



Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities presents



# Nature Buddies After School Program



**2016-17  
School Year**

After school fun for ages 5-10.  
Discover new interests, explore  
unseen sights, and make  
every day an adventure!



703.746.5559  
[alexandriava.gov/Recreation](http://alexandriava.gov/Recreation)



Dear Parents and Participants:

Welcome to another year packed with fun and educational nature-oriented activities for children in the Nature Buddies Program. This program offers your child a more personal and structured learning environment with our excellent child to supervisor ratio (8:1). Participants are placed into groups based on their age and/or grade.

Generally, K-1<sup>st</sup> graders are placed in the “Tadpoles” group, and 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders are placed in the “Frogs” group. Naturalists and leaders are here to help your child find the naturalist that lies within while gaining respect for the natural environment!

Throughout the school year, we’ll cover many fun filled themes and activities including animal care, woodland hikes, outdoor picnics, fishing, aquatic ecology studies in the marsh and stream, and much more! And, since the Nature Center is adjacent to a 50-acre park (Dora Kelley Nature Park) -- the fun possibilities of outdoor explorations are endless!

The program hours are Monday-Friday from 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. and follow the traditional ACPS academic calendar. Our staff will sign “in” your child upon arriving and they must be signed “out” by a parent or authorized adult when leaving the nature center. Daily snacks and all program materials are provided and are included in the registration fee.

The program fee of \$350/month per child is due the time of registration, and on the first of every month thereafter. Payment made by check or money order should be made payable to the “City of Alexandria”. Financial assistance is available for qualified families; forms are available upon request.

Please remember that in order for your child to participate in our program, you must be a resident of the City of Alexandria. You are required to provide two forms of identification to verify residency and complete all registration information forms before your child is able to attend the program.

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact Majd “MJ” Jarrar, Nature Buddies Program Coordinator, at 703.746.5525 (VA Relay 711) or [majd.jarrar@alexandriaVA.gov](mailto:majd.jarrar@alexandriaVA.gov).

**The Nature Buddies Afterschool program is located at:**

Jerome “Buddie” Ford Nature Center  
5750 Sanger Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22311



# 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR REGISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, 5750 Sanger Ave., Alexandria, Virginia 22311

## PLEASE PRINT

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Fall Grade Level (2016-17) \_\_\_\_\_

## PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION:

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_ M Work # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ M Cell # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_ F Work # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ F Cell # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Work Location \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Work Location \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact #1\* \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact #2\* \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*Emergency contacts must be someone other than the parents and available during program hours.

## My child will regularly arrive/leave the Center by way of (Check box):

Walking       Parent/Guardian       ACPS School Bus       Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Person(s), other than parents, authorized to pick up child:

Name # 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Name # 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

If a parent or other adult is NOT allowed to pick up the child, attach a copy of applicable paperwork such as custody papers.

-----Office Use Only-----

September 2016 Fee: \$350    Credit Card \_\_\_\_    Check # \_\_\_\_\_    Money Order \_\_\_\_\_    ID \_\_\_\_    Staff \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDICAL/SOCIAL INFORMATION** NAME OF PARTICIPANT \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have medical conditions, such as allergies to foods, insects, plants and/or medications? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
If yes, describe your child’s reactions and any medication he/she may require:

Note: Children will go to the park on a daily basis (weather permitting). Does your child have any conditions that may prevent them from participating in regularly scheduled activities? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe action to be taken in an emergency:

Does your child have a recent operation or any other pertinent medical information that might require special attention?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No if the answer is “yes”, please explain:

List prescribed medications your child takes and what the medications are treatment for. NOTE: Nature Center staff are NOT authorized to administer medication. This information may be needed in case of a medical emergency that requires treatment.

Medication your child takes:	Medication for treatment of:

Please list any social or behavioral challenges for your child that you believe staff should be aware of:

Please list any accommodations needed:

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact Jackie Person, Therapeutic Recreation Program Manager, at 703.746.5423 (VA Relay 711) or jackie.person@alexandriava.gov.

Name of Participant’s Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Insurance Information:  
Company \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The City of Alexandria does not provide medical insurance for your child. In the event of illness or injury requiring treatment, hospitalization, and/or surgery, the family medical insurance must be used.

**EMERGENCY TREATMENT STATEMENT & HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT**

I give the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Natural Resources Division, permission to acquire emergency treatment at my expense for the participant named above. In consideration of the City of Alexandria, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, conducting various programs, the undersigned realizing the risk of injury attendant to such programs, does hereby and forever discharge the City of Alexandria, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and its officers, agents and employees from any and all action, claims or liability resulting from or arising out of or based upon any bodily injury or property damage which may be sustained by the undersigned or the undersigned’s child while participating in such programs.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED OF PARENT/GUARDIAN \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR RULES AND REQUIREMENTS



NAME OF PARTICIPANT \_\_\_\_\_

In order for your child to participate in the 2016-17 School Year Program, you must understand and comply with all of the following rules and requirements.

