

2025



MNAFEE Family & Early Childhood Education Conference

APRIL 9-11

St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center



Register Now!
bit.ly/MNAFEE2025

This conference is designed for: administrators, coordinators, teachers, students, legislators, researchers, and all others who care about and are concerned for the welfare of children.

Letter from Board Co-Chairs

Sara Chovan

Julie Ritter



Welcome!

Welcome to the 2025 MNAFEE Annual Family & Early Childhood Education Conference!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Julie and I are thrilled to welcome you to our 2025 MNAFEE Spring Conference! We are so excited to bring together the dedicated and caring professionals who work with Minnesota's youngest students and their caregivers. Use these precious days to learn something new, create action plans with your team to implement exciting innovations, build and deepen your professional and personal connections—and find some time to have some fun!

This year's conference theme, "Finding Joy! ...with a Little Help from Your Friends," celebrates the power of community, collaboration, and the joy that comes from supporting one another. As we gather together, we'll explore how we can spark joy in our work, our classrooms, and our

families—while connecting with others who share the same passion for early childhood education. Join us to be inspired, uplifted, and reminded of the incredible impact we can make when we lean on each other.

It takes so many hands to make light work with a conference of this size and scope! The co-chairs, **Sarah Holmboe and Sue Stoner**, have dedicated countless hours to planning and managing this conference. They are supported by a strong and dedicated committee team focused on creating a wonderful experience for you. Thank you so much to this team of volunteers.

We also want to publicly thank **Linda Vukelich, our Executive Director**. Linda not only ensures that each moment of our conference is smooth, but she has also been the engineer, broker, guardian, and archiver for every detail of MNAFEE as it has grown into the mature organization it is today. Linda—you are so appreciated by Board members, past and present.

MNAFEE is your professional organization, and our Board of Directors takes seriously its commitment to provide high-quality professional development. Please enjoy the many ways in which you are invited to learn, grow, and engage over these next days.

Warmly, *Sara Chovan* and
Julie Ritter

Conference Overview



Wednesday, April 9 Kelly Inn Ballroom

- 1-4 pm **Afternoon Pre-Conference Keynote***
- 5:30-6:30 pm **Light Dinner for Evening Pre-Conference Keynote**
- 6:30-8 pm **Evening Pre-Conference Keynote***

* Must register for each Pre-Conference presentation separately; not part of the total conference registration.

Thursday, April 10 River's Edge Conference Center

- 7:30-8:15 am **Continental Breakfast & Conference Registration** - across from Glen Carlson Room (first floor)
- 8:20-8:30 am **Conference Welcome & Announcements** - Glen Carlson Room (first floor)
- 8:30-9:45 am **Keynote Speaker** - Glen Carlson Room (first floor)
- 9:45-10 am **Break & Exhibits** - Terry Haws Center C (first floor)
- 10-11:30 am **Workshop Session A**
- 11:45 am-12:45 pm **Lunch** - Glen Carlson Room (first floor)
Thank you to our 2025 MNAFEE Annual Conference Lunch Sponsor - Teaching Strategies!
- 1-2:30 pm **Workshop Session B**
- 2:30-2:45 pm **Break & Exhibits** - Terry Haws Center C (first floor)
- 2:45-4:15 pm **Workshop Session C**
- 4:30-5:30 pm **Connect, Ponder & Learn** (formerly Eat, Ponder & Learn) - Terry Haws Center C (first floor)



Friday, April 11 River's Edge Conference Center

- 7:15-8:15 am **Exhibits Open** - Terry Haws Center C (first floor)
- 7:30-8:05 am **Continental Breakfast and Conference Registration** - across from Glen Carlson Room (first floor)
- 8:05-8:15 am **Conference Welcome & Announcements** - Glen Carlson Room (first floor)
- 8:15-9:30 am **Keynote Speaker** - Glen Carlson Room (first floor)
- 9:30-9:45 am **Break and Exhibits** - Terry Haws Center C (first floor)
- 9:45-11:15 am **Workshop Session D**
- 11:15-11:30 am **Break & Exhibits** - Terry Haws Center C (first floor)
- 11:30 am-1 pm **Workshop Session E**
- 1-2 pm **Lunch & Adjourn** - Glen Carlson Room (first floor)

Pre-Conference Keynote

1-4 pm

Kelly Inn Ballroom

Mindsets and Strategies for Cultivating Equitable and Inclusive Cultures for Early Education

Dr. Ramon Pastrano

In this keynote, we'll discuss how culture plays a key role in creating fair and supportive learning environments where everyone feels they belong. We'll look at ideas from brain science, psychology, education, and cultural studies to find practical ways to build and maintain a positive organizational culture.

Key topics include:

- **Understanding Culture Dynamics:** How culture influences behavior, learning, and growth in early education settings.
- **Transformational Leadership:** Leadership practices that promote cultural change and support diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Implementing DEI Strategies:** Creating actionable Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plans that match organizational values and improve educational outcomes.
- **Equity Mindsets for Educators and Parents:** Recognizing how personal mindsets affect interpretations and responses to daily experiences, especially challenges and adversity. The twelve mindsets offer a framework for creating optimal learning conditions for students.
- **Engaging Stakeholders:** Building collaborative networks among educators, parents, and community members to support children's development.
- **Sustaining Change:** Setting up methods for continuous evaluation and adjustment of DEI initiatives to ensure long-term success.

By focusing on these areas, we aim to provide tools and insights to help create educational spaces where every child and adult feels valued and supported.

“
I loved this
keynote. Probably
the highlight of
the conference
for me. This will
be so useful in my
Pre-K class...I have
already started
implementing
some of it!

- Participant 2024
Conference
”

Pre-Conference Keynote

6:30-8 pm

Kelly Inn Ballroom

Why So Unserious? Choosing Chaos, Inside the Classroom and Out

Dillon White

Ever noticed those suspiciously cheerful preschool teachers? Here's their secret: they've learned to dance with the delightful chaos of little learners rather than fight it!

What You'll Discover:

- Why your most chaotic moments can become your favorite memories
- How finding joy in "little disasters" can keep burnout at bay
- Simple ways to turn "everyone's crying " into moments of connection
- The magic that happens when you follow the children's unexpected curiosity

Through entertaining stories of glitter explosions and impromptu puddle-jumping adventures, we'll try to help spot the precious moments hiding within the everyday classroom mayhem.

Leave with practical techniques from a former teacher-turned-lawyer-turned-dad-of-4 to rediscover the wonder and joy that drew you to early childhood education—and finally understand why those seemingly unflappable colleagues still giggle when tiny humans say hilariously honest things!

About the Speaker:

Dillon White (@dadchats on TikTok) is a content creator who has built a community around the authentic experiences of fatherhood. Through his relatable TikTok videos, he shares the joys, challenges, and everyday moments of being a dad. His engaging personality and genuine approach to parenting resonates with parents and non-parents alike, offering both humor and heartfelt perspectives on family life.



