



2026-2027 School Field Trips and Teacher Programs

Inspiring Curiosity Since 1967



cincinnati nature center

SCHOOL PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Providing positive experiences in nature

Regardless of the lesson choice, our first priority is to make sure students feel comfortable and safe. Each day, we hope to increase the comfort level students and adults have in natural settings.

Discovery first, discussion second

Students will be exposed to local ecosystems with hands-on activities and authentic materials. Their discoveries and questions will be tied back to lessons in school and the organisms that live in their region.

Small student-to-naturalist ratios

In order to provide hands-on experiences without harm to our local natural resources, small groups of 8-10 students per naturalist are key. This also allows us to follow student interests and provide personal attention.



What we appreciate from teachers who work with us:

- Coming prepared to enjoy and experience nature with their students
- Open communication of any changes before the trip arrives
- Encouraging students to pack lunches with minimal waste
- Looking for more ways to become involved with Cincinnati Nature Center



Join the Nature Center's teacher Facebook page to receive updates on programs, nature fun facts, and activities for your schoolyard by clicking [HERE](#).



program OPTIONS

All Nature Center field trip programs are outdoors. Time for lunch is built into the program day.

Hike-Based Programs

Local Plants and Animals, What's For Lunch, Under Our Feet, Maple Sugaring

- Kindergarten and older
- \$9/student*
- Teachers, student aides, and up to 2 adult chaperones per small group are free of charge.**
- 20-50 students per day
- Up to 3.5 hour program time
- Explore the lesson plan in naturalist-led small groups, outdoors, throughout the day

Nature Sparks

- Kindergarten and older
- \$9/student*
- Minimum of 30 students for this program model
- Up to 3 hour program time
- Students spend half the program in the PlayScape and the other half hiking in small groups with a naturalist
- Completely outdoors. Cancellations may be necessary for days with poor weather.

Independent PlayScape Visit

- Preschool and older
- \$7 per person (adult and child)*
- Teachers and student aides are free of charge.
- 20-50 people per day (adult and child)
- Completely outdoors; Fair weather only
- An orientation with a naturalist, followed by time for students to freely explore the outdoor PlayScape.

Learn more about our Nature PlayScape [here](#).

Summer Field Trips & Self-Guided Field Trips

- Self-guided groups register through a separate process than other school trips. Visit our [website](#) for information.

*The true cost of a Cincinnati Nature Center field trip is \$15 per student. The reduced cost listed in the program options above are available to schools through generous support from foundations and grants to Cincinnati Nature Center. Visit our [Nature For All page](#) on the website for more details. [Donations are welcome.](#)

**We'll communicate with you 4-6 weeks before your visit with preferred numbers of trail groups and chaperones. To get an estimate earlier, divide your total number of students by 9. You can also reach out to us at schools@cincynature.org.



field trips

PRESCHOOL-8TH GRADE

	Preschool	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6+
Independent PlayScape Visit (September, October, April, May)								
Nature Sparks (September, October, April, May)								
Maple Sugaring (January, February)								
Local Plants & Animals (September-December, March-May)								
What's For Lunch (September-December, March-May)								
Under Our Feet (November, December, March)								

Hike-Based Programs

Maple Sugaring

- Photosynthesis, how animals and humans use sap, process from sap to syrup

**Maple Sugaring programs are 3 hours maximum time*

Nature Sparks

- Experience being in nature, using senses to explore nature and hikes, games and nature activities
- Ideal for students who have had limited experience in nature
- Includes half of the program time in the Nature PlayScape, and half hiking in small groups

Local Plants & Animals

- Local species, adaptations, habitats/microhabitats and life cycles

What's for Lunch

- Food chains and webs, ecosystem interactions, niches and adaptations specific to "eat or be eaten"

Under Our Feet

- Decomposition, soil composition, fossils and weathering/erosion/deposition



teacher & garden PROGRAMS

In an effort to extend outdoor learning to schoolyards, Cincinnati Nature Center offers teacher trainings to show you how to use your existing outdoor spaces as an extension of your classroom. Looking to improve your school's natural spaces? We can work with you to install a native pollinator garden for increasing nature engagement and adding opportunities for student learning. Subscribe to our teacher e-newsletter to receive updates or join our teacher Facebook group for natural history posts and program announcements.



Teacher Workshops

Cincinnati Nature Center often offers professional development for early childhood and elementary teachers during summer months. Check the website for details on topics and dates for special summer workshops or sign up for our teacher newsletter to be the first to hear about new programs. Customized nature-based trainings are also available at our location or yours for \$100/hour for up to 12 participants. We offer trainings throughout the year, as well as shortened sessions for school in-services or conferences.

School Pollinator Gardens

Since 2019, Cincinnati Nature Center has been working with local schools to create outdoor green spaces for learning. While our field trip programs aim to bring students into wild outdoor spaces, our objective with the school garden program is to 'bring nature to the students'. Our school garden program provides teacher workshops and activities centered around the importance of native plants and biodiverse habitats. If you have a team of teachers, a supportive administrator, and a willingness to get creative, reach out to schools@cincynature.org to discuss options for your school. Discounts on plants are available if a school would like to purchase plants and install on their own, or we can work with you through the entire design and installation process.

Teacher Memberships

All teachers who bring their students on a field trip to Cincinnati Nature Center will be offered a free individual membership (or a credit towards a higher membership level).



**Click here to join our
teacher Facebook Page!**



**Click here to sign up for
our teacher newsletter!**

registration & FAQs

View available dates and registration links on the Schools and Teachers page at CincyNature.org

1. Visit our field trip page [here](#) to view available dates for the program of your choice. You can also contact Melissa Sabo if you have additional questions before scheduling. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, so early applications are more likely to receive preferred dates.
2. After your application is processed, you'll receive email confirmation with details for your program.

Pricing & Payment Information

Fees are due on the day of your program. If your school requires billing, please include a purchase order. A cancellation fee of \$25 per class of 25 students will be charged for schools canceling less than 45 days before their program. This does not apply to cancellations due to school closings, poor weather or dangerous road conditions. Schools who no show/no call for their program will be charged \$50 per class of 25 students.



Schedule your school group!
[Click Here to Register](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: May I bring more students?

A: A low student/teacher ratio is crucial to accomplish educational objectives. Group limits take into account logistical concerns, including the number of educators available, the number of trails and learning stations and the size of classroom spaces. On occasion, we are able to accommodate larger groups. Please email the school team at schools@cincynature.org to inquire.

Q: Are scholarships available?

A: Schools with more than 50% of their students in the Federal Free Lunch Program qualify for scholarships. Amount of funding available varies each year, so apply early! For more information, email schools@cincynature.org or call (513) 831-1711, ext. 138.

Q: How does lunch work during our visit?

A: We encourage you and your students to pack lunches in reusable containers and lunch boxes that will travel to and from the Nature Center with you. Small groups will eat lunch at different times depending on the program requested.

Q: If a parent/guardian is a Nature Center member, do they still need to pay for their child to attend a field trip?

A: Since our field trips provide special benefits that students would not have the opportunity to experience without Nature Center group leaders, Nature Center members and nonmembers pay the same program fee.

Q: Is there a fee for adult chaperones?

Fees are program dependent. See program descriptions on [page 3](#) for details. All adults will participate in a brief orientation at the beginning of the day and are encouraged to be active participants in the field trip.