



Conference Sessions

Day 1

Leadership teams are invited to join us on 10/28 to learn about emerging political and advocacy updates, leadership trainings and more.

Day 2

Morning Sessions

*Denotes sessions that contain some birth to three specific content

The Science of Success: The Power of Emotional Intelligence, Growth Mindset, and Psychological Safety with Catherine Sanderson

Many people focus on the importance of cognitive intelligence in predicting academic and professional success. But empirical evidence suggests that other traits - including emotional intelligence (EQ) and a growth mindset - play a fundamental role in helping people achieve the best outcomes in their personal and professional lives. This talk examines the distinct components of EQ, how having a growth mindset helps you be a better colleague and leader, and how creating psychological safety - in which team members are able to speak up without fear of negative repercussions - improves team performance. Perhaps most importantly, this talk provides practical strategies for increasing your own EQ and cultivating a growth mindset, no matter your natural inclination.

***Co-Creating Playful Learning Experiences for Toddlers: Building Documentation Into Your Curriculum** with Pamela Thompson

Presentation of a Reggio-inspired curriculum for children aged 15-months-33 months published by Neighborhood Villages that responds to an unmet need in ECE. It was piloted in existing early education programs in the Boston area as part of 'The Neighborhood', a pilot district-level model for early care and education. Guided by the principles of playful learning, co-created by educators, families and experts in the field, and aligned with the local K-12 school district, the project brings a unique anti-bias, child-centered lens to learning through play.

This session will focus on how this curriculum provides early educators with flexibility and scaffolding and the importance of strong documentation practices to guide teaching and learning in the classroom. Participants will engage in experiencing playful learning and practice strategies for using documentation to make learning visible & plan for future experiences for children. Discussion on the relationship between documentation and curriculum to support educator planning of play-based learning experiences.

Digital Communications: How to Navigate Turbulent Times with Meghan Rothschild

In this session, participants will learn 1. Learn how to develop communications strategies that highlight Head Start in a positive light during turbulent political climates. 2. Identify the Dos and Don'ts of messaging when it comes to communicating to key constituents and stakeholders. 3. Develop a plan for digital communications to support the work of Head Start while mitigating any challenges.

***How to Talk to Kids Before They Talk Back: Words that Prevent Power Struggles** with Cara Tyrell

In this session, participants will: 1. Apply a new mindset and perspective to the power of intentional language used between birth and five. 2. Explore verbal vs. non-verbal communication strategies. 3. Articulate the difference between receptive and expressive language for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. 4. Learn to identify and match intentional language scripts to the learning opportunity from a shortlist of age-appropriate self-skills. (i.e. emotional awareness/regulation, delayed gratification, early choice making, ownership of natural consequences.

The Power of Play: Developing and Implementing a Play-Based Curriculum with Joe Pinnoneault

All play leads to learning, and children of all ages learn best through the active exploration and experimentation of their immediate environment...also known as Play. Join Joe in this fun-filled virtual workshop that will focus on how to effectively develop and implement a Play-Based Curriculum, through the lens of Play Development (Unoccupied Play, Solitary Play, Spectator/Onlooker Behavior, Parallel Play, Associate Play, and Cooperative Play). As well as, have an in-depth discussion regarding Functional Play, Constructive Play, Dramatic Play, and Game with Rules. In this session, educators will learn about the importance and power of play. The key concepts of developing and implementing a Play-Based Curriculum will be addressed through lecture, open questioning, small group discussions, and hands-on activities. Please have your favorite toy or game with you (or photo) to help guide our discussions.



Day 2 Afternoon Sessions

Don't Take It Personally: It's Just Behavior! with Dr. Stacie Bancroft

Ever asked yourself, "Why is this kid acting like this?!" You're not alone - and the answer might be simpler (and more powerful) than you think. In this interactive session, we'll unpack the concept of behavioral function - a fancy way of saying "the reason behavior is happening." You'll learn how to view challenging behavior not as defiance or bad kids, but as an effective, albeit undesirable, way to meet their needs. We'll discuss, engage, and grow our collective understanding of the main types of behavioral functions, quick and practical ways to spot what might be driving behavior, and strategies to teach more adaptive behaviors and reduce power struggles. This perspective will help boost not only effectiveness, but also compassion. Whether you're a teacher, director, or leader, you'll leave with tools to make your day smoother, your team stronger, and your heart just a little lighter.

***An Introduction to Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model®: Using the Six R's In Early Childhood Education and Intervention** with Stephen Bradley

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will learn, discuss and identify the application of the "Six R's" of the Neurosequential Model developed by Dr. Bruce Perry focusing on providing learning experiences for children that are: Relevant (to their developmental abilities), Rhythmic (resonant with / in tune with their biological needs), Repetitive (patterned), Relational (safe), Rewarding (for the child and the adults) and, Respectful (of the child and their family and the norms of the classroom) -Bruce Perry (© 2007-2025)
- Participants will learn basics of sequential brain development as it relates to the development of capacities in ages 0-5
- Participants will discuss and identify a basic understanding of the impact of developmental trauma on a range of functions mediated by the brain.
- Participants will identify and discuss specific strategies for supporting their students' ability to self regulate in the classroom setting
- Participants will identify how Neurosequential Model® Concepts connect with other approaches in Head Start including Touchpoints Principles.

Family Engagement: Creating Meaningful Child and Family Centered Involvement with Joe Pinsonneault

The simplest statement that can be made about family engagement, is that when it happens everyone reaps the benefits. Research has concluded that family engagement benefits children, parents, educators, schools and centers whether the program serves infant/toddler, preschool, or school-age children. To develop and sustain a partnership with all families, education professionals need to support parents as the primary educators for their children, provide every family with opportunities for a significant experience, and ensure that parents are involved in making decisions for their children. Join Joe in this interactive and informative session where staff will learn about the Basics of Family Engagement, the Benefits of Family Engagement, the types of Family Engagement, Families as Systems, and so much more. Please write down a situation that occurred between you and a family member (positive or challenging) to share with the group, this will help us deepen our discussions in the interactive portion of this session.

Responding Rather than Reacting: A Body-Mind-Emotion Approach to Increase Self-Regulation and Co-Regulation with Jesse Bernal

Challenging, triggering, and dysregulating situations are inevitable in the helping profession, especially for those who support children and families exposed to varying levels of trauma and toxic stress. Understanding how our bodies, minds, and emotions automatically respond to challenging situations provides us with not only the insight that allows us to increase our daily wellness, but mindful awareness to strengthen and build safe and secure interpersonal relationships with those we work with. This training will take a deep dive into identifying and understanding the holistic body-mind-emotional impact of triggers, countertransference, and stress response on those who work with young children and families, and equip learners with techniques to increase self-regulation in order to give the best care to those we work with.

The Daddy Factor: How Male Figures Support Healthy Early Development with Corey Santos and Ashley Weaver

The relationship between father and child has a deep impact on a child's overall and long-term healthy development. Fatherhood is life-changing, for dads and for babies. As tiring as being a Dad is at times, all those moments add up to a lifetime of love and connection.

Children with dads who are involved in their upbringing tend to do better socially, emotionally, and academically than kids with uninvolved fathers. Research also shows kids with involved dads tend to be more confident and more successful with schooling and life skills. Together, we will reflect on, promote and enhance Fatherhood Engagement. Participants will learn about the importance and benefits of the presence of Dads and male figures in children's lives and strategies to get them more involved in the classroom and community