

Fall 2025 Professional Learning Workshops For Early Childhood Educators

www.msvu.ca/earlychildhoodworkshops

***Child and Youth Study: Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Early Childhood Administrator Certificate, Professional Learning Workshops —
be part of something BIG!***

Intervention • Inclusion • Diversity. Our Children. Our Youth. Our Community.



These workshops and special programs are made possible by contributions received through the Early Childhood Education Training Initiatives Agreement, including contributions received through the Canada-Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, coordinated by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policy of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.



Mount Saint Vincent University
166 Bedford Highway
Halifax, NS, B3M 2J6

Child and Youth Study Department

SAVE THE
DATE:
October 25,
2025

SPECIAL EVENT

Storytelling and A Whole Lot of Other Stuff!

The Promise of a Story

IN PERSON

Mount Saint Vincent University

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Rosaria Student Centre Multi Purpose Room

\$75/\$65 with a current AECENS membership





Early Childhood Administrator - Continuing Education Course



September — June

Hear what participants are saying about the program:

“The overall programme exceeded my expectations because of the level of professionalism that was attained throughout the course”

“I have rekindled my commitment to the field of early childhood education and development and have a renewed determination to make a difference”

“I became more confident in my profession and myself”

“This program has allowed me to see where I am able to take my career.”

“I have always been a hard worker but this course showed me that I was able to accomplish a lot more than I ever thought myself capable of..”

“The skills we learned were not only relevant to a career in child and youth but to any field.”

“I feel more confident in my ability to manage groups of people “

“I would recommend this programme to any early childhood educator who wishes to aspire to a Directors position... I believe all of us should be required to take the course...”

“The exercises and assignments are not overly difficult and they are relevant to the field, which makes it much easier to work through.”

“The amount of growth I experienced personally and professionally during the past year because of the connections made with colleagues as well as the instructors and personal dedication to helping foster an even higher quality program for the children in my community could not have been accomplished in any other way during such a short amount of time.”

For more information Please visit our website;
<http://www.msvu.ca/administratorcourse>



Early Childhood Administrator - Continuing Education Course



Who: Early learning and childcare program administrators or educators.

What: Developing leadership skills, knowledge and competency in administering and managing early learning and childcare programs.

When: September - June (two days a month in person, on campus: Friday & Saturday, 9am-4pm)

Where: Mount Saint Vincent University.

Why: You will develop competence in leadership and management training. Through a mixture of lectures, presentations, guest speakers, discussions, workplace based assignments and individual and group work, participants will develop skills to effectively manage and lead early learning and childcare programs.

Modules Include:

Management & Leadership
Managerial Communication
Computer Applications
Human Resource Management
ECE Policy Development
Financial Management
Marketing Child Care Programs
Advocacy & Professionalism
Strategic Planning
Risk Management
Innovation
Curriculum Design Implementation & Evaluation
Pedagogical Leadership
Collaboration & Mentoring Practices

Module Dates for 2025/2026 Sessions

Orientation Reception;

Friday Sept. 5, 2025 9am-4pm

Sept. 12 & 13, 2025

Oct. 17 & 18, 2025

Nov. 14 & 15, 2025

Dec. 5 & 6, 2025

Jan. 16 & 17, 2026

Feb. 20 & 21, 2026

March 20 & 21, 2026

April 10 & 11, 2026

May 8 & 9, 2026

June 5 & 6, 2026

Graduation TBA

2024/2025 Program Fee is **\$1,350 plus *\$170 for course materials**. A Continuing Education Certificate will be awarded upon successful completion of the program. For more information, please contact:

Rhonda Rees
Professional Learning Coordinator
Department of Child and Youth Study, Mount Saint Vincent University
rhonda.rees@msvu.ca

Applications are available at
<http://www.msvu.ca/administratorcourse>

This course qualifies for the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development reimbursement Continuing Education Program.

Early Childhood Education Assistance & Continuing Education Programs

The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Early Childhood Development Services, has a recruitment and retention strategy to encourage more individuals into the field, and to assist those already in the early child care sector to deliver quality licensed child care services in Nova Scotia.

They offer two programs to provide financial support; the Early Childhood Education Assistance program offers a debt reduction incentive, and the Continuing Education Program offers reimbursement for continuing education courses offered through the early childhood training institutions in Nova Scotia. For more information on these programs, please visit their website:

<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/pd/>

ALL REGISTRATION IS ONLINE

Please visit our website www.msvu.ca/earlychildhoodworkshops and follow the links to register for workshops.

