

ELD Presents A Memorable Conference for All

On Saturday May 25th, 2019, The Early Learning and Development programs hosted a conference titled "Autism in the Early Childhood Setting: Advancing our practice". We partnered with City of Toronto and Humber College, who helped with advertising, recruitment and registration through their "city wide training" initiative. The day featured three inspiring talks: A keynote speech delivered by Dr. Jessica Brian which discussed the model which she co-developed, which is called "The Social ABCs". This speech was extended with a discussion co-facilitated by Dr Brian and Kate Bernardi – Research coordinator. This discussion focused on ECE specific considerations and practical strategies from The Social ABCs. The second talk was presented by Raya Shields – autism self-advocate and critical disabilities scholar. She highlighted important considerations for early childhood educators who want to practice respectful engagement with kids who have autism. The final talk was presented by Moira Pena, Occupational Therapist and focused on strategies to promote self-regulation in kids who have autism. All three talks were full of information and inspiration! The conference was attended by 20 Early Learning and Development staff and 80 registrants from across the GTA. Attendees were primarily early childhood educators and childcare centre managers. The feedback from the conference has been truly excellent with very high satisfaction ratings across all talks as well as facilities and food (which was catered by Sodexo).

Overall, the day was a tremendous success and met our multiple objectives of advancing our own practice in ELD, capacity building with community partners and showcasing Holland Bloorview as leaders in the fields of early childhood education and autism. Further, this event was the product of superior team work and dedication of ELD staff, who put months of planning and collaboration into this!

As written by Christie Welch, Lead
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