*“Parent” also refers to a legal guardian.*

## NATURE BUDDIES AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM:

- I currently reside in the City of Alexandria and will provide two forms of identification to verify my address.
- I will complete a 2016-17 school year program registration packet providing all information requested on the forms and pay the \$350 registration fee for the first month of school.
- I give the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Natural Resources Division, permission to acquire emergency treatment, at my expense, for my child.
- I give permission for my child to participate in indoor and outdoor activities, discussion groups and personal development activities led by professionals as part of the program.
- I consent to the City of Alexandria’s use of photographs, film or video which includes my child in activities sponsored by RPCA for use in marketing or promotional material.
- I understand that children are expected to respect center staff, program participants, equipment, supplies and facilities. Inappropriate behavior, abusive language, physical altercations, destruction of property, possession of weapons or other unlawful items and other serious offenses will not be tolerated and will require disciplinary action up to and including suspension from the program. Staff will make every effort to work with parents to assist youth with behavior issues affecting their participation in the program.
- I understand that my child is expected to participate in all scheduled activities, and that failure to participate (i.e. refusing to go on hikes, etc.) will result in having to pick them up early from the program.
- I will make sure my child has an extra change of clothes and rain boots in their cubbie at all times. I understand that my child will be spending time outdoors on woodland hikes, at the stream, and at the marsh and that they may get wet or muddy.
- I, or an authorized adult, will sign my child out on the attendance log every day.
- I understand that if I’m notified that my child is ill that I will need to arrange my child’s pick up as soon as possible if so requested.
- I understand that staff will do their best to make sure my child is given enough time to do their homework, but if my child refuses staff cannot force them to comply.
- I agree to pick up my child by 6 p.m. If I am late I will call to let staff know my estimated time of arrival.

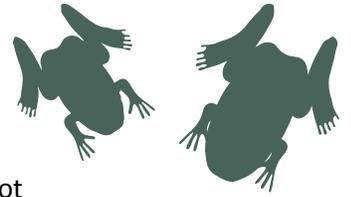
**Lateness policy:** Picking your child up after 6 p.m. will result in a late fee that will be charged to your household account. The fee is \$20 per 15 minute increment. The late fee will be imposed for repeated late pick-ups.

If a child is not picked up and staff is unable to reach a parent or guardian, staff will call the emergency contacts. If staff is unable to get in touch with either emergency contacts, the parents or guardian, Social Services will be called.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the above rules and requirements:

SIGNATURE REQUIRED OF PARENT/GUARDIAN \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# QUESTIONNAIRE



## TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN:

- 1) How much time does your child spend outdoors?  Very Little  Some  A Whole Lot
- 2) What do you particularly want your child to gain from the program?
- 3) How does your child interact with other children one-on-one and in a group? At home? At school?
- 4) How does your child interact with adults? Please address listening skills and ability to follow directions.
- 5) What creates stress in your child? How does s/he cope with stress and conflict?

## TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT:

Dear Nature Buddie,  
Welcome to the program! Below are some questions to help us get to know you better. Please answer them as completely and honestly as you can.



- 1) What is your name and what do you like to be called?  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Why are you coming to the Nature Buddies after school program?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Please list at least three things that you love to do outdoors.  
1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) What more would you like us to know about you?
- 5) Do you have any questions for us?

## 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

Fee: \$350/child/mo.

Sibling discount: \$50 per child

*"Parent" also refers to a legal guardian.*



### Age of Participants

**Tadpoles** - Entering grades K-1 (Ages 5-7) in Fall 2016

**Frogs** - Entering grades 2-5 (Ages 7-10) in Fall 2016

### Ratios

The child to supervisor ratio is as follows:

Grades K-1 (Ages 5-7) is 8:1

Grades 2-5 (Ages 7-10) is 8:1

### Hours of Operation

The program will operate 2:30-6 p.m. every school day, from the time they arrive at the nature center after their school's dismissal, until 6 p.m., including half-days and early release days. Parents are to pick up children no later than 6 p.m.

*Early dismissal and release days:* Children will arrive after school dismissal. (i.e. a two hour early release means that your child will arrive at 12:30 p.m. instead of 2:30 p.m.)

The program will not operate on holidays, snow days, spring break, or summer vacation. However, parents may check out our Summer Nature Camps for these times, as well as full-day camps during teacher work days at an additional cost.

### Transportation

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) provide transportation to our program at the Nature Center. Parents must submit a request to ACPS Transportation or your school principal to provide bus transportation to the Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center. Parents may also arrange for their own private transportation to the Nature Center and children may arrive at any time the Nature Buddies Program is in operation.

### Fees & Payment Policy

There is a \$50 discount per month per child for two or more children from the same family registered in the program (i.e., two children registered on a monthly basis and attending the program at the same time.)

1 Child                      \$350/month

2 Children (siblings)      \$600/month

3 Children (siblings)      \$900/month

Fees are determined at time of registration and will not be reduced for absences, illnesses, closings due to emergencies or inclement weather. Fees are also not prorated for months that have holidays (winter & spring break). Any unpaid balances on RPCA accounts must be cleared in order for your family members to register in any other RPCA sponsored activities. Payment must be received by the first of every month to avoid late charges.

