

Northern Alberta Educational Assistant's Conference 2025 - **Thursday** (March 6, 2025)

Keynote

Sandra Woitas

The World is Wonky. Ten things I know for sure to make it less wonky

9:00 - 10:15 AM

Yes, the World is Wonky, but in this talk Sandra will share with you Ten things she knows for sure to make it a little less wonky!

Full Day Sessions

Sandra Woitas

Behaviour Managment - 101 - Full Day

10:30 - 3:45 PM

Participants will examine the prevention of disruptive behaviour preemptively as well as effectively responding to it after it happens. Sandra will speak about the importance of relationships, making connections, striving for consistency, remaining compassionate along the way, and the importance of humour to make it through even the most trying days. Prime focus will be on attention seeking behaviours.

Morning Sessions

Krystal Zhang

Difference not Deficit: Supported Unmasked Autistic Communication

10:30 - 11:45 AM

In this session learn how to support your non-speaking or dysregulated autistic learners. A focus on the importance of safety, nervous system regulation, and interests will be included. This session will also explore alternatives to social skills programming that support the unique ways that autistic individuals communicate and encourage them to be less masked at school.

**Kathy Mykyte
& Victoria Baker**

Life Skills: It's More Than Recycling

10:30 - 11:45 AM

This session will provide:

- Criteria to determine who would benefit from Life Skills Programming: Assessments, Informed consent
- Scope and Sequence of the life skills curriculum across all grade levels: Curriculum document
- Strategies and resources to support programming: Topic sheets with strategies, resources & assessments

Amy Bartlett

Understanding the Teacher-Educational Assistant Partnership

10:30 - 11:45 AM

Join Amy Bartlett as she explores the critical role of Educational Assistants (EAs) from a teacher's perspective. Through open dialogue and real-world examples, Amy will address common challenges faced in the classroom, such as power struggles, confusion over expectations, and the balance between offering support and fostering independence in students.

Stacy Wheeler

Literacy Supports for Diverse Learners

10:30 - 11:45 AM

This session will provide an overview of some hands-on literacy supports and strategies that can easily be incorporated in the classroom to assist diverse learners.

Connie Jakab

How to Work with Students with ADHD, Opposition, Anxiety, Depression

10:30 - 11:45 AM

Many teachers are feeling lost in how to teach students who are struggling. They don't need more information, but practical tools that allow them to engage students like this on a daily basis. This session will give the background they need to know about how these students work, as well as 5 practical tools that will result in the teacher feeling more confident and successful in reaching their students who are struggling.

**Tammy Leslie
& Betty Morris**

The Power of Manipulatives!

10:30 - 11:45 AM

Concrete manipulatives are powerful tools that help students 'to see' the math. This session will focus on the use of number lines and counters. Experience the many ways that these tools can be used to help students to visualize and communicate their understanding. Both concrete and digital will be shared.

Kim Barker-Kay

28 Day Challenge through the Book Me and White Supremacy - Full Day

10:30 - 11:45 AM

For decades Kim Barker-Kay has been focused on building educational equity for students. Addressing racism and other forms of oppression are critical parts of this work. Kim will share some recent "aha" moments and experiences that led her to the anti-racism work of Layla F. Saad and her 28 day challenge through the book Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor.

Jen Duperron-Trydal

FASD - Transforming Behaviours into Success! - Full Day

10:30 - 11:45 AM

Come to this fun and interactive session with specific questions, as there will be opportunities for discussion and engagement. Learn to easily interpret 'challenging' behaviours in a whole different light, while discovering new universal strategies that will be beneficial for all students. By the end of this session, you will have a refreshed mindset that will make you ready to tackle the most challenging situations.

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Morning Sessions

Jo-Ella Woodman Executive Functioning Understood

10:30 - 11:45 AM

This session will provide a brief understanding of executive functioning skills and support strategies in the classroom.

Michelle Dechaine Learning to Write Without a Pencil

10:30 - 11:45 AM

Join us for a session all about making writing fun and accessible for diverse learners. We'll explore practical and supportive writing strategies for students who are not (yet) printers. Let's make writing an interesting adventure that celebrates every learner's unique voice!

Melissa Renfree Self Regulation :An Introduction

10:30 - 11:45 AM

In this session we will break down the different key components of self-regulation. We will discuss emotional, cognitive and sensory regulation and how they can present in the classroom and what we can do to build a child's capacity for these types of regulation.