MNAFEE

Conference 2025

Notes

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Thursday Keynote

8:30-9:45 am

River's Edge Conference Center

Investing in the Early Years: The Science of Strong Start Executive Function Skills: Foundation for Learning and Adaptation

Dr. Philip David Zelazo

Executive function (EF) refers to the mental skills that help us control our thoughts, actions, and emotions. These include cognitive flexibility (the ability to switch between tasks or thoughts), working memory (holding and manipulating information in mind), and inhibitory control (resisting impulses). These skills develop quickly during early childhood and are crucial for school readiness and social-emotional development. Essentially, it's not just what you know, but how well you can use these EF skills to apply your knowledge.

This presentation will cover what we know about EF and its development in children, discuss ways to measure EF accurately, and suggest effective methods for parents, teachers, and others to support healthy EF growth. The main point is that early support for developing EF skills in schools can enhance all children's learning and development, giving every child a fair chance to succeed in school and beyond.

About the Speaker:

Dr. Zelazo's research on the development and neural bases of reflection and executive function has resulted in over 150 publications that have been cited more than 10,000 times by other scholars. His research has been honored by numerous awards, including a Boyd McCandless Young Scientist Award from the American Psychological Association (APA), and a Canada's Top 40 Under 40 Award, and he has given over 85 invited talks and keynote addresses (nationally and internationally) during the past 10 years.

**Thursday,
April 10**
10-11:30 am

Workshop Session A

River's Edge Conference Center

A-1 ECFE Outreach and Partnerships

*Beka Swisher, MS, LAMFT, Parent Educator, Midstate Education District
Jennifer Sadlovsky, MA, Parent Educator, Midstate Education District*

This session will equip your team with many ideas about outreach and creating partnerships in your community. You will leave with practical ideas for providing inclusive, welcoming and equitable programming for parents/caregivers. The presentation will include time for you to share your ideas and wisdom to others in the field.

A-2 Wellbeing for Early Childhood: Strategies to Support Adult Wellbeing and Emotional Regulation to Facilitate Co-regulation with Young Children

Sara Daniel, LCSW

Young children often struggle to manage their emotions, leading to challenging behaviors for educators and caregivers. This becomes even harder when adults face their own personal or work-related stress. In this session, we'll explore how the brain processes stress and learn practical strategies to support emotional regulation in both children and adults. These techniques include sensory activities, building strong relationships, and cognitive approaches targeting different brain areas needing regulation. By applying these methods, adults can better manage their own emotions and help children develop self-regulation skills. The session features hands-on activities and provides resources to use in classrooms and at home.

A-3 Supporting Healthy Relationships: Building a Secure Foundation for Families in ECFE

Laura Goodman, M.A. Parent Educator, Duluth Public Schools ISD 709

Lynn Henderson, M.A. Parent Educator, Early Childhood Educator, Duluth Public Schools ISD 709

Jen Jaros, ECFE Coordinator, Parent Educator, Early Childhood Educator - Duluth Public Schools ISD 709

Join us for a discussion on how Duluth Public Schools structure our ECFE classes to minimize transitions, facilitate healthy parent-child separations and reunions, and provide a supportive presence for families. Guided by Circle of Security attachment research and developmentally appropriate practices, we will explain our rationale and share the valuable insights we have gained by implementing this approach in our classes. We will also share the work we are doing to create partnerships with local community agencies.

I love to hear how other districts do classes and this gave me some great ideas and resources. It was a great learning environment!

- Participant 2024 Conference

Workshop Session A

River's Edge Conference Center

10-11:30 am

A-4 Understanding AI: Practical Teaching Tools for Early Childhood Educators

(repeat D-4)

Kyle Turck, Innovation Coach, Minnesota School District 742

Discover how AI can transform your teaching with "Magic School AI." You'll be introduced to the basics of AI, its functionality, and practical applications in the classroom. Learn how AI can streamline planning, communication, and personalized learning, empowering you to focus more on what you love—teaching.

A-5 ECFE Enhancement Plan 2025-2030

Darcy Rodriguez, Education Specialist DCYF

Mi Yang, Education Specialist DCYF

Mike Brown, Education Specialist DCYF

The Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Enhancement Plan for 2025-2030 serves as our strategic roadmap for statewide program development. This session will outline its key focus areas, objectives, strategies, and action steps. Attendees are invited to provide feedback, assist in prioritizing initiatives, and consider local implementation strategies.

A-6 Challenging Behaviors in Daycare Centers: An Inclusive Approach to Supporting Daycare Staff

Mary Croteau, M.A. Elementary Education, ECFE Anoka-Hennepin Schools

Janey Shampine, M.A. ECSE, B-3 Early Childhood Special Education, Anoka Hennepin Schools

As the needs of children get more complex, is your district drowning in requests for support from daycare centers? Our framework seeks to support centers in meeting the needs to every child regardless of needs or diagnoses.

A-7 Supporting Teachers in Implementing PreK Early Literacy Instruction

Kelly Kazeck, Early Childhood Workforce Collaboration Specialist, Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Lucy Arias, Early Education Language and Literacy Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education

Delve into practical strategies for early literacy instruction and explore the critical role of leadership in supporting classroom teachers. Gain valuable insights into effective techniques for fostering a love of reading in young children, while also understanding how school leaders can create a supportive environment that empowers teachers to implement these strategies successfully.

A-8 Artful Parenting

Barbara J. Burkhardt, M.A. Parent Educator, Saint Paul Public Schools District 625

Parenting, like making art, is a process, which can be both profound and frustrating. It's never perfect, there are so many different materials and methods you can use, and the mess can be really wonderful. Through this art-making process, parents develop an awareness and trust in themselves.

A-9 Connecting With Hard to Reach Families Through Home-Visits (PART 1)

(PART 2 - B9)

Julie Koritz, M.Ed, Early Childhood Trainer/Consultant

Explore ways to connect and build relationships with families. Topics that will be covered are: strategies to use during initial visits with families and red flags to be aware of, including how trauma and toxic stress impact the parent/child relationship. This class will also discuss difficult scenarios we may encounter. When this course is complete, home visiting professionals will have developed additional skills to help make a positive impact on the families they provide services to.

**Thursday,
April 10**
10-11:30 am

Workshop Session A

River's Edge Conference Center

A-10 Tackling Tough Topics with Diverse Parent Groups
(repeat E-10)

Danny O'Brien, M.Ed. Parent Educator, ISD 191

Cynthia Sampers, Early Learning Coordinator, ISD 191

Talking about sensitive topics in parenting groups is difficult no matter what. Mix in multiple languages, belief systems, and ethos and well...it gets even more difficult. Our presentation will offer some insights, strategies, and real life experience into discussing sensitive topics with a diverse group of parents.

