

PROPOSAL to hold OUTDOOR NATURE CLASSES at SILVER COMET LINEAR PARK
Submitted May 5, 2023 by Heidi L Davies

To: Travis Landrum, Michele Coursey, et al



Hello! I'm **Heidi Davies**, an early outdoor educator here in the Atlanta metro area, writing to inquire about the possibility of holding a small, nature-play class for children with their caregivers at Silver Comet Linear Park. We'll be using outdoor play to nurture skills kids need to thrive. I think Linear Park would be the perfect space to welcome kids/families to play and learn together. The moment I saw the green spaces, the proximity to the Silver Comet Trail and the family-friendly atmosphere, I knew it would be the perfect place for kids and families to explore! Let me tell you more: I call it Creative Wellness. The curriculum is Tinkergarten.

WHAT is it? Tinkergarten is a child-led, play-based, outdoor educational program, designed by education experts.

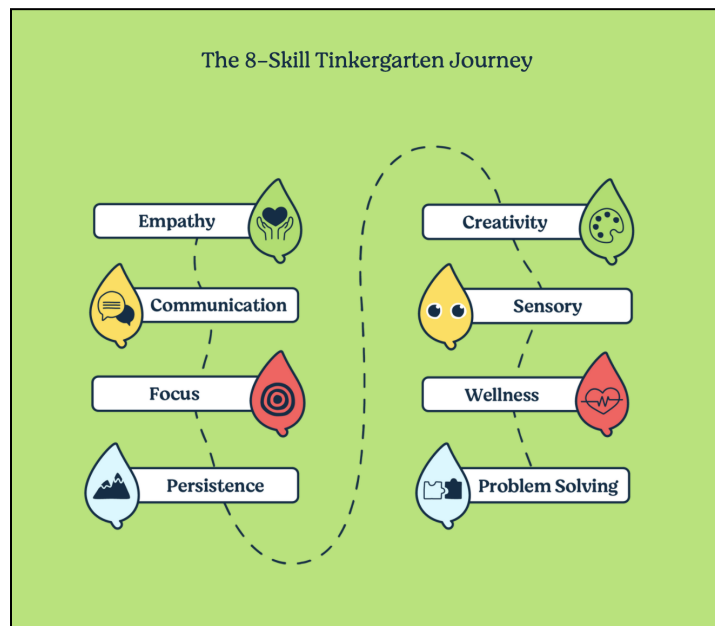
WHO is it for? Children between 18 months and 8 years, (Explorers) and their caregivers (Guides)

WHERE? We hold Tinkergarten classes in any local, public greenspace, park or playground.

WHAT do we do? Our child-led, play-based approach is designed to support a wide range of learners in engaging in deep, meaningful learning. The curriculum guides learners through play experiences designed to support the development of the following 8 essential skills—all while deepening children's connection to the natural world we all share.

- Communication
- Creativity
- Empathy
- Focus
- Persistence
- Problem Solving
- Sensory Development
- Wellness

Lessons are pre-tested by education experts, and help families raise healthy, confident and capable kids.



LOGISTICS

- Each program lasts a season: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall. Each season consists of one-hour-long classes, typically meeting once a week for six to nine weeks.
- Classes are small and do not require reserved space.
- Class-size is limited to 12-15 children max per class/season, between the ages of 18 months and eight years old. Children are accompanied by an adult and are never in our direct care.
- Free opportunities will be occasionally offered to the community and families pay to enroll in the season.
- I am setting up my own online registration process, and can be flexible about how I collect registration, waivers and payment. If needed, for a special event, I would be open to Linear Park collecting registration.
- I will carry my own General Liability Policy with coverage up to \$1M.

There could be more than one class per season. My intention will be to do this each of the four seasons, as long as there are enough sign-ups, each time. I'd like to potentially offer a variety of experiences; pop-up play-dates, different lengths of seasonal programs, and potentially a camp-type experience where we meet each morning for five days in one week, still with caregivers present. All of these opportunities are open to any of the community. Ideally these programs are also shared by Silver Comet Linear Park with frequent visitors of the park, and the community.

I'd also like to take advantage of the opportunity to have a table at the summer outdoor movie series, preceding the start of the movie. I'd offer an appropriate length, one-off activity/lesson for anyone to participate in.

BENEFITS

The benefits for children, adults, and families are many. Tinkergarten has found that studies show that kids today get out outdoors 50% less than we did. Being outside is shown scientifically to improve mood, reduce anxiety and facilitate learning (for both children and adults). (See more here: <https://tinkergarten.com/blog/why-wellness-post>)

Beyond that, Tinkergarten helps to facilitate a new kind of bond for many parents and caregivers, with their kiddos. We encourage adults to either join in with the child's play, following the child's lead, or simply observe the children and ask questions. Both are things we find ourselves often "not having time" to do in our busy day-to-day lives.

As a leader, I am taught about Behavioral Schemas (routines and patterns of behavior that kids repeat in play) to also share with caregivers. Schemas like transporting, transforming, trajectory,

explain that actions like carrying rocks in a bowl, pulling petals from a flower and throwing dirt, respectively, are normal parts of a child's development and learning. These are things I found especially interesting, as a Mom - I can say that my child's behavior is "typical", and a thought like that goes a long way.

ABOUT HEIDI

I joined Tinkergarten as a leader in Summer of 2022, because I wanted to get my kids (now aged 5 and 3) outside more often and more intentionally. They join me in and benefit from my classes. I led a class in Kennesaw at Leone Hall Price Park in Fall 2022, and then at Lewis Park in Acworth this past Winter. Tinkergarten has benefitted me personally in many ways, as well, including being able to find more creative ways to play outside with my own kids at home.

In the past, I have done my teaching as an independent contractor. Tinkergarten coordinated many of the logistics on our behalf, including securing permission to teach in my outdoor location. The organization is restructuring a bit, so moving forward, I will be using the same wonderful Tinkergarten curriculum, but I will be operating as an individual that collects our own registration, carries our own liability, etc for the first time. It's new, but exciting!

SUMMARY & CONTACT

In summary, holding Tinkergarten curriculum nature classes at Silver Comet Linear Park would be a benefit for all of the community. I'd love to work with Linear Park on this important mission, to get more kids outside, discussing a year's worth (four seasons) of programming at a time.

I thank you sincerely for your time. If you have any questions, I can be reached the following ways:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Best,

Heidi Davies
[Creative Wellness Mama](#)
[Find me on Tinkergarten](#)

