



FIRST NATIONS  
**Early Learning  
& Child Care**  
CONFERENCE

**OUR WAYS, OUR BEADWORK:**  
SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE

**FEBRUARY 1-2, 2024**

Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre | 1808 Wellington Ave, Winnipeg, MB

*"We have to work as a community to help children...we need each other."*

*—Elder quote*

# Victoria Inn Hotel Map



# Conference at a Glance

## February 1, 2024 – Day 1

- 7:45 – 9:00 Registration
- 8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 – 10:00 Grand Entry  
Opening Prayer  
Welcoming Remarks: First Nations Dignitaries
- 10:00 – 10:45 Our Beadwork presentation: FNELCC Advisory Committee members
- 10:45 – 11:00 Transition
- 11:00 – 12:00 Keynote: Ovide Mercredi
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch  
Entertainment: The Master Jiggers
- 1:10 – 2:25 Workshop Session 1
- 2:25 – 2:45 Transition
- 2:45 – 4:00 Workshop Session 2

## February 2, 2024 – Day 2

- 7:45 – 8:00 Pipe Ceremony
- 8:00 – 9:00 Registration and Breakfast
- 9:00 – 10:15 Workshop Session 3
- 10:15 – 10:45 Transition
- 10:45 – 12:00 Workshop Session 4
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch  
Entertainment: Zoongi Ogichidaa Ikwezensag Anishinaabe Nagamoog,  
Riverbend's Anishinaabe Hoop Troop, Rylee Sandberg
- 1:10 – 2:25 Workshop Session 5
- 2:25 – 2:45 Transition
- 2:45 – 4:00 Closing

## Aaniin/Boozhoo, Wajeeye, Hau, Wotziye/Edlanet'e, Tānsi, Hello!

As the Executive Director of the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC), I'm excited to be part of the First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Conference, Our Ways, Our Beadwork: Supporting and Strengthening Early Learning and Child Care.

The First Nations Early Learning and Child Care (FNELCC) team provides guidance and support to Early Learning and Child Care programs in all 63 First Nations in Manitoba. This work, referenced as Our Beads, is regionally driven and informed by the collective wisdom of our Elders, communities, partners, leadership, parents, and families.

This year's theme highlights "Our Ways and Our Beadwork" as FNELCC moves forward with this imperative work to support and strengthen Early Learning and Child Care. The work ahead also requires many hands, as it is a shared responsibility, including our partners among all our systems that support children, parents, and families.

We can expect a conference full of learning and connecting to ensure First Nations children start early to reach their optimal development and build positive futures grounded in our cultures and languages. I appreciate your commitment to making this happen.

Miigwetch,



Charles Cochrane  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MFNERC



## Welcome

On behalf of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), I welcome you to the First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Conference. We are all here to support the children, our sacred gifts, in all our communities. Together, we are stronger and can make a difference for children and families.

First Nations languages and cultures hold immense importance for preschool children. This early exposure fosters a deep understanding and appreciation of their First Nations heritage, enriching their cultural identity. By embracing these languages and traditions, children learn respect for diversity, develop a strong sense of belonging, and gain unique perspectives that enhance their cognitive and emotional development.

Moreover, integrating First Nations culture in early education promotes language preservation, ensuring these rich linguistic and cultural treasures are passed down to future generations.

I am confident you will have a fantastic two days of learning and sharing. I thank you for your dedication to Early Learning and Child Care.

Ekosani,



Howard Burston  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMC



## Our Beadwork

Our Beadwork is guided by the following child-centred principle:

Every decision, every investment, and every action we make in the work of the new First Nations Early Learning and Child Care mandate must be made with our children's best interests in mind.

## Our Beads

### Reclaim First Nations Languages and Culture:

Build a FNELCC system grounded in First Nations knowledge, languages, cultures, and land-based teachings.

### Promote Healing-Centred Engagement:

Embed healing-centred engagement in the FNELCC system to support the holistic well-being of children and families.

### Ensure High-Quality and Professional Development:

Ensure a high-quality FNELCC system by investing in skilled and fairly compensated program staff, particularly early childhood educators.

### Strengthen Community Capacity:

Recognize and accommodate local strengths, needs, and infrastructure requirements within the FNELCC system.

### Adopt First Nations Ways of Evaluation:

Demonstrate the value of FNELCC through First Nations methods of evaluation and assessment.

### Ensure Transparency and Accountability:

Build trust within the FNELCC community by implementing accountability measures that ensure transparency in funding and performance reporting.

### Strengthen the Early Learning Community:

Foster coordination and collaboration among FNELCC programs and with other services providers, including those serving children with additional support needs.

### Adopt a "Children First" Principle:

Prioritize the best interests of children by adopting a "children first" principle in all decision making, policies, and practice.

## First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Advisory Committee



From left to right:

Susan Edwards, *Director, Abinoojii Head Start Centre, Lake Manitoba First Nation*

Lianna Wanbdiska, *Director, Oyate Christinapida Daycare, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation*

Vivian Scott, *Councillor, Pimicikamak Cree Nation (former committee member)*

Penny Thomas, *Early Learning Child Care Programs Manager, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation*

Leanne Lavallee, *Coordinator, Aboriginal Head Start, Misipawistik Cree Nation*

Marilyn Mason, *Director, Poplar River Day Care Centre*

Natty Flett, *Director, Awasis Day Care, Garden Hill First Nation (front row)*

Victoria Antsanen, *Director, Lac Brochet Aboriginal Head Start Program, Northlands Denesuline First Nation (missing in photo)*

## Early Learning and Child Care Team

On behalf of the Early Learning and Child Care team, we thank everyone for participating in the FNELCC Conference *Our Ways, Our Beadwork: Supporting and Strengthening Early Learning and Child Care*.

