


HEAD START
 Regional T/TA Network

Jungle Gyms vs. the Jungle-




Exploring and honoring our Mother Earth by creating appropriately challenging nature based environments.

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These materials were developed for OHS/Region XI under Contract No. HHSP233201500016c by ICF International


GROUND RULES

1. Take care of your needs as you have them, quietly.
2. Demonstrate respect for all, including yourself!
3. Allow others to finish their statements.
4. Be flexible; suspend certainty.
5. PLEASE Turn off or mute cell phones and pagers
6. " Vegas Rule" (maintain confidentiality)
7. Feel free to go out on a limb; be vulnerable/courageous
8. Expand what you know to benefit children & families!
9. Enjoy yourself!

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OBJECTIVES:

Participants will learn about American Indian program strategies for culturally appropriate outdoor learning environments

Participants will better understand the benefits of nature based learning environments

Participants will increase their knowledge of how to balance risk and safety in developing natural playscapes
 Teachers will increase instructional support for children using natural materials.

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KEY POINTS:

-  Research shows that time spent involved in nature based play has many benefits
-  Children are spending less time outdoors and enjoying less vigorous, physical play
-  Programs can play an essential role in supporting staff and families in helping children spend time in nature based play

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Head Start Program Performance Standards:

1302.30 Purpose:

“...A program must deliver developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts.”

Head Start Program Performance Standards

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Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

Guiding Principles:

Every child has diverse strengths rooted in their family’s culture, background, language, and beliefs. Responsive and respectful learning environments welcome children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Effective teaching practices and learning experiences build on unique backgrounds and prior experience of each child.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five p. 3

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What does the research say:

- The Nielson Company report indicates that children ages 2-5 years old spend 32 hours a week on average in front of the television.
- The amount of screen time only increases in age.
- School age children spend 7.5 hours a day on electronic media.
- Percent of overweight children have more than tripled between 1971 and 2009.
- Kids who play outside are healthier, happier and stronger.
- Children play 27% on electronics compared to 1% outside.
- Children play only 30 minutes a week in unstructured play.

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The percentage of preschool children who are overweight more than tripled between 1971 and 2009, exploding from 5.8% in 1971 to 18.4% in 2009 (Odgen et al, 2007; Anderson, 2009). Six out of ten of these preschoolers will continue to be overweight or obese at age 12 (NICHD, 2006). The situation is so severe that this generation of children's life span is predicted to be shorter than that of their parents.

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"I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where all the electric outlets are."

A 4th grader in San Diego, quoted in Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv
 Quote from Outdoor Play Benefits on ECLKC

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Reflect on your childhood experiences outdoors.
What was your favorite activity?
Share with your friends



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Video from eclkc

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FOSTERING CHILDREN'S THINKING SKILLS

What does it look like?

- Classroom interactions that focus on "big ideas" and deepen children's knowledge of the world around them.
- Children's thinking skills can be fostered during interactions that involve:
 - Using the scientific method
 - Problem-solving
 - Applying knowledge

What does it NOT look like?

- **Drilling children on facts or skills.**

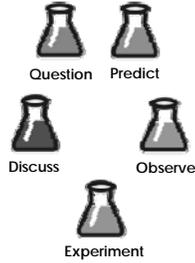
**FOSTERING CHILDREN'S THINKING SKILLS
BY USING THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD**

Provide tasks where children can **observe**, **predict**, and **experiment**.




SCIENTIFIC METHOD

- The scientific method is a series of steps that help children understand their world.
- Teachers use the scientific method when they:
 - Help children **question**.
 - Ask children to **observe** the world around them.
 - Encourage children to **predict** during activities.
 - Create opportunities for children to **experiment**.
 - Allow children to **discuss** the results of their experiment.



QUESTION

Help children form their own **questions** related to their world.

A child is playing outside and exclaims:
 "Oh no! The plant! What happened?"



OBSERVE

Ask children to use their senses and closely **observe** the world around them.



"Let's look at some of the plants that are growing around our school. What do you notice about places where they are growing? How does the soil feel around them?"
 (Encourage children to think about water.)

PREDICT

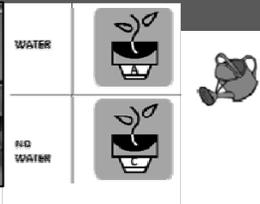
Encourage children to **predict**, or guess, the answer to the initial question.

“What do you think plants need to grow?
What do you think would happen if we gave water to some plants but not others?”



EXPERIMENT

Provide opportunities for children to **experiment** and test their predictions.



DISCUSS

Allow children to **discuss** the results of their experiment.

“Let’s look at our two plants. Remember we treated each plant differently? The first plant got water and the second plant did not get water. What happened to the plants in our experiment? Which plant grew the most?... What do plants need to grow?”



WHEN CAN I USE THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD?

Teachers can use the scientific method **throughout the school day** in many classroom activities.



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Using the materials at your table, practice the scientific methods steps.

Share back with the rest of the group.

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“When a story is told it is not forgotten. It becomes something else, a memory of who we were; the hope of what we can become.”
(DeRosnay, Sarah's Key p.136)

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- Tell your story of where you feel you are with including Nature Based Learning and Development in your program.
- What will you change in your environments or program?

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NATURE BASED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES ON ECLKC



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<https://youtu.be/wGOALNlgXw>

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Citations:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching>
Outdoor Play Benefits, Head Start Body.

<https://youtu.be/wGOALNlgXw>
deRosnay, T. *Sarah's Key*. St.Martin Press, NY. 2007.

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