

LAWSON FOUNDATION

Outdoor Play and Early Learning Policy Research Symposium

October 24-26, 2018



THIS PROGRAM BELONGS TO:

A few words of welcome...

On behalf of the Lawson Foundation and our partners, we are delighted to welcome you to this Outdoor Play and Early Learning Policy Research Symposium.

Whether you're a practitioner, researcher, policy-maker, funder, consultant, parent or advocate - you play an important part in the outdoor play and early learning ecosystem. We're delighted and excited to be learning with and from you over the next few days.

So, what makes for a thriving ecosystem? In a natural context, one might consider biodiversity to be a critical factor. In our case, we're delighted that among us for the symposium are participants from across a number of relevant sectors including insurance, urban planning, public health, landscape architecture, physical activity, philanthropy, family resource, communications, parks and recreation, post-secondary training and research, in addition to early childhood education, education and the environment.

We're welcoming 125 participants from six countries, 11 Canadian provinces and territories, and several Indigenous communities. We have participants from municipal, provincial/territorial and federal governments. Universities, colleges and CEGEPs are in the mix, too.

It's our hope that this symposium will provide a forum for all of us who are a part of this ecosystem to build relationships; to share and connect research, policy and practice; to showcase international exemplars and emerging initiatives in Canada; and to engage in critical reflection all with the goal of advancing outdoor play and early learning across the country. Thank you for making the time to be here and for bringing your knowledge, experience and insights. We have a lot to learn from and with one another.

Thank you also to our esteemed colleagues at the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development (OISE/UT), the Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, Cape Breton University and Okanagan College for their support in making this symposium a reality.

Welcome!



MARCEL LAUZIÈRE, President & CEO



SUSIE OSLER, Board Chair



Agenda At A Glance

Symposium Objectives

RELATIONSHIPS

To build relationships among stakeholders to advance outdoor play and early learning in Canada.

CONNECTIONS

To connect research, policy and practice.

RESEARCH

To share research to inform policy development and to emphasize the importance of building the evidence base in Canada to support policy development and practice.

SPOTLIGHT

To highlight international exemplars and emerging initiatives in Canada.

REFLECTION & COLLABORATION

To engage participants in critical reflection about how to advance outdoor play and early learning in Canada.

WEDNESDAY

1:00 – 2:45 PM

Arrival after lunch
Registration and check-in
Light snacks available

3 – 5:15 PM

Opening and Scottish Keynote Presentation

5:30 – 8 PM

Welcome Reception & Dinner

THURSDAY

7:30 am – 8:30 PM

Symposium sessions
All meals and breaks

FRIDAY

7:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Symposium sessions
Breakfast, break and lunch

1:30 PM or 2:30 PM

2 complimentary shuttle departures to
Toronto Pearson International Airport

AGENDA

Wednesday, October 24

1 - 2:45 PM

Arrival & Registration
(snacks available)

3 - 4 PM

Opening
Grand Ballroom

Indigenous Welcome
CAT CRIGER, University of Toronto Mississauga Indigenous Advisor

Lawson Foundation Welcome
MARCEL LAUZIÈRE, President & CEO, Lawson Foundation

A New Paradigm for Early Learning through Outdoor Play
CHRISTINE ALDEN, Program Director, Lawson Foundation

4 - 5:15 PM

Keynote
Grand Ballroom (Program details on page 14)

Scottish Early Learning Policy and Outdoor Play
HENRY MATHIAS, Care Inspectorate, Scotland
MICHAL PERLMAN, University of Toronto
NINA HOWE, Concordia University

5:30 - 6:30 PM

Welcome Reception
Grand Ballroom

6:30 - 8 PM

Dinner
Connections Dining Room

Bridges Bar open until 11 PM

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AGENDA

Thursday, October 25

- 7 - 8:15 AM** **Breakfast Buffet**
Connections Dining Room
- 8:30 - 9:30 AM** **Opening & Keynotes**
Grand Ballroom (Program details on page 16)
- Outdoor play and risk - Essential for healthy child development
MARIANA BRUSSONI, University of British Columbia
- What can Indigenous curriculum teach us all?
ANGELA JAMES, Government of the Northwest Territories
- 9:30 - 10:30 AM** **Group Working Session**
Grand Ballroom (Program details on pages 10-11)
- Setting an outdoor play and early learning policy agenda: Exploring an ecosystem lens
- 10:30 - 11 AM** **Networking Break**
- 11 AM - 12:30 PM** **Breakout Sessions - Sharing Research: Part I (Choose A or B)**
- A. Canadian children: their voices and their early outdoor play experience**
Grand Ballroom A (Program details on pages 17-18)
Moderator: EMILY ROOT, Cape Breton University
- Outdoor play in schools: Meeting children and families where they are at to make it a success!
E. OBERLE, M. GUHN, M. BRUSSONI, L. IRWIN, P. ROWCLIFFE, A. ALMAS (Canada)
- Nurturing curiosity in the outdoors: A Kindergarten case study
T-L. SCHEFFEL, L. HIVES, A. STEELE, J. SCOTT (Canada)
- The willow trees talk to us: Thinking with place and (re)storying young children's encounters in a forest nature program
L. ZIMANYI, L. SHORT (Canada)
- B. Advancing knowledge about quality playspaces**
Grand Ballroom B (Program details on pages 18-19)
Moderator: FIONA BARTON, Outland Design
- Findings and policy applications of a research study on the effect of the outdoor childcare environments on children's behavior
R. MOORE, N. COSCO, W.R. SMITH, J. WESOLOSKI, T. DANNINGER, D. S. WARD, S. G. TROST, N. RIES (USA)
- From policy to play provision: inclusion by design – design by inclusion
H. LYNCH, A. MOORE (Ireland)
- Evaluating the impacts of outdoor playspace interventions to inform environmental and policy changes supportive of outdoor play for young children
J. LOEBACH, H. CAMPBELL (Canada)

AGENDA

Thursday, October 25

12:30 – 2 PM

Experiential Lunch & Learn

Choice of session by pre-registration. Pick up boxed lunch and meet groups in Grand Ballroom A. Groups depart at 12:45 PM sharp. (Program details on pages 20-23)

- I. Canadian risk benefit assessment toolkit for outdoor play
- II. Loose parts play in open and closed campus settings
- III. The willow trees talk to us: (Re)storying forest nature encounters
- IV. Supporting educators to transform their practice
- V. Changing practice: How Six Thinking Hats can influence new pathways
- VI. Policy toolkit to increase unstructured play

2:15 - 3 PM

Keynote

Grand Ballroom (Program details on page 24)

Creating a culture of outdoor learning among children in a sedentary city
S. BARAY, S. WESER, Pre-K 4 SA, San Antonio, Texas

3 - 4:15 PM

Breakout Sessions - Sharing Research: Part II (Choose C, D, or E)

C. Urban planning to enhance the built environment for young children

Meeting Room 11 (Program details on page 25)

Moderator: MARCEL LAUZIÈRE, Lawson Foundation

Child friendly city planning policies, opportunities and tools
P. ÅKERBLÖM (Sweden)

Outdoor play in urban contexts
M. KYTTÄ (Finland)

D. Supporting children's opportunities for risk

Grand Ballroom (Program details on page 26)

Moderator: MARLENE POWER, Child & Nature Alliance of Canada

Tools for reframing parents' perception of risk to promote children's outdoor risky play
M. BRUSSIONI, T. ISHIKAWA, C. HAN, I. PIKE, A. BUNDY, J. JACOB, J. TELLEZ, K. QUACH, F. HASANY,
G. FAULKNER, L. C. MASSE (Canada)

The right to a bruise: professionalizing ECEC educators to increase children's risk competence
M. VAN ROOIJEN, M. COTTERINK (Netherlands)

E. Canadian provincial and territorial outdoor play policies

Meeting Room 12 (Program details on page 27)

Moderator: WYNNE YOUNG, Lawson Foundation

The view of outdoor play in Canadian early childhood education curriculum frameworks,
legislation and policy
K. MCCUAIG, J. BERTRAND (Canada)

Examining outdoor play policies in licensed childcare centres in Alberta
M. PREDY, N. HOLT, V. CARSON (Canada)

AGENDA

Friday, October 26

- 7 - 8:15 AM** **Breakfast Buffet**
Connections Dining Room
- 8:30 - 9:30 AM** **Panel Presentation**
Grand Ballroom (Program details on pages 40-41)
- Overview of emerging initiatives to advance outdoor play and early learning in Canada**
- Partnering for outdoor play: A case study of forest and nature school programming in the context of licensed child care in Ottawa, Ontario
B. NIBLETT, M. POWER, K. HISCOTT
- Examining the development of outdoor play and early childhood education in Nova Scotia
P. MAHER, S. MELANSON, J. L. HUNTINGTON, P. MCCRACKEN, G.R. GALLAGHER
- Current outdoor play pedagogy and practice in publicly funded Canadian community colleges
B. DIETZE, A. CUTLER
- 9:30 - 10:30 AM** **Breakout Sessions on Emerging Initiatives (Choose F, G or H)**
- F. Partnering for outdoor play: A case study of forest and nature school programming in the context of licensed child care in Ottawa, Ontario**
Grand Ballroom
- G. Examining the development of outdoor play and ECE in Nova Scotia**
Meeting Room 11
- H. Current outdoor play pedagogy and practice in publicly funded Canadian community colleges**
Meeting Room 12
- 10:30 - 11 AM** **Networking Break**
- 11 AM - 12: 45 PM** **Group Working Session**
Grand Ballroom
- Advancing outdoor play and early learning in Canada: Symposium synthesis and next steps
- 12:45 - 1 PM** **Closing Remarks**
Grand Ballroom
- MARCEL LAUZIÈRE, President & CEO, Lawson Foundation
- 1 PM** **Boxed Lunch (Available to go or stay)**
- 1:30 & 2:30 PM** **Complimentary shuttle departures to Toronto Pearson International Airport**

Exploring an Ecosystem Lens



GROUP WORKING SESSION: EXPLORING AN ECOSYSTEM LENS

ECOSYSTEM: a system, or a group of interconnected elements, formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment. (dictionary.com)

In thinking about how to advance outdoor play and early learning, we propose using the lens of an ecosystem to explore the diverse, interrelated and essential components that must work in harmony in order to ensure all children in Canada have opportunities for high quality outdoor play experiences. Please take some time to contemplate the draft diagram and reflect on the following questions.

What resonates?

What's missing?

What needs changing?

What are the key challenges of advancing this ecosystem?

What are the challenges if an ecosystem model is not adopted and pursued? What are the alternatives?

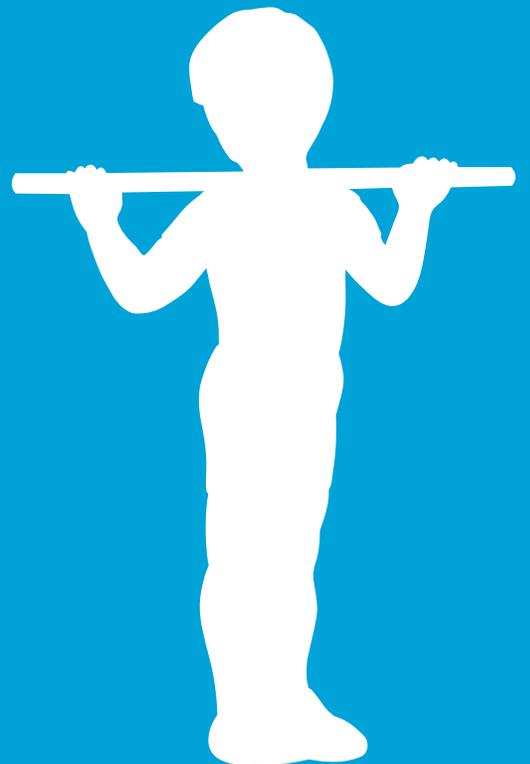
GROUP WORKING SESSION: ADVANCING OUTDOOR PLAY AND EARLY LEARNING

Based on your expertise and experience, what are the specific priority actions that you and your sector need to take to advance outdoor play and early learning in Canada? Also consider priority actions that need to happen in other parts of the ecosystem that you may not control.

	SHORT TERM 6-12 MONTHS	MEDIUM TERM 1-4 YEARS	LONG TERM 5+ YEARS
P/T Legislation & Curriculum Frameworks			
Pre-Service Training			
Program Implementation			

What research and evaluation will be required to move an outdoor play and early learning agenda forward to inform policy and practice? Please consider the different information needs of diverse stakeholders and be as specific as possible in your recommendations.

Abstracts & Biographies
Wednesday



KEYNOTE

Advances in Scottish Early Learning Policy and Outdoor Play

Part One: Context and vision

More than a quarter of a million children attend registered early learning and childcare services in Scotland. These services are regulated by the Care Inspectorate, the statutory body responsible for assessing and supporting improvement in the standards of social care for adults and children in Scotland. In this presentation, the Care Inspectorate's Strategic Lead for Health and Social Care Standards will give an overview of how regulation in Scotland has shifted from measuring provider inputs to assessing the impact of services on children's outcomes. Henry will explore how the regulation and inspection of outdoor play and forest nurseries has evolved. The recent flourishing of outdoor play, including the growth of specialist outdoor-based services, is set within a historical context and the implications for the current expansion of state funded early learning and childcare are considered.

HENRY MATHIAS, Care Inspectorate, Scotland started work as a full-time dad, then established a successful childcare business before becoming an early years inspector. A qualified social worker with an MSc in Social Work Management, Henry has a wealth of experience regulating and improving care. In his early years leadership role, he has been influential in changing the culture of regulation from measuring compliance with provider inputs to assessing and improving experiences of children. He played a leadership role in producing 'My World Outdoors' (http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/3091/My_world_outdoors_-_early_years_good_practice_2016.pdf) a good practice resource promoting outdoor play as part of the Care Inspectorate's aim to improve as well as regulate services. Henry led the recent review of the Standards, which has resulted in Scotland's radical integrated Health and Social Care Standards.

Part Two: Research study

Scotland is in the process of making substantial changes to its early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy; the number of free ECEC hours available to families is being doubled while emphasizing outdoor play. We conducted a series of interviews with policymakers and educators about the reasons for this policy initiative as well as the implementation challenges that are anticipated. In addition, information collected during visits to seven early adopters of outdoor play in different parts of Scotland is utilized. The role and importance of the early adopters of outdoor play as demonstration sites highlighted the possibilities for the policy initiatives. The key role of the Care Inspectorate in facilitating a cultural shift in the approach to risk perception also emerged as a theme. Challenges including parents' and educators' interest in full-time outdoor play are described. Implications for other localities interested in promoting outdoor play initiatives are discussed.

MICHAL PERLMAN is a Professor of Applied Psychology and Human Development at the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on issues related to quality in early childhood education and care (ECEC) including how it should be defined and measured and the links between aspects of ECEC program quality and child outcomes. Dr. Perlman has worked with different levels of government to explore how ECEC quality measurement can be used for monitoring and quality improvement purposes. Her work has been funded by a host of government funders and private foundations and published in a variety of peer-reviewed journals and practitioner/policy-oriented outlets.

NINA HOWE holds the Concordia University Research Chair in Early Childhood Development and Education and is a Professor in the Department of Education, Concordia University, Montreal. She teaches in both BA programs (Early Childhood and Elementary Education and Child Studies), and at the graduate level (MA program in Child Study; PhD in Education). Her areas of research include children's play, relationships (sibling pretense, conflict, teaching, imitation), the social-cognitive development of preschool and school-aged children, and early childhood education. She has published numerous articles and her work has been supported by a number of granting agencies (e.g., SSHRC).

Abstracts & Biographies

Thursday



KEYNOTE

Outdoor Play and Risk - Essential for Healthy Child Development

Play has long been recognized as important and access to play considered a basic childhood right. However, there has been little understanding until recently about the importance of outdoor play specifically, and its unique contributions to children's socio-emotional and physical health, development and learning. With increasing attention, has come growing appreciation of the critical and diverse role it plays. Research from disparate disciplines indicates an extraordinary array of benefits, from physical activity to creativity to prosocial behaviour to eye health. The evidence is clear that children need regular and repeated access to outdoor play, yet also indicates that children's engagement in outdoor play has never been lower. It points to an urgent need to address and reverse this concerning downward trend, with special attention to the early years as a time when lifelong healthy habits are formed and an appreciation for the outdoors can be readily cultivated.

MARIANA BRUSSONI is a developmental psychologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia. She is an investigator with the British Columbia Children's Hospital Research Institute and the British Columbia Injury Research & Prevention Unit. Mariana investigates child injury prevention and children's risky play. She is leading research to develop an index of the playability of the built environment for children aged 10-13 years; and research to develop and test a tool to reframe parents' risk perceptions related to outdoor play.

KEYNOTE

What Can Indigenous Curriculum Teach Us All?

The Northwest Territories in Canada is the homeland of the Dene, Métis, and Inuvialuit people. "Among the Dene, it is said that the child is born with a Drum in its hand. The child is born with integrity. The child has worth. It is the birthright of the Dene child to be acknowledged and respected for this. The child who is not respected cannot become what it is meant to be ... a capable person." (Dene Kede Curriculum, Government of the NWT, 1993). It is critical in the growth and development of the child into 'a capable person' (James, 2016) that educators are aware of the Indigenous curriculum and understand the need to balance it with its Western counterparts. That is, when speaking of outdoor play and early learning, we must also speak of the Land and make the connections for children to understand the Land's gifts, vitality, medicines, and spirituality. For Indigenous peoples, the Land offers the cyclical approach to teaching and learning through the seasons that can help children develop their unique ways of being, knowing, doing and believing.

ANGELA JAMES is the Director of the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat for the Government of the Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada. As the former Director for Early Childhood and School Services, Angela oversaw the development of the NWT's Right from the Start Framework and Action Plan, which defines goals and actions to support children from birth through their transition to school. Angela began her career as classroom language teacher, then as Indigenous education camp coordinator, and then school principal. She received her own education in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. Angela's work centres on raising children to becoming, being and believing as 'a capable person,' and on the perspectives of Indigenous educational theory and research in informing educational reform. A Manitoba Métis, Angela has made Yellowknife her home for the past 40 years.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Select Session A or B.

A. Canadian Children: Their Voices and Their Early Experiences of Outdoor Play

Outdoor play in schools: Meeting children and families where they are at to make it a success!

E. Oberle, M. Guhn, M. Brussoni, L. Irwin, P. Rowcliffe, A. Almas (Canada)

Objective: The goal of this research is: 1) investigating children's experiences with active outdoor play and risky play upon Kindergarten entry; 2) exposing differences in engagement in active outdoor play and risky play based on families' demographic backgrounds; and 3) discussing how individual and classroom-level data on children's outdoor play-experiences can support teachers and schools in making informed decisions. Method: Data were collected with Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) – a parent-reported survey that assesses children's experiences in their early environments prior to Kindergarten (N=1248 children in 97 public schools in BC). Analyses and discussion: We investigate differences in outdoor play based on family demographic backgrounds. The use of this data for school and community planning is discussed. Connecting outdoor play promotion in schools with other systemic approaches in education (e.g., social-emotional learning was recently added as a mandate for schools to address in BC's revised curriculum) will be discussed.

EVA OBERLE is an Assistant Professor with the Human Early Learning Partnership (UBC). She holds a PhD in educational psychology from UBC and conducted postdoctoral research at UIC/CASEL (Chicago). Eva investigates factors linked to positive child development and strategies for promoting mental health and wellbeing in the school context. Her focus is on social and emotional learning in schools and positive youth development. Eva is interested in the role of peer relationships, relationships with adults, and school-level factors in achieving positive and healthy child outcomes. Eva takes a whole-child approach, understanding child development within the ecological contexts in which children grow.

Nurturing curiosity in the outdoors: A Kindergarten case study

T-L. Scheffel, L. Hives, A. Steele, J. Scott (Canada)

The purpose of this study is to deepen community-wide understanding of healthy, active experiences in the outdoors by bringing together a shared lens of university researchers and an educator team to reveal opportunities for increasing children's experiences in an outdoor, play-based early learning Kindergarten setting, in a publicly-funded elementary school context. Taking a case study approach, we share an in-depth case of one Kindergarten classroom in Northern Ontario and the opportunities for nurturing curiosity in the outdoors. Through the representations, words and actions of the Kindergarten children, we discuss the conditions that support the development of healthy, lifelong attitudes toward outdoor learning. The role that policy plays in removing or reducing perceived barriers will also be discussed.

