



Early Childhood  
Methodist Conference  
Track A



A Training Event for  
Teachers of Children Ages 0-6  
Sponsored by  
United Methodist Texas Conference Weekday Ministries

Thursday and Friday, January 26 & 27, 2017

Conference Location:  
St. Peter's United Methodist Church  
20775 Kingsland Blvd  
Katy, TX 77450

# Key Note Speakers

Thursday:

**Tom Wilbeck**

You're a Rock Star:

your children think so ...are they wrong?



Friday:

**Dr. Sarah Lytle**

Building Baby Brains:

The Science of Brain Development



Rock stars seem to live on “easy street.” Rock stars are glamorous most of the time. Rock stars are influential and important in many people’s lives ... The life of a rock star and the life of a teacher have many parallels. This presentation will highlight the awesomeness of teachers in a full and uplifting way while educating teachers of self-care and renewal. Teaching is not easy. Teaching is not glamorous all the time. Teachers, however, are among the most important and influential people in a young child’s life. This presentation celebrates why you started this labor of love.

Tom Wilbeck is a Professional Counselor, trainer and performer who has been delivering Christ-centered therapeutic and educational intervention since 1995. He is currently in private practice as a child and adolescent therapist, licensed by the Texas State Board of Examiners and specializes in play therapy. Tom has also been a trainer for groups ranging from Exxon, Coca Cola, NASA and early childhood education audiences in the greater Houston area.

As a performer, Tom is “Mr. Tom” from Tom’s Fun Band: a nationally ranked children’s recording artist with 3 CDs to his credit. Tom firmly believes that we each have a purpose. He seeks to increase joy in people’s lives so their purpose will shine through.

Children are born learning. From their earliest interactions with parents and caregivers, children’s brains are growing at an incredible rate. Brain development shapes skills that serve as the building blocks for later success. This keynote focuses on the importance of interactions and early relationships as the context that fosters all learning. Through a discussion of the latest research with children from birth to age 5, Dr. Lytle will focus on the foundations of cognitive and social/emotional development that are critical to a wide range of later skills, such as reading and making friends. Finally, she will highlight ways to incorporate research into our daily interactions with children.

Dr. Sarah Lytle is the Director of Outreach and Education at the Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences (I-LABS) at the University of Washington. In this capacity, Sarah leads a team of science communicators who disseminate the latest science of child development to those who can use it. Sarah has a unique ability to clearly communicate complex scientific concepts and she is dedicated to making sure cutting-edge science is accessible to parents, educators, policymakers, and those who advocate on behalf of children. Dr. Lytle has a B.A. in Psychology and Spanish from the University of Notre Dame and a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology at Temple University, where she studied infants’ and toddlers’ language learning from screen media, and she was a 2014-2016 Zero To Three Fellow.

# Registration Information

1. Registration is ONLINE and participants will be able to choose from many workshops! Online payment is a new feature this year.
2. Priority is given to Methodist programs. Online registration begins December 5<sup>th</sup> for Methodist programs and December 12<sup>th</sup> for all other programs. Please be prompt with registration, as some workshops will fill early.
3. Participants must be registered individually. Directors may register each staff member or allow teachers to register themselves.
4. Cost per participant is **\$85**. Payment may be made for individuals via Paypal or credit card. An entire staff may register and request to pay via check. The school may submit one check that covers all participants. To ensure that we post your payment correctly, please include the Account Summary of each participant when paying via check. Please make your check payable to ECMC Houston and mail it to 5920 FM2920, Spring, Texas 77388.
5. After January 9, 2017, the cost to register increases to \$100. Mailed checks must be postmarked by Monday, January 16, 2017. If your check is not received on time, participants may not be able to attend the conference.
6. Please be sure to contact the registrars, Josette Horaist and Lisa Correia, if you have any questions or problems. Their contact information is listed below.

## To Register:

1. Go to our website at <http://www.ecmchouston.com>.
2. Locate your school on the Register page.
3. Choose from:  
Conference Registration                      Advanced Track Registration                      Directors' Track Registration
4. Choose your workshops and times for the two-day conference.
5. Add all workshops to cart.
6. When you are ready, proceed to check out. Here you will complete your registration information, which will include an email address and a password. **Each person registered will be required to have an email address and a password.**
7. Decide your method of payment and agree to the terms and conditions of registration.
8. **Please be sure to print your confirmed workshops for the conference as we are going paperless this year!**

Please send payment and direct all questions to the Registrars:

via mail:

ECMC Registrar  
5920 FM2920  
Spring, Texas 77388

via email:

**ECMCregistrar@gmail.com**

## Details of the 2017 conference:

**Lunches:** The conference fee includes a morning snack and lunch each day plus two (2) drinks. Please note that ECMC is not able to provide for special dietary restrictions. If you have special dietary needs, feel free to bring your own lunch.

