HCCAO
HOME CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

2026 Home Child Care Conference

Thriving Together: Empowering Licensed Home Child Care for the Future



Event Program

October 21-23, 2026
Novotel Hotel, North York

Register:
hccao.com/conference

Welcome to Toronto!

We are so glad that you are here! Please use this section to inspire ways to chart your exploration of Toronto during your stay.

Around the hotel

Dining

The Keg Steakhouse & Bar - 5015 Yonge St.
Bao House - 5336 Yonge St.
Aroma Espresso Bar - 8 Park Home Ave.
Trio Restaurant & Bar - At the hotel

Other nearby favourites:

- Pizzeria Libretto
- Konjiki Ramen
- Kinton Ramen
- Wako Sushi
- Mezza Notte Trattoria

Getting Around Toronto

The Novotel Toronto North York has direct indoor access to North York Centre subway station, putting downtown Toronto just a subway ride away. No car required. The hotel is on **TTC Line 1**, making it easy for attendees to travel south toward downtown attractions, restaurants and theatres. The hotel itself has direct indoor subway connection and approximately 25-minute subway journey to downtown.

Entertainment

Meridian Arts Centre - 5040 Yonge St.
Mel Lastman Square - 5100 Yonge St.
Lee Lifson Art Park - 223 Gladys Allison Pl.

Shopping & Essentials

RioCan Empress
Shoppers Drug Mart



Novotel Toronto North York



Arts, Culture & Museums

Psychedelics: Art. Culture. Science.
Discover one of the ROM's major exhibitions of 2026. *Psychedelics: Art. Culture. Science.* explores the historical, cultural and scientific significance of altered states of consciousness.

Sunday Best: The Power & The Glory of Black Style. On view during October 21–23 | Art Gallery of Ontario
Explore the AGO's major new exhibition celebrating the history and cultural significance of Black style and self-fashioning.

The Karate Kid – The Musical
October 21–23 | Princess of Wales Theatre
Experience the Canadian premiere of The Karate Kid – The Musical, bringing the beloved 1984 film to the stage through music, choreography and storytelling. The production explores friendship, mentorship, resilience and the relationship between Daniel LaRusso and Mr. Miyagi.



Art Gallery of Ontario

Hell's Kitchen
October 21–23 | CAA Ed Mirvish Theatre
Inspired by the life and music of Alicia Keys, Hell's Kitchen follows a 17-year-old girl growing up in New York City as she discovers her artistic voice and finds her way through family, ambition and first love.

Sleuth
October 21–23 | Harbourfront Centre
For something a little more suspenseful, catch Sleuth, a classic psychological thriller presented as part of Shaw Festival at Harbourfront Centre. Expect deception, rivalry, twists and plenty of mind games.

MONKS
October 21–23 | Tarragon Theatre
Looking for something a little unconventional? MONKS is a one-hour physical comedy described as a "clown epic," following two medieval monks whose quiet monastery life is turned upside down by a wagon full of unexpected visitors.

Allison Russell with Elisapie & AHI
Thursday, October 22 | Massey Hall
Spend an evening at one of Toronto's most iconic concert venues. Acclaimed singer-songwriter Allison Russell performs with special guests Elisapie and AHI.



Ed Mirvish Theatre

Welcome letter from our Board President and Vice-President

When we are asked how HCCAO does its best work, the answer is always the same, **we do it together**. Throughout the year, members from across Ontario come together to share ideas, challenge one another, strengthen practice, advocate for the sector, and find new ways to professionalize and advance licensed home child care. This collective work is helping to position home child care as a strong, essential solution within the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care system, and as an important part of the future of early learning and child care in Ontario.

Our annual Institute and Conference events are the most important opportunities we have to come together. It is a time to meet colleagues, learn from one another, reflect on where we have been, and think strategically about where we need to go next. Each year, we gather in a different community, communities that are deeply connected to the children, families, providers, and neighbourhoods served by licensed home child care. In doing so, we are reminded that the work we do at a provincial level ultimately has to make a difference where it matters most, in local communities.

This year's theme, **Thriving Together: Empowering Licensed Home Child Care for the Future**, speaks directly to that responsibility. The future of home child care, and the future of early learning and child care more broadly is something we are building together. Our shared responsibility is to ensure that children and families can access high-quality care in the communities where they live, and that licensed home child care providers have the recognition, support, resources, and opportunities they need to deliver that care and thrive in their work.

