

January to June 2025

# esteem

*Professional Learning Opportunities to Support the Early Learning and Child Care Workforce*

**eccdc**

early childhood community development centre

Register for any of our sessions at [www.eccdc.org](http://www.eccdc.org), by calling 905.646.7311 ext. 304, or emailing [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org)

Virtual and In  
Person Events



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# Implementing Ontario's Early Learning Frameworks in Early Learning Settings

Incorporating *How Does Learning  
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Increase knowledge/refresher on early  
child development



## Building Relationships in School Age Programs Series *with the ECCDC Training Team*

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 3-part 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.

### Series Objectives

- Participants will identify how building and maintaining positive relationships within school age programs reflects Ontario's early learning and middle years frameworks.
- Participants will select and implement age appropriate and culturally responsive strategies to integrate within their school age programs, to create welcoming environments that support positive relationship building.
- Participants will uncover the unique challenges of developing relationships within school age programs and strategize how to overcome them.

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## Building Relationships in School Age Programs Series continued

### Session 1: Supporting Relationships With and Between Children

The first session in this series will explore how *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*, *Think Feel Act for the Middle Years*, *Gearing Up: A Strategic Framework to help Ontario Middle Years Children Thrive*, and *On My Way* frames relationships. The session will then go on to explore a variety of age-appropriate strategies that educators can utilize to support them in fostering warm, caring relationships with children attending out of school programs. The session will then look at how educators can facilitate experiences and environments that enable children to develop positive peer-to-peer relationships.



All sessions presented *Via Webinar*

**Session 1: Thursday September 26, 2024**

**Session 2: Thursday January 16, 2025**

**Session 3: Thursday May 15, 2025**

7:00 to 9:00 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Educators: No Charge

Outside Niagara Educators: \$25 per session or \$60 for full series

### Session 2: Developing Relationships With Schools and Community Partners

The second session in this series will investigate a variety of approaches that school age programs can adopt to plan intentional connections with school administrators and staff, both formally and informally, to build mutually respectful, strong, trusting relationships that support children and families to feel a sense of continuity between school, program, and home. The session will then go on to consider how educators can build relationships with community organizations and individuals to connect their program and children with their local community.

### Session 3: Facilitating Relationships With Families and Connection Between Families and Partner Organizations

During the third and final session in this series, 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, educators will contemplate ways in which they can facilitate the three-way sharing of information between families, school, and their afterschool program.



## Igniting Curiosity: Implementing Inquiry-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education Series *with the* ECCDC Training Team

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!

### Series Objectives

- Participants will identify and differentiate between structured, guided, and open-ended inquiries, understanding the unique characteristics and benefits of each type.
- Participants will understand how to effectively set up provocations and invitations to play, understanding the differences between these approaches and how they can spark curiosity and exploration in young children.
- Participants will evaluate environments that encourage exploration, experimentation, and reflection, supporting the overall development of children's inquiry skills and nurturing their natural curiosity.

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## Igniting Curiosity: Implementing Inquiry-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education Series continued

### Session 1: Embracing Open-Ended Inquiry

In the first session of our three-part series on inquiry-based learning, we will explore the exciting and dynamic realm of **open-ended inquiry**. This approach empowers children to formulate their own questions and decide on the processes to find the answers, promoting a high level of autonomy and personalized learning. This session will provide you with the tools to facilitate open-ended inquiries that transform your program into a hub of exploration and discovery. Join us and take the first step in transforming your program with inquiry-based learning!



All sessions presented *Via Webinar*

**Session 1: Tuesday October 15, 2024**

**Session 2: Tuesday January 14, 2025**

**Session 3: Tuesday April 15, 2025**

6:30 to 8:00 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Educators: No Charge

Outside Niagara Educators: \$25 per session or \$60 for full series

### Session 2: Delving into Guided Inquiry

The second session of our series focuses on **guided inquiry**, where the educator presents a question, but children are given the freedom to determine the process for discovering the answer. This approach balances structure with children's autonomy, fostering deeper engagement and independent thinking. Through interactive activities and real-world examples, you'll gain insights into creating meaningful, child-led explorations that stimulate curiosity and creativity. Join us to learn how to seamlessly integrate guided inquiry into your practice!

### 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!





## Designing YES Spaces: Embrace the YES and Design a Space for Children *with* Carla Ward

Design an innovative early learning space that will allow children to discover who they are rather than telling them who they are. Environments that encourage educators to be able to say “yes” to children address children’s agency, risky play, knowing their limits, leadership and workplace culture, teaching children to respect boundaries, feeling control over their life, giving children the autonomy to know and feel who they are, and so much more.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday January 30, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$35

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55



**Carla Ward** is an experienced Early Childhood Educator and the visionary founder of Early Learning Foundations, a business dedicated to promoting education and elevating the profession of Early Childhood Education. With over 18 years of diverse experience in education, Carla has held various roles and is committed to the growth and development of children.



## Early Learning Art Explorations, a Three-Part Series: *Creating an Outdoor Art Studio, Reflections on the Value and Possibilities of Recycled Materials in Children's Play and Process vs. Product? Examining Our Ideas About Young Children and the Arts* with Victoria Armstrong

### Session One: Process? Product? Examining Our Ideas About Young Children and the Arts

What is art? Why do we engage in artistic experiences with young children? What are children pursuing in their relationships with art materials? What values and beliefs do we hold about young children and the arts and do our practices align with these? What if there's more to the arts with young children than process and product? Do common mantras like 'process-based art' speak to the complexity that is inherent in children's pursuits with art materials? Together, in this 1.5-hour session, let's deconstruct 'process' and 'product' in children's art experiences and consider what other possibilities might exist for children if we shifted some of our language, thinking and practices.



#### Session 1

All sessions presented *Via Webinar*

**Tuesday February 18, 2025**

6:30 to 8:00 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Educators: \$25 per session or \$65 for three sessions

Outside Niagara Educators: \$35 per session or \$85 for three sessions

## Early Learning Art Explorations, a Three-Part Series continued

### Session Two: Creating an Outdoor Studio

Come and discover the value and possibilities in creating an outdoor art studio. We will consider questions such as: What could an outdoor studio look like? Feel like? Would it be a permanent or transient space? Or have elements of both permanency and fluidity? Would there be a difference in the materials that are offered outdoors vs indoors? What possibilities does an outdoor studio hold that an indoor studio doesn't? How could space be used? What elements could tie the indoor and outdoor studios together? Material, space and outdoor provocation ideas will be shared as part of the conversation, and we will also take time to explore 1-2 art and nature provocations together.



All sessions presented *Via Webinar*

**Session 2: Tuesday March 25, 2025**

**Session 3: Tuesday April 22, 2025**

6:30 to 8:00 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Educators: \$25 per session or \$65 for three sessions

Outside Niagara Educators: \$35 per session or \$85 for three 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.



#### **Victoria Armstrong, RECE, B.ECS, Owner Side By Side (SBS) Consulting Services**

For over 15 years, Victoria Armstrong has devoted her life to living out this view of children and supporting and challenging others to live out this view of children also. A published author and dance instructor, she has held a variety of roles throughout her early learning career; Classroom Educator, Pedagogical Leader, College Professor, HR and Communications Specialist, Coordinator and Early Learning Consultant. A large part of her career was dedicated to the pioneering and growth of a children's art initiative that integrated local artists into early learning and licensed child care programs. Her passion for the arts in early childhood along with giving visibility to children's thinking through the process of pedagogical documentation is what has given her career specific direction over the past 8 years.



## **Creating Literacy-Rich, Playful Learning Experiences in the Early Years: Three-Part Learning Series *with* DSBN and Niagara Catholic DSB Early Literacy Partners**

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.

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## Creating Literacy-Rich, Playful Learning Experiences in the Early Years: Three-Part Learning Series continued

### Session One: Intentional Picture Books to Inspire Oral Language through a Sense of Wonder

How can we infuse oral language development through a literacy, math, social-emotional learning, and science lens with intentional picture books? How can we sprinkle vocabulary building with our youngest learners to support language development and comprehension? We will share ideas on how to connect beautiful picture books to children's experiences beyond the pages of the book. Join us as we share our top 10 read alouds and engage in interactive learning experiences that you can take right into your learning spaces tomorrow!



All sessions presented *In Person* at ECCDC Conference Room (3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold and/or Glenridge Quarry Naturalization Site (1860 Sir Isaac Brock Way, St. Catharines)

**Session 1: Thursday November 14, 2024**

**Session 2: Thursday February 20, 2025**

**Session 3: Tuesday May 27, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm (all sessions)

Cost: No Charge (*Sponsored by Niagara Catholic District School Board and the District School Board of Niagara*)

### Session Two: The World of Mark Making - Early Writing Behaviours

Join us for this interactive session as we explore the world of mark making in the early years! We will share inspiring ideas of materials that you can add to your environments to spark curiosity and wonder in learners of all ages. Together we will reflect on the stages of emergent writing and begin to notice the *trails of learning* that are sprinkled around our learning spaces. Through this hands-on exploration using a variety of materials, educators will reflect and gather ideas on how to weave mark making experiences within their indoor and outdoor spaces. Come join us for an evening filled with opportunities to explore, play and leave your mark!

