



CHILDREN THE HEART OF THE MATTER CONFERENCE

**FEBRUARY 2 - 3, 2024**

 *Children*  
THE HEART OF THE MATTER  
[childcareoptions.ca](http://childcareoptions.ca)

# REGISTRATION

Register online at [childcareoptions.ca](https://childcareoptions.ca)  
Click on the registration link on the conference page.

Join us **ONLINE** or **IN-PERSON**, February 2 & 3, 2024 for the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Children the Heart of the Matter Conference!

CHOICES...	ONLINE	IN-PERSON
	Streamed live - sessions will not be recorded.	Bell Performing Arts Centre 6250 144 St, Surrey, BC
<b>FRIDAY</b> February 2 <b>\$20</b>	Includes evening keynote	Includes evening keynote
<b>SATURDAY</b> February 3 <b>\$40</b>	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Morning keynote</li><li>AM workshop - A1 only</li><li>PM workshop - P1 only</li></ul>	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Morning keynote</li><li>AM workshop - ANY</li><li>PM workshop - ANY</li></ul>
Registration closes:	February 1, 2024 at 8:00 PM	January 29, 2024 at 8:00 PM

## FOOD

Refreshments at the morning break and individually packaged lunches will be provided. Vegetarian, gluten-free, and dairy-free options will be available. Please make your own arrangements if you have other dietary restrictions or allergies.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Participants receive discounted rates at the Holiday Inn & Suites Surrey East - Cloverdale (17530 64 Ave) for the nights of February 2 and 3, 2024. These rates are available until December 29, 2023, after which regular rates will apply.

Discounted rates are only available by booking online, please do not call the hotel to book. Cancellations and changes must also be processed online, through your confirmation email.

[Click here to book online.](#)

HOTEL	RATES
Holiday Inn	\$169 +Tax



We are grateful to the ECE Professional Development Bursary Fund for helping to reduce the registration fees to participants of this year’s conference. Without this funding the cost to attend would be \$150.00.

This initiative is funded through the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia, in partnership with the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (WCCRC), the agency responsible for administering the funds.

## POLICIES

- > Workshop changes are not permitted after registration. Registration is first-come, first-served; we do not maintain waitlists for full sessions.
- > A unique email address is required for each registrant. If registering multiple people, make sure you have a different email address for each of them. All confirmations, receipts, and information about the conference are sent by email. Please add [childcareoptions@options.bc.ca](mailto:childcareoptions@options.bc.ca) to your contacts to ensure you don’t miss any important correspondence.
- > Certificates of attendance will be provided for the completion of each keynote and workshop session attended.
- > Photographs will be taken during the Children the Heart of the Matter conference. By registering for the conference, you are giving permission for photos containing your image/likeness to be used on our website or social media.

## CANCELLATIONS

Friday registrations are non-refundable.

Saturday cancellations are accepted until January 29, 2024 at 8:00 PM.

Cancellations will be subject to a \$10.00 administration fee. Participant substitutions are accepted at no additional cost. We are unable to process registration changes after this date and time.

THE CHILDREN THE HEART OF THE MATTER CONFERENCE COMMITTEE IS HONoured TO USE OUR CONFERENCE AS A TOOL TO ELEVATE INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW, ESPECIALLY THAT EVERY CHILD IS A GIFT AND HAS GIFTS TO SHARE WITH US AND OUR COMMUNITY. AS A COLLECTIVE OF EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS WITH THE SACRED JOB OF CARING FOR THESE GIFTS, THE CHILDREN - WE ARE GATHERING ON THE TRADITIONAL LANDS OF THE COAST SALISH PEOPLES SITUATED ON THE UNSURRENDERED TERRITORIES OF THE STO:LO, KWANTLEN, sáq̓ciyám̓ təm̓x̓s (KATZIE) AND SEMIAHMOO FIRST NATIONS AND THE TREATY LANDS OF THE s̓c̓w̓aθen̓am̓ təm̓x̓s (TSAWWASSEN) AND Á,LEᑎENEᑎ TE (WSÁNEĆ) FIRST NATIONS. IN ADDITION, WE RECOGNIZE THE FIVE MÉTIS CHARTERED COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE SOUTH FRASER REGION.



# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

We are excited once again to be offering this year’s Children the Heart of the Matter conference in a hybrid format.

The conference begins Friday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> with a welcome reception, followed by a keynote presentation with Dr. Deborah MacNamara. Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> will be a great day of learning with a morning keynote presentation by Denita Dinger, followed by a number of workshops reflecting diversity, inclusive practice, the implementation of the BC Early Learning Framework, and other topics of interest to those in the early care and learning field.

The Children the Heart of the Matter conference will be of interest to all those who work with young children and their families in early years settings.

# OUR MISSION

The Children the Heart of the Matter Conference brings together all those involved in the care and education of young children. Our mission is to raise the awareness and profile of child care and early years programs. Through professional development, networking, and sharing of information and resources between child care professionals, we aim to help provide the best for young children.

PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
CERTIFICATES

Conference attendees will receive certificates for sessions attended.  
Friday: 2.5 hour keynote  
Saturday: 2 hour keynote  
2 x 2 hour workshops  
Total for all sessions: **8.5 hours**

FOLLOW FOR  
CONFERENCE  
UPDATES

Twitter @chccareoptions  
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Instagram @childcareoptions  
Threads @childcareoptions  
Website childcareoptions.ca

# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

- 6:00 PM Registration table and Marketplace open
- 7:00 PM Keynote with Dr. Deborah MacNamara  
*Nourished: Connection, Food, and Caring for Our Kids (and Everyone Else We Love)*
- 10:00 PM Marketplace closes

\*Online participants have access to keynote and A1/P1 workshop sessions only.

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

- 7:00 AM Registration table and Marketplace open
- 8:15 AM Keynote with Denita Dinger  
*We Are Doing It Wrong: True Kindergarten Readiness*
- 10:15 AM Morning break
- 10:45 AM AM Session workshops
- 12:45 PM Lunch break
- 1:45 PM PM Session workshops  
Marketplace closes
- 3:45 PM Conference ends

# FOR THOSE ATTENDING IN-PERSON...

VISIT THE  
MARKETPLACE

Check out the latest toys, equipment and materials available for the early care and learning field, as well as local community resources, in our Marketplace!

SELFIE  
STATION

Be sure to drop by the selfie station with your colleagues and new friends! Take a photo and post it to social media using the hashtag #CHOM2024 for a chance to win a great prize!



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

## FRIDAY KEYNOTE

### *Nourished: Connection, Food, and Caring for Our Kids (and Everyone Else We Love)*

WITH DR. DEBORAH MACNAMARA



We seem to know more than ever about food and feeding others, yet we face rising eating issues among our kids and ourselves. What has gone wrong? Is it simply about the food we eat? What if it wasn't just about food, or the table, or sitting beside each other to eat? We have missed something more critical to well-being that was meant to go along with eating, which has become eclipsed in our food-obsessed society.

We urgently need to address how we feed our children as increasing numbers are being fed outside of the home by multiple caretakers. Feeding and eating cannot be separated from the caretaking relationship that truly nourishes kids. It has never been more urgent to relook at our assumptions and to put food back into its rightful place than today. Expect to have your beliefs challenged, your eyes opened, and never see eating the same way again. Based on over ten years of research, Dr. Deborah MacNamara will share her findings based on her new book, *Nourished: Connection, Food, and Caring for our Kids (and everyone else we love)*.

A dynamic speaker and best-selling author, Deborah MacNamara, PhD. is sought after for her expertise in child and adolescent development, parenting, and educating kids. She is the author of *Rest Play Grow* and her new book *Nourished: Connection, Food and Caring for our Kids (and everyone else we love)*. As a clinical counsellor, educator, and researcher with more than 25 years of experience working with families and teachers, Deborah translates the science of human development into stories that are transferable to the home and the classroom. She is the director of Kid's Best Bet Counselling and on faculty at the Neufeld Institute, where she works with Gordon Neufeld and colleagues to make sense of kids to the adults who are responsible for them. For more information, please see, [deborahmacnamara.com](http://deborahmacnamara.com).

