

Parent Handbook 2019



Anita Purves Nature Center

1505 N. Broadway Ave.

Urbana, IL 61801

217-384-4062

www.urbanaparks.org

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WELCOME!

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

The Urbana Park District is offering its first *Forest Preschool* program from March 18-22, 2019, 8am-12pm each day. This pilot program, developed for children age 4-6 (toilet trained) who have not yet attended kindergarten, takes place entirely outdoors! Kids will spend time in Busey Woods, the Friendship Grove Nature Playscape, and Crystal Lake Park during themed nature explorations.

This program is currently in the “pilot” stage, meaning that the park district will conduct this first weeklong session on a small scale in order to assess the feasibility of a possible longer-term program, as well as find areas for improvements in the future.

WHAT IS A “FOREST SCHOOL”?

Forest schools, or “nature schools”, are not a new concept, but they are recently gaining popularity across the United States. The nature-based early childhood movement has two origins. In North America, the nature preschool movement started around the time of the first Earth Day in 1970 and has been slowly spreading across the country. The forest kindergarten movement surfaced in Scandinavia in the 1960s and then began growing in the 1990s. Now there are thousands of forest schools throughout Europe, Australia, and more recently Asia and the United States.

Children in these schools spend most of their time outdoors, no matter the season, unless the weather is dangerous (i.e. lightning, severe cold, etc.). The interests and curiosities of the children usually determine the topics explored. Adults facilitate the children’s learning by providing an educational framework for each investigation. This model promotes children’s independence and teamwork, encourages critical thinking and problem solving skills, gives children a sense of place, and helps build their self-esteem.

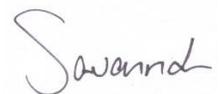
GOALS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

- Foster curiosity and sensory exploration through hands-on projects and play
- Stimulate intellectual and physical development while participating in authentic learning opportunities
- Develop respect and appreciation for the natural world through meaningful, place-based experiences
- Encourage language development by letting children express themselves creatively
- Develop social skills as children make friends and work collaboratively
- Develop self-confidence and a sense of success

GOALS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- Gauge public interest in a local Forest Preschool program, long-term or short-term
- Determine the park district’s ability to offer this or a similar program again in the future
- Identify community partners who would like to be involved
- Identify areas for future improvements and expansion

Thank you for taking part in this exciting new program!



Savannah Donovan
Environmental Public Program Coordinator
Urbana Park District
sydonovan@urbanaparks.org / 217-384-4062

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WHAT TO WEAR AND BRING

Each day, bring your child dressed for a morning (4 hours) outdoors, depending on the weather forecast for that day. Dressing in layers is highly recommended.

Essentials:

- Warm socks
- Water-resistant shoes (closed-toed)
- Thick or sturdy pants, such as jeans
- Long-sleeved undershirt
- Sweater, sweat shirt, or hoodie
- Outer jacket that is water-resistant
- Hat that covers the ears
- Gloves or mittens
- Refillable water bottle

On Monday, bring the following CLEAN EXTRAS in a bag marked with your child's full name. These items will be housed at the nature center for the week of the program:

- 1 pair underwear
- 2 pairs socks
- 1 pair of pants
- 1 towel

All clothing, shoes and accessories should be able to get dirty or muddy. It is recommended that you **label ALL personal items (especially clothing) with your child's name** so they can be easily identified. The Urbana Park District will not take responsibility for lost personal items.

If necessary, staff will apply **SPF 30+ sunscreen** to your child as long as permission has been granted by the guardian on the Camper Information Form. If you prefer to supply your own sunscreen, please label the bottle and send it with your child on Monday.

FIRST DAY CHECK-IN

On Monday, each parent must check-in their child(ren) at the reception desk inside the Anita Purves Nature Center. Staff will ask for the child's name and make sure that all fees have been paid and all paperwork (Camper Information Form) has been completed. Staff will then direct you to the group's daily gathering location in the Friendship Grove Nature Playscape. Staff will be there to greet children and start playing!

