

Why Invest in Early Childhood?

In 2001, the Minnesota Initiative Foundations began to collaborate on a joint initiative focused on early childhood. Recognizing that strengthening early care and education for young children and their families is the most important investment communities can make for the future, the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative was developed.

Strong evidence shows that our country is under investing in early childhood development, which is diminishing our nation's ability to compete in the global marketplace. Research confirms the huge long-term economic payoffs from investments in quality early childhood development programs.



Early Childhood Initiative

Partners:

- ◆ West Central Initiative
- ◆ Parents
- ◆ United Way of OTC
- ◆ Fergus Falls ISD #544 and
 - ◆ Early Childhood Family Education
 - ◆ Community Education
- ◆ OTC Public Health
- ◆ Fergus Falls Public Library
- ◆ Fergus Falls Head Start
- ◆ Fergus Falls Area Spec. Ed. Coop
- ◆ Fergus Falls Police Department
- ◆ Children's Corner Learning Center
- ◆ Child Care Resource and Referral
- ◆ Lakes Country Service Coop
- ◆ Morning Sun Christian Preschool
- ◆ Shover Nursery School
- ◆ A Center for the Arts
- ◆ Permanent Family Resource Center



For more information contact us at
1.218.731.4163 or look us up on the web
at: www.fergusfallseci.org



THE FERGUS FALLS
COMMUNITY

MUD PIE
ADVENTURE
PARK



AN EARLY CHILDHOOD
OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AT
MCKINLEY SCHOOL



Outdoor Play is Key for: Exercise

Outdoor play allows children to run, climb, yell and laugh, exerting their energy in a positive way. Multiple play areas build balance and coordination.

Math and Science Skill Building

Math and science skills are a natural fit with outdoor classrooms. Children learn about caring for living things. They learn to count, predict and estimate as they play with items like pine cones, sand and water.

Early Literacy

Children need chances each day to explore nature, helping them to learn new words, read signs and tell stories about their outdoor experiences.



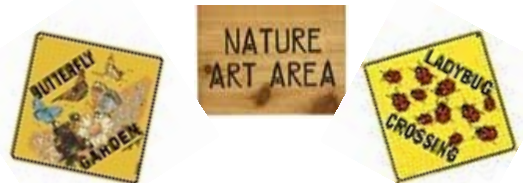
What is the

MUD PIE ADVENTURE PARK?

The Otter Preschool, ECFE and Otter Care with the help of the Fergus Falls Early Childhood Initiative have developed a plan to build a natural outdoor classroom located at the McKinley Early Childhood School site in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

This early childhood outdoor classroom has been designed with the needs of all children in mind, including:

- ◇ Handicap accessible walking/tricycle paths to encourage exercise for both children and adults
- ◇ Nooks and crannies for climbing and exploring
- ◇ A shade structure to serve as a gathering place for families, picnics, and group learning
- ◇ Community and early childhood gardening boxes and opportunities
- ◇ Dramatic play areas, including a stage
- ◇ Naturalistic landscaping to teach the wonder of natural science.



**To learn more go to:
natureexplore.org**

Donation Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Amount of donation: \$ _____

Notes about donation: (example
"In Honor of John & Jane Doe")

**Please make checks payable
and mail to:**

**United Way—Mud Pie Park
120 East Washington Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537**

