



eccdc

April to June 2025

esteem calendar

Inspiring excellence in early learning and child care since 1993

April 2025



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
		1	2	3 Supporting Mental Health in Early Learning Environments 6:30-8:30pm (p. 8)	4 Reflect and Revitalize Series Part 1: 1:30-3:30pm (p. 8)	5
6	7	8 Mastering Emotional Intelligence for RECEs 6:00-8:30pm (p. 8)	9 Pour les éducateurs/éducatrices francophones (part 4) 18h30 à 20h30 (p. 8)	10 Intuitive Leadership Team Building Boot Camp Series Part 1: 10:00-11:30am (p. 9)	11	12
13	14	15 Igniting Curiosity: Implementing Inquiry-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education Series Part 3: 6:30-8:00pm (p. 9)	16	17 Supporting Families of Young Children with Special Needs 6:30-8:30pm (p. 9)	18 ECCDC Closed - Easter	19 ECCDC Closed - Easter
20	21 ECCDC Closed - Easter	22 Early Learning Art Explorations Series Part 3: 6:30-8:00pm (p. 9)	23	24 Emotional Regulation for Early Years 6:30-8:00pm (p. 10)	25	26
27	28	29 Exploring Inclusion in Our Early Learning and Child Care Programs Series Part 3: 6:30-8:30pm (p. 10)	30 Book Study Part 4: Illuminating Care 6:30-8:00pm (p. 10)		April Network Meetings Home Child Care Professionals Linked with a Licensed Home Child Care Agency - April 14 Preschool Network - April 16 Infant and Toddler Network - April 23 Please refer to Esteem for further details	

May 2025



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
	May Network Meetings School Age Network - May 14 Niagara Nature Alliance Network - May 21 Please refer to Esteem for further details			1	2 Reflect and Revitalize Series Part 2: 1:30-3:30pm (p. 8)	3
4	5	6	7	8 Intuitive Leadership Team Building Boot Camp Series Part 2: 10:00-11:30am (p. 9)	9	10 Getting Back to the Roots of Play 10:00am-2:00pm (p. 10)
11	12	13 Creating Community in Your Early Learning Environment 6:30-8:30pm (p. 11)	14	15 Building Relationships in School Age Programs Series Part 3 7:00-9:00pm (p. 11)	16 Relationships through Research Series for EarlyON Teams Part 3: 1:00-2:30pm (p. 11)	17 ECCDC Closed - Victoria Day
18	19 ECCDC Closed - Victoria Day	20 Exploring Inclusion in Our Early Learning and Child Care Programs Series Part 4: 6:30-8:30pm (p. 11)	21	22 In the Heat of the Moment: Understanding Escalating Behaviours in Early Childhood 6:30-8:30pm (p. 11)	23	24
25	26	27 Creating Literacy- Rich, Playful Learning Experiences in the Early Years Series Part 3: 6:30-8:30pm (p. 12)	28 Recruitment, Retention and Performance Management Series Part 3: 10:00am-12:00pm (p. 12) Book Study Part 5: Illuminating Care 6:30-8:00pm (p. 10)	29	30	31 Pedagogical Documentation in Early Years Practice: Seeing Through Multiple Perspectives 10:00am-2:30pm (p. 12)

June 2025



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
1	2	3 Exploring the Possibilities of Makerspace in Outdoor Environments 6:30-8:30pm (p. 12)	4	5	6 Reflect and Revitalize Series Part 3: 1:30-3:30pm (p. 8)	7 Fostering a Sustainable Future Through Environmental Programs Grounded in Ontario Curriculum 10:00am-3:00pm (p. 13)
8	9	10	11	12 Intuitive Leadership Team Building Boot Camp Series Part 3: 10:00-11:30am (p. 9)	13	14
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Supporting Mental Health in Early Learning Environments (ECCDC Conference Room)

This workshop, presented by Niagara College Professors Angela Hayes and Cathy Teixeira, will look at the importance of supporting mental health in early learning environments. Participants will explore the ways they can create secure relationships and spaces for young children to learn and grow, and the importance of these relationships on young children's mental health. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the ways they currently support children's well-being and mental health in their learning environment and next steps in their journey.

