

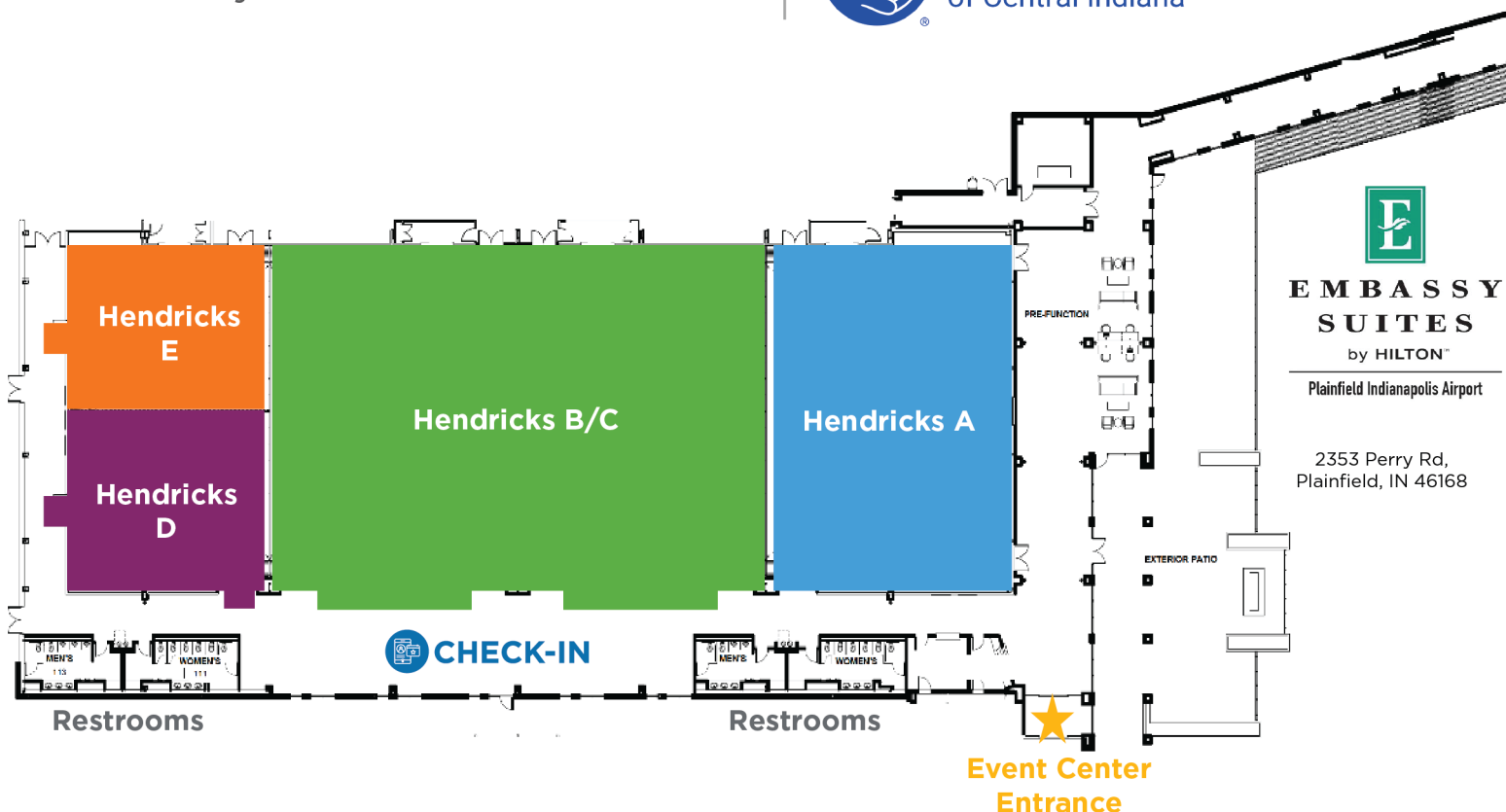
Early Learning
INDIANA

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE AGENDA ▶▶▶▶ 10.24.26



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ENGAGE. LEARN. INSPIRE.

- 8:30-9 a.m.** Check in (**Outside of Hendricks B/C**)
- 8:30 a.m.** Breakfast (**Hendricks B/C**)
- 9 a.m.** **Welcome with Erin Kissling**, CEO & President of Early Learning Indiana (**Hendricks B/C**)
- 9:05 a.m.** **Keynote with Dr. Brian Dinkins**, CEO & Founder of the Center for Empowering Education Creator of Emotionally-Inclusive Practices (**Hendricks B/C**)
- 10 a.m.** **Break, Transition to Session 1**

10:10-11 A.M.: BREAKOUT SESSION 1

Every Interaction Matters: Conversations in Motion

Presenter: Olivia Barbour, Online Learning Specialist, Early Learning Indiana

Session for: Assistant Teachers, Aides, Floaters and Other Support Professionals

Description: Through this active and inspiring session, classroom support staff—including assistant teachers, aides, floaters, and other support professionals—will pause to reflect on the important role they play in children’s learning and development. Through movement and meaningful conversations, participants will celebrate their strengths, build connections with fellow educators, and leave inspired with practical ideas they can immediately apply in their classrooms.

