



# Empowering Educators: Strategies for a Sustainable Workforce

George Brown College  
Waterfront Campus  
51 Dockside Drive  
Toronto

**May 9, 2025**  
9:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m.



# ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Summer Institute is an annual collaboration between the School of Early Childhood at George Brown College and the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. The institute strives to offer timely information to inform early childhood research, policy, and practice.

This year, the 21st Summer Institute unites educators, administrators, policymakers, researchers, and advocates from across Canada to explore innovative strategies for nurturing a sustainable ECE workforce while tackling critical issues of equity and access.

Through engaging workshops, keynote presentations, and collaborative discussions, you will:

- discover actionable strategies to support, recruit, and retain talented early childhood educators;
- address the challenges of fair compensation and equity and how to advocate for policies that reflect the vital role of ECE professionals; and
- explore initiatives to build a robust and sustainable ECE workforce tailored to community needs.

This event is an opportunity to elevate the voices of early childhood educators and drive meaningful change. Together, we can create a future where every educator feels empowered to shape the next generation of learners.



## OPENING REMARKS



**DR. GERVAN FEARON**  
President  
George Brown College

President of George Brown College since August 2021, Dr. Gervan Fearon has a proven track record of collaboration, transformative leadership, and engaging higher learning communities in a shared mission. He leads George Brown's efforts to provide transformative education opportunities that meet the educational and career goals of students, the requirements of employers, the growth of industry, and the vitality of communities.

His career also includes roles at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Treasury Board of the Ontario Ministry of Finance. He has served on numerous community boards, including the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Council, United Way Niagara, the Greater

Niagara Chamber of Commerce, Tropicana Community Services, and the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto.

Dr. Fearon was a co-founder of the Canada Caribbean Institute, along with Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies. He is a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2013), The Michaëlle Jean Foundation Influencer Award (2017), and the University of the West Indies Vice-Chancellor's Award (2020).

He holds a Ph.D. in economics Western University and received his Master's and Bachelor of Science degrees in agricultural economics from the University of Guelph. He holds a Chartered Professional Accountant designation (CPA, CGA) and Institute of Corporate Directors designation (ICD.D).

# MORNING KEYNOTE



**DAVID MACDONALD**  
*Senior Economist*  
Canadian Centre for  
Policy Alternatives

## Standing up for Child Care

David Macdonald is a leading voice on how economies can work for people. Each year, he organizes the Alternative Federal Budget—a different take on the federal budget that puts people first. In his keynote address, David confronts the pressing challenges facing the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan given his decade of research on the topic.

Fees are falling fast but that doesn't mean the CWELCC plan is going to last. Finding a spot is challenging and rapid system expansion is the only answer. But how is this expansion happening, who is building new spaces, where are they building them, and are we going to like the results?

There hasn't been a national compilation of how one of the biggest new social programs in recent Canadian history is rolling out ... until now. In this keynote, you'll get an unprecedented look at never-before-seen data about who's winning and who's losing from the \$10 billion a year CWELCC plan. Will there be enough financing to keep the system afloat, or will poor allocation doom the entire project? Come find out.

A trusted media commentator regularly featured on the CBC, and in the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, and Canadian Press, David's keynote address promises to be a transformative call to action—one that underscores the urgent need to secure a resilient, equitable future for all Canadians.



## PANEL ONE

### Building Equity Through Fair Compensation

This panel brings together a complementary group of experts whose insights underscore the critical importance of a qualified early learning and childcare workforce for the success of the CWELCC plan. United by a common vision, these thought leaders offer a comprehensive perspective on how to recruit and retain the talent essential for delivering high-quality early childhood education. Their collaborative approach and innovative strategies highlight practical solutions to the challenges faced by the sector, ensuring that children, families, and communities across Canada continue to benefit from robust and resilient early childhood services.

