Inspiring Educators

ELEA Region 3
Early Childhood Educators Conference

in collaboration with

ELEA National
Administrator & Pastor Conference

Registration information for National Conference provided separately:

February 28-29, 2020 | Maple Grove, MN
Conference Information

Conference Fees
ELEA Members
- Two Day Conference Fee: $140
- One Day Conference Fee: $105

Non-ELEA Members
- Two Day Conference Fee: $175
- One Day Conference Fee: $125

Group Discount: $5 discount for each registration after the first 9 at regular price
Late Registration Fees: Any registrations after February 14th will be charged a $10 late fee

Registration
This year’s registration is through a new online platform. A Director/Administrator for each school will have an account through this platform (if you are an ELEA member) or will need to create an account for your school.

1. Use worksheet on page 4 of this program to collect your staff’s session registration preferences. Please collect cell phone numbers, which will be used for important text notifications during the conference.

2. Visit https://eleanational.memberzone.com/eventregistration/register/34
   - Members: Log in to your ELEA member account to receive the member discount
   - Non-Members: Create an account

3. Add and register each of your staff members

4. You will have the option to pay online or receive an invoice by email to pay by check

With questions about the registration process, please email: elearegion3@gmail.com

Location
Lord of Life Lutheran Church
7401 County Rd 101
Maple Grove, MN 55311

Accommodations
The Crowne Plaza Minneapolis West is our conference hotel, offering ample space and accommodations. Room rates are $99 and amenities are many. Relax at the spa, work out in the state of the art gym, swim laps, or enjoy the hot tub.

Reservations must be made by using this link: https://book.passkey.com/event/50022047/owner/3249434/home or by calling (763) 559-6600 and referencing the ELEA Conference.

Transportation provided from the hotel to Lord of Life Lutheran Church Friday and Saturday morning and afternoon. Please indicate on your registration form whether your staff will be utilizing this transportation.

Conference Fees Include:
- In-service training for teachers of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, pre-kindergarteners, directors/administrators, elementary school principals and pastors of church schools
- Outstanding keynote and featured speakers who inform and inspire
- Fellowship, professional growth, and networking opportunities
- Tours of on-site Preschool
- In-Service training recognized by MNCPD
Meaningful intentional worship

Continental breakfasts and hot catered lunches each day

**Minnesota Registry Training**

ELEA Region 3 has applied for approved training with the Minnesota Center for Professional Development for conference workshops. Information will be available at the conference. For additional information visit www.mncpd.org.

**Notes**

- Conference Cancellation: If the ELEA Region 3 40th Annual Early Childhood Educators Conference should have to be canceled due to severe weather, ELEA Region 3 cannot guarantee that full refunds can be made.

- If a registration needs to be canceled, a full refund can be granted before January 31st, 2020. After January 31st, 2020, but before February 14th, 2020, a 50% refund is available. After February 14, 2020, a registration may be transferred to another attendee, but no refunds will be available.

- ELEA Region 3 or Lord of Life Lutheran Church, cannot be held responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged equipment, merchandise or personal items brought to the conference by vendors, presenters or attendees.

**Questions? Contact:**
elearegion3@gmail.com or Heather Charmoli at 952-934-4156

**observe - share - celebrate!**

The learning story company

Email rachel@geteduca.com

Code: ELEA2020 for "ELEA special"
Registration Worksheet

Use this tool to collect your staff’s session preferences

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Barb O’Neill
Friday Keynote Speaker
Barb is the founder of Transform Challenging Behavior, a training and consulting business that helps early childhood programs develop systems and skills to set children up for success and ensure that no child is expelled because of their behavior.

She holds an Ed.D. in Early Childhood Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. A former professor, Barb has researched many of the methods she teaches and has published in early childhood journals including, NAEYC’s Young Children and Teaching Young Children.

Kelly Matthews
Saturday Keynote Speaker
Kelly Matthews, owner of A Place For You Early Childhood Consulting in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, joyfully explores engaged learning with people of all ages. She is a published author whose writings are included in Learning Together with Young Children and the newly revised Reflecting Children’s Lives, both by Margie Carter and Deb Curtis. Published articles are included in Young Children (NAEYC), Teaching Young Children (NAEYC), and Child Care Exchange. Kelly loves playing with language and in her sessions, she often incorporates poetry to inspire educators. One of her own poems is included in the collection Baby Blessings. In addition to her own consulting work, Kelly is also a member of the Harvest Educators Collective. Over the past 20+ years, she has worked in a number of early education settings, both center- and home-based care, as well as having been a director, nanny, mentor teacher, & presenter.

Now, the fulltime focus of Kelly’s work, regardless of her setting, is her passion for bringing relevant, thought-provoking professional development to educators and caregivers around the country. She is much more interested in “learning with” educators and not “telling to.” Brought back by popular demand in several locations, it is clear that Kelly’s strength lies in creating engaging professional development that invites educators to fully bring their voices and experiences to the learning.

Kelly’s early childhood training has been a mixture of hands-on experiences in teaching children through mentoring relationships with master teachers as well as pursuing higher education in more formal ways. Kelly earned her MA (Human Development) at Pacific Oaks College, with dual specializations in Leadership in Education and Human Services [sub-specialization: Teaching Adults] and Early Childhood Education. She is exceptionally proud of this learning, grounded in social justice and meaningful, contextualized practice. She currently is on the adjunct faculty of two technical colleges in Wisconsin.
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<tr>
<td>7:30-8:15</td>
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**SESSION 1  8:15-9:15**

**Session 1A**  
**One in Mission: Healthy relationships between church and school/early childhood centers**  
**Janelle Hooper**  
"One In Mission" engages the question, How critical are the relationships between the church and school/early childhood center? If the relationship is ignored or taken for granted neither ministry is at its healthiest potential. Join us as we get healthy together.

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

**Session 1B**  
**There's Always That One Kid**  
**Emma Hansen**  
In this presentation, we will look at self-reflective practice as a means to successfully work with behaviors that are personally challenging.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

**Session 1C**  
**Self-Reflective Teacher Training**  
**Paula Landis**  
Learn self-reflection practices to help identify themes in your professional practice. Develop culturally conscious strategies to use in providing professional development, engaging with colleagues, and families.

Audience: Infant, Toddler and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

**Session 1D**  
**From “SCREECH” to “More Please”: Fostering Communication Skills in Infants and Toddlers**  
**Raelene Ostberg**  
Gain insight into how infants and toddlers develop the critical language skills needed to avoid screaming, throwing food, and other negative behaviors. Collect effective techniques to promote the useful infant and toddler verbal and nonverbal language skills that will help toddlers turn those ear-shattering screams into useful phrases and gestures.

Audience: Infant and Toddler Teachers
Session 1E  
**Connecting School, Family, and Church Through Chapel Time**  
*Linda Chambers*

Chapel Time is a great tool to connect everyone to the Gospel, and to each other! Strengthen your education ministry’s connection to your families and your congregation. Explore the components of Chapel Time, and try different ways to make it fun and exciting for everyone.

**Audience:** Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

Session 1F  
**Big Pictures in Early Childhood Classrooms**  
*Jana Crosby*

Have you been asked to rate your classroom’s curriculum implementation? How do you know if teachers are implementing curriculum with fidelity and utilizing best practices? This session will explore administrative walkthroughs and items to look for when observing ECE classrooms. Best practices and curriculum “look fors” will be shared.

**Audience:** Directors/Administrators

Session 1G  
**Intentional and Purposeful PLAY**  
*Jennifer Skibba*

PLAY is not an extra but a requirement for learning. We will explore the research behind why PLAY is important to share with colleagues and families. This journey will explore the Five Essentials to Meaningful PLAY and what it means to be a facilitator and coach in the classroom. Participants will also receive an example of a PLAY rubric as a tool to measure growth over time and reflect on-site or classroom practices.

**Audience:** Toddler and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

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**Keynote Speaker  9:50-11:20**  
**What if You Loved “Challenging Behavior”?**  
*Barb O’Neill*

In her signature upbeat, down-to-earth talk Barb uses her knowledge, humor, and real stories to compassionately light a fire under teachers and give them the confidence they need to try new strategies immediately.

Attendees will learn:
- highlights about PreK expulsions, disproportionality, and bias
- research about teacher beliefs and children’s behavior
- why play is essential for tackling behavioral challenges
- 3 simple, powerful, strategies for transitions/circle time
- how these ideas have been used in real classrooms successfully

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**SESSION 2a  11:30-12:30**

Session 2aA  
**Director’s Networking Session**  
*Heather Charmoli*

Join our group of directors to discuss topics with your peers. You will help build the agenda! We will have a separate lunch service line and this session will run from 11:30-1:30.

**Audience:** Directors/Administrators
Session 2aB
Playing with Science & Systems: Connect Books with Environmental STEM
Heidi Ferris
Author and environmental educator, Heidi Ferris, will lead participants in... Playing with Science & Systems: scientifically accurate & sometimes about faith! We'll use hands-on nature play and the books to explore how water, land, air and living things are interconnected right where we live, learn, play, and worship.

Audience: Toddler and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 2aC
The Emotional Power of Music: Putting it into Practice
Jeremy Schreffels
Think of a song that resonates deep down in your being. As simple as it sounds, scientists have found that listening to particular genres of music changes the way we perceive the world. Modern research supports the conventional wisdom that music impacts emotional and physical reactions. Whether it's a massive symphony that brings one to tears or a nostalgic song that speaks of a happy summer; whether it rocks you to sleep or inspires you to travel, music strongly influences human emotion as well as behavior.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 2aD
Panel Discussion: Language and Dialect in Early Childhood Education
Paula Landis
In what ways do teachers support children's language and dialects in the early childhood classroom? How do their assumptions or personal bias affect their interactions with families, children and each other?

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

SESSION 2b  12:30-1:30

Session 2bA
Director's Networking Session
Heather Charmoli
Join our group of directors to discuss topics with your peers. You will help build the agenda! We will have a separate lunch service line and this session will run from 11:30-1:30.

Audience: Directors/Administrators

Session 2bB
Transform Challenging Behavior By Building On Strengths During Play And Throughout the Day
Barb O'Neill
This interactive session will introduce you to new strategies for supporting children who exhibit challenging behavior with a strengths-based perspective. Using interactive activities, role-play, video clips and discussion you will learn how to connect with children using their strengths, interests, and play initiations. You will learn how to be proactive in using these strengths to design effective supports to prevent behavior problems in the first place. Leave with increased confidence in working with children who exhibit challenging behavior knowing you have innovative tools for prevention in your toolbox.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers
Session 2bC
More than 'Your Child Did Great!' Building Trust and Positive Relationships with Caregivers to Nurture Children's School Experience
Ayuko Uezu Boomer
This session will focus on a variety of methods to build positive relationships with caregivers in order to create safe and nurturing school experiences for children. An array of communication strategies will be discussed while also addressing parental concerns that occur during the children's school experience.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers

Session 2bD
Lessons from the Park
Pam Miller
Learn how to incorporate nature-based principles into a variety of early childhood programs. Based on the presenter's experience of teaching a half-day preschool program based in a public park, attendees will learn how to incorporate nature-based principles into their curriculum and materials, indoor and outdoor environments, and through special events, such as field trips. The session will be conducted using a mixture of lecture-style and small group discussions.

