



School & Nature RVA

Parent's Co-op group

Information & Presentation

Welcome to School & Nature RVA : Where Education Meets the Outdoors

Imagine a classroom with no walls, where the sun is the ceiling and the trees are the chalkboards. At School & Nature RVA, learning happens outdoors, in our beautiful Nature Areas. Our program is designed to nurture each child's academic, emotional, social, and personal development while fostering a love for the environment 🌳☀️

Join us and let your child explore : Outdoor learning helps children develop leadership, teamwork, and critical thinking : skills they'll carry with them far beyond the classroom

1. Our Mission and Philosophy

At School & Nature RVA, we are not simply offering outdoor time—we are rethinking what education can feel like for a child.

Our mission is to create an environment where children grow into **capable, confident, and grounded individuals**, through a daily connection to nature, movement, and meaningful learning.

We believe children thrive when:

- Their bodies are **active and engaged**, not confined
- Learning is **connected to real life**, not abstract and fragmented
- They are trusted to explore, try, fail, and grow outdoor
- They feel **safe, seen, and supported**

This summer program is intentionally small and simple.

It is not about doing more—it is about doing things **better**.

Instead of separating subjects, we guide children through experiences where everything is connected:

- A moment at the creek becomes science, problem-solving, and confidence
- Caring for animals becomes responsibility, empathy, and routine
- Exploring the forest becomes movement, creativity, and resilience

Our approach blends:

- **Outdoor, nature-based learning**
- **Child-led exploration with strong guidance**
- **Structured moments for academic growth**
- **Daily focus on emotional and personal development**

We are not trying to recreate a traditional classroom outside.

We are creating something different, a place where children can **build real skills, real confidence, and a real connection to the world around them.**

2. Program Overview

Age Group : 5 to 9 years old

 **Group Size :** Maximum 10–12 children - Ratio - 1 teacher for 6 children

 **Schedule Options :**

1, 2 or 3 days a week - Drop-off available

Half Day : 9am - 12/12.30 or 1pm - 4pm

or Full Day – Drop-off available : 9am - 4pm

 **Student's abilities requirements :**

- Follow teacher directions and respond appropriately to safety instructions.
- Stay with the group and respect established boundaries.
- Use the bathroom independently, including recognizing when they need to go, managing clothing, and washing their hands.
- Clearly communicate when they are hurt, unwell, thirsty, hungry, uncomfortable, or need help.
- Participate willingly in an outdoor program and arrive prepared for different weather conditions.
- Respect teachers, classmates, animals, materials, and the natural environment.
- Accept guidance and redirection without disrupting the group.

Age Group : 2,5 to 5 years old

 Group Size : Maximum 8 children - Ratio - 1 teacher for 4 children

 Schedule Options :

1 or 2 Half days a week - Drop-off available : : 9am - 12/12.30

 Student's abilities requirements :

- Be fully potty trained and able to use the bathroom independently (including basic clothing management and hand washing).
- Follow simple two-step directions (for example: "Put your backpack away and come sit on the log.")
- Listen to and follow teacher instructions, especially those related to safety.
- Stay with the group and respond when their name is called.
- Express their basic needs verbally (Hungry, Thirsty, Bathroom, Hurt)

 Location : Mechanicsville (Westwood / Old Church area)

Private land with forest, creek, and outdoor learning classrooms, Indoor space available for: Bathrooms and Weather safety.

3. Learning Approach and Curriculum

Our 15 Learning Pillars

All activities are designed to naturally develop:

1. Mathematics & Logic
2. Literacy & Communication
3. Science, Natural Systems, Geography & Earth Systems
4. Nature & Survival Skills
5. Practical Life Skills
6. Financial Literacy
7. Emotional Intelligence
8. Community & Leadership
9. Physical Development
10. Art & Creativity
11. Critical Thinking
12. Ethics & Responsibility
13. Innovation & Design
14. Mindfulness & Self-Development
15. Languages and Cultures

 This means children are always learning multiple skills at once, in a way that **feels natural and engaging**.

Our Curriculum - Learning Through the Seasons

At School & Nature RVA, learning follows the rhythm of nature.
Each season brings its own topics, energy, and opportunities for discovery.

Through the year, children explore themes such as:

Spring: growth, life cycles, planting, renewal
Summer: water, ecosystems, outdoor skills, abundance
Fall: harvest, food systems, preparation, transformation
Winter: resilience, stillness, survival, reflection

Even in our summer program, children naturally experience: the creek, the garden, the animals, and the forest as their main learning environment.

How the 15 Pillars Are Integrated

Our 15 pillars are not taught as separate subjects throughout the day.

Instead, they are all connected within the same theme, allowing children to move through the day with coherence and meaning.

This creates: A natural flow between activities, A deeper understanding of what they are learning, A day that respects both their physical energy and cognitive rhythm

Each moment of the day builds on the previous one, so children don't feel like they are "switching subjects," but rather going deeper into the same experience.

Example of a Theme in Practice

Theme: Water & Creek Exploration

The same experience evolves through the pillars:

In the morning, children move, explore the creek, climb, balance → Physical Development

They observe water flow, insects, environment → Science & Natural Systems

They build small dams or redirect water → Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

They measure, compare, estimate → Mathematics & Logic

They describe what they see, share ideas → Literacy & Communication

They collaborate, take turns, solve small conflicts → Community & Emotional Intelligence

Later, this can extend into:

Drawing what they observed → Art & Creativity

Reflecting on the experience → Mindfulness & Self-Development

Our Educators

Who remembers that one teacher you loved?

The one who made you love what they were teaching—simply because **they loved it so much themselves**.

This is exactly who we look for.

At School & Nature RVA, our educators are **passionate people** who don't just teach—they **invite children into an adventure of learning and discovery**.

They are not aligned with traditional indoor education.

They choose to be here because they want something more—
a way of teaching that is **alive, real, and deeply connected to children**.

They believe that:

- Children learn best **outside, through real experiences**
- Education should be **engaging, meaningful, and human**
- A strong connection between **teachers, children, and families** changes everything

Our educators are not simply filling a role.

They are **part of the vision**.

They bring their energy, their passion, and their desire to contribute to something bigger—
a different kind of education, and a better future for children.

4. Tuition & Fees

Our summer program is offered on a **monthly basis**, with flexible attendance options:

Monthly Tuition

- 1 half-day per week → \$190 / month
- 2 half-days per week (or 1 full day) → \$380 / month
- 3 half-days per week (or 1.5 day) → \$570 / month
- 4 half-days per week (or 2 full days) → \$570 / month
- 5 half-days per week (or 2.5 days) → \$760 / month

👉 A half-day is either:

- Morning: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Afternoon: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

👉 A full day is

- 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Trial day : \$45

Enrollment Fee : \$50 (one-time, non-refundable)

Notes

- Tuition is **due before the 1st of each month** to secure your child's spot
- Monthly tuition is **non-refundable**, including in case of absence
- Tuition reserves your child's spot for the month
- Limited spots available to maintain a **small, high-quality group**

5. Safety & Environment

At School & Nature RVA, safety is a priority—especially in an outdoor environment where children are free to explore, move, and engage with the world around them.

We create a space that is both **safe and empowering**, where children can take appropriate risks, build confidence, and develop independence within clear boundaries.

Safety Expectations

Children must:

- Be able to follow instructions
- Be aware of basic safety rules in an outdoor setting
- Be comfortable navigating natural environments (uneven ground, water, weather)

Our educators provide:

- Clear guidelines and boundaries
 - Active supervision
 - Support adapted to each child's needs
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Behavior Expectations

To maintain a safe and positive group dynamic, children are expected to:

- Treat others with **kindness and respect**
- Participate in a cooperative and supportive way

Verbal or physical aggressive behavior is not allowed in order to maintain a **calm, safe, and respectful environment** for all children at all time.

Drop-Off Policy

- **Children 5 years and older** may be dropped off
 - **Parents are welcome to stay on site at any time** (we simply ask that parents do not interfere with the teaching or group dynamic)
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Weather Preparedness

We embrace outdoor learning in all weather conditions.

Children must come prepared with:

- Weather-appropriate clothing (rain, cold, heat)

Indoor space is available when needed for:

- Safety
- Weather (If too hot outside to enjoy and learn)
- Bathroom

Join the Adventure Today!

Give your child the opportunity to grow academically, socially, and emotionally while developing a deep connection to nature. 🌿✨

Contact Us:

- **Phone:** 804-791-8439
- **Email:** schoolnaturerva@gmail.com
- **Website:** www.schoolnaturerva.com
- **Social Media:** Follow us on Facebook for updates and photos of daily adventures.

Experience the magic of nature-based learning with a certified teacher who understands how to inspire and nurture every child's potential. 🌈

Agreement and Signature:

- **Parent /Guardian Name :** _____
- **Parent /Guardian Signature :** _____
- **Date :** _____

10. The science behind outdoor learning

Learning outside has been scientifically shown to be beneficial for children in several ways, which can be attributed to various factors related to physical health, cognitive development, and emotional well-being.

1. **Enhanced Cognitive Function and Focus:** Research has shown that spending time in natural environments can improve cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and problem-solving. Nature has a calming effect that reduces mental fatigue, allowing children to focus better and for longer periods. This is supported by studies indicating that exposure to natural settings helps improve children's concentration and cognitive performance in tasks.
2. **Physical Health and Motor Skills:** Outdoor learning naturally incorporates physical activity, which is crucial for children's physical development. Activities like running, climbing, and exploring diverse terrains help develop motor skills, balance, and coordination. Regular physical activity also promotes cardiovascular health and helps prevent obesity, which can be more challenging to integrate into indoor learning environments.
3. **Reduced Stress and Improved Mental Health:** Nature exposure has been linked to lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. For children, being outside in a natural setting can provide a sense of freedom and reduce the pressure they might feel in a more structured indoor environment. The presence of natural elements like trees, water, and open spaces has been shown to decrease cortisol levels (a marker of stress) and promote overall well-being.
4. **Enhanced Social Skills and Collaboration:** Outdoor learning often involves group activities that encourage teamwork, communication, and social interaction. In an outdoor setting, children are more likely to engage in unstructured play and cooperative games, which can enhance their social skills and emotional intelligence.
5. **Connection to Nature and Environmental Stewardship:** Regular exposure to nature fosters a deeper connection to the environment, which is crucial for developing a sense of responsibility and stewardship for the natural world. This connection is harder to cultivate in indoor settings and is increasingly recognized as vital for raising environmentally conscious future generations.
6. **Improved Academic Performance:** Some studies suggest that children who engage in outdoor learning and play perform better academically. The combination of physical activity, enhanced focus, and reduced stress contributes to better learning outcomes and can make children more receptive to educational content when they return to more formal indoor settings.
7. **Sensory Engagement and Creativity:** Being outside engages all the senses—sight, sound, smell, touch—which can lead to more immersive learning experiences. This sensory engagement can stimulate creativity and imagination, as children are inspired by the changing environment and the endless possibilities of the natural world.

In summary, learning outside supports children's holistic development by enhancing cognitive function, physical health, emotional well-being, and social skills. These benefits make outdoor learning an invaluable complement to traditional indoor education.