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

- **Drop-off is from 8-8:30am, Tues-Fri,** at the Friendship Grove Nature Playscape, just outside the nature center (on the east side). Scheduled activities begin at 8:30am; if possible, make sure your child arrives by 8:30am.
- **Pick-up is from 11:45am-12:00pm** and is also located at the nature playscape

For your child's safety, you must drop off and pick up your child with the staff each day. **All participants must be signed-in and signed-out each day.** No child will be allowed to leave unless accompanied by an adult designated on the Camper Information Form. **Picture identification will be required to pick up a child.** The photo ID must match the name of a person authorized for pickup on the Camper Information Form. Designated adults may be added to or deleted from the Camper Information Form at any time. The parent or legal guardian may call (217) 384-4062 to make changes. You are expected to pick up your child by the designated time. **The Urbana Park District will charge a fee of \$5.00 per every 5 minutes that your child is picked up late, starting at 12:10pm.**

LATE DROP-OFF & EARLY PICK-UP

There are times when you may need to arrive late. If you know in advance that you will be late, please arrange with the staff so that your child can easily join the group upon arrival. Otherwise, call 217-384-4062 to let the staff know you are coming. If you must pick up your child early, please arrange with staff in advance to ensure that your child is waiting at the agreed-upon location at the appropriate time. We ask that special pick-up requests be kept at a minimum so as not to interfere with the program schedule and your child's experience.

HAZARDOUS & RAINY WEATHER

This program will take place entirely outdoors, even in rainy weather. If the weather becomes hazardous, such as in the case of lightning or extreme cold, the program will be relocated inside the Anita Purves Nature Center. Following Urbana School District guidelines, if the outdoor temperature should fall below 20°F, children will not be allowed outdoors for longer than 15 minutes at a time.

If you would you like to receive instant notifications in case of change of plans or weather updates, sign up for our Rainout Line at: <http://www.urbanaparks.org/events/rain-outs-and-cancellations/>

GENERAL SCHEDULE

Each day will follow the rough schedule outlined below:

| | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 8:00-8:30am | Drop-off and welcoming activities | Friendship Grove Nature Playscape |
| 8:30-8:45am | Circle time and introduction to the day | Friendship Grove Nature Playscape |
| 8:45-10:00am | Exploration and activity time | Busey Woods |
| 10:00-10:45am | Snack and story time | Fire Ring |
| 10:45-11:45am | Exploration and activity time | Busey Woods |
| 11:45-12:00pm | Departure activities and pick-up | Friendship Grove Nature Playscape |

Restroom breaks inside the Anita Purves Nature Center will be offered before heading into the woods, upon return from the woods, and before and after snack time. Children will wash their hands indoors before snack time each day and as needed.

SNACKS

A morning snack is provided each day. Snack time will take place at the Fire Ring, outdoors on the southwest side of the nature center. Some snacks will be cooked over the camp fire with help from the children, safety permitting. All attempts will be made to make snacks nutritious and wholesome. **Indicate any dietary restrictions or food allergies on your child's Camper Information Form.** If you prefer to send your child with their own snack, please do so in a clearly-labelled lunch box.

ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES

You must record any food allergies or other severe allergies on your child's Camper Information Form. Specify the severity of the allergy and intervention needed. Inform staff if your child carries an Epi-pen or requires any special accommodations. If your child has asthma or severe allergies (including food allergies), please have your child's physician complete an **Asthma Action Plan** or **Allergy Action Plan** for staff to keep on file. This will allow us to best care for your child.

MEDICATION / MEDICAL NEEDS

We strongly discourage administering medication during the Forest Preschool program hours unless medically necessary. All prescription drugs must be given to the program coordinator who will administer the drug at the designated times. **Please explain medical needs in detail on the Camper Information Form AND communicate your child's needs in person with staff. Parents must also complete a Medication Administration Packet. Inform staff if your child carries an Epi-pen or requires any special accommodations.**

LOST AND FOUND

Remember to label ALL belongings with your child's name (especially clothing). The Urbana Park District will not take responsibility for lost personal items. Lost-and-found items will be held at the Anita Purves Nature Center for at least two weeks after the Forest Preschool program has ended.

ABSENCES

Please notify the nature center staff at 217-384-4062 if your child will be absent.

Keep your child home if:

- Your child has a temperature of 100°F or higher (and continue to keep them home for 24 hours after their temperature is back to normal)
- Your child has a severe cold
- Your child has inflammation of the eyes
- Your child has been vomiting or has had diarrhea
- Your child has lice

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

The **Anita Purves Nature Center**, located at 1505 N. Broadway Ave. in Urbana is the headquarters for the Urbana Park District's environmental programs and services. Should hazardous weather arise, the nature center has indoor space available. Restrooms and water fountains are located here, and this is where you will check in on Monday.

