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Nature-Based Preschool National Conference

August 2-5, 2017

Education in Context:
Nature, Culture, and Equity
in Preschool

Program

Seattle, Washington • Seattle University

naturalstart.org





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Nature-Based Preschool National Conference

August 2-5, 2017

Education in Context:
Nature, Culture, and Equity
in Preschool

Welcome!

On behalf of the entire team at the North American Association for Environmental Education, welcome to the 2017 Nature-Based Preschool National Conference! At this year's conference, you are joining educators, administrators, researchers, and advocates for nature-based early childhood education from over 30 U.S. states and Canadian provinces. This broad geographic representation reflects the tremendous momentum and energy in the nature preschool movement, and we are thrilled that you are at the forefront of it!

Our wonderful Planning Committee volunteers, led by our Conference Chair, Kit Harrington, have organized three-and-a-half days of informative sessions, inspiring plenary addresses, networking opportunities, and site tours that showcase practices and ideas that you can take right back to your classroom. And this year's conference theme, *Education in Context: Nature, Culture, and Equity in Preschool*, draws our attention to the continued importance of culture in a field whose organizing principle is nature.

For some of you, this may be your first Nature-Based Preschool National Conference, like it is for me. For others, this may be the fourth or even the fifth! I am looking forward to meeting each and every one of you, learning from and with you, and understanding how the Natural Start Alliance and the North American Association for Environmental Education can be resources to you in the months and years ahead.

Most of all, I am eager to be among a group of people working to help children discover "the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in," as Rachel Carson put it over sixty years ago. This is critically important work and our time together in Seattle will help us to sustain our momentum and enrich the lives of many more children.



Emilian Geczi

Director, Natural Start Alliance
North American Association for
Environmental Education

Welcome from Your Conference Planning Team

On behalf of the entire team, welcome to Seattle! In recent years, Seattle has emerged as the epicenter of the urban outdoor preschool movement, heralding a wave of grass-roots nature-based early childhood programming in Washington State and beyond. Just a few months ago, Washington became the first state in North America to pass legislation to develop licensing for outdoor nature-based preschools. With all that in mind, we are incredibly excited to hold our first West Coast conference in this beautiful urban setting. Our planning team has worked diligently over the past year, and it is our hope that the coming days will provide you with the inspiration and innovative ideas that the city is known for.



Kit Harrington
Conference Chair

Conference Planning Team:

Amanda McMickle, Ann Halley, Betty Olivolo, Christy Merrick, Chuck Lennox, Kit Harrington, Megan Gessler, Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Patty Born-Selly, Regina Fong, Sarah Heller, Sheila Williams Ridge, Anna Dutke

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Schedule at a Glance

Wednesday, August 2

5 pm – 7 pm

Registration & Welcome Reception

Campion Tea Garden

Thursday, August 3

7 am – 8 am

Early Birds Tour

Tea Garden

7:30 am – 8 am

Ethnobotanical Walk

Ethnobotanical Garden

8 am – 9 am

Registration

Pigott PACCAR Atrium

9 am – 5 pm

Exhibits (on-going)

Atrium

9 am – 10:30 am

Welcome & Keynote Address by Dr. Debra Sullivan

Auditorium

10:30 am – 11 am

Break with Refreshments

Atrium

11 am – 12:30 pm

Concurrent Sessions, Block 1

See session descriptions

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Lunch

Atrium

1:30 pm – 3 pm

Concurrent Sessions, Block 2

See session descriptions

3 pm – 3:30 pm

Break with Refreshments

Atrium

3:30 pm – 5 pm

Concurrent Sessions, Block 3

See session descriptions

5 pm – 7 pm

Reception & Dinner Sponsored by Polarn O. Pyret USA

Campion Ballroom

7 pm – 8:30 pm

Self-Care Session

Outdoors on The Green

7 – 8 pm

School's Out Movie Screening

Auditorium

Friday, August 4

7 am – 8 am

Early Birds Tour

Tea Garden

7:30 am – 9 am

Breakfast

Cherry Street Market

9 am – 5 pm

Exhibits (on-going)

Atrium

9 am – 10:30 am

Opening Panel Discussion

Auditorium

10:30 am – 11 am

Break with Refreshments

Atrium

11 am – 12:30 pm

Research Poster Sessions, Block 4

Campion Ballroom

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Lunch

Cherry Street Market

1:30 pm – 3 pm

Concurrent Sessions, Block 5

See session descriptions

3 pm – 3:30 pm

Break with Refreshments

Atrium

3:30 pm – 4:50 pm

Closing Plenary by Dr. Dilafruz Williams

Auditorium

5 pm – 6 pm

iLabs Presentation

Pigott 103

6 pm – 8 pm

Networking at Nearby Restaurants

Varies

Saturday, August 5

8:30 am

Meet for Field Trips

9 am

Buses depart (Full day trips)

9:15 am

Buses depart (Half day trips)

12 pm

Half day trips airport drop-off

1:15 pm

Half day trips return to campus

3 pm

Full day trips return to campus (no airport drop off)

(optional Field Trips) Trips depart from Visitor Lot Near Pigott Building

Conference Strands

N

Nature Preschool 101—Sessions in this strand are most appropriate for those who are interested in starting a nature-based preschool program or learning more about the field. Examples of topics include: business planning, innovative partnerships, licensing programs, and more.

