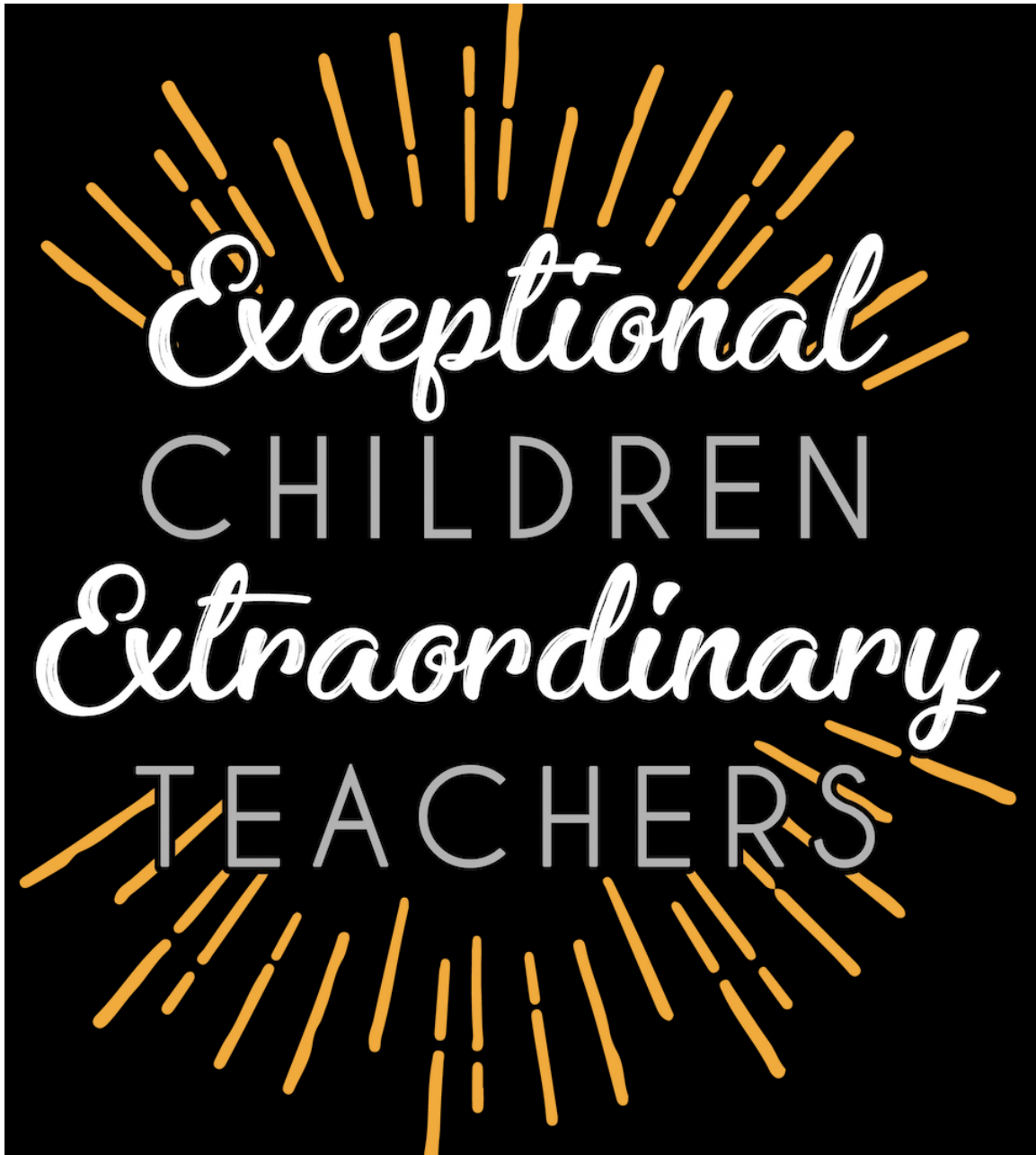


The Council for Exceptional Children
OF
Mississippi
PRESENTS



September 14-16, 2022

The Refuge: Flowood, MS



MISSISSIPPI

Dear Friends,



We are excited to welcome each of you to the 2022 Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children (MS-CEC) Conference here in Flowood, Mississippi. We are even more excited to be meeting in-person for the first time since the fall of 2019! We are pleased to continue our partnership with our friends at the North Mississippi Education Consortium (NMEC) who have used their expertise to streamline this in-person event. We would like to thank the Mississippi Department of Education for providing volunteers and speakers that are experts in their fields. We have planned a spectacular conference for you and have included sessions on topics that are impacting

special education in our state. Take advantage of the informative sessions, networking opportunities, and time to visit the vendors that are supporting MS CEC. We hope that you use this conference time to renew old friendships, and begin new ones, as well as to learn new strategies and skills to improve student outcomes

The pandemic has had a tremendous impact on not only our students with disabilities, but special education teachers as well. We are dealing with a significant teacher shortage, a mental health crisis, and substantial learning gaps all across the state, as well as the nation. In planning the conference “Exceptional Children, Extraordinary Teachers,” we wanted to take time to celebrate our teachers that work so hard each and every day for our student with disabilities. You are truly champions!

