

**First Nations Early Learning and Child Care
Conference 2026**

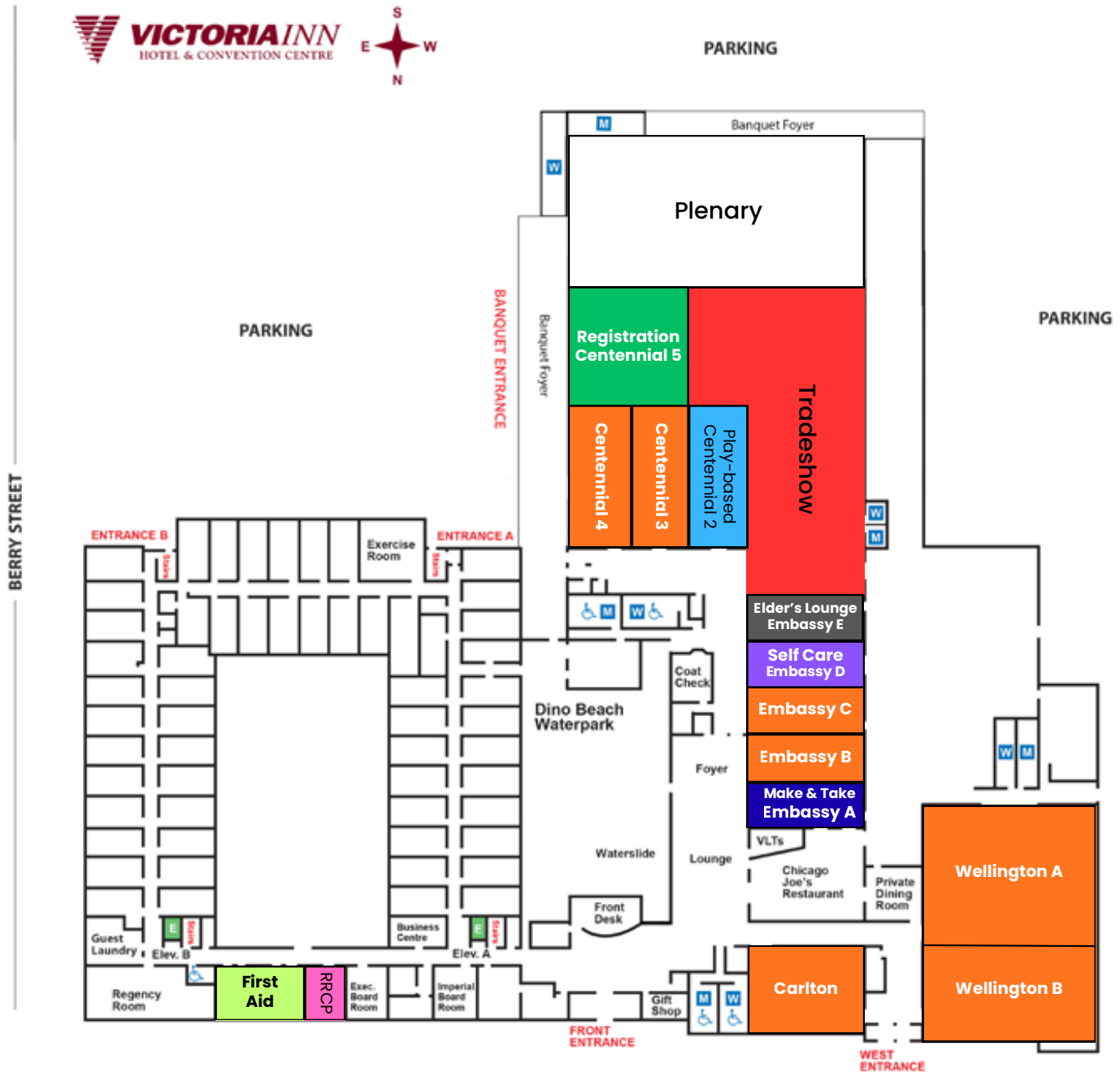
All Our Gifts, All Our Children

**February 24 & 25, 2026
Victoria Inn, Winnipeg MB**



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

Conference Map



Plenary

Registration Centennial 5

Workshops

Play-based Room

Tradeshow

Elders Lounge

Self Care Sanctuary

Eagle Urban

Make & Take

First Aid

RRCP ECE Cohort



First Nations Early Learning and Child Care conference

February 24-25, 2026

Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre
1808 Wellington Ave, Winnipeg



All Our Gifts, All Our Children

Rooted in First Nations teachings, this gathering celebrates the diverse strengths and spirits our children bring into the world. Together, we will honour each child's uniqueness, explore inclusive practices, and strengthen the circle that connects us all. Join us in celebrating the beauty of our children, the resilience of our communities, and the truth that every gift matters — and every child belongs.



"We do not need to reinvent the wheel. We have the wheel.
It is our way; it has always been our way."

—Elder Eunice Beardy

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



On behalf of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, I want to welcome each of you to this gathering. It's an honour to stand with the educators, caregivers, leaders, and families who carry the responsibility of nurturing our children and protecting their futures.

This work is sacred. When we invest in early learning and childcare, we are investing in identity, language, culture, and belonging. We are reminding our children that they come from strength, and that their gifts are needed in this world.

Our communities know that raising children is not just a program or a service, it is a collective promise. A promise that every child will be seen, supported, and celebrated. A promise that our teachings will live on through them.

I thank you for the work you do every day, often quietly, often without recognition, but always with heart. The impact of your care will reach far beyond this conference and far into the future.

Together, we continue to build a path where our children grow up proud of who they are, connected to where they come from, and confident in where they are going.

Grand Chief Kyra Wilson
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs



Boozoo, Aniin,



Welcome to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs First Nations Early Learning and Childcare Conference. As a member of Peguis First Nation and Executive Director, I am honoured to welcome you and thank you for participating. This conference is an important opportunity to explore new approaches, share best practices, and connect with fellow early learning professionals. I encourage you to collaborate, network, and exchange ideas to enhance your work. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to First Nations Early Learning and Childcare and for your valuable contributions.

Kiichi Miigwetch,

Carol McCorrister
Executive Director, AMC



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

Ceremony and Elders

Ceremony



Elder Oshoshko Bineshiikwem Osawa Aki Ikwe – Florence Paynter and
Elder Ogimaa Binesii – Phillip Paynter

