

7TH ANNUAL

Nature Preschool Conference

FRIDAY – SATURDAY
APRIL 20-21, 2018



**NOT JUST
FOR
PRESCHOOL
TEACHERS!**

This year's conference has expanded to include workshops for caregiver and child, homeschool, after school, daycare, summer camp, and of course, preschool programs! There's something for everyone!

**WE HOPE YOU CAN
JOIN US!**

2018 SCHEDULE *Upstairs Classroom will be set up for viewing throughout the conference*

Fri., April 20th, 2018

Arrival & Check In	5-6 p.m.	Exhibit Hall / Registration Table
Welcoming Happy Hour/ Open House/Bird Hike/ Wetland Tour	5-7 p.m.	Upstairs Classroom, Barn and Wetland Area
Keynote: Dana McCauley, Crellin School and Sunshine Farm	7-9 p.m.	Fern Room
Campfire Networking	9-11 p.m.	Outdoor Amphitheater

Saturday, April 21st, 2018

Coffee Wake-up Call	7:30 a.m.	Tent
Arrival & Check In	8-9 a.m.	Exhibit Hall / Registration Table
Early Riser Yoga or Shinrin-yoku (Forest Bathing)	8-8:30 a.m.	Deck or Trailhead
Welcoming Breakfast	8-9 a.m.	Tent
Opening Exercise: Monica French	9-10:30 a.m.	Outdoor Amphitheater
BREAK	10:30-10:45 a.m.	
Session A Workshops	10:45-11:45 a.m.	
(A) Building a Nest for Little Birds		Fern Room B/Trails
(B) Nature-based Playschools and Daycares		Outdoor Classroom
(C) Nature Based Homeschool Programs		Fern Room A/Deck/Trails
(D) Guided Hike		Trailhead
Lunch & Learn	11:45-12:45 p.m.	Tent or Outdoor Amphitheater
(A) Programs at Irvine		
(B) The Eastern Region of Forest and Nature Schools		
(C) Book Signing with Sandra Duncan		
Session B Workshops	12:45-1:45 p.m.	
(A) Natural Playthings		Downstairs Classroom/Under Deck
(B) STEM in a Backpack		Outdoor Classroom/Trails
(C) Revisiting Natural Play Rhythms		Fern Room A/Deck
(D) Guided Hike		Trailhead
BREAK	1:45-2 p.m.	
Session C Workshops	2-3 p.m.	
(A) Natural Playthings		Downstairs Classroom/Under Deck
(B) Mindfulness & Yoga		Fern Room B/Trails
(C) We are all Connected		Fern Room A/Deck
(D) Guided Hike		Trailhead
BREAK	3-3:15 p.m.	
Session D Workshops	3:15-4:15 p.m.	
(A) Supporting Children's Emotional Competence, Naturally		Fern B/Outdoor Classroom
(B) Music & Movement		Fern Room A/Deck
(C) Stupendous Storytelling		Outdoor Amphitheater
(D) Guided Hike		Trailhead
Closing Remarks, Survey & Assessment Collection	4:15-4:45 p.m.	Tent / Registration Table

ABOUT OUR CONFERENCE

Join fellow educators for the seventh annual Nature Preschool Conference and learn how to grow your nature based program.

QUICK CONFERENCE DETAILS

- Friday and Saturday April 20-21, 2018
- Prices range from \$60-\$220
- At Irvine Nature Center in Owings Mills, MD (25 minutes outside of Baltimore)
- Rustic camping available on-site \$25 fee

OPENING PRESENTER

Dana McCauley, Crellin School and Sunshine Farm, Crellin, MD

Dr. Dana McCauley has served as the teaching principal of Crellin Elementary School in Oakland, Maryland for the past sixteen years. As the instructional leader at Crellin Elementary School she coordinates and monitors a learning program that guides students to achieve and sustain



academic and personal success. Under her direction, Crellin Elementary School participated in a reclamation project that led to the creation of their Environmental Education Laboratory, consisting of a 5.5 acres outdoor classroom, on school property. In addition, the schoolyard is the home of Sunshine Farm, which houses sheep, goats, chickens, multiple gardens and a greenhouse. These unique school features serve as resources for instruction, place-based projects and student research. McCauley holds a B.S. and M.Ed. from Frostburg State University in Maryland and an Ed.D. from West Virginia University.

