

Speaker Biographies, Workshops & Presentation Topics

Conference delegates have registered for a workshop with the opportunity to further build on keynote presentations. Workshops will occur simultaneously and are color coded to indicate delegates workshop selection.



Dr. Shanker



Dr. Clinton



Dr. Connors



Dr. Stuart Shanker



Dr. Shanker is a distinguished Research Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at York University. Dr. Shanker is involved in researching processes in the development of language and reflective consciousness in young infants and clinical studies designed to significantly enhance the capacities of children with various types of impairment. In addition he has served as Co-Director of the Council of Human Development and is Past President of the Council for Early Child Development. He is also Director of the Cuba-Mexico-Canada Research Initiative, an international, multi-disciplinary investigation into preventative mental health.

Keynote Presentation: The Neuroscience of Early Childhood Development

Dr. Shanker will speak about recent advances in developmental neuroscience that are dramatically altering our attitudes towards the possibility of maximizing the potential of each and every child. We can now identify early signs of subtle neurobiological deficits that can significantly constrain a child's development, and intervene effectively. The same knowledge is enabling us to enhance the development of all children, by helping them to acquire the sorts of emotional, social, and moral, as well as cognitive and communicative skills, which provide the foundation for a happy and productive life. Dr Shanker will talk about the policy implications that arise from this research for preschool and early education.

Workshop 1 (W1) The Importance of Healthy Early Childhood Development

Dr. Shanker will address topics relating to healthy early childhood development including the prevention of developmental problems and early intervention. He will focus on how we can help our children learn the communicative, cognitive, emotional, and social skills in order to maximize their full potential.



Dr. Jean Clinton



Dr. Clinton is an Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neuroscience at McMaster University, division of Child Psychiatry. She is on staff at McMaster Children's Hospital and is an Associate in the Department of Family Medicine at McMaster as well as an Associate in the Department of Child Psychiatry, University of Toronto and Sick Children's Hospital. As an Associate Member of the Offord Centre for Child Studies she leads the "Friends of the Offord Centre" Initiative, and as well, sits on the "Circle of Friends for Children's Mental Health Ontario."

Keynote Presentation 1: The First R: Relationships (Wednesday)

The quality of our relationships and the quality of programs with children are the key to health and resilience.

Keynote Presentation 2: What's All this Fuss about the Early Years? (Thursday)

This presentation will provide a detailed look at the evidence for the impact of ECD and literacy on well being and health outcomes.

Workshop 2 (W2) Social and Emotional Development: Why We Need to Pay Closer Attention

This workshop will provoke dialogue on “the Tyranny of Cognitive seduction”. We will explore where the focus away from relational literacy, to numeracy and letter recognition has its origins and what we can do.



Dr. Ed Connors



Dr. Connors is a registered Psychologist in Ontario. He is of Mohawk and Irish ancestry and a band member of Kahnawake Mohawk Territory. He has worked with First Nations communities across Canada in both urban and rural centres. Dr. Connors worked with Elders and apprenticed in traditional First Nations approaches to healing. He is currently on the advisory council for the Ontario Suicide Prevention Network and serves as an elder/advisor for Enaahitig Learning and Healing Lodge and the Native Mental Health

Board of Canada. Additional work includes consultation and community training to assist First Nations in the development of restorative justice and health programs.

Keynote Presentation: Providing Healthy Health Service to First Nations Children and their Families

This talk will focus on how health care providers can improve the quality and effectiveness of their care for First Nations children and their families.

Workshop 3 (W3): Healthy Infants, Children and Families within Healthy First Nations Communities

This workshop will explore the links between the factors that promote healthy infants, children and families in healthy First Nations communities. This information will assist health care providers to identify what they need to know in order to provide effective health care services to First Nations children and their families. While there are common factors that promote health across all cultural groups there are factors that are more unique to aboriginal populations. This workshop will identify and clarify these factors. Dr. Connors will explain how these factors can be translated into an effective and healthy health care practice with First Nation infants/children and their families. He will provide examples of practice with both on and off reserve families.

Martin Liberio



Martin is a graduate from McGill University with a bachelor's degree in education, has taught both at the primary and college level for eleven years. He is the co-author of *Educators in Native Childcare Services*, published by St-Felicien College, and author of *The Educational Program: Learning through Play*, as well as of the planning guide *Planning for Child's Play*. Martin is a dynamic & inspiring speaker who will leave you energized and excited about the way you care for young children.

Keynote Presentation (Thursday evening): Democratic Interventions: True-North Values

Values are like a compass, they always point to the true point. If one knows how to read their compass and understand the true north values, one does not get lost or confused in their work with children and families. The keynote will outline the values which steer our work with children and families. These values include the importance of attachment and the ecological model. These values are self-evident, self validating natural laws - they do not change or shift over time. They provide 'true north' when navigating in your profession. Martin will also speak about different principles of child development, the primary agents of their development, and learn through play.

