

Building a Real World Foundation for Engaged, Lifelong Learning

The goal of the Outdoor Classroom Project is to better the lives of young children in Santa Barbara County by increasing the quantity, quality and benefit of their outdoor experiences. It does this by focusing educators on outdoor programs and environments in early childhood education.



Nearly anything that can be taught indoors can also be learned outdoors.

programs and environments of 50% of all early care and education centers in Santa Barbara County, achieved through a combination of **teacher training**, on-site **consultation** and **outdoor enhancements** aimed at getting kids outdoors and involved in developmentally essential activities in which children learn through play.

The Outdoor Classroom addresses a set of seven challenges to the health and well-being of 21st Century children:

- Lack of exercise
- Preoccupation with electronic media
- Lack of play time outside
- Isolation from, and fear of, nature
- Lack of interest in and understanding of our world, including nature and human impact on it
- Current trends toward a one-dimensional approach to early childhood education
- The epidemic use of behavior-modifying drugs on young children

The goals of this project include the permanent transformation of the outdoor

How Can You Participate in the Outdoor Classroom?

The primary activities of the Outdoor Classroom Project are program and site evaluation, design consultation, and teacher training. Over the first two-year phase of the Project, 144 centers, or 83% of all child care centers in Santa Barbara County, participated.

The Outdoor Classroom provides for physical activity, hands-on learning, social learning through peer interaction, and multifaceted approaches to cognitive development that maximize children's learning success. It can be utilized with nearly any curricular model and is appropriate for any population of children.

If you work in Early Care and Education in Santa Barbara County, we invite you to visit a demonstration site, or contact Theresa Embry (Theresa.Embry@gmail.com).



Education and experience need not rely on electrical outlets.