OPENING ADDRESS

● **Wet Sneakers + Dirty Clothes = A Day at Crellin School**

Friday, 7-9 p.m.

Dana McCauley, Crellin School and Sunshine Farm, Crellin MD

There is no ordinary day at Crellin Elementary School! Whether students are exploring their Environmental Education Laboratory, caring for their farm animals, or maintaining the plants in their greenhouse, students spend time actively engaged in nature. Dr. McCauley, teaching principal and Mrs. Friend, kindergarten teacher will share Crellin's journey toward the creation of a learning environment that increases student and community engagement and excitement for learning. By "taking down the school's walls," students and teachers have discovered unique learning opportunities outside. A shift in the school's culture has given teachers the freedom to be creative and foster students' curiosities. Crellin's program is based on the idea that some of the best teaching and learning experiences grow out of a sense of place.

WORKSHOPS

Presenters knowledgeable in nature based education are invited to share meaningful, inspirational workshops. We encourage participants to ask questions and share personal experiences with our community of conference-goers. We learn from each other!

Four workshop sessions are offered throughout the day Saturday. Attendees are invited to select one workshop per session to attend. Each workshop is geared toward a specific age group. Use the key below to determine the age group focus of each workshop:

- Birth – age 3 ● Birth – age 5 ● Ages 5 and up ● All ages

OPEN HOUSE

Friday, 5-7 p.m.

● Creativity Runs Wild

Karen Madigan and Nature Preschool Staff, Irvine Nature Center

Tour our classrooms and check out dozens of art projects, games and activities that reinforce emergent approaches to nature-based learning.

OPTIONAL MORNING ACTIVITIES

Saturday, 8-8:30 a.m.

● Rise & Shine Yoga

Jess Gruber, Yoga Instructor Little Moon Yoga, Wash., D.C.

Start the day with yoga poses inspired by nature and discover how to infuse mindful approaches into your curriculum.

● Shinrin-yoku (Forest Bathing)

Erika Piotrowski, Irvine Nature Center Eco-Explorers Leader and Little Birds Teacher

Everyone knows that a walk in the woods can be relaxing. Wait until you take a mindful stroll through Irvine's forest with one of our naturalists to practice Shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing. This practice was developed in Japan in the 1980's, and has become the cornerstone of preventive health care and healing in Japanese medicine. Studies have shown Shinrin-yoku can improve your mood and relieve stress.

MORNING EXERCISE

Saturday, 9-10:30 a.m.

● Nature Play Paves the Way to Learning

Monica French, Irvine Nature Center and Wild Haven

Armed with the wealth of experience she has gained as an educator in various settings, Monica French will lead us on an exciting adventure! She will model approaches to outdoor learning with inspiration coming from *The Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature* by Jon Young and other provocative literature. Monica will share songs and games, and special techniques for working with groups of children during outdoor learning.

EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOPS

(Select one workshop per session)

Session A – 10:45 -11:45 a.m.

● Building a Nest for Little Birds: A Blueprint for Developing a Parent & Children Program

Beth Savitz, Early Childhood Programs Coordinator, Irvine Nature Center

The goal of Irvine Nature Center's Little Birds program is to provide children birth through 3 years of age with the opportunity to discover the wonders of wildlife alongside their caregiver. Now in its fifth year, the Little Birds program has tripled in size as parents, grandparents, extended family members, and other childcare providers eagerly look for ways to enjoy nature with their little ones. Join Beth for an hour of fun and learn how you can bring the joy of wildlife to

the youngest learners in your programs. This workshop will include a simulated Little Birds class where participants will enjoy songs, stories, crafts, live animal encounters, and a short hike. Learn strategies for building a successful program of your own!