### Session Three: Discover Literacy While Exploring Outdoors

Would you love to explore literacy outdoors, but are not sure where to start? Connecting literacy to 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. *We will begin indoors at the ECCDC, then move as a group to the Glenridge Quarry site.*





## Stimulating Language and Literacy Development in an Inquiry, Play-based Environment with Carolyn Hadcock

Registered Early Childhood Educators are encouraged to engage in reading to children to assist in language and literacy development. However, there is so much more that can be done in all aspects of the child's day. This webinar demonstrates ways to implement an environment rich with language and literacy activities. Join the session for an exciting discovery of stimulating language and literacy development in a play-based environment.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Tuesday January 21, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$35 per session

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55 per session



**Carolyn Hadcock** is a retired professor from teaching in the School of Early Childhood Education at Seneca College for 20 years. Carolyn is passionate about the field of Early Childhood Education and is an enthusiastic and energetic speaker.



## Emotional Regulation for Early Years *with* Dana Sproule

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.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday April 24, 2025**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Niagara Educators: \$25

Outside Niagara Educators: \$45



### **Dana Sproule, Burning Point Coaching and Consulting**

Dana became fascinated with the dynamics of leadership when she was a young adult, working at summer camp. She loved seeing the difference she could make for her team and her campers, by leading from a place of service and clear purpose. For 12 years, Dana worked with a non-profit, coaching university students as they stepped into leadership for the first time. She trained front line staff, managers, and regional leaders, equipping them for mentoring, strategic planning, conflict resolution, and working in multi-ethnic contexts. Prior to starting her coaching practice, Dana worked in pastoral ministry and in child protection. This breadth of experience has given her empathy for the challenges people face, and conviction that everyone is worthy of respect and love. She is a gifted speaker, group facilitator, and trainer.



## Getting Back to the Roots of Play *with Pierre Harrison, B.Sc., M.Sc. and B.Ed.*

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**



**Pierre Harrison** grew up in Northern Ontario. He enjoyed a playful childhood filled with bumps and scrapes, wonder and adventure, and eventually earned a B.Sc. in Biochemistry, a M.Sc. in Protein Chemistry and a B.Ed. with qualifications to teach at the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior levels in Ontario. Pierre facilitates play training workshops across Canada and in Europe. He is also invited to keynote on play, inquiry and learning at national and international conferences. To date 15,290 teachers, educators, recreation leaders, health care service providers, parents/caregivers and members of the general public have taken Pierre's Play Ambassadors Oath. Pierre also organizes and facilitates Adventure PlayDays in schools and in community spaces across Canada. To date, 15,045 children have enjoyed his PlayDays.



Presented *In Person* (St. Catharines Museum, 1932 Welland Canals Parkway, St. Catharines)

**Saturday May 10, 2025**

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Niagara Educators: \$65 includes a light lunch

Outside Niagara Educators: \$85 includes a light lunch



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# Supporting Children with Unique Needs



## Trauma-informed Emotional Regulation & Well-Being in Early Learning Settings Series: How to Help Children Feel Safe and Seen *with* Lisa Pinhorn

### Session One: Holistic Emotional Regulation Workshop

Emotional Regulation is a hot topic! Come and learn relational skills that will set the stage for more emotional regulation in early learning settings. Leave with hands-on tools & strategies that you can use immediately. Emotional Regulation is a skill that is modelled and practiced by caregivers. This is a skill like all others, they take time and practice to develop. Early Childhood Educators play a vital role in supporting the foundations of mental health in young children. Each day early learning professionals have opportunities to model and help shape children's emotional regulation skills. Early learning settings that offer emotionally safe spaces and foster emotional awareness teach our children necessary lifelong skills.

Topics such as: emotional safety, co-regulation, neuro-affirming practices, developmental trauma, attachment styles, inclusive settings, equity, and staff resiliency are vital for the mental health of our entire ECE community, including children, teachers, and administration. Early learning settings have the potential to be the buffers necessary for the toxic stress levels we are seeing in modern families and harnessing that potential could be life-changing for families.



### Session 1

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday January 23, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$25 per session or \$65 for full series

Outside Niagara Educators: \$35 per session or \$85 for full series

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## Trauma-informed Emotional Regulation & Well-Being in Early Learning Settings Series: How to Help Children Feel Safe and Seen continued

### Session Two: Adverse Early Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Attachment Styles in Young Children Workshop

During this workshop we teach caregivers and educators the science of stress on trauma in children and families. We highlight how the ACEs research can guide and support why we need to create connected, compassionate, and calm relationships with children. We will also look at Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and why it is vital we see its value in this generation of children. See the magic that comes from attuned and empathic relationships, and how we can help children of all ages manage the day-to-day stresses of their lives – especially those with trauma, neurodiversity, and complex attachment styles. We walk participants through the theories of co-regulation of emotion, nervous system regulation, and attachment science. Feeling connection is our most powerful tool, especially if there is developmental trauma or toxic stress in the lives of children. Attunement is a magical place of deep connection that is cultivated when we slow down, get curious, and consciously attune to children. Attunement is a special micro-space that has a frequency - when you feel it, you know it. These connected and compassionate spaces are vital for all children to thrive and shine, but even more so if there has been developmental trauma, attachment issues and neurodiversity. This workshop session is based on the interpersonal neurobiology approach taught to us by Dr. Dan Siegal, which helps us use our personal calm neurology to support attachment, co-regulation and emotional safety. In these emotionally rich spaces children can thrive because they feel grounded, connected and seen.



Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

**Session 2: Thursday February 27, 2025**

**Session 3: Thursday March 27, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Educators: \$25 per session or \$65 for full series

Outside Niagara Educators: \$35 per session or \$85 for full series

### Session Three: Emotional Safety and Cultivating Emotionally Rich Spaces in Early Learning Settings

In this workshop we will show how and why educators need to create connected, compassionate, and calm relationships with children. Come learn why we must also focus on respectful and empathic relationships to help children manage the day-to-day stresses of their lives. We will discuss the best practices and trends that are changing the way we need to address emotional awareness in the lives of this generation of children. When spaces are truly emotionally safe – everything can change for the better. Lisa Pinhorn will walk your educational staff through the theory of Emotional Regulation and how it can expand our understanding of what it means to feel safe within learning settings. Emotional safety is vital to the mental health of our entire educational community, including children, teachers, and administration. Our schools have the potential to be the buffers necessary for the toxic stress levels we are seeing in modern families.



**Lisa Pinhorn** holds a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Child and Youth Studies, a Masters of Education and over 25 years of non-profit community work, public speaking, and advocacy. She is the Co-Founder of Empowered Parents and the creator of Head to Heart Therapeutic Yoga. Lisa is a member of the Academy of Naturopaths and Naturotherapists, a Certified Shanker Self-Reg Practitioner and Learning Facilitator, and trained in Interpersonal Neurobiology by Dan Siegel through the Mindsight Institute.



## Self Regulation *with* Spencer Terpstra and Jennifer Saltarelli, Pathstone Mental Health

Learn the ins and outs of self-regulation. What it is, how to recognize dysregulation, ways to promote independent self-regulation in the children you work with and more!

**Spencer Terpstra** is a Registered Early Childhood Educator, who possesses a Master's Degree in Applied Disability Studies (specialization in Applied Behaviour Analysis). She has worked in child care, school, respite, ABA/IBI, and mental health settings with young children. She currently works for Pathstone Mental Health as a Behaviour Consultant, and owns and operates Bloom Behaviour Consulting Inc., a home-based behaviour consultation service. Spencer is passionate about children's mental health, finding the messages hidden in behaviour, play/inquiry-based learning and outdoor/nature-based education.

**Jennifer Saltarelli** is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and Resource Consultant in Niagara. Jennifer is a graduate of Niagara College and Seneca College. She holds a Bachelor of Education from the University of Hannover, Germany. Jennifer has been working in the field of Early Childhood Education for 10 years, 5 of those years in various Resource Consultant roles. She currently works as a Behaviour Consultant in the Kids and Families Matter program at Pathstone Mental Health.



Presented *in Person in Niagara*  
(ECCDC Conference Room, 3550  
Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

**Tuesday February 4, 2025**

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Cost: No Charge (*This session has been sponsored by Pathstone Mental Health*)



## In the Heat of the Moment: Understanding Escalating Behaviours in Early Childhood *with* Acclaimed Author Barbara Kaiser

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.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday May 22, 2025**


6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$35

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55



**Barbara Kaiser** is the co-author of *Challenging Behavior in Young Children*. She has taught at Acadia University and at Concordia University and College Marie-Victorin. In addition to presenting workshops and keynote speeches on challenging behaviour throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and Europe, Barbara has acted as chief consultant for *Facing the Challenge*, an instructional DVD based on *Challenging Behaviour in Young Children* (Devereux Center for Resilient Children), and a workshop, *What Do You Do With the Mad That you Feel for Mr. Rogers' Family Communications, Inc.* Barbara founded and was the director of two child care centres and an after-school program. A master's degree in educational administration from McGill University gives her a firm theoretical foundation, but above all her perspective is practical, realistic, and compassionate, stemming from decades of working with children, families, and teachers.

