

Out in the Funshine

New child care program brings the great outdoors to the classroom

Getting back to nature.

Remember the last time you heard that phrase? It was probably couched in a discourse about scaling back, turning off all your gadgets and ultimately escaping the frenetic pace of industrialized life.

For developing energetic minds, however, “getting back to nature” can be more about ramping up than slowing down.



That’s where Funshine Home Child Care comes in. This Idaho Falls-based learning center has received national certification from the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation.

The classrooms, which are being developed across the country, offer interactive elements such as musical instruments made of natural materials, garden or pathway areas and more natural materials for building and creating art. The environment is designed to enhance concentration, develop creativity and problem-solving, relieve stress and improve skills in all areas of development.

“We cannot expect our children to take care of and respect nature if opportunities are not available to enjoy and gain an appreciation for the outdoors,” said Funshine owner Kathy Reynolds. “Children are our future. They are the trustees that will be taking care of this world and need to be exposed to nature in order to appreciate and respect all it has to offer.”

She added that Nature Explore classrooms help remove children from technology ridden activities and connect them with nature through research-based outdoor learning experiences.

“Funshine has shown tremendous leadership in growing the next generation of environmental stewards,” said Susie Wirth, Nature Explore Outreach Director. “Their commitment to providing research-based and nature-rich learning offers a wonderful example of educators throughout the country.”

For additional information and photos or to set up a tour of the property, visit www.funshinehomechildcare.com.

Submitted by Sharon Coyle

