

IRVINE NATURE CENTER PRESENTS THE NATURE & YOUNG CHILDREN SUMMIT

Formerly The Nature Preschool Conference

*Deep Roots.
&
Hiking Boots.*



Irvine
NATURE CENTER



Nature Preschool
of Irvine Nature Center

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Participants engage in discussion, hands-on learning, and the sharing of ideas all centered around this year's theme: Deep Roots and Hiking Boots.

Guided by knowledgeable early childhood educators passionate about nature based child-led learning, we'll revisit and strengthen our understanding of humanity's ancestral roots to the natural world. We encourage you to think critically, ask questions, reflect on your practice, and share your experiences as we strengthen our growing community.

In addition to a keynote address on Friday evening and enrichment activities, three different breakout workshop sessions are offered throughout Saturday. Attendees are asked to select one workshop per session to attend.



QUICK CONFERENCE DETAILS

- Friday and Saturday April 3-4, 2020
- At Irvine Nature Center in Owings Mills, MD (*25 minutes outside Baltimore*)
- Prices range from \$60-\$220
- Rustic camping available on-site for a \$25 fee
- Approved by the Maryland State Department of Education for 6.5 hours of professional development.





KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Nicolette Sowder

Founder, Wilder Child and Wildschooling

Wilder Child is one of the largest global, online communities of nature connected parents and educators.

Nicolette's experience as a teacher in a traditional classroom strengthened her resolve to help design nature-bonded, visceral learning experiences outside of those four walls. She is committed to furthering the outdoor education movement through her work as an educator at Strong Roots Natural Learning Community and board member of the American Forest Kindergarten Association.

She finds her center, inspiration, and a lot of eggs on her 60-acre farmstead in Michigan where she Wildschools her two daughters.



**THE NATURE &
YOUNG CHILDREN
SUMMIT IS MADE
POSSIBLE BY:**

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WORKSHOPS & PROGRAMS

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2020

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020



Open House, Friday, 5-7pm Creativity Runs Wild

Katie Rooney & Staff

The Nature Preschool at Irvine

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

Keynote, Friday 7-9pm Storying the Landscape: Strengthening the Nature Bond through Narrative *Nicolette Sowder, founder of Wilder Child and Wildschooling*

For a millennia, humans have imprinted on, survived, and bonded to their environments through the use of story. Much of this type of intelligence and way of being has been lost. We often traverse unaware and nature blind to the narrative threads that arch out like mycelium to reach us. To remember this way of meaning making, we can look to traditional and contemporary uses of story within the wilder landscape. We'll explore examples of stories born out of a shared need, vocabulary, sense of survival, or raw creativity. Brimming with that knowledge and framework, we can once again turn our attention to the stories that have been there all along. Once recognized, those stories create a foundation that we can then layer and build our nature-bonded programs upon.

OPTIONAL MORNING ENRICHMENT SATURDAY 8-8:30AM

Rise & Shine Yoga

Jess Gruber, Yoga Instructor at Little Moon Yoga

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 Environmental Educator

Take a mindful stroll through Irvine's forest to practice Shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing. Studies have shown that this Japanese practice can improve your mood and relieve stress.

Bird Walk

Simon Best & Keith Eric Costley

Novice or not, join our experienced birders for a morning stroll to listen and look our feathered friends. We'll visit bird blinds, the meadow, and wherever the eagle flies. Binoculars encouraged, but not required.

Qigong (the Grandparent of Tai Chi)

Mary Pinkard, QiMaryP, LLC

Invite the outdoors to help you breathe, relax, revitalize, get grounded & centered for the day. Practice the playful form of 5 Animal Qigong, a 4,000 year old style of moving meditation, with Mary Pinkard of Qi-MaryP, LLC.

REGISTER TODAY:

ExploreNature.org/summit

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020 (CONT'D)

OPENING EXERCISE SATURDAY 9-10AM

Community Building Through Play and Song *Lynn Trotta, Sagefire Institute*

Join Lynn to experience the power of Play as a community building tool.

