

Development of human-nature connection and outdoor learning

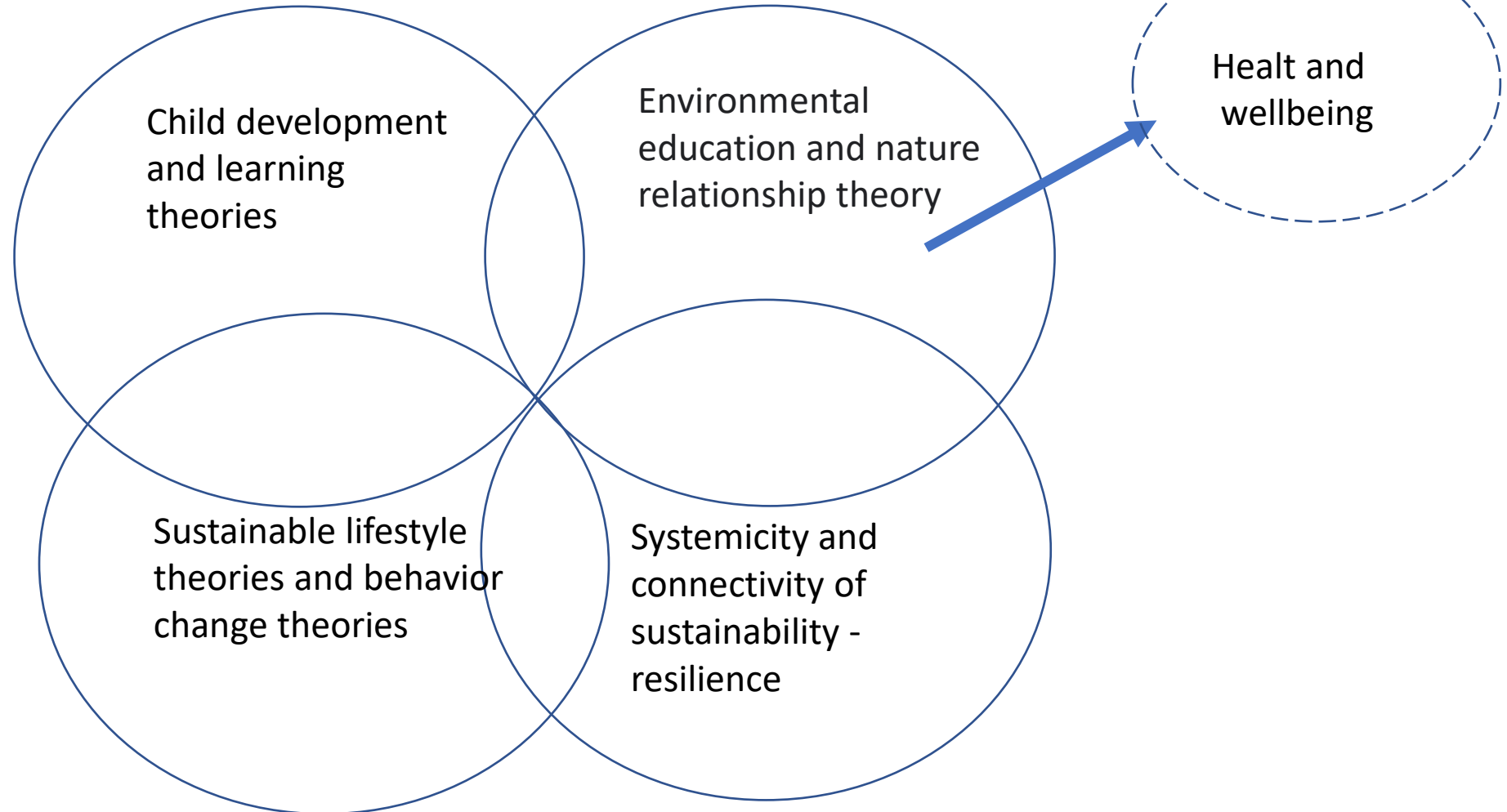
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Alienation from nature can mean reduced ability to maintain both physical and mental health and social well-being.

What we know about sustainability and child development?

What we know about sustainability and child development? -There are many perspectives on the matter.



