

## CONFERENCE OVERVIEW – SATURDAY MARCH 9, 2024

7:30 am - 8:30 am Registration, Breakfast, and Vendor Fair  
 8:30 am - 8:45 am Conference Welcome & Introductions  
 8:45 am - 9:45 am **Keynote Presentation - Julia Gabor**

### ALL FRONT LINE LEADERSHIP/DIRECTOR

10:00 am - 11:15 am

### SESSION 1 Workshops

<p><b>SESSION 1 - A</b> (Sundance A)</p> <p><b>JULIA GABOR</b> "Raise them Up"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 1 - B</b> (Sundance B)</p> <p><b>MIKE ASHCRAFT</b> "8 Habits of Highly effective afterschool leaders"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 1 - C</b> (Sundance C)</p> <p><b>JENNIFER BULMER</b> "Reality-Based Leadership: Thriving in Change"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 1 - D</b> (Midnapore)</p> <p><b>SHARON NESS</b> "Positive Guidance"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 60</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 1 - E</b> (McKenzie)</p> <p><b>AMELIA NEWBERT</b> "Building Trans Affirming Spaces"</p> <p><i>theatre max 35</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 1 - F</b> (Bridlewood)</p> <p><b>ERYNN BIGGAR</b> "AB Active After School Guidelines 2.0: Inclusive Play Strategies"</p> <p><i>ds of 10 max 100</i></p>	<p><b>S 1 - CB1A</b> Stream 2 (Bonavista) <b>MELISSA BENTLY</b> "In My World There Are No Bad Kids"</p> <p><i>theatre max 25</i></p>	<p><b>S 1 - CB2A</b> Stream 1 (Deer Run) <b>BRITTANY CALDWELL</b> "Beyond the Playground: Supporting All Types of Play When you Go Outside"</p> <p><i>theatre max 25</i></p>
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11:30 am - 12:45 pm

Lunch, Vendor Fair

12:45 pm - 2:00 pm

### SESSION 2 Workshops

<p><b>SESSION 2 - A</b> (Sundance A)</p> <p><b>JULIA GABOR</b> "Slowing Down With Gratitude"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 2 - B</b> (Sundance B)</p> <p><b>MIKE ASHCRAFT</b> "Learning to Lead"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 2 - C</b> (Sundance C)</p> <p><b>BRANDI OLENBACH</b> "Indigenous Allyship"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 2 - D</b> (Midnapore)</p> <p><b>TINA GEERS</b> "Mighty Transitions! Transitions that work!"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 60</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 2 - E</b> (McKenzie)</p> <p><b>MELISSA BENTLEY</b> "Follow the Leader: A Practical Approach to Inclusive Leadership"</p> <p><i>theatre max 35</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 2 - F</b> (Bridlewood)</p> <p><b>JANICE COMRIE</b> "Beyond the Bell: The Educator's role in creating environments that foster connection, engagement and belonging in OSC"</p> <p><i>ds of 10 max 100</i></p>	<p><b>S 2 - CB1A</b> Stream 2 (Bonavista) <b>MELISSA PEARCE</b> "Bushcraft Basics"</p> <p><i>theatre max 25</i></p>	<p><b>S 2 - CB2A</b> Stream 1 (Deer Run) <b>JAYMEE POLOWICK</b> "Art Mindfulness"</p> <p><i>theatre max 25</i></p>
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2:15 pm - 3:30 pm

### SESSION THREE Workshops

<p><b>SESSION 3 - A</b> (Sundance A)</p> <p><b>JULIA GABOR</b> "Mindful Conflict Resolution"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 3 - B</b> (Sundance B)</p> <p><b>MIKE ASHCRAFT</b> "S.T.E.M"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 3 - C</b> (Sundance C)</p> <p><b>TANYA KETO</b> "ADHD: What Educators Need to Know"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 120</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 3 - D</b> (Midnapore)</p> <p><b>JEN GOERS</b> "HIGH FIVE® (in a Nutshell)"</p> <p><i>rds of 10 max 60</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 3 - E</b> (McKenzie)</p> <p><b>SARAH READER</b> "The Need for Nature: How Outdoor Programming Helps Build Connection and Better Mental Health"</p> <p><i>theatre max 35</i></p>	<p><b>SESSION 3 - F</b> (Bridlewood)</p> <p><b>BRITTANY CALDWELL</b> "Process Art for the School Age Child"</p> <p><i>ds of 10 max 100</i></p>	<p><b>S 3 - CB1A</b> Stream 2 (Bonavista) <b>GINA BLANK</b> "Defiance or Stress Response? Reframing Challenging Behaviour"</p> <p><i>theatre max 25</i></p>	<p><b>S 3 - CB2A</b> Stream 1 (Deer Run) <b>DR. E. HENDERSON DEKORT</b> "A Children's Rights Approach to Practice"</p> <p><i>theatre max 25</i></p>
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3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

### Celebration and Closing Mike Ashcraft

"Games that Build Community F.A.S.T. "



Innovate • Celebrate • Educate



## JULIA GABOR

### Keynote Presenter

Julia Gabor, the Founder of Kid-Grit, offers a personal and genuine glimpse into her upbringing on the streets of NYC, navigating life as a latchkey child in a challenging environment with a parent struggling with addiction. Her inspiring narrative is replete with qualities of resilience and tenacity. Julia seamlessly transitions her journey into an exploration of how her lived experiences shape her current work in the realm of social-emotional learning. In this session, she not only shares her story but also provides insights for education leaders on adopting a holistic approach that can instigate cultural change within any educational community. Julia engages participants in discussions, weaving practical ideas for both schools and out-of-school time programs that attendees can readily implement. The session promises to be a refreshing, candid, and interactive experience.

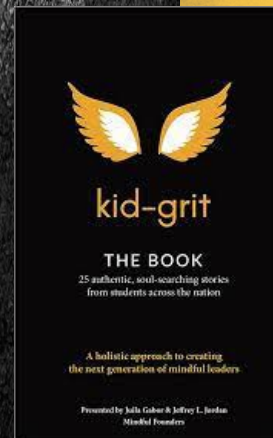
Julia is an award-winning educator and keynote speaker. Born & raised in NYC, she comes from a diverse background. She is a passionate, youth development specialist, and the Founder of kid-grit, a vibrant social-emotional learning education company serving youth, educators, and leaders.

