



Creative Cocoon Nature School

Parent Handbook

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Welcome!

Welcome to **Creative Cocoon Nature School**, a small, home-based, nature-rooted program in Saylorsburg, PA, serving families in the Poconos.

Creative Cocoon offers two connected programs for young children:

Creative Cocoon Summer Re-Wilding Program - Thursdays and Fridays 9:00AM-1:00PM
A child-led outdoor nature play program for ages **3–7**.

Creative Cocoon Nature School: Homeschool Enrichment - Mon-Tues-Wed 9:00AM-1:00PM
A seasonal homeschool enrichment program for ages **5–7**.

Through both programs, Creative Cocoon invites children into nature-rooted learning, meaningful outdoor play, creativity, movement, music, storytelling, friendship, and seasonal wonder.

Our summer program offers a season of re-wilding — a gentle return to mud, water, flowers, sunshine, movement, imagination, and child-led outdoor play.

Our homeschool enrichment program supports families during the school year with hands-on, nature-based learning experiences that may include early academics, art, music, movement, storytelling, handwork, practical life, nature journaling, and outdoor exploration.

Creative Cocoon is rooted in the belief that childhood deserves time outside. Time to dig. Time to pour. Time to watch a beetle crawl across a log. Time to make flower soup, mud pies, fairy homes, leafy crowns, and sandy rivers. Time to become strong, curious, confident, kind, and connected.

This handbook is here to help families understand the rhythm, values, safety practices, expectations, and heart of Creative Cocoon Nature School. Our hope is that children feel held by a gentle rhythm, inspired by the natural world, and free to experience the wonder of childhood in a small, caring community.

What “Re-Wilding” Means

At Creative Cocoon, **re-wilding** means giving children time to reconnect with the simple gifts of childhood:

Mud, Water, Flowers, Sunshine, Movement, Imagination, Open-ended outdoor play

Re-wilding does **not** mean unsafe or unstructured in a careless way. It means children are offered a lovingly prepared outdoor space where they can explore freely within clear boundaries, gentle guidance, and thoughtful supervision.

Re-wilding is a return to childhood wonder.

It is muddy hands, sun-warmed stones, buckets of water, petals floating in bowls, bug watching, cloud gazing, stick villages, sandy toes, and the deep joy of being outside.

Our Philosophy

Creative Cocoon Summer Re-Wilding Program is centered around **child-led outdoor play**.

Children learn naturally through their senses, bodies, imaginations, relationships, and repeated experiences with the living world. Our role is to prepare a beautiful, safe-enough, inviting environment and then allow children time to enter deeply into play.

We value:

Outdoor play, Seasonal connection, Messy sensory exploration, Music and movement, Gentle yoga and body awareness, Storytelling, Open-ended art, Loose parts play, Imaginative play, Respect for nature, Kindness toward living things, Social-emotional growth, Wonder, joy, and belonging

We do not rush children through product-based crafts or rigid lessons. Instead, we offer simple invitations that children may explore in their own way.

A flower potion may become a science experiment, a fairy soup, a birthday cake, a color study, a friendship offering, or a quiet moment of concentration. The value is in the process.

Our daily rhythm offers children a gentle sense of predictability while leaving plenty of room for wonder, imagination, and child-led discovery. Our goal is to create a safe, nurturing outdoor environment where children can return to the simple gifts of childhood: mud, water, flowers, sunshine, movement, imagination, and meaningful play in nature.

Neuro-Affirming Approach

Creative Cocoon is a **neuro-affirming** program. **This means we honor the many different ways children think, feel, move, communicate, learn, play, and experience the world.** We do not expect every child to sit the same way, join in the same way, express themselves the same way, or move through the day in the same rhythm.

Our outdoor, child-led environment naturally offers many supportive choices: movement, quiet corners, sensory-rich play, open-ended materials, predictable rhythms, gentle transitions, and opportunities to participate in ways that feel comfortable. Children may listen while moving, observe before joining, take space when needed, use big body play to regulate, or engage deeply with a favorite material or activity.

At Creative Cocoon, we focus on connection before compliance. We support children with warmth, respect, clear boundaries, and developmentally appropriate expectations. Our goal is to help each child feel safe, seen, capable, and welcomed as they are.

