Grand Ronde Head Start Staff Directory 2024-2025



Meet The Team



Dawn Doar Early Childhood Education Manager

Phone: 503-879-2287

Email: Dawn.doar@grandronde.org



Serving the Tribal Membership is the focus of my work. Always remembering who we are working for and how we can help the future generations.

I have a Master of Business degree and over 15 years of experience in management and operations. I have over four years of experience working in a Head Start program and learning more each day.



Shelley Clift Health and Nutrition Coordinator

I believe health is a vital part of a child's ability to learn and thrive. By connecting families with information and resources, I am proud to support families in making the best health decisions for their children. Bachelor of Science (BS) in Social Science from Western Oregon University Honors Program

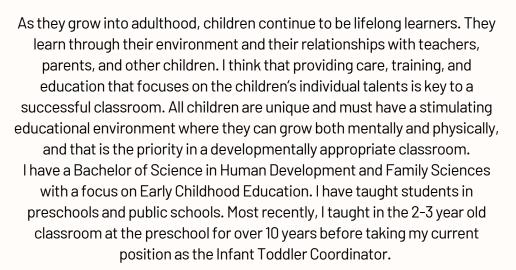
Master of Public Health (MPH) in Health Promotion & Education from Oregon State University

I have worked with families in the Grand Ronde community for over 20 years through programs including Healthy Start, WIC, and Children & Family Services. I have also served as a member of the Yamhill County Service Integration Team, Head Start Health Advisory Committee, and the Yamhill County Health Equity Workgroup.

> Phone: 503-879-2161 Email: Shelley.clift@grandronde.org



Melissa Phillips Infant Toddler Coordinator



Phone: 503-879-1433 Melissa.phillips@grandronde.org



Star nayka yaXal (my name is Star). I have been married since 2007 and we have a full household. I am a member of The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, my grandma's tribe, but I come from and did my best growing up in Klamath Falls, Klamath being my grandpa's tribe. I graduated high school at Klamath Union High School in 2005, from Central Oregon Community College with my Associate's in 2011, and from Eastern Oregon University with my Bachelor's in ECE with a Minor in Native American Studies in 2022. I opened my first in-home daycare in 2007 and, from there, have worked in numerous childcare, early education/preschools, Montessori, bilingual Spanish immersion, before and after school programs, and even summer programs with youth going into 5th and 6th grade (not to mention being the second are their child's first and most important teachers and advocates; and with that comes the blessing of being able to get to know and help raise the next generation of leaders. And there is no better place to do that than with my



Star Weatherall Inclusion Coordinator

early childcare/education settings, including center-based childcare, in-home oldest of 9). My family and I moved here in 2016 and I have been working at the Grand Ronde Head Start Preschool since August 2016. My whole life has been dedicated to taking care of others. My passion is supporting families who truly own people.

> Phone: 503-879-1413 Star.weatherall@grandronde.org



Tracy Howerton
Transportation and
Facilities Coordinator

I am passionate about mechanical detail and strive for value and performance. I do my best to get the most out of every dollar I spend.

I have an Associate's degree in Aviation Mechanics and Electronics. I've spent most of my career in technical and mechanical fields.

Phone: 503-879-2285
Tracy.howerton@grandronde.org



Amber Wright
ERSEA Coordinator

I strongly believe in developing positive and supportive relationships with children and their families, with the aim of empowering parents to become their children's primary and most significant educators. I understand that people have different learning styles and unique needs, and it is our responsibility to cater to each individual with a compassionate, considerate, and trauma-informed approach. I have been working for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde for more than 20 years now. In this period, I have been dividing my time between the Grand Ronde Head Start and the Social Services department. I have a Bachelor of Science in Social Science with a minor in Child, Youth, and Family Studies. My education and training have been primarily focused on early childhood development and working with adult learners

Phone: 503-879-1434
Email: Amber.wright@grandronde.org



Family and Community
Partnerships
Coordinator

My approach to working with adult learners includes home visiting, conducting needs assessments, and motivational interviewing. I collaborate with families to identify and support their goals while respecting their rights to selfdetermination. I provide information and referrals that can empower families to increase their economic mobility, self-reliance, and family well-being. My educational background is a Bachelor's degree in Community Crime Prevention with a minor degree in Legal Studies. I have college certificates in Supervision and Early Childhood Education Preschool. I have achieved Oregon Registry Step 10 certification with more than 1,556 training hours in the field of childhood care and education. My Qualified Mental Health Associate credential is under the taxonomies of counseling and case management. My career has spanned 20 years of experience working in community and human services, including 8 years' experience in leadership/program coordination roles and over 8 years of experience in Head Start/EHS programs. I have skills in resource information and referral, domestic violence advocacy, positive youth development, health promotion and outcome measurement and statistical reporting.

