

Submitter: Cricket Clarke

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

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To restore the health of our Earth, and our human relationship to it, we must first get to know the Earth. We must attune our senses to the colors, sounds and rhythms of nature. This can not be achieved synthetically in a simulated space.

"There is a crescent moon today," my six-year-old mentions as he describes his day. My four-year-old can jump, hang, and climb with a balance honed by moving daily outside, in big ways. They both have a reverence for a changing bud and a spider wrapping its prey. They are both confident that their bodies can overcome the discomforts that the elements bring to challenge them.

I attribute their abilities to our family's commitment to an outdoor lifestyle. We are privileged to choose the forest to be our children's classroom at Hazelwood Outdoor Kindergarten. This program is taught by professionals who not only know how to thrive outdoors themselves, but who also know how to lead parents in preparing their children well. The time for appropriate preparations and gearing-up children must not be underestimated for outdoor ed to go well. The rewards for the striving will be vast and unquantifiable. I wish this privilege could be attainable for more children in our community - or better yet - becomes the "main-stream," obvious option for early childhood education.