



ALICE FERGUSON FOUNDATION

Nature Nuts Play Pods

Frequently Asked Question

The school year is upon us and many schools will continue remote learning. One of the biggest losses in remote learning is the loss of play time with other children. This fall, join us at the Alice Ferguson Foundation for play pods that give kids the opportunity to enjoy safe, small group outdoor activities.

WHAT IS AN OUTDOOR PLAY POD?

An outdoor play pod is our way to keep your children safe and engaged in outdoor activities. We will have a pod no larger than 9 children be led by one of our experienced educators. This pod will stay together for the duration of the session and will not intermix with other children. We have 330-acres and a barnyard to explore!

HOW DO OUTDOOR PLAY PODS WORK?

1. Parents will drop their children off using our “kiss and ride” contactless procedures.
2. Children will be outside.
3. Pods will have a **maximum** of 9 children.
4. We have 330-acres to play on! Some of our outdoor activities include: hiking, gardening, tending to the barnyard animals, walking through the wetlands, bird watching...

WHAT KEEPS MY CHILD SAFE?

1. Small groups of **9 or fewer** (which includes one counselor)
2. Being outdoors where **air is fresh and not re-circulated.**
3. All children and educators will have their temperature checked at the start of each day.
4. All families signing a liability waiver and committing to social distancing practices and procedures as outlined in our protocols.
5. Use of hand sanitizer, wipes, twice daily cleaning and specific bathrooms only for the pod. Cleaning procedures will be tracked and recorded daily.
6. Having staff wear masks at all times. (Staff do need to take drinks of water, eat, and keep adjusting masks to stay comfortable.) Children will wear masks if indoor time is required due inclement weather.

WHAT IF SOMEONE GETS SICK?

If someone (staff and students) is confirmed sick, the sick person will be excluded from the program to return only after being cleared by a medical professional with documentation of the clearance.

In case of suspected COVID-19, Nature Nuts will close for 1-2 days for deep cleaning of all classrooms and public spaces used by the infected person, and close contacts of the infected person will be notified and excluded from the program for 14 days after their last interaction with the infected person. Per CDC guidance a close contact is defined as someone who was within six feet of an infected person (laboratory confirmed or probable) for at least 15 minutes.



If a participant or staff member is exposed to someone with COVID-19 outside of the program, that student or staff member shall remain home in quarantine for 14 days from the date of exposure.

Additionally, we are keeping cleaning and sanitizing logs and rosters by group with staff and participants daily temperatures and health checks.

One positive test would require the group to have to quarantine and if there were two positives in different groups it would be called an outbreak and the entire site would be shut down.

WHAT ABOUT BATHROOMS?

We have designated toilets for our Nature Nut pod. These are exclusively used by the group and will be cleaned after each session.

WHAT HAPPENS ON RAINY OR INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS?

We have a wonderful barn where our Nature Nuts will be based. This barn allows for free-flowing natural air and will be exclusively used by our Nature Nut pod.

WHAT AGES CAN ATTEND?

PlayPods serve children ages 4 and up. We have found that mixing ages works very well to create a sense of community. Older kids get to demonstrate responsibility, and younger kids enjoy looking up to older friends.

WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED TO BRING?

A small backpack with a water bottle, a snack and a mask as well as an extra mask. There will be no sharing of food. We ask that children keep these items in the backpack.

HOW LONG WILL THE PLAY PODS RUN?

We have designed our sessions for 5-week increments.

WHAT IS YOUR REFUND POLICY?

We do not offer refunds. Once a family commits to a pod, the space is secured and cannot be substituted. If the program has to shut down or go on hold because of an outbreak, we will provide credit.

ARE YOU CERTIFIED AND DO YOU HAVE INSURANCE?

Yes to both. Hard Bargain Farm - the Alice Ferguson Foundation - has been operating for more than 60 years. We are a nonprofit organization located in a national park and provide programs to more than 8,000 children annually throughout the DMV region. We are a Maryland State Aided Institution and work with the school systems throughout the region including the District of Columbia, Prince George's County, Charles County, Montgomery County plus numerous independent and Catholic schools. All of our educators are CPR certified and trained, fingerprinted and have the appropriate Maryland state clearance checks to work with children.