The **Friendship Grove Nature Playscape**, located outdoors east of the nature center, opened in April 2017. A wide variety of play opportunities is available for all ages and abilities. "Loose parts" such as kitchen supplies, toy animals, natural materials, wooden blocks and more are seeded throughout the playscape and inspire creative play. The nature playscape is where Forest Preschool participants will start and end their days.

Busey Woods, located west of the nature center, is a 59-acre remnant forest. The woods contains a 1/3 mile accessible boardwalk trail as well as soft paths. The Urbana Park District manages Busey Woods as a natural area. Some oak trees are as old as 300 years, and common wildlife includes deer, birds, box turtles, salamanders, squirrels, and more. Forest Preschool participants will take daily excursions into Busey Woods; adventures will take us off trail!

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Urbana Park District uses pictures of participants in its programs and events to inform others of recreational opportunities in promotional materials including brochures, websites, social media, and the Program Guide course catalog. If you do not wish to have your or your child's photo taken, please email Savannah Donovan at sydonovan@urbanaparks.org as soon as possible to let her know.

COMMUNICATION

Staff and volunteers will be making observations and taking photographs. At the end of each day, parents will receive highlights from their child's day. Feel free to contact staff at any time with your questions, thoughts, or concerns: 217-384-4062 or sydonovan@urbanaparks.org.

ACCIDENTS / EMERGENCIES

All staff are trained in general first aid and CPR. If a participant has an accident serious enough to require professional medical attention, Urbana Park District staff will contact the parent or guardian. If the parent cannot be reached, the designated emergency contacts listed on the Camper Information Form will be called. If it is necessary for the participant to go to the hospital, the parent may transport the participant or an ambulance will be called at parent expense. In very severe circumstances, 911 will be called and parents will be notified after the 911 call. If staff are unable to reach any adult responsible for the participant or if time is critical, an ambulance will be called and the participant will be taken to the hospital. A staff member will accompany the participant to the hospital.

EQUAL ACCESS / AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT / INCLUSION

The Urbana Park District complies with and is committed to providing equal access in accordance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA), which prohibits discrimination in the provision of services, programs, or facilities to individuals with disabilities. The District works in cooperation with C-U Special Recreation (CUSR) to offer equal access to our recreation programs and services for persons with disabilities.

If you or a family member need a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the ADA to participate in any activity, program, or use any facility, please **identify and explain the accommodation in writing**. You may submit any information you think will be helpful in determining the support needed for success in the program. **Notification at the time of registration is advised. In the interest of safety, no child will be allowed to participate in programming if required accommodations are not in place prior to the first day of the program.**

If you have any questions about the ADA, or would like information on our inclusion process, please contact the CUSR Inclusion Coordinator at (217) 239-1152.

NO FIREARMS POLICY

No person will carry or have in his or her possession any firearm, air pistol, air rifle, pellet gun, explosive device of any nature or any other instrument capable of launching or firing any projectile, rocket or noxious substance, whether propelled by gunpowder, gas, air, spring, or any other means while within any Park, Boulevard, driveway, or other public place of the District, except that this section will not apply to any law enforcement officer authorized by law to carry a weapon within the District and except in a District organized, authorized, and supervised recreational program.

MEET THE STAFF

Savannah Donovan, Environmental Public Program Coordinator

Hello, and thank you for registering your child for this exciting pilot program! I am the coordinator of this and other nature/environmental public programs including Nature Day Camps at the Urbana Park District.

I am an Urbana native with a background in biology. My passion for environmental programming led me to a MS in Environmental Education and Interpretation. I have been planning and leading programs and camps specifically for preschoolers since 2009. I am also a mother to a 3-year-old daughter and twin 8-month-old babies (one boy and one girl)!

I look forward to getting to know each of you and your children and utilizing your valuable feedback to evaluate this pilot program. The future of Forest Preschools is exciting, and I am thrilled to take part in this new adventure with you!



Olivia Webb, Environmental Public Program Assistant & Nature Play Facilitator

I have been working at the nature center since May 2018 leading preschool programs, assisting with Nature Day Camps, and facilitating nature play opportunities for all ages. Since graduating in Bioengineering from UIUC in 2015, I have worked in prairie restoration and environmental education, and have volunteered at organic farms across the country. In my free time I enjoy tabletop roleplaying games, mushroom hunting, and cooking for my eight housemates. I am looking forward to an adventurous and playful week at Forest Preschool!



