



Camp Kawartha Environment Centre
Nature School



Program Guide



Program & Philosophy

Philosophy & Mission

Over the past decade Camp Kawartha has taken a leadership role in fostering stewardship and environmental awareness. We are an accredited, award-winning, not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to the promotion of the highest standard of programming.

Our mission is to inspire environmental leaders and stewards of all ages through dynamic, accessible, year-round outdoor programming and powerful partnerships to create meaningful change.

Nature school is a year-round nature immersion experience where children can step into the wonders of the forest to explore, create, and connect. Whether they're discovering hidden trails, building friendships, or crafting woodland art, students will grow confident, capable, and grounded in the rhythms of the natural world.

Camp Kawartha's Four Pillars:

- Promoting Self-Esteem
- A Commitment to Excellence
- Promoting a Sense of Community
- Fostering Environmental Stewardship & Kinship

Location & Facilities: 2505 Pioneer Road, Peterborough, ON

Age Groups & Program Offerings:

Ages 4-7: Forest Explorers

Calling all Forest Explorers! Join us each week as we explore and get to know the natural world! Full of adventures, games, lessons, weekly themes, and more. Forest Explorers fosters a love of Nature and a sense of belonging in our youngest students. Connecting with Nature at a young age helps to forge a lifelong bond with the beauty, joys, wonders, and well being found in the outdoors!

Students will engage in age-appropriate Pathways to Stewardship "Landmarks" (Landmarks 4-12). Pathways to Stewardship promotes and supports healthy childhood development, community connection and environmental stewardship through building an early and ongoing relationship with nature.

- Example activities include:
 - Visiting a favorite outdoor place every week,
 - helping in a garden,
 - sharing books, songs and games about nature,
 - planting something you can eat,
 - celebrating each season,
 - meeting friends in your neighborhood.

For more details on Pathways to Stewardship please visit: <https://pathwayproject.ca/>

- Students will also engage in the development of age-appropriate Bushcraft skills, including plant and animal identification, foraging skills, gardening and animal track ID. Students who enroll for the full year will have the opportunity to participate in at least one off-site field trip.
- Additional Information:
 - This **Weekly Program runs every Monday from September 8th to June 15th** at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre. **2505 Pioneer Road**, Peterborough
 - Program runs from **9am - 3pm**
 - Ratio of Students: Approximately 1:5
 - *Weekly Option Only*
 - **All Forest Explorers students must be a minimum of 4 years old** on their first day of Nature School. Students attending Nature School **must be toilet trained** and **able to change independently** if necessary.

Ages 8-10: Woodsy Wednesday Jr. - NEW THIS YEAR!

We've split our Woodsy Wednesday's programming into JR. and SR. age groups. Woodsy Wednesdays JR. is a weekly 'Nature Immersion' experience in which students learn to deeply appreciate, understand, and feel at home in the natural world. Learning about Nature and caring for the Environment is a lot like learning a language in that it happens over time, immersed in the outdoors in all seasons and weather and through a wide variety of experiences.

Students will engage in age-appropriate Pathways to Stewardship "Landmarks" (Landmarks 13-19). Pathways to Stewardship promotes and supports healthy childhood development, community connection and environmental stewardship through building an early and ongoing relationship with nature.

- Example activities include:
 - Travelling familiar outdoor routes,
 - learning new outdoor skills,
 - exploring the worlds of gardening,
 - critter watching and bird feeding,
 - exploring renewable energy concepts and biodiversity.
- Students will also engage in the development of Bushcraft skills, such as basic shelter building, foraging skills, animal track ID, fire-making and introductory tool use.
- Students who enroll for the full year will have the opportunity to participate in at least one off-site field trip.
- Woodsy Wednesdays Jr. and Sr. student will have the opportunity to collaborate on certain games and activities that require larger groups of students.
- If enrollment numbers are low, Woodsy Wednesdays Jr. and Sr. groups may be combined on a regular basis to facilitate a more engaging student experience.
- Additional Information:
 - This **Weekly Program runs every Wednesday from Sept 10th – December 17th** at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, **2505 Pioneer Road**, Peterborough.
 - **9am - 3pm**

- Ratio of approx. 1:6 (e.g., group of 12 kids and 2 staff)
- *Biweekly option may be available upon request – please inquire.*

Ages 11-13: Woodsy Wednesday Sr. NEW THIS YEAR!

