

FRIENDS OF RYE NATURE CENTER'S

FOREST PRESCHOOL

Five Mornings a Week
September 2019 - June 2020
9:15 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.

Hiking the forest, catching dragonflies, digging for worms, listening to songbirds – these are some of the activities that fill our preschoolers' time at the Rye Nature Center.

Our five-morning Forest Preschool is an opportunity for children to make these activities the foundation of their early development.

Our Forest Preschool is unlike any other preschool program – children will be in an outdoor, natural setting over 75% of their class week, year round.



Friends of Rye Nature Center
873 Boston Post Road Rye, NY 10580
p. 914.967.5150 • f. 914.921.5968
info@ryenaturecenter.org
www.ryenaturecenter.org



EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Friends of Rye Nature Center believes that the best way to foster a lifelong connection to nature is by engaging in meaningful outdoor activities as a child. Our curriculum is based on the Swiss concept of forest kindergartens. This educational model utilizes experiential, place-based, student-led activities with nature as the primary setting to create a dynamic for children to grow and succeed.

- **Place-based philosophy** — We believe children’s immediate natural surroundings promote knowledge acquisition.
- **Nature is the primary teacher** — We believe that the outdoors is the principle setting where childhood experiences and learning occur, and that this early connection and understanding will shape our futures.
- **Learn by doing** — We believe that experiential education develops gross and fine motor skills and allows for the mastery of STEAM and literacy skills.

ECO-LITERACY + NATURE CONNECTION = LIFELONG ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS



CURRICULUM DESIGN

Our staff creates a dynamic that prioritizes the development of the whole child. In addition to the best practices established by nature educators around the world, we use a variety of sources to inform each class, including New York State’s Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core. We then develop a year-long curriculum which targets and refines the naturally inquisitive behaviors of three- to five-year-olds so that there is a cumulative acquisition of literacy, science, technology, engineering, art, and math concepts. Songs, dramatic play, and project work (e.g. fort-building, gardening) are also central to each class. All activities are designed to help children develop:

- Early literacy skills,
- Math and science concepts,
- Fine and gross motor skills,
- Problem solving skills,
- Eco-fearlessness and eco-carefulness,
- Empathy and friendship, and
- Resiliency and independence.

SAMPLE FOREST PRESCHOOL MORNING

9:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Class drop-off and morning meeting outside in the playground, tent, or garden.

9:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Hike through the FRNC woods to collect leaf and seed samples.

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Examine samples with magnifying glasses at picnic tables. Discuss living and non-living things. Fine motor manipulative activity: counting/sorting of samples.

10:30 – 11:15 a.m.

Literacy project using collected samples. Dramatic play and songs.

11:15 – 11:45 a.m.

Lunch

11:45 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

Story time and closing meeting. Prepare to leave for the afternoon.

FOREST PRESCHOOL TEACHING MODEL

Our Forest Preschool is led using a co-teaching model. Each class is guided by a teacher with a Master's in Education and a naturalist. Our Education Director, Allison Rogers, in collaboration with our Associate Director of Forest Education, Henry Myers, and Early Childhood Education Specialist, Rachael Pothula, oversee the curriculum design and development of the program.

ABOUT FRIENDS OF RYE NATURE CENTER AND OUR STAFF

Friends of Rye Nature Center is an independent, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect our natural resources and promote environmental stewardship and education. Located within the Rye Nature Center, a 47-acre urban forest, FRNC oversees environmental education programs, camps, and workshops for children, school groups, and families using the Nature Center's building and grounds. FRNC is run by a Board of Directors and employs a staff of full-time and part-time naturalists, teachers, and administrators. Our staff consists of experienced educators with backgrounds in ecology and environmental science.

