

Early Childhood Studies Newsletter

Issue 34 • October 2025

Dear ECS Students,

As we move into November, I hope this semester has been filled with meaningful learning, connection, and growth. This time of year, invites us to pause and reflect—not only on the progress we’ve made in our studies, but also on how we care for our own well-being as educators in training.

November is Early Childhood Mental Health Awareness Month, a reminder that nurturing emotional health in young children begins with nurturing ourselves. When we make space for rest, reflection, and connection, we model the very balance and resilience we hope to cultivate in the children and families we serve.

This month’s newsletter continues that theme of care and connection. Inside, you’ll find a feature on early childhood mental health awareness month; reflections from our Tiempo de Cuentos Storytime series; celebrations of our ECS community, including Dr. Kay Kyunghwa Park’s national recognition and Gladys Perez’s CABE Scholarship Award; and book recommendations and upcoming opportunities to stay engaged in the program.

As we head into the final stretch of the semester, I encourage you to keep approaching your studies with intention, balancing focus and self-care, structure and creativity. Remember, caring for yourself is part of the work.

Wishing you all a reflective, nourishing, and empowering month ahead. ¡Con gratitud y ánimo!

Dr. Assadullah Sadiq

Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Studies



November: EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that November is Early Childhood Mental Health Awareness Month?

This month highlights the importance of supporting young children's emotional well-being, relationships, and resilience from the very start of life. Early childhood mental health focuses on how children develop social and emotional skills as well as how they express emotions, form relationships, and explore and learn about the world around them.

When families, educators, and communities nurture positive relationships and provide safe, predictable environments, young children are more likely to thrive. Promoting mental health in early childhood is essential for lifelong learning and well-being.

Here in our own program, Dr. Candice McKinnon research interests includes a focus on the mental health and well-being of early childhood educators. Her research reminds us that supporting teachers' emotional health is vital for creating nurturing, responsive environments for young children.

You can learn more about Dr. McKinnon's here: [Click here](#)

You can also explore these national resources:

- The Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultations: [Link](#)
- Zero to Three: [Link](#)



November: EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Together, we can help children—and the educators who care for them—grow with confidence, compassion, and resilience.

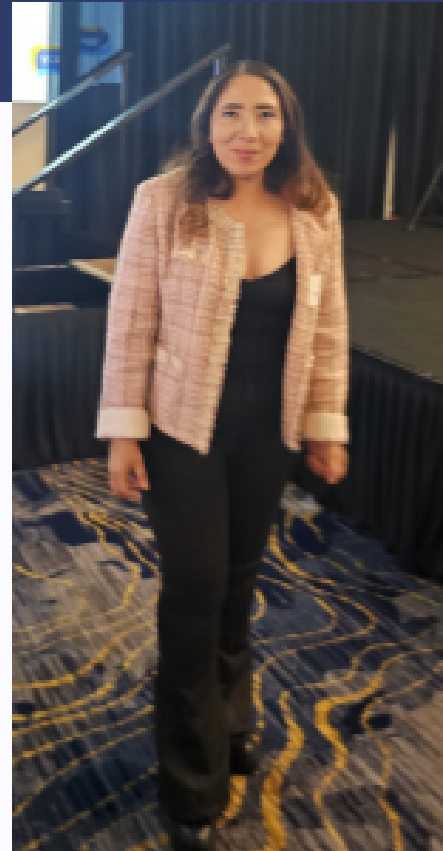
Keep thinking: How do you take care of your own mental health and emotional well-being as an educator? How do you nurture children's emotional well-being in your classroom? What routines or relationships help children feel safe and valued?



ECS STAR STUDENT

GLADYS PEREZ

I arrived in Oxnard, California, many years ago with my dad, carrying only a suitcase full of dreams just like many people who come to the United States searching for new opportunities. Growing up in a small town in Michoacán, Mexico, I only saw University life on television or movies and never imagined that one day I would be part of it myself. My family is very traditional, and I am the youngest of eleven siblings. Most of my sisters married between the ages of fifteen and sixteen, so everyone expected me to follow that same path.



However, something inside me told me that I was meant for more. I wanted to become a professional woman and break the expectations insisting that women only belonged at home.

When I first arrived in Oxnard, life was completely different from what I had imagined. I began taking basic English classes because I often accompanied my dad to the doctor, and people assumed I could translate for him but I couldn't. That experience motivated me to learn English, and my dad encouraged me every step of the way. I started ESL classes at Oxnard College, and from there, my journey truly began.

While taking my general education courses, two classes caught my attention: computers and early childhood education. Even though my English was still developing, I felt passionate and confident in these subjects. My teachers often asked how I was able to understand so much, and I always remembered my father's words: "You can learn whatever you want; there are no limits."

ECS STAR STUDENT

GLADYS PEREZ

With perseverance and support from my counselor who has been like an angel guiding me through this journey I continued studying and growing. Today, I am proud to be in my second year at California State University Channel Islands, pursuing a degree in Early Childhood Development. My dream is to become an educator for young children and inspire them to believe in themselves, just like my dad inspired me.

