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St. George, Ontario,
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(226) 747-7859

(519) 404-5030



Nurture your child's connection with nature.

Ebb and Flow

Forest School Parent Handbook

Programs Offered

Burrs and Buds

A 2 hour program for 18 months-3 year olds and their parents.

Sprouts

A full day program for 3-4 year olds.

Seedlings

A full day program for 5-6 year olds.

Saplings

A full day program for 7-9 year olds.

Oaks

A full day program for 10-12 year olds.

Note: Our age groupings are flexible based on the needs of your child and our learners.

Visit our website for additional information and contact us to discuss your child's needs.

What is Forest School?

Forest School provides learners with opportunities to connect to themselves, to others, to our land and to their source. It requires regular and repeated experiences in natural spaces combined with learning through inquiry, emergent and land based knowledge. The facilitator is not the holder of knowledge, rather a guide. The participants and the land work together to direct the learning in an authentic and natural manner that reflects the interests and needs of all involved. Learners find balance and resilience which allows them to thrive in a complex, busy and challenging world. We gain an awareness of community and a deeper connection with nature and our fellow human beings leaving us better suited to live authentic and rewarding lives rich with meaningful relationships. Our days will be filled with exploring and adventuring through the forest, supported risk taking, creative endeavours and meaningful connections to age appropriate curriculum. Together, we will play, problem solve, celebrate, reflect and discover ourselves and how we fit into the world around us.

What is our Philosophy?

Facilitators, learners and the land play equal roles in educating the whole child. We prioritize play and child-directed inquiry learning. This approach contributes to a more connected community, varied experiences and meaningful discussion. We believe that small group learning leads to real world connections and applications and a child's intrinsic motivation to thrive. We commit to instill a love of absorbing knowledge, connecting with those around us meaningfully and noticing the beauty with which we are surrounded. We believe it takes a community to meet the needs of the whole child and look forward to partnering with all shareholders to allow our children to be authentically children while simultaneously preparing them for their future.



A Typical Day at Forest School

9:00 - 9:15	Arrival and frontyard play
9:15 - 9:45	Learning prompt/circle time/lesson
9:45 - 11:00	Outdoor adventuring
11:00 - 11:30	Lunch
11:30-12:15	Quiet activity/music lessons
12:15 - 12:45	Learning Prompt/circle time/lesson
12:45 - 2:15	Outdoor adventuring
2:15 - 2:45	Yoga and mindfulness
2:45 - 3:00	Gratitude/land acknowledgement
3:00 - 3:15	Frontyard play and pick up

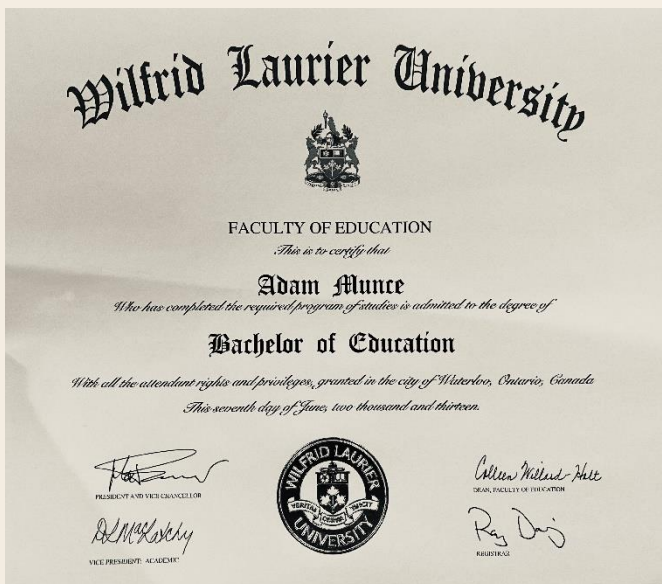


Meet our Facilitator

ADAM MUNCE



Adam is an Ontario Certified Teacher and is currently completing his Child and Nature Alliance of Canada certification. He has taught in the public education system for 8 years and has additional qualifications in Special Education, Mathematics and Music. Adam is a proud and active father of 4. Along with nature and mountain biking, Adam is passionate about music. He heads a local originals band as the singer-songwriter playing the guitar, ukulele and mandolin. Adam believes we must teach the whole child to truly provide balanced education. By providing varied experiences, asking rich questions and engaging in open dialogue and discussion, we can develop learners' ability to think critically with confidence and create meaning in the world in which we live.



