

NATURE EVERYWHERE EVALUATION

Increasing equitable access to nature everywhere children live, learn, and play

*Ashlie Denton, Camila Cigarroa Kennedy, and Rachel Maller (Education Northwest)
Trevor Sophonis (The Sustainable Learning Projects)*

November 2025



SUGGESTED CITATION

Denton, A., Cigarroa Kennedy, C., Maller, R., & Soponis, T. (2025). *Increasing equitable access to nature everywhere children live, learn, and play: Nature Everywhere evaluation*. Education Northwest.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is the result of a deeply collaborative effort. We extend our sincere thanks to Erin Allaman of the Children & Nature Network for her insights and support throughout the evaluation. We also appreciate the technical assistance leads at Nature Everywhere for their time, dedication, and commitment to sharing their teams' experiences—an essential contribution to this work. Finally, we acknowledge the valuable input of our Education Northwest colleagues, including Jacob Williams, Bracken Reed, and Valerie Silvernail.

Contents

Executive Summary	iv
Introduction	1
What are the core elements of Nature Everywhere?	4
What change is happening in Nature Everywhere communities?	8
What do teams need to successfully progress through each stage of the theory of change?	19
Conclusion	26
Appendix A. Data sources and methods	28

Tables

Table 1. Current stage of Nature Everywhere teams	8
Table 2. Explore milestone activities checked on Asana tracking system	9
Table A1. Communities who have participated in CCCN and Nature Everywhere, by cohort	28
Table A2. Breakdown of teams by community type	29
Table A3. List of Nature Everywhere Community teams and survey completion information	30
Table A4. Number of communities that selected each strategy	31

Figures

Figure 1. Nature Everywhere logic model	7
Figure 2. Technical assistance leads said that most teams included essential community partners and reflected the diversity of the local community	10
Figure 3. Technical assistance leads said that many teams have a structure for meaningfully engaging leadership, but fewer teams reported that institutional leadership played a significant role in decision-making	10
Figure 4. Many teams engaged community partners, institutional leaders, and youth in their community assessments	11
Figure 5. Most teams felt their vision statement helped define the team's purpose for what they planned to achieve in Nature Everywhere	11

Figure 6. Most teams believe their strategy has a high probability of creating more equitable access to nature	12
Figure 7. Teams that progressed beyond the Explore stage had higher levels of engagement with technical assistance	20
Figure 8. Teams that moved beyond the Explore stage were more likely to set up a regular meeting time with the team outside of technical assistance meetings	23
Figure 9. Framework for successful Nature Everywhere participation	26

Executive Summary




Nature Everywhere is a national initiative co-led by the Children & Nature Network, the National League of Cities, and KABOOM! The goal of the initiative is to expand equitable access to nature for children in 100 U.S. communities by 2025. Building on lessons from the Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) initiative, Nature Everywhere provides technical assistance, funding, and peer learning opportunities to help cross-sector teams embed nature access into local systems where children live, learn, and play. Nature Everywhere uses strategies to influence systems that support children’s access to nature, such as Early Childhood Nature Connection for children up to age 5, Green Schoolyards for K–12 schools, and Nature Exploration Areas to foster partnerships with parks.

This evaluation, conducted by Education Northwest in collaboration with The Sustainable Learning Projects, used a developmental approach to assess implementation and progress of Nature Everywhere. The evaluation focused on three questions:

- 1** What are the core elements of Nature Everywhere?
- 2** What change is happening in Nature Everywhere communities?
- 3** What support and resources do teams need to successfully progress through each stage of the theory of change and overcome the challenges they face?

Core Elements of Nature Everywhere

Nature Everywhere is anchored in a logic model co-developed by the evaluation team and initiative staff members. Communities advance through four milestone stages: Explore, Plan, Implement, and Sustain. This model tracks progress toward systems change, focusing on shifts in policies, practices, resource flows, relationships, and mental models that limit equitable access to nature. To support this work, the initiative offers:

-  **Technical assistance.** Monthly sessions with national experts to guide strategy, maintain accountability, and connect teams to resources, guided by the Nature Everywhere logic model.
-  **Funding.** \$40,000 seed grants for capacity-building and engagement; \$50,000 catalytic grants for implementation for select teams.
-  **Peer learning.** Virtual sessions and in-person convenings (e.g., Vision Labs, Nature Everywhere conferences) to share strategies and build networks.



Resources. Toolkits for community assessment, visioning, and implementation planning. Evidence-based resources to support case-making with institutional leaders and community partners.

Change happening in Nature Everywhere communities

Of 25 teams analyzed, 72 percent completed the Explore stage, forming diverse cross-sector teams, engaging leadership, and selecting strategies such as Green Schoolyards, Early Childhood Nature Connections, and Nature Exploration Areas. As teams progressed through the milestones, they made progress toward relational, structural, and transformative change.



Relational change. Nature Everywhere supported relational change in most communities through expanded and deepened collaboration. Most teams reported having stronger partnerships and collaboration due to their participation in Nature Everywhere, including connections with institutional leaders and community partners.



Structural change. Nature Everywhere supported structural change in some communities through policy updates, as well as increased community resources and infrastructure. Some Nature Everywhere teams have also made progress on the policies, practices, and resource flows at the structural level of systems change, although many of these changes are still in progress.



Transformative change. Nature Everywhere helped build communities' vision for nature access. Vision development began shifting mental models, although these changes require more time.

The support and resources teams need

We looked closely at the communities that successfully moved through Nature Everywhere milestones and identified the key characteristics and supports that contributed to their success.



Technical assistance. Nature Everywhere technical assistance was crucial to supporting teams' progress toward systems change. Technical assistance was critical for accountability, legitimacy, and systems change guidance. Teams that engaged technical assistance consistently progressed faster through the milestones.



Systems change focus. Nature Everywhere technical assistance was most effective when teams understood the concept of systems change from the beginning. These teams were more likely to progress through milestones and achieve broader goals.



Team leadership and composition. Nature Everywhere technical assistance was most effective with teams with appropriate leadership and composition. Successful teams require members with a mix of commitment, authority, and capacity to make progress.



Funding and convening. Nature Everywhere funding and opportunities to connect with other teams were also important to team progress. Seed funding enabled teams to build their capacity and capability, while in-person convenings built momentum and clarified goals.

To sustain and scale Nature Everywhere, the initiative needs to focus on supporting well-equipped teams with key resources and time. Well-equipped teams have a systems change focus and are staffed with leaders and team members who have the commitment, authority, and capacity to make progress. Teams need Nature Everywhere technical assistance, funding, and opportunities to convene. They also need time to deepen partnerships and make progress on systems change goals.





Introduction

The Children & Nature Network, the National League of Cities, and KABOOM! co-lead the Nature Everywhere Communities initiative. This effort aims to expand equitable access to nature for children in 100 U.S. communities by 2025.

Participating teams receive a comprehensive set of resources to support system-level planning and implementation. These tools are designed to help cross-sector teams build sustainable, inclusive systems that ensure all children can experience nature where they live, learn, and play. Nature Everywhere uses strategies to influence systems that support children's access to nature, such as Early Childhood Nature Connection for children up to age 5, Green Schoolyards for K–12 schools, and Nature Exploration Areas to foster partnerships with parks.

Although Nature Everywhere launched in 2023, the partnership between the Children & Nature Network and the National League of Cities began in 2014 with the Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) initiative. From 2014 to 2023, CCCN supported 45 cities with funding, technical assistance, in-person convenings, and a peer learning network focused on strategies for systems change.

Thirty-three CCCN cities remain engaged with Nature Everywhere, helping the initiative grow. As of October 2025, CCCN and Nature Everywhere together had reached about 100 communities, with 87 participating in hands-on technical assistance and the peer learning network. This report focuses primarily on a set of 25 communities that received similar Nature Everywhere technical assistance, persisted in the 2-year initiative, and had not previously participated in CCCN. We also provide insights into progress across CCCN sites. Additional details about all participating teams are available in appendix A.

Overview of the developmental evaluation

Between March 2024 and October 2025, Education Northwest, in ongoing collaboration with The Sustainable Learning Projects, conducted a mixed-methods, developmental evaluation of Nature Everywhere to assess its implementation and progress in expanding children's access to nature. Developmental evaluation is grounded in systems thinking and fosters innovation by leveraging real-time data collection and analysis to enable informed, continuous decision-making throughout design, development, and implementation.¹ Our developmental evaluation incorporated logic model development, progress tracking, and ongoing collaboration with technical assistance leads to ensure that evaluation activities were both meaningful and actionable.

¹ Patton, M. Q. (2011). *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. Guilford Press.

The evaluation focused on the following questions, developed in collaboration with the Nature Everywhere team:

1

What are the core elements of Nature Everywhere?