Phone: 503-879-2159
Email: Rebecca.ambrose@grandronde.org



Ashlee Webb Education Coordinator

My philosophy focuses on how important it is to have meaningful interactions with children. Ensuring you are giving them all your focus and asking them meaningful questions, so they feel listened to and supported in their areas of interest and their lives. Every interaction with a child results in neural development and increases their understanding of the world.

Education and background experience:

I have a bachelor's degree in human development and Family sciences from Oregon State University and a master's degree in child developmental psychology with focus on birth – five from Southern New Hampshire University. I have worked in ECE for 15 years in various roles both in and out of the classroom.

Phone: 503-879-2160 Email: Ashlee.webb@grandronde.org



Gianna Espinoza Administrative Assistant

I grew up in Central Oregon and have lived here with my Fiancé Logan Kneeland and 3 kids for 14 years. My oldest is Logan, middle is Ava, and youngest is Allen. We enjoy visiting family, barbequing, going to new parks, and arcades.

I have previously worked here at the Preschool in different roles; being a Substitute a few times, a Cook, and currently as the Admin Assistant. I have worked at the Willamina Elementary as a SPED 1 on 1 Assistant. I have my Paraprofessional Certificate. I have also worked at the Spirit Mountain Casino Lodge- Front Desk. I am happy that my heart brought me back to the Preschool! I believe that every child and family are unique and special in their own way. I take great pleasure in greeting everyone and making sure that everyone feels welcome into our Preschool.

Phone: 503-879-1430
Email: Gianna.espinoza@grandronde.org



Family Partnership
Specialist

Vacant



Jeff Versaw Social Emotional Coach

I believe that every child has a right to positive self-esteem and the opportunity for supportive social interactions. As a Child and Adolescent therapist, I believe in the power of play as a way to aid growth and that it offers children freedom of action to express their inner feelings.

Education: I have a Master in Social Work and have been licensed as a Clinical Social Worker for 20+ years. for most of that time, I've specialized in Play Therapy and Early Childhood Mental Health. I've been involved with Head Start/Early Head Start indirectly and directly for over 10 years.

Phone: 503-879-1405 Email: Jeffrey.versaw@grandronde.org



Sommer Bruckner Data Specialist

I have eight years of experience serving the community and the tribe. I became passionate about early childhood education after my husband and I started a family. At the moment, both of our children are enrolled in preschool. I have the honor of working as a data specialist while our young children are at preschool, learning and developing. I'm a better, more involved parent since I work at preschool. Not only do we educate the children as parents and teachers, but the children also educate us.

I'm currently enrolled in college to advance and attain some personal goals.

Email: Sommer.bruckner@grandronde.org



Teacher Jen Bus Driver

I'm teacher Jen, and I have been a preschool bus driver since 2017. I enjoy helping and providing safe transportation for our kids.

Sometimes, we are the first smiling adults that a student sees in the morning and the last ones that they see before they go home, which, I believe, can have a profound impact on a child.

Email: Jennifer.jerabek@grandronde.org



Heidi Whittington Bus Driver

I enjoy the bond that is built with the families and students over time. Helping keep the kids comfortable and safe on their ride home is a goal of mine.

I have over 15 years of school bus driving, and I love every minute of it.

"Among the things you can give and still keep is your word, a smile, and a grateful heart." ~ Winnie the Pooh

Email: Heidi.whittington@grandronde.org



Teacher Tammy Family Educator

My name is Tammy Fisher, and I am an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. I'm also a descendant of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (Tom/Riggs families) and the Salish Kootenai Tribes in Montana (Fisher/Pelletier families). When not at work, I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, weaving, beading, cooking, and attending sports events. I have worked with families in the Grand Ronde community for over 7 years. My journey in ECE began as an on-call sub/bus monitor, and in 2020, I became a Family Educator. As a Family Educator for the Confederated Tribes of Grand

Ronde, I believe in the value of the holistic approach to education for my students and families. By being aware of each family's unique dynamics and goals, I'm able to create a curriculum and make a plan that suits the individual needs of each child and family. I will provide an atmosphere of respect, trust and inclusion that allows everyone to feel comfortable and empowered. My aim is to include education, culture, community and family support to all families.





