



## 2022 MNAFEE Family & Early Childhood Conference Featured Keynote Speakers

**Thursday, April 7, 8:30-9:45 am**



### **Standing Up for Children's Rights in a High-Pressure World**

How can we meet children's needs in a world where kindergarten is the "new first grade?" In this thought-provoking keynote, Heather examines pressures young children face including early academics and overly scheduled days, even in child-centered programs. She shares her dynamic list of "Children's Rights" and challenges adults to realign our expectations to truly meet kids' needs.

#### **Heather Shumaker, MS**

Heather Shumaker is the author of "It's Okay Not to Share" and "It's Okay to Go Up the Slide". She's a speaker, blogger, podcaster and advocate for free play and no homework for young children. She's been featured on National Public Radio "All Things Considered," Huffington Post, New York Post, Parenting, Parents.com, USA Weekend, and is a graduate of Swarthmore College (BA) and University of Wisconsin-Madison (MS) and the Wisconsin Public Radio.

**Friday, April 8, 8:30-9:45 am**



### **The Importance of Play During Difficult Times**

Dr. Von Bank will discuss the benefits of play for the mental health and well-being of infants, children, and adolescents during times of uncertainty (ie. pandemic, post-pandemic). The address will include a discussion about the benefits of risky play, or play that elicits physical and emotional responses, as a way to cope with difficult circumstances.

#### **Heather Von Bank, Ph.D.**

Heather Von Bank is a Professor in the Department of Family Consumer Science at Minnesota State University-Mankato. She has been teaching courses in the area of Child Development and Family Studies since 2008. She has taught a number of classes during her time at MSU-Mankato, but consistently teaches Parenting Education, Lifespan Development, and The Role of Play in Child Development. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Educational Psychology. She is currently the Chair of the Department of Family Consumer Science. In her professional life she is most proud of the first book she co-authored "The Power of Playful Learning: The Green Edition" and her most recent publication of the online textbook "Lifespan Development: Telling the Human Story."

Heather Von Bank has presented at international, national, state, and regional conferences to promote the power of play: International Play Association, US Play Coalition Play Conference, Minnesota Association of Children's Mental Health, Minnesota Association for the Education of Youth Children/MN School-Age Care Alliance (MnAEYC/MnSACA), and Minnesota Social Service Association Regional Conference.