**Teaching children to teach adults? Reflection on learnings from a nature
based playgroup in a zoo setting**

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**Abstract**

Early childhood education, with an emphasis on play and the importance of connecting children with nature is becoming increasingly recognized as having benefits for children. From this, emerges the concept of playgroups within a zoo setting. Using Young Explorers Club, Ocean Park as a case study, this workshop will examine what are the strengths and weakness of this playgroup concept. We will explore observations and experiences of participants and will reflect on the value of playgroups for the child but also the potential it has for the adult. Looking at how we allow children the space to play and learn in nature whilst simultaneously encouraging the accompanying adults to value and support this, can we in turn actually teach them too? Using our favourite educational medium of play, participants will experiment and reflect by creating small world animal habitats. Using a variety of materials, loose parts and creativity, we will examine firstly how to facilitate the use of materials and play and secondly look at the benefits and how these can both be presented to the child and the adult simultaneously with the aim of having a dual educational impact.