Audience: Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

SESSION 3  1:45-2:45

Session 3A
What To Do (And What Not To Do!) About Tantrums
Barb O’Neill
If you find yourself struggling with children having meltdowns because they don’t want to come inside, don’t want to come to circle-time, or didn’t get what they wanted you are not alone. As it turns out some tried and true strategies such as calmly reminding the upset child of the rules or expectations might actually be escalating the situation! Learn what to do instead, practice techniques, and leave with clarity and confidence to get you through the next tantrum.

Audience: Infant, Toddler and Preschool Teachers

Session 3B
Strengthening Relationships Through Communication
Heather Charmoli
From a review of tried and true methods to exploring new methods, come and see how you can improve relationships for student success!

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

Session 3C
From Golf Outings to Galas - Part 1
Jon Dize
Special Fundraising Events have been a part of Lutheran Christian schools almost as long as tuition assistance. Whether sit down dinners, golf outings, speaker events, etc., our schools have worked to find ways to augment their limited resources of money to engage our congregations, communities, and alumni to support the work of the school via an event. However, schools and nonprofits have limited resources of time and effort as well; when factoring in the cost of staff time, donor fatigue, and other key considerations, if your event is not netting, after costs, at least $25,000, you should consider ways to upgrade your efforts, raise more dollars, switch events, or stop doing the event!

Mr. Dize has condensed his 1/2 day workshop into 2 one-hour presentations. If you are considering initiating an event, need to re-en vigor your efforts, or have a great event and want to find ways to enhance its success, one or both of these presentations will be of interest to you. If possible, you may want to bring committee and budget chairs to the event as well.
Part 1 will start with the basics: general considerations, committee structure, setting the goal and designation, setting the big pieces of the event (who, what, where, when, why), and discuss various themes and formats.

Part 2 is a continuation of Part 1 but also will be of interest to those with more experienced events with a good command of the basics listed in Part 1 and only want to attend Part 2. This session will continue the discussion but dive into more detailed topics of budget creation, setting the admission price, sponsorships, games/activities, legal considerations, marketing/promotions, databases, and After the Event "need-to-dos".

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

**Session 3D**

**Using Visual Routines and Social Stories to Support Behavior Interventions and Student Resiliency**

**Kelsey Baker**

Are you stumped on how to support young students’ social-emotional, behavior, or mental health needs when intervention is needed? This presentation will address how to creatively use a variety of visual supports at school and home to ease anxious feelings, create a routine, and promote positive social-emotional skill-building.

Audience: Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

**Session 3E**

**Who me? Lead staff?! From Surviving to Thriving in Your Leadership Role**

**Raelene Ostberg**

Identify normal director “bumps in the road” and common leadership traps. Explore the evidence-based qualities of highly effective managers and collect many effective leadership strategies. Identify methods to promote powerful partnerships with your team. Gain numerous ideas to thrive in your leadership role.

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals

**Session 3F**

**Sticky Church**

**Rick Chromey**

It’s the number one problem in most churches: attracting and keeping visitors and guests. Even the largest churches struggle with member retention. The reason? They aren’t naturally “sticky.” They don’t have a natural attractiveness to draw and/or retain people. In this insightful workshop, you’ll discover the powerful “Rule of 3’s” that guide this process. You’ll learn what to do to meet the needs of visitors, returning guests and even long-time members.

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

**Session 3G**

**Food Experiences - Connecting Nutrition and Healthy Relationship to Food**

**Ann Kisch and Allie Henley**

Following Westwood Early Childhood Center’s food philosophy, children are exposed to a variety of food experiences in order to foster healthy relationships with food and nutrition. Learn how WECC’s Food Specialist and Kitchen Aide work with Infant through PreK classrooms using different techniques to create positive connections with food and nutrition. Hands-on, edible learning will be provided to participants as an example of a monthly lesson. Also learn how we integrate school gardens, an organic farm share, and teacher collaboration into our food philosophy.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators
SESSION 4  3:00-4:00

Session 4A  
Bridging Generations  
Chris Stark and Patsy Cordes  
Finding new and innovative ways to get your congregation and community involved in the ministry to your children.  

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors  

Session 4B  
Something's Got a Hold on Me  
Don Gillingham  
When Smokey Robinson sang this tune in my youth I never knew it would express the central truth of my relationship to Lutheran Education. Retention of students, teachers, alumni and the parents of former students is the number one element of a successful and sustainable school. Let’s talk about what makes our school establish its hold on us.  

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors  

Session 4C  
Classroom environment: Calm vs. Chaos  
Heather Lane  
In this session we will discuss a variety of things that affect your classroom environment. We explore how your classroom environment can also be a tool to help your students and you as a teacher to have successful days. We will explore the ideas of room arrangement, organization of education materials and centers, and routines.  

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators  

Session 4D  
Thriving Ministry in Smaller Churches  
Rick Chromey  
Small is tall in a postmodern culture! And smaller churches enjoy distinctive advantages to operate nimbly, fluidly and quickly. In this interactive and insightful workshop, participants will discover why smaller churches hold incredible potential and possibility. Plus they’ll explore how to create ministry environments that attract and engage all ages through grace, community, affirmation, dignity, pleasure, and security.  

