

# Safety and Healthy Risk Taking in Nature-Based Education

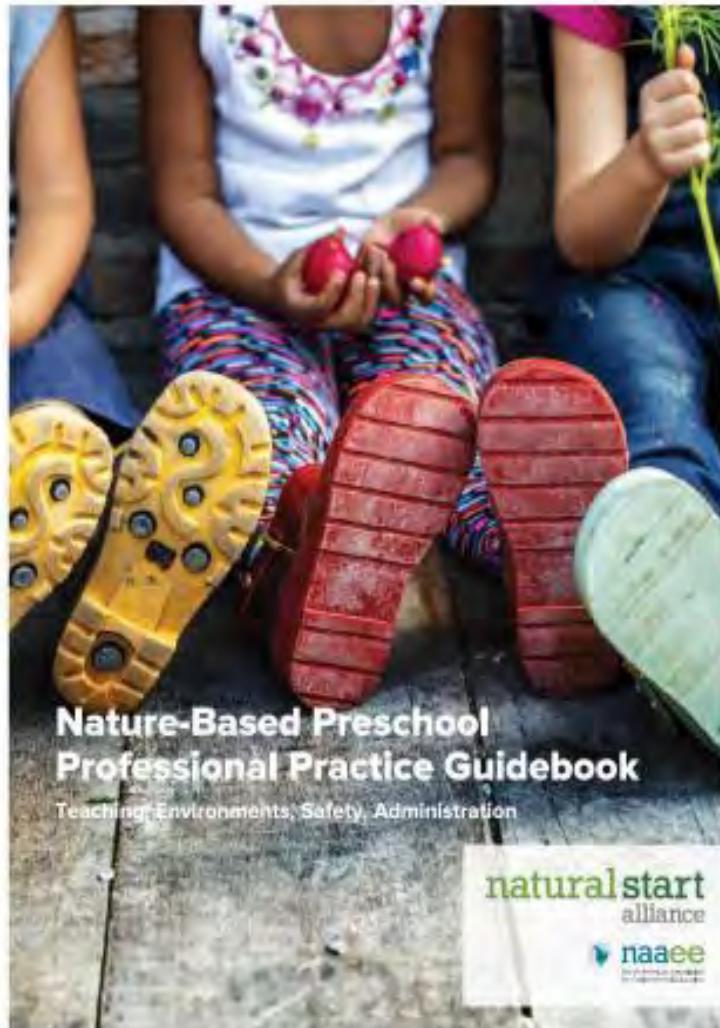
Hosted by the Natural Start Alliance  
*with guest speakers*

Anne Stires and Amy Butler



North American Association  
for Environmental Education

# natural start alliance





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# Amy Butler

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ECO  
Educating Children Outdoors

# Part 2: Are We Ready? Let's Go--and Stay--OUTSIDE!

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**Building Awareness - *Learning Risk Management Skills with your students***

**Ratios for Safety and Engagement - *What does supervision look like in wild outdoor environments?***

**Building Program Resiliency - *Developing regular practices for ensuring safety***

“Teach the children. We don’t matter so much, but the children do. Show them daisies and the pale hepatica. Teach them the taste of sassafrass and wintergreen.

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The lives of blue sailors, mallow, sunbursts, the moccasin-flowers. And the frisky ones - inkberry, lamb’s-quarters, blueberries. And the aromatic ones - rosemary, oregano. Give them peppermint to put in their pockets as they go to school. Give them fields and woods and the possibility of the world salvaged from the lords of profit. Stand them in the stream, head them upstream, rejoice as they learn to love this green space they live in, its sticks and leaves and then the silent, beautiful blossoms.

Attention is the beginning of devotion.”

~Mary Oliver, *Upstream*



# Build Awareness

with *Risk Management Skills*



# Meet The Children Where They Are At

## *Ask 3 Questions*

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**#1 - What is wonderful about the forest/field/city park?**

**#2 - What do we need to careful/mindful of?**

**#3 - How will we stay safe?**

*Tim Gill - Rethinking Childhood*

# What is wonderful about the forest?

Play in trees

Animals climb trees

Animals-Panda Bears

Hunting

Cool Bugs

You can put a swing in forest

Zipline

Play with toys in forest

build a fire

build a fort

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## What do we need to ~~be~~ ~~saf~~ careful of?

fox, Black Bears  
wood falling out of trees  
bonking into trees  
falling in the river  
fall out of trees  
Mean bears  
Snakes <sup>underground</sup>  
tripping on sticks in ground  
baby turkeys  
Tigers, Lions, Cheetas - They bite

## Stay Safe

- Don't Trip over trees
- Stay together
- Help friends
- find people that are hurt
- Bring Shield
- Be careful of bugs
- If someone gets lost, call to them.
- Bring a stuffed bear, so bear can chew it and we run away

# What we can learn about before we go into the outdoor classroom?

- How to dress for weather
- Boundaries for play and exploration
- Hazards that can be found in your area (including flora and fauna)
- Assessing risky types of play/learning

# Scaffolding INSIDE: Assessing the Weather

## K-ESS2-1

**Ask questions to obtain information of local weather conditions to describe patterns over time.**

## K-ESS3-2

**Ask questions to obtain information about the purpose of weather forecasting to prepare for, and respond to, severe weather.**

***Clarification Statement – Emphasis is on local forms of severe weather.***





We are all more comfortable when we have the type of layers to match the weather and/or season. Children can focus on the learning or activity in front of them if they are warm/cool, dry, and comfortable. Especially if they have had a role in figuring that out.

# Co-creating Boundaries for Learning, Play, and Exploration





Assessing Potential Hazards: A.R.I.S.E.



# Assessing Risk: What Types of Risky Play to Provide For and Why?

# BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENTS

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A benefit risk assessment is a tool for teachers, students, and administrators. It is a vital routine for any outdoor- and nature-based classroom. In addition, parents, caregivers, licensing personnel, lawyer, and insurance companies appreciate learning about your commitment to safety through the benefit risk assessment.

*(Please refer to Claire Warden's Fascination series)*

Benefit Risk Assessment	Activity:
Assessment Date:	Assessment undertaken by:
Site Considerations:	Site Amendments:
Benefits: Academic/Cognitive:	Benefits: Gross Motor/Physical
Benefits: Social/Emotional	Benefits: Creative/Spiritual/Metaphysical







# Ratios for Supervision and Engagement:

What does supervision look like in wild outdoor spaces and environments?

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# Considerations for Supervision and Ratios

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- What is the experience and training of your staff and coworkers?
- What is the distance you will be traveling to access your outdoor space?
- What activities will the children be participating in?
- “One Teacher, One Risk”
- How close are you to potential hazards? (water, animal dens, roads)
- Are there visual obstacles and what are your boundaries?
- Who else can access the space? Is it in a busy park or public space?
- Who are your students, how old are they, and what are their individual and/or developmental needs?

# Building Program Resiliency:

Establishing, maintaining, and reflecting on safety routines, policies, and protocols to ensure a high level of professional practice



# *Are We Ready...?*

**Building Awareness - *Learning Risk Management Skills with your students (Knowledge, Alliance, Resilience)***

**Ratios for Safety and Engagement - *What does supervision look like in wild outdoor environments?***

**Building Program Resiliency - *Developing regular practices for ensuring safety***

# Let's Go--and Stay--OUTSIDE!



Now that you made it  
this far...join us,  
Amy and Anne, for a  
Q & A session  
(7/31 at noon EST)  
*during the*  
Natural Start Alliance  
Conference, July 29-31!

