

Potomac Association of Cooperative Teachers Inc.



The Potomac Association of Cooperative Teachers Inc.

February 2026

Spring Newsletter

www.PACTteachers.org

Letter from the President 2/9/2026

Dear PACT members,

Wow, what a winter we have had so far! As I'm writing this, our school playground sits practically unusable due to a still 2-inch layer of frozen tundra covering most of the space. In addition, the available parking in our school lot has been reduced by about 50% due to the same. While we have benefited from some herculean efforts by our members and staff to clear walkways and make the campus safe for our kiddos and ourselves, we are cold, tired and longing for the spring days ahead.

It is at times like these, with our energy low and our nerves frayed that managing behaviors in the classroom can seem beyond challenging. When we combine stressed teachers with a room full of kiddos who have had missed days of school and are missing outside playground time, things can start to get unstable. This is why developing an effective method of handling difficult behaviors that we can rely upon is so crucial. Our spring keynote presenter, Saba Ahmed with [SKA Education Training](#), is here to help. I look forward to joining you at our Spring 2026 PDD with Saba as she takes us on a journey of discovery towards helping us develop our own best methods of dealing with challenging behaviors.

(James) Scott Mitchell

PACT President

[Professional Developmental Day](#): Thursday, March 19 8:45am-1:00pm

PACT is pleased to offer an in-person workshop this Spring 2026.

"Cultivating Positive Behavior in an ECE Classroom" by Saba Ahmed

The workshop will be held at [Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville](#) located at 100 Welsh Park Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Schedule of Events:

8:45 Registration and Hospitality Tables Open

9:20 PACT Business Meeting

9:30 Workshop begins

11:00 Break

11:15 Workshop resumes

12:45 Workshop ends

Workshop Description:

This presentation explores the importance of shaping behavior in early childhood and highlights how positive behavior guidance forms the foundation for future social and emotional development. Through understanding the science behind early brain development and practical strategies for fostering strong relationships and social-emotional learning, educators will be equipped to create nurturing and effective classroom environments. *COK hours: Child Development 3*

Presenters' Biography

Saba Ahmed is a seasoned leader in the world of early childhood professional development and growth. Saba fosters a collaborative environment for early childhood education teachers to grow, learn about emerging trends, and tackle critical issues in the field of ECE.

Saba's work is rooted in a passion for transformational learning and advocating for early childhood education/educators. She is a brain development research fanatic and believer that authentic connection is the greatest predictor of long-term impact. Saba is a lifelong learner and has built expertise in the process of learning for both adult and early learners, and the social-emotional and neuro-cognitive skills that prepare children for success in school and life.

Saba earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a Master's degree in Special Education. This academic background fuels her passion for creating inclusive and nurturing learning environments that cater to the unique needs of every individual.

Credit Hours and Core of Knowledge Area

Members who attend the full session 8:45am-12:45pm this Spring 2026 will receive 3 Core of Knowledge credit hours. *COK hours: Child Development 3*

Registration

Registration and payment can be completed [HERE](#). Please sign up individually to ensure your email is recorded. Registration should be submitted by [Friday, March 13](#).

Current Members (dues paid for the 2025-2026 school year): There is no additional fee to attend this spring's professional development day. You are still required to complete the registration using the link above.

New and Returning Members: There will be a \$35 fee to attend this spring's professional developmental day. You must complete the registration using the link above and pay the \$35 fee. *By completing the Spring PDD registration, you are also receiving a membership to PACT for the remainder of this school year.*

Assessments and Evaluations

Members will be asked to complete a content assessment and presenter evaluation via a Google form. QR codes for the assessment and survey will be provided at the conclusion of the workshop. For those of you who prefer to do the assessment and evaluation at home, links will be emailed in the evening.

*****Requirements by MSDE also stipulate members from MD must pass the assessment with a score of 70% or higher.***

Certificates

In accordance with MSDE regulations, participants **MUST** attend the full three-hour presentation and complete a content assessment along with a presenter evaluation before receiving their certificate. Personalized certificates will be emailed to participants within 7-10 business days.

Membership (New or Renewing)

Join PACT (or renew your membership!) by completing the online form [HERE](#). To join PACT now, the membership fee for the remainder of 2025-2026 school year is prorated at \$35 which includes the spring professional development day on March 19, 2026.

