

***Where the “Heartland and Heart Work” Intersect!***

**2024 REGION VII HEAD START ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**June 4-6, 2024 • 6/3 reserved for pre-track sessions**

Sheraton Hotel, Overland Park, KS



**Region VII Head Start Association**

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# Where the “Heartland and Heart Work” Intersect!

## 2024 REGION VII HEAD START ANNUAL CONFERENCE

We're excited that you've chosen to join peers and colleagues as we come together and experience an interactive collaborative week of professional development opportunities with sessions designed to promote innovation, develop capacity for shared/inclusive leadership, build strong and resilient teams, while recognizing and elevating everyone's human potential.



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# Hotel information

## Sheraton Overland Park Hotel at the Convention Center

6100 College Boulevard, Overland Park, Kansas 66211

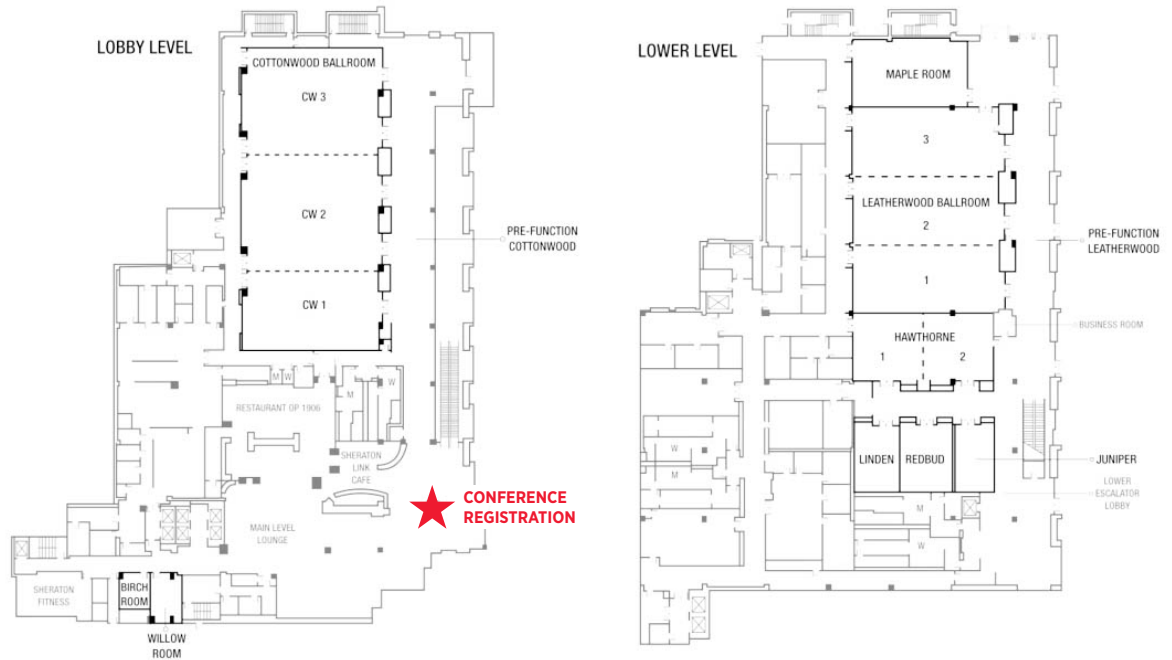
36.1 Miles to Kansas City International Airport

**Guest room reservation link:** *Room block closes May 15th*

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1688068727410&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

### Amenities:

Business center • Fitness center • Free high-speed internet  
Meeting event space • Parking • Pet friendly • Pool



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# Conference Highlights

## Region VII Annual Award Recognition & Celebration Luncheon

June 4th 12:00 – 1:30pm

### Regional Spotlight

- Region VII Office of Head Start:  
Clarence Small M.Ed., Regional Program Manager
- Administration for Children and Families,  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & Team
- Dignitaries to be announced
- Region VII Office of School Readiness,  
Administration for Children and Families
- Region VII Training & Technical Assistance Team

### Announcing a Special NHTSA visit

Blair Hyatt, Senior Director of State Affairs,  
National Head Start Association

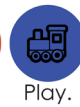
### Renowned Keynote Speakers

- Dr. Robert Lemon, Professional Speaker,  
Author and Entrepreneur
- Anne Meeker Watson, Ph.D., MT-BC,  
renowned Music Therapist & Author

Robert Lemon



Sing.



Play.



Love.

### National Center stand-alone sessions and tracks delivered by

- National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety (NCHBHS)
- National Center on Program Management Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO)
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE)

### More than 36 Topic-focused Breakout Sessions

presented by Region VII program staff and  
content area experts from across the country



### 2025 60th Anniversary Celebration Kick off

“Unveiling of the *Head Start 60th Birthday Toolkit*”

“Peer Colleague Meet-ups” (per attendee request from past event surveys)

**Back by Popular Demand** Craig Cable, Safety and Security Consultant and  
Trainer (see pre track sessions for more information)

### Exhibit Gallery

- Exhibit Walk-about Reception: Tuesday, June 4th (4:30 – 6:30pm)

### Region VII Head Start Association Annual Meeting

June 5 (4:45 – 5:30pm) Hosted by your R7HSA Board of Directors

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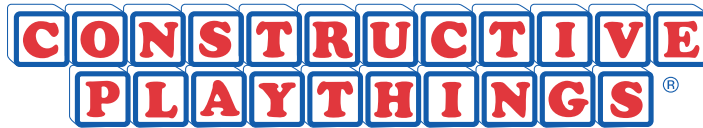


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# *Thank you* to our **CONFERENCE SPONSORS**

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[bukaty.com](http://bukaty.com)

