Welcome to Woodland Wonders, Auburn’s first nature preschool and Alabama’s second nature preschool. Nature preschool allows your child to learn about, with, and through nature enjoying the great outdoors as their classroom. Children spend their mornings exploring and uncovering knowledge in an environment where questions and child-led discovery are encouraged.

Nature preschool is guided by an emergent curriculum which supports children’s interests and voices while incorporating developmentally appropriate practices through play-based activities. This approach has been proven to support children’s whole development including increased attention, self-discipline, physical activity, and motivation in an environment which has been shown to provide a more conducive place of learning (Kuo, Barnes, and Jordan, 2019).

Woodland Wonders will follow the guidelines from the Alabama Office of School Readiness to promote the following in our children as they prepare for kindergarten:
• an enthusiasm for learning,
• an ability to function in a social setting,
• age-appropriate communication and problem solving skills,
• age-appropriate physical and emotional skills, and
• optimal health.
(http://children.alabama.gov/firstclass/)

**Our Values**
- We have an inherent connection to the natural world
- The natural world offers endless opportunities for children to develop and grow in rich and engaging environments
- Each child has a unique voice that is valued and respected
- By teaching children respect and care for the natural world, they will become lifelong stewards of the earth

**Our Mission**
To encourage and promote a child’s exploration, wonder, and delight in the natural world in an effort to cultivate their spirit of stewardship and connectedness to each other, their community, and their environment.
Enrollment

Woodland Wonders Nature Preschool welcomes children from diverse backgrounds without regard to race, religion, gender, color, creed or national origin.

Woodland Wonders is open to children aged 3-5 on or before September 1 of enrollment year. Enrollment is limited to twelve (12) students.

Enrollment requirements:

- A Completed Registration
- Completed and Signed Liability Forms
- Completed and Signed Medical Forms
- Signed Approval of Parent Handbook

Enrollment process:
1) Student is registered through website and pays $50.00 registration fee
2) Parent/Caretaker completes the set of required forms (liability, medical and parent handbook agreement)
3) The Director will then contact parents/caretaker through email to answer any questions and schedule a meeting prior to the first day of school
4) Student starts the first day!

Re-enrollment
Current families are given first priority to re-enroll their child for the following school year. Registration begins mid-January. After current families enroll, registration will open up to the public.

Withdrawal from school
Woodland Wonders will meet from mid-August through mid-May. Children are enrolled for the entire school year and parents are obligated to fulfill tuition payments under the terms of the tuition agreement. If the need arises for a child to withdraw from the program after the school year begins, a written one month notice is required for withdraw along with tuition payment for that month.

Meeting Times and Location
Woodland Wonders will meet at the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center, 2222 N. College Street

Students will be outside for the duration of their morning spending their time exploring our 120-acres of woodlands and streams.

Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday’s from 8:00am-11:30am. Drop-off and pick-up will be at the front parking lot under the entry pavilion. Drop-off begins at 7:45 am and pick-up is promptly at 11:30 am. Children not picked up by 11:40am will be held by the teachers and there will be a fee of $1.00 per minute after 11:45am.
Important Dates for 2019-2020 School Year

Meet the Teacher’s Day/Open House: Tuesday, August 13

First Day of School: Tuesday, August 20

Last Day of School: Thursday, May 14

We will follow Auburn City Schools for holidays, weather related closings and delays. If Auburn City schools are delayed one hour, we will open one hour late and if schools are delayed two hours, we will open two hours late. Anything beyond a two hour delay for then we will be closed for the day. If your child is in school and Auburn City Schools announces that schools are closing due to inclement weather, you should pick your child up immediately. There are no refunds for missed days or inclement weather.

