

# Children & Nature Network

*Resources shared during the Children & Nature Network's  
"Culturally centered nature-based programs for kids" event, November 12, 2025*

Links shared during the event:

- Find your native land: <https://native-land.ca>
- How to support Indigenous Peoples Everyday
  - <https://amplifier.org/campaigns/well-being/>
  - <https://www.kaainamomona.org/>
  - <https://www.childrenandnature.org/resources/honoring-indigenous-people-and-land/>
- Resources and inspiration for families, caregivers and program service providers:  
<https://www.childrenandnature.org/families/>
- Subscribe to our Families newsletter: <https://www.childrenandnature.org/subscribe/>
- Support the children and nature movement: <https://www.childrenandnature.org/support/>
- Unearthing Joy Together:
  - <https://unearthingjoytogether.com/>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/unearthingjoytogether>
  - <https://www.instagram.com/unearthingjoytogether/>
- "Seeing Ourselves in Nature," featuring Ashley Brailsford available at Red Leaf Press.  
<https://www.redleafpress.org/Seeing-Ourselves-in-Nature-Stories-from-Educators-and-Children-of-Indigenous-Black-and-Other-People-of-the-Global-Majority-P3102.aspx>. Receive 20% off of this title using promo code NATURE20 - valid through 7/31/26
- Finding Nature News article featuring Jessica Fong, editor of Ashley's book -  
<https://www.childrenandnature.org/resources/fnn-birds-in-my-neighborhood-connecting-kids-to-the-joy-of-birding-and-nature/>
- Components of Dr. Ashley Brailsford's culturally centered nature programs:
  - Community is curriculum
    - Experiences that were offered were based around topics that Ashley thought young children deserve to learn about - taught by experts in the community who look like them - who weren't normally considered nature or conservationists or environmentalists but everyday people doing really good work
    - They weren't in nature just for the sake of being in nature

- Learning through a justice lens
- Topics included: Gardening for Food Justice, Skills for Liberation, Creative Arts in Nature, Exploring the Animal Kingdom, Farm Fridays
- If you're creating a culturally-centered program, you have to really deal with yourself first - examining your bias through an anti-racist lens
  - *Multicultural Teaching in the Early Childhood Classroom* by Mariana Souto-Manning
  - Free resource Ashley created based upon work by Dr. James A. Banks the Founder of Multicultural Education <https://bit.ly/evaluationhandout>
- Always start with the word outside (as opposed to nature) because it usually conjures more memories that are comforting for folks
  - Shift your mind about what counts as nature. Families visited Frankie Pierce Tunnel Mural in Nashville, Tennessee. Juno Frankie Pierce, a prominent Black suffragist and civil rights activist.
- The program was an hour and a half, in the mornings, meeting once a week for 6 to 8 weeks at a time. One session in the spring and one in the fall
- Create inclusive environments that honor culture and promote well being
  - Equitable Food-Oriented Development (EFOD) - recipe from *The Gaza Kitchen: A Palestinian Culinary Journey* by Laila el-Haddad
  - [Tri-County Play Collaborative](#)
- Have to acknowledge things like ICE raids, African Americans in the US historically, and even today, not being safe in nature.
- Program needs to have values. Discern who is aligned with your values, be firm on them and the right people will choose to be there. For Ashley she valued her program centering on Indigenous, Black, and other people, the global majority.

Books Dr. Ashley Brailsford has used in her programs:

- *Growing Table* by Farmer Will Allen, daughter Erika Allen Founder, CEO [Urban Growers Collective](#)
- *I Am Farmer: Growing an Environmental Movement in Cameroon* by Baptiste Paul and Miranda Paul
- *Jayden's Impossible Garden* by Mélina Mangal
- *The Thing About Bees: A Love Letter* by Shabazz Larkin
- *Tomatoes for Neela* by Padma Lakshmi

- *We are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom
- *Being Mindful Like Grandpa* by Sheri Mabry
- *The Stuff of Stars* by Marion Dane Bauer
- *My Book of Butterflies* by Geraldo Valério
- *My Tata's Remedies* by Roni Capin Rivera-Ashford
- *Tanna's Owl* by Rachel Qitsualik-Tinsley and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley
- *Creeking: A True Story* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin
- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
- *The Beeman* by Laurie Krebs and Valeria Cis
- *Danza!: Amalia Hernández and El Ballet Folklórico de México* by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Capoeira: Game! Dance! Martial Art!* By George Ancona
- *The Electric Slide and Kai* by Kelly J. Baptist and Darnell Johnson
- *Josie Dances* by Denise Lajimodiere and Angela Erdrich
- *Beatrice Looks for Home* by Ron Grady
- *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* by Margarita Engle
- *Trombone Shorty: A Picture Book Biography* by Troy Andrews
- *Your Name is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow
- *Rickshaw Girl* by Mitali Perkins
- *Rainbow Weaver / Tejedora del Arcoiris* by Linda Elovitz Marshall
- *Dim Sum for Everyone* by Grace Lin
- *La fiesta de las pupusas/The Fiesta of the Pupusas: El Salvador* by Jorge Argueta and Gabriela Morán

In addition:

- [Socialjusticebooks.org](https://socialjusticebooks.org) has vetted Multicultural books written for Indigenous, Black and other people of the global majority. Just because a book features a Black or a Brown character, doesn't mean it's a quality multicultural literature book.
- [@maistorybooklibrary](https://www.instagram.com/maistorybooklibrary) and [@weneeddiveersebooks](https://www.instagram.com/weneeddiveersebooks) also recommend a ton of inclusive books

Questions in the chat that Dr. Ashley Brailsford did not get a chance to answer during the event and graciously responded to post-event.

- Q: Who initiated this program? Did your organization approach local stakeholders or did they reach out to the greater community to participate in this initiative?

A: For the program at the garden, it was one that I started based on our personal needs as a family and grew organically to also serve the neighborhood and greater Nashville community.

- Q: Do you go to the places where the families and young people are located to gather for the workshops, or do they have to travel to get to where the workshops are taking place? If the latter, have you experienced challenges having people come to the locations where the workshops are being held?

A: In the program at the garden, they travel to the program. I am not aware of transportation issues folks may have had. For the program with [Tri-County Play Collaborative](#) in SC, we had funding to offer gas cards to families as the programs were all across the tri-county area.

- Q: Any strategies for consoling parents or community members who may be initially resistant to the curriculum involved in culturally centered nature based programs in general?

A: Nope, that's NEVER the work for those who are minoritized to do. I don't console people who don't understand the value of a culturally centered program and do not want them in these safe spaces. That's for them to do that work on their own fragility. There are too many resources to remain ignorant.

- Q: You said community is curriculum. How do you initiate conversations with community members to find out what is most needed? For someone who is just getting started.

A: You start in your own community with who you know and the organizations that are there in the neighborhood. If you are doing programming outside of a neighborhood where you live you spend time in that neighborhood volunteering, walking and authentically getting to know people and work on building trust first which may take time. I was volunteering at the garden weekly for almost 6 months before I started a program.