



Howard County RECREATION & PARKS

Robinson Nature Center
6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044
www.howardcountymd.gov/RobinsonNatureCenter.htm
410-313-0400



Hello Home School Families!

We wanted to take the time to welcome you all to the 2019-2020 school year of Robinson Nature Center's Home School class and give you some information before the school year begins. We will be making some changes this year, all with the intention of better serving your avid learners! The updates, as well as any other relevant information are in this letter.

- Your child is signed up for the **Fall 2019 Friday class**. Class will occur on the first Friday of every month from **2:30-4:00 PM** at the Nature Center. Class dates are **Sept 6, Oct 4 and Nov 8**. Before arriving on **Sept. 6**, please fill out a [Participant Information Form](#) for your child. This form is required even if you choose to stay with your child during class.
- On the back of the Participant Information Form you will find our [Code of Conduct](#). This generally covers the behaviors that we expect during class to ensure the best possible educational experience for all students. Please take a moment to discuss the Code of Conduct with your child prior to class and sign at the bottom of the page.
- All information about class, as well as certificates of completion, will be posted to our website so that you may access it as you need it. Please go to <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/rnchomeschoolmaterials> to access the materials.
- We will be continuing to offer a [Home School Class Google Calendar](#). If you use Google calendar, you can add your child's classes to your personal Google calendar. We highly recommend you add these class dates to your own calendar as reminders are not sent out prior to each class.

How will class work?

If you've never participated in our Home School classes before, here's a quick overview of how we expect class to go, and a couple reminders about things that may have changed from last year.

1. **Sign-In/Sign-Out** – You must walk your child to class each month and sign them in. At the end of class, you must also sign your child out (even if you stay with your child). If you have children in other classes, you must sign each of your children in and out of class. This is a requirement and ensures your child is safely under the care of an adult when departing from class.
2. **Parent options** - While your child is in class, you're welcome to sit in on the class, leave the Nature Center and return for pick-up at 4:00 PM, or relax, socialize and network with other parents in our "Parent Lounge". We set up the Parent Lounge in the south end of the Auditorium. The lounge is an informal area with tables and chairs where parents can catch up with each other, and still be close to your children if you want to check in on class. The lounge

opens directly into the room for the pre-homeschool (4-5 year old) class. We generally put out some small games or blocks for younger siblings, books and literature pertaining to the class topic, and sometimes information about upcoming programs or opportunities.

3. **Siblings** - Younger siblings under the age of 4 years are welcome to join an older sibling's class, but parents must monitor them at all times and remove them if they become disruptive so that students can concentrate. Out of fairness to enrolled participants, younger siblings are welcome to observe, but they may not participate in class activities.
4. **Special accommodations/severe allergies** – If your child requires any special accommodations or severe allergies we need to be aware of, please call Josh Detweiler at 410-313-0507 as soon as possible so we can better understand your child's needs. For Howard County residents, the Howard County Recreation & Parks Department has recently updated its inclusion process for residents requesting special accommodations. Please visit the following link to provide information about your child's needs/complete your accommodation request. <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Therapeutic-Rec>.

Changes to the program this year

- The age ranges of our classes have changed to better serve our students. The new ranges are as follows:
 - Pre-Home School: 4-5 years old
 - Home School: 6-8 years old
 - Home School In-Depth Study: 9-12 years old
- Our oldest class section has a new format and name – Home School In-Depth Study. Themes for this class will last an entire season, allowing for more in-depth exploration and investigation over the course of the three classes.
- Based on enrollment numbers and attendance numbers from last year, we will no longer be offering a second Thursday class or the end-of-season Home School Workshop.
- Should you have any questions, concerns or feedback about these changes, please contact our Program Manager, Meagan Downey at mdowney@howardcountymd.gov.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's class please contact us Wednesday through Sunday by email or phone. Please note, the Center is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays and we will not be able to respond to inquiries on these days. Thank you!

We look forward to seeing you on Friday, September 6th!

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