



2024 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR'S CONFERENCE

MARCH 1 & 2, 2024

Teaching Heart and Mind

*For wisdom will enter your head and knowledge will
fill you with joy! Proverbs 2:10*

Sponsored in conjunction with



Welcome

On behalf of Concordia University, the Minnesota South District of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod and the Early Childhood Planning Committee, we welcome you to the Minnesota Early Childhood Educator's Conference

Our conference strives to provide spiritual enrichment and continuing education for early childhood educators. We believe that early childhood educators must be affirmed, valued and challenged in their work with young children. We are a Christian conference that strives to help teachers grow professionally but also recognizes that spiritual growth is an area of development as well. To support this mission, we will provide worship, motivational keynotes and sectionals for the unique needs of program directors and teachers of children from birth to kindergarten. Early childhood education is as diverse as the children we teach. We hope to expand your horizons and help you gather information for the best developmentally informed appropriate practices.

Professional Development

We have indicated which sessions are Develop Approved, which may meet needs within Parent Aware or Licensing requirements for training. We also have indicated which may be applied toward clock hours for those of you who need hours for teacher relicensure.

Food

Lunch and morning coffee & pastries are included in your registration.

Vendors

We welcome a variety of vendors to our conference with materials to both purchase and inform you of current trends in early childhood education.

Daily Schedule

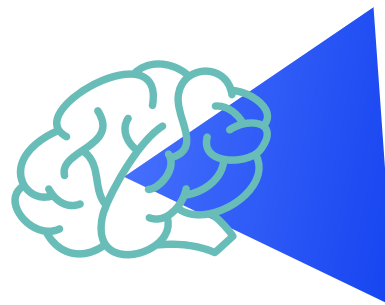
7:45-8:30 Registration, Vendors & Continental Breakfast

8:30-10:30 Session

10:45-12:15 Announcements, Worship and Keynote

12:15-1:30 Lunch

1:30-3:30 Session



Arriving for the Conference

Registration will be held in the Pearson Commons (building 24) at Concordia University in St. Paul. More information on directions to the campus and a campus map can be found <https://www.csp.edu/campus-map-and-directions/> Parking is available in campus lots. Please be mindful of signage designations for specific spots.

Friday Morning Session 8:30-10:30

Please indicate your session choice by number 10-18

10

Building Our Capacity for Curiosity, Compassion and Courage: Critical Elements –

Jamie Bonczyk, Program Officer, Greater Twin Cities, United Way

Explore the power and impact of curiosity, compassion and courage. Learn strategies to integrate these traits into your personal and professional life.

11

Classroom Environment and Challenging Behavior

Heather Lane, Director, All Saints Childcare

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement – Accommodations, Modification and Adaptations

Explore how classroom environment can affect children behavior. Classroom environments can have many different components in how it can affect teachers and students. Here are some examples: Room layout, Tone, Expectations, Visual displays and sensory stimulation. As an educator, how and what can we do to create an environment that is successful for students and teachers.

12

A Conversation about Expulsion in Early Childhood Education –

Beth Menninga, Coaching Manager & Jacy Nylander, Lead Coach -Center for Inclusive Childcare

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement –Positive Behavior Intervention

The current staffing crisis in child care programs is compounding the already urgent problem of suspensions and expulsions in early childhood education programs. Join us to explore perspectives and hear from early childhood educators and parents wrestling with this issue. We will examine how we in a variety of infant mental health roles and sectors might support children, families, early childhood educators when expulsion threatens. We will take time to share strategies for reducing and preventing expulsion from the group, as well from CICC and other work in our state and beyond.

13

Dual Language Learners in Early Education Settings -

Hannah Riddle, Bilingual Trainer, Semillitas Training

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement –English Language Learner

MN DHS Childcare Training Requirement for Child Development

Develop Approved Training –KCF Area I Child Development and Learning

Learn how to support children who speak a second language. Children need a strong base in their native language to help support their development in all developmental domains, but that doesn't mean that they can't also learn a second language. Discuss the benefits of second language learning for children while learning strategies to support them while in our care.