**Dr. MacNamara will be available to sign her new book after the presentation.**

## SATURDAY KEYNOTE

### *We Are Doing It Wrong: True Kindergarten Readiness*

WITH DENITA DINGER



In this eye-opening presentation, participants will clearly see the errors in the current "Kindergarten Readiness" mindset. We are truly doing it wrong. The skills that hold the most value for children are not the skills most kindergarten assessment tools measure. Sadly, in the rush to force children to gain the skills we erroneously deem as "Kindergarten Readiness," adults remove authentic opportunities from young children that foster what is truly the most important. Participants will leave with a solid understanding of what Kindergarten Readiness truly requires, as well as many ideas to foster those skills. Adults will realize that no matter how well-intentioned, what they are currently doing "for children" is actually stripping away valuable learning opportunities from children. All will leave empowered to stand up and be the voice children need them to be.

Denita is an internationally-known defender of the joyful and valuable learning that occurs in child-led play. Her journey from believing children should "LISTEN TO ME", to now, her job is to "LISTEN TO THE CHILDREN", will motivate educators who work with all ages (and parents too!). Meeting needs and empowering children by creating an emotionally healthy environment are at the forefront of Denita's message.

Denita's presentations are heartfelt, humorous, relatable, valuable, and most important, REAL. She doesn't just toss out theory -- she is all about practice. She also understands when people struggle with listening to children and seeing the learning power of child-led play. That struggle is something Denita knows well. Her practice with children used to be the complete opposite of what it is now. She caved to the pressures from parents and operated a rigid, heavily scheduled, and adult-influenced program where the ideas of children were not respected. She knows, first-hand, how hard, but rewarding, the journey is from a teacher-controlled philosophy to a child-centered, child-led one. The results of her journey are what fuels her passion; it is what makes her relatable. She wants all educators to feel the stress relief of letting go...and letting children be empowered WITHOUT losing control.



# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

## AM SESSIONS 10:45 AM - 12:45 PM

- A1

There is No “Right Way” to Play with Acorns: Fostering an Emotionally Healthy Environment

Denita Dinger

♥ Online option available
- A2

Beyond Playdough: How to Create Sensory Friendly Spaces

Stephanie Siqueira & Bobbie Felix
- A3

Communications Without Spoken Words: Somatic Understanding in Infants, Toddlers, and Non-Verbal Children (Part 1)

Dr. Annabella Cant
- A4

21st Century Neurodiversity, Autism and Paradigm Shifts for Caregiving

Pam Collins
- A5

Supporting Children with Disabilities in Your Program

Cari Rawling & Karen Speijer
- A6

Relational World-Making Through Drawing

Tahmina Shayan
- A7

Creating a Culture of Connection: Nonviolent Communication Strategies for Building Trust and Cooperation

Monica Chan
- A8

Nature Wellness and Teaching Outside

Jasmine Chou
- A9

Fair Working Environments for Early Childhood Educators: Learn About Your Rights

Nora Bergh
- A10

Getting Comfortable with Pedagogy in Early Childhood Practice

Samantha Johnstone

## PM SESSIONS 1:45 - 3:45 PM

- P1

Two-Eyed Seeing: Interweaving Western and Indigenous Worldviews

Len Pierre

♥ Online option available
- P2

Got Joy?

Denita Dinger
- P3

Communications Without Spoken Words: Somatic Understanding in Infants, Toddlers, and Non-Verbal Children (Part 2)

Dr. Annabella Cant
- P4

Building Environments That Encourage Positive Behavior In Classrooms

Shalini Das
- P5

Pack Your Bag

Ruth Beardsley
- P6

Exploring Coding with Early Learners: Coding without Computers

Marianna Cavezza
- P7

Indigenous Awareness in the Early Years “Bringing Back the Village”

