



TERMS OF COMMITMENT TO A NATURE PLAY SPACE

After agreeing to abide by the following terms, your Organizing Group will be officially accepted and ready to begin. Please read this document carefully, making sure that all members of your group understand and agree to the terms listed below. Signing this Letter of Commitment formalizes your agreement with the Chicago Park District. Nature Play Space Organizing Groups are expected to *renew their commitment every two years*.

MANAGEMENT

Chicago Park District's Nature Oasis staff is here to help your group not only start your Nature Play Space, but also to help you sustain a positive and productive presence in your park. Maintaining communication with the Park District regarding management of the Play Space is expected. Information about changes in leadership, events, workdays, classes, etc. that are hosted in the Space should be shared with the Nature Oasis staff. If problems occur with the operation or patrons of the Nature Play Space, the Park Supervisor should be informed and involved in the resolution of any problems. In the event the group leader needs to step down, he or she is responsible for recruiting and facilitating new group leadership.

The Group shall inform any new volunteers of the Nature Play Space Guidelines, stressing the importance of ongoing maintenance. The Group must follow a transparent membership process open to all. As a public agency, Chicago Park District policy requires inclusiveness; anyone interested in joining the Group is to be fairly considered.

NATURE PLAY SPACE MAINTENANCE

The Group is entirely responsible for the maintenance of the Nature Play Space. Keep in mind that the space allocated is on public land and must always be actively maintained. The Group must follow the Maintenance plan, outlined in Step 4 of your Written Proposal (FORM #1.)

Chicago Park District will not do any regular maintenance within the Nature Play Space. Through the Park District's independent observation, if the space is deemed unsightly or otherwise neglected, the designated liaison will be given two separate warning notices via two different means (for example, phone call and email) each time. If the problem continues thereafter, the agreement will be revoked and the Group will be responsible for proposing a plan to restore the Play Space to parkland to the satisfaction of the Park District's Department of Cultural & Natural Resources (DCNR).

Once a year, from September through May, the Chicago Park District will collaborate with the Group to coordinate a large-scale community workday, inviting the organizing members of other Nature Play Spaces to share ideas, collaborate on building projects, and work on a large group effort such as mulching, planting, repair, or another activity. Staff support will be provided and additional resources sought for this workday.

ORGANIC PRACTICES

In keeping with the Chicago Park District's commitment to sustainability, and for the health and safety of all park patrons, it is required that all growing practices, including disease and pest control, be organic. **NO CHEMICAL PEST CONTROL MEASURES MAY BE USED.**

PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY STRUCTURES

Sensory beds: It is the responsibility of the Group to ensure that the soil, sand, or gravel used in the Nature Play Space is clean and free of hazardous material such as broken glass.

Bird feeders: If bird feeders are present, they must be maintained. Use of native plants will provide natural food

sources such as berries and seeds without attracting rodents or pigeons. Native plants must be approved by the CPD Natural Areas Manager. Please request to see our Native Plant List.

Fences and walls: Permanent structures such as fences, walls, and sizeable plant material such as **trees** are **NOT** allowed, unless approved by Department of Cultural and Natural Resources (DCNR). The Group must work with Nature Oasis staff to coordinate tree plantings.

Structures: Small trellises and nature play structures such as mud kitchens, plant based forts, and the like are permitted with the prior written approval of the DCNR and are the responsibility of the Group to manage, maintain, and repair.

PLAY SPACE BORDERS

The Nature Play Space boundaries must remain as submitted on the original design plans. Any proposed modification or expansion requests must be approved by DCNR BEFORE any changes are made. Please contact the Nature Oasis staff for further guidance and instructions.

VANDALISM

Like drought, hail, and freezing temperatures, theft and vandalism are among the assumed risks of operating a Nature Play Space in a public park. All spaces within the parks are and will continue to be public property. While the Nature Oasis Program continues to support efforts to reduce unnecessary vandalism or theft, we cannot guarantee that any Space is free from the risk.

LIABILITY

Chicago Park District is not responsible for the Nature Play Space itself, or for anything in or pertaining to the Space. **EACH MEMBER OF THE GROUP MUST SIGN A WAIVER OF LIABILITY (FORM 4B).**

SIGNAGE

Chicago Park District will provide each Nature Play Space with a welcome sign. It is the responsibility of Each Nature Play Group to publicize information about how to become involved with the group's project – through signage or other materials.

VEHICLES

Park patrons – including Nature Play Space Group members -- are permitted to use motorized vehicles within a park **ONLY** on designated roadways, driveways and parking facilities. The parking or driving of motorized vehicles by any park patron on walkways, restricted-access drives, lawn areas, under trees, or within landscaped areas is strictly forbidden.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES IN THE NATURE PLAY SPACE

- **Littering, dumping, grilling, alcohol consumption** and any otherwise unlawful activities.
- **Amplified sound.**
- **Pets** are not allowed in the Space per the Code of the Chicago Park District.
- **Ball playing** or other forms of active recreation.

PLAY AREA TERMINATION

If the Group decides to no longer maintain their space, they must immediately notify the Park District. The Group will be responsible for proposing a plan to restore the Nature Play Space to parkland to the satisfaction of the Park District's DCNR.

While unlikely, the Chicago Park District reserves the right to remove the Nature Play Space at any time and will make every effort to provide notification prior to removal.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

A Chicago Park District representative may attend a neighborhood association and/or Park Advisory Council meeting to review the successes or challenges experienced by the Nature Play Space Groups. The Park District will take appropriate action based on that assessment. Failure by the Nature Play Space organizers to provide the required operational and financial support will result in the removal of the space by the Park District.

CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

NATURE PLAY SPACE LETTER OF COMMITMENT

I _____ (*please print name*) am the official liaison of the Nature Play Space Group. Each current member of our Group has read the attached terms and agrees to abide by them and now enters into a commitment to maintain our Nature Play Space in _____ Park.

Liaison's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Group Name: _____ **Date:** _____

How many active members? _____ **Additional volunteers (number, if any)?** _____

Park: _____

Park Supervisor's name: _____

Square footage of the Nature Play Area: _____

Liaison/Group Leader's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Alternate Contact's Name*: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Second Alternate Contact's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Group website or blog address, if any: _____

****The Primary & Alternate contacts may not be in the same immediate family and may not reside at the same address.***

Please email completed form, along with the required attachments (see above) and signed Liability Waivers for each member to:

Sarah Unz
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Culture, Arts & Nature – Nature Oasis
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