Supporting Ceremony



Walking Wolf – Coco (Ray) Stevenson
Treaty 1 Territory



Erica Daniels
Peguis First Nation

Elders Denesųłıne



Elder Elsie Dettanikkeaze
Lac Brochet



Elder Lizette Denechezhe
Lac Brochet

Ansininemowin



Elder Donna Wood
St. Theresa Point



Elder Rose Wood
St. Theresa Point

Ininimowin



Elder KiwetinohkKipapak Iskwekw – Eunice Beardy
Tataskweyak Cree Nation

Dakota



Elder Leona Tacan
Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

Anishinaabemowin

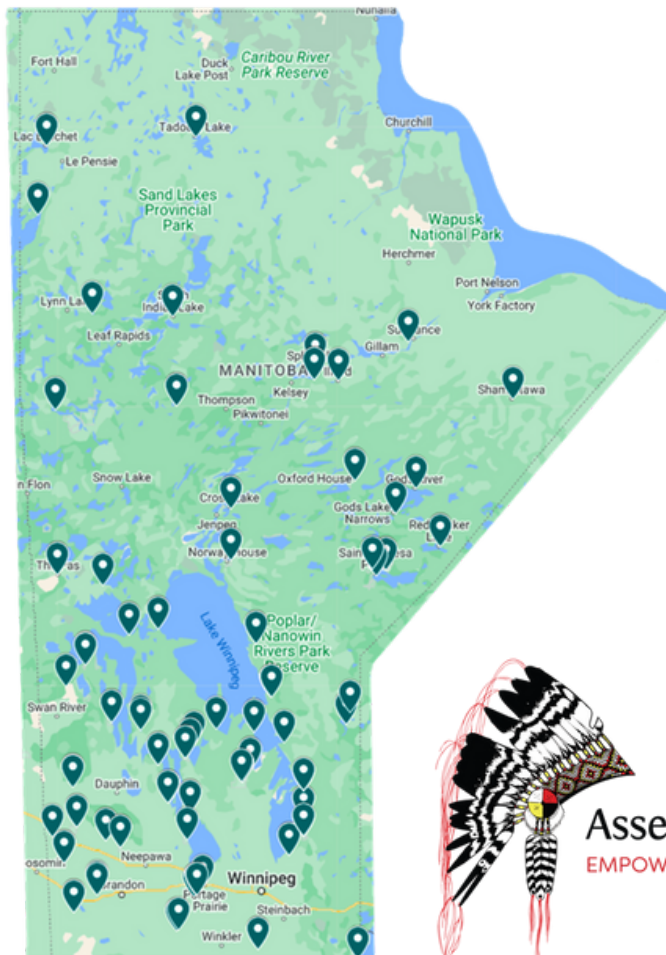


Elder Wabii Maaiigan Agabow
Agnes Prince
Peguis First Nation



Traditional Knowledge Keeper Misko Ginev – Dave McPherson
Peguis First Nation

Chiefs Committee on ELCC



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

Grand Chief Kyra Wilson, AMC

Chief Dennis Pashe, Dakota Tipi First Nation

Chief Tony Travers, Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation

Chief Clinton Keeper, Little Grand Rapids First Nation

Chief Heidi Cook, Misipawistik First Nation

Chief Raymond Flett, St. Theresa Point First Nation

Advisory Committee



From left to right

Sheila Murdock – FNELCC Director, AMC

Councilor Vivian Scott – Pimicikamak Cree Nation

Victoria Antsanen – Northlands Denesuline First Nation

Leanne Lavallee – Misipawistik Cree Nation

Marilyn Mason – Poplar River First Nation

Susan Edwards – Lake Manitoba Treaty 2 First Nation

Penny Thomas – Brokenhead Ojibway Nation

Not Pictured:

Natty Flett – Garden Hill First Nation

Our Beadwork



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

Our Beadwork

Adopt a “Children First” Principle: Prioritize the best interests of children by adopting a “children first” principle in all decision-making, policies, and practices.

Revitalize First Nations Languages and Cultures: Build an FNELCC system grounded in First Nations knowledge, languages, cultures, and land-based teachings.

Promote Healing Centred Engagement: Embed healing-centered engagement in the FNELCC system to support the holistic well-being of children and families.

Ensure High-Quality and Professional Development: Invest in skilled, fairly compensated program staff, particularly Early Childhood Educators, to ensure a high-quality FNELCC system.

Strengthen Community Capacity: Recognize and accommodate local strengths, needs, and infrastructure requirements within the FNELCC system.

Adopt First Nations Ways of Evaluation: Recognize and accommodate local strengths, needs, and infrastructure requirements within the FNELCC system.

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 service providers, including those serving children with additional support needs.

Conference at a Glance – Day 1

Tuesday, February 24, 2026		Location
7:30	Pipe Ceremony Water Ceremony	Plenary
7:45 – 9:00	Registration	Centennial 5
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast Buffet	Plenary
9:00 – 12:00	Opening Ceremony	
	Presentations	
	Health Break	
	Keynote Tanya Dawn McDougall	
	Performance Wesakechak and Kinosew Storytelling	
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch & Entertainment Mason Hoop Dancers	
1:10 – 2:25	Workshop Session 1	Multiple locations
2:25 – 2:45	Health Break	Plenary
2:45 – 4:00	Workshop Session 2	Multiple locations

Conference at a Glance – Day 2

Wednesday, February 25, 2026		Location
7:45 – 9:00	Registration	East Foyer
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast Buffet	Plenary
9:00 – 10:15	Workshop Session 3	Multiple locations
10:15–10:45	Health Break	Plenary
10:45 – 12:00	Workshop Session 4	Multiple locations
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch & Entertainment Aboriginal School of Dance	Plenary
1:10 – 2:25	Workshop Session 5	Multiple locations
2:25 – 2:45	Health Break	Plenary
2:45 – 4:00	Closing Ceremony & Door Prize Draws	Plenary

Door Prizes

All conference participants will be entered into a draw for our door prizes. Tickets are in your name badge.



Grand prize
Nintendo Switch 2

Two Chances
\$500 Visa Gift
Card



You must be in attendance to win!

Co-Emcees

Jordan Knight & Davey Gott



Jordan Knight and Davey Gott are the dynamic duo bringing laughs, charm, and good vibes to Manitoba's airwaves!

Jordan Knight, a Winnipeg-born radio pro, mixes decades of experience with quick wit and a magnetic personality that instantly draws people in.

Davey Gott, a Cree broadcaster from Chemawawin Cree Nation, brings contagious humor, relatable charm, and a lively presence that makes every moment feel personal and fun.

Together, they host NCI FM's Morning Show and Friends On Friday—and now, they're ready to bring that same energy to your event as your emcees!

Tuesday Morning Entertainment

Wesakechak and Kinosew Storytelling

This storytelling performance reveals Indigenous Teachings and Universal Laws such as love, kindness, wisdom, and sharing, highlighting their importance to all of humanity. Through the story of Wesakecahk, audiences are reminded of our connection to the Creator, Mother Earth, and all life, and how balance can be restored through right relationships.

Featured in the Netflix documentary For Love, this Indigenous storytelling demonstrates how our words, thoughts, and actions carry vibrational energy—what is sent out returns back. For over 12 years, these stories and performances have been shared in schools, conferences, communities, and land-based cultural camps, supporting the preservation of storytelling as a vital part of Indigenous life.

Doris Collins

Doris Collins (Badger) is from Kehewin Cree Nation in the Treaty Six Territory.



Samuel L Bull

Samuel L. Bull is from Whitefish Lake First Nation #128 in Treaty Six Territory.

Keynote Speaker

Tanya Dawn McDougall



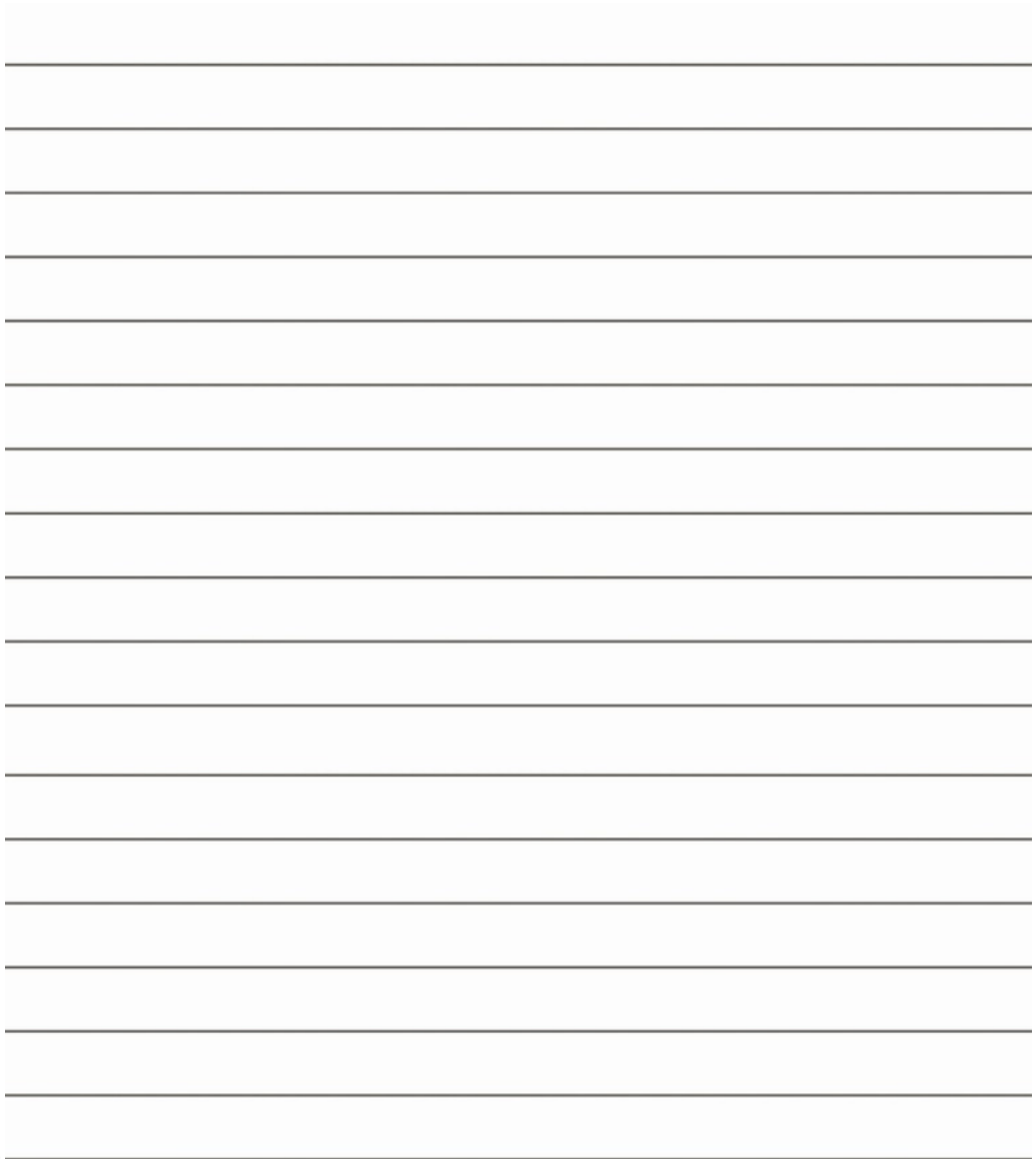
Tanya is the daughter of Mrs. Nelliane Cromarty, who is an Anishinabe language and Knowledge Keeper. She is the granddaughter of Kathleen Mason, the first female Councilor in the region. Tanya's life journey employs servant leadership in the fields of education and wellness. She holds two master's degrees. Her first graduate degree is in Educational Administration from the University of Manitoba, and her second is in School and Applied Child Psychology from the University of Calgary. As a former school mental health advocate on the St. Theresa First Nation School Second Level Services team and in her current role as Wellness Coach for the Community Wellness Program, Tanya makes it her mission to contribute to the building of capacity of trauma-informed approaches. Fueled by a deep love for her community and its children, her focus is always to enable support and opportunities needed by building the capacity of others based on the beloved values and practices of her home community of St. Theresa Point Ansininew Nation.