### SPEAKERS



**RAYNA BARRESE**  
*President*  
Elementary Teachers  
Federation of Ontario,  
Durham Region



**JOHN WEATHERUP**  
*President*  
Canadian Union of  
Public Employees  
Local 2400



**SCOTT PODREBARAC**  
*Superintendent of  
Education*  
Halton District School  
Board



**DR. EMIS AKBARI**  
*Professor and Program  
Coordinator*  
School of Early  
Childhood, George  
Brown College  
  
*Executive Director*  
Atkinson Centre



### moderator

**KIMBERLY DREDDY**  
*Executive Director*  
Jimmy Pratt Foundation

# PANEL TWO

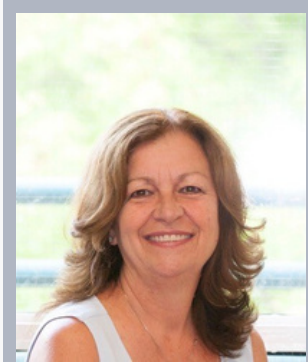
## Opportunities to Build the ECE Workforce

This panel explores real opportunities for building a sustainable early childhood workforce, bringing together perspectives from both a major childcare provider and early childhood systems managers. Through a rich dialogue that draws on their diverse experiences, the speakers illustrate how strategic, well-crafted policies can successfully recruit and retain a qualified early childhood workforce. Using their insights, they demonstrate the transformative potential of strategic, well-supported systems for fostering a skilled, dedicated workforce that can meet the growing needs of children and families across Canada.

### SPEAKERS



**DOREEN GILLIS**  
*Director of Early Years*  
Government of Prince  
Edward Island



**LINDA COTTES**  
*Senior Vice President*  
YMCA of Greater  
Toronto



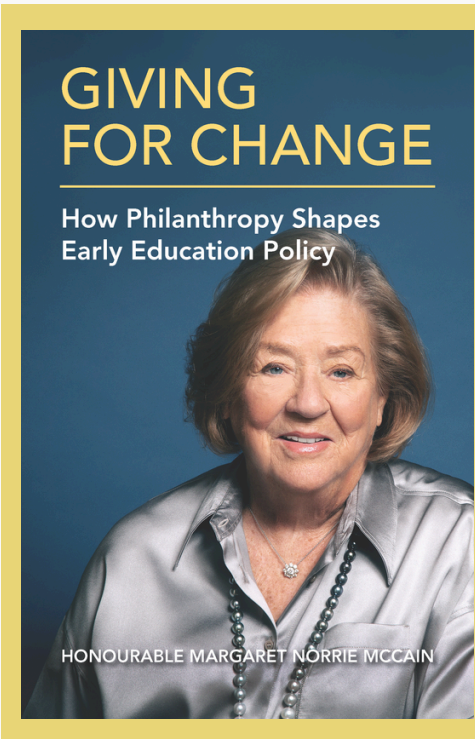
**SONYA BOURGEOIS**  
*Director of Toronto  
Early Learning and  
Child Care Services*  
City of Toronto



### moderator

**KERRY MCCUAIG**  
*Senior Policy Fellow*  
Atkinson Centre  
University of Toronto

# SPECIAL PRESENTATION



## THE LAUNCH OF GIVING FOR CHANGE

### How Philanthropy Shapes Early Education Policy

Few have left as profound an imprint on Canada's early education policy as The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain. In her new book, she chronicles a transformative journey defined by visionary philanthropy and an unwavering commitment to the future of our children.

Her early work—most notably, the seminal Early Years Studies, coauthored with the late Dr. Fraser Mustard—changed the

conversation on early childhood across the nation. By sponsoring cutting-edge research, Margaret's efforts not only elevated the dialogue within legislatures and boardrooms, but also set the stage for innovative policy reform.

Travelling across Canada, she engaged directly with premiers, local leaders, and influencers, championing models that test-drove real change. Her relentless advocacy and strategic vision played a critical role in shaping the historic 2021 federal budget, where she is acknowledged as a motivator behind the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan.

Join us as we celebrate this remarkable milestone—a tribute to a legacy that continues to inspire and redefine what is possible in early education policy. This book is not only a testament to Margaret's extraordinary influence, but also a call to action for all who believe in building a brighter, more equitable future for Canada's youngest citizens.

**Copies of the book will be given to conference participants.**

# AFTERNOON KEYNOTE



**SUSAN COLLEY**

*Chair*

Building Blocks for  
Child Care (B2C2)

## Innovative Strategies to Improve ECE Compensation

We are honoured to welcome Susan (Sue) Colley as our keynote speaker. With a wealth of experience spanning decades in early childhood advocacy and policy, Sue brings unparalleled expertise to the conference stage. As chair of the board of Building Blocks for Child Care (B2C2), she has empowered not-for-profit and public childcare organizations in Ontario to expand and thrive by providing strategic advice and support in every phase of facility development.

A trailblazer in the field, Sue was a founder of Action Day Care and the first executive director of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. She has also played

a pivotal role in major studies of child care policy and programs for the University of Toronto, the City of Toronto, and the Province of Ontario. Her work has consistently demonstrated that with the right policies, it's possible to transform the early childhood sector.

