



## Diann Gano

Diann Gano—who opened her family child care program, *Under the Ginkgo Tree* in 1986—has long believed that “the earth gives us what we need to learn” and that nature is “the perfect environment for little brains to grow and learn in every day.” While conducting research for her master’s thesis on outdoor learning in early childhood settings, she learned about the Nature Explore Classroom Certification Program, which recognizes schools and other organizations that have made a commitment to providing outdoor classrooms and comprehensive programming to help children use the natural world as an integral part of learning. She enrolled in the Nature Explore Classroom certification program after completing her Master’s degree in 2010, and *Under the Ginkgo Tree* was certified as a Nature Explore Certified Outdoor Classroom Program in 2011.

She presents at the local, state and national levels on topics such as indoor and outdoor learning environments, the importance of loose parts in early math education and the impact of immersion in the natural world on brain development in young children. In 2019, she received the prestigious *Terri Lynn Lokoff/Children’s Tylenol National Teacher Award*, which honors 50 outstanding early child care professionals across the nation each year for making a lasting difference in the lives of the children they serve and setting them on a path to success in school and in life. She received her BS in liberal arts from Western Illinois University and her MEd in education from St. Mary of the Woods College in Indiana.



### Conference Sessions

Thursday, April 25

1:00-2:30

Tinkering With Nature, Science and Loose Parts

Friday, April 26

8:30-10:00 AM

Art Smarts With Loose Parts: Building Brains and Creativity Through Play

3:00-4:30 PM

Nature Sparks! Supporting Infant and Toddler Development Outdoors with Sharron Krull