



## Nature Explore Classroom Certification Application

*Please note: Yearly recertification is required*

### What you will need to apply for Certification:

- 1 Application Form** (*begins pg 2*)  
Once you have completed this application form, please submit application and all photos through the [online submission form](#).
- 2 Final Concept Plan or Rough Map of Classroom Layout** (*see pg 3*)  
If you had a Nature Explore Design Consultation—this is already on file
- 3 Classroom Area Photos** (*see pg 3*)  
Photos of required areas are needed for certification. Please upload using our online [photo submission form](#). Detailed descriptions of areas may be found in the [Learning With Nature Idea Book](#). Photos may show multiple areas in one shot.
- 4 Classroom Story and Photos for Your Nature Explore Webpage** (*see pg 7*)  
Your classroom will be included in the Certified Classrooms listing on the Nature Explore website. Please submit a few paragraphs about your outdoor classroom (500 word maximum) as well as photos for use on your designated webpage. Please upload using our online [photo submission form](#).
- 5 Payment** (*see pg 9*)  
Your \$50 application fee is payable by credit card or check upon application approval. Payment is not required if you have had a Nature Explore Design Consultation.

Please download this form and save to your computer. Check to make sure your information is saving properly before completing the entire form. Once complete, submit application and photos through the [online photo submission form](#).

**Please note:**

Nature Explore/Dimensions Foundation may use the content submitted within your application materials for promotional and educational purposes.

## 1) General Information

(Please note: Yearly recertification is required. Please send any changes in contact person to Lana Gilson at [lanag@natureexplore.org](mailto:lanag@natureexplore.org) immediately)

What is the name of your school or organization?	
Who is the contact person for your Nature Explore Classroom?	
What is his/her title or position?	
Please provide his/her email address:	
What is the address of the site of your Nature Explore Classroom?	
Mailing address (if different):	
Telephone number:	
How should the name of your classroom appear on your certificate and in media announcements?	
How many children are served at your site?	

## 2) Information on Your Outdoor Space

The following requirements are based on the Ten Guiding Principles outlined in the [Learning With Nature Idea Book](#).

**A. Please submit a concept plan or map of your space showing clearly delineated areas for different kinds of activities.** *If you had a Nature Explore Design Consultation—this is already on file.*

**B. Complete the section below regarding required areas in your outdoor classroom.** Provide **labeled digital photos** identifying each of the following areas needed for certification. See *Photo Submission Agreement* (page 8) and submit all photos through the online [photo submission form](#).

Activity Area		Name you have given your area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Entry feature	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open Area for large-motor activities	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Climbing/Crawling Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Messy Materials Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Building Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nature Art Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Music and Movement Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Garden Area and/or a pathway through plantings	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gathering Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Storage Area	

**C. Did you include any supplemental areas in your Classroom?**

*These areas are **not** mandatory for certification.*

Activity Area		Name you have given your area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dirt-Digging Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheeled-Toy Area	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swings or other dynamic equipment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenhouse	

**D. Is each area labeled with a sign?**  Yes  No

**E. Is every area visible at all times OR is there enough supervision to allow visibility of all areas at all times?**  Yes  No

**F. Briefly tell us how you are incorporating natural materials, including trees and other live plants, into your classroom.**

**G. Please describe how the elements in your classroom allow for durability and low maintenance of the space.**

**H. How does your site maximize beauty, visual clarity, and aesthetics in the over-all design?**

**I. How have you personalized the design of your space with regional materials, artwork, and ideas from children and staff?**

**J. Does your space meet all regulatory standards for your region?**  Yes

**K. Were there any challenges in meeting these standards?**  Yes  No  
If Yes, please describe:

**L. How did you build your outdoor classroom? Did you use contractors, volunteers, or a combination of both?**

**M. Please list any contractors or volunteer organizations that you would recommend to others.**


### 3) Staff Professional Development

At least one staff member, from the site applying for certification, must attend: the Nature Explore online workshop *Using Your Outdoor Classroom* (2 hours) + one additional online Nature Explore workshop (2 hours) or the in-person Nature Explore workshop *Using Your Outdoor Classroom* (3-hours)

Name of Staff Member and position	Date and/or location of Nature Explore Workshop

### 4) Family Involvement

Please provide a brief description of activities you have conducted to increase family awareness and ongoing involvement in the Nature Explore Classroom and nature education for young children.

\*Examples could include holding an open house, sending flyers home, providing Nature Explore Families' Club memberships, or recruiting parent volunteers.

