Shasta College

ECE Newsletter

Fall 2026

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Welcome Message from the Director

Welcome to our ECE Department Newsletter! This summer, our faculty, staff, and I engaged in professional learning focused on the book *Working in the Reggio Way* (by Julianne Wurm), deepening our commitment to inquiry, documentation, and seeing children as capable and competent learners. As Loris Malaguzzi reminds us, "Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water." This quote reflects both our shared learning experience and my ongoing interest in teachers as researchers, where educators learn alongside children through observation, reflection, and inquiry.

We also had the opportunity to attend an inspiring UPK Symposium this summer, where Kim Adams, M.A., shared Dr. Peter Gray's five characteristics of play. She reminded us that authentic play is self-chosen and self-directed, intrinsically motivated, guided by rules created by the players, imaginative, and experienced in an active yet low-stress state of mind. Her presentation reinforced the essential role of play in supporting children's creativity, problem-solving, well-being, and deep learning. As we begin this new year, these ideas continue to guide our work as we create joyful, engaging learning environments for young children.

—Beverly Charsha, Early Childhood Education Center Director, Director Mentor, and CAAEYC President



Calendar at a Glance

NOV

18 Spring 2027 registration opens for Matriculated students

23 Thanksgiving Break

DEC

10 Student Teacher Showcase, 6pm – 7pm

18 Last day of the Fall Semester

21 Winter Break

JAN

20 Spring Semester starts

APR

10 First 5 Shasta presents Week of the Young Child

For questions or more information, contact us at:

(530) 242-7601

Turtle Bay presents:
Emotions at Play: with Pixar's Inside Out | *Now – Jan 3*
Redding Garden of Lights | *November 20 – Jan 3*

www.shastacollege.edu

Discovering the Joy of Painting

By Karen Sears
South Lab ECE Center Teacher and Mentor

The 2026 Fall semester is in full swing! In South Lab, we have been discovering the joy of painting. The children are exploring colors, textures, and their own creativity. Through this creative process, they are able to express their own unique ideas and emotions while building confidence in their artistic abilities. Painting encourages imagination, problem-solving, and self-expression, as well as being a relaxing experience. It has been wonderful to watch the children take pride in their creations, share their artwork with friends and family, and celebrate the beauty of making something all (on) their own.









Find us
on your favorite social media platform!

Morning Routines Build Successful Children

By Wendy Hord
North Lab ECE Center Teacher and Mentor

The North Lab Preschool Classroom started Fall 2026 with a majority of very young children (2.5 years of age) who were brand new to preschool. Routines are super valuable, and consistency is key to a successful start in preschool.

There are very few "have-to's" in our classroom. The most important is that children wash their hands before exploring the classroom. How we manage their wide-eyes from not going straight to the classroom materials is tricky. It goes as follows…

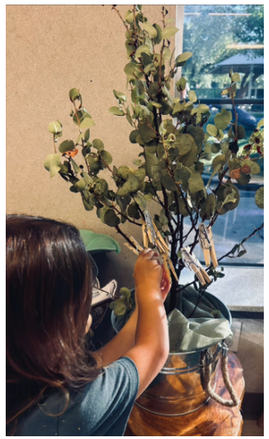
Once a child arrives at school, they see a poster located at the classroom entrance. It has a sun shining and a power line with clothespins attached. The poster reads, "Good Morning Sunshine." Each clothespin has a classmate's name and a bird. It is their bird. Children find their bird and "fly" it to a tree located at the back of the classroom between two sinks. They clip their bird to the tree and wash their hands. After handwashing, they are welcome to do whatever they choose in our child-directed classroom. Their day has begun.

Later, when a child wants a snack, they move the bird from the tree to a birdhouse and wash their hands before eating. All of this bird business and handwashing is conveniently located in the same area, making the routine easy for children to follow. The windowsill serves as our snack bar, where children sit on stools and bird-watch out the window as they enjoy their snack.

There is so much more learning happening than simply following routines. Along with the important habit of handwashing, children learn to identify their names as well as other classmates' names. They begin to notice that if a bird is still on the power line, then that child is not at school. Another skill they develop is using the clothespins, which helps strengthen the pincer grip used later for writing.

In all honesty, this routine may seem difficult at first. However, children are incredibly capable, routine-driven, and able to persevere. In a surprisingly short time, they learn to follow multistep processes and confidently navigate routines that once seemed difficult.









Spotlight Features

Mentor Teacher Spotlight – Ruby Annelle



Ruby Annelle is a preschool educator who brings both passion and experience to her classroom. For the past three years, she has worked as a preschool mentor teacher.

