

# Friday, October 3

Session 1   10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Session 2   1:15 pm - 2:45 pm	Session 3   3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
1. What's Happening at the Iowa Department of Education	13. Creativity and Learning: Teaching Young Children by Leveraging and Nurturing Their Creativity	25. Hearing You, Supporting You: Reflective Leadership for Stronger Teams in Early Childhood
2. The Play of Infants and Toddlers: Noticing, Naming, and Nurturing STEM Dispositions from the Beginning	14. The Power of Alignment: Program Wide EC-PBIS and IQ4K for Lasting Impact	26. Teaching Strategies GOLD - Working Smarter Not Harder
3. Child Passenger Safety: How to Keep All Children Safe	15. Building Social Emotional Skills by Using Classroom Management Strategies Birth-5	27. My Kid Would Never
4. Children in Grief Workshop	16. Pint Size Science: Exploring Engineering	28. Recruitment and Retention Challenges? Learn How TEACH and WAGE\$ Can Help
5. Learning REALLY IS Connected to Movement in Young Children	17. Positive and Purposeful: Family and Community Partnerships	29. Understanding and Supporting Children with Autism
6. Do You Want to Plant A Garden? (Seed Starting 101)	18. Beyond the Task: Reimagining Early Learning Through Play	30. Sensory Play Through the Ages - Infant - Preschool
7. Advocacy in Action	19. Nurturing Young Minds: Strategies for Early Childhood Guidance	31. Adult Educator Training
8. Scripted Success: Harnessing the Power of Scripted Stories to Empower Young Learners	20. Talk Money to Me: Boost Your Childcare Business Practices for Center Programs	32. More Than a Song: Using Music to Support Child Development
9. Growing Family Connections: Engaging families Through Farm to ECE	21. Advocating for Broccoli: Implementing Farm to ECE for the Littlest Eaters	33. Co-Teacher Communication as a Part of Professionalism
10. Understanding NAEYC Revised Quality Assessment and Accreditation System	22. Recognizing the Impact of Nurturing Children's Social Emotional Development: Early childhood Staff/Teachers and Parental Perceptions	34. From Objects to Opportunities: Using Open-Ended and Authentic Materials
11. Reducing Costs While Maintaining Quality	23. Advocacy Doesn't Have To Be Scary; Learn How to be an Iowa Advocate	35. Strategies for Building Community and Family Relationships in Early Childhood Programs
12. SmartHer Money	24. Take the First Step in your Education with a CDA	36. Who You Gonna Call? The floater!

## Class Track Key

Curriculum/Teaching
  Health/Physical Environment
  Leadership/Management
  Relationships/Families

# Friday Class Options

## 1. What's Happening at Iowa Department of Education Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

A lot is happening at the Iowa Department of Education. Updates in the Early Childhood Bureau include news from Early ACCESS, early childhood special education, Shared Visions, Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programming, FY26 efforts and much more. Come to learn updates, ask questions and gain knowledge regarding various regulatory requirements for preschool programs and districts operating under the Iowa Department of Education.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/  
Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Kimberly Villotti and Mary Breyfogle - Iowa Department of Education

Leadership/Management

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## 2. The Play of Infants and Toddlers: Noticing, Naming, and Nurturing STEM Dispositions from the Beginning Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Infants and toddlers need access to an environment that invites inquiry to support the development of STEM dispositions. In this session we will introduce and describe how adults can support this development when they provide inviting places, interesting materials, and ample time for investigation; recognize that infants and toddlers have their own learning agenda- they are “wired” for learning; trust the child to learn through their choices of materials and actions; and support rather than interfere with the child’s agenda. Participants will learn strategies for engaging all infants and toddlers in developmentally appropriate play that supports the growth of STEM dispositions. Suggestions for using observation, documentation, and reflection to discover what young children are interested in investigating, the meaning of their actions, and the kinds of problems they create for themselves during their explorations will be included. Participants will have an opportunity to engage in teacher play with materials that have been vetted in supportive infant and toddler environments and to discuss the results of their play with other participants. Handouts will include information about easily accessed, safe, and intriguing materials that invite inquiry and support infants and toddlers in the development of STEM dispositions.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Children with Special needs

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Curriculum/Teaching

Sherri Peterson and Shelly Bromwich - University of Northern Iowa

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## 3. Child Passenger Safety: How to Keep All Children Safe Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Child Passenger Safety can be overwhelming and hard to understand all the details. It can be difficult to determine how to correctly install a car restraint and also make sure the child fits safety in the child restraint. We want to keep all children safe, so let's “buckle up” together as we learn how pieces of the “car seat puzzle” fit together. Learn why child passenger safety is important, the different types of child passenger safety options, what the law requires compared to best practice guidelines, and how to find answers to child passenger safety questions. The more we know, the better we can do to keep all children safe.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/  
Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Kim Tiedt - Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral

Health/Physical Environment

# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 4. Children in Grief Workshop

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Hospice of Pella offers the "Children in Grief Workshop" for caregivers to learn how to help the children in their lives who are grieving. The focus of this training is on the grief experienced with the death of a loved one, but most of the information is applicable to anyone facing grief from any other loss. Topics that will be covered include the following: supporting children in grief at various ages and stages, the brain and how it processes grief, coping strategies and support, keeping memories alive, grief in suicide, and self-care. This presentation will offer hands-on activities, discussions, videos, and various resources to help caregivers find hope as they offer support to the children in their lives who are wading through the difficult grief process.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs  
Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Leah M. Garland - Pella Regional Health Center - Hospice of Pella

Relationships/Families

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## 5. Learning REALLY IS Connected to Movement for Young Children

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Children are born to move, but as teachers we often want them to sit still, stand still, walk, etc. However, research tells us that promoting movement in children can increase memory, perception, language, attention, emotional regulation and decision-making. In addition, when language is combined with movement, learning increases 90 percent. Come join us as we experiment with combining learning with movement!

