

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27

9:00 - 9:30 WELCOME AND OPENING KEYNOTE

99% A Human, 1% Amazing

Daryl Williams Jr.
Bon Secour I-III

This keynote is a powerful reminder that the greatest teaching tool you have is *you*. In a profession that often demands so much, *99% A Human, 1% Amazing* challenges educators to embrace their individuality, their unique abilities, and their purpose. Through personal storytelling, powerful insights, and real-world application, teachers will rediscover that they are not just *capable*, they are *called*. When you show up as your authentic self, you make the kind of impact no one else can. You are valued. You are appreciated. You are amazing.

10:30 - 11:00 BREAK AND EXHIBITORS

11:00 - 12:00 BREAKOUT SESSION A (60 min.)

Starting Small: Factors that May Impact Development of Young Children Born Extremely Preterm or with Extremely Low Birth Weight

Stephanie Anderson, M.D.
Audience: GENERAL Introductory-Intermediate
Bon Secour I

This session is designed to provide a better understanding of developmental differences commonly seen in young children with history of extreme prematurity or extremely low birth weight. Specific medical experiences and other factors are associated with increased risk of particular developmental issues. The goal of this session is to increase awareness of risks to early development and to enable service providers and caregivers to identify potential developmental differences as early as possible. Early identification of developmental differences can facilitate early delivery of services targeted to each child's individual developmental needs, improving long-term functioning.

From Early Intervention to Preschool: Facilitating Positive and Successful Transitions for Children and Families

Tabitha Perry; Kathy Wilkins; Amy Fisher; and Stephanie Bear, Ed. S., CCC-SLP
Audience: EI All levels
Bon Secour II

The Alabama Early Intervention System and the Alabama State Department of Education Special Education Services are joining forces to provide strategies that support a seamless transition for children with disabilities who have received early intervention services to their local education agency (LEA). The session will emphasize the significance of effective communication strategies, essential documentation,

transition meetings, and compliance procedures. Together, these organizations are committed to ensuring that all team members fully understand the transition process and the requirements established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Their collaboration is dedicated to fostering a smooth, positive, and successful experience for children and their families.

Supporting Emotional and Behavioral Regulation in Early Childhood Special Education Through Mindfulness-Based Strategies

Erica Lee, Ph.D.
Audience: EI, HVs, GENERAL Introductory-Intermediate
Bon Secour III

Young children with disabilities often experience challenges with emotional and behavioral regulation, which can impact their ability to engage in meaningful learning experiences. This session explores the use of mindfulness-based strategies to support young children's self-regulation to reduce challenging behaviors and increase engagement. Grounded in evidence-based research, this session is all about providing practical and accessible strategies that can be easily incorporated into daily routines.

Brushstrokes to Soundwaves: Unlocking Expression Beyond Words

Savannah Loudin
Audience: GENERAL All levels
Mobile Bay I-II

In this hands-on and heart-centered session, educators will explore adaptive approaches to art-making that empower every child, verbal or non-verbal, to express themselves. In collaboration with the groundbreaking creators of *Unspoken Symphony*, participants will learn how visual artwork can be transformed into personalized musical compositions, offering children a voice beyond words. Attendees will discover practical strategies for incorporating this free innovative technology in early childhood and inclusive settings and will engage in the process themselves by creating art and converting it into sound. This session will inspire new possibilities for emotional expression, connection, and accessibility in the classroom. *Art supplies provided for first 100 attendees.*

Preschool Classroom Management: Building a Community of Success!

Hannah Kennedy, Ph.D. and Kate Scarborough, Ph.D.
Audience: CLASSROOM Introductory
Mobile Bay III

In this interactive session, presenters will share practical tips for managing an inclusive preschool classroom. Presenters will share evidence-based practices and practical suggestions for

setting up the physical environment, collaborating with paraprofessionals, establishing consistent routines and procedures, and building a classroom community that supports all learners. Presenters will share resources and allow opportunities for collaboration among participants to share ideas, resources, and strategies for success. Presenters will include components of Conscious Discipline, Positive Behavior Supports, and Character Education.