Reflect and Revitalize: Onboarding Educators and Families while Bringing Your Program Statement and Centre Values to Life Series (Webinar - all sessions)

Are you ready to breathe new life into your onboarding processes and program statement to create a more cohesive team and early learning and child care program? Join us for a dynamic and collaborative series designed to deepen your understanding and enhance the impact of both your onboarding processes and program statement. We will be exploring the connection between the foundation of your mission, vision, values and program statement. Don't miss this opportunity to reconnect with your core values and inspire your team and families!

Session 1 – Onboarding Educators

In this session, participants will dive into the heart of their program by exploring its vision, mission, and core values. Educators will gain clarity on their roles and responsibilities, ensuring alignment with your program's foundational principles. Participants will be equipped with practical strategies to effectively integrate the program's philosophy into their teaching practice and foster a cohesive learning environment. Through detailed explanations, real-life examples, and reflective conversations, educators will leave empowered to uphold the program's goals while nurturing a supportive educational journey. This session is designed not only to onboard educators effectively but also to enhance retention by fostering a strong connection to your program's mission and values.

Session 2 – Onboarding Families

In this session, we will dive into the onboarding process for families as it is a critical first step to ensure families feel welcomed and informed as they enrol their child in your program. The process is crucial to build a strong foundation and relationship with the family as highlighted within *How Does*

Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. Within the session we will highlight how providing a thorough onboarding experience will provide an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the family's goals for their child and consider how your program's mission, vision, and values align with their expectations of your program.

Session 3 – Moving Forward with Your Program Statement

In this session, participants will identify key elements in program statements that inform decision-making, such as values, goals, and pedagogical approaches. You'll discover techniques to engage staff and families in ongoing conversations about the program statement and its implementation, fostering a sense of community and shared vision. Additionally, you'll learn how to align your program statement with goal setting and staff performance evaluations to ensure consistency and clarity. We'll also explore opportunities for supervisors to support and share program statements with their teams, encouraging input and development.

Mastering Emotional Intelligence for RECEs (Webinar)

We have had knowledge of the concepts of Emotional Intelligence for some time, but many haven't readily addressed them. In this seminar you will define Emotional Intelligence (EI) and learn the essential components. After completing a brief quiz, you can gain a sense of your personal Emotional Intelligence (EI) which will assist you in ascertaining the importance of possessing a healthy one. Finally, a discussion will ensure where strategies on how to achieve an elevated Emotional Intelligence and become a master of your EI will transpire. Join Carolyn for a journey that promises to be life changing, knowing that it will benefit our professional and personal life.

Pour les éducateurs/éducatrices francophones (Webinar - all sessions)

La diversité intégrée en tout et partout - Nous préparons les enfants à vivre et à réussir dans un monde diversifié et en constante évolution. Nous avons un rôle à jouer pour rendre les enfants plus ouverts aux gens différents de lui. Par le biais d'activités interactives les participants vont réfléchir sur leur responsabilité collective et individuelle en tant qu'éducateurs et éducatrices de la petite enfance pour créer un milieu où la diversité et l'inclusion sont acceptées, normalisées et valorisées. De nombreuses idées seront données pour enrichir et valider les activités, les interactions, les matériaux et les ressources dans leurs milieux respectifs.

Intuitive Leadership Team Building Boot Camp Series (Webinar - all sessions)

Leaders will learn practical steps to support their own mental and emotional health through focusing on 3 areas: Self Care, Emotional Balance, and Intuitive Knowledge.

Part 1: Intuitive Knowledge Skill Development and Tuning and Tapping In

Tuning in and finding inner power to lead/interact intuitively building confidence, self-trust, and healthy ways to oversee/work in sync with organizations and teams. This enables professionals to make better decisions and see situations from a higher, more objective perspective, seeing the whole picture in any given situation to come out of stagnant situations and lead agencies/staff through change and adversity.

Part 2: Emotional Balance, Self Care, and Seeking Joy

Facing fears and healing past triggers/wounds to increase inner emotional stability and create emotionally intelligent/balanced teams and work environments. Through also practicing self-care and seeing it as a necessity, not a luxury, and learning to put ourselves first to operate at our optimum to better be able to support, serve, and uplift others. Participants will gain effective emotionally intelligent skills to best fulfill their own emotional balance as well as remain calm, balanced, and grounded in stressful, toxic, challenging, or adverse situations in communities and workplaces.