Our current staff includes:

Christine Siller, Executive Director

Mary Gillick, Program Director

Allison Rogers, Education Director

AJ Johnson, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Jeni Vogel, Associate Director of Preschool & Camp

Henry Myers, Associate Director of Forest Education

Nicole Pennucci, Associate Director of Development

Rachael Pothula, Early Childhood Education Specialist

Chris Hendershot, Land Steward

Emily Embick, Environmental Educator

Katie Jamer, Environmental Educator

Kris Karpinia, Environmental Educator

Amanda Schuster, Environmental Educator

Clio Walton, Environmental Educator

Andrew Middlebrook, Conservation Educator

Siobhan Prout, Environmental Educator

Annette Hein, Horticulturist

Our staff is certified in Adult, Child, and Infant CPR and First Aid for First Responders. We are also trained to use EpiPens. Certifications are updated annually. Since we work within the Rye City School District for programs, all staff are fingerprinted and pass the district's rigorous background check. FRNC has an emergency action plan in place to ensure the safety of our students and visitors at all times. Our action plan includes fire drill procedures, an evacuation plan, and lockdown policies. Our plan is reviewed and updated every year by the Executive Director and staff. Our evacuation plan and lockdown policy are also approved annually by the Westchester County Department of Health. Our summer camp is accredited by the American Camp Association



LUNCH & FOOD SAFETY

Children should be sent daily with either a snack or lunch. We understand that some children will need to eat lunch prior to the end of class if they have an additional program in the afternoon.

Although the Nature Center is not a nut-free facility, we ask that you pack lunches and snacks that consider the welfare of other children and use nut-free alternatives whenever possible. If the class has multiple peanut/tree nut allergies, we may ask parents to only send nut-free food to the Rye Nature Center. Children going to afternoon classes will wash their hands prior to leaving the Nature Center. Children must be able to feed themselves.

We recommend packing your child's favorite lunch/snacks for him/her to eat at the Nature Center. We have a full kitchen and would be happy to reheat kid-friendly items like chicken nuggets or mac n' cheese. Please be mindful of the number of items packed in the lunch; if given too many choices, children will fill up on yogurt drinks, juice boxes, and snacks before eating their main entree. A sandwich with a piece of fruit or a bag of crackers should be plenty of food. We do not recommend packing a lunch for your child that contains any added sugar and/or caffeine. Please provide your child with a reusable water bottle and we will refill it throughout the day.



BACKPACKS, CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR

"There is no such thing as bad weather — there is just bad gear." Please dress your child in appropriate clothing for an outdoor hike and have them wear sturdy boots or older sneakers. Flip-flops, crocs, and ballet flats are not appropriate footwear for Nature Center programs. Children must wear socks. Your child will get muddy and dirty while at the Nature Center, this is a sign that they are having a great time!

FRNC provides full-body rain suits for Forest Preschool students. Students will need to bring their own rain boots. The children will need to bring a hat and waterproof mittens when the months grow cold. Pack extra gear in your child's backpack. Our staff will help children put on their outerwear when necessary. Please see the following chart for seasonal recommendations of clothing.

Season	Apparel
Fall/Spring	Layers: t-shirt, sweatshirt/sweater, jacket and rain boots, when necessary
Winter	Coat, waterproof mittens, hat, scarf, balaclava, and waterproof/insulated boots



