

# Country Focus: The Bahamas

As ITEN Teacher Fellows, **Deandra McKinney Metholall**, **Alexis Ferguson**, and **Keiliah Tameka Chisholm** are early childhood educators have a lot to offer their colleagues across The Bahamas.

With the onset of the pandemic, Deandra and Alexis worked together to consolidate what they knew about cognitive science to make the case for STEM education to their peers through a workshop in collaboration with the **Department of Education of The Bahamas**, with additional contributions from Keiliah.

200

teachers participated in this workshop from 5-9 July 2021.

Turning to academic literature on the subject, Deandra and Alexis promoted process skills for teaching science, including (1) observing, (2) classifying, (3) measuring, (4) communicating, (5) inferring, and (6) predicting, with the ultimate goal to promote STEM as a strategy for improving early childhood education overall.

Importantly, they did not want to keep these strategies to themselves. Deandra shares: "I met with Early Childhood staff at my institution grade level and encouraged the importance of teaching science with intent at least once a week. While engaged in the program, **I was able to apply many concepts I learned which enabled me to coach two pre-service teachers** as they completed the final stages of their Bachelor Degree."

Critically, Deandra and Alexis want teachers to know that STEM is accessible! Through play-based, hands-on learning, teachers can increase student engagement and instructional quality.

## Why Specific Teaching Strategies for Science?

Makes learning fun	Learning concepts become meaningful	Extends of student's misconceptions	Students move from concrete to abstract
Engages student's ability to draw connections	Promotes critical thinking	Helps with the connection of the real world	Creates independent thinkers and doers
	Builds languages skills	Promotes high order thinking	



Weather box

Sensory clouds



### Extension of Activities

Here are a few alternative activities that can be used in this lesson:

Weather wheel



Rain clouds



Pin wheel





**The Department of Education**  
**Early Childhood Education Section**  
 Virtual Professional Development for Teachers and Teacher's Aides

**Theme: Bridging the Learning Gap**  
 Topic: Supporting the Development of Preschoolers through Effective Teaching Strategies using the National Preschool Curriculum

Monday, July 5th, 2021 through Friday, July 9th, 2021  
 Starting Time: 9 a.m.

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While Keiliah collaborated with Alexis and Deandra on developing the workshop content, she also shared her expertise as a curriculum writer. In late 2020, she worked with ITEN to **incorporate STEM activities** into two courses of the Early Childhood and Family Studies certificate program **at the University of the West Indies Open Campus**. Additionally, she was asked by the Department of Education to develop the level 1 (for 3 year-olds) pacing outline, with a special focus on science and language.

**"The Ministry of Education, Preschool Department continues to call upon the ITEN Teacher Fellows to demonstrate lesson plans, create activities and inform colleagues about STEM Education." - Keiliah**

**Leadership in STEM education has inspired Keiliah to think about more than just early childhood education in the classroom.** She has embarked on numerous projects to help solve challenges in her community.



Keiliah leads an in-house school teachers' workshop, "Building Together," focused on the importance of teamwork, an important element of STEM education.



Keiliah coordinates donations through the **Outreach Non-profit Organization** to provide access to nutrition and health education.