



ASSOCIATION FOR EARLY LEARNING LEADERS
HOW SUCCESSFUL DIRECTORS LEAD
40th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17th

CONFERENCE CHECK IN & REGISTRATION OPEN | 7:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. & 4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

<p>Pre-Conference Event</p> <p>9:00 A.M. - 12:15 P.M.</p>	<p>Early Learning Center Tours</p>	<p>One of our most popular conference events, this year's tours, will visit two local early learning centers that reflect excellence and innovation in early education. This is a great way to spark new ideas and perspectives as you pursue exceptional programming in your centers! We will conclude the tour by stopping at the Amazing Savings store, where educators can find well-priced books and classroom materials for their programs.</p> <p>Cost: \$89 Member \$109 Non-Member</p>
<p>AM Pre-Conference Event</p> <p>9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.</p>	<p>Navigating the Flames: Soft Skills in ECE Leadership - Leading When EVERYTHING is On Fire Summer Picha</p>	<p>This presentation is designed for childcare owners, directors, and leaders seeking practical insights and strategies to navigate the challenges of leading a program amidst chaos. Whether you're a seasoned leader or just stepping into a leadership role, the content is tailored to elevate your leadership skills in demanding circumstances.</p> <p>Join us as we explore the art of leading with finesse when everything around you seems ablaze. Together, let's discover the power of soft skills in transforming chaos into an opportunity for growth and success.</p> <p>Cost: \$139 Member \$189 Non-Member</p>
<p>*** Would you like to attend both pre-conference sessions? Bundle your registrations to get the best deal on both sessions!</p> <p>Cost: \$250 Member \$350 Non-Member</p>		
<p>PM Pre-Conference Event</p> <p>1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.</p>	<p>The Elevated Employee Experience: Create Your Team's Path to Performance Beth Cannon</p>	<p>In this session, you will create a strategic framework encompassing Evaluate, Employee, Excite, Educate, Engage, Energize, and Evolve stages in the Employee Experience. You will gain practical insights and tools to craft an environment where employees not only thrive but actively contribute to the success of the organization. Elevate your leadership skills and foster a team that wants to transform your school into your community's choice for high-quality care and education.</p> <p>Cost: \$139 Member \$189 Non-Member</p>

CONFERENCE WELCOME PARTY - A 40TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION FOR AELL! | 5:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Join us in the exhibit hall for a proper conference kick-off birthday party as we celebrate AELL turning 40! We'll have door prizes, snacks, cash bar, music, and tons of fun in store as we launch an amazing week together!

PRESIDENTS' LEGACY COMMISSION FUNDRAISING DINNER - AN ITALIAN TASTE OF NEW JERSEY | 7:00 P.M. – 11:00 P.M.

The Association for Early Learning Leaders and the Presidents' Legacy Commission invite you to join us for our annual fundraising dinner. It is our desire and purpose to raise much-needed financial resources that will provide scholarships, training opportunities, and professional resources to leaders in the field of early care and education.

We invite you to support this effort by purchasing tickets to attend the fundraising dinner.

Each ticket will include a delicious "Taste of New Jersey" dinner, live entertainment from the Howl2Go Dueling Pianos show, live auction, and much more!

- [Standard Seat Ticket \(\\$150\)](#): Includes dinner, show admission and two drink tickets
- [Premium Seat Ticket \(\\$250\)](#): Includes dinner, show admission, open beer/wine bar and event gift bag

- [Sponsored VIP Tables \(\\$3500\)](#): Includes seating for 10 at stage/dance floor, open bar with dedicated table server, VIP gift for each table guest, 1-year AELL vendor membership, prominent branding on event signage and marketing pieces, logo on all AELL email campaigns and website sliders for 12 months

THURSDAY, APRIL 18th

CONNECT OVER BREAKFAST WITH EXHIBITORS | 7:15 A.M. – 8:15 A.M.

Join us in the exhibit hall each morning for a complimentary breakfast as we connect with fellow attendees and our awesome exhibitors!

OPENING KEYNOTE | 8:15 A.M. – 10:15 A.M.

