



In Bloom in New Haven

*Promising Practices in Nature-based
Early Childhood Education*

Saturday, June 3, 2017 ❖ 9:00 am – 4:00pm

Leila Day Nurseries

New Haven, Connecticut

Witnessing the enthusiasm of early childhood professionals in this muddy effort to get children outside has been both inspirational and heartwarming! These conferences allow a place to share the work of some of the best nature-based early childhood educators. If you've not made it to one of the other conferences, this is your last chance! Join us in Connecticut for **In Bloom in New Haven: Promising Practices in Nature-based Early Childhood Education!**

Boundaries

*There is a place where the town ends,
and the fields begin.
It's not marked but the feet know it,
also the heart that is longing for refreshment
and, equally for repose.*

*Someday we'll live in the sky.
Meanwhile, the house of our lives is this green world.
The fields, the ponds, the birds.
The thick black oaks—surely they are
the inventions of something wonderful.
And the tiger lilies.
And the runaway honeysuckle that no one
will ever trim again.*

*Where is it? I ask, and then
my feet know it.*

One jump, and I'm home.

from **Red Bird** by Mary Oliver

Schedule for the Day

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|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 8:15 am – 9:00 am | Registration Opens |
| | Morning Refreshments |
| 9:00 am – 9:10 am | Opening Circle |
| 9:15 am – 10:15 am | Morning Keynote |
| 10:30 am – 12:00 noon | Morning Workshops |
| 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm | Lunch |
| 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm | Afternoon Keynote |
| 2:15 pm – 3:45 pm | Afternoon Workshops |
| 3:50 pm – 4:00 pm | Closing Circle |

Morning Keynote

Dirty Teaching

Juliet Robertson, Creative STAR Learning, Inverurie, Scotland

One of the keys to a happy and creative classroom is getting out of it, and Juliet will give you the confidence to do just that! She'll draw from her many years of experience, sharing tips, tricks and engaging activities that can help you provide outdoor experiences for your students. There is no need for expensive tools or complicated technologies: all you need is your coat and a passion for learning. And, of course, the kids!

Juliet Robertson, of Inverurie, Scotland is a former elementary school principal who set up Creative STAR

Learning in 2007 to support educators to teach outside. She writes documents and publications on a national level. Her latest venture was co-authoring "The Loose Parts Play Toolkit" for the Scottish government in 2016. In addition to her outdoor learning and play consultancy, Juliet travels worldwide offering training and keynote speeches on many aspects of outdoor learning and play. Juliet also finds time to write her award-winning blog, "I'm a teacher, get me OUTSIDE here!" which receives more than two hundred and fifty thousand visits annually.

Juliet is the author of Dirty Teaching: A Beginner's Guide to Learning Outdoors and Messy Maths: An Outdoor, Playful Approach.



Morning Workshops

Trailside Tuesdays: First Graders Make the Outdoors their Classroom

Julie Norman, First Grade Teacher, Flanders School, East Lyme, Connecticut

In a traditional public school, Julie's first grade class takes learning outside every Tuesday – and yours can, too! Help reclaim the wonders of childhood for your young learners by prioritizing engagement with nature. Experience how exploring the outdoors can support a public school's learning objectives, and think through the steps of establishing an outdoor classroom at your school. Participate in outdoor classroom learning activities, gather ideas and build your determination. You can be the change! We will be outdoors, so dress for the weather.

All Creatures Great and Small

Pam Heaphy, Head Teacher, Leila Day Nurseries, New Haven, Connecticut

From classroom pets and birds at the feeder to the "things" your kids find on the playground, living creatures should play a big part in every child's life. Research shows a classroom pet has real value, teaching compassion, empathy and responsibility. Alas, adults aren't always as comfortable as children when it comes to catching creatures. No problem—Pam can help! She'll introduce animals that make good pets as well as ones that can teach us about nature and lifecycles. Your "Eeeuw!" will change to "What can we find today?" as you head outside to look for things yourself.



Wild Roots Nature School at Stonewall Farm

Engaging Children with Nature through Art

Christine Dinella and Meridith Ahlberg, Preschool Teachers, New Canaan Nature Center Preschool, New Canaan, Connecticut

This workshop offers inspired ways to connect children to Nature throughout all seasons. Participants will actively collect and manipulate natural materials through various forms of creative expression. We will also explore Richard Shilling's idea of creating "Land Art," a movement that allows children to get creative, appreciate the wonders of nature and connect to the world around them.

Rethinking Recess for the Mind, Body and Spirit

Marina Pappas, Education Programs Coordinator, Gesell Institute of Child Development, New Haven, Connecticut

Outdoor play has the potential to support all areas of child development—brains, bodies and spirits alike. We will play outside in the style of Montessori, Waldorf and Forest Schools. How does each approach affect our play, our brains, and our connection to nature? Why? Leave with a fresh outlook on recess—and many developmentally appropriate activities to incorporate into your outdoor play environment!

Bringing the Outdoors In

Wendy Garcia, Operations Manager, Leila Day Nurseries and Founding Director of Let's Take It Outside, New Haven, Connecticut

This workshop will focus on the many ways you can teach with nature and give your preschool and grade school students access to the natural world and its benefits—even at times when you just can't get outside. From science and math to art and gardening, we'll explore a range of activities you can do through each of the New England seasons. This workshop will include a field trip across the street from Leila Day to East Rock Park.

