



December 2025

Satellite

FAMILY CHILD CARE SYSTEM

NEWSLETTER

**Congrats on your
Reaccreditation!**



Brandee Crabb
Waddle-In Family Childcare

Congrats on moving to Associate level!

Kewannee Allen – Explorers of Truth Child Care
Lisbet Guzman – Seeds of Love Academy LLC

Sarah Tuttle
Bright Beginnings Day School 6

**Congrats on your first
Accreditation!**



Manuela Aleman
Sweet Home Smiles

**Congrats to winners of the Satellite 2026
Annual Questionnaire \$50 Kwik Trip gift
card give-away!**

Names were drawn at random.

Valerie Johnson
Lissette Santiago
Sarah Olson

Happy 50th Birthday Satellite!

We celebrated fifty years of **Satellite Family Child Care System** on November 12 at Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison. Thank you to everyone who helps support our mission – then and now!



FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

The 2025 Bright Beginnings Day School Art Show

Program owner: Sarah Tuttle

Accredited Satellite educator

Checkout this unique family engagement event!



DIVING INTO THE STANDARDS

Child-Directed Play



Relevant Satellite Accreditation Standards

III. The Daily Program for Children

B. Children learn through self-paced play, and through active engagement with materials, the provider, and other children.

1. Children have opportunities throughout the day to move about, make choices about their activities, and follow their own interests at their own pace. They are active and engaged most of the time.

F. The schedule offers a balance of activities.

1. Most activities are child initiated. Activities planned by the provider are planned according to the interests and abilities of the children.



Kathy's Kids Home Child Care



Let the Dragons Fly Child Care



Explorers of Truth Child Care

The Basics

Child-directed play is spontaneous and self-initiated where children make decisions about their play – including what to play, how to play, and with whom to play. Educators support child-directed play through intentional preparation of the learning environment and honor child-led play by asking open-ended questions, encouraging cooperation, celebrating achievements, and documenting learning.

Why is child-directed play essential? An intentional balance of child-led and educator-led experiences supports children's cognitive, motor, language, social and emotional development. Preschoolers in early childhood programs that spent at least 60% of learning time in child-directed play showed higher school readiness than children in more educator-led programs (Vaisarova & Reynolds, 2022). Multiple studies also show child-led play has greater positive effect on early math skills and shape knowledge than direct instruction (Skene et al., 2022). Child-led play helps children practice making decisions, cooperating with others, taking risks, and thinking creatively – all necessary skills for mental health and social wellbeing.

Child-Directed Play (Cont.)

[How can I support child-directed play?](#) Family child care educators intentionally prepare the environment to support self-directed play and learning. Through observation, educators note the interests of the children in the program and add materials and adjust the environment accordingly to expand their play. Below are more examples of supportive strategies for child-led learning.

- **Make it accessible.** What is a choice must be accessible in the environment. Consider infant and toddler safety around chokeable items while maintaining freedom of movement for all.
- **Arrange play areas.** Organize materials with similar learning objectives together so that children can find, use, and replace materials based on their individual interests.
- **Incorporate open-ended materials.** Materials with many possible uses (such as blocks, sand, and art supplies) support more imaginative, deeper play.
- **Embrace the boredom.** Brainstorm with children about their play options. Together, fondly remember enjoyable play experiences. Ask open-ended questions about their interests. Offer choices and wait for children to decide.
- **Encourage mixed-age play.** Younger children learn so much from older children, and older children practice empathy and leadership skills when supporting young children. Recruit preschoolers and school agers to include infants and toddlers when it feels appropriate.

[I want to learn more!](#)

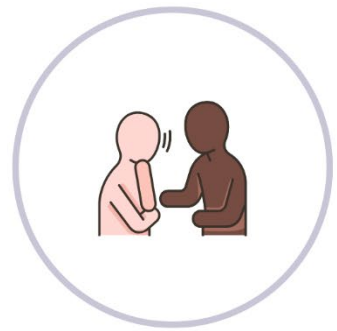
- [The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting](#) (Article)
- [Observing, planning, guiding: How an intentional teacher meets standards through play](#) (Article)
- [The Power of Open-Ended Materials](#) (Resource)
- [Supporting Children's Learning Through Play](#) (Article)
- [Is more child-initiated always better? Exploring relations between child-initiated instruction and preschoolers' school readiness](#) (Research article)
- [The teacher's role in supporting child-directed play](#) (Research article)