In her keynote address, Sue shares innovative strategies to improve compensation systems for the early childhood workforce—a critical element in ensuring that childcare professionals are not only valued, but are also empowered to deliver the highest quality care. Her insights illuminate how rethinking compensation can attract and retain the dedicated talent necessary for building a robust, equitable, and sustainable early childhood system. Join us for an inspiring session that promises to reshape the conversation around workforce investment in early learning and child care.



## WORKSHOPS

### WORKSHOP #1: Culturally Relevant Education – Centennial College’s Indigenous ECE Stream



**TIFFANY DITTMANN, M.ED., BASC, RECE**  
*Faculty*  
Early Childhood Education, Ashtonbee Campus, Centennial College



**BARBARA WILSON, RECE**  
*Faculty*  
Early Childhood Education, Ashtonbee Campus, Centennial College

Join Centennial College’s Early Childhood Education program as they reflect on the Indigenous ECE Stream’s development and explore a path forward through Community-Connected Global Learning (CCGL). This workshop shares lessons from community partnerships, emphasizing relational, reciprocal, and culturally responsive education. Grounded in Centennial’s Reconciliation Curriculum Guide, it highlights how Indigenous knowledge must be embedded in early learning through sustained, community-led engagement. Discover how CCGL supports reconciliation by ensuring Indigenous-led education is woven into ECE training. Learn strategies, resources, and best practices that promote Indigenous sovereignty, decolonization, and long-term community partnerships that empower educators and children.

### WORKSHOP #2: How Strategic HR Practices Keep Top Educators



**KIM HISCOTT, RECE**  
*Chief Executive Director*  
Andrew Fleck Children’s Services



**RONNA MACPHERSON**  
*Director of Human Resources*  
Andrew Fleck Children’s Services

Ever wonder why some childcare programs struggle to retain staff while others have educators lining up at their doors? Join us for an engaging workshop where leaders from Andrew Fleck, a large not-for-profit multi-site organization, reveal their secrets. Learn how they are transforming the educator experience by focusing on worker engagement, competitive compensation, talent attraction, retention strategies, and robust professional development. In response to ongoing recruitment challenges, their team has prioritized HR best practices that not only elevate the childcare workforce, but also drive the organization’s success in delivering high-quality early learning and care. Discover how effective leadership and innovative strategies can make all the difference in creating a thriving, supportive environment for educators.

## WORKSHOPS more to explore

### WORKSHOP #3: Breaking Barriers: Equitable Child Care for Children with Disabilities



**SHANNON COSTELLO**  
*Director of Children's Services*  
Cochrane District Services Board

Across Ontario, children with disabilities are being sent home or denied access to early learning and childcare programs. In this workshop, Shannon shares her groundbreaking efforts in documenting these challenges and reforming special needs resourcing to foster equitable access. With extensive experience at YMCA Ontario and YMCA Canada—where she evaluated the National Child Protection Program—and with the Cochrane District Services Board since 2018, Shannon offers invaluable insights into creating inclusive childcare environments. Join us to explore practical strategies and reforms to ensure every child, regardless of ability, receives the quality care they deserve.

### WORKSHOP #4: Urban Nature Connect: Transforming Learning and Well-being



**KELLY BIRCH-BAKER, RECE**  
*Certified Forest & Nature School Practitioner*  
*Director of Operations*  
Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre

**AND**

**FAYE JANTZI, RECE**  
*Forest and Nature School Practitioner*  
Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre

This workshop is designed for educators and caregivers who are keen to integrate outdoor experiences into urban learning. Led by two passionate practitioners from Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care in Waterloo, this session blends outdoor programming with techniques from forest and nature schools and natural playspaces in an urban setting. With extensive experience in Ontario and beyond, the presenters show how nature-based learning deepens children's engagement while boosting educator job satisfaction. Participants will explore hands-on activities, share success stories, and develop practical strategies to incorporate natural elements into daily routines. Join us to learn how to reconnect with nature, enhance your teaching practice, and transform urban spaces into vibrant play areas.