Doug Parsons Autism 101

10:30 - 11:45 AM

During this presentation, we dive deeper into what Autism is and share practical strategies that can help you interact with and support autistic individuals. The presentation also covers the strengths and challenges experienced by many autistic people and how to respond to create accommodating environments.

Erin Burns Creating success in Knowledge and Employability

10:30 - 11:45 AM

During this session we will explore the knowledge and employability program. I will share my philosophy, my challenges and my successes. We will uncover strategies to increase student success while working with other educators.

Tammy Novak & Frances Russel Enhance Well-being, Enhance Learning:

10:30 - 11:45 AM

Healthy students learn better and achieve better outcomes. The comprehensive school health (CSH) framework is Alberta's roadmap for school health and wellness. CSH begins with you, right in your classroom! Join us for an engaging discussion on hot topics that directly impact you and your students.

Angele Farn You're Invited to a Fail-A-Bration

10:30 - 11:45 AM

In this session we will break down the different key components of self-regulation. We will discuss emotional, cognitive and sensory regulation and how they can present in the classroom and what we can do to build a child's capacity for these types of regulation.

Afternoon Double Sessions

Sandra Ciurysek & Kim Barker-Kay Poverty Simulation

1:00 - 3:45 PM

The United Way Poverty Simulation is a unique and powerful experience which is aimed to sensitize participants to the realities faced by low-income people. The simulation replicates a month in the life of a family living in poverty. The ultimate mission of each of these families is to provide food, shelter and other basic needs with a limited income.

Krista Umble Blanket Exercise

1:00 - 3:45 PM

The Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning opportunity where the participants get to walk through the history and experiences of Indigenous Peoples in Turtle Island and will tell the story by using blankets.

Michelle Dechaine & Brandis Short AAC in Action: HAAC in Action: Hands-On Practice for Communication at School

1:00 - 3:45 PM

Protective factors are skills, strengths, or resources that help people deal more effectively with stressful events and make it less likely that individuals will develop mental health problems. These skills enhance resilience and help to counterbalance risk factors. Join us in an activity to explore these factors, understand how to recognize them, cultivate them for ourselves and our students, and deliberate on their significance in risk assessment.

Doug Parsons Autism 201

1:00 - 3:45 PM

Autism 201 is a follow up session to Autism 101. Attendance in the Autism 101 class is advised but not necessary for Autism 201 as there is a review component. By joining this session, you will be able to:

- Expand your knowledge of Autism
- Dive Deeper into Common Autism characteristics and how you can support
- Identify the impact of sensory differences and respond to the sensory needs of autistic individuals
- And so much more!

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Early Afternoon Sessions

Krystal Zhang

ADHD: A Never-ending Boss Battle

1:00 - 2:15 PM

Your students with ADHD are fighting a metaphorical boss battle everyday! Even if appropriately medicated or well supported, the challenges of filtering out additional sensory information are overwhelming in our high demand informational school settings. Tips and tricks for supporting the wide range of ADHD challenges students might face!

Connie Jakab

How to Work with Students with ADHD, Opposition, Anxiety, Depression - Repeat

1:00 - 2:15 PM

Many teachers are feeling lost in how to teach students who are struggling. They don't need more information, but practical tools that allow them to engage students like this on a daily basis. This session will give the background they need to know about how these students work, as well as 5 practical tools that will result in the teacher feeling more confident and successful in reaching their students who are struggling.

**Jo-Ella Woodman
& Kelsey Friesen**

No sensory room, no problem: Supporting Regulation in the classroom

1:00 - 2:15 PM

Discuss what is regulation is and provide practical solutions to support regulation in a classroom.

**Carolyn Hovey-
Johnson**

Declarative Language

1:00 - 2:15 PM

This presentation explores how the strategic use of descriptive and declarative language can significantly enhance communication and emotional regulation for students, including those with autism, executive functioning difficulties, anxiety, and behavioural challenges. Declarative language, which focuses on sharing information and thoughts without demanding an immediate response, encourages children to think, process, and engage more flexibly!