Learning the Listening and Spoken Language Therapy Strategies for Communication Delays

Denise Wilkes; Kelli Ellis, CCC-SLP/LSLS Cert. AVT; and Natalie Baldwin, CCC-SLP/LSLS Cert. AVT

Audience: GENERAL *Introductory*
Grand Bay I-II

Come learn the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) speech therapy strategies typically used with children with hearing loss. These proven strategies can be easily incorporated into your family sessions to help all children with communication delays. This session will provide modeling and practice opportunities for all disciplines.

12:00 – 1:30 LUNCH (ON YOUR OWN)

1:30 – 3:00 BREAKOUT SESSION B (90 min.)

Research in Brain Development: Implications for Speech and Language Disorders

Lawrence Molt, Ph.D., CCC-A, CCC-SLP, FASHA, FAAA

Audience: SLPs *Introductory-Intermediate*
Bon Secour I

The goal of this seminar is to sensitize clinicians to the role that disruptions or abnormalities in brain development, either prenatal and/or postnatal, may play in many types of speech, language, and hearing disorders and the implications for diagnosis and treatment. A variety of examples are provided, from hormones affecting developmental patterns, specific genes that are implicated in a variety of communication disorders, and specific examples in autism spectrum disorders, childhood apraxia of speech, and stuttering.

Make it Work! Using Everyday Items from a Home to Create Language Building Opportunities

Natalie Baldwin, CCC-SLP/LSLS Cert. AVT; Kelli Ellis, CCC-SLP/LSLS Cert. AVT; and Denise Wilkes

Audience: EI, HVs, SLPs *All levels*
Bon Secour II

Families and service providers need real life tools that can help them build their child's language abilities. In this session we will explore everyday items and scenarios that are commonly found in homes and help turn them into activities that will enhance learning and language development. Let's learn how

to turn things around the house into brain building tools for language fun!

Early Intervention Service Coordinator Roundtable

Debra Florea and Shannon Foster

Audience: EI *Intermediate*
Bon Secour III

The Early Intervention Service Coordinator Roundtable is a collaborative forum designed to facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration among Service Coordinators involved in Early Intervention services.

Behavior Strategies for the Preschool Classroom

Christy McSpadden M.S., BCBA, LBA and Caitlyn Seipel

Audience: CLASSROOM *All levels*
Mobile Bay I-II

In this session we will discuss basic strategies for the preschool classroom to help with classroom management and develop a plan for behavior issues before they occur. We will learn how to develop and train paraprofessionals to be vital part of the classroom management plan.

Feeding Issues in Children Who are Blind

Jennifer Cantrelle, M.Ed.

Audience: EI *Introductory*
Mobile Bay III

We will discuss the relationship between eating and having enough energy to perform skills on the Matrix. We will also talk about the difference between blind and legally blind definitions as well as strategies to promote better eating habits. Attendees will have the opportunity to wear simulators (adapted glasses) to self-feed.

Nerve Ninja

Jessica D. Strickland, BSE, LICSW and Jennifer Street, LCSW-S

Audience: GENERAL *Introductory-Intermediate*
Grand Bay I-II

Ever had an experience that just made you feel out of control or unable to focus? What about working with others (client, child, parent, teacher, participant, etc.) who seemed out of control, distracted, and unable to regulate their minds, bodies or emotions, much less learn from what you were trying to share? Has saying "calm down" ever truly been effective? In this session, you will learn how to master control of your body and mind so you can regulate your emotions and be a more effective provider. You will also learn how to help others do the same, making your sessions more effective and "homework" completion and follow through more likely.

3:00 – 3:15 BREAK AND EXHIBITORS

3:15 – 4:45 BREAKOUT SESSION C (90 min.)

What Do I Do Now? When Needs are Beyond the Home Visit

Angela Washington M.A., LPC and Stacy Carden, LBSW
Audience: EI, CLASSROOM, HVs Introductory-Intermediate
Bon Secour I

This session will look at common issues or concerns that we encounter daily during home visits. Discussion of what is typical and methods to address concerns such as maternal depression, challenging behaviors and identification of signs of potential abuse and neglect. This session will discuss what behaviors are typical and when a referral may be needed. Ethical dilemmas encountered in the Early Intervention or other home visitation settings will be discussed as well.

Navigating Autism Conversations: Supporting Families Through Honest and Open Communication

Pam Ramsey, M.C.D., CCC-SLP and Abby Hicks, M.A. CO
Audience: EI, HV Introductory-Intermediate
Bon Secour II

When a child displays characteristics of autism, families may face uncertainty, concern, and a desire for understanding, especially if they are unfamiliar with autism or have not yet recognized these traits in their child. This session equips professionals with strategies to engage families in meaningful conversations, using insights from the ASD Screening initiative as a guide. Participants will explore practical techniques for delivering information with empathy, addressing common concerns, and connecting families with supportive resources. This session empowers professionals to guide families in navigating their child's unique developmental journey with confidence and understanding by fostering trust, providing clarity, and offering real-world examples.

Many Voices, One Goal: Celebrating Cultural Diversity in Early Communication

Danielle Waldrep Rich, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, ASDCS
Audience: EI, CLASSROOM, HVs, SLPs Introductory
Bon Secour III

This session seeks to equip early intervention professionals (Speech-Language Pathologists, teachers, Developmental Specialists, childcare providers) with practical skills to serve culturally and linguistically diverse families across home, daycare, and preschool settings. The presentation combines myth-busting education with practical strategy development, ensuring attendees leave with immediately usable assessment modifications, family partnership techniques, and culturally responsive intervention approaches. Through interactive learning, professionals develop both awareness and actionable skills for celebrating linguistic diversity as an asset rather than a barrier.

The Role of Child Care Providers in Early Intervention

Leigh Pate and Stephanie Waters, M.S., IMH-E®
Audience: EI All levels
Mobile Bay I-II

Childcare settings are ideal for Early Intervention (EI) services. They have regular routines, play-based and child-centered activities, and opportunities for peer interaction. Providing quality, coordinated care between childcare and Early Intervention can improve both child and family outcomes. Participants will learn practical strategies for effective collaboration and inclusion of childcare professionals in the EI process.

Not Today Coach I am Tired

Kristie Hamby, IMH-E, ACAS and Misty Wheeler, IMH-E, ECMH-E
Audience: GENERAL All levels
Mobile Bay III

From your best hitter to your bench warmer, not everyone on your team wants to play and some days it feels like you are the only one on your team. Come sit in our locker room and let's discuss how we can support all our players. At times, our best performers get left behind because "they have it and others need me more" and we spend more time coaching others who struggle. How do you balance working with all levels? Join us for some fun interactive coaching and self-care ideas.

Play It Out: Providing Trauma Support in the Classroom

Dr. Chelsea Taylor, LPC, NCC and Beth Jones, MSW, IECMH-E®

Audience: EI, HVs, CLASSROOM All levels
Grand Bay I-II

Kids are resilient, but the impacts of trauma can be seen and heard in classrooms across the state. Early childhood educators have access to tools within their classroom to support children who have experienced trauma or adversity. Presenters will share evidence-based strategies to support educators in helping children heal through play. Learn how to support children's healing by playing it out!

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

8:00 – 8:15 WELCOME AND OPENING KEYNOTE

Through the Eyes of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers: It's Hard to Be Little

Tweety Yates, Ph.D.
Bon Secour I-III

Have you ever thought about how hard it is to be little? Think about an infant trying to express his wants and needs. A toddler trying to become more independent. A preschooler trying to understand and manage all those big emotions she is

feeling. Let's take a fun journey through the eyes of infants, toddlers and preschoolers and see if they can teach us a few things to help us become better supporters of their development.

9:15 - 9:45 BREAK AND EXHIBITORS

9:45 - 10:45 BREAKOUT SESSION D (60 min.)

Fine Motor Activities on a Budget

Katasha Hughes, MAECEL

Audience: CLASSROOM

Introductory

Bon Secour I

During this training participants will learn the importance of fine motor skills in early development, as well as do hands on activities that can be utilized at little to no cost for their program. Participants will also have the opportunity to create a make-and-take fine motor activity to take home with them. We will be utilizing materials that you may already have access to but are unsure of how to incorporate with children to help with their development. *Take home activity limited to first 100 participants.*

Unlocking Your Inner Detective Superpowers: Embracing an Investigative Mindset for Understanding Behaviors That Challenge Us

Tweety Yates, Ph.D.

Audience: GENERAL

All levels

Bon Secour II

All behaviors have meaning and are a form of communication. However, when it comes to those behaviors that challenge us, determining what the behavior is communicating can often be challenging (and easier said than done!). In this session, we will do some investigative work around determining the meaning of behaviors and share some strategies and resources to help strengthen our investigative superpowers.

