



Enrollment Packet and  
Program Guidebook

2026-2027

## Welcome!

We are so excited to be beginning our fifth year of learning and exploring together!

The content of this enrollment packet and guidebook is to help lead you and your child through this experience of learning together in an outdoor setting. It includes policies, guidelines, breaks/session schedules, gear requirements and more!

We are always here to help and are excited to connect with each and every one of you. If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

We can't wait to see you for classes!!!

*The Roots Collective Team*

### Session Calendar

| <i>Session 1:</i>     | <i>Session 2:</i>    | <i>Session 3</i>     | <i>Session 4</i>  |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>September 8th</i>  | <i>November 10th</i> | <i>January 26th</i>  | <i>March 30th</i> |
| <i>September 15th</i> | <i>November 17th</i> | <i>February 2nd</i>  | <i>April 6th</i>  |
| <i>September 22th</i> | <i>November 24th</i> | <i>February 9th</i>  | <i>April 13th</i> |
| <i>September 29th</i> | <i>December 1st</i>  | <i>February 16th</i> | <i>April 20th</i> |
| <i>October 6th</i>    | <i>December 8th</i>  | <i>February 23rd</i> | <i>April 27th</i> |
| <i>October 13th</i>   | <i>December 15th</i> | <i>March 2nd</i>     | <i>May 4th</i>    |
| <i>October 20th</i>   | <i>January 5th</i>   | <i>March 9th</i>     | <i>May 11th</i>   |
| <i>October 27th</i>   | <i>January 12th</i>  | <i>March 16th</i>    | <i>May 25th</i>   |

#### *Weather Make-Up Days:*

|                     |                   |                 |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <i>January 19th</i> | <i>March 23rd</i> | <i>June 1st</i> |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|

{Because of the need to cancel due to weather, the session calendar is subject to change throughout the year. Off weeks in the schedule will be used as snow makeup days if needed. We will cancel classes for severe weather such as storms or snowfall - indoor accommodations are available for rain and cold weather conditions. Winter session will be held primarily inside with some outdoor activities as applicable. Spring and fall sessions will be held both inside and depending on activities. Students should be prepared for outdoor classes.}

## Location

Zion Spies Lutheran Church - 310 Spies Church Rd, Reading, PA 19606

## Pick-Up and Drop-Off

\*\*\*All students must be signed in when they arrive so that we have a full count of all participants. Please make sure that you sign your child in before you drop off.\*\*\*

Participants who are under 10 need to have an adult present at all times.

Parents and younger siblings are welcome to stay and play and socialize with other parents and siblings when classes are taking place. We ask that parents remain available to help their participating students if they have any additional needs such as clothing or bathroom assistance so that the teacher can remain with the rest of the class and remain on task.

## Weather/Cancelation Policy

Roots Collective will be operating with both indoor and outdoor spaces available for favorable weather. We will plan to hold classes indoors only for light inclement weather. For severe weather that limits driving and requires road clearing we will cancel classes for the day.

{Because of the need to cancel due to weather, the session calendar is subject to change throughout the year. }

Please be sure to sign up for our weather cancellation text messages.

\*\*\*Occasionally during the school year we may also need to cancel due to multiple teachers calling out sick. We will follow weather cancellation procedures for any cancellations for "bugs" that are going around and that are caught by too many of us at the same time.\*\*\*

## What should I bring?

- A refillable water bottle
- Layers as applicable for outdoor classes
- Clothing that can get messy

- Extra change of clothes as needed - in a well marked backpack
- Hats and gloves for cold weather
- A packed lunch if not participating in our soup lunch
- An afternoon snack if needed

\*\*\* Roots Collective is not responsible for any items that are misplaced, damaged, and/or stolen. Found items that are not labeled will be collected and stored in our lost and found box. Please leave all valuables at home. If you feel that it is important for your child to have a cellphone while they are participating in the program, we ask that your child be instructed to keep it silenced and stored away on their person for the duration of the class time.

## Lunch/Food

The Roots Collective program is peanut free. Please refrain from sending any items that contain peanut butter or peanuts for lunch. Some classes will contain food as a part of the curriculum. In addition to our medical forms, please discuss with your child's teachers any foods that should not be included during class participation or as part of a lesson that your child is participating in.

## Rules and Expectations

Rules of Kindness and Respect: We respect and value the natural world, the plants and animals that live in it, the parks and properties that are our hosts. We will show kindness and respect to nature and to all property. We respect each other and the teachers, volunteers and parents that give their time to our program. We will respect each of them equally and treat them all with kindness and dignity.

When we show kindness and respect to each other, to our teachers, and to our environment we create a place for each of us to grow and thrive. All rules of conduct in our program are all under this umbrella. We expect each child to treat others with kindness and respect so that no adult or child feels disrespected or unsafe while participating in our program. This includes using unkind words, bullying, rough or violent play, or repeated disruptive behavior that makes it difficult for others to learn and participate.

