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# Urban Nature Connection

*Transforming Learning  
and Well-Being*

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# Our Story





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# Childhood Memories



# Elements to Naturalize Urban Spaces and take your program outdoors











# Gathering Places and Sensory



# Loose Parts









## Gardens

**Family Planting Days, Life Cycle of Plants, Caring for Gardens, Harvest, Cooking and Enjoying the Harvest Together**





# Use Your Imagination

adding items that encourage safe risk taking







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# Create a Sensory Walkway

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# Trees







**To tap, to climb, life cycles, harvest fruit,  
places to hide**





# Bird Feeders



# Benefits to the Children



- Gross motor, curiosity, exploration are all richer for children outdoors
- Open areas for movement/opportunities for risky play
- A tranquil place to be alone/rest
- Connections to land, others and self

Benefits overall well-being of the children- physical, intellectual, problem solving, resilience, social, mental health, creativity etc

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# **Wild life is attracted to our playspaces**

**Wild life has been attracted  
to playspaces eg ducks that  
return each year – children  
can experience this first  
hand – not just read it in a  
book**

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# Benefits to Educators

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- Curriculum easily emerges through the children's discoveries and interests and connection to the land
  - Not redirecting children as much as indoors – they are able to run freely, jump, be loud
  - As an educator my connection to the land is stronger, learning along with the children and improved mental health
  - I feel more energized/benefit overall well-being
  - The day is less stressful outdoors with fewer transitions
  - Personal joy and professional growth
  - Working in nature feels right for me
  - Brings back many fond memories of camping, fishing, fire cooking with my family
  - Co-workers are happy, joyful, always smiling makes a lovely work environment
  - Job satisfaction seeing a difference in the overall well-being of the children



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# **Faye's Story**

## **Why I left a job that I loved?**



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**What would you need as an educator to be successful in working in and outdoor program?**



# What our educators shared with us

- Access to water – to keep cool in summer, to drink, hand washing stations/ snack bins
- Tables to set up provocations, snack, lunch
- Large spaces to move
- Shade in the summer







- Storage to keep loose parts etc so you do not need to take things in and out
- Wagons to take items outdoors
- Access to a bathroom is ideal
- Places for adults to sit with the children on adult size chairs
- Warming shed
- Proper clothes for educators and children/ giving staff a bonus to buy clothing items they need to be outdoors
- PD and opportunity to take the Nature and Forest School Certification/Time for adults to connect with each other in nature
- Having an extra educator at times to have a fire/use tools etc



**Questions?**