

# Fireside Chat: Relationship with Trust (August 31, 2021)

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

nature, nous, forest, trust, children, parts, learning, inquiry, maria, questions, kids, loose, margaret, emergent, à, de, chat, play, des, land

## SPEAKERS

Heather, Diana, Alix, Margaret, Tiiu, Busola, Suzanne, Maria

B

Busola 00:39

Welcome everyone to today's fireside chat event Relationship with Trust, it's good to have everyone here and just to see all of your faces. So today we're going to be having our event on Relationship with Trust. Today's event is going to be recorded. So if you do not want to be in the video, you can turn off your camera or just stop your video. Our breakout rooms will not be recorded because we're going to be going into breakout rooms later on in the evening, but they will not be recorded. My co-host Tiiu and I are going to be switching between English and French and to follow in the language of your choice, we're providing complete transcriptions in the links in the chat below. And our colleague Megan will also be providing a summary translation in the chat for the times where we speak in English and we'll not be translating to French we would have Megan put that in the chat. And if you would also like to follow along, we do have in the chat below the link to the scripts for today so you can just click on that link and follow along as we go. We have that in both English and in French.

T

Tiiu 01:58

Bonsoir, bienvenue. Cette séance sera enregistrée afin que nous puissions la partager avec les personnes qui n'ont pas pu y assister. Veuillez noter que les discussions en petit groupe ne seront PAS enregistrées. Busola et moi, Tiiu allons co-animer en anglais et français.

Nous partageons le lien à la transcription complète dans le chat, si jamais vous souhaitez suivre le texte en même temps en anglais ou français. Également, notre collègue Megan offrira des résumés traduits dans le chat pour la durée de la séance. Pour les discussions en petit groupe, nous aurions un groupe parlant en français - vous y serez placé si vous l'avez noté dans l'inscription. Sinon ou si vous n'êtes pas certain.e.s, veuillez nous l'indiquer dans le chat maintenant. Merci Busola

B

**Busola 02:59**

Thank you Tiiu. So over to our land acknowledgement CNAC is headquartered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe in Ottawa, Ontario. Our organization is currently led by white settlers and we have imposed a settler-colonial way of being with the Land because our programs were not co-created with Indigenous people. We are committed to repairing our relationship with Indigenous communities by dismantling harmful practices, changing the way we operate, and co-creating programs.

T

**Tiiu 03:33**

Merci. La CNAC a son siège social sur le territoire non cédé des Algonquins Anishinaabe à Ottawa, en Ontario. Nous reconnaissons également que notre organisation est actuellement dirigée par des colons blancs et que nous avons imposé une manière coloniale d'être avec la Terre parce que nos programmes n'ont pas été co-crésés avec les peuples autochtones. Nous nous engageons à réparer notre relation avec les communautés autochtones en démantelant les pratiques nuisibles, en changeant notre mode de fonctionnement, et en co-crésant des programmes. Je m'appelle Tiiu Strutt et je vous rejoins du territoire des Anishinaabe, des Haudenosaunee et des Hurons-Wendat, et du territoire du Williams Treaty. Ma famille vient de l'Estonie et du Grand Bretagne, et moi, je suis Canadienne de première génération. Je suis mère de deux beaux enfants, musicienne et éducatrice dans le système scolaire public. Je travaille également avec le CNAC comme animatrice.

B

**Busola 04:41**

Thank you Tiiu. I'm just going to be doing a personal introduction for myself. My name is Busola Lawal. I am currently the Project Administrative Coordinator here at CNAC. I am honestly very thrilled, happy to be at CNAC. I am working with Marc St Dennis, he's not here today, he is on vacation. I am currently working with him on the Community Consultation Project. And it's just been an exciting journey going through this Community Consultation Project and just learning all of the things that CNAC is doing, this has actually been an amazing journey for me. I love hiking, I will tell you one fun fact. So every

time I go hiking, I would pick up a stick that's like my little buddy throughout my hiking, just have that stick with me and then just like go, and then when I'm going, I put it in like a safe place hoping that when I go back to that trail, I'll find it there, but yeah, I never find it. So that's a bit about me. I am from Nigeria and I've been in Canada since 2019. And I've just been enjoying Canada, even though COVID hit, I'm excited to be here. I currently live in Oakville, Ontario and the Town of Oakville resides on the treaty lands and traditional territory of the Mississauga, Neutral, Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee. So that's where I currently reside, and I am happy to be here. So today, we're just going to give a brief introduction of the Community Consultation Project. Today's event is part of a three-year Community Consultation Project we are undertaking, with support from the Lawson Foundation. Our goal is to meet with Forest/Nature School practitioners so that we can: Articulate as a community what a quality Forest/Nature School in Canada looks like, sounds like, and feels like. Improve our professional learning courses; and also set the stage for representing the Forest/Nature School sector in discussion around policy and systems change. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities have been learning from the Land and teaching their children on the Land since time immemorial. This project is not in any way meant to advise or in any way regulate Indigenous communities. This project is specifically designed to address settler organizations who are operating Forest/Nature schools on Indigenous Land.