Questions and Answers about FRNC's Forest Preschool

Question	Answer
How old does my child need to be to enroll in FRNC's Forest Preschool?	All children must be 3.25 years old by start of program; born before June 15, 2016.
Does my child need to be potty-trained prior to the start of the program?	All children attending Forest Preschool need to be potty-trained prior to the start of the program. However, we understand that the summer prior to the start of the program is one of many milestones. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with FRNC staff.
Will children be separated according to their age?	Children ranging from 3.25 years to 5.5 years old will be grouped together. The FRNC feels that children can learn from each other's range of gross and fine motor skills, and that grouping these ages together helps foster development, creativity, and an overall positive group experience.
What is the class size?	FRNC strives to maintain a 6-to-1 student-teacher ratio. Class sizes will be determined accordingly.
I am holding my child back from Kindergarten. How will the Forest Preschool help prepare my child for Kindergarten?	Our practices for early childhood education incorporate New York State's Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core and include literacy skills, math and science concepts, fine and gross motor skills, problem solving techniques, eco-fearlessness and eco-carefulness, and appropriate social interactions.
Can you walk my child to one of the local nursery schools along Boston Post Road?	An optional walking component will be available for any child attending Christ's Church Nursery School or Rye Presbyterian Nursery School in the afternoon.
If I enroll my child in FRNC's Forest Preschool, can I also enroll my child in the Extended Day Preschool Ecology Program?	Children enrolled in FRNC's Forest Preschool <u>may not</u> enroll in the Extended Day Preschool Ecology.
How does the weather affect the program?	We will spend at least 90 minutes outdoors every day during all four seasons. We require children to come dressed in weather-appropriate clothing. We will utilize outdoor spaces including our outdoor classrooms and covered tents. We will remain indoors in the event of thunderstorms/high winds.
My child currently has an aide at preschool. Will FRNC offer an aide if I send him to Forest Preschool?	We do not provide aides or one-to-ones as part of our program. If a child currently has an aide at their preschool, they will need one at Forest Preschool.

Please note: FRNC is not an accredited preschool and is not licensed as a New York State Childcare Provider. We are not legally affiliated with any school.



REGISTRATION AND TUITION

Registration for Forest Preschool 2019-2020 will open on November 5, 2018. Spots will be filled on a first come, first served basis. A complete application will include the following four documents and the non-refundable application fee of \$100 (checks payable to Friends of Rye Nature Center):

- Registration Form
- Medical and Emergency Contact Form
- Signed Consent Agreement
- A copy of your child's immunization record

Tuition for the 2019-2020 academic year will be \$9,900 for Forest Preschool. We cannot pro-rate tuition for missed or cancelled classes. You may request in writing to cancel your child's registration, less the non-refundable deposit, prior to April 1, 2019. All refunds and cancellations after April 1, 2019 are contingent upon the FRNC filling your child's place.

Registration Forms and Application Fee - \$100 <small>(Includes a Membership to FRNC)</small>	Contract and Non-refundable \$1,000 Deposit Due	Second Payment of \$4,450 Due	Final Payment of \$4,450 Due
Due upon registration. Starting November 5, 2018	January 4, 2019	April 1, 2019	September 1, 2019

Friends of Rye Nature Center's Nature Access Fund can provide financial assistance to those who qualify. For more information, please contact Executive Director, Christine Siller, at christinesiller@ryenaturecenter.org.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact Friends of Rye Nature Center's Education Director, Allison Rogers, at allisonrogers@ryenaturecenter.org or (914) 967-5150.

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Friends of Rye Nature Center's Forest Preschool 2019-2020 Registration Forms

Child's Name: _____

Child's Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Child's Age September 2019: ____ years ____ months

Address: _____

City State, Zip: _____

All correspondence will go to the primary parent's email listed on this form. Please print clearly.

Primary Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Phone 1: _____ (cell) (home) (work)

Phone 2: _____ (cell) (home) (work)

Email: _____

Parent/Guardian Two Name: _____

Phone 1: _____ (cell) (home) (work)

Phone 2: _____ (cell) (home) (work)

Email: _____

If your child will be attending an afternoon program, please indicate below.

Rye Presbyterian Afternoon Session
Teacher: _____

Christ's Church Afternoon Session
Teacher: _____

Other: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Application Fee: \$100	
Contract Received	
Deposit: \$1,000	
Second Payment: \$4,450	
Final Payment: \$4,450	

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Friends of Rye Nature Center's Forest Preschool 2019-2020 Emergency Contact Information

Child's Name: _____ Child's Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Please choose emergency contacts in the event parents/guardians cannot be reached.

