The purpose of this study was to determine how outdoor play spaces were utilized in a midwestern state and to what extent. Participants in the study were 292 randomly selected licensed child care centers representing the range of quality in the state. One preschool classroom and teacher from each center participated in the study. Classrooms and outdoor environments were observed and teachers completed a survey of demographic information and practices. Checklist were used to measure compliance and outdoor opportunities. The study found less than half of the facilities met minimum licensing requirements. There was an average of five different opportunities available for children, though the complexity of the environment consisted of simple play units. Results also indicated that teachers sometimes plan for outdoor activities. There was modest but significant correlations between teacher specialized education and the total number of variety opportunities and planned outdoor activities.
grow and change throughout the year helps children to understand and learn more about nature. Including natural environments in outdoor play spaces. An outdoor play space with natural features designed for toddlers in long day care will look very different from an outdoor space with natural features designed for an outside school hours care or family day care service. Considerations when designing or modifying outdoor play spaces with natural environments. Quality outdoor preschool environments in early care and education centers. By JENNIFER LYNN TOWELL, Bachelor of Science University of Central Oklahoma. Edmond, Oklahoma 1997. Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of the. Quality child care includes providing children the opportunity for outdoor play daily both in the morning and afternoon, even if for a brief period of time (Frost 1992; Harms et al., 1998). In relation to the amount of time spent outdoors, Frost (1992) reports that the Scandinavians allow for two hours of outdoor play daily, which concurs with Trister Dodge et al.’s (2002) recommendation, though they suggest an hour in both the morning and afternoon, extending the time when the weather permits.