As gifts from the Creator, children bring love, respect, joy, and laughter to our families—they make our families stronger and our communities whole. Our Elders have told us that each child carries a special gift entrusted to them by the Creator. These gifts will be carried by each child, to be used when they grow into the caregivers, leaders, and visionaries of our communities. (MFNERC, 2015, *Manitoba First Nations Guide to Support Early Learning*, p. 6,)

Sheila Murdock, *Early Learning and Child Care Manager*

Deborah McKenzie, *Administrative Assistant*

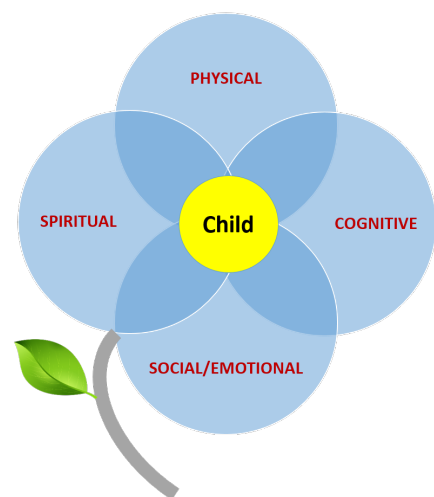
Anne Rundle, *Quality Enhancement Facilitator*

Stephanie Edwards, *Early Learning and Child Care Liaison*

Tammie Jonasson, *Early Learning and Child Care Facilitator*

Robin Potter, *Early Learning and Child Care Facilitator*

Donna McCorrister, *Finance Controller*



### Childhood Development

Children learn and grow in ways that are interconnected. When learning a physical skill, they also develop in the cognitive, social/emotional, and spiritual domains. Conference workshops provide educators with ideas to enhance childhood development in all areas of learning.

## Keynote Speaker Ovide Mercredi

Ovide Mercredi is a Cree born in Grand Rapids in northern Manitoba in January 1946. His first months were spent on the Summerberry winter trapping grounds of his father. He grew up in a family of 10 children and learned his values of justice, honesty, and kindness from his parents, George and Louise Mercredi. He was politicized by the construction of a huge hydroelectric dam constructed by Manitoba Hydro without any consultation with the local community.



While at the University of Manitoba, he helped found the first Indigenous Student Association in Canada, and he was its first president. He graduated with a law degree and practised criminal law. He later specialized in constitutional law as an advisor to the Manitoba Chiefs. In 1989, he was elected Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations for Manitoba. He became a key strategist for the Assembly during the time of the Meech Lake Accord constitutional reform discussions. He also had a strong leadership role in helping to resolve the Oka Crisis in 1990.

Ovide was elected National Chief for the Assembly of First Nations in 1991. During his first term, he led the negotiations for the First Nations in the Charlottetown Accord. He was re-elected in 1994 and served as National Chief until 1997. He addressed the United Nations in Geneva and New York. He led a human rights delegation of Canadians to the troubled area of the Mexican state of Chiapas. From 2005 to 2011, he was Chief of his home community of Misipawistik Cree Nation. He negotiated a new nursing station, satellite campus for University College of the North, community store, and truck stop and renegotiated a new compensatory agreement with Manitoba Hydro.

He co-authored *In the Rapids: Navigating the Future of First Nations* with Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond in 1993. In 2015, he published a book of poetry called *My Silent Drum*.

Ovide is an advocate of non-violent methods for change and travelled to India when he was nominated for the Gandhi Peace Prize. He has received honorary degrees from Bishops University, St Mary's University, University of Lethbridge, Athabasca University, and the University of Manitoba. He has taught courses on Indigenous topics as an adjunct professor at McMaster University, University of Lethbridge, University of Sudbury, and the Canadian School of Peacebuilding. In 2005, he was awarded the Order of Manitoba by the Province of Manitoba.

In 2007, he was appointed Chancellor of the University College of the North in Manitoba. He was the National Spokesperson for Treaties 1 to 11, from 2006 to 2014 having been chosen in a traditional and customary manner. In 2013, he was awarded the Distinguished Alumni award from the University of Manitoba. Ovide was on the National Board for the Heart and Stroke

Foundation of Canada and served on the board of the Winnipeg Art Gallery and The Boldness Project. He was a member of the Indigenous Leadership Initiative that supports Indigenous communities in taking control of their lands and resources and promoting nationhood.

In 2017, the Law Society of Ontario appointed him as an Independent Reviewer to examine how the society could serve its First Nations clients in a more culturally competent manner. From 2018 to 2022, he was the Lead Negotiator for NAN Health Transformation.

Ovide worked closely with Elders from all regions of Canada when he was National Chief, and he has continued his practice of seeking the advice and support of traditional Elders.

In the fall of 2022, Ovide received the Order of Canada in Ottawa.

At present, Ovide is the treaty advisor to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. He also works for Sioux Lookout Health Authority as an advisor on health transformation. Ovide is also a partner in Silent Drums Inc., which provides consultation and advisory services to First Nations communities.

Ovide is a strong believer in a positive future for all First Nations communities and recognizes the inherent strength and talents of First Nations people. He has made hundreds of speeches in different venues. He once said,

I say that I am an optimist about our future because I know that when we come together as men and women, as Elders and children, for the collective good of our people and the advancement of our communities and our societies, not only will we benefit, but Canada as a whole will benefit.

He has always maintained that his people possess the answers to their needs and aspirations. To him, healing and advancement can be accomplished by the simple application of traditional values such as respect, kindness, and tipaynimisouwin (self-reliance).

In his spare time, he truly enjoys golfing.