Please include approximate number of families

reached:

--

## 5) Your Classroom Story for Your Nature Explore Webpage (*must be included with application*)

Our network of Certified Nature Explore Classrooms may be found at this [link](#). As a part of this network and as a benefit of certification, you will receive your own designated webpage on the Nature Explore website. This will allow you to showcase your classroom and your journey of transforming your outdoor space. In the text box below, please tell us your unique story. Feel free to use the following prompts to help write your content.

- *What would you like to highlight about your site?*
- *What makes your Nature Explore Classroom unique/special?*
- *Write about your success*
- *Describe your classroom for visitors*
- *Special acknowledgements*
- *Stories from children, staff, families, community members or volunteers*
- *Thank you notes*
- *List of donors and/or donor stories*
- *Fundraising efforts*
- *Artwork examples*
- *Exceptional features in your space*
- *Quotes/testimonials*
- *Annual/special event descriptions*
- *How your space is changing your business/organization/relationships*
- *Future plans*
- *Planting/gardening efforts*
- *Clean-up and maintenance effort*

### A. Please tell us your story below (approximately 500 words or less)

### B. Facebook

If you would like to include a link to your organization/classroom Facebook page, please include your URL link here:

### C. Classroom Website

If you would like to include a link to your organization/classroom website, please include your URL link here:

**D. Please upload 6-8 additional, labeled photos to be included with your story. If none are submitted, we will insert photos from your application. See *Photo Submission Agreement* (page 8) and submit all photos through the online [photo submission form](#).**

## 6) Photo Submission Agreement

Dimensions Educational Research Foundation (Dimensions) includes Nature Explore, as well as Dimensions Education Programs and Exchange Press. In addition, Dimensions also provides administrative support for the World Forum Foundation. I authorize the use of my appearance to support any of these entities.

I understand that Dimensions may produce and make use of my appearance—in forms both procured by Dimensions and submitted by me to Dimensions—in any promotional or educational materials including, but not limited to: website, videos, educational magazine, flyers, presentations, print materials, publications and social media (the Production).

I understand that I am to receive no compensation for this appearance, and that I am to receive no compensation of any kind as a result of any uses by the Production. My voluntary participation in the Production of materials shall be work made for hire for Dimensions under the copyright laws of the United States. To the extent that my voluntary participation cannot be considered a work made for hire, I assign all right and title, including all copyright rights in the Production of materials and its derivative works, to Dimensions.

Dimensions shall have complete ownership of the Production of materials, including full domestic and foreign copyright, and shall have the exclusive right and license to make such use of the Production as it wishes, including (but not limited to) the right of performance, display, reproduction and distribution in all media, and the right to create, perform, display and distribute derivative works of the materials produced.

**I agree that I have photo release information for all individuals (adults and children) representing my site that supports the above statements.** I give Dimensions the right to use the likeness and/or information of any individuals representing my site to publicize the Production, derivative works of the Production, and the services of Dimensions. I agree that it is my responsibility to keep any individuals who do not have a photo release on file at my site from appearing in the media production process.

**If person appearing is a minor, parent or legal guardian signature must appear on the site's photo release information obtained and held by the site.**

**Please enter your name and date below to show that you have read, understand, and agree to the terms of this Photo Submission Agreement:**

<i>Name</i>		<i>Date</i>	
-------------	--	-------------	--



## 7) Press Release

Dimensions Foundation will distribute a press release to media outlets in your area in recognition of your outstanding efforts to make nature a part of children's daily lives. A press release draft will be sent to you upon certification. Your written approval by email is needed.

We have found that many local papers will take our short press release and add to it. In that instance, they may contact you for additional information or pictures.

**Please provide up to 6 media contacts, local, state or national organizations**

Name of organization	Contact name	Email address or online submission link

## 8) Payment Information

The application fee is payable upon application approval. We accept payment via credit card, PayPal, check, wire or ACH transfer. **Payment options will be included with certification notice.**

I have had a Nature Explore Design Consultation (no application fee)

Application Fee: \$50

**Check:**

Please make check payable to **Nature Explore** and mail to:

*Nature Explore  
Attn: Certification  
7700 A Street  
Lincoln, NE 68510*

**Credit Card:**

Please email Lana Gilson - [lanag@natureexplore.org](mailto:lanag@natureexplore.org) (Monday-Wednesday, 8:00am-4:30pm Central Time) to arrange for your certification application payment via credit card.

**This completes your application—please enter your name and date below to show that you have read and agree with the following:** I am submitting this application on behalf of the school or organization listed above for certification as a Nature Explore Classroom, having achieved the required standards for the certification program.

<i>Name</i>		<i>Date</i>	
-------------	--	-------------	--

Updated 02.16.22 - SH