

Chippewa Nature Center & West Midland Family Center's

Nature Preschool Registration Packet



2007-2008

Venture Out!

Dear Families:

Thank you for your interest in Nature Preschool, a new cooperative program between Chippewa Nature Center (CNC) and West Midland Family Center (WMFC). This partnership combines CNC's strong commitment to environmental education and active learning with WMFC's commitment to providing children with developmentally appropriate education. In this registration packet you'll find basic information to help you decide if our school is the right choice for your family.

In the inaugural year of the preschool we will offer experiences typically found in child-centered programs such as discovery-based learning through play, sensory, large and fine motor activity, creative expression, and making friends and developing social skills. However, what's unique about this preschool is that we'll use the natural world as a catalyst for children's growth and development. Children will have daily experiences with animals in the classroom and on the nature center property. The children will also regularly hike to wooded areas, ponds, fields, and the Homestead Farm. Children will also be involved in gardening.

As you might imagine from this description students will need to be dressed for outdoor play in all kinds of weather. Based upon seasonal changes, the curriculum includes art, music, social and cognitive skill development, gross and fine motor skill development, and natural science exploration. Children will be building their knowledge through their first-hand experiences with nature, classroom materials, and their relationships with peers and adults.

Again, we hope this packet provides you with the information you need. However, if you have any questions please feel free to call Rachel Larimore at 989-631-0830 or email rlarimore@chippewanaturecenter.org. We look forward to welcoming your family to our school community!

Sincerely,

Rachel

Rachel Larimore
CNC Director of Education

Gail

Gail Crosby
WMFC Director of Programs

Mission

The mission of the Nature Preschool is to provide a premier early childhood environment which meets the developmental needs of the whole child, while initiating them into a lifelong, meaningful relationship with the natural world.

Philosophy

At the Nature Preschool we believe that children are intrinsically motivated to learn. The teaching staff promotes learning by:

- Providing an environment which encourages discovery, experimentation, and the opportunity to see the results of one's actions.
- Developing activities that encourage growth based on children's abilities and interests.
- Encouraging problem-solving and reflection by asking open-ended questions and providing information in response to children's ideas, insights, and concerns.
- Assisting children in their interactions with each other and offering opportunities for cooperative learning.
- Appreciating the individuality of children and families and celebrating diversity.



Curriculum

The Nature Preschool curriculum focuses on the whole child, promoting growth in physical, social, emotional and intellectual areas. Nature Preschool uses the Creative Curriculum® model which emphasizes vocabulary building through conversation, books, stories, finger-plays, art and field trips. By the end of the year, the children will learn how to be a part of a group, to follow directions, and to take turns with toys and games.

Daily activities include:

- Natural science experiences
- Art activities
- Music and movements
- Language activities
- Block play
- Dramatic play
- Large and small motor activities
- Cooking and food experiences
- Sensory activities

Schedule

For the inaugural year of Nature Preschool we are offering a 4 day per week program, Monday through Thursday. We offer a choice of morning or afternoon classes for preschool children that are at least 4 by December 1 in the year of enrollment. Children cannot attend both the morning and afternoon programs. The '07-'08 school year will run September 10 through May 15, and will follow the Bullock Creek School District calendar.



Morning class: 9:00-11:30am
Afternoon class: 12:30-3:00pm

Facility

The first year of the Nature Preschool will be held at the Chippewa Nature Center's Nature Study Building. This space is designed to provide the best possible preschool environment for young children. The spacious classroom allows for the busy, active play of preschool children. (Three adults will oversee a maximum of 18 children.) Open-ended equipment and supplies encourage creative and cooperative learning. A naturalized playground provides children a supervised opportunity to dig, climb, and roam as they build their connection to the natural world. Of course the 1,150 acres of CNC property offers great opportunities for group excursions.



This is a view of the Nature Study Building from the dock. Children will have a wonderful bird's eye view of the pond from inside the building.

Enrollment Policy

To enroll your child in Nature Preschool you will need to complete a registration form and submit it with a \$75 registration fee. If applying for a scholarship please do not send your registration fee until we've determined your scholarship eligibility.

We will try to place your child in the class you have indicated on your registration form. If we are unable to do so, we will place your children in the other class if space allows.

Once your child has been placed, you will receive a confirmation letter, including a Parent Handbook, from Chippewa Nature Center. At that time, a \$250 deposit will be due within 10 working days to hold your child's place. This is a non-refundable deposit that will be applied to May's tuition. Tuition for the 2007-08 school year is \$3,000.

Some of the documentation required before each child's first day of attendance includes:

- Proof of immunization
- Physical signed by a licensed physician
- Copy of birth certificate

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is critical to the development of young children as well as the Nature Preschool program. The main responsibilities for Nature Preschool parents include:

- Attending Parent Orientation, held in August without preschoolers, where you'll have a chance to meet the staff and learn what to expect for the coming year. Class lists will be distributed at this time.
- Working a minimum of once a month in the classroom.
- Attending parent and family activities.
- Being available for two home visits and two parent/teacher conferences. (The first home visit will be arranged at Parent Orientation, and will occur in early September. This gives the new student a chance to meet their teacher before school begins, and for you to ask any questions and take care of any last paperwork.)
- Reading newsletters and flyers sent home with your child.

How You Can Reduce Your Tuition

We know that providing the best quality preschool education for your child represents a financial commitment. Just as the natural world is full of diversity, this preschool program is expected to have a rich diversity of students, including economic diversity. Families that meet the Federally Funded Free and Reduced School Lunch guidelines and the Michigan School Readiness Program qualifying guidelines will be awarded full scholarships, pending a grant receivable by the West Midland Family Center.

