

A sunlit meadow with a tree trunk on the right and daisies in the foreground. The background is a soft-focus green field with a bright sun flare in the upper left corner. The text is overlaid on this scene in four horizontal boxes.

WELCOME TO:

OUR NATURE KINDERGARTEN

OPEN HOUSE 2023/2024

FACILITATED BY STEPHANIE SPILCHAK



*"We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of Treaty No.6, and home of Métis Nation of Alberta Zone 4. We also acknowledge the Inuit and other diverse Indigenous peoples whose ancestors have marked their territory since time immemorial, a place that has welcomed many peoples from around the world to make their home here."*

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

If we want our children  
to move mountains,  
we first have to let them  
get out of their chairs.

*-Nicolette Fowler*



# WHEN DOES NATURE KINDERGARTEN TAKE PLACE?

Nature Kindergarten will take place on Mondays, Wednesdays and some Fridays. A full year calendar will be provided before the start of the year.

- Children should be enrolled in a Tuesday/ Thursday Kindergarten program to participate in Nature Kindergarten.
- Nature Kindergarten is an extension of your child's home Kindergarten Program.

# WHY NATURE KINDERGARTEN?

- Children have a natural curiosity about the world around them. Letting them explore their capabilities and taking risks helps them evolve into strong, capable, resilient autonomous citizens. The outdoors is healing!
- Connecting children to nature fosters rich learning experiences, ecological literacy and healthy living. This supports their executive functioning skills, builds strong brain functioning, self regulation and life skills.





# WHO WILL FACILITATE THE PROGRAM?



- Stephanie Spilchak is a qualified teacher and certified Forest School Practitioner through the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada.
- A Program Assistant has been developing this program alongside Stephanie for the last 3 years. With a Bachelor of Science in Biology and environmental consulting background, the program is immersed in science based inquiry and play.



# RISK AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT

The teacher and assistants are trained in first aid and will take appropriate measures to ensure your child is safe everyday!

- Risk- The experience and management of it- is an inherent and integral part of Nature Kindergarten, and indeed of healthy child development.
- Nature kindergarten teachers endeavour to co-assess and co-manage risk with participants. We believe this is an essential skill for children to acquire and for adults to support.







# WHAT ABOUT WHEN ITS REALLY COLD?!

When we need an inside break  
(to warm up or dry off)  
we can always bring some nature  
inside with us!



# SOME TOPICS WE HAVE EXPLORED SO FAR IN NATURE KINDERGARTEN

**Physics and angles**



**Fire safety and building**



**Animals!**

**Indigenous culture**



**Tools** (such as hammers, peelers)!



# EXAMPLES OF OUR SPACES



The courtyard is an outdoor space in the middle of the school. Protected by harsh winds this is a good option for us on cold/windy days and includes loose parts play and our mud kitchen!

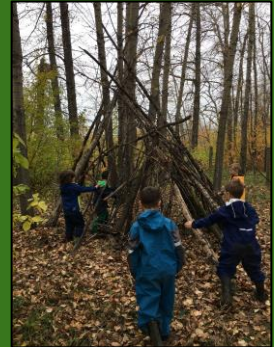


We have 3 playgrounds at Holy Redeemer. Play time here means experiencing different structures and during recess they get the chance to collaborate with other students.



“The Wetland” and “Little Forest” provides us with a cool new ecosystem to explore!

“Creek Forest” is a good walk away from the school but provides us with more woodland areas including a creek area!



# HOW DOES MY CHILD GET TO THE PROGRAM?

- Holy Redeemer students will take their regular school bus.
- Students will be transported for field trips to the Strathcona Wilderness Centre by school bus.
- Students coming from other EICS schools will need to be dropped off and picked up on Nature Kinder days.



# STRATHCONA WILDERNESS CENTRE

The Strathcona Wilderness Centre is a four season outdoor adventure centre located in the Beaver Hills Biosphere which is a UNESCO biosphere reserve. The hummocky “knob and kettle” terrain of the moraine forms a patchwork of depressional areas, which supports wetlands, small lakes and streams.

Both boreal and parkland animal and plant species can be found in the area.

A child’s ‘wanderland’!



# OUR PARENT FEEDBACK

"The nature program allows a child to learn and explore the outdoors. My son is learning there is so much to explore right in our very backyard, interesting plants and bugs we can find and that we need to take care of our planet. Now when we go on walks we all pick up garbage. I also find we stop and "smell the roses". Enjoy the small things around us that maybe we used to walk right past. As a family we are going outside more on those not so nice days and learning to love all the seasons in Alberta. We now have new hobbies and activities we do as a family outside. I would highly recommend the Nature Program. Every child should be able to learn while exploring."

"SWC trips - free forest play - creative and flexible lessons plans that incorporate nature - amazing communication via seesaw app, love the pics - fostering a positive attitude and love towards the outdoors, regardless of the weather - creative play in the mud kitchen - risky play opportunities"

# OUR PARENT FEEDBACK

“My daughter took me to Creek Forest the other day, a special place where the kids like to play on their morning outings. It was amazing to see her face light up as she told me all about the fun games and adventures she has there with her friends. Of course we had to re-enact a few of them.



“ I love that the kids are exposed to so many interesting activities that they might otherwise have never done at their age, such as orienteering, shelter building, snowshoeing and cross country skiing.”

“My daughter always reaches her activity goal (usually x2!!) on her vivofit watch on nature kindergarten days. It’s great to see that she is being so active.”



[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s4qHBNXvcl3mjTqhROTiRYrPbfQDj6h3/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s4qHBNXvcl3mjTqhROTiRYrPbfQDj6h3/view?usp=share_link)



THE POWER OF  
UNSTRUCTURED PLAY:

**6-YEAR-OLDS  
WHO SPEND MORE  
TIME IN  
UNSTRUCTURED  
PLAY SHOW  
GREATER SIGNS  
OF EXECUTIVE  
FUNCTIONING  
AND DECISION-  
MAKING SKILLS  
WITH LINKS TO  
ACADEMIC  
SUCCESS.**





The more risks  
you allow  
children to take  
the better they  
learn to take care  
of themselves.

*-Roald Dahl*

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**“you can't  
fall if you  
don't climb.  
but there's  
no joy in  
living your  
whole life  
on the ground”**