



# WOW

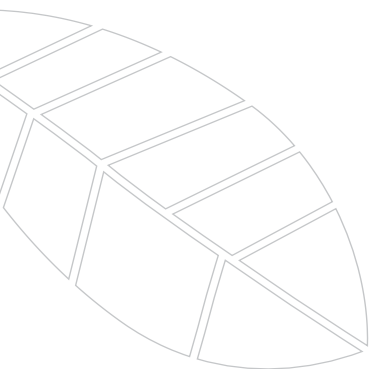
**WORLD OF WONDER**

an international nature-based  
early learning conference

August 1-4, 2018 | Chicago, IL, USA

#WOWconference

## program guide



natural start  
alliance





August 1-4, 2018  
Chicago, IL, USA

#WOWconference

Chicago Zoological Society  
Brookfield Zoo

# welcome bienvenido

We are thrilled to welcome you to Chicago for four days of presentations, dialogue, and networking that help children experience the joy and wonder of nature!

You are joining early childhood professionals from 11 countries and 35 states who believe that nature-based learning is critical to whole-child development and to an active, caring engagement with the world. The incredible diversity of ideas and experiences represented at this conference is one of our greatest collective strengths, and we are grateful for your own unique contributions to it.

Our three organizations work at the regional, national, and international levels, respectively, to connect early childhood professionals to each other and advocate for high-quality nature-based early childhood education for all children. We hope that you come away from the conference inspired and better prepared to facilitate nature-based learning moments with young children. But we also hope that you find opportunities to become engaged in our association work and help bring additional recognition and support to nature-based educators, researchers, and advocates in your community and across the world. Together, we can make sure that teaching with nature becomes the norm everywhere!

We look forward to learning from and with you over these four days! Thank you in advance for everything you will teach us and everyone else who believes in the power of wonder and nature in early childhood.



**Megan Gessler**  
Founder and President,  
Northern Illinois Nature  
Preschool Association



**Emilian Geczi, Ph.D.**  
Director, Natural Start  
Alliance, North American  
Association for  
Environmental Education



**Claire Warden**  
Founder, International  
Association of  
Nature Pedagogy



# välkommen bienvenue



Welcome! On behalf of all of us at the Chicago Zoological Society (CZS), we are proud to be a sponsor of the 2018 World of Wonder Conference and to welcome all of you to Brookfield Zoo. We thank the North American Association for Environmental Education, the Natural Start Alliance, the International Association of Nature Pedagogy, and the Northern Illinois Nature Preschool Association for their collaborative efforts in creating this trailblazing international gathering of nature play professionals. The work, play, and learning that we will engage in over the next few days is vitally important in our dramatically changing world. As more children and families throughout our planet live in increasingly urbanized areas, it is up to each of us to expand opportunities for the people we serve to have quality nature experiences, to explore the natural world around us wherever we may happen to be, and to create childhoods filled with nature play. These are the roots of caring for nature throughout our lifetimes.

At CZS, our mission is to inspire conservation leadership by engaging people and communities with wildlife and nature. We believe it is important for all people to care about nature and wildlife, and to provide them the tools and experiences that enable them to do so. Like each of you, we believe that spending time with nature is essential for children’s physical, emotional, and social development, particularly for children living in under-resourced and marginalized neighborhoods. Therefore, we work with residents and community leaders in these areas to connect children with nature in their local schools, libraries, and community centers. We know that these are commitments that many of you share. We are proud to welcome you!



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**Stuart Strahl, Ph.D.**  
 President & CEO  
 Chicago Zoological Society



**Conference Planning Team:**  
 David Becker, Marilyn Brink, Emilian Geczi, Megan Gessler, Ann Halley, Jennifer Kaczmarek, Christy Merrick, Betty Olivolo, Claire Warden, Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Sheila Williams Ridge

# Schedule at a Glance

## Wednesday, August 1

9 am - 3:30 pm	Optional Workshop: Talking & Thinking Floorbooks	Discovery Center, Savannah Room
5 pm – 7 pm	Registration	Discovery Center Lobby
	Networking Reception	Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room
	Guided Tour	Hamill Family Play Zoo

## Thursday, August 2

8 – 9 am	Registration and Breakfast	Discovery Center Lobby
8:30 am	Native American Welcome Ceremony	Nature Stage
9 am – 10:30 am	Welcome and Keynote Address	Discovery Center, Savannah & Founders Rooms
11 – 12 pm	Sessions (Block 1)	See session descriptions
12 – 1:30 pm	Lunch	Swan Pavilion
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Sessions (Block 2)	See session descriptions
3 – 4 pm	Sessions (Block 3)	See session descriptions
4:30 – 6 pm	Sessions (Block 4)	See session descriptions
6 - 7:30 pm	Reception and Dinner	Swan Pavilion

Exhibitors located in the Swan Pavilion from 12 – 1:30 pm and 6 – 7:30 pm.

## Friday, August 3

9 – 10:30 am	Sessions (Block 5)	See session descriptions
11 – 12 pm	Sessions (Block 6)	See session descriptions
12 – 1:30 pm	Lunch	Swan Pavilion
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Sessions (Block 7)	See session descriptions
3 – 4 pm	Sessions (Block 8)	See session descriptions
4 - 4:30 pm	Afternoon Refreshments	Discovery Center Lobby
4:30 – 6 pm	Closing Panel Discussion	Discovery Center, Savannah & Founders Rooms

Exhibitors located in the Swan Pavilion from 12 – 1:30 pm.









## Saturday, August 4

7:45 am	Meet for Optional Field Trips	DoubleTree Oak Brook
8 am	All Trips Depart	DoubleTree Oak Brook
4 pm	Chicago Trips Return	DoubleTree Oak Brook
5 pm	Wisconsin Trip Returns	DoubleTree Oak Brook

# Bus Schedule

If you are staying at the DoubleTree Chicago-Oak Brook or at the Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Suites, you can take advantage of free transportation to and from the Brookfield Zoo on August 1-3. Please note that, although we will do our best to accommodate everyone who wants to ride with us, seating on the buses is available on a first-come, first-served basis. If you are driving yourself to and from the zoo, please consider inviting others to carpool with you. Parking at the zoo is complementary for conference participants. See Travel and Lodging section in this guide for zoo address and parking information.



## Wednesday, August 1

8 am	Bus 1 departs	 DoubleTree and Hilton Suites
8:15 am	Bus 2 departs	 DoubleTree and Hilton Suites
3:45 pm	Bus 1 departs	 Brookfield Zoo
4 pm	Bus 2 departs	 Brookfield Zoo
4:45 pm	Bus 1 departs	 DoubleTree and Hilton Suites
5 pm	Bus 2 departs	 DoubleTree and Hilton Suites
7 pm	Bus 1 departs	 Brookfield Zoo
7:15 pm	Bus 2 departs	 Brookfield Zoo

## Thursday, August 2





7:30 am	Bus 1 departs	 DoubleTree and Hilton Suites
7:45 am	Bus 2 departs	 DoubleTree and Hilton Suites
7:45 pm	Bus 1 departs	 Brookfield Zoo
8 pm	Bus 2 departs	 Brookfield Zoo

## Friday, August 3

7:45 am	Bus 1 departs	 DoubleTree and Hilton Suites
8 am	Bus 2 departs	 DoubleTree and Hilton Suites
6:30 pm	Bus 1 departs	 Brookfield Zoo
6:45 pm	Bus 2 departs	 Brookfield Zoo

## Saturday, August 4

Please note that field trips will depart from and return to the DoubleTree Chicago-Oak Brook, NOT the Brookfield Zoo. If you are driving yourself to the DoubleTree, it is located at 1909 Spring Road, Oak Brook, Illinois, 60523. You can park in the hotel's parking lot and meet in the lobby.

7:45 am	Meet for Optional Field Trips	 DoubleTree Oak Brook
8 am	All Trips Depart	 DoubleTree Oak Brook
4 pm	Chicago Trips Return	 DoubleTree Oak Brook
5 pm	Wisconsin Trip Returns	 DoubleTree Oak Brook

## Conference Tracks

The conference includes three tracks to help meet the needs of attendees looking for different kinds of professional development:

**A** **Administration**—Sessions in this track 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.

**T** **Teaching**—Sessions in this track 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.

**R** **Research**—Sessions in this track allow participants to share and learn about the latest research in the nature-based early learning field.

## Multicultural and International Perspectives

Look for the **🌍** symbol next to session descriptions to identify presentations and workshops featuring multicultural and/or international perspectives on nature-based early learning.

## Accommodations for Outdoor Sessions

Outdoor spaces in the Hamill Family Play Zoo have limited seating. Please text us at 240-319-3944 or talk to a conference volunteer if you need accommodations, and we will gladly try to meet your needs!

