

2026 Early Childhood Care & Education Conference

Belonging Begins Here!



Keynote: Building Connection, Regulation, and Belonging (CKC-LEC)

Strong classroom communities do not happen by accident—they are intentionally built through relationships, responsive environments, and consistent practices that support children and adults alike. In this session, participants will explore how connection, regulation, and belonging create the foundation for learning and positive behavior.

Whether working in center-based programs, schools, or home-based settings, educators will gain practical strategies for fostering relationships, creating predictable routines, and designing environments where every child feels safe, valued, and connected.

Play Coaches - The Power of Play (CKC-HGD)

Play is not just something children do—it is how they learn, grow, connect, and make sense of the world. In The Power of Play, participants will rediscover the science, purpose, and joy behind playful learning while exploring how intentional, responsive adults support healthy development.

Through reflection, storytelling, and interactive experiences, participants will reconnect with their purpose as educators and caregivers while learning how play supports cognitive, social, emotional, language, and physical development. This uplifting session reminds participants that meaningful learning happens when children experience joy, curiosity, connection, and wonder.

Soobin Oh - Designing Environments (CKC-LEC)

An introduction to our resource of the same name — a practical framework for designing classroom invitations and environments that spark children's exploration and inquiry. Hands-on and immediately applicable.

Shawn Massingale - Observation Assessment (CKC-OA)

Participants will learn the importance of observing children during their play and how this relates to assessing children's development. Participants will engage in practice observations and garner feedback from peers and instructor.



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Soobin Oh - Conflict Curriculum (CKC-LEC)

Conflict isn't a disruption to learning – in the early childhood classroom, it can be the curriculum. This session reframes the everyday disagreements, big feelings, and social ruptures children experience as the exact moments where connection and belonging get built. We'll spend a little time on why this works, and most of our time on concrete, in-the-moment practices teachers can use to guide children through conflict in ways that deepen relationships and community – an antidote to many of the behavioral challenges teachers are navigating right now.

Shawn Massingale - Nutrition Film (CKC-HSN)

Participants will watch a film from the Oregon Nutrition Hub and Meyer Institute that discusses the importance of good nutrition prior to becoming pregnant or fathering a child and how nutrition is a major factor in social determinants of health. A guided discussion will occur after the film to answer questions.

Markel Owens & Stephanie Cravalho - Every Child Belongs: Understanding the Process for Getting Support (CKC-PPLD)

Wondering what happens after a childcare provider requests support through Every Child Belongs? This informative training will walk participants through the Every Child Belongs process from start to finish. We'll explore what Every Child Belongs is, who can request support, what to expect during the initial contact and Welcome Consultation, and how support is determined based on the needs of the child and the childcare setting.



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