

Crystal's Nature School

Rooted in Creativity

Community

Scientific Exploration

You are worthy. You are Loved. You belong in nature.

Serving Families Across Central Wisconsin:
Columbia, Marquette, Green Lake, Adams, Juneau, and Sauk Counties

 Welcome to Crystal's Nature School

Dear Nature-Loving Family,

Welcome to Crystal's Nature School! We're so glad you've joined our growing community of families who believe in the power of nature to inspire, teach, and nurture the whole child.

Our Philosophy

At Crystal's Nature School, we believe that children thrive when immersed in nature, surrounded by community, and empowered to explore their creativity. Our curriculum is guided by three core pillars:

-  Creativity – Artistic expression, journaling, and storytelling that inspire curiosity
-  Community – Multi-age, family-inclusive groups that foster empathy and collaboration
-  Environmental Science – Seasonal, hands-on experiences with the natural world

What to Expect Each Session

-  100% outdoor sessions — rain, shine, or snow!
-  Welcome Circle & warm-up
-  Free nature exploration
-  Small group discovery
-  Nature journaling & hands-on art
-  Optional picnic lunch & social time

Class Locations

We currently serve Columbia, Marquette, Green Lake, Juneau, Adams, and Sauk Counties (Wisconsin). You'll receive an email or text reminder with specific location details before each session.

What to Bring

-  Weather-ready clothing (layers, rain gear, sun hats)
-  Waterproof shoes or boots
-  Water & snacks/lunch
-  Nature journal & colored pencils
-  Sunscreen & bug spray
-  Optional: towel, dry bags, binoculars, hand warmers

Safety First

Your child's safety is our top priority. Ms. Crystal is CPR and First Aid certified, and all classes begin with a safety briefing. We monitor the weather closely and will contact you if cancellation is necessary.

Weather Policy

We embrace all weather except extreme conditions:

-  Thunder/lightning
-  High winds
-  Below 15°F
-  Above 95°F

 Always dress in layers and pack extras for comfort!

Membership & Attendance

-  4 classes/month included in your membership
-  Missed classes? You can attend another group within the same month
-  Unused sessions don't roll over

Staying Connected

-  Weekly texts or emails with updates
-  Follow & tag us: Instagram & Facebook @crystalsnatureschool
-  Questions? Email Ms. Crystal at: crystalsnatureschool@gmail.com
-  We love seeing your photos, reflections, and feedback!

 We're so excited to learn, grow, and get muddy with you this season!
Welcome to the adventure.  

Remember, you are worthy. You are loved. You belong in nature.

With gratitude,
Ms. Crystal 
Crystal's Nature School

 Welcome to the Monday Group!

Dear Monday Families,

Welcome to Crystal's Nature School's Monday Group, serving the beautiful outdoor spaces of Columbia, Marquette, and Green Lake Counties! We're so excited to explore, learn, and grow with you and your family each week. This group brings together a vibrant community of curious learners, caring caregivers, and enthusiastic nature lovers who are ready to embrace each season with wonder and intention.

Each Monday, we'll gather at rotating trail locations within our region for a full outdoor session. From forest paths to wetlands and prairie edges, the landscapes we visit will become our classroom. We'll follow a familiar rhythm—starting with our Welcome Circle and ending with an optional community picnic—while diving into creative art projects, nature journaling, and hands-on science that reflects the seasonal world around us.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We can't wait to see where the trail takes us—mud, moss, magic, and all.

Please look at the file included in our Google Drive Files called Daily & Weekly Rhythm to see where we are in our rotation for specific information on location, topics, and let me know if you have any specific questions.

My phone number is: 414-552- 4672. Be on the lookout for email reminders in case they end up in your spam folder. Our email is crystalsnatureschool@gmail.com

With gratitude,

Ms. Crystal 

Crystal's Nature School

 Welcome to the Tuesday Group!

Dear Tuesday Families,

Welcome to Crystal's Nature School's Tuesday Group, rooted in the wild beauty of Adams and Juneau Counties! We're thrilled to spend each week together exploring the forests, wetlands, meadows, and trails that make this region such a rich and dynamic classroom for our scholars.

