



Manitoba Child Care
Association

47th Early Learning and Child Care Conference
May 22 & 23, 2025

The Brilliance of Play: *Adventure Awaits*



Winnipeg, Manitoba
The Victoria Inn Hotel & Conference Centre

Contents

Conference Welcome	3
Conference Information	4
Selecting A Workshop	5

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Keynote	6
AM Workshops	6-8
PM Workshops	8-10
Full Day Workshops	11
Annual General Meeting	12
Full Day Offsite Workshops	13
Game Night	14

Friday, May 23, 2025

Keynote	15
AM Workshops	15-17
PM Workshops	18-19
Full Day Workshops	20
Full Day Offsite Workshops	21
Awards Banquet	22

Presenter Profiles	24-27
Travel & Accommodation Subsidy	28
Registration Information	29
Conference At A Glance	30
Registration Form	31
Conference Fees	32

Brochure Development: Karen Kowalski

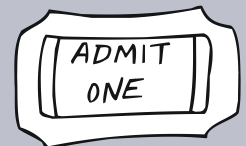
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Please keep in mind:

- When you register for conference (online or paper) you will receive an emailed confirmation with your workshop selections.
- If you are mailing in your registration please check our website to see if there are any workshops that are full. Please ensure you have made a 2nd & 3rd choice if registering by mail.
- Need a vegetarian, vegan or gluten free meal, don't forget to check off the box on the registration form (paper and online) and then check your confirmation to ensure it states you have ordered a special meal. We cannot accommodate vegetarian/vegan/gluten free requests at the conference, you must pre-order.
- If you are going to submit a travel subsidy request please read the information on page 28 prior to driving to the conference.
- Lunch is the only meal provided. AM and PM refreshments are provided.

50/50 Draw

Here's your chance to walk away with a cash prize.



Tickets are 10 for \$5.00 and can be purchased from a conference committee member or in the ballroom foyer. The winner keeps 50% of what is collected and MCCA keeps the other 50% to use towards the purchase of a new smart board.

The draw will take place at 3:00 pm each day in the Centennial Ballroom.

The conference is being held at the Victoria Inn and Convention Centre, 1808 Wellington Avenue

The Brilliance of Play: *Adventure Awaits*

It is my honour and pleasure to welcome everyone to the Manitoba Child Care Association's 47th annual conference, **The Brilliance of Play: *Adventure Awaits***. This year's conference promises to be an enriching and inspiring experience, thanks to the dedication of our committee, who have worked tirelessly to organize a diverse and engaging program. The workshops and presenters reflect both the challenges and successes we face as educators in our daily practice, and we hope they ignite a passion for learning that will continue well beyond this event. As you explore this brochure, we encourage you to take full advantage of the wide variety of opportunities designed to support your growth as a professional in the field of early childhood education.



Our keynote speakers this year are truly exceptional. They are leaders in the field who will bring fresh insights and new perspectives that will leave a lasting impression. Their presentations promise to challenge our thinking, inspire our creativity, and strengthen our commitment to the work we do. In addition to the keynote sessions, we have an array of workshops and field trips designed to meet the diverse needs of educators at every level, from frontline staff to directors. Whether you are just starting your career or are a seasoned professional with years of experience, you will find something here to enrich your practice and deepen your understanding of the important role we play in children's lives.

The Manitoba Child Care Association's conference is proud to be the largest child care conference in Canada. I have been an early childhood educator for 35 years, and I can honestly say there is no other experience quite like being at this conference, surrounded by like-minded professionals. The energy at the event is palpable, there is a sense of excitement and camaraderie that comes from being with others who are as passionate about early childhood education as you are. It's an experience I wish every educator in Manitoba could feel.

But this conference is more than just workshops. It's about connecting with your peers, exchanging ideas, and building relationships that will last beyond the event itself. It's about networking, collaborating, and sharing insights that can help all of us grow professionally and personally. It's about making new friends and finding new inspiration to bring back to your workplace. These connections are what truly make this conference special, and we hope you carry these feelings with you throughout the year.

We look forward to welcoming you in May and to embarking on this exciting journey of learning and growth together. Let the adventure begin!

Melanie Glaser
Conference Committee Chair

The 2025 Conference Committee:

Committee Members: Nola Adair, Sheila Argue, Tracy Bijl, Danielle Bedard, Allison Boxshall, Melanie Glaser, Lanny McDonald, Shawna McKenzie, Sara MacPherson, Lorraine Milan, Melodie Meakin, Diana Metrik, Aricelle Taylor, Marilyn Valgardson, Pina Zammito

Staff: Karen Kowalski, Assistant Executive Director

MCCA is proud to be saving some trees by using a conference app that has all the information regarding conference. You can download the app to your smart phone (iPhone/Android) iPad and tablet.

The app will be available to conference delegates in May.

- Step 1: Download the Attendee Hub
- Step 2: Search MCCA
- Step 3: Select the conference: The Brilliance of Play
- Step 4: Make a profile
- Step 5: Add in your workshop choices to the schedule

Please note we recommend that you allow push notifications so that you are getting the latest information about the conference.



What should I bring to the conference?



A pen - to write with, unfortunately we don't have a supply of pens to hand out.



Paper - to write on, a small notebook works best.



A sweater - the workshop rooms can be cool especially first thing in the morning but once 64 people are in there, it can get quite warm. Layers of clothing work best.



Labels with your name on them - this will make it much easier to purchase your 50/50 tickets.



Cash - to purchase 50/50 tickets. You can also use debit or credit.



And lastly, bring your enthusiasm, energy, and your eagerness to learn and network!

Important Information for Conference 2025

This conference is a perfect opportunity to use your professional development days granted by ELCC. The MCCA conference is also a perfect opportunity to have your whole team attend. So many workshops to all participate in and then share the knowledge at a future staff meeting. If you are a family child care provider this is a perfect opportunity to get a chance to network with other family child care providers.

Our mobile conference app (Attendee Hub) will launch in May and because we have moved to CVENT, each registered delegate will get an prompt to download the app. Attendee Hub is a CVENT product so they work together, this makes for a seamless experience. It will be very important to ensure the delegate's cell phone number is included on the registration.

If you are going on an offsite workshop you will not be attending the keynote. You will board your bus at 9:00 am.

When you register online you will receive an email confirmation of what you or your staff are registered for. It is really important to look over each confirmation to ensure the information is correct, especially if the person requires a special (vegetarian, vegan or gluten free) meal.

Registration opens up at 7:30 am and Opening Remarks begin at 8:30 am, please arrive early to registration so that you are seated in the Centennial ballroom by 8:30 am.

Special Meals



The MCCA Conference offers delegates the option of requesting a gluten free meal, vegan or a vegetarian meal for lunch. These meals must be requested at the time of registering. Please ensure that you check off the box for yourself or for your staff to ensure that they will have the special meal that they requested. We cannot accept requests at the conference for speciality meals.



Selecting A Workshop

You are looking at the conference brochure and deciding what workshops to sign up for. What factors help you to decide what workshops to take? Do you have a goal to work on, are you looking for new ideas on a specific topic, are you trying to to gain new learning and skills?

The workshops have an icon that will let you know what type of presentation the workshop is, is it hands on, seminar or lecture.

The next icon you will see, will let you know who the workshop is geared to in terms of what age groups you work with.

The last set of icons will tell you (if applicable) if the workshop is geared to a frontline person, a manager/leader, or for everyone.

It is important to pay attention to these icons because if you work with infants, going to workshop that is geared for those who work with school age children will be disappointing. Don't just select a workshop based on the title, read the workshop description and note the session icons.

Sessions Legend

Type of Presentation:



Hands On



Seminar
(some participation)



Lecture

Geared for adults who work with:



All Ages



Infant/Toddler



Preschool



School Age

Geared for adults who are:



New Frontline Caregivers



Frontline Caregivers
w/5 Years Experience



Frontline Caregivers
w/5+ Years Experience



Managers/Leaders



Everyone



The school bus means that you will be taken offsite for your workshop and travelling by bus.



The clock means that there is something to note regarding the workshop time.



Joanne Brown

THURSDAY KEYNOTE - 9:00 am - 10:00 am

We're All Doing The Hard Stuff

Acknowledging the changing landscape of our workforce in child care; the increasing complexity of the children we serve; and the frustration of the lack of funding and society's acceptance of such. . . but what does all of that do to us? How do we continue to rise up and meet this changing landscape? Where do we put our resources in order to do our best work, regardless of the conditions? By shrinking our focus down to our immediate bubbles, we find mastery, competence, control and safety.

Thursday AM (TAM) workshops: 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

TAM-01 Math and the Early Years: It's All Around Us!



Many of us either love or hate math! It was always a struggle for me so when I began working with children, I was never able to see the math that was happening all around me. It is more than just singing number songs like Six Little Ducks, it is noticing how they line up the ponies or categorize the cars. When we understand what math looks like in children's play we can support it and enhance all the math that is already happening inside and outside. We will explore what various math concepts look like in children's play and spend some time playing ourselves. We will talk about how to share this learning we see with others including parents as well as the children. You will also go away with ideas for environmental enhancements and experiences you can offer children.

