

Physical Development & Movement Experiences Series  
Session V

**CREATING ENGAGING PLAY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR THE EARLY YEARS – BIRTH THROUGH 5**

**Our presenter**

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Retired CEO, Children's Harbor  
Adjunct Professor, Tidewater Community College

The Source for Learning – ECC Initiatives

**Today's Objectives**

**UNDERSTAND**  
Understand the importance of outside play for developing the whole child.

**DISCOVER**  
Discover the difference between outside play and natural environments.

**EXPLORE**  
Explore strategies to add natural aspects into the outside and inside play areas.



**Benefits of Outdoor Learning Environment**

- Physical Benefits
- Cognitive Benefits
- Social Emotional Benefits



**Physical Benefits**

Reduces obesity, improves nutrition; uses all senses.

89% of time in early childhood programs is sedentary.



**Cognitive Benefits**

Reduces Attention Deficit Disorder Symptoms,

Enhances Cognitive Abilities,

Improves Academic Performance,

Supports Creativity and Problem Solving.

**Social Emotional Benefits**

- Improves social relations
- Improves self-discipline
- Reduces stress and irritability



Howard Gardner –  
Naturalistic Intelligence

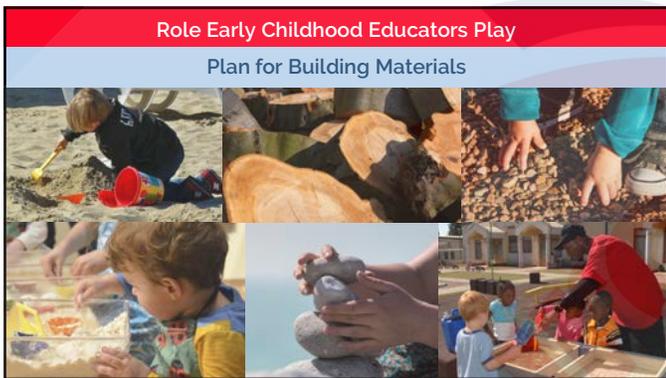


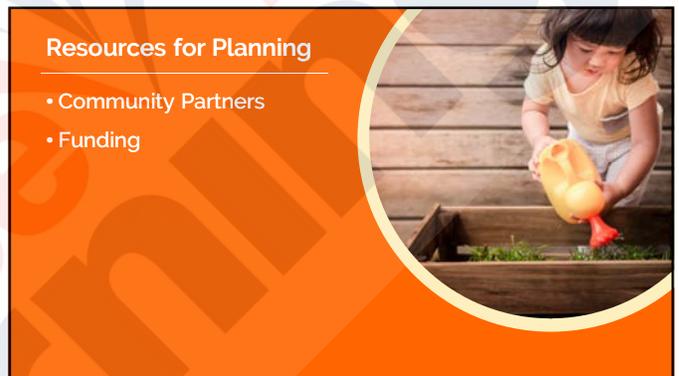
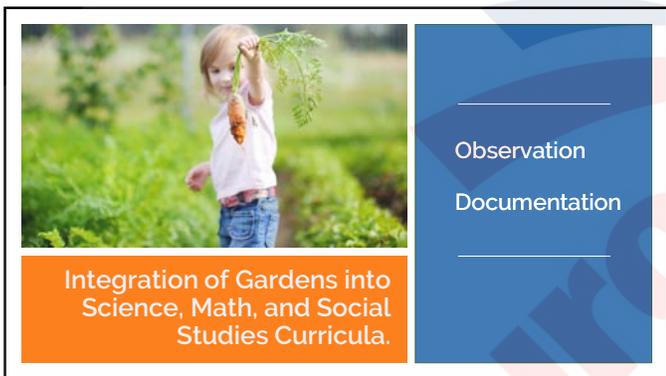

**"Nature-Deficit Disorder"**

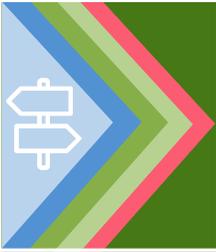
Helping children reconnect to nature and natural places so children can thrive.

**Role Early Childhood Educators Play  
Plan for Natural Play**









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## Resources

**The Great Outdoors – Advocating for Natural Spaces for Young Children**, Revised Edition naeyc Mary S Rivkin 2014 – which has the resources for National Organizations that support getting children outdoors.

**SECA Dimensions of Early Childhood**, Volume 41, Number 3, 2013, Discovering Nature: “The Benefits of Teaching Outside the Classroom”, Jill L Jacobi-Vessels, “Creating and Enriching Quality and Safe Outdoor Environments” Heather Olsen, “Turning Our World of Learning Inside Out!” Laura Monsalvatge, Kris Long and Lilia DeBello  
[http://southernearlychildhood.org/upload/pdf/Dimensions\\_Extra\\_V41\\_3\\_wCLASS.pdf](http://southernearlychildhood.org/upload/pdf/Dimensions_Extra_V41_3_wCLASS.pdf)

**HELLO** is NAEYC’s platform for interest forums and online communities. It is one of the NAEYC’s most popular member benefits. <http://hello.naeyc.org/home>

## Resources

**The Children & Nature Network** is a leading organization in the movement to connect all children, their families, and their communities to nature through innovative ideas, evidence-based resources and tools, broad-based collaboration, and support of grassroots leadership.  
<https://www.childrenandnature.org/>

**Benefits of Connecting Children with Nature: Why Naturalize Outdoor Learning Environments** January 2012 Creating a Supportive Network and Training Resources for Naturalized Learning Environments in Child Care Supported by: North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education  
[https://naturalelearning.org/sites/default/files/Benefits%20of%20Connecting%20Children%20with%20Nature\\_InfoSheet.pdf](https://naturalelearning.org/sites/default/files/Benefits%20of%20Connecting%20Children%20with%20Nature_InfoSheet.pdf)

## Image Attribution

**Slide 37**  
**Incirlik CDC** - Tyrone Dukes, also known as Mr. T by his students, plays with the children at the water table at the Child Development Center Sept. 23. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Nathan Lipscomb)  
<http://www.mirlik.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/302392/minature-people-come-first-at-cdc/>

## Questions?

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**The Virginia Early Childhood Administrator Professional Credential (VA-ECAP)**



**ONLINE CREDENTIALING PROGRAM**  
 The program is a joint offering with Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) that is recognized by NAEYC. Participants earn a combination of credit hours and CEUs.

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