Part 3: Resilience Reset and Making Effective Choices

Gaining self-awareness and removing personal biases/assumptions to create neutrality towards people/situations, removing of old belief systems, and seeing what areas we are going to keep, remove, or adjust. Participants will look at practical ways of becoming resilient which they can implement in their programs/organizations through using systematic methods to break down each area of their responsibilities or goals, looking at the past and present ways of doing things, and how we want to rebuild or rethink the future.

Igniting Curiosity: Implementing Inquiry-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education Series (Webinar - all sessions)

Join us for an engaging and informative series designed to inspire curiosity and foster a love of learning in young children. "Igniting Curiosity" will explore the concept of inquiry-based learning, delve into various types of inquiry, and demonstrate practical strategies for implementing these

approaches in your program. Learn how to set up provocations and invitations to play and understand the differences between these concepts. Don't miss this opportunity to equip yourself with the tools and techniques to create an inquiry-friendly environment that nurtures young minds. Register today and take the first step towards making learning an exciting adventure for children!

Session 3: Exploring Structured Inquiry

In the final session of our series, we dive into the world of *structured inquiry*. This session will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of how to design and facilitate structured inquiry activities, where the educator provides both the question and the process for finding the answer. Don't miss this foundational session to complete your journey into inquiry-based learning!

Supporting Families of Young Children with Special Needs (Webinar)

Families with children with special needs face unique challenges navigating the early years, and even further challenges once they enter the school system. Having supportive, caring and knowledgeable educators supporting them in the early years can make all the difference to these families. This webinar will explore ways we can support families with children with special needs during the early years and how we can prepare them once their child is ready to enter school. Participants will explore common obstacles these families may endure and how to support them in the process.

Early Learning Art Explorations, a Three-Part Series (Webinar - all sessions)

Session Three: Reflections on the Value and Possibilities of Recycled Materials in Children's Play

Bottle caps are buttons on a space shuttle, an empty wrapping paper tube is a telescope, leftover laminate is the windshield on a cardboard car. Recycled materials hold infinite possibilities. Children naturally see these possibilities and breathe new life into materials that we as adults might otherwise discard. In this 1.5-hour session, we'll think together about the important role recycled materials hold in children's play and how we can nurture and deepen this natural relationship between children and recycled materials. We will also take some time ourselves to explore the possibilities of a few recycled materials.

Emotional Regulation for Early Years (Webinar)

This workshop helps Early Childhood Educators put emotional regulation front and center in their classrooms. Participants will learn a child-centered, trauma-informed framework for understanding and interpreting emotional outbursts. Using that framework, they will learn classroom strategies to use when children are in the green, yellow, and red zones of emotional regulation. Teachers particularly appreciate tools to “trick” the brain back online during an outburst, and strategies to include emotional regulation tools in the daily curriculum so children grow in their capacity to manage emotions. This workshop is best suited for educators but could easily be adapted for parents.

Exploring Inclusion in Our Early Learning and Child Care Programs Series (Webinar - all sessions)

The Exploring Inclusion four-part series will offer opportunities for educators to explore tools and resources through case studies while considering their daily inclusive practices to support children within their early learning and child care programs. Educators are strongly encouraged to attend all four sessions as the series has been created to build upon each session.

Session 3 - Environments as the Third Educator

If we look at the environment as the third educator through the lens of the Program Inclusion Reflection Tool, what do we need to consider regarding our inclusive practices? Take a step back and reflect on your environment. Does it reflect those living in the space? Can children lead their own play? Moving from structured play to unstructured play, empowering children to extend and plan their play, choice of materials, curriculum modifications, adult reminders and incorporating the element of fun.

Book Study - Illuminating Care – The Pedagogy and Practice of Care in Early Childhood Communities (Webinar - all sessions)

Please join the ECCDC Coaching and Mentoring team to explore a five-part book study on Illuminating Care – The Pedagogy and Practice of Care in Early Childhood Communities, by Carol Garboden Murray. We will dive deeply into the concept of defining care as an action, an attitude, and an ethic for the early learning and child care community. The book study is for all those who work within the early learning and child care field as we will be exploring how we look to elevate care for the children in our programs and acknowledge the essential role that early childhood educators have in building a strong profession. We will be looking to dispel the myth

and discover the truth of care for young children, consider how we move beyond a basic standard of care, name care as a core value in the work that we do, and explore care ethics and a responsive care philosophy.

