

Building Capacity for Early Childhood Education with Diverse Audiences: Growing Up WILD Evaluation

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Project WILD

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Building Capacity for Early Childhood Education with Diverse Audiences:

Growing Up WILD Evaluation

Background

Growing Up WILD is an early childhood education program that builds on children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Through a wide range of activities and experiences, *Growing Up WILD* provides an early foundation for developing positive impressions about the natural world and lifelong social and academic skills.

The purpose of *Building Capacity for Early Childhood with Diverse Audiences* is to provide greater opportunities for children ages 3-7 from diverse backgrounds to experience more time outdoors and engaged in nature based learning. The goals of the project are:

1. To introduce environmental education into childcare settings in at least nine states¹ through the use of the *Growing Up WILD* (GUW) activity guide and associated professional development offerings;
2. To utilize the existing network of Project WILD Coordinators to prioritize delivery of *Growing Up WILD* to early childhood educators and trainers who reach diverse and underserved children; and
3. To build capacity within the Project WILD Facilitator networks to include new organizations, particularly Head Start.

As this evaluation is of a funded project, there is an implicit concern about return on investment and about sustainability of the efforts beyond the funding cycle. Thus, a fourth, unvoiced goal must be to use the capacity building to ensure sustainability of the efforts and to generate a growing return on investment.

The evaluation for this capacity building project included the basic

¹ Workshops were held in the ten states participating in this pilot program, as well as additional workshops that project funding made possible in Illinois and Nevada.



- Frequency and use of GUW activities
- Future plans for conducting GUW activities
- Reports on changes in behavior
- Other learning outcomes associated with exposure to GUW activities
- Educators' perceptions about program effectiveness

Because the project was designed intentionally to serve early childhood providers who themselves have diverse audiences, the focus of the evaluation was on the outcomes of these educators rather than on the children served. The underlying philosophy is that by addressing those who serve children in diverse communities which are often underserved by conservation education programming, the impacts of the project will be both a higher return on investment, and an ongoing return on the original investment.

Methods

The desired summative evaluation has three components: 1) a meta-analysis of existing data; 2) a meta-analysis using existing reports and documents; and 3) implementation and analysis of an online questionnaire.

Meta-analysis of existing data

Data were provided by Project WILD from workshop feedback forms and participant information forms. The following analysis presents a summary of participants with appropriate frequency reports and a lateral analysis of workshop responses.

Meta-analysis of existing reports and documents

A content analysis method was used for a cross document review of any relevant reports and documents provided by Project WILD. CEE provided documentation reported by Project WILD state coordinators who participated in the project. See Appendix B for this reporting form. The analysis matrix was structured using the specific objectives of the GUW program as well as the overarching goals of the program to cull elements of desired audience and specific activity.

Online questionnaire

The questionnaire developed by the evaluator for Project WILD was reviewed to ensure the specific elements of the summative evaluation were included to provide appropriate breadth and depth to answering the summative questions. A power sample statistic was used to obtain maximum generalizability to the frame; with a $p=.05$ and a Confidence Interval of 5, a total of 248 names were needed. Using the feedback forms from the participants, a sequential, proportional (by state) sample with a random start determined the 243 responses pulled for inclusion in the follow-up study. For those for whom no e-



mail addresses were given, the sequential count remained consistent and that state's sample was looped until the appropriate number of names were drawn. For some states, there were sessions where e-mail addresses were not collected.

ILI used Qualtrics for disseminating the online questionnaire and for obtaining responses. To keep responses confidential, e-mail identifiers were not included in the process and the questionnaire was sent out to the bulk list from the researchers. There were three distributions; the first two distributions were one and one-half weeks apart to the full sample. After another week and a half, a third request was sent by Project WILD using a live link to the questionnaire. By having Project WILD send the final request, 42 undeliverable e-mail addresses were revealed and the researchers randomly selected the same number of questionnaires from those not included in the sample selection in the first rounds. The final N was 59 completes with 5 incompletes (data used as possible) for a low, but relatively standard response rate of 25.8%.

Data were analyzed using SPSS19.

Findings

Results are presented by each of the three components: 1) a meta-analysis of existing data; 2) a meta-analysis using existing reports and documents; and 3) implementation and analysis of an online questionnaire.

Meta-analysis of existing data

Data were supplied by Project WILD from workshop feedback forms and participant information forms. The findings below reflect the reactions of participants in the *Growing Up WILD* workshops.

Number of students reached

Of those respondents who provided information about the number of children with whom they would use GUW (n=827), the median number reported was 20. A few individuals, who often reported being in a resource-sharing position across an entire organization or school district, reported that they would reach as many as 2,200 students. Taking these individuals into account, the mean number of students reported was nearly 41 (40.92, standard deviation 131.581). The total number of students that respondents planned to serve with the GUW materials was 33,842 across the nine (of twelve) states where participants were asked about the students they served.



