

CIS INSTITUTE 2025 MORNING SESSIONS



KEYNOTE: THE BRAZELTON TOUCHPOINTS™ APPROACH: A DEVELOPMENTAL-RELATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN AND ENGAGING FAMILIES

Jayne Singer

The Brazelton Touchpoints™ Approach is an evidence-based, developmental-relational practice that improves professionals' and parents' ability to support children's well-being. This can be especially valuable in more deeply understanding behavior that can be challenging within both typical and atypical development. This Approach focuses on recognizing and anticipating "touchpoints" as key periods in child development and family functioning as opportunities to improve parent-provider and parent-child relationships that promote relational health for the whole family, in service of best outcomes.

This 45-minute Keynote presentation will provide an overview of the Brazelton Touchpoints™ Approach with an exploration of both its Developmental and Relational Frameworks for deeply understanding children's functioning. The event will include PowerPoint presentation material as well as interactive opportunities for reflection to orient participants to Touchpoints-informed practice as applied to their daily challenges. These activities will support workforce skills and well-being in service of capacity to serve young children and their families.

Keynote objectives:

- As a result of their participation in this presentation, participants will be able to:
- Define and explore elements of developmental processes that are key to understanding challenging behavior.
- Understand the role of regression in affecting developmental process. Begin to explore the Touchpoints strength-based attitudes and relationship-based practices as integrated strategies to promote engagement among families and providers.

Core Components:

Developmental Framework – provides a concrete framework to better understand a child's developmental process as one characterized by disorganized behavior and how it impacts caregiving relationships.

Strengths-based, Relational Framework – provides concrete relationship based strategies and practices for building strong partnership with families, staff and community partners.

Culturally Responsive – provides strategies to discover what is important to families

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EMPOWERING FAMILIES: UNIVERSAL STRATEGIES TO PREVENT CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Erin Barton, Ph.D., BCBA-D

This 90-minute session is designed for providers supporting families and caregivers of young children in fostering positive social-emotional development and preventing challenging behaviors. Participants will explore universal, developmentally appropriate strategies—such as responsive caregiving, predictable routines, and co-regulation—that caregivers can use to prevent challenging behaviors and support social emotional competence. Through interactive discussions and illustrative scenarios, providers will gain practical tools to guide families and caregivers in creating environments that support their child’s growth.

Objectives:

- Identify and explain universal strategies that families and caregivers can implement to support emotional regulation and reduce challenging behaviors in young children.
- Develop communication techniques and resources to effectively share these strategies with families and caregivers in a culturally responsive and accessible manner.

COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT AND ENRICHMENT: WHAT DOES THE SCIENCE SAY?

Sara Benham, PhD, CCC-SLP and Molly Bumpas, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, BCBA

In this presentation, we will lay out communication development milestones in children 0-3 who are monolingual and multilingual, and for children who are developing speech and language typically or are at risk for speech and/or language disorders. We will discuss ‘red flags’ for children who may be struggling with communication development, and offer information for caregivers and professionals on clear, evidence-based recommendations for setting up language-rich environments for monolingual and multilingual learners. Attendees will walk away with a sharpened understanding of early communicative development and best practices for facilitating language in the home environment.

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BOUNDARIES AS BRIDGES: STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND COLLEAGUES

Alyssa Campbell, M.Ed.

Boundaries aren't barriers—they're the key to stronger, more connected relationships, both in the classroom and among colleagues. This session explores how clear, compassionate boundaries create trust, emotional safety, and cooperation with children while also fostering respect and balance in professional relationships. Walk away with practical strategies to confidently set and maintain boundaries that support both your well-being and the well-being of those around you.

THRIVING TOGETHER: REBUILDING WELLBEING WITH PLAY, MOTIVATION, AND INQUIRY

Ellen Drollette

This interactive workshop invites early childhood educators, leaders, and caregivers to explore how play, motivation, and inquiry can be intentionally used to support the social and emotional wellbeing of children, families, and providers in the wake of the pandemic. Through hands-on activities, reflective exercises, and small group discussions, participants will examine the powerful role of play in fostering resilience and rebuilding connection. Together, we'll explore how motivation can reignite joy and engagement, and how inquiry can serve as a guide toward meaningful transformation in our programs and communities. Participants will leave with practical strategies to create nurturing, inclusive environments that celebrate strengths, inspire curiosity, and promote a deep sense of belonging—for every child and every adult in the system. This workshop is a call to action to build back better—together.

