



## EVENT GUIDE: Centering diversity, equity and inclusion

### Introduction

Leaders in our movement are learning and growing together. This guide, developed by Juan Martínez, Senior Advisor to the Children & Nature Network, is intended to be a starting point and a “living document” for the children and nature movement as we work together to increase equitable access to the benefits of nature. As you use this guide, please feel free to [contact Juan](#) with feedback and questions. In addition, DEI training and technical assistance is available to paid members of the Children & Nature Network.

### Purpose

The primary goal of this guide is to help you center Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as fundamental values of event planning so that all participants feel safe, welcome, valued and inspired. This work begins by equipping your whole organization, not just your event planning team, with the tools and support needed to integrate DEI values into day-to-day action. While this guide specifically addresses events and convenings, the Children & Nature Network welcomes you to join us in learning, growing and working to infuse DEI values into all aspects of our work and the global children and nature movement. [Learn more about C&NN's values.](#)

## Setting the Tone for Your Organization and Your Event

Creating and upholding inclusive space for children and nature movement events must be continuous and consistent. As part of this effort, it is important to:

- Encourage your staff and partners to be visible and vocal in their commitment to DEI.
- Share timely, relevant and meaningful DEI messages, grounded in real action.
- Employ a variety of forums and formats to share DEI values: speeches, webinars, convenings, conferences, roundtables, online discussions and social media.
- Communicate about DEI not only at DEI functions, but at general events, speaking engagements, orientation of new team members, fundraisers and more. Share your DEI goals and how you are working to achieve them any time you have an opportunity to talk about your work.

### Event Planning

- Incorporating your DEI values into event planning applies any time you bring people together to learn, network, collaborate and take action in your own field and across the broad disciplines of the children and nature movement.
- Any event can incorporate DEI values, from large to small and ranging from classes, workshops, meetings, programs, trainings and field trips to large scale conferences and partnerships.

## What is my role in advancing DEI?

As an event planner, you have the opportunity to create experiences that are not just inclusive, but welcoming and productive for diverse audiences. **While there is a lot to consider, good design is a process and any progress toward inclusion is a success!** Here are a few thoughts to get you started:

- Strive for equity and inclusion. Be intentional and state your intentions at the start of your planning process.
- Consider accessibility and inclusion early in your planning to ensure participants have a positive experience. (This may also save you money by eliminating the need to retrofit components of your event or make last-minute accommodations.)
- Barriers to participation, of any kind, can make attendees feel unwelcome and less likely to return or recommend your event to a friend or colleague. Commit to similar if not identical experiences for all, including disabled and non-disabled participants.
- Be knowledgeable about all aspects of your event. As the event planner, you should be prepared to field all event-related inquiries, including questions about accessibility, DEI and more.

### General DEI Guidance

- Be aware of how diverse audiences perceive explicit and implicit messages. Creating content from a singular viewpoint or set of experiences may unintentionally reinforce bias.
- When seeking speakers, presenters and contributors, strive for a broad range of voices, perspectives and experiences to ensure that your event is inclusive and reflective of your audience.



## Words Have Meaning

- Words matter. Avoid biased language and divisive words that demean, reinforce stereotypes or make any person or group feel excluded.
- Be sensitive to differences and consciously choose inclusive language, such as gender-inclusive pronouns.
- Try to avoid slang, regional colloquialisms, phrases or expressions that may be misinterpreted or even considered offensive.

## Promoting Your Event

- Be inclusive in promoting your event, including social media. When creating content, be aware of your audiences and their time zones. Something as simple as 'Good Morning' is not inclusive for a global event.
- Curate an inclusive image library that portrays a fair representation of your audience, including those who have been historically excluded from your organization's work or focus area.
- The same goes for videos; by making sure that diverse representatives of your field are featured, you communicate in a non-verbal way that your entire audience is valued.



## Template for Event Opening Remarks

Here is a sample opening statement that you can adapt as needed:

*Welcome and thank you for joining us for (insert title of event).*

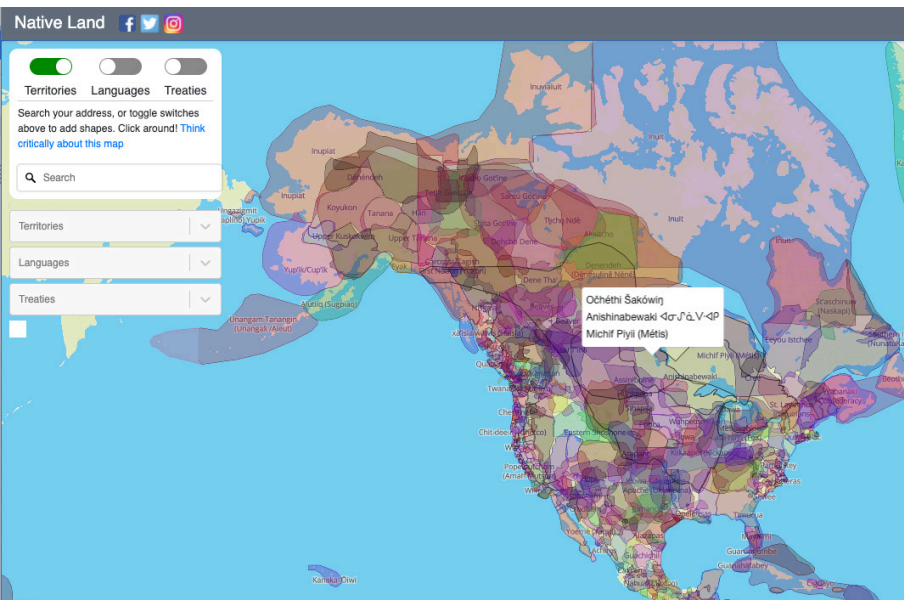
*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are core values of (insert organization or event name here). These values are critical to our mission and fundamental to the children and nature movement's efforts to increase equitable access to nature. At this event, and in our day-to-day work, we aim to foster a culture where every participant feels valued, supported and inspired to achieve both individual and common goals.*

*With intent, we have planned this event to welcome people of every race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, migratory status, disability/ability, political affiliation, veteran status and socioeconomic background. Please let us know how we are doing; hearing from you helps us grow and learn.*

*As we begin today, we must first acknowledge that we gather on the ancestral territory of the (use Native Land Map link below) people. For more than five hundred years, Native communities across the Americas have demonstrated resilience and resistance in the face of violent efforts to separate them from their land, culture, and each other. They remain at the forefront of movements to protect Mother Earth and the life it sustains. Native American communities continue to thrive today. As part of the children and nature movement, we acknowledge the critical and necessary step of honoring Native communities and invite you to join us in this practice.*

## Native Land Acknowledgement Resource

To learn about the Indigenous territories and languages of your workplace or event location, the Native Land Map, shown below, is available online at [native-land.ca](https://native-land.ca) and is also available as an app.



To learn more about Indigenous land acknowledgments, we recommend these resources:

- [Honor Native Land](#)
- [Indigenous Land Acknowledgment, Explained](#)
- [Native Land Community Blog](#)

We wish you great success in planning inclusive events at which all participants feel **safe, welcome, valued and inspired**. Please feel free to send questions, comments and suggestions for this guide to [juan@childrenandnature.org](mailto:juan@childrenandnature.org).