Presenter: Cindy Curry

TAM-02 Sleep Matters: Empowering Educators and Parents to Foster Healthy Sleep Habits for Young Children



This workshop will highlight the importance of quality sleep and realistic sleep expectations for young children, offer practical nap/quiet time techniques for educators, and explore effective ways to collaborate with parents to establish positive sleep habits at home.

Presenter: Shanel Deslauriers

TAM-03 Schema Play in Early Childhood: Supporting Learning and Development for All Children



In this interactive workshop, we will dive into the fascinating world of schema play—repetitive actions and patterns that help children make sense of the world around them. Schema play is an essential part of early childhood development, fostering cognitive, physical, and emotional growth. Participants will explore: What schema play is: Understanding the key types of schemas (e.g., transporting, rotation, enclosure) and how they manifest in children's behaviour. Why schema play is important: Discover how these patterns of play contribute to the development of problem-solving skills, motor coordination, language acquisition, and social interaction. How to plan and support schema play: Learn practical strategies to create an environment that encourages schema exploration, tailored to the needs of all children, including those with additional support needs. Through engaging videos of children in action, we will analyze various schemas in real-life scenarios and discuss how to recognize and nurture these learning opportunities in your practice. This workshop is designed to empower educators to create inclusive, supportive environments where all children can thrive through schema play.

Presenter: Pat Furman

Thursday AM (TAM) workshops: 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

TAM-04 Play Deficit Disorder: A Worldwide Crisis and How Early Childhood Educators Can Help to Solve It

Research in the United States and elsewhere has revealed a dramatic decline in children’s free play, especially their free outdoor play over the past several decades. This decline has been accompanied by dramatic increases in childhood depression and anxiety and by dramatic declines in creativity, internal locus of control, and psychological resilience. In this talk I will present the logic and evidence behind my claim that the decline in free play is a, if not the, major cause of these deleterious effects on children’s wellbeing. I will describe some of the social forces that have led to the decline of play and will suggest ways by which families, schools, neighborhoods, and communities can restore children’s opportunities for free play. I will conclude with suggestions about how early childhood educators can play a major role in helping parents and others understand the value of play.

Presenter: Dr. Peter Gray

TAM-05 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A Beginners Guide

This workshop shares the presenter’s anecdotal experiences and principles of her training with ABA techniques. It provides an overview of the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the implications of autism, best practices for supporting and educating children with autism, and strategies to mitigate challenging behaviours in the child care setting. This workshop will explore the following: - What is autism? - What are behavioural indicators of possible ASD (with real-world examples)? - How does autism impact learning? - How to treat challenging behaviour (such as aggression or self-injury) emphasizing ethical considerations, including the least intrusive and most effective procedures.

Presenter: Michelle Petricone

TAM-06 Creating an Inclusive and Accessible Child Care Program: A Neuroaffirming Approach

This presentation aims to equip child care providers and educators with practical strategies to create an inclusive and accessible environment, focusing on a neuroaffirming approach that celebrates and supports neurological diversity.

Key Topics:

1. Understanding Neurodiversity: - Introduction to neurodiversity and the importance of a neuroaffirming approach. - Addressing common misconceptions about neurodivergent children.
2. Creating an Inclusive Environment: - Sensory-friendly space design and flexible routines. - Supporting different communication styles and fostering positive peer interactions.
3. Neuroaffirming Daily Practices: - Integrating stimming, movement, and sensory breaks into daily activities. - Emphasizing strengths and supporting autonomy in play.
4. Engaging Families: - Building trust and collaboration with families without pressuring for disclosures. - Creating individualized care plans that respect each child’s needs. Participants will gain practical insights to implement neuroaffirming practices, creating a more inclusive and accessible child care environment.

Presenter: Ali Puumala

TAM-07 The Power of Connections

In this workshop, we will explore the power of the educator and the importance of building connections with children. We will explore how early childhood educators influence a child’s day and why their role is crucial in shaping the future of our children. By the end of the workshop educators will:

- Understand the importance of connections
- Understand an educator’s role in influencing a child’s day
- Know how to build a sense of community in their programs
- Understand how to shape the learning environment
- Know the importance of promoting healthy routines
- Understand fostering social and emotional development
- Know the importance of supporting families
- Have strategies to support educators when faced with unique challenges.

Presenter: Carla Ward

Thursday AM (TAM) workshops: 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

TAM-08 Unlocking the Potential of Tuff Trays and PlayTrays for Play-based Cross Curricular Learning



Join us for an inspiring professional development workshop designed to showcase the transformative power of Tuff Trays and PlayTrays in early childhood education. Discover how these versatile tools can support child-led play cross curricularly through engaging, hands-on activities that align with curriculum goals. In this session, Emily will guide you through a variety of creative setups and playful learning invitations that promote early literacy, numeracy, sensory exploration, and social-emotional development. Learn how to design dynamic play environments that encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and collaboration among young learners. Whether you're an educator seeking fresh ideas for your classroom or a parent looking to enhance learning at home, this workshop will provide you with practical strategies to make the most of Tuff Trays and PlayTrays. Join us to explore endless possibilities for creating enriching, play-based experiences that ignite wonder and support meaningful learning for children of all ages!

Presenter: Emily Webster

Thursday PM (TPM) workshops: 1:45 pm – 4:30 pm

TPM-01 Living the Dream: Turning Theory Into Practice



The Canadian Paediatric Society recently recommended an increase in risky play for children's overall health and well-being leaving ECEs to ask ourselves: "How do you allow risky play while still following best practices?" Join this workshop if you aren't sure how to follow these recommendations when your coworkers don't agree and your director and parents aren't on board. This workshop will give you concrete steps on how to solve this problem along with other burning ECE questions such as: How do you play in the mud without facing angry parents at the end of the day and how do you play outside when no one has snow pants? This workshop will give your concrete strategies to achieve your curriculum goals for your program even if you are worried they may be controversial.

Presenter: Corine Anderson

TPM-02 Science and the Early Years; It's More Than Magnets



For many of us, science can feel intimidating. We are not sure how to approach it with young children and it often ends up being magnets on a table that children and adults rarely go near. Let's change that! Get rid of the table and observe all the science that children are already involved in through their play. We will identify 12 different categories of science that children are currently exploring without us even being aware of it. Many of these categories, such as Palaeontology (the study of dinosaurs), are already familiar to us but we don't think of them as science. We will talk, explore ideas for possible environmental enhancements, identify some experiences we can offer children and we will play with science!

Presenter: Cindy Curry

TPM-03 100 Languages For All Learners



This workshop explores the Reggio Emilia concept of the "100 Languages of Children," emphasizing inclusion through sensory regulation, play, and cultural awareness. Designed for early childhood educators, this session highlights how children express themselves through multiple forms allowing every learner's voice to be heard. Participants will engage in hands-on activities, including creating self-portraits to foster self-reflection and exploring sensory materials designed to support regulation and engagement. Through storytelling, we will bring the Reggio philosophy to life, demonstrating how it can be applied in practice to create inclusive environments for children of all abilities, races, and cultural backgrounds. Leave with practical tools to enhance your learning environment and ensure that each child, regardless of sensory needs or cultural background, can express their emotions, ideas, and identity through their unique 'language.' Discover how to honour every child's way of communicating and create a truly inclusive space where diversity is celebrated.

Presenters: Pat Furman & Veronica Green

TPM-04 Mother Nature's Pedagogy: How Children's Natural Curiosity, Playfulness, and Sociability Serve Their Education



Children come into the world exquisitely designed by natural selection to learn about the physical, social, and cultural world around them. In this talk, based on cross-cultural research, laboratory studies, and my own research at alternative educational settings in the United States, I will describe how children's instincts to explore, play, and bond with others provide the natural foundation for education. I will also describe the conditions in which these educative instincts seem to operate best.

Presenter: Dr. Peter Gray

TPM-05 Building Social Connections: The Power of Lego Therapy in Neurodivergent Support



This presentation will explore the transformative impact of Lego therapy in fostering social communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills in neurodivergent children. Using the structured, playful format of Lego building, this therapeutic approach promotes collaboration while respecting individual strengths and differences. Attendees will gain insights into how Lego therapy can be integrated into classroom, clinical, and home environments to create more inclusive and supportive spaces for neurodiverse individuals. Practical examples, case studies, and hands-on activities will be included, making this session both engaging and educational.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the principles behind Lego therapy and its neuroaffirming foundations
- Explore case studies demonstrating successful outcomes for autistic children and those with related developmental challenges
- Learn practical strategies for implementing Lego therapy in educational and therapeutic settings
- Engage in a hands-on activity to experience the collaborative benefits of Lego therapy

Presenter: Ali Puumala

TPM-06 Emotional Regulation



Emotional Regulation is the ability to recognize, understand and effectively manage emotions, and it is an important skill to develop. Supporting children in learning emotional regulation is a vital part of Early Childhood Education.

This workshop will cover:

- Understanding emotional development
- The science behind emotional regulation
- The importance of observation and recognition of emotions
- How to cultivate emotional regulation
- How to have a collaborative approach with parents
- Self-care for educators

Presenter: Carla Ward

Thursday PM (TPM) workshops: 1:45 pm – 4:30 pm

TPM-07 Exploring Big Ideas Through Small World Play: Cross-Curricular Learning in Early Years



Join Emily Webster for an engaging, hands-on professional development session where we dive into the world of small world play and explore its powerful role in cross-curricular learning! Small world play encourages children to create miniature worlds, using loose parts and imaginative play to explore a wide range of learning concepts. This session will show educators how to harness the potential of small world setups to support literacy, numeracy, science, and social-emotional development.