2

What change is happening in Nature Everywhere communities?

3

What support and resources do teams need to successfully progress through each stage of the theory of change and overcome the challenges they face?

LOGIC MODEL DEVELOPMENT

In October 2023, Education Northwest and The Sustainable Learning Projects produced [Lessons Learned from the Cities Connecting Children to Nature Initiative: Final Report](#) (Lessons Learned from CCCN). This report outlines the need for greater clarity in processes and outcomes for the success of the initiative. In response to this suggestion, the Nature Everywhere evaluation team—with representatives from Children & Nature Network, National League of Cities, KABOOM!, Education Northwest, and The Sustainable Learning Projects—collaboratively developed a logic model that represents the relationships among program inputs, activities, and outcomes (figure 1). In addition to the representatives mentioned, we also solicited feedback from an advisory group of experts who helped identify the most meaningful outputs and outcomes to track. This model served as a framework for assessing progress toward Nature Everywhere goals. The logic model defines clear stages of teams’ participation in Nature Everywhere, from exploring their strategy options to sustaining their work, and articulates the connection between short- and long-term outcomes.

PROGRESS TRACKING

In our CCCN report, we also recommended a more robust tracking system for both processes and outcomes of the initiative. Therefore, a central component of the evaluation was the creation of a tracking system in Asana. This system mapped directly onto the team progress outcomes outlined in the logic model. The Nature Everywhere team and technical assistance leads completed quarterly narrative status updates and tracked milestone completion in Asana as a way of monitoring progress for current Nature Everywhere participants. Additionally, the Nature Everywhere team gathered retrospective data on the progress of CCCN sites to include in the Asana tracking system.

ONGOING COLLABORATION

Education Northwest and The Sustainable Learning Projects met regularly with the internal Children & Nature Network team to discuss progress and address any issues that arose. Additionally, to build shared understanding around the importance of the evaluation, the team engaged in norming activities with technical assistance leads, emphasizing how evaluation supports continuous improvement and

helps cities achieve their goals. This collaborative approach fostered buy-in and improved the quality of data collected.

ADDITIONAL DATA SOURCES

The evaluation team used a variety of additional data sources to support a richer understanding of community progress through the goals of Nature Everywhere. These data sources included:

Milestone review surveys. Surveys, completed by technical assistance leads after teams reached specific milestones, provided both quantitative and qualitative data.

Project closeout calls. Phone calls with technical assistance leads provided additional insight on team progress and lessons learned.

Conference attendance. Attendance at Nature Everywhere conferences in 2024 and 2025 supported overall understanding of the initiative.

Technical assistant lead interviews and observations. Interviews and observations, conducted at multiple timepoints, offered insight into the nature of technical assistance, team dynamics, and challenges faced in meeting milestones.

Secondary data sources. Ripple Effect Mapping, case studies, and “one-pagers” enriched the evaluation by capturing broader impacts and contextual factors.

Past reviews of CCCN. [Lessons Learned from CCCN](#), written by Education Northwest and The Sustainable Learning Projects in 2023.

To answer the guiding evaluation questions, the team analyzed milestone review surveys, Asana tracking data, and other key project documents collected as of September 2025. The team drew additional insight from observations and conversations with technical assistance leads throughout the initiative, as well as debrief interviews with teams conducted in October 2025. See appendix A for more details on data sources and methods.

This integrated analysis provides a holistic view of the Nature Everywhere Communities initiative, reflecting the diversity of participating cities and the critical role of technical assistance. It evaluates how cities’ progress toward goals varied based on factors such as size and capacity and captures the tailored support communities received as they advanced through the Nature Everywhere milestones.



What are the core elements of Nature Everywhere?

Nature Everywhere provides community teams with tailored support focused on reaching the goals outlined in the logic model (figure 1). The core elements of the initiative are a focus on systems change and the specific resources each community needs to drive this change.

Nature Everywhere focuses on systems change

At a fundamental level, Nature Everywhere works toward systems change or “shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place.”² In the Nature Everywhere model, the collective problem communities are seeking to address is that too few children have access to nature where they live, learn, and play. FSG’s “Waters of Systems Change” outlines six interactive conditions: policies, practices, resource flows, relationships and connections, power dynamics, and mental models.³ These conditions are sorted into three categories—relational, structural, and transformative change—which guided the development of the Nature Everywhere logic model (figure 1).

Because of the systems change approach, Nature Everywhere does not fund communities to carry out direct service through a program. As FSG suggests, Nature Everywhere begins with a community assessment that helps teams to better understand the systemic forces at play in their community. Nature Everywhere then helps teams shift the conditions in their communities—from mental models around nature connection to resources and partnerships supporting built environments—so all children can experience nature where they live, learn, and play.

Nature Everywhere provides teams with crucial resources to move the needle on systems change

Although Nature Everywhere is designed with a systems change approach and long-term systems goals, the one- to two-year timeframe for the initiative means that most current efforts focus on short-term actions and foundational steps that position teams for future systemic change. Therefore, Nature Everywhere focuses its immediate assistance on technical assistance, funding, peer learning and convening, and access to pre-developed resources to support team progress.

² Social Innovation Generation as cited in Kania, J., Kramer, M., & Senge, P. (2018). *The water of systems change*. FSG. https://www.fsg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-Water-of-Systems-Change_rc.pdf

³ Kania, J., Kramer, M., & Senge, P. (2018). *The water of systems change*. FSG.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The focus of Nature Everywhere support is technical assistance from national experts in nature equity, urban planning, and youth development. Most teams meet monthly with their technical assistance leads to promote accountability, assess progress, and identify next steps.



SEED AND CATALYTIC FUNDING

All Nature Everywhere teams received \$40,000 in seed funds to start their journeys. Nineteen teams used their funds to build their capacity to connect to core partners through hiring a coordinator. Nine teams reported using their seed grants to enhance community engagement, including compensating community members and youth for their participation in community assessments. Community teams also used seed funds to invest in professional development for team members, provide more accessible play areas (e.g., installing shade structures on playgrounds to support access for young children), and support strategic planning.

Additionally, near the end of the two years of Nature Everywhere, six teams applied for and received \$50,000 in catalytic funding to make progress on their implementation plans. Those plans focused on a range of activities, including policy change, nature-based play infrastructure development, and increasing adult capacity to support nature-based learning.



PEER LEARNING AND CONVENING

The Nature Everywhere Peer Learning Network [PLN] connects teams across the country to share strategies, challenges, and successes through regular virtual meetings and in-person conferences. PLN virtual meetings focus on activating leadership, community assessment (e.g., equity mapping), using an assessment workbook, developing policy, and more.

In addition to virtual meetings, teams can connect and learn during in-person events, including Children & Nature Network conferences and Vision Labs. These in-person convenings can include not only team leads, members, and coordinators, but also institutional leaders (e.g., mayors, superintendents, parks directors), community partners (e.g., leaders of other community-based organizations, environmental educators, librarians), and specialists (e.g., STEM coordinators).



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Nature Everywhere provides toolkits and planning guides for strategy development and evidence-based resources to support case-making with institutional leaders and community partners. Many of these resources were adapted or created specifically for specific technical assistance needs in a community rather than used as off-the-shelf solutions. Common tools include resources for community assessment (e.g., equity mapping), visioning, community engagement, implementation planning, and communication.

Nature Everywhere provides communities with clear milestones to track progress toward systems change

The Nature Everywhere milestones are organized into four stages: Explore, Plan, Implement, and Sustain (figure 1). Each stage includes two to three levels of outcomes, which community teams identify in collaboration with Nature Everywhere technical assistance leads.

