

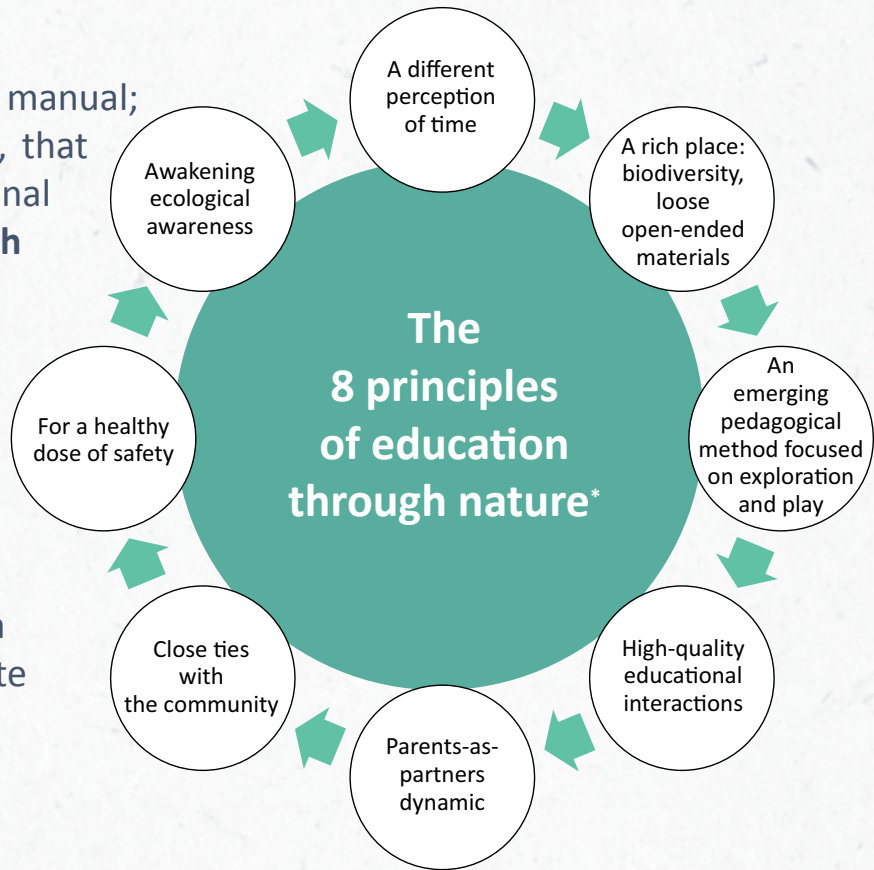


Photo credit: AQCPÉ

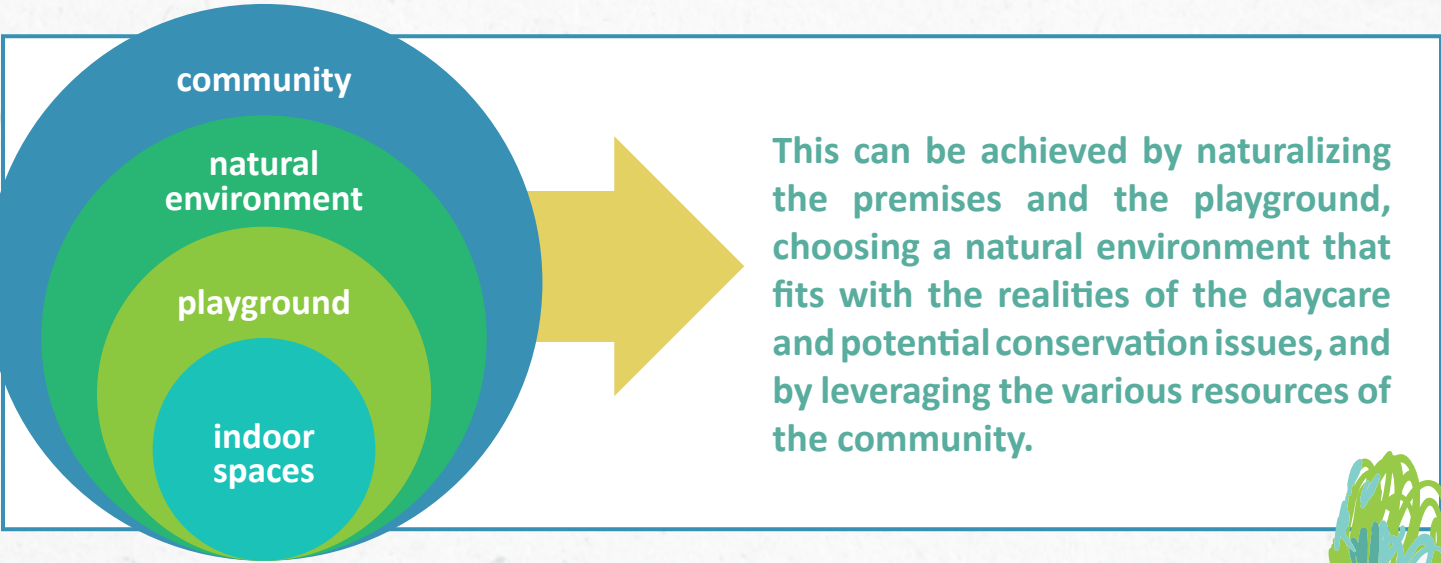


Education through nature (ETN) in urban settings

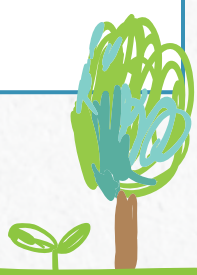
ETN is more than program or a user manual; it is an **approach**, even a philosophy, that underpins all aspects of educational childcare. ETN promotes **contact with nature** for toddlers and builds on **8 principles** to create an educational experience that promotes their **overall development**. ETN features an emerging pedagogy where children initiate exploration and play. ETN works in partnership with families and the community to provide a **healthy dose of safety** and to initiate children to **ecological awareness**.



When setting up ETN in an urban environment, nature should be showcased in all its forms, at all times and in each of the ETN’s four spaces.



*Leboeuf, M., Pronovost, J. (2020). Alex, framework of reference, Education through nature in the educational childcare service. Association québécoise des CPE.



Setting up education through nature at your daycare is easier than you think!
Keep in mind the 8 principles and the following reminders when setting up ETN.



LAYOUT

The CSA Z614:20 standard provides a framework for arranging modules on daycare playgrounds. It governs only the **structures that are anchored to the ground or provide natural stability and are not intended to be moved.**

Loose and open-ended materials are not covered by the norm, but that doesn't mean they shouldn't be used. Such **loose playing objects are an essential to children's creative games** and should be made available to children whenever possible.

Some recommendations found in the CSA Z614 standard can also be applied to loose and open-ended materials to ensure their durability and safe use.



MATERIALS

Education through nature often happens outdoors, so it is important that children and educators are **adequately equipped** for the outing conditions (Alex, pp. 234-241).

For that reason, daycares might want to **build up a supply of clothes and equipment** to facilitate group activities in the natural environment. Certain precautions must be taken when selecting, using, and managing equipment to ensure that it is truly useful and does not become a burden for staff.



