

In Bloom in Delaware

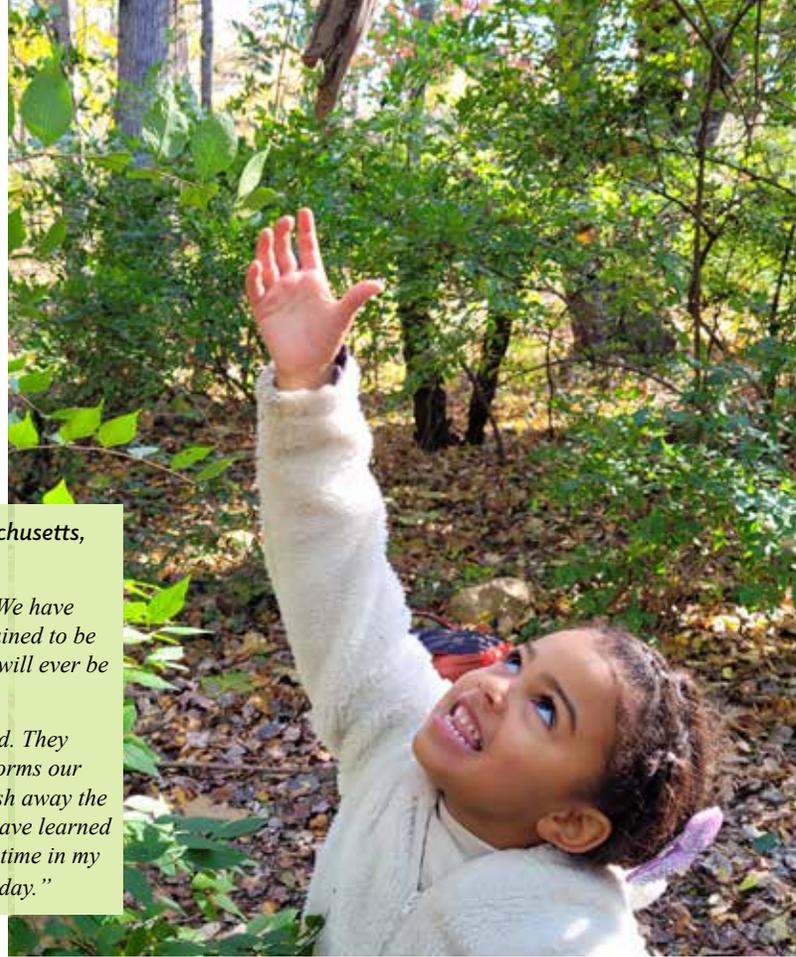
Saturday, April 2, 2022

at the
University of Delaware Lab School
University of Delaware, Newark

Iris Ponte, director of the Henry Frost Children's Program in Belmont, Massachusetts, said this about her learning during the 2020-2021 school year.

"As a preschool educator, I used to think 30 degrees was cold. Not anymore... We have learned to layer, eat warm foods in Thermoses, and keep moving. I was not trained to be an outdoor educator, but I have learned to embrace it. In fact, I do not think I will ever be able to work with children again without prioritizing the outdoors.

The children have adapted and adjusted in ways we could never have imagined. They cheer when we have ice rain, and they cannot wait to see how the snow transforms our play spaces.... Our curriculum has taken on a whole new dimension, as we push away the boundaries of our school walls and play yard fence, and explore beyond. We have learned that weather is to be embraced, the seasons to be understood, and for the first time in my life, I have been teaching young children completely outdoors for five hours a day."



Welcome back to what we hope will be the new normal of convening early childhood and early elementary teachers to learn about and engage in nature-based education. We're planning conferences that can accommodate 100-125 folks and we're hoping to be mask-less. Time will tell. We're continuing to expand our focus, so we now are planning workshops to address teachers of pre-K through 4th grade students in our two New England events. We're also planning on workshops that continue to address what we've learned about outdoor learning during the pandemic.

Antioch University New England will again host three In Bloom conferences this spring in the eastern United States.

We'll be offering our first In Bloom in the mid-Atlantic states at **In Bloom in Delaware** on the campus of the University of Delaware and in conjunction with the University of Delaware Lab School and the Human Development and Family Sciences Department. The Delaware conference will be on Saturday, April 2, 2022 and will focus on early childhood education for toddlers through children age six. Come south for an early spring experience.

Next is **In Bloom in Western Massachusetts** on Saturday, May 14, 2022 hosted at the beautiful Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst, Massachusetts. We'll focus on pre-K through grade 4 students and teachers here.