That is why the work of HCCAO matters. Our advocacy, policy, and sector development work is not an end in itself. Its value is realized when it strengthens the conditions in which members operate, when provincial conversations lead to better local opportunities, when policy decisions recognize the realities of home child care, when partnerships open doors for our members, and when the voice of the sector helps shape a system that works better for children, families, providers, and communities.





We should also take a moment to recognize what we have accomplished together.
Across all levels of government, HCCAO continues to build and sustain a collaborative model of partnership. We continue to be welcomed into conversations with government and sector partners because of the knowledge, experience, and collective voice that our membership brings. These relationships give us an opportunity to influence how the early learning and child care system develops and grows, and to ensure that the realities of licensed home child care are part of those conversations.

At the same time, we know that influence only has meaning if it translates into impact for members. You should be able to see the value of HCCAO in your own communities, in the policies that shape your work, in the growing recognition of licensed home child care as a fundamental part of an emerging system, in the resources and tools available to support your organizations and providers, in stronger partnerships, and in the opportunities created when our sector speaks with a collective voice.

This year, HCCAO has also strengthened its commitment to inclusion, equity, belonging, and diversity as fundamental principles in our decision-making and our work. This is part of our responsibility to ensure that the future we are building is one in which every child, every family, and every provider can see themselves reflected, valued, and supported.
But above all, this work is collective.

It is about you, our members. It is about the providers and families you support every day. It is about those who have not yet found their way to our membership. And it is about the children and communities who depend on a strong, accessible, high-quality early learning and child care system. This is our work and we do it together.

We wish all HCCAO members a wonderful conference week and look forward to seeing what emerges from our time together in Toronto.

Brenda Ferguson
President

Diane Daley
Vice President





A message from our conference hosts

On behalf of the four Toronto hosting organizations, it is our great pleasure to welcome members of HCCAO, sector colleagues, partners, and guests to Toronto for this year's Annual Conference.

We are delighted to host you in one of Canada's most vibrant, diverse, and dynamic cities. Toronto is a city shaped by its neighbourhoods, cultures, communities, and people, and we hope that, alongside your participation in the Conference, you will have an opportunity to experience some of what our city has to offer. A selection of information and suggestions has been included in the Conference program to help you enjoy your time in Toronto.

This year's Conference has been thoughtfully developed to provide a diverse range of learning opportunities that reflect the many roles, experiences, and interests represented within licensed Home Child Care. Through keynote presentations, workshops, professional dialogue, and opportunities for shared learning, our goal has been to create a program that supports professional growth, encourages new ideas, and offers practical perspectives that participants can bring back to their organizations and communities.

Professional learning is strengthened by the relationships we build along the way. For this reason, we warmly invite all participants to join us for our Wednesday evening reception. This gathering will provide an informal opportunity to reconnect with longtime colleagues, meet new people from different communities across the province, and celebrate the strength of our sector. The evening will also include a brief presentation highlighting Indigenous perspectives, accompanied by live music and hors d'oeuvres.

NETWORK CHILD CARE SERVICES
FOUNDED IN 1991

Macaulay Centres for Children

HERITAGE
HOME CHILD CARE SERVICES

FAMILY DAY

We are especially pleased to introduce a dedicated day for executives and organizational leaders. This new component of the Conference provides an opportunity for leaders to participate in presentations focused on organizational development and emerging sector priorities, while also creating valuable space to connect with colleagues from across Ontario, exchange perspectives, share experiences, and learn from one another.

We hope this year's Conference will leave you informed, inspired, renewed, and even more connected to colleagues from across Ontario. Most importantly, we hope you will take full advantage of the opportunities to participate, contribute, ask questions, share your own experiences, and enjoy the company of those who share a commitment to children, families, providers, and communities.

We are pleased to welcome you to Toronto, and to 2026 HCCAO Annual Conference. We wish you an engaging, enriching, and memorable Conference experience.

Network Child Care Services **Macaulay Centres for Children**

Heritage Home Child Care Services **Family Day Care**



New this year:
Leadership Institute

New this year, Senior Leaders from across the early learning and child care sector are invited to participate in a three-part workshop series around governance, system development, and sectoral advocacy.