Opening Keynote |
Steve Gross

Steve Gross, MSW, is a clinical social worker and pioneer in the field of using playful engagement and relationships to overcome the devastating impacts of early childhood trauma.

Steve founded Project Joy, a nonprofit organization that used the power of joyful play to heal and strengthen homeless and impoverished children throughout Greater Boston, in 1989. In 2011, Life is Good invited Project Joy, now The Playmaker Project, to be the sole social mission of the brand.

Through an outpouring of love, optimism, experience, and expertise, Steve and a trusted team of researchers and colleagues have spent 30+ years developing the Life is Good Playmaker Project program.

BREAKOUT SESSION ONE | 10:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

101	Leading with Heart: Unlocking Team Success Prerna Richards	Running a high-quality early childhood education program is hard work, and staffing issues can make it more challenging and draining. In this intentionally designed session, we will take a closer look at 3 specific strategies to help create dynamic and effective teams where staff feel valued and motivated to provide the best education for all young children enrolled in the program.
102	Making Good Decisions When It Really Matters Lynnette McCarty	The business of Early Education is changing rapidly. Many of the “old” ways of doing things may no longer work, and we are constantly faced with having to make quick decisions and pivot to stay in business! Participants will be guided through the process of doing the "hard things" and being confident in making the "right" decisions for their business. These tools and more will support strong and resilient leadership!
103	Seamless Succession Planning: Your Step-by-Step Guide to Future Proofing Your Company Kathe Petchel	It's never too early to plan your exit- in fact, we recommend you start thinking about it when you open your doors. However, as your company grows, things become more complicated, especially when real estate is acquired, children and family members join the company, and you are the market leader in your area. Join Kathe Petchel, Hinge Advisors Business Development team member, for an informed discussion about what you should have in place now, what to consider for the future, and the key factors that will make you have a successful exit if and when you choose. Special content relating to second-generation succession planning, business and real estate valuations, and choosing a corporate successor will be shared. Don't miss this session designed to give you peace of mind- future-proof your company now!
104	How the Director Got Their Groove Back! Tym Smith	Feeling like you're in a funk? Finding it hard to connect to your purpose and vision with the same passion you once had? Well this session is for you! Join us for this motivational and inspiring workshop that was scheduled just for you! Let's fill each other's buckets and get back on track to find the grit, determination, and desire needed to play the long game! You've got this!
105	Taming Your Imposter Syndrome: Growing in Confidence in a Professional System Suzanne McColl	In this session, Suzanne discusses what Imposter Syndrome is, where it comes from, and how it affects us at work. She describes the different "faces" of imposter syndrome and what that looks like when you are working with teams. Suzanne will teach how to identify your own limiting beliefs and gives information on how to create more empowered beliefs and confidence and hacks that can be used to strengthen more confident and empowered beliefs and actions. Suzanne speaks from her knowledge of personality development, trauma, and neuroscience in an understandable and accessible manner.
106	Are You Hiring The Right Person? Ten Signs You Might Not Be Dawn Martini	A great deal of time and money is spent on hiring an employee, bringing the employee on board, and subsequently training him or her to fulfill the requirements of the job within your organization's corporate culture. And if the employee doesn't work out, the turnover cost can be staggering. This workshop will focus on the serious nature of hiring and help you, as the employer, recognize the signs that a potential employee might not be a good fit for your organization.
107	No More Inspirational Junk Food: 5 Reasons Leadership Development Programs Fail Michelle Villatoro	Leadership development is now a critical investment for companies seeking to nurture talent and drive business success. Despite annual spending of \$356 billion on leadership development training, only 25% of senior leaders consider it crucial for their organization's outcomes (McKinsey & HBR). It's time to end the "inspirational junk food" approach and explore the five reasons behind most program failures.
108	Leadership Starts From Within Collette Sawyer	Leadership starts on the inside and flows to those around you. In this class, we will discover principles for leading yourself and leading others. We will talk about the skills and traits that make an impactful leader and how you can develop those skills and mentor others to do the same.

