



# Early Childhood Conference

Michigan District, LCMS

August 7, 2025

Agenda

**St. Lorenz Worship and Event Center - 850 W Genesee St. Frankenmuth**

## **Doors Open @ 8:00 - Light Breakfast**

|                 |                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>8:45 AM</b>  | Welcome / Devotion / Announcements |
| <b>9:15</b>     | Keynote - Cathy Tooley             |
| <b>10:15</b>    | Break                              |
| <b>10:30</b>    | Sectional #1                       |
| <b>11:30</b>    | Lunch                              |
| <b>12:30 PM</b> | Sectional #2                       |
| <b>1:30</b>     | Break                              |
| <b>1:45</b>     | Keynote - Travis Grulke            |
| <b>2:45</b>     | Closing                            |



Sectional titles and descriptions follow on pages 2-5.

*SCECHs (4 Total), training hours, and MiRegistry hours will all be available. Please see the conference booklet for more information and steps to apply for the different hours.*



## Each Session is Offered at Both 10:30 and 12:30

| Speaker              | Session Title  | Room |
|----------------------|--|------|
| Meghan Paruszkiewicz | <b>Cooking and Crafting with Preschoolers</b> - Title speaks for itself. Come and learn some hands-on cooking and crafting ideas for your classrooms to enjoy with your preschoolers.  |      |
| Erin Baller          | <b>Phonological and Phonemic Awareness</b> - This presentation will provide educators with a comprehensive understanding of phonological and phonemic awareness and their critical role in early literacy development. We will explore how articulation and speech impact reading skills, highlighting the connection between oral language development and phonological processing. Additionally, practical and research-based classroom strategies will be shared to help teachers foster phonological awareness in students, including engaging activities that support sound recognition, segmentation, and manipulation. Educators will leave with actionable insights and tools to enhance literacy instruction and support all learners in building strong foundational reading skills. |      |
| Melissa Bowman       | <b>Ooey Gooley 2.0</b> - Are you ready for more ooey gooley squishy FUN? Roll up your sleeves and explore the world of hands-on sensory play, and find out why sensory play is so important in early childhood. Participants will walk away with fun, creative, and easy ideas to implement sensory play into their classrooms. It's okay if the kids get messy!   |      |
| Dr. Tracie Salgado   | <b>Early Intervention: Is it needed?</b> - Children in the early childhood development period of their lives are developing at a pace like no other time in life. Brains are changing literally overnight as they absorb the world around them. How do we, as educators, know when we need to be concerned about a child's educational progress? When we decide we need to be concerned, what do we do? Session goals include:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What is early childhood neurotypical development?</li> <li>* What does IDEA recognize as eligibility for services at this age?</li> <li>* How can we support students who need interventions?</li> </ul> Please join for learning through discussion.   |      |
| Kathi Pearson        | <b>Help! I Have Anxiety and I Struggle</b> - Many of your coworkers, your students, and their parents seem to struggle with anxiety about SOMETHING. We will look at the WHY and strategies to use in your classroom, whether you are an assistant or classroom teacher, or administrator, so you can experience a mentally healthy environment!   |      |
| Nicki Blain          | <b>Early Intervention and Inclusion for Infants and Toddlers</b> - You may have heard about early intervention, but what does it actually look like with infants and toddlers? As caregivers of our youngest learners, you may be wondering what to do when you notice developmental concerns. In this session, we will discuss what research says about early intervention, how to have conversations with families when you have a developmental concern, and how to set up an inclusive environment for all infants and toddlers, including those with disabilities.  |      |
| Cindy Sommerfeld     | <b>Language and Brain Development from Birth to 3</b> - Take a closer look at the rapidly changing language of young children as we discuss research in brain development.   |      |
| Andrea Dykman        | <b>Conflict Resolution &amp; Assertiveness in the Workplace</b> - Skills and steps for managing conflict with co-workers or among staff. Including: assertiveness, open communication, empathetic & active listening, and more.  |      |
| Lynn Zeddies         | <b>Handwriting 101</b> - We will discuss the 7 different areas that affect a child's handwriting, what to look for when handwriting is a struggle, and how to effectively strengthen any areas that might have deficits.   |      |
| Emily Ritchie        | <b>Building Staff Morale</b> - Staff Morale directly impacts program quality. We will discuss practical strategies to enhance staff morale and foster a positive culture at our centers.   |      |

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|--------------------|--|--|
| Kelley Fehn        | <b>Bring Back Social Skills</b> - Children are not coming to us with the bag of skills they had 30 years ago (I know I am dating myself). We will look at the skills that are missing and ways to help incorporate them into our classroom culture.  |  |
| Connie Wollenweber | <b>Art &amp; Literature: Ideas for Kindergarten &amp; First Grade</b> - This hands-on session focuses on three elements of art: Line, Shape, & Texture. In our early elementary art department, we use picture books as a springboard into our art projects. This session will allow participants to see how we start with a story, and then jump into the language of art and into an art project inspired by the book. Participants will get to use construction paper, glue, paint blobs, crayons, Sharpie markers, and crayons.  |  |
| Julian Petzold     | <b>Ministry to Parents and Families through an Infant/Toddler Parent Class</b> - Effective ministry to parents may seem difficult, but capturing parents when children are unborn or newly born can be most effective. New parents are a captive audience for information on many important early childhood issues like: developmental norms, faith formation, the impact of experiences, the value of play, effects of screentime in children, etc. Participants will experience a "sample" infant toddler class and share ideas for issues important to parents today.           |  |
| Robyn Adams        | <b>Supporting Children's Peer Relationships and Friendships</b> - Peer relationships and friendships are important aspects of children's lives. This session will look at how children build friendships and how we, as their teachers and caregivers, can help them to learn the skills necessary to make and maintain those friendships.   |  |
| Valerie Eby        | <b>Trash to Treasure</b> - Stop shopping and be creative. It's time to repurpose those "disposables". Learn to make beautiful artwork from things most people call junk. These projects will save you money, teach you to view things from a "treasure " perspective, and result in unique gifts for special occasions.  |  |
| Tiffany Young      | <b>When Words Matter Most</b> - Changing the tone of our voice and the words we use can immediately impact our relationships with staff, families, and youth. In this session, we will discuss some helpful tips to make even the tough conversations not seem so overwhelming or impossible to start, and take a moment to reflect on conflict scenarios and how to best talk through them.   |  |
| Tina Kassebaum     | <b>There's Hope for Peace in Preschool</b> - Does peace seem near impossible in your classroom of 3, 4, or 5-year-olds? The strategies and tools I will share with you will start and continue your year with a learning environment that has peace and enjoyment. It is possible to have peace in your preschool. Join me in this session to discuss and learn more.  |  |
| Kevin Zoromski     | <b>Early Childhood Educator</b> - One of the most important milestones for young children is the development of speech and language. Parents and providers can support the development of these language skills through meaningful interactions and engagement with children. This workshop will help participants learn about communication behaviors and how to recognize communication milestones, explore ways to facilitate the development of speech and language skills, and discuss speech-language development concerns.  |  |
| Simon Yu           | <b>Tiny Moments, Big Impact: Effortlessly Turning Daily Classroom Joys into Meaningful Home Conversations</b> - You create joyful moments that shape how children grow & learn - but how often do families see that magic? In this session, discover how Daysee, a simple classroom celebration app, helps you safely share those moments effortlessly, sparking meaningful conversations at home without extra work. Learn how teachers use Daysee to strengthen school-home connections, deepen family engagement, and celebrate the everyday joys of early childhood education. |  |