

Friday, May 1

Cultivating Calm: A Tiered Approach to Social-Emotional Wellness

Step into a dynamic learning experience with fellow center and home child care colleagues—where fresh ideas meet renewed energy for your environment and personal well-being! Using early childhood evidence-based practices, we'll dive into practical, hands-on strategies to prevent challenging behaviors and master advanced communication. Additionally, we'll dedicate time to staff self-care and stress reduction techniques, ensuring that you can pour from a full cup. Invest in your practice, your children, and yourself!

Presenters



Penni Gaul
Keystone Area Education Agency



Angie Squires
Keystone Area Education Agency

Saturday, May 2

Class 1 8:45 am - 10:15 am	Class 2 10:30 pm - 12:00 pm	Class 3 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm
1. Finding the Light: Strategies for Overcoming Burnout	5. Leading with Connection – Building Strong Relationships for Effective Early Childhood Leadership	9. Director Tips & Tricks
2. Chaos to Clarity: Get Organized for Tax Time	6. Delivering High-Quality Experiences in Complex Multi-Age Environments	10. From Play to Progress: Using Curriculum, Assessment, and Communication in FCC Homes
3. Speech and Language Development for Toddlers	7. Creating Predictable Environments: Using Visual supports, routines, and transitions to help Children with autism thrive	11. Understanding Young Children's Behavior: The Why and What to Do
4. Prioritizing Connections: Elevating Quality Practices in Infant and Toddler Care through Relationships	8. Engaging Infants and Toddlers in Spatial Thinking with Everyday Materials	12. Everyday Moments that Matter: Supporting Developmental Milestones through Care-giving Routines

Please note: Participants may follow a single learning track or customize their schedule by selecting classes that best meet their individual needs.

Class Track Key



Infant/toddler



Behavior



Director



Family Child Care

Class 1 Options 8:45 am - 10:15 am

1. Finding the Light: Strategies for Overcoming Burnout

In the relentless pace of leadership, it's easy to lose your spark. As administrators, directors, and program leaders, you carry immense responsibility. Over time, even the most passionate leaders can find themselves running on empty, overwhelmed by stress and stuck in survival mode. If you're feeling burned out, emotionally drained, or like you just can't get ahead, this session is for you. Finding the Light offers a restorative space to pause, reflect, and reconnect with your purpose. You'll walk away with tangible strategies to lighten your mental load, reframe challenges, and create sustainable habits that protect your well-being. Whether you're at the edge of burnout or already deep in it, this session provides both the validation and tools you need to find your way back to clarity, confidence, and productivity. Come ready to shift your mindset, reclaim your energy, and rediscover the light that brought you to this work in the first place.

Target Audience: Program Administrators, Directors, Owners, Center Directors and Staff, Home Providers and Staff, Preschool Directors and Staff, Center/Preschool/Head Start Directors/Program Administrators/Assistant Directors.

Cody Summerville - Summerville Consulting Services, LLC

Director

2. Chaos to Clarity: Get Organized for Tax Time

This session is designed specifically for family child care providers who want to feel more confident and prepared when tax season arrives. Participants will learn which documents and records should be collected throughout the year and how to organize them efficiently. The session will also walk providers through accessing and gathering income data from commonly used child care apps and digital platforms. Participants will receive Excel spreadsheets and Google document templates in advance, allowing time to practice entering data before and during the session. Hands-on support will be available to ensure all participants feel successful and leave with practical tools they can immediately use in their programs.

Target Audience: Home Providers and Staff

Amy Bice - CDA Navigator with Iowa AEYC
Tarra Stagl - Early Learning Center Director at Xavier Catholic Schools

Family Child Care

Class 1 Options 8:45 am - 10:15 am

3. Speech and Language Development for Toddlers

What's typical? What's not? And what actually helps?

Speech and language impairments can significantly impact a child's ability to communicate effectively, which in turn affects their learning, social development, and overall confidence

Sonia will walk through speech and language developmental stages in a practical, easy-to-understand way—breaking down what to expect at different ages and when something may warrant closer attention. She'll share fun, effective strategies to naturally encourage speech and language in both group and individual settings, using approaches that fit seamlessly into everyday routines.

Sonia will also cover how to confidently and compassionately talk with parents when concerns arise, including how to navigate conversations around screenings and evaluations in a supportive, non-alarming way.

Target Audience: Practitioners of Infants and Toddlers, Preschool Teachers, Practitioners of Children with Special Needs, Home Providers and Staff

Sonia Strueby - Speech-Language Pathologist and Founder/Owner with Enrichment Therapy and Learning Center

Behavior

4. Prioritizing Connections: Elevating Quality Practices in Infant and Toddler Care through Relationships

In this session we will explore ways to connect with infants and toddlers, meeting them where they are in their own development and using the power of secure attachments as the primary driver of cognitive, social and emotional growth. With EC-PBIS as a foundation, we will explore how a multi-tiered system of support will help staff elevate the quality of instruction, practices and relationships with the infants and toddlers in their care.

Target Audience: Practitioners of Infants and Toddlers

Monica Shuey - Head Start State Collaboration Office at Iowa Department of Education
Tracy Frush - District Preschool Curriculum Specialist at Council Bluffs CSD

Infant/toddler

Class 2 Options 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

5. Leading with Connection – Building Strong Relationships for Effective Early Childhood Leadership

Strong leadership in early childhood programs is built on strong relationships. This session explores how relational leadership practices—grounded in trust, communication, and psychological safety—directly impact staff morale, retention, and program quality. Participants will examine how their leadership behaviors influence workplace culture and learn practical strategies for building trust, coaching through connection, and navigating challenging conversations. Through reflection, discussion, and real-world scenarios, participants will identify concrete actions they can take to strengthen relationships with their teams.

