



ENC's Nature Preschool awarded Platinum LEED, develops online learning programs

The Environmental Nature Center's state-of-the-art ENC Nature Preschool, which opened last fall, has been awarded Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The award is the highest designation available to buildings that demonstrate energy efficiency and sustainability.

This is the second LEED platinum building for the ENC, whose campus is a model of sustainability for our community. ENC is excited and enthusiastic about sharing its model with administrators from a multitude of educational institutions – from preschools to universities. The organization is passionate about empowering people to make sustainable choices: To strengthen their communities, and literally save the world.



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Photos courtesy of ENC

Youngsters explore the ENC Nature Preschool's play area

ENC naturalists have been guiding youngsters these past several weeks while they attend online school through structured learning. Here are some ways the ENC staff is working to connect our community to the natural environment while we shelter in place – even if it's in our own yards or on walks in our neighborhoods, with valuable resources during these uncertain times:

- Students learning at home take virtual field trips with ENC Naturalists who present programs live with Zoom. Students have the ability to ask and answer questions about what they observe in real time.
- ENC Nature Preschool teachers are also working hard to continue providing education for their students. Students whose parents work is considered essential continue to be served in person on the preschool campus, and those that must stay home are being served via a distance learning platform.
- Educational Live Stream Events, including daily story time, are streamed regularly on ENC's Facebook page. ENC has seen exponential growth on this platform, from reaching 277 on March 14 to 1,503 on April 19.
- Educational "Learn from Home" videos are posted daily on ENC's YouTube channel so families can keep learning about nature and science. ENC's channel received nearly 3,000 views in the last month.



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The Nature Preschool cultivates hands-on learning

–ENC's annual Spring Faire – a community tradition – is going virtual. The online event will feature virtual visits to the ENC's Butterfly House so "visitors" can learn about butterflies and their host and nectar plants. Throughout the week children can participate in a virtual pollinator-themed "Craft Crawl" and "Story Walk." The Center will post virtual nature games, animal encounters and cooking demos on how to prepare delicious, sustainable food. Virtual tours of the ENC Nature Preschool will be led by the school's teachers and feature mini-lessons and insight into how the students learn through collaborative, creative activities. Enjoy online activities and content for the entire week of May 11 leading up to the main event on Sunday, May 17.

–ENC's volunteer trainings are also being presented virtually. ENC has presented Leader in Training for local teens eager to volunteer, Butterfly House Docent training, and soon will offer Museum Docent training.

–Based on ENC's recently conducted survey, the community would like ENC to provide "nature-based lesson plans." ENC has started a Nature Lesson Plans page and is posting lesson plans regularly.

Check out the [Nature Resources](#) page with links to everything mentioned above.

For more information, visit www.encycenter.org.

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