



Essential Gear Guide

We have compiled a list of essential gear based on our field testing of 20+ years of gear. A few suggestions may appear to be expensive, but the overall product durability and lifetime far exceeds less expensive alternatives and will be useful for the entire time your child is at our school and with the entire family. Many items have been chosen to foster your child's ability to dress independently.

Monogrammed Lunch Box

LL Bean makes the best lunch box by far. The barrel style flip top is good for toddlers and hungry preschoolers benefit from the storage capacity of the [LL Bean Lunch Bag](#). Monogram your child's and pick one of 20 designs and you are sure to find their lunch box each day.



Cup Labels

We love these stretchy label bands as they can be used for years and moved from bottle to sippy cups and water bottles as your child grows. Choose a neutral design and just your last name and they will be useful for the entire family. www.inchbug.com Twice per year, we will have an opportunity to order personalized water bottles from [Yeti](#) with your child's name and our logo.



Clothing and Shoe Labels

Keeping clothes and shoes organized is an incredibly challenging task. Help us help you by [labeling everything clearly](#). Use a label with a last name only and they will work for the entire family.



Cot Sheets and Blankets

Urban Infant makes the perfect nap roll up! The elastic corners loop directly to our cots so it stays in place. We do not recommend the ones that roll with Velcro as the hook-and-loop closure does not last. Order directly through urbaninfant.com and use coupon code SLEEPER0517 for 15% off.



Bento Box

A rectangular dish and [small silicone cupcake liners](#) make the perfect layout for bento box lunches. The cups hold the perfect USDA recommended food portions for young children. Six snacks should be provided each day with 2 veggies, 2 fruits, and 2 crunchy snacks. Removable cups make it easy to heat items. Another option with pre-made dividers is [Bentgo bento boxes for kids](#).



Tote Bag

Tote bags with an open top make it easy for children and teachers to access the contents of their bags while still keeping everything in one place. Sturdy canvas totes stand up on their own and are able to be monogrammed. [LL Bean](#) and [Land's End](#) make high-quality canvas totes that can be used for years to come. Another option is reusable plastic tarp-like bags from Marshalls or TJ Maxx for easy cleaning.



Water Bottles

We love the cleanliness and durability of both [Yeti](#) and [Klean Kanteen](#) water bottles. They have multiple style tops from a sippy spout to a soft sport bottle top to support your child's developmental needs.



Sunscreen and Bug Spray

Though lotions and sticks protect little ones' skin from cancer-causing UVA and UVB rays, doctors advise new mamas to use physical barriers such as: SPF clothing, hats, umbrellas, and shades — rather than lotions on babies younger than 6 months old.

Our top sunscreen recommendations are mineral-based, such as: All Good, Aveeno Baby, Neutrogena Baby, Tom's of Maine Baby, Blue Lizard, Think Sport, Badger, California Baby, All Terrain, Goddess Garden, and Bare Republic.



Due to the prevalence of tick- and mosquito-borne diseases in North Carolina, the NC DHHS has outlined which products and applications will best protect your child over the age of 2 months from insect bites [here](#). Recommendations* include: Cutter Deep Woods Insect Repellent, OFF! Deep Woods Insect Repellent, and Ben's 30% Deet Mosquito, Tick, and Insect Repellent.

**Please try to use pump-spray rather than aerosol sprays, as aerosols can trigger asthma attacks.*



Sun hat

Sun hats are essential to keeping little ones safe in the sun. The long back helps protect their neck and the chin strap keeps it in place for the little ones.



Summer shoes

Shoes for the summer need to have tread and enclose your child's heel for outdoor adventures. The [Keen-style sandal](#) pictured is sturdy, waterproof, provides adequate support, and allows for ventilation in the summer. Please make sure the style of footwear you chose is one that your child can take on and off independently.



Rain and Mud Boots

These one piece molded boots are perfect for muddy play. Just rinse and repeat! The handles help children learn independence by helping them change shoes on their own. They are made by [Crocs](#) and there are generics available.



Rain and Mud Suit

We spend a significant amount of time outside in the rain and mud, especially in the transition seasons. This one-piece rainsuit is available on Amazon and is a must-have. They are generously sized and fit over winter gear when we are in the muddy season.



Snow suit

Even for the older children, we recommend a one piece snow suit. They can put them on and take them off independently and the icy mud never ends up where it doesn't belong. [Reima suits](#) are expensive, but they look like new at the end of the season. They are highly waterproof and extremely durable. We have also had good luck with [Land's End](#) and [Columbia](#).



Mittens

Even though we don't typically see snow in the Carolinas, children's hands need to stay warm and dry. [Snow Stopper mittens](#) come to the elbow and stay on. They are quite warm and will last a season. Mittens keep little hands warmer and there is no fighting to put fingers in the correct spaces like we see with gloves.