This group brings together families who value connection, both with each other and with the land. Our Tuesdays will follow a steady rhythm of nature play, seasonal science, storytelling, creative expression, and community-building. Whether we're listening to frog calls near a marsh or sketching leaf shapes beneath the trees, each moment offers a chance for growth, reflection, and joy.

Thank you for joining this meaningful work of nurturing curiosity and wonder. We're so excited to walk beside you and your children through this learning journey—rain, shine, snow, or bloom.

Please look at the file included in our Google Drive Files called Daily & Weekly Rhythm to see where we are in our rotation for specific information on location, topics, and let me know if you have any specific questions.

My phone number is: 414-552- 4672. Be on the lookout for email reminders in case they end up in your spam folder. Our email is crystalsnatureschool@gmail.com

Warmly,

Ms. Crystal 

Crystal's Nature School

 Welcome to the Wednesday Group!

Dear Wednesday Families,

Welcome to Crystal's Nature School's Sauk County Wednesday Group—a community rooted in curiosity, creativity, and connection to the land. From sandstone bluffs to oak savannas and winding forest trails, Sauk County offers a rich landscape for discovery, and we're so excited to explore it with your family each week.

Our Wednesdays are designed to flow with the natural rhythm of the seasons. We'll gather outdoors for joyful learning through nature journaling, seasonal science, artistic expression, and unstructured exploration—all within a supportive, multi-age environment. Whether your child is discovering a new insect or building friendships around the picnic blanket, every moment in nature is an opportunity to grow.

Thank you for bringing your presence, your stories, and your sense of wonder. We're honored to walk this trail with you.

Please look at the file included in our Google Drive Files called Daily & Weekly Rhythm to see where we are in our rotation for specific information on location, topics, and let me know if you have any specific questions.

My phone number is: 414-552- 4672. Be on the lookout for email reminders in case they end up in your spam folder. Our email is crystalsnatureschool@gmail.com

With gratitude,

Ms. Crystal 

Crystal's Nature School

What to Expect in the First Few Weeks

Welcome to Crystal's Nature School! The first few weeks are a time of settling in, building relationships, and establishing rhythms. Whether your child is new to outdoor learning or already a little forest wanderer, we honor the adjustment process and meet each child where they are.

1. Settling Into a New Rhythm

- Children may take time to adjust to being outdoors for extended periods.
 - Our daily structure is predictable but flexible, giving children time to feel safe and confident.
 - Expect some tiredness at first—nature play and fresh air are wonderfully tiring!
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2. Connection First

- We focus on building trust, friendships, and community before diving into deeper learning.
 - Teachers model respectful communication, kindness, and curiosity.
 - Children will begin learning one another's names, playing cooperative games, and engaging in group routines like circle time.
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3. Exploratory Play and Observation

- Much of our early time is spent exploring the land, noticing small details, and observing wildlife and seasonal changes.
 - We'll encourage children to ask questions, wonder aloud, and begin nature journaling if they're ready.
 - Children will learn simple routines: where to place backpacks, how we gather, and where to go if they need help or a quiet moment.
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4. Comfort with the Outdoors

- Some children may be hesitant about bugs, mud, or weather—this is okay!
 - We help each child find comfort, resilience, and confidence through modeling and gradual exposure.
 - Adults and older children are encouraged to model a positive attitude toward rain, wind, or cold.
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5. Routines and Responsibility

1. Children will learn to pack and manage their own gear, care for tools and materials, and take pride in preparing for the day.
 2. We introduce Leave No Trace principles and respectful interaction with nature.
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6. Communication & Check-Ins

1. We'll check in regularly with parents via weekly emails and updates.
 2. You're welcome to reach out with questions, feedback, or concerns as your child adjusts.
 3. Your insights are always welcome—we are partners in this journey!
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Remember: Growth takes time. Our goal is to support your child in developing a lasting connection to the natural world while feeling safe, seen, and celebrated.

Respect & Inclusion Statement

At Crystal's Nature School, we believe that every child and family belongs in nature. Our community is built on respect, kindness, and the celebration of diversity. We welcome people of all backgrounds, abilities, family structures, faiths, and identities.

