



ECHO
EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH OUTDOORS

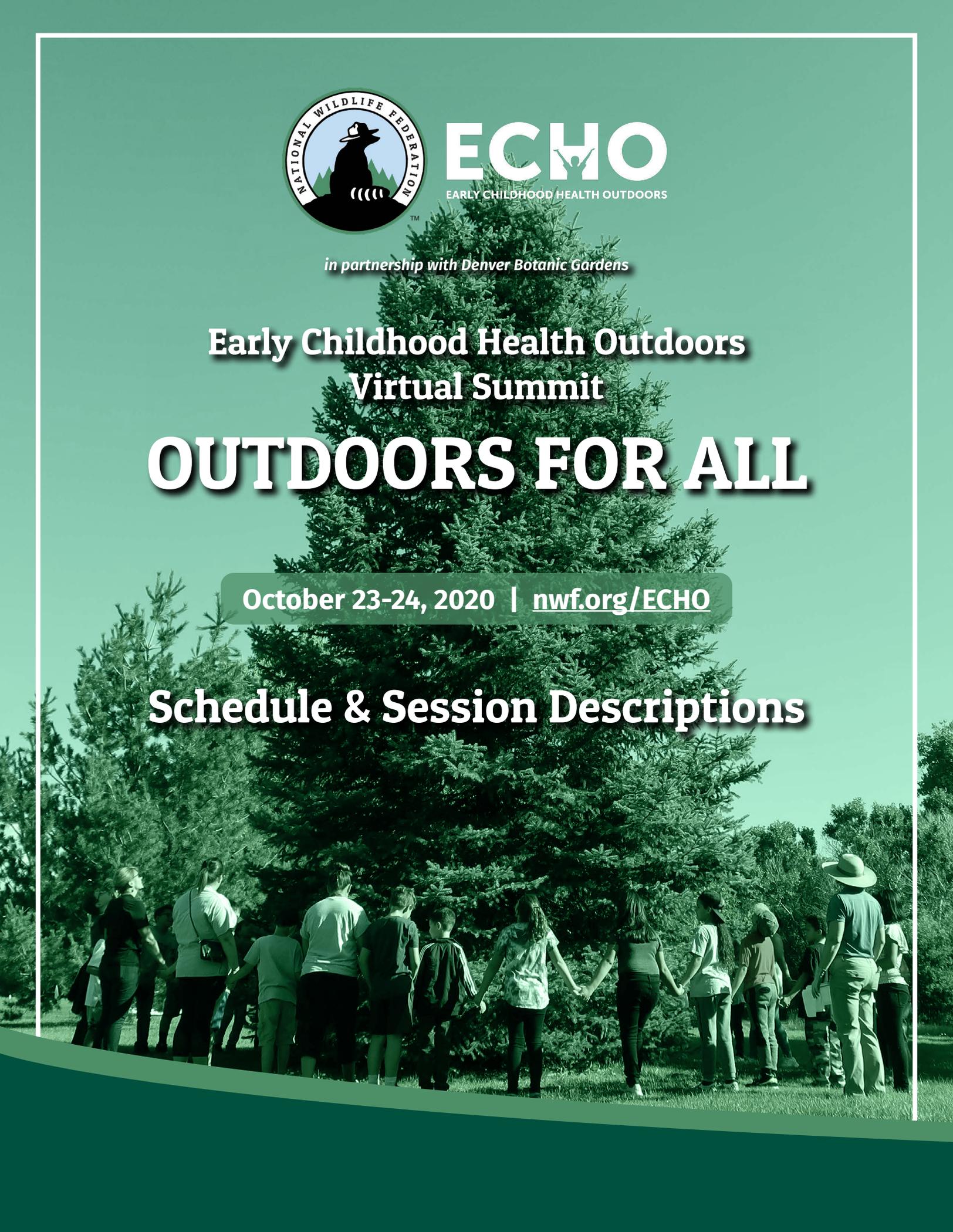
in partnership with Denver Botanic Gardens

**Early Childhood Health Outdoors
Virtual Summit**

OUTDOORS FOR ALL

October 23-24, 2020 | nwf.org/ECHO

Schedule & Session Descriptions



SUMMIT SCHEDULE

Friday
**OCT
23**

1:00 p.m. - 1:50 p.m.