Why Play Matters: The Biology of Childhood

Play is not “just play.” It is one of the most important ways young children build their brains, bodies, relationships, and understanding of the world. The American Academy of Pediatrics has emphasized that play is essential for healthy child development and even encourages pediatricians to support play as a vital part of childhood. Through play, children strengthen executive functioning skills such as flexible thinking, memory, focus, problem-solving, self-control, and emotional regulation. These are the very skills children need for later learning, friendships, resilience, and confidence.

At Creative Cocoon, outdoor play gives children a living laboratory for biology, physics, sensory development, and social learning. When a child pours water, mixes mud, balances on a log, watches a beetle, builds with sticks, or makes flower potions, their nervous system and brain are actively organizing information. They are testing cause and effect, noticing patterns, building motor pathways, strengthening muscles, using language, negotiating with peers, and learning how their body moves through space. This kind of whole-body learning supports physical development, early math and science thinking, language growth, creativity, and self-regulation.

Nature play also supports the child’s developing sensory system. Mud, sand, water, bark, leaves, stones, sunlight, shade, movement, sound, and fresh air all offer rich sensory input. For many children, especially in a neuro-affirming environment, this kind of open-ended sensory experience helps the body feel grounded, organized, and connected. Big body play such as running, digging, climbing, hauling, balancing, and jumping helps children build strength, coordination, body awareness, confidence, and regulation.

Creative Cocoon’s child-led outdoor rhythm is designed with this in mind. We believe children learn deeply when they are safe, connected, curious, and joyfully engaged. Play gives children

room to wonder, experiment, repeat, imagine, collaborate, rest, move, and try again. **In this way, mud kitchens, puddles, fairy houses, flower potions, story circles, songs, and quiet nature corners are not extras — they are meaningful developmental work wrapped in childhood joy.**

**May we notice the beetle,
the breeze, and the bloom.
May we splash in the puddles
and make the mud room.
May we listen to birdsong,
feel sun on our skin,
and carry the wild
and the wonder within.**

What Your Child May Bring Home

Your child may come home with muddy clothes, sandy shoes, wet sleeves, flower petals in their pockets, paint on their hands, stories about bugs, songs from circle time, and big feelings from a full day of play.

They may also bring home something less visible: confidence, resilience, new friendships, stronger bodies, calmer nervous systems, deeper curiosity, and a growing sense that the natural world is a place where they belong.

Creative Cocoon Re-Wilding Program - Daily Rhythm

9:00–9:30 | Arrival + Outdoor Free Play

Children settle in, explore the outdoor classroom, visit the mud kitchen, sand, water, paint, loose parts, or nature corners.

9:30–9:45 | Morning Circle

Welcome song, seasonal verse, simple yoga or movement story, weather noticing, and invitation for the day.

9:45–10:45 | Child-Led Outdoor Nature Play/ Big body play

Mud kitchen, water play, paint, sand, building, digging, collecting, pretend play, bug watching, nature observation, (big body play) includes active outdoor movement such as running, jumping, climbing, balancing, digging, hauling, dancing, rolling, building, animal walks, and other whole-body activities.

10:45–11:15 | Open-Ended Nature Invitation

Simple teacher-prepared activity such as flower potions, nature paint, mud pies, leaf printing, stick weaving, rock washing, water transfer lab, fairy houses, nature crowns and more.

11:15–11:45 | Music, Movement + Story

Seasonal song, rhythm sticks, scarf movement, animal yoga, puppet story, or oral nature tale.

11:45–12:15 | Lunch from Home

Outdoor picnic when possible, gratitude practice, hand washing, and self-help clean-up.

12:15–12:45 | Quiet Nature Play / Restful Exploration

Shade play, blanket books, nature journaling, drawing, cloud watching, gentle water play, or quiet sensory work.

12:45–1:00 | Closing Circle + Pick-Up

Gentle yoga, reflection, gratitude, song, belongings, and goodbye.

A Gentle Reminder

Creative Cocoon is a living, seasonal program. Each day may look a little different depending on the weather, the children's needs, the energy of the group, and the discoveries nature offers us. The rhythm gives us a steady container, but the children and the season help guide the magic inside it.

Summer 2026 Weekly Themes

These themes guide our songs, stories, invitations, and materials. They are loose and flexible, allowing children's interests to lead.

Week 1: July 9–10

Welcome to the Summer Re-Wilding Circle

Focus: settling in, outdoor classroom discovery, safety, belonging.

Week 2: July 16–17

Mud, Water + Flower Potions

Focus: sensory play, mixing, pouring, transformation.

