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## *Press Release*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **PROJECT LEARNING TREE RELEASES NEW CURRICULUM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS TO GET YOUNG CHILDREN OUTDOORS**

#### **Activity Guide and Music CD Teaches Children Ages 3 to 6 About the Natural World Around Them**

Washington, D.C. – Just as more attention is being focused on the need to connect students to nature at a younger age, Project Learning Tree® (PLT) releases a new curriculum guide and music CD to engage children ages 3 to 6 in outdoor exploration and play. Eleven field-tested, hands-on activities showcase over 130 “early childhood experiences” which integrate investigations of nature with art, literature, math, music, and movement. Early childhood educators and caregivers can obtain a copy of [PLT’s \*Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood\* curriculum](#) by attending a PLT professional development workshop in their area.



“Exploring nature is a complete sensory experience, and early experiences with the natural world excite children’s imaginations and foster their inborn sense of wonder and curiosity—important motivators for lifelong learning,” says Kathy McGlaflin, Director of Project Learning Tree and Senior Vice President of Education for the American Forest Foundation, the national sponsor of PLT.

“Increasing environmental literacy is a proven way to encourage scientific inquiry, and PLT’s *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* provides an introduction to environmental education at a key developmental period in children’s lives,” adds McGlaflin.

Since 1993, PLT has provided environmental education training and academic curricula for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten educators to assist in their educational programming with young people. In response to a huge demand for more activities that use developmentally-appropriate approaches for reaching young learners, PLT has created a new early childhood curriculum and produced an accompanying music CD to provide a valuable resource designed specifically for early childhood educators.

“PLT’s Early Childhood program encourages young children to learn about the natural world around them using their senses, the seasons, and neighborhood trees,” says Al Stenstrup, Director of Education Programs at the American Forest Foundation. “The experiences in PLT’s Early Childhood guide encourage children to explore, discover, and communicate in expressive ways.

They emphasize outdoor adventure, support children having fun while learning, and utilize each child's imagination and creativity to provide opportunities for learning in groups or as individuals," he says.

The activities highlight the importance of kinetic learning and differentiated instruction, including opportunities to incorporate music and movement using the CD to encourage children to sing and dance. The music selections include instrumentals with different rhythms and cultural connections, nature sounds, classical music, and fun songs with educational lyrics from children's music artist Billy B. Brennan.

PLT's *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* guide includes background information on facilitating experiences for the early childhood learner, how to guide children in learning about nature both indoors and outdoors, and clear objectives and benchmarks to assess learning. It also includes suggestions for activities that families and friends can conduct to enhance their child's learning experiences at home.

PLT's *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* guide has been correlated to national standards for preschool education by three major early childhood accreditation programs. All activities meet the National Association for the Education of Young Children criteria for curriculum, the North American Association for Environmental Education's Early Childhood Environmental Education Guidelines for Excellence, and the Head Start's Child Outcomes Framework.

Educators receive training and PLT's *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* materials by attending a professional development workshop. PLT's 50-state network trains 30,000 PreK-12 educators every year through 1,500 workshops held across the country. Contact information for each PLT state program can be found at [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org), along with additional resources and correlations to academic standards and guidelines.

#### *About Project Learning Tree*

*Project Learning Tree® is a program of the American Forest Foundation, a nonprofit conservation organization that works to ensure decision makers and educators, both today and tomorrow, understand and value the role that forests and the environment play in our lives. Through quality environmental education and outdoor learning for children and adults across the country, and in conjunction with our 50-state network of partners and volunteers, our programs are engaging youth and communities in conservation efforts, growing healthy forests, and conserving habitat. For more information, visit [www.forestfoundation.org](http://www.forestfoundation.org).*

*PLT provides environmental education training and PLT curriculum materials to 30,000 PreK-12 educators every year through 1,500 professional development workshops held in communities across the country. Recognized for 35 years as a leader in environmental education, PLT teaches students how to think, not what to think about complex environmental issues, and helps students learn the skills they need to make sound choices about the environment. PLT's service-learning programs, GreenSchools! and GreenWorks!, engage students with their community to apply their learning in a real-life context. For more information, visit [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org).*