

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Thursday, April 11

10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

Kindergarten Innovation: Bridging Pre-K and K Educators | Mt. Hood A

Katrina Edwards

Through our Kindergarten Innovation Cohort, Pre-K and kindergarten educators in PPS are learning from each other and exploring promising practices to embed playful learning and build continuity between Pre-K and kindergarten experiences for children and families. Learn about our educators' discoveries and discuss opportunities for innovation in your Pre-K contexts.

Understanding Challenging Behavior in the Classroom | Mt. Hood B

Nicole Stutte

We will discuss an eclectic approach to understanding challenging behavior as it presents itself in the early childhood classroom settings. Using current research and frameworks, we will explore why challenging behavior occurs and what can be done to reduce it. *Part 1 of 2, participants are encouraged to attend both sessions.*

Intentional Support Plans:

Going from Triage to a Plan for Students who Struggle with Regulation | Mt. Hood C*

Kourtney Ferrua, Kellie Morris, Emma Velazquez

In this session we will share a tool that we have developed for primary classrooms to support PreK leaders and K teachers who are helping our youngest students build skills. In this session we will help educators move from triage to a thoughtful plan that connects problems to solve with meaningful interventions and supports that promote growth and learning.

Pivotal Practices for High Quality Inclusion | Cascade AB

Meredith Villines

Inclusion in early care and education environments is backed by 30 years of research and practice. Despite this, children who experience disability are often excluded from early childhood educational environments. Learn the reasons behind this reality and how to make changes to ensure equitable access to high quality, early care and education for all of your young learners. This session will focus on core practices, rooted in Universal Design, that can be used in early learning environments to improve student outcomes.

Creating Inclusive Classrooms for Diverse Learners | Cascade C*

Jessica Lyerly, Katie Byerly

This session is designed to equip educators with the knowledge and skills to create inclusive and supportive learning environments for students with diverse learning styles. Participants will learn practical strategies for classroom setup, behavior management, and communication strategies to support all students and, more specifically, their autistic learners.

We Can and Must Give Our Students the Gift of Confidence | St. Helens AB

Rick Stiggins

During and after the pandemic for many students gave up on themselves as learners. During that time, an international program of research revealed very effective ways to help learners regain their confidence. During this time early learning programs emerged rapidly to, in part, help young learners develop the confidence needed to begin school. The remedies referenced above can work here too. Rick will describe and illustrate teaching and learning strategies that help students watch themselves growing due to their own efforts, giving them the confidence to succeed in future learning. They come to believe in themselves because they're succeeding. Rick will describe these breakthrough strategies, and discuss their application in early learning contexts.

Addressing Attendance in Kindergarten Through Early Home-School Connections | St. Helens CD

Nancy Hauth, Marnie Jewell

The transition into kindergarten is an opportunity to center equity and focus less on how "ready" children are and more on how prepared our educational systems are to receive and support all young children and families. One way to prepare our systems is to explore current attendance challenges among kindergarten students and families. In this session, we will discuss attendance data and its impact, as well as how building relationships between schools and families before starting kindergarten may have a positive impact on attendance. We will highlight bright spots across the state and promising practices that support regular attendance so every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Unpacking Oregon's Early Literacy Framework | Mt. Hood A*

Holly Dalton, Jenny Pond and Amber Gardner

During this session, participants will become familiar with ODE's Early Literacy Framework, and how the eight sections of the framework help reinforce culturally responsive practice and reading science as fundamental to children's literacy.

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Lead, Coach, and Teach with Emotional Power

Harness the Power in your Brain:

Emotions—Energy in Motion—In Our Bodies | Mt. Hood C

Dr. Kathy Norwood

Most people LOVE to dance. Did you know we dance all the time? There is a sophisticated tango between electrical, chemical and magnetic energies that produce our emotions. We can learn to recognize and harness this energetic power. Emotions can be condensed into two types of emotional energies: emotional pain—emotions that hurt or deplete us; and emotional power—emotions that heal and regenerate us. Join us to learn three research-based techniques—neuroenergetic codes—drawn from neuroscientist Dr. Julia Diganji (Energy Rising, 2023) to work intelligently with our emotional power and our embodied magnetic leadership.