**Speaker Credentials:** All speakers presenting at ECMC 2016 meet the trainer qualifications required by TDFPS effective January 2012. Speaker qualifications are kept on file and can be provided to participants if requested.

**Parking:** St. Peter's United Methodist Church has limited parking. Please plan to carpool.

Visit our website for more conference information: <http://www.ecmc.com>

**Please note:** In case of conference cancellation due to inclement weather or other circumstances beyond our control, there will be no refunds. Registered participants will be offered a make-up day at no cost.

### Conference Schedule 2017 Track A

Thursday		Friday
Registration, Vendors, & Sharing	8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Registration, Vendors, & Sharing
Welcome & Keynote	8:30 - 10:00 a.m.	Keynote
Break, Vendors, & Sharing	10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Break, Vendors, & Sharing
Session 1	10:30 a.m. - noon	Session 3
Lunch, Vendors, & Sharing	noon - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch, Vendors, & Sharing
Session 2	1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Session 4
Advanced Track (includes lunch) 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.		Advanced Track (includes lunch) 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Director's Track (includes lunch) 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.		

Please notice that we have tightened the schedule to allow participants to complete 5 hours of training by 2:30 p.m. PLEASE REMEMBER TO USE ALL FREE TIME TO VISIT THE VENDORS AND THE SHARING ROOM. You receive training credit for these activities.

## Early Childhood Methodist Conference Etiquette

The conference mission is to provide a quality, professional training experience for quality, professional Early Childhood Educators. Please remember to respectfully represent your school at all times.

- All attendees must arrange their own childcare. No children are allowed at the conference.
- Cell phones should be turned off during the Keynote and all training sessions.
- Beverages and food are not allowed in the Sanctuary.
- Keep in mind that all the “staff” at the conference are volunteers. They are not there to police the attendees. Please speak to them respectfully.
- The clock hour certificate will be provided after the attendee has completed her/his evaluation of the conference online. This certificate is provided in good faith. Each attendee is honor bound to attend all required training sessions.

# Sharing Room

**“Share with your friends” We’ve all said this .. now it’s your turn to share with your ECMC friends!**

**Remember to bring a developmentally-appropriate activity to display in the Sharing Room. Other teachers will love to get ideas from you! Each item must be accompanied by the Sharing Room Activity Description form which has been sent to your director. Bring your sample activity and form to the Sharing Room on Thursday morning and pick it up before you leave on Friday.**

**Sharing Room contributors will earn one additional clock hour!**

**Be sure to cruise the Sharing Room to see great new activities that you can take back to your classroom.**

**Feel free to bring a camera to capture the look and purpose of the activity.**

**If you have questions about the Sharing Room, please email Debbie Durkin: [pandddurkin@att.net](mailto:pandddurkin@att.net)**

**Don’t miss this opportunity to let your favorite activities shine!**

## Conference Workshops

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A1	Linking Literacy to Motor	Marilyn Bitsis	3, 4, K	Professional Practice, Methods, & Curriculum

Discover how to connect the fourteen KidBuilders' motor skills to higher learning. Preschool teachers will learn how to improve their students' academics through motor development activities and learning enhancements.

Marilyn Bitsis, a Master Registered Trainer in the Texas Early Care and Education Development System, has co-authored a book *Sensational Beginnings – Sensory and Motor Activities for Infants and Toddlers*. She is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and has a combined twenty six years of business and teaching experience. She is the owner of the motor skills company Kidbuilders.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A2	Prayers, Praise, and Play	Christina Brackens-Evans	all	Professionalism

Wow! Who said coffee was the only way to jumpstart your morning to survive your preschool environment. Let Christina share her proven use of the 3P's (prayer, praise, and play) that is sure to improve your day!

Pastor Christina Bracken-Evans is a wife, mother of two, and has 15 years of experience as a Lead Teacher in Infant and Toddler classrooms. She is a continuing student at the Christian Biblical College in Houston. She and her husband, Pastor James Evans Jr., are the founders of JC Ministries which is a unique outreach venture which focuses on nontraditional evangelism.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A3	Groovy Geology!	Barbara Cargill	all	Professional Practice, Methods, & Curriculum

Volcanoes, fossils, rock treasures, and dinosaurs! What more could an amateur paleontologist ask for?