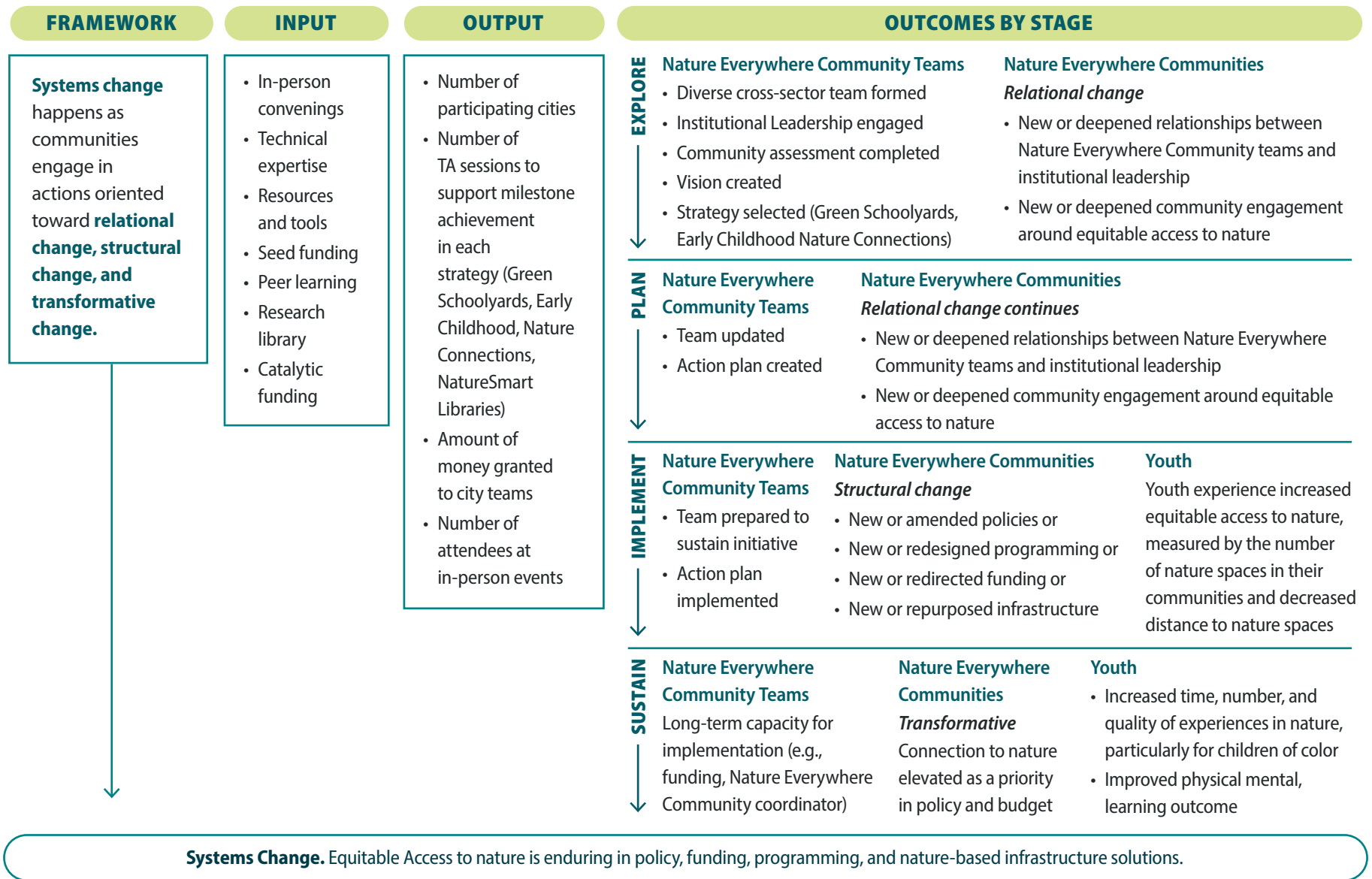
In the Explore stage, teams focus on foundational efforts such as forming cross-sector partnerships, engaging institutional leadership, conducting a community assessment, developing a shared vision, and selecting a Nature Everywhere strategy that aligns with local priorities. Some of these strategies were carried over from CCCN (e.g., Green Schoolyards, Early Childhood Nature Connection), while others are new to Nature Everywhere (e.g., Nature Smart Libraries, Nature Exploration Areas). Over time, the role of the strategies has evolved—from suggested approaches to central themes around which cohorts are formed and teams apply to participate. Nature Everywhere encouraged teams to adopt defined strategies with prior examples of success and evidence-based resources.

As teams move into the Plan stage, they continue to strengthen engagement with their partners while developing a comprehensive action plan to guide their implementation efforts. In the Implement stage, teams begin executing their plans and measuring progress toward their goals. During this phase, they also start preparing for the Sustain stage by developing strategies to maintain and expand their work beyond the direct support of Nature Everywhere. The Sustain stage is centered on building long-term capacity, with a focus on embedding nature connection as a priority in local policy and budget planning.

Across these stages, the nature of change evolves. For example, in the Explore and Plan stages, the emphasis is on relational change, particularly in building and deepening relationships between Nature Everywhere teams, institutional leaders, and community members. While often beyond the timeframe of Nature Everywhere, teams in the Implement stage start to see structural change, which may include shifts in policies, programs, funding, and infrastructure. These structural changes pave the way for transformative change in the Sustain stage, where nature connection becomes a recognized and prioritized element in community governance and planning.

Additionally, in the Implement and Sustain stages, teams expect to see meaningful outcomes for youth. These include increased equitable access to nature and improvements in physical health, mental well-being, and learning outcomes. These youth-centered impacts reflect the broader goals of Nature Everywhere to foster lasting, community-wide benefits through nature connection

Figure 1. Nature Everywhere logic model



Source: Logic model for the Nature Everywhere initiative developed collaboratively with the Nature Everywhere staff and members of the evaluation team.



What change is happening in Nature Everywhere communities?

To answer the second evaluation question, we looked at the progress community teams made on the outcomes established in their logic model (e.g., cross-sector team formed, strategy selected). We also looked at changes in Nature Everywhere communities, including relational change (relationships and connections and power dynamics); structural change (policies, practices, resource flows); and transformative change (mental models).

Most teams made progress on one or more Nature Everywhere milestones

At the time of reporting, technical assistance leads placed the 25 Nature Everywhere community teams in our sample into various stages (table 1). To assess progress on the Explore and Plan stages, we analyzed Explore milestone survey responses for all 25 teams. We analyzed Plan milestone survey responses for the nine teams that completed the survey. Teams within each stage may be at different points; for example, one team in the Implement stage may have just finalized its implementation plan, while another may already be making progress on execution.

Table 1. Current stage of Nature Everywhere teams

	Count	Percentage
Explore	7	28%
Plan	7	28%
Implement	9	36%
Sustain	2	8%
Total teams	25	100%

Source: Asana tracking system, exported September 2025 (N = 25).



At the time of data collection, 18 teams⁴ had completed the Explore stage. All teams that completed Explore had formed diverse teams, engaged institutional leadership, and selected a strategy (table 2). Most had also conducted a community assessment and developed a vision. Nearly all teams still in the Explore stage had chosen a strategy but were in the process of completing other key activities, such as vision development and leadership engagement. While teams were encouraged to complete each milestone activity in a stage before moving on, technical assistance leads determined on an individual basis when teams were prepared to move to the next stage. Therefore, a couple of teams finished the Explore phase without completing all milestone activities.

Table 2. Explore milestone activities checked on Asana tracking system

	Explore stage complete (n = 18)	Explore stage not complete (n = 7)
Diverse cross-sector team formed	100%	86%
Institutional leadership engaged	100%	29%
Community assessment completed	89%	43%
Vision created	94%	14%
Strategy selected	100%	71%

Source: Asana tracking system, exported September 2025 (N = 25).

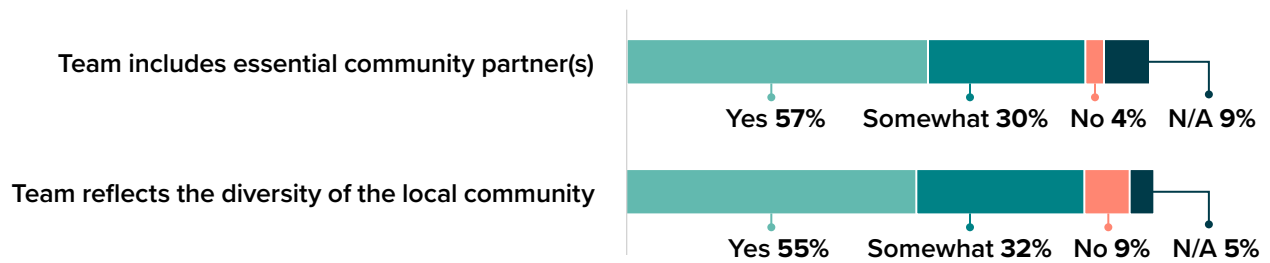
Throughout this section we also draw on our interviews with Nature Everywhere technical assistance leads, who provided additional insight into communities’ milestone completion.

DIVERSE CROSS-SECTOR TEAM FORMED

Teams developed partnerships across schools, cities, community-based organizations, nonprofits, and other interest holders (figure 2). Eighty seven percent of teams reflect or somewhat reflect the diversity of the local community.

⁴ This includes seven teams in the Plan stage, nine teams in the Implement stage, and two teams in the Sustain stage. Of the teams who had not completed the Explore stage, three were still actively participating in technical assistance, while four had disengaged and did not continue with technical assistance.

