

Inclusion Alberta

# FAMILY Conference

April 12-13, 2024

Fantasyland Hotel  
Edmonton, AB

Families, the **HEART** of community

*In*clusion Alberta

# WORKSHOP

Friday, April 12 | 9 am – 12:00, 1:30 – 4:30 pm

## Designing instruction in inclusive classrooms from K-12

Presenter: Toby J. Karten  
- Educator, Author, and Consultant

Toby Karten, teacher, education coach and consultant, staff developer, author and adjunct professor will highlight in this dynamic and interactive workshop how to create lessons with appropriate goals, methods, materials, classroom design and assessments for all students. This workshop includes scaffolding and teaching methods that incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the 3 stages of Understanding by Design (UbD). In addition, Toby will address the utilization of peer supports, multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, self-efficacy, technology and VAKT (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile) elements. A label of exceptionality never defines potential, nor mastery. Classrooms need to be structured to highlight students' acumens and social skills while offering opportunities for whole class, small group and individual inquiry and instruction.

Success in inclusive classrooms requires teachers, principals, administrators and parents to work collaboratively and communicate effectively; a dynamic and complex process. Toby will engage participants in what to do, what to do better and what not to do so that teachers, principals, and families as collaborative partners can share their realities and skillsets to catapult students to success. When professionals, students

with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families are a collaborative team, then the knowledge, respect and understanding of inclusion increases in schools and ultimately in life. Let's plan together to advance inclusive education and learning.

**Toby Karten** is an award-winning inclusive educator, dynamic presenter, and author who is passionate about sharing her knowledge with others. She has taught students ranging from preschool to graduate level. Toby works with school districts across the United States, Canada, and internationally as a staff developer, inclusion coach and educational consultant, author and adjunct professor. Toby focuses on creative, practical solutions for helping ALL students gain not only access but also ongoing successes in inclusive classrooms.

She has collaborated with administrators, staff, students, and their families at local, national, and international school sites and conferences as an invited speaker and consultant. She has an undergraduate degree in special education from Brooklyn College, a master's degree in special education from the College of Staten Island, a supervisory degree from Georgian Court University, and an honorary doctorate from Gratz College. Toby has been

recognized by the Council for Exceptional Children and the New Jersey Department of Education as an exemplary educator, receiving two Teacher of the Year awards.

Toby has authored and edited more than 30 books and quick reference guides on collaborative inclusion strategies and interventions. Her interactive PD and resources offer ways for professionals, students, and families to have their eyes, minds, and actions on how inclusion practices connect to educator, learner, and curriculum realities. Toby's ongoing professional goal is to help learners achieve successful inclusion experiences in school and ultimately, in life.

For more information visit [inclusionworkshops.com](http://inclusionworkshops.com).

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## President's Reception

Friday night, from 7 pm – 11 pm, Inclusion Alberta hosts its annual President's Reception. Join us as we honour individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to the lives of children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Many find the President's Reception to be an inspiring celebration of community inclusion. If you wish to attend this event, please add a free ticket for each person in the 'add on' section when purchasing your Conference ticket(s).

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## Children and teens welcome

Fully inclusive Childcare and Teen Club have been a part of the Family Conference since its inception. Each day will be a new adventure filled with fun, inclusive play, and hands-on experiences. The staff are quality caregivers/play consultants who will add a touch of magic to the day, while parents participate in the conference. A limited number of childcare spaces are available for children 12 and under and Teen Club spaces for children aged 13 to 19. When purchasing your Conference ticket(s) online, you will be able to purchase Childcare/Teen Club programming in the 'add on' section at a cost of \$25 per day per child or teen. Spaces are limited and will be filled on a first-come basis.



Friday, April 12 | 9 am – 12:00, 1:30 – 4:30 pm

## Customized employment using evidence-based practices

Presenter: Doug Crandell - University of Georgia and Senior Consultant with Griffin Hammis Associates

Inclusive employment is one of the most important avenues to a meaningful life and should be pursued to the maximum extent possible. In addition to creating greater financial security, employment is an important source of our adult identity, allowing the opportunity to contribute one's unique gifts and talents and develop relationships. This full-day interactive workshop on Customized Employment by Doug Crandell will focus on the basics of what it means to deliver evidence-based supports related to creating long-lasting, unique career paths for youth and adults with intellectual disabilities. We will review effective evidence-based practices in job development that avoids pre-placement delays such as volunteering, job tryouts,

internships, and paid or unpaid work experiences and assists those adults with intellectual disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, to become employed with the best opportunity for long-term success and income. We will explore alternatives to common job coaching and other conventional community integrated employment practices and show the difference between consultative training vs traditional job coaching. The session will delve into what approaches and practices individuals and families should look for that have proven results. In addition, we will spend some time linking the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities a professional must possess in the modern era to deliver evidence-based practices.

