



Fireside Chat: Relationship with Land (January 29, 2021)

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SPEAKERS

Lukeisha, Jason, Marc, Petra, Adrian, Cameron, Caitlin, Lise



Marc 00:45

So to get things started off, I just wanted to once again say thank you to everyone for joining us, I'd want to begin by acknowledging that the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada, we are headquartered, headquartered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabe and what is commonly known as Ottawa, Ontario now, our organization is led by white settlers and we have imposed this settler colonial way of being with the land. Because our programs were not co created with Indigenous people. We are very committed to repairing our relationship with Indigenous communities by dismantling harmful practices changing the way we all operate, and co creating our new programs. So the land is at the heart of everything we do at CNAC or at Child and Nature Alliance. So I would personally like to just give thanks to the land for teaching and nurturing my family and I and giving us a place to live work, laugh and play. So myself, my name is Marc St. Denis, I am Metis in French. I'm a father, I'm a husband, and my role at the Child and Nature Alliance is as Project Lead. So I am basically looking at leading our community consultation so that we can you know, co create a quality indicators for Forest and Nature school so that we can come together and say, you know, what is a Forest and Nature school in Canada, what does it look like nor to say that this is of a high quality and this is what a Forest and Nature school in Canada looks like with within our context. So I'm very, very happy to be here and very, very excited to hear from everybody. But for the time being, I'll just pass it off to Petra, who is also going to introduce herself and talk a bit

about the project.

P

Petra 04:30

Sure. So my name is Petra Eperjesi and I'm the manager of Forest school Canada at the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. If you're curious about what the difference between CNAC and Forest School Canada is, please check out our website. Our introductory video that introduces this project does a pretty good job of explaining in a nutshell the relationship between Forest school Canada and CNAC. I also come to this work as a mother, I'm a settler Canadian and I'm personally grateful to the land as well for offering me lessons, even before I knew to think. Okay, so a little bit about tonight and about the project that this was a part of. So today's event is part of a three year community consultation project that we're underseeking with support from the Lawson foundation. So our goal is to meet with Forest and Nature school practitioner so that we can do three things. One, articulate as a community, what quality Forest and Nature school in Canada looks like sounds like feels like as Marc spoke to, improve our professional learning programs that we offer, and set the stage for representing the Forest and Nature school sector, in discussions around policy and systems change. So why this project and why now, there is unprecedented interest in and attention on Forest and Nature schools in Canada, at this time, that's been building for several years, and COVID has just, you know, really thrust us into the limelight. But at any rate, we're in a important moment. And we have heard from you, the practitioners on the ground, that we need a set of quality indicators in Forest and Nature school in Canada. We've also heard you looking to CNAC for a higher level of leadership. And we have heard you looking to CNAC for a national voice to represent the sector. So our hope is that this project, this community consultation project will position us to do just that. And instead of just assuming what the sector needs and and designing our strategy and our response, based that way. We're hoping that you'll walk with us every step of the way through this project so that all the outcomes are truly representative of your needs and aspirations as practitioners. Back to you, Marc.

M

Marc 07:24

Thanks, Petra. So the fireside chats, this is a series of conversations that we are excited to have with you all. And I guess the the the purpose of them is to create a virtual space for Forest and Nature school practitioners to meet share experiences and answer questions related to a specific theme. So during this specific fireside chat, we're going to dive into four principles of forest and nature school practice, these were developed in 2018, admittedly developed in house, so they're not perfect, we're well aware of that, we're very much open to hearing feedback on developing those. So especially because, like I said earlier, our organization comes from that settler background. And so we are aware of

what we've imposed. And we are wanting to hear from folks of ways that we can do better. But the one that we're looking at today is we will go over the principles a little bit later. But the theme that we're talking about today, his relationship with land. And so we want to learn from all of you what the principles of practice look like on the ground, and specifically how we can measure them and say, with a certain degree of certainty that the principles are being met. So like what are the measurements, what is missing? So, we are hoping tonight to have a lively discussion about quality practice and Forest and Nature school and I just want to say that the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada, we are definitely not here to judge anyone's practice or be critical. And I hope we can also see that everyone's probably very passionate about this topic. And so there's likely going to be some differences between us and what we value as essential. So which is you know, basically why we're actually here we're having this conversation so that we can find what is common amongst us and what is shared, and while still preserving what makes our specific practices unique. So let's just remember to be respectful and kind to one another even when disagreements arise. So the format for tonight is going to be we have three guest speakers with us and they are practitioners themselves with, you know, some great experience that we're very excited to, to speak with them. So that will be the first half of tonight's event followed by a facilitated Breakout Room discussion. So we are going to break up this amazingly large group of people into, into we I think we have 10 breakout groups. So we'll we'll do those, there'll be a specific question that will be asked in the breakout rooms, each breakout room will have a breakout room lead, who has already been assigned, and they will just do the recording of the conversation. And then we'll come back together near the end as, as a group, we'll hear from some of those leads, and then we'll close out for the evening. At you Petra