Participants will actively engage in creating small world environments, learning how to integrate nature, storytelling, and play-based learning to create rich, open-ended learning opportunities. Whether building a bustling city or recreating scenes from picture books, small world play fosters creativity, problem-solving, and language development. It's a versatile tool that encourages children to engage with their surroundings, ask questions, and construct their own knowledge through play.

Educators will leave with practical, cost-effective ideas for using loose parts and natural materials to set up cross-curricular play experiences. Learn how small world play can bring subjects like math, science, and storytelling to life, while nurturing critical thinking, collaboration, and independent exploration.

Unlock the potential of small world play in your early years classroom and see how it encourages children to learn through imagination and inquiry!

Presenter: Emily Webster

Thursday PM (TPM) workshops: 1:45 pm – 4:45 pm

TPM-08 Best Choices: Ethics Part I



In Manitoba and Canada, those who work in early learning and child care environments have a Code of Ethics to guide our standards of practice. Using this code is a professional obligation. This four-part series occurs in a specific order, with each workshop a pre-requisite for the following session. The series helps us to use this code in our daily practice and continues to receive rave reviews. Here's your chance to join us in some serious fun!

This is the first workshop in the MCCA's ethical journey series. In Part I, you will learn about beliefs, values, and ethics and the relationship between them. You will learn to identify your own beliefs, values, and ethics and understand how they impact your actions. You will also learn to understand others' beliefs, values, and ethics.

Participants will receive a binder to put all their ethics workshop notes in and a protective pocket to keep their certificate.

Presenters: Kisa Maclsaac & Michelle Vesey

Thursday Full Day (TFD) workshops: 10:30 am – 4:30 pm

TFD-01 Leadership Is Not A Title



Those in leadership roles often hold titles such as Coordinator, Director, Manager, or Administrator. Some of these titles are accompanied by more specific terms that better outline their responsibilities. However, leadership is less about the duties associated with these titles and more about the passion, excitement, and sense of responsibility that educators bring to their work and their roles. Leaders can emerge within teams even without formal titles. How can we, as Managers, Directors, or Administrators, create an environment that nurtures these emerging leaders? How do we support those who are inspired and eager to share their passion, interests, or skills with others? How can we build a community that supports individuals essential for fostering a positive culture aligned with our organizational values?

Presenter: *Jacqueline Ewonus*

TFD-02 When a Young Child Experiences Stress — A Trauma-Responsive Lens on How the Body and Brain Respond to Stress



Stress has a unique impact on young children’s behaviour, development and learning. This workshop will explore the developmental responses and functional behaviours of preschoolers who have experienced adverse events and loss. It will cover common challenges faced by early childhood caregivers including sleep disturbances, eating problems, regression, attachment anxiety, dysregulated emotions and crisis behaviours. Further, the workshop will discuss how the brain’s response to stress impacts preschool learning. Participants will work through a case study involving a baseline preschooler’s body experience in the classroom compared with that of a preschooler under stress. They will consider the functions of the stress response and learn how to respond to create safety, co-regulate, build secure relationships and enhance learning. Participants will leave with proven tools and strategies to confidently and compassionately respond to children in their preschool classroom who have experienced adverse events and loss.

Presenter: *Rebecca Prathipati*

TFD-03 Nurturing Wellness in Early Childhood Educators



The goal of this workshop is to provide Early Childhood Educators with information about the signs of burnout, and what they can do to combat burnout. More important, this workshop is an opportunity to give educators a space to feel nurtured, appreciated, heard, and valued.

In this workshop educators will cover:

- Emotional and mental health strategies that help them in their work
- How they communicate and advocate for themselves, their needs, and boundaries
- Ways to be the change they want to see, creating a positive outlook and positive work environment.

Presenter: *Ana Valle Rivera*

Thursday Full Day Offsite Workshops



9:00 am - 4:30 pm

When registering for these workshops please keep the following in mind:

- Buses will leave by the Wellington doors by 9:10 am sharp
- If you miss your bus, attending another workshop at the Victoria Inn is not an option
- You will not attend the keynote address
- Lunch is included with all field trips, please indicate if you require a vegetarian, vegan or gluten free meal
- Delegates cannot drive their own vehicles to the offsite workshops
- Space is limited on all off site workshops and MCCA reserves the right to limit the amount of registrants from one centre/organization. **The centre limit for these two offsite workshops are four per centre.** If there is space after the early bird deadline then more staff can register
- Delegates will be picked up at approximately 3:45 pm at their location and brought back to the Victoria Inn for 4:30 pm

THO-01 Empowering Children Through Outdoor Play: The TimberNook Approach

We will unpack the TimberNook philosophy through conversation, activities, and reflection in this 100% outdoor session. Discover how nature-based play can revolutionize the way children learn, grow, and navigate complex emotions. In this engaging workshop, we'll explore the TimberNook approach, where children thrive through hands-on experiences like using real tools, engaging in imaginative weapon play, and building essential social-emotional skills. You'll learn how unstructured outdoor play fosters independence, problem-solving, and resilience, giving children the freedom to process hard emotions such as death, conflict, and divorce in a safe and supportive environment. The session will also offer practical strategies for creating a 'yes' environment, one that empowers children to lead their play while embracing safe risks that build confidence. Through group discussions and real-life examples, you will walk away with tools to inspire natural leadership, creativity, and emotional growth in your students. These skills are not only vital for the classroom but also foster development at home and in child care. Join us for this hands-on outdoor experience and discover the profound impact of TimberNook's philosophy on childhood development. Sign up now and learn how to make outdoor play a transformative part of your teaching practice!

Location: Kildonan Park

Presenter: *Shelley Bettker*

THO-02 Exploring Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park

Join us for this jammed packed day of exploring Assiniboine Park.

Assiniboine Park was established in 1904, this year-round playground is one of Winnipeg's finest attractions. There are so many activities year round to participate in. We have selected a few of them for this full day offsite field trip.

The day will start with a Biome Tour at The Leaf, then tour of the outdoor gardens, lunch at The Qualico Centre. After lunch delegates will experience Journey to Churchill, the zoo's award-winning northern species exhibit, brings you nearly nose to nose with playful polar bears, seals and other Arctic animals. Highlights of the exhibit include the Sea Ice Passage — underwater tunnels that offer incredible views of swimming polar bears and seals and then after that, delegates will have some free time to explore the zoo.

A couple of important things to note:

Travel subsidy: travel subsidy is open to all MCCA members who reside in Manitoba. You must be a member from January 1, 2025. What happens if you want to join in February or April because you want to attend conference? That is fine, you just need to pay the annual membership fee then this will allow you to attend the conference at the MCCA fee and allow you to apply for travel subsidy (within Manitoba).

Gas receipts: It is important to fill your tank before you leave for the conference. Why do we ask that you do this, so we know you started on a full tank and any future fill ups are the amounts for gas used. We then ask you to fill up when you get home. When you are adding up all of your receipts you will deduct the first fill and that is the amount to put on the subsidy form. This is the amount (dependent on funds available) is the amount we will reimburse you.

Please note, new for 2025: MCCA encourages carpooling to the conference and will reimburse 50% of the attendees from one centre. For example if two people are coming to conference and decide to both drive, we will only reimburse one person, if four people are coming and driving, we will reimburse 2, if 6, then 3, etc.

Conference Certificates

When you come to the registration desk at the conference you will be handed a certificate. You will add your name on it and then you check off any evening events you might have attended. It is a good idea to keep your conference registration with this certificate as proof that you attended the conference.



Audio or Video Recordings

No audio or video recording of lectures or presentations is allowed in any format, openly or surreptitiously, in whole or in part without permission. The workshop hostess will let you know if you can take photos of the presentation slides once confirmed with the presenter. Course materials (both paper and digital) are for your private use.

MCCA conference sessions are made available on the understanding that all information is provided by third parties and MCCA is not responsible for the information or its use.

Please take responsibility for the energy you bring to the conference.

Your words matter.

Your behaviours matter.

Our members, presenters, guests and MCCA staff matter.

Take a slow deep breath and be mindful of your energy before entering the conference keynote and workshop learning spaces.

MCCA's Annual General Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2025

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Doors open at 4:30 pm

Location: Embassy A & B

Attend our Annual General Meeting!

Elect the new Board of Directors!

Hear more about MCCA's plans for 2025/2026!

Light refreshments will be provided.

Please register using page 31 or online with your online registration.

BOARD GAME NIGHT

Thursday, May 22, 2025

6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Room: Wellington A & B



Don't have a Clue what to do Thursday night? Scrabbling for ideas? Take a Risk; you don't need a Ticket to Ride! Join us for a night of mingling, meeting new people, and playing some awesome board games!

GO!

Attendees will be given the opportunity to try out and play a variety of board games.

You must pre-register for this evening. It is \$20.00 for MCCA Members and \$40.00 for Non Members. You don't have to be registered for the conference to attend the evening.

