

Growing Up Wild

Exploring Nature with Young Children
Ages 3-7



About Growing Up WILD

Growing Up WILD is an early childhood education program that builds on children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Through a wide range of activities and experiences, *Growing Up WILD* provides an early foundation for developing positive impressions about nature and lifelong social and academic skills.



Building Connections with

Connecting to Success

Since the program's beginnings in 1983, over one million educators have participated in Project WILD training. The effectiveness of this award winning program for use in schools, outdoor classrooms, and nonformal education settings is well documented and known to many. Hands-on, classroom ready activities that connect topics in wildlife and the environment across the curriculum for use by K-12 educators—regardless of their background or subject area knowledge—are hallmarks of Project WILD.

With the recent launch of *Growing Up WILD*, now the high quality professional development and materials available to K-12 educators are also available to educators of young children, ages 3-7. *Growing Up WILD* is an early childhood education program that builds on children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Through a wide range of activities and experiences, *Growing Up WILD* provides an early foundation for developing positive impressions about the natural world and lifelong social and academic skills.

About the Guide

Growing Up WILD: Exploring Nature with Young Children is designed to help educators and caregivers engage young children in activities that encourage exploration of the outdoors. With activities written by educators and wildlife professionals and reviewed by experts in early childhood education, the guide provides an early foundation for developing active, healthy children who appreciate nature and are prepared to enter school with ample learning skills.

The *Growing Up WILD* activity guide:

- ✿ Is written especially for early childhood educators of children ages 3-7.
- ✿ Features 27 field-tested, hands-on, nature based activities in a full-color 11"x17" activity guide.
- ✿ Includes crafts, art projects, music, conservation activities, reading and math connections and much more.
- ✿ Involves social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive domains to help foster learning and development in all areas.
- ✿ Supports developmentally appropriate practice allowing children to learn at levels that are individually, socially, and culturally appropriate.
- ✿ Is correlated to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards and the Head Start Domains.

Growing Up WILD

Connecting to Nature

A young child's connection with nature can be as simple as sitting under a tree, listening to the chirping of crickets, or planting a seed. *Growing Up WILD* builds on these experiences with ideas for outdoor learning.

Benefits

Research has shown that there are many positive benefits to spending time in nature and that it is an important part of a child's overall well-being. Children who have opportunities to play and learn in nature are more likely to:

- ✿ Handle challenges and problems more capably.
- ✿ Be more physically active, healthy, aware of nutrition, and less likely to be obese.
- ✿ Have better mental and emotional health.
- ✿ Have a greater appreciation of the arts, music, history, and literature.
- ✿ Choose science or a science related subject as a career.
- ✿ Become better informed and environmentally aware adults.
- ✿ Be happier and smarter.

Connecting to Academics

Growing Up WILD goes beyond building connections to nature and prepares young learners for future success through school readiness. Skills addressed in *Growing Up WILD* include beginning inquiry, word recognition, speech, observation, classification, sequencing, measuring, listening, and cooperating.

Connecting to Families

Growing Up WILD features "Home Connections" cards available in English and Spanish. Activities about plants and animals extend the learning at home for the entire family.

Connecting to Training

You can receive *Growing Up WILD* materials by participating in an interactive, hands-on workshop designed to meet the needs of early childhood educators and caregivers. Experience *Growing Up WILD* activities first hand, learning how they can help you reach your educational goals. Discover how to lead your young learners on an exploration of the natural world outside your classroom while they gain valuable knowledge and skills.

Growing Up WILD's network of sponsors and facilitators can tailor a workshop especially for you—whether you work at a public or private school, day care or Head Start center, museum or zoo—in a large urban setting or small, rural town.

To lead *Growing Up WILD* workshops at your site, contact your Project WILD State Coordinator for information about *Growing Up WILD* Facilitator trainings.

For more information about *Growing Up WILD* visit www.projectwild.org/GrowingUpWILD.htm

"This is the ultimate example of content integration with creative and critical thinking, while engaging and addressing the needs of all children...an amazing package all in one! The alignment with developmentally appropriate practices is revealed in each and every section of every unit. What a great way to support and encourage all early childhood educators to include nature in many ways."

—Dr. Kathryn Jenkins
Assistant Professor in Early Childhood Education
University of Houston-Downtown





Growing Up WILD is a program of the Council for Environmental Education, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and a nationally recognized leader in environmental education.

Join Our Network

Growing Up WILD is coordinated and delivered by a network of representatives from sponsoring wildlife, natural resources, and educational agencies at state and local levels. *Growing Up WILD* qualifies as a non-federal match for Head Start grantees. Information about *Growing Up WILD* Educator and Facilitator workshops is available through your Project WILD State Coordinator found at www.projectwild.org or by contacting:



For additional information about joining our *Growing Up WILD* network, please contact:

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