

Elmwood Outdoors: Dressing for Rain and Winter Weather

Let's gear up for outdoor play at Elmwood! Children will be allowed to get muddy and wet, as they investigate the natural world and discover what's intriguing about each season. As the saying goes, "There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing." To that end, we have researched the advice of many forest schools and compiled their recommendations below so that the children will be well-prepared to engage comfortably in all-weather play. We hope this guide is helpful as you gather cold weather clothing for your child. As you consider options, we suggest you aim for simple, durable clothing, that can be layered, easily cleaned, and handed down. For cold weather days, proper base, mid and outer layer clothes are required.

1 - BASE LAYER (*Materials: thin wool, silk or thermal*)

- Long Underwear (a base layer shirt and pants)
- Wool Socks (not cotton)

2 – MID LAYER (*Materials: fleece, merino, or polyester*)

- Shirt and Pants (Play clothes over the base layer that can get dirty)

3 - OUTER LAYER

- Waterproof winter coat
- Snow pants
- Rain jacket and pants (Recommended: Polarn O. Pyret's waterproof suspender rain pant)
- Waterproof gloves (large waterproof sleeve mittens)
- Balaclava
- Waterproof winter boots (Recommended: Bogs Classic Boots)

We suggest you first look through what your child has, thinking about how you will layer those clothes. For items you plan to purchase, we recommend the following brands: Oakiewear, Backcountry.com, REI, Snow Stoppers, Bogs, Kamik, winterkids.com, Lands End, Polarn O. Pyret*

*Elmwood families have a 20% discount on all full priced outerwear (socks, rainsuits, etc.) and swimwear from Polarn O. Pyret. You can sign up for an account on the outdoor schools section of their website and enter the Elmwood as the affiliate school.

Child Care Weather Watch

Watching the weather is part of a child care provider's job. Planning for playtime, field trips, or weather safety is part of the daily routine. The changes in weather require the child care provider to monitor the health and safety of children. What clothing, beverages, and protections are appropriate? **Clothe** children to maintain a comfortable body temperature (warmer months - lightweight cotton, colder months - wear layers of clothing). **Beverages** help the body maintain a comfortable temperature. Water or fruit juices are best. Avoid high-sugar content beverages and soda pop. **Sunscreen** may be used year around. Use a sunscreen labeled as SPF-15 or higher. Read and follow all label instructions for the sunscreen product. Look for sunscreen with UVB and UVA ray protection. **Shaded** play areas protect children from the sun.

Condition GREEN - Children may play outdoors and be comfortable. Watch for signs of children becoming uncomfortable while playing. Use precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages for all child age groups.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS are unable to tell the child care provider if they are too hot or cold. Children become fussy when uncomfortable. Infants/toddlers will tolerate shorter periods of outdoor play. Dress infants/toddlers in lightweight cotton or cotton-like fabrics during the warmer months. In cooler or cold months dress infants in layers to keep them warm. Protect infants from the sun by limiting the amount of time outdoors and playing in shaded areas. Give beverages when playing outdoors.

YOUNG CHILDREN remind children to stop playing, drink a beverage, and apply more sunscreen. **OLDER CHILDREN** need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens). They may resist applying sunscreen and drinking beverages while outdoors.

Condition YELLOW - use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of outdoor time.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS use precautions outlined in Condition Green. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of time for outdoor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN may insist they are not too hot or cold because they are enjoying playtime. Child care providers need to structure the length of time for outdoor play for the young child. **OLDER CHILDREN** need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens), applying sunscreen and drinking liquids while playing outdoors.

Condition RED - most children should not play outdoors due to the health risk.

INFANTS/TODDLERS should play indoors and have ample space for large motor play.

YOUNG CHILDREN may ask to play outside and do not understand the potential danger of weather conditions.

OLDER CHILDREN may play outdoors for very short periods of time if they are properly dressed, have plenty of fluids. Child care providers must be vigilant about maximum protection of children.

Understand the Weather

The weather forecast may be confusing unless you know the meaning of the words.

Blizzard Warning: There will be snow and strong winds that produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life threatening wind chills. Seek shelter immediately.

Heat Index Warning: How hot it feels to the body when the air temperature (in Fahrenheit) and relative humidity are combined.

Relative Humidity: The percent of moisture in the air.

Temperature: The temperature of the air in degrees Fahrenheit.

Wind: The speed of the wind in miles per hour.

Wind Chill Warning: There will be sub-zero temperatures with moderate to strong winds expected which may cause hypothermia and great danger to people, pets and livestock.

Winter Weather Advisory: Weather conditions may cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life threatening.

Winter Storm Warning: Severe winter conditions have begun in your area.

Winter Storm Watch: Severe winter conditions, like heavy snow and ice are possible within the next day or two.