## Graduate Credits Available

Interested in receiving graduate credits for your participation in the conference? Optional graduate credits (2 credits) are available through Hamline University. Contact Patty Born at [pselly01@hamline.edu](mailto:pselly01@hamline.edu) to learn more.

## WI-FI

The Brookfield Zoo will provide free wi-fi access to conference participants. The password will be announced when you arrive.

## Questions? Text Us!

If you have questions, feel free to **text 240-319-3944**. This number is for text messages only. You can also look for volunteers wearing either a NINPA t-shirt or a green ribbon on their name badge who can help you!

## Share the Conference!

Use **#WOWconference** to tag the World of Wonder International Early Learning Conference on social media. Take a selfie at the WOW conference and instantly enter to win one of the fabulous prizes featured at the prize table! All you have to do is add #WOWconference to your selfie on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter and we will choose winning photos to highlight during the closing plenary on Friday. Winners must be present to win. Prizes will not be mailed. Facebook users: make sure that your post's visibility is set to "Public" or otherwise we won't be able to see it.





# NatureStart™

A Program of the Chicago Zoological Society professional development



*NatureStart™ Professional Development is a program that blends early childhood education, environmental playwork, informal education, and conservation psychology to strengthen your nature play activities and settings for young children and families.*

This program is specifically designed for a range of informal educators and professionals, and can be adapted to zoos and aquariums, museums, nature centers, forest preserves, social service organizations, childcare programs, and more!

Register today to receive a 20% discount. The program is available in two formats:

- A weeklong training course at Brookfield Zoo
- A regional training program that combines in-person and online components

*Go to [czs.org/NatureStart](http://czs.org/NatureStart) to register.*

*Use coupon code WOW2018 for a 20% discount. Professional development credits are available.*



Chicago Zoological Society  
*Inspiring Conservation Leadership*



This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services  
(Award # MG-10-16-0067-16)

# Wednesday

## Workshop, Registration, Reception, and Guided Tour

9 am - 3:30 pm

### Optional Workshop: Talking & Thinking Floorbooks: Documenting Children's Voices

Discovery Center, Savannah Room

Join conference keynote speaker, Claire Warden, for a daylong workshop that will help you to:

- engage children in their documentation;
- share children's attainment of learning standards with parents, other staff, and licensing;
- facilitate meaningful, authentic real world learning with nature inside, outside, and beyond into the wilder spaces.

This inspirational training course examines the place of consultation in the early years and primary sector, how it can impact the planning process and educators' practice, and how it can raise attainment. It is designed to look at the way we involve children from the age of 0 to 12 in planning their learning linked to curriculum.

Please note that this workshop is full.

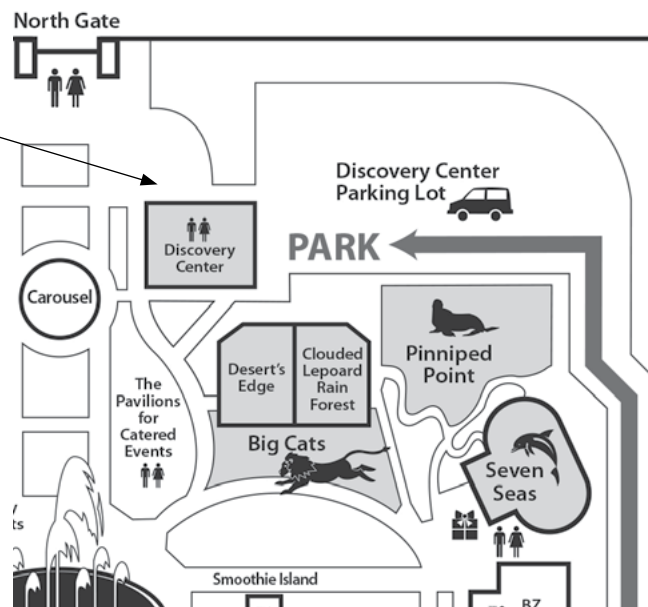
5 pm - 7 pm

### Registration (Discovery Center), Reception (Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room), Guided Tour (Hamill Family Play Zoo)

Come connect with old friends and meet new ones as you register for the conference and collect your conference materials. Then proceed to the Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building's White Oak Room to enjoy drinks and light appetizers. You can also tour the Family Play Zoo, an innovative interactive exhibit that has helped redefine how early childhood play can give children the tools they need to build a strong connection with animals and nature.

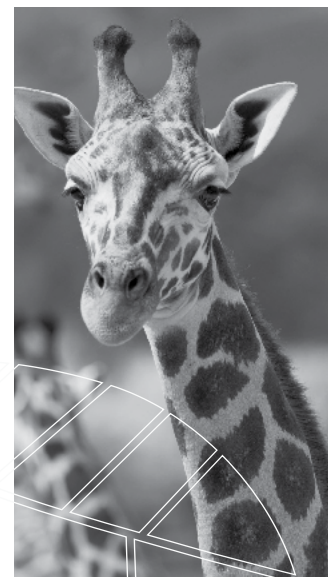


Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building



**REGISTRATION**

See back cover for full map.



First Avenue



# Thursday

8 – 9 am

## Registration and Breakfast

Discovery Center Lobby

8:30 am

## Native American Welcome Ceremony

Joseph Standing Bear Schranz, Midwest SOARRING Foundation  
(Save Our Ancestors' Remains & Resources Indigenous Network Group)  
Nature Stage (outdoors)

9 am – 10:30 am

## Welcome and Keynote Address: I Wonder Why?

Claire Warden, Educational Consultant, Founder of International Association of Nature Pedagogy

Discovery Center, Savannah Room (live) and Founders Room (simulcast)\*



Claire Warden

This keynote embraces the world of wonder hidden within nature-based pedagogies. Step into the international world of nature-based learning as the globally renowned Claire Warden shares stories, musings, and research about the world of Nature Pedagogy that runs underneath education and emerges in many different models of practice around the world.

*\*Seating in Savannah Room available on first come, first-served basis. Overflow seating and simulcast available in the Founders Room.*

## About Our Keynote: Claire Warden

Claire's approach to Nature Kindergartens has earned her international recognition as a pioneer in educational thinking. Her respect for children and families runs through the Floorbook® approach that is used within Nature Pedagogy to incorporate children's voices into intentional teaching. Claire Warden is one of the world's leading consultants and writers on the use of consultative methods in education. The centre for excellence she has set up in the UK Auchlone Nature Kindergarten is renowned for the consultative Floorbooks® used there. Her own learning pathway as a teacher involves working in a wide variety of settings (2-18 years), mentoring and advisory work, authoring over 21 books, and designing resources and landscapes.

Claire is an international advisor to the Children and Nature Network, World Forum Foundation, and the International School Grounds Group. Claire was voted Exceptional Master Leader in the field of Early Care and Education and is a Visiting Fellow at Strathclyde University, Scotland; founder of the International Association of Nature Pedagogy; Board member of the Natural Heritage Advisory group for the National Trust for Scotland; and is currently engaged in a PhD exploring Nature Pedagogy.



# Thursday

11 – 12 pm

## Concurrent Sessions (Block 1)

### **Nature-Based, Project-Based, Service-Based. . .Oh My!**

Peter Dargatz, Hamilton School District

MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Prairie Room

Time is essential and more often than not, students and educators don't have enough of it. Combine that with rising expectations and the results can be overwhelming. Discover how cross-curricular integration of nature, projects, and service enhance instruction and save time for what matters most.

### **Connecting with Diverse Partners: Developing the Team and Resources for a Nature-Based 4K**

Mike Reed, Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary

Great Bear Wilderness Classroom

The example of the first tuition-free nature-based 4K in Wisconsin will illustrate how to build relationships with community leaders, school districts, nonprofits, universities, and local minority groups. We will share how we completed a \$3 million campaign to expand our nature-based program.

### **Outdoor Classrooms in Ontario: Designing Spaces and Researching Relationships Between Frequency of Use and Students' Self-Regulation, Educators' Well-being**

Andrea Faber Taylor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Great Lakes Room

This session will present research findings and methods employed to examine the use of outdoor classrooms in Ontario, CA. The research explored relationships between frequency of use and kindergarteners' self-regulation and educators' well-being. The session will also include details about funding, design process, and unique features in the classrooms.

### **Friendship in the Forest**

Audrey Elszasz, Laurel School; Nicole Gerami, M.A. CCC-SLP, Nicole Gerami, LLC

Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room

Children with learning differences are often excluded from outdoor education programs. The forest's calming effect enables children to approach the challenges of cooperative play, sharing, and impulse control in a natural way. Learn how to make your program more inclusive.



