

Spring to Fall 2026

# esteem

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

**eccdc**

early childhood community development centre

Virtual and In  
Person Events

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)

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

Incorporating *How Does Learning  
Happen?* in Your Program

Increase knowledge/refresher on early  
child development

# Incorporating *How Does Learning Happen?* in Your Program



## Everyday Moments That Matter: Building Foundations for Connection and Intentional Practice, 5-Part Series *with* ECCDC

Strong early learning programs begin with strong, intentional foundations. This series invites educators to reflect on and refine their daily practices—exploring how thoughtful rhythms, responsive routines, and meaningful interactions shape the flow of the day. From transitions to environments, materials to relationships, each session offers practical strategies and reflective insights to support a classroom culture rooted in care, curiosity, and connection. Whether you're looking to strengthen your daily routines, co-create expectations, or deepen your work with children, families, and colleagues, this series provides the building blocks for intentional, relationship-driven practice.

### Series Objectives

Develop thoughtful, responsive strategies to guide daily routines, transitions, and interactions that support a sense of safety, consistency, and well-being for all • Enhance educators' understanding of environments, materials, and small group experiences as tools to spark inquiry, nurture relationships, and promote play-based learning • Reflect on educators' role as co-learners and collaborators, using intentional observation, documentation, and communication to strengthen connections with children, families, and colleagues.

### Session 1: Inviting Spaces & Tools for Thinking: Designing Environments and Using Materials to Spark Play, Learning, Inquiry and Connection

The environment is often called the "third teacher", and for good reason. The layout, overall flow and availability of materials in your classroom can profoundly influence how children feel, move, engage, wonder, and connect. In this session, we'll explore how to create intentional, flexible spaces that respond to children's needs, invite exploration, and nurture a sense of belonging. We will also dig into the role of materials and how what we choose to offer children can spark their curiosity and support their development in powerful ways. Whether your program space is small or large, you'll leave with practical ideas to reimagine your early learning environment and reflect on strategies for selecting materials that will promote learning, spark curiosity, nurture relationships, and bring joy to your daily practice.

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## Everyday Moments That Matter: Building Foundations for Connection and Intentional Practice, 5-Part Series *with ECCDC continued*



### Session 2: In the Moment: Capturing Children's Thinking Through Documentation

What are children showing us through their play, their questions, and their conversations? How can we, as educators, slow down and see ourselves as researchers of their ideas, strategies, and meaning-making? In this session, we'll explore the power of in the moment documentation: the raw, spontaneous, unpolished notes, transcripts, artifacts, and reflections that allow us to see the learning unfolding in real time. Together, we'll look at how to capture children's voices, questions, and thinking through observation and documentation that is practical, authentic, and responsive. We'll reflect on how real time documentation can help us build deeper connections with children, inform our planning, and share meaningful stories of learning with families and colleagues.

### Session 3: Co-Creating Boundaries and Expectations Together

Boundaries and expectations are an important part of creating a safe, predictable, and caring environment where children can thrive. Together, we'll explore how to co-create shared expectations with children through consistent routines, gentle guidance, and meaningful conversations. We'll reflect on how our own presence, tone, and responses shape the emotional climate of our classrooms and consider how to foster a sense of safety, trust, and mutual respect. This session takes a thoughtful look at how we support children in learning boundaries, program expectations, and navigating social interactions.

### Session 4: Small Groups, Big Thinking: Fostering Connection and Learning Through Small Group Experiences

Small group experiences offer powerful opportunities to connect with children, follow their interests, and extend their thinking. This session explores how to use small groups not just for activity time, but as rich spaces for conversation, exploration, and relationship-building. We'll reflect on how to tune in to children's ideas, use their interests to introduce new concepts and materials, and support emergent learning in responsive and meaningful ways.

### Session 5: From Chaos to Connection: Reclaiming Transitions as Moments of Learning and Care

Transitions are often seen as the bridges between the scheduled parts of the day, but what if we viewed them as meaningful moments in and of themselves? In this session, we'll explore how transitions can be opportunities for care, connection, and learning. We'll consider how small shifts in our routines can create calm, responsive moments that help children feel secure, engaged, and understood. You'll be invited to slow down and reflect on the flow of your day, tuning into how even the simplest of transitions can be used to build relationships, model regulation, and respond to children's unique needs and rhythms. Together, we'll give ourselves permission to pause, to see transitions not as something to "get through", but as moments filled with potential. You'll leave with strategies to make your transitions developmentally responsive, meaningful, and full of connection.