Nature based games and songs bind a group through laughter, vulnerability, and shared experience. You'll learn ways to choreograph the energy of a group and get to know your students better by tracking their participation. You'll leave with a handful of back pocket games and awareness exercises which you can use with a variety of ages and group sizes in outdoor settings.



EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOPS *(Select one per time slot)*

SESSION A SATURDAY 10:15AM TO 11:45AM

A Friendship that Lasts a Lifetime *Lynn Trotta, Sagefire Institute*

Emotionally intelligent and resilient adults begin with healthy relationships in childhood. A rich relationship with nature offers a deep sense of belonging and acceptance, without judgement or conditions. In our time together we'll explore exercises and routines that help children build an interconnectedness with nature that sets them up for a love of life and lifelong connection with nature. We'll discuss how and why practices like gratitude, awareness tools, and art, foster a sense of peace and joy, as well as offer a way to process difficult emotions.

Sensory Play Nature's Way *Sue Penix, Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center*

Infants and toddlers are born with an innate ability to explore the world around them through sensory experiences. Nature naturally supports sensory development and play and is often overlooked as a medium of exploration for infants and toddlers. This workshop takes a look at how infants and toddlers build brain connections known as schemas through sensory play with the natural world and natural elements and introduces the "Honeycomb Hypothesis" which illustrates how young children develop schemas with nature. Participants will also come away with ideas and strategies for incorporating nature into their curriculum for infants and toddlers that are age and developmentally appropriate.

WORKSHOPS AGE GROUP KEY



All Ages



Ages birth to 2



Ages 3 to 5



Ages 6 to 8

SESSION A (CONT'D) 10:15AM TO 11:45AM

Mud, Sun, and Wind: Wild Nature Play at the Nature Preschool

Katie Rooney & Meghan de Kozlowski, The Nature Preschool at Irvine



The Nature Preschool at Irvine spends at least half of their day outside engaging in free-play and exploration. Throughout our experiences, preschoolers investigate and learn about themselves, peers and nature. Join us for a boots-on workshop as we explore some of our favorite spots and share how we facilitate and extend children's play and learning with nature. We'll cover it all from logistical considerations, safety guidelines, our language, favorite activities, and natural gems. Don't forget your camera and hiking shoes!

Guided Hike



Jenna Krebs, Lydia Shreeve, Steve Everitt & Erika Piotrowski, Irvine Nature Center

Join an Irvine Naturalist for an hour long, guided hike through the different habitats found on our property. Questions and photographs welcome!



SESSION B SATURDAY 12:45pM TO 2:15pM

Education in Context: Understanding and Supporting Self-Regulation in the Outdoor Environment

Kit Harrington, Natural Start Alliance



Self-regulation plays a critical role in children's learning and growth, and studies show it is a better indicator of future success than any single other aspect of development. Using the concept of "education in context" as a framework, we'll examine the ways in which the outdoor environment is uniquely suited to supporting children's development of this important capacity. We'll get back to what makes outdoor learning so exceptional, while learning a variety of games, activities, and routines to help scaffold and support young learners in developing related skills in all areas - cognitive, social, emotional, and physical.

Including Young Children with Disabilities



Sylvia Collazo, Florida State University

Despite the growing number of nature based preschool programs nationwide, most have reported having less than 5% of children who receive special education services. The goal of this presentation is to increase teachers' knowledge of the needs of young children with disabilities and provide strategies to effectively support them in their program. The presentation will begin with a brief overview on the characteristics and needs of young children with disabilities. Participants will identify fears and barriers that limit or prevent including little ones with special needs. They will then explore natural spaces and discuss research-based strategies for inclusion during outdoor and nature-based activities. Resources that support inclusive practices in early childhood environmental education will be shared.