Her classroom philosophy centers on a child-led, hands-on, and play-based approach, grounded in the belief that young learners thrive when given opportunities to explore through sensory experiences and active play.

By designing a flexible learning environment based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), she supports diverse learning styles from the start, fostering independence, a joy for discovery, and a strong foundation for lifelong learning.



Faculty Spotlight – Andrea St. Amant

Andrea holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master of Science in Education. She is passionate about supporting teachers in creating positive, safe, and equitable learning environments where children can grow and thrive.

Through collaboration with teachers, students, and families, she strives to meet each child's unique needs while laying the foundation for future success and a lifelong love of learning.

Program News & Highlights

By The Numbers

CBE is starting slowly, but so far a total of **89 competencies** were mastered in 25/26!

3 new CBEs were added this school year:

- ECE 15 Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- ECE 12 Infant Toddler Learning
- ECE 22 Infant Toddler Care and Education

In the 2025-2026 school year, **33 students** enrolled in CBE.

We have 11% PACE students, 35% 1st Gen students, 12% male in 2025/2026

67 degrees/certifications were awarded to 60 graduates in 25/26

- 41 Associate of Science degrees (AS)
- 12 Associate of Science degrees for Transfer (AS-T)
- 14 certifications

Offered degrees:

- AS-T Early Childhood Education
- General Studies: AS Human Development
- AS Early Childhood Education
- Early Childhood Education Certificate
- Family Childcare Certificate

New Certificates & Classes

Early Childhood Educator 1 Certificate

This certificate provides the foundational coursework needed for entry-level work with children ages 0-8. Students gain knowledge in child development, curriculum, family engagement, and creating supportive learning environments. Because the certificate aligns with the new Level 1 Child Development Permit, it's an excellent opportunity to begin working toward your permit.

Already completed the required 12 units? Check the Future Teacher Toolkit section to learn about permit stipend opportunities and next steps.

New School Age Courses for Ages 5-12

ECE 14, School-Age Learning and Development – 3 units

This course examines the cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development of school-age children (ages 5–12) and applies child development theory to PK–3 classrooms and expanded learning environments. Students will develop the skills to create inclusive, equitable learning experiences through observation, guidance, assessment, family partnerships, and culturally responsive practices that support diverse learners.

ECE 24, EC Curriculum: School-Age Care and Curriculum Design – 3 units

This course explores principles and practices that support the development and learning of school-age children (ages 5–12) in community and expanded learning settings. Students will design and evaluate developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive curriculum that fosters academic, social-emotional, physical, and creative growth while creating inclusive environments that engage families and support diverse learners.

Summer Recap

A City Where Everyone Belongs: Reflections from Reggio Emilia

By Jeanne Veich



To my Early Childhood Education colleagues and future teachers: I returned from my summer 2026 study-group visit to Reggio Emilia, Italy, carrying more than new ideas. I returned with new questions that challenged my understanding of children, our responsibility to families and communities, and how we prepare the next generation of educators.

In education, we are often moving quickly. We plan lessons, assess development, document learning, meet standards, support families, and respond to the many needs before us. All of this work matters. Yet Reggio Emilia invited me to slow down and reconsider something more fundamental: How do we truly see the child?

Do we see children primarily as recipients of our teaching, or as capable thinkers, researchers, designers, storytellers, and scientists? Do we leave enough room for their questions, theories, discoveries, and ideas to shape what happens next? Most importantly, are we listening closely enough to understand what children are already telling us?

To my ECE colleagues already doing this important work: I invite you to pause with me and reflect on these questions.

"You Belong Here. This Place is Also Yours."

The Right to Belong

One of the ideas that has stayed with me since returning home is that belonging in one's city, town, or community should not be a privilege. It should be a personal right. Every child and family deserves to experience the place where they live as one that welcomes them, includes them, and communicates: *You belong here. This place is also yours.*

This requires us to think beyond the classroom. The child, family, school, and community are deeply connected. Streets, parks, public art, gathering places, and open spaces all contribute to a sense of belonging. When these spaces are thoughtfully designed, children are recognized not simply as participants, but as citizens whose ideas and experiences matter.

What Can a Stroll Teach Us?

Among the many experiences that captured my attention was something remarkably simple: taking a stroll.

Adults may view a walk as transportation, exercise, or a part of a daily routine. Children may experience it differently. A stroll becomes an opportunity to notice a shadow, follow the sound of water, study a crack in the sidewalk, watch people gather, ask questions about the world around them, or stop to investigate something an adult might pass without seeing.