All sessions presented *In Person In Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold) and *Via Livestream*

Session 1: **Thursday October 23, 2025**

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

Session 3: **Thursday January 22, 2026**

Session 4: **Thursday March 26, 2026**

Session 5: **Thursday May 21, 2026**

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

Niagara Educators: \$15 per session or \$50 for the series

Outside Niagara Educators: \$20 per session or \$75 for the series



## Expanding Our Knowledge – Building on *How Does Learning Happen?* to Consider New Pedagogical Approaches to Deepen Our Practice- 3-Part Series *with* ECCDC

There are multiple pedagogies that surround early learning and child care. Some familiar, some less familiar, with some pedagogies grounded in research, and some not so much. However, when choosing pedagogies to incorporate within their practice, early learning and child care practitioners need to ensure that they are grounded in current research. Whether you are a seasoned educator who wants to expand the pedagogical approaches that you utilize within your work or you're a newer educator who is curious to explore new pedagogies, there's something for you in this series. If you want to find out more about the pedagogies of social justice, slow pedagogy, and sustainable pedagogy, practical strategies, and how they can be utilized within our practice, this new 3-part series is for you.

### Series Outcomes

Participants will gain an understanding of additional pedagogical approaches that can be adopted with their settings • Participants will be able to evaluate which pedagogical approaches are appropriate to incorporate within their practice • Participants will be able to strategize how to utilize new pedagogical approaches within their programming.

### Session 1: Slow Pedagogy

'It takes a whole load of slow to grow'. Educators have been encouraged to slow down in our work with children to truly see them. The Froebelian theory of slow pedagogy reinforces this concept of slowing down. This session will explore what slow pedagogy is, the research behind slow pedagogy, and practical strategies that educators can adopt to make time for children's development and learning in their programs. The session will utilize case studies and stories to explore slow pedagogy.

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Expanding Our Knowledge – Building on How Does Learning Happen?  
to Consider New Pedagogical Approaches to Deepen Our Practice-  
3-Part Series *with ECCDC continued*



### Session 2: Social Justice Pedagogy

“Children from very young ages internalize messages about power and privilege with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and language, which they perpetuate through their play and talk” (Ryan & Grieshaber 2004). This session will explore what social justice is, why it matters, and how educators can create more equitable and ethical settings through adapting a pedagogy of social justice. Participants will explore how they can mitigate the inherent power and privilege that dominate society and the role of children’s rights and democracy within a pedagogy of social justice. They will gain practical strategies that can be utilized within their practice to explore fairness and equity with the children they work with.

### Session 3: Sustainable Pedagogy

‘A development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs’ is how sustainability has been described, but how does this link to our work with children and what can it look like within our practice? The third and final part of this series will investigate what sustainable pedagogy is, its key components, and what it can look like within our settings. Case studies and stories will be utilized to explore the pillars of sustainable pedagogy and practical strategies will be shared to support educators in affording young children experiences to develop sustainable relationships with the environment.

All sessions presented *Via Webinar*

Session 1: **Thursday April 9, 2026**

Session 2: **Thursday May 7, 2026**

Session 3: **Thursday June 11, 2026**

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

Niagara Educators: \$30 for the series or \$15/session

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55 for the series or \$25/session



## Environments that Inspire: Reconsidering Our Environments and Materials, 3-Part Series *with Rosalba Bortolotti*

This 3-part series will invite educators to consider their early learning environment and materials in a new light through the lens of Reggio-based practices. Participants will receive practical ideas for setting up their environment in a way that provokes curiosity among children, and considerations for materials that provoke thinking and exploration.

### **Session 1 - Before the Children Arrive: Preparing the Learning Environment**

A reflective and practical session on the role of the educator as a preparer of spaces and experiences. How do we set the stage for wonder, discovery, and belonging?

### **Session 2 - Spaces that Speak: Designing Environments that Welcome and Inspire**

Explore how thoughtful, intentional design of space can nurture a sense of belonging and provoke curiosity. This session offers practical ideas and reflective strategies for transforming environments.

### **Session 3 - Materials that Listen**

This hands-on session offers time with open-ended materials, exploring how materials “listen back” and provoke thinking. Educators will develop skills in observing, documenting, and expanding children’s inquiries through intentional material choices.

