

ences with the outdoors. Providing opportunities for such experiences and sharing them with young children is the essence of environmental education. Environmental education for the early years focuses primarily on young children exploring and enjoying the world of nature under the guidance and with the companionship of caring adults.



Adapted from "What Can I Teach My Young Child About The Environment?" at [www.KidSource.com](http://www.KidSource.com)

# The Iroquois Thanksgiving Address

Ohenton Kariwahtekwen

## GREETINGS TO THE NATURAL WORLD

**The People.** Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people. *Now our minds are one.*

**The Earth Mother.** We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our mother, we send greetings and thanks. *Now our minds are one.*

**The Waters.** We give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms- waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of Water. *Now our minds are one.*

The address goes on to offer thanks to the food plants, the medicine herbs, the animals, the trees, the birds, the four winds, the thunderers, the sun, grandmother moon, the stars, the enlightened creatures, and the Creator. The full text of the address can be found at:

[http://www.nativevillage.org/Inspiration-/iroquois\\_thanksgiving\\_address.htm](http://www.nativevillage.org/Inspiration-/iroquois_thanksgiving_address.htm)

This eloquent prayer of acknowledgement and thanksgiving for all the gifts of the earth is one of the key speeches of the Six Nations Iroquois. It is given to open and close social and religious gatherings in traditional Iroquois communities.

Maybe your community has a tradition like this. Or you might like to write a thanksgiving address with your children and families, using the Iroquois address as an inspiration.

One elementary school had the children write their own address and illustrate it, making it into a beautiful book.