## Emcee Ken Bighetty

Ken Bighetty ran the most successful youth program in the mid-90s along with 140 Junior Chief and Council members in his home community of Pukatawagan. In a year, the community reduced the number of young offenders charged from 77 to 19. Ken, along with select Junior Chief and Council members, won an invitation to present at the National Youth Conference. During his work, an Elder told him, “You cannot tell a young person to stand up straight unless you do it first.” He left his dream job and pursued a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Winnipeg.

During his work as a Health Director, Ken dealt with many challenges, including nine suicides, revamping the employee policies, implementing regular staff meetings, building capacity, revising budgets to meet the culture of the community’s seasonal activities, and hiring additional nurses.

In addition to being very proactive in the communities, Ken prioritizes working on his energy and taking care of himself, which is one of the sacred laws. He is a Sun Dancer, painter, artist, and exceptionally gifted in finding laughter. He has seen miracles unfold in his Art Therapy sessions, and people experience the walk into their hearts.



## Entertainment

### The Master Jiggers



The Master Jiggers are a dance trio consisting of Ryan Richard, Ashley Campbell, and Felicia Morrisseau, all currently residing in Winnipeg. They also dance with the square dance groups United Thunder and the Asham Stompers, and they have been dancing together for almost 20 years.

Ryan is from Sandy Bay First Nation. He learned jigging in the footsteps of his grandmother, Irene Richard, and has been dancing since he was a toddler. Ashley is a self-taught jigger from Ebb and Flow First Nation who has been dancing for 19 years. Felicia is a self-taught jigger from Crane River who has been dancing since age four.

The Master Jiggers incorporate traditional Red River jigging with modern-day variations of stepping. They are accompanied by fiddle extraordinaire Shawn Mousseau from Lake Manitoba First Nation.

### Gloria Barker and the Zoongi Ogichidaa Ikwezensag Anishinaabe Nagamoog

Gloria Barker is from Hollow Water First Nation. Gloria is passionate about sharing her gift of teaching Anishinaabemowin and has been working at revitalizing the language for 30 years. She has produced a nursery rhyme book, co-produced a children's songbook, edited and translated children's books, and assisted organizations with language translation. She currently teaches at Riverbend School, instructing language classes evenings and weekends and presenting at conferences.

Strong Warrior Girls Anishinaabe Singers was formed in 2017. There are 15 girls from Grades 1 to 5 who sing in their Anishinaabe language. They have performed for the Jets, Blue Bombers, Winnipeg Ice, Westman Basketball Championships, and at many language conferences.

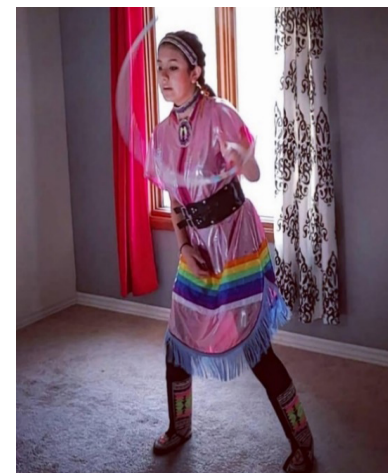
### Riverbend's Anishinaabe Hoop Troop



Riverbend's Anishinaabe Hoop Troop is a performance group from Riverbend Community School that blends traditional Indigenous Hoop Dance moves with modern contemporary dance and songs. They perform to songs made by famous Indigenous artists such as The Halluci Nation and DJ Shub.

The group includes students from Grades 1 to 5 in the Ojibwe Bilingual Program at Riverbend Community School. The students are dedicated to learning and practicing dances choreographed by their dance teacher, Ms. Chinchilla. All students are also powwow dancers involved in their school's powwow club. They are happy to share their dance at any opportunity!

### Rylee Sandberg



Rylee Sandberg is Anishinaabe and Métis on her mother's side (families from Roseau River and Skownan First Nation), and Cree on her dad's side (Norway House First Nation), and she was born and raised in Winnipeg.

She has been hoop dancing for 10 years (since she was four), and she started powwow dancing when she was two years old (jingle and fancy shawl); she currently dances fancy shawl.

Rylee's hoops have taken her to many places, and she has performed in several schools, events, towns, and cities. One of her most notable performances was at the World Hoop Dance Championship in Phoenix, Arizona, at the Heard Museum in 2016. At the time, she was just six years old, competing in the Youth (ages 6–12) category, and she placed third overall out of 31 dancers. She continues to share her dance, which is known as a storytelling and healing dance, where the dancer creates different shapes that represent objects and elements that exist in nature. Along with being a gifted dancer, Rylee is also a talented artist and writer and loves school and sports (especially basketball). She has recently started sharing her hoop dance teachings by facilitating her own workshops at various schools and daycares in Winnipeg. She is grateful to have the opportunity to take her hoops to different places and share her dance.

## Workshop Schedule Day 1

| Day 1        | Thursday, February 1                                       |  |
|--------------|--|--|
|              | Session 1  | Session 2  |
|              | 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm  | 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm  |
| Centennial 1 | Tradeshow  |  |
| Centennial 2 | Family Friendly Program Policies                           | Developing Safety Plans                                    |
| Centennial 3 | A Deep Dive into Schema Play                               | Data Sovereignty   |
| Centennial 4 | Looking at Mamàhtawisiwin                                  | Developing Early Numeracy, the Secret to Success           |
| Centennial 5 | Language and Teaching Networking                           | TOYBOX Activities for Caregivers and Children              |
| Centennial 6 | Fit Kids Healthy Kids                                      | Mobility Foundations                                       |
| Embassy A    | Total Physical Response                                    | Family Group Conferencing                                  |
| Embassy B    | Mental Wellness: Coping with Grief and Loss                | Empowerment through Risk                                   |
| Embassy C    | Babies Are Sacred: What's New in Safe Sleeping Guidelines? | Babies Are Sacred: What's New in Safe Sleeping Guidelines? |
| Embassy D    | Self-Regulation Room                                       |  |
| Embassy E    | Elders Room  |  |
| Carlton      | Nuton's Recipe for Food and Nutrition Education            | Positive Guidance through a Self-Reg Lens                  |