Andrea Loepky

ACES Trauma Informed Strategies

1:00 - 2:15 PM

ACES trauma informed strategies for the classroom. Explaining ACES and what trauma looks like in the classroom and how to support these individuals. Also provide information around prevalence of childhood trauma and what it can look like.

Martha Mzvondiwa

Navigating Grief and Loss

1:00 - 2:15 PM

The presentation will focus on how school staff can support children experiencing grief and loss. How to support children returning to school following a loss and recognizing that everyone grieves differently. The discussion will include resources and practical strategies to help school staff, support children.

Leah Montes

Use your Purple Puzzle Piece like a Pro

1:00 - 2:15 PM

Read and Write (aka the Purple Puzzle Piece) is an extension that works within Google Do you work with students that are supposed to use text to speech, or speech to text? Do you feel like you're fumbling around when it comes to helping with the Purple Puzzle Piece or other accessibility features? Join me while I go through some chromebook tools, as well as the features available through Read and Write.

Angele Farn

You're Invited to a Fail-A-Bration - Repeat

1:00 - 2:15 PM

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**Tammy Leslie
& Betty Morris**

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Late Afternoon Sessions

Krystal Zhang

Can't versus Won't: Supporting Apparent School Avoidance

2:30 - 3:45 PM

Regular school attendance is important to supporting social and academic growth. Learn how to support families and students that "can't" attend. This session reframes attendance from won't to can't and examines the challenges that some students face with school attendance. Discussion and problem-solving approaches to supporting your diverse learners and their ability to attend school.

Charity Neilson

Skill building through social emotional learning

2:30 - 3:45 PM

In this session we will look at social emotional learning programs available in our schools (Slumberkins and Little Spot specifically) and look at how utilizing these programs with students can be a consistent way to build skills such as emotional regulation, social skills, responsible decision making.

**Aimee Cormier &
Mary Anne Donovan**

Understanding Autism: Embracing Neurodiversity Affirming Principles

2:30 - 3:45 PM

In this informative session, participants will gain a deeper understanding of autism and neurodiversity, exploring how these concepts manifest in the classroom. The session will highlight the diverse characteristics of autism and emphasize the importance of adopting neurodiversity-affirming principles that celebrate the unique strengths of all learners.

**Carolyn Hovey-
Johnson**

Declarative Language - Repeat

2:30 - 3:45 PM

This presentation explores how the strategic use of descriptive and declarative language can significantly enhance communication and emotional regulation for students, including those with autism, executive functioning difficulties, anxiety, and behavioural challenges. Declarative language, which focuses on sharing information and thoughts without demanding an immediate response, encourages children to think, process, and engage more flexibly!

**Crsytal Gaede
& Nicole Lavallee**

The Brain Game!

2:30 - 3:45 PM

Learn in a fun and interactive session about how experiences in a child's early years impacts and changes their brain development.

Martha Mzvondiwa

Navigating Grief and Loss - Repeat

2:30 - 3:45 PM

The presentation will focus on how school staff can support children experiencing grief and loss. How to support children returning to school following a loss and recognizing that everyone grieves differently. The discussion will include resources and practical strategies to help school staff, support children.

Leah Montes

Use your Purple Puzzle Piece like a Pro - Repeat

2:30 - 3:45 PM

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**Angele Farn
& Fringina Mukaga**

What's Their Superpower? Identifying Student Strengths

2:30 - 3:45 PM

In this session, we will explore a strength-based approach to supporting students. We will delve into strategies to identify student strengths and explore ways to integrate a strength-based approach into our schools. Participants will gain an understanding of how to build meaningful connections with students by acknowledging and nurturing their abilities and creating supportive learning environments. Join us in celebrating the superpowers of all students!

**Tammy Leslie
& Betty Morris**

Oh, the Math Games You Will Know!

2:30 - 3:45 PM

As an Educational Assistant you are often tasked to work with students who require additional support and practice. This hands-on session will focus on building number sense and practicing skills through games. Ideas, tips and strategies will be shared including literature connections and interactive websites.

**Kathy Mykyte
& Sheila Knoot**

Language Growth with Pattern Books

2:30 - 3:45 PM

This session is designed to equip educators with effective strategies for embedding language and literacy learning throughout the day. Using repetitive pattern books as a springboard, participants will explore practical methods for implementing the TELL ME program, focusing on core vocabulary that forms the foundation for lifelong communication and learning.