

# EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLY

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Becker's is inviting you to this exclusive event!

WEBINAR WITH AUTHORS  
**Grace Lin & Ana Crespo**

## Storytelling Math Webinar

Celebrate diversity, math,  
and the power of storytelling!

November 4th @ 1-2 PM ET

The graphic features three children's book covers: 'Lia & Luis Who Has More?' by Ana Crespo, 'iCirculo! iEsfera Circle! Sphere' by Grace Lin, and 'What Will Fit?' by Grace Lin. It also includes circular portraits of the authors, Grace Lin and Ana Crespo, and an illustration of a young child with curly hair blowing a large blue bubble.

**FREE WEBINAR  
THURSDAY  
NOVEMBER 4TH**

Are you familiar with this Math series of books for young children? If not, you are missing out! This is an excellent collection of books that are not only great for toddlers but preschoolers.

Click the link below to sign up:

<https://www.shopbecker.com/resource-cafe/workshops/>

## **PINE CONE PROJECT STUDENT DIRECTED ART INSTALLATION ♥**

Did you see the Pine Cone project I posted about early this month?

Emily, my Insta friend @teachwithscience started with preschool children collecting pine cones from around the neighborhood when a child made the observation that “trees are dropping pine cones”. This began a conversation about all the gifts trees gave them. The list included: leaves, flowers, acorns, sticks, gumballs, sap. With the abundance of pine cones collected, they made an idea web together about all of the things they could potentially do with these gifts from the trees.

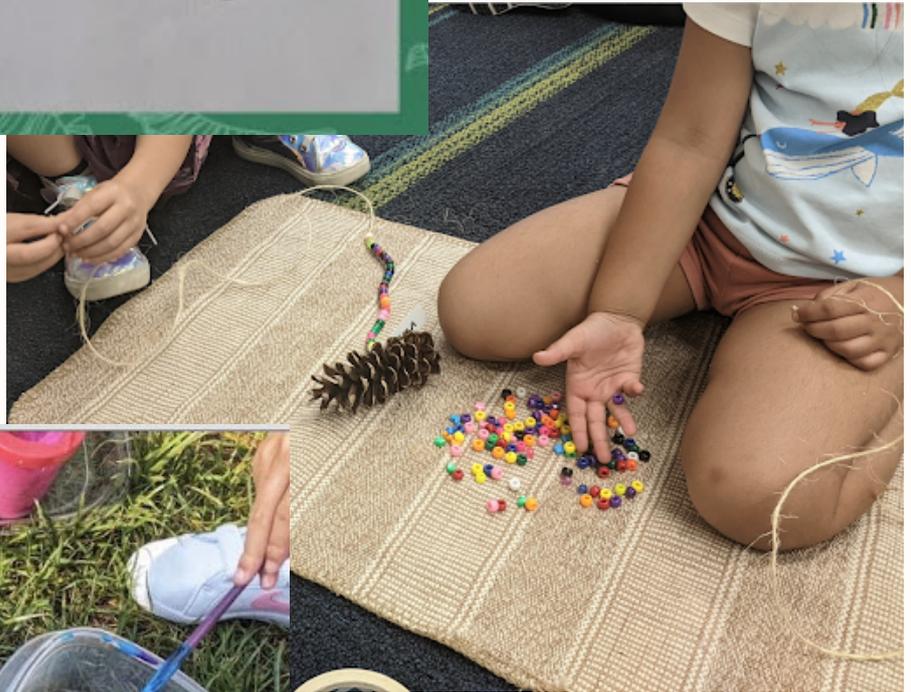
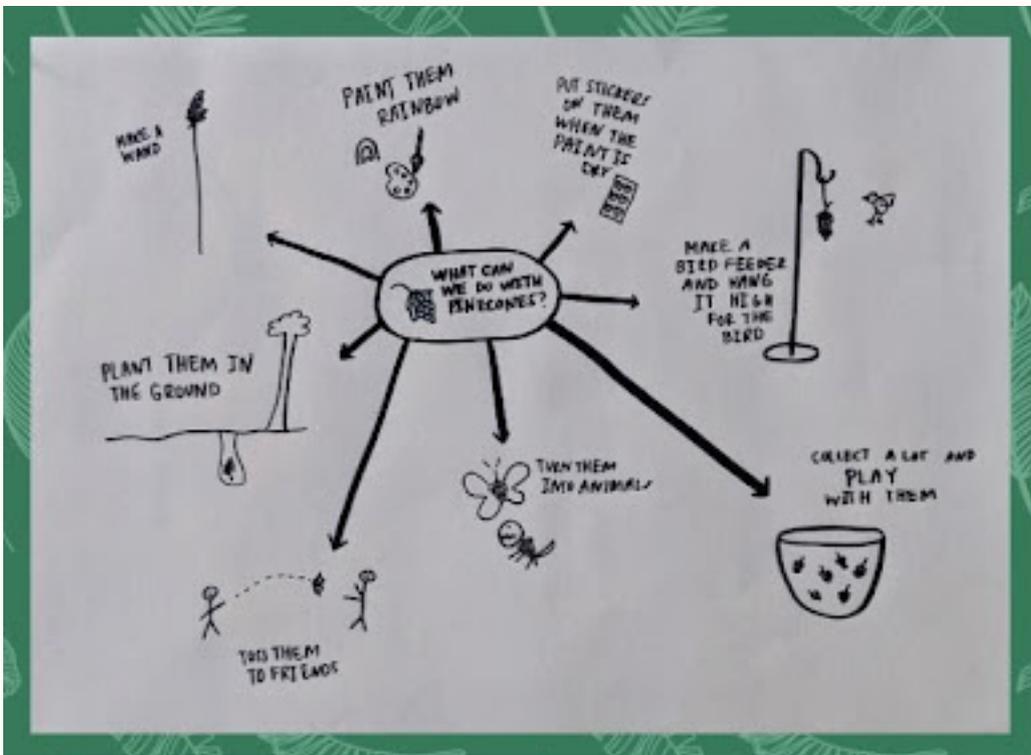
Throughout the week, they dove into each idea and pushed in mini lessons along the way, appropriate for students age 4 and 5. The first idea was about making the pinecones "rainbow" with paints. During one of the mini lessons on their painting day, they learned three new painting techniques to cover the pinecone.

