Starting Out Wild at the I-20 Wildlife Preserve; Thriving in nature

The session will describe current trends in outdoor experiences and the positive correlations on kindergarten readiness by highlighting Starting Out Wild, a new educational program at the I-20 Wildlife Preserve. While participating in planned outdoor learning experiences at the Preserve, toddlers, ages 18 months - 3 years, use all their senses to explore the outdoors, learn about themselves, the environment, and how to become comfortable with nature. The Starting Out Wild series incorporates all the documented benefits of play and learning which contribute to school readiness and create a happier, healthier, smarter student.

I. Introduction to Playas and the I-20 Wildlife Preserve
   a. Get to know us, I-20 Wildlife preserve and myself
   b. Playa quiz and video
   c. Range of educational programs with best practices in STEM STREAM OR STEAM
      i. Starting Out Wild
      ii. Vaya to the Playa
      iii. Investigating Ecosystems
      iv. Resource Management Exercise
      v. Independent Research

II. Introduction : Why it matters
   a. The playas need protection, our water supply needs protection.
   b. Generational changes can lead to the death of environmentalism.
   c. Children’s overall Health
   d. Executive Functions
   e. Need system thinkers to provide a road map for the future

III. Time in the out of doors does prepare our youngest learners for school.
   a. How learning to put on rain boots leads to academic success.
   b. Kindergarten readiness
   c. Read: I’m in Charge of Celebrations, Byrd Baylor.
   d. game: each one teach one, nature bracelet, leaf rubbing, pressing, photography, cycles, build/destroy,

IV. Starting Out Wild- how you can help
   a. targeting at-risk families
   b. registration for the second class will open soon. Visit ‘events’ on our webpage www.i20WP.org for additional information and to register.
V. Connections

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connections</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th>kindergarten</th>
<th>2nd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>make a big book together each page:</td>
<td>group 1- pick a topic and make an activity.</td>
<td>group 2-</td>
<td>group 3</td>
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<td>Why should I care?</td>
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<td>what does this have to do with you?</td>
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VII. Extensions

a. Classroom Extension Activities
   i. Emmy stuff online, SOW pdf files, resources

b. Interactive Extensions
   i. let me know if you want more training, or if you want me to come to your school and look for ways to get outside. cross the barriers together.

c. What’s coming in the 2018-2019 Academic Year?

VIII. Questions

1. What are some benefits you see your students getting from more time outside? and/or What are the challenges you see arising as you try to give these children more time in the outdoors?
2. Why should I care?
3. What does this have to do with you as a teacher?
• Playas are only found in Texas. Playas are found over the Ogallala Aquifer in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma. We are at the southernmost point in Midland.

• Playas recharge the Ogallala Aquifer. Playas are a major source of recharge to aquifer. This recharge is enough to support grazing operations and municipalities but not irrigation.

• Rangeland playas are ephemeral. Urban playas because of their compromised functioning retain water for longer periods.

• Playas contribute economically to the High Plains region through supporting ranching, hunting, ecotourism, recreation and aquifer recharge.

• Playas are centers of high biodiversity by providing local resources and are critical to stopovers for migrating wildfowl.

• Our 86-acre urban playa is the 12th largest playa in Midland County. It has been cut off at the south and north ends by roads and greatly altered by human activities over time.