

**SOUTHEAST
CHILDHOOD COLLECTIVE**
EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE



March 13 & 14, 2026
Centennial Hall | Juneau, AK

WITH SUPPORT FROM Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska,
Sealaska Heritage Institute, State of Alaska Department of Education and Early
Development, & thread

Nurture

Grounded in Relationships - Growing in Connection.

Welcome to the 2026 Southeast Childhood Collective Annual Early Childhood Conference! We are honored to welcome you to Nurture: Grounded in Relationships, Growing in Connection.

This year's conference invites us to embrace themes of healthy attachment, social-emotional learning, and caregiver and child well-being. Nurturing relationships establish the foundation for lifelong learning and overall health. When children experience consistent, responsive care, they build the confidence, resilience, and emotional competence that support them throughout life. Social-emotional learning deepens this foundation by helping children recognize and regulate their emotions, form healthy relationships, and develop empathy and problem-solving skills. We also recognize that caregiver well-being and child well-being are deeply interconnected. When educators and families are supported and valued, children truly thrive.

As we continue forward under our new name, Southeast Childhood Collective (formerly SEA-AEYC), we celebrate both our history and our growing vision for collective impact across the region. We are proud to gather the largest collection of early childhood professionals, administrators, and parent mentors in Southeast Alaska. With nearly 40 Sessions and an estimated 250 Participants representing dozens of agencies and programs, this conference reflects the power of coming together with shared purpose and big hearts.

We invite you to engage fully, share your wisdom, listen deeply, and nurture both new and longstanding connections. May these two days strengthen your practice, renew your spirit, and reaffirm the essential role of healthy attachment and well-being in the lives of children and caregivers alike.

Thank you for the dedication, compassion, and expertise you bring to this field. We are grateful you are here and look forward to growing in connection together.

With gratitude,
Southeast Childhood Collective Board of Directors

SCC Staff

Blue Shibler, Executive Director
Nikki Love, Creative Director
Emily Thompson, Parents As Teachers Coordinator
Mary Adelmeyer, Parents As Teachers Home Visitor
Liesel Wittmer, Parents As Teachers Home Visitor
Raineka Ackley, Parents As Teachers Home Visitor
Ray Romberg, Parents As Teachers Home Visitor
Leanora Skaggs, Parents As Teachers Program Assistant
Tess Olympia, Childcare Apprentice Coordinator
Colleen Brody, Childcare Provider Mentor
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HOUSEKEEPING & EVENT NOTES

Professional Development

This year's attendance will be tracked using certificates of attendance found in your conference folders. Be sure to sign in, complete the electronic evaluation, and receive an attendance sticker at the end of each session. These certificates are your proof of attendance for the event. They are needed to count toward training hours with child care licensing and are required for educators applying for travel or professional development reimbursement through SEED!

Interested in earning UAS Credit? You can enroll to receive credit for your attendance by logging on to your UAOnline account and searching **ED 593 :Nurture: Grounded in Relationships, Growing in Connection *CRN: 36860**). Come visit the SCC/CDA table in the lobby to learn more about what professional development path is best for you and your goals!

Attendance

Attendance Verification Stickers will be distributed following each session to mark your Certificate of Attendance. It is also recommended that you add your sessions to your Whova Agenda so that we are able to record your attendance in instances of lost certificates and inquiries following the event.

Meals

Breakfast: will be available in the lobby starting at 7:30 am both days.

Lunch: will be served buffet style in the lobby both days.

Refreshments: Coffee and tea will be available all day.

Workshop Expectations

Please sign in as you enter each Workshop. We will be able to email handouts presenters have provided! Session rooms will have a maximum capacity to prevent overcrowding. Please respect these capacities and the individuals enforcing them. Have a backup session in mind in the event your first choice is full.

Resource & Activity Tables

We have lots of fun things in store for you! Between sessions, be sure to explore both lobby areas! We have wonderful organizations that will be on-site and ready to say hello and answer questions about how they can support YOU!

Table Care

Keep it clean! Please bus your own tables after each session and take any trash or dirty dishes to the collection trays. You are welcome and encouraged to explore the table décor - we ask that you leave any unused/reusable items on the table so others can enjoy them as well! Please do not remove centerpieces unless otherwise indicated.

Parking:

Are you parked in the right spot? To avoid a parking fine, be sure to park in the designated Centennial Hall Parking Area (marked in green, located between the JACC and Centennial Hall buildings) and sign your car in at the office kiosk. You can park anywhere after 5 pm on Friday and all-day Saturday.

EVALUATIONS

At the end of each session, please pull out your phone and scan the following QR codes to complete an online evaluation. Not a fan of QR codes? This allows presenters to easily access and review your valuable, lived experience. **Please complete an evaluation for each Presentation you attend.**

FRIDAY



SATURDAY



OPENER: LISA PHU

Season five of the podcast *No One is Coming to Save Us* explores the child care system we demand to have: one that is guaranteed, high quality, accessible, and truly supportive for families. And quality isn't about a fancy building or the latest tools. It's about relationships. It's about nurture — for children and for those who teach and care for them. One of the show's producers, Lisa Phu, reflects on her experience helping to create the season, which highlights a simple yet powerful idea — caring for the caregivers is crucial to high quality care.