74

Four Inspired Ways to Inspire Love and Responsibility in the Classroom

Pam Thompson, Certified Parent Coach and Licensed Early Childhood Teacher, Cords of Hopes Coaching

It's a challenging time to be a teacher. We want to foster love in the classroom (for each other AND for learning). But we also want a calm and peaceful classroom where the kids listen to us and do what they are supposed to do. It often feels as if we sacrifice one for the other. In this session, you will learn a framework with four simple messages you can use to guide the interactions in your classroom, helping you to become the teacher you want to be.

15

Math, What Does it Look Like? No Time for Flashcards

Jessica Rogers, Trainer & Family Child Care Provider

Develop Approved Training –KCF Area IIB Promoting Cognitive Development

Learn how to create a math rich learning environment for your children. Participants will discover how to promote math in everyday activities like games, dramatic play and circle time. Explore how to create a mathematic environment that prepares children for a formal math education . Participants will explore hands on actives you will be able to bring back to your setting .

16

Move Mindfully® For Early Education: Introduction to Mindfulness, Movement and Social/Emotional Learning for Early Educators

Chrissy Mignogna, BA, RYT-200, Movemindfully Lead Trainer & Director of Education

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement –Positive Behavior Intervention

Learn how to integrate developmentally appropriate mindfulness, movement and social/emotional learning practices into Early Education Environments. Deepen your understanding of the impact of trauma and stress on both children and adults. Develop practical research-based interventions to assist young children with self-regulation, focus, de-escalation, community connection and overall well-being. Learn breathing exercises, simple regulating-movement, relaxation techniques and social/emotional skill development activities to incorporate into early education environments. Develop a toolkit of practices for use with the children you work with and for your own self-care.

17

Promoting Professionalism for Early Childhood Educators: How to Implement Culturally Responsive Practices Grounded in an Ethical Framework

Kelly Sadlovsky, Chair, Department of Graduate Teacher Education and MAED-ECE, Concordia University, St Paul

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement -Cultural Competency

This session will include research-based best practices for early childhood educators in diverse roles with a focus on professionalism in the field, implementation of culturally responsive practices, using a code of ethics to guide decision-making, and advocating for inclusive early learning environments.

18

Self Care, Child Care, World Care in Nature

Karen Walburg, Teacher, Westwood Early Childhood Center

How do you practice self care? What gifts can we receive when we practice mindful, centered self care, especially when in nature? How might those gifts and that practice influence us personally, professionally, as members of our global society and beyond? Let's explore together these questions and look at examples of how the gifts of self care time in nature have influenced some Early Childhood Educators. How might you be able to experience those gifts?

Friday Keynote - Becky Danielson

Establishing a Firm Foundation for Effective Parent -Teacher Relationships



As preschool is typically the first step in the educational process for families, preschool teachers have the awesome responsibility of creating a positive educational foundation. Respectful, collaborative teacher-parent relationships enhance the learning environment, provide security and success for children, and offer an example for future home-school relationships. Today's parents need to be encouraged to advocate, rather than abdicate their responsibility as their child's primary teacher. With encouragement and support, as well as community building and teamwork, the working relationship between the school and the home will allow for greater success of the whole child.

As a licensed parent and family educator and former kindergarten and first grade teacher, Becky Danielson has abundant experience and on-the-job training working with families and teachers. She is a certified teacher with a BA in Elementary Education, a MA in Education as well as licensure in Early Childhood Education and Parent and Family Education. She candidly shares her life as a Christian, wife, mom, and educator in small group settings, workshops, and at national conferences. She has co-authored six parenting books.

Friday Afternoon Session 1:30-3:30

Please indicate your session choice by number 20-28

20

Beyond Sharing: Teaching Generosity & Kindness

Pam Thompson, Certified Parent Coach and Licensed Early Childhood Teacher, Cords of Hopes Coaching

We want our children to share and we spend a lot of time telling them to share and teaching sharing. But it often doesn't seem to be effective. In this session, you will learn effective and fun ways to teach your children to be generous and kind to those in your class as well as to others, including but going beyond sharing.