Table 1: Response by State

State	Number of Valid Surveys	Percent of All Valid Surveys
Alabama	0*	0%
Arizona	30	2.4%
California	187*	15.1%
Illinois	193*	15.5%
Maine	96*	7.7%
Michigan	87	7.0%
Montana	147	11.8%
Nevada	32	2.6%
New Jersey	143*	11.5%
Oklahoma	128	10.3%
Texas	27*	2.2%
Virginia	172	13.8%
Total	1,242	100%

* Additional surveys were completed in the following states which did not conform to the others sufficiently to be included for analysis: Alabama (n=121), California (n=46), Illinois (n=42), Maine (n=20), New Jersey (n=14), and Texas (n=589). The total number of surveys completed that were unsuitable for analysis was 983, or more than 44% of all surveys.

Workshop type

Very little overall data are available from the questionnaires about the intended audiences for any given G UW workshop. Some instruments asked respondents if they were attending a G UW facilitator workshop, an educator workshop, or a workshop aimed expressly at Head Start educators. Of those individuals who were able to identify their experience using one of these three types (n=294), 56.5% reported being part of the Head Start audience. About one quarter more (26.5%) claimed participation in an educator workshop, and the remaining 17% indicated they were at G UW facilitator trainings.

However, more than 300 other participants, when presented with this question, declined to complete it at all. This may be an instrument design issue, resulting from the question's placement in small print at the top of the survey; it may also indicate some lack of clarity on the part of the participants. (A further 290 people selected more than one of the workshop types in response to this question.) On several states' adaptations of this survey (n=352), the question of workshop type was omitted altogether.



Reasons for attending G UW workshops

When asked where they were receiving the G UW materials, a larger number of respondents (n=1,050) were better able to identify their own reasons for attending a G UW workshop. About four in ten (40.4%) indicated they were participating in G UW as a “workshop for inservice credit,” with a further 18.5% participating in a “workshop not for credit.” Nearly one third (31.3%) reported attending a “Project WILD facilitator workshop.” Only 2.3% said they had gotten the G UW materials through a college or university course. An additional 7.6% reported additional categories that were unique to individual states’ modified surveys.

Respondents’ reported positions

Of those who indicated their current professional roles (n=1,039), the largest plurality – 44.1% – described themselves as Head Start educators. The next largest groups also described themselves as working with young children: preschool teachers (16.8%) and day care providers (9.9%). This is consistent with G UW’s target audiences for both children and educators for this project. No other pre-determined category was selected by more than 5% of respondents (See Appendix A for a list of all questions used for analysis). However, an additional 12.5% of respondents (130 individuals) selected “Other” and wrote in one or more position titles, so perhaps G UW is also reaching one or more unintended audiences. The most common self-reported position titles included:

- assistant teacher / teacher’s aide
- camp counselor
- Early Head Start teacher
- environmental educator
- family advocate
- museum educator / zoo educator
- naturalist
- volunteer (classroom / parent volunteer or other)

Respondents’ reported sex

Those who were asked to describe their sex and did so (n=1,175) described themselves overwhelmingly as female (95.7%). An additional 36 individuals did not respond when asked to describe themselves as either male or female.

Respondents’ reported race & ethnicity

Of the respondents who reported race, a majority (60% of valid responses; 52% of all responses) identified as Caucasian. Although on all responses, 24.4% were Hispanic/Latina, of the questionnaires usable for analysis, only 8.6% were so identified. There were fewer African American/Black respondents than in the U.S. population distribution, but a higher proportion of American Indian or Alaskan Natives. Table 2



provides an overview of responses both for valid questionnaires and unusable response questionnaires.

Table 2: Racial identity in respondents

	N= (valid responses only)	Percentage of Total	N= (including all questionnaires where asked)	Percentage of Total
African American or Black	160	14.0%	177	10.2%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	169	14.8%	170	9.8%
Asian	12	1.0%	15	0.9%
Hispanic or Spanish	98	8.6%	422	24.4%
Pacific Islander	6	0.5%	8	0.5%
White or Caucasian	686	60.0%	900	52.0%
None of the Above	13	1.1%	40	2.3%
Total	1,144	100%	1,732	100%

Respondents' interest in further involvement with *Growing Up WILD*

Most individuals who completed the versions of the survey included in the analysis were asked two questions about further involvement with the program: whether they would like to attend other Project WILD workshops (n=984), and whether they would like to train other educators by becoming a *Growing Up WILD* facilitator (n=996). Far more respondents answered the first question affirmatively than the second (93.9% versus 43.1%), perhaps reflecting the limits of or extent to which educators are willing to commit to additional obligations beyond the classroom. This does provide CEE with an indication that crossover populations for their programs could exist.

Respondents' feedback questions about *Growing Up WILD*

An overwhelming majority of respondents viewed G UW very favorably (rating their perceptions using either a 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale) across all measures; most of these rated it the highest possible across all or most questions. Likewise, the low distributions indicate consistent response patterns. The skew of these responses is in some ways a testament to the strength of the G UW workshops, but it also calls into question the effectiveness and potential bias of the items themselves. Table 3 shows the items, means and deviations, and the number of responses (which vary due to inclusion/exclusion on some instruments).