PARTNERSHIPS

The nature-based approach to education can be implemented more easily if it is **supported by the CPE community.** Therefore, it is essential to mobilize support beyond the leadership team by reaching out to potential partners. Partners can **support the daycare in many ways**, for example by supervising activities or sharing knowledge.

Parents are natural and essential allies in the implementation of ETN, but it is also possible to seek support from less immediate connections, for example from within the municipal environment (borough, city), the local community (eco-districts, NPOs in agriculture / environment) or non-profit groups (Park People, Scouts).

Resources

The Alex framework of reference

Information on the ETN approach.

https://www.aqcpe.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/alex-cadre-de-reference_lenp-en-sge_2020_VF.pdf

The ETN compass

To situate your daycare on the ETN continuum according to each of the 8 principles. <https://www.aqcpe.com/projets/alex/>

The Alex Youtube channel

Nearly 75 videos on different aspects of ETN

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIQBT4tmjypYV9hjuq-NPRZ0clv_zVrxb

AQCPE Alex service proposal

Visit the AQCPE website <https://www.aqcpe.com/projets/alex/> or write to serviceeducatif@aqcpe.com

Island of Montréal Sport and Recreation service proposal

Visit the SLIM website <https://www.sportloisirmontreal.ca/> For any questions on equipment, the CSA standard or setting up outdoor projects, write to griendeau@sportloisirmontreal.ca

Safety requirements for outdoor daycare premises

Consult the Department of Family webpage : <https://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/en/services-de-garde/parents/sante-securite/securite-aires-exterieures-jeux/Pages/index.aspx>

How the CSA Z614 standard applies to daycares

Browse the FAQ section of the regroupement des CPES de la Montérégie website: <https://www.rcpem.com/services/qualite-securite-espaces-jeu/foire-aux-questions>

Regulations applicable to plants located on playgrounds

Consult Appendix 6 (p.78) of the Institut national de santé publique du Québec publication : https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/395_aires_appareils_jeu.pdf