



A weekly highlight of what our forest schoolers explored, learned, played, created, & so much more!

Spring Term: Week 7 – April 29 – May 5, 2024

This week the forest was full of many sounds of spring life. We heard the nearby screech from 3 red-tailed hawks perched on the tallest trees, and beautiful robin sounds as they searched for worms and collected materials to build their nests. Most of all, the frogs and toads have returned to the pond, and we could hear their non-stop chirps and croaks as they prepare to lay their eggs. There is no doubt that spring has returned to the forest, and we had so much fun exploring the many changes.

Seeds (5-7 years)

- Collected water, split kindling and started the morning fire
- Explored soil and mud in search of clay - the smallest of the soil particles
- Processed, filtered, baked and squished lots of clay
- Practiced woodworking and cordage making - on Monday some whittled their own roasting sticks
- Enjoyed some free time at the sand pit
- Observed Canadian Geese on the pond as they took off, landed and communicated with each other
- Found a Spring Peeper frog while exploring off trail
- Made a large teeter totter and tested our balancing skills while experimenting with different weights at each end
- Cooperatively designed a way to climb up the slippery A-frame using ropes
- Combined sifted soil, water, dish soap and a small amount of paint to create mud paint! - we enjoyed trying different painting techniques with our brushes

Sprouts (7-10 years)

- Mined for clay using wooden chisels, mallets and our hands
- Began processing the clay by breaking up chunks in water, sifting out the rocks, sand, soil and other debris, and pouring through cloths to separate the water and leftover clay particles
- Co-created imaginative games with our peers that had us running through the forest
- Built a brand new 2-story fort at the nest - used materials from an old fort we decided we were no longer interested in
- Used a fallen poplar tree down by the pond as a balance beam
- Looked at the tree rings of a cut down Pine tree and noticed the outer layers that the sap flows through
- Explored the forest on an “exercise hike”, stopping at checkpoints along the way, to measure our pace
- Played Toro - a game that we democratically voted on
- Searched for fish, turtles, frogs and toads around the pond with lots of success!
- Discovered that just under the surface of the wood chip pile it is very warm - we covered ourselves in wood chips and made a wood chip “hot tub”

Forest Rangers (11-14 years)

- Continued our mission to construct a garden, collecting poles and rails and using saws, measuring tapes, hatchets and knives to process them by debranching, debarking and cutting to length
- Adventured to find many new species of plants and fungi, smelling, researching and poking around at all the details
- Collected rocks, then smashed them using masonry chisels and hammers, following the grain in search for crystals and geodes
- Constructed more sheppards slings and practiced throwing different sized projectiles
- Created a tin foil lamp fire oven and enjoyed pizzas!

Roots & Shoots (0-6 years)

- Explored the forest for birds!
- Found woodpecker homes and nests
- Listened to different bird sounds and calls
- Played hide and seek by following the sounds to find a blue bird and an owl
- Built nests and explored the creek at the Nest bridge

More Dogwood Visitors: Durham Mommy Connection Travel Tots

- Explored the forest for bird friends throughout the forest and sang songs about different kinds of birds and what they do
- Created roads and baked cookies with loose parts
- Played at the mud kitchen, climbed on tires, and explored sounds at the music centre

Other Dogwood Activities: Community Connections

- Revisited some of our Kindergarten friends at local DCDSB schools for the third and final outdoor learning program where we explored new spring growth, worms and birds
- Joined the [Ontario Society for Environmental Education](#) Annual Eco Links Conference in Guelph as a workshop presenter; not only had the opportunity to share our experiences of outdoor play but also hear and learn from Chief Kelly LaRocca of MSIFN and many other outdoor groups and educators

This week we thoroughly enjoyed the warmth of the sun and the sounds of spring. We are fortunate to be able to spend our days at a place like this and watch as new life appears in the forest - a reminder to open our hearts, minds, and souls to the gifts the earth offers to us and the necessity for humans to take care of her in a reciprocal way.



Observing the progression of seed growth



Muddy hands are fun!



Scooter showing us how Wood Peckers move up and down the tree searching for bugs to eat



The Seeds saw some geese land on the pond which caught their interest and attention



Smashing rocks to see what is inside



The trilliums are bloom and the green forest "wall" is starting to fill in



Filtering collected dirt into clay



Mud painting!



Harvesting/collecting dirt



Broke up the chunks of dirt to remove rocks and begin the refining process



Filtration through some screening



Mud painting with hands continues!



We found Scooter and the little sound bird!



Exploring balance on the bridge



The Rangers enjoyed campfire pizza by creating a tin foil oven



More heat exploration when forest schoolers dug down into the wood chips and felt it to be warmer



Exploring other strategies for filtration



Climbing on logs with friends – multiple skills developing



More balance exploration by creating a teeter totter



Tree rings and observation of where sap flows



Hello little Spring Peeper!



...and to turtle as well! Lots of life is reappearing with the warmer weather!



A trout lily flower



Doe and the DMC Travel Tots had lots of fun building!