

Love to Learn: The Transformative Power of Connection in Early Care and Education

Keynote Speaker:

ISABELLE C. HAU

Executive Director
Stanford Accelerator of Learning

with a special panel discussion

Responsive Interactions and CLASS

moderated by

Sarah Neville-Morgan

Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Early Childhood

Jena Smith

Branch Chief
Maryland EXCELS

Maryland State Department of Education

DECEMBER 8, 2025

8:00AM - 4:00PM

TURF VALLEY RESORT

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Connection in Early Care
and Education

AGENDA

8:00am – 8:30am	Registration & Breakfast
8:30am – 8:45am	Welcome
8:45am – 10:15 am	Keynote
10:15am – 10:30am	Break
10:30am – 11:00am	Q&A with Keynote Speaker
11:15am – 12:30pm	Workshops
12:45pm – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:45pm – 2:30pm	CCSSO Update
2:45pm – 4:00pm	Moderated Panel Discussion

WORKSHOPS

PLEASE SELECT AND CIRCLE YOUR 1st, 2nd, & 3rd CHOICES FOR WORKSHOPS

A. Love to Learn: A Closer Look at Our Relational Future 1 2 3	B. Building Executive Function Through Joyful Practice 1 2 3
This interactive workshop builds on the themes of the keynote address. Participants will come to better understand the latest science on how relationships shape brain development, learning, and well-being; recognize the dimensions and consequences of today's relational deprivation crisis and explore how AI both challenges and can support human connection. This session will provide participants the opportunity to envision practical ways to build relational infrastructures in their settings and communities. Isabelle C. Hau Executive Director Stanford Accelerator of Learning	This hands-on workshop will explore the three core components of executive function – working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control – and their foundational role in all learning. Participants will experience firsthand how these skills impact daily life and academic success, discovering connections between executive function and other critical cognitive abilities like reading comprehension, mathematical reasoning, and social-emotional regulation. Brigid Cook, M.Ed., C.A.S Assistant Professor, Harford Community College & Adjunct Faculty Member, Towson University's Northeastern (TUNE) Campus
C. From Simple to Sophisticated: Nurturing High-Quality Play for Learning 1 2 3	D. The Active View of Reading: Executive Function as Reading's Hidden Partner 1 2 3
While we know that play is the way young brains learn best, not all play is created equal. Understanding the spectrum of play – from free play to guided play to games- is essential for maximizing children's learning while preserving their natural joy and motivation. This session will help participants distinguish between different types of play and understand when each serves learning best. Participants will practice recognizing the difference between play that looks busy versus play that truly builds cognitive complexity and discover how to guide children toward more sophisticated play narratives that strengthen academic readiness skills. Berol Dewdney Prekindergarten Teacher Baltimore City Public Schools	Dive into the latest research on how executive function skills work alongside decoding to create skilled readers. This session will unpack the Active View of Reading model, showing participants how working memory, cognitive flexibility, and attention control work alongside decoding skills to support reading comprehension. Attendees will explore how high-quality, intentional play experiences can strengthen these critical executive function skills that support reading development and discover practical strategies for building both decoding and comprehension skills through joyful and engaging activities. Molly Snyderman Kindergarten Teacher Baltimore City Public Schools

CCSSO UPDATE

The National Academies of Science – A New Vision for High-Quality Pre-K Curriculum in Action: What does this mean in Maryland?

Shannon Glynn Thomas, an independent consultant and policy expert, will share the Council of Chief State School Officers Pre-k High-Quality Instructional Materials Network and how this project is being put into action in Maryland, including how they plan to expand beyond pre-k.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Responsive Interactions and CLASS

Moderated by Sarah Neville-Morgan and Jena Smith, this panel discussion featuring Dr. Bridget Hamre, a co-author of CLASS, will provide an overview of CLASS and discuss the importance of supporting learning including the Science of Reading and Math, through responsive interaction. It will give participants an opportunity to gain experience from and share with their peers as well as interact with the panel.

REGISTRATION

Register online at www.readyatfive.org. To submit a Purchase Order, send an Excel spreadsheet with attendee(s) registration information to monique@readyatfive.org. No Refunds. Email info@readyatfive.org with any questions.

Photography & Videography

By registering for and attending this event, you agree that your image and voice recording may be used at any time, without further notification, for printed materials, websites, social media, and other marketing and educational purposes.