Travis Pittman, Environmental Program Intern

I am a senior in Recreation, Sport and Tourism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am passionate about providing fun and engaging programming for all ages, which is why I chose to study the field of recreation. I have really enjoyed my recent role assisting with programs for preschoolers at the nature center (Pre-K Fridays and Nature Play Kids).



Olivia Tasch, Environmental Program Volunteer

I moved to Champaign six years ago after finishing my education degree at Millikin University. Since then, I have been teaching English at The High School of St. Thomas More and working as an active board member at Girls Rock CU. I am passionate about education and finding unique ways to reach kids. Outside of education, I am also passionate about music and have become an active member of the Champaign-Urbana music scene since moving here.



*All staff and volunteers have passed criminal background checks.
Staff can be reached by calling the Anita Purves Nature Center at (217) 384-4062.*

Urbana Park District Camp Rules and Discipline Guidelines

Urbana Park District Behavior Code

The goal of Urbana Park District Camps is to provide a safe, positive, and fun environment. In keeping with the Urbana Park District's goals, we encourage fun for all participants. However, certain rules are necessary to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment. The following expectations apply to all participants in UPD camps. Failure to follow these rules may result in dismissal from programs.

Expectations for Camp:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| *Use walking feet indoors. | *Be kind to yourself and others. | *Use gentle hands and feet. |
| *Do your best! | *Use kind words. | *Use listening ears. |
| *Keep your space clean. | *Follow directions. | *Ask a leader if you need help. |
| *Use inside voices when you are inside. | | |

The UPD Camp program revolves around choices. Camp staff work with campers to help them make the best behavior choices. Camp staff give as much positive reinforcement and recognition as possible to campers who are meeting expectations. Expectations of campers are developmentally-appropriate, as are the consequences of inappropriate behavior. In the event of inappropriate behavior, staff will first give a quiet reminder, explain the behavior, and let the camper know what is expected and the consequences associated if the negative behavior continues (see below). Time-outs, behavior reports and conferences with parents and camp supervisors will be utilized as necessary.

Please note: In cases of major rule violations, including aggressive or physical contact (pushing, shoving, hitting, fighting, etc.), verbal abuse (cursing, threats, taunting, teasing, etc.), or destruction of property (other campers' belongings, camp materials, or public property), participants may be suspended or dropped immediately from camp, regardless of the number of previous offenses. Refunds will not be issued for that session.

Consequences of Inappropriate Behavior:

1. **Time Out:** Participant will be removed from the group, receive a verbal warning that the exhibited behavior is inappropriate, and be reminded of the appropriate behavior. Participant may or may not return to the group, dependent upon severity of offense.
2. **Conference with supervisor:** Staff will inform the camp supervisor if a problem continues. The participant will again be removed from the group and will sit out for an appropriate period of time, dependent upon severity of offense. The participant's parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified that a second offense has occurred, asked for suggestions to prevent recurrence of the unwanted behavior, and asked to sign a behavior report.
3. **Suspension:** The participant's parent/guardian or emergency contact will be called for immediate pickup, and the participant will be suspended from the program for up to five days without refund. When the participant is picked up, the appropriate staff will meet with the parent/guardian or emergency contact to discuss the incident and consequence, prevention tactics, and discuss the consequences of a fourth offense. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign the behavior report. (*If participant is not picked up within one hour of the parent/guardian being contacted, the participant may be released to the custody of the Urbana Police Department.)
4. **Expulsion:** The participant's parent/guardian or emergency contact will be called for immediate pickup, and the participant will be suspended from all UPD Camps for the duration of the summer, without a refund for that session. If the participant is registered for any subsequent camps, the parent/guardian will be refunded their deposit and fees for those camps. When the participant is picked up, the appropriate staff will meet with the parent/guardian to discuss the incident and permanent suspension. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign the behavior report. (*If participant is not picked up within one hour of the parent/guardian being contacted, the participant may be released into the custody of the Urbana Police Department.)

Waiver and Release of All Claims

I recognize and acknowledge that there are certain risks of physical injury to participants in the above program(s), and I agree to assume the full risk of any injuries, damages or loss regardless of severity that I or my minor child/ward may sustain as a result of participating in any and all activities connected with or associated such program(s). I agree to waive and relinquish all claims I or my minor child/ward may have as a result of participating in the program against the District and its officers, agents, servants and employees.

