

[ONLINE] - Children Thrive Outside

A New Day for Outdoor Play in Child Care

May 11, 2021 | 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm ET

Participants

**Aliza Yair**

Outdoor Preschool Pilot Program Specialist,
Washington Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Aliza Yair, M.Ed. is the Program Specialist for the WA Outdoor Preschool Pilot Program, the nation's first state project to license outdoor, nature-based early learning programs. She has been responsible for the research and development of outdoor preschool licensing standards, systems and infrastructure development, reporting to the legislature, and the transition to full implementation of licensing outdoor, nature-based child care. Yair partners within Washington and with other states and national organizations to advance outdoor, nature-based early childhood education and policy. Aliza began her career in early childhood education working as a teacher and then educational leader in New Zealand, where she also led a weekly outdoor preschool program. In 2015, Aliza gained her M.Ed. from Harvard's Graduate School of Education in International Education Policy, and then spent a few years as the Quality Frameworks Policy Manager at New York City's Pre-K for All program, before joining the WA Department of Children, Youth, and Families in 2017. Her guiding framework is to be in service of children and the earth, and extends gratitude to the Puyallup Tribe for the ancestral stewardship of the lands she currently occupies.

**Amanda Bryans**

Director Research Analysis and Communication,
Office of Early Childhood Development, U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services

Amanda B. Bryans has worked in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services since 1999. During that time, she has led efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of program services through regulations, research, program monitoring, and training and technical assistance. She currently leads the Office of Head Start's work on school readiness and research to practice. In addition to early childhood education and research, expertise includes inclusion and transportation services. Amanda has a BS from Cornell University in

Human Development and Family Studies and an MS from the State University of New York at Albany in Educational Psychology, Measurement and Statistics. She has worked for Head Start for over 30 years including five years as a Disabilities Services and Education Coordinator, and five years as the Director of the Head Start program in Albany, NY.



Anupama Joshi
Executive Director,
Blue Sky Funders Forum (moderator)

Anupama Joshi joined Blue Sky Funders Forum as Executive Director in December 2018. She is an accomplished leader in the non-profit and social sector in the United States and abroad. She was previously Executive Director of the National Farm to School Network, which she co-founded in 2007, building a movement to incorporate local procurement, gardens and food and farm education in schools and early care sites across the United States. She has excelled in developing policies, programs and partnerships; fundraising; and managing organizations through phases of growth and change. She is a firm believer in the power of networks and collaboration to enable lasting change and has embodied that throughout her career. She is co-author of *Food Justice* (MIT Press, 2010), developed “Evaluation for Transformation” a pioneering cross-sectoral framework for research and evaluation, and regularly speaks at national and international events. Joshi currently serves on the board of directors for the Triangle Land Conservancy and the Farmers Market Coalition. She provides mentorship to emerging leaders through the Community Food Systems Mentorship Program. Joshi is a mom, loves to travel, and cook, and currently lives in Cary, North Carolina.



Brian Kurzel
Regional Executive Director,
Rocky Mountain Regional Center, National Wildlife Federation

Brian Kurzel is the Regional Executive Director of the National Wildlife Federation’s Rocky Mountain Regional Center. He oversees the National Wildlife Federation’s work to help people and nature thrive, including work with Tribal and Indigenous Partners, efforts to bring nature into the lives of every young child and family, helping build strength for Hispanic and Latinx leaders in conservation, and fostering habitat connectivity for wildlife in the West. Kurzel joined the National Wildlife Federation in 2015 after 10 years with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, where he most recently served as Senior Manager focused on policy and planning initiatives. Kurzel also oversaw Colorado’s natural areas program, a statewide, science-driven natural resource conservation effort focused on species and habitat protection. He was a scientific consultant for the Colorado State Forest Service, researcher at the University of Colorado-Boulder, and has experience in inner-city, school-based, and outdoor science education. Kurzel earned a master’s degree in Ecology and Biogeography

from the University of Colorado-Boulder, and a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.



Cara Sklar

***Deputy Director of Early & Elementary Education Policy,
New America***

Cara Sklar is Deputy Director of Early & Elementary Education policy with the Education Policy program at New America. She provides research and analysis on policies and programs improving children's birth-through-third grade learning experiences. Prior to joining New America, Sklar gained education policy experience working at the federal, state, and local levels. She was a Federal Policy Analyst for Zero to Three, an Education Research Analyst for the District of Columbia Government, and the Director of Research and Policy for a high-performing, two-generation public school where she now serves on the Board of Trustees. Sklar holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Georgetown University and a master's degree in Education Policy and Management from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



Debbie Gray

***Quality and Technical Assistance Program Manager,
Colorado Office of Early Childhood***

Deborah Gray has had the privilege of working in the field of early childhood education for more than 30 years. She has served in a variety of capacities including Early Childhood Teacher, Head Start Teacher, Early Interventionist, Parent Educator with Parents as Teachers, Licensing Specialist, Coach, Quality Evaluator, and Environment Rating Scale Reliability Trainer. Gray's passion for improving quality in early childhood facilities has led her to her position as the Quality and Technical Assistance Program Manager with the Colorado Office of Early Care and Learning, Division of Early Childhood. Gray has a certification in Adult Learning Principles and enjoys training and facilitating. She is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) and enjoys sharing ideas on how to provide a challenging but safe outdoor play area as well as creating a nature inspired learning environment. Gray obtained her bachelor's degree in Sociology/Family Studies with an emphasis in Family Studies at the University of Northern Colorado.