First Emergency Contact Name (DO NOT LIST YOURSELF OF SPOUSE): _____

First Emergency Contact Phone Numbers: _____

Second Emergency Contact Name (DO NOT LIST YOURSELF OF SPOUSE): _____

Second Emergency Contact Phone Numbers: _____

Doctor Name: _____ Doctor Phone: _____

Medical Information

Is your child subject to asthma, allergies, diet restrictions, and limits on activities? Yes No

If YES, please explain: _____

Does your child have any medical conditions? Yes No

If YES, please explain: _____

Does your child have any learning, emotional, or behavioral challenges? Yes No

If YES, please explain and let us know the best way to connect with your child and/or address the challenges:

Are there any other circumstances concerning your child that we should know about?

Please indicate the number of children in your household and their ages:

Is your child covered by family medical/hospital insurance? Yes No

If yes, indicate insurance carrier: _____

Group Number: _____ Policy Number: _____

Policy Holder's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

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Parent Guardian Waiver and Release of Liability Forest Preschool 2019-2020

I am the parent or guardian of _____ ("My Child") who intends to participate in the Forest Preschool Program (the "Program") operated Friends of Rye Nature Center ("FRNC"). I hereby consent to the participation of My Child in the Program and release FRNC, its officers, directors, agents, and employees (the "Released Parties") from and against, any and all claims, including injury to person, or for death, or from loss of, or damage to, property in any way connected to such participation. Further, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless each of the Released Parties, and all of them, from any liability they may incur as a result of My Child's participation.

I fully understand and acknowledge that: 1) risks and dangers exist by virtue of the nature of the Program activities of hiking, climbing, and outdoor games and my child's participation in hiking, climbing, and outdoor game activities, 2) such activities, my child's use of equipment related to, and/or participation in, such activities may result in illness or injury or death or damage to personal property and 3) these risks and dangers may be increased and damage may occur due to actions of other participants, or by accidents, forces of nature or other causes. I understand that such risks may arise from foreseeable or unforeseeable causes and that such risks cannot be eliminated without jeopardizing the essential qualities of the activity. I hereby knowingly and voluntarily accept and assume these risks and dangers and the risks of illness, injury or death or damage to personal property on my behalf and on behalf of my child.

In a medical emergency, I grant FRNC permission: 1) to take My Child to a hospital via motorized vehicle or ambulance and 2) to authorize examination and treatment of injuries, x-rays and any other necessary care for my child.

It is my intention that this release shall be interpreted as broadly and inclusively as permitted by law and that it shall be binding on My Child, my spouse, all of the members of my family and their heirs, executors and assigns.

Parent Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Cancellation Policy: I understand that my deposit and application are non-refundable and that I must make the payments for the class according to the fee schedule. I understand that if I choose not to enroll in the program I must let FRNC know in writing by April 1, 2019 for a refund less the \$1,000 deposit and \$100 application fee.

Parent Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Behavior Agreement: I understand that FRNC reserves the right to cancel this contract at any time if the staff finds that the program is not suitable for My Child due to repeated conduct by My Child that the staff finds unacceptable and that any refund in such situation will be at FRNC's discretion.

Parent Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

For Parents Whose Children Will Be Walked by FRNC Staff: As part of My Child's enrollment in this program, I give FRNC staff permission to walk My Child to and/or from their preschool. I understand My Child will be crossing the Boston Post Road under FRNC staff's supervision. I give my consent for FRNC staff to bring My Child to and/or from his or her classroom at his or her preschool on their enrolled program day(s). I understand that if the Friends of Rye Nature Center staff determine that my child is not participating in the walk to school in a safe manner, I may be required to provide separate transport for My Child from the program to his/her school.

Parent Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Photographic Permission and Release (Optional): I hereby grant FRNC permission to copyright, publish, use and reproduce, in whole or in part, alone or with others, any photograph, moving picture, videotape or recording taken or made of My Child, in any medium, for any purpose related to the Program, whether or not My Child is named or otherwise identified, and I agree to waive any right of inspection or approval.

Parent Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____