

GEARING UP FOR NATURE SCHOOL

Gear is an important part of outdoor education. Children and teachers need to be ready for all kinds of weather. Local weather in any given day can fluctuate wildly and is often a bit different at Nature School because of our location on the Sound. The following will help you plan for your child's successful, fun-filled year in all types of weather. Please read this thoroughly and reach out if you have any questions or need help acquiring gear. We cannot stress enough how important your child's gear is to ensure a good day in all kinds of weather.

- **Gear Guide Wishlist:** The following wishlist details recommended gear and gives various examples of the things listed below. You are not required to buy from here or to buy any of these brands (though the rain gear listed here is tried and true brands we do highly recommend). This is simply a visual resource we hope will help.
 - https://www.wishlist.com/wishlist/_nature-school-at-camp-albemar/gear-guide-recommendations/a5V38p/
- **Please label all of your child's gear.** Our lost and found is often overflowing with unclaimed things. If a child's gear is clearly labeled, we can easily help keep track of it. You can find cheap labels at kidslabels.com, or often a sharpie works well.
- **Your child will get messy.** We encourage them to explore the world around them with their whole body. There will be mud, paint, ice, water, sand, etc. Make sure your child wears clothes that can get messy.
- **Please buy smaller gear** – smaller backpacks, smaller water bottles. This allows your child to successfully be independent and responsible for their gear.
 - **Child-sized, comfortable backpack**
 - It is very important that your child has an appropriately sized backpack. In past years, we have not always required that our students carry their backpacks from place to place, but this year we will be implementing this. A 12-15in. backpack is the size that should best fit your child and provide ample room for their gear. See our Gear Guide Wishlist for recommendations... You can also usually find small backpacks at Walmart for under \$10 that work well. We do not recommend drawstring backpacks with the rope simply because they are difficult or impossible to size to a preschooler and hard for the child to manage on their own.
 - **Water Bottles**
 - A 12-16oz insulated water bottle, visibly labeled with your child's name is highly recommended. Anything larger and they struggle to carry it. No matter the weather, but especially during hot weather, we refill their water bottles regularly with fresh water so a larger size is not needed.
 - We ask that you do not send disposable plastic water bottles. These are always difficult for a child to independently open and drink out of and usually results in the bottle, cap and all, being placed in their mouth before they ask a teacher to help. We understand sometimes things get left behind in the rush out the door in the morning and we are happy to provide a spare water bottle for your child to use that day. See our Gear Guide Wishlist for examples....

Gear For Cold And Wet Weather

Base Layer:

A wool, silk or polyester base layer (shirt and pants) is recommended for days under 45 degrees. A base layer from these materials holds in heat and repels moisture. Cotton is great for mild days, but not recommended as a base layer. When cotton gets wet (from sweat or rain) it takes a long time to dry and will make your child colder. Walmart and Lidl both carry comfortable and affordable base layers, just be sure to check that they are polyester and not cotton.

Mittens:

We recommend purchasing several pairs of the thin, stretchy mittens (not gloves) you can easily find at Walmart each year. Our weather is often not cold enough for extra thick mittens and the children are easily frustrated with their ability to maneuver resulting in mittens on and off constantly or refusal to wear them. For colder, wetter days requiring a bit more warmth, we recommend layering these mittens with a thin waterproof pair. See our Gear Guide Wishlist for specific examples.

Rain Gear:

There are several examples of quality rain gear on our Gear Guide Wishlist. Your child needs a waterproof rain coat, rain pants/bibs or a one piece suit, and rain boots. You can often buy a quality rain jacket a size larger (which will allow it to fit over a winter coat on rainy winter days) and get you the most for your money.

Helpful All-Season Gear Guide

Summer	Spring and Fall (cooler days)	Winter (45 degrees or under)
Tank tops & t-shirts	Layered t-shirt and/or long sleeve shirt	Base Layer top and bottom
Shorts	Pants	Mid Layer: warm pants and shirt that will fit comfortably over the base layer. Fleece is great here.
Closed-toed sandals (keens or similar style) or sneakers	Socks and sneakers or rain boots	Outer Layer: Winter coat, snow pants, wool socks, mittens
Swimsuit under clothes or a rashguard & swim shorts	Rain pants & rain jacket	Warm hat that covers the ears
Wide brim sun hat or baseball cap	Wide brim sun hat or baseball cap	Rain jacket that will fit over winter coat for rainy days
Rain jacket & boots	Fleece pullover or light jacket	Insulated boots or wool socks with rain boots

