



Parent Handbook

Revised March, 2008

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Mission Statement

Wild Bear Center for Nature Discovery is a nonprofit, tax exempt corporation offering year round hands on, educational programs to people of all ages to foster a life long appreciation of the environment and to promote an environmentally aware, responsible and ecologically sound community.

Location

Wild Bear's Executive office is located in Nederland Community Center. Wild Bear's classroom is located in the Discovery Lab in Nederland Elementary School. The education office is located at the entrance of the NES Library.

Contact Information

Registrar's office: 303-258-7092 X242, Education office: 303-258-7092x242, **Discovery Lab: 303-258-7092 x237**, Wild Bear voice mail: 303-258-0495, and Executive Director, Jill Dreves cell: 303-588-0299

School Year Hours

M-F 10:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m., Afterschool 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Days off from school: 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Summer Program Hours

M-F 8:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Aftercare 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (if available).

Statement of Policy

Wild Bear Center for Nature Discovery is a non-profit organization providing year round hands on educational programs to people of all ages to foster a lifelong appreciation of the environment and to promote an environmentally aware, responsible and ecologically sound community. Wild Bear is licensed as a School Age Child Care program by the Colorado State Department of Social Services. Most of our programs operate at a capacity of between 12 and 21 children. We strive to maintain an adult/child ratio of 1:8. Enrollment is available to any child and for any program as space is available. Wild Bear reserves the right to cancel programs when enrollment is less than five children.

Wild Bear History

In 1995, Wild Bear has been committed to serving the community, by providing top quality and affordable educational programs for families, by collaborating with other organizations to reach a broader audience, and by creating a community driven process to plan a low impact nature center facility at the gateway of the 3,200 acres of Mud Lake Open Space and Caribou Ranch Open space.

In 2007, Wild Bear provided environmental education opportunities to more than 11,000 people of all ages throughout the region. This includes our family workshops: the Enchanted Forest and Wild Earth Saturday as well as its successful year round workshops for youth. Wild bear provided 246 days of service to working families, providing after school, holiday and summer programs to youth. Wild Bear has a strong scholarship program and 25% of year round participants receive free or reduced program tuition rates.

The long-term vision from Wild Bear's modest beginnings in 1995 is to create a nature center facility in the mountains near Nederland.

Our Curriculum

Wild Bear programs not only provide environmental education to people of all ages, they also provide an educational venue during times when children are not in school. Wild Bear bases all learning experiences on the Constructivist Learning Theory. This honors background experiences

and provides discovery learning opportunities. Children are always given the opportunity to share their knowledge with others. One of the most important goals of our curriculum is to encourage students to become lifelong learners, discovering the amazing wonders of nature. We strive to foster independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners, instilling an intrinsic love for learning.

Wild Bear forms curriculum around the following styles of learning:

- *Linguistic: reading, writing, telling stories
- *Logical/Mathematical: experiments, problem solving, reasoning/logic
- *Spatial: drawing, building, designing, puzzles, using their imagination
- *Musical: singing, instruments, sounds, rhythm
- *Kinesthetic: moving around, games, dance, sports, body language
- *Interpersonal: group/teamwork, communicating, sharing, cooperating
- *Intrapersonal: journaling individual work, working in an independent self-paced instruction.
- *Naturalistic: discriminate among living things as well as sensitivity to natural world features.

Developing an understanding of science makes it possible for people to share in the richness and excitement of comprehending the natural world. A sound foundation in science strengthens many of the skills that successful people use every day, such as creative problem solving strategies, critical thinking, cooperative problem solving, and valuing life-long learning.

Learning is play. Learning is fun. Play is learning....

Staff

We believe strongly in positive, enthusiastic, experienced role models for your children. The members of our teaching staff bring higher education degrees and rich experiences to Wild Bear. Our staff hold undergraduate and graduate degrees in Environmental Science, Art, Environmental Conservation and Museum and Field Studies. All Staff are annually certified in both CPR and First Aid and all Wild Bear staff are required to receive background checks before they are allowed to work with children.

Instructors are responsible for creating program curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for the program audience (children, teens, adults, families). Instructors attend weekly and monthly staff meetings, have established weekly planning times and are encouraged to attend professional development courses throughout the year to learn new curriculum and teaching strategies. Prior to the summer program, the summer staff participates in a full week of training and orientation in order to understand behavioral management policies and work as a team to create a well-rounded program for your child.

Wild Bear staff is available to share information concerning your child on a daily basis. Parent conferences are not found to be a necessity at Wild Bear, however conferences may be arranged at any time. We welcome your input, as you are the foremost expert about your child's needs.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Resolved, that Wild Bear Center for Nature Discovery Board of Directors hereby affirms and shall enforce a non-discrimination policy which Wild Bear shall not fail or refuse participation because of the race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, or mental or physical disability of such individual or such individual's friends or associations; but with regard to mental or physical disability, it is not discrimination for Wild Bear to act as provided in this paragraph if there is no reasonable accommodation that the Corporation can make with regard to the disability, the disability actually disqualifies the individual from program participation and the disability has a significant impact on program participation.