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)  
Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Jennifer Stritz and Johnna Haggerty - Iowa AEYC ECQuIP Consultants

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 6. Do You Want to Plant A Garden? (Seed starting 101)

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

How to start seeds with children.  
When to start seeds  
Preparing the soil and seeds  
Teaching children to care for the seedlings  
Transplanting seedlings  
Common issues and how to correct them

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)  
Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Anita Schuckert - Early Childhood Educator

Health/Physical Environment

# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 7. Advocacy In Action

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Advocacy is becoming a very critical skill for those of us in the early childhood profession. This session will focus on the basics of what advocacy is and give participants some take aways they can use for their own advocacy. In the session participants will be asked to build their own advocacy plan, based on advocacy areas that each person is passionate about. Participants will learn how to find their Representatives how to follow a bill that is in development, and be motivated to become more of an advocate themselves!

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Leadership/Management

Brandy Smith, Hannah Slater, and Allie Spredemann - Wartburg College

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## 8. Scripted Success: Harnessing the Power of Scripted Stories to Empower Young Learners

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

In this session, we will explore the transformative power of scripted stories to enhance the success of toddlers in meeting classroom rules and expectations. This session is designed to equip educators with practical tools to pro-actively address and redirect challenging behavior while fostering a supportive and caring classroom environment. We will dive into multiple real-life examples of social stories and books that have successfully been used to set clear expectations in the classroom and explore how these stories can be seamlessly integrated into daily routines to help children understand what to expect. We will share examples of how scripted stories can contribute to the establishment of a caring and inclusive classroom community while helping to promote empathy, cooperation, and a sense of belonging among children. By this session's end, you will see how scripted stories can help create a positive, predictable, and supportive learning environment for all children. Templates of all stories will be provided for participants to personalize for their own use.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Curriculum/Teaching

Candice Hyler and Merrick Behnke - Drake University Head Start

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## 9. Growing Family Connections: Engaging families through Farm to ECE

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Farm to early care and education (Farm to ECE) offers fun and healthy ways to get kids excited and families involved. On-site gardens, food education, and sourcing local food are the foundations of Farm to ECE. Learn about these fundamental elements, how to incorporate them into your childcare or preschool program, and creative ways to engage families through Farm to ECE programming. In this session you will hear firsthand about Drake Head Start's implementation of Farm to ECE and a family engagement project and its impacts. Participate in hands-on activities and leave with ideas and connections to get "growing" with Farm to ECE.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Krista Smith - Iowa State University Extension and Outreach - FFED

Sarah Martinez - Drake University Head Start

Relationships/Families

# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 10. Understanding NAEYC revised Quality Assessment and Accreditation System

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

In this session, participants will learn about the new changes to NAEYC accreditation. NAEYC staff will present the new Early Learning Quality Assessment and Accreditation system. The presentation will include an overview of the content as well as the process that programs would go through to engage in the NAEYC system. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions about accreditation and register for an account on site.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/  
Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Alissa Mwenelupembe - National Association for the Education of Young Children

Leadership/Management

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## 11. Reducing Costs While Maintaining Quality

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Improving your program's financial health doesn't always mean cutting back. In fact, reducing expenses without a clear strategy can lead to unintended consequences—like lower staff morale or diminished program quality. This class is designed to help family child care providers and center directors take a smarter approach to financial management. Participants will learn how to use financial tools to analyze and monitor expenses effectively, ensure their program is receiving all the revenue it earns, and explore cost-saving strategies that preserve, and even enhance, program quality. Join us to gain practical skills and insights that support sustainable, quality child care without unnecessary sacrifices.

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Angie Rae Duncan and Heidi Schlueter - First Children's Finance

Leadership/Management

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## 12. SmarHer Money

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

This workshop will focus on what you need to know to build a strong financial foundation. You'll learn budgeting methods to effectively manage personal finances and discover strategies for managing debt, building credit, and making informed financial decisions. Explore the importance of saving for emergencies, healthcare, college, and retirement, while understanding the options and benefits available. Gain a solid foundation in investing, covering key terms like stocks, bonds, and mutual funds, as well as the power of compound earnings. The session will also address financial considerations during life changes, such as the death of a spouse or divorce, and introduce valuable planning resources through SmarHer Money.

Class Content Pertains to: Personal Finance

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Heather Kriener - Iowa Department of Insurance and Financial Services

Leadership/Management

# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 13. Creativity and Learning: Teaching Young Children by Leveraging and Nurturing Their Creativity

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

“Creativity is so critical to the way humans grow, learn, and make sense of and shape their world that it should be at the center—not the periphery—of early childhood education.” This quote from our new book, *Creativity in Young Children*, captures the core purpose of this session: to explore research-based concepts of creativity and how to use them to design a rich, engaging curriculum for young children. We examine two approaches to fostering creativity in early learning environments: domain-general strategies that apply across subjects, and domain-specific strategies that cultivate creativity within particular areas of learning. We also highlight how creativity is embedded in the Iowa Early Learning Standards and how educators can build on that foundation to strengthen instruction. Finally, we invite participants to explore creative teaching practices and how they can make teaching more active, constructionist, collaborative, and improvisational.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Tom Rendon - Early Childhood Consultant/Author and Zach Stier - Ericson Public Library

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 14. The Power of Alignment: Program Wide EC-PBIS and IQ4K for Lasting Impact

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

In today's early childhood landscape, aligning quality initiatives with program-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is essential for creating sustainable, high-impact learning environments. This session explores how intentional alignment can strengthen program foundations, enhance staff cohesion, and improve outcomes for young children. Participants will gain practical strategies from a panel of current programs and coaches on how integrating Program Wide EC- PBIS within existing quality frameworks, foster a shared vision among staff, and build systems that support both behavioral and academic growth. Whether you're just beginning your PBIS journey or looking to deepen your implementation, this session will provide tools and inspiration to drive meaningful, lasting change.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Mary Janssen, Paige Duncan and Travis Hayenga

Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral and Mid Sioux Opportunity

Leadership/Management

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## 15. Building Social Emotional Skills by Using Classroom Management Strategies Birth - 5