MUNCH & MINGLE - LUNCH WITH THE EXHIBITORS | 12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

Join us for this opportunity to network with our outstanding conference exhibitors and conference participants over complimentary lunch. Remember, these are the people who work hard to support your role as a leader and the implementation of your programs. They want to know you and know how to help you!

BREAKOUT SESSION TWO | 1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

201	<p>Is Accreditation Right for You and Your Program? National Accreditation Commission Erin Glenn & Susan Southerton</p>	<p>This information-packed, interactive session will unpack what accreditation is and how it can elevate your program and reputation in the community. Our accreditation team will answer your questions, share the benefits and rewards of accreditation in your state, and guide you through the process of deciding whether accreditation through the National Accreditation Commission is the right fit for your program!</p>
202	<p>Tackling Turnover Post COVID: An Owner's or Director's Guide for Building a Dedicated Staff and Raising Morale Vernon Mason</p>	<p>Directing a childcare program has its challenges; one of the biggest is retaining quality staff. In this session, Vernon Mason—a director/owner with 30 years of experience—will share examples of how to support staff, reduce staff turnover, raise staff morale, and build dedication for little or no cost. Participants are asked to share innovative ideas that they are using. We will also discuss obstacles in achieving the desired outcome. Participants will leave with practical information to put into immediate use in their programs. This workshop is based on the book, “Don't Go!”</p>
203	<p>The Challenge of Challenging Employees Miriam Dressler</p>	<p>In this session, we will look at the 'perfect storm' that creates the conditions for challenging employee behavior. We'll review what a happy, cooperative team looks like in your program, including the expectations for managing challenges and stresses at work. Then, we'll learn strategies that can support your management of employees when difficult behavior arises, and finally, what to do when you see no way forward with an employee.</p>
204	<p>An Unconventional Approach: Leveraging Kindness As Strategy For Success Cindy Rowe</p>	<p>Science has proven that doing kind acts for others makes us happier. And that's great news for leaders because happier employees are 12% more productive. In today's workplace climate—amid staffing and retention challenges, it's crucially important to have a competitive edge with current staff and future employees. In this talk, you'll learn how to use kindness as a key differentiator to make your organization stand out from the crowd. When you learn how to use kindness strategically, you'll be seen and valued as a strategic and compassionate leader while simultaneously boosting the bottom line and improving workplace culture.</p>
205	<p>Risk Management Strategies for Early Learning Education Programs Michael Swain</p>	<p>Good risk management practices can help control insurance costs and provide a positive client experience. What better way to learn what insurance carriers might expect from your risk management program than listening to an experienced insurance risk management specialist? For early education providers, risk management practices need to support business continuity and safety. This can include strategies designed to protect your property, enhance your transportation practices, and provide a safe environment for your clientele. This workshop will provide an insurance professional's overview of what some of these risk management strategies should be to help maintain a well-rounded risk management program at your center.</p>

206	<p>Trauma-Informed Supervision: Building Stronger Teams Christina Fecio</p>	<p>“Who helps the helpers?” Caring for others can take its toll, resulting in emotional exhaustion, reduced empathy, and increased anxiety. Fortunately, organizations can have a positive impact on employees' well-being, combating compassion fatigue and burnout by adopting a trauma-informed approach to supervision. This session introduces the key principles of trauma-informed care, focusing on ways that supervisors can help employees cope with challenges, manage stress, and perform their jobs more effectively, ultimately creating a healthier and more productive work environment.</p>
207	<p>Playing to Your Strengths & Unleashing Your Team! Mary Hornbeck</p>	<p>Highly effective and successful leaders know their strengths and are aware of their areas of challenge. They lean into those strengths and are strategic in selecting team members whose strengths shine in the gaps and help the team thrive. Inspired by the book "The Self-Aware Leader" by John Maxwell, this session will set you up with tools and strategies that will elevate your leadership and equip you to build an invested, motivated, and inspired team! If you are a new and growing leader, this session is for you!</p>
208	<p>Got Challenges? Have Questions? Let's Talk About It! Brittney Luther, Lori Picklesimer, Zubeen Saeed, Lake Ryan Gemzik</p>	<p>The days can be long, and the stories we can tell can be even longer! This open forum panel discussion is the perfect place to unpack current challenges and ask questions! Our group of ECE experts and practitioners will be on hand to facilitate these important conversations and share practical ideas, tools, strategies, and resources that will carry your leadership, team, and goals forward!</p>