Hikes

If Wild Bear has planned to take your child on a hike, please send your child with hiking boots or comfortable shoes, a backpack with a sack lunch and snack, plenty of water, sunscreen, sunglasses, sneakers or snow boots, extra layers of clothing, rain or snow gear. Your child's experience will be much more enjoyable if they are prepared. Please sunscreen your child each morning before they leave your care.

How to Come Prepared

Participants enjoy a rich variety of scientific studies such as Entomology, Ornithology, Hydrology, etc. supplemented with guest scientists and hands on activities. Children should come prepared each day for an active outdoor experience. Each day students should bring lunch, snacks, backpack, plenty of water, sunscreen, comfortable walking shoes, rain gear, sunglasses... and a positive attitude.

Registration Policies

- You may register on our website, www.wildbear.org, or you may send in a completed Registration Form along with full payment. (Please contact Wild Bear for payment plan information).
- When we receive your Registration Form and payment, we will send you program confirmation and a registration packet.
- In the event a class is full, your child's name may be added to a waiting list and you will be notified promptly if a space becomes available.
- All Program attendees must fill out the following Wild Bear forms prior to attending.

Forms for Registration

Before your child's first day at Wild Bear we must receive the following **completed** forms:

- _____ 1. Parent Contract /Policies
- _____ 2. Intake Form
- _____ 3. Authorization Form
- _____ 4. Health Form
- _____ 5. Copy of your child's birth certificate (Nederbugs & Chautauqua ONLY)
- _____ 6. Copy of Immunization records signed by the child's physician (new participants ONLY)
- _____ 7. Form indicating that you have read the parent handbook
- _____ 8. Medication Form (if applicable)

Program Policies

See policies initialed on the Program Contract found in the Wild Bear Forms Please sign up for all programs at least 48 hours in advance. It is important for us to know the number of children attending programs. When we know in advance we can staff the program appropriately and supply it with the right amount of materials. We also can know in advance if less than our minimum number of 5 children have signed up where we need to cancel a program. This allows us to inform families so that they can make alternative arrangements.

Cancellations

If weather threatens the safety of Wild Bear patrons, programs may be cancelled at the discretion of a Wild Bear staff member and approved by the Executive Director. Participants will be reimbursed for all programs that Wild Bear has decided to cancel.

When a family has registered and paid for a program and decides to cancel, fees will be refunded if cancellation is made at least 3 weeks prior to the program. After that fees will be refunded only if your child's space can be filled. In all cases, a \$25.00 administrative fee will be retained.

Child Pick up/Drop off Policy

A sign in/sign out sheet (in the Nederland Elementary School Office, near the door of the main classroom or with your shuttle driver) must be signed by an authorized person listed in the child's files when the child is dropped off and again when the child is picked up. Under State law, according to the Department of Social Services and Colorado Department of Health, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to leave and pick up their child and to ensure that the staff has been acknowledged of the fact that their child has arrived or left.

If any other person other than the child's parent or guardian is to pick up the child, the Wild Bear staff must be notified in writing. If an emergency situation should arise, verbal notification is sufficient. This individual must be listed within the child's file or a personal note must be written from the parent. Staff is required to check identification and receive permission from the parent before children can be released to unknown individuals.

Late Pick Up Policy

Parents are required to pick up their child by the program's end. See individual program brochures to be sure of end time for your child's program. In the event that an authorized person does not pick up the child by the designated time, late fees will be charged. Should a parent continuously pick up after closing hours, a late charge will be assessed at \$5 for every 5 minutes (see financial policy). If an authorized person does not pick up the child by 15 minutes, parents are called. If 1/2 hour from the school's closing time, staff will call the emergency contact listed in the child's file. If an authorized person does not pick up the child by one hour from the school's closing time, Social Services will be called and the child will be placed in protective custody. The child will be released to parents or authorized persons at the discretion of Social Services.

Financial Policies

The Wild Bear Federal Tax ID is # 84-1352764

To reserve a spot in any program, the program fee must be paid in full. If payment is not made and the child has participated in a program, a bill will be sent. Any balances that are past due will be assessed an additional 5% late fee. It is never our intention to charge a large fee for our services, but as a small nonprofit Wild Bear struggles to continue to provide quality educational programs. Payment plans can be arranged, if necessary.

Wild Bear is a member of Boulder and Gilpin County CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program). Contact them at 303-604-1043 to find out if you are eligible. Wild Bear also offers 1/2 price to all federally identified free and reduced lunch participants.