1. dip and tap, 2. dip and spread, 3. glob and twirl (placing a big glob in a bowl and shaking the pinecone around inside). They did this outside and really loved getting messy with it. Freshly dropped pine cones, as they found out, are quite sticky and very fun to cover with paint.

After the paint was dry, Emily tied a string to the pinecone to hang them "UP HIGH" per request. Once the string was on, students had ideas to add rainbow beads, which turned out beautifully, and was a nice and unexpected fine motor activity for their newly writing Junior Kindergarteners.

Art installations hung in the classroom create a real sense of beauty while embracing community!



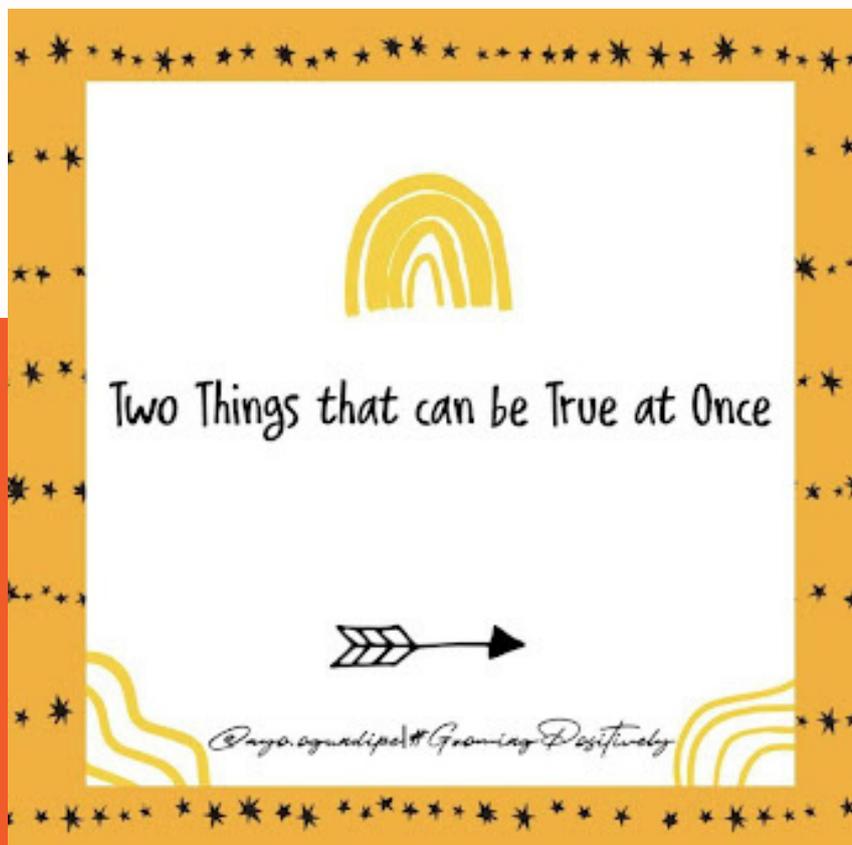


## QUIET ACTIVISM - TWO THINGS CAN BE TRUE

I was meeting with a friend who started a new job not long ago and she shared that her heart and mind were in conflict. She is enjoying her new role and the responsibilities that she has. She felt her co-workers were welcoming and helpful. She was grateful for this new opportunity and community.

