

PROVINCIAL CHILD & FAMILY PROGRAMS



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER IN OUR JOURNEY

2nd Annual Virtual Conference

Join Us On

Feb 1, 3, 8,10,15,17, 2022 Zoom Platform

The committee is excited to present our line up of fantastic speakers who will provide enlightening interactive sessions where we can exchange views and share experiences.

The conference highlights many considerations and practices in working with young children and their families whether delivering in-person or virtual programming.

Our goal is to connect Indigenous Child & Family Programs and partners to support one another on this journey.

Click on the link to register https://forms.office.com/r/h1X5WsMQ81

Hosted by FIREFLY in collaboration with the Provincial Child & Family Program Conference Committee







CONFERENCE SCHEDULE SNAPSHOT:

Feb 1st - 8:30 - 9:00 am CST / 9:30 - 10:00 am EST

Opening with Don Jones, Nigigoonsiminikaaning Territory

& Conference Highlights with Committee

Feb 1st - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Building Our Wigman

With Melanie Francis, Mnidoo Mnising Sharing & Learning Centre

Feb 3rd - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Mino Bimaadziwin "Living the Good Life"

Designing an Indigenous Framework for Child & Family Centres

With Faith Hale, Naomi Wilson, Connie DaSilva, Ska:na Family Learning Centre

Feb 8th - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Anishinaabe Oral Language Practices and Early Years
With Ramona Shawana, Anishinabeck Nation

Feb 10th - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Sharing our Story; Keeping Our Families Engaged
With Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Children & Family Learning Centre Team

Feb 15th - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Developmental Milestones in the Toddler StageWith Terry Willemsvandyk, Mnaamodzawin Health Services

Feb 17th - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Coffee Talk: Building a Resilient Mindset Through Self-Reflection With Lani Sunday, Wakenda Peters, Precious Boots, Akwesasne

Feb 17th - 3:00 - 3:30 pm CST / 4:00 - 4:30 pm EST

Closing with Don Jones, Nigigoonsiminikaaning Territory

& Conference Reflections with Committee



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What You Need To Know:

Early Bird Registration Deadline: January 12th, 2022 \$25.00 per person (non-refundable)

Regular Registration Fees Apply: January 13th, 2022 & Closes January 21st to ensure timely delivery of Welcome Bags \$50.00 per person (non-refundable)

https://forms.office.com/r/h1X5WsMQ81

Late Registration: January 24th to 28th, 2022

No guarantee of Welcome Bags

No registrations accepted after January 28th, 2022

Attendance:

At the end of the conference a cultural resource (\$25.00 value) will be provided to participants who attend all of their registered sessions!

Opening - Feb 1st & Closing - Feb 17th:

Separate Zoom Links sent to registered participants.
Important announcements for attendees!
Opportunities to win door prizes!!
Grand Prize winner to be announced at Closing!!
Must be in attendance to receive!

Zoom Links:

Participants will receive their zoom link for sessions 24 hours prior.

Absence:

In the event of an absence by a session facilitator(s) due to unforeseen circumstances a pre-recorded webinar from the 2021 virtual conference will be uploaded for viewing.

Evaluations:

A link will be provided to participants following the completion of a webinar. Please take the time to complete as this information keeps the committee informed on how to support educators.



Opening Feb 1st - 8:30 - 9:00 am CST / 9:30 - 10:00 am EST & Closing Feb 17th - 3:00 - 3:30 pm CST / 4:00 - 4:30 pm EST



The conference committee is pleased to welcome **Don Jones**. Don was born and raised in the Nigigoonsiminikaaning territory and is a proud member of the Lynx clan near Fort Frances, ON. He was elected Chief at 25 years of age and served 5 terms, as well as, Tribal Chief for three terms for Grand Council Treaty #3. He served for 14 years as Research Director for the (TARR) Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research program for Grand Council Treaty#3 and as an Executive Director at Pwi-Di-Goo-Zing Ne-Yaa-Zhing Advisory Services in Fort Frances for 5 years. Mr. Jones also held the position as Policy and Implementation Officer for with the National Centre for First Nations Governance for seven years, and has developed, delivered and facilitated self-governance workshops/forums for many years.

Niigaanibines completed his second term as a Council member in 2016 for the Nigigoonsiminikaaning Anishinaabeg and held the Governance and Land Claims portfolio for his community. He is currently retired but still holds a trapline and is an active trapper, delivers cultural/traditional teachings and is fluent in Anishinaabemowin. Don also provides Master of Ceremonies services for Tribal Agencies, First Nations and First Nation organizations throughout the Treaty #3 territory.







