30TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

HONORING OUR PAST,
INVENTING OUR FUTURE

OCTOBER 6 & 7, 2023
ASHORE RESORT & BEACH CLUB
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To register, go to [www.msfcca.org/annualconference](http://www.msfcca.org/annualconference) or scan QR code.
UPLIFTING THE STRENGTHS OF FAMILY CHILD CARE: PAVING THE WAY FOR A PROMISING FUTURE

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Shayna Cook

Join us for a keynote speech that explores the transformative power of family child care in shaping a promising future for Maryland's children and families. This session delves into the unique strengths and advantages that family child care offers, highlighting the nurturing environment and personalized attention that foster children's growth and development. By recognizing the often underestimated contributions of family child care providers, this keynote aims to empower attendees to continue the work in this vital sector with support from the Maryland State Department of Education. Discover actionable strategies and collaborative approaches to improve the quality and accessibility of family child care, paving the way for a future where every child, family, and family child care provider thrives. Don't miss this opportunity to be part of a partnership that embraces the strengths of family child care and drives positive change in early childhood education.
ENGLISH

A. Understanding and Avoiding Licensing Issues
Louis Valenti & Sherry Tsigounis | HSN

Join expert leaders from Maryland State Department of Education Licensing Branch and discuss the common licensing non compliances and strategies to avoid them. Additionally, learn more about the regulation updates, new inspection surveys and discuss ways to strengthen customer service communication, as well as troubleshoot areas of licensing concern.

B. 7 Steps to Create Wealth, Caring for Children
Amina Jones Law & Conrad Brian Law | PRO

This workshop will explain 7 practical steps to establish, sustain and grow your family child care business. Long term goals will address financial wealth strategies.

C. The Practice of Slowing Down: Using Nature as a Role Model and Second Teacher
Heather Quinn | COMM

“Hurry Up!” Research proves and statistics reveal that our lives are busier than ever before. Caregivers and the children are feeling this, too. How do we slow down? The peace and calm you and the children in your care need is just outside your door! Nature is Enough!

D. Show Your Best Self, Marketing Your Family Childcare Business
Lisa Hendricks & Kristin Reel | PRO

Learn the best methods and strategies to promote your family childcare business. Engage with potential clients through digital, social media and print marketing. Build your individual elevator pitch to gain confidence in promoting your program.

SPANISH | ESPAÑOL

SA. Resiliencia Financiera 101: Seguimiento de Gastos + Herramienta de 20 Degrees
Paola Bonilla | PRO

Los participantes tendrán la oportunidad de editar en vivo la herramienta junto con un entrenador de 20 Degrees y salir con herramientas concretas, diseñadas específicamente para los aspectos comerciales de ECE. Participantes tendrán acceso a vídeos de capacitación para los proveedores para garantizar la comodidad y la facilidad de uso, también.
ENGLISH

E. The Pyramid Model goes to Family Child Care Homes
Ashley Fehringer & Sarulatha Nithyanandam | CD

The Pyramid Model for social emotional competence in infants and young children has been a corner stone for supporting children’s social emotional development and providing positive behavior support in child care centers and public pre K for years. However, the application of the model looks different in a family child care home. If you are interested in learning about how the Pyramid Model can support the social emotional and behavioral needs of children in your family child care home than this session is for you! In the session we will review key principles of the Pyramid Model and considerations for program-wide implementation, as well as, view examples of how the Pyramid Model is being used by family child care homes in Montgomery County. Participants will leave the training with new resources and ideas for how they can use the Pyramid Model in their own family child care homes.

F. An Overview of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program
Debbie Langer | PRO

Come and find out how to earn free money for work you are already doing! This workshop will provide an overview of the credential program and its advantages. You will learn about the requirements, documentation needed, and how to apply and submit your first time application, upgrade or renewal. We will also discuss the incentive programs that you will have access to once you are credentialed.