She was conflicted with some of the early childhood practices she was observing and being supported. She has a strong belief in emergent curriculum and was struggling with supporting some of the strategies she saw throughout the program. Her mind understood why her program was using the practices and even knew it before she started. However, being immersed in it every day she is beginning to feel a real internal struggle about the lack of curriculum being delivered as best practices.

We started talking about what was going well with the program. She shared that the children are well cared for, safe and the schedule is consistent. There are adequate materials for the curriculum. The families appear to be happy and engaged. Administration is encouraging of the practices the classroom(s) are delivering. Behavior concerns are typical for this time of year. Her inexperienced teachers liked the structure and guidance the curriculum offered.



## QUIET ACTIVISM - TWO THINGS CAN BE TRUE CONT.

We moved into what was bothering her and she talked about a curriculum/program that was not focused on children's interest. Rather it was predetermined and lacked the "magic" that happens when a classroom mirrors children's interest. For her more experienced teachers she didn't see the spark and passion of planning and engaging with children. She felt that there were many missed opportunities for growing and learning.

We talked about how after she has spent some more time building relationships with staff she could begin a conversation around adding components that are more emergent. Being able to start with staff who are naturally inclined towards emergent curriculum. To model how it could look with just a few adjustments. To offer a professional development experience or journal article round table on a topic that supports emergent curriculum could be effective. Adding materials that might naturally lend themselves to emergent curriculum such as loose parts could be a win-win. Typically loose parts are low cost and have many learning benefits.

I believe that our quiet activism can make impacts. I have been around long enough to know that persistence is critical. Making a plan to move a program forward. There is no perfect program, only programs trying to grow and learn each day.

**JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SERIES**  
FEATURING  
**Dr. Reginald A. Blockett**  
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

**SESSION DATES:**

<b>OCT 20</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND OPPRESSION</b>
<b>OCT 27</b>	<b>EXPLORING ANTI-RACISM &amp; ANTI-DEFICIT APPROACHES TO DEI WORK</b>
<b>NOV 10</b>	<b>INTERSECTIONALITY... MORE THAN A BUZZWORD</b>
<b>NOV 17</b>	<b>MOBILIZING EQUITY AND JUSTICE AGENDAS</b>

EACH SESSION BEGINS AT 6 PM EST & RUNS 60 MINUTES

**RSVP: [tinyurl.com/grccJEDI](https://tinyurl.com/grccJEDI)**



## GVSU + GRCC SERIES

I continue to be engaging in growing and learning especially in the topics of Justice, Equity and Inclusion. As a proud GVSU alumni I am excited to see their efforts in addressing these topics.

# ECA JUSTICE, EQUITY AND INCLUSION Q & A

IN NOVEMBER I WILL BE HIGHLIGHTING VARIOUS QUESTIONS THAT ALL OF YOU HAVE SHARED SPECIFICALLY AROUND EARLY CHILDHOOD. LOOK FOR SHORT REELS, IGTV AND POSTS OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. THEY WILL BE SAVED IN THE HIGHLIGHTS TOO.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ANSWERED? DM ME ON INSTAGRAM OR SEND ME AN EMAIL.

## ROOKIE SUPPORT TIP

I was talking with my nephew Evan a few weeks ago about the difference between year one and year two in his role as a Banking Analyst. Since we both share a love of sports he used the term rookie. (The picture above is of him scoring a goal. He played hockey in college). What we talked about mirrors my conversations with new teachers and directors.

The feeling of overwhelm can be paralyzing at times. This is especially true for directors who were master teachers and knew their jobs inside and out. This idea of not knowing is hard.

The uncertainty of when do I ask, when do I try to just work through it. This is especially true when there isn't a clear policy or procedure to go to for the answer.

Not understanding the rhythm of the schedule yet can be an obstacle. What is the flow of the work. Is this normal? Is this how it will always be? Can I handle this?



## ROOKIE SUPPORT TIP CONT.

Communication and support is CRITICAL. Who can you go to with questions? Are they supportive? Do you have team members that check in with you often?

Feeling like you are part of a TEAM. Understanding that what you are doing is important to the bigger goal of the company/organization helps rookies to feel connected.

We laughed how by year two there is a sense of relief. We know more about what to expect and who we can go to. We see how things are connected and that makes a real difference.