21

Compliance/Avoiding Claims: Employment Law Issues Every Manager in Early Childhood Education Must Know

Shelia Engelmeier, CEO, Engelmeier & Umanah, PA

This session is most appropriate for directors or school administrators

Analyzing techniques and litigation avoidance strategies to apply to the full employment cycle. Discuss best practices for interviewing and selection, documenting performance, job descriptions, performance management, handling leaves and other time off, discipline and discharge and more.

22

Developing Readers & Writers – It's in the DOING!

Sue Starks, Professor of Education, Chair of Early Childhood Education, Concordia University, St Paul

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirements for Reading Preparation

For young children, learning comes via doing as is the case for the development of language and literacy. As significant adults in the lives of children we need to create relationship-based contexts, along with experiences and opportunities for them to engage with language and literacy in purposeful ways. Join a conversation on a structured approach to energize you as you empower your developing readers and writers to DO and to become!

23

Embracing Change: Navigating Cold in a Minnesota Early Childhood Education Program

Ayuko Boomer & Alyssa Wilt, Early Childhood Specialists Child Development Laboratory School, University of Minnesota

In the fall of 2020, the University of MN's Lab School decided to move their ECE programming entirely outside in response to COVID-19. None of the teachers had worked in this type of programming before, and the year has provided a wealth of learning opportunities. In this session, attendees will hear from teachers as they reflect on the lessons learned while navigating the cold. Presenters will share the changes they made to their programming to keep children safe and the difficulties and triumphs they experienced moving to outdoor, nature-based programming. We'll hear from the school's teachers about what it is like to continue to support outdoor learning today.

24

Making Happy Happen: Building Resilience in Children

Jessica Rogers, Trainer & Family Child Care Provider

Develop Approved Training –KCF Area IIC Promoting Social & Emotional Development

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement –

Accommodations, Modifications, Adaptations of Curriculum, Materials & Strategies

Recognize specific characteristics or elements in a child's life that contribute to resilience. Explore how the development of these resilient tendencies will give a child the essential life skills needed to cope with challenges, adopt a positive perspective, and develop self-confidence and self-worth – all essential ingredients for happiness.

25

Move Mindfully® Breathe, Move, Rest Practices for You!

Chrissy Mignogna, BA, RYT-200, Movemindfully Lead Trainer & Director of Education

The stress of our work takes it toll, impacting overall health and well-being. Relief is possible with simple mind-body stress-management care practices to reduce stress, relieve exhaustion and prevent ultimate burnout. Experience simple Breath Move Rest practices for your own physical, emotional and mental health well-being. Explore ways to take care of YOU that can be easily integrated into the work day, staff meetings, the classroom or family time. Come as you are -no special clothes or mats needed!

26

Nature's Classroom: Cultivating Positive Behavior in Early Childhood Education

Jen Gelhar, Owner Little Beginning Learning Center & Just In Time Teachers

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement -Positive Behavior Intervention

Join us as we discover how nature positively influences early childhood behavior. We will explore practical strategies for integrating outdoor experiences inside and outside of the classroom to foster a positive learning environment.

27

Nurturing the Heart and Mind: Character Building for Preschoolers

Becky Danielson, M.Ed. Licensed Parent & Family Educator, Faith First Parenting

Build a collaborative, cohesive, and kind classroom by integrating character building lessons focused on faith. This session will highlight how to assist children in developing appropriate and socially acceptable behaviors, applying friendship building skills, and encouraging empathy in the classroom. A variety of influences, including Covid, have left young children lacking interpersonal relationship skills including communication skills and problem-solving strategies. Extension activities for families enhances the learning and increases the likelihood of the character-building skills to be internalized. The child will be more successful when the school and home collaborate.