CONFIRMATION & CANCELLATION POLICY:

Participation is not confirmed until payment is received. Confirmation receipt will be sent by email upon receipt of payment.

All fees are non-refundable but you may allow an alternate person to attend in your absence. Please allow 48 hours advance notice if making a substitution, otherwise a \$10.00 administration fee is required for a revised certificate of attendance.

If a participant misses a workshop, they forfeit all fees and there is no refund or credit.

CERTIFICATES:

A Certificate of Attendance (including number of workshops contact hours) is given out for all workshops or workshop series.

Participants must attend the **full scheduled workshop session** in order to receive a certificate.

PARKING: All campus parking is "paid" parking from Monday to Friday, including evenings. Please visit our website below for pricing and parking regulations.

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/aboutus/safety-security/parking/default.aspx>

Workshop information & online registration is on our website:
www.msvu.ca/earlychildhoodworkshops

**Registration for
Culturally Responsive Practice in Nova Scotia's Early Learning
and Child Care Settings, Capable,
Confident and Curious; Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum
Framework AND
Learning with Mi'kma'ki**

There is no charge for these Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework workshops

For more information on available sessions please visit the Early Years Professional Development Committee website www.eypdc.ca

Registration: To register for any of the MSVU Nova Scotia Curriculum Framework Training sessions at any of the locations across Nova Scotia please click on the link below, or visit our online brochure and follow the registration links

<https://eypdc.ca/learning/early-learning-curriculum-framework/registration/>

Curriculum Resource Centre / Lending Library

Our Curriculum Resource Centre (CRC) is located in Seton Academic Centre and serves primarily Education and Child and Youth Study students at the Mount. In addition to a wide selection of books (including many indigenous titles, picture books and young adult novels), journals, DVDs and resource kits, students are also able to borrow a variety of audio visual equipment including iPads, Chromebooks, laptops, MP3 recorders and digital cameras/video cameras. A selection of paper, markers, foamies, paint, clay, folders, and glue guns are available for use. Access to laser printers, a photocopier, a laminator, binder and a die cut machine are available for a small fee to cover materials.

The CRC is accessible to early childhood educators and the community, who are able to visit or borrow materials once they have approved access via the Mount main library. All resources except for audio visual equipment can be borrowed by the community.

Food and drinks are allowed, and the CRC has Wi-Fi, a charging station for electronic devices and earbuds available for purchase.

Please visit our link for more information <http://libguides.msvu.ca/crc>

Fall 2025 Workshops at a Glance

SPECIAL EVENT

Storytelling and a whole lot more!

The Promise of a Story

In partnership with the Association of Early Childhood Educators Nova Scotia; AECENS

IN PERSON 7 PD hours Saturday October 25, 2025 (9am-4pm) Cost: \$75 / \$65

Featuring Carolyn Landry, Oral Story Teller & host of the Seven Sacred Teachings Podcast

- **All Children with Nature: Exploring Inclusion and Child-Nature Relationships through Two Distinct ECEC Models **IN PERSON****
 - ♦ **Session 1; South Shore Waldorf School, Blockhouse, Nova Scotia** Sunday October 5, 2025 10 am– 3pm **Total PD hours: 5 PD hours** *Presenter: Taylor Hansen*
 - ♦ **Session 2; Small World Learning Centre, Bridgewater, Nova Scotia** Sunday, November 2, 2025 from 10am-3 pm **Total PD hours: 5 PD hours** *Presenter: Taylor Hansen*
- ***Inspiring Spaces & Environments CAR Tour **IN PERSON OR ONLINE****

Presenter: Krista Ahearn Wednesday October 15 (7- 9 pm **Online**)* AND Saturday October 18, 2025 (9am – 4pm **In Person**) **Total PD hours: 9 PD hours** ***OPTION to attend the full workshop OR attend the online evening only**
- **Collaborative Dialogue Series **IN PERSON****

2 PD hours each, 8 PD hours total *Presenter: Kathy Black* Monday October 27, Tuesday November 4, Wednesday November 12, and Monday November 17, 2025 (6:30 pm – 8:30pm all dates)

