

# Potomac Association of Cooperative Teachers Inc.



February 2024

Spring Newsletter

[www.PACTteachers.org](http://www.PACTteachers.org)

## Letter from the President

Dear PACT Members,

As you all are well aware, the common thread connecting our schools and our experiences as early childhood education professionals is that we predominantly work in cooperative schools alongside the parents of our students. For the handful of you who have joined our ranks despite not being in cooperative schools, the nature of early childhood education is that a solid relationship with the child's family is imperative no matter the school type or setting.

Sometimes it is our relationship with the parents that causes the greatest anxiety. We are with the kids on a daily basis. Our classes become like a family. We strive to understand and relate to them in a way that is hard to describe. Due to the nature of our jobs, we naturally deal with the parents less often. Truth be told, sometimes we may even lack confidence when communicating with them.

It is for these reasons that I am filled with joy to be presenting Claire Lerner as our Spring 2024 Professional Development Day featured speaker. Claire has a wealth of professional experience working with kids and their parents and will surely help us all develop our own ability to do the same.

(James) Scott Mitchell  
President-[PACTteachers.org](http://PACTteachers.org)

**Note:** The board has been working to update our by-laws to better match how our practices have evolved. Please review the [Proposed By-Laws](#) as we will need to have a confirmation vote during the business meeting portion of our PDD.

## **Professional Developmental Day: Thursday, March 14 8:45am-1:00pm**

PACT is pleased to offer an in-person workshop this Spring 2024.

***"Partnering with Parents: An Approach to Collaborating with Families to Best Meet Children's Needs"***  
by Claire Lerner

The workshop will be held at [Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville](#) located at 100 Welsh Park Drive #1900, Rockville MD 20850.

### **Schedule of Events:**

- 8:45- Refreshments and Socializing
- 9:15- Business Meeting
- 9:30 Workshop Begins
- 11:00 Snack Break
- 12:40 Workshop Ends
- 12:40-1:00 Complete Evaluation and Assessment

## Workshop Description:

This workshop presents an approach to making strong connections with parents that maximizes the chance they will register and act on the important information you have to share about how to best help their children thrive in school. This model is especially important when it comes to discussing challenging behaviors, as it builds trust with teachers that enables parents to absorb difficult information, reducing denial and defensiveness that often gets in the way of effective collaboration.

Learning goals:

- 1) Participants will learn ways to build a strong, trusting relationship with parents.
- 2) Participants will “find the words” to communicate difficult information to parents in a way that is empathetic and opens parents up, versus shutting them down.
- 3) Participants will learn how to navigate difficult conversations when parents become angry, defensive, or blaming.

*1.5 COK/Child Development, 1.5 COK/Professionalism*

## Presenters' Biography

**Claire Lerner** is a nationally recognized [child development and parenting expert](#) with more than three decades of experience in education and direct practice. Claire partners with parents to decode their children’s behavior and solve their most vexing childrearing challenges. She also trains pediatric residents in child development and parenting and provides mental health consultation at DC area preschools. In addition to her clinical work with families, Claire led the parenting division of [Zero to Three](#) for nearly 20 years, translating the science of early childhood for parents—to empower moms and dads to nurture their children’s healthiest development through access to the findings of experts on a wide range of topics, from early brain development to positive parenting to coping with vexing child-rearing challenges. Claire authorizes hundreds of parenting resources, including blogs, podcasts, and videos. Her new book is, *Why Is My Child in Charge?* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021). She writes a column for PBS Kids, frequently contributes to parenting publications, and has served as a content expert for numerous national daily newspapers.

## Credit Hours and Core of Knowledge Area

Members who attend the full session 8:45am-1:00pm this Spring 2024 will receive 3 Core of Knowledge credit hours (*1.5 COK/Child Development, 1.5 COK/Professionalism*).

## 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 8](#).

**Current Members (dues paid for the 2023-2024 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 \$40 fee to attend this spring’s professional developmental day. You must complete the registration using the link above and pay the \$40 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.

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### 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 2023-2024 school year is prorated at \$40 which includes the spring professional development day on March 14, 2024.

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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, February 29, 2024.

### 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)*

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### 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](http://www.PACTteachers.org).

#### [The 2023-2024 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

##### Treasurer

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

Logistics & Hospitality

VA - OPEN

MD - [Rana Oriolo](#) Learning Center for Young Children, MD

Professional Development Day Administration

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

Exhibits/Resource Table - OPEN

Assessments and Evaluations

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

Legislative Contact

MD - [Bernadine Occhiuzzo](#)

DC - OPEN

VA - OPEN

Listserv

[Rana Oriolo](#) Learning Center for Young Children, MD

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

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### 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](mailto:VPMembershipPACT@gmail.com).

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### 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](mailto: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!

