

EARLY CHILDHOOD
MUSIC + MOVEMENT
ASSOCIATION

UND UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH DAKOTA

2026 BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

***Building Relationships
and Community***



June 28-30, 2026



EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC + MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION



Welcome to the 2026 ECMMA International Convention!

Thank you for taking the time and resources to be here for a period of learning, community, and celebration. A very special thank you is owed to Dr. Erika Knapp, Dr. Whitney Mayo, and other members of the University of North Dakota for their tremendous effort in making this convention a success.

Like many non-profit organizations, we are in a time of rebuilding, stabilization, and renewal during the various challenges we currently face as a field and as educators and humans. We have been spending time considering what our community needs from our organization. Why should early childhood music educators maintain a membership? Therefore, to start, we are working to increase member benefits in terms of online learning opportunities. The ECMMA Professional Development Series, sponsored by the Joanne Rutkowski Professional Development Fund, launched in the Fall of 2025. Through that, we have recruited new members and provided opportunities for current members to connect and "see" each other, even if virtually. We also look forward to announcing upcoming changes to our certification process, led by a brilliant and dynamic team Sarah Bonner and Lara Larsson.

Another important member event includes this convention. The convention title, "Building Relationships and Community" reflects our vision for ECMMA moving forward. In addition to spending this time together, we want those relationships to continue and grow. Teaching young children in any capacity is the most noble work and important work that there is. We build the capacity for humans to achieve their greatest potential. We build the foundations of the future, one note at a time.

Thank you again for being here with us today and for being in the early childhood community. We look forward to building upon the momentum of this convention to expand our network, share our good work with each other, and celebrate the art and science of music and movement in early childhood. Please enjoy yourself and thank you once more!

Warmly,
Christina Svec, PhD
President, Early Childhood Music & Movement Association



EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC + MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION

“Building Relationships and Community”

Welcome to Grand Forks! At ECMMA, we believe children are the future of our society and, thus, must have a solid foundation for learning the skills necessary to adapt and innovate. We believe using and learning music in early childhood provides a firm foundation for knowledge and growth. This conference centers on “Building Relationships and Community” through 1) cross-cultural musical bridges, 2) the social science of musical play, 3) Intergenerational musical partnerships, 4) environmental stewardship, and 5) multilingual relationships. The sessions in this conference will aid all attendees in building towards these goals for their students.

We are thrilled to feature the works of prominent scholars, practitioners, and artists in the field of music and movement in early childhood. We welcome our plenary session presenters, Dr. Wendy Valerio, author-educator Jay Broeker, and Dr. Kristen Votava. They will present plenary, stand-alone sessions without conflict and simultaneous sessions. We also want to welcome the 2026 Hall of Honor inductee, Dr. Alison Reynolds, who will give a virtual talk during our banquet. In addition, we welcome our simultaneous session presenters, who give a variety of options to meet all professional development needs. Lastly, we are very honored to have our featured performers from the Grand Cities Children’s Choir.

Finally, we would like to thank our convention joint sponsor, The University of North Dakota, for hosting the conference and providing the infrastructure support. We hope you enjoy!

Sincerely,

Whitney and Erika
Vice Presidents of Convention



Welcome!

From the University of North Dakota Department of Music, we welcome you to Grand Forks! The University of North Dakota is the state's oldest and largest university. We offer 225+ accredited on-campus and online degrees. Founded in 1883, six years before the state itself was established, UND gave North Dakota its name when the former Dakota territories separated into two distinct states. Today, UND is a busy 521-acre campus, the state's largest in the North Dakota University System (NDUS). We are happy and honored to host and joint-sponsor the 2026 ECMMA Biennial International Convention, "Building Relationships and Community."

With undergraduate and graduate degrees, UND Music is equipping students with 21st-century skills through studies with world-class faculty. Whether your passion is teaching the next generation, performing in front of audiences around the world, composing original music, or developing your skills alongside another major, UND Music has the program for you.

Our approach to music education for students of all ages, our dedication to the local community, and our commitment to international educational perspectives make UND a great place for the "Building Relationships and Community" ECMMA international conference. We hope you enjoy your time on our beautiful campus.

Sincerely,



Executive Board
EARLY CHILDHOOD
MUSIC + MOVEMENT
ASSOCIATION



Christina Svec, Ph.D.
President



Jason Jones, Ph.D.
President-Elect



Ann Harrington, Ph.D.
Treasurer



Sam Webber
Secretary



Sara Bonner
VP- Professional
Advancement



Whitney Mayo, Ph.D.
VP-Convention Site



Erika Knapp, Ph.D.
VP-Convention
Programming

Sunday, June 28

12:00PM

Registration

UND Memorial Union

12:30PM - 1:30PM Plenary Session

Music Circles for Everyone

Wendy Valerio- MU 318

This plenary session will engage in spontaneous human-to-human interaction through music and movement games inspired by the mantras that a) there are no wrong notes, b) all notes are right notes, c) silence is your friend, d) every voice is important, e) listening is the most important job of all musicians, and f) we are all musicians. Take away strategies for cultivating creativity and building musical bridges for children of all ages.

