



Children's Program

We believe in inclusion and reducing barriers to participation, so we offer a free, hands-on, engaging program for children of registered participants. This program is carefully designed for children ages 4-14 and is staffed by early childhood educators and/or qualified teachers. Opportunities to participate in both official languages are available.

This year's theme, *Supportive Environments for Child and Youth Mental Health: Our Shared Responsibility!*, will see the Children's Program parallel that of the adults. Children will participate in interactive activities based on social and emotional learning principles. The emphasis on positive mental health and its relationship to physical activity and the environment will be part of the fun as the children explore local Island culture, through art, music, games and nature walks!

We have delivered a Children's Program at 12 different Atlantic Summer Institute events, with rave reviews from the kids!

Coordinator

Karen MacDonald

Karen is a passionate, student-centered educator who continually seeks to improve student learning and to foster positive growth and development in her students. She has a Master's Degree in Literacy from Mount Saint Vincent's University (2007) and a Bachelor's Degree in Science (1977) and in Education (1983). Karen's teaching career has spanned across many years beginning in 1978 at the high school level and for the past twenty-eight years she has taught various grades at an elementary school. Through her teaching experiences, she has learned the importance of supporting not only the child academically but also their social and emotional growth. Karen's greatest joy in life comes from spending time with her husband, Jerry, their four children and six grandchildren.

Educators

Erin Acorn

Erin is a hardworking, enthusiastic, and kind educator who loves her job as a Kindergarten teacher. She works hard to educate her students not only academically but socially and emotionally. Erin has a Diploma in Early Childhood Education (1999), a Bachelor's Degree in Education (2013), a Degree in Child and Family Studies (2015), and is currently working on a Master's Degree in Literacy. Erin has been working as a Kindergarten teacher for the past 18 years, and she recognizes the importance of developing a positive classroom community that supports student learning. On her free time, she enjoys spending time with, two daughters, family, and friends.

Julie Arsenault

Julie grew up in a French Acadian community in the Evangeline region. That's where she fell in love with the culture by leaning music and acting, playing in different bands and theatre groups. She was very involved in her community growing up, playing lots of sports and being part of many committees. After getting her diploma for Counseling in Human Services as well as Early Childhood Education, she knew she had found her passion: connecting with people, hearing their stories and being part of their journey. She was later certified as a group fitness instructor and personal trainer. Thirteen years later, Julie is still working as a trainer and also works as an Educational Assistant with the French School Board. Her grandmother has had a big influence on Julie's positive attitude. *"There is good in everything and everyone, you just have to find it."* She loves to spend her spare time with friends and family. She loves to run, hike and surf, but also loves a nice quiet night watching a movie.