

# Cultivating Natural Playgrounds that Nurture Children's Curiosity and Wonder:

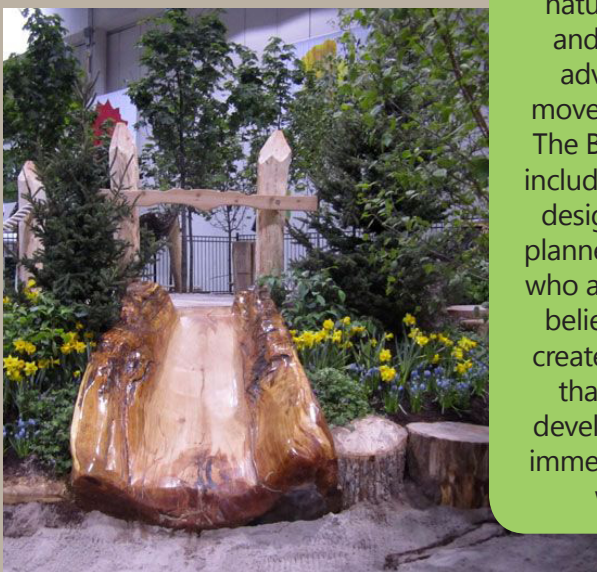
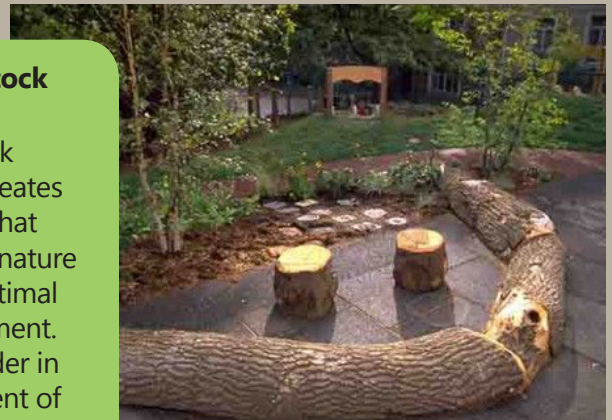
## *A Series to Deepen Our Thinking*

Today's children and families often have limited opportunities to connect with the natural environment. Children spend more time indoors watching television or using computers than they do being physically active outside. In the past decade, research has demonstrated the important benefits of children connecting to nature. Collectively, this body of research shows that children's emotional, social, and physical health is positively impacted when they have daily contact with nature. Join the team from Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds for an informative series that will provide you with strategies for designing, maintaining and planning for young children's curiosity in naturalized play spaces. You'll also learn about outdoor programming and documentation techniques for outdoor activities. Attending all sessions in the series is not mandatory, but is highly recommended.



### **The Bienenstock Story**

Bienenstock Playgrounds creates play spaces that connect kids to nature and inspire optimal child development. They are a leader in the development of natural playgrounds and are passionate advocates for this movement worldwide. The Bienenstock team includes award winning designers, architects, planners and educators who are united by their belief in the need to create outdoor spaces that support child development through immersive experiences with nature.



## Workshop Series Session One: Not Just Another Playground and Extending Curriculum Outdoors

- **9:00 am Registration and Breakfast**

- **9:30 am to 12:00 pm Morning Session: Not Just Another Playground....**

The first workshop in the series will offer an introduction to forest schools and natural playgrounds and the concepts behind them. It will also examine some of the opportunities natural playgrounds provide for learning to be extended. You'll learn why natural play spaces are pedagogically sound and why they are imperative to a child's development. You'll also have a chance to review some of the best natural playground designs from around the world. Additionally, societal attitudes toward the outdoors will be discussed, as will the barriers that limit us from creating spaces that truly engage and challenge children.

- **12:00 to 1:00 pm Lunch**

- **1:00 to 3:30 pm Afternoon Session: Extending Curriculum Outdoors**

The focus of this session will be on delivering an outdoor curriculum to children of all ages. It will emphasize making the most of what you already have, while adding simple ideas and strategies to ensure success for both children and educators. In addition to considering some global examples of schools and child care centres that use the outdoors as their main learning environment, you'll learn how to develop children's language, math, science, art and social skills in an outdoor setting. This session will also discuss how to overcome some of the common barriers educators face when transitioning to the use of outdoor programming.