Experiments include making edible metamorphic rocks, fossil imprinting, digging treasures from sedimentary rock, core sampling the earth, erupting volcanoes, and excavating dinosaurs from ice. Your students will love geology when doing these hands-on experiments and activities!

Barbara Cargill is the Founder/Director of Wonders of The Woodlands Science Camp which just celebrated its 22<sup>nd</sup> year of offering summer camps, school outreach programs, teacher professional developments and birthday parties. ([www.wowsciencecamp.com](http://www.wowsciencecamp.com)) Barbara has an education degree from Baylor University and graduate degree from Texas Woman's University in science education. She served for four years as Chair of the Texas State Board of Education, an appointment by Governor Rick Perry, and is currently serving her 4-year term on the Board.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A4	Play it out! The power of play therapy!	Casey Casteel	3, 4, K	Guidance

Play is the language of the child. Learn how play can be utilized in the classroom to help children express themselves, assist in emotional regulation and manage classroom behavior. Through an introduction to child centered play therapy, learn how the therapeutic principles can be utilized in the classroom to assist with classroom management, identify developmental delays, and develop social and emotional growth. Discover current challenges faced due to the lack of play and ways to address those challenges.

Casey has worked in the education field for more than 17 years in Early Childhood, the Arts and Special Education. She has an M.A in Professional Counseling and is completing her certification as a registered play therapist. Currently she is a Licensed Professional Counselor-intern providing individual, group and family play and expressive arts therapy in private practice.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A5	Bounce From a Book: Creative Writing Experiences Inspired by Quality Children's Literature	Sharon Dworaczyk	4-K	Professional Practice, Methods, & Curriculum

During this presentation, participants will be introduced to quality children's literature and ways to extend children's understanding of the written word. From class quilts to creative art experiences, find out ways to enhance children's literature that make the reading process a fun and engaging one.

Sharon Dworaczyk has worked with young toddlers through second grade age children for over twenty years. Her education background consists of an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education specializing in Early Childhood and English as a Second Language from Texas A & M University in College Station and a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Houston, Clear Lake. She was trained in the Classroom Storytelling Project from the School Literacy and Culture from Rice University in 1996, and has continued with the project as a mentor teacher and seminar leader.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A6	Learning Interventions & Learning Differences in Childhood	Gayle Y. Fisher, M.Ed.Tech.	T - K	Child Growth & Development

We shall discuss how a child learns, how all the layers of learning fit together (or don't, sadly). We will discuss best practices in learning interventions, what parents and educators can do to help, and some classroom management re-directs to help guide behaviors toward intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning.

Gayle is a mom of a child with learning differences and an educator at Lone Star College-Montgomery Academy of Lifelong Learning. She helps you understand what to do to help children with learning differences prepare for today and for life. More about Gayle at [GettingSorted.com](http://GettingSorted.com)

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A7	Touchable Literacy	Wesley Gibson & Sarah Williams	3, 4, K	Child Growth & Development

Learn how to take your literacy lessons to the next level by creating an environment where all of the children's senses are engaged. Providing a mix of open-ended and guided multi-sensory play materials enhances imagination and allows for children to invent and discover. During this workshop, teachers will learn the importance of multi-sensory learning, as well as how to apply it to their literacy lessons.

Wesley Gibson and Sarah Williams have a combined over thirty years of teaching experience in early childhood and elementary schools. Their passion of literacy led them to create Literacy Enrichment and Play, which aims to teach of love of literacy and learning in the early years. Wesley and Sarah continue to teach their literacy program throughout Houston, as well as train early childhood teachers using their multi-sensory/play methods.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A8	Hot Topics in Nutrition & Health	Kathryn H. Grigsby	all	Professionalism

This presentation is designed to enable teachers and administrators to focus on taking care of themselves in the midst of busy schedules and family lives. We will explore current nutrition topics and interesting concepts important for good health. Topics may include, but are not limited to: new dietary guidelines, carbs / sugars, gluten, organic foods, food labels, supplements and how to find reliable information. Nutrition is an evolving science, and new information is revealed as more is discovered. Attendees will be encouraged to ask questions, and topics will be explored as desired.