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

In this session we will examine effective classroom practices for ages birth to five. We will look at a variety of strategies that when used consistently will support the social emotional development of your students. We will do a refresher of behaviors and developmental skills for each age. We will discuss how strong connections and responsive relationships contribute to positive social emotional skills and increase learning.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Laurie Parker and Lisa Stocksleger - Iowa AEYC ECQuIP Consultants

Curriculum/Teaching

# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 16. Pint Size Science: Exploring Engineering

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Ready to start your engineering journey with your students? Join the Science Center of Iowa to explore practical ways to include engineering practices, materials properties and problem solving in your classroom. Participants will be invited to investigate appropriate materials that can be used to advance pedagogy to improve problem solving skills with young learners. Learning frameworks and standards application will be a take away that teachers can easily utilize tomorrow.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Jolie Pelds and Zach Riggins - Science Center of Iowa

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 17. Positive and Purposeful: Family and Community Partnerships

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Join IQ4K Specialists Jen, Alison, and Tessa as they discuss the importance of family engagement. We will talk about why orientation, partnership activities, and gathering information about families all support programming and quality. The session will review partnership options that programs can choose in supporting their IQ4K application. We will also cover how to create supportive documentation for completed partnership activities for programs to showcase their work with families.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Jennifer Verhulst, Alison Schmitz, and Tessa Amato  
Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral - IQ4K Specialists

Relationships/Families

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## 18. Beyond the Task: Reimagining Early Learning Through Play

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

This interactive training is designed for early childhood educators working with infants through preschool-aged children. Many educators feel pressure to complete tasks and manage behavior, often missing the powerful opportunities that play provides for connection, learning, and classroom harmony. This session encourages a mindset shift from focusing on completing tasks to intentionally using play as the foundation for all interactions and planning. Participants will explore realistic classroom scenarios, experience hands-on activities, and leave with simple, powerful tools to bring back to their daily routines.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Katie Bangert - Iowa State University

Curriculum/Teaching



# Friday Class Options, Continued

19. Nurturing Young Minds: Strategies for Early Childhood Guidance  
Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

We will share ideas to support the social-emotional development of young children. This will provide educators and caregivers with practical strategies and techniques to create nurturing environments that promote positive behavior and self-regulation. Through a blend of theory and real-world examples, this presentation will provide ideas needed to build strong relationships with children, manage challenging behaviors effectively, and foster a sense of belonging and emotional well-being. Presenters will share documentation ideas, lessons and books to use with young children and give time to share what works in your classrooms!

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)  
Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Allison Barness and Allison Pattee - University of Northern Iowa

Curriculum/Teaching

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20. Talk Money to Me: Boost Your Childcare Business Practices for Center Programs  
Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

An introduction to Childcare Collaborative of Iowa. How Financial Management Coaching can empower the business practices of a childcare center program. This class will include tips to boost your business operations and how to utilize childcare management software.

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices  
Competency Level: Level 3 - Mastery Professional

Rebekah Hungate and Krystal Frank - Mid-Sioux Opp/Child Care Collaborative of Iowa

Leadership/Management

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21. Advocating for Broccoli: Implementing Farm to ECE for the Littlest Eaters  
Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Farm to early care and education (Farm to ECE) offers opportunities that benefit life-long health and wellness for children, families and caregivers. If you're new to Farm to ECE, this session is for you! We'll cover the core elements of Farm to ECE as well as share engaging ideas and activities that can be tailored to your program. Through group discussions and activities, learn how Farm to ECE aligns with the Iowa Early Learning Standards, enjoy a taste while learning how to conduct your own, and create a plan to get started. You'll leave with ideas and tools to get kids excited about eating their veggies and learning where they came from.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)  
Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Krista Smith and Chelsea Krist - Iowa State University Extension and Outreach - Farm to ECE

Curriculum/Teaching

Health/Physical Environment



# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 22. Recognizing the Impact of Nurturing Children's Social Emotional Development: Early Childhood Staff/Teachers and Parental Perceptions.

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Young children attending a private, non-profit, accredited pre-school were evaluated by their staff/teachers and parents using an empathy questionnaire which assesses empathic responses in young children. Furthermore, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) determined developmental range. It is hypothesized that empathy is learned through observing, social interactions, modeling.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Annisia Raby- Deay, Jill Sudak-Allison, and Kris Owens  
Primrose Schools of West Des Moines and Grand View University

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 23. Advocacy Doesn't Have to be Scary; Learn How to be an Iowa Advocate

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Join us to learn the ins and out of advocacy work in Iowa. Participants will gain a basic knowledge of advocacy and then do a deep dive into understanding how a bill becomes a law in Iowa. Participants will become comfortable with letter writing to legislators, requesting meetings with legislators and understanding how to navigate the Iowa Legislator website. Discussions will include advocacy in action and how participants can make change happen. If you want to make a difference but just aren't sure where to begin, this is the session for you!

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Jeannine Laughlin - Iowa AEYC

Leadership/Management

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## 24. Take the First Steps in your Education with a CDA

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

This session will provide an overview of the process to earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™. Information will be shared about applying for a CDA and the assessment process. You will learn how TEACH Early Childhood® IOWA can help with a variety of scholarship options for the CDA or another type of college degree in early childhood. We support early childhood professionals across the state and provide a variety of resources!