What does a stroll mean to a child? Who determines the destination? Who decides the route and pace? What changes when we walk with no need to hurry?

These questions may sound small, but they reveal something important about our practice. When adults determine the destination, schedule, pace, and what deserves attention, we can unintentionally overlook the child's perspective. Slowing down creates space for exploration, connection, and a deeper understanding of what matters to children.

Listening, in this sense, is more than hearing words. It means paying attention to children's gestures, play, drawings, constructions, questions, and interactions. It means resisting the urge to provide an immediate answer and becoming curious alongside them.

"The most meaningful learning was never waiting at the destination. It was unfolding all along the way."

Children as Designers and Scientists

My time in Reggio Emilia reaffirmed the importance of creating spaces for design-based thinking. Children naturally investigate their surroundings. They test possibilities, observe patterns, solve problems, collaborate, and revise their thinking. These are the actions of scientists, artists, architects, and designers.

Our role is not to take over that process. It is to recognize it, provide thoughtful materials and environments, document learning, and ask questions that deepen children's thinking. This also creates an important responsibility for those who prepare teachers.

As faculty, our work extends beyond teaching course content. We create opportunities for future educators to observe, reflect, and engage in inquiry about children's learning. We encourage them to ask:

What is the child trying to understand? What ideas are emerging? What could we offer next that would extend, not interrupt, the investigation?



Preparing teachers in this way helps them trust children's competence while creating conditions for meaningful inquiry.



Returning Home with a New Perspective

My visit to Reggio Emilia did not give me a checklist to bring back and reproduce. Its greatest impact was the invitation to see differently.

I returned thinking about how our classrooms, colleges, neighborhoods, and cities communicate belonging. Most of all, I returned even more committed to preparing teachers who view children as capable, connected, and worthy of being taken seriously.

To future teachers: I encourage you to begin your career with curiosity and a willingness to truly listen.

Take a stroll with a child. Slow your pace. Notice where the child stops, what the child sees, and which questions emerge. You may discover that the most meaningful learning was never waiting at the destination. It was unfolding all along the way.

Our work begins with how we see children. When we see them as citizens, researchers, creators, and valued members of a community, we begin to design classrooms and communities where everyone has the right to belong.

Future Teacher Toolkit

Take the Next Step: Child Development Permit Stipend

Earning a Child Development Permit is an important milestone in the Early Childhood Education profession. The CDTC Permit Stipend Program is now accepting applications and may help eligible educators offset permit-related expenses. Funding is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, so applicants are encouraged to apply early.

For the 2026-2027 program year, eligible applicants may pay the permit fee directly to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and request reimbursement through CDTC or submit a paper application through CDTC for fee payment processing. Whether you are applying for your first permit, renewing an existing permit, or advancing to a higher level, support may be available to help you continue growing in the field.

Classroom Observation Strategies

Beyond the Checklist

New Ways to See Children and Their Learning Environments

AS ECE practitioners, we know how important learning environments are to children. In the past, we often used checklists and rating scales to evaluate classroom quality.

At the Shasta College Lab School, we describe the environment as "the third teacher." In this model, every element of the environment, including lighting, temperature, colors, materials, and furniture arrangement, is intentionally designed to support learning.

The next time you observe an early learning classroom, including Transitional Kindergarten through third grade, look for qualities that reflect our view of children as capable and competent learners.

Look for materials and spaces that:

- Invite children to explore and investigate
- Are accessible for independent use
- Encourage interaction and collaboration
- Displays children's work, ideas, or thinking
- Allow children to make choices
- Can be used in multiple ways
- Represents children's families, cultures, and identities

This isn't just for teachers. Parents are also welcome to use our Observation Room to observe classroom environments and children's learning experiences.

You can reach out to vmcdaniels@shastacollege.edu if you would like to schedule an observation.

Special thanks to Heidi Conzales, MA, ECE Faculty, for inspiring these observation strategies.

Professional Connections & Opportunities

Cypress Elementary Internship

Help a Child Discover the Joy of Reading!

Literacy Instruction Intern (1 unit Work Experience credit)

Want hands-on experience working with young readers while earning college credit? As a Literacy Instruction Intern at Cypress Elementary School in Redding, you'll support primary-grade students as they build reading confidence and fluency through engaging, play-based literacy activities.

Under the guidance of Shasta College Instructor Kelly Nickel, M.A.Ed., interns will participate in one-on-one and small-group intervention sessions, collaborate with teachers and instructional staff, and help document children's growth over time.

This opportunity is ideal for students interested in teaching, child development, education, literacy, speech-language pathology, or other helping professions.

What you'll gain:

- 1 unit of Work Experience credit through the college
- 50 hours of hands-on experience working directly with children
- Experience delivering literacy interventions and supporting early readers
- Collaboration with educators in an elementary school setting
- Practical skills that transfer to teaching, tutoring, coaching, mentoring, and other child-focused careers

Make a meaningful difference in a child's educational journey while building valuable experience for your future career.

Interested? Contact Kate Ashbey at (530) 242-7615 or your academic counselor to discuss your options.

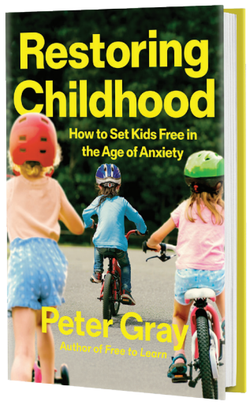
Credit for Prior Learning

Your learning journey did not begin when you enrolled in college. Early childhood educators develop valuable knowledge and skills every day through their work in classrooms, family child care homes, community programs, and other professional settings. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) recognizes this experience and may allow eligible students to earn college credit for prior learning gained outside the traditional classroom.

It's one more way we honor the strengths you already bring to the profession while supporting your continued growth toward certificates, degrees, and career goals.

On Our Bookshelf

Restoring Childhood: How to Set Kids Free in the Age of Anxiety by Dr. Peter Gray



In *Restoring Childhood*, psychologist and researcher Dr. Peter Gray explores the concept of a "normal childhood" and argues that today's youth mental health challenges may be rooted not in smartphones and social media, but in our understanding of childhood and its role in supporting children's growth, independence, and well-being.

Dr. Gray also includes an interactive component. He welcomes questions, concerns, comments, and ideas from parents, teachers, and others who are interested in reflecting on how they support the children in their care. After reading the book, visit his website to join the conversation and share your reflections.

www.petergray.org/restoring-childhood

"*In* Restoring Childhood*, Peter Gray gently but firmly asks us to look at how our love, fear, and obsession with perfection may be getting in the way of what our kids desperately need. Peter sits beside us, holds up the evidence, and invites us to ask quietly and honestly, What have we taken from childhood and what might it take to put it back?*"

—Julie Lythcott-Haims, New York Times bestselling author of *How to Raise an Adult*

Wellness & Self-Care Corner

The Power of Presence

The holiday season can bring added pressure to do more, create more, and celebrate more. Yet what children often value most cannot be found in decorations, activities, or special events. They remember how they felt, who spent time with them, and the relationships that shaped their experiences.

As the season unfolds, focus on presence rather than perfection. A welcoming environment, a caring conversation, and familiar routines can provide comfort and stability for children and families alike.

Remember that caring for others also requires caring for yourself. Protect your well-being, set realistic expectations, and trust that your daily presence and care make a meaningful difference.

Join NAEYC

CALIFORNIA CASCADE CHAPTER
caaeyc California Association for the Education of Young Children

Join us, and grow your early childhood community!

Become a member of NAEYC and connect from national to local. Our local community in the Cascade Chapter consists of Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity counties.

Scan to become a member.

NAEYC
National Community

CAAEYC
California Association

Cascade Chapter
Local Community

Learn • Connect • Advocate • Belong

Cascade Chapter Events Calendar

Business Meeting & Pizza Fundraiser
December 3 | 5pm – 7pm
Charlew's Pizza, Anderson, CA

Curriculum Exchange
January 30 | 11am – 1pm
Shasta College ECE Center, Bldg 3200, Playground

Business Meeting
February 18 | 6pm – 7:30pm
Shasta College ECE Center, Bldg 3200, Classroom 3217

Progressive Brunch
March 13 | 9am – 12pm
Redding, CA

Business Meeting & Pizza Fundraiser
April 15 | 5pm – 7pm
Location TBD

End-of-Year Board Meeting & Dinner
May 13 | 6pm – 7:30pm
Shasta College ECE Center, Bldg 3200, Classroom 3217

Community Partners

SHASTA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

TRINITY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

TEHAMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
All About Learning
Students • Schools • Districts • Community