LOTJE HIVES brings a wealth of classroom experience as a Kindergarten teacher. Lotje continues to facilitate professional learning for pre- and in-service Early Years educators. She brings perspective having had the responsibilities of Education Officer in the Early Years Division of the Ministry of Education of Ontario, School Board Program and Outreach Coordinator (Early Years Leadership, Healthy Schools, Environmental Education, Early Literacy and Mathematics), and Acting Vice Principal of Program with a School Board system leadership lens. Leadership and research interests include the process of pedagogical documentation, and the environment as teacher – indoors and out.

The willow trees talk to us: Thinking with place and (re)storying young children's encounters in a forest nature program

L. Zimanyi, L. Short (Canada)

Two towering 150-year old oziisigobiminzh/crack willow trees situated along GabeKanang Ziibi/the Humber River, surrounded by Canada's most biologically diverse ecosystem are the heart of The Willows nature program for preschool children at Humber College Child Development Centre in Toronto. Located in Adobigok/Place of the Black Alders, the 105-hectare Humber Arboretum is part of the traditional territory of the Ojibwe Anishnabe people including several First Nations communities. While embodied learning in nature is increasing in the early years, programs are dominated by Euro-Western child-centred pedagogies. An earth-centred paradigm shift is needed that sees nature as culture, embraces Indigenous ways of knowing and being and addresses and supports children's collective and relational engagements. By thinking with place, the research explores how collective engagement, inquiry and storytelling alongside educators, children, Indigenous peoples and the more-than-human world may contribute to reconceptualizing, (re)storying and reshaping place-based early childhood pedagogies, supporting children's emplaced connectedness and ethical relations through lived and collective reciprocity.

LOUISE ZIMANYI, Professor, Early Childhood Education, School of Health Sciences, Humber College, has extensive global experience in early childhood programming, policy, research and advocacy. Most recently her work, research and advocacy focuses on early childhood pedagogy and practice that privileges relationality and reciprocity including with PlayFutures and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

LYNN SHORT, Professor, School of Applied Technology, Horticulture and Support Staff, Aboriginal Resource Centre, Humber College, has extensive experience in the natural outdoor environment with students of all ages and works with an Indigenous Elder at Humber College co-teaching the Indigenous Knowledge Certificate. Her research focuses on the interactions of living things in natural ecosystems.

B. Advancing knowledge about quality playspaces

Findings and policy applications of a research study on the effect of the outdoor child care environments on children's behavior

R. Moore, N. Cosco, W.R. Smith, J. Wesoloski, T. Danninger, D.S. Ward, S.G. Trost, N. Ries (USA)

What outdoor learning environment (OLE –North Carolina policy) characteristics foster physical activity (PA) among 3-5 year old children? A sample of 355 behaviour settings in 30 childcare OLEs was studied using behaviour mapping. Physical activity (PA) levels were coded across behaviour settings and modeled in 6,083 behavioural displays using multi-level statistical procedures. As behaviour mapping codes behavior and physical attributes simultaneously, results provide an objective, operational measure of predictable behavioural patterns across settings and sites and proportional amounts of activity afforded by setting. Adjacency and centrality of play and learning settings increased PA, together with child-to-child interaction (more for boys than girls) and manipulable items such as wheeled toys and balls. Results offer objective information to spur evidence-based regulations and creation of new standards of practice. They may inspire public debate to support policy change. Replication is necessary to confirm results in a variety of geographic regions and cultural contexts.

ROBIN MOORE, Dipl.Arch, MCP, Hon. ASLA, is Professor of Landscape Architecture and co-founder, Natural Learning Initiative (NLI), NC State University. He holds degrees in architecture (London) and city planning (MIT). Since 2000, he has guided NLI's interdisciplinary, community engagement in built environment design and action research for children and families in underserved communities. Moore is an international authority on intergenerational urban play and learning environments. He is former president of the International Play Association and former chair of the Environmental Design Research Association. Publications include "Design for Healthy Childhoods and a Healthy Planet," in Biophilic Design.

From policy to play provision: inclusion by design – design by inclusion

H. Lynch, A. Moore (Ireland)

The purpose of this study was to analyze inclusive outdoor play provision in park-playground units in one city in Ireland. Outdoor playgrounds are social settings and should be places of inclusive play opportunities for all children. However, children with disabilities experience significantly reduced participation in play and are often excluded from outdoor play. Universal Design (UD) is promoted as one way to design for inclusion. Therefore, the National Disability Authority commissioned this study to examine UD in one urban community in Ireland from October 2017 to May 2018. A desk-based review of evidence and a review of guidelines for inclusive playground design was conducted. Five urban community park-playground units were audited and analyzed for play-value, accessibility, and usability. Participants included local municipality employees, playground designers and 22 diverse playground users. Findings confirmed the need to establish international and national policy for good practice in outdoor, inclusive playground design and provision.

HELEN LYNCH is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, University College Cork, Ireland and a Research Associate of the Institute for Social Sciences in the Twenty First Century. She has engaged for many years in a research program concerning early childhood play environments, and the rights of children to play, including children with disabilities. She has worked on national and international projects exploring these issues, with the Heritage Council, the National Disability Authority and in the EU, through the Ludi COST Action. She is a member of Eurochild and the Children's Rights Alliance, Ireland.

Evaluating the impacts of outdoor playspace interventions to inform environmental and policy changes supportive of outdoor play for young children

J. Loebach, H. Campbell (Canada)

The last decade of research has provided evidence that exposure to diverse, nature-rich outdoor play environments has significant benefits for children's health and learning. Increasing the quality of outdoor playspaces can support children's development across all domains. To inform effective environmental and policy interventions, it is valuable to understand the impacts on children's play behaviors from changes to their outdoor playscapes. This paper presents results from a comprehensive pre-post analysis of both the outdoor environment and children's outdoor play activities following major renovations to the Kindergarten play yards at two elementary schools in Ontario. Behavior Mapping, paired with environmental audits and staff 'walkalong' interviews, richly illustrates children's use of their outdoor play yard and the impact of environmental changes. This presentation will share insights from the analysis including the impact of the natural playground renovations on specific outdoor play behaviors including: physically active play, social interactions, and loose parts use.

JANET LOEBACH, PhD, P.Eng, M. Env. Design, is an environmental design researcher and consultant based in Ontario, and Principal Consultant for Thrive Design Consulting. She is a Community-Based Research Fellow at the CAMH Institute for Mental Health Policy Research, where she is investigating the impacts of neighbourhood type on children's community play and mobility. Her areas of expertise include assessment and design of play and learning environments, as well as participatory, child-led and community-based planning processes. Dr. Loebach currently serves as VP of the International Play Association (Canada) and Co-Chair of the Children & Youth Environments Network of the Environmental Design Research Association. www.thrivedesignconsulting.ca

EXPERIENTIAL LUNCH & LEARN

Choice of six outdoor sessions by pre-registration. Sessions I-V will be held outdoors in “all weather” so please bring appropriate clothing. Session VI will be moved indoors if it rains.

Session I. Canadian risk benefit assessment toolkit for outdoor play

Marlene Power, Executive Director, Child & Nature Alliance of Canada

The aim of this lunch and learn is to examine the gaps in knowledge and competencies in supporting children to engage in developmentally appropriate risks that are inherent in outdoor play. We will explore how the development of the ‘Canadian Risk Benefit Assessment Toolkit’ will aim to increase practitioner competence in balancing, advocating for, managing, and assessing risk in outdoor play. We will also spend some time testing out the tools that will be published in 2019, with time for discussion on how this may enhance the growing outdoor play sector in Canada. This session will proceed in “all weather”, so please bring appropriate clothing.

MARLENE POWER founded the Carp Ridge Forest Preschool, the Ottawa Forest and Nature School, as well as Forest School Canada, a national education initiative to support the Forest and Nature School movement. Marlene studied at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Dalhousie University. In the last decade she has been sought out as a speaker and thought leader on Forest and Nature School, Risky Play and Outdoor play. In December 2014 she was appointed Executive Director of the Child Nature Alliance of Canada and continues to be inspired by children’s capacity and competency in their play outdoors.

Session II. Loose parts play in open and closed campus settings

Brenda Simon, Director of Play Programs, Earth Day Canada

Learn more about Earth Day Canada’s POP UP Adventure and Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) program through first hand observation of loose parts play. This session will provide participants with an opportunity to expand their understanding of how diverse loose parts facilitate play provision, providing exploration and imaginative play options for children and supporting a supervision practice that foregrounds children’s capacities. We will observe the diversity of play and social-emotional learning as it unfolds during a session attended by a local Kindergarten class. We will discuss the challenges presented by risk and open campus settings, as well as some of the logistics associated with using loose parts. This session will proceed in “all weather”, please dress comfortably for outdoor observation. Participants will have the opportunity to chat with play providers from the EarthPLAY/OPAL team.

BRENDA SIMON is the Director of Play Programs at Earth Day Canada (EDC). In 2013, Brenda introduced neighbourhoods in Toronto to POP UP Adventure Play, after researching the profession of play-work in the U.K., Germany and Denmark. Since joining Earth Day Canada in 2015, the EarthPLAY team has grown to 8 full-time play-trainers and has produced over 100 adventure play-days with loose parts across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. EarthPLAY’s school program, OPAL, is now working in 25 schools and growing rapidly every year. Working closely with the Toronto District School Board, EDC is developing a board-wide play policy and a playground design program that will support diverse and enriched play during the school day and after. EDC is collaborating with community agencies, conservation authorities and municipalities to bring play into all forms of childcare, recreational programming and outdoor education.

Session III. The willow trees talk to us: (Re)storying forest nature encounters

Louise Zimanyi & Lynn Short, Faculty, Humber College

Fall is a time of Binawkway Geezis (Falling Leaves Moon). Connecting with the energy of Ahki/Mother Earth and Nibhi/water – GabeKanang Ziibi/ the Humber River, the blood of mother earth, will inspire participants to experience the value of local natural spaces for play, teaching and learning, wellness and creative thinking. Participants will walk in the forest and along the Humber River, explore and investigate close-up, listen to a story of place, and create their own story of place. Participants will learn about the importance of place from an Indigenous perspective; experience and understand the importance of place-based, earth-centred experiences and storytelling for play, wellness, learning and teaching; and create a reflection stick and their own story of place. This session will proceed in “all weather” so please bring appropriate clothing.

LOUISE ZIMANYI - Professor, Early Childhood Education, School of Health Sciences, Humber College. Louise has extensive global experience in early childhood programming, policy, research and advocacy. Most recently her work, research and advocacy focuses on privileging relationality and reciprocity as central components of transformative and contemplative early childhood pedagogy and practice. This includes work with PlayFutures (Lego Foundation) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Louise is currently conducting research on how collective engagement, inquiry and storytelling alongside educators, children, Indigenous peoples and the more-than-human world in a forest nature program may contribute to (re)storying and reshaping place-based early childhood pedagogies.

LYNN SHORT - Professor, School of Applied Technology, Horticulture and Support Staff, Aboriginal Resource Centre, Humber College. Lynn has extensive experience in the natural outdoor environment with students of all ages and works with an Indigenous Elder at Humber College co-teaching the Indigenous Knowledge Certificate. Her research focuses on the interactions of living things in natural ecosystems. Lynn has been sharing stories in the forest nature program at Humber for the past year.

Session IV. Supporting educators in transforming their practice

Cyndi Frizelle & Jennifer Gilbert, YMCA of Western Ontario

The YMCA of Western Ontario is changing the face of the current practices and beliefs across Canada around outdoor play through an ongoing research project aimed at exploring the many benefits of children being exposed to outdoor play in a less structured program, based on making healthy “risky” behaviour choices. Our current community practice is falling short in ensuring our children are participating in real active outdoor play. Their “play” time is over-structured and filled with unnatural activities and equipment. We hope to guide you through an understanding around how encouraging unstructured play in the outdoors impacts educators and early learning professionals. Learning how to shift from a mindset of putting children in a bubble to one that allows risk, inquiry, resilience and building confidence. It all starts with us!

This interactive session will be focused on three outcomes: understanding how vital outdoor play is to children’s healthy, holistic development; recognizing our own perceptions around the image of the child; and, what tools are required to create and support opportunities for children in outdoor play. We will also guide participants through an understanding about the YMCA of Western Ontario’s journey in response to the influx of data surrounding the benefits of outdoor play. This session will proceed in “all weather” so please bring appropriate clothing.

CYNDI FRIZELLE, RECE: Cyndi is the Regional Manager, Children’s Educational Services at the YMCA of Western Ontario. She has also been a professor in the Early Childhood Education program at Fanshawe College for over 10 years. Cyndi sits on many advisory groups in London and surrounding area, committed to improving quality care and education. With a strong passion for outdoor play and physical activity, she was the project lead for the YMCA of Western Ontario’s Risky Outdoor Play Project.

JENNIFER GILBERT, RECE: Jennifer is the Regional Manager of Quality at the YMCA of Western Ontario. She has also worked as a professor in the Early Childhood Education program at Fanshawe College for over 20 years. Before her current position, Jennifer was the YMCA’s first Outdoor Classroom Specialist. She has committed her career to improving the opportunities children have within quality child care settings in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Session V. Changing practice: How de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats system can influence new pathways

Beverlie Dietze, Okanagan College

As new research evolves on an array of outdoor play topics, government, community, and program leaders will be required to lead employees in a change process. How leaders lead, facilitate, and manage change with their employees will determine the success of the change process. This interactive workshop will introduce participants to the theory of de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats process in relation to change management. Participants will examine how this thinking process guides leaders in their practice, while fueling innovation and positive change that supports the outdoor play agenda. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: examine how de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats process is used to enhance group discussion and individual thinking processes when new ways of knowing and practice are being implemented; and describe how the Six Thinking Hats concept could be used to facilitate discussion and decision making on the change process when new outdoor play policies, procedures, and programming practices are being planned and implemented. This session will proceed in “all weather” so please bring appropriate clothing.

BEVERLIE DIETZE (PhD) is the Director of Learning and Applied Research at Okanagan College. She is the lead researcher for a variety of national and a local research projects that focus on advancing children’s outdoor play through training, programming, and environmental space designs. She is co-author of five textbooks related to play and children’s programming, including *Outdoor and Nature Play in Early Childhood Education*, and has several peer-reviewed articles published on early childhood and adult education topics.

Session VI: Policy toolkit to increase unstructured play

Frank Welsh, Canadian Public Health Association

Play is an integral part of every child's healthy development and is embedded in Article 31 in the Convention on the Rights of a Child. Children and youth need time, appropriate space and opportunity to engage in quality unstructured, self-directed play. They, however, are moving less, sitting more, and have more limits placed on them. Meanwhile, the prevalence of poor physical health, poor mental wellness and the use of mental health services have increased among Canadian children and youth. The challenge is to identify what is causing this shift and to develop methods and approaches that could mediate these effects by improving access to unstructured play.

CPHA has been investigating the challenges to decision-making that limits access to unstructured play. The reasons for this shift include the influence of social media and peer pressure on parent's decisions and the effect of societal norms and public opinion on decision-making by municipal and school board officials. Together, we will explore the reasons for these shifts and the tools that could reduce this trend. An overview of CPHA's unstructured play toolkit will be shared. Participants will be challenged to identify how access to play challenges can be addressed to make Canada more play-friendly.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the challenges to decision-making that supports access to unstructured play in school and child care settings
- To identify solutions that address barriers to making Canada play-friendly

This session will be held outside if it's dry, but inside if it's rainy or very cold. Participants will also have the option of observing Kindergarten children at play outdoors as per Session B.

FRANK WELSH, PhD is the Director of Policy for the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), where he is responsible for developing policy alternatives and advocacy approaches on topics of public health importance. Prior to joining CPHA, Frank had a career in the Federal Government where he held several Director-level positions, as well as positions involving science-based regulatory and policy development, business and strategic planning, and management of science policy-based organizations. He began his career as a research scientist with the National Research Council of Canada. Frank holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Manitoba, Masters and Doctoral degrees from Cornell University, and a Diploma in Business Administration from the University of Ottawa.

KEYNOTE

Creating a culture of outdoor learning among children in a sedentary city

In 2012, voters in San Antonio, Texas approved a sales tax increase to support Pre-K 4 SA, a comprehensive initiative to increase access to high quality preKindergarten for the city's most vulnerable four year olds. The initiative included building four model education centres that serve as demonstration sites and incubators of curriculum innovation. In 2017, Pre-K 4 SA was named the best early childhood program in Texas, in part for its outdoor learning program. San Antonio's loosely linked system of early childhood providers are rapidly replicating Pre-K 4 SA's outdoor learning innovation in spite of having no requirement to do so. This study identifies key conditions and events that contributed the integration of outdoor learning into early childhood programs throughout San Antonio. Although context-specific, the results yielded generalizable propositions that may be applied in other contexts and may inform policy development to support outdoor learning for young children.

SARAH BARAY, Ph.D. is Chief Executive Officer of Pre-K 4 SA and has more than 25 years of experience in the education field. Previously Dr. Baray directed the Ph.D. in School Improvement program at Texas State University and was a researcher and instructor in the Educational and Community Leadership program. Dr. Baray has served in various roles in education including teacher, principal, and district administrator. Dr. Baray holds a Ph.D. in Executive Public School Leadership, from the University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests centre on policies and practices related to educational equity and the role of high-quality early learning in educational outcomes.

SANDY WESER received a Master's of Education in Early Childhood Education from the University of the Incarnate Word. She has served as an early childhood teacher, curriculum specialist, and director of two early childhood schools. She has experience in curriculum development and professional learning experiences for pre-K and Kindergarten teachers to enrich language and literacy instruction. As the current Director of the Pre-K 4 SA North Education Center, she coaches staff in pedagogical practices. Her passion for the positive effects of nature on young children led her to develop an innovative outdoor learning curriculum adopted by dozens of programs.

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BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Select Session C, D or E.

C. Urban Planning to Enhance the Built Environment

Child friendly city planning policies, opportunities and tools

P. Åkerblom (Sweden)

The trend of densifying cities is gaining dominance also in Sweden resulting in stressful urban environments counter to children's and young people's independent mobility. This is a main reason why outdoor settings at schools and pre-schools have never been more important than today for play, experiencing nature, learning and physical activity. Therefore the Swedish Government published national guidance and general advice for professionals engaged with decision-making, planning, design and management of school grounds – which has inspired several local projects where municipal officials are developing planning tools. This presentation will address barriers and opportunities found in both research and in the practitioner oriented research project Sustainable Outdoor Management in Nacka, Sweden. The aim is to develop a model for cross-administrative support focused on sustainable, equally valuable, non-toxic and educational suitable outdoor environments at schools and pre-schools.

PETTER ÅKERBLOM is a landscape architect working at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences as senior lecturer in urban landscape management. Specializing in outdoor environments for young people, his PhD was about educational, historical and communicative conditions for school gardening. He is engaged in research on suitable planning tools for schoolyard development connected to teacher's educational use and demands, respectively on what characterizes a cross-administrative model for schoolyard management. He is course leader for two courses (advanced level): Design Through Practice and Management, and Public Space for Children and Youth. From 2006-2017 he worked as national coordinator for outdoor urban space for young people at Movium Think Tank, SLU.

Outdoor play in urban contexts

M. Kyttä (Finland)

Because children are increasingly residing in urban environments, it is essential to understand the characteristics of urban settings that promote outdoor play and children's wellbeing. According to my "Bullerby"-model, the two central criteria for child-friendly environments include children's possibilities for independent mobility and their opportunities to actualize environmental affordances. In a series of studies among children, we have investigated the built environment characteristics and contextual qualities that encourage children to move around independently and find intriguing possibilities for functional, social and emotional activities. An online public participation GIS methodology, softGIS, allows the study of large groups of children who can produce localized experiential knowledge through user-friendly applications. The gathered 'soft' data can then be analyzed together with the 'hard' data included in geographic information systems to generate insightful knowledge about child-friendly outdoor settings and to promote participatory urban planning with children and young people.

MARKETTA KYTTÄ, professor in Land use planning in Aalto University, Finland, has her background in environmental psychology and participatory planning. Her research covers various topics: child-, and human friendly environments, environments that promote wellbeing and health, perceived safety and new methods for public participation. Currently, her multidisciplinary research team concentrates on the place-based person-environment research with public participation GIS methodology. The team has worked with numerous real life public participation projects of cities in Finland and abroad. These include a large scale public participation project related to the Helsinki Master plan process.

D. Supporting Children's Opportunities for Risk

Tools for reframing parents' perception of risk to promote children's outdoor risky play

M. Brussoni, T. Ishikawa, C. Han, I. Pike, A. Bundy, J. Jacob, J. Tellez, K. Quach, F. Hasany, G. Faulkner, L.C. Masse (Canada)

The opportunity to engage with risk is a fundamental part of play. Children's risky play is associated with a variety of positive developmental, physical and mental health outcomes. Despite this, parents', educators' and other caregivers' fears of risk and adverse consequences have resulted in unnecessary restrictions on children's risky play. We developed a digital tool (OutsidePlay.ca) and in-person workshop to reframe parents' perceptions of risk and change parenting behaviours. We describe our tool and present preliminary results of a randomized controlled trial to examine whether it leads to increases in mothers' tolerance of risk in play and goal attainment relating to promoting their child's opportunities for risky play. The RR tool could be of use in educational settings to influence parents' perceptions and increase acceptance of risky play. It could also be effective in influencing other decision-makers and gate-keepers to children's risky play, including educators and policy makers.

MARIANA BRUSSONI is a developmental psychologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia. She is an investigator with the British Columbia Children's Hospital Research Institute and the British Columbia Injury Research & Prevention Unit. Mariana investigates child injury prevention and children's risky play. She is leading research to develop an index of the playability of the built environment for children aged 10-13 years; and research to develop and test a tool to reframe parents' risk perceptions related to outdoor play.

The right to a bruise: Professionalizing ECEC educators to increase children's risk competence

M. van Rooijen, M. Cotterink (Netherlands)

Research has shown that engaging with risks enhances children's resilience, their self-image and self-confidence. The purpose of this study is to enhance educators' competencies and skills on facilitating risky play and interacting with stakeholders (policy makers, parents, colleagues and children). A professionalization program was offered to seven Dutch afterschool childcare settings, introducing 'loose parts' to stimulate risky play. The program is evaluated using the TRiPS instrument (Tolerance of Risk in Play Scale) and as a multiple case-study identifying factors whereby stakeholders influence professionals in encouraging or discouraging children's risky play. Positive effects of the program towards professionals' attitudes were found. Preliminary results will be discussed. Results are expected in terms of greater understanding and improved competencies among educators. Insight will be given into Dutch context on policy and childcare practice, illustrated with the Risk monitor and national campaign towards parental attitudes on risky play of the Dutch Consumer Safety Institute.

MARTIN VAN ROOIJEN set up two adventure playgrounds as coordinator of the playwork team. He completed his Master's in Pedagogy with honours on 'Parents and risky play'. He is currently working as a pedagogue on children's outdoor activities and is a researcher of professional dilemmas towards children's risk-taking in play. Martin is involved in Dutch networks on nature play and children's play rights. He is member of the International Journal of Playwork Practice Editorial Board, the Dutch branch of the International Play Association and the Special Interest Group Outdoor Play & Learning of the European Early Childhood & Education Research Association.

E. Canadian Provincial and Territorial Policies

The view of outdoor play in Canadian early childhood education curriculum frameworks, legislation and policy

K. McCuaig, J. Bertrand (Canada)

Barriers to outdoor play: The law or rationalization? Is there a conflict between the promotion of the playful, learning child in early childhood pedagogy and the regulatory frameworks educators must consider when designing outdoor learning programs? This paper provides a summary of provincial and territorial documents that govern the operation of regulated child care centres and school-operated early years programs identifying their influence on the nature of play. It also analyzes provincial and territorial curriculum frameworks examining if and how the concept of the “classroom as the third teacher” extends to the playground. The authors question the extent to which regulations that are designed to secure children’s safety, constrain the ability of educators to support risky play. They conclude that while policy emphasizes safety, it also encourages physical play. Meanwhile new advocates for outdoor play are being found in unlikely places from hospitals to architect firms.

KERRY MCCUAIG, Fellow Early Childhood Policy, Atkinson Centre, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/ University of Toronto is co-author of the Early Childhood Education Report, which tracks provincial/territorial progress in early years programming. Kerry has a long involvement in policy development including as a founder of Toronto First Duty, a pioneer in the integrated delivery of early childhood services. Kerry is author of several publications, including those commissioned by the Senate of Canada and the governments of Manitoba, New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Ontario and the City of Toronto, as well as reports for labour, women’s and community organizations.

JANE BERTRAND is currently the Program Director at the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and Adjunct Professor at OISE, University of Toronto. Jane worked in collaboration with Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain as the research coordinator for Early Years Study (1999), Early Years Study 2 (2007) and Early Years Study 3 (2011). Recent publications and collaborations focus on the intersection of research, policy and practice in early childhood education. She is a contributing author of the Science of Early Child Development (www.scienceofecd.com) and co-authored a textbook, *The Essentials of Early Childhood Education*, Canadian Edition.

Examining outdoor play policies in licensed childcare centres in Alberta

M. Predy, N. Holt, V. Carson (Canada)

Objectives: Determine the prevalence of outdoor play time and written policy components, and the association between outdoor play policies and time in Alberta childcare centres.

Methods: Directors of licensed childcare centres (n=224) in Alberta with programs for toddlers and preschoolers (19-60 months) completed a questionnaire based on a GO Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment Tool.

Results: A higher percentage of centres met best practices for outdoor play duration in the non-winter months (Toddlers: 57%; Preschoolers: 53%) compared to winter months (Toddlers: 23%; Preschoolers: 14%). Most centres (94.2%) had a written outdoor play policy, of which 61% had a policy for time. Centres had a mean of 4.8 (SD=2) written policy components. Future analysis will examine the association of outdoor play time with policies.

Conclusions: Children are receiving less than optimal outdoor play time, especially in the winter. Prevalence of outdoor play policies is high; however the components are highly variable.

MADISON PREDY is a 2nd year Master of Science student studying under the supervision of Dr. Valerie Carson in the Behavioral Epidemiology Lab within the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include early childhood development, outdoor play, and the supporting policies within the childcare setting. Madison’s thesis will examine current outdoor play environments and policies of licensed childcare centres in Alberta. When Madison is not involved in research her favorite outdoor activities include hiking in the Rocky Mountains and running in Edmonton’s river valley.

CANADIAN RESEARCH & PRACTICE OUTDOOR POSTER SESSION

Research Posters

1. A Pilot Assessment of the Forest and Nature School Early Childhood Education and Development Program in Canada

M. Guerrero, E. Lee, C.E. Gray, M.S. Tremblay

The purpose of this presentation is to discuss a three-year, quasi-experimental pre-post pilot study examining the impact of the Ottawa Forest and Nature School (FNS) on the health and development of young children. Approximately 48 children (n = 16, Ottawa FNS; n = 32, traditional childcare centres) will be recruited for Year 1. Children enrolled in the FNS will receive 2 days/week of immersive forest experience and 3 days/week of nearby-nature experience. Children, parents, and educators will complete various measures throughout the study. Measures will assess children's movement behaviors (sleep, sedentary behavior, and physical activity), fine and gross motor skills, cognitive functioning, and psychosocial well-being (via educator and parent self-report); parents' connectedness to nature and modeling behaviors; and quality of early childhood outdoor learning environments (via observation). Implications of this research as well as pre-pilot findings and feedback will also be discussed.

MICHELLE GUERRERO is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), working with the Healthy Active Living and Obesity (HALO) Research Group. Michelle obtained an Honors Bachelor of Arts in Sport Psychology from Laurentian University, and a Masters of Human Kinetics and Ph.D. in Kinesiology from the University of Windsor. Her primary research interests include studying environmental and psychosocial correlates and determinants of physical activity participation among children and youth (with and without physical disabilities).

2. The Feasibility of a Modified Outdoor Free Play Schedule in Childcare Centres: Adherence to the Supporting Physical Activity in the Childcare Environment (SPACE) Intervention

M. Driediger, P. Tucker, L.M. Vanderloo, S.M. Burke, A.M. Johnson, J.D. Irwin, B.W. Timmons

The implementation adherence and feasibility of a modified outdoor playtime schedule (4 x 30-min/day) in centre-based childcare was examined. The Supporting Physical Activity in the Childcare Environment (SPACE) intervention, an 8-week randomized controlled trial was delivered by Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) to preschoolers in London, Ontario. In 2015, 11 centres (49 ECEs; 200 preschoolers) participated in Phase 1. Phase 2 was conducted in 6 distinct centres (20 ECEs; 102 preschoolers) in 2017. ECEs recorded their compliance with each outdoor period in a daily log. Post-intervention, ECEs completed an evaluation survey including open-ended questions to assess barriers and facilitators to implementation. Adherence to the four 30-minute outdoor playtimes was high (>80%) in both Phase 1 and Phase 2. Transitions were reported as challenging, yet ECEs used strategies to overcome this. Shorter, more frequent outdoor periods during childcare may present a practical approach to support improved levels of physical activity among preschoolers.

MOLLY DRIEDIGER is a post-doctoral scholar at the University of Western Ontario. Working with Dr. Trish Tucker, her research focuses on physical activity promotion among young children. As project coordinator in the Child Health and Physical Activity Lab, she has managed a number of randomized controlled trials that have examined the impact of childcare interventions on preschoolers' objectively measured (accelerometer derived) physical activity. She is currently conducting research that explores the impact and feasibility of a childcare physical activity policy on children's physical activity levels.

3. Transforming Outdoor Education Perspectives Through Critical Engagement with Climate Action Pedagogies

L. Gagliardi, V. Pacini-Ketchabaw, R. Khattar

Not only is there an urgent need to explore how adults can learn from and with children, we also need to identify creative and site-specific responses to support children's sustainable living now and as they grow. The international Climate Action Network (CAN) addresses these needs by developing an innovative program of research that investigates children's engagement with climate change related issues in creative, innovative and generative ways. CAN represents a research-practice initiative devoted to synthesizing knowledge about children's roles in environmental and sustainable living. It is timely because climate change and children's present and future responses to it have profound sociocultural, political, and economic implications for Canada and every other country around the world. Specifically, this poster presentation reports on ongoing research conducted across two Collaboratory sites – in Toronto and London, Ontario, that are experimenting with innovative pedagogies to foreground children's personhood and diversely situated relationships in ecologically challenging times.

LISA-MARIE GAGLIARDI is an early childhood educator, pedagogista, teacher educator and PhD candidate at Western University. In her work with children, educators, teacher candidates, and faculty, Lisa-Marie experiments with pedagogical practice informed by feminist post-qualitative research methodologies. Her PhD dissertation explores entangled human-food relations in our complex times of climate change. Applying feminist post-humanist theories to early childhood education contexts, this research stays with the complexities and the ethical tensions of our relations with other species as foods.

4. Can Digital Technology Enhance Outdoor Play and Learning?

M. McGlynn-Stewart, N. Maguire

This three-year study followed 14 Kindergarten classrooms in Ontario as they used open-ended tablet applications to support outdoor play and learning. Through the creation of slideshows that incorporated photos, video, drawings, and audio recordings, the children explored their physical and creative activities outdoors, as well as their connections to nature. The educators were cautious about safety and solitary and sedentary use. However, findings illustrated that children used the tablets safely, both individually and collaboratively, in conjunction with outdoor pursuits such as climbing and dramatic play. Rather than undermining the active, social, and nature focused value of outdoor play, the use of open-ended apps enhanced these aspects by allowing children to attend to, document, and review their outdoor interests and activities.

MONICA MCGLYNN-STEWART (Ph.D.) is a professor in the School of Early Childhood at George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario. She teaches courses in curriculum, policy, and research methods. She is a former elementary teacher, principal, and consultant. Currently, she is the Principal Investigator on the SSHRC funded research project, Toys or Tools? Using Tablet Applications for Open-Ended Literacy Learning. Her research interests include teacher action research, student engagement, literacy learning and teaching in the early years, and digital technology mediated learning and teaching.

NICOLA MAGUIRE is a recent graduate of the Master of Arts in Early Childhood Studies program at Ryerson University. She is part-time faculty in the School of Early Childhood at George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario. She teaches courses in curriculum and supports George Brown ECEs, students, and faculty as they integrate digital technology into their practice. Nicola works as an assistant on the SSHRC funded research project, Toys or Tools? Using Tablet Applications for Open-Ended Literacy Learning. Her research interests include children's outdoor play, arts-based research methods, literacy learning in the early years, and digital technology mediated learning and teaching.

5. Recess as a Unit of Analysis: Systemic Influences that Constrain Outdoor Play in Canadian Elementary Schools

L. McNamara, K. Lodewyk, S. Jollimore

Opportunities to protect and promote healthy outdoor play during recess and lunch have been surprisingly overlooked in research, practice, and legislation. Unorganized, ill-equipped, and minimally supervised school playgrounds catalyze high levels of boredom, social conflict, victimization, rejection, and exclusion during recess – factors that clearly undermine the benefits of healthy outdoor play at school. Recess Project Canada is the only Canadian research team designed to explore the complex challenges and best practices of recess. We have worked with over 2000 students and 30 schools. In this poster we translate our research into concrete recommendations for national, provincial, and regional action. Further, we share the details of our national strategic partnership with the McConnell Family Foundation and Physical and Health Education Canada.

LAUREN MCNAMARA, PhD has over 25 years of experience working with school boards in the U.S. and Canada. Trained as an educational psychologist, she has turned her research interests towards the role of recess in schools. She is an Ashoka Fellow and is the founder and senior research scientist of Recess Project Canada, an action research project designed to reshape the social landscape of recess in Canadian elementary schools. She works closely with universities, school boards, students, and community partners to mobilize change and ensure recess is part of the national conversation of healthy schools.

6. Outdoor Nature Play as a Catalyst to Promote Active Children

D. Harwood, J. Barratt

A mixed method study of 8 preschool age children's physical activity (PA) levels was conducted to explore the role of context and the relation to vigorous activity. Accelerometer devices were used at three points (fall, winter, and spring) to measure PA levels while in an outdoor nature program and alternatively typical program. Field observations were also conducted. Findings indicated that children were twice as physically active in the nature-based program in comparison to the 'typical' program. These patterns of activity were consistent across all seasons. Policies must reconsider the ways in which childcare environments are constructed and operationalized to promote more physical activity among young children. Policies should be inclusive of guidance for educators to incorporate play within a natural (forest) environment as one such avenue of fostering higher activity levels for children.

DEBRA HARWOOD teaches inquiry science and outdoor courses in the ECE undergraduate and Master's program at Brock University. Her research interests include nature pedagogies and outdoor programs, specifically examining the intra-actions of children, educators, and matter.

7. What's the Point? Why Modeling Handwork Skills is Relevant in Nature-based Early Childhood Programs

Z. MacEachren, A. Welz

What's the point? is a poster examining the importance of early childhood educator's role modeling handwork in order to influence children's play through imitation. Archival images and journal passages are used as data to critically examine and compare past and present opportunities of Canadian children, especially Indigenous children, to witness and be influenced by adults working with their hands. The research explores what is lost when children's play is devoid of opportunities to watch adult's skillfully working with their hands, especially in today's culture when so many products are purchased and electronic games made abroad abound. Some connections are made to mirror neurons, which emphasize brain and hand regulation and their role in cognitive development. The poster will convey a wide array of hand skills that can be incorporated into nature and forest schools and some preliminary research role modeling at a new nature school.

ZABE MACEACHREN, PhD, has been examining the role of handwork as a means of environmental education for almost four decades. Her experience with Anishinaabe elders has influenced her research and she draws upon her past teaching and camp directing opportunities with Anishinaabe youth under elder guidance. Presently she coordinates Queen's Faculty of Education's Outdoor & Experiential Education program. She aims to inspire teacher candidates to learn to make their own camping equipment, to become competent practitioners of handwork done with natural materials and to recognize the importance of role modeling handwork in front of children of all ages.

8. Outcomes of Natural Play and Learning Spaces: A Collaborative Case Study

Z. M. Stevens, B. Grimwood, S. Babcock, C. Meissner

This evaluative and collaborative case study focused on identifying, understanding, and evaluating perceptions associated with KidActive's Natural Play and Learning Spaces program and the role it plays in fostering nature connection, place meanings, and outcomes linked to individual and community wellbeing. The exploration of perceived outcomes led to the development of a program logic model that illuminated a possible culture shift in school settings towards endorsing and advocating outdoor play and learning. This emerging shift signals the need to develop outdoor play and learning policies aimed at supporting and advancing affordances for a strong culture of outdoor play that emphasizes nature-based play as integral to development, learning, and wellbeing. Results of this research help to contextualize the importance of the provision of naturalized play spaces for children, underlining the need for the development of policy that supports the use of the outdoors as a critical space for play and learning.

ZACHARY M. STEVENS graduated from the University of Waterloo with a Master's degree in 2017 from the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. His research interests include nature-based play and learning, nature connection, and program evaluation. Guided by these passions, Zachary began working for Evergreen developing, facilitating, managing, and evaluating outdoor play and learning opportunities for the Neighbourhood Nature Play Project in Kitchener, Ontario. He concurrently consults as a program evaluator for the p.i.n.e project, helping to understand the impact of an adult nature connection mentorship. Zachary's love of the outdoors and nature continues to be a driving force behind his work.

9. Pedagogical and Policy Outcomes of a Collaborative Action Research Project on Nature-based Teaching and Learning at the Elementary Level

L. Glithero, J. Ostertag

For three years, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) supported an innovative collaborative research project on nature-based teaching and learning (Kindergarten-Grade 6) with the Ottawa Forest & Nature School (OFNS) and researchers associated with the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. The researchers worked with a total of 86 participants from 26 schools, including elementary teachers (n=45), principals (n=24), RECEs (n=11) and systems leaders (n=6). The poster presentation focuses on the pedagogical and policy-related findings and recommendations that emerged from this study, and their impacts on district-wide nature-based learning and outdoor play initiatives. Considerations on how a community of practice of teachers, early childhood educators, administrators, researchers, forest educators, and district staff was cultivated through the research process, and the effectiveness of a gradual release approach in developing pedagogical confidence and capacity in teachers to provide outdoor learning experiences (through inquiry-, play- and experiential approaches) for their students are discussed.

LISA (DIZ) GLITHERO, PhD, is an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, educational researcher, active consultant, and national speaker. Diz is passionate about connecting today's youth to the natural world and to developing active, engaged, and empowered citizens. Pro-environmental behaviour change, experiential pedagogy, and collective impact collaborations are areas of interest. Recent projects include: Education Lead for Canada C3, evaluation team member for the Canada Service Corps, and principle researcher of nature/ land-based learning studies for various school boards. Currently, Diz is serving as the National Coordinator of the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition.

10. Paving the Way for Outdoor Play: A Mixed-method Examination of Socio-environmental Barriers and Facilitators to Children's Outdoor Play

J. Loebach, T. Elton-Marshall

Western children's time and freedom to play outdoors has plummeted in recent decades, limited by a number of socio-cultural factors such as children's increased engagement in structured activities, decreased independent mobility levels, and higher prevalence of digital media activity. This decline in time spent playing outdoors and in nature has been linked to negative outcomes for child physical and mental health. Understanding the barriers and facilitators influencing children's outdoor play, particularly those which may be amenable to change, is key to directing effective environmental interventions and policy shifts. This poster will present findings from a mixed method study of the outdoor play habits and perceptions of children from the London region, and will highlight social and environmental influences on children's outdoor play patterns, and links between time outdoors and several physical and mental health outcomes. Common barriers restricting outdoor play among children across the region will also be identified.

JANET LOEBACH, PhD, P.Eng, M. Env. Design, is an environmental design researcher and consultant based in Ontario, and Principal Consultant for Thrive Design Consulting. She is a Community-Based Research Fellow at the CAMH Institute for Mental Health Policy Research, where she is investigating the impacts of neighbourhood type on children's community play and mobility. Her areas of expertise include assessment and design of play and learning environments, as well as participatory, child-led and community-based planning processes. Dr. Loebach currently serves as VP of the International Play Association (Canada) and Co-Chair of the Children & Youth Environments Network of the Environmental Design Research Association. www.thrivedesignconsulting.ca

Practice Posters

11. Driving Canada's National Play Movement: IPA Canada's Development of a National Canadian Play Charter

IPA Canada

The International Play Association (Canada) has been working to promote the child's right to play for more than 40 years. Building on the momentum from successfully hosting the Triennial IPA World Conference in Calgary in September 2017, IPA Canada is now pursuing a new strategic priority to drive the play movement in Canada: the development of a national Play Charter. The Canadian Play Charter will be a rights-based document that clearly articulates children's right to play and participate, accompanied by complementary guidelines and tools which will support the adoption and mobilization of the Play Charter and affiliated programs across Canada. This poster presents the rationale for the Play Charter, as well as the Draft Statements developed by IPA Canada. These statements and priorities will be reviewed and finalized during a national multi-pronged consultative process. We invite feedback on this initiative and the preliminary Play Charter Statements.

JANET LOEBACH is an environmental design researcher and consultant based in Ontario, and Principal Consultant for Thrive Design Consulting. She is a Community-Based Research Fellow at the CAMH Institute for Mental Health Policy Research, where she is investigating the impacts of neighbourhood type on children's community play and mobility. Her areas of expertise include assessment and design of play and learning environments, as well as participatory, child-led and community-based planning processes. Dr. Loebach currently serves as VP of the International Play Association (Canada) and Co-Chair of the Children & Youth Environments Network of the Environmental Design Research Association. www.thrivedesignconsulting.ca

12. Seeing the Possibilities: Creating Beautiful Spaces for Children

C. Webber

When Pre-Primary programs were established in schools in Nova Scotia, staff envisioned outdoor play spaces where children could explore the natural world while engaging in experiences that support holistic learning and development. For schools, this was a non-traditional approach to outdoor play and finding natural play spaces for young children on school grounds was a challenge. Educators and administrators in the Strait Regional Centre for Education have been inspired by beautiful outdoor environments and have used the natural resources available to them to create rich experiences for children while outside. They have also found resources in the school and community to support their journey from traditional school playgrounds to beautiful natural play spaces. This poster presentation celebrates the successes of seeing the possibilities within our environments and working together to turn our vision into reality.

CAROLYN WEBBER has worked in Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia for over 30 years. She has been a frontline educator, provided program support for children with special needs and was project manager for Partnerships for Inclusion, which provided quality enhancement and inclusion support to staff in licensed childcare centres. Carolyn was the Lead Educator at one of the first Early Years Centres established by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Nova Scotia. She is currently the Manager of Pre-Primary and Early Years Programs for the Strait Regional Centre for Education.

13. How has Investing in the Forest and Nature Practitioner Certification Training Influenced the Practices of a Multi-service, Multi-site Not-for-profit Early Learning and Family Support Agency?

K. Hiscott

You can see the growth! In 2017, 22 Andrew Fleck Children's Services employees, including representatives from their licensed group programs, licensed home childcare, Children's Inclusion Support Services and EarlyON, started their Forest and Nature School journey by committing to the one-year training. Their experience has influenced their programming, expectations and interactions with children, families and each other.

KIM HISCOTT, RECE, is the Executive Director of Andrew Fleck Children's Services (AFCS), a multi-service, multi-site not-for profit agency that has been providing services for Ottawa's families since 1911. Her favourite days are the ones spent outside.

14. Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC)

P. Couroux

ECCDC began the journey with offering training sessions on ways to support Niagara's early learning and child care programs in reconnecting children to nature. The training sessions led to the Naturalized Play Space Pilot involving four sites receiving playground design recommendations, customized nature education and support with the selection of innovative materials for creating inspiring outdoor experiences for children. The pilot led to a community wide project involving 22 additional child care centres inclusive of an outdoor loose parts kit. Research from both projects is currently being analyzed to inform possible next steps. ECCDC has continued the momentum within the community by supporting programs through its Coaching and Mentoring services, hosting speakers for training sessions, rejuvenating resource kits to support exploration in the outdoors, a bus tour of completed naturalized playgrounds and an article within the Association for Early Childhood Educators of Ontario Link magazine highlighting the community wide project.

PATRICIA COUROUX is a Registered Early Childhood Educator who has worked in the field of early learning and child care for over twenty-five years. Her role within the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) as Coaching and Mentoring Services Coordinator sees her supporting early learning and child care teams with curriculum and pedagogical supports, engaging indoor and outdoor environments, professional learning, facilitating communities of practice and offering coaching and mentoring services. Patricia participated in the Provincially funded Mentoring Pairs for Child Care Project as a mentor and with the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario Leadership Pilot Project.

15. Wander, Be Wild and Always Wonder: Making Connections the Forest and Nature School Way as a Community

G. Molenaar

Since facilitating learning in Kindergarten for a local school board, my experiences have highlighted the connection of nature to self-regulation, (using the Shanker Method™ definition), and how the pedagogy of place affects children by reducing stress behaviour and increasing social engagement with others and the environment. Therefore, creating the independent Wander Wild Wonder education consultancy in 2016 was a natural 'next step' after facilitating Forest and Nature School at SCDSB and observing the benefits. Connecting educators and students to self-determined, emergent learning within a nature pedagogy is critical for mental, physical and environmental health. Our next generations depend on it!

GAIL MOLENAAR, BA, RECE, MPEd student, is a passionate educator who connects nature, place-based learning and self-regulation. She believes all children have the right to self-determined, emergent learning under the mentoring and guidance of responsive, empathic facilitators. She is a practicing Forest and Nature School Practitioner, Nature Pedagogy, Shanker Self-Reg™ consultant and workshop presenter.

16. Outdoor Play the Saskatchewan Way!

D. Skuce

This poster will show how to get children outside in every type of weather and season and will display: how developing the outdoor space is just as important as developing the inside space; the importance of having the Early Childhood Educators participate alongside to encourage the children to try new things and take risks in a safe and enriching environment; and, a focus on the Essential Learning Experiences of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Early Learning Program Guide.

DENISE SKUCE is East Side Director of Tykes and Tots Early Learning Centre Inc. Denise was a home provider of 22 years and now a recent Director of two Early Learning Facilities. Denise is passionate about getting children outside, connecting them to nature and connecting nature to children. An advocate for quality in Early Learning Environments Denise strives to encourage Early Childhood Educators to not just take the outside in but also to take the inside out. Denise is a board member of the Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association, and Co-Director of the Canadian Association for Young Children Saskatoon Satellite.

17. Get Outside and Play Early Childhood Network in Alberta

C. Pickles

Since 2014, the Get Outside and Play Early Childhood Network in Alberta has worked strategically at different levels to ensure more outdoor play in the early years. Our theory of change identifies work to be done in the following areas:

Early Learning and Care

- Professional learning – Workshops for early childhood educators at conferences and other events. Role modeling and mentorship opportunities to support change in professional practice.
- Engaging spaces – Training for educators on creating complete outdoor spaces that spark curiosity and learning.
- Policy and practice alignment – Recommendations to the regulatory agencies to support outdoor play in early learning and care settings.

Families and Communities

- Promotion and support – Profiling existing programs offered by a diversity of organizations.
- Public narrative – Engaging media and families in conversations about outdoor play.
- Planning – Considering the design of public outdoor spaces.

CHRISTINA PICKLES has been an environmental educator for 20 years and has worked in wetlands, badlands, forests, streams and streets with people of all ages. For the last 5 years she has led the Get Outside and Play Early Childhood Network in Alberta and has developed a deep respect for early childhood educators and a passion for the early years. Play hasn't been a focus in traditional environmental education programs, but Christina now understands that this needs to be the foundation of all excellent environmental education, especially in the early years! She lives in Calgary minutes from the Bow River with her family.

18. Glenora Child Care Society

N. Cedeno

As one of the recipients of a 2015 Lawson Foundation Outdoor Play Strategy grant to increase active outdoor play, Glenora Child Care Society set out to become a leader and ambassador for cold-weather, outdoor, unstructured, adventure play and nature education by enhancing our outdoor play. Through this process our centre was able to engage the community, educate/inform parents, policy-makers and other early learning professionals. Through our journey in enhancing and expanding outdoor winter play, our centre learned that change happens when we are able to come together as a community and fully embrace all the wonderful resources and experiences that winter can provide us.

NICOLE CEDENO has been an Early Childhood Educator for over ten years and has work with a variety of ages from 12 months to 12 years old. Her passion for early childhood led her into the position of Executive Director at Glenora Child Care Society where she has continued to guide both children and educators in the early childhood field. As both an Early Childhood Educator and parent, Nicole knows the value of children having opportunity to have time outside in various weather conditions, where they are able to explore risky/adventure play and loose parts.

19. Rediscovering Wonder: How Experiential Learning for Educators Translates into Increased Outdoor Play for Children

C. Anderson

An overview of the history, mission and vision of the Manitoba Nature Summit Inc., a volunteer run, non-profit organization located in Winnipeg that strives to create community and experiential outdoor learning opportunities for educators to build the skills they need to take their classrooms outdoors. The Manitoba Nature Summit started as a way to network between Early Childhood Educators, Teachers, Outdoor Ed Specialists, Naturalists, Gardeners, Environmental Activists, Forest School and Land-based Education Advocates and School Administrators who were all working towards the same goals. Our goal is to address the concrete barriers that keep classrooms indoors like inappropriate clothing and weather guidelines. We host a two-and-a-half day conference every second year as well as a variety of other activities ranging from Pop-Up Adventure Play events, Film Screenings, and *coming soon* a Conquer the Cold Winter Summit event!

CORINE ANDERSON has a passion for creating unstructured, outdoor play in licensed Early Learning & Child Care programs. She grew up in a forest in Saskatchewan and has been working as an Early Childhood Educator for over 20 years. She's currently the Director of Norwood Nursery School, a Co-Chair of the Manitoba Nature Summit, and a Board Member of the Manitoba Child Care Association. Her current interests include using land-based education models as a path towards reconciliation and creating public policy that supports these actions.

