



Building Connections, Knowledge, and Strong Early Learning Communities: A Winter Virtual Learning Institute

Saturday January 28, 2023

9:00 am Morning Keynote Presentation: Reflecting Upon Your Work in the Early Years and Re-igniting Your Passion

This presentation will inspire reflection and deep conversation to support educators in recognizing the valuable contributions they make, the importance of resiliency during times of significant change, and strategies for considering how to include joy, enthusiasm, and fulfillment in our daily practice. The session will also include a fun, interactive quiz - including prizes - and an opportunity to create a self-reflective tool and a go-forward plan for including self-reflection into our work as part of an ongoing motivational and mindfulness practice.

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10:15 to 11:45am Morning Presentations (please choose one session)

Session One: Exploring Children's Development through Everyday Materials

This session will offer opportunities for participants to review excerpts of *Early Learning for Every Child Today* (ELECT) to gain an understanding of children's developmental milestones and how to incorporate a variety of everyday, inexpensive materials while working with children and their families. The session will connect participants with the current frameworks and how they can be used in guiding conversations and choices with families. A resource kit of accessible materials will be explored along with extension ideas to help equip Teams with gaining knowledge and strategies to share with families to support their children on their developmental journey.

Session Two: Roles of the Modern Reflective Educator

Whether the educators are the architects, coaches, or storytellers, this multifaceted approach to early learning plays an important part in planning purposeful and intentional experiences that foster children's development, engages families, and provides opportunities for critical reflection. In this webinar we will look at ways we can strengthen our roles as educators, explore how each of these roles are important in your program, and examine the roles our colleagues and families play. Let's come together to highlight the view of the modern educator, the current roles they play, and the many hats they wear.

Session Three: Supporting Children in Developing a Practice of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a simple technique that emphasizes paying attention to the present moment in an accepting, nonjudgmental manner. As we reflect upon *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* and the foundation of well-being, it speaks to lifelong learning habits. Habits formed early in life will inform behaviours in adulthood; with mindfulness we have the opportunity to give children the habit of being peaceful, kind, and accepting. At each developmental stage, mindfulness can be a useful tool for decreasing anxiety and promoting happiness. Mindfulness equips children with tools to build self-esteem, confidence, manage stress, and skillfully approach challenges. The earlier they learn it, the greater the opportunity to help them cultivate resilience and develop and refine their mindfulness practice as they mature. This session will offer resources and experiences that will highlight the benefits of mindfulness and enhance your curriculum for children of all ages.

11:45 to 12:45 Lunch Break

12:45 to 2:30 pm Afternoon Sessions (please choose one session)

Session One: Taking Care of Me to Take Care of You Wellness Session

Participants will have an opportunity to explore the key aspects of workplace wellbeing that can support not only their own wellbeing but that of their staff team. Together we will engage in discussions on returning to the workplace post-pandemic, sharing your journey, and tips and tricks you have discovered. We will review the reasons for burnout and understanding ways to avoid it. Links will be made throughout the session to Ontario's Early Learning Frameworks that can be shared. To finish off the session, a large group brainstorm will take place exploring ways to share this information with your team and implement and track success.

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Session Two: Sensory Play for Children

Sensory play includes any activity that stimulates a young child's senses. Providing opportunities and experiences for children to actively use their senses as they explore their world is crucial to brain development. Sensory play supports children's self-regulation and builds skills for mindfulness. This leads to a child's ability to complete more complex learning tasks and supports cognitive growth, language development, gross motor skills, social interaction, and problem-solving skills. The session will provide interactive experiences and identify links to other curriculum areas and focus on how educators can incorporate daily sensory experiences within their program while reflecting upon the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

Session Three: Positive Interactions through Connecting versus Directing

How much time do we spend Connecting, Directing, and Correcting? What is your C:D:C ratio? Seeing children as co-collaborators and supporting them to explore and learn using positive interactions rather than managing or directing their behaviour is important as educators. During this session we will explore the impact of positive interactions on children and link these interactions to healthy brain development. Join us as we expand on simple strategies that we can incorporate throughout our day and understand how the flow of the day allows children to make choices that support responsive relationships and promote reflection on our professional practice.



Presented *Via Webinar*

Saturday January 28, 2023 from 9:00am to 4:00pm

Niagara Educators: No Charge (sponsored through funding provided by Niagara Region Children's Services)

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55

To register, call 905.646.7311 ext. 304, email eccdc@eccdc.org or visit www.eccdc.org

2:30 to 2:45 pm Break

2:45 to 3:45 pm Local Panelists Sharing Perspectives for Each Theme

- Mindfulness
- Teambuilding/Wellness
- Sensory Play

3:45 to 4:00 pm Closing