



• A FOREST & NATURE SCHOOL •

# ACADEMY IN THE WILD HANDBOOK

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# WELCOME TO ACADEMY IN THE WILD!

We are excited to be sharing adventures in the wild with your children! The main objective of this manual is to introduce you to us and to help you and your child prepare for Academy in the Wild.

During our programs, we share the responsibility of protecting the health, safety, and well-being of your child and the policies outlined in this handbook are designed to do just that. We ask that you read through, ask questions, and discuss any or all of these with your child, prior to the start of the program.

Please contact us if you have questions or would like to discuss any information enclosed in this document.

We look forward to having lots of fun in the wild!



*"I have always been in love with nature, It was a place to go for hours and let my imagination run wild, creating worlds within worlds. My magical forest I was blessed to grow up in is what motivates me now to create a space that can foster those similar experiences in our young children today."*

**ANGELINA ROBILLARD**

Founder of  
Academy in the Wild  
[hello@academyinthewild.com](mailto:hello@academyinthewild.com)

## ABOUT US

Our mission is to inspire children to grow wild! Academy in the Wild is a program that strongly believes that all children and youth should have the opportunity to play and learn from the natural earth through child-led and play-based learning. Children are intrinsically motivated to learn, and they do so by exploring the world around them. The goal is to provide children with repeated access to nature, give them time and space to investigate and foster a genuine sense of wonder and to help grow future stewards of the land.

## ABOUT FOREST SCHOOLS

Forest Schools have now spread throughout the world, and process that started in the 1950s in Europe. They are founded on trust, relationship and freedom. Children spend the majority of the day immersed in various outdoor settings where time is unhurried and there is space for independent reflection, collaborative creation and risky play. The benefits of FNS are endless and help develop the whole-child; social, emotional, physical, and cognitively. It allows education to happen naturally for each child.

We've summarized here some core principles of Forest and Nature Schools;

- Takes place in a variety of natural places
- Regular repeated sessions in the same natural space
- Views children as competent and capable learners
- Values the benefits of multi ages learning together
- Led by a qualified Forest and Nature School Educators
- Values play
- Views the opportunity to experience risk as an integral part of a child's learning
- Uses loose, natural materials to support open-ended experiences
- Values the process as much as the outcome

## HOW WE LEARN

Studies show that humans learn best through construction, cognition, and community. Forbes speaks on these 3 pillars of learning saying “**Construction**. Learning happens when we build or make things....**Cognition**. Learning happens when we think things. We make observations, we process feedback from our environment, we simulate and predict....**Community**. Learning happens when we want to survive and thrive amongst a group of people”



Forest and Nature schools are beautifully designed to allow learning to occur by providing children opportunities to construct freely and build a sense of community. It naturally develops a Child's cognitive development through an on-going relationship with the land, a dedicated educator, to one another as well as themselves, and by having the freedom to explore, play, build, create, imagine, and use their senses to experience the outdoor environment.

## WHERE WE GATHER

Academy in the Wild is located in the Lethbridge Indian Battle Park. We spent countless hours hiking all over the coulees and found a place that we believe is magical. Providing so many things children need today; loose parts, mud, clay, sand, trees, bushes, safe no/low current shallow water areas (also safe in winter when they ice over), and a fire pit. We are also a short walk to shelter in case of sudden inclement weather.





# PREPARING FOR FOREST SCHOOL

## ENROLMENT AND PAYMENT

We require a \$30 non-refundable enrolment fee, per child, to secure your child's spot at Academy in the Wild. Full payment is due two weeks before the start date of your program.

## LETHBRIDGE LOCATION

### COYOTES (3-8 yrs)

- FALL SESSION - September - November (10 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$325.00
- WINTER SESSION - February - April (10 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$325.00
- SPRING SESSION - April - June (10 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$325.00

### RATTLERS (6-11yrs)

- FALL SESSION - September - November (10 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$325.00
- WINTER SESSION - February - April (10 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$325.00
- SPRING SESSION - April - June (10 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$325.00

## **FALCONS (11-15 yrs) - COMING 2023**

- FALL SESSION - September - November (8 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$350.00
- WINTER SESSION - February - April (8 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$350.00
- SPRING SESSION - April - June (8 weeks)  
1 day/week = \$350.00

### **HOW TO PAY**

- E-Transfer is preferred, payments can be sent to [payments@academyinthewild.com](mailto:payments@academyinthewild.com)
- Cash and credit card are also accepted

No refunds will be given for days missed due to illness, inclement weather, emergency closures during session, or statutory holidays.

