Rooted in Wabanaki Ways of Knowing:



5TH ANNUAL INDIGENOUS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CONFERENCE

November 12 & 13, 2026 | Delta Hotel - Fredericton

CONFERENCE AGENDA

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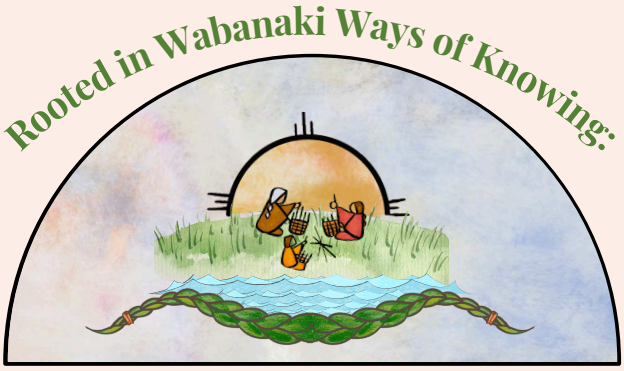
November 12

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast & Registration
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM	Welcome Opening Remarks & Housekeeping
9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	Gina Brooks - Caribou Club
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Nutrition Break
10:30 AM - 11:30 PM	Gina Brooks - Caribou Club
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Activity Mooselegs & Browse Vendors
12:00 PM - 12:45 PM	Lunch
12:45 PM - 1:45 PM	Raven Labillois & Margie Gray- Nurturing Lifelong Wellness & Preventing Type 2 Diabetes in Early Childhood
1:45-2:00 PM	Nutrition Break
2;00 PM - 3:15 PM	Estelle MacDonald - Moe the Mouse Toolkit
3:15PM-3:30PM	Closing Remarks For Day 1



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November 13

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:15 AM	Welcome Back Remarks and Recap of Previous Day
9:15 AM - 10:30 AM	**Dr. Andrew Dutcher**
10:30 AM - 10:45 AM	Nutrition Break
10:45 AM - 12:00 PM	**Center Of Excellence - Esgenoopetitj Daycare**
12:00 PM - 12:45 PM	Lunch
12:45 PM - 2:00 PM	**Update on ECE Initiative**
2:00 PM - 2:15 PM	Closing Remarks for Conference

Gina Brooks

CARIBOU CLUB

GINA BROOKS IS A WABANAKI STORYTELLER, EDUCATOR, AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE SHARER DEDICATED TO HELPING YOUNG CHILDREN CONNECT WITH LANGUAGE, LAND, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY. THROUGH HER WORK WITH CARIBOU CLUB, GINA CREATES MEANINGFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT HONOUR WABANAKI TEACHINGS AND ENCOURAGE RESPECT FOR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.

AS A KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE WABANAKI ECE CONFERENCE, GINA SHARES STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES ON LAND-BASED LEARNING, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCING CHILDREN TO INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE, HISTORY, AND WAYS OF KNOWING FROM AN EARLY AGE. HER PRESENTATIONS INVITE EDUCATORS TO BUILD STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LAND AND TO CREATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ROOTED IN RESPECT, CONNECTION, AND COMMUNITY.

GINA'S WORK IS SUPPORTED BY A TEAM OF KNOWLEDGEABLE PRESENTERS WHO SHARE SPECIALIZED TEACHINGS AND HANDS-ON SKILLS, INCLUDING WABANAKI LANGUAGE, BIRCHBARK BASKET MAKING AND ETCHING, MEDICINE TEACHINGS, ASH BASKET MAKING, TRADITIONAL HARVESTING, AND MOCCASIN MAKING. TOGETHER, THEY OFFER EDUCATORS AN ENGAGING AND CULTURALLY GROUNDED OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM WABANAKI KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS AND ARTISANS

Raven Labillois & Margie Gray

GROWING HEALTHY ROOTS

MARGIE GRAY IS A REGISTERED DIETITIAN AND CERTIFIED DIABETES EDUCATOR WITH MAWIW COUNCIL INCORPORATED PROVIDING SERVICE TO ESGENOOPETITJ, ELSIPOGTOG AND NEQOTKUK COMMUNITIES. MARGIE WORKS CLOSELY WITH HEALTH STAFF IN COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE DIABETES AWARENESS/PREVENTION ACTIVITIES, DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION AND WORKS WITH SCHOOL TO PROVIDE HEALTH LIFESTYLE EDUCATION.