Teacher Tracy Family Educator

Over the past 20+ years, I've worked and volunteered for a variety of nonprofit programs serving children, youth, and families at Big Brothers Big Sisters, Camp Fire, Girl Scouts, YMCA, ARC, and a Chinese immersion school in direct service and administrative positions. I enjoy supporting families by creating positive, well-rounded activities, experiences, and resources.

My Bachelor of Science Degree is in Human Development and Family Sciences from Oregon State University with focuses in Early Childhood Education and Human Services.

Phone: 503-879-1361 Email: Tracy.haas@grandronde.org



Teacher Shawn Family Educator

I am very passionate about working with children and families. I hope to not only teach them but also learn from them. Every family brings something unique, and we always learn together. My goals are to ensure children's safety and build a trusting relationship with the family. My hope for families is that their early experiences prior to school make a foundation for learning and give parents the knowledge to advocate for their children and to be involved. I started my journey working with family and children in high school. I worked for a church childcare center in Willamina; I then got married and worked for 6 months in Simi Valley, CA., for Just for Kids Daycare; when we moved back to Oregon, I worked for Little Foot Daycare for 6 months. For the next 6 years, I had my licensed childcare unit in my home. I started volunteering for Grand Ronde Head Start in 2003, and then a year later, I was hired full-time, and I have been here for the last 20 years. I was a sub, an Assistant Teacher in the 3's class, a Chinuk language teacher's aide, and currently am an EHS home visitor. During my time at the tribe, I earned my associate's degree in early childhood education. I feel like I am working my dream job, and I will retire as a Teacher.

Phone: 503-879-2153

Email: Shawn.bobb@grandronde.org



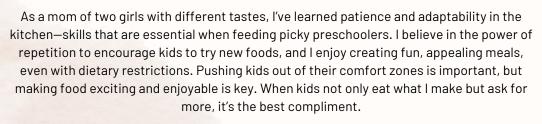
Teacher Jose Nutrition Services Supervisor

I have been in this position for 3 years and still learning CACFP Information. I have been in the culinary industry for 21 Years the first couple years started my junior year of high school washing dishes for Western Oregon University where it all began. Then proceeding on to Spirit Mountain Casino where I worked for a total of 6 years and started off washing dishes and then moved up to a prep cook position where I learned I was pretty good with a knife. Then moved up to the next position as short order cook working in delis and small kiosk from there I moved on to a full fledged line cook working in sports bars and buffets where I learn cooking in a large yield. I learned all I could working for the casino and strived for more knowledge in this awesome food world so I then moved on to fine dinning as a chef in training at the Allison Inn & Spa the restaurant name was Jory I spent 3yrs learning all this amazing knowledge about food then proceeded on to new opportunities. I then proceeded to open a food truck called Panino where I learned not to go into business with friends. I went on to work for SAGE dinning services as the Assistant Food Service Director, we were a contract dinning service for a private school where I then worked for 7 years before I came to my current position.

"Everything important I learned, I learned as a dishwasher" - Anthony Bourdain..

503-879-1924

Email: Jose.motano@grandronde.org



My passion for cooking started early, and by high school, I earned my Culinary Arts
Certificate through a two-year Pro Start program. I was part of the school's catering team
and gained hands-on kitchen experience, eventually working for Olympic gold medalist
Chef Richard Burr at Spirit Mountain Casino. After earning a lead cook position, I thrived in
experimenting with new dishes and flavors. After eight years in the professional kitchen, I
left to focus on motherhood, which has been the ultimate challenge in adaptability. I've also
embraced the nutritional side of cooking, showing that healthy food can be delicious. I
continue to grow and learn, both from my team and my toughest critics—my kids.