Feb 1st - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Building Our Wigman with Melanie Francis

Building relationship with the land, community partners, families and all of community: how Mnidoo Mnising Sharing & Learning Centre, Edge of the Bush and Our Children Our Future programs worked together over the course of 2+ years and eventually came together over a weekend to build a Wigwam. It was a time of knowledge sharing, strengthening relationships, teachings by Elders & community knowledge keepers to address reconciliation, focus on moving forward and maintaining these relationships and creating a safe space for knowledge sharing for the future of our children and families.

Misko Nimkii Binesi Kwe ~ Niimi'iwe Shkode Kwe n'diznikaaz Migizii Dodum Timiskaming miinwa Mnidoo Mnising doonjibaa, Anishinaabe kwe n'dao.

Aanii – my Name is Red Thunderbird Woman, Dancing Fire Woman. English name – Melanie Francis. I am from the Eagle clan, a member of Timiskaming First Nation and grateful to call Mnidoo Mnising (Manitoulin Island) my home. I am the Indigenous Early Years Coordinator at Mnidoo Mnising Sharing & Learning Centre for All/Journey Together Program, which provides programs and training opportunities for the early years sector within the Sudbury/Manitoulin District. Our program objectives are to increase access to culturally relevant services, enhance Indigenous content, foster Indigenous identity, and support non-Indigenous and Indigenous develop capacity. Our team consists of myself and our team liaison, Nicole Abotossaway and a variety of Instructors, and Elders.







Feb 3rd - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Mino Bimaadziwin "Living the Good Life"

Designing an Indigenous Framework for Child & Family Centres

With Faith Hale, Naomi Wilson, Connie DaSilva, Ska:na Family Learning Centre

This workshop will assist Child & Family Centre practitioners in designing and developing their own Indigenous Framework that will help to recruit and retain families & children. Mino Bimaadziwin teachings and Indigenous wise practices will be reviewed and utilized.

Ska:na Family Learning Centre (SFLC)

SFLC was founded in 2003 and is an Urban Indigenous-led non-profit, charitable organization. SFLC has five (5) Licensed Child Care Centres and four (4) Child & Family Program Centres located at sites in Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent and Sarnia-Lambton.

Faith Hale, SFLC Executive Director

Faith is Mandan-Hidatsa from Mandaree ND and has resided in the SW Ontario region for 40 years. Faith is married and has 5 adult children ranging from ages of 26 to 38. Faith is a graduate from St. Clair College ECE, Brock University, B.Ed. and Wayne State University M.Ed., BA. Soc. Faith has 35+ years experience as a Registered Early Childhood Educator and is a certified Trainer of Trainers in the High Scope Curriculum Approach focusing on Indigenous culture and education. Faith is passionate about Urban Indigenous leadership and the advancement of Indigenous peoples in all levels of government. She has been recognized as a significant contributor in advancing the vision of leadership in both the Indigenous and mainstream organizations.

Naomi Wilson, SFLC Programs Policy Analyst

Naomi is from Deshkan Ziibiing (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation) in SW Ontario. She also identifies with Onya:dayga (Oneida of the Thames First Nation) as her mother is from that First Nation and is Bear Clan. Naomi is married and has a 30-year-old daughter. Naomi's background is in Business Administration with training in Human Resources and Graphic Arts. She has gained a lot of experience working as a Literacy Coordinator, Community Developer and Executive Director for Friendship Centres for 15+ years, and as a Youth Grant Manager and Workforce Coordinator for the US Dept of Labour in California for 10 years. Naomi is creative and passionate about sharing her knowledge and experiences to help in the development of programs, services, grants, policies and procedures for Indigenous peoples.

Connie DaSilva, SFLC Child & Family Programs Manager

Connie DaSilva has been involved in the Urban Indigenous community of Windsor-Essex, since 1995. Currently, she is the Child and Family Programs Manager for Ska:na Family Learning Center and has been in this role since 2014

With a Bachelor of Social Work from York University and experience in Early Years, Connie has worked with Newcomer and Indigenous populations in the areas of Early Years, Immigration, Family law and Human rights, receiving an award from the Spanish-Speaking community in 2019 for all the work she has done with Spanish-Speaking migrant workers, and vulnerable populations. Connie is currently pursuing a career as a licensed Paralegal in order to serve, represent and advocate for children families.



Feb 8th - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Anishinaabe Oral Language Practices and Early Years With Ramona Shawana, Anishinabeck Nation

This presentation will give you the opportunity to think more deeply about Anishinaabe oral language practices and how they lay a necessary foundation for our young learners. Together we will have the opportunity to rethink literacy and examine our common everyday practices. I invite you to join me in my own exploration of thinking beyond the skills of literacy and thinking more about what our children really need. I will share my inquiry into building relationships and community with young children and exploring what reciprocity and listening mean in early learning environments.