RAVEN LABILLOIS IS A REGISTERED NURSE AND DIABETES COMMUNITY CONSULTANT WITH NORTH SHORE MI'KMAQ TRIBAL COUNCIL SERVICING ALL 7 MEMBER COMMUNITIES. RAVEN IS A MEMBER OF UGPI'GANJIG FIRST NATION AND IS PASSIONATE ABOUT WHOLISTIC WELLNESS FOR ALL AGES!

GROWING HEALTHY ROOTS:
NURTURING LIFELONG WELLNESS & REDUCING RISK OF TYPE 2 DIABETES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

WE EXPLORE HOW EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS CAN SUPPORT LIFELONG HEALTH AND REDUCE THE RISK OF TYPE 2 DIABETES IN YOUNG CHILDREN. THROUGH A STRENGTH-BASED LENS, WE WILL DISCUSS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOOD, MOVEMENT, SCREEN TIME, SLEEP, AND CONNECTION TO LAND AND CULTURE. PARTICIPANTS WILL LEAVE WITH PRACTICAL TIPS AND EDUCATION TO HELP NURTURE HEALTHY HABITS IN EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.

Estelle MacDonald

MOE THE MOUSE

ESTELLE MACDONALD IS A BILINGUAL, NATIONALLY CERTIFIED, SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST CURRENTLY WORKING AT THE LENNOX ISLAND DAYCARE IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND. SHE WAS BORN AND RAISED ON PEI, IN THE EVANGELINE AREA AND SHE EARNED HER MASTER'S DEGREE AT DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY IN 2009. FOLLOWING GRADUATION, SHE MOVED TO NORTHERN NB AND STARTED HER CAREER AT THE BATHURST HOSPITAL PROVIDING SERVICES TO PEDIATRIC AND ADULT CLIENTELE. IN 2015, AFTER 7 YEARS AWAY FROM HOME, ESTELLE, HER HUSBAND T.J. AND THEIR TWO CHILDREN, JAKE AND ELLA, MOVED BACK TO PEI TO BE CLOSER TO FAMILY. ESTELLE CONSIDERS HERSELF VERY BLESSED TO HAVE FOUND SUCH A GREAT JOB OPPORTUNITY SO CLOSE TO HOME AND IN SUCH A GREAT COMMUNITY. NEXT YEAR WILL BE HER 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF WORKING IN THE LENNOX ISLAND COMMUNITY.

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTION:

MOE THE MOUSE™ IS IN THE HOUSE! MOE THE MOUSE™ IS AN EARLY SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM THAT USES INDIGENOUS TOYS AND STORIES TO ENHANCE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 5. THIS PROGRAM WAS CREATED BY 2 SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS (SLP) WORKING WITH THE BC ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE SOCIETY (BCACCS). ESTELLE MACDONALD, SLP WORKING IN THE LENNOX ISLAND COMMUNITY, WAS PART OF A GROUP THAT WORKED TOGETHER TO ADAPT THE ORIGINAL PROGRAM INTO A VERSION THAT WOULD FIT THE MARITIME COMMUNITIES. MOE THE MOUSE™ HAS FOUND A HOME AT THE LENNOX ISLAND DAYCARE AND ESTELLE WOULD LOVE TO SHARE WITH YOU HOW YOUR DAYCARE CAN BE A HOME FOR MOE TOO!

