Lauren Prestino Friedrich was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and has since made her home in Spartanburg, South Carolina. She found a passion for Early Childhood Education during her first course at City University of New York- Kingsborough. She went on to pursue Child Study at St. Joseph’s College and study Elementary Reading and Literacy at Walden University.

All of her 18 years of teaching were spent in Pre-K/4K classrooms, both in New York and South Carolina. Lauren spent many years mentoring new, student and fellow teachers and thrives in collaborative and leadership roles. Most of her time in the classroom was spent teaching vulnerable populations and children from all over the world. Through this experience, Lauren learned the value of providing equitable experiences and differentiated instruction for children from all backgrounds, to create an atmosphere where all children can succeed. One of her proudest moments was winning Teacher of the Year in 2016 for South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness 4K.

In addition to classroom experience, Lauren also spent two years doing ABA Therapy with children on the Autism spectrum. During this time, Lauren learned Behavior Analysis principles that not only were valuable in working with children with special needs, but also in the general education classroom and in the workplace.

Lauren has three years of Conscious Discipline training and classroom execution. She is a firm believer in explicitly teaching social emotional skills to young children so that they can build self-regulation and mindfulness.

Lauren has always been extremely passionate about the importance of early childhood education and instilling in children the foundational skills they need to succeed in later years. Knowing that learning through play is the key in early childhood, she began volunteering with The Children’s Museum of the Upstate as they formed focus groups to plan a new branch in Spartanburg. In 2018, Lauren made the transition from classroom teaching to informal education as the Early Childhood Specialist of the upcoming branch. She was drawn to the mission of the museum because it was set to focus on early childhood and kindergarten readiness, which was lacking in the community. She was quickly promoted to Director and spent her three year tenure coaching staff on the execution of educational programming, collaborating with non-profits on community initiatives and planning learning opportunities for local educators. What Lauren is most proud of are the diversity, equity and inclusivity initiatives she developed and introduced based on research, Continuous Improvement and community input.

Lauren has been lucky enough to attend numerous conferences, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the South Carolina Early Childhood Association and the Carolina Play Summit. She believes in keeping on top of educational trends and research in order to give children the best opportunities possible.

In addition to education, Lauren has a love of travel! Her favorite places include tropical beaches, but most of her recent travels have been to visit her family living in New York, New Jersey and California. She has a deep love of animals and rescued and fostered a number of cats and dogs. Lauren now lives in Spartanburg with her husband, dog and two cats.

Lauren is extremely excited to be joining the Innovative Strategic Solutions team and is looking forward to sharing her knowledge and passion for helping children, and the community as a whole, to see their full potential through education.