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**BRONZE** PARTNER



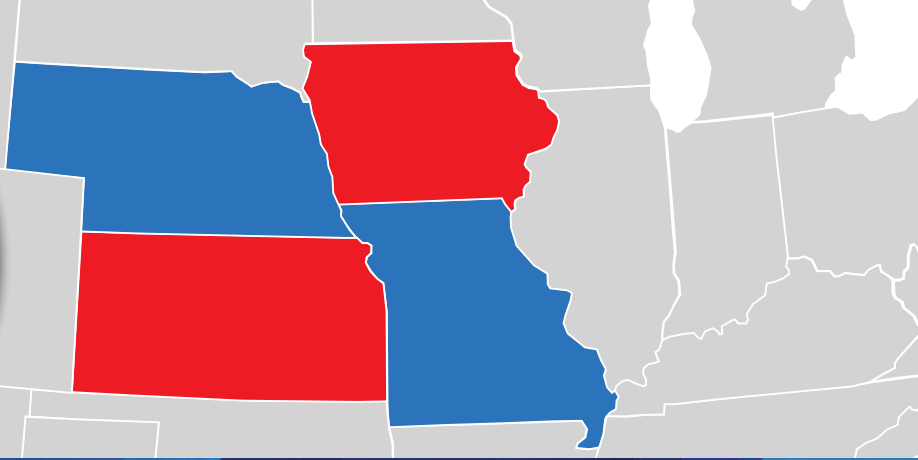
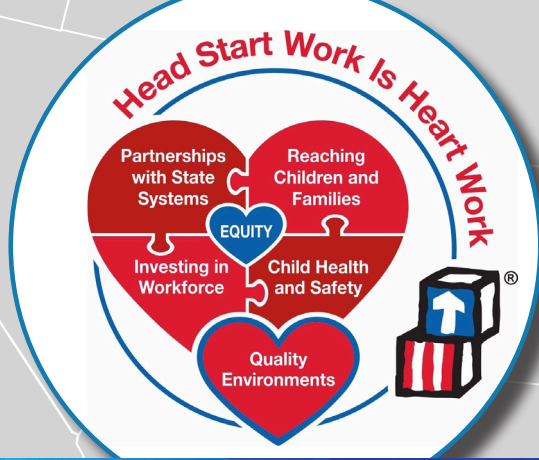
[learning-genie.com](http://learning-genie.com)

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**Region VII — Iowa • Kansas • Missouri • Nebraska**  
**Where the “Heartland and Heart Work” intersect!**

**2024 REGION VII HEAD START ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

*Preliminary Schedule at a Glance (Subject to change)*

**MONDAY, JUNE 3**

8:30am – 4:30pm  
 9:00am – 3:30pm  
 4:00 – 6:00pm

**Pre-Track Session attendees arrive!**

Registration Opens  
 Pre-Track Conference Sessions *(separate registration & fee required)*  
 R7HSA Board Meeting

**TUESDAY, JUNE 4**

8:00am – 5:00pm  
 8:00 – 9:00am  
 8:30 – 9:30am  
 10:00 – 11:30am

Registration Open/Exhibit Gallery Open  
 Coffee/Tea/Pastries  
 State Groups  
 Opening General Session • Office of Head Start  
 Welcome: Clarence Small M.Ed, Regional Program Manager  
 Administration for Children and Families  
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & other Dignitaries

12:00 – 1:30pm  
 1:45 – 3:15pm  
 3:30 – 4:30pm  
 4:30 – 6:30pm

Scholarships and Awards Luncheon  
 Breakout Sessions:  
 Peer Networking Group Meetings  
 Exhibit Walk-About Reception

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5**

8:00am – 5:00pm  
 8:00 – 9:30am  
 10:00 – 11:30am  
 11:30am – 1:00pm  
 11:30am – 1:00pm  
 1:00 – 2:30pm  
 2:30pm  
 3:00 – 4:30pm  
 4:45 – 5:30pm

Registration/Exhibit Gallery Open  
 Breakout Sessions  
 Breakout Sessions  
 Lunch Break (on your own)  
 Region-State Meet up luncheon (invite only)  
 Breakout Sessions  
 Break  
 Breakout Sessions  
 Region VII Head Start Association  
 Annual Meeting

**THURSDAY, JUNE 6**

8:00am – 1:00pm  
 8:00 – 11:00am  
 8:30 – 10:00am  
 10:15am – 12:00pm  
 12:00pm

Registration Open  
 Exhibit Gallery Open  
 Breakout Sessions  
 General Closing Session  
 Attendees depart

**June 4-6, 2024**

6/3 reserved for pre-track sessions

Sheraton Hotel  
 Overland Park, KS

**Questions?**

Contact [Donna@R7HSA.com](mailto:Donna@R7HSA.com)  
 or call 816-718-2260



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# Featured Presenter

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**DR. ROBERT LEMON** is a renowned professional speaker and author, and has risen to prominence by delivering a high energy message which inspires people to take responsibility for their lives and live up to their greatness. A leading corporate and workforce, and community speaker, Robert combines the ageless tool of storytelling with a profound understanding of today's culture. For years thousands have been touched by his keynotes and trainings.

Recently, the prestigious *Hoinser Book and Magazine* honored Dr. Lemon among 100 Top Voice Global Thought Leaders of 2024.

Robert was selected by Legacy Magazine, published in the Miami Herald honored as one of "South Florida's Most Powerful and Influential Business Leaders" of 2018.

In 2017, he was presented a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition. U S Representative Frederica S. Wilson. Florida's 24 Congressional District recognized his outstanding and invaluable service to the community.

Dr. Lemon shares his empowerment principles with numerous local and national organizations. Robert is a best selling and co-author of the book "*Multiple Streams of Inspiration*" with other celebrity authors



including Jack Canfield "*Chicken Soup for the Soul*" with forewords by Les Brown and Zig Ziglar. Robert is the author of his newest book, "*Now Is Your Time*" with foreword written by Les Brown and testimonial by Willie Jolley, and is now in print.

In 2011, Robert was selected as the "Author of the Year" by Advantage Media / Forbes Books from a field of 1500 corporate authors.

In 2013 Robert earned his Doctorate Degree in Religious Education. Robert has been recognized for achieving and surpassing goals in customer service, sales, and has over 35 years of corporate experience from the US Postal Service and leadership from the US Air Force.

A Head Start student success, Dr. Lemon has presented for numerous Head Start and Community Action Partnership conferences.

