



# FHSA 2025 Annual Conference & Expo

**Tuesday, October 28- Thursday, October 30**

*(Agenda/Schedule subject to change [www.FLHeadStart.org](http://www.FLHeadStart.org) for the most up-to-date information)*

**October 28, Tuesday, Conference Opening Session and Keynote Speaker, 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Universal A**

## Honoring the Past, Shaping the Future, Dr. Robert Lemon, Motivational Speaker and Author

A proud Head Start alumnus, Dr. Lemon brings a powerful message of legacy, resilience, and progress. Through the lens of historical knowledge and cultural heritage, he shares how Head Start shaped his journey—from military and community service to workforce leadership. His vision reframes Head Start not as a sprint, but as a generational relay—passing the baton to ensure every child has a fair shot at success. Dr. Lemon challenges us to build bridges across generations, using the past to inform a brighter, more connected future. [Click here](#) for more information about this session and speaker's bio.

**October 28, Tuesday, Experience Hall Open & Welcome Reception, 4:30 PM- 6:00 PM, Universal B**

**End Day 1**

**October 29, Wednesday Reflective Supervision Track 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM**

### FAIMH Reflective Supervision Track

Dr. Noemi Marquez, LCSW, IMH-E®

Child Development (Birth to 5) Education & Coaching, Family Engagement, Mental Health, and Support Infant/Early Childhood Professionals who are planning to become Reflective Supervisors/Consultants

This specialized training series, offered in partnership with the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH), is designed for Head Start and Early Head Start professionals in supervisory roles who are seeking to strengthen their skills in reflective supervision. Participants who enroll in this track will complete 7.5 hours of training—six hours in person on October 29th during the FHSA Annual Conference, plus a required 90-minute virtual session on November 13th from 3:30–5:00 PM. Completion of this series fulfills half of the training hours needed to become an Endorsed Reflective Supervisor in Florida. Endorsed supervisors can provide reflective supervision hours that count toward a supervisee's application for Infant or Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement®. Attendance at all sessions is required for credit.

**October 29, Wednesday, Instructional Coaching Track 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM**

### Implementing Quality Coaching to Improve Teaching Strategies and Increase Child Outcomes

Cindy Kaier, Education Consultant/Trainer

Education & Coaching, Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities), Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced

Coaching is one of the most effective strategies for improving teaching practices, boosting CLASS scores, and increasing child outcomes across Head Start programs. This interactive session will guide participants through the essential components of a high-quality coaching program, including the skills and training needed to be an effective coach, the systems and structures that support successful implementation, and the development of strategic Needs Assessments to ensure fidelity.

Participants will explore how coaching aligns with Head Start Performance Standards, how to use data to target instructional improvements, and how to build collaborative partnerships that support sustained growth. The session includes small group dialogue with seasoned coaches, planning tools, tiered coaching models, and practical resources to support implementation. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to elevate coaching within their own programs and drive meaningful outcomes for children and staff.

### October 29, Wednesday, Leadership Breakout Session 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

#### **Change Management and Next Generation Leadership: Part I**

Kristen Hayes, Consultant

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, Home Visitors

In a time of evolving challenges and opportunities, effective change management and intentional leadership development are essential to sustaining Head Start's mission. This interactive session invites program leaders and managers to explore the foundational elements of change management and reflect on their own readiness to lead transformation at both the individual and organizational level.

Participants will engage in peer-driven dialogue to uncover strategies for cultivating the next generation of Head Start leadership—ensuring continuity, innovation, and equity in early childhood programs. Through hands-on activities, attendees will gain practical experience using a change management tool and a succession planning framework designed to support long-term impact.

### October 29, Wednesday, Make American Healthy Breakout Session 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

#### **Connecting GO NAPSACC and Head Start: Building Healthier Foundations Together**

Kimberly Singer, Director, Florida Head Start Collaboration Office

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, Home Visitors

Healthy habits begin early, and Head Start programs play a critical role in shaping lifelong wellness for children and families. This session explores how GO NAPSACC, an evidence-based tool for improving nutrition and physical activity in early care and education, aligns with Head Start Program Performance Standards. Participants will learn practical strategies to integrate GO NAPSACC into daily routines, family engagement efforts, and program planning. Through real-world examples and interactive discussion, we'll uncover how this partnership can strengthen child health outcomes, support staff wellness, and reinforce Head Start's whole-child approach, while meeting the vision of the Make America Healthy Again policy agenda.

