

PRE-SERVICE 2026



Brightpoint

Strong Families • Thriving Children

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **IN-PERSON DAY: AUGUST 11, 2026**
 - **LOCATION: BLOOMINGTON CENTRAL CATHOLIC H.S.
1201 AIRPORT RD. BLOOMINGTON, IL 61704**
 - **TIME: 9:00AM-3:30PM**
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- **Breakfast and lunch will be provided**
*Please note: Reach out to Lori Wahrer for any dietary restrictions or if you need a vegetarian lunch lwahrer@brightpoint.org
- **Registration will be on UKG Pro Learning beginning July 13**
*See schedule of workshops on following pages. You will need to register for both of your sessions through UKG. Watch your email for registration instructions.
- **Bottled water will not be provided. Please bring a reusable water bottle to refill at our water stations—support sustainability and enter for a chance to win a raffle prize!**
- **TRANSPORTATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THE FOLLOWING SITES:**
 - **CARPENTERSVILLE**
 - **SCHAUMBURG/PALATINE**
 - **MITZI FREIDHEIM**
 - **EL HOGAR DEL NINO**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

STEVE SPANGLER



Steve Spangler is a two-time Emmy Award-winning science educator, bestselling author, and Hall of Fame speaker best known for creating one of YouTube's first viral videos with the Mentos and Diet Coke experiment. Over the past 30 years, his hands-on approach to teaching has reached global audiences, with more than 4.5 billion video views, over 6,500 live presentations, and 120,000 educators trained through his STEM institutes. A frequent guest on The Ellen DeGeneres Show and host of the nationally syndicated DIY Sci, Steve is widely recognized for making science engaging and accessible. Today, he serves as STEM Educator in Residence at High Point University, continuing to inspire curiosity and learning across classrooms and organizations alike.

KEYNOTE DESCRIPTION

Best Day Ever: How to Create Unforgettable Learning Experiences

Through engaging demonstrations and interactive moments, he brings the “Best Day Ever” principle to life—showing educators how to design meaningful experiences that maximize engagement and inspire students. His approach helps learners make lasting connections, fueling curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity in the classroom.



DAILY SCHEDULE

****PLEASE NOTE: SPACES FOR THESE SESSIONS ARE LIMITED. IF YOUR FIRST CHOICE IS UNAVAILABLE, PLEASE BE PREPARED TO REGISTER FOR YOUR SECOND OR THIRD CHOICE****

TUESDAY 8/11 SESSION A: 11:15AM-12:45PM (CHOOSE ONE)

01. ENGAGING FATHERS, STRENGTHENING FAMILIES: REFERRING TO BRIGHTPOINT FATHERHOOD SERVICES (ALL STAFF)

The workshop will provide staff with an overview of Brightpoint Fatherhood Services and the critical role father engagement plays in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children.

02. TRAUMA INFORMED CARE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (ALL STAFF)

Scary things happen in our world and babies, toddlers and preschoolers are often not immune. Sometimes these are big like school shootings, tornados, or abuse and sometimes these are smaller like dog bites, car accidents or medical procedures. Learn how to recognize signs and symptoms of trauma and how to help a child work through this and become resilient.

03. BUILDING A ROAD TO RESILIENCE (ALL STAFF)

Resilience isn't just a trait—it's a skill that can be learned and nurtured. In this training, participants will explore the science and power of resilience, with an emphasis on how to build it in children, families, and within themselves. Learn to identify key traits and domains of resilience, assess your own resilience capacity, and discover strategies to activate both internal strengths and external supports. Walk away empowered to foster lasting resilience in those you serve.

04. TEACHING CULTURAL IDENTITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS (ALL STAFF)

This hands-on workshop provides staff with an opportunity to reflect on their own cultural identities. Participants will also learn strategies that can be incorporated into daily practices and interactions across the program.

05. HEALTHY CONFLICT (ALL STAFF)

This session provides staff with practical tools to strengthen self-awareness, tolerate strong emotions, foster curiosity through thoughtful questioning, and repair relationship ruptures effectively. Staff learn how to apply these skills in daily interactions to improve communication, build trust, and deliver more responsive, participant-centered support. This session combines theory and practice.

06. AI IN ACTION: PRACTICAL WAYS TO SAVE TIME AND SUPPORT FAMILIES (ALL STAFF)

Curious about AI but not sure where to start? In this interactive session, we'll explore real-world AI tools and experiment with practical ways they can help with everyday work—from writing emails and summaries to brainstorming ideas and reducing administrative burden. No technical experience required—just bring your curiosity and discover what AI can (and can't) do to make your work easier.

07. STEM FOR LITTLE SPROUTS (MANDATORY FOR ALL EDUCATION STAFF)

The workshop is intended for early childhood teachers and instructional coaches and is focused on best practices and innovative strategies for getting students excited and engaged in the four pillars of STEM (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity). This hands-on workshop will provide educators with the tools and instructional strategies for transforming ordinary activities into unforgettable experiences using high-level engagement strategies that help to strengthen critical thinking skills.

