

PLAY-BASED LEARNING:

Meeting Standards and Supporting Executive Function Skills

PRESENTERS:



KAREN GRAY

Karen Gray M.Ed, has twenty-four years in public education, which include instructional coaching and principalships. As a building leader, Karen ensured that play-based learning was a part of the daily schedule because she believes in the importance and value it brings to advancing children's education. Additionally, Karen has been working as an Education Consultant in districts throughout Connecticut. She provides professional development and coaching to early childhood educators in the area of play-based learning to increase student engagement and self-regulation in the context of standards, curriculum and cognitive rigor. Her work is funded by school districts and the LEGO™ community Fund US. Karen has presented for CAS in the past, including "How Adults Can Buffer Stress and Reduce Challenging Behaviors."



MELANIE SMITH-CERVERA

Melanie Smith-Cervera, M.Ed, is an early childhood specialist with EASTCONN and has been working in the field of early childhood education since 1996. Melanie's career has encompassed a variety of positions, including teacher assistant and teacher in community-based preschool programs as well as director of early childhood services for multiple programs serving children birth through school age. For the past 9 years, through her work at EASTCONN, Melanie has been conducting training and coaching in various districts and community-based preschool programs on executive function and play-based learning – most recently working with kindergarten classrooms to incorporate the CT Core Standards into play-based learning. Melanie enjoys working with classroom teachers and administrators, using a team-based approach, to support implementation of the executive function strategies and play-based learning models.