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors  

Session 4E  
Do Unto Others  
Sue Starks  
Question: Are all of the practices we follow completely child-centered or are some put in place to make our lives easier as teachers? Hmm, we need to remember, it’s not about us it’s about the kids! Do unto others (kids!) as you would have them do to you! Rated DRBK—Do Right By Kids!  

Audience: Preschool Teachers  

Session 4F  
From Golf Outings to Galas - Part 2  
Jon Dize  
Special Fundraising Events have been a part of Lutheran Christian schools almost as long as tuition assistance. Whether sit down dinners, golf outings, speaker events, etc., our schools have worked to find ways to augment their limited resources of money to engage our congregations, communities, and alumni to support the work of the school via an event. However, schools and nonprofits have limited resources of time and effort as well; when factoring in the cost of staff time, donor fatigue, and other key considerations, if your event is not netting,
after costs, at least $25,000, you should consider ways to upgrade your efforts, raise more dollars, switch events, or stop doing the event!

Mr. Dize has condensed his 1/2 day workshop into 2 one-hour presentations. If you are considering initiating an event, need to re-en vigor your efforts, or have a great event and want to find ways to enhance its success, one or both of these presentations will be of interest to you. If possible, you may want to bring committee and budget chairs to the event as well.

Part 2 is a continuation of Part 1 but also will be of interest to those with more experienced events with a good command of the basics listed in Part 1 and only want to attend Part 2. This session will continue the discussion but dive into more detailed topics of budget creation, setting the admission price, sponsorships, games/activities, legal considerations, marketing/promotions, databases, and After the Event "need-to-dos".

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

**Session 4G**

**Faith Development - All Day, Every Day at School and At Home**

**Linda Staats**

Knowledge of child development is core to being an effective administrator and teacher. How does one seamlessly integrate faith development into the entire day of the child? How does one also support the parent as the child’s primary nurturer of the faith? In this interactive workshop, we will look at age and stage related to faith as part of the child’s wholly, holy development.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

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**Saturday, February 29**

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<tr>
<td>7:15-7:45</td>
<td>Registration &amp; Continental Breakfast</td>
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<td>7:45-8:30</td>
<td>Welcome, Worship &amp; Announcements</td>
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**Keynote Speaker** 8:30-9:45

**We Grow As Children Grow: Our Professional Development Rights & Responsibilities**

**Kelly Matthews**

In our Early Childhood world, there has been an increase in the use of the phrase: professional development. But what does that actually mean? How do we know when we’ve been ‘developed’? As our profession moves forward, we need to have thoughtful conversations about what our rights and responsibilities are in this process.
SESSION 5  10:00-11:00

Session 5A
Changing the Game with Difficult Kids
Kelly Matthews
It’s frustrating and energy-draining to work with children who feel difficult. Children struggle with strong
behaviors, strained relationships, or high demands for attention. We explore insights from working with children,
child development, and psychology to grow skills, knowledge, and thinking when it comes to our work with
children.

Audience: Toddler and Preschool Teachers

Session 5B
Creating a Lutheran School Culture
Chris Comella
Our school culture makes each of our schools and early learning centers unique, and school culture has a
proven impact on student performance. Participants in the workshop explore the meaning of “school culture”
as it relates to and as it differs from “school climate”. They also reflect on the culture of their own
schools/centers and work collaboratively to design a plan so that their school culture might be in line with their
mission and vision. The session helps to identify key stakeholders for collaboration in this process. Participants
have the opportunity to read at least one key article about best practice and school culture, as well as to
evaluate their school culture for the sake of improvement.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

Session 5C
Inclusion: Developmentally Appropriate Care for ALL Children
Dana Ellingson
Examine the key concepts of developmentally appropriate inclusive care, including the important role of the
caregiver in the creation of an encouraging environment. Explore skills in observation and in encouraging and
fostering positive social interaction as well as learning to promote productive play within childcare settings.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 5D
After Trauma or Disaster
Melissa Donovan
Social-emotional support for young children following a disaster or traumatic experience. Learn ways to provide
support to children after trauma or disaster, and strategies that build resilience and coping skills for a lifetime.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers

Session 5E
Why Appreciation Is More Than a Thank You
Sara Kantorik
In today's workplace, it is crucial for employees to feel valued. But that's a challenge when you and your
employees communicate differently. In this session, participants will discover how to effectively show gratitude
to employees by speaking their language of appreciation.

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

Session 5F
Why Your School Should Start a YouTube Channel
Rich Kuenneke
YouTube is more than a place to store your school's videos. The free platform offers everyone with a message
an incredible opportunity to build a loyal, dedicated audience that will love watching what you do. In this
workshop, content creator Richard Kuenneke explains what you’ll need to get started and how to develop a strategy that fits with your institution’s overall communication objectives.

Audience: Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

**SESSION 6  11:10-12:10**

**Session 6A**
The ABC’s of Quality Care - They’re Not What You Might Think  
*Kelly Matthews*
What would you say if you had to define quality care in only three words? Are they on the tip of your tongue? Where would you find the inspiration for each word you picked? Please join us for a time to reflect, question, and converse about what constitutes high-quality care. This interactive workshop will provide you with time to develop and articulate your thoughts on the matter, bringing in your experience and stories, as well as hear from your colleagues and facilitator, Kelly Matthews.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

**Session 6B**
Writing Centers Your Kids Will Love  
*Allison VanLoon*
I will summarize preschool writing standards and outcomes. I will describe practical ways that teachers can help children reach these outcomes, including practices to give children opportunities to write and tips for improving pencil grip. I will model fun writing activities that engage kids and draw them into writing. Bring your cameral!