1:45PM - 2:45PM Simultaneous Sessions

**Yes, They Can! Place-based Learning for the
Youngest Music Learners**

Maria Draper- MU 207

Place-based learning (PBL) is the method of using nature and the local environment to assist in learning. Within the early childhood music setting, PBL takes many interactive forms to give representation and build cultural connections that are not only affirming but also fun and easy to accomplish.

**Social Emotional Strategies Through the Understanding of
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

Kristen Votava- MU 318

This presentation includes information about the large public health study called the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) study. The ACEs study created a breakthrough in understanding how childhood experience affects well-being across the life-course. The presentation will view ACEs understanding through the discussion of the “NEAR” sciences of Neuroscience, Epigenetics, ACEs, and Resilience, including connections to strategies to improve health and well-being in early childhood education environments.

Sunday, June 28

2:45PM -3:15PM

Break

Poster set-up

3:15PM-4:15PM Simultaneous Sessions

**Nurturing Relationships Between Young Children And
Their Environment Through Music, Movement,
And Literature**

Rita Whitaker Haun- MU 207

Workshop participants will enjoy *FIRST THE EGG* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger through activities that include singing, listening, moving, playing simple instruments, and reading. Prepare to explore science by moving like a caterpillar/butterfly, changing from seed/flower, and growing from tadpole/frog!

Say It, Play It, Sing It

Jay Broeker- MU 318

Experience models for using language (familiar words, nonsense syllables, sayings, rhymes, poems, stories) both to develop accessible, flexible musical experiences and to foster vocal, instrumental, and musical skills and expression.

4:30PM-5:30PM

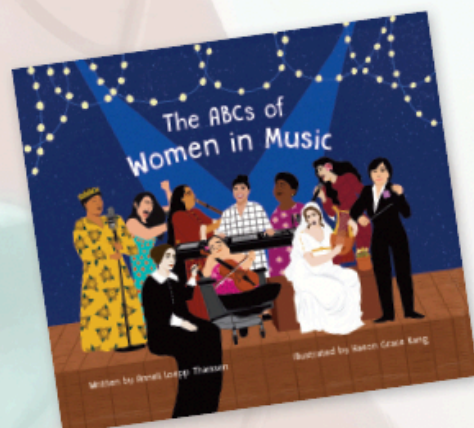
Poster Session

MU 318

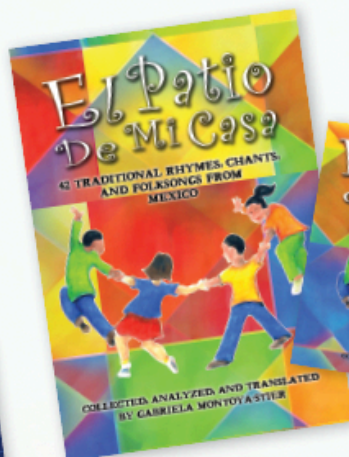
In this session, convention presenters and researchers will display posters of their work for attendees to discuss topics in early childhood music and movement.

- Dr. Nichol Anderson and Dr. Kristen Votava- Initiatives and Strategies on Supporting Child Care Operations
- Dr. Nichol Anderson and Dr. Kristen Votava- Strengths and Challenges of Rural Child Care Access
- Dr. Sarah Burns- Assessment Literacy: Play-based Assessment in the Music Room
- Dr. Ted Hoffman- Movement in Methods: A Content Analysis of Undergraduate Elementary/General Music Methods Course Syllabi
- Kylar Pagnac- Implementing Universal Design for Learning in One-on-One Piano Lessons with Children
- Dr. Christina Svec and Ms. Lara Larsson- But How Do They Feel? Encouraging Singing Self-Efficacy in Early Elementary

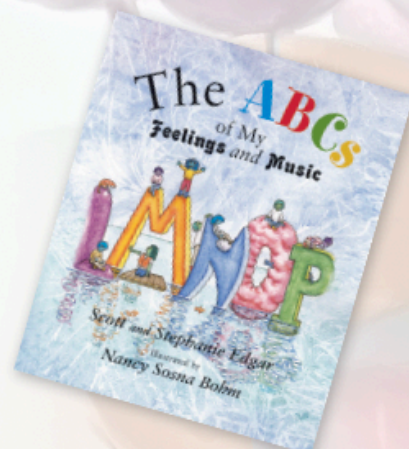
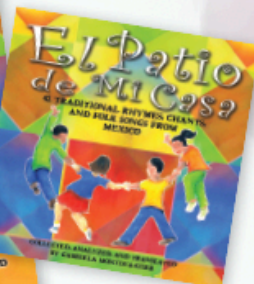
Early Childhood Resources from GIA Publications, Inc.



**The ABCs of
Women in Music**
Anneli Loepp Thiessen
Haeon Grace Kang
G-10547 \$18.95

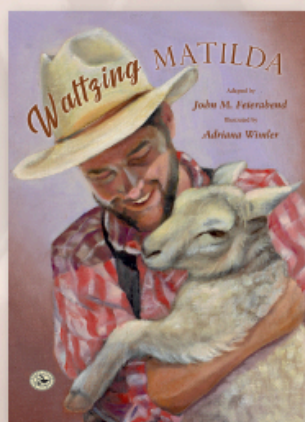


El Patio De Mi Casa
Collected by Gabriela Montoya-Stier
G-6947 \$17.95



**The ABCs of
My Feelings and Music**
Scott & Stephanie Edgar
Nancy Sosna Bohm
G-10153 \$18.95

More beautifully
illustrated books
with classic songs
and rhymes for
children from
GIA Publications, Inc.