Figure 2. Technical assistance leads said that most teams included essential community partners and reflected the diversity of the local community

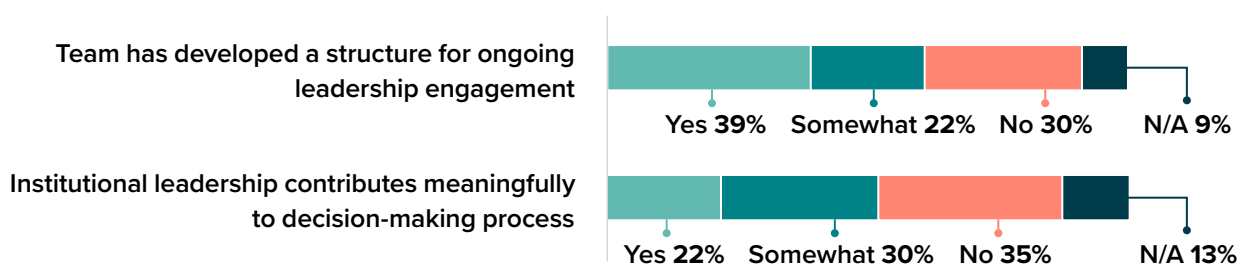


Source: Education Northwest analysis of the milestone review survey (N = 25).

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP ENGAGED

Some Nature Everywhere teams engaged institutional leaders as core team members, while others engaged them more informally or infrequently. Technical assistance leads said about two-thirds of teams had structures for engaging leadership, although fewer saw leaders play a significant role in decision-making (figure 3).

Figure 3. Technical assistance leads said that many teams have a structure for meaningfully engaging leadership, but fewer teams reported that institutional leadership played a significant role in decision-making



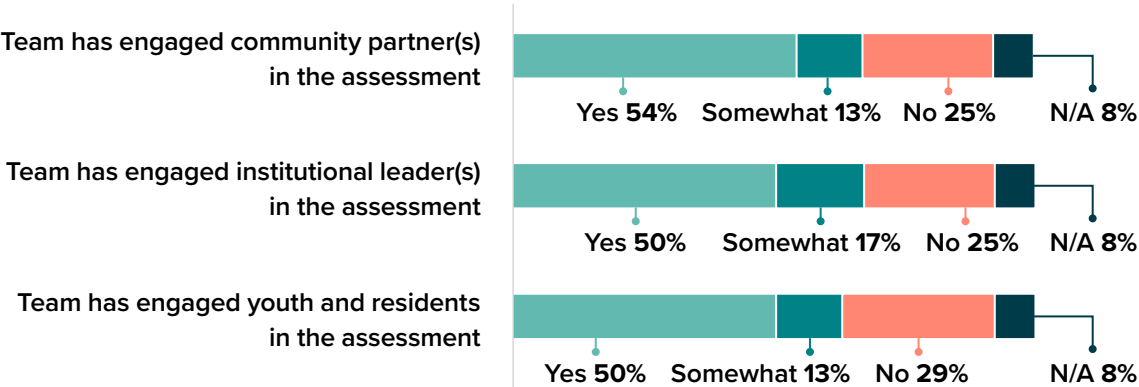
Source: Education Northwest analysis of the milestone review survey (N = 25).

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

Most teams who moved from Explore to Plan completed community assessments. About two-thirds of the teams actively engaged community partners, institutional leaders, and/or youth and residents during the community assessment process (figure 4). This engagement was sometimes informal, through in-person events and discussions, or more formal, through structured assessments. For example, the Get Outdoors Partnership (Groton, CT) team chatted with community members at preexisting city

events, such as Community Wellness Hub events or Earth Day events, while Prescribe Outside (Philadelphia, PA) engaged student researchers and a community engagement specialist to conduct formal listening sessions.

Figure 4. Many teams engaged community partners, institutional leaders, and youth in their community assessments

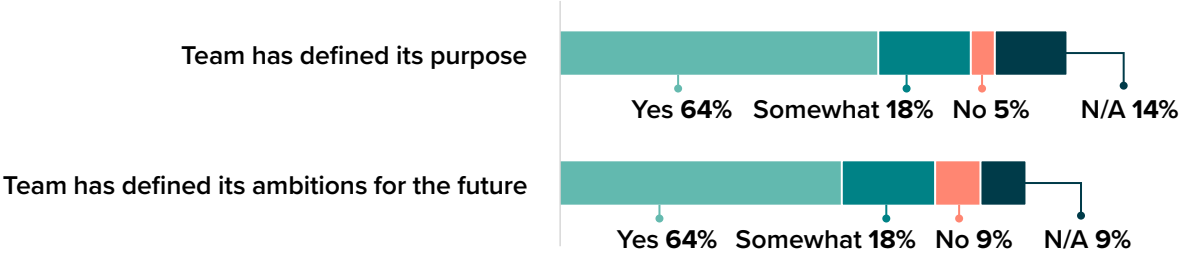


Source: Education Northwest analysis of the milestone review survey (N = 25).

VISION CREATED

Nearly all teams that exited the Explore stage had developed a vision for their work. Vision statements varied in length, from brief to in-depth. Most teams that completed their vision statements felt it helped to build purpose and direction for what they planned to achieve (figure 5).

Figure 5. Most teams felt their vision statement helped define the team’s purpose for what they planned to achieve in Nature Everywhere



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the milestone review survey (N = 25).

STRATEGY SELECTED

Based on our findings from Lessons Learned from CCCN, Nature Everywhere leaders encouraged teams to adopt defined strategies with prior evidence of impact. Teams primarily selected Green Schoolyards, Nature Exploration Areas, and Youth Leadership Development as their Nature Everywhere strategies (see table A4 in appendix A for a full list of strategies). However, the selection process was often complex, and some teams created their own nature connection strategy or pursued a combination of strategies.

Technical assistance leads noted that several teams refined their strategies based on insights gleaned from their community assessments, while others shifted focus after considering system-wide factors during technical assistance.

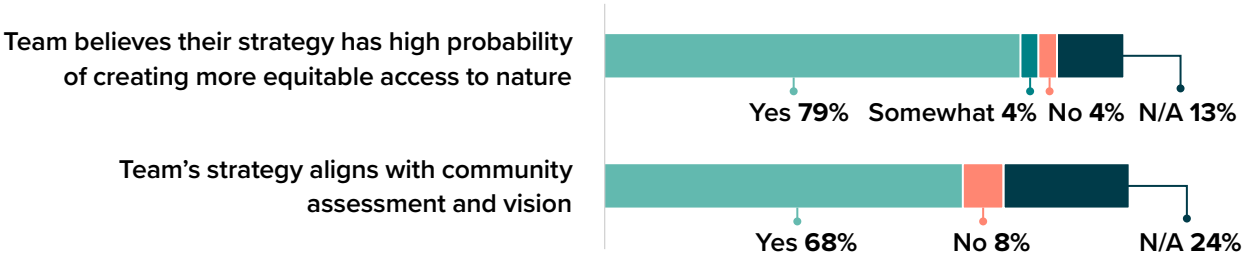


Although the team originally came on board with a Green Schoolyards focus, they demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness by shifting toward an ECNC [Early Childhood Nature Connections] strategy after thoughtful discussion. This pivot was informed by contextual realities ... and strategically aligned with growing city momentum around early childhood, allowing the team to build on existing priorities, partnerships, and visibility.”

– Nature Everywhere technical assistance lead

Technical assistance leads reported that 68 percent of teams’ strategies aligned with their community assessment and vision (figure 6), reflecting that some teams chose strategies before completing assessments. Regardless of how strategies were selected, 83 percent of teams believed their strategy would improve equitable access to nature.

Figure 6. Most teams believe their strategy has a high probability of creating more equitable access to nature



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the milestone review survey (N = 25).

Nature Everywhere supported relational change in most communities through expanded and deepened collaboration

Nature Everywhere teams have made the most progress on changing the relationships and connections in their communities and shifting the power dynamics at play in nature connection.

COLLABORATION

Most teams reported having stronger partnerships and collaboration due to their participation in Nature Everywhere, including connections with institutional leaders and community partners. Some teams leveraged existing relationships and partnerships when forming their teams; others needed more technical assistance support to build the team. Nature Everywhere helped facilitate these connections, which teams aim to sustain.

For example, in Groton, Connecticut, Nature Everywhere technical assistance helped foster connections between the school district, parks and recreation, the mayor's office, nonprofits, and other partners. These connections helped break down existing silos and encouraged knowledge sharing and collaborative decision-making.



I think we can all point to this collaboration as an example of how different groups in our town can work together for a common goal. There's always politics, especially around budget time, and there's always competing priorities. But I know many of us have used this as an example of how people from these different spheres within town can work together for the benefit of kids and the community.”

