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Environmental education for preschool children: Benefits, challenges, and suggestions

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Abstract

Environmental learning in the early childhood years is related to pro-environmental behavior in children's future life, and there is a growing interest in early childhood environmental education to develop young children's sense of environmental responsibility. However, there is no universally-accepted vision of early childhood environmental education for the targeted goals. This study sought to investigate a small subset of relevant literature related to environmental education in early childhood classrooms. A narrative synthesis was conducted, and 25 research studies were selected for in-depth analysis. The findings provided a detailed description of benefits, challenges, and suggestions regarding the implementation of environmental education in preschools. According to analysis, environmental education has a variety of benefits for each stakeholder of the process including child, teacher, and parent. However, there are school and family related challenges influencing the education process. Suggestions were also offered including child agency in the process, teacher training, and family and community involvement. It was concluded that environmental educations can provide influential and permanent outcomes on children by actively integrating children, teachers, families, and community into the process.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education; Environment; Environmental Education; Suggestions; Narrative Review