She has trained thousands of educators across the US. In 2022, Julia won certification from the Women's Business National Enterprise Council as a 100% Women Owned Business. She has received awards for her outstanding contribution to education across the nation from CAL STATE Fullerton, U.S. Representative for California, Lou Correa, and the BOOST Collaborative.

Julia has presented and facilitated keynotes and learning sessions at over 100 conferences and for over 10,000 educators nationwide. She holds a master's in educational leadership from Antioch University.

#### About kid-grit:

- At kid-grit, our mission is to equip educators and students with knowledge and tools to build confidence, character, resilience, and self-care.
- We offer robust research-based programs that include curriculum, focused workshops, evidence-based professional development and coaching, leadership development programs and coaching, and workshops for families. Our offerings are anchored in themes that include emotional intelligence, mindfulness, wellness strategies, inclusion, self-awareness, digital literacy, and mastery of learning.
- PASSION → PERSEVERANCE/GRIT → SELF-CONFIDENCE → SUCCESS



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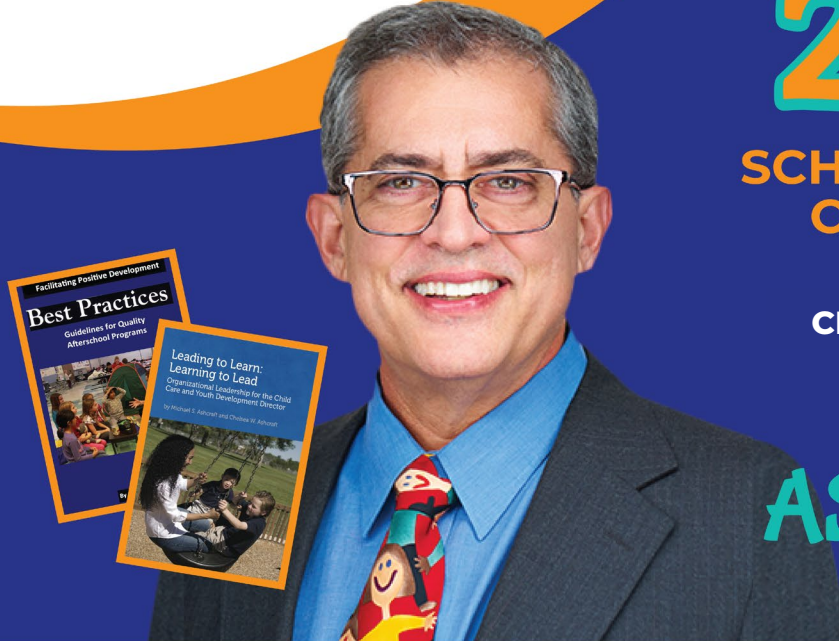


# 2024

## SCHOOL AGE CARE CONFERENCE

CLOSING PRESENTER

# MIKE ASHCRAFT

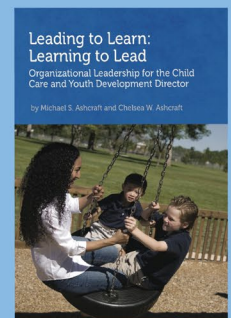
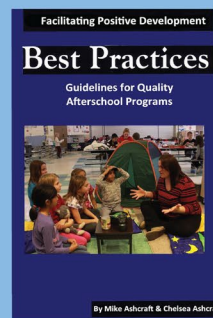


**Mike Ashcraft is a thought leader in the fields of positive child and youth development and out-of-school-time (OST) programming. He is the Founder and Lead Learner of Children’s Choice, a highly acclaimed and successful provider of OST programming in Albuquerque New Mexico, USA. Mike’s mission in life is to continuously learn new and innovative theories and practices, passionately sharing them with others, and helping them benefit by developing their own competencies. He works with leaders, educators, & caregivers who want to have less stress, be more effective, & have more fun at work!**

**BIOGRAPHY**

Mike Ashcraft, Founder and CEO of Children’s Choice, holds a Master of Arts Degree in Education with an Emphasis in School-Age Care from Concordia University. He holds a graduate-level certification as a Pedagogista in the Reggio Emilia Approach from Webster University. He is a doctoral of education candidate (ABD) with Nova Southeastern University. He has more than 20 years of experience in child care and education. He served as a training and technical service contractor and a professional writing contractor for the New Mexico Public Education Department. He served as a guest professor on the faculty of Concordia University, teaching college courses in school-age care programming. He is a former Accreditation Endorser for the National Afterschool Association. He is the former President of the New Mexico School-Age Care Alliance and the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children. He is the author of Best Practices: Guidelines for School-Age Programs, and the Best Practices Workbook, and co-author of Learning to Lead: Leading to Learn: Organizational Leadership for the Child Care and Youth Development Director.

Are you ready to explore a world of insightful learning with a dash of humor, inspiration, and a whole lot of practicality? Mike brings you a repertoire of captivating topics that cover a wide range of subjects, from child-specific topics like guidance, teambuilding, and curriculum to staff-specific topics like customer service, leadership, and positive relationships.



Purchase your copies of *Leading to Learn, Learning to Lead & Best Practices: Guidelines for Quality Afterschool Programs* by scanning the QR codes.