# Thursday

11 – 12 pm

*Continued*

## **One Destination, Many Paths: Case Studies of Nature-Based Preschool Business Models** <sup>(A)</sup>

David Catlin and Rachel Larimore, David Catlin Consulting LLC  
*Discovery Center, Founders Room*

As nature-based early childhood education captures the public imagination, many educators and administrators seek to launch their own programs. But what business model—nonprofit, for-profit, government-run, or hybrid—makes the most sense? We'll examine examples of a variety successful programs.

## **Natural Curiosity 2nd Edition: The Importance of Indigenous Perspectives in Children's Environmental Inquiry** <sup>(T)</sup>

Haley Higdon, Natural Curiosity  
*Bocaditos (upper level)*

The 2nd edition of Natural Curiosity supports a stronger awareness of Indigenous approaches to environmental learning. This session will provide a starting point in a conversation that explores the importance of Indigenous perspectives in children's environmental inquiry in the early years.

## **Weaving Together Environmental Education and the Reggio Emilia Approach** <sup>(T)</sup>

Clare Loughran and Ron Anderson, NOLA Nature School  
*Nature Stage (outdoors)*

Learn more about how to integrate environmental education with the Reggio Emilia approach. In this session, participants will work in small groups to create and share mini-projects and learn strategies for supporting and strengthening emergent, child-centered curriculum in nature-based settings.



## **A Playful Pedagogy: Using Playwork Methods to Enhance Opportunities for Exploration, Inquiry, and Play Outside** <sup>(T)</sup>

Linda Kinney and Kathy Osborne, North Carolina Zoo  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, The Woods (outdoors)*

This outdoor session offers a variety of strategies for incorporating nature play into curricula, programs, and everyday life. Learners will explore open-ended creative ways to work with children outdoors, using approaches employed in the playwork profession.

## **Formal and Informal Educators Unite....Outside!** <sup>(R)</sup>

Meg Gravil, University of Kentucky  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Earth Play (outdoors)*

Learn how a collaboration between The Arboretum State Botanical Garden of Kentucky, teachers, and the University of Kentucky resulted in standards-based learning experiences for kindergarteners. Attendees will participate in a sampling of educational activities integrating science learning with fun!

12:00 – 1:30 pm

Lunch with Exhibitors  
*Swan Pavilion*

Exhibitors located in the Swan Pavilion from 12 – 1:30 pm.



# Thursday

1:30 – 2:30 pm

## Concurrent Sessions (Block 2)

### **The Next Generation of Nature Preschool Teachers: Duluth's Pre-service Model**

Laura Whittaker, Wind Ridge School House; Michaela Johnson, University of Minnesota student teacher

MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Prairie Room

The UMD education department has a unique program that places pre-service early childhood teachers in area nature preschools where they learn to integrate nature-based approaches into early learning. This session will feature reflections from faculty, a preschool director, and a student teacher.

### **Nature Buddies: An Inclusive Nature Education Pilot Program**

Kay Knight and Ann Halley, Chicago Botanic Garden; Mirela Vesa, Green Bay School Great Bear Wilderness Classroom

Lack of diversity in nature education includes students with special needs. This session reviews an inclusive pre-K pilot program at the Chicago Botanic Garden: its resources, successes, and lessons learned. Attendees will collaborate on developing activities and will share insights and practices.

### **Finding Nature in a Concrete Jungle**

Angela Speakman and Shilpa Sethi, Elements Preschool

Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room

Elements, the only nature-based preschool in Manhattan, stands as evidence that nature-based education can thrive in city spaces. This session will discuss the need for well-designed, natural outdoor spaces and the ways in which obstacles can be overcome in designing these spaces in environments.

### **Living Playgrounds**

Adam Bienenstock, Jill Bienenstock, and Jon Halayko, Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds Discovery Center, Founders Room

This session focuses on the importance of selection and placement of plant material supporting purposeful play and design, maximizing educational principles. Learn the what, where, and why of planting shrubs, trees, and soft plantings that will reinforce the importance of good design principles.

### **10 Trips to the Forest: Piloting a First-Time Forest Kindergarten Partnership**

Marcos Stoltzfus, Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen

College; Robby Morgan, Nancy Duffy, and Jody Jordan, Wolf Lake Elementary School

MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Great Lakes Room

What happens when a small, rural public school asks a local nature center if they've heard of Forest Kindergartens? This session will describe unique structural elements of our program (relational model, 3-year leadership transfer, and others) and results from two research projects in our pilot year.



# Thursday

1:30 – 2:30 pm

Continued

## Curriculum Principles for Nature-Based Preschools <sup>®</sup> <sup>™</sup>

Scott Ashmann, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and Mike Reed,  
Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary

*Bocaditos (upper level)*

A nature-based four-year-old kindergarten program was established in 2013 in Green Bay, WI. This program is a partnership among the Wildlife Sanctuary, Green Bay Public School District, and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. We will describe the principles upon which the curriculum is built.

## Wonder on the Corner: Tinkergarten and Bringing Nature-Based Learning to Every Community <sup>™</sup> <sup>™</sup>

Amanda Worsley and Missy Sherburne, Tinkergarten

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Backyard (outdoors)*

Learn about the power of bringing nature-based play to otherwise nature-starved communities. We will support educators in taking outdoor learning, early STEM, creative thinking, and problem solving into green spaces large and small to facilitate learning in all neighborhoods, for all children.

## The First 30 Days: Setting Expectations and Procedures <sup>™</sup>

Tanya Milano Snell, Playful Pathways Preschool

*Nature Stage (outdoors)*

Setting expectations and procedures in the beginning of an early childhood program can be overwhelming. We will journey through a school day as participants in message time, small group time, and class meeting through the use of Positive Discipline techniques.

## Igniting the Spark: Creating Nature-Rich Learning Environments Based on our own Powerful Experiences in Nature <sup>™</sup>

Katrine Horion, Second Nature Design

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, The Woods (outdoors)*

Get inspired to create Nature Play Environments, even in an urban setting. We'll use our own childhood experiences and explore different environmental settings from all over the world. Explore adding elements of nature through sensory activities, loose parts play, and child-centered curriculum.

3 – 4 pm

## Concurrent Sessions (Block 3)

### Let the Children Get Messy and Dirty! Pocket Blackland Prairie Restorative Land Practice in an Educational Setting <sup>™</sup> <sup>™</sup>

Dr. Tiffany Lipsett, Blackland Prairie Conservatory & Atelier

*MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Great Lakes Room*

This presentation examines cultural, theoretical, and applied practices in education and planning learning environments. As the first licensed nature school in North Texas, we discuss ways to align outdoor experiences with a commitment to multimodal learning and culturally meaningful moments.



Photo: Manonson Sonnan

# Thursday

3 – 4 pm

Continued

## **Outdoor Classrooms in Family Child Care** (T)

Melinda Carlson, Family Child Care Partnerships, HDFFS, Auburn University  
*Great Bear Wilderness Classroom*

This session will highlight Family Child Care (FCC) and the importance of outdoor learning and play. Participants will discuss ideas of learning areas to include in a FCC outdoor classroom, learning activities for children of all ages, and how the activities meet developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and milestones.

## **Children and Their Uses of Flowers in Learning and Play** (R) (I)

Kimberley Beasley, Childscapes  
*Discovery Center, Founders Room*

This session will share research on children's perspectives and ideas around the flowers and plants in their environments. Participants will be inspired to include flowers in their environments, seek children's perspectives, and plan for the use of flowers as a part of their curriculum.

## **Inclusion in Nature-Based Early Childhood Education** (A) (I)

Dr. Anne Ouwerkerk, Kearsarge Regional School District  
*MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Prairie Room*

This session will help participants think about creating nature-based programs that are inclusive and accessible in order for all children to have the opportunity to learn with and from their natural environment.

## **Close Encounters: Making the Most of Children's Encounters with Animals** (T)

Jill Canelli and Rina Zampieron, Massachusetts Audubon,  
Drumlin Farm Community Preschool  
*Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room*

Whether your class has backyard chickens, is raising young turtles for wild release, or happens upon a flock of wild turkeys, encounters with the animal kingdom will capture the curiosity of your students. This session will focus on how to make the most of these experiences.

## **Designing Outdoor Learning Environments** (A)

Edward Melvin, SHP Leading Design  
*Bocaditos (upper level)*

This session provides an overview of the design steps for planning your outdoor school and spaces with an intention for learning.

## **More than Mud: Getting the Most Out of a Mud Kitchen** (T)

Stefanie Wiencke, Kendall County Forest Preserve District's Natural  
Beginnings Early Learning Program  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Backyard (outdoors)*

Have you ever wondered how mud, a multisensory material, and learning standards mesh together? Join us for stories from the mud kitchen to get a fresh take on mud. You will learn how to connect a variety of activities with learning standards, documentation, and marketing.





