



## PROGRAM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

### CREATE YOUR OWN PATH: FIVE WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN MAKE BETTER CONNECTIONS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Session Day 2, In-Person

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Environmental Education (EE) offers a foundation for children to learn about the natural world. Through games, crafts, exploration, and free form thinking they can make lifetime connections to the environment. This will help them shape ideas about how they can be environmental stewards but also how they are connected to the environment. Having children who can choose the way they want to learn helps them better understand the environment. This only happens when they are engaged in the curriculum with which they are interacting. The purpose of this study was to find differences in engagement of different (EE) curriculums through monitoring the engagement of a game and craft that have the same learning objectives. To accomplish this study, I monitored the engagement for eight weeks at Islandwood's summer camp. I created a spreadsheet that had questions that allowed me to see the differences of how children interacted with one another, the time they spent on the game or craft, body language and spoken word from them while completing the activity. The findings show that having curriculum for EE that includes teamwork, exploration, creativity, and paths for personal work helps create the longest period of time that students will be engaged with an activity. Engaging different pathways helps them create the connection with the environment. With the climate changing at a rapid rate, we need to adjust our curriculums to better suit our climate and children's needs and also the needs of children learning EE.