



Provider Spotlight Series

May 2017



This month's edition of the Eco-Healthy Provider Spotlight Series features *Owl and the Dove Certified Family Child Care*, located in Portland, Oregon.

Owl and the Dove has been endorsed by Eco-Healthy Child Care® (EHCC) for 8 years. Founder and Director, Teri Relyea cares for children 18 months to 5 years. Prior to attaining the EHCC endorsement, Ms. Relyea was already living an eco-friendly lifestyle - both as a parent and child care provider for 16 years. "It made sense" said Ms. Relyea. It has always been clear to her that parents are looking for child care providers that value and protect children's health, and specifically, their environmental health.

Children showcase 8 years of eco-friendly living at Owl and the Dove!

From the beginning, Ms. Relyea has spearheaded the implementation of EHCC practices in an effort to comprehensively protect the health of the children in her care. Before she opened her program's doors, the lead containing vinyl mini-blinds were removed and indoor air-cleaning plants, like spider and snake plants, were purchased. The facility has been remodeled to capture natural sunlight via solar tubes and skylights. Their asphalt shingle roof was removed and replaced with a 100% recyclable, eco-friendly steel roof. Ms. Relyea uses bleach-free cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting products as much as possible. Additionally, she opts for tissues made from sugar cane and bamboo instead of trees. Children also participate in a variety of hands on activities, including: organic gardening, harvesting water from rain barrels and



Friends enjoy a noncompetitive board game outdoors!

[vermiculture](#). These activities provide an opportunity to teach the importance of being a healthy person, while also fostering an appreciation and respect for the world around them.

Owl and the Dove is a shoe free facility which reduces the amount of pollutants that may be tracked in. The program also requires cloth training underwear. Ms. Relyea routinely makes time to teach the children about the importance of environmental stewardship. Parents are also encouraged to adopt the *Owl and the Dove* motto: *Reduce, Refuse, Reuse, and Recycle*. For example, if packing a lunch, reusable containers are strongly encouraged and single use packaged items are discouraged.

Furthermore, *Owl and the Dove's* motto is used during healthy outdoor play. Untreated repurposed wood has been used to build a treehouse and sandbox and to create "tree coins" (seen in the picture to the right). They also have an imagination station, where children use materials found in nature and repurposed materials to support creative play and learning.

Ms. Relyea has made her school a wonderful example of going above and beyond Eco-Healthy Child Care®'s requirements. Her tips for others seeking this endorsement is to "Educate yourself on environmental concerns and it will help make becoming an Eco-Healthy Child Care® facility easy. When you do your research you can't ignore that it's the right thing to do."

We are honored to showcase *Owl and the Dove Certified Family Child Care*. They protect children's health and use nature as their classroom!



Owl and the Dove uses natural materials, indoors and out, to nurture a connection and sense of place in the world.

To learn more about this child care facility, visit their website [here](#). To become an EHCC endorsed provider or to be considered for the EHCC Spotlight Series visit www.cehn.org/ehcc.