When will the leadership institute take place?
On the second day of the conference, Thursday, October 22.

Where will the conference take place?
Novotel Hotel in North York, 3 Park Home Avenue, North York.

Who is the leadership institute intended for?
Executive Directors/CEOs, Senior Leaders, and Sectoral Advocates within the licensed early learning and child care sector **not specific to home child care.*

Do I have to be an HCCAO member to attend?
You do not have to be a member to attend the leadership institute. If you'd like to become a member and/or participate in the full conference, we encourage you to purchase a full conference Non-Member ticket!

Which ticket should I purchase?

- If you would like to attend **only** the opening reception (Oct 21) and the Leadership Institute (Oct 22), please select the Leadership Institute ticket ($245).
- If you would like to attend **the full conference**, including the opening reception (Oct 21), the Leadership Institute (Oct 22) and the final conference day (Oct 23), please select either a Member/Non-Member full conference ticket ($675-795).

What topics will be covered in the leadership institute?
We have three workshops prepared to engage senior leaders in discussion and learning around national child care system building, optimizing governance and senior leadership dynamics, and organizational succession planning.

Blue coloured workshops in this package indicate leadership institute sessions.

About HCCAO

HCCAO represents more than 80 Licensed Home Child Care Agencies which provide licensed, home-based early learning and child care in over 3,000 homes across Ontario, through sectoral engagement and advocacy.

Goals of HCCAO

- To encourage and promote the adoption and maintenance of appropriate **standards of practice** in the provision of home child care.
- To encourage and promote the **continuing professional learning** of all individuals, groups, organizations and government authorities involved in the provision of home child care.
- To encourage and promote **social action** as appropriate.
- To encourage and promote **research** in the home child care field.



Board of Directors

Ashley Collins, Compass Early Learning and Care
Brenda Ferguson, *President*, Today's Family
Cathy Kerr, Etobicoke Home Child Care Agency
Charles Abayomi, Macaulay Centres for Children
Cheryl Nolan, Andrew Fleck Children's Services
Dana Sharkey, *Treasurer*, Centrepoint Childcare Services
Diana Beatty, Family Space Quinte
Diane Daley, *Vice-President*, Family Day Care Services
Jodi McMahon, County of Wellington
Julie Keens, *Secretary*, London Children's Connections
Michelle Galloway, Region of Waterloo
Samantha Hamilton, Friends Forever Child Care Agency
Sylvain Guilbeault, Centre pour enfants Timiskaming Child Care
Spyros Volonakis, Network Child Care Services
Tracy Scharf, Sweetgrass Home Child Care Agency

DAY ONE: OCTOBER 21

6-8PM Reception event

6:30PM Opening Remarks:

More Than Land Acknowledgements: Choosing Relationship

The conference will open with a traditional hand drum song, creating a meaningful space for reflection, intention, and connection. This will be followed by a keynote exploring what Indigenous relations truly ask of us, not simply to learn more, but to be more intentional in how we build relationships with Indigenous children, families, educators, communities, and one another.
This opening will invite participants to reflect, spark curiosity, and embrace a shared commitment to learning throughout the conference. Participants will leave feeling grounded, inspired, and ready to engage in meaningful conversations and connections over the next two days.



Kristin Tyrer is Ililiwiskwew, a Cree woman from Moose Cree First Nation, currently residing in Brantford, Ontario. She holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and Aboriginal Adult Education and is an Indigenous Learning Consultant with the Centre for Indigenous Professional Learning. With 15 years of experience in Hamilton's Indigenous community, Kristin is passionate about revitalizing traditional practices, Indigenous ceremony, cultural safety, and supporting others through the teachings of Elders.



Shannon Murphy, a proud member of the Mohawk Bear Clan from Six Nations with Irish heritage, is the Provincial Manager for the Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association's Centre for Professional Learning. With over 20 years of experience in early learning, community engagement, advocacy, human resources, and capacity building, Shannon is dedicated to advancing healing, wellness, and systemic change while strengthening relationships and fostering respect for Indigenous worldviews.