Doors open at 6:00 pm, attendees will have time to try out various board games. Light refreshments will be served and there will be door prizes.

We hope to see you there!

Room: Wellington A



Dr. Peter Gray

FRIDAY KEYNOTE - 9:00 am - 10:00 am

What Exactly is Play, and Why Is It Such a Powerful Vehicle for Children's Development and Learning?

"Play" is a word that we use commonly to refer to children's preferred activities and to some adult activities. But what, really, is play? In this talk I will define play as activity that is (1) self-chosen and self-directed; (2) motivated by means more than ends; (3) guided by mental rules; (4) includes a strong element of imagination; and (5) is conducted in an alert, active, but relatively non-stressed frame of mind. I will show how each of these characteristics contributes to play's educational and developmental value. I will explain why play came about, in natural selection, to promote children's healthy physical, intellectual, social, moral, and emotional growth and will describe the psychological detriments that have accompanied the decline of play in recent decades.

Friday AM (FAM) workshops: 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

FAM-01 Solving Challenges to Getting the Children Outside: A Beginner's Guide to Daily Outdoor Play



Join Shelley Bettker for a practical session designed to help educators overcome common challenges to getting children outside for daily play. Explore the top 10 barriers, such as time constraints, safety concerns, and unsupportive administration, and discover actionable solutions using the ROCKS approach: Routines, Open-ended activities, Creative loose parts, Kits, and Safety. Through brainstorming and collaboration, we'll develop a seasonal list of engaging outdoor activities tailored to your environment, ensuring you leave inspired and ready to integrate outdoor play into your daily schedule. The session will include dynamic discussions and hands-on strategies, like utilizing milk crates and wagons to facilitate outdoor experiences. Topics will cover maintaining momentum, embracing all weather conditions, and bringing nature into the classroom. Participants are encouraged to bring photos of their outdoor spaces to collectively problem-solve and tailor solutions. Don't miss this opportunity to enrich your teaching practice and make outdoor play an essential part of your students' lives! Together, we can transform the way children experience the outdoors, fostering resilience, creativity, and connection with nature in every child.

Presenter: Shelley Bettker

FAM-02 Nourishing Beginnings: Supporting Young Eaters



Build your knowledge and confidence in early childhood nutrition! Educators play an important role in, and can greatly influence, how children learn to approach food and eating. Dive into the first module of Nourishing Beginnings with the support of an experienced registered dietitian and educator. Learn how to feed toddlers and preschoolers with trust and respect and make meals and snacks an enjoyable part of everyone's day. This program was crafted in collaboration with leaders in nutrition education and early learning and child care. All participants will earn a certificate of completion and have ongoing access to this program and resources. Nourishing Beginnings is a free, Canadian, online early childhood nutrition program. The program's two modules include essential information on how to feed toddlers and preschoolers and how to engage children when learning together with food. This self-paced program can be used as a continuing education opportunity for ECEs in child care centres and home based child care. The program can also be used by post secondary instructors and students as a course component for ECE training.

Presenter: Sarah Cahill-Johnson

FAM-03 Big Body Play For School Aged



This workshop is designed to help educators learn fun and engaging active games primarily for school aged children. These simple, yet challenging games focus on gross and fine motor skills as well as teamwork and cooperating skills. These games can be for any school aged child and promote more involvement from child and educator alike!

Presenters: Catarina Raposo & Tristen Sanness

FAM-04 A Bunch of Bookmaking

Bookmaking is a wonderful way to allow the worlds of literacy and art to merge and provide rich child-led learning experiences. This hands-on, interactive workshop will allow you the opportunity to explore simple, accessible bookmaking ideas that can be integrated into early years programs. Experiment with a variety of materials like sandwich bags, sticks, and paper bags to come away with simple bookmaking ideas that can be replicated with children in infant, toddler and preschool environments.

Presenter: Nancy Tovell

FAM-05 The Difference Between Bullying and Conflict: Creating a Workplace Where People Like to Work

In this workshop, Early Childhood Educators will learn to distinguish between normal workplace conflict and bullying behaviour, empowering them to foster a healthy and supportive work environment.

In this workshop, participants will explore:

- the dynamics of conflict resolution and navigating disagreements
- how to address bullying in a professional setting
- communication strategies and boundaries
- creating a workplace where people like to work

The session will focus on building a positive workplace culture. Educators will gain practical tools to promote collaboration and create a space where everyone thrives and enjoys coming to work.

Presenter: Ana Valle Rivera

FAM-06 Strengthening Relationships with Families: Explore best practices for building strong, positive relationships with the families in their programs

Having a strong relationship with the families in your program is an investment into helping children thrive.

In this workshop participants will:

- explore best practices for building strong, positive relationships with the families in their programs.
- learn effective communication strategies, ways to handle conflicts and challenges
- learn techniques for building trust with families.
- learn the importance of involving families in their child's care
- gain practical tools and tips for fostering meaningful partnerships

Presenter: Carla Ward

FAM-07 Illuminating Learning: Enhancing Early Childhood Development with Light Panels & Tables

Join us for an interactive professional development workshop where we delve into the transformative benefits of integrating light panels and light tables into early childhood settings. Discover how these versatile tools can unlock a world of play-based learning opportunities, supporting children in exploring concepts like light, colour, and shadows in an engaging, hands-on manner. During this session, we'll demonstrate how to use light panels and tables to nurture creativity, critical thinking, and fine motor skills through thoughtfully designed play invitations. Participants will learn practical strategies to create sensory-rich, child-led learning environments that foster curiosity and support curriculum goals. Whether you're looking to introduce new materials into your classroom or enhance existing practices, this workshop provides valuable insights and inspiration to help you harness the power of light-based exploration. Don't miss this chance to illuminate the endless learning possibilities for young minds!

Presenter: Emily Webster

FAM-08 Documentation and Reflective Practice

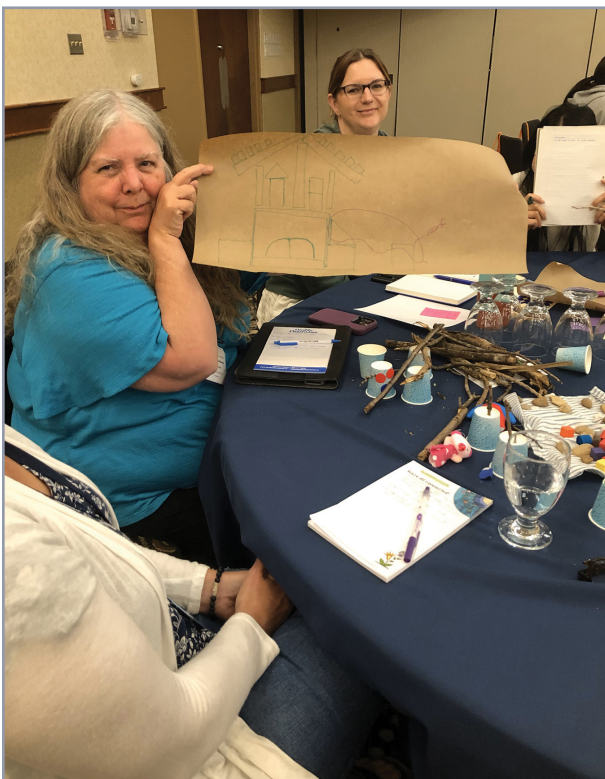


Join this insightful, hands-on workshop focused on the vital role of documentation in curriculum planning and reflective practice. Documentation takes many forms and is a core component in curriculum. Curriculum documentation records learning experiences but also weaves narratives that uncover deeper meanings.

Come explore and refresh your documentation powers and consider which approach—or combination of approaches—best suits your needs to foster a richer educational environment, make learning visible and curriculum planning engaging.

Presenter: Sue Narozniak

2024 PASSPORT TO EXCELLENCE
Conference



FPM-01 How to Create Educational Settings that Work With, Not Against, Children's Natural Ways of Learning



How can we create rich educational environments where children learn joyfully and naturally, where they maintain and build upon their natural curiosity and creativity? Success in the world that young children are growing into will depend, increasingly, on their abilities to innovate, to ask and answer previously unanswered questions, and to adapt to changing conditions. How do we foster these abilities, which are natural to children but are too often driven out of them by the dreary routines of school? Here, on the basis of research into learning in hunter-gatherer bands and at a democratic school in the United States, I will describe children's natural ways of educating themselves and discuss the conditions that optimize those abilities

Presenter: Dr. Peter Gray

FPM-02 Curriculum and Image of Educator



Curriculum can be said to exist in play, routines, and everyday interactions that take place throughout the day. Educators are not only facilitators of learning but also co-creators of the curriculum. In this workshop, you are invited to explore your "Image of Educator" – how you perceive yourself in your daily practice.

We will also reflect on your personal connection to your centre's curriculum statement and consider how it aligns with your understanding of your role as an educator. Participants are asked to bring a copy of their centre's curriculum statement to engage fully in the workshop experience.