Jade Brass & Aunty Tami
- P8

Outdoor Art Studios: Discovering Place, Value and Connection

Shannon Heighes
- P9

Caring for Ourselves So We Can Care for Others

Danielle Davis
- P10

Care as Curriculum: Educating Through Relationships in Infant and Toddler Programs

Monica Chan

A1

There is No “Right Way” to Play with Acorns: Fostering an Emotionally Healthy Environment

Buzzwords like “loose parts” have created an industry that has forgotten that the environment we create for young children is about so much more than the “stuff” we put in it. When adults are concerned about “the right way to play with acorns”, or present open-ended materials in such a way that they are no longer “open-ended” there is an error in our ways that we absolutely must stop and fix. The physical environment is just one component. Arguably, more important is the emotional health of the environment. Not only will “an emotionally healthy environment” be fully defined, but participants will also have moments to pause and evaluate their practice with children. There will be hard conversations: Is there freedom in the environment you have created for children? Do children feel their ideas are respected? Do they feel trusted? Are children free to own discoveries? Is the environment ready for the ideas of the children? Are children able to be their best selves? Who is in control? Who needs to be in control? This workshop is for the early childhood professional who has ever been concerned that children are not playing with the acorns correctly.

**Denita Dinger** - See keynote section for Denita Dinger’s bio.

A2

BEYOND PLAYDOUGH:  
HOW TO CREATE SENSORY-FRIENDLY SPACES

This session will identify what it means to be a sensory-friendly classroom and key considerations for educators. We will explore creating sensory-friendly environments both inside and outside and the benefits of sensory play for all learners including English Language Learners and children with special needs. In a hands-on setting, we will share how to introduce a variety of sensory play opportunities into different settings and support children that may have sensory sensitivities.

Come prepared to explore a variety of sensory play materials.

### Stephanie Siqueira

Stephanie is a kindergarten teacher in Surrey. She enjoys supporting educators through professional learning opportunities focusing on social emotional and play-based learning. She began her career as an ECE in the lower mainland and has since developed a love for global education working in classrooms across Canada, Europe, and Brazil. Stephanie is passionate about bridging the gap between ECE and early primary and holds a BA ECE, BED, and M.ECEC.

### Bobbie Felix

Bobbie is a Strong Start Facilitator with Surrey Schools with an extensive background in early childhood education. With a passion for learning through play and the 100 languages of children, she focuses on the well-being and belonging of the family. This focus allows for collaboration to be meaningful and visible in the development of the child, as stated through the BC Early Learning Framework.

A3

## Communications Without Spoken Words: Somatic Understanding in Infants, Toddlers, and Non-Verbal Children (Part 1)

THIS IS A FULL DAY WORKSHOP, YOU MUST ALSO REGISTER IN P3

This workshop will invite educators into the beautiful world of communication where words are not essential. Annabella will share her research in Imaginative Education and particularly the meaning-making tools of Somatic Understanding to demonstrate how imperative it is not to confuse communication with spoken language. She will create an environment of encounters where the participants will be able to see the world through the eyes of those who don't need sound words to communicate. She will even share some basic American Sign Language that she uses with both verbal and non-verbal children. After this workshop, participants will leave with a treasure box of different perspectives and more confidence in being inclusive educators, ready for the uniqueness of all children.

*Participants should be comfortably dressed.*



### Dr. Annabella Cant

Dr. Annabella Cant is a professor in ECCE at Capilano University. She has been an ECCE since 1994. Her newest publication, *Unswaddling Pedagogy*, is a book for educators and parents. Her new pedagogical lens—the *Unswaddling Pedagogy*—is inspired and fueled by the stories she has lived. Her passions are her family and puppy, running, building miniature houses, making jewelry for fundraisers, and creating an inclusive world.

A4

## 21st Century Neurodiversity, Autism, and Paradigm Shifts for Caregiving

There have been great strides in science over the past 30 years. Much of what we have been taught about autism is based on myths, stereotypes, and past research done by non-autistics. Treatment or therapy is often recommended based on this information. This course is autistic designed, aligns with the neurodiversity paradigm, is based on current autistic research, and promotes neurodiverse affirming practices. We will explore the following topics: sensory processing, cognitive processing, communication, social interactions, play, masking, trauma, Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), and more.