P

Petra 10:49

Yeah, so the chat box is there for you. We hope that you will also answer the questions and do that in the chat box, and discuss with each other the questions that we're using to guide the discussion this evening. And as you have already noticed, we will be launching a few polls during the event. If you have questions or thoughts after the event, you are welcome to share them with us in whatever way is best for you, whether that's, you know, a quick video recording or an audio recording or if you want to write them by email, whatever works best for you, and send them to us at community@childnature.ca. So Heather, I'm sure will pop that into the chat. You can also complete the survey for this session, which I think I already saw just pop up which will yes! which is in the chat and it's also going to be available on our website. So if you haven't noticed already, on childnature.ca there's a new page devoted to this project and after after each session and actually in the lead up to each of these fireside chats. The survey format like the survey version of these questions will be available to you to fill out. So but if that format doesn't

work for you, please use the others that I mentioned as well. So without further ado, I would like to introduce our guest speakers this evening. So first up is Lukeisha Andrew. Welcome Lukeisha. Lukeisha grew up in a small village of Diamonds on the beautiful island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines located on the Windward side of the Island, Diamonds is neighboring lush forest, the ocean and active volcanoes and waterfalls. As a child, Lukeisha spent most of her time playing outdoors getting her knees bruised, making memories in nearby banana and coconut fields and streams. She enjoys working with children watching them play and explore in nature as they learn independently. Her best days are time spent with her son in nearby forests where they hike, play and explore. Lukeisha is passionate about sharing her love of nature and exploration with students of all ages. As Tomas Berry noted, teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives. Lukeisha holds a Bachelor's degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of the West Indies Mona Jamaica. Lukeisha worked as a librarian at St. Vincent and Grenadines Community College and she is currently a Director of Education at Wild Roots Nature and Forest School in Cumberland, Ontario. And we have Lise. Welcome Lise. Lise began her career at camps in Manitoba as an outdoor educator and guide, Lise completed a Bachelor of Recreation in 2001, a Masters of Social work in 2007 at the University of Manitoba, a Certificate in Expressive Arts Therapy in 2012, and the Forest School practitioner training in 2015. Lise combines these areas of practice to provide clinical direction facilitate groups and counsel individuals both in urban and wilderness environments with a focus on physical and emotional safety, successful participation, fun, meaningful activity and group cohesion. Lise is on the Forest School Canada facilitator team with us at CNAC and she sits on the board of the Association for Experiential Education. Welcome Lise And Adrian Alphonso. So Adrian is the Director of Clear Paths. Adrian is a band and community member of Waywayseecappo. Did I say that right? I didn't practice that in advance, First Nation. Adrian is passionate about Indigenous perspective cycling programs and leads on Treaty One Territory land to honor Truth and Reconciliation. At momenta, which is the organization that Leads Leads. Adrian delivers inclusive accessible cycling programs with the goal of inspiring a connection to the land. He has devoted his life to a journey of discovering. He is a commuter, a coach, a professional stunt rider, trials, a bicycle technician, a passionate guide, and devoted his life to a journey of discovering. One thing I wanted to add, which is not in Adrian's official bio there is that Adrian and Lise works together and are largely responsible for the the way the practitioners course is currently oriented around relationships. And actually, those themes of relationship that you'll see anchoring these fireside chats are Lise and Adrians' I want to say brain child but I think heart child as well. And so there's no one Adrian immediately came to mind when when we landed on relationship with land as the first theme for for these fireside chats. So welcome to all of our panelists. Thanks so much for being here. And let's jump right in. So the first set of questions will be about principle one. So we we've outlined 10 principles,

and we will be posting those on the website soon. They're not totally all quite ready for public eyes yet. We're still tweaking them a little bit. But there are, so there are four of those 10 principles that relate to our relationship with land. So we'll be exploring those four principles this evening. So first up is principle number one. Forest Nature school can take place in any outdoor space, including urban green space, playgrounds, forest creeks, prairies, mountains, shoreline and tundra. So I think I saw the the poll will pop up in the chat. So please let us know if you agree or disagree. And Lukeisha, do you agree? Can forest and nature school take place in any outdoor space?



