

ETFO hosts *Putting Young Minds First* Symposium on student mental health

For Immediate Release – April 20, 2026

TORONTO, ON – The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) will be holding *Putting Young Minds First: An ETFO Symposium on Student Mental Health*, a gathering of 150 participants focused on strengthening collaboration to support student well-being.

The full-day symposium offers media an opportunity to hear directly from experts and stakeholders about the changing landscape of student mental health. The program will feature presentations, panel discussions, and small-group sessions organized around the three tiers of mental health support in schools:

- mental health promotion for all students
- prevention and early services in partnership with mental health professionals
- specialized and intensive supports for students with complex needs

WHEN: Thursday, April 23, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

WHO: ETFO President David Mastin will be joined by ETFO educators and representatives from partner organizations, including:

- Dr. Michele Locke, a registered clinical psychologist specializing in children, adolescents, and parenting
- Irwin Elman, Ontario's first independent child advocate, president of Defence for Children International - Canada, and Order of Canada recipient
- education advocacy groups
- parents and caregivers
- federal and provincial unions and federations
- school board and professional associations
- provincial government representatives
- trustees

WHERE: Delta Hotels Toronto Airport Conference Centre, 655 Dixon Rd.

[ETFO](#) represents approximately 84,000 members, including public elementary teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators, education support personnel, and professional support personnel. Visit [BuildingBetterSchools.ca](https://www.buildingbetterschools.ca).

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ETFO Media Relations: Carla Pereira | 416-962-3836 ext. 2332 | cpereira@etfo.org