Week 3: July 23–24

Bugs, Birds + Backyard Beasts

Focus: observation, gentleness, curiosity for living things.

Week 4: July 30–31

Sun, Shade + Summer Colors

Focus: light, shadow, color, warmth, cooling down.

Week 5: August 6–7

Seeds, Gardens + Growing Things

Focus: plants, growth, care, patience.

Week 6: August 13–14

Sticks, Stones + Fairy Homes

Focus: building, balance, imagination, natural loose parts.

Week 7: August 20–21

Rain, Clouds + Water Wonders

Focus: weather, water movement, pouring, floating, sinking.

Week 8: August 27–28

Wild-Hearted Summer Celebration

Focus: gratitude, confidence, favorite activities, seasonal transition.

Outdoor Play + Weather

Creative Cocoon is an outdoor-centered program. We plan to spend as much time outdoors as possible, weather and safety permitting.

Children may play outside in:

Light rain
Mud
Warm sunshine
Cooler summer mornings
Cloudy weather
Puddles
Shade
Breezy days
Damp grass
Seasonal outdoor conditions

Outdoor play may be shortened, adjusted, or moved indoors for safety reasons, including:

Thunder or lightning
Extreme heat or high heat index
Unsafe air quality
Heavy rain
High winds
Unsafe ground conditions
Other weather concerns

We follow local childcare/home program regulations, weather safety guidelines, and family policies.

Rain Play

Safe rain play can be a beautiful part of childhood.

When conditions allow, children may splash, collect rainwater, notice droplets, make mud soup, paint with wet brushes, and explore the sounds and smells of a rainy day.

Rain play will not happen during thunder, lightning, unsafe temperatures, or conditions that create safety concerns.

Please send weather-appropriate clothing so your child can enjoy damp and muddy play comfortably. See

Indoor Backup Plan

If outdoor play is not safe or practical, we will move indoors for nature-inspired play and calming activities.

Indoor backup activities may include:

- Nature stories
- Puppet play
- Music and movement
- Gentle yoga stories
- Drawing
- Watercolor painting
- Nature journals
- Loose parts play
- Sensory bins
- Seasonal songs
- Quiet books
- Restful play
- Simple handwork
- Nature-inspired art

The feeling of the day remains gentle, creative, and connected to nature, even when we need to be inside.

Messy Play Expectations

Children will get messy.

Mud, water, sand, paint, grass, leaves, petals, clay, and dirt are part of the Creative Cocoon experience.

Please send your child in clothing that can get stained, wet, sandy, muddy, or painted. This is not a program for special outfits or shoes that need to stay clean.

Messy play supports:

- Sensory development
- Creativity
- Confidence
- Problem-solving
- Motor skills

Imaginative play
Scientific thinking
Joyful childhood memories

We will support hand washing, clothing changes when needed, and respectful use of materials, but children should be expected to come home with signs of a full outdoor day.

A muddy child is often a deeply engaged child.

Clothing Recommendations

Please dress your child for active outdoor play.

Highly Recommended Outdoor Wear

Creative Cocoon Summer Re-Wilding Program is rooted in the belief that children thrive when they have the freedom to play outdoors in many kinds of weather. We take a “there is no bad weather, only the need for the right gear” approach, while always following local childcare/home program regulations, weather safety guidelines, and family policies. With the right clothing, children can more fully enjoy mud, water, rain, puddles, sand, grass, shade, sunshine, and seasonal outdoor play.

Because this program includes messy, sensory-rich outdoor exploration, we **highly recommend** that each child come prepared with outdoor gear that can get wet, muddy, sandy, painted, and well-loved. Families may wish to consider brands such as **Splashy**, **Oaki**, or similar waterproof outdoor gear. These are not required brands, but they are examples of the type of durable rain and mud gear that works well for nature play.

Recommended outdoor items include:

- A waterproof rain suit or rain pants and jacket
- Rain boots that are comfortable for puddles, mud, and wet grass
- Easy slip-on water shoes for warm weather water play
- A sun hat or rain hat, depending on the weather
- Weather-appropriate layers that can get dirty
- A full change of clothes kept in the child’s bag

Please send children in clothing that allows them to say “yes” to outdoor play. Muddy knees, wet sleeves, sandy toes, and flower-stained hands are all part of the Creative Cocoon experience.

The goal is not to keep clothing perfectly clean, but to help children feel comfortable, protected, and free to explore.