G. How to Set-Up Integrated STEAM Learning Centers
Akil Rahim | CURR

Participants in this workshop will use take-home materials to assemble their own integrated STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) leaning centers. This session also includes discussions about the old and new/21st century ways of teaching STEAM.

H. How Insurance Could Impact Your Business
Nancy Nicklow | HSN

In this session, there will be a discussion about the types of insurance you should have for your business- the difference between a personal liability on the homeowners policy and the general liability coverage.

SPANISH | ESPAÑOL

SB. Musica y Movimiento Como Herrramienta de Inclusion Educativa
Ligia Cajiao | CD

La vida sin tocar música es inconcebible para mí. Vivo mis sueños en la música. Veo mi vida en términos de música... Saco más alegría de la vida de la música” – Albert Einstein / Con este taller se pretende entender como la música y el movimiento son una herramienta de inclusión educativa e igualmente es un reflejo de la cultura, y aprender o pretender tocar un instrumento estimula las células cerebrales, mejorando funciones como la memoria, actividades motoras finas y gruesas, habilidades de razonamiento abstracto, lenguaje y destreza social-emocional.
I. Encouraging Healthy Social Emotional Development; Ages 3-5
Angie Sparks & Janelle Peoples | CD

This session will increase participants’ knowledge of healthy social and emotional development in early childhood. Through research highlighting the importance of social emotional development for children’s academic success, participants will gain an overview of healthy development, ways to recognize major milestones, indicators which may indicate possible delays, and strategies to use to promote social and emotional competencies in children ages three to five.

J. Guide to Self-Assessment: Using the Maryland EXCELS Standards to Guide Program Self-Assessment
Vickie DiSanto | PRO

In this training, participants will describe the differences between a self-assessment and a self-study, explore the Maryland EXCELS Self Assessment Tools, and receive guidance as to how to complete a Program Improvement Plan.

K. Situational Awareness in Leadership
Dr. Carlena Vaden | PRO

Busy days?... Constantly putting fires out? What is happening around you daily in your school (environment) with students, families, and staff? This session will explore the importance of leaders’ ability to identify, analyze, and address what is taking place around them.

L. Free and Low-Cost Professional Learning with Maryland Public Television
Krista Repass & Karla Thompson | PRO & CURR

Participants will explore a variety of synchronous and asynchronous online courses, in-person workshops and hybrid professional learning models that feature research-based PBS KIDS content. MPT’s free and low-cost professional development courses will help you learn more about media literacy and creating a learning environment that supports media literacy skills. Participants will learn how to plan thoughtful, developmentally appropriate ways to use media and technology and foster active learning with young children in accordance with COMAR.

SPANISH | ESPAÑOL

SC. Implicaciones fiscales, preparación de impuestos y recomendaciones para su negocio
Samir Garcia | PRO

En la sesión trataremos temas fiscales de actualidad con relación a negocios en el cuidado de infantes. Session will include the covering of topics related to businesses in the child care space.
LIGHTEN UP! HUMOR IS FUNDAMENTAL TO PROVIDING QUALITY CARE AND EDUCATION TO YOUNG CHILDREN

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Paul McGhee**

This keynote is entertaining and fun, but substantive, as well. It focuses on how keeping your sense of humor helps childcare providers and early childhood educators provide quality care and education day after day—even on the tough days. A good sense of humor is emphasized as an essential (emotional) survival skill for childcare providers, helping to provide the resilience needed to cope with the challenges that young children sometimes provide. The key to humor’s ability to boost emotional resilience will be shown to be its ability to generate a strong positive emotion within you . . . even when you’re having a tough day. This resilience is even more important in the midst of continuing COVID uncertainty and challenges.
M. The playful brain: development of young children’s humor
Dr. Paul McGhee | CD

This Power Point-based workshop describes basic developmental changes in young children’s humor from infancy until about age seven. The use of humor in your teaching efforts will also be discussed as an additional tool for boosting attention and building more positive emotion into learning—strengthening the love of learning that is already there.