WORKSHOPS AGE GROUP KEY



All Ages



Ages birth to 2



Ages 3 to 5



Ages 6 to 8

SESSION B (CONT'D)

12:45pM TO 2:15pM

Tending the Wild/ Caretaking Joe Murray, *The Pearlstone Center*



Not so long-ago, native peoples lived in harmony with their land. Such was the abundance they created: American Chestnuts masting over one foot deep, while Passenger Pigeon droppings could cover the forest floor to the depth of two- and one-half inches, and fishing could be accomplished without tools. Join us for a walk in the forest and learn Indigenous and other methods of Tending the Wild or Caretaking. Learn practical lessons on how to start increasing food, biodiversity and overall ecological health by harvesting from the environment. In this class you will learn that you and your students are the solution to many of our ecological problems today.

Guided Hike



Jenna Krebs, Lydia Shreeve, Steve Everitt & Erika Piotrowski, *Irvine Nature Center*

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SESSION C SATURDAY

2:30pM TO 4:00pM

The Nature of Play



Atiya Wells, *Backyard Basecamp*

In childhood, learning happens through play. Whether children are modeling adult behavior, building stacks with wooden blocks, or tracking ants on a log, they are learning how to be in the world. This has remained true throughout the test of time. Join us for a hands-on workshop that will describe the cohesive relationship between developmental milestones, stages of play, and play schemas. Participants will apply these principles in order to develop a supportive learning work plan in these areas.

SESSION C (CONT'D)

2:30pM TO 4:00pM

Enlivening Nature Through Aki the Forest Gnome



Nicolette Sowder, *founder of Wilder Child and Wildschooling*
Kristin Stoddard, *Strong Roots Natural Learning Community*

Nature and children have an innate bond, but traditionally story has served as a powerful bridge and conduit for humans to connect to the wilder world. Inspired by the Scandinavian concept and character, Skogsmulle, Aki functions as one of the primary narrative threads through which our younger students in the Strong Roots Natural Learning Community bind to the land. This workshop will provide the elements, seasonal connections, rhythm and songs used to bring Aki to life within a nature preschool setting. We will also present ways in which Aki can serve as a heart-centered vehicle for exploring emotional intelligence, peacekeeping and mindfulness. Participants will walk away with the resources, knowledge and inspiration to create their own forest friend for the children to grow and explore beside.



SESSION C (CONT'D)
2:30pM TO 4:00pM

Mud, Sun, and Wind: Wild Nature Play at the Nature Preschool
Katie Rooney & Meghan de Kozlowski,
The Nature Preschool at Irvine



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THE MARGARET O'NEILL EARLY CHILDHOOD NATURE EDUCATOR AWARD

Know an incredible early childhood educator? Irvine Nature Center is accepting nominations for this year's 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 young children.

HEAD TO

www.ExploreNature.org/ONeill

**TO NOMINATE
AN OUTSTANDING
EDUCATOR**

2020 SUMMIT REGISTRATION

CONFERENCE PRICING

FULL CONFERENCE (FRIDAY-SATURDAY, APRIL 3 & 4): \$195

Includes all Friday and Saturday events and workshops including Friday Happy Hour with drinks and appetizers and Saturday breakfast, lunch, and snacks

FULL CONFERENCE W/ CAMPING (FRIDAY-SATURDAY, APRIL 3-4): \$220

FRIDAY ONLY (FRIDAY, APRIL 3): \$60

Includes Happy Hour with drinks and appetizers, classroom Open House, Keynote, and Campfire Networking

SATURDAY ONLY (SATURDAY, APRIL 4): \$160

Includes all events, workshops, breakfast, lunch, and snacks

CAMPING – BRING YOUR OWN TENT: \$25

REGISTER: www.ExploreNature.org/Summit



CAMPING ACCOMODATIONS:

Ensure your conference time is filled with rejuvenation and reconnection! Join presenters like Nicolette Sowder, Kristin Stoddard, Kit Harrington, and Katie Rooney and pitch your own tent on our property for minimal fee. 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!*



The Nature & Young Children Summit has been approved by MSDE for 6.5 professional development hours.