[Books available through Satellite's lending library:](#)

(for Satellite participating programs only)

- *Serious Fun: How Guided Play Extends Children's Learning* (NAEYC, 2019)
- *This is Play: Environments and Interactions that Engage Infants and Toddlers* (Luckenbill, 2019)
- *Spotlight on Young Children: Exploring Play* (Bohart, 2015)
- *Developmentally Appropriate Play Guiding Young Children to a Higher Level* (Gronlund, 2010)

ECHO Family Child Care: Including Learners with Disabilities



Learn strategies to support inclusive family child care for children with a special health or development need through four discussion-based evening sessions. Each event will include a short presentation on the session topic followed by discussion-based problem solving for a specific program concern. Satellite accredited family child care educator Jenifer Cribben joins the specialist team for this unique opportunity.

To learn more about the ECHO model, [click here](#).

You will learn to...

- ✓ support a range of communication abilities.
- ✓ promote successful transitions between activities.
- ✓ identify and support behaviors of concern.
- ✓ partner with families of children with disabilities.

Wednesdays • 6 – 7 pm • Zoom • 1 hour of Registry credit per event • English only

January 7

January 21

February 4

February 18

[Register here](#)



WAISMAN CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON





THE MUSICAL CHILD: USING THE POWER OF MUSIC TO RAISE CHILDREN WHO ARE HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND WHOLE

Guided Book Study

We offer this opportunity to all educators participating in Upward Milwaukee & Satellite's accreditation system.

This guided book study explores *The Musical Child: Using the Power of Music to Raise Children Who Are Happy, Healthy, and Whole* by Joan Koenig (2021). Over eight discussion-driven sessions, you will learn about music's positive impact on early child development. The book will introduce playful, simple ways to incorporate music and movement every day for a mixed-age group. Participants will learn strategies for promoting relationships and children's early literacy, math, language, and brain development with music. Learn not only from the book but also from other's experiences, perspectives, and knowledge!

You will learn...

- ✓ current research on the impact of music throughout early childhood development.
- ✓ playful ways to implement music and movement every day for children birth to five.
- ✓ how to support relationships, early literacy, math, language and brain development with music.

Zoom • Thursdays • 1 – 2 PM • English only • 16 hours of Registry credit

February						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

[REGISTER HERE](#)





Exploring Quality in Family Child Care

Tuesdays • 1 – 2 pm • Zoom • 1 hour of Registry credit • English and Spanish

Dates	Topic	Registration
January 13	Selecting High-Quality Materials	Register by 1/11
February 10	PBS Kids Presents: Developmentally Appropriate Media	Register by 2/8
March 10	Promoting Friendship Skills	Register by 3/8
April 7	Preparing Future Readers Through Print Awareness	Register by 4/5
May 12	Building Empathy by Talking About Differences	Register by 5/10

ECHO: Including Learners with Disabilities in Your Family Child Care Program

Wednesdays • 6 – 7 pm • Zoom • 1 hour of Registry credit per session

Learn strategies to support inclusive family child care for children identified with a special health or development need through four discussion-based evening sessions. Learn more information [here](#).

Language	Dates				Registration
English only	January 7	January 21	February 4	February 18	Register by 1/5
Spanish only	March 4	March 18	April 1	April 15	Register by 3/2

Guided Book Studies

Thursdays • 1 – 2 pm • Zoom • 16 hours of Registry credit • English only

Only for programs participating in Satellite's accreditation system.

Dates	Book	Registration
February 12 – April 2	The Musical Child: Using the Power of Music to Raise Children Who Are Happy, Healthy, and Whole	Register by 1/2

SATELLITE LOAN PROGRAM

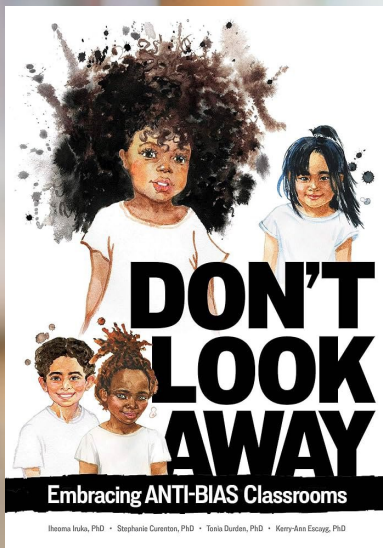
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR RESOURCE LIBRARY