Presenter: Sue Narozniak

FPM-03 Navigating Tech Separation Anxiety in Young Children



This workshop is designed to help educators understand and address the impact of technology use in the classroom. Participants will explore how technology can support and hinder learning and learn strategies for effectively managing and reducing tech dependency among young children. The session will cover techniques for creating tech-free zones within the classroom, utilizing technology intentionally as a teaching tool, and establishing boundaries to promote healthier relationships with digital devices. Educators will leave with actionable strategies to create balanced tech environments and resources to engage families and communities in maintaining these practices beyond the classroom.

Presenter: Marcia Nicole

FPM-04 "Why, When and How" - Documentation in Child Care



In this workshop we will review how documentation is used to create beneficial outcomes and build positive relationships within your child care programs. Good documentation will develop positive relations with children, families, and colleagues. It is a way to reflect on and enhance health and safety practices. It inspires your child centered play-based curriculum and supports social and emotional development. If done well it will focus on individual needs, abilities, and strengths. "Why" it is imperative to review daily documentation and use it to enhance your skills and practices. "When" is documentation useful in your day-to-day practices. "How" do you write documentation such as incident/accident reports, behavioural documentation, pedagogical, individual program plans.

Presenter: Gerrie Stolz

FPM-05 Supporting Children Who Are English Language Learners



The goal of this workshop is to support Early Childhood Educators with practical strategies to support English Language Learners (ELLs) in an inclusive classroom.

The session will cover:

- Approaches for scaffolding instruction for children who are emergent bilingual
- Using songs, visuals and gestures to enhance communication
- Encouraging peer support and connections
- Integrating other bilingual resources

Participants will also learn how to collaborate with families and use culturally responsive practices to build strong, supportive relationships with ELL students, promoting both their linguistic and social-emotional development.

Presenter: Ana Valle Rivera

Friday PM (FPM) workshops: 1:45 pm – 4:30 pm

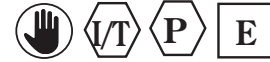
FPM-06 ECE Essentials: Effective Communication with Families and Professionalism



Learn the essence of professionalism in Early Childhood Education. This workshop delves into the heart of professionalism. You will discover the art of nurturing family connections through impactful communication. Harness the potential of a Professional Portfolio. We will uncover how centre policies become your support pillars. This workshop will help you elevate your career by mastering both classroom excellence and professional finesse, gaining insights that transform your practice. In this workshop, participants will learn: What it means to be a professional within the ECE profession? How to foster relationships and healthy communication with families. The benefits of starting a Professional Portfolio? The importance of being aware of centre policies and program statements.

Presenter: Carla Ward

FPM-07 Splashing Into Learning: The Power of Water Play in Early Years



Join Scholar's Choice for an engaging, hands-on professional development session where we dive into the wonders of water play in early childhood education! Water play offers young learners endless opportunities to explore sensory experiences, develop key skills, and spark curiosity. This session will explore how water play can be used to support play-based learning, enhancing children's cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development.

Educators will actively participate in water-based activities that demonstrate the power of sensory play. Learn how simple water play setups can encourage children to explore scientific concepts like volume, buoyancy, and cause-and-effect, while also promoting language development and collaboration. Whether pouring, splashing, or observing water's movement, children engage in open-ended exploration that fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

This session will provide practical, cost-effective ideas for integrating water play into your learning environments, both indoors and outdoors. Discover how to create meaningful, sensory-rich experiences that support holistic development while keeping children engaged and excited to learn.

Join us to uncover how water play can transform your early years classroom into a place where curiosity flows freely and learning is as natural as water itself. Take a splash into creative, sensory-rich play that nurtures children's development through the power of water!

Presenter: Emily Webster

Friday PM (FPM) workshops: 1:45 pm – 4:45 pm

FPM-08 Best Choices: Ethics Part II



In Manitoba and Canada, those who work in early learning and child care environments have a Code of Ethics to guide our standards of practice. Using this code is a professional obligation. This four-part series occurs in a specific order, with each workshop a pre-requisite for the following session. The series helps us to use this code in our daily practice and continues to receive rave reviews. Here's your chance to join us in some serious fun!

In this second session in your ethical journey, you will be introduced to the MCCA Code of Ethics and understand its benefits. You will also begin to learn the process of ethical decision making. In this session, you will receive your personal copy of the Code of Ethics and a handy wallet size card with the principles to keep at your fingertips.

Bring your certificate or binder from part I to receive your part II sticker.

Presenters: Christine J. Enns & Monica Lytwyn

Friday Full Day (FFD) workshops: 10:30 am – 4:30 pm

These workshops will provide an opportunity to really dive into a subject. If delegates select one of these full day workshops, they will attend in the am and return after lunch for the pm session.

FFD-01 How Parental Relationships Impact Child Development



Whether parents remain together or live apart, children are learning about themselves through how their parents conduct themselves. They form internal working models of themselves and of adults and how to be in relationships. We will look at what to be on the watch for with children, and how to support the family.

Presenter: Joanne Brown

FFD-02 Relate Program Communication Strategies for ECEs (Related to Autism)



Participants will learn how to effectively guide social communication during practical everyday tasks or activities. This workshop will be supplemented with discussion, video review, demonstration, and hands on practice of these strategies for supporting children who are non-speaking, echolalic, or speaking in phrases. Participants will learn:

1. How our brain works to support regulation of attention, senses, emotions, language, and cognition as it relates to social communication. Participants will learn how Autism can be defined from a neurodiversity-affirming lens and how other brain differences or traits may overlap.
2. How co-regulation is the basis for all interactions. We will review how to engineer and scaffold 'do-together' activities with children to improve social learning behavior through attachment/shared attention and action coordination to provide learning opportunities in the child's learning 'zone'.
3. How to use a declarative communication style supporting the foundations of reciprocal communication. Participants will learn the importance of using verbal language and body language during activities and how to smoothly transition between tasks.
4. How to find stability amidst change in joyful, relationship building, and emotionally regulating 'do-together' activities. We will practice applying variations to these positive shared experiences promoting flexible thinking and attention maintenance.

Presenter: Kally-Anna Clinton

FFD-03 Nurturing Leadership



Within each educator lies a passion, experience, and knowledge for the work they do with children, families and each other. Educators should have the opportunity to utilize their passion, skills, bringing their genuine selves to their work. Leadership involves inspiration from and to children and colleagues, fostering daily challenges that prompt reflection and responsive practice.

Traditionally, leadership models often direct others from a hierarchical perspective, inconsistent with current pedagogy and approaches to our work with children, and our image of a strong competent child.

Through the presentation, our intent is to unearth the administrative/leadership shifts needed in an effort to shift our image of the educator to engage with them in a more meaningful way, parallel with our established practice with our children.

Presenter: Jacqueline Ewonus

FFD-04 Comfort With Creatures



Creating relationships with animals of all kinds is undoubtedly a meaningful experience. It can be easy for most of us to connect with furry critters and the beauty of birds, but what about our invertebrate friends and those that bring out discomfort with some of us? What about the rooted plant life and their need for respect and reciprocity? Learning to be respectful of all living things is one of the most valuable things we humans can do. Let's embody the Land Acknowledgements we recite by actually acknowledging and honouring the land itself and share that experience with the children in our care.

Presenter: Leah Smith & David Seburn

Friday Full Day Offsite Workshops



Friday, May 23

9:00 am - 4:30 pm

When registering for these workshops please keep the following in mind:

- Buses will leave by the Wellington doors by 9:10 am sharp
- If you miss your bus, attending another workshop at the Victoria Inn is not an option.
- You will not attend the keynote address
- Lunch is included with all field trips, please indicate if you require a vegetarian, vegan or gluten free meal.
- Delegates cannot drive their own vehicles to the offsite workshops
- Space is limited on all off-site workshops and MCCA reserves the right to limit the number of registrants from one centre/organization. **The centre limit for these two offsite workshops are four people per centre.** If there is space after the early bird deadline then more staff can register.
- Delegates will be picked up at approximately

FRO-01 Land Based Teachings



Delegates will board a bus at 9:00 and travel to St. Genevieve, MB where they will participate in different land-based teachings.

These land-based teachings include:

Sweat lodge and Smudge teachings: Participants will have an opportunity to sit by the sweat lodge and learn how the lodge was built, the purpose of the ceremony and preparation before entering the ceremony. Participants will have an opportunity to see and handle the four medicines used for smudging.

Beading teaching: Participants will have an opportunity to try their hand at making earrings, bracelet or a dreamcatcher.

Tipi teaching: Participants will have an opportunity to set up a 13 pole Tipi and sit inside for the teachings of the poles.

Medicine teaching: Participants will have an opportunity to learn about where and how we harvest traditional medicines and their use.

Sharing Circles: Participants will have an opportunity to sit in a circle and discuss topics related to the importance of Reconciliation and receive a list of recommended action items.

FRO-02 Exploring Camp Manitou



Camp Manitou is a summer camp and year-round outdoor recreation facility located five minutes outside of Winnipeg. With its forests, 2.6-acre lake, large grass playing field, and the Assiniboine River on three sides, this 39-acre oasis provides lots of space in which to enjoy nature. We provide a wide range of activities, challenging educational programming, and the perfect environment to step out of the everyday and connect with nature.

At Camp Manitou, outdoor programming is delivered with the goal of providing accessible, meaningful, camp experiences to Manitoba children, youth and community groups.

