

SESSIONS AT A GLANCE

10/15/26 Thursday	Diamond/Sapphire- 250 (Rounds of 10)	Plaza A- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza B- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza C- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza D- 40 (Classroom)	Illinois- 40 (Classroom)	Governor- 40 (Classroom)	Ruby Ballroom- 100 Play
6:15-7:00	Yoga Session with Tammy Davis Classroom							
7:00-8:00	Conference Registration							
8:15-9:30	Keynote – Dr. Antoinette Taylor (Diamond/Sapphire)							
9:45-11:15	Dr Bridgett Mitchell (NAEYC)	Tracy Patton - Infants, Toddlers & Twos Oh My!		Erin Wiese-Reichert - Hands-on STEAM for Preschoolers	Candace Smith - Cultivating Care: Building Trauma-Informed Classrooms Through Educator Wellness	Amanda Quesneberry - Creating Supportive, Inclusive Environments	Mary Korthauer & Kema Gibson - The Serious Business of Play for SPED	Nikki Bowman - Meeting the Needs of All Students in a Play-based, Mixed-age classroom
11:15-1:00	Lunch/Exhibit Hall Grand Opening/ Playroom							
1:15-2:45	Dr. Antoinette Taylor - 100 Years of NAEYC, Early Childhood Education and Care, and Kindergarten: How it started, How it's going, and Where it needs to go.	Shawntay King - Beyond SEL: Understanding the Teacher's Role in Supporting Social-Emotional Development	Dr. James Mitchem & Debbie Sykora - Lessons Learned: Coaching for Inclusion in Community Based Organizations	Chris Horan - Emergency Readiness Hubs: Bring Your Team and Build Your Center's Plan Together	Abby Spychalski - Guiding Big Emotions	Amanda Quesneberry & Elizabeth White, Yadira Ramirez, & Nicole Offutt - Elevating the ECE Workforce: Alternative Pathways to Degree Completion	Amy Kelly - What Is Our Role? Screen-Aware Decision Making in Early Childhood	Sara Garner & Tammy Davis - Tiny Explorers: Growing Through Touch, Texture, and Play
3:00-4:30	Tammy Davis & Sara Garner - Art as A Language of Expression: Process-Oriented Art experiences for Infants and Toddlers	Gretchen Sprinkle - Is It Just Trending? Reframing Neurodivergence	Iris Corral & Elizabeth Martel - From Conversations to Collaboration Communication That Connects	Tessa Hobbs-Curley & Cheri Burcham - Mindful Practice: Bring Self-Awareness into the Classroom	David Banzer & Christina Delgado - Engineering Challenges to Support Early Math Learning	Megan Jung - Positive Descriptive Feedback: What is it and How to use it	Emily Kleeman & Stephanie Mitzenmacher - Big/Little Buddy Programs	Julia Singler - Powered by Play: Developing Early Literacy Through Joyful Learning - What Recent Research Tells Us About Integrated, Play-Based Foundational Literacy Instruction
4:30-5:30	Submit Certificates & Exhibit Hall - Shopping, Door Prizes/ Playroom							
6:30-8:00	Board/Membership Meeting							