#### Tiiu 07:42

Cette séance fait partie d'un projet de consultation communautaire de trois ans que nous entreprenons avec le soutien de la Fondation Lawson. Notre objectif est de rencontrer les praticien.nne.s de l'école de la nature afin de pouvoir : Articuler, en tant que communauté, à quoi ressemble, ce qu'on entend et ce qu'on ressent à une école de la nature de qualité au Canada. Améliorer nos cours d'apprentissage professionnel ; et Préparer le terrain pour représenter le secteur des écoles de la nature dans les discussions sur les changements de politiques et de systèmes. Depuis des temps immémoriaux, les communautés des Premières Nations, des Métis et des Inuits apprennent de la Terre et enseignent à leurs enfants sur la Terre. Ce projet n'a pas pour but de conseiller ou de réglementer de quelque manière que ce soit les communautés autochtones. Il est spécifiquement conçu pour s'adresser aux organisations de colons qui opèrent des écoles de la nature sur des terres autochtones.



#### Busola 08:54

Thank you Tiiu. So the purpose of today's fireside chat. The Fireside Chat series is a virtual space for Forest/Nature School practitioners to meet, share experiences, and answer questions related to a theme. During this Fireside Chat we are going to dive into five

Principles of Forest/Nature School practice, developed in 2018, and how they relate to our Relationship with Trust. We want to learn from you what these principles look like on the ground. How can we measure the principles? What are the measurements? How do we know a Forest/Nature School program is meeting these principles? And is anything missing? Our hope is to have a lively discussion about quality practice in Forest/Nature School. We at CNAC are not here to judge anyone's practice or be critical. I hope we can all see that everyone here is passionate about Forest/Nature School, and it's likely there are differences between us and what we value as essential. I hope we can all keep an open mind and embrace differences of opinion. Just a couple of house keeping things, If you have questions or thoughts after this, you are welcome to share them in whatever way is best for you—video, audio, written—or whatever creative way, drawings and send them to [community@childnature.ca](mailto:community@childnature.ca). You can also complete the survey for this session which will be linked in the chat and also will be available on our website.

T

Tiiu 10:27

Merci Busola. Objectif de la discussion informelle d'aujourd'hui. La série Causeries au coin du feu est un espace virtuel permettant aux praticiens des écoles de la nature de se rencontrer, de partager leurs expériences et de répondre aux questions liées à un thème. Au cours de cette Causerie au coin du feu, nous allons nous plonger dans cinq Principes de pratique de l'école de la nature, élaborés en 2018, et la manière dont ils sont liés à notre Relation avec la confiance. Nous voulons que vous nous disiez à quoi ressemblent ces principes sur le terrain. Comment pouvons-nous mesurer ces principes ? Quelles sont les mesures ? Comment savons-nous qu'un programme d'école de la nature respecte ces principes ? Et y a-t-il quelque chose qui manque? Nos espoirs pour la conversation. Nous espérons avoir une discussion animée sur les pratiques de qualité dans les écoles de la nature. Nous (la CNAC) ne sommes pas là pour juger la pratique de qui que ce soit ou pour critiquer. J'espère que nous pouvons tous voir que tout le monde ici est passionné par l'école de la nature, et il est probable qu'il y ait des différences entre nous et ce que nous considérons comme essentiel. Nous espérons garder l'esprit ouvert et accepter les différences d'opinion. Points pratiques . Si vous avez des questions ou des idées après cette session, vous pouvez les partager de la manière qui vous convient le mieux (vidéo, audio ou écrit) et les envoyer à [community@childnature.ca](mailto:community@childnature.ca). Vous pouvez également remplir le questionnaire au sujet de cette session qui sera lié au chat et disponible sur notre site web.