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Lisa Hajek, Amy Bice and Melissa Ellis  
Iowa AEYC CDA Navigators

Leadership/Management

# Friday Class Options, Continued

25. Hearing You, Supporting You: Reflective Leadership for Stronger Teams in Early Childhood  
Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

In the fast-paced world of early childhood education, leadership that listens deeply and supports intentionally can transform not only relationships, but entire teams. This session explores how reflective conversations between directors, lead teachers, and staff can strengthen trust, build skills, and promote professional growth across roles. Participants will learn strategies to offer supportive feedback, guide development, and create emotionally safe environments where adults feel valued and engaged. By fostering stronger connections and a culture of reflection, leaders can help reduce staff burnout and turnover while building more resilient, collaborative teams. Attendees will leave with practical tools for leading with empathy, mentoring with purpose, and nurturing growth in others

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices  
Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Jennifer Ryan - Tanger Place

Leadership/Management

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26. Teaching Strategies GOLD - Working Smarter Not Harder  
Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

This session will provide an in-depth look at Teaching Strategies GOLD and how it supports authentic, observation-based assessment in early childhood settings. Participants will learn how to collect, organize, and interpret documentation aligned with the developmental objectives in GOLD. The session will highlight strategies for embedding assessment into daily routines and using the data to inform instruction and support individual growth.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5)  
Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Vickie Parker - Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer and Dawn Johnson - Kids World Day Care and Preschool

Curriculum/Teaching

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27. My Kid Would Never  
Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Learning more about the apps and social media that our children are using will only help protect them further. Education is the best step in keeping them safe. Also, if we are educated as adults we will be able to navigate in a more safe, secure way. It is all about being safer, smarter tech users.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)  
Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Christy Teslow - Mobile Momma

Curriculum/Teaching

# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 28. Recruitment and Retention Challenges? Learn How TEACH and WAGE\$ Can Help!

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Do you struggle to find qualified staff to work in your program? Can't seem to keep the good staff that DO walk through your door? Finding qualified staff who will stay in your program can be a challenge. That's why scholarship programs like TEACH Early Childhood Iowa and salary supplement programs like Child Care WAGE\$ Iowa were created. Come hear about the resources available to you to help support your staff in becoming more qualified and learn what incentives we can offer to help retain them in your program.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), Program Administration/Business Practices, Consultants

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Jeannine Laughlin and Lauren Linnenbrink - Iowa AEYC

Leadership/Management

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## 29. Understanding and Supporting Children with Autism

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

This session, Understanding and Supporting Children with Autism, is designed for early childhood professionals working in preschool, childcare, clinical, and classroom settings. Participants will gain a foundational understanding of autism, including its key characteristics and the primary areas where children with autism may experience challenges. The session will also highlight the unique strengths and abilities of autistic individuals, offering insight into how they perceive and interact with the world. Attendees will learn practical, research-based strategies— including basic behavioral techniques— to better support autistic children in early learning environments. These strategies will help educators respond more effectively to individual needs, foster positive behaviors, and create inclusive, supportive classrooms. By the end of the session, participants will be better equipped to promote meaningful engagement and success for all children.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 3 - Mastery Professional

Kristin Hanson - Axis Therapy Centers

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 30. Sensory Play Through the Ages - Infant - Preschool

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

We will explore a variety of sensory items that can be used in infant through preschool classrooms. Participants will learn how important multi-sensory play is in relationship to healthy brain development. During the session, opportunities will be given to explore a variety of sensory materials. Time will be given to brainstorm new sensory ideas that can then be taken back and used in classrooms.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Heather Bruno, Tena Purvis and Tayler Smalley  
Iowa State University Child Development Laboratory School

Curriculum/Teaching

# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 31. Adult Educator Training

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Trainer, Facilitator, Mentor, Coach, Consultant? Have you ever used one of these terms to describe your work or the work that you'd like to do? If so, this session is for you! This workshop will provide you with tips and strategies for making your trainings effective and engaging. Participants will learn basic adult learning principles, instructional design components, how to write learning outcomes, and strategies for making your training stick. **\*This training fulfills the Iowa AEYC Adult Educator/Instructor training requirement. This is for becoming a new adult educator ONLY!**

Tammy Engebretson - Iowa AEYC

Leadership/Management

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## 32. More Than a Song: Using Music to Support Child Development

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

In this session, educators will discover how music can be a meaningful tool to support various areas of early childhood development. We will consider the many ways music can encourage connection, communication, and creativity in young learners. The session will also highlight the potential of using visuals, movement, and intentional music choices to enhance engagement. Participants will leave with adaptable ideas to bring music into everyday routines in thoughtful and impactful ways.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Katie Moore and Molly Dabb

Iowa State University Child Development Laboratory School

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 33. Co-Teacher Communication as a Part of Professionalism

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Relationships are the absolute number one element that makes life worth living. However, they can also be the greatest challenge for most people. This can include the relationships with the co-teachers in your classroom. If there is a single factor that really tends to improve one's relationships across the board, it is better communication. What does that mean? It means listening with more empathy and understanding, communicating calmly and effectively, and learning to work with people rather than against them. This training will provide you with the skills needed to better improve your communication skills with fellow teachers in the classroom.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Mariah Duszynski - Story Book Child Care & Preschool

Relationships/Families

# Friday Class Options, Continued

## 34. From Objects to Opportunities: Using Open-Ended and Authentic Materials

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Discover how every day, authentic materials can spark creativity, problem-solving, and rich learning experiences for young learners. This session explores the role of open-ended resources in early childhood environments, offering practical ideas and inspiration for using “real stuff” to support meaningful play. We’ll examine how everyday objects become powerful tools for communication and discovery, and how thoughtfully curated environments can foster curiosity, agency, and engagement.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Candice Hyler and Heather Stemsrud - Drake University Head Start

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 35. Strategies for Building Community and Family Relationships in Early Childhood Programs

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

This session will focus on strategies that invite and create community and family relationships to enhance student learning. Documentation of examples from several family and community partnerships will be shared with participants. Participants will walk away with strategies to strengthen family and community partnerships in their settings. Participants will also have an opportunity to collaborate with others regarding current practices of family and community engagement and plan for implementation within their own programs. This session will share tips and implementation planning tools.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Rebecca Wilson and Jennifer Naig  
Van Meter Community School District

Relationships/Families

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## 36. Who You Gonna Call? The floater!