### Pam Collins

Pam is a late-identified neurodivergent parent to two amazing multiply neurodivergent adult sons. She provides Neurodiverse-Affirming parent coaching, consulting, and education services to families and community partners and has been supporting families for over 23 years.

A5

## Supporting Children with Disabilities in Your Program

The Family Support Institute (FSI) of British Columbia can support you in your inclusive early years environments. FSI can direct you to appropriate support for all children with disabilities and their families. We can start to help early, before there is even a diagnosis, with free support and services you can access and share with families. In this session, you will also learn about some helpful tools and toolkits available to everyone.

### Cari Rawling

Cari is an ECE and StrongStart Educator and is the North East Regional Coordinator for the Family Support Institute. Cari is also an active member of ECEBC as part of her local ECEBC branch and has served on the provincial board for five years. She volunteers in many community events for children and families and is devoted to learning and supporting families of children with Autism and who are deaf or hard of hearing.

### Karen Speijer

Karen is the Family Support Institute of BC's (FSI) Regional Network Coordinator for the Fraser South Region and is a past board member. She has been a Resource Parent with the FSI for over 23 years. She is a wife of 39 years and a mom and Nana of four. Karen specializes in assisting children with diverse needs and their families in important life transitions, such as starting kindergarten or graduating high school.



A6

## Relational World-Making Through Drawing

We express ourselves in many ways, verbal and nonverbal. Children use drawing as a means of communication. It is through drawing that their imagination is made visible and thoughts are represented. This workshop aims to orient educators to children's world-making through drawing. Drawing in their individual sketchbook and collective drawings on a large sheet of paper have provided children with a space to converse, discuss each other's ideas, share stories of their drawings, and synch into each other's propositions. Their drawing demonstrates concepts of identity, gender, belonging, relationship, and intellectual curiosity. Drawing serves as a tool for children to communicate experiences and information achieved from their family, school, and broader social environment.

Children's drawing is not a representation of objects only, it is the coming together of marks, movements, sounds, ideas, emotions, stories, gestures, ideas, dialogues, and a process of meaning-making.

### Tahmina Shayan

Tahmina is an instructor at Capilano University. Her areas of research include childhood, children's art making, teacher education, curriculum, and pedagogy.





A8

## Nature Wellness and Teaching Outside

Why are children so drawn to water, sand, soil, light, and sound and feel happy simply running around? No matter how old we are, or where we are from, we all need to play in nature.

In this workshop, I invite you to be curious, explore, learn, play, and get to know the outdoors like you have never done before! We'll discuss the benefits of nature play, risky play, and messy play, and think deeply about outdoor and environmental education. We may even go out for a walk together!

You will walk out feeling refreshed and inspired to bring children and yourself out in all seasons and all weather!

*As we may step outside, participants should be comfortably and appropriately dressed for the weather.*

### Jasmine Chou

Jasmine is a nature-loving, and nature-appreciating earth child. She believes in a growth mindset and loves to learn and connect! She has been an OUTDOOR ECE since 2015 and has worked in various settings teaching outdoors. Jasmine is committed to continuing to teach and play in nature for as long as she can.

A7

## Creating a Culture of Connection: Nonviolent Communication Strategies for Building Trust and Cooperation

In this transformative workshop, participants explore the profound impact of nonviolent communication on fostering a culture of connection, trust, and cooperation in caregiving spaces. Through engaging discussions and interactive activities, attendees learn practical strategies to create an environment where children feel valued, heard, and understood. Discover how nonviolent communication principles can strengthen relationships, enhance cooperation, and promote a sense of belonging among children and caregivers. Gain insights into building trust, resolving conflicts, and nurturing empathy in order to establish a harmonious and supportive caregiving community. With these invaluable tools, participants will leave the workshop equipped to cultivate a culture of connection that promotes the holistic development and well-being of children.