Keynote Presentation (Friday morning): Building on the True-North Values

This presentation builds on the True North Values plenary of Thursday evening. Participants will understand the importance of adopting a democratic intervention style to guide children's behavior. They will learn to distinguish this style from the more traditional authoritative and "laissez-faire" approach. This workshop presents positive intervention strategies which have lifelong benefits on children's development. Democratic styles of intervention are explored through creative and hands-on activities promising to leave everyone with an inspiring drive to examine their own intervention practices. Furthermore, it will motivate the staff to appreciate democratic values and incorporate them in their approach with children, parents, and colleagues

Bea Shawanda



Bea is a motivational speaker. She was raised with Elders and attended residential school. She has worked for over 30 years in North America in the areas of health, education and social development, specializing in family and community healing. Her international work has included issues of world peace, world environmental issues and child abuse prevention. Other specialty areas include anti-racism/prejudice, resiliency work and post-trauma relationship building. Bea has authored four commissioned books on family and community development. She presently owns a leadership/consultation training company that is service-directed, client-learning centered and action oriented. Through the art of storytelling she delights her audiences with wit and humour.

Keynote Presentation: Moving Forward, Nurturing Resilient Spirits

"Moving Forward, Nurturing Resilient Spirits" is a motivational address with a focus on the importance of nurturing the resilient spirit of children and their families through nurturing our own spirits as caregivers. It is about acknowledging the importance of mutual support to one another for ensuring quality service delivery.

Ken Coulter

Ken Coulter is Executive Director of Community Quality Improvement. He moved to Sault Ste. Marie two years ago from southern Ontario to take on this position. He is married and has seven dependents, all of the four-legged variety.

When not in the office Ken enjoys spending time at his log cabin west of the City, backpacking and paddling the beautiful northern Ontario wilderness.

Judy Tucci

Judy Tucci worked with the Ministry of Community and Social Services from 1974 to 2001. That was followed by a short period with Child Care Algoma as the Data Analysis Coordinator, for the Ontario Early Years program. She has been a member of the municipal Best for Kids committee since its inception in 2003.

Judy is now 'retired' and "doing whatever my two granddaughters want me to do".

Sault Ste. Marie Community Geomatic Centre

The Sault Ste. Marie's Community Geomatic Centre (CGC) is a not for profit organization created to promote and establish the partnerships and technological means to efficiently share geospatial data, tools and knowledge amongst community organizations to create a safer, healthier and more prosperous communities. The CGC has partnered with over forty district level organizations to address numerous inter related health and social service issues.

A key area of emphasis for the CGC has been mapping and analyzing factors affecting early childhood development. Projects completed or underway include: childhood injuries, domestic violence, prenatal smoking, prenatal drug use, low birth weight babies, EDI, lead in drinking water, participation in sports and recreation and library services, service location determination and the mapping of other factors affecting children. The sharing of data from multiple organizations has proven valuable in providing information that can be acted upon to improve the lives of children and the community as a whole.

Renée Delarosbil



Renée Delarosbil is a specialist in the area of violence against women and children and has been instrumental in mobilizing community awareness and collaboration around the issue in the Algoma region. She is the Counselor and Community Development Worker at the Sault Ste Marie site of the Francophone Sexual Assault Centre (Centre Victoria pour femmes). She is a member of a number of Boards and Committees, such as the Algoma Council on Domestic Violence.

Renée is a Registered Social Services Worker, and is presently completing her Bachelor's degree in the field of Psychology.

Long-time Trainer/Facilitator with COPA (Ontario's Francophone provincial prevention education centre), Renee provides workshops for prevention of child abuse, including bullying, to children from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12, and school staff and parents in French- and English-language schools. Renée also provides a variety of healthy relationship workshops to adolescents and COPA's self-defense to young adolescent girls and women.

Tina Nelson



Tina Nelson is a pediatric Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) who has been practicing for over 14 years. She is currently employed at the Children's Rehabilitation Center Algoma and functions as a Professional Practice Leader in her field. She works as part of a multidisciplinary team and specializes in the assessment and treatment of infant, toddler & preschool children. She has expertise in pediatric feeding/swallowing disorders and early communication development. Tina has had extensive training and experience in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Currently, she is a consultant-in-training with the Relationship Development Intervention (RDI) program for children with Autism and Social Communication Disorders. She is also actively involved in research with University of Toronto regarding remote delivery of Speech and Language Assessments using videoconferencing.

Brenda Clarke

Brenda Clarke is the Community Coordinator for Understanding the Early Years North. She has a background in evaluation, teaching, social and community services. When the UEY North project is completed, Brenda will be returning to her position at Algoma Family Services as the Coordinator for programs for children 0-6 years.