

AECENS

Annual Professional
Learning Symposium

2024



WEAVING OUR STORIES
INTO PRACTICE

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SYMPOSIUM 2024

Event Format

The Symposium is a new event format for us!

Each participant will select 1 session to attend for the whole day to explore your chosen topic in-depth and to develop a community of practice around it.

The event registration form has spaces for you to select your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices of topics.

The Symposium also includes a Key Note Address, the annual Awards Luncheon, and a final gathering event with everyone together at the end of the day. AECENS members are also invited to stay for the Annual General Meeting after the Symposium wraps up.



For pricing and registration
please go to
aecens.ca/events

*Scroll through the pages
below for details on the
session and presenters*

Saturday, June 22nd, 2024

9:00am to 5:00pm

Rosaria Centre Multi-Purpose Room,
Mount St. Vincent University,
166 Bedford Highway, Halifax

- Parking at MSVU is free on weekends.
- For those not familiar with the campus, please visit the [campus map](#) (Rosaria is building 19) for where to park.
- The Multi-purpose Room is on the 2nd floor of Rosaria. We will all meet there for registration & the opening key note address.

KEY NOTE

Supporting Diversity and Inclusion
through Responsive Practice



DR. CHRISTINE MCLEAN, PHD

Dr. Christine McLean is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Child and Youth Study at Mount Saint Vincent University.

Prior to this role, Christine was involved in the ECE sector in Newfoundland and Labrador for 28 years in a variety of capacities including Registrar of Certification, Program Consultant with the NL Provincial Government, and manager of the Early Childhood Program at the College of the North Atlantic.

She is a member of the National Advisory Council for Early Learning and Child Care and an executive member of the Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC).





Indigenous Learning

Michelle & Brian will use traditional storytelling to explain the Mi'kmaq perspective of education and early education. Learn & share new ways of seeing how community & culture intersect.

BRIAN FRANCIS

Brian (aka Joe) is Mi'kmaq Elder who is also a medicine man. He is a widower who has 2 daughters and a grandson, granddaughter and great grandchildren. Brian will help anyone who needs it, and he will listen when you need someone to talk to.



MICHELLE PAUL

Michelle is a mother, treaty rights holder, water protector, land defender, advocate, & activist. She is a member of the Wasoqopa'q (Acadia) First Nation. Her advocacy work focuses on Indigenous allies and settler solidarity to resist colonial infringements on Mi'kmaw sovereignty, including the Alton Gas Resistance movement in Mi'kma'ki.



Newcomers In ELCC

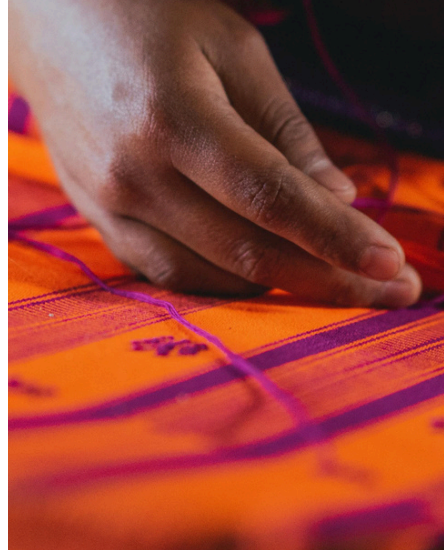
Can you imagine starting life over in a different country?

Did you know that some countries don't allow dual citizenship?

Do you have families and children from other countries in your classroom?

Would you be interested in supporting them in more culturally responsive ways?

Hopefully, our stories can bring different perspectives and build bridges to connect with those who are not afraid of learning something new and different.



JACKIE YOUKGYOUNG LEE

Jackie Youkgyoung Lee is originally from South Korea. She arrived in Halifax in the summer of 2011 to study early childhood education with the hope of getting a PR card in this beautiful country called Canada.

South Korea, doesn't allow dual citizenship, so Jackie is not Canadian. Still, she is very happy to say that she is Korean with permission to stay in Canada permanently, and feels fortunate to teach future early childhood educators through the EAL ECE program at NSCC.



