

Institute Dates & Locations

February 22, 2025

VA Peninsula Community College
Peninsula Workforce Development Center
600 Butler Farm Road, Hampton, VA 23666

March 8, 2025

J Sargeant Reynolds Community College
Massey Library Technology Center
1651 E Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23228

March 22, 2025

VA Western Community College
Fralin Center Health Professions Bldg.
3091 Colonial Ave SW, Roanoke, VA 24015

April 26, 2025

Tidewater Community College - VA Beach Campus
Student Center
1700 College Crescent, Virginia Beach, VA 23453

May 17, 2025

Wytheville Community College
Galax Hall
1000 East Main Street, Wytheville, VA 24382

Institute Agenda

8:30–9:00 am	Registration
9:00–9:15 am	Welcome & Opening
9:15–10:15 am	Keynote
10:15 – 10:30 am	Break
10:30 – 11:30am	Keynote Activity
11:30 – 12:30 pm	Activity Session (Lunch Served)
12:30 – 2:15 pm	Caregiver Session 1/Director Session 1
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Break
2:30 – 4:15 pm	Caregiver Session 2/Director Session 2
4:15 – 4:30 pm	Certificate Distribution

Institutes for early care professionals who serve infants and toddlers!

Celebrating
BABIES & TOTS HAND-IN-HAND
2025

February 22 - Hampton
March 8 - Richmond
March 22 - Roanoke
April 26 - Virginia Beach
May 17 - Wytheville



These exciting professional development institutes will empower early childhood educators and site leaders to explore and integrate the concept of community; fostering a sense of belonging and connection in the child care setting for Virginia's infants and toddlers.

VIRGINIA
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST
NETWORK

"Achieving Excellence in Early Care"

For more information or to register online, please visit
www.va-itsnetwork.org

Institute Objectives



- Discover a fresh perspective on the vital role and enduring impact educators have on infants, toddlers, and society
- Provide strategies to integrate the concept of community fostering a sense of belonging and connection in the early childhood setting that involves families, community services, and resources in the neighborhood
- Explore and develop strategies that empower educators to promote warm, positive relationships with infants and toddlers
- Encourage community as a model through which educators can provide opportunities for learning and growth
- Promote networking, collaboration, and resource sharing among institute participants

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Institute Keynote Speaker



Dr. El Brown, affectionately known as Dr. El, is a distinguished author, professor, and thought leader with a diverse career. From teaching young children in the United States, Japan,

and South Korea to founding the global initiative KinderJam, she has made a significant impact on families in 11 countries and 16 states. Dr. El holds a Ph.D. in Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Special Education, focusing on rethinking support systems for mothers, particularly those raising children with disabilities.

Keynote Session

Inspiring Community in Early Childhood



“Inspiring Community in Early Childhood” affectionately influenced by, *The Acorn Story*, is an inspiring keynote rooted in Dr. El Brown’s personal journey. This presentation illustrates how early childhood educators have the unique privilege and responsibility of nurturing both individual growth and community. Through the metaphor of an acorn growing into a mighty oak tree, Dr. El will share how early interactions shape children’s futures, creating positive ripples that extend through families, the care environments, and society. By fostering strong teacher-child relationships and embedding a sense of community in each child, educators set the stage for a better, more interconnected world.

Institute Workshops

Workshop Objectives



The workshop sessions will be presented by highly qualified infant and toddler specialists and infant and toddler behavior consultants from nine regions across the state.

Sessions for Caregivers

The Power of Nurturing Inclusive Foundations for Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers feel secure and valued when caregivers prioritize their sense of belonging. Learn new ways to include community values in the child care environment by modeling relational behaviors, respect, and positivity. This workshop will equip participants with tools to nurture social-emotional learning by modeling and promoting empathy and cooperation and creating a well-managed, inclusive child care community.

You've Got A Friend in Me!

Infants and toddlers thrive when they have supportive relationships with their caregivers. This workshop will discuss the building blocks of child care harmony, starting with a foundation of trust, communication, and responsiveness. Strategies for building trust-based relationships with infants and toddlers to enhance how caregivers manage their early childhood environments will be explored.



Institute Workshops

Sessions for Directors/Family Day Home Owners

Family Engagement and Community Building Beyond the Classroom



Infants and toddlers benefit from a seamless connection between home and child care, where families are welcomed in the caregiving partnership. Leaders will identify ways to include extended community support to foster a consistent, nurturing environment that strengthens infants' and toddlers' emotional and social development. This workshop will also provide strategies to extend the child care community into the homes of infants and toddlers, involving families as active participants in their development.

It Takes a Village: Encouraging Positive Interactions

Effective caregiving is more than identifying who cares for infants and toddlers. It also involves how they are cared for. Leaders have the opportunity to work collaboratively to create warm environments that foster emotional development. Join us as we discuss how leadership can allow shared experiences and meaningful activities to occur. This workshop empowers leaders to take on the primary role of being in community with their educators, setting a site-wide foundation for warm, positive relationships with infants and toddlers and effective child care management.