### Monica Chan

Monica is an early childhood consultant and parent educator dedicated to empowering caregivers to thrive alongside children. With expertise in developmental psychology, early childhood education, and the Resource for Infant Educators (RIE) method, Monica's a sought-after presenter for conferences and workshops across the country. Through heartfelt guidance and practical strategies, she supports caregivers in fostering optimal growth and cultivating loving relationships with children.

A9

## Fair Working Environments for Early Childhood Educators: Learn About Your Rights

If you are looking to have a better understanding of your rights to a fair and just workplace, this session is for you. The Justice Education Society (JES) has designed a workshop to help early childhood educators and their employers/managers navigate their legal rights and responsibilities.

JES conducted a survey of over 200 early childhood educators to identify common concerns and questions. Based on this feedback, a JES team of lawyers and ECE experts have created a series of workshops for employees and employers/management.

Participants will learn about:

- Human rights in the workplace.
- How to create an inclusive workplace.
- What to do if you experience discrimination or harassment at work.
- How to provide a safe, fair, and compliant workplace for employees.

Learn through our engaging interactive 2-hour session and get a chance to ask your questions.

### Nora Bergh

As a non-practicing lawyer, Nora has been working in the public legal information and education sector for the last 7 years. She uses her content expertise and plain language skills to help British Columbians learn about the law and our justice system, assisting them to be more able to deal with their legal issues.

A10

## Getting Comfortable with Pedagogy in Early Childhood Practice

This workshop explores the definition of pedagogy, a brief history, and its global usage. In connection with the BC Early Learning Framework, we will go over what pedagogical choices are and how they are intertwined in everything we do in early years practice. Furthermore, even though we may not be completely comfortable with the pedagogical language, we will solidify that we all have a personal pedagogy and philosophy that influences our pedagogical choice-making every day.

This workshop is for learners who are curious/hesitant about the language of pedagogy and want to gain the confidence to be able to talk about it and grasp pedagogical concepts in relation to their own pedagogical framework. Walk away from this session with the confidence and acknowledgement that pedagogy is part of your professional life, and the broad understanding to be able to own your pedagogical experience.

### Samantha Johnstone

Samantha uses many different words to describe herself. She is a mother of two young children, a wife, a daughter, an auntie, a friend, a playful professional in the early childhood field, and a continuous learner. She is currently a Child and Youth Care student at the University of Victoria and is on maternity leave from her role as a resource consultant in a very busy early childhood resource library. Over the years she has held many roles on the floor ranging from ECEA to manager as well as many private roles with children and families. She truly enjoys family time and is a lifelong night owl!

P1

## Two-Eyed Seeing: Interweaving Western and Indigenous Worldviews

Two-Eyed Seeing (2ES) refers to the interweaving of Western and Indigenous worldviews. This workshop is to help Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants develop or enhance their ability to interchange their professional lenses to better understand and support Indigenous peoples and programs.

2ES is about learning and adopting Indigenous knowledge and values in their frameworks of professional philosophy, policy, and practice.

The main learning ideas are:

- Define Two-Eyed Seeing in the context of the early years profession.
- Explore similarities and/or differences between Western and Indigenous worldviews.
- Conceptualize the value and importance of incorporating a 2ES approach to bringing about social change and transformation.

**Len Pierre (He/Him)** - Owner, Managing Consultant

Len is Coast Salish from Katzie (kate-zee) First Nation. Len is an educator, consultant, TEDx Speaker, social activist, traditional knowledge keeper, and cultural practitioner. He has completed his Master of Education degree from Simon Fraser University focusing on curriculum and instructional design. His experience includes Indigenous education and program leadership from various health organizations, including the First Nations Health Authority, Fraser Health Authority, and the Canadian Centre for Mental Health and Addiction. As an agent for change, Len leads and advises for systemic transformation in universities across North America. He specializes in the development of educational programs and services with decolonization and reconciliation as its core values. He comes to us with an open heart and open mind and hopes to be received in the same way.

P2

## Got Joy?

This workshop is based on the Finnish saying: "Those things you learn without joy you will forget easily." In our world of high-stakes testing and push-down academics, JOY is missing from too many classrooms.