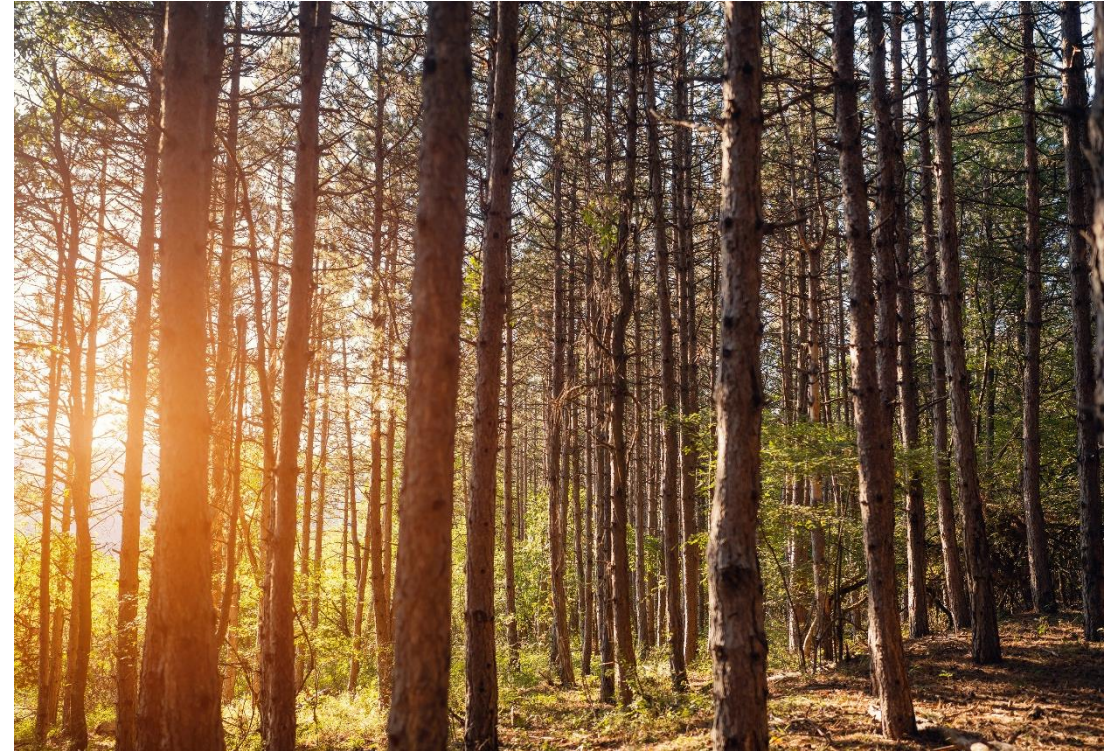
One of the most significant roles of education is the promotion of well-being and health.

According to research, doing sustainable development actions increases well-being.

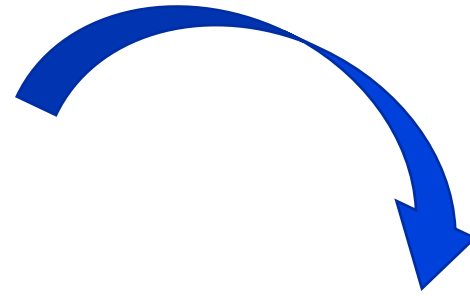
Many activities that promote sustainability increase health.

How does nature affect?

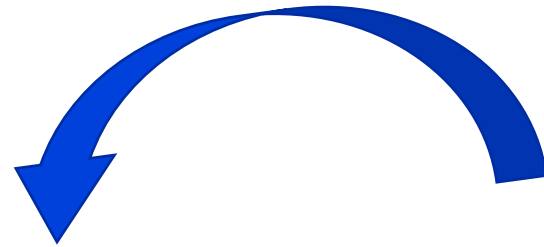
- 5 minutes: The mood improves.
- 15–20 minutes: Vitality increases and blood pressure decreases.
- Using the city's green areas for at least 5 hours a month, or 2-3 visits a month to nature sites outside the city: the mental well-being of the city's residents improves significantly.
- It has been researched that gardening can lift the spirits of those who are depressed. Taking care of the garden strengthens balance, muscle condition and coordination.