GET CONNECTED! FIRST-TIME ATTENDEE MEET-AND-GREET | 3:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

If this is your first time participating in our conference or you are attending conference alone, please join the AELL Ambassadors for this fun, interactive "Get Connected" reception! This is the perfect place to make new friends, get to know more about the Association, and get tips on making the most of your conference experience!

LEADERS' NIGHT OUT - NYC HARBOR DINNER CRUISE | 6:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M. (DEPARTING AT 4 P.M.)

Get ready for an unforgettable journey through the stunning New York City Harbor! During this excursion with fellow early learning leaders, you'll be treated to awe-inspiring sights, including panoramic vistas of the iconic Manhattan skyline, the majestic Statue of Liberty, and historic Ellis Island. As you cruise through the harbor aboard the Destiny, you'll also pass beneath the iconic bridges that connect the city, adding to the beauty of the experience.

To ensure your evening is truly special, your ticket (**\$259**) covers several fantastic amenities. You can look forward to round-trip transportation at 4 P.M. from the conference hotel, the Hilton East Brunswick, a seated dinner, indulgent desserts, and the option to savor a variety of wines and beers from the complimentary open bar.

It's a complete package designed to make your visit to the New York Harbor an unforgettable and enjoyable experience.

FRIDAY, APRIL 19th

CONNECT OVER BREAKFAST WITH EXHIBITORS | 7:15 A.M. – 8:15 A.M.

Join us in the exhibit hall each morning for a complimentary breakfast as we connect with fellow attendees and our awesome exhibitors!

BREAKOUT SESSION THREE | 8:30 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.

301	Supervising Staff Through The 4-Stages of Teacher Development Robin Stephenson	Supervising staff members can be a challenging task, especially when they have varying levels of experience. As a supervisor, it is crucial to provide guidance and support to your team members at all stages of their careers. In this session, we will explore effective strategies for supervising staff members with different levels of experience, from new hires to seasoned professionals. By implementing these strategies, you can create a positive and productive work environment that fosters growth and development for all your staff members.
302	The Power of "So That"! Using the Power of "So That" Statements to Increase Enrollment! Ruth Ann Rose	<p>"So that" is such a powerful statement that can mean so much to families searching for an early learning center for their children. Yet leaders often forget to use "so that" statements consistently on all online platforms, tour scripts, emails, and phone conversations.</p> <p>Telling a mom of an infant that your program includes sign language is nice, BUT telling her that your program includes sign language SO THAT her child "can express themselves at an early age" is powerful! Now she can picture her child communicating and being more self-sufficient!</p> <p>Your school has extended hours just like the center down the street, but stating on your website or in your tours that you have extended hours "so that busy parents have more flexibility to get things done before or after work" helps parents imagine successful days!</p> <p>Use the power of "So That" across all your advertising platforms and online presence to stand out and to help prospects imagine how partnering with your school will make a difference in their family's lives!</p>
303	Enhance Children's Physical Development with 5 Basic Items Alisha Kriege	<p>Let's face it – equipment is expensive, and children are tough on equipment, so it breaks. But what if I were to tell you about 5 core items that are affordable and impactful for children's physical development? This session will take you through 15-20 different activities and learning opportunities using only 5 items that will allow you to focus on children's physical development. We will focus on 4 areas of physical development: Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Balance, and overall Perceptual Skills.</p> <p>Through these activities, your children will not only challenge themselves and learn, but they will have increased focus in the classroom and a growth of self-confidence as they master new skills. Lastly, this session will be hands-on, interactive and engaging for all that attend because there is no better way to learn than doing.</p>
304	The Domino Effect Brandon Howard	This session will examine how the selection of your commercial real estate agent can impact your childcare center's viability, profitability, and ability to hire and retain qualified staff. Join commercial real estate leasing specialist Brandon Howard as he takes you on a journey from suburbia to the urban core while sharing insight on how some of what ails the childcare industry may have solutions in real estate.