 - ♦ **Session 1: Interacting and communicating daily with children, families and colleagues**
 - ♦ **Session 2: Understanding and supporting all children and families**
 - ♦ **Session 3: Daily responsibilities for early childhood educators**
 - ♦ **Session 4: Importance of self care for early childhood educators**
- **Making Thinking Visible: Art as a Pathway to Inquiry in ECEC** **Date** Saturday November 1, 2025 9am-12 noon **Total PD hours: 3 PD hours** **IN PERSON** *Presenters: Jamie Leach & Annette Comeau*
- **Seeing Differently: Nurturing Neurodiversity in Early Childhood Education **ONLINE****

6 PD hours *Presenters: Colin Morrison & Karen Carey* Saturday November 8, 2025 (6pm– 9pm) and Monday November 10, 2025 (6pm– 9pm)
- **Promoting Positive Behavior Using Effective Preventative and Teaching Strategies**

IN PERSON & ONLINE 9 PD hours *Presenters: Heather Bartholomew & Debbie Thompson* Saturday November 15, 2025 (9am –3 pm) **IN PERSON** & Tuesday November 18, 2025 (6-9pm) **ONLINE**

SPECIAL EVENT

✿ *Calling All Early Childhood Educators!* ✿

Get ready for a full day of inspiration, connection, and hands-on learning!

📖 Dive into the magic of books and storytelling as we explore how every part of a child's day—art, science, math, music, language, outdoor play—is beautifully connected.

Storytelling & a Whole Lot of Other Stuff!

The Promise of a Story

*Featuring Carolyn Landry, Indigenous Oral Storyteller
& host of the Seven Sacred Teachings Podcast*



In partnership with the Association of Early Childhood Educators Nova Scotia; AECENS

Date Saturday October 25, 2025 (9am –4 pm) **Cost:** \$75 (\$65 with a current AECENS membership)

Total PD hours: 7 PD hours **Location:** **IN PERSON** Rosaria Student Centre Multi Purpose Room (Room #303) Lunch is provided (*AECENS members must provide the 8-digit Member ID number from their virtual membership card at the time of registration to receive the discount*)

Description: The Promise of a Story Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of communication & is a way to share experiences, understand others, emotions, perspectives & promote respect for all life. When we listen to a story there can be lasting personal connections, imagining of new possibilities & promotion of innovative problem solving & fostering of a shared understanding. It can also show a pathway through any adversity that the child may be experiencing. Stories often have multiple layers of meanings that the listener can 'hear' & ponder on & make sense of the world.

The promise of stories is limitless—each narrative opens a new doorway into the possible, a canvas upon which dreams & discoveries are painted. Stories invite us to imagine what could be, to wander into unknown worlds, & to embrace the unfolding of new perspectives. They are pathways for curiosity, bridges to connection, & seeds from which understanding & transformation grow.

This conference is a gathering for those who believe learning begins with curiosity & grows through connection. Through storytelling, art, science, movement, & play, we will explore how imagination, diversity, & a sense of belonging shape vibrant learning communities. Together, we will reflect on how inquiry & self-expression empower children to become authors of their own learning journeys.

We will explore the inherent connectedness of all aspects of the child's early learning. We will explore methods of integrating this learning into the everyday experiences of children in the early learning & care program. When we approach learning in a holistic manner we engage the whole child.

Using books & story telling as a vehicle to explore the many aspects of the educator's work with children, we will:

- use books & storytelling as invitations to explore art, science, numeracy, literacy & language, music & movement & outdoor play.
- examine how inherent in each aspect is the need to allow for autonomous play, & relationship building.
- explore the use curriculum webs as a planning & documentation tool.
- use the Froebelian principle of Unity & Connectedness as a foundational approach to planning

Come join the story!

AECENS is a non-profit membership-based association dedicated to supporting early childhood educators and elevating their professional practice. Our members work in a variety of different ECE settings across the province. We provide quality professional learning opportunities and an annual awards gala that recognizes excellence in professional practice. Our strength is in our membership, so join us today.

<https://aecens.ca/membership>

The Promise of a Story

Facilitator Bios

Carolyn Landry is a member of the Annapolis Valley First Nation community. She is a mother, a grandmother, a sociologist, & a cultural advisor. Although she has many titles, she doesn't identify as any of them.

The 7 Sacred Teachings (7ST) are non-physical abilities innate to human beings. All cultures have a foundation in which the 7ST are brought to one's awareness. When one practices the teachings on a daily basis, our moral code remains intact allowing us to be the best human being we can be. It's simple & easy because it is one's true nature.