We are committed to:

- Creating a safe, welcoming space for every child to be seen, heard, and valued
- Honoring diverse cultural relationships with the land
- Teaching inclusive language, empathy, and cooperation as foundational skills
- Addressing harmful behavior with compassion and accountability
- Continually learning and growing in our practices of equity and justice

"You are worthy. You are loved. You belong in nature."

Conflict Resolution Approach

Conflict is a natural part of community life and provides rich opportunities for growth, reflection, and skill-building. At Crystal's Nature School, we model and teach peaceful problem-solving rooted in empathy, curiosity, and respect.

Our approach includes:

- Preventative practices like community agreements, check-ins, and social-emotional tools
- Encouraging children to use "I feel / I need" language
- Supporting children in active listening and naming feelings
- Facilitating restorative conversations rather than punishment

- Partnering with families when ongoing support is needed

We meet each conflict as a moment to build trust, confidence, and lifelong social skills.

Code of Conduct for Families

To support a thriving, respectful learning community, we ask all participating families to follow the guidelines below:

1. Respect the Land and One Another

- Encourage your child to engage with nature mindfully and gently
- Use kind, inclusive language with all families and staff
- Support our Leave No Trace principles on trails and at meet-up locations

2. Honor Communication

1. Read weekly updates and respond to communication as needed
2. Share important information (e.g., changes in pickup, medical needs, concerns)
3. Speak directly and respectfully with staff if questions or issues arise

3. Be Punctual and Prepared

Arrive on time for drop-off and pick-up

Ensure your child is dressed appropriately and has the needed gear and supplies

4. Uphold Community Safety

Keep children home if sick or showing symptoms of illness

Respect safety guidelines and staff decisions during weather events or emergencies

5. Foster a Spirit of Inclusion

1. Celebrate the diversity of our community

2. Be mindful of different parenting styles, abilities, and needs
3. Support an environment where all families feel safe and valued

We are honored to walk beside your family in this journey. Together, we create a community rooted in wonder, care, and shared stewardship of the Earth.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

At Crystal's Nature School, we recognize that the land on which we gather, learn, and explore is the ancestral and current homeland of many Indigenous peoples.

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Ho-Chunk Nation, whose people have stewarded and respected this land since time immemorial. We also honor the presence and contributions of the Menominee, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Oneida, and Stockbridge-Munsee peoples who have historical and contemporary ties to what is now called Wisconsin.

We offer deep gratitude to these Nations and their elders—past, present, and future—for their care of the earth and their enduring connection to this place.

 We commit to walking gently, listening deeply, and teaching with respect for the histories, cultures, and sovereign rights of Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Tribes of Wisconsin

1. Ho-Chunk Nation (People of the Sacred Voice)

- Original inhabitants of much of what is now southern Wisconsin
- Formerly known as the Winnebago tribe
- Deep cultural and spiritual ties to the land and water
- The Ho-Chunk Nation is sovereign and active today, with land holdings across the state

2. Menominee Nation

- Known as the “Wild Rice People”, with ancestral territory in northeastern Wisconsin
- Historically lived along rivers and forests, relying on wild rice and maple sugar

- The Menominee Reservation is located near Shawano, WI

3. Ojibwe (Chippewa)

1. One of the largest Indigenous groups in North America
2. Also known as Anishinaabe, with tribal communities in northern Wisconsin
3. Known for their connection to the Great Lakes, wild rice, and birchbark canoes
4. Wisconsin Ojibwe tribes include:
 - Lac Courte Oreilles Band
 - Lac du Flambeau Band
 - Red Cliff Band
 - Bad River Band
 - Sokaogon (Mole Lake) Band
 - St. Croix Band

4. Potawatomi

- Part of the Council of Three Fires with the Ojibwe and Odawa
- Traditionally lived in southeastern Wisconsin and along Lake Michigan
- Today, the Forest County Potawatomi Community has a reservation in northeastern Wisconsin

5. Oneida Nation

- One of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy tribes
- Migrated to Wisconsin from New York in the 1820s due to forced relocation
- The Oneida Reservation is located near Green Bay

6. Mohican Nation (Stockbridge-Munsee Band)

- Originally from the Hudson River Valley in New York
- Moved to Wisconsin in the 1800s

- Today, they reside on the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation near Bowler, WI

Fall Curriculum & Themes – Crystal’s Nature School

Fall at Crystal’s Nature School is a time of settling in, connecting with the land, and establishing rhythms that will carry us through the year. As the leaves turn and the air grows crisp, children are guided to observe seasonal transitions, build community bonds, and deepen their sense of place. This is a season to slow down, explore, and root ourselves in the present moment, just as the natural world begins preparing for its winter rest.