Lisa Phu is an editor, journalist, and podcast producer based in Juneau. She's managing editor at KTOO Public Media. She was previously a producer at Lemonada Media and helped make top-charting podcasts like *No One is Coming to Save Us*, *Uncared For*, and *Still My Baby*. She created and produced the award-winning podcast *Before Me*, a story that follows her mom's life, from Cambodia to America and the long overdue conversation between Lisa and her mom about their family's history. She was Deputy Editor at the *Alaska Beacon*, and reported for the *Juneau Empire*, *KSTK*, and *Wrangell Sentinel*. Originally from New York, Lisa is first generation Chinese American and a mom of two.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: THE PLAY COACHES



The Play Coaches, Dani Svantner and Wendy Turcott, are nationally recognized trainers, consultants, and keynote speakers who bring a research-backed, heart-centered, and highly practical approach to Social Emotional Learning for both children and adults. With expertise in early childhood education, emotional intelligence, trauma-responsive care, leadership development, and brain-based teaching, they help educators and caregivers understand how the nervous system, relationships, and play work together to shape lifelong learning and well-being.

Their work is grounded in the belief that: "Children don't learn to regulate unless they are first co-regulated. We can't teach calm if we don't live calm."

Their keynote will blend neuroscience, storytelling, reflection, and playful audience participation to create an experience that is both deeply meaningful and immediately usable in classrooms, homes, and leadership settings.

HIGHLIGHTED SPEAKER: NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGES

Neighborhood Villages designs and scales innovative and collaborative solutions to the biggest challenges facing early education and child care providers serving families with young children ages 0-5 and advances sustainable, equity-driven systems change through advocacy, education, and policy reform.

We advocate for early education and care policy reform and implement innovative, scalable solutions that address the biggest challenges faced by early education and care providers and the families who rely on them. We specialize in ground-level, strategic interventions aimed at building the capacity of the early education and care sector, and advocate for the public investment it needs and deserves. We show systems change in action to push policy forward.



FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026

7:30 - 8:00	Registration and Breakfast			
8:00 - 10:30	Welcome with Lisa Phu Ballroom 2/3 Keynote with the Play Coaches Ballroom 2/3			
10:30 - 11:00	Break			
	Ballroom 1	Egan	Hickel	Miller
Session 1 11:00 - 12:00	Tl'ix' Yaakw: One Canoe - Paddling as One to Help Revitalize Lingít Language thru Music Lorrie Heagy & Yuxgilsiy George Holly	Preparing Children Socially and Emotionally for Kindergarten Supanika Ordonez	Growing Hope & Belonging Tammy Iund	Babywearing in the Childcare Setting Sara Gress and Kaity Wyatt
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch Ballroom 2/3			
Session 2 1:00 - 2:00	Sense Your Emotions The Play Coaches	Nourished Connections: Helping Children Build a Healthy Relationship with Food Audra Henderson	Language Acquisition through Relationship Building Sarah Peele & Molly Briggs	Circle Time That Connects: Joyful, Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Preschoolers Mary Adelmeier and Blue Shibler
2:00 - 2:30	Break			
Session 3 2:30 - 3:30	Co-Creating Playful Learning Experiences Through Curriculum Pamela Thompson & Erica Maia	From Awareness to Action: Understanding Trauma in the Early Years Vanessa Plourde-Smith	Growing Connection: Transforming Systems of Care through Help Me Grow Alaska Reanne Honemann-Queja & Robyn McComas	Connection to Self and Others through the Land Kelly Sorensen and Naatalgail Utler
3:30 - 4:00	Break			
Session 4 4:00 - 5:00	Co-Creating Playful Learning Experiences Through Curriculum Pamela Thompson & Erica Maia	From Awareness to Action: Understanding Trauma in the Early Years Vanessa Plourde-Smith	Nurture Relationships and Learning with Picture Books Amelia Jenkins	Connection to Self and Others through the Land Kelly Sorensen and Naatalgail Utler
				Wool Work: Make-a-Mat Tess Olympia



SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026



7:30 - 8:00	Registration and Breakfast				
8:00 - 10:00	Welcome and Keynote with the Play Coaches Ballroom 2/3				
10:00 - 10:30	Break				
	Ballroom 1	Egan	Hickel	Hammond	Miller
Session 1 10:30 - 11:30	Together in Relationship: Advancing Our Shared Mission for Thriving Children Tammy Iund	Getting Started with Story Workshop Lindsay Baranovic	Your Personal Universe Elizabeth Giudice	Making Meaningful Musical Moments Karen Lange	Meet Up Space
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch Ballroom 2/3				
Session 2 12:30 - 1:30	Cultivating a Culture of Wellbeing The Play Coaches	The Power of Everyday Connections: Nurturing Children and Families Joanna Hinderberger	You Are the Nervous System in the Room Cindee Brown-Mills	Daytime Sleep as Emotional Care: Supporting Infant & Toddler Mental Health Mary Adelmeyer	Meet Up Space
1:30 - 2:00	Break				
Session 3 2:00 - 3:00	Co-Creating Playful Learning Experiences Through Curriculum Pamela Thompson & Erica Maia	Bladder, Breaks, and Boundaries Casey Hampton	Supporting Social Emotional Development in the Classroom Colleen Brody	Making Space for You: A Vision Board Workshop for Caregivers Nikki Love	Meet Up Space
3:00 - 3:30	Break				
Session 4 3:30 - 4:30	Co-Creating Playful Learning Experiences Through Curriculum Pamela Thompson & Erica Maia	Grounded in Relationships: Strengthening Connection to Support Social-Emotional Learning Fisher Stevens	Nurtured From the Very Beginning: Birth Support for Everyone Andria Buddill	Embroidery Workshop: Stitch Your Stress Away Emily Coate Thompson	Meet Up Space
4:45 - 5:00	Closing Session with Lorrie Heagy & Yuxqitsiy George Holly				