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# **Strengthening Diversity and Inclusion within Early Learning Settings**



## Strategies for Promoting an Equitable and Discrimination Free Early Learning Environment *with* Dr. Dane Marco Di Cesare

This session is being offered by Dane Marco Di Cesare, PhD, Assistant Professor, Brock University, Faculty of Education. Dane will offer strategies to support early childhood educators in providing an environment free of gender identity and gender expression discrimination through creating gender-inclusive and gender-affirming spaces. The session will introduce gender vocabulary and discuss children's developmental milestones related to gender, speak to strengthening self-awareness to check assumptions and interrupt biases about gender. Dane will offer practical and tangible ideas and strategies for co-creating gender justice curricula in early years' classrooms.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Tuesday January 28, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: No charge  
(*sponsored by Brock University –  
Faculty of Education*)

Outside Niagara Educators: \$15



**Dr. Dane Marco Di Cesare** (he/him) is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University and Chair of the Canada Regional Network of INQYR (the International Partnership for Queer Youth Resilience). Di Cesare's research interests are intersectional and involve how youth with intersectional identities (particularly 2SLGBTQ+) engage with digital technology and their use of media literacies, supporting 2SLGBTQ+ mental health and wellbeing, gender equity with young children, and supporting early years families through the school system (2SLGBTQ+, families with children with special needs).





## Exploring Inclusion in Our Early Learning and Child Care Programs Series *with* ECCDC Training Team

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.

### Series Objectives

- Consider what inclusion is and how it is woven into our daily practices through self-reflection and self-awareness.
- Discuss and identify what behaviour and development are and link them to inclusive practices that support children and families.
- Revisit and review relationships, self-regulation, development, environments, daily practices, and curriculum, ensuring the use of inclusive language and practices using the Program Inclusion Reflection Tool.

*Continued on page 25*



## Exploring Inclusion in Our Early Learning and Child Care Programs Series continued

### Session 1 — Educator Self-Reflection and Self-Awareness

During the first session educators will have an opportunity to utilize the practice of self-reflection to understand how their actions within the early learning and child care program can impact both their own development and the development of the children in their care. Various interactive and hands-on experiences will be explored to support developing educators' self-awareness of their expectations. Participants will have an opportunity to consider strategies and techniques that support their development and those of the children in their care to move forward in navigating next steps of their learning journey with resiliency and empathy.



Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

**Session 1: Tuesday February 11, 2025**

**Session 2: Tuesday March 18, 2025**

**Session 3: Tuesday April 29, 2025**

**Session 4: Tuesday May 20, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Educators: No Charge

Outside Niagara Educators: \$75 for the series

### Session 2 — Reflecting on Inclusive Practices Utilizing the Program Inclusion Reflection Tool

Following on from session one's self-reflection, participants will consider how to use the Inclusive Program Reflection Tool of what do they see through the eyes of the child and how utilizing an inclusive approach supports children's behaviour and development. An opportunity will be provided to breakdown the tool and reflect upon how they can use it within their own programs moving forward.

### 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.

### 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.



## Strengthening Our Understanding of Indigenous Culture in Early Childhood *with Jeannie Martin, Assistant Professor (MPEd, BEd, BA), Brock University Faculty of Education and Stacy Tekonwaniahesen Hill*

During this session, participants will explore ways they can strengthen their understanding of Indigenous Culture and how to apply this knowledge within their early learning environments. Through this session, participants will receive helpful resources to continue their learning on Indigenous Culture and ways in which they can apply this knowledge to create culturally safe learning environments for Indigenous learners and educators. Participants will also explore the ways they can support land-based pedagogy for all early learners.

**Jeannie M. Martin**, from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, Mohawk Nation, Wolf clan, is currently an Assistant Professor of Indigenous Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education at Brock University. She holds a Master of Professional Education: Focus on Leadership in Indigenous Education. Her interests are in Indigenizing academic settings, working with education communities to create culturally safe learning spaces for Indigenous learners and educators, and building educator capacity in Indigenous education. She is a member of the Ontario College of Teachers and an educator with 27 years experience in Indigenous education.

**Stacy Tekonwaniahesen Hill** - Stacy is an Indigenous educator, leader, and innovator from the Mohawk, Turtle Clan at the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. For over twenty years she has been working in multiple educational environments on and off reserve, from babes in arms to post secondary levels. She is currently a freelance consultant working with Indigenous communities to build Indigenized educational systems. Stacy is a mid speaker of Kanyen'keha (Mohawk Language). Throughout her lifetime, Stacy has contributed her innovative ideas to the creation of many community organizations and programs to build a better tomorrow for Indigenous people in community. Stacy holds a Bachelor of Arts in Native Studies from Trent University, a Bachelor of Education from Brock University with designations in the Primary-Junior-Intermediate panels and Alternative Education. Her areas of Expertise encompass Indigenous Education, Mohawk Language learning, Program Development, and Community Engagement.



Presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room)

**Monday February 24, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Cost: No Charge (*Sponsored by Brock University*)



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# **Engaging Families in Authentic Ways**



## Supporting Families of Young Children with Special Needs *with* Dr. Dane Marco Di Cesare

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.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday April 17, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: No charge  
(Sponsored by Brock University –  
Faculty of Education)

Outside Niagara Educators: \$15



**Dr. Dane Marco Di Cesare** (he/him) is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University and Chair of the Canada Regional Network of INQYR (the International Partnership for Queer Youth Resilience). Di Cesare's research interests are intersectional and involve how youth with intersectional identities (particularly 2SLGBTQ+) engage with digital technology and their use of media literacies, supporting 2SLGBTQ+ mental health and wellbeing, gender equity with young children, and supporting early years families through the school system (2SLGBTQ+, families with children with special needs).





## Creating Community in Your Early Learning Environment *with Joel Seaman*

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.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Tuesday May 13, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$25

Outside Niagara Educators: \$45



**Joel Seaman** (he/him) is a classroom teacher, Kindergarten Specialist, AQ instructor, educational presenter, and firm believer in play-based learning and all things Early Years. He has presented workshops and courses for educators throughout Ontario. Most recently, he was approached to develop lessons and appear as an educator on TVO Kids Power Hour of Learning.

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# Connecting Children to Nature



## Plant-based Culinary Adventures in the Classroom *with* Danielle Medina, B.S. Food Science and Nutrition

Join us for an exciting webinar that explores innovative ways to incorporate plant-based culinary adventures into early learning environments. Discover creative and engaging activities that introduce young minds to the wonders of nutritious, plant-based foods. This presentation will share practical tips, delicious recipes, and interactive ideas to make healthy eating a fun and educational experience for both educators and young learners.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday February 13, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$25

Outside Niagara Educators: \$45

### Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the importance of teaching healthy eating habits in early childhood.
2. Learn about the plant-based food groups: whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables.
3. Discover fun and interactive ways to teach children about nutrition.
4. Gain practical skills for creating simple, nutritious meals and snacks in an interactive culinary demo.
5. Develop strategies for engaging children in meaningful conversations about food.



**Fit N Play Mama LLC** guides businesses and families to live a more playful, joyful and healthy life. Our mission is to not only offer wellness programs to improve your well-being and empower you to excel but to embrace new ideas that enhance your life's journey.



## Exploring the Possibilities of Makerspace in Outdoor Environments *with* ECCDC Training Team

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.



Presented *In Person in Niagara* (St. Catharines Museum, 1932 Welland Canals Parkway, St. Catharines)

**Tuesday June 3, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$10

Outside Niagara Educators: \$25





## Fostering a Sustainable Future Through Environmental Programs Grounded in Ontario Curriculum *with* Jacob Rodenburg

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.



Presented **In person** in Niagara  
(ECCDC Conference Room)

**Saturday June 7, 2025**

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Niagara Educators: \$25 includes a light lunch

Outside Niagara Educators: \$45 includes a light lunch



**Jacob Rodenburg** has taught in the field of Outdoor Education for almost 30 years. He is currently the Executive Director of Camp Kawartha and teaches part time at Trent University in environmental education. Recently Jacob co-authored an award-winning book called "The Big Book of Nature Activities" with naturalist Drew Monkman. Jacob conceived of an environmental framework for children of all ages called the Pathway to Stewardship & Kinship.

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# **Promoting Health, Safety and Wellbeing within Early Learning Environments**



## Wellness Strategies: Stress, Compassion Fatigue, and Resilience for Educators *with* Achieve Centre for Leadership

In many organizations it is common to find employees suffering from the adverse effects of stress, which can lead to loss of focus, productivity, and well-being. In

the helping field, there are additional factors related to the nature of supporting people that can contribute to compassion fatigue or secondary trauma symptoms. This webinar will help participants identify personal stress factors and introduce them to practical strategies for managing stress and increasing resilience.

**The Achieve Centre** provides training (in-person and online), consulting, books, and free resources in the areas of leadership, workplace culture, conflict, and communication. At the heart of our training materials and resources is a belief that everyone deserves to like where they work. We hope that the impact of our work ripples out into the world, inspiring learning and improving lives.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday February 6, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$45

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55



## Supporting Mental Health in Early Learning Environments *with* Angela Hayes, Coordinator and Professor and Cathy Teixeira, Professor, Niagara College

This workshop 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.



Presented *In Person in Niagara*  
(ECCDC Conference Room)

**Thursday April 3, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Cost: No Charge (*Sponsored by  
Niagara College*)





## Mastering Emotional Intelligence for RECEs *with* Carolyn Hadcock

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.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Tuesday April 8, 2025**

6:00 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$35

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55



### **Carolyn Hadcock, Bachelor of Teaching, ECE**

I have been involved in the Early Childhood Education field for 40 years. My experience includes front line staff for 5 years and supervisor for 10 years. I am a retired professor, teaching in the School of Early Childhood Education at Seneca College for 20 years. I currently operate my own 35-year-old consulting business, Miss Carolyn Seminars, offering inspirational/keynote speaking and a variety of webinars, seminars, workshops, etc., that I have created, designed, and facilitated. I am passionate about the field of Early Childhood Education and feel that there is value for RECEs, etc., to be inspired, informed, and excited about teaching and caring for children of all ages. I am an enthusiastic, energetic speaker. My presentations and PowerPoints are of high caliber and have received many kudos from organizations on their quality. I also teach meditation practices and have been doing it for 30+ years.



