

WILD CHILD Outdoor Playgroup



TESTIMONIALS



Being hired on as the WILD CHILD Program Lead this year has truly been a remarkable experience. To find an organization that believes so deeply in the importance of these hands-on, family and community outdoor experiences has been a euphoric discovery. I am so honoured to be apart of such a wonderful team of individuals at Childreach. Childreach has managed to dream up, launch, grow and sustain the WILD CHILD program for 9 years, and I am grateful to carry WILD CHILD through its tenth year celebration as we work towards building upon and growing this beloved program.

You don't have to take my word for it, the testimonials from our community and the commitment from families who attend week after week are more than enough evidence that this program is adored and appreciated.

Nicole Van Beers, WILD CHILD Program Lead

Our family has been part of the Wild Child community for many years now. We first started attending when our now six-year-old was just two, and we continue to attend with our three-year-old, who has been coming along since she was a newborn. Over the past year, I've also had the privilege of working with Wild Child as a substitute group co-facilitator.

As a nature-based occupational therapist, I wholeheartedly believe in the benefits of outdoor, child-led, and risky play — and Wild Child truly embodies these principles. Wild Child is led by a team of warm, enthusiastic facilitators who are passionate about nature-based play and incredibly knowledgeable about our local forests and wildlife.

My children adore Wild Child, and I've loved watching how the program has supported their growth as strong, confident, and discerning forest explorers. Through their time in the forest, they've developed real-world risk assessment skills and a meaningful understanding of their own limits and boundaries.

Wild Child has given us endless opportunities to exercise bravery, deepen self-discovery, engage in sensory exploration, and have fun together! Wild Child has also served as the perfect backdrop for fostering connections with other nature-loving families in our community.

Steph Omstead, Parent of Ellis and Maura



We love this program, getting out and exploring nature with Nicole is fantastic. It is very clear she loves nature and sharing that with everyone. If you don't mind your child or yourself a little dirty this is the program for you. So many fantastic memories made in the sun, rain, trees, puddles and mud!

Wild Child is so much fun! A fun way to get out and explore nature! My son and I have been to over 50 adventures over the last 2 years! Check it out and embrace the dirt!

We have absolutely loved WILD Child groups and connecting with other like minded families. We have already seen our children become so much more confident in the outdoors and even more in love/ fascinated with what the world has to offer. Nicole is great at identifying what the kids are picking up on and leaning into that. I hear so many fun facts and make believe play the rest of the week around things they learned at WILD Child. Thank you!

We just love the time spent together here, learning, playing and discovering the joys of nature nearby. So educational and brings back memories of play that we participated in as children—catching crayfish, laughing with friends and getting wet and dirty (dress appropriately, bring a change of clothes, water, some snacks and your golden)

We have loved attending Wild Child and see the deep value of it every session. My son is seeing and discovering new things every time. The leaders are absolutely lovely and so knowledgeable, and add a lot to the experience. We are so grateful for this program!

We enjoy attending wild child play groups, it's so much more for kids, when they have others to watch and play with

My kids loved exploring new aspects of nature that the leaders would highlight during our weekly walks. The chance to explore the forests with other kids/families provided unique experiences to create, problem solve and work together that are invaluable and are not found at any other play groups we have attended!

We absolutely love going to the wild child Playgroup, it reminds me of being a kid playing outside, curious about every little thing and never bored. Thank you.

We love wild child, it has been fun watching my child's confidence grow along with his love of nature! West Minster ponds is the best so many different environments in one space. Catching frogs, borderline swimming in the pond, climbing and finding fun spaces to hide and explore. This is a fantastic program to get kids outside and loving nature along with a fun memory making way to get us grown ups out there too!

My daughter gets to observe and learn from nature without distractions of phones. An added she understands the importance of dressing for the elements.

Wild child has been a great activity for my 20 month old granddaughter and me. We get out in nature for an easy hike, hang out with other families and learn a bit with the help of the facilitators. Thanks so much for putting this on!



2025 Highlights

- 3 playgroups a week, all year round
- 1592 WILD CHILD playgroup attendees
 - 702 adult WILD CHILD playgroup attendees
 - 890 children WILD CHILD playgroup attendees
- 14 bilingual playgroups with "la ribambelle"
- 1 Kids1stDay Playgroup in partnership with "Investing in Children"
- 2 tick safety presentations for campers by Middlesex-London Health Unit, Environmental Health Division
- 1 playgroup partnership with "Thames Valley Children Center"
- 1 full time WILD CHILD Program Lead employee hired
- 7 young adults employed through summer day camp
- 280 summer camp attendees
- Re-launch of PA Day camps
- ~45% increase in Instagram and Facebook followers over the past year
- 1 radio station shout-out on Country 104





Rain days in the forest are some of our favourite days to play. The muddier, the better!

Three WILD children and one WILD adult spent the morning moving around rocks in the creek to create the strongest current possible. Teamwork, determination, trial and error, and a little bit of science.



Often these WILD children are eager to help us clean up the garbage we find littered in the forest.



Gentle hands, build gentle hearts.