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
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.

Pg. 36
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

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<td>Rattan Balls</td>
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<td>Nature’s Playground</td>
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<td>Balanced and Barefoot</td>
<td>Clay Pots</td>
<td>Charcoal</td>
<td>Are You Ready to Play Outside</td>
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<td>Paintbrushes</td>
<td>Modelling Clay</td>
<td>Wood Craft Sticks</td>
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# Naturalized Playground Design and Consultation Service

**• Loose Parts Kit – Preschool**

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<td>Modelling Clay</td>
<td>Wood Craft Sticks</td>
<td>Tap the Magic Tree</td>
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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