Room: Hendricks B/C

Little Sparks of Wonder: Provocations for Infants and Toddlers

Presenter: Sarah Hopkins, Director of Coaching and Supports, Early Learning Indiana

Focus age group: Infant/Toddler

Description: Learn how provocations can become pathways to learning, communication and connection. Grounded in play and observation, this session explores how educators can design experiences that honor children’s natural curiosity and competence.

Room: Hendricks D

Establishing and Building Connections: Partnering with Parents, Staff and Children in Your Center

Presenter: Donna Sutton and Allison Gill, Operations Managers, Day Early Learning

Session for: School Leadership

Description: Relationships are at the heart of early childhood education. This session invites operations managers to explore how intentional communication and collaboration with parents, staff and children create a sense of belonging and trust. Through interactive role-playing, we’ll practice approaches that strengthen these essential connections.

Room: Hendricks A

The Value in the Small Things

Presenter: Nina Woodbury, Teacher, Day Early Learning

Focus age group: Preschool/Pre-K

Description: In early childhood education, the smallest moments often leave the greatest mark. This session invites educators to reconnect with five simple practices that build trust, joy and belonging—from how we greet, ask and listen to embracing “messenger” sensory play and supporting one another as co-teachers. Participants will leave with practical strategies for turning everyday interactions into meaningful opportunities for learning and connection.

Room: Hendricks E

11 a.m.-12 p.m. Working Lunch: Beyond the Keynote with Dr. Brian Dinkins (*Hendricks B/C*)

12 p.m. Break, Transition to Session 2

12:10-1 P.M.: BREAKOUT SESSION 2

From Purpose to Practice: Turning Your Why Into Impact

Presenter: Cathy Hartman, Director Educator Solutions, Early Learning Indiana

Session for: School Leadership

Description: Discover how centering your “why” can reconnect you to purpose, clarify your values, and guide the responses you make as a leader. This session explores how intentionally aligning the *why* to a strong image of educator inspires meaningful impact in practice, relationships, and within the school community.

Room: Hendricks A

Laying the Foundations: Supporting Infant and Toddler Literacy Development

Presenter: Charity Coppola, LENA Coordinator, Early Learning Indiana

Focus age group: Infant/Toddler

Description: This session examines the building blocks of early literacy during the first years of life and explores ways to promote vocabulary growth, emergent communication and positive relationships with books through everyday routines and play.

Room: Hendricks D

La preparación para la escuela comienza en la educación infantil

(Presented in Spanish)

Presentadora: Claudia Escalera, Maestra, Day Early Learning

Grupo de edad objetivo: Bebés y niños pequeños

Descripción: Los primeros tres años de vida de un niño son un período crucial para el desarrollo cerebral, ya que sientan las bases para el aprendizaje futuro, la inteligencia emocional y las habilidades sociales. Este período representa tanto una gran oportunidad como una etapa de vulnerabilidad, que moldea la trayectoria de la vida del niño.

Habitación: Hendricks E

Safety and Guidance: Overcoming Strong Emotions

Presenter: Chelsea Ndaiga, School Leader, Day Early Learning

Focus age group: Toddler-Pre-K

Description: How to use consistent language and voice volume, create body boundaries and navigate through strong emotions in a classroom setting. Let's find your voice, choice of words and body positive language to navigate the outcomes of how children self-regulate and respond when trenching through their strong emotions. You will learn how to keep your body and the children's bodies safe while moving through all types of emotions.

Room: Hendricks B/C

1 p.m.

Break, Transition to Session 3

1:10-2 P.M.: BREAKOUT SESSION 3

Potty Learning with Purpose: Partnering with Families to Support Developmental Growth

Presenter: Debra Roberts, Teacher, Day Early Learning

Focus age group: Infant

Description: Potty learning is a big step for little ones—and it can be a big journey for families, too! In this session, we'll talk about how teachers can guide and support families through the potty learning process in positive, developmentally appropriate ways. We'll connect potty learning to the child's overall growth—like building independence, confidence and self-awareness—and share tips for keeping communication with families open and encouraging. Throughout this presentation, we will talk through real-life scenarios together.

Room: Hendricks D

Small Bodies, Big Senses: Understanding Sensory Behaviors in Toddlers

Presenter: Livy Kanter, Social Emotional Learning Coordinator, Early Learning Indiana

Session for: Toddler/Twos

Description: Toddlers learn through movement, touch and exploration — and their behaviors often reflect their sensory needs. In this interactive session, educators will uncover how sensory experiences shape behavior and reflect on ways to create responsive, supportive environments that nurture regulation and connection.

Room: Hendricks A

Growing Readers and Writers: Supporting Literacy Development in Preschool

Presenter: Charity Coppola, LENA Coordinator, Early Learning Indiana

Focus age group: Preschool/Pre-K

Description: Preschoolers explore language, print and storytelling through rich, meaningful experiences. This session highlights key components of emergent literacy and explores ways to intentionally encourage children's curiosity, exploration and engagement with literacy every day.

Room: Hendricks E

What Counts as Curriculum? Reimagining What Shapes Learning

Presenter: Cathy Hartman, Director Educator Solutions, Early Learning Indiana

Session for: School Leadership

Description: What do we really mean when we talk about curriculum, and what should shape the decisions we make about children's learning? This session explores the essential elements of curriculum—including children's interests and our image of the child—and considers how these perspectives influence instructional decisions, learning environments, and the experiences we create for children.

Room: Hendricks B/C

2 p.m.

Break, Transition to Closing

2:10 p.m.

Closing (*Hendricks B/C*)