A-11 Decoding the READ Act: Implementation Tools for Educators
(repeat B-11)

Justin Killian, PhD Education Issues Specialist, Education Minnesota

Matt Ryg, PhD Education Issues Specialist, Education Minnesota

Participants will review the requirements of the READ Act and what the law means for literacy instruction for students and training for staff. Participants will also discuss implementation plans and pitfalls. The session leaders will supply examples of labor-management agreements, training plans and materials, research documents, bill language, and more.

A-12 Circle Time for Parent Educators

Penny Walsh, M.A. Parent and Family Educator, Anoka Hennepin Schools

Many Parent Educators teach non-separating classes, where they are leading circle time.

In this session, we will discuss:

- Why we do circle time?
- Elements of circle time.
- Special considerations including families who need extra support, language and cultural needs and staff support.
- There will be time for sharing favorite circle time resources.

Of course, this isn't just for PE's, everyone is welcome!

Workshop Session A

River's Edge Conference Center

**Thursday,
April 10**
10-11:30 am

A-13 **Gender Identity - A Parent's Journey**

Dawn Puroway, Parent, Minnesota School District 45

Leah Dunbar, M.Ed. (She/Her) Parent Educator, St. Paul Public Schools

Dawn will share her journey as a parent of a gender expansive child, along with children's book recommendations with gender diverse characters, and advice about some changes in language about gender that all people can use.

A-14 **Building ILPs in Community**

Nicki Murphy, M.Ed., Parent and Family Educator & Home Visitor,
Robbinsdale Area Schools

Melissa Denning, M.Ed., ECFE, Parent Education, Outreach & Early
Childhood Screening, St. Francis Public Schools

Do integrated lesson plans (ILPs) scare the daylight out of you? Are you lacking prep time to work on lesson planning in general let alone the ILP format? Are ILPs your jam? Are you able to support others in the first steps of creating an ILP?

Join us in a work session regarding creating ILPs. See a demonstration on how to take a lesson plan and change it into the ILP format and then work with those around you to take one of your very own lessons and turn it into an ILP. Already have lessons in the ILP format? Bring them along, share them with colleagues, help a colleague out and brainstorm together how to move the field of parent and family education to the next level.

Please bring a fully charged electronic device to work with, one or several lesson plans, and your thinking caps. Copies of the PECCF book and ECIPS available for your use during this work session. Use the new ILP Planning Rubric as a guide in creating your new content.



LUNCH

11:45 am-12:45 pm
Glen Carlson Room

*Thank you to our 2025
MNAFEE Conference
Lunch Sponsor -
Teaching Strategies!*



**Teaching
Strategies®**

**Thursday,
April 10**
1-2:30 pm

Workshop Session B

River's Edge Conference Center

B-1 Parent Group Facilitation - Supporting All Parenting Personalities Through Reflective Questioning

Beka Swisher, MS, LAMFT, Parent Educator, Midstate Education District

Jennifer Sadlovsky, MA, Parent Educator, Midstate Education District

Crafting questions that engage and inspire parents is an art and a science! Open-ended questioning is essential for facilitating engaging parent ed discussions. Join Beka and Jen to learn techniques, strategies, and patterns for creating questions that support parents in increasing their ability to be reflective of their parenting.

B-2 Unlocking the Power of Canva

Paula Poaletti, Early Childhood Educator, Lake Superior School District

Mischelle Squire, Marketing & Outreach Specialist, Osseo Area Schools

Canva, the free online design tool for non-designers, makes creativity easy! Learn to create stunning flyers, social media posts, and classroom visuals with templates and tools tailored for early childhood professionals. Perfect for all skill levels - whether you're new to Canva or a seasoned pro! BYOD – Bring your own device for hands-on work.

B-3 Sing Today, Read Forever! How to Prepare Young Brains for Reading

Ann Kay, Co-founder & Ed. Director, Rock 'n' Read Project

Ron Gustafson, ECFE teacher/administrator (retired), musician, Teddy Bear Band

Richard Erickson, musician, manager of Teddy Bear Band

Come participate in fun, evidence-based singing activities for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers...and their parents, of course! Learn results of brain research that has revealed that auditory processing is the key to language and literacy, and singing and practicing basic music skills is a primary way of developing it.

“
LOVED this session and took away so much great information, strategies, songs, etc. These teachers rocked their first time presenting! Thank you :)

- Participant 2024 Conference
”

Workshop Session B

River's Edge Conference Center

1-2:30 pm

B-4 Maternal Mental Health: An Investment in the Family

(repeat C-4)

Katie Fleuriet, LICSW, PMH-C, Therapist & IOP Social Worker, PrairieCare

Research has shown that early detection and intervention are essential for the prevention of adverse outcomes for individuals and their families. This session explores the mental health needs of pregnant and postpartum individuals, by identifying symptomatology, risk factors, and cultural considerations in the perinatal period. Participants will learn about brief interventions, referral options, and other best practices in maternal mental health.

B-5 ECFE Needs Assessment: Regrounding for Program Improvement

Darcy Rodriguez, Education Specialist DCYF

We will review the history of the ECFE Needs Assessment, the statutory requirement, and the purpose behind it. Then, we will have a conversation about how to think about community needs; how we determine them, how we capture them, and how we use those needs to drive programming and think about change.

B-6 Bridging the Gaps: Leadership for Aligning Early Childhood and K-12 Systems

Dr. Mike Brown, Education Specialist, DCYF

Dr. Lisa Willman, Principal, Zimmerman Elementary, Elk River

Dr. June Reineke, Education Specialist, DCYF

In this session, Dr. Willman will present findings from her dissertation on early childhood leader's work to align their early childhood and K-12 systems. DCYF staff will facilitate a discussion on key findings and strategies education leaders can use to help support prenatal to grade 3 (P3) systems work.

B-7 MTSS in Early Childhood using the EDECA

Erin Metoxen, Assistant Director of Early Learning

Jess Turek, Early Childhood Teacher

Amanda McNearny, Early Childhood Nature Teacher

Learn how the eDECA supports social-emotional development within an MTSS framework. This session explores strategies for universal screening, targeted interventions, and progress monitoring while fostering family engagement. Participants will gain practical tools to enhance early childhood programming and promote collaboration between educators and families.

B-8 INNOVATIVE ECFE: How to be an ECFE Podcaster!

Lisa Weir, M.Ed. Parent & Family Educator, Eastern Carver County Schools

Busy Parents LOVE podcasts! Podcasts are a great way to share important ECFE content. Imagine parents on their way to work listening to a podcast about emotional regulation, limit setting or any number of topics from you, their beloved parent educator. You can enrich your community with ECFE content without adding to parents already busy load. In this session we will go through the basics of starting a Parenting Podcast in your ECFE program. We will cover the technical aspects as well as style and content approaches. Lisa began her parenting podcast, Mom Psych in 2019. Mom Psych has received approx. 5,000 downloads.