SESSIONS AT A GLANCE

10/16/26 Friday	Diamond/Sapphire- 250 (Rounds of 10)	Plaza A- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza B- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza C- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza D- 40 (Classroom)	Illinois- 40 (Classroom)	Governor- 40 (Classroom)	Ruby Ballroom- 100 Play
6:15-7:00	Yoga Session with Tammy Davis Classroom							
7:00-8:00	Conference Registration							
7:30	Exhibit Hall Opens							
8:00-9:30	Michelle Sharpe - (More details coming soon)	Jose Orlando Torres - Revolutionizing the Word Wall: How classrooms can build belonging vocabulary	Kirsten Miller & Katie Neidetcher - Understanding Behavior: What's typical, what's not, and how to talk with families about concerns	Ashley Harms & Wendy Connell - Belonging Builds Commitment: Reflective Supervision and Staff Satisfaction	Becky Grider - The Family Talk Toolkit: Four Easy Steps to Hard Conversations	Mark Parker - Why Good Programs Are Losing Child Care Liability Insurance and What We Can Do About It	Deborah Perez & Nelly Ventura - Building Ecosystems of Care: Supporting Playful Partnerships	Ryan Edwards & Haley Ford - Leveraging Play as a Tool to Build Educator Resilience
9:45-11:15	Dr. Antoinette Taylor - The Road from Early Childhood Education and Care to Kindergarten: A Bumpy Ride or a Smooth Transition	Emily Dorsey & Natalie Danner - Success for All! Strategies to Support Preschoolers with Disabilities	Leslie Katch - Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health: What teachers and leaders need to know	Melissa Casteel - The Inquisitive Leader - Trading Knowing for Wondering: A Strategic Advantage	Becky Grider - It Takes a Community: Building Sustainable Early Childhood Partnerships That Strengthen Programs, Families, and the Workforce	Dan Berman - Engaging Community Partnerships to Promote Prenatal to Five Literacy	Beth Miller - From Vision to Victory: Building Stronger Grant Proposals for Child Care Sustainability	Margi Bhansali & Erean Mei - Playing Our Way Through the Transition to K: Using Play-Based Practices to Support Students With and Without Disabilities in K and Beyond
11:15-12:00	Exhibit Hall/Games/Playroom							
12:00-1:30	Children Champion Luncheon							
1:45-3:15	Cori More & Jennifer Buchter - Screen Time: What do we know, where to we go	Kathleen Sheridan & David Banzer - From Wonder to Care: Helping Young Children to Love the Earth	Kristen Driscoll & Kayla Schwenk - The Power of 'Me' & 'We': Building Positive Toddler Communities	Molly Crain & Meghan Redeker - Emergency Preparedness: Empowering Staff to Handle the Unexpected	Sparkle Jackson & Jodi Eppenstein - Creating Trauma-Informed, Culturally Responsive, and Inclusive Early Childhood Classrooms	Beth Trammell - Leading with Heart and Backbone: Compassionate Accountability in a Mental Health-Aware Era	Zahara Hussain & Samantha Jean Iwinski - Bridging Families and Classrooms: Ways to Incorporate Families	Martha Meyer & Laura Florian - A Great Nature Education Resource: the Blueberry Awards
3:30-5:00	Jennifer Butcher & Cori More - Ethical implications of behavior based approaches in ECE	Kimberly Vazquez - Supporting the mental health of immigrant children in the classroom	Carmen Holley - Small Bodies, Big Reactions: Practical Strategies for Early Relational Health in Preschool Classrooms	Dr. Ja'Re Thorn - Do Your Biases Impact Your Teaching Practices?	Tarah Kadzielawski - Improving Outcomes for Children—How the Learning Environment impacts the Quality of Interactions	Bonnie Spencer - Know Your Worth: Advocacy for Infant & Toddler Educators	Dorothy Turner - The Power of Team Building: Stronger Together	Jesse Ilhardt & Raha Dempsey - Fostering Staff Collaboration, Talent Development + Retention Through Play
4:45-5:30	Submit Certificates/Playroom							
7:00-9:00	Showing of Make a Circle - Classroom							

SESSIONS AT A GLANCE

10/17/26 Saturday	Diamond/Sapphire- 250 (Rounds of 10)	Plaza A- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza B- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza C- 40 (Classroom)	Plaza D- 40 (Classroom)	Illinois- 40 (Classroom)	Governor- 40 (Classroom)	Ruby Ballroom- 100 (Open with Chairs Around Perimeter)
7:00-8:00	Conference Registration							
8:00-9:30		Dr. DeShonda Jennings - Pour Into You: Self-Care Strategies for Sustainable Leadership	Emilie Austin - Steering Forward with AI: Smarter Tools for Smoother Leadership in Early Childhood Education	Tanille Ulm - Loose Parts putting all the pieces together collaboratively	Barbara O'Donnell - STEAM-Based Activities for Young Ecologists	Toni Galassini & Michelle Zurita-Sharpe - Counting is More Than 1, 2, 3: Intentional Strategies for Building Strong Counting Skills	Erin Acosta - Beyond the Screen: Rebuilding Children's Language Through Human Connection	
9:45-11:15		Carly Teeling - When Less is More: Developmentally Appropriate Technology Use in Early Learning	Lisa Cipriano - Big Feelings, Safe Spaces: What We Can Do to Support Challenging Behavior and Healing	Paula Schnicker-Johnson & Ashley Baldridge - Play Schemas in Action	Ruth Baugh - Coaching and Mentoring New Early Childhood Educators	Toni Galassini & Cyndi Lopardo - Beyond Counting: Exploring Geometry, Measurement, and Data in Picture Books	Sandra Duncan -Designing the Ultimate Classroom Through the Five Senses: How Sensory-Intelligent Design Improves Regulation, Behavior, & Learning	
11:30-1:00		Elsbeth Stowe-Grant - Mindfulness & Movement: Strengthening Social-Emotional Growth, School Success, and Educator Well-Being in Early Childhood Classrooms	Wendy Connell & Natalia Ambrozek - Strengthening Coaching Systems for Early Childhood Leaders	Melissa Favata & Leslie Hampton - Mastering time and task management	Dr. Carrie Comer-Yates - Self Regulation in Early Childhood Classrooms: Improving Teacher Practice while Supporting Engagement and Achievement	Michelle Zurita-Sharpe - Visuals! Visuals! Visuals!	Joyce Hemphill & Laura Lynne - Make + Play = Learn	
1:00-1:30	Submit Certificates							