

WORKSHOPS

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



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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.