[www.ashcraftafterschool.com](http://www.ashcraftafterschool.com)

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# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

10:00 am - 11:15 am **SESSION ONE**

## SESSION 1A:

### **Raise Them Up!**

**Focus: Everyone**

**Julia Gabor**

Raise Them Up! The kid-grit approach to SEL! In this workshop, we will engage staff in addressing self-regulation in areas of mindfulness, healthy behaviors, tolerance and empathy, and digital/social consciousness. This workshop provides a BRAND-NEW approach to helping staff develop motivation, positive behavior, and resilience. We will provide team building and hands-on activities to implement in your organization as soon as tomorrow! Slowing Down with Gratitude Reflecting and continuing with the content of the previous session, participants will share their wellness and healthy behavior accomplishments. In this session, we will explore gratitude as a tool for maintaining happiness and building relationships within yourself, with teams, and one-on-one. Participants will explore building healthy activities and accountability forums addressing — mindfulness, body awareness, community and connection, and digital and social media consciousness to build new habits that promote learning, connection, and a sense of community. Mindful Conflict Resolution Solutions Disgruntled, disengaged, and disconnected staff have your head spinning? Searching for mindful and safe communication strategies to utilize when having hard conversations with staff? Then, this session is for you! Join us and explore non-threatening and inclusive, simple-to-implement communication strategies. These activities support your work as a leader to build a perfectly productive team and a positive work culture. Leave with new ideas for building a collaborative and cooperative team!

## SESSION 1B:

### **8 Habits of Highly effective afterschool leaders**

**Focus: Everyone**

**Mike Ashcraft**

How can you be more effective at leading others in the afterschool profession? Attend this event and explore the traits, passions, and habits required to be a highly effective afterschool leader. These 8 habits are essential for afterschool professionals in leading children. Come investigate these powerful elements and learn practical and useful approaches to enhance these traits and transform yourself and others into extraordinary afterschool leaders.

## SESSION 1C:

### **Reality-Based Leadership: Thriving in Change**

**Focus: Leadership / Director**

**Jennifer Bulmer**

Revolutionize your approach to leadership with our transformative workshop on eliminating ego-driven behaviours and reshaping workplace dynamics. In this dynamic session, we delve into the detrimental impact of ego-driven behaviours on personal and professional growth, offering practical strategies to help your team break free from the need for approval, defensiveness, and resistance to feedback. Discover the power of reality-based leadership, guiding your staff to perceive the world as it is, free from distorted perceptions and personal biases. Accountability

takes centre stage as we explore coaching techniques that empower your team to solve problems effectively and take ownership of what they can control. In this hands-on workshop, you'll gain invaluable insight into creating a workplace free from drama, fostering open communication, and building a positive culture that thrives on collaboration. Embrace a leadership mindset that goes beyond formal authority, influencing your team through competence, collaboration, and a commitment to shared success. Join us for An engaging and practical workshop that equips you with the tools to challenge the status quo, inspire your team, and cultivate a workplace culture that encourages continuous learning and growth. Transform your leadership style and propel your organization toward success.

## SESSION 1D:

### **Positive Guidance**

**Focus: Front Line**

**Sharon Ness**

Sharon Ness is a Child Development Supervisor who has been part of the western Canadian child care community since 1989 and been involved with the Alberta community since 2001. Her background is in Early Childhood Education. Sharon is a global Virtues Project Facilitator and is also trained in delivering Positive Discipline for Parents. Sharon owned the first licensed overnight child care facility in British Columbia and has worked extensively in the not-for-profit sector since arriving in Alberta. She is the recipient of the Alberta Association for Community Living's Community Living Award for promoting the concept and spirit of community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities.



# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

10:00 am - 11:15 am **SESSION ONE**

## SESSION 1E:

### **Building Trans Affirming Spaces**

**Focus: Front Line**

**Amelia Newbert**

In this session participants will gain knowledge, skills and confidence in being able to effectively support their trans and gender diverse patients, colleagues and community members in an inclusive and affirming way. We will review core concepts surrounding gender diversity; discuss the discrimination and barriers facing trans and gender diverse communities; explore evidence-based practices and the foundational principals of gender affirming care; and, provide and empower participants in the implementation of tangible actions they can act on to create more affirming spaces.

## SESSION 1F:

### **AB Active After School Guidelines 2.0: Inclusive Play Strategies**

**Focus: Front Line**

**Erynn Biggar**

AB Active After Schools Guidelines have been updated! We've been busy providing in person training and promoting our new online module; taking a deep dive into inclusive play strategies. In this session you will get highlights from the latest training, along with new game ideas with a fresh outlook on inclusive play. Dress comfortably and prepare to move as this session is for every-body!

## SESSION 1 - CB1A & CB2B:

### **In My World There Are No Bad Kids**

**Focus: Front Line**

**Melissa Bently**

Prevention is the best intervention! This session is designed to help front line educators with challenging behaviors by bridging the gap between research and real practice. Through a process of collaboration, reflection, and active dialogue, you will learn why school age children behave

the way they do, suggestions on how to prevent most challenging behaviours, and develop skills and attitudes that will enable you to respond effectively when challenging behaviours do occur (because let's be real, we can't prevent everything!).

## SESSION 1 - CB2A & CB1B:

### **Beyond the Playground: Supporting All Types of Play When you Go Outside**

**Focus: All Three- Supporting outdoor play comes from the leadership and trickles down!**

**Brittany Caldwell**

Unleash the limitless potential of outdoor play with our stimulating workshop - "Beyond the Playground: Supporting All Types of Play Outside". Designed with educators and program leaders in mind, this workshop aims to equip you with the tools to foster diverse play styles among children - be it quiet reading, active physical play, or creative art activities.

Recognizing that each child is unique, we've crafted a special learning environment that encourages their individual preferences, helping to nurture their physical, cognitive, and social abilities. Learn to create dynamic outdoor opportunities that not only facilitate active engagement but also promote a sense of adventure, curiosity, and imagination.

Beyond physical games, it's about igniting passion and stirring creativity. With our workshop, you'll learn to stimulate the bookworms, challenge the energetic, and inspire the builders and creators. This all-rounded approach will ensure that every child makes the best out of their outdoor play experience.

Join us in this enlightening journey, where we redefine the boundaries of traditional playgrounds and pave the way for a holistic child development program. After all, there's an entire world Beyond the Playground, waiting to be explored!



# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

12:45pm - 2:00pm **SESSION TWO**

## SESSION 2A:

### Slowing Down With Gratitude

**Focus: Everyone**

**Julia Gabor**

Reflecting and continuing with the content of the previous session, participants will share their wellness and healthy behavior accomplishments. In this session, we will explore gratitude as a tool for maintaining happiness and building relationships within yourself, with teams, and one-on-one. Participants will continue to develop healthy activities and accountability forums addressing — Mindfulness, Body Awareness, Community and Connection, and Digital and Social Media Consciousness in order to build new habits that promote learning, connection, and a sense of community.