Audience: Preschool Teachers

**Session 6C**
The Why Behind Our Words: Classroom Management  
*Dana Ellingson*
Investigate current practices for effective learning environments. Topics of respect and perspective-taking will be discussed. Take a look at behaviors that trigger our own sense of control as educators and how can we adjust language or strategies we use, to help give children the power to change their own behaviors.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

**Session 6D**
Building Our Capacity for Curiosity, Compassion, and Courage as Leaders in Early Education  
*Hannah Riddle de Rojas and Jamie Bonczyk*
There are many hard conversations taking place with the professionalizing of early childhood education. We are required to engage in hard conversations. Rediscovering the power and impact of these traits and how to use them in our lives, serves as an essential tool for strengthening and unifying our voice.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

**Session 6E**
What Does Anxiety Look Like in Children and How to Help  
*Mary Adams*
This is an interactive walk gaining insight into what a preschooler might be saying and how we can help them be successful.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators
Session 6F
Intro to the Pyramid Model
Heather Charmoli
The Pyramid Model is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children’s healthy social and emotional development for children from birth. Participants will be introduced to the model and learn the beginnings of implementing this strategy in their program.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 6G
Earth, Air, Fire & Water: Play Inspired by the Natural Elements
Joey Schoen
This session focuses on the possibilities for creativity and inquiry provided by the elements: earth, air, fire & water. Hands-on, sensory experiences with nature and the imaginative manipulation of “loose parts” are the most autonomous, exciting and valuable ways for young children to embark on their relationship with the world.

Audience: Preschool Teachers

Session 6H
Overwhelmed and Overstimulated: How Approaching Behavior From A Sensory Perspective Can Result In Positive Preschool Behaviors
Jessica Naiberg
Sensory processing is a foundational skill that supports everything we do. Come ready to learn about the 8 senses. You’ll leave with information to help you better incorporate sensory activities into the classroom and reframe your beliefs about common maladaptive preschool behaviors.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers

SESSION 7  1:00-2:00

Session 7A
Seeing Every Child: Developmental Screening and Monitoring in Early Childhood Education
Debbie Tonne
We all know the first five years of development are crucial. We can help make the most of those years by having school-wide processes and procedures in place to screen and monitor every child’s progress. We will discuss how to find what works for your program, as well as the important step of educating, communicating, and collaborating with parents about growth and goals.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 7B
Photos, Videos & Anecdotes: How to make learning come to life through authentic assessment practices.
Kellee Nelson
Capturing a child’s day and authentically tracking their development can be challenging for even the most seasoned educator. Come and learn how to weave authentic assessments that align with state standards and best practices into daily routines. Leave with tips, tricks, and new tools that will help streamline processes, provide parents with necessary insight into their child’s learning, and help educators become more effective and reflective practitioners.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 7C
What You Need To Lead
Kim Kusilek
What You Need To Lead-Join me for an interactive workshop to talk about the best and worst scenarios you encounter as a team leader. Are all of your team members on the same page? How can we create a TEAM instead of a STAFF? What are the common threads of disconnection? How will we, as directors, create cohesiveness? The list goes on...let’s work together to strengthen our TEAMS.
Session 7D
Resiliency: How to Live Your Best Life
Kris Meyer
Resiliency is something that can be learned and taught for any age. It brings the hard edges of life into manageable softness. Through stories, humor, and research on resiliency, Kris Meyer will lead the group to an understanding of this powerful way of living.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

Session 7E
Literacy: The Power of Picture Books with Infants and Toddlers
Kristen Wheeler Highland
Before we can read words, we read pictures. Reading aloud every day with infants and toddlers is an important way that we support the development of academics and literacy. Additionally, reading with them “stimulates optimal patterns of brain development and strengthens caregiver-child (parent-child) relationships” and “builds language, literacy, and social-emotional skills that last a lifetime” (per Gurdon, American Academy of Pediatrics). Let’s talk about some great books and how to use them to support our infants and toddlers.

Session 7F
Scrubbies and Spoons: Taking a Creative, Minimalist Approach to Environment and Materials, While Making Progress Towards the ECIPS indicators
Wendy Dimatteo
Explore a minimalist approach to your environment, how it makes you feel, and how it may lead to sensory overload in yourself and your children. Discuss how thinking outside the catalog when choosing classroom materials encourages deeper creative thinking and cognitive learning, meeting the MN ECIPS indicators.

Audience: Infant and Toddler Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 7G
Communication Detective: Understanding typical & delayed communication skills
Melissa Lonsky
Did you know the average 3 year-old knows more than 1,000 words? Birth to five years of age is the brain’s critical period for learning language. Learn the difference between typical and delayed speech and language development and leave with practical tips for promoting developmentally appropriate skills and communicating concerns to families.

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers

SESSION 8  2:10-3:10

Session 8A
Returning To The Basics: Using Loose Parts with Infants and Toddlers
Kristen Wheeler Highland
Infants and toddlers are natural scientists and researchers, fascinated by the properties of objects and how things work. They construct knowledge as they explore materials with all their senses. They delight in cause-and-effect relationships. Loose parts are captivating objects for infants and toddlers to investigate because of their open-ended nature. Loose parts provide rich opportunities and allow young children to be in control of their inquiries as they gather and learn information about physical objects. Join us to explore how to choose appropriate loose parts, how to introduce them and how they support all aspects of development and curriculum! Let’s play!