DAY TWO: October 22

7:30-8:25AM	Breakfast and registration
8:30AM	Opening remarks
8:45-9:35AM	Opening Keynote
9:45-11AM	Workshops **A**
11-11:15AM	Break and networking
11:15AM-12:30PM	Workshops **B**
12:30-2PM	Lunch and networking
12:30-4:30PM	Vendor Market
2-3:15PM	Workshops **C**
3:15 PM	Closing remarks





Opening Keynote:

BEST IN CLASS™: The Power of Thriving Together, Reconnecting to Purpose, Contribution, Connection and Possibility

What separates a good organization from a BEST IN CLASS™ organization? In this energizing keynote, Karen brings home child care professionals together around a shared vision of excellence. Participants will reconnect with why their work matters, recognize the value of their contributions, and discover the collective power of working together. Whether leading an agency, managing programs, supporting providers, visiting homes, or beginning a career in home child care, participants will leave feeling valued and revitalized, with renewed pride, stronger connections, and fresh energy to move home child care from good to BEST IN CLASS™.



Karen Craggs-Milne is an award-winning global leadership and inclusion architect with 25+ years of experience across 75 countries and 150 organizations. Recognized as a 2026 Leader to Watch and Obama White House Changemaker, she helps leaders transform inclusion into strategic advantage. Drawing on her work with EarlyON professionals and public-sector, education, and community organizations, Karen inspires leaders to lead with humanity, connection, and care while creating organizations where people and communities can thrive.

A Leadership Institute Workshops (Oct. 22) 9:45-11AM

Fireside Chat: Succession Planning Best Practices and Lessons Learned

A critical role for any leader is ensuring that succession planning is in place - both at the CEO level and across the organization. In this panel discussion, we will explore how organizations can prepare for leadership transitions while maintaining organizational stability, culture, and performance. The discussion will include practical suggestions, and the latest thinking from the world of staffing and organizational development.



Moderated by Hugh MacPhie. Hugh is an author, keynote speaker, and strategic advisor who helps corporate, government, and non-profit organizations strengthen leadership, culture, and performance. Through his Magnetism philosophy, he shows how organizations can attract the people who matter most. Hugh is the author of "*Don't Forget Your Cape! What Preschoolers Teach Us About Leadership and Life*" and has worked with leading organizations across Canada. He is also a sought-after speaker and guest lecturer at several Canadian universities.



Marni Flaherty is the former Interim CEO of the Canadian Child Care Federation and served as CEO of Today's Family Early Learning and Child Care for over two decades. A Registered Early Childhood Educator since 1990, Marni brings more than 35 years of leadership experience in early learning and child care. A recipient of the Ontario Premier's Award and Hamilton Woman of Distinction Award, she is recognized provincially and nationally for her expertise and passion for quality child care.



Tim Cozier is a Partner at Vaco, where he specializes in talent acquisition, leadership development, retention, and succession planning. With more than 16 years of experience, he has helped organizations across a range of sectors build high-performing teams and address complex talent challenges. Known for his practical, results-focused approach, Tim empowers leaders to strengthen organizational culture, develop future leaders, and create sustainable succession strategies that support long-term success.



B Leadership Institute Workshop B
11:15AM-12:30PM

Working Better Together: Optimizing Your Board and Leadership Team Dynamics

When Boards and Leadership Teams work well together, organizations can thrive. In this interactive and engaging session, MacPhie and Company will share their observations and insights, and lead us in interactive discussion - providing you with practical and meaningful ideas to make governance better.



Hugh McPhie is an author, keynote speaker, and strategic advisor who helps corporate, government, and non-profit organizations strengthen leadership, culture, and performance. Through his Magnetism philosophy, he shows how organizations can attract the people who matter most. Hugh is the author of "Don't Forget Your Cape! What Preschoolers Teach Us About Leadership and Life" and has worked with leading organizations across Canada. He is also a sought-after speaker and guest lecturer at several Canadian universities.

C Leadership Institute Workshop C
2-3:15PM

Leadership: Key Learnings from the Initial Phases of Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System Building

Christopher is Executive Director of the Muttart Foundation in Edmonton, leading its work in early learning and care. He serves on the University of Alberta's Community University Partnership and the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care. Appointed to the National Advisory Council on Early Learning and Child Care in 2022, he provides advice on building Canada's early learning and child care system. He previously served on the National Expert Panel on Early Learning and Child Care Data and Research.



