

How to Bring Nature to Your Community



from the **TREE CITY USA®**
BULLETIN

Urban foresters, volunteers, and tree boards have a long tradition of meeting new challenges and adapting to the changing needs of their communities. Today one of the greatest needs is to reconnect children with nature. This bulletin is designed to show a way to do this that is research-based and field-tested. It is a way to help ensure the stewardship of our community trees and other natural resources for generations to come.

A Music and Movement Area provides children with a chance to create their own music and enjoy expressive movement, vital to children's healthy development.

A Garden and/or Pathway through Plantings Area lets children experience planting and harvesting and the wonders of nature through the seasons.

An Entry Feature gives children a visual clue that they are entering a special place.

A Gathering Area provides a place to bring together an entire class or large group of children. In smaller Nature Explore Classrooms such as this, the Gathering Area can double as the Open Area.

An Open Area gives children room for running and large movement. This area is often called the "action area."

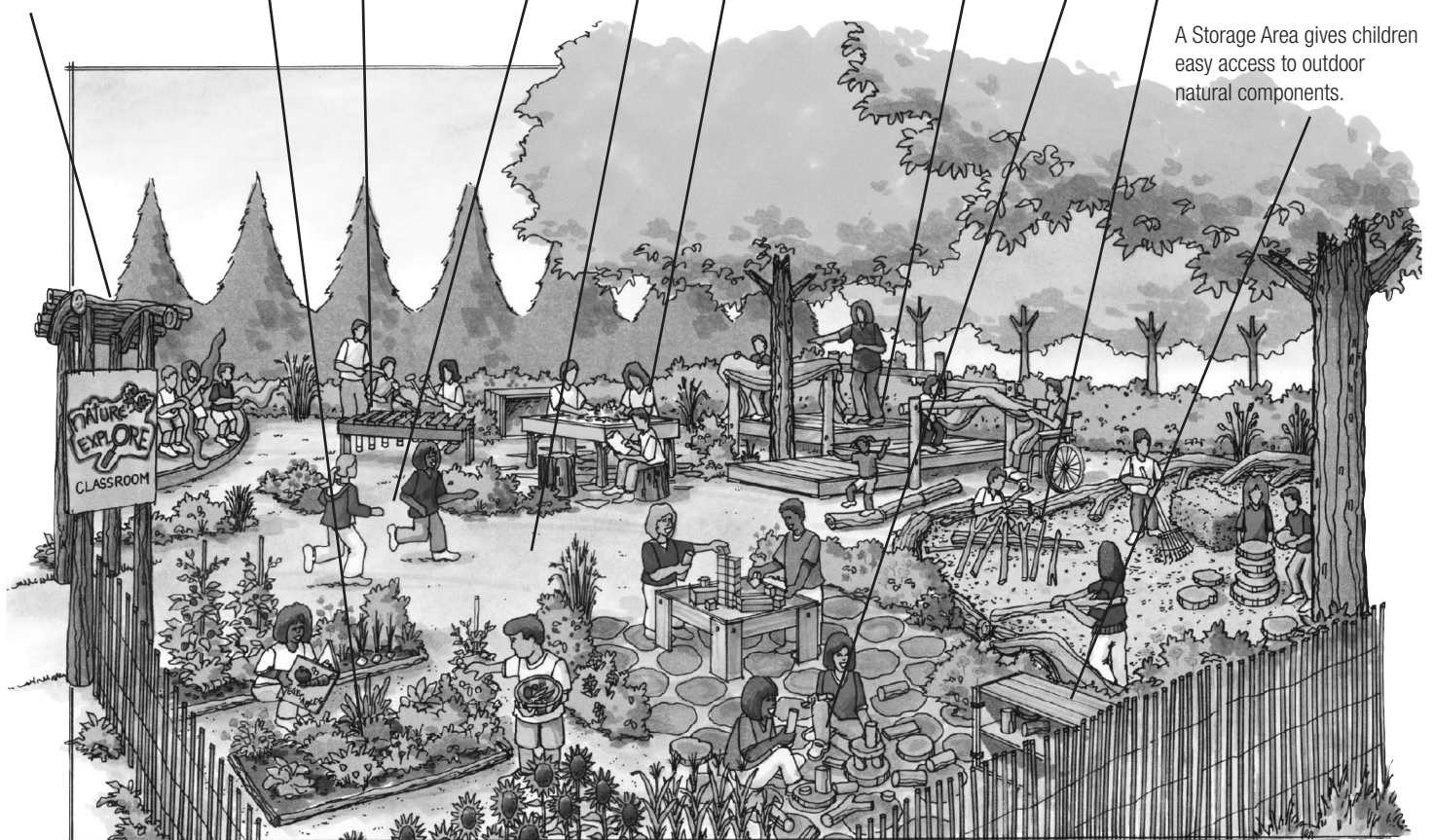
A Nature Art Area develops children's creativity as they sketch and build 3-D works of art made of pine cones, acorns, sea shells, and other natural materials.

A Building Area complete with organic and geometric building blocks provides enough space for individual creativity while children strengthen mathematical and visual-spatial thinking.

A Climbing and Crawling Area gives growing children the chance to safely master physical challenges.

A Messy Materials Area lets children experience nature while gaining a sense of accomplishment and personal mastery over the environment.

A Storage Area gives children easy access to outdoor natural components.



Nature Explore Classrooms can be designed in many possible configurations for large or small spaces. Each classroom reflects the interests of the program's families and staffs and uses regional plants and materials. This is one example of how the 10 recommended areas can work in a fairly small space.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- What is happening to children today that separates them from nature
- The proven benefits of a research-based, field-tested Nature Explore Classroom
- Help that is available to create a Nature Explore Classroom



Arbor Day Foundation®
100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410