

The Oak Rose Gear Guide



No bad weather...our forest school motto. With the right gear your child can have fun learning in any weather. Here is a quick reference guide for you when making sure you have all the gear we will need throughout our year in the forest together.

You will find more detail below. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Child sized back pack - big enough to fit full change of clothes, water bottle and picnic lunch. *Chest clip preferred to help carry comfortably*

Proper footwear - wool socks and comfortable rain boots. We suggest finding flexible rain boots that can be worn every day (no matter the weather) so we can enjoy any water we find. See below for recommendations.

Base layers - silk, wool or polyester base layers (pants and shirt). *Avoid cotton* On warm days you may want a pair of hiking/trail pants (water resistant) as an option.

Mid layer - fleece, wool or insulated pants & a fleece or wool jacket. Avoid cotton - make sure fleece is 100% polyester.

Insulated jacket & vest. We love having down vests as a warm layer in the fall and spring.

Waterproof shell: waterproof bottoms (rain pants, bib pants), waterproof jacket (shell only- not insulated), rain mittens are optional but something worth exploring.

Accessories: warm winter hat, sun hat, neck gaiter or baklava,

waterproof insulated mittens with long sleeves, a few pairs of "magic gloves"

 Sunscreen & bug protector* See below for info

WHAT WILL YOU NEED?

Child Sized Backpack

- With chest clip to carry extra clothes, picnic lunch, and water bottle. We love the REI Co-Op Kids 12 Tarn pack, Osprey Daylight Kids pack, but any pack with around 10-12L capacity and a chest clip that is comfortable works great!

Wool Socks

- Needed for any days under 50 degrees, at least 50% wool. You'll want a pair to wear and a pair to send as extras for wet days. Wool is moisture wicking and breathable - we recommend finding some all season wool socks to use even in warmer months and some plush wool ones for when it is cold. Mamaowl has great wool socks and so does Nui Organics.

Rain Boots

- For young children, it is important that the boots be tall enough to allow for shallow stream play, have flexible soles without a heel, be light weight, and stay on while running and climbing - not always easy to find!
- Boots that are too small (consider that you are adding thick wool socks) restrict blood circulation and lead to cold toes - make sure they have room.
- Our favorite rain boots that are light weight and easy to walk in are the Crocs Handle-it, the Hunter toddler boots (no heel) and the Thandi Plae boots - We especially love Thandi Plae boots because they are lighter than any other rain boot and more flexible. These would be perfect for your "every day of forest school" boots. None of these are insulated, so you may need to get a pair of winter boots too. Whatever you choose, make sure they are fully waterproof and comfortable to walk in. **Children wear rain boots to school every day, no matter the weather.**

Rain Gear

- Waterproof bottoms (rain pants, rain suits, rain bib) - there are *so* many options. See below for discounts to Oaki and Polarn O. Pyret. We also love CeLaVi rain gear. Rain pants or rain bibs with a foot stirrup are great to have any day when the ground is wet - that would be our choice over a full body suit. *We recommend kids wear rain pants to school every day.*
- Any sort of waterPROOF rain coat (shell only, not insulated) will work as long as it keeps the wet out. You want a fully rainproof jacket for the really rainy days - rainproof jackets tend to be stiffer and not breathable - that is what you will want when it is pouring.
- You may want to consider waterproof rain mittens to keep hands from getting too soggy. We can layer these over a thin pair of gloves on cold wet mornings.
- You can also look into waders for your child! Rain pants with boots attached - these are great for keeping feet and legs totally dry.

Base Layers

- Flexible clothing that allows freedom of movement (no jeans and try to avoid cotton) - long pants every day no matter the temperature (or shorts under rain pants) that are tucked into socks. This helps protect against ticks, bites and scrapes.
- A wool, silk, or polyester base layer (pants and a shirt) are recommended. Polyester base layers are smooth and easy to layer over. They are great every-day exploring clothes. We also love wool, even when it's warm, because it is so breathable and moisture wicking. You can find a pair or two of hiking/trail pants too for warmer days. *Avoid long dresses as it is hard to climb and explore in.*
- You don't need a ton of base layers! Really just a full set to wear and a full set to pack would be enough - you can of course buy more but it isn't necessary.
- We love base layers from Patagonia, LLbean, Mamaowl, Nui Organics, Smartwool but there are so many options!

Mid Layers

- Fleece pants or insulated pants - Label should say 100% polyester or wool (both base layer and mid layer pants are needed in colder months)

- Thick Fleece jacket or sweatshirt layer -100% polyester or wool
- On very cold days, children wear their form fitting base layer, then looser fleece pants, then snow pants (or, base layer, fleece pants, rain pants for wet late fall days)
- Llbean, Patagonia, REI, Columbia, Polarn O.Pyret - all have great mid layer options.

Insulated Jacket or Winter Coat

- Look for a slim fit insulated jacket that could be worn under a raincoat. (REI, Patagonia, LL Bean, Lands End, Columbia, Polarn O. Pyret etc.)
- For kids who get cold easily, a down VEST also works well under their coat/waterproof shell as an additional warm layer.
- Some children prefer a base layer shirt, a warm fleece jacket, and a waterproof shell (see rain gear above) instead of one bulky coat, and that is fine as long as they are warm enough!

Keeping Extremities Protected

- Hats for all seasons are recommended. Warm wool or polyester hats in the winter and sun hats to protect the face and neck in the warmer months.
- Mittens and gloves are incredibly important. You can get a few pairs of the basic "magic gloves" to wear alone on milder days and under mittens when it is really cold. These are also great under rain mittens on cold, wet days.
- You should also have a pair of insulated, water-proof mittens with a long sleeve to help them stay on for colder months.
- Neck gaiter or baclava to help keep neck and head warm.

Again - always look for wool or fleece polyester. Cotton doesn't hold heat in well.

Keeping Skin Safe and Protected

- The parent or guardian will be responsible for applying sunscreen and/or bug spray before class each day if they want their child wearing it. We will usually be in the forest and out of the sun but if your child is particularly sensitive to the sun, you should consider this for

daily use to be safe. Mineral based sunscreen sticks should work just fine to protect face and neck. We love Badger sunscreen.

- Let's talk about bug spray. Buzz Away is our favorite spray for daily application and it smells great. We also recommend spraying your rain pants and outer shell with Permethrin every few weeks. It's extremely effective and safer than DEET (please, no DEET), as it is said to not permeate the skin of mammals. Nevertheless, it is not good for our fish and amphibian friends, so please only apply it to the knees on up so as not to saturate clothing that would be underwater during shallow stream wading.
- Tick checks are recommended after every school day. We protect ourselves by tucking pants into socks and wearing long pants all year long but you must do tick checks every single day. It will quickly become a routine but don't skip this step! With the permethrin, rain pants, and socks tucked into pants the chances of a tick hiding are slim but still, always better to be safe.
- We recommend using a skin balm in the colder months to protect cheeks from wind burn. Beeswax or shea butter work well. Baby Balm, Shea Moisture Baby Butter, Dr. Bronner's Baby Magic Balm, Wixelene, Alba Un-Petroleum Jelly, etc.

Keep in mind - layers are the most important aspect of dressing for school. Thin layers that can be removed and put back on easily are ideal. High Tor Gear Exchange is a great place to go first for used quality gear! We also *love* shopping for used gear on Poshmark.