● **Nature-based Playschools and Daycares**

*Jessica Clayton, Riverside Rhymes LLC
Nature Play School*

Did you ever want to open your own nature based childcare out of your home but didn't know where to begin? Do you have a currently running family childcare but want to incorporate more natural elements into your program? Come look at photos of my New Jersey, home-based program, see how I created indoor and outdoor classrooms at my home, incorporated regular visits to natural spaces, and attracted clients into my full day, state licensed, Nature Play School. Bring all your questions so we can discuss as a group!

● **Nature-based Homeschool Programs**

Stephanie Holzman, Head of Homeschool Programs, Irvine Nature Center

Creativity can spark deeper connections to the world around us. At Irvine, our Earth Friends Homeschool program has been infused with creative arts since its inception. The use of art, music, creative writing, storytelling and drama modalities in our classes have been an exciting way to encourage sensory engagement with natural history and science. Join Stephanie Holzman, Earth Friends teacher and former Creative Arts Therapist to further explore your own creativity and learn to deepen the place-based connections between your environment and the children you teach.

● **Guided Hike**

Naturalists, Irvine Nature Center

Join an Irvine Naturalist for an hour long, guided hike through the different habitats found on our property. We will visit the forest, meadow, and wetlands; all while learning about the different plants and animals that call each habitat their home. During our journey we will stop at Irvine's aviary to discuss the natural history of birds of prey, we will get an up-close look at life under a log, we will sample and discuss the many edible plants that grow in the area, and we will discover how everything is connected to nature, even ourselves! This hike is mildly strenuous; please expect to walk between 1-2 miles. Closed-toed shoes or boots are highly recommended, along with a water bottle and sunscreen/bug spray if needed. Questions are welcome during the hike, photographs are encouraged, and immersing yourself into Irvine's mission of 'explore, respect, and protect nature' is a given!

LUNCH & LEARN

11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Enjoy a delicious lunch on the go while learning about the many programs offered here at Irvine, or join Amy Beam to discover the benefits of The Eastern Region of Forest and Nature Schools: Maryland Chapter, or meet author and presenter Sandra Duncan for a book signing. We also invite you to take your picnic lunch and explore the trails or find a quiet place to reflect on all the wonderful knowledge you're acquiring!

Session B – 12:45-1:45 p.m.

● **Natural Playthings – Sticks & Stones**

Karen Madigan, The Nature Preschool at Irvine

Handmade games and manipulatives spark creativity and learning in a whole

new way! Children discover how to be resourceful and how to repurpose plentiful natural and recycled materials, specifically sticks and stones, while refining foundational skills. Come and create playthings for your school during this hands-on workshop.

● **STEM in a Backpack**

Sue Penix, Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center

Providing nature experiences in an urban setting can be a challenge for many childcare programs. STEM in a Backpack is a nature immersion program for childcare providers to help them incorporate more STEM activities into their programs, both indoors and outdoors. The program leads participants in discovering the rich, natural resources available to them throughout Baltimore City, and outside their own front doors. It allows participants to experience nature first-hand during visits to local city parks. This workshop gives an overview of STEM in a Backpack, and includes a short hike and make and take activity.

● **Revisiting Natural Play Rhythms**

Ann Marie Douglass, Nature Club Kids, LLC.
Ann Marie will demonstrate how primitive technologies, sensory awareness activities, and gratitude for Nature's pace, complexity, and abundance leads to curiosity, awe, and stewardship in all learners. Ann Marie dreams of a 'Natureopolis' where humans find their place again in balance with the Natural world.

● **Guided Hike**

Naturalists, Irvine Nature Center

Session C – 2-3 p.m.

● **Natural Playthings – Sticks & Stones**

*Karen Madigan,
The Nature Preschool at Irvine*

● **Mindfulness & Yoga**

Jessica Gruber, Little Moon Yoga

This presentation will consider how breath and mindfulness play a role within the nervous system and how this affects child development, specifically children with AD(H)D, ASD, and sensory processing disorders. Participants will practice deep breathing and mindfulness techniques that are not only beneficial for educators, but can be taught in any classroom setting. Then, as we notice how these tools affect our own mental, emotional, and physical bodies, we will dive into the neuroscience behind breath, mindfulness, and intentional movement and how it applies to children. We will practice multiple methods of embodying mindfulness, teaching it, and reinforcing it in our classrooms, whether indoors or out in nature.