Dr. Christopher Smith is Executive Director of the Muttart Foundation in Edmonton, leading its work in early learning and care. He serves on the University of Alberta's Community University Partnership and the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care. Appointed to the National Advisory Council on Early Learning and Child Care in 2022, he provides advice on building Canada's early learning and child care system. He previously served on the National Expert Panel on Early Learning and Child Care Data and Research.

A Workshops A (Oct. 22)
9:45-11AM

Beyond A is for Apple: Mentoring Providers for a Literacy-Rich Home Child Care Environment

Start with what's strong, not what's wrong. This interactive session explores how a strengths-based mentoring approach can help home child care providers build rich, engaging literacy environments that go beyond the alphabet. Participants will discover practical strategies to recognize and build on providers' unique gifts, share creative literacy ideas, and explore new perspectives on mentoring that support children's early language and literacy development.



Terry Kelly is a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) and professor in Seneca Polytechnic's School of Early Childhood Education. Her career spans child care, early literacy, EarlyON, and professional development in early childhood education both locally and internationally. In 2026, she co-edited Rethinking Mentorship in Early Childhood Education and Care: Diverse Perspectives for Transforming Practice and Policy. Terry is also a registered yoga teacher, mother, and grandmother.

From Collaboration to Impact: Advancing Quality, Inclusion, and Advocacy in Home Child Care

Discover how strong partnerships between municipalities, home child care agencies, and community organizations can create more inclusive, high-quality home child care systems. Drawing on Toronto's experience, this interactive session highlights collaborative approaches to system planning, municipal leadership, and agency partnerships that promote quality, equity, and inclusion. Through practical examples and real-world success stories, participants will gain strategies to better support children, families, and home child care providers.



Nancy Hendy has 37 years of experience in disability services and has served as Program Manager of Every Child Belongs for the past decade. She is passionate about advancing inclusion, equity, and reconciliation while supporting children with extra support needs and ensuring families' voices are valued.



Angela Robertson is a Registered Early Childhood Educator with over 30 years of experience in early learning, family support, and children's mental health. As a Toronto Children's Services Consultant, she has played a key role in supporting home child care services and implementing Ontario's Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program.



Anne Hepditch is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and Program Manager with the City of Toronto's Children's Services Division. She is dedicated to strengthening early learning quality through collaboration, sector leadership, and continuous improvement, and has contributed to post-secondary education and research in early childhood education.

Inclusion of Children with Extra Support Needs within the Home Child Care Program

The session will examine effective approaches in supporting children with extra support needs in home child care settings. Participants will learn how to develop individualized plans, including setting up appropriate goals, strategies and resources in order to achieve the goals. In addition, the session will review the role of the Home Child Care Visitor in supporting providers and families. This includes tips for a successful collaborative process used to develop, implement, and monitor individualized support plans.



Toni Giovane brings 34 years of experience at Macaulay Centres for Children. Toni is an Early Childhood Educator and Resource Consultant specializing in inclusive practices and family collaboration. A Humber College graduate with expertise in Early Childhood Education and Special Needs, Toni is passionate about creating nurturing environments where children, families, and educators thrive.



Maritza Caro is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and Resource Consultant with experience in EarlyON programs and licensed home child care. Holding degrees in Early Childhood Studies and Sociology, she is passionate about collaborating with families and educators to recognize children's strengths and create supportive, inclusive learning environments.

Partnering Through Challenges: Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution

This session will explore strategies for building and sustaining positive relationships with families, even when difficult situations arise. Participants will learn practical approaches for managing conflict, communicating effectively during challenging conversations, and responding professionally and respectfully when concerns or disagreements occur. The session will provide tools and tips to help strengthen partnerships with families and foster positive outcomes for children in care.



Miguel Martinez, born in El Salvador, has over 20 years in personal development and is the head coach and founder of MTClife - a company dedicated to leadership, wellness, and mental health education. He is a TED Talk speaker, a North American Speaker and the author of the upcoming book "The 7 Imps." He is also the Program Director behind transformative initiatives such as Connect7, WellnessXP, The Playbook Leadership Journal, The Beautiful Mind Day Event, and IMPACT (a social media awareness program).