N. From Screen time to Skill Building: Media Literacy for Every Generation
Krista Repass & Karla Thompson | CURR

On November 10, 1969, Sesame Street made its television debut. Over fifty years later, our mobile devices and screens have grown smaller as we gain access to more media and information. Strengthening technology fluency and media literacy skills for the adults in early childhood ecosystems is an important step to protecting the health and well-being of young children. During this session, participants will examine the ages and stages of media literacy for children under the age eight through a lens of developmentally appropriate use of media and technology in accordance with COMAR screen time policies. Through large group discussions and small group activities, participants will explore the purpose of traditional and digital media, and use MPT’s step-by-step framework, Media STEPs for Learning, to build activity plans as they identify and align learning goals with trusted content from PBS KIDS.

O. From Stress to Strengths
O’bette Jamison | PRO

You will come together for two hours to recognize your challenges, your ambitions, your strengths, and your desire to succeed. You will walk away with tools, strategies and an action plan to acknowledge your past and move forward in your future.

P. Financial Resiliency 101: Expense Tracking + 20 Degrees’ Proprietary Tool
Frances Paul | PRO

In this workshop, participants will learn how to use an expense tracker, created specifically for ECE providers, and how to maintain records, categorize spending and revenue, and highlight spending patterns or one-off events. Participants will have the opportunity to live edit the tool alongside a 20 Degrees coach and walk away with concrete tools, custom designed specifically for the business aspects of ECE, as well as training videos for the providers to ensure comfort and ease of use.

SPANISH | ESPAÑOL

SD. El Poder de las emociones y Calidad de vida postpandemia
Claudia Campos | HSN

Taller interactivo cuyo objetivo es brindar a las participantes información y herramientas para manejar las emociones en momentos de crisis y tener un balance de salud física y mental.
ENGLISH

Q. All Children Together: Making Sense of Sensory Supports
Sara Foura & Lindsay Muir | SN

Sensory supports can have huge impacts on the way a child interacts with peers, providers and their environment. This session will show you how to create your own sensory tools using inexpensive items, including a make and take with all materials provided. Participants will understand how to use sensory materials to support inclusive environments. Participants will engage with adaptive materials to apply inclusive practices.

R. Setting Goals for Higher Quality: An Exploration of Professional Goals for Early Childhood Educators
L’Ornya Bowie | PRO

This training explores the different types of goals that are pertinent to early childhood professionals and how to create SMART goals to guide improvement.

S. Tax implications for Child Care Providers
Samir Garcia | PRO

Seminar will immerse the attendant in topics related to taxation and fiscal implications of Child Care Providers. The presentation will include tips on preparation of fiscal reporting, good practices, and updates of matters critical to the correct preparation of tax returns. The seminar will be an interactive session.

T. Hope for the Future: Igniting Success
Thelma Hayes & Erica Bates | COMM

In this highly engaged workshop, the participants will take a deep dive into their professional goals for the future. Participants will explore the unique challenges faced by the 21st century provider in light of the ongoing changes and requirements within the field of ECE. Participants will develop a personal professional plan that meets their growth aspirations and provides much needed support within their community.

SPANISH | ESPAÑOL

SE. Vivir la vida por diseño
Nydia Tejada | PRO

En esta clase las familias aprenderán cómo hacer para que el dinero trabaje para ellos y no únicamente trabajar por el dinero por medio de una estrategia de ahorro que les ofrece potencial a ganar cuando el mercado sube y protección cuando el mercado cae, al mismo tiempo como prepararse para un retiro seguro y libre de impuestos y como estar mejor preparados para los imprevistos de la vida en caso de enfermedades terminales, crónicas ,críticas o lesiones críticas inclusive discapacidad. También enseñaré cómo incrementar sus ingresos en el negocio al minimizar los impuestos que pagan. Aprenderán la mejor manera de ahorrar para fondos educacionales.
ASHORE RESORT & BEACH CLUB
10100 Coastal Hwy, Ocean City, MD 21842
Website: https://ashoreresortoceancity.com/