Waltzing Matilda
John M. Feierabend, PhD
Adriana Wimler
G-10805 \$18.95



Music Play 2 Part A
Alison Reynolds
Cynthia Taggart
Wendy H. Valerio
J381 \$48.00



Music Play 2 Part B
Alison Reynolds
Cynthia Taggart
Wendy H. Valerio
J382 \$48.00



**There Was an
Old Lady Who
Swallowed a Fly**
John M. Feierabend, PhD,
Isiah Timmons
G-10921 \$18.95

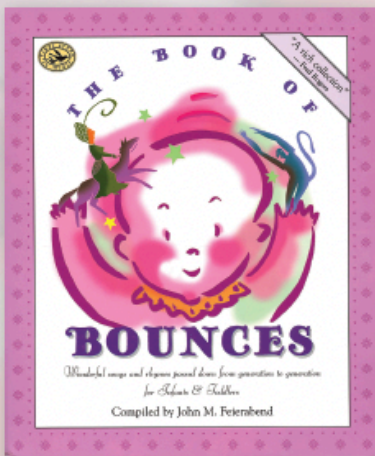
Learn more at giamusic.com



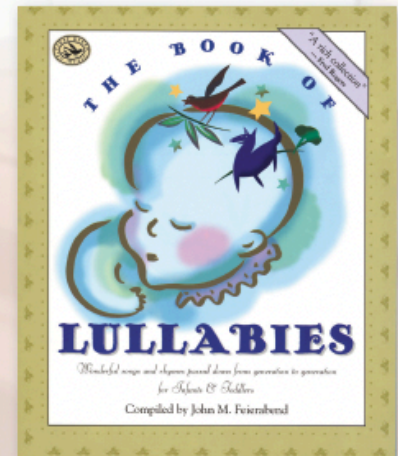
Coming July 2024
Recipes for
Everyday Music Making
G-11121 \$29.95

Beautifully illustrated
collections of classic
songs and rhymes
for young children
(0-36 months)

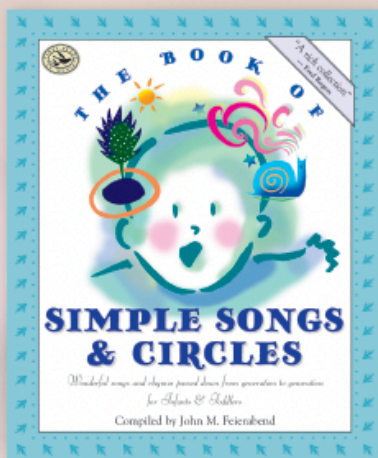
First Steps in Music for
Infants and Toddlers
by John M. Feierabend



The Book of Bounces
G-4975 \$13.95



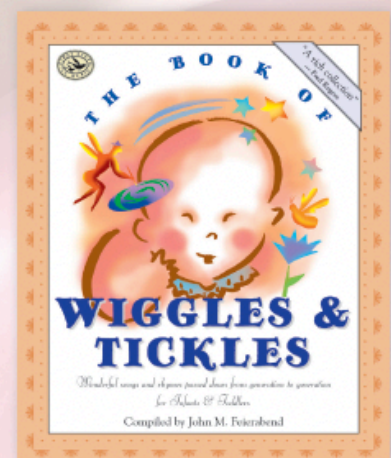
The Book of Lullabies
G-4979 \$15.95



The Book of Simple Songs
& Circles
G-4978 \$11.95



The Book of Tapping & Clapping
G-4977 \$9.95



The Book of Wiggles & Ticks
G-4976 \$9.95



GIA Publications, Inc.

Monday, June 29

8:30AM-9:00AM

Registration and Check-in

9:00AM-10:00AM Simultaneous Sessions

Caregiver Perspectives on Children's Musical Experiences

Erika J. Knapp & Rachel Grimsby- MU 207

This research examines caregiver perspectives on their children's K-12 music experiences. Through interviews with caregivers of students with disabilities, this research explores barriers to access, educator relationships, and suggestions for creating inclusive music programs.

Using Beginner-Friendly Ukulele Skills For Early Childhood Music

Ann Harrington- MU 318

This session demonstrates how teachers can use beginning-level ukulele skills to support children's movement. Activities will show basic ukulele skills (single chords, down strums, up strums, simple picking, etc.) can be used to add variety to responsive listening lessons.

10:15AM-11:15AM Plenary Session

Incorporating Global Repertoire

Jay Broeker- MU 318

Sing, play, and move with others to easily learned traditional songs and singing games in both English and non-English languages as we explore the global instinct of children to create relationships and community through musical play.

Monday, June 29

11:30AM-1:00 PM LUNCH BREAK

1:00PM-2:00PM Simultaneous Sessions

So Many Musical Minds, So Little Time!

