



Nature Arts Handbook

Summer Camp 2024

Welcome to the Nature Arts Summer Camp Program by Rutabaga Toy Library.
We can't wait to learn, grow, and explore with you!

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Curriculum Overview & Weekly Themes

At Nature Arts summer camp, we mix outdoor adventure with art education. We encourage kids to play, be curious, and appreciate the environment through hikes and explorations around East Falls, using natural materials to create amazing artwork. From McMichael Park to the Wissahickon Trail and beyond, we love to get outside and create.

It's all about the journey, not just the finished product!



Location Details

NATURE ARTS SUMMER CAMP
3800 VAUX STREET, PHILADELPHIA, 19129

East Falls Presbyterian Church (located at that corner of Vaux St. and Midvale Ave. in East Falls) is the homebase for Nature Arts Camp this summer. We have exclusive access to their facilities during camp, including the auditorium, classrooms, and outdoor space.

We explore green spaces in East Falls and occasionally in the Wissahickon during our daily outings. If a day trip to the Wiss is planned, we will provide information in advance.

Sample Schedule

8:30-9:30 Drop-off @ EF Presbyterian Church (3800 Vaux Street, 19129)
9:30-10:00 Morning Meeting // Ice-Breaker Games // Announcements
10:00-12:00 Small Groups // Morning Activity & Exploration
12:00-1:00 Lunch // Quiet Time
1:00-2:15 Afternoon Activity & Exploration
2:00-2:30 Afternoon Meeting // Clean up // Pack for home
2:30-3:00 Pick-up @ EF Presbyterian Church

*Campers will experience nature, art, and sensory play activities throughout the summer. Each day is unique, while each week focuses on a theme (see previous page).

How to Prepare

PACKING CHECKLIST:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insulated Water Bottle | <input type="checkbox"/> Towel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insulated Lunch Bag | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen (LBELED) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch & Snacks (high-protein, low-sugar) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bug Spray (LBELED) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Play Clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> Sun Han |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Change of Clothes | |

→ **LABEL ALL ITEMS!** A lost & found bin will be located at the entrance. Unclaimed items will be donated.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

- Dress your child in durable clothes and shoes that can get dirty and are good for walking.
- Avoid open-toe or slippery-soled shoes (no Crocs).
- No tie shoes unless your child can tie them independently.
- Rain gear required for predicted inclement weather.
- Prioritize high-protein, low-sugar foods.
- Only send easily peelable foods your child can eat independently (e.g., fruits).

Policies & Procedures

ARRIVALS – Our camp day begins at 9, campers may arrive anytime between 8:30 and 9. Please ensure your child arrives by 9 to avoid disruptions to our program. If you plan a late arrival, kindly let us know in advance. Drop-off takes place at the main entrance of Nature Arts Home Base, the double doors on the first level, where goodbyes occur.

For safety reasons, we kindly request that adults avoid entering the building during drop-off. Thank you for helping us maintain a secure and smooth process.

DEPARTURES – Our camp programming wraps up at 2:45, pickup time is between 2:45 and 3:00. If you need to pick up your camper before 2:45 for any reason, please let us know in advance. Keep in mind that your child might be on an outing or engrossed in an activity. Pickups take place in our side yard. Please ensure your child has all their belongings, our camp staff is here to help retrieve anything left inside.

A late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for any pickups after 3:00PM. We kindly request that late fees be settled before your child's arrival the following day.

EXTRA CARE OPTIONS – Extra Care is available on a day-by-day basis. To ensure availability, please register for Extra Care at least two weeks before each camp week. The cost for Before Care (7:30-8:30) is \$10/day, and for After Care (3:00-5:30) it is \$20/day. The payment for Extra Care is due at the time of booking.

SUN, MOSQUITOES & TICKS – Please apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent prior to camp. Counselors will apply as needed with permission (see Registration Form). While ticks have not posed a problem in the past, we suggest that tick checks be done when campers are home to prevent Lyme disease or other tick-borne illnesses.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS – At Nature Arts Camp, we understand that plans may change. Our cancellation policy is designed to balance the limited availability of camp spaces with our commitment to fair wages for our dedicated staff. Please review the following cancellation guidelines:

- **Before April 1st:** If you need to cancel your registration before April 1st, you have the option to receive a full camp credit or a refund, minus a \$50 processing fee.
- **From April 1st to May 31st:** Changes to your registration can be made during this period, subject to space availability, with a \$50 processing fee. Refunds are not available during this time.
- **After May 31st:** Unfortunately, we are unable to offer refunds for cancellations made after May 31st.

For extenuating circumstances or special requests, please contact us at camp@RutabagaPhilly.com. We're here to assist you and ensure that your camp experience aligns with your needs. Your understanding of our cancellation policy is greatly appreciated, as it helps us provide a seamless experience for all campers.

CAMPER CODE OF CONDUCT – Our camp environment is informal and fun, but structured. Campers will be informed of Nature Arts and etiquette upon arrival. All campers are expected to respect each other, as well as the Camp staff, facilities, and environment on our outings. Disruptive behavior affects the fun, safety, and overall quality of the camp experience. In the event of repeated misbehavior, counselors will notify the parent/guardians and request that the camper be picked up or dismissed.

MEDICATIONS – We require a written note from the primary caregiver and doctor listing all the medications and over the counter products that may be given to your child. Any prescription medication given by us, must be

in its original prescription container. The caregiver must complete a medication form, permitting staff to administer the medication as prescribed.

SAFETY & MEDICAL INFORMATION – Nature Arts is an outdoor, "rough and tumble" program where the children are encouraged to climb, hike, jump, run and especially get dirty during outdoor play. It is expected that the children may get bumps and bruises, which are signs that your child is active and taking reasonable risks. Additionally, nature interpretation and hikes may have hidden dangers (including but not limited to: risk of bee stings, poison ivy, ankle sprains, and exposure to ticks and mosquitoes). Camp staff are trained in administering first aid, and will contact authorized medical personnel in the case of an emergency.