Stacey Elliott graduated from Mount Saint Vincent University with a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Child & Youth Study). Upon graduating, she became an Early Childhood Educator at the MSVU Child Study Centre & has worked in the Preschool classroom there for 25 years. Stacey has taught evening courses & workshops at the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education. Fostering a sense of belonging through connection & warm relationship building is at the heart of her work.

Liz Hicks has worked in early learning as an ECE, owner/director & most recently as a private consultant offering professional learning in a variety of topics. Liz has always been intensely interested in literacy, through books & story telling. She is fortunate to have a mother who read to her for many years from a rich variety of books. She continues to love stories & books of all genres & uses them in many ways – especially using children's books with adults as a 'metaphor' for our work.

Michelle LeBlanc is an Early Childhood Educator with over 30 years of experience working with toddlers & preschoolers in child care settings. She has completed the ECE Administrator Continuing Education Certificate at Mount Saint Vincent University & excels in responsive programming & using the environment as the third teacher. Passionate about creating meaningful learning experiences, Michelle is dedicated to fostering curiosity & connection in young children. Outside of her professional life, she is adventurous & enjoys live music, theater, & exploring new experiences. Michelle also cherishes her role as a mother to her grown daughter

Rachel Pope is an Early Childhood Educator, artist & writer who lives & works in Halifax, Nova Scotia. During the past two decades, she has worked with children aged 6 months to 12 years in both Canada & England. Rachel recently graduated from the Early Childhood Administrators Program at Mount St. Vincent's, & also holds a Level 2 classification. She is a dedicated educator who promotes play-based & hands-on learning, along with process art, or what she calls "Playful Art" also the title & topic of her book to meet all children's needs. Rachel loves to paint abstracts & pet portraits in her spare time along with reading & spending time with her family & friends.

Moashella Michelle Shortte is an educator, author, & speaker whose storytelling is rooted in the rich traditions of her Garifuna heritage & the communal philosophy of Ubuntu. As Faculty in the Africentric Learning Option at Nova Scotia Community College, she designs inclusive, culturally responsive learning experiences that center student identity, voice, & belonging. Her children's book *Mirror* & her contributions to *Healing the Little Woman Inside* reflect her commitment to affirming marginalized learners through narrative, while her co-authored open educational resources empower educators to embed equity & cultural relevance into early childhood pedagogy.

Michelle's workshops & speaking engagements are dynamic, healing spaces where educators explore anti-racism, empathy, & the transformative power of story. Her work with the Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre & her facilitation of culturally responsive practice training across Nova Scotia reflect her deep commitment to educational liberation. Whether mentoring future educators or leading community-based research, Michelle's storytelling bridges scholarship & soul, reminding us that teaching is not just a profession it's a collective act of care, identity-building, & justice.

All Children with Nature: Exploring Inclusion and Child-Nature Relationships through Two Distinct ECEC Models

Session 1; South Shore Waldorf School, Blockhouse, Nova Scotia **IN PERSON** Sunday October 5, 2025 10 am–3pm **Cost: \$50 Total PD hours: 5 PD hours** *Presenter: Taylor Hansen*

Session 2; Small World Learning Centre, Bridgewater, Nova Scotia **IN PERSON** Sunday, November 2, 2025 10am-3 pm **Cost: \$50 Total PD hours: 5 PD hours** *Presenter: Taylor Hansen*

Register for both sessions \$80; 10 PD hours

Description: Join us for a two-part professional development workshop series designed to inspire & deepen your practice as an early childhood educator. Set in two nature-rich early childhood education & care (ECEC) environments in rural Nova Scotia, this series invites you to engage directly with the philosophies of **Reggio Emilia & Waldorf**—two distinct models that offer rich opportunities to support inclusion & foster meaningful relationships between children & the natural world. Through hands-on, experiential learning in real ECEC settings, you'll explore how thoughtful pedagogy, nature-connected environments, & inclusive practices come together to support the well-being of *all* children.

Together, we'll reflect on the possibilities & challenges within each model, consider barriers to inclusion, & explore how these approaches can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners in a variety of early learning contexts.

Note: Each workshop stands alone & is a complete experience, though they are designed to complement & enrich one another when attended together.

Learning Goals: Deepen comfort & knowledge of the focus ECEC model's approach in relation to inclusion & child-nature relationships.

Explore both the unique opportunities & challenges each model presents through rich dialogue & reflection guided by real educator's experiences in these unique practice spaces.

Inspire new ways of relating with nature & thinking about inclusion in participants' own practice settings.

Session 1: Waldorf Context

Date/Time: Sunday, October 5, 2025 10am-3pm **Location:** South Shore Waldorf School, Blockhouse, NS

The Waldorf philosophy emphasizes imagination, rhythm, & a spiritual connection to nature. This session begins with a framing presentation on inclusive practice & child-nature relationships, led by the series facilitator. This introduction will prepare participants to critically engage with the Waldorf approach as they:

- Step into a Waldorf-inspired context through hands-on engagement facilitated by a practicing Waldorf educator.
- Experience first-hand the seasonal, story-rich, & nature-centered practices that shape children's daily experiences in this space.
- Engage in conversation with the Waldorf educator to understand the pedagogical intentions behind their approach & how inclusion is considered.

Session 2: Reggio Emilia Context

Date/Time: Sunday, November 2, 2025 10am-3pm **Location:** Small World Learning Centre, Bridgewater, NS

In this session, we will step into a Reggio-inspired context where nature is approached as a co-teacher & children are viewed as capable, competent, & curious protagonists in their own learning. The session includes:

- An experiential component facilitated by an educator working in a Reggio-inspired setting. Participants will take part in hands-on, nature-based opportunities that mirror what children experience in this context.
- Opportunities to ask the educator about the thinking, planning, & pedagogical values behind their choices.
- A closing reflective segment, led by the series facilitator, where participants will identify inclusion-related opportunities & barriers observed in the model & engage in collaborative planning & goal-setting for their own practice.

Presenter Biography: *Taylor Hansen* is a mother to two young children and an advocate for children's rights. She is particularly interested in the dynamic ways diverse children advocate and make space for themselves in their daily lives, as well as the ways caregivers transform space through their courage to care well for children in a world that does not care well for many.

Taylor has worked directly with young people in a variety of capacities and contexts for over 20 years and all of my professional work is driven by a desire to support others in relating to all children as complete people worthy of dignity and respect. Currently, I am a Lecturer in the Department of Child and Youth Study at Mount Saint Vincent University and in this role, I aim to create learning spaces that prioritize care and connection, challenging colonial norms.

All Aboard for the Inspiring Spaces & Environments **CAR** Tour

OPTION Attend the full 9 hr workshop
OR attend the 2 hr online evening only

Date: Wednesday October 15 (7– 9pm)* **AND** Saturday October 18, 2025 (9am – 4pm)

Cost: \$85 **Total PD hours:** 9 hours **Location:** **IN PERSON & ONLINE** **Presenter:** Krista Ahearn

IF you are unable to attend the car tour, you are invited to attend *JUST* the Wednesday evening (2 hours PD) to look at previous inspiring centres, and learn about the questions that you can ask to ensure you also become an inspiring centre! You MUST come to Wednesday evening if you are going on the car tour for a total of 9 hours PD.

Date: Wednesday October 16 (7 – 9pm) **ONLY** * 2 PD hours **Cost:** \$25

Description: In response to popular demand, we are offering another car tour for environments – indoors and outdoors. **Please note it is a CAR tour.** This means if you sign up for this workshop you are responsible for driving yourself (we suggest car pooling) to the sites that have generously volunteered to show you their environments.

On the Wednesday evening, October 15– online by Zoom - we will reflect on, discuss, and look at ideas on ways in which learning environments could inspire ourselves, the children, and families. **We will be referencing the NSEYCF, and look at some previous car tour NS child care spaces.**

On Saturday, October 18 we will meet at the Mount. This will give an opportunity for car pooling. **When you register for this workshop please indicate if you are able to take any extra people, and how many spaces you may have in your car. E.g. Krista will be driving and have 4 spaces for participants. Each centre will give participants time to tour, and a short introduction to their program, philosophy and a question and answer session.**

The centres we will visit are:

9:30ish – 10:45 am: Beech Tree Academy – 1352 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Beechville - [https://](https://www.beechtreeacademy.ca/)

www.beechtreeacademy.ca/ At Beech Tree Academy, staff believe that young children learn through action and experience, and that a positive environment for learning is one that exercises and challenges the developing mind of each child. Educators help every child in their care strive to meet their full potential and to become lifelong learners. The centre follows a Reggio-inspired emergent curriculum.

11:15 – 12:45pm: Forest Kids Early Learning – 1 Yankeetown Road, Hammonds Plains - <https://www.forestkids.ca/node/1> Forest Kids is a locally-owned and family oriented child care facility where educators provide nurturing and stimulating environments based on developmentally and individually appropriate daily programs in a natural setting. They are committed to nature immersion and unstructured free play, flow learning, inquiry-based teaching, emergent curriculum and documentation of the learning.

12:45pm – 1:45pm – break for lunch – at your convenience.

1:45pm – 3:00pm - Leeds Street Child Care Centre – 5685 Leeds Street, Halifax - <https://labs.nscece.com/>

At Leeds Street CCC, staff understand that children are naturally curious, competent, capable, and brimming with potential, born with an intrinsic desire and capacity to learn. Educators strive to recognize each child's unique attributes shaped by their families, educators, peers, and communities. Their program aligns with play-based, emergent curriculum and the Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework.

3.00pm – 4.00 – Returning to the Mount and debriefing.

You will receive instructions on how to access each location the week of the workshop

*** IF you are unable to attend the car tour, you are invited to attend just the Wednesday evening (2 hours PD) to look at previous inspiring centres, and learn about the questions that you can ask to ensure you also become an inspiring centre! You MUST come to Wednesday evening if you are going on the car tour for a total of 9 hours PD.**

Presenter Biography: *Krista Ahearn* has worked in the field of Early Childhood Education for 17 years. For 13 years, she worked in licensed child care, with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school aged children, as well as 2 years as a lead educator in pre primary. Since 2021, she has been a full-time Instructor at the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education, where she teaches in the onsite accelerated ECE program, as well as contributing to curriculum development and mentoring new Instructors. Since May 2025, Krista has also taken on the role of a pedagogical consultant with NSCECE's Lab Schools (child care centres), mentoring & supporting the staff with deepening their practice with emergent curriculum & pedagogical documentation.

In 2022, Krista completed her Masters of Child & Youth Study, from Mount Saint Vincent University, where she wrote her thesis about the ways educators who work with infants can support these young children in being active decision makers in their learning environment. Her professional passions include: the importance of child care rooted in meaningful relationships between educators, children, & families, creating inclusive learning environments & programs for all children, & making children's ideas & learning visible through various forms of documentation.

Collaborative Dialogue (Talking Circle)

Dates: Monday October 27, Tuesday November 4, Wednesday November 12, & Monday November 17, 2025 **Time:** 6:30-8:30 pm **Cost:** \$20 per session/ \$70 for full series **Total PD hours:** 8 hours (2 PD hours per session) **Location:** **IN PERSON** **Presenter:** Kathy Black

Description: This collaborative series of workshops will provide a safe place for educators to gather in the evening for two hours to form a community of practice with open lines of communication. A guide will be shared at the beginning of each session, outlining discussion topics and guidelines to participate in the talking circle. Participants will have the opportunity to share in each discussion, or pass. All participants are equal and will feel welcomed and a true sense of belonging.

Session 1: Interacting and communicating daily with children, families and colleagues

Effective strategies to interact with children throughout the daily routine
Share ways to stay connected with families and colleagues

Session 2: Understanding and supporting all children and families

The importance of knowing the children and families in your program
What types of supports can educators sharing with families

Session 3: Daily responsibilities for early childhood educators

Review the tools that are available to help educators to understand their role
Walk through your typical day as an ECE in Nova Scotia

Session 4: Importance of self care for early childhood educators

What can ECEs do to take care of themselves physically and emotionally
What types of wellness programs are available to ECEs within their community
Participants will have an opportunity to experience tools for self care

Goals:

Educators will strengthen relationships with educators in the childcare sector
Educators will share and learn effective practices and strategies to communicate and support all children and families
Educators will learn and experience strategies for self care

Presenter Biography; *Kathy Black* began her career as a nanny and later worked at the MSVU Child Study Centre where she was fortunate to learn from some of the best mentors in the early childhood field. Kathy continued her career as an Early Childhood Development Officer and Licensing Officer with the Nova Scotia Provincial Government. After 30 years in the field, Kathy accepted a term position as faculty in the Early Childhood Education program at the Nova Scotia Community College. In 2022 Kathy decided to go back to the childcare sector and work directly with the children and families. Kathy believes that working daily with children and families is her true passion and calling in life. Kathy began facilitating workshops to ECE's in 2009 and continues to be inspired when meeting others who are passionate about caring for young children. Her goal is to empower other educators, parents and professionals to discover what is best for all children.