Lara Larsson- MU 207

Learn how Seesaw on iPads can support self-administered, research-based measures of singing voice development and self-efficacy in children ages 6–9. This practical session invites dialogue between researchers and educators on using technology for instruction, assessment, and future research.

Musical Relationships Via Playful Improvisation

Wendy Valerio- MU 318

Engage in playful music contexts and strategies designed to develop independent and collaborative musicianship through social music engagement. Experience strategies designed to elicit young children's vocalizations and movements as springboards for improvisation that deepen music relationships through music skills and understanding. Experience the unexpected joys and wonders possible through improvisation that is based in young children's vocalizations and movements.

2:15-3:15PM Simultaneous Sessions

If You Build It, They Will Come! The Foundations of Creating a Thriving Children's Choir, Inspired by Movies

Melanie Popejoy- MU 207

How did the Grand Cities Children's Chorus (GCCC) move from a seed of a dream to a valuable asset to not only the singers it has served, but to the entire greater Grand Forks area? With inspiration from the themes of popular movies, participants will learn the tools to build their own thriving children's choral program that stands the test of time.

Monday, June 29

2:15-3:15PM

Simultaneous Sessions

(Con't from previous page)

Amplifying your work: Publishing in the International Journal of Music in Early Childhood

Diana Dansereau

MU 233 (Virtual Presentation)

IJMEC is the only peer-reviewed international journal pertaining to the intersection of music and young children - and it is dedicated to sharing the work and ideas of those who work with very young children. The purpose of this session is to 1) make IJMEC's submission and review processes transparent, 2) share writing and publishing tips, and 3) workshop potential article topics with session attendees.

Early Childhood Eurythmics

Jason Jones- MU 318

Moving creatively and purposefully can foster musicality from an early age. In this session, Jones will demonstrate Dalcroze-based experiences designed for children ages 0-4 years old. Participants will leave with activities to directly implement into their next lesson.

3:30-4:30PM

Simultaneous Sessions

Assessment Literacy: Play-Based Assessment In The Music Classroom

Sarah Burns- MU 207

This research examines how play-based assessment of musical knowledge and skills can reveal what young children know and can do. From these assessments, teachers gain authentic insight into how children understand music meaningfully, which can inform future instruction.

Singing Voice Development, Ages 4-7

Christina Svec- MU 233

We will discuss research behind singing voice development associated ages 4-7, demonstrate engaging activities using audience participation, and provide classroom examples using video footage of what activities look like with children. A packet of demonstrated materials will also be provided.

Monday, June 29

4:00-5:00PM

Break

5:00PM-6:30PM

Banquet and Hall of Honor Induction

MU 318

You are invited for an evening of fellowship as we celebrate inducting Dr. Alison Reynolds into the **Early Childhood Music and Movement Hall of Honor**. Dinner will be served. Entertainment will be provided by the Grand Cities Children's Choir. Must purchase a ticket to attend.

Dr. Alison Reynolds
Hall of Honor Inductee



With a performance by
Grand Cities Children's Choir



Haven't purchased your ticket yet?
Scan the QR code posted at the convention or click here:
<https://2026ecmma.vfairs.com/en/registration-page>

Tuesday, June 30

8:30AM-9:00AM

Registration and Check In

9:00-10:00AM

Simultaneous Sessions

**Sound Interdisciplinary Collaboration:
Empowering Student Engagement and Academic
Success Through Music**

Sarah Burns & Renée Baptiste- MU 207

Come learn how an interdisciplinary partnership between a university music education program and second-grade classrooms in a local school district motivated student engagement and promoted academic success through musical play and social interaction. Explore the magic of this musical collaboration!

**Experiences in an Early Childhood Music Lab:
Perspectives from Young Children and
Preservice Music Teachers**

Sam Webber, Mara Culp, Zhilin Zhang, & Laura Turley-
MU 318

We will share perspectives of caregivers, young children, and preservice music teachers who participated in an early childhood music lab class, including the results of a quality improvement project intended to inform future iterations of this lab connecting college students and community members.

10:15-11:15AM

Plenary Session

Psychological Safety for Working Together
Kristen Votava- MU 318

This session will consider psychological safety through the lens of implementation science, including discussion of the characteristics of highly functioning teams, stages of psychological safety, and application to education. Teaming and collaboration will be a focus through examination of how to create an environment of interpersonal trust and respect.

Tuesday, June 30

11:30-12:30PM Simultaneous Sessions

**Guided Immersion Through Song: Empowering
Spanish-Speaking Educators to Build
Bilingual Music Communities**

Madeleine Welch- MU 207

Strategies for building bilingual early childhood music communities through Spanish-language song and movement. This interactive session uplifts Spanish-speaking educators as cultural and linguistic leaders while supporting all teachers in inclusive, developmentally grounded musical practice.

**Lessons from the Lap Lab: What My Children Are
Teaching Me About Early Childhood Music**

Whitney Mayo- MU 318

Spontaneous parent-child musical moments offer rich opportunities for engagement and connection. Through personal vignettes and audience sharing, participants will practice recognizing and embracing everyday musical moments at home and in classrooms.

12:30PM-2:00PM LUNCH BREAK

Getting to Know ECMMA

MU 318

Grab your own lunch and join our president, Dr. Christina Svec, to learn more about ECMMA's DEI initiatives, Certification, Organization, and how to get Involved!

2:00-3:00PM Simultaneous Sessions

**But How Do They Feel? Encouraging Singing Self-
Efficacy in Early Elementary**

Christina Svec & Lara Larsson- MU 207

Together, we will explore why self-efficacy is an important singing topic with young children and how we can go about encouraging self-efficacy. Most importantly, fun activities and songs shaped to promote positive self-efficacy will be demonstrated and made available to attendees

Tuesday, June 30

2:00 PM-3:00PM Simultaneous Sessions
(Con't from previous page)

**Supporting Young Learners with Down Syndroms in
Early Childhood (And Beyond!)**

Sam Webber- MU 318

Although Down Syndrome is one of the most common chromosomal conditions in the United States, individuals with Down Syndrome may represent an underserved population in music and movement education. In this workshop, the presenter will model strategies that benefit young learners with Down Syndrome.

3:15-3:30PM

Closing Remarks
Christina Svec- MU 318

The convention will close with remarks by ECMMA President, Christina Svec. This session will also include a brief membership meeting and raffle drawing. Join us for our final activities!

**Thank you for joining us in Grand Forks, ND for the
2026 ECMMA Biennial Convention!**

Want to get more involved with ECMMA?

Click the Link for Information:

<https://ecmma.org/>

**EARLY CHILDHOOD
MUSIC + MOVEMENT
ASSOCIATION**

Plenary Presenters



Jay Broeker

Jay Broeker has taught general music to children for over 35 years and presents workshops nationally in the areas of music creativity, curriculum development, and effective teaching practice. Each summer, he teaches in the graduate teacher education programs at the University of St. Thomas and the University of Kentucky. Jay's commissioned choral works have been performed by numerous state and national honor choirs and are published by Boosey & Hawkes and Santa Barbara Music Publishing.

Plenary Presenters



Wendy Valerio, Ph.D.

Dr. Wendy Valerio is Associate Professor of Music and Director of the Children's Music Development Center (CMDC) at the University of South Carolina where she teaches graduate and undergraduate music methods courses and conducts early childhood music development research which has been sponsored by The Texaco Foundation and The Presser Foundation. Her work is featured in *Musical Experience in Our Lives: Things We Learn and Meanings We Make* (Rowman & Littlefield), *Listen to Their Voices* (Canadian Music Educators Association), *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, *Music Play: Bah Bah, Bebop, Beethoven* (GIA), and she is co-author of *Music Play* (GIA), and *Jump Right In: The Music Series* (GIA).

After teaching elementary general music in the public schools of Lawrence, KS, Valerio received MM and PhD degrees from Temple University. She holds Kodaly Level 1 and Level III Orff Schulwerk certification, and is a member of the International Society for Music Education, Music Educators National Conference, Society for Music Teacher Education, Alliance for Active Music Making, Gordon Institute for Music Learning Mastership Certification Faculty, American Orff Schulwerk Association where teaches movement and special topics for Orff Schulwerk Teacher Training Levels I and II.

Plenary Presenters



Kristen Votava, Ph.D.

Dr. Votava is the graduate director of early childhood education at the University of North Dakota. She is a speech-language pathologist and early interventionist, specializing in work with birth to 5-year-olds. Dr. Votava has over 20 years' experience in the field of early intervention. She is a master trainer of adverse childhood experiences (ACES), with training in Hanen, routines-based interview/family assessment, NEAR@home toolkit, focusing on implementation science and team collaboration. She has presented nationally and internationally.

Hall of Honor Inductee



Alison Reynolds, Ph.D.

Dr. Alison Reynolds focuses her research and teaching interests on expressive and creative music development, early childhood and general music teacher preparation, and developing curriculum materials for children 12 years old and younger. Reynolds has been published in *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Bulletin for the Council of Research in Music Education*, *Arts Education Policy Review*, *Research Studies in Music Education*, *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, *Perspectives*, and several state music educators' journals. She is in her second term of service on the review board for *Bulletin of the Council of Research in Music Education*, and serves on the *He Kupu (the word)* and *International Journal of Music in Early Childhood* review boards.

Reynolds is lead co-author and co-editor of *Music Play 2 (Parts A & B)* being translated into the Chinese and co-author of *Music Play*, which has been translated to the Korean, Lithuanian, and Chinese; and *Jump Right In: The Music Curriculum (Revised Edition)*. She is co-editor and contributing author for *Engaging Musical Practices: A Sourcebook for Elementary General Music*. She is a frequent presenter of research and practice in international, national, regional, state, and local venues.

From 2012-2018 she served the Early Childhood Music Education Special Research Interest Group as Chair Elect, Chair, and Past Chair. Since 2012, she has served as the Research Chair for Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA). In 2017, she received the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching from Temple University. Reynolds is a member of the certification faculty for the Gordon Institute of Music Learning.