## Workshop Schedule Day 2

| Day 2        | Friday, February 2                            |   |  |
|--------------|---|---|--|
|              | Session 3                                     | Session 4                                 | Session 5  |
|              | 9:00 am – 10:15 am                            | 10:45 am – 12:00 pm                       | 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm                                    |
| Centennial 1 | Tradeshow                                     |   |  |
| Centennial 2 | Painting & Wellness                           |   | Developing Safety Plans                              |
| Centennial 3 | Prevent It!                                   |   | Nuton's Recipe for Food and Nutrition Education      |
| Centennial 4 | Let's Play                                    | Let's Play                                | Looking at Mamàhtawisiwin                            |
| Centennial 5 | TOYBOX Activities for Caregivers and Children | Data Sovereignty                          | Naskapi Niistim – Walking Alongside the Caribou      |
| Centennial 6 | Mobility Foundations                          | Fit Kids Healthy Kids                     | Why Should We Try a Little Coding with Children?     |
| Embassy A    | Family Friendly Program Policies              | Family Group Conferencing                 | Lesson Planning for Land-Based Learning for Children |
| Embassy B    | Counting with Purpose                         | Open a Book, Open the World               | Medicine Bag Making                                  |
| Embassy C    | Play Is What We Are                           |   |  |
| Embassy D    | Self-Regulation Room                          |   |  |
| Embassy E    | Elders Room                                   |   |  |
| Carlton      | Bundle Building: Breath Is Life               | Positive Guidance through a Self-Reg Lens | Laughing Yoga  |



# Workshop Descriptions

## DAY 1 – SESSION 1

### Family Friendly Program Policies: Creating Clear Connections Between Families and Educators

Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm

Centennial 2

Presenter: Robin Potter & Tammie Jonasson

Ever wondered how to create a family policy manual that is informative and easy to follow? This workshop is your go-to! Discover the ins and outs of crafting a family policy manual that answers all the questions families have. We'll show you how to make it clear, friendly, and packed with everything families need to know about your program's rules, values, and more.

### A Deep Dive into Schema Play

Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm

Centennial 3

Presenter: Cindy Curry

Have you ever noticed children continually throwing or dumping buckets of toys? Maybe you have observed children hauling toys and materials from one area to another. These are examples of two different types of schemas in children's play. In this workshop, we will learn about several common schemas, explore what they look like in children's play, and why it is important to recognize them. We will take this information and examine how we can support this play, offer developmentally appropriate experiences, and use it to build strong play-based curriculums.

### Looking at Mamàhtawisiwin

Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm

Centennial 4

Presenter: Dina Ducharme, Yvonne Kipling

Take a journey to explore ways Indigenous perspectives can be embedded into curriculum, programming, and everyday practices. Dina will introduce an overview of *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With – An Indigenous Education Policy Framework* and strategies from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We will then have a sharing circle on Murray Sinclair's four guiding questions. Our journey will then guide us down a path of Indigenous teachings and artifacts on land-based teachings, true history of Indigenous Peoples, Authentic Involvement, Putting Children at the Centre, traditional and cultural teachings, and Indigenous languages. Dina hopes to leave you with thoughts on how you can design and deliver an Indigenous-focused Child Care program that empowers children with a strong sense of identity.

### Language and Teaching Networking

Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm

Centennial 5

Presenter: Stephanie Edwards & Chickadee Richard

The session will start with a sage smudge. Stephanie will share what is in her Child Care Bundle and ideas and ways to implement language and culture in your child care program. Come prepared to share what you currently do in your programs that reclaim our languages and cultures. Grandmother, Elder, and Knowledge Keeper Chickadee Richard will discuss the importance of First Nations languages and share some teachings in caring for our young children, from the womb to age six. Chickadee will also be sharing her Sacred Family Structure Puzzle.

### Fit Kids Healthy Kids

Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm

Centennial 6

Presenter: Josh Murray, Paige Beaudry, Nadia Schimnowski

Learn about physical literacy, fundamentals of movement skills, and facilitating tips and tricks, such as organizing games and activities for ages two to six. Fit Kids Healthy Kids will teach you games that focus on getting kids moving while learning fundamental movement skills like throwing, catching, running, jumping, and many more. Be ready to learn many different games and activities that focus on getting kids active.

### Total Physical Response: Language and Learning in Young Children

Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm

Embassy A

Presenter: Agnes Carlson, Elder Lizette Denechezhe

As part of language revitalization, we are learning innovative ways and using new tools to help with language learning in the early years. Presenters will introduce Total Physical Response (TPR) in young children, one of the well-known methods in second language acquisition. We will demonstrate language learning strategies for different domains. As part of movement skills in language learning, we will conclude our presentation with a TPR Bingo, in the Dene Yatié language.

### Mental Wellness: Coping with Grief and Loss

Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm

Embassy B

Presenter: Penny Thomas

Coping with grief and loss can be difficult. Join this session to learn about the Mental Wellness Kit. Discover new resources and activities to assist with the healing process and engage in an activity you can share with clients in your community.

### Babies Are Sacred: What's New in Safe Sleep Guidelines?

Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm

Embassy C

Presenter: Elizabeth Decaire & Joanna Thich

Sleep-related infant deaths are the leading cause of death of First Nations babies under one year of age. Yet, there is significant misinformation and limited First Nations-centred resources to promote safe sleep. Participants of this workshop will be trained to use the newly released resource *Babies Are Scared: A Guide to Safe Sleep*. This resource is an interactive tool to have conversations and create safe sleep plans with families in a trauma-informed way.