Making Thinking Visible: Art as a Pathway to Inquiry in ECEC

Date: Saturday November 1, 2025 **Time:** 9am-12 noon **Cost:** \$40 **Total PD hours:** 3 PD hours

Location: **IN PERSON** **Presenters:** Jamie Leach & Annette Comeau

Description: How can we use art as a tool to nurture children's curiosity & sustain their inquiry? This interactive workshop invites early childhood educators to explore how art materials can help make children's theories & questions visible, support emotional expression, & encourage new perspectives. Through hands-on experiences & discussion, we will consider how art can be woven into the cycle of inquiry, deepening children's relationships with one another & the world around them. Join us as we reimagine art as a powerful thinking tool for inquiry, exploration, & discovery.

Main goals/objectives:

- Deepen educators' understanding of how art can be used to make children's thinking, questions, & theories visible within an inquiry-based approach.
- Explore & engage with a range of art materials & processes that support children's expression, meaning-making, & perspective-taking
- Reflect on the role of the educator as a co-learner, listener, & documenter who fosters inquiry by creating an environment that supports children's thinking through creative processes.

Presenter Biographies;

Jamie Leach is an associate professor in the Department of Child & Youth Study at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her research interests & projects focus on children's relationships with materials (e.g., emotional expression, social interactions) & the ways in which materials invite or constrain connectedness in playful experiences in early childhood education & care (ECEC) environments. She is also interested in participant action research with ECEs to co-create communities of practice that offer authentic & sustainable collaboration. Her other projects include how early learning & care curriculum frameworks are used in ECEC environments & co-creating democratic & immersive theatrical experiences with young children from an ECEC perspective.

Annette Comeau is the Director of the Child Study Centre at MSVU in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Annette is a graduate of NSCAD University with bachelor's degrees in fine art, Art Education & Design Communication. She has a diploma in Early Childhood Education from The Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education & holds a Level 3 ECE classification in Nova Scotia. She has 28 years of experience in the field. Passionate about the Reggio Emilia philosophy, Annette values the role of environments, materials, & relationships as co-constructors of meaningful experiences that empower children, families, & educators.

Seeing Differently: Nurturing Neurodiversity in Early Childhood Education

Date: Saturday November 8, 2025 (9am—12 noon) and Monday November 10, 2025 6pm— 9pm) **Cost:** \$75 **Total PD hours:** 6 hrs **Location:** **ONLINE** **Presenters:** Karen Carey & Colin Morrison

Description: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand neurodiversity as a natural and valuable aspect of human development, and recognize the diverse developmental profiles of neurodivergent children in early years settings.
2. Apply inclusive, strengths-based strategies to support sensory needs, emotional regulation, and communication for neurodivergent children.
3. Foster secure, collaborative relationships with neurodivergent children and their families, and implement accommodations that promote inclusion, safety, and belonging.

Part 1: Topics

What is Neurodiversity?

- Defining neurodiversity and shifting from deficit to difference
 - Overview of common neurodivergent profiles (autism, ADHD, sensory differences, speech/language variations)
- Strengths-based language and the social model of disability

Diverse Developmental Pathways

- Moving beyond typical milestones
 - Recognizing unique strengths in play, communication, and regulation
- Early signs that may be misinterpreted as “challenging” behavior

Building Safe and Nurturing Relationships

- Co-regulation and emotional attunement

- Responding with curiosity, not correction
 - Inclusive communication strategies: visual, non-verbal, and augmentative supports
- Collaborating with families and validating their expertise

Part 2: Topics

Understanding and Supporting Sensory Profiles

- Introduction to sensory processing and sensory profiles
 - Identifying sensory preferences, sensitivities, and avoidances
 - Environmental adaptations: reducing overwhelm, increasing regulation
- Tools: fidgets, visuals, quiet spaces, movement breaks

Designing Neurodiversity-Informed Routines and Spaces

- Making accommodations without singling out
 - Embedding flexibility into daily routines
- Examples: flexible transitions, predictable visuals, alternate seating

Becoming a Neurodiversity-Informed Educator

- Reflecting on your own sensory and communication style
 - Unpacking biases and ableism in early childhood education
 - Working as a team to shift practice and advocate for inclusive care
- Partnering with families to co-develop supports that work

Presenter Biographies: *Colin Morrison* has over 20 years’ experience working with children, youth & families in the mental health field. Colin has served primarily as youth care worker & case coordinator for families & children in the Child & Family Day Treatment Program at the IWK. He has extensive experience in developing & implementing skill groups with children, particularly in the area of emotional regulation, & providing supportive counselling to families. Colin is currently completing a Master of Social Worker degree at Dalhousie University, & is working on a thesis related to male childhood sexual abuse, & the impacts of "toxic masculinity" on mens' help seeking behaviours. He has a keen interest in trauma focused therapy, attachment theory, mens' health, & issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community.