Andrew Dutcher

BIG FEELINGS, BETTER STRATEGIES: RETHINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD BEHAVIOURS AND CREATING CALM CONNECTION

DR. ANDREW DUTCHER BELIEVES IN KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER. HE EMPOWERS PARENTS BY EQUIPPING THEM WITH THE TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS AND CREATE A HEALTHY HOME ENVIRONMENT. ANDREW IS A SOUGHT-AFTER KEYNOTE SPEAKER, EDUCATOR AND STORYTELLER. HE HAS EXPANDED HIS REPERTOIRE FROM WRITING MEDICAL HISTORIES AND PRESCRIPTIONS TO WRITING BOOKS. HE PUBLISHED HIS FIRST BOOK, "BIG-HEARTED PARENTING (EVEN WHEN IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE)" IN 2023. ANDREW GOT HIS MEDICAL DEGREE FROM DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY AND RECEIVED HIS SPECIALIZED TRAINING AS A CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIST THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY.

ANDREW DEDICATES MUCH OF HIS TIME TO WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND CHILDREN IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN BOTH ALBERTA AND NEW BRUNSWICK. ANDREW IS A WOLASTOQEY MEMBER OF TOBIQUE FIRST NATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK. HE NOW CALLS CALGARY HOME. ANDREW HAS BEEN FEATURED AS A MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT IN SEVERAL STORIES COVERED BY CTV NEWS. HIS MISSION IS TO PREVENT ANY MORE INDIGENOUS CHILDREN FROM BEING TAKEN INTO THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN CANADA. WHEN HE'S NOT WORKING, HE'S ON THE HUNT FOR GOOD EATS WITH HIS WIFE AND EXPLORING NATURE AND OTHER COOL PLACES WITH HIS 4 KIDS

Center of Excellence

OUR JOURNEY WITH AQI

REPRESENTING ESGENOÔPETITJ TINY TREASURES DAYCARE, OUR TEAM OF SIX DEDICATED EDUCATORS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS BRINGS TOGETHER A DIVERSE RANGE OF EXPERIENCES, SKILLS, AND A SHARED PASSION FOR SUPPORTING THE GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND WELL-BEING OF YOUNG CHILDREN.
WITH BACKGROUNDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, HUMAN SERVICES, AND YOUTH CARE, OUR TEAM HAS EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF VARIOUS AGES, ABILITIES, AND DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS. WE ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING SAFE, NURTURING, INCLUSIVE, AND ENGAGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS WHERE EVERY CHILD FEELS VALUED, SUPPORTED, AND ENCOURAGED TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN LEARN BEST THROUGH PLAY, EXPLORATION, CREATIVITY, AND MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS. THROUGH HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES, STORYTELLING, MUSIC, CULTURAL TEACHINGS, AND CHILD-CENTRED LEARNING EXPERIENCES, WE STRIVE TO FOSTER CONFIDENCE, INDEPENDENCE, IMAGINATION, AND A LIFELONG LOVE OF LEARNING. AS EDUCATORS WORKING WITHIN AN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY, WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF INCORPORATING OUR CULTURE, TRADITIONS, VALUES, AND LANGUAGE INTO EARLY LEARNING. WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT STRENGTHENING CHILDREN'S CONNECTIONS TO THEIR IDENTITIES, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY WHILE CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO LEARN, GROW, AND TAKE PRIDE IN WHO THEY ARE.

OUR TEAM IS ALSO COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND COLLABORATION. THROUGH ONGOING TRAINING, MENTORSHIP, AND PARTICIPATION IN INITIATIVES SUCH AS AQI, WE CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN OUR KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES TO BETTER SUPPORT THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WE SERVE.
TOGETHER, WE SHARE A COMMON GOAL: TO NURTURE CONFIDENT, CAPABLE, AND PROUD CHILDREN BY PROVIDING MEANINGFUL EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES ROOTED IN CARE, CONNECTION, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY.