

# Developing a Relationship with the Environment – for the Health of It

*Noticing, naming, and nudging at perceived barriers to outdoor learning*

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**Table 1. Summary of Perceived Barriers and Nudges: Case Study Voices**

Perceived Barrier	Ways to “Nudge” At Perceived Barrier
<b>i) Preparedness (all weather/all seasons)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating with families and engaging in conversations with children</li> <li>• Offering access to a range of materials</li> <li>• Encouraging professional dialogue around safety expectations</li> </ul>
<b>ii) Concern for Risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizing respect for the environment as a way of being</li> <li>• Recognizing children as curious and competent in the outdoors</li> <li>• Pairing up with learners in older grades</li> </ul>
<b>iii) Unpredictability of Inquiry-based Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing the curriculum/knowing the environment</li> <li>• Recognizing the curriculum as integrated and living</li> <li>• Recognizing that outdoor learning enhances literacy connections</li> <li>• Asking questions to deepen understandings</li> <li>• Creating opportunities for innovative thinking and problem solving</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Ideas for Learning in the Outdoors/Bringing the Outdoors In**

Learning in the Outdoors	Bringing the Outdoors In
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading under trees</li> <li>• sketching in quiet observation spots</li> <li>• exploring the elements and properties of the local land and water</li> <li>• shadow play to explore time passing</li> <li>• hatching/releasing butterflies</li> <li>• observing how Nature recycles naturally (e.g., decomposing log/sunflower in the classroom)</li> <li>• Nature scavenger hunt with Learning Buddies</li> <li>• exploring natural elements (snow, ice, fallen leaves)</li> <li>• observing tracks in the snow; track walk</li> <li>• study of the universality of water</li> <li>• discovery walks to explore changes and notice patterns (weather, animal behaviors, plants) through cycles of the seasons</li> <li>• promotion of family/community experiences in nature</li> <li>• exploring animal adaptation with snowshoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plotting places around the world that have meaning to children, their families, and the learning through the year on a class map</li> <li>• collecting natural, found, and re-purposed land-based materials in an Art Studio and for creative design and expression</li> <li>• using senses to explore different foods (e.g., squash in the fall) and using math thinking to survey, collect, display, graph, and compare data</li> <li>• innovation and design using “beautiful stuff”<sup>18</sup></li> <li>• melting snow/ice provocation (change of states, implications in the real world)</li> <li>• designing &amp; posting environmental posters</li> <li>• collecting nature materials with Nature Buddies and co-creating an I Spy Nature word poster</li> <li>• intentional choice of read-aloud texts to foster a healthy relationship with, and appreciation for, the natural world (e.g., <i>No One But You</i> by Douglas Wood)</li> </ul>