



ECHO
EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH OUTDOORS

In Partnership With
Natural Learning Initiative



ECHO Training Opportunities

Are you looking for new ways to enhance or use your outdoor spaces at your child care facility? ECHO offers a variety of training opportunities for early childhood professionals, directors, child care health consultants, and family child care providers. The training menu below is a sampling of the training we are able to offer. To request a training or if you have specific training needs, please reach out to the ECHO team at echo@nwf.org.

Outdoor Learning Environment Design Guidance

Design Workshop

In this 6.5-hour face-to-face interactive workshop, programs will learn about the Best Practice Indicators of the Preventing Obesity by Design Model and ways they can create an outdoor learning environment that not only engages children but leads to positive cognitive and physical benefits. Participants will collaborate with landscape design experts to design an outdoor learning environment they can implement in their program.

Design Clinic: Intensive

In this 2-hour face-to-face interactive workshop, programs will learn about Best Practices in outdoor learning environments. They will also work with landscape design experts to begin to re-imagine outdoor spaces to promote positive physical, social, and cognitive benefits for children.

Best Practice in Outdoor Learning Environments

Educators often spend hours ensuring the indoor classroom is engaging and enriching for young children. However, what about outdoor spaces at child care facilities? Often overlooked, outdoor learning environments can offer various learning and activity settings that have positive outcomes for children. In this 1.5-hour face-to-face interactive workshop, participants will learn about best practices in outdoor learning environments, why “green is good,” and identify one way they can begin to re-imagine their outdoor spaces.





Engaging Children Outdoors

Brrr...It's Cold Outside. Let's Go Out and Play!

So often cold temperatures and snow deter us from taking our children outdoors in Winter. Join us for this 1.5-hour face-to-face training to learn hands on and fun ways to engage children outdoors in Winter. We will discuss barriers, guided activities, and ways your outdoor space can support play year round. Let's bundle up with hats, mittens and scarves, and play.

My First Garden: Growing Plants with Young Children

Not everyone needs to have a green thumb to learn how to grow plants with young children. In this 1.5-hour face-to-face training, participants will gain the confidence and skills they need to support container gardening in an early childhood setting. Participants will learn best practices in plant care and how to shop for plants at a local garden supply store. Participants will also be able to learn firsthand how to successfully plant a seedling and support its growth. Finally, participants will discuss appropriate ways to engage young children in gardening. Break out your tools, and let's get messy! Participants will receive gardening resources and materials, and they will leave with their own container garden.



Encouraging Messy Play in the Early Childhood Classroom

Eww, yuck, wow that texture is unique! Sensory experiences are critical for child development, but sometimes educators avoid providing them because they are messy. In this 1.5 hour face-to-face training, participants will learn about the value of messy play, different types of messy play, and how to safely encourage messy play in the classroom and outdoor environments. Participants will also leave with recipes for safe messy play and get to experience hands on textures and opportunities for children.



Water, Wind and Weather: Engaging Infants and Toddlers in Outdoor Spaces

Our youngest learners are natural scientists. They crave opportunities for exploration, and discovery. However, did you know that many outdoor activities for infants and toddlers also promote critical physical development? In this 1.5-hour face-to-face training, join us as we explore positive and engaging ways to support infant and toddler growth and development through outdoor settings. We will explore how to create a safe and welcoming outdoor space for young children and engage in hands-on activities you can take back to your program.



Engaging Children Outdoors (continued)

Grass, Dirt, and Concrete: Engaging Preschoolers in Outdoor Settings

The outdoor learning environment is an integral part of any early childhood program. It provides opportunities for children to develop gross motor skills, engage in social interactions, and take appropriate risks. Playing in a more naturalized outdoor learning environment is more engaging for children, and small changes can positively impact children, staff, and families. In this 1.5-hour face-to-face training learn how adding loose parts to the outdoor learning environment can create new opportunities for cognitive growth and development, creativity, and language. By reimagining the outdoor learning environment as a dynamic and variable space, educators will gain new insights into ways to ensure no two days outdoors are ever the same.

Curriculum and Program Support

Taking Cues from Your Children: Emergent Curriculum in Action

Teaching is an art. It takes the ability to grow and learn with the children in the classroom. Utilizing emergent curriculum, a teacher is able to build upon a child's interest and create an environment that embraces the journey for knowledge. In this 1.5-hour face-to-face training, participants will learn how emergent curriculum can be embraced in the classroom to not only help children achieve their academic goals, but also create an atmosphere of learning, collaboration and exploration. Participants will be able to plan for their own program and to understand simple first steps to implement emergent curriculum.

Fundraising and Community Mapping

Very rarely do we have all the tools and materials we need for the children in our classrooms. In this one-hour interactive webinar or face-to-face training, we will dive into the world of fundraising and provide easy ways to start approaching those in your community to gain monetary or material donations for your program. Participants will receive sample materials to start making the ask and learn how to no longer fear hearing "no."





For Coaches, Directors, Child Care Health Consultants and Program Support Staff

Creating Dynamic Outdoor Spaces for Young Children: Supporting Implementation

As early childhood professionals, we recognize the importance of the outdoors for the cognitive, physical, and social emotional development of young children. However, in many child care programs the outdoor play space for young children is often overlooked and underutilized. In this 3-hour face-to-face training, you will learn how to assess and analyze an outdoor space, be able to identify best practices in outdoor learning environments and begin to reimagine the outdoors into a dynamic, flexible and natural environment that engages children. The tools and experiences from this training will allow you to support child care programs in various settings and help ensure young children have access to high quality outdoor learning environments.



For Family Child Care Providers

Nature Play at Home

Are you interested in learning natural and affordable ways you can engage children in outdoor spaces in your family child care home? Join us in this 1.5-hour face-to-face training to learn how to implement a naturalized outdoor learning environment in your own backyard. Participants will gain hands on knowledge of different play settings they can add to their outdoor spaces and easy ways to create a dynamic and engaging outdoor space. Each participant will leave with materials to start implementing right away.

