



Based on an academic calendar, our **In Bloom** conference season actually started this past November in Santa Barbara, California. If you've always associated November with melancholy and dreary greyness, we recommend attending **In Bloom in Santa Barbara** in some upcoming year. November in Santa Barbara is the antithesis of November in northern New England!

Antioch University New England will host three **In Bloom** conferences this spring. The first, **In Bloom in Vermont**, will be held on the third day of spring, March 23, 2019 in Brattleboro. We're well aware there will not be much in bloom in March, so we've assigned an "in bloom in snow" theme to **In Bloom in Vermont**. We'll be focusing on how to work with children outdoors in winter.

This conference, **In Bloom in Maine**, brings us back to Kittery to work with the vibrant nature-based early childhood community there. We look forward to a warm spring day to celebrate the end of Earth Week! Register early for this conference as it has always filled to capacity. Online registration is fairly simple, as we are now doing workshop sign-ups at morning registration.

Our **2019 In Bloom** season comes to fruition with our first foray to Amherst, Massachusetts. On June 8, 2019, The Hitchcock Center for the Environment will host us for **In Bloom in Western Mass**. We are confident that the clematis, iris, peonies, AND dandelions will all be in bloom!

In the past, In Bloom workshops have catered to teachers of children between the ages of 3 and 6, but children grow up, so we're catching up! This year our workshops are geared to preschool through third grade, so invite your elementary teacher colleagues.



The enthusiasm of early childhood professionals in their valiant efforts to get children outside continues to be inspirational and heartwarming. We've got exciting new keynote speakers this year from Maine, Virginia, Missouri, Minnesota, and British Columbia, plus a host of new workshop presenters from each region, along with some old favorites. We'll also continue to spotlight the work of Antioch New England faculty members who teach in the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate program.

During the lunch break we will show our short documentary film, **The Best Day Ever: Forest Days in Vermont Kindergartens**. This 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.

Structure for the Day

8:00am–9:00am	Registration Opens/Workshop signups Morning refreshments
9:00am–9:15am	Opening Circle
9:15am–10:15am	Morning Keynote
10:30–Noon	Morning Workshops
Noon–1:00pm	Lunch/NENNECE or movie
1:00pm–2:00pm	Afternoon Keynote
2:15pm–3:45pm	Afternoon Workshops
3:50pm–4:00pm	Closing Circle

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When I Am Among the Trees

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks, and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you, too, have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled with
light, and to shine."

by Mary Oliver

Leaf Art by Linda McIntyre

Morning Keynote



Creating Outdoor Spaces that Connect Children to the Natural World

Nancy Striniste, Landscape Designer and Early Childhood Educator/Director of EarlySpace, Washington, DC

Nature play can awaken children's senses, challenge their bodies, inspire their imaginations and build self-confidence. In order to grow up healthy and happy, children need abundant, unstructured time to play and explore in the natural world, but today's children rarely have the opportunity to roam free outdoors. Bringing nature to the places where children spend their time is an answer.

Well-designed nature play spaces are inviting and endlessly engaging for children AND good for the planet. With inspiring images from around the world, Nancy explains why and how to bring the beauty, adventure, and sustainability of nature play to backyards, schoolyards, neighborhood parks, and early childhood settings.

Nancy Striniste, founder and principal designer at EarlySpace, LLC, has a unique background as both a landscape designer and an early childhood educator. She has worked with schools, childcare centers, municipalities and organizations to create sustainably designed natural play and learning spaces.

Ms. Striniste is the author of *Nature Play at Home: Creating Outdoor Spaces that Connect Children to the Natural World*. She is faculty at Antioch University New England in their Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate program, serves on the Nature Play Workgroup of the Maryland Partnership for Children and Nature, and on the Leadership Team of NoVA Outside.



Morning Workshops



Promoting Social and Emotional Intelligence Through Forest School

Jessica Labbe, Acting Director, Eyes of the World Discovery Center, Kittery, ME

The feedback is in from the Kindergarten teacher! They'd rather have a child who can dress themselves and talk it out with a peer than a child who can write and recite the ABC's. As pre-school teachers, how can we promote this type of learning? We will discuss how to use forest play to build on social emotional intelligence and how to talk to parents about why these areas of intelligence are more important than IQ. We will be doing lots of social story role-playing during this training. Be prepared to act out many situations that you would see in the preschool classroom.

The Pedagogy of Silence

Brandi Cartwright, Co-founder, Raintree School, St. Louis, MO

The beginning of empowerment-based education in the outdoors can start with the passion of forest school encounters. Building on the curiosities and questions in wild environments, students' personal intentions, investigations, and journeys make strong impacts. This workshop will introduce participants to the ways in which intentional listening and purposeful questioning allow children to build on a network of experiences and reflections from which they can construct their own framework of capability. In this interactive workshop, participants will head outdoors to experience the collateral benefits for academic outcomes, social-emotional learning, and creativity. Gear up for a hike and explore how the pedagogy of silence creates a paradigm shift to allow for truly engaged students.

An Emergent Curriculum For All Seasons

Dawn Jenkins, Nature Immersion Specialist, South Berwick, ME

Join Dawn in the forest to learn the ins and outs of an emergent curriculum. Find out about the tools and gear that help guide children through nature. You will learn how to weave science lessons, math, literacy, and crafts into your day using what the children discover around them in their environment throughout the year. Each season presents us with different "themes" that are relevant to our students' lives. You will be given hands-on examples from each season! We will explore a decaying log! You will learn how to sharpen sticks safely using fixed vegetable peelers and then carve the log, working through rotting crevices to discover the different shades of colors, consistencies of dust and different shapes. We'll discuss how something as simple as a decaying log can lead into conversations about beetles, composting, trees and more! All these activities help support age appropriate learning objectives organically through discovery and play!



Sabot at Stony Brook School



Wild Roots Nature School

Morning Workshops *(continued)*

Rhythms in the Woods

Judy Nielsen, Professional Drummer, Tai Chi Master, Whitefield, ME and **Fletcher Boote**, Sound Artist, Yoga Teacher, Educator, Bath, ME

A simple drumbeat can bring us back to our bodies to listen, celebrate, and dance, as well as connect with our breath and with each other. Drumming together is an empowering and joyful way to practice listening skills, cooperation, patience and self-awareness. It is also an excellent way to channel and release strong feelings and calm our body and mind. Rhythms in the woods will focus on empowering you to bring rhythm-making into your outdoor classroom. We'll drum together, using Judy's African Djembe drums, dance together to experience the ways the rhythms move through our body, and explore rhythm-making through a variety of widely accessible, homemade/found percussion instruments so that you can easily take these tools to your own classroom, when a skin-drum is not available.

Raising Readers and Writers Outdoors? No problem!

Anne Stires, Founder and Director, Juniper Hill School for Place-based Education, Alna, ME, Adjunct Faculty, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

Early literacy exposure happens in a multitude of ways in 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.

Gonna Get Myself Connected!

Liza Lowe, Director Wild Roots Nature School, Chesterfield, NH Adjunct Faculty, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

New England Network of Nature-based Early Childhood Educators (NENNECE) has formed in response to a growing interest in nature-based education. The purpose is to provide a network for early childhood educators throughout New England to connect with one another, share ideas and resources, and support each other in providing high quality nature-based learning opportunities throughout the region. Interested in collaborating with like-minded colleagues? Curious how to start a group in your neck of the woods? Join us as we explore ways to grow NENNECE, design a newsletter, and further develop our New England Network.

Lunch

Movie Showing at 12:30pm

**The Best Day Ever:
Forest Days in Vermont
Kindergartens**



Chris Hardee

Afternoon Keynote

Girls on the Edge of Wildlands

Brandi Cartwright, Director, Raintree School, St. Louis, MO

As girls lead increasingly online lives, their sense of self and the definitions they create to define themselves become more and more embedded with the reactions, response, and critiques from social media. There is a need for girls to integrate experiences in wildlands with the ways in which they define what it means to be human and what it means to be a girl. In her typical storytelling fashion, Brandi Cartwright explores the lives spent outdoors for girls and the creative, academic, and social-emotional value of wild nature experiences.

Brandi Cartwright has spent her professional career honing a progressive teaching style and philosophy congruent with her goal of acting as an agent of change in the education system. As a certified teacher, she holds degrees from Northwestern University and St. Thomas University and has taught at the pre-kindergarten, middle school, and secondary education levels. Brandi co-founded Raintree School in 2007 and continues to spread the message of empowerment-based learning approaches and the importance of learning in the wild.



Afternoon Workshops

Building a Magical Bamboo Bower

Nancy Striniste, Landscape Designer and Early Childhood Educator, Director of EarlySpace, Washington, DC, Faculty, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

In this hands-on session we will work together to build a cozy, child-sized shelter using removed invasive plants. Being surrounded by greenery creates a sense of enclosure that invites imagination. Small spaces support conversation and small group social interaction. This simple technique for building is one you can take back to your program to enhance your space immediately!

One Classroom's Story of Weaving Magic

Robin Huntley and Sarah Schrader, First and Second Grade Teachers, Juniper Hill School for Place-based Education, Alna, ME.

Ten students and their two teachers started the school year with magic. They went on a journey through several emergent and explicit curricular topics throughout the school year. Those teachers will now lead you through a part of that journey and articulate the process, so that you can replicate the components of meaningful, interdisciplinary, integrated curriculum with your students. Participants will also experience the activities, create a similar base of a curricular product to learn the skills, and play with creating such possibilities for deeply thoughtful curriculum. The teachers will also articulate their specific roles in the development of the child-centered process. Geared primarily to teachers of early elementary students (1st-3rd grades).

Afternoon Workshops



Montessori Outdoors

Kate Connelly, Director, and Nicole Gallagher, Teacher, Camp Ketcha Montessori Preschool, Scarborough, ME



Wild Roots Nature School

Outdoor learning and a nature-based curriculum are ideal for realizing Montessori schools' rich traditions for literacy skill building, math concepts, practical life skills, and sensory exploration. Montessori methods combine elements superbly suited for successful

outdoor learning: long uninterrupted blocks of 'work' time to pursue activities; compelling and varied activities and materials to accommodate individual preferences; and imparting to young children a vision for and their role in realizing a protected and peaceful world. While Maria Montessori taught educators to replicate her classroom model of 'specially prepared environments' for exploratory learning, taking Montessori methods outside means that a patch of woods, a stream, trail or garden serves as a naturally prepared environment for achieving the ultimate goal of early childhood learning—playful, joyful, deeply immersive developmental experiences. And you can set up nifty nature lesson 'work' stations too!

A Journey Through Sticky Mud

Faith Masterson and Amanda King, First Grade Teachers, Dondero Elementary, Portsmouth, NH

Are you working in a public school? Do you want to take your kids outside, but don't know how to move beyond the constraints of your "four walls"? Mandie and Faith work at a public K-5 school and want to share their journey with you. These two teachers started with a mud pit and created an outdoor classroom that followed learner curiosity while still being mindful of state standards and district-wide learning expectations. You will hear their journey, participate in core routines, and leave with ideas on how to get through the "sticky mud" to find your support network as you start your outdoor learning adventure.

Wild Play on the Man-Made Playground

Yasmin Azel, Preschool Teacher, Breakwater School, Portland, ME

When getting into the forest isn't an option, how can we make our play spaces inviting of creative open-ended play that connect children to nature? In this workshop, participants will be inspired to set-up provocations on their playground to invite nature-based learning. We will talk about the Reggio Emilia approach of presenting opportunities to children and how loose-parts are an important piece of the outdoor play landscape and essential for encouraging expression and free play. Participants will practice creating provocations to meet their children's current needs and interests and discover what natural play themes lend themselves to playground landscapes. **Process**

Art in Nature for Children and Teachers

Brady Nickerson, Artist and Teacher, Edgecomb, ME

Young children are caught in the busy-ness of today's world. As they struggle to find enough space and voice, they need more tools to feed their awareness, calm their bodies, and clear their minds. The purpose of this workshop is to provide teachers with a hands-on, nature-based art experience in order to discover the many benefits of Process Art for their young students. Young children often naturally gravitate toward free-form artistic expression. Process Art encourages one to doodle/paint for the process (rather than the product or end result). Simply putting paint, pen, or markers on paper allow confidence, self-esteem, and sheer joy to ignite. Process Art is a lifelong tool for all ages to learn.



Forest Days Handbook



Brady Nickerson

Thank You to Our Co-Sponsors:



Eyes of the World Discovery Center Preschool

Juniper Hill School
for Place-Based Education



Register Here:
<https://tinyurl.com/y8onrkqy>

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 /College Ed students	\$50.00

Visit our website: www.antioch.edu/new-england/inbloom
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