

# GEARING UP FOR OUTDOOR EXPLORATION

Gear matters! Children and teachers must be prepared for all kinds of weather because temperatures fluctuate wildly, and there can be extreme heat, cold, and wet weather in any season. For example, fall or spring mornings can be a crisp 60-65 degrees, but quickly rise into the 80's. The following will help you plan for gear in all kinds of weather:

- **Wear layers.** It's great to have a light sweater or pullover that you can peel off when it gets warm, or to put on top of a t-shirt when it gets chilly.
- **Get quality gear** in layers for cold and wet weather (see below).
- **Bring a child-sized, comfortable backpack** so you can explore hands-free. There should be room for a water canteen, nature journal, and rain pants/extra layers as needed. Children carry their own backpacks, so be sure it is sized appropriately.
- **Label your child's gear.** Nothing is more frustrating than losing gear and cheap labels like these can make life easier! We can help keep track of your child's gear if it's labeled. [kidslabels.com](http://kidslabels.com)
- **Your. Child. Will. Get. Messy.** Freedom of exploration is crucial in our program, which means whole-body play in mud, ice, grass, paint, glue, etc. Make sure your child wears clothes that can get messy. Ebay, FB Marketplace, and the Tot Swap are great options to find gently used gear.
- **Bring a separate set of clothes** in a Ziplock or waterproof bag (pants, t-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, socks, and underwear). We want to be sure your child is comfortable, so if s/he gets drenched or covered in mud, we can get fresh clothes on. Likewise, potty accidents sometimes happen, and we want everyone to be prepared.
- **Bring a filled re-usable water bottle or canteen.** Vigorous, outdoor play requires lots of hydration. Please don't forget a full water bottle in your child's backpack each day.

## GEAR FOR COLD AND WET WEATHER

Wool, fleece, and silk make the best layers, especially with warm, waterproof outer layers. This combination holds in heat and keeps out moisture so your child can comfortably play. REI and Patagonia make base layers for kids, too.

Cotton is great for mild days, but please avoid cotton layers. When cotton gets wet, it takes a long time to dry and will make your child colder – and for longer.

Insulated, waterproof mittens are warmer than gloves. In especially frigid temperatures, we like to double up on mittens with a wool mitten or knit glove base layer, followed by your child's insulated, waterproof mittens on top.

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## Helpful Gear Guide

SUMMER	FALL & SPRING	WINTER
Tank tops and t-shirts	Layered t-shirt and/or long-sleeved shirt	Waterproof, insulated mittens
Shorts or pants (pants are better for tick protection)	Long pants	Spare pair of knit gloves to wear underneath waterproof mittens
Closed-toed sandals (EX. Keens) OR sturdy hiking shoes with socks pulled over pant legs to protect from ticks	Socks that can be pulled over pant legs to protect from ticks	Thick wool socks (EX. Smartwool or Darn Tough)
Rain boots (EX. Bogs or Oakiwear)	Rain pants, bibs and jacket, or rain suit (EX. Tuffo Muddy Buddy, Polarn O. Pyret, Jan + Jul, Grundens, Frogg Toggs, or Oaki)	Insulated snow boots (EX. Kamik, Sorel, or Northside)
Rain pants or rain suit (EX. Tuffo Muddy Buddy or Polarn O. Pyret)	Hat (insect/sun protection)	Base Layer: wool, silk, or poly long underwear top and bottom (EX. Cuddl Duds or REI)
Swimsuit (under t-shirt and shorts or pants - optional)	Rubber rain boots	Mid-Layer: long-sleeved wool or fleece sweater. For extra cold days wear fleece pants and wool mitten mid-layers, too
Hat (insect/sun protection)	Sturdy hiking shoes or boots	Outer Layer: Waterproof coat with hood, insulated waterproof snow pants, wool socks, and insulated waterproof mittens
Insect repellent*	Fleece pullover or warm sweater	
Sunscreen*	Insect repellent*	Warm hat such as a fitted balaclava or wool hat
	Sunscreen*	Neck warmer (no scarves)

*\*Please apply these before your child arrives. With your written permission, we will re-apply.*

*Due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, face coverings are also required. See COVID-19 guidance for more information.*