

ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION THROUGH OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION OF CHILD BEHAVIOR UNDER OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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There is no doubt that we have entered a new Environmental Era where Environmental Education is needed most. The area has been constantly changing over the past hundreds of years and there is a growing need for a steady curriculum to educate the youth of today on environmental issues. During my time as a K-8 Environmental Education Intern at the Seward Park Audubon Center, I observed and evaluated the effectiveness of their already thriving outdoor education programs. To achieve this, I observed and facilitated a number of activities that the park uses in their curriculum and researched ways in which they could obtain maximum engagement in their students. In doing this, I also used surveys administered by the park and analyzed them to record any patterns I saw in the student's behavior. With the information and data collected, I found that with the incorporation of music and song, shortened instruction time, and more time outdoors, students were less distracted and more engaged in being fully immersed in learning and in nature. Educating youth about environmental issues through the experience of being outdoors builds long lasting impressions that have the potential to go a long way in mitigating future environmental problems.