Teacher Caitlyn Cook



Hello, my name is Chantel, and I am the prep cook/dishwasher at early childhood education. I make sure that all food service equipment is clean and sanitized, I also assist preparing and cooking the children's meals and snacks. I love to help provide healthy meals for the young community.

Teacher Chantel Prep/Dishwasher

Email: Chantel.Grefsrud@grandronde.org



I am a hardworking teacher who loves interacting and engaging with children. I believe having a calm mind and being flexible and caring help create an environment where children can learn and grow!

I am currently working towards a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and have over 8 years of experience working with children in various educational settings.

Teacher Josh Lead Teacher

Email: Joshua.biery@grandronde.org



My teaching approach is to provide a safe, creative environment for our students. My focus is on creating a supportive and engaging environment in the classroom, a safe space for the students to learn and express themselves. I am motivated by our students and enjoy watching them learn and grow.

I am enrolled in an ECE associate degree program and have been working at this Preschool for about a year and a half.

Teacher Maddy Assistant Teacher

Email: Madison.aaron@grandronde.org



Teacher Pimm Teacher's Aide

My teaching approach is providing a safe creative environment for our students. My focus is to provide a supportive and engaging environment in the classroom to provide a safe space for the students to learn and express themselves. I am motivated by our student and enjoy watching them learn and grow.

I am enrolled in an ECE associate degree program and have been working at this Preschool for about a year and a half.

Email: Lena.nelson@grandronde.org



Teacher Lana Teacher's Aide

My name is Teacher Cora, and I believe in a warm, welcoming embrace for each student. I always try to smile and take a gentle approach.

It is crucial to foster learning through play and communication.

Words of encouragement can go a long way.

Email: Cora.gleason@grandronde.org



I am a creative and compassionate preschool teacher with a passion for working with young children and helping them grow. I enjoy working with children to foster independence and social/emotional skills. I strive for a classroom where children can feel safe and welcomed every day.

I have 9 years of experience working at the preschool, and am currently working toward my bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education.

Teacher Holly Lead Teacher

Email: Holly.marler@grandronde.org



Teacher Liz Assistant Teacher

My name is Teacher Liz, and I began working at this preschool in 2022 as a substitute teacher before moving on to the Pre-K classroom as a teacher's assistant. In order to help kids develop good habits at school that carry over into their homes, I support a lighter and fun approach to teaching and learning. I value, accept, and treat our students with respect at all times.

Email: Elizabeth.atanacio@grandronde.org



Teacher Wendy Teacher's Aide

I graduated from Willamina high school in 2004. I have 20 years in childcare experience and have worked here as an aide at the preschool for the last 9 years. I'm a caregiver by nature and truly enjoy working with children.

Email: Wendy.mercier@grandronde.org



Teacher Bradly Teacher's Aide

I'm teacher Bradly, and I've been a teacher's assistant at the preschool for the past two years. Together, my wife Caitlyn, who works at the preschool, and I have two daughters who attend school here.

My strategy is to make ensure that all of our kids are safe and included while fostering an environment that allows them to develop socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

Email: Bradly.robertson@grandronde.org



Teacher Jessica Lead Teacher

I have a passion for making time for the children while they are at school, for safe, fun, and hands-on learning, and for providing an environment that both children and families feel comfortable and excited about.

I have a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from Western Oregon University with an infant and toddler certificate. I have had the privilege of working for the education department at the Tribe for 19 years and opened the Kwiskiws class in 2010, where I am still a teacher.

Email: Jessica.cruickshank@grandronde.org



Teacher Emma Lead Teacher

I have a passion for working with young children that I discovered at an early age. I believe in creating a loving, inclusive, and safe space to allow children to learn and grow. I enjoy working with each and every child that comes into my classroom. I am one of the first teachers a child has so I strive to form relationships that promote development and foster skills for children to become lifelong learners.

I earned a bachelor's degree for Early Childhood Education in June of 2022. I completed a year of student teaching my final year of school while also working as a substitute at the preschool. I was hired as a head teacher shortly after graduating. Previous to that, I worked as a private nanny for three years.

Email: Emma.hill@grandronde.org



Teacher Roxanne Teacher's Aide

I am a passionate preschool teacher/educator who enjoys helping to improve knowledge and skills to effectively engage with students to improve their learning.

I have my associates in Early Childhood Education and have over 22 years of experience working with children.

