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Nature Action Collaborative for Children



Photograph by V Flores

Vision:

Connecting children with the natural world:

- Is crucial for their optimal intellectual and physical development
- Provides a sense of refuge and healing in a sometimes violent and frightening world
- Helps them grow into adults who care about environmental stewardship
- Nurtures a sense of shared community among the world's peoples.

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WHO SHOULD ATTEND NACC?

Anyone who is interested in re-connecting young children with nature can become a member of the Nature Action Collaborative for Children. It's free!

Join with the other 1,400 NACC members -- architects, environmentalists, engineers, health professionals and early childhood educators...

- You will receive a subscription to NACC's bimonthly newsletter with insights on nature education and updates on events and resources.
- You will be invited to tell your nature education story, to contribute to our online directory of resources and events. (More coming soon!)
- You will receive advance notification of upcoming NACC events. The last two Nature Education Working Forums sold out two and three months in advance, so you will want to take advantage of this advance notice.
- You will receive a daily newsbrief with stories of interest to those who care for and about young children.



Nature Action Collaborative for Children Leadership Team, Belfast June 2009



From left: Rodney Kenner (USA), John Rosenow (USA) Guillian McAuliffe (Australia), Helle Nebelong (Denmark), Swati Popat (India), Toni Christie (New Zealand), Nancy Rosenow (USA), Bishnu Hari Bhatta (Nepal), Sebastian Chuwa (Africa). In front from left: Irma Allen (Swaziland), Claire Warden (Scotland), Raed Abu Hayyaneh (Jordan)

Universal Principles

Developed by the Nature Action Collaborative for Children Leadership Team, a World Forum Foundation Working Group*

Final revision: March 29, 2010, based on feedback from NACC Leaders



Universal Principles - For Children

We believe it is important for multi-disciplinary groups of design professionals, environmental advocates, educators, health-care professionals and families to work together to design and support spaces and experiences that help children make connections with nature a sustaining and enriching part of their daily lives.

We believe that regular connections with the natural world encourage children to develop:

- Respect for local cultures and climates and for themselves as a part of nature.
- Feelings of unity, peace and well-being as global citizens.

We believe it is important that children:

- Have daily access to nature-based outdoor and indoor environments in their early childhood programs and schools.
- Be respected as competent, powerful learners and risk-takers who have a voice in what they create and learn through nature.
- Be supported in developing life skills through holistic nature-based learning.

Universal Principles - For Design Professionals

We believe:

- Nature should be integral in the design process of children's indoor and outdoor environments.
- Children's "voices" (children's ideas and adults' observations of children's use of space) should be central to the design process.
- The over-all environmental and ethical impact of the design should be considered
- Nature-based spaces should:
 1. Respect and celebrate the site's natural assets, local culture, climate and history.
 2. Use local, indigenous plants, animals, natural materials and community contributions as much as possible.
 3. Provide multi-functionality/multiple possibilities.
 4. Stimulate all the senses.
 5. Be accessible to all abilities.
 6. Inspire wonder and discovery.
 7. Be sustainable and able to develop over time.



Universal Principles - For Educators



We believe it is important for educators to:

- Allow enough time each day for children to explore freely in nature-based spaces.
- Understand their role as researchers and facilitators who observe children's interactions with nature and support the emergent curriculum.
- Support children's appropriate risk-taking and adventurous play in nature, as well as time for silence and contemplation.
- Encourage children's development of a sense of wonder and a sense of environmental stewardship.

Universal Principles - For Families

We believe it is important for families to:

- Understand the value of children's daily connections with nature.
- Support children's appropriate risk-taking and exploration in nature.
- Enjoy regular experiences in the natural world with their children.





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