B

Busola 12:24

Thank you, Tiiu. So we're just going to go over to introducing our guest speakers for tonight. So first, here we have Maria. Maria, has always enjoyed the dynamic of inquiries

as a pathway of learning. Her background is chemistry and she holds a PhD in energy and materials science. Ever since she became a mother she realized how children are real scientists. Their innate capacity of asking "why" naturally engages them with the scientific method. Through this experience, Maria grew an interest in education based on forest and nature learning, and is currently in training with CNAC as a forest school practitioner. She was already a chemistry teacher and now her dream is to write a book on the "chemistry of learning." I definitely want to read that book. Welcome, Maria.

M

Maria 13:21

Thank you so much Busola

T

Tiiu 13:25

Our next guest speaker to introduce is Margaret Fraser. Margaret is an outdoor play advocate, working, living, and playing on the island of Tiohtiá:ke, known to many as Montréal. In 2013, she co-founded the Lion and the Mouse, a non-profit committed to children's right to outdoor play in the city, where she continues to bring Forest School and Playwork principles to her work as the General Coordinator. As a child, she lived in Vancouver Island where, after a bumpy start to school, she connected with the land as a way to engage in relationships and processes that grow and change with us. She is the mother of a neurodivergent family of 4 and has taken keen interest in exploring the intersections of outdoor play, the right to the city, and disability. Welcome Margaret

B

Busola 14:17

Okay, I have the opportunity here of introducing Alix Wilson. As a child, Alix was blessed with a mother who taught her to notice and celebrate the little things happening in nature around us all the time while living in many places across Canada, always in spots with lots of big wild spaces to spend hours exploring. When Alix in turn became a mother, it was amazing to see the wonder of nature again through her sons' eyes. Alix was reminded of the insatiable desire children have to learn everything about the world around them, and how children love learning outside—no matter the weather! After running a nature-based program out of her home for 5 years, Alix became part of the team at Hand-In-Hand Nature Education as an Early Years Nature Educator. From there Alix had the chance to take part in CNAC's Forest/Nature School Practitioner Course, and develop numerous programs for a wider range of children in her community. For the past 6 years Alix has been helping children tune into the cycle of the seasons, learn about the amazing world outside our back door, and gain what she hopes is a lifelong love of nature, and there are many years ahead for Alix to continue the important work of connecting children to

nature! Thank you, Alix for doing this because as a child, I always loved to go outside and just explore and my mom always, would look for me. So yeah, thank you, Alix. And it's good to have you here tonight. Welcome.

A

Alix 15:50

Thank you, Busola

T

Tiiu 15:54

Okay, so, to start things off we're going to explore the principle that Forest/Nature School is led by educators who share power with learners through play-based, emergent, and inquiry-driven teaching and learning methods. We invite you all to click the link in the chat to view an illustration by Trevor MacKenzie that suggests four different types of inquiry. So that should be there in the chat for you now. Let's just give you a moment to look at that. I'm feeling this need to like make sure everybody can see it. So if you're having a problem, maybe viewing it, maybe put something in the chat. Oh, good. There's the link there. It's showing the different types of student inquiry from structured inquiry to controlled inquiry to guided inquiry, free inquiry. And so Alix, if it's okay, I'd like to start with asking you. CNAC describes the pedagogy of Forest/Nature School as play-based, emergent, and inquiry-driven. What does play-based mean in your Forest/Nature School practice?

A

Alix 17:31

Well, thanks. For us at hand in hand, play based means that everything that we do comes out of the children's play. So first of all, we define play as something that is just done for fun and has no agenda attached to it. So participants are able to join and leave of their own will. And there's no specific outcome, like at the beginning of the play, the kids aren't saying, Hey, we're gonna learn about gravity, or, you know, they just go about it. And so through that play based learning, and that occurs in that free play. As educators, our job is to stand back and notice what's happening and notice the ideas and topics and interests that's coming up from them and that's where later we can delve into the emergent and inquiry based stuff.

T

Tiiu 18:39

Thank you so much, Alix, really appreciate that. Margaret, I'll go to you now, what does emergent mean in your Forest/Nature School practice?

M

Margaret 18:52

For us, I mean, emergent really feels like adults are in the backseat. And what that means for us often working, well working exclusively in the city in very public spaces. Emergent means as an adult, my job is to tell other adults to take the backseat. And my job is to also tell, you know, different people who manage public spaces and even at times elected officials that they're getting in the way, and that play is happening and not just in playgrounds. And if we want emergent play to happen all around us, we need to stop telling kids what to do in every space they're allowed to exist them. So emergent means saying, hey, step back, you can walk your dog over there. You might be uncomfortable watching this happen. You might want to join in, but get out of the way.

T

Tiiu 19:57

Right on thank you for that. And Maria, what does inquiry driven mean in your Forest Nature School practice?

