



JANE ANN BENSON

Early childhood professional with more than 40 years of experience and founder of Early Childhood Ally.

GET IN CONTACT

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EDUCATION GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Master of Education:
Adult Learning - Early Childhood emphasis
Bachelor of Arts:
Early Childhood Services + Sociology

WORK HISTORY

EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLY

Founder | August 2019 - Present

- Content Creator for ECA instagram page (daily stories, weekly posts and reels) and monthly newsletters with resources.
- Coach for individual and group sessions for early childhood professionals.
- Presentations and trainings for organizations focusing on a theme of choice.
- Leader of the Early Childhood Ally leadership conferences - half and full day experiences for groups with 30-50 attendees.
- Presents at local, regional, and national conferences on various early education topics.

PLAY AND LEARN

Lead Coach | August 2020 - Present

- Partner with Coaches and staff to deliver all aspects of Play and Learn project goals and objectives. Content creation, schedule and manage all aspects of Instagram and Pinterest.

GRCC PHYLLIS FRATZKE EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING LABORATORY

Director | October 1999 - May 2020

- Responsible for the day to day functions of an NAEYC accredited early childhood learning center with 110 children, supervising 28-30 faculty and support staff.
- Provides mentorship to a variety of professionals in the community, strengthening the next generation of leaders.
- Engages and partners with families to meet their goals together.
- Cultivates community relationships and partnerships for funding, including Great Start Readiness school program, Early Learning Neighborhood Collaboration, CCAMPIS, Perkins ECE funding, and Early Head Start in addition to private funding.
- Supervises and coordinates ECLL Community Liaison, including Play and Learn groups.
 - Play and Learn groups offer 90 minute caregiver and child play groups based on the Kaleidoscope model. They are offered daily in Grand Rapids Public Schools and Community spaces.
- Key contributor to the design and vision of the Phyllis Fratzke Early Childhood Learning Laboratory (ECLL)
 - Coordinator and visionary of ECLL (24,000 sq. foot, LEED certified building) that serves as a hub for early childhood education - opened January 2017. The building has won multiple design and architecture awards.
 - Worked closely with the GRCC Foundation to raise funds for the building.
 - Development of outdoor classroom for infant/toddler and preschool spaces.
 - 1999 to 2017: Grand Rapids Community College Laboratory Preschool, Preschool Director

CREATIVE LEARNING CENTER

Director | 1984 - 1999

- Director (1990-1999)
 - Oversaw the day to day activities of a 150 child, accredited, for profit early childhood program. Worked closely with staff to create innovative learning. Had the opportunity to take part in the planning and building of the new space.
- Lead Toddler and Preschool Teacher (1984-1988)
- Assistant Director position (1988-1990)

WORK HISTORY CONT.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Grand Rapids Community College | 2001 - Present

- CD 105 Foundations in Early Childhood
 - Developed course in 1984 - course remains a fundamental course in the Early Childhood Education program.
- CD 106 Promoting Safe Healthy Learning Environments
- CD 118 Human Growth and Development
- CD 218 Early Childhood Program Administration
- CD 270 Leadership in Early Childhood

Calvin College | 2017, 2020, 2022, 2023

- EDUC 337 Curriculum Theory and Development: Early Childhood Education
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PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MEMBERSHIPS

- Accreditation Chair for Community College –NAEYC (2010-2014)
 - Contributing author Classroom Language Enrichment Model (CLEM) and Family Engagement Model
 - Creator of Early Childhood Ally - online community for early childhood educators 2019
 - CPR/First Aid Certified (1993 - present)
 - Developed the Fast Track Child Development Associate Credential program with the GRCC Education Department
 - Early Childhood World Forum (attendee: 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013-2015, 2017-present, 2019-present)
 - Early Language and Literacy Training (2005, 2008)
 - Early Reading First (2002-2007 2008-2013): Grant Writing team, Assessment team, Reading Coaches Supervisor, Curriculum team
 - International Reading Conference (2005-2010)
 - MiAEYC Conferences (1984-present)
 - MiAEYC Public Policy Committee
 - AEYC Accreditation of Higher Education Team Chair
 - NAEYC National Conferences (1985-2018)
 - NAEYC Professional Development Conference/Professional Learning Institute (2006-2019)
 - National Association for the Education of Young Children (member)
 - National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers Conference (2000-2009, 2011, 2012)
 - National Coalition of Campus Children's Programs (member)
 - Presenter/speaker at local and state level engagements by request(1987-2019)
 - The Society of College and University Planning Conference (presenter and attendee: June 2019, October 2019)
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PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

- 2010 Inaugural Director of the Year - Western Michigan Association for Young Children
- 2018 Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children - Lifetime Achievement Award
- 2018 Early Learning Neighborhood EPIC Advocate of the Year
- 2018 Grand Rapids Community College Excellence in Education Awardee
- 2020 Lillo (Formerly Himama) Early Childhood Educator of the Year