# Thursday

3 – 4 pm

*Continued*



## **School Days to Forest Days: Routines in the Wild** (T)

Eliza Minnucci, ForestKinder

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, The Woods (outdoors)*

Experience the tried-and-true outdoor rhythms of public school kindergartners who spend one day every week in a wild space. From the morning bell to the tick check, these routines balance play and learning. This session is especially good for educators hoping to lead frequent and extended outdoor time.

## **How Does the Outdoor Classroom Stack Up?** (R) (T)

Audrey Elszasz, Laurel School; Nicole Gerami, M.A. CCC-SLP, Nicole Gerami, LLC

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Backyard (outdoors)*

Researchers at Case Western Reserve University and Laurel School's Center for Research on Girls conducted a year-long study comparing the outdoor and indoor programs. It highlights the effectiveness of high-quality outdoor education and brings important quantitative data to the literature.

## **Shades of Brown: A Project Promoting Art, Identity, and Nature Study** (T) (R)

Melissa Jackson and Elizabeth Philpott, The Orchard School

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Earth Play (outdoors)*

This session will describe a recent collaborative project titled "Shades of Brown." Through our study of identity, young students at The Orchard School created a powerful work of art that showcases nature's and people's unique characteristics, similarities, and differences.

4:30 – 6 pm

## **Concurrent Sessions (Block 4)**

### **Panel: Nature Education Stories from the Field** (T)

*Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room*

Early childhood educators from a traditional early childhood program and a laboratory school will share their stories of transition to nature-based programs and an early elementary program will share about the importance and challenges of including nature-based programming in the elementary school day. Participants will leave the presentation with valuable tips, resources, activities, and tools to work through challenges that come up during program changes.

**Panelists:** Janet Staal and Katelyn Egnatuk, West Side Christian School;

Katie Pollock, University of Delaware Lab School;

Cheryl Ryan, Red Oak Community School

**Facilitator:** Sheila Williams Ridge, University of Minnesota

# Thursday

4:30 – 6 pm

Continued

## **Panel: Nature-based Early Childhood Programming: Reflections from a Canadian Perspective** (R) (F)

Discovery Center, Founders Room

In this panel session, two Canadian educators will share how some of their nature-based early childhood programming explorations have stretched their perspectives and how they have adapted and applied them to their Canadian context. This includes a brief history of forest schools in Canada, a look at a Canadian Forest School Practitioner training, and reflections about a German Waldkindergarten experience.

**Panelists:** Elizabeth Boileau, PhD student, Lakehead University in Alberta, Canada  
Andrea Welz, Early Childhood Education faculty at Sault College in Ontario, Canada  
**Facilitator:** Patti Bailie, PhD, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Maine, Farmington

## **Building Partnerships for Children, Cities, and Nature** (A) (F)

David Becker and Marilyn Brink, Chicago Zoological Society; Educators from NatureStart™ Network

Bocaditos (upper level)

This session will focus on strategies for developing multidisciplinary partnerships to encourage and support family nature play within marginalized neighborhoods. Educators from the Chicago NatureStart™ Network will share impacts their nature play programs are having on the families they serve.

## **How to Use What You Have and Transform it into What Your Young Students Need (and Want)** (T)

Cassandra Louise Ellis, Bloom Early Education

MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Great Lakes Room

As one school walks the path of transformation by adding a nature-based program to its primarily indoor offerings, learn how you, too, can transform your outdoor space into an engaging learning home, rich with opportunities for children to deeply connect with the many wonders of nature.

## **When Children Go To City Hall: Forest School Meets Project-Based Learning** (T)

Emily Gillain and Genevieve Ploch, Raintree School

Great Bear Wilderness Classroom

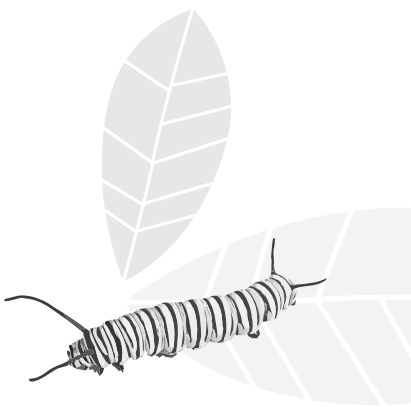
Where does forest school and project-based learning meet? It's where human landscapes and natural landscapes meet. Join Emily Gillain and Genevieve Ploch as they explore ways in which child-initiated projects born in the forest reveal the capacity for young children to articulate visions for their community.

## **Strategies for Supporting All Learners: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in Early Childhood Environmental Education** (T)

Sylvia Collazo, Florida Atlantic University

MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Prairie Room

Participants will learn the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework and discuss how its principles can offer all children opportunities to explore developmental and academic skills. They will generate strategies based on UDL principles and develop action plans to implement into their programs.



# Thursday

4:30 – 6 pm

*Continued*



## **Growing Up WILD: Guiding Experiential Learning Through Nature Exploration** (T)

Meghan Bowe, Environmental Education Association of Illinois;  
Marc LeFebre, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Backyard (outdoors)*

Create authentic nature-based experiences for young learners that will engage, awaken, and activate the senses. Growing Up WILD provides endless options for young learners to connect at the appropriate developmental level by providing the framework for active, cross-curricular learning.

## **Where to Grow Next? A Rhizomatous Approach to Place-Based Professional Development** (T)

Sarah D. Silver, Sarah Foglesong, and Ellen Bashor; Prescott College Center for Nature and Place-Based Early Childhood Education  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, The Woods (outdoors)*

Explore how sense of place connects with nature-based teaching practices in multicultural communities and challenging environments. Engage in experiential activities that focus on relationship to place and discuss how it benefits professional development and inspires creative program design.



## **Toddlers and Trees: Nature-Based Exploration in Outdoor ‘Classrooms’** (T)

Cara Mia Duncan and Sara Dvorak, Hathaway Brown School  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Earth Play (outdoors)*

Find out how one toddler classroom in an urban setting explores woods, fields, and gardens, bringing the outside back inside to continue learning. Using David Sobel’s Nature Design Principles to frame nature play, experience the hands-on activities used by the toddlers and play like a kid again!

## **Fostering Children’s Creativity, Ingenuity, and Problem-solving: Making the Most of Natural Outdoor Classrooms** (T)

Kirsten Haugen, Nature Explore  
*Nature Stage (outdoors)*

Practice strategies to boost creativity, ingenuity, and problem solving through the creation of outdoor spaces. Explore the selection of tools and ‘loose parts’ that support children’s freedom to think for themselves, ponder problems, and dream up creations.

6 - 7:30 pm

## **Reception and Dinner**

*Swan Pavilion*

Exhibitors located in the Swan Pavilion from 6 – 7:30 pm.





## Make forest dreams come true—support your national professional alliance

A monthly donation to Natural Start supports the work we do for you all year long.

### Putting Nature Preschools on the Map

Thousands of people view our map of nature preschools each year. When your program is on our map, we help the world find you.

### Best Practices

Natural Start is working with education leaders across the country to describe the professional practices that help make nature-based early childhood education safe, effective, and inclusive.

### Professional Development

Whether you join a Natural Start training webinar or use our site to find professional development opportunities near you, we connect you with the tools you need to hone your skills with professionals like you.

### National Conference

Nature-based education for young children is not like any other approach to education, and it requires a professional conference like no other. Natural Start is happy to bring our field together every year to network, learn, and push our field forward.

### Council of Nature and Forest Preschools

Want to step up to help lead the field? The professionals leading the Council of Nature and Forest Preschools are advocating for nature-based education, promoting professional development and networking, connecting the higher education community, and more.

### International Environmental Education Network

Natural Start is a project of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), which connects you to a global network of environmental education professionals through eePRO. Learn more at [naaee.org](http://naaee.org).

**naturalstart**  
alliance

[naturalstart.org](http://naturalstart.org)

# NORTHERN ILLINOIS NATURE PRESCHOOL ASSOCIATION



A professional alliance that promotes, supports, and enhances nature-based early childhood education.



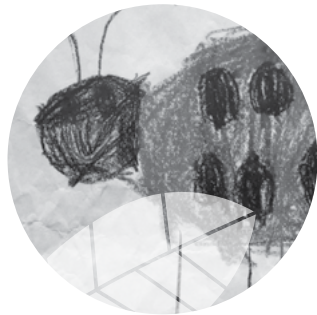
- Gain access to shared documents and programming materials
  - Attend professional development workshops
  - Network and collaborate



Visit [NINPA.org](http://NINPA.org) for more information

# Friday

9 – 10:30 am



## Concurrent Sessions (Block 5)

### Panel: Starting a School

*Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room*

Starting a nature-based or forest preschool is no easy task. While every situation is unique, there are many lessons that can be learned from other people's experiences. This panel brings together four different programs to share their origin stories, challenges, successes, and advice. There will be time at the end for questions from the audience.