Karen Carey is a Registered Social Worker with over 20 years of experience in mental health services, case coordination, & family support. She currently works as a Clinical Access Navigator with the IWK Central Referral Mental Health & Addictions Program, where she advocates for families & ensures timely access to appropriate care pathways. Karen’s professional practice is rooted in the core values of dignity, self-determination, & social justice. She brings expertise in trauma-informed, client-centered, & anti-oppressive approaches, drawing on extensive experience in crisis intervention, case management, psychoeducation, & interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition to her clinical work, Karen has facilitated professional development workshops at Mount Saint Vincent University on topics such as resilience, caregiver communication, & the impacts of stress & trauma in children. She is passionate about equipping professionals & caregivers with practical tools to support children, youth, & families in meaningful & sustainable ways.

Together Colin & Karen have seen positive & long lasting benefits for children AND families when they are provided education, strategies, guidance, empathy & support. They see effective communication & open collaboration as the key ingredients in supporting positive futures for the children & families under their care.

Promoting Positive Behavior Using Effective Preventative and Teaching Strategies

Date: Saturday November 15, 2025 (9am –3pm) **IN PERSON** & Tuesday November 18, 2025 6-9pm

ONLINE Cost: \$90 **Total PD hours:** 9 hours **Location:** **IN PERSON & ONLINE**

Presenters: Heather Bartholomew & Debbie Thompson

Description: Due to popular demand and recommendations from past participants, we are re-offering this two part workshop series to provide participants with a framework for better understanding the function of challenging behavior. Previous participants said, “It really helps you figure out how to prevent behaviors from happening and what techniques work” and, “It was very useful for learning how to deal with problems in the classroom in a positive way.” Participants will be asked to record information on what is currently challenging within their own classrooms & will be supported through interpreting that information to determine why the behaviour is occurring. Facilitators will then share a variety of tools that can be used as part of a comprehensive plan for preventing the behavior and responding to the behavior when it does occur. Cultural influences, in the context of interpreting behaviour and strategies to build collaboration with all team members will be discussed. This workshop focuses on the prevention of challenging behaviors & how small changes within your routines & programming can make all the difference.

Three learning outcomes:

- 1) provide preventative strategies to support children with challenging behaviour
- 2) teach the process to identify functions of behaviour
- 3) learn how to incorporate this information into a framework to develop a complete plan to support children to use prosocial behaviours to meet their needs.

Presenter Biographies: *Heather Bartholomew* graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Child & Youth Study) & in the twenty plus years since then, has been working with preschoolers. Additionally, she has recently begun working part-time with adults with developmental delays, giving her a broader, across the lifespan perspective on supporting diverse individuals at any age. She has worked as an Early Childhood Educator, one-to-one support staff & as a resource teacher. For five years, she served as Resource Teacher at the Mount’s Child Study Centre, supporting children with identified special needs &, in particular, delivering programming to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Heather has worked as a Program Implementer in Halifax’s Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention program for the past seventeen years. She has developed & facilitated workshops on a variety of topics, most frequently relating to Inclusion. Heather is passionate about facilitating positive inclusion experiences & finding effective & efficient strategies to support individual & classroom-wide learning.

Debbie Thompson is a graduate from Mount Saint Vincent University with the Degree in Child & Youth. Debbie started her journey in ECE at Wee Care Developmental centre working as a Developmental teacher in an integrated setting. It was there that she knew she wanted to focus her attention on working with children with special needs. Debbie also developed the Resource position at Wee Care & was responsible for developing & implementing plans for children with special needs. Debbie now works at the IWK as a Program Implementer for the Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention program (EIBI) working with children with Autism. Through her job at the IWK she continues to work closely with preschool teachers consulting & providing feedback in various programs. Debbie also teaches regularly at Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education & Mount Saint Vincent University on various topics including challenging behaviour & Inclusion.

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 our electronic brochure please contact:

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