Kathryn H. Grigsby is a Registered and Licensed Dietitian and has been an educator for healthcare facilities and community organizations as well a Research Dietitian for Baylor College of Medicine. She currently teaches nutrition and music for The Chapelwood School for Young Children.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A9	5+5+8=Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child	Janine R. Groth, M. Ed.	all	Child Growth & Development

Five senses, five domains, and eight intelligences will be examined to help teachers create better lesson plans. Participants will analyze their current practices and learn an approach that will assist them in creating lessons that are well round and targeted to the whole child. Teachers will leave with a thorough grasp of how they can help each child reach their potential through an intentional lesson plan.

Janine Groth has been in the Early Childhood Field for over 30 years, starting as a teaching assistant and working up through the ranks to currently teaching college. She operated a large NAEYC accredited center for almost 5 years and then moved to the higher education arena in 2005. Ms. Groth is an adjunct professor for University of Houston-Downtown, LoneStar College and Houston Community College.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A10	Spring Cleaning With the Noodle Lady!	Diane Havens	T - PK	Child Growth & Development

Lots of moving games using imaginary stories and musical activities to encourage cleaning ourselves and our environment. Lots of great new equipment ideas that are inexpensive and long lasting for all your motor activities. Come ready to move with the Noodle Lady!

Diane Havens has been teaching creative toddler – preschool music/movement activities since 1988. She is the co-owner of a movement and music center in Kingswood and teaches on a regular basis. She currently co-owns with her daughter a childcare, preschool and afterschool program.

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A11	Science Detectives: Birds, Spiders, & Insects	Aileen Kirkham	3, 4, K	Professional Practice, Methods, & Curriculum

Attendees will make-and-take items and experience recommended books and activities to teach units on birds, spiders, and insects.

Aileen Kirkham is a published author of numerous magazine articles and four books. She has presented 50+ staff development programs and over 300 story telling programs. She has 30+ years of teaching experience

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A12	Play ---- The Springboard to Learning	Marilyn Kramer	3, 4, K	Child Growth & Development

The participants of this workshop will discover the characteristics of play; the importance of play on the neurological and cognitive development of young children; and how play can foster problem-solving, pre-math, pre-reading, and science skills in the young child. Classroom management techniques to promote play and open-ended manipulatives will also be introduced.

Marilyn Kramer is the owner/CEO of ECE Training Dynamics, LLC and a TECPDS Registered Trainer. She holds a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Texas and an undergraduate degree in ECE from Southwest Texas State University. Marilyn is passionate about young children and incorporating developmentally appropriate practices in the early childhood classroom!

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A13	Classroom Activities to Foster Healthy Eating, Activity, and Family Routines	Laura Laine	all	Professional Practice, Methods, & Curriculum

Obesity and overweight conditions now affect 25% of children 2-5 years. Factors that contribute to this alarming statistic include poor family routines, inadequate sleep, excessive screen time, inadequate activity, large portions, and poor fruit and vegetable consumption. A 2010 study showed that children in childcare were

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protected from obesity compared to those cared for by parents and relatives. This talk will discuss the causes of obesity in preschool children and offer ideas for classroom activities that foster healthy eating, activity, and family routines.

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Laura Laine is a registered dietitian, spiritual director, and owner of Sophia Grace Center for Nutrition, Health and Spirituality. Laura worked at Texas Children's Hospital for 22 years and served as Parish Administrator of St. Laurence Catholic Church for 8 years. She and her husband Greg have been married for 32 years and have 2 grown children that are both gourmet cooks!

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#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A14	Together Time for Infants & Toddlers	Susan MacHugh	I, T, & 2	Professional Practice, Methods, & Curriculum

Participants will list four areas of development which have a significant impact on why we MUST take infants and toddler's outdoors daily. There will be a discussion on how to set-up an outdoor play area and ideas for interesting experiences.

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Susan Meriwether, M.A. is a teacher of Two and Three Year Olds at St. Francis Episcopal School. Susan offers trainings to parents and teachers of young children and speaks on a variety of topics.

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#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A15	The Impact and Need for Infant and Toddler Play Outdoors	Susan Meriwether	I, T, & 2	Child Growth and Development

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Susan Meriwether, M.A. is a teacher of Two and Three Year Olds at St. Francis Episcopal School. Susan offers trainings to parents and teachers of young children and speaks on a variety of topics.

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#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A16	Sing Across Texas With Me: Greatest Hits	Devora Miller	3, 4, K	Professional Practice, Methods, & Curriculum

Celebrate the great state of Texas with songs and games. Rodeo, farm, and bilingual songs and activities will be included. Curriculum connections in reading, math, and social studies will be demonstrated. Come a ki yi yippee yay!

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Devora is the music specialist at The Briarwood School in Houston and has been sharing her love of music with children and educators for the past 27 years. She also teaches creative dramatics at Grace Presbyterian Church and is the found of Big Books That Sing!