All Our Gifts, All Our Children

FNELCC Conference 2026

Keynote



All Our Gifts, All Our Children

FNELCC Conference 2026

Networking

Name	
Email	
Phone	
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Phone	
Name	First Nations Early Learning & Child Care, AMC
Email	fnelcc@manitobachiefs.com
Phone	Main 204-318-0080 Fax 204-947-5895

Lunch Entertainment

Mason Hoop Dancers

Kimberly, Charisma, and Nakiyah Mason are Cree sisters who honour their Indigenous heritage through hoop dance, inspiring community connection. Born in Winnipeg and now living in southeastern Manitoba, they began dancing at a young age and are accomplished performers known for engaging, interactive performances and cultural teachings.

They have performed across the Prairies and throughout Canada at school workshops, festivals, professional sporting events, and major gatherings. The sisters competed at the advanced level at the 2024 and 2025 World Championship Hoop Dance Contest in Phoenix, Arizona, and have also performed in Santa Fe and the Taos Pueblos of New Mexico. Through storytelling dance, they address issues facing Indigenous peoples while promoting reconciliation and celebrating Indigenous youth. Their regalia—sewn by their mother—and their own beadwork and hoop-making reflect a commitment to carrying this art form forward.



Aboriginal School of Dance

The Aboriginal School of Dance is known for innovative, emotionally powerful performances that captivate audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Often described as the “Indigenous Cirque du Soleil,” its productions blend storytelling, acting, dance, and voiceovers into breathtaking theatrical experiences.

Each performance weaves traditional teachings with contemporary choreography, guided by the heartbeat of the drum and the strength of community. Through compelling narratives and dramatic expression, dancers bring stories of resilience, culture, and spirit to life.

Carefully curated music highlights Indigenous artists while blending global and contemporary sounds, creating an authentic, educational, and unforgettable experience.





EAGLE

URBAN TRANSITION CENTRE

SCIS Status Card Program Pop-Up Clinic

WHERE:

First Nations Early Learning & Child
Care Conference
Victoria Inn (

WHEN:

February 24 & 25, 2026

MUST HAVE EITHER:

- 1.) Valid Photo ID **or**
- 2.) Health Card **and**
Signed Guarantor Form



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Phone: 204-954-3050

Email: statusintake@manitobachiefs.com



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Gathering Spaces

Community Showcase - Hallways

A display area dedicated to First Nations early learning programs. Immerse yourself in a visual journey showcasing activities, culture, and language. Discover indoor and outdoor learning environments, engaging events, and hands-on materials through photos, observations, and tangible examples.

Play-based Room : MITT Students - Centennial 2

True inclusion is a practice in reflection, openness, and growth. This interactive workshop led by ECE students will provide an opportunity to explore the topic of inclusion in meaningful ways, focusing on representations of ourselves, our communities and the songs and stories that define our past, present and future.

Self-Care Sanctuary-Embassy D

A calming, come-and-go space designed to help you recharge and reconnect. This room offers activities that nurture well-being across physical, emotional, social, and spiritual domains.

Elder's Lounge - Embassy E

A space for participants to gather and engage in the wisdom of Elders through their teachings and storytelling. Elders will share cultural knowledge, traditions, and personal experiences, and offer valuable insights. Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in this meaningful exchange.

Gathering Spaces

Tuesday, February 24

Day 1	Session 1 1:10 to 2:25	Session 2 2:45 to 4:00
Elder's Lounge	Anishinaabemowin	Dakota
Self-care Sanctuary	Creative Circles	Gentle Yoga & Meditation
Make & Take	Mini Tipis	Dream Catchers

Wednesday, February 25

Day 2	Session 3 9:00 to 10:15	Session 4 10:30 to 12:00	Session 4 1:10 to 2:25
Elder's Lounge	Ininimowin	Denesųłıne	Ansininemowin
Self-care Sanctuary	Tea & Talk	Gratitude & Reflection	Sensory, Body Scrubs & Coloring
Make & Take	Medicine Bags	Mini Tipis	Dream Catchers

Self-Care Sanctuary

Session 1: Creative Circles: Engage in beading and crochet as grounding, hands-on practices that encourage focus, relaxation, and social connection in a shared creative space.

Session 2: Gentle Yoga & Meditation: Short, accessible sessions offering simple movement, breathwork, and guided meditation to release tension and support calm and regulation. All experience levels are welcome.

Session 3: Tea & Talk: Participate in mindful tea-making that invites slowing down, reflection, and connection—whether in quiet presence or gentle conversation with others.

Session 4: Gratitude & Reflection: Explore guided journaling prompts, contribute to the community gratitude wall, or create a personal vision board to reflect, set intentions, and nurture spiritual well-being.

Session 5: Sensory/Body Scrubs/Colouring Stations: Move in and out of sensory, body scrub, and colouring stations designed to offer soothing textures, calming visuals, and mindful focus and create at your own pace.

Weighted blankets, essential oils, and other sensory tools will be available throughout the space to support your self-care experience.

**Come as you are, stay as long as you need,
and leave feeling refreshed.**

Make & Take – Embassy A

Eagle Urban Transition Centre

Join us for an engaging, hands-on craft session facilitated by Eagle Urban Transition Centre (EUTC) Cultural Support Workers from the Indian Residential School team, led by Blaine Harris and Tess Bigelow. Participants will explore and create traditional Indigenous crafts through guided, interactive experiences that celebrate culture, creativity, and meaningful community connection



Tess Bigelow is a Cultural Support Worker with the Indian Residential School team at Eagle Urban Transition Centre and a proud member of White Bear First Nation. She is a mother and active community member who enjoys creating traditional art and regalia, participating in ceremonies, and sharing her cultural knowledge as a Grass Dancer and second-year Sundancer.



Blaine Harris is a Knowledge Keeper and Cultural Support Worker with Eagle Urban Transition Centre in downtown Winnipeg. A proud member of Ebb & Flow First Nation, Blaine is passionate about making art and culture accessible to all and enjoys sharing this knowledge with the wider community.

Volunteers

First Nations Early Learning and Child Care would like to thank all the volunteers that helped make this conference happen!

ECE Students and Instructors from Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) hosted our Play-based Gathering Space



ECE Students and instructors from Urban Circle volunteered as Session Supports and Greeters



THANK
YOU

Special thanks to the staff of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and friends and family who supported the conference.



