



early childhood community development centre

# Coaching & Mentoring CONNECTIONS

ISSUE 5 • August 2025

*Our goal is to provide you with practical, inspiring resources to support your work and professional growth in the early learning and child care field.*

Welcome to the August edition of the ECCDC Coaching and Mentoring newsletter. **“Literacy is more than just reading and writing. It’s the foundation upon which we learn and grow”** (Canadian Children’s Literacy Foundation, n.d.). In this edition of the coaching and mentoring connections newsletter we will be exploring how educators can support children’s early literacy development.



## Spotlight on Early Literacy Development

The Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation (n.d.) highlights the importance of building children's literacy skills as it is one of the most effective ways to ensure they can achieve their full potential during their school days and throughout their life. To find out more about the Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation, please [click here](#). They also highlight the important role that early learning and child care (EL&CC) educators play in supporting early literacy skills. Continue reading to learn how you can support and enhance early and emergent literacy within your EL&CC program.

## Supporting Emergent Literacy in Early Learning and Child Care

by Emma Coffey, Summer Intern with the ECCDC

### Literacy Areas

Literacy areas are dynamic, immersive spaces where children explore and engage with oral language, storytelling, reading, writing, and symbolic expression. Supporting emerging literacy skills includes open-ended materials, signs, symbols, and props (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). Additionally, offering several modes of literacy—oral, visual, and written—allows children to explore their identities, build upon vocabulary, and develop comprehension skills.

### Foundational Skills for Reading Development

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

### Early Literacy Skills Identified (National Early Literacy Panel)

- Alphabet knowledge
- Rapid automatic naming
- Writing
- Phonological memory
- Print Awareness



### Strategies for Supporting Early Literacy

- **Environmental Print:** Using everyday print found in the environment (like signs and labels) to teach reading and writing.
- **Dialogic Reading:** Engaging children in discussions about the text during read-aloud sessions to improve comprehension and vocabulary.
- **Predictable and Patterned Books:** Using books with repetitive phrases to support language learning and print awareness.

# Coaching & Mentoring CONNECTIONS

## Support for English Language Learners (ELL)

- Labelling classroom objects in both English and the student's first language.
- Providing materials in the student's first language to support bilingualism while learning English.
- Encouraging families to read and talk to their children in their home language(s) to support overall language development.

## Resources and Tools

**Read-Alouds:** Frequent and interactive read-aloud sessions to model reading behaviour and engage children with texts. (Brown, 2014)

**Word Walls:** Creating word walls with pictures and words to provide visual aids for learning vocabulary and concepts of print.

Focus on early literacy skills, supporting ESL children, and providing resources for educators to support young learners' reading and writing development.



## Strategies to Support

### Oral Language Development:

- Scaffold children's oral language. These include one-on-one conversations, encouraging talk during classroom activities (e.g., singing songs), and introducing subject area vocabulary.
- Be a good language model fostering language interactions by talking to children, asking questions, and promoting language use in meaningful contexts.

### Writing Development:

Learning to write is viewed as connecting meaning through text. Encouraged children to draw as part of their writing process, help them to create more complex texts from a younger age.

### Supporting Multilingual Children:

Understanding language differences is crucial in classrooms where children speak diverse languages. Encouraging parents to interact with their children in their home language(s) and promoting the use of children's home languages in the classroom.

### Professional Development Needs:

Participate in professional development to support your practices in developing oral language and supporting Indigenous and French Immersion children. There is a recognized need for ongoing observations and sensitive interactions to better support children's language development.

Peterson et. al., (2016)

# Coaching & Mentoring CONNECTIONS

## Cultural and Linguistic Awareness

It is important that educators are knowledgeable about children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds as it helps to create effective and inclusive learning environments that respect and incorporate children's diverse language experiences (Bhowmik & Kim, 2021).

## American Sign Language (ASL) Literacy and Literature

**ASL Literacy:** involves the ability to comprehend, analyze and communicate using ASL.

**ASL Literature:** storytelling, poetry, drama, through various media

**ASL Nursery Rhymes:** utilizing repetition of handshapes, movements, and nonmanual signals for educational purposes.

Educators should incorporate ASL nursery rhymes into early childhood programs to support language and literacy development in Deaf children.

---

## Refences and Resources for Mindfulness in Early Learning Books & Articles

Brown, C. S. (2014). Language and literacy development in the early years: Foundational skills that support emergent readers. *Language and Literacy Spectrum*, 24, 35-49.

Bhowmik, S. & Kim, M. (2021). K-12 ESL Writing Instruction: A Review of Research on Pedagogical Challenges and Strategies. *Language and Literacy/Langue et littérature*, 23(3), 165–202.

<https://doi.org/10.20360/langandlit29530>

Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation (n.d.). Literacy Facts: Let's build a brighter, more literate future for all children in Canada. <https://childrensliteracy.ca/Literacy-Matters>

Peterson, S. S., McIntyre, L. J., & Forsyth, D. (2016). Supporting young children's oral language and writing development: teachers' and early childhood educators' goals and practices.

*Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 41(3), 11+.

---

## Useful Blogs and Videos to Support Children's Early Literacy Skills

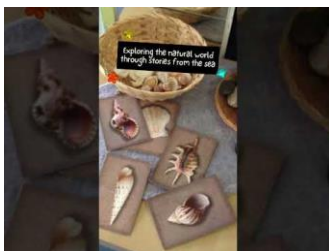


Niagara Children's Services: Speech Services Niagara Emergent Literacy – [click here](#) to watch

# Coaching & Mentoring CONNECTIONS



Pre-writing skills – [click here](#) to watch



Creating literacy rich environments in early childhood education – [click here](#) to watch

Learning Disabilities Association Ontario - Parent guide to reading with struggling readers: [click here](#)

Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation - Literacy Matters: [click here](#)

## ECCDC Blogs and Podcasts

If you would like to find out more about supporting children's early literacy development, then check out this ECCDC podcast.



