

Flourishing in Nature

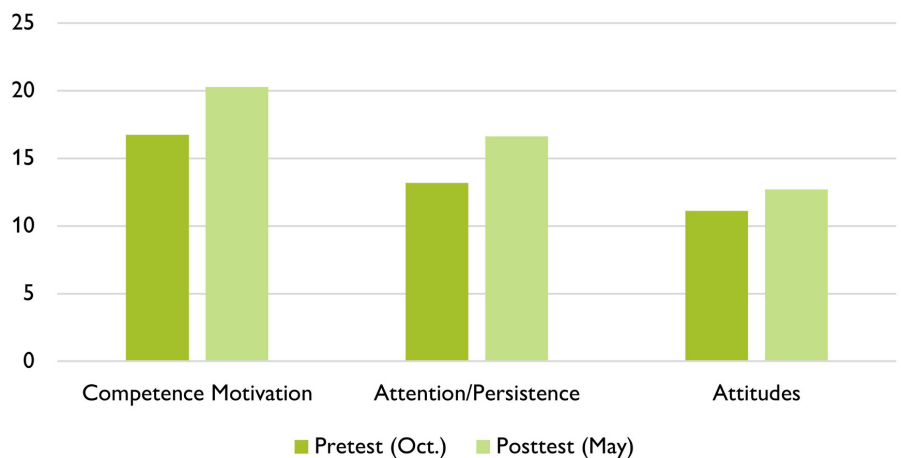
Investigating the Impact of Nature Preschools on Young Children's Learning Behaviors

Overview. Successful transition from preschool to kindergarten relies on a variety of skills that contribute to school success. Learning behaviors are an overarching set of actions, behaviors, and dispositions that describe how a child engages in or responds to a learning situation. A growing body of research suggests that learning behaviors also greatly impact a child's successful transition as well as future academic performance. The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of nature preschools on participants' learning behavior, which contributes to young children's academic readiness. Four nature preschools (84 participants) and two non-nature preschools (24 participants) took part in this study. Learning behaviors were measured using the Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale.



Image Credit: Wind Ridge Schoolhouse, MN

Growth in Nature Preschoolers' Learning Behaviors



Results: There was significant growth in learning behaviors (total score), as well as in the three learning behavior dimensions of competence motivation, attention/persistence, and attitudes (all at the $p < .001$ level). There was not significant learning behavior growth in children from the non-nature preschools. A comparison of adjusted posttest means suggest nature preschool had the greatest impact on the competence motivation dimension of learning behaviors (corresponding to moderate effect size).

Conclusion. The results of this study suggest the potential for nature preschools to positively impact learning behaviors of preschool participants and particularly competence motivation. This exploratory study demonstrates the value of nature preschools in helping children transition to kindergarten, providing them with key "learning to learn" skills that transfer to future learning toward successful school experiences and beyond.



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