Lukeisha 17:15

Hi, everyone, and thank you, Petra. Yes, I believe that Forest and Nature school can take place in any outdoor space like at wild roots, we actually have two two spaces where we, where we hold what Forest School, we have our shoreline of Peachtree Island, and we have all forests at MacSkimmimng in. If Forest school cannot be held at any outdoor space, the principal access to all this, this will not this cannot facilitate that. Because Forest school should be able to take place at any outdoor space in order to access access, oh, if we can't come, if you can't come to the forest, we will bring the forest to you, people who can't afford to come to our location we go to them. So I believe strongly that Forest School should be able to hold in any outdoor space.



Petra 18:40

Thanks Lukeisha. So you I hear you really approaching that principle also from an access and equity lens were, yeah, the the principle that Forest and nature school can take place everywhere is an accessibility connection as well. Thank you. So then Lise, I'll follow up with you. Does the outdoor space need to have certain elements or qualities? Maybe I'll start briefly like with you, do you agree that it can take place everywhere? And what sorts of qualities or elements does the space need to have from your perspective?



Lise 19:26

Hi, everyone. There's a lot of people here. Just gonna take a deep breath and settle in. Lots of people that I know and look up to it's awesome to be here. You know, this is a hard question on the poll I said no. And the only reason why I said no is because for me Forest school is about a relationship with land and that relationship with land is about things around us that change and things around us that spark our curiosity and our wonder. So if I'm on a concrete pad, it's hard for me to be sparked with interest. However, I agree with Lukeisha. We can bring those natural elements to all spaces, we can plant gardens where so that the bugs can arrive, we can look up at the sky and enjoy the clouds. So I I agree

that with Lukeisha that we can be everywhere and this needs to be an accessible thing for everybody to participate in. Absolutely. But we do need to make sure that there's something that is catching our curiosity and our interest in that that comes from the land that comes from the natural world.

P

Petra 20:44

Thanks Lise, yeah, that's my, I think I have, my mind is going a thousand miles a minute as well. But I'll hold my tongue. And actually, Adrian, this isn't in the script. But can I turn to you for for your thoughts on this as well?

A

Adrian 21:01

Yeah, absolutely. Hello, everybody. Aiinee boozoo. It's such a pleasure to be here, want to chime in, on this principle, so in an urban setting, it changes throughout the seasons, especially here in Canada, we get winter, spring, summer and fall. And each experience, each season is going to provide something different each time. So I do agree with Lise and and everybody where we can bring in nature objects. I have brought Willow sticks into space, just to provide some some play. I brought all sorts of pine cones and and medallion type of making nature, nature art. So it's important for sure. Thanks.

P

Petra 22:05

Thanks, Adrian. Okay, well, we'll pause on principle one for the moment, but I think it'll, it'll come back up as we go. And I'll turn it to you, Marc, then for some discussion of principle two.

M

Marc 22:23

Thanks Petra. Yeah. And everyone just as a reminder to absolutely, we are very much encouraging your participation in the chat. But we also have our survey, if you'd prefer to just listen and answer the survey. later on. We'll post the link again, near the end of our of our conversations tonight. But it will be available on our website, too. So the second principle that we're talking about today is: Forest and Nature school is a sustained process of regular and repeated sessions in the same outdoor space, supporting children to develop a reciprocal relationship with the land, and an understanding of themselves as part of the natural world. So I guess like the, for myself, the three main words and this principle that I kind of want us to nitpick over is regular, repeated and the same. And what do those mean? Are they necessary? So Adrian, we're gonna ask you the first question with this one is, again, just do you agree does Forest and Nature school need to be regular

repeated, and in the same space,

A

Adrian 23:39

The work and the experience that I have personally seen, it has been revolving around regular and repeated visits, I had just briefly touched on on the seasons, or each visit may be differently. And it's important to listen to the land with each visit, because it's going to teach you something every single time, you may notice something very different from last time, or you may have a connection with a piece of that of that outdoors that you just don't know what it's about but you you're aware that it's familiar. Indigenous languages revolve around being on the land, because we're from the land. And if we are learning our language, which is our our land speaking to us, at the same time of learning, what it feels like and what it smells like and what it looks like. Immersive experiences and seminar participants and others of our community. This is a very powerful thing. So as we continue to visit the same spot and learn things differently from each experience we can then bring more awareness to add that in this again winter that spot once a week or once a month. It's very impactful for everybody. I think I could just leave that there. That's a lot to take in. So

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Marc 25:46

Yeah, thank you, Adrian. Yeah, definitely. I definitely hear what you're saying. I think there was a little bit of a connection issue for myself. I'm not sure if everybody else had had the same experience. But I we least my personally, I got most of what you said so. But I think I think you're writing anyways, personally too, is that being in the same space helps with actually developing that relationship and, and just just as like, my son, when we go to the same space, he starts to notice new things each time. Lukeisha, can I ask you the same question, first of all, is like, do you agree that that Forest and Nature school needs to be regular repeated and then the same space but Furthermore, what does regular repeated and the same space mean in your practice?