Getting Back to the Roots of Play (St. Catharines Museum)

PLAYLearnThink has been promoting play based and inquiry-based learning for over 20 years.

Research around children’s development tells us that play is essential to a child’s physical health and emotional well-being. Play stimulates all aspects of a child’s development, i.e. the physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Through play children, armed with curiosity and a spirit of inquiry, explore their environment and build knowledge about the world around them. In doing so they prepare the foundation on which they will build a life of resilience, creativity, self-confidence and life-long learning. Play is also essential for the continued growth of adults. That’s why PLAYLearnThink workshops incorporate playful ways of engaging participants. Whether working as a group on a challenging task or experimenting with various materials, the focus is always the use of play to nurture imagination and foster creativity which leads to great feats of problem solving and a heightened self-esteem.

1. Overview of the importance of play in the healthy development of children - This section is an engaging presentation on play and learning through play. It includes what we know from research and practice. It touches upon different topics such as the benefits of self-directed play, exploring risk, nature play, resilience and the adult’s role in supporting play. I also share videos and stories from personal experiences and touch upon what is happening in various parts of the world.
2. Loose parts play - Participants will play and create with a multitude of materials (loose parts) and tools. They will plunge into the joy of self-directed, spontaneous play and thus feel firsthand what children experience during free play.
3. Debrief.

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Creating Community in Your Early Learning Environment (Webinar)

An early learning community provides equal voice to all involved – teachers, students, families. Each member's unique perspective is honoured, valued, celebrated, and reflected in the space. As a learning community, the focus is not on arbitrary rules and discipline, but on co-created expectations, self regulation, teamwork, mutual respect, and accountability. During this webinar, you will explore why building a community in your early learning environment is so important, how to go about building a community, and the different roles of the educators and children.

Building Relationships in School Age Programs Series (Webinar - all sessions)

Building relationships and connections in school age programs matters. Relationships underpin the work of educators, and both Ontario's early years and middle years frameworks emphasize the importance of relationships, with research highlighting the beneficial impact that positive relationships have on children through their childhood and into adulthood. This series will explore how educators working in school age programs can develop supportive, trusting relationships with children and their families, and intentionally build strong, supportive relationships with the multiple partners they engage with.

Session 3: Facilitating relationships with families and connection between families and partner organizations

Educators will have an opportunity to consider the importance of developing supportive, reciprocal relationships with the families of children attending school age programs that are built on trust. The session will then dive into ways that school age educators can connect with the families by adopting authentic family engagement strategies and family-centred practices. Thought will be given to how educators can meet families where they are at in a culturally responsive way. Lastly, we will contemplate ways in which they can facilitate the three-way sharing of information between families, school, and their afterschool program.

Relationships through Research: Cultivating Connection and Engagement with Children and Families through Teacher Research: A Three-Part Series for EarlyON Teams (Webinar - all sessions)

EarlyON programs are bubbling with endless possibilities for curiosity, creativity, innovation and connection. Through intentional research questions, we can deepen our understanding of who children are, the

competencies they hold, and the ideas they have as we listen and observe carefully, think with one another, and respond thoughtfully.

Part 3: Sharing the Findings - Celebrating Together

Once we've spent time listening, observing, gathering artefacts of children's thinking and ideas, studying and thinking together, we have the opportunity to celebrate all that we've learned and share this learning with others outside of our programs. In Part 3, we'll look at how we can create captivating and meaningful displays and other artefacts of our research findings that include photos, children's work, our written observations and interpretations, and more.

Exploring Inclusion in Our Early Learning and Child Care Programs Series (Webinar - all sessions)

Session 4 – Breaking Down Our Daily Practices for Inclusivity

As educators navigate a new pathway, the final session will take a deep dive into inclusive early learning strategies, challenging our daily practices and routines, use of language, equitability, power relationships and how it translates to best practices. Moving forward educators will have an opportunity to consider next steps for implementation into both their daily practice and early learning environments and early learning and child care programs.