Please avoid:

Flip-flops
Special occasion clothing
Shoes that cannot get muddy
Long dresses that make climbing or running difficult
Clothing your child cannot manage independently for toileting

Children should arrive dressed and ready for outdoor play.

Extra Clothing Bag

Please send a labeled bag that stays with your child or at the program.

The bag should include:

- One full change of clothes
- Extra underwear
- Extra socks
- Extra shoes if possible
- A wet bag or plastic bag for muddy clothes
- Rain layer if weather calls for it

Please label everything.

Sunscreen

Creative Cocoon has a wonderfully shady outdoor classroom, with plenty of natural shade for play, rest, stories, and exploration. There is also one area of direct sunlight, which children may move through or play in during parts of the day. Because outdoor play is central to our rhythm, families are responsible for applying sunscreen before arrival.

Please send any sunscreen your child may need for reapplication, clearly labeled with your child's name. Parents should communicate sunscreen preferences, sensitivities, allergies, and reapplication instructions in writing. Creative Cocoon will follow the family's written sunscreen plan as much as possible within the rhythm of the day.

Bug Spray

Families are responsible for applying bug spray before arrival if desired.

Snacks + Lunch From Home

Families provide all snacks, lunches, and drinks from home.

Please pack food that is simple, familiar, and easy for your child to eat outdoors or in a picnic-style setting.

Please send:

- **A labeled water bottle**
- **Snack for your child's session**
- **Lunch for full-day or afternoon children, if needed**
- **Any utensils your child needs**
- **An ice pack if food must stay cool**
- **Food your child can manage as independently as possible**

Creative Cocoon does not provide meals.

Please do not send food that requires heating unless we have discussed it in advance.

Water Bottles + Hydration

Please send a labeled water bottle every day.

Children will be encouraged to drink water throughout the day, especially during warm weather and big-body play.

On hot days, we may slow the rhythm, seek shade, offer more water breaks, use gentle water play, and move indoors if needed.

Food Allergies + Dietary Needs

Please share all allergies, food sensitivities, dietary restrictions, and medical needs before your child begins.

Families are responsible for packing safe foods for their own child.

Depending on enrolled children's needs, some foods may need to be limited or avoided during program hours. Families will be informed if specific food safety guidelines are needed for the group.

Tuition

Programs

Creative Cocoon Summer Re-Wilding Program

A child-led outdoor nature play program for ages 3–7

Thursdays + Fridays
9:00 AM–1:00 PM
\$50/day

This summer program invites children into a season of re-wilding - a gentle return to mud, water, flowers, sunshine, movement, imagination, and child-led outdoor play.

Creative Cocoon is happy to offer a sibling discount for families enrolling more than one child.

Tuition is
\$50/day for the first child
\$40/day for each
additional sibling enrolled
on the same day.

Creative Cocoon Nature School: Homeschool Enrichment

Seasonal homeschool enrichment for ages 5–7

Mondays, Tuesdays +
Wednesdays
9:00 AM–1:00 PM
\$50/day

This school-year program supports homeschool families through a gentle, nature-based rhythm of outdoor exploration, storytelling, hands-on early academics, art, music, movement, practical life, handwork, and seasonal learning.

Creative Cocoon is happy to offer a sibling discount for families enrolling more than one child.

Tuition is
\$50/day for the first child
\$40/day for each
additional sibling enrolled
on the same day.

Optional Afternoon Workshops

Additional nature-rooted enrichment in the afternoon.

These workshops are a separate offering from the regular Creative Cocoon Summer Re-Wilding Program and are open to both enrolled Summer Re-Wilding families and families who are not enrolled in the morning program, when space allows.

1-Hour Workshop
1:00–2:00 PM
\$15/day per child

2-Hour Workshop
1:00–3:00 PM
\$25/day per child

Afternoon Workshops may include nature art, storytelling, quiet outdoor exploration, drawing, seasonal handwork, sensory play, music and movement, nature journaling, open-ended creative projects, or calm indoor nature-inspired activities when needed.

Arrival

Please arrive at 9:00 AM

Arrival is a gentle transition. Children may need a few moments to settle, look around, say goodbye, and enter play.

To support a peaceful start:

Keep goodbyes warm and brief
Let the teacher know any important updates
Help your child place belongings in the designated area
Allow your child to enter the rhythm of the day

If your child has difficulty separating, we will work together on a consistent, loving goodbye routine.