T

Teachers—Sessions in this strand are most appropriate for educators who are interested in refining their practice as educators in nature-based programs. Examples of topics include: teaching strategies, documentation and assessment, and curriculum design and implementation.

A

Administration—Sessions in this strand are most appropriate for administrators who are running nature-based programs. Examples of topics include: best practices in nature-based education, fundraising, and marketing nature-based programs.

Research—Sessions allow participants to meet researchers in nature-based education, learn about their research, and engage in group discussions on research topics in a roundtable format.

Wi Fi

Free Wi-Fi is available at Seattle University. Please use the network sparingly to accommodate all the users.

Questions? Text us!

If you have questions, stop by the Registration Desk in the Atrium to ask for help. You can also text questions to **206-890-6804**. This number is for text messages only. Look for volunteers wearing bright green scarves – they can help you!

Share the Conference!

Use **#NaturePreschool2017** to talk about the Nature-Based Preschool National Conference on social media.



Wednesday Schedule

5 – 7 pm

Registration and Welcome Reception

Campion Tea Garden

Thursday Schedule

7 – 8 am

Early Birds

Tea Garden

Meet at the Campion Tea Garden to search for birds in the hidden nooks and crannies of the S. U. Campus with Larry Hubbell, Master Birder and author of the www.unionbaywatch.blogspot.com nature blog.

8 am – 9 am

Registration

Atrium

9 am – 10:30 am

Welcome & Keynote Address: Equity and Identity:

Auditorium

A Socio-Cultural Examination of Nature-Based Early Childhood Education

Dr. Debra Sullivan, President, Seattle Affiliate of the National Black Child Development Institute



Dr. Debra Sullivan

In just a few decades, the field of nature-based early childhood education has grown from a scattering of dedicated educators into a full-fledged international movement. As the field matures, we face an increasing need for definition, for answers to questions with profound implications: What does it mean to practice nature-based preschool? How do we set standards without becoming exclusionary? Who are we teaching to, and why? This inquiry ultimately influences the design and makeup of our classrooms and demographics in far-reaching ways. Using a lens of socio-cultural anthropology, Dr. Sullivan will frame the development of our broader identity in the larger social, cultural, and historical contexts. This meaningful conversation explores the true nature of equity in both policy and practice.

10:30 am – 11 am

Break with Refreshments

11 am – 12:30 pm

Concurrent Sessions (Block 1)**Assessing the Nature-Based Curriculum** A

Admin 203

Collette Jarvela-Kuhnen, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center

What is the purpose of assessment? How do we assess a program based on outdoor exploration? While we do not claim to have all the answers, we have experimented with multiple approaches over the years. We have determined what doesn't work and will explore what does during this session.

Crosswalk to Success: Standards Based Curriculum A **Designed for Nature Preschool**

Admin 208

Kathleen Beining, D. Ed., Saint Vincent College/WPNReserve

This session will share an overview of how a unique, site-specific curriculum was constructed from cross-walking three sets of standards into one usable document used as a foundation. Tips and steps to construct a site-specific nature-based curriculum will be offered.

Design Process for Outdoor Learning N

Admin 220

Edward Melvin, SHP Leading Design

This session will explore a design process for envisioning outdoor classroom spaces in ideal and real life situations, taking into account context and affordance as they relate to nature preschools and kindergartens.



Bringing Healthy Outdoor Play Nationwide A Outdoors on the Green

Josh Falk, National Wildlife Federation

The National Wildlife Federation, in a national partnership with the Storer Foundation and the North American Association of Environmental Educators, and Qualistar Colorado and Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) of North Carolina State University in Colorado, is developing policy strategies that support the healthy growth and development of young children. This project is designed to create outdoor learning environments (OLEs) in early childhood settings that promote physical activity, healthy behaviors, and interaction with nature. In this interactive presentation, NWF will highlight these strategies and facilitate a discussion to collect feedback from educators and administrators in the field.