## WORKSHOPS more to explore

### WORKSHOP #5: Land as First Teacher: Considering The Educator's Role in Land-Based Learning



**DR. DARLEE  
GERRARD**  
*Professor*  
School of Early  
Childhood, George  
Brown College

Land-based learning offers profound benefits for children and families but also for educators, fostering deeper connections to nature, community, and Indigenous ways of knowing. This workshop will share insights from our ongoing work with a group of educators reflecting on their experiences with a Land-based approach. Participants will explore how engaging with the Land may serve to deepen their approach, develop connectivity, and foster a sense of well-being. Through discussion and hands-on activities, we will consider ways we may continue to integrate these approaches into the work of early childhood educators, create richer learning experiences, and appreciate Land as a first teacher.

### WORKSHOP #6: Supporting Newcomer Children in Canada: Fostering Social, Emotional, and Cultural Well-being



**DR. JESSIE-LEE  
MCISAAC**  
*Associate Professor*  
*Canada Research Chair*  
Mount Saint Vincent  
University



**NAHAL FAKHARI**  
*PhD Candidate*  
*Research Coordinator*  
Mount Saint Vincent  
University

This workshop focuses on the well-being of newcomer children and families within early learning and child care settings. The presenters share research on exploring the experiences of newcomers as they navigate new environments, cultures, and languages. The session emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in supporting the social, emotional, and cultural well-being of newcomer children and families. Participants will learn strategies to support children and their families, as well as practical techniques for integrating diverse cultures into daily classroom practices.

## WORKSHOPS

### WORKSHOP #7: Inspiring Educators through the Pedagogy of Care, Reflective Practice, and Design of Space with Ongoing Professional Growth as a Learning Community



**DOMINIQUE-ANN  
BOISVERT, RECE**  
*Coordinator Quality  
Assurance for the Early  
Years*  
United Counties of  
Prescott and Russell



**MARYSE GRÉGOIRE,  
RECE**  
*Coordinator Quality  
Assurance for the Early  
Years*  
United Counties of  
Prescott and Russell

Join this workshop led by two pedagogical leaders from a predominantly rural, French-speaking region. They are guided by their commitment to providing children and adults with an intentional pedagogical space that supports a sense of belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression.

They champion the belief of working with a wide range of perspectives, as collaborators and leaders, but also as engaged learners and researchers. This work requires the pursuit of various learning opportunities. It involves a constant reformulation and renegotiation of the image early childhood professionals hold of themselves, and also of the image of children, families, and their context.

Presenters seek to inspire individuals and centres to identify as being part of a learning community, one that thinks, engages, collaborates, and creates with others. This approach not only benefits children, but also revitalizes the teaching environment for educators. Their collaborative work not only enriches early learning experiences, but also fosters educators work satisfaction, and long-term educator retention. Together, they offer practical strategies to enrich the experiences of children and their educators.

**NOTE: While this session will be conducted in English, all resources and presentation slides will be available in both English and French.**



# AWARD OF EXCELLENCE



**GAIL HUNTER, RECE**

Gail Hunter's dedication to early childhood education spans over 45 years, leaving an indelible mark on children, families, students, and colleagues. She's known for her social justice advocacy work, and leadership in DEI, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and dismantling systemic inequalities.

As a former early childhood educator, child care supervisor, and child care advisor, Gail's expertise was instrumental in shaping childcare start-ups and providing ongoing support across various sectors. Upon joining George Brown College in 1991 as a professor and ECE program coordinator, she played a pivotal role in launching key programs, including the Winter Intake ECE Diploma and the Early Childhood Leadership Honours Degree.

Beyond teaching, her leadership nurtured the invaluable partnership between George Brown College and the Project for the Advancement of Childhood Education (P.A.C.E.), which later expanded to a Jamaica-Canada collaboration. She remains passionate and committed to the ECE sector by continuing to work with children and staff in George Brown's Lab Schools, U of T's Atkinson Centre, and local and international agencies.

## BIOGRAPHIES



### **DR. EMIS AKBARI**

*Executive Director, Atkinson Centre, OISE/University of Toronto  
Professor and Program Coordinator, School of Early Childhood, George Brown College*

Dr. Akbari is the executive director of the Atkinson Centre and a professor and program coordinator at the School of Early Childhood, George Brown College. Her research examines early childhood policy changes and their impact. She co-authors the Early Childhood Education Report, serves on the scientific advisory committee for the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, and co-leads the Knowing Our Numbers Project.



### **RAYNA BARRESE, RECE/DECE**

*President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) Durham,  
DECE Local*

Rayna is a passionate early childhood educator with over 27 years of experience. Since 2010, she has worked as a designated early childhood educator in the Kindergarten program with the Durham District School Board. As president of ETFO Durham DECE Local, she advocates for ECEs' rights, professional recognition, and fair working conditions.