### Self-Regulation Room

Sessions 1 – 5 (open workshop)

Embassy D

Presenter: Stephanie Edwards, Jessica Daniels

As educators, we experience varying levels of stress. We need to know when we are becoming too anxious or stressed and then make time to calm ourselves so we can help children find their calm. Dr. Stuart Shanker states, "When an individual's stress levels are too high, various brain/body regulatory systems support thinking, emotion regulation, social engagement, and even metabolic recovery are compromised. The signs of dysregulation can show up in behaviour, mood, attention, and physical well-being of a child, teen, or adult." This room is set up for your self-care throughout the conference—if you are feeling stressed, you are welcome to enter the room and find ways to calm yourself. Calm begets calm.

### **Nuton's Recipe for Food and Nutrition Education: Four Ingredients to Make a Difference**

**Session 1: Thursday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Carlton**

Presenter: Amanda Hamel

The messages we receive about food, bodies, and movement are often control and restriction-based, which can hinder children's natural curiosity around food. This can be a recipe for disaster. Join Amanda in this interactive workshop and stir up a fresh perspective on food, eating, and body image to help you create positive food and eating environments in child care settings. Learn Nuton's recipe for impactful food exploration. Attendees receive a free educator toolkit with reflective activities and resources.

## **DAY 1 – SESSION 2**

### **Developing Safety Plans: A Hands-On Workshop for Directors and Coordinators**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Centennial 2**

Presenter: Robin Potter & Tammie Jonasson

Calling all directors and coordinators! This workshop is tailored specifically for you. Together, we'll explore the provincial guidelines for creating enhanced safety plans, focusing on the unique needs of First Nations child care centres and Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve programs. Using a practical approach, we'll dive into the step-by-step process outlined in the resource guide, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how to develop, evaluate, and implement safety policies specific to your programs. Through collaborative discussions and real-world examples, we'll adapt existing safety protocols to address a variety of potential situations, empowering you to foster safe and secure environments for the children and communities you serve.

### **Data Sovereignty**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Centennial 3**

Presenter: Carla Cochrane, Stephanie Sinclair, Dr. Taylor Morrisseau

In this session, we will be discussing Data Sovereignty by looking at the history of self-determination, culture, and traditions. We will share what Data Sovereignty is, the difference between Western versus First Nations research and ethics, and explore the importance of building and maintaining relationships. During the workshop, we will engage attendees on priority areas within Early Learning and Child Care data to help communities and organizations to move toward their visions.

### **Developing Early Numeracy, the Secret to Success**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Centennial 4**

Presenter: Liz Barrett

A cornerstone for learning, especially in math, is practice, confidence, and helping young students become comfortable with the language of numbers. Mindful instruction is a big part of developing student confidence and exploring the wonderful world of numbers. JUMP math lessons are prepared to support you to be a great math teacher.

### **TOYBOX Activities for Caregivers and Children**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Centennial 5**

Presenter: Sheri-Lynn Skwarchuk, Liz Keeper-Garson, Leanne Lavallee, Vivian Scott, Madison Young, Jeannie Kerr

TOYBOX provides free, fun, and playful evidence-based activities in learning letters and numbers and supporting wellness for caregivers and their 2-to-8-year-old children to provide a good learning foundation for life. (See TOYBOXManitoba.ca) These activities are planned to create a good foundation for children's learning and life. We will work together with the audience to learn about the activities used to promote learning and wellness at home and in education settings. We will talk about ideas to add, how to have conversations with young children, and why learning and wellness with young children is important. Come meet our learning friends, Litty, Nume, and Welly, and learn about what all the coloured TOYBOX t-shirts are all about! Prize draws and giveaways included!

### **Mobility Foundations**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Centennial 6**

Presenter: Tricia Klassen-Morton

Mobility means moving naturally, with control but without noticeable effort. Good mobility allows you to perform the movements and exercises that are a part of daily life, including working with children. Learn how to enhance your mobility and flexibility with Mobility Foundations to move better, feel better, minimize or eliminate pain, improve overall health and well-being, and relieve stress. Join me and start moving more freely!

### **Family Group Conferencing as Implemented at Isobel's Place and Child Development Centre**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Embassy A**

Presenter: Lisa Champagne & Brenda Berens

Our workshop will provide an overview of Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Family Group Conference program, which is an Indigenous-led family group decision-making model for the care and protection of children. We will specifically focus on the program implementation within Isobel's Place and how young moms with babies are supported to meet their goals. Participants will learn about resources available, Isobel's Place Program, the Child Development Centre, the Family Group Conference model, and the findings of our Indigenous-focused evaluation.

### **Empowerment through Risk**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Embassy B**

Presenter: Leah Smith

In this workshop we will discuss an important first step toward supporting goals of more time in nature for outdoor/risky play: our own state of emotional regulation. Looking at our unique perspectives on what we deem to be risky through the lens of our lived experience and beliefs, we can find ways to expand our comfort zone and engage with the natural world in a grounded way. Layering in what we know about our nervous system, our animal instincts, and our need for time in nature, we can explore how to be an emotional safe space for colleagues, parents and most importantly, children. With interactive conversations, brainstorming sessions, sit spots, and time for reflection, this workshop will leave you feeling grounded and capable of building your resilience through understanding and assessing risk.

### **Babies Are Sacred: What's New in Safe Sleep Guidelines?**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Embassy C**

Presenter: Elizabeth Decaire & Joanna Thich

Sleep-related infant deaths are the leading cause of death of First Nations babies under one year of age. Yet, there is significant misinformation and limited First Nations-centred resources to promote safe sleep. Participants of this workshop will be trained to use the newly released resource, *Babies Are Scared: A Guide to Safe Sleep*. This resource is an interactive tool to have conversations and create safe sleep plans with families in a trauma-informed way.