We've split our Woodsy Wednesday's programming into JR. and SR. age groups. Woodsy Wednesdays SR. is a weekly 'Nature Immersion' experience in which students learn to deeply appreciate, understand, and feel at home in the natural world. Learning about Nature and caring for the Environment is a lot like learning a language in that it happens over time, immersed in the outdoors in all seasons and weather and through a wide variety of experiences.

Students will engage in age-appropriate Pathways to Stewardship "Landmarks" (Landmarks 16-23). Pathways to Stewardship promotes and supports healthy childhood development, community connection and environmental stewardship through building an early and ongoing relationship with nature.

- Example activities include:
 - Exploring biodiversity,
 - trying a new sport, craft or survival skill,
 - engaging in and documenting an environmental project,
 - exploring renewable energy concepts.
- Students will also engage in the development of age-appropriate Bushcraft skills, such as shelter building, orienteering, foraging skills, animal track ID, fire-making and tool use.
- Students who enroll for the full year will have the opportunity to participate in at least one off-site field trip.
- Woodsy Wednesdays Jr. and Sr. student will have the opportunity to collaborate on certain games and activities that require larger groups of students.
- If enrollment numbers are low, Woodsy Wednesdays Jr. and Sr. groups may be combined on a regular basis to facilitate a more engaging student experience.
- Additional Information:
 - This **Weekly Program runs every Wednesday from Sept 10th – December 17th** at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, **2505 Pioneer Road**, Peterborough.
 - **9am - 3pm**
 - Ratio of approx. 1:6 (e.g., group of 12 kids and 2 staff)
 - *Biweekly option may be available upon request – please inquire.*

Ages 14-17: Rootwood

Rootwood focuses on the integration of key nature connection practices and philosophies to foster the independent growth of participants. While this experience has been designed for youth who have 'graduated' through our younger programs, new participants may be welcome depending on experience and space available (please inquire).

Students will engage in age-appropriate Pathways to Stewardship "Landmarks" (Landmarks 20-30). Pathways to Stewardship promotes and supports healthy childhood

development, community connection and environmental stewardship through building an early and ongoing relationship with nature.

- Example activities include:
 - Calculating your ecological footprint,
 - development of new outdoor skills,
 - or rehabilitating something living that has been damaged.

For more details on Pathways to Stewardship please visit: <https://pathwayproject.ca/>

- Students will also continue developing their Bushcraft Skills, including plant and animal id, orienteering, shelter building, fire making, tool use, etc.
- Students who enroll for the full year will have the opportunity to participate in at least one off-site field trip.
- Additional Information:
 - This **Weekly program runs every Tuesday from Sept 9th – June 16th** at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, **2505 Pioneer Road**, Peterborough.
 - Program runs from **9am - 3pm**
 - *Weekly or Bi-Weekly option available*

Ages 8-13: Forest Fridays

- Forest Fridays is a biweekly 'Nature Immersion' experience in which students learn to deeply appreciate, understand, and feel at home in the natural world. Learning about Nature and caring for the Environment is a lot like learning a language in that it happens over time, immersed in the outdoors in all seasons and weather and through a wide variety of experiences.
- Students will engage in age-appropriate Pathways to Stewardship "Landmarks" (Landmarks 13 – 23). Pathways to Stewardship promotes and supports healthy childhood development, community connection and environmental stewardship through building an early and ongoing relationship with nature.
- Example activities include:
 - Trying a new outdoor sport, craft or game,
 - learning new outdoor skills,
 - exploring the worlds of gardening,
 - critter watching and bird feeding,
 - exploring renewable energy concepts and biodiversity.
- Students will also engage in the development of age-appropriate Bushcraft skills, such as shelter building, orienteering, foraging skills, animal track ID, fire-making and tool use.
- Additional Information:
 - **This Bi-Weekly Program runs every other Friday from Sept 12th – June 19th** at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, 2505 Pioneer Road, Peterborough.
 - **9am - 3pm**
 - Ratio of approx. 1:6 (e.g., group of 12 kids and 2 staff)
 - *Weekly and biweekly options available.*

To learn more about the Pathways to Stewardship and Kinship [please visit their website](#).
To download a [complete guide of the landmarks click here](#).