All sessions presented *Via Webinar*

Session 1: **Tuesday September 22, 2026**

Session 2: **Tuesday October 13, 2026**

Session 3: **Tuesday November 17, 2026**

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

Cost: \$65 for the series or \$30/session



**Rosalba Bortolotti** is a pedagogical consultant and Registered Early Childhood Educator with over 27 years of experience and research in the Reggio Emilia approach. Rosalba has a passion in food pedagogies, school gardens and the practices of seed to table. In addition to presenting to educators around the province, Rosalba has recently developed online webinars and interactive live studio sessions from her studio lab.

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)



## Digital Technology and Materials in Early Learning: Light, Shadow, Pixel, Clay *with* Rosalba Bortolotti

Reimagine technology and digital materials not as distractions, but as creative, expressive, and inclusive tools for meaning-making in early childhood environments.



**Rosalba Bortolotti** is a pedagogical consultant and Registered Early Childhood Educator with over 27 years of experience and research in the Reggio Emilia approach. Rosalba has a passion in food pedagogies, school gardens and the practices of seed to table. In addition to presenting to educators around the province, Rosalba has recently developed on-line webinars and interactive live studio sessions from her studio lab.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Tuesday December 8, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Cost: \$45

# Increase knowledge/refresher on early child development



Back by popular demand!

## Back to the Foundations of Early Learning, 2-Part Series *with* Niagara Catholic District School Board and District School Board of Niagara

### Session 1: Back to the Foundations of Early Math Development

Introducing early numeracy skills to young children can set the foundation for later mathematical understanding. In this session, participants will explore practical strategies for incorporating mathematical concepts into their early learning environment. This session will highlight manipulatives and loose parts that can be utilized in play-based experiences to support numeracy skills as well as practical activities to introduce with the children in your setting.

Both sessions presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

Session 1: **Tuesday January 27, 2026**

Session 2: **Thursday May 28, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Cost: \$10 per session includes materials

### Session 2: Back to the Foundations of Early Literacy Development

Do you wonder about how to get back to the foundations of literacy in your early years program? Are you curious about how to support children in their oral development, phonics, and phonemic awareness? Join us as we share practical tips and interactive experiences on how to incorporate experiences that support these crucial building blocks of literacy. Through hands-on exploration with manipulatives, outdoor resources, and written activities, educators will delve into materials that will inspire students' literacy skills!



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)



## Enhancing Children's Literacy Experiences Through Story Sacks, Sponsored by Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara

Literacy is one of the foundational skills that young children develop beginning right from birth. Story Sacks support the development of literacy through providing a storytelling experience with associated props. The props invite additional learning opportunities by inviting children who have not yet learned to read with the materials they need to verbally tell and act out a story. This also helps visual learners with comprehension and gives educators a unique way to capture the children's attention. During this session, participants will explore the key aspects of story sacks and the ways in which they can implement it in their early learning environment.

All sessions presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

### Date Options

**Tuesday February 16, 2027** 6:30 to 9:00 pm

**Wednesday February 17, 2027** 6:30 to 9:00 pm

**Saturday February 20, 2027** 9:00 to 11:30 am

Cost: No charge for training session and Story Sack materials (*this session has been generously sponsored by the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara*). This session is open to Niagara Educators only

**Please note** that a maximum of 2 educators from each licensed child care program in Niagara may register, and each program will receive one story sack for their centre. We ask that designated educators planning to attend be prepared to share the workshop materials and concepts with their Team. The session will include suggestions on how to share the information.





Back by popular demand!

## Supporting the Holistic Development of School Age Children *with* Angela Hayes and Jodi Noble, Niagara College

This workshop will highlight the important elements of school-age children’s development and the middle years through Ontario’s Framework *On My Way: A Guide to Support Middle Years Child Development*. Participants will also engage and reflect on how they can support children to thrive through Ontario’s Framework *Gearing Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario Middle Years Children Thrive*.

Presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)  
**Wednesday May 27, 2026**  
6:30 to 8:00 pm  
Cost: No Charge (*This session has been sponsored by Niagara College*)



**Angela Hayes** [RECE, CLS, M. Ed.] has spent 23 years in the area of children’s mental health and development, the last 10 of which she has been teaching and coordinating the Early Childhood Education program at Niagara College. Angela has extensive knowledge of child development and works privately with parents using a family-focused approach. Angela has a diverse portfolio with a degree in psychology, diplomas in Early Childhood Education, Resource Teaching and Infant Mental Health, as well as being a Child Life Specialist and having a Masters in Education. Angela is committed to supporting her students in order to have the most significant ripple effect on the early years community by contributing to the lenses of future educators.