***Doug Crandell** has worked for decades in employment and disability supports. He is also an advocate for a sibling with disabilities. In Twenty-Two Cents an Hour, he focuses on how the Disability Industrial Complex is often impenetrable, mired in deficit-thinking, and controlled by the lobbying of trade groups that do little for people with disabilities.*

## WORKSHOP

*Doug has published eight books with publishers including Penguin-Random House, Chicago Review Press, Virgin Books, and Cornell University Press. His essays on labour, mental health, and disability appear regularly in the SUN magazine. He directs the training and technical assistance center known as Advancing Employment.*

*Doug is a national subject matter expert in customized employment, passionate, creative, informed and a great storyteller. This is an important session for families, funders and those working in the field, especially individuals in the supported employment field, from FMS staff to employment specialists in agencies.*

For more information visit [dougrandell.com](http://dougrandell.com).

Inclusive employment is one of the most important avenues to a meaningful life and should be pursued to the maximum extent possible.

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## Family Celebration Dance

Join us on Saturday evening from 7:00 to 11:00 pm in the Fantasyland Hotel Ballroom for a fun and casual celebration for family members of all ages! A band will be playing party favourites and even if you don't like to dance, it's an opportunity for Conference-goers to connect, celebrate and enjoy some snacks. There will be entertainment for children (including face painting and the famous 'freeze-dance' and 'limbo'), but please note that parents are responsible for their supervision – Childcare and Teen Club are not provided. If you wish to attend this event, please add a free ticket for each person in the 'add on' section when purchasing your Conference ticket(s). Dinner will NOT be provided but snacks, finger foods and soft drinks will be available along with a cash bar. For dinner, there are numerous restaurants and food courts in the mall if you'd like something to eat before the Family Celebration Dance.



# OPENING PLENARY Saturday, April 13 | 9 am – 10 am

## The power of partnerships

Presenters: Toby Karten - Educator, Author, and Consultant, and Doug Crandell - University of Georgia and Senior Consultant with Griffin Hammis Associates

This year's two keynote speakers will share in this plenary session the

importance of families, educators, co-workers and employers working in partnership to create the relationships and opportunities that enable children and adults with intellectual disabilities to experience lives of meaning, belonging and participation. By coming together

and welcoming the knowledge and contributions of children and adults with intellectual disabilities, their families, educators, employers, and community members, we can ensure a family's vision for an inclusive life is sustained over time.

# YOUTH FOR INCLUSION Saturday, April 13 | 9 am – 4:30 pm

(ages 16-22)

Youth for Inclusion is a youth-led initiative committed to amplifying the voice and experience of youth with intellectual disabilities while furthering the broader agenda of inclusion through community-based advocacy and leadership. Youth forum participants will explore the power of collective advocacy and leadership in contributing to the broader movement for inclusion.

Youth participants will participate in the opening plenary conversations and join a morning session from the larger conference. During the afternoon, participants will join mini sessions specifically for youth. Participants will explore leveraging their own personal networks to advance the agenda of inclusion, heightening consciousness, and informing social change within

our spheres of influence. Topics for mini - sessions will include deinstitutionalization, inclusive employment, and advocacy. We welcome youth with and without disabilities committed to social justice, action, advocacy, and inclusion to join us for this day!

*Lunch is provided but space is limited so please register early.*

The Closing Plenary will follow the Afternoon Sessions (see page 6).

# CLOSING PLENARY Saturday, April 13 | 3:15 Pm – 4:30 pm

## Celebrating Inclusion Alberta's Family Conference: Its impact and legacy after 30 years

Moderator: Trish Bowman, Inclusion Alberta CEO

In 1992, Inclusion Alberta embarked on a process of renewal and revitalized commitment to the dreams, hopes and aspirations of children and adults with an intellectual disability and their families. That year the first annual

Family Conference was held, with a unique focus on families as the heart of community, with sessions specifically designed to support fully inclusive lives. The Conference was to be a place where entire families -new and experienced- would be welcomed to gather in mutual commitment, learn, be renewed in their never-ending advocacy, share stories of heartbreak and hope, find understanding without explanation, connect, celebrate, and be inspired by unimagined examples of the realization of inclusive lives. A place where the expertise of the best in the field would be combined with the lived experience and knowledge of families and their

family members with and without an intellectual disability.