Workshops

Tuesday, Feb 24 – Day 1

Room	Session 1 – 1:10 to 2:25
Plenary	Children with Exceptionalities and System Development to Support FNELCC Programs
Centennial 3	2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Our Spaces
Centennial 4	Andekhdoodowak? Strategies for Working with Children Impacted by Trauma
Centennial 5	Nature-Based Program Design with CPAWS Manitoba
Embassy B	Medicine Bags Workshop
Embassy C	Physical Literacy
Carlton	Drum Teaching, and Song Learning
Wellington A	Bye, Bye Burnout
Wellington B	Building Strong Foundations: Nurturing Relationships in Child Care
Kensington	First Aid & CPR – <u>RE</u> certification (Continuous Sessions 1 & 2) ** Starting at 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. ***

Looking for more?

See page 22 for Gathering Spaces Schedule

Workshops

Tuesday, Feb 24 – Day 1

Room	Session 2 – 2:45 to 4:00
Plenary	Children with Exceptionalities and System Development to Support FNELCC Programs
Centennial 3	Supporting Children’s Language Through Play
Centennial 4	Pedagogy: Teaching Children from a Speech Language Perspective
Centennial 5	Total Physical Response: Language Learning in Children
Embassy B	Weaving Worlds to Create Outdoor Early Learning & Child Care for the Future
Embassy C	Riding the Waves: Understanding and Supporting Big Emotions
Carlton	Traditional Hand Drumming in Early Learning Environments
Wellington A	Wheels on the Bus are Flat: How to Pump Up the Music in Your Early Learning Program
Wellington B	Forest School 101
Kensington	First Aid & CPR – <u>RE</u> certification CONTINUED FROM SESSION 1



All Our Gifts, All Our Children

FNELCC Conference 2026

My Workshop Plan

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 Day 1	
Session 1	
Session 2	
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 Day 2	
Session 3	
Session 4	
Session 5	



Workshops

Wednesday, Feb 25 – Day 2

Room	Session 3 – 9:00 to 10:15
Centennial 3	Communicating with Families
Centennial 4	Children with Exceptionalities and System Development to Support FNELCC Programs
Centennial 5	Relax & Create: Art for Wellness
Embassy B	It's Potty Time!
Embassy C	Mentoring with Kindness
Carlton	Traditional Hand Drumming in Early Learning Environments
Wellington A	Complex Trauma Among First Nations and Building a Culture – Based Model of Care
Wellington B	Our Children Matter: Literacy Strategies to Support Mattering in Early Childhood
Kensington	First Aid & CPR –New Certification (Continuous Sessions 3, 4 & 5) *** 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. ***

Looking for more?

See page 22 for Gathering Spaces Schedule

Workshops

Wednesday, Feb 25 – Day 2

Room	Session 4 – 10:45 to 12:00
Centennial 3	Connecting the Dots: Building Community and Leadership Within and Across the Early Childhood Community
Centennial 4	Relationship Over Regulation: Honouring the Unique Gifts of Children with Neurodevelopmental Differences
Centennial 5	Relax & Create: Art for Wellness
Embassy B	Fierce Little Listeners: Children as Meaning Makers
Embassy C	Mentoring with Kindness
Carlton	Laughter Yoga
Wellington A	Pedagogy: Teaching Children from a Speech Language Perspective
Wellington B	Traditional Medicines of Manitoba
Kensington	First Aid & CPR –New Certification CONTINUED FROM SESSION 3 *** 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. ***

Looking for more?

See page 22 for Gathering Spaces Schedule

Workshops

Wednesday, Feb 25 – Day 2

Room	Session 5 – 1:10 to 2:25
Centennial 3	Play, Language and Wellness: Indigenous Learning Opportunities with the TOYBOX Project
Centennial 4	Relationship Over Regulation: Honouring the Unique Gifts of Children with Neurodevelopmental Differences
Centennial 5	RRC Polytech Workplace ECE for First Nations Communities
Embassy B	Fierce Little Listeners: Children as Meaning Makers
Embassy C	Seeing the Gifts in Every Child
Carlton	Remembering the Child Within You
Wellington A	Raising Leaders at Home: When Parents Lead, Children Rise
Wellington B	Traditional Family Parenting
Kensington	First Aid & CPR –New Certification CONTINUED FROM SESSION 3 *** 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. ***

Workshop Descriptions

Day 1 – Session 1 1:10 p.m. to 2:25 p.m.

Children with Exceptionalities and System Development to Support FNELCC Programs

Presenter: Dr. Don Shackel

Session 1 1:10 – 2:25 ROOM: Plenary

Join Dr. Donald Shackel for an interactive session focused on understanding the needs of First Nations preschool children (ages 0–4) with disabilities or special needs living in Manitoba communities. Participants will be invited to share their experiences and ideas about the supports and services needed for children, families, and early learning staff, with a focus on First Nations–led solutions. Dr. Shackel will also share early findings from the study based on surveys, interviews, and focus groups completed so far.

2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion in our Spaces

Presenter: Gaston Lopez Ficher

Session 1 1:10 – 2:25 ROOM: Centennial 3

In this workshop, we will explore what inclusion looks like and feels like in regards to our 2SLGBTQIA+ families and children. This workshop will discuss terminology around the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and provide tangible changes that can be implemented in programs. In other words, we will explore direct ways to make programs more inclusive and intentional for our 2SLGBTQIA+ families and children; we will work together to protect and nurture the wellbeing and wellbecoming of 2SLGBTQIA+ families and children. This presentation will be interactive in nature, so come with questions, comments, and (as always) an open mind!

Day 1 – Session 1

Andekhdoodowak?

Presenter: Tanya Dawn McDougall

Session 1

1:10 – 2:25

ROOM: Centennial 4

This workshop creates a safe, engaging and reflective space for professionals to explore trauma informed approaches to working with children through an Ansininew Worldview. Grounded in Ansininew teaching, relational ways of knowing, and holistic understandings of well-being this session emphasizes the interconnectedness both within and around the child. Through storytelling, discussions, and a guided exploration of strategies participants learn approaches that honour children's identities, strengths, and inherent worth. There is an understanding and recognition that healing happens through relationship, belonging, and respect. Participants leave with practical insights and tools that support children in ways that are culturally responsive and strengths based.

Nature-Based Program Design with CPAWS MB

Presenter: Carly Gray

Session 1

1:10 – 2:25

ROOM: Centennial 5

Join environmental educator Carly Gray for a hands-on workshop on building an outdoor learning program for children. Carly will share pedagogy, practical, and adaptable approaches for cultivating nature connections in all seasons. Activities that support centre-wide inquiry, land-based learning, and sharing local and traditional ecological knowledge. A key focus of this workshop is on educator well-being, exploring how connecting with nature cultivates a sense of stewardship in both students and the educators who guide them.

Workshop Descriptions

Day 1 – Session 1 1:10 p.m. to 2:25 p.m.

Medicine Bag Workshop

Presenters: Samantha Dumas & Justine James

Session 1 1:10 – 2:25 ROOM: Embassy B

In this hands-on cultural workshop, participants will work with deer hide, sinew, and beads to create their own traditional medicine bags. Throughout the process, they will learn about a variety of Indigenous medicines and their uses. Each participant will have the opportunity to select and customize the medicines they wish to include, creating a personal and meaningful medicine bag to take home.

Physical Literacy Workshop

Presenter: Caleb Baranyk

Session 1 1:10 – 2:25 ROOM: Embassy C

Fun and interactive training exploring the importance that physical activity plays in children's everyday lives.

Drum Teachings, and Song Learning

Presenter: Austin Fourre

Session 1 1:10 – 2:25 ROOM: Carlton

Join us for an interactive and immersive experience where children will learn the significance of drumming and singing in Indigenous cultures. Through storytelling, song, and drumming, participants will discover the rich traditions and teachings behind these important cultural practices.

Day 1 – Session 1

Bye, Bye Burnout

Presenter: Melanie Bacon

Session 1 1:10 – 2:25 ROOM: Wellington A

Bye Bye Burnout is an engaging, science-informed session focused on understanding what burnout is, why it happens, and how to begin addressing it in meaningful, manageable ways. Participants will explore the root causes of burnout and discover a wide variety of practical, realistic strategies that can be applied right away to support well-being and sustainability in their work. Openness to reflection and new ideas are encouraged. Expect to laugh, learn, connect—and, if luck is on our side, start to see a light at the end of the tunnel. P.S. There's chocolate.