Ramona Shawana is an RECE from Wiikwemkoong First Nation. Ramona has worked in the field of early years for 29 years. Early in her career, she spent some time working within her community in their Hub Centre as a preschool educator. To provide additional support in her community she sought additional qualifications to become a Communicative Disorders Assistant which allowed her to provide speech and language therapy to young children in her community under the direction of a Speech Language Pathologist. While working as an ECE in a provincial school system, Ramona completed her Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies at Ryerson University. She also recently obtained a Professional Masters of Education with a concentration in Aboriginal Education at Queen's University. Ramona is passionate about early learning and continues to explore how Anishinaabe ways of knowing and being can enhance learning for children in early years programs.

Feb 10th - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Sharing our Story: Keeping Our Families Engaged With Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Children & Family Learning Centre Team

Some members of the Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Children & Family Learning Centre Team will share their stories on how they continue to keep families engaged in the program. The Team will share ideas that have worked and what they are looking forward to with the families. We hope you enjoy the session!





Feb 15th - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Developmental Milestones in the Toddler Stage With Terry Willemsvandyk, Mnaamodzawin Health Services

Developmental Milestones are skills most children can manage at specific ages. Fostering opportunities that cultivate a sense of well being in the child, maintains their spirit, emotional, physical and mental growth. Knowledge is power. When we learn about our child's development it provides ability to be in control of our lives. This makes our job easier and more relaxed. Coming along side of our children keeps the attachment intact. Play for fun and enjoyment without a specific goal or a 'win/lose' attitude reduces stress and builds in creativity. Environment, language, connections and culture are tools to we can use to encourage a sense of wellbeing. We are our children's role models and the more we understand these milestones the easier we can navigate through this stage of their life with enjoyment.

Terry Willemsvandyk n'dizhnikaaz. Early Childhood Educator, Resource Teacher (Special Needs), Registered Behaviour Technician and Indigenous Social Work Student. Mother of six, grandma (nokimus/oma), currently working for Mnaamodzawin Health Services as the Maternal and Child Health Program Coordinator. I have a long list of certificates in the field of children and business recently completing a Diploma in Postnatal Depression Awareness.







Feb 17th - 9:00 - 11:00 am CST / 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST Session Repeat - 1:00 - 3:00 pm CST / 2:00 - 4:00 pm EST

Coffee Talk: Building a Resilient Mindset Through Self-Reflection With Lani Sunday, Wakenda Peters, Precious Boots, Akwasasne

This will be a mental health check-in for RECEs. It will be an opportunity to engage in self-reflection on the past year. We will discuss our successes and challenges, reflect and become aware of our feelings on working through the pandemic, COVID risks, truth and reconciliation efforts, triggers, how to seek help, how to help others, and finding the silver lining in it all and build a resilient mindset.

Shekon! I am Lani Sunday the Program Manager for the Akwesasne Zero 2 Six Family Program, and also for the Akwesasne Child Care Program for the last 12 years. I have my Masters degree in Education, Bachelor's degree in Sociology, and are currently working on a second Master's in Counselling and Psychopathology. Our Zero 2 Six Child & Family Program is fairly new operating over the last three years on reserve, and our licensed care has been operating for the last 25 years on reserve.

She:kon everyone, I am **Wakenda Peters**. I work as an Early Learning Specialist with Akwesasne Zero 2 Six, within my home community of Akwesasne. This position has allowed me to empower and educate families. I love that our program is continuously enfolding to meet the needs of the community. I enjoy trying different ways to engage and support my community, especially during this trying time. I decided to join this field after completing a year in Social Service Worker. I knew I wanted to work with children and their families. So I enrolled in the ECE program at Mohawk College. Upon completion I worked as a Registered Early Childhood Educator in a Head Start Classroom with the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education. I am a mother to my wild and loving son Damon. I am excited to share some knowledge and insight, and to learn from you as well.

My name is **Precious Boots** and I have been working in the ECE field for 9 years in my home community of Akwesasne. I started as an educator aide with Akwasesne Child Care and found my love for teaching children. I graduated from St. Lawrence's ECE online program in 2020 and am currently an Early Learning Specialist with Zero to Six. I am an Insta (mother) to three boys and one baby girl. My children have fueled my aspirations of learning as much as I can about the early years of development. As an Indigenous RECE I take pride in creating, collaborating and implementing ways to help our families connect to their culture and language. I am inspired by our program's dedication to bridging the concept of learning through play and providing a safe space for children and caregivers to do so. I love having the opportunity to be a part of the growth and development of families in and around our community.