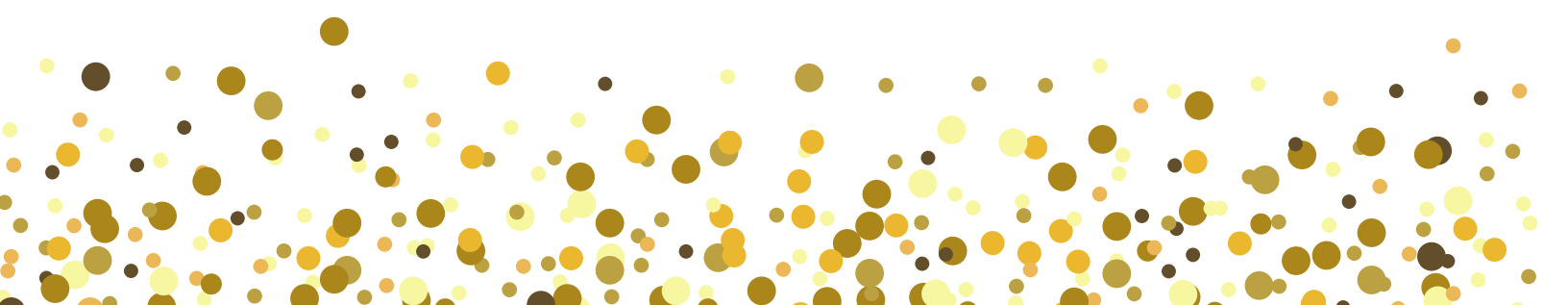
We hope that you will get connected with CEC while at this conference. CEC is growing and we welcome new ideas and new energy! We hope that you will take some time to learn more about what CEC has to offer and consider joining a division .

Finally, we want you to be proud of what you do and be a positive change for the future of special education in Mississippi. Part of the mission of CEC is to build networks, partnerships, and communities and you are contributing to that mission by attending the conference. You are extraordinary, stunning, and marvelous and we are glad you are here!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie Etheridge'.

Julie Etheridge, M.S.
2021-2022 MS CEC
President Elect



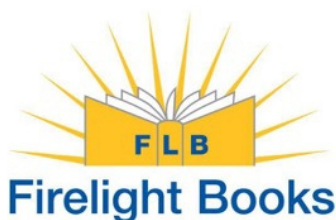
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Event Schedule

September 14

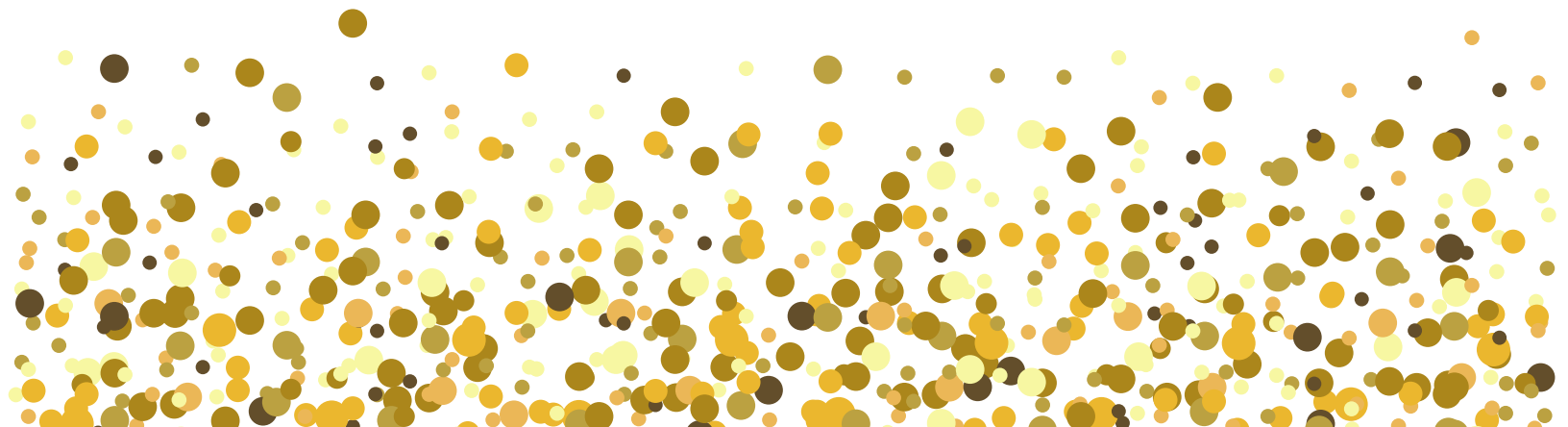
12:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Exhibitor Setup	Conference Pre-Function
12:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Participant Sign-in	Conference Pre-Function
1:00 PM - 4:15 PM	Pre-Conference Sessions	Jr. Ballroom C & D

September 15

7:15 AM - 10:00 AM	Participant Sign-in	Conference Pre-Function
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Breakfast/Vendors	Conference Pre-Function
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Welcome/Keynote	Grand Ball Room
10:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Breakout Session 1	Meeting Rooms
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch	Grand Ball Room
1:30 PM - 2:45 PM	Breakout Session 2	Meeting Rooms
3:00 PM - 4:15 PM	Breakout Session 3	Meeting Rooms
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Conference Social	Grand Ball Room

September 16

7:30 AM - 10:00 AM	Breakfast/Vendors	Grand Ball Room
8:30 AM - 9:15 AM	Division Interest Meetings	Meeting Rooms
9:30 AM - 10:45 AM	Breakout Session 4	Meeting Rooms
10:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Closing Session/Keynote	Grand Ball Room
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM	Closing/Business Meeting	Grand Ball Room



Featured Presenters



Sarah Ward, M. S., CCC/SLP

Ms. Ward has over 25 years of experience in the treatment of executive dysfunction. Sarah is an internationally recognized expert on executive function and presents seminars on the programs and strategies she has developed with her Co-Director Kristen Jacobsen. Their 360 Thinking Executive Function Program received the Innovative Promising Practices Award from the National Organization CHADD. She has presented to over 1600 public and private schools and organizations worldwide.



Christy Hunt

Ms. Hunt is a consultant, coach, and trainer, has more than twenty-two years of experience working with students and educators. She has been a general education and special education teacher, faculty member of the University of Tennessee, educational advocate, and provided professional development in Tennessee and Mississippi. She has collaborated with state departments to plan and implement inclusive practices. Christy brings high-energy and passion for inclusion to her interactive workshops providing participants with creative and practical solutions for anticipating variability and teaching to diversity.



Dr. Kim Benton

Dr. Kim S. Benton is Mississippi's State Superintendent of Education, interim. Dr. Benton served as Chief Academic Officer/ Deputy State Superintendent with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) from 2012 to 2018, leading the implementation of hallmark initiatives including the Early Childhood Collaborative Act, Mississippi K-12 College and Career Ready Standards, and the Literacy-Based Promotion Act.

Dr. Benton has served as a consultant and trainer for the Academic Development Institute providing leadership services to the National Comprehensive Center, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and multiple state departments of education and Regional Comprehensive Centers. She has served as Associate Professor in Educational Leadership at William Carey University and as an adjunct instructor for Mississippi State University and the University of West Alabama.

A veteran educator and leader, Dr. Benton started her career as an assistant teacher and later served as a teacher, principal and district director of federal programs and special populations programs. Her numerous awards include the National Association of Elementary School Principals' National Distinguished Principal. She has served in multiple state and national leadership roles including past president of the Mississippi Early Childhood Association and Mississippi Professional Educators, the Mississippi Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Advisory Board and National Assessment Governing Board Task Force.

Pre-Conference Sessions

Pre-Conference Session 1:

Executive Function Interventions – A Toolbox of Strategies

Presented by Sarah Ward

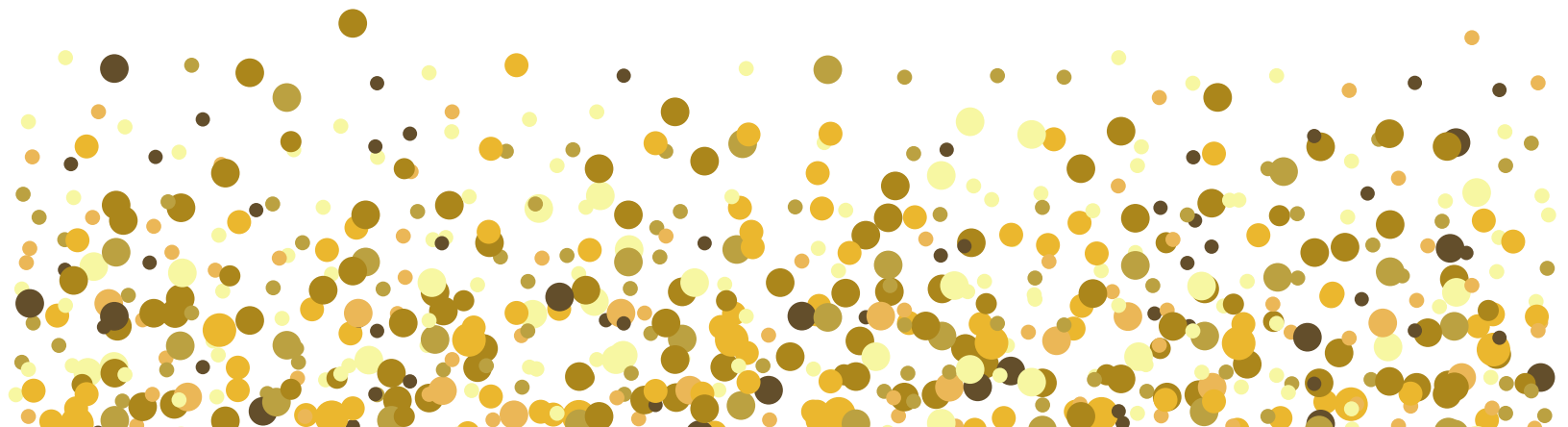
This Pre-Conference is for the professional who wants to learn more strategies and techniques, have advanced treatment examples, and become more knowledgeable of the scope and sequence to implement executive function interventions. This seminar will help you to understand where to start and give you the opportunity to make and practice implementing a Toolbox of Strategies for teaching executive function skills. We will address at an advanced level how to teach students to channel their motivation and go from Intention to Action by creating and carrying out plans and to sustain forethought for tasks. Understand the relationship between speed of processing and executive function and learn practical strategies to improve written expression and how to tackle complex novel and open ended assignments and projects. Do you feel like you spend the majority of resource room/learning center/treatment time “putting out fires” and there does not seem to be time to teach the executive skills? This webinar will address how to use assignments and classwork as the tools to build the executive function skills! It is a win-win!

Pre-Conference Session 2:

Divergent Planning: SDI to Improve Student Outcomes

Presented by Christy Hunt

Participants will engage in a divergent planning process to use specially designed instruction to improve outcomes (academically and socially) for students with disabilities. The process will evaluate systemic changes, clarify roles of educators, analyze instructional strategies, and expand access for students with disabilities.



Keynote Sessions

Learn it Today – Use it Tomorrow! Cutting Edge Strategies to Improve Executive Function Skills in the Classroom

Presented by Sarah Ward. MS. CCC/SLP

How to Teach Students to Efficiently Initiate, Transition, Plan and Manage their Tasks, Time Space and Materials (and keep their emotions in check!)

This seminar is all about providing dozens of practical strategies that you can learn today and implement tomorrow! From task initiation and execution to time management, practice using strategies such as 'Future Sketch', 'Get Ready, Do, Done', 'STOP and Read the Room', and seeing and sensing the passage of time. Classroom and remote instruction strategies will be given.

During this Workshop through demonstration and practice you will learn how to teach students the following executive control skills:

- Awareness: to "Tune in" to what is happening around them so they can understand how information, events, and their actions will impact their goals and objectives, both now and in the near future
- Forethought: to predict the successful outcome of tasks and to know what a 'stop spot' looks like
- to Wait: to control a reaction long enough to contemplate the outcomes of their choices
- Planning Skills to be able to sense the passage of time and to know how to break down the steps for immediate tasks, and assignments.
- to Shift: Fresh approaches to help students develop automaticity for class routines and fluidly transition from one mental mindset to another and to be able to stop doing one activity and then move on to and be prepared to start new tasks
- to Pace: to speed up or slow down within a given time frame, to complete tasks within allotted time and to persist on tasks even if the tasks are difficult, boring or nonpreferred

Breakout Sessions

Adapting Grade-Level Text for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Presented by Denise Harrison & Melanie Watkins

In this hands-on presentation, participants will not only learn about the research that supports increased reading comprehension outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities but will also engage in the process of creating their own adaptive, grade-level text to use with their students to promote comprehension. Participants will be able to create accessible, grade-level texts for their students with significant cognitive disabilities, including physical and digital adaptations.

Co-Teaching within the Middle School Settings

Presented by Alice Stringer

Co-teaching in the middle school setting looks a lot different than in other grades such as the elementary and high school levels. My session will explain how the multiple school settings approach co-teaching and describe how each one looks within each school setting. Co-teaching with middle school teachers allows everyone involved to give valuable input as well as use each other's stronger abilities to provide the best possible approach. The idea of parallel teaching is sometimes hard to put into practice without some sort of plan of action.

Efficient Plan Management and Progress Monitoring Tools for Extraordinary Educators

Presented by Wendy Rogers

The management of the paperwork associated with educating students with exceptional needs is tremendous. From notices of committee meetings and IEPs to documentation of skills for ESY criteria and eligibility determinations, SEAS Attain has you covered! In addition to that, CLASS is the gap analysis tool that will provide baseline data for truly individualized PLAAFP statements and goals and objectives as well as progress monitoring and ESY data that educators can use for instructional decision making that leads to improved student performance. Come see what SEAS can offer you to make your lives a little easier and more efficient in the paperwork world of special education so you can spend more of your time actually teaching and making a difference for your students!

Erasing the Misery of Reading and Spelling Multi-Syllable Words

Presented by Severina Despenza

Did you know you can teach students to read and spell long words using some very functional, simple techniques? This session demonstrates explicit, scaffolded teaching of multisyllabic word decoding with various multi-sensory techniques, including a manipulative that is easy to access or create for use with students of all ages. Additionally, participants learn a scope and sequence to teach powerful, multisyllabic word decoding, and receive a list of words that are effective for teaching the scope and sequence.

Executive Functioning in Education – Being Student Ready: Initiation, Transitions, Time Management Materials

Presented by Sarah Ward

Immerse yourself in the entire 360 Thinking Executive function curriculum. Learn best practices to get students motivated, focused, organized, and performing closer to their true potential. Learn how to teach students to go from intention to Action to initiate and complete assignments, persist e when they are stuck and to know how to ask for help. *The Get Ready * Do * Done Model*

Do what you do...just make one tiny tweak and turn the core classroom objectives and tasks into powerful tools to teach students executive control skills for classroom and treatment interventions.

The 'Get Ready * Do * Done' program teaches students the process of how to visualize simple, multi-step and complex tasks and assignments and then sequence and plan the requisite steps to fully complete work.

Get More Bang for Your Buck

Presented by Robin Hurst

This topic will focus on developing IEP goals that have the most impact on student achievement, specifically in state-tested subjects.

Interprofessional Collaboration

Presented by Dr. Ashten Yost

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Researchers have identified Interprofessional Collaboration, communication between educational professionals as a crucial key to student success and better outcomes. After this session, participants will be able to implement Interprofessional Collaboration into their teaching practice successfully.

Participants will define Interprofessional Collaboration, describe its importance, and examine communication skills needed for its successful implementation.

Kurzweil 3000: Support for Learners with Reading, Writing, & Learning Challenges

Presented by Missy Tatum

Kurzweil 3000 is a text-to-speech literacy technology that supports reading, writing, learning and test-taking. Students with complex learning needs can access a wide range of learning tools including talking dictionaries, highlighters, notes, graphic organizers, audible spell check, word prediction and more.

Kurzweil 3000 makes all content accessible anytime, anywhere. This session will provide an overview of this comprehensive literacy and learning technology.

Let Me Check Your Pulse: Trauma-Informed Behavior Challenges

Presented by Jimmie Carolyn Keaton

There has been an increasing trend in schools with challenging behaviors that are related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The goal of this presentation is to give teachers effective evidence-based strategies to help reduce behavior challenges and increase pro-social and productive behaviors in the classroom. Teachers and students social-emotional well-being and mental health are vitally important to address behavioral challenges.

Manifestation Determination Review Process

Presented by Dr. Sarieta Holmes Pollard

This session explores the MDR process by defining MDR and its purpose, describing the MDR process, and collaborative approaches to MDR meetings.

Parents Are a Child's First Teacher: Engaging & Equipping Parents

Presented by Benjamin G. Torrey, II

Parents are truly a child's first teacher. Schools and districts must equip parents with the tools and resources to initiate positive learning outcomes at home. Through a series of engaging parent sessions, Rosemont Consulting provides schools and districts with an avenue to create never before seen opportunities for parental growth. At the conclusion of each session, parents will be equipped with a tangible resource that will have lasting impacts on the academic well-being of their child. It truly takes a village to raise a child; we use a holistic approach by offering thoughtful, researched-based strategies to assist schools and districts in the process of taking your village to new heights. This session will include a brief synopsis of current offerings, and provide school leaders and teachers with an overview of how to meet parents where they are, all the while providing parents with pertinent information to assist the academic progress of their child.

Reaching Struggling Students through Unusual Activities

Presented by Honora Wall

Dyscalculia is the mathematics learning disability. It mimics low numeracy, the result of a weak math foundation. While these challenges have different origins, they share the same classroom presentation: failing math students. Students with learning challenges can find mathematical success through unusual activities that keep students interested, engaged, and ensure math success. This presentation uses a variety of hands-on projects, class discussions, and other activities that help teachers reach their struggling students.

Sensory Systems and Supports for the Classroom

Presented by Ellen Ellis & Lori Henry

In this session, we would like to share information about the various sensory systems and how they can impact students throughout the school day. Being able to identify a student's sensory needs and how to best meet those needs can lead to increased attention and success in the school setting. We would give specific examples and also touch on how these needs impact behavior. I have attached a copy of the presentation because we have given it for two school districts.

SPED Legal Q & A

Presented by Kashonda Day, Adams & Reese Law Firm

Do you have any burning Special Education legal questions? This is the session for you! Bring your questions and get the answers you need to be legally compliant in your classroom.

Stop! Don't Say "That In an IEP Meeting

Presented by Kathy Dickerson

Join us for a fun, interactive discussion on conducting compliant and successful IEP meetings. Session will include "things" to avoid saying AND things that should be said at EVERY meeting

Structured Teaching for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Presented by Paige Pigott

This session is an overview of a center-based classroom management training designed to provide educators of students with significant cognitive disabilities, non-verbal students, and students with communication disorders with the knowledge of classroom set-up including floor plan arrangement to implementation of visual structure through individual schedules, work systems, and other supports to successfully manage a classroom with multiple students functioning on a variety of instructional levels. Structure provides students with the support they need to understand where they should be, what they should be doing, and how long they should be doing activities. By providing visual support and structure to address these three core areas students develop in-seat on-task appropriate behavior, limit self-stimulatory behaviors, build independence, and improve overall compliance directly impacting student achievement and outcomes.

Teaming and Collaborating: Building Relationships with Parents

Presented by Leslie Junkin

The teaming and collaborating component for families is often overwhelming and can be frustrating when they don't understand the process. Family members and other team members need to exchange information and share knowledge and expertise in ways that are respectful, supportive, enhance capacity, and are culturally responsive. How can we work together to reduce barriers, help parents understand the process, and learn to be part of the decision making team? Recommended Practices help prepare professionals and by using the Family Guides we can help prepare parents as they learn how to build relationships with the teams that support them and their child.

The Brain Game

Presented by Kanisha Adams

Early experiences affect the development of brain architecture, which provides the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health. Just as a weak foundation compromises the quality and strength of a house, adverse experiences early in life can impair brain architecture, with negative effects lasting into adulthood. This experience is designed to engage attendees in understanding the science of early brain development-what promotes it, what derails it, and what the consequences are for society.

The First Essential Worker: Tools for the P.U.R.P.O.S.E Driven Educator

Presented by Chadiah Williams

Being a P.U.R.P.O.S.E.-driven educator in and outside the classroom, is quintessential for every teacher. This approach focuses on ones ability to be a Problem-solver, Unique, Resilient, Prosperous, provide Opportunity, be Successful and maintain confidence in being Essential.

These seven tenants provide a framework that will focus on the educators ability to increase their personal self-care, boost student achievement and ultimately realign with their personal and professional goals. Educators are some of the most self-LESS humans on Earth, as you/we have to exert yourselves emotionally, physically and mentally. The dedication to such a task, relies solely upon the development and success of the leaders of our future, exceptional student.

The Power in the Post It Note: Developing Relationships with Students Exhibiting Difficult Behaviors

Presented by Cathryn Warren

In this session, participants will discuss building relationships with students who exhibit difficult behaviors, with focus on the challenges these students tend to present and methods to assist in building relationships with them.

Using High-Leverage Practices (HLPs) to Structure Professional Learning in Mississippi's Mentor Pilot Program to Increase Program Effectiveness and Support for New Special Education Teachers

Presented by Dr. Lisa White

In this session, participants will learn how High-Leverage Practices (HLPs) were used to structure professional learning in Mississippi's Mentor Pilot Program during the 2021-2022 school year, lessons learned, and how HLPs were prioritized for professional learning moving forward into the 2022 - 2023 school year. Resources for HLP implementation and professional learning will be shared, in addition to resources to help school districts to implement an effective induction and mentoring program to support new teachers. Finally, details regarding the HLP Exemplar Video and Resources Competition will be shared to inform teachers how they can submit exemplar videos and other supplemental resources for possible monetary compensation and use on Mississippi's future HLP professional learning website.

Using Office 365 Multiple Ways and using QR codes

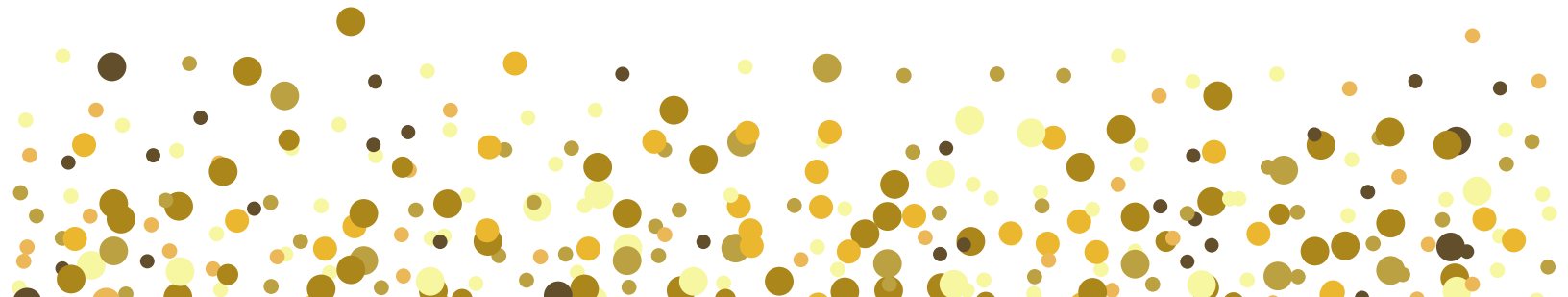
Presented by Alice Stringer

During this session, the participants discover how to use Microsoft forms in a valuable way to collect data from time within a classroom to behavioral tracking that all teachers are willing to fill out. I will explain how to use QR codes in the classroom to tie everything together.

Using Social Emotional Learning to Address the Impact of Fatherlessness

Presented by Dr. Clayton Barksdale

Research shows that a large percentage of exceptional children are raised in single family homes; specifically, homes where the father is absent. This workshop will teach attendees peer reviewed strategies on how to effectively educate fatherless students using social emotional learning (SEL). Attendees will understand the heavy psychological burden that fatherless exceptional children are bearing. Additionally, educators will learn the many benefits of SEL, once used correctly, it can be an effective tool to help children manage stress and other trauma which will decrease behavioral problems.



Session Presenters

Kajesha Adams

Ms. Kanesha Adams is a Ph.D. student in the Educational Leadership department at the University of Alabama. She is an educator, advocate, and “change agent.” She currently serves as the CEO and Founder of Bearapy Bookshelf, which is a social literacy organization wrapped around three pillars; representation in text, teaching emotional and social resilience, and trauma recovery. In addition to this work, she serves as a Communities Engagement Specialist with Bright Futures Arkansas.

Ms. Adams is a 2020 graduate of Arkansas’s inaugural cohort for the New Leaders Council where she has received hands-on support for her educational startup, known as Bearapy Bookshelf. Kanesha is a newly self-published children's book author, with her recent title "Sisters Forever" commemorating the relationship of her first best friend, her sister.

Dr. Clayton Barksdale

Dr. Clayton Barksdale has been an educator for over 20 years and has served on all levels of education as a teacher, librarian, college professor, assistant principal and consultant. Currently he serves as assistant principal at Cleveland Central Middle School and behavioral counselor at the Behavioral and Counseling Center for Fatherless Children. He serves as an educational consultant at Rosemont Consulting where he offers professional development to school districts and teach educators how to reach fatherless children using social emotional learning. Dr. Barksdale has written three books and has received many awards including the prestigious Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from Congressman Bennie Thompson.

Kashonda Day

Ms. KaShonda L. Day started her career as a school teacher and later became an education consultant. Now as a lawyer representing school districts, she brings a deep understanding of how schools work – the daily lives of teachers and administrators – to the legal counsel that I provide.

Ms. Day joined Adams and Reese after serving as the Assistant District Counsel for the Jackson Public School District for seven years, where she provided routine legal advice and assistance to the administrative staff. She also represented the district in various litigation and administrative matters. Ms. Day previously worked as a judicial law clerk with the 13th Judicial Circuit Court of Hillsborough County, Fla. and has previously served as a classroom teacher and education consultant.

Severina Despenza

Ms. Severina Nicholl-DeSpenza is an Implementation with Really Great Reading. She has acquired extensive training in Infant/Toddler, Pre-K and K-12 teacher-child interactions, infant mental health, and early, adolescent and adult literacy. She holds a B.S in Psychology, M.A.T in Education, and a M.A. in Educational Leadership.

Severina has worked as an educator in the New Orleans metropolitan area for over 20+ years in public, charter, private, and parochial schools. During her tenure, she has held a number of positions requiring strong leadership, planning, organizational, and administrative skills; such as the, Reading/Learning Specialist for the Center for Development and Learning (CDL), the Early/Elementary Adjunct Professor at Southern University of New Orleans, the Head Start and Early Head Start Education Specialist (Pre-School/Infant Toddler) for all of the Head Start programs in New Orleans, Diversity Coordinator at Metairie Park Country Day School (a member of the ISAS network), and Secretary of the New Orleans Recreation Department under the auspice of the former Mayor Marc Morial.

Kathy Dickerson

Ms. Dickerson is an instructional coach with Bailey Education Group, LLC. providing training and modeling effective implementation of all areas related to Special Education. Kathy is retired from Lee County School District where she served as Special Education Director for 13 years. She also served as special education teacher, school counselor and assistant principal. Kathy provided relevant engaging professional development for all staff in the areas of special education, counseling, social emotional, classroom management, discipline and behavior. She works to create and support inclusive communities that celebrate diversity, set high standards and expectations, and equip every individual with the skills to achieve personal and professional goals. She has an Ed.S in Education from the University of Mississippi with endorsements in Special Education, Psychometry, Counseling and Administration.