Target Audience: Program Administrators, Directors, Owners

Tammy Engebretson - Director of Quality Initiatives with Iowa AEYC

Director

6. Delivering High-Quality Experiences in Complex Multi-Age Environments

Planning and implementing high-quality activities in multi-age settings can present unique challenges. In early childhood programs where educators work with children from birth through school age, certain parts of the day may be particularly demanding. This session will focus on three key components of the daily schedule—outdoor play, mealtime, and literacy experiences—and examine strategies for delivering high-quality activities during these periods. Content will be aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-3). The session will also include guided opportunities for participants to identify common challenges associated with these times of day and collaboratively explore practical solutions.

Target Audience: Home Providers and Staff

Brandy Smith - Education Faculty with Wartburg College

Rebecca Ausman - Childcare Provider and Educator with A Leap Ahead In Home Care

Family Child Care

Class 2 Options 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

7. Creating Predictable Environments: Using visual supports, routines, and transitions to help children with autism thrive

Children with autism often experience increased stress, behavioral escalation, and reduced independence when expectations are unclear or environments feel unpredictable. This class provides practical, evidence-informed strategies for creating structured and supportive environments using visual supports, consistent routines, and effective transition systems. Participants will learn how to implement predictable daily structures that improve cooperation, communication, and adaptive skills while reducing challenging behaviors. This training is designed to be highly applicable for home, school, and clinic environments and will include real-world examples, implementation tips, and tools that participants can use immediately

Target Audience: Practitioners of Infants and Toddlers, Preschool Teachers, Practitioners of Children with Special Needs, School Age Care, Home Providers and Staff, Center Employees, Paraprofessionals, etc.

Kelsey Schabold and Kiley Johnson - Axis Therapy Center

Behavior

8. Engaging Infants and Toddlers in Spatial Thinking with Everyday Materials

Infants and toddlers are natural explorers, constantly investigating the world around them. Through these early experiences, they learn how to navigate space, understand how objects fit together, and develop a sense of size, shape, volume, and distance. These foundational interactions are essential for building spatial reasoning and geometric thinking—skills that are critical for later success in STEM disciplines. In this interactive session, participants will explore practical strategies for supporting spatial reasoning in young children. The workshop will feature photos and video examples of teachers and children engaging in STEM learning with simple, inexpensive “contents and containers” materials. Attendees will also participate in hands-on activities with these materials and reflect on how infants and toddlers in their own settings can investigate and learn through exploration.

Target Audience: Practitioners of Infants and Toddlers, Practitioners of Children with Special Needs, Center Directors and Staff, Home Providers and Staff, Center Employees

Sherri Peterson - Program Coordinator with UNI

Infant/toddler

Class 3 Options 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

9. Director Tips & Tricks

This 90-minute Director Tips and Tricks class is designed specifically for childcare directors who want practical strategies they can use right away. The session will focus on time-saving leadership tools, effective staff communication, and simple systems to improve daily operations. Participants will learn real-world tips for managing challenges such as staffing, organization, and parent communication with confidence. The class also provides opportunities to share experiences and solutions with other directors. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas to strengthen their programs and feel more supported in their leadership role.

Target Audience: Program Administrators, Directors, Owners, Center Directors and Staff, Preschool Directors and Staff, Center/Preschool/Head Start Directors/Program Administrators/Assistant Directors

Kelsey Andersen - Director at Bluff's Littler Thinkers

Director

10. From Play to Progress: Using Curriculum, Assessment, and Communication in FCC Homes

Family child care providers do more teaching than they often realize. This 90-minute session focuses on making learning visible through simple curriculum planning, child assessments, and strong parent communication. Participants will explore different curriculum types, practical assessment tools, and easy ways to align everyday activities with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. The training will also cover how to share children's progress during parent conferences using clear, family-friendly language. Real-life FCC examples will be shared to support multi-age care settings.

Target Audience: Home Providers and Staff

Anna Birkenholtz - Family Child Care Provider at Tulip Tots

Family Child Care

Class 3 Options 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm

11. Understanding Young Children's Behavior: The Why and What to Do

Young children's challenging behavior can be puzzling, frustrating, and sometimes overwhelming—but it always has a purpose. This session explores the “why” behind challenging behavior and what adults can do in response. Participants will learn preventative practices that support regulation, how to identify the function of behavior, and practical, developmentally appropriate strategies to respond with confidence and care. Walk away with tools to better support young children’s big feelings and guide behavior in positive, meaningful ways.

Target Audience: Preschool Teachers, Center Employees

Marisa Kahler - Iowa EC-PBIS State Coordinator and Jessie Blohm Education Program Consultant with Department of Education

Behavior

12. Everyday Moments that Matter: Supporting Developmental Milestones through Caregiving Routines

Caregiving routines—diapering, feeding, napping, greetings/departures—are not interruptions to learning; they are the curriculum for infants and toddlers. Drawing on PITC principles, this session helps early childhood educators recognize how everyday routines support social-emotional, language, cognitive, and physical development when approached with intention, responsiveness, and respect.

Target Audience: Practitioners of Infants and Toddlers

Tammy Engebretson - Director of Quality Initiatives with Iowa AEYC

Infant/toddler