305	<p align="center">Yes! Professionalism Needs to Be Taught Dawn Martini</p>	<p>This session's primary focus is to encourage, among Direct Care Staff, the notion of professionalism. We want the Direct Care Staff to consciously think and act in all instances as the professionals this industry commands. Participants will be engaged in an interactive discussion to define "profession" and to reflect on how they can act personally to promote a professional air. Participants will analyze their corporate culture, including policies, practices, and procedures, and implement changes as needed to reflect the desired professional culture. The latest developments and programs which are driving this movement, will also be presented. Controversial issues, including appearance, supervision, personal presentation, and behavior outside the center, will be discussed in relation to their impact on the quest for professional recognition.</p>
306	<p align="center">How to Support Your Staff in the Implementation of an Effective Curriculum Kate Sherrard & Kelly Harrison</p>	<p>Purchasing a curriculum can be very expensive. Frequently, teachers have little to no instruction on how to use that curriculum. Consequently, the teacher must spend extra time doing extra work (time=\$\$\$) to create lesson plans and find resources. Accountability then becomes an issue as well. Are you meeting the required state standards? Will the children be able to learn and thrive? In this session, we will explore the problems surrounding the improper implementation of a curriculum. How can you, as owners/administrators, help the teachers use the curriculum you have? What resources do they need? How can you save money/time by providing the support they need to be successful? We will show you how to inspire your teachers to use your curriculum effectively and steer them in the right direction.</p>
307	<p align="center">Maximizing Your Executive Presence Donna Thornton-Roberts</p>	<p>Need greater composure and internal control in challenging situations or behaviors? Tenured leaders, those of us who have been in the business for more than 25 years, are facing a plethora of difficulties in leading a changing workforce that can be difficult and demanding. In this session, seasoned early learning leaders will review the 7 Traits of Executive Presence and discover how to utilize then leverage new skills to lead with confident composure. Elevating and engaging Executive Presence skills is necessary for overcoming the stresses, demands, and of an executive leadership position. If you have lost your joy or are on the brink of a premature exit- please don't miss this session!</p>
308	<p align="center">Creating an AELL Affiliate Group in Your Community Lynette Galante, Kathy Feigley, Maria Hughes</p>	<p>"Community is about doing something together that makes belonging matter." (Brian Solis)</p> <p>Having a community of peers who support your leadership is essential to success in our field. AELL is committed to providing this opportunity for connection through AELL Affiliate Groups. This informative session with leaders of our long-standing affiliate, New Jersey Child Care Association (NJCCA), will share the affiliate platform and strategies for building a local ECE leaders' network that promotes advocacy, learning, and community with the support of the Association and its resources and benefits.</p>

SESSION FOUR ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS | 10:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Join us for an engaging and interactive conference experience featuring Roundtable Breakout Sessions! These sessions are designed to facilitate in-depth discussions on various topics of interest to ECE leaders. It's an excellent opportunity to connect with peers, share insights, and explore common challenges and opportunities unique to your region.

Participants will have the opportunity to choose a breakout session based on their topic of interest. Each session will be led by industry experts and facilitators, fostering a collaborative environment for meaningful conversations and knowledge sharing.

401	Accreditation with the National Accreditation Commission
402	Advocacy
403	Coaching & Mentoring

404	Finance
405	Hiring & Recruitment
406	Legal & HR
407	Parent Engagement
408	Team Dynamics

MUNCH & MINGLE - LUNCH WITH THE EXHIBITORS | 12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

Join us for this opportunity to network with our outstanding conference exhibitors and conference participants over complimentary lunch. Remember, these are the people who work hard to support your role as a leader and the implementation of your programs. They want to know you and know how to help you!