Ellen Ellis

Ms. Ellen Ellis is serving her first year as the Behavior Specialist for the special education students in the Pearl Public School District. Prior to this position, Ellen was one of the 2nd and 3rd grade self-contained special education teachers at Northside Elementary School. She served in that position for 10 years. Mrs. Ellis earned her degree in Special Education from Mississippi State University. She then completed her Masters in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders from William Carey and her Specialist in Educational Leadership from William Carey. She is also a National Board-Certified Teacher.

Denise Harrison

Ms. Denise Harrison is a Special Education Professional Development Coordinator with the Mississippi Department of Education-Office of Special Education, along with the Office of Professional Development and the University of Mississippi. She has been in the field of education for 21 years. Thirteen of those years, Denise taught students with significant cognitive deficits. Denise earned her Master of Education degree in Special Education from Arkansas State University. She received her National Board Certification in 2011. Denise is pursuing her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Special Education from the University of Mississippi.

Lori Henry

Ms. Lori Henry is a Certified Autism Specialist and works for Pearl Upper Elementary as the self-contained special education teacher. She has worked in this position for the last 6 years. In addition to working at Pearl, she also serves as the Volunteer Advocacy Ambassador for the State of Mississippi with Autism Speaks. Mrs. Henry earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from the University of Southern Mississippi. Mrs. Henry also received a Masters of Education degree in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders of Children and a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership from William Carey University.

Robin Hurst

Ms. Robin Hurst is a former high school special education teacher, Case Manager, and Special Education Director. She also served as the District Test Coordinator for eleven years. Since retiring in June of 2021, she has worked with Rosemont Consulting. Throughout her career, she has provided professional development to teachers on special education paperwork, developing and implementing IEPs, the referral to placement process, and special education policies and procedures.

Leslie Junkin

As an advocate for individuals with disabilities and their families for 23 years, Ms. Leslie has presented extensively in the areas of IDEA, Transition from Part C to Part B, Advocacy Skills, Parenting Children with Disabilities, Communication and Conflict Resolution and presents Parent Advocacy Academies and IEP Boot Camps around the state. She is the project director of the MS PTI and has been with them for 14 years. Leslie worked as a Parent Liaison with Early Intervention for 15 years and is a member of the State Rehab Council, the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) and has served as a member of the MS Dept. of Education's Special Education Advisory Panel and an Ameri Corp member in community outreach with LIFE and the Arc of MS. Leslie is the aRPy ambassador for MS, a project of the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA). Leslie's most important job is being mom to, Isabella, her 23-year-old daughter that has Down syndrome and Type 1 diabetes.

Jimmie Carolyn Keaton

Ms. Jimmie Carolyn Keaton is a native of Mount Olive, MS. She completed her undergraduate degree at Tougaloo College in Elementary Education. A Master's degree from Mississippi College in Elementary Education and a Specialist degree in Counseling from Mississippi College. She also received an endorsement in Psychometry from William Carey University. Jimmie Carolyn Keaton is a Positive Behavior Specialist with Jackson Public School District. She works with exceptional education students to provide social skills training, conduct professional developments on the 13 disability categories, and works side-by-side with teachers and administrators to assess students' needs and provide strategies to decrease problematic behaviors.

Sara Myers

Ms. Sarah Myers, M.S, CCC-SLP is the Director of The Children's Center for Communication and Development at The University of Southern Mississippi. She is a speech-language pathologist and has worked at The Children's Center for over ten years, providing therapy to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with a variety of complex developmental disabilities across the southern half of the state. Sarah specializes in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) use to support children with limited speech along with infant and toddler feeding therapy.

Allison Paige Pigott

Ms. Allison Paige Pigott is currently in her third school year with the North Pike School District as the Special Services Director. Ms. Pigott's career in education spans a total of twenty-one years which includes experience in cross-categorical and continuum of services areas and grade levels within special education at the school, district, and state levels in rural and urban environments.

Ms. Pigott's experience includes two years as the Special Services Director for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, two years as the Special Services at Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) in the Office of Special Education as an Instructional Support Specialist and as a Compliance Monitor, two years as district Behavior Interventionist and Instructional Support Specialist for Zachary Community Schools in Zachary, LA, twelve years as a teacher in cross-categorical areas and grade levels within special education at Zachary Community Schools, East Baton Rouge Parish Schools, and Plaquemines Parish Schools in Louisiana and Baldwin County Schools in Georgia. In addition, Ms. Pigott started her career in education at Bogalusa City Schools in Louisiana as a general education teacher

Sarieta H. Pollard

Dr. Sarieta H. Pollard is a Professional Development Coordinator in the area of Special Education. Her emphasis is in Behavior/Transition/Child Find/IEP Development for the University of Mississippi and the Mississippi Department of Education. Dr. Pollard has been in the field of Special Education and Mental Health for over 22 years. Dr. Pollard has served as a Director of Disabilities in the field of Mental Health for 9 years, an educator/leader specializing in special education for 12 years, a consultant specializing in transition, and an Adjunct Instructor in Special Education. In 2004, Dr. Pollard earned her Master of Education degree in Special Education from William Carey University. In 2015, Dr. Pollard earned her doctoral degree in Leadership in Education Administration with an Emphasis in Special Education from Capella University.