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#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A17	POPCORN: Behavior Management For Sensory Processing Needs In The Classroom	Robin Rettie	all	Child Growth & Development

POPCORN is an interactive workshop that provides insight and support to educators who are baffled by behavior of children who seem to lack social awareness, are rigid and experience difficulty in shifting, and who experience meltdowns turning the best planned day into chaos. Due to the rise in Autism (1 in 68), educators need information and strategies as to how to support unfamiliar behavior. Expect to learn about the 7 sensory systems and to gain insight to research proven strategies that support the management of behavioral and environmental triggers that can help a child experience greater success in learning, social, and emotional development. Join Robin Rettie, M.Ed. Special Education for a fun-filled, engaging learning experience!

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Robin Rettie, M., Ed., Special Education, is the owner of Lighthouse Learning Resources, an online specialty store

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that supports individuals with special needs in Sensory Processing Disorder through training and product use for parents and educators. Robin holds a State Board for Educator Certification in the State of Texas and has 20 years combined teaching experience in Early Childhood, General Education, and Special Education, and is the sister to Laurie Lorraine Rettie, who was born with a disability.

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### Directors' Track

Designed for directors, this is a 4-hour long workshop (including lunch) and will be offered on Thursday only. Participants will still go to the keynote address on the day they attend this workshop.

#### Thursday Directors' Track

#	Workshop	Presenters	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A18	The 7 C's of Culture & Ask the Experts	Tym the Trainer Debra Fischer Kim Renick Tracy Willemsen	Admin	Professionalism

Tym the Trainer will start us off with an inspiring workshop, *The 7 C's of Culture*. Knowing that staffing an early childhood center is one of the most challenging parts of a director's job, this workshop will discuss seven incredible techniques that are imperative to managing a successful program, motivating and retaining quality staff.

Following lunch together, you will have the opportunity to "ask the experts." We've brought together a panel of experts, moderated by Debra Fischer, Director of St. Paul's Day School and past Chair of the ECMC Committee. Our experts include: Tym the Trainer, Kim Renick (Inspector V; DFPS – Child Care Licensing) and Tracy Willemsen (Educational Diagnostician at Holy Covenant Child Development Center).

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Make sure you come ready to do some shopping!  
This year, the vendors will be in the  
**Wesley Student Center: The Quad**

There will be many old favorite vendors  
as well as vendors new to ECMC.

## Advanced Track

Designed for very experienced teachers, this is a 4 hour long workshop (including lunch) and will be offered on one day only.

Participants will still go to the keynote

address on the day they attend this workshop.

If you choose the Advanced Track, please ensure that you **ONLY** attend the workshop that is relative to the age that you teach.

### Thursday Advanced Track

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A19	The Importance of Infant/Toddler Brain Development and Your Role as an Early Childhood Educator	Keith Pentz	I, T, & 2	Child Growth & Development

This workshop will examine research and notable applications of interpersonal connections, language/communication use and patterns, and emotional support and development. All will be addressed as they relate to the establishment of a social brain. How we work with the very young, especially the emotional engagement we provide to infants and toddlers, is a profound opportunity. The society of tomorrow is being determined by our relationships, brains, and minds we help to create today.

Keith L. Pentz, National Early Childhood Specialist for Kaplan Early Learning Company, has been in the field of education for more than 35 years. Keith began his career by working in childcare with infants and toddlers, taught elementary students as well as Kindergarten, and then taught PreKindergarten. Before beginning his career as a consultant, Keith taught at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida and was an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts,

### Friday Advanced Track

#	Workshop	Presenter	Ages	Core Knowledge Areas
A20	Teaching Emotional Intelligence: The Early Years	Brian Goonan, PhD	3, 4, K	Child Growth & Development

Emotional Intelligence is considered a distinguishing “soft skill” in adults. However, our emotional lives and emotional regulation skills begin from the time we are born and are highly teachable. This workshop will give teachers both the theoretical understanding and practical tools for working with children and their families in the early childhood years to create the building blocks for increasing emotional intelligence.

Dr. Brian Goonan is a clinical psychologist who received his degree from Emory University and practices in Houston. Dr. Goonan is a life cycle psychologist who works with individuals, families, and groups from early childhood through late adulthood, caring not only for the needs of the person as they exist today but being mindful of how each stage serves as a foundation for the next. Dr. Goonan has given over 100 presentations and workshops in churches, schools and various organizations throughout Texas.