*{We require participants to be able to use kind words, show respect for teachers, staff and volunteers, maintain other's personal space and boundaries, and contribute to a sense of safety and inclusion for all participants.}*

Sometimes children struggle with rules as they adapt to a new environment. If a child in the program struggles with this policy we will offer a gentle correction or pull that child to the side to discuss the issue in a calm and patient manner and

with clear and specific expectations. If repeated disruptive behavior occurs we will contact parents to discuss a behavior plan that can help the child to thrive and to maintain respect for others. If a child is not able to follow a behavior plan agreed upon with the parent, the parent may be asked to participate with the child in-order to support the child in modeling appropriate behavior and providing needed additional attention.

\*\*\*We allow room for participants who struggle with attention, have a need to move their bodies, have a need to create sensory input, or who struggle with social connection/communication. Students who are experiencing stress, anxiety, or sensory processing challenges will be supported as needed. We recognize that these are not behavioral issues and will not be treated as such. As we are a volunteer-led program, if a child is struggling because of any of these challenges, we may require parent support to ensure that they and their fellow participants have the attention that they require. This is not a disciplinary action but it is necessary to make sure that our group leaders can continue to teach the group at large and ensure that individual needs for attention and assistance are being met in a healthy and productive way.\*\*\*

In addition to these requirements, all participants must be able to:

- Use the bathroom independently.
- Change clothing independently if needed.
- Be prepared to use non-flush bathroom facilities if needed.
- Tolerate varying weather conditions.
- Travel for short distances on unpaved terrain carrying a water bottle and or backpack.
- Listen to and follow directions.
- Remain with their group at all times without concern for elopement.

These guidelines are provided to help parents understand the nature of our program and identify if it is a good fit for their child's abilities and comfort level. Throughout the program, students will participate in games and walks/hiking that require light to moderate physical activity. If your child has needs that do not allow for this, please let us know so that we can discuss how to adapt and adjust to meet those needs. We would like to accommodate your child in any way that we are able — if we are able — with the expressed understanding that there are limitations to the accommodations that can be made in a program with an outdoor/forest setting and to our host facilities.

## Parent Communication

The guidelines within this packet will help everyone understand expectations, prepare for situations in advance, help ensure our safety, and foster a positive learning environment. We are committed to clear and transparent communication.

We are interested in hearing your suggestions and appreciate your calls! Please let us know of any questions, concerns or difficulties so we can provide you and your child(ren) with a successful outdoor school experience.

Information and routine updates will be posted on our Facebook page and sent to families via email. Please make sure that you are checking regularly. Time sensitive information such as weather cancellations or drop off location changes will be sent via text message as well to ensure that all participants receive them as soon as possible.

## Illness Policy

If your child is ill, please keep them home for their own sake and for the sake of the other students, volunteers and teachers/guides. Please keep students home who are experiencing any illness symptoms that are more severe than seasonal allergies. Even minor symptoms like fatigue can make program conditions uncomfortable for children who are not feeling their best. In the event that a child becomes ill during program time, we will contact the parent/guardian.

Please keep your child home if they have any of the following symptoms — Participants should be symptom free for a full 24 hours before attending the program.

- Fever (children need to be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducers before participating).
- Unexplained Rash
- Conjunctivitis (pink-eye)
- Diarrhea, vomiting or upset stomach (without dietary explanation)
- Head lice
- A positive covid test or active covid symptoms
- Cold or Flu symptoms
- Persistent cough
- Severe allergic reaction of any kind

## Tools and Weapons / Safety Policy

As a general rule, weapons are not permitted at Roots Collective. Some items, such as knives can be classified as both a weapon or a tool. In the case of items such as pocket knives, lighters, survival tools, hooks, needles, or other crafting tools, we ask that all participants leave these items at home. When tools are needed to accomplish learning activities throughout the course of the program, staff and volunteers will supply and monitor those tools. — This means that even if your student's group is participating in an activity such as wood carving, no knives other than the ones that an adult staff member or volunteer bring and maintain responsibility for are permitted to come to Roots Collective. This policy allows our staff to make sure that all tools are only being used when staff are prepared to monitor them, safety measures are in place, learning and preparation has been made, and that no tools and equipment are being used by unintended participants or in an unsupervised or unsafe way.

If your child forgets to remove a tool, weapon, or sharp object from their bag or pocket they are always welcome to simply let a responsible adult party know. We will be happy to store the item out of accessible range until the end of class time without any fear of reprimand or repercussion.

\*\*\*No guns of any kind are permitted. This policy includes adult participants and volunteers.\*\*\*

## **Emergency Information**

In the event of an emergency, every effort will be made to reach you or other contacts on your child's registration form. If we are unable to reach any of the persons listed, we will take the necessary actions for the health of your child. Should there be any changes in your emergency contact information, please notify Roots Collective so that we may update your child's file.