**Panelists:** Teresa Weed, The Forest Playschool; Jesper Klinghed and Asa West, Scandinavian School SF Outdoor Program; April Hepokoski, The Little Barnyard Preschool; Karen Palmer, Unicare Early Childhood Education

**Facilitator:** Rachel Larimore, Michigan State University

### Panel: International Stories from the Field – Nature and Native Wisdom

*Discovery Center, Founders Room*

Discover how nature-based education is informed by native wisdom and strengthens communities during a panel presentation that highlights programs in New Zealand, India, and Australia. The panel will explore culture, identity, and the role of indigenous peoples in New Zealand. We will examine an organizational structure in Australia that integrates nature-based curriculum and learning through an inclusive school model. We will also consider how to transform conventional schools into sustainable, affordable, inclusive schools with insight from the Green School Initiative taking root in India.

**Panelists:** Katherine Maud, Tiaki, New Zealand; Virendra Rawat, Green School Initiative, India; Nicole Hunter, Bold Park Community School, Australia

**Facilitator:** Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Eastern Region Association of Forest and Nature Schools

### Panel: Nature Play Spaces in Chicago

*Bocaditos (upper level)*

Nature play spaces can make joyful, hands-on interactions with nature broadly accessible to children in urban communities. Learn how three Chicago institutions – Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago Park District, and NeighborSpace – planned and designed their respective nature play spaces, and take away ideas for creating programming, engaging the community, and designing research studies at your own nature play spaces.

**Panelists:** Becky Lyons, Emily Van Laan, and Nicole Filippone; Lincoln Park Zoo Sarah Unz and Matt Freer; Chicago Park District; Jessica Fong, Chicago Public Schools and Robin Cline, NeighborSpace

**Facilitator:** Emilian Geczi, Ph.D., Natural Start Alliance

### Increasing Advocacy and Empathy with Children in Nature

Laura Seger and Kelsey Navin, St. Louis Zoo

*MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Prairie Room*

Explore how inclusive nature play and the project approach allow children of all abilities to develop social and emotional skills including empathy, advocacy, and inclusion. These skills allow children to be advocates for themselves, their peers, and their environment.





# Friday

9 – 10:30 am

*Continued*



## **Puddles & Piñons: Learning About People & Place Through a Shared “Friends of the Forest” Pen Pal Program** (T) (P)

Sally Anderson, Sol Forest School LLC

*Great Bear Wilderness Classroom*

A story of sharing between two forest school programs: the Panorama Forest School, Vancouver Island and Sol Forest School, New Mexico. Through a six-month comparison of flora, fauna, Native stories, local culture, and play, our Forest Explorers gained a better understanding of “their place” while also learning about a new place.

## **From Aversion to Wonder: A Qualitative Investigation of Preschoolers’ Caring Relationships with Nature** (R)

Deepthi Kharod, Ph.D., University of Texas at San Antonio and Linda Charlton, Cibolo Nature Center

*MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Great Lakes Room*

Through a child’s story as she moved from aversion to wonder in response to nature, we share research based on ethics of care and biophilia. Participants engage in outdoor exploration and a research presentation that reveals preschoolers’ capacity for developing caring relationships with nature.

## **Can’t We All Play In The Mud? Effective Strategies for Inclusion in a Nature-Based Early Education Model** (T)

Stephanie Novacek, Lead Learning Ally; Jill Anderson and Carri Kasick, Well Wilderness Kids Therapeutic Nature Center

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Backyard (outdoors)*

All children are wired with a sense of wonder for the world. But how do you facilitate that sense for children who have challenges taking the world in? This interactive workshop will provide effective strategies for inclusion to better serve children of all abilities within your nature program.



## **Safe Tools and Techniques to Empower Early Learners** (T) (P)

Sarah Sheldon, Chicago Botanic Garden and Sean Shaffer, North Park Village Nature Center in the Chicago Park District

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, The Woods (outdoors)*

With simple hand tools students can safely work wood into a variety of tools, toys, and creations. Learn first-hand about woodworking using tenon cutters, hand drills, microplanes, and more. Leave this session with the knowledge and resources to safely implement tools into your curriculum.

## **What’s the Point? Why Modelling Handwork Skills is Relevant in Nature-Based Early Childhood Programs** (T) (P)

Zabe MacEachren, Queens University and Andrea Welz, Sault College and Little Lions Waldorf Child and Family Centre

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Earth Play (outdoors)*

Participants will be involved nature-based handwork activities, followed by questions and a discussion on the importance of role modelling skills and meaningful work. Plans for the way such skills can be developed and integrated into nature-based programs will be shared.

# Friday

11 – 12 pm

## Concurrent Sessions (Block 6)

### **Learning from Nature: Getting Young Gifted Kids Outdoors** <sup>®</sup>

Leigh Ann Fish and Patti Ensel Bailie, PhD, University of Maine at Farmington  
*Discovery Center, Founders Room*

It's no secret that spending time in nature benefits everyone. The outdoors can also provide a perfect place for gifted learners to grow and flourish in surprising ways. Join us as we discuss research-based reasons to get young gifted learners outdoors with specific ideas and hands-on activities.

### **Watching the Clouds: The Benefits of Learning at Nature's Pace** <sup>™</sup> <sup>®</sup>

Misha Davydov, A New Leaf  
*Great Bear Wilderness Classroom*

By studying diverse cultural perspectives of time and the natural world, we can help children to more freely construct their own knowledge. Nature's pace holds the key to helping students develop patience, flexibility, and an acceptance of change.

### **Setting Them Free: How to Cultivate Open-Ended Free Play in Nature** <sup>™</sup> <sup>®</sup>

Laura Whittaker, Wind Ridge Schoolhouse and April Hepokoski,  
*The Little Barnyard Preschool*  
*MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Prairie Room*

Play is the fundamental way that young children learn and develop life skills. Open-ended free play in nature offers great benefits across the developmental domains and enlivens a childhood. This session will give concrete strategies for how to cultivate more nature play into your program.

### **Forest School and Facebook: How to Successfully Promote Nature-Based Education By Harnessing the Power of Social Media** <sup>™</sup> <sup>®</sup>

Nicolette Sowder, Wilder Child and Wildschooling and Linda Åkeson McGurk,  
*Rain or Shine Mamma*  
*Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room*

Learn why and how to use some of the most common social media platforms to network, educate, fundraise, grow a following, and advance the nature-based education movement. Following the presentation, Linda McGurk will be selling and signing her book *There's No Such Thing as Bad Weather*, a parenting memoir about the nature-loving parenting culture of Scandinavia.

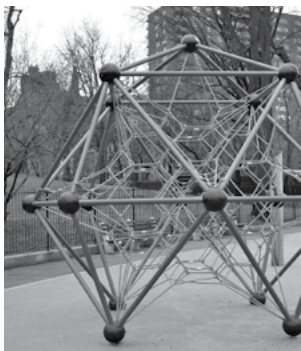
### **Go Outside! An Urban Early Childhood Program Explores Children's Risk and Agency in Meaningful Engagement with the Outdoor Playscape** <sup>®</sup>

Katherine Kidd, University of Tennessee Early Learning Center; Jessie Barber and Kathryn Barr, UT Early Learning Center  
*MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Great Lakes Room*

Children in urban programs can have deeply meaningful outdoor experiences just beyond the classroom door. Presenters share their documentation and collaborative inquiry method, illuminating their effort to honor and support children's competence and initiative through expanded time spent outside.



Photo: cyfamatters.wordpress.com



# Friday

11 – 12 pm

*Continued*

## **Nature Schooling in a Reluctant Community** (A) (T) (P)

Orien Kuang, My World Mandarin Nature School

*Bocaditos (upper level)*

Have you been dreaming about starting a nature preschool in a foreign language but your target language community is uncertain about the idea? Well dream no more, come to learn how to bring your reluctant community with you to realize your common vision!

## **Making Literacy Come Alive in the Great Outdoors** (T) (P)

Rachel Hucul and Vicki Sturtevant, Outdoor Discovery Center

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Earth Play (outdoors)*

Let's go outside for literacy! Nature provides context to what we read, building vocabulary and oral language through direct experiences. Let's explore how to make books come alive in the eyes of a child, and why increasing literacy efforts outside will help all children grow as future readers.

## **Recognizing Ourselves in Reed's Story: Cultivating Meaningful Experiences for Young Children and Their Families** (T)

Julie Vandervort-Peterson and George Klut, Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center, Forest Preserves of Cook County

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, The Woods (outdoors)*

Reed's story was our story. Learn how we authored a new approach to early childhood programs through awareness, professional learning, and partnership building with early childhood educators. We'll share how we now explore our world in wildly wonderful ways using inquiry, discovery, and play.