**Jodi-Lynn Noble** [RECE] has over 35 years in the early learning and care field in Niagara. Currently, she is the Field Placement Officer at Niagara College in the School of Community Services – Early Childhood Education program. She has worked in variety of settings which include childcare, supervising and presenting on various topics locally as well as provincially. This enabled her to share her knowledge and passion for the field as well as learn from other’s experiences and joy. She is a lifelong learner who believes in the importance of relationship building and play.



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## Creating a Visual Art Studio in an Early Learning Environment, 2-Part Series *with* Victoria Armstrong, Side by Side Consulting

### Part 1: Creating the Studio: Space and Material Considerations

How can you set up an inspiring visual art space in your classroom that will invite children to build relationships with art materials? In this session, we'll think about the physical layout and materials to include in the space as well as initial provocations to invite children into the studio to linger with materials and build relationships.

Both sessions presented *Via Webinar*

Part 1: **Tuesday May 5, 2026**

Part 2: **Tuesday June 2, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Cost: \$60 for the series

### Part 2: Documenting, Display and Integrating Art into the Whole Classroom

What can you look for when documenting art experiences? What might be important to capture? How can you share these experiences through display? How can you move art from the studio into the rest of the classroom where it can be used as a tool for thinking, connecting, and sharing with others? In this session, we'll consider all these questions as we think about how best to now use our new studio space.



**Victoria Armstrong**, B.ECS, owner of Side By Side (SBS) Consulting Services as well as a published author and dance instructor, has held a variety of roles throughout her early learning career; Classroom Educator, Pedagogical Leader, ECE College Professor, HR and Communications Specialist, Artists and Children Together 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 10 years.



## Nurturing Brilliance Masterclass: Using Play-Activated Learning to Awaken Children's Potential *with* Sally Haughey, Fairy Dust Teaching

In this intensive, 90-minute workshop we will demystify the power of play by exploring the compelling neuroscience that proves its essential role in child development. Based on the Play-Activated Learning (PAL) Model from the book *Nurturing Brilliance*, this session moves beyond theory to provide a clear, science-backed framework for understanding how play builds a smarter, more resilient, and more regulated brain. You will leave with the language and confidence to advocate for play as the gold standard of early education, grounded in a practical understanding of what's happening inside a child's mind.

Presented *Via Webinar*  
**Tuesday October 6, 2026**  
6:30 to 8:00 pm  
Cost: \$55

**Learning Objectives** - Participants will be able to: Articulate the limitations of traditional educational models versus the benefits of a play-activated approach • Identify the four pillars of the PAL Model: Permission, Choice, Repetition, and Voice • Explain the core brain science associated with each pillar (e.g., sensory integration, the limbic system, myelination, and language centers) • Connect specific play behaviours (like wandering, repetition, or imaginative dialogue) to critical brain development processes • Apply this understanding to make one immediate, impactful shift in their educational practice.



**Sally Haughey** is the CEO and Founder of Fairy Dust Teaching, now known as Wunderled. Sally started her teaching journey in 1996 and that experience now expands over two decades. She cultivated her learning at Northeastern State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education. In 2010, Sally began Fairy Dust Teaching. She believes young children have the right to play, to be collaborators in learning, and to dream. Since then, Wunderled has become a global platform serving 120 countries worldwide. Sally is also the creator of Play-Activated Learning™, a powerful framework that helps early childhood educators build and develop a play-based teaching practice. Her literary works include *The Wonder Art Workshop* (publ. 2019), *Through A Child's Eyes*, co-authored with Sandra Duncan and Jodie Martin (publ. 2018), *The Honeycomb Hypothesis*, co-authored with Sandra Duncan and Sue Penix (publ. 2022), and *Nurturing Brilliance: Using Play-Activated Learning to Awaken Children's Potential* (publ. 2025).

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The page features several overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green and brown. In the top right, there are two overlapping light green squares. On the left side, there is a large green square with a smaller, lighter green square and a brown square overlapping it. In the bottom right, there is a brown square overlapping a larger, darker brown square.

# Supporting Children with Unique Needs



Back by popular demand!

## Behaviour Awareness and Self Regulation in Early Childhood Programs *with* Pathstone Mental Health

Join the Pathstone Mental Health Behaviour Consultant Team for this informative workshop that is back by popular request. In this workshop participants will gain knowledge to identify the function of behaviour, understand the importance of data collection, and develop strategies to help promote student success. This workshop will also cover Self-Regulation: what it is, why its important, signs of it, and what we can do in child care settings to promote positive self-regulation skills.