Either Days will be added or refunded for cancellations due to Academy in the Wild staffing issues, at the discretion of Academy in the Wild.

## **PREPARING FOR ACADEMY IN THE WILD / FIRST DAY**

The first morning is full of energy and excitement. We are all eager to get to the forest, but before we head out, we must make sure that all the important bits are in place. We recommend arriving a little early (10-15 min) at the start of the very first session. This provides us with a chance to meet you, your children, do some admin, check clothing, gear, and answer any last-minute questions that you may have for us.

When everyone is ready, we encourage a quick goodbye to lesson the potential separation sadness before we head off into the forest.



## A TYPICAL DAY

There is a general rhythm to the day, but please note that our schedule is flexible. The weather, the child's interests, the woods, animals present, events and activities all help shape our time at Forest School.

Here's what a typical day in the Coyotes looks like:

- Arrival/Sign In
- Welcome Circle
- Site Assessment & Child Led Play
- Snack, Books & Storytelling
- Activity & Free Play
- Sit Spot/Closing Circle
- Departure/Sign Out





## PARTICIPANT SIGN IN/SIGN OUT

Academy in the Wild will not release children to anyone who is not specified as a Primary Contact, Emergency Contact or other contacts specified on the enrolment form. Everyone, including parents who are authorized to pick up a participant must be prepared to present photo ID.

Sign in/out is made easy at a picnic table located right by the parking spot. We require the child to be walked to our meeting spot and signed in/out on paper. We will generally travel into the woodland southwest from this drop off location once goodbyes have been said.

## WHAT TO WEAR

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that your child is properly dressed for each session. Please check the forecast each morning and dress your child in the proper gear to be able to participate in our programs appropriately for extended play outdoors. This helps to create a happy, comfortable, safe and willing participant in forest school activities.

At Forest School your child's clothing will get dirty, wet, and possibly ripped. If you need to purchase any supplies, consider second hand shops, Kijiji and Facebook marketplace. You can find great quality for much less.

If you are in a situation where your child does not have or is not able to acquire the necessary clothing for the program please let us know, we can take a look in our extras bin that your child could borrow from.

## LAYERING

**1) Base layer:** your first layer is for wicking moisture away from the skin and insulating it with a breathable layer.

**2) Middle Layer:** This is another insulation layer that creates 'dead-air space' between skin and the elements. This airspace helps in keeping warm.

**3) Outer Shell:** This layer should be **a warm, insulated** waterproof and wind-proof. Be aware that water resistant is different than waterproof, waterproof breathable materials are preferable. The best foot wear would be two wool socks and boots one size too big to create insulating dead-air space.

# WINTER TEMPERATURES

## BASE LAYER

- Thermal top
- Thermal bottoms - wool is best, otherwise use another natural fibres
- Wool or wool blended socks (wool will insulate even when wet)
- Can also use polyester pyjamas for this layer if needed

## MIDDLE LAYER

- Fleece pants (fleece is very cozy, quick to dry, and warm)
- Fleece or wool top (hoodie, pull-over or zip-up )
- If it's an especially cold day, you can add 2-3 middle layers

## OUTER LAYER

- Warm, waterproof snowsuit - waterproof snow pants, overall style, work nicely to keep the upper body insulated along with a waterproof snow jacket
- Winter boots - warm, waterproof boots with removable liner. Recommended brands - Sorel or Columbia
- 1 wool toque or hat that fits snugly and covers the ears (put extra 1 in backpack)
- 1 wool light gloves, to go under your thicker waterproof pair (can put into backpack)
- 1 pair of warm , well insulated, waterproof gloves or mittens, if possible please put them on a long string that attaches them to each other, or to the jacket. This helps not lose them. (put extra 1 pair in backpack)
- 2 pairs of socks to wear - wool or wool mix is best however you can use one thin cotton sock as a base, and a thick wool or fluffy bed sock for top. (two spare pairs of socks are to be packed in the backpack)
- Wool/fleece neck warmer or balaclava (much safer and easier for children than scarves)
- Hand/foot warmers - reusable or throwaway. (place inside the backpack and we will help/when needed)

## SPRING AND FALL TEMPERATURES

### BASE LAYER

- Thermal top (wool is best, or polyester pyjama set)
- Thermal bottom

### MIDDLE LAYER

- Top. Wool or fleece or other synthetic fabric, (hoody, pull over, zip-up) (extra in backpack is recommended)
- Bottom. Wool, fleece or other synthetic fabric