Table 3: Item means and deviations in order by mean score

Item	n	Mean (on a six point scale)	Std Dev
Overall, this workshop was: (6="excellent")	1,105	5.80	.533
I would recommend <i>Growing Up WILD</i> to other interested early childhood educators.	1,102	5.78	.544
By attending this workshop, I learned new information I can use in my classroom or at my facility.	884	5.78	.581
By attending this workshop, I learned new information about connecting young children to nature and the outdoors.	888	5.77	.557
I will include <i>Growing Up WILD</i> resources in my teaching.	1,008	5.76	.619
I believe that the information and activities contained in <i>Growing Up WILD</i> will resonate with the children I teach.	1,076	5.69	.654
The content of this workshop is appropriate for the subjects I teach.	1,005	5.68	.689
The content of this workshop is developmentally appropriate for the children I teach.	1,089	5.66	.727
I will integrate <i>Growing Up WILD</i> activities into my teaching.	1,082	5.64	.670
I will work with other teachers at my site to utilize <i>Growing Up WILD</i> throughout the year.	1,054	5.64	.788
<i>Growing Up WILD</i> activities will help the children I teach gain the knowledge and skills prescribed by local and/or state standards.	1,064	5.62	.715
<i>Growing Up WILD</i> activities will help me address and meet curriculum requirements.	1,050	5.59	.755

Respondents' comments about *Growing Up WILD*

The open-ended comments respondents left on their questionnaires were almost uniformly positive. These comments tended to refer to the workshops themselves – often described as “wonderful,” “great,” “very interesting,” “excellent,” and so on.

More specific praise was directed at a few elements of G UW. Respondents liked the hands-on nature of the workshops and “doing the activities to help understand them better” before leading them with their students. Similarly, a number of individuals connected the fun they had in the workshop with their excitement to share G UW activities with others.



Opportunities for sharing and discussion within the workshop, learning from peer educators, garnered respondents' praise as well. As one respondent put it, "our co-workers had a lot of exciting science activities to share with us!" Taken alongside comments about using the "fantastic" resource book to "extend learning," it seems that many respondents felt well-prepared by their G UW workshop experiences.

Several respondents also mentioned their workshop facilitators' enthusiasm and/or knowledge of the material. Some enjoyed the actual facilitation of their workshop (as with those who appreciated receiving an agenda for the day), while others shared critiques of their workshop's structure or pacing.

Respondents' anticipated challenges in implementing *Growing Up WILD*

In addition to their praise for *Growing Up WILD* workshops and materials, many respondents offered thoughtful feedback about potential challenges to using the G UW materials and activities.

By far the most common concerns had to do with access to resources: many described limited funding, limited time to prepare or to implement G UW activities, or possible difficulty in purchasing or obtaining G UW-related materials. More than one-third of respondents who provided feedback about challenges described one of these resource-related issues. Some respondents described their limited time in terms of the need to prioritize many exciting G UW activities, because they would only have room in their classroom routine – or their structured curriculum – for a few.

Respondents also shared concerns about how others might react to G UW resources and activities. Some saw their colleagues' buy-in as a potential hurdle: that "it is difficult to make teachers understand the importance of science & hands on activities in the preschool classroom." Others anticipated resistance from the parents of their students, and trouble convincing them "it's OK to get dirty & explore the outdoors with teacher supervision." Still others were concerned about children's level of participation, expressing the hope that G UW activities would hold students' attention. Some also mentioned the need to adapt G UW materials or activities for the ages of the children in their class.

Respondents also anticipated some difficulties related to the execution of G UW activities with their students. Several challenges were related to their own geographic locations: they noted the difficulty of outdoor lessons and activities during inclement weather, through seasonal variation, and in "sterile" urban settings, for example. Similarly, one respondent from a desert climate observed a "lack of desert concentrated content," perhaps highlighting a need for greater breadth within G UW materials. A few individuals commented that their school district, agency, or organization had policies that prohibited giving children any food, so food-related activities would need to be modified or avoided.



And a number of respondents pointed out that the size, shape, and design of the *Growing Up WILD* resource book would make its use more difficult for them; the “awkward” and “unusual” size was described as difficult to transport or store, and making the pages difficult to reproduce.

Meta-analysis of existing reports and documents

Ten states were involved in this pilot effort. Across these ten states, over 1,600 individuals associated with Head Start programs were trained in either *Growing Up WILD*, or in facilitating *Growing Up WILD* trainings for educators. There were 1,911 educators and 269 facilitators trained during the grant period. Several of the states reported workshops scheduled or pending for the remainder of 2011. One state noted that they held additional non-Head Start workshops on *Growing Up WILD* but did not include those in their report. An additional 269 facilitators were trained to conduct *Growing Up WILD* educator workshops. One state reported three new facilitators who are interested only in conducting workshops for early childhood educators.