One word that defines me is perseverance. I am always looking for ways to learn, grow, and reach my goals. I believe that we all have the tools to create the life we dream of if we truly set our minds to it. This is me, Gladys Perez, and I am proud of the woman, student, and future educator I am becoming.

Thank you for taking the time to learn a little about my story. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this university community and look forward to continuing my educational journey with enthusiasm and commitment.

Sincerely,
Gladys Perez

CABE SCHOLARSHIP

GLADYS PEREZ

Congratulations to Gladys Perez on being awarded the CABE Scholarship. ("The CABE Annual Teachership and Scholarship Program is an endowment fund established by CABE to award \$2,000 scholarships to college or university students seeking a career in pursuing their bilingual teaching credential" (gocabe.org)).

Gladys wrote the following for this scholarship:

Tell us a little about yourself, and describe why you have chosen bilingual education as a professional career path. Include why you think it is important for public schools to offer bilingual programs. List specific events or experiences that have inspired your commitment to become a bilingual teacher. (250 word maximum)

My first language is Spanish, and I am a sophomore at California State University Channel Islands. When I am not studying, I enjoy going to the beach, spending time with my family, and finding ways to give back to my community.

I chose bilingual education as a career because of my own experiences growing up as a Spanish speaker. I believe that bilingual programs in public schools are essential because they help children feel understood, valued, and supported in both their first language and in English. These programs not only strengthen academic success but also build confidence and cultural pride.

My commitment to becoming a bilingual teacher comes from two important experiences. The first is personal: as a child, I was motivated to learn English so I could help my dad at his medical appointments. That responsibility showed me the power of language in creating access and support for families. The second experience occurred while I was volunteering at Easter Seals. I worked with a young boy whose first language was Spanish, yet he was placed in a classroom where all the other children spoke English. It was clear how isolated he felt at first, but I also witnessed how meaningful it was when I helped him communicate with his classmates. That moment confirmed my desire to become the type of teacher who bridges language barriers and empowers students to succeed academically and socially.

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING:

TIEMPO DE CUENTOS (STORYTIME) SESSION #2

OVERVIEW AND REFLECTIONS

On Sunday, October 26 from 1–2 pm, we held our second Tiempo de Cuentos (Storytime) session of the semester at the Broome Library. In this session, our ECS teacher candidates took full ownership: planning, setting up, and leading the Storytime entirely on their own. Their preparation and leadership truly shone as they engaged children and families in meaningful literacy and cultural learning experiences.

The session began with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. Teacher candidates invited the audience to share about their favorite foods, passing around sticky notes and pencils for everyone to write or draw their responses. Soon, our shared list included pizza, tacos, steak, pozole, and sopas and even I joined in, writing that my favorite food is Kabuli pulao, a rich Afghan rice dish with carrots, raisins, and nuts. Later, when the page appeared where the hungry caterpillar eats all sorts of foods, the teacher candidates substituted the original items with our responses. The room filled with laughter and delight as everyone heard their own foods read aloud, a moment that beautifully affirmed our diverse experiences and connected to the concept of funds of knowledge in action.

Next, the group transitioned to *Mi abuelita tiene ruedas* by Silvia Molina. Before reading, the teacher candidates encouraged the audience to examine the cover and asked, “¿Qué es una rueda?”—helping to build background knowledge and curiosity. The story was read entirely in Spanish. From my seat in the back, I occasionally interrupted with phrases like, “No puedo, por favor ayúdame,” prompting the teacher candidates and the audience to collaboratively unpack the language and meaning. This interactive approach turned into a lively and inclusive language-learning moment. The story opened a gentle conversation about differences, accessibility, and how communities support one another.

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING:

TIEMPO DE CUENTOS (STORYTIME) SESSION #2

OVERVIEW AND REFLECTIONS

To close the session, participants were invited to write or draw about a favorite memory with their grandparents or other loved ones. The group then gathered in a circle to share their narratives and drawings, closing the afternoon with cookies, conversation, and connection.

We look forward to welcoming families and children back for our final Tiempo de Cuentos session of the semester—one you definitely won't want to miss!

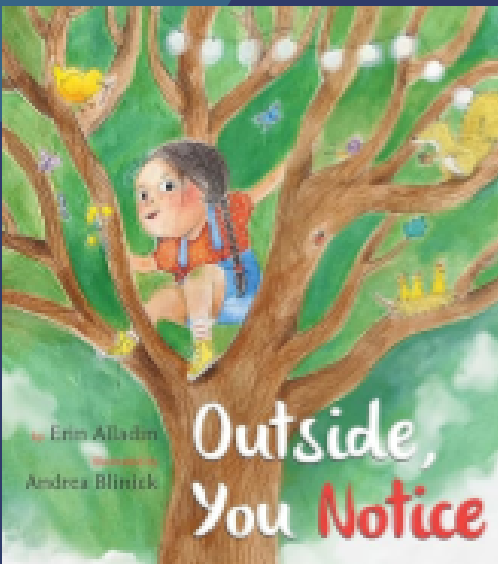


(Some images from our second session. Note: Not all participants are photographed).

