

## Nature-Based Preschool: Required Clothing

*“Childhood is a state of mind which ends the moment a puddle is first viewed as an obstacle instead of an opportunity.”*

~ Kathy Williams

We are very excited to have your child in our nature preschool program. As you know, the nature preschool classes have a daily outdoor component, spending at least 45 minutes (temperature & weather dependent) each day learning outside in our outdoor classroom spaces. The only time we will not go outside is if the weather is dangerous (i.e. thunderstorms or when the temperature is below district’s cold weather policy of -5 degrees Fahrenheit for actual temperature and/or wind chill). Our motto is: “There’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing” so we will be outside in the sun, rain, and snow. To ensure your child has a successful experience, here are some tips and advice for appropriate outdoor clothing throughout the year. If you have any questions or need assistance with securing clothing, do not hesitate to let your child’s teacher know.

This information will be reviewed again during orientation and is located on the PLSAS website under Circle of Friends Preschool, however, we wanted to be sure you have adequate time to secure the appropriate clothing for your child’s first day of preschool. The success of nature preschool is dependent on children being able to enjoy their time outside regardless of the weather. On behalf of the staff as well as the other children, thank you in advance for your cooperation in ensuring your child is dressed appropriately each day. When in doubt, overdress for the weather as it is easier to remove gear than to find enough gear for 20 students.

We’re all looking forward to exploring and learning in the great outdoors!

Sincerely,

Nature Preschool Teachers and Staff

**The following clothing is required to ensure your child is able to be comfortable and able to enjoy our outdoor learning experiences. ALL clothing must be labeled with your child’s name before your child wears it to school! Without names on the clothing, we won’t be able to ensure it gets sent home with the right child.**

<b>FALL:</b>	<b>WINTER:</b>	<b>SPRING:</b>
Rubber boots (rain boots) Jacket/sweatshirt Rain jacket with hood Rain pants (one piece rain suit)	Warm, water-resistant Winter coat Snow pants (one piece snowsuit) Waterproof mittens Scarf/neck cover Hat/ear covers Insulated Boots (snow boots) Wool/fleece socks Long underwear top & bottom	Rubber boots (rain boots) Jacket/sweatshirt Rain jacket with hood Rain pants (one piece rain suit)

**Rain boots:** These aren’t just for rainy days. Often the grass is wet or the ground is muddy in the fall and spring, so wearing rain boots during our hikes will help ensure your child has dry, clean shoes for the classroom and using the gym.

**Gloves versus Mittens:** We recommend mittens vs gloves as mittens are easier for children to put on/take off independently. In addition, we highly recommend mittens with a zipper as it makes it easier to put them on and they are able to go over the child’s coat sleeves, creating a barrier from the snow. We recommend having at least two pairs of mittens/gloves to ensure your child has a dry pair each day. DO NOT send your child in thin knit gloves/mittens. These get wet quickly and as a result will not keep your child’s hands warm for the duration we’ll be outside.

**Winter Boots:** Get a winter boot that is one size larger than your child’s foot (this is with socks on). This creates a “dead-air space” to assist in insulating the foot. The best insulations for feet are wool socks with water-proof boots.

**Socks:** MYTH: If one pair keeps your feet warm, then two pairs should keep them even warmer. Boots are designed to hold your feet and one pair of socks, not two. The second pair compresses your foot, cutting of circulation and making your feet colder than they’d be with a single pair. This impaired blood flow makes your feet even more vulnerable to frostbite.

**One piece rain suits and/or snowsuits:** These are very popular for children in nature preschools across the world and are a great option for ensuring your child stays warm and dry. When choosing a size, make sure you think of what clothing your child will be wearing underneath as well as allow room for your child to grow into it. If you don't have rain or snow gear yet, these are an option worth considering.

**Dressing in layers is the key to ensuring your child stays warm.** It also allows your child the option to remove layers if he/she becomes too warm. We will be very active outdoors but will also spend some time sitting for circle time and observation activities. On wet and cold days, pay close attention to the layers close to their skin. Clothing made from materials such as poly-propylene or capilene, fleece or wool takes moisture off of the body and transfers it to other layers, rather than soaking through. This is called "wicking." Cotton holds moisture close to the body and makes a person cold and damp.

**Tennis Shoes:** Your child must bring tennis shoes every day for wearing inside the classroom. Sandals with closed toes and heel straps are only acceptable for warm weather. Flip flops and Crocs are not acceptable for safety reasons.

Our activities outside and in the classroom requires freedom from restrictive clothing. This includes tight clothing, fancy dresses and costumes that get in the way during active play. Children will likely get messy, so wearing clothing that can get dirty is essential!

All children must have a labeled change of clothes to be kept in their backpack for emergencies and in situations when their other clothes get wet or muddy. This should include underwear, pants, shirt and socks. This extra set of clothes should change with the seasons and be appropriate for the expected climate.

**Brand Clothing Recommendations:**

We STRONGLY encourage you to consider the following brands. These have been proven to be successful with our nature preschool students as well as students at other nature preschools across the country.

RAIN BOOT BRANDS:	WINTER BOOT BRANDS:
<p><b>*Boggs</b> Capelli Western Chief Vivobearfoot Weather Stars</p>	<p><b>*Boggs</b> Columbia Keane Totes</p>
<p><b>*Boggs work for rain and snow</b></p>	

RAIN GEAR BRANDS:	WINTER GEAR BRANDS:
<p><b>*Tuffo Muddy Buddy</b> <b>*Oaki Suit</b> Frog Toggs Columbia LL Bean</p>	<p><b>*Columbia</b> <b>*C-9 Target</b> Zero Exposure Lands End North Face Obermeyer <b>*Cuddl Duds - long underwear</b> LL Bean</p>

WEBSITE AND STORES:	
<p>Oakiwear.com Target Once Upon A Child Walmart - Cuddl Duds</p>	<p>Amazon.com Fleetfarm LL Bean Lands End</p>