Building Strong Foundations: Nurturing Relationships in Child Care

Presenter: Jennifer Waytiuk

Session 1 1:10 – 2:25 ROOM: Wellington B

In this session, we will explore strategies for building strong, positive relationships with children, families and colleagues. Through practical tools and reflective approaches, educators will learn how building and nurturing connections supports holistic child development.

First Aid & CPR – REcertification

Presenter: Ron Ducharme

Session 1 & 2 ** 11:00 to 4:00** ROOM: Kensington

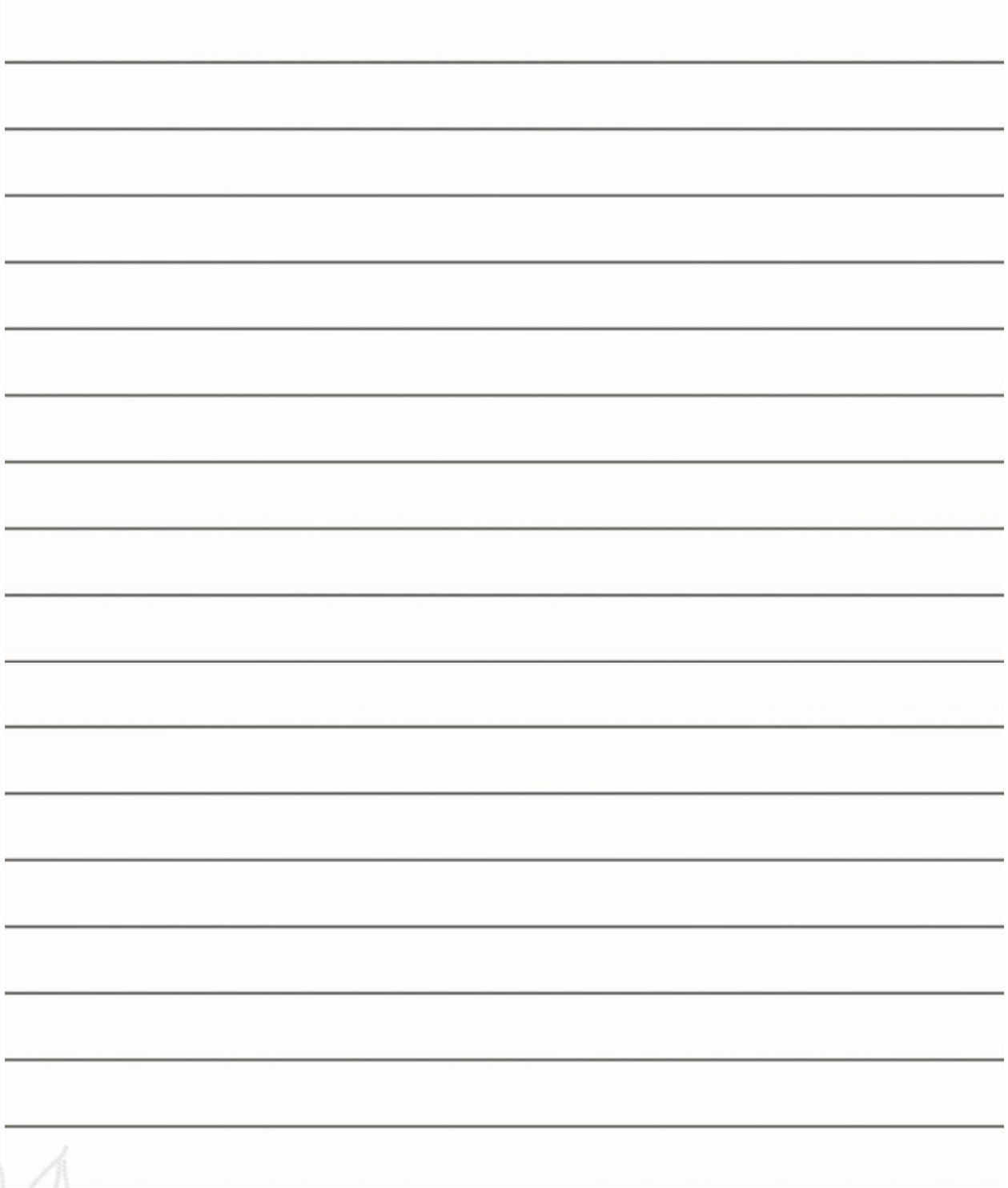
First Aid and CPR **recertification**. Participation in this workshop is based on interest and random selection. Participants will be announced at the end of the morning break.



All Our Gifts, All Our Children

FNELCC Conference 2026

Session 1

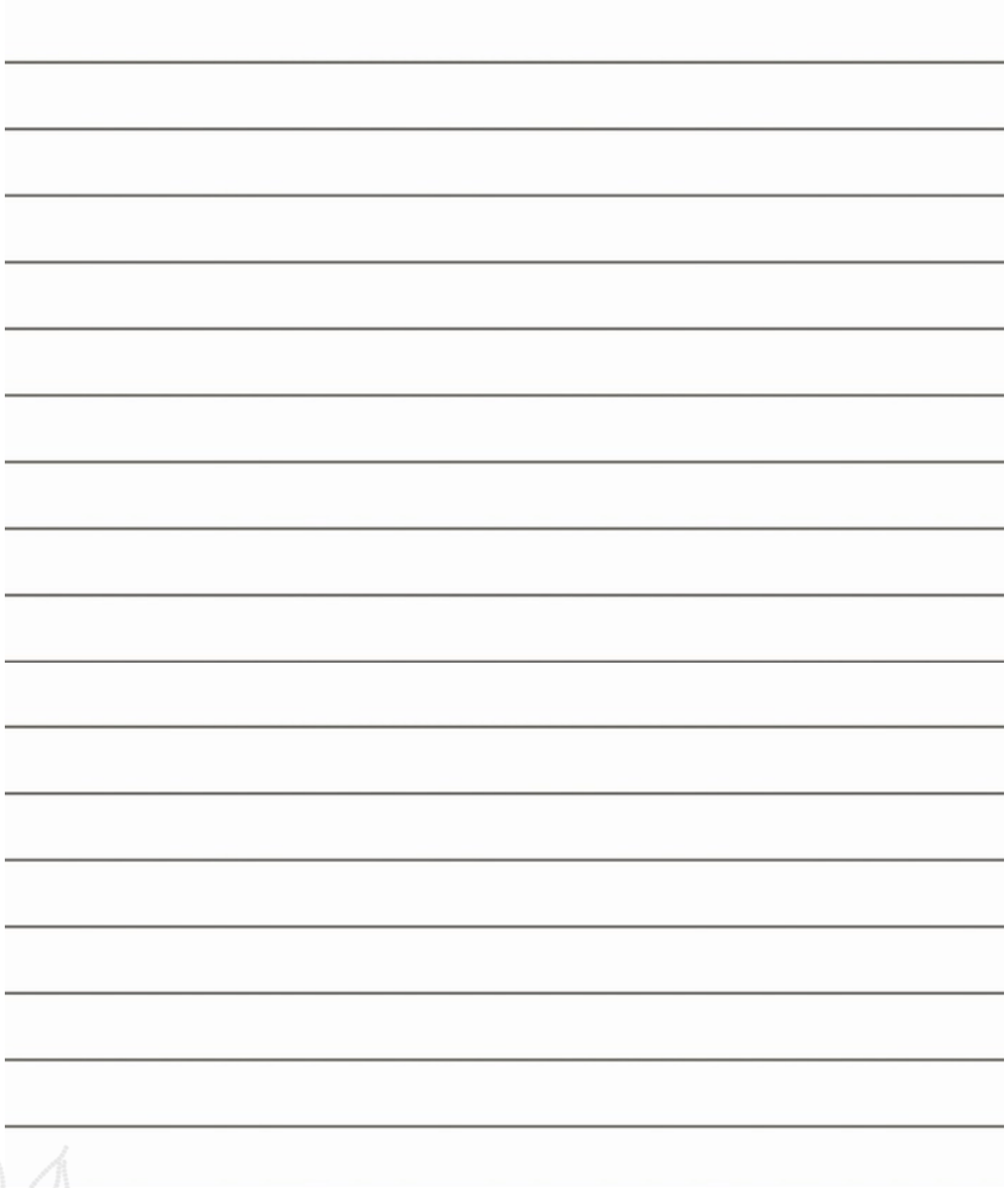




All Our Gifts, All Our Children

FNELCC Conference 2026

Session 1



Workshop Descriptions

Day 1 – Session 2 2:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Supporting Children’s Language Through Play

Presenter: Jessica Daniels

Session 2 2:45 to 4:00 ROOM: Centennial 3

Children are gifts from Creator! As a positive role model for the children we guide on their learning journey, we must create positive and loving relationships that foster optimal growth by providing meaningful play experiences that support children’s traditional language.

