



# Early Childhood Conference

Michigan District, LCMS

August 7, 2026

Agenda

**St. Lorenz Worship and Event Center - 850 W Genesee St. Frankenmuth**

## **Doors Open @ 8:00 - Light Breakfast**

<b>8:45 AM</b>	Welcome / Devotion / Announcements
<b>9:15</b>	Keynote - Dr. Joy Roberts
<b>10:15</b>	Break
<b>10:30</b>	Sectional #1
<b>11:30</b>	Lunch
<b>12:30 PM</b>	Sectional #2
<b>1:30</b>	Break
<b>1:45</b>	Keynote - Dr. Joy Roberts
<b>2:45</b>	Closing



Sectional titles and descriptions follow on pages 2-3.

*SCECHs (4 Total), training hours, and MiRegistry hours will all be available. Please see the conference booklet for more information and steps to apply for the different hours.*



## Each Sectional is Offered at Both 10:30 and 12:30 (Exception - Joy Roberts Sessions)

Speaker	Session Title	Room
Joy Roberts	<p><b>10:30 Session - Little Brains, Big Feelings</b> - Discover how young children’s brains process emotions and stress—and why their reactions can feel so big. Learn simple ways to recognize and respond to challenging behaviors with empathy and calm, modeling the same patience and understanding Christ shows us. <b>IT/PK/EL/AD</b></p> <p><b>12:30 Session - Building Blocks for School Readiness: Nurturing Hearts, Minds, and Character in Early Learners</b> - Before children can learn, they need to feel safe, loved, and ready. This session explores how relational readiness and character formation prepare young learners to thrive. Guided by the ages and stages of early childhood development, educators will learn practical tools—like daily check-ins and emotional vocabulary—to help children build confidence, empathy, and self-control. Faith-based discussion will highlight how virtues like kindness, patience, and gentleness mirror the fruit of the Spirit and strengthen both home and classroom communities. <b>IT/PK/EL/AD</b></p>	
Jen Welch	<b>Literature for Littles and More</b> - Join me as we explore fun, hands-on booktivities based on some of my favorite board books for infants, toddlers, and twos. Bring your favorite board book along, and we can brainstorm some new activities as well! <b>IT</b>	
Karla Hardies	<b>Create and Communicate - Canva for Educators</b> - Elevate your classroom communication with Canva’s powerful, free tools for teachers. From newsletters and posters, you’ll learn how to make eye-catching designs that enhance communication and creativity. Bring your laptop and your imagination—this session is hands-on and fun! (Teachers are eligible for a free Pro Account with Canva. Sign up today to be ready for this exciting sectional!) <b>PS/EL/AD</b>	
Ashley Keller	<b>Music Made Easy: Fun and Foundational Ways to Teach Music to Infants, Toddlers, and Twos</b> - This interactive session explores simple research-based musical activities designed especially for infants, toddlers, and twos. These playful experiences support cognitive, language, and social-emotional development. Come ready to sing, move, and make music as you discover easy ways to bring joyful learning to your youngest learners! <b>IT</b>	
Julian Petzold	<b>Best Practices in School and ECC Safety</b> - Participants will receive and learn a framework that can be used in any crisis, whether at school or anywhere in life. The framework participants learn will help them remain calm and make adaptive decisions with ease in times of crisis. The framework participants learn will enable them to make accurate and adaptive decisions when: "This is really happening." (That phrase will make sense to anyone who attends.) <b>IT/PK/EL/AD</b>	
Robyn Adams	<b>Space Matters</b> - In this sectional we will discuss how structuring our classroom can enhance children's social competence, independence, and self-regulation. How you organize both the physical spaces in your classroom and your time in the classroom matters and can help or hinder children as they learn important social skills. <b>PK/EL</b>	
Brenda Sievert	<b>Back to the Basics: A Day in the Life of a Preschooler</b> - Simple truths of what a little one needs from their very first school experiences, socially, emotionally, and most importantly, spiritually. <b>PK</b>	
Mindy English	<b>Multi-Sensory Learning in Early Math</b> - Learn how to make your math lessons hands-on and concrete for your littlest learners. Help them to dive deep into math concepts by using their whole body and all their senses, so their brains can hold on to that information, but also make it fun, while differentiating for all the different learners in your classroom. <b>PK/EL</b>	
	<b>Continued on Next Page...</b>	

Kevin Zoromski	<b>Reducing Challenging Behaviors: Understanding A Toddler's World</b> - From tantrums to biting, toddler behaviors can be frustrating! This program will focus on learning more about typical social-emotional skills that develop during toddlerhood and how to help support these crucial skills. Learn ways to manage difficult feelings and develop strategies for reducing tantrums, biting, and other challenging behaviors. <b>IT</b>	
Travis Grulke	<b>Biblical Leadership Lessons Through Picture Books</b> - We'll dive into about 40 picture books to grow as leaders and tie each of them to a scripture verse as we learn how to use these texts to help instill essential traits/skills in those we serve. - If you attended last year, you heard much of this already, so you can pick another sectional:) <b>IT/PK/EL/AD</b>	
Melody Copus	<b>How to Handle Big Feelings</b> - This training helps educators support preschool-aged children as they learn to understand and manage big feelings through developmentally appropriate social-emotional strategies. Participants will explore practical tools like emotion coaching, calming routines, and sensory-based supports that help children regulate their bodies and emotions. <b>IT/PK/AD</b>	
Valerie Eby	<b>Rhythm and Play</b> - Inspire students and expand brain power with classroom rhythm activities and game play. <b>IT/PK/EL</b>	
Lisa May	<b>The Law and Gospel of GSRP</b> - In this session, participants will talk about the "Law & Gospel" of GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program) and how it can apply to your ministry. The "Law" being the rigid state requirements we must follow, and the "Gospel" being the joy and grace we bring to the classroom regardless of the paperwork. Learn what has and hasn't worked for us in our first three years with GSRP. <b>PK/AD</b>	
Kelley Fehn	<b>TONE... It Matters</b> - Tone matters more than we sometimes realize—especially in an early childhood classroom where little ears are always listening and learning. In this sectional, we'll explore how our voice tone can shape classroom culture, guide behavior, and create an environment where children feel safe, respected, and ready to learn. From calm redirection to joyful encouragement, the way we say something often matters just as much as what we say. Join us as we reflect, laugh a little, and discover how a thoughtful tone can turn everyday moments into powerful teaching opportunities. <b>IT/PK/EL/AD</b>	
Greta Bower	<b>Bringing Worship to Life for Young Children</b> - Worship can be engaging and enjoyable for young children! In this session, we'll discuss age-appropriate chapel formats and classroom ideas to keep kids interested in worship and learning more about God's word. <b>IT/PK/AD</b>	
Roxanne Schmerheim	<b>Making time for You in the Midst of your Ministry</b> - Caring for yourself in ministry is essential—not optional. It prevents burnout, sustains long-term service, honors your God-given worth, and allows you to lead by example. Self-care is about balance, healthy boundaries, and faithful stewardship. It is not selfish; it is necessary. Just as we tend to our families with intention and care, we must also tend to ourselves so we can serve with strength, integrity, and longevity. Join us for a few minutes of self-care and tips to make it part of your routine. <b>IT/PK/EL/AD</b>	

Key for sectional ages:

IT - Infant/Toddler

PK - Preschool/Kindergarten

EL - Elementary (grades 1-3)

AD - Administration