L

Lukeisha 26:49

Regular means, for us at Wild Roots, it means once a week, or twice a week, for a minimum of three hours untested day for all four system. Why all four seasons because as Adrian said, the environment changes. People, kids need to see how the land changes in order to respect the line in order to grow with the land. For a high quality Forest school and Forest and nature school. Children need to build relationships with peers and teachers and the land. Repeated sessions in one season will allow a relationship to grow, to reconnect children to nature and the land. This is where children can see the

environment change each week due to weather and seasons and watch things grow. They learn about the seasons firsthand and get to know the land. And for example, they learn how to identify a maple tree during the spring during the fall and during the winter, by absorbing the tree, smelling the tree, they learn what comes from the tree. And, and this they grow more respect for the land because they they see what the land has to offer. Thank you.

M

Marc 28:41

Thanks Lukeisha. Yeah, I like the the interesting theme of seasons that are are being woven through this conversation because I think we've been at least at Child and Nature Alliance, we've been thinking about that a lot lately. And there's there's a lot to learn from from the seasons. Lise, the next question is for you. And I'm wondering, in your experience, how do we know that children are developing a sense of themselves as belonging to the natural world?

L

Lise 29:15

That's such a good question. So I was thinking about this question this afternoon a little bit. And I think one of the components of success at Forest School is this idea of feeling safe. And so the land can really offer us a beautiful place to feel safe. And it's really up to us Forest School practitioners to develop that sense of safety and that sense of place so that they can settle into the land. I can recall many instances of young children just not knowing what to do and not knowing where to go or even what to ask. But there's this moment and Adrian and I talked about this moment of like, all of a sudden, it's like, settled, and everyone's engaged, and everyone's happy. And, and I do really, truly believe that it's because we've arrived at a place where they can feel safe. And you know, the seasons play into that. Because in the winter time, we don't feel as safe as we do when it's beautiful outside, and it's easy to keep our bodies warm. So I think that, that, for me, it's that settling of them just really being attuned to the land and what's around them.

M

Marc 30:49

Thank you Lise. You've definitely given me some something to think about.

P

Petra 30:59

I had deep, deep nods to that moment of settling that it's such a phenomenon like it. I wonder if other people I'm curious to see if anybody responds in the chat to having that same experience. But yeah, often working with school groups, and teachers will feel

everybody's kind of at high alert. And I would always just say just wait to get it get 15 minutes. It's like clockwork. And that feeling comes, as you describe. Thanks, please. Okay, so moving on to principle 9. And principle 9 and 10 are going to be woven through each of our discussions. So you'll get to know them well, and we'll probably rework them and hone them as we as we go. So principle nine is Forest and Nature school prioritizes, building reciprocal relationships with First Nations, Metis and Inuit, who have been learning from this land since time immemorial. So first to you, Adrian, as Forest and Nature school practitioners in Canada. How do you and how do we respond to the fact that we work on and with indigenous land? What are our responsibilities? And what actions do you take?

A

Adrian 32:26

Hey, I may just paused for a long because it just said that my connection is unstable. So I just want to make sure I'm coming through clear, how is it right now? Okay, so as a forest practitioner, I do my best to bring my language and my culture to the experiences that when we're out, and that is my duty as Anishinaabe or Ojibwe. I am finding my language and my culture, because that's something that I feel like is part of my journey as I'm bringing people along. My duty is to help organizations and agencies who are interested in learning more enter process of understanding through reading the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action. There's a few specific ones that I highly recommend, which is article 14, and 43, and 44. And those last two include UNDRIP. So UNDRIP is the UN Declaration of Indigenous peoples. As Indigenous communities have gathered throughout the times and identified needs of what we need from society, it is clearly imprinted there. And if we are going to, if we're going to move forward as if these things are already implemented, those are the steps that are important is to organizationally, look at these things, and adopt them as if they're law or taken into legislation already. As far as waiting. We can choose to wait but it's just gonna continue to, to be not addressed. So as organizations, as communities, as your own personal information to learn the truth and reconciliation calls to action are a must read as well as getting through the articles of UN Declaration on Indigenous peoples. And that's the reason why there is some change happening in these organizations is because some have considered that working with Indigenous peoples doesn't just mean First Nations communities as in reservations, it means your neighbors, your children's friends who are Indigenous their families, the people you work with every day, it's important to be acknowledged. And that's that's the start. I'm just looking at the question here, it's a multi layered one. So yeah, my responsibility is to find out on my own how I can contribute to these experiences with reconnection with land. And to me, language, indigenous languages are of the land and created for land in learning, with the biggest, the biggest value being observation, followed up by inquiry. So that's what I wanted to say about that. Miigwech.



Petra 36:24

Miigwech Adrian. Not much for me to say after that, there's lots for me to chew on. So I'll move over to Lukeisha the same questions. As a Forest and Nature school practitioner, how do you respond to the fact that you work on and with indigenous land? What are your responsibilities and what actions do you take?



Lukeisha 36:48

I always tell my students, if you know your history, then you will know where you're coming from. And I believe strongly that educating the kids about about the land telling them how we get to use in the land is a major part of of changing how we think in the future. Some actions we take at Forest school to, to help with this education. We read a lot of stories, we earn points, we educate ourselves as practitioners we we attend pow wows, we attend singing circles with Aboriginal people. We go to watch back crafting, and we bring this back to Forest school. We teach them how to do beadings, crafting, and we we invite the elders to come to Forest school to teach the children, to do story tellings with them, because it is very important to incorporate the Aboriginals in Forest School to help teach the children these things.



Petra 38:38

Thanks, Lukeisha and to you too Lise, same questions. Should I say them again? Or do you feel



Lise 38:46

You can say them again



Petra 38:49

Okay. As a Forest and Nature school practitioner in Canada, how do you respond to the fact that you work on and with Indigenous land? What are your responsibilities? And what actions do you take?



Lise 39:03

Yeah, this is a huge question. And we could probably talk about this for a long time. But I'll give a few tidbits of some of the things that I'm trying to do to to repair past harm. I live I work on stolen land, it's important for me to acknowledge that every single day. I have a

beautiful relationship with Adrian, which has helped me move forward and truth and reconciliation. And for me to understand how how important for, for me as a business owner as a Forest school practitioner to think about my values and policies and procedures and making sure that we're being equitable in what we're doing. And, you know, Adrian listed some of the calls to action that he's focused on I'm also focused on particular calls to action, which are 7, 12, 63, 89 and 92. And I would encourage everyone to, to do that work to read the document and to figure out where they can be active in, in serious truth and reconciliation, because it does take work in action to do that work. So thanks.

P

Petra 40:26

Thanks Lise. Yeah, it's, as Lise said, it's a huge topic and, and sort of, as Marc said, from the get go, not one that we mean to lead from a place of, or open from a place of like, oh, we're doing it right. And and we're, you know, we're experts on this topic, because we're not. I think these are great concrete examples of starting places that we can move forward from and yeah, some really beautiful things coming out in the chat to Michelle wrote you embrace the seven grandfather teachings and walk the walk, remembering past the past to allow the next generation to build a wonderful future of unity, and the medicine wheel that encompasses us all. Thanks, Michelle. Sorry, I haven't I haven't been turning my attention to the chat that much, because I'm just not that good at multitasking, to be honest. Okay, I think Marc your next with principle 10.

M

Marc 41:36

Yeah, thanks. Thanks, Petra. And yeah, I keep like turning my head to look at my other screen too. So that's why sometimes it looks like I'm talking off to like some random person that's nowhere on in front of me. So I feel I feel that Petra, too much going on sometimes. So the the next principle of practice that we're discussing, and again, this is one that we are going to be interweaving throughout all of our conversations because it is it's very important is a question about access and equity. And so the principle goes like this. It says, Forest Nature schools grounded in and prioritizes building engaged, healthy, vibrant and diverse communities by always considering issues of access and equity. So Lukeisha to start things off with this particular principle. I think there's some there's some, some mics that are on if you can just make sure all those mics are muted. So the question is for Lukeisha is acknowledging that access and equity is a problem within the Forest Nature school sector. What steps would you like to see the sector as a whole take to ensure that all children can get to program locations?