### **Self-Regulation Room**

**Sessions 1 – 5 (open workshop)**

**Embassy D**

Presenter: Stephanie Edwards, Jessica Daniels

As educators, we experience varying levels of stress. We need to know when we are becoming too anxious or stressed and then make time to calm ourselves so we can help children find their calm. Dr. Stuart Shanker states, “When an individual’s stress levels are too high, various brain/body regulatory systems support thinking, emotion regulation, social engagement, and even metabolic recovery are compromised. The signs of dysregulation can show up in behaviour, mood, attention, and physical well-being of a child, teen, or adult.” This room is set up for your self-care throughout the conference—if you are feeling stressed, you are welcome to enter the room and find ways to calm yourself. Calm begets calm.

### **Positive Guidance through a Self-Reg Lens**

**Session 2: Thursday 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Carlton**

Presenter: Susy Komishin, Jody Naruse, Dawn Flood, Anderson Agbugba

“See a child differently and see a different child,” says Dr. Stuart Shanker. In this workshop, we will explore positive guidance through a self-regulation framework. We will explore how educators must dig deeper to understand children’s behaviour and respond appropriately. Children develop self-regulation by co-regulating with the important adults in their lives.

## **DAY 2 – SESSION 3**

### **Painting & Wellness**

**Session 3 & 4: Friday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm (double session)**

**Centennial 2**

Presenter: Dawn Chartrand

Step-by-step, we will paint a bushel of strawberries with opportunity and encouragement for artists to add their own flavour and creativity. Dawn will share some teachings on the strawberries, and how they are referred to as “heart berries” by Indigenous Peoples. Strawberries represent connectedness to self, family, communities, ancestors, the heart, and unconditional love. This double-session workshop will begin with a full-body grounding stretch and deep breathing with a special focus on inviting creativity and kindness to our spirits.

### **Prevent It!**

**Session 3 & 4: Friday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm (double session)**

**Centennial 3**

Presenter: Denise Eger

The Little Warriors Prevent It! workshop is an interactive workshop designed to educate adults to help prevent and respond to child sexual abuse through improving attitudes, knowledge, and behaviour of workshop participants. This workshop is unique in Canada and was developed using research-informed methods and evaluated with scientific rigour. Learn to take action to help prevent and respond to child sexual abuse using the following steps: study, talk, observe, and prepare for action. Each participant will receive a certificate of attendance upon completion of the workshop.

### **Let's Play – The Underlying Importance of Play for Children**

**Session 3: Friday 9:00 am – 10:15 am**

**Centennial 4**

Presenter: Leanne Austin & Kelsey Ali

Kelsey and Leanne will discuss the importance of play for children in the early years and the impact that it has on developing skills, social engagement, and regulation. They will discuss the role of the care provider in relation to ways care providers support children’s development and the importance of learning through play. Play can take many forms, and this will be highlighted within the presentation.

### **TOYBOX Activities for Caregivers and Children**

**Session 3: Friday 9:00 am – 10:15 am**

**Centennial 5**

Presenter: Sheri-Lynn Skwarchuk, Liz Keeper-Garson, Leanne Lavallee, Vivian Scott, Madison Young, Jeannie Kerr

TOYBOX provides free, fun, and playful evidence-based activities in learning letters and numbers and supporting wellness for caregivers and their 2-to-8-year-old children to provide a good learning foundation for life. (See [TOYBOXManitoba.ca](http://TOYBOXManitoba.ca)) These activities are planned to create a good foundation for children’s learning and life. We will work together with the audience to learn about the activities used to promote learning and wellness at home and in education settings. We will talk about ideas to add, how to have conversations with young children, and why learning and wellness with young children is important. Come meet our learning friends, Litty, Nume, and Welly, and learn about what all the coloured TOYBOX t-shirts are all about! Prize draws and giveaways included!

### **Mobility Foundations**

**Session 3: Friday 9:00 am – 10:15 am**

**Centennial 6**

Presenter: Tricia Klassen-Morton

Mobility means moving naturally, with control but without noticeable effort. Good mobility allows you to perform the movements and exercises that are a part of daily life, including working with children. Learn how to enhance your mobility and flexibility with Mobility Foundations to move better, feel better, minimize or eliminate pain, improve overall health and well-being, and relieve stress. Join me and start moving more freely!

## **Family Friendly Program Policies: Creating Clear Connections Between Families and Educators**

**Session 3: Friday 9:00 am – 10:15 am**

**Embassy A**

Presenter: Robin Potter & Tammie Jonasson

Ever wondered how to create a family policy manual that is informative and easy to follow? This workshop is your go-to! Discover the ins and outs of crafting a family policy manual that answers all the questions families have. We'll show you how to make it clear, friendly, and packed with everything families need to know about your program's rules, values, and more.

## **Counting with Purpose**

**Session 3: Friday 9:00 am – 10:15 am**

**Embassy B**

Presenter: Pamela Courchene, Virginia Birch

Math is an abstract concept; it is like learning another language. Children in the early years need lots of practice and a range of different contexts to understand a mathematical concept. In this session, delegates will participate in hands-on activities on counting, representing number, and patterns. The activities will range from concrete to pictorial to abstract, focusing on First Nations perspective.

## **Play Is What We Are**

**Sessions 3 – 5 (open workshop)**

**Embassy C**

Presenter: RRCP Exchange District ECE Students, Marc Battle, Rebecca LaRiviere

Play is often referred to as a child's work, but it actually belongs to all of us—young and old. This open workshop conducted by a group of ECE students will provide an experience for you as an adult to experience play in a way that reminds you of who you are and connects you to an experience that you may have forgotten.