Wendy Rogers

Ms. Wendy Rogers is a retired MS educator currently working for SEAS Education. Wendy served as a teacher and administrator in numerous capacities prior to joining MDE as an Educator in Residence mentoring new special education directors across MS and completing her tenure as the Superintendent of Mississippi Schools for the Blind and the Deaf. Wendy enjoys her role with SEAS Education as she continues to work with administrators and teachers providing plan management tools to assist in the education of students with exceptional needs.

Alice Stringer

Ms. Alice Stringer is a special services teacher for fourteen years in several districts across Mississippi. In those fourteen years, she has worked with self-contained, resource, and inclusion students, and has taught students from Pre- K to 8th grade.

She attended Mississippi College where I earned my Bachelor's degree in Special Education, a Master's degree in Elementary Education, a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership, and an endorsement from William Carey in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders.

Ms. Stringer firmly believe in the growth of not only children academically but the relationships they build with teachers and peers

Missy Tatum

Ms. Missy Tatum is a Kurzweil Education Representative for Audio Optical Systems of Austin, a Kurzweil Business Partner. She's been working with Kurzweil Education and Audio Optical Systems (AOS) since 2007. Kurzweil 3000 is a web-based, text-to-speech learning tool that supports students with learning differences. In her "previous life," Missy provided Occupational Therapy and Assistive Technology Services in public schools for over 18 years and worked with diverse learners with a wide range of challenges.

Benjamin G. Torrey

Mr. Benjamin G. Torrey, II brings over 22 years of educational expertise to Rosemont Consulting. Mr. Torrey has experience at each level of the K-12 educational spectrum, serving as an Assistant Principal, Principal, Coordinator of Testing and Accountability, Assistant Superintendent, and Interim Superintendent. Mr. Torrey believes that parents play an integral role in positively impacting student achievement. Throughout his career, Mr. Torrey has developed and been a part of various successful parental initiatives, from serving as a parent liaison at the district level, to leading "Parents Teaming for Literacy Success" as a building principal. These programs proved to have a profound impact on the academic success of its target student population when compared to other students.

Honora Wall

Ms. Honora Wall is a teacher, researcher, and speaker specializing in the math learning disability, dyscalculia. Her company, EduCalc Learning, provides educator training in Specific Learning Disorders, ADHD, anxiety, depression, and trauma-responsive teaching. She is completing her Ed.D. in Curriculum & Instruction through Concordia University Chicago and is a member of the Association of Teacher Educators, Association of Math Teacher Educators, and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She lives in Osage, Iowa, and travels regularly for conferences and workshops.

Cathryn Warren

Dr. Cathryn Warren in Lucedale, MS, where I am an IEP Team Leader at George County Middle School. I am an Assistant Professor with Liberty University where I teach courses under the Educational Leadership and Special Education Umbrella. I also work as a grading assistant at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ. In addition, I have taught inclusion and resource in grades Kindergarten thru Sixth Grade and two years within a behavior modification classroom. I hold a Specialist and Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from Liberty University, a Master's degree in Special Education with a focus in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders from the University of Southern Mississippi, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Melanie Watkins

Ms. Melanie Watkins is an elementary ELA Professional Development Coordinator for both the University of Mississippi and the Mississippi Department of Education. Throughout her seventeen years in education, she taught both elementary and junior high school students, facilitated professional development, served as an ambassador with the National Writing Project, received recognition for her students' standardized test scores, and was elected teacher of the year by her peers. She is a National Board-Certified Teacher in Early and Middle Childhood Literacy and earned her Masters of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Mississippi College.

Dr. Lisa White

Dr. Lisa White works as a coach/consultant for the North MS Education Consortium and has 27 years of experience working in public education in Mississippi. She has served as a special education teacher, high school math teacher, and FLE/ACT prep teacher; at the district level, she has served in the roles of Assistant Superintendent, Special Education Director, Federal Programs Director, District Test Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator, EL Coordinator, MTSS/TST Coordinator, Personnel Director, Professional Development Coordinator, Teacher Mentoring Program Director, Intervention Specialist, Behavior Specialist, and Project Director for the 21st CCLC after school program.

Dr. White worked 5 1/2 years at the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) as an Educator in Residence, coordinating the Mississippi Principal Evaluation System (MPES), the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), and a variety of other projects. She has served as part of Mississippi's Teaching and Leading Solutions Group (TLSG) and the Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) team for 4 years and worked closely with MDE and CEEDAR partners as Mississippi's Special Education Mentor Pilot Program Project Director during the 2021 – 2022 school year.

Chadijah Williams

Ms. Chadijah Williams, a motivational speaker, a mentor, a musician, and an educator, her name means trustworthy and most revered, or highly respected. Chadijah Williams is swiftly becoming known as a powerful force inspiring educators and young adults with her candid yet insightful conversations across the nation. Her mission is to guide and empower the next generation of educators and students to identify and live in their P.U.R.P.O.S.E. in and outside of the classroom. With several years of experience in education, she uses her experiences to help innovate solutions for educators, that will assure their confidence in ability to teach and connect with students.

As a first-generation college graduate, Chadijah has made it her priority to serve schools that serve under privileged communities, and create opportunities for their members. She ensures that educational leaders develop routines in and outside of the classroom, that will not only encourage self-care, but to restore peace to community at large.

Dr. Ashten Yost

Dr. Ashten Yost is a Special Education Professional Development Coordinator (Hearing Impaired) for the University of Mississippi and the Mississippi Department of Education. She has been an educator for 11 years, specializing in deaf education. In 2012, Ashten earned her Master of Science degree in Deaf Education from the University of Southern Mississippi and received her Doctor of Education degree in May 2022 from the University of Southern Mississippi.