roles & responsibilities

Role of Facilitators

The facilitator's responsibilities include planning and programming for sessions, ensuring that all equipment is available for all learners to participate meaningfully, documenting learner's experiences and communicating regularly with parents/caregivers. The facilitator must also complete regular risk benefit assessments to ensure the safety of all learners. It is a facilitator's role to ensure learners feel safe physically, mentally, socially and emotionally and address any situations that arise.

Role of Volunteers/Accompanying Adult

The role of volunteers is to take direction from the facilitator. They must follow safety protocol, encourage engagement from learners and help manage behaviours. If the volunteer/accompanying adult has been assigned a particular learner, they are to remain within close proximity of that learner to support them with their goals outlined in the behaviour plan. We welcome all forms of volunteers within our program including joining our sessions for periods of time or contributing to our organization in other ways. Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering your time or expertise in anyway.

Role of Learners

The learner's responsibility is to engage actively in Forest School activities. They will be expected to treat each individual at Forest School with respect and approach new learning with an open mind. Learners will be encouraged to reflect on their day, show gratitude for the learning the land provided and engage in discussion with facilitators and peers to deepen their understanding of the world. Learners will challenge themselves to approach new experiences with curiosity and work hard to develop their knowledge and understanding of our environment and its impact on the world.

Role of Parents

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that all registration paperwork has been submitted prior to your child's first day of Forest School and that payment has been received in full. Parents must also adhere to the policies outlined in the Parent Handbook. It is imperative that parents help their children dress appropriately for the weather and that they have the necessary gear for their day. Finally, it is a parent's responsibility to communicate any information they feel would be useful for the facilitator upon dropoff.



Sustainability of our Environment

Leave No Trace

We have rules for learners and facilitators to help ensure the sustainability of our land.

1. Leave little to no trace within our learning environments.
2. Kindness must be exhibited to all living things.
3. Contribute to the land as it contributes to us.
4. We use our senses to observe the land to understand its needs.
5. We show gratitude for the learning opportunities presented to us through our land.

It is through these rules that we will ensure our land maintains its beauty and health. We will watch the land for signs of stress and/or deterioration and will adjust actively to keep our forest in a natural symbiotic relationship between learners and 'natural classroom'. We have also partnered with a local arborist to ensure the health and safety of our grounds.



What to Bring to Forest School (please label items)

- Waterbottle
- Backpack with packed lunch
- Pocket sized snack (1-2)
- Work gloves/gardening gloves that fit (BONUS ITEM, not required)



<h2>Winter</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Snowpants, winter jacket, warm boots ○ Extra socks, extra mittens, hat, neckwarmer ○ Travel mug ○ Dress in layers 	<h2>Spring</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rain suit, rain boots ○ Extra socks ○ Plastic bag x 2 (for soiled clothing and soakers) ○ Dress in layers
<h2>Summer</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long, light pants ○ Closed toe, sturdy shoes (running shoes) ○ Sunscreen, hat ○ Eco-friendly bug spray (optional) 	<h2>Fall</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rain suit, rain boots ○ Extra socks, extra mittens, hat ○ Travel mug ○ Dress in layers

Inclusion and Accessibility

Everyone is welcome to our Forest School. We strive to be creative about finding solutions to ensure that all interested families have access to our facilities regardless of ability levels, race, religion, socio-economic status, gender, etc. Please do not hesitate to ask if you feel your particular circumstances create a perceived barrier to attending a program and we will work with you to find appropriate solutions. We view families as partners in education and look forward to collaborating with you.

Discrimination of any sort will not be tolerated within our program. We will address any misconceptions and misunderstandings from a place of learning and personal growth to help even our youngest learners celebrate differences. We feel it's important to create a space where learners and their families are comfortable asking questions to deepen their understanding of others' circumstances.