## SESSION 2B:

### Learning to Lead

**Focus: Leadership/Director**

**Mike Ashcraft**

Learning to Lead! How can you develop a motivated, enthusiastic, high performing staff team with a high level of commitment? Attend this event! Often times, people who work well with children become leaders and administrators of the program. The purpose of this session is to help those leaders be more effective at leading adults. Explore the complex systems of afterschool leadership, leaderly learning, and learn how to develop vision, and a culture of innovation, empowerment and teamwork. Learn how to create dialog, how to learn the most from mistakes, and how to design a workplace that is safe for thinking and innovation. Learn the secret art of leading with love, servant leadership and creating a learning organization.

## SESSION 2C:

### Indigenous Allyship through a Child Care Lens

**Focus: Front Line**

**Brandi Olenbach**

Back due to popular demand from the 2023 SACDA Conference!

Have you ever wondered how you can be a better ally to the Indigenous community in child care but don't know where to begin on your allyship journey? Then this session is for you!

In this session we will address how to confront and interrupt oppression, show up, and speak up; how to listen to marginalized people's lived experiences; learn and educate ourselves about privilege and structures of oppression; and be aware of how much space we occupy and how we can put Indigenous people and culture at the forefront of the work we do as an ally. We know the

environment you construct around you and the children reflects the image you have about the child, and our vision is to inspire Educators across Alberta to reflect on the image they have of Indigenous children and foster new ways of incorporating Indigenous culture into our programming and being a supportive ally to children from marginalized communities.

## SESSION 2D:

### Mighty Transitions! Transitions that work!

**Focus: Everyone**

**Tina Geers**

Transitions can be either stressful or successful! It depends if we use our magic wand or not! And YES! There is a magic wand for successful transitions. Being intentional with our transitional activities, and ensuring they are responsive to the needs and interests of the children we work with is the key! Every transition doesn't work for every child, so we need a pocketbook full of quick, and sometimes longer, transitional ideas to help children feel successful when change is happening. Reducing stress, for both you and the children, and minimizing dysregulation during transitions are two of the main goals of successful transitions. Let's look at all the obstacles and possible outcomes of mighty transitions as we work through a variety of tools and strategies that you can adopt and adapt to your OSC environment. Not only will we be brainstorming strategies, games, and tools that work, but we will also be trying out some of these strategies together!

## SESSION 2E:

### Follow the Leader: A Practical Approach to Inclusive Leadership

**Focus: Leadership / Director**

**Melissa Bentley**

Come unlock your inner leader! Whether you are new to a leadership role or have a wealth of experience, join me for this fun, interactive, and highly motivating session to explore a practical framework of techniques that will help you reflect on your own leadership style and push you to step outside of your comfort zone to create an inclusive environment for your team. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to becoming a leader in our industry. Every center and community is different, and what works for you might not for others. This session aims to provide you with industry tested, research driven tips and tricks that will help you incorporate inclusive practices into your day-to-day operations as a leader. Through a process of collaboration and active dialogue, you will learn what it takes to become an inclusive leader and find new ways of influencing and inspiring the teams you lead. Remember, "people don't leave bad jobs, they leave bad leaders!"

# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

12:45pm - 2:00pm **SESSION TWO**

## SESSION 2F:

### **Beyond the Bell: The Educator's role in creating environments that foster connection, engagement and belonging in OSC**

**Focus: Front Line**

**Janice Comrie**

Using current research on children in the middle years, this session emphasizes the vital role of connection in nurturing belonging, and in shaping positive environments. Through an interactive format, participants will consider their role in making these connections in both daily routines and planned activities, in ways that match children's interests and needs. This workshop will provide real-life examples, while also providing links to research briefs and tip sheets for further learning.

## SESSION 2 - CB1A & CB2B:

### **Bushcraft Basics: For Mental Health & WellBeing**

**Focus: Leadership / Director**

**Melissa Pearce**

Bushcraft Basics Outdoors: For Mental Health & Well-being. What is mental health? This is a broad term that rests within a continuum we all exist on. This changes day by day, and through different life experiences & challenges. It encompasses our psychological, social, and emotional well being while it impacts our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and physical experiences. What would it look like if we could support these needs in the outdoors? How could teaching basic bushcraft be used as a valuable tool in doing so? Join Melissa to discuss what being outdoors does to our cortisol levels, and how emotional well being can be improved in outdoor settings that promote resiliency, perseverance, safe risk taking and empowerment.

## SESSION 2 - CB2A & CB1B:

### **Art and Mindfulness for Mental Wellness**

**Focus: Everyone**

**Jaymee Polowick**

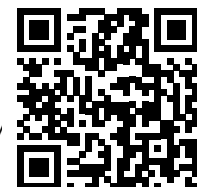
Incorporating art as a tool for mindfulness offers numerous benefits for children, fostering their holistic development and enhancing the educational experience. There are several ways in which art positively impacts children in schools, from supporting the development of motor skills, enhancing cognitive development, supporting emotional regulation, and cultivating executive function skills. For many children, art is one of the most effective forms of non-verbal communication, and can open the door for social connection, mindful focus, and enhanced self-esteem.

By integrating art into the school curriculum, educators can create a more comprehensive and enriching learning environment that nurtures the intellectual, emotional, and social development of children. The creative process not only enriches their developmental experiences but also provides a platform for self-reflection and personal growth. By the end of this workshop, you will reach a better understanding of the impact art has on the developing child, and the importance of our role as educators. As students learn about art, we not only provide a vehicle for self-discovery, learning, and personal growth, but open the door for future skills of mindfulness and wellness, thereby contributing to their healthy, happy, and resilient futures.



### kid-grit SEL Tips in a Jar

Welcome to kid-grit 111 SEL Daily "Supplements" for the Soul! Read, absorb, practice, and digest our SEL vitamins each day and you'll feel lighter, healthier, and more joyful. When reading and engaging with the kid-grit 111 SEL Daily Supplements for the Soul, you can address behaviors, patterns and habits that you may want to look into for self-improvement and bring more joy into your life.





# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

2:15pm - 3:30pm **SESSION THREE**

## SESSION 3A:

### Mindful Conflict Resolution Solutions

**Focus: Leadership/Director**

**Julia Gabor**

Disgruntled, disengaged, and disconnected staff have your head spinning? Searching for mindful and safe communication strategies to utilize when having hard conversations with staff? Then, this session is for you! Join us and explore non-threatening and inclusive, simple-to-implement communication strategies. These activities support your work as a leader in order to build a perfectly productive team and a positive work culture. Leave with new ideas for building a collaborative and cooperative team!

## SESSION 3B:

### S.T.E.M.

**Focus: Everyone**

**Mike Ashcraft**

STEM is Awesome! You don't have to be a teacher to include STEM afterschool. Buckle your seatbelts! In this fast-paced, hands-on STEM session we will share our most popular science and engineering activities that you can explore with your kids. Featuring: Puff Car, Engineering Provocations, Rainbow Polymers, Oobleck, Color Chromatography, Stop Animation, Seltzer Rockets, Diaper Science, Slinky Science, Sharpie Science, and more!

## SESSION 3C:

### ADHD: What Educators Need to Know

**Focus: Front Line**

**Tanya Keto**

What Educators Need to Know

The classroom environment can pose challenges for a child with ADHD. The very tasks these students find the most difficult—sitting still, listening quietly, concentrating—are the ones they are required to do all day long. Perhaps most frustrating of all is that **most of these children want to be able to learn and behave like their neurotypical peers.** Neurological deficits, **not unwillingness**, keep kids with attention deficit disorder from learning in traditional ways. Educators play a key role in setting these students on a path for success!

## SESSION 3D:

### HIGH FIVE® (in a Nutshell)

**Focus: Leadership / Director**

**Jen Goers**

Canada's Only Quality Standard for Children's Recreation Programs Focus: Leadership / Director Jen Goers Through this national certification program (aligned with NCCP, Sport for Life, and Canadian Women in Sport), recreation and sports staff learn about the five Principles and three Design Guidelines that ensure every child has a quality experience by understanding their role in leading the program, the

power of social connection, ways to build play into every activity, ensure participants experience mastery, and the importance of participation as well as how we make activities developmentally appropriate, safe, and welcoming of diversity.

- Learn how your staff can become some of the thousands of staff who are certified in HIGH FIVE® across Alberta each year!"
- Learn about the HIGH FIVE® history and background in Canada
- Understand the importance of the HIGH FIVE® Principles & Design Guidelines
- Learn about the training opportunities available to front-line staff, supervisors, managers/directors
- Get involved!" Quality Standards and/or Curriculum Framework

## SESSION 3E

### The Need for Nature: How Outdoor Programming Helps Build Connection & Better Mental Health

**Focus: Leadership / Director**

**Sarah Reader**

Contact with nature is essential in our day-to-day lives - it connects us to ourselves and each other and increases our physical and emotional health. Being outdoors helps build compassion, kindness, improves social bonds and relationships, impacts our personal development, and allows us to feel lighter and happier. While out in nature we engage all our senses; we can fully immerse ourselves in the experience which helps to recover from cognitive fatigue. Since the beginning of the pandemic, children and youth have been experiencing more mental health challenges, particularly those in vulnerable groups such as those with pre-existing mental health challenges, those with physical disabilities, and racial and ethnic minorities. Research shows that spending regular time in nature helps you to become more creative, a better problem solver, have increased focus, and improve your ability to build resilience to handle stresses in your life. Join Sarah as she talks about the social, emotional, and mental health benefits of spending time and playing in nature and gives you practical tips on how to bring nature back into your life, classrooms, and programs.

# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

2:15pm - 3:30pm **SESSION THREE**

## SESSION 3F

### Process Art for the School Age Child

**Focus: Front Line**

**Brittany Caldwell**

Unleash the creativity within every child! Join our workshop: 'Process Art for School Aged Kids', specially structured for educators working in after-school care settings. Instead of focusing on a final product, we shift the emphasis to the creative journey, transforming the most resistant students into enthusiastic creators.

This hands on workshop will allow to test drive some fun process art activities and find joy in the materials yourself. You will then be able to transfer your knowledge of these new materials and practices to your programs!

Learn unconventional approaches to engage students in a non-judgmental, open-ended exploration of materials. Develop techniques to nurture independence and artistic dexterity among students, inspiring them to leave their comfort zones and dare to experiment.

## SESSION 3 - CB1A & - CB2B:

### Defiance or Stress Response? Reframing Challenging Behaviour to Support Regulation and Participation

**Focus: Front Line**

**Elizabeth Maddison**

Using key concepts from the Neurorelational Framework, educators will explore important paradigm shifts to reframe their understanding of, and approach in responding to, challenging behaviour. This workshop will consider the stress responses children may experience, that can position educators to proactively co-regulate with children, as well as support children's self-regulation skills over time.

## SESSION 3 - CB1B & CB2B:

### A Children's Rights Approach to Practice

**Focus: Everyone**

**Dr. E. Henderson Dekort**

In this interactive session participants will be introduced to the UNCRC and consider how they might incorporate a child rights approach to their practice. This will include practical strategies and tools for incorporating a child rights approach to practice and curriculum planning. Participants will also learn how to work with children so they understand their rights, and how to build awareness and education for parents and community members about children's rights.

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm **CELEBRATION AND CLOSING**

### "Games that Build Community F.A.S.T. "

**Mike ASHCRAFT**

Learn games that help kids and staff learn how to handle making mistakes. Learn "in case of emergency" games to use when your group has to wait for the next thing to happen. Learn name games, get-to-know-you games, circle games, silly low stress games, team-building challenges and more. This is a hands-on experience and a time to share some favorite proven games and activities perfect for afterschool programs, summer camps, or staff teambuilding events.



**AFTERSCHOOL  
PROFESSIONALS**  
APPRECIATION WEEK

**APRIL 15th- 19th, 2024**



CELEBRATE, ENCOURAGE, APPRECIATE THE #HEARTOFAFTERSCHOOL!

