

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to invite submissions for a Special Issue of the journal *Ecopsychology* on **Children and Nature: Experiences, Connectedness, and the Foundations of Care for the Natural World**.

Key deadlines are:

- Submission of title, authors, and 300-word abstract: **8 November 2026**
[Submit Abstracts for consideration to Special Issue editors via email with subject line: **Special Issue Abstract: "Abstract title"**]
- Invitation of full manuscripts: **8 December 2026**
- Full manuscript submissions: **1 April 2027**

Please find the full call below. All invited submissions will undergo peer review.

We would be very grateful if you could circulate it among colleagues, networks, and mailing lists who may be interested.

Warm Regards,

Rachel Severson and Emily Foster-Hanson

Call for Special Issue Submissions

Ecopsychology invites submissions for a Special Issue on **Children and Nature: Experiences, Connectedness, and the Foundations of Care for the Natural World** dedicated to advancing theory and evidence that broadly addresses the question: "How do we cultivate the next generation of people who not only love nature but act to protect it — and what are the individual, social, cultural, and structural conditions that make this possible?"

About the Journal

Ecopsychology places psychology and mental health in an ecological context to recognize the links between human health, culture, and the health of the planet. The journal is published by Sage/Mary Anne Liebert with a 2-year impact factor of 2.3 and 5-year impact factor of 2.3 (<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/ECO>). *Ecopsychology* publishes original research articles, meta-analyses, systematic or scoping reviews, theoretical papers, nature writing, and book reviews.

Aim of the Special Issue

At a moment of profound ecological crisis, understanding how children develop meaningful relationships with the natural world has never been more urgent. A growing body of research points to a compelling pathway: direct experiences with nature in childhood foster a sense of connectedness with the natural world, and that connectedness, in turn, motivates care and action for nature across the lifespan. Yet the conditions that enable or constrain this developmental pathway remain incompletely understood, and the populations and contexts in which it has been studied remain unacceptably narrow.

This special issue of *Ecopsychology* invites empirical, qualitative, theoretical, and therapeutic-oriented contributions that advance our understanding of how children come to know, love, and act for nature, as well as what stands in the way of those experiences.

Addressing this question requires moving beyond documenting associations between nature exposure and positive outcomes. We therefore particularly welcome submissions that illuminate the psychological, social, and developmental pathways through which experiences with nature shape identity, values, wellbeing, and behavior. Knowing that nature contact matters is no longer sufficient; we must understand *why, how, for whom, and under what conditions* it does so.

What type of contributions are eligible?

We welcome original research articles, systematic and scoping reviews, meta-analyses, theoretical and conceptual papers, methodological contributions, and practice-based contributions. Interdisciplinary submissions drawing on developmental psychology, ecology, education, public health, environmental studies, urban planning, Indigenous studies, and related fields are encouraged.

Submissions may focus on, but are not limited to:

1. Nature Experiences: How Types, Quality, Timing, and Doses Impact Developmental Outcomes
2. Awe, Wonder, and Curiosity as Pathways to Nature Connectedness and Environmental Engagement
3. Developmental Trajectories of Nature Connectedness across Infancy, Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, Adolescence, and Into Adulthood
4. Frameworks and Interventions Supporting Reciprocal Rather Than Extractive Human-nature Relationships
5. From Connectedness to Action: The Developmental Roots of Moral Responsibility, Environmental Behavior, and Citizenship
6. Climate Change, Ecological Grief, and Pathways from Anxiety to Hope; Strategies to Build Ecological Resilience and Meaning-making in the Context of Environmental Crisis
7. Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Therapeutic Dimensions of Nature Exposure and Connectedness
8. Indigenous Perspectives, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and Cross-Cultural Approaches; Non-Western, Non-Euro-American, and Global South-focused Conceptions of Childhood, Human-nature relationships, and Impacts on Children and Families
9. Equity and Social Justice: Barriers to Children's Access to and Experience of Nature
10. Family, Community, and Nature Socialization from Caregivers and Communities

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Expected Publication

All submissions will follow the journal's standard peer-review process. Accepted articles will be available via OnlineFirst once finalized; we expect the full special issue to be published in the March 2028 issue of *Ecopsychology*.

Further information

For inquiries and submissions, please contact the Special Issue editors:

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Visit the journal website for the Call for Submissions: <https://journals.sagepub.com/page/eco/call-for-special-issue-children-and-nature>