



International Play Association Conference 2017 – Niagara Naturalized Play Spaces Initiative

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Initiative Outline

- 1. How the Niagara Naturalized Play Spaces Initiative came about**
- 2. Naturalized Playground Design and Consultation Service**
- 3. Expression of Interest**
- 4. Findings**
- 5. Next Steps**



How the Niagara Naturalized Play Spaces Initiative came about ...

- **The Research**
- **Professional Development**
- **Building on the momentum**



How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

Four Foundations

- **Belonging**
- **Well-Being**
- **Engagement**
- **Expression**



Links to Frameworks – *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

- **Well Being – Children Thrive in programs where they can engage in vigorous physical activity in natural outdoor spaces and playgrounds that present manageable levels of challenge while these environments need to be safe it is also important for them to provide children with interesting opportunities for a reasonable degree of risk taking. Pg 28**



Links to Frameworks – *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014

- **Engagement – Activities in outdoor spaces that are designed to inspire investigation with bodies, senses and minds improve children's physical health and emotional well being and enhance their capabilities for self-regulation, creative problem solving and communication.**

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Naturalized Playground Design and Consultation Service

- **Bienenstock Partnership**
- **4 Professional Learning Workshops**
- **Consultation Visits Before and After**



Naturalized Playground Design and Consultation Service

- Loose Parts Kit – Infant/Toddler

Rope	Storage Crates	Bike Tires	Roll of Pipe
Metal Bucket	Soil	Roll of Twine	Wooden Spoons
Metal Spoons	Step Stool	Broom Whisks	Woven Basket
Rattan Balls	Funnels	BMX Bike Tires	Zip Ties
Vegetable Peeler	Magnifying Glass	Pallet	Nature's Playground
Balanced and Barefoot	Clay Pots	Charcoal	Are You Ready to Play Outside
Paintbrushes	Modelling Clay	Wood Craft Sticks	Fruit Basket



Naturalized Playground Design and Consultation Service

• Loose Parts Kit – Preschool

Eavestrough and parts	Pulleys	Storage Crates	Thermometer
Rain Gauge	BMX Bike Tires	Solid Pipe	Pipe Roll
Perforated Pipe	Metal Bucket	Soil	Step Stool
Roll of Twine	Woven Basket	Metal Spoons	Wooden Spoons
Broom Whisk	Metal Bowl	Vegetable Peeler	Rope
Green Tarp with strap	Pallet	Nature's Playground	Balanced and Barefoot
Charcoal	Are You Ready to Play Outside	Fruit Basket	Paintbrushes
Modelling Clay	Wood Craft Sticks	Tap the Magic Tree	



Expression of Interest

- **Flyer sent out to Niagara's Early Learning and Child Care Community**



Pilot Sites

- **St. Thomas Church Child Care**
- **A Child's World – Woodlawn**
- **Bethlehem Place**
- **Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care**



The Findings; children

- less conflict
- more cooperative play; play and work together
- make rules
- more exploration and purposeful play
- play independently
- spend more time and are engaged longer in play
- more problem solving/less reliance on adults to solve problems
- more confident to take risks
- able to return to play later in the day/next day



The Findings: educators

- less telling and directing of children's play
- less intervening in children's play
- less surveying and more engaging in play
- more confident to allow children to take risk
- more confident to ask questions of fellow staff
- previously in charge of what and where play took place
- open to new ideas on how to use space
- less standing around



Next Steps

- **How can children be more involved in the initial consultation process?**
- **Partnership with Niagara Region for Funding**
- **Evaluation of Loose Parts Kit**
- **Sharing our story**



Questions