**Pathstone Mental Health** is a leading provider of mental health services for children, youth, and families in the Niagara region. They offer a wide range of free, accessible, and family-centered programs and services, including walk-in clinics, crisis support, and various therapeutic interventions. Pathstone is also the Lead Agency for Moving on Mental Health (MOMH) in Niagara, ensuring consistent and high-quality mental health care across the region.

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

**Tuesday May 12, 2026**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

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





## Technology Use for Children with Autism *with* Bethesda Services

This session will explore why children and youth with autism gravitate towards technology usage, and how it can be used as an effective learning tool. We will also consider how to find a balance for technology usage, strategies for managing screen time, as well as some ideas for screen-free activities.

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

**Thursday June 4, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Cost: No Charge (*This session has been sponsored by Bethesda Services*)





## 'The 4'S of Authentic Inclusion.' Helping Children with Disabilities Feel Safe and Seen in Early Learning Settings *with* Lisa Pinhorn

At Empowered Parents, we are firm believers that our entire culture benefits when we fully embrace the diversity that surrounds us. I have been discussing inclusion practices for over 25 years, and this is what I see - in small pockets of our world, in extraordinary spaces, creative and compassionate people understand the power of relationships and emotional safety. When we authentically include and support everyone, magical things happen. Child care settings and classrooms can become safe places where children can learn, be creative, move, dance, express emotions, and make friends.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Tuesday September 29, 2026**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Cost: \$45

Discover how to apply Dr. Daniel Siegel's 4 Principles of Attachment to foster a sense of safety and belonging in all children, especially those with neurodiversity, within educational settings. Become part of the educational paradigm shift using relationship science to support authentic inclusion and belonging for neurodivergent children.



**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.



## Nurturing Positive Behaviours: Effective Strategies for Early Childhood Educators

with Jinder Virdee, Seneca Polytechnic

This dynamic and informative workshop is designed for early childhood educators who are dedicated to fostering positive behaviours in young children. Understanding and supporting children's behavioural development is crucial for creating a harmonious and productive learning environment.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday November 12, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Niagara Educators: \$25

Outside Niagara Educators: \$45


**Learning Outcomes** - By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- **Understand the Foundations of Positive Behaviour** - Describe key developmental stages that influence children's behaviour in early childhood settings • Recognize the role of emotional regulation and social development in shaping behaviour.
- **Identify and Analyze Behavioural Patterns** - Observe and interpret common behavioural cues in young children • Distinguish between challenging behaviours and developmentally appropriate behaviours
- **Apply Evidence-Based Strategies** - Implement proactive strategies to encourage positive behaviours and reduce challenging ones • Use positive reinforcement, redirection, and modelling techniques effectively
- **Create Supportive Learning Environments** - Design classroom environments that promote cooperation, empathy, and self-regulation • Establish consistent routines and expectations that support behavioural development
- **Reflect and Adapt Practices** - Evaluate the effectiveness of behavioural strategies and make informed adjustments • Reflect on personal biases and attitudes that may influence behavioural responses



**Jinder Virdee**, Bachelor of Education, has been involved in the Early Childhood Education field for over 30 years. Jinder teaches at Seneca College, and operates her own consulting business offering keynote speaking, workshops, webinars and seminars. Through these hands-on workshops, Jinder shares personal experiences and shares many personal stories.

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



## How to Get Second Language Learners Talking *with* Niagara Children's Centre

Oral language skills are one of the building blocks of emergent literacy. A preschooler's ability to talk about something that has happened, describe what they see, and maintain a conversation is a big part of what helps them be able to read and write in the future. But what happens when the child is being exposed to English or French for the first time in the child care setting? How can we help children with these skills when we may not even speak their home language? This workshop will quickly take you through what to expect of second language learners and then will be a hands-on look at how we can use current provocations and incorporate new ones to encourage these learners to increase their vocabularies and develop their oral language skills.

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

**Tuesday April 21, 2026**

7:00 to 8:30 pm

Cost: No Charge (*This session has been sponsored by Niagara Children's Centre*)





Back by popular demand!

## Supporting Children Through Gaining An Awareness and Understanding of Sexual and Gender Diversity *with Kaitrin Doll*

Join us for this informative presentation that will support Early Childhood Educators with increasing their awareness and knowledge of sexual and gender diversity to support the critical conversations and relationship building with families of the children enrolled in early learning programs. During this session, participants will explore the following concepts:

Presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)  
**Thursday April 30, 2026**  
6:30 to 8:00 pm  
Cost: No Charge

- Background on why sexual and gender diversity is important to address
- An overview of key terms (Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Sex assigned at Birth, and Physical and Romantic Attraction)
- Pronouns – what are they and how to use them
- How to be an Ally – recommendations to foster more inclusion in personal and professional life

**Kaitrin Doll** (they/ them) is a PhD Student at University of Toronto and Co-Chair of the Canadian Regional Network at International Partnership for Queer Youth Resilience (INQYR).