Behaviour Management Policy

Learners will be actively engaged in all activities and will be encouraged to demonstrate kindness towards others and the forest at all times. The foundation to our program is kindness, gratitude and mindfulness. Each day there will be time for focused goal setting, quiet mindfulness, and gratitude sharing - all contributing to healthy, happy learners. Because of these factors, we typically see few undesirable behaviours.

Behaviours that contribute to another individual feeling uncomfortable will not be left unaddressed. Undesirable behaviours will be addressed as a learning opportunity in the early stages of a learner's Forest School experience. However, as sessions proceed, if undesirable behaviours persist, more involved steps will be taken. Due to low ratio numbers, concerns with learners' behaviour or conduct will be addressed at pick up with parents. We believe that facilitators and parents are a team and that there should be no surprises. We strive to avoid learners missing out from learning experiences and will only take that step if safety of the learners is at stake because of the behaviours.

We do not want to exclude anyone from this opportunity. If severe behaviours continue to occur, facilitators would ask that a parent/trusted capable adult accompany their child to Forest School to help improve behaviour while maintaining safety and protecting the well-being of other learners. A clear plan will be created with parents, facilitators and the child to ensure that all are aware of the learner's specific goals and expectations. This will allow for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of successful achievement of goals. The ultimate goal will be to gradually remove the use of a support person and reintegrate learners into independently participating in Forest School.

Our Learning

Land Stewardship

- Respect the land, protect the land, nourish the land

Species Study

- Identification of plants and animals, life cycle observation, habitat study, etc.

Creative Expression

- Music, art, story-telling, focus on the process over product

Problem Solving

- Team work, perseverance, divergent thinking

Tool Use

- Fire building, orienteering, building, whittling, knot tying

Risk Taking

- Risk/benefit awareness, modeling, guidance and open communication, development of risk comfort zone

Play-based Learning

- Loose parts, imaginative play, open-ended prompts, providing time and space

Inquiry/Emergent Learning

- Following learners' interests and inquiries, extending the lessons the land is providing, flexible planning

Community Connections

- Finding ways to positively impact/engage the community, connecting to Ontario curriculum

Character Development

- Mindfulness, gratitude, metacognition, resilience, self-esteem and self-awareness, confidence, and more!

Land Acknowledgement

We are grateful to be gathered together here today on this lush and beautiful land. We sit close to where the Nith River joins the Grand River on the Haldimand Tract in Brant County. In the traditions of the First Nations, who are the original stewards of this land, we consciously choose to cherish and honour this land and the plants and animals that thrive here. We choose to allow the land to be our partner in our learning and to walk on this land with soft feet, open minds, and brave hearts. All my relations.

Risk Awareness

Poison Ivy

As with many Ontario forests, there is poison ivy. We approach this through **education, awareness and prevention**. We teach even our youngest learners how to identify poison ivy, we complete risk assessments in areas of exploration and we dress appropriately to prevent exposure. We have trails and play areas that we monitor closely to keep free of poison ivy, however, we cannot guarantee its absence. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately to avoid Poison Ivy exposure.

Ticks

Spending time in nature and exploring off trail always comes with the risk of ticks. We encourage families to develop a **tick checking ritual** after Forest School or on the evening of Forest School. This involves removing all clothing and thoroughly checking all areas, especially little nooks and crannies, to ensure that no ticks have hitched a ride home with your child. Please help your child complete tick checks each evening after Forest School. The risk of Lyme's disease in children is quite low, especially in the first 24 hours. If you do find a tick, using tweezers, gently but firmly pull the tick off, grabbing close to its head. Put the tick in a ziplock bag or sealed jar and clean the area of the bite with soap and water. Finally, if you require the tick to be analyzed, contact your local Public Health Unit or your family doctor to help facilitate this process.



Our Policies

Cancellations

When you have registered for Forest School, you have committed to the entirety of the sessions. If your child misses a day due to illness or other reasons, unfortunately we will not be able to refund the transaction for that day. However, if you have decided that Forest School is not working out for your family, we can refund you your registration fee minus the days that were attended and an administration fee of \$50 with at least one week's notice.

Privacy

We respect each families right to privacy and individual comfort level with photos of their child. Please indicate on your registration form whether or not you provide permission for photo sharing. There are various levels of permission that you can provide.

Illness

Please do not send your child to Forest School if they are ill. Your child may return when they are feeling better. Runny noses are a part of life and we do not consider children with runny noses as ill.

Food Allergies

All learners will be required to indicate, upon registration, of any known food allergies. The known allergies will be communicated to the other learners and families in order to keep all learners informed and safe. If there are no known allergies, there will be no restrictions to food that can be brought for lunches and snacks. Sharing of snacks will be discouraged unless approved by families in advance for special occasions. (ie: cooking a snack over open fire)

Child Protection

Children will only be able to be picked up by preapproved guardians/caregivers. If your child's pick up person differs from the Emergency Contact form, we ask that you please notify us in an email with a photo of the adult picking your child up.

All facilitators have completed a Vulnerable Sector Police Check and have had reference checks. Any visitors on site will be accompanied by our facilitators and will not be left alone with our learners.

Toileting and Handwashing

Learners will be encouraged to use the on site facilities before heading into the forest. There will always be antibacterial soap and clean linens provided. Students will be required to wash their hands before eating lunch. If students are deciding to eat a snack while adventuring in the forest, an organic hand sanitizer spray will be available. Hand wipes will be available in the cabin facility. Learners will be encouraged to do a nature squat/pee if we are not near our bathroom facilities.

Risk Management

A site risk assessment will be completed each morning to evaluate the safety of the Forest School premises and facilities. In the case of inclement weather, facilitators will decide to proceed with their regularly scheduled day by finding alternate learning locations to optimize safety. Experience Risk Benefit assessments will also be completed for activities that include higher risk. These activities will be discussed with learners beforehand to ensure safety protocols are being adhered to. Safety will be monitored during activities and debriefed following activities.

Emergency Procedures and First Aid

All facilitators are required to have First Aid and CPR training. Each facilitator will have a personal sized First Aid Kit on them at all times. A larger First Aid Kit will be stored in the indoor facility. Each family completes an Emergency Contact and Information Form upon registration. Emergency contacts will be contacted immediately if an injury occurs that the facilitator feels requires further medical attention. Facilitators will communicate minor injuries upon pickup.

Inclement Weather

If we feel parents or facilitators would be unsafe driving to Forest School, a decision will be made and emailed out to families by 7am. Generally, our program runs rain, sleet or shine! Dress your child appropriately! Layers are recommended.

Tool Use

Learners will always be pre taught how to use tools during Forest School to ensure safe and appropriate use. Learners will be directly supervised by the facilitators when learning how to use tools and will be provided with ongoing feedback and modeling in order to use tools properly. Learners will be provided with appropriate safety equipment should it be needed, such as protective eyewear and cut proof gloves.

Grievances

If you feel the need to report a grievance, please email us your concerns. We will respond to grievances within a 24-48 hour time period. We assure you that we are committed to working alongside parents to find solutions to concerns and/or complaints.

Payment and Paperwork

A \$100 deposit will secure your child's spot in their session of Forest School. Please have your payment submitted in full within one week of your child's first session. Payments can be e-transfer, cheque or cash. All paperwork must be submitted in full by your child's first day.

General Communication

ebbandflowforestschool@gmail.com

Please email us with questions or inquires. We will use this email to send out updates and group messages. Please use (226) 747-7859 or (519) 404-5030 to reach one of our team members.

Documentation of Learning

We recognize the value and importance of being involved in your child's education. After each day at Ebb and Flow, your child's facilitator will complete a collage of photos, anecdotes and prompts so that you can engage in discussion with your child about their days in the forest. We encourage you to show these collages to your child to guide discussions.

"There is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing"
Alfred Wainwright



What will my child do at Forest School?



LayoutReady

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