N.E. Miles ECDC
College of Charleston
2014 Recertification Application
Nature Explore
7.17.14.NERecertification
Concept Plan

2013 Recertification
Additions to concept plan

- Sorting bins
- Concrete + natural materials inserts
- Mural + new drinking fountain
- Retractable awning
- "Sitting" wall
- "Banging post" + fantasy area

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Playground Area 6,069 sq ft.

See original plan for area designations + color coding.
Sustained Commitment

We are grateful for the opportunity to annually renew our NatureExplore certification, as the process helps us maintain focus on continued improvement. As a campus-based demonstration and laboratory program, we have a responsibility to model best practices in our community, including connecting children with the natural world. Our efforts focus on commitment to 3 “big ideas”

- Sustainability & ecological responsibility
- Loose parts play
- Collaborations within and external to our campus

The following slides share highlights of our work in 2013-2014 on these ideas
Big Idea #1: Sustainability & Outdoor education

- Addition of recycled tree stump furniture
- Improvements to composting system
- New gardening tools & storage
- Bringing outdoor materials inside for exploration
- Hosting SC Aquarium portable “touch tank”
- 2014 4th Annual “Remida Day”
2014 Remida Day

Remida Day is an annual family event at our center inspired by the community activities in Reggio Emilia, Italy that focus on repurposing and recycling materials in interesting and aesthetic ways.

- Tire garden
- “ECDC” sign from recycled materials
- Take home projects
Big Idea #2: Loose Parts

We continue to look for open-ended materials to add to our outdoor space that encourage use of the children’s bodies and minds in sustained play.

- Discarded wood aerobic steppers from our campus gym became a source of endless fascination over 9 months of play.
Our grounds crews brought us logs and boulders large enough to be tough to move alone, but manageable with a friend (or two!)
Loose Parts: rocks & sticks

- We added more rocks to our rock pond, courtesy of the Geology Department
- We brought in boulders that like the logs, are too heavy for solitary play but great for teamwork and problem-solving
On-campus collaborations continue with
• Grounds
• Physical Plant
• Office of Sustainability

Community collaboration resumed with Memminger Elementary School (MES):
We installed a gate in the brick wall at the back of our outdoor area to the gardening area of our next-door neighboring public elementary school. The school (Memminger Elementary) was re-occupied in 2013-2014 after a three years absence during the reconstruction of the building. We’ve met several times with faculty, the MES leadership team, and several area non-profits that want to work with schools on nature-related projects. Our plan is to develop the area between our two schools as a habitat/nature area for the children. More on that next year!
In addition to our existing library of materials and resources supporting outdoor environments, play, and education – this year we added:


Green Teacher Magazine, Themed Issues:
  100: Investigating Insects
  102: Rain or Shine, The Nature Kindergarten Issue
  101: Thriving in an outdoor environment
  78: Principles of Permaculture
  77: Counting the cost of Food

Members of our staff attended sessions at the following conferences on outdoor education:
MEPI (Montessori) Conference in Litchfield, SC, January 2014
College of Charleston Early Childhood Summit, June 2014
National Coalition of Campus Childrens’ Centers, (NCCCC) in Portland, OR, April 2014