Delegates will participate in several of the following activities:

- Fire Building
- Orienteering
- Archery
- Climbing Wall
- Low Ropes

Please note: This day is filled with physical activities.

Awards Banquet

Friday, May 23, 2025 • 6:15 pm – 9:30 pm

Leader of the Year Award
Exceptional Early Childhood Educator Award
Exceptional Family Child Care Provider Award
Volunteer of the Year Award
Dr. Gretta Brown Scholarship Awards
MCCA Student Scholarship Award
Educaring Award
5+ Year Career Milestones



Come join us to honour and celebrate with the MCCA award recipients. Last year we changed the evening from a dinner to cocktails and appetizers. We are going to continue this format. Tickets are only \$45.00 each. Everyone is welcome to join us so bring your family and friends..

The evening will include a cash bar, hors d'oeuvres, award and career milestone presentations and a silent auction with an abundance of wonderful prizes to win. You must purchase a ticket in advance, see page 32 of the brochure or you can register online and pay with a credit card on our website.

Deadline for ticket purchases is May 7, 2025. Tickets will be mailed out the week prior to the banquet.



2024 PASSPORT TO EXCELLENCE Banquet



Benefits of Attending Conference:

- ✓ Opportunity of attending some awesome workshops
- ✓ Listen to our dynamic speakers share their expertise and insights
- ✓ Networking with peers from all over the province
- ✓ Make some new friends
- ✓ Hearing a variety of perspectives
- ✓ Fulfilling your professional development hours
- ✓ Connecting with old colleagues and coworkers
- ✓ Visting tradeshow vendors that are beneficial to your program
- ✓ Chance to walk away with some cash from the 50/50 draw
- ✓ Opportunity to celebrate colleagues at the awards banquet
- ✓ Make new connections at the networking evening
- ✓ Attend the MCCA AGM and find out what your association has been up to



If you are registering for Best Choices: Ethics Part II, don't forget to bring your certificate you were given at Part I.

Corine Anderson is an ECE III/Forest School Practitioner is the Executive Director of Riverview Ashland Child Care Centre Inc., a founding member of the Manitoba Nature Summit Inc. and a long-time child care and nature play advocate. She won't be happy until there are fire circles in all the school yards and loose parts in all the playgrounds- so beware!

Shelley Bettker is an outdoor play expert, passionate advocate for child-led learning, and the founder and director of Explorer's Forest School and TimberNook Saskatoon. Dedicated to providing enriching play experiences to all children, she works with kids aged 1 to 13 on a prairie oasis east of Saskatoon. Often found alongside children in the dirt and trees, Shelley fosters curiosity and a sense of wonder through hands-on, nature-based experiences. In addition to her work with children, she runs a parented program, guiding caregivers to embrace and understand the benefits of outdoor play. Shelley holds a Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan and is a certified Early Childhood Educator Level 2. She completed the Forest & Nature School Practitioner course through the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. Additionally, she is a TimberNook Certified Teacher and Provider, receiving specialized training in outdoor play, sensory integration, and child development through nature-based activities. Shelley is committed to promoting the importance of getting kids outside. Her expertise in child development and outdoor play has been showcased through various speaking engagements, including the Manitoba Nature Summit and TimberNook Conference, driven by her belief that every child should experience the benefits of outdoor play.

Joanne Brown is the coordinator of CARE (childcare attachment and relationship education) at New Directions, and a clinician in the family therapy services there as well as the co-chair of the Attachment Network of Manitoba. Joanne has been at this work for over 35 years, using attachment as a lens to understand relationships.

Sarah Cahill Johnson, RD – Nüton, Teach Nutrition, by Dairy Farmers of Canada. A nutrition educator for over 16 years, Sarah combines her experience as a registered dietitian and parent to support educators, children, and families in the development of positive relationships with food and eating. The team at Teach Nutrition is passionate about creating programs and activities that enhance the wellbeing of students and all of the people in their lives. Sarah loves that food brings people together to share, learn, and celebrate. When we lead with curiosity, we can nourish mind, body and soul.

Kally-Anna Clinton is a registered Speech-Language Pathologist and Relationship Development Intervention® Consultant for the Relate Program in Neurodevelopmental Services at Rehabilitation

Centre for Children (RCC). She is trained to assess, provide supports & strategies, and presents workshops for families and staff. Throughout the year she works directly with families enrolled in the Relate Program and presents workshops to the public, for caregivers and/or professionals. Kally-Anna also maintains a role on the Child Development Clinic Autism diagnostic team at RCC. The Relate Program provides education and consultation to caregivers supporting Autistic children or other neurodevelopmental differences, who are seeking support related to relationships, social communication development, and behavior. We discuss brain differences and build on the child's strengths. We are here to help caregivers who are finding it hard to connect with their child using a developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed and attachment-based approach. Caregivers learn how to adjust everyday interactions to support social learning development together.

Cindy Curry loves learning, sharing her passion for child-led play and is energized when she can inspire others along the way. She has dedicated over 35 years to Early Childhood Education and has worked in many types of programs including group family child care and forest and nature school. Currently, she is the director of a rural child care program, instructs at Red River College Polytechnic, facilitates workshops, and advocates for children connecting with nature. In the fall of 2023, she was recognized as an Exchange Leader through the Exchange Leadership Initiative and was published in the summer 2024 edition of *Play Outdoors Magazine*.

Shanel Deslauriers is a Pediatric Sleep Consultant, and the founder of The Sleep Consultant. She and her team of consultants have supported thousands of parents to find sustainable, healthy sleep for their children. In addition to Shanel's Pediatric Sleep certification and experience, she holds a Bachelor of Science Degree, and a Masters of Science Degree in Human Physiology & Pathophysiology from the University of Manitoba. This, and her background working in primary care health research heavily influence her sleep philosophy. The sleep solutions she and her team provide are evidence-based, and in alignment with current child development and pediatric sleep research. Shanel's personal experience with her own daughter's sleep challenges is what continues to drive her mission to help families who are struggling. She believes that with the right approach and support, every child can learn to sleep well.

Christine Enns has over 25 years of experience in the field of Early Childhood Education in different capacities. Currently she is an Early Childhood Education Instructor at University College of the North in The Pas. She has been enjoying learning about the Cree culture and how to apply Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. Christine has facilitated Best Choices and been on the Ethics Committee since 2003.

Jacqueline Ewonos is currently the Program Director at SFU Childcare Society in Burnaby, BC, where she oversees 20 programs that accommodate 414 children aged 0–12 years, alongside more than 100 educators. She has a long-standing career in the childcare field, with over 34 years of experience in various roles, including work within the K-12 system, supporting children and families with diverse abilities, and serving as a Licensing Officer. For the past 17 years, she has been an instructor with the Burnaby School District in the Early Care and Education Post Basic Program, teaching Inclusive Practice and Administration. Jacqueline is also a provincial mentor for educators through the BC ECE Professional Development Bursary Program, where she supports the creation of Communities of Practice. Additionally, she has served on the board of the Vancouver Reggio Association for the past six years. Jacqueline is also a pedagogical consultant who presents at national and international conferences on pedagogical leadership and organizational change.

Pat Furman has been Executive Director of Inspired by Wonder, two innovative and inclusive childcare programs in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for 20 years. She was a recipient of the 2016-2017 Prime Ministers Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education, as well the 2020 recipient of the Manitoba Child Care Association, Leader of the Year Award. Pat is the co-chair of the Manitoba Reggio Inspired Coalition of Educators (Manitoba Reggio), is a board member of the Vanier Institute of the family and is part of the Children's Rights working group with the World Forum Foundation. Pat is passionate about the rights of diverse learners. She is often found freezing in various community rinks as all three children play hockey; she loves reading, walking her golden retriever, cross country skiing, and paddle boarding at the lake in the summer.

Dr. Peter Gray is a research professor of psychology and neuroscience at Boston College who has conducted and published research in behavioral biology, developmental psychology, anthropology, and education. He is author of an internationally acclaimed introductory psychology textbook (*Psychology*, Worth Publishers, now in its 8th edition), which views all of psychology from an evolutionary perspective. His recent research focuses on the role of play in human evolution and how children educate themselves through play and exploration, when they are free to do so. He has expanded on these ideas in his book, *Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life* (Basic Books), which has been translated into 18 languages. He also authors a regular blog called Freedom to Learn, for *Psychology Today* magazine and a Substack series entitled *Play Makes Us Human*. He is one of the founders of the nonprofit Alliance for Self-Directed Education and the

nonprofit Let Grow, the mission of which is to renew children's freedom to play and explore independently of adult control. You can follow him on Facebook and find many of his published articles on his website.

Veronica Green is an Early Childhood Educator and Consultant with a focus on the Reggio Emilia approach, sensory processing, and loose parts play. With over 10 years of experience, Veronica integrates her professional work with her journey as a parent to an autistic son, bringing unique insights into supporting children who are differently wired. She inspires educators worldwide through her trainings, blog, and resources, helping them create environments that foster curiosity, wonder, and inclusive play. Veronica is dedicated to changing perspectives on behaviour through collaborative strategies and creating learning spaces where every child's abilities are embraced. Based in Winnipeg, MB, she offers professional development both locally and online, and is an executive member of Manitoba Reggio.

