

WHO WE ARE

School of Early Childhood Studies

www.ryerson.ca/ecs

“ An *innovator* in care, education and services for young children and families. ”

Program courses link theory with field practice in a variety of child-care programs, centres, hospitals and other related settings.



The oldest undergraduate four-year degree program of its kind in Canada, Ryerson's School of Early Childhood Studies (ECS) has earned a strong reputation nationally for its focus on the growth and development of children from birth to age eight. In addition, the school offers a master of arts program in Early Childhood Studies. The only master's degree of its kind in North America, this program is recognized for producing graduates who fully understand issues related to diversity and inclusion.

A leader in establishing innovative partnerships locally, provincially, nationally and internationally.

- The school partners with the Toronto District School Board to place Year 3 students in first-grade classrooms, where they implement an early reading intervention program, improve children's literacy skills, and work with families, teachers and consultants.
- Through partnerships with Ontario colleges, many graduates of early childhood education (ECE) diploma programs enter Year 3 of Ryerson's School of ECS.
- The school has played a role in the transformation of Ontario's early childhood system by working with other universities and research centres to host many events on the implementation of full-day, early learning programs.
- Faculty and students from the University of Urawa in Japan visit the School of ECS each year to learn about Canadian family support programs.

Students graduate with an understanding of how to contribute to the well-being of Canadian children. The students' knowledge includes:

- Child development: analyzing the forces that shape children's development
- Curriculum planning: facilitating children's development through play
- Children at risk or with disabilities: focusing on early intervention and inclusive practice
- Research: investigating topics related to young children, families and the profession
- Families: supporting children and families from diverse backgrounds
- Field education: hands-on learning in a variety of settings, including Ryerson's award-winning laboratory school and family resource centre and the Adaptive Design Studio at Ryerson University's Experiential Design and Gaming Environment Lab.

Faculty **Spotlight**



ECS associate professor Kathryn Underwood received a Faculty of Community Services Scholarly, Research and Creative (SRC) Activity Award in recognition of her outstanding SRC achievements and their impact on her discipline. Specifically, Underwood led two research projects that examined services to support children and their families during the early years.

The first project, funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, explored parents' and families' perspectives of supports in three communities where the integration and co-ordination of early years services has been promoted by the province. Among the project's findings: parents value the interrelated goals of family support, and child and community development. Parents and families also recommended that programs continue to focus on families' needs by building on the social networks that exist in communities. Currently, Underwood is also leading a study that examines parents' perceptions of school-based Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, comparing these sites to community-based early years programs.

In a separate study, which involved mapping early intervention services across Ontario, Underwood found that supports for children with special developmental needs vary across the province. Specifically, there are differences in the following areas: which agencies and groups deliver services to children with special developmental needs; who receives those services; and how the services are funded. As a result of this variability, families and children have fewer choices of services in some regions of the province.

Alumni **Achievements**



Reilly Dow, ECS '12, was attracted to the School of ECS for one important reason: the program's holistic view of children and learning. As the owner of Pinkfish, a graphic recording company, Dow understands big-picture thinking – she uses her talents as a visual artist to organize the ideas presented in a range of meetings and brainstorming sessions, from corporate to non-profit. It's a skill that Dow hopes to put into practice by teaching visual arts to children. "My goal is to empower children in their learning, especially those who have special needs and who are at risk."



Ryan Campbell, BA-ECS '07 and MA-ECS '09, graduated from George Brown College's ECE diploma program and completed his undergraduate degree at Ryerson through part-time studies. He then went on to finish the master's program in ECS. Campbell has worked as a supervisor at both the University of Toronto's Early Learning Centre and the Macaulay Child Development Centre, and has been an ECE instructor at a number of post-secondary schools throughout Toronto. Today, he is a full-time faculty member in Humber College's ECE program.