

FORTWHYTE FOREST SCHOOL ENROLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY

PROGRAM DETAILS

- Entirely outdoor program (with the exception of extreme weather)
- Indoor spaces are available only for cold weather snack breaks and in the case of extreme weather
- 12 children per class
- 2 staff facilitators, 1 FortWhyte Alive volunteer
- Summer program has full days (9 am -3 pm); all other sessions are ½ days (mornings or afternoons).

STEP 1. REVIEW THE ELIGIBILITY AND READINESS CRITERIA

Forest School is an outdoor, multi-age program for preschoolers that takes place rain or shine in the forests of FortWhyte Alive. During the Winter Session, we balance our indoor and outdoor time according to the weather.

- Children entering the program must be:
- Preschool or Kindergarten age (minimum 3.5 years)
- able to use the toilet independently (no diapers or pull-ups)
- able to verbally communicate their needs
- able to understand and follow basic rules and direction
- able and willing to respond to their name when called
- able to go on nature walks carrying their backpack (we love to walk!)
- willing to help dress themselves and manage their own snack items

STEP 2. COMPLETE THE GOODNESS OF FIT SURVEY

Before enrolling, parents are asked to complete a short Goodness of Fit Survey to assess their child's readiness and fit for the program.

To ensure children have the most positive experience possible, it is important that family expectations of the program are in line with what is offered. The success of our program is dependent on the support from families enrolled.

The survey is designed to gauge the child's:

- independence level (including bathrooming)
- willingness to immerse in nature
- ability to follow directions and stay with the group
- ability to engage positively with others
- ability to verbally communicate their needs

This survey can be done over the phone and should only take approximately 10 minutes of your time. After the survey is completed and Forest School seems like a great fit for your family, you will be eligible to receive the link to our online registration site.

Email us at forestschool@fortwhyte.org to arrange a time to complete the survey.

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STEP 3. REGISTRATION

After your Goodness of Fit Survey has been completed, reviewed, and approved, you will receive a link to our online registration site. You may register your child anytime after registration has opened. See the Forest School homepage for registration opening dates.

1. Fill in registration information:
 - Online family profile
 - Medical form
 - Waiver Form
 - Pre-authorized alternate pick-up form (optional)
2. Complete payment (installment options available).

A few weeks prior to the start of your session, you will receive a welcome email with additional information about the program, such as:

- Orientation visit information
- What to bring
- Invitation to join Storypark, the parent-educator communication platform used by FortWhyte Forest School
- Driving directions and parking instruction

STEP 4: PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR FOREST SCHOOL

Supporting your child's independence will help them adjust to Forest School. Here are a few things you can do to help prepare your preschooler for Forest School:

- WALK with them wearing their backpack (we LOVE to walk at Forest School!).
- PRACTICE opening and closing snack containers, lunch kit, and backpack.
- ENCOURAGE them to help with dressing for the weather.
- PLAY OUTSIDE in all kinds of weather!
- TALK with them about their feelings regarding being left in the care of new caregivers and about meeting new children.