

**CF** COLLEGE of  
CENTRAL  
FLORIDA  
—an equal opportunity college—  
3001 SW College Rd  
Bldg. 20, Rm. 202  
Ocala, FL 34474



CF.edu/ECC

Scan the code to learn more about  
the Early Childhood Conference.



# 36th Annual Early Childhood Conference

Saturday,  
March 29, 2025  
7:15 a.m.-4 p.m.

College of Central Florida  
Ewers Century Center  
3001 S.W. College Road  
Ocala, FL 34474



Participants are invited to compete in our contest by creating a vision board/artwork that illustrates your hopes, dreams, and plans for the future of education

**Dr. James Henningsen**  
CF President

**Dr. Mark Paugh**  
Vice President of  
Academic Affairs

**Dr. Jennifer Fryns**  
Vice President of Workforce  
Development and Innovation

### Conference Co-Sponsors:

CF Teacher Education  
CAMPUS USA

Hand2Mind  
Kaplan Early Learning Company

Marion County Public Library System  
Department of Children and Families

### Conference Committee:

CF Teacher Education  
CF Learning Lab School  
ELC of Marion County  
Marion County Public Library System

Marion County Public School  
Church at the Springs  
Family Ties Child Center  
Florida Family Child Care Home Association



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ALBERT WRIGHT

### Purposeful Partnerships: The Importance to Engaging Families, Educators and Community Partners

The purpose of being a community of educators shows the collective power of collaboration among teachers, administrators and education stakeholders. In this increasingly fast-paced world, no single educator or environment can meet every challenge or possess every skill needed to support the diverse needs of students. So, we need to have the courage to share knowledge, experiences and resources to ensure that every child receives the best education possible. No matter what age we work with, we all need to understand we are in this together with the same goal - to educate our children.



## CLOSING SPEAKERS: JENNIFER BECK AND CHRISTINE SANDY

Preschool educators play a crucial role in preparing young learners for a future shaped by rapid changes. Key skills and values will be essential for tomorrow's world. Ultimately, as educators, we must lay a strong foundation that empowers preschoolers to thrive in an uncertain future and become the problem-solvers, leaders and responsible citizens of tomorrow. Children born today will become the workforce of 2043 and beyond. Will they be ready to meet the challenge?



College of Central Florida offers equal access and opportunity in employment, admissions and educational activities. The college will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, pregnancy, age, marital status, national origin, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status or disability status in its employment practices or in the admission and treatment of students. Recognizing that sexual harassment constitutes discrimination on the basis of sex and violates this policy statement, the college will not tolerate such conduct. The Title IX Coordinator has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies and can be contacted at Ocala Campus, Building 3, Room 116, 3001 S.W. College Road, 352-291-4410, or [Compliance@cf.edu](mailto:Compliance@cf.edu).

See website for information and registration: [CF.edu/ecc](http://CF.edu/ecc)

For group registration, download the form. Each student must complete the form and return it to Bebe Rahaman via [rahamanb@cf.edu](mailto:rahamanb@cf.edu).

### **Managing Difficult Behavior in Children – Albert Wright**

We will explore practical ways to diffuse problematic behaviors and slow down their reoccurrence. There is absolutely a difference between difficult behavior and age-appropriate behaviors, and having a clear grasp of these differences is imperative. Understanding current trends in behavior and knowing the importance of positive reinforcement is a must. A happy and successful child makes for a happy and successful classroom.

**Target Audience: I, F, P, A**

### **Exploring Teacher Skills in Early Childhood Education through Technology Integration – Nermin Ciloglu Cakmakci**

Technology has become an important tool in the modern classroom, affecting multiple aspects of education, including communication, teaching and learning. This systematic review examines how technology integration impacts teaching skills in early childhood education, focusing on the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. It synthesizes 18 studies (2018–2024) from global databases using PRISMA guidelines. The review highlights benefits like improved teaching, creativity and addressing diverse learning needs while recognizing challenges such as equity and teacher training.

**Target Audience: P**

### **Unlocking Potential: Benefits of an Inclusive Preschool Environment - Alison Thomas and Erin Nowakowski**

In recent years, the importance of inclusive education has gained significant momentum, particularly in early childhood settings. This presentation will explore the benefits of inclusive preschools for all children, focusing on social, emotional and cognitive development. By fostering an environment that embraces diversity, we not only support children with disabilities but also enhance the learning experiences of their typically developing peers.

**Target Audience: I, P**

### **The Intersection of Environment and Interactions in Supporting Self-Regulation Skills - Erin Murray**

This session merges best practices in designing learning environments, teacher-child relationships and the development of self-regulation. We'll focus on creating effective spaces, routines and visual resources to help teachers and children build a toolbox of strategies for supporting social-emotional and sensory development. Examples include breathing practices, big body movements, problem-solving approaches, and designing intentional space for co-regulation.

**Target Audience: I,P**

### **From Chaos to Calm: Engaging Transitions Through Drama - Terry LeCompte**

Turn challenging classroom transitions into moments of creative connection! This interactive workshop provides practical strategies to keep children focused and engaged during transitions using dramatic play, movement and storytelling. Participants will explore quick, effective tools such as “transition songs” and mini-roleplay activities like “Marching to the Jungle.” You'll walk away with a toolkit of fun and practical ideas to bring calm and focus to your classroom. Follow-up support is available to help tailor these tools to your unique setting.

**Target Audience: A**

### **The Relationship Revolution: Transforming Leadership Through Connection - Sarah James**

We all know the saying: People work for people. But what does that really mean? Building relationships with fellow human beings is one of the fundamental steps to a healthy and productive human experience, but navigating the complexities of other humans can be incredibly frustrating and challenging at times. Join this session and discover the multistep process to foster positive connections that develop into sustainable relationships.

**Target Audience: A**

### **Exploring High-Level Training and Professional Learning Opportunities with TEACH and INCENTIVES\$ Florida – Emily Fulkerson and Rhiannon Castillo**

Studies indicate that early learning experiences play a crucial role in brain development. TEACH Early Childhood® Scholarship and INCENTIVES\$ Florida work in conjunction, providing comprehensive supports and scholarship opportunities for early learning and family child care educators to help them create and maintain high-quality learning environments within and across their programs.

**Target Audience: P, A**

### **STEM Classroom Jobs "Whole Child Method" - Michelle Dean**

Build self-esteem and perseverance throughout the school year with STEM careers. Have you ever wondered how you can engage your students in exciting STEM careers (classroom jobs)? Come join me and I will guide you through the process of choosing your students based on the “whole child method.” Your young learners will learn valuable tools to help with current and future career success. You don't want to miss out on this informative presentation.

**Target Audience: P**

### **Teacher Education Courses at College of Central Florida**

Whether you are interested in honing your skills in a certificate program or working your way to a bachelor's, we can help you achieve your dream. CF offers the Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) and the Director's Credential to individuals who are serving or would like to serve in the child care industry.

We offer College Credit Certificate programs in Child Care Management and Early Intervention. Our Associate in Science in Early Childhood Education and our Associate in Arts directly articulate into our Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education.

**Target Audience Key: I = Infant/Toddler; F = Faith Based; P = Preschool; A = Administration**

### **Creative Connections: Integrating Arts into Early Childhood STEAM Learning - Elizabeth Fields**

In this hands-on session, you'll explore how integrating visual and performing arts with science, technology, engineering and math (STEAM) fosters deeper learning, creativity and critical thinking in young children. From bubble painting to digital storytelling, you'll gain actionable strategies that engage young learners in fun, art-infused lessons. You will be equipped with practical tools to inspire and support your children's growth. You also will experience interactive activities designed for early learners - meaning you'll leave with a ready-to-implement toolkit for your classroom. This session will give you the confidence to weave arts into your daily teaching while creating a well-rounded STEAM curriculum.