BREAKOUT SESSION FIVE | 1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

501	<p align="center">Elevating Excellence: Multi-Unit Leadership in Childcare From a 10,000-Foot View Rachel Supalla</p>	<p>In the dynamic realm of multi-site childcare ownership, mastering the intricacies of operations, strategic planning, and brand buy-in becomes crucial. This immersive session is dedicated to empowering multi-unit leaders to navigate these challenges with finesse and foresight. Join Rachel Supalla and learn from her years of running multiple locations and scaling as she teaches you from her mistakes and successes.</p> <p>By the end of this session, you'll walk away equipped with actionable insights, a refreshed perspective, and proven strategies to elevate your leadership game. Whether you're scaling up, refining operations, or aiming to bolster your brand's presence, this is a must-attend for all aspiring and seasoned multi-unit childcare leaders. Join us to lead with excellence from the grand expanse of the 10,000-foot view.</p>
502	<p align="center">Transforming Your Triggers: 6 Simple Steps for Hijacking Reactions and Crafting Intentional Responses Carla Tyrrell</p>	<p>Participants will explore conscious & subconscious reactions and identify their personal triggers. We will simulate teacher/child interactions and practice learning opportunities through Cara's 6 step process for choosing a response to match the situation, the student, and the desired outcome. Participants will leave 1. With a new understanding of their triggers and the ability to observe them instead of unconsciously allowing them. 2. With a step-by-step process for bypassing triggers and choosing their response based on the intended outcome. 3 Able to apply their new knowledge and strategies to multiple areas of their work, including parent/teacher communication, teacher/student communication, and staff interactions.</p>
503	<p align="center">Helping Teams Build Bridges Instead of Walls Jennifer Romanoff</p>	<p>In this interactive workshop, participants will learn about techniques and activities that can be implemented with staff members to prevent conflict that occurs within the center before it can begin! Attendees will receive additional ideas on how to handle conflict and how to be a facilitator to help teachers help themselves when it comes to resolving issues. Just as we guide children, administrators will receive tips and tricks to guide their teachers in bringing about resolutions and solutions to struggles they may be experiencing with one another.</p>
504	<p align="center">Leaders Role in Managing Challenging Behaviors Prerna Richards</p>	<p>Many leaders of childcare centers are facing teacher turnover and burnout due to increased challenging behaviors and stress in early childhood programs. In this session, we will look at 5 factors that can help reduce the behaviors and reduce the levels of stress. After this session, directors will have the tools to look at their programs with fresh eyes to see where and how to make changes to support their teachers and, most importantly, the young children they are educating.</p>

505	Conflict Kaboom! Exploring Cognitive Distortions for Childcare Leaders Summer Picha	<p>Ever wondered why our brains sometimes play tricks on us, making us think the worst or jump to conclusions that just aren't true? Well, get ready for a mind-boggling journey through the world of cognitive distortions!</p> <p>In this lively presentation, we'll explore those sneaky thinking patterns that lead us to negative and often totally off-base conclusions. But fear not, because we're also going to learn how to spot and flip these distortions on their heads!</p> <p>And guess what? This knowledge isn't just for your own benefit. When you understand these mind tricks for yourself and others, you'll become a conflict-resolution master.</p>
506	Uncovering STEM in Early Childhood Education through Exploration, Play & Investigation Gabriella Hall	<p>This session will uncover how STEM learning can effectively and meaningfully be supported and facilitated in early childhood education. It will begin with an overview of specific Investigation-Based Teaching Practices (IBTPs) that educators and leaders can utilize to promote STEM learning across diverse early childhood educational settings. Gabriella will offer a comprehensive breakdown of STEM, the specific domains, and how children naturally engage in each, as well as specific ways educators can foster STEM through exploration, play, and investigation.</p> <p>The 'E' in STEM will be highlighted to introduce Kodo's Think, Make, and Improve (TMI) Design Process, which offers a systematic approach to solving problems. Each stage of the TMI Design Process will be broken down, and specific examples and powerful imagery will be provided to emphasize how young children can engage in this process-oriented, student-centered learning approach. Loose parts and material properties will also be included as a discussion topic to offer additional strategies and context to how STEM learning can effectively be integrated into early childhood education.</p>
507	Monkey Spotting - Keeping Tasks from Overwhelming Your Day Kathryn Woodward Young & Carrie Casey	<p>Running a program means doing 100 things on any given day. Managing all the tasks can be overwhelming. There are always at least 3 arenas of activities you need to manage. You are a ringmaster. You need a whip, some music, and talented lion tamers to keep everything moving along & safe. If you don't, the monkeys will get loose & cause mayhem...making it impossible for you to get your work done. Join this session to identify your monkeys, tiger time, lion tamers & soundtrack.</p>
508	F.U.N. (Foundation for Unique Nurturing) Dawn Brown	<p>By investing the time and energy to help your staff set and reach goals, you can turn your average employees into a team of superstars. By building a fun foundation of appreciation with your employees you will be building loyalty and trust. By building loyalty and trust, you will build a firm foundation of employees who want to stay and work for you for many years. In this class, participants will learn many activities to use with their staff to make them feel appreciated for a job well done.</p>

