

Karen Brown

Karen Brown is the creative director of the Center for Ecoliteracy (www.ecoliteracy.org). The Center was founded in 1995 as a nonprofit dedicated to education for sustainable living by Fritjof Capra, author and systems thinker; Peter Buckley, business leader, farmer, and philanthropist; and executive director Zenobia Barlow, a pioneer in creating models of schooling for sustainability. The Center recognizes that students need to experience and understand how nature sustains life, and encourages schools to teach and model sustainable practices.



Using systems thinking as a conceptual framework for all its publications and endeavors, the Center has worked at multiple levels of scale — locally, statewide, and nationally — to originate initiatives with broad systemic impacts. A prominent example is California Food for California Kids®, a partnership of the Center and the TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation. California Food for California Kids is a statewide network of 88 public school districts that serve over **340 million** school meals a year. It uses a systems approach to achieve multiple goals: improved student health and learning outcomes — while increasing students' ecological understanding of where their food comes from and how it reaches the table; economic benefits to local communities who provide food and labor to the school food system; and more sustainable environmental practices because fresh, healthy ingredients travel a shorter distance and generate less packaging and waste. California Food for California Kids has received national and international recognition as a model for positive large systems change and accessibility.

As creative director, Karen's work has received recognition across the United States and beyond for its effectiveness in communicating complex, technical, or systemic issues with clarity, concision, and appeal. Her work has been included in the Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, and featured in *The New York Times*, *Architectural Digest*, and other popular and technical publications as well as on *Today* on NBC. She has lectured on design and environmental topics throughout the United States, Japan, and Europe. She is a co-author of the Center's latest interactive educational resource, *Understanding Food and Climate Change*, available free at ecoliteracy.org.

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