

Progressive Design Playgrounds Launches Outdoor Learning Environments; Natural Playgrounds Serve As Outdoor Classrooms

Oceanside, CA, January 12, 2009 -- [Progressive Design Playgrounds](http://www.pdplay.com) (www.pdplay.com), designer and manufacturer of environmentally sound commercial play structures announced today that it has added natural playgrounds to its product line. The new line of play products, [Outdoor Learning Environments](#), extends the classroom into the outdoors where children can play with and among natural elements such as sand, water and living plants. Through natural learning, outdoor classrooms enhance and reinforce the lessons students learn in every subject from math to the arts.

Outdoor Learning Environments are natural playgrounds that allow children to explore their surroundings with sight, hearing, touch and smell. [Outdoor Learning Environments](#) come in many different configurations depending upon the school, the community, the climate and resources available. They range from vegetable gardens, to slides built into grass hills, to stages where pretend play capitalizes on natural surroundings to stimulate young minds. More elaborate natural playgrounds include science labs, greenhouses, ponds, dirt trails, trike trails and mazes and reading amphitheaters. They often include local plants and boulders, contributing to the authenticity of the natural environment. These outdoor classrooms function as play areas on their own or as additions to traditional physically challenging stand alone play structures such as overhead ladders, ring mazes, and climbing walls. A list of our natural playground products can be found online at www.outdoorlearningenvironments.com.

Numerous studies find that the natural world is essential to a child's physical and emotional well-being. The correlation between outdoor play and social, cognitive and behavior development is well documented with evidence supporting benefits such as improved recall of information, creative problem solving and increased creativity among children. A growing number of children's advocates and political leaders express concern that disconnection with nature adversely affects children, sparking a nationwide back-to-nature movement to reconnect children to the outdoors. Outdoor Learning Environments bridge traditional playgrounds and nature, creating a pioneering and fun way for children to fully reap the benefit of outdoor play.

Rebecca Candra, Director of La Jolla United Methodist Church Nursery School in San Diego, CA, commented their children's existing play habits led the community to add an Outdoor Learning Environment last month. "As childcare experts, we understand the value of nature-based play," she said. "What is really interesting is that children, when left alone, inherently gravitate to the natural elements like dirt, grass and water." Candra added, "The children are thrilled to have a play space that combines natural elements *and* monkey bars and they benefit from the combination physically, emotionally and academically."

Outdoor Learning Environments meet or exceed U.S. and International safety requirements.

Progressive Design Playgrounds designs and manufactures state-of-the-art and environmentally friendly commercial children's play structures, natural playgrounds, safety surfacing and recreation site furnishings. Based in Oceanside, California, Progressive Design Playgrounds' play structures are available worldwide through an extensive dealer network. For more information visit the company's website at <http://www.pdplay.com>.

Contact: Margaret Ryan
Progressive Design Playgrounds
415.437.0437
Margaret@pdplay.com