High Quality Environmental Education for Young Children: Guidelines for Program Design, Outdoor Spaces, and Educator Professional Development T Pigott 101

Linda Rhoads, Alliance for Childhood

Through a series of interactive modalities, participants will be introduced to and receive a free resource designed to foster developmentally appropriate environmental education. Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence was created by a panel of experts in early childhood and environmental education fields, and published by the North American Association for Environmental Education. It provides a set of research-based recommendations for developing and administering high-quality environmental education programs and experiences for young children. Focusing on ages three to six, the Guidelines identify six key characteristics of high-quality early childhood environmental education programs, including program philosophy, DAP, play and exploration, outdoor spaces, curriculum, and professional development.



Can You Write in the Rain? Rethinking Traditional Materials and Discovering New Ones in an All-Outdoor Preschool N Pigott 102

Katherine Miller and Rachel Franz, Tiny Trees Preschool

Without a building, supplies can get wet, muddy, or blown away! Explore how to reframe traditional materials for use in your outdoor space and discover innovative tools and manipulatives. Meet standards and children's developmental needs, including physical, cognitive, literacy, math, and creative arts, while overcoming the challenges of the elements.

Sea To Me T Pigott 103

Shanda Freitas and Heather Lemkelde, University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center

"Sea to Me" is a journey of stewardship that instilled the Hawaiian cultural values of "Mālama 'O Ke Kai and Mālama 'Āina " (caring for the ocean and land) to its participants.

Thursday Schedule

11 am – 12:30 pm



12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

1:30 pm – 3 pm

Child-Nature Interaction in a Forest Nature Preschool: Pigott 208

An Interaction Pattern Approach T

Peter Kahn, Thea Weiss, Kit A. Harrington, Kayla Carrington, Sara Park Perrins, and Elizabeth M. Lev; University of Washington

In this study we use an interaction pattern approach to characterize child-nature interaction at Fiddleheads Forest School located in an Arboretum in Seattle, WA. We suggest that his new line of research can help give voice to nature preschools nationwide.

Learning Opportunities in the Garden T Pigott 308

Joey Schoen and Marty Watson, Dodge Nature Preschool

Gardens—planned and unplanned—offer powerful potential for learning. Children gain rich knowledge from direct engagement, nature-based observations, place-based learning, and sensory experiences when growing a garden. Join us in a conversation about the many wonders of young children growing their own food and share your own garden and harvest experience!

Mapping a Whole Park: How Emergent Curriculum Pigott 309

Thrives in Nature-Based Preschools T

Lisa Mathias, Under the Maple Tree School and ESD 123

One little acorn so smooth and brown – where did it come from? After a multi-media recreation of our school's challenge to map every tree in the park, participants will identify and discuss ways emergent curriculum classrooms follow the threads of learning goals and individualized child outcomes using science and story.

Lunch

Cherry Street Market

Concurrent Sessions (Block 2)

How Nature Play Supports STEM Learning T Admin 203

Patty Born, Hamline University

Children naturally engage in STEM learning while they are busy at nature play. In this session, learn about core STEM thinking skills, and consider how children constantly rely on these skills and practices during play. Finally, consider how you can add more support for STEM through developmentally appropriate practice, choice of materials, and use of natural areas.

Supporting and Assessing Risk T Outdoors on The Green

Kristen Peterson, Butterfly Hill Nature Preschool and Wild Rumpus Forest and Nature Programs

Is RISK a scary word to you? Explaining risk-taking to others can be daunting. Parents fear their children will get hurt. Leave this session feeling confident in your knowledge of the benefits of risk-taking in early childhood education, the difference between risks and hazards, and tools for assessing risk and evaluating risky play in your nature preschool program.



More than ABC's and 123's: Using Nature and Service Learning to Assess What Really Matters T

Admin 208

Peter Dargatz, Woodside Elementary School, Hamilton School District

In this “assessment age,” reaching rising academic standards can take students and teachers away from what really matters. Using a unique “4 P” philosophy that emphasizes nature and service learning, find out how assessments are used to reach today’s standards while providing students what they really need (and want).

Whole-Hearted Teaching T

Outdoors on The Green

Jenn Liebham, Fiddleheads Forest School, University of Washington Botanic Gardens

Following the work of researcher Brene Brown, this session will focus on what it means to be a wholehearted teacher and tools to do so. We as teachers want children to take risks, not fear failing, and to “fail forward,” so we have to be that way. This session is designed to look inward, and connect with our inner self by reflecting, and then exploring ways to support ourselves as we become more wholehearted. This is a practice of taking care of ourselves as humans so we can be better for the children we work with and our community of friends and family.