28

This Little Gospel Light of Mine; Let's Let it Shine

Jan Stockman, Retired Director and Early Education Consultant

Every day we have the opportunity to share our mission of that "Gospel light." In this session, we will discuss ways to let that light shine in our classrooms, to the homes of our students and to our local and church community. We will investigate easy ways to weave our philosophy throughout the school day. Come and explore ways to enrich our programs as we strive to make each of our Centers a shining example of God's love that will touch our students, families and community.



Saturday Morning Session 8:30-10:30

Please indicate your session choice by number 30-38

30

Circle Time Fun

Sarah Fritsch, Early Childhood Coordinator, Big Lake Schools

Develop Approved Training –KCF Area II C Promoting Social & Emotional Development

Explore the learning opportunities that group time can provide for children at any age. Examine how all domains of learning can be found in a quality group time. Gain songs and activities that will keep children engaged, while keeping families involved through book bags, letter bags and more.

31

Connecting Children to Nature through Art

Sandra Burwell, Consultant & Presenter with experience as a teacher, director supervisor mentor and educational coordinator

Explore the many opportunities that combining nature and art can offer to children in all areas of the curriculum and environment. View power point presentation of inspiration and works created in and with nature. Receive handouts and participate in dialogues. Move about in wide variety of materials both indoors and out as well as create art with nature objects offered and/or collected.

32

Equity in Leadership

Melissa Donovan, TARSS Training Specialist, Center for Early Education & Development, University of Minnesota

Develop Approved Training -KCF Area VI Professionalism

Explore the vital role of equity in early childhood leadership. Designed for early childhood professionals and aspiring leaders, this course delves into the principles, practices, and strategies necessary to promote equity in early childhood settings. Gain valuable insights, tools, and resources to enhance your leadership skills and foster inclusive environments where all children, families, and staff can thrive.

33

Good Starts with Loose Parts

Ann Ossanna, Infant Teacher, Westwood Early Childhood Center

This session has a special focus on those teaching infants

Finding loose parts to use with Infants requires extra thought with choking hazards, things that can be mouthed, and the need to wash and sanitize. In this session, we'll talk about things to use with infants, and share ideas of how to present them in a way that allows infants to explore and discover on their own.

34

A New Approach to Trauma: Introduction to Trust Based Relational Interventions

*Kiah Van Horne, Mot, OTR/L, TBRI Practitioner, Pediatric Occupational Therapist
This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement –Positive Behavior Intervention*

In this session participants will be introduced to TBRI –an attachment-based trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. The understanding of the effect of trauma on brain development is discussed and opportunities are gained on how to utilize the connections developed between the relationships of providers and children allows for positive support. Strategies on utilizing TBRI will be discussed.

35

Observation and Documentation: Using Program Information for Decision Making

*Heather Charmoli, MnAEYC Program Administrator
Develop Approved Training –KCF Area IV.A Observing, Recording and Assessing Development*

This course will describe the components of authentic assessment, of which observation is key; describe how observation and documentation are used in making program decisions; and how to develop lesson plans using the Minnesota Early Indicators of Progress as a guide.

36

Seeing with New Eyes: Looking for Multiplicity in Our Work with Children

Kelly Matthews, Owner, A Place For You Consulting

Are we always so sure what we see is what actually happened? What if we choose to focus on an unexpected piece of a conflict –how does that change the mood in the room? By exploring optical illusions, works of art, photographs, and interactively tying it all to our daily work with children, we can realize the power we have to change our perspective, and just as importantly, understand children’s perspective better.

37

Sensory Processing Disorder

*Allison VanLoon, Director, Acorn Academy
This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirement -
Accommodation, Modification, Adaptation of Curriculum, Materials and Strategies
MN DHS Childcare Training Requirement for Disabilities Training
Develop Approved Training –KCF Area II.A Creating Positive Learning Experiences*

Define the characteristics of Sensory Processing Disorder and how it may impact young children in child care programs. Identify strategies for inclusion as well as resources to share with parents.