M

Maria 20:09

So medically like in chemistry, which is more abstract concepts and working with older kids, it might mean a little bit more like, the questions are their own questions. And I should follow them down and direct them to start with where I want them to go. So it doesn't necessarily mean controlled inquiry. But it means more like a mix between a guided inquiry type of inquiry and free, which I think is the ideal breakup interval where I should be in order to keep like, curious environment in order to keep the motivation up in the classroom, and also to transmit something to them. Because in science, we need to transmit as well and all the opportunities and other questions are good to puzzle and transmit them. So basically, in my field, it means to build on what the students already know, it means to build on what they know, it means to build on their outside school experience, that's important for them to connect, to be connected to the point, basically to that.

T

Tiiu 21:29

Thank you so much Maria and I'll thank you all for such diverse perspectives, and for bringing your practice to us and answering these questions. Busola I'll pass it over to you now.

B

Busola 21:39

Yeah, sure. Thank you Tiiu. We have another principle of practice. And another principle of practice is that Forest/Nature School views children and youth as innately competent, curious, and capable learners. So my question, and Margaret, I'm going to ask you first, if you don't mind. CNAC describes Forest/Nature School pedagogy as a pedagogy of trust. What does trust look like and sound like in your program/practice? Who/what participates in that trust?

M

Margaret 22:17

I was trying to think of how to put this into words other than you know what, when you see it, but I feel like when I see a group where there's trust amongst the kids, there's an ease of just being together. Like when I'm talking amongst a group of children, there's not a tension, there can be a flow, and there's an inclusion that everyone who is present is part of this group. And I think part of it is if there's trust then no one has to force themselves to be a certain way, or no one needs to force someone else to be a way that isn't how they should be authentically as part of themselves. I see it as like, people can be themselves and be there and show up as they are, which is hard to, I think it's really hard to know if trust is present and existing unless you're part of the group. And so I think what it takes to have it is group members who are committed to building it, who see the value of it, and even amongst children who care to establish reciprocal relations, who know that we're going to be coming back to each other, and that we want to come back to each other and there will be broken trust, and we have to want to rebuild it. So I guess there's trust where we value it and work at it. Sorry that's a little, that's not so concrete.

B

Busola 23:58

That's like, that's short and straight, you hit it on. Thank you, Margaret. That's really true. Like, you know, letting the children just go and just trusting them. That's awesome. Thank you, Margaret. And Alix, I'm just going to ask you the same question.

A

Alix 24:25

Yeah. Trust in a program, as Margaret was saying is hard to see if you're not a part of it. But I think there are certain signs that show maybe it's more like what you don't see, like you don't see educators hovering over kids or saying no a lot. You don't see boundary cones keeping kids collected, they're sort of there already. And I think in building that relationship of trust and that culture of trust, it does fall on the educators, both with the children as well as with the families, because I think, especially in Forest and Nature School, the trust between parents and educators is really big as well for them to give us their children to share outdoors and keep safe in an enclosed space can require a lot of



trust. And I think it's done through building mutual respect between the kids and then for us, and the parents. And then for us, and as again, Margaret was saying so nicely, just being able to be who you are and being accepted that way and honored that way. Nobody's bringing bad ideas, or, you know, everyone has an equal sight. There's a culture of care that we make among each other, we care for the kids, the kids care for us, the parents, as well, everybody's involved. And I guess a culture of cooperation, in that, we really work to build that sense of us as a whole and in such a way that it becomes like a family. Everybody feels included and valued for who they are. And also, for me, as an educator, I think a way that I can build that relationship of trust is by choosing some vulnerabilities to share with families as well as children and showing that humaneness and that can, you know, helps others to do the same, but also to show that we're in it together, and it's not that I have some power over youths, children or parents somehow. I hope that's good answer?

B

**Busola 27:00**

That is. Thank you so much, Alix. Yeah, you know, just sharing that, like, vulnerability with children is like very good. Because like, then they're able to, like, you know, just trust you. And you know, just keep going with whatever like they're doing, and knowing that it's okay sometimes to fall or stand or whatever they do. Thank you so much, Alix. And Maria, I'm going to also ask you the same question.

M

**Maria 27:27**

I think it also, in addition to what Alix and Margaret said, but also that it's important, like nowadays, on which most of the schools are still using traditionally performance based trust also means not to put pressure on students success, it means also to wait for them to achieve. And I think that there is a very subtle notion of trust when we do that, we encourage them, but we also wait for them to achieve it. And we avoid the pressure. And I think that nowadays generally in schools, it's a point that sometimes it's a bit forgotten. So it's just a small point that I would add upon those magic ideas. Yeah, that's it.