Creating outdoor spaces *for and with* children
Mara Mintzer

1:50 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

ECHO Site Panel Discussion
Michelle Dalbotten & Susan Bennett

Saturday
**OCT
24**

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Social Justice and Outdoor Learning
Parker McMullen Bushman

10:15 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Breakout Session 1
Choose 1 of 10 different sessions

11:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Breakout Session 2
Choose 1 of 10 different sessions

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Friday
**OCT
23**

Creating outdoor spaces *for and with* children

Mara Mintzer (she/her/hers)

Growing Up Boulder

1:00 P.M. - 1:50 P.M.

We know how important time outdoors and in nature is to young children's physical health, emotional well-being, and learning. But did you also know that young children can provide meaningful input to the design of outdoor spaces? By tapping into children's creativity, empathy, and lived experiences, we can co-create places that are responsive to little ones' needs and that inspire them to be lifelong ecostewards.



Mara Mintzer is a co-founder and the director of Growing Up Boulder (GUB), Boulder, Colorado, USA's child- and youth-friendly city initiative based out of the University of Colorado Boulder's Community Engagement Design and Research (CEDaR) Center. She presents and writes internationally on the topic of engaging young people in community planning and child-friendly cities. Her TEDx talk, featured on TED.com and called, "How Kids Can Help Design Cities," has received more than 2 million combined views, and she recently co-authored the book *Placemaking with Children and Youth: Participatory Practices for Planning Sustainable Communities* with lead authors Victoria Derr and Louise Chawla. Prior to GUB, Mara was director of a community school, where she oversaw child and family support services on a underresourced school campus. She has designed and implemented programs for underrepresented children, families and neighborhoods in New York and California. Mara received her B.A. in Psychology from Brown University and her M.A. in Organizational Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University.

ECHO SITE PANEL DISCUSSION

Friday

**OCT
23**

Panelists:

Michelle Dalbotten (she/her/hers)

Owner - Step by Step Child Development Center

Susan Bennett (she/her/hers)

Environmental Interpreter - City of Wheat Ridge, Parks, Forestry & Open Space

1:50 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.

Join us to hear from two ECHO sites as they share about their journey to creating engaging and natural outdoor spaces for young children. Each panelist will use images of the incremental transformation of their outdoor play spaces to show how small changes over time can have big impacts on child development. Participants will hear from a licensed child care center and a public park.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Saturday

OCT
24

Social Justice and Outdoor Learning

Parker McMullen Bushman (she/her/hers)

Ecoinclusive

9:00 A.M - 10:00 A.M.

Children from very young ages internalize messages about power and privilege with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, which they perpetuate through their play and talk. The link between Social justice and ecological teaching offers a much-needed vision for early childhood education in the face of the challenges weighing on our nation, the field and confronting the planet. Join Parker McMullen Bushman as she talks about the links between the social and environmental justice movements and early child education outdoors.



Parker is a dynamic speaker that engages audiences in new thinking around what it means to be a diversity change-agent. Parker's background in the conservation, environmental education and outdoor recreation fields spans over 23+ years. Parker has a passion for equity and inclusion in the outdoors. Her interest in justice, accessibility, and equity issues developed from her personal experiences facing the unequal representation of people of color in environmental organizations and green spaces.

Parker tackles these complex issues by addressing them through head on activism and education. In Colorado she works with environmental organizations to aid them in building culturally diverse and culturally competent organizations that are representative of the populations that they hope to reach and serve. She is a member of several committees that focus on diversity in environmental fields as well as a presenter and trainer on diversity issues. Parker is the creator of an online resource called Ecoinclusive. Ecoinclusive provides training and resources for non-profit, cultural and environmental organizations to aid them in building a culturally competent staff that reflects the populations that they serve. Parker McMullen Bushman is also the Co-founder of Inclusive Journeys. Inclusive Journeys is a company that is working to identify safe and welcoming spaces for all. Their first project is the Digital Green Book.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Saturday

OCT
24

BREAK OUT SESSION 1

10:15 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Choose one of the following sessions.

BREAK OUT SESSION 2

11:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Choose one of the following sessions.

Affordable Play Settings in Outdoor Learning Environments

Amanda Knight (she/her/hers)

Early Childhood Health Outdoors Senior Design Coordinator - National Wildlife Federation

Learn ways to activate and improve your outdoor learning environment through low-cost, high-impact changes. Participants will gain inspiration and ideas that they can implement in their own spaces by creatively using affordable materials to support children's play.

Back to Basics – What does nature look like in your environment?

Chelsey Bardgett (she/her/hers)

Family & Children's Program Instructor - Denver Botanic Gardens

Helena Sizemore (she/her/hers)

Family & Children's Program Instructor - Denver Botanic Gardens

How do you define nature and how does it appear in your learning space? In this session, we will look at the many ways nature is present all around us. Let's talk about how to create or enhance your space to meet your learners' needs through hands on engagement, sensory exploration and our imaginations! Together we can make nature accessible to everyone!

