

# Planet Playground

Children's Environmental Resource and Literacy Project

- Objectives:** (1) To educate children on ways to take on endeavors in an environmentally sound, sustainable way;
- (2) To foster self-confidence through literacy and theatre arts

## How?

- By educating children of the community on ways to create a set, costumes, and props for a full-length play out of primarily recycled materials
- By demonstrating ways of creating ecologically friendly landscapes and gardens
- By helping the children create, produce, and perform in their very own play
- By having readalongs, involving the kids in the storytelling process by acting out the characters
- By creating eco-art, redirecting children's energy back to the appreciation of natural beauty

## Logistics

- I propose a recruiting tour for Planet Playground. After making arrangements with school principals within a geographic area to be determined, we would go to elementary schools and give a

presentation to grade levels K – 8. The presentation will be theatrical, so as to give the kids an idea of the type of program we’re offering. We will then ask students questions about the environment and conservation, seeding out the kids who would be interested. Finally, we give out Letters of Interest attached to a fact sheet that the child has to fill out, get a parent’s signature, and then mail in. The first 15 children will be invited to sign up.

- I would like the parents to only have to pay for food, just like regular school.
- Three months in length
- Five days a week, from 2pm to 6pm.

**Schedule**

Everyday will be something new, rotating between four different classes. Here is an example of how one three-week period might look:

M	Tu	W	Th	F
Set, Costumes, Props	Eco-Art	Storytelling	Urban Design/ Gardening	Set, Costumes Props
Eco-Art	Storytelling	Urban Design/ Gardening	Set, Costumes, Props	Eco-Art
Storytelling	Urban Design/ Gardening	Set, Costumes, Props	Eco-Art	Storytelling

## Background

This project was partly inspired by a play Mr. Jamison cowrote called *Death: or, the Playground*. The play is about appreciating life, and the desperate stories we all cling to in order to remain in misery. We believe that our society is so bombarded with images of “stuff that’s supposed to make you happy” that humanity has forgotten that all the most beautiful things about life were freely given to us at birth. As such, children are ripped from appreciating the world around them and taught to breathe, sleep, and eat the Bottom Line till death do them part from this mortal coil. We’d like to start transforming that outlook on life into something a little more enriching.

**Planet Playground’s** main goal is to give kids an alternative value system. Value life, not technology; value love, not status; your planet, not your possessions. If all goes as planned, the children who participate in the program will bring back to their peers a bigger global perspective, and become leaders among other kids and adults in regard to the value of conservation.

## What?

**Eco-Art**—Ecological art is a term applied to the creation of visual art using ecologically sound and recycled materials. These materials can be found by trolling through thrift stores, visiting your local neighborhood shops and stores for discarded materials, and from the everyday household. If kids can start to see ways to make mobiles out of broken coat hangers and packing foam, then we’ve done our job.

**Storytelling**—We believe that a big reason kids these days are having so many self-esteem problems is that they are directly not encouraged to express themselves. This is not entirely the fault of

teachers—crowded classrooms and strict curriculums have made it almost impossible to give individual students the kind of attention they need for proper emotional development. The storytelling segment of the program will endeavor to give even the shyest kids the opportunity to read and act out stories. Reading and acting out will be done on a rotating basis, with the emphasis being on never judging anyone because of how they express themselves—i.e., don't make fun of DeShaun because he decides to quack like a duck when he's supposed to be imitating the wind. This will also be the segment in which we conceive of and write the play.

**Urban Design/Gardening**—We will use this time to educate kids on ways they can make their neighborhood more environmentally friendly. This will include lessons on urban planning, and the need for parks and gardens. We will also go through the process of how you get permission from the city to make changes to your neighborhood.

### **Time Table**

We ideally would like to make this a three-month summer program, extending from June 1 to Sept 1, pending school schedules. We would tour area schools throughout mid-April and May. The deadline for submission will be May 15, giving us enough time to meet with each parent about what their child will be learning about everyday before the program begins. Ideally we would like parents to dedicate two half-days a month to helping out. Hopefully we can provide some sort of incentive to their employers for letting them take off what will be the equivalent of 8 hours a month for three months.