2 Queen Beds
$149.00 - Thursday
$199.00 - Friday
$199.00 - Saturday

Check in time - 4:00PM (may be able to check in early depending upon availability of ready-to-use rooms)
Check out time - 11:00AM

- +11% State and Local tax on all rooms
- Extra person charge is $15.00 per night
- All guests will be responsible for contacting the hotel directly to secure overnight accommodations.
- Call their phone number, 410-524-3535 and request for the Maryland State Family Child Care Association group rates when making reservations. All reservations must be made on or before September 7, 2023.

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RATES

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Akil Rahim

Akil has been conducting family engagement training for Head Start (and other early childhood) staff and parents since 1995 and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art & math) training since 2007. Currently, he provides STEAM and family engagement training to programs in MD, DE, PA, NJ and NY. And, he has conducted training at early childhood conferences in the same states. In addition, he has a curriculum for teaching early childhood STEM and STEAM courses at Howard Community College in Columbia, MD. He holds a bachelor’s degree in science education and a master’s degree in HRD Education, Training and Development.

Amina Jones Law

Amina Jones Law has owned and operated a family child care business and two centers. She also worked as a legislative lobbyist and advocate for children and women. She majored in early education and business management. In 1991 she established Childcare Management Solutions LLC (CMS), worked as a college instructor and has provided classroom and online training for over 100,000 participants in the U.S. and abroad. In 2020 she received the Strengthening Business Practices (TOT) certification from the U.S. Administration for Children and Families and in 2022 the Certificate in Early Education Leadership (CEEL) from Harvard University.

Angie Sparks

Angie Sparks is a Professional Development Specialist with Abilities Network/Project ACT. She promotes high quality, inclusive early childhood education experiences for children of all abilities by providing training and consultation services to early childhood professionals. Through coaching, mentoring, advocating, and the provision of resources, she supports educators and families in fostering healthy social-emotional development and addressing the mental health and behavioral needs of young children. Angie has served as a Pre-K teacher and director, a fifth grade teacher, and a Curriculum Writer/Education Specialist for a for-profit corporate child care. She has worked in urban, suburban, and rural locations, which gives her a diverse perspective of children, families, and teachers.

Ashley Fehringer

Ashley Fehringer, MPH, is a senior early childhood training and coaching specialist with the Institute for Innovation and Implementation. In this role, she develops and manages training activities to support the implementation of best practices in infant and early childhood mental health in child care settings, with early intervention providers and with parents throughout the state of Maryland. Ashley comes to this work with seven years of experience in early childhood development and education, adult education and skills transfer, sexual and reproductive health, and public health research projects. She has worked with non-profits and state health departments in the US as well as in global development settings in Africa and Latin America.

Claudia Campos

Claudia Campos completed her studies in Clinical Psychologist who completed at the Catholic University in Bogotá, Colombia. She holds a Master’s degree in Sexual Education and Health Psychology. Additionally, Claudia earned her PHD and Master’s degree in Human Sexuality and Couple’s Therapy from the University of Tenerife in Spain. She is a certified Trauma Specialist and actively engages with her community as a leader. Furthermore, Claudia is recognized as a radio and TV personality, focusing on providing valuable content for the Latino community.