Preserving the Harvest with Fox in the Kitchen T Pigott 101

Susie Fox, Fox in the Forest/ Fox in the Kitchen

Remember the Little Red Hen? Let’s get kids involved in harvest, preserving for year-round cooking. After a demo of “handwashing for a crowd made easy” we’ll learn to make dandelion syrup, rose petal candy, nettle soufflé, kale chips, fruit leather, tomato candy, and more.

Sewing Seeds of Systems Thinking in Nature Preschools T

Pigott 102

Ellen Zito, WA State Department of Early Learning;
Coleen O’Connell, Lesley University

Sewing Systems Thinking in Nature Preschool will highlight ways teachers can focus on patterns seen in outdoor classrooms. Theatrical stories, books, and project ideas, that elucidate social-ecological systems, will be shared as starting points for conversations that get students to think critically about the world in which they live.



Thursday Schedule

1:30 pm – 3 pm

(continued)



Standards-Based Preschool Nature Education at a Nature Center T

Pigott 208

Angela Belli and Allison Petris, Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve at Saint Vincent College

Incorporating academic standards, undergraduate preservice teachers, science, and community in preschool program design at Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve at Saint Vincent College has provided creative and effective programs for ten years. Come learn the variety of programs designed for preschool-aged children on a 50-acre suburban nature center.

Helping Parents Understand the Ins and Outs of Outdoor Schooling N

Pigott 305

Kendall Becherer, Kinder Earth

In this presentation, I'll help teachers and directors strategize how to manage expectations before families even begin your outdoor program, outlining some of the most important factors you should communicate to parents about their role (snacks, gear, drop off, community, etc.) and the way outdoor schools work

"Teeter Totter" Teaching: Balancing Teaching and Child Autonomy in a Play-Based Outdoor Preschool T

Admin 220

Rowena Hall and Ann Glaser, Tiny Treks

The Anti-Teaching Guide to building resilient happy kids in the Pacific Northwest! Learn through video, photos, and practice from an experienced outdoor team. This session focuses on the balance between teaching and encouraging child autonomy. Learn positive steps to lead your class in creating their own narrative.

3 pm – 3:30 pm

Break with Refreshments

Atrium

3:30 pm – 5 pm

Concurrent Sessions (Block 3)

Starting a New Nature-Based Preschool: Plans, Partnerships, and Devilish Details N

Admin 203

David Catlin, David Catlin Consulting, LLC; and Rachel Larimore, Consultant
Starting a new preschool? You say you know all about early childhood education, but are perhaps are less confident in your understanding of the business side? If you can handle little people but aren't so sure about big ones--like architects, attorneys, licensing authorities, potential landlords, and prospective partners--this workshop is for you.

It Doesn't Come Naturally: Making the Business Case for a Nature-Based Preschool N

Admin 208

Claire Berezowitz and Amber Gray, Educational Consultant

This interactive presentation will shed a comforting light on the mysterious business aspects of establishing a nature-based preschool. Presenters will guide participants through the process of performing a market analysis, establishing needs and assets, developing a business model, while highlighting important legal, risk management, and licensure considerations.



Everyone Can Play: Welcoming Children of All Abilities Into Nature-Based Preschools T

Admin 220

Liz Bullard and Hannah Gallagher, Seattle Children's PlayGarden

At the PlayGarden we include children with Down syndrome, Autism, and Cerebral Palsy and typically developing peers. Learn what we have learned over the past 7 years in developing and implementing a fully inclusive preschool. Explore the challenges and the rewards of an inclusive program and gain practical solutions to these challenges.

Salmon Speaks T

Admin 223

Natalie Lucas and Tracy Barkman, South Slokan & Area Childcare Society "Salmon Speaks" shares the voice of the children as the children speak for the voiceless salmon. This is an environmental project that can be used as a pedagogical model for educators who are interested in implementing nature-based programming by following the lead of the children. Resources created to reinforce and extend the children's journey will be presented.

Equity in Nature Play T

Outdoors on the Green

Linda Charlton, Cibolo Nature School

Too often nature-based education happens only in places like nature centers or zoos. Many kids get to attend field trips or camp. But what about nature play for all kids? Let's discuss how we can encourage nature play in areas where nature is not so easily accessible.



Supporting Young Children with Diverse Learning Needs in Nature-Based Programs: Benefits, Opportunities, and Strategies T

Pigott 103

Deborah Carter and Juli Pool, Boise State University; Marie Lister, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools; and Sheila Williams Ridge, University of Minnesota Lab School

We will discuss the benefits and opportunities of including children with diverse learning needs in nature-based programs and share strategies for providing individualized supports within the context of daily activities. Participants will discuss benefits, opportunities, and challenges and have the opportunity to explore strategies for a range of developmental needs.