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

In a center setting, things can change quickly! Imagine you’ve been asked to go to into a classroom where a teacher needs to leave quickly. They are unable to give much direction to you on their way out. There is a sub binder, but it’s much too large to read while being in ratio. Does this sound familiar? Worry not. This class will focus on giving you confidence to enter any early childhood classroom and look for clues on what happens next. We will touch on zoning, building relationships quickly, and high quality language that benefits all ages. There will be many examples of adult visuals with shared language that can be taken back and applied at any center. Come feel like the rockstar you are as a flexible professional.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Jen Wright - Drake University Head Start

Curriculum/Teaching

## Saturday, October 4

Session 1   10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Session 2   1:15 pm - 2:45 pm	Session 3   3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
1. Today I think I'll T.E.A.C.H.	13. Adding Windows and Mirrors to Your Classroom: Culturally Responsive Play Spaces	-
2. Large Motor Every Day	14. Small Steps to BIG SCIENCE	26. Determining the Function to Bring Back the Fun!
3. Seedling CPR and First Aid! Creating a Magical Outdoor Space.	15. Creativity and Learning: Teaching Young Children by Leveraging and Nurturing Their Creativity	27. Art & Mindfulness: Using Color to Bring Self-Awareness
4. Business Essentials for Childcare Owners and Providers	16. Understanding and Supporting Children with Autism	28. The Body Brain Connection: Covering the Science and Nutrition behind Autism and ADHD/ADD
5. Children in Grief Workshop	17. Aquaponics in a Jar	29. STEAM-based Activities for Young Ecologists
6. Child Passenger Safety: How to Keep All Children Safe	18. Outlining and Understanding Business Expectations in 2023 and Beyond! (Part 1)	30. Outlining and Understanding Business Expectations in 2023 and Beyond! (Part 2)
7. Essential EC-PBIS: 5 Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behaviors	19. Teaching Parents about Play in Early Childhood	31. Mark Making – More Than Just Child's Play!
8. Using Your Voice: Storytelling in Advocacy	20. Talk Money to Me: Boost your Childcare Business Practices for Family Childcare	-
9. Guiding, Not Doing, Children's Artwork	21. Math-terpieces - Arts Integration with Numbers and More!	33. Coaching Though Challenging Behaviors
10. 90 Minutes to Consider Our Own and Collective Leadership	22. Professionalism in Early Childhood Education: Building Strong Foundations for Success	34. Knowing You, Trusting You: Building Partnerships with Families Around Behaviors
11. Understanding NAEYC Revised Quality Assessment and Accreditation System	23. Retain Staff and Build a Quality Program with TEACH and WAGE\$	35. We Color Outside the Lines: Emergent Curriculum Approach
12. Hearing You, Supporting You: Reflective Leadership for Stronger Teams in Early Childhood	24. Seeing Me, Growing Me: Reflective Teaching for Young Minds	36. Co-Teacher Communication as a Part of Professionalism

## Class Track Key

Curriculum/Teaching
  Health/Physical Environment
  Leadership/Management
  Relationships/Families

# Saturday Class Options

## 1. Today I think I'll T.E.A.C.H

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

This in-depth and interactive session will focus on intentional strategies and messages that will encourage stronger academic connections and learning fun. Dr. Kimberly Johnson will share her experiences and encourage you to take the time to get to know your families and your co-workers through teaching. This session will present common sense ways to increase creativity and resiliency among our youngest learners. Participants will leave this invigorating session ready to increase their teaching ability and improve their teaching style. We will discuss various learning styles and examine activities that can help mitigate behavior issues before they become challenges.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs  
Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Kimberly P. Johnson - Simply Creative Works

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 2. Large Motor Every Day

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

We will discuss the main reasons, using current research why children need large motor every day:

- Balances active and passive learning
- Large motor development leads to fine motor development
- Brain development
  - Movement and
  - Crossing midline
- Childhood obesity
- A need to move (activity level)
- Sensory and emotional regulation

Examples of low-cost ideas for large motor centers will be shared. Participants will have time to write 3 large motor center ideas.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs  
Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Celia Priebe Shedd, Tiffany Schieffer

Iowa State University and Iowa State Child Development Lab School

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 3. Seedling CPR and First Aid! Creating a Magical Outdoor Space.

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Participants will learn the proper way to plant their seedlings and care for them. I will give them suggestions on companion planting. They will be given ideas on how to trouble shoot issues that might come up in the garden. I will explain how to include the children in solving the issues. I will give them ideas to include a "Sensory Garden" and Sunflower room, and pole bean house for the children to enjoy.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)  
Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Anita Schuckert - Early Child Educator

Health/Physical Environment



# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 4. Business Essential for Childcare Owners and Providers

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

What every childcare provider should know about running their organization as a business, from organizing a legal structure to record keeping to financial.

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Mark Juffernbruch - The Iowa Center for Economic Success

Leadership/Management

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## 5. Children in Grief Workshop

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Hospice of Pella offers the “Children in Grief Workshop” for caregivers to learn how to help the children in their lives who are grieving. The focus of this training is on the grief experienced with the death of a loved one, but most of the information is applicable to anyone facing grief from any other loss. Topics that will be covered include the following: supporting children in grief at various ages and stages, the brain and how it processes grief, coping strategies and support, keeping memories alive, grief in suicide, and self-care. This presentation will offer hands-on activities, discussions, videos, and various resources to help caregivers find hope as they offer support to the children in their lives who are wading through the difficult grief process.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Leah M. Garland - Pella Regional Health Center - Hospice of Pella

Relationships/Families

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## 6. Child Passenger Safety: How to Keep All Children Safe

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Child Passenger Safety can be overwhelming and hard to understand all the details. It can be difficult to determine how to correctly install a car restraint and also make sure the child fits safely in the child restraint. We want to keep all children safe, so lets “buckle up” together as we learn how pieces of the “car seat puzzle” fit together. Learn why child passenger safety is important, the different types of child passenger safety options, what the law requires compared to best practice guidelines, and how to find answers to child passenger safety questions. The more we know, the better we can do to keep all children safe.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 3 - Mastery Professional

Kim Tiedt - Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral

Health/Physical Environment

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 7. Essential EC-PBIS: 5 Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Managing challenging behavior in early childhood isn't about reacting—it's about intentionally creating environments and interactions that set children up for success from the start. Most challenging behavior can be prevented with the use of five classroom practices. This class is designed to introduce early childhood educators to five essential practices from Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (EC-PBIS). During the session, we will go into detail with each of these five practices, provide real-life examples and time for participants to think about how they could implement them in their own settings.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Marisa Kahler - Iowa Early Childhood - Positive Behavior Intervention Supports

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 8. Using Your Voice: Storytelling in Advocacy

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

We will discuss participants' experience in advocacy. Participants will learn how to find their state and federal legislators. We will review state and federal policy agendas. We will practice an "elevator speech".

