

Kindergarten

Manzanita Forest Kindergarten Overview

Under a magnificent oak tree, in the wild chaparral, you can find Manzanita School's Forest Kindergarten. Our program takes place entirely outdoors using child led, nature based, experiential learning principles. Children climb trees instead of structures, get wet and muddy, learn to become strong and self-sufficient, and explore on and off trails through all seasons. This outdoor learning environment inherently presents invitations for learning, just as a teacher might present a lesson to their students. By recognizing nature as a teacher, adults and children alike build skills of observation, reflection, exploration, and an intuitive 'listening' for environmental cues.

Philosophy

At Manzanita, we challenge the prevailing paradigms of both schooling and culture, and present new models for student learning, parent involvement, and community engagement. Our curriculum and programs are built on the understanding that every young person has something unique and meaningful to offer the world, and that this gift must be awakened. Our Forest Kindergarten model, with its emphasis on student-guided learning and supported risk taking are the first steps in bringing forth the intrinsic gift.

Teachers/Program

Our qualified teachers, trained by the staff from Wild Roots Forest School in Santa Barbara, model intrinsic motivation, empathy, and love for the natural world. Pulling on best practices in the Forest Kindergarten model, teachers build the confidence necessary for students' future academic success by offering rich embodied experiences in the natural environment within the disciplines of Ecology, Biology, Literacy, Math, History, Environmental Science, and Art.

A Typical Day

A typical day at Manzanita's Forest Kindergarten starts with a morning circle, feet in the dirt, the call of the Canyon Wren, stories, and songs. What follows is a blend of open play, exploration and routine meal breaks, in which the whole group participates in storytelling, self-care, and community building rituals. The day passes

as children follow their own passions and curiosities alongside their peers, teachers, and the earth. As the afternoon sun begins creating shadows on the chaparral life, children are given the opportunity to rest. The day ends with a closing circle where students sing songs, connect with each other, and express gratitude for all the adventures and discoveries made that day.

For more information, please [visit our Forest Kindergarten FAQs.](#)

