

# Iowa District West & Iowa District East Early Childhood Conference

The Conference Planning Committee would like to extend a warm invitation to join us on Friday, August 2, for the annual Iowa District West and East Lutheran Early Childhood Conference! The theme for this year's conference is "Walk in the Light."



Take a moment now to reserve this date by placing it in your personal and staff calendars. Once again, this conference is a one-of-a-kind event for Iowa West and East early childhood ministries as it is the only training event you will attend that helps you grow as a Lutheran educator. Not only is this event for you and staff, but we encourage you to invite your pastor(s), DCE, board members, and others associated with your Early Childhood Center. The committee has put together a list of top-notch speakers who are experts in their field and you and your staff will walk away being enriched and inspired.

Jesus is the light of the world and as we lead children and families in our early childhood centers we want to share the love of Jesus with them so they can "Walk in the Light." Our theme verse is 1 John 1:7 "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." As an early childhood educator, you have a unique opportunity to not only educate young children but also to point children and their families to the "light," that great news that Jesus loves them and has given His life for them to purify them from all sin. As we "walk in the light," we are guided to live differently than the world.

All the registration information is included with this letter. If you have any questions, please give Jan or Rhonda a call.

**The registration deadline is July 12.** Please respect this deadline so that we are able to plan accordingly.

In the coming days, we pray for God's blessings on the end of your school year. Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you at the Conference on Friday, August 2, 2024.

Lori Jenks, St. Paul Preschool, Ames – Chairperson  
Jackie Illian, Immanuel Preschool, Cedar Falls  
Kim Powell, Mt. Olive Preschool, Des Moines  
Karen Ritter, Good Shepherd Preschool, Eldora  
Heather Schmitz, Tiny Treasures Preschool, Gloria Dei, Urbandale  
Jodi VanEtten, Lutheran Interparish School and Preschool, Williamsburg

Rhonda Mohr, Iowa District West Assistant to the President for Education, Youth and Family Life  
Jan Doellinger, Iowa District East Assistant to the President - Schools

## SECTIONAL A – 10:15 AM

### A1. This Little Light of Mine Presenter: Steve and Seana Wilcken

Music is a great way to teach, learn, and celebrate the joy of our Lord. In this session, we plan to share our experience with bringing this joy to students. We will share songs and motions to help teach of God's love as well as show ways to get students involved with simple instruments / noise makers. We will also explore ways to bring this joy to the students even if you do not feel that this is your strength. Let's sing Praise to our God.

Steve and Seana have been involved with the music ministry and education at St. Paul, Ames, for many years. Seana has been teaching Sunday School and leading opening for the preschool - 2nd grade for over 30 years. Steven has been leading music / opening for the older students for the past 20 years, as well as currently serving as Sunday School Superintendent. Together, they have been leading the music for VBS for the past 8 years.

### A2. Jesus: In the Morning, At the Noontime, When the Sun Goes Down Presenter: Andrea Lohman

In our classrooms, we want to be about sharing Jesus' love with our students all the time, but we need to work at it. During our time together, we will share, brainstorm and learn new strategies for creating a space where Jesus is integrated in all we do. When people visit our classrooms, we will then receive the best affirmation possible, "I can tell this is a Jesus place."

After serving in Lutheran schools for 30 years, Andrea retired in June 2024. She is still passionate about supporting and encouraging early childhood educators as they work hard to share God's love with young children and their families.

### A3. Message in a Backpack Presenter: Dr. Annette Anschutz

Message in a Backpack is a one-page flyer that provides families with information about a variety of topics to help them become informed about appropriate early childhood growth, development, expectations, and timely topics, along with tips for extending learning at home. Participants will work together to design messages for a variety of topics, then share their work with one another so that everyone has several examples to take back to their classrooms.

Dr. Anschutz holds a B.A. in social work, an M.A. in family life science, an M.Ed. with an early childhood emphasis, and an Ed.D. in early childhood education. She has taught and directed early childhood programs for over 35 years. Since 2009, she has served at Concordia University, Nebraska. Currently semi-retired, she serves as graduate early childhood program director. She has three sons, two daughters-in-law, and three granddaughters. She is married to Concordia alum and Liturgical Artist, Mark Anschutz. She has written several articles and enjoys visiting other early childhood programs across the United States as learner, speaker, and consultant.

