



THE MANITOBA CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION PRESENTS:

# BEYOND THE BELL:

*Rethinking the School Age Experience*



**COLLABORATION  
& NETWORKING**



**RELEVANT & REAL  
SCHOOL AGE  
TOPICS**



**HANDS ON TOY  
MAKING**



**2 DAYS WITH  
SCHOOL AGE  
EDUCATORS**

**2ND SCHOOL AGE CONFERENCE**

**October 16 – 17, 2026**

**WINNIPEG, MANITOBA  
VICTORIA INN**

# FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2026

## THE POWER OF PLAY IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

Research consistently shows that play is essential to healthy child development and that the brain develops rapidly in the first 5 years of life. But, play is so much more, it's how children make meaning of their world and how we can best prepare them for an unknown future. The world our children will inherit is filled with uncertainty.

Protecting play is not just about protecting fun, it is about supporting emotional resilience, problem-solving, and creativity in future generations. Children will get to grow up without shame for doing exactly what they should be doing as young children and that is play.

## ROOTING IN PURPOSE, PRACTICE AND PLAY

Play is not just beneficial for children; it is also necessary for adults. Play promotes creativity, problem-solving and resilience. Play can be healing and provide us with an open-ended way to express ourselves, but play is often misunderstood. Play is also dismissed when not rooted in purpose or experience. This workshop session resists a lecture-style presentation, participants will blend research-based learning about play with practice and hands-on experiences.

## THROUGHOUT THE DAY PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- Reflect and root in purpose
- Receive practical ideas and inspiration for activities
- Learn the research and developmental benefits of play
- Network with participants
- Get up, move, create and play!



## ANA VALLE RIVERA

Ana is a proud mother of three, a public speaker, TEDx speaker, a consultant, and the founder of Early Years Thriving. Ana has 18+ years of experience in the child care field, including OSC (out of school care), ECE, supervisory, and early intervention roles. She has direct experience working with children and families using inclusive and trauma-informed approaches. Ana has over 11 years of experience working in adult education and currently supports ECE practicum students at local colleges. Ana has 9+ 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 a Master's of Professional Education in ECE. Ana will be a PhD student in Child, Youth, Family, and Community Studies beginning in Sept 2026.

# SATURDAY OCTOBER 17, 2026

In this full day workshop, we are going to use our adult brains to make toys that make our little humans' brains happy. You're going to use power tools, measuring tools, and a gung-ho attitude to make cameras and catapults.

The skills you take from this will help you bring tool play into childhood and work safely with tools that might otherwise make you nervous. At the end, we're going to use all the skills we learnt for a super secret scrimmage.

We recommend bringing a willingness to learn and a healthy curiosity.

Incidental learning may include the nature of dendrochronology (the study of tree rings) , worldwide lumber poaching, and the various physical properties that form wood characteristics.



## QUINN NIKULAK

Quinn is the brain behind Kustom Kitties Canada, your all-Canadian supplier of wooden toys and furniture. Whether it's making toy cameras or giant pirate ships, he's dedicated to keeping the whimsy in the silliness. A teacher once upon a time, he moved into building toys and other things for kids when his first child was born and spent a considerable time in the NICU. He runs his business under a strict code of ethics and will always try to do the best for kids. You can find him in his workshop in Cupar, Saskatchewan building toys with his shop assistants (elves), teaching workshops to adults and kids alike, or advocating for early childhood education anywhere and everywhere.

# Registration Information

## Location:

The School Age Conference will be held at the Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre in Winnipeg

## Registration & Payment:

Register online using Visa, Visa Debit, or Mastercard

You can also register online and mail or drop off your cheque or pay with e-transfer

- E-transfers must be received within 24 hours of your registration

## Conference Fees:

Full Conference (2 Days): \$250.00 — MCCA Members     \$500.00 — Non-Members

Saturday Only: \$150.00 MCCA Members     \$300.00 — Non-Members

## Full conference registration includes:

14 hours of professional development (9:00am–4:00pm Friday/Saturday)

All materials for Saturday's woodworking workshop

- Take home your own catapult and camera!

Morning refreshments and lunch on both days

## Saturday conference registration includes:

7 hours of professional development (9:00am–4:00pm)

All materials for Saturday's woodworking workshop

- Take home your own catapult and camera!

Morning refreshments and lunch on Saturday

## Important Information:

- Register for the full conference or Saturday only (Friday-only registration is not available)
- Registration deadline is: September 28, 2026
- Cancellations are accepted until: September 28, 2026 (less 25% administrative fee)
- Substitutions are accepted until October 6, 2026
- No travel subsidies are available for this event
- Member rate applies to individual MCCA members only (active as of Jan. 1, 2026)
- Full payment must be included with registration
- (Purchase orders and faxed registrations are not accepted)
- Cheques payable to The Manitoba Child Care Association
  - **Mailing Address:** 2-2350 McPhillips St, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2V 4J6
  - If paying with cheque, you must still complete online registration.

If you have questions about the conference  
Please contact Kayla Mauricio at 204-336-5061 or [kmauricio@mccahouse.org](mailto:kmauricio@mccahouse.org)