

Dressing for Nature School

We have learned a few things over the last 20 years about dressing for outdoor play in Wisconsin. Children are involved in many types of activities while at Nature School, many of them involving mud and water, and they should be dressed accordingly.

Here are our tips:

- ***Expect your child to be active in play and have the possibility of getting wet and muddy every day.***
- Rain gear is not just for rain. Play is messy and rain gear helps keep the students dry and comfortable.
- ***Children should be appropriately dressed for outdoor play everyday in all seasons. It is better to dress on the warm side and remove layers than to start cold and try to warm up.***
- Outdoor exploration requires freedom from restrictive clothing including tight clothing, fancy dresses, and costumes that get in the way during active play.
- For independence in toileting, children need clothing that is easy to remove and put on.
- Children need comfortable, protective shoes with gripping soles for running, jumping, and climbing. Slip-on waterproof outdoor boots are best. Sandals with closed toes and heel straps are acceptable for warm weather—flip flops though, are not safe on trails.

Many children have the same color and style of gear.

To prevent mix-ups and lost gear, all clothing should be LABELED with the child's name.

Gear Checklist:

Everyday Items:

- Reusable water bottle
- Waterproof bag/backpack
- Reusable/washable tote bag for muddy/wet gear and clothing
 - This bag can be popped into the wash machine with the dirty gear for quick clean up
- Ziplock bag with appropriate seasonal change of clothes (inside of the bag/backpack)
 - The labeled change of clothes for emergencies should be kept in the student's waterproof bag
 - This should include underwear, pants, shirt, and **multiple** sets of socks. This extra set of clothes should be changed for each season.
Be sure to replace shorts with long pants etc., when the weather gets colder
 - Check bag often to refill

Start the School Year with these items (you will switch back to these items in Spring too):

- Rain boots
- Longer socks (no footies)
- Rain pants/bib
- Rain/Shell Jacket with hood
- Hat with brim
- Rain mittens (or shell mittens) **We HIGHLY suggest these!**
- Stretch mittens/gloves for under rain mittens in cooler weather

As weather cools add these items:

- Wool socks
- Warm mittens to wear under waterproof mittens (have multiple pairs)
- Mid-layer fleece jacket - wear under rain jacket and tuck under bibs

Change to these in Cold Weather:

- Base layers – wool or high-tech poly or function fleece – *never cotton*
- Insulated waterproof snow jacket with hood or insulated waterproof snowsuit with a hood
- Insulated waterproof snow pant or insulated waterproof snowsuit
- Waterproof rain suit to fit over snow gear - *our winters have been more wet than snowy. This worn over the snow gear helps keep your child dry and warm*
- Insulated waterproof snow mittens
- Warm hat that covers ears
- Gator or neck wrap
- Insulated waterproof snow boots - buy a size larger to accommodate thick socks, foot warmers, and to allow for toes movement to stay warm. Tight boots equal cold toes!
- Foot warmers **We HIGHLY suggest these!**
- Hand warmers **We HIGHLY suggest these!**

The appropriate gear assures your child will be comfortable and safe while playing and exploring outdoors in all types of weather throughout the school year.

Where to Buy Children's Outdoor Gear

Links included.

Used Gear:

Buying Used Gear helps the planet and your finances. Here are some links to places our Nature Preschool and K4 families have recommended finding quality used items.

- Kids Cycle North Shore (must join group)
- [Poshmark](#)
- Facebook Marketplace
- [REI Used](#)
- [Patagonia Used](#)

[New Quality Gear:](#)

In the last few years, as more Nature-based schools have opened across the country, more high-quality brands have become available. Here are some links to brands and sites our families have recommended.

- [Outdoor School Shop](#) is an excellent source for gear and information. *They carry many of the brands listed below all in one place.* The [Layering Guide](#) and [Regional Gear Checklist](#) are excellent resources.
- [H&M](#)
- [Reima](#)
- [Oaki](#)
- [Polarn O Pyret USA](#)
- [Muddy Puddles](#)
- [Helly Hansen](#)
- [BOGS Boots](#) - a great time to purchase your BOGS boots is at the [WEYCO SALE](#) shoe sale in Glendale. It is held three times a year.
- [REI Outlet](#)