Tuition Rates
Registration fee: $50.00 non-refundable fee due at registration to secure spot in Woodland Wonders program

Supply fee: $50.00 due upon the first day of class

Tuition $1,530.00 per year which can be divided up into 9 monthly payments of $170.00

Tuition Payments
Tuition payment should be made online through our website, www.auburn.edu/preserve. Tuition is due on the first day of each month. The first month tuition is due on August 20 and will cover both the month of August and the month of May. The second tuition will be due on September 1st, the third on October 1st, and so on... We do not prorate tuition or fees. Tuition is based on days registered, not days attended. Our tuition is an annual rate calculated into monthly payments. There will be no reduction for holidays, breaks, inclement weather, or personal absences. There will be a $25 late charge for tuitions not received before the 10th day of the month. If payment is past due after 30 days, a student will not be allowed to attend the program.

If an outstanding circumstance arises concerning family finances, please contact Sarah Crim at daysara@auburn.edu for a meeting.

Curriculum
Woodland Wonders Nature Preschool is guided by an emergent curriculum which supports children’s interests and voices while incorporating developmentally appropriate practices through play-based activities. This approach has been proven to support children’s whole development including increased attention, self-discipline, physical activity, and motivation in an environment which has been shown to provide a more conducive place of learning (Kuo, Barnes, and Jordan, 2019).

Activities will vary daily based on the teacher’s observations of children’s interests and exploratory play. As expressed best through Fred Rogers, “Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the
work of childhood.” Children will allowed to free-play within pre-determined boundaries that have been risk-assessed prior to their entering.

Children will be exposed to academic material including literature, writing, mathematics, science, and natural history through their play and nature activities. Our goal is to have the children learn through their own inquiry and exploration in order that the learning is authentic and based on their developmental level.

Teachers will use the assessment tool of documentation to demonstrate each child’s learning and their learning as a class of students. Parents are welcome to view this documentation at any time.

Typical Day

Arrival and Morning Greetings
Circle time and preparing for the day ahead
Setting out into the woods for our daily exploration
Snack Time
Talking Time and Documenting our experiences
Play/Exploration Time
Storytime and Closing Activities

Communication

The teachers of Woodland Wonders want to support not only the children but the families of those that we serve. Meetings with families will be set up each year prior to the start of Woodland Wonders in an effort to get to know the child’s background and goals that parents/caretakers may have for their children. In addition, meetings may be requested at any time during the course of the school year by either the teachers or the parents/caretakers.

A private Facebook page will be set up to post weekly pictures, quotes and updates. This is the best way to keep informed about our day and happenings.

If you need to reach us during school hours, please contact Sarah Crim at 334-332-5995 (cell) or 334-844-8091 (office) or we are available through email at daysara@auburn.edu or preserve@auburn.edu.

Special Events and Celebrations
Teachers would love to honor your children for special events like birthdays and holidays. If you would like to bring something to celebrate your child’s birthday, please email Sarah Crim at daysara@auburn.edu.

Children with Special Needs and Abilities
The natural environment presents a wonderful environment for children with special needs and abilities. If your child currently is currently diagnosed with a special need or ability, please contact us so that we can work on the development of a plan to best work with them. Our teachers are not equipped with the therapeutic background to support students with severe or moderate autism at this time. As we work with your children, if the teachers observe or
document any concerns they see in a child’s behavior and development, they will be immediately communicated to the parent for further observation.

Many times in a social setting with peers, a child may display a characteristic that may not be recognized at home with adults. Our goal is to team with you in helping your child receive the help and guidance he/she needs in a timely, loving manner. If a child’s development or behavioral needs are not able to be handled in our space, or if their behavior poses a risk to other children, termination of the contract may be warranted.

**Health and Safety**

*Discipline*
Children will be treated with respect, patience and kindness in all circumstances including the matter of discipline. Teachers will use positive reinforcement to address situations and will encourage children to make the best choices. Every situation will be handled individually and with the best interest of the child at heart.

If a child is being aggressive or disruptive, the teachers will do the following:
- Make every effort to re-direct, or discuss other choices with him/her.
- If this is not effective, the child will be separated from the group, with a teacher available and near to talk with him/her and help them transition back into the group or play situation.
  * Corporal punishment will never be used.

*Accident Reports*
Accidents will be reported both verbally and in written form. A copy of the accident report will be given to you as well as being placed in your child’s file.

