



Transcript for the [Video](#):
Investigating...Going Green

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Class Singing: Jump down; turn around; pick up the garbage. Jump down; turn around; throw it in the truck.

Child 1: Going green...is pick up the earth.

Child 2: We have to take care of the earth. We can't litter.

Patricia Gardner, Preschool Teacher: Our most recent investigation with the children here at the CFDR, the preschool children, is the Green Project, and we're exploring "Going Green." We're exploring different aspects of nature, recycling.

Claudia Ahern, Preschool Teacher: The Green Project is part of our nature and environment investigation, and we're focusing on "Going Green." When we did our webbing, that was the first portion that we were going to focus on. And we are trying to teach the children what it means to be "Going Green."

Theresa Bouley, Associate Professor of Education: Children don't get outside as often as they should. Researchers have used the term Nature Deficit Disorder to describe children's real disconnect with nature. If they can develop a relationship with nature early on and feel excited about being outside, then they'll become aware of how their actions can impact the environment.

Teacher: Do you know what the green represents?

Child: It's for the grass!

Claudia Ahern: The way that we taught Going Green to the children is: It's taking care of our world. And it's little things with shutting off the lights; it's helping pick up litter.

Niloufar Rezai, Preschool Teacher: Going Green at the early childhood level is setting the foundation hopefully for living a cleaner, healthier lifestyle.

Claudia: Can you show Alexa what we do?

Patricia Gardner: Our children always surprise me by what they're interested in, and they always surprise me by what they know and what kind of things they take home. You can tell if a child is ready to hear something, like about recycling, if they give it back to you a day or two later. Or if they share it with another friend, you know that they're thinking about it and they're conscious about it.

Claudia Ahern: We introduced the investigation by using this book that was written by Kindergarten students in Oklahoma, and it was just a simple book that explained what it meant to be Going Green: taking care of our earth. Our goal is the children can—everybody can—help take care of our earth. Everybody can have a small part, even preschool children.

Child: Some kids are going green because they are so happy.

Niloufar Rezai: They're happy?

Niloufar Rezai: Some of the activities we are doing in class to raise environmental awareness include: showing children how our own use of paper products adds up over the course of a day. We made a stack of the amount of cups they use in one day and on their own, several of the children decided, well, we can just reuse our cups over the course of the day. So one child began writing her name on a cup and said that she would use it for her morning snack, her lunch, and then her afternoon snack. And before we knew it several children followed suit.

Theresa Bouley: Preschool-aged children are really aware of fairness. They have a heightened sense of empathy. And I think that it's a really good time to help them to use that empathy towards the environment, and how little things that they do—like going through three or four paper cups a day or using a lot of paper towels—can have an impact on the environment.

Claudia Ahern: When they get paper towels, we are encouraging the children to say "1, 2, 3, save a tree." And by them going up to the paper towel dispenser and pushing down only three times, the amount of paper towels they use to wash their hands will help reduce the amount of paper towels. And by reducing paper towels, we possibly could be saving a tree.

Patricia Gardner: We're making a replica of the planet Earth. And we took a giant beach ball—it's supposed to be 48 inches in diameter—and we are doing paper maché. So we talked about Earth, and we showed pictures from what the earth looks like from far away as if you were in a spaceship, and then what it would look like a little bit closer. And then we went out in the back yard and we looked at the dirt and talked about the different things you might see: you might see a tree; you might see some grass—but when you're far away, you can't see that in such detail.

Class sings: Reduce, reuse, recycle...

Claudia Ahern: Some of the activities that we've been doing in the classroom are songs. We have a song that we sing every day, "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle."

Class sings: We might be only children, be we will try...

Claudia Ahern: When you add music and play into the program, that seems to work best with the children.

Claudia reading to class: Nathan said garbage goes in a bag.

Patricia Gardner: We also wrote a letter to the garbage collector that we see pick up our garbage everyday with the dumpster, and we asked him questions.

Child: Sometimes when you see that big blue dumpster over there, and you really see some garbage, you should pick it up, not just leave it there.

Claudia Ahern: We read a book every day, and the books help the children connect. The pictures help the children connect the topic, because Going Green to them was *coloring* green. That was something they had to learn what it meant, so the visual cues with the preschool was really important. And there's great literature out there.

Patricia Gardner: I think definitely all the children are more aware of things that they're seeing or hearing. We talked about senses and how that connects with nature. We've gone on nature walks where we'll go out in the backyard and we'll just close our eyes and close our mouths and just use our ears, and write about the things that we hear.

Claudia Ahern: We've asked the children to use their five senses. And we ask them: what's the color of nature; what they can hear, see, smell, touch.

Trail Wood Guide: I want you to listen, and if you hear a bird, point in what direction you hear it. But I want everybody to do it.

Patricia Gardner: We were able to go on a school bus and go to the Audubon Society in Hampton. It was an amazing experience for all the children.

Niloufar Rezai: Trail Wood was such a meaningful experience. We went to a place where we were just surrounded by nature, trees, birds, different kinds of flowers, and plant life and water.

Marcia Kilpatrick, Trail Wood Guide: My goal for coming here today was to have the children get outside and enjoy nature. A lot of kids never get out; they watch all these things on TV as well as every other piece of electronic equipment. I really feel like they are missing a lot, and it's a good thing; it really is.

Patricia Gardner: We had a couple children that were very excited about seeing water. There was a running brook in there, and if you looked very close and stood very still you could see the fish darting around in there. And we have recently taken on some tadpoles in our classroom, so they were aware that the tadpoles came from the water, and they were looking for tadpoles.

Marcia: How many are in there?

Child: Four.

Marcia: Four? You got to count again.

Children: One, two, three, four, five, six.

Marcia: Six!

Marcia Kilpatrick: I love doing this sort of thing; I want to teach kids all about nature.

Theresa Bouley: There's a lot of research that shows that being out in nature actually has a big impact on children's ability to function cognitively, on their creativity and their imagination. Children who have high energy or behavior problems in classrooms, children become really focused and really calm, being outside.

Patricia Gardner: It's so amazing in our classroom. You just walk in and everything is about nature and awareness.

Claudia Ahern: We've seen a lot of growth with the children. When we first introduced recycling, [only] three children knew what recycling meant.

Patricia Gardner: This has been a wonderful experience for me. To see the children even two months ago, when we first started talking about environments and habitats and recycling and that kind of thing, there was such little knowledge. And now they're paying it forward kind of thing; they are sharing things with their parents.

Theresa Bouley: What I liked best about the whole investigation was that the teachers and children both just really dove in and just really enjoyed getting out there and bringing nature inside. And that enthusiasm is just so important.

Niloufar Rezai: One parent came in and she said that her son on garbage day dumped out their garbage in their kitchen and started sorting and recycling. It was neat to see that they're bringing that home.

Patricia Gardner: If my parents' generation thought to do that with me, we wouldn't be where we are, so I need to do that with this next generation. I want to know more. I want to help more, so I'll try to be a model as best I can.

Reference

The term "nature deficit disorder" is from: Louv, R. (2008). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature deficit disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.