ROCKSANA POULADI

Rocksana is originally from Shiraz, Iran. She immigrated to Halifax, NS in 2008, where she obtained her English for Academic Purposes (EAP) certificate followed by completion of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) diploma.

She has had various experiences as an ECE throughout the years, however the highlight is being a supervisor at ISANS and giving back to the newcomers of our society.



Engaging in Community Support Through Africentric Mentorship

How does an Africentric approach to Community & Mentorship work?

A key principle is: “Having a love for and wanting all people to prosper to be given opportunities and to be treated fairly and equally is all that should matter, living in today’s world knowing that we need to support each other is what should matter most, when one climbs, we all climb”.

Our mission is providing as many learners as possible with exceptional learning experiences that will help them build a strong, positive foundation for learning for life!

Trina began her journey in the East Preston Day Care Centre & Family Resource Centre programs. She is now an Executive Director overseeing and supervising a multitude of programs. Trina holds a teaching position with NSCC in the Afrocentric Early Childhood Educator course, having attained her Adult Teaching/Tutoring Certification in 2020. Trina is an active member of the Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Advisory Committee and the Nova Scotia Community College Afrocentric Early Childhood Educator Advisory Committee.

Trina lives by many principles that indicate the benefits of hard work, being humble, & caring for others.

Moashella is a mother, educator, author, & child and youth advocate. Her formative working years at the East Preston Day Care & Family Resource Centre and ultimately became its Executive Director.

In 2018 she co-founded *Learning4YoungMinds*, a company offering online and in-person workshops teaching empathy and socialization to young children; anti-racism training for educators and student support workers. She serves on the NSCC Africentric ECE advisory committee and fills the roles of faculty for the Africentric Learning Option (ACLO). She sits on the Board of Directors for the East Preston Day Care & Family Resource Centre and is a Facilitator for the Culturally Responsive Practice program.

MOASHELLA SHORTE & TRINA FRASER



Empowering Collaboration: Inclusion Through Parent-ECE Partnership

We will explore a parent's perspective of life with a child with disabilities and the challenges they face, and also look at the importance of the role of an ECE for families and the ECE's perspective of working with children with disabilities. There will be discussion and examples of what supports do you need at your centres to improve accessibility, and look at what "orientation" looks like for a new child with disabilities. We will also have a hands-on/tactile component, such as looking at G tubes, rescue meds, and other supplies.



BETH TOWLER



Formally educated in London, England in the fields of Child Development and Child Welfare, ultimately obtaining a degree in Early Childhood Education. She managed/directed a non-profit preschool for 9 years. In 2016 she moved to Nova Scotia and has worked in the position of daycare Director and Head Junior Primary teacher. In 2019 she gratefully accepted the role of Executive Director at Wee Care Developmental Centre. Beth's combined 20+ years of working with children in early years continues to support her enthusiasm within this wonderfully rewarding field.

Krysta has been advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) since childhood in various ways. One of her passions is sharing information and providing education on social justice and DEI topics in both formal and informal ways. She is a white, settler, queer person who lives with a brain injury, PTSD, ADHD, and is autistic. She and her spouse Jackie are parents to Frankie, a medically complex toddler, who has attended Wee Care full time for the last 3 years. Krysta truly believes there is a way for all children to be included in the early childhood setting with the right supports in place for staff, families, and children.

KRYSTA HARTLEN CÔTÉ (SHE/THEY)





What Is Neurodiversity?

Join Melissa and Leanne as they walk through their discovery and understanding of neurodiversity. Explore and share your own experiences with neurodiversity and how it impacts your daily practice. What are the challenges and strengths of being neurodivergent in an early learning environment? What does a neurodiversity affirming approach mean to professionals and the children we work with?

Using reflective practice, we will investigate what we can do to ensure accessible work spaces, policies and expectations. Come together to celebrate what makes us different!