Paying with a check:

- Checks must be made payable to "City of Alexandria"
- Please write your child's last name and the month which you are paying for in the memo section (bottom left of the check). I.e "Johnson- September"

### Lateness Policy

Picking your child up after 6 p.m. will result in a late fee that will be charged to your household account. The fee is \$20 for every 15 minute increment, for example if you pick your child up between 6-6:15 p.m. the fee is \$20; if you pick your child up between 6:15-6:30 p.m. the fee is \$40). The late fee will only be imposed for repeated late pick-ups. This fee will be placed on the family's RPCA account balance and must be paid in full before the child is able to register for the next month.

If a child is not picked up and staff is unable to reach a parent or guardian, staff will call the emergency contacts. If staff is unable to get in touch with either emergency contacts, the parents or guardian, Social Services will be called.

### Sign In & Sign Out Procedure

Participants will be signed in by a staff member at the time of arrival. Participants are expected to be signed out by a parent or authorized adult daily upon pickup with pick up time and the adult's initials. Parents should make arrangements to pick up children on time at the end of the day. Please inform the program supervisor of all persons authorized to pick up your child.

### Attendance & Updating Information

Parents are asked to notify the staff if a participant is going to be absent for a day or on vacation. Parents must update their personal information when their address, email, or telephone number changes. When information is not current staff may be unable to contact a parent in case of emergency.

### Proper Attire

Children should wear comfortable clothing that can they can get dirty during active play and outdoor hikes. Children should wear sneakers or water shoes, not sandals. Children are required to keep the following items in their cubbies at the nature throughout the school year:

- Rain boots
- Extra change of seasonally appropriate clothes, underwear and socks
- Water bottle with their name on it
- Hat, sunglasses and sunscreen (highly recommended but not required)

Please Label your child's clothes and belongings with the child's name.

### Snacks

Snacks will be provided to all participants on a daily basis and will comply with the USDA food requirements for afterschool snacks (i.e., snacks will contain at least two different components of the following four: a serving of milk; a serving of pro-

tein; a serving of vegetables or fruits or full strength vegetable or fruit juice; a serving of whole grain or enriched bread or cereal). Though encouraged, children are not required to eat this offered snack, and may bring their own snack from home. Additionally, parents must notify staff if their child has any food allergies.

### Illness & Injuries

Participants with a fever, vomiting or complaining of pain or other symptoms will not be allowed to attend the program. If a participant becomes ill during program hours, parents must make arrangements for the participant to be picked up as soon as possible. An ill child will be separated from their group until parents arrive.

When a participant is severely injured or ill (when more than simple first aid is needed) staff will attempt to contact a parent first or at least one person on the emergency contact list if a parent cannot be reached. If warranted, staff will call emergency services to attend to the injured/ill child. The City does not provide medical insurance for participants. In the event of an illness or injury requiring treatment, hospitalization, and/or surgery, the family's medical insurance must be used.

### Medications

Staff is not permitted to administer medication. If your child needs medication during the time period that he/she attends the program, the parent must arrange to bring and administer the medication to their child. If the child is required to have medication with them in case of emergencies (i.e. inhalers, epi-pen), the child may have it at the center in a personal backpack or bag that is labeled. The medication must be labeled as well. Backpacks will be stored in an appropriate area of the center and be accessible if needed.

Staff should be aware of any health concerns and the information must be noted on the child's registration form.

### Participant Behavior/Conduct and Discipline

Children are expected to demonstrate respect for themselves, their counselors, other program participants and the facilities within and around the Nature Center and Dora Kelley Nature Park. As such, rules of behavior will be reviewed with the children on a regular basis. Inappropriate behavior, abusive language, repeatedly ignoring staff instructions, physical altercations, destruction of property, possession of weapons or other unlawful items and other serious offenses cannot be tolerated and will initiate corrective action.

Discipline shall be constructive in nature to include using limits that are fair, consistent and appropriate. Staff will make every effort to work with parents to assist youth with behavior issues affecting their participation in the program. Positive reinforcement is our goal.

However, in the best interest of the overall quality of the program and its participants, staff members reserve the right to enforce restrictive actions on a participant who is causing a disturbance in the program.

Restrictive action may include temporary exclusion from activities, meetings with parents, and/or up to three days of suspension from the program. Repeated misbehavior may result in expulsion from the program.

### Field Trips

Occasional field trips may be scheduled between April-June during program hours. In the event that a field trip is scheduled, you will be notified and will be expected to return a signed field trip permission slip. Transportation will be provided by Alexandria City Public School buses or City vehicles to and from field trip locations. All vehicles used for the purpose of transportation meet the safety standards set by the Department of Motor Vehicles and are kept in satisfactory condition to assure the safety of children. Participants will not be transported in staff owned vehicles. When necessary, participants will cross streets with staff at corners and crosswalks or other designated safe crossing points. Participants who do not have a signed permission slip will not be allowed to attend the trip.

### Special Activities

The program coordinator will often schedule activities and programs with other agencies and organizations for the registered participants. These programs are taught by certified professionals (i.e. biologists, police officers, yoga instructors, etc.).

Checklist of information needed for registration:

- Completed/signed registration forms for each child
- 2 forms of proof of City residency (1 photo ID)