For those families that don't qualify for full scholarships, the Nature Preschool fortunately has a scholarship fund which can partially reduce tuition. The goal of this scholarship fund is to reduce tuition so that a family receiving scholarship aid will spend no more than 5% of its household income on a child's preschool tuition. For example, a family making \$40,000 would pay approximately \$2,000 per year, or \$222 per month for nine months, for a child's enrollment in the Nature Preschool.

If you're interested in being considered for a scholarship, please complete the scholarship application titled "Intake Form," mark "West Midland Family Center at Chippewa Nature Center" as your first choice, and submit it along with the registration form.

Payment Schedule

Tuition can be paid monthly or in one lump sum. Upon notification of placement in the program, \$250 is due within 10 working days. This is a non-refundable deposit that will be applied to May's tuition. Monthly tuition payments commence September 1 with subsequent payments due on the first of the month.

CNC Membership

Your tuition includes a one-year family membership beginning September 1. If you are already a family member of CNC your membership expiration date will be extended by one year. Membership benefits include:

- Early camp registration and discounted program rates
- Reduced rates for workshops, field trips, and other programs
- Invitation to members-only events including Maple Syrup Day Pancake Breakfast, Special Preview of the Nature Art Show & Sale, & Fourth of July Fireworks Party
- In-home delivery of the monthly *Chippewa Nature Center News* and quarterly *Program Guide*
- Free admission to Fall Festival & Maple Syrup Day
- Opportunity to host birthday parties
- 10% Nature Center Store discount
- Checkout privileges in the CNC library
- Invitations to quarterly members-only open houses
- Free admission to 100 nature centers worldwide

WMFC Facilities & Services

Some of the other facilities and services available at WMFC include:

- Fitness room
- Gym
- Family Resource Room
- Family Support Meetings
- Family Fun Night
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Clothing Room
- Referrals

Details about these services will be included in the Parent Handbook.

Nature Preschool Registration Form 2007-08 School Year

Child's Name _____

Child's Date of Birth _____ Sex Male Female

What school do you expect your child to attend for kindergarten? _____

Please rank your order of preference:

Morning class, 9-11:30am Afternoon class, 12:30-3pm

Are you applying for a scholarship? Yes No

If yes, please complete the "Intake Form" and disregard the \$75 registration fee until we determine your scholarship eligibility. You will receive a call from West Midland Family Center within one week of your form submission.

Please tell us about your family:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____

Alternate phone (please specify) _____

Email address(es) _____

Employer(s) _____

How did you hear about our program? (please mark all that apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/word of mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> Chippewa Nature Center newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher or educator | <input type="checkbox"/> Midland County Preschool Partnership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting Families magazine | <input type="checkbox"/> Saginaw Family magazine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

We are currently unable to offer extended care (before or after school care). However, if we were able to offer such a program would you be interested? _____

Tuition for 2007-08
\$3,000 per year

Please complete this registration form along with a \$75 registration fee payable to Chippewa Nature Center and send to: Chippewa Nature Center
400 S. Badour Rd.
Midland, MI 48640

To pay with Mastercard or Visa please stop by the Visitor Center or call 989-631-0830. If you'd like to apply for a scholarship be sure to include the Scholarship Application along with your registration form.



2007/2008

Child's Name: _____ Birth Date: _____ Sex: M F

Parent / Guardian's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Message Phone Number: _____

Address: _____ (Street) (City) (Zip) School District you live in: _____

Where did you find out about the Midland County Preschool Partnership: _____

Please identify the closest crossroads near your home (i.e. Smith Ave - between Main and Third St.)

Child Care Address (if different): _____

All attempts will be made to put your child in the first program of your choice. Priority is based on the child's age, family income level and other eligibility criteria. Please see the Midland County Quality Preschool Partnership program brochure for each program's qualification criteria.

Please indicate with a #1 and #2 your First and Second choices of the preschool programs that you would prefer your child to attend:

- () **Coleman Universal Preschool:** Coleman Schools, Coleman Community Network, MCESA, & NEMCSA Head Start
- () **Education and Training Connection:** Salvation Army Site, Waldo Rd. (Midland Public Students Only)
- () **Kinder Kare:** James Savage Rd.
- () **Meridian Schools (Young 4's):** Perkins Community Center (Meridian Public Students Only)
- () **N.E.M.C.S.A. Head Start:** M-20, Sanford/Meridian, Midland Community Center, Midland County ESA
- () **North Midland Family Center:** NMFC Mills Township
- () **West Midland Family Center:** WMFC M-20
- () **West Midland Family Center at Chippewa Nature Center:** Chippewa Nature Center

Gross Household Income: \$ _____ () Weekly, () Bi-weekly, () Monthly, () Annually
 Number of children in Household: _____ Number of adults in household: _____

Do you receive DHS childcare reimbursement, DHS Cash Assistance, or SSI Assistance: Yes: ____ No: ____

Is there additional information that you can share about your child? (i.e. disability, medical concerns, foster child, allergies, etc.) _____

I hereby release this information to be shared among the member agencies of the Midland County Quality Preschool Partnership:

 Parent/Guardian's Signature Date

Referring Agency: _____
 Name/ Telephone number

State and Federally funded programs do not discriminate against any family because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability except as prescribed by program guidelines.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE. FOR STAFF USE ONLY

Head Start supports this placement (H.S. Staff Signature) _____

Reviewed by _____ Date _____ Age (as of Dec. 1) _____

Action Taken _____

Phone intake: Verbal permission to release this information taken above. Received by: _____ (Name/Date)

Nature Preschool

is a cooperative program of:



400 S. Badour Rd.

Midland, MI 48640

989-631-0830

www.chippewanaturecenter.org

Inspiring people and institutions to protect the natural world.

&



4011 W. Isabella Rd.

Shepherd, MI 48883

989-832-3256

www.wmfc.org

Thriving...Giving...Growing...Together!