Pick-Up

Please arrive on time for pick-up.

Pick-up time: 1:00 PM

Children will gather belongings, wash hands as needed, and transition home.
Please let the teacher know in advance if someone else will pick up your child. Children will only be released to approved adults.

Late Pick-Up

Please communicate as soon as possible if you are running late.

Creative Cocoon's program day ends promptly at **1:00 PM**. Please plan to arrive on time so your child can end the day with a calm, predictable transition.

A child is considered late for pick-up **15 minutes after dismissal**, beginning at **1:15 PM**. At that time, a late pick-up fee of **\$15** will be charged.

If a child has not been picked up by **1:30 PM**, the late pick-up fee increases to **\$30**. Creative Cocoon will also begin contacting the child's emergency contacts if we have not already heard from the parent or guardian.

If you know you will be late, please contact Creative Cocoon as soon as possible. We understand that occasional delays can happen, but repeated late pick-ups may require a conversation about whether the program schedule is the right fit for your family

Because this is a small home-based program, timely pick-up is important. Repeated late pick-ups may result in additional fees or a conversation about whether our after care program option fits best.

Absences + Make-Up Days Policy

Creative Cocoon understands that family life is full, and children may miss program days due to illness, travel, appointments, weather concerns, or other family needs. While tuition reserves your child's spot for their enrolled day, we want to be as flexible and supportive as possible when absences happen.

If your child will be absent, please let Creative Cocoon know as soon as possible. **When space allows, families may request a make-up day on another available program day within the same summer session.** Make-up days are not guaranteed.

We do our best to offer flexible make-up days when space allows. Tuition reserves your child's enrolled spot, so missed days are not automatically refunded. However, families may request a make-up day within the same summer session, and Creative Cocoon will offer available options whenever possible.

Unwell Policy

Please keep your child home if they are unwell or unable to comfortably participate in outdoor play.

Children should stay home for:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent cough
- Unexplained rash
- Contagious illness
- Severe fatigue
- Eye discharge
- Symptoms requiring one-on-one care beyond the program's ability
- Any illness that prevents safe participation

Please keep your child home until they are fever-free, vomiting-free, and diarrhea-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, or according to current health guidance and program policy.

Medication + Emergency Allergy Policy

Creative Cocoon does **not administer routine medication** during program hours. This includes daily prescriptions, over-the-counter medication, vitamins, supplements, pain relievers, cough medicine, allergy medication, medicated creams, or other non-emergency treatments. Families should give any needed routine medication before arrival or after pick-up whenever possible.

The exception to this policy is an emergency medication, such as an **epinephrine auto-injector/ EpiPen**, for a child with a known severe allergy or emergency medical need. If your child requires an emergency medication, families must provide Creative Cocoon with written instructions, allergy information, emergency contacts, and a clearly labeled emergency medication before the child attends. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping all emergency medications current and replacing them before expiration.

In the event of a serious allergic reaction or medical emergency, Creative Cocoon will follow the child's written emergency plan, contact the parent/guardian, and call emergency services as needed. Emergency medication will only be used according to the family's written plan, the medication label, emergency guidance, and any applicable local childcare/home program regulations.

Please speak with Creative Cocoon before enrollment or attendance if your child has a medical condition, severe allergy, or emergency health need so we can make sure the program can safely support your child.

Toileting

Children attending Creative Cocoon should be potty trained and able to use the bathroom with age-appropriate independence. This means children can recognize when they need to go, communicate their needs, and use the toilet with minimal support.

Creative Cocoon understands that young children may still need gentle reminders, especially during outdoor play, transitions, or new routines. I am happy to offer bathroom reminders throughout the day and support children with hand washing, clothing adjustments, and calm transitions to the bathroom as needed.

Please send your child in clothing that is easy for them to manage independently. Families should also pack a full change of clothes in case of accidents, water play, mud play, or spills.

Occasional accidents are a normal part of childhood and will be handled with warmth, privacy, and care. If accidents become frequent or a child is not yet ready to manage toileting within the program rhythm, we will have a gentle conversation with the family about how to best support the child's readiness and comfort.

Rest + Quiet Needs

Even in a playful outdoor program, children need moments of rest.

Our rhythm includes quiet nature play, shade time, books, drawing, cloud watching, and calmer sensory experiences.

Children are not required to nap, but they will be offered slower moments, especially during after care program hours.

