

**Teachers' role in supporting/scaffolding children's learning in the
Nature Explore Classroom(s)TM**

Draft/Outline – April 2009 (Dr. Dana L. Miller, Kathy Tichota, Joyce White)

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Structural question (for analysis): What are all the ways teachers are supporting/ scaffolding children's learning in the Nature Explore Classroom(s)TM?	Identified in analysis of nature notes (i.e., teachers' documentation)	Identified in focus group interviews w/teachers (n=23) 3/09
Observing children closely (e.g., seeing the teachable moments, knowing when to intervene, observing their skill level)	X	X
Listening carefully to children/their plans/discoveries	X	X
Asking children questions, particularly open-ended questions (encouraging children to think, problem-solve, put what they know into words)	X	X
Engaging children in real work that has a purpose (relates to development of self-esteem and confidence and developing respect for nature)	X	X
Remaining flexible/willing to change plans and extend activities (extending time/activity over multiple days)	X	X
Allowing children to problem-solve and learn, without intervening too early	X	X
Avoiding "correcting" children, asking for one "right answer" as they are sharing their emerging knowledge	X	X
Setting up areas/providing a variety of materials that provide rich learning experiences (successful environment)	X	X
Noticing, validating and affirming children's discoveries, knowledge, competence (caring adult)	X	X
Following children's lead/honoring their expertise	X	X
Providing assistance when necessary so children can be successful (often with physical tasks)	X	X
Monitoring safety/conflict, teaching children how to use materials/tools/their bodies safely	X	X
Allowing appropriate risk-taking	X	
Being physically present and engaging in activities with children (at their invitation) & discovering with them	X	X
Encouraging children to become engaged in activities that are multi-sensory, to engage all parts of the brain	X	X
Modeling love/respect for nature	X	
Extending outdoor activities to the indoors, bringing nature inside to build on children's learning experiences	X	X
Making a commitment/planning to take children outdoors in all kinds of weather (making it a priority)	X	X

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Inviting children to draw, sketch and document (which enhances their close observation skills, taps into their visual and kinesthetic memory, helps them internalize their experiences)	X	X
Implementing flexible learning plans with intentional focuses (dots and lines, patterns, textures, etc.)	X	
Helping children interact successfully with other children (e.g., include them in their plans, listen to their ideas, work collaboratively, communicate their ideas)	X	X
Serving as a resource person; providing additional information, providing vocabulary, reading related books with children (increasingly bringing in non-fiction reference books and reading with children)	X	X
Allowing children to explore materials and tools in their own way and use their imaginations to change the function of materials (creative representation)	X	X
Allowing children to get messy, and educating parents about appropriate clothing	X	X
Providing specific learning experiences that connect to children's prior knowledge	X	X
Accommodating each individual child's needs, interests, and comfort level/building on those	X	X
Re-directing children who need focus (re-directing to certain materials, areas, challenges)	X	X
Reading books that relate to children's interests to learn more about the topics/materials to help answer children's questions (relates to teacher's personal learning)	X	X
Being more personally aware in nature, of things to help children notice/to discuss with children (e.g., seasonal changes, habitats, living creatures)		X
Helping children communicate their plans and sequence their processes	X	X
Allowing children to explore NATURAL materials/the earth, not always providing tools and toys	X	X
Exploring materials prior to providing them to children (field-testing and physically interacting with materials for ease/age appropriateness and safety)	X	X
Helping children identify and value their own space (e.g., building in the messy materials area, working in the sand area, digging area)	X	X