### OUTER LAYER

- Waterproof rain pants and jacket/Muddy Buddy (can be purchased from our **SHOP** page, and we will bring to first day of class )
- Closed-toe hiking shoe and/or comfortable insulate rubber boots (we recommend boots that are one size larger than your child's foot. Creating dead-air space to assist in insulation.)
- Thinner toque or hat
- Light knitted gloves (extra pair in backpack, pack as well their winter pair)
- Wool or wool-blend socks (can be thinner) (1-2 extra pair in backpack )
- Hand/foot warmers are great if your child gets cold hands and feet easily (place inside the backpack and we will help/when needed)
- Sunblock (optional, please apply before coming if wanted)

## SUMMER TEMPERATURES

### BASE LAYER

- Long pants and long-sleeved shirt (this will help protect from scratches, ticks, and insect bites)
- Light pair of socks

### OUTER LAYER

- Closed-toe supportive waterproof shoes/rubber boots
- Waterproof pants and jacket. (can be purchased from our **SHOP** page, and we will bring to first day of class )



- Hat - wide brimmed or ball cap. (Can be purchased from our **SHOP** page, and we will bring to first day of class )
- Sunblock/bug repellent

## EXTRA CLOTHING NOTES

- Dress your child in layers during the days, it will allow for better control over body temperature. It's easier to have too many layers than not enough.
- It is often cooler/damper in wooded areas, and during morning.
- Stay away from cotton as much as possible. It retains moisture and can make us feel cold. This includes cotton socks.
- Use wool for base and middle layers if possible as it insulates even when wet. When woollen items are not available, use other synthetic fibres (fleece, polyester, silks...)
- Mittens are also better than fingered gloves for little hands. Thin knitted cotton gloves should be avoided, as they can make hands colder than wearing nothing, especially when they get wet.
- Children are encouraged to wear a hat at all times
- A sturdy breathable waterproof jacket and waterproof rain pants will be required. Please note that most snow pants and nylon splash pants are not waterproof and are not appropriate on wet rainy days. When purchasing gear, look for waterproof and not water resistant.
- **LABEL ALL GEAR**, that you are both wearing and in your backpack.

Not dressing properly for weather is often a recipe for unhappy children and we all want the children to have a great experience so please try your best to provide all the layers and needed items for your child.

***For the health and safety of your child, we reserve the right to refuse a child's participation based on improper clothing and footwear.***





## WHAT TO PACK

We ask that parents ensure their child has all of the following items packed in a sturdy backpack that fits your child. It is good practice to pack the backpack with your child's help so that they will be aware of what is in it and where to find specific items. Please place any lifesaving medication in an easy to grab location, and make us aware of the location at every days sign in.

Please refrain from packing extra items. Your child will be carrying their own pack while walking from site to site and extra items will add extra weight. Travel sized items or smaller portions in labeled containers for sunscreen and bug repellent will help reduce the weight and space taken in your child's backpack; All tools and equipment that are needed will be provided by Forest School. Please do not send any tools or knives from home unless we have asked.



- **Small full water bottle:** that they are able to open.
- **Healthier snacks:** preferably litter-less, in a container that sets your child up for success. (container such as, <https://tinyurl.com/23w8529y>) You will be informed if there are any allergies in your group you must be aware of, i.e. nut allergies.
- **Extra underwear:** for children ages 3-7
- **Extra socks:** wool or synthetic fibres, <https://tinyurl.com/bdcv3nak>
- **Spare clothing:** in a plastic bag. (Refer to what to wear to know what extras in your season)
- **Plastic bag:** for dirty clothing.
- **3 Bread bags:** clean, re-used bread bags for your child's backpack. These go over the feet if boots get wet, so that children can slip their feet into their boots again. Please place a few bags into your child's backpack.
- **Pair of Hand warmers:** reusable or throw away.
- **Tissues:** in a small ziplock bag, easily accessible.
- **Small dry hand towel:** so they can dry their wet/muddy hands on.
- **Life saving medication** (ex, epipen)
- **All extra clothing listed in Temperature outline above.**

## PLEASE DO NOT BRING:

- ⊗ Toys
- ⊗ Pocket knives or other tools
- ⊗ Electronic devices including cell phones, mp3 players, and gaming devices

**We encourage all participants to arrive with sunscreen and bug spray applied when weather is nicer.**

Upon registration you will get a condensed [PRINTABLE VERSION](#) of your clothing and backpack essentials emailed to you that you can put on your fridge.

