

ultra

# Kidtelligence

## THE NEW SCHOOLS

A multitude of new school models have gained in popularity since the pandemic as a way to break away from traditional learning and get kids excited about actively participating in planning their own education. As kids squeeze every last drop of fun out of their summer freedom, back-to-school looks different for some kids thanks to innovative new approaches.

**Pull Up A Tree** - Forest Schools, which have their roots in Scandinavian traditions, have been growing in popularity for many years. The pandemic, though, increased their popularity as an alternative to the isolation of remote learning. Instead of sitting quietly in a classroom, class is held outdoors in nature where kids build forts, study bugs, and read stories by a babbling brook. Champions of Forest Schools say they promote physical activity, problem solving skills and a unique connection to nature.

"Nature is your co-teacher. You may have a plan but then a cluster of ladybugs starts flying through the air and suddenly that's your new curriculum," said Joanna Ferraro, founder of Oakland's Early Ecology preschool. (Karen D'Souza, EduSource)

**Blue School** - Founded as a playgroup in 2006 by the Blue Man Group...yes that Blue Man Group...the Blue School has evolved into an innovative school where kids 2 through 8 "come up with ways to improve recycling, create 3D models of New York City, and fix home appliances. They gain an intimacy with real-world problems that few kids are exposed to in learning their times tables with flash cards." (Chris Weller, Business Insider)

**"It's not enough to give them knowledge, you also have to give them a way of transforming knowledge into action, and that's very important for us, and I think it is important for modern schools."**

- Ørestad Gymnasium headmaster, Allan Kjær Andersen

**Grand Rapids Public Museum High School** - The Public Museum High School in Michigan is located in the Grand Rapids Public Museum and the Museum Archives. Students are surrounded by fossils, art and cultural artifacts.

"The museum is a resource students use nearly every day but is just one of the places they learn. Students also spend time working with community partners and collaborators all over the city, from universities and nonprofit groups to local scientists, artists, and businesspeople." (Superschool.org)

**Brightworks School** - "Brightworks takes some of the most dangerous things parents tell their kids not to do and makes an entire curriculum out of them." In a San Francisco warehouse filled with art, homemade forts and lots of tools, kids get dirty working on hands-on projects like taking apart appliances and building a sail car. According to Justine Macuely, Brightworks program coordinator, "We invite students to be co-authors of their education, embracing and supporting the individual and the unique set of skills and interests that motivate them." (Chris Weller, Business Insider)

**Ørestad Gymnasium** - Ørestad Gymnasium is a school in Copenhagen, Denmark without classrooms. Hailed as an architectural wonder, the school was purpose-built to fit the school's philosophy of mixing 50% teacher-led learning with 50% independent student-centered learning. (Matthew Jenkins, The Guardian)

What all these schools have in common is their partnership with their students to create individualized curriculum that fits the needs and interest of each child. When kids are given agency over their own education, they are more likely to become engaged, enthusiastic lifelong learners.

