

2/28/2023

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing my strong support for a path to licensure for fully outdoor preschools.

My two daughters attended an outdoor preschool and kindergarten from ages three to seven.

I witnessed my children develop strong connection to the natural world as well as resiliency from being part of the rhythm of an ever-changing landscape. Being outside together solving problems, sharing a meal or snack, singing, building, and exploring in the unpredictable weather created a shared experience that was bonding to the children.

The experience was important to our children's social and emotional needs. Our younger daughter is more physical and needs a good amount of space, whereas our older daughter is more reserved and is more easily disturbed by loud classmates. Being outdoors allowed for children who need to move to move, and for children to need more quietness to find it. Both our children transitioned easily to school following their outdoor experience.

We were privileged to be able to send our children to an outdoor preschool and kindergarten. It is our greatest hope that this option will be available to all children, not just families who can afford the tuition or can handle half-day care. Outdoor preschool and kindergarten creates a strong physical, social, and emotional foundation from which all children are able to thrive.

With appreciation,

Sara Keilholtz