El Rinconcito De Los Libros/ Children's Book Corner

OUTSIDE YOU NOTICE

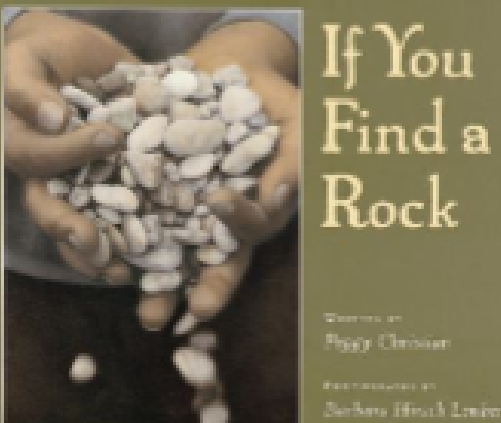
By Erin Alladin & Illustrated by Andrea Blinic



This is a gentle and beautifully illustrated book that invites children to slow down and notice the wonders of the natural world, from bees buzzing to worms tunneling underground. Through sensory details, it highlights the importance of observation, curiosity, and connection with living things. Teachers can use this book to spark conversations about children's questions and discoveries outdoors, encouraging them to see themselves as scientists and caretakers of nature.

IF YOU FIND A ROCK

by Peggy Christian & Photographs by
Barbara Hirsch Lember



This book is filled with poetic language and striking photography and explores the many kinds of rocks a child might find and the meanings they can hold, such as skipping rocks, resting rocks, wishing rocks, and more. It nurtures wonder and imagination while connecting children to the natural materials in their environment. Teachers can use this book to inspire inquiry, descriptive language, and creative exploration in nature- or science-based learning centers.

Highlight:

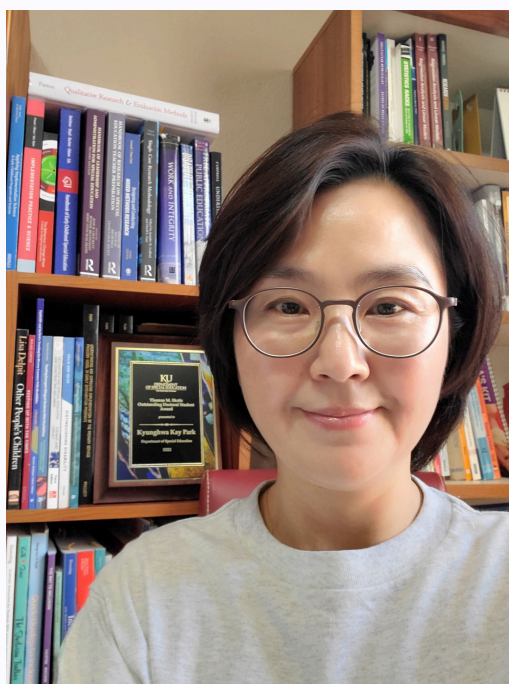
Hearty congratulations to Dr. Kay Kyunghwa Park, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Studies, whose scholarly contributions were recently recognized by the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

Two of Dr. Park's peer-reviewed articles published in *Young Exceptional Children* (YEC) received special recognition—one as the most cited article in the past three years and another as among the most read articles in the past six months.

Below, Dr. Park shares more about this honor and its significance for our ECS community:

I am deeply grateful to be part of our ECS community that values and supports meaningful scholarship in Early Childhood and Early Intervention. This recognition reflects the growing attention to inclusive and family-centered practices that so many of us champion through our teaching, research, and partnerships.

—Dr. Kay Kyunghwa Park



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are you READY FOR MA in ECS? These are great sessions to join from the comfort of your home and hear about this wonderful program...designed just for you!

Please register for one of our upcoming information sessions to learn more about the Master of Arts in Early Childhood Studies! Check the flyer on the next page!

- Wednesday, November 5, 2025 from 6pm to 7pm
- Wednesday, December 3, 2025, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.



Thank you for reading. For feedback, please contact Dr. Mari Riojas-Cortez, Professor & Chair, Early Childhood Studies at mari.riojas-cortez@csuci.edu

"Strength doesn't always roar. Sometimes, it's the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'" ~Unknown

JOIN US DURING STORYTIME!

Come join us for Storytime at the Broome Library (see flyer for dates and times)

Early Childhood Studies & The Library Present

Children's Storytime

Tiempo de Cuentos

Broome Library, Children's Section

Sunday, September 8
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Sunday, October 26
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Sunday, November 23
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Open to the community!

The University encourages people with disabilities to participate in its programs, events and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact the respective area noted below as soon as possible.

cSUCI Students: accommodations@csuci.edu | CSUCI Employees: christine.girardot@csuci.edu | Members of the Public: titiex@csuci.edu