Lukeisha 43:06

As far as though we believe that children should have equal opportunity, whether irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, disability, gender, sexual orientation. Currently at Wild Roots, we have one Aboriginal child and one black child. Why is this? Is it because that we're not reaching out to that population more? How can we change that? Most or all of the kids at Forest School. The time we vote for school is from nine to 12. So the parents drop their kids off at nine o'clock and we pick them up from 12 o'clock. So you see what, so you see what sort of children will be coming to Forest School parents who can afford to take time off from from their jobs to come to Forest School. So this is one problem, we have the timing of Forest School. We try to, we try to change this by reaching out to the community to to offer free Forest School for for people who can't afford to come to Forest School, and it started havoc within the community because they didn't want the kids to be in the forest, they say, the kids will wreck the forests. So that that went out of the window. To provide this to provide this equal society for our participants, we need to do much more in our sector, we need to reach out to the less fortunate populations and see how we can reach them



Marc 45:46

Thank you Lukeisha. Yeah, it's makes me think about the privilege of being able to, like you say, get to the program to begin with just given the, the, you know, the timing that's often associated with with the programs. So it's definitely a challenge in the sector. And I think I'm, I'm glad we're having the conversation about it so that we can learn how to move forward in a better way. Maybe, maybe Lise and Adrian, I could ask the same question of both of you, in case you have something to to share about that. Please, can I start with you and ask what steps you'd like to see the sector as a whole take to ensure that children have equitable access to Forest and Nature school?



Lise 46:42

Yeah, I think, you know, I like to think about the structures that exist in the world already. So we have schools and we have childcare centers. And for me, it's really important to think about how we can use school fields differently, how we can train teachers to see that the natural world has a lot of value with our curriculums. The other day, I was like, why doesn't Forest school Canada teach at universities? I just was, you know, these ideas come to my head, it's like, how do we support people to, you know, embrace this style of teaching and learning? And how do we get every single kid outside during the day for more than just recess? And so I think a lot about who's creating the policies and procedures? And are they willing to talk to me about how we can do things differently? So yeah, I mean, seeing all the people here today, there's 89 people here advocating for kids

to be outside. So you know, the future is bright.

M

Marc 47:54

Thanks Lise. Adrian, same question too. Wondering if you have any thoughts about what steps we can take as a sector to ensure that there's equitable access to program locations?

A

Adrian 48:07

Right, have given some thought to this, because a lot of my passion is to and aim to remove barriers for for everyone. It's a big thing to take on to think about all the time. But it's something that's that really passionate about. I think that we are catering to a lot of outdoor enthusiasts who are looking for alternative alternative programming for their kids. It's true, we're offering outdoor add for, for families, to, for the kids to enjoy while while we're with them, and it's it looks like childcare, or actually providing is opportunities to connect with the earth with the land. And that needs to be supported by climate activism and climate action. It doesn't fit in education, it's clear because we're not being supported by education. It's not really health because we're not being supported entirely by health either. So by bringing people to nature, they are creating their own connections, personally deep within themselves within their identity and their language. And it is so true that they're going to become advocates themselves one day, whether on a small scale, or could be a huge scale. So I think we start to, we need to start speaking to our lobbyists, our our people who are working diligent on saving spaces, parks, rails, Because this is going to be a multi generational sort of internet is unstable. But if I don't spend time outside, there's no way I'd be in a position right now where I can speak of any of this. barriers to, to apply for, as well as creating political moves at the climate action level. Um, I think I'm very passionate about it.

M

Marc 50:46

Thanks, Adrian. Yeah, it's interesting, just hearing from all three of you too, how it makes me think about, you know, it's, it's about our sector, but it's also about how our sector relates with the rest of the world, like we have, everything is interrelated. And so it's about systems change, as well as as, like personal change, as well as like, changes within the sector itself. So it's, we sort of have this responsibility then to, to reach out, not just not just turn inward, like that's, that's important to, to look at ourselves and see what we can do, but also to see how we can support these other movements. So thank you for for bringing those, those conversations for the three of you really, really, really appreciate having you here today to to share your experiences. I'm sure this won't be the last time we we speak

