



Conference Keynote – Dr. Travis Wright

Emotionally Responsive Teaching: Reframing Resilience for Children with Challenging Lives

For many children, such as those growing in the midst of life’s difficulties or other forms of trauma, the demands of the classroom and home may require very different skills and attitudes to succeed. This session will focus on the possibilities and challenges of educating children with difficult lives. Participants will leave inspired and with new perspectives and strategies!

Emergent Inquiry Track

Venturing Into Nature’s Classroom: Connecting the Head, Heart, and Hands in a Forest School – Micky Morton, M.Ed.

This session will take you through the cycle of inquiry as we observe the children's experience within nature emerge into deep connective learning at Seedkeepers Forest School. Participants will explore a few of the many projects that have taken place over the years that emerged from seasonal interactions with the land and will be guided in a simple activity that allows each to understand how daily connections to nature can lead to a lifelong passion for learning.

Documentation Panel Round Table – Jane Broderick, Ed.D. & Cindy McGaha, Ph.D.

In two round-table presentations this session will feature documentation from a variety of Reggio inspired schools. Each participant will choose two round table discussions during these sessions to hear the stories of children’s, teachers, and even director’s inquiry processes through photos, descriptions, and reflections. Learn how documentation makes the ideas and theories of children, teachers, and directors come to life.

Emergent Inquiry with Infants and Toddlers – Dominique Files

Educators may struggle with implementing emergent curriculum when the children in the classroom are not yet speaking. This session will outline how educators can look beyond the words of the children to successfully guide the children on their journey of inquiry by providing participants with practical strategies.

Farm to Table: Food as Care and Pedagogy – Andrea Anderson, Ed.D. & Casey Black, B.S.

This session will share the journey of a Reggio Emilia-inspired program as they implemented a farm-to-table pedagogy as a form of care and curriculum. Presenters will share documentation of the emergent curriculum based on food inquiry, gardening, sustainability, recycling, and food as a means to show love and care as well as how the administrative team sought out community connections and grant funding to support the development of the food program.

Infants & Toddlers Track

Consent and Healthy Relationships with Infants and Toddlers – Amanda Osborne, M.A., IMH-E

This session will explore the need to address healthy relationships beginning in infancy by describing the components of healthy relationships and the concept of consent. We will explore how we can practice consent with infants and toddlers so we begin teaching consent from birth to help children build a strong foundation that will keep them safe as they grow.

The Power of Your Voice: Singing and Storytelling with Infants and Toddlers – Amie A. Perry, M.A. & Sonya Greear

In this session we will explore the profound impact of music and storytelling in early childhood classrooms. We will discuss the benefits of singing and storytelling for language acquisition, emotional regulation, and bonding. Attendees will leave equipped with practical techniques and strategies to integrate music and storytelling into their classrooms by harnessing the transformative power of their voices.

"This child can't self-regulate!" Understanding the sensory integration issues of very young children. – Cassandra Nabalta, Marketa Raevsky, & Julia Atilas

This session will delve into sensory integration dysfunction (SPD) by exploring its manifestations, prevalence, and impact on children's development. We will discuss strategies for identification, intervention, and effective communication with parents and colleagues, emphasizing the importance of early support for children with SPD to thrive socially and academically.

Leveraging Quality Early Language and Literacy Experiences in Fostering Young Children's Social and Emotional Development – Lydia Ifunanya Ugwu, Ann Marie Cornelison, & Ruth Facun-Granadozo

Grounded in child development principles and recent research, the session will explore effective practices for promoting language and emergent literacy skills while nurturing socio-emotional development. Through interactive discussions, small-group reflections, and practical strategies, participants will enhance their ability to create enriching learning environments and foster meaningful interactions with infants and toddlers, ultimately supporting their holistic development.

Leadership Track

Leading for Emotionally Responsive Teaching – Travis Wright

Participants will discuss the conditions, environments, and supports necessary to cultivate and support emotionally responsive teaching. Through the presentation of several case studies, participants will leave with new perspectives and strategies to better support educational and clinical practice.

Early Childhood Leadership: Nurturing Hearts & Minds as You Lead – Pamela Evanshen, Ed.D. & Patience Mensah-Bonsu Aggrey

In this session designed for center directors or program leaders, participants will explore effective from ineffective leadership traits and how they impact the relationships we build among employees. Participants will determine their strengths and utilize them as they think about enhancing their understanding of employees, refining relationship-building and mentoring strategies, and engaging in reflective practice to facilitate professional growth.