3:30 pm – 5 pm
(continued)

Reading the Landscape: Wildlife Tracking as a Tool for STEAM Learning T

Pigott 101

Joanna Wright, Fiddleheads Forest School, University of Washington Everything in nature tells a story. Join us to learn about wildlife tracking as a tool for exploration and inquiry. We will develop skills for perceiving, identifying, and interpreting a variety of common tracks and sign. Participants will expand their ecological awareness, and gain transformative tools for nature-based STEAM learning.

Thursday Schedule

3:30 pm – 5 pm

(continued)



Documenting Nature-Based Learning T

Pigott 102

Sunny Crandell, Santa Barbara City College; Antioch University, Santa Barbara
Methods of documenting authentic emergent nature-based learning, in order to share, revisit, and build upon those themes with children, parents and teachers, will be presented. Strategies for inviting parents to share discovery-based learning that happens away from school with the school community will also be introduced.

Collaborative Design for a Nature and Place-Based Early Childhood Center and Teacher Degree Programs T

Pigott 308

Bob Ellis, Prescott College; Sarah Silver and Ellen Bashor, Prescott College
Center for Nature and Place-Based Early Childhood Education
This collaborative session will focus on how Prescott College's experience in founding its Center for Nature and Place-Based Early Childhood Education might initiate similar efforts elsewhere and will ask participants for insight and ideas for designing curricula for the College's new nature and place-based early childhood teacher degree programs.

Audubon Babies: Exploring Nature With the Very Young T

Pigott 309

Lisa Randerson, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center
Children are never too young to enjoy the wonders of nature. Come to learn about and share how to design a parent/child program for children 6-24 months, rich with sensory experiences and opportunities to explore the natural world, both indoors and outdoors.

5 pm – 7 pm

7 pm – 8:30 pm



Reception & Dinner, Sponsored by Polarn O. Pyret USA

Campion Ballroom

Optional Evening Session: Self-Care

Outdoors on the Green

Lauryn Smith Demyanovich, NatureBridge
Taking care of ourselves is not self-indulgent! Self-care is a tool for us to be more engaged and better meet the needs of our students. By employing relaxation methods as well as revisiting our own love of the natural world, we will explore many ways we can take care of ourselves as dedicated teachers: body, mind, and spirit.

Movie Screening: *School's Out: Lessons from a Forest Kindergarten*

Auditorium

In Switzerland's Langnau am Albis, a suburb of Zurich, children 4 to 7 years of age go to kindergarten in the woods every day, no matter what the weather. This eye-opening film follows the forest kindergarten through the seasons of one school year and looks into the important question of what it is that children need at that age. There is laughter, beauty and amazement in the process of finding out. The documentary is a combination of pure observational footage of the children at kindergarten in the forest, paired with interviews with parents, teachers, child development experts, and alumni, offering the viewers a genuine look into the forest kindergarten. There are also scenes of a traditional kindergarten in the United States to show the contrast between the different approaches. This is a Linden Tree Films Production directed by Lisa Molomot.



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Friday Schedule

7 am – 8 am

Early Birds
See Thursday description

Tea Garden

7:30 am – 8 am

Ethnobotanical Hike Crosswalk next to the Ethnobotanical Garden
Take a tour of the Vi Hilbert Ethnobotanical Garden on campus with Janie Murphy from Seattle University to discover native plants of Washington state.

7:30 am – 9 am

Breakfast Cherry Street Market

9 am – 10:30 am

Opening Panel: Equity and Diversity in Nature-Based Early Childhood Education

Auditorium

Panelists: Adana Protonentis, Dr. Debra Ren-Etta Sullivan, Running Grass; Moderator: Kit Harrington

Nature-based early childhood education should be accessible to all children, but questions surrounding diversity and cultural responsiveness persist throughout the field. Many schools feel uncertain about how to create an environment that is welcoming to all students, regardless of ability, gender, race, or cultural identity. Adana Protonentis, Operations Director of Seattle Children's Playgarden, Debra Ren-Etta Sullivan, President of the Seattle Chapter of the National Black Child Development Institute, and Running Grass, founder of the Three-Circles Center for Multicultural Environmental Education, will reflect on the invisible barriers that prevent certain populations from accessing nature-based preschool and explore steps that we can take as a field and as teachers to cultivate diversity and honor the individual differences, experiences, and needs of our student population.



10:30 am – 11 am

Break with Refreshments

Atrium

11 am – 12:30 pm

Research Poster Session (Block 4)

Campion Ballroom

Feel free to move about and explore topics as researchers present and discuss their work.