Inclusivity

Camp Kawartha is proud to welcome campers and families of a wide variety of backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences. We celebrate the diversity of our camp community and strive to make camp a safe space where campers can feel celebrated and seen for how they identify and express themselves.

Staff Team:

Administration:

- **Executive Director:** Jacob Rodenburg
- **Environment Centre Manager:** Craig Brant
- **Environment Centre Registrar:** Sarah Van Ryn
- **Administrative Assistant:** Hannah Taylor

Daily Schedule and Programming

Sample Schedule*:

9:00 - Child drop off to outdoor classroom
9:15 - Opening circle
9:30 - Snack
10:00 - Programming
12:00 - Lunch
12:30 – Free time
1:00 – Programming
2:45 – Closing circle
3:00 - Parent pick-up at outdoor classroom

*Please note that this is a sample schedule and it can change depending on attendance, weather, as well as unforeseen factors.

Pick-up & drop-off procedures: Please check-in with your program's lead educator when you arrive to ensure that attendance is taken. On your first day of the season, please arrive slightly early as the lead educator will double-check that you have completed all your paperwork and that the information on file is up to date. If your child requires any medications or accommodations, please communicate with your lead educator on the first day of the season.

Water & Food:

- All Camp Kawartha programs are **NUT SAFE** If a student brings a product containing nuts, it will be removed and given back to parents/guardians at the end of the day.
- Please ensure your child has **enough food/snacks to keep them energized throughout the day.**
- We are **very active**, and kids often require larger lunches than in other settings.
- Please pack a morning snack, a big lunch and a smaller afternoon snack
- Participants will **not be permitted to trade/exchange food.**
- The Centre does not receive garbage or recycling pick-up. We require all participants to pack out their garbage and encourage the children to bring a **litter-less lunch.**
- Each student must bring their own **water bottle**, which should be kept with them all day.

Health and Safety

Please ensure you have completed your child's medical form. You can find it here:

1. Please [click here](#) to log back into your registration portal
2. Under "View My Registrations and Forms", "Environment Centre Nature School" click "View Details"
3. Under "Forms", you will see "Medical Form"
4. Complete the form and hit "Submit"

If you have submitted your child's medical form and you need to update or add any information, please contact healthcare@campkawartha.ca and we will unlock your child's medical form.

Camper Photo: If you haven't already, be sure to include a current photo of your child. For emergency purposes, a photo is important for us to have on file. It should be a clear head shot, with good lighting, no hats or sunglasses, and with a clean background.

Medication: All medication must be given to a staff member who will store it in a safe location. If a student is required to take medication during the day, parents/ guardians will be asked to complete and sign a **Camper Medication Form** that provides information on dosage and frequency.

Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan: If applicable, please fill out the allergy section of your child's medical form in detail. If you indicate anaphylaxis on your medical form, an anaphylaxis emergency plan automatically generates for our staff. Be sure to include a current photo of your child. Campers with EpiPens or inhalers will always keep these with them during the day.

Handwashing & Hygiene: Students will be required to wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating and when appropriate throughout the day. Staff carry hand

sanitizer in the field for use as needed. All children must be toilet-trained and independent in the bathroom to be able to participate in Nature School.

BEE ware: Camp Kawartha is proud to house an observational beehive. With plexiglass walls, this observational hive is designed to encourage students to view bees at work from inside the Environment Centre. The bees enter the hive from a PVC tube located on the exterior of the building. Honeybees play a critical role in helping to pollinate plants. With a variety of apple trees near the Centre and pollinator gardens, the bees will help to ensure that there will be a healthy harvest of apples next fall.