Storytelling with Children

Joey Schoen, *Preschool Lead Teacher & Assistant Director, Dodge Nature Center*

Ross Thompson, *Grace Neighborhood Nursery School Lead Teacher*

Storytelling with children offers the opportunity to include their interests, ideas and exploration while also fostering their imaginations and supporting their social interactions. When we invite children to share their stories, we gain insights into their thoughts and values. When we come together to act out children's stories, our classroom community connects and strengthens. Joey Schoen will share her experiences with using the Story Acting methods created by Vivian Gussin Paley and how that has enhanced her work with children. Ross Thompson will talk about his inclusion of daily storytelling in his classrooms – styles, the skills supported, and why the inclusion of frequent storytelling (both by the adults and the children) is a vital part of any classroom.

Saturday Keynote - Megan Miessler

Understanding the Brain



The brain is one of the most complex creations of God! Children's brains are continuing to develop and often need adult assistance to be able to function in a healthy way. Megan Miessler, LCSW, will share ways to interact with students and families in the classroom to help impact the social and emotional development of the brain in a positive way. Who knows you might even learn something about your own brain!

Megan is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and currently serves as the Executive Director at Lutheran Counseling Services in Winter Park, FL. Megan began working with children and youth as a DCE in the Lutheran Church. She received her MSW from University of Central Florida and her DCE from Concordia St. Paul. Megan works with children and families and focuses on play therapy, depression, Anxiety, Crisis Intervention, School Counseling and Marriage Therapy. Megan seeks to encourage self-awareness, through authenticity, so that all feel equipped to use their God-given gifts and talents.

Saturday Afternoon Session 1:30-3:30

Please indicate your session choice by number 40-49

40

Asking Intentional Questions to Stretch Learning

Sandra Burwell, Consultant & Presenter with experience as a teacher, director supervisor mentor and educational coordinator

Delve into the many questions we might encounter in our work...Questions we ask ourselves, our children, our parents, our colleagues as well as questions children ask each other, questions children ask us, questions parents ask...So many questions! Explore the theory and practice of good questions and ways to construct them in order to enrich our conversations and extend our insights. Class will include slides, articles, inquiry into good questions and dialogue.

41

Conflict, Power Struggles & That Darn Chair

Kelly Matthews, Owner, A Place For You Consulting

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirements for Positive Behavior Supports

Does it seem like you spend all day putting out fires: conflicts over toys, space and the ever popular “But I had it first!” If this sounds familiar, join us for an interactive session on new ways to look at conflicts. We'll discuss the difference between misbehavior and mistaken behavior and take a deeper look at some traditional discipline techniques that may be doing more harm than good! If you're ready to be done with power struggles, this is the session for you!

42

Courageous Conversations: Discussion a Child's Development with Families

Heather Charmoli, MnAEYC Program Administrator

Develop Approved Training -KCF Area III Relationships with Families

Communicating with families when there are concerns about their child's development requires careful planning and preparation. Identify best practices for building cultural competency in partnerships with families as a strategy to promote healthy child development. Model how positive parent-child interactions can foster warm and nurturing relationships within the family structure. Utilize relationship-based and reflective practice to engage parents and caregivers in courageous conversations that will lead to better outcomes for children experiencing developmental concerns.

43

Infants, Toddlers & Their Families: Nurturing & Supporting Social Emotional Development

Melissa Donovan, TARSS Training Specialist, Center for Early Education & Development, University of Minnesota

Develop Approved Training -KCF Area II.C Promoting Social and Emotional Development

The objectives of the training are to help participants: learn about social and emotional behaviors in infants and toddlers and how this development is impacted by caregivers; and reflect on ways in which culture (perceptions, beliefs, values) influences caregiving practices.

44

Let's Move! Using Movement to Promote a Child's Development

Kiah Van Horne, Mot, OTR/L, TBRI Practitioner, Pediatric Occupational Therapist

Movement is valuable to young children as it impacts their brain development! This session explores the effect of movement activities on various developmental processes and explore movement activities to implement to promote brain development for young children.