Special Performers

Grand Cities Children's Choir



The GCCC is a performance-based music education program whose mission is to offer young people the experience of musical artistry and excellence through choral singing in a youth-centered atmosphere. Students develop their vocal mastery as they prepare and perform along with the members of their choirs. Literature covers a wide variety of musical styles and time periods. Rehearsals focus on vocal skill development, ear training, sight singing, and performance preparation. GCCC welcomes students from all backgrounds, and tuition assistance is available to ensure that all children are able to participate.

The Grand Cities Children's Choir was founded in 2002 by Melanie Popejoy. GCCC was originally created as a division of the Grand Forks Public School System Summer Performing Arts Program (SPA). Since its inception, GCCC has grown from two choirs to four, developed a mentoring program for the graduates, hosts an annual fundraiser to give back to the community, and implemented a musical enrichment tour every three years.

Primo Voce is made of singers in grades 7-9 and performs literature that covers a wide variety of musical styles and time periods. Primo has performed in Medora, New York City, Omaha, Washington, D.C., and across the Greater Grand Forks community. GCCC is excited to celebrate our 25th season and is thankful to ECMMA for the invitation to perform at the 2026 Biennial Convention!

Directors: Jack Boyer & Amy DeWitt



Session Presenters

Ms. Nichol Anderson is an Early Childhood Education Professor at Minot State University. Their research interests focus on early childhood education, particularly in the areas of rural education, nature-based learning, and play-based learning. They are passionate about exploring practices that support young children's development and learning across diverse educational settings.

Dr. Sarah Burns is an assistant professor of music at Jacksonville State University and is a graduate of Shenandoah University (D.M.A.). Dr. Burns has certification in both Kodály and Orff-Schulwerk, training in Dalcroze Eurhythmics, World Music Drumming, and Montessori music. Research interests include play-based assessment, community music making, shape notes, and geriatric music engagement.

Dr. Renée Baptiste is Professor of music and department head at Jacksonville State University and is a graduate of the University of Florida (PhD). Kodály-certified, her research interests include the male adolescent changing voice, prospective music educators' implicit biases, & William L. Dawson's life & music.

Dr. Mara E. Culp is Associate Professor of Music Teaching and Learning at Eastman School of Music. She has taught general, choral, and instrumental music and researches communication in/through music, music education for children who receive special education services, and general music education.

Ms. Maria Draper teaches music at Emerado Public School in Emerado, ND. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and a Master of Science in Teaching and Leadership from UND. Her interests include behavior, classroom management, equitable and special education, SEL, and place-based learning

Dr. Rachel Grimsby, Ph.D., has over fifteen years of experience teaching elementary general music and choir. She is currently Assistant Professor of Music Education at James Madison University. Her research interests are centered on teaching music to students with disabilities, preservice music teacher preparation, and the relationship between music and language acquisition.

Session Presenters

Dr. Ann Harrington is an assistant professor of music education at Florida State University, where she teaches courses in elementary music methods, classroom management, and graduate research methods. She also directs a music education lab for local elementary students and facilitates ukulele and recorder groups for retired adults.

Dr. Edward (Ted) C. Hoffman, III, is Professor and Director of Music Education at the University of Montevallo, where he coordinates the undergraduate music education programs, teaches graduate coursework in the Master of Education program, directs tuba/euphonium studies, and co-directs the summer music camps.

Dr. Jason D. Jones, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He is also the early childhood music and movement specialist at the Brownsville Piano Studio. Jones holds certification in Eurhythmics and Kodály. He received his doctorate in music education from the Eastman School of Music.

Dr. Erika J. Knapp, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Music Education at Texas Woman's University, specializing in early childhood, elementary education, and music for diverse learners. An active presenter and guest clinician/conductor, Dr. Knapp has shared her scholarship and passion for teaching at national and international venues where she focuses on inclusive practice and empowering educators to create joyful musical experiences for their students.

Lara Larsson is a music educator, clinician, and researcher based in Newark, N.J. She holds a B.Mus.Ed. from Houghton University, an M.A. in Arts Administration from Florida State University, and an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Music Learning Theory from the University at Buffalo (SUNY). Lara is certified in Early Childhood and Elementary General Music through ECMMA and GIML and previously served on the Board of Directors for ECMMA as VP of Development.

Dr. Whitney Mayo, assistant professor of music education at the University of North Dakota, has nine years of early childhood and elementary teaching experience in public and community music school settings. Her work focuses on early childhood and elementary music, rural music education, and equity of access to music.

Session Presenters

Mrs. Kylar Pagnac is a piano performance and pedagogy master's student at the University of North Dakota and founder of Moltzan Music Studio. She is passionate about creating accessible music learning opportunities for students with diverse needs and abilities.

Mrs. Melanie Popejoy is Associate Director of Choral Activities at the University of North Dakota where she conducts the Allegro Choir, Vivo Chamber Ensemble & Hawks in Harmony, and instructs courses in Music Education methods. In addition, she is the Founder of the Grand Cities Children's Choir program.

Dr. Christina Svec is Assistant Professor of Music Education at University of Kansas, specializes in early childhood/elementary music. She has held board positions with IMEA, GIML, OAKE, and serves as the NAFME ECM SRIG Past-Chair and ECMMA President. Her research topics include children's music aptitude and singing voice development.