– Nature Everywhere team member

POWER DYNAMICS

Through community assessments and strategic partnerships, Nature Everywhere teams worked to ensure equitable access to nature in ways that reflect the unique needs of their communities—whether addressing rural populations, Black urban youth, Indigenous knowledge, youth with disabilities, or issues of trauma and environmental injustice. While not all teams achieved significant progress in shifting local power dynamics, several made intentional efforts to engage communities and youth throughout the process, from assessment and visioning to planning for implementation.



We had a lot of fantastic momentum around the youth feedback and buy-in and just getting the information from them about how they were using open space and how they felt about their connection to nature. It was incredible to get that baseline and then be able to return to them after we did some of this work and see how it's going.”

– Nature Everywhere team member

Many teams reflected the diversity of their local community, including leaders from BIPOC organizations or from other diverse community groups.



The team works well together and has representatives from both culturally diverse and disability and accessibility communities.”

– Nature Everywhere team member

However, some teams struggled to achieve representation that reflected their communities' racial and cultural diversity. This gap made it harder for those teams to address power dynamics effectively. Where possible, technical assistance leads helped identify opportunities to bring additional voices and perspectives into the team.



There is clear recognition that BIPOC representation and community-based organization engagement are essential, not optional. Team leads acknowledge that the current group is incomplete. Opportunities are emerging to engage more voices ...”

– Nature Everywhere technical assistance lead

Nature Everywhere supported structural change in some communities through policy updates, as well as increased community resources and infrastructure

Some Nature Everywhere teams have also made progress on the policies, practices, and resource flows at the structural level of systems change.

POLICIES

Two Nature Everywhere teams have integrated nature-equity strategies into comprehensive land plans, while others are working toward this goal, ensuring that children’s access to nature becomes a structural priority. The five teams who have passed a Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights (COBOR) emphasized that growing policy infrastructure provides a foundation for future legislative action and can formalize a team’s vision. As one technical assistance lead described it, the partnerships developed during COBOR adoption with institutional leaders, “really brought the connections to city priorities and willingness to make this a priority for the sustainability office.”



We established the COBOR and are working on weaving nature exploration areas throughout the city. By doing so, we’ve paved the way for more progressive policies to ensure that nature and green space are accessible. Now, we have a foundational document—a piece of legislation—that supports this work, which is pretty substantial.”

– Nature Everywhere team member

However, technical assistance leads emphasized that while COBORs are valuable, they are not enough to shift system conditions. Teams also need a broader strategy to ensure long-term success.

PRACTICES

While practice alone does not produce systemic change, a few participants described how practice shifts helped create buy-in and momentum for larger structural change. Participants said that piloting programs—like nature weeks, aftercare Nature Fridays, and outdoor learning activities—helped clarify what is possible and provided tangible examples for stakeholders.

RESOURCE FLOWS

Teams are in process of shifting resources. Nature Everywhere teams are working toward equitable distribution of nature infrastructure through Green Schoolyards, Nature Smart Libraries, and green infrastructure projects. Additionally, several Nature Everywhere teams described working to leverage

seed funding and Nature Everywhere’s legitimizing support to secure federal, state, local, and philanthropic dollars for design, construction, and nature-based programming.

Nature Everywhere helped build communities’ vision for nature access

Although less tangible, seven teams described transformative change in their communities’ thinking around nature connection. Vision development—especially when it included youth, institutional leaders, and community members— increased community support and began changing perceptions of nature access.



We are getting the idea of nature play and nature exploration infused through all of these partners and all of our various departments.”

– Nature Everywhere team

Seventy percent of teams set ambitious goals in their vision statements, helping reframe what’s possible in their communities. However, some teams struggled to shift entrenched views, build buy-in, and maintain a clear vision.



We come into this knowing that green space is going to be beneficial to kids. But how do you convince others of its importance for them 10 years down the road? It’s hard to prove, especially when they’re focused on immediate concerns, like where kids will have lunch on a given day. Maybe part of the strategy is finding a way to weave these needs into our work in a true and meaningful way.”

– Nature Everywhere team



With more time, CCCN teams made further progress on systems change

As we described in [Lessons Learned from CCCN](#), systems change takes time. Through surveys and interviews, we asked CCCN teams to reflect on their progress toward this goal. Among respondents, 71 percent of cities with six to nine years of CCCN participation reported implementing at least one systems change strategy, compared to 43 percent of cities with only one year of involvement. To understand more recent developments, we reviewed updated information from CCCN sites that have been working toward systems change for a longer period. While we only reviewed a sample, these CCCN sites had deepened and expanded their work, often in unexpected ways.



RELATIONAL CHANGE

In our report, we found that some respondents said CCCN helped them successfully convene community partners (59%), multiple departments (41%), and other government partners (38%) while most others were working toward that goal ([Lessons Learned from CCCN](#)). In the CCCN sites we reviewed, these partnerships grew deeper and more institutionalized over time. For example, the Green Schoolyards Action Network, led by Green Umbrella, includes Cincinnati Public Schools, the city, and over 30 partners. Through deepening partnerships, the Green Schoolyards Action Network's work has scaled beyond its initial formation as a partnership between the school board and park board. It is now embedded throughout the city, producing the Green Cincinnati Plan, the District Tree Program, Green Workforce Development, and curriculum development to support green schoolyard initiatives and more.



STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Additionally from our report, 17 percent of survey respondents said CCCN helped them shift policies, programs, and infrastructure, while 59 percent of respondents were actively working toward that goal ([Lessons Learned from CCCN](#)). Additionally, about a quarter of survey respondents said CCCN helped them successfully allocate staffing and resources toward connecting children to nature (24%), while 59 percent of respondents were actively working toward that goal ([Lessons Learned from CCCN](#)). The CCCN sites we reviewed made progress on these goals over time.

Policy. CCCN sites achieved policy changes that were directly related to their engagement with CCCN, as well changes that were the result of long-term collaboration with partners. For example, in alignment with the goals of their engagement with CCCN, many cities include nature play in their cities' master plans (e.g., the Lower Columbia Nature Network has supported park and recreation departments' comprehensive plans, cities' climate action plans, and other initiatives across Southwest Washington).

Alternatively, Cincinnati has adopted the “Good Agricultural Practices” policy, enabling schools to serve as farm-to-school food suppliers. While this marked a shift for the Green Schoolyards Action Network, it aligned with their broader goal of expanding agricultural education (described below) and the interests of their network.

Practice. As an example of how practice can be part of a larger systems change strategy, Cincinnati has developed a Green Workforce Pathway through career and technical education opportunities in Cincinnati Public Schools. This change in practice was a result of the deep partnerships represented in the Green Schoolyards Action Network and reflects the local role of agriculture in youth leadership, academic success, and career preparation.

Resources. Given time, the CCCN teams we reviewed have been able to see shifts in infrastructure in their communities. For example, as of 2025, 60 of the 66 public schools in Cincinnati have green space. The Cincinnati team has built 20 green schoolyards, with more underway, backed by over \$1 million in funding. Additionally, Milwaukee has transformed 35 school yards, removing 806,000 square feet of asphalt and benefiting over 14,000 students.

Some teams have leveraged public and private funding to support infrastructure development. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, the team leveraged a parks bond initiative that secured \$703,000 in funding for green schoolyards and nature playscapes alongside private funding from the Wege Foundation, the Outdoor Foundation Thrive Outside initiative, and CCCN. To date, Grand Rapids has successfully built six green schoolyards, with plans for additional schoolyards in areas that lack green spaces.

Participation in CCCN has significantly shifted resource flows for nature access. Since 2014, \$3.6 million in direct investments helped communities leverage over \$45 million—about \$15 for every \$1 invested to support nature access for children.



TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

In our report, many CCCN survey respondents said their participation in CCCN helped them guide vision and strategy in their city (21%), while 59 percent of respondents were actively working toward that goal ([Lessons Learned from CCCN](#)). The CCCN sites we reviewed kept moving toward the goal of systems change, while also adapting to meet the needs of their partners.



What do teams need to successfully progress through each stage of the theory of change?

While many communities saw change based on their participation in Nature Everywhere, not all teams made the same level of progress. We looked deeper at those communities that successfully moved through the stages of Nature Everywhere and identified the key characteristics and supports that contributed to their success.

