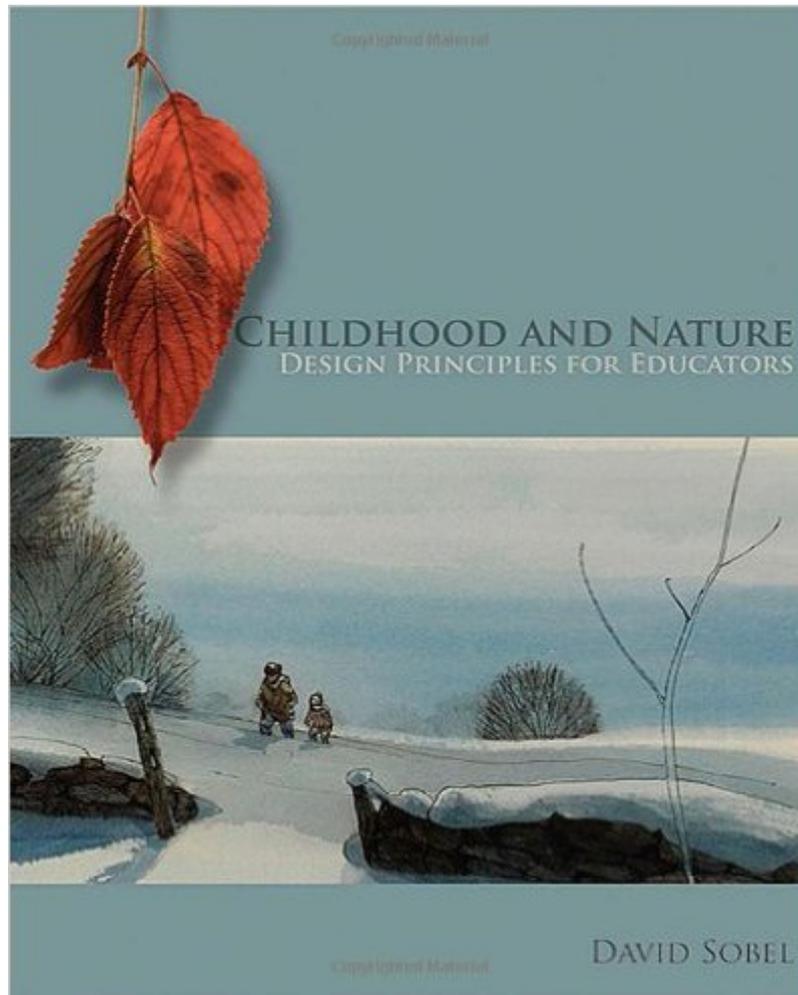


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Childhood And Nature: Design Principles For Educators



Synopsis

Public discussions of global climate change and other threats to the planet are making children more aware of environmental issues. As increasing numbers of kids come to school wishing to take action, educators want to know how to teach in a way that fosters a love of nature and an understanding of the complexity and seriousness of these issues. In *Childhood and Nature*, noted educator David Sobel makes the case that meaningful connections with the natural world don't begin in the rainforest or arctic, but in our own backyards and communities. Based on his observations of recurrent play themes around the world, Sobel articulates seven design principles that can guide teachers in structuring learning experiences for children. Place-based education projects that make effective use of the principles are detailed throughout the book. And while engaged in these projects, students learn language arts, math, science, social studies, as well as essential problem-solving and social skills through involvement with nature and their communities. The pressures of test preparation, standards, and curriculum frameworks often reduce the study of nature and the environment to a set of facts and general concepts. However, as *Childhood and Nature* demonstrates, linking curriculum with an engagement in the real world not only provides students with the thinking skills needed for whatever test comes their way, but also helps them grow into responsible citizens and stewards of the earth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Sobel, already the author of four influential books, including *Beyond Ecophobia* and

Children's Special Places, has just published a fifth. Called *Childhood and Nature: Design Principles for Educators*, the book provides a guide for fostering in children a love of nature and an understanding of the complexity and seriousness of the issues facing our world. Though geared toward educators, the book is also quite useful for parents and others who are involved with kids or, like me, simply have a strong interest in our human relationship with nature, and how we might mend it. Of particular note is Sobel's last chapter in which he explores the challenge of talking with kids about climate change. What most children learn in school is divorced from the landscape they see right outside their classroom windows, according to Sobel. His life work has been dedicated to fostering children's direct experience of their natural surroundings right alongside learning about history, math, art, and other subjects. In Sobel's words "we must show how School and Mother Nature can become friends again." When the study of nature and the environment occurs outside in real landscapes, children learn much more than just facts and concepts. Such engagement provides students with not only the thinking skills needed to pass tests, but also helps them to grow into responsible citizens and stewards of the Earth. To help educators create nature-based curricula, Sobel articulates seven "play motifs" that he has observed during children's interactions with nature. Based on these motifs, such as "making friends with animals" or "constructing adventures," Sobel offers design principles for developing nature-based curricula.

David Sobel is one of the pioneers of the children and nature movement. His book "Ecophobia," and now "Childhood and Nature," are a must read for educators and parents concerned about the disconnect between children and the natural world.

I loved this book! It is very interesting and informative. Well written, it touches on the need for children to be out in nature and enjoying free, unstructured time to be creative, explore, build, climb, run, fall...whatever they need to do. A necessary read for anyone with even an inkling of interest in what is best for children (and adults).

Resonant for this teacher of young learners. David Sobel understands young minds and the intimate connection between learning and fun. Inspiring for any teacher who feels there must be a better way to design lessons for K-6, even K-8 learners. Applicable beyond outdoor lessons.

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