Carlena N. Vaden

Dr. Carlena, EdD is an education consultant that provides leadership training and professional workshops for educational organizations, public and private, and at national conferences. Dr. Vaden is the owner of Divine Illumination Agency LL. Dr. Carlena provides leadership training and professional workshops for educational organizations public and private and at national conferences. Dr. Vaden has been highlighted in the Early Childhood Report, February 2017 issue on leadership and professional development. Dr. Carlena is also a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Professional Development Trainer, MSDE Excels Program Quality Assessor and MSDE Accreditation Validator. Dr. Carlena is also an approved trainer with the Office of The Superintendent in the District of Columbia. It is Dr. Carlena’s desire to see that all students are given the proper tools and support needed to be successful in their educational journey.
Conrad Brian Law
Conrad is the CEO of Applied Learning Solutions LLC (ALS) and the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for Childcare Management Solutions. Conrad has worked as a business consultant with the Maryland Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide training and technical assistance to businesses and organizations. He has also taught online entrepreneurial courses for 65+ colleges through YouGotClass.com since 2010. Conrad is also an approved Strengthening Business Practices (TOT) trainer and a Certified Online Instructor (COI) and Project Management Professional (PMP).

Erica Bates
With over 20 years of classroom experience and an Educational Specialist Degree in education, Erica Bates strives to generate a joy of learning. She holds a Maryland Educator Certificate in Early Childhood Education PreK-3 and an Association of Christian Schools International Educator’s Certificate for elementary level. As a passionate and dedicated educator, Erica continues to seek to apply her extensive experience and knowledge in the area of Early Childhood education to create stimulating and enriching learning environments that provide children with a solid educational foundation. While working in various family childcare programs, Erica designs, delivers, and modifies instructional techniques that promote active learning, and improves student’s performance to meet the needs of students with varied learning styles. Erica is currently pursuing her Ed. Doctorate in curriculum development.

Debbie Langer
Debbie Langer is the Lead Training Approval Coordinator within the Workforce Advancement Branch in the Division of Early Childhood. She has always had a passion for early childhood and has over 40 years of experience working in the field that includes teaching Kindergarten, child care center staff, family child care provider, trainer, Director of a Child Care Resource Center, and now as the Lead Training Approval Coordinator. Debbie has 2 grown boys that are the light of her life and is anxiously awaiting that moment when she can become a grandmother!

Frances Paul
Frances Paul is the Associate Director of ECE Financial Resilience for 20 Degrees. Professionally she held various positions at Child Care centers in the Washington Metropolitan Area before transitioning into the role of a Family Provider in Montgomery County. She has over 20+ years experience in Early Childhood Education. Frances has held positions in both Federal and city government, and private industry. She brings her knowledge from these sectors, and her experience as an Early Educator and entrepreneur, to assist providers in being financially efficient and empowered business owners. Frances has sat on boards, participated in committees and think tanks, and volunteered for different events and businesses in and around the Washington Metropolitan Area.

For Frances sharing knowledge through teaching is her Super Power, and learning is reciprocal. Her life’s motto as an Early Educator and business owner is: “Mediocrity is Accepted, Excellence is Rare.” ~ Don Cheadle.

Frances holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from the University of Maryland, College Park. Outside of work, Frances supports the arts and is an avid music lover. She also volunteers with the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

Heather Quinn
Heather Quinn is a Montessori trained child-guide, certified birth-6 years old specializing in nature-based outdoor learning and curriculum. She has been a director, lead teacher, and program coordinator for over 20 years. Heather holds a Level 2 Certification with ERAFANS as well as an active member, advocate, and facilitator for their programs. She is the founder of Hummingbird Hill Nature Preschool and Programs, a MSDE-licensed family early childhood program for 3-5-year-olds. Additionally, Heather a founding member of Nature Learning Collective of Maryland, where she develops nature-based teacher training, professional development workshops, and conferences.

Janelle Peoples
*to follow
Karla Thompson
Karla Thompson, Director, PreK-12 Learning Design, oversees digital content learning design for early care programs and PreK-12 classrooms, including curriculum development and community engagement. She develops content and manages the production process for interactive lessons, standards-based educational websites, and educator support materials. Ms. Thompson leads the design and development of digital professional development content and online courses for pre-service and continued training hosted on MPT’s education portal, Thinkport.org.