### October 29, Wednesday, Community Alignment Breakout Session 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

#### **Building Strong Foundations: Collaborative Partnerships Between Early Learning Coalitions and Head Start Grantees**

Molly Grant, Executive Director, and Jessica Prichard, Deputy Director, Association of Early Learning Coalitions, Inc.

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, Home Visitors

Strong partnerships between Florida's Early Learning Coalitions and local Head Start grantees create powerful opportunities to strengthen early childhood systems. This panel will highlight how collaboration enhances program quality, maximizes public and private resources, reduces duplication of services, and supports smooth transitions for children and families. Coalition and Head Start leaders will share examples of coordinated planning, shared professional development, and joint family engagement efforts that have led to stronger outcomes. Attendees will gain insights into best practices, lessons learned, and strategies to cultivate a culture of partnership that prioritizes access, alignment, and system efficiency to ensure every child is prepared for lifelong success.

### October 29, Wednesday, ERSEA Breakout Session 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Full Enrollment Initiative, Next Steps, Tips and Planning

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Senior Vice President, National Policy, Start Early

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

Are you facing a Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI) letter from the Office of Head Start? This session is your roadmap to resilience. We'll unpack the next steps for grantees navigating potential fund recapture, spotlight best practices from the field, and walk through how to build a compelling action plan. From waiver procedures to tactical tips, you'll leave equipped to respond with confidence, clarity, and purpose. Whether you're in the early stages or deep in the process, this session will help you turn challenges into strategic wins.

### October 29, Wednesday, Mental Health/Wellness Breakout Session 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Reset, Refuel Recharge

Wyletta Johnson, Coach at Curricula Concepts, Inc. Be Well Care Well

Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: Experienced

Are you feeling stressed and overwhelmed? When was the last time you truly recharged? Are you looking for ways to increase staff well-being and decrease burnout? We have got your answers right here! This is a fun, interactive session where we will examine our current stress levels and identify small, manageable action steps to start improving our overall well-being right away. This session aligns with Head Start Program Performance Standards by supporting staff wellness as a foundation for high-quality, responsive care in early childhood settings.

### October 29, Wednesday, Leadership Breakout Session 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM

Change Management and Next Generation Leadership: Part II

Kristen Hayes, Consultant

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

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Participants will engage in peer-driven dialogue to uncover strategies for cultivating the next generation of Head Start leadership—ensuring continuity, innovation, and equity in early childhood programs. Through hands-on activities, attendees will gain practical experience using a change management tool and a succession planning framework designed to support long-term impact.

### October 29, Wednesday, Make American Healthy Breakout Session 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM

Boosting Children's Language Skills Using the Family Garden & Engagement Program: Growing Talkers

Emily Montford and Bronwyn McLemore, Research Associates, Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

Step into the Family Garden & Engagement Program (FGEP), where language development and healthy living grow side by side. This lively, hands-on session explores how FGEP uses gardening as a dynamic backdrop for nurturing young minds—turning planting, harvesting, and outdoor exploration into rich opportunities for language-building and connection. Through five transformative Talk-Time Practices—Describe It, Question It, Connect It, Tell It, and Build On

It—educators learn to turn everyday garden moments into powerful conversations that support school readiness, critical thinking, and emotional well-being. With real classroom examples, interactive games, and collaborative discussion, participants will leave inspired and equipped to cultivate language-rich environments that nourish both body and mind.

October 29, Wednesday, Community Alignment Breakout Session 10:30 AM- 11:15 AM

Statewide Needs Assessment Focus Group/Wage Study	Kimberly Singer, Florida Head Start Collaboration Director and Autumn Tomas, MPA, CEO/Lead Consultant, A Tomas Consulting	Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors
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Description Coming Soon!

October 29, Wednesday, ERSEA Breakout Session 10:30 AM- 11:15 AM

Leading with Intention: Responsible AI Adoption in Head Start Programs	Mary Grace Romo, Founder EarlyEdPro.ai   EarlyEd.ai and Jennifer Corkern, Senior Consultant	Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors
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Artificial Intelligence is rapidly reshaping how organizations operate, and Head Start programs are no exception. This session offers a thoughtful exploration of how leaders can guide AI adoption in ways that uphold Head Start Program Performance Standards, reinforce organizational values, and remain deeply rooted in family-centered practices. Participants will examine both the opportunities and risks of integrating AI into early childhood systems, and learn how to craft policies that promote trust, equity, and compliance. Through practical strategies and real-world examples, the session will empower attendees to lead their teams through technological change with transparency, intention, and care. By the end, participants will leave with a draft roadmap for safely and effectively adopting AI in their Head Start programs, along with policy considerations that support ethical implementation and meaningful engagement with families and stakeholders.