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1-Progressing Professional

Brenda Loop - Cedar Valley's Promise Early Childhood Iowa

Leadership/Management

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## 9. Guiding, Not Doing, Children's Artwork

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Attending this interactive, in-person session will increase your understanding about the importance of guidance when working with children during an art activity. Participants will discover how Process Art is a better learning experience for children when compared to Product Art. Not only will this session allow you to make art time exciting and fun for children, it will also be exciting and fun for you. Imagine the smiles and pride children will demonstrate when creating art! Imagine the observation of skills you can document! As you enter and sign in, make sure you visit each art area so you can experience the joy of being a child while creating your own Process Art.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Melissa Ellis - Iowa AEYC CDA Navigator

Curriculum/Teaching

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 10. 90 Minutes to Consider Our Own and Collective Leadership

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Comfort, confidence and capacity in leadership requires our individual certainty in belonging as well as our hopes for betterment for the broader collective of humanity. Ninety minutes offers the gift of time to contemplate our place on the continuum of leadership, identify our safe spheres for brave connection, and deepen our comfort in power and leadership necessary to impact humanity's collective challenges. Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern's memoir, *A Different Kind of Power* will provide an inspirational backdrop to this early care and education-focused leadership self-reflection and conversation with outcomes of consideration in activism and service to the profession.

Class Content Pertains to: Professionalism, Leadership capacity building

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Crystal Abbe - Community Collaborator

Leadership/Management

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## 11. Understanding NAEYC Revised Quality Assessment and Accreditation System

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

In this session, participants will learn about the new changes to NAEYC accreditation. NAEYC staff will present the new Early Learning Quality Assessment and Accreditation system. The presentation will include an overview of the content as well as the process that programs would go through to engage in the NAEYC system. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions about accreditation and register for an account on site.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Alissa Mwenelupembe

National Association for the Education of Young Children

Leadership/Management

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## 12. Hearing You, Supporting You: Reflective Leadership for Stronger Teams in Early Childhood

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

In the fast-paced world of early childhood education, leadership that listens deeply and supports intentionally can transform not only relationships, but entire teams. This session explores how reflective conversations between directors, lead teachers, and staff can strengthen trust, build skills, and promote professional growth across roles. Participants will learn strategies to offer supportive feedback, guide development, and create emotionally safe environments where adults feel valued and engaged. By fostering stronger connections and a culture of reflection, leaders can help reduce staff burnout and turnover—while building more resilient, collaborative teams. Attendees will leave with practical tools for leading with empathy, mentoring with purpose, and nurturing growth in others.

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Jennifer Ryan - Tanger Place

Leadership/Management

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 13. Adding Windows and Mirrors to Your Classroom: Culturally Responsive Play Spaces

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

In this interactive session, early childhood educators will explore how to thoughtfully design classroom spaces and select materials that reflect and celebrate the lives of the children and families they serve. The session focuses on early childhood settings and emphasizes the importance of representation, inclusion, and identity in children's everyday play. Participants will learn how to evaluate their current materials, identify gaps in cultural representation, and integrate more inclusive items across classroom learning centers. They will also discover ways to partner with families to enrich the classroom environment. Educators will leave with practical strategies and a personalized action plan to begin creating more responsive and affirming spaces for all children.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Heather Donoho - Iowa State University

Health/Physical Environment

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## 14. Small steps to BIG SCIENCE

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Messy, sticky, wild, fun, and sometimes....daunting. Science can feel like a BIG thing to break down for young children, especially if they have interests that maybe don't match our interests or expertise as educators (who here can name more than 5 dinosaurs?), but did you know that you don't have to have all of the answers for them? In this session, our goal is to teach educators at all experience levels new ways to make learning about big science concepts a little easier - and it starts with some small steps. This session is not intended to be project work training but elements of project work will be included. Please note that no experience with project work is needed, and the strategies shared can easily be implemented with another curriculum, or no formal curriculum at all. Participants are encouraged to come to the session with a science topic in mind that is frequently requested by the littles in your care as we will use these ideas throughout the session so you can hit the ground running after the conference.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Kala Sullivan and Libby Seyller - Iowa State University

Curriculum/Teaching

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 15. Creativity and Learning: Teaching Young Children by Leveraging and Nurturing Their Creativity

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

“Creativity is so critical to the way humans grow, learn, and make sense of and shape their world that it should be at the center—not the periphery—of early childhood education.” This quote from our new book, *Creativity in Young Children*, captures the core purpose of this session: to explore research-based concepts of creativity and how to use them to design a rich, engaging curriculum for young children. We examine two approaches to fostering creativity in early learning environments: domain-general strategies that apply across subjects, and domain-specific strategies that cultivate creativity within particular areas of learning. We also highlight how creativity is embedded in the Iowa Early Learning Standards and how educators can build on that foundation to strengthen instruction. Finally, we invite participants to explore creative teaching practices and how they can make teaching more active, constructivist, collaborative, and improvisational.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)

Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Tom Rendon - Early Childhood Consultant/Author and Zach Stier - Ericson Public Library

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 16. Understanding and Supporting Children with Autism

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

This session, *Understanding and Supporting Children with Autism*, is designed for early childhood professionals working in preschool, childcare, clinical, and classroom settings. Participants will gain a foundational understanding of autism, including its key characteristics and the primary areas where children with autism may experience challenges. The session will also highlight the unique strengths and abilities of autistic individuals, offering insight into how they perceive and interact with the world. Attendees will learn practical, research-based strategies— including basic behavioral techniques— to better support autistic children in early learning environments. These strategies will help educators respond more effectively to individual needs, foster positive behaviors, and create inclusive, supportive classrooms. By the end of the session, participants will be better equipped to promote meaningful engagement and success for all children.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 3 - Mastery Professional

