

David Sobel 7 Design Principles

Sobel, David. (2008) *Childhood and Nature Design Principles for Educators*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

ADVENTURE

Children should stalk, balance, jump, and scamper through the natural world. Activities with a physical challenge component speak directly to children via the mind/body link.

FANTASY AND IMAGINATION

Young children live in their imaginations. Stories, plays, puppet shows, and dreams are preferred media for early childhood. We need to structure programs like dramatic play; we need to create simulations in which students can live the challenges rather than just study them.

ANIMAL ALLIES

If we aspire to developmentally appropriate science education, then the first task is to become animals, to understand them from the inside out, before asking children to study them or save them.

MAPS AND PATHS

Finding shortcuts, figuring out what's around the next bend, following a map to a secret event. Children have an inborn desire to explore local geographies. Developing a local sense of place leads organically to a bioregional sense of place and hopefully to biospheric consciousness.

SPECIAL PLACES

Almost everyone remembers a fort, den, tree house, or hidden corner in the back of a closet. Children like to find and create places where they can hide away and retreat into their own found or constructed spaces.

SMALL WORLDS

From sand boxes to doll houses to model train sets, children love to create miniature worlds that they can play inside of. Through creating miniature representations of eco-systems, or neighborhoods, we help children conceptually grasp the big picture. The creation of small worlds provides a concrete vehicle for understanding abstract ideas.

HUNTING AND GATHERING

From a genetic perspective, we are still hunting and gathering organisms. Gathering and collecting anything compels us; searching for hidden treasure of the Holy Grail is a recurrent mythic form. Look at the success of Where's Waldo. How do we design learning opportunities like treasure hunts?