**“ Experience the Passion, Feel the Power,  
and Live the Purpose with Dr. Robert Lemon**

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## Contact info:

P.O. Box 171802, Miami, FL 33017  
rrobertlemon@aol.com • 800-319-7919  
robertlemon.com  
facebook.com/robert.lemon.543  
youtube.com/user/robertlemon

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# Featured Session

Tuesday, June 4th • 10:00am

Opening General Session



## *Head Start Is Heart Work in the Heart Land*

**Dr. Robert Lemon**

Now is the time to Make A Difference. Focusing on the conscience choices we make everyday that impact the lives of others. Each of us has the potential to transform the culture of an organization through our actions and attitudes. Organizations allocate a large amount of their marketing budget dedicated to building a positive and trustful relationship with the public. They think carefully about the type of

customer that they wish to attract, the image their brand portrays, and how they communicate the benefits of their products and/or services to potential customers. Head Start is Heart work in the Heart Land. Everything you do that is customer service is essential: every phone call, every email, and every face-to-face interaction with a customer is the motivation behind Making a Difference in this presentation.

## Wednesday, June 5

### Breakout Session: **Teamwork Makes The Dream Work**

**(Team Building) “We may not have it all together , Together we have it all”**

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm • Location: Cottonwood 1

“We may not have it all together , Together we have it all” Learning how to effectively work together is progress, keeping together is success. Learn to choose activities, establish and support your organization’s mission, vision and strategic goals. Participants will also address challenges in the workplace because of poor planning, eliminate communication distractions and focus on not just personal but also team goals. Choosing right over wrong, ethics over convenience and truth over popularity will allow team goals to be accomplished. Team members can be successful in the workplace if everyone can concentrate on their own performance and behavior, not that of their counterparts. Teamwork helps most people listen, observe, and respond positively without defending their productivity or performance. If you grow your people through these timeless principles, when applied in your own life and the life of your organization, Teamwork will make the Dream work.



# Featured Presenter

**ANNE MEEKER WATSON, Ph.D., MT-BC** is the founder of the *SING.PLAY.LOVE.* program. Through her writing, product development, and workshops, she shares information about the benefits of music and play to support early learning and kindergarten readiness and gives easy and practical strategies for embedding both into the daily lives of young children. Her program is being used all over the country and across the globe, most recently making its debut in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Anne has taught music to students from preschool through college levels. She received the *Excellence in Teaching* award given by the *Learning Exchange, Kansas City Chamber of Commerce*, and the *Kansas City Star*. She was a commission member of the *Vision 2020 Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education* sponsored by the Music Educators National Conference.

Anne's specific research interest is the use of music for helping with the social-emotional and communication skills of young children. She was invited to share her work on social-emotional development at the National Training Institute Addressing Young Children with Challenging Behaviors.

Her research on music to support early language was published in the *International Journal for Research in Music Education*. She is the author of the popular *Baby Sing & Sign* book series (Perseus Books Group) and *SING & SIGN for Young Children: A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals* (Brookes Publishing, 2021).



Anne is a frequent trainer and presenter across the country, including conference presentations for the National Center for Parents as Teachers, National Head Start Association, Division of Early Childhood, Zero to Three, NAEYC Institute, the National Association for Music Education, and the American Music Therapy Association.

Her music for children earned National Association of Parenting Publications and Parent's Choice Honors awards.

She enjoys kayaking, snacking, and camping with her husband, Phil, and their two dogs. You will often find her dancing and belting the song "Uptown Funk" in her kitchen while baking bread. And, importantly, she believes the world would be a much better place if everyone would just take an afternoon nap.

## Contact info:

Anne@singplaylove.com • 816-225-4357  
Meeker Creative LLC  
6023 Wyandotte, Kansas City, Missouri 64113  
[vimeo.com/showcase/4737810/embed](https://vimeo.com/showcase/4737810/embed)



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# Featured Session

Thursday, June 6th • 10:30am



## *Just Seven Skills*

What are the essential skills for preparing children to succeed in school and in life?

**ANNE MEEKER WATSON, Ph.D., MT-BC**

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the ways many parents and children interact. Combined with an increase in the amount of time both children and their parents spend utilizing devices, the loss of face-to-face interactions has also impacted a child's ability to master important early learning of social-emotional skills.

Consequently, numerous early childhood professionals are reporting an increase in challenging behaviors and escalations in the young children they serve. This reality impacts job satisfaction and has likely resulted in a reduction in the work force in settings serving young children. Many early childhood professionals report feeling overwhelmed and overworked.

Now more than ever, early childhood education requires a reset.

“Just Seven Skills” is a framework developed by Dr. Anne Meeker Watson, music therapist and early interventionist, that distills learning outcomes to a scope and sequence that includes seven key social-emotional skills.

“Just Seven” allows an early childhood professional to teach deeply and provides age-appropriate strategies and materials for teaching every skill to every child as they grow. Teachers utilize engaging picture books, fun songs, and play-filled learning activities across the day, providing engaging opportunities to master the content and skills.

By pairing the preferred activities of young children – music, books, play – with natural opportunities to teach skills across the day, teachers can add JOY and intentional teaching of foundational social-emotional skills to their relationships with children.

## Wednesday, June 5

### Breakout Session: **“Where The Wild Things Are”**

**Songs and Strategies to Support Young Children with Challenging Behaviors**

Time: 1:00 – 2:30pm • Location: Leatherwood 3

Songs and Strategies to Support Young Children with Challenging Behaviors. Discover how to blend intervention and prevention to help children who exhibit challenging behaviors, while guiding all children toward self-regulation, friendship skills, and emotional literacy. Anne will describe ways music- and play-based strategies can support the work of teachers desiring to implement a program of social-emotional learning that aligns with a variety of curricula, standards, and philosophies. Learn how to build supportive relationships with all children as you teach the social and emotional skills children need most to learn and grow.

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# Featured Pre-track Presenter

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## Craig Cable

Safety and Security  
Consultant and Trainer

Craig is a risk management expert who provides safety and security consulting and training for schools, corporations, and nonprofits around the country.

In addition to Craig's safety and security experience, he is a sworn peace officer serving as a Reserve Deputy at the Larimer County Sheriff's Office located in Fort Collins, Colorado. As a member of law enforcement, he not only protects Larimer County's citizens as a volunteer patrol deputy but also county schools as a school marshal and certified School Resource Officer. He is an instructor for the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), which specializes in de-escalating individuals who are a potential danger to themselves, and/or others.