Developing Teacher Agency in a Time of External Control – Melody Kay Hobbs, Ed.S.

This session aims to encourage program and teacher leaders, coaches, and mentors to reconsider their perceptions of teachers by emphasizing the importance of viewing teachers as capable individuals. Participants will explore how leadership practices can either support or hinder teachers' development of decision-making skills. Presenters will highlight the benefits of leadership approaches that prioritize teacher agency which could enhance teacher self-efficacy and positively impact the school culture and children's social-emotional well-being.

Developing an Inclusion Leadership Team – Amanda Mason, M.Ed., Kerri Munsey, M.Ed., & Anita Still, Ed.S.

This session will guide preschool educators and leaders in understanding what both the law and research say about meaningful inclusion for young children with disabilities. Through hands-on activities and discussion, participants will reflect on their values for education to create a vision for inclusion in their district's preschool programming. Participants will use this vision to

identify members and establish an Inclusion Leadership Team (ILT) which leads the charge for creating inclusive opportunities for preschool children in the district.

Early STEM Track

Where do I start?: Using a learning trajectories approach to cultivate inclusive STEM learning experience – Lim Chi-Ing

Co-hosts: Alissa A. Lange, & Amie A. Perry

This session will focus on identifying, using, and applying inclusive STEM practices in early childhood environments. Through reflections on participants' own practices and video demonstrations, participants will learn about ways to be intentional and drawing from children's strengths and interests to support each and every child in STEM learning opportunities. Participants will also leave with free ready to use resources.

Intentional Interactions to Support STREAM Skills and More! – Caitlin Ellis, M.Ed. & Andrea Barrett

Participants in this session will learn how to strategically plan intentional interactions throughout the day to nurture STREAM skills and support social and emotional development in young children. Through practical exercises, attendees will identify activities and materials tailored to specific developmental goals, considering both child interests and educator objectives.

Tinker with Tales: Using Children's Literature to Engage STEM Explorations – Jennifer Bilbry & Ruth Copeland

This session will explore the integration of children's literature into early childhood classrooms to foster STEM engagement among preschoolers. Through hands-on examples, discussions on cross-curricular learning, and exploration of picture books' potential, educators will gain practical insights and inspiration to incorporate STEM activities effectively, ultimately enhancing young learners' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Social and Emotional Aspects of STEM in the Preschool Classroom – Alicia Holley

This session will empower educators to integrate STEM learning into preschool classrooms, tapping into children's natural curiosity and creativity. By leveraging everyday items, educators can facilitate engaging activities that promote scientific exploration, engineering challenges, and mathematical concepts while fostering language development and problem-solving skills. Attendees will explore how hands-on experiences and collaborative projects build foundational STEM competencies while also cultivating social-emotional skills, environmental awareness, and a sense of belonging.

Early Literacy Track

Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, and Phonics. Oh my! – Angela M. Shelton, Ed.S. & Kathryn Sharp, Ed.D.

Much of the work we do in early literacy begins with a solid foundation in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics instruction. However, these terms can often feel overwhelming and confusing. Join this session to discuss how these skills develop and exchange ideas on how to incorporate them into your literacy instruction. Participants will also engage in a "make and take" activity to use right away!

Social Stories as Emotional, Social, and Literacy Tools – Rachel Jamieson, M.S. Ed.

Have you ever wondered how to help a child process the arrival of a younger sibling? Struggled to effectively support a child's big feelings or big reactions? Wanted to ensure your classroom is prepared for an upcoming field trip? Come learn how to create and use personalized social stories to organize young children's experiences, both in and out of the classroom. This session will be beneficial for anyone who provides care for children-- teachers, aides, therapists, parents!

Using Informational Text to Enhance Learning in the Preschool Classroom – Bolatito Anne Alaofin, Candi S. Clevinger, & Narges Sareh

Presenters in this session will discuss strategies to use informational text along with fiction books in developing interdisciplinary lessons and activities in early childhood classroom with a focus on preschool. Presenters and attendees will discuss ways to identify informational books that support children's learning in various content areas as well as strategies to include those books in the classroom.

Literacy Beyond Borders: Promoting Reading and Comprehension Among ESL Learners – Clara Puni Nyamesem, M.A. & Claudia Baiata

This presentation aims to inspire early childhood educators and researchers by offering a multicultural perspective on promoting reading and comprehension among ESL learners. By weaving together the richness of storybooks, the letters of the alphabet, and pictures we can create an inclusive and effective learning environment that nurtures the linguistic and cultural development of young children in preschool and early elementary school