Putting CARE into Practice - Integrating Shared Purpose into How We Work

Moving from good to BEST IN CLASS™ requires more than a shared vision. It asks us to show up and work differently every day. In this engaging and practical session, Karen reveals her signature CARE Framework and guides participants through four powerful shifts that bring the BEST IN CLASS™ vision for home child care to life through everyday interactions, decisions, service and leadership. Participants will leave equipped with a practical framework for navigating competing needs, drawing upon different perspectives and making inclusive decisions, even in complex, compliance-heavy situations. They will be ready to translate shared purpose into how they communicate, collaborate and lead every day.



Karen Craggs-Milne is an award-winning global leadership and inclusion architect with 25+ years of experience across 75 countries and 150 organizations. Recognized as a 2026 Leader to Watch and Obama White House Changemaker, she helps leaders transform inclusion into strategic advantage. Drawing on her work with EarlyON professionals and public-sector, education, and community organizations, Karen inspires leaders to lead with humanity, connection, and care while creating organizations where people and communities can thrive.

B Workshops B (Oct. 22)
11:15AM-12:30PM

Leading the Way Outdoors: Supporting Providers to Champion All-Weather Learning

Discover the benefits of all-weather outdoor play and how to support home child care providers in creating meaningful outdoor learning opportunities year-round. Participants will explore practical strategies, build confidence in advocating for outdoor play, and gain tools to address common parent concerns around weather, safety, comfort, and risk, helping children learn, explore, and thrive in every season.



Lianne Terry is a Program Manager at Family Day with more than 25 years of experience in the early learning and child care sector. A passionate advocate for outdoor learning, she chairs Family Day's Open Doors Outdoor Learning Committee, leading initiatives that promote meaningful outdoor experiences and foster children's connection with nature.



Linda Saad is Manager of Pedagogy and Program Quality at Family Day, bringing 27 years of experience supporting children, families, educators, and communities. A member of Family Day's Open Doors Committee, Linda is passionate about outdoor learning and connecting children with nature. She champions the role of outdoor experiences in fostering children's development, well-being, physical health, and sense of wonder.

When Knowing Better Isn't Enough: Why stress changes how you show up and how to access the version of yourself you want to be.

This practical and interactive workshop explores the gap between what we know and what we can access when we are stressed, overwhelmed, or depleted. Drawing on nervous system science and somatic practice, Vivian Meraki helps participants understand how stress can influence communication, decision-making, and reactions. Participants will learn simple, body-based practices to interrupt automatic responses, restore capacity, and respond with greater intention. The workshop offers practical tools to better understand personal patterns under pressure and create the internal conditions needed to apply what we already know, even in demanding moments.



Vivian Meraki is an award-winning Human Connection Speaker, trauma-informed somatic coach, and founder of The Aliveness Journey. Drawing on 20+ years of leadership experience, she helps caregivers understand stress and nervous system regulation through practical, body-based approaches. A sought-after media expert and award recipient, Vivian makes complex ideas accessible, offering simple tools to build greater steadiness, capacity, and safety while supporting others.

From Monitoring to Mentoring: Supporting "Quality" in Home Child Care

Home Visitors play a vital role in supporting Home Child Care Providers while ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. Balancing the roles of administrator, consultant, mentor, coach, and compliance monitor, they are responsible for ensuring providers meet legislative requirements and maintain required documentation and practices. This session will explore practical strategies for monitoring compliance while inspiring and motivating providers to engage in ongoing professional learning and strengthen their commitment to delivering high-quality learning environments for children.



Miguel Martinez, born in El Salvador, has over 20 years in personal development and is the head coach and founder of MTClife - a company dedicated to leadership, wellness, and mental health education. He is a TED Talk speaker, a North American Speaker and the author of the upcoming book "The 7 Imps." He is also the Program Director behind transformative initiatives such as Connect7, WellnessXP, The Playbook Leadership Journal, The Beautiful Mind Day Event, and IMPACT (a social media awareness program).

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PRESENCE: The Art of Being Embodied

Explore the power of authentic presence and how it shapes leadership, communication, and meaningful connections. Through guided body and breath awareness, gentle movement, body language exploration, and self-expression practices, participants will discover tools to cultivate a more grounded, inspiring, and impactful leadership presence. Learn how being fully embodied can enhance confidence, connection, and purpose in every interaction.