# **Strengthening Early Learning Programs: Legislation and Small Business Operational Strategies**



## Recruitment, Retention and Performance Management: A Three-Part Series *with* Achieve Centre

### Session One - Hiring Strategies – Recruitment, Selection and Onboarding

Finding and selecting the right people to join our teams – those who will perform well in the role and contribute meaningfully to our workplace culture – is a challenge for every organization. This workshop explores current research and best practices to help participants evaluate and improve their current recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes. As the first phase of the employee experience, these three elements set the stage for future performance and engagement. Through individual exercises and group discussion, participants will generate practical insights that can be immediately applied to improve their hiring strategy and practices in their organization's context.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Session One: Wednesday January 22, 2025**

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Niagara Administrators: \$35 per session or \$85 for the full series

Outside Niagara Administrators: \$55 per session or \$125 for the full series

*Continued on page 40*

*Niagara Registrants are invited to attend the Executive Directors and Administrators Network following Session One to connect about issues and opportunities to share strategies, suggestions and best practices with their colleagues from 12:00 to 1:30 pm*

## Recruitment, Retention and Performance Management: A Three-Part Series continued

### Session Two: Coaching Strategies for Learning - Conflict, Performance, Change

In the absence of intentional coaching, employees often lack the support they need to develop and perform at their highest levels. Effective leaders are skilled at coaching the people they lead to inspire growth, change, and healthy work relationships. This workshop provides a leadership approach for coaching others effectively and provides tools that bring out the best in the people. Through the use of case studies, participants will learn a five-step coaching model for working with their employees to enable changes in behaviour, promote skill development, and resolve conflict.

### 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.

**The Achieve Centre** provides training (in-person and online), consulting, books, and free resources in the areas of leadership, workplace culture, conflict, and communication. At the heart of our training materials and resources is a belief that everyone deserves to like where they work. We hope that the impact of our work ripples out into the world, inspiring learning and improving lives.



Presented *Via Webinar* - all sessions

**Session Two: Wednesday March 26, 2025**

**Session Three: Wednesday May 28, 2025**

10:00 am to 12:00 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Administrators: \$35 per session or \$85 for the full series

Outside Niagara Administrators: \$55 per session or \$125 for the full series

*Niagara Registrants are invited to attend the Executive Directors and Administrators Network following Session Two to connect about issues and opportunities to share strategies, suggestions and best practices with their colleagues from 12:00 to 1:30 pm*





## Strengthening Your Program Through Trauma-Informed Practices *with* **Achieve Centre**

Trauma is prevalent in our world and has an impact on many of the people we interact with, including our clients and colleagues. Compassionate and trauma-informed care is essential to providing effective support and building sustainable services. This workshop explores how to build a trauma-informed culture in a workplace setting that integrates knowledge throughout the organization. Participants will develop an understanding of the pervasive impact of trauma on individual health and relationships. Guiding principles will be explored for increasing emotional and physical safety, culturally sensitive empowerment, and creating greater resilience for all parts of an organization. Becoming trauma-informed creates a sustainable foundation in any work setting to promote strength, engagement, and recovery.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Saturday February 22, 2025**

8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Niagara Educators: \$65

Outside Niagara Educators: \$75

**The Achieve Centre** provides training (in-person and online), consulting, books, and free resources in the areas of leadership, workplace culture, conflict, and communication. At the heart of our training materials and resources is a belief that everyone deserves to like where they work. We hope that the impact of our work ripples out into the world, inspiring learning and improving lives.





## **Reflect and Revitalize: Onboarding Educators and Families While Bringing Your Program Statement and Centre Values to Life Series** *with ECCDC Training Team*

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!

### **Series objectives**

- Understand the purpose and components of a mission, vision, values, and program statement in supporting your organization.
- Develop strategies for effectively communicating onboarding processes and program statement to educators and families.
- Identify methods and techniques to engage and reflect with educators and families within the program utilizing the onboarding process and program statement.

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## Reflect and Revitalize: Onboarding Educators and Families While Bringing Your Program Statement and Centre Values to Life Series continued

### 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.



All sessions presented *Via Webinar*

**Session 1: Friday April 4, 2025**

**Session 2: Friday May 2, 2025**

**Session 3: Friday June 6, 2025**

1:30 to 3:30 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Administrators: No Charge

Outside Niagara Administrators: \$65 for full series

### 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.

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# Inspiring Leadership in Early Learning and Child Care



## Lead Like It Matters *with* Debbi Sluys

Join Debbi Sluys for this new workshop to empower your leadership path. Participants will have conversations on the following workshop topics in order to reinvigorate your perspective on leadership and recommit to building the capacity of others. Participants will regain confidence in themselves as a leader and become an empowered decision maker. The workshop will also encourage leaders to apply strategies to re-engage with their Team to help cultivate a positive culture within their organization. The workshop will help participants feel better prepared to respond to today's challenges as a leader.

1. The IT Factor - what is it?
2. Study yourself - to build confidence
3. Study others - to empower your teams
4. Study yourself in relationship to others - to build community
5. Empower Decision making - for sustainability.

Upon conclusion, the participant will be **better prepared to respond to today's challenges as a leader.**



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Wednesday February 19, 2025**

10:00 to 11:30 am

Niagara Administrators: \$55

Outside Niagara Administrators: \$65



**Debbi Sluys**, Personal Development & Empowerment Coach empowers people to live their best lives and be the best professional they can be, by discovering their vision, balancing their lives, and realizing their inner power. Debbi is founder of the Dare to Declare™ Academy, which certifies coaches and entrepreneurs to lead impactful vision board experiences for their clients.



## Ten Things Outstanding Board of Director Teams Do *with* Acclaimed Author Paula MacLean

Join your board colleagues, senior managers, and bestselling author and Canadian board governance expert Paula J. MacLean, for this interactive virtual session on how to create a GREAT board! We'll explore how to fully understand and strengthen your board's governance role. And we'll also discover the six ways that boards can hold senior managers accountable, without the board getting involved in operations. Each participant will also receive a copy of a customizable template for creating a board governance policy manual.

### Topics we will touch on include:

- 3 different models for nonprofit boards
- Roles and fiduciary duties of policy boards
- Responsibilities of individual board members
- Term limits and why they are important
- Board recruitment and orientation of new members
- Financial stewardship
- 4 quarters of board activity
- Succession planning for the board and executive director/CEOs



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Wednesday February 26, 2025**

9:30 to 11:30 am

Niagara Administrators: \$45

Outside Niagara Administrators: \$55

**Paula J. MacLean**, a leading Canadian author, nonprofit educator, coach and consultant, has almost four decades guiding nonprofit boards and organizations to face their unique challenges and build successful teams. She is the author of 6 books focused on leadership and human resource practices. She has worked with and for more than 400 agencies in Canada over the past several decades. This course is intended for individuals in a leadership position or those aspiring to formal leadership.



## Intuitive Leadership Team Building Boot Camp Series *with* Alison Grbic

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. They will learn to:

- Go within, listen to themselves and their own needs by getting quiet, doing things they enjoy to do the inner reflective work, discover areas of healing, acceptance, and releasing past wounds, fears/doubts to live as their true authentic self.
- To see the value of self-care and its benefits as they fill their cup and to function at their optimum to best support others without self-sabotage.
- To gain insight, wisdom, and intuitive knowledge to guide them each day and “to tune in/tap in”.
- Use the “Intuitive Model” as a guide to recognize, honour, and access their intuition and take action based on their intuitive promptings, providing clarity to make difficult decisions or face conflict or stressful situations as self-reliant, confident, and empowered leaders.
- To balance empathy, accept others, set healthy boundaries, and use intuitive discernment with people/situations to support others in traumatic/adverse situations by being objective, grounded, and through intuitive interactions, creating deeper connections and understanding of self/others.
- To understand intuition works in tandem with emotional balance and through use of “Steps to Emotional Balance” to improve self-awareness, acceptance of self/others, and reflect on areas that require healing of triggers/wounds, old beliefs, biases, and assumptions or attachments. Building their own emotional/mental health, raise their vibration, and create more happiness, opportunities, and positivity in their own lives, having a ripple effect on teams and communities as they are better “equipped” to support others and share this knowledge in reciprocal ways.
- Emotionally healthy, intuitive leaders in our sector have a profound, positive impact on uplifting the emotional/mental well-being of children, families, staff, overall building sustainable systems, and communities to overcome adversity.

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## Intuitive Leadership Team Building Boot Camp Series continued

### 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.



Presented *Via Webinar* - all sessions

**Session 1: Thursday April 10, 2025**

**Session 2: Thursday May 8, 2025**

**Session 3: Thursday June 12, 2025**

10:00 to 11:30 am (all sessions)

Niagara Administrators: \$55

Outside Niagara Administrators: \$75

### 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.



**Alison Grbic** is an Early Childhood Educator who has been in the field of Child Care and Early Learning, serving families and children ages 0-12 years old, for over 30 years. She has experience in many leadership roles such as a Supervisor/Manager of various child care centres, before/ after school, and summer camp programs; Owner/Operator of 2 child care centres; Manager of 5 Ontario Early Years Centres; ECE Field Advisor for Seneca College, and currently over 10 years as Senior Manager of 19 EarlyON Child & Family Centres with the TCDSB and business owner of an educational/professional development & training company, On Eagles Wings. Alison is a strong advocate for early learning programs/services, community growth and development and mindful, intuitive teaching and leadership, focusing on the value of each individual. She is passionate about supporting and empowering educators, parents, families and children and aims to help them reach new heights as they move along the continuum of their own unique learning journey!



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# **Position Specific Training Series**



## Pour les éducateurs/éducatrices francophones avec Helene Pouliot-Cleare

### Approfondissons nos connaissances sur l'observation, la documentation et la planification

Cet atelier présentera diverses façons (collecte de données) de recueillir des informations significatives sur les besoins et les intérêts des enfants pour les intégrer dans la planification d'un programme de la petite enfance ou de maternelle/jardin par le biais d'activités qui invitent la réflexion et la participation active afin de valider vos pratiques actuelles et les enrichir.

### L'apprentissage par le jeu

Cet atelier fournira des suggestions concrètes pour organiser des centres d'apprentissage inspirants qui respectent les besoins et les intérêts des enfants en ajoutant du matériel familier, tiré du vécu de l'enfant à peu ou pas de frais dans les centres suivants : les blocs, le jeu dramatique, les arts, les activités sensorielles, la littératie, la numératie et les sciences.



Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

**le 16 octobre 2024**

**le 4 décembre 2024**

18h30 à 20h30

Participants au Niagara: \$15 par séance ou \$45 pour la série

Participants à l'extérieur de Niagara: \$25 par séance ou \$85 pour la série

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## Pour les éducateurs/éducatrices francophones continued

### Comment aider nos enfants à développer l'autorégulation et mieux gérer ses comportements

L'autorégulation aide l'enfant à s'ajuster et à gérer son attention, ses émotions, son comportement, ses pulsions, ses réactions face aux différentes situations ou changements dans son environnement. Les recherches récentes démontrent l'importance de développer cette habileté dès le jeune âge car c'est étroitement lié à la réussite scolaire et sociale pour la vie durant. Cet atelier offrira des stratégies pratiques pour favoriser ce développement.

### 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.



Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

**le 5 février 2025**

**le 9 avril 2025**

18h30 à 20h30

Participants au Niagara: \$15 par séance ou \$45 pour la série

Participants à l'extérieur de Niagara: \$25 par séance ou \$85 pour la série



**Hélène Pouliot-Cleare** est œuvre en éducation depuis plus de quarante ans dans le Centre-Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario et toujours dans un milieu riche de diversité où le français est la langue de la minorité; elle a travaillé comme éducatrice et coordonnatrice d'une garderie, enseignante à l'élémentaire, prof au niveau collégial et universitaire, conseillère pédagogique, directrice d'école élémentaire, consultante et conférencière; elle a travaillé dans des conseils scolaires, au ministère de l'éducation et à TFO chaîne de télévision française; et elle est passionnée par l'éducation, elle aime allumée les autres.



## Relationships through Research: Cultivating Connection and Engagement with Children and Families through Teacher Research: A Three-Part Series for EarlyON Teams *with* Victoria Armstrong

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 1: Forming the Question - Brainstorming Together

Research begins with a question. In Part 1, we'll begin by diving into what teacher research is, how and what we observe, what makes a researchable question, and how we can go about forming a specific question for research with other colleagues and families. At the end of this session, participants will have a process that they can utilize with families to create a researchable question for their programs.



Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

**Part 1: Friday October 25, 2024**

1:00 to 2:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$15 per session or \$40 for the full series

Outside Niagara Educators: \$35 per session or \$85 for the full series

*Continued on page 53*

## Relationships through Research: Cultivating Connection and Engagement with Children and Families through Teacher Research: A Three Part Series for EarlyON Teams continued

### Part 2: Studying the Question - Looking Together

Once we have a question ready to study, we are ready to listen and look closely. In Part 2, we'll look at multiple ways to document children's thinking and ideas in response to our research question. This includes creating a research board, a parent/caregiver documentation invitation, and sharing secondary research on our topic with families. We'll then think about how to look for big ideas and overarching themes in the documentation that we are capturing as a way of pulling our research together. At the end of this session, participants will have tangible ideas for documenting answers to their research question with families.



Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

**Part 2: Friday January 24, 2025**

**Part 3: Friday May 16, 2025**

1:00 to 2:30 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Educators: \$15 per session or \$40 for the full series

Outside Niagara Educators: \$35 per session or \$85 for the full series

### 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.



#### **Victoria Armstrong, RECE, B.ECS, Owner Side By Side (SBS) Consulting Services**

For over 15 years, Victoria Armstrong has devoted her life to living out this view of children and supporting and challenging others to live out this view of children also. A published author and dance instructor, she has held a variety of roles throughout her early learning career; Classroom Educator, Pedagogical Leader, College Professor, HR and Communications Specialist, Coordinator and Early Learning Consultant. A large part of her career was dedicated to the pioneering and growth of a children's art initiative that integrated local artists into early learning and licensed child care programs. Her passion for the arts in early childhood along with giving visibility to children's thinking through the process of pedagogical documentation is what has given her career specific direction over the past 8 years.



## Professional Learning Series for Home Based Professionals: Strengthening Play in the Home through *How Does Learning Happen?*

**Session One: How Does Learning Happen for  
Non RECEs with ECCDC Training Team**

I'm not an RECE so what does *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* look like for me? *How Does Learning Happen?* Is a pedagogical resource developed for early learning professionals that promotes a shared understanding of what children need and what can be done to help them grow and flourish. The early learning field is moving away from prescribed checklists of tasks to complete or a template for a "one-size-fits-all" approach which recognizes the uniqueness of programs, children, families, and educators. *How Does Learning Happen?* is meant to promote deeper reflection on how to create places and experiences where children, families, and educators explore, question, and learn together in quality early years programs. This session has been designed to introduce non RECEs to the ideas and theories within *How Does Learning Happen?* and offers opportunities for reflection, discussion, and exploration of the document.



Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

**Monday November 4, 2024**

7:00 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Home Child Care Providers:  
\$20 a session or \$45 for the full series

Outside Niagara Home Child Care  
Providers: \$25 a session or \$65 for the  
full series

*Continued on page 55*

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## Professional Learning Series for Home Based Professionals: Strengthening Play in the Home through *How Does Learning Happen?* continued

### Session Two: Unlocking the Magic of Emergent Curriculum - An Introduction to the Emergent Curriculum Approach *with Tina Geers*

Step into the magical world of emergent planning – where children are the key! The way we plan play experiences for children is changing as we focus on the interests and abilities of the children as the core concept behind planning classroom experiences and co-learn, co-create, and co-imagine with the children. What is emergent planning? Is it effective? Will the children still enjoy the experiences and learn? How does it work with the Ontario Framework? Discover the answers to these questions and more as we look at key tips and strategies for implementing an emergent curriculum approach to children’s learning. This workshop is designed to reveal the mystery and magic of the well-known emergent curriculum concept and put it into practice in your early learning environment. Remember! Not all environments and planning are the same – just like not all children or educators are the same. So, let’s figure out how to do it so it works for everyone!



Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

**Session 2: Monday January 20, 2025**

**Session 3: Monday March 31, 2025**

7:00 to 8:30 pm (all sessions)

Niagara Home Child Care Providers: \$20 a session or \$45 for the full series

Outside Niagara Home Child Care Providers: \$25 a session or \$65 for the full series

### Session Three: Playful Planning: Enriching Your Emergent Curriculum Approach *with Tina Geers*

Playful learning experiences promote a sense of curiosity, exploration, and confidence, which are what we all strive to achieve when we plan for our early childhood environment and our children’s experiences. The emergent curriculum approach is one of the most popular and best approaches to achieve this. This approach lets the child lead the playful experiences and follow their own learning path. As early childhood educators, our job is to observe their interests and plan to complement or extend them. Being intentional about preparing a responsive environment is a key element to emergent planning. How we plan activities, play experiences, provocations and invitations and make changes to our environment all depends on the dynamics of our group of children and our ability to really listen, observe, and learn about the children’s deeper interests and abilities. Let us walk alongside the children and join them in their journeys of wonder, play and curiosity. Join me as we discuss planning strategies that work for everyone. There is no ‘one size fits all’ when it comes to planning for children’s play, so let’s explore what your journey is with the children and how you can plan for play!



**Tina Geers** (Owner of Inspired Minds ECC Consulting Inc.) is an Early Childhood Coach and Consultant with over 17 years of experience. She has taught in Asia, Europe, Canada and has experience as an educator, coach, consultant, and mentor. Bachelor’s of Professional Arts, Early Childhood Education and Training from Athabasca University Early Learning and Child Care degree from Grande Prairie Regional College.

