



**Forest Preserve District**  
**OF WILL COUNTY**

*Bringing People and Nature Together*



# EEAI

## Environmental Education Association of Illinois

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*“To maintain a vital network that supports and advances quality environmental education throughout the state.”*

- ❖ Support Network
- ❖ Legislation Support
- ❖ Mini Grants Program
- ❖ Conferences & Workshops
- ❖ Newsletter & Website
- ❖ Awards Program
- ❖ Leadership Development



# What's What

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**Experimental Education** - A philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values. involves learning through activity and direct experience with the topic.

**Service Learning** - A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

**Environmental Education (EE)** - A learning process that increases peoples knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action.

Aims to develop an environmentally literate citizen that has the skills, knowledge, and inclinations to make well-informed choices and decisions concerning the environment and his or her quality of life, without compromising that of future generations.

**Outdoor Education** - Education in, for, and about the outdoors. May address multiple areas of study.

**Interpretation** - Mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and meanings inherent in the resource. Interpretation is the experience. Environmental education is driven by the message.

**Others?????**



# Guiding Principles of Environmental Education

- ❖ Considers the environment in its totality
- ❖ Is a lifelong process
- ❖ Is interdisciplinary
- ❖ Focuses on current environmental & social issues
- ❖ Provides opportunity for decision making and skill development
- ❖ Is hands-on
- ❖ Is diverse in teaching method and approach
- ❖ Explores the complexity of environmental issues



- ❖ Emphasizes community
- ❖ Is relevant
- ❖ Is presented without judgment or bias



## Why EE?

The need for Environmental Education can be stated in many ways and given many reasons. Basically, it comes down to two things: 1) to sustain the environment in which we live and 2) to develop healthy relationships with our fellow humans.

*Studies and research repeatedly state the benefits of green spaces and outdoor teaching.*

Students that participate in Environmental Education programming are shown to display values, choices, and qualities deemed favorable by local and global societies.

- ❖ More likely to become active in their community
- ❖ More likely to seek higher education
- ❖ More likely to discuss political issues and vote
- ❖ More likely to treat their local environment with respect

Benefits to teachers and educational institutions include:

- ❖ Relieves symptoms of ADHD
- ❖ Reduces childhood obesity, heart disease and childhood diabetes
- ❖ Increased concentration in adolescent girls
- ❖ Improved performance by a greater diversity of students



# EE and Teaching Sustainability

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## *Environmental Education is Teaching Sustainability*

- ❖ Climate change
- ❖ Stewardship, service learning, restoration
- ❖ Energy - example biodiesel
- ❖ Proactive, be positive, empower
- ❖ Economics
- ❖ Green Collar Jobs
- ❖ Leadership
- ❖ Legislation



# Hot Topics in EE

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- ❖ Leaven No Child Inside Act
- ❖ Reauthorization of the National Environmental Education Act
- ❖ Book: Last Child in the Woods – *Nature Deficit Disorder*
- ❖ State Environmental Literacy Plans - EL for IL Strategic Plan
- ❖ Teaching Sustainability & Climate Change



I believe that school must represent life – life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or in the playground.

- John Dewey

*Founder of the 1930 Progressive Education Movement*