Our last event will be **In Bloom in Maine** in mid-coast Maine on Saturday, June 11, 2022 at the Blueberry Cove 4-H Camp and Learning Center in Tenant's Harbor—a beautiful new location for us. Right on the water, so bring your bathing suit!

For you mid-westerners, let us draw your attention to a new conference: **The Midwest Early Childhood Educator Symposium: Honoring the Earth and Each Other Through Fostering Diversity Equity, Access and Inclusion** on June 4, 2022. Antioch University will serve as co-sponsor to this event of the Northern Illinois Nature

Preschool Association (NINPA) and the Morton Arboretum outside of Chicago.

In the early stages of the pandemic, it became clear that transmission of the virus in closed, indoor spaces was much more likely than outside in the open air. Indoor ventilation systems facilitated exposure to the virus, outdoor spaciousness facilitated dispersal of the virus, and allowed children to socially distance. For the last two school years, many early childhood centers and elementary schools across the northeast have realized that one solution to keeping schools open year was to move classrooms outside as much as possible. This preserved equal access for all children, rather than just the children with technology and a good internet connection. Educating outside has been one part of the solution to the diversity, equity and inclusivity challenges of the pandemic.

We've got exciting new keynote speakers this year from around the country. Some new speakers will be *Rose Brusaferrero from Baltimore discussing the differences between nature-based early childhood programs in east and west Baltimore, *Ayana Verdi, Director of the Verdi Ecoschool in Melbourne, Florida and *Tara Williams, Executive Director of the Maine Association for the Education of Young Children. And we'll spotlight the work of Antioch New England faculty members who teach in the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate program.

We look forward to seeing you at one of this year's spring **In Blooms**. Bring mud boots, raingear your indomitable spirits and perhaps some backyard flowers.

This event is sponsored by:

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Structure for the Day

8:30 am-9:00 am	Registration Opens Workshop sign-ups Morning refreshments
9:00 am-9:15 am	Opening Circle
9:15 am-10:15 am	Morning Keynote
10:30 am-Noon	Morning Workshops
Noon- 12:45 pm	Lunch Inside-Outside network
12:45 pm-1:45 pm	Afternoon Keynote
1:45 pm- 2:15 pm	Travel to UD Lab School
2:15 pm-3:45 pm	Afternoon Workshops
3:50 pm-4:00 pm	Closing Circle
4:00 pm -4:30 pm	Tours of UD Lab School

Morning Keynote

Connecting Children to Nature: Teachers as Catalysts

Ellen Doris, Ed.D. Core Faculty, Education Department, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

Children construct their own knowledge of the world and how it works as they forge relationships with their surroundings and communities. Try as we might, adults can't make the connections for them! What is the teacher's role in this discovery process? A close look at the evolution of place-based investigations carried out by young children will illuminate how teachers can support children's experience and deepen their understanding of the natural world, highlighting the choices teachers make as facilitators and catalysts.

Ellen Doris is a core faculty member and directs the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate programs in the Education Department at Antioch University New England. She has been an early childhood and elementary teacher in schools, museums and outdoor education programs. Her books include *Doing What Scientists Do*, for teachers, and *The Real Kids/Real Science Series*, for children.



Morning Workshops

Montessori Outdoors in the DC area Metro Montessori Schools

Amy Beam, Nature Educator at Beyond the Walls/Kids Love Nature, Gaithersburg, MD

Maria Montessori recognized the value of children's time spent in nature and she ceaselessly promoted it. She endeavored to create sensorially-rich materials for the classrooms while constantly acknowledging that one could never replicate the sensorial richness of the natural world. This workshop will focus on how we apply her philosophies in the outdoor spaces that we use and how that enhances the learning that takes place indoors in the classrooms. We will be using common materials that can be gathered in most outdoor environments. Applicable for all early childhood educators, not just Montessori teachers.

Venues

Morning keynote, morning workshops, lunch and afternoon keynote will take place at **Audion at STAR Tower** on the University campus. Then conference attendees will drive themselves or ride a shuttle to the **University of Delaware Lab School** for the **afternoon workshops**. Directly after the conference closing, a **tour will be available** of the Lab School facilities. Shuttles will return to the main campus before and after the tours.

Morning Workshops

Art with Young Children Outdoors

Jamie Diemidio, Assistant Pre-K Teacher & Preschool/Pre-K Art Teacher, Wilmington Friends School, Wilmington DE

Outdoor art for children is meant to develop their expression, intuition, sense of adventure and independence through exploring the boundless materials we can find in our natural surroundings. We provide opportunities for children to be able to seamlessly connect between education and art. A project-based approach allows children to discover ways to build and make art materials through the seasons, and this contributes to their self-expression and confidence. Together, we will make ink pens, use handmade paper, natural ink and mud paint to delve into the natural art process. Resources and art recipes will be provided as well so you can practice with your students!