## LOST ITEMS

Academy in the Wild is not responsible for any lost or stolen items while on site. We encourage parents to label everything coming with your child to help ensure it ends up back in their pack.

***Any items left on site that is found will be place in a Lost and Found.***





# HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Two weeks before the start date of the program, in order to participate we need:

- **ALL** Registration Forms to be completed
- Informed Consent /Liability Waiver signed
- Payment in full

## PRIVACY POLICY

Any personal data held by us, including photographic images, will be processed strictly in accordance with privacy legislation and will be used for the purposes that you have consented to in enrolment form. We will not share details with third parties without consent, except where we are legally compelled or obligated to do so.

## REFUND POLICY

Refunds are not given unless there are extreme circumstances that prevent a child from participating in Forest School. Academy in the Wild reserves the right to determine and assess these circumstances on a case by case basis.

- Refunds will not be given 2 weeks prior to program start date, or during program unless the spot can be filled.
- Refunds will not be given when a days program must be cancelled due to inclement weather, or sickness of child.
- A full refund will be given if a program must be cancelled due to insufficient registration

## ILLNESS POLICY

We ask that participants (including students, educators, and accompanying volunteers) stay home from Forest School for at least 24 hours after their last symptoms have subsided, for the following cases:

- Temperature (At or above 38°C/100.4°F)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Pink Eye
- Any contagious illnesses

Should the above-mentioned situations arise while at Forest School, the parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up their child immediately.

In the case of communicable diseases such as measles, pink eye, chickenpox, mumps, flu, strep throat, viral pneumonia, etc. A sick child may return to Forest School after their health care provider has communicated that it is safe for them to do so. Any outbreak of communicable disease or lice treatment will be communicated to parents/guardians via preferred method of contact.



## FOOD/ALLERGY POLICY

Food is fuel, when children are outside and being physical they will need fuel and their appetites will tell them so. Packing a little food helps maintain high energy levels and a good mood. There will be a hand washing/sanitizing time prior to snack time.

- We ask that participants try to bring litter-less snacks with them, reducing the amount of trash we produce.
- During colder days consider thermoses for hot snacks and beverages.
- Ensure your child knows what containers are theirs, also how to open and close the containers.
- If we have any children with a nut allergy during your session we will adhere to a strict nut-free zone. Parents will be informed of this topic via email prior to the start of the program.
- We ask participants to avoid sharing snacks, as this ensures the health and safety of the community.
- Please consider the weight of containers that your child will be carrying.





## **TOILETING PROCEDURE**

- Please encourage your child to use the toilet at home/school before each forest school session to cut down on bathroom trips.
- Please ensure your child is fully potty trained before program start date. We can help with clothing buckles and fastenings if needed.
- Children ages 3-7 years old should bring an extra set of underwear and lightweight pants in case of an accident.
- Children will be required to wash/sanitize before eating, and after using the bathroom. Hand sanitizer will be used (unless parent/guardian tells us otherwise) if water and soap is not available.

If there is a bathroom emergency when we are out in the park and do not have immediate access to a bathroom, a staff person may bring the child to a place where that child can do a “tree wee” if the child is comfortable. We will only assist the child with sitting or standing to toilet if the child gives consent. We feel that wild toileting is a valuable “talent” that every person should know how to do, because we have all been in THAT situation sometime in life.

## **TOOL USE POLICY**

Tools can be a very empowering element. Tools are only brought out once the staff have gotten to know the participants in the program. Individuals are assessed based on their maturity-level, interest level in the tool, how they navigate levels of risk, concentration level, ability to follow the clear guidelines given and shown around tools before being allowed to use any tools.

- FS Educator will check all tools before use
- Correct and safe use of sharp tools will be demonstrated before use
- Tools will be counted when handed out and again when collected
- All children are to be supervised closely until deemed competent to work with limited supervision
- All safety guards of tools will be replaced immediately after use
- Each child must remain outside the individuals ‘safety bubble’ while using tools

## **FIRES**

- Correct use of equipment and fire safety will be demonstrated before use
- Participants will only light fires under direct supervision
- A burns kit and water will be kept within close range of fires
- All fires will be fully extinguished at the end of a session

## TICKS

Ticks are a natural part of nature, mostly in spring. If a tick is found embedded, use a pair of tweezers to pinch the tick as close to the tick's head and mouthparts as possible and pull out slowly. Do NOT remove it by burning, smothering, applying alcohol, or squeezing the body. Any of these methods could make it release potentially infected fluids into your body, increasing your chance of infection. Similarly, pulling the tick out too quickly may result in leaving the mouthparts imbedded in the skin, possibly leading to infection.

A nurse at the other end of #811 will gladly walk you through this. Discard live ticks by placing them in alcohol or oil, wrapping them in a sealed bag or in tape.

If you find a tick after a session please let Academy in the Wild staff know so that other parents in the group can be properly informed.



## **WEATHER RELATED POLICIES**

While we do intend to carry on with every session, we still feel very strongly that it must be both safe and enjoyable for our participants. Programs take place entirely outside. Academy in the Wild reserves the right to postpone or cancel sessions due to unsafe weather conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances that may negatively impact the health, safety, and wellbeing of participants and staff.

- If extreme winds but safe to be outside, we may stay closer to open areas.
- In case of forecasted thunder and lightning, staff will ensure that kids are close to a shelter so that they can quickly go under if needed.
- In the case of extreme cold (-20C or lower) or extreme heat (30C or above), staff may cancel or will limit the kids' length of exposure based on their age, constantly assessing their comfort and safety.
- If dangerous weather develops while a session is running, educators will quickly gather children and seek shelter and remain there until the weather subsides. If the decision to cancel is made while we are in session, participants will be taken to the nearest and safest space possible, and parents will be notified by phone to arrange pick-up. Educators will remain with the children until all participants have been picked up.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND FIRST AID POLICIES**

Our Forest School has emergency procedures prepared that all facilitators and volunteers are familiar with. One facilitator carries a copy of these procedures, including emergency numbers in their backpack.

First aid kits are carried in the backpack by the lead educator during each session. Our first aid kits are well-equipped with all necessary items needed to treat minor injuries, such as scrapes and small cuts, slivers and blisters, etc. To receive a list of our first aid kits contents you can email us and we will send it over.

An Academy in the Wild educator that is certified in First Aid and CPR will be present at all sessions.

## ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE


In the case of a serious accident or emergency the staff at Academy In the Wild will follow this procedure:

1. The senior educator will take the lead; establishing the nature and extent of the emergency and administer appropriate first aid.
2. Another adult will be asked to call 911, providing emergency services the following information:
  - Nature of emergency and first aid administered
  - Injured party details: age, gender, medical history (see Emergency: Medical Form in first aid backpack)
  - Location: Lethbridge Alberta, Indian battle park, Alberta picnic shelter, 49°41'39.7"N 112°51'48.1"W
3. Ensure that the remainder of the party is adequately supervised, and receives appropriate support and reassurance
4. Send another adult to meet the ambulance at the car park to direct them to the injured party. In case there is no other adult on site, call another educator or ask nearest adult to meet the ambulance at the carpark.
5. Inform the emergency contact of the injury as soon as possible.
6. Lead Educator to accompany injured party in the ambulance if the emergency contact hasn't arrived.
7. The Executive Director will continue to liaise with the emergency services until the incident is over or emergency contact arrives.
8. As soon as reasonably possible after the event, the accident will be reported using an Incident Report Form.

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Academy in the Wild is committed to taking a proactive position regarding child protection. In accordance with the Child, Family and Community Services Act, we are required to immediately report if we suspect that child abuse has occurred or if a child is at risk of abuse.





## RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Risk is an inherent part of Forest School, and learning how to manage risk is an extremely important life skill and is part of what makes our program unique. Our team of educators continually assess and manage the risks on-site, while balancing inclusion of the participants in this process to help them learn risk management skills themselves. Some of the risks that participants may face while in Forest School include:

### **Weather Injuries**

- Chill or hypothermia from improper gear
- Falling or stirred debris from wind
- Thunderstorms

### **Injuries from Physical Activity**

- Slips/falls on uneven or slippery ground
- Unsafe handling of sticks
- Rough play with other children
- Forest floor debris in eye

### **Interactions with other animals bug bites**

- Insect stings
- Tick attachment
- Scratches or bites from domestic dogs or wildlife

### **Plant interactions**

- Scratches from thorns
- Ingestion of improperly identified plant material
- Scratch to the eyes from a twig swinging back



# OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

## **PARTICIPANT: STAFF RATIOS**

Our maximum teacher to participant ratio is 1:6. This allows all children to be heard and stay safe.

## **STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

Forest School facilitators have experience working with children in outdoor environments, which we believe is the most critical in keeping your child safe. Our staff members are passionate about sharing their love of nature with others.

