ISSN: 3048-9121 (Online)

# Growing Environmental Responsibility

How nature-based learning can nurture environmental stewardship in early childhood

Excellent Educator, 3(19), 5, 2026

## 🔎 Research in Brief

The study examines how nature-based learning can contribute to the development of environmental stewardship among young children. Using a qualitative case-study approach in an early childhood education setting in Indonesia, the researcher explored children's interactions with nature and the role of educators and institutional support. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews and documentation, and analysed thematically.

The study describes how direct and repeated interaction with natural surroundings can support children's cognitive, affective and moral development. Experiences such as observing living things, interacting with plants and caring for the environment can help children develop emotional connections with nature. These experiences provide a foundation for environmental concern, ecological empathy, responsibility and simple pro-environmental behaviours. The study also identifies educator competence, institutional support and the availability of suitable outdoor spaces as important factors influencing implementation. Limited facilities, safety concerns, traditional perceptions of classroom learning and inadequate teacher training can hinder the approach.

For early childhood educators, the findings emphasise that environmental responsibility is developed through meaningful experiences and repeated everyday practices, rather than through instruction alone. Teachers can involve children in caring for plants, observing insects, maintaining gardens and recognising the consequences of their actions on the environment. Such activities can help connect environmental knowledge with attitudes and behaviour. However, the study uses a qualitative case-study design and does not establish a measured causal effect or quantify long-term changes in children's behaviour.

## ✓ Try Tomorrow

- Establish a small classroom or school garden where children can care for plants.
- Encourage children to observe living things and discuss their needs.
- Introduce simple routines such as conserving water, caring for plants and avoiding damage to natural surroundings.

## ★ One Key Takeaway

**Environmental stewardship begins with meaningful, repeated experiences that help children develop an emotional connection with nature.**

**Keywords:** environmental stewardship, nature-based learning, early childhood education, ecological empathy, environmental awareness, sustainability

## 📖 Source Article

Firayani. (2026). The Effectiveness of Nature-Based Learning on the Development of Environmental Stewardship in Early Childhood Education. *Scientica Education Journal, 2*(6). https://doi.org/10.62872/rxgd2614