

# Early Childhood Environmental Education

## Annotated Bibliography of PK Educational Resources

Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education (11/13)

*The following list consists of selected resources for teaching environmental education in the early childhood years. This bibliography was developed with the assistance and recommendations of a dedicated committee of early childhood environmental education professionals in Wisconsin. Most of the materials can be found at the WI Center for Environmental Education Resource Library. Materials are also available for purchase from a variety of book stores or Amazon.com. Please call or visit the WCEE for assistance or visit our web site at <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/wcee/library/Pages/default.aspx> for additional information on borrowing resources.*

### Teaching Activity Guides

**Mudpies to Magnets: a Preschool Science Curriculum** by Rober Williams, et al, Gryphon House, MD. (1987).

*224 hands-on science experiments and ideas with step-by-step instructions delight and amaze children as they experience nature, the human body, electricity, floating and sinking, and more. Children participate in projects such as making a tornado in a jar, creating constellations and growing crystals. Categorized by curriculum areas, each activity includes a list of vocabulary words and easily accessible materials.*

*Grade levels: PK Length: 156 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: AC EG 50)

**Nature's Art Box** by Laura Martin, Storey Kids, MA. (2003).

*In Nature's Art Box, writer, gardener, and nature-crafter Laura Martin offers 65 fun projects kids will love to make, using materials they can find just about anywhere. She explains how to make paints and inks from flowers and other plants; how to use shells, moss, seedpods, and cones to embellish large objects; how to build elf-sized furniture; how to decorate picture frames, birdhouses, and keepsake boxes with woodland treasures; and how to dig clay, weave vines, and make natural dyes to color T-shirts.*

*Grade levels: PK Length: 192 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: AC CRA 14)

**A Place to Live: Teacher's Manual** by National Audubon Society. (1970).

*A basic introduction to environmental studies for urban teachers and students. Hands-on activities encourage students to inquire, learn, achieve and build self-esteem while discovering their environment.*

*Grade levels: PK-K Length: 52 pages*

Available for purchase from: Out of Print

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: AC URB 3)

**Discovery Science: Explorations for the Early Years** by David Winnett, Innovative Learning Pubs. (1996).

*Children are full of questions, and this innovative series encourages them to find the answers by getting their hands into scientific explorations. Adding exciting and eye-opening discoveries to any science curriculum, this developmental approach guides children in acquiring the skills of inquiry. Four units for each grade level provide activities that help students build investigative and emerging literacy and math skills as they complete easy-to-do experiments and tasks.*

*Grade levels: PK Length: 352 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: AC EG 198)

**Early Sprouts: Cultivating Healthy Food Choices in Young Children** by Karrie Kalich, et al., Red Leaf Press. (2009).

*To counteract the prevalence of childhood obesity and to establish lifelong healthy eating habits, this research-based early childhood curriculum is designed to increase children's preferences for nutritious fruits and vegetables. The tested "seed-to-table" approach will engage preschoolers in all aspects of planting, growing, and eating organically grown foods. Also included are recipes children can help prepare and ways to involve the whole family in making healthy food choices. These activities can be tailored to fit any early childhood program, climate, or geographical region.*

*Grade levels: PK Length: 224 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: AC FA 25)

**Small Wonders: Nature Education for Young Children** by Linda Garrett & Hannah Thomas, VT Institute of Natural Science, VT. (2006).

*Small Wonders: Nature Education for Young Children introduces children ages three through kindergarten to the natural world in a special way. Based on a hands-on educational approach, children learn about their environment by seeing and doing. The accurate, scientific content is wrapped in age-appropriate exercises, experiments, and explorations that use children's imagination and natural curiosity.*

*Grade levels: PK Length: 320 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: AC EG 221)

**The Kid's Nature Book** by Susan Milord, Williamson Pub. Co., VT. (1989).

*Winner of Parents' Choice Gold Award and endorsed by the National Wildlife Federation and the Massachusetts Audubon Society, this book includes 365 self-contained, fully-explained indoor and outdoor activities, observations, and experiences, coupled with charming illustrations.*

*Grade levels: PK Length: 158 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EG 56)

**Start Young! Early Childhood Science Activities** by Shannan McNair, NSTA Press, VA. (2006).

*Start Young! offers a wealth of simple educational activities designed to use right away with even the littlest scientists. The book includes a chapter of helpful background on the latest thinking about effective ways to introduce science in early childhood. But the bulk of the book is two dozen articles compiled from Science & Children, NSTA's award-winning journal for elementary school teachers.*

*Grade levels: PK Length: 174 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon or NSTA

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: AC EG 278)

**WI Department of Natural Resources Early Childhood Resources Kit**

*The WI Department of Natural Resources has pulled together over 30 early childhood resources into one convenient kit. Some of the resources include posters, digital media, and books on clean air, Project WET, WILD, and Learning Tree, Wisconsin trees and wildlife, gardens, and recycling.*

*Grade levels: PK-5*

Available for purchase from: WI Department of Natural Resources

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

## **Books for Youth**

**It's my Earth, Too** by Kathleen Krull, Doubleday Books, New York, NY. (1992).

*A celebration of the earth and its creatures offers a brief, lyrical text--designed for read-aloud times--that includes twelve practical tips, in rebus format, on protecting the environment.*

*Length: 31 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EG 52)

**I Celebrate Nature** by Diane Iverson, Dawn Publications. (1995).

*Diane Iverson has created an introduction to the wonders of nature for very young children. Children are shown enjoying such simple activities as climbing a tree, observing wildlife, and wading in a stream. The descriptive, rhyming storyline emphasizes the tactile aspects of the children's experience.*

*Length: 32 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EG 53)

**In the Woods: Who's Been Here?** by Lindsay Barrett George, Greenwillow Books, NY. (1998).

*Cammy and William don't see any wildlife as they walk through the woods, yet there are signs everywhere that animals have been around. Help these young nature lovers Find the clues -- an empty nest, a fallen branch with the bark gnawed off, bleached bones by a cave, and more -- and join in guessing, "Who's been here?"*

*Length: 48 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY BC TEF 3)

**Mud** by Mary Lyn Ray, Harcourt Brace, San Diego, CA. (1996).

*An ode to muddy hands and feet, brown earth, and new grass. Simple text and exuberant illustrations will make children and their grown-up friends want to sink their feet into gooey, gloppy, mucky, magnificent mud.*

*Length: 32 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EG 48)

**In the Small, Small Pond** by Denise Fleming, Harcourt Brace, New York, NY. (1993).

*Denise Fleming's book gives young readers a frog's-eye view of life in a pond throughout the seasons. In the Small, Small Pond is a 1994 Caldecott Honor Book.*

*Length: 32 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY BC AQ 30)

**Help the Environment: Cleaning up Litter** by Charlotte Guillain, Heinemann, Chicago, IL. (2008).

*This series introduces very young children to the concept of caring for the environment in an attractive and accessible way. Based on children's real-life experiences, the books focus on things children can do to help the environment and keep the world around us clean. In this book, children learn what litter is, how it can harm the environment, and what they can do to help clean up litter.*

*Length: 24 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY SW 33)

**A Nest in Springtime: A Bilingual Book of Numbers** by Belle Yang, Candlewick Press, MA (2012).

*In English and Mandarin Chinese, Belle Yang's bilingual board books celebrate the natural world with simple concepts and beautiful, bold illustrations. In springtime, when wild geese come to nest, there are eggs for counting. But how many goslings will there be? And how many in the whole paddling family, when Papa and Mama join them? Tonal marks used in the book are explained in a final spread, along with a pinyin translation of the Chinese characters..*

*Length: 24 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EG 149)

**Why Should I Protect Nature** by Jen Green, Heinemann, Barron's, NY. (2005).

*When children take a trip to the countryside, some of them are rowdy and careless, breaking tree branches and scattering trash. But if everyone acted that way, there would soon be no trees, no birds, and the fields would be ugly and unsafe for both animals and people. Part of every child's development involves asking questions. Today, some of the most important questions kids ask are related to the natural environment.*

*Length: 32 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EH 4)

**We're Going on a Bear Hunt** by Michael Rosen, Heinemann, McElderry Books, NY. (2009).

*Brave bear hunters go through grass, a river, mud, and other obstacles before the inevitable encounter with the bear forces a headlong retreat. Full of delightful comedy and high drama, this tale of a brave family's joyous romp through sweeping landscapes is sure to win new fans.*

*Length: 36 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EG 154)

**The Black Book of Colors** by Menena Cottin & Rosana Farin, Groundwood Books, Toronto. (2008).

*Living with the use of one's eyes can make imagining blindness difficult, but this innovative title invites readers to imagine living without sight through remarkable illustrations done with raised lines and descriptions of colors based on imagery. Braille letters accompany the illustrations and a full Braille alphabet offers sighted readers help reading along with their fingers. This extraordinary title gives young readers the ability to experience the world in a new way.*

*Length: 24 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EG 158)

**26 Big Things Small Hands Do** by Coleen Paratore, Free Spirit Pub, Minneapolis, MN. (2008). *Living with the use of one's eyes can make imagining blindness difficult, but this innovative title invites readers to imagine living without sight through remarkable illustrations done with raised lines and descriptions of colors based on imagery. Braille letters accompany the illustrations and a full Braille alphabet offers sighted readers help reading along with their fingers. This extraordinary title gives young readers the ability to experience the world in a new way.*

*Length: 32 pages*

Available for purchase from: Amazon.com

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE (call number: BY EG 130)

## **Reference/Background Books**

**Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards** by the WI Model Early Learning Standards Steering Committee, (2011).

*The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards specify developmental expectations for children from birth through entrance to first grade. The standards reflect attention to all the domains of a child's learning and development..*

*Grade levels: Adult*

Available for purchase from: Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

**Make Early Learning Standards Come Alive: Connecting Your Practice & Curriculum to State Guidelines** by Gaye Gronlund, Redleaf Press, (2011).

*The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards specify developmental expectations for children from birth through entrance to first grade. The standards reflect attention to all the domains of a child's learning and development.*

*Grade levels: Adult*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

**Go Green Rating Scale for Early Childhood Settings** by Phil Boise, Redleaf Press, (2009).

*Many products used in early childhood settings, such as cleaning supplies and carpeting, have a major impact on children's health. This research-based rating scale helps early childhood professionals determine the level of environmental health and safety in their early childhood settings and explains why particular scores are earned.*

*Grade levels: Adult*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

**The Play's the Thing** by Elizabeth Jones & Gretchen Reynolds, Teachers College Press, (2011).

*This classic textbook and popular practitioner resource offers systematic descriptions and analyses of the different roles a teacher adopts to support play, including those of stage manager, mediator, player, scribe, assessor, communicator, and planner. This new edition has been expanded to include significant developments in the broadening landscape of early learning and care, such as assessment, diversity and culture, intentional teaching, inquiry, and the construction of knowledge.*

*Grade levels: Adult*

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

**Nature and Young Children** by Ruth Wilson, Routledge, (2012).

*Nature and Young Children promotes the holistic development of children by connecting them with nature. It offers advice and guidance on how to set up indoor and outdoor nature play spaces as well as encouraging environmentally responsible attitudes, values and behaviour in your early childhood setting. Covering topics as diverse as gardening with young children, creating an accessible nature program for children with special needs and addressing cultural differences in connecting children with nature, this book reveals how important nature play can be in the development of young children.*

Grade levels: Adult

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

**The Goodness of Rain** by Ann Pelo, Exchange Press, (2013).

*Join author Ann Pelo on her year-long journey as she nurtures the ecological identity of a toddler and discovers for herself what it means to live in relationship with the natural world.*

Grade levels: Adult

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

**Cultivating Outdoor Classrooms** by Eric Nelson, Redleaf Press, (2012).

*Transform outdoor spaces into learning environments where children can enjoy a full range of activities as they spend quality time in nature. This book is filled with guidance to help you plan, design, and create an outdoor learning program that is a rich, thoughtfully equipped, natural extension of your indoor curriculum.*

Grade levels: Adult

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

**Crisis in the Kindergarten** by Edward Miller & Joan Almon, Alliance for Childhood, (2009).

*Crisis in the Kindergarten includes new research showing that many kindergartens spend 2 to 3 hours per day instructing and testing children in literacy and math with only 30 minutes per day or less for play. In some kindergartens there is no playtime at all. The same didactic, test-driven approach is entering preschools. But these methods, which are not well grounded in research, are not yielding long-term gains.*

Grade levels: Adult

Available for purchase from: Amazon

Borrowing: Check your local library or the WCEE

## **Websites**

### **Eco-Healthy Child Care**

*Eco-Healthy Child Care is a national program that ensures child care settings are as happy, healthy, safe and green as possible by reducing children's exposure to toxics.*

Web link: <http://www.ecohealthychildcare.org/>

### **NAAEE Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence**

*Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence (NAAEE 2010), the newest addition to the continuing guidelines series, contains a set of recommendations for developing and administering high-quality environmental education programs for young children from birth to age eight,*

*with a focus on ages three to six. These guidelines provide a tool that can be used to ensure a firm foundation for new programs or to trigger improvements in existing ones.*

*Web link: <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines/posts/Early-Childhood-Environmental-Education-Programs-Guidelines-for-Excellence>*

### **Natural Start Alliance**

*The Natural Start Alliance is a coalition of educators, parents, organizations, and others who want to help young children connect with nature and care for the environment. Natural Start is a project of the North American Association for Environmental Education.*

*Web link: <http://naturalstart.org/>*

### **World Forum Foundation**

*The mission of the World Forum Foundation is to promote an on-going global exchange of ideas on the delivery of quality services for young children in diverse settings. This mission is accomplished through convening gatherings of early childhood professionals around the world and by promoting the continuing exchange of ideas among participants.*

*Web link: <http://www.worldforumfoundation.org/>*

### **Wisconsin Child Care Information Center**

*The Wisconsin Child Care Information Center (CCIC) is a mail-order lending library and information clearinghouse serving anyone in Wisconsin working in the field of child care and early childhood education. Our goal is to help Wisconsin child care professionals give the best possible start to Wisconsin's children.*

*Web link: <http://ccic.dpi.wi.gov/>*