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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Lena Pope Early Learning Center located at University of North Texas Health Science Center receives National Recognition as a Certified Nature Explore Classroom**

Lincoln, Neb. (January 20, 2023)— Lena Pope Early Learning Center located at University of North Texas Health Science Center, at 3620 Modlin Avenue in Fort Worth, Texas has earned recognition as a Certified Nature Explore Classroom from the Nature Explore program, which is a division of nonprofit Dimensions Educational Research Foundation.

This certification confers on Lena Pope Early Learning Center a number of benefits, including membership in an ever-expanding network of more than 500 like-minded spaces. Certified Nature Explore Classrooms foster highly effective, nature-based outdoor learning.

“Lena Pope Early Learning Center-UNTHSC’s commitment to providing research-based and nature-rich learning offers a wonderful example to programs and educators throughout the country.” said Heather Fox, director of communications and outreach for the Nature Explore program. “These spaces inspire hands-on activity, creativity, play and plenty of time exploring the natural world for children of all ages.”

These unique outdoor classrooms offer interactive, open-ended materials and elements that allow them to use their creativity, imaginations and initiative. Research consistently shows that children who learn and grow in Nature Explore Classrooms exhibit enhanced concentration, develop creativity and problem solving techniques, manage stress in healthy ways and develop skills across the spectrum of academic and creative learning.

Nature Explore Classrooms have been developed by a team of master educators, landscape architects and researchers in response to the documented growing disconnect between children and nature. The classrooms help fill this void by integrating research-based outdoor learning opportunities into children’s daily lives. Classrooms that are designed according to standards and principles described in Dimensions Educational Research Foundation’s [Learning With Nature Idea Book](#) are eligible to become Certified Nature Explore Classrooms.



More information **about** Lena Pope ELC-UNTHSC may be found at <https://certified.natureexplore.org/lena-pope-early-learning-center-at-university-of-north-texas-health-science-center/>

Serving children and families for 93 years, Lena Pope has a rich and storied history in Fort Worth. Since its inception in 1930, Lena Pope has identified the needs of local children and delivered effective services to meet those needs. Today, Lena Pope's programming focuses on prevention and early intervention services that support child development and improve behavioral and mental health. By investing in high-quality early education, adolescent mental health services, and behavioral interventions early on, Lena Pope offers Fort Worth and Tarrant County children the tools necessary for success. For more information, visit [LenaPope.org](http://LenaPope.org).

**About Dimensions Educational Research Foundation:** The mission of the Dimensions Educational Research Foundation is to transform children's lives through meaningful daily connections with nature. Its Nature Explore team provides research-based outdoor classroom design services, educator workshops and natural products. More information about Dimensions is available at <http://www.dimensionsfoundation.org/>