with each other. Just in the interest of giving everyone else here a chance to have a conversation and to share their experiences, we are going to now move into the breakout room session. So let me just explain this a little bit for everyone, so you get a better sense of what to expect. We're going to ask one question during the breakout room. And the question is, how do we know children are developing a reciprocal relationship with the land? What are the indicators of this and perhaps is it a spectrum. So just like I said earlier, each Breakout Room already has an assigned facilitator who will help guide the conversation a bit and who will record the conversations with their own notes. And then after the breakout room, we're going to invite everyone back together as one large group. And we will ask some of the facilitators to share a summary of your conversations, we won't be able to get to everyone I don't think just given the size of the group that we have today and the number of breakout rooms we have. However, we're going to ask all of the breakout room leads to share with us the notes from your conversations and these notes will then support the project which is in this case, looking to build quality indicators for Forest and Nature school so all of your voices will be incorporated and heard. But for the sake of when we come back to the as a group we'll just here for a few of them. And so the the breakout rooms will last for about 15 minutes, you should get a notification saying hey, you have a countdown. Once again reminding everyone that the breakout rooms will not be recorded. When we come back together as a main group the recording over zoom again. So Charlene who is our tech guru in the background, she will send us off. All right. Welcome back, everyone. So just a reminder, you should have been automatically muted. But if for some reason, that did not work, just it'd be very helpful just to hit that mute button again, so that it's not confusing chaos, as we come back together as a group. Not sure about the others, but we had a really, really nice conversation. I have to say, Brianna, I would love to hear the end of that story about the mosque we got cut off before we could. So if you ever want to finish that story through email, we'd love to hear that. Um, so I guess now I'm gonna invite a few short summary of the conversations from from some some folks. So I guess I'll start with Cameron, who is a member of our evaluation team, actually, for those with this project. What was your breakout room like what was the discussion like?



Cameron 1:14:43

It was great man we like as we also got cut off too there was just, you know, some really rich insights that we're, we're coming on, despite the fact that we did get a good minutes to to close it out. We came up with some very interesting just a very interesting discussion in terms of what people's some of the observations and some of the things. So just to summarize, I guess fairly quickly to give people enough chance to chat is one of the things that one of the indicators that that people felt that was shared across a few different stories was the idea of is a when children are prompting things. So when you might have

had a lesson, and then the next week, the children unwind, or there's a part of the lesson that's not taught, maybe forgotten or missed or something, and the children want to do that. Or there's something that you did one week, and then the next week, they want to do it again. So when they're starting to lead, provide a little bit leadership or prompting, unprompted. They're wanting to do stuff. So that was one of the big things that came out, I'm going to sort of jump around a couple of things. One of the really, I think big insights that came right at the end of our conversation, was this idea of a triangle. So rather than just thinking about it as whether, children in the land, we started to talk a little bit about the role of the practitioner, and we talked about the land and the children and actually viewing it as a triangle. So there's this idea of the child, the practitioner, and the land, and there's these relationships between land and practitioner, land and child, child and practitioner. But then as we started talking, another triangle came out was time place in person. So being able to understand those things, and that it's in those relationships there, that there was a lot of discussion as to understanding that reciprocal nature is understanding how children fit and act within those kinds of relationships. That was that was something that came up that's not as clear of an indicator, but very useful, somewhat of a taxon. taxonomy. And, yeah, I think those are some of the biggest ones. The other. One other piece that sort of came in there, tied together was this idea about having intergenerational conversation is once children start extending their experience with the land, with the Forest School, to parents, peers, outside, one of the stories I was told is that what happens when kids are bringing their their families back to the place where we're class was after, like, not outside of class time, when that's something that's another really important indicator that we discussed as well.

M

Marc 1:17:47

Thanks, Cameron. It's interesting, just for myself, because a lot of those themes also seem to come up in the conversation I was involved in. Caitlin, I'm interested to hear what your group is talking about.

C

Caitlin 1:18:03

Yeah, we also had some really lovely conversations, I kind of wish I was in every single group. so fascinating. So some of the things that we were really talking about was just the different relationships, and and how children kind of demonstrate that they're building relationships. So some of the things that came up were around when they had kind of empathetic responses to things that they saw in the forest. So you know, someone carving into a tree or litter that they found in a stream that they often visit? And how that would kind of generate these, these inquiry practices that will Why is this happening? And is this going to hurt the fish? And just what are we going to do and how can we help but also

that it just it was, it was something that they took, personally in a way as well, kind of demonstrating that that emotion are connected? Also, yeah, just some of them again, similar to what Cameron Cameron was sharing, but sharing those stories with their parents with their friends kind of talking about all the exciting things that they discovered and learned and, and experienced and how, you know, they wanted to go back every single day and were disappointed when they couldn't, kind of demonstrates just the the, the emotion or the the impact that it has with some of those children. And then other people were talking about how kind of to measure that we're seeing children going to the same place and how over time they're becoming more and more comfortable. So the first visit maybe they stayed on the trail didn't go off really were quite kind of reserved in their exploration and then the more often it would go the the kind of further from the trail they would start to visit. One person shared in our group about how they did a night Walk as well as this boy that is usually quite scared of the dark in his home was like leading the way and felt so powerful in that forest space that previously he probably would have been stuck to the trail and yeah was typically scared of the dark. But that was he's very comfortable in the forest. So kind of just seeing the, those emotional responses. They're like excitement for it. And they're, they're increasing comfort within those spaces. And then similar to what Another point that Cameron had kind of noted was also them planning their play for the next session. So being so excited and knowing you know, going in there with a mission, the next time you were there and knowing exactly what they're doing. Oh, yeah. And one cool one was some of the children naming parts of the forest. So there's one program that there is Pelican clearing was one location that they would visit. And it was named that because one, at one point they saw as the promoting Pelican and this was really exciting and interesting. And lots of questions. And so then that became their special spot. And, and they named it, which is a really cool way to indicate Kind of, yeah, relationship and familiarity. So yeah, lots of cool, cool things that came that came up.

