

Illinois Council for Exceptional Children

76th Annual ICEC Fall Convention 2025

Convention Theme: Whatever it Takes! Thursday – Saturday, November 6-8, 2025

Thursday, November 6, 9:00-10:30 a.m. **Keynote Speaker: Robin Thoma, Ph.D.**

Keynote: Whatever It Takes: Unshakable Commitment,

Unstoppable Impact



Dr. Robin Thoma began her career as a high school special education teacher, where she spent 18 years specializing in supporting students with specific learning disabilities and autism. She earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Indiana State University.

Dr. Thoma currently serves as the Project Manager for the Illinois SLD Support Project, where she leads professional learning efforts

designed to reduce the achievement gap for students with specific learning disabilities. In the ever-changing landscape of education, the power of unwavering dedication to every learner remains. This session will reaffirm your purpose and challenge you to dig deeper—for your students, your fellow educators, and yourself.

Friday, November 7, 9:00-10:00 a.m. **Keynote Speaker: Shannon Voss**

Keynote: Disabled Not Defeated: Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices Every Day



Mr. Shannon Voss is a captivating and intuitive thinker. Most people who meet him are moved by his determination, perseverance, and courageous demeanor. During his junior year as a business administration major at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, he contracted lifethreatening illnesses. Today he uses the

text-to-speech application on his iPad to communicate daily.

Mr. Voss strives to share his unique and remarkable story through connecting, helping, and inspiring the lives of those around him. He was the keynote speaker at the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) Conference, 2025 in Orlando, FL. There, he received the 2025 Prentke AAC Distinguished Lecture Award.

Thursday, November 6, 12:00-1:30 p.m. Keynote Speaker: Sonya Kunkel, Ed.S.

Keynote: Advancing Co-Teaching Practices: Proven Strategies for Academic Success



Dr. Sonya Heineman Kunkel is a veteran special education teacher, school administrator, and author. She is renowned for her ability to create inclusive and accessible learning environments and is passionate about mentoring teachers and administrators, particularly in the areas of specially designed instruction and standards-based IEPs. She is known for her hands-on, demonstration-based approach to professional development.

Dr. Kunkel has consistently improved student outcomes in diverse settings. She has trained educators across the United States, as well as in Canada and Australia. Known for her engaging style and sense of humor, she offers practical, research-based strategies that are easy to implement and effective for meeting the needs of all learners in inclusive settings.

Friday, November 7, Luncheon, 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Keynote Speaker: Sarah Powell, Ph.D.

Keynote: What's Important for Mathematics Intervention?



Dr. Sarah Powell is a professor in the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin, where she is the associate director of the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk. Her research, teaching, and service focus on mathematics, particularly for students who experience mathematics differently.

Dr. Powell will present five researchvalidated practices for math intervention and discuss how to incorporate vocabulary, representations, modeling and practice, fluency, and word-problem solving into

any instructional platform for mathematics. Dr. Powell focuses on teaching all students to become mathematicians!

Bring your IEIN# for Professional Development Credit

Be Among the First 50 Registrants to Receive a Special Prize

Hurry Preregister Online Today and Save! www.illinoiscec.net

Thursday, November 6, 2025

8:00-6:00 p.m. Registration Open

8:00-9:00 a.m. Coffee and Grab and Go

8:00-6:00 p.m. Professional Development Sign-in/Sign-out

8:00-4:00 p.m. Exhibits Open

The Chicago Marriott Naperville

Room reservations due Friday, October 17, 2025. The ICEC Fall Convention rate

is \$136.00 Single and Double Rooms: https://www.marriott.com/event-

reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1750085862187&key=GRP&app=resvlink

Hotel Address: 1801 North Naper Boulevard, Naperville, IL 60563 Hotel Phone Number: 1-800-228-9290 or 1-630-505-4900.

9:00-10:30 a.m. Dr. Robin Thoma, Opening Keynote: Whatever It Takes: Unshakable Commitment, Unstoppable Impact

10:45-11:45 p.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

Better Together in Collaboration: Shared Values in Action Kelly Russell, M.Ed., BCBA, Elim Christian School.