Audience: Infant and Toddler Teachers, Directors/Administrators
Session 8B
It's Raining It's Pouring, and ALL My Plans are BORING!
Wendy Dimatteo
This training offers and encourages the opportunity to brainstorm and share ideas of ways to help toddlers and preschoolers stay engaged and learning in a fun, active and sometimes out of the box ways when we are all stuck inside by Mother Nature

Audience: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 8C
Introduction to RIE
Marie Johnson
RIE stands for Resources for Infant Educarers and was founded by child development guru Magda Gerber. In this session, you will receive a brief synopsis of the RIE approach and learn more about why it is important.

Audience: Infant and Toddler Teachers, Directors/Administrators

Session 8D
National Leadership Networking for Regions 1, 2 & 3
Audience: Region 1, 2 & 3 Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

Session 8E
National Leadership Networking for Regions 4, 5 & 6
Audience: Region 4, 5 & 6 Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors

Session 8F
National Leadership Networking for Regions 7, 8 & 9
Audience: Region 7, 8 & 9 Directors/Administrators, Principals, Pastors
Thank you to our 2020 presenters!

Mary Adams
I am and have been the director of Ahwatukee Preschool for the past 2 years. Prior to this, I was the director of a program called Noah’s Ark (18 months to 3-year-olds) for 3 years which the former director of the preschool and I started. I am finishing my Masters in ECE Leadership in June.

Kelsey Baker
Kelsey Baker is a School Psychologist for Central Rivers Area Education Agency in Cedar Falls, Iowa. She has worked in public and non-public districts with students ages preschool - 12th grade. Her daily work focuses on supporting students and districts around academic disabilities, social-emotional / behavior / mental health needs, and system-level change.

Jamie Bonczyk
Jamie Bonczyk is the Executive Director of Hopkins Early Learning Center in Hopkins, MN. She has 20 years in the Early Childhood Profession. Jamie started her journey as a Pre-k teacher, where she discovered the wonders that intentional anti-bias experiences can bring to children. In 2015, her efforts were recognized when she was named an Emerging Leader in the field of Early Childhood by Exchange Magazine. For self-care, Jamie is a student and performer of improvised theater and storytelling. She can be found nightly telling stories to her 7-year-old daughter, Sylvie.

Ayuko Uezu Boomer
Ayuko Uezu Boomer is an Early Childhood Specialist at the Shirley G Moore Laboratory School at the University of Minnesota. She is also a resident Parent Educator and has offered parent classes and events at the Lab School.

Linda Chambers
Linda Chambers has been the director of Memorial Lutheran Chapel School in St. Augustine, Florida for 27 years. Linda is a former secretary of the ELCA Schools and Learning Centers (ELEA) National Board, and a former ELCA Early Childhood Director of the Year. Linda enjoys sharing the love of Christ with her community and also teaches Sunday School, Youth Group, and Confirmation classes. She is a new grandmother to 2 babies born recently: Isla Scout Burrier, who is 5 months old; and Adele Solenne Burrier, who is 3 months old.

Heather Charmoli
Heather Charmoli, MA, is the Co-Director in charge of the full-day program at All Saints Preschool and Childcare. She earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education from Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD, and her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of St. Mary's in Minneapolis. In addition to being a director, Heather is a trainer and consultant in the Minneapolis area.

Rick Chromey
Dr. Rick Chromey (Founder and President of MANNA!) has equipped leaders to lead, trainers to train, and teachers to teach for over three decades. He’s a popular author on leadership, culture, human motivation, and faith, penning twelve books, including three best-selling titles. Dr. Chromey has written for leading periodicals on children, youth and family and travels widely to speak at conferences, conventions and other leadership events as “the Original Edu-trainer!” It’s a title that fits him perfectly because audiences rave about his ability to create smiles while blending in powerful insights and amazing ideas.

Chris Comella
Chris Comella has over 30 years of experience in professional education, both in the classroom and in the administration of both private faith-based schools and urban public schools. A graduate of Wabash College and Northeastern Illinois University, Chris also studied at DePaul University, the University of Aberdeen (U.K.) and
the Goethe Institut (Berlin) and is a former Fulbright Teacher. In 2018 Chris was chosen as the ELEA Lutheran School Principal of the Year and represented the ELEA as an NAESP National Distinguished Principal in Washington, D.C. Chris lives with his partner, Clair Anderson, in Chicago and is enjoying his 7th year as Principal of Pilgrim Lutheran School in Chicago.

**Jana Crosy, HMH Professional Services Consultant**
Jana Crosby, M.Ed., has worked in education for over twenty-five (25) years, with most of those years in early childhood and elementary education. As a certified Reading Specialist, she has worked with many grants across the country, in Canada, and Singapore. She has also served as a volunteer to both local, state, and national affiliates of the International Literacy Association (ILA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Jana currently works at Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt as a Professional Services Consultant in Literacy Solutions. She resides in Nashville, TN, with her husband and three, four-legged kids - Izzy, Karma, and Paisley.

**Wendy Dimatteo**
Like many, I have filled almost every role in early childhood over the last thirty-five years-in both home-based and center-based programs. I am a HUGE advocate for letting the children drive the learning, getting to know them, and listening to them before making your daily plan.

