Staff of the Nurture in Nature Preschool at the Tacoma Nature Center are often asked what will a child learn during their time in the school. This document attempts to outline this information for parents and help prepare them to be an active part of their child’s learning experience.

Our mission is to provide a high-quality early childhood environment that meets preschoolers’ needs, while inspiring them to love nature. We strive to offer experiences and opportunities that allow children to learn and grow at their own pace. We encourage their endless curiosity, and plant the seeds to help them become lifelong learners.

As a nature-based preschool, we do not follow a set curriculum. We are discovery based and child-driven. However, there are many topics that we focus on throughout the year on a pre-scheduled basis or as the interests of the children and our discoveries give us opportunities. That list of topics has been given to you separately and is also posted in the classroom.

Our emergent child-inspired curriculum often follows the changing seasons and exciting things that are happening in and around our building and grounds, is reflective of our currently enrolled families, and is amplified by our ever-changing climate. As our curriculum builds off of our gained/learned information, attendance is key to gleaning the most of our unique program. We do not recommend this program for those who will be taking a more drop-in approach to school. Barring illness, and vacations that cannot happen during scheduled breaks, students are best served being here for all class dates through the whole school year.

Throughout the school year, we also work on building each child’s skills. Below are the skills we focus on at various times throughout the school year. Since a child’s development is highly individualized, this is not meant to be a list of skills for your child to master but rather to develop, practice, and build upon throughout the year.

Most importantly, while we maximize our time spent together during class, a home/school partnership is important for sustained progress. Please note how many hours your child is with us during the school year:

- Two-day/week Section: 63 days = 189 hours
- Three-day/week Section: 94 days = 282 hours
- Summer Session: 18 days = 76.5 hours

In the grand scheme of their lives this is not a lot of time. For your child to improve in the following areas, regular attendance is important. Also, support and reinforcement at home will greatly improve your child’s progress in these areas. If you would like some practical ways to
practice these or other skills at home, please feel free to contact your child's teacher and we are happy to provide resources for support beyond the classroom. We also often provide ideas for you in the monthly digital newsletter. Thank you for all you do to support your child and our program!

**Environmental Education**

1. Demonstrates knowledge of life cycles (plants, animals, water, weather, seasons)
2. Identifies elements within the natural world at the Tacoma Nature Center (plants, animals, rocks, signs of animals, fungi, etc.)
3. Compares and contrasts roles of predators and prey within a system
4. Identifies the elements of a habitat relevant to those at the Tacoma Nature Center (wetland, forest, meadow, garden)
5. Demonstrates knowledge of animal behaviors (hibernation, migration, behavioral adaptations, etc.)
6. Develops an appreciation and respect for the natural world
   a. investigates sustainable practices and their importance
   b. demonstrates leave no trace practices
   c. takes care of living things in nature

**Social-Emotional**

7. Emotional and behavioral regulation
   a. Manages feelings
   b. Follows limits and expectations
   c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
8. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
   a. Interacts appropriately with peers
9. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations

**Physical**

10. Demonstrates traveling skills
11. Demonstrates balancing skills
12. Demonstrates fine motor strength and coordination

**Language**

13. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
14. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
15. Uses appropriate conversational skills
**Cognitive**

16. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning  
   a. Attends and engages  
   b. Persists  
   c. Solves problems  
17. Remembers and connects experiences  
18. Uses classification skills

**Literacy**

19. Phonological awareness  
   a. Notices and discriminates rhyme  
   b. Notices and discriminates repeated sounds (alliteration)  
20. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet (age 4+ skill)  
   a. Identify and name some letters  
   b. Identify letters in own name  
   c. Use letter sound knowledge  
21. Comprehend and respond to books and other texts  
22. Demonstrate developing writing skills

**Mathematics**

23. Use number concepts  
   a. Counts  
   b. Quantifies (more or less, long or short, big or small, light or heavy)  
   c. Connects numerals with their quantities (age 4+ skill)  
24. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes

Our primary goals are to help your child develop and foster a curiosity for the world around them and build skills to help them be successful learners. If you have concerns about your child’s progress in any of these areas please do not hesitate to contact your child’s teacher. You can do so by emailing preschool@tacomaparks.com, requesting a meeting from your teacher when you see them in person, or by posting a request on the facebook group page. If you feel that you are not connecting with your teacher(s) effectively, please feel free to ask for assistance from the director, Michele@tacomaparks.com.