Behavior + Social-Emotional Guidance

Creative Cocoon uses gentle, respectful guidance.

Young children are still learning how to share space, express feelings, wait, ask for help, set boundaries, and repair after conflict.

We support children by:

- Naming feelings
- Offering choices
- Modeling kind words
- Helping children take turns
- Creating calm-down space
- Redirecting unsafe behavior
- Supporting problem-solving
- Encouraging repair
- Protecting each child's dignity

We do not use shame, harsh punishment, threats, or fear-based discipline.

Safety Boundaries

Children are free to explore within clear safety boundaries.

We will teach and practice simple outdoor agreements such as:

- Stay within the classroom boundaries
- Use sticks safely
- Ask before touching living creatures
- Walk near water play areas
- Keep sand low
- Use tools with care
- Listen when a teacher calls
- Care for plants, animals, materials, and friends
- Stop when someone says stop
- Wash hands before eating

Safety is taught through repetition, songs, modeling, and gentle reminders.

Risky Play

Outdoor play naturally includes age-appropriate challenge.

Children may balance, climb low structures, carry buckets, dig, haul, build, run, and test their bodies in reasonable ways.

Healthy risky play helps children build:

- Confidence
- Judgment
- Coordination
- Strength
- Body awareness
- Problem-solving
- Resilience

Risky play is not reckless play. Adults remain nearby, observe carefully, set limits when needed, and help children learn how to move with awareness.

Nature Care

Children will be encouraged to treat the natural world with gentleness.

We will practice:

Watching bugs carefully
Returning creatures to safe places
Not pulling living plants without permission
Using fallen nature treasures when possible
Respecting nests, webs, and animal homes
Noticing rather than harming
Saying thank you to the outdoor space

Our goal is not to make children afraid to touch nature, but to help them build a relationship of curiosity and care.

Materials Children May Use

The outdoor classroom may include:

Mud kitchen
Water tables
Sand box
Nature art table
Loose parts
Wooden materials
Rocks
Sticks
Pinecones
Shells
Leaves
Flowers
Pots and pans
Bowls
Spoons
Ladles
Scoops
Buckets
Paintbrushes
Recycled containers
Cozy story area
Open-ended art materials
Building materials

Materials are chosen to invite imagination rather than dictate one correct outcome.

Communication With Families

Family communication may include:

Brief arrival updates
Brief pick-up conversations
Parent notes
Text or email updates
Photos, if permission is given
Theme reminders
Weather reminders
Supply reminders
Incident or injury communication when needed

Please share anything that may affect your child's day, such as:

Poor sleep
Big transitions
Family changes
Illness recovery
Separation worries
Sensory needs
Food changes
Toileting needs
Emotional concerns

Small details help us care for your child well.**Open and timely communication helps our days feel smooth, safe, and connected.**

For day-to-day communication, questions, schedule updates, illness notices, or anything time-sensitive, **calling or texting the Lead Guide is preferred**. Calls and texts are seen more quickly during program hours and are the best way to reach us when something needs timely attention.

Email may also be used for non-urgent communication, paperwork, longer questions, enrollment details, or information that does not need an immediate response. Please allow additional time for email replies, especially during program days when the Lead Guide is caring for children.

hello@creativecocoonnatureschool.com

For urgent same-day matters, such as late arrival, early pick-up, illness, emergency changes, or pick-up updates, please call or text rather than email.

Mrs. Ily 619-889-4620

Photos

Creative Cocoon may take photos to document play, learning, and seasonal moments.

Photos will only be shared according to family permissions.

Please complete a photo permission form before your child begins.

Photo Sharing + Privacy Options

Creative Cocoon may take photos during the program to capture special moments of outdoor play, nature exploration, art, movement, storytelling, and seasonal activities. Families may choose the level of photo permission that feels right for their child.

Private Family Sharing Only

Photos of my child may be shared privately with currently enrolled Creative Cocoon families.

Marketing Use Allowed

Photos of my child may be used for Creative Cocoon marketing, such as flyers, website, social media, or program materials.

Public Sharing Not Allowed

Photos of my child may not be shared publicly, but may be shared privately with enrolled families.

Identity Hidden Option

Photos of my child may be used only if my child's identity is hidden. This may include photos from behind, hands only, feet in mud, nature work, artwork, or group play where my child's face and identifying features are not visible or blurred.