Lisa Clarke brings a lifelong connection to the early childhood field, shaped by her experience as the daughter of an RECE and child care operator. As the founder of La La Wellness, Lisa has trained Early Childhood Professionals across Ontario and the United States in mindfulness and movement-based practices. She is also the author of I'm a Growing Yogi and has completed training in Infant Mental Health through SickKids Hospital and Harvard's Early Childhood Leadership Program. Lisa continues to create programs that support mindfulness, physical literacy, embodiment, and early learning.

C Workshops C (Oct. 22)
2-3:15PM

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Embedding DEIB into Daily Practice versus the Checkmark

This interactive workshop explores how to move beyond viewing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) as a checklist and instead integrate it into everyday workplace practices and Home Child Care environments. Participants will gain practical strategies to foster inclusive behaviors, make equitable decisions, and create a culture of belonging through their daily actions



Lisa Shortall is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and Resource Teacher with over 40 years of experience. An experienced trainer and mentor, she is dedicated to advancing pedagogical quality and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), supporting educators in creating responsive, inclusive early learning environments.



Nira Ponniah is a Registered Early Childhood Educator with over 25 years of experience and a Resource Teacher certification. A passionate advocate for inclusion, she continues to support educators, children, and families by promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) and strengthening inclusive practices across the sector.

Safer Care, Managing Risk in Home Child Care

This interactive workshop explores practical strategies for identifying, reducing, and responding to risk in home child care settings. Through real-world examples and discussion, participants will learn how supervision, daily routines, policies, communication, and emergency preparedness contribute to safer environments. The session also covers effective responses to incidents and complaints, equipping providers with actionable tools to strengthen safety, accountability, and risk management in their own programs.



Beth Gorchynski, B.A., M.S.A., is a Risk Consultant with more than 30 years of experience in the health and social service sectors. She specializes in quality and safety management, risk mitigation, policy development, and evidence-based approaches to learning from safety events.
Since 2019, Beth has supported clients across diverse industries by delivering risk education and helping organizations strengthen safety culture and manage operational risk.

Leading the Learning: Bringing Indigenous Roles, Responsibilities and Leadership into Home Child Care

This interactive workshop introduces the *Roles, Responsibilities and Leadership in Indigenous Early Childhood Education* resource, exploring the College of Early Childhood Educators' Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice through an Indigenous lens. Participants will consider how the resource can support professional learning, reflective conversations, mentorship, and everyday practice. Through both leadership and educator perspectives, participants will explore practical ways to deepen connections to relationships, community, and Indigenous ways of knowing and being, while strengthening ethical practice and professional growth.



Kristin Tyrer is Ililiwiskwew, a Cree woman from Moose Cree First Nation, currently residing in Brantford, Ontario. She holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and Aboriginal Adult Education and is an Indigenous Learning Consultant with the Centre for Indigenous Professional Learning. With 15 years of experience in Hamilton's Indigenous community, Kristin is passionate about revitalizing traditional practices, Indigenous ceremony, cultural safety, and supporting others through the teachings of Elders.



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Terry Kelly is a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) and professor in Seneca Polytechnic's School of Early Childhood Education. Her career spans child care, early literacy, EarlyON, and professional development in early childhood education both locally and internationally. In 2026, she co-edited Rethinking Mentorship in Early Childhood Education and Care: Diverse Perspectives for Transforming Practice and Policy. Terry is also a registered yoga teacher, mother, and grandmother.



DAY THREE: OCTOBER 23

7:30-8:25AM	Breakfast
8:30AM	Remarks
8:45-10AM	Workshops D
10-10:30AM	Break and networking
10:30-11AM	Raffle and announcements
11AM-12PM	Closing Keynote
12:30PM	Lunch and networking



Workshops D (Oct. 23)
8:45-10AM

Leading the Way Outdoors: Supporting Providers to Champion All-Weather Learning

Discover the benefits of all-weather outdoor play and how to support home child care providers in creating meaningful outdoor learning opportunities year-round. Participants will explore practical strategies, build confidence in advocating for outdoor play, and gain tools to address common parent concerns around weather, safety, comfort, and risk, helping children learn, explore, and thrive in every season. **The outdoor space used for the workshop will be "Dempsey Park" located at 250 Beecroft Road, North York**



Lianne Terry is a Program Manager at Family Day with more than 25 years of experience in the early learning and child care sector. A passionate advocate for outdoor learning, she chairs Family Day's Open Doors Outdoor Learning Committee, leading initiatives that promote meaningful outdoor experiences and foster children's connection with nature.

