

# Virtual Outdoor Play Institute: Rethinking the Rules and Practices of Outdoor Play

eccdc

Friday September 9, 2022

- 5:00 to 6:00 pm - Institute Opening Keynote: Rethinking Rules & Practices for Outdoor Play with Rusty Keeler *and door prize draw of Rusty's new book*

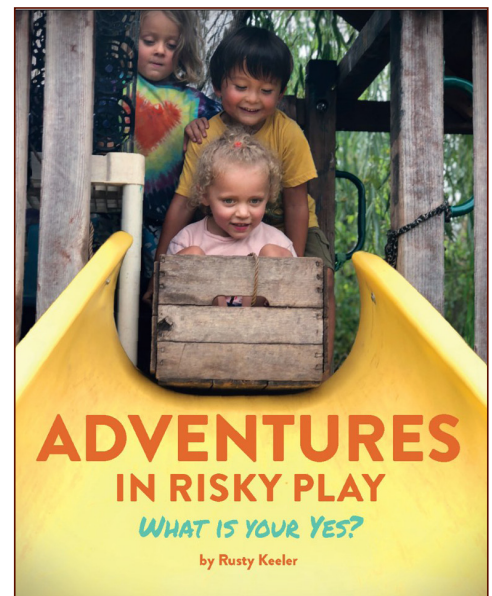
What if you could reflect on your philosophies of outdoor play and your hopes and dreams for children's experiences and then craft new rules based on things that really made sense for your children, your yard and your program? Join Rusty Keeler, Internationally Renowned Playscape Designer and Author, to re-examine your outdoor rules and practices and to consider how to offer the best experiences for the children in your program.



## About Rusty Keeler

For the past 20 years, Rusty Keeler has worked with hundreds of community, school, park, university, and child care leaders to dream, design, and construct beautiful outdoor environments for schools and centres throughout the world. Keeler

is a frequent keynote speaker and a pioneer in the movement to reconnect children to nature.



# Outdoor Virtual Play Institute: Rethinking the Rules and Practices of Outdoor Play continued

Saturday September 10, 2022

## 9:30 to 10:30 am - Opening Keynote with Debra Harwood, Professor (PhD), Department of Educational Studies - Embracing Outdoor Nature Play & Shifting Pedagogies

Are you curious about the benefits of outdoor nature play and how to shift pedagogies? Outdoor nature play offers opportunities for children to explore, imagine, wonder, create, discover, and respond with infinite possibilities. Ultimately, it is through this cycle of curiosity and creativity that young children develop the confidence, competence, and security to test ideas, learn new skills and ideas. Educators must be purposeful in designing outdoor environments and adopting intentional practices that help sustain children's thinking and engagement in outdoor play spaces. From mud play, dramatic play, STEAM experiences to rowdy dizzy play and more, outdoor environments and practices must support a diverse spectrum of play-learning opportunities for every child.

## 10:30 am to 12:00 pm - Choice of Session

### **A: Canada Through the Seasons with the ECCDC Team**

Studies have shown the importance of providing young children with physical fitness activities, connecting with nature, and the opportunity for engaging in playful experiences outdoors whatever the weather or the season. This session will focus on Canadian Fall including the benefits and inclusion of sensory experiences in planning for young children. During this session participants will explore ways in which to engage families in Fall experiences and materials and experiences to enhance outdoor play.

### **B. Opportunities for Play in a Forest School Setting with Greenbelt Academy**

Join Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre for this engaging webinar. During this session participants will gain strategies for providing educational experiences through daily access to extended time in nature. Participants will explore the many benefits of outdoor play including physical, mental, social and emotional health, while developing a connection with the environment.

### **C. Extending Your Indoor Curriculum Outdoors with Kimberly Squires, Pedagogical Leader, University of Guelph**

With the many benefits of being outdoors with children, we need to consider how to capitalize on this natural resource. During this session you will explore a variety of strategies for taking your indoor curriculum into the great outdoors. You will also explore ways to take advantage of Canada's four seasons and how to use weather to your advantage. Teaching outdoors does not have to disrupt your curriculum, join us for tips and tricks to make getting outside with children easier!

## 12:00 to 12:30 pm - Lunch Break

# Outdoor Virtual Play Institute: Rethinking the Rules and Practices of Outdoor Play continued

Saturday September 10, 2022

## ● 12:30 to 2:00 pm - Choice of session

### **A: Rethinking Outdoor Play Materials with the ECCDC Team**

One of the silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the emphasis on outdoor play for children. This session will encourage educators to continue their focus on outdoor play and learning post-pandemic, by prompting educators to consider where they are currently at and reflecting on where they can go next, by rethinking the materials they offer in their outdoor spaces. Educators will have opportunities to share their learning and experiences, and to reflect on their outdoor pedagogy.

### **B. Land Art with Links for Greener Learning**

The earth offers endless beauty right in our backyards, parks, and greenspaces. Art is often inspired by this beauty in the natural world. In this workshop participants will explore the origins of land art and share some examples of cultures that have created art with nature. Participants will explore how to support children in creating their own art with the common natural materials they find outdoors.

### **C. Garden Planning, Programming and Play with Garden Jane, Permaculture Designer and Gardener, and Community Developer**

Join Garden Jane for this design workshop, where you can learn about and plan for including young children in food garden design and growing food. Participants will have the opportunity to explore the process behind real world garden development and how children were part of the development, building, and growing processes.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Friday September 9, 2022:** Keynote with Rusty Keeler from 5:00 to 6:00 pm

**Saturday September 10, 2022** from 9:30am to 4:00pm

Niagara Educators: \$25

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55

**To register**, call 905.646.7311 ext. 304, email [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org) or visit [www.eccdc.org](http://www.eccdc.org)

## ● 2:00 to 3:00 pm Inclusion of Children with Special Education Needs in Outdoor Play with Monique Somma, Faculty of Education, Brock University and Rachelle Gibbs, RECE

Outdoor play has overwhelming benefits for all children including the development of their gross motor skills, self-confidence, decision making, risk-taking, communication and collaboration skills, overall wellbeing and more. These abundantly researched benefits are true for all young children, including children with special education needs. This session will highlight how using an inclusive framework through concepts of universal design for learning and differentiated instruction, outdoor play opportunities can be designed to provide access points for all children in your care.

## ● 3:00 to 3:45 pm - Panel of Speakers with Prompting Questions

## ● 3:45 pm - Formal Closing

# Outdoor Virtual Play Institute: Rethinking the Rules and Practices of Outdoor Play continued

## About the Presenters

### Debra Harwood

Debra has been involved in the area of Early Childhood Education for more than 20 years. As a practitioner and researcher, Debra has worked directly with educators, families and young children in Ontario, British Columbia, and internationally. Her teaching and research expertise are focused on early child development and curriculum, nature pedagogies, professionalism, community capacity building, and ethical research practices with young children and their families.

### Greenbelt Academy

Greenbelt Academy strives to give every child the opportunity to learn about their world through daily access to extended time in nature. Quality educators facilitate an emergent curriculum that reflects the needs of the whole child and meets the demands of the world in which we live.

### Kimberly Squires

Kimberly Squires is the pedagogical leader at the University of Guelph Child Care and Learning Centre. She also teaches in the bachelor of applied science program at the University of Guelph with a focus on early learning pedagogy and administration. She has worked in both child care and school-based early learning and care settings during her more than 10 years in the field.

### Links for Greener Learning

Links for Greener Learning (LGL) is an environmental charity organization that seeks to serve the needs of the community by promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable practices. LGL programs and initiatives focus on protecting and preserving our natural environment while providing meaningful social benefits to members of the community.

### Garden Jane

Jane is a gardener, educator, and community developer with twenty-seven years of experience. She founded Garden Jane in 2007 to help people learn how to grow and connect to healthy food, gardens, and each other. Jane has worked directly with thousands of people since then. She invites people in with storytelling, art and play, and shares what science, research, and pattern-based observation have to offer. Her current work includes working with garden communities of all ages, teaching permaculture design, and helping grow healthy food communities in Southern Ontario. Jane has a B.A. in Anthropology and Environmental Studies (U of T), a Masters in Environmental Studies (York U) and certificates in Permaculture Design and Teaching Permaculture.

### Monique Somma

Monique Somma is a faculty member in the Teacher Education Program. She teaches courses on topics related to education for students with exceptionalities. Monique obtained an MEd and PhD from Brock University. Prior to joining Brock full-time in 2017, she taught both special education and inclusive classes in several Ontario elementary schools for 15 years.