Morning Workshops

Stick Play: The Power of Imagination

Anne Stires, Founder and Director, Juniper Hill School, Alna, Maine

Sticks are quite possibly the world's oldest toys. Inducted into the toy hall of fame in 2008, sticks often inspire expansive imagination, the telling of story, engineering skills, and social safety awareness in connection with others. Children use sticks as tools, weapons, utensils, machines, magical people, food animals, puppets, as building materials, for fire making, cooking, nature art, and for flying. There are seemingly endless uses of sticks in play and yet there are perceived and real risks as well. This workshop will explore the many benefits of stick play, increase our collective comfort in using sticks with young children, and focus on mitigating and managing the risks.

Lunch

Afternoon Keynote

Following Chipmunks and Feeding the Fire: How Nature-based Curriculum Unfolds

Bugs, rocks, furry animals and other aspects of nature attract and intrigue young children. How can teachers develop that interest through emergent curriculum that is both playful and rigorous? A close look at the evolution of several nature-based investigations will illuminate the teacher's role in listening for children's questions, structuring experiences, providing tools and encouraging inquiry.

*Ellen Doris is a faculty member in the Department of Education at Antioch University New England. Ellen has been an early childhood and elementary teacher in schools, museums and outdoor education programs. Her books include **Doing What Scientists Do**, for teachers, and **Life at the Top: Discoveries in a Tropical Forest Canopy**, for children.*



*Anne Stires is the founder, director, and teacher at Juniper Hill School in Alna, Maine. She has worked with AUNE on In Bloom conferences since their beginnings, and serves as adjunct faculty with the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate Program. She is a contributing author to **Nature Preschools and Forest Kindergartens: The Handbook for Outdoor Learning**.*



Afternoon Workshops

Learning from Walking Sticks

Alanna Pan, Preschool Teacher, Beginnings, New York, New York

One approach to forming deeper connections to the natural world is to spend time observing creatures from the natural world. In this workshop, Alanna will introduce you to real, live 'stick bugs' and share a variety of ways to appreciate the complexities of these seemingly simple insects. Alanna will facilitate exploration and investigation through close observation, drawing and sketching, and nature walks.



Alanna Pan, Beginnings



Alanna Pan, Beginnings

Messy Maths

Juliet Robertson, Creative STAR Learning, Inverurie, Scotland

There is magic in maths which comes alive outside. Children appreciate the opportunity to work in groups, experiment and investigate with bigger materials. Learn how to facilitate children's investigations of shape, symmetry, pattern and number while they're out and about. Messy maths provide a pleasant change from indoor activities. In this workshop, Juliet provides a range of open-ended possibilities for those who work with pre-school and elementary-aged children.

The Naturally Mindful Educator: Outdoor Practices for Centering and Self Care

Peg Oliviera, Executive Director, Gesell Institute of Child Development and Founding Director, 108 Monkeys, New Haven, Connecticut

Giving is rewarding, and also hard. Educators are all out, all the time, givers. Mindfulness-based practices, like yoga and meditation, provide a useful frame for growing an awareness of and appreciating time outdoors as a way to replenish the giving tank. In this experiential workshop you'll be given tools that will enable you to use basic mindfulness practices to center and heal from the stress inherent in being a giver. You'll engage in listening, seeing and walking meditation, practice basic movement exercises for balance and clarity, and learn how to incorporate "yoga snacks" into your daily routine.

Afternoon Workshops

NatureYear's First Year

Rebecca Holcombe, Director of Community Programs, and Jill Keating Herbst, Professional Development and Partnerships Manager, Common Ground High School, Urban Farm and Environmental Education Center, New Haven, Connecticut

Journey through NatureYear's first year! NatureYear is a new program at Common Ground, first conceptualized as a preschool. In response to demand from families, the program instead meets one day per week, September through June, serving children aged 5-13. Our program structure and activities have evolved in response to the children; they support child-directed learning and free play in the forest and on the farm. In this workshop we'll share how we structure the program and reflect on the challenges and successes of a mixed-age yearlong program. Participants will be outside—playing, exploring, and collaborating with both children and adults.

Children and Nature: Design Principles for Educators

David Sobel, Senior Faculty, Antioch University New England, Keene, New Hampshire

When children have access to free play in natural areas, they do the same things, around the country and around the world. They make special places, go on adventures, develop fantasy games, go hunting and gathering, craft small worlds. These recurrent play patterns can be used as design principles to help structure compelling outdoor activities with children, and these engagements can lead to environmental values and behaviors in adulthood. We'll recollect some of our own significant experiences from childhood. Then we'll explore the nearby environment using some of these recurrent play motifs and design appropriate activities for young children.



Small Hands, Big Ideas: The Wonderful World of Worms

Charlie Malone, Nature Study Coordinator, Leila Day Nurseries, New Haven, CT

Get your hands dirty! Investigate the “worminess” of worms, explore the miniature worlds in our backyard, and venture into East Rock Park. We'll dig around in “worm boxes,” find some worms, and figure out how they move and live. We'll also look for worms in their natural environment, explore their relationship to neighboring invertebrates, and brainstorm follow-up activities. Wondering as we wander, we'll consider earthworms and the role they play in gardens, backyards and the wider ecosystem. Throughout, we'll focus on how to help young children make deep and lasting connections with the natural world, cultivate their natural curiosity, foster critical and creative thinking strategies,

and have lots of joy, delight, laughter and fun.



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Registration Fees:

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| Working Professional | \$125.00 |
| Groups of 3 or more from same organization | \$100.00 |
| Antioch University Alumni. | \$75.00 |
| Antioch University Students | \$50.00 |

Lunch is included.

Please indicate dietary restrictions when registering.

Register Here:

www.antiochne.edu/in-bloom-2017

Questions? Contact Peg Smeltz, 603-283-2301
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