- Understand the role of play, motivation, and inquiry in well-being
- Engage in interactive activities that promote collaboration and reflection
- Develop actionable strategies to foster a thriving environment
- Build a supportive professional community through shared experiences

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WRITING FOR WELLBEING: EMPOWERING PROVIDERS IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Lori Meyer, Associate Professor, University of Vermont, Ph.D.

In this session, we will delve into the intersection of professional development (PD), writing, and social-emotional wellbeing (SEW) for CIS providers navigating the post-pandemic landscape. The pandemic had a profound impact on children, families, and professionals. In this session, participants will explore how writing can be a transformative process that fosters self-reflection, increases understanding of unique experiences, and promotes personal social-emotional wellbeing (SEW) for both them and the children and families they serve. Participants will learn how reflecting on their practice through writing has the potential to deepen their understanding, strengthen their use of high-quality, recommended practices, and cultivate personal wellbeing.

This session also presents a unique opportunity to establish a first-in-the-nation, state-specific, Community of Practice (CoP) designed explicitly for EI/ECSE professionals who want to leverage writing for PD and SEW. The CoP will offer an exclusive space for members to share their writing, gain feedback, build connections, and support each other's growth and wellbeing. As the Publication and Products Chair for the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), I am deeply committed to amplifying practitioner and family voices and creating resources that uplift those voices and addresses the field's current needs. My published work, including, "DEC at the Intersection: Actualizing Division for Early Childhood's Racial Equity Point of View within our Resource System" (Meyer et al., 2024) focuses on equity and representation in EI/ECSE resources.

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DEVELOPMENT IS A JOURNEY - A CONVERSATION ROADMAP FOR TALKING WITH FAMILIES ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS

Jayne Singer, PhD, IECMH-E®

We all know how critical early identification and intervention is to promote a child's optimal development. Yet developmental concerns, screening, and assessment results can be anxiety-provoking for families and providers. Come explore a new tool to help family-facing providers have collaborative and productive conversations with families about developmental screening results. This 90-minute workshop introduces the Development is a Journey Conversation Roadmap. Participants learn seven simple steps to engage parents actively in planning for their child's developmental needs. This workshop introduces participants to the Roadmap and its focus on honoring families' knowledge of their child. We explore why providers and families sometimes have differences of opinion about children and screenings. We practice strengths-based ways to invite all perspectives into the conversation and move ahead with collaborative and equitable shared decision-making.

Objectives:

- Identify the key elements of parental emotional reactions to concerns about their child's development.
- Anticipate parental stress and differences in perspective when providers raise concerns about a child's development.
- Implement perspective-taking as a key relationship-based skill.
- Practice using the Development is a Journey Roadmap tool to support strengths-based conversations with families in service of collaborative goals.

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SENSE(S) OF SELF: A CHILD'S RIGHT TO BELONG

Scottie Taylor, Pediatric Physical Therapist

This session explores how children take in information through their five external senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell—while also listening to internal senses like proprioception, vestibular, and interoception. By trusting these experiences, children build self-awareness, confidence, and belonging. Participants will learn to observe sensory patterns and support children's needs in their days/curriculum/supports.

We will discuss how sensory variations shape a child's understanding of themselves and their environment. This session emphasizes honoring each child's unique processing style, fostering self-trust, and using multi-sensory communication to create supportive environments where children can fully engage as their authentic selves.

TAKE-AWAY HOME VISITING STRATEGIES FROM MATERNAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SUSTAINED HOME VISITING (MECSH) AND PARENTS AS TEACHERS (PAT)

Heather Wilson, Licensed Psychologist-Master
Margaret Urban, RN, MSN

Come learn about the evidence-based home visiting models within CIS: Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home visiting (MECSH) and Parents as Teachers (PAT). You will learn about the theories and frameworks from these models and how they can be applied to your partnership with families. You will be introduced to strategies and techniques used within the models such as having difficult conversations and reflective supervision.

CIS INSTITUTE 2025 AFTERNOON SESSIONS



BUILDING STRONGER BONDS: EFFECTIVE FAMILY COACHING THROUGH RELATIONSHIP-FOCUSED STRATEGIES

Erin Barton, Ph.D., BCBA-D

This 90-minute session will focus on strengthening the partnerships with families and caregivers through relationship-based coaching strategies. Participants will learn how trust, collaboration, and active listening enhance family and caregiver engagement and improve outcomes for infants and toddlers. By practicing coaching techniques such as reflective questioning and strength-based feedback, providers will be better equipped to empower families and caregivers in supporting their child's development in natural routines and daily interactions.