Craig has an extensive training background which includes active shooter response training through the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training program. He is a Threat Liaison Officer who works closely with the FBI to identify potential threats against schools and critical



infrastructure in Larimer County. He is also an NRA-certified firearms instructor, Range Safety Officer, and tactical trauma trainer. Craig has trained hundreds of security team leaders, community volunteers, and individuals working in schools, places of worship as well as numerous public settings.

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**BACK AT YOUR REQUEST!** Region VII Head Start Association is excited to announce that Craig Cable, Safety and Security Consultant and Trainer is returning to Region VII! For those of you who missed Craig's presentation at the 2023 Fall Caucus or those of you who left asking for more, Craig is coming back! Although none of us want to ever be faced with a situation that threatens harm to staff, our children and their families, R7HSA is committed to bringing you quality safety training sessions in alignment with the Region VII "Safe in Hand" Initiative.

A disturbing side note that speaks to the importance of being prepared and developing situational awareness techniques, a school shooting (not Head Start) occurred the very day Mr. Cable left the Caucus and flew out of the KCI airport.

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## Contact info:

ccable@americanchurchgroup.com • 303-590-9657 • 877-794-2330  
americanchurchgroup-colorado.com

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# Pre-Track Sessions

Monday, June 3rd

9:00 – 11:30am and 1:00 – 3:30pm • Location: Cottonwood 1



## *The Time is Now: Safety First* De-escalation Training (2 part session)

**Craig Cable**

Safety and Security Consultant and Trainer

This two-part training session will focus on equipping you with best practices and core principles for de-escalating potentially volatile situations. Together, we'll address the increase in incidents involving mental illness and the unique considerations for helping to keep the individual, yourself, and others safe.

Don't miss the opportunity to join this important session and continue sharpening your skillset in the area of de-escalating a potentially dangerous situation. I promise, you will leave feeling empowered!

Topics covered:

- Addressing the mental health crisis
- Recent incidents
- De-escalation best practices
- Core principles of de-escalation
- Live scenario-based training
- Learning how to lead your own scenario training

## Safety in Region VII is our first priority!



No matter your HS/EHS role, some aspect of a child's life is in your hands. Keep them safe!

Visit the R7HSA Marketplace for *Safe in Hand* merchandise!

[r7hsa-marketplace.creator-spring.com/](https://r7hsa-marketplace.creator-spring.com/)

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# Pre-Track Sessions

Fee-based sessions  
Lunch provided

## Monday, June 3rd

### **Supporting Social and Emotional Needs while Addressing Challenging Behaviors: Morning session: Using the Big 5 Strategies to Prevent & Reduce Challenging Behaviors**

Time: 9:00 – 11:30am • Location: Cottonwood 2

Come learn and practice five evidence-based strategies that benefit all children and can reduce challenging behaviors in the classroom. Learn how to implement these to fidelity and how to embed this into your day. This training came out of the research for Prevent Teach Reinforce for Young Children. While researchers were working with children using functional behavior analysis they realized over the course of the study they lost 20% of their sample to these instructional practices when they were implemented with fidelity. In this training we will look at these “big bang” successful teaching strategies, that are a foundational piece of the Pyramid Model training. We will explore and practice the strategies of: 5 positives to 1 negative, Schedules, Routines to the 3rd Power, Teaching Behavioral Expectations, and Teaching Social Emotional Skills.

*Presenters: Kelly Wilson, Janice Lee and Amittia Parker, National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety (NCHBHS)*

### **Supporting Social and Emotional Needs while Addressing Challenging Behaviors: Afternoon session: What To Do In The Interim: Strategies for Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behaviors**

Time: 1:00 – 3:30pm • Location: Cottonwood 2

Serious challenging behaviors present a difficult problem, particularly when they occur before assessments are conducted and a behavior support plan can be developed and implemented. In this session, we will discuss strategies for addressing disruptive and dangerous behaviors that occur in preschool classrooms and childcare settings. We will cover prevention and safety considerations, functional assessments, behavior support plans, and temporary intervention procedures that can defuse disruptive episodes in the interim periods before effective support plans can be implemented. Questions and participant discussion will be encouraged.

*Presenters: Kelly Wilson, Aimee Ackley, Janice Lee and Amittia Parker, National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety (NCHBHS)*



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## **R7HSA Board Meeting**

4:00 – 6:00pm • Location: Hawthorne 1&2

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Tuesday, June 4th

**Regional & State Breakout Meetups**

Time: 8:30 - 9:30am

- RO Cottonwood 1
- IA Hawthorne 1
- KS Hawthorne 2
- MO Leatherwood 1
- NE Leatherwood 2



ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES



**Opening General Session**

Time: 10:00 - 11:30am • Location: Cottonwood 1 & 2

*Congratulations!*

**2024 REGION VII  
AWARD RECIPIENTS**

*Award Recognition  
Celebration Lunch*

**Tuesday, June 4th • 12:00 - 1:30pm  
Cottonwood 1 & 2**

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# Tuesday, June 4th • Breakout Sessions

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## Teamwork Makes The Dream Work

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm • Location: Cottonwood 1

“We may not have it all together – Together we have it all.” Learning how to effectively work together is progress, keeping together is success. Learn to choose activities, establish and support your organization’s mission, vision and strategic goals. Participants will also address challenges in the workplace because of poor planning, eliminate communication distractions and focus on not just personal but also team goals. Choosing right over wrong, ethics over convenience and truth over popularity will allow team goals to be accomplished. Team members can be successful in the workplace if everyone can concentrate on their own performance and behavior, not that of their counterparts. Teamwork helps most people listen, observe, and respond positively without defending their productivity or performance. If you grow your people through these timeless principles, when applied in your own life and the life of your organization, Teamwork will make the Dream work.

*Presenter: Dr. Robert Lemon, renowned speaker, author and entrepreneur*

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## Putting Heart into Practice: Customizing Early Childhood Education for Each Child

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm • Location: Leatherwood 1

In our Heart Work, we get to be on the frontlines of supporting children’s success where every child’s journey is honored and nurtured. In this presentation we will explore the essentials for fostering meaningful growth and development in young learners. Join us as we explore the importance of recognizing where children stand on the developmental continuum, and identifying approaches that support home-based and center-based educators with individualization.

