

Hilltop Educator Institute

Hilltop offers an institute for professional development, skill building, best practices, and comprehensive education on early learning. Our institute's work includes workshops, training sessions, reflective community meetings, a podcast (Emergent Conversations) available on Spotify and YouTube, and an educator blog that documents work and studies in the field and in classrooms.

Our workshops and training sessions are available to all and can be taken for STARS hours, professional development, or personal growth. We offer multiple opportunities each month throughout the entire year for anyone to take courses from knowledgeable and experienced professionals in the field.

Podcast and Blog

Did you know that Hilltop has a podcast and a blog? At Hilltop, we strive to elevate the field of early learning by exploring different platforms to reach the broader ECE community. One way we do this is by using various media to amplify the voice and knowledge of our educators and the topic of education. The podcast, hosted by our Senior Manager Alfonso Campos, typically features different guests and educators from Hilltop and the early learning field, exploring a variety of topics, getting to know the educators more in-depth, discussing child development, and much more.

We also have a blog! Similar to our podcast, the blog serves as a way to showcase different educators, topics, themes, theories, classrooms, and overall, as a way to learn more about Hilltop and our pedagogical approach.

Practicum and Work Study Students

Hilltop has a long-standing partnership with Seattle Pacific University and has been part of their practicum program, where students studying early learning and education may join us for practicum work in exchange for course credits. This allows students to gain firsthand knowledge and experience to further their education and careers. Many of the students who work with us have stayed and become full-time faculty members at Hilltop.

Lab Classroom

Hilltop's Fremont location houses a lab classroom in partnership with the Seattle Preschool Program, serving as a demonstration setting for best practices in early childhood education. This lab environment allows practicum students, work-study students, and coaches/mentors to observe and participate in a community of learning. Volunteers benefit from observing Hilltop seasoned educators collaborating with children, planning, and implementing meaningful activities under the supervision of experienced staff. The carefully planned environment in the lab classroom provides children with opportunities to experiment, explore, problem-solve, and interact. Although seemingly informal, this setting is thoughtfully designed to support children's natural learning and provide positive, practical experiences for student teachers. This partnership not only enriches the educational experience for our children but also offers invaluable hands-on learning opportunities for future educators.