No Photos, Please

Please do not take or share photos of my child.

Creative Cocoon will honor each family's selected photo preference as carefully as possible. Photo permissions may be updated by a parent/guardian in writing at any time.

What to Bring Each Day

Please send:

- ☐ Labeled water bottle
- ☐ Healthy snack
- ☐ Healthy lunch
- ☐ Extra clothing
- ☐ Extra socks
- ☐ Extra underwear
- ☐ Weather-appropriate outerwear
- ☐ Sun hat
- ☐ Rain gear if needed
- ☐ Wet bag or plastic bag
- ☐ Comfort item, if helpful for transition

Please label everything.

Please Leave at Home

Please leave the following at home unless discussed in advance:

Personal toys (may be lost outdoors)

Special treasures (may be lost outdoors)

Electronics

Candy

Gum

Weapons or weapon-like toys

Items that cannot get dirty

Tiny toys that may be lost outdoors

Nature treasures found at home may be brought only when invited.

Celebrations + Birthdays

Birthdays and seasonal celebrations will be kept simple, gentle, and child-centered.

A birthday may include:

A special song

A small circle moment

A nature crown

A kind wish from friends

A simple story

Please discuss any birthday food or treats in advance, especially because of allergies and family food preferences.

Parent Handbook Quick FAQ

Is Creative Cocoon a home-based program?

Yes. Creative Cocoon is a small, home-based nature program in Saylorsburg, PA. The program is intentionally small, warm, and personal, with designated program areas created for children's play, learning, and exploration.

Our primary classroom is outdoors in a separate, fenced yard area with its own outdoor entry. This outdoor classroom is designed for nature play, sensory exploration, mud kitchen work, water play, art, storytelling, movement, and child-led discovery.

Children do not have open access to roam through the home or the larger property. Program areas are clearly defined, and children are supervised during all activities.

Is this a daycare, private school, or homeschool enrichment program?

Creative Cocoon Summer Re-Wilding Program is a summer outdoor nature play program for children ages 3–7.

Creative Cocoon Nature School: Homeschool Enrichment is a supplemental homeschool enrichment program for children ages 5–7. It is designed to support homeschool families through nature-based learning, seasonal studies, child-led play, art, music, movement, storytelling, practical life, and gentle early academic invitations.

Creative Cocoon is not a full private school, cyber school, umbrella school, or replacement for a family's homeschool program. Families remain responsible for their child's legal homeschool requirements, records, portfolios, evaluations, and required submissions.

Who is responsible for homeschool records and portfolios?

Parents or legal guardians are responsible for maintaining their child's homeschool records and portfolios.

Creative Cocoon Nature School: Homeschool Enrichment is an add-on enrichment program. Families remain the official record keepers for their homeschool students and are responsible for understanding and following Pennsylvania homeschool requirements.

Creative Cocoon does not provide legal advice, act as the child's official homeschool supervisor, or replace required homeschool documentation.

How does Creative Cocoon support portfolios?

Creative Cocoon may provide meaningful, portfolio-friendly experiences and documentation that families can choose to include in their child's homeschool records.

This may include nature journal work, art samples, handwork, photos when appropriate, seasonal project notes, activity summaries, early math or literacy invitations, science observations, storytelling responses, and examples of hands-on learning.

Our program may support areas such as nature science, art, music, movement, storytelling, early literacy, early math, practical life, social-emotional growth, and outdoor exploration. Families may use these experiences as part of their broader homeschool portfolio, but parents remain responsible for selecting, organizing, and submitting any required homeschool materials.

Are household members cleared/background checked?

Yes. All household members over the age of 18 have completed the required clearances and background checks, including criminal background checks and child abuse clearances.

Creative Cocoon takes child safety seriously and follows applicable safety, clearance, and home-program requirements. Families are welcome to ask questions about safety practices during enrollment.

Where do children use the bathroom?

Children have access to an indoor bathroom through a separate-entry area near the outdoor classroom. This area connects to a designated home office/classroom space and is used for bathroom needs, hand washing, and other supervised program purposes.

Depending on the nature activity, outdoor rhythm, or supervised exploration area, an outdoor camping toilet may also be available if needed. The primary bathroom access is indoors through the separate-entry program space.

What happens in bad weather?

Creative Cocoon is an outdoor-centered program, and we spend as much time outside as weather and safety allow.