*Presenters: Bethanie Grass, Early Childhood Specialist, Region VII Head Start TTA, ICF; Loretta Skinner, Early Childhood Specialist, Region VII Head Start TTA*

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## Guiding Potentials: Our Own and Those of Others

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm • Location: Leatherwood 2

Imagine reaching your highest human potential and what that might model for others. Gaining awareness of ourselves – our strengths and blockages to our potential – can lead to a more heartened behavior to match your consciously chosen way of being – indeed your potential. Researched strategies presented guide you in embracing this.

*Presenter: Janet Humphryes, M.A., Dynamic Coaching Systems*

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## Rev It Up or Calm It Down: Trauma-Informed Regulation Strategies for Every Body

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm • Location: Leatherwood 3

Stress has a deep impact on how infants, young children and adults are able to regulate their internal systems. Lack of regulation often shows up in or through behavior. This interactive session uses trauma- informed practices to deepen our understanding and strengthen our support of regulation skills across a variety of settings. Explore various regulation stations (e.g., calming corners and contained energy zones) with various sensory-based tools that can be used to promote regulation in classrooms, at home, and everywhere in- between.

*Presenters: Amittia Parker, Robert Harris; National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety (NCHBHS)*

# Tuesday, June 4th • Breakout Sessions

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## Family Fusion: Empowering Engagement and Embracing Diversity

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm • Location: Hawthorne 1

This session presents a four-stage, problem-solving model used to increase family engagement with attention to diverse populations. We discuss how Continuous Quality Improvement processes can be used to significantly increase family engagement and embrace diverse populations. Participants will understand how data can be used to track and increase family engagement and develop their own engagement plan.

*Presenter: Rachel Parsons-Head Start Consultant, Learning Genie*

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## Beyond Compensation: Burnout, Intent to Leave, and ECE Workforce Wellbeing

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm • Location: Hawthorne 2

Longstanding challenges faced by the early care and education workforce include perennially low wages and high turnover rates. In a recent research study, Head Start grantees completed surveys and focus groups, allowing for exploring the complexity of factors contributing to well-being over and above compensation.

*Presenters: Dr. Paula Thompson, Associate Professor, University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK); Alexandra Daro, Research Specialist, Buffett Early Childhood Institute; Kate Sutton, Senior Research Specialist, Buffett Early Childhood Institute; Kristen Cunningham, Research Specialist, Buffett Early Childhood Institute*

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## Data-Informed Decision Making

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm      Location: Maple Room

What data do programs need most to inform decisions? Take a deep dive into the data and evaluation management system during this engaging session. We will identify strategies for effectively preparing, managing, and utilizing data. We will also demonstrate effective skills to analyze data and improve services, as well. Learn how to identify the data you need to turn intuition into grounded, data-informed decisions.

*Presenters: Ametta Reaves, Elsa Hernandez and Nicole Holman-Alexander National Center on Program Management Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO)*

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## Head Start 60th Anniversary Toolkit

Time: 1:45 – 3:15pm • Location: Juniper Room

In May 2025, Head Start will celebrate 60 years of service to the nation's youngest children and their families. The Region VII Head Start Association has created a digital toolkit to support state and program planning of birthday celebrations with ease. Attendees will see a demonstration of the toolkit features, have time to explore the digital resources, and ask questions about the toolkit. Join us as we unveil the Region VII Head Start 60th Birthday Toolkit and begin planning for upcoming celebrations!

*Presenter(s): R7HSA Board of Directors*



Tuesday, June 4th

## Peer Networking Group Meet-ups

Time: 3:30 – 4:30pm

- Management Teams/Governing Body
  - Education
  - Social Services-ERSEA, etc.
  - Transportation-Facilities
  - Health Specialists
  - Parent Groups-Policy Council
- Leatherwood 1  
Leatherwood 2  
Hawthorne 1  
Maple Room  
Hawthorne 2  
Juniper Room

## Exhibit/Walk-About Reception

Time: 4:30 – 6:30pm • Pre-function areas

*Relax with your Head Start family, mingle with our event exhibitors, and enjoy assorted appetizers and beverages.*



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# Wednesday, June 5th • Breakout Sessions

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## Fiscal/Grants (3-hour session with 30-minute break)

Time: 8:00 – 11:30am • Location: Cottonwood 1

The fiscal/grants session will include a Review of OHS-PI-24-01 (SF425 and SF428 reporting), discussion on the updated OHS Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award, preview the Uniform Guidance crosswalk of Part 75 to Part 200, and an important discussion regarding financial reporting requirements and the treatment of unobligated balances (de-obligation, offset, carryover).

*Presenters: Jennifer Curtiss, Grants Management Officer, School Readiness, Administration for Children and Families; Stefanie Gordon, Director, School Readiness Grants, Office of Grants Management, Administration for Children and Families*

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## The Employee Experience Journey (Workforce Track Session 1)

Time: 8:00 – 9:30am • Location: Leatherwood 1

“Every interaction, every moment that employees have with your brand influences whether they’ll stay with your organization.” Gallup, Inc. All the moments of an employee’s experience, from recruitment to departure, play a role in how a person feels about their workplace. These feelings affect employee engagement, performance, and retention. It pays for leaders to implement strategies that enhance employee perceptions of the workplace. Discover strategies to support recipients as they enhance the employee’s experience and create a culture of hiring, retention, and growth.

*Presenters: Ametta Reaves, Elsa Hernandez and Nicole Holman-Alexander National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO)*

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## Leveraging Professional Development to Support Career Pathways for Family Services Professionals

Time: 8:00 – 9:30am • Location: Leatherwood 2

Family services staff attend numerous professional development activities that support their work in your Head Start program. However, this critical part of our workforce has larger professional aspirations and career goals. The opportunity to scaffold these career goals alongside family services professionals builds human capital and positively impacts your recruitment and retention of qualified family services staff. Join the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) to discuss using existing professional development opportunities as a platform to identify career goals and support Family Services Professionals moving forward on their career pathway.