B

**Busola 28:22**

Thank you so much, Maria. Those are all great answers. Thank you so much for that. I am going to pass it over to Tiiu

T

**Tiiu 28:34**

Thanks Busola. In previous Fireside Chats, we've discussed how Forest/Nature School

relies on loose, natural materials to support open-ended, creative play and learning. We seemed to agree that loose parts are an essential element of Forest/Nature School in Canada. Now, we'd like to explore the relationship between inquiry and loose parts. So the question I have to ask, and is the same for all three of you, Alix, Maria and Margaret is what is the relationship between loose parts and emergent and inquiry driven learning? Alix I'll start with you if that's all right?

A

Alix 29:21

Sure, um, I think without loose parts, it would be really hard to participate with emergent or inquiry based learning, because the use of them and the interaction of them that can really build first of all, a problem or an inquiry in the first place, but also can serve to be solutions or to further that learning. And, and so for emergent, I think often, you see kids using these loose parts. In Forest and Nature School especially, to either serve as a physical sort of learning and in let's say, trying to build a bridge, so no one's feet get wet crossing a little stream, or they might use those loose parts in their imaginative play to do more social emotional type learning. And so we see the sort of open endedness of those loose parts, making an infinity of possibilities for them to delve into their questions and their interests.

T

Tiiu 30:37

Absolutely! Thank you so much for your answer, Alix. Maria, I'm curious to hear from your perspective, what you feel the relationship between loose parts and emergent and inquiry driven learning, it's been in the school, environment and with older students?

M

Maria 30:57

I think loose parts in nature is a huge substance for inquiries. So for me, it relates directly to inquiry. Also, it relates to wonder, to curiosity, it opens up a child, on a higher level, we can bring some loose parts inside class, if it's like in a more like 17 years old students, we can bring molecules, we can bring pieces of plastic, and then understand, which is the polymer behind, we can also play loose parts to older kids. Generally, we can reuse, associate to children generally, like is it easier, they wander, their curiosity opens a lot of questions. It's like free inquiry by default. But I think that it's challenging to bring it into an upper level. But it is possible, it demands a bit more of effort, but it is possible. And I think it's important, and there is also loose parts in for older kids. And we might not, just not forget it. So I think it's a substance that we can really apply in any age. And if we can make it also to teenagers, if we can direct their attention with things with reality. They are there, then they are motivated, intrinsically motivated, because we are bringing things

from their outside of the school world, from the world outside, they know already. To get deeper into their knowledge, then we want to get into knowledge with more. Yes, I tried to compliment a little bit with the older kids.

T

Tiiu 33:00

Thank you so much for that perspective. Maria, I think you're right, I think we often think of loose parts for the younger ones. And maybe we can explore more value for the older children in our lives. Thank you for that. Margaret, how about you, the relationship between loose parts and inquiry driven and the environment in which you work in.

M

Margaret 33:23

For me, loose parts are so essential in so many ways, and a large part of it is about- loose parts give kids agency, like if we say we're adults in the backseat, we're following their lead and yet, children are often existing in spaces and with materials that were picked and given uses by adults, you know, like even as simple as, like the parents deciding what's in the home and what it should be used for. Same thing in schools, same thing in cities. And just thinking of that, I like to think of like play as a liberatory practice. It's like when you're playing, you are experiencing your own full power and of course, learning to use that responsibly, but there's something about knowing that if there's a thing and you can break it if you want to, to experience all the parts of yourself. And for me, that's where it's very connected to that emergent and the inquiry, but also allowing for children to have parts of themselves emerge and to wonder things about their own abilities and relationships and power that you don't get to explore in a lot of contexts. And especially not if someone cares that there's still materials left at the end of the play session.

T

Tiiu 34:56

Thank you so much for your answer Margaret. I love the pieces that you're bringing to the table, and I just want to thank all three of you, Alix, Maria and Margaret, each one of you as you've been speaking, and then like, Oh, I want to respond, because, Alix, when you talked about the bridge, it reminded me of something from my own experience. Maria talking about older students and how I've used loose parts with science with older students. And Margaret talking about bringing yourself, when thinking about when I've worked with students from different parts of the world or English language learners, what loose parts is, you've gotten me, all of you, really excited about the discussions that we're going to have as our fireside chat continues. So thank you all for your responses, and Busola I will pass it back over to you.