Researching the Impact of Nature-Based Preschool & Kindergarten on Children's Learning

Rachel Larimore, Michigan State University

The Adult Side of Early Childhood Programming

Wanda Peters, Prescott College

Exploring Children's Experiences in a Forest with GoPro Videos

Debra Harwood, Brock University, St. Catherine's, Ontario

Creative by Nature: Investigating the Impact of Nature Preschools on Children's Creative Thinking

Julie Ernst and Mandi Wojciehowski, University of Minnesota, Duluth

Graduate Program Information

Patty Born, Hamline University

Bridging the Gap Between Interactive Technology and Nature Play

Kristen Tarr, University of Maine at Farmington



12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Lunch

Cherry Street Market

1:30 pm – 3 pm

Concurrent Sessions (Block 5)**Outdoor Preschool Legislation Passes:**

Pigott 103

How You Can License An Outdoor Classroom in WA State A

Andrew Jay, Tiny Trees; Genevieve Stokes and Luba Bezborodnikova, Washington State Department of Early Learning; Sibyl Maer-Fillo, Washington Outdoor School; and Heidi Bruce, Orcas Island Forest School

A bi-partisan group of lawmakers sponsored a bill to direct the Department of Early Learning to create licensing rules for outdoor preschools (no building). Since this bill passed, a 4-year pilot will begin in September 2017 to develop licensing rules. This presentation is to provide more information on how preschools that operate primarily outdoors can participate in the pilot. Pilot organizations will be licensed and able to offer full day programs, qualify for city and state subsidies for low-income children, and qualify for WA States quality improvement and rating system Early Achievers.

The Nature and Nurture of Resiliency T

Admin 203

Julie Ernst, University of Minnesota, Duluth

There is concern expressed in the U.S. popular and academic literature that today's children are growing up without sufficient resiliency to meet the demands that will face them in life. What is resiliency, why does it matter, and how can we foster it? This session will address these questions in the context of a research study investigating the impact of nature preschools on children's resiliency.

Adults Need Nature Too N

Outdoors on the Green

Wanda Peter, Prescott College

While focusing on children, it is also important to consider an adult-level connection to nature as well. In this session, you have the opportunity to laugh, discuss, observe, journal, and find beauty. You will be outside, sometimes sitting quietly, sometimes exploring, sometimes talking with others, to gain a sense of how your own connections and experiences in nature can motivate, inspire, and inform your work.

Nature Journaling in Nature Preschool T

Pigott 102

Anna Dutke and Marie Lister, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools

Nature journals are one way to foster young children's early writing skills and alphabet knowledge. Come prepared to learn and share strategies for incorporating nature journaling into your classroom. Participants will also have the opportunity to apply what they have learned by engaging in nature journaling activities outside.

The Relationship Between Pedagogy and Space A

Admin 220

John Noble, SHP Leading Design

This session will explore a collaborative effort with the Schools of Education and Architecture at the University of Cincinnati, along with a discussion of how these insights have informed the design of early childhood spaces.



Friday Schedule

1:30 pm – 3 pm

(continued)



Designing a Classroom Outdoors

Pigott 101

Jenn Leibham, Fiddleheads Forest School, University of Washington Botanic Gardens

To cultivate a fun interactive space outdoors for children starts with a well thought out design plan. In this session you will learn ways we have taken in designing our outdoor class space, keeping the children cozy outside throughout the seasons, and materials we add to inspire wonder, awe and experimentation.

What a Turtle Can Teach T

Pigott 208

Patty Born, Hamline University

Understand why young children are so drawn to animals, and how relationships with animals help support children's emotional and cognitive development, and promote executive function. Discuss the benefits and challenges of using captive animals in your program, and consider how to make the most of encounters with wild animals in your nature-based settings.

Managing Risk in Nature-based

Pigott 308

Early Education N

Megan Gessler and Sarah Sheldon, Kendall County Forest Preserve District

Join us as we identify the risks and benefits associated with a variety of nature-based experiences. Explore how incorporating the practice of Risk Benefit Assessment can enhance and improve risk management. Take home a resource list and a Risk Benefit Assessment tool to share with your community.

Universal Design and Nature Play T

Pigott 305

Hannah Markos, Tinkergarten

How can you design nature play environments for learners with individual differences and special needs? At Tinkergarten, we apply a Universal Design for Learning lens as we develop programs, train teachers, and educate parents. We'll share lessons and successes in our work to help all children thrive in outdoor classrooms.

From Research to Practice: Affordances and Pedagogy for Nature Play and Learning T

Admin 208

Victoria Carr, Cathy Maltbie, and Leslie Kochanowski; University of Cincinnati
Engaging young children in nature-rich preschool experiences affords numerous opportunities for learning through play and exploration. From National Science Foundation supported research to educational practice, learn what elements within nature provide the richest learning prospects for serving as a "third teacher" and what pedagogical practices best support positive child outcomes.



3 pm – 3:30 pm

3:30 pm – 5 pm



Dr. Dilafruz Williams

5 pm – 6 pm

6 pm – 8 pm

Risk Versus Consequence T

Pigott 309

Sarah Salazar-Tipton, Olympic Nature Experience

Understanding how to manage risky play, avoid dangerous consequences, and keep track of the changing natural environment is key to safety and fun in the outdoor settings of nature schools. Learn how to assess risk on the move, create safety routines, and understand how risk relates to consequence in a new way.

Break with Refreshments

Atrium

Plenary Session: The Wonders of Biocultural Diversity: Intersection of Nature and Culture

Auditorium

Dr. Dilafruz Williams, Professor of Leadership for Sustainability Education, Portland State University

Why care about biocultural diversity? In what ways do nature and culture intersect? What lessons can we learn from history about resilience of life on the planet facilitated by this interrelationship? This session will explore these ideas within the broader discourse of “homogenization” in an era of globalization. The cries of ecosystem fragility that we hear are often those that result from loss of languages, loss of cultural understandings related to people’s relationship with the land and its bounties that evolved over centuries, and loss of biodiversity. Examples will be presented from nature-based early childhood that counter the present thrust to homogenize by bringing life to the center of the educational enterprise at an early age. What is now also needed is to ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity are honored along with biological diversity.

iLabs Presentation: Young Scientists Building STEM Skills Through Play

Auditorium

Sarah R. Lytle, Ph.D.

Play is an important and powerful learning tool. This session will cover the growing body of research demonstrating the ways in which play builds children’s fundamental Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) skills. Participants will learn developmentally appropriate and playful strategies to build executive function and encourage spatial learning and exploration. iLabs is a non-profit, Milan-based organization pursuing multidisciplinary research on radical extension of human life-span.

Informal Off-site Networking

Have a drink on us! Continue all those great conversations during an informal networking opportunity at nearby restaurants (in walking distance of Seattle University). Drink ticket provided at registration is valid at Optimism Brewery, Capitol Cider, or Trove Restaurant until 8 pm.

Saturday Schedule

We are delighted to learn from nature-based programs in the Seattle area! ***Please note: pre-payment and registration is required for these optional field trips.*** If space is available, you may modify your conference registration to add a field trip. We must reach minimum attendance to run each trip; a refund for the cost of the trip will be given if cancelled.

Where to Meet: Trips will depart from Seattle University at the Visitor Lot near the Pigott Building.

When: Please arrive by 8:30 am (full day trips) or 8:45 (half day trips) so that we can load the buses quickly. Buses will depart promptly, so don't be late!

What to Bring: Half day trip will make a stop at the SeaTac Airport for participants who have departing flights, so bring your luggage if you need to. Full day trips include lunch. You may want to bring a snack if you are on the half day trip. Please bring your water bottle! A note pad and camera are good ideas, too. Remember – be prepared for the weather!

Most tours have an outdoor component or are completely outside. Check the weather beforehand and be prepared in case of rain!

- 9 am Full day trips depart
- 9:15 am Half day trips depart
- 12 pm Half day trips make stop to drop off at SeaTac Airport
- 1:15 pm Half day trips return to campus (after airport drop off)
- 3 pm Full day trips return to campus (no airport drop off)



Option 1: Full day (9 am–3 pm) This trip visits: Polliwog Preschool at Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center, Tiny Trees Preschool at Jefferson Park, and Seattle Children's Playgarden. Trip begins and ends at Seattle University. Lunch is included.