Accelerating Foundational Skills for Older Readers Cate Simmers, M.Ed., NBCT, Center for the Collaborative Classroom.

AAC in Preschool - They're Not Too Young! Laura Kubitz, SLP, Kevin Ross, Special Education Teacher, and Debra Ryan, SLP, Huntley Community School District 158.

Core Components of Reading and Their Instructional Implications Samuel Whitley, Ph.D., Nationally Certified School Psychologist, Certified Academic Language Practitioner, SPS 186.

Building Pathways to Success: Supporting Special Education Teacher Candidates Through Alternative Licensure from Admission to Licensure Gina Braun, Ph.D., ITED President, John Snakenborg, Ph.D., and Katherine Hartmann, Dominican University.

Evolution of Active Shooter Drills from Lockdown to Trauma-Informed Nicole Spatafore, Ed.D., Berkeley SD #87; Board Secretary NISSAA, Northern Illinois School Safety Association.

Behavior Management Toolbox: Evidence-Based Strategies for Busy Educators Colleen Kleinsmith, Doctoral Student, University of Illinois, Chicago.

Newcomers and Special Education: Intentional Identification, Thoughtful Planning, and Targeted Supports for Language Learners
Anne Cordina, Doctoral Student, Aurora University, Assistant Principal and Alanna Lambert, Student Services Coordinator, Wheeling SD21.

12:00-1:30 p.m. Luncheon Keynote Address: Advancing Co-Teaching Practices: Proven Strategies for Academic Success Sonya Kunkel, Ed.S., Consulting Services

1:45-2:45 p.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

Co-teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom. Increasing Scores for All Learners." (Double Session) Sonya Kunkel, Ed.S., Consulting Services.

IDLD Showcase: Legal Updates and Current Issues in Learning Disabilities: What You Need to Know (Double Session) Neal Takiff, Partner and Shermin Ali, Partner, Attorneys at Law, Whitted Takiff, LLC, Northbrook, IL.

Applying Critical Disability Studies Concepts to Clinical Practice: Early Childhood Considerations Chelsea Wallaert, Doctoral Student, Occupational Therapist, University of Illinois Chicago.

Starting Strong: Mentoring and Coaching Supports for Early Career Special Educators Sarah Westberg, Ed.D., Mid-Valley Special Ed Cooperative.

Beyond the Basics: Navigating Multisyllabic Words with Confidence Christie Johnson, MSA, Illinois SLD Support Project.

We're Better Together: Special Education Within the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Process Cindy Knight Meisner, Former Director of Special Education, Illinois MTSS Network.

But They Talk at Home! Understanding Selective Mutism (Double Session) Kathy Slattery, STAR NET Region II Director.

Informed Decision-Making: Change of Placement Antigone Campobasso, Ed.D. and Linde Parvin, MSW, MED, Valley View SD 365.

3:00-4:00 p.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

"Whatever it Takes! Co-teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom. Increasing Scores for All Learners." (Session Contd.) Sonya Kunkel, Ed.S., Consulting Services.

IDLD Showcase: Legal Updates and Current Issues in Learning Disabilities: What You Need to Know (Session Contd.) Neal Takiff, Partner and Shermin Ali, Partner, Attorneys at Law, Whitted Takiff, LLC, Northbrook, IL.

Enhancing Learning Through Supporting Executive Functioning: A Starting Point for Educators Amy Weltin, M.S., Ed., Illinois Specific Learning Disability Support Project.

Doing What it Takes for DHH Students Michelle Gremp, Ph.D. and Christy Borders, Ed.D., Illinois State University.

Half-Marathon Management: 13.1 Lessons for Educators to Empower Colleagues and Students for Success Michael Earnshaw, Principal Extraordinaire, Oak Glen Elementary, Lansing SD 158.

Whatever it Takes = Whatever They Need: A Parent and Caregiver Guide to a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework Lori Hensold, Ed.D. and Cindy Knight-Meisner, SSP, Illinois MTSS Network, Northern Illinois University.

