

NATURE-BASED TEACHER CERTIFICATION

ONLINE POLICIES AND FAQ'S

Can I take the class on my own time and watch recordings?

No. Unlike some of our self-directed webinars and courses that are recorded, the Nature-Based Teacher Certification is carefully crafted to encourage active participation and networking with colleagues online. For this reason, recorded sessions simply cannot fulfill this aspect of the course. This course requires real-time participation. If the timing does not work with your schedule, check back next season!

What if I have to miss a class?

If you miss a class, you can ask teachers from your cohort to help fill you in. Because the course is designed for real-time learning, you should aim to miss no more than 1-2 classes, as only a few select sessions will be recorded and there's no guarantee it will be the one you miss.

Where do I find more information for class resources?

In addition to our interactive Zoom calls, we are using an interactive learning management system. The Edmodo platform will allow you to interact as a class, in small cohorts, access documents in our library, take polls and quizzes, upload photos and PDFs, etc. Be sure to logon with the code provided, set up your profile, and get started!

What assignments are required?

There are several assignments to complete as we move through the course. Unlike a live training where we experience topics together, this online course has "check points" each week. These assignments are not about receiving a grade. They are there to help you attain and apply new learning and demonstrate your active participation along the way.

What does "successful completion of the course" mean?

Attendance: Plan to be present for all the live online sessions. If you must miss a class, let the facilitator know and ask your cohort to fill you in. Everyone will sign-in virtually each class.

Participation: Discussion and question-asking are encouraged during our online sessions. We have provided a reading list and other resources for you to delve into, apart from online learning. This is a 36-hour course that includes 24 hours online and 12 hours of self-directed learning, which you will document.

Online discussions: Reply to each weekly reflection post by the facilitator and comment/reply to 2-3 fellow attendees. Our community is safe space where everyone is respected, so please be supportive and thoughtful with your words.

Cohort Stories projects: These vary and involve interaction with your group.

Self-directed skills practice: You will receive instructions on many outdoor skills and approaches to nature-based education! You will upload your photos/videos and submit an Individual Visual Journal to document completion.

Submit required documents: This includes proof that you hold credentials to work in a licensed setting in the state or country where you are from (*exemptions for those not working in a licensed setting). This may be waived for teachers in alternative settings.

Course of Action: This is the culminating project driven by you and your goals for the year. We will discuss this in much greater detail.

Final course survey: Your feedback helps us improved! We require a survey from all participants at the conclusion of the course. You will receive a Survey Monkey link to complete it anonymously.

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What do I need to submit to get the full certification?

Per our website, you must submit proof of completion of early childhood training, often referred to as a 90 hour certification OR the equivalent Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. This ensures that participants have basic knowledge of early childhood education principles, which is required to work in a licensed setting. These requirements vary by state; participants must demonstrate they have basic credentials to teach in a licensed setting where they live. NOTE: For educators working in non-formal and unlicensed settings, this may be waived. We will provide a Google form link where you can submit documents as needed.

How long do I have to complete outstanding requirements?

You have one year from the time you complete the course.

What is needed to maintain this certification?

Your certification is good for three years. After that time, we recommend you take the Level 2: Intermediate certification or attend at least 6 clock hours of training with the Eastern Region Association of Forest and Nature Schools annually (live or online).

How will the certification help me in the future?

Firstly, the training you receive will equip you with tools to better facilitate nature-based learning with children. We cover a range of important topics and learn from many professionals in the field. You will also develop important relationships with colleagues who will continue to be a source of support long after the course is finished. As a certified as a Nature-Based Teacher, you also demonstrate your commitment to nature-based education to prospective employers, families, and other learning communities who value this approach. We will share a 'certified teacher badge' for your website so you can let people know.

Does this count for professional development hours or PD I need to keep my teaching certificate current?*

Every state and country has different requirements for what qualifies as approved professional development. If you have a question, go to your Office of Early Learning (or similar department) to find out if this will fulfill your PD requirements. Do this *before* you register.

When does the Level 1: Introductory course take place? What about Level 2 and 3?

We offer training in person each summer. There is always one week of training in the greater Baltimore, Maryland area where we are based, but additional live training may occur anywhere in the United States. Select online courses run for 6-week sessions for level 1 training. We do our best to rotate times for online courses to help people in various time zones participate.

How can we continue our networking and conversations?

We will provide a contact list of participants so you can keep in touch. We also have an active FaceBook community especially for ERAFANS-certified Nature-Based Teachers. We regularly host free networking calls, and we will have a three-month and six-month check-in with attendees from your course. We encourage you to start local groups where you live to help grow this movement!

*As of 2021 this course is approved for MSDE clock hours (Maryland).