



TWO Nature Kindergarten Programs **Exciting Options for 2023/2024**



Muir Lake School is excited to announce that we are reducing cost barriers to nature-based education for kindergarten students across the Parkland School Division.

Nature Kindergarten has successfully operated as an extension program for 7 years! The Parkland School Division community has continued to embrace the principles of nature-based learning as a method for extending learning in the Early Years.

After consultation with the wider community, it is apparent that the demand for nature-based programming remains strong. Our feedback survey highlights that families want to see a version of this program that covers the full kindergarten programs of study so that their children have the flexibility to attend a nature-based program that is the main and only program for their kindergarten experience. It was also highlighted that families want to see more affordable options in accessing nature-based opportunities for days that their child is not attending kindergarten class.

We are excited to announce that Muir Lake School has been granted approval to explore the possibility of two programs for 2023 - 2024:

1. Nature Kindergarten - A full curriculum nature-based program of choice that is funded in the same way as other kindergarten classrooms with no education fee charged to families.
2. Nature Enrichment - An extension of kindergarten and is funded through fees charged to families.

Two Programs - What's the difference?

Nature Kindergarten (full curriculum):

- Mondays, Wednesday, and alternating Fridays
- Government funded program of choice that delivers the full kindergarten programs of study with no education fee charged to families.
- The curriculum will be delivered through a nature-based lens. This will mean that children will learn literacy, numeracy, and all aspects of the curriculum with nature as the vehicle for learning.
- The full kindergarten curriculum will be delivered by a certified teacher with the support of an Educational Assistant.
- Children will spend as much time as possible outside with indoor classroom time being used when it is most appropriate for learning or when the weather prevents outdoor learning.
- The Nature Kindergarten program will be supported by the full ECS team in the same way as other kindergarten classrooms.
- If families choose to register in this Nature Kindergarten program, they will not be able to register elsewhere for kindergarten programming. Muir Lake School will become their school-of-choice for Kindergarten. (Note: It will not be 'school-of-choice' if a family happens to live in the Muir Lake School attendance area.)
- The class will be limited to 20 students.
- Additional educational visit fees may apply and will be inline with other kindergarten classrooms.
- As a program of choice, no transportation is available to students outside of the Muir Lake School attendance area.
- Students within the Muir Lake attendance area will be able to apply for PSD busing like other Muir Lake students.

- Registration is through PowerSchool. See the Parkland School Division website: <https://www.psd.ca/schools/registration>

Nature Enrichment (extension programming):

- Tuesday, Thursday, and alternating Fridays
- Families can sign up to attend nature enrichment on days that they are not in their kindergarten class at their designated school. (Students MUST be signed up for a kindergarten class with a recognized Alberta Kindergarten program)
- This is an enrichment program that focuses more on the outdoor education aspects of nature-based learning.
- It does not deliver the full kindergarten programs of study. Instead, the program will focus on life-skills including resilience, social interaction, social emotional regulation, collaboration, physical literacy, outdoor education. Examples of activities include snowshoeing, XC skiing, physical literacy, bush craft skills, child led exploration and inquiry, nature play, arts and crafts, nature learning, environmental stewardship, nature-based science.
- Families will be charged a fee of \$400 per month to attend.
- No transportation is available to any students outside of the Muir Lake attendance area.
- Students enrolled at Muir Lake for their main kindergarten programming that live within the Muir Lake School boundaries will be able to apply for PSD transport on enrichment days.
- This program will be led by an appropriately certified professional and supported by an EA.
- Children will spend as much time as possible outside and in nature unless the weather prevents this.
- The student's designated school will remain whichever school they registered for through Powerschool for kindergarten education.
- The class will be limited to 20 students.
- Registration is through a separate registration form that can be found here: <https://www.psd.ca/programs/programs-of-choice/nature-based-kindergarten>

Can my child attend Nature Kindergarten AND Nature Enrichment?

Students are able to attend the funded Nature Kindergarten program for their full curriculum learning and also attend the Nature Enrichment program should families wish to do so.

Will there be an information meeting?

Yes, we will be offering two information sessions for potential families:

Thursday 16th February 2023, 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Tuesday 4th April 2023, 6:00pm - 7:00pm

What if the classes are full?

Applications for both programs will be accepted on a first come first served basis. A waitlist will be created once the classes are full.

Who can I talk to about transportation?

Students that live within the Muir Lake School attendance area are eligible to apply for transportation. For more information on eligibility of a rider, please see the [transportation website](#) or call 780-963-8452 or email Transportation@psd.ca.