I do hereby fully release and discharge the District and its officers, agents, servants and employees from any and all claims from injuries, damage or loss which I or my minor child/ward may have or which may accrue to me or my minor child/ward and arising out of, connected with, or in any way associated with the activities of the program(s).

I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless and defend the District and its officers, agents, servants and employees from any and all claims resulting from injuries, damages and losses sustained by me or my minor child/ward arising out of, connected with, or in any way associated with the activities of the program(s). In the event of an emergency, I authorize District officials to secure from any licensed hospital, physician, and/or medical personnel any treatment deemed necessary for me or any minor child/ward's immediate care and agree that I will be responsible for payment of all medical services rendered.

I authorize the Urbana Park District staff to take my child on all field trips as associated with this program. I understand that my child will either walk or be transported by public transportation on field trips and that I will receive notification of these trips at least 24 hours prior to each trip. I may withdraw my permission for any specific activity by contacting and making alternative arrangements with the camp supervisor at least 12 hours prior to the activity.

Participation in this activity shall be considered an agreement to disclaimer by those participating and their parents.

URBANA PARK DISTRICT – 2019 Camper Information Form

To help us get to know your child ahead of time, complete and return this form to the Phillips Recreation Center. In-person registrations must complete this form onsite. **Online, phone, and mail-in registrations will have 2 weeks from the date of registration to submit this form or your child will be withdrawn from all camps.** Complete a separate form for each child.

By mail/in person: **Urbana Park District, 505 W. Stoughton St., Urbana, IL 61801**

By FAX: **(217) 367-1592** (Call 367-1544, ext. 1, to confirm receipt of your fax)

By email: camps@urbanaparks.org

Please print

Child's First & Last Name: _____ Preferred First Name (Nickname): _____

Birthdate (mo/day/year): _____ Language(s) spoken: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Name: _____ Parent/Guardian 1 Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Name: _____ Parent/Guardian 2 Phone: _____

If you would you like to receive notifications in case of change of plans, sign up for our Rainout Line at

<http://www.urbanaparks.org/events/rain-outs-and-cancellations/>

*I understand that my child must be picked up promptly every day and that a **\$5 per 5 minutes late pick-up fee** will be charged beginning at 12:10pm for half-day camp, 3:10pm for regular camp and 5:35pm for extended camp. **ONLY the names listed below, in addition to the parent/guardians listed above, have permission to pick up my child from camp.** Picture identification will be required to pick up a child. **No child will be allowed to leave camp unless accompanied by a designated adult.***

In the event of an emergency, staff will contact the parent/guardians listed above, then the people listed below in order until someone has been reached:

| Name | Relationship to Child | Phone Number(s) |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

**Turn page over -
additional information and signature required on reverse.**

2019 Camper Information Form Continued

Any allergies, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or other conditions that could pose a medical or safety problem? Yes No

If yes, describe fully (including type of reaction): _____

Will your child need to use any medications during camp (including Epi-Pens)? Yes No

If you answered yes to either of the above questions, complete the *Medication Administration Packet*, available at all camp sites and online at <https://www.urbanaparks.org/programs/summer-camps/>

If available, bring a copy of an *Allergy Action Plan* or *Asthma Action Plan* from your doctor or school.

In case of an emergency, please contact

Physician's Name: _____ Phone: _____ Preferred Hospital: _____

Any food allergies or dietary requirements? Yes No

If yes, describe fully (including type of reaction): _____

Any specific sensory needs? Yes No

If yes, please describe: _____

I give permission to the Urbana Park District to administer sunblock for my child.

Yes, but only what they bring from home Yes, from home or camp No

I give permission to the Urbana Park District to administer insect repellent for my child.

Yes, but only what they bring from home Yes, from home or camp No

Is there any additional information you would like camp leaders and supervisors to know about your child?

I have read and understood the Urbana Park District Camp Rules and Discipline Guidelines, as well as reviewed them with my child. I understand the Urbana Park District Camp Expectations, and understand the consequences for negative behavior choices. I also have read the camper manual, and understand the guidelines for automatic payments, pick-up times, and late fees. I have read and agree to the terms, including procedures for field trips, contained in the Waiver and Release, located below the Camp Rules and Discipline Guidelines in the Camper Manual. By signing this form, I understand that the park district is not licensed or regulated by DCFS.

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____