Email: Roxanne.moniz@grandronde.org



Teacher Betty Lead Teacher

My name is Betty. I am a proud Grand Ronde Tribal member, a fellow program parent and a lead teacher in the Shwiqhiq classroom. This is my 3rd year at the Preschool 2nd year in which I have spent in the Shwiqhiq classroom. I love what I do and I look forward to building strong relationships with all our families!

Hiyu masi for trusting us with your children.

Email: Betty.hoopingarner@grandronde.org



Teacher Cassidy Lead Teacher

Teaching Philosophy and Approach: I am a caring and creative preschool teacher passionate about working with young children. I can help each child grow into their own person by instilling positivity and love. I strive to create a warm, welcoming, and inclusive classroom environment where children can explore, learn, and have fun.

I am working towards a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and have over 5 years of experience working with children in various educational settings.

Email: Cassidy.castillo@grandronde.org



Teacher Miranda Lead teacher

The first lead teacher I worked with at this school used to tell me and our class something that's become my favorite thing to say to the kids I work with: "You can do hard things." Everything we say to children shapes the inner voice that will guide them for the rest of their lives. I believe in the power of shifting our language to create environments that inspire confidence in their capabilities and safety to be their most authentic selves.

Since 2017, I've worked with children in various roles within Head Start, the Chinuk Wawa Language Nest, and Children & Family Services. I have worked for center- and home-based programs, and the ages of kids I've worked with range from 0-18.

Email: Miranda.ellis@grandronde.org



Teacher Sara Teacher's Aid

Hi, I'm Sara Lafferty, and I work as a teacher's aid in the Shwiqhiq class. I used to be a program's parent. I worked as a substitute teacher before landing a full-time job in the Shwiqhiq classroom.

I approach learning with the understanding that every child is unique. I'm mindful of each child's needs, interests, and abilities.

Email: Sara.lafferty@grandronde.org



Teacher Frankie Teacher Assistant

My goal as a teacher is to provide a warm, welcoming, inclusive environment for all children while meeting their needs where they are, upholding teacher-family relationships, and offering support and resources when available. My passion is to aid in meeting the developmental needs of each child in my care.

I got my high school diploma from Sheridan AllPrep Academy. I completed the Chemeketa Cohort Program and earned an ECE infant/toddler certificate. I am currently dual enrolled in Chemeketa Community College and Western Oregon University, studying early intervention.

Email: Isabelle.grout@grandronde.org



Teacher Kristen Aftercare Educator

My name is Kristen Latham. I am a mother of 6 and grandmother of 5. I have worked as a foster parent, a cheer coach, and a manager at DQ. I have my associate's degree. I love to go to concerts and thrift shops in my spare time.

My teaching philosophy is to provide a safe and inclusive environment where all children feel welcomed and safe to grow.

I have an associate's degree in General Studies.

Email: Kristen. Latham@grandronde.org



Teacher Shyanne Teacher's Aide

My teaching approach is providing a safe creative environment for our students. My focus is providing a supportive and engaging environment in the classroom to provide a safe space for the student to learn and express themselves. I am motivated by our student and enjoy watching them learn and grow.

I am enrolled in an associates degree program and have been working at this Preschool for about a year and a half.

Email: Shyanne.frank@grandronde.org



Teacher Griselda Lead Teacher

My name is Griselda Perez, and I am an infant toddler teacher at Head Start. I have been working at the Head Start, holding different positions for 8 years. I have been an on-call sub, assistant, and now lead teacher. I am getting ready to finish my Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education in a few more terms. Every day is a new opportunity for children to learn and try new things. My goal is to offer a welcoming, nurturing learning environment where children have opportunities to succeed. I would like parents to feel welcomed and respected coming into the classroom. The door is always open, and we value all families.

Email: Griselda.perez@grandronde.org



Teacher Ashley Lead Teacher

My name is Ashley, and I believe the best way to educate is to recognize each child's unique learning preferences and create an individualized educational setting. I like to take an active role in learning through engagement experiences. I think that meaningful play is the best way for kids to learn.

I have an associate's degree in Elementary education.

Email: Ashley.sheron@grandronde.org



Teacher Hannah Lead Teacher I am a lead teacher in the Kwenat classroom and have worked at the preschool for over three years. My role as a teacher is to guide my students to reach their developmental milestones and work towards individual goals aimed at helping them succeed.