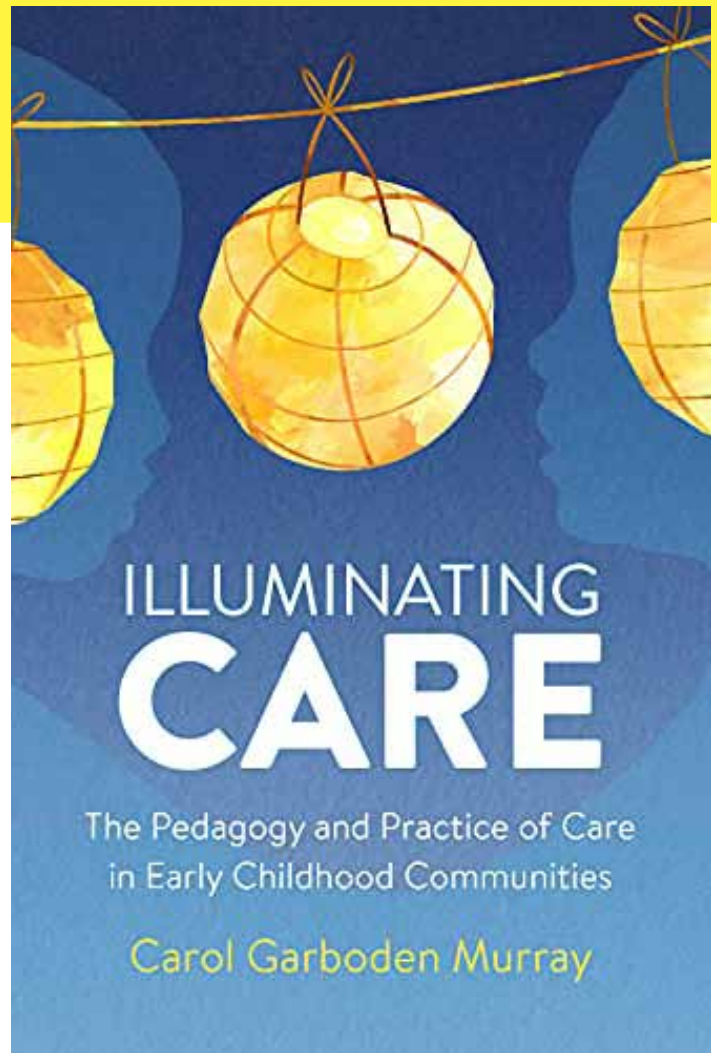
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# Peer to Peer Book Study Opportunities



## Book Study - Illuminating Care – The Pedagogy and Practice of Care in Early Childhood Communities

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.



Presented *Via Webinar* - all sessions

**Session 1: Wednesday January 29, 2025** Launch with Book Author Carol Garboden Murray 6:30 to 7:30 pm

**Session 2: Wednesday February 26, 2025**

**Session 3: Wednesday March 26, 2025**

**Session 4: Wednesday April 30, 2025**

**Session 5: Wednesday May 28, 2025**

6:30 to 8:00 pm - all sessions except Session 1

Niagara Educators No charge

Outside Niagara Educators: \$45

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**Very Special Presentations  
Featuring Acclaimed  
Authors, Researchers  
and Storytellers**

# Creating Circles of Support Through Cultivating Professional Friendships in Early Childhood Education: A Professional Conversation

*Book written by Diane Kashin and Launched in Niagara with the Loving Care of Cindy Green and Support from Diane's Family*

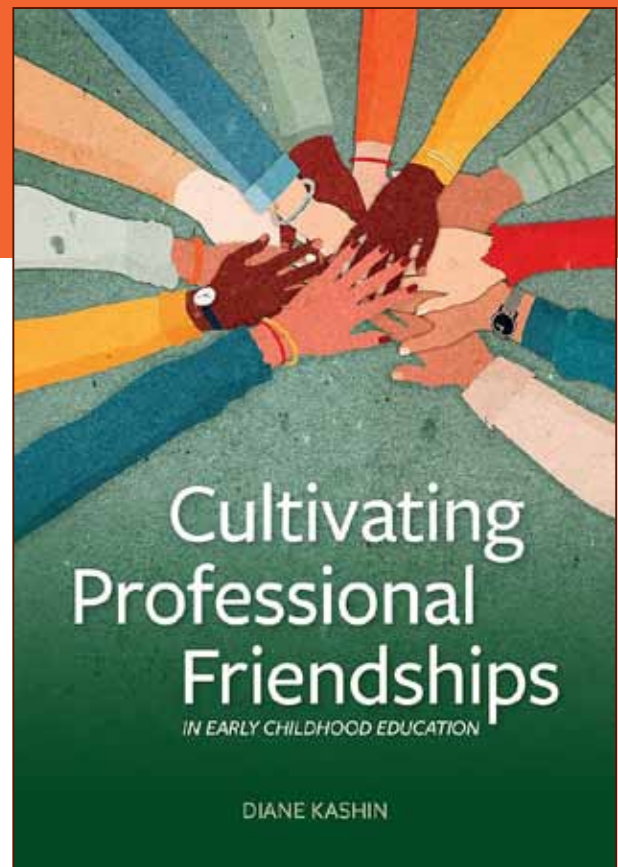
Adult professional friendships are integral to early childhood education, giving educators daily support and collaboration, nurturing their professional and pedagogical growth, and - not to be discounted - making the job fun. During this workshop, participants will explore what it means to be a friend, how to make friends and keep friends, and what happens when friendships end. All are invited to attend. Workshop participants will be invited to join a series of professional conversations following this launching session. Dates and times to be explored as a group.

Together with Dory Kashin, Cindy is excited to join you in Niagara and share reflections about the big ideas inherent in this book as well as Diane's writing process.

In addition to being a daughter, wife, mother, bubbie, sister, friend, professor and mentor, **Diane Kashin**, EdD, RECE was an early learning educator who shared her research, wisdom and passion with so many. She was an author of many books pertaining to early learning and care and her blog [tecbiresearch.blog](http://tecbiresearch.blog) was followed by thousands. In her final book, *Cultivating Professional Friendships in Early Childhood Education* (2024), Diane invites educators to delve into the theory that professional friendship is a practice that enhances professional learning and growth. In her work with educators, it was her aim to embed opportunities for play. Playful adults are more inclined to invite young children to follow their curiosities through play and inquiry. Diane's enthusiasm and knowledge about social constructivism and pedagogical practices invited, sustained and deepened the thinking of so many. Diane, we are your legacy.

**Dory Kashin**, daughter of Diane Kashin, is an Event Planner by trade and is currently a Creative Operations Manager at Hootsuite. Dory has worked alongside Cindy and her mom; sourcing and lugging materials, securing venues, planning and setting up food and beverage and has been a sounding board for many of our professional dreams.

**Cindy Green B.Sc., RECE** is a retired ECE professor from a community college in Ontario and currently works as an early learning and care consultant. Cindy and the late Diane Kashin, professional friends for a number of decades deepened our relationship throughout the years as we were passionate to engage in pedagogical ponderings that kept us up all hours of the night! Cindy is honoured to have been one of Diane's personal and professional friends.



Presented ***In person in Niagara***  
(ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

**Saturday January 25, 2025**

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

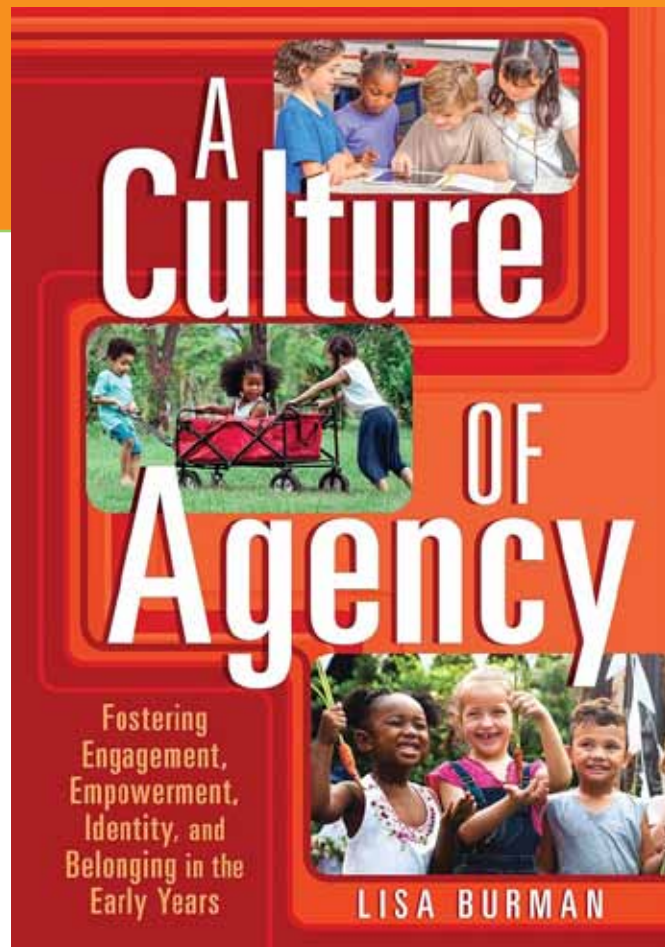
Cost: \$65 includes a copy of the book  
*Cultivating Professional Friendships*

*In loving memory of Diane Kashin, author, colleague, friend.*

To register for any session, visit [www.eccdc.org](http://www.eccdc.org), call 905.646.7311 ext. 304, or email [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org)

## A Culture of Agency: Fostering Engagement, Empowerment, Identity, and Belonging in the Early Years *with* Lisa Burman

Deeply engage all young learners with a sense of agency and belonging. What gives some early childhood classrooms that special “buzz” of learning? How do those educators create the culture of learning for their students, where all children are deeply involved and drive their own learning with curiosity and care? Using her everyday research approach, in the tradition of the pedagogistas of Reggio Emilia, author Lisa Burman observed several special classrooms with children ages three to eight and identified some common engagement, agency, identity, and belonging, which together combine to create a culture of agency. The term agency is widely used, but often misunderstood as “giving children choice.” Agency is far more than this, and the most powerful learning happens when personal agency is connected to community we are only as strong as each other. These connections form the heart of a democratic one that values the rights of the child and empowers participation, shared power, respect for diversity, and self-efficacy. Her framework for supporting a culture of agency has five Relationships, Rituals for belonging and identity, Language of agency, Environment, and Learning Contexts. Using this framework along with the book’s guiding questions and goal-setting tool will help you bring intentionality as you build your classroom culture to support children’s agency and learning.



