

## **Earthbound Skills Program Details for all Home School Programs**

*We are so excited that you are registering for our Home School Program! Below is more details about our school year program. Please read through it completely. This is important to us so that we know that you are informed about all the details of class, such as what your child should bring, what to expect on a rainy day, etc. Thank you :-)*

### ***WHAT TO BRING TO CLASS:***

Please make sure your child comes prepared to each class, equipped with:

- Backpack that has room to carry their food and water, and any other essentials that they may need. They will all be responsible to carry their own items, so it is important that it is also comfortable for them to carry.
- Full container of water, *not* a glass container. This should be at least a 24 ounce container. Your child may not drink a lot of water at home, but we are very active during our classes and it is important that your child stays hydrated and healthy.
- A packed lunch *and* snack that will be suitable for their needs. (We all know that a hungry kid is a cranky kid!) Also, please do **not** pack high processed sugar snacks.
- Clothing that is appropriate for the weather (this will be further explained below).
- Clothing that they and you are okay getting dirty. We cannot guarantee that your child will come home clean! Please don't allow your child to wear special or expensive clothing to our class unless all of you are ok with getting dirty.
- Comfortable shoes for walking. This does not mean that you have to buy expensive hiking style boots. We actually don't recommend hiking boots for this class, they tend to be very restrictive to your child's natural movements. A comfortable sneaker, or sandals for summer, or boots for winter, is just fine. With parental permission, children are allowed to be barefoot, and many will choose to be barefoot.
- Some of our classes will have a nature journal. We have found through experience that mostly the Forest Foxes and the Woodland Scouts benefit the most from having a nature journal. If we decide to use nature journals for class, they will be asked to bring them along each week in case we have a journal lesson to complete.

### ***TARDINESS/ABSENCE***

**Drop off** - *Please be on time when dropping off/picking up your child(ren).* If you are going to be late, please give us a call/text. We usually do not remain at the drop off site for longer than 15-20 minutes, so if you arrive late we will not be in the immediate area. Consistent late arrivals will not be tolerated, because the rest of the class will potentially be held up waiting for your arrival, and our plan for the day may be compromised.

**Pick up** – Please be on time when picking up your child. If you are going to be more than a few minutes late, please give us a call/text. If you are consistently more than 10 minutes late in picking up your child, we may have to talk about removing your child from the program. Please be on time because often our instructors have commitments after class.

If you are going to miss a class, it is helpful if you call/text us by the morning of the class at the latest,

or send us an email if you know by the night before.

### ***MAKE UP DAYS***

We do not provide any refunds for days missed, nor can we guarantee that you can make up a day if missed. If your child misses a day and you wish to make it up, you must contact us first to make arrangements. ***Please do not show up unannounced at another class, we may not be able to accept you.*** If we can allow for a make up day, you are limited to **1 make up day per session.**

### ***RAINY DAY POLICY***

Earthbound Skills is a nature connection education program. We encourage developing and strengthening our relationships with nature despite what the weather may be doing. So we strive to be outside, even on rainy days. We also teach survival skills, which includes knowing how to stay warm and dry in all types of weather. However, we also want everyone to be safe, happy, and healthy. On a mild to heavy rainy day, we will come prepared. Any of the children that have taken our classes before will tell you that they love rainy days with us. We come with tarps (which provides them with a great opportunity to learn how to set one up), activities, and sometimes hot tea, wool blankets, stories. If the weather is forecast to be intense (heavy, prolonged rain, strong winds, lightening storms, etc) we will arrange to meet at Cedar Grove, and we have permission to use the Nature Center for shelter *if it is available. (Note Since the onset of Covid19, the Nature Center and all CARD buildings are not available for reservation. They will be reevaluating in 2022.)* We typically **do not** cancel class for average inclement weather, unless it is hazardous weather such as extreme high winds, lightening, poor AQI due to wildfire smoke, etc. If we have to cancel a class because of bad weather, we can not guarantee a make-up class nor refunds.

### ***COLD/WET WEATHER CLOTHING:***

In our mediterranean climate, it mostly only rains when it is cool outside. This means that if your child is not properly dressed to withstand rain, they will most likely be cold. This section is meant to help you dress your child appropriately for the weather.

*“There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.”*

**If rain is in the forecast:** In survival, shelter is number one, the very first thing, before water and food and even making a fire (unless its part of your shelter). *Your clothing IS the first layer of shelter.* PLEASE dress your child appropriately. Please read our guidelines below, and please be sure to have proper rain gear ready for the wet season.

- The following is a saying amongst survivalists: *“Cotton kills.”* That may sound dramatic, but there is truth to it. *We strongly advice against wearing cotton on rainy days, especially on both the most inner and most outer layers.* Cotton absorbs moisture like a sponge and literally wicks away the warmth from your body when wet. If it is on the outside layer, it will absorb moisture instantly – even from the moist air. If it is a base layer that is cotton, it can cause your child to sweat, the cotton will absorb that moisture, and then continue to wick away any warmth from their bodies, causing their body temperatures to drop. Either wool (or other similar animal fibers) or synthetic fibers (such as polyester) are much better for inner and outer layers.