## **Math Outdoors: Integrating Math Standards into a Play-Based Curriculum** (T)

Anna Dutke, Prior-Lake Savage Area Schools and Marie Lister, University of Minnesota Shirley G Moore Lab School

*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Backyard (outdoors)*

Learn how two different programs in Minnesota incorporate state math standards into their learning environments. There will be an opportunity for participants to engage in hands-on mathematical learning with natural materials.

## **Including Every Child: Considerations for Nature Play As It Should Be** (T)

April Leigh, Erikson Institute and NatureStart at the Chicago Zoological Society/ Brookfield Zoo and Lauren Reeder, Inclusion Specialist, NatureStart Programs at Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo

*Nature Stage (outdoors)*

Accessibility for all children should be carefully considered during program planning for nature-based settings. The goal is for each child to actively participate and feel a sense of belonging and accomplishment. In order to do this, varying needs, interests, and abilities of young children are important considerations in selection of materials as well as design and use of environment. The role of family learning may also need to be addressed. We'll consider four nature play activities using the NatureStart™ Checklist for Including Every Child Guide.



# Friday

12:00 – 1:30 pm

## Lunch with Exhibitors

Swan Pavilion

Exhibitors located in the Swan Pavilion from 12 – 1:30 pm.

1:30 – 2:30 pm

## Concurrent Sessions (Block 7)

### How our Forest Preschool Became State Licensed and Retained our Core Values (A)

Maryfaith Decker Miller, Lime Hollow Forest Preschool  
Discovery Center, Founders Room

Considering state licensing? We will explore the pros and cons, looking carefully at core values and how to keep them in a regulated program, group-solve problematic regulations, and use a risk/benefit tool to craft protocols that will keep programs safety standards high and allow for licensing.

### Supporting the Development of Executive Function Skills through Nature Preschools (R)

Jenna Zamzow and Dr. Julie Ernst, University of Minnesota Duluth  
Bocaditos (upper level)

Learn about a research study investigating the effects of nature preschool on executive function skills. This session will involve an overview of executive function skills, development of these skills in early childhood, suggestions for using nature play to foster these skills, and study results.

### The Park Beyond the Playground: Rediscovering a Neighborhood Park (T)

Bernard Brown, Arcelia Pineda, Peter Brown, and Kristin Brizzolara,  
Velma Thomas Early Childhood Center  
Great Bear Wilderness Classroom

The Velma Thomas Early Childhood Center, a Reggio-inspired urban preschool, dedicated the past year to nurturing young inner city children to develop consistent, meaningful, and impactful connections with McKinley Park, resulting in educators, children, and parents discovering the “park beyond the playground.”

### A Child's Right to the Natural World: Linking Inside, Outside, and Beyond to Children as Active Citizens with Rights (T)

Briony Brooks and Claire Warden, Mindstretchers Ltd  
Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room

Follow the journey of educators who created a flow between inside, outside, and beyond spaces, which led to a beyond-the-fence program. Celebrate as we advocated for children to be recognised as active citizens of the community, who then influenced the local government to create a natural play space.

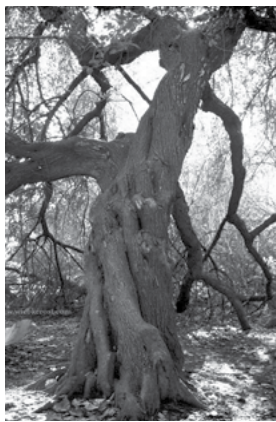


Photo: Wiebke Rost





# Friday

1:30 – 2:30 pm

Continued



## **Partnering for Success: Lessons from a Nature Play Partnership Between Denver Zoo and Denver Preschools** (A)

Joanna Cagan and Nicole Little, Denver Zoo and Mikayla Martinez,  
Mile High Early Learning  
MacLean Conservation Learning Center, Prairie Room

Curious about integrating nature into ECE programs? A partner can help! Denver Zoo and Mile High Early Learning share from Nurturing Scientists Through Nature Play, an impactful partnership between urban preschools and the Zoo. Bring questions and your experiences and join the conversation!

## **Playing Care/Caring Play: How Chicago Urban Community-Led Nature Play Sites Steward Nature Play** (A) (T)

Robin L. Cline, NeighborSpace and Jessica Fong, Spry Community  
School Chicago Public Schools  
MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Great Lakes Room

Community garden sites are ideal spots for nature play nooks--intimate, public, and urban. This public play also creates new norms and opportunities for communities to see each other both playing and stewarding together. This session explores “public play” as a new kind of early childhood stewardship.

## **Water Walls** (T) (T)

Jill Bienenstock, Adam Bienenstock, and Jon Halayko, Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds  
Hamill Family Play Zoo, Earth Play (outdoors)

Children love playing with water, whether it’s jumping in a puddle or playing at the water table. At this workshop, learn how to set up your own vertical water wall with tubing, connectors, and ties. Children can work together while they control the amount and direction of the water.

## **Wondering and Wandering: Creative Nature Connection and Nature Journaling with Young Children** (T) (T)

Kelly Johnson, Wings, Worms, and Wonder  
Hamill Family Play Zoo, The Woods (outdoors)

Explore the ‘hows and whys’ of helping children connect with nature through art and nature journaling! We’ll make early childhood nature journals and create sensory exploration activities while discussing the materials, teaching processes, applications, and challenges of various students and environments.

## **Wild Roots: Exploring Collaboration** (T) (T)

Andrea Welz, Sault College and Little Lions Waldorf Child and Family Centre  
Hamill Family Play Zoo, Backyard (outdoors)

Wild Roots, is a parent cooperative formed with an intent to nurture collaborative relationships with children, adults, and the rest of the natural world. Join an early childhood educator and parent as they share stories and insights about their explorations to put this intent into practice.



# Friday

1:30 – 2:30 pm

*Continued*

## **But I Can't Sing!** (T) (I)

Alicia Falcon, Cincinnati Nature Center

*Nature Stage (outdoors)*

Come explore the universal language of music and leave ready to share this enriching art form with your preschool children. Through hands-on music making we will learn singing and instrumental techniques that will leave you feeling confident no matter your musical aptitude.

3 – 4 pm

## **Concurrent Sessions (Block 8)**

### **Landscapes for Autism: How Nature-Based Play, Learning, and Therapeutic Environments Benefit Children with ASD** (R) (I)

Jena P. Jauchius, PLA, CPSI, EDAC, SPVV Landscape Architects

*Bocaditos (upper level)*

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is on the rise. You are in a unique position to effectively respond to this worldwide childhood health trend. A landscape architect specializing in nature play for ASD discusses how your facility or program can greatly benefit children on the spectrum.

### **Collecting Nature, Bringing the Wonders of Nature Indoors, and Learning About the Important Relationship Between Spiritual Development and Nature** (T) (I)

Deborah Schein, Growing Wonder LLC and Champlain College School of Education

*MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Prairie Room*

This session provides hands-on experiences, visual examples, and time to reflect upon the relationship between nature, wonder, and spiritual development of young children. The session will culminate in a big sharing of ideas.

### **Investigating Parental Narratives Surrounding Outdoor Nursery Choice in Scotland** (R) (I)

Erin C. Fitzpatrick, Mindstretchers Ltd

*Discovery Center, Founders Room*

Ever wondered about the decision-making process when choosing early education? Research conducted in Scotland with parents of children enrolled in a nature preschool told stories about play, learning, and risk to highlight reasons behind outdoor nursery choice. Come to learn and discuss the results!

### **Safe, Effective, and Inclusive: Developing Best Practice Guidance for Nature-Based Preschools** (R) (I)

Christy Merrick, Natural Start Alliance

*Bramsen Animal Ambassador Building, White Oak Room*

As nature-based preschools surge in popularity, educators, parents, regulators, and many others are wondering how to identify quality in nature-based programs. Natural Start has been working with a broad range of nature-based education leaders from across the Alliance to develop a common set of best practices for nature preschools in the United States. Learn about the people, process, and early results of this project.

# Friday

3 – 4 pm

*Continued*

## **Climbing the Tree: Exploring the Research Branch of Forest Preschools** (R)

Melinda Storie, Northeastern Illinois University and Theresa Weed, Forest Playschool  
*Great Bear Wilderness Classroom*

We will “climb the tree” by summarizing current research on forest preschools. We will then “rest on a branch” by outlining our case study of Forest Playschool. We will finally “explore other branches” by discussing how to facilitate productive collaborations between researchers and educators.

## **Remove the Bubble Wrap: Building Resilience through Risk-Taking** (T)

Joanna Booth-Miner and David Miner, Live & Learn Early Learning Center  
*MacLean Conservation Leadership Center, Great Lakes Room*

Remove the bubble wrap! Allowing children to risk take builds a resilience and competence for life skills. Discover effective techniques for providing indoor and outdoor movement activities. Let’s keep children as safe as necessary, not as safe as possible.

## **Sit Spots for Observation and Reflection** (T)

Nicole Fravel, Wildwood Nature School  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, The Woods (outdoors)*

Participants will gather outdoors to learn how to use sit spots to connect children to nature. See how schools use storytelling, mapping, and journals to enhance sit-spot observations and brainstorm ways to make sit spots meaningful to the group of students you teach.

## **Loose Parts in Environmental Education: Rethinking Nicholson’s Intent** (T)

Carla Gull, University of Phoenix  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Earth Play (outdoors)*

Reexamine Nicholson’s theory of loose parts through an environmental education lens. Explore unique concepts of loose parts, specific strategies inherent in environmental education, current research, connected theories, and related children’s books through hands-on approaches.

## **Building Cooperative Skills In Young Learners** (T)

Vicky Prusinski, The Orchard School  
*Hamill Family Play Zoo, Backyard (outdoors)*

Learn and play different challenge activities and group initiatives that support and encourage cooperative skills in young learners. Participants will leave with a list of activities and ideas that are easily implemented and ready to use on Monday morning--with little to no cost and prep!

4 pm

## **Afternoon Refreshments**

*Discovery Center, lobby*



# Friday

4:30 - 6 pm

## **Closing Panel: Risk Management in Nature-Based Programming Across the Globe**

*Discovery Center, Savannah Room (live) & Founders Room (simulcast)\**

Children seek learning that is challenging and adventurous, where they can reach beyond their abilities and test themselves. Teaching and learning in nature readily provides these sorts of experiences. Being outdoors with children, however, in all weather, requires another level of risk management beyond fire drills and correct hand washing instructions. Children learn to be safe by engaging in risky activities (whether physically or by watching their peers). As teachers, our role is to mitigate hazards and teach risk assessment through well-scaffolded lessons about risk elements we choose to provide for in our programs.

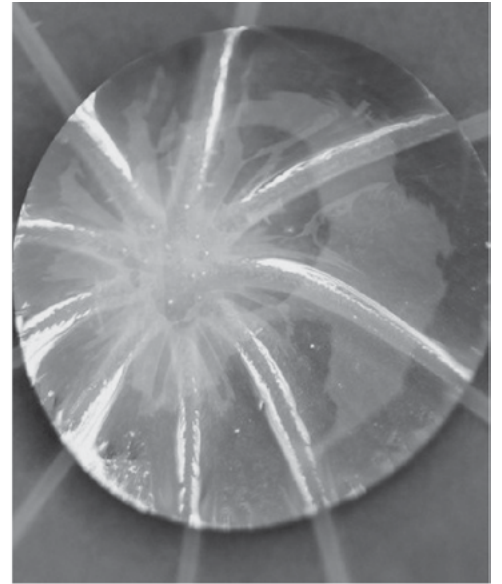
**Panelists:** Aliza Yair, Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families; Claire Warden, Founder of IANP, Auchlone Nature Kindergarten, Perth, Scotland, CEO of Mindstretchers Ltd., and Claire Warden Ltd. Educational Consultant and Speaker; Briony Brooks, Department For Education, South Australia, Preschool Director in various Preschools and Children's Centres, and Trainer for Mindstretchers, Ltd, and Claire Warden Ltd.

**Facilitator:** Anne Stires, M.Ed., Founder and Director, Juniper Hill School for Place-Based Education

*\*Seating in Savannah Room available on first come, first-served basis. Overflow seating and simulcast available in the Founders Room.*







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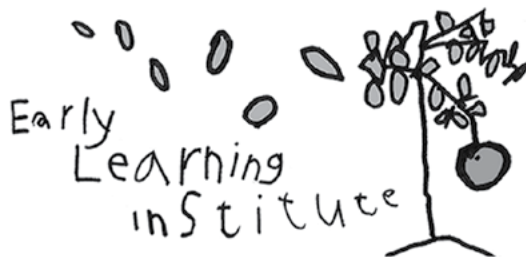
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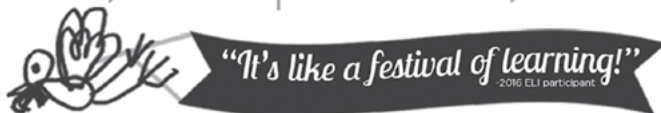


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# Saturday Field Trips

Chicago is home to an incredibly diverse – and rapidly expanding – nature-based preschool community. Gather new ideas and inspiration by visiting Chicago-area nature-based preschool programs! Three options are available to highlight some of these model programs. **Please note: pre-payment and registration is required for these optional field trips.**

*If you'd like to add a trip, you can check availability and adjust your registration online.*

**Where to Meet:** Trips will depart from the DoubleTree Hilton-Oak Brook parking lot (1909 Spring Road, Oak Brook, Illinois, 60523)

**When:** Please arrive by 7:45 am so that we can load the buses quickly. Buses will depart promptly at 8 am.

**What to Bring:** All trips include boxed lunch, but 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!



Photo: Mikyoung Kim Design

## Option 1: North Illinois Field Trip

8 am – 4 pm, \$60

**This trip visits:** Chicago Botanic Garden, Winnetka Public School Nursery, and The Forest Playschool at North Park Village Nature Center; boxed lunch included.

Join us on a tour of a variety of programs north of Chicago. We'll visit the Chicago Botanic Garden, which just opened the Chicago Botanic Garden Nature Preschool in 2016, and features 27 gardens and four natural areas available for children to explore and use as learning areas. We'll also visit the Winnetka Public School Nursery, which has undergone a series of changes since it was founded in 1926. Starting with a progressive education model, the school adopted the Reggio Emilia philosophy in 1991, and in 2011 began a journey to bring nature into their indoor and outdoor spaces. And we'll also visit The Forest Playschool at North Park Village Nature Center, the first entirely outdoor preschool in the Chicagoland area. This school meets in Walking Stick Woods, a 12-acre forest nestled within an urban setting. The site is managed by the Chicago Park District and the project is a collaboration with North Park Village.



Photo: Der/gallery/Chicago

### Option 2: West Illinois Field Trip

8 am – 4 pm, \$60

**This trip visits:** Peaceful Pathways Montessori Academy, Natural Beginnings Early Childhood Program, and Prairie School of DuPage; boxed lunch included.

Western Illinois is home to diverse nature-based programs that operate in a variety of settings. We'll visit the Peaceful Pathways Montessori Academy, an authentic Montessori school that serves children ages 15 months through 9th grade. We'll also visit the Hoover Forest Preserve, home to the Natural Beginnings Early Childhood Program. With over 350 acres of prairie, streams, and woodland to explore, students immerse themselves in seasonal themes by taking nature walks, studying natural phenomena, and engaging in activities that build physical, emotional, and academic skills. And finally, we'll visit the Prairie School of DuPage, a private elementary school in Wheaton, IL for families seeking a progressive, nature-based approach to education. They serve pre-K through grade 8 with a holistic curriculum that emphasizes traditional academics, as well as outdoor education, nature studies, visual arts, music, theater, foreign language, yoga, STEM, and more.

### Option 3: Wisconsin Field Trip

8 am - 5 pm, \$65

**This trip visits:** The Urban Ecology Center, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, and Woodside Elementary School; boxed lunch included.

The longer drive to experience programs in the Milwaukee area is worth it, with stops at three highly regarded nature-based education programs. We'll visit the The Urban Ecology Center, which provides over 8,000 preschool-aged children with hands-on, inquiry-based early childhood experiences through their three environmental community centers, all located adjacent to reclaimed urban natural spaces. We'll also visit the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, which sits on 185 acres of forest, wetland, restored prairie, ravines, bluffs, and Lake Michigan shoreline. For 15 years, the nature center has operated a nature preschool that now serves 144 children in 9 preschool classes. We'll also visit Woodside Elementary, part of the Hamilton School District, which has created a nature kindergarten program and incorporated a trail (Timberwolf Trail), a natural play area, and several outdoor learning spaces in a previously unused parcel of oak savanna/prairie land behind the school building.

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College**

**Center for Nature and Place-Based  
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# Travel and Lodging



## Conference Venue

Chicago Zoological Society - Brookfield Zoo  
3300 Golf Road, Brookfield, IL 60513. Parking at the zoo is complementary for conference participants. Use the above address to arrive at the zoo's South Gate. Do not park in the North Lot or use the North Gate entrance.  
[www.czs.org/Brookfield-ZOO/Home](http://www.czs.org/Brookfield-ZOO/Home)

## Conference Hotels

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel –  
Oak Brook  
1909 Spring Road, Oak Brook, Illinois, 60523  
1-630-472-6000

Hilton Chicago – Oak Brook Suites  
10 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
1-800-HILTONS

## Travel Around Chicago

Airports: Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) and Midway International Airport (MDW),  
[www.flychicago.com](http://www.flychicago.com)

Airport Shuttles  
Coach USA Airport Supersavers, 1-800-248-8747,  
[www.airportsupersaver.com/airport-information](http://www.airportsupersaver.com/airport-information)

Go Airport Express, 1-888-284-3826, [www.airportexpress.com/client/flychicago](http://www.airportexpress.com/client/flychicago)

FreeTaxi Dispatch, Inc. 1-844-894-3733, offers discounted rates to Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Suites

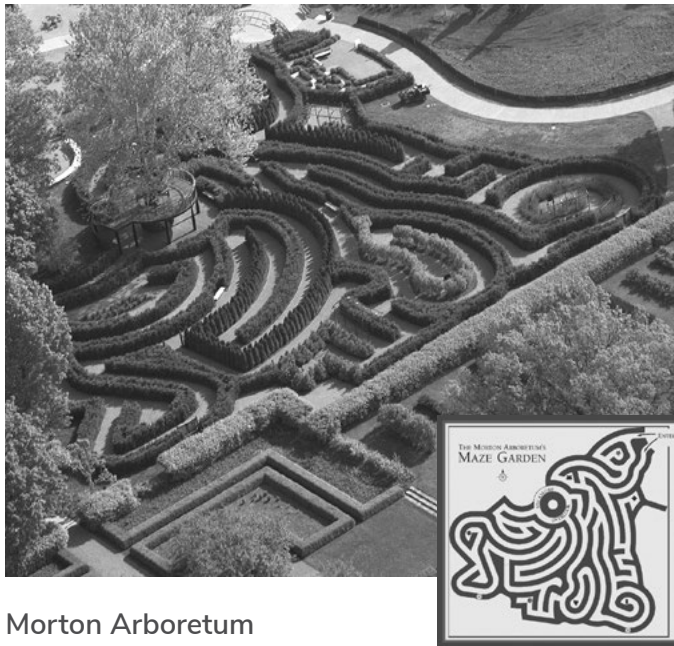
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# Chicago Highlights

Extending your stay? Visit and be inspired by these nature-based early learning spots in and around the city:



**Morton Arboretum**  
4100 Route 53, Lisle  
[www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org), 630-968-0074  
Hours listed on website

At The Morton Arboretum, visitors will find 1,700 acres of vast woodlands, prairie, and lakes. One of the arboretum's highlights is the Children's Garden, where imagination lives, curiosity grows, and kids flourish. Splash through secret streams, climb colossal acorns, and slide down giant tree roots all day long. The Children's Garden includes two main garden areas: Backyard Discovery Gardens and Adventure Woods, linked by a Central Plaza. The three areas incorporate ten themed gardens, each with engaging and interactive activities that children will find irresistible. If that isn't enough, journey through our far-reaching forest to hunt for six colossal trolls crafted from reclaimed wood by Danish artist Thomas Dambo. Marvel at these 15- to 30-foot-tall (and one 60-foot-long) sculptures that have been created to serve as protectors of our environment. The institution also includes several specialty gardens, including an extensive Maze Garden, as well as educational exhibits and 16 miles of hiking trails. Visit website for hours of operation and admission fees.

**Trailside Museum of Natural History**  
738 Thatcher Ave, River Forest, Illinois  
<http://fpdcc.com/nature-centers/trailside-museum-natural-history/>, 708-366-6530  
Open 9am-5pm, closed Friday. Free.

Do you work for a nature center and are interested in installing a nature play area in which young children can build, stack, climb, and play imaginatively? Visit historic Trailside Museum, the first public nature education facility of the Forest Preserves of Cook County, to see how its staff turned part of the grounds into a space that fosters creative nature play. While there, also check out the native animal exhibits or hike the trails meandering through oak woodlands and the banks of the Des Plaines River.



**Lincoln Park Zoo**  
Lake Shore Drive at Fullerton Parkway,  
Chicago, Illinois  
[www.lpzoo.org](http://www.lpzoo.org), 312-742-2000  
Open and free every day.

Lincoln Park Zoo is a leader in local and global conservation, animal care and welfare, learning, and science. Its early-learning initiatives include Wild Sapling Play Forest, a nature-play-structured playground open daily in the Pritzker Family Children's Zoo, a woody home for North American animal species. Additionally, Play Days at the Farm, taking place at 10 a.m. and noon on Tuesdays and Saturdays, provides facilitated nature-play activities for early learners at the Farm-in-the-Zoo, home to farm animals and an Edible Garden where children connect with natural resources that sustain us all.



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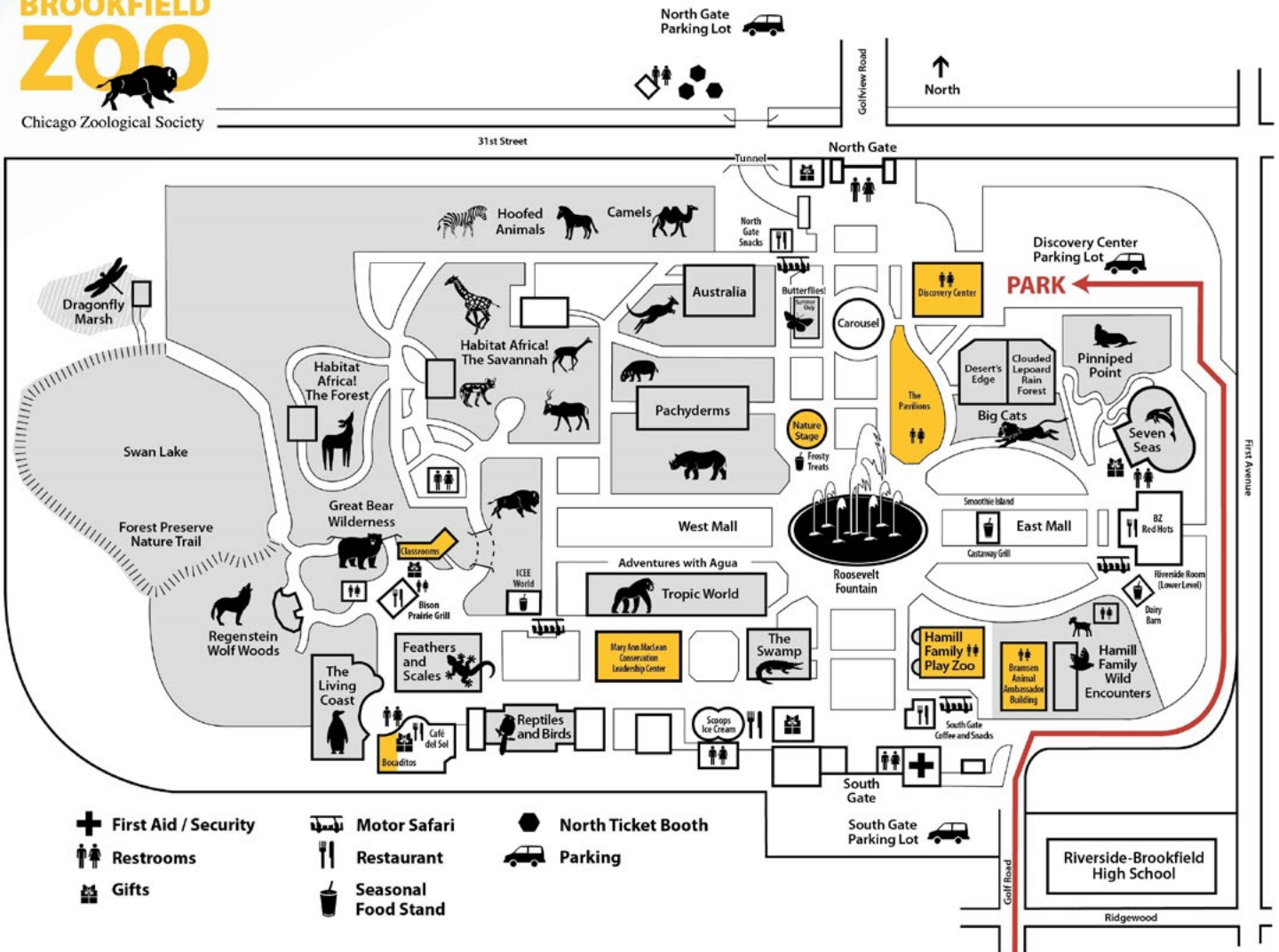
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# BROOKFIELD ZOO

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