**Thursday,
April 10**
1-2:30 pm

Workshop Session B

River's Edge Conference Center

B-9 Connecting With Hard to Reach Families Through Home-Visits (PART 2)
(PART 1 A-9)

Julie Koritz, M.Ed, Early Childhood Trainer/Consultant

Explore ways to connect and build relationships with families. Topics that will be covered are: strategies to use during initial visits with families and red flags to be aware of, including how trauma and toxic stress impact the parent/child relationship. This class will also discuss difficult scenarios we may encounter. When this course is complete, home visiting professionals will have developed additional skills to help make a positive impact on the families they provide services to.

B-10 "You Just Follow Your Heart": The Perspectives of Foster Parents of Unaccompanied Minors (UAM)

Dr. Hrunn Ingudóttir PhD, Assistant Professor Parent Education, University of Iceland

Dr. Brynja Halldórsdóttir, PhD, Associate Professor Critical Theories in Education, University of Iceland

Foster care for unaccompanied minors requires intercultural awareness and sensitivity. Our research indicates that adequate preparation and continued support for parents is vital to successful foster relationships. Our workshop focuses on developing parent educator support tools for these families especially regarding: diverse understandings of trauma, language, cultural and religious experiences.

B-11 Decoding the READ Act: Implementation Tools for Educators
(repeat A-11)

Justin Killian, PhD Education Issues Specialist, Education Minnesota

Matt Ryg, PhD Education Issues Specialist, Education Minnesota

Participants will review the requirements of the READ Act and what the law means for literacy instruction for students and training for staff. Participants will also discuss implementation plans and pitfalls. The session leaders will supply examples of labor-management agreements, training plans and materials, research documents, bill language, and more.

Workshop Session B

River's Edge Conference Center

1-2:30 pm

B-12 Supporting the ECFE LGBTQ+ Community

Leah Dunbar, M.Ed. (She/Her) Parent Educator, St. Paul Public Schools

Shawna Bork (They/Them) Parent Educator, Hopkins
Dawn Puroway, Parent, Minnesota School District 45

Queer communities offer a place where individuals can be themselves without fear of discrimination, allowing them to express their identities openly and authentically. Have you wanted to start an LGBTQ+ class in your program? Our focus will be on supporting Educators who wish to create or continue a LGBTQ+ Affinity Group in their district.

B-13 Parent Educators: Is our Title Still Relevant?

Shannon Rader, Ph.D., Program Director and License Program Lead, Parent and Family Education Program, University of MN

Parent Educators do so much more than educate. We connect, navigate, support, refer, facilitate, coach...the list goes on. We are what makes ECFE different from any other early childhood program in the nation. So is the title parent educator/parent education still appropriate for what we do or is it limiting how others perceive our work? A short presentation about the national/international landscape of parenting education will inform a highly interactive conversation.

B-14 Defining Screening, Assessment, and Evaluation for ECE Professionals

Karen Satre, M.Ed., Early Childhood Standards and Assessment Coordinator, Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Margo Chresand, Early Childhood Screening Specialist at the Department of Children, Youth and Families

Jon Vaupel, Kindergarten Fall Assessment – Coordinator at the Department of Education

This session clarifies the differences between screening, assessment, and evaluation, which are often misunderstood in early childhood education. By establishing a shared language, professionals can improve collaboration, support children effectively, and engage families as informed partners. Aligned with state guidelines and best practices, the session will address misconceptions, when and how each process is used, and culturally responsive approaches. Participants will gain practical strategies to apply in daily practice.

**Thursday,
April 10**
2:45-4:15 pm

Workshop Session C

River's Edge Conference Center

C-1 Technologies and Families

Jennifer Sadlovsky, MA, Parent Educator, Midstate Education District
Beka Swisher, MA, LAMFT, Parent Educator, Midstate Education District

Come and learn some of the newest research on screens and children. You'll leave this session with resources and strategies to use in the classroom and with caregivers as we all continue to navigate this ever changing landscape of screens. Much of the research from this session will be sourced from the books *Anxious Generation*, *Glow Kids*, and *Dopamine Nation*.

C-2 Gender Assignment, Gender Expression, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation - What Does it all Mean?

Beth Magistad, Ph.D., CFLE, Licensed Parent Educator

This is a primer for folks who find themselves confused about LGBTQIA language, who are open to learning more, who want to understand why it is important, and who want to practice using they/them pronouns.

C-3 Mixed Delivery Partners and Partnerships Make a Difference - Where Do We Start?

Jeanne Dickhausen, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Head Start Collaboration Director
June Reineke, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Program and Collaboration Specialist

Mixed Delivery focuses on strengthening the state's early care and education (ECE) system to support children and families' experience using early care and education across a variety of programs, providers, and settings. In this session, we will present strategies for building "mixed delivery" partnerships by providing examples highlighting the work being done by communities throughout Minnesota. You will leave this presentation ready to hurdle challenges and build relationships that strengthen mixed delivery partnership in your community.

“
Between the
facilitators &
everyone
sharing their
tips &
experiences, it
was an idea-
rich session!

- Participant 2024
Conference

”

Workshop Session C

River's Edge Conference Center

2:45-4:15 pm

C-4 Maternal Mental Health: An Investment in the Family

(repeat B-4)

Katie Fleuriet, LICSW, PMH-C, Therapist & IOP Social Worker, PrairieCare

Research has shown that early detection and intervention are essential for the prevention of adverse outcomes for individuals and their families. This session explores the mental health needs of pregnant and postpartum individuals, by identifying symptomatology, risk factors, and cultural considerations in the perinatal period. Participants will learn about brief interventions, referral options, and other best practices in maternal mental health.

C-5 DCYF ECCE Marketing and Outreach Efforts

Mi Yang, Education Specialist DCYF

The 2025-2030 Enhancement Plan includes Family and Community Engagement. The DCYF ECCE team will be working closely with a couple of vendors to (1) identify family messages that resonate with the Spanish, Somali, Hmong, African American, and Indigenous communities and (2) create a marketing and outreach guidebook for ECCE programs. Attend the session to learn about the process and plans for the marketing and outreach guidebook that will be available to all ECCE programs in the fall.

6 Benefits of Attending the MNAFEE Conference

1. Networking with peers and professionals.
2. Sharing innovative ideas.
3. Expanding your knowledge and skills.
4. Staying updated on the latest trends.
5. Exposing yourself to fresh perspectives.
6. Enjoying a fun and engaging experience.



**Thursday,
April 10**
2:45-4:15 pm

Workshop Session C

River's Edge Conference Center

C-6 Building Foundations: How the Revised Minnesota ECIPs Support Lifelong Success for Young Learners

(repeat D-6)

Karen Satre, M.Ed., Early Childhood Standards and Assessment Coordinator, Department of Children, Youth, and Families

This presentation covers the updated Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs), highlighting key changes. It provides insights into how these revisions support child growth, ensure equitable learning experiences, and align with current research to foster lifelong success for young learners.