45

Loads of Learning!

Michelle Espelien, Director Kids of Peace Preschool

This session is a combined session featuring 2- 1 hour sessions. One which focuses on literacy and the other on art.

Everyday Experiences with Favorite Books - We will take a look at several great authors and artists and learn about activities that can be used with the books. There will be examples of games, art and other creative activities to do in your classroom.

Art is Everywhere! -Artist works are everywhere! A class to learn about many famous artists and activities and projects to use in the classroom as well.

46

Mental Health in the Classroom

Megan Miessler, MSW, LCSW, DCE; Executive Director Lutheran Counseling Services

This session fulfills MN Teacher License Renewal Requirements for Mental Illness

The issue of Mental Health in our world today appears to be something we are more and more willing to discuss and address openly. COVID has impacted how we view not only our physical health but also our mental health. What do you need to be aware of when addressing Mental Health in the classroom? How can you promote mental health awareness at your school? Megan Miessler, LCSW, DCE, Executive Director at Lutheran Counseling Services in Winter Park, FL will lead this discussion, sharing facts, data and tools that will be helpful in your ministry as you address Mental Health in your school.

47

Playing with the Language of Music and Movement

Mark Sorvari, Playing with Music

Explore the interwoven elements of Music, Creative Movement, and the Visual Arts as they relate to aesthetics for fostering creative and cognitive connections. Experience multi-layered proposals that consider experimentation as a working method which lingers on the creative process rather than the result. Join us for a discussion around environments and learning contexts that will stimulate critical thinking and aesthetic feeling simultaneously.

48

Science Centers Your Kids Will Love

Allison VanLoon, Director, Acorn Academy

Back by popular demand from 2023!

Develop Approved Training -KCF Area II.B Promoting Cognitive Development

Attract kids to your science center with hands-on activities that they will beg to explore. Discover fun and thrifty ways to make your science center effective and exciting. Learn licensing requirements from DHS, science learning objectives from the MN ECIPs, and best practices from NAEYC. Examine many practical ways to put these into practice, including science skills, magnetism, states and properties of matter, chemical reactions, applied science/physics, ramps and rolling, mirrors/prisms, and five senses. Deepen science learning in your classroom.

49

Understanding Temperament is Understanding Behavior

Sarah Fritsch, Early Childhood Coordinator, Big Lake Schools

Develop Approved Training -KCF Area II.C Promoting Social and Emotional Develop

Define temperament and how temperament plays a crucial role in behavior. Analyze the nine temperament traits and compare your traits to those of the children in your care. Investigate goodness of fit, and how it can change our perception of a child's behavior. Gain strategies on how to bring out the best in each child's temperament traits using hands on activities, books and songs.

TEACHERS ENCOURAGE...

brains
to think

hands
to create

hearts
to love.

Registration

- All registration is online. The form below is for planning purposes for you or for programs where your center director may ask you to provide this information.
- The link to register online is available through the Minnesota South District LCMS website
- Registration is \$95 for one day or \$165 for both days.
- Registration fee includes all sessions for that day, keynote, light breakfast and lunch.
- Registrations must be received by February 23rd
- General conference questions may be sent to mnecec@gmail.com For registration/payment questions, please contact Christina at christina.krentz@mnsdistrict.org
- The conference admits participants without regard to age, sex, creed, race, color, national or ethnic origin or disability.

For Planning/Internal Center Purposes Only Registration must be completed online

Name _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Develop ID _____

A develop ID number must be provided to begin the process of receiving credit the Develop website (MN Training). You will still need to sign in at sessions with your develop ID number so please bring that information to the conference.

Friday, March 1st

Session 1
8:30-10:30

Session # _____

Session 2
1:30-3:30

Session # _____

Saturday, March 2nd

Session 1
8:30-10:30

Session # _____

Session 2
1:30-3:30

Session # _____