8:30AM-10:30AM KEYNOTE

Before the Wave: Preparing the Brain & Body for Big Emotions, the Play Coaches

Ballroom 2/3

Big emotions don't start at the meltdown—they start long before the wave rises. In this first keynote, participants explore what is happening inside both the child's brain and their own before emotions escalate. Grounded in neuroscience, sensory integration, and trauma-informed care, this session focuses on strengthening the "green zone" so children and adults are more supported, more regulated, and better able to stay connected when challenges arise. Participants will learn how daily habits, classroom routines, and simple nervous system tools act as protective factors that reduce emotional intensity and increase resilience over time.

11:00AM-12:00PM SESSION ONE

Tléix' Yaakw: One Canoe - Paddling as One to Help Revitalize Lingít Language thru Music, Lorrie Heagy & Yuxgitsiy George Holly

Ballroom 1

Join us for an interactive workshop where we share a free online resource designed to support Lingít language learning and social-emotional development through song, movement, games, and storytelling—tools that can be used in both classroom and home settings.

Lorrie is an Assistant Professor of Elementary Education, Fulbright Scholar, Alaska Teacher of the Year, and leader in music for social change. Lorrie has over 20 years of experience in elementary and higher education. She specializes in culturally responsive teaching, elementary and music education, innovative pedagogies, student engagement, and Indigenous language revitalization.

Yuxgitsiy George is a Deg Xit'an songster, artist, storyteller and teacher of indigenous languages. He writes music to support the indigenous language revitalization movement. He works at Sit' Eeti Shaanáx and Kaxdigoowu Héen Elementary Schools in Juneau and believes it is well within us to hold up the Lingít. He worked with children at Tlingít Culture Language and Literacy program in Juneau and composes many songs in indigenous languages.

Preparing Children Socially and Emotionally for Kindergarten, Supanika Ordonez

Egan

As children transition from their early learning experiences into the elementary classroom, what are the skills that they will need for a successful transition? This workshop will demonstrate some practical relationship-building activities that can be integrated into daily routines through the lens of the 13 goals of Alaska's Developmental Profile.

Supanika has her Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education and has been working at the state level supporting early learning programs for the past 9 years. She is a former Head Start teacher, childcare administrator, and PK-3 classroom teacher in Alaska and Thailand.

Brain Break: nurturing the body with movement, Lea Skaggs

Miller

This session is limited to 10 participants

Explore the mind-body connection through intentional movement and grounding practices to add to your self-care toolkit. No experience required. All bodies welcome!

Lea's passion for joyful movement and lifelong training in dance and performance arts inspires her to build connection and optimize health through somatic exercises. Through her instruction, Lea encourages others to tune inwards to recognize the individuality of the human body, explore the mind-body connection and connect deeper with one's intuition. Lea received her certification to teach yoga by the Maui Yoga Loft in 2019. Lea also holds a certificate in Natural Nutrition, is working on her Postpartum Doula training, and works closely with Juneau families as the Program Associate for Parents As Teachers.

Babywearing in the Childcare Setting, Sara Gress & Kaity Wyatt

Hammond

Join us to explore how babywearing can support regulation, attachment, and healthy development in early childhood settings. This session briefly explores the neuroscience of co-regulation and the role of close physical contact in reducing stress and promoting social-emotional growth. Participants will also learn how babywearing allows caregivers to provide responsive, relationship-based care while benefiting from hands-free multitasking in busy group environments.

This session provides time and space to explore a variety of infant and child carrier types while helping caregivers build confidence and familiarity with the safe, comfortable use of babywearing tools.

Sara is an Advanced Practice Nurse with certifications in Inpatient Obstetrics, Lactation Consulting, Perinatal Mental Health, and Child Passenger Safety. With 20 years of experience, she supports families through pregnancy, birth, and early childhood. Sara is also a mother of two school-age children; Inspired by her own experience, she is passionate about sharing the practice of babywearing with families in her community.

Kaity has been a dedicated Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for 12 years, serving families in Bartlett OB with a special focus on lactation support and maternal care. As a mother of three daughters, Kaitlyn brings both clinical expertise and personal experience to her practice.

Growing Hope & Belonging Intentionally, Tammy Iund

Hickel

Belonging is not an outcome — it is a practice. In this interactive session, participants will explore how to intentionally cultivate a culture of belonging and emotional safety for children and staff through the TIES Center Belonging Tool and the Science of Hope. Grounded in early childhood development, relational neuroscience, and trauma-informed school practices, educators can strengthen protective factors, nurture resilience, and promote hope. Participants will leave with practical strategies to embed hope, foster identity, and create nurturing early learning environments.

Tammy is a systems coach and founder of ShiftED Strategies. She has trained educators across Washington, integrating the Search Institute's frameworks, Culture of Belonging, and the Science of Hope to build resilient, relational school cultures rooted in equity and belonging. Known for uplifting, engaging, and practical professional learning, Tammy brings more than 30 years of school-based experience. Tammy moved to Haines, AK in May 2025 to live near her own grown children and continue the systems change work she is so passionate about.

12:00PM-1:00PM: LUNCH

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026

Sense Your Emotions, the Play Coaches Ballroom 1

Before children can regulate emotions, they must first sense them. This hands-on breakout session helps educators experience what emotional awareness feels like in the body and how sensory input supports regulation. Participants will engage in practical activities designed to strengthen interoception and sensory processing while learning how to bring these experiences back into their classrooms. Together, participants will create a sensory bottle and explore how simple, low-cost tools can support children in recognizing, naming, and moving through emotions safely.

The Play Coaches, Dani Svantner and Wendy Turcott, are nationally recognized trainers, consultants, and keynote speakers who bring a research-backed, heart-centered, and highly practical approach to Social Emotional Learning for both children and adults. With expertise in early childhood education, emotional intelligence, trauma-responsive care, leadership development, and brain-based teaching, they help educators and caregivers understand how the nervous system, relationships, and play work together to shape lifelong learning and well-being.

Nourished Connections: Helping Children Build a Healthy Relationship with Food, Audra Henderson

Egan

In this interactive session, participants will explore how nurturing relationships—with ourselves, with children, and with food—can transform mealtimes into moments of connection and growth. Drawing on principles of nutritional therapy and child development, we'll discuss practical ways to model a healthy, positive relationship with food that supports children's physical and emotional well-being.

Audra is a Functional Nutritional Therapy Practitioner, Master of Public Health, Certified Personal Trainer and Nutrition Educator for the University of Alaska, Cooperative Extension Juneau. Audra is passionate about teaching food as medicine. For over fifteen years, Audra has worked with people one-on-one and in groups to support positive physical and emotional transformation.

Language Acquisition through Relationship Building, Sarah Peele & Molly Briggs

Hickel

We invite you to join us in experiencing a classroom setting demonstration of engaging with stories through an Alaska Native perspective. This highly interactive workshop will introduce and demonstrate the method of dialogic reading aligned with Sealaska Heritage Institute's award-winning "Baby Raven Reads" program. Discover hands-on learning tools you can bring to your classroom.

Sarah has Haida and Tlingit heritage and is from the village of Hydaburg. She is a program manager for the Baby Raven Reads program at Sealaska Heritage Institute. She is passionate about providing support to caregivers and educators in their use of culturally appropriate early literacy materials.

Molly is a program manager for Baby Raven Reads at Sealaska Heritage Institute. She is passionate about early childhood education and holds Montessori pedagogy at the center: education for life and education for peace. Molly loves living in Juneau because of the emphasis on community, access to hiking trails and glorious mountains.



Circle Time That Connects: Joyful, Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Preschoolers, Mary Adelmeyer & Blue Shibler Hammond

This session is limited to 24 participants

Circle time is a powerful opportunity for connection, regulation, and learning. This session explores how to create flexible, engaging circle times that support preschoolers' attention spans, social-emotional growth, and sense of belonging. Participants will gain practical strategies using songs, movement, and storytelling so circle time feels joyful, inclusive, and realistic for both children and educators.

Each participant will receive a circle time basket full of hands-on tools that they can take back and use with their group of preschoolers.

Mary is part of the Southeast Childhood Collective's Parents As Teachers program. Mary, a pediatric sleep consultant, supports families during the postpartum period and early childhood. Her work focuses on gentle, evidence-informed sleep strategies that address sleep disruptions while supporting emotional regulation, attachment, and caregiver mental health. Mary partners with families to create developmentally appropriate sleep plans that reflect their values.

Blue is a seasoned professional with over two decades of hands-on experience in childcare. Her career journey began as a dedicated childcare provider and has evolved into her role of Executive Director of SCC. Passionate about ensuring the well-being of childcare providers and access to high-quality childcare for all families, Blue has been a tireless advocate - educating policymakers and raising awareness about the importance of early childhood education.

Round Table Conversation: Building Strong Relationships with Families, Raineka Ackely Miller

This session is limited to 10 participants

Strong relationships with families are the foundation of high-quality infant and toddler care. Families are children's first and most important teachers, yet building meaningful partnerships can feel challenging in busy early childhood settings. This workshop will be a round table discussion how intentionally valuing parent and family partnerships can transform classroom practices and deepen educators' understanding of the children they serve.

Raineka holds an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development. She has over a decade of experience in AEYC accredited programs and currently serves as a Parents As Teachers Home Visitor.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026



FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026



2:30PM-3:30PM SESSION THREE

Growing Connection: Transforming Systems of Care through Help Me Grow Alaska, Reanne Honemann-Queja & Robyn McComas

Hickel 2:30pm - 3:30 pm

Grounded in the belief that relationships are the foundation for a child's lifelong success, Help Me Grow Alaska serves as a vital bridge between families, providers, and the resources they need to thrive. This session explores how we foster meaningful connections through our statewide centralized access point, ensuring every Alaskan child is supported in their social-emotional and developmental journey. We will highlight the launch of Growing Minds, our new infant and early childhood mental health support line designed to provide providers and families with real-time guidance to nurture young children's well-being and strengthen the caregiving relationship.

Reanne, originally from a small town in Iowa, moved to Anchorage in 2010 and now serves as the Partnerships Lead for the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership. With over 15 years of experience in supporting early childhood through child care, healthcare and social services, she specializes in building trust-based relationships and leading strengths-based system transformations to improve service access for families. Her professional dedication to Help Me Grow Alaska is deeply personal, informed by her journey as a mother of two and the complex medical challenges faced by her 2.5-year-old son. When not advocating for statewide childhood networks, Reanne enjoys life in Anchorage with her husband Pili, their two children, Maluhia and Kaimana, and their dog, Avett.

Robyn holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Alabama and a Master's in Education from Liberty University. With a strong foundation in early childhood education and family-centered systems work, she brings both professional expertise and genuine compassion to supporting children and families across every stage of development. As a member of a military family, Robyn has embraced the ever-changing definition of "home," gaining a deep appreciation for diverse communities along the way.

4:00PM-5:00PM SESSION FOUR

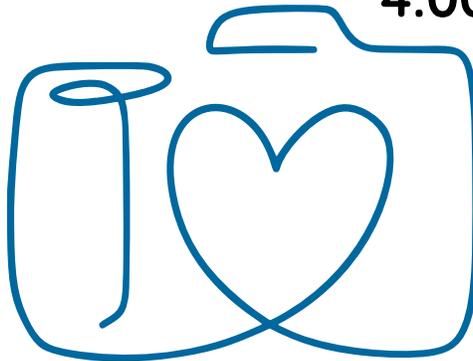
Nurture Relationships and Learning with Picture Books, Amelia Jenkins

Hickel 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

This informal workshop will provide time and space for you to read and share picture books. You will see old and new books for toddler through school-aged children. You will have the opportunity to read aloud if you choose, visit with colleagues, and read quietly.

Amelia is a life-long Alaskan who has worked in daycare centers in Ketchikan and Petersburg before settling in Juneau. She completed an MLIS at the University of Hawaii and has been with the Juneau Public Library for 25 years.

CHECK
OUT
OUR
PHOTO
BOOTH!



2:30PM-5:00PM: SESSION THREE LONG

Note: Session 3 Long Workshops are each Two Hours with a half hour break in the middle. Please return to your chosen room after the break for Attendance Verification.

Co-Creating Playful Learning Experiences Through Curriculum, Neighborhood Villages: Pamela Thompson and Erica Maia Ballroom 1

This session is offered both days, so you don't miss out!

Curriculum for toddlers? Yes. This Two Part Session will explore a free & open-sourced, Reggio-inspired, anti-bias, culturally responsive curriculum for children aged 15 months to 33 months. Guided by the principles of playful learning and co-created by educators, families, & experts in the field, this curriculum provides early educators with flexibility & scaffolding, building on a foundation of connection between educator & child(ren). Participants will explore documents, engage in playful learning, practice strategies for enhancing documentation to make learning visible & use reflective practice to assess & plan for future experiences for children.

Pamela has held many roles during her career (20+ yrs) from teacher to director, in both non- and for-profit early education settings. In her experience, she has found that relationships (just like with children) are the key to supporting continued growth. She is passionate about supporting educators' on-going evolution as knowledgeable, skillful, and impactful educators. Pamela loves providing tailored encouragement and engaging professional learning opportunities to challenge educators and help them rediscover their passion for, and their "why" of, working with children.

Erica grew up in Watertown, CT. She received a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology with a minor in Music from Boston College. She began teaching as an Assistant Toddler Teacher in Newton, MA where she fell in love with teaching young children and witnessing how quickly children grow and change through their early years. She is passionate about helping children label and navigate their big feelings and brings her love for music into the classroom. She is also grateful for the time she spent working as a Lead Toddler Teacher at a center where she had the opportunity to train and mentor the college students working in her classroom. It was there that her interest in coaching blossomed!



2:30PM-5:00PM: SESSION THREE LONG

Note: Session 3 Long Workshops are each Two Hours with a half hour break in the middle. Please return to your chosen room after the break for Attendance Verification.

From Awareness to Action: Understanding Trauma in the Early Years, Vanessa Plourde-Smith Egan

This session provides a foundational understanding of trauma and its impact on young children. Before exploring trauma-responsive care, we will take time to unpack what trauma is and why it matters in early childhood education. Participants will learn: What trauma means and how it affects development; Why young children are at the highest risk for exposure and most vulnerable to its adverse effects; Key statistics, including that nearly half of all U.S. children—about 35 million—experience at least one type of trauma before age eight; Common examples of trauma in early childhood, such as abuse, neglect, injuries, and witnessing domestic violence. By understanding the scope and nature of trauma, educators and caregivers can better prepare to implement strategies that promote resilience and healing.

Vanessa is a lifelong Alaskan with an adventurous spirit and a love for the great outdoors. Vanessa holds a BA in Social Work from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) and has spent over three decades working with both youth and adults in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors throughout Alaska. During her college years, she built a successful nanny business, which eventually led to her role as an educator and advocate at S.T.A.R., where she worked with sexual assault survivors and community members across the state. She also served as a youth counselor at McLaughlin Youth Center, collaborating closely with residents as a case manager. In 2000, after the birth of her first daughter, Vanessa opened her own family childcare program, where she provided loving care for children for 16 years. Currently, Vanessa channels her wealth of experience into her role as a Professional Development Specialist at thread, Alaska's Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) organization, where she continues to advocate for and support early childhood educators across the state.

Connection to Self and Others through the Land, Kelly Sorensen & Naatalgail Utter Hammond

This session is limited to 24 participants. This session will include a walk outdoors. Please come prepared for the weather. We will talk about, demonstrate, and practice ways in which you can get outside and establish a connection to place with your students. We will start with an introduction that offers ideas for routines you can build into your day or week to make heading outside a bit easier. We will also tell you about some of our most successful games, activities, and free play stations that are used regularly in our programs, and we know work with kids! After the intro, we will head outside to Cope Park to show you some of these ideas in practice. There will also be time spent discussing risk management, logistics, and materials. Returning inside, we will share some of our favorite books and follow-up activities that can deepen the connection established outdoors.

Kelly was raised in Nova Scotia and holds a Degree in Environmental Studies and a Master's Degree in Teaching. She has spent much of her adult life playing, learning, and teaching kids. She has been with Discovery since 2015 working as the education coordinator. Previously, Kelly was a classroom teacher in the Juneau School District, and Director of Education Technology for the State of Alaska. In her free time she loves snowboarding, fishing, and exploring with her family.

Naatalgail (na-tuth-guy) was born and raised in New Hampshire. He spent his childhood roaming the lush forests and mountains. As an adult, Naatalgail has worked to build positive and strong connections with youth as a community outreach worker and paraprofessional, while also keeping his love of exploring nature. He moved to Juneau in the summer of 2020. and joined the Discovery Southeast team. Naatalgail enjoys combining his passion for teaching with his love of nature.

Wool Work: Make-a-mat, Tess Olympia Miller

***This session is limited to 10 participants. ***

In this fun, hands-on, playful and creative workshop, we'll make wool play mats through a wet felting process, essentially creating a piece of fabric. Once dry, you'll have a ready-to-go foundation for creative play! Whether you design a city mat, a pond, or forest is up to you. Everyone will create their own to keep.

Tess manages the Childcare Apprenticeship Program for Southeast Childhood Collective. She has worked in early childhood for many years, drawn to creative learning, play, and child development. Tess also just opened up a yarn shop, Juneau Woolies, in downtown Juneau. Sharing creativity through fiber!



FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026

WE VALUE YOUR
FEEDBACK!
SCAN FOR FRIDAY
EVALUATIONS



INTERESTED IN VISITING
THE CAPITAL THIS
AFTERNOON?
VISIT THE ADVOCACY TABLE!





SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026



8:00AM-10:00AM KEYNOTE



Riding the Wave: What to Do When Emotions Take Over, the Playcoaches

Ballroom 2/3

When emotions rise, the brain changes—and so must our response. In this second keynote, participants follow the emotional wave from the green zone (thinking brain) through the limbic system and into the survival brain. Educators will learn what happens at each stage of escalation, why traditional logic and language stop working, and how regulation tools must shift in real time. This session emphasizes co-regulation, brain-based intervention, and the powerful healing that happens after the storm passes. Participants will also explore why reflection and repair after big emotions are essential to long-term emotional growth.

10:30AM-11:30AM SESSION ONE

Together in Relationship: Advancing Our Shared Mission for Thriving Children, Tammy Iund

Ballroom 1

Strong, supportive relationships are at the heart of children’s growth and learning. In this session, we will explore the Developmental Relationships Framework and how it connects to our mission as the Southeast Childhood Collective. Together, we’ll look at practical ways to strengthen bonds with children, families, and colleagues while deepening collaboration across our communities. Participants will leave with tools and strategies to foster meaningful connections that help every child—and the adults who support them—thrive.

Tammy is a systems coach and founder of ShiftED Strategies. She has trained educators across Washington, integrating the Search Institute’s frameworks, Culture of Belonging, and the Science of Hope to build resilient, relational school cultures rooted in equity and belonging. Known for uplifting, engaging, and practical professional learning, Tammy brings more than 30 years of school-based experience. Tammy moved to Haines, AK in May 2025 to live near her own grown children and continue the systems change work she is so passionate about.

Getting Started with Story Workshop, Lindsay Baranovic

Egan

Story workshop is an integrated arts, language, and literacy routine that engages children to develop stories through play. Explore how to get started with the basics of the routines and rhythms that support you and your students.

Lindsay has a Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education and, in 2024, was one of seven Alaska teachers to receive Sealaska Heritage Institute’s “Distinguished Educator Award.” Lindsay has worked with SHI to create, pilot, and implement Raven Writes curriculum, which is a writing program that provides culturally relevant writing curricula, family engagement activities, and professional development for elementary students, teachers, and families.

Your Personal Universe, Elizabeth Giudice

Hickel

The Personal Universe activity is a beginner-friendly entry point to poetry. In this workshop, you will craft a list of words that describe memories or sensations that have had an impact on you and apply them in verse. This is a freeform, uncritical group where everyone is free to share, collaborate, enjoy, or just listen!

Elizabeth is a social worker, advocate for mental health rights, and poetry enthusiast. She lives in Juneau with her fiancée, Izzy, and their husky, Lillith and works in behavioral health.

Making Meaningful Musical Moments, Karen Lange

Hammond

Making connections with your children through music starts with the littlest babies and continues through your Kindergarteners. Building musical aptitudes begins at birth, and research shows that musical experiences in early childhood impact all areas of learning and development! So when you connect with your children musically, you are giving a gift that lasts a lifetime even if they never play an instrument!

Karen is a certified music and movement teacher with 12 years of experience teaching the benefits of early childhood music and movement. Her passions for music are driven by the research showing that all children thrive on quality music environments from birth. Her Windsong Musik studio has been serving Juneau families for almost 3 years.

11:30AM-12:30PM: LUNCH



Cultivating a Culture of Wellbeing, the Play Coaches

Ballroom 1

What if social-emotional learning wasn't a lesson—but a lifestyle? In this breakout session, educators will explore how daily routines, adult modeling, and classroom systems shape emotional wellbeing. Participants will leave with practical ideas for building a culture where regulation, connection, and belonging are part of everyday practice.

The Play Coaches, Dani Svantner and Wendy Turcott, are nationally recognized trainers, consultants, and keynote speakers who bring a research-backed, heart-centered, and highly practical approach to Social Emotional Learning for both children and adults.

With expertise in early childhood education, emotional intelligence, trauma-responsive care, leadership development, and brain-based teaching, they help educators and caregivers understand how the nervous system, relationships, and play work together to shape lifelong learning and well-being.

The Power of Everyday Connections: Nurturing Children and Families,

JJ Hinderberger

Egan

Strong relationships with children and families are built in the small, intentional moments of daily life. This interactive session invites early childhood educators to explore practical strategies for connecting meaningfully with children, strengthening family partnerships, and reflecting on their own practices. Participants will leave with concrete ideas and simple action steps to deepen trust, foster connection, and make every interaction count.

JJ was born in Juneau and raised on the Chilkat River in Haines with her four siblings. JJ has taught preschool, kindergarten, and first grade and served as an elementary principal in Unalaska and the Juneau School District. She also mentors and is a professor with UAA. She holds a Master's Degrees in Educational Leadership and English Language Learning, along with a graduate certificate in Special Education and a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

JJ also experiences early childhood through the eyes of her two children and remains grounded in the everyday joys, messiness, and wonder of this stage.

You Are the Nervous System in the Room, Cindee Brown-Mills

Hickel

Childcare providers carry a tremendous amount of emotional responsibility every day. You're not just managing schedules, routines, and safety. You're also managing your own nervous system in the middle of constant demands, noise, and stress. This interactive workshop is designed to support the caregiver first, because sustainable caregiving begins with internal steadiness. Participants will learn how stress shows up in the body, how to recognize early warning signs of overwhelm, and how to shift out of survival mode in real time without needing extra time, silence, or a break room. This session offers realistic strategies that can be used throughout the day to create more ease, confidence, and resilience in caregiving work.

Cindee spent two decades navigating the fast-paced corporate world and understands the toll constant stress can take on the mind, body, and spirit. Known as "the nervous system whisperer," she is on a mission to help people, especially women, transform stress into strength using breath as a tool for resilience, focus, and serenity. She has helped hundreds of people harness the science of breathwork to regulate their nervous system and return to a place of steadiness and control. Now, her work focuses on reducing burnout and equipping professionals and caregivers with practical tools they can use in real time to feel grounded, energized, and engaged.

Daytime Sleep as Emotional Care: Supporting Infant & Toddler Mental Health,

Mary Adelmeyer

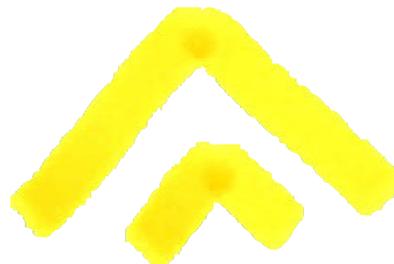
Hammond

Daytime sleep is a critical yet often overlooked component of infant and toddler mental health in childcare settings. This session explores how naps support emotional regulation, brain development, behavior, and stress resilience in young children. Childcare professionals will learn how sleep deprivation and misaligned nap schedules impact mood, attention, and attachment behaviors in group care environments. Practical strategies will be shared to help caregivers recognize sleep cues, create calming and emotionally supportive nap routines, and respond compassionately to nap resistance. Participants will leave with tools to reframe nap time as an essential act of emotional care—supporting children's well-being while maintaining realistic classroom structure.

Mary is part of the Southeast Childhood Collective's Parents As Teachers program. Mary, a pediatric sleep consultant, supports families during the postpartum period and early childhood. Her work focuses on gentle, evidence-informed sleep strategies that address sleep disruptions while supporting emotional regulation, attachment, and caregiver mental health. Mary partners with families to create developmentally appropriate sleep plans that reflect their values.



SATURDAY



SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026



SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026



2:00PM-3:00PM SESSION THREE

Co-Creating Playful Learning Experiences Through Curriculum, Neighborhood Villages: Pamela Thompson and Erica Maia Ballroom 1

This session is offered both days, so you don't miss out!

Curriculum for toddlers? Yes. This Two Part Session will explore a free & open-sourced, Reggio-inspired, anti-bias, culturally responsive curriculum for children aged 15 months to 33 months. Guided by the principles of playful learning and co-created by educators, families, & experts in the field, this curriculum provides early educators with flexibility & scaffolding, building on a foundation of connection between educator & child(ren). Participants will explore documents, engage in playful learning, practice strategies for enhancing documentation to make learning visible & use reflective practice to assess & plan for future experiences for children.

Pamela has held many roles during her career (20+ yrs) from teacher to director, in both non- and for-profit early education settings. In her experience, she has found that relationships (just like with children) are the key to supporting continued growth. She is passionate about supporting educators' on-going evolution as knowledgeable, skillful, and impactful educators. Pamela loves providing tailored encouragement and engaging professional learning opportunities to challenge educators and help them rediscover their passion for, and their "why" of, working with children.

Erica grew up in Watertown, CT. She received a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology with a minor in Music from Boston College. She began teaching as an Assistant Toddler Teacher in Newton, MA where she fell in love with teaching young children and witnessing how quickly children grow and change through their early years. She is passionate about helping children label and navigate their big feelings and brings her love for music into the classroom. She is also grateful for the time she spent working as a Lead Toddler Teacher at a center where she had the opportunity to train and mentor the college students working in her classroom. It was there that her interest in coaching blossomed!



Bladder, Breaks and Boundaries, Casey Hampton Egan

This educator-centered session focuses on how caregivers' physical needs—especially bladder health, rest, and body awareness—impact regulation, presence, and connection in the classroom. We will explore how common workplace realities (holding urine, limited breaks, frequent lifting, floor sitting, and rushing) affect the body and nervous system, contributing to fatigue, pain, and decreased patience over time. The session highlights practical, non-clinical strategies educators can use during the school day, including simple breathing, posture, and movement tools that support bladder function and nervous system regulation—often without leaving the classroom. We also emphasize healthy boundaries around bodily needs, reframing them as essential to sustainable caregiving rather than a personal failing.

Casey is a pelvic floor specialist and physical therapist with a private practice in Juneau. She teaches community classes on pelvic floor health, core strength, and injury prevention. A parent herself, Casey's goal at this conference is to help educators understand bladder and pelvic health while providing practical strategies to stay strong, energized, and fully present for the children they guide.

Supporting Social Emotional Development in the Classroom, Colleen Brody Hickel

Explore practical ways to support social-emotional development in early education settings. Whether you're an educator, administrator, or advocate, you'll gain valuable insights and actionable strategies to promote young children's holistic development. Participants will examine evidence-based strategies to foster healthy social-emotional growth and the vital role educators play in nurturing emotional intelligence, building positive relationships, and creating supportive learning environments. Through discussion and reflection, participants will deepen their understanding of social-emotional development and its impact on early childhood education.

Colleen holds a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. She has worked in the ECE field for over 15 years and is a Child Care Provider Mentor for Southeast Childhood Collective. As an Endorsed Circle of Security Classroom (COSC) Coach, she is committed to fostering secure and supportive learning environments for young learners.

Making Space for You: A Vision Board Workshop for Caregivers, Nikki Love Hammond

Early educators give their energy and care to children and families each day. This Vision Board Workshop offers time to pause, reflect, and reconnect with personal well-being—because caring for ourselves supports caring for others. Through guided reflection and hands-on creation, participants will explore self-care, balance, and joy while creating a vision board grounded in sustainability, not perfection. No artistic experience is needed—just a focus on reflection, affirmation, and resilience.

Nikki has worked with SCC for over 26 years, spearheading various projects to increase support for children, families, and caregivers. Currently, she is working on building the Fireweed Family Center! She is a lifelong artist and maker of things.

3:30PM-4:30PM SESSION FOUR

Co-Creating Playful Learning Experiences Through Curriculum, Neighborhood Villages Ballroom 1

Part Two. Please see previous page "Highlighted Speaker" Session.

Grounded in Relationships: Strengthening Connection to Support Social-Emotional Learning, Fisher Stevens

Egan

Strong, responsive relationships are the foundation of children’s social-emotional development and long-term well-being. This session will explore how educators can intentionally build connection with children, families, and colleagues through everyday interactions. Participants will leave with practical, relationship-centered strategies they can apply immediately in early childhood and school-age settings.

Fisher is an experienced early childhood and school-age professional with over 16 years in the field, including leadership, program administration, and statewide professional development. He currently serves as a Professional Development Specialist with thread, providing training, coaching, and technical assistance to early educators. His work is grounded in inclusive practices, quality improvement, and supporting educators across diverse program settings in Alaska.

Nurtured From the Very Beginning: Birth Support for Everyone, Andria Budbill

Hickel

How you bring a baby into the world has lasting effects on your parenting journey. Having a non-judgmental, emotionally supportive birth professional at your birth can lead to smoother labors and more satisfaction in the birth experience which helps promote closer bonding between parents and infants. Hear from local doulas about what it's like to have the valuable support of a birth doula at the very beginning of entering parenthood.

The Southeast Alaska Birth Collective was founded in 2025 by a group of doulas to build community and spread awareness of birth services in Juneau and the rest of Southeast. SEABC focus on educating the community and connecting families to birthworkers to make sure every birth is fully supported.

Embroidery Workshop: Stitch Your Stress Away, Emily Thompson

Hammond

Slow down, breathe, and let your hands do the calming. This mini embroidery class is designed as a gentle reset from daily stress, using simple stitches and mindful making to help you relax and recharge. No prior embroidery experience is needed—this is about the process, not perfection.

In a cozy, supportive setting, you’ll learn a few easy stitches, work at an unhurried pace, and enjoy the soothing rhythm of needle and thread. Embroidery’s repetitive, tactile nature encourages focus, quiets the mind, and creates space to unwind—much like meditation, but with something beautiful to show for it.

Emily is a seasoned Parents as Teachers Program Manager with 18 years of experience at Southeast Childhood Collective. Specializing in birth to three brain development, Emily holds a Master of Education Degree and is passionate about empowering families and anyone who cares for young children.

4:40 PM - 5:00 PM Closing Session

Ballroom 2/3

Loirie Heagy & Yuxgitsiy George Holly lead us in a musical celebration to wrap up this wonderful event.

As we close this year’s conference, we celebrate the powerful connections strengthened, the wisdom shared, and the collective commitment to healthy attachment, social-emotional learning, and caregiver and child well-being. May the relationships nurtured here continue to grow, sustaining and inspiring the important work you carry forward every day.

FRIDAY



SATURDAY



SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026



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