C-7 A Moral Development Solution to Motherhood Penalty: Mother-child Mutual Development

Jackie Liu, M. Ed Graduate Student, Parent and Family Education, University of Minnesota

Young mothers balancing career growth and child development often face a motherhood penalty, feeling pressured to choose between professional success and their child's well-being. This session explores a moral development approach that supports mutual growth for both mother and child, helping mothers make informed decisions that foster their careers while nurturing their children. Through research insights and practical strategies, we'll examine ways to navigate societal expectations and create sustainable solutions for long-term success and well-being for both mother and child.

C-8 Grow Your Program with Creative Outreach

Lisa Weir, M.Ed. Parent & Family Engagement, Ramsey County Schools

When you find the outreach model that works for you, you can include new families, parents, and caregivers. In this session, we'll explore ideas to increase program enrollment and expand its impact within your community and beyond. Specifically, we will focus on creative outreach as well as Parent Gateway and create more "on ramps."



Workshop Session C

River's Edge Convention Center

2:45-4:15 pm

C-9 Identifying Dyslexia in Early Childhood - Parent Educator Video and Classroom Resources

Kimberly Carlsen, Decoding Dyslexia MN Board President, mother of two neurodivergent children

Laurie Berg, Decoding Dyslexia MN Co-V.P., mother of two neurodivergent children

M.J. Bauer, Decoding Dyslexia MN Executive Director, mother of two neurodivergent children

Parent Educators, come and experience a FREE dyslexia educational video and teacher discussion materials from Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota. Help parents understand dyslexia and its signs/symptoms at various ages and stages. The sooner a child with dyslexia is identified, the earlier a parent can begin advocating, and the better the outcome.

C-10 Self-Care and Community Care for Early Education Professionals

Sheila Bauer, M.Ed, Parent Educator, Decoding Dyslexia MN School District, and a certified Mind-Body teacher from Minnesota Body

with over 25 years of experience in Mind-Body medicine founded by Dr. ... training in evidence-based and practical techniques for wellness and stress reduction to healthcare professionals, educators, and community leaders. Join Sheila Bauer to learn and practice mind-body skills to support yourself, students, colleagues, and your community.

C-11 Partnerships for Success: EC and ECSE Working Together

Danielle Hayden, Early Education Director, Minnesota Department of Education

Nikki Kovan, Early Learning Services Director, Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Emilie Levinson, Director of Early Learning & Sara Tinklenberg, Early Learning Supervisor, Robbinsdale Area Schools

Erin Metoxen, Assistant Director of Early Learning, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools

Lori Parker, Early Childhood Special Education Lead and Speech-Language Pathologist for Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools

This session will explore strategies for building strong and effective partnerships between early childhood special education (ECSE) and early childhood general education (ECE) professionals. We will delve into practical strategies for improving communication, coordination, and co-planning, fostering shared understanding, and creating a collaborative foundation for inclusive and high-quality early learning experiences for young children.

C-12 Group Facilitation Skill Building

Christy Kujawa, M.Ed, LPE Minneapolis Public Schools, Adjunct Teaching Specialist University of MN, CEHD PFE program

In this session we will explore some tools, strategies and discussion on Group Facilitation Skills. This will be a curated mini version of the course we offer in the Parent and Family Ed program at the University of MN. What makes for a positive group experience? How does the facilitator influence this? What tools help grow the skills needed to connect others? What are some strategies when the discussion goes off course? How do you create a feeling of safety among strangers? We will discuss all this and more.

**Thursday,
April 10**
2:45-4:15 pm

Workshop Session C

River's Edge Conference Center

C-13 Empowering Generational Greatness for Parent Groups (repeat D-13)

*Trinette Potts, EGG Project Manager, The Family Partnership
John Everett Till, Chief Strategy Officer, The Family Partnership
Christine Wing, CCC, SLP, Ph.D.*

Empowering Generational Greatness is a program designed to support the development of executive functioning in parents and their young children. Come and learn the three key strategies that Empowering Generational Greatness employs to strengthen executive functioning in parents and support its development in young children.

“
This workshop
was really well
done. The
presenters were
engaging and
knowledgeable. I
left feeling
excited and
prepared.

- Participant 2024
Conference

C-14 Minnesota's Rally to Read's BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal)

*Tim Reardon, Executive Director and Ex Officio Board Member, Minnesota's Rally to Read
Jennefer Johnson, Early Learning Coordinator, Monticello School District
Laurie Ohmann, Nonprofit Strategist and Leader, and former leadership team member Minneapolis Public Schools*

Minnesota's Rally to Read has a BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal): transform Minnesota into the state with the highest reading proficiency with the fewest inequities and accomplish it with "a fierce urgency of now." The benchmarks of success: every child is "wired" to read by age 3 and reads proficiently at grade level. We're launching community Rally to Read Coalitions statewide to mobilize support and establish grassroots innovations to achieve the BHAG. Our facilitated Community Innovation process is designed to deploy Minnesota's abundant social capital by examining the need within the community, increasing collective understanding of the problem, generating ideas based on best practices, testing and implementing solutions, and monitoring progress to achieve results. Come learn about the launch prototype Rally to Read Coalitions in Monticello, Roseville and Golden Valley.

MNAFEE

Conference 2025

Notes

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Connect, Ponder & Learn

4:30-5:30 pm

Terry Haws Center C (first floor)
formerly Eat, Ponder and Learn

Early Childhood Education Roundtables

Join fellow educators for dynamic discussions on pressing topics in early childhood education. Share experiences and gain fresh perspectives from colleagues across Minnesota during these interactive roundtables. Whether you're new to the field or a seasoned educator, you'll leave with valuable insights and connections.

CPL-1 **Decoding Disruptions: Understanding and Managing Children's Challenging Behaviors**

As challenging behaviors rise in ECCE programs, join fellow educators to explore strategies from *Raising Kids with Big, Baffling Behaviors* and *Unsmiling Faces*. The presenter will share insights, real-life stories, and humor to navigate this tough but important topic.

CPL-2 **Decoding the READ Act: Implementation tools for Educators**

Participants will explore the READ Act's impact on literacy instruction, staff training, and implementation challenges. Session leaders will provide resources, including agreements, training plans, research, and bill details.

CPL-3 **Mixed Delivery Partners and Partnerships Make a Difference - Where Do We Start?**

Mixed Delivery strengthens Minnesota's early care system by connecting families with diverse ECE programs. This session explores partnership strategies with real community examples, equipping you to overcome challenges and build strong collaborations.

CPL-4 **Self-Care and Community Care for Education Professionals**



For over 25 years, The Center for Mind-Body Education has taught simple stress-reduction techniques to professionals and educators. Join Sherry Bauer to learn and practice these skills for yourself and your community.