[Click here](#) to listen to ***Foundations First: Building Literacy Through Authentic Engagement*** with Stacy Benge, M.S., and Andrea Stranges.

We are well into the summer, and the heat is rising. If you are trying to beat the heat in your Early Learning and Child Care program, then why not check out this ECCDC blog post?



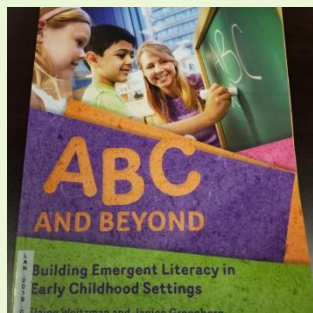
[Click here](#) to read ***Beat the Heat!***

You may also find this what to wear for the [weather infographic](#) from Active for Life not only helpful for the summer, but all seasons.

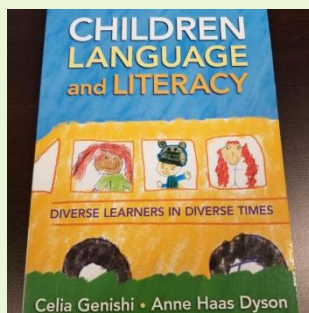


## Supporting Early Literacy Books and Resources

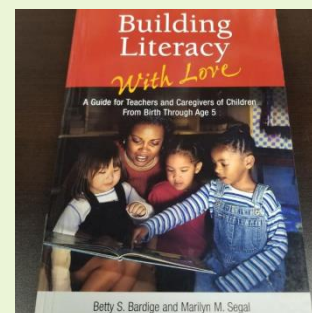
The ECCDC has many books and resources available to borrow from the ECCDC resource lending library. [Click here](#) to search the catalogue for resources to borrow or to purchase from ECCDC's E-Store, [click here](#).



ABC Beyond Building  
Emergent Literacy in  
Early Childhood  
Settings by Elaine  
Weitzman & Janice  
Greenberg



Children Language and  
Literacy - Diverse  
Learners in Diverse  
Times by Celia Genishi  
& Anne Haas Dyson



Building Literacy with  
Love by Betty S Bardige  
& Marilyn M Segal



Animal Friends: Young  
Children Investigate  
Birds Through  
Storytelling  
Experiences



Stories, Poems &  
Songs: Métis Nation of  
Ontario - The Giving  
Tree Story Bag



Story Sack - The Three  
Little Pigs

## Resource Delivery Service

If you're an ECCDC member located in Niagara, you can take advantage of our free resource delivery service. We'll bring materials right to your program! To learn more or to arrange a delivery, please contact the ECCDC at 905.646.7311 ext. 304 or [email](#) us.

## Professional Development and Networking Opportunities

This summer, we are thoughtfully planning and preparing an exciting new edition of ESTEEM—our 2025–2026 training catalogue, launching this fall. Stay tuned! The upcoming ESTEEM will land in your inbox later this summer, filled with fresh opportunities to inspire, connect, and grow your professional practice from Fall 2025 through Spring 2026.

## Coming Soon

August ECCDC podcast conversations will focus on school-age mobile outdoor classrooms, and Ginette will be in conversation with Starlene Ruttan and Kim Barton from the University of Guelph Child Care and Learning Centre. Keep an eye on your inbox during the middle of August.

The ECCDC podcast is available on [Spotify](#) and [Apple](#) Podcasts! Stay tuned - you won't want to miss these insightful conversations. [Click here](#) to listen to other ECCDC Podcasts

## Educator Well Being through Reading for Relaxation and Growth

This month's supporting educator well-being follows the theme of literacy and focuses on the enriching activity of reading. Whether it's diving into a gripping novel, exploring a thought-provoking non-fiction book, or losing yourself in a collection of poetry, reading is a wonderful way to relax, escape, and grow.

### Benefits of Reading

Reading offers numerous benefits beyond simple enjoyment. It can reduce stress, improve brain function, increase empathy, and even help with sleep. Engaging with a book allows you to step away from the hustle of daily life, providing a mental break and a chance for quiet reflection or exciting escapades in your imagination.



## How to Incorporate Reading into Your Routine

**Choose Material That Resonates with You:** The key to enjoying reading is selecting books or materials that genuinely interest you. Whether it's a genre you love or a topic you're curious about, choose something that excites you.

**Set a Dedicated Time for Reading:** Carve out a specific time during your Mondays solely for reading. It could be during your morning coffee, on your lunch break, or as a way to wind down before bed.

**Create a Comfortable Reading Space:** Establish a cozy spot for your reading time. Good lighting, a comfortable chair or pillow, and maybe a warm cup of tea can make your reading experience more enjoyable.

**Join a Book Club or Reading Group:** To add a social element to your reading, consider joining a book club. It can be a great way to share perspectives and discover new books.

**Reading as a Mindful Activity:** Approach reading as a mindful exercise. Pay attention to the words, the rhythm of the narrative, and how the story or text makes you feel. Allow yourself to be fully immersed in the experience.

## Combining Learning with Leisure

Reading can be both an educational journey and a leisure activity. Non-fiction books offer a chance to learn about new subjects or gain different perspectives on familiar topics. Reading fiction can be an entertaining escape that also stimulates your imagination and creativity.

Incorporating a habit of reading into your Mindful practices provides a perfect balance between relaxation and personal growth. It's an activity that can quiet the mind, stir the imagination, and leave you feeling refreshed for the week ahead.