



Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program **2024 Policy Handbook**

Non-Discrimination Policy: Bison Prairie Farms is a non-profit outdoor educational facility. We are a non-accredited private enrichment program. We are not a licensed daycare facility or accredited school, and, therefore, children need to be over 5 to attend without an adult to comply with state regulation. We do not offer official school credit. Participants with special needs are welcome. Accommodations will be considered on a case by case basis.

Our program is open to participants of all race, gender identity, religion, and national origin in a spirit of welcoming and respect for all.

Enrollment Options and Tuition

Age	Program	Rate
Child 5 yrs to 12 years	Drop In or Nature Enrichment / Unit Studies	\$40 per day
Child 5 to 12 years	Microschool	\$165 a week (5 days) \$140 a week (4 days)

(An enrichment group for peer interaction, nature play, and unit-themed play opportunities to supplement your homeschool curriculum.)

(A learning pod that includes academic instruction in core subjects *Math and Language Arts* as well as unit studies.)

2025 Unit Study Topics

Monday & Wednesday: Literature - Folktales and Fables from Around the World

Tuesday: Science - Earth Science and Geology

Thursday: Nature - Woodlands and Meadows

Friday: Art - Shapes, Forms, and Figures

Hours of Operation

- Microschool: M-F 7:30am to 5:30pm
- Nature Enrichment Program event hours are listed in EventBrite registration and vary based on program.
- Law enforcement will be contacted to check on your well being for children not picked up by 15 minutes after the ending of the program.
- No transportation is provided.

Attendance

- We will operate year round with approximately 2 weeks of scattered breaks each quarter rather than 1 long summer break. This is to reduce widely-recognized learning loss that occurs over the summer in a typical school setting.
- Attendance is OPTIONAL. We are not a public school and will not report excessive absences for truancy. HOWEVER, it is imperative that your school-aged child attend as often as possible to make academic progress.

Facility Closures

- A school calendar will be provided upon enrollment.
- Sick days: I reserve up to 5 days of sick leave per calendar year to illnesses of my family or myself. Closures related to illness up to 5 days are still paid. Closures beyond 5 days per year will be refunded.
- I will notify families of any illness symptoms as soon as possible.

- **The 2025 scheduled breaks are as follows:**
 - **January 1-10**
 - **March 17-28**
 - **July 4**
 - **September 8-19**
 - **November 24-28**
 - **December 22-31**
- If you need to take additional days off beyond our regularly scheduled breaks to enjoy a family vacation, a break, or for any other reason -- take it! We encourage 12 weeks off per year at your discretion, meaning **you can choose approximately 3-4 additional weeks** off beyond our scheduled breaks.
- Full tuition is still due regardless of the number of planned absences.
- Full tuition is still due during holidays and breaks.

Meals

- Breakfast will not be served. Your child needs to eat breakfast before arriving.
- **Participants are responsible for bringing a sack lunch.**
- One of the major teachings of a nature program is the respect for our natural environment. Pack it in, take it out. Participants will be responsible for all their own trash. If food items come in single use packaging, the participant will bring the trash home. We encourage the use of reusable containers.
- A microwave and refrigerator are available for use.
- We will provide a morning and an afternoon snack.
- Healthy snacks will be provided by the program, and sometimes these snacks may be items sourced from the farm (eggs / produce / honey / etc.) and not a licensed food packaging facility. If you would like to opt out of locally sourced snacks, please let leadership know. Please include any known allergies in the application form.

Curriculum

Our curricula choices are secular, meaning not taught from any specific religious or cultural worldview. This does not mean it's anti-religion. It simply brings awareness from a factual standpoint of all religions, cultures, traditions, and diverse lived experiences, leaving families individual opportunities to teach and discuss their own personal beliefs.

- Nature Enrichment Program
 - No formal curriculum is covered in the program.
 - Learning opportunities are developed based on individual and group interests and skill levels and will focus more on skills that include, but are not limited to: self-regulation, sustained attention, responsibility, self awareness, risk taking,

conflict resolution, creativity/imagination, gross and fine motor skills, self advocacy, and more.