20. Nurturing Development of Active Play – A Major Project Across Québec

S. Melsbach

The Regroupement des centres de la petite enfance de la Montérégie (RCPEM) project has helped to sensitize communities in different regions of Québec to the innate abilities of children to move and take risks in outdoor environments, and to review and transform their outdoor play space to meet the needs of young children. This project highlights the importance of understanding the role of free play and motor skills in brain development. It also emphasizes the need to provide the opportunity to develop motor skills regularly in an environment offering challenges balanced with safety. It highlights the need for the adult to let go and let the child be with all the exuberance of movement.

SYLVIE MELSBACH has been responsible for partnerships and play areas at the RCPEM for the past 14 years. She has been teaching at an early childhood centre for more than 25 years, in early childhood education (CEGEP) for 15 years and has served as Educational Director for 5 years. As a child, she loved to play outdoors, which is no doubt what led her to pursue her university studies in early childhood education and psychomotor development. She has written numerous articles, texts and papers on topics related to child safety, education and development and the integration of children with special needs.

21. When Educational Quality Rhymes with Nature... Grandir en Forêt in Québec

M. Leboeuf

More than ever, in Québec, early childhood centres, parents and members of the community have major concerns about children's sedentarism, nature deficit and poor instructional support (ECERS, CLASS). Grandir en forêt is a new project led by the Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance. By facilitating contact with nature as well as high-quality educational interactions, its main goal is to improve young children's holistic development, healthy habits and ecological awareness. Grandir en forêt involves interventions at three levels: awareness/mobilization, experimentation and documentation/research. Three outputs are expected: (a) A network of partners promoting nature education in Québec, (b) A reference framework about the nature education approach in Quebec early childhood centres (c) a set of tools and resources that support nature education initiatives for French speakers (webinars, field guides, forums and others).

MICHÈLE LEBOEUF is trained in educational psychology and has worked in the field of early childhood and family services for more than thirty years (as teacher, consultant, ECE quality specialist, research assistant, etc.). She has always been fascinated by young children's sensitivity, curiosity and sense of wonder. Inspired by her discovery of German WaldKindergartens and Tuscan nidos and scuolis, she participated in the Forest School Canada Practitioner's Course in 2015. Since 2016, Michèle supervises a collaborative nature project in a Quebec urban borough. She became AQCPE's Grandir en forêt coordinator in spring 2018. Her credo: high quality educational environments and nature connection are inseparable.

22. Le Lion et la Souris

G. Doiron

This poster presentation elaborates upon the presenter's experiences supporting outdoor play programs in schools and outlines some key resources and initiatives for outdoor play and learning in Quebec. At the Lion and the Mouse, a play non-profit in Montréal, QC, we support outdoor play and learning in two ways. First, we offer a training program for educators/parents on our approach in our early childhood programs, including introductions to playwork, forest school, and risky play policies. Secondly, we work with schools to animate loose parts play sessions outdoors. As we grow and build relationships with schools and CPEs (Centres de petite enfance, the Québec equivalent of an ECEC) and communities, we are increasingly interested in helping these communities support and make space for child-led play with loose parts outdoors.

GABRIELLE DOIRON is a playworker and outreach coordinator at The Lion and the Mouse, a play non-profit in Montreal that advocates for child-led play in urban nature. Recently she has developed and delivered loose parts play programs at schools and is one of the instructors for a training program for educators interested in incorporating playwork and forest school approaches into their teaching practice. She also delivers after-school and PD day play programs for children. She is currently in Forest School Canada's Practitioner's Course. She is working on playspace design projects in collaboration with daycares, schools, and Montreal boroughs.

23. “Isn’t This The Best Place Ever...” - Observations From Forest School

L. Molyneux

Cloudberry Forest School Inc. is Newfoundland’s first outdoor, play-based, inquiry-driven educational program. Beginning as a part-time preschool program in 2014 it now runs year round preschool and school-aged programs, summer and school break programs and professional development and learning. Using anecdotal evidence, photographic documentation as well as data collected over the last four years of operation the presentation will demonstrate the value of play and place-based learning in the development of problem solving skills, physical and emotional resiliency and long term project development for children who learn best from big body play, movement and inquiry based learning projects.

Section 1: The Air Contest - Teaching Problem Solving

Section 2: Snatchfall - Teaching Consent

Section 3: This is Where the Farmer Lived - Teaching Strategies for Active Learners

Section 4: Optometry, Speech and Occupational therapy - Observations from other professionals

LAURA MOLYNEUX is co-owner and operator of Cloudberry Forest School Inc. Newfoundland’s first outdoor, play-based, inquiry and project based educational program. Laura is a certified Level IV ECE with a degree in Psychology/Sociology and a diploma in Early Childhood Education. Prior to opening Cloudberry, Laura worked in child development/behaviour management, licensed child care programs, program operation and management, program consulting and as an instructor for child and youth care workers at Keyin College.

24. Will You Let Me Play? - Ottawa Forest and Nature School

M. Power

This poster presentation will show the rich play and learning that can unfold on the land when children are supported by knowledgeable and competent educators. Through images of children learning and playing outdoors we will examine what is happening, the value of play, and the role of the educator in the process. Additionally, we will have a handout available outlining the Forest and Nature School movement in Canada. Within this handout we will also outline our professional learning opportunities currently being offered through Forest School Canada, and what we’ve learned through this work to inform what we believe are the critical components required in offering transformative and meaningful experiences for practitioners, that have deep impact on children.

MARLENE POWER founded the Carp Ridge Forest Preschool, the Ottawa Forest and Nature School, as well as Forest School Canada, a national education initiative to support the Forest and Nature School movement. Marlene studied at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Dalhousie University. In the last decade she has been sought out as a speaker and thought leader on Forest and Nature School, Risky Play and Outdoor play. In December 2014 she was appointed Executive Director of the Child Nature Alliance of Canada and continues to be inspired by children’s capacity and competency in their play outdoors.

25. York Region District School Board

T. Murray

YRDSB (York Region District School Board) is exploring what is possible in building educator confidence and capacity in facilitating safe and meaningful learning in and around our school’s outdoor spaces. After an extensive Outdoor Education Review in 2017, we have been shifting how we deliver and support outdoor learning both with our students and our educators. This has included multi-session Professional Learning Communities, Mentorship Groups, Certification Courses, EcoSchools alignment and Messaging around Risk Management.

TANYA MURRAY grew up climbing trees, paddling and mucking about in ravines. She seeks relationship and connection with land and lets her heart lead the work. Tanya has been a wilderness guide, education facilitator, and for the past 13 years, has been working as a classroom teacher. Drawn to inquiry, place-based education, and the pedagogy of Forest School, she champions collaborative, transformative, responsive environments that support voice and belonging. Tanya is currently in a curriculum leadership role with the York Region District School Board supporting Environmental Literacy and Outdoor Learning and focuses her passions to shift mindsets and inspire learning - outside.

Abstracts & Biographies

Friday



PANEL PRESENTATION

Emerging Initiatives to Advance Outdoor Play and Early Learning in Canada

Partnering for outdoor play: A case study of forest and nature school programming in the context of licensed child care in Ottawa, Ontario

B. Niblett, M. Power, K. Hiscott

This case study examines the policy significance of a partnership between the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada (CNAC) and Andrew Fleck Children's Services (AFCS) that has resulted in the launch of a pilot licensed, nature-based, early childhood education program that regularly visits the Ottawa Forest and Nature School. We will explore a constellation of policy themes that have emerged from recurring conversations with organizational leaders of CNAC and AFCS, as well as educators and program delivery staff from each organization. Through this dialogue, we hope to illustrate elements that can help to create a policy-ecosystem that may lead to successful implementation of forest school and forest-school inspired outdoor-play in early childhood contexts.

BLAIR NIBLETT is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education and Professional Learning at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. His research and teaching integrates concepts of experiential education, social justice, and well-being.

Examining the development of outdoor play and early childhood education in Nova Scotia

P. Maher, S. Melanson, J.L. Huntington, P. McCracken, G.R. Gallagher

This presentation will share a thematic baseline of where policies, partnerships and practice, related to outdoor play and early childhood education, are at present across the province of Nova Scotia. The study it is based on collected stories of program development over the past five to ten years, which is the timeframe leading up to the Government of Nova Scotia's commitment to implement a universal play-based, Pre-primary Program for four-year-olds, over the next four years (2017-2021). The purpose of the study was to "set the scene", so as to inform future implementation and evaluation, and to better understand where we are now (2018) and why.

Results were derived from a wide range of individual and group interviews with 50 key informants. The study involved a research partnership between Cape Breton University, and the NS Departments Communities, Culture and Heritage and Education and Early Childhood Development, and was funded by the Lawson Foundation.

PATRICK T. MAHER, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department for Experiential Studies in Community and Sport at Cape Breton University (Sydney, Canada). He is a 3M National Teaching Fellow and a University-appointed Teaching Chair in Community-engaged Teaching and Scholarship. Pat sits on the Leadership Team for the Nova Scotia Outdoor Network, is the former Editor of the Journal of Experiential Education, and current Editor of the Canadian Journal of Environmental Education. He also sits on International Advisory Board of the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning and the Research Advisory Committee for Outward Bound Canada.

**Current outdoor play pedagogy and practice in publicly-funded,
Canadian community colleges**

B. Dietze, A. Cutler

Early learning and child care professionals and families are critical to the successful implementation of outdoor play experiences that activate and stimulate children’s inquiring minds. It is assumed that early learning and child care professionals acquire both the theory and the application skills during their post-secondary education to design and facilitate rich, intriguing, and active outdoor play environments and experiences for and with children. However, as we continue to see research that suggests children’s outdoor play is being reduced, there appears to be a disconnect between how the theory on outdoor play is transferred to practice with children. How do we address these challenges? It may be time to examine new policies, curriculum, teaching and learning strategies and community commitments that would contribute to increasing early learning and child care professionals’ competencies and transforming the approaches used to connect children to nature and maximize their play and learning.

BEVERLIE DIETZE (PhD) is the Director of Learning and Applied Research at Okanagan College. She has taught at colleges and universities in Ontario and the Maritimes. She is a researcher on a variety of national and local research projects that examine strategies to advance children’s outdoor play through professional learning, pre and post-service training, and space design. She is the co-author of five textbooks related to play and children’s programming, including the newly released book entitled *Outdoor and nature play in early childhood education*. She has published several peer-reviewed articles on early childhood and adult education topics.

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