Table 4: Summary of state efforts²

State	# Educators	# Facilitators Trained	# Affiliated with Head Start	Grant	Match
Alabama	114	138	223	3,828	5,983
California	220	39	201	3,700	23,882
Maine	141		40	3,828	5,983
Michigan	156		155	2,700	3,141
Montana	148		142	4,200	6,956
New Jersey	133	18	134	3,500	20,880
Oklahoma	115	13	128	4,200	5,168
Oregon	81	33	69	4,154	
Texas	634		368	5,950	7,056
Virginia	169	28	195	3,600	5,625
TOTAL	1,911	269	1,615	39,660	84,674

The states reported grant total expenditures of \$39,660. With one state missing its report, the match was reported across the states as \$84,674 or 2.13 times the grant amount. Most of this match was for time spent in planning and conducting workshops.

Online questionnaire

The questionnaire developed by the evaluator for Project WILD was reviewed and slightly altered for statistical sensitivity. A copy of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix A.

² Numbers vary from component to component of this study. This table (4) reflects the numbers reported by the coordinators. There were more workshop feedback forms received which is why the earlier number does not agree. This number will be used through the remainder of the report.



The evaluation was designed to answer the overarching question: how effective was the project at reaching its target audience? To address this question, seven evaluation questions were asked regarding the participants in the training programs:

1. What are educators' perceptions of the overall program?
2. Were materials of value to the educators?
3. Were training programs of value to the educators?
4. To what degree and in what ways are the materials being used by the educators?
5. How did *Growing Up WILD* affect the educators themselves?
6. How valuable was *Growing Up WILD* for the children involved?

Regarding those who responded, all 56 who reported their sex were female. In terms of what ages they work with, one (of 63 who provided ages) works only with children 2 and under while 25 (nearly 40%) work only with 3-4 year olds. Seven work only with 5-6 year olds, and four work with 7 year olds only. Two work with infant – 4 year olds, one works with infants through 6 years old and two work with infants to 7 year olds. Another seven educators work with combinations of children 3-7.

Nine of the educators work in non-formal settings with four at science or nature centers, three in zoos, and two who are naturalists. There was one home school educator and three of the respondents are also curriculum specialists. The vast majority, 91%, received their G UW certification through an in-service training program; the other 9% were all pre-service.

The plurality (22 or 41% of the 54 responding to this question) of the educators teach in suburban areas with the second highest concentration (17 or 31%) in rural areas. There were 11 (20%) in each of the response categories of small city and inner city/urban area. A strong majority (46 or 84%) of the educators feel the facility in which they teach has sufficient access to outdoor space for conducting G UW activities; 9 of the 54 responding to this question do not. Of the respondents, 22% have been teaching five years or less with another 20% between five and ten years. There were 17% who have taught between eleven and fifteen years, and 13% have taught up to twenty years. Almost a third, 28% have taught twenty-one years or more. The respondents estimate that over 380 other educators with whom they work have completed *Growing Up WILD* training; those educators engage an estimated 4,952 children per year.

Collectively, the educators responding to the questionnaire estimate they directly reach over 1,200 young children per year with whom they do or will conduct *Growing Up WILD* activities.



What are educator's perceptions of the overall program?

The educators had a clearly positive response to the overall *Growing Up WILD* program. The strongest agreement was around the developmental appropriateness of the materials, with a mean of 5.86 on a 7-point scale and a fairly good deviation of 1.18 (See table 5). Educators also felt the program is effective in developing school readiness skills ($M = 5.50$) and for covering necessary concepts in the classroom ($M = 5.54$). There is also clear agreement that implementation is easy ($M = 5.71$).

Table 5: Perceptions of the overall program

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Effective for developing school readiness skills	5.50	1.45	6.0
Developmentally appropriate for young people	5.86	1.18	6.0
Effective for covering concepts necessary for my classroom	5.54	1.46	6.0
Easy for me to implement in my classroom	5.71	1.38	6.0

It would appear the educators involved in the project had positive opinions of the program, but that there is some opportunity for improvement.

Were the materials of value to the educators?

There was very strong response to items relating to the materials themselves. The activities are viewed by these educators as fun ($M = 6.43$), educational ($M = 6.39$), easy to read ($M = 6.18$), easy to lead ($M = 6.13$), and easy to adapt ($M = 6.05$) and use ($M = 6.04$). There was clear agreement, though not quite as strong, with affordability and time effectiveness of the materials, both of which had means of 5.89/7.

Table 6: Perceptions of the materials

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Activities are educational	6.39	.77	7.0
Activities are fun	6.43	.78	7.0
Activities are easy to lead with young children	6.13	.81	6.0
Activities are important to the children with whom I work	6.11	.88	6.0
Affordable	5.89	1.41	6.0
Time effective	5.89	1.30	6.0
Easy to read	6.18	1.03	6.0
Easy to adapt	6.05	1.23	6.0
Easy to use	6.04	1.21	6.0



As with other Project WILD materials, the educators in this project appear to be very satisfied with the utility and functions of the materials. The educators seem to be uniformly pleased with the resources.