Jennifer Zuckerman
Director of Strategic Initiatives,
Duke World Food Policy Center (moderator)

Jennifer Zuckerman's current role as Director of Strategic Initiatives at Duke University's World Food Policy Center focuses on people-first policy development for equitable food policy. Prior to this role, she spent twelve years at the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, serving as the Senior Program Officer for Healthy Living and the Director of Strategic Partnerships, focusing on increasing access to active environments and on providing sources for healthy, locally sourced food with a specific focus on early childhood. She also contracts with the Biwa-Emergent Equity to facilitate white caucuses in nonprofit and philanthropic organizations and with DEI Works Collective in the capacity of a racial equity facilitator. Zuckerman serves as the Chair of the Board of the Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders Network, Chair of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems Advisory Board, Secretary of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation Board of Directors, Board Member of Communities in Partnership, and member of the National Academies Early Care and Education Innovation Collaborative.



Kathleen Belk Doffermyre
Senior Program Officer,
The George B. Storer Foundation

Kathleen Belk Doffermyre joined the George B. Storer Foundation in 2009 and served as the Senior Program Officer since 2015. In this role she oversees all of the Foundation's grantmaking and leads the Foundation's Early Childhood Education program. Prior to joining the Foundation, Doffermyre served as Director of Development for the Murie Center in Grand Teton National Park. Doffermyre earned her BA in English and Elementary Education at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia where she was a student athlete. She is a passionate angler, backcountry skier, mountain biker, literacy center tutor, and volunteer board member for several organizations serving her community. Doffermyre lives in Jackson, Wyoming with her husband Randolph and their two toddlers James and Kate.



Katie Krause
Nebraska Extension Educator,
The Learning Child

Katie Krause is an Extension Educator at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, working out of the Omaha, NE office. Through her work as an Extension Educator, Krause focuses on providing professional learning opportunities for early childhood educators and other adults who care for young children. She focuses much of her

work in the areas of nature-based learning and outdoor learning environments. She strives to support early childhood programs in getting children outside as much as possible, connecting children to nature indoors and out, and helping programs to create high quality, outdoor environments. In response to Covid-19 restrictions, Krause has created a new niche for herself in the area of online teaching, which is now the primary mode she uses for professional development.



Kim Kofron
Director of Early Childhood Education,
Children at Risk

Kim Kofron served as the Executive Director for Texas Association for the Education of Young Children from 2014 until April 2021. She now is the Director of Early Childhood Education for Children at Risk. She has been in the Early Childhood field for over 25 years after receiving her Bachelor's of Science in Child Development from the University of Illinois. Ms. Kofron worked in the for-profit child care sector for many years including in roles as Teacher, Director, Regional Education Specialist and Manager of Education for a multi-site company across Texas. During that time, she received her master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Texas, became a Child Care Health Consultant, and served on the local Austin AEYC and Texas AEYC boards. Ms. Kofron currently serves on the Texas Early Learning Council.



Kimberly Shaw
Owner,
A Safe Place Child Enrichment Center

Kimberly Shaw is the Founder and President of A Safe Place. She started as a family child care home in August 1997, and the business now includes two full-time, five-star, NAEYC-accredited centers in Raleigh, NC. Shaw serves her community in many ways including leadership positions on the Child Care Services Association Board of Directors, the Executive Board for Wake County Smart Start, and as mentor for the NC Farm to Preschool Network. She previously served on the Early Education Coalition Board of Directors and as statewide mentor for the Farm to Early Care and Education Initiative. Shaw is the recipient of multiple awards including the 2014 Dorothy B. Graham Child Care Leadership Award, and A Safe Place received the 2015 and 2017 City of Raleigh Urban Agriculture Awards.



Dr. Lynette M. Fraga

**CEO,
Child Care Aware® of America**

Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D., is the Chief Executive Officer of Child Care Aware® of America, a national membership-based nonprofit organization working to advance a high-quality, affordable child care system that supports children's growth, development, and early education. She began her career in early childhood as a teacher in infant, toddler and preschool classrooms, and has since held positions at the local, state, and national level within the nonprofit, corporate, and higher education sectors. Fraga has a doctoral degree in Family Studies from Kansas State University, a master's degree in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma, and a bachelor's degree in Special Education from the University of Arizona.



Mustafa Santiago Ali

***Vice President of Environmental Justice, Climate, and Community Revitalization,*
National Wildlife Federation**

A renowned thought leader, international speaker, policy maker, community liaison, trainer, and facilitator, Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali serves as the Vice President of Environmental Justice, Climate, and Community Revitalization for the National Wildlife Federation. He is also the founder of Revitalization Strategies, a business focused on moving our most vulnerable communities from "surviving to thriving." Before joining the National Wildlife Federation, Ali was the senior vice president for the Hip Hop Caucus, a national non-profit and non-partisan organization that connects the hip-hop community to the civic process to build power and create positive change. Prior to joining the Hip Hop Caucus, Ali worked for 24 years for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He began working on social justice issues at the age of 16 and joined the EPA as a student, becoming a founding member of the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ). He most recently served as Senior Advisor for Environmental Justice and Community Revitalization and Assistant Associate Administrator, working to elevate environmental justice issues and strengthening environmental justice policies, programs, and initiatives.



Sarah Konradi
Program Director,
Early Childhood Health Outdoors

Sarah Konradi, PLA, ASLA, is a landscape architect working at the intersection of design, health, and conservation. As Early Childhood Health Outdoors Program Director at the National Wildlife Federation's Rocky Mountain Regional Center, she and her team of designers, educators and policy specialists work with communities to create engaging and dynamic “outside of the box” play areas where young children can connect with the natural world. In June 2018, Sarah delivered a TEDxMileHigh talk, “Designing playgrounds for happier, healthier kids”.

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