Our role as Forest School educators is to:

- Spark Engagement: By modelling enthusiasm for nature play
- Observing: Once the children are engaged in exploration, the educator steps back to give the children space to play and explore and grow as individuals.
- Learn Alongside Children: The educator gets dirty, explores, creates, builds, learns, gains knowledge, celebrates alongside the children
- Staying Safe: The educator's role is to make sure the group is physically safe
- Creating Connections: The educator works to create community with the children, and to help them through conflicts and discussions that arise
- The educator is there to nurture the children's ability to manage risk and to make sure the children are physically safe and comfortable.

**We require all educators to have up to date standard First Aid and CPR training and a criminal Record Check, with a Vulnerable Sector Screening.**



## BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At Academy in the Wild, we are proactive in creating spaces that are developmentally appropriate for the children.

Academy In the Wild explicitly prohibits the following: Corporal punishment, sexual/emotional/physical abuse (hitting, kicking, scratching, biting), harassment or any kind and foul language.

We understand young children are running on heightened emotions, we will do our best to work through and mitigate situations in a safe and positive way. We will assess each situation on a basis to basis.

In general, our behaviour management will:

- Focus on the behaviour rather than the child
- Consider the child's developmental level and needs
- Make expectations clear and provide scaffolding to help students participate positively
- Be implemented in a positive and consistent manner
- Be designed to help the child to learn appropriate behaviour and techniques that can help children to develop self-control, self-confidence, decision making skills, the ability to communicate effectively and sensitively in their interactions with others
- Involve consulting with parents/guardians to include their input and how best to approach their child if problem is re-occurring. Along with keeping them informed of issues/concerns as/if they arise

Please note that Academy in the Wild does reserve the right to expel or suspend a child from the program should their behaviour continue and be deemed unsafe for themselves or others during program. In this event, parents will be contacted and instructed to pick up their child. The lead educator will be available to discuss this decision with the parent.

## COMMUNICATION STRATAGY

We are always excited to hear from you!

We believe very strongly in being present for all children. Our promise is to not be on technology while we are with your child. We will occasionally take our camera out to quickly capture moments of children in play and growth. With this being said, please be aware that If you need to get ahold of us while we are in session, it is best to call so we will hear our phones ring.



## **GENERAL COMMUNICATION**

Generally, Academy in the Wild staff will communicate with families via email or text. To reach us in a timely manner, please send an email or call/text .

Please be sure to communicate the following:

- If you will be late/absent
- If any member of your group is ill with a communicable illness
- If any member of your group is being treated for lice

## **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION**

In the event of an emergency at our forest school, parents/guardians will be contacted by telephone once emergency services (if needed) have been contacted.

In any emergency event causes us to cancel a session or close early for the day, parents will be notified by phone.

## **QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, GRIEVANCES**

You and your Childs experience and happiness of all involved at Academy in the Wild matters greatly to us. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us through text, email, phone, or in person, whichever is most comfortable to you. We will do all we can to work through any questions, concerns or problems you may be having. We will make every effort to address and resolve these issues in a timely manner, and always in confidence.

## **RECOGNIZING OUR FIRST STEWARDS**

We strive to care for this land that was originally the gathering, traveling, and hunting routes for the Blackfoot nation. They marked this land with their footprints before us and its our job to continue stewarding this land in a way that allows its beauty and diversity to stay here for our future generations that have yet to walk it.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability and practices are at the heart of our programming. We are focused on providing an opportunity for children to connect with nature by being immersed in it. However, this can also have an adverse effect on the ecosystem. We therefore strive to meet a delicate balance whereby we promote children's connection to nature through exposure and meaningful experiences, while at the same time fostering an ethic of care and sustainable use of the land we are connecting to. We do this through conducting ongoing ecological site assessments in the sites we are most often in, in order to identify, monitor, limit, and mitigate our potential negative impact(s) on the ecology of the site.

Some of our main mitigation practices are taking pictures of our sites 3 times a year to compare our impact on the land. We may also do a rotation of sites/locations and we stay on park, bike, and animal trails when walking distances as much as possible. We also strive to keep high impact activities on already disturbed areas.

We encourage natural art (using mainly loose parts) and the use of reusable, recyclable, materials for all activities that include crafting.

We are conscious that the spaces we use for our Forest Schools are public and that we share them not only with fellow explorers, but also with all types of wildlife. Anything we setup gets taken down at each sessions end, following the principles of "leave no trace behind".

***Well... Hope you enjoyed this crazy amount of info!... Now that you know us, let us know if you have any more questions! And if not we hope to see you in the wild soon!***