



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

University of Winnipeg Strategic Pillars

The TOYBOX training project aligns with The University of Winnipeg's Strategic Priorities, as outlined below.

Pillar 1: Academic Excellence.

The project involves learning about the best evidence-based educational practices to ensure children have access to early learning opportunities. This project will inform teaching practices in Developmental Studies and set an example of providing training based on pedagogical practices grounded in research and theory.



Pillar 2: Partnering Research.

This research is situated within the Canadian AIM partnership through collaborations with the TOYBOX project (see AIMCollective.ca). Additionally, we work with early childhood educators who have graduated from our program and have a substantial experience-base across the Manitoban child care sector. TOYBOX has a known track record for working with community partners, and the field is desperate to develop and offer professional development opportunities for child care staff. This PD training situates UW at the cutting edge of researcher-practitioner praxis.



Pillar 3: Indigenous Engagement.

This research will be conducted in the core area of Winnipeg and around Manitoba to support the early learning and childcare sector in these areas with high Indigenous representation. Makoonsag Daycare has successfully participated in TOYBOX research previously, and a meeting with Thompson educators revealed an undying need for northern training opportunities. Opportunities will connect TOYBOX to these vulnerable communities as we build our project. This work will establish a path for further Indigenous engagement.



Pillar 4: Community.

TOYBOX has developed a trusted relationship with communities across Manitoba. As Honorary Doctor of Laws recipient Rhonda Elias-Penner noted at the Arts Convocation June 2026: "Showing up matters and restores someone's dignity." TOYBOX involves communities in reciprocal dialogue about best practices of raising children. The team learns about local perspectives and links them to research and curriculum.

Pillar 5: Building Local Impact.

A TOYBOX goal is to become the sought-out training model for supporting excellence in early childhood education across Manitoba and beyond. We hope the positive experiences of current and former students will forward our passion about young children through word-of-mouth. These options allow people to stay connected with UW or become reconnected with UW through partnership or individual membership with TOYBOX. Everyone works with the community team to build local early childhood learning opportunities. Our recent engagement at the Teddy Bear Picnic showcased materials made in Manitoba, for Manitobans.