October 29, Wednesday, Mental Health and Wellness Breakout Session 10:30 AM- 11:15 AM

The Nature of Teacher Well-Being	Jamie Ward, Owner, Curricula Concepts & Managing Partner, Be Well Care Well	Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors
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The natural world has a powerful influence on our health and well-being, but Americans today are spending less time surrounded by nature than previous generations. This session will provide strategies on connecting with the natural world that support teacher well-being in the childcare setting. Content will align with Head Start Program Performance Standards by promoting staff wellness as a key component of a healthy and effective learning environment.

### October 29, Wednesday, Leadership Breakout Session 11:30 AM- 12:30 PM

#### Change Management and Next Generation Leadership: Part III

Kristen Hayes, Consultant

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

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Participants will engage in peer-driven dialogue to uncover strategies for cultivating the next generation of Head Start leadership—ensuring continuity, innovation, and equity in early childhood programs. Through hands-on activities, attendees will gain practical experience using a change management tool and a succession planning framework designed to support long-term impact.

### October 29, Wednesday, Make America Healthy Session 11:30 AM- 12:30 PM

#### Importance of Nutrition for Children in Head Start: Part I

Pam Darby, MS, MPH, RDN, CDN, National Enrichment Group

Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist)

This presentation highlights the importance of nutrition in Florida's Head Start programs, emphasizing its impact on early childhood development. It covers CACFP goals and meal patterns, defining what "healthy" means for young children. The discussion explores cultural inclusivity in meal planning, the global impact of childhood obesity and the role of mealtime in fostering social and developmental skills. It also addresses medical conditions that affect eating and essential food safety practices. By covering these key areas, the presentation equips Head Start staff with strategies to promote lifelong healthy habits in young children.

### October 29, Wednesday, Community Alignment Session 11:30 AM- 12:30 PM

#### Bridging Systems: Building Strong Partnerships and MOUs to Support Young Children and Families

Autumn Tomas, MPA, CEO/Lead Consultant, A Tomas Consulting

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

This in-person training session is designed to help Head Start and Early Head Start grantees improve cross-sector collaboration by strengthening their strategies for engaging community partners and formalizing relationships through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). In alignment with Priority Area 1 from the most recent Florida statewide assessment, this session supports the goal of improving systems alignment for children and families from prenatal through age five. Attendees will gain tools to engage underutilized state agencies, develop structured communication protocols, and create effective, compliant MOUs

### October 29, Wednesday, ERSEA Sessions 11:30 AM- 12:30 PM

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### October 29, Wednesday, Mental Health/Wellness Session 11:30 AM- 12:30 PM

#### Building Your Bounce: What is Resilience?

Wyletta Johnson, Coach at Curricula Concepts, Inc. Be Well Care Well

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers) Directors, Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Mental Health, ERSEA), Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist) Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced

In this training, participants will recognize the important role adults play in the lives of children and families. Participants will learn the link between adult stress and the potential impact on an adult's ability to care for children. This training defines resilience, and participants will explore what resilience means to them. This session aligns with Head Start Program Performance Standards by supporting staff wellness and resilience, which are essential to fostering responsive caregiving and high-quality early learning environments.

### October 29, Wednesday, Experience Hall Open, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM, *Universal B*

### October 29, Wednesday, FHSA Annual Awards Luncheon, 12:45 PM – 2:45 PM, *Universal A*

### October 29, Wednesday, Reflective Supervision Track 2:45 AM – 5:00 PM

#### FAIMH Reflective Supervision Track

Dr. Noemi Marquez, LCSW, IMH-E®

Child Development (Birth to 5) Education & Coaching, Family Engagement, Mental Health, and Support Infant/Early Childhood Professionals who are planning to become Reflective Supervisors/Consultants

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### October 29, Wednesday, Challenging Behaviors 2:45 PM – 3:45 PM

#### Navigating Challenging Behaviors

Kendra Wolford, Instructional Coach, Brevard Public Schools Head Start

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

This session offers a multi-level approach to understanding and addressing challenging behaviors in early childhood settings. Participants will explore strategies rooted in the Pyramid Model, insights from Push Past It! by Dr. Angela Searcy, and techniques for reframing adult perceptions. Designed for teachers, administrators, and program leaders, the session provides practical tools, leadership guidance, and systems-level planning to strengthen behavior support across Head Start programs. Aligned with Head Start Program Performance Standards, it promotes child well-being, reduces suspensions, and enhances classroom quality.

