



Digging Deeper: Exploring Science with Young Children



March 11, 2016

University Center * Western Carolina University

Sponsored by the
Birth-Kindergarten Program

- 8:00 – 8:45** Registration
- 8:45-10:00** Welcome and Introductions
- Keynote: Using Nature to Move Full STEM/STEAM Ahead in Early Learning!*
Tanya Poole, NC WILD
- 10:00-10:15** Break
- 10:15-11:15** Keynote Cont'd.
- 11:15- 12:30** Lunch (If attending the afternoon session: Growing Up WILD, this session will start at 12:15)
- 12:30 – 1:45** Breakout Session I (Growing Up Wild Session: 12-15-4:15)
- 1:45- 2:00** Break
- 2:00 – 3:15** Breakout Session II
- Complete Satisfaction Survey**
- Adjourn - Thank you for attending!**

Session Descriptions

Breakout Session I: (12:15 – 4:15)

- 1. Growing Up Wild.** Tanya Poole (This session will start at 12:15 and end at 4:15, Participants will receive a certificate and 6 hours of CEUs). Growing Up WILD is an early childhood program that builds on children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and their habitats, with an emphasis on promoting aquatic resource appreciation and stewardship. Through a wide range of activities and experiences, Growing Up WILD provides an early foundation for developing positive impressions about nature and lifelong social and academic skills. The Growing Up WILD curriculum is primarily oriented towards formal and non-formal educators, who work with children ages 3-7. This may include early childhood and classroom educators, home school teachers and park rangers. Participants trained in Growing Up WILD will receive a free Growing Up WILD activity guide.

Breakout Session II: (12:30-3:15)

1. **Preschool Engineering.** Patricia Bricker, Ed.D.

STEM experiences are naturally part of what children experience every day through play and interactions with others. Many of the materials we need to involve students in STEM activities are already used in early childhood classrooms. Our mission as teachers is to provide a learning environment that encourages children to engage in scientific and engineering practices with these materials. In this session, you will learn about and experience ways to help young children participate in engineering activities. This will include having students:

1. Ask questions and identify problems
2. Construct models
3. Test and evaluate designs
4. Redesign
5. Talk, draw, and write about their investigations

Improving STEM education is a high priority for our region, state, and nation and is critical for our future related to scientific discovery and innovation, job preparation, and a STEM-literate society. You can get students off to a great start in your work as early childhood educators.

2. **"Science Isn't Magic."** Betsie Stockslager, Asheville City Schools Early Childhood Specialist and Jessica Jackson, Ira B. Jones Elementary Kindergarten Teacher

Do you ever wonder how something works or is made? Do you ever hear your students asking questions about the world around them? If you answered yes, you are ready for the session, "Science isn't Magic." Often our youngest learners are the most inquisitive learners and in order to get to the heart of teaching science, our job as ECE is to foster and support that sense of wonder.

1. Focus on 5 skills of inquiry: Questioning, Observing, Predicting, Compare & Contrast/Classifying, Investigating and Documenting
2. Will have the opportunity to work through the inquiry process themselves
3. Work through the inquiry process through peer-to-peer conversations and activities (with a focus on feedback loops)
4. Will start to apply your learning by creating lessons and other classroom learning opportunities grounded in the inquiry skills