Kristin Hanson - Axis Therapy Centers

Curriculum/Teaching

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

17. Aquaponics in a Jar  
Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

The workshop will discuss how to make small personal aquaponics systems to teach about micro-ecosystems, plants, and animals. Participants will participate in discussions about responsibility, systems, and learning while creating their personal systems to take home. The IKEA-like plans will be physically given to be shared with their communities. Current ideas for personal study(ies) and continued research/ use will be shown.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs  
Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Michael Dean Bechtel - Wartburg College

Curriculum/Teaching

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18. Outling and Understanding Business Expectations in 2023 and Beyond! **(Part 1)**  
Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Understand how the outline, design and planning of Contracts and Policies clarify business expectations. Gain knowledge of how these business tools support early child hood professionals and their families served. Participants will learn the importance of word choice and clarification within a contract and a policy. Finally, to understand why organization and separation of these documents are Best Practice.

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices  
Competency Level: Level 1-Progressing Professional

Lori A Tapke - Child Care Resource & Referral

**\*NOTE: THIS IS A TWO - PART CLASS, IF YOU SELECT PART 1 YOU NEED TO GO TO PART 2 FOR FULL CREDIT\***

Leadership/Management

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19. Teaching Parents about Play in Early Childhood  
Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

This session focuses on equipping caregivers with the skills to explain the value of play to others, including family members, educators, and peers. Participants will learn how to articulate the different types of play, their developmental benefits, and their role in fostering creativity, social skills, and emotional resilience in children. The session highlights effective strategies for demonstrating the power of play in daily routines and advocating for its importance in various settings. By mastering these concepts, participants will be better prepared to advocate for children's growth through meaningful play. This training is ideal for those who wish to confidently convey the significance of play in childhood development.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5)  
Competency Level: Level 2 - Skilled Professional

Tiffany Skaggs - Little Explorers

Curriculum/Teaching

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 20. Talk Money to Me: Boost your Childcare Business Practices for Family Childcare

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

An introduction to Childcare Collaborative of Iowa. How Financial Management Coaching can empower the business practices of a family childcare program. This class will include tips to boost your business operations and how to utilize childcare management software.

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 3-Mastery Professional

Amanda Conklin and Melinda Aman - Mid-Sioux Opportunity

Leadership/Management

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## 21. Math-terpieces - Arts Integration with Numbers and More!

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

This session will explore how math concepts can be naturally integrated into art experiences in early childhood classrooms. Participants will learn how elements such as shape, pattern, measurement, symmetry, and spatial awareness can be introduced and reinforced through creative, hands-on activities. The session will highlight the benefits of combining math and art to support multiple learning styles and foster deeper engagement. Practical examples and project ideas will be shared, along with strategies for observing and documenting children's mathematical thinking during art experiences. By the end of the session, participants will feel confident designing art activities that build foundational math skills in meaningful and playful ways.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 2-Skilled Professional

Vickie Parker - Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer and Dawn Johnson - Kids World Day Care and Preschool

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 22. Professionalism in Early Childhood Education: Building Strong Foundations for Success

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

As an early childhood educator, professionalism extends far beyond the classroom—it shapes the learning environment, builds trust with families, and sets the tone for the overall culture of the program. In this training session, we will explore the essential components of professional behavior that contribute to success in the early childhood education field. From punctuality and work ethic to communication skills and appropriate attire, this session will provide practical strategies for embodying professionalism in every aspect of your work.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Tammy Engebretson - Iowa AEYC

Leadership/Management



# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 23. Retain Staff and Build a Quality Program with TEACH and WAGE\$

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Is your program struggling with retention? Are you seeking to improve program quality? The TEACH and WAGE\$ programs can help to improve compensation, quality and retention. This session will include a more in depth look at TEACH and WAGE\$ with a focus on addressing common myths and misconceptions of the programs. This session will clear up any myths about both programs and provide evidence of how TEACH and WAGE\$ can improve your program. This session is geared towards directors, board members, or any program looking to support their staff on TEACH or WAGE\$.

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1-Progressing Professional

Iowa AEYC Staff

Leadership/Management

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## 24. Seeing Me, Growing Me: Reflective Teaching for Young Minds

Time: 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

This interactive session invites early childhood professionals to explore how reflective teaching deepens relationships with children while also supporting early learning across emotional, social, and academic areas. Using real-life examples from community childcare settings, participants will learn how to use reflective language and intentional responses to help children feel seen, valued, and ready to learn. Together, we'll re frame everyday moments—like transitions, challenging behaviors, and peer interactions—as rich opportunities to build connection, support self-regulation, and foster early learning across language, math, science, and social development. Educators will leave with practical tools to observe with curiosity, respond with empathy, and guide children's development through thoughtful, relationship-based teaching. Whether you're just entering the field or bringing years of experience, this session offers meaningful strategies to support both connection and classroom learning

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5, School Age (5-8)

Competency Level: Level 2-Skilled Professional

Jennifer Ryan - Tanger Place

Curriculum/Teaching

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 26. Determining the Function to Bring Back the Fun!

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Beneath every behavior there is a feeling, and beneath each feeling is a need. And when we meet that need, rather than focus on the behavior, we begin to deal with the cause, not the symptom." ~Ashleigh Warner. It is commonly said in early childhood settings that there is a reason for every behavior, but do behaviors ever leave you feeling stumped. Before deciding on a plan to address the behavior we must first understand why it is happening, and what need hasn't yet been met. In this session, participants will learn strategies for collecting information, determine the likely function of a behavior relevant to their own practice, examine which guidance strategies best address each function (or maybe undermine your efforts), and develop SMART goals to take back and implement with the child(ren).