But They Talk at Home! Understanding Selective Mutism (Session Contd.) Kathy Slattery, STAR NET Region II Director.

Changing Hearts, Minds, and Practices: Reflections on Inclusion in Prekindergarten Kevi Jackson, Springfield SD 186.

4:15-5:15 p.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

Coaching and Supporting Co-teaching: A Leadership Perspective Sonya Kunkel, Ed.S., Consulting Services.

The Silenced Scream: Breaking the Cycle of Bullying Through Awareness and Action Kiria Cora, Heartmath Certified Mentor and Trainer, SPS 186.

Balanced Social-Emotional Learning in Early Childhood Kristy Rauch, M.A., Center for the Collaborative Classroom.

Increasing Communication Across School Settings Carly Franzgrote, SLP, Easterseals.

Harnessing the Neurobiology of Reading: Strategies to Enhance Literacy for All Learners Aisha Simon, M.D. and Hannah Broido, Axiom Learning.

Building a Connection to Help Support Students Laura Spence, Special Education Teacher and Chuck Spence, Paraprofessional, Danville SD 118. From Hype to Help: AI Tools That Truly Support Diverse Learners Donna Wakefield, Ph.D. and Deborah Dorfman, Adjunct Professor, National Louis University.

Skill and Thrill: Demystifying Effective Phonics Instruction Brenna Westerhoff, Learning and Development, 95 Percent Group.

5:30 p.m. Past President's Advisory Council

6:30 p.m. ICEC Executive Board Meeting—Elected

ICEC Board Members and Committee Chairs are expected to attend.

8:00 p.m. President's Reception

ATTENTION: ALL STUDENT ICEC MEMBERS

Volunteer for three hours at the 2025 ICEC Fall Convention

and earn free student registration (limited slots available)

To apply, contact Amanda Passmore, Elmhurst University amanda.passmore@elmhurst.edu

Meet ICEC Convention Exhibitors and make meaningful connections with special education experts.

Learn about new resources and walk away with new and useful information.

Are you a member of CEC/ICEC? If not, join CEC today and save on ICEC Convention registration fees.

As a member of CEC, you automatically become a member of ICEC https://exceptionalchildren.org

Friday, November 7, 2025

7:30-5:00 p.m. Registration Open

8:00-5:00 p.m. Professional Development Sign-in/Sign-out

8:00-4:00 p.m. Exhibits Open

5:15-6:15 p.m. ICEC Delegate Assembly

Expand your knowledge and make meaningful connections by attending the poster-sessions – a valuable opportunity to explore diverse topics and engage with presenters.

Friday, November 7, 2025, 9:00-10:00 a.m. ICEC Fall Convention Keynote Address

Disabled Not Defeated: Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices Every Day

Shannon Voss

10:30-11:30 a.m. Choice of Seven Sessions

The Education Team: Working with Paraprofessionals Shelley Kenow, Author, Speaker, and IEP Consultant.

Helping Students to Learn the Language of Math Sarah Powell, Ph.D., Professor, The University of Texas at Austin.

Part 1: How Can I Get Them to Control Their Behavior? 50 Strategies for Emotional Regulation for Children Bev Johns, M.S. Special Education, Retired, MacMurray College, Learning and Behavior Consultant.

Understanding and Establishing Meaningful Work-Based Learning Experiences Jessica Sipovic, Training Specialist, Illinois Center for Transition and Work - University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Overcoming the "I can't read" Kerry Garvey, Graduate Student, Special Education Teacher and Paul Sims, Special Education Teacher, Pekin Community High School.

From Public School to Private Placement - Better Partnerships for Success Angela Williams, BCBA, Special Education Teacher, School Administrator, School District U46.

Teacher Educators: Doing Whatever It Takes Gina Braun, Ph.D., ITED President, Dominican University and Jaime Zurheide, Ph. D., ITED President Elect, Elmhurst University.

11:45-1:15 p.m. Luncheon Keynote Address: What's Important for Mathematics Intervention?

Dr. Sarah Powell, University of Texas at Austin

1:30-2:30 p.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

10 Things I Didn't Expect When I Became a Special Ed Director Elizabeth deGruy, Ed.D., Past President of IAASE.

Word Problem Problems? (Double Session) Sarah Powell, Ph.D., Professor, The University of Texas at Austin.

Part 2: How Can I Get Them to Control Their Behavior: Restorative Practices for Emotional Regulation for Children Bev Johns, M.S. Special Education, Retired, MacMurray College, Learning and Behavior Consultant.

Growing Our Own: Supporting Teacher Apprentices in Special Education Settings Chrissy Brown, Ph.D., Daniel Maggin, Ph.D., and Ozge Aksoy, Doctoral Student, University of Illinois Chicago.

Poster Sessions

#nolimits Shattering Limiting Beliefs to Maximize Potential (Double Session) Shelley Kenow, Author, Speaker, and IEP Consultant.

The New-Teacher's Guide to On-Boarding with Paraprofessionals Kary Zarate, Ph.D., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Word Ninjas: Slicing Through Syllables with Skills Karla Jackson, Really Great Reading.

2:45-3:45 p.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

Use of AI for Teaching and Learning Mathematical Literacy Mikyung Shin, Ph.D. and Allison Kroesch, Ed.D., Illinois State University.

Word Problem Problems? (Session Contd.) Sarah Powell, Ph.D., Professor, The University of Texas at Austin.

Sustaining Mutually Beneficial Partnerships Between Practitioners and Researchers Erica N. Mason, Ph.D. and Joy Chen, Doctoral Student, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Educational Leadership Within a Generational Divide: School Culture and Supervision of Educators Jessica Loustaunau, Ed.D. and Greg Bublitz, Ed.D., Waukegan Public SD 60.

Poster Sessions 1:30-5:00p.m.

#nolimits Shattering Limiting Beliefs to Maximize Potential (Session Contd.) Shelley Kenow, Author, Speaker, and IEP Consultant.

Partnering for Progress: How Educators Can Empower Parents in the Special Education Process Janet Flesch, Special Education Administrator, Tri-County Special Education Cooperative.

Introduction to Supporting Students with Specific Learning Disabilities Robin Thoma, Ph.D., Project Manager for the Illinois SLD Project.

4:00-5:00 p.m. Choice of Seven Sessions

ISCEC Showcase: Student Roundtable Discussions and Social Amanda Passmore, M.Ed., Instructor, Elmhurst University, Elmhurst, IL

Brewing Transitions: A Collaborative Conversation on Student Success Lyndsay Palach Shelton, Transition Specialist, Illinois DCDT President, FUTURE Social Learning & Transition Planning and Rachel Merke, Transition Coordinator, New Connections Academy.

Building Community Partnerships Through Project SEARCH Megan Kobliska, Special Education Teacher, Plainfield SD 202 and Jessica Wisneski, Employment Specialist, Trinity Services.

Supporting Children with Sensory Disabilities Anna Tess, Ed.D., Foundation for Hearing and Speech Resources.

Poster Sessions 1:30-5:00p.m.

Improving High Schoolers' Informative Writing Using Self-Regulated Strategy Development Emese Poszet, Graduate Student and Amber Ray, Ph.D., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Connections Between Whole Number and Fraction Understandings for Students with Intensive Supports in Mathematics Anabella Chlada, Student, Allison M. Kroesch, Ed.D., Associate Professor, and Neet Priya Bajwa, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Illinois State University.

Creating A Classroom Community with Authentic Interaction Activities Darin Sullivan and Bill Edison, Special Education Teachers, Glenbrook North High School.

Saturday, November 8, 2025

7:30-10:00 a.m. Registration Open

8:00-2:00 p.m. Professional Development Sign-in/Sign-out

8:00-2:00 p.m. Exhibits and Poster Sessions

Complete Your Convention Evaluation Form and be eligible for Special Drawing for Great Prizes

8:00-9:00 a.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

Building Better BIPs (Double Session) Courtney Stillman, Attorney, Himes, Petrarca & Fester, Chtd.

What's Happening in Springfield, Washington, and in the Courts That Impacts Special Education Bev Johns, M.S., Learning and Behavior Consultant, Co-Chair, ICEC Governmental Relations.

Ways to Truly Include Everyone, No Matter Their Ability Shelley Kenow, Author, Speaker, and IEP Consultant.

Considerations for Creating Welcoming Mathematics Environments for Black Girls with (Dis)abilities Camille R. Griffin, Ph.D., Saint Xavier University and Joy Chen, Doctoral Student, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Beyond Compliance: Doing Whatever It Takes to Reimagine Partnerships with Families Elizabeth Cambray-Engstrom, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Chicago.

Illinois Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (IDDEL) Annual Membership Meeting Kary Zarate, Ph.D., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, President IDDEL.

Beyond Social Validity: How Students Make Sense of Their Learning Through SRSD Writing Interventions Toni Ariwijaya, Doctoral Student, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, College of Education, Department of Special Education.

Not Your Average Session: Creating Visuals to Support Behavior in the Classroom Adriana Schmidt, BCBA, Autism Specialist, Easterseals.

Building Better BIPs (Session Contd.) Courtney Stillman, Attorney, Himes, Petrarca & Fester, Chtd.

ILCCBD Showcase: Follow Your Heart But Take Your Brain with You: Integrating Compassionate Care with Evidence-Based Classroom Management Strategies (Double Session) Heather Volchko, BCBA, Threshold Learning.

9:15-10:15 a.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

People-First Systems: Driving Change in Education Through HR Innovation Esiloza Omoh, Senior Director, Catholic Charities, Chicago.

Teacher Collaboration: Understanding the Power Dynamics Between Special and General Educators from General Education Teacher Candidates' Perspectives Zhuo Chen, Doctoral Student, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Whatever It Takes: Advancing Equity with the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Alexandra Owens, Ed.D., McKendree University.

How to Teach Sentence Writing: Evidence-Based Practices and Adaptations Abby Allen, Assistant Professor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Dyslexia 101: Characteristics, Warning Signs, Myths, and a Simulation (Double Session) Karla O'Brien, M.Ed., LBS1, C-SLDI, Classmates Educational Group.

Family Engagement Practices in Early Childhood. Antoinette Taylor, Ph.D., Illinois Division of Early Childhood.

10:30-11:30 a.m. Choice of Eight Sessions

What To Do When Students Do Not Attend School Courtney N. Stillman, Attorney, Himes, Petrarca & Fester, Chtd.

ILCCBD Showcase: Follow Your Heart But Take Your Brain With You: Integrating Compassionate Care with Evidence-Based Classroom Management Strategies (Session Contd.) Heather Volchko, BCBA, Threshold Learning.

Illinois DCDT Annual Membership Meeting Lyndsay Palach Shelton, President, Illinois DCDT.

Establishing an Equity Conceptual Framework (4-E Framework: Elaborate, Evaluate, Exposure & Empower) Zackary J. Livingston, Ed.D., University of Chicago Laboratory Schools.

Beyond Mobility: The Transformative Role of Service Dogs for Children with Autism Laici M. Zakrajsek, Student, Riley M. Stanton, Student, and Quentin M. Wherfel, Ph.D., Bradley University.

The Journey of a Lifelong Learner: Three Key Strategies for Success Amanda Downard, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Paraprofessional+ Pathway Program Director, McKendree University.

Dyslexia 101: Characteristics, Warning Signs, Myths, and a Simulation (Session Contd.) Karla O'Brien, M.Ed., LBS1, C-SLDI, Classmates Educational Group.

Kindergarten Readiness for Students with Exceptional Needs...Whatever it Takes. Antoinette Taylor, Ph.D., Illinois Division of Early Childhood.

Ray Graham Awards Luncheon Saturday, November 8, 11:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m.



November 6-8, 2025 Chicago Marriott Naperville

Mail form & check payable to ICEC: P.O. Box 324 Normal, IL 61761

Donation to Dollars for Scholars:

(Benefits ICEC Student Scholarships)

Registration InformationRegistrations <u>must be received</u> by the

following dates:

-Early Bird --> 9/20/25

-Registration --> 9/21/25 through 10/25/25

-On-site--> 11/6 - 11/8/25

-Online registration at illinoiscec.net

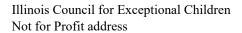
Additional Information

-On-site registrants may pay by cash, check, or credit card. NO P.O.s accepted!
-Written request for refunds by 10/18/25
-Questions? Contact us at

www.illinoiscec.net/contact-us/

PARTICIPANT INF Name (last, first):	ORMATION (1 form pe	er registrant) Please print: E	mail:	
Street Address:		C	city:	
State & Zip:			Phone:	
CEC Member # (if applicable):			IEIN (if applicable):	
Creeial Poguesto				
Special Requests, Food Allergies, &/or Accommodations				
CONVENTION BUNDLE Includes registration for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Lunch provided each day, with plated lunch on Sat. (indicate lunch choice for Saturday ONLY). Check the appropriate box indicating your attendance.				
Convention Bund	ile ICEC / CEC Mem	ber Non-Member	Student	*Retired (*Pricing for meals only)
Early Bird	\$160	\$210	\$60	\$110
Registration	\$180	\$230	\$60	\$130
On-site registratio	n \$300	\$400	\$60	\$150
Saturday Lunch (choose 1, if applicable	☐ Vegetarian ☐ Chicken		Total: \$	
DAILY RATE Not able to join us for all 3 days of convention? Select the days you will attend in any combination. Lunch provided each day, with plated lunch on Sat. (indicate lunch choice for Saturday ONLY). Check the appropriate box indicating your attendance and total based on <u>per day rate</u> .				
Daily Rate	ICEC / CEC Member	Non-Member	Student	*Retired (*Pricing for meals only)
Early Bird	\$80 / Thurs., Nov. 6 day Fri., Nov. 7 Sat., Nov. 8	\$105 / Thurs., Nov. 6 \$105 / Fri., Nov. 7 Gay Sat., Nov. 8	\$30 /	\$55 / Thurs., Nov. 6 \$55 / Fri., Nov. 7 Sat., Nov. 8
Registration	Thurs., Nov. 6 \$90 / Fri., Nov. 7 day Sat., Nov. 8	\$115 /	\$30 / Thurs., Nov. 6 \$30 / Fri., Nov. 7 day Sat., Nov. 8	Thurs., Nov. 6 \$65 / Fri., Nov. 7 day Sat., Nov. 8
On-Site registration	Thurs., Nov. 6 \$150 / Fri., Nov. 7 day Sat., Nov. 8	\$200 / Thurs., Nov. 6 \$200 / Fri., Nov. 7 Gay Sat., Nov. 8	\$30 / Fri., Nov. 7 Sat., Nov. 8	Thurs., Nov. 6 \$75 / Fri., Nov. 7 day Sat., Nov. 8
Saturday Lunch (choose 1, if applicable)	Vegetarian Chicken		Total: \$ (# of days X daily rate)	

Total Amount Enclosed: \$





Dates For Your Calendar ICEC Fall Convention, *November 6-8*, 2025

Preregister today: <u>www.illinoiscec.net</u> Hotel Reservations: *Convention Rate* deadline - Friday, October 17, 2025

https://www.marriott.com/event-

reservations/reservation-

link.mi?id=1750085862187&key=GRP&

app=resvlink or call today: 1-800-228-9290 or 1-630-505-4900

ICEC Fall Convention Preregistration Deadline Saturday, *October 25*, 2025

76th Annual ICEC Fall Convention

Thursday – Saturday, November 6-8, 2025

Convention Theme: Whatever it Takes!

Preregister online at www.illinoiscec.net



Early Bird Registration is open now.
Use the QR Code to preregister today and save.