Sensory-Based Feeding at Home

Mary Laura Day, OTR/L, MS, NTMTC and Kristen Wilhite, M.A., CCC-SLP

Audience: EI, HVs

Intermediate

Bon Secour III

This presentation will review the sensory system and how it applies to a child's approach to feeding. We will discuss strategies that can easily be used within a child's home environment. We will also provide an opportunity for attendees to have a hands-on problem-solving experience.

Setting Service Coordinators Up for Success

Julie Carden, M.S.; Samantha McCammon, MSW; and Courtney Musso

Audience: EI

All levels

Mobile Bay I-II

What makes an Early Intervention Service Coordinator successful? Join us as we look at generational and personality differences in approaching tasks and deadlines, managing our expectations and stress levels, and practical organizational strategies to set us up for success. By building on our strengths, we can gain joy by seeing the "big picture" of helping the children and families we serve through their Early Intervention journey.

Patterns, Processing, and Purpose: Exploring Functional Language in Children with Diverse Language Profiles – Part 1

Angie Barber, Ph.D., CCC-SLP and Shelby H. Hall, M.S., CCC-SLP

Audience: SLPs

Introductory

Mobile Bay III

This session will explore how young children develop and use language in different ways, including analytical language development, gestalt language processing, and patterns seen in unreliable or inconsistent communicators. Participants will learn how to identify these communication styles and implement evidence-based and supportive strategies that promote meaningful, functional communication across settings. Practical tools, real-life examples, and collaborative techniques will be shared to help educators and caregivers connect with all children, regardless of how they express themselves.

Alabama's Regional Autism Network (RAN)

Michelle McDaniel, M.Ed. and Maria Gutierrez

Audience: GENERAL

Introductory

Grand Bay I-II

Alabama's Regional Autism Network (RAN) serves those who have questions, concerns, or resource needs regarding themselves, a family member, friend, client, patient, or a student with diagnosed or suspected Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). RAN provides Professional training programs; Technical Assistance and consultation services; individual and direct family assistance in the home, community, and school; and public education programs. Alabama's RAN is staffed by experts in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Each RAN strives to connect people with ASD, their families, educators, and service providers to the information and/or services that best meet their needs.

10:45 - 11:00 BREAK AND EXHIBITORS

11:00 - 12:00 BREAKOUT SESSION E (60 min.)

Resilience and Relationship: Building Connection, Felt Safety, and Positive Experiences for Children

Jessica D. Strickland, BSE, LICSW and Jennifer Street, LCSW-S

Audience: GENERAL

Introductory-Intermediate

Bon Secour I

Life is not easy and for our children, difficult experiences often lead to challenging behaviors. Most of us are aware of the need for healthy resilience strategies to counteract the adverse, dare-say traumatic, experiences we all encounter. It is often said that children are resilient, but this is a skill learned in the context of relationships. Some of the greatest protective factors for resilience are healthy, positive relationships and experiences that build a sense of felt-safety. It's not easy, but a powerful way to do this is through pursuing connection over compliance. Join me as we highlight the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the importance of Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs), and practical strategies you can use to create nurturing environments that build both connection and emotional resilience. Come learn actionable techniques for strengthening the caregiver-child bond and leave with a clearer understanding of how to create safe, trusting spaces where children can thrive.

Let's Talk About it: Resource Panel Discussion of Statewide Community Resources for Supporting Families

Savannah Loudin (moderator); Sallye Longshore; Mary Florian; Stephanie Waters, M.S., IMH-E®; and Kym Williams
Audience: **GENERAL** All levels
Bon Secour II

Panelists from Help Me Grow Alabama, the Alabama Infant Toddler Specialist Network Alabama, Parents as Teachers, and the Department of Child Abuse & Neglect will share the details of their services, and how their resources are beneficial to Early Interventionists, home visitors, childcare providers, and parents. At the end of the panel discussion, participants will be able to ask questions during a Q & A portion.

It Takes a Village: Let's Get Social

Shanté Hamm, LMSW
Audience: **EL, HVs** All levels
Bon Secour III

This session will allow participants an opportunity to learn the benefits of group socialization events, especially for children who receive home-based services. We will discuss and learn ways to plan successful events, and the fun they can be for all. We will also learn about community resources who add value to group socializations.

