



## ENC Nature Preschool Project has broken ground



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Photo by Lana Johnson

**Local dignitaries including Mayor Duffy Duffield and Newport Beach Councilmember Brad Avery join ENC board members and ENC Executive Director Bo Glover (third from left) and ENC Nature Preschool Director Susan Bierlich (third from right) during the groundbreaking**

The Environmental Nature Center (ENC) celebrated the official groundbreaking of its highly anticipated state-of-the-art Nature Preschool on February 15. The ENC Nature Preschool will be the community's first nature preschool and nature play area. It will be located on 1.3 acres bordering the Nature Center's Redwood Forest at 745 Dover Drive, Newport Beach.

The ENC Nature Preschool will teach the building blocks of a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) education by providing young children with the opportunity to become familiar with the natural world by playing – and learning – while surrounded by nature.

Qualified early childhood educators and environmental educators will teach the basics of a typical preschool and more. Indoor spaces will be warm, welcoming and conducive to learning, but the majority of the day will be spent learning outside.

"It is becoming increasingly evident that nature-based preschools are more effective in terms of learning and health benefits," said ENC Executive Director Bo Glover. "Our Nature Preschool will provide quality education and nature exploration opportunities for preschool children, and help them develop into environmentally literate adults, which is needed today more than ever."



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Courtesy of ENC

**ENC's Nature Preschool is designed by LPA Inc. and will be constructed by Consolidated Contracting Services**

The ENC is aiming to achieve a Platinum Level LEED Rating on the new facility. The U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.

The preschool was already awarded a citation from the American Institute of Architects Orange County Chapter (AIAOCC). The ENC's Nature Preschool was one of eight projects selected to receive an award out of the 56 projects that were entered into the design competition. It was the only project to receive an award that was not a completed project.

"The ENC's Nature Preschool will have play areas but no playgrounds," said ENC Nature Preschool Director Sue Bierlich. "Students will spend the majority of the day outdoors, where they will have ample time for unfacilitated nature experiences."





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***ENC's pond and forest are among the nature experiences awaiting the preschoolers to explore***

The ENC Nature Preschool will also engage parents in active learning, serve as a model nature preschool, and provide a research forum on early childhood and environmental education.

"I truly believe that this Nature Preschool and Nature Play Area will be an integral addition to the community making an essential impact on the next generation," said Rick John, long-time Newport Beach resident and ENC board member. "We are urgently seeking community members to join us in supporting the ENC Nature Preschool."

Anticipated completion date for the Nature Preschool is April 2019.

For more information or to donate to the ENC's Nature Preschool, visit [encnaturepreschool.org](http://encnaturepreschool.org) or contact ENC Executive Director Bo Glover at 949.645.8489, ext. 101 or [bo@encenter.org](mailto:bo@encenter.org).