

A photograph of two children standing in a puddle. The child on the left is wearing a red jacket with white polka dots and red rain boots. The child on the right is wearing dark pants and blue rain boots. The water in the puddle is dark and reflects the boots and the surrounding environment.

# ROOTED IN NATURE: EXPLORING OUTDOOR PLAY AND OUR CONNECTION TO THE LAND

## 2026



*Children*  
THE HEART OF THE MATTER

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

[childcareoptions.ca](http://childcareoptions.ca)



# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

## FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

- 6:00 PM **DOORS OPEN**  
Welcome reception  
Registration table and Marketplace opens
- 7:00 PM **TRADITIONAL WELCOME**  
with Xwopokton, Chief Harley Chappell,  
elected Chief of Semiahmoo First Nation
- KEYNOTE**  
Embracing Uncertainty and Making  
Friends with Outdoor Risky Play  
with Dr. Mariana Brussoni
- 9:30 PM **BOOK SIGNING**  
with Dr. Mariana Brussoni
- 10:00 PM **MARKETPLACE CLOSES**



## SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

- 7:00 AM **DOORS OPEN**  
Registration table and  
Marketplace opens
- 8:00 AM **TRADITIONAL WELCOME**  
Lekeyten & Sqwayeten Cheryl Gabriel,  
Elders from Kwantlen First Nation
- PANEL PRESENTATION**  
Multiple Perspectives on Outdoor Play
- 10:15 AM **MORNING BREAK**
- 10:45 AM **AM SESSION WORKSHOPS**
- 12:45 PM **LUNCH BREAK**  
**DOOR PRIZE DRAWS**
- 1:45 PM **KEYNOTE**  
Land as Relative: Coast Salish Teach-  
ings on the Connection, Value, and  
Sacred Responsibility to Land  
with Len Pierre
- Marketplace closes**
- 4:00 PM **CONFERENCE ENDS**

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 \$160.00.

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 Family Centres (Westcoast), the agency responsible for administering the funds.





# DISCIPLINE WITHOUT DAMAGE

The Online Course  
by Dr Vanessa Lapointe.

Discipline Without Damage is a seven week, self-paced online course that incorporates both video and reflective exercises in order to help you better understand not only your child's behavior, but also yourself.

Available  
Now!



PARENTING RIGHT  
FROM  
THE START  
LAYING A HEALTHY FOUNDATION  
IN THE BABY AND TODDLER YEARS



DR. VANESSA LAPOINTE, R. PSYC  
Author of Discipline Without Damage

DR. VANESSA LAPOINTE, R. PSYC

DISCIPLINE  
WITHOUT  
DAMAGE

HOW TO GET  
YOUR KIDS TO BEHAVE  
WITHOUT MESSING THEM UP

This course is based on the principles of *Discipline Without Damage*, the best-selling book by Dr Vanessa Lapointe. Dr Vanessa is also the author of the IBPA Benjamin Franklin Silver Award winning book, *Parenting Right From The Start*.

Visit [www.drvanessalapointe.com](http://www.drvanessalapointe.com) to learn more!



Books available on Amazon or at fine booksellers



# FOR THOSE ATTENDING IN-PERSON...

## CERTIFICATES

For each keynote and workshop you attend, certificates will be available for download from the conference portal by February 2, 2026. You must complete an evaluation for each session before the certificates will be available to download.

## SELFIE STATION

The selfie station is back! Be sure to drop in for fun with your colleagues and new friends! Take a photo and post it to Instagram or Facebook using the hashtag **#CHOM2026** to be entered to win a door prize!

## WELCOME RECEPTION

Friday evening will feature light refreshments and a chance to catch up with friends and colleagues.

This is also a great time to visit vendors in the Marketplace!

## 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!

Photographs will be taken during the Children the Heart of the Matter conference. By registering for the conference, you are giving permission that photos containing your image/likeness may be used.

## HEARTFELT THANKS TO THIS YEAR'S SPONSORS...

### SILVER SPONSORS



### BRONZE SPONSORS



## FRIDAY CONFERENCE WELCOME



### CHIEF HARLEY CHAPPELL

"O Siam e Nes Chalacha Siam"

Dear respected friends and relatives,

My traditional name is Xwopokton, English name Harley Chappell. I am the Elected Chief of Semiahmoo First Nation.