CLEANLINESS + HYGIENE – Summer Nature Arts Camp follows recommendations from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the CDC, and the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Below are the key practices as well as Nature Arts' interpretation:

1. We clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, shared objects, and ensure safe and correct use and storage of disinfectants.
2. Promote healthy habits including hand hygiene – campers and staff will wash their hands during each transition (i.e. entering the building, before + after snack, toileting, etc.) Staff will keep hand sanitizer on their person when outdoors.
3. Families must report any symptoms or possible COVID exposure ASAP, no exceptions.
4. Plan for when someone becomes sick. If a child, household member, or staff member displays COVID symptoms or exposure, they cannot attend camp until a negative COVID-19 test and standard return criteria are met. Common COVID symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, cough, loss of taste/smell, and more. Safety is our priority, and we appreciate your cooperation.

ILLNESS – We follow health recommendations from local authorities. Please keep them home if they show these symptoms before camp. If your child exhibits symptoms such as discharge from eyes/ears, red eyes, vomiting or diarrhea, any rash with blisters, or signs of cold/illness, we may require them to go home.

If your child becomes sick during Nature Arts hours, you will be contacted immediately. You may be asked to come for the child depending on the severity of symptoms. *A 24-hour symptom-free period, without medication, is required after fever breaks.*

LOST PROPERTY – We understand that belongings can sometimes go missing during the excitement of camp activities. To assist in the recovery of lost items, please ensure all your child's belongings, including clothing, water bottles, backpacks, and personal items, are labeled with their name. In the event of lost property, promptly notify our camp staff, who will assist in searching the campsite and designated areas. We maintain a Lost and Found area at Nature Arts Camp, where recovered items are stored. To claim a lost item, please contact us as soon as possible, and we'll arrange for retrieval during camp hours or at a later date. Unclaimed lost items will be held for four weeks after the camp session ends, after which they may be donated to a local charity or disposed of, depending on the item's nature.

IMAGE RELEASE – We may use images and updates from camp activities to share the daily camp experience with all caregivers and for marketing purposes. These images and updates may be posted on our website, social media, newsletters, and flyers. In this regard, unless you've explicitly noted, you give us permission to do so.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS - Child care providers are required by law to report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate agencies. It is then the responsibility of that agency to conduct an investigation.

LIABILITY INFORMATION – You understand the mission and goal of Nature Arts is to inspire meaningful connections between people, nature, and art. Through our program, your child will be provided the opportunity to develop by learning to take risks, judge their limits, and practice responsibility both in our indoor and outdoor space. Every reasonable precaution will be taken by the staff to prevent serious accidents and injuries. However, you understand the implied risk of exploring outdoors and you will not hold Nature Arts (including Rutabaga Toy Library) staff, or other parents/caregivers liable for accidents. In participating in this program, you (the parent or legal guardian) recognize that the activities at Nature Arts may involve physical and outdoor activity and grant permission for your child to participate in all activities of the program and to walk parks and other outdoor spaces within the neighborhood. In consideration of allowing your child to participate in its activities, you assume all risks and hazards incidental to such participation, including the risk of serious injury to the child, and do hereby waive on the child’s behalf and on behalf of yourself and other relatives of the child, any and all claims relating to such participation against Rutabaga Toy Library, its employees, organizers, and other participants. Rutabaga Toy Library or its representative has your permission, in an emergency where you cannot be located immediately, to transport your child at your expense to the emergency room of the nearest hospital. The hospital and its staff have your permission to provide treatment that is deemed necessary for the well-being of your child.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ARE STAFF REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A BACKGROUND CHECK?

We take the protection and security of our visitors and campers very seriously. All Rutabaga staff are vetted through a three-point background check (state, federal, child abuse).

CAN I SEND MY CHILD HOME WITH ANOTHER PARENT?

Anyone picking up your child must be listed in your approved contacts that we have on file. If your pickup routine is different one day, please be sure to inform camp staff at the time of drop-off.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN IT IS RAINING?

Although we will venture outdoors unless it’s storming, we will move indoors for activities like games, crafts, snack and lunch. Please send raincoats, as well as extra clothes and shoes if it is a day when your child might get wet.

WHAT DO YOU DO DURING EXTREME HEAT?

We prioritize the safety and well-being of our campers during extreme heat. We closely monitor the weather conditions and follow heat index guidelines to ensure their safety. During hot weather, we provide ample shade, encourage hydration, modify schedules to avoid the hottest times of the day, and incorporate cool-down activities. Our trained staff is knowledgeable about heat-related illnesses and takes appropriate measures to keep the children safe. Please dress your child in lightweight clothing on these days.

CAN I PACK PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY?

Yes. We are not peanut-free. We strongly discourage campers from sharing lunches or snacks and will place campers with peanut allergies at separate peanut-free tables per parent request. If your child does have food allergies, please let us know.

CAN MY CHILD BRING A “COMFORT” TOY?

To ensure a smooth transition and a positive experience for all campers, we kindly ask that personal toys not be brought to camp. This helps prevent conflicts, misplaced items, and departure difficulties. We understand that each child is unique, so please communicate any concerns or special needs regarding your child's transition. Our staff is here to provide individualized support. If your child requires specific items for medical or therapeutic purposes, please contact our camp administration in advance.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE A QUESTION?

Any camp programming, scheduling, or enrollment related questions can be emailed to Camp@RutabagaPhilly.com. If it's an urgent question that needs a response that day, it's best to send Krystal a text at (717)253-0248.