# BIOGRAPHIES

## JENNIFER BULMER

Jennifer Bulmer, CEO of Childcare by Design Coaching, is a seasoned Out of School Care professional with a journey that began as a Day Camp Counselor. With a background in Recreation Therapy and Early Childhood Education, Jennifer has worn every hat in childcare, from Educator to Director to Owner to Coach. In 2010, she founded Juvenescence Child Development Centre, implementing visionary systems that prioritize creativity, learning, resilience and is proud to support Educators in their careers with the same passion as they care for the children. As a wife and mother of two, Jennifer understands that delicate balance of juggling roles. Today, through Childcare by Design Coaching, Jennifer channels her wealth of experience to assist leaders in navigating their responsibilities effectively. She is not just a childcare expert but a visionary leader and coach dedicated to creating thriving environments for both professionals and children.

## JULIA GABOR

I have an entrepreneurial and innovative spirit that has been demonstrated both in the startup world and in the nonprofit landscape. I have a wide range of passions: from youth development to helping people and organizations maximize their full potential. I thrive in collaborative work environments and am also an independent thinker. Whether creating & enhancing dynamic programs or working directly with students I have made a true impact with real, proven and successful results. Co-Founder of a new & innovative educational company, kid-grit: presenting 5 approaches to developing the next generation of mindful leaders through self-regulation, positive relationships, self-management, self-awareness and social skills. We offer kid-grit the curriculum, staff development, educator wellness, kid-grit: THE BOOK, keynotes and youth coaching. Currently, building collaborative relationships across the U.S. in Oklahoma, Ohio, Florida, California, New Jersey, Michigan, and Indiana. In less than one year requested to present educator sessions at National Summer Learning Conference, National Youth at Risk Conference, Safe Schools Conference, School Climate Conference, Beyond School Hours, National AfterSchool Association, over six regional conferences in the state of CA, Idaho School Counselor Conference and Indiana After School Network. Responsible for: creating content, building the team, developing trainings for conferences and staff development, social media branding, sales/accounting, and national expansion. At WRITE BRAIN BOOKS, the After School All Stars & Tiger Woods Foundation built project-based, 21st-century skills, and SEL curriculums that impact diverse student communities across the nation. Personally responsible for coordinating 30 conferences annually, building trainings and staff development for hundreds of educators, and managed social media on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram on a daily basis. (Award-winning educator)

## MIKE ASHCRAFT

Founder and CEO of Children's Choice, holds a Master of Arts Degree in Education with an Emphasis in School-Age Care from Concordia University. He holds a graduate-level certification as a Pedagogista in the Reggio Emilia Approach from Webster University. He is a doctoral of education candidate (ABD) with Nova Southeastern University. He has more than 20 years of experience in child care and education. He served as a training and technical service contractor and a professional writing contractor for the New Mexico Public Education Department.

He served as a guest professor on the faculty of Concordia University, teaching college courses in school-age care programming. He is a former Accreditation Endorser for the National Afterschool Association. He is the former President of the New Mexico School-Age Care Alliance and the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children. He is the author of Best Practices: Guidelines for School-Age Programs, and the Best Practices Workbook, and co-author of Learning to Lead: Leading to Learn: Organizational Leadership for the Child Care and Youth Development Director.

Are you ready to explore a world of insightful learning with a dash of humor, inspiration, and a whole lot of practicality? Mike brings you a repertoire of captivating topics that cover a wide range of subjects, from child-specific topics like guidance, teambuilding, and curriculum to staff-specific topics like customer service, leadership, and positive relationships.



# BIOGRAPHIES

## **Melissa Bentley**

Co-Founder & CEO  
Little Steps Childcare Centre  
melissa.littlesteps@gmail.com  
littlestepschildcare.ca  
@littlestepssocial

A kid at heart, Melissa grew up always knowing she was meant to be in an industry related to children that satisfied her need to be challenged and continuously learning. Her passion for creating environments that positively impact young children's lives and helping build strong foundations for children's future success is the driving force behind her career. She is the Co-Founder and CEO of Little Steps Childcare Centre and believes in empowering and inspiring others in whatever ways she can to help make a difference in our future.

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## **Melissa Pearce**

Owner/Operator  
Rediscover Play Nature Schools  
rediscoverplay19@gmail.com  
www.rediscoverplay.com  
@rediscoverplaynatureschools

Melissa's vision includes helping children and adults feel confident and excited about being outdoors. During a time of healing and grieving the loss of her brother, she rediscovered play, and nature & its benefits. Melissa's programs guide children in learning how to mitigate risk in a safe environment, allowing space and time for children & youth to be themselves while they bond with each other and nature around them. Her passion for child inquiry, emergent curriculum and bushcraft teaching guides her programs and she designs her curriculum with the welfare of the whole child in mind. She has been running nature schools for ages 3 - 15 since 2017 and was the director of an Out of School Care Program for 7 years prior. Melissa is a certified Forest & Nature School Practitioner with a BA in Early Childhood Education and Development. She is certified in Mental Health First Aid, has Brain Story certification and

carries a valid Wilderness CPR/First Aid She is excited to complete her Practical Herbalist Diploma in the near future.

## **Brandi Odenbach**

Program Manager, Child Care  
YMCA of Northern Alberta  
brandi.odenbach@ymcanab.ca  
ymcanab.ca  
@ymcaedmonton

Brandi Odenbach is a Program Manager for Child Care with the YMCA of Northern Alberta and has been with the Y in Child Care for 15 years as of 2023! Brandi is a seasoned trainer for the YMCA national child care curriculum (A Place to Connect), and Brandi leads the Truth and Reconciliation Committee for the YMCA of Northern Alberta amongst several other things. Brandi was honored to be selected to pilot Rupertsland Institute's new Métis Early Learning Education and Childcare Training (ELECT) program and implement it in child care. Brandi is a passionate ally for the Indigenous community and her aim as an ally is to challenge and work towards breaking down those barriers that continue to violate Indigenous communities.

For fun, Brandi loves fitness, spending time with her pets (4 cats and 3 dogs) and practices agility with her German Shepherd.

## **Brittany Caldwell**

Owner of Creative Seeds  
Creative Seeds  
playcreativeseeds@gmail.com  
creativeseeds.ca  
@playcreativeseeds (instagram)

Meet Brittany Caldwell, an exceptional early childhood educator with 8 years of experience in early education and forest schools. Brittany is the owner of a unique venture, Creative Seeds Mobile Nature Classroom, which brings nature, play, and creativity together. She strongly believes in the transformative power of play, nature, and art, and has made it her mission to support her community in finding more opportunities to get playful outside.

She has successfully provided various community-driven programs including camps and birthday parties, along with professional development workshops for childcare centers. Her in-program outdoor play classes that cater to daycares, preschools and out of school cares are particularly loved, both by children and educators alike. With Creative Seeds, she continues to sow the seeds of creativity, curiosity, and compassion.

# BIOGRAPHIES

## **Amelia Newbert**

Director, Learning & Engagement  
Skipping Stone  
amelia@skippingstone.ca  
www.skippingstone.ca  
@skippingstoneca (facebook & IG)

Amelia (she/her) is a passionate educator and advocate who is the co-founder and Director of Learning & Engagement for Skipping Stone, a national recognized nonprofit which supports trans and gender diverse youth, adults & families. She has previously held positions with Calgary Pride, as the President of the Trans Equality Society of Alberta and serves as a faculty member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. Over the past decade, she has played a role in the introduction and implementation of legislation recognizing the rights of trans and gender diverse individuals at ever levels of government. In recognition of her work, she has received the Outstanding Community Impact Award from University of Calgary Law School and was awarded the Grand Heart Award in 2018 in recognition of her significant contributions to advancing 2SLGBTQIA+ human rights in Alberta.

## **Rebecca Bultsma**

AI Expert, Presenter, and Consultant;  
Director of Communications in K-12 Education  
AI Expertise; Rebecca Bultsma  
consulting@rebeccabultsma.com  
rebeccabultsma.com  
Twitter:@rebeccabultsma LinkedIn: rebeccabultsma

Rebecca is a Generative AI Expert and Presenter who consults with organizations on leveraging AI to drive innovation. She spends the majority of her free time presenting to organizations across North America, delivering keynote addresses, webinars, and hands-on workshops to inspire and educate audiences about the practical applications and transformative impact of AI. She works as a Director of Communications in K-12 Education.

## **Jaymee Polowick**

School-Based Mental Health  
Promotion Wellness Coach  
Wellness Empowerment Program  
- Renfrew Educational Services  
nicoledixon@renfreweducation.org  
<https://wellnessempowerment.wixsite.com/wepyyc>  
"Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TransitionsWEP/>  
Instagram: @wellness\_empowerment"

Jaymee Polowick has worked with children in various capacities and roles since 2007. As a graduate from the University of Lethbridge Jaymee holds her bachelor's degree in psychology and neuroscience and is currently a Wellness Coach with the Wellness Empowerment Program at Renfrew Educational Services. Jaymee works front-line in schools

providing students, teachers and parents a variety of opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills to support positive mental health and overall wellness. Jaymee believes in advocating for the mental health and wellness of children and youth in Calgary, as well as helping teachers and parents build their skills and knowledge around mental healthcare. Through Jaymee's work, she has become familiar with using nature-based art as a method of mindfulness, and the benefits it has on one's mental wellness. Jaymee has a passion for nature, being silly, drawing and being innovative in the work that she does with schools.

Sarah Outh is currently working as a Wellness Coach with the Wellness Empowerment Program at Renfrew Educational Services where she engages and educates students on mental health and wellness. Her earlier experiences include working with individuals living with a brain injury, as well as training as a crisis interventionist. From there, Sarah became a teacher for preschool children through to grade four. For over ten years, Sarah has been working at Renfrew Educational Services where she has worked in various capacities. This rewarding experience has allowed Sarah to grow alongside many children and their families. In addition to all Sarah's work experience, she has been volunteering as the children's ministry leader for her church coordinating a variety of programs, some of which expand into the community. When Sarah is not working, she enjoys painting and hiking.

## **Gina Blank**

Professional Learning Lead  
GRIT  
professionallearning@gritprogram.ca  
<https://gritprogram.ca>  
Facebook: [facebook.com/thegritprogram](https://www.facebook.com/thegritprogram)  
Instagram: @thegritprogram LinkedIn:  
GRIT Program Gina Blank has a Bachelor of Science in psychology, as well as a Master's in General Special Education. She has worked with GRIT for twenty years in a variety of roles: supporting children with disabilities; coaching early childhood educators; and currently, coordinating and facilitating professional learning for community partners and the public. When she is not supporting adult learning, she can generally be found outdoors with a camera, a good book, or both.

# BIOGRAPHIES

## **Erynn Biggar**

Health & Wellness Consultant  
Ever Active Schools  
plo@everactive.org  
everactive.org  
Instagram: @everactiveab X(Twitter): @EverActiveAB

Ever Active Schools is a registered national charity designed to create and support healthy school communities. We engage and support schools through a Comprehensive School Health framework, which addresses health and education goals to improve the social outcomes of children and youth in Alberta.

## **Dr. Emmie Henderson-Dekort**

Child Rights Project Lead  
Canadian Child Care Federation/MRU  
sgarrow@mtroyal.ca  
<https://cccf-fcsge.ca/>

Emmie is the Child Rights Approach to Practice project lead and teaches ELCC at MRU and BVC. Her PhD research focused on children rights. Jewel is in her final year of the Bachelor of Child Studies Degree at MRU and is a fierce advocate for the ELCC profession and children's rights. Batoul and Manpreet are 3rd year Bachelor of Child Studies students completing their leadership practicum as part of the project team. Both have a strong passion and interest in creating awareness of the importance of children's rights.

## **Sharon Ness**

Early Learning Specialist  
Creative Childcare Consulting  
sharoness11@gmail.com  
creativechildcareconsulting.ca  
Facebook: Creative Childcare Consulting

Sharon Ness is a Child Development Supervisor who has been part of the western Canadian child care community since 1989 and been involved with the Alberta community since 2001. Her background is in Early Childhood Education. Sharon is a recognized member of the Alberta early childhood community having been involved in both local and provincial associations. Sharon is a global Virtues Project Facilitator and is also trained in delivering Positive Discipline for Parents. Sharon owned the first licensed overnight child care facility in British Columbia and has worked extensively in the not-for-profit sector since arriving in Alberta. She is the recipient of the Alberta Association for Community Living's Community Living Award for promoting the concept and spirit of community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities.

## **Janice Comrie**

Inclusive Child Care Manager  
The GRIT Program  
janicecomrie@gritprogram.ca  
iccalberta.ca

"Janice Comrie is currently the Inclusive Child Care Manager with the GRIT Program. She is a strong advocate of inclusion and quality early learning and care. Janice has 30+ years of experience in education and child care settings. Her bachelor and masters of education degrees focused on early childhood and music education and she has always used music in her classroom to build community, support early literacy skills and as a way to include all children and foster a sense of belonging.

Lauren has a bachelor of arts degree in Child Studies with more than a decade of childcare experience. She's played various roles, from educator to assistant director, to behavioural therapist.

Lauren also has extensive experience supporting children with a range of diverse needs by developing and implementing specialized programs.

In her current role as Inclusive Childcare Coach at GRIT, she guides childcare staff in implementing Pyramid Model strategies, which support the social emotional development of all children.

She has a strong passion for inclusion, advocating for the belief that everyone deserves a voice and a sense of belonging.



# BIOGRAPHIES

## **Sarah Reader**

Play Consultant  
Playful Adventures  
hello@playfuladventures.ca  
www.playfuladventures.ca  
Instagram: @playfuladventures

Sarah Reader has been running recreation programs for all ages in the Calgary area since 2008. In 2016 she created and managed the City of Calgary's first Mobile Adventure Playground and sat on the planning committee for the 2017 International Play Conference. Sarah has a Bachelor of Physical Education from the University of Alberta, is a High Five trainer, and an instructor at Bow Valley College in their Early Childhood Education Diploma program. Through her company, Playful Adventures, she loves inspiring people to Rediscover their Wildhoods through education, professional development and unstructured, outdoor play.

## **Tanya Keto**

Tanya has over 20 years of experience working with struggling students and their families as a teacher, a learning strategist, a guidance counselor, and educational psychologist. Now as Director of Avery Family and School Psychology Services, she specializes in conducting psychoeducational assessments, including assessment and treatment of neurodevelopmental disabilities such as ADHD and Learning Disabilities (LD). She is also a sessional university instructor and the university of Calgary where she teaches about Learning Disabilities as part of the Master of Education program as well as a parent coach for the Center for ADHD Awareness Canada. Throughout her career she has focused on working with individuals with ADHD and Learning Disabilities, and regularly provides coaching, education, and mentorship for educators, caregivers, employers, and specialists around these two neurodevelopmental disabilities. With a unique

ability to combine her real-world experiences with professional practice, Tanya approaches her work from a place of empathy, insight, and expertise in order to set everyone up for success.

## **Jen Goeres**

ARPA HIGH FIVE® Coordinator  
Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA)/  
HIGH FIVE®  
<https://arpaonline.ca/program/high-five/>  
Instagram: @highfive\_canada, @arpa.cop

Jen has been involved in sport and recreation for nearly 30 years, working and volunteering for not-for-profit and community groups and several municipal, provincial, and national organizations. Jen is a HIGH FIVE® Master Trainer and has facilitated over 1800 hours of HIGH FIVE® content across Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. She was also a content writer and developer for HIGH FIVE® Principles of Healthy Child Development, HIGH FIVE® Sport, HIGH FIVE® Girls In Sport, HIGH FIVE® Strengthening Children's Mental Health and HIGH FIVE® Indigenous Games for Children, as well as academic support for HIGH FIVE® Principles of Healthy Aging. Currently, she works as the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) HIGH FIVE® Coordinator and the Calgary Adapted Hub powered by Jumpstart Program and Community Engagement Coordinator, working with community partners to connect children and families living with disabilities with quality sport and recreation opportunities. Jen graduated from the University of Calgary with a Bachelor of Kinesiology (Adapted and Therapeutic Physical Activity) and a Bachelor of Education (Secondary Physical Education). Her love of teaching has allowed her to share her passion for learning with students in the Calgary Catholic School Board and as a Faculty Member of St. Mary University (Calgary).

# BIOGRAPHIES

## Sandra Lamouche

Hoop Dancer, Writer, Speaker, Artist  
Instagram: @hoop\_dance\_goddess

"Sandra Lamouche is a member of the Bigstone Cree Nation residing on the land of the Nitsitapi (Blackfoot people) of Southern Alberta. She is a champion hoop dancer, award-winning Indigenous educational leader, TEDx Speaker, author, and transdisciplinary storyteller and artist. She received an M.A. researching Indigenous Dance and well-being. The hoop dance and its teachings of unity, balance, equality and interconnectedness of creation guides her work. This includes land based practices, environmental and climate related topics as well as, social justice issues include advocacy for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Residential School Survivors and their descendants, which directly impact her and her friends and family. " Indigenous Ways Of Knowing Using dance, art, and storytelling to share indigenous ways of knowing. Build understanding and appreciation. Encourage using Indigenous knowledges etc.

## Lauren Dunphy

(ICC Coach) Lauren has a bachelor of arts degree in Child Studies with more than a decade of childcare experience. She's played various roles, from educator to assistant director, to behavioural therapist. Lauren also has extensive experience supporting children with a range of diverse needs by developing and implementing specialized programs. In her current role as Inclusive Childcare Coach at GRIT, she guides childcare staff in implementing Pyramid Model strategies, which support the social emotional development of all children. She has a strong passion for inclusion, advocating for the belief that everyone deserves a voice and a sense of belonging.



**LIGHTS ON  
AFTERSCHOOL ALBERTA**

A Celebration of Afterschool

**April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Host your "Lights On" event for your community and watch as landmarks across the province light up to show support for afterschool programs!

Check out the ideas for your Lights On Afterschool Alberta Initiative online at [www.calgarysacda.com](http://www.calgarysacda.com)