### October 29, Wednesday, Leadership Session 2:45 AM –3:45 PM

#### Now Is Your Time (Work / Life Integration)

Dr. Robert Lemon, Motivational Speaker and Author

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker,

Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

Maximize your time, minimize your stress. This engaging session helps leaders prioritize what matters, eliminate distractions, and align daily actions with strategic goals. Learn to set boundaries, manage multiple priorities, and plan with purpose. Through practical tools and inspiring insights, you'll boost your confidence and walk away ready to lead with clarity and intention.

### October 29, Wednesday, Make America Healthy Session 2:45 AM – 3:45 PM

#### Importance of Nutrition for Children in Head Start: Part II

Pam Darby, MS, MPH, RDN, CDN, National Enrichment Group

Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist)

This presentation is the second part of the Importance of Nutrition for Children in Head Start. This session highlights the importance of nutrition in Florida's Head Start programs, emphasizing its impact on early childhood development. It covers CACFP goals and meal patterns, defining what "healthy" means for young children. The discussion explores cultural inclusivity in meal planning, the global impact of childhood obesity and the role of mealtime in fostering social and developmental skills. It also addresses medical conditions that affect eating and essential food safety practices. By covering these key areas, the presentation equips Head Start staff with strategies to promote lifelong healthy habits in young children.

### October 29, Wednesday, Community Alignment 2:45 AM – 3:45 PM

#### Florida Gap Map

Florida Chamber

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

Description Coming Soon!

### October 29, Wednesday, ERSEA Session 2:45 AM – 3:45 PM

#### Florida Children Experiencing Homelessness: Landscape Analysis and Recommendations

Kimberly Singer, Director, Florida Head Start Collaboration Office

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers), Direct Service Providers (Education/Child Development, Disabilities, Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, ERSEA), Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist), Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

Come explore the findings from a 2024–2025 landscape analysis conducted by the Head Start Collaboration Office and SchoolHouse Connection. This session examines the intersection of homelessness and early childhood in Florida, highlighting key data and actionable recommendations. Attendees will engage in an interactive dialogue focused on identifying, enrolling, and supporting McKinney-Vento eligible children and families. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of Florida's current needs, stronger connections to local partners, and practical strategies to better serve this vulnerable population.

### October 29, Wednesday, Mental Health/Wellness Session 2:45 AM – 3:45 PM

#### Quality Classrooms...Include Happier Teachers!

Jamie Ward, Owner, Curricula Concepts & Managing Partner, Be Well Care Well

Administrators (CEO, CFO, Executive Director, HR, Center Managers, Directors, Family Support (Family Service Worker, Family Advocate, Family Engagement Specialist) Teachers: New, Teachers: Experienced, and Home Visitors

High-quality classroom environments support and stimulate children's growth and learning. However, when teachers are unhappy, things can really go downhill fast! This highly interactive session explores the connection between quality and teacher happiness, provides strategies for building resilience, and helps relate the impact of staff well-being on the classrooms and children. Aligned with Head Start Program Performance Standards, this session reinforces the importance of staff wellness as essential to maintaining effective learning environments and promoting positive outcomes for children.

### **October 29, Wednesday 4:00 PM-5:00 PM Collaborative Learning Rooms**

Step into our Collaborative Learning Rooms—dynamic spaces designed for focused peer conversations around key themes emerging from the convening. These small group sessions offer a unique opportunity to:

- Explore specific topics with greater depth
- Exchange tools, resources, and strategies that are working for your peers
- Identify actionable steps to bring innovation and impact back to your agency

Whether you're looking to troubleshoot challenges or amplify successful practices, these rooms foster meaningful dialogue and practical takeaways in an intimate setting.

### **October 29, Wednesday 5:00 PM-6:30 PM Reception in Experience Hall, *Universal B***

**End of Day 2**

### **October 30, Thursday, 8:00 AM - 12:00 M Experience Hall Open, *Universal B***

### **October 30, Thursday, 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Breakfast, Policy Panel and Conference Wrap-up, *Universal A***

**End of Conference**