*Presenters: Juan Rodriguez, Alejandra Davis, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE)*

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## Co-Creating and Implementing Peer Coaching

Time: 8:00 – 9:30am • Location: Hawthorne 1

Using coaching skills to promote more effective communication is one way to respond to the current high needs of children, families and staff. Learn research-based practices to elevate thinking/action more systemically and generatively. Determine a beginning plan for transforming your program into a more responsive community with peer-coaching supports.

*Presenter: Janet Humphryes, M.A., Dynamic Coaching*

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# Wednesday, June 5th • Breakout Sessions

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## Conversations that Help: Using Motivational Interviewing Strategies (3 hours)

Time: 8:00 – 11:30am • Location: Leatherwood 3

In this two part workshop, we will explore challenges in engaging families for their health and well-being, and strategies to build positive relationships and have better interactions. Motivational interviewing will be shared as an approach and strategy in facilitating conversations that can be more helpful.

- Gain increased understanding of factors that may make it difficult for staff and families to engage in support
- Gain strategies for improving their ability to develop positive relationships between staff and families
- Gain strategies for having more-helpful conversations that facilitate growth

*Presenter: Amittia Parker, National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety (NCHBHS)*

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**\*REPEATED SESSION\*** see page 14 for description

## Beyond Compensation: Burnout, Intent to Leave, and ECE Workforce Wellbeing

Time: 8:00 – 9:30am • Location: Hawthorne 2

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## Lost and Found: A Personal and Professional Journey to Transformation

Time: 8:00 – 9:30am • Location: Maple Room

Adults need deeper connections and relationships to navigate their day to day lives. What would it look like if every staff member in your program functioned at their highest capacity? Come hear about a Head Start Programs journey to success and transformation.

*Presenters: Jason Mercer, Early Learning Coach; Amber Buchheit, Director of Early Childhood Education, Youth In Need*

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**\*REPEATED SESSION\*** see page 15 for description

## Head Start 60th Anniversary Toolkit

Time: 8:00 – 9:30am • Location: Juniper Room

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## Fiscal/Grants (continued)

Time: 10:00 – 11:30am • Location: Cottonwood 1

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# Wednesday, June 5th • Breakout Sessions

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## **A Place for Me: Dismissing Children from the Classroom**

Time: 10:00 – 11:30am • Location: Maple Room

In order to skillfully manage educational spaces, professionals need a delicate balance of consistency and compassion. Underlying the decision-making process lurks an evitable factor that cannot be shut off, but instead must be yielded with caution: bias. From very early ages, children of color, are being dismissed from their classrooms in higher numbers than the rest of their peers. How does this dismissal impact their trajectory? How does their dismissal also impact the viewpoints of the other.

### *Session Outcomes:*

1. Participants will learn how bias is active in the mind and then manifests in behaviors.
2. Participants will examine patterns of classroom policies that exclude groups of children.
3. Participants will dialogue on opportunities for inclusion.
4. Participants will gain strategies for confronting bias.

*Presenter: Dominique NC Lewis, MS, NC Planning and Consulting*

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## **Staff Wellness, Organizational Culture and Values (Workforce Track Session 2)**

Time: 10:00 – 11:30am • Location: Leatherwood 1

A healthy organizational culture is one that is collaborative, integrative, and responsive, resulting in engaged and inspired staff. When your employees' well-being is thriving, your organization directly benefits. Discuss systemic strategies that support and maintain a healthy organizational culture that contributes to staff well-being. Join us as we identify everyone's role in building a workplace that embraces the organization's culture.

*Presenters: Ametta Reaves, Elsa Hernandez and Nicole Holman-Alexander, National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO)*

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## **Supporting Head Start Programs with New Resources to Promote Family Economic Mobility**

Time: 10:00 – 11:30am • Location: Leatherwood 2

Have you been waiting excitedly for the new Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) toolkit to support family economic mobility? If so, this session is for you! You will have the opportunity to navigate through Family Economic Mobility (FEM) that meets staff members and leaders wherever they are in partnering with families on their family well-being goals. Join NCPFCE as we reveal the updated FEM Toolkit e-book designed to support family economic mobility basics. Explore hands-on resources to help you plan as you partner with families on their journey toward economic stability.

*Presenters: Juan Rodriguez, Alejandra Davis, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE)*

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# Wednesday, June 5th • Breakout Sessions

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## **It Starts With Us: Adult Regulation, the Change Agent in Trauma-Informed Care**

Time: 10:00 – 11:30am • Location: Hawthorne 1

Trauma-informed care is essential for providing the best possible education and care to children/families, but it's not always easy for those tasked with providing the services. Educators/caregivers must be able to recognize their own needs and cues before they can accurately and effectively meet the needs of others.

*Presenters: Jeannie Thurston, MS, LPC, CCTP-I, Trauma Smart-Crittenton Children's Center, Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City; LeAnn Keck, LCSW/RPT*

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## **Health Oriented Leadership: The Secret to Retaining Staff**

Time: 10:00 – 11:30am • Location: Hawthorne 2

Just as we are charged with serving the community of families and children, our leaders are also here to serve the staff who carry out the Head Start mission. Resources and mental health lead to positive outcomes for families as well as agency staff.

*Presenter: Amber Davis, MSIOP, Human Resources Manager, Drake University Head Start*

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## **Conversations that help: using Motivational Interviewing (cont.)**

Time: 10:00 – 11:30am • Location: Leatherwood 3

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11:30am-1:00pm (Lunch on your own)

11:30am-1:00pm **Regional-State Association Meetup** (invite only)

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## **Program Planning: A Discussion on Enrollment Reduction and Conversion Applications**

Time: 1:00 – 2:30pm • Location: Cottonwood 1

Community needs shift over time and for various reasons often indicating a need to adjust enrollment. This regional office program session will focus on enrollment reduction and conversion applications. Discussion will center on preparing the agency for submission of either the reduction or conversion application to include pre-planning, timeline, implementation, and service delivery model changes.

*Latrice Davis, Esq., Supervisory Program Specialist, OHS, Administration for Children and Families, Region VII, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

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## **Retention (Workforce Track Session 3)**

Time: 1:00 – 2:30pm • Location: Leatherwood 1

Great employee onboarding can improve employee retention by 82%; and new employees with good onboarding experience are 18x more committed to their employer. Yet, and interestingly, Gallup reports that only 12% of employees agree that their organization has a good onboarding process. Find out what is necessary for a “good” onboarding process.

