

Nature Discovery Center Pollywog Playbook

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Program Description

Our Pollywog program is a chance for you and the infants and toddlers in your care to experience the wonders of the natural world together. We are here to provide a safe, comfortable outdoor nature space filled with opportunities, guidance, and resources to facilitate your exploration of nature, while you are your child’s primary source of support and interaction throughout the session. Your engagement, your child’s interests, and their comfort will shape the pace and flow of your time in nature together.

Though there is some structure to the program, we believe in honoring differences in child needs, interests, and development with flexibility. Your comfort and your child’s comfort during the program will make meaningful nature connections possible.

- **Late arrivals** – we appreciate how hard it can be to get out of the house with young children. Please join in when you arrive. If we are out on a nature walk, feel free to find us in the park or wait on the blanket for us to return.
- **Feeding** – please feel free to feed your child at any time if they are hungry. Though you are welcome to remain with us, you can also use our small Discovery Room upstairs in the Center if that is more comfortable. The building won’t be open to the public during our program.
- **Changing** – We have a large changing station in our upstairs restroom inside the Center as well as one in the outdoor restrooms by the Pavilion Patio.
- **Activity pacing/overwhelm** – please follow your child’s cues to decide if they need to spend longer on an activity or move on to a new activity. It is perfectly ok if their cues tell you they need a break from the program environment. This may look like a brief step away to visit our ambassador animals or leaving the park early on a day that is simply not a good day for them.

Our Intent is to:

- Facilitate nature connections for infants, toddlers, and their caregivers by providing for age-appropriate outdoor exploration and exposure.
- Support early sensory, motor, and language development through invitations to play, movement activities, and social interaction.
- Empower caregivers to recognize and take advantage of opportunities to connect with kids to nature.
- Provide a comfortable, approachable framework for continued outdoor exploration and learning.

- Nurture and value the innate curiosity in young children.

What should you expect in each class?

Blanket Time in Nature (in a circle)

- A welcome introduction
- Gentle movement activity
- Live animal interaction
- Surprise Sack: The surprise could be a picture book or nature specimen

~~ Transition Time ~~

Themed Nature Walk – an opportunity for observation and interaction with nature

Themed Invitations to Play – opportunities for sensory and motor play

End of Program Clean Up

Transition to Free Play

What should you bring and wear?

- Clothes appropriate for the weather (including layers, rain gear, etc.) and for the setting (comfortable, can get dirty, etc.)
- Beach towel
- Refillable water bottle
- Your usual travel or go bag when you are out and about with your child
- Anything else you might want for personal comfort and needs
- Not all of our trails are super stroller friendly. You might want to carry or wear your child on our nature walks.

What should you expect with weather?

This is an outdoor, rain or shine program where you will be surrounded by our nature park. Please check the forecast before you come and dress for the weather. Depending on the weather, we may need to modify some activities slightly or move some activities under our Pavilions. A little drizzle is part of nature, and we will embrace it. Extreme or unsafe weather (lightning, a freeze, etc.) may necessitate a cancellation or an attempt to reschedule the program. We will be watching the weather and will email you 24 hours out to give you an update based on the weather information we have available to us at the time.