

Mastermind Members Only Book for ECE Leaders



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**NAME**

Karen

RESIDENCE

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TITLE

ECSE Specialist, Minnesota
Department of Education

FUN FACT

I am very outdoorsy, if you didn't know
I have a forestry degree you would
never guess it.

A BIT ABOUT ME

This is a tough one. I have an undergraduate degree in forestry. I tend to be more data driven and structured in my thinking so the science degree was a great fit for me at the time. I decided to stay home with my children when they were young and my son was diagnosed with autism. When he started receiving early intervention I was recruited into the field.

CURRENT ROLE/WORK

I support Minnesota districts on best practice for Early Childhood Special Education for Part C and Part B. There really is no typical day, but in a typical week I am out in a region or district facilitating professional development on anything from due process to assessment and instruction. Other days are answering technical assistance emails from the field and creating guidance to support districts. I frequently collaborate with the Part C coordinator, 619 coordinator and/or the early learning kindergarten assessment specialist.

REASON FOR MASTERMINDING

I am hoping to be able to gain more perspectives in the field of early childhood and connect with others that are working on staying grounded in best practice.

**NAME**

Danielle

RESIDENCE

Cleveland, Ohio

EMAIL

Danielle.vigh@gmail.com

TITLE

Early Childhood Specialist

FUN FACT

I have climbed Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the continental US.

A BIT ABOUT ME

I am an avid outdoors person and love long backpacking trips. I recently married my husband Dave whom I have been friends with since high school. Dave and I enjoy hiking, traveling, and fly-fishing together. I have two dogs, Otto who is a Vizsla and Olive who is a rescued German Shorthair Pointer. Last year we travelled to Japan and Hawaii. This year we are going to Idaho for a week long backpacking trip. I also enjoy collecting loose parts and other reusable items and putting together materials for my staff to use with children. Oh and my husband and I also own a coffee shop in the Tremont neighborhood of Cleveland.

CURRENT ROLE/WORK

I support the preschool teachers, children, and families. I am also responsible for licensing, ensuring we receive 5 Stars on the state's rating system, Step Up to Quality, managing enrollment, recruiting, managing grants and I am the Gen. Ed. representative for all IEP meetings. I check in with teachers, greet families at one of 3 buildings, and then move back to my office or a conference room to work on grants or SUTQ. I also try to be in a classroom for 30min to an hour each day to support teaching practices. This has been extremely difficult for various reasons. Recruiting, meeting, and paperwork take up a majority of my time, so I spend most of my day in my office.

REASON FOR MASTERMINDING

I am hoping to learn something from everyone and improve on my practices.

**NAME**

Missy

RESIDENCE

Glenwood Springs, CO

EMAIL

Melissa.taucher@gmail.com

TITLE

Colorado Department of Education
(CDE) Regional Support Specialist for
State Funded Preschool

FUN FACT

I like participating in triathlons and
volunteering as a coach for Girls on the
Run and Girls Who Code.

A BIT ABOUT ME

I'm a mom of two amazing girls ages 13 and 10. I'm a wife of 15 years. My husband and I both work in the education field. I've worked as a classroom teacher, director, coordinator, and coach. I also teach early childhood classes at the community college level. I am most proud of my work around supporting dual language learners and their families. This passion led me to opening a dual language preschool program. Personally I love to travel and scrapbooking my family's amazing experiences!

CURRENT ROLE/WORK

I provide training, technical assistance, oversight, input, conversation, questions, monitoring, support for 30 school districts receiving funding for state funded preschool in the west/northwest part of Colorado. (The big idea here is to continually improve quality of programming for children who are funded by the Colorado Preschool Program and children who qualify for an IEP). It's unique in that I work from home and live in the region that I serve, so I am heavily involved in the local early childhood community. I may attend local early childhood meetings, answer questions from CPP coordinators, provide training to coaches/administrators, develop resources for the field, complete classroom observations and provide feedback, provide information for the legislature, speak to quality early childhood programming, monitor compliance of the Colorado Preschool Program, attend cross department meetings at CDE, team with colleagues to develop trainings for the field, and help districts build their own capacity.

REASON FOR MASTERMINDING

I am hoping to improve my leadership skills, specifically improving my skills around communication and working with adults. I'm hoping to use this dedicated time to grow professionally.

**NAME**

Leslie

RESIDENCE

Logandale, NV

EMAIL

unlvnelson@gmail.com

TITLE

Title I PreK Project Facilitator

FUN FACT

I like to play Pokemon to decompress...got to catch em all :)

A BIT ABOUT ME

I started my career as a licensed educator later in life. I waited until my son graduated from high school to start teaching. Up until this time I worked as a support staff at our local high school. I felt the need to be available for my son and would not have had the same flexibility as a classroom teacher. Because of this life experience I pursued a Master's in early childhood special education and autism, followed up by my doctorate in autism and curriculum and instructional technology. Instead of pursuing a higher education position I decided to stay in the local school district and try to make a difference. Two years ago I finished a second Master's in leadership and have since applied for school administration positions. I am torn between staying in the position I am in where all CCSD early childhood staff have access to professional development created by me or going into a position as a school site administrator.

CURRENT ROLE/WORK

I work with Title I PreK staff who are serving families that have students attending Title I PreK programs in the Clark County School District. I provide instructional and behavioral supports for the staff. My main role is assist them with doing what is best for the students and families they serve.

REASON FOR MASTERMINDING

I would like to be able to advocate for change within our district for developmentally appropriate practices within early childhood focusing on prekindergarten and kindergarten. Our students often "blow-up" when transitioning from prekindergarten into kindergarten because the environment they are entering is not appropriate for their developmental level. Our state ranks among the bottom for public education. . I want to be a voice of change that those in positions to make a difference will listen to.