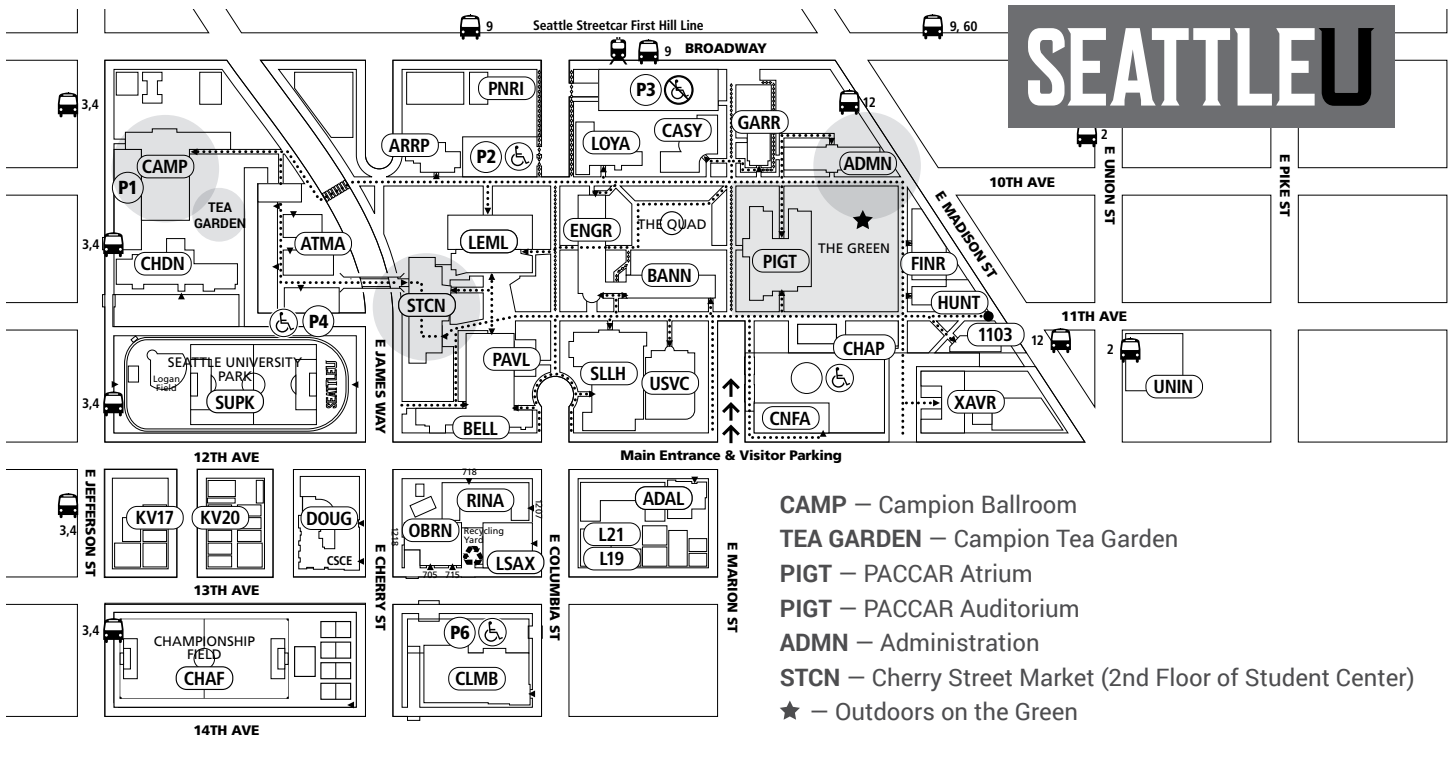
Option 2: Full day (9 am–3 pm) This trip visits: Discovery Park Nature Kids Preschool, Daybreak Star Preschool at the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation (UIATF), and Fiddleheads Forest School. Trip begins and ends at Seattle University. Lunch is included.

Option 3: Half day (9:15 am – 1:15 pm) This trip visits: Farm & Nature Preschool at Farrel McWhirter Park and Tiny Treks. Trip begins and ends at Seattle University; SeaTac airport is the final stop (at noon) before returning to Seattle University. Lunch is not included.

*See registration guide for complete field trip descriptions at www.NaturalStart.org.



Seattle University Campus



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Natural Start's Council of Nature and Forest Preschools

Dear Conference-goers,

As the demand for nature-based early childhood programs increases, so does the need for professional support. The Council of Nature and Forest Preschools seeks members to help elevate our profession by sharing resources, research, and best practices nation-wide. Naturally, you are invited to join us!

The Council supports our field by working in three committees:

Professional Development and Resources—Helping our field stay connected and informed about professional development opportunities

Research—Making sure we are all aware of the latest research of interest to nature-based early childhood educators

Advocacy—Working together to look for opportunities and resources to help us better advocate for nature-based learning for young children

The Council is evolving to help address your needs. These committees need strong leaders to further our goals and support your important work. If you'd like to learn more, please visit NaturalStart.org and click the "Nature Preschools" tab for more information. You can also speak with Advocacy Committee Chair, Anna Dutke, during the Research Poster session on Friday.

Happy Trails,



Rachel Larimore
Co-chair of the Council of
Nature and Forest Preschools



Monica Wiedel-Lubinski
Co-chair of the Council of
Nature and Forest Preschools

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The Natural Start Alliance is a project of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). NAAEE is North America's largest professional association for environmental education. To learn more about NAAEE and its new professional networking platform, eePRO, visit naaee.org.

2000 P Street, NW, Suite 540, Washington DC 20036

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