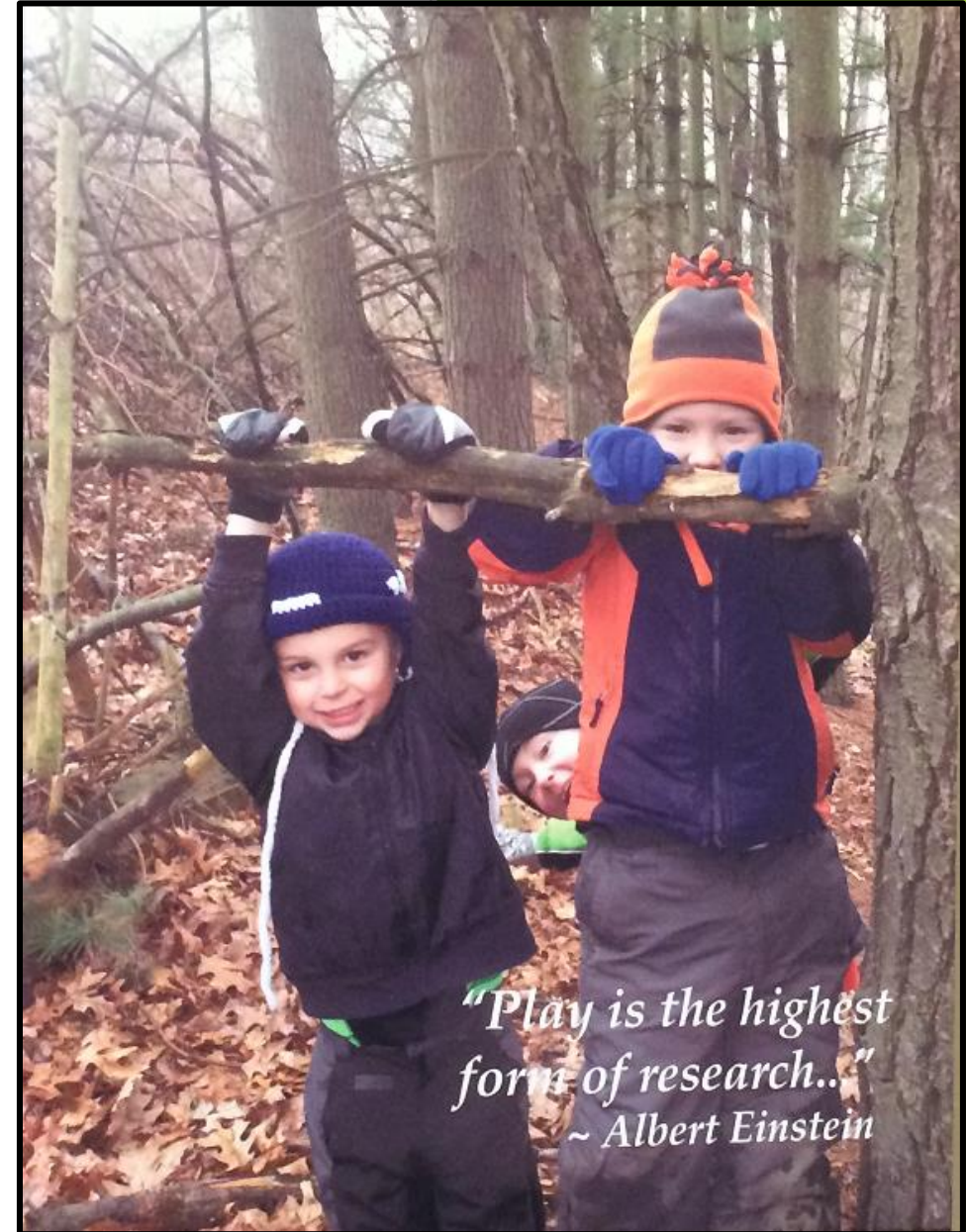


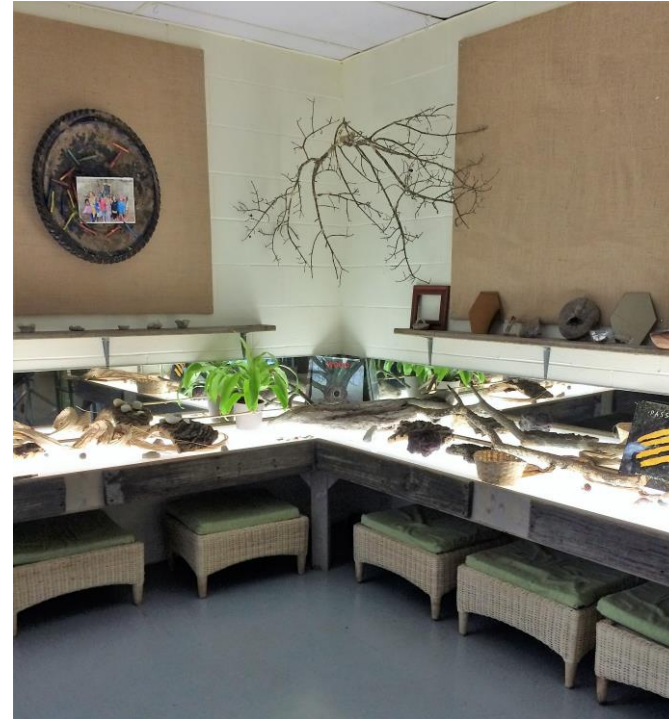
Cleveland Metroparks Nature-Based Preschool Project

Bev Walborn, Naturalist
Rocky River Nature Center



What is a Nature-Based Preschool?

- ▶ Provide a nature-focused curriculum
- ▶ Emphasize daily outdoor experiences and Kindergarten readiness in nature
- ▶ Licensed program
- ▶ Classrooms filled with natural materials that reflect the outdoor environment