“Sustainable future is an important goal, but in the middle of numerous everyday demands that future seems far away, and you can think about it later— but the suitable time for sustainability issues never comes”



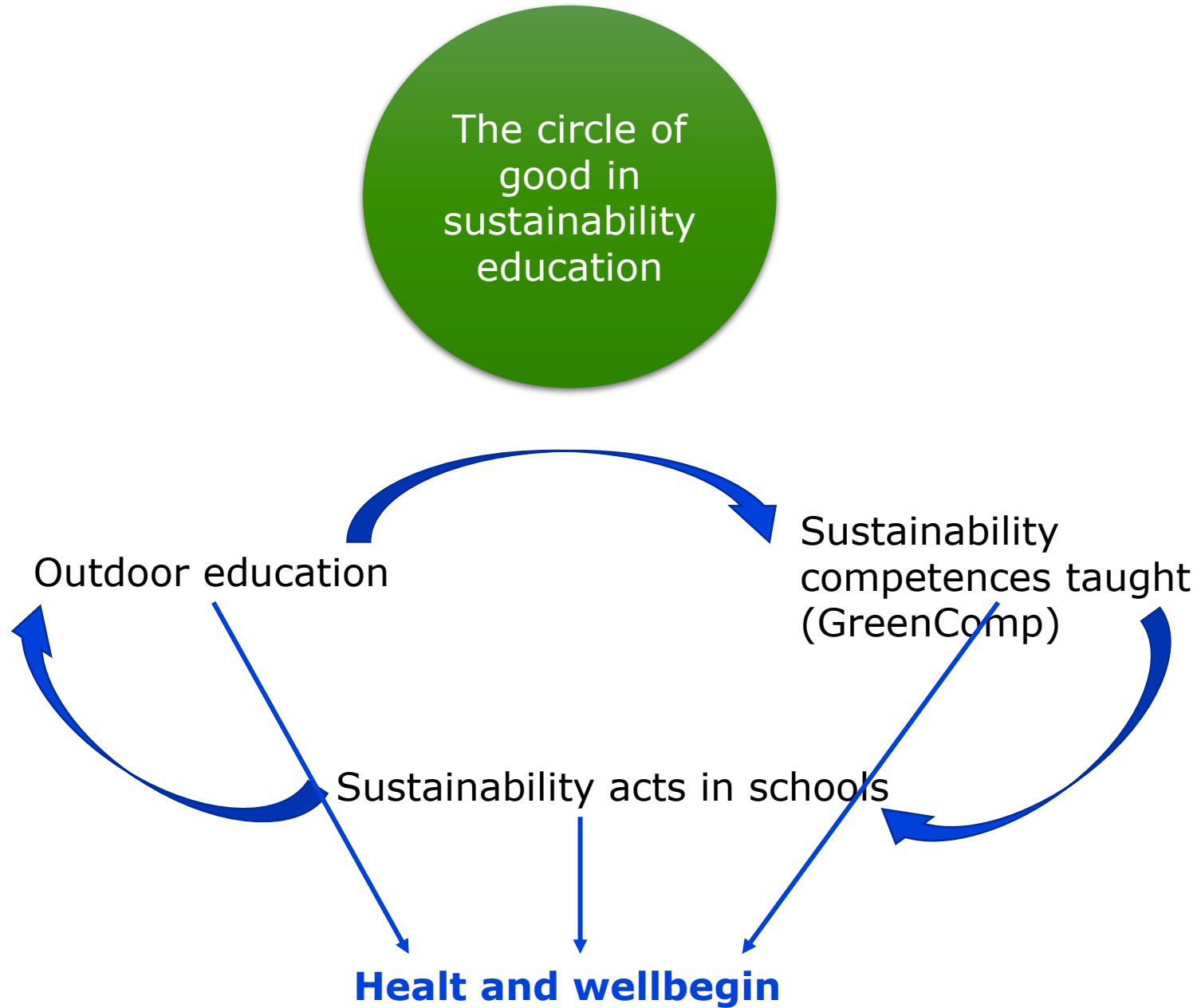
“ According to research, doing sustainable development actions increases well-being. Children should have opportunity to act for sustainability in schools”



“Need for commitment can come from nature relationship, that also affects to sustainability acts”

“Sustainability is strongly related to health and wellbeing”





Sustainability and early childhood?

- **Spending time** in nature (and the built environment) and **exploring** the environment are an important part of early childhood development.
- Through the experiences of admiration, adventure, the joy of discovery and play, the **child learns to enjoy nature** and the surrounding environment.
- Local nature and the built environment are both **learning targets and learning environments**.
- Many **sustainability acts are easy to learn in early childhood**. But they are difficult to retain.