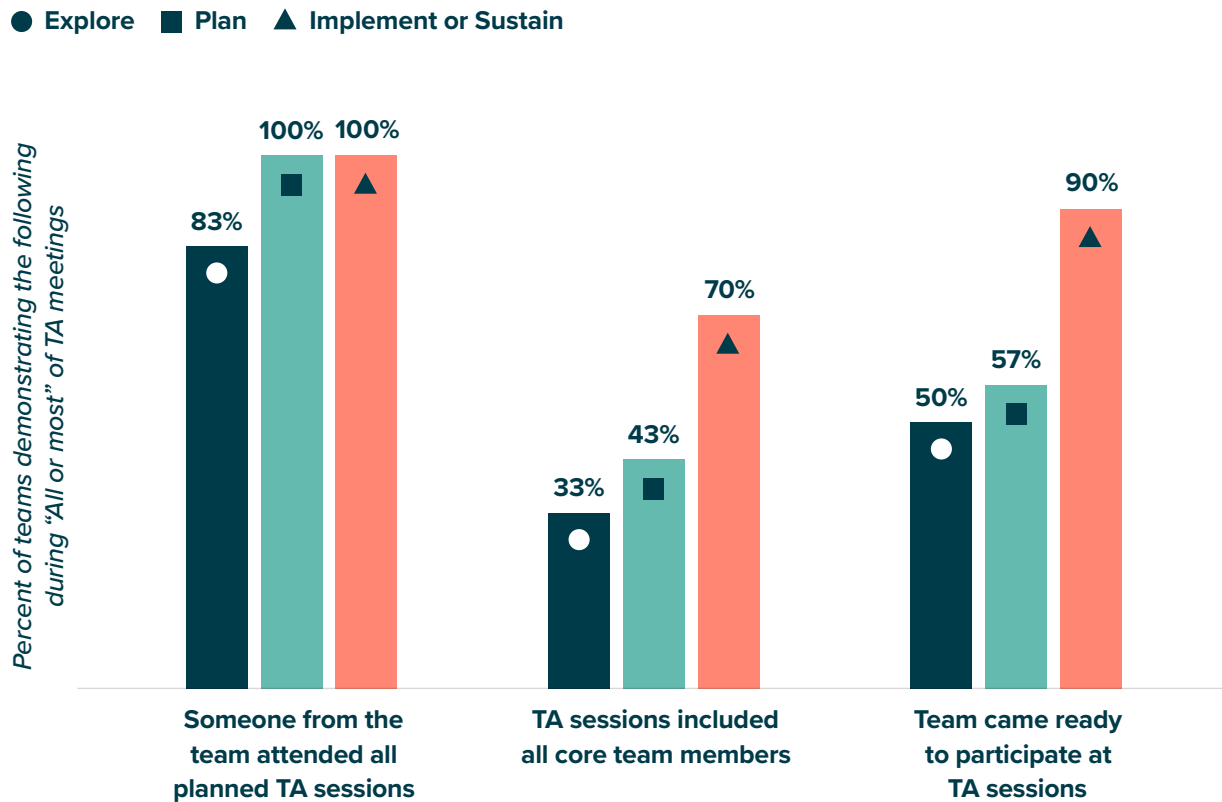
Nature Everywhere technical assistance was crucial to supporting teams' progress towards systems change

Technical assistance is a core component of Nature Everywhere. Technical assistance leads noted that support varies by team—some teams follow a structured format, while others are more flexible and responsive. Several key areas of support emerged:

- 1. Trusted partners and allies.** Technical assistance leads built strong relationships with teams through regular monthly check-ins, which helped maintain focus, accountability, and momentum. Their responsiveness and investment in the work fostered trust.
- 2. Resource connection.** Technical assistance leads linked teams to people, research, funding, and tools like the Early Childhood Nature Connection toolkit and community assessment guide. Their cross-site experience allowed them to share examples from other cities, giving teams a broader perspective and sense of national connection.
- 3. Leveraging influence.** Technical assistance leads used their national standing to engage institutional leaders and initiate meaningful conversations. As one Nature Everywhere team member said, “We had some buy-in from the common council. We’ve had mayoral support. And I think being part of this national program and having it be this legitimate effort by respected national partners really strengthened that relationship.”
- 4. Consistent structure and engagement.** Teams valued the external structure technical assistance provided, which helped coordinate partners and guide strategic planning toward shared goals.

Teams who had progressed to later stages of the Nature Everywhere process had higher levels of engagement with technical assistance, according to the survey filled out by technical assistance leads (figure 7). For example, 90 percent of teams who progressed to the Implement or Sustain stages “came ready to participate at technical assistance sessions” all or most of the time, compared to 50 percent of teams who were in the Explore or Plan stages.

Figure 7. Teams that progressed beyond the Explore stage had higher levels of engagement with technical assistance



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the milestone review survey (n = 25).

Teams consistently highlighted that technical assistance played a key role in advancing their work. Participants said technical assistance leads helped them think differently about community assessments, uncover new opportunities for policy and practice change, and strengthen relationships across sectors. Technical assistance support provided practical tools, guidance, and examples from other communities that teams could adapt locally.



Technical assistance was incredible. For example, [our technical assistance lead] recently presented to institutional leadership on the coalition’s progress and its connection to academic outcomes. Having [the technical assistance lead] lead the presentation and bring that information together so effectively made a huge impact.”

– Nature Everywhere team member

In-person site visits with technical assistance leads were especially valuable for building trust, fostering collaboration, and offering concrete models for action. Additionally, these in-person visits offered opportunities for institutional leader engagement.



The technical assistance visit seeded strong momentum and opened doors to additional leadership connections—including the school superintendent, chamber of commerce, county departments, and sustainability leaders.”

– Nature Everywhere team member

Although technical assistance was essential to team success, some teams initially struggled to understand its purpose and the shared goals of the initiative. As one team member noted, “[We were] unclear when it started where we were in the process and what we needed to accomplish before it ended.” With consistent and direct support, some teams gained clarity over time, but four teams remained uncertain throughout their participation, which limited their ability to fully engage with the systems change goals of Nature Everywhere.



I think sometimes I was a little lost on what the expectations were, and I struggled to know what you guys were seeking from us and the pathways to get there.”

– Nature Everywhere team

Because this evaluation was developmental, the logic model and other details about Nature Everywhere’s processes and outcomes emerged while teams were already receiving technical assistance. As a result, some technical assistance leads said the lack of clarity among certain teams may partly reflect their own evolving understanding of their roles and Nature Everywhere’s goals.



Nature Everywhere technical assistance was most effective when teams understood the concept of systems change from the beginning

While all teams began with a commitment to equity, those that demonstrated a clear understanding of systems change as early as the proposal stage were more likely to progress through Nature Everywhere milestones. These teams set goals for city-wide policies, partnerships, and practices that could systematically improve youth access to nature.

In contrast, teams whose applications focused on grassroots or programmatic efforts sometimes struggled to connect their work to broader systems change. Some found the national framework difficult to adapt to local contexts and struggled to “pull up” from programmatic efforts and grassroots approaches to systems change.

With targeted technical assistance, a few teams successfully shifted to models like collective impact to engage the broader systems, but others disengaged without making the connection to system-wide approaches. These teams, often led by community-based organizations serving communities of color, showed strong commitment to nature access but lacked the institutional engagement needed to advance systemic change.

Nature Everywhere technical assistance was most effective with teams with appropriate leadership and composition

In conversations with technical assistance leads and teams, we found that teams that engaged leaders with commitment, authority, and capacity were most successful in moving through Nature Everywhere. One team member described their team as “the doers who also have decision-making power.”

