

Bringing the outdoors “in”: how nature-based, outdoor play can inspire change in our work with young children and ourselves

## **Session 2: How nature-based play is a foundation for anti-bias education**

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

5:45-7:30pm

Bowdoin College Children’s Center, Brunswick ME

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### Benefits of outdoor, nature-based play: addressing parents/staffing apprehensions

- Cognitive
    - Attention, risk-taking, working memory
  - Social
    - Empathy, cooperative play, regulation
  - Health
    - Sleep, brain stimulation, stress
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### Anti-bias framework: addressing staff training

*“Anti-bias education is not just doing occasional activities about diversity and fairness topics (although that may be how new anti-bias educators begin). To be effective, anti-bias education works as an underpinning perspective, which permeates everything that happens in an early childhood program—including your interactions with children, families and coworkers—and shapes how you put curriculum together each day.” Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards*

Four goals:

1. Identity
    - a. Supporting children to form positive sense of identity without feeling superior or disrespectful. Comfortable in their culture and environment.
      - i. Dressing up and imaginative play, gendered play
  2. Diversity
    - a. Guiding children to notice sameness and differences, and be delighted by both, respecting and caring for all
      - i. Community act, tidying up
      - ii. Mud kitchen food, family structures
      - iii. How they use structures
      - iv. Ability
  3. Justice
    - a. Exposing children to the conversation of how they understand their world
      - i. Un/fairness: how it serves me, who has a need
  4. Action
    - a. Standing up in moments of unfairness, demonstrate confidence and power
      - i. Mixed age groups
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### Creating curriculum

- Start with their interest/what is available
  - What is interesting to them?
    - In play, exploration, social dynamics, and ABAR wonderings
  - What do you notice?
- How can you apply the ABE framework to nature-based learning?
- In your group, think about your curriculum and consider this information:
  - What do you wonder about? What are you curious about?