EXHIBITOR APPRECIATION HOUR - CALLING ALL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES! | 3:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

TRUTH: We couldn't do the excellent work we do without the support and advocacy of our vendors! They work hard to bring us the best in quality resources and customer service, and it's time to let them know how much we appreciate them! Join us as we close out our Exhibit Hall with tons of appreciation and celebration for our awesome conference vendors! There will be loads of fun, great door prizes, snacks, cash bar, and more!
 Everyone who attends will be entered into a drawing for a special gift valued at over \$500!

AMBASSADOR INFORMATION MEETING | 4:00 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.

The AELL Ambassador Team is the heart and hands extended of our amazing Association! They are the hosts with the most and work very hard to make our events both memorable and meaningful! If you are interested in how you can be part of this amazing volunteer group of experts and leaders, join us for this meeting to learn more!

ADVOCACY INFORMATION MEETING | 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Join AELL for a crucial conversation about advocacy in early childhood education. Discover effective strategies to amplify your voice and champion the significance of early education within your community.

OWNER & EXECUTIVES' HAPPY HOUR | 5:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.

Calling all executives & owners! Join us for networking and all the latest and greatest information about upcoming activities and resources!

DIRECTOR & LEADERS' HAPPY HOUR | 5:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.

Calling all directors! Join us for fun & networking as we connect with directors and leaders from all over the country! Make your new phone-a-friend here!

40th ANNIVERSARY "RED" GALA | 8:00 P.M. - 12:00 A.M.

This won't be just any karaoke and dance party. This will be THE karaoke and dance party of the century! Join us on the red carpet in your most fabulous red attire as we celebrate 40 years, yes, we said FORTY YEARS! of sharing this amazing early learning journey together. There will be singing, dancing, door prizes, snacks, cash bar, and so much fun!

SATURDAY, APRIL 20TH

CONNECT OVER BREAKFAST | 7:45 A.M. – 8:45 A.M.

Join us for our last day of conference with a complimentary breakfast!

BREAKOUT SESSION SIX | 9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

601	Accreditation Self-Study: The First Step to Joining Our Community of Quality! National Accreditation Commission Stephanie Resenbeck & Jacqui Schlosser	So, you are ready to begin the Accreditation process! Join this interactive session as we walk you through all the steps to get your program ready for this important step of self-reflection and overall program analysis. How do I fit this into my already busy schedule? Who needs to be involved? Who does what? We will answer all these questions and more in our interactive session. Let us join you in moving your team from intimidated to INSPIRED!
602	Supporting or Enabling? What's Your Management Style Resulting In? Miriam Dressler	Managing people is not always easy. It's tempting to jump in and 'help' – but sometimes it doesn't have the effect we were hoping for. In this session, we'll look at how helping is not necessarily helping and that using strategies like scaffolding can produce better outcomes for you and your employees.

