



Putting the Public into Early Learning and Child Care

December 1, 2023

9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

University of Toronto
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

252 Bloor Street West

Library, Main Floor

**Atkinson
Centre**

 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

This symposium will highlight how early learning and child care delivered within schools can increase access, reduce uneven quality, improve the working conditions and professionalism of educators, allow for early detection and intervention, and provide a continuum of learning to benefit young children.

The Federal government's \$27 billion investment through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreements has raised the profile of early learning and child care in Canada. Parents are benefiting from reduced fees although availability is limited. Funding is limited to licensed child care, preventing schools from accessing new funding to expand services. Provinces and territories are left to implement the agreements with the pandemic-weakened, low-waged licensed child care sector.

Forging a coherent social program out of a disjointed mix of commercial, charitable, religious, and non-profit providers operating under 13 different provincial and territorial agreements is no small task. There are lessons to be learned from across Canada on how education and child care could and should be integrated.

MORNING agenda

OISE Library, Main Floor

9:30 A.M.

Registration & Refreshments

10:00 A.M.

Opening Remarks

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

Dr. Michal Perlman, Professor: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

10:10 A.M.

Morning Keynote: Seven benefits to expanding preschool programs in public school

Craig Alexander, Former Chief Economist at TD Bank, Deloitte Canada, Conference Board of Canada. President: Alexander Economic Reviews

10:40 A.M.

Panel One: The Power of Schools for Early Learning

Expanding early learning and child care programs as part of public education optimizes existing infrastructure and recognizes early learning as a public good. Schools exist in all communities and can provide a hub of learning and family support activities. The panelists will share an overview of the status of early learning and child care across Canada and how schools are responding to the opportunities provided by CWELCC.

Moderator: Dr. Michal Perlman, Professor: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Kerry McCuaig, Senior Policy Fellow: Atkinson Centre

Dr. Emis Akbari, Professor and Program Coordinator School of Early Childhood George Brown College, Senior Policy Fellow, Atkinson Centre

Dr. Gordon Cleveland, Professor Emeritus University of Toronto Scarborough; Advisor Building Blocks for Child Care

12:00 P.M.

LUNCH

AFTERNOON agenda

OISE Library, Main Floor

1:00 P.M.

Panel Two: Schools at the Centre - Pan-Canadian actions

Hear about innovations from across Canada on how to best deliver early learning and child care through publicly-funded schools.

Moderator: Dr. Zeenat Janmohamed, Executive Director Atkinson Centre, University of Toronto

Melia Dirk, District Vice Principal of Early Learning and Child Care Okanagan Similkameen School District 53, British Columbia

Zeba Ahmad, CEO, Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation, Saskatchewan

Jill Piers, Manager, Pre-Primary Operations: Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Development, Nova Scotia

2:15 P.M.

Panel Three: Policy Research Informing Best Practice

How public education can support diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppressive practice in early learning.

Moderator: Dr. Christine McLean, Associate Professor and Department Chair, Child and Youth Study, Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia

Dr. David Philpott, Researcher/Consultant, Retired Professor, Memorial University, Newfoundland

Gail Hunter, Professor and Program Coordinator, School of Early Childhood, George Brown College, Ontario

Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac, Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair, Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia

3:00 P.M.

Round Table Discussion and Closing Remarks

Patricia Chorney-Rubin, Interim-Dean: Centre for Health Sciences and Centre for Community Services and Early Childhood

Nexus Lounge, 12th Floor

3:45 to 5:00 P.M.

Reception

Hosted by Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation. Remarks from Chair, **Scott McCain**