● **We are all Connected: Creating Environments that Connect Young Children, Families, and Communities**

Sandra Duncan, co-author of Inspiring Spaces for Young Children; Rethinking the Classroom Landscape: Creating Environments that Connect Young Children, among other publications.

There is an invisible thread of life that connects us all. It weaves in and out among us to create a unique tapestry of beauty and diversity. Beginning with the child and radiating out to the family, school, and community, this invisible thread connects us all together. This thread entwines everything and everybody--creating a tapestry of interdependence and interconnection impossible to unravel. Learn how to strengthen your classroom tapestry with the power of nature and natural elements.

● **Guided Hike**

Naturalists, Irvine Nature Center

● **Supporting Children’s Emotional Competence, Naturally**

Stephanie Bozzo and Amelia McLaughlin, Audubon Nature Preschool

One of the primary goals of early childhood education is to help young children find their own voices and socialize successfully with peers. Discover ways that nature-based learning connects children’s natural interests with one another and facilitates authentic moments of self-discovery.

● **Music & Movement, Rhythms & Rhymes**

Monica French, Irvine Nature Center and Wild Haven

Music and movement creates opportunities for children to develop cognitive and social emotional skills, as well as their ability to express creatively! Inspired by the movements and sounds found in the natural world, this workshop explores how to integrate music and

movement into the daily rhythm of your program. Musical elements like “pitch”, “tone”, “rhythm” and “scale” surround us in nature! Birds calling in the tree tops, the stealthy stride of a hungry fox, and the pitter patter of raindrops are all examples of these. Come ready with your favorite song and we can learn and share together!

● **Stupendous Storytelling!**

Paula Jackson, Forest Dreamers at Irvine Nature Center

We all have a story to tell! Whether it’s a spontaneous tale created by your children, or a folktale from the past, storytelling should be an interactive and exciting part of your day. In this engaging workshop we will learn how to use the outdoors to enhance the way we create or share narratives. We will look at how to extend literary text to include memorable lessons, and how to use the natural landscape as inspiration for developing a love of literacy.

● **Guided Hike**

Naturalists, Irvine Nature Center

Camping Accommodations: Pitch your own tent on our beautiful property for a minimal fee (\$25). Rustic accommodations do not include shower facilities, but sunrise over the meadow and morning bird songs are pure bliss. (Port-o-potties are in walking distance; campground is a 10-minute walk from the nature center.) Space is limited. **Reserve early!**

NATURE PRESCHOOL CONFERENCE 2018 REGISTRATION

Register online at www.ExploreNature.org

Conference Pricing

Full Conference	Friday-Saturday, April 20-21	\$195
<i>Includes all Friday and Saturday events and workshops including Friday Happy Hour with drinks and appetizers and Saturday breakfast, lunch, and snacks</i>		
Full Conference with Camping Fee	Friday-Saturday, April 20-21	\$220
Friday Only	Friday, April 20	\$60
<i>Includes Happy Hour with drinks and appetizers, classroom Open House, Bird Hike, Wetland Tour, Opening Address and Campfire Networking</i>		
Saturday Only	Saturday, April 21	\$145
<i>Includes all events, workshops, breakfast, lunch and snacks</i>		
Camping – BRING YOUR OWN TENT \$25		



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www.ExploreNature.org



WHO WILL YOU NOMINATE FOR THE MARGARET O'NEILL EARLY CHILDHOOD NATURE EDUCATOR AWARD?

This award recognizes the contributions of an outstanding early childhood educator who facilitates nature-based learning to provide meaningful programming for children birth through eight years old. To nominate someone you admire, visit www.ExploreNature.org/O'NeillAward.

**REGISTER NOW
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APRIL 20-21, 2018**