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Saturday

**OCT
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Bugging out! Exploring Bugs with Young Children

Katie Krause (she/her/hers)

Associate Extension Educator - The Learning Child, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Bugs are everywhere, and young children will find them! During this session we will discuss the role of teachers in facilitating children's exploration of bugs. Wherever you are in your comfort level with bugs, learn ways to support children's play and learning.

Classroom in a Backpack

Sarah Candelaria (she/her/hers)

Youth Program Director & Homeschool Mom - New Mexico Wildlife Federation

It is not difficult to see the benefit of the great outdoors providing the perfect classroom to ignite a student's interest in all formal lessons within their schooling at home experience! After all, we are surrounded by the beauty of nature – the astounding colors and patterns of a desert landscape, the complexity of the spiral patterns of shell on the seashore, and the study of the relationships of all the wildlife in our communities. Come brainstorm all the options for getting our kids outdoors in this new (or veteran) experience of homeschooling. How do you include nature and natural outdoor settings in your everyday life and lessons? Does it all have to come from a book or worksheet? Pull up a blanket and join us under a big shade tree as we dive into the world of homeschooling!

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Saturday

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Connecting with Wildlife: Developing Empathy through Nature Play

Emily Murgia (she/her/hers)

Learning Experiences Manager: Preschool, Elementary, and Nature Play - Denver Zoo

Manda Baker (she/her/hers)

Early Childhood Programs Specialist - Denver Zoo

Children aren't the only ones to benefit from nature play. It's good for wildlife, too! In this session, we'll take a virtual visit to Denver Zoo's Zofnass Barclay Family Nature Play Trail to explore how nature play helps develop empathy for the natural world. Learn how we can encourage the next generation of conservation stewards by engaging and connecting with wildlife.

Family Engagement in the Early Childhood Classroom: Creating Authentic Equal Partnerships

Jessica Yuill (she/her/hers)

Early Childhood Health Outdoors Program Coordinator - National Wildlife Federation

Partnering with families is a critical component of success in the early childhood classroom. But how do you truly create equal and effective partnerships that support child development and school success? In this session, we will talk about the importance of family engagement in the early childhood field, and learn strategies on how to create equal partnerships between families and providers. Participants will also have time to explore ways that they can incorporate family engagement in their own programs and positions.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Saturday

**OCT
24**

Littlest Learners at Play in Nature

Joanna Cagan (she/her/hers)

Executive Director - WOW! Children's Museum

Gini Philipp (she/her/hers)

Director of Early Childhood Education - WOW! Children's Museum

Young children are hardwired to learn from their environment, and hardwired to play, no matter what the setting. And while parents and caregivers sometimes get stuck in creating elaborate artificial environments, nature itself provides us with one of the absolute best settings for developmentally appropriate play and learning. In this session, staff from WOW! Children's Museum will share strategies from our Littlest Learners programming for children and caregivers, ages 0-3. Together we will explore opportunities to encourage motor-skill development, social/emotional and cognitive growth and spatial awareness, all in some of our favorite environments.

Nourishing the Seed of Mindfulness in Children

Angie Andrade (she/her/hers)

Manager of Therapeutic Horticulture Programs - Denver Botanic Gardens

Practicing mindfulness can mutually benefit teachers and students by decreasing stress and increasing self-awareness. Learn about the benefits of mindfulness and how nature teaches us to slow down and enjoy every moment. We will practice together and share nature-based mindfulness activities that will engage children and help them see the joy in each moment.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Saturday

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Trees Can Talk Too You Know - Just Different From You and Me

Liz Boyle (she/her/hers)

Owner and Educator - Bright Branch Learning LLC

From general characteristics and factual knowledge to trees with personality that love to tell us jokes or stories. This breakout session explains some of the ways trees communicate and explores different ways we can interact with and incorporate trees in teaching and storytelling. We will cover practices that have students celebrating nurse log graduations, asking for permission to bump trees so we can invite their leaves to dance with us in fall, and more.

Welcoming Natural Outdoor Environments for All

Nilda Cosco, PhD (she/her/hers)

Director of Programs - Natural Learning Initiative, Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, NC State University

Research shows that nature has a positive impact on children's wellbeing regardless of children's abilities. Welcoming outdoor environments are inclusive as a result of a delicate balance between children's needs (psychological, physical, spiritual) and their environmental components (nature, built features, and natural processes). The presentation will show how inclusive design principles applied to children's environments can create enjoyable spaces for all.