B

Busola 35:43

Thank you Tiiu. Another principle that we have is: Forest/Nature School prioritizes building reciprocal relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, who have been learning from this Land since time immemorial. And Alix, I am going to be asking you, if you don't mind. How does a Forest/Nature School program in Canada, including its staff, build trust with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities?

A

Alix 36:17

Thanks. As a settler program, it is probably one of our trickiest things, to build that trust. We're pretty lucky in the Comox Valley to have a really strong First Nation here who's really generous with their time and knowledge and resources. And yet, we still have our colonial program, which we're working on. So building trust with that nation has lots of little steps. And I think, fundamentally, the very foundation would be respecting the land in the way that they would like us to. But also taking their ways of knowing and helping instill that in the program as well. For example, we make tea on a weekly basis out in the forest during the colder months. And so using a lot of, I mean, we use the plants that are in the forest. So using the Indigenous knowledge of what plants are good for and exploring their benefits and taste and those kind of things with the children is, one way. And then inviting our First Nation elders to come and participate in any way that they want to and sharing what they think is most valuable with the group of children that we're working with. Those are a few of the little things that we're doing to build that trust.

B

Busola 38:03

Thank you so much, Alix that's like really awesome and great. Thank you for that answer. I am going to pass it over to Tiiu now.

T

Tiiu 38:12

Thanks Busola. Forest/Nature School practices, policies, and programming reflect and prioritize the building of engaged, healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities through consideration of access and equity in our decisions and actions. Margaret, a question for you. How does a Forest/Nature School program in Canada, including its staff, build trust with communities who are often excluded from the Forest/Nature School movement in Canada

M

Margaret 38:49

Different thing I was going to say and now I'm just listening to Alix. I think an important thing we've been working on in our work is to let go of the beautiful Forest Nature School aesthetic, to let go of the good gear and all of that. Because it's a marker of so much privilege that if somebody shows up and doesn't have it, you're immediately uncomfortable. And I think something we've been doing more and more is instead of planning in or investing in or recommending gear, is doing that same planning and preparation around accommodations that may be needed for children with disabilities who want to be part of our programs. And to frame it more of like, if you may have difficulty walking in the snow, we have sleds. You know those kinds of transitions that say this can be in place for you and to instead of putting an emphasis on how, and each individual can be the most prepared to think about how as a group can we make sure everybody can be part and be present. And I think a huge element we've been working on a lot this year in particular is understanding that like, access is not enough. And in our camp, this is the second year, we've had, like a shadow program where we specifically have shadows who are there to give support to children with disabilities who participate in our programs, and realizing in a free play context, in a forest context where we are emergent and inquiry based and all of that, equity is so important when I say that, I think it's like the, the accommodation matters, so that the kids can show up. And I'm speaking specifically to the disability component, because that's what I work very closely on right now. But it matters just as much, if not more, so how the non-disabled children are holding space for participation, and how they are supporting or not children with disabilities. And like, no amount of planning on our end can make that happen. So something we did this year is like in our parent guide, we added a section about language, where we said like, before you show up to our camp, we want you to know, please don't assume pronouns. If you don't know how to ask someone's pronoun, here's how to ask you can say, I'm Margaret, I use she/her, how about you like, and same thing around disability to name before non-disabled people come. These are appropriate questions and these are not. So that we can work towards more of a solidarity component. And I have some like lovely stories that came out of this, this summer, like we had one boy in a group, where he ended up being the only Anglophone but because he had a shadow and there's all these COVID rules, we couldn't move him into a group where he could be with other Anglophones. And it's a boy who has motor difficulties, hearing loss. And the other kids in the group wanted him to be able to be part of it so much that they created their own sign language for the week. So that they could all find a way to play together, no amount of planning on our end, or fancy funding proposals can make that happen. It comes from the kids. And it comes from naming to our members and our community that these things matter for us. And if you want to keep showing up, they need to start mattering for you. Did I answer it all, I think.

T

Tiiu 42:40

Oh yeah, for sure. I'm just giving a moment to let that sink in. Thank you very much for that. That's a lot to think about and a lot to consider. And yeah, a lot to think about in that I love how you're talking about how you're proactively engaging community through the handbook and setting the stage before they even arrive. That's really thought provoking for me, and I really appreciate that. And that's just one tidbit of what you had to share. So thank you. I will give the final question to Maria. Maria, the question for you is: Is emergent and inquiry driven learning accessible to everyone? And what barriers exist?