Pathways to Inquiry and Playful Learning: Lessons from Inquiry-Based Approaches in Pre-K through First in Three Oregon School Districts | Cascade AB

Jen Burkhart, Sarah Dunkin, Kayla Bell

This session considers the adoption of playful inquiry approaches as instructional practice for public preschool classrooms in three school districts in Oregon and the alignment of those practices into district kindergarten and first-grade classrooms. This session will describe the environmental and instructional elements of this playful learning initiative and the district strategies that built the impetus for playful learning in the early grades.

On-site Preschool Benefits and How to Establish a Preschool through Public/Private Partnerships | Cascade C

Jessica Casey, Steven Fuller

Come hear how organizers established a in the rural community of Williams. We will talk about the unique partnership between the school and preschool and how it benefits the students, families and the community. The academic and social emotional skills gained in the preschool go on to benefit K-5.

Mindfulness and Self-Care Practices for Leaders | St. Helens AB

Carrie-Ann Tkaczyk

Mindfulness, as defined by mindfulness expert Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, is "awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally." In this interactive session, educational leaders and coordinators will explore ways to use mindfulness to develop an effective self-care practice that will enable them to connect with themselves and others, and to develop an open, compassionate leadership style.

Friendships in Early Childhood | St. Helens CD*

Tim Andrews

In this session we will examine key skills that lead to friendships in early childhood. We will discuss how to teach these skills, and importantly how to embed them into routines in order to give children many opportunities throughout the day to connect and form friendships.

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Transition to Kindergarten; Supporting families from IFSP to IEP | Mt. Hood A

Alicia Riddle

This training is designed to equip professionals with the necessary tools to support families during the critical transition from early childhood special education to kindergarten. Participants will learn how to demystify the IFSP to IEP process, implement best practices for fostering inclusive environments, apply achievable goals toward inclusion, and engage families effectively. Through understanding these key areas, educators will be better prepared to provide a supportive, and inclusive early childhood setting that celebrates diversity and promotes the Least Restrictive Environment, ensuring a smoother transition for children and their families into the next phase of their educational journey.

How to Keep the "Calm" in Your Classroom | Mt. Hood B

Brenda Martinek, Carley Neuhaus

How do we, as early childhood educators, help support students with behavioral and sensory dysregulation challenges? This session will go over ABCs of behavior, the crisis cycle, de-escalation strategies and how to support students with sensory needs.

Balanced Care vs. Overcare | Mt. Hood C

Dr. Kathy Norwood

Our ability to experience and express compassion is one of our highest assets, emerging from our heart intelligence. But, like most things, efficacious care requires a balance point. Balanced care nurtures us and others. Overcare creates stress and energy drain, diminishing our effectiveness as well as our health and well-being. Compassion and care do not cause fatigue and burnout; we exhaust ourselves by overidentifying with depleting emotions that undermine our strength and effectiveness. Let's discover how to distinguish between the two and strengthen the effectiveness of our care by bringing it into balance and coherent alignment with our heart.

The Impact of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems on Children's Later Academic Achievement | Cascade AB

Ashley Pierson

State-level quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) are one strategy to improve child outcomes through increasing access to quality early care and education (ECE) programs. We will present findings from a new national study of the impact of QRIS on children's grade 4 math and reading scores. The study includes findings specifically for children of color, linguistically diverse children, and children experiencing economic disadvantage. Findings include the overall impact of QRIS on outcomes and how that impact differs by QRIS implementation features. Participants will discuss results for Oregon and implications of findings for quality standards for early learning programs.

