

2016 Friends of Children Recipient

Mary Beth Jonz is the 2016 CAYC Friends of Children recipient. She is recognized for her contribution to the well-being of young children in leading others with a vision where all children thrive. Her voice has been heard at many forums, in many ways, asking hard questions, opening dialogue on the pedagogical issues of the day, encouraging others to have a say, advocating when needed and supporting those in roles with children and families. Mary Beth has made a difference in many lives!



Mary Beth's ability to build relationships through respectful conversations, listen at every opportunity to the stories of administrators, leaders, other system managers, those who support the system, educators, families and children, gave her the strength to influence the day to day lives of all involved, both locally and in the greater Ontario community of early childhood education.

In a leadership role, Mary Beth inspired others to achieve greatness. In her role as Director of Children's Services, Mary Beth contributed to the development of an Ontario provincial early years system that championed high quality supports for children and families. Her contribution to many numerous initiatives, including the Ministry of Education's transformational journey was exemplary. As one of her many achievements, Mary Beth co-chaired, and championed a Ministry of Education advisory group responsible for the implementation of full-day kindergarten and the transfer of child care and family support programs from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education. Her commitment to children and their families had a significant impact over the 5 year roll-out.

Mary Beth's approach was always firmly rooted in partnerships. She has made significant contributions to the early years sector and in supporting provincial initiatives toward Ontario's vision of a seamless, integrated, high-quality and accessible system of early years and child care programs. Her contributions helped shape the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 as well as a number of key regulations and policies to support high-quality programming, before and after school programs for children and the fundamental role that service system managers play in the sector. Retiring in 2016, Mary Beth's legacy in Ontario as a champion for young children and families will be remembered and celebrated.