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs

Competency Level: Level 2-Skilled Professional

Kala Sullivan and Betsy Magalhaes  
Iowa State University and Foundations Learning Center

Health/Physical Environment

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## 27. Art & Mindfulness: Using Color to Bring Self-Awareness

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Art & Mindfulness is one of the most helpful tools you can have in your tool belt as educators. In the heat of a moment, a child might not have words for what they are feeling, but often they can pause long enough to choose a color. In this presentation, you will work through a mindfulness exercise to give words to your emotions. You will learn practical ways to implement this helpful exercise with the supplies you already have, and might learn something about yourself in the process! Once you've finished the exercise, there will be free time for further artistic expression and brief Q&A.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 2-Skilled Professional

Julie Gish - Humble Hands

Health/Physical Environment

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## 28. The Body Brain Connection: covering the science and nutrition behind Autism and ADHD/ADD

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

In our workshop, The Brain Body Connection, participants will explore the critical link between neurological function and physical health. We'll dive into the latest science on how the gut-brain axis and nervous system impact behavior, focus, and mood in individuals with Autism, ADHD, and ADD. Attendees will learn how dysregulation in the nervous system can contribute to sensory challenges, emotional outbursts, and attention difficulties. We'll also examine how inflammation, nutrient deficiencies, and food sensitivities influence these conditions. Practical nutrition and lifestyle strategies will be shared to help support brain development, emotional regulation, and nervous system balance. This workshop is ideal for parents, educators, and caregivers seeking a science-backed, holistic approach to supporting neurodiverse individuals.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1-Progressing Professional

Dr Miller and April O'Tool - Truth Family Chiropractic

Health/Physical Environment

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 29. STEAM-based Activities for Young Ecologists

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Harnessing younger students' innate curiosity about the natural world and desire to protect it can be done with hands-on classroom activities that build STEAM skills, increase environmental literacy and show sustainable paths forward. In this session, the presenter will facilitate a series of interdisciplinary lessons that involve creating 3-D models, engaging in an interactive story, and working collaboratively on solving authentic problems. The session activities aim to excite and motivate students to work toward the type of world they want, and showing them how STEAM skills can empower them to do that. The presenter will allow time for discussion and provide participants with take-home lessons in an electronic format.

Class Content Pertains to: School Age (5-8)

Competency Level: Level 2-Skilled Professional

Michael Bechtel - Wartburg College

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 30. Outling and Understanding Business Expectations in 2023 and Beyond! (Part 2)

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30pm

Understand how the outline, design and planning of Contracts and Policies clarify business expectations. Gain knowledge of how these business tools support early child hood professionals and their families served. Participants will learn the importance of word choice and clarification within a contract and a policy. Finally, to understand why organization and separation of these documents are Best Practice.

Class Content Pertains to: Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 1-Progressing Professional

Lori A Tapke - Child Care Resource & Referral

**\*NOTE: THIS IS A TWO - PART CLASS, IF YOU SELECTED PART 1 YOU NEED TO GO TO PART 2 FOR FULL CREDIT\***

Leadership/Management

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## 31. Mark Making – More Than Just Child's Play!

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

The term mark making in the early years describes the improvised marks children make and may include, scribbling, dots, lines, shapes, or patterns. Mark-making goes beyond just drawing or learning to write. In this session you will learn how children train the small muscle in their hands and further their cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth while having fun making marks.

Class Content Pertains to: Preschool (3-5)

Competency Level: Level 1-Progressing Professional

Vickie Parker - Early Childhood Consultant/Trainer and Dawn Johnson - Kids World Day Care and Preschool

Curriculum/Teaching

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 33. Coaching Through Challenging Behaviors

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

What do you do when a teacher looks at you and says, “I’ve tried everything, and nothing’s working”? This session equips educational leaders and coaches with research-informed strategies to help teachers respond to challenging behaviors with empathy, confidence, and composure. Explore an array of coaching techniques that re frame behavior as communication and empower teachers to cultivate emotionally responsive classroom environments using the most powerful resource they already have: meaningful conversation. Leave with practical tools to turn everyday disruptions into powerful moments for coaching and connection.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Leaders, Coaches

Competency Level: Level 2-Skilled Professional

Lindsey Santarelli and Jodi Whiteman - LENA

Leadership/Management

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## 34. Knowing You, Trusting You: Building Partnerships with Families Around Behaviors

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

When children’s behaviors feel challenging and families seem disengaged, it’s easy for educators to feel frustrated or stuck. But what if we approached those moments with curiosity instead of judgment? In this session, participants will explore how empathy, trust, and perspective-taking can shift the dynamic between teachers and families from ‘us vs. them’ to ‘we’re in this together.’ Through reflection and discussion, educators will uncover the common barriers families face, and learn how to build stronger partnerships grounded in mutual respect and shared goals. Participants will leave with practical communication tools and mindset shifts that support collaboration—even in tough conversations—and ultimately strengthen outcomes for children.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8), Children with Special Needs, Program Administration/Business Practices

Competency Level: Level 2-Skilled Professional

Jennifer Ryan - Tanger Place

Relationships/Families

# Saturday Class Options, Continued

## 35. We Color Outside The Lines: Emergent Curriculum Approach Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Join us for a unique view on what happens when you “color outside the lines” while creating a curriculum that offers students a non-traditional educational experience. Main Street School offers an emergent curriculum that is flexible, child-centered, and dynamic, all while providing curriculum that is focused on the high interests, questions, and experiences of children who attend the program. This approach also embraces exploring nature, encourages questioning, and embraces curiosity as the students explore the world around them, all while meeting and exceeding learning standards!

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8),  
Competency Level: Level 1-Progressing Professional

Kelly Donnelly and Tanya Apana - Main Street School

Curriculum/Teaching

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## 36. Co-Teacher Communication as a Part of Professionalism Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Relationships are the absolute number one element that makes life worth living. However, they can also be the greatest challenge for most people. This can include the relationships with the co-teachers in your classroom. If there is a single factor that really tends to improve one’s relationships across the board, it is better communication. What does that mean? It means listening with more empathy and understanding, communicating calmly and effectively, and learning to work with people rather than against them. This training will provide you with the skills needed to better improve your communication skills with fellow teachers in the classroom.

Class Content Pertains to: Infant/Toddler, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5-8)  
Competency Level: Level 1 - Progressing Professional

Mariah Duszynski - Story Book Child Care & Preschool

Relationships/Families