**A4. Pushing Pride in Preschool and Beyond: Scholastic's "Joyous Boom" of Queer Literature and the Christian's Call to Bring the Joyous Light of Truth**  
**Presenter: Rev. Jonathan Conner**

"What literature you provide [children] with, and how you talk about both literature and identity, can have an immense, life-changing impact on the young people in your life." As an early childhood educator or pastor, you know this statement is true. What you might not know is that it was taken from Scholastic's "Read with Pride" Resource Guide that goes on to celebrate a "joyous boom of queer literature for children and young adults" that they are enthusiastically pushing into preschools, schools, libraries, and classrooms. In this sectional, Pastor Jonathan Conner will share excerpts from these books as he encourages and equips us not to bring a "joyous boom" of pride into our classrooms, but the joyous light of truth in Jesus.

Pastor Jonathan Conner loves words— like propitiation (1 John 4:10), splanchnizomai ("compassion" in Luke 15:10), and chesed ("steadfast love" in Exodus 34:6). Those words will put fire in your veins. Reading this paragraph about Pastor Conner's years in the ministry, along with the boards/committees on which he's served, conferences at which he's spoken, articles he's written, and master's degrees he's earned will turn your blood to sludge and your brain to mush. So stop reading about Pastor Conner and spend time with God's words. Crunch them in your teeth. Drink them as espresso for your soul. Slam them as Jolt for your mind. Ingest words that matter. And then confess them in your church, family, school, and beyond.

**A5. IQ4K- Implementing Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)**  
**Presenter: Erin Casey & Casey Shelton**

Join us in learning more about Iowa's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Iowa Quality for Kids. IQ4K provides five levels of quality (building blocks) that programs can achieve and continue to improve on. By implementing Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), IQ4K allows programs to assess where they currently are across all areas of programming and devise a structured plan to increase the overall level of program quality. In this session, you will learn more about the CQI model within IQ4K and how to get started today!

Erin and Casey are both IQ4K Specialists with Childcare Resource and Referral of Central Iowa. They are part of a statewide group who meet to support early childhood and school age programs, community partners and Childcare Resource and Referral Staff to understand the IQ4K system, the benefits it brings to programs and to engage programs in CQI work. With nearly 25 years of combined experience working with Quality Initiatives, they look forward to sharing IQ4K information with you!

**A6. Building Relationships with Parents**  
**Presenter: Heather Schmitz**

We will dive into generational differences in parenting and parenting styles. We will look at different situations and discuss how to handle them. This will be an active participation sectional.

Heather Schmitz is the director at Tiny Treasures Lutheran Preschool in Urbandale. With 18 years in the ECE field, she has dealt with many parents. She believes that building relationships with parents and caregivers is just as important as relationships with students.

**A7. Technology: the kids might know more than you**  
**Presenter: Jackie Illian**

Technology can be beneficial to use in the classroom but getting started can be tricky and overwhelming. In this sectional, we will discuss different apps that you can use, how to implement QR codes, and how to successfully integrate other aspects of technology.

Jackie is the preschool teacher and Parish and Preschool Administrator at Immanuel Lutheran in Cedar Falls, Iowa. She has served at Immanuel for seven years but has been in Lutheran Education for 27 years. She has held a variety of roles in her 27 years of ministry. She earned a master's degree in educational leadership in 2009. Jackie has always had the focus of making education exciting and fun for the children in her classroom.

## **SECTIONAL B – 11:20 AM**

**B1. This Little Light of Mine**  
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**B4. The Three Pillars of Success**  
**Presenter: Dr. Drew Gerdes**

Research continues to point to the value that self-regulation, executive functions, and social-emotional learning have in laying the foundation for success in the lives of young children. Join us for an in-depth look at each of these areas, how to foster them in your classroom, and how to best prepare children as they walk their journey into adulthood.

Dr. Drew Gerdes serves as Assistant Professor of Education and Director of the Undergraduate Early Childhood Education Program at Concordia University, Nebraska. With nearly 3 decades of experience, Dr. Gerdes has taught and led schools in Shanghai, China, and the LCMS Missouri District. With a great desire to help teachers grow as life-long learners, Dr. Gerdes has been a sought-after speaker around the globe on topics of early childhood pedagogy, leadership, and Lutheran school ministry. He is a regular author, consultant, and contributor to materials for LCMS School Ministry, Lutheran Education Association, Lutheran Education Association – Asia, and Concordia Publishing House.

