



Universal Principles for Connecting Children with Nature

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

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.

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.



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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.
- Provide children with opportunities for silence and contemplation in natural settings.
- Encourage children's development of a sense of wonder and a sense of environmental stewardship.

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.