M

Maria 43:32

So, yes, I mean, yes, and no, we have to look, especially here in Quebec. The school system is very heterogeneous. So if you want to have like an emergent modern pedagogy, like, apply to our kids, we have to look for an alternative schools, we have a lot of traditional system. So the answer is more like it's not acceptable to everybody, we have to look for it, we have to be informed. And it should be more common. But what I can see is that it's not really accessible to everyone. There are more and more efforts, especially with CNAC. And it's wonderful that CNAC is held all these efforts on this, on a limited budget. But there is a lot to do especially in older kids. In older kids, we don't see these. There's a lot to do with my answer. I think there's a lot to do and I have to honor your effort from CNAC on this consultation project, because it's really what we need now, especially in COVID times. Alternative schools and alternative pedagogies, they can have like a major effect and a major impact and building like an excellent infancy on everyone, especially on kids and also on teenagers. But definitely, there's a lot to do. That's my perspective.

T

Tiiu 45:39

Absolutely. We appreciate you being a part of this too. We're in the work together, right. So thank you for that, Maria. And thank you to all of our guest speakers for the thought that you've put in to your answers and for your preparations for tonight, I think you've really broadened the scope of what we're thinking about and what we'll be able to bring to the breakout rooms, which I will pass over to Busola to set up for us.

B

Busola 46:10

Thank you Tiiu. And thank you to our guest speakers. Thank you for your perspective, for your answers and for the great work you're all doing in your Forest Schools. Like it's really awesome. Just to move into our breakout rooms, we're now going to divide everyone into facilitated breakout rooms to discuss: How does Forest Nature School educators/practitioners in Canada support emergent and inquiry driven learning. That is

what would you see and hear that indicates that a program is highly emergent, and inquiry-driven learning environment. So each breakout room has already been assigned a facilitator who will record notes of your conversation. After the breakout room, we're all going to come back and we'll bring everyone and ask some of the breakout room facilitators to share a summary of your conversations. We will not be able to hear from everyone. We will collect all the written notes from the breakout rooms and the breakout rooms will last for 15 minutes. So yeah, Cherlene is just going to send us off to our breakout rooms.



Tiiu 1:03:28

Maria if you just wanted to finish your thought



Maria 1:03:33

I was telling Heather that sometimes in older levels in, upper levels, like for older kids we tend to forget the concept of nature school and Forest School, but actually we can bring them inside I was giving the example of an abstract concept that we need to do in class. Like for instance we are doing a distillation we are working with glassware, we have a temperature, we have to control the temperature, we have glassware, we need a table, we need a lot. How can we bring nature inside classroom, okay, we are maybe making a distillation of lemon peel to obtain lemonade for instance. We are working with nature. We can work with questions, we can work with inquiries, we don't need to control the class, meaning the teacher or the professor doesn't need to control the class, we need to control the experiment. We need to have some degree of control but not to control everything and when the teacher controls everything. At some point it's abusive because we are abusing of our role because we are controlling everything and we don't need to do that. We tend to forget that we don't need to do that. We can do it in a more open way and traditionally we are not taught that way and we are preprogrammed to teach in a more like, passive way. So we speak they listen. But at some point we are in the 21st century. At some point, we need to remind ourselves of these Forest and Nature School concepts and to bring them also inside classroom also. It is possible.



Tiiu 1:05:39

Thanks Maria. I think again, another moment with a lot to reflect upon and consider, has me thinking about like the continuum. For me, I think a lot about how early years is a really easy, I don't know if the word is buy in, but a lot of people just go, oh! early years, let's get them outside. And I wonder about our older children, where along the line, we're dropping that ball for them, so that by the time that they're 17? Like, yeah, like, why is that

mindset? How to bring that mindset forward? And how the formative experiences and I think there's like a gradient or something. But yeah, you've given us a lot to think on for sure there. Thank you for that.

A

Alix 1:06:42

It's such an interesting question. I have two sons, who are 14 and 17. And you know, there's been no shortage of Forest and Nature school, like opportunities and things from family at least. And, you know, it's definitely like a societal thing of like, what's cool, and what's not, and what them and their friends are into? And, yeah, it is like, at what point, do they, I mean, I think conventional school has something to do with it. And I think we're seeing a shift in that. But still, again, sort of seeping into the like K to 3, k to 4, but still not seeing a lot of opportunities at the high school level.

