

Nature Connections

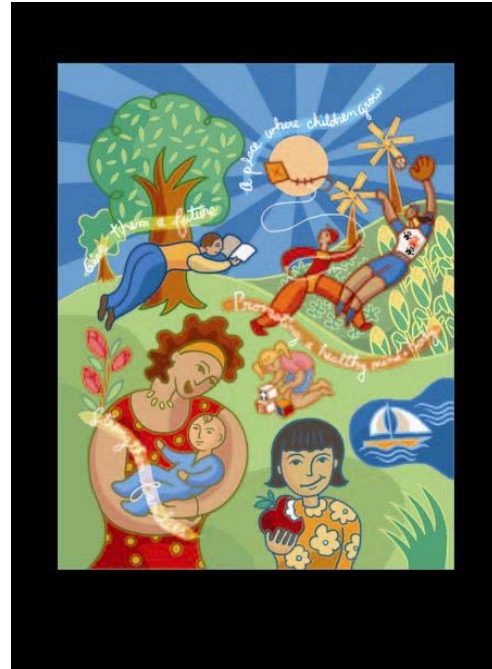
This conference is organized by Nature Connections, which is a collaboration of the following partner agencies:

Dickinson County Conservation Board
Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County
Friends of Lakeside Lab
Iowa Lakes Community College Early Childhood Programs
Iowa Lakeside Laboratory & Regent Resource Center
ISU Dickinson County Extension Lakes Decat Empowerment
Patrice Leary Foundation
Prairie Lakes AEA 8
UDMO – Child Care Resource and Referral
UDMO Early Childhood Programs

Link to registration form:

<http://www.udmo.com>
Go to: Programs – Head Start

These agencies do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, age, marital status or disabilities in its educational programs, services or employment practices.



Second Annual Outdoors: Let's Explore!

MEETING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS WHILE INITIATING A LIFE LONG MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NATURAL WORLD.

Keynote: Healing the Broken Bond Between Children and Nature

Martha Farrell Erickson, Ph.D.
Key Note Speaker

Past generations of children spent many of their waking hours outside playing and exploring, finding those special places in nature that tapped their curiosity and nurtured their spirits. Children today too often know nature only as an abstract concept, something they watch on TV or the internet. What accounts for this change and what is the impact on the health, development and wellbeing of children? Dr. Erickson will highlight what recent research has to say about this growing problem and will point the way to how we can turn the trend around.

Martha will also do a workshop:

Be Creative!

Kids today spend much less time outside than previous generations did -- at great cost to their health, learning, and even the future of our environment. There is a growing movement to reconnect children and nature, and you can be part of it, starting right outside your own door. In this follow-up to Dr. Erickson's keynote address, you'll get practical ideas for making nature a part of young children's everyday lives and you'll learn where to share innovative ideas with other parents and educators around the county.

OTHER BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Bugs: Presenter will be Diana Pritts, Kinder Nature Outreach Coordinator.

Learn about young children's favorite bugs! Be ready to go on a "Bug Hunt" and find out where to find them. Preview a wide variety of bug books suitable for young children. Ideas for activities, songs, finger-pays and recipes will be provided. Emphasis will be on monarch butterflies and how to raise them.

"Green Play": Presenter Marta Barnard, Director Willow River Arts.

This will encourage you to set free the dancer and actor within. It will elevate your spirit and let your imagination go "green". Take your cues from nature while you dance in the wind and move like a bug. Enjoy expressing yourself through poetry, story, song, and dance. Teach "green" awareness and respect for the environment while stimulating your brain through music and movement. Learn to promote literacy and multiculturalism in the great outdoors. Participants will learn theatre games and movement poems to take back to their classroom.

Continued Breakout Sessions



Need some new book or visual aide ideas to “grow” with your garden unit? How about a little play to “grow” with your favorite nursery story? Get lots of ideas for stories and action plays you can “grow” home with and use right away.

Inside Out: Dodge Nature Preschool Staff; Joey, Mary, Sarah and Sheila. Teachers and Assistant Director of Dodge Nature Preschool.

Hear about ways to bring “indoor” activities outside throughout the seasons. Using photos and videos, teachers from a nature-based preschool will share their experiences of bringing their curriculum outside – cooking, art, music, group time and more. experience the Great Barrier Reef. Whew!

Art Throughout the Seasons: Dodge Nature Preschool Staff

Nature provides ideal inspiration for art. Join us to hear about young children’s art experiences that are inspired or enhanced by nature. We will share photographs and artifacts of our experiences creating nature-inspired art with young children. We will do some hands on work with materials.

Gardening with Children: Presenters: Christiana Ostovic, Program Coordinator, ISU Extension and Tess VerMeys of Courtyard Gardens

Learn how to grow good kids by giving them the tools to become good gardeners and good citizen s. Participate in hands on lessons and activities, which can be used

inside or outside of the classroom.

Little Explorers:
Presenter Stacie Young, Naturalist Clay County

Let your inner child come outside to play! Nature is fun, it’s free and it’s educational on many levels. We’ll share ideas for activities, hikes and natural toys. Give children lifelong memories by allowing them to connect with the natural world.

Bird Identification by Sight and Sound: Presenter: Lee and Nancy Schoenewe, Local Bird Experts

We will hike the trails to identify spring bird migrants and residents. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars and to have a pair of ears ready to hear about 40 different birds.

Preschoolers, Pet, and Publishing; Presenter: Vicki Myron, former Director of Spencer Public Library and now author.

This workshop will provide information on the process of writing a book, children’s experiences with a public library cat for 19 years, and publishing books for preschoolers and middle grade students. We will also discuss having pets in a public setting and its effect on child behavior.

**Location: Pearson Lakes Art Center
2201 Highway 71 N
Okoboji, Iowa**

AGENDA

- 7:30 – 8:25 a.m.
Registration and Networking and a light snack
- 8:30 Keynote Speaker
- 10:00 Breakout Workshops
- 11:00 Breakout Workshops
- 11:45 Lunch Provided
- 12:15 p.m.
Breakout Workshops
- 1:30 Breakout Workshops
- 2:45 Breakout Workshops
- 3:45 Conclusion

We ask that you please dress comfortable, casual, and in layers. These sessions will be outside, so plan your dress according to the weather.

Lunch is included in your day.

Please complete the registration form and return by March 17, 2009. There is no charge for this conference, see registration form for details.



Research shows that young children greatly benefit from spending time outdoors. This presentation will help you create quality outdoor play and learning environments where teachers and children will want to spend time in outdoor space. You will discover engaging and practical hands-on ideas for materials and equipment that can be incorporated into the outdoor space. This session will also provide information about safe and healthy outdoor environments.

Mud & Masterpieces; - Presenter: Cyndee Dather, “Always a Fish” studio owner, former director of Lakes Art Center.

Explore and create with natural materials and recyclables. Enrich children’s art experiences by offering them various processes that utilize elements found in nature. Turn disposable and unused items that were headed for the landfill into magnificent art projects that are whimsical and imaginative in nature.

Books You’re “Growing” to Love:
Presenter: Ellen Williams, Youth Services Director, Spirit Lake Public Library