

Wild Roots – Parent Insights

The Wild Roots program was an extremely positive experience for me and my daughter. As parents and facilitators our input was always sought and valued in the development and delivering of the program. The early childhood educator provided a solid framework for the structure and vision, and we were able to adapt fluidly and creatively to the needs of the children and families. This was my daughter's (age 3.5) first program where she was away from family for any length of time, and we felt very supported with that potentially challenging separation. She really blossomed in the caring and engaging environment that the program provided. I really valued the detailed storytelling that chronicled the adventures of the day.

The outdoor setting provided so many unique learning opportunities. My often shy daughter was excited to share what she learned with us outside of program hours, even proudly identifying a swallowtail butterfly to a surprised and impressed Ontario Parks interpreter while on a family camping trip. Wild Roots programming allowed each child to develop their individual interests and strengths and challenged them to try new things by watching their peers engage in activities they weren't initially drawn to. My daughter particularly enjoyed the storytelling, quiet observation, learning prompts, hiking, developing meaningful friendships, drawing and creating, and has new interest in climbing, organized games, the specific wildlife and plants they observed (monarch caterpillars and butterflies, milkweed, tadpoles and toads, woodpeckers, various birds, a snake, and a white-tailed deer we saw on our way there). She enjoyed accessing the many resource books to look up information about her surroundings, and learning about the safe use of tools. She felt empowered by her new knowledge of safety procedures should she ever encounter larger wildlife, and has taught her big sister to observe the environment for potential hazards such as hawthorn trees or animal scat.

I would highly recommend this program to other parents and caregivers. It is extremely valuable for our children gain awareness and begin to appreciate the unique and wonderful landscape we have here in Northern Ontario, and provides them with a solid foundation for early learning. It fills a void in the local programs available to families of young children.

~ Wild Roots parent