As you may or may not know, Surrey resides on the unceded traditional territory of three land based communities; Semiahmoo, Katzie, and Kwantlen, and has the highest Urban Indigenous population in British Columbia.

It's an honour to be asked to welcome participants for the Children the Heart of the Matter conference.

With sincere thanks,

Harley Chappell

Xwopokton, Harley Chappell



We gratefully acknowledge the beautiful artwork panels displayed on stage were created by Gitksan Nation artist Trevor Angus. The panels, titled Killer Whale, reflect the rich cultural traditions of the Gitksan people.



**Delta School District**  
*Inspired Learning*

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- ▶ BASIC Certificate
- ▶ SPECIAL NEEDS Certificate
- ▶ INFANT/ TODDLER Certificate



***A journey  
awaits you.***

- ▶ *Part-time Schedules*
- ▶ *Quality instruction with affordable fees*
- ▶ *Teaching early childhood educators since 1969*

**<https://deltalearns.ca/eceprogram/>**

## FRIDAY KEYNOTE

# EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY AND MAKING FRIENDS WITH OUTDOOR RISKY PLAY

## DR. MARIANA BRUSSONI

Research shows the importance of risky play for children. Providing children with opportunities for independent exploration, testing limits, and expanding boundaries helps promote mental health, physical activity, cognitive development, and independence. Yet many of us struggle with letting children enjoy these freedoms. We'll explore some common myths and current realities and will discover simple ways to move away from saying "No!" and "Be careful!" to creating opportunities for "Yes!".



## With Outlast, students build their own outdoor play experience!

*Interlocking knobs connect blocks, planks, ramps & flow pans. Sturdy enough for children to balance, jump, & walk on, these play structures never get tired.*

*All Outlast outdoor classroom furnishings and blocks are:*

- Lifetime warrantied. Made of toxin free acetylated wood. The only manufacturing byproducts are vinegar and water.
- Rain, shine, freeze, or thaw, Outlast is designed to endure all Canadian seasons.
- Warrantied against rotting, warping or splitting for a lifetime to grace your outdoor learning space for generations.

FIND more on [Louisekool.com](https://louisekool.com)  
Markham

*CASE STUDY: Learn why a centre in Markham invested in Outlast Sheds, blocks, tables & more.*







**LEKEYTEN &  
SQWAYETEN CHERYL GABRIEL**

## SATURDAY CONFERENCE WELCOME

We are Lekeyten and Sqwayeten Cheryl Gabriel, Elders from Kwantlen First Nation, residing on McMillan Island across from Fort Langley. We have been together for 50 years and have 13 wonderful grandchildren from our blended family.

During our time as partners, parents, co-workers, grandparents, and Elders in Residence we promised ourselves that we would give back and share our Kwantlen First Nation history.

As Elders we have welcomed many to family gatherings for over 30 years, with drumming and singing to ground everyone to the learning spaces.

We have been part of the education system sharing our responsibility and accountability to Indigenous worldview with our love and respect as Kwantlen First Nation. We remind everyone we share with that we think generationally - reflecting on the knowledge from the previous seven generations as well as considering the seven generations forward to time immemorial. We share our traditional territories to those who live, play, learn and work here.

We are honoured to be asked to welcome everyone.

## WHY CHOOSE US



**INSTALLATION  
SERVICES**



**HASSLE-FREE  
RETURNS**



**EXCLUSIVE  
PRODUCTS**



**LEASING OPTIONS  
AVAILABLE**



**THE  
WINTERGREEN  
GUARANTEE**



**COMPLETE  
CLASSROOM  
DESIGN**



**INDUSTRY-STANDARD  
SAFETY APPROVED  
FURNITURE**



**GREENGUARD  
CERTIFIED AND  
CHILD SAFE**

# WINTERGREEN

LEARNING MATERIALS

## SATURDAY PANEL PRESENTATION

# MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON OUTDOOR PLAY



**LEN  
PIERRE**

**OWNER & CEO  
LEN PIERRE CONSULTING**



**SHANNON  
COOK**

**PUDDLE SPLASHING FOREST  
PRACTITIONER AND ADMINISTRATOR**



**BEVERLIE  
DIETZE**

**OUTDOOR PEDAGOGY SPECIALIST  
& EDUCATOR**



**RACHEL  
RAMSDEN**

**OUTDOOR PLAY RESEARCHER,  
STUDENT, & PARENT**



**SHELBY  
GORDON**

**PARENT &  
OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST**



**ANGIE  
UY**

**CHILD CARE LICENSING  
PRACTICE CONSULTANT**



**LISA  
KALDENBACH**

**CHILD DEVELOPMENT &  
MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIAN**



**MEGAN  
ZENI**

**PANEL MODERATOR & OUTDOOR  
PLAY RESEARCHER & CONSULTANT**

This panel brings together passionate advocates and experts in outdoor play to highlight the important impact that spending time outdoors has on children's well-being. They aim to emphasize the significance of outdoor experiences, not only for the physical and emotional health of children but also for educators. By exploring the numerous benefits of outdoor play, we hope to share with conference attendees how it positively influences children's behavior, fosters creativity, and supports overall development.



**SEE YOU**



**NEXT YEAR!**



Children  
THE HEART OF THE MATTER

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**FEBRUARY 26 & 27, 2027**

Once upon a child<sup>®</sup> Surrey  
kids stuff for  
**Less**



**cash**  
for kids' stuff

#4-3238 King George Blvd | Surrey, BC  
604-536-6823

[onceuponachild.com/locations/Surrey-BC](https://onceuponachild.com/locations/Surrey-BC)



Pediatric Dentistry  
& Orthodontics  
For a Lifetime of Smiles

For more than 50 years, we've supported children and families across the Lower Mainland with compassionate and specialized dental care, creating safe and positive experiences at every visit.

Call us at 604-734-1000  
*Scan to learn more*





# BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE MARKETPLACE FOR...

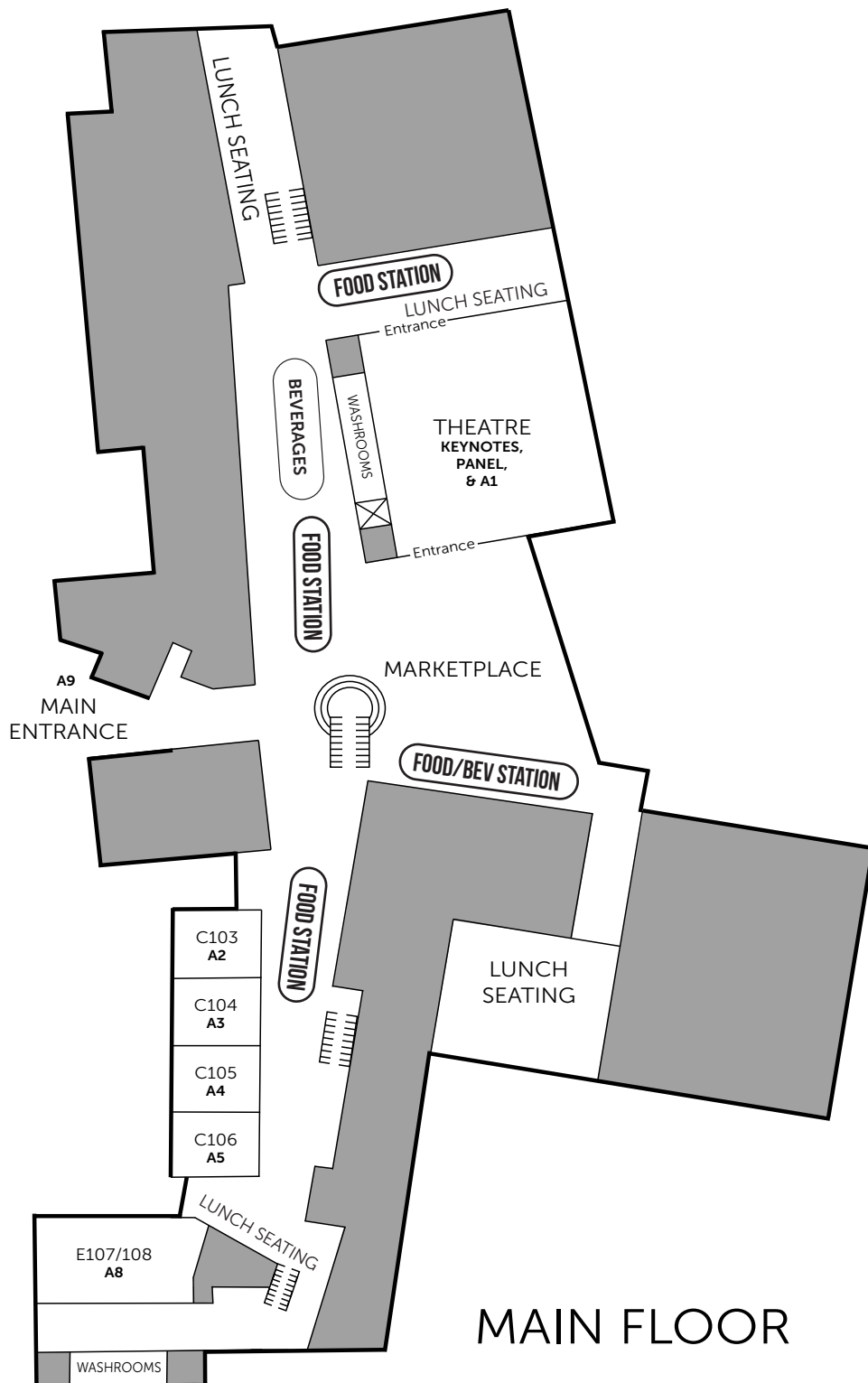
## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS)
- BC Cancer Prevention (Sun Safe BC)
- Child Care Options CCRR
- Delta Continuing Education, ECE Program
- Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC)
- Inclusion Langley Society
- Learning Outside Together Program (BCACCS/ECEBC)
- Learn Through Active Play
- Métis Nation BC
- Outdoor Play Canada
- Outside Play UBC Lab
- Reach Child & Youth Development Society
- The Centre for Child Development

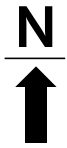
## VENDORS

- Eleven Twenty One Enterprises
- Forest Learning Tools
- Kinderbooks
- Little Métis Things
- Little Peg Town
- Little Sunshine Felt Stories
- Louise Kool & Galt
- McPar Creations Felt Stories
- Michael Hill Designs
- Natural Pod
- Naturalwood Creations
- Sensory Kidz
- Sticks & Stones
- The Local Bookshelf
- Ubuntu Ogogo Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign
- Wintergreen
- Wool Food

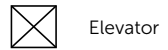




MAIN FLOOR



LEGEND

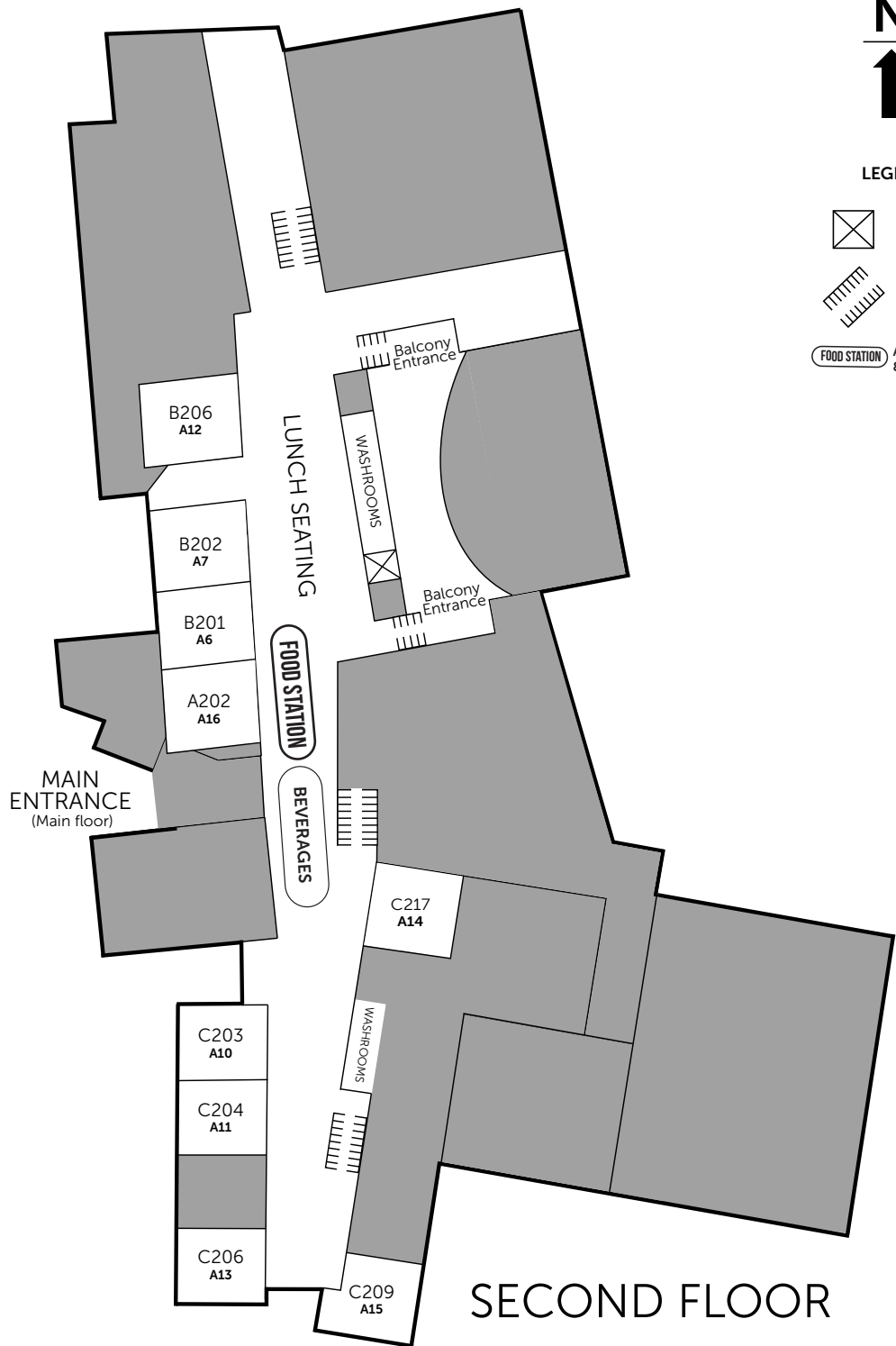


Elevator



Stairs

**FOOD STATION** AM SNACK  
& LUNCH PICK UP



SECOND FLOOR



# SATURDAY AM WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

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

A1

### Co-Designing Outdoor Play Spaces with a Sense of Curiosity and Wonderment

Dr. Beverlie Dietze

ROOM: Theatre

A2

### Experiencing Mathematics Outdoors in the Early Years

Janice Novakowski

ROOM: C103

A3

### Adventure Awaits Under the Trees

Nida Fatima Jasani & Jui-Jou Jasmine Chou

ROOM: C104

A4

### Literacy and Landscape: Integrating Books and Outdoor Learning in Early Childhood

Annie Montague

ROOM: C105

A5

### Creating a Neurodivergent-Inclusive Outdoor Environment

Tricia Edgar

ROOM: C106

A6

### Precipitation Education: Tips and Tricks for Embracing the Rain

Karen Begley

ROOM: B201

A7

### Rooted Reflections: Integrating Sit Spots into Curricular Learning

Lauren MacLean

ROOM: B202

A8

### Exploring Games and Outdoor Activities for Children

Gary Robinson

ROOM: E107/108 Multi-Purpose

A9

### Re-Rooted: Finding our Inner-Child and Tapping into Nature-Connectivity

Kylee Cox

ROOM: Meeting at the Main Entrance

A10

### Neurodiversity and Nature: Supportive Environments for ADHD

Monica Maddison

ROOM: C203

A11

### The Wonder of Play

Angela Horbanuik

ROOM: C204

A12

### Walking with the Land through a Métis Lens

Kari-Anne Barr & Cara Koebel

ROOM: B206

A13

### Rethinking Risky Play

Megan Zeni

ROOM: C206

A14

### Growing Outside the Walls: Holistic Development Through Outdoor Play

Shannon Cook

ROOM: C217

A15

### Let Them Roam: Nature's Role in Raising Resilient, Connected Children

Alisha Inch & Victoria Lim

ROOM: C209

A16

### Pathways to Outdoor Play in Early Learning and Child Care

Rachel Ramsden

ROOM: A202

# SATURDAY AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

LAND AS RELATIVE:  
COAST SALISH TEACHINGS ON  
THE CONNECTION, VALUE, AND  
SACRED RESPONSIBILITY TO LAND

LEN PIERRE

In Coast Salish worldviews, land is not a resource—it is a relative. Rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of being, this 2-hour session will invite early childhood educators to reimagine outdoor education through a relational lens. Participants will explore how land and territory are foundational to learning, identity, well-being, and belonging for Indigenous children, families, and communities.



# MILLS.ca

SINCE 1949

**ARTS, CRAFTS, AND  
EDUCATIONAL  
SUPPLIES FOR  
EVERY AGE!**



**1000's of Art Supplies  
Stocked Locally in Port  
Coquitlam**



**Use Promo Code “CHILDRENOFTHEHEART” at [www.mills.ca](http://www.mills.ca)  
and save 20% off your first online order!**



# ONLINE CONFERENCE PORTAL

## *Tips, Tricks, and Helpful Information*

- The conference portal can only be accessed by those registered for conference.
- **Only virtual attendees will be able to view the live streams.**
- Participants were sent an email with a password and link to the portal the week of the conference.
- To verify your registration details, check your email for your initial registration confirmation.
- **Please note both in-person and virtual attendees will use the portal to access their certificates.**

Can't find your registration information?

Contact [childcareoptions@options.bc.ca](mailto:childcareoptions@options.bc.ca) or 604-572-8032



## CONFERENCE PORTAL LINK

[https://events.myconferencesuite.com/CHOM\\_2026/virtual/login](https://events.myconferencesuite.com/CHOM_2026/virtual/login)



## TO LOG IN, YOU NEED:

1. Your email address
2. Your password or confirmation number (8-digit string of letters and/or numbers)



## TROUBLE LOGGING IN?

Contact [support@myconferencesuite.com](mailto:support@myconferencesuite.com)

**For more detailed information, as well as a helpful video tutorial, on how to navigate the online conference portal - visit the link below:**

<https://www.childcareoptions.ca/children-the-heart-of-the-matter/conference-portal/>



# ATTENDING IN-PERSON?

The online conference portal is not just for online participants! In-person conference attendees can engage with the online conference portal in many ways:

- Access your certificate for all sessions attended.
- Connect with other conference attendees and speakers.
  - Use the right hand side bar to post a public message in the Social Feed, and chat with other participants under Users. You can also message any participant from the attendees list.
- View the conference program.
- Visit the sponsor's virtual booths.



## GET SOCIAL

Join us on social media!

We'll be using the hashtag **#CHOM2026**. Be sure to use it when you post about conference, and you will be entered to win a prize!

Facebook @childcareoptionsccrr

Instagram @childcareoptions



# CONFERENCE EVALUATION

## **We want to hear from you!**

Your opinion is important to us. The conference committee is dedicated to offering innovative and engaging learning opportunities that addresses your needs and interests. We look forward to your valuable feedback and comments as it helps us to plan for future conferences.

Please scan the QR code below or watch for our follow up email with a link for you to give us feedback about your thoughts on the overall conference. The link will also be available on our website after the conference.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your insightful feedback.



**SCAN OUR QR CODE TO  
COMPLETE OUR SURVEY!**







# 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.

## 2026 CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS

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

## 2026 CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ewa Boss    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)  
Karen Came    Inclusion Langley Society - Child Development Services  
Daljit Dial    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)  
Laura Dutton    Children's Foundation  
Gisele Haines    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)  
Krista Harrison    Surrey Libraries  
Nina Kozawko    City of Surrey  
Jody Mischuda    Ministry of Education and Child Care  
Karen Norman    Early Childhood Educator (Retired)  
Rachel Oulton    Child Care Options CCRR (Options Community Services)  
Karina Roman    Alexandra Neighbourhood House  
Violeta Savic    Métis Nation BC  
Jennifer Street    Fraser Health Licensing  
Crystal White    The Centre for Child Development