

Certified Outdoor Nature-Based (ONB) Child Care Programs

Fast Facts for Community Partners



**Oregon Department of
Early Learning
and Care**

What is a certified outdoor nature-based program?

A "certified outdoor nature-based child care program":

- Enrolls preschool through school-age children;
- Provides child care to children in a primarily outdoor natural space approved by Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC); and
- Utilizes a philosophy where nature is central to children's learning and development.
- The licensed space for ONB programs must have at least 4000 square feet of outdoor space per child which may be public or private land. The program must have a permanent location to be eligible for this type of licensing.
- Programs must follow the Child Care Licensing Division's application process and pass an inspection by a licensing specialist and an environmental health specialist.

Staff to Child Ratios and Maximum Group Sizes:

- Preschool age (36 months through eligible for kindergarten):
 - Ratio of 1 staff to 8 children, with a maximum group size of 16 children
- School Age (Eligible for kindergarten through 12 years old)
 - Ratio of 1 staff to 10 children, with a maximum group size of 20 children

In addition to the standard licensing training, ONB qualifications requirements include:

- 20 hours of approved outdoor nature-based education or training for directors, and 10 hours for teachers
- Depending on the location, wilderness first aid may be required for staff.

How were the ONB rules developed?

In 2023, House Bill 2717 added outdoor child care program to the definition of "child care facility" opening the way for the DELIC to develop a path for outdoor programs to become licensed. The process for developing Oregon's Certified Outdoor Nature-Based child care rules included consulting with current programs in Oregon, using Washington's ONB rules as a guide, conducting site visits in Washington and Oregon, and gathering feedback from an advisory committee of advocates and professionals knowledgeable in this type of care. Throughout the process DELIC has remained focused on foundational health and safety standards.



Follow us:



For more information, visit: oregon.gov/delc

Questions? Email CCLD.Customerservice@delc.oregon.gov or call 1-800-556-6616