A standard outfit for a cool and rainy day would preferably be:

- rain boots (sneakers absorb water, wet feet = cold and cranky kid)

- a thick, warm pair of socks with an extra pair packed in bag.
- rain jacket with hood, or a non-cotton, water repellent hat
- rain pants (please don't skip this part)
- warm hat (we lose heat more quick if our heads are not warm)
- **LAYERS.** It is not just the layers themselves that help keep kids warm, but the space in between the layers that help trap the bodies natural radiating heat. Again, non-cotton layers are best. On a cold, wet day (typically anything under 58 degrees, but each child is different, and be familiar with what your child's standard is) we suggest 3-4 layers on top (a base layer, a shirt, a sweater/sweatshirt, and a rain jacket) and 3 on the bottom (a base layer, pants, and rain pants) Layers are great, because if we are moving around and the kids get warm, they can take a layer off and put it away. If we stop moving and go back under our shelter for a story and tea or an activity, they can put the layer back on.
- **EXTRA CLOTHING.** This is especially true for younger kids. Unless you are buying Oaki rain gear (see below) or other more expensive brands, often much of what is on the market for children is designed to get a child to and from their car without getting wet. It is best to pack at least a warm sweater/sweatshirt, cozy pants, and a extra pair of socks, sealed in a ziplock bag, so that if they do get wet, they can easily change into something warmer.

**Tips:** We know that kids grow fast, are expensive to clothe, and resist putting on what they are told to. So here are some tips:

- Don't wait until the last minute, sometimes our local stores will sell out of rain gear when the first storm of the season is on the way.
- Check out thrift stores. Not only for rain jackets, rain pants, and rain boots, but for wool sweaters.
- Check our our pdf on tips to finding good rain gear:  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bf364851aef1d2c93bffd3/t/5df7f8702b72246fbefab3a6/1576532080933/Rain+Gear.pdf>
- If your child is resisting putting on proper rain gear, tell them that we (the teachers) told you that they have to do it, otherwise we will send them home. We really don't want to turn away anyone from class, but we also don't want kids to get sick from exposure, or have to change our activity because one child is not prepared.

### ***WARM WEATHER CLOTHING***

In our area, we tend to have many more warm days versus wet and cool days. It is important to know how to dress your child to be comfortable and healthy to be outside for long periods of time during warm to hot weather.

- If your child is sensitive to the sun, please apply any sunblock before dropping them off with us. If your child is especially sensitive and you would like them to reapply during the day and they will need assistance, please initial here indicating that we have permission to help them reapply:
- A sun hat is also useful for keeping children less likely to get heat exhausted, especially if they can soak it in the water.

- Consider packing two bottles of water, if you can make it cold water that is a great option that your kid will love you for. Consider adding electrolytes on very hot days.
- Pack juicy fruit, such as oranges or melons, in their lunch.
- On hot days, we often get in the creek water, so dressing your kids in swim friendly clothing is important during the hot seasons. We are always water safe, and with our smallest children we only go in areas that are wade friendly. We never go in dangerously fast moving water. With our older kids, they have to prove to us that they can swim, and even then we stay in areas that have varying amounts of depth and never let them out of our site.
- Sandals that are outdoor-friendly (*not* pretty plastic sandals) that have good grippy soles and are comfortable are best. Even better if they double as water shoes. If you prefer for your child to have a separate pair of water shoes, please be sure that they are able to put them on/take them off themselves.
- Many children will prefer to be barefoot outside. In our registration form we address our barefoot policy, unless you have specified that your child needs to keep their shoes on, we allow children to be barefoot.

## ***HAZARDS***

- There are **ticks** in the park! We will hopefully not get any, but of course we cannot guarantee this. You may want to consider using a tick repellent for your child. **Doing a tick check after our classes is strongly recommended.** You can also designate certain clothing for our classes, and have children change their clothes and shower when coming home to avoid contact with ticks.
- **Poison Oak** – this plant is very prevalent in the park. We are constantly reminding the children to be aware of it (awareness is the #1 lesson taught in all that we do).
- **Other hazards** – There are other hazards that can depend on where and when we meet. Whenever we meet, we will always go over the potential hazards. This is not to strike fear in any student or parent, but just to bring awareness around the topic. With awareness, there is lesser chance of injury. We are constantly reminding children of what they need to be aware of that surrounds us, whether it could be rattlesnakes, bee or wasp hives, red ants, broken glass or other hazardous litter, etc. From our experience, this has only heightened the children's awareness and we have avoided (after literally hundreds of students) any major injuries.