Connect, Ponder & Learn

Formerly Eat, Ponder & Learn

4:30-5:30 pm

CPL-5 Get Involved and Make a Difference

Join us to explore meaningful ways to connect with MNAFEE, support its mission, and get involved as a volunteer or board member. Learn about MNAFEE's goals and initiatives, and discover how your voice and talents can make a lasting impact in our community.

CPL-6 Are you Ready for a Parent and Family Education License?

Learn about licensing in Parent and Family Education, including program options, costs, and new funding opportunities. Whether you're adding to a MN teaching license or starting fresh, get your questions answered here!

CPL-7 Empowering Generational Greatness for Parent Groups

Empowering Generational Greatness supports the development of executive functioning in parents and their young children. Join us to explore three key strategies used to strengthen executive functioning in parents while supporting its growth in young children.

CPL-8 University of Minnesota Connect and Learn for current UMN PFE students and recent graduates: Launching your career

Attention UMN PFE students and recent alumni! Join us for an in-person meet-up to network and discuss launching your career as a parent educator. This session provides an opportunity to connect with peers and share insights about entering the profession.

CPL-9 Opening a World of Possibilities: Inspiring Young Readers with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Research shows children's brains must be built for reading from birth. Access to books boosts family engagement, vocabulary, and early reading skills. Learn how to start a Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program in your community to help build future readers and support lifelong learning in Minnesota's children.

Notes

[illegible]

Friday Keynote

8:15-9:30 am

River's Edge Conference Center

Rooted in Resilience

Linnea Devine, LICSW, CCFP

An insightful and engaging keynote that explores the impact of compassion fatigue, burnout, and empathy distress on educators and school communities. Blending clinical expertise, lived experience, and practical strategies, Linnea brings humor, wisdom, and heart to the conversation—helping you navigate the emotional challenges of working with students and families. You'll gain a deeper understanding of stress in education, learn actionable tools to build resilience, and leave feeling validated, rejuvenated, and ready to foster a thriving school environment with renewed compassion for yourself and others.



About the Speaker:

Linnea Devine, LICSW, is a licensed therapist, consultant, fierce advocate, and former school social worker who is deeply passionate about creating space for educators to explore and deepen both mental and physical wellness mindsets. Her expertise includes mental health literacy, compassion fatigue, trauma, and empowerment of educators.



Attending the MNAFEE Annual Conference is a great opportunity. You'll learn the latest information about Early Childhood Education, improve your skills, and meet other professionals. It's a chance to grow and make a difference in your work.

**Friday,
April 11**
9:45-11:15 am

Workshop Session D

River's Edge Conference Center

D-1 Building Bridges: Connecting ECFE Programs with Pediatricians

Sara Chovan, Assistant Director, Early Childhood Programs, Hopkins Schools

Mischelle Squire, Marketing & Outreach Specialist, Osseo Area Schools

Discover how to create meaningful partnerships with pediatricians to strengthen referrals to your Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program. Learn strategies for building relationships, highlighting shared goals, and positioning ECFE as a vital resource for families. Explore practical examples, communication tools, and outreach ideas to help pediatricians play a key role in connecting families to your program.

D-2 Joys of Co-Teaching

Amber Smith, Nature-based Preschool Teacher, Monticello School District 882

Heather Arbanella, Nature-based Preschool Teacher, Monticello School District 882

Have you ever wondered how you can make co-teaching run smoothly? We will share the benefits of co-teaching whether you work with kids inside or outside. Plus, since we work in a nature-based setting, we will add in some nature-based teaching tips and tricks.

D-3 Bridging The Gap

Miranda Bapp, Child Care Director, Generations Child & Memory Care

Ellie Johnson, Assistant Director, Generations Child & Memory Care

Elise Ollrich, Activities Coordinator, Generations Child & Memory Care

This session will explore the benefits and strategies of facilitating intergenerational activities between children and elderly individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia. We will discuss how structured, meaningful interactions can promote cognitive, emotional, and social well-being for both age groups. Attendees will learn practical activity ideas, tips for ensuring safety and engagement, and ways to foster positive connections between young children and older adults. The presentation will include case examples, hands-on activity demonstrations, and a discussion of the research supporting the power of intergenerational engagement. This session is ideal for caregivers, educators, and healthcare providers seeking to enhance quality of life through connection and shared experiences.

Workshop Session D

River's Edge Convention Center

9:45-11:15 am

D-4 Understanding AI: Practical Teaching Tools for Early Childhood Educators

(repeat A-4)

Kyle Turck, Innovation Coach, Minnesota School District 742

Discover how AI can transform your teaching with "Magic School AI." This session will introduce early childhood educators to the basics of AI, its functionality, and practical applications in the classroom. Learn how AI can streamline planning, communication, and personalized learning, empowering you to focus more on what you love - teaching.

D-5 Nurturing Little Explorers: Bringing the Minnesota Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights to Life in Your program

Anna Dutke, M.Ed Early Childhood TOSA, Minnesota School District 196 & Jeffers Foundation

Kelly Kazeck, DCYF Early Childhood Workforce Collaboration Specialist

The Minnesota Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights outlines a vision where all children and families experience the wonders of the natural world. Join us as we explore inspiring examples of how early childhood programs, including ECFE, are successfully implementing this vision. Discover practical strategies and gain access to valuable resources that will empower you to create meaningful nature-based experiences for your children and support families in connecting with the outdoors. This session will provide you with the tools and inspiration to bring the Outdoor Bill of Rights to life in your own program.

D-6 Building Foundations: How the Revised Minnesota ECIPs Support Lifelong Success for Young Learners

(repeat C-6)

Karen Satre, M.Ed., Early Childhood Standards and Assessment Coordinator, Department of Children, Youth, and Families

This presentation covers the updated Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs), highlighting key changes. It provides insights into how these revisions support child growth, ensure equitable learning experiences, and align with current research to foster lifelong success for young learners.

“

Real information that we could take to our classrooms.

Presenters were knowledgeable and open in sharing. I feel like I could start with families confidently and successfully.

- Participant 2024 Conference

”

**Friday,
April 11**
9:45-11:15 am

Workshop Session D

River's Edge Conference Center

D-7 Decoding Disruptions: Understanding and Managing Children's Challenging Behaviors

Megan Gangl, M.Ed, Supervisor of Prek/ECFE, Anoka-Hennepin School District

Jill Eidenschink, Early Childhood Teacher & Proactive Intervention Program (PIP) Team Lead, Anoka Hennepin District #11 Early Learning Programs

As intense and challenging behaviors increase in our ECFE programs, come engage with like minded educators to discuss and learn new ways to better understand and intentionally address these behaviors using principles and strategies from the books *Raising Kids with Big, Baffling Behaviors* and *Unsmiling Faces*. The presenter will weave in her own stories and experiences throughout her presentation to include humor in this otherwise hard topic.