Krista Respass
Krista Respass, Managing Director, Early Childhood Education Services, oversees all grant-funded early childhood and after-school education projects. This includes coordinating the activities of professional and technical personnel to develop and implement various professional development models, student learning resources, and family engagement activities in a way that is relevant within Maryland communities. Ms. Respass leads her team in developing and conducting statewide professional development sessions in early childhood education practices, particularly in the area of media and technology integration and curricula.

Kristin Reel
Kristin Reel is the Family Support Center Director for the Howard County Office of Children and Families, previous training coordinator with 17 years of experience in early education. She is a ToT trainer and certified in family child care business programming.

L'Ornya Bowie
L’Ornya Bowie is a Quality Assurance Coordinator for MSDE’s Maryland EXCELS. Ms. Bowie has her M. Ed in Education NK - 8th grade and more than 25 years of experience in the field of early care and education; serving as a classroom teacher for infants, toddlers, and two’s, a center director as well as multi-program oversight in both the corporate and not for profit child care sectors.

Ligia Cajiao
Ligia Cajiao, originally from Cali, Colombia, currently resides in Maryland with her husband of 31 years, Jesus. With over 30 years of experience in education, Ligia is an MSDE-approved trainer and Family Case Manager with Sheppard Pratt’s Linkages to Learning Program. Her previous roles include Family Child Care Quality Enhancement Coordinator at the Montgomery County Child Care Resource & Referral Center, NAFCC Bilingual Observer, Owner of a Spanish Immersion Family Child Care Program, Early Childhood Consultant and Instructor at The Instituto de Educacion Infantil, and Bilingual Professional Development Specialist at The Council of Professional Recognition, among others.

Ligia's expertise lies in Coaching, Mentoring, and teaching MSDE-approved training in Spanish. She has extensive knowledge of State and National Child Care Credential Programs such as Maryland Excels, Maryland Child Care Credential, and NAFCC Accreditation. Ligia is actively involved in the Latino Child Care Association of Maryland and enjoys serving her community.

Lindsay Muir
Lindsay earned her Masters in Education in Learning and Technology from Western Governors University. Lindsay has worked in the early education field for 11 years. Ten of those years were spent in a variety of roles supporting Special Education classrooms, students, and teachers. Lindsay joined Project ACT in 2022.

Lisa Hendricks
Lisa Hendricks is a Early Childhood Program Specialist for the Howard County Office of Children and Families. She has 15 years in early education experience. She is ToT trained and certified trainer in Family Child Care Business programming.
Louis Valenti
After graduating in 1978 from UMBC with a degree in Social Work and Psychology, Louis worked in the child care field as a Social Work Associate in the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, in all areas of child welfare. In 1988, he accepted a position as a Licensing Specialist with the Office of Child Care for 14 years. Louis worked as a Licensing Supervisor before becoming a Regional Manager in January, 2003. In December, 2018, he assumed the position of Licensing Branch Chief in the Division of Early Childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education. Louis looks forward to continuing to work with the high quality early care and education system in Maryland.

Nancy Nicklow
Nancy has lived her whole life in Pasadena, Maryland and feels a real connection to her community. Nancy lives there with her husband Jerry and son Dalton. Nancy started at Huff Insurance at the age of 14, working summers and holidays. After graduating from Salisbury University, she started full time as a personal lines’ insurance customer service representative. Nancy earned her life and health license since she was 19 years old and her property and casualty license at the age of 22. She moved into the Commercial lines department in 2000. While being pregnant with 2 children, she earned her Certified Property & Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) designation in 2002 after 4 years in the program. But Nancy did not stop there; she went on to earn the Accredited Advisor of Insurance (AAI), and the Construction Risk & Insurance Specialist (CRIS) designations in the insurance industry. Nancy is now teaching other insurance professionals at the Independent Insurance Association of Maryland parts of the AAI and ASCR designations. Since becoming President of Huff Insurance, Nancy has not forgotten her commitment to the community. She has served on the Board of Directors and President of the Independent Insurance agents association of Maryland, and represents the State of Maryland on the Agent’s Council for Technology, and was on the National board for 3 years. In May of 2014, Nancy was awarded the Insurance Advocate of the year, by the Small Business Administration. In addition, Nancy serves on the board of the Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce, currently in the role of president. Also, Nancy is the President of her chapter of Beta Sigma Phi sorority. Nancy is also the State National Director of Maryland on the IIABA’s Board.