We'd like to remind all visitors to the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre that there are always bees, wasps, and stinging insects in any natural area. Please ensure that any students with allergies to bees come with the appropriate safeguards in place (an EpiPen – if required, antihistamine tablets etc.).

Poison Ivy: We'd also like to remind visitors that there are patches of poison ivy in the vicinity of the Centre. Closed toed shoes and long pants are highly recommended. These and other natural hazards are covered as part of the 'Program Orientation' each season

Severe Weather: In case of severe weather (typically thunderstorms), all groups of kids on site need to go inside the Environment Centre for the duration. We engage in games, crafts, stories and more and we can return to our regular programming 30 minutes after the last thunderclap.

Sun Safety: Please send your child to camp with sun-protective clothing, a hat, sunscreen and a water bottle. Campers are encouraged to wear appropriate sun protection, apply/reapply sunscreen and hydrate frequently.

Ticks: Though ticks (and Lyme Disease) are not as common in this area as in some locations, there are ticks, and a few cases of Lyme disease have been reported in Peterborough County. Lyme disease can become a serious infection caused by a bacteria spread by the bite of blacklegged ticks. We highly encourage all families to do **TICK CHECKS at the end of each day** and to get in the habit of doing so after every outing in the woods. This is part of helping families to build important routines around tick awareness and Lyme disease prevention.

The Peterborough City County Health Unit recommends a **TICK CHECK** when coming in from the outdoors:

- Have a shower to rinse ticks off.
- Outdoor clothing should be placed in the wash or hung outside
- Check your body thoroughly for ticks.
- Make sure to look in hidden areas like the scalp, between toes, armpits, back of knees, groin, behind ears.
- Please remember that ticks can be tiny freckle sized or as large as a small grape when engorged.
- If a tick is found, put it in a screw top bottle or zipper closed bag and bring it to your local Health Unit.

For more info: <https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/31711-2/?highlight=ticks>

Communicable Disease Policy: Many things have changed in the past few years but there are still some considerations to bear in mind.

Screening - Prior to bringing your child to the Environment Centre, please screen them for the following symptoms (new/unexpected or outside of their baseline health): *fever, cough, shortness of breath, decrease or loss of taste or smell, muscle aches or joint pain, extreme tiredness, sore throat, runny or stuffy/congested nose, headache, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, abdominal pain, pink eye, decreased or no appetite.*

The following self-assessment tool can be used as a guide: <https://www.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Please remember, for the well-being of all our participants, staff, and their families, **Do Not Send Your Child If They May Be Ill** to Environment Centre programs. We sincerely appreciate everyone's support in this regard! A student who is showing signs or symptoms of a communicable disease (on arrival or during the day) will be assessed, and parents will be contacted. Ill students must return home until they are fever free for 24 hours and have had 24 hours of improving symptoms (any symptoms from the list above). Students must be 48 hours free of gastrointestinal symptoms before returning to Nature School.

Immunizations: Immunization is a key component of maintaining a healthy school. Camp Kawartha recommends that all students, campers and staff be up to date with their immunizations based on their age, according to Ontario's Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule ([click for information](#)). As our obligation to protect the health of your child and the broader camp community, it is important for us to know your child's vaccination status. Please provide up-to-date information on your child's health form. In the unlikely event that a case of measles (or any other disease targeted by Ontario's Vaccination Program) is discovered at Camp Kawartha, unvaccinated children will be sent home for the recommended period of isolation (i.e. measles 21 days) without any fee adjustment.

Emergency Procedures: Camp Kawartha follows internal procedures to ensure we are prepared to respond in an emergency. We will be sure to contact the emergency numbers provided in case such a situation was to occur.

First Aid & CPR: All Camp Kawartha staff are trained in Standard First Aid and CPR. All staff carry a fanny pack with first aid supplies.

