All Children Need Nature....

Alexandra O’Rourke
C&NN Conference
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11 Families, 8 Calgary Parks, 1 Owl Puppet...
Urban Wild Family Nature Club Recipe

✓ A sprinkle of nature inspired activities
✓ A scoop of family led nature walks
✓ A dollop of child led explorations (free play)

Mix and cook for 1.5 hours and you have delicious curiosity for the natural world!

Alex and Hoot
Parental Observations: Child-Nature Relationship

“I see their strengths in new ways, such a gift.”

“...interaction with nature... is a beautiful way for children to release their natural energy”
Parental Observations: Parent-Nature Relationship

“I am rooted like the trees”

“We arrive, I breathe better already.”
Parental Observations: Parent-Child Relationship

“...finding our way...”

“...experimenting with what we can do.”

“We were being ourselves again together.”
Parental Insights:

“Nature is a playground. Running, chasing, jumping. Who needs a park?”

“Nature supplies the ingredients and we make the recipe”
What we learned

- Varied landscapes
- What engages young children in nature play
- Effects of a community of families
- Following the child’s lead
- The freedom of experience
- Nature as a safe partner in our children’s experiences
“We have a new way of spending time together...what else is out there?”