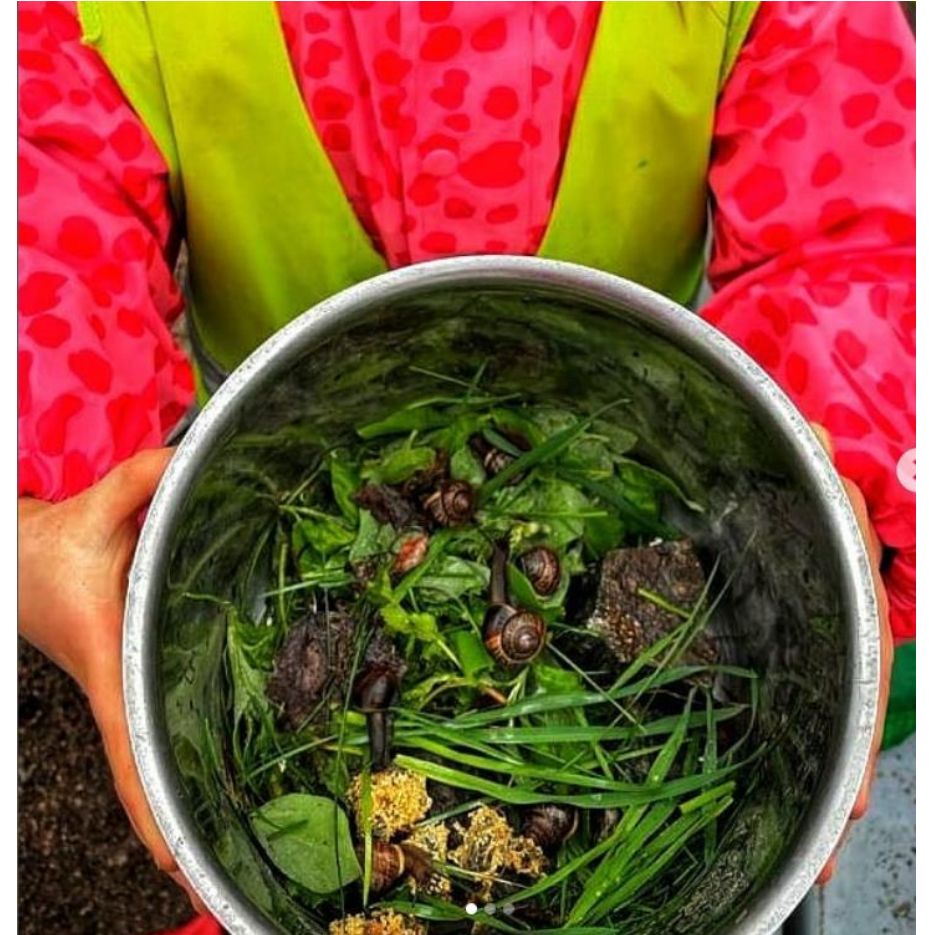
Nature relationship development infants

- Infants and young children begin to develop a connection to nature through sensory experiences.
 - They may enjoy touching grass, feeling the wind, or observing trees and animals.
- Caregivers play a crucial role in fostering a positive attitude toward nature by providing opportunities for outdoor play, exploration, and guided interactions with the natural world.



Nature relationship development toddlers and preschool age

- As children grow, they engage in more independent exploration and play outdoors. This period is critical for developing a ***sense of wonder, curiosity, and comfort in natural settings.***
- Hands-on Activities: Engaging in activities like digging in the dirt, splashing in puddles, or watching insects can spark curiosity and a sense of connection with nature.



Nature relationship development 5-6 years old

- Needs support in making friends and becoming independent -> natural en
- Moral development
- The child needs encouragement and praise for trying
- The child is increasingly thinking about the causes of different phenomena and asking questions about different things
- They believe that there is an explanation or answer to all questions and that an adult knows it.
- Children often have fun comparing and sorting objects according to their characteristics.
- Develop problem solving skills.

Nature relationship development later - curricula

- Outdoor education is very important.
- Children need to feel that their actions have an impact on a sustainable lifestyle.
- The adult model plays an important role in the adoption of a sustainable lifestyle -> each of us is an environmental educator.
- It is important that the child feels accepted; that it is not wrong to be concerned about the environment and the planet.
- As interest in nature and its wonders grows, more knowledge will be brought about the different species and their links to our own activities, our well-being and the preservation of the planet.
- Gradually, children (and adults) will understand our interdependence with biodiversity, sustainable lifestyles and the natural cycle, among other things.
- In this way, from an early age, we build actors with values, attitudes, skills and knowledge that contribute to the preservation of the planet and sustainable development.

*By the age of 12,
a relationship with
nature should be
established.*

What next in Finland?