**Jon Dize**
Jon Dize, CFRE is a consultant and fundraising coach to schools, churches, and other non-profits, working as a coach and mentor with new and seasoned fundraising staff. He also works with small and large organizations to start advancement programs, resurrect lapsed programs, and fill interim needs during times of transition. He currently serves as the Fundraising Coach and Advancement Director for The Lutheran Schools Partnership in Northeast Indiana and Administrator of The Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization of Indiana.

**Melissa Donovan**
Melissa Donovan has been a childcare provider for 12 years and a trainer for three years. Received her bachelor’s degree from Liberty University and is currently working on her master’s in Early Education. Her passion is about children and she is committed to helping educate others in the field.

**Dana Ellingson**
Dana Ellingson has been in the early childhood field for over 23 years. Her recent focus has been on supporting adults that work with children to build passion and curiosity in the early education field, serving as an Infant and Toddler Specialist with the Center for Inclusive Child Care and an independent trainer/consultant. When she’s not consulting, attending graduate school or creating courses to help childcare providers find their passion behind their work, you can find her and her family exploring what the world has to offer.

**Heidi Ferris**
Heidi Ferris is author, STEM trainer, environmental educator and founder of Growing Green Hearts, LLC. She works to boost nature play, climate literacy, and local STEM experiences for communities through site visits for kids, training for teachers, and green projects. Heidi lives in Minnesota with her family, not far from the Mississippi River.

**Don Gillingham**
Don Gillingham began a career in Lutheran education in 1977. His ministry has taken him to four different schools in these five decades. Don is a big-picture guy focused on developing vision and themes for schools and their programs. Currently, he serves as Executive Director at Rockford Lutheran School, a PK-12 Pan Lutheran institution. Don is often called on to comment and write about topics affecting the changing face of a timeless Lutheran education. He often comments on the constructs of our society from buffet dining protocol to why loyalty to a sports team is overrated.
Emma Hansen
Dr. Emma Hansen has been a family child care provider and is currently a foster care provider and trainer. She specializes in trauma-informed care topics and strengthening family models as well as working with challenging behaviors. She has 2 grown children and one adopted high school Junior.

Janelle Hooper
Janelle Rozek Hooper serves as Program Director for Ministry with Children for the ELCA. As a pastor in congregations, college campuses and a preschool she learned the importance of wonder and nonjudgementalness. She’s married to a hard-working elementary educator and has two kids, who encourage her passion for gardening.

Marie Johnson
Education Specialist

Sara Kantorik
I have been in the Early Childhood Education field for 23 years. I have been a teacher, assistant director and currently a director, a position I have held for 14 years. Graduated from Stark State College of Technology with an Associates degree in Early Childhood Education.

Ann Kisch
Ann Kisch is a Registered Dietitian that joined Westwood Early Childhood Center from being the State Coordinator for Action for Healthy Kids. Ann sees that working for Westwood provides the chance to change the lives of our next generation. Ann graduated from the University of Minnesota and pursued a career working for a Food Service Management company caring for the senior population. Her experience during that time reinforced that those that ate healthy and were active throughout their lives lived longer and with less disease. Her various encounters have instilled a passion for clean living based on eating as close to the earth as possible, supported by daily exercise.

Allie Henley
Allie Henley works at Westwood as the Kitchen Aide and has been at Westwood since January 2019! She is a Special Olympics athlete and a public speaker! She has spoken to schools and businesses and gives sermons at church.

Richard Kuenneke
Richard Kuenneke began his career in radio news a long, long time ago. Since then, he’s worked as a broadcast journalist in both commercial and public television, taught a college-level course in television reporting and managed a television newsroom for a major midwestern university. Today Richard owns Deep Roar Content, which offers content creation services with an emphasis on YouTube Channel strategy for businesses and non-profits.

Kim Kusilek
Kim Kusilek has over 25 years of experience working with children. The majority of that time has been spent with preschool-aged children. She has spent the last 21 years working as a preschool teacher, preschool director and coordinator of schools. Kim understands the importance of early social and academic learning and deeply values the need for safe, educational centers for all children. She has a vast knowledge of creative curriculum development and implementation. She oversees tedious staff screening/hiring processes’ and maintains meticulous records on First Aid/CPR/Continuing Education Training for staff. She sees team building as an integral part of staff development. Kim believes that the social development of young children is imperative to the total educational process. She is passionate about education as a ministry and enjoys teaching children about God. Kim has a degree in Education with an emphasis in Speech/Language Pathology. She lives in LaConner, Washington with her husband and is the proud parent of three adult children.
Paula Landis
Paula Landis is an educational program developer and instructor. She holds a Master’s degree in Early Childhood growth and development and is a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership. Landis’ background connects private business leadership and development, product production and marketing with essential components of human growth, development, and psychology. Her goal is to fuse personal leadership using an anti-bias lens to structure professional development for teachers and stakeholders at all levels in and of education. Landis has authored or co-authored many early childhood education-training modules used to fulfill professional training requirements for state licensing, NAEYC accreditation, and education requirements for obtaining a Childcare Development Associate credential.

Heather Lane
I have been working in the early childhood field for 25 years. I have held a variety of roles within the early childhood community. I began my career in Hollywood, Florida and made my way to Minnesota. I have a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood and a Masters in Special Education. I am currently working at All Saints Childcare as their Program Assistant. I am very passionate about this field and I love to share what I have learned to the next generation of Early Childhood teachers.

Melissa Lonsky
Melissa Lonsky, M.A., CCC-SLP, is a Speech-Language Pathologist and Founder/CEO of, Sora Pediatric Therapy. Melissa is dedicated to helping children and their families thrive. She has treated children in a variety of settings including: Early Childhood Special Education, preschools, elementary schools, middle schools and outpatient pediatric medical clinics.