**BRING BACK THE JOY!** Set the environment in a way that brings joyful ownership of discoveries and connections into your classroom. Just because recent expectations placed on children are growing further and further away from being developmentally appropriate, does not mean the methods in which we teach need to also. Children need you to take a stand! Got Joy? Your answer will be YES after this inspiring and thought-provoking experience.

**Denita Dinger**

See keynote section for Denita Dinger's bio.



P3

## Communications Without Spoken Words: Somatic Understanding in Infants, Toddlers, and Non-Verbal Children (Part 2)

**THIS IS A FULL DAY WORKSHOP, YOU MUST ALSO REGISTER IN A3**

See A3 for details

P4

## Building Environments That Encourage Positive Behaviour In Classrooms

Are you concerned about how to implement and sustain classroom management and behavioral interventions? A classroom environment plays a central role in encouraging positive behavior in children. Consistent and predictable classroom environments, schedules, and routines can increase children's independence, ability to anticipate change and likelihood of using appropriate behavior.

In this workshop, we will collectively:

- Learn the neuroscience of self-regulation and its impact on students.
- Explore the difference between behaviour versus sensory needs.
- Explore some strategies and implement practices that you can use to acknowledge appropriate behavior as well as respond to challenging behavior too.
- Learn some simple steps to collect basic data inside the classroom and obtain valuable information about the behaviour of the students from them.

**Shalini Das**

Shalini is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) as well as an Occupational Therapist (OT) which makes her one of the few professionals listed in the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) with dual qualifications. She is the co-founder of Symbiosis Pediatric Therapy Inc. which has multi-disciplinary clinics in the Lower Mainland supporting children with different needs and their families.



P5

## Pack Your Bag

Pack Your Bag is an experiential workshop introducing early childhood educators to experiences that refugees face.

The non-fiction children's book "My Heart in Kenya" written by Ruth will be used to introduce participants to the discussion regarding the sense of belonging, and what happens when you have to pack your bag. This workshop will also explore simple things each of us can do to welcome newcomers to our communities.

### Ruth Beardsley

Ruth is an early childhood educator, author, and grandmother who worked for over 40 years in community services and early learning programs before her retirement. She first started telling stories while working with young children, but it was by working with adults in community groups that she learned the power of storytelling as a tool to raise awareness on issues related to refugees. Before retiring she received the United Way Community Impact Award, recognizing her work with refugee families and their young children.

P6

## Exploring Coding with Early Learners: Coding Without Computers

Join us for Science World's new STEM-based workshop for child care providers that work with young children. We will explore and try out some fun, hands-on ways to introduce young children to coding through inclusive stories, dance, play dough, games, nature's life cycles, and treasure hunts, without them ever having to go near a computer screen or tablet!

### Marianna Cavezza

Marianna is an Experiential Learning Specialist at Science World. She is a passionate early childhood advocate with over twenty-five years in the field and has worked in a variety of child care settings in different roles as a Strong Start Facilitator, ECE instructor, and Early Interventionist.

P7

## Indigenous Awareness in the Early Years "Bringing Back the Village"

This workshop will take the participants on a journey of pre-contact, contact, and today's realities for Indigenous people across turtle island. This journey will allow the participants to understand ways of life before contact and the challenges brought on by settler colonization. With discussion on the Indian Act, residential school, '60s/millennial scoop, and then ways to bring Indigenous people's resilience into our lives in an authentic way. This journey will be facilitated with respect and vulnerability.

*This workshop will be addressing colonial violence and genocide. Participation may trigger unresolved grief and loss issues for some.*

### Jade Brass

Anin Jade Brass nitisinihkas The Key First Nation nitonci. Jade studied at Native Education College (NEC) and has her IECE Diploma. She is continuing her studies at UBC to obtain her Bachelor of Indigenous Education through the Indigenous Teacher Education Program 'NITEP'. Jade has come full circle to now teach at NEC with both the ECE certificate and diploma program. As Anishinaabekwe her goal is to continue to be a positive role model in the community and do this work for our children and our unborn babies.

