



PARTICIPATORY DESIGN ACTIVITY SERIES

Window of Wishes

"If you could have the best school ground ever, one that's good for people and the planet, what would be in it?"



EVERGREEN

Details

This activity aims to help students visualize their ideal outdoor play and learning environment and share ideas about what would make their school ground more welcoming, calm, playful, and connected to nature. Older grades can be introduced to thinking about features and elements that support climate resiliency.

Category: Brainstorming and creative expression

Grades: K–8 with modifications specific to each age group.

Materials:

- A printed or hand-drawn window frame (one per student)
- Plain paper or drawing booklet
- Pencils, markers, or crayons
- Optional: sticky notes for extra ideas



Students will:

- Imagine and express what a welcoming, nature-rich, school ground could look and feel like.
- Use creativity and observation to reflect on what their current school grounds offer—and what they wish they could do outside.
- Communicate ideas visually or in writing, sharing what matters most to them in outdoor play and learning spaces.
- Recognize the diversity of perspectives by seeing how classmates imagine the school grounds differently.
- Contribute meaningful input to the school’s design process by identifying features that support play, learning, comfort, and nature.

Step 1. Set the Scene

Invite students to imagine their classroom window as a portal into the future—a future where their school ground has been redesigned to support play, learning, wildlife, shade, comfort, and connection to nature.

Prompt them with a simple question:

“If our school grounds were everything you hoped for... what would you see when you looked outside?”

Invite students to add sticky notes or written notes explaining:

- Why they chose their ideas
- What they would do in the space
- How it would make them feel

Step 2. Create the Window of Wishes

Give each student a blank window frame (see below). Ask them to draw, doodle, or write what they imagine outside that window. This could include:

- Spaces for exploring, playing, or learning
- Trees, gardens, water features, or wildlife
- Shade, gathering places, quiet nooks, or adventure areas
- Features that help keep the school cool, manage rainwater, or support nature
- Encourage boundless imagination—ideas do not need to be realistic at this stage.

Step 3. Share and Reflect

Give students the chance to share their windows with partners, small groups, or the whole class.

Reflection prompts:

- *What do you notice about other people's ideas?*
- *Are there common themes or features across all the windows?*
- *What are you most excited to be able to do in the school ground that we can't do now?*

4. Collect & Synthesize

Post all the windows on a “Dream Wall.” This visual collection becomes a powerful input for your school ground design process, highlighting shared dreams, student priorities, and opportunities to invite nature back to school.



I Want all Creehrs to cum here.

Window of Wishes for your Future School Grounds

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Imagine you are looking out a window onto your future school grounds. If you could have the best school ground ever, that's good for people and the planet, what would be in it? Think of what you and your friends would be doing there. Draw a picture in the window to show us what you wish for.

You can also include words.