**Target Audience: I, P**

### **Exploring Strategies for Supporting Students with Dyscalculia in Early Childhood Math: A Hands-On Workshop – Rob Curran**

Participants will learn to incorporate decodable texts and sound wall instruction, starting with the manner of articulation, to reinforce phonemic skills. This hands-on session will provide practical tools and techniques to enhance your literacy instruction, ensuring that students develop the accuracy and automaticity needed for fluent reading. Join us to transform your teaching practices and boost your students' reading proficiency.

**Target Audience: P**

### **From Phonemes to Automaticity: Building Fluency Through Phonemic Awareness – Keegan Wilson**

Using a multimodal approach and explicit instruction, we'll delve into effective strategies to transition students from recognizing sounds to achieving fluent reading. Participants will learn to incorporate decodable texts and sound wall instruction, starting with the manner of articulation, to reinforce phonemic skills. This hands-on session will provide practical tools and techniques to enhance your literacy instruction, ensuring that students develop the accuracy and automaticity needed for fluent reading. Join us to transform your teaching practices and boost your students' reading proficiency.

**Target Audience: P**

### **Number Routines with Number Blocks: Make Number Magic – Carrie DeNote**

Teachers will take a deep dive into the early counting principles that create a solid foundation for building numeracy with our youngest learners. Explore how Number Routines with number blocks perfectly pairs hands-on learning with captivating animation and collaboration to keep students engaged, connected and excited about math!

**Target Audience: P**

### **Student-Led Inclusivity: Empowering Change in Neurodiverse Pre-K Classrooms – Meg Lietzau**

This presentation will explore the transformative power of student-led initiatives in shaping an inclusive Pre-K classroom environment, particularly for neurodiverse students. The focus will be on why inclusion is critical in early childhood education and how students can be pivotal in building welcoming spaces for children with diverse abilities. This session will highlight how the collaboration between students and staff has contributed to the creation of an inclusive learning environment for neurodiverse children in Pre-K and how such efforts can inspire similar initiatives across other educational levels.

**Target Audience: P**

### **Embracing Play-based Learning - Shucree Cameron and May Darrisaw**

In this session, we will focus on identifying key strategies to effectively incorporate play into the daily routine. Participants will explore various methods to create playful learning environments that enhance educational outcomes. Educators should aim to embrace the eight intelligences by asking, “What tools or strategies support this intelligence?”

**Target Audience: I, P**

### **Reading with Horses - Bringing Books to Life - Debbie Garcia-Bengochea**

Learn about the opportunities for teachers in preschools to have highly trained therapy horses with reading programs in their schools. Hands-on activity will be shared with a real horse in the classroom.

**Target Audience: I, F, P, A**

### **It Takes a Village: Cultivating Family Engagement - Shayna Torres**

Impactful family engagement is a shared responsibility among leadership, teachers and families in which centers commit to working in partnerships that pave the way for school readiness and children's later academic success. Children who come from homes and programs that prioritize parental involvement have a greater chance of developing healthy social, emotional, cognitive and physical development skills than those who do not. By attending this session, participants will gain knowledge in the following areas: creating a welcoming environment, effective school-family communication, providing meaningful resources for families, shared leadership with families, and conflict resolution - turning conflicts into partnerships.

**Target Audience: I, F, P, A**

### **The Very Hungry Caterpillar with Shadow Puppets - Edna Bland**

In this make and take workshop, teachers will learn how to integrate English Language Arts, Science, Visual and Theater Art. Puppets are great teaching assistants and a wonderful resource in aiding with helping students to meet ELA standards with reading comprehension, storytelling and listening skills.

**Target Audience: P**

**Continuing Education Approvals:** Child care personnel can receive eight hours of in-service credit.

Marion County Public School employees will receive six MIP points for sessions attended.