- ▶ Associated with a nature center that provides unique resources





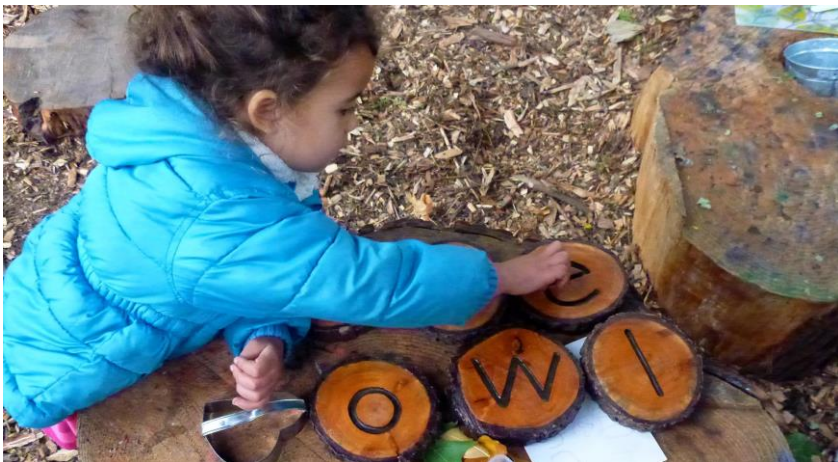
02/14/16

See Why These Students Are Learning Outdoors

Video clip from NBC National News report 2/14/16

How is a Nature-Based Preschool different?

- ▶ Nature is the central organizing concept of the program
- ▶ Combines both early childhood education and environmental education
- ▶ Uses the natural world to support:
 - ▶ Child development
 - ▶ Conservation values



