

Early Learning Conference 2023

Transition: A Smoother Entry into Kindergarten and Beyond

Virtual: March 20-24

Keynote Address:

Building Hope with Fred Roger's Blueprint 

Gregg Behr | Executive Director, Grable Foundation

Ryan Rydzewski | Award-winning author and speaker

In so many ways, Fred Rogers was a learning scientist who was decades ahead of his time; and his lessons are more important than ever for educators, parents, and caring adults everywhere as they endeavor to support “atmospheres for learning” that our children and youth so desperately need and deserve. Co-authors Gregg Behr and Ryan Rydzewski capture Mister Rogers’ “blueprints for learning” in their book, *When You Wonder, You’re Learning*. These blueprints are so much more than nostalgic; they’re instructive about remaking learning experiences that meet needs this very moment right now—in learning centers, in schools, and in our very own Neighborhoods.

1) *The Importance of Early Talk*

Kelly Thompson Muraglia | Regional Partnerships Director, Lena Foundation

This session supports the understanding that development and learning are dynamic processes influenced by children’s early environment. The research studies linking conversational turns to improved social-emotional development, executive functioning, reading skills, and brain development will be reviewed, and discussion questions proposed. Simple strategies for increasing interactive talk to improve the learning environment will be shared. Handouts with strategies for educators and families will be provided.

2) *Unleash the Power of Play: Joyful Learning with LEGO Education*

Evangelia Papacostas | Mid-Market Account Manager, LEGO Education

Tom Taylor | Key Account Manager, LEGO Education

How do we engage our youngest learners in STEM education? By providing hands-on, interactive learning experiences that make STEM concepts come alive. Learning should be fun and engaging, while also providing opportunities for children to build confidence in learning STEM concepts and developing the skills they need for the future. In this session, we will discuss how to provide learning opportunities for collaboration and problem-solving, as well as inspiration for students to further STEM learning. We will explore the basic principles of learning through play and how LEGO Education solutions can be used to support children's learning and development from Pre-K through 3rd grade.

3) *Sounds, Letters, and Instructional Practices*

Dawn Durham | Curriculum Specialist, Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

Starting at birth, robust literacy experiences allow our youngest learners the opportunity to establish foundational skills necessary for reading and writing. These foundational skills include the accurate representation of our speech sounds through oral language and how those speech sounds map onto our written symbols or letters. This session will equip participants with the vital knowledge of our English sounds, how to provide appropriate instruction for young learners on articulation, and instruction and guided practice opportunities with the sound-symbol connection. The intent is for participants to walk away feeling confident and prepared to build the bridge between oral language and print.

4) Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Early Childhood Classroom

Tiffany Blisard | English Language Development Teacher, Carlisle Area School District

In this session, we will be exploring what culturally responsive teaching is and how it can provide positive experiences for our youngest learners. We will take a closer look at cultural norms and how understanding these can benefit our relationships with families and children. Finally, we will focus on our understanding of culturally responsive teaching and apply it to the classroom curriculum. You will be challenged to think outside of the box as we explore how to incorporate multicultural activities throughout the early childhood curriculum to support and provide a welcoming environment for all learners.

5) The Secret Power of Read-Alouds: Using What You Already Know to Increase Learning

Kay Witmer | Quality Literacy Coach and Storyteller, First Start Partnerships for Families

We all know how to read aloud to children, but did you know that read-alouds can be the most impactful teaching time during the school day? Great read-alouds help you connect with students, and create opportunities for learning literacy, math, science, social skills, and so much more. When these learning opportunities are fun and engaging, students stay focused and learn more. During this session, you will see examples of how to make your read-alouds one of your most powerful teaching tools.

6) A Sprinkle of STEAM!

Amy Crider | District Librarian, Greencastle-Antrim School District

Emily Trace | K-2 STEM Teacher, Greencastle-Antrim School District

STEAM is an ever-growing field, and students can benefit from a sprinkle of STEAM education as early as possible! In this session, participants will learn about ways that they can incorporate STEAM concepts in the early childhood classroom. STEAM learning can connect to a wide variety of other content and subject areas, and participants will hear about ways to weave STEAM activities into the Pre-K classroom!

7) Five Strategies for Building Strong Connections with Children Conscious Discipline

Perna Richards | President and CEO, Together We Grow!

This session focuses on five simple and effective strategies for building stronger connections with children. You will explore the difference between relationship-based and supervision-based connections with children and how understanding this difference will reduce power struggles and defiance in the classroom.

8) Establish and Cultivate Family Partnerships

Andrea Lown | Early Childhood Supervisor, Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13

Examine professional resources that inform teachers' partnerships with families and learn strategies for developing reciprocal relationships with families. Also, evaluate the effectiveness of different communications with families, review types of family engagement, and discover additional resources.

9) Reclaim Your Joy: Paving Your Positive Path Forward as an Early Childhood Educator

Erin Ramsey | Author, Speaker & Lavender Farmer

In this refreshing and inspiring webinar, early care and education leader, author and inspirational speaker, Erin Ramsey will inspire you to pave a positive path forward with ways to claim your power, remove your roadblocks and find your joy. Erin will share tools, stories, photos, and poetry that will provide you an opportunity to reset and rejuvenate to improve your life and work!

10) *The Basics Movement*

Ron Ferguson, Ph.D. | Founder and President of The Basics

This twenty-minute compilation combines five short videos that provide an orientation to The Basics Movement. The first explains how and why The Basics initiative started, the second covers early brain development issues that make the work urgent, the third introduces five core principles—The Basics Principles—around which the work is organized, the fourth gives the overarching vision for communities, and the fifth lays out the core tools.