Were the training programs of value to the educators?

As a major focus of the dissemination of the materials is the training, it is important that the participants be satisfied with the training itself. For this study, training was included as an interpretation of effectiveness. The educators involved in the training did see the training as effective. They clearly believe the training increased the use of EE in the classrooms ($M = 5.89$) and increased confidence in the educators ($M = 5.68$). There is strong agreement that the materials were effective ($M = 6.09$). Table 7 shows the means, deviations, and medians for effectiveness measures of the training.

Table 7: Means and modes related to training items

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Training increased my use of environmental education in the early childhood classroom/care setting	5.89	1.67	6.0
Training helped increase my confidence in leading environmental education activities	5.68	1.54	6.0
Effective training materials	6.09	1.13	6.0

To what degree are the materials from *Growing Up WILD* used by educators?

Educators were given the options from not-at-all (1) to extensively (7). The responses to use of materials were mixed and bi-modal with the larger mode being neutral (4) and the secondary mode being high at 6.

There was no clear distinction among the three items related to which activities the educators use: activities conducted during the workshop, activities from the book not included in the training session, and other information from the workshop were all skewed positive, but had means and medians close to 4. Standard deviations for the three items were also normal (1.44 to 1.62).

Scores were slightly higher for the four items examining how activities are used by the educators (see Table 8). When asked about use of the activities as written, there was an interesting bi-modality with the dominant mode being 4-5, and the secondary mode being 1. For the other three items, the mode was a strong 6. Adapt/modify activities to fit program or class was the strongest mean ($M = 4.91$) followed by incorporating activities into program or class ($M = 4.78$) and then use of activities in thematic units ($M = 4.66$). Standard deviations were slightly elevated (up to 1.80) which reflects the difference in approaches. It would appear the early childhood educators trend toward adapting activities into their classes, often through themes, but it is not a strongly dominant pattern



as other educators use the activities as written and do not have clear patterns in how the activities are integrated (two with medians of 4 with two with medians of 5).

Table 8: Use of materials by educators

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Activities conducted during my <i>Growing Up WILD</i> workshop	4.38	1.44	4.0
Activities from the book not included in my training session	4.12	1.61	4.0
Other information from the <i>Growing Up WILD</i> workshop	4.27	1.45	4.0
I use the activities as written	4.28	1.79	4.0
I use the activities in thematic units	4.66	1.80	5.0
I incorporate activities into my program or class	4.78	1.56	5.0
I adapt/modify activities to fit my program or class	4.91	1.66	5.0

There was stronger support for each of the items questioning what might motivate the educators to engage with *Growing up WILD*. Personal interest in environmental education ($r = 5.88$), personal interest in wildlife ($r = 5.80$) and personal interest in nature ($r = 5.95$) were all strong motivations with relatively small standard deviations (1.04-1.05). Although correlations both to state standards or curriculum ($r = 5.48$) and to national standards including Head Start Domains ($r = 5.36$) were strong, the deviations were slightly high for state standards (1.75) and national standards (1.60) suggesting these are less consistent across respondents.

Table 9: Means and medians of motivators

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Median
My personal interest in environmental education	5.88	1.04	6.0
My personal interest in wildlife	5.80	1.05	6.0
My personal interest in nature	5.95	1.04	6.0
The correlations of Growing Up WILD to state standards/curriculum	5.48	1.33	6.0
The correlations of Growing Up WILD to national standards, including Head Start Domains	5.36	1.60	6.0

How did *Growing Up WILD* Affect the educators?

Educators clearly agreed that *Growing Up WILD* positively affected their teaching and themselves. Table 9 shows the mean and median scores for the items related to effect on educators. The strongest score was for the item “a beneficial personal experience for me” which had a median of 7 and a mean of 5.98. All other items had medians of 6, denoting a



clear positive orientation suggesting that the experience of using *Growing Up WILD* was personally and professionally a positive and beneficial experience.

Table 10: Effect on educators

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Had a positive impact on my teaching	5.64	1.43	6.0
Has the support of my administrators/supervisors	5.78	1.51	6.0
Is something I talk about with other educators	5.29	1.59	6.0
Is something I encourage other educators to become trained in	5.68	1.49	6.0
Was a beneficial personal experience for me	5.98	1.38	7.0
Meets my needs as an educator	5.79	1.37	6.0
Helped expand my interest in environmental education	5.63	1.54	6.0
Increased my knowledge of wildlife	5.55	1.65	6.0

How valuable was *Growing Up WILD* for the children involved?

The data indicate that *Growing Up WILD* is successful in its working with and engaging the target population of ECE participants. For this scale, all but two of the thirteen items had very strong agreement scores. Table 10 shows the items, means and deviations, and median scores. All means are extremely strong (and most medians are 7/7) with the exception of causality of behavioral change in the children, which is a much more difficult and time-based outcome. Even this mean, however, was clearly positive ($\bar{x}=5.82$). All standard deviations were very small, suggesting uniform perceptions across respondents.