Prices

Tuition fees make up 50% of our total annual budget and the rest of our revenues come from grants, donations, and events. As a small nonprofit, our fees are comparable to most of the other programs in the Front Range. Wild Bear incorporates all materials fee costs into the tuition fee. Occasionally, however, we need to charge additionally for Full Day and Summer Programs to offset extra program costs such as snowshoe rentals, skiing fees, swimming, museum admission fees, and photo developing. You will be informed at time of registration if additional fees will be assessed for the program for which you enroll.

A 10% discount is applied to the fees for the second (+) child within a family who is enrolled in a program.

Visitor Policy

All visitors to the school must sign in and out on our visitor sign-in sheet located at the entrance of Nederland Elementary School. Visitors must list name, address, time of visit, purpose of visit and wear a volunteer badge.

Discipline Policy

Wild Bear follows a philosophy of preventative discipline. Students are shown that we care for them by providing consistent, high expectations. Personal relationships and using a sense of humor usually prevent children from choosing to misbehave. Conflicts between students are handled privately. We utilize conflict resolution strategies when solving problems between children. The Golden Rule of the Wild Bear Behavioral Plan is to discipline with dignity, as no child deserves to be humiliated.

In the event that your child should misbehave at Wild Bear (i.e., physical behavior, profanity, continuous disruptive behavior, defiance of authority) your child will discuss the matter with an instructor. All physical behavior must be documented by an instructor. If the behavior continues, the Executive Director and parents will be notified. A conference will be held with the parent, student, instructor and Executive Director setting clear expectations and problem solving to set strategies to improve behavior. If said behavior continues after the conference, the child will not be accepted back into the program. Refunds are not offered for children who are dismissed due to behavior. Any incident of sexual play between children will be reported to the parents.

Health Policy

For the protection of all children, if illness is noticed after a child's arrival to Wild Bear, the child may be separated from other children until the parent or other authorized person can pick up the child. The ill child's parent will be notified immediately for immediate pick up. When a child is ill, the parent must take responsibility to provide alternate care.

The child may not return that day if the following are detected:

- a) Abdominal pain – Parents will be called if it doesn't lessen in one hour.
- b) Fever – Because a fever over 100.6 is usually a sign of infection, parents will be called to pick up their child.
- c) Vomiting – If a child vomits while at Wild Bear, parents are required to pick up their child.
- d) Rash – Parents will be notified in the case of an unusual rash.
- e) Pink eye/conjunctivitis – Parents will be notified and the child will be sent home. The child should definitely see a doctor because it is very contagious.
- f) Chicken Pox – The child may not return to Wild Bear until blisters have formed scabs.

Wild Bear staff members **may not legally administer** medication to a child (**over the counter or prescribed**) unless accompanied by a Doctor's written notice. Medication forms can be found in your packet of information to be filled out and returned to Wild Bear upon enrollment in programs. The medication prescribed must be in the original container bearing the original pharmacy label, which shows the prescription number, date filled, doctor's name, directions for use method of administration and frequency and the child's name. Medication is kept in a locked storage, out of reach of children, when not being used. When no longer needed, or when expired, medications are returned to the parents or destroyed and parents are notified. Parents will be asked to sign a medication slip for each medication given, noting the time to be given, dose, frequency, method, and number of days to be given. In no case will a Wild Bear staff member administer a dosage in excess of the maximum recommended on the label without written direction by a physician. All administration of medication must be logged in the Medical log.

During a non-life-threatening emergency where medical attention is needed, parents are notified before medical arrangements are made. Parents are responsible for directing staff to the

appropriate medical service and parents are responsible for all medical expenses. If parents cannot be reached, the emergency contacts listed in the child's file will be contacted. If none can be reached, appropriate medical services will be arranged as needed in accordance with provisions agreed to by parents on the authorization form in the child's file. **No employee or staff member will ever transport a child for the purposes of medical treatment unless given permission by a parent or guardian.**

Staff are required to fill out an accident report (located in the first aid cabinet in the Discovery Lab) should an accident occur and parents are asked to sign. A copy will be placed in the child's file and a copy will be sent home. All incidents involving a bump to the head shall be communicated with parents.

Medical Emergencies

When an emergency arises, every effort will be made to contact parents, guardians or an emergency contact. In the event of a possibly life threatening emergency, the person in charge will make the decision whether to call emergency medical services (i.e. ambulance, fire, rescue, 911). After emergency medical services are contacted, the parents are contacted and the Wild Bear Director is also notified. CPR and First Aid may be administered to the victim by qualified staff members if needed.

Absences and Tardies

If a child will not be attending Wild Bear due to an illness or other reason, it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to inform the staff. Please call Wild Bear at Nederland Elementary 303-258-7092 X242 to inform us of such occasions! Parents will be required to make other arrangements for care if a child arrives late and thereby misses his or her program due to departure on a field trip. In some instances arrangements may be made for the late child to meet the group if the parent can transport him/her to that location.