Monica Lytwyn is an Indigenous woman originally from Kinoséw Sipi Cree Nation in Treaty 5 who currently lives in Winnipeg. She is an Early Childhood Educator III with a Bachelor of Human Ecology and a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education (ECE). She is an original member and past chair of MCCA's Ethics Committee. Monica has worked in a number of capacities in early learning and child care (ELCC) over the years including as a volunteer, an Early Childhood Educator, a supervisor, an ECE instructor and curriculum developer at Red River College (RRC) Polytechnic, a consultant, and even as a policy analyst and supervisor in ELCC for the Province of Manitoba. She is currently an Educational Developer on the Early Childhood Development Research Team at RRC Polytech creating digital resources for the Science of Early Child Development (SECD).

Kisa Maclsaac is Métis, a mother, an educator, artist, advocate, and volunteer. She is an ECE III and holds a BA degree in Developmental Studies. Kisa jumped into the field of early learning and childcare back in 2002, has been a member of the MCCA Ethics Committee since 2008, and is a proud member of the MCCA Board of Directors. She is passionate about land-based curriculum, and loves to garden with children!

Sue Narozniak is a former Instructor and Academic Coordinator for the Early Childhood Education Program at Red River College Polytechnic and a founding member of the Manitoba Reggio Inspired Coalition of Educators (serving for 10 years as Chair and Co-Chair). Sue was the first Manitoban to study at the Loris Malaguzzi Centre in Reggio Emilia, Italy and has been deeply involved in supporting Professional Development of emergent curriculum and Reggio-inspired work within Manitoba. Sue is a popular ELCC

presenter and can often be found working on various yoga and Pilates challenges or being walked by the family dog along with her husband and daughter.

Marcia Nicole is a passionate early childhood educator and advocate with over 20 years of experience in the early years sector. As the founder of Ispyr to Educate, Marcia is dedicated to bridging the gap and reigniting passion for educators, teachers, and leaders through professional development, mentoring, and guidance. Marcia's extensive experience in early education has led her to earn a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree, and certification as an Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT), demonstrating her commitment to lifelong learning. Marcia is the host of The Inspiring ECE Podcast, where discussions focus on key topics, challenges, and successes within the early years sector, fostering a strong and connected community for educators.

Michelle Petricone is a registered Early Childhood Educator (ECE). Since 2020, she has been teaching at the University College of the North as an ECE College Instructor in Thompson, Manitoba. She also works part-time as an ECE Consultant at the Thompson Crisis Centre, a domestic violence shelter and resource centre. Before teaching, she worked with children with autism and related developmental disabilities in the home, childcare, and community, providing clinical skills instruction and behaviour reduction protocols based on the principles of applied behaviour analysis. She has a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Studies and an Honours Degree in Child Development. Passionate about the ECE field, she enjoys learning innovative ways to support children's holistic well-being.

Rebecca Prathipati is a Registered Social Worker who holds a Masters of Science with a specialization in the area of attachment across the lifespan. For the past 19 years Rebecca has worked within various systems focusing her expertise on child and adolescent mental health and attachment. Her experience has given her a vast appreciation for the resilience and healing that children experience in the context of secure relationships within the family and in the wider community. Rebecca is passionate about helping parents and caregivers respond to children's stress-based emotion and behavior with trauma-informed, trust-based strategies.

Ali Puumala is a passionate advocate and mother of four, whose life is dedicated to championing the rights and needs of neurodivergent children. Three of her children are autistic, with one also having an HIE brain injury. This personal journey ignited her deep commitment to creating a world where every child, regardless of their neurological differences, can thrive. Initially trained in behavioral therapy, she quickly gravitated toward a neuroaffirming approach that celebrates diversity rather than conforming to norms. Her expertise blossomed as she became a

certified Lego therapist and completed the Autism Specialist program at Algonquin College, equipping her with the tools to support children in innovative and compassionate ways. Driven by her own experiences as a neurodivergent individual living with ADHD, she has become a powerful voice in the fight for inclusivity and accessibility. Collaborating closely with the government, she is at the forefront of efforts to reform early education for children with disabilities. For her this isn't just professional work, it's a mission fueled by love, understanding, and an unwavering belief in a more inclusive world.

Catarina Raposo is an ECE II and has been in the field for 16 years and majority of her experience has been with school age. She believes that building relationships with children are the most important part of the job to help children succeed.

Tristen Sanness is an ECE II and has been in the field for 10 years. He loves playing Dungeons and Dragons, storytelling, and making movies with the school aged children he works with.

David Seburn is a certified Forest and Nature School practitioner who has worked as an educational assistant in an elementary school setting with the Winnipeg School Division for the last 15 years. He also has many years of experience supporting children with disabilities as a direct service worker for the Government of Manitoba, as well as planning and facilitating outdoor day camps with Momenta Inc. David is a father of two young children and loves spending time outside with them as much as possible. He strives to help foster not only a love but a reverence for nature in children. Helping them learn, play, and thrive outside safely all year long.

Leah Smith completed her Forest School Practitioner course at FortWhyte in 2016. Leah has brought her passion for nature-based learning everywhere she goes. With 20 years of experience and an honours diploma in Early Childhood Education, Leah has found inspiration in many settings of early learning. From large centres, to Montessori schools, to private multi-family care, to her own entrepreneurial Forest School sessions along the riverbanks of Winnipeg, her commitment to outdoor child-led curriculum runs deep. Leading workshops on risky play and the forest school ethos for independent childcare centres and professional development conferences has also been a big part of her career in recent years. Her current role as Director of Education at FortWhyte Alive brings her the opportunity to bring ECE perspectives and Forest School ethos to all programs in this non-for-profit organization.

Gerrie Stolz is a classified Early Childhood Educator III with years of experience in a variety of roles in the field of early childhood education. She started her career learning with infants and preschoolers, was an

instructor in the Early Childhood Education Program at Red River College Polytech and spent much of her career as a Quality Enhancement Specialist for the Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care program. The past five years she was the director at River Road Child Care. She recently accepted a new position as an Educational Developer in the Science of Early Childhood Development at Red River College, Research, and Innovation department. Gerrie has been involved in developing a variety of resources focused on early learning curriculum and inclusion. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Developmental Studies with an Advanced Diploma in Studies of Special Rights. Gerrie is a trained facilitator in Circle of Security® and a Forest School Practitioner. She is an active member of the Manitoba Reggio Inspired Collation of Educators and The Manitoba Inclusion Committee.

Nancy Tovell is a Program Coordinator at Bookmates Inc. As part of the team at Bookmates, Nancy has a wide range of experience in facilitating workshops with a focus on sharing early literacy strategies, tools and resources to support pre-school children's healthy development and learning capabilities. Prior to joining Bookmates, she was a contractor for a division of Scholastic Canada called "Books On Tour" and subsequently founded "The Book Girl", a company providing books to schools and child care centres in Winnipeg.

Ana Valle Rivera is a proud mother of three, a public speaker, a consultant, and the founder of Early Years Thriving. Ana has 17+ years of experience in the childcare field. She has direct experience working with children and families using inclusive and trauma-informed approaches. Ana has 10+ years of experience working in adult education and currently supports ECE practicum students at the college level. Ana has 8+ years of experience as a workshop facilitator and has facilitated hundreds of professional development workshops for thousands of educators, teachers, and parents. Ana has a Diploma in ECE, a Bachelor's Degree in Child & Youth Care, and is currently completing a Master's of Professional Education in ECE.

Michelle Vesey is an ECE III. She has been working in the child care field since 1998 during which time she has held a variety of front line ECE positions as well as administrative roles. She has worked in infant, preschool, nursery school and school age program settings. Currently, Michelle is an instructor in ECE program at Université de Saint-Boniface. She is a member of the MCCA Ethics committee and looks forward to guiding others along their ethical journey.

Carla Ward is a passionate and dedicated early childhood education expert with over 19 years of experience in the profession. As the founder of Early

Learning Foundations and host of The Everything ECE Podcast, she is committed to transforming the way educators approach early learning. Carla has worked in a wide range of roles, from classroom educator to leadership positions, and has become a sought-after speaker, workshop facilitator, and mentor for early childhood professionals. A certified Wonder-Based educator, Carla incorporates the power of curiosity and joy into her teaching and professional development offerings. Her unique perspective blends hands-on learning with intentional interactions, helping educators create environments that foster children's natural love for learning. She is also known for her work on developing strong educator-family relationships and empowering early childhood professionals to take pride in their role. Carla's key accomplishments include launching the ECE Podcast Academy, where she supports aspiring podcasters in the early childhood education profession, and hosting The ECE Experience, an innovative professional development conference designed to celebrate and elevate early childhood educators. Additionally, she founded The ECE Latte Lounge, a vibrant community for educators to connect, learn, and grow through resources like live coffee chats and a book club. With a passion for leadership, pedagogy, observation, and documentation, Carla helps educators and supervisors rediscover their passion for the profession, encouraging them to find new ways to make a meaningful impact. Driven by a deep belief in the potential of early learners and those who teach them, Carla Ward continuously seeks to elevate the profession and inspire others to find meaning and joy in their work.