*Presenters: Ametta Reaves, Elsa Hernandez and Nicole Holman-Alexander, National Center for Program Management and Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO)*

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# Wednesday, June 5th • Breakout Sessions

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## The Power of Reflection to Support Adult Regulation and Promote Wellness

Time: 1:00 – 2:30pm • Location: Leatherwood 2

Pandemic-related issues, political distress, negative media saturation, or just a regular Tuesday working in a program can lead to high levels of stress. Whether you supervise staff or receive supervision (or perhaps do both), there is much that can be learned about maintaining and encouraging wellness through reflective practice. The more skilled we become in finding our calm, the more effective our wellness practices will become, creating an impact on you, your relationships, and your work. Join this interactive session to explore reflective techniques and strategies to build reflective capacity, and adult self and co-regulation, which can be instrumental during challenging moments.

*Presenters: Amittia Parker, Robert Harris, National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety (NCHBHS)*

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## “Where the Wild Things Are” Songs and Strategies to Support Young Children with Challenging Behaviors

Time: 1:00 – 2:30pm • Location: Leatherwood 3

Songs and Strategies to Support Young Children with Challenging Behaviors. Discover how to blend intervention and prevention to help children who exhibit challenging behaviors, while guiding all children toward self-regulation, friendship skills, and emotional literacy. Anne will describe ways music- and play-based strategies can support the work of teachers desiring to implement a program of social-emotional learning that aligns with a variety of curricula, standards, and philosophies. Learn how to build supportive relationships with all children as you teach the social and emotional skills children need most to learn and grow.

*Presenter: Anne Meeker Watson, Ph.D., MT-BC, renowned music therapist & Author*

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## Head Start Horizon: Igniting Success through Conference Mastery

Time: 1:00 – 2:30pm • Location: Hawthorne 1

The Head Start horizon requires us to become innovative, but also very strategic with conference and staff In- Service planning. We are excited to share what our program has done and are now planning and celebrating our 10th Annual Conference in July! Conference and In-Service planning is key to building connections, spreading positive environments, and providing the most beneficial information to staff.

*Presenters: Kimberly Lackey- EHS/HS Director, NEK-CAP, Inc. Linda Grier- Data Manager*

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## A Community of Practice: Attachment vs. Authenticity. What's The Dilemma?

Time: 1:00 – 2:30pm • Location: Hawthorne 2

It's a two for one! Explore attachment and authenticity, reflecting upon self-awareness and fostering your personal development, while simultaneously participating in a Community of Practice, gaining understanding of how you can implement this style of professional development within your own program to co-construct learning, reflection, and change!

*Presenters: Amber Buchheit, Director of Early Childhood Education, Youth In Need, Early Learning Programs. Jason Mercer, Early Learning Coach*

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# Wednesday, June 5th • Breakout Sessions

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## **ERSEA – Using Data to Create a Successful Plan** (3 hour session)

Time: 1:00 – 4:30pm • Location: Maple Room

Bring your Community Assessment, Selection Priorities, Recruitment Plan and marketing materials. Come ready to engage in interactive discussions about best practices and innovative ways to reach children and families.

*Presenters: Kimberly Shinn-Brown, Teresa Sivils-Dickey, Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation (OACAC) Head Start Program*

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## **Community Contributions: A Discussion on Non-federal Share Match**

Time: 3:00 – 4:30pm • Location: Cottonwood 1

This regional office fiscal session will focus on non-federal share match information and explanations of fiscal issues such as contributions, allowable versus unallowable sources, documentation, in-kind, valuation and volunteer services. This session will also review the process for requesting a non-federal share match waiver.

*Presenter: Kaycie Bennett, Grants Management Specialist, School Readiness, Administration for Children and Families*

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## **Equity (Workforce Track Session 4)**

Time: 3:00 – 4:30pm • Location: Leatherwood 1

Nurturing Relationships between the Head Start Workforce and Families while Exploring Equitable Practices: The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework provides a road map for effective family engagement in program systems and services that promote positive and long-lasting outcomes for families, their children, and staff. At the same time, the opportunity to scaffold career goals alongside family services professionals also builds human capital and positively impacts recipients' recruitment and retention of highly qualified family services staff. In addition, the new "Equity Drivers" that strengthen family engagement are grounded in equity, inclusivity, and cultural and linguistic responsiveness which support all the interactions in the PFCE Framework Program Foundations and Program Impact Areas. Join NCPFCE in this session to discuss two of the five equity drivers our workforce can use to enhance relationships with parents and families through an equity lens.

*Presenters: National Center for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE), National Center for Program Management and Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO)*

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## **Positive Kindergarten Transitions for All Head Start Children and Families**

Time: 3:00 – 4:30pm • Location: Hawthorne 1

Head Start plays a key role in supporting positive kindergarten transitions and can partner with school districts and community partners to ensure success for all incoming kindergarten students. Head Start program staff will share their experiences identifying and implementing practical transition strategies.

*Presenters: Heather Schroberger, Executive Director, Kansas Head Start Association; Kimberly Kennedy, Director, Kansas Head Start Collaboration Office*

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# Wednesday, June 5th • Breakout Sessions

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## Can You Hear Me Now? ... How To Be A Better Listener

Time: 3:00 – 4:30pm • Location: Hawthorne 2

Listening is essential to building trust! Join us in this interactive session to assess and reflect upon ways we listen, define deep listening and how its elements can benefit all relationships and communication, and identify strategies & techniques to support our listening practices.

*Presenters: Amber Buchheit, Director of Early Childhood Education, Youth In Need, Early Learning Programs. Jason Mercer, Early Learning Coach*

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## NHSA Session on the NHSA Tool kit

Time: 3:00 – 4:30pm • Location: Leatherwood 2

Blair Hyatt, Senior Director of State Affairs of the National Head Start Association (NHSA) will be sharing information on the NHSA Advocacy Toolkit in this informative session. Plan to join Blair and learn about one of NHSA's highest priorities, building a national "Go Team" of advocate programs. Participants will join in a conversation focused on exploring ways we can continue to grow our capacity to fight for Head Start children and their families in 2024 and beyond.

