

Cultivating Connections

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

Sweet Summer Literacy!



Welcome to the July 2026 issue of Cultivating Connections: A Monthly Professional Learning, Resource and Mentoring Newsletter brought to you by the ECCDC Team.

This month we are diving into sweet summer literacy. Whether you're looking for a unique book to enhance your professional learning on the beach or exploring some new ways to incorporate literacy within your early learning environment, this issue of Cultivating Connections contains great resources to support literacy concepts this summer. This season is short and sweet, so make your planning as easy as A-B-C with services and supports available through the ECCDC!

Together in Community,
The ECCDC Team

Featured Professional Learning Opportunity: Local Author Meet & Greet – An Introduction to Niagara-Based Authors, Book Signing and Refreshments

You are invited to join local Niagara Authors for a special event highlighting their work, an opportunity to purchase and have books signed, and engage in networking with colleagues. Book readings will be taking place throughout the evening, and light refreshments will be provided. This special event is a wonderful opportunity to support local writers who have created children's literature that can be incorporated into your early learning program!

Wednesday July 8, 2026

6:30-8:30pm

Hosted in Person at the ECCDC

For more information, or to RSVP for this free event, [click here](#) or scan the QR Code below.



Last Month's Professional Learning Highlight
Technology Use for Children with Autism



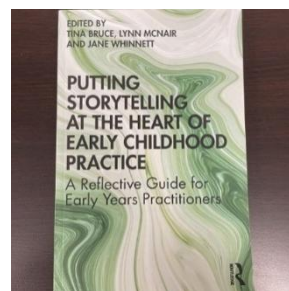
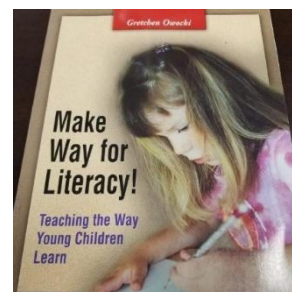
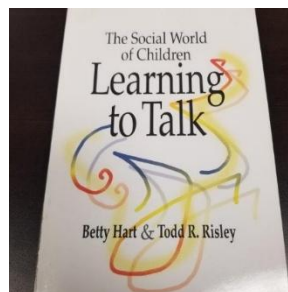
On June 4, we were pleased to welcome Paige and Emily from Bethesda Services for an engaging and informative workshop on supporting technology use for children with autism. Participants gained valuable insights and practical strategies to support children in the early learning environment. Thank you to everyone who attended, and a special thank you to Bethesda Services for sponsoring this meaningful professional learning opportunity.



ECCDC Lending Library Recommended Summer Reads Available to Support Your Knowledge of Early Literacy Development

- Putting Storytelling at the Heart of Early Childhood Practice (CUR.0061)
- Where is Thumbkin? (MUS.0017)
- The Social World of Children: Learning to Talk (LAN.0039)
- Teacher Talk Series Part 1: Encouraging Language Development in Early Childhood Settings (LAN.0120)
- Sight Word Manipulatives for Reading Success (LAN.0089)
- ABC and Beyond: Building Emergent Literacy in Early Learning Settings (LAN.0019)
- Make Way for Literacy! Teaching the Way Young Children Learn (LAN.0102)
- Literacy and the Young Child (LAN.0007)
- Literacy Outdoors: 50 Exciting Starting Points for Outdoor Literacy Experiences (OUT.0074)
- Get Set for School: Colouring, Drawing, Singing, Counting, and Handwriting Readiness (LAN.0117)

June Featured Professional Learning Attendance Draw Winner: Nicole Strolenberg
Connect with Kelly on or before July 31 to claim your prize!



A SWEET SUMMER LISTEN!

CHECK OUT OUR PODCAST: MEET THE AUTHORS
FEATURING KATHRYN RECOURT, LISA CLARKE & GRACE HOWES

Listen on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or by using the QR Code!

Fresh Picks Supporting Literacy Development to Read and Watch This Summer

Blog Post



Simple Classroom Tweaks That Build Literacy: Stacy Bengé offers educators 5 simple strategies to help promote early literacy in the classroom; specifically, the development of skills that are not directly related to reading and writing. “Before kids can sit and write letters, they need strong hands, eyes, and coordination to make it happen...let’s give them more opportunities to move, build, and play.”

[Click here](#) to read more!

Video



Building Literacy Skills by Sparking Imaginations: Storytelling through play helps children build a foundation for later writing while fostering creativity, confidence, and a love of learning. Through guided conversations about story elements such as setting, characters, and beginning-middle-end structure, children develop oral language and early writing skills in a joyful, engaging environment. [Click here](#) to watch!

Extend Your Understanding of Early Literacy Development with the ECCDC’s Customized Training Opportunities

Mark Making Schemas: This session will look at schema play through a lens of early Mark Making, a prerequisite for the development of literacy skills, and explore how educators can introduce schema play materials and experiences to their environment to support mark making.

Story Sacks: This interactive session will identify links to other curriculum areas and focus on how educators can develop their own story sacks and how utilizing them in their programs reflects both the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years* and the Kindergarten Program’s four frames.

Learning Language and Loving It™ the Hanen Program® for Early Childhood Educators: The Learning Language and Loving It Program was designed to provide early childhood educators with practical strategies for helping all children in the classroom build language and social skills, no matter what their learning and communication styles are, and even if they have special needs.

For more information on how to book a customized training session for your team, agency, or early learning community, connect with us at eccdc@eccdc.org.



Extend Children's Learning With This Unique Resource Available for Borrowing Through ECCDC's Lending Library!

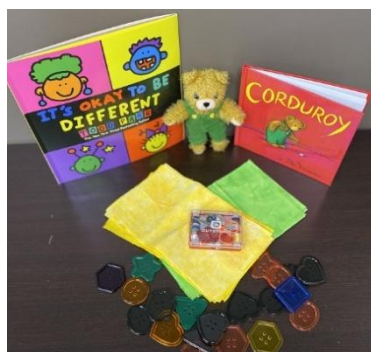
Investigating Repetition Using Robert Munsch's Storytelling Experiences

This kit contains materials such as a selection of Robert Munsch's popular books, related vocabulary cards, story wands, and more to support early literacy development.



Learning Through Play and Provocations: Check Out These Additional Resources Available for Borrowing to Support Literacy Development

- Children's Literature on Celebrations Around the World (#7203)
- Story Sack – Corduroy (#6891)
- Phonics Resources to Support Reading and Writing Development (#7405)
- Mini Light Panel Exploration with Translucent Letters and Gems (#7245)
- Children Explore Stories from Canadian Indigenous Authors (#7310)
- Infant Sign Language Resources (#91)
- Children's Literature Exploring Black History and Culture (#7199)





Our team extends thanks to our community partners for supporting our nomination, and to the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce for recognizing the businesses that help make Niagara a vibrant place to live, work, and grow. We are also deeply grateful to our primary funder, Niagara Region Children's Services. It is a privilege to contribute to the important work being done by Niagara's early learning professionals in support of our youngest citizens and their families.

We've Got Exciting News!

The ECCDC was honoured to be named the recipient of the 2026 Excellence in Business Award - Not For Profit