Exploring Ecological Identity: Using Nature to Define Us

Rose Brusafiero, Ph.D. Sustainability Education, Environmental Education Consultant, Baltimore, MD

Ecological identity is a fascinating concept that can be leveraged by nature-based ECE programs to help teachers and administrators frame the importance of connecting children to nature. This concept is influenced and illustrated by the way children play outdoors. In this workshop, you will experience the ways in which children at a forest preschool in Baltimore City displayed indicators of developing ecological identities. Participants will learn how to assess child-nature relationships in the context of biophilic values through hands-on activities and collaborative group exercises.

(Re)connecting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to Land and Nature

Atiya Wells, RN, Founder and Executive Director, Backyard Basecamp, Baltimore, MD

Nature is all around us. Sometimes we have to be shown where and how to look. While learning more about our natural world, Atiya often noticed that she was one of the few Persons of Color in the room. By diving into research and history, she learned that ancestral wounding and historical trauma are key players in the lack of diversity in nature-based programming. She has since dedicated her time to slowly (re)introducing her community to nature by starting in their own backyards and embarking on a journey into the many wild spaces across Baltimore. This workshop will focus on the importance of equity in greenspace design, intergenerational creation, cultural relevance, and community cultivation. In their BLISS Meadows project, Backyard Basecamp has reclaimed 10-acres of vacant land in their neighborhood to be used as a place for urban farming, environmental education, and community green space in Baltimore City.

Morning Workshops

Just Add Nature: Forest Days in Philadelphia K/1 Public School Classrooms

Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Executive Director, Eastern Region Association of Forest and Nature Schools (ERAFANS), Baltimore, MD

Susan Chlebowski, and **Brianne Good**, ERAFANS Forest Days Facilitators at Lingelbach Elementary School in Philadelphia, PA

Nature is a critical component of all educational journeys, including those of students in urban public schools. By working closely with public school teachers and administrators, it is possible to craft a weekly outdoor learning program that works with the nuanced needs of each specific school community. Join us as we dig into what we have learned this year about working with students and staff, curricular connections, speaking the language of public education, and much more.

Raising Readers and Writers Outdoors? No Problem!

Anne Stires, Affiliate Faculty, Antioch University, Keene, NH
Educational Consultant and Founder, Juniper Hill School, Alna, ME

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 old children.

Lunch

We enjoy treating you to a tasty and healthy lunch. During the lunch hour, Liza Lowe and other regional coordinators will update you on Inside-Outside chapters. There are now more than a dozen **Inside-Outside** chapters of nature-based educators in New England, the mid-Atlantic states and across the country. Learn how to join or start one. Contact Liza Lowe at elowe@antioch.edu.



Afternoon Keynote

Concrete and Katyids: Exploring Nature Just Off the City Sidewalk

Rose Brusafarro, Ph.D. Sustainability Education, Environmental Education Consultant, Baltimore, MD

Given the high concentration of people living in cities across the U.S., it is worthwhile to discuss the nuances of connecting children and their families to nature in urban environments. In Baltimore City especially, nature-based early childhood programs involve strategic partnerships with parks to establish safe outdoor spaces where children can play and grow. Urban ecology offers unique outdoor experiences that show children the dynamics of human-nature relationships, such as when tree roots push up through asphalt or heavy rainfall leads to flooding. Rose will share the recurring themes from her case study of Wild Haven Forest Preschool in west Baltimore that informed the way she developed the Fox and Heron Early Childhood Outdoor Education program for BLISS Meadows on the east side of town.

Rose Brusafarro, Ph.D. has worked as an environmental education practitioner and research scientist in the Baltimore area for ten years. With roles ranging from nature birthday party leader to Director, she specializes in formally observing and documenting children's nature play in order to show how their time outdoors influences their relationship to nature. She now offers environmental education consultation services to nonprofits and government entities, including teacher training, program and curriculum development, and lectures. She teaches mentored courses for Prescott College and serves as a peer reviewer for the *Journal of Sustainability Education*.



