The third annual Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO) Summit offered presentations by leading professionals in the fields of conservation, and early childhood education, and outdoor hands-on activities showcasing innovative ideas and concepts that participants can implement in their own settings.

During the full-day event at Denver Botanic Gardens, participants learned the value of naturalized outdoor play, how to engage young children outdoors, and how small changes in the outdoor environment can lead to lasting impacts on children and families.
What were your primary takeaways from the keynote presentations?

We are the ones that can make a difference in a child’s life.

All individuals should have opportunities to connect with nature no matter what ethnic background or socioeconomic background. Equitable access to nature so important.

Be the person who gets a child excited about being in nature

What we learn when we are young can affect our actions way into the future. Creating strong, positive feelings in children about nature creates the next generation of environmentalists.

Everyone needs access to the outdoors.

How will you apply what you learned from the Summit in your daily work?

I will integrate the natural world in our lesson plans and experiences with the children every day.

I have already created a sensory table design based on what I learned... I love the concept of using nature, while also keeping it protected.

I want to be able to show the kids that I am just as excited as they are to go play outside.

What did you think about the summit in general?

Third year attending and I learn something new every time!

Participating in this summit fed my heart, soul and creativity... I can’t say enough how much I enjoyed this day! I will attend every year!

It left me feeling positive and with great ideas to enhance a young person’s mind and psyche. What an inspiration considering the current climate we live in. This gives me glimmers of hope. I left smiling, thinking about how much we will change so many young people’s lives.