DEVELOPING INTERPERSONAL SKILLS THROUGH NATURE-BASED LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

- Interpersonal skills are an important part of early childhood development.
- Nature based learning (NBL) is on the rise and holds many benefits.
- Research is lacking on the relationship between NBL and interpersonal skills.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Does NBL impact interpersonal behaviors in young children?

METHODS

- I worked with Wildflowers Preschool, a nature-based preschool in Columbia City, to study students' interpersonal skills.
- I conducted an observational study tracking the frequency of negative and positive interpersonal behaviors indoors and outdoors.
- I produced a marketing brochure and final report of my study.

RESULTS

Figure 2: Overall average frequency of negative and positive behavior frequencies in the indoor classroom setting vs. the outdoor urban greenspace.

Overall the positive behaviors in each setting were similar but in the outdoor setting there was a lower frequency of negative interpersonal behaviors as observed in Figure 2.

Figure 3: Overall frequency of conflicts in both settings by day. The average number of conflicts was lower in the outdoor setting.

One factor that led to less conflicts in the outdoor space was the increase in physical space allowing for more room for expression as seen in Figure 4.

RESULTS CONT.

The outdoor setting behavior frequency showed:

- **Increased sense of empathy**
  - Outdoor activities allowed children to learn about other living things

- **Increased self expression**
  - Sensory activities in nature helped students articulate feelings

SIGNIFICANCE

- NBL has proven benefits for students but it is essential that more research is done.
- More outreach on NBL needs to exist to get past barriers to implementation such as safety concerns and lack of overall information.
- Standardization of criteria for NBL safety and curriculum is a solution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the students at Wildflowers for allowing me to be part of their class, my site supervisor, Carrie, and my friends and family.