### Aunty Tami

Aunty Tami McAllister is from Metlkatla and from the Tsimshian nation. She studied at Native Education College and received her IECE certification. ECE is important to Aunty Tami because all children deserve her patience and time. With Aunty Tami's experience, she has created a deep understanding of children's needs, and knows they are each free spirits that need our love and care in all capacities.







P8

### Outdoor Art Studios: Discovering Place, Value, and Connection

In this workshop, we hope to help educators become comfortable going beyond the indoors and evolve the way they view children, art, and art spaces. The BC Early Learning Framework principles look at how people build connections and reconnections to land, culture, community, and place. When children have the opportunity to create while outdoors, opportunities for them to connect with their place and to value that connection emerge. In addition, they may experience art-making processes as decision-making opportunities. An outdoor art studio makes room for children to feel they belong in a place and in their community.

In this workshop, we will explore different ways and considerations when we take art outside, such as:

- Why create an outdoor art studio or art space?
- What does the space need?
- How and where to create the space?
- What to consider when creating the space?
- What challenges could arise, such as weather or location?
- Does the space have to be stationary?
- What to take outdoors?
- Why create meaningful spaces and invitations?
- How to use the environment as a third teacher?

#### Shannon Heighes

Shannon is the Senior Supervisor of a dual license Infant Toddler Program at UBC. She has been working with children for 25 years from infants to school-age in a variety of settings from resorts, preschools, daycares, and Supported Child Development. She is also a mom to two young children.

P9

### Caring for Ourselves So We Can Care for Others

In this workshop, participants will explore the concepts of collective care, self-care, and community care. How does collective care support us in our practice as early childhood educators? We will look at the history and theory behind the concepts of collective care and self-care. Furthermore we will look at how we embed these practices into our programs and how these practices can support the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators.

#### Danielle Davis

Danielle has been in the field of early childhood education for close to three decades. She has held many roles during her career, including educator, director, pedagogist, consultant, and college instructor. She is passionate about the early years and those who choose to make it their career.

P10

### Care as Curriculum: Educating Through Relationships in Infant and Toddler Programs

This workshop explores the unique role of caregivers in infant and toddler rooms and highlights how caregiving routines can be a meaningful and intentional part of the curriculum. Educators will learn strategies for building secure attachments, creating nurturing caregiving interactions, and promoting trust and emotional well-being in the youngest learners.

#### Monica Chan

Monica is a parent educator and early childhood consultant dedicated to empowering caregivers to thrive alongside children. With expertise in developmental psychology, early childhood education, and the Resource for Infant Educators (RIE) approach, Monica is a staple presenter at conferences and workshops across Canada. Through heartfelt guidance and practical strategies, she supports caregivers in fostering optimal growth and cultivating loving relationships between caregiver and child.





# CONFERENCE PLANNING

The conference planning committee is comprised of individuals working in the field of early care and learning in our community. Committee members and CCRR staff contribute to the planning and organization of this conference. Through the dedication of the committee, provincial funding, and sponsor support, we are able to keep the conference affordable for our participants.

## 2024 CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS

Leah Drayton    Surrey School District #36  
Michelle Davies    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)

## 2024 CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ewa Boss    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)  
Karen Came    Inclusion Langley Society - Child Development Services  
Shelley Cranstone    The Centre for Child Development  
Pia Evans    Reach Child and Youth Development Society  
Laura Frame    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)  
Gisele Haines    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)  
Krista Harrison    Surrey Libraries  
Vanessa Hickman    Ministry of Children and Family Development  
Jody Mischuda    Fraser Health Licensing  
Karen Norman    Early Childhood Educator (Retired)  
Rachel Oulton    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)  
Katie Pearson    Lower Fraser Valley Aboriginal Society  
Karina Roman    Maxxine Wright Early Care & Learning Centre (Atira Women's Resource Society)  
Kristina Saito    Options Community Services  
Jennifer Street    Fraser Health Licensing  
Jennifer Vanderberg    Delta Continuing Education  
Lisa Wade    City of Surrey