Nydia Tejada
Nydia was a stay-at-home mom of 6 kids for 13 years. In May 2015 she was introduced to the financial industry. She became the first Latin woman in the company to achieve a Regional Field Director position in 2021. Nydia is a multiple 6 figure earner. She is also a multiple time Deferred Compensation earner. It has been an honor for her to be able to train many women to become 6-figure earners as well. She specializes in Tax Free Retirement, College funding, and Risk Free savings. Nydia helps minimize taxes and increase your income, and much more that can benefit the individuals, business owners, or corporations.

O'bette Jamison
O'bette Jamison, Executive Director of GBJ Education Services, has spent more than fifteen years in the K-12 education industry. She specializes in program design and management, coaching and development, and work group facilitation. Her area of focus is building healthy relationships by bringing awareness and the opportunity to have critical conversations at work, home, and in the community.

Paola Bonilla
Paola Bonilla is the Social Finance Manager for 20 Degrees. She has over 5 years of experience working within the nonprofit sector with a focus in development/fundraising. As Social Finance Manager, she supports and provides one-on-one coaching for 20 Degrees’ Financial Resilience program participants. Paola has deployed our Early Childcare Curriculum in Spanish. A jack of all trades, Paola has experience managing annual funds and scholarship programs, transitioning nonprofits from one Customer Relations Management (CRM) system to another, and supporting all aspects of fundraising and development offices. Paola has demonstrated an ability to foster relationships and connect individuals to missions that best align with their core values. She is a fluent Spanish speaker and received a Bachelor of Arts in French and Psychology from Albright College.
Paul McGhee
Paul is a developmental psychologist who spent 20 years teaching at the university level before quitting his academic job to become a full-time professional speaker. He has published 5 books and many scientific articles on children’s humor and is internationally known for his own research in this area, as well as on practical applications of humor. Paul have received lifetime achievement awards from a) the International Society for Humor Studies, b) Oakland University and c) the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor for both his basic research on humor and laughter and work on practical daily applications of humor.

Samir Garcia
Samir Garcia is a CPA with expertise in Child Care provider tax reporting.

Sara Foura
Sara Foura, M.Ed. is the Program Manager at Abilities Network/Project ACT. Sara has been supporting adults who work with young children for 10 years. Sara has a Master’s Degree in Education in Teaching and Curriculum from Pennsylvania State University. Sara has worked in the early education field in a variety of roles including teacher, director, consultant, trainer and quality rating specialist. Sara has been working with Project ACT for over 8 years with Early Childhood Professionals.

Saru Nithyanandam
As a passionate advocate for young children, youth, and their families, Saru serves as the PBIS – Early Childhood Program Specialist with Montgomery County Child Care Support Services. Saru has been in the ECE profession for more than twenty years and has more than twelve years of experience serving in an Early Head Start program in different leadership roles. She holds bachelor’s degrees in Education, Chemistry, a master’s degree in English literature, and several certifications in Early Childhood Education, including the Pyramid model, RIE – Foundational Course, CLASS, and as well as in Practice-Based Coaching. In her current role with the Montgomery County Child Care Support Services, Saru provides coordination and oversight of the implementation of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Pyramid model to the childcare providers, parents, and other ECE community providers. She is also a certified yoga teacher who teaches yoga and heartfulness meditation to the members of the community. Saru’s personal mission is “To motivate and empower dedicated individuals to gain, develop and enhance their professional and life skills and to make a positive impact on the future society”

Shayna Cook
Dr. Shayna Cook is the Assistant State Superintendent of the Division of Early Childhood at MSDE. Dr. Cook most recently served as the director of the Early Childhood Systems at the Bainum Family Foundation where she supported the development and implementation of their programmatic-level strategy by translating lessons learned from the early childhood education field to effective knowledge building, practice, an policies. In addition, Dr. Cook recently served as the senior advisor in the Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She served in this capacity through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act Program. Prior to these roles, she served as a policy analyst for New America, where she focused on the early childhood education workforce, learning technologies, family engagement, mental health, and school discipline practices. Dr. Cook has also served as a summer policy fellow at Zero to Three.