Fall Overview • Months: September, October, November

- Average Temperatures: 30–70°F

17 Monthly Learning Topics September: • Seeds

- Ladybugs and Beetles
- Fall Equinox
- Harvest Moon

October: • Migrating Animals

- Fall Tree Study
- Hibernating Animals
- Pumpkins and Harvest

November: • Late Fall Pond Study

- Moss
- Thanksgiving
- Deer

Core Themes of Fall Learning

Roots & Rhythms • Establishing daily and seasonal routines

- Learning the rhythms of the natural world (day/night, sun/moon, seasonal cycles)
- Exploring how animals and plants prepare for winter

Change & Preparation • Observing leaves changing color, seeds dispersing, and animals storing food

- Noticing temperature shifts, migrating birds, and signs of hibernation
- Gathering materials, ideas, and memories to carry into the quieter months

Trees, Seeds & Soil • Tree and leaf identification

- Exploring acorns, pinecones, seed pods, and root systems
- Soil observation and understanding the forest floor

Harvest & Gratitude • Celebrating seasonal abundance through food, art, and storytelling

- Learning about traditional harvest practices and giving thanks to the land
- Reflecting on the meaning of “enough” and how nature shares its gifts

Foundations of Nature Journaling • Introducing drawing, labeling, and observational prompts

- Encouraging daily noticing, wonder, and reflection
- Practicing stillness and awareness in nature
- Create leaf and bark rubbings

- Observe and journal how animals prepare for colder weather
- Write from the perspective of a migrating bird or falling leaf
- Compare and contrast the colors, sounds, and scents of early vs. late fall
- Record changes in sunrise/sunset times and daylight hours
- Keep a “signs of fall” list updated each week

Fall Observation List • Leaf colors and patterns

- Falling seeds and acorns
- Squirrel or bird activity
- Fungi and moss on logs or trees
- Animal tracks in mud or leaves
- Changes in light and shadow throughout the day

Fall Yoga & Mindfulness Techniques • Mountain Pose – feel grounded like a tall tree

- Tree Pose – explore balance as a leaf shifts in the wind
- Forward Fold – imagine being a leaf gently falling to earth
- Leaf Breathing – trace the outline of a leaf while breathing slowly
- Gratitude Circle – share one thing you’re thankful for in nature
- Sit Spot Meditation – find stillness and listen to seasonal sounds
- Acorn Visualization – hold an acorn and reflect on potential, growth, and letting go

Book Recommendations

For Children: • Fletcher and the Falling Leaves by Julia Rawlinson

- Goodbye Summer, Hello Autumn by Kenard Pak
- In November by Cynthia Rylant
- Because of an Acorn by Lola M. Schaefer
- We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga by Traci Sorell

For Adults: • Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

- The Wild Edge of Sorrow by Francis Weller
- The Nature Fix by Florence Williams
- How to Be a Wildflower by Katie Daisy
- The Sense of Wonder by Rachel Carson

 The Heart of Fall at Crystal’s Nature School “Fall teaches us to let go with grace, to gather what sustains us, and to ground ourselves in community and place.”

In fall, children are encouraged to: • Build friendships and a sense of belonging

- Explore familiar trails through new sensory lenses
- Tune into cycles of change and transition
- Develop confidence in outdoor routines and self-care

Winter Curriculum & Themes – Crystal’s Nature School

Winter at Crystal’s Nature School invites children to slow down, tune in, and experience nature in its most peaceful and powerful form. As the landscape rests, we encourage children to notice subtle details, build inner strength, and develop deeper sensory awareness. Far from being a season of inactivity, winter is rich with opportunities to explore adaptation, survival, creativity, and reflection. Through bundled-up adventures and mindful moments, children learn how life continues—quietly and wisely—even in the coldest months.

