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## **NAAEE Executive Director's Welcome Note**

**Judy Braus**

*North American Association for Environmental Education*



It is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*. This is an exciting and important venture for the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). As an organization, NAAEE is committed to promoting excellence in environmental education. Publishing *IJECEE* is an essential component of our continuing efforts to strengthen the field of environmental education and increase the visibility and effectiveness of the profession.

Across the globe, growing numbers of educators are recognizing that connecting young children with their environment needs to be a fundamental part of early childhood education. Preschools, daycare centers, head start programs, nature centers, zoos, and parks departments are incorporating environment and nature focused experiences into their programs. They are providing opportunities for young children to play in nature, explore their local surroundings, and learn about themselves, others, and their environment. We strongly believe that this education is crucial and that giving young people access to nature and high quality environmental education programming will provide a firm foundation leading to environmental literacy.

*IJECEE* is a peer reviewed, on-line journal that will provide easy access to research and other resources. It is intended to help strengthen our understanding of early childhood environmental education and help us all improve our practice.

I invite you to read our first issue and those that follow. And I hope you will share this journal with others. And, after reading this first issue, please let us know what you think and how we can best support this growing movement to provide all kids with a magical childhood with access to nature, learning, and creative exploration.

Judy Braus, Executive Director, NAAEE, October 2013