Afternoon Workshops

at the University of Delaware Lab School



Photographs used with permission, University of Delaware Lab School

Letting Go and Letting Kids Be Free

Katie Pollock, Master Teacher, and **Monica Shire**, Master Teacher, University of Delaware Lab School, Newark, DE

Have you ever stepped back and marveled at what young children come up with as they play in the woods? Their ideas, creativity, conversations, and joy fill the air in a way that is unparalleled to a traditional indoor school setting. Nature-based education encourages deep learning by embracing children's desire to discover with and in nature. Children meaningfully experience connections to the natural world and to themselves when given the time and space. Participants will be led through a process to breathe new life into their own teaching practices allowing them to "Learn to Let Go." Being challenged to experience risk themselves, participants will gain perspectives that they can then take into their programs to stimulate change.

Afternoon Workshops

Exploring Nature-based Science Practices and Engineering Processes

Jennifer Gallo-Fox, Associate Professor, University of Delaware, Department of Human Development & Family Sciences, Newark, DE

Young children are natural scientists who ask questions and seek to understand the world around them. However, knowing how to support their scientific development can sometimes be hard. Together we will examine science and engineering processes and design, wonder, explore, and document our natural environment. By doing this we experience ways we might follow children's curiosity to foster interdisciplinary, developmentally appropriate learning about the world. Opportunities to discuss how to design emergent, child-centered curriculum and examine children's work samples will occur.

Exploring Nature and Birds with Toddlers

Debbie Torbert, Master Teacher, and **Polly Lung**, Lead Teacher, University of Delaware Lab School, Newark, DE

What can toddlers learn by splashing in puddles? In rolling down hills? Watching the movement of clouds and tall trees while lying on their backs? Noticing the birds that come to our classroom window feeders? Adventures in nature provide opportunities for toddlers to learn how to observe nature up close, wonder, question, imagine, create, and build their knowledge of nature. We will explore what spiritual development in young children looks like and why that awareness is important when developing the whole child.

Pop-Up Style!

Monica Morrell, Director/Teacher, St. Paul's Nature Preschool, Camden, DE

In this hands-on session you will experience a small-scale Pop-Up Adventure Playground! Large or small, Pop-Ups help support child-directed play. With the help of the UK charity Pop-Up Adventure Play, I held my own Pop-Ups in 2019. With these events I showcased play in the community and promoted the opening of my play and nature preschool program. In this workshop "loose parts" materials will be provided for participants to discover, imagine, and create. This experience will provide you with the confidence and resources necessary to implement a Mini Pop-Up right away in your program or community.



Registration Fees

Working Professional	\$125
Group Rate: (3 or more teachers from same organization)	\$100*
AU Alumni, AUNE & UD current students	\$75

*If you would like to register as a group
OR

If you have an unused voucher from a 2020 In Bloom conference
contact Peg Smeltz, msmeltz@antioch.edu
603-762-0012 call or text



Mind Full or Mindful: Exploring Benefits, Practices and Possibilities for Children and Teachers when Nature and Mindfulness are United

Kristen Chandler, Lead Teacher, and **Laura Morris**, Master Teacher, University of Delaware Lab School, Newark, DE

Most would agree teaching, at this time, is challenging, complicated and stressful. What if it was possible to alleviate some of these challenges without needing to move to a tropical island or spend a lot of money? In this interactive workshop, participants will investigate the concept of mindfulness and explore how engaging with nature in a mindful way serves as a powerful tool for reducing stress, reactivity and anxiety and for increasing focus and self-control. Participants will experience practices that can be easily incorporated into any program and can be used to bring about greater calmness and self-awareness for children and teachers.

The American Shad: A Story across Time-Connecting People, Place, and Environmental Practices

Kesha Braunskill, Urban & Community Forestry State Coordinator, **Amy Shepherd**, Director of DEI, St. Anne's Episcopal School, **Kerry Wilson**, Program Manager, Philadelphia Regional Institute for STEM Educators, Philadelphia, PA

Meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEE) provide rich opportunities for cross-curricular understanding and study. MWEEs offer hands-on immersive experiences that lead to increased citizenship engagement, problem solving, and critical thinking. We will learn about the history of the American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), Indigenous people, and shad bush through a MWEE. Discussion will include historical and contemporary Indigenous connection, human impacts on the environment and restoration of the shad migration to the Brandywine River in Delaware and Pennsylvania. You will hear diverse perspectives of Afro-Indigenous people, DEI, and the scientific community. Activities will include a picture book presentation and discussion, STEM activity, and cultural connection with fish tanning. Please be prepared to get dirty and wet. This workshop can be scaled to suit the needs of learning for multiple grade levels.

After the Conference:

- Tours of Lab School by faculty will be offered, lasting approximately 30 minutes.

Working Professionals, AU Alumni and Current Students
please use this link to register:
<https://continuinged.antioch.edu/course-category/IB>

For group discount, contact Peg Smeltz at
Antioch University New England, msmeltz@antioch.edu