

In Bloom in Maine:

Promising Practices in Nature-based Early Childhood Education



Eyes of the World Discovery Center, Kittery, ME

Saturday, April 21, 2018 ♦ Eyes of the World Discovery Center
Kittery Community Center ♦ 120 Rogers Road, Kittery, Maine

Antioch University New England hosts three **In Bloom** east coast conferences this spring. We're heading down to the southern Appalachians to North Carolina first for **In Bloom in Asheville**, on Saturday, April 7, where we'll expand the curriculum focus from pre K up to 3rd grade. Then we're back north to Kittery, Maine on April 21 for **In Bloom in Maine**, and a return to our early childhood focus. On April 28, David Sobel will head out to Jackson, Wyoming to collaborate with the Teton Science Schools for their first **In Mud** conference. To close out the spring, we'll be back home in the heart of New England, in Brattleboro, Vermont, (rather than Keene, New Hampshire) on Sat. May 19, for **In Bloom in Vermont**, to celebrate a new partnership with the Brattleboro public schools.

Witnessing the enthusiasm of early childhood professionals in their valiant efforts to get children outside has been inspirational and heartwarming. As before, at each conference we will feature the good work of practitioners from each region as well as spotlight the work of Antioch New England faculty members who teach in the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate program. We invite you to come to one of our 2018 conferences, **In Bloom: Promising Practices in Nature-based Early Childhood Education!**

Each conference has two keynotes and two workshop sessions, bringing together a diverse array of early childhood professionals, higher education faculty, environmental educators, mindfulness practitioners and naturalists.

At lunch we will show the new movie, *The Best Day Ever: Forest Days in Vermont Kindergartens*. The movie was filmed in public school kindergartens in Hartland and Norwich, Vermont and illustrates the benefits of one day each week spent outside, year round, with Kindergarten children. This grassroots movement has spread to more than two dozen public schools in Vermont, New Hampshire and Connecticut.

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Children, It's Spring

*And this is the lady
Whom everyone loves,
Ms. Violet
in her purple gown*

*Or, on special occasions,
A dress the color
Of sunlight. She sits
In the mossy weeds and waits*

*To be noticed.
She loves dampness.
She loves attention.
She loves especially*

*To be picked by careful fingers,
Young fingers, entranced
By what has happened
To the world.*

*We, the older ones,
Call in Spring,
And we have been through it
Many times.*

*But there is still nothing
Like the children bringing home
Such happiness
In their small hands.*

by Mary Oliver

Schedule for the Day

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, Movie
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–9:15am

Anne Stires

From Trees and Ticks to Knives and Poison Ivy



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From trees and ticks to knives and poison ivy to extreme cold and prolonged sun exposure, to the many other risk-based activities which push children (and teachers) to their edge, we'll go on a journey to understand the importance of risk and how to manage risk in your current or future classrooms or

programs. We'll explore the roles of students and teachers at Juniper Hill's programs in implementing risk-based activities, as well as their experiences of risk and the benefits we observe. Faculty make daily risk management decisions as a team and with their classes. We learn from and are trained by professionals throughout the year, including Maine guides/trip leaders, insurance agents, lawyers, and wilderness medics.

Topics that will be considered in the talk include: hazard identification, appropriate planning for risk, what kinds of risky play to allow and foster (tree climbing, fire building, tool use, winter wilderness trips) versus which to discourage and why, and research on the relationship between risk in nature play and overall health and development.

*Anne Stires is the founder, director, and lead 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.***



Morning Workshops–10:30am

Nature Yoga: Using Movement During Circle Time, Transitions & Outdoors

Kasia Beznoska, Teacher, Heart Centered Multi-Age Nature Preschool, Bristol, NH.

During this workshop participants will learn how to make yoga an easy and accessible part of learning during circle time and beyond! We will discuss what the physical, emotional, mental, and social benefits of incorporating yoga into your school's daily routine are. We will also talk briefly about how to use a "Peaceful Pause" to help with transitions, as well as play movement games that get us crossing the midline and engaging in proprioceptive input. Participants are encouraged to bring questions to this workshop, as we will be actively working together to troubleshoot any issues people currently have in their classrooms.

School Days to Forest Days: Routines in the Wild

Eliza Minnucci, Director, ForestKinder, Tunbridge, VT.

In 2013 Eliza Minnucci co-founded the one day-a-week Forest Kindergarten in a Vermont public kindergarten. Since then she has collaborated with teachers in dozens of classrooms to develop similar programs. In this workshop experience an abbreviated version of some tried and true outdoor rhythms. From the morning bell to the tick check, learn routines that balance play and learning. An especially good fit for educators looking to start frequent and extended outdoor time with students.

Sense and Savor: Sensory Experiences in Nature with Young Children

Susan Dreyer Leon, Ed.D., Chair, Education Department and Coordinator, Mindfulness for Educators program at Antioch New England, Keene, NH.

The natural world is our natural place to connect to the senses. Join Susan in an exploration of mindfulness of body through sensory experiences in nature. We will enjoy a "sense and savor" walk, and several fun activities from the Awareness Through the Body curriculum. We will talk about the value of mindfulness practices just for educators and possible applications for working with students as well.

Wildroots Nature School Chesterfield, NH



Eyes of the World Discovery Center, Kittery ME

Morning Workshops (cont.)

Show Me the Math

Amy Butler, Education Director, North Branch Nature Center, Montpelier, VT.

Math happens when children are invited to explore and play in a natural setting with open-ended materials. Finding the opportunities to teach math in nature can be as simple as counting with one-to-one correspondence to geometry to economics. This workshop will be filled with many examples of child led mathematical thinking and teacher directed math lessons in a nature-based setting. Be ready to fill your math bucket with inspirational ideas to take back to your classroom.

Applying Inquiry-based Learning to Nature-based Education

Deanna Fahey, Creator of City Life Nature Kits, Portland, ME.

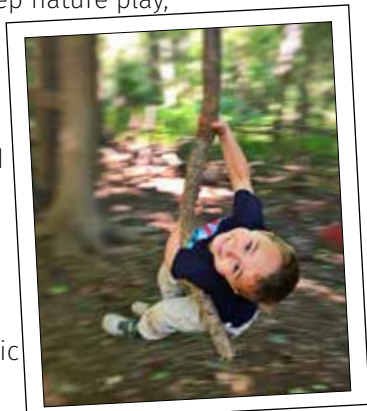
Our natural way of learning through interacting with the world around us can be enhanced through the development of questioning skills. When children ask questions they are taking an active role in their own learning, developing critical thinking skills and building communication skills.

During this workshop we will use my interactive, nature-based education kits to learn to guide primary age children to question what they observe naturally. Each kit offers a peek into an easily relatable nature topic through a short reading book and hands-on, nature-based activities that provide ample opportunity for play. After children have time to interact with the topic, a guided, developmentally appropriate experiment is suggested that guides and engages young children in the process of questioning.

Child-led “Flow Learning”: A Day Without a Lesson Plan

Dawn Jenkins, Director, Eyes of theWorld Discovery Center, Kittery, ME.

Interest-led, child-driven “Flow Learning” requires the teacher to step back without an agenda and follow the child’s lead. Trusting in the children and in the organic learning that happens in deep nature play, teachers allow children to explore what interests them. Learn how to create a peaceful environment that supports the development of emotional and social intelligence, then follow your students throughout the day in the outdoors. See how nature play addresses early childhood learning objectives and prepares children for public school.



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Lunch–12:00 noon

Light breakfast fare and lunch are included in the conference fee. Please indicate dietary preferences when registering.

Afternoon Keynote–1:00pm

Susan Dreyer Leon

Mindfulness of Body: Building our Connection to the Natural World

As we help young children discover the natural world around them, we also have a wonderful opportunity to help them connect to the natural world within them—the amazing body-heart-mind system that allows us to perceive our environment, ourselves and each other. Drawing on the modern mindfulness in education movement, we’ll talk about how mindfulness approaches and activities can be woven into nature-based early childhood curricula and we’ll explore (and practice!) some examples from Awareness Through the Body, Still Quiet Place, Thich Nhat Hanh, and several others. We’ll also talk about the power of mindfulness practices for educators and the promising work being developed at Antioch New England in this dynamic field.



Susan Dreyer Leon, EdD., is Chair of the Education Department at Antioch University New England, and directs both the Mindfulness for Educators and Educating for Sustainability M.Ed Concentrations. She is passionate about the development of mindfulness as an enduring part of teacher education, reflective practice and renewal.

Afternoon Workshops–2:15 pm

Raising Readers and Writers Outdoors? No Problem!

