

Visit the ECCDC to Experience an Interactive Dramatic Play Centre



The ECCDC invites the community to enter a **Cane Den** where they can **Mess About** with authentic resources in an innovative **Dramatic Play Centre**.

Messing About is a process in which educators have an opportunity to explore, try out, and experience materials before they offer them to children.

Whilst **Messing About** in the **Dramatic Play Centre**, there will be opportunities available to engage in reflective conversations utilizing **A Thinking Lens® for Reflection and Inquiry** developed by Harvest Resources Associates. To support you in this process, the Dramatic Play Centre includes prompts to focus one's attention on four specific areas in which to Mess About, and with each prompt there is a reflective question(s).

There will also be an opportunity to participate in an interactive evaluation activity and **as an evaluation participant you will be entered to win the Cane Den for your centre!**

Messing About Cozy Area

- What learning experiences could you create for children like this?

Messing About Loose Parts

- Do you have any hesitations about having loose parts in your early learning environment?
- How would having loose parts in your early learning environment support the children's open ended explorations?

Messing About Art Prints

- What do you see in the prints?
- How do the prints make you feel?
- In what ways could you incorporate artwork into your own early learning environment?

Messing About China Tea Cups

- Do you have any hesitation incorporating china and other more delicate breakable materials in your early learning environment?
- How might you overcome your hesitation in order to introduce more delicate breakable items in your early learning environment?

The Dramatic Play Centre was developed by the ECCDC's Coaching and Mentoring Services Team to support educators on their emergent journeys.

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Visit the ECCDC's Learning Café, at 3340 Schmon Parkway in Thorold, to see this innovative space and ask to speak to Ginette or Patricia regarding unique suggestions for your early learning environment, to request a program visit, or obtain flyers to continue the conversation with your team.

Thank you to Cathy Elliott and Louise Kool & Galt for making the furniture and some accessories available for the centre. For further information regarding Louise Kool & Galt products, visit www.louisekool.com or contact Cathy Elliott at celliott@louisekool.com.

The Cane Den Journey

After much discussion about what to design next for the ECCDC's Learning Café Resource Highlight, it was decided a dramatic play centre would be created.

We began by reflecting on what to include, how we would arrange the materials, and whether or not the highlight would generate interest. The team didn't know the answers to these questions but they were excited to take a chance to see what would happen.

The structure was ready to go but we were unsure of what to include in the structure so that educators would be drawn in to mess about, explore, and reflect on what they saw.

We selected many resources from Louise Kool & Galt and a new idea of a Cane Den was chosen to house the highlight area.

The day came where boxes were opened, furniture was assembled, the cane den was built, loose parts were added, and reflective questions were posted. The team stood back and discussions began on how the space made them feel. Staff spoke of how they would have loved a space like this when they were younger, and how children would enjoy having tea in a cane den. Finally we wondered what our ECCDC members were going to say.

Through reading the highlight book, we soon learned what our members were thinking.

Lori Brady said *"There is certainly much attention to detail. It feels so welcoming, just what everyone deserves!"*

Christina Ramanauskas said *"Such an inspiring place to be. I can only imagine how the children would feel!"*

Laverne Gilbert said *"Well done! From beginning to end very warm and made me feel welcome and cozy. Awesome place to play!"*

The completion of the Dramatic Play Highlight area has left us reflecting on further questions. What learning experiences will educators be inspired to create for children through experiencing the dramatic highlight area? How will educators use loose parts in their environments going forward? In what ways will educators incorporate artwork into their own early learning environments?

Our journey continues as we read the comment book reflections from the educators and their time in the Cane Den messing about.