 Winter Overview • Months: December, January, February
• Average Temperatures: 20–35°F

 Monthly Learning Topics December: • Winter Birds

- Evergreens
- Winter Solstice/Yule/Christmas Celebration
- Herbal Teas
- School closed from the Friday before Christmas until the first Monday in January

January: • Winter Sky (clouds, snow, sun, precipitation)

- Wolf Moon Study
- Winter Tree Study
- Winter Pond Study
- Candlemas Mention

February: • Woodland Animals (squirrels, bunnies, foxes, mice, chipmunks, deer, voles, beavers)

- Valentine’s Day
- Evergreens and simmering pot recipes
- Eagles, hawks, and deep breathing meditations

Core Themes of Winter Learning

 Adaptation & Survival • How animals and plants survive cold and scarcity

- Observing tracks, nests, burrows, and winter food sources
- Exploring hibernation, migration, and dormancy

 Warmth & Resilience • Learning how to dress for comfort and safety outdoors

- Building confidence and independence in self-care
- Practicing teamwork, perseverance, and emotional regulation

 Weather, Ice & Snow • Exploring snow crystals, ice formations, and winter weather patterns

- Hands-on science with melting, freezing, and water cycle experiments
- Studying how weather affects ecosystems

 Stillness & Observation • Tuning into the quiet beauty of winter

- Practicing animal tracking and slow, focused nature walks
- Learning through listening, looking, and feeling

✨ Reflection & Storytelling • Winter journaling and creative expression

- Telling seasonal stories from different cultures
- Honoring the solstice and cycles of rest and renewal

🧘 Winter Yoga & Mindfulness Techniques • Candle Breath – slow breath in, slow breath out like a flickering flame

- Snowflake Pose (Star Pose) – stretch out and imagine drifting like snow
- Hibernation Pose (Child's Pose with a blanket) – find stillness and warmth
- Animal Walks – move like winter animals (fox, deer, rabbit)
- Guided visualization – imagine being cozy inside a den or burrow
- Gratitude Stones – hold a stone and share a warm memory or wish

📖 Nature Journaling & Observation Prompts • Sketch snowflakes and describe their patterns

- Note how animal tracks vary in snow vs. mud
- Record temperatures and weather conditions daily
- Draw bare trees and label their parts
- Observe how the sun moves lower and shadows lengthen
- Journal feelings during a silent sit in snow or stillness
- Write a winter story from the view of an evergreen or hibernating animal

📚 Book Recommendations

For Children: • Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner

- The Shortest Day by Susan Cooper
- The Mitten by Jan Brett
- Animals in Winter by Henrietta Bancroft
- Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

For Adults: • Wintering by Katherine May

- Snow: A Scientific and Cultural Exploration by Giles Whittell
- The Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey (fiction, seasonal magic)
- In the Company of Trees by Andrea Sarubbi Fereshteh
- Mindfulness in Nature by Nina Smiley & David Harp

🔥 The Heart of Winter at Crystal's Nature School "Winter teaches us how to be present, how to endure, and how to find beauty in quiet moments. It is the season of deep connection—with nature, with each other, and with ourselves."

In winter, children are encouraged to: • Embrace the magic of snow, ice, and stillness

- Slow down and observe the hidden life all around them
- Build emotional resilience and body awareness
- Deepen their bond with the natural world, even when it sleeps

Spring Curriculum & Themes – Crystal’s Nature School

 Spring at Crystal’s Nature School is a season of awakening, curiosity, and exploration. As the world blooms anew, we guide children through the cycles of life, weather, animal behavior, and plant growth, nurturing joy and wonder.