Registration Procedures

The information below outlines the registration process for all Nature School applicants. All Nature School registrations, trial day registrations, and inquiries can be directed to our Nature School Registrar, Sarah @ (705) 652-3860 ext. 201 or by email sarah@campkawartha.ca

Nature School 2025/26 Seasons

Fall: Sept 2025 – December 2025

Winter: January 2026- March 2026

Spring: April 2026 – June 2026

Nature School 2025/26 Programs

Forest Explorers- ages 4 to 7 (offered Monday and Wednesdays)

Rootwood- Ages 13 to 17 (offered Tuesdays)

Woodsy Wednesday JR. ages 8 to 10 (offered Wednesdays)

Woodsy Wednesday SR. ages 11-13 (offered Wednesdays)

Forest Fridays -Ages 8 to 13 (offered bi-weekly on Fridays)

2025/2026 Holidays

Thanksgiving: Monday, October 13th

Christmas Break: Monday, December 22nd – Friday, January 2nd

Family Day: Monday, February 16th

March Break: Friday, March 13th to Friday, March 20th

Good Friday: Friday, April 3rd

Easter Monday: Monday, April 6th

Victoria Day: Monday, May 18th

Nature School will not run on the holidays listed above

Nature School Registrations Prior to Program Start Date

All Nature School registrations initiated at least 1 week in advance of the program start date may be completed through the online registration portal, or by contacting the Nature School Registrar directly. All registrations will be completed on a first-come, first-serve basis until a program is full. After a program becomes full, applicants will have the option of being placed on a waitlist should a space become available. Where there is sufficient interest, and staffing numbers are adequate, Camp Kawartha may elect to add additional spaces to a program.

2025/26 Online Registration Open and Close Dates

Full Year Registration - Opens: June 1st, 2025 / Closes: September 1st, 2025

Fall Season Registration - Opens: June 1st, 2025 / Closes: September 1st, 2025

Winter Season Registration - Opens: October 5th, 2025 / Closes: December 29th, 2025

Spring Season Registration - Opens: January 11th, 2026 / Closes: March 16th, 2026

Nature School Registrations After the Program Start Date

All Nature School registrations initiated less than one week in advance of a program start date, or after a program has begun, must be completed by contacting the Nature School Registrar directly. Online registration is not available for late or mid-season registrations.

Late and Mid-Season registrations will be accepted provided there is space available in the program. To avoid integrating children one by one over the course of the season, students who enroll late or mid-season will only be eligible to join their program on the designated mid-season intake day. Season fees will be pro-rated to reflect the later start date.

Program Intake Dates

Mondays: Fall: Monday, October 20th / Winter: Monday, February 2nd / Spring: Monday, May 4th

Tuesdays: Fall: Tuesday, October 21st / Winter: Tuesday, February 3rd / Spring: Monday, May 5th

Wednesdays: Fall: Wednesday, October 22nd / Winter: Wednesday, February 4th / Spring: Wednesday, May 6th.

Fridays: Fall: Friday, October 24th / Winter: Friday, February 6th / Spring: Friday, May 8th

Please contact sarah@campkawartha.ca or at (705) 652-3860 ext. 201 for more information or if you would like to register for Nature School after online registration has closed.

For our full schedule of programming please [click here](#).

Minimum Enrollment

While we hope that all programs can run as scheduled, it is important to note that a minimum number of enrolled students is required. If a program does not meet our minimum enrollment standards, Camp Kawartha reserves the right to cancel, postpone or reconfigure these programs as necessary. Should cancellation or postponement be required, families will be given the option of joining another comparable program (when available) or receiving a full refund. To allow sufficient time for planning, families will be given notice of cancellation at least 2 weeks prior to the start date.

Minimum Age Requirements – Forest Explorers

Please note that all registrants in our Forest Explorers program must be at least 4 years old on their first day in attendance. All students must be toilet trained and able to change their own clothing independently if necessary.

Deposit

Depending on your date of registration, a non-refundable deposit totaling 25-50% of your

total Nature School fees are due at the time of registration to hold your spot. Please refer to our “[2025/2026 Nature School Installments Dates and Deposits](#)” document for details.