Ms. Laura Turley is the director of the Early Childhood Music Program at the Eastman Community Music School. She has more than two decades of experience as a general and choral/vocal music educator in various church, public school, homeschool, preschool, and university settings.

Ms. Samantha (Sam) Webber is pursuing her PhD in Music Education at the Eastman School of Music. Sam holds Bachelor's degrees in Music Education and Flute Performance, as well as a Master of Arts in Music Education. Sam has 10 years of experience teaching early childhood and elementary general music.

Mrs. Maddie Welch, BA (Princeton) and MEd (Boston University), is a bilingual singer, performer, and educator with 30 years' teaching experience in public schools, Spanish programs, and early-childhood music. Founder of Canta y Baila Conmigo® (2009), she has recorded 150+ songs and trains educators in the CyBC methodology.

Session Presenters

Mrs. Rita Whitaker Haun is a professional 'cellist with over 40 years music teaching experience. She has taught Early Childhood Music and Movement, Public and Private School General Music, and Beginning through High School String Education. She currently enjoys providing MUSIKGARTEN and "Music, Movement, and Literature" for families in the Tahoe Region through Classical Tahoe, Incline Village, NV.

Ms. Zhilin Zhang is a PhD student of Music Teaching and Learning at Eastman School of Music. Her scholarly interests include culturally responsive music teaching, marginalized students' music experiences, and interdisciplinary and international collaboration.

EARLY CHILDHOOD
MUSIC + MOVEMENT
ASSOCIATION

Sponsors

ECMMA would like to thank our
sponsors for the 2026 Convention.
We are grateful for your support!



GIA Publications, Inc.

Your sound. Inspired.

Popplers
Music, Inc.

UND UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH DAKOTA
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES



Special Thanks

The ECMMA board would like to thank the University of North Dakota for their joint sponsorship and support for the convention. We would like to especially thank Patricia Young, UND Event Services, who was instrumental in making this convention possible. We are grateful to have such wonderful hosts.

EARLY CHILDHOOD
MUSIC + MOVEMENT
ASSOCIATION

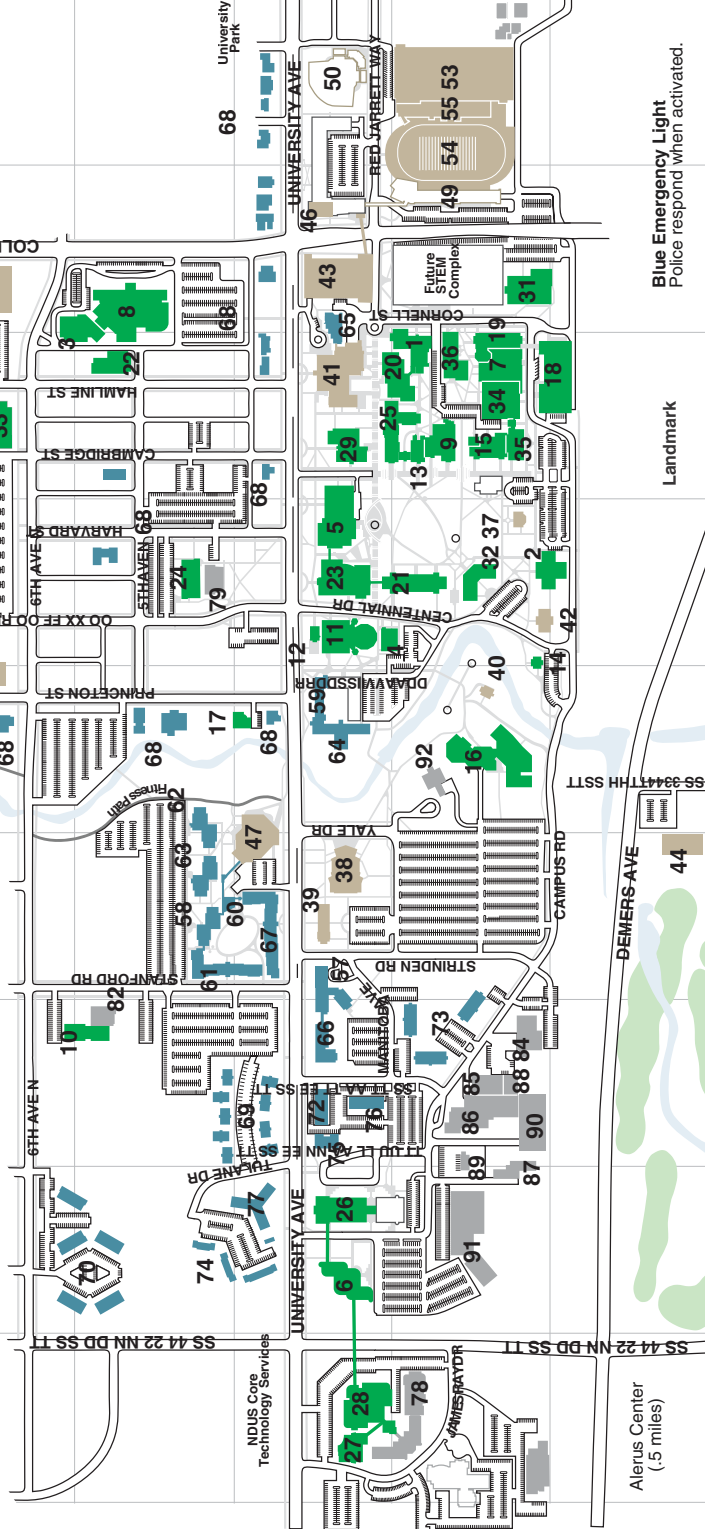
UND AEROSPACE FLIGHT OPERATIONS & GRANDFORKS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