Pedagogy: Teaching Children from a Speech Language Perspective

Presenter: Loretta Sinclair

Session 2 2:45 to 4:00 ROOM: Centennial 4

The audience can expect to hear how child development can be enhanced through incidental play, socialization and observation. We use the Seven Teachings in our facilities and we may not realize the scope and sequences that unfold.

Total Physical Response: Language Learning in Children

Presenters: Agnes Carlson with Elder Lizette Denechezche

Session 2 2:45 to 4:00 ROOM: Centennial 5

The presenter will share her experiences of utilizing Total Physical Response methodology for language learning in children. She will share ideas and themes relating to interacting skills in language acquisition strategies, weaving Total Physical Response movement skills to help children learn a language. The use of movement skills and Language learning manipulatives will be the focus of this presentation.

Day 1 – Session 2

Weaving Worlds to Create Outdoor Early Learning & Child Care of the Future

Presenter: Corine Anderson

Session 2

2:45 to 4:00

ROOM: Embassy B

We all share the vision of connecting children to the land and understand the importance of doing so- but how do we accomplish these goals? Is it possible to create culturally relevant Early Learning & Child Care environments that are safe and healthy and meet modern standards? In this workshop we will discuss the barriers to providing outdoor EL&CC programs and how to troubleshoot those barriers. We will look at your daily routines and also how to adjust your policies, human resource development, build necessary relationships and develop a curriculum framework to accomplish your goals.

Riding the Waves: Understanding and Supporting Big Emotions

Presenter: Heidi Paetau

Session 2

2:45 to 4:00

ROOM: Embassy C

Every day brings a tide of emotions in the children we care for. In this workshop, we'll explore where big feelings come from, why they can feel so overwhelming, and how we can stay connected through the storms. You'll learn compassionate, practical ways to ride emotional waves with more ease, empathy, safety and understanding while exploring the gifts of the big emotions we all experience!

Workshop Descriptions

Day 1 – Session 2 2:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Traditional Hand Drumming in Early Learning Environments

Presenters: Ko’ona Saber with Grandmother Barbara Nepinak and Willow Cochrane aka Magnus

Session 2 2:45 to 4:00 ROOM: Carlton

Discover the joys of hand drumming with ECE Ko’ona Saber, a Traditional Indigenous Educator, in this immersive experiential learning circle. Ko’ona shares traditional rhythms and techniques focused on engaging children helping them explore drum songs as powerful tools for promoting cultural awareness and fostering connections. Gain practical strategies and insights from her expertise and integrate drumming experiences into your curriculum, enriching the lives of the children and families you work with.

Wheels on the Bus are Flat: How to Pump Up the Music in Your Early Learning Program

Presenter: Melanie Bacon

Session 2 2:45 to 4:00 ROOM: Wellington A

The Wheels on the Bus Are Flat: How to Pump Up Music in Your Early Learning Program is a hands-on workshop that explores simple, meaningful ways to strengthen music experiences in early learning settings. Participants will learn practical ideas to confidently use music throughout the day, supporting engagement, routine, and development. This session encourages educators to rediscover music as a joyful and accessible teaching tool.

Day 1 – Session 2

Forest School 101

Presenter: Leah Smith

Session 2

2:45 to 4:00

ROOM: Wellington B

Learning about the Forest School ethos and how you can apply its principles to your professional practice. Understand how emergent curriculum, risk management and personal connection to the land can transform your daily routines into enriching experiences

First Aid & CPR – REcertification

Presenter: Ron Ducharme

Session 1 & 2 ** 11:00 to 4:00**

ROOM: Kensington

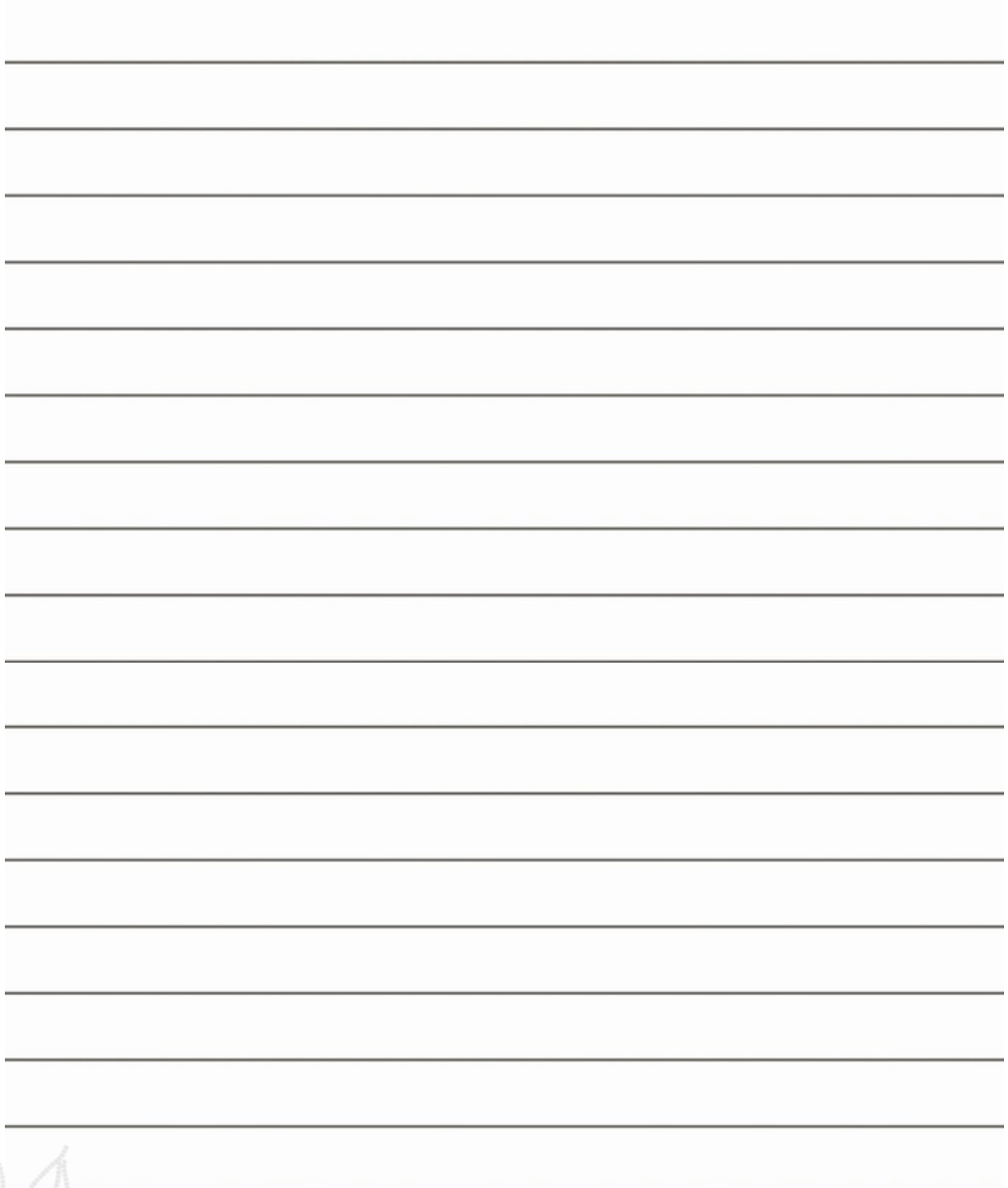
Continued from Session 1. Participation is determined by random selection.



All Our Gifts, All Our Children

FNELCC Conference 2026

Session 2



Session 2

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Workshop Descriptions

Day 2 – Session 3 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

First Aid & CPR – New Certification

Presenter: Ron Ducharme

Sessions 3, 4 & 5 9:00 to 2:25 ROOM: Kensington

First Aid and CPR **new recertification**. Participation in this workshop is based on interest and random selection. Participants will be announced at the end of the Tuesday morning break.

