



Little Naturalists Program

Frequently Asked Questions

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What are the program hours?

The Little Naturalist program is a 3 day program - Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week. Drop-off is at 9:00 AM and pickup is at noon, 12:00 PM.

How can I sign my child up for the Little Naturalist program?

You can download our camp application on our website. It can be mailed in with payment dropped off in person. Alternatively, you can sign up online on our website.

If you sign up digitally, you can pay using Paypal, but please make sure to complete the payment or the form will not be submitted. After completing the physical or online application, you will receive a confirmation letter to your email address. Both the PDF application and the online form contain the same information, so you only need to complete one.

What should I pack for the day?

Please send an individual drink and snack with your child each day with his or her name clearly labelled. A labelled lunch box is also sufficient. We typically take a snack break at 10 AM or 10:30 AM. Please do not send peanut products as a snack. Please do not send large backpacks with changes of clothes or shoes. If possible, please pack reusable/recyclable items to help reduce waste. Electronics or toys may get misplaced, please leave these items at home. If your child has allergies that require an EpiPen, please make sure to write this in the medical section of our application, and pack the EpiPen with your child everyday. Counselors will be aware of this and will carry the EpiPen in our First Aid kit.

How should I dress my child for the Little Naturalist program?

Although we will spend our time outside for the majority of the day, we will not be getting wet or muddy as our older campers do! Children must wear close toed shoes (flip-flops, crocs, and sandals are not permitted) and we recommend dressing for the weather. If sunny, hats are more than welcome, but please apply sunscreen and bug spray at home. If raining, please send your child with a rain jacket and comfortable shoes. If there is heavy rain or thunder, we will spend our day safely indoors.

What kinds of activities will you do during the program ?

This program is designed to introduce and immerse young children in nature through outdoor exploration, hands on activities, games, crafts, and meeting many of the Refuge animals up close. The children will learn respect for the natural world and will have lots of fun in the process. A variety of topics will be introduced to the children including forest and pond habitats, food chains, local plants and animals, birds, mammals, reptiles, animal defenses and adaptations, composting and recycling. Each day of the program we will meet a resident animal, go on a hike, and make a craft to take home.

At what age can my child join the Little Naturalist program?

This program is for children ages 4, 5 and 6 years old. Children MUST be 4 years old at the time of camp. If your child is older than 6 years old, please look at our Summer Ecology Program camp for more information on programs for children older than 6.

I want to sign my child up for multiple sessions of the Little Naturalist camp, but will the activities be different from previous weeks?

Yes! Our educators like to keep track of children who have come to camp before and plan our lessons to make sure that we'll be doing new and exciting activities! Of course, the hikes and the animals at the Refuge will stay the same, but there is always something new to see!

How many children will be in the camp?

Our registration varies from week to week, but typically we have between 10 - 20 children during any given session. This may change depending on best practices for camp group sizes from the CDC.

I have a child in the Summer Ecology Program and a younger child in Little Naturalists. Who do I pick up first?

Please pick up your Little Naturalist before picking up your child from the Summer Ecology Program. Thank you!

How many instructors will be teaching during my child's camp week?

During each camp week, there will be at least 2 adult educators, and up to 4 volunteer teenage assistant counselors. Adult educators are certified in First Aid and CPR.

I'm concerned about my child getting bit by ticks. What can I do to prevent tick bites?

Ticks are a part of our natural ecosystem and while we can appreciate that they are often food for other animals, we understand your concern. Throughout the camp day, we teach children how to avoid ticks, by walking in the center of the trail, wearing long white socks and light colored clothing. Because other beneficial insects can be affected by bug spray, please apply these products at home, before coming to camp. Throughout the day, we will take breaks to look at our shoes and legs and do a tick check, and we recommend that you do the same when your child gets home. Please find tick identification resources in the Nature Center for more information.

My child has separation anxiety. Can I stay with him/her for the duration of the camp day?

We absolutely understand that for many Little Naturalists, this may be one of the first times away from mom and dad. We have experience encouraging children to participate in our daily adventures and are happy to work with you to make this a positive experience for your child. In our experience, we've found that parents who stay with the camp prolong the separation anxiety for both your child and other campers who might miss their parents. Instead, we recommend you stay close, take a walk around the Refuge trails, and we will contact you if any issues arise.

I signed my child up for camp but now our plans have changed. Can I receive a refund?

Refunds will be granted if cancellations are received at least two weeks prior to the start of the camp session (minus \$25 processing fee). Due to processing times, any cancellations made within two weeks of the camp session will not receive a refund. Changing the camp session that your child is signed up for will result in a \$25 processing fee.