Practical Behavior Supports for Early Learners | Cascade C

Hillary Flood, Laura Mlyn

Children and youth with behavioral needs require tailored interventions. Identifying antecedents is crucial for preventive strategies, enabling professionals and caregivers to create positive environments. Equally vital are consequence strategies reinforcing alternative behaviors, fostering a shift away from maladaptive responses. This introductory approach involves proactive interventions, positive reinforcement, and skill-building to support the overall development of children facing behavioral challenges.

Equity in Interactions with Families, Caregivers, and Educators through Listening | St. Helens AB

Cami Stevenson

If we are to believe that building families' and teachers' capacity is one of the primary goals of early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE), interactions between EI/ECSE professionals need to be examined under a microscope. The purpose of this presentation is to open professionals' eyes to the possibility that their actions subtly keep families and teachers, especially marginalized families, in a subservient role, where they are expected to carry out professionals' "suggestions" or "recommendations" rather than collaborating with them in the development of intervention strategies for their children.

Resources and More! Helping Oregon's Families of Children with Special Health Needs Navigate Healthcare | St. Helens CD

Tamara Bakewell, Lydia Dennehy

One in five Oregon children, youth, or young adults experience a special health need or disability. They may have physical, developmental, or mental health needs beyond that of typical children, or they may need care from more than one health care provider. Their families often struggle to navigate the many programs and services available to them through insurance, Medicaid (Oregon Health Plan) and other public health programs. Learn how to access hundreds of resources specifically to support children and their families, and learn more about what families can teach us from their experiences raising children with disabilities and special health needs. This will be a resource-rich and interactive session.

2:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Shifting Mindsets on the Science of Reading | Mt. Hood A

Amy Rae Foss, Katie Stiles

"Science of Reading" has become a key phrase in recent years, but translating the theory into practice requires new knowledge, skills, and mindsets. Learn how one Oregon school district has approached this change across its K-5 literacy programming. Hear how they have worked to align systems, structures, and supports to implement strong literacy instruction based on the Science of Reading. This session will include practical application. If you're grappling with how to shift mindsets and systems to support a transition toward Science of Reading, this session is for you.

Creating Inclusive Classrooms for Diverse Learners | Mt. Hood B*

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Healing Sleep | Mt. Hood C

Dr. Kathy Norwood

Quality sleep is healing—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Quality sleep tends to be the #1 missing ingredient for a great life. Stress greatly impacts our ability to sleep soundly or to sleep enough. Join us to look at current research that highlights quality sleep and sleep deprivation and the impact it has on every aspect of our lives. When our batteries are not able to fully recharge, our performance and well-being are severely compromised. Inadequate sleep accumulates over time, producing a debt that we must repay. Come and discover several techniques that will reduce stress and help us to sleep smarter.

Playing to Learn:

Integrating Play Planning and Studios for Academic Success | Cascade AB

Maggie Staley- Principal

Sarah Tompkins, Marissa Shafer, Katrina Wilson- Kindergarten teachers

Jessica Stormberg-Title I teacher

An exploration into the fusion of play-based learning and academic success. This session delves into the strategic integration of play planning methodologies and purpose-built studios to merge academics and play.

Fostering Authentic Engagement in Classroom Routines for Autistic Children | Cascade C*

Fawn Anderson

In this session, we will explore ways to foster engagement for autistic children within classroom routines. We will discuss naturalistic interventions that promote growth in early communication, social behaviors, and play skills.

Oregon's Family Conversation: Improving Systems to Support Families for a Seamless Transition to Kindergarten | St. Helens AB

Karina Guzmán Ortiz, Sody Fearn, Lauren Sigman

The Oregon Department of Education and the Department of Early Learning and Care are updating the state's Kindergarten Assessment to redefine "kindergarten readiness." This interactive session invites school districts and early learning partners to discuss the pilot of the Family Conversation, the first element of the Early Learning Transition Check-In. The transformative approach aims to establish district, school and classroom systems prepared for children and enhance connections through family engagement. Facilitators will highlight adjustments that have been made to the pilot based on input from educators, families, and cultural groups to ensure a smooth transition into kindergarten for all Oregon children.

* indicates a repeat session