Communicating with Families

Presenter: Jody Naruse

Session 3 9:00 to 10:15 ROOM: Centennial 3

This workshop will cover strategies for communicating with families. Topics include building partnerships, written reports, daily communication, and difficult conversations. This session will include discussions and role play exercises to practice communication skills.

Children with Exceptionalities and System Development to Support FNELCC Programs

Presenter: Dr. Don Shackel

Session 3 9:00 – 10:15 ROOM: Centennial 4

Join Dr. Donald Shackel for an interactive session focused on understanding the needs of First Nations preschool children (ages 0–4) with disabilities or special needs living in Manitoba communities. Participants will be invited to share their experiences and ideas about the supports and services needed for children, families, and early learning staff, with a focus on First Nations–led solutions. Dr. Shackel will also share early findings from the study based on surveys, interviews, and focus groups completed so far.

Day 2 – Session 3

Relax & Create: Art for Wellness

Presenters: Red River College Polytech ECE Student & Instructors

Session 3 9:00 to 10:15 ROOM: Centennial 5

Wellness is an important part of working with children and families, and creative arts can be a powerful tool for our healing and wellbeing. The arts can bring us into a feeling of balance- physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Participants coming to this session will have a variety of arts mediums and materials to choose from – creative arts practices and skills being shared by some of the First Nations Communities RRC Polytech ECE workplace students. So please come by to visit, create, laugh, connect, find stillness and peace as we explore the arts as a tool for wellness in our lives. The students will be offering arts that they find relaxing, fun, and therapeutic, such as beading, painting, vision boards/collage art, DIY diamond painting, colouring, and more... Art is medicine!

It's Potty Time!

Presenters: Ryan Heckert & Keevan Brockie

Session 3 9:00 to 10:15 ROOM: Embassy B

This workshop gives helpful advice on toilet training. It covers topics such as knowing when a child is ready, getting everything set up for success, ways to deal with challenges with potty training, and how to introduce the concept of potty training to a child.

Workshop Descriptions

Day 2 – Session 3 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Mentoring with Kindness

Presenters: Liz Clyde & Ashley Lachance

Session 3 9:00 to 10:15 ROOM: Embassy C

Mentoring with Kindness focuses on supporting new staff and students as a way to strengthen care for children. This interactive session explores how simple, thoughtful mentoring practices can build confidence, trust, and belonging for educators who are learning and growing. Participants will reflect on their own experiences, share ideas, and walk away with practical strategies they can use right away. This workshop highlights how caring for adults strengthens the circle of care around every child.

Traditional Hand Drumming in Early Learning Environments

Presenters: Ko’ona Saber with Grandmother Barbara Nepinak and Willow Cochrane aka Magnus

Session 3 9:00 to 10:15 ROOM: Carlton

Discover the joys of hand drumming with ECE Ko’ona Saber, a Traditional Indigenous Educator, in this immersive experiential learning circle. Ko’ona shares traditional rhythms and techniques focused on engaging children helping them explore drum songs as powerful tools for promoting cultural awareness and fostering connections. Gain practical strategies and insights from her expertise and integrate drumming experiences into your curriculum, enriching the lives of the children and families you work with.

Day 2 – Session 3

Complex Trauma Among First Nations and Building a Culture Based Model of Care

Presenter: Tina Linklater

Session 3 9:00 to 10:15 ROOM: Wellington A

This workshop will work to engage First Nations in defining a Culture based Model of Care for complex Trauma by:

1. Understanding a definition of First Nations Complex Trauma
2. Understanding key trauma experiences across the life span
3. Matching culture-based practices to address Complex Trauma across the life span
4. Identify key program & service components for a model of care

Our Children Matter: Literacy Strategies to Support Mattering in Early Childhood

Presenter: Nancy Tovell

Session 3 9:00 to 10:15 ROOM: Wellington B

The concept of mattering is foundational to healthy child development. This is the feeling that we are valued and have value to add to the world. While mattering is important to us all, our sense of whether or not we matter begins in the earliest days of infancy. Join us for this workshop as we explore how we can use early literacy strategies in our programming to support children's lifelong health and well-being by nurturing a strong sense of mattering. Highlights include: Discussing the importance of ensuring our early learning programs reflect an environment of safe, responsive care. Reviewing the benefits of positive child-led, play-based experiences in the early years – including how language and literacy development, as well as social-emotional learning and attachment is enhanced. Sharing children's picture books, rhymes and songs as well as literacy extension activity ideas that can build on the concept of mattering

Session 3

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Workshop Descriptions

Day 2 – Session 4 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Connecting the Dots: Building Community and Leadership Within and Across the Early Childhood Community

Presenters: TOYBOX Manitoba: Sheri-lynn Skwarchuk, Taylor Bear, Lexi Meachem, Madison Young, Christine Schmidt, Terri Button, Erin Leathers & Karlin Mann

Session 4 10:45 to 12:00 ROOM: Centennial 3

An age-old saying reminds us that “it takes a village to raise a child.” In this interactive workshop, participants will reflect on the roles they play in supporting young children, educators, and their communities.

Through guided reflection and group discussion, the session highlights the importance of mutual support in fostering positive growth.

Participants will explore themes of leadership, mentorship, and community building as collective responsibilities that strengthen early learning and care environments.

Day 2 – Session 4

Day 2 – Session 4 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Relationship Over Regulation: Honouring the Unique Gifts of Children with Neurodevelopmental Differences

Presenter: Robyn Sugden

Session 4 10:45 to 12:00 ROOM: Centennial 4

This session, facilitated by a non-Indigenous-led organization, acknowledges how many child-serving systems are rooted in colonial frameworks that regulate behaviour, promote sameness, and pathologize neurodivergence. Drawing on Indigenous teachings, this presentation shares our approach at decolonizing care for all children through a two-eyed seeing approach, integrating Indigenous and Western knowledge. We will offer practical strategies rooted in harm reduction, cultural humility, and anti-oppressive care. Participants will be invited to reframe behaviour as communication rather than a “problem”, celebrate the unique gifts neurodivergent children bring, and think about ways to show up for neurodivergent children differently.

Workshop Descriptions

Day 2 – Session 4 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Relax & Create: Art for Wellness

Presenters: Red River College Polytech ECE Studentss & Instructors

Session 3 10:45 to 12:00 ROOM: Centennial 5

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Fierce Little Listeners: Children as Meaning Makers

Presenter: Catherine-Laura Dunnington

Session 4 10:45 to 12:00 ROOM: Embassy B

Children have perspectives we must take seriously. This workshop will focus on how early childhood educators can listen "fiercely" to how children are already engaged in making meaning. When we listen fiercely to children, we are better able to imaging what all are capable of, curious about, and consider dramatic. The workshop will introduce participants to methods we might use to meaningfully (and respectfully) observe, listen, document, and lean into children as meaning makers. Using journaling, documentation, and perspective taking, we'll consider what happens to US when we listen fiercely to all children, and get ready to do it.

Day 2 – Session 4

Mentoring with Kindness

Presenters: Liz Clyde & Ashley Lachance

Session 4 10:45 to 12:00 ROOM: Embassy C

Mentoring with Kindness focuses on supporting new staff and students as a way to strengthen care for children. This interactive session explores how simple, thoughtful mentoring practices can build confidence, trust, and belonging for educators who are learning and growing. Participants will reflect on their own experiences, share ideas, and walk away with practical strategies they can use right away. This workshop highlights how caring for adults strengthens the circle of care around every child.

Laughter Yoga

Presenter: Dawn Chartrand

Session 4 10:45 to 12:00 ROOM: Carlton

Laughter Yoga is an uplifting, low-impact accessible practice that combines intentional breathing with gentle movement and guided laughter exercises. Sessions include warm-ups, playful laughter games, and conclude with a calming meditation. These sessions are not only energizing and fun but also serve as powerful tools for stress reduction, team building, and emotional release. Backed by scientific research and rooted in Indigenous principles of natural healing, Laughter Yoga stimulates the release of endorphins, boosts mental health, strengthens the immune system, and increases oxygen flow to the brain and body. It is a safe, adaptive, and inclusive activity suitable for all ages and abilities. Participants leave with practical tools to incorporate unconditional laughter into their daily routines, enhancing personal and community wellness.

Workshop Descriptions

Day 2 – Session 4 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Pedagogy: Teaching Children from a Speech Language Perspective

Presenter: Loretta Sinclair

Session 4 10:45 to 12:00 ROOM: Wellington A

The audience can expect to hear how child development can be enhanced through incidental play, socialization and observation. We use the Seven Teachings in our facilities and we may not realize the scope and sequences that unfold.

