

WORKSHOP BIOGRAPHIES



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.



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.



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.

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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.



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.

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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.



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.

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RONA MACPHERSON

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

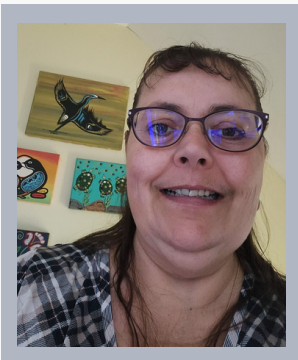
Ronna has over 30 years of HR experience and has led Andrew Fleck Children's Services' HR strategy for 16 years. She focuses on employee engagement, talent retention, and workforce development. Her leadership supports the agency's mission to enhance early learning and care while addressing sector-wide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



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.



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.