 Spring Overview • Months: March, April, May • Average Temperatures: 30–70°F

Monthly Learning Topics

March • Nesting Birds • Pond Study • Vernal Equinox • Rain Cycles

April • Spring Tree Study • Plant Life Cycle • Bears and Hibernating Animals • Earth Day

May • Bees • Caterpillars & Butterflies • Early Wildflowers & Herbs • Ants

Core Spring Learning Themes

 Life Cycles & Emergence • Discovering baby animals, eggs, nests, and hatching • Studying insect, amphibian, and plant life cycles • Noticing patterns of growth and change in familiar places

 Water & Weather • Exploring the water cycle through puddles, rain, and snowmelt • Learning how water supports new life • Observing how weather shapes the land and habitats

 Plants, Seeds & Blossoms • Seed starting and planting • Identifying wildflowers and plant parts • Exploring pollination and insect importance

 Migration & Animal Behavior • Observing returning birds and bird calls • Tracking signs of wildlife and insects • Understanding animal adaptations to spring.

Observation & Nature Journaling

- Drawing and labeling seasonal changes
- Practicing mindful noticing and detailed observation
- Asking “I wonder...” questions to spark curiosity
- Making sound maps to record what you hear around you
- Creating leaf rubbings and comparing shapes and textures
- Noticing colors in nature and creating a spring color wheel
- Writing short sensory poems about a moment outdoors
- Mapping where you see signs of new life: sprouts, bugs, blossoms
- Observing one plant over time—draw and note daily or weekly changes
- Describing the sky, temperature, and ground each visit.

♥ The Heart of Spring “Spring is the season of gentle courage. It’s about stepping out of dormancy and into possibility.” • Be patient observers of small miracles • Reconnect with the land after winter’s rest • Build skills for identifying plants and animals • Embrace change and growth as natural parts of life

Children’s Nature Books – Spring Focus

1. A Seed Is Sleepy** by Dianna Hutts Aston**

Beautifully illustrated and full of poetic facts about seeds and plant growth.

2. Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring** by Kenard Pak**

A gentle book that introduces seasonal transitions with lyrical text and vivid art.

3. When Spring Comes** by Kevin Henkes**

Perfect for younger kids, this book captures the transformation of the season with clarity and warmth.

4. Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt** by Kate Messner**

A look at what happens above and below the soil in springtime—great for garden studies.

5. Have You Heard the Nesting Bird?** by Rita Gray**

Encourages bird listening and introduces the idea of stillness and observation.

6. Crinkle, Crackle, Crack: It’s Spring!** by Marion Dane Bauer**

Focuses on the subtle sounds of spring awakening, wonderful for sound maps.

Nature-Inspired Poetry for Children

1. Sing a Song of Seasons: A Nature Poem for Each Day of the Year** edited by Fiona Waters**

Includes seasonal poems—great to use as daily circle time inspiration.

2. Outside Your Window: A First Book of Nature** by Nicola Davies**

Spring sections contain sensory-rich poems that align beautifully with nature journaling.

3. Today I Will Fly!** (early reader level) by Mo Willems**

While not poetic in structure, this lighthearted take on growth and courage pairs well with spring themes of emergence.

Nature Books for Adults & Educators

1. The Nature Fix** by Florence Williams**

Explores the science behind how time in nature boosts well-being—great for understanding the adult “why” behind your programming.

2. Braiding Sweetgrass** by Robin Wall Kimmerer**

Interweaves ecology and Indigenous wisdom—especially beautiful for themes of reciprocity and spring renewal.

3. How to Be a Wildflower** by Katie Daisy**

A stunning, poetic visual guide with nature invitations and journaling prompts.

4. The Sense of Wonder** by Rachel Carson**

A classic for educators and parents—emphasizes awe and observation, especially fitting for spring exploration.

5. World of Wonders** by Aimee Nezhukumatathil**

Memoir-style nature writing infused with poetic language and curiosity.

Spring Yoga & Mindfulness Techniques

Spring Yoga Poses (Gentle, Grounding, Awakening)

- Seed Pose (Child's Pose): Start in stillness, imagining you're a seed underground waiting for warmth and water to awaken.
- Sprout Stretch (Seated Forward Fold): Stretch and “sprout” toward the sunlight.
- Tree Pose (Vrikshasana): Emphasize new leaves growing and feeling rooted and balanced.
- Butterfly Pose (Bound Angle): Imagine being a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.
- Sun Salutations (Modified): Gentle flows to warm the body and mirror the rising spring sun.