Lunch and Snack

Wild Bear does not provide meals to its participants. During Full Day programs and Summer programs, students are required to bring a sack lunch including an extra morning snack. Children are allowed to eat only during designated times. We do not allow children to share food, as it becomes a health issue concerning passing germs and unknown allergies.

Parent Involvement

Parent participation is a great asset to all of our programs. Parents are welcome to visit Wild Bear at any time. This is a great opportunity for us to all work together to ensure an exciting summer for your child. We welcome parents to join any programs. Come join the fun!!!

Play Time

Indoors: Children have choices during playtime to engage in any games, activities or toys that are provided by Wild Bear. Instructors often will organize group games which children can participate in at their own discretion. Wild Bear takes group bathroom breaks. There is a bathroom pass for girls and one for boys should your child need to go outside of the group time. Children are never to leave a room without informing staff of their destination.

Children should wear comfortable play clothes and shoes that will not hinder running, playing or other various activities. Playtime is scheduled every day and included in every Wild Bear program. Toys from home can be brought but are only allowed out during playtime. Children who bring toys must be prepared to share.

Outdoors: Weather permitting, we try to play outside as much as possible. (Children should be prepared for outdoor play including hat, mittens, boots, coat and if appropriate, snow pants. In the wintertime often our outdoor play area is snowy and/or muddy.)

Television and Video

Television is not a part of our programs, however educational videos are sometimes used as a teaching tool. All educational videos are previewed by staff to ensure the appropriate addition to our scientific study. Instructors actively watch with the children and facilitate discussion about the scientific subject matter of the video.

Children's Belongings

Wild Bear provides a place for children to store personal belongings. We recommend that all belongings that come to Wild Bear be labeled with your child's name. Labeled belongings usually end up back with the child.

Lost Belongings

A common sight at Wild Bear is a parent asking a bewildered student "Where did you leave your lunch box?" or "How did you get your shirt dirty?" Please remember they will lose things and get dirty. By minimizing what your child brings to Wild Bear, you will cut down on the amount of lost items. Leave new, expensive things at home. There is a Lost & Found inside the cafeteria at Nederland Elementary for all abandoned items. While we make every effort to be sure your child leaves with what they came with, we cannot be responsible for things left behind at Wild Bear. Expect that your child will be involved in his/her most important work - having fun. This fun may be messy. And, drop by Wild Bear to check the lost and found located in the classroom!

Disaster/Evacuation plan

Fire drills are practiced several times a year at Wild Bear. The fire exit plans are posted in each classroom. It is the instructors' responsibility to know all the exit routes. All staff are trained on procedures in the event of an emergency.

Child Abuse policy

All staff are required to read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse and neglect pursuant to state law and outlining the staff member's personal responsibility to report all incidents of child abuse or neglect according to state law. If staff members have reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect must immediately report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the Boulder County Department of Social Services, Nederland Police Department or Boulder County Sheriff's Department.

If suspected child abuse occurred at Wild Bear, the report of suspected child abuse must be made to the above-recommended agencies. If the suspected child abuse did not occur at Wild Bear, the report of suspected child abuse must be made to the local law enforcement agency in the community in which the incident is believed to have occurred.

If a parent suspects child abuse at the Wild Bear Center for Nature Discovery, it should be immediately reported to the Boulder County Department of Social Services at 303-441-1240 and to the Nederland Police Department at 303-258-3266 or the Boulder County Sheriff Department at 303-441-3650.

Missing/Lost Children

Staff members are required to perform head counts throughout all of our programs. With our small student to staff ratio, it is unlikely that we may be faced with a lost or missing child. However, it is very important for you to know that we do have a procedure and policy should this unfortunate circumstance arise. Staff members will notify the Executive Director immediately

when it is suspected that a child may be missing. Staff will look for the child for 15 minutes. If the child is not located, the Police will be called by dialing 911. After the Police have been notified, the parents will be notified of the situation.

All staff members are trained to be observant and aware of their surroundings. Any suspicious persons or activities will be reported to the Executive Director and appropriate law enforcement immediately.

Program Evaluations

We are open to and embrace any and all feedback. Please feel free to give us feedback at anytime of the year. You may schedule an appointment with a staff member or the Executive Director at any time to discuss your family's needs.

Parents will be asked to fill out evaluations at the end of most programs. Your feedback is vitally important to us and helps us to constantly improve to provide quality programs. Please take the time to tell us how you feel we are doing and provide any suggestions or comments about your expectations of Wild Bear Center for Nature Discovery. We occasionally release surveys if you could please find the time to fill them out we would appreciate it!

To File a Complaint About this Facility Contact:

The Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, Colorado 80203-1714
Or Call
303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876

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