Olive Grove NATURE SCHOOL



What is a nature school?
Our nature school is an outdoor-based program for children in Pre-K through 2nd grade. It focuses on hands-on learning, exploration, and play in the natural environment, helping children connect with nature while building academic and social skills.

What are the benefits of nature-based play and learning?
First of all, it's important to recognize that children learn best through play! Nature-based learning boosts creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving skills. It supports physical health, emotional well-being, and helps children build a strong connection to the environment. Additionally, nature-based learning encourages teamwork and confidence through hands-on exploration and collaboration.

What curriculum is used at your nature school?
Our Pre-K program blends Arkansas's Explorers Curriculum and the Project Approach for project-based early learning. For our Kindergarten through 2nd grade classes, we use Wild Reading, Wild Math, Five in a Row, and the Project Approach—blending academics with hands-on and nature-based learning. Our homeschool Wildcrafting classes and Pre-K through 2nd grade classes all use the Wild Passport curriculum as a graduated, safety-first approach to learning wildcrafting skills in 5 areas: plant and animal identification, rope skills and knot-tying, woodcrafting and tool use, shelter-building, and fire skills.

What are your teacher-to-child ratios?
We always maintain the Arkansas state regulations for ratios, but we go a step further by implementing lower teacher-to-child ratios in each class. The majority of the day, we will be at the lower ratios, 2:12 for Pre-K classes and 2:16 for K-2nd classes. This allows us to provide closer attention and to support your child's learning and development more individually.

What are your hours of operation?
For the 2026-2027 school year, our Pre-K program is open from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM, and drop off/pick up can be any time within those hours. K-2nd grade is in session from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, with optional before/after school care available 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM with no additional fee through May of 2027. Our homeschool Wildcrafting classes are 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Fridays.

When is Olive Grove Nature School closed?
Our K-2nd grade program closely follows the Rogers Public Schools calendar. On RPS teacher workdays and professional development days, our Pre-K program remains open. Care for K-2nd grade students is available on those days for an additional fee. The entire school closes for federal holidays, Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, and a few professional development days each year.

How do you teach children about physical boundaries in outdoor play areas?
Teachers talk about safety and practice boundaries with children every day. We use consistent routines, visual markers, and clear expectations to help children understand and respect outdoor limits. Children are introduced to new outdoor spaces gradually and as they demonstrate their ability to play safely in those spaces.

How are the indoor classrooms utilized?
While we spend most of our time outdoors, indoor classrooms are used during certain times of the day, especially for indoor-specific activities or during unsafe weather conditions. The classrooms provide a cozy space for continued learning, play, and connection when outside play/learning isn't practical.

Will there be homework?
Nope! We do not require homework. All of our learning takes place at school through hands-on exploration, play, and discovery. We want home time to be for relaxation, family, and fun! Recommended home activities for the K-2nd hybrid program may be an exception, but not required.

Are children tested?
Pre-K children are assessed on an ongoing basis, however, there is no formal testing in Pre-K. Homeschoolers in our Wildcrafting classes are not tested. For children in our K-2nd grade program, we assess on an ongoing basis, however, those with EFA funding are required by the state to do standardized testing once a year. We proctor the testing here on-site.

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What measures are taken for outdoor play during extreme weather?

The safety of the children is our top priority. During extreme weather (ex. lightening, extreme heat) we limit or pause outdoor time and move indoors. In severe situations (ex. tornado warning), we have a FEMA-approved storm shelter on site for added protection. For all other weather conditions, we advise families on how to dress their children appropriately for the conditions.

What do mealtimes look like?

We serve breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack for our Pre-K children. K-2nd grade is served breakfast and lunch, and those staying for after-school care also get an afternoon snack. Our homeschool Wildcrafting classes are served lunch only. Mealtimes are a chance for conversation, connection, and learning about where our food comes from. Meals may be enjoyed indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather and the food served.

Will my child come home wet and muddy?

It's possible! Children are required to have extra clothes at school, but there may be times when you arrive for pick-up and they are joyfully exploring in the rain and mud. Just expect your child to get dirty - it's a sign of a busy day, and it's all part of the fun and learning that comes with nature-based play!

How is technology used in the classroom?

Although teachers occasionally look up a song or explore a curiosity with the kids on the teacher"s iPad (like identifying a plant or insect with the Seek app), the children do not use screen time for learning in the classroom or outdoors. Our learning happens through real-world, hands-on experiences. There may be an exception for special occasions when a class may watch a short video together, but we do not have TVs!

What makes your program unique compared to others?

Our program blends academic learning with daily outdoor exploration in a natural setting. We focus on whole-child development through play, nature immersion, and hands-on discovery. We believe in preserving the joys of childhood as long as possible and giving children plenty of opportunity to move their bodies. With small class sizes, strong teacher-child relationships, and a commitment to curiosity and creativity, we offer a distinctive learning experience.

What should my child bring each day?

Your child should come each day well-rested and ready to learn and explore! Most personal items like extra clothes and nap gear will stay at school. Be sure your child has these items each day:

- A labeled water bottle (essential for staying hydrated)
- Weather-appropriate clothing (layers are great!) and at least one change of clothes in a backpack or bag
- Seasonal outdoor gear such as sunglasses, a hat, rain boots (boots can stay at school), warm jacket (we provide rain suits), or mittens/gloves—depending on the weather

We go outside in all kinds of weather, so dressing for the day helps your child stay comfortable and enjoy every moment outdoors.

What does communication with families look like?

We use an app called Tadpoles to keep you connected. You'll receive updates about your child's day, including notes, photos, meals, and other communications. It's a great way to stay in the loop. Teachers are always happy to schedule a time to chat as well.
You are also welcome to contact the office by phone or email if you have questions or need to reach us directly.

Do you offer part-time enrollment?

Yes! We offer full-time and part-time enrollment for Pre-K and part-time for our homeschool Wildcrafting classes. Hybrid K-2 classes are Monday-Wednesday so that children have back to back daily consistency on those days.

Do you accept state funding?

We accept state child care assistance (SRA) for Pre-K and school choice funding (EFA) for K-2nd grade. Our homeschool Wildcrafting classes are also eligible for EFA payments. For more information on state funding, please check out these websites:

Pre-K https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/office-of-early-childhood/help-paying-for-child-care
K-2nd https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/offices/office-of-school-choice-and-parent-empowerment/education-freedom-accounts

If you receive another source of funding, please check with the office at office@ognschool.org to see if we may be able to accept it as well. Sometimes the approval process can be very simple, in which case, we are happy to check it out!

For all other questions, please email us at office@ognschool.org!