603	<p align="center">Building a Financial Framework for Your Future Kathy Ligon</p>	<p>In the childcare industry, profit can sometimes be viewed as a bad word. But you cannot carry out your mission without financial stability. Quality and profitability aren't at odds with each other—you must be financially healthy and thriving to provide excellent care and education. So, in an industry that is difficult to manage with low-profit margins, how can you control costs to better serve the families in your care? Join HINGE Advisors Founder & CEO Kathy Ligon for an interactive session discussing healthy spending tactics for your childcare business. Kathy will cover current trends and challenges within the childcare industry as well as share her coveted financial tool—demonstrating what the average financially healthy school looks like in numbers and how your company can mimic that success.</p>
604	<p align="center">Birth Order & The Workplace: How and Why It Matters to How You Manage You and Your Team! Heather Torres</p>	<p>Firstborn? Only child? Middle child? Baby of the family? Find out what it means to you, your leadership, your relationships, and your team. This interesting and engaging session will unpack how powerful the birth order influences are, help you understand yourself, get along better with others, overcome ingrained tendencies you never thought you could get rid of, and be more successful in the workplace.</p>
605	<p align="center">The Art of Growing Leaders Lori Buxton</p>	<p>“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.” – Former CEO of GE, Jack Welch</p> <p>Of all the resources we steward as leaders, the most important by far is our people. Every plan, goal, and dream we have for our programs, our team, and the children they serve depends on our ability to grow, equip, and support inspired and invested leaders. This session with Lori Buxton, arguably the "peoply-est" person on the planet, will identify the leaders on your team (hint...it rhymes with shmeveryone), discuss what people development really is, and guide you toward a workable plan to grow exceptional leaders throughout your team.</p>
606	<p align="center">Delegate to Motivate: Building Your Bench Jennifer Romanoff</p>	<p>In this interactive and humorous session, participants will discuss the stress involved when trying to assign daily tasks to others. Through group discussions and some friendly debate, we will investigate both the benefits and potential disadvantages of delegating tasks to others. Additionally, attendees will create a list of the overwhelming tasks that must be completed monthly, weekly, and even daily while running a successful early learning center. (A self-assessment of non-negotiable responsibilities will be generated, and some true reflection will play a part in breaking down the barriers to delegation.) Come laugh, take an honest look at your A-type personality of having to do everything "right," and start to break down your barriers to delegation!</p>
607	<p align="center">Stop Turnover - Recruiting Today's Workforce and Discovering Why People Quit Donna Thornton-Roberts</p>	<p>A successful early learning center pivots on a director's skill in leading, managing, and recruiting a great team to create exceptional children's programs! Just imagine the UTOPIA of leading teams that are reliable, skilled, experienced, mature, kind, friendly, trained, dedicated, and unified, but our reality is very different! Today's directors are struggling to recruit and retain new staff members. This mayhem has caused extreme stress in competing for employees, increasing entry wages, and managing the revolving door with new hires who quit within 90 days of being hired. In this session, directors will discuss the primary reason why staff quit, review proven HR strategies to increase retention in childcare, and examine the critical On-Boarding HR tools that will help stop excessive turnover.</p>
608	<p align="center">Understanding School Safety and Security Samuel Slater and Guy Beveridge</p>	<p>Understanding and developing the proper methodology for school security can completely change a scenario. Knowing what to look for and how to react builds muscle memory and the confidence to work through real-life scenarios.</p>

CLOSING CONFERENCE KEYNOTE | 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Closing Keynote |
Lisa Murphy

Lisa Murphy has been involved in early childhood education for over 30 years. She has written five books, produced numerous training videos, serves on several early childhood advisory boards, lectures both domestically and internationally, is a frequent guest on many early childhood podcasts, and is the founder and CEO of Ooey Goey, Inc.

In 2013 she received a Master's in Early Childhood Education from Champlain College, in 2018, she received the Patricia Monighan Nourot Award for Play Advocacy from NAEYC's Play, Policy and Practice Interest Forum, in 2020, her book, Lisa Murphy On... Being Child Centered was nominated for "Best in Education" by Midwest Book Awards, and in 2022 she was awarded the "Doctor of Play" award by the U.S. affiliate of the International Play Association.

As an outspoken play advocate, Lisa is known for her commitment to creating child-centered, play-based early childhood environments and her fierce protection of childhood. Her seminars are humorous, energetic, content-rich, and inspiring.