Fees and Forms

All fees and required forms must be completed and submitted at least one week in advance of your Nature School program start date. Nature school fees can be paid using a credit card, or via pre-authorized bank withdrawals. We are also happy to offer installment payment options. Please refer to our “[2025/2026 Nature School Installment Dates and Deposits](#)” document for details.

Full Year Discount

Families who wish to register in advance for the full year of Nature School are eligible to receive a 10% discount on their Nature School fees. We are happy to offer installment payment options. Please see our [2025/2026 Nature School Installments Dates](#) document for dates and required deposit amounts.

Payment Methods

Nature School fees can be paid using a credit card, or pre-authorized bank withdrawal. Registrants are welcome to submit fees through the online registration portal, or by contacting the Nature School Registrar directly.

Special Needs and Accommodations

While we always do our best to meet the needs of children who require special accommodation, we are not equipped to meet the needs of children who require a high level of physical, mental or emotional support. If your child requires additional supports, please get in touch with our Nature School Registrar Sarah (sarah@campkawartha.ca) to discuss your child’s specific requirements.

Missed Sessions

Maintaining a high ratio of educators to students is important to us, and staff members are scheduled based on a program’s full enrollment. As such, refunds or credits will not be granted for sessions missed due to illness, inclement weather, or any other situation which is beyond the control of Camp Kawartha. If extenuating circumstances arise for your student, please contact the Nature School Registrar and we would be happy to discuss suitable arrangements.

Unplanned Nature School Closures

From time to time, situations may arise that prompt Camp Kawartha to cancel a Nature School session. These situations could include, but are not limited to, severe weather, power outages, other dangerous indoor or outdoor conditions, staff illness, etc. If it is determined by the CK Environment Center Director that cancellation of Nature School programming is required, a credit for each day missed (calculated at \$70/session per day) will be applied to the account of each impacted family.

What to Bring:

Essential Items:

- lunch and two snacks (nut free)
- a change of clothes
- refillable water bottle (at least 500ml)
- sunscreen & hat (if applicable)
- an extra pair of socks & mittens
- backpack
- medication if required
- rain & snow gear (as needed)

Dress for Success: Programs run rain or shine so please check the weather and dress appropriately. **Please ensure students have extra socks and are always dressed for the weather because we will be outside for most of the day or the entire day depending on age groups.**

Items to leave at home: Expensive jewelry and electronics. We are trying to create a nature rich experience for all—electronics interfere with kids having a fulsome connection to nature. (Please leave ALL valuables at home).

Labeling belongings: Please label your child(ren)'s belongings so as not to contribute to our ever-growing lost and found basket.

Parent Communications & Expectations:

Administration & Registration: Please contact (705) 652-3860 ext. 201 or email sarah@campkawartha.ca if you have any questions regarding attendance, registration, programming, or how our Nature School operates. You can also contact Sarah for more information regarding accommodations.

Student Conduct: For our team to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for all participants, we ask that Parents/Guardians review this code of conduct with their children.

Remember The Three Rs:

- **Respect yourself.** All participants are expected, in accordance with their age, to take appropriate care of themselves (personal hygiene, dressing appropriately, water, food, sunscreen etc.)
- **Respect others.** We expect all participants to treat one another, and our staff, with courtesy and respect.
- **Respect the environment.** The Camp Kawartha Environment Centre is located on Trent University's Wildlife Sanctuary. It is our responsibility to take care of these lands.

Please review our [Environment Centre Code of Conduct](#) with your child.

Behaviour Management: We seek to provide a safe and caring experience for each participant. We can assist and support children, but we are unable to provide alternative programming for extended periods of time should a participant require this. **If a student needs to be repeatedly withdrawn from activities and/or their behaviour is deemed to**

be a threat to their own safety or to the safety of others, we will not be able accommodate them and they will be sent home.

Our staff will do their utmost to:

- Make expectations clear
- Be positive and supportive
- Consult with parents/guardians about recommended approaches with each student.
- Keep parents/guardians informed about issues as they arise
- Consider the child's developmental needs