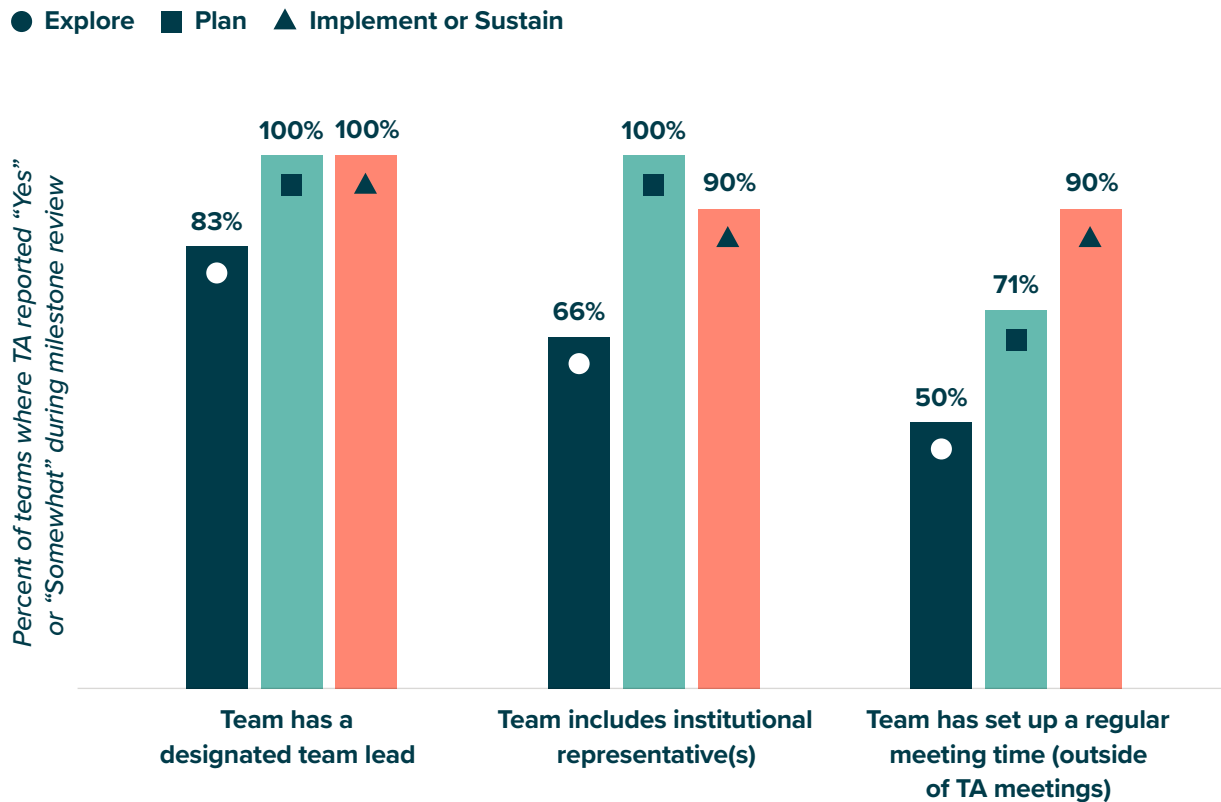


Some of the teams I work with have a very proactive team lead. That makes it a lot easier to come up with an agenda, carry it out, and give them things in between steps.”

– Nature Everywhere technical assistance lead

Teams that had a designated lead and had institutional leader representation on their team during the Explore phase were more likely to advance into planning (figure 8). Additionally, 90 percent of teams in the Implement or Sustain stage met regularly in addition to the required technical assistance meetings.

Figure 8. Teams that moved beyond the Explore stage were more likely to set up a regular meeting time with the team outside of technical assistance meetings



Source: Education Northwest analysis of the milestone review survey (n = 25).

Teams that made less progress often faced internal challenges like leadership turnover, unclear roles, limited capacity, and skepticism about the process. Many lacked time and staff bandwidth, spending energy on urgent issues (described as “putting out fires”) rather than systems change work. Some regretted not involving institutional leaders early, while others needed more support to manage complex group dynamics and strengthen collaboration.



This team has strong goals in their strategic plan, but they don’t have a robust working team or anyone on the team with the ability to make connections to institutional leadership ... this team is very driven by grassroots rather than grass tops.”

– Nature Everywhere technical assistance lead

Nature Everywhere funding and connecting with other teams were also important to team progress

To make progress on their goals, teams relied on resources beyond technical assistance that were provided by Nature Everywhere, including funding and opportunities to convene.

SEED AND CATALYTIC FUNDING

Teams said the seed funding enabled their work, often describing it as pivotal in advancing their initiatives. For those that used the funds to hire a coordinator, technical assistance leads emphasized that the coordinator played a critical role in driving team progress. As limited capacity can hinder advancement, having a dedicated coordinator provides the time and focus needed to keep efforts on track.

While Nature Everywhere funding was critical to team progress, limited financial capacity was a major barrier, especially for smaller organizations with constrained budgets.



Funding—that’s the obvious one. And knowing each of our organizations’ capacity, it’s challenging to spend time seeking funding because we’re already dedicating so much time as individual organizations to secure resources for our own work, then trying to find time for funding for this combined effort.”

– Nature Everywhere team member

Looking ahead, teams expressed a desire for continued support from Nature Everywhere, both in funding and technical assistance. They emphasized the importance of learning about funding opportunities and receiving guidance to navigate and access those resources. As one Nature Everywhere team member said, “If you spot fundraising opportunities—grants or any other funding streams—send them our way.”

IN-PERSON CONVENING

Several teams emphasized the value of in-person convenings. Conferences gave teams the opportunity to hear from expert speakers, learn what other cities were doing, and gather ideas to bring back to their communities. These events deepened understanding and offered practical insights for local implementation. Teams also highlighted the Vision Lab as a strong project kickoff—it brought members together, fostered engagement through hands-on activities, and built excitement. The in-person connections helped strengthen team cohesion and clarify systems change goals, which supported forward momentum.

Nature Everywhere strategy selection required clear decision-making, community engagement, and connection to systems change

When selecting a strategy for their Nature Everywhere participation, many successful teams demonstrated strong engagement and collaboration within their team, often forming cross-sector groups and conducting thorough community assessments to inform their decisions.

A few Nature Everywhere teams faced challenges in selecting a strategy due to inconsistent participation in technical assistance, unclear decision-making processes, and limited understanding of how their goals aligned with the initiative's systems change framework. These issues hindered their progress through key milestones. Technical assistance leads guided these teams by introducing systems change concepts (e.g., leveraging relationships, policy opportunities) and connecting their work to the Nature Everywhere theory of change.

A few teams, particularly direct service organizations, remained committed to nature access but struggled to engage institutional leaders, which ultimately limited their ability to advance systems change goals.



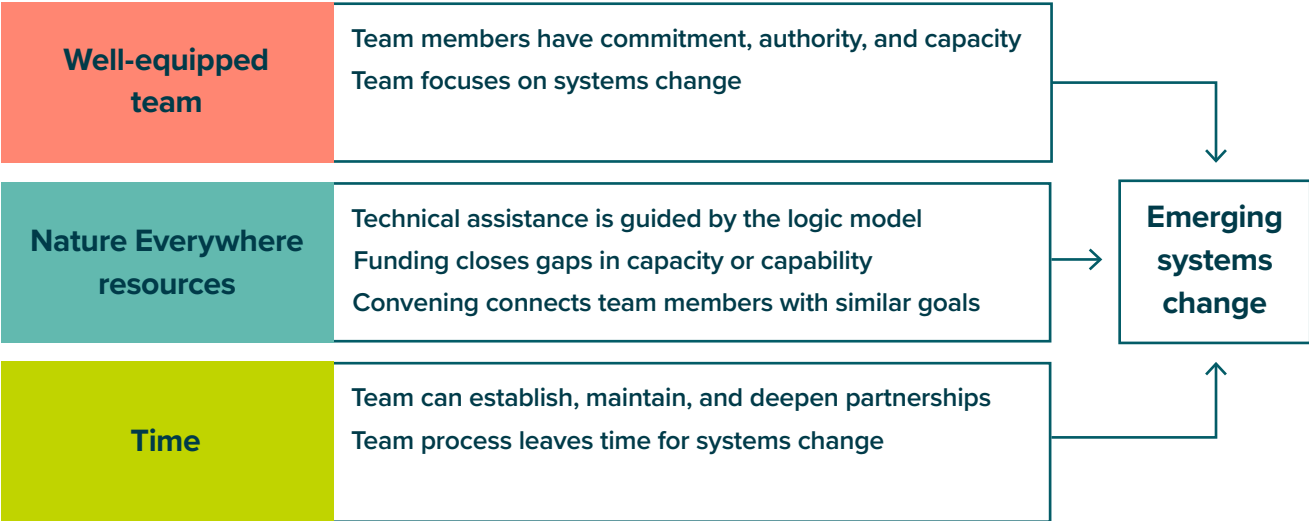


Conclusion

Nature Everywhere provides a framework for engaging communities in systemic change to ensure all children can experience nature where they live, learn, and play. This framework has been successful in supporting many teams to build the foundations for systems change, including developing a diverse, cross-sector team with an ambitious vision for nature access in their community; engaging institutional leaders; and developing a plan for how to change policy and infrastructure.

Overall, our evaluation of Nature Everywhere provides a pathway for implementation that relies on having a well-equipped team from the onset, access to Nature Everywhere resources, and time to support emerging systems change (figure 9). We describe each of these elements in more detail below.

Figure 9. Framework for successful Nature Everywhere participation



Source: Authors’ analysis of the findings from this report.

Well-equipped team

Teams that advanced through the Nature Everywhere milestones shared common characteristics related to team leadership, team composition, and a focus on systems change.

Team leadership. Strong leadership was essential for team progress. Successful teams had a designated lead who convened partners and encouraged participation in technical assistance and team meetings. Some teams used Nature Everywhere funding to hire a coordinator for this role, while others were led from the start by an individual with the capacity and authority to lead.

Team composition. Successful teams require members with a mix of commitment, authority, and capacity. As one technical assistance lead noted, teams need “the doers who also have decision-making power.”

These teams either include institutional leaders or have clear pathways to engage them effectively. In addition, they should reflect the diversity of their local community to ensure equitable representation and inclusive decision-making.