- **3:30 pm Workshop Closing**

**Friday November 7** • 9:00 am to 4:00 pm • Amici's Banquet and Conference Centre, 2740 Merrittville Hwy, Thorold • \$85 includes breakfast, lunch, handouts, and all materials



## Workshop Series Session Two: Designing a Natural Playground and Extending Curriculum Outdoors in the Winter

- **9:00 am Registration and Breakfast**

- **9:30 am to 12:00 pm Morning Session: Designing a Natural Playground**

This session will focus on the design principles needed to naturalize your outdoor space. Participants will review what a natural playground is and discuss ideas from leading designers from around the world. Working in a small group, you'll have a chance to create your own natural playground design. Each group will get a chance to present its model to the larger group. The session will end with a goal-setting exercise, so you can acquire the skills necessary for getting past any barriers that might prevent your outdoor classroom project from happening.

- **12:00 to 1:00 pm Lunch**

- **1:00 to 3:30 pm Afternoon Session: Extending Curriculum Outdoors in the Winter**

This highly experiential, hands-on session will be outside. You'll have a chance to experience some of the fun and exciting programming you can use in winter, including blowing ice bubbles, creating ice art, and tapping trees. Additionally, you'll be provided with a newsletter to share with colleagues and parents discussing the Scandinavian concept of "there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing."

- **3:30 pm Workshop Closing**

**Friday January 23, 2015** • 9:00 am to 4:00 pm • Amici's Banquet and Conference Centre, 2740 Merrittville Hwy, Thorold • \$85 includes breakfast, lunch, handouts, and all materials

**Please note:** A large portion of the workshop materials will be presented outside, weather permitting. Please ensure you wear appropriate clothing.



## Workshop Series Session Three: How Does Your Garden Grow, Water Walls, Dirt is Good and the Stick ... Yes You Can

- **9:00 am Registration and Breakfast**
- **9:30 am to 10:45 am Morning Session: How Does Your Garden Grow?**

Many educators feel they don't have the green thumb it takes to grow a successful garden. This session will demonstrate that simplicity is the key to any gardening adventure and inspire you to start small and grow from there. You'll learn all of the basics about planting, digging, weeding and stick fences, as well as how gardening provides opportunities for children's learning to occur all year long.

- **10:45 to 12:00 pm Second Morning Session 'Dirt is Good'**

Making mud pies is a natural part of any childhood. It's a simple activity that is packed full of learning concepts including: viscosity, density, volume and capacity. It's also ideal for children who crave sensory experiences. Setting up a mud kitchen provides dramatic opportunities to enhance social and language skills. This session will show you how to set up a mud kitchen in any playground and provide creative and meaningful experiences that are truly memorable.

- **12:00 to 1:00 pm Lunch**

- **1:00 pm to 2:15 pm Afternoon Session: Water walls**

All children love playing with water. Whether it's jumping in a puddle or playing at the water table, it's always a big hit. This workshop will show you how to set up your own water wall along any chain link fence, using some tubing, connectors and ties. Explore how you can work with the children to control the amount and direction of the water and get tips and tricks for extending their learning. Come and see for yourself how you can create a unique outdoor activity centre with truly unlimited potential.

- **2:15 pm to 3:30 pm Second Afternoon Session The Stick - 'Yes You Can'**

Be sure to stick around for this workshop! You'll learn a variety of ways to encourage children to explore the natural world, starting with a stick. Learn where sticks come from, who needs them and their many uses. From painting sticks and stick art, to making stick people and animals, to building forts, sticks can be the focal point of many great learning opportunities. The best part is that sticks are free, which puts these opportunities within everybody's reach.

- **3:30 pm Workshop Closing**

**Friday April 10, 2015 • 9:00 am to 4:00 pm • Amici's Banquet and Conference Centre, 2740 Merrittville Hwy, Thorold • \$85 includes breakfast, lunch, handouts, and all materials**



Cultivating Natural Playgrounds that Nurture Children's Curiosity and Wonder: A Series to Deepen our Thinking is presented by Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds and hosted by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre.

**To register**, contact the ECCDC at 905.646.7311 extension 304 or [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org)



**eccdc**

Early Childhood Community Development Centre  
3340 Schmon Parkway | Thorold, ON | Canada L2V 4Y6  
T. 905.646.7311 F. 905.646.2692 [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org) [www.eccdc.org](http://www.eccdc.org)