Table 11: Values for the children participating

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Enables children to develop an interest in nature and the outdoors	6.44	.73	7.0
Enables children to experience nature in numerous ways	6.41	.78	7.0
Helps children learn about and be involved in taking care of the environment	6.33	.87	7.0
Increases outdoor participation by children	6.28	.98	7.0
Helps children learn about the environment	6.39	.77	7.0
Helps children be involved in taking care of the environment	6.35	.88	7.0
Increases outdoor participation by children	6.28	1.05	6.0
Leads to children exhibiting positive behavioral changes	5.82	1.09	6.0



Conclusions

There were three overarching objectives guiding the project and thus, the lens for analysis of this summative study. There was also a fourth, unvoiced but very present question—that of the return on investment for this capacity building project. The first two objectives were addressed by the design of the project and the data are included in the meta-analysis. The third objective and the evaluative questions underlying it were addressed across the findings above. The fourth is addressed through analysis. The objectives and summative questions were:

1. To introduce environmental education into childcare settings in at least nine states through the use of the *Growing Up WILD* (GUW) activity guide and associated professional development offerings.
Did this project introduce environmental education into childcare settings in at least nine states?
2. To utilize the existing network of Project WILD Coordinators to prioritize delivery of *Growing Up WILD* to early childhood educators and trainers who reach diverse and underserved children.
Did this project utilize the existing network of Project WILD Coordinators to prioritize delivery to early childhood educators and trainers who reach diverse and underserved children?
3. To build capacity within the Project WILD Facilitator networks to include new organizations, particularly Head Start.
Did participants value the overall program?
Were materials of value to the educators?
Were training programs of value to the educators?
Are the materials being used by the educators?
Did Growing Up WILD affect the educators themselves?
Was Growing Up WILD valuable for the children involved?
4. Was the return on investment for this project a positive one?

Summative Conclusions

Question 1: *Did this project introduce environmental education into childcare settings in at least nine states?*

Yes. Twelve states participated in this project, with eleven submitting reports in time for inclusion in the analysis. From these twelve states, workshop leaders reported that 2,180 educators were trained in *Growing Up WILD*. Workshop participants, including pre-service



educators and those who attended a facilitator training with the goal of reaching other educators rather than students, self-reported an annual reach to 1,220 children and an extended reach through others in their schools to 33,842 children.³

Question 2: Did this project utilize the existing network of Project WILD Coordinators to prioritize delivery to early childhood educators and trainers who reach diverse and underserved children?

Yes. The ten states reporting provided evidence that the state Coordinators were able to structure and deliver training to 2,180 educators. These educators were themselves diverse with 14% African American, 14.8% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1% Asian, 8.6% Hispanic, .05% Pacific Islander and 60% white/Caucasian. Of these educators, 1,615 or 74% of them were affiliated with Head Start.

Question 3:

a. Did participants value the overall program?

Yes. Educators had clearly positive response to the overall *Growing Up WILD* program with a summative mean of 5.65 on a seven point scale.

b. Were materials of value to the educators?

Yes. On a seven point scale, the summative mean was 6.12 for items asking about quality and value of materials.

c. Were training programs of value to the educators?

Yes. The median score for each item inquiring about the training program was 6. The mean was clearly positive at 5.89.

d. Are the materials being used by the educators?

Yes, but not in consistent ways. Educators reported conducting activities from the workshop with medians of 4.0/7.0 (or in the middle) regarding using those from the training program, activities not included in the training program, and other materials from the book. There was a slight skew to use of activities in thematic units, incorporating activities into their classes, and adapting or modifying activities to fit their classes.

e. Did *Growing Up WILD* affect the educators themselves?

Yes. There was a positive effect on the educators related to impact on their teaching, sharing with others, having a beneficial personal experience, and meeting their needs. The mean for all items related to impact on educators was clearly positive at 5.67/7.0.

³ Several factors contributed to the seemingly incongruous numbers of educators versus students served, including the inclusion of participants who do not work directly with students. Most notably, however, some states did not ask participants about the students they planned to or already serve, and participant questionnaires from several other states were sufficiently different from other states' forms as to be excluded from analysis altogether resulting in a deflated number of children reported as being directly served.



f. Was *Growing Up WILD* valuable for the children involved?

Yes. The educators strongly felt that *Growing Up WILD* provides positive experiences for the children. The summative mean for all items related to values for participating children was 6.29/7.0.

Question 4: Was the return on investment for this project a positive one?