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Award for Devoted Service in Early Childhood Education

We are pleased to announce the return of the annual PACT award for Devoted Service in Early Childhood Education! Is there a staff member at your school who stands out for their dedication to the preschool, its families, and the cooperative model? Please fill out this Google Form to nominate your staff member for recognition! (The two reference letters may be emailed to the address provided in this form.) Please submit a [Service Award Nomination](#) by Thursday, March 5, 2026.

Hall of Fame

The PACT Board established a PACT Hall of Fame in 2016 to recognize members who have given exemplary service in Early Childhood Education. Following are the members who have been inducted to date:

- Janise Allyn-Smith** - *Teacher/Director, Silver Spring N.S., PACT Board member (2017)*
- Jennifer DeBernardis** - *Teacher, Silver Spring N.S., PACT Board member (2018)*
- Annette Fitzpatrick** - *Director (retired), CCUMC Preschool, PACT Board member (2018)*
- Edie Mossberg** - *Director, Glenbrook N.S., Board member, ECE Consultant (2019)*
- Bernadine Occhiuzzo** - *Director/Teacher, Cedar Lane N.S. (2019)*
- Nancy Renner** - *Director, Fort Hunt Preschool (2020)*
- Helene Segal-Turner** - *Director, Kensington N.S., PACT Board member (2018)*
- Cindy Walsh** - *Director (retired) CCPC Weekday N.S., PACT Board member (2018)*
- Fran Warthen** - *Director, Suburban N.S. (2018)*
- Angie Zeidenberg** - *Teacher, Bannockburn N.S. (2019)*
- James Scott Mitchell**-*Teacher, Silver Spring Nursery School, PACT Board President (2022)*

Join the PACT Board!

The PACT Board is run by dedicated volunteer early childhood educators. There are still some open positions, so we need members to step forward! Please check the list below and contact Scott Mitchell if you are interested in joining our team. Information about Board positions can be found in PACT’s By-Laws on the website www.PACTteachers.org.

The 2025-2026 Board Members

President

[James Scott Mitchell](#) Silver Spring Nursery School, MD

V.P. Programming

[Bernadine Occhiuzzo](#) Cedar Lane Nursery School, MD

[Doreen Buntin](#) Cedar Lane Nursery School, MD

V.P. Membership

[Ellen Griffin](#) Cedar Lane Nursery School, MD

Secretary

[Rebecca Brunson](#) Silver Spring Nursery School, MD

Co-Treasurers

[Janise Allyn-Smith](#) Silver Spring Nursery School, MD

[Kristin Wasserzug](#) Spring Knolls Cooperative Preschool, MD

Logistics & Hospitality

VA - [Joan Morales](#) Spring Knolls, MD

MD - [Meghan Ufko](#) Rockville Community Nursery School, MD

Professional Development Day Administration

[Jessie Auten](#) Providence Nursery School, VA

Joanna Lazzaro Silver Spring Nursery School MD

Exhibits/Resource Table -

Celeste Raker-Dillen Silver Spring Nursery School MD

Assessments and Evaluations

[Emily Ederer](#) Silver Spring Day School, MD

Legislative Contact

MD - [Ylla Bishop](#) Silver Spring Day School, MD

DC - **OPEN**

VA - **OPEN**

Google Groups

[Magdalena Barry](#) Sleepy Hollow Preschool, VA

Web Master & Newsletter Editor

[Meredith Savage-Myers](#) Ashton Christian Preschool, MD

Past Co-Presidents

[Bernadine Occhiuzzo](#) Cedar Lane N.S., MD

[Ellen Griffin](#) Cedar Lane N.S., MD

Job Postings

Looking for a new teaching position in the Washington, DC area? PACT posts job openings on the website - so check it out [HERE](#). Directors wishing to post job openings should e-mail details to

VPMembershipPACT@gmail.com.

Member Groups

PACT members' email list: Registered PACT members receive periodic email updates from PACT. To add or update an email address, please contact vpmembershippact@gmail.com.

Directors' Google group: Share resources, ideas, and training opportunities by joining the PACT Directors listserv. PACT membership is not required. To join the Directors' Google group, send an e-mail to [James](#)

[Scott Mitchell](#)

We hope you are having a great school year!