MELISSA CASTONGUAY



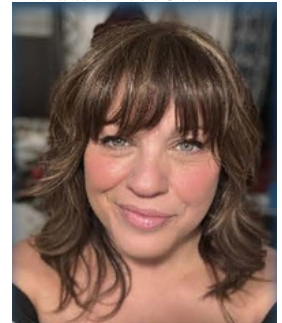
Melissa Castonguay is an Early Childhood Educator, a neurodiversity movement advocate, an advisor for childcare transformation in Nova Scotia, and the parent of a neurodivergent child. She is also a professional consultant, facilitating workshops focused on neurodiversity affirming pedagogical practice and the implementation of supportive accommodations for neurodivergent children and educators.

Melissa is striving to inspire truly inclusive early learning for all and believes whole-heartedly in the value of meeting children where they are, accepting them for who they are, and supporting them in reaching their lifelong potential.

Leanne Thomey was born and raised in Newfoundland and Labrador. She left Newfoundland in 1999 to pursue a degree in Child and Youth Care from the University of Victoria. She began working in the field in 2000 as an Early Childhood Educator, teaching all age groups, moving on to become a Family Home Consultant in 2012.

Leanne is a people person, and a positive thinker. She is very self-motivated and enjoys taking on new tasks. She is a lifelong learner who believes we can always be more.

LEANNE THOMEY



Beyond Gender Binary

This session will cover an understanding about Gender Diversity and how we will be able to translate it to the work we do with children & families.

Through story-telling and open conversations by the presenters, participants will learn essential terminologies and context of gender, and lay the groundwork to meet where the participants are in relation of their own knowledge and experience of gender.

What the presenters hope to achieve is for participants to gain appreciation and acceptance that gender is beyond binary, thus, normalizing conversations around gender especially with children, families, & their colleagues.



SPENCE PRYOR



Spence graduated from NSCECE in 2021 and began his career at one of the College's lab schools in Halifax. Spence is a sought-after public speaker, engaging learners through discussions on gender diversity in early childhood, and creating gender inclusive environments. In 2015 Spence began his social transition as a transmale. Navigating his own identity journey gave him insight into the challenges and misconceptions surrounding gender diversity, which led to him advocating for gender inclusion, & educating others on its importance. He recognized the need for greater awareness and acceptance, particularly in early childhood education where biases start forming at a young age and where educators need to ensure children's identities are respected and celebrated in their learning environments.

B obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work at Miriam College, Philippines, in 2003. In 2012 he immigrated to Halifax. He graduated from NSCECE in 2016 and promptly began his career at Point Pleasant Child Care Centre. B also became a Canadian Citizen in 2016, and published a chapter in *Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments: Creating, Supporting and Collaborating* by Susan Stacey, where he began to be recognized for his work in raw documentation. In 2017, B transitioned as transmale & began his journey to physical transition. His valuable experience paved the way to advocacy work around Gender Inclusion, including co-presenting workshops on Gender Inclusion with Sexual Health Expert Emily Martinello. He continues advocacy work in Inclusion & Diversity, at the same time teaching part-time at the NSCECE, and working with children and families.

B DE GUZMAN



AWARDS



ECCE 20+ Service

The ECCE 20+ Service Award honours licensed Early Childhood Education programs in Nova Scotia which have been providing services to children and families for 20 years or more.



Commitment to Care

Years of Commitment working in Early Childhood Education. Must currently work in a recognized early learning and care program in Nova Scotia and have been in the field for a specific number of years i.e.: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 or 26 and up.



ECLC Excellence Program or Practice

The Award of Excellence for Program honour will be awarded to a Nova Scotia early childhood education program that provides outstanding and high-quality early childhood care and learning to the children enrolled in the program.

The Award of Excellence for Practice honours the exceptional accomplishments and dedication of Educators. This honour will be awarded to an individual who consistently demonstrates best practices in their care of young children and an outstanding dedication to the children they care for and to the early childhood education profession.



Caring at Work

The Caring at Work Award is recognition of individual early learning and care practitioners by their peers in the ECE community.