

Project: Outdoor Learning Environment
 Location: EPA Campus, Research Triangle Park, Durham, NC
 Client: First Environments Early Learning Center, EPA/NIEHS
 Project Dates: 2004-2006



Natural Learning Initiative
 College of Design
 NC State University
 Robin Moore, Director



1. Illustrative plan (MIG, NLI).
2. Aerial view of site (Google Earth).
3. Pathway and vegetable garden (NLI)
4. Greenhouse in winter (NLI).
5. Dramatic Play Setting (NLI).

The Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) at the new First Environments Early Learning Center (FEELC) surrounds the FEELC with play and learning settings focused on helping children gain an understanding of environmental stewardship and food production. The design provides a range of settings to optimize children's time outside by providing a multitude of program functions.

Robin Moore, together with MIG, Inc., and Nilda Cosco led the community-based design process in collaboration with staff from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who manage the site, and consulted on development of the schematic design.

The new FEELC and OLE opened in 2006 to almost 200 children ages infant to 6 years, on a year-round basis. The school kitchen uses vegetables and fruits grown in the OLE, which in 2011 contributed more than 300 pounds of nutritional enjoyment for the children.

In 2011, one of the former interns trained by NLI and the National Wildlife Federation during the previous summer was appointed as a FEELC outdoor teacher to intensify the creative link between the OLE and children's programmed activity.

Project Size: 55,000 sq. ft.

Client Contact Information:

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