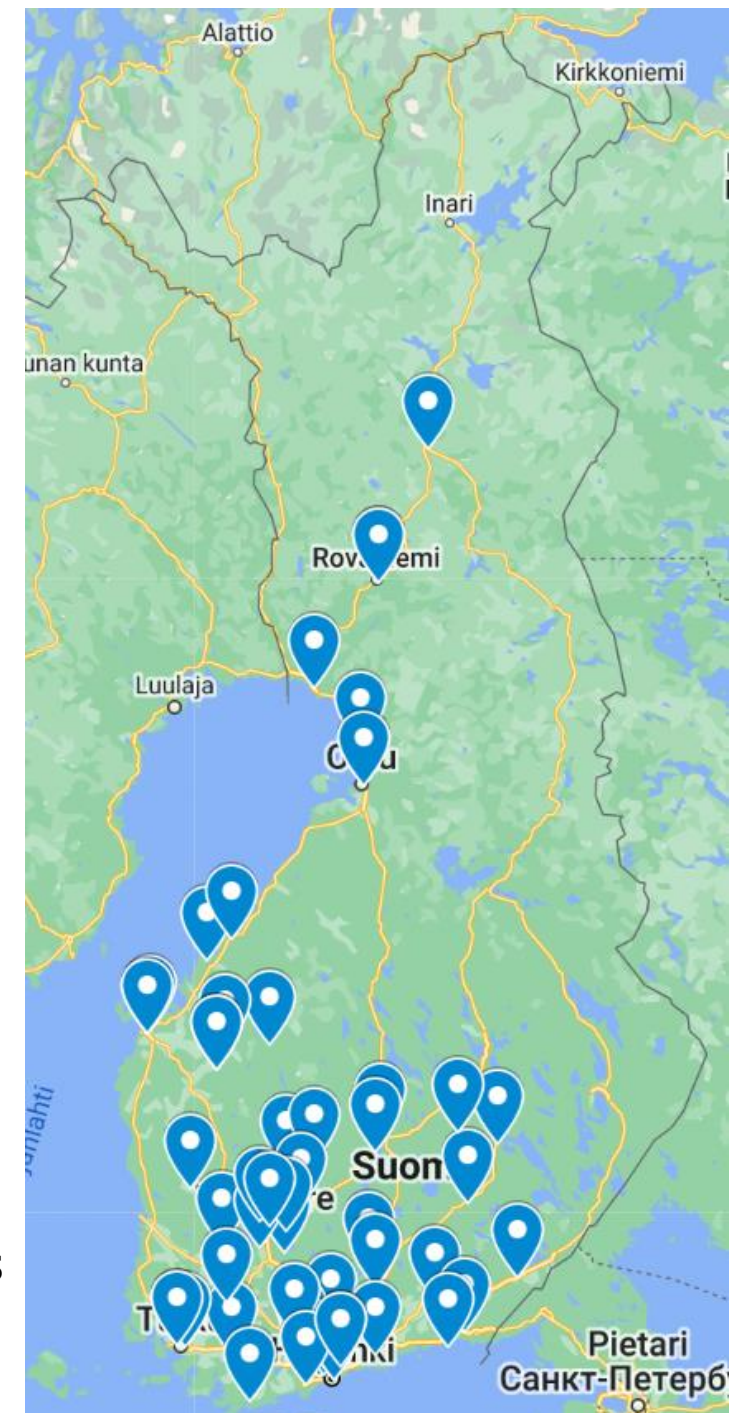
Many opportunities

- All schools in Finland are in the range of 300 meters from green area.
- School trips are relatively short.
- Outdoor education – a lot of in-service training ongoing.
- Greening school and day care yards – money coming.
- Municipality and teachers autonomy +/-.
- Many projects on going.

Future views

- Climate law & nature conversation law. Eu-legislation
- New national curriculum, when?
- Need for sustainability competences in different sectors.
- Demographic change.
- Adaptation to climate change.
- Remote-learning?

Inequality often reflects many dimensions and varies across different urban and rural geographic settings within Finland.



Check list to us all.

- How do I talk about nature and sustainability?
- Do I set an example?
- Do I remember to praise and listen?
- Do we do enough excursions and outdoor learning?
- Do I create a safe atmosphere?
- Do you go outdoors regardless of the weather?
- Do you not restrict safe running around and climbing?
- Are you allowed to talk about any personal environmental anxiety with other adults!

Good experiences with outdoor education?

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Thank you!

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