DAILY SCHEDULE

08. ENGAGING “THOSE” PARENTS (FSS)

Do you have one or more “those” parents who seem difficult to engage? This session focuses on understanding the barriers that may impact family involvement—such as stress, past experiences, or life circumstances—and equips participants with practical, relationship-based strategies to build trust, strengthen communication, and create welcoming, inclusive environments. By the end, staff will be better prepared to respond with empathy and develop meaningful partnerships that support positive outcomes for children and their families.

09. BUILDING TRUST WITH FAMILIES (FSS, HOME VISITORS)

This training focuses on the importance of building trust-based, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed relationships with families in a family support role. Participants will learn how trust impacts family engagement, identify common barriers to trust, and practice skills to strengthen professional relationships through empathy, communication, and consistency.

10. FROM COMPLIANCE TO CONNECTION: RETHINKING SUPERVISION AND STAFF SUPPORT (SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS)

From Compliance to Connection reimagines leadership as a relationship-centered practice. This training supports leaders in moving beyond rule enforcement toward building trust, valuing strengths, and creating teams that function as connected and supportive units.

11. WRITE IT RIGHT: DOCUMENTATION FUNDAMENTALS (NAVIGATORS, CASE MANAGERS, EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS)

This session provides an overview of documentation basics and its critical role in supporting quality, accountability, and continuity of care. Attendees will explore when and how to document, professional language expectations, objective versus subjective notes, and what information should be included in a thorough case note.

12. WHEN IT MATTERS MOST: BEST PRACTICES FOR CRISIS NURSERY STAFF (CRISIS NURSERY STAFF)

This session focuses on strengthening the skills and approaches needed to support children and families during times of crisis. This session will highlight practical, trauma-informed strategies that are directly applicable to daily work in the Nursery setting. Staff will also have the opportunity to collaborate and share insights across sites, strengthening consistency and connection between Bloomington and Rockford teams.

DAILY SCHEDULE

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TUESDAY 8/11 SESSION B: 1:45PM-3:15PM (CHOOSE ONE)

01. CHILDHOOD EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE (ALL STAFF)

This conversation will give insight into symptoms that children may experience after experiencing domestic violence. It will also discuss ways caregivers can support children in their lives who are healing from attachment trauma, which can be caused by domestic violence.

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05. SHARING OUR STORY: SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EVERYONE (ALL STAFF)

Learn how to use social media to spotlight your work, engage the community, and share partner resources effectively. This session will explore best practices for sharing content across platforms and highlight how staff can collaborate with the Communications team to expand the reach of programs, events, and community impact stories.

06. HEALTHY CONFLICT (ALL STAFF)

This session provides staff with practical tools to strengthen self-awareness, tolerate strong emotions, foster curiosity through thoughtful questioning, and repair relationship ruptures effectively. Staff learn how to apply these skills in daily interactions to improve communication, build trust, and deliver more responsive, participant-centered support. This session combines theory and practice.

07. CALM UNDER PRESSURE: MINDFULNESS, STRESS MANAGEMENT, AND DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS (ALL STAFF)

Working in early childhood settings often requires balancing multiple responsibilities while maintaining positive relationships with children, families, colleagues, and community partners. This interactive session will explore mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques, practical time management strategies, and effective de-escalation skills that support both personal well-being and professional success. Participants will also learn how strong customer service practices and emotional regulation can reduce workplace stress, improve communication, and foster a positive environment for staff, families, and children.

DAILY SCHEDULE

08. THE SENSORY SENSITIVE CLASSROOM (CLASSROOM STAFF)

In "The Sensory Sensitive Classroom" you will learn about the eight senses, how to identify avoidance and seeking in each of these sensory domains, and resources to implement in your classroom environment. We will work together to build your knowledge base and leave you with concrete applications to bring to your classroom today in order to facilitate a more inclusive and harmonious environment.

09. ASK THE EXPERT- BEHAVIOR AS COMMUNICATION (CLASSROOM STAFF)

Gena Schuler, Mental Health Consultant, hates the word Expert – but loves to share her expertise and gain from yours. Please come with your burning questions and behaviors that have you stumped. You will receive resources for help with challenging situations you face with children and families. Leave with insight and possible solutions.

10. EVERY INTERACTION COUNTS: SUPPORTING LANGUAGE, FEEDBACK, AND MODELING FOR BIRTH TO THREE AND NON-VERBAL CHILDREN (CLASSROOM STAFF)

This interactive workshop supports educators and caregivers in using intentional language strategies with children ages birth to 3 and early language learners. Participants will explore how to provide meaningful language support, high-quality feedback, and effective language modeling during everyday routines and activities. Through hands-on practice, attendees will learn to naturally embed language-rich interactions into daily experiences to strengthen communication skills.

