



2025 Georgia Head Start Association Fall Leadership Institute

November 19-20, 2025

C.W. Pettigrew Conference Center
Fort Valley State University
1005 State University Drive
Fort Valley, Georgia



ABOUT GHSA

GHSA's Mission Statement

The mission of the Georgia Head Start Association is to provide education, leadership, and advocacy that support Head Start programs' efforts in delivering high quality comprehensive services to Georgia's children, families, and communities.

Contact Us

Georgia Head Start Association

1 West Court Square Suite 750
Decatur, GA 30030
Juanita Yancey, Executive Officer

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GHSA's Vision Statement

Georgia Head Start Association's vision is to be a positive voice, a powerful advocate and promoter of quality programs for Georgia's children, families and communities as they prepare for life-long success.



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Welcome & Greetings

GHSB President: Tajuannya McBride, M.Ed.



Welcome to the GHSB 2025 Fall Leadership Institute! Our theme is “Celebrating the Past, Embracing the Future- The Head Start Legacy Continues.” Thank you for attending. We appreciate your participation and hope the event supports your professional growth and personal renewal.

GHSB Executive Officer: Juanita Yancey, MBA



Thank you for attending the annual Fall Leadership Institute! We hope you gain valuable insights, share knowledge with your colleagues, and find inspiration in Head Start’s legacy as we work together to lead children and families toward lifelong success.

Greetings

Greetings Georgia Head Start & EHS Leaders!

I want to begin with a big dose of gratitude and praise. This is a season of growth for yourselves, your programs, and your communities. Your hard work continues to be a beacon of light for the families you serve every day, and it does not go unnoticed. Thank you! Together we will continue to thrive and connect! We will face the challenges impacting our workforce together and advocate for sustainable change. Our Head Start services are needed now more than ever. And the collective resilience of our program will shine long after. Best wishes for a wonderful learning experience at the GHSA Fall Conference this year!

Allison Setterlind
GA Head Start Collaboration Office
allison.setterlind@dec.al.ga.gov



Georgia Head Start Collaboration Director:
Allison Setterlind



Conference At A Glance

Wednesday: November 19, 2025

Conference Registration: 7:00 a.m. -9:00 a.m. | Lobby

Opening Session: 8:00 a.m.- 8:30 a.m. |C.W. Pettigrew Auditorium

Keynote & Panel Discussion: 8:30 a.m.- 10:00 a.m. | C. W. Pettigrew Auditorium- Allison Setterlind, Moderator

Morning Break: 10:00-10:30 a.m.

Breakout Sessions: 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon | Turner Ball Rooms

Lunch Break (The Georgia Room): 12:00 p.m. -1:15 p.m.

Keynote & Panel Discussion: 1:30 p.m.- 3:00 p.m. | C.W. Pettigrew Auditorium- Tatjana Elmore, Moderator

Afternoon Break: 3:00-3:30 p.m.

Breakout Sessions: 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Turner Ball Rooms

Town Hall Rally: 5:00-5:30 p.m. - Auditorium

Silent Auction hours: 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. | Turner Ball Room 107

Networking Reception: 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Lobby

"Celebrating the Past"

Thursday, November 20, 2025

Keynote & Panel Discussion: 8:30 a.m.- 10:00 a.m. | Thomas and Barbara Turner Ball Rooms- Belva Weathersby, Moderator

Morning Break: 10:00-10:30 a.m.

Breakout Sessions: 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon | Turner Ball Rooms

Lunch Break (The Georgia Room): 12:00 p.m. -1:15 p.m.

Hot Topics Discussion: 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.| C.W. Pettigrew Auditorium

Silent Auction hours: 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Turner- Room 107

Closing Session: 3:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.| C.W. Pettigrew Auditorium

Opening Keynote Speaker



**REBECCA LIST
FREEDMAN**

*First Day Learning
Company*

Rebecca has over 20 years of experience in Early Childhood Education in a variety of roles, organizations, and settings. She is experienced in collaborating with leadership from community-based development organizations -- nationally to provide technical assistance and curriculum design to high-need early education centers and internationally in assisting schools with social-emotional curriculum development and innovation. Rebecca's experience is based in Applied Behavior Analysis and includes supporting families and educators in promoting pro-social behaviors and having effective responses to challenging behavior.

Opening Session

8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. |

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

C.W. Pettigrew Conference Center Auditorium

Welcome and Opening Remarks: *Donnis Pace, GHSA 1st Vice President*

Greetings: *Nikkia Mosley, Executive Director, Fort Valley State University*

Conference Announcements- *Yolanda Daniels, T TA Committee Chair*

Introduction of Keynote Speaker: *Donnis Pace, GHSA 1st Vice President*

Keynote Speaker: *Rebecca List Freedman, First Day Learning Company*

Introduction of Panelists and Moderator: *Juanita Yancey, Organizer*

Panel Discussion- *(Allison Setterlind, Moderator)*

Closing Remarks: *Donnis Pace, GHSA 1st Vice President*

"Embracing the Future"

Welcome to Fort Valley, GA

Founded in 1856, Fort Valley is the county seat of Peach County and home to 8,780 residents, according to the 2020 Census. This charming Southern town is known for its tree-lined streets, beautifully preserved historic homes, and strong sense of community, guided by a dedicated mayor, city council, and professional police and fire departments.

Widely celebrated as the "Peach Capital of the World," Fort Valley is the heart of Georgia's largest peach-producing region. Lane Southern Orchards, located on the edge of town, exemplifies this legacy with its expansive peach packing and retail facility—now a favorite destination for tourists.

Fort Valley also boasts a rich industrial and educational heritage. It is the birthplace and corporate headquarters of the Blue Bird Corporation, one of the nation's leading school bus manufacturers. The city is also home to Fort Valley State University, a historically Black university with deep roots in the community, and the American Camellia Society, which celebrates one of the South's most iconic flowers.

Source: <https://www.fortvalleyga.org/>



Session Key

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

10:30 A.M. – 12:00 Noon

Location	Session Title	Presenter(s)
Room 102	An Overview of Circle of Security Parenting (COS-P)	Consuella Carter, EdS, CC Educational Training Services, LLC
C.W. Pettigrew Auditorium	Using Play Intentionally to Build Social Skills and Prevent Challenging Behaviors	Rebecca List Freedman, First Day Learning Company
Room 103	The Magic of ABC-123 Behavior Change plans	Anastasia Newton, First Day Learning Company
Room 104	Disabilities And Mental Health Know Your Why	Dr. Christina Hicks, LMFT Lada Hicks, C3 Therapeutic Solutions
Room 110	Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health in Georgia	Laura P. Lucas, MS, IMH – E DECAL

The Thomas and Barbara Turner Ball Rooms

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Location	Session Title	Presenter(s)
Room 102	Open Communication: Navigating Difficult Conversations	Kelvin Thomas, Vice President, Acelero Learning
Room 103	Leadership Workshop Series: Follow-Through – Time & Task Management	Maria Madigral, Director of Learning Engagement, Shine Early Learning
Room 104	Dads Can Make A Difference	Ako Kambo Sundjata Aya, Visionary Leader's Institute
Room 110	Family Engagement: Building Strong Partnerships	Tatjyana Elmore, M.Ed. BCDI Atlanta

***“THE HEAD START LEGACY
CONTINUES!”***

Session Key

Thursday, November 20, 2025

10:30 A.M. – 12:00 Noon

Location	Session Title	Presenter(s)
Room 102	Harnessing AI for Early Learning Success	Carolyn Heyliger-Graham, Learning Genie
Room 103	Leading AI Adoption and Policy	Mary Romo, EarlyEd.ai
Room 104	Innovation in Action: Bridging Technology and Compliance with Safe Facility	Diane Binda, Dicabi Solutions, LLC
Room 110	Smarter, Faster Data: How to Halve Your Research Time and Double Your Strategic Impact	Maya Mcelrath, Danielle Luchtenburg mano-Y-ola (Insights by mYo)

Enjoy the Institute!!!



HOT TOPICS DISCUSSION

Allison Setterlind, Moderator

Special Guest: Debra Kibbe,

Georgia SPAN/ PEACH Collaborative

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025

C.W. PETTIGREW AUDITORIUM

1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.



*"CELEBRATING THE PAST, EMBRACING
THE FUTURE- THE HEAD START
LEGACY CONTINUES!"*

Closing Session

**3:15 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. | Thursday, November 20, 2025-
C.W. Pettigrew Conference Center Auditorium**

Welcome: *Melisa Metcalf, GHSA 2nd Vice President*

Introduction of Keynote Speaker: *Melissa Metcalf, GHSA 2nd Vice President*

Keynote Address: Courtney Nicole Howard, Project Manager, FSVU

Introduction of Moderator & Panelists: Juanita Yancey, Organizer

Panel Discussion: Faculty & Staff Fort Valley State University -**Columbus Alderman: Moderator**

Silent Auction Winners and Door Prizes:

Acknowledgements: Juanita Yancey, Organizer

Closing Remarks: *Melissa Metcalf, GHSA 2nd Vice President*



Visit Our Silent Auction

This year Programs have donated holiday theme baskets. Choose One! Christmas or Thanksgiving! Each donation is valued at \$50.00 or more. We thank all our Programs for donating and supporting the GHSA Child Advocacy Campaign Fund!

Closing Keynote Speaker

COURTNEY NICOLE HOWARD

FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY



Courtney Nicole Howard is a visionary leader, educator, and innovator with a passion for leveraging technology to empower communities. She currently serves as Project Manager for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) “Communi-versity” Project at Fort Valley State University (FVSU).

At FVSU, Courtney leads large-scale initiatives including the *Cultivate AI Conference*—positioning the University as the first HBCU in Georgia to host a conference dedicated to AI in education, entrepreneurship, and agriculture.

Beyond her work at FVSU, Courtney is the founder of *COURTesy Wellness Studio*, a faith-centered wellness brand and stationery line dedicated to promoting mental, spiritual, and emotional wholeness. She is also the host of *The CourtHouse Podcast* and the author of the forthcoming book *From Hurt to Healed*.

GHSA Officers

2025-2027

President- Tajuannya McBride

1st Vice President- Donnis Pace

2nd Vice President- Melissa Metcalf

Secretary- Yolanda Daniels

Asst. Secretary- Cassandra Daniels

Treasurer- Sherree Dean

Asst. Treasurer- Nichola Williams

Parliamentarian- Dr. Tanya Thomas

Asst. Parliamentarian- Ramona Codling

Historian- Kimberly Rainey

Asst. Historian- Ernestine Smith

***Thank You for your service to the
Georgia Head Start Association!***

Region IV Representatives

Region IV Director Representatives

Donnis Pace

Tajuannya McBride

Region IV Staff Representatives

Faye Boyd

Sherree Dean

Region IV Parent Representatives

vacant

Region IV Friend Representatives

Kimberly Rainey

Ramona Codling



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GHSa gives our thanks to the faculty and staff of Fort Valley State University for their commitment, leadership and in-kind support of the 2025 Fall Leadership Institute.

THANK YOU!

*On behalf of the GHSa Training and Technical Assistance Committee, thank you for attending and participating in this annual training event that convenes Head Start leaders and other early childhood education professionals. We hope that your professional development goals are met as well as your personal satisfaction and that you can **Celebrate, Embrace, and Continue the Head Start Legacy!***

Panelists and Moderators

Rebecca List Freedman, *First Day Learning Company*

Anastasia Newton, *First Day Learning Company*

Laura Lucas, *Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)*

Consuella Carter, *Quality Educational Services, LLC- Circle of Security Trainer*

Dr. Christina Hicks, *C3 Therapeutic Solutions*

Lada Hicks, *YMCA Early Childhood Development Company (ECDC)*

Kelvin Thomas, *Acelero\Shine Early Learning*

Ako Kambon, *Visionary Leader's Institute*

Sundjata Aya, *Visionary Leader's Institute*

Maya Mcelrath, *Insights by mYo*

Diane Binda, *Dicabi Solutions, LLC*

Carolyn Heyliger-Graham, *Learning Genie*

Mary Grace Romo, *Early Ed.ai*

Belva Weathersby, *Insights by mYo*

Debra Kibbe, *Georgia SPAN/ PEACH Collaborative*

Courtney Nicole Howard, *FVSU*

Dr. Christopher Ekpo, *FVSU*

Nikkia Mosley, *FVSU*

Columbus Alderman, *FVSU*

Nicole Taxiltardis, *Acelero/Shine Early Learning*

Allison Setterlind, *Georgia Head Start Collaboration Director*

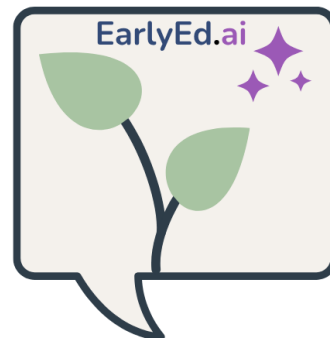
Melissa Skrbic-Huss, *ChildPlus*

Tatjana Elmore, M.Ed., *BCDI Atlanta*

Angie Moon de Avila, *Clarke County School District*

Maria Madigral, *Acelero\Shine Early Learning*

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!!!



Safe Travels!!

As we **CELEBRATE THE PAST AND EMBRACE THE FUTURE...** we hope that you enjoyed your time in Fort Valley, GA, learned new things and will share and apply what you've learned. Get home safe and we look forward to seeing you next year!

Training Credits & CEU's

The Fall Leadership Institute provides **4.5 hours** of training credits awarded by the Georgia Professional Development System. CEU credits are awarded by the First Day Learning Company. ***Please pick up your training certificate before leaving the Institute. Certificates will not be available after the Institute.**