GOLD(R) for Preschool Special Educators

Stephanie Bear, Ed. S., CCC-SLP and Kathy Wilkins Audience: **CLASSROOM, SLPs** All levels
Mobile Bay I-II

This session is designed for special educators and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) serving preschool-aged students with disabilities. Topics covered will include: an introduction to the GOLD® and its significance in preschool special education, guidelines on administering the GOLD® assessment

to preschool students with IEPs, and best practices for ensuring accurate and reliable assessment results.

Patterns, Processing, and Purpose: Exploring Functional Language in Children with Diverse Language Profiles – Part 2

Angie Barber, Ph.D., CCC-SLP and Shelby H. Hall, M.S., CCC-SLP
Audience: **SLPs** Introductory
Mobile Bay III

This session will explore how young children develop and use language in different ways, including analytical language development, gestalt language processing, and patterns seen in unreliable or inconsistent communicators. Participants will learn how to identify these communication styles and implement evidence-based and supportive strategies that promote meaningful, functional communication across settings. Practical tools, real-life examples, and collaborative techniques will be shared to help educators and caregivers connect with all children, regardless of how they express themselves.

All Are Welcome Here: Using Research-based Tools to Foster a Sense of Belonging

Kimberly Hile, Ph.D. and Loretta Hayslip, Ph.D.
Audience: **CLASSROOM, ADMIN** Intermediate
Grand Bay I-II

High-quality inclusion is more than access—it's about belonging. Presenters will introduce participants to research-based tools designed to assess and support inclusive practices in early learning environments. Through real-world examples and interactive discussion, attendees will explore how these tools can guide continuous reflection and professional growth, focusing on promoting membership and meaningful participation for all children. Whether you're a teacher, coach, or administrator, this session offers actionable insights for making inclusion intentional and impactful.

12:00 – 1:30 LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

1:30 – 3:00 BREAKOUT SESSION F (90 min.)

Cutting Through the Noise: You Are the Strategy

Joy Winchester
Audience: **GENERAL** All levels
Bon Secour I

We are inundated with information, and this leads to cognitive overload which freezes many of us in decision making and trusting ourselves. The truth is, for humans the most important strategy is an attuned human. How do we cut through the noise to use the information that is helpful and also build our confidence to trust ourselves? This impacts parents, teachers, and anyone who works with children as the sea of information is endless and at times treacherous. If we trust ourselves and

lean on what we know, we engage more fully and be what that other person needs for support.

Principles of Culture: How to Build a Positive Culture in the Workplace

Susan Sellers, JD; Jessica Letson; and Stephanie Holderby, MBA
Audience: GENERAL, ADMIN All levels
Bon Secour II

Workplace culture can be defined as the behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and interactions of employees. It encompasses the values, mission, and goals of an organization and helps shape how employees interact with others. Maintaining a positive culture can be exceptionally challenging during times of change. *Principles of Culture: How to Build a Positive Culture in the Workplace* will examine the importance of a healthy workplace environment, how to build a positive culture, and how workplace culture can have a direct impact on job satisfaction and performance.

Supporting Social-Emotional Growth in Early Childhood: Innovative Approaches for Early Intervention

Sarah Neese, BSW and Susanne Napp, M.Ed.
Audience: GENERAL Introductory-Intermediate
Bon Secour III

Early childhood is a critical period for the development of social and emotional skills, which are foundational for later success in school, relationships, and mental well-being. This session aims to highlight the importance of early intervention in supporting social-emotional development in children from birth through age five, and to provide practical tools, strategies, and resources for professionals working with young children.

Don't Get Your Panties in a Bunch: Inclusive Potty Training Strategies

Angie Gullledge
Audience: GENERAL Intermediate
Mobile Bay I-II

Potty training does not need to feel impossible anymore. This session covers a variety of tips, tricks, and strategies to support caregivers and families potty train children of all abilities. Learning inclusive potty training strategies helps take the stress away from this huge milestone.

Childhood Apraxia of Speech: Neurologic Perspectives on Assessment and Treatment

Lawrence Molt, Ph.D., CCC-A, CCC-SLP, FASHA, FAAA
Audience: SLPs Intermediate
Mobile Bay III

Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS) is a rare disorder affecting the motor speech planning/programming phase of the speech production process. This seminar is designed to introduce an

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evidence-based model for speech production with an emphasis on the phase of production underlying apraxic errors. Possible etiologic factors will be discussed and the current evidentiary support for each. A model of assessment procedures for differential diagnosis of CAS from other speech sound disorders will be presented. Possible treatment approaches and the evidentiary support for each will be discussed.

Integrating Music into Home Visits and Group Socialization: Promoting Emotional, Physical, and Cognitive Development in Early Childhood

Maggie Gill, MM, BM
Audience: EI, HVs All levels
Grand Bay I-II

This session explores how music can be effectively integrated into home visits and group socialization to support early childhood development. Drawing on over twenty years of experience teaching music in early childhood and more than a decade of leading Music Together® classes through Fiddlesticks Music, a Music Together Center in Birmingham, the presenter will share practical strategies and real-world examples. This presentation also highlights work with families through a partnership with the University of Alabama at Birmingham Head Start program. Participants will learn how music supports emotional, physical, and cognitive growth, and receive adaptable tools for use in early intervention settings. No musical background is required—just a willingness to engage and explore.

3:00 – 3:15 BREAK AND EXHIBITORS

3:15 – 4:45 BREAKOUT SESSION G (90 min.)

Supporting Parents in Developing Social Emotional Development in Preschoolers

Gwendolyn Miniard MS, CAMS-I, ALC
Audience: EI, HVs, CLASSROOM All levels
Bon Secour I

Social-emotional development is vital to early childhood development. It forms the foundation for children's overall development, including their ability to learn, form relationships, and cope with challenges. It can reduce the risk of future mental health challenges, too.

Home Visits: Competence, Confidence, and Connection

Melissa White, MSPT; Julia Stanley, M.S.; Brandy Rhodes M.S., CCC-SLP; and Megan Carpenter, OTD, OTR/L
Audience: EI, HVs All levels
Bon Secour II

This course is designed to help Early Intervention providers gain confidence in their home visits, exhibiting fundamental skills across disciplines and recognizing when/how communication and collaboration with other providers is

appropriate and needed. We will look at problem-solving through unique challenges that a provider may face.

Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Preschool Updates

Kathy Wilkins and Stephanie Bear, Ed. S. CCC-SLP Audience:
CLASSROOM, SLPs All levels
Bon Secour III

Get updates on the most current information from the State and Federal levels that will affect your procedures and practices as a special educator or SLP working with preschool-age students with disabilities in the public schools. Topics will include tips for producing compliant paperwork, information on changes around the transition from Early Intervention to preschool, and selecting the most appropriate least restrictive environment. Any updates that pertain to preschool students with disabilities will be included.

Engaging Partnerships with Families in Transition from Early Intervention to Classrooms

Jeana Winter and Evelyn Dukes
Audience: GENERAL All levels
Mobile Bay I-II

Families of children with disabilities require support to successfully navigate through complicated systems of early intervention, preschool, and school aged classrooms while supporting their children with disabilities. Early childhood is often a very frustrating period of time for families as they work to develop an understanding of their child, their diagnosis or disability, their strengths and needs, the service and support systems, and how to support and advocate for them. Families transition through systems that they often know very little about. This session will focus on ways providers can reach and engage families, build partnerships from early intervention to school aged classrooms and support families in their knowledge and advocacy. It will provide tools and highlight concrete connections that providers may use to support families through their transition to classrooms through family engagement and skills in advocacy.

The Power of Reflective Supervision in Early Childhood Education Igniting Growth, Well-Being, and Student Success for Teachers & Administrators

Johnece Smith, M.S., EdS., LPC, NCC, IMH-E
Audience: CLASSROOM All levels
Mobile Bay III

In the fast-paced and emotionally demanding world of early childhood education, teachers and administrators often find themselves overwhelmed by stress, high expectations, and emotional exhaustion. The constant juggling of lesson planning, behavioral management, and administrative responsibilities can take a toll on educators, leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction. This presentation explores Reflective Supervision as a transformative tool that fosters

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emotional resilience, professional growth, and a supportive learning environment. By integrating reflection into daily practice, educators can develop greater self-awareness, strengthen their coping strategies, and ultimately enhance their well-being.

The Power of Community: Ending Language Deprivation Together

Kimberly Moon, M.S.; Laurel Maradik, M.S.; Kathryn Duncan, Ed.S; and Linnea Elliott, Ed.S
Audience: GENERAL All levels
Grand Bay I-II

Language Deprivation is an epidemic among deaf/hard-of-hearing (D/HH) children worldwide. Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) Outreach Services and the Regional Early Acquisition of Language (REAL) Project South partner to discuss the complex issues related to early language acquisition. Data gathered by AIDB Outreach related to academic outcomes among D/HH children will be shared, and REAL South will expand on resources that are available to support families and the professionals who serve them.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29

8:00 – 9:00 BREAKOUT SESSION H (60 min.)

It's Ok to Be Afraid!

Kimberly Keeton
Audience: GENERAL Introductory
Bon Secour I

Often adults dismiss the fears and concerns of young children. We hear statements such as, "kids are resilient" or "they'll grow out of it". What our children need to hear from those that are responsible for keeping them safe is, "I understand that you are afraid", "How can I help you?" and "I'm afraid of _____ too!". Learn what fears are common for children at various ages and ways that we can help support healthy coping skills in response to fears.

We Wish You Knew: What Families Want When Autism is Suspected

Linda Ware; Maria Gutierrez; and Sarah Bailey
Audience: EI, HVs, CLASSROOM All levels
Bon Secour II

The initial conversations between early intervention providers or early childhood educators and families, when autism is first suspected, can have a profound impact. This session, facilitated by seasoned family navigators from the Regional Autism Network (RAN), who are also parents of autistic children, offers valuable perspectives on what families genuinely need during these critical moments. Drawing on lived experiences, lessons learned, and evidence-informed strategies, the session will guide professionals in building trust,

alleviating fear, and engaging families with cultural humility, empathy, and clarity. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their current practices, challenge assumptions, and enhance their approach to family-centered support.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC): What is it? What is Our Role in Supporting AAC Users?

Ashton Robinson, M.S., CCC-SLP; Amanda Savage, M.S., CCC-SLP; Chelsea Emmons, M.S., CCC-SLP; and Jessica Payne, M.S., CCC-SLP

*Audience: CLASSROOM, SLPs
Bon Secour III*

Introductory

As early childhood educators, we all may have heard the term "AAC" in relation to communication, but what is it? Have you ever had a child in your classroom or on your caseload that is non-speaking or minimally speaking and you were not sure how to provide the best support? Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) goes beyond designated speech generating devices for non-speaking individuals. In this session, participants will learn about the many different types of AAC that are available to users with communication difficulties. Participants will be able to identify current and/or past children that may benefit from the use of AAC to support their communication. Participants will also learn how to identify if a child is ready for AAC and learn our role in supporting them individually or in the classroom.

Breaking Barriers: Teaching Children About Inclusion and Disabilities in the Classroom

Katasha Hughes

*Audience: GENERAL
Mobile Bay I-II*

Intermediate

Children are naturally curious and often ask question about the world around them. This session focuses on how to answer those hard questions about disabilities and fostering an inclusive environment for young children by promoting an understanding and acceptance of disabilities. Through engaging activities and discussion, participants will learn how to create supportive spaces that celebrate diversity and ensure all children regardless of ability feel valued and included. *Activity limited to first 75 participants.*

Special Needs Childcare Subsidy

Melissa Anderson

*Audience: GENERAL
Mobile Bay III*

Introductory

Participants will discuss the UCPC Special Needs Childcare Subsidy including eligibility criteria and how to make a referral. The collaboration with the Childcare Enhancement with a Purpose project will be discussed. We will also review frequently asked questions and leave time for additional questions about the program and benefits.

The Perspective Shift - I am a Special Needs Parent

Amber May

*Audience: GENERAL
Grand Bay I-II*

All levels

After being a parent to a "typical" overachieving child and a special needs child, Amber May realized that perspective is everything. The change that happens when you come to terms with the reality "I am a special needs parent" is life changing. Accepting your new reality as early as possible sets you up to take on all of the challenges that come with raising a child who isn't typical. Early intervention (EI) coached Amber and educated her on what to expect and how to pursue those expectations while also giving her a dialog to be an advocate for both of her children. Her daughter has educational supports that she was confident enough to push for because of how well Early Intervention trained her. Johnny's IEP is extensive but her EI coordinator was very real with her about what her son was capable of. EI has been such an important part of Amber's journey and she is thrilled to get to share with you how important your passion is to families like hers.

9:00 – 9:15 BREAK

9:15 – 10:15 BREAKOUT SESSION I (60 min.)

Empowering Voices: The Work of the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP)

Shannon Shelley-Tremblay, JD

*Audience: GENERAL, ADMIN Introductory-Intermediate
Bon Secour I*

Join us for an insightful discussion on the vital work of the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) in championing the rights of people with disabilities across the state. This talk will explore how ADAP provides advocacy through legal assistance, client support, and educational outreach. Attendees will learn about ADAP's role in offering training, information and referrals, the Client Assistance Program, and legal assistance, as well as how individuals can get involved in shaping advocacy priorities. Discover how ADAP is working to ensure equality, access, and empowerment for all Alabamians living with disabilities. This session will also include an overview of current updates and issues related to pertinent federal regulations, funding, and case law.

Putting Out Wildfires

Anna Knight

*Audience: GENERAL
Bon Secour II*

All levels

This parent perspective session will offer insight into the parent experience of navigating complex diagnoses — and equip service providers with strategies to recognize, respond to, and support families through periods of stress and growth.

How to Accelerate Learning for Children with Developmental Disabilities

Amanda Williamson, M.A., BCBA, LBA

Audience: GENERAL

All levels

Bon Secour III

In this session we will discuss the benefits of using naturalistic play-based intervention using the principles of behavior analysis and precision teaching to teach skills to fluency while respecting the learner's autonomy and ways to determine assent with non-speaking learners. The emphasis will be to teach caregivers and professionals how to select pivotal skills that will lead to generative learning (acquiring skills in the natural environment without the need for direct intervention), how to pinpoint skills for increase using learning channels, and how to measure skill acquisition in real time using the Standard Celeration Chart (SCC).

Using Visuals to Aid Communication in the Early Childhood Setting

Savannah Loudin

Audience: CLASSROOM

All levels

Mobile Bay I-II

This training explores the use of visual supports to enhance communication, routine-building, and emotional regulation for infants and toddlers. Educators will learn how to implement first-then boards, visual schedules, social stories, and emotion cards to support early development. The session will also cover overcoming common challenges, engaging families, and adapting visuals for diverse needs. Participants will leave with practical strategies and access to printable resources for immediate classroom application.

Promoting Inclusion in the Classroom: Strategies for Creating Equitable Learning Environments

Teresa Lewis

Audience: CLASSROOM

Introductory

Mobile Bay III

Inclusion in the classroom is more than a buzzword—it's a commitment to ensuring that every student regardless of background, ability, or identity feels valued, supported, and empowered to succeed. This presentation will explore practical strategies and evidence-based approaches to fostering inclusive learning environments that celebrate diversity and promote equity. Participants will gain actionable tools to address barriers to inclusion, create culturally responsive classrooms, and build a sense of belonging for all students.

Choosing Appropriate Early Intervention Providers: Roles of Speech-Language Pathologists and Developmental Specialists

Danielle Waldrep Rich, Ph.D. CCC-SLP, ASDCS & Shauna Ashley, Ph.D. CCC-SLP, ASDCS

Audience: EI

Intermediate

Grand Bay I-II

Early Intervention Service Coordinators are crucial in connecting families with the right Early Intervention services but deciding between Speech-Language and Special Instruction (SI) services can be challenging. This session will provide Service Coordinators with clear, practical guidance on when to recommend Speech services versus SI services based on each child's unique needs and developmental goals. By the end of this session, Service Coordinators will have the tools and knowledge needed to make informed service decisions that truly support each child's growth and development.

10:15 – 10:30 BREAK

10:30 – 10:45 CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cheryl Smith, CEO, UCP Huntsville

Susan Sellers, JD, CEO, United Ability

10:45 – 11:45 CLOSING KEYNOTE (60 min.)

The Power of Hope

Joy Winchester

Bon Secour I-III

Hope is not just a feeling — it's a measurable brain state that fuels motivation, problem-solving, and resilience. This keynote explores the neuroscience of hope and how it can be intentionally cultivated, even in the face of adversity. Through engaging stories, practical strategies, and evidence-based insights, participants will discover how to activate the brain's "possibility pathways" to inspire growth, strengthen communities, and create a future worth working toward.