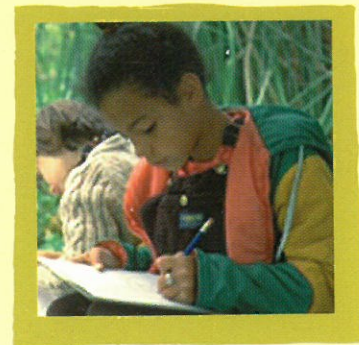
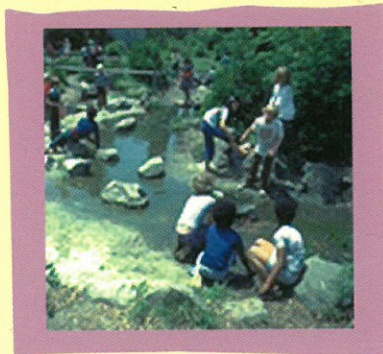


The Life History of an Environmental Schoolyard

Natural Learning



Creating Environments for Rediscovering
Nature's Way of Teaching

ROBIN C. MOORE & HERB H. WONG

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Once Upon a Yard...



The healthy development of children was the central focus of the Yard. Their participation offered wonderfully diverse ideas and a strong desire for nature. Groups worked with drawings and models to communicate their vision of the future.



before



after

We took a fragment of the Earth's surface, where nonhuman life was extinct, and through design demonstrated the power of nature to restore itself. This super-rich playing and learning environment brought nature back into the daily lives of city children.

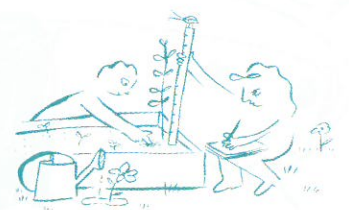
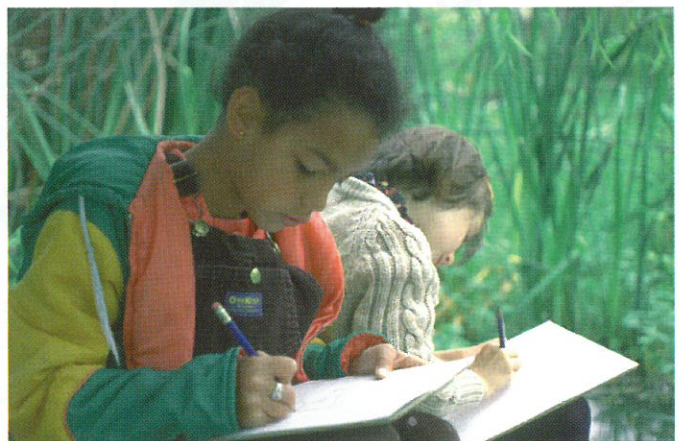




Construction of the Yard was a community process with many groups working together to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. College students were essential collaborators. Children measured, mused upon, classified, and wrote about the magical changes happening around them.



The aquatic life of the Yard was especially fascinating to the children, and was the most strongly remembered of all the natural settings. Here, the ecology of childhood and planet Earth were fused in an ethic of caring.



Play and curiosity were the motivating forces that inspired children to learn. Diversity and choice were the open arms that embraced their many learning styles and abilities. Sensory stimulation opened a natural gateway to success. Freedom of expression in mind and body offered students limitless aspirations.



The materials and processes of nature provided a uniquely interactive environment for hands-on learning. The complexity of natural spaces stimulated a greater range of activities. Change, a constant in nature, presented new experiences each moment: poetic revelations, mathematical challenges, scientific engagements, and bonds of friendship. We call it dynamic quality—experience that banishes boredom because it is never repeated.