### **KELLY BIRCH-BAKER, RECE**

*Certified Forest and Nature School Practitioner  
Director of Operations, Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care*

Kelly is an RECE and certified forest and nature school practitioner with over 40 years of experience at Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care. Passionate about nature-based education, she leads the organization's outdoor programming and is overseeing its expansion, including a new site with 10 acres dedicated to immersive outdoor learning.

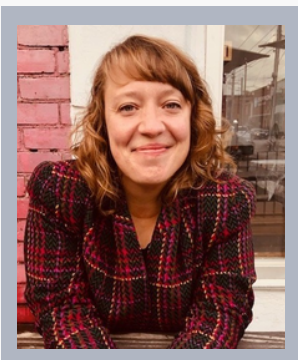
## BIOGRAPHIES more to explore



### **DOMINIQUE-ANN BOISVERT, RECE**

*Coordinator Quality Assurance for the Early Years, United Counties of Prescott and Russell*

Dominique-Ann is an RECE with a university certificate in business administration and experience in human resources. She has spent the past decade as a quality assurance coordinator and pedagogical leader, working with early years educators in a Francophone community. She is deeply engaged in pedagogical facilitation and advocacy for quality learning environments.



### **SONYA BOURGEOIS**

*Director of Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services, City of Toronto*

Sonya oversees Toronto's municipal child care system, managing 39 centres and supporting home child care providers. With experience in senior leadership roles at the municipal and provincial levels, she is committed to high-quality early learning and community development. She holds a Master's in Social Work and is dedicated to supporting children and families.



### **SUSAN COLLEY**

*Chair of the Board, Building Blocks for Child Care (B2C2)*

Susan is chair of Building Blocks for Child Care (B2C2), supporting Ontario's not-for-profit and public child care expansion. A founder of Action Day Care and former executive director of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, she has contributed to major child care policy studies. She also serves as secretary-treasurer of Rise Up Feminist Digital Archive.

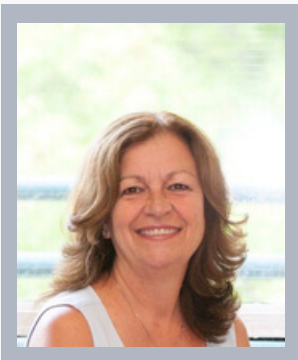
## BIOGRAPHIES more to explore



### **SHANNON COSTELLO**

*Director of Children's Services, Cochrane District Services Board (CDSB)*

Shannon has over two decades of experience in child care and community services. Before joining CDSB in 2018, she held leadership roles at the YMCA of Timmins, working on provincial and national initiatives. As director of children's services, she focuses on quality assurance and service delivery for child care and EarlyON programs.



### **LINDA COTTÉS**

*Senior Vice President, YMCA of Greater Toronto*

Linda oversees 309 child care centres, supporting over 35,000 licensed spaces and 4,000 educators. With 45 years of experience in early learning, she serves on multiple advisory councils and committees, shaping child care policy at provincial and national levels while advocating for high-quality early learning and care. As an expert advisor to the Ontario Ministry of Education, Linda provides critical insights on regulatory changes and the implementation of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Care agreement.



### **TIFFANY DITTMAN**

*Faculty, Early Childhood Education, Ashtonbee Campus, Centennial College*

Tiffany is a faculty member and curriculum developer in Centennial College's Early Childhood Education program. She specializes in culturally responsive pedagogy, community-based learning, and reconciliation-focused curriculum. She developed the Community-Connected Global Learning (CCGL) framework, which emphasizes ethical partnerships, relational pedagogy, and decolonized approaches to educator preparation.



## BIOGRAPHIES more to explore



### **KIMBERLY DREADY**

*Executive Director, Jimmy Pratt Foundation*

Kimberly is the executive director of the Jimmy Pratt Foundation. With 30 years of experience across sectors including housing, education, and mental health, she applies a social justice lens to systemic and community change. She is dedicated to advancing research and policy that support the well-being and resilience of children and youth.



### **NAHAL FAKHARI**

*PhD Candidate, Research Coordinator, Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre, Mount Saint Vincent University*

Nahal is a PhD candidate at Dalhousie University and a research coordinator at Mount Saint Vincent University. A former early childhood educator, her work focuses on the cultural identity of Iranian immigrant children and advocating for inclusive policies that support the well-being of newcomer families in Nova Scotia.



