

Natural Learning Initiative

NEWSLETTER

July - August 2025

NC STATE



Creating environments for healthy human development
and a healthy biosphere for generations to come.

Check out the NLI Website!

Verner Center for Early Learning (Central) Asheville, NC

NC STATE



NCDHHS
Division of Child Development
and Early Education



Virtual Field Trip

Join NLI for a Virtual Field Trip at Verner Central!

Welcome to the outdoor learning environment Virtual Field Trip, to the new Verner Center for Early Learning ("Verner Central"), in West Asheville, NC, adjacent to the new Emma Elementary School. Verner Central grew from "Danny" Verner's 2001 vision for early care and education for mountain area children and families. NLI worked previously on the Intermountain Children's Place (Spruce Pine, Mitchell County), so joining the Verner team early on was especially meaningful...[read more](#)



Healthy Play. Active Learning.
All Outdoors.

Shaping environments where children grow, explore, and thrive.

2026 Grow Outdoors SC Application Webinar

Watch the webinar broadcast on Aug 27, 2025 going over the application process for your center to take part in our upcoming 2026 cohort. Hear stories from previous cohort participants and learn about the opportunities and benefits of naturalizing your outdoor play and learning space!



Grow Outdoors South Carolina Website Launched!

Grow Outdoors South Carolina website launched! Designed by NLI in collaboration with leadership, the website serves as a communication and resource hub for Participating Centers, Lead Organizations, Implementation Team, Advisory Group, and the broad community of interest...[read more](#)

Declining Children's Health & Nature Connectedness

New research articles about the declining health of U.S. children and the loss of "nature connectedness" in the U.K., simultaneously give cause for alarm but also validate growth of the children and nature movement, including NLI...[read more](#)



SAVE THE DATES!

Celebrating 25 Years of Nature Play & Learning

NLI 25th Anniversary Exhibition
Wednesday, October 21



"Rooting Childhood in Nature" – 25th Anniversary NLI Retrospective, Opening Reception, 5:30 pm, October 21st all invited! [Click here](#) for more info!

18th NLI Design Institute and 25th Anniversary Celebration! Wednesday, October 22

"Rooting Childhood with Nature – Supporting Children's Health Caring for Our Home in the Universe"

Register now for the 18th NLI Design Institute and 25th Anniversary Celebration at Dix Park, Oct. 22nd (early bird until Sep. 30th). Fabulous speaker lineup and visit to Gipson Play Plaza! [Click here](#) for full details, including CEUs.



Professional Development Online Courses



Gardening With Young Children Certificate Course (GWYC)

Next Session: October 6 - November 9

The Gardening with Young children Course is a 5-week self-paced distance learning course hosted on the NCSU platform, Moodle...[read more](#)

Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Environments Certificate (ECOLE)

Next Session: September 2 - November 16

is targeted towards early childhood professionals and others interested in improving early childhood outdoor play and learning environments...[read more](#)



Even in rocky soil, flowers find a way—NLI embraces the changing season with growth, warmth, and fresh possibilities.

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NLI's Development Fund. 

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