



Acting Outside

**Encouraging Environmental Connectedness
in Children through Role-play**

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Challenge

How to enrich
environmental
education?





Lecture-based Programs

Strengths

- Information rich
- Placed-based
- Experiential learning

A group of children and adults are in a greenhouse, looking at large cacti. The children are wearing colorful clothing and boots. One child is crouching down, looking at the ground. The greenhouse has large glass panels and various plants, including cacti and succulents.

“Wow, I’ve never seen so many trees!”

“I’m scared of ants and lady bugs.”

“Ewww! Grass is gross”

“But the forest is full of bears!”

Limitations

- Overloaded programs
- Negative messaging
- Anthropocentric perspective

What is role play?



How Role-Play Works

1. Know your character



How Role-Play Works

1. Know your character
2. Create a safe place



How Role-Play Works

1. Know your character
2. Create a safe place
3. Go with the flow



How Role-Play Works

1. Know your character
2. Create a safe place
3. Go with the flow
4. Time to debrief



Researching Role-Play



Results

- Increased engagement



Meet David

Results

- Increased engagement
- Deeper insights into ecosystem complexity
- Increased respect towards the environment

So we began
to supplement
our programs
with Role-Play





Pollination Game

Survival of the Fittest

- Interactive role-play examining adaptation
- Based on the concept of Darwin's Finches



Challenges