

A flagship education program of the Foundation is the Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers (center) program. Centers on school campuses are created by partnering with local soil and water conservation districts and their local school. To date the Foundation has funded centers in 57 counties, impacting over 200,000 children annually. Inaugural sponsors include Caterpillar, Z. Smith Reynolds, Walmart, and Duke Energy. **Our Call to Action: More sponsors and centers are needed statewide.**



Today, children do not spend much time outside and are not in touch with the natural world around them. The Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers program is working to change this pattern by getting kids outside and learning in a new space. A local planning team, often involving students, designs the center. A team of volunteers, parents and others, installs the center. The center is available for all teachers to use regardless of subject type.



Centers are used by all grade levels and in all areas of education. Teachers incorporate all areas of sciences, mathematics, creative writing and art development, as well as history. The outdoor space is a powerful educator. Local projects have focused on Native Habitat, Gardens, Natural Resource Monitoring and Conservation Demonstrations.



A growing and disconcerting trend is that children are so removed from the farm that they do not know where their food comes from. Environmental Educators note that when you ask a kid where their milk comes from they respond – the grocery store. Many districts are using these centers to rectify this by establishing community gardens. It is amazing the changes that occur in a child when you encourage them to play in the soils and get dirty. They are inspired as they watch the seeds grow and eat the fruits of their labors.



**The Foundation continues to seek funding partners for this program.
Join the conservation movement by supporting Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers!**