In the Heat of the Moment: Understanding Escalating Behaviours in Early Childhood (Webinar)

We've all been there: a child is beginning to melt down or heat up! What do you do next? In the heat of the moment, has your response ever escalated a child's challenging behaviour? Children's behaviour can escalate quickly. Your feelings about that escalation can erupt just as quickly. De-escalation – helping children calm down – takes time and only happens intentionally. This webinar explores the stages of escalation and ways you can respond that will support and help children to be able to return safely to the group.

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Creating Literacy-Rich, Playful Learning Experiences in the Early Years: Three-Part Learning Series (In person, Glendridge Quarry Naturalization Site)

Are you interested in learning more about the importance of playful, joyful practices that foster early literacy learning? Join us as we bring to life our favourite picture books, explore the power of mark making, and enjoy the fresh air while tapping into literacy experiences outdoors! Educators will experience ways in which literacy learning happens all around us and in many different playful, intentional contexts using a variety of materials. You will leave with practical tips and inspiring ideas to enhance your early years program, both inside and outside the classroom. These sessions are for educators of preschool and kindergarten age children.

Session Three: Discover Literacy While Exploring Outdoors

The outdoors is a wonderful way to inspire children to use their imagination and engage in learning using the elements of nature that are right at our fingertips! Grab your rain boots and hats to join us for this outdoor session as we experience group games, storytelling, and invitations using natural materials and loose parts to develop early literacy skills. We will share practical tips and interactive experiences that will give you ideas for starting up an outdoor routine in any season and weather, from green spaces to concrete jungles.

Recruitment, Retention and Performance Management: A Three-Part Series (Webinar - all sessions)

Session Three: Employee Engagement – How to Foster Motivation

When employees are not actively engaged at work, not only do they suffer – the organization does as well. Workplaces with high levels of engagement have employees that are committed and feel a connection to the organization. Engaged employees are willing to use discretionary time, brainpower, and effort beyond what is expected of them. This workshop explores how employee engagement occurs more readily when employees are respected and cared for, when they do tasks that bring them satisfaction, and when they work in an organization that makes a difference. Participants will learn unique insights for increasing engagement and be challenged to think critically about their approach to employee engagement.

Pedagogical Documentation in Early Years Practice: Seeing Through Multiple Perspectives (ECCDC Conference Room)

Morning: Emergent Curriculum – Debunking the Myths and Creating a Shared Understanding

This workshop will explore the common myths and misapplications around Emergent Curriculum: what it is, and is not, how it translates into daily practice, and the educator's role in the process, including the Cyle of Inquiry. We will think through and practice the journey of Emergent Curriculum, from observations and reflective dialogue to thoughtful responses to children's ideas, questions. and theories. Through investigation of examples from real classrooms, we will create a shared understanding of Emergent Curriculum that can be taken forward into your practice.

Afternoon: A hands-on exploration of Pedagogical Documentation

What is the difference between documentation and pedagogical documentation? What are the many ways in which Pedagogical Documentation might be used as a tool for understanding children's theories and ideas, for creating questions for ourselves that lead to our own professional growth, and for communicating with families and society at large the brilliance of young children's thinking? We will explore these questions as we move through the process of creating a rough piece of documentation and engaging in dialogue with each other about the thinking involved.

Exploring the Possibilities of Makerspace in Outdoor Environments (In person - St. Catharines Museum)

This workshop will provide a hands-on opportunity to engage in a Makerspace in an outdoor environment, also known as a Natural Makerspace. Participants will explore what a Makerspace is and the common materials involved, the difference between an indoor and outdoor Makerspace, the benefits of a Natural Makerspace, and materials to consider in the outdoor environment. Educators will also have the opportunity to discuss barriers they may face in a Natural Makerspace and ways to overcome these barriers.

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**Fostering a Sustainable Future Through Environmental Programs
Grounded in Ontario Curriculum** (ECCDC Conference Room)

How do we activate, empower, and inspire children to adopt a sustainable future? We show them. Jacob Rodenburg has spent the past 30 years fostering environmental stewardship in children. During this time, Jacob has created over 90 curriculum linked outdoor and environmental programs. Join this session to explore how to enhance environmental awareness and learn ways you can provide students with practical, hands-on environmental activities from schoolyard naturalization to environmental science projects.



The ECCDC extends gratitude to Niagara Region Children's Services for their longstanding commitment to funding many of ECCDC's local services and supports