If weather, air quality, heat, storms, lightning, or other safety concerns make outdoor play unsuitable, the program will move into designated indoor program spaces. Indoor activities may include nature-inspired play, art, sensory work, storytelling, music, movement, quiet play, practical life, and indoor gross motor play.

Indoor spaces are sectioned off from the private areas of the home and are used intentionally for program activities.

Families should send children dressed for outdoor play and changing weather. Follow local childcare/home program regulations, weather safety guidelines, and family policies.

Are children allowed to roam the property?

No. Children are not allowed to roam freely through the property or home.

Children play and learn within designated program spaces. The primary outdoor classroom is fenced and has clear boundaries. Additional outdoor areas, such as the grassy play area or the fern-filled nature area we call the Fern Glen, may be used for guided nature walks, observation, movement, or special outdoor invitations.

Any time children move beyond the main outdoor classroom, they are supervised by the primary guide. These areas are explored intentionally and are not open for unsupervised wandering.

How much time is spent outdoors?

As much time as possible.

Creative Cocoon is rooted in outdoor play and nature-based learning. Weather and safety permitting, children spend much of the day outside in the outdoor classroom, exploring mud, water, sand, loose parts, nature art, storytelling, music, movement, and child-led play.

When outdoor conditions are not safe or comfortable, we use designated indoor spaces for nature-inspired learning and play.

What should my child bring?

Families should send children prepared for outdoor, messy, seasonal play.

Please send:

- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Extra clothes
- Outdoor shoes or closed-toe shoes
- Rain gear when needed
- A labeled water bottle
- Lunch and snack from home
- Sun hat or warm hat, depending on the season
- Sunscreen and/or bug spray according to family preference and program policy
- A backpack or tote for belongings

Creative Cocoon is a place where children may get muddy, wet, sandy, painted, leafy, or grassy. Mess is part of the learning.

Do families provide food?

Yes. Families provide their child's lunch, snacks, and water bottle from home.

Creative Cocoon does not prepare food as part of the daily program. Mealtimes may include hand washing, gratitude, quiet conversation, self-help skills, and clean-up routines.

Families are responsible for packing foods that meet their child's needs.

Is this a religious program?

No. Creative Cocoon is not a religious program.

Our work is rooted in nature, creativity, community, storytelling, music, movement, seasonal connection, and deep respect for the living world. Children are invited to feel at home among the forest, water, mountains, gardens, and sky — growing in wonder, kindness, confidence, and care for the earth.

We believe childhood is a meaningful and beautiful season of life, not something to rush through. Creative Cocoon was created to offer children a gentle, grounding, nature-connected space for imagination, friendship, discovery, and child-led play.

Yoga, breathwork, and body awareness are offered in child-friendly ways focused on feelings, calm, imagination, nature, movement, and self-awareness. Families of all backgrounds are welcome.

Creative Cocoon Nature School Connection

Creative Cocoon offers two connected programs for young children and families:

Creative Cocoon Summer Re-Wilding Program is our summer outdoor nature play program for children ages **3–7**. This program is rooted in child-led outdoor play, sensory exploration, mud, water, flowers, sunshine, movement, imagination, storytelling, music, and seasonal wonder.

Creative Cocoon Nature School: Homeschool Enrichment is our school-year homeschool enrichment program for children ages **5–7**. This program supports homeschool families through seasonal, nature-based learning, storytelling, art, music, movement, gentle early academics, handwork, practical life, nature journaling, and outdoor exploration.

Both programs are part of the larger Creative Cocoon vision: to offer children a gentle, grounding, nature-connected space where they can feel safe, known, curious, capable, creative, and connected to the living world.

The summer program is more play-based and outdoor-centered, while the school-year homeschool enrichment program includes more guided lesson-based enrichment. Both remain gentle, seasonal, creative, child-led, and rooted in the belief that childhood deserves time outside.

Family Partnership

Creative Cocoon works best when families and the Lead Guide are in warm, open communication.

Please reach out with questions, concerns, observations, schedule changes, or shifts in your child's needs. Families know their children deeply, and your insight helps us support each child with care, patience, and understanding.

We are partners in helping your child feel safe, known, joyful, and free to grow.

Thank you for trusting Creative Cocoon with your child's days. May this season be filled with muddy hands, flower-filled bowls, sun-warmed stories, new friendships, strong bodies, curious minds, kind hearts, and the deep joy of outdoor childhood.

Welcome to Creative Cocoon Nature School!!

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