

WELCOME TO PATHFINDER OUTDOOR EDUCATION



our mission

Pathfinder's mission is to deliver fun, challenging adventures that help participants learn about themselves, others and the environment



pathfinder is accredited

We've been accredited by the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) since 1998. Pathfinder is the only AEE accredited organization in Florida.



physical and emotional safety

Pathfinder is a place for youth to speak up, test out leadership skills, hear and acknowledge new voices, and grow as a person in order to contribute to their community in a meaningful way.

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Families,

Pathfinder Outdoor Education is a nonprofit with a vision: to create communities of inclusion, integrity, and sustainability. We are working toward this vision through our mission: delivering fun, challenging adventures that help people learn about themselves, others, and the environment.

Pathfinder has been providing programs for over 29 years and we are pleased your group leaders have chosen to partner with us for one of our exciting, learning adventures. The location, schedule, activities, and goals were intentionally chosen by your group and are designed to build a stronger community. We infuse fun in almost everything we do and want this to be an amazing experience for all involved.

During a Pathfinder program, participants are invited to join in a variety of activities. Your leader can provide a copy of the schedule designed specifically for your group but during all programs, youth will experience learning, laughter, and growth. Challenges, games, and active play are often followed by an opportunity to comment on how they thought the group worked together and what they might change on the next activity.

Your program will be led by our extraordinary staff of facilitators. They bring diverse backgrounds, engaging personalities, compassion, and thoughtfulness to each and every program. Their insightful assessment of each group's needs and careful sequencing of activities leads to deep discussions allowing participants to transfer learning to everyday life.

Our facilitators are extensively trained, including in the prevention and management of risk. They hold current certifications in First Aid, CPR/AED, low challenge course, high ropes, tree climbing, canoeing and lifeguarding. This level of preparedness and our staff's constant vigilance has resulted in an excellent safety record.

To gain a better understanding of our program, it may be helpful to see what your child will be doing. Our [website](#), [facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube channel](#) provide lots of pictures and videos. We have extensive information on our programs which we are happy to share with you. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for allowing your child this opportunity,

Amy Durand
Executive Director

PATHFINDER'S COVID-19 PLAN

To provide an environment that allows participants to flourish, we have made updates to our normal program operations based on guidance from health authorities such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other government agencies.

Please review the following information in detail.

PREPARING FOR PROGRAM:

We are proud to say that 100% of Pathfinder's facilitators are vaccinated and that they will still be responsible for following CDC guidelines.

If Pathfinder staff are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath or difficulty of breathing, fever/chills, temperature of 100.4 or greater, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, or secretions), have in the past 10 days been in close contact with someone suspected or confirmed as having COVID-19, or are confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19 in the past 14 days, they will be asked to stay home.

Pathfinder strongly recommends that unvaccinated participants and chaperones self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms 10 days prior to the start of a Pathfinder program.

DURING PROGRAM:

If any person (Pathfinder staff, participant or attendee) shows signs or symptoms of COVID-19, we will separate that individual from the group and seek medical advice.

Site policies and procedures

Anyone participating in or attending a Pathfinder program will adhere to any updated policies and procedures that partner sites have implemented. This also includes school facilities, parks, and other off-site locations.

Masks

Anyone participating in a Pathfinder program who is fully vaccinated does not need to wear a mask, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local businesses, our partner sites, and workplace guidance.

Outdoors - masks are optional for all adults and children.

Indoors (vaccinated adults and children) - masks are optional.

Indoors (unvaccinated adults and children) - masks are optional but strongly encouraged.

Pathfinder staff will continue to encourage those who are not fully vaccinated to wear a mask consistently and correctly. Although fully vaccinated persons do not need to wear masks, staff will be supportive of adults and participants who choose to continue to wear masks.

Physical distancing

Physical distancing is not necessary for participants and staff who are fully vaccinated. Pathfinder staff will continue to promote physical distancing with participants, including adults, who are not vaccinated.

Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, cleaning and disinfecting

Pathfinder staff will continue to facilitate health-promoting behaviors such as hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the spread of infectious disease in general. Pathfinder staff will continue to follow cleaning, disinfecting, and ventilation recommendations, including routine cleaning of high-touch surfaces and shared objects to maintain healthy facilities.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

For those who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 as defined by the CDC, please carefully consider, in conjunction with your healthcare provider, whether to attend Pathfinder at this time.

We will continue to monitor and take proactive steps to slow the spread and to reduce the risk of significant impacts to our future participants, staff, and communities. Our practices may change as we gain new information or as recommendations change.

Thank you for your patience, understanding and support.



frequently asked questions

Who is Pathfinder Outdoor Education?