*Illness*
For the protection of our children and teachers’ health, we ask that you keep your child home if he or she displays any of the following within a 24 hour period:
- Temperature 100 degrees or above
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Conjunctivitis/pink eye
- Undetermined skin rash or infections
- Persistent cough or sore throat
- Colored discharge from nose or eyes or constant wiping of nose so that it is disruptive to the child’s normal routine
- Head lice (free of nits)
- Streptococcal infection (24 hours after treatment has been started)

Many parents and pediatricians who treat children with allergies say it is normal during seasonal allergy times to have a green or yellow nasal discharge; however we will need a note from the doctor stating that the child is not contagious.

If a child becomes sick during school, the teacher will contact you to pick them up. If you are not available, they will contact the next on emergency list.
Teachers are only permitted to dispense approved medications as indicated on the medical form submitted at registration. If your child needs a prescription medication then we must have a signed document from their physician as noted on the Auburn University Authorization, Waiver, and Consent for Self-Administration of Prescription Medication Form. To obtain the proper paperwork for the administration of a prescription medication, please contact KPNC Manager, Michael Beckman at buckmmd@auburn.edu. All epi-pens must be in the original container with the original pharmacy label. A signed medical release form must be completed and kept in the child’s file.

Custody
The parent/guardian that enrolls the child in the program and signs the agreement/release form has the right to say who may or may not pick up the child. There is a place on the enrollment form to list all persons allowed to pick up the child. The staff will verify names and valid driver’s licenses with the list.

Any changes needing to be made concerning the release of your child must be given to the director in writing by the parent/guardian. Your child will not be released to anyone other than the parent or guardian unless we are notified in writing. If a domestic issue should arise that might concern a Woodland Wonders family, please notify Sarah Crim at daysara@auburn.edu.

Outdoor Activities and Risk
Outdoor learning provides a rich experience for children offering many opportunities for developing self-confidence and self-regulation. Students are taught how to evaluate risk and are offered opportunities to participate in activities such as tree climbing, stick play, and tool use at their developmentally appropriate levels.

Teachers are trained in first-aid and outdoor emergency protocols. Outdoor settings and activities are evaluated through formal benefit-risk assessment. However, there is inherent risk associated with an outdoor environment including variables related to weather, wildlife, and terrain. These variables will be evaluated and controlled for to our full extent.

Tick and Insect bites
Teachers will make every effort to assess potential locations of insect populations and avoid these, however as insects are a part of the natural environment, the children will be exposed to risk of bites. Teachers will lead children in a tick check during the spring/fall seasons. If we do find a tick, we will take the tick off using special tweezers, clean the area and put the tick in a bag for you should you want it tested. Please make sure to do a thorough check on your child at home.

We recommend that children wear insect repellent prior to coming to preschool each day. For a list of specific insect repellents, feel free to contact us at preserve@auburn.edu.

Weather
Outdoor education subscribes to the motto of, “There is no bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.”— Ranulph Fiennes. Therefore, we will be outside in the weather conditions that nature provides to us. We recommend the following for each student to have available through the year: rain jackets/ponchos, comfortable close-toed shoes, light jacket, heavy jacket, winter gear (scarf, mittens, hat), sun hat, etc…
The exception to this is that in the case of severe weather (thunderstorms, hail, tornados, extreme heat or extreme cold), we will try to provide an alternative indoor location to meet. In some rare cases, an alternative location may not be found and class may have to be canceled. In cases of severe weather, we will provide you with accurate information as soon as we have it available.

**What to bring**

- Reusable water bottle that your child can refill during the day. There are also water fountains available on property.
- A labeled child’s size backpack that can be left at school. Needs to be big enough to fit water bottle and snack. We will use these backpacks on our daily hikes through the preserve.
- Extra clothes, including underwear and socks. Accidents and mud/water happen! Please make sure your child has weather appropriate clothes in their bag AT ALL TIMES.
- A complete list of recommended outdoor clothing will be provided prior to the first day of class.

Disclaimer:

Woodland Wonders reserves the right to change or modify requirements, amend, or revoke any section of the parent handbook. These changes would be communicated to parents through email.