She began her career as an early childhood educator and has taught third grade, Head Start, and prekindergarten in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). Dr. Cook served as a grade level chair in DCPS and managed quality assurance for Head Start classrooms. She also taught pre-K at an early childhood development center in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Dr. Cook received a doctorate in Education Policy and Leadership from American University. She holds a Master of Education from American University as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Classics with a minor in English from Howard University.
**Thelma Hayes**

Thelma Hayes holds a MS Ed. with a specialization in Reading and Literacy. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in special education at Liberty University. As an educator for over 25 years, Thelma has served as a classroom teacher working with students of diversity and special needs. She is a Family Child Care mentor and consultant who supports and encourages the inclusion of all children in the learning process. She is a recipient of the Howard County Celebrating Success Perennial Award. She currently serves as a mentor and facilitator in Howard, Montgomery, and Prince Georges County while working with teachers in the classroom to support the best practices for creating an enriched learning environment. She is an approved MSDE trainer and works directly with both center and family childcare staff. Thelma has presented workshops at NAEYC, NAFCC, ACSI, Arundel Connections, and many other local and regional/state Child Care conferences.

**Vickie DiSanto**

Vickie DiSanto is a Quality Assurance Coordinator for MSDE’s Maryland EXCELS. Ms. DiSanto has earned the degree of M.A.Ed in Early Childhood Education. She has over thirty years of experience in the early childhood field, both as a Head Start teacher-home visitor in Pennsylvania and as a child care director in Maryland. She has also served as an adjunct professor at Montgomery College.
An application for training voucher can be submitted for:

- Pre-Service training
- Registration at statewide and national child care conferences

Child care providers participating in the Credential Program at level two or higher are eligible to receive up to $400 each year as long as funds are available. Requests for training voucher or reimbursement, must not exceed $400.

The following are not eligible for training voucher/reimbursement:

- Training that has not been approved by MSDE according to COMAR 13A.14.09
- Fees incurred for training
- Association membership fees
- CDA credential/ CDA renewal fees

Source: Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) - Division of Early Childhood

If you are applying for a training voucher at MSDE for the MSFCCA Annual Conference, please follow these steps:

1. Please go to https://onestop.md.gov/forms/msde-application-for-training-voucher-608af42b6bce330222af6b5ca.
2. Click “Apply Online”. Log in if you have an account or click “Register” to create one.
3. Fill out the form and input the following information:
   - OCC assigned approval number: CWO-160684
   - Title: Honoring Our Past, Inventing Our Future
   - Date: 10/06/2023
   - Training Organization Name: Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA)
   - Address: 10612 Harpoon Hill, Columbia, MD 21044
   - Please choose an option: check “Provide a link to conference/pre-service training advertisement”
   - Conference/Pre-Service Advertisement URL Link: https://www.msfcca.org/annualconference
4. Click “Submit”.

ARE YOU USING A VOUCHER?

Please forward your training voucher approval to marylandstatefamilychildcare@gmail.com once you receive it in your email. Your application for your voucher will hold your spot until your Validated Voucher is received by the Conference Committee. If your MSDE Voucher is not received by September 5, 2023, you have until September 30, 2022 to send in a personal check or credit card information to keep your spot. If not, your registration will be forfeited.

ALL vouchers must be received by September 5, 2023. The attendee is responsible for MSDE Vouchers, it is not the responsibility of the MSFCCA Conference Committee.