Yes. In terms of direct costs, there was more than a 2:1 investment from the State Coordinators for Project WILD. In terms of return related to reach, the \$39,660 provided directly to the states allowed 1,911 educators to be trained during the grant period; these educators in turn reach 1,220 children directly⁴ and many more through the extended training efforts. This turns into a one-time cost of \$20.75 per educator trained in the intensive one day workshop, often done for college credit. In terms of direct delivery to students, using the conservative estimate of 1,220 children per year, the cost would be \$32.51 per child in the first year, or per child in the second year \$16.25; in year three the outlay per child would be \$10.84 or below the hourly cost of the educator; and in four years, the cost per child would be \$8.13 or less. Using the extended figure of 4,952 children per year by including other educators in the institutions of the trained participants, the hourly cost per child would be \$8.01 in the first year, \$4.00 per child in the second year, and \$2.49 per child by the third year.

Growing Up WILD appears to be a program with an applicable training program using excellent materials that has a strong return on investment.

⁴ Many of the educators did not include estimates of youth reached directly.



Appendix A

Growing Up WILD Participant Questionnaire: List of Questions

1. I received the Growing Up WILD materials at one of the following:
 - a. workshop for inservice credit
 - b. workshop not for credit
 - c. college/university course
 - d. *Project WILD* facilitator workshop

2. My current position is:
 - a. Head Start educator
 - b. preschool teacher
 - c. day care provider
 - d. elementary teacher
 - e. center/school administrator
 - f. curriculum specialist
 - g. resource agency person
 - h. resource specialist
 - i. youth organization
 - j. preservice teacher
 - k. college student
 - l. college faculty
 - m. industry rep.
 - n. other

3. I am:
 - a. female
 - b. male

4. I would describe my race or ethnic origin as:
 - a. African American or Black
 - b. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - c. Asian
 - d. Hispanic or Spanish
 - e. Pacific Islander
 - f. White or Caucasian
 - g. None of the above

5. How many students will you use the Growing Up WILD materials with during the year?

6. Yes / No I would like to attend other Project WILD workshops.

7. Yes / No I would like to learn to train other educators in the use of Growing Up WILD materials.

8. Comments

9. By attending this workshop, I learned new information I can use in my classroom or at my facility.

10. By attending this workshop, I learned new information about connecting young children to nature and the outdoors.

11. The content of this workshop is developmentally appropriate for the children I teach.

12. The content of this workshop is appropriate for the subjects I teach.



13. I will include Growing Up WILD resources in my teaching.
14. I will integrate Growing Up WILD activities into my teaching.
15. Growing Up WILD activities will help the children I teach gain the knowledge and skills prescribed by local and/or state standards.
16. Growing Up WILD activities will help me address and meet curriculum requirements.
17. I believe that the information and activities contained in Growing Up WILD will resonate with the children I teach.
18. I will work with other teachers at my site to utilize Growing Up WILD throughout the year.
19. I would recommend Growing Up WILD to other interested early childhood educators.
20. Overall, this workshop was:
21. What will be your biggest challenge in implementing Growing Up WILD in your classroom?



Appendix B

State-level Reporting Form



Final Report Form
for
Growing Up WILD EPA Seed Grant Recipients



The Council for Environmental Education is preparing to submit a final report to the national office of EPA for the grant program *Building Capacity for Early Childhood EE for Diverse Audiences*. The report will include accomplishments by state Project WILD programs that received seed grants for training Head Start educators. In order to prepare the report and comply with our grant requirements, we ask that you provide the information requested below. Feel free to use as much space as necessary by expanding or reducing the text space and/or table size for each item.

1. Date:
2. Report submitted by (name):
3. Affiliation (organization) of person submitting report:
4. In what state where seed grant activities were conducted:
5. Seed Grant Amount:
6. The training and other project activities made possible through the Growing Up WILD (GUW) seed grant your organization received have been. . . (check one)
 - Completed.
 - Delayed. Please provide an explanation for the delay, anticipated date of completion and, if applicable, how CEE may be able to assist.
7. List any workshops associated with your seed grant that you or your facilitators conducted, including the location and date. Please include the number of educators that participated in GUW educator workshops and the number that participated in GUW facilitator workshops. Of the total number of participants, indicate the number of educators affiliated with Head Start.

Date	Location	Educator or Facilitator Workshop?	Total Number of Participants	Number of Participants (out of the total) who are Affiliated with Head Start



8. Please complete the following table for grant fund expenditures and matching funds. No expense receipts are required. (Please add rows as needed.)

Expenditures (Please itemize. Suggested headings are inserted.)	Federal Grant Funds Spent	Matching Funds (You can meet the 1:1 matching funds requirement through in-kind items, such as staff time, facilitator time, etc.)
Salaries		
Supplies & Materials		
Lodging and Meals		
Travel		
Equipment		
Facility Use Fees		
Contractual		
Other Costs		
TOTAL		

9. If applicable, describe other completed activities or accomplishments associated with this seed grant, in addition to the training workshops listed above:

10. Describe any obstacles you encountered in implementing the seed grant project:

11. Additional comments:

Please send the following items:

- A. Copies (or originals) of all Growing Up WILD educator and facilitator workshop evaluation forms and workshop participant information forms.
- B. Copies of any other documentation related to the project--such as workshop agendas, promotional flyers, photographs, photo permission forms, training documents, etc.
- C. This completed Final Report form.



Appendix C

Online Questionnaire

Q1 Thank you in advance for your help! We're trying to find out how to better serve educators using Growing Up WILD. As an educator who participated in a Growing Up WILD professional development workshop, your opinions and ideas are very important to us. The responses you provide will greatly help us in our efforts to improve the Growing Up WILD program. The questionnaire should take about ten minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential and only the researcher will have access to the electronic database. Thanks, again.

Q4 For the following, please rate how much you use each of the following in your Growing Up WILD activities. If you do something extensively, it would be a 7 (seven). If you never or rarely do that, it would receive a 1 (one) or 2 (two). If you sometimes use it, it would be rated a 3, 4, or 5.

	1 - Not at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 - Extensively (7)
Activities conducted during my Growing Up WILD workshop (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities from the book not included in my training session (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other information from the Growing Up WILD workshop (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 Using a similar 7 point scale, we're interested in finding out how you use the Growing Up WILD activities in your teaching. If you do not do something at all, it would receive a 1 (Not at all). If you do something almost all the time, it would be a 7 (Extensively).



	1 - Not at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 - Extensively (7)
I use the activities as written (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the activities in thematic units (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I incorporate activities into my program or class. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I adapt/modify activities to fit my program or class (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 For the following items, we're interested in how important each is to you, from not at all important to extremely important.

	Not at all important (1)	Very Unimportant (2)	Somewhat Unimportant (3)	Neither Important nor Unimportant (4)	Somewhat Important (5)	Very Important (6)	Extremely Important (7)
My personal interest in environmental education (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My personal interest in wildlife (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My personal interest in nature (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The correlations of Growing Up WILD to state standards/curriculum (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The correlations of Growing Up WILD to national standards, including Head Start Domains (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following? Growing Up WILD:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
Enables children to develop an interest in nature and the outdoors (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enables children to experience nature in numerous ways (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helps children learn about and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



be involved in taking care of the environment (3)							
Increases outdoor participation by children (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helps children learn about the environment (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helps children be involved in taking care of the environment (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increases outdoor participation by children (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leads to children exhibiting positive behavioral changes (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities are educational (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities are fun (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training increased my use of environmental education in the early childhood classroom/care setting (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities are easy to lead with young children (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities are important to the children with whom I work (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 And how did Growing Up WILD affect you? Growing Up WILD:

	1 - Not at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 - Completely (7)
Had a positive impact on my teaching (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has the support of my administrators/supervisors (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is something I talk about with other educators (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is something I encourage other educators to become trained in (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was a beneficial personal experience for me (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Training helped increase my confidence in leading environmental education activities (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meets my needs as an educator (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helped expand my interest in environmental education (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased my knowledge of wildlife (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is effective for developing school readiness skills (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is developmentally appropriate for young children (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is effective for covering concepts necessary for my classroom (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is easy for me to implement in my classroom (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 To what extent do you believe Growing Up WILD or the Growing Up WILD materials are:

	1 - Not at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 - Very much so (7)
Affordable (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time effective (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy to read (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy to adapt (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy to use (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective (training materials) (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13 Are you:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q14 I am (check all that apply):

- Early childhood educator - 2 years or younger (1)
- Early childhood educator - 3-4 years olds (2)
- Early childhood educator - 5-6 years olds (3)
- Early childhood educator - 7 year olds (4)
- Non-formal educators (5)



- Naturalist (6)
- Home school educator (7)
- Zoo/museum educator (8)
- Science/nature center educator (9)
- Curriculum specialist (10)

Q15 I teach in a:

- Rural area (1)
- Small city (2)
- Suburban area (3)
- Inner city/urban area (4)

Q16 The school or facility in which I teach has sufficient access to outdoor space for leading Growing Up WILD activities:

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q17 I received my Growing Up WILD activity guide:

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q27 I have been a teacher/educator for:

- Less than 1 year (1)
- 1 - 5 years (2)
- 6 - 10 years (3)
- 11 - 15 years (4)
- 16 - 20 years (5)
- 21 - 25 years (6)
- More than 25 years (7)

Q18 In what year?

Q20 Are you a school educator?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)



Q21 The ages of those I teach are:

Q22 I work with special needs students:

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q23 I was certified in Growing Up WILD through:

A pre-service training program (e.g. a college or university) (1)

An in-service training program (e.g. while employed at an early childhood school/program) (2)

Q24 How many educators at your school/facility use Growing Up WILD?

Q25 What is the average number of children per year with whom you conduct Growing Up WILD?

Q26 How many other educators in your organization have completed Growing Up WILD?

Q27 What is the average number of children per year with whom they conduct Growing Up WILD?

Q27 Thank you for completing this questionnaire! Your generous gift of your time will help us improve Growing Up WILD for other educators!