## Understanding and Supporting Indigenous Storytelling, Music, and Movement in Early Learning Environments *with* Brock University

Join us as we explore strategies for including Indigenous storytelling, music, and movement experiences within your early learning program in a way that is appreciative of Indigenous cultures. Participants will also have the opportunity to learn more about cultural appreciation versus appropriation to create culturally safe learning spaces that support a sense of belonging for all children.



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

**Tuesday June 16, 2026**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Cost: No Charge



## Strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in All Organizations, 2-Part Series *with Inclusivity Insight*

### Session 1 - Foundations of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

An organization is only as strong as its culture—and every person has a role to play in building that culture. This session equips participants with a robust and shared understanding of important equity, diversity, and inclusion concepts and terminology. This will lay the groundwork for productive conversations about building safer spaces and an inclusive culture for those outside our own lived experiences.

Both sessions presented *Via Webinar*

Session 1: **Thursday October 15, 2026**

Session 2: **Thursday November 19, 2026**

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

Cost: \$65 for the series or \$40/session

### Session 2 - Effective Allyship: Building Circles of Solidarity

More than ever, there is a need for us to acknowledge our individual role in creating more equitable and inclusive teams and organizations. To facilitate meaningful change, it is crucial for us to be visible allies and to follow through with tangible actions. In practice, allyship requires those with power and privilege to affect change in both the culture and systems that shape our organizations. In this session, participants will understand what it means to be an ally and the core principles of allyship with practical tips that they can apply to everyday practices.

**Inclusivity Insights** was founded in June 2016 and offers practical, data-informed solutions that empower inclusive and high performing teams. Inclusivity is IBPOC owned with more than 50% women in leadership positions and brings their work a diversity of lived experiences and interdisciplinary expertise.

**inclusivity**

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)

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# **Engaging Families in Authentic Ways**



## Family-centered Early Childhood Education and Care, 3-Part Series *with* Cara Caudle, Childhood Connect

Family-centered Early Childhood Education & Care is a three-part series designed for early learning professionals to explore critical pedagogical approaches through the lens of placing families at the center of practice. The series focuses on taking a wraparound approach, integrating responsive relationships, the environment as the third teacher, pedagogical documentation, co-educators, and collaborative inquiry to create inclusive, supportive learning experiences. Through this series, participants will gain tools to engage families effectively and cultivate intentional, reflective practices that strengthen family partnerships and enhance children's learning.

### **Part 1: Responsive Relationships and Environment as Third Teacher**

In this session, we will explore how building responsive relationships with children, families, and the community lays the foundation for learning. We will also examine how the physical environment functions as the third teacher, fostering engagement, creativity, and a sense of belonging.

### **Part 2: Pedagogical Documentation and Co-Educators with Families**

This session will focus on the role of pedagogical documentation in capturing and reflecting families' learning journeys, as well as how it can deepen educator-family partnerships. We will discuss the value of viewing families as co-educators, creating a shared learning experience that includes both the home and the early learning environment.

*Continued on page 28*

Family-centered Early Childhood Education and Care, 3-Part Series *with*  
Cara Caudle, Childhood Connect *continued*



**Part 3: Collaborative Inquiry and Reflection,  
Learning Through Play, Exploration, and Inquiry**

The final session highlights the importance of reflective practice and collaborative inquiry in shaping responsive early childhood education. We will explore how learning through play, exploration, and inquiry can be a shared experience, and how continuous reflection supports both professional growth and family engagement.

Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

Session 1: **Tuesday March 24, 2026**

Session 2: **Tuesday April 28, 2026**

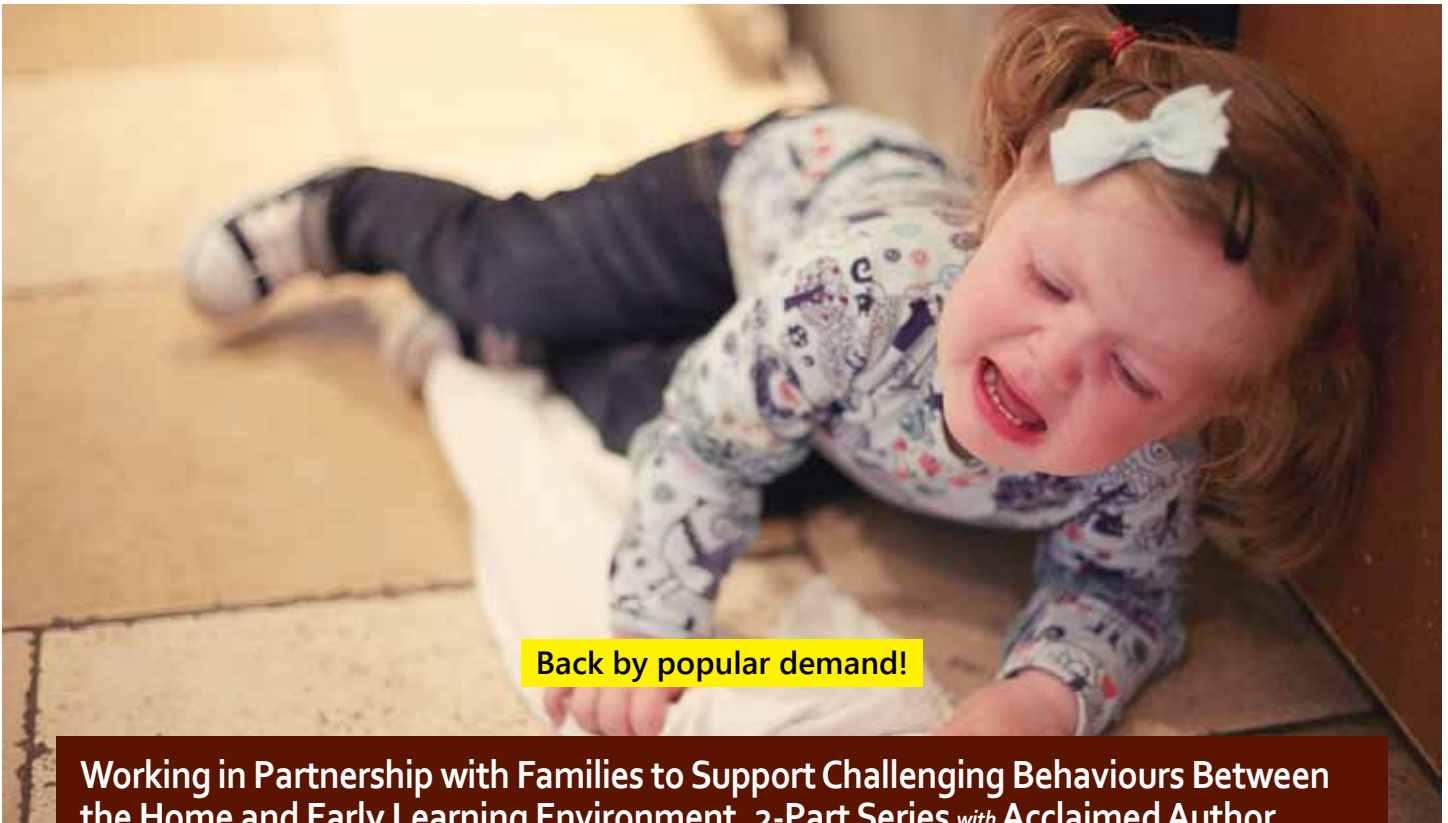
Session 3: **Tuesday June 9, 2026**

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

Cost: \$55 for the series or \$25/session



**Cara Caudle** MEd, BAsC, RECE is a dedicated early learning professional with a passion for all things early years and professional development. Cara views learning as relationship-driven and pivotal to personal and collective growth. With a master's in education and undergraduate in child studies, Cara blends supportive approaches to adult learning with various early learning topics. Currently, Cara leads the growth of her business Childhood Connect, while teaching with First Nations Technical Institute's Early Childhood Education program.



Back by popular demand!

**Working in Partnership with Families to Support Challenging Behaviours Between the Home and Early Learning Environment, 2-Part Series** *with* **Acclaimed Author Barbara Kaiser**

**Session 1: Putting Positive Supports in Place to Support Children with Challenging Behaviour**

Prevention is the best intervention. Just as behaviour can affect all aspects of a learning environment, all the aspects of a learning environment can be structured to promote positive behaviour (NAEYC). This session will cover the continuum that involves universal supports for all children that include building strong relationships and providing a high-quality environment that encourages positive behaviour from learning activities to transitions and materials and opportunities available during free play.

