



early childhood special education summit keynote speakers:

Thursday, February 7th, 2019

Adiba Nelson

4 Things You Can Do Right Now to Stop Disabling Your Child (Or Student)

Author, Screenwriter, Performer, Activist, Wife, Mother, Daughter, and most recently, subject of the Emmy winning documentary, *The Full Nelson*.



Often referred to as “inspirational”, Adiba Nelson wrote and self-published her first children’s book in 2013, after not being able to find a children’s book that adequately and appropriately represented her daughter (African American, with special needs). Since then, she has independently sold over 3000 books, won an award (Royal Dragonfly, Honorable Mention - Best Children’s Book - Topic: Disability), led numerous workshops for educators and education professionals/paraprofessionals, and partnered with Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona to introduce a new inclusion patch program, Girl Scouts for ALL (which has now been replicated in California and Texas).

More than just children’s literature, Adiba has also penned several articles for Huffington Post, Ravishly, Everyday Feminism, and My Brown Baby, focusing on issues around race, parenting, body image and womanhood. In 2017 she gave her first TEDx talk (Skating Downhill: The Art of Claiming Your Life) and joined her local NPR affiliate as a regular contributor on Arizona Spotlight.

Adiba Nelson is trying to change the world, and from the looks of it, she has no intentions of stopping until she does. When she’s not ironing her cape, you can find her moonlighting as a *mostly* decent mom to her incredible daughter Emory, debating her husband over who has the better Netflix feed, or checking Expedia, looking for the least expensive 4-day beach getaway.

Friday, February 8th, 2019

Ron Suskind

Life, Animated: A Tale of Autism & Hidden Potential



One of America’s most treasured journalists, best-selling author Ron Suskind brings a Renaissance man’s breadth of knowledge and experiences to the speaking stage. His keynotes and mainstage conversations with notable leaders in the financial world draw upon a career as a Pulitzer-Prize-winning Wall Street Journal reporter. Combining a remarkable ability to simplify complex and high-level subject matter with a gift for engaging, entertaining and genuine rapport with audiences, Suskind’s presentations are a showcase for one of the most talented storytellers of our time.

Suskind’s works are frequently characterized by his passion for giving a voice to the voiceless. This is evident in his most recent best-seller, *Life, Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes and Autism*, which was adapted into an Academy Award-nominated documentary and recently won three News and Documentary Emmy’s. *Life, Animated* tells the story of his youngest son, Owen, who, after being diagnosed with autism, found a way to reengage with the world around him. Seizing upon Owen’s love of animated Disney movies, the Suskind family re-

enacted the films with him, pioneering a now-widely acknowledged method of emulative communication known as Affinity Therapy.