

Informal Science Education

PREAMBLE

NSTA recognizes and encourages the development of sustained links between the informal institutions and schools. Informal science education generally refers to programs and experiences developed outside the classroom by institutions and organizations that include:

- children's and natural history museums, science-technology centers, planetariums, zoos and aquaria, botanical gardens and arboreta, parks, nature centers and environmental education centers, and scientific research laboratories
- media, involving print, film, broadcast, and electronic forms
- community-based organizations and projects, including youth organizations and community outreach services

A growing body of research documents the power of informal learning experiences to spark curiosity and engage interest in the sciences during school years and throughout a lifetime. Informal science education institutions have a long history of providing staff development for teachers, and enrichment experiences for students and the public. Informal science education accommodates different learning styles and effectively serves the complete spectrum of learners: gifted, challenged, non-traditional, and second language learners.

<http://www.nsta.org/positionstatement&psid=13>