5 miles West of Grand Forks on U.S. Highway 2

- Flight Operations UNDERCONSTRUCTION
- Hangars
- Air Traffic Control Tower
- Aviation Administration James Ray Line Equipment Building
- Aviation Maintenance Facility
- Hangars
- Helicopter Hangar

Grand Forks International Airport

AIRPORT ROAD



Visit UND.edu/map to view accessible parking, accessible building entrances and UND parking permit zones.
Visit UND.edu/parking for information on the UND's parking app and event parking.

Updated March 2026

CAMPUS MAP

ACADEMIC/STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Abbott Hall, G7
- McCannel Hall, G7
- Merrifield Hall, G6
- Research Building, E7
- Burtess Theatre, G6
- Nistler Hall, F6
- Chester Fritz Library, F6
- Nursing Building, E6
- Clifford Hall, F2
- Collaborative Energy Complex, G7
- Odegard Hall, F2
- Columbia Hall, E8
- Robin Hall, F1
- Education Building, G28
- Ryan Hall, F1
- Education Northwest, D3
- School of Law/Law Library, F7
- Gamble Hall, F6
- Gershman Center, F630
- School of Medicine & Health Sciences Building, A8
- Starcher Hall, G8
- Gustafson Hall, G6
- Harrington Hall, F1
- Jodsaas Center, G7
- Twamley Hall, G6
- Hughes Fine Arts Center, 33
- University Health Facility, D7
- Indigenous Student Center, E5
- Upson I, G7
- Upson II, G7
- Laird Core & Sample
- Witmer Hall, G7 Library, H7

POINTS OF INTEREST

- GENERAL
- Carnegie Hall, G6
 - Athletics Offices, G8
 - Chester Fritz Performing Arts Center, F4
 - Sorecki Alumni Center, F4
 - 50 Albrecht Field, F9
 - Hopper Danley Chapel, G5
 - Betty Engelstad Sioux Center, C6
 - Memorial Union, F7
 - 53 Fritz Polak Field Athletic Center, G9
 - Ray Richards Golf Course, H4
 - Memorial Field, G8
 - Nodak Insurance Sports Performance Center, G9
 - University Bookstore, C6
 - University Commons, F4
 - Wellness Center, C5
- ATHLETICS

HOUSING

- RESIDENCE HALLS
- Housing & Residence Life Office, F3
 - Brannon Hall, E4
 - Johnstone Hall, F5
 - Landing Zone, E4
 - McVey Hall, E4
 - Noren Hall, E4
 - Selke Hall, E4
 - Smith Hall, F5
 - Swanson Hall, F7
 - University Place, F3
 - Virginia Rose Apts, F3
 - West Hall, F4
 - Williamsburg Apts, F3
 - University Ave Apts, F3
- GREEKHOUSES
- Housing & Residence Life Office, F3
 - Brannon Hall, E4
 - Johnstone Hall, F5
 - Landing Zone, E4
 - McVey Hall, E4
 - Noren Hall, E4
 - Selke Hall, E4
 - Smith Hall, F5
 - Swanson Hall, F7
 - University Place, F3
 - Virginia Rose Apts, F3
 - West Hall, F4
 - Williamsburg Apts, F3
 - University Ave Apts, F3
- UND APARTMENTS
- Berkley Apts, F3
 - Carleton Court Apts, E2
 - Hamline Square Apts, B7
 - 72 Mt Vernon Apts, F3
 - 73 Swanson Apt Complex, G3
 - 74 Tulane Townhouses, E2
 - Williamsburg Apts, F3
 - University Ave Apts, F3

SERVICES AND AUXILIARY

- SERVICES
- Center for Innovation, G1
 - Bronson Center, A6
 - Central Foods, G3
 - Central Receiving, G3
 - Facilities Management, G3
 - Mechanical Shop, G2
 - Print & Mail Center, G3
 - Skalicky Tech Incubator, 88
 - Safety/UND Police, G2
 - Tech Accelerator, G1
 - 90 Steam Plant, G3
 - University Children's Hospital, G2
 - Transportation, G2
 - University House, G5
 - President's Residence
- AUXILIARY
- Center for Innovation, G1
 - Bronson Center, A6
 - Central Foods, G3
 - Central Receiving, G3
 - Facilities Management, G3
 - Mechanical Shop, G2
 - Print & Mail Center, G3
 - Skalicky Tech Incubator, 88
 - Safety/UND Police, G2
 - Tech Accelerator, G1
 - 90 Steam Plant, G3
 - University Children's Hospital, G2
 - Transportation, G2
 - University House, G5
 - President's Residence