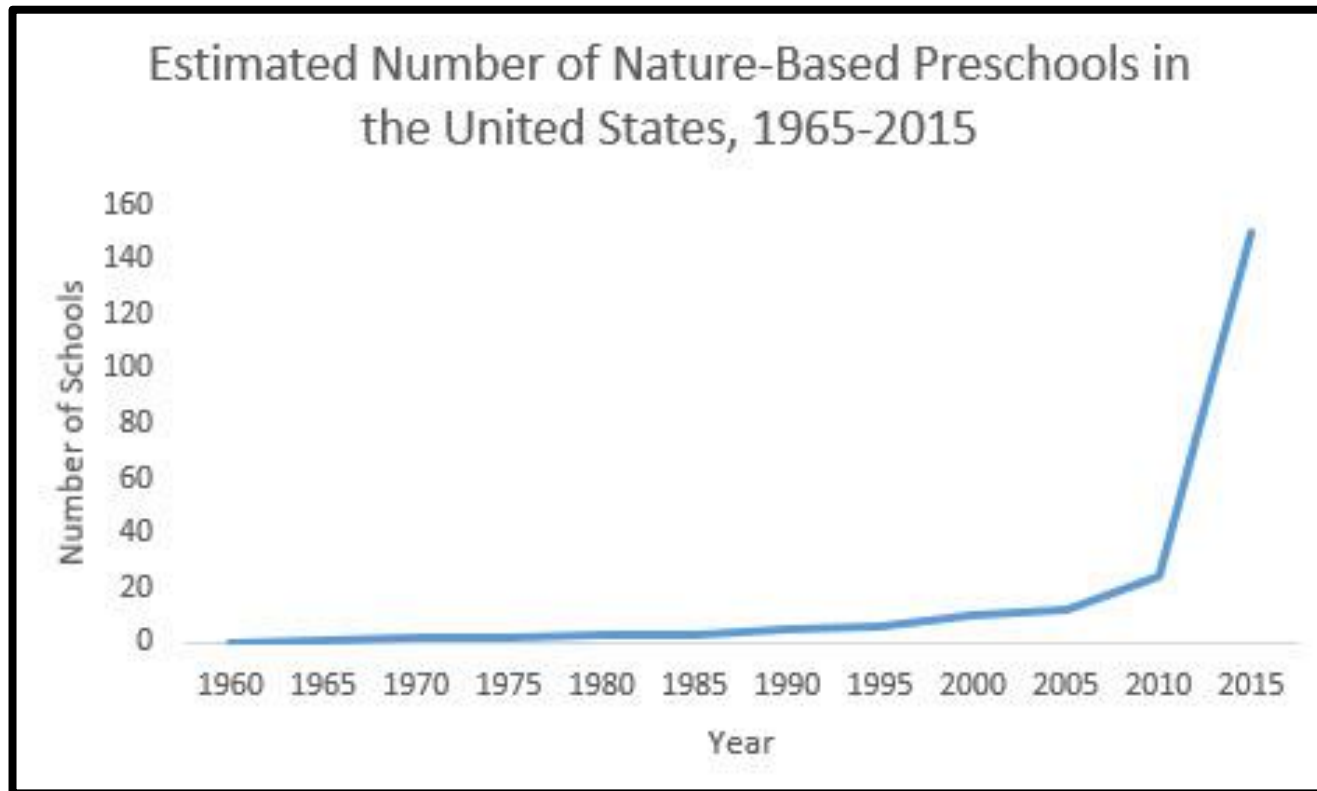
Benefits of Nature-Based Preschools

- ▶ Score higher on tests of concentration and self-discipline
- ▶ Show more advanced motor fitness
- ▶ Healthier bodies and sick less often
- ▶ Imaginative and creative play fosters language and collaborative skills
- ▶ Improves children's cognitive development
- ▶ Develops enhanced observation skills
- ▶ Meets the goals of Cleveland Metroparks Mission and Strategic Plan Indicators



Nature-Based Preschools are growing

- ▶ First Nature-Based Preschool opens in New Canaan, CT in 1966
- ▶ In 2010, 24 Nature-Based Preschools were operating in the US
- ▶ In 2012, Dr. Patti Bailie publishes research on the benefits of Nature-Based Preschools
- ▶ By 2015 the number of Nature-Based Preschools in the US increases 600% to 150
 - ▶ 5 of which are currently operating in Ohio (Dublin, Dayton, Cincinnati, Seneca County Parks, Laurel School)



Graph from Natural Start Alliance

Current Cleveland Metroparks Preschool Programming

Small Wonders
Rocky River Nature Center



Polliwog Preschool
North Chagrin Nature Center



Look About Littles
Look About Lodge



Proposal

- ▶ Licensed Nature-Based Preschool program
- ▶ Tuition based and self sustaining
- ▶ Temporary modular building with wood exterior offering 2 classrooms
- ▶ Up to 7 classes can be offered per week for children ages 3-5
- ▶ Operate September through May with opportunities for Summer Camps
- ▶ Staff would include
 - ▶ 1 manager/administrator
 - ▶ 2 part time lead teachers
 - ▶ 2 part time assistant teachers



Site Proposal

Corner of Shephard Lane and Valley Parkway,
Rocky River Reservation, North Olmsted



Simulated photo provided by Jen Brumfield



Photos from Fiddleheads Forest School, Seattle, WA