I have received my CDA and am currently taking classes to obtain a degree in early childhood education.

Email: Hannah.nice@grandronde.org



Teacher McKenzie Teacher's Aide My name is Teacher McKenzie, and I am a Teacher's aide in the Shayim class. My approach to teaching is to provide emotional support and implement learning in our students. I also provide positive reinforcement to help the children develop their skills. I enjoy being a teacher and a part of our Preschool Program.

Email: Mckenzie.alvarez@grandronde.org



Teacher Shawna Administration Staff I am a highly enthusiastic and creative teacher/admin staff with a passion for nurturing young minds. I enjoy helping and watching them grow as individual children.

When my children were younger, I ran my own daycare for 3 years, with ages ranging from 6 weeks to 10 years old.

Email: Shawna.freeman@grandronde.org



community to bring consistency, diligence, and warmth to my job in the hope that I can inspire and encourage such traits in the children as well.

I have been working with children in various educational

I aim to bring an open mind and positive attitude to the classroom daily. I believe that I owe it to the children and the

I have been working with children in various educational settings for 14 years. 6 of those years have been at the Tribe's Head Start Program.

Teacher Krystal Substitute Teacher

Email: Krystal.king@grandronde.org



My name is Shantell, and I have worked at this Preschool since 2018. My teaching Philosophy and approach is to be a consistent, calm, and safe teacher for our students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is bright and secure because every child deserves that in their lives.

I am enrolled in an ECE associate program and have years of experience working with the youth

Teacher Shantell Substitute Teacher

Email: Shantell.ulestad@grandronde.org



My style of teaching is to provide a warm and welcoming approach to all the children. I believe that every child should have a safe, inclusive environment to be themselves. I truly believe that when children learn, the best is when they are included and having fun.

I love working at the preschool and watching the children grow every day.

Angela Combs Substitute Teacher

Email: Angela.combs@grandronde.org



I believe every child is unique and special in their own way. I think that children grow the best when they are supported and given a strong environment of belonging to express themselves. It is essential to let these children know they are safe and supported.

I love being a substitute teacher here at the Preschool. The children bring so much joy to my life.

Teacher Aleah Teacher's Aide

Email: Aleah.patterson@grandronde.org



Bethani Owen Teacher's Aide

Teaching Philosophy & Approach:

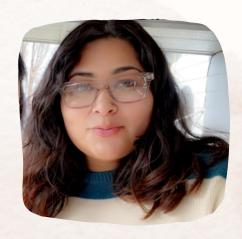
I'm an enthusiastic educator who wants to nurture young minds and to help them grow in every aspect of their lives. Give them the support and resources to be successful. Also help them work together and share their ideas, so they learn from each other.

Education & Background Experience:

I have been working on getting my associates in Early childhood education for a little while now and plan to finish in the near future.

I have about 10+ years of experience in childhood education starting from infant all the way up to school age children.

Email: Bethani.Owen@grandronde.org



Lana Townsend Teacher's Aide I provide a safe environment, open communication, and promote creativity.

MY teaching style is helping our students through play based learning that allows our students to explore, create, and problem solve. Play and interaction is a natural way for students to learn about themselves, their friends, and the world around them.

Email: Lana.townsend@grandronde.org



Maria Ramiraz Substitute Teacher I strive to be a supportive and kind teacher. I evoke social and creative experiences for the students. I'm happy to be in a program that inspires young learners and it is great to be a part of that.

I will be enrolling in school and working towards obtaining an associate degree.

Email: Maria.ramirez@grandronde.org



Micah Rogers Substitute Teacher My approach is to take the time to get to know the students individually to be the teacher they need me to be. Also, it provides a safe and nurturing teaching style and environment for the children to expressive themselves. I enjoy being a teacher at the preschool!

I really enjoy being a part of their learning experience.

Email: Micah.rogers@grandronde.org



Teacher Kacee Substitute Teacher For the past 25 years I've been passionate about providing holistic, healing-centered, support to children and families overcoming adverse life experiences.

Currently, I'm working on continuing education within ECE.

But I had my start in 1999 at CTGR Early Childhood

Education.

Email: Kacee.eltrich@grandronde.org