



**elevate**  
EARLY EDUCATION CONFERENCE

## Shaping Practice Through Connection, Resilience, and Inclusion

ONLINE ● TUE, 1 APR 2025 ● 9.15AM - 4:30PM

# program

Our popular annual 1-day online conference brings together thought leaders and educators to inspire transformative change in early childhood education.

TUESDAY, 1 APRIL 2025 ● 9.15AM - 4:30PM

9.15 - 9.30AM

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

**Michele Carnegie**  
CEO, CELA

9.30 - 10.30AM

### Introducing Infant and Toddler Play from a Piklerian Perspective

Infant, toddler and early childhood specialist and advocate Katherine Bussey introduces key concepts about infant and toddler play from a Piklerian perspective. She will explore how self-directed play with open-ended resources fosters fine and gross motor skill development, active thinking, and problem-solving.

**Dr Katherine Bussey**  
Research Fellow,  
Deakin University,  
School of Education

10.30 - 10.45AM

Break

10.45 - 11.45AM

### Anxiety and Resilience in Under 5s

In this engaging, highly practical session with trusted Child Psychiatrist Dr Kaylene Henderson, you will gain practical approaches that can be easily incorporated into your daily interactions and routines to foster greater support for anxiety and enhanced resilience among the children (and families) you work with.

**Dr Kaylene Henderson**  
Child Psychiatrist

11.45AM - 12PM

Break

12.00 - 1.00PM

### Connecting Through Culture

Highly regarded Cultural Competency Specialist Jie Pittman explores Aboriginal cultural practices and perspectives, including connection to Country, kinship systems, and principles of belonging and identity. This session includes a keynote presentation, an in-depth conversation hosted by CELA Early Education Specialist Guita Badoui, and an interactive Q&A.

**Jie Pittman,**  
Indigenous Leader  
and Cultural  
Competency  
Specialist

1.00 - 2.00PM

Break

2.00 - 3.00PM

### Embracing Difference – Neuroaffirming Practice in Education and Care

Explore the transformative power of neuroaffirming practices in early education. Reflect on the historical roots of standardised education and discover strategies to celebrate the strengths of every child.

**Jen Boddy**  
Early Education  
Specialist

3.00 - 3.15PM

Break

3.15 - 4.30PM

### Brain to Brain – The Neuroscience of Calm, Connection and Co/Self-Regulation

Karen Young explores the neuroscience behind self-regulation and its impact on behaviour, learning, and relationships. Gain practical, science-backed strategies to manage stress and maintain calm amidst challenges.

**Karen Young**  
Psychologist, Child  
and Adolescent  
Anxiety Specialist

## MEET THE FACILITATORS

### DR KATHERINE BUSSEY

Research Fellow, Deakin University,  
School of Education

Dr Katherine Bussey is an infant and toddler specialist and Pikler® pedagogue originally from Aotearoa New Zealand, living in Melbourne, Australia. Katherine is a strong advocate for infants and toddlers, having spent the last 24 years actively engaging in international infant and toddler professional learning and developing practice in early childhood education based on the Pikler® approach.

Katherine mentors, consults and provides professional learning and development to educators and infant and toddler teams by helping them engage in inspiring critical reflection, learning and growth.



### DR KAYLENE HENDERSON

Child Psychiatrist

Dr Kaylene Henderson is a medically trained child health specialist and one of Australia's leading parenting experts. She is also a grateful mother of three zany young kids.

Popular for sharing her expertise in a warm and relatable way, Kaylene has created a range of resources for educators and parents that provide helpful, expert advice through training, articles and speaker events.

Kaylene is passionate about 'translating' research-based information into practical tips and sharing these with you – parents and educators – since you're the ones who spend the most amount of time with our next generation!



### JIE PITTMAN

Indigenous Leader and  
Cultural Competency Specialist

Jie Pittman draws from cultural roots spanning the Darug, Yuin, Wiradjuri, Ngemba, and Kooma nations. His cultural competence and commitment to learning from Elders make him exceptionally qualified to bring authenticity and expertise.

Raised in Blacktown, in Sydney's western suburbs, Jie's upbringing is intricately intertwined with the cultural heritage of Sydney's fresh and salt waters. With over two decades of experience in film, television, education, and training, Jie brings a wealth of knowledge and insight to his endeavours.

Jie's goal is to promote unity among all First Nations, cultures, and religions by creating an inclusive environment that encourages individuals and groups to embrace diversity.



### KAREN YOUNG

Psychologist, Child and  
Adolescent Anxiety Specialist

Karen began her career as a psychologist in private practice and is now recognised as a leading authority on child and adolescent anxiety. She has worked extensively with children, teens, and families, and in educational and organisational settings.

Karen created Hey Sigmund, an internationally popular online resource, to provide contemporary, research-driven information on the art of being human, and being with humans. She is also the author of five books, including the bestselling 'Hey Warrior' and 'Hey Awesome', which creatively assist children to understand and manage anxiety, and build the capacity for self-regulation.

It is through her work with children, teens, and families that she learned the power of solid information when it is placed in the solid, loving hands of parents or any important person in a child's world.



### JEN BODDY

Early Education Specialist

Jen is a skilled practitioner whose thoughtful and empathetic style inspires educators and leaders to think differently. As a support facilitator with ACECQA and a CELA early education specialist, she has worked with leadership teams across NSW to deepen reflective practice and enhance quality for children and families. A passionate advocate for children's rights, Jen champions inclusive practice as the heart of both education and care.

At Elevate this year, Jen will present 'Embracing difference: Neuroaffirming practice in education and care'. Drawing on professional expertise and lived experience, she will highlight how the legacy of standardised education and the myth of 'normal' continues to shape how we respond to difference. This session offers an opportunity to deepen your understanding of neurodiversity and identify your next steps in implementing neuroaffirming practice so that every learner at your service can feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.



**FIND OUT MORE AND BOOK:**  
[www.cela.org.au/elevate-conference-2025](http://www.cela.org.au/elevate-conference-2025)



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