### **DR. DARLEE GERRARD**

*Professor, School of Early Childhood, George Brown College*

Dr. Gerrard is a professor at the School of Early Childhood, George Brown College with extensive experience in early learning, public and private education, and research. She holds a PhD in engineering education from the University of Toronto and specializes in STEM-environmental-land-based pedagogy, advocating for inclusive and meaningful learning experiences for children and educators.

## BIOGRAPHIES more to explore



### **DOREEN GILLIS**

*Director of Early Years, Department of Education and Early Years, Government of Prince Edward Island*

Doreen has nearly three decades of experience in early childhood education, spanning roles in child care, family resource centres, and post-secondary education. As director of early years in Prince Edward Island, she leads initiatives to enhance early learning and child care across the province. She holds a Master's in Early Childhood Education.



### **MARYSE GRÉGOIRE, RECE**

*Coordinator Quality Assurance for the Early Years, United Counties of Prescott and Russell*

Maryse is an RECE with 18 years of experience in early years education. As a quality assurance coordinator, she champions pedagogical learning and outdoor education, advocating for forest, farm, and nature schools. She is committed to fostering play-based learning in outdoor environments to support children's natural curiosity and development.



### **KIM HISCOTT**

*Chief Executive Director, Andrew Fleck Children's Services (AFCS)*

Kim, an RECE based in Ottawa, leads Andrew Fleck Children's Services, a multi-service, non-profit organization providing early learning and care. She is passionate about outdoor play, intergenerational programming, and system-building partnerships that enhance early childhood education. She advocates for collaborative, reflective practice to support children, families, and educators.

## BIOGRAPHIES more to explore



### **FAYE JANTZI, RECE**

*Forest and Nature School Practitioner, Emmanuel at Brighton Forest and Nature Child Care*

Faye is an RECE and forest and nature school practitioner with over 30 years of experience. She transitioned from indoor learning environments to outdoor education, where she fosters children's connection to nature. She leads Emmanuel at Brighton's outdoor programs, providing immersive land-based learning for children in Kindergarten and beyond.



### **DAVID MACDONALD**

*Senior Economist, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)*

David has been senior economist at the CCPA since 2011, specializing in child care, income inequality, and federal fiscal policy. He coordinates the Alternative Federal Budget and conducted the child care fee analysis that informed Canada's national child care plan. He is a frequent media commentator on economic and social policy.



### **RONA MACPHERSON**

*Director of Human Resources, Andrew Fleck Children's Services (AFCS)*

Ronna has over 30 years of HR experience and has led Andrew Fleck Children's Services' HR strategy for 16 years. She focuses on employee engagement, talent retention, and workforce development. Her leadership supports the agency's mission to enhance early learning and care while addressing sector-wide workforce challenges.

## BIOGRAPHIES more to explore



### **KERRY MCCUAIG**

*Senior Fellow Early Childhood Policy, Atkinson Centre, OISE/University of Toronto*

Kerry McCuaig co-developed the Early Childhood Education Report, tracking progress in early years policy across Canada. A co-author of Early Years Study 3, she helped pioneer integrated early childhood programming with Toronto First Duty. She has advised governments, authored key policy reports, and is a frequent speaker on early learning and care.



### **JESSIE-LEE MCISAAC**

*Associate Professor, Canada Research Chair in Early Childhood, Faculty of Education and Department of Child and Youth Study, Mount Saint Vincent University*

Dr. McIsaac is Canada research chair in early childhood and director of the Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre at Mount Saint Vincent University. Her research bridges policy, community, and practice to support child well-being, with a focus on newcomer families and the role of early learning environments in fostering inclusion.



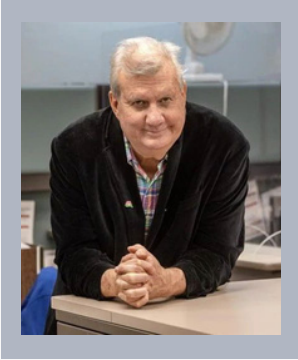
### **SCOTT PODREBARAC**

*Superintendent of Education, Halton District School Board*

Scott spent 30 years in education as a teacher, principal, and superintendent. He played a key role in the rollout of full-day Kindergarten in Ontario and led early years programming in multiple school boards. A recipient of Canada's Outstanding Principal Award, he continues to advocate for quality early learning.



