



Early Childhood Health Outdoors 2019 Annual Summit: Wild and Curious

Breakout Session Descriptions

Sticks and Stones

Nicole Little, Denver Zoo, Early Childhood Programs Coordinator
Manda Baker, Denver Zoo, Early Childhood Programs Specialist

Sticks and stones ... can be good for our children! Knowing how to encourage risk-taking while setting safe boundaries and expectations for children is key when working with children outdoors. And recognizing the power of loose parts is equally important. In this session, we'll explore what healthy risk-taking for young children looks like and how to foster these skills, supporting healthy development well into adulthood. Learn how we can move past the prevalent "be careful" culture to help support children as they navigate through natural spaces, and celebrate sticks and stones and everything else a young explorer might uncover!

Bugging Out – Overcoming Fears with Invertebrates in Nature

Eric Oaks, Butterfly Pavilion, School Programs Manager

As Educators we try to model learning examples for our students but our own personal feelings and fears about "creepy crawlies" can lead to biases against insects that we don't intend to teach as part of our lessons. In this session we will look at developmentally appropriate inquiry based methods of studying insects and invertebrates in nature that leads to appreciation and respect for the natural world.

Nature Art

Chelsea Gilmore, Think 360, Teaching Artist

Chelsea Gilmore is a local artist and herbalist. With her passion and knowledge for nature and ecology, she will offer and encourage exploration and creativity in the natural environment. From nature bracelets, nature mandalas, observational sit spots and more, open yourself up to the endless integration of beauty and creative inspiration provided from nature!



Bringing the Outdoors In

Chelsey Bardgett, Denver Botanic Gardens, Family & Children's Program Instructor

Helena Sizemore, Denver Botanic Gardens, Family & Children's Program Instructor

A hands-on session inviting you to discover how the use of plants and nature-based pieces can assist in the successful development of the whole child.

Exploring your Senses in the Vegetable Garden

Angie Andrade, Denver Botanic Garden, Senior Horticulturist/Horticultural Therapist

The vegetable garden is not only a place to explore your sense of taste but can also be a great teaching tool to experience all of the senses. Come learn about the basics of school vegetable gardens and how you can get the most out of your garden with interactive activities that will awaken your senses.

Unplug Free Play Outdoors

Martina Pfender, Children's Museum of Denver, Joy Park Coordinator

Karyn Perdue, Children's Museum of Denver, Adventure Forest Coordinator

Play is a pivotal part of a child's life. Outdoor play in greened playscapes has a positive effect on children's social development, motor skill development, attention, and activity level. In this session we will talk about stages of play and different types of play. We will explore how educators and teachers can be mentors as playmakers and foster play. We will present easy to establish ideas about how to restore children's independent outdoor play in today's world as it offers the opportunities for vigorous physical exercise, exciting adventures, and escape from adult interference that our children today most sorely need.