M

Maria 1:07:32

We kind of see it vanishing as they get older. And the point is to get it back, to make them feel that they are interdependent. Because the kids, when they get older, they become independent. It's like the target of a school or the target of a country is to have independent citizens. That's the target, it's easily reached. And all of us have to be aware that nobody is absolutely independent. We depend on each other. And for a teenager to get these, might not be easy. And I think that if we can kind of activate their ecological soul and activate some points on them, it will get inside, and they will think in a more or in a less loss way. They will think in a more connected way. And what we search is to reconnect with them at those ages. We don't want to lose them. We want to have them like connected.

A

Alix 1:08:53

Yeah, and I think they come back you know, I think it's there. It's in them if it was instilled in them in early years and younger years. I mean, this my hope anyways, but I think that it's in there, whether they sort of know it or not. And that they'll come back.

B

Busola 1:08:58

Thank you, everyone. That was such a great conversation in the breakout rooms. Okay, I'm just really mindful of our time here. So I think we could just go into the second breakout room if that's okay. And then we can have a conversation on that. Okay for the next breakout room, we're going to be discussing: How does a Forest/Nature School educator/practitioner in Canada show that they trust children as learners?





Diana 1:27:51

So I was gonna say, just like I was talking about having to trust the land and trusting nature, we also have to trust that, again, with the loose parts play, we have to trust that that material is enough. After being a classroom teacher for a long time, it took a long time for me to just trust that handing kids, whatever material or allowing loose part play, trusting that loose part play, loose parts are enough. You don't have to have a croquet set or a game with rules for children to be able to play, in fact, it's better if you don't, but again trusting that, that unlearning of how to play. Yeah, that's all I was gonna say.



Heather 1:28:42

Just quickly, I'm also aware of time, but you've just prompted something there because the games piece reminded me that you know, outside of this pedagogy and in more traditional settings, caregivers are prompted to fill that time. And what your point prompted for me was that you can also trust those down moments, that those moments of boredom, more the children exploring with themselves and each other. What are we going to do now and that we're trusting in that moment to where there may not be to their outside eye, anything to do. Wonder if that resonates with anybody?



Busola 1:29:34

Yes, it does Heather. Does anyone here have any other thing to add or say? Suzanne I can see your hands up.



Suzanne 1:29:52

This actually makes me think like, you're starting a new group of children now. To bring actually like less provocations and bring out less material what we bring sometimes, because it's good to see like, what do they do? prefer material or for loose parts? What happens if you don't have anything provided? And? Yeah, we have two sides. And on one side we have a box like hidden in the forest where we have like, little like cooking tools and like cooking stuff so the kids can make my pies and stuff. But we have another side which is really smaller. And then we bring things as it's really literally like five pots and five spoons. And that's all and one kid was commenting on it, that it's common. It's not common. It's just it's like we're in the same forest. But I found it was interesting that the less provided goes to comma. And I thought that was super interesting.



Heather 1:30:54

That is interesting. Thank you Busola. I'll return to you for regular programming.

B

Busola 1:31:02

Thank you so much, everyone. Those were beautiful stories like just your answers and your input tonight was very great. And I just want to thank everyone for participating in today's fireside chat relationship with trust, we really do appreciate your inputs as we seek to co-create a set of quality indicators for Forest/Nature Schools. Thank you so much once again. This is just a reminder that we do have a formstack survey so if you did not feel like answering questions during the event or you would like to share it with your circles or yeah just like re answering those questions or putting more information we do have the survey link in the chat below. Also this recording as well as a summary of our conversations tonight will be up on our website in the next week or two. So if you want to watch the event again or you do want to share with other people we would have it on our website in the following week or two. We do have our next fireside chat coming up on October 28 at 3pm and it will be on Relationship with Story. I'm excited about that one. And also if you would like to get in touch with us in any way you feel comfortable email, drawings, videos, audios, you can send it to [community@childnature.ca](mailto:community@childnature.ca). Again thank you so much everyone.

T

Tiiu 1:32:41

Merci beaucoup Busola. Merci. Remerciez l'auditoire de sa participation et dites-lui que nous apprécions sa contribution alors que nous cherchons à co-créeer un ensemble d'indicateurs de qualité pour la pratique des écoles de la nature. Rappelez-leur l'enquête formstack, s'ils n'ont pas eu envie de répondre aux questions pendant l'événement ou s'ils souhaitent la partager avec leur entourage. Rappelez-leur que cet enregistrement ainsi qu'un résumé des conversations seront disponibles sur notre site web dans une semaine ou deux. Annoncez la prochaine discussion informelle : 28 octobre à 15h00 EDT sur le thème : La relation avec le récit. Contactez-nous : [community@childnature.ca](mailto:community@childnature.ca)

B

Busola 1:35:02

Thank you everyone.