Kris Meyer
Kris Meyer is a speaker, storyteller, educator, and counselor. She is the Principal of St. Paul’s Lutheran School in Waverly, Iowa. Kris has done extensive research in the area of resiliency. She has presented at numerous seminars, workshops, and taught the concepts in various arenas of learning and living.

Pam Miller
My name is Pam Miller and I am a lead teacher at the Shirley G. Moore Lab School at the University of Minnesota. My classroom is always full of energetic, excited and exceptional 3-5 year-olds, teaching candidates and fun-loving adults. I have been working with young children since 2010 and I earned my Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education from the U of M in 2014. After graduating from the U, I spent three years teaching young children in Southeast Asia. I believe in supporting children’s development through play and child-led exploration. I am interested in and passionate about children’s social and emotional development, inclusive education for children with special needs, and advocacy for policy changes that improve the lives of young children and families.

Jessica Naiberg
Jessica Naiberg is an occupational therapist for Sora Pediatric Therapy. She has helped families navigate developmental delays, feeding disorders, and disordered sensory processing for over 8 years. She is skilled at identifying foundational deficits impacting a child’s participation in daily activities. Jessica holds a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy.

Kellee Nelson
Kellee Nelson currently serves as the Director of Westwood Early Childhood Center in St Louis Park, MN. She has many years serving and learning within the field of early childhood family education and has worked within a variety of high quality, innovative, learning environments. Kellee has a BA in Child and Family Studies from Concordia College Moorhead, MN, an MA in Education with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education from Concordia University, St. Paul, MN, and is currently working on an EdD in Adult and Occupational Education from North Dakota State University. She is also certified as a Master Trainer and Relationship-Based Professional Development Specialist.
Raelene Ostberg
Raelene Ostberg is dedicated to developing and delivering transformative, fun, and inspiring educational opportunities for early childhood educators. Raelene is an Achieve Master Trainer, Licensed Parent Educator, Vlogger, Coach, and Mentor. She obtained a B.A. in Theater and M.Ed. in Family Education from the University of Minnesota. Raelene’s engaging Keynotes and workshops are designed to decrease stress, enhance joy, and bolster the success of early childhood professionals in their critical work.

Hannah Riddle de Rojas
Hannah Riddle de Rojas is a Founder of SolBe Learning, a Spanish immersion early education center. She has experience as a preschool educator, center director, trainer and adjunct faculty. Hannah is also a bilingual Master Trainer. In 2018 Hannah was named an Exchange Leader by Exchange Magazine. Hannah earned her Master’s degree in Adult ESL Education at Hamline University and has a B.S. in Child Psychology and B.A. in Spanish Studies from the University of Minnesota.

Joey Schoen
Joey is a teacher and administrator at Dodge Nature Preschool in West St. Paul, MN. She holds an M. Ed. in Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Minnesota. Joey is a regular contributor to the podcast “Teaching with the Body in Mind.”

Jeremy Schreifels
As a speaker, Jeremy has been bringing the Emotional Power of Music to mental health conferences, teacher trainings and workshops like MACMH’s 2018 and 2019 Annual Children’s Mental Health Conferences, New Horizons Early Childhood trainings.

Jennifer Skibba
Jennifer Skibba has a degree in Early Childhood Education from UW-Stout and a Masters in Professional Education from UW-LaCrosse. She was a Director for a preschool center before becoming a public school educator for 20 years in the Verona Area School District. Now the Early Learning Coordinator for the Verona Area School District. She serves at the state level on the Community of Practice for the Southern Region and Strengthening Diversity Community of Practice committees.

Linda Staats
Linda’s passion for child development began in college during her first one-way mirror observation labs. Her Master’s degree in Human Development combined with her lifelong work in the church forms Linda’s foundation for integrating faith development into every age and stage of life. Linda is the Founder of HomeGrown Faith and serves on the ELEA Board.

Chris Stark and Patsy Cordes
With 80 years of combined experience Chris and Patsy have worked together numerous times over the last 20 years. Chris has a degree in Social Work and has been a Center Director for 18 years. Patsy has a degree in Applied Psychology. Patsy has worked in all aspects of the childhood spectrum, from family to public to private as well as teaching at the college level.

Sue Starks
Dr. Sue Starks coordinates the early childhood licensure program at Concordia University. Prior to this, she was a preschool teacher and program administrator for over 15 years. Dr. Starks is a Pyramid Model trainer for the state and also enjoys spending time in classrooms working with and coaching teachers, observing, and interacting with young children.
**Debbie Tonne**
Debbie Tonne is the Director of Abiding Love Lutheran Children’s Center in Austin, Texas. Debbie received her Bachelor of Arts with teaching certification from Howard Payne University. Prior to Abiding Love, Debbie was both a teacher and an administrator for a large nonprofit center. She has a heart for quality programs, the inclusion of all children, and empowering teachers through continuing education.

**Allison VanLoon**
Allison VanLoon is the director of Acorn Academy. She has over 15 years of teaching experience. She is passionate about purposeful planning so that children are engaged, active, and eager to play and learn. NAEYC recently named Allison as the Gera Jacobs Emerging Leader Scholar.

**Kristen Wheeler Highland**
Kristen frequently says that she has been doing this work since dinosaurs walked the earth. While that may be an exaggeration, she has many years of experience, lots of knowledge and even more passion. Her style is laid back and interactive, she believes it is important to not just gain new information, we need to connect that information to the daily work we do.