Objectives:

- Apply relationship-based coaching techniques, such as active listening and reflective questioning, to strengthen family partnerships and promote collaborative problem-solving.
- Develop strategies to provide strength-based, culturally responsive feedback and reflection that supports families in implementing effective caregiving practices that promote positive social-emotional development.

FOSTERING EMOTIONAL GROWTH IN CHILDREN: BUILDING RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL COMPETENCY

Alyssa Campbell, M.Ed.

Emotional growth is the foundation of lifelong resilience and healthy relationships. This session will dive into practical ways to support children in navigating big feelings, developing coping skills, and building positive social connections. Learn how to create environments that nurture emotional intelligence and equip children with the tools they need to thrive.

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AFTERNOON SESSIONS



OVERVIEW OF LATCH & MOTION / CAUSES OF LOW MILK PRODUCTION

CRADLING CONNECTIONS: CLIENT AND COMMUNITY CENTERED LACTATION SUPPORT IN THE SETTING OF SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE

Tricia Cassi, IBCLC, Katy Leffel, RN-IBCLC and Amy Wegner, RN-IBCLC

This session will explore three topics of breastfeeding, including; breastfeeding in motion, low milk supply, and substance use and breastfeeding. A significant portion of this session will focus on the new guidelines on Substance Misuse and Breastfeeding from the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine and how we as a community can support this population in a holistic way. This will be a facilitated discussion with time for questions and answers.

SURVIVING TO THRIVING: CREATING A PERSONAL PLAN

Ellen Drollett

This interactive workshop is designed to help individuals move from merely surviving to truly thriving by leveraging their strengths, experiences, and community support. Through real-life narratives from families and caregivers, participants will explore the power of resilience and discover practical strategies for creating a personal thriving plan. Using a strengths-based approach, this session will provide tools to reframe challenges, build motivation, and foster well-being in personal and professional settings.

Objectives

- Explore personal and professional strengths as tools for resilience and growth.
- Engage in reflective exercises to identify and build upon past successes.
- Develop a personalized plan for thriving using goal-setting techniques.
- Identify strategies to overcome barriers and cultivate a supportive community

CIS INSTITUTE 2025 AFTERNOON SESSIONS



APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS: WHAT IS IT AND HOW DO WE KNOW WE'RE DOING IT RIGHT?

Cheri Keith, MA, MS, BCBA, LBA-VT

This session will provide an overview of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and its historical and contemporary contexts as a treatment for autism spectrum disorder. Autism spectrum disorder will be discussed through medical and social models, including the language used to talk about the autistic experience across the spectrum.

DEVELOPMENT IS A JOURNEY: A CONVERSATION ROADMAP FOR TALKING WITH FAMILIES ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS

Jayne Singer, PhD, IECMH-E®

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PREGNANCY AND EARLY PARENTHOOD, DC- 0-5

Noelle Hause

Presenter will join the conference virtually. CEUs available

Pregnancy and the birth of a child are significant markers in the life of not only the developing baby but the parents and family as well. This includes thinking about the "imagined child" (the prospective parent dreams about) and the actual baby that comes into their life, as well as the "imagined parent" (how they dream about and anticipate they will parent) and the development of the actual parental identity. Explore and consider key concepts around development, identity, and issues surrounding complicated pregnancies, prematurity, and loss. As a result of participating in this training, participants will be able to:

- Describe the psychology of pregnancy, especially as it relates to parental understanding, emotional experiences, and expectations.
- Outline the stages of early parenthood and key concepts surrounding parental identity formation.
- Recognize the impact on the psyche of parents/families around challenging experiences such as complicated pregnancy, prematurity, loss, and birthing a baby who is sick or has disabilities.
- Articulate the importance of clinical reflective practice in working with expectant and new families.

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JAYNE
SINGER



Keynote, Morning, Afternoon



About Jayne

Jayne Singer (she, her), PhD, IECMH-E®, is a clinical psychologist with over 40 years of experience in hospital, school, and community-based settings. At Boston Children's Hospital (BCH), she provides evaluation and treatment for families and children aged birth throughout childhood with medical, developmental, emotional, behavioral, and familial challenges including trauma. She is Past President of the Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health. At BCH, she co-launched an early detection of autism program and the Cardiac Neurodevelopmental Program. She is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and an International Facilitator of the Brazelton Touchpoints Approach and the Newborn Behavioral Observations (NBO) system.

At BTC, Jayne spearheaded the Early Care and Education Initiative as an adaptation of the Touchpoints Approach to infuse preventive social-emotional health into early education. This developed into the Tribal Touchpoints Initiative as well as the Office of Head Start National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. She also created adaptations of the Touchpoints Approach for families living with children with developmental challenges and for families living in the context of substance use disorder recovery, as well as for mental health practitioners. She is the primary author of the Touchpoints in Early Care and Education Reference Guide and the Touchpoints in Reflective Practice guides for practitioners and mentors.

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ERIN
BARTON

Morning, Afternoon



About Erin

Erin E. Barton, PhD, BCBA-D, is an international educational consultant, Faculty and Director of Research and Development for the Pyramid Model Consortium, and founder of Barton Consulting, LLC. She has worked as both a special education teacher and a university professor. As a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Dr. Barton leads research on evidence-based practices for young children, high-quality inclusion, and effective professional development systems. She is the Editor of *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* and a Past President of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Dr. Barton's professional focus is on creating environments where each and every child feels loved, valued, and a true sense of belonging—and where the adults who care for them feel supported, confident, and well. A prolific scholar, she has authored over 120 peer-reviewed publications, numerous book chapters, and several textbooks focused on early childhood special education. She has received numerous honors, including the 2021 Peabody Faculty Excellence Award for Service to Students and the 2020 Chancellor's Faculty Fellowship at Vanderbilt University. She was also recognized with the 2019 Merle B. Karnes Award for Service to DEC and the 2017 Distinguished Early Career Research Award from the Division for Research of the Council for Exceptional Children.

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**SARA
BENHAM**

Morning, Afternoon



About Sara

Sara (she, her) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Vermont. She is a licensed speech-language pathologist and researcher specializing in children's speech sound production and word learning in toddlers and preschoolers. She runs the Language Learning Lab and conducts NIH-funded research related to late-talking toddlers.

**MOLLY
BUMPASS**

Morning



About Molly

Molly (she, her) is a Clinical assistant professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Before coming to UVM, Molly worked in the field of autism in varying capacities and settings, including clinics, homes, and schools. She served on an Autism Clinical Team in South Burlington Schools for ten years providing consultation and training to professional and para-professional staff. Most recently she was a Program Director at SD Associates, a behavior consultation company, where she started an intensive early intervention program.

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**ALYSSA
CAMPBELL**

Morning, Afternoon



About Alyssa

Alyssa Blask Campbell (she, her), M.Ed., is the CEO and founder of Seed & Sew and a globally recognized expert in emotional development. She co-created and researched the Collaborative Emotion Processing (CEP) method, transforming how adults support children's emotions. Her bestselling book, *Tiny Humans, Big Emotions*, shares this research, and her second book, *Big Kids, Bigger Feelings*, is publishing with HarperCollins in 2025. Alyssa hosts the *Voices of Your Village* podcast and created a professional development program for early childhood educators with unlimited, free coaching support from experts in education. She speaks worldwide for organizations like UNESCO and has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *CNBC*, and *Vermont Public*.

**TRICIA
CASSI**

Afternoon



About Tricia

Tricia Cassi (she, her) is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) and the State Breastfeeding Coordinator for Vermont WIC. She has experience teaching breastfeeding classes and supporting parents with lactation challenges in WIC clinic and an outpatient breastfeeding clinic. Her passion lies in presenting breastfeeding trainings for WIC staff and Breastfeeding Peer Counselors, and mentoring the Peer Counselors as they support WIC participants with lactation challenges.

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**ELLEN
DROLLETT**

Morning, Afternoon



About Ellen

Ellen brings over 30 years of experience to the early childhood field. Ellen is passionate about advocating for children, families, and the early childhood workforce. Ellen has had many roles in the ECE profession, including owning a family child care program, being a Global Leader with the World Forum Foundation, and authoring several articles for Exchange Magazine. Her first book, *Overcoming Teacher Burnout in Early Childhood: Strategies for Change*, was published by Redleaf Press in 2018. Her second book will be published in October, 2025. Ellen's side gig is owning Positive Spin VT, LLC, where she does keynotes and professional development focusing on a variety of topics, including appreciative inquiry, growth-mindset, strategies for overcoming stress and burnout, and change management. Ellen now works for Seed and Sew; Seed and Sew's mission is to support teachers and families with the tools for regulation and connection, helping children thrive and build resilience.

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**NOELLE
HAUSE**

Afternoon



About Noelle

Noelle Hause is the Senior Professional Development (PD) Manager, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, for ZERO TO THREE's Professional Innovations. In this role, she works with a team to support the delivery of ZERO TO THREE's PD products and services.

Specifically, Noelle leads and coordinates the delivery of DC:0-5™ Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood (DC:0-5™) and other infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) related national and international PD offerings.