M

Marc 1:21:21

Thanks, Caitlin. Again, once again, it seems like there's a common thread for many of these conversations. And we spoke about that as well in our group about, about naming, as well as the play. And I think the interesting thing that was brought up in our our group about play was that the the kids who will start to remember their their play, but beyond that, they'll also start inviting other kids like the next next week to come come that weren't there the first week to come and join in on that play within that particular spot. And then also with like, you know, bringing the stories back to their parents, that's also that was brought up the idea of the kids actually telling their parents how to behave with the land like hey, you can't you can't do that. That's that's not allowed, that hurts the forest. So that, that just reminded me of that. Jason, I'm wondering what what your group

was, was up to?

J

Jason 1:22:20

Thank you, frankly, very beautiful stories. I really enjoyed the the quick conversation, we had a lot of similar things to Caitlin, Cameron. One thing that really struck me was this idea that often when we think about what indicators of child development, you have to ask what do they know and our group was saying, what's more like, what do they ask, and this sort of approach to inquiry, inquiry that is important in outdoor spaces, stories of, you know, kids, first seeing this wide open space, or this this space outdoors, and then getting very specific about it, again, the naming, the naming of things came up, like I wanted to know what these things were and why they were observing older children who've been in the, in this program, or school or group for however long teaching the younger kids about do's and don'ts and what you do and what you don't do. And that same, similar to what we said before, about being careful about what you do with into the land in relation to other things on the land, like other animals, and what the bees need, and what the birds need, and, and so on. And just asking what not, what do we know about for instance, chickadees was a animal that came up, but when the chickadees can teach us that kind of that kind of idea. I think the finally just to wrap up with a lot of again, same ideas as the other groups. But this idea that if you get found this foundation of repeated visits to the same place, or engaging with the same place allows you to interact with other places differently. So it's not you that you don't go to the other other's places, you go to one place over and over, but you also visit other places, and then you have a different relationship or different set of questions or opportunities at these other places. And I think that that's when you start to think about the transferability of you know, this, this kind of knowledge and start thinking about the outdoor environment differently. I hope I captured that folks that were in my group.

M

Marc 1:24:27

Thanks, Jason. Yeah, that that. That reminds me just oh, no, I lost my train of thought I had I had a plan anyways, I do want to say to everyone as well that we are getting near the end of our time, so unfortunately, we can't hear from the leads from every single breakout room. But like I said earlier, we will be collecting the notes from all of the leads so that we can still your voice will be part of the process for looking at at this particular question, so thank you to everyone for participating in those breakout rooms. And just for coming for the listening to our guest speakers and answering in the chats, I'd like to just take a brief moment to remind folks that if you didn't comment in the chat and didn't feel like it, for whatever reason, if you'd still like to get in touch and share your experiences, there's a couple of ways you can do that. We have an online survey, which Heather has already put

in the chat. So thank you, Heather. And so they're the same questions that we asked today during this event. So if you'd like to really dive into it and answer the questions that way, that's another way we can collect your feedback and incorporate your voice, like Petra said, at the beginning of this event. You guys are the heart of what we do and why we operate. So we don't want to be imposing the answers to what Forest and Nature school is, we really want this to be a co created effort. And so really, really appreciate everyone participating today. So there will also be recording that we will of this chat, which we will put online and we do have a website as well that we launched on on Tuesday. Now the next fireside chat is scheduled for February 25 at three o'clock pm eastern time, we be really excited if we can see some of you or all of you back for that. And that one is going to be on the theme of relationship with play. And if you want to get in touch in the meantime, we have a new email address specifically for this project at simply community@child nature.ca. So once again, thank you everyone for joining us this evening. Really appreciate you taking the time. And I hope you all have have good days and we'll see you next time. Bye everyone.



Petra 1:27:09

Thanks everybody. This was great.