*Presenter: Blair Hyatt, Senior Director of State Affairs, National Head Start Association*

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## ERSEA-Using Data to Create a Successful Plan (cont.)

Time: 3:00 – 4:30pm • Location: Maple Room

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## AmeriCorps Seniors, a natural partner for Head Start

Time: 3:00 – 4:30pm • Location: Leatherwood 3

AmeriCorps Seniors connects today's 55+ with the people and organizations that need them most. We help them become mentors, coaches, or companions to people in need, or contribute their job skills and expertise to community projects and organizations. Each year, AmeriCorps Seniors engages more than 200,000 older adults in volunteer service through its Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), Senior Companion Program (SCP), and RSVP, enriching the lives of volunteers and benefiting their communities. In this session with AmeriCorps North Central Region staff, participants will learn: - Details about AmeriCorps mission, opportunities, and how to partner with programs in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska - Foster Grandparents service sites, counties they serve in the 4-state region and the potential to partner with Head Start programs - RSVP service sites, the counties they serve in the 4-state region, and the potential to partner with Head Start programs.

*Presenters: Michael Laverty, Regional Administrator Sara Albright, Deputy Regional Administrator Daniel Cruz, Senior Portfolio Manager, Kansas/Nebraska Katia Tovmenko, Senior Portfolio Manager, Missouri*

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Wednesday, June 5th

## R7HSA Annual Meeting

Time: 4:45 – 5:30pm • Location: Cottonwood 2&3

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2024  
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# Thursday, June 6th • Breakout Sessions

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## Ongoing Monitoring - A Systems Lens

Time: 8:30 – 10:00am • Location: Leatherwood 1

Programs use data generated by ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement to measure program performance, identify areas of concern, and make immediate program corrections. Join us in this interactive session to explore the key components of these interrelated processes. We will share valuable tools and practices so that programs can improve ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement.

*Presenters: Ametta Reaves, Elsa Hernandez and Nicole Holman-Alexander, National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO)*

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## Sensory Emotional: Wiring the Brain for Success Through Sensory Experiences

Time: 8:30 – 10:00am • Location: Leatherwood 2

The connection between brain development and sensory experiences is well documented. This training will encourage participants to use a sensory lens when investigating the meaning of challenging behaviors and deciphering what those behaviors are trying to tell us. Participants will explore activities to meet those needs in fun, interactive and connection making ways.

*Presenter: Loree Beason, Mental Health Consultant, Heartland Early Education*

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## Male Caregiver Mental Health

Time: 8:30 – 10:00am • Location: Hawthorne 1

Join us to explore the unique needs and challenges of male mental health, especially as it relates to early child development and family outcomes. Participants can look forward to exploring connections between male mental health and child outcomes. We will explore stereotypes and bias that may influence male mental health, barriers and challenges, and also develop strategies that encourage positive mental health outcomes for male caregivers and those they care for. Learning Objectives: 1. To acknowledge the unique needs/impact of men's mental health in relation to early child development 2. To adopt and incorporate strategies that normalize support of men's mental health in Early Head Start & Head Start 3. To recognize the benefits of male inclusion in Head Start, Early Head Start in connection to positive mental health.

*Presenter: Robert Harris, National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety (NCHBHS)*

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## Understanding Lead (Community Lead Awareness)

Time: 8:30 – 10:00am • Location: Hawthorne 2

This session is designed for educators and community members interested in learning more about lead, its impacts, and actions that can reduce and prevent lead exposure. The following questions will be addressed throughout the session:

- What is Lead and what are some potential sources of exposure?
- Why should we be concerned about Lead?
- What can be done to reduce the potential of Lead exposure?

*Presenter: Marie Blankenship, EPA*

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# Thursday, June 6th • Breakout Sessions

## United We Teach: Strengthening Team Dynamics in Head Start

Time: 8:30 – 10:00am • Location: Maple Room

This presentation is focused on increasing workplace morale after COVID-19. This training focuses on the importance of morale, its impact on overall productivity, and specific strategies to boost morale in the post-pandemic workplace.

*Presenters: Stefanie Gardner, Education Coach, NEKCAP, Inc., Mary Alice Cooper, Education Manager; Karla Winterscheidt, Education Manager*

## Stress, Coping Skills, and Resilience

Time: 8:30 – 10:00am • Location: Leatherwood 3

“We often hear the terms “burnout” and “stress” used interchangeably, but they are not the same thing. Recognizing the difference is crucial, as addressing stress early can help prevent burnout. Participants will learn information on how to build resiliency to manage stress at work and at home, as well as some helpful resources for seeking help if needed.”

*Presenter: Mallory Gevertz, Community Prevention Coordinator, Johnson County Mental Health Center*

## Confronting Poverty

Time: 8:30 – 10:00am • Location: Cottonwood 1

Poverty is a living community issue that can feel close and distant at the same time. As advocates for children, Head Start leaders can have the best intentions to meet families with empathy yet feel inadequate to provide meaningful respite to families existing in crisis. In this workshop, safe discovery will be the goal as participants observe personal and social factors that contribute to the narrative of poverty. 1. Participants will discover how personal bias shapes community perspectives on poverty. 2. Participants will examine how the ripples of poverty impact children of young ages. 3. Participants will recall the regional tension of wages and costs of living. 4. Participants will dialogue on economics as an inflection point in continuity of care.

*Presenter: Dominique, NC Lewis, MS, NC Planning and Consulting*

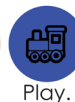
## Conference Closing Session

Time: 10:15am – 12:00pm • Location: Cottonwood 2&3

**ANNE MEEKER WATSON, Ph.D., MT-BC**  
Founder of the *SING.PLAY.LOVE.* program.



Sing.



Play.



Love.

***Don't miss this exciting and moving closing session!***

Dr. Anne will bring an important message as well as have you singing and dancing before you hit the road!

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# SAVE THE DATES!

## 2024 ANNUAL CAUCUS

*October 22-24, 2024*  
*(Pre-Tracks: October 21)*

*Announcing new location:*  
*Hilton Kansas City Airport*

**DETAILS COMING SOON!**



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