## **Self-Regulation Room**

**Session 1 – 5 (open workshop)**

**Embassy D**

Presenter: Stephanie Edwards, Jessica Daniels

As educators, we experience varying levels of stress. We need to know when we are becoming too anxious or stressed and then make time to calm ourselves so we can help children find their calm. Dr. Stuart Shanker states, "When an individual's stress levels are too high, various brain/body regulatory systems support thinking, emotion regulation, social engagement, and even metabolic recovery are compromised. The signs of dysregulation can show up in behaviour, mood, attention, and physical well-being of a child, teen, or adult." This room is set up for your self-care throughout the conference—if you are feeling stressed, you are welcome to enter the room and find ways to calm yourself. Calm begets calm.

## **Bundle Building: Breath Is Life**

**Session 3: Friday 9:00 am – 10:15 am**

**Carlton**

Presenter: Lee Spence

Breath is your life force. Lee will share everyday breathing practices to soothe your nervous system and, in exchange, create opportunities to co-regulate with others, including the children, youth, and adults in your life. Breathing practices, when paired with an understanding of the nervous system, create opportunities for building awareness and safety within your body.

## **DAY 2 – SESSION 4**

### **Painting & Wellness**

**Session 3 & 4: Friday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm (double session)**

**Centennial 2**

Presenter: Dawn Chartrand

Step-by-step, we will paint a bushel of strawberries with opportunity and encouragement for artists to add their own flavour and creativity. Dawn will share some teachings on the strawberries and how they are referred to as "heart berries" by Indigenous Peoples. Strawberries represent connectedness to self, family, communities, ancestors, the heart, and unconditional love. This double-session workshop will begin with a full-body grounding stretch and deep breathing with a special focus on inviting creativity and kindness to our spirits.

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Kelsey and Leanne will discuss the importance of play for children in the early years and the impact that it has on developing skills, social engagement, and regulation. They will discuss the role of the care provider in relation to ways care providers support children's development and the importance of learning through play. Play can take many forms, and this will be highlighted within the presentation.

### **Data Sovereignty**

**Session 4: Friday 10:45 am – 12:00 pm**

**Centennial 5**

Presenter: Carla Cochrane, Stephanie Sinclair, Dr. Taylor Morrisseau

In this session, we will be discussing Data Sovereignty by looking at the history of self-determination, culture, and traditions. We will share what Data Sovereignty is, the difference between Western versus First Nations research and ethics, and explore the importance of building and maintaining relationships. During the workshop, we will engage attendees on priority areas within Early Learning and Child Care data to help communities and organizations to move toward their visions.

### Fit Kids Healthy Kids

**Session 4: Friday 10:45 am – 12:00 pm**

**Centennial 6**

Presenter: Josh Murray, Paige Beaudry, Nadia Schimnowski

At this active workshop, learn about physical literacy, fundamentals of movement skills, and facilitating tips and tricks, such as organizing games and activities for ages two to six. Fit Kids Healthy Kids will teach you games that focus on getting kids moving while learning fundamental movement skills like throwing, catching, running, jumping, and many more. Be ready to learn many different games and activities that focus on getting kids active.

### Family Group Conferencing as Implemented at Isobel's Place and Child Development Centre

**Session 4: Friday 10:45 pm – 12:00 pm**

**Embassy A**

Presenter: Lisa Champagne & Brenda Berens

Our workshop will provide an overview of Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Family Group Conference program, which is an Indigenous-led family group decision-making model for the care and protection of children. We will specifically focus on the program implementation within Isobel's Place and how young moms with babies are supported to meet their goals. Participants will learn about resources available, Isobel's Place Program, the Child Development Centre, the Family Group Conference model, and the findings of our Indigenous-focused evaluation.

### Open a Book, Open the World

**Session 4: Friday 10:45 pm – 12:00 pm**

**Embassy B**

Presenter: Nancy Tovell

This workshop is focused on sharing early literacy resources that promote diversity, including race, belief systems, gender, culture, family structures, and abilities. Content includes:

- Reviewing the importance of being intentional with the types of early literacy information, tools, and strategies we incorporate into our early learning environments as well as our programming.
- Exploring concepts to strengthen, support, and enhance the fundamentals of literacy while celebrating diverse communities.
- Sharing a variety of children's books and related hands-on literacy extension activities that can be integrated into our current environments. These resources will be primarily geared to children two to five years of age.

### Play Is What We Are

**Sessions 3 – 5 (open workshop)**

**Embassy C**

Presenter: RRCP Exchange District ECE Students, Marc Battle, Rebecca LaRiviere

Play is often referred to as a child's work, but it actually belongs to all of us—young and old.

This open workshop conducted by a group of ECE students will provide an experience for you as an adult to experience play in a way that reminds you of who you are and connects you to an experience you may have forgotten.

### Self-Regulation Room

**Sessions 1 – 5 (open workshop)**

**Embassy D**

Presenter: Stephanie Edwards, Jessica Daniels

As educators, we experience varying levels of stress. We need to know when we are becoming too anxious or stressed and then make time to calm ourselves so we can help children find their calm. Dr. Stuart Shanker states, "When an individual's stress levels are too high, various brain/body regulatory systems support thinking, emotion regulation, social engagement, and even metabolic recovery are compromised. The signs of dysregulation can show up in behaviour, mood, attention, and physical well-being of a child, teen, or adult." This room is set up for your self-care throughout the conference—if you are feeling stressed, you are welcome to enter the room and find ways to calm yourself. Calm begets calm.