Presented *Via Webinar*

**Wednesday March 5, 2025**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$45 for workshop only or \$75 for workshop and a copy of Lisa’s Book, *A Culture of Agency*

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55 for workshop only or \$85 for workshop and a copy of Lisa’s Book, *A Culture of Agency*

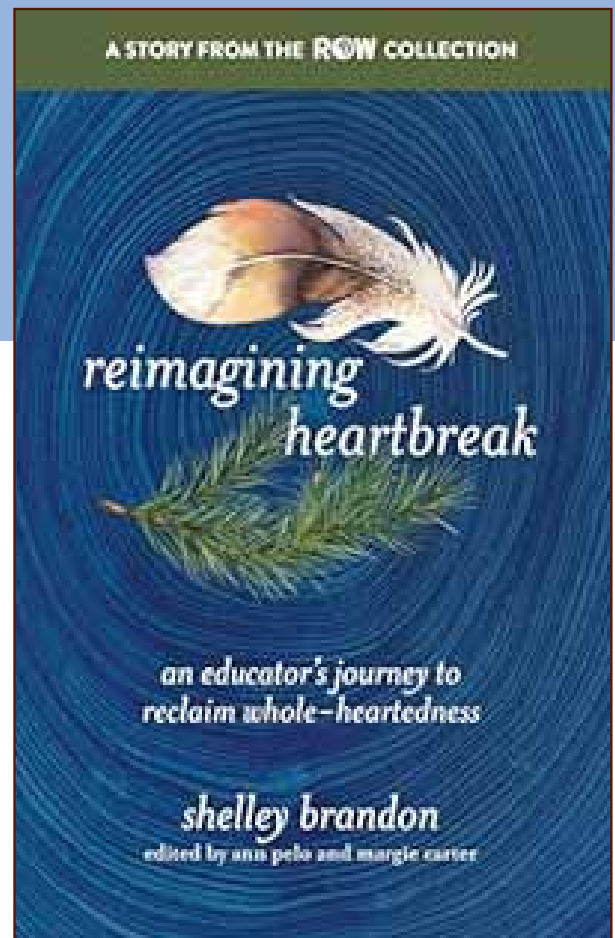


Lisa Burman, Director & Principal Consultant - Lisa is an experienced teacher and school leader. She currently works as a Pedagogical Consultant in Australia, supporting educators and prior-to-school and primary school leaders to develop site wide plans for pedagogical change. Lisa’s interests include early childhood education and care, imbedding and contextualizing the principles of the Reggio Emilia educational project within learning environments, play, literacy learning, inquiry learning and strengthening children’s connections to nature. She is passionate about pedagogies that see children as capable and competent learners who are skilled in researching life and making connections. Her favourite work is side-by-side with children and educators in their learning settings. Lisa has presented at a number of national and international conferences. Her first book was published by Redleaf Press and is titled “Are You Listening? Fostering Conversations that Help Young Children Learn”.

# Book Launch and Highlights with the Author: Re-imagining Heartbreak: An Educator's Journey to Reclaim Whole-Heartedness *with Shelley Brandon,* book edited by Ann Pelo and Margie Carter

Reimagining Heartbreak is part of the Reimagining Our Work (ROW) book collection, a book series that inspires early childhood educators to reimagine their work and thinking alongside children. Stop. Look. Listen. Feel. Come fully alive in your encounters with young children. Reimagining Heartbreak is a call to return to fullhearted, embodied teaching. It is a journey through the woods and into the depths. Shelley Brandon's stories reveal the extraordinary beauty that is possible in ordinary life. Can you dare to bring your whole self to your work with young children? Can you afford not to?

Join Author Shelley Brandon to explore some main highlights of her book, to learn about her inspiration in writing it and to consider key messages in our work with young Children. Books may be ordered in advance and Shelley will be happy to sign books during the day.



Presented ***In person in Niagara*** (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

**Saturday March 29, 2025**

9:30 to 11:30 am - Highlights of the Book Shared by Shelley Brandon

11:30 am to 12:00 pm - Book Signing

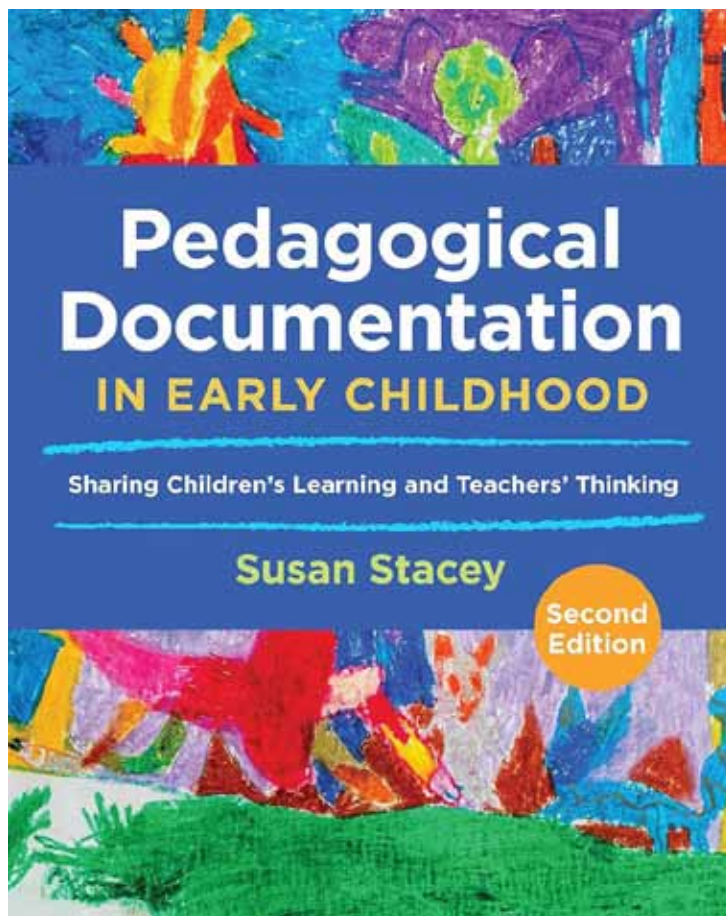
Niagara Educators: \$45 includes a copy of Reimagining Heartbreak

Outside Niagara Educators: \$65 includes a copy of Reimagining Heartbreak

## Pedagogical Documentation in Early Years Practice: Seeing Through Multiple Perspectives *with* Acclaimed Educator, Author and Researcher Susan Stacey with A Special Book Signing

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.

The afternoon will provide participants the opportunity to engage in a hands-on exploration of pedagogical documentation.



Presented *In person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

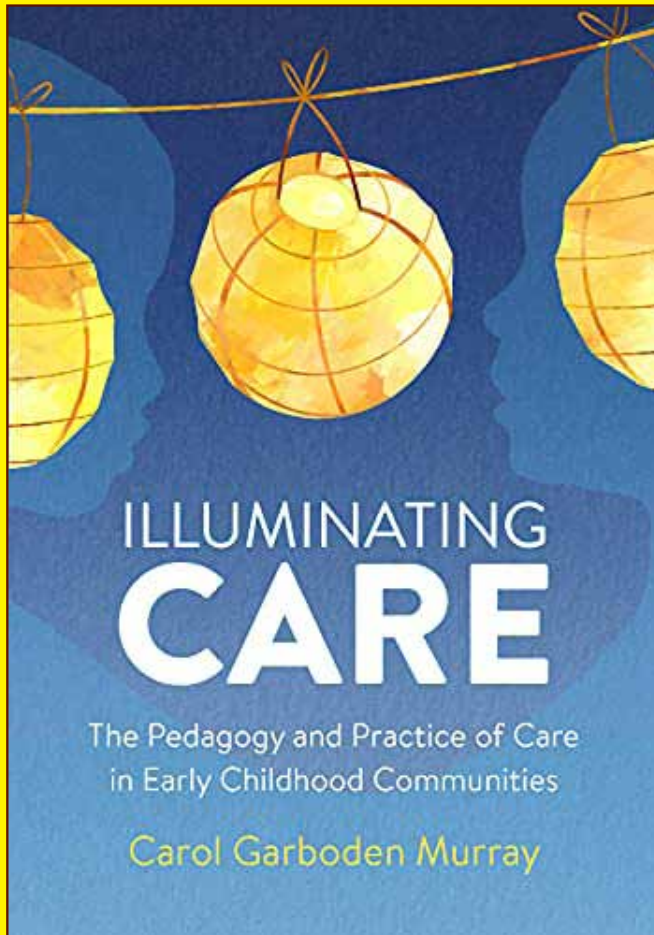
**Saturday May 31, 2025**

10:00 am to 2:30 pm

Niagara Educators: \$65 includes a light lunch

Outside Niagara Educators: \$75 includes a light lunch

Copies of *Pedagogical Documentation in Early Childhood Education: Sharing Children's Learning and Teachers' Thinking* may be purchased in advance and Susan will happily sign the book during lunch time. Participants may choose to purchase a copy of the book through ECCDC for \$80. Please ensure your book order is placed by **May 8, 2025**



## ILLUMINATING CARE – The Pedagogy and Practice of Care in Early Childhood Communities

Book Study Launch with Carol Garboden Murray on January 29 from 6:30 to 7:30 pm (see page 57).

**Full Day Institute in 2025!**  
Please stay tuned for a date.

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# Niagara Communities of Practice Network Meetings





Are you an early learning and child care professional looking to connect with peers, share resources, and stay updated on the latest trends?

Our 2024/2025 Networks offer a unique opportunity for professionals across various programs to come together for insightful discussions, collaborative brainstorming, and mutual support. Whether you're seeking innovative solutions for everyday challenges, exploring new ideas, or simply looking to connect with others in the field, our networks provide the perfect platform to enhance your practice and strengthen the community.

Join us and be part of a supportive environment where your voice matters, your ideas flourish, and your professional journey is supported.

## Niagara Networks Winter 2024/25 (December 2024 to February 2025)

### Licensed Child Care Centre Menu Planning and Nutrition Network Meeting (formerly Licensed Child Care Cooks Network)

**Cultural Diversity in Menus: Celebrating Global Flavours:** Embrace the rich tapestry of global cuisines by incorporating culturally diverse menus. This network will explore how to plan and prepare meals that celebrate various cultures, ensuring that children experience a wide range of flavours and learn about different cultures through food. In this network, we will discuss strategies for involving families in menu planning and supporting them in seeing their diverse cultures through food.

- Monday December 9, 2024 | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | Via Zoom

### Infant and Toddler Network

**Building Relationships through Care as a Curriculum:** Explore the impact of nurturing relationships in early childhood settings. This network will emphasize the concept of care as a curriculum, highlighting how meaningful interactions contribute to a child's learning and development. Come together to gain insights into creating warm, supportive relationships that promote emotional and social growth.

- Wednesday January 22, 2025 | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | Via Zoom

### Home Child Care Professionals Linked with a Licensed Home Child Care Agency

Are you contracted with one of Niagara's home child care licensed agencies: Wee Watch or Niagara Region Home Child Care? If so, this Network is for you. Come to tour the ECCDC, borrow resources, problem solve with your peers and engage with others in similar positions. All sessions will take place at the ECCDC, 3350 Schmon Parkway, Thorold. Registration in advance is required by contacting [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org).

- Monday February 10, 2025 | 7:00 to 8:30 pm | In Person at ECCDC

### Licensed Child Care Supervisors Network

**Leadership and Team Building: Strategies for Effective Supervision:** Develop essential leadership and team building skills to effectively supervise your centre. This network covers strategies for cultivating a positive work environment, fostering collaboration among team members, and promoting professional growth. Together we will discuss our insights into effective communication, conflict resolution, and creating a supportive atmosphere where staff feel valued and empowered.

- Monday January 13, 2025 | 6:00 to 7:30 pm | Via Zoom

Continued on page 67



## Preschool Network

**Supporting Smooth Transitions to School:** Prepare preschoolers for a seamless transition to school with effective strategies and supportive practices. This network will focus on easing the transition process, addressing challenges, and fostering confidence in both educators, children and families. We will also discuss practical tips and collaborative solutions to ensure a positive start to a new journey.

- Wednesday January 15, 2025 | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | Via Zoom

## Executive Directors and Administrators Network (formerly Executive Directors Network)

Executive Directors are invited to attend this network to connect about issues and opportunities to share strategies, suggestions, and best practices with their colleagues. The Executive Directors and Administrators Network meeting will take place following Recruitment, Retention and Performance Management Series Session One - Hiring Strategies – Recruitment, Selection and Onboarding with Achieve Centre for Leadership. Participants are invited to watch the webinar at the ECCDC and join the in-person meeting which follows. For more details on this session, please refer to page 39.

- Wednesday January 22, 2025 | 12:00 to 1:30 pm | In Person at ECCDC (3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

## Niagara Nature Alliance Network

**Garden Adventures and Planting Parties: Cultivating Green Thumbs:** Discover the joys of gardening with children through hands-on planting activities and garden adventures. This network offers practical tips for starting and maintaining a garden in your childcare setting, regardless of space limitations. Join us for conversations on engaging children in the gardening process, from planting seeds to harvesting crops, and nurture their curiosity for nature.

- Wednesday February 19, 2025 | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | Via Zoom

## School Age Network

**Designing Dynamic Spaces and Mobile Carts:** Design exciting spaces and carts for before and after school programs that engage and inspire school-age children. This network will explore creative ideas for designing mobile carts and flexible spaces that cater to diverse interests. Join us to brainstorm solutions and share strategies for creating enriching environments that promote learning and fun.

- Wednesday February 12, 2025 | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | Via Zoom

# Niagara Networks Spring 2025 (March to May 2025)

## Licensed Child Care Centre Menu Planning and Nutrition Network Meeting (formerly Licensed Child Care Cooks Network)

**Gardening and Farm-to-Table - Integrating Food Education into Curriculum:** Connect children with the origins of their food through gardening and farm-to-table education. This network will explore ways to incorporate hands-on food education into your curriculum, from planting and harvesting to preparing and enjoying fresh produce. Join us to share ideas, discover resources, and plan activities that teach children about nutrition, sustainability, and the joys of growing their own food.

- **Monday March 17, 2025** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In person at a local child care centre (location to be announced)

## Infant and Toddler Network

**Connecting with Nature: Outdoor Learning and Play for Infants and Toddlers:** Connect with the great outdoors and uncover the benefits of nature-based learning. During this network, we will discuss outdoor play and exploration, providing practical ideas for integrating outdoor play into your practice. Come and be a part of this network to share how we create stimulating outdoor experiences that foster physical development, sensory exploration, and a lifelong love for nature.

- **Wednesday April 23, 2025** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In person at a local child care centre (location to be announced)

## Home Child Care Professionals Linked with a Licensed Home Child Care Agency

Are you contracted with one of Niagara's home child care licensed agencies: Wee Watch or Niagara Region Home Child Care? If so, this Network is for you. Come to tour the ECCDC, borrow resources, problem solve with your peers and engage with others in similar positions. All sessions will take place at the ECCDC, 3350 Schmon Parkway, Thorold. Registration in advance is required by contacting [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org).

- **Monday April 14, 2025** | 7:00 to 8:30 pm | In Person at ECCDC

## Licensed Child Care Supervisors Network

**Using the Niagara Inclusion Tool - Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in your Centre:** Discover practical ways to integrate the Niagara Inclusion Tool into your center's practices to promote diversity and inclusion. This network will explore how to assess and enhance inclusivity and support children and educators in creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all. Join us in conversation around strategies implementing inclusive practices that celebrate differences and nurture a sense of belonging.

- **Monday March 24, 2025** | 6:00 to 7:30 pm | In person at a local child care centre (location to be announced)

Continued on page 69

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## Preschool Network

**Inclusive Environments - Using the Niagara Inclusion Tool:** Learn how to create inclusive preschool environments that celebrate diversity and support all children's unique needs. This network will look at the Niagara Inclusion Tool through collaborative discussions for implementing the tool through supportive practices. Join us to promote a welcoming atmosphere where every child can thrive.

- **Wednesday April 16, 2025** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In person at a local child care centre (location to be announced)

## Executive Directors and Administrators Network (formerly Executive Directors Network)

Executive Directors are invited to attend this network to connect about issues and opportunities to share strategies, suggestions, and best practices with their colleagues. The Executive Directors and Administrators Network meeting will take place following Recruitment, Retention and Performance Management Series Session Two: Coaching Strategies for Learning - Conflict, Performance, Change with Achieve Centre for Leadership. Participants are invited to watch the webinar at the ECCDC and join the in person meeting which follows. For more details on this session, please refer to page 40.

- **Wednesday March 26, 2025** | 12:00 to 1:30 pm | In Person at ECCDC (3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

## Niagara Nature Alliance Network

**Outdoor Cooking and Nature Recipes: Exploring Culinary Delights in the Wild:** Blend the excitement of outdoor activities with the joys of cooking in nature. This network will explore creative ways to incorporate cooking into outdoor activities. Join us to share recipes, plan outdoor cooking events, and discover how to turn nature's offerings into delicious adventures.

- **Wednesday May 21, 2025** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In person (location to be announced)

## School Age Network

**Supporting Smooth Transitions with Children in Before and After School Programs:** This network will focus on supporting children during their initial first few months in before and after school programs. Discover practical strategies to ease children's transitions, build rapport, and create a sense of belonging. Explore with us transition techniques and activities that promote positive relationships among children, families, and educators.

- **Wednesday May 14, 2025** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In Person at ECCDC (3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold) and Via Livestream



## Coming Soon to a Computer Near You!

Microlearning Mondays – Elevating  
Professional Development through  
Bite-Sized Videos

Get ready for Microlearning Mondays, where we bring you short, focused videos designed to deliver timely insights and actionable strategies on current topics and trends. Dive into topics like "Exploring Inquiry-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education," "Integrating STEAM Education into Early Learning Environments," "Myths of Outdoor Play," and "Developing Fine Motor Skills Through Play." Stay tuned for quick, impactful learning experiences that fit into your busy schedule, coming soon!

The ECCDC extends gratitude to Niagara Region Children's Services for subsidizing costs associated with many of our programs and services in support of Niagara Region's early learning programs.



**eccdc**

Early Childhood Community Development Centre

3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold, ON L2V 4Y6 | 905.646.7311 ext. 304 | [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org) | [www.eccdc.org](http://www.eccdc.org)



Any of the sessions you read about in esteem can be customized to meet the individualized needs of your program or organization.