Preference for Natural Things in Preschoolers

Beth Keller
Illinois Wesleyan University

Peter Verbeek, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc

https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2000/posters/13

This is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.
©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.
Biophilia is a term coined by biologist E. O. Wilson to label his hypothesis that human beings have an innate affinity toward the natural world. Aspects of biophilia that have been researched to test Wilson's hypothesis include psychological-, aesthetic-, and spiritual correlates as well as the effect of technological advances on the expression of biophilia. Most of this research has been conducted with adults, but a few recent studies have focused on aspects of biophilia in school-age children and adolescents. The present study investigated aspects of biophilia in early development. Fifteen children enrolled in an urban preschool, and 27 children from a rural preschool, were shown a picture book containing paired images depicting natural things and their non-natural counterparts.

The preschoolers were asked which picture of each pair they preferred and their preferences were noted. Two specific hypotheses were tested. First, it was predicted that the children in this study would show a preference for natural things and as such display some degree of biophilia. The second hypothesis predicted that due to their generally greater exposure to subsistence derived from natural things, children from a rural environment would make a proportionally greater number of biophilic choices than children from an urban area.