

## Elements of Excellent Environmental Education Programs

Excerpted from *“Measuring the Success of Environmental Education Programs”*

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The following ten principles of excellent environmental education programs were drafted by a group of experienced environmental educators involved in the Green Street Initiative, as part of a visioning and capacity-building exercise. Green Street is a standard of excellence for quality environmental education programs provided by prominent Canadian environmental education organizations.

Excellent environmental education programs...

- Are credible, reputable, and based on solid facts, traditional knowledge, or on science. Values, biases, and assumptions are explicit
- Create knowledge and understanding about ecological, social, economic, and political concepts, and demonstrate the interdependence between a healthy environment, human well-being and a sound economy.
- Involve a cycle of continual improvement that includes the processes of design, delivery, evaluation and redesign.
- Are grounded in a real-world context that is specific to age, curriculum, and place, and encourage a personal affinity with the earth through practical experiences out-of-doors and through the practice of an ethic of care. Like the environment itself, programs transcend curricular boundaries, striving to integrate traditional subject areas and disciplines.
- Provide creative learning experiences that are hands-on and learner-centered, where students teach each other and educators are mentors and facilitators. These experiences promote higher order thinking and provide a cooperative context for learning and evaluation.

- Create exciting and enjoyable learning situations that teach to all learning styles, promote life-long learning, and celebrate the beauty of nature.
- Examine environmental problems and issues in an all-inclusive manner that includes social, moral, and ethical dimensions, promotes values clarification, and is respectful of the diversity of values that exist in our society.
- Motivate and empower students through the provision of specific action skills, allowing students to develop strategies for responsible citizenship through the application of their knowledge and skills as they work cooperatively toward the resolution of an environmental problem or issue.
- Engage the learner in a long-term mentoring relationship, transforming them as they examine their personal values, attitudes, feelings and behaviors.
- Promote and understanding of the past, a sense of the present, and a positive vision of the future, developing a sense of commitment in the learner to help create a healthier environment and a sustainable home, community, and planet.