



3/9/2026

Hot Springs Early Childhood Association

Presentation: Learning Comes Alive Outdoors – Arkansas Children’s Week Theme

Training Minutes

There were 13 people in attendance, including five board members.

Melanie Jackson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She shared that HSECA is an affiliate of AECA and briefly discussed how participants could become members. She also informed participants about the upcoming Dinner and Tribute scheduled for April 13, 2026, with P.J. Yarbrough planned as the guest speaker and Bubba’s Catfish providing the catering. She then introduced Geania Dickey as the guest presenter for the evening.

The presentation focused on the Arkansas Children’s Week theme “Learning Comes Alive Outdoors.” Participants began by discussing what comes to mind when hearing this phrase. Many shared that outdoor experiences fuel curiosity and provide endless opportunities for exploration and learning.

Participants reflected on their own childhood experiences with outdoor play and how those experiences shaped the way they think about outdoor learning today. Everyone listed activities they remembered doing outside as children and placed them on a line to show whether they spent most of their time playing inside or outside. All but one participant shared that they spent more time playing outside growing up.

The group discussed similarities in their experiences and noted that some differences in outdoor play may be related to generational changes. Participants also talked about the importance of being intentional about getting children outside more often.

Participants completed a worksheet activity where they placed a star beside statements they related to or found surprising and discussed their responses. Participants also chose an outdoor activity to try and later discussed what they learned from the experience.

Participants worked in groups of two to choose a photo of an outdoor environment and answered discussion questions about it, including identifying their favorite parts of an outdoor space and discussing the role educators play in supporting outdoor experiences for children.

The Arkansas Children’s Week toolkit was distributed to participants.

Sam Crow drew names for door prizes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.