- There are no grades, report cards, earned credits, or tracking of state learning standards.
- **Microschool**
 - We choose our curricula based on evidence-based research. These curricula may not align with current grade level state standards, but they are effective instructional resources proven to lead to high achievement.
 - Our academic program is designed for children K-5, and all students will receive instruction based on their current level of performance, not necessarily grade level. Not all students will receive instruction in all areas. (Example: grammar starts around grade 3-4, so a younger student would not have grammar instruction.)
 - Unit studies are covered in mixed grade levels and are adapted to current skill level.
 - Children must attend a minimum of 4 days per week to receive instruction in math and English Language Arts (ELA).
 - Math: Saxon
 - Reading and Spelling: All About Learning Press
 - Grammar: Fix It Grammar
 - Handwriting: Handwriting Without Tears
 - Science / Social Studies / Literature / Writing / Art / Nature: Blossom & Root
 - Social emotional / self care / recreation & leisure and other “soft skills” are learned informally through free play and incidental experiences.
 - There are no grades, report cards, earned credits, or tracking of state learning standards.
 - Parents / Guardians will be kept up to date on performance.

Attire

- Participants **MUST** be dressed accordingly for the weather conditions. This includes the HIGH temperature, LOW temperature, WIND CHILL, and PRECIPITATION. Please be weather aware.
- Shoes must be appropriate for running, jumping, climbing, and playing. NO flip flops. Open toe shoes are strongly discouraged. Depending on the season and activity, children may be allowed to play barefoot.
- Participants are responsible for carrying all their own gear, including their own water bottle.
- All participants should bring at least one change of clothes, preferably two.

- For a list of recommended items, please see our [storefront guide](#).

Winter:

Base Layer (wool or synthetic polyester. No cotton!)

Wool Socks

Layer 2 - Fleece jacket / pants

Layer 3 - Insulation layer (puffy or down coat, snow pants)

Layer 4: Hat, mittens, gloves, waterproof boots

Rain:

Rain suit OR Jacket / Pants combo

Waterproof boots

Waterproof brimmed hat

Summer:

Sun protective, lightweight shirt

Hat

Sunglasses

Accessories:

Water Bottle

Lunch box with reusable containers

Backpack to store extra gear

Wet Bag for wet / soiled clothing

Supervision Plan

- The facility is a 6-acre dually permitted residential and business property in rural Abilene, KS. All Nature Enrichment Program activities will take place outdoors unless dangerous weather is present. (See emergency plan.) Microschool activities will take place in the primary residence and outdoors.
- There is one teacher on staff, so there will be periods of time that children will be in charge of their own well-being with the teacher available in an emergency. If more than 10 students enroll, a second teacher will be hired.
- The bathroom is indoors, and use of the restroom is unsupervised. **Participants must be independent in self-care and bathroom hygiene.**
- Free play, meals, and activities will take place in open spaces throughout the property.
- Children will be within hearing distance of the provider at all times, but may not be in visual sight, especially while the teacher is supervising another group requiring more oversight.
- No overnight or extended care is provided unless specifically stated in the event details.
- The property has many animals both wild and domestic including, but not limited to: dogs, cats, chickens, birds, spiders, snakes, bees, wasps, and many other insects.

Updated January 10, 2025

- Qualified substitute teachers, teacher aids, and facilitators may be hired to assist with programming.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Parents/Guardians are responsible for providing:
 - Daily food (lunch)
 - Individual water bottle
 - A change of clothing
 - Weather appropriate clothing and shoes for all weather conditions (coats, hats, boots, rain pants, swimsuits, etc.)
 - Medications
 - Sunscreen / Bug Spray
 - Towel
- Notify the provider of absences or illness.
- Notify the provider at least 7 days in advance when terminating services

Provider Responsibilities

- Bison Prairie Farms will provide:
 - Curricula and school supplies
 - Snacks each day
 - Water Refills
 - Basic Toiletries (toilet paper, soap, etc.)
 - Activities and Supplies
 - Basic First Aid (Band aids, aloe vera, etc.)
- Notify the parents within 1 business day of critical incidents.
- Notify the parents within 7 days of termination of services.

Payment

- Payment is due before participation begins.
- The provider maintains the right to refuse service if payment has not been received.
- A deposit is not required to be added to the waiting list, but it will be required when moving from the waitlist to the participant roster.
- Payment accepted:
 - Through EventBrite (For Nature Enrichment Program)
 - Venmo @BisonPrairieFarms
 - Paypal @ kylie.c.kilmer@gmail.com
 - Cash
- Rates vary depending on the duration of the event.

- An annual rate increase of approximately 1-5% may occur each January 1st.
- As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we welcome donations of school supplies, material goods, services, and monetary donations. Donations are non-refundable.

Refunds

- A full refund is available with at least 7 days notice before a missed Nature Enrichment Program session. Third party website fees are non-refundable.
- No refunds are offered for last minute cancellations or illness.
- We will not close for weather, but we understand if you don't want to risk the drive. If a session is missed due to a weather closure, we will do our best to have a make-up day or will honor ticket transfers to another event, but no refunds are available for weather absences.

Illness

- Children should be kept home when exhibiting the following:
 - Fever / Chills
 - Wet Cough / Runny Nose
 - Sore Throat
 - Vomiting / Diarrhea
 - Undiagnosed Rash
 - Itching / Oozing Eyes or Ears
 - Draining Wounds
 - Head Lice or Other Infestations
 - Any other potentially contagious symptoms.
- Children may not participate until they are symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.
- Parents will be notified to pick up the child if they begin to exhibit symptoms while at our program. A refund will not be provided.
- Parents will be responsible for notifying the provider as soon as possible for illness-related absence.

Inclement Weather

- Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program will operate outdoors in all weather conditions. Parents are responsible for viewing the weather and dressing children appropriately.
- In the event of a major snow/ice where it is deemed unsafe for travel, we encourage families to travel at their own risk. The facility will not be closed. We will honor tickets purchased at another date if available.
- Snow/Ice: In the event of dangerously low wind chills, children will be offered protection from the elements in the outdoor shop with heat. However, please expect at least some outdoor time in all weather. We will be outside even in the snow!
- Extreme Heat: the children will be offered many water breaks and rest in the shaded areas of the property. The shop does not have air conditioning, but we have fans that will give some relief from the sun.
- Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm: In the event of lightning or hail, children will be moved into the covered shop until it is safe to return outside. In the event of a tornado, children will be moved to the residence (built into the ground) to the safest room.
- Parents will be notified as soon as possible when inclement weather impacts opening.

Emergency Procedures

- Fire: A fire extinguisher is located at the shop and in the residence. If a fire is out of control, we will call 911. The designated meeting place in case of a fire is the circle driveway.
- Tornado: Move to the designated shelter area of the home.
- Flood: Follow the direction of emergency personnel for evacuation.
- Injury: Provide basic first aid or CPR if needed. Call 911 for emergencies.
 - Nearest Hospital: Memorial Health Systems of Abilene.
- Threat of Terrorism: Relocate to residence, lock all doors, relocate away from windows, and follow the directions of local emergency personnel.

Incident Reporting and Discipline Policy

- Though it is understood that children sometimes communicate through actions instead of words, it is my responsibility to maintain the safety of all children.
- Prevention of undesired behavior will be the priority by using redirection and choice-making.
- Natural consequences are my preferred method to handle situations. (ie. Being too rough with the toy, the toy breaks, and you can't play with it anymore.)
- Positive reinforcement of desired behavior will be implemented.

- Parents of both the aggressor and victim will be notified the same day of any major incidents or injuries.

Recurrent Negative Behavior

- Severe or repetitive negative behaviors will not be tolerated including physical aggression, verbal threats, bullying, and elopement.
- If a major incident occurs, the child's parent will be notified of the need to pick up their child for the rest of the day. No refund will be offered.
- Continuation of services is at the discretion of the provider and will be discussed with parents on an individual basis.

Mandated Reporting and Other Policies

- As a licensed educator, I am required by the state of Kansas to report to authorities any suspect of physical/emotional abuse, neglect, or other potential harm to the child.
- The program notifies parents upon enrollment and prior to a change in the presence of:
 - Tobacco or simulated tobacco use: there are currently no tobacco products or tobacco use in the facility
 - Alcohol: alcoholic beverages are stored in the main house refrigerator on occasion. Children do not have permission to access the refrigerator. All staff and volunteers will not consume alcoholic beverages while the program is in session.
 - Weapons, including how safety requirements are met: my husband is a law enforcement officer. His duty weapon is locked in a safe, unloaded, with ammunition locked separately.
 - An animal: We have chickens on the property. There are many non-domesticated wild animals including snakes, birds, insects, and barn cats.

Technology

- **Personal cell phones, tablets, or internet connected devices (including smart watches) are not permitted** and should remain at home.
- From time to time, students will have access to video content pertinent to lesson topics and screened by the instructor.
- Once or twice per year, students will take computerized tests to assess progress.
- Music is sometimes played through a speech activated device (Alexa) and is under supervision of the instructor.

- At no other time will students use personal devices or have access to internet supported technology including videos, social media, video games, email, web browsing, or gamified learning.
- The instructor is available by phone for emergencies and needed communications.

About Me

I have a Bachelor's Degree in recreation therapy and a Master's degree in special education. As a former special education teacher, I have 7 years of experience working with children of all ages and abilities. Education was great, but I needed to make a change to staying at home after having our daughter. An enrichment program allows me to get back to what I loved about teaching -- the kids! I am married to Austin, who works in the technology industry and is a part-time law enforcement officer. Together we have 2 children as part of a blended family.

I strongly believe in early learning and growth through play and experiences, not through paper and pencil or group lecture lessons. Early childhood development research stresses the importance of imaginative, group, musical, and free play as early indicators of lifelong success. I prioritize being outside, open-ended toys, learning through trial and error, independence, and self regulation. There will be a strong focus on child-led free play and imagination and minimal focus on academics and tabletop work. I will not be tracking elementary school standards, providing academic progress reports, or working on things like handwriting-- the research doesn't support it in early childhood! There will be no television or tablet time.

I believe in setting clear boundaries and expectations without raising my voice, and I allow children to learn to make safe choices on their own. Natural consequences are my preferred way to handle discipline. We will take responsible risks, make messes, practice using calm words to express wants and needs, work on self-reliance skills, make choices for ourselves, and explore our social/emotional skills through real-life conflict management. I look forward to working with your family, and I can't wait to see this generation of kids grow up to change the world!

Contacts:

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Policy Acknowledgement

AGREEMENT

This Contract contains the entire agreement between the parties; and that the terms of this agreement are contractual and not merely a recital. This Contract may not be altered, amended or modified, except when signed by both parties. Furthermore, this Contract shall be binding upon the undersigned and shall be subject to and governed by the laws of the State of Kansas. This Contract has been carefully read and fully understood by the undersigned. The terms have been explained to me and I am freely, knowingly and voluntarily entering into this Contract.

Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program 2024 Liability Waiver

By attending an event, the participant (or guardian) agrees to the following...)

_____ I grant permission for the enrollee to participate in all planned activities for the duration of all Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program activities for the 2025 season.

_____ I understand that participation in activities can expose the participant to risk and possible injuries, which include bumps, bruises, cuts, strains, sprains, concussions, broken bones, stings, bites, and other possible trauma. I understand that there is a qualified certified First Aider on site and grant permission for them to treat the above named participant in the event of an injury.

_____ I understand that I hereby release Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program from any and all liability associated with the program my child is attending.

_____ All tools and materials will be provided by Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program. Participants are discouraged from bringing additional items to sessions as they may be lost, stolen, or damaged. I will not hold Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal items.

_____ I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the participant is dressed properly for weather conditions as this is a program largely based outside in natural settings. I understand that the participant may be refused admission to a session if they are not clothed properly for the conditions and I will not hold Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program responsible.

_____ While participating in the Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program, I understand that the participant will be required to listen and follow the guidance of Bison Prairie Farms

Nature Enrichment Program Leaders. This includes participation in outlined activities, expectations for age-appropriate behavior, and being able to respect the health and safety for themselves and any member of the group. If for any reason the participant is unable or unwilling to follow expectations, engage in acceptable behavior, or acts in an unsafe manner towards themselves or others, they may be removed from the session or the entire program. I understand that Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program reserves the right to deny access to a participant who has been disruptive in the past or sent home because of behavior issues.

__ I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this agreement, and accept the risks involved with the participant's engagement in these activities at Bison Prairie Farms Nature Enrichment Program.

Participation in the event demonstrates you understand and accept the policies and liability waiver set forth in this document.