Today, as Inclusion Alberta's Family Conference has become the highlight of the Inclusion Alberta year and remains unique throughout the world, it is time to look both backward and forward; to consider whether the Conference has fulfilled and is fulfilling its promise. This Closing Plenary will feature the perspective of four key Inclusion Alberta family leaders from the 1990's to today and beyond, as well as the perspective of one of the individuals who was key to the inception and development of the Conference.



Saturday, April 13 | 10:30 am – 12 pm

# MORNING SESSIONS

## Take care of the person in the mirror: 'Take five to achieve ten!'

Presenter: Toby J. Karten - Educator, Author, and Consultant

Assist students with intellectual/developmental disabilities to transform inclusive education challenges into solutions. Experience and promote wellness for yourself, students, families, educators, and community partners with increased structure, awareness, compassion, collaboration, and reflection.

We will explore how to:

- manage 'inclusion anxiety'
- rest to achieve your best
- honour and capitalize on everyone's strengths
- focus on the positive and plan ahead
- celebrate outcomes and achievements
- communicate and collaborate with colleagues, students, families, related service providers
- explore and employ applicable inclusive education practices and resources

## Romantic relationships

Presenters: Anne McWhir, parent; Catherine Oakleaf, Inclusion Alberta Director of Advocacy, sibling; Shawna Francis, Inclusion Alberta Director of Inclusive Post-Secondary, sibling; and others

For over 65 years families have advocated for their family members with intellectual disabilities to be fully included in schools, recreation, workspaces, and the broader community with their vision for a good life becoming ever more expansive. While access to these domains is in itself an accomplishment, the value of inclusion lies

in the possibilities for relationships and belonging in these spaces. While freely given relationships are crucial for us all, intimate and romantic relationships remain simultaneously challenging for families to navigate and central for many of us to feel fulfilled in our adult lives. This panel discussion will explore the euphoria and heartbreak of love, dating and long-term commitment for persons with intellectual disabilities, including the power of natural pathways, how families can encourage connection and how to navigate the unique support that romantic relationships may require.

## The advocacy landscape: Trends, challenges and opportunities

Presenters: Bruce Uditsky, M.Ed., Inclusion Alberta CEO Emeritus and Trish Bowman, Inclusion Alberta CEO

This session will explore the advocacy issues and trends currently impacting individuals and families, discuss possible and needed responses and look to where opportunities to improve the possibilities for inclusive lives might be found. This session provides an

opportunity to take stock of where resistance to inclusion might be increasing and why, including the necessity to ensure what is meant by inclusion is clearly defined and articulated. Issues explored will include challenges in accessing disability related supports, inclusive education, inclusive childcare, community partnerships, the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) and MAiD (Medical Assistance in Dying). The importance of individual and collective advocacy and family leadership as a response to current threats to inclusion and the lives of children and adults with intellectual disabilities will be discussed.

## Registered Disability Savings Plans and the Disability Tax Credit: Planning for the future

Presenters: Heather Lambert, Inclusion Alberta RDSP/DTC Coordinator; Wendy McDonald, Inclusion Alberta COO; Steven Williams and Jennifer Schow from the RDSP Guy

The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) and the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) are two important financial tools available to individuals with an intellectual disability and/or their caregiver to help them save

money, yet less than half of those eligible are accessing them. The RDSP is one of the best disability-related savings plans in the world, and the DTC not only saves money at tax time but is used as a qualifier for many programs such the recently announced Canada Dental Care Plan and will perhaps be used to determine eligibility for the forthcoming Canada Disability Benefit (CDB).

This session will describe the significant benefits of both the DTC and the RDSP and will share practical advice and information on what's needed to qualify and apply for both.



# AFTERNOON SESSIONS Saturday, April 13 | 1:30 pm – 3 pm

## Understanding career planning practices that are (and are not) evidence-based

Presenter: Doug Crandell - University of Georgia and Senior Consultant with Griffin Hammis Associates

For individuals with intellectual disabilities to have success in employment we must ensure best practices in the delivery of those services and supports. The career development model that works for those without disabilities is going to be the same model that works

for those with disabilities. Individuals with intellectual disabilities often get mired in a myriad of 'assessments' supposedly aimed at determining a job seeker's needs. The truth is we test, evaluate, and assess people with disabilities so much that the tools being used are rarely analyzed through the lens of evidence. Does this type of assessment have data that shows its effectiveness? This session will focus on career planning methods that actually create meaningful inclusive employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

## Creating inclusive early learning environments

Presenters: Sherri Husch Foote, parent and Executive Director at Midwest Family Connections; Stacey Andrews, parent, Senior Advocate with Inclusion Alberta and Inclusion Lloydminster, and others

In Alberta there are ample options for young children to partake in early education, childcare, and recreational activities that allow them to foster relationships,

connect with peers of a similar age and grow. Access to these opportunities are no less important, and perhaps more so, for children with intellectual disabilities. Early inclusion helps enable families to stay on an inclusive pathway over the lifespan and is a springboard to an inclusive life. Join us in learning first-hand from childcare providers and families of children with intellectual disabilities how their vision for their children has helped enhance our communities and build more inclusive early learning environments for all children.

## Inclusive education for First Nations students

Presenters: Isstoi'soowa (Winter Count Coup)/Christopher Scout - Superintendent of the Siksika Board of Education and the Vice-Chair of the Old Sun Community College Board of Governors, Tracy McHugh - Siksika Nation Tribal Councillor

Join us for an informative session as we engage in a rich conversation around inclusive education for our First Nations students. This session will unpack the complex challenges and barriers that our learners with

exceptionalities may encounter within the educational system and explore the proactive solutions and initiatives implemented to address these obstacles. From fostering cultural inclusivity to promoting accessibility and accommodation, we will discuss the working solutions that have been instrumental in creating a more equitable and supportive learning environment. We will also discuss areas where continued advocacy is needed. Participants will gain valuable insights into how they can contribute to and support the ongoing mission of inclusive education for our First Nations learners.

## Sustaining inclusion: It takes a village

Presenters: Wendy McDonald, Inclusion Alberta COO and parent, and others

For families with a family member with an intellectual disability, ensuring a life of meaningful inclusion over time is an ongoing problem-solving process. While so many families, particularly parents, feel they are alone in this process, at times we all require others to support us on our journey. This session will focus on increasing the likelihood that people with intellectual disabilities

will develop relationships, secure employment, be part of community life, acquire increasingly positive roles in community and safeguard their inclusion when we as parents are gone, by inviting other people in so they can contribute to solutions and tap into their networks. As a vision for the future begins to form through this kind of brainstorming, people are challenged to increase opportunities for the individual with the disability. Families will share how they have used this process to assist their family member in becoming a full participant in the community.



# FAMILY CONFERENCE PRICING

## Ticket options

There are several ticket options available, for either a full Conference or single day experience and family or individual options. Discounted Early Bird ticket pricing is in effect until February 29th.

Group pricing available for Friday's workshops at a rate of 3 for the price of 2. Please contact [info@inclusionalbarta.org](mailto:info@inclusionalbarta.org) for group pricing inquiries.

## Barrier-free Conference experience

Please contact [info@inclusionalbarta.org](mailto:info@inclusionalbarta.org) if you require assistance or are experiencing any barriers in attending the Inclusion Alberta Family Conference, in areas such as (but not limited to) access to technology required to register for the Conference or financial barriers limiting your ability to cover Conference fees.

## Hotel Information

For attendees coming from out of town and needing a hotel, Inclusion Alberta has secured special Conference pricing at the Fantasyland Hotel.

For rates and reservations, please call the hotel at 1-800-737-3783. Callers must mention that they are attending the "Inclusion Alberta Conference" to receive the negotiated rate or provide the group code number 3731028 by March 12th, 2024.

Early Bird (until Feb. 29) - Full Conference (INDIVIDUAL)	CA\$230.00
Early Bird (until Feb. 29) - Full Conference (FAMILY)	CA\$330.00
General Admission - Full Conference (INDIVIDUAL)	CA\$280.00
General Admission - Full Conference (FAMILY)	CA\$380.00
Friday Workshop - Toby Karten (INDIVIDUAL)	CA\$210.00
Friday Workshop - Toby Karten (FAMILY)	CA\$260.00
Friday Workshop - Doug Crandell (INDIVIDUAL)	CA\$210.00
Friday Workshop - Doug Crandell (FAMILY)	CA\$260.00
Saturday only (INDIVIDUAL)	CA\$210.00
Saturday only (FAMILY)	CA\$260.00
Youth for Inclusion Forum	CA\$30.00
Child Care/Teen Club (per day per child/teen)	CA\$25.00

[Register online at inclusionalbarta.org](https://inclusionalbarta.org)

## Grant application

Inclusion Alberta has a limited number of grants available to individuals and families to assist with costs associated with attending the conference. Grant applications can be submitted online [here](#).

**\*\*IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR A GRANT, DO NOT PURCHASE YOUR CONFERENCE TICKET(S) YET.** Grant application deadline: February 29, 2024. Applicants will be notified of their grant status by March 8, 2024.