Emily Webster is a dynamic force in educational engagement as the Social Media and Partnership Coordinator at Scholar's Choice, where she also excels as a webinar host. Her journey with the family-owned business began long before her official role in 2018, having grown up immersed in the educational community that Scholar's Choice nurtures. Emily holds a degree in Communications and Cultural Studies from Wilfrid Laurier University, which she utilizes to cultivate meaningful partnerships and craft compelling social media strategies. She is passionate about promoting the Playful Learning Approach—a method that inspires children to explore their creativity, cultivate a lifelong love for learning, and unlock their full potential. Emily's vibrant social media presence is a testament to her dedication, featuring daily posts that showcase engaging, play-based learning activities. Her work not only connects educators and parents but also transforms classrooms, daycares and homes into spaces where learning and play intersect seamlessly. Emily's innovative approach and deep-rooted commitment to education make her an inspiring voice in the field of early childhood development and educational outreach.

Travel & Accommodation Subsidy

- **To qualify for subsidy you must be a personal member of MCCA as of January 1, 2025.**
- Travel and accommodation subsidies are available to all MANITOBA MCCA members and will be reimbursed as funds allow.
- Travel Subsidy Forms are available on our website (May) and will be available at the MCCA Registration table.
- Subsidy requests must be received at MCCA no later than **June 6, 2025**. ALL receipts MUST be included with the Subsidy Application.
- Reimbursement cheques will be made payable to the name indicated on the form and will be sent out by the end of June.
- Accommodation subsidy will be calculated at \$50.00 per person per night to a maximum of \$100.00 per room, limited to Wednesday & Thursday night(s). Please attach hotel receipts.
- **Gas receipts: Please fill your tank up prior to driving to the conference and then again upon your arrival at home. Submit all receipts along with the subsidy form and we will reimburse the difference. Gas will be reimbursed to 50% of those from one centre. For example, if four people attend the conference we will reimburse a maximum of 2 people.**

Conference Accommodation

- Our conference site is the Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre, 1808 Wellington Avenue, located near the Winnipeg Airport and is easily accessible via Winnipeg Transit.
- For direct reservations call 204-786-4801.
- Room rates are \$138.00 single/double per night. There is an additional cost of \$10.00 per person, per night for a triple/quad. When booking please quote Group Block **#340795** and indicate that you are a delegate of the MCCA Conference. This will get you the conference rate.
- **Please note:** The hotel is smoke free, including the rooms.

Questions About Conference

If you have a question regarding:

- Online registration
- MCCA membership
- Making a substitution
- Registration process
- Forms

Call or email Debbie at 204-336-5065 or toll free 1-888-323-4676 ext. 227, dcrampton@mccahouse.org.

If you have a question regarding:

- Tradeshow

Call or email Kayla at 204-336-5061 or toll free 1-888-323-4676 ext. 223, kmauricio@mccahouse.org.

You can also contact Karen Kowalski for any conference related question. She can be reached at 204-336-5062 or toll free 1-888-323-4676 ext. 224 or kkowalski@mccahouse.org.

Information is also available on our website www.mccahouse.org.

To cancel a registration by the deadline, please email Karen Kowalski. Cancellation requests must be submitted in writing.

Registration Deadlines

- March 11, 2025** **Early Bird Registration**
Registrations received prior to March 11, 2025 will be entered in a draw for a complimentary full conference package for 2026.
- May 5, 2025** **Registration Deadline**
Registrations WILL NOT be accepted after 4:00 pm, May 5, 2025.
- May 12, 2025** **Last Day to Make Meal Changes**
- May 15, 2025** **Substitutions**
Substitutions accepted until May 15, 2025.
- May 17, 2025** **Banquet Ticket Purchase Deadline**
Last day to purchase Awards Banquet tickets.

Registration Policies



Photo Release Policy: By virtue of your attendance, you agree to usage of your likeness in still and video photography without compensation or notification. MCCA reserves the right to include your photo in *Child Care Bridges*, MCCA's website, Facebook, Instagram or any other MCCA publication/social media platform.

Registration Policies

- Registrants **MUST** be personal members of MCCA to qualify for the member rate.
- MCCA Centre Membership allows one board member to attend on the Centre Membership; this membership is **not** transferable to any of the centre staff.
- Organizations that have an MCCA Associate Membership can send one person at the member rate.
- Non-members can begin registering February 11, 2025.
- We do not accept faxed registrations, registrations by phone, or registrations at the conference.
- Post dated cheques are not accepted and all NSF cheques will be charged a \$25.00 fee.
- Invoices can be issued to sponsoring organizations (government/agencies). The registrations must be accom-

panied by a Purchase Order indicating the name, address, postal code, phone number of the organization and must be signed with a designate officer and their direct phone number. MCCA reserves the right to decline any Purchase Order.

- MCCA reserves the right to limit the amount of registrations from one centre for a workshop.

Cancellation Policies

- *Individual registrations:* Cancellations will be accepted until May 5, 2025 and only 75% of the registration fee will be refunded. A written request must be submitted to Karen Kowalski at kkowalski@mccahouse.org. No refunds will be granted after this date.
- Substitutes must be MCCA members, attend the workshops that are currently registered and must be made by May 15, 2025.

Special Requirements

If you should require ASL interpretive services or any other service, please call Karen Kowalski at 204-336-5062 or Toll Free (Manitoba only) 1-888-323-4676 ext. 224 or email kkowalski@mccahouse.org.

Thursday, May 22

7:30 am - Registration Opens
8:30 am - Welcome
9:00 am - 10:00 am - Keynote
Joanne Brown
9:00 am - Board buses for Offsite Workshops
10:00 am - 10:30 am - Transition Break
10:30 am - 12:30 pm - **AM session**
12:30 pm - 1:45 pm - **Lunch**
2:45 pm - 3:15 pm - Break
3:00 pm - 50/50 Draw
1:45 pm - 4:30 pm - **PM session**
4:30 pm - AGM Sign-in
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm - Annual General Meeting
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Board Game Night

Registration is located outside of the Centennial Ballrooms – Doors on Berry Street entrance.

The Trade Show Hours:
7:30 am – 3:15 pm (Thursday)
7:30 am – 3:15 pm (Friday)

Please ensure you complete your evaluation at the end of your last conference day. You can access the evaluation on the mobile conference app.

Friday, May 23

7:30 am - Registration Opens
8:30 am - Welcome
9:00 am - 10:00 am - Keynote
Dr. Peter Gray
9:00 am - Board buses for Offsite Workshops
10:00 am - 10:30 am - Transition Break
10:30 am - 12:30 pm - **AM session**
12:30 pm - 1:45 pm - **Lunch**
2:45 pm - 3:15 pm - Break
3:00 pm - 50/50 Draw
1:45 pm - 4:30 pm - **PM session**
6:15 pm - Awards Banquet

Interested in joining the 2026 Conference Committee?

**Email Karen Kowalski
@kkowalski@mccahouse.org
by June 6, 2025.**

Registrant's Name: _____ MCCA #: _____

Pronouns: _____ (will appear on your name badge)

Organization or Facility Name: _____

Business/Home Phone: _____ Personal Cell Phone: _____

Work Email: _____ Personal Email: _____

Classification: CCA ECE II ECE III FCCP OTHER

FOOD: I require a vegetarian meal **Vegan meal** **Gluten free meal**

**These are the only three dietary requests we can accommodate.*

I will attend the following Thursday evening events:

- MCCA's Annual General Meeting (4:30 pm – 6:00 pm) - No cost to attend
- Board Game Night (6:30 pm – 9:00 pm) MCCA Members: \$20.00 Non-members: \$40.00

Registration Instructions

- **If you choose to take two different workshops in a day, you must select an AM and a PM workshop for your 1st, 2nd, or 3rd choice. You can also choose to take a full day workshop. You can select a combination of either 2 ½ day workshops or a full day workshop for your 1st, 2nd or 3rd choices.**
- Each conference day includes the keynote address (unless otherwise noted) and lunch.
- ½ day registrations are not accepted and registrants cannot share days or two day packages.
- Each person must fill out their own registration form.
- If registering online you will not need to make a 2nd & 3rd choice because if the workshop is full it will not show up as an option.

Day & Session	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Thursday AM			
Thursday PM			
Thursday Full Day			
Thursday Offsite			
Friday AM			
Friday PM			
Friday Full Day			
Friday Offsite			

Turn over for conference fees, submit pages 31 & 32 to register.

Purchase Options

	Individual Member	Non Member
1 Day Conference	\$160.00	\$320.00
2 Day Conference	\$275.00	\$550.00

Conference Fees

1 Day	_____ x _____	\$ _____
2 Days	_____ x _____	\$ _____

Board Game Night:

MCCA Member	_____ x \$20.00	\$ _____
Non-Member	_____ x \$40.00	\$ _____

Awards Banquet Tickets: _____ x \$45.00 \$ _____

Names of the people attending Awards Banquet:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED \$

Method of Payment

Cheque enclosed in the amount of \$ _____

Visa or Mastercard: go to our website at www.mccahouse.org and register online.

Date processed: _____ Cheque No. _____ Amount: _____

Mail completed registration forms (pages 31 & 32) and payment to:

Manitoba Child Care Association, 2nd Flr., Royal Bank Building, 2350 McPhillips Street, Winnipeg, MB R2V 4J6