Approval number: CWO-158245

NATURE & YOUNG CHILDREN SUMMIT SCHEDULE

Upstairs Classroom will be set up for Open House: Creativity Runs Wild on Saturday.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2020

WORKSHOPS & ACTIVITIES

TIME

LOCATION

Arrival & Check In

5-6 p.m.

Exhibit Hall

Welcoming Happy Hour/
Open House/Bird Walks

5-7 p.m.

Exhibit Hall/Upstairs
Classroom/Trail Head

KEYNOTE Storying the Landscape:
Strengthening the Nature Bond
through Narrative

7-9 p.m.

Fern Rooms

Nicolette Sowder, founder of Wilder Child

Campfire Networking

9-11 p.m.

Outdoor Amphitheater

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020

Open House: Creativity Runs Wild

all day

Upstairs Classroom

The Nature Preschool at Irvine Nature Center

WORKSHOPS & ACTIVITIES

TIME

LOCATION

Coffee Wake-up Call

7:30 a.m.

Tent

Arrival & Check In

8-9 a.m.

Exhibit Hall

OPTIONAL MORNING ACTIVITIES:

8-8:30 a.m.

Early Riser Yoga

Deck

Jessica Gruber, Little Moon Yoga

Shinrin-yoku (Forest Bathing)

Trailhead

Erika Piotrowski, Irvine Nature Center

Bird Walk

Outdoor Classroom Steps

Simon Best & Keith Eric Costley

Qigong

Amphitheater

Mary Pinkard, QiMaryP, LLC

Welcoming Breakfast/Announcements

8-9 a.m.

Tent

Opening Exercise: Community
Building Through Play & Song

9-10 a.m.

Outdoor Amphitheater

Lynn Trotta, Sagefire Institute

Break

10-10:15 a.m.

SESSION A WORKSHOPS - 10:15-11:45 a.m.		LOCATION
A Friendship that Lasts a Lifetime <i>Lynn Trotta, Sagefire Institute</i>		Outdoor Amphitheater
Sensory Play Nature's Way <i>Sue Penix, Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center</i>		Fern B/Deck
Mud, Sun, and Wind: Wild Nature Play at the Nature Preschool <i>Katie Rooney & Meghan de Kozlowski, The Nature Preschool at Irvine</i>		Outdoor Classroom Steps
Guided Hike <i>Naturalists, Irvine Nature Center</i>		Trailhead
Lunch & Learn: Visits with Animal Ambassadors	11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Tent
SESSION B WORKSHOPS - 12:45 - 2:15P.M		Outdoor Amphitheater
Education in Context: Understanding and Supporting Self-Regulation <i>Kit Harrington, Natural Start Alliance</i>		Fern A/ Outdoor Classroom
Including Young Children with Disabilities <i>Sylvia Collazo, Florida State University</i>		Fern Room B/ Deck
Tending the Wild/ Caretaking <i>Joe Murray, The Pearlstone Center</i>		Outdoor Classroom Steps
Guided Hike <i>Naturalists, Irvine Nature Center</i>		Trailhead
Break	2:15-2:30 p.m.	
SESSION C WORKSHOPS - 2:30-4 P.M.		
The Nature of Play <i>Atiya Wells, Backyard Basecamp</i>		Fern B/ Deck
Enlivening Nature Through Aki the Forest Gnome <i>Nicolette Sowder & Kristin Stoddard, Strong Roots Natural Learning Community</i>		Forest Glen
Mud, Sun, and Wind: Wild Nature Play at the Nature Preschool <i>Katie Rooney & Meghan de Kozlowski, The Nature Preschool at Irvine</i>		Outdoor Classroom Steps
Break	4-4:15 p.m.	
Closing Remarks, Survey & Assessment Collection	4:15 - 4:45 p.m.	Amphitheater / Registration Table



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**2020 NATURE
& YOUNG CHILDREN
SUMMIT**

APRIL 3RD & 4TH