Focus on systems change. Teams that understood systems change from the onset were more likely to progress through milestones and achieve broader goals. These teams were better able to leverage relationships, policy opportunities, and resource flows, which set them up for long-term impact.

Nature Everywhere resources

Nature Everywhere resources, including technical assistance, funding, and opportunities to convene, were crucial for team advancement.

Technical assistance. Teams need technical assistance that provides accountability and legitimacy and is anchored in the logic model. Technical assistance leads connected teams to toolkits and other evidence-based resources, facilitated relationships with institutional leaders, and kept teams focused on their goals.

Funding. Teams need funding to close gaps in capacity or capability. Whether hiring a team coordinator to fill capacity needs or bringing in researchers with community engagement expertise, funding was critical to making progress on milestones.

Networking. Teams need opportunities to authentically connect with others who are working toward the same goals. In-person convening through Vision Labs, Nature Everywhere conferences, and more offered team members the opportunity to learn from one another and feel connected to a broader network of teams working to increase nature access for children.

Time

Time is a critical component to the success of Nature Everywhere and to long-term system change.

Partnership development. Teams need time to establish, maintain, and deepen partnerships. While teams made immediate progress on relational change, these relationships require ongoing investment to influence policy and resource flows.

Systemic change. Teams need time for the slow process of structural and transformative change to occur. Teams that continued to invest in systems change through partnerships, policies, and infrastructure over three to five years were more likely to see additional “ripple effects” throughout their community.

Nature Everywhere is a framework for embedding nature access into the fabric of community systems. To sustain and scale this work, future efforts should prioritize long-term funding strategies, deepen institutional engagement, and maintain fidelity to the logic model. By doing so, communities can move toward systemic transformation that ensures every child can experience nature where they live, learn, and play.



Appendix A. Data sources and methods

Asana tracking

Nature Everywhere technical assistance leads and the Children & Nature Network Evaluation and Measurement Team used the Asana project management platform to track the progress of all actively engaged community teams. This included information such as team makeup and roles, milestone completion, and status updates. To the extent possible, they also collected data on teams that had already completed their involvement with technical assistance. In the Asana tracking system, teams were sorted by their active status: “Active TA” [technical assistance], “Active PLN” [Peer Learning Network], “Post TA”, and “Inactive.” The eight teams categorized as “Action Challenge” were kept separate, and data on their progress was not recorded since their intervention was entirely different. The Children & Nature Network Evaluation and Measurement Team exported the Asana data in September, soon after most teams had completed their TA, and shared it with our team.

TEAM DIRECTORY

Using the Asana data, we created a comprehensive directory of the 87 Nature Everywhere and Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) teams who had joined between 2014 and 2025. Note that the four Jacksonville teams were counted as a single team in the Asana tracking system, but each one is a unique entity with its own composition, vision, and projects. Additionally, this list does not include teams who engaged with the initiative in different ways, which would take the overall participating communities to 100.

Table A1. Communities who have participated in CCCN and Nature Everywhere, by cohort

Initiative	Cohort	Years	Number of teams
CCCN	Pilot	2014	7
	Peer learning network and technical assistance	2018	7
	Green Schoolyards	2018, 2021	12
	RSNC	2018, 2021	6
	Early Childhood Nature Connection Community of Practice	2022	13
Nature Everywhere	NE19	2023	19
	Climate24	2024	5
	High-intensity technical assistance	2024, 2025	3
	KABOOM!	2025	8

Initiative	Cohort	Years	Number of teams
	Total participating teams	2014, 2018–2025	87

Note: Teams participated in multiple cohorts of CCCN and Nature Everywhere.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of tracking data provided by the Nature Everywhere team.

Table A2. Breakdown of teams by community type

Community type	Number of teams
Action Challenge	8
Cities Connecting Children to Nature	48
Nature Everywhere	31

Note: This is a comprehensive count of teams, regardless of the stage the team was at. It also includes teams who applied and joined Nature Everywhere or CCCN but never began technical assistance.

Source: Asana tracking system, data pulled September 2025.

ANALYTIC SAMPLE

For most of the analysis in the report, we focus on a sample of 25 Nature Everywhere community teams who had not previously engaged with CCCN. We selected this sample with input from the Evaluation and Measurement team. Of the 30 teams flagged as being part of the Nature Everywhere initiative, two never started their technical assistance and were therefore excluded from the sample. Additionally, three teams (Casey Family Programs; Waukegan, IL; Jacksonville, FL) participated in a high-intensity, accelerated technical assistance experience. We exclude these teams from the main analytic sample because they received very different input than other teams.

Milestone review surveys

The Nature Everywhere evaluation team developed milestone review surveys to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the progress made toward key milestones. Once the teams completed one or more milestones, the technical assistance leads were directed to complete a survey describing the teams' experience with the tasks associated with that milestone.

Technical assistance leads for all 25 Nature Everywhere community teams in our analytic sample completed the Explore milestone survey, and eight Nature Everywhere community teams completed the Plan milestone survey.

Table A3. List of Nature Everywhere Community teams and survey completion information

Nature Everywhere community team name	Year joined	Current stage	Explore survey	Plan survey
McAllen (Texas)	2021	1	Yes	No
East End Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania)	2023	1	Yes	No
Riverfront Nature Network (Tennessee)	2023	1	Yes	No
Thrive Outside Atlanta (Georgia)	2023	1	Yes	No
Tri-County Play Collaborative (South Carolina)	2023	1	Yes	No
South Texas (Texas)	2024	1	Yes	No
Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (Maryland)	2025	1	Yes	No
Faribault Region (Minnesota)	2023	2	Yes	Yes
Resilient Ribault-Jacksonville (Florida)	2023	2	Yes	Yes
Arkansas Valley Visioning Cohort, Rocky Ford (Colorado)	2023	2	Yes	Yes
Sonoma County Youth Access to Nature (California)	2023	2	Yes	No
Cedar Rapids (Iowa)	2024	2	Yes	No
Dubuque (Iowa)	2024	2	Yes	No
Emeryville (California)	2024	2	Yes	No
Cleveland (Ohio)	2021	3	Yes	Yes
Get Outdoors Partnership, Groton (Connecticut)	2023	3	Yes	Yes
Kingston (New York)	2023	3	Yes	No
Longmont Nature Network (Colorado)	2023	3	Yes	Yes
Lowell (Massachusetts)	2023	3	Yes	Yes
Connecting Children to Nature, Pima County (Arizona)	2023	3	Yes	Yes
Prescribe Outside, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania)	2023	3	Yes	Yes

Nature Everywhere community team name	Year joined	Current stage	Explore survey	Plan survey
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission	2025	3	Yes	Yes
Uvalde (Texas)	2025	3	Yes	No
Nevada Outdoor Education Advisory Working Group (Nevada)	2023	4	Yes	Yes
Baltimore City Public Schools (Maryland)	2025	4	Yes	Yes

Note: Stage 1 = Explore, Stage 2 = Plan, Stage 3 = Implement, Stage 4 = Sustain.

Table A4. Number of communities that selected each strategy

Strategy	Number of teams
Green Schoolyards	8
Nature Exploration Areas	8
Youth Leadership Development	7
Enhancing Public Spaces with Nature	5
Early Childhood Nature Connection	4
Out of School Time	3
Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights	2
Policy Coalition	1
Nature Smart Libraries	1
Other	1

Note: Some teams selected multiple strategies.

Source: Asana tracking system, exported September 2025 (n = 25).

Not captured in the table above are the teams in Waukegan and Jacksonville, as well as the Casey Family Programs team who are participating in a high-intensity technical assistance process, different from the other Nature Everywhere cohorts. These teams picked strategies focused on activating green spaces, drawing the connection between nature and health, and integrating nature-based programming in schools and communities.

Secondary data sources

We conducted a qualitative analysis of multiple secondary data sources to better understand the core elements, success factors, and types of change emerging across Nature Everywhere communities. Data sources included:

Nature Everywhere

Community Team One-Pagers.

15 one-pagers from “successful” Nature Everywhere communities and four one-pagers from “unsuccessful” communities on their application and fit.

Nature Everywhere

Community Case Studies.

Five case studies from successful sites on their key highlights and progress made.

Technical Assistance

Debriefs. 22 technical assistance debrief summaries documenting implementation progress and challenges.

Each data source was imported into Atlas.ti for qualitative coding and thematic analysis. A two-stage coding process was used for each dataset. In the first round, documents were coded according to relevant evaluation and research questions (e.g., core elements, success factors, project and TA challenges, and evidence of change). In the second round, we conducted thematic coding to identify, define, and categorize emergent themes across the data.

For each theme, we developed descriptive summaries and noted the frequency of occurrence across documents. The coding process allowed us to triangulate findings across data sources to identify consistent patterns of success and areas for improvement in NE implementation.