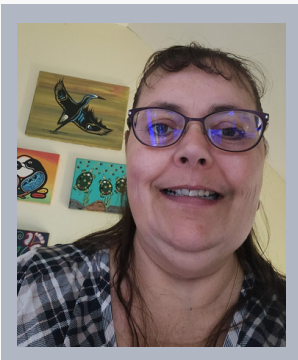
## BIOGRAPHIES more to explore



### **JOHN WEATHERUP**

*President, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 2400*

John has served as President of Toronto Education Workers/Local 4400 since its formation in 1998. He represents over 17,000 school board employees, including nearly 1,700 ECEs and DECEs. He also serves on the OMERS Board of Governors and the Sponsors Board, advocating for workers' rights and benefits.



### **BARB WILSON**

*Faculty, Early Childhood Education, Ashtonbee Campus, Centennial College*

Barbara is a faculty member in Centennial College's Early Childhood Education program and an alumna of the college. She spent much of her career in Aboriginal Head Start and as a Supervisor in an Aboriginal-focused child care centre. She was instrumental in developing Centennial's Indigenous ECE Stream and now teaches full-time.

# GENERAL INQUIRIES



**For further information about this event, please contact:**

**George Brown College, School of Early Childhood**

**T:** 416.415.5000 ext. 2310

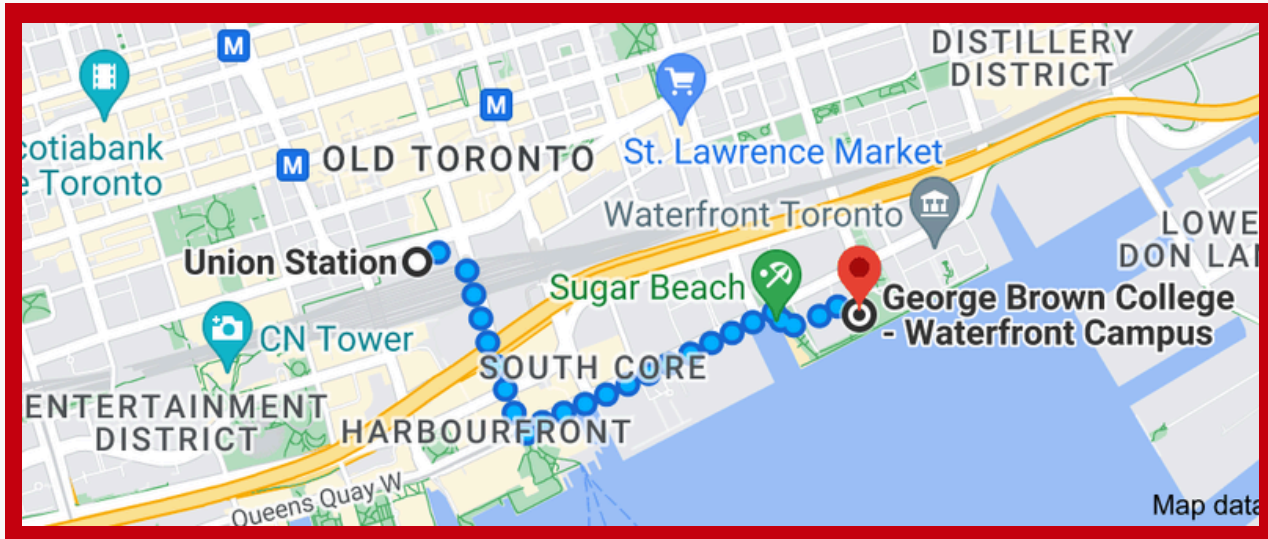
**Email:** [ece@georgebrown.ca](mailto:ece@georgebrown.ca)

**Summer Institute 2025 Information**

**Hotels nearby:**

- [Union Hotel](#)
- [Novotel Toronto Centre](#)
- [The Westin Harbour Castle](#)

# GETTING THERE



## From Union Station

- Walk (about 2 minutes) to Bay Street at Front Street West
- Take the Number 6 bus (Queens Quay and Sherbourne) 5 stops to Dockside Drive at Queens Quay East (South Side)
- Walk (about 2 minutes) to 51 Dockside Drive

## DAY AT A GLANCE

8:00AM **REGISTRATION**

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9:00AM **WELCOME AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**Dr. Gervan Fearon**, President, George Brown College

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9:15AM **KEYNOTE: STANDING UP FOR CHILD CARE**