Noelle, a licensed clinical provider, completed a postdoctoral Irving Harris Child Development and Infant Mental Health Fellowship in 2011. She is trained in multiple evidence-based interventions and holds an Infant Mental Health Mentor - Clinical endorsement (Endorsement® for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health - IMH-E ®).

In addition to her clinical work, Noelle brings experience in reflective supervision and consultation. Her experience in developing training for professionals and student learning through higher education (in-person and virtual), focuses on growing capacity for families, professionals, and systems to support infant and early mental health. She has provided consultation across the early childhood field including home visiting, nursing, perinatal mental health, judicial, child welfare and fostering, and more.

Noelle is passionate about identifying opportunities for improving the capacity of caregivers, early childhood professionals, organizations, communities, and systems to provide quality mental health supports and early childhood education for infants and young children. She is committed to translating research into practice and using practice to inform research.

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**CHERI
KEITH**

Afternoon



About Cheri

Cheri (she, her) has worked within the designated mental health system in school, home, community, residential, and center-based settings for over 13 years and currently provides consultation services through a private practice. Cheri holds master's degrees in Education and Clinical Mental Health Counseling and has maintained her credential as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst since 2016. Throughout her career, Cheri has focused on specialty areas such as behavioral pediatrics and behavior based feeding disorders, developmental disabilities, trauma, and organizational behavior management. Previously, Cheri served as a mentor through Spectrum Youth and Family Services and as Chair for Vermont's Association for Behavior Analysis.

**KATY
LEFFEL**

Afternoon



About Katy

Katy Leffel (she, her) is a nurse and lactation consultant in the Family and Child Health Division of the VDH. She focuses on perinatal quality improvement, maternal mortality and perinatal substance use. She continues her work of over 13 years in home health, providing breastfeeding support and nurse home visiting with Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice on a per diem basis. She is also active on the boards of the Family Center of Washington County and the Vermont Donor Milk Center.

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LORI
MEYER

Morning



About Lori

Lori Erbrederis Meyer (she, her) is an Associate Professor who teaches Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education courses in the Special Education program at the University of Vermont. As a publicly engaged interdisciplinary researcher, Dr. Meyer's scholarship focuses on young children's physical development, disparities in developmental screening, and equitable early childhood policies and practices for inclusion. A key aspect of her collaborative work is developing policy and practice solutions that are co-created by and through the active involvement of diverse families and community members. Dr. Meyer aims to improve early childhood outcomes and remove structural and systemic barriers that create disparities for marginalized young children and their families.

SCOTTIE
TAYLOR

Morning, Afternoon



About Scottie

Hi folks! My name is Scottie Taylor, my pronouns are they/them, and I am excited to share and learn with you! I earned my Doctorate in Physical Therapy from UVM in 2011, after knowing most of my life I wanted to support and impact children and families in Vermont. I've been working in and around Chittenden County, advocating for inclusion, belonging, and child led learning in a variety of settings, including Early Intervention and Early Education Centers. I strive to look at learning and education from an entirely different lens, making space for all learners, and providing the best tools to our early educators so they can work their magic and support our future leaders.

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**MARGARET
URBAN**

Morning



About Margaret

Margaret Urban (she/her) presently works for Vermont Department of Health, managing the implementation of the CIS Strong Families Vermont Nurse Home Visiting Program (MECSH). Previously she was a nurse case manager providing home visiting with high risk/high-cost populations with complex co-morbidities on Medicaid in Chittenden County. She has held positions as a Family and Child Health Coordinator and Public Health Nursing Supervisor at the Middlebury District Health Office and Labor & Delivery in Chicago. In her free time, Margaret loves to recreate outdoors in all seasons and spending time with her two teenagers.

**AMY
WEGNER**

Afternoon



About Amy

Amy Wenger is a Registered Nurse and International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant. Her passion for Maternal Child Health work began over twenty years ago as a doula and childbirth educator. As a nurse Amy deepened her work with birthing and lactating people working on Vermont's largest postpartum unit, in pediatric clinics, and in her current position as the Family and Children's clinical nurse manager at a large community home health agency. Amy is also the founder and co-executive director of the Vermont Donor Milk Center which provides outpatient pasteurized donor human milk to infants who require supplementation, along with crucial lactation supports and postpartum resources.

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**HEATHER
WILSON**

Morning



About Heather

Heather Wilson (she/her) works for the Vermont Department of Health, managing the CIS Strong Families Vermont Family Support Home Visiting Program. She is certified in the Parents as Teachers (PAT) home visiting model and supervised a PAT program for 8 years. She has a master's degree in clinical psychology and a psychotherapy private practice. Her favorite color is yellow because she grew up in a big family and it was the only color left.