

December 2025

For Immediate Release

Niagara's 2025 Appreciation and Recognition Gala ~ Celebrating the Commitment and Dedication of a Thriving and Collaborative Early Learning Community

The Appreciation and Recognition Gala showcases the significant accomplishments of early learning professionals and the quality experiences offered within early learning and child care programs across Niagara. This year, the event takes place on Wednesday December 3, 2025 from 5:30 to 9:00 pm at The Americana Conference Resort in Niagara Falls. The gala is an annual event coordinated by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC), a charitable organization in its 31st year of offering professional learning, pedagogical resources, and mentoring supports within the early learning sector.

More than 500 guests will attend this year's event, which celebrates the exceptional dedication of educators, administrators, support staff, students, and volunteers for the enriching and nurturing early learning opportunities they provide to Niagara's children. This special event will be hosted by Dream 105.7's Aiko Iwashita and kicked off with an opening prayer offered by Senator Jean-Jacques Séguin of Métis Nation of Ontario. A jiggle dance will be performed by Sara Cotter. The evening will feature 14 recognition presentations, a silent auction, and entertainment provided by The Feverish Lemons Duo, a Niagara-based musical group.

We are grateful to Dream 105.7FM for their media sponsorship of this year's event, as well as to primary event sponsor Louise Kool and Galt, for the longstanding support of this gala. Many local businesses are also supporting this year's celebration, including the YMCA of Niagara, Walker Industries, Mountainview Building Group, A Child's World Family Child Care Services, Little One's Lunches, CIBC, The District School Board of Niagara, The Niagara Catholic District School Board, and Skycomp Solutions.

Lorrey Arial Bonilla, Executive Director of the ECCDC, shares her appreciation for the important work that Niagara's early learning professionals do to support a strong, vibrant community for children and families to grow and thrive. "Each year, the ECCDC is honoured to coordinate this valuable event to celebrate the work of early learning professionals and the strong partnerships that have been developed within the early learning sector here in Niagara. Community development is at the heart of the work that we do, and we are privileged to have this opportunity to honour and recognize the commitment and dedication of so many individuals working to support Niagara's children and families."

The ECCDC is pleased to have many community partners presenting awards at the gala, including: Niagara Region Children's Services, The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario, Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds, Brock University, Children's Learning Garden Home Child Care Licensing Agency, District School Board of Niagara, Fort Erie Aboriginal Head Start, Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara, Métis Nation of Ontario, Niagara Catholic District School Board, Niagara Child Care Sector Executive Committee, Niagara College, Pathstone Mental Health, Six Nations Polytechnic, YMCA of Niagara, and Wee Watch Home Child Care.

The ECCDC is an independent charitable organization dedicated to providing Niagara's early learning and care programs and providers with affordable access to the specialized learning resources, training and supports they need to deliver high quality care. The ECCDC's services are available to all educators and others involved in the care and education of children. The ECCDC is grateful for the funding received through Niagara Region Children's Services.

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