ENGAGING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE URBAN FOREST

JANE ERDMANN
WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT IT ANYWAYS?

Happy and healthy minds = happy healthy children

70% of youth aged 13-20
Outside LESS than 1hr/day

Active Healthy Kids Report Card 2013
A Child's View of Nature

- Complex
- Develop Relationships
- Value
- Sensations (physical/emotional)
- A place
- Activities

Watson, 2004
WORK TOWARDS THE CHILD'S AGENDA

- Learning by doing and experiencing
- Push boundaries
- Play and Learn
- Use the common sense
- Ask open ended questions
- Stop saying NO!
The Wilderness Advantage

- Challenge
- Socialization
- Nature
- Manipulating materials
- Senses
- Identity
- Emotions
Nature's Play Space

- Embrace the location
- Let them roam
- Site check
- Educate
The Outdoor Lifestyle

ALLEMENSRÄTTEN

FRILUFTSLIV
You the Leader

- Group Dynamics
- Strengthen Play
- Foster learning and development
HOW TO GET KIDS INTERESTED

- Use technology
- Take risks
- Get creative
- Ask questions
- Use pre-existing knowledge
PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Preparation
- Developmentally appropriate
- Activity write up
- Materials & equipment
- Site checks

Action
- Intro & rules
- Play!
- Do not disturb

Debrief
- Open ended questions but not leading questions
- Ask why!
- Good things and bad things
Preparation

- Developmentally appropriate
- Activity write up
- Materials & equipment
- Site checks
Action

- Intro & rules
- Play!
- Do not disturb
Debrief

- Open ended questions but not leading questions
- Ask why!
- Good things and bad things
FINAL THOUGHTS

- The child should never feel bad about being wrong
- IDEA
  - Introduction
  - Demonstration
  - Explanation
  - Activity
- The wilderness is not that scary
  - perceived risk
  - actual risk
- Be inspirational
LET'S GO PLAY!
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Jane Erdmann