Meet Our Speakers

Speaker Biographies 2026



Dr. Jean M. Clinton

Clinical Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry & Behavioural Neurosciences, McMaster University

Dr. Jean M. Clinton, a McMaster University graduate with a Bachelor of Music (Honours) and Doctor of Medicine, is a Clinical Professor at McMaster University and a renowned child psychiatrist whose work has profoundly influenced understanding of relationships, brain development, and mental well-being. A Fellow of the ZERO TO THREE Academy, she has served as an Education Advisor to the Premier and Minister of Education for Ontario and on multiple national and international advisory bodies, including UNICEF Canada and the Canadian Pediatric Society. Author of Love Builds Brains and co-author of Ontario: A Learning Province, Dr. Clinton's teaching and scholarship bridge neuroscience, education, and deep learning in child development. Recognized with numerous awards —including the YWCA Woman of Distinction and induction into the Hamilton Gallery of Distinction— she is a passionate advocate for fostering well-being and resilience through connection and caring relationships.



Faith Hale

Executive Director, Ska:na Family Learning Centre

Faith Hale, a proud member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of the MHA Nation, is the Executive Director and co-founder of Ska:na Family Learning Centre (SFLC), one of Ontario's first Indigenous organizations focused on Child Care and Early Years programming. Faith was instrumental in researching, developing, and implementing an urban Indigenous culturally relevant early years framework. Under her leadership, SFLC continues to grow, offering diverse programs and services, while Faith mentors the Child Care and Early Years sector through collaboration with various boards, committees, and networks.

Faith holds a Master of Education, a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Wayne State University, a Bachelor of Education from Brock University, and an Early Childhood Education Diploma from St. Clair College. As a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE), she has served on the College of Early Childhood Educators advisory committee, presented at various conferences, and led research projects in education and community development at local and provincial levels.

In addition to her work with SFLC, Faith is the President of the 7 Generations Indigenous Centre (7GIC), a College of Early Childhood Educator Mentor, and has held leadership positions such as past Second Vice-President of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and delegate appointee to the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services Board.

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Lori Kempe

Executive Director, Children First in Essex County
Executive Lead, Lead Agency for Child and Youth Mental Health, Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare

Lori Kempe is a passionate advocate for children's mental health with over 30 years of leadership in mental health, developmental services, and child welfare across Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent. She holds a Master of Social Work from Eastern Michigan University and a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Windsor and is an alumna of St. Clair College's Sign Language Communicator and Interpreter programs. Lori drives system-level change through provincial roles with the Knowledge Institute for Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions, Ontario Health's Centre of Excellence Clinical Council, Co-chair of the Lead Agency Consortium and is currently co-leading the development of a provincial Infant and Early Mental Health Service Delivery Model. A dedicated volunteer with the Canadian Centre for Accreditation and Schulich School of Medicine, Lori brings vision, collaboration, and commitment to every conversation.



Sandra Lohnes

Team Supervisor, Child Care Support Services ,
Children First in Essex County

Sandra Lohnes is a Team Supervisor with Children First with a career rooted in compassion, education, and a deep commitment to supporting children and families. Sandra has dedicated more than two decades to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those she serves. Her academic journey began with an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Family Studies, as well as earning her Bachelor of Education degree, building a strong foundation that would bring together her passion for learning, child development, and family well-being. She is also a member of the Ontario College of Teachers.

For more than 20 years, Sandra worked as a dedicated frontline professional, developing extensive experience in supporting children, families and early learning professionals while building strong relationships with colleagues, community partners, and the people at the heart of her work. Her years on the frontline shaped her understanding of the importance of meeting families where they are—with empathy, respect, and a strengths-based approach.

Today, Sandra brings that wealth of experience, where she provides leadership, guidance, and mentorship to professionals supporting children and families. Her journey from educator and frontline practitioner to clinical leader reflects not only her professional growth, but also her enduring belief that every child and family deserves to be heard, supported, and empowered.

At the heart of her work is a simple but powerful philosophy: relationships matter, every family has strengths, and meaningful change begins when people feel supported and understood.