D-8 Eleyo 101: Child Care (Preschool) Module

Robbie Rice, Product Sales Specialist, Eleyo

Join our Eleyo experts for a comprehensive "back to basics" review of the Eleyo Child Care Module. This session will feature a dedicated Q&A segment to address all your Eleyo-related questions. Whether you're new to Eleyo or seeking a refresher, you'll leave with valuable tips and tricks to enhance your daily operations.

D-9 Quality Improvement for Early Childhood Departments

Cindy Check, Creative Compass Consulting

Carmen Cook, Creative Compass Consulting

Looking to evaluate your Early Childhood department? With changes in legislation, workforce, and leadership, Early Childhood leaders face new complexities. This session presents a program evaluation model based on the Components of Exemplary Programs, identifying strengths, growth areas, and providing a framework to enhance quality, build cohesion, and maximize resources.

“
I just love the
MNAFEE
conference. It
gives me just
the energy I
need to finish
the school year
strong.

- Participant 2024
Conference

”

Workshop Session D

River's Edge Convention Center

9:45-11:15 am

D-10 Understanding the Minnesota Child Care and Early Education Wage Scale

Jessica Richards, M.Ed., Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Low compensation for early educators is a problem, and wage scales have been identified as a necessary strategy for progress. This presentation gives an overview of the development, features, and implementation possibilities of the new Minnesota wage scale, applicable to ECFE programs as well as other fields related to early care and education.

D-11 Parent Education During Polarizing and Stressful Times

Shannon Rader, Ph.D., Program Director and License Program Lead, Parent and Family Education Program, University of MN

Parenting is both a public and private endeavor that is affected by local, national, and global events. Parent educators are often faced with difficult conversations in groups that welcome all families. How are we handling these difficult conversations? Together we will share our wisdom and support each other through a guided, informal conversation.

D-12 Foundations for Early Connections: A Multicultural Perspective

(repeat E-12)

Jamesetta Diggs, Certified Parent Coach, Beyond Early Initiatives LLC

Foundations for early connections is an interactive reflective practice training workshop that highlights the importance of parent-child relationships in connections with children's development and wellbeing from a multicultural perspective. Through storytelling the workshop engages participants to reflect on how young children can enjoy rich early experiences within their socio-cultural environments.

D-13 Empowering Generational Greatness for Parent Groups

(repeat C-13)

Trinette Potts, EGG Project Manager, The Family Partnership

John Everett Till, Chief Strategy Officer, The Family Partnership

Christine Wing, CCC, SLP, Ph.D.

Empowering Generational Greatness is a program designed to support the development of executive functioning in parents and their young children. Come and learn the three key strategies that Empowering Generational Greatness employs to strengthen executive functioning in parents and support its development in young children.

**Friday,
April 11**

11:30 am-1 pm

Workshop Session E

River's Edge Conference Center

E-1 From Confusion to Clarity: Addressing Baffling Behaviors in Young Learners

Beka Swisher, MS, LAMFT, Ellison Center

Join us for an engaging and interactive session tailored for professionals working with young children exhibiting challenging behaviors. We'll explore effective strategies to understand and manage these baffling behaviors, based on understanding the nervous system, impact of trauma, and impact of neurodiversity. This session will draw on resources from Robyn Gobbel, Dr. Ross Greene, and Dr. Dan Siegel as well as lots of experiences and stories from the presenter. Participants will gain insights into the underlying causes of these behaviors and learn practical techniques for responding with empathy, support, and boundaries. Let's empower each other to create nurturing spaces where every child feels understood and can thrive!

E-2 Click, Connect, and Collaborate with Online Learning Strategies

Rachel Daley, MA.Ed. Early Childhood Education Faculty

This session introduces participants to strategies for designing and delivering active online training. Learn how to structure content for virtual learning, incorporate interactive tools, and promote participant engagement. Through hands-on activities and real-world examples, you'll explore practices to promote engagement in the virtual space and troubleshoot common challenges. **BYOD - bring your own device!

E-3 Starting From Scratch: Building Small Programs With Big Ideas

Katy Smith, M.Ed Career Parent Educator, Consultant

Darcy Rodriguez, M.Ed, MPH ECFE Educational Consultant MN Department of Children, Youth and Families

We see you! Greater MN has a whole new cohort of newly licensed professionals working to build programs that have been under the radar or neglected due to Covid, staffing shortages or lack of leadership. Join us as we roll up our sleeves to help you put new life into programs that need a boost.

Workshop Session E

River's Edge Conference Center

11:30 am-1 pm

E-4 Incorporating Nature-based Learning in Early Childhood Programs

Anna Dutke, M.Ed Early Childhood TOSA, Minnesota School District 196 & Jeffers Foundation

Minnesota is a leader in the Nature-based early childhood movement. This session uses a FREE resource to help you integrate nature into your program. Learn how to set goals and identify action steps for increasing how nature is incorporated in your program's philosophy & policies, community engagement, indoor/outdoor instructional practices. Applicable to all types of early childhood programs.

E-5 Making a Difference in the Early Years... Resources and programs to help support educators interested in early childhood teacher licensure

Kelly Kazeck, Early Childhood Workforce Collaboration Specialist, Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Erin Young, TEACH Scholarship Manager, Child Care Aware

Kelly and Erin will expand on the Making a Difference in the Early Years document and share information about programs and supports that can help support educators who are interested in pursuing early childhood teacher licensure. This will include information about grant programs, the TEACH apprenticeship program, and more. We will have complimentary copies of the Making a Difference in the Early Years document!

E-6 Books: Talking the Best

Jenny Hill, Ed. D., St. Cloud State University
Deborah Wheeler, Ed. D., St. Cloud State University

Do you want to know about award-winning books are all about before you read them? Are you looking to add award-winning titles to your collection but you want to spend your money wisely? Do you love hearing and talking about books? This session is for you!



Networking while at the Conference

While developing skills and knowledge is important, the real power lies in connecting with others and collaborating. Engaging with diverse perspectives expands horizons and offers new insights. By working together, attendees can leverage collective expertise to address challenges more effectively, leading to greater success in making a positive impact in our communities.

**Friday,
April 11**

11:30 am-1 pm

Workshop Session E

River's Edge Conference Center

E-7 Head Start and Early Childhood Special Education: In Tandem

Barbara Eckberg MS, IMH-E® Infant & Early Childhood Family Specialist Early Childhood Special Education Educator Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools, District 877

Kelsey Kautzman Head Start Site Supervisor | Wright County Community Action

We will explore one model of access and least restrictive environments for preschool children, enrolled in a center-based Head Start classroom. Participants will be encouraged to share their current and future experiences with collaboration, while exploring the presented model.

E-8 Lessons and Activities for Parenting Practitioners to Cultivate Parent, Family and Community Well-Being

Beth Magistad, Ph.D., CFLE, Licensed Parent Educator

Discussion of "Family Well-Being for the Greater Good: A science-based workbook for people supporting parents," a new resource from UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center offering parenting practitioners practical lessons and activities to help cultivate your own social and emotional well-being and share these practices with parents and families.

E-9 Early Childhood Screening: New Initiatives, Leadership

Margo Chresand, R.N., M.A, M.S., Screening Specialist, DCYF

Please join this interactive discussion of new initiatives leaders may embrace including: creation of screening cultural companion guides for MN American Indian families; Healing Centered (trauma informed) Screening Guide; new trauma question in social emotional questionnaires; screening marketing toolkit; exploring ECLDS and MN Story Collective data for in-reach.

I went home
with so many
great ideas
that I'm
excited to
implement.
Thank you!

- Participant 2024
Conference

Workshop Session E

River's Edge Conference Center

11:30 am-1 pm

E-10 Tackling Tough Topics with Diverse Parent Groups (repeat A-10)

Danny O'Brien, M.Ed. Parent Educator, ISD 191
Cynthia Sampers, Early Learning Coordinator, ISD 191

Talking about sensitive topics in parenting groups is difficult no matter what. Mix in multiple languages, belief systems, and ethos and well...it gets even more difficult. Our presentation will offer some insights, strategies, and real life experience into discussing sensitive topics with a diverse group of parents.

E-11 From Garden to Growth: Harnessing Therapeutic Horticulture to Enhance Parent-Child Engagement in Nature-Based Family Education Program

Tina Cross, Founder, GoodRoots Family Education
Susi Susanti, M.A. student in Family Social Science, UofM
Elizabeth Brinton, student in Family Social Science, UofM
& Parent Educator, Anoka-Hennepin School District

Integrating nature-based interventions into ECFE or family-centered programming enriches connections and supports child development. Gardening offers a unique way to engage families, promoting attention, mental health, and social connection. This session will explore nature-based learning, family engagement, and practical gardening strategies rooted in therapeutic horticulture.

E-12 Foundations for Early Connections: A Multicultural Perspective (repeat D-12)

Jamesetta Diggs, Certified Parent Coach, Beyond Early Initiatives LLC

Foundations for early connections is an interactive reflective practice training workshop that highlights the importance of parent-child relationships in connections with children's development and wellbeing from a multicultural perspective. Through storytelling the workshop engages participants to reflect on how young children can enjoy rich early experiences within their socio-cultural environments.

E-13 Eleyo 101: ECFE Module

Robbie Rice, Product Sales Specialist, Eleyo

Join our Eleyo experts for a comprehensive "back to basics" review of the Eleyo ECFE Module. This session will feature a dedicated Q&A segment to address all your Eleyo-related questions. Whether you're new to Eleyo or seeking a refresher, you'll leave with valuable tips and tricks to enhance your daily operations.

Attending the MNAFEE Conference gives early childhood professionals the chance to learn new strategies, discover current research, and connect with peers who share your dedication to supporting families with young children. Invest in your growth and bring innovative ideas back to your program!



Conference Logistics



Conference Location

The conference is located at the
St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center
10 Fourth Ave. S. in St. Cloud, MN

Venue maps



bit.ly/3F5G8lQ

Parking & directions



bit.ly/4hUKSzU

Conference Registration is located on the first floor across from Glen Carlson Hall.

Wi-Fi Information

Network: Rivers Edge Prepay

Password: RiverSpring2025



Accommodations

Enjoy discounted rates for overnight accommodations during the conference at the following hotels conveniently located near the Convention Center.

A room block is reserved under the name: Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education. Be sure to mention that you are attending the MNAFEE Family & Early Childhood Education Conference to take advantage of the reduced room rate.

Best Western Plus Kelly Inn

100 4th Ave. | 320-253-0606
\$119 king, \$119 double queen

Courtyard Marriott Hotel

404 West St. Germain St. | 320-654-1661
\$145 king, \$155 double queen

Clock Hours - CEU Credit

Following the conference, Certificates of Attendance will be accessible through an online evaluation process. Participants will receive an email containing a link to complete the evaluation and download their certificates.

Attendees are reminded that it is their responsibility to submit these certificates to their respective governing boards to obtain Clock Hours or CEU Credit.



Register Now!
bit.ly/MNAFEE2025

Conference Logistics

Conference Materials

All presenter handouts and presentation slides will be available in the conference drive for attendees to access.



Pre-Conference Keynote Presentations

Wednesday, April 9

- Afternoon Session: 1:00–4:00 p.m.
- Evening Session: 5:30–8:00 p.m.
- Location: Kelly Inn Conference Center

Important Registration Information:

- Pre-conference presentations require separate registration and are not included in the main conference registration.
 - *Afternoon Pre-Conference Keynote* - \$ 50
 - *Evening Pre-Conference Keynote* - \$50 (includes light dinner)
- Registration deadline: Wednesday, April 2 at 12:00 p.m. (noon)
- The evening presentation includes a light dinner.

Secure your spot early to participate in these valuable pre-conference learning opportunities.

Vendors

Enhance your professional toolkit by exploring our carefully selected vendor showcase featuring educational materials and books. These organizations offer valuable resources to support your work with young learners.

Visit Vendor Booths in the Terry Haws Center:

- Thursday: 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Friday: 7:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Featured Vendors Include:

- Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- Edvantage
- FastTrackerMN.org - MN Mental Health Community Foundation
- St. Catherine University
- Teaching Strategies

Take advantage of this opportunity to gather new materials, learn about innovative programs, and connect with representatives who can provide insights to enhance your teaching practice.



Register Now!
bit.ly/MNAFEE2025

Conference Registration



Your full conference registration includes:

- Complete access to all speakers and workshops
- Conference materials
- Continental breakfast (Thursday & Friday)
- Lunch (Thursday & Friday)

How to Register: Visit bit.ly/MNAFEE25

Registration Deadline: Wednesday, April 2 at 12:00 p.m. (noon)

Register today to secure your place at this valuable professional development event!

Registration Fees

Afternoon Pre-Conference Keynote	\$ 50
Evening Pre-Conference Keynote includes light dinner	\$ 50
Thursday-Friday (MNAFEE Member Rate)	\$215
Thursday-Friday (Non-Member Rate)	\$255
Thursday-Friday (Retiree/Student Rate)	\$115
Thursday Only (MNAFEE Member Rate)	\$145
Thursday Only (Non-Member Rate)	\$175
Friday Only (MNAFEE Member Rate)	\$105
Friday Only (Non-Member Rate)	\$125
Approved Speaker Credit	\$ 25



Register Now!
bit.ly/MNAFEE2025

Mark your calendars! The 2026 MNAFEE Family & Early Childhood Education Conference is happening from April 8 to 10, 2026 at the St. Cloud Rivers Edge Convention Center.



MNAFEE

Conference 2025

Notes

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Break Through to New Possibilities in Early Childhood

Fall
Workshop
**SAVE
THE DATE**
Nov. 7, 2025