Anne Stires, Founder and Director, Juniper Hill School, Alna, ME.

Early literacy exposure happens in a multitude of ways in an early childhood programs. Children develop speaking and listening literacy with puppetry, storytelling, mud kitchen play and performances. We cultivate writing literacy with nature journals and daily personal journals. We support reading literacy by having a library that can be out in nature, reading aloud twice a day, sending book bags home each week with predictable/interest books for students to read to their families, establishing reading partners in other classes, and making stories about adventures which children can then read aloud to others. Learn from one school’s experience with providing rich literacy experiences and establishing a program that occurs both outdoors and in warming spaces. Somewhat geared to teachers of 4-6 year olds.

Afternoon Workshops– (cont.)

Toddlers in the Outdoors: Working with Two-year Olds

Let Them Be Little, Let Them Wiggle: Learning Through Movement Naturally

Johanna Booth-Miner, Director, Live and Learn Center, Lee, NH.

Kids need to wiggle! Sitting still and listening or doing worksheets are not strong suits for pre-schools. Discover effective techniques for providing indoor and outdoor movement activities that help children develop body control, gain knowledge about the world, and enjoy an outlet for emotional expression. Explore movement activities that will help with transitions, creative thinking and tie to curriculum. Learn ways joyful movement experiences can help support children's individual needs and behavior challenges. Let's encourage movement experiences that are safe as necessary not as safe as possible. Come in clothing that will allow you to move freely indoors and outdoors, including movement on the ground.



Lime Hollow Forest Preschool, Cortland, NY

Dramatic Arts Outdoors

Elise K. Voigt, Actress and Performing Arts Educator, Juniper Hill School, Alna, ME.

Dramatic arts experiences provide a perfect combination of visual, physical and vocal expression for young children. These experiences develop teamwork at the same time as giving students a chance to be appreciated for their individual creativity and unique spark. Place-based curriculum and performance go hand-in-hand as when a unit on building and habitats gets taught through a performance of The Three Little Pigs.

Doing theater outside, however, has its own challenges. Without a walled in space, it takes some adjustment and finesse to teach students outdoors. How to maintain focus and encourage cooperation becomes half of the job. In this workshop you will learn how to use different dramatic arts games and styles to enhance your students connection not just to your topic of study, but also to each other and themselves.

Plant Foraging for Teachers of Young Children

Jenna Darcy, Forager/Owner, Twin Flower Farm, South Berwick, ME.

We will walk around the schoolyard and wooded outdoor classroom and learn about common plants you are likely to encounter at your own schools and homes. We'll identify some of these plants and also their uses and how those might be incorporated into the classroom. We will practice good rules, ethics, laws safety and learn about resources for beginner foragers and children.

Alison Flynn and Fred Hoyt, Teachers, Eyes of the World Discovery Center, Kittery, ME.

How do we prepare toddlers for outdoor play and learning that nurtures independence? How can you safely bring a group of toddlers into a "classroom without walls"? We will discuss how the four seasons make a forest setting a very stimulating and multi-sensory place for toddlers to play and discover and how teachers and parents can safely provide that type of guidance to the youngest of children.

Don't Over-help Them: Carving with Knives to Develop Resilience and Self-Mastery

Debbie Lyons and Aria Nevin, Teachers, Merrohawke Nature School, Newburyport, MA.

As teachers in an outdoor setting we have responsibility to keep other people's children safe, and must constantly practice watchful risk assessment. However, without giving them tools and risks and self-agency over their circumstances, how can we possibly help the children develop their own skills. Using simple hands-on carving, we will experience and role-play some of the ways in which perceived risk can bring significant developmental benefits, scaffolding children's ability to handle risk independently. Sharp tools are an ancient primate resource, and even young children have a deep desire to use real tools in real life situations. We will discuss strategies to educate adults who tend to "over help" children and illustrate ways to solve the issue at hand that don't involve an adult automatically solving the problem for the child?

Thanks to our Co-Sponsors:

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Juniper Hill School
for Place-Based Education



Registration Fees:

Working Professional	\$125.00
Group Rate: per person for 3 or more from same organization	\$100.00
Antioch University Alumni	\$75.00
AUNE students	\$50.00

Register Here: www.antioch.edu/new-england/inbloom

Questions? Contact Peg Smeltz at Antioch University New England, 603-283-2301, m-smeltz@antioch.edu,