Mindfulness Activities for Spring

- “I Notice...” Sit Spot Practice: Choose a quiet place and sit silently for 3–5 minutes. Use all five senses to notice signs of spring.
- Spring Breath: Inhale deeply like you're smelling flowers, exhale gently like blowing dandelion fluff.
- Nature Gratitude Circle: Share one thing each person is grateful for in springtime.
- Mindful Listening Walk: Walk slowly through nature, pausing often to listen for birds, frogs, wind, or water.

- Petal Meditation: Use real or imagined flower petals, placing one for each kind thought or wish.
- Rainfall Finger Taps: Lightly tap fingers on thighs or palms to mimic the sound of rain, slowly building and softening.

Summer Curriculum & Themes – Crystal’s Nature School

Summer at Crystal’s Nature School is a time of adventure, expansion, and deep sensory connection. With long, warm days and the natural world in full bloom, we guide children to explore the energy of the season through hands-on discovery, child-led play, and elemental learning.

Summer Overview • Months: June, July, August

- Average Temperatures: 65–85°F

Monthly Learning Topics June: • Farming & Plants

- Honeybees
- Summer Solstice
- Blooms

July: • 4th of July

- Summer Tree Study
- Frogs
- Moths & Fireflies

August: • Astronomy

- Senses
- Summer Pond Study
- Harvest and Late Blooms

Core Themes of Summer Learning

Sun & Energy • Observing how sunlight fuels life

- Exploring heat, shadows, and solar patterns
- Learning about hydration, warmth, and summer survival for animals and plants

Water & Play • Pond life, creeks, and water safety

- Exploring aquatic ecosystems: frogs, insects, turtles, and plants
- Using water for sensory regulation and seasonal joy

Pollinators & Abundance • Bees, butterflies, and the role of pollinators

- Wildflower identification and plant-lifecycle studies
- Harvesting wild herbs or berries (if applicable), and learning respectful foraging

Confidence & Independence • Encouraging leadership and group collaboration

- Creating space for child-led exploration, curiosity, and resilience
- Practicing problem-solving and natural risk-taking

Nature Art & Storytelling • Using natural materials to create art, forts, and sculptures

- Journaling through illustration, sensory writing, and seasonal reflection
- Telling stories inspired by the land, animals, and weather

 The Heart of Summer at Crystal’s Nature School “Summer is the season of self-trust. With warmth on their skin and dirt between their toes, children bloom in confidence, creativity, and connection.”

In summer, children are encouraged to:

- Get messy and be curious

- Follow the trails of bugs, birds, and water
- Rest in hammocks and meadows
- Slow down and notice the small things—the shimmer of dragonfly wings, the scent of warm wildflowers, the shape of clouds



Children's Picture Books for Summer • And Then Comes Summer by Tom Brenner

- Summer Days and Nights by Wong Herbert Yee
- Fireflies! by Julie Brinckloe
- Blueberries for Sal by Robert McCloskey



Summer-Themed Poetry • A Child's Calendar by John Updike (illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman)

- Hailstones and Halibut Bones by Mary O'Neill



Nature Journaling & Observation Prompts for Summer • Sketch shadows at different times of day and track their length

- Map insect activity: Where do you find bees, ants, or butterflies?
- Track cloud types across a week and write weather reflections
- Create a "Sounds of Summer" journal entry after sitting quietly
- Make a bark rubbing and describe its texture
- Observe pollinators and list what flowers they're visiting
- Record temperatures and dew points with a weather chart
- Follow a stream or trail and mark everything along your path



Summer Yoga & Mindfulness Techniques • "Sun Breath" – arms rise with inhale like the sun rising, lower with exhale like sunset

- "Tree Pose" under a tree—focus on rooting and balance
- "Bee Breathing" – gentle humming to calm the nervous system
- Summer body scan meditation – focus on warm sensations, breeze, and sounds
- Gratitude circle: share one thing you love about summer in nature
- Walking meditation: barefoot on grass or dirt, noticing each step
- Guided visualization: Imagine being a butterfly or a wave