Traditional Medicines of Manitoba

Presenter: Dana Wood

Session 4 10:45 to 12:00 ROOM: Wellington B

This workshop would include a 60-min PowerPoint presentation (and 15 min question period) on some of the most common plant medicines in Manitoba traditionally used by the indigenous peoples, how to properly identify and respectfully harvest the plant medicines, their medicinal properties, how to prepare teas, tinctures, ointments for various illness and injury, and how to administer these plant medicines safely to all ages.



First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Conference 2026

All Our Gifts, All Our Children

Early childhood educators shape the foundation of who children become, not just what they know. Their work teaches future generations by grounding learning in land, story, relationship, and respect. By nurturing identity, culture, and belonging in the earliest years, educators help raise children who know where they come from and how to carry that knowledge forward.

When children feel a true sense of belonging, they know who they are—and that is where they thrive.

Session 4

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Workshop Descriptions

Day 2 – Session 5 1:10 p.m. to 2:25 p.m.

Play, Language and Wellness: Indigenous Learning Opportunities within the TOYBOX Project

Presenters: TOYBOX Manitoba: Sheri-lynn Skwarchuk, Taylor Bear, Lexi Meachem, Madison Young, Christine Schmidt, Terri Button, Erin Leathers & Karlin Mann

Session 5 1:10 to 2:25 ROOM: Centennial 3

TOYBOX Manitoba offers free, accessible, play-based, and evidence-informed literacy, numeracy, language, and wellness activities designed for all caregivers and children. See TOYBOXManitoba.ca for our latest adventures! In this interactive session, we will explore ways of supporting children's learning through simple home activities. Participants will receive an activity kit with supplies for supporting early childhood learning. Come learn together, play together!

Relationship Over Regulation: Honouring the Unique Gifts of Children with Neurodevelopmental Differences

Presenter: Robyn Sugden

Session 5 1:10 to 2:25 ROOM: Centennial 4

This session, facilitated by a non-Indigenous-led organization, acknowledges how many child-serving systems are rooted in colonial frameworks that regulate behaviour, promote sameness, and pathologize neurodivergence. Drawing on Indigenous teachings, this presentation shares our approach at decolonizing care for all children through a two-eyed seeing approach, integrating Indigenous and Western knowledge. We will offer practical strategies rooted in harm reduction, cultural humility, and anti-oppressive care. Participants will be invited to reframe behaviour as communication rather than a "problem", celebrate the unique gifts neurodivergent children bring, and think about ways to show up for neurodivergent children differently.

Day 2 – Session 5

RRC Polytech Workplace for First Nations Communities

Presenter: Red River College Polytech

Session 5 1:10 to 2:25 ROOM: Centennial 5

Join us for an information session about the Early Learning and Child Care program at Red River College Polytech. Participants will learn about program structure, expectations, benefits, and future opportunities for those interested in advancing their education in early learning and child care. This session will also provide space for questions, discussion, and exploring interest in the program.

Fierce Little Listeners: Children as Meaning Makers

Presenter: Catherine-Laura Dunnington

Session 5 1:10 to 2:25 ROOM: Embassy B

Children have perspectives we must take seriously. This workshop will focus on how early childhood educators can listen "fiercely" to how children are already engaged in making meaning. When we listen fiercely to children, we are better able to imagine what all are capable of, curious about, and consider dramatic. The workshop will introduce participants to methods we might use to meaningfully (and respectfully) observe, listen, document, and lean into children as meaning makers. Using journaling, documentation, and perspective taking, we'll consider what happens to US when we listen fiercely to all children, and get ready to do it.

Workshop Descriptions

Day 2 – Session 5 1:10 p.m. to 2:25 p.m.

Seeing the Gifts in Every Child

Presenter: Devyn Ewanchuk

Session 5 1:10 to 2:25 ROOM: Embassy C

Every child comes into the world with their own gifts, strengths, and ways of being. Rooted in Indigenous teachings, this workshop invites Early Childhood Educators to reflect on how children who need extra support are understood, supported, and included in child care settings. Through stories, shared reflection, and honest conversation, educators will explore ways of seeing children that focus on belonging, relationships, and community care. Instead of focusing on labels or deficits, this session centres children's dignity, strengths, and right to be fully included. Together, we will honour each child's uniqueness and affirm that every child belongs.

Remembering the Child within You

Presenter: Chris Scholl

Session 5 1:10 to 2:25 ROOM: Carlton

Experience the joy of the music we make together in our community as we drum. ABCD stands for Any Body Can Drum. No previous musical experience necessary as you are guided through a series of interactive games and activities designed to break down barriers and uplift everyone. Expect laughter!

First Aid & CPR – New Certification

Presenter: Ron Ducharme

Sessions 3, 4 & 5 9:00 to 2:25 ROOM: Kensington

Continued from Session 3. Participation is determined by random selection.

Day 2 – Session 5

Raising Leaders at Home: When Parents Lead, Children Rise

Presenters: Cody Gonsalves with Ray 'Co Co' Stevenson

Session 5

1:10 to 2:25

ROOM: Wellington A

Raising Leaders at Home: When Parents Lead, Children Rise Before children ever enter a classroom, they are shaped by the leadership they see at home. This 75-minute workshop shifts the focus back to where leadership truly begins with parents and caregivers. Through cultural grounding, song, community stories, and practical wellness strategies, participants explore how adult presence and daily choices shape children's confidence, safety, and resilience. This session challenges the idea that children alone must carry the future and instead empowers adults to reclaim their role as leaders and role models. When adults rise, families rise and children rise with them.

Traditional Family Parenting

Presenter: Elissa & Timothy Gabriel

Session 5

1:10 to 2:25

ROOM: Wellington B

The Traditional Family Parenting Workshop offers a culturally grounded, land-based, and narrative-informed approach to strengthening Indigenous families and community care. This interactive session explores how parenting roles were traditionally guided by kinship, shared responsibility, and how these teachings were disrupted through colonization and child-welfare systems. Relatives will reflect on how children learn through relationship, story, and example, and how emotional responses shape family life. Using the Tipi teachings, storytelling, and group dialogue, this workshop supports caregivers in reclaiming their strengths, building healthy communication, and nurturing safe, connected, and resilient families.

Session 5

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FNELCC Team



Sheila Murdock
FNELCC Director



Susy Komishin
Assistant Manager



Deborah McKenzie
Executive Assistant



Christa Lee
Administrative
Assistant



Celina Tait
Finance Assistant



Stephanie Edwards
FNELCC Liaison



Robin Potter
Operations Policy
Analyst



Brianne Sanderson
Capital
Infrastructure
Assistant



Brenda Berens
Quality Assurance
Coordinator



Tammie Jonasson
FNELCC Facilitator



Rachelle McKay
FNELCC Facilitator



Desiray Sawler
FNELCC Facilitator



**Santana
Denedchezhe**
FNELCC Facilitator



Kathleen Ledesma
FNELCC Facilitator



Anderson Agbugba
Research Project
Coordinator



Logan Stalker
Research Assistant

Trade Show

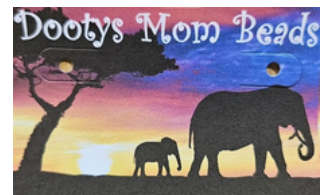


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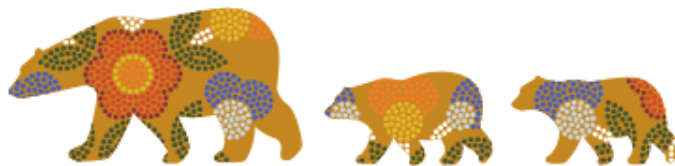


DREAMCATCHER
PROMOTIONS



SECD
SCIENCE OF EARLY
CHILD DEVELOPMENT

ROBERTSON



Teekca's Boutique



Creative Unique Traditional Crafts
by Blaine & Marilyn Harris >



All Our Gifts, All Our Children

FNELCC Conference 2026

Evaluations

FNELCC values your feedback!

Printed copies of the evaluations will be available in the session space. Copies of the overall conference evaluation are available at Information (Lobby by plenary) and in the plenary.

Workshop Evaluations



Please complete the overall conference evaluation.

Overall Conference Evaluation



Please complete a workshop evaluation for each session you attend.

First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Conference 2026



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS