



Children
THE HEART OF THE MATTER

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

CHILDREN THE HEART OF THE MATTER CONFERENCE

JANUARY 30 & 31, 2026

childcareoptions.ca

REGISTRATION

Join us **ONLINE** or **IN-PERSON**, January 30 & 31, 2026 for the 29th 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
FRIDAY January 30	\$20	Includes evening keynote	Includes evening keynote
SATURDAY January 31	\$45	Includes: • Panel presentation • AM workshop - A1 only • PM workshop with Len Pierre	Includes: • Panel presentation • AM workshop - ANY • PM workshop with Len Pierre
Registration closes:		January 29, 2026 at 8:00 PM	January 26, 2026 at 6:00 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 January 30 and January 31, 2026. These rates are available until January 2, 2026, after which regular rates will apply.

[Book online by clicking the booking link in our online brochure, found at \[childcareoptions.ca\]\(#\)](#)

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.

HOTEL	RATES
Holiday Inn	\$209 ^{+Tax}

Register online at childcareoptions.ca

Click on the registration link on the conference page.

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.

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 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

All cancellations are accepted until January 26, 2026 at 6:00 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 S'ólh Téméxw (STÓ:LÖ), KWANTLEN, sḡəciŷaʔt təməxʷ (KATZIE) AND SEMIAHMOO FIRST NATIONS AND THE TREATY LANDS OF THE sḡəwaθenaʔt təməxʷ (TSAWASSEN) AND Á,LENEŃÉ ʔTE (WSÁNEĆ) FIRST NATIONS. IN ADDITION, WE RECOGNIZE THE FIVE MÉTIS CHARTERED COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE SOUTH FRASER REGION.

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

We are thrilled to offer this year's conference in a flexible hybrid format, welcoming both in-person and virtual participants. The event opens on Friday, January 30th with a warm welcome reception, followed by an inspiring keynote presentation by the renowned Dr. Mariana Brussoni.

Saturday promises a rich day of learning, starting with a morning panel featuring seven passionate advocates and experts in outdoor play. They will share their insights on the powerful impact that time spent outdoors has on the well-being of both children and educators.

The learning continues with a selection of engaging workshops tailored for professionals in early care and education. These sessions will further explore the role of outdoor environments in fostering curiosity, creativity, and connection in early learning 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: 2.25 hour panel presentation
2 hour AM session workshop
2.25 hour PM workshop

Total for all sessions: **9 hours**

FOLLOW FOR CONFERENCE UPDATES

Twitter @chcareoptions

Facebook @childcareoptionsccrr

Instagram @childcareoptions

Threads @childcareoptions

Website childcareoptions.ca

Bluesky childcareoptions.bsky.social

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 **#CHOM2026** for a chance to win a great prize!

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

6:00 PM Registration table and
Marketplace open

7:00 PM Keynote with
Dr. Mariana Brussoni
*Embracing Uncertainty and Making
Friends with Outdoor Risky Play*

10:00 PM Marketplace closes

*Online participants have access to the Friday evening keynote, the Saturday panel presentation and the A1/P1 workshop sessions only.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

7:00 AM Registration table and
Marketplace open

8:00 AM Panel Presentation
*Multiple Perspectives
on Outdoor Play*

10:15 AM Morning break

10:45 AM AM Session workshops

12:45 PM Lunch break

1:45 PM Keynote with Len Pierre in the theatre
Marketplace closes

3:45 PM Closing remarks and door prizes

4:00 PM Conference ends



FRIDAY KEYNOTE

Embracing Uncertainty and Making Friends with Outdoor Risky Play

WITH 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!".



Dr. Brussoni is Director of the Human Early Learning Partnership, Professor in the UBC Department of Pediatrics and School of Population and Public Health, Investigator at BC Children's Hospital Research Institute and lead of the Outside Play Lab. She is a co-founder of Outdoor Play Canada. Her award-winning research investigates children's outdoor and risky play, focusing on shifting parents' and educators' perceptions of risk, designing play-friendly environments, and changing systems to ensure children have the time, space and freedom to play outside every day. Further details available at <https://www.outsideplay.org/>



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

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.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

Land as Relative: Coast Salish Teachings on the Connection, Value, and Sacred Responsibility to Land

WITH 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.

Through storytelling, reflection, and cultural teachings, we will explore how early learning spaces can honour the land as a living teacher and create conditions that reflect Indigenous values of reciprocity, respect, and connection to place. This session will also provide practical guidance for educators to integrate land-based practices and perspectives into their daily programming in ways that are culturally humble and locally grounded.

Educators will leave with a deeper appreciation for Indigenous relationships to land and with inspired ideas to cultivate outdoor learning environments that foster a sense of wonder, stewardship, and relationship in young children.

Len is Coast Salish from Katzie (kate-zee) First Nation. Len is an award-winning entrepreneur, professor, consultant, TEDx Speaker, social activist, change agent, and traditional knowledge sharer. He specializes in the development of educational programs and services with decolonization and reconciliation as its core values. Len holds a Masters degree in Education from Simon Fraser University focusing on Indigenous curriculum and instructional design. His experience includes Indigenous education and program leadership from various organizations across colonial Canada. He comes to us with an open heart and open mind and hopes to be received in the same way.

SATURDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

AM SESSIONS 10:45 AM - 12:45 PM

A1

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

Dr. Beverlie Dietze



Online option available

A2

Experiencing Mathematics Outdoors
in the Early Years

Janice Novakowski

A3

Adventure Awaits Under the Trees

Nida Fatima Jasani & Jui-Jou Jasmine Chou

A4

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

Annie Montague

A5

Creating a Neurodivergent-Inclusive
Outdoor Environment

Tricia Edgar

A6

Precipitation Education: Tips and Tricks for
Embracing the Rain

Karen Begley

A7

Rooted Reflections: Integrating Sit Spots
into Curricular Learning

Lauren MacLean

A8

Exploring Games and Outdoor Activities for
Children

Gary Robinson

A9

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

Kylee Cox

A10

Neurodiversity and Nature:
Supportive Environments for ADHD

Monica Maddison

A11

The Wonder of Play

Angela Horbanuik

A12

Walking with the Land through a Métis
Lens

Kari-Anne Barr & Cara Koebel

A13

Rethinking Risky Play

Megan Zeni

A14

Growing Outside the Walls: Holistic
Development Through Outdoor Play

Shannon Cook

A15

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

Alisha Inch & Victoria Lim

A16

Pathways to Outdoor Play in Early
Learning and Child Care

Rachel Ramsden



This icon indicates this workshop will be held fully outdoors. Please dress for the weather.



This icon indicates this workshop will be held partially outdoors. Please dress for the weather.

A1

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

♥ Online option available

Children belong in outdoor play environments that connect with and celebrate nature in all kinds of environments. Outdoors is a place that is intended to inspire children to think and wonder, to experiment, and to discover. When children and adults design outdoor play spaces together, children are more likely to act upon their curiosity and wonderment. This interactive workshop explores ways to engage children in designing spaces that will lead them to new levels of exploration, wonderment, discoveries, and learning.

Dr. Beverlie Dietze

Dr. Dietze is passionate about advancing children's opportunities to engage in outdoor experiences. She is the author of ten textbooks related to play and children's programming and has several peer-reviewed articles published on early childhood and adult education topics. She is the publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Play Outdoors magazine.





During this session, ideas will be shared for taking mathematics outdoors as well as finding mathematics outdoors. Several outdoor learning practices will be shared as ways to think about and play with mathematics in outdoor settings, whether in a backyard, park, forest, beach, or urban space. Materials and resources will be available for participants to consider and plan outdoor math experiences for their context. The early mathematics we will explore will include quantity, size, shape, pattern and symmetry.

Note: *We will spend part of our time outdoors, rain, shine or snow, please dress for the weather.*

Janice Novakowski

Janice is a teacher, UBC adjunct professor, part of the Indigenous Mathematics Education Network and facilitates the BC Reggio-Inspired Mathematics Project which involves educators from across the province engaging in practitioner research, particularly connecting mathematics to place and story.



Adventure Awaits Under the Trees is a beginner-friendly workshop designed to support educators who are new to outdoor play and learning. Rooted in connection to the land and guided by inclusive, reflective practices, this session offers both practical strategies and inspiration. Participants will explore how nature-based experiences nurture mental well-being, build resiliency, and foster a sense of belonging in children.

Through guided discussions, real-world examples, and hands-on exploration, we'll reframe outdoor play as essential to early learning. We hope to empower educators to take their first steps into the natural world with confidence by ending our workshop outside, under the trees with music and storytelling.

Note: *We will spend part of our time outdoors, rain, shine or snow, please dress for the weather.*

Nida Fatima Jasani

Nida is a passionate early childhood educator, who believes every stick, puddle, and tree holds wonder. With 16+ years of experience, she fosters inclusive outdoor learning, mentors through ECEBC's LOT program, and supports diverse communities in building strong nature connections.

Jui-Jou Jasmine Chou

Born in Taiwan and raised in Canada, Jasmine speaks the languages of forest school, emergent curriculum, place-based, and experiential education. A teacher and lifelong learner, she's been an advocate since 2015, nurturing a love for the outdoors and care for Mother Earth through play and reflection.

A4

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



This interactive workshop supports early childhood educators in connecting literacy development with outdoor learning experiences. Participants will engage in practical exercises to design accessible, experiential lessons inspired by storybooks and grounded in the natural environment. We will emphasize using narratives to spark curiosity, observation, and connection with place. Educators will also be exposed to a curated collection of culturally relevant and context-specific literature and receive resources to help them choose stories that reflect the communities and landscapes where they teach.

Participant Notes:

- *Please bring your favourite children's book (does not have to be nature-themed).*
- *We will spend part of our time outdoors, rain, shine or snow, please dress for the weather.*

Annie Montague

Annie is an early childhood educator and researcher specializing in sustainability education that promotes social equity. She was formerly the BC Regional Manager of United for Literacy, where she supported community-based literacy initiatives across the province. Annie earned her Master of Arts in Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia.

A5

Creating a Neurodivergent-Inclusive Outdoor Environment



Playing outdoors can be for everyone, as long as we are conscious of how we structure our programs and teaching and how we choose or create our learning environments.

In this workshop, we'll focus on the ways in which land-based and play-based learning are inherently suited to neurodivergent children. Through conversation, we'll consider different challenges and opportunities and brainstorm ways to create programs that are easily accessible to all. In the second part of the workshop, we will get hands-on with tried-and-true nature-based activity provocations and materials that are inherently inclusive - and lots of fun!

Note: *We will spend part of our time outdoors, rain, shine or snow, please dress for the weather.*

Tricia Edgar

Tricia is the cofounder of Fresh Air Learning - a forest school in Metro Vancouver. She enjoys creating learning environments in which all children are included and celebrated.



A6

Precipitation Education: Tips and Tricks for Embracing the Rain

Want to feel more excited about learning and playing outside during the rainy months? Join us for a lighthearted and practical conversation about the opportunities, challenges, and logistics of programming in wet, cold, and soggy situations. We'll discuss how to shift mindsets about the rain, how to dress to stay warm and dry, play invitations involving puddles, potential inquiry studies that may emerge when being in the rain, and more.

Karen Begley

Karen empowers educators to feel fantastic about their work by making connections between their values, programs, and theory. Her playful style makes for interactive workshops that generate new ideas and increase participants' confidence to bring practical, enriching experiences to their programs.

A7

Rooted Reflections: Integrating Sit Spots into Curricular Learning

How can a quiet moment on the land transform student learning? In this workshop, we'll explore the power of sit spots—intentional moments of stillness and observation outdoors—as a grounding routine that deepens students' connection to place, supports curricular learning, and nurtures personal growth.

Rooted in the practice of slowing down and noticing, sit spots offer a meaningful bridge between outdoor play, land-based learning, and curriculum. You'll gain practical strategies for incorporating sit spots into your classroom routines, discover how they naturally connect to journaling, inquiry, and reflection, and understand how they support student well-being and engagement across subject areas.

Lauren MacLean

Lauren is an accomplished author, primary teacher, and outdoor learning consultant whose picture books *Me and My Sit Spot* and *Finding Common Ground* celebrate the joy of connecting with nature. Her guide, *Sitting with Nature*, helps educators bring outdoor learning to life.



A8

Exploring Games and Outdoor Activities for Children

This workshop will give early years professionals interactive ideas and suggestions on group games to play with children. The workshop will lead participants through a variety of games/activities to enhance young children's development, self-confidence and holistic well-being. Activities will highlight the importance of play for children and will lead participants through "The Flow of Play." Games can be adapted to Indigenous and non-Indigenous settings.

Gary Robinson

Gary is a knowledge keeper and member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation raised in South Vancouver. Gary has worked in Fields of Recreation and Social Services for 40 years and has always highlighted and stressed the importance of play with children, youth, families and professionals.



A9

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



If we reflect back, we often have early memories outdoors that were significant in our development. This workshop will dust off our child-like wonder and extract our playful selves that will bring enjoyment to all. Through theory and playful practice, we will highlight the importance of staying inspired as ECEs and the rippling effects of our enjoyment and passion, particularly outdoors. When we are engaged, this is felt by the children we guide, grow and play with. We believe nature-connection in responsive ways can serve as a pathway to finding life-long enjoyment in our field of working with children.

Kylee's background couples their love of the natural world and their heart to inspire educators towards best practices. Let's re-root together!

Note: This ENTIRE WORKSHOP WILL BE HELD OUTDOORS, RAIN OR SHINE. Please dress for the weather.

Kylee Cox

Kylee completed their Masters of Environmental Education and Communication at Royal Roads University. Kylee is an ECE sessional instructor in the School of Education at the University of the Fraser Valley and has been a co-creator of Wild Wonder Society since 2015, fostering nature connections for preschool-aged children.

A10

Neurodiversity and Nature: Supportive Environments for ADHD

This session will explore ADHD, how this diagnosis can impact children within early years, and how one of the most important tools for support actually exists 'outside' of our classroom walls - not within it. Participants work through past bias and misunderstandings of this diagnosis to create space for current, holistic, neurodiversity-affirming practice. We explore what's happening at a brain-based level, and how engagement with nature and movement can not only properly support children with ADHD, but allow them to thrive.

Monica Maddison

Monica is a neurodiversity-affirming consultant, providing direct service delivery to children and their families for over 14 years. Her company, Bloom Behaviour, has taken her coast to coast across Canada and the USA encouraging educators to nurture neurodiversity with inclusive classroom spaces.

A11

The Wonder of Play

Children are naturally curious and full of endless questions; how does this work? why does this happen? where does this lead? who did that? what would happen if? Our role as educators is to keep this sense of wonder alive. We need to encourage additional questions which will help lead them to the answers they are seeking. This interactive, 2-hour workshop aims to help you as an educator develop your own "Wonder Wheel". These ideas will spark the creative wonder in every child you work alongside. Extending your practice to the outdoors provides an endless amount of wonder. Participants will leave with practical ideas that are tried and true to add to their practice immediately.

Angela Horbanuik

As a Forest and Nature School Practitioner, a Montessori Educator, and an Early Childhood Educator, with over 20 years of experience, Angela is passionate about encouraging children and recognizing the gifts each child has to offer. Nature provides every child with endless opportunities for growth.



Walking with the Land through a Métis Lens

Engaging with the land through a Métis perspective offers participants an interactive early learning experience centred around a creative story bag practice. This approach invites individuals to explore narratives from elders, foster connections to the land, and reflect on the Métis cultural calendar, utilizing various objects to ignite children's imagination and creativity while deepening their understanding of Métis traditions. The workshop will be guided by Métis core values and the Métis Early Learning Framework, helping participants comprehend the significance of walking with the land in a Métis way.

Kari-Anne Barr

Kari-Anne is a proud Métis Citizen, Early Childhood Educator and a volunteer in her Métis community. In her role as a pedagogist Kari-Anne believes in the act of fostering interconnectedness, curiosity, and open exploration; children deepen their connections to the world around them.

Cara Koebel

Cara is a proud Métis citizen living in the Okanagan, where she brings heart, experience, and cultural knowledge to her role as a Pedagogist with Métis Nation British Columbia's Ministry of Education. Within their role, Cara supports Indigenous families in the Kelowna School District area.



Rethinking Risky Play

This session will provide a conversational space to discuss research supporting risky play in early learning environments, alongside practical implementation strategies for working with children in our care. Three broad topics will be addressed: 1) what is risky play (and how it supports learning with and from the land); 2) planning for, and implementation of, risky play in early learning environments; and 3) risky play issues, challenges and recommendations for early learning professionals.

Megan Zeni

Megan has over 25 years' experience as a professional K-7 classroom teacher and teacher consultant. Megan is widely known for her expertise in school gardens and risky play in schools. Her PhD research resulted in the teacher tool at outsideplay.org.

A14

Growing Outside the Walls: Holistic Development Through Outdoor Play

Children don't just play outside—they grow there. This engaging session explores how repeated exposure to nature supports holistic development across all domains: cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language. Outdoor environments offer rich, dynamic experiences that nurture the whole child in ways traditional indoor settings often cannot. Educators will gain insight into the benefits of all-weather outdoor learning, effective strategies for communicating its value to families, and hands-on activities they can implement immediately. Participants will leave feeling inspired and equipped to support and facilitate outdoor explorations with confidence—fostering stronger connections between children, themselves, and the natural world.



Shannon Cook

Shannon is an experienced early childhood educator and forest practitioner at Langley Forest School. With a deep passion for nature-based learning, she is dedicated to inspiring educators to foster meaningful outdoor experiences that enhance children's growth and connection to nature.

A15

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

This workshop explores how outdoor play supports children's social and emotional development, aligned with the Early Learning Framework (ELF). Participants will discover how nature fosters emotional regulation, empathy, cooperation, and resilience. The workshop highlights the calming effects of natural environments and their role in promoting well-being, engagement, and expression. Educators will gain practical strategies to integrate nature play into daily routines and create inclusive, enriching outdoor experiences. Rooted in ELF principles, this session empowers caregivers to view nature as a co-teacher in nurturing holistic child development.

Alisha Inch

Alisha has been an ECE educator for over 25 years. In 2000, she moved to Romania, where she lived and worked with orphaned children for 8 years. After returning to Canada, she began teaching preschool, opened her own centre, presented workshops and became a college instructor.

Victoria Lim

Victoria has been dedicated to the early years field for over a decade as an educator, college instructor, and a child care centre program director. She has always been passionate about providing a safe environment for children to explore their authentic selves and support their healthy brain development.



Children's experiences at child care provide essential opportunities to engage in outdoor play and create positive life-long outdoor practices. This workshop explores the critical role child care providers and educators play in supporting outdoor play and examines the systemic, institutional, and practical challenges that often stand in the way. Drawing on recent Canadian research from the Outside Play Lab at UBC, participants will explore how to actively support and enhance outdoor play within early learning environments. The session acknowledges common challenges educators face while focusing on practical, research-informed strategies to overcome these and create outdoor experiences that are welcoming, engaging, and playful for children in the early years.

Note: We will spend part of our time outdoors, rain, shine or snow, please dress for the weather.

Rachel Ramsden

Rachel is a Research Coordinator at the Outside Play Lab and a PhD Candidate in the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia. Rachel leads research projects in BC and across Canada that aim to support children's outdoor and risky play. She has a particular interest in understanding how outdoor environments facilitate children's play in early childhood, focusing on healthy built environments and community planning initiatives that include children. Rachel brings experience in school-age child care, recreation, and community planning. She holds a Master of Public Health (2016) and a Bachelor of Kinesiology (2013).



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)
Terri Calvert Children's Foundation
Karen Carne Inclusion Langley Society - Child Development Services
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