**David MacDonald**, Senior Economist, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

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9:45AM **PANEL ONE: BUILDING EQUITY THROUGH FAIR COMPENSATION**

**moderator: Kim Dreddy**, Executive Director, Jimmy Pratt Foundation

**Rayna Barrese**, President, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, Durham Region

**John Weatherup**, President, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 2400

**Scott Podrebarac**, Superintendent of Education, Halton District School Board

**Dr. Emis Akbari**, Professor & Program Coordinator, George Brown College/Executive Director, Atkinson Centre

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10:45AM **BREAK**

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11:00AM **PANEL TWO: OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD THE ECE WORKFORCE**

**moderator: Kerry McCuaig**, Senior Policy Fellow, Atkinson Centre, University of Toronto

**Doreen Gillis**, Director of Early Years, Government of Prince Edward Island

**Linda Cottes**, Senior Vice President, YMCA of Greater Toronto

**Sonya Bourgeois**, Director of Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services, City of Toronto

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12:00PM **BOOK LAUNCH**

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12:20PM **LUNCH**



## DAY AT A GLANCE

### 1:30PM **KEYNOTE: INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ECE COMPENSATION**

**Susan Colley**, Chair, Building Blocks for Child Care

### 2:15PM **BREAK + POSTER SESSION**

### 2:45PM **WORKSHOPS**

#### **CULTURALLY RELEVANT EDUCATION – CENTENNIAL COLLEGE’S INDIGENOUS ECE STREAM**

**Tiffany Dittman**, M.Ed., BAsC, RECE, Centennial College  
**Barb Wilson**, Centennial College

#### **HOW STRATEGIC HR PRACTICES KEEP TOP EDUCATORS**

**Kim Hiscott**, RECE, Andrew Fleck Children’s Services  
**Ronna MacPherson**, Andrew Fleck Children’s Services

#### **BREAKING BARRIERS: EQUITABLE CHILD CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

**Shannon Costello**, Cochrane District Services Board’s Services

#### **URBAN NATURE CONNECT: TRANSFORMING LEARNING AND WELL-BEING**

**Kelly Birch-Baker**, RECE, Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre  
**Faye Jantzi**, RECE, Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care Centre

#### **LAND AS FIRST TEACHER: CONSIDERING THE EDUCATOR’S ROLE IN LAND-BASED LEARNING**

**Dr. Darlee Gerrard**, School of Early Childhood, George Brown College

#### **SUPPORTING NEWCOMER CHILDREN IN CANADA: FOSTERING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND CULTURAL WELL-BEING**

**Dr. Jessie-Lee Mclsaac**, Mount Saint Vincent University  
**Nahal Fakhari**, Mount Saint Vincent University

#### **INSPIRING EDUCATORS THROUGH THE PEDAGOGY OF CARE, REFLECTIVE PRACTICE, AND DESIGN OF SPACE WITH ONGOING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AS A LEARNING COMMUNITY**

**Dominique-Ann Boisvert**, United Counties of Prescott and Russell  
**Maryse Grégoire**, United Counties of Prescott and Russell

### 3:45PM **CLOSING REMARKS**

**Patricia Chorney Rubin**, Dean of Community Services & Health Sciences, George Brown College

### **ECE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

Presented to **Gail Hunter**, RECE

reception to follow

# REGISTRATION FORM

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND SUBMIT THE FORM BELOW BY EMAIL.  
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY OR COMPLETE AS AN ADOBE FILLABLE FORM.**

## 21st Annual Summer Institute on Early Childhood Development **Empowering Educators: Strategies for a Sustainable Workforce**

**May 9, 2025**

George Brown College, Waterfront Campus  
51 Dockside Drive, Toronto

**REGISTRATION FEE: \$175  
(Student Fee: \$30)**

HST Registration Number: 108082868RTR001.  
Advance payment is required to register.  
**Space is limited.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email (REQUIRED): \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop Selection (first choice):      1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Workshop Selection (second choice):      1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY REQUIRED ACCOMMODATIONS.  
EVERY ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO FULFILL YOUR REQUEST.**

sign language interpreter      real-time captionist      braille  
computerized note taker      captions media      other: \_\_\_\_\_  
food allergies/restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL REMITTANCE: \$**

**METHOD OF PAYMENT:**      mastercard      visa  
If you are paying by credit card, we will call you for card details.

**PLEASE EMAIL YOUR COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM TO:  
[ece@georgebrown.ca](mailto:ece@georgebrown.ca)**