



Dear Home School Family,

August 7, 2009

Welcome to Indian Creek Nature Center's 2009-2010 Home School Program Series. We, along with volunteer teacher-naturalists, plan to provide a worthwhile environmental education experience for your child this year. We look forward to having your student attend our "Wild World" program series. Whether he/she is signed up for one program, several sessions, or the entire series, we know your student will enjoy learning about nature and how to care for it during their time here.

We encourage you to spend time at the Nature Center when you're not in class. Here are some ideas that might interest you:

- Explore our new wetland restoration project by hiking Wood Duck Way—a raised boardwalk leading from Quillback Bridge through the riparian forest and onto a woodchip footpath that ends up at Lynch Wetland.
- Once there, hike the trail winding through Lynch Wetland. Look for large tadpoles from the deck, waterfowl, and wetland plants. (You can also drive there; parking lots are $\frac{3}{4}$ mile West, down Otis Road from the barn.)
- Visit our soon-to-be completed natural playscape outdoor classroom directly behind the Nature Center barn. Included in the new Sense of Wonder Trail are a beautiful limestone stage, willow tunnel and teepee, touch tables, and many other areas to explore, all made from natural materials.
- Attend a public program as a family (a calendar sent to members is available at the front desk).
- Visit our indoor working beehive upstairs in the Sun Room. Can you find the Queen?
- Get a bird's eye view of our beautiful grounds and Indian Creek from our silo observation deck.
- Have a picnic near the barn, climb the boulder.
- Check out one of our trail packs—*Prairie Adventure*, *Wetland Explorer* or *Woodland Walk*—to use while exploring ICNC property.
- Hike a trail in the floodplain, prairie, or oak woodland. Take note of the many sights and sounds.
- Look for aquatic creatures in our frog pond behind the barn.

We would like to share some guidelines to help our program run smoothly and provide a safe and enjoyable experience for your student. Please look for them on the back of this letter.

See you soon!

Sincerely,

Jan Aiels
Education Facilitator

Margaret Wolter
Program Specialist

Indian Creek Nature Center Program Guidelines

Health/Permission Form

Please fill out the enclosed form, especially noting any food allergies, as we will occasionally have program-related snacks. Send the completed form in to the Nature Center, or make sure it accompanies your student to his/her first session.

Arrival

Please park in the lot across from the barn and walk your student across the street (especially K-2). Try to arrive between 12:45-1:00 PM. We will proceed to our program area (Sun Room, Auditorium, or Sugar House) at 1:00 PM. If you arrive late, please check in at the front desk so staff can direct your student to the appropriate program room.

Pick Up

Please park in the lot and come to meet your student at 3:00 PM (especially K-2).

Gift Shop

Please accompany and supervise your student and their siblings while browsing and making purchases before or after their program. We cannot allow children to linger in the shop.

What to Bring

Warm weather: water bottle, sunscreen, insect repellent, hat, rain jacket or suit, closed shoes/boots.

Cold weather: water bottle, coat, hat mittens, layered clothing, boots, snow pants for snow.

A backpack may be helpful for keeping track of items and extra clothing. **Please label everything!**

Rainy or “bad” weather: We will never endanger your child, but we will always go outside, if only for a short time. We don't melt if we get rained on, and short hikes are possible even in very cold weather.

Cancellation Policy: If public schools have a delayed start, we will hold our program that day. If public schools are cancelled, we will notify you of a program cancellation by noon. Call if you have questions.

RULES

Our goal is for all students to have a positive, meaningful, and enjoyable experience at the Nature Center. With this in mind, we ask that all visitors respect the Nature Center as a **preserve**. Do not disturb animals or their homes. Do not pick or collect plants, animals/insects, or other objects. What is here needs to stay here for others to enjoy. We will let you know when it is okay to touch or sample something from nature for our learning experience.

Respect animals, plants, and **people**. Do not touch or bother other students. Listen. Talk when it's your turn. Listen to your naturalist and follow instructions.

Hikes: Stay with the group. Stay behind the leader. Do not pick plants along the trail.

Behavior: In the rare case when a student is not respectful, we reserve the right to call parents for early pick-up.

Please go over the above information with your student before the first session.

We will remind them of important points at appropriate times during our sessions.