100+ books

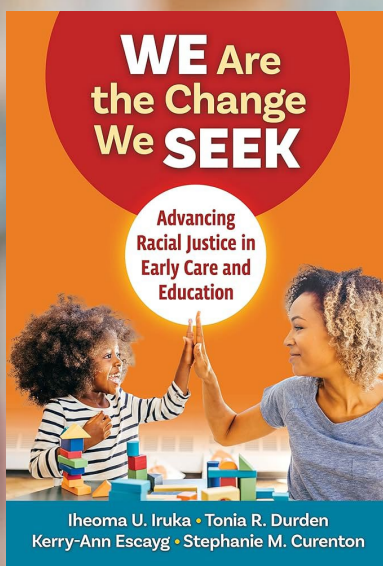
Satellite members have full access to Satellite's early childhood educator resource books. Check the link below to view our full lending options.

[Satellite's Library](#)

When you choose a book, your consultant will inform you of whether the item is available immediately or if you're on the waiting list.



Every day, 250 children are suspended from school. Many are children of color, deprived of opportunities to experience learning at the same rate and quality as white children. Many families don't feel heard or respected in their child's schools. Don't Look Away: Embracing Anti-Bias Classrooms leads early childhood professionals to explore and address issues of bias, equity, low expectations, and family engagement to ensure culturally responsive experiences. Importantly, this book will challenge you to consider your perceptions and thought processes.



This teacher-friendly text shows how to engage in self-inquiry and evaluate current classroom practices while embedding new ones that advance the learning and well-being of children, especially those from minoritized and poor communities. Readers will find tools and assessments to support the implementation of culturally grounded practices that will improve outcomes for diverse children in early childhood settings and systems. We Are the Change We Seek connects history to current events, supports self-inquiry, encourages a shift in mindset and, most importantly, offers guidance for creating affirming and joyful spaces for young children to learn.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Civitas Strategies' New Tax Tool for Family Child Care Educators

Civitas Strategies has a new **FREE** tax assessment tool designed for family child care educators. Identify commonly missed savings and tax risks and get a personalized report to take directly to your tax preparer with this new tool.

[Click here to explore the tool!](#)

GET KIDS READY INFORMATION

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families is excited to introduce the new [Get Kids Ready](#) program, a community-based school readiness initiative designed to support licensed and certified child care educators serving four-year-old children. Learn more about this new program by watching the latest Tuesday Talks session.

[Click here to watch!](#)



Satellite Team



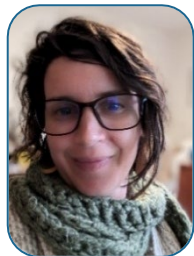
Estella Vargas

Accreditation Consultant
Bilingual (Spanish/English)
(608) 852-7724
evargas@reachdane.org



Amy Christianson

Language Access, Curriculum, and
Satellite Director
Bilingual (Spanish/English)
achristianson@reachdane.org



Jen Jorgensen

Accreditation Consultant
(608) 416-9531
jjorgensen@reachdane.org



Laura Simkin

Satellite Associate Director
(608) 381-2676
lsimkin@reachdane.org
Contact Laura with all general questions
related to accreditation and Satellite services.



Rachel Halstead

Accreditation and Upward
Milwaukee Consultant
(608) 690-0174
rhaldstead@reachdane.org



Grace Eilers

Family Child Care Content Specialist
(608) 400-2823
geilers@reachdane.org



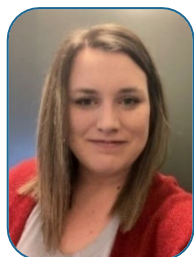
Stephanie Winkel

Accreditation and Upward
Milwaukee Consultant
(608) 416-3996
swinkel@reachdane.org



Laura Cruz

Administrative Assistant
Bilingual (Spanish/English)
(608) 910-0382
lcruz@reachdane.org



Mykenzie Lerg

Accreditation Consultant
(608) 843-5378
mlerg@reachdane.org



Janna Hack

Mental Health Consultant

Satellite Family Child Care System
(608) 275-6740
satellitelfcc@reachdane.org

Mailing and drop-off address:

2096 Red Arrow Trail, Fitchburg, WI 53711

Label mailed and hand delivered items with "attention:
Satellite" & and the Satellite staff person's name

Satellite Supports

To learn more about Satellite's numerous supports, click on the circle below.



Thank you to our partners for helping us provide these services at no cost to participants:

