



Indigenizing Early Childhood Education in the Caribbean

**University of Guyana Early Childhood Care and Education, Turkeyen, Guyana
15th May 2026, 9:00h -16:00h**

Early childhood education practices, teacher training, research, policies, and ethical considerations in the Caribbean region are often rooted in, defined by, and shaped by the wholesale importation and implantation of knowledge systems from Europe and North America. These practices continue today in the formerly colonised Caribbean countries, often leading to the silencing and marginalisation of local epistemologies. This conference focuses on country-level attempts to decolonise and indigenize early childhood education in a few Caribbean countries by considering historical experiences, behaviours, belief systems, and cultural and religious practices of the diverse groups of people in the Caribbean.

PROGRAMME

- 9:30 Introductory Remarks:** Michelle Semple-McBean, Dean, Faculty of Education and Humanities, University of Guyana
- 9:35 Remarks:** Prof. Paloma Mohamed-Martin, Vice Chancellor, University of Guyana
- 9:40 Remarks:** Anna Azaryeva Valente, UNICEF's Representative Officer-in-Charge
- 9:45 Remarks:** Mischka White-Griffith, Chief Planning Officer, Minister of Education
- 10:00 Decolonising Early Childhood Education: Conceptual Frameworks:** Jaipaul L. Roopnarine, Department of Human Development and Family Science, Syracuse University, NY; Anton de Kom University of Suriname; University of Guyana
- 10:25 Indigenizing Early Care and Education: Centering Community in Research, Systems, and Practice:** Tandeca King, Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, Georgia
- 10:50 Mud Play Experiences: The University of Guyana Early Childhood Centre of Excellence:** Althea Edwards and Godryne Wintz, University of Guyana
- 11:15 Exploring ECD Curriculum Rigidity: A Guyanese Sociocultural Perspective:** Lidon Lashley, University of Guyana
- 11:40 This Covid Thing - You still can't even cough in peace (A Child's Perspective):** Maureen Philadelphia and Valissa Peters, University of Guyana
- 12:05 Lunch**
- 13:00 The Role of Assessment in Indigenizing ECE in the Caribbean:** Elizabeth Jaeger, University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas, UVI
- 13:25 Rooted in Place: Indigenizing Early Childhood Education Curriculum in Jamaica:** Suzette Kelly-Williams, Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri
- 13:50 ECD in Guyana – From Humble Beginnings to National Development:** Abeeda Ali, Ministry of Education, Guyana
- 14:15 ECD 2026 COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT
Promoting ECD opportunities for Indigenous Peoples: Advancing Guyana Education Sector Improvement Project - Indigenous Peoples Plan, 2017:** Zoyah Kinkead-Clark, UWI, Mona Campus, Jamaica
- 15:05 Building Partnerships, Extending Collaborations**