**B5. Love and Logic**  
**Presenter: Lori Kilburg**

Love and Logic provides positive techniques for maintaining calm and effective classrooms. It helps teachers and parents teach and raise strong and positive children. It contributes to creating a calmer, happier home or classroom that's free from power struggles, yelling and nagging, and filled with joy and mutual respect.

My name is Lori Kilburg, currently teaching preschool at Trinity Lutheran School in Davenport, Iowa. I am in my 16th year of teaching 4 year-old preschool. I am the Department Chair at TLS and have a team of 3 other teachers. My love for teaching and young children has helped me to continue on a path of guiding young children in their learning years, helping them to have a foundation complete with God's Word and a love of learning.

**B6. Go...and be the Light!**  
**Presenter: Heidi Rains**

In this make-it and take-it session, we will look at light and darkness through the eyes of a preschooler. While we are sinners and live in a dark world, God is our light and gives us forgiveness. As we look at 1 John chapter 1 for a devotion, participants will leave this session with a lesson and activities that they can take back to their classrooms.

Heidi Rains graduated from Grandview University with a degree in elementary education, with endorsements in early childhood and reading. Heidi is the Preschool and Admissions Director at Mount Olive Lutheran Church and School in Des Moines. Prior to her call at Mount Olive, she taught kindergarten in Des Moines Public Schools.

**B7. Pastoral Oversight of the Christian Preschool**  
**Presenter: Rev. Paul Dare**

There are so many things a pastor needs to do. It's easy to leave a preschool/daycare to manage itself. However, in this sectional, we will discuss modern issues for Christian education that require a pastor's attention and leadership. In addition, we will examine materials from our church body to help a Christian preschool embody your church's mission.

Pastor Paul Dare has served in connection with a Lutheran school/preschool for his 24 years in ministry. He has a deep love for the blessings of Christian education and sees it as an avenue for mission. He currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Spirit Lake.

## **SECTIONAL C – 2:05 PM**

**C1. Love and Logic**  
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**C2. Becoming Screen Wise: Understanding Screens' Toxic Tactics, Soberly Seeing Their Adverse Effects, and Confidently Charting a Wise Way Forward**  
**Presenter: Rev. Jonathan Conner**

The phone in your pocket has a message for you: You are being conditioned. Your imagination is being manipulated and your eyes are being monetized. The more time you spend with me (and other individualized screens), the more your mental health suffers. And it's worse for kids. Join Pastor Conner as he presents sober, eye-popping data on the toxic tactics and adverse effects of the individualized screen in the classroom and the home and then calls us to a courageous, wise way forward in the un-pixelated, three-dimensional world.

Pastor Jonathan Conner loves words— like propitiation (1 John 4:10), splanchnizomai (“compassion” in Luke 15:10), and chesed (“steadfast love” in Exodus 34:6). Those words will put fire in your veins. Reading this paragraph about Pastor Conner's years in the ministry, along with the boards/committees on which he's served, conferences at which he's spoken, articles he's written, and master's degrees he's earned will turn your blood to sludge and your brain to mush. So stop reading about Pastor Conner and spend time with God's words. Crunch them in your teeth. Drink them as espresso for your soul. Slam them as Jolt for your mind. Ingest words that matter. And then confess them in your church, family, school, and beyond.

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**C4. The Art of Observing and Listening to Children**  
**Presenter: Andrea Lohman**

Children are God's amazing creations. As early childhood educators, our privilege is to observe and listen to see and hear their perspective of God's world. During our time together, we will pause to reflect on our observation and listening skills when we are with children. We will consider how we can incorporate meaningful, enriching practices to create environments where they know they are truly valued as His children.

After serving in Lutheran schools for 30 years, Andrea retired in June 2024. She is still passionate about supporting and encouraging early childhood educators as they work hard to share God's love with young children and their families.

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**C6. What's New with Jesus Time - Enduring Faith Early Childhood Training**  
**Presenter: Jackie Illian**

Sharing the love of Jesus in your early childhood classroom takes many forms. CPH has resources to help! This session will showcase the new Early Childhood level of Enduring Faith Religion Curriculum. We'll talk about how it compares to and aligns with the Pre-K level of Enduring Faith as well as look at other CPH resources that support faith development in the early childhood classroom.

Jackie is the preschool teacher and Parish and Preschool Administrator at Immanuel Lutheran in Cedar Falls, Iowa. She has served at Immanuel for seven years but has been in Lutheran Education for 27 years. She has held a variety of roles in her 27 years of ministry. She earned a master's degree in educational leadership in 2009. Jackie has always had the focus of making education exciting and fun for the children in her classroom. Jackie has gone to CPH to receive specific training instructions from the publisher to make this sectional available.



# Keynote Speaker

Dr. Drew Gerdes serves as Assistant Professor of Education and Director of the Undergraduate Early Childhood Education Program at Concordia University, Nebraska. With nearly three decades of experience, Dr. Gerdes has taught and led schools in Shanghai, China, and the LCMS Missouri District.

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## Schedule

- 8:00 AM** | Registration / Refreshments
- 8:25 AM** | Welcome
- 8:30 AM** | Open by Rev. Paul Dare
- 9:00 AM** | Keynote 1 - Mr. Rogers Was Right!
- 10:00 AM** | Break
- 10:15 AM** | Sectional A
- 11:20 AM** | Sectional B
- 12:20 PM** | Lunch / Exhibits
- 1:00 PM** | Keynote 2 - Let's Play, But...How?
- 2:05 PM** | Sectional C
- 3:05 PM** | Close / District Celebrations

# Iowa Early Childhood Conference

**IOWA DISTRICT WEST & IOWA DISTRICT EAST, LCMS**

**August 2, 2024**

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
8301 Aurora Avenue, Urbandale



**1 JOHN 1:7**

# Conference & Lodging Details

## Conference Facility

Tiny Treasures Lutheran Preschool &  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
8301 Aurora Avenue, Urbandale

## Lodging

There are numerous hotels in the area for attendees who want to come early.

# Experience Jesus

- Through partnerships between educators, aides, boards, and pastors
- Through resources for early childhood education
- Through professional partners
- Through those who love and support children

# Registration

Each participant must register using the following website:  
[www.surveymonkey.com/r/IDWECC2024](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IDWECC2024)

**Registration fee:** \$50 per person  
(includes lunch)

**Make checks payable** to Iowa District West

**Registration deadline:** July 12, 2024

**Mail your payment with a list of those who will attend to:**

Sue Light

Iowa District West, LCMS  
409 Kenyon Road, Suite B  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501



Iowa District West and Iowa District East  
**Early Childhood Ministry Celebrations**  
(to be noted at the Early Childhood Conference on August 2, 2024)

Celebrating Servanthood

Please note years of service (5, 10, 15, etc.) that were completed in the 2023-24 school year. Include directors, teachers, other staff.

<u>Name</u> (please print)	<u>Years of Service</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Celebrating Centers

Please note if your preschool/early childhood center observed a special anniversary at the conclusion of the 2023-24 school year (5, 10, 15, 20, etc.).

Celebrating!

Please note any other awards, recognitions, or accomplishments of the past year:

Submitted by

Preschool \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \_\_\_\_\_



Send to Sue Light, Iowa District West, 409 Kenyon Road, Suite B,  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501 or email to [sue@iowadistrictwest.org](mailto:sue@iowadistrictwest.org). Please return by July 12.

# IOWA EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE

## Registration

*August 2, 2024*

**ALL** participants must register using the following website:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IDWECC2024>

Complete the information below and mail one check to Iowa District West.

Name and location of preschool/congregation

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Participants (Please Print)

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**Registration fee:** \$50 per person (includes lunch)

Make check payable to **Iowa District West**

**Registration deadline:** Friday, July 12

**Mail to:** Sue Light  
Iowa District West, LCMS  
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**All Adult Sizes:**

**\$15.00 ea**

**2024 Early  
Childhood Conference  
T-Shirt Order Form**

**Customer Details**

Name:	
Address 1:	
Address 2:	
City:	
State:	
Zip:	
Phone #:	
Email:	

**Front**



But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

-1 John 1:7

**Back**

**Adult Sizes**

- | Size                        | Color         | Qty   |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> S  | Color: Yellow | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> M  | Color: Yellow | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> L  | Color: Yellow | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> XL | Color: Yellow | _____ |

- | Size                         | Color         | Qty   |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2XL | Color: Yellow | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3XL | Color: Yellow | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4XL | Color: Yellow | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5XL | Color: Yellow | _____ |

Payment Method:  Check Only    Total Qty: \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$\_\_\_\_\_

**All orders are due by July 10, 2024. Please submit order form with checks payable to Jonathan Illian.**

Please mail your completed order form and payment to:  
**Jonathan Illian - 3722 Laurinda Lane - Cedar Falls, IA 50613**