Pathfinder is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to deliver fun, challenging adventures that help people learn about themselves, others and the environment. We facilitate hands-on programs with an emphasis on community. Working together to identify and achieve common goals, participants gain new skills in resolving conflicts and effective collaboration while developing leadership skills and enhancing communication. Because our curriculum is exciting and active, participants feel energized about learning and have fun in the process.

What kind of activities can we expect?

Pathfinder offers over 30 curriculum choices that vary by age and location. Your group leader has discussed options and created goals with Pathfinder. Activities have been selected to meet the desired outcomes set by your school or organization. The goals may include: community building, healthy decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership development. Some activities include: team building games, low challenge course, canoeing, high ropes, tree climbing, outdoor living skills, and science enrichment.

Pathfinder activities have a minimum of lecture. Instead, they focus on experience-based learning. Participants actively engage in exploring, discovering, creating, thinking and doing an activity. The experience is then debriefed with the guidance of Pathfinder facilitators to draw parallels between what was learned and how this may apply in real life.

What does a typical day look like?

Each full day of programming typically contains breakfast at 8:30 am, a three hour morning session, lunch at 12:30 pm, a three hour afternoon session, Free Time with sports or other recreation, dinner at 6:00 pm and a two to three hour evening session. Pathfinder programming is usually completed by 9:30 pm and lights-out is determined by chaperones.

Is it safe?

At Pathfinder, safety is our highest priority. We are the only organization in Florida accredited by the Association for Experiential Education. Pathfinder facilitators are Level II background checked, undergo extensive training for all activities and are certified in First Aid, CPR, and AED.

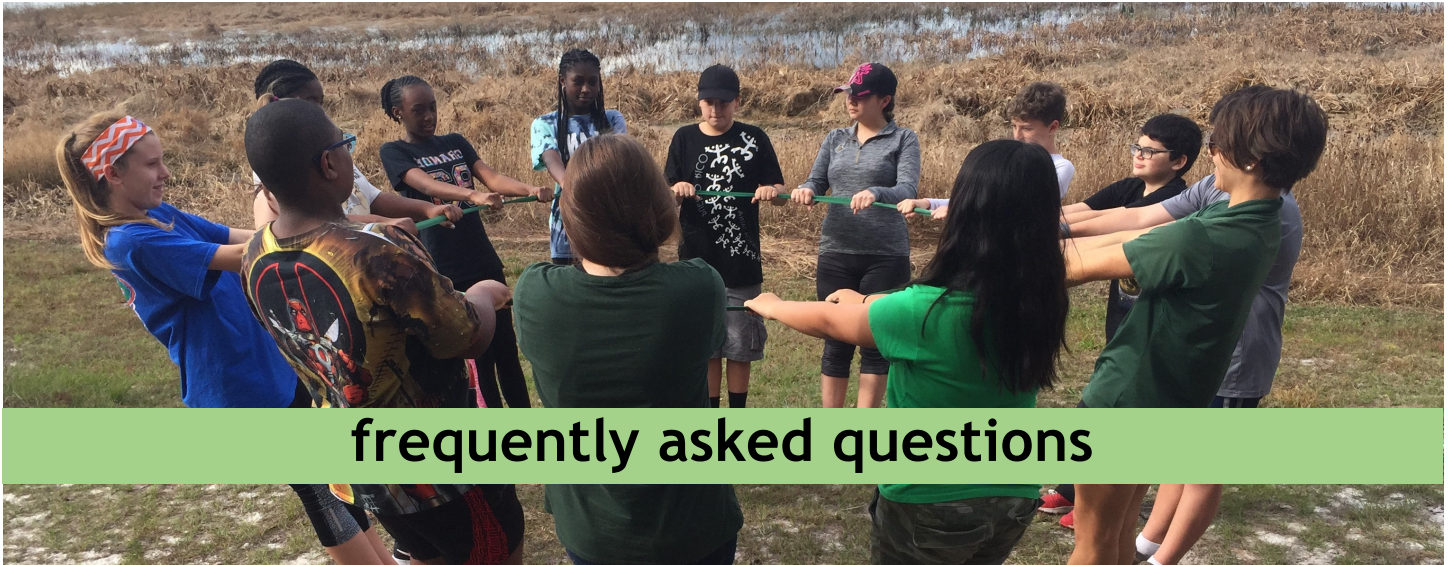
Each group is supervised by at least one Pathfinder facilitator. A chaperone from your school/group also accompanies these groups. Pathfinder facilitators carry a complete roster of the participants in their care which contains pertinent medical information.

What behavior is expected of participants on a Pathfinder trip?

Participants are expected to abide by all regular school/group rules unless instructed otherwise. In addition, all participants are expected to follow the Pathfinder safety instructions and policies.

Do we need to wear masks?

Pathfinder will follow your school/community's masks guidelines. However, we will also ask you to comply with any mask guidelines the sites who are hosting us may have in place. We politely ask you to be respectful of their choices and follow their guidelines.



frequently asked questions

What about medications?

All medications should be sent in their original packaging and can be dispensed by chaperones from your group.

What about special dietary requests?

Vegetarian options are available at every meal. Special arrangements can be made for needs such as gluten-free and lactose intolerant. Dietary needs should be listed on the *Liability Waiver and Medical Information Form*. If there are other allergies or more specific dietary needs, please call our office.

What are sleeping arrangements like?

Accommodations vary. Participants generally stay in climate controlled, single-sex dorms or cabins with a chaperone from your school/group on every hall or in the same dormitory complex.

What should we pack?

Consult the Pathfinder *Packing List* for a complete list of items needed.

What about electronic devices?

Electronic devices such as cell phones, ipods, DS systems, etc. can be brought at the discretion of the group leader for the bus ride and cabin time. Electronic devices are not allowed during Pathfinder programming and should be left in a safe location or with a chaperone.

Are calls home permitted?

While phones are easily accessible in case of emergency, your group leader specifies when phone calls are permitted. Typically, phone calls are allowed in the evening or during free time (4:30-6:00 pm) and not during program. We also request that youth do not carry their cell phones so they aren't distracted from their experience.

What paperwork do we need to complete?

All attendees must complete Pathfinder's *Liability Waiver and Medical Information Form*. Your group leader may have additional forms that need to be completed.

What happens after the program?

We encourage parents and guardians to bring the learning back into your home. Ask your child about what they learned, both about themselves and about their group. Your child might have discovered that they're not actually as afraid of heights or the dark or being alone as they thought they were. They might have realized that the quiet kid in their class really has some interesting things to say but no one has given them the chance to speak up before.

How can we stay involved with Pathfinder?

One fun way for your entire family to get involved is to come to our [Open Tree Climbs](#). Pathfinder hosts the Open Climb the first Saturday of every month at our St. Petersburg location. Anyone ages 6 and up can climb and it's a great way to get outside and spend time together as a family while meeting our facilitators and learning more about experiential education and outdoor education.



packing list

ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR BOTH DAY AND OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS

- ◆ **Prescription Medications**—in original container with directions and dosage amount, given to your trip leader or chaperone
- ◆ **Closed Toe Shoes**—sneakers, running shoes, hiking boots, etc.
- ◆ **Shoes for Water Activities** (Alafia Adventure, Canoeing, Cast Away, Estuary Explorer, Water World) Flip flops will not be permitted. They must have a strap on the back.
- ◆ **Towels**
- ◆ **Rainwear**
- ◆ **Reusable Water Bottle**
- ◆ **Bathing Suit**—if your group has water activities
- ◆ **Jacket**
- ◆ **Long-sleeved Shirts**
- ◆ **Long Pants**
- ◆ **Longer Shorts**—for tree climbing and high ropes
- ◆ **EPA-registered Insect Repellent**
- ◆ **Sunscreen**
- ◆ **Masks**—CDC approved, as many as needed for the length of your program

ADDITIONAL ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS

- ◆ **Bedding**—pillow and sleeping bag OR pillow and linens for a single bed—no linens are provided
- ◆ **Toiletries**—shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, etc.
- ◆ **Clothing for Each Day**—including pajamas, underwear, socks, etc.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- ◆ **Camera**
- ◆ **Sunglasses**
- ◆ **Hat**
- ◆ **Individual hand sanitizer**
- ◆ **Cell phones**—will be held by a chaperone and used only during designated times
- ◆ **Money**—only if required by your school/group

Please leave your nice, expensive things at home because they could be lost or damaged. Pathfinder is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Pack for casual comfort in the outdoors but understand that we will be in a natural environment. Ants, mosquitoes and other bugs are to be expected.

Founded in 1993, Pathfinder is a non-profit offering experiential educational programs that develop leadership, increase self-confidence, and enhance communication through trust and team-building activities. Participants work together to identify and achieve common goals and in the process, gain new skills in problem-solving, resolving conflict, listening, observing, and working effectively in a group.

experiential education



Experiential Education is a hands-on form of learning that begins with a concrete experience. After solving a problem, learners reflect on the process and are able to apply lessons more broadly to their lives.

Pathfinder Outdoor Education is accredited by the Association for Experiential Education. [We are the only AEE accredited program in Florida.](#) To learn more about Experiential Education and the accreditation process, please visit AEE.org.