

# Cultivating Connections

A MONTHLY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING,  
RESOURCE, AND MENTORING NEWSLETTER  
*brought to you by the ECCDC Team*

## Hop Into Land Based Learning



Welcome to the very first issue of Cultivating Connections: A Monthly Professional Learning, Resource and Mentoring Newsletter brought to you by the ECCDC Team! Rather than receiving three separate newsletters to keep you up to speed on what's new at the ECCDC, our team has developed a single, comprehensive newsletter to highlight updates from all three of our areas of service.

This month we are hopping into Land Based Learning and are delighted to share highlights from our resource lending library, professional learning and coaching and mentoring team! In this month's newsletter, you'll find our featured resource Kit of the Month, recommended reading to support your

land-based learning journey, a quick tip for registering your team for workshops and webinars, and much more! Hop into April with us and learn more about the resources and supports available to enhance your early learning program this spring!

Together in Community,  
The ECCDC Team

## Featured Professional Learning Opportunity: Opportunities for Play in a Forest School Setting

Join us for this engaging workshop where participants will gain strategies for providing educational experiences through daily access to extended time in nature. Participants will explore the many benefits of outdoor play including physical, mental, social and emotional health, while developing a connection with the environment.

**Saturday May 9, 2026**

9:30 to 11:00am

Presented In Person at the ECCDC



## Alternative Opportunities to Extend Your Understanding of Land Based Learning



If you have an outdoor play space that you would like to naturalize to further nurture children's curiosity and spark wonder, then you are in luck! The ECCDC's Coaching and Mentoring Team can support your program or organization through outdoor environmental design and programming. Connect with us at [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org) to get started!

We also invite you to check out the following resources!

### ECCDC Podcast:

'Rethinking Outdoor Play and Materials with Greenbelt Academy & Early Learning Centre'



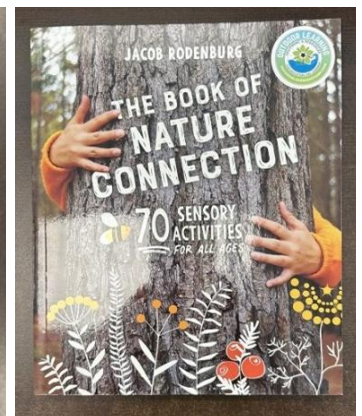
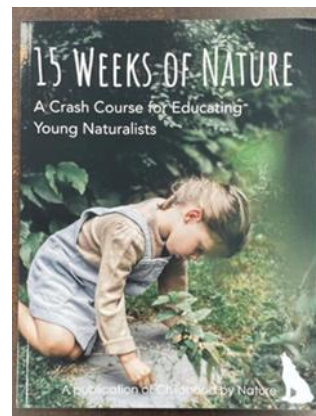
### ECCDC Blog:

'Don't Shy Away from Outdoor Play'



### Resource Lending Library Recommended Reading to Support Your Land Based Learning Journey

- 15 Weeks of Nature: A Crash Course for Educating Young Naturalists (OUT.0090)
- Natural Curiosity 2nd Edition - The Importance of Indigenous Perspectives in Children's Environmental Inquiry (OUT.0008)
- The Book of Nature Connection - 70 Sensory Activities for All Ages (OUT.0022)
- Forest School & Outdoor Learnings in the Early Years (OUT.0035)
- Growing with Nature: Supporting Whole-Child Learning in Outdoor Classrooms (OUT.0055)



## Watch This! Videos to Enhance Your Land Based Learning Experiences



Humber Research & Innovation - **Two-Eyed Land-Based and Co-learning**: [click here](#) or scan the QR code at left.



Storypark - **Land as the First Teacher** with Hopi Martin (part 1): [click here](#) or scan the QR code at left.