Let's keep this in mind as we bring new members on to our teams. In a competitive market it might be the difference in keeping someone. Invest up front in these relationships.

## DIY PULL UP BAR

**SARAH IS A DIY QUEEN, YOU MIGHT REMEMBER HER FROM THE LEMONADE/ICE CREAM STAND SHE MADE. THIS GEM SHE MADE FOR UNDER \$15.00 FOR HER PROGRAM. BEING RESOURCEFUL HELPS US TO MANAGE OUR BUDGETS!**

**IF YOU AREN'T A DIY PERSON CHECK IN WITH FAMILIES TO SEE IF SOMEONE IS WILLING TO ASSIST. I FOUND THAT THERE WERE MANY FAMILIES WHO WERE WILLING TO HELP, THEY JUST NEEDED TO BE ASKED.**



**DIY Pull Up Bar For Babies**  
**Thrifty Nifty Mommy**

[thriftniftymommy.com](http://thriftniftymommy.com)

### What You Need

- (2) 24" pieces of 3/4" PVC piping
- (4) 12" pieces of 3/4" PVC piping
- (2) 14" pieces of 3/4" PVC piping
- (4) 7" pieces of 3/4" PVC piping
- 4 elbow joints
- 4 "T" joints
- 4 end caps
- Duct tape or athletic tape (optional)
- Sand (optional)

# DIY PULL UP BAR PICS CONT.



# FINISH THE YEAR STRONG!

IT'S BEEN DELIGHTFUL TO SEE SO MANY OF YOU PARTICIPATING IN THE 90 DAY CHALLENGE. THE GOAL IS TO KEEP MOTIVATED, HAVE SOME FUN AND CONNECT WITH OUR COMMUNITY.

I UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS A COMPLICATED AND CHALLENGING TIME FOR MANY OF YOU IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SO THIS IS JUST FOR YOU. PICK ONE THING A WEEK THAT YOU WANT TO GIVE A TRY.

DON'T FORGET TO TAG ME OR SEND ME A PICTURE! WE ALL KNOW THAT ACCOUNTABILITY MATTERS. HERE'S A FEW OF THE WEEK'S CHALLENGES IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN FOLLOWING ALONG ON INSTAGRAM. SEND ME AN EMAIL OR DM WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE.

## ECA 90 DAY CHALLENGE

WEEK 1

- Paint and/or carve a pumpkin.
- Get to work at least 10 minutes early.
- Try a new recipe.
- Go to a museum and/or festival.
- Say hello to someone new today.
- Smile at someone today.
- Send a joke or meme to someone.

 @EarlyChildhoodAlly #ECA90DayChallenge

## ECA 90 DAY CHALLENGE

WEEK 2

- Make the commute in silence.
- Give yourself a high five.
- Call a friend.
- Walk at least twice this week for 20 minutes.
- Go to the apple orchard or pumpkin patch.
- Try a new fruit.
- Clean your workspace.

 @EarlyChildhoodAlly #ECA90DayChallenge

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WEEK 3

## ECA 90 DAY CHALLENGE

- Shop small.
- Write a thank you note to someone you appreciate.
- Try a new activity and bonus if it's with children.
- Eat a new veggie.
- Check out a trail/park or beach.
- Color.
- Write out a motivation quote and hang where you see it everyday.

 @EarlyChildhoodAlly #ECA90DayChallenge



**ARE YOU NEW HERE?**

**WE ARE SO GLAD  
YOU HAVE JOINED  
US, WELCOME!**

A little bit about me, I am the founder of Early Childhood Ally (ECA) and have been in the field for 40 years as a teacher, coach, mentor and director. I started the Early Childhood Ally Instagram page just over two years ago with the support of my family and friends, especially my daughter Jazzy.

My partner Herm and I live primarily in our cottage in the Manistee National Forest after 30 years of living in Midtown Grand Rapids. I have two daughters Britany who works and lives in East Lansing with her partner Nick. Jazzy lives and works in Grand Rapids. I do travel into Grand Rapids often for work and to see my grandchildren Rosalie and Alex with my bonus daughter Ashleigh.

I spent over 20 years at Grand Rapids Community College leading and directing the Early Childhood Learning Laboratory, an accredited, star rated program in the heart of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Over the past year I transitioned to semi-retirement and am loving working as the Lead Coach for our Play and Learn grant. If you are interested in following along with that work you can check it out on Instagram through Play and Learn GRCC. I coach and mentor a handful of Directors which is incredibly rewarding.

As a long time advocate of all issues impacting the field of early childhood I have more time to devote to my passion. If you are interested in specific content don't be shy and reach out and let me know. I am always eager to hear what you all need.