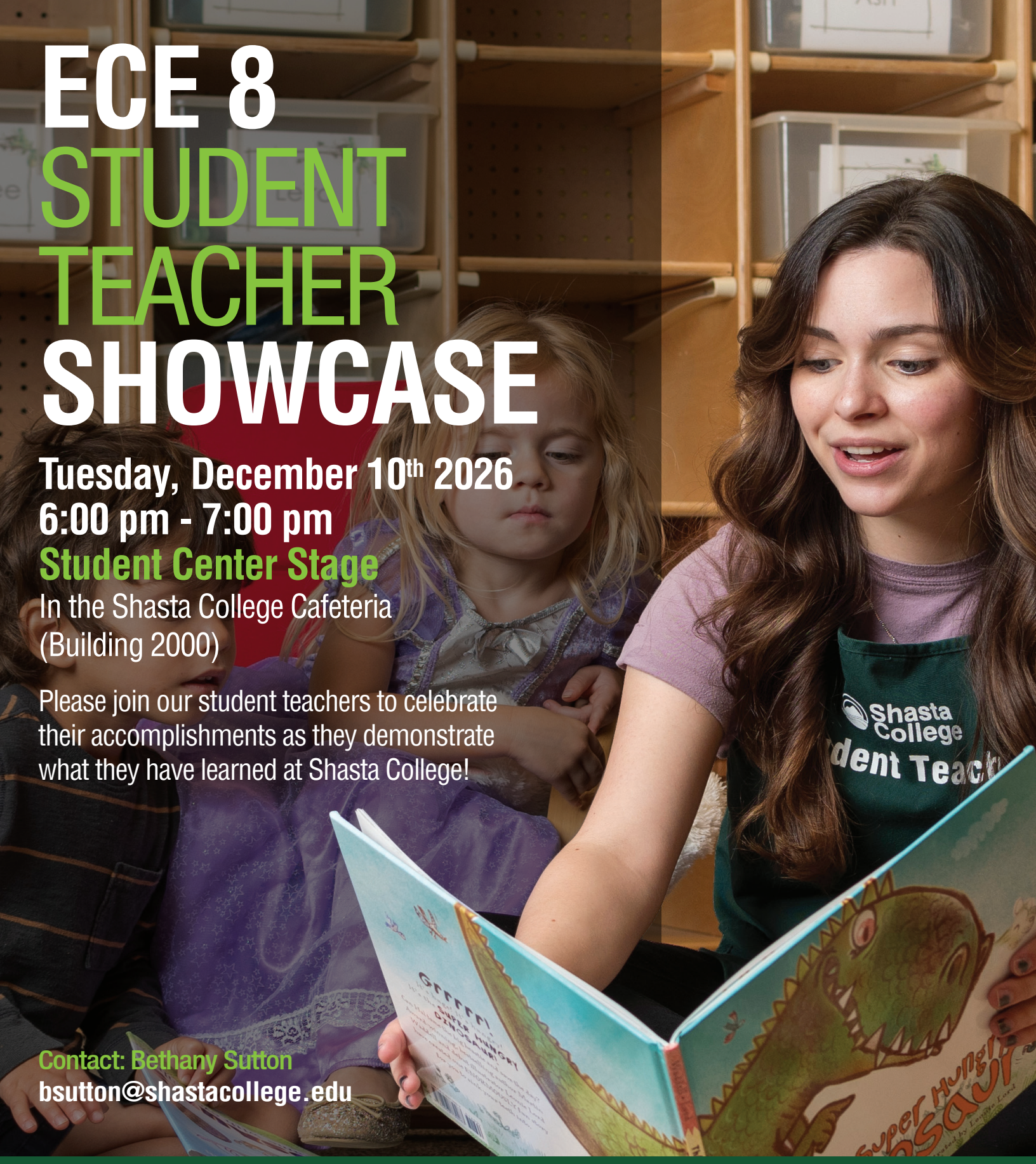
FIRST5 SHASTA

HELP ME GROW CALIFORNIA SHASTA COUNTY

CPIN
California Preschool Instructional Network

CALIFORNIA CASCADE CHAPTER
caaeyc California Association for the Education of Young Children

ECE 8 STUDENT TEACHER SHOWCASE



Tuesday, December 10th 2026
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Student Center Stage
In the Shasta College Cafeteria
(Building 2000)

Please join our student teachers to celebrate their accomplishments as they demonstrate what they have learned at Shasta College!

Contact: Bethany Sutton
bsutton@shastacollege.edu

Shasta College
www.shastacollege.edu

Shasta College is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Shasta College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in employment, in any of its educational programs, or in the provision of benefits and services to its students. A lack of English language skills and/or visual and hearing impairment will not be a barrier to admission or participation in any educational program, including Career Technical Education.