

# Brain development & the early years!

Join ARCQE in a new and exciting Professional Learning series facilitating conversations on Brain Development!

## ***What?***

ARCQE is pleased to announce the launch of a new exciting opportunity to meaningfully engage and dialogue as a community on the impact of brain development and educator practice relative to our interactions with young children! Through the generosity of the Palix Foundation and support of Mount Royal University, ARCQE was engaged as a partner in specialized Neuro-Science training aimed at enhancing educator understanding and knowledge about the importance of supporting early brain development. This work led to the development of a professional learning series which includes self-study module reflection supported by facilitated educator discussion on the following topics:

- Module 1:** The Core Story of Early Brain Development
- Module 2:** The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Module 3:** Adolescent Brain Development and Risk for Addictions
- Module 4:** Resilient Adaptation in the Face of Risk
- Module 5:** Paternal Engagement and Family Well-Being
- Module 6:** Co-parenting Perspectives

These on-line study modules have then been intentionally combined with two-hour facilitated dialogue led by skilled trainers intended to guide meaningful professional learning discussion groups with relevant case study scenarios and reflective questions that offer context for practice.

## ***How to participate?***

All sessions are offered as a blend of self-study (pre-reading theory modules) with facilitated discussion groups (reflective practice sessions). Educators interested in participating in a Brain Development discussion group have the option of professional learning community (PLC) engagement in one of the following formats:

- On-line:** Join a province-wide discussion group sharing educator perspectives with other professionals from learning communities all across Alberta (*on-line sessions can be done from the comfort of home or work, but necessitate computer and internet access to participate*).

**OR**

- In person:** Create your own group with colleagues from your own agency, or sign up for face-to-face sessions with members of the regional community in which you live and work.

Once PLCs are formed, a link will then be shared enabling participants time and opportunity to work through self-study modules (two at a time) and information independently over a two-week period, after which formalized facilitated discussion sessions will follow each segment of the

study modules information. (Times and length of facilitated discussion groups may vary according to format selected.)

### ***Training Outline:***

If interested in participating as part of a PLC group exploring impact of early brain development, please register at <http://arcqe.ca/events/#id=135&cid=1004&wid=201> to sign up for the format that works best to support your involvement (i.e. daytime, evening and/or weekend schedules). The time and participation commitment should you choose to become involved would be outlined as follows:

- A link to on-line Study Modules will be forwarded upon registration enabling access to the six on-line study modules. (Must have access to use of a computer, headsets and internet to obtain study modules information).
- Once you have identified interest in a particular group, in order to support effectiveness of group discussion, all participants must commit to completing readings as part of independent study (supporting theory) in advance of facilitated session timelines outlined for each specific PLC group session. (Typically participants will have 2-3 weeks intervals between sessions to permit time to review materials well in advance of discussion group sessions).
- Facilitated sessions are approximately 2 hours in length, depending on format selected and will be guided by two of ARCQE's neuro-science trainers aimed at supporting participant learning, understanding, and application of content through reflective discussion of case studies
- All groups will consist of only 8-12 participants in order to enhance participation and meaningful group dialogue!
- As learning group dialogue is scaffolded on prior readings and discussions participants must commit to participating in the full series and as such are not eligible to attend individual portions of the series as self-selected.

### ***PD Funding Information:***

Child Development Supervisors (CDS) will be able to apply for PLC funding for this professional learning opportunity, up to \$1,000 per year. Child Development Assistants (CDA) and Child Development Works (CDW) can access workshop PD funding, up to \$500 per year.

For more information and details, please visit <http://arcqe.ca/services/professional-development/>.

***“Professional development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice. Key components of professional development should include:***

- a. *Characteristics and contexts of learners (and those they serve- children & families).*
- b. *Content (what professionals should know and be able to do)*
- c. *Organization and facilitation of learning experiences (approaches, models, or methods used to support self-directed, experientially oriented learning that is highly relevant to practice)<sup>1</sup>.”*

<sup>1</sup> Vuyse, V., & Hollingsworth, H.L. (2009). Program Quality and Early Childhood Inclusion: Recommendations for Professional Development. Hammill Institute on Disabilities p. 119-128).