Centering Children's Rights in the Ethical Use of Images, Video, and Voice

As child care organizations increasingly use children's images, videos, and voices, it's essential to balance storytelling with privacy and protection. This workshop explores a child-rights approach to consent, representation, and ethical media practices. Participants will learn strategies for responsibly collecting, using, and sharing visual and audio content while respecting children's dignity, amplifying their voices, and ensuring organizational practices support their rights, well-being, and meaningful participation.



Caitlin Wood, RECE, MAECS is a professor, researcher, research ethics board member, and children's rights advocate with over 20 years of experience in early childhood education. Her work focuses on children's agency, voice, consent, inclusion, and participation, guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Through teaching, research, and community engagement, Caitlin supports educators in creating rights-respecting, inclusive environments where every child is empowered to thrive.

Use of Technology in Home Child Care Program

In this workshop, participants will gain practical insights into introducing new technology, supporting staff/provider adoption, addressing implementation challenges, and using technology to strengthen operations while keeping a focus on high-quality service delivery.



Claudia Magro serves as Supervisor, Special Projects at Macaulay Centres for Children, where she has been employed since 2017 and has led organization-wide initiatives in process improvement, technology implementation, data management, and change management. Claudia has provided leadership on major initiatives designed to strengthen service delivery and operational efficiency, including the implementation of new database and digital systems for Group Centres and Home Child Care programs.

Integrating Environment and Sustainability for All

Sustainability is more than an objective; it is a way of thinking that can be understood by all ages. Particularly when we work with children young period, this presentation examines the meaning of sustainability, the consequences of failing to adapt, and practical strategies for incorporating sustainable principles into education, play, and business. Explore how small actions can contribute to lasting positive changes.



Kirsty Lewis is a geographer and in her fourth year as an undergraduate student majoring in Climate and Environmental Change at the University of Waterloo. Her academic interests show how climate change is impacting our natural environment, and how these impact human societies and socioecological.



Jordan Wilton is an ecologist and final year undergraduate student majoring in Environment, Resources, and Sustainability at the University of Waterloo. Alongside her research interests in penguins and local beekeeping in Niagara, she centres her work on place-based learning and providing positive experiences for children in nature.

Making Data Work for You

Glory Ressler and Farwa Burny will share simple ways to think about, gather and use information from stakeholders to inform decision-making. Methods to gather perspectives that help identify priorities, deepen understanding and connection with providers, and identify strategies to make improvements will be discussed. The session will also include practical examples and tools that can be adapted for use in participants' own work.



Glory Ressler is the Director of Strategy, Policy & Quality Assurance at Mothercraft where she leads the collection and use of data to report on progress and identify areas where changes might be useful to service users and/or staff. From 2011 to 2020 Glory was the Canadian National Representative to the World Forum on Early Care and Education, and in 2017 she was named an Exceptional Master Leader by Child Care Exchange magazine. She has presented to local, national, and international audiences.



Farwa Burny is the Policy and Quality Assurance Officer at Mothercraft, where she supports policy development, program evaluation and organizational improvement. She leads surveys and other approaches to gather feedback from staff and service users, helping turn data and lived experiences into practical insights for planning and decision-making.
Farwa has a master's degree in public policy and is passionate about making data and evaluation practical, accessible and useful in everyday work.



Closing Keynote:

The Difference You Make: Leading With Purpose in a Profession that Changes Lives

As leaders, agency staff, and home visitors, you may not always be the ones caring for children every day, but you play a critical role in supporting the people who do. When we help others reconnect to their purpose, we strengthen teams, build resilience, and create environments where children, families, and educators can thrive. Through an unforgettable story of resilience, purpose, and perseverance, Danielle reminds leaders that the greatest impact they can have is helping others rediscover their why.



Danielle Campo is a decorated Canadian Paralympian, speaker, author, and coach. Diagnosed with a neuromuscular disorder at age two, she went on to win multiple gold medals, break eight world records, and earn 17 Paralympic and World Championship medals. Beyond sport, Danielle has raised millions as a National Ambassador for Muscular Dystrophy Canada and is a devoted mother of five. Her achievements have earned numerous honours, including the Order of Ontario, the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award, and Canada's Walk of Fame National Hero Award.



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