

# Learning in **NATURE**

## IMPORTANCE & DEEPLY ROOTED BELIEF



### A REFLECTION FROM FOUNDER MARIAL LEISGE

Learning outdoors is important to me because it reflects everything I've learned through my own journey as a mother—especially raising my son Otto. Traditional education expectations often felt suffocating, overlooking the sensory, emotional, and developmental needs of real children.

Outside, I found a world where children could finally breathe, move, explore, and learn in the ways their bodies naturally crave. **Outdoor teaching allows me to create a learning environment rooted in connection, freedom, and a deep sense of belonging – rather than rigid, unrealistic systems.**

### WHY OUTDOOR LEARNING IS IMPORTANT TO OCEAN STATE KIDS

Outdoor learning is at the heart of Ocean State Kids because it supports natural child development rather than outdated academic expectations. Outside, children can regulate better, engage more deeply, and build confidence through hands-on exploration that feels meaningful instead of forced. This approach creates an inclusive environment where all types of learners—especially neurodivergent, sensory-seeking, or highly creative children—can thrive.

It also strengthens family connections, as learning becomes shared, visible, and community-driven. Most importantly, outdoor learning invites creativity, problem-solving, and emotional resilience in ways four walls simply cannot—**bringing children closer to their own sense of self, their joy, their play, and of course, a healthy layer of dirt.**

### WHY OUTDOOR LEARNING IS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY

Outdoor learning strengthens the entire community by reconnecting families with each other, with nature, and with collaborating community members. Communities become healthier, calmer, and more resilient when children grow up outside—exploring local trails, farms, parks, and natural spaces that belong to all of us.

It encourages parents to become active participants in their children's learning, deepening bonds and shared experiences. **Teaching outdoors fosters a culture where childhood is protected, family connection is valued, and nature is treated as an essential part of community life.**