Presented *Via Webinar* (both sessions)  
Session 1: **Thursday April 16, 2026**  
Session 2: **Thursday November 5, 2026**  
6:30 to 8:30 pm (both sessions)  
Cost: \$55 for the series or \$35/session

*Continued on page 30*

Working in Partnership with Families to Support Challenging Behaviours Between the Home and Early Learning Environment, 2-Part Series *with* Acclaimed Author Barbara Kaiser *continued*



### Session 2: Challenging Behaviours - The Importance of Working with Families

Communicating with families about concerns about their child's behaviour is one of the hardest things you need to do. You might worry that you will damage your relationship with parent(s), put an extra burden on a struggling family, or put the child at risk for excessive punishment or harm. These are often valid concerns; nevertheless, you have an obligation to keep families informed about their child's progress and well-being. Communication is key to creating family partnerships. Family members must feel comfortable asking questions, seeking information, and raising concerns about their child's care, well-being, and development. Families may need support as much as their child does.



**Barbara Kaiser** is the co-author of *Challenging Behavior in Young Children*. She has taught at Acadia University, 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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# Connecting Children to Nature



**Supporting Children in Developing Empathy, Wonder, and Respect for the Natural World: Why Bees and Biodiversity Matter *with* Niagara Bee Group**

Bees are essential pollinators, responsible for the reproduction of many plants, including those that produce the food we eat. Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth, ensures ecosystem resilience and the availability of resources. Understanding these concepts is crucial for fostering a sustainable future.

In this session, we will explore the importance of bees, biodiversity basics, threats to bees and biodiversity, and conservation efforts. This session will offer the opportunity to observe a hive experience, where participants can safely see live honey bees up close, watch them dance and work together, and experience first-hand how bees support our food chain. Educators will leave with strategies for sharing experiences with children on the topic of bees and biodiversity and supports the development of empathy, wonder, and respect for the natural world.

Presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)  
**Tuesday March 31, 2026**  
6:30 to 8:00 pm  
Cost: No Charge (*This session has been sponsored by Niagara Bee Group*)





## Connecting Toddlers with Land Based Learning *with* Métis Nation of Ontario

The early childhood and land-based learning training will discuss the importance of “play schemas” and the benefits of planning intentionality based on understanding key child development principles. Participants will engage with thinking about land-based learning and the importance of getting toddlers outdoors to develop their curiosity to understand the interconnectedness of all living things, and as a key strategy in ensuring positive mental health.

Métis Nation  
of Ontario 

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

**Thursday April 23, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Cost: No Charge (*This session has  
been sponsored by Métis Nation of  
Ontario*)



## Opportunities for Play in a Forest School Setting *with* Susanne Robitaille

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.

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

**Saturday May 9, 2026**

9:30 to 11:00 am

Cost: No Charge



**Susanne Robitaille** is a Forest School Practitioner and National Geographic Certified Educator and Registered Early Childhood Educator. Susanne has been on her forest school journey since 2014. In 2015 she was part of a research project with Dr. D. Harwood PhD, highlighting the opportunities that forest schools bring to young children. Susanne runs the Kinder Forest School Program at Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care.



## Understanding Our Role in Cultivating an Ecological Identity for Children and Ourselves *with* Discovery Professional Learning

This session will explore research and frameworks from leading voices in Nature Pedagogy, including Ann Pelo, Jon Young, and Richard Louv. We will examine how rituals, routines, and intentional use of materials deepen children's connection to the natural world. Participants will engage in reflective discussions and hands-on strategies to integrate nature-based practices into their programs. We will explore:

- Practical approaches to aligning pedagogy with *How Does Learning Happen?*
- The role of wonder, awe, and ecological identity in early learning
- Risk mitigation strategies and intentional material use in outdoor learning
- The impact of place-based education in licensed/regulated early learning settings
- Strategies for cultivating a connection to nature for children, families, and communities

Facilitators will offer insights from educators, provocations from thought leaders, and tools to support outdoor learning. This session creates a space to bridge theory and practice, empowering educators to shape pedagogical aspirations that foster livable futures in the world of climate crisis.

**Karen Eilersen** (RECE, Forest School Practitioner) is the founder and Director of Discovery Child Care Centre, one of Ontario's first licensed child care centres certified as a Forest and Nature School since its inception in 1998.

**Jessica Holder** (RECE, BSc, Forest School Practitioner) has been a dedicated leader in Early Childhood Education for over a decade. As the Pedagogical Leader at Discovery Child Care Centre, she collaborates with educators to reflect, grow, and co-construct meaningful programs with children and families.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday October 8