## Lending Library Resources to Support Land Based Learning

- Exploring Trees & Leaves Through Storytelling Experiences (#2323)
- Loose Parts: Forest Animals and Habitats (#6302)
- Literature Exploring Indigenous Teachings, Language and Respect for the Land (#6897)
- Exploring Sounds of Nature Through Music (#5394)
- Exploring Underwater Life Through Individual Sensory Play (#1505)



## Featured Kit of the Month: Learning to Care for the Earth Through the Exploration of Nature (#5276)



This provocation for learning kit is a wonderful way to incorporate nature throughout your early learning environment! With materials like non-fiction books, tweezers, magnifying glasses, and much more, this kit supports children’s observations and understanding of our natural world. For more information about this kit, or to learn more about resources available for borrowing to support land-based learning, connect with us at [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org).

## Upcoming Professional Learning to Support Outdoor Learning

- Opportunities for Play in a Forest School Setting (May 9, 2026)
- Understanding Our Role in Cultivating an Ecological Identity for Children and Ourselves (October 8, 2026)



## Customized Training

Taking Emergent Literacy Outdoors – connect with us at [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org) to learn more!

Use the QR Code to visit our training calendar for more information on these and other upcoming professional learning opportunities!



## Past Session Spotlight: Advancing Physical Literacy in Early Childhood Through Play-Based Pedagogy



On March 9, we were delighted to have Dr. Jaime Barratt from Brock University join us for this informative webinar that shared key findings from her research comparing early childhood educator practices from Canada and Australia.

This webinar focused on how educators play an essential role in fostering physical literacy in child care environments, offered practical strategies to support children’s movement skills, health and well-being. Thank you to the more than 200 participants who joined us.

Missed the webinar? You’re in luck! Dr. Barratt was featured in our recent podcast, *Supporting Young Children to Develop Physical Literacy*. Scan the QR code to listen.



## March Featured Professional Learning Attendance Draw Winner

### Fuzia Abuhadra

Connect with Kelly at [kbol@eccdc.org](mailto:kbol@eccdc.org) on or before April 30 to claim your prize!

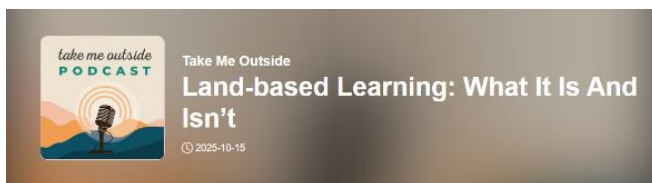


## Other Useful Resources

### Podcasts

Take me outside PODCAST

[Click here](#) to listen to *Land-based Learning: What It Is and Isn't*. This podcast contains a panel discussion from the 2025 national outdoor learning conference in Banff AB. The podcast dives into land-based learning; what it is, and why it matters.



[Click here](#) for ECCDC's podcast *Exploring Mobile Outdoor Classrooms* with the University of Guelph's Child Care and Learning Centre team.

### Video

Storypark – [Click here](#) to watch Exploring Seasonal Pedagogies: Learning with the Rhythm of the Land with Dr Hopi Martin

### Blog

[Click here](#) to read ECCDC's Growing Together Blog: *Unleashing Nature's Playground: Embracing All-Weather Play in Early Learning Programs*

### Website

[Click here](#) to visit the *Learning from Indigenous Perspectives: Land-Based Learning in Early Years Settings* website which includes downloadable resources including Indigenous Pedagogies, Respecting & Understanding Indigenous Spirituality, Appreciation vs. Appropriation, Suggested Materials, and a Seasonal Pedagogy case study, as well as many practical ideas.

### ECCDC Related Topics

If you have an outdoor play space that you would like to naturalize to further nurture children's curiosity and spark wonder, then you are in luck. The coaching and mentoring team can support your program or organization through outdoor environmental design and programming. [Email ECCDC](#) or [click here](#) to visit ECCDC Naturalizing Play Spaces website. [Click here](#) to check out the ECCDC's Coaching and Mentoring CONNECTIONS newsletter on Outdoor Play.