11. OBSERVATION & MONITORING: GROWING, NOT "GOTCHA" (CLASSROOM STAFF)

This training helps educators understand the purpose of classroom observations by both internal and external monitors, emphasizing growth rather than a "gotcha" approach. It acknowledges that observations can feel uncomfortable and provides practical strategies to help educators remain professional, confident, and at ease when observers are present.

12. THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY IN THE CLASSROOM (CLASSROOM STAFF)

Play has been a topic of conversation for the last few years. It is not uncommon to hear people who are not in the ECE field say "All you do all day is play" or "Why do you play so much, don't you know the children need to learn?" Learn how to overcome those conversations and see how you can incorporate different ways to play across the domains of ECE. Be prepared to share ideas from your classroom and also discuss the barriers that prevent us from being able to play.

13. DESIGNING THE PLAYLOGUE: INTERDISCIPLINARY PLAY, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY IN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS (CLASSROOM STAFF)

This session supports educators and service providers in strengthening inclusive, interdisciplinary literacy practices within play-based settings. Participants will learn to design a daily "playlogue" that integrates language, literacy, and developmental supports through collaborative, team-based interactions, while also gathering meaningful observational data. The session also reimagines circle time as a space for planning, reflection, and community-building, offering practical strategies and tools grounded in inclusive, asset-based approaches.

14. WHEN WORDS AREN'T ENOUGH: HELPING CHILDREN COMMUNICATE (CLASSROOM STAFF)

This training discusses the functions and variety of communication skills and showcases a wide range of visual supports that staff can adapt to their own classrooms. Staff will learn about a variety of alternative communication methods to support students with developing language skills. At the end of the session, staff will have the opportunity to explore low- and high-tech alternative communication methods!

DAILY SCHEDULE

15. FROM PAINT TO PURPOSE: INTEGRATING ART WITH MEANING AND JOY (CLASSROOM STAFF)

Imagine, explore and implement ways that you will seamlessly integrate art into your classroom environment using ideas that support culture, nature and developmentally appropriate techniques. Participants will interact with various mediums to create ideas that integrate art into the curriculum.

16. NURTURING ATTACHMENT AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH BABY DOLL CIRCLE TIME (CLASSROOM STAFF, HOME VISITORS)

This interactive workshop explores Baby Doll Circle Time as a relationship-based Conscious Discipline strategy that supports infants' and toddlers' social-emotional development across both center-based and home-based settings. Participants will learn how intentional use of dolls, routines, and language builds connection, co-regulation, and empathy with young children and caregivers, whether in classrooms, home visits, or group socializations. Practical examples and adaptations will be shared to support implementation within daily routines and family-centered work.

17. HAVING BOUNDARIES WHEN WORKING WITH FAMILIES (FSS, HOME VISITORS)

This training focuses on the importance of maintaining professional boundaries while building positive relationships with families. Key topics include understanding boundaries, recognizing common boundary challenges, and applying healthy boundaries in daily practice to support safe, respectful, and professional interactions.

18. HELP FOR BIG & LITTLE LEARNERS! (FSS, ERSEA)

Discover how Brightpoint's Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Child Care Assistance Program and our center-based programs help families access affordable, high-quality child care while easing parental stress that can come with finding care and paying for it. Our staff will walk you through CCAP eligibility, application options, and the many supports we offer to help families, so they feel confident, supported, and set up for success.

19. DOULA CONNECTION: NAVIGATING SERVICES AT LIVING ALTERNATIVES (DOULAS)

This workshop provides an overview of the medical and support services offered through Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center, including pregnancy testing, ultrasound exams, and options counseling under licensed medical direction. Participants will also learn about the center's comprehensive support programs, such as pregnancy and parenting education, post-abortion care, adoption support, and perinatal grief services. The session is designed to help attendees understand how these resources can support individuals and families throughout their pregnancy journey.

20. WHAT'S THE STORY? EXPLORING THE DATA BEHIND OUR WORK (SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS)

Data isn't just numbers—it's the stories of the children and families we serve. In this interactive session, we'll explore real program data, practice asking good questions, and discover what data can teach us about families' experiences, program impact, and opportunities for improvement. No spreadsheets required—just curiosity and a willingness to explore

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- If you plan to take the bus, please arrive no later than 6:30 a.m.
 - The bus will need to depart on time and won't be able to wait for late arrivals.
 - Mileage reimbursement is limited to staff whose site is not offered a bus, and carpooling is strongly encouraged. Those who choose not to use an available bus will not be eligible for reimbursement.
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LAYOUT FOR THE WEEK

Monday:

A.M.- Active Intruder training at El Hogar del Nino and Palatine
P.M.- Active Intruder training at Schaumburg and Carpentersville
- CPR at El Hogar del Nino

Wednesday:

A.M.- Active Intruder training at Scott
- CPR at Mitzi Freidheim and Carpentersville
P.M. - Medication Administration/Bloodborne Pathogens (virtual)

Thursday:

P.M. - Medication Administration/Bloodborne Pathogens (virtual)

Friday:

A.M. - CPR at Palatine