### Positive Guidance through a Self-Reg Lens

**Session 4: Friday 10:45 am – 12:00 pm**

**Carlton**

Presenter: Susy Komishin, Jody Naruse, Dawn Flood, Anderson Agbugba

"See a child differently and see a different child," says Dr. Stuart Shanker. In this workshop, we will explore positive guidance through a self-regulation framework. We will explore how educators must dig deeper to understand children's behaviour and respond appropriately. Children develop self-regulation by co-regulating with the important adults in their lives.

## DAY 2 – SESSION 5

### Developing Safety Plans: A Hands-On Workshop for Directors and Coordinators

**Session 5: Friday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Centennial 2**

Presenter: Robin Potter & Tammie Jonasson

Calling all directors and coordinators! This workshop is tailored specifically for you. Together, we'll explore the provincial guidelines for creating enhanced safety plans, focusing on the unique needs of First Nations child care centres and AHSOR programs. Using a practical approach, we'll dive into the step-by-step process outlined in the resource guide, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how to develop, evaluate, and implement safety policies specific to your programs. Through collaborative discussions and real-world examples, we'll adapt existing safety protocols to address a variety of potential situations, empowering you to foster safe and secure environments for the children and communities you serve.

### Nuton's Recipe for Food and Nutrition Education: Four Ingredients to Make a Difference

**Session 5: Friday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Centennial 3**

Presenter: Amanda Hamel

The messages we receive about food, bodies, and movement are often control and restriction-based, which can hinder children's natural curiosity around food. This can be a recipe for disaster. Join Amanda in this interactive workshop and stir up a fresh perspective on food, eating, and body image that will help you create positive food and eating environments in child care settings. Learn Nuton's recipe for impactful food exploration. Attendees receive a free educator toolkit with reflective activities and resources.

### **Looking at Mamàhtawisiwin**

**Session 5: Friday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Centennial 4**

Presenter: Dina Ducharme, Yvonne Kipling

Take a journey to explore ways Indigenous perspectives can be embedded into curriculum, programming, and everyday practices. Dina will introduce an overview of *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With – An Indigenous Education Policy Framework* and strategies from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We will then have a sharing circle on Murray Sinclair's four guiding questions. Our journey will then guide us down a path of Indigenous teachings and artifacts on land-based teachings, true history of Indigenous Peoples, Authentic Involvement, Putting Children at the Centre, traditional and cultural teachings, and Indigenous languages. Dina hopes to leave you with thoughts on how you can design and deliver an Indigenous-focused Child Care program that empowers children with a strong sense of identity.

### **Naskapi Niistim – Walking Alongside the Caribou**

**Session 5: Friday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Centennial 5**

Presenter: Loretta Robinson

The land is full of opportunity and is a place where learning happens. Naskapi Niistim is an outdoor learning program for preschoolers that celebrates the Naskapi way of life, the Caribou, the land, the language, and the knowledge of the Elders as we walk on the land of our ancestors. The workshop will share the journey of the younger learners and educators being on the land, daily learning opportunities that allow for learners to strengthen their connections holistically, and strategies that will enable Naskapi language and teachings to be the foundation of walking Naskapi Niistim, Naskapi First.

### **Why Should We Try a Little Coding with Young Children?**

**Session 5: Friday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Centennial 6**

Presenter: Michele Henderson, Dawn Flood

Learning to code for young children is a fun, exhilarating game/activity that engages all the domains of child development. While socially engaging with their peers in an activity, young children practise self-regulation, learn math and language skills, and develop cognitive abilities while having fun.

### **Lesson Planning for Land-Based Learning for Children**

**Session 5: Friday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Embassy A**

Presenter: Barb Carlson

In this hands-on workshop, participants will learn how to create lesson plans for children. We will explore topics related to reclaiming culture through land-based learning.

### **Medicine Bag Making**

**Session 5: Friday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Embassy B**

Presenter: Haley Vincent, Justine James

We share knowledge passed down to us about the four sacred medicines, including how to pick and use them and teachings about medicine bags. Our workshop includes smudging and a

song to honour the medicine and ourselves. Participants will learn to piece together the natural materials to make their medicine pouch. We will also discuss how this workshop can be accommodating and accessible to children in their early years. The workshop is a reclamation of our culture and an activity that brings together and promotes community.

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### **Laughing Yoga**

**Session 5: Friday 1:10 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Carlton**

Presenter: Dawn Chartrand

Laughter yoga is a unique, gentle exercise routine that combines unconditional laughter with conscious breathing techniques. Gentle warm-up and breathing exercises are introduced to prepare the lungs for laughter, followed by a series of fun and interactive laughter exercises and games. When combined with group dynamics, these exercises always lead to prolonged and authentic laughter. A session typically ends with a full-body guided meditation that can be done from a seated position. Laughter yoga offers a fun and safe energetic release and is an effective team-building exercise. One of our seven natural ways of healing, laughing offers profound health benefits and is the quickest way to reduce stress. Based on the well-known adage, "laughter is the best medicine," the positive effects of laughter can be felt almost immediately, as does the energetic rise in a session. Laughing naturally stimulates the "happy" hormones in the brain, resulting in a measurable and significant boost in mental health. Laughter Yoga exercises bring more oxygen to the body and brain and help to strengthen lungs and the immune system. Participants are introduced to ways they can implement Laughter Yoga in their daily lives to promote wellness and holistic health for their selves, their families, and their communities. Laughter Yoga is done from a seated (or standing) position and there are no props required.

2-1100 Waverley Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 3X9

Phone: (204) 594-1290 | Fax: (204) 942-2490 | Toll Free: 1 (866) 319-4857 | email: [info@mfnerc.com](mailto:info@mfnerc.com)

[www.mfnerc.org](http://www.mfnerc.org)



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