Faculty of Education

An Extraordinary Opportunity to Develop Leaders, Ignite Discovery and Invest in the Future
At the Faculty of Education, we know today’s children are tomorrow’s leaders, and see it as our moral imperative to nurture our children so that they may thrive.

Through our research, teaching, and service, we work to strengthen education and schools; powerful forces in counteracting the social inequities that threaten the well-being of children, families, and communities.

Our partnerships take us beyond Western’s gates to the frontlines of our communities to address challenges and drive solutions that help our most vulnerable children to succeed.

With support from our forward-thinking alumni and friends, we can broaden our reach, further utilize our expertise and ensure a brighter future for all children around the world.

We think that’s extraordinary.
Invest in the Future

A Commitment to Children, Families and Communities

Develop Leaders
At the Faculty of Education, we develop leaders on multiple levels—from our undergraduate, graduate and continuing education students, to the countless children and youth that they in turn go on to influence throughout their careers in teaching, policy development and government.

We are proud to develop the next generation of teachers, administrators, psychologists and researchers and to instill a passion to provide services that result in healthy, thriving children and families.

As part of Western’s overall strategic plan to achieve excellence on the world stage, we are confident that our graduates will be global citizens whose education and leadership will serve the public good, as they advocate for a just society in which the needs of all people are more fully met.

Ignite Discovery
Ethical, evidence-based research is central to our mission to develop leaders and our vision of a world where every child has the opportunity to flourish. Our faculty researchers serve as “capacity-building” agents who exchange ideas and share their findings with child development professionals, while also imparting relevant knowledge to our students through state-of-the-art curriculum development and meaningful experiential learning opportunities.

Invest in the Future
It is often said the world’s future rests with our children and youth. No one understands this better than our alumni and community partners who bear regular witness to the needs and gaps within our society.

Through Be Extraordinary, Western’s most ambitious fundraising campaign to date, we are seeking support for the Mary J. Wright Research and Education Centre at Merrymount - a unique hub dedicated to advancing early childhood research and interventions.

We invite you to learn more and to consider investing in children, and a better future for all.
Mary J. Wright Research and Education Centre at Merrymount

Helping All Children To Thrive

Advancing Early Childhood Research and Interventions

Mary J. Wright was a pioneer and visionary in the field of child psychology. Western is proud to carry on her vision of nurturing children and helping them to thrive and flourish through the creation of the Mary J. Wright Research and Education Centre at Merrymount.

This unique Centre will drive state-of-the-art interdisciplinary research that examines factors impacting early childhood development, with the goal of fostering the health and wellbeing of society’s most vulnerable children, and enhancing outcomes for all children.

The Centre will be housed at the Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre, allowing our researchers to test their theories and gauge the results of their interventions immediately. Overseen by Western’s Faculty of Education, the Centre will:

- Lead to more advanced understandings of the relationship between childhood neurodevelopment and psychosocial factors;
- Foster the development of evidence-based prevention, promotion, and treatment programs for children and families;
- Bring evidence-based practices directly to the community;
- Allow researchers to share their findings and educate professionals who deliver children’s services in other communities, nationally, and internationally;
- Nurture the next generation of childhood professionals through active involvement of Western students in internships and practicum placements in the community setting.

Driving Transdisciplinary, Evidence-based Research

The Centre will be composed of an interdisciplinary team of basic and applied researchers from Western’s faculties of education, science, social science and health sciences, who will work collaboratively across three signature areas of research:

- Environmental effects on brain development – toxic stress
- Cognition, language, literacy and numeracy
- Social, emotional and behavioural resiliency and wellbeing

“By generating new knowledge from research in areas such as cognition and brain development, and using that knowledge to develop interventions and programs designed to help children, we will be able to make an extraordinary difference in the lives of not only children, but their families and communities as well.”

- Vicki Schwean,
  Dean, Faculty of Education
Extraordinary Impact

Fostering the Health and Wellbeing of the Next Generation
The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. Our researchers are committed to providing better outcomes for children by integrating an enhanced understanding of child development gained through basic research into evidence-based early childhood education and intervention programs and initiatives. This could have an extraordinary impact on Canada’s social and economic future.

Developing Early Childhood Researchers and Professionals
The Centre will help us to develop and maintain programs of services and supports for the next generation of researchers, scholars, and professionals.

- Graduate and postdoctoral students will benefit from collaborative research and publication opportunities, professional development, service learning, practicum, and internship programs.
- Undergraduates will be provided research opportunities in early child development through real-world child- and family-related projects.

Building Capacity, Ensuring Sustainability
The striking shortage of well-trained personnel in the field of early childhood education indicates that substantial investments in training, recruiting, compensating, and retaining a high quality workforce must become a top priority. Our Centre seeks to be both a local and national source of capacity building in knowledge of early child development and to foster and develop evidence-based early intervention and education practices.

Help Us Ensure the Most Vulnerable Children Thrive
Researchers within the Centre are fully funded. However, to support their work, share their findings and train our students, we need your help. We invite our alumni and friends to consider a gift in support of:

- Leadership: capacity building, community development, management of transdisciplinary research programs
- Research: publication costs, travel, workshop fees
- Students: internships, placements and research awards
- Knowledge translation and dissemination: named symposiums, seminar series and training programs

We would be pleased to discuss details of these initiatives in further detail. Thank you for your consideration.

Signatures Areas of Research

Toxic Stress
Children who are exposed to traumatic circumstances in the perinatal period are prone to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health. We will investigate the impact of early adversity on brain functioning and develop interventions to help prevent these children from developing lifelong disabilities.

Cognition, Language, Literacy and Numeracy
The development of interventions for learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, has been hampered by the variable nature of the disabilities, and the ways they can affect individual children. Our world-renowned cognitive neuroscience researchers will study the cognitive processes that support children’s learning, and examine the key mechanisms associated with emerging, established and delayed skills in language, reading and math.

Social, Emotional and Behavioral Resiliency and Well-Being
We will explore the cause and frequency of mental health problems in young children, and develop and evaluate tailor-made early childhood assessment measures and intervention programs to enhance mental health outcomes for children. Our studies will also focus on the role of individual differences in the development of psychological health and well-being in young children.

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