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Community-Based Education Program



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Promotional Copy

#4254 – Outdoor Learning Grounds Design

Organization Information

The host organization is dedicated to quality year round outdoor, environmental and leadership opportunities for children and adults, developing positive stewards of our natural and human communities. Our vision is to be recognized as a leader in the delivery of high quality and inspirational outdoor and environmental programming, practicing, teaching and promoting sustainable living practices to children and adults of all ages and abilities.

Project Information

Richard Louv has written persuasively about a phenomenon he describes as the Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD), experienced by children of all ages. As children spend up to 6 hours in front of a glowing screen indoors, they are not, he argues, playing outside and encountering nature. As a consequence, children are becoming disconnected from their local environment and from the very life processes that sustain us all. The purpose of this project is to investigate what makes for effective outdoor learning grounds. More specifically, what makes for a creative outdoor play area for teaching children about wildlife and nature? What types of activities stimulate outdoor learning? What kinds of design elements are developmentally appropriate for younger elementary students, older elementary students, high school? Based on research findings, the researcher will suggest a number of design elements that the host organization can incorporate into planning.

Benefit to the Host Organization and Community

Innovative outdoor learning spaces do much to encourage active play in natural environments. If they are well constructed and well designed, they invite engagement, stimulate the imagination and promote physical exercise. We'd like our outdoor learning grounds to serve as a model for schools in our community.

What students might learn

- How to conduct relevant, unbiased research
- Learning about the stages of environmental awareness and what makes for effective environmental education
- Researching best practices in the design of innovative learning grounds
- Interviewing techniques
- Tabulating, organizing and summarizing data
- Learning how to create a detailed design plan for outdoor play spaces

Screening or Training Requirements

- Police check required

Skills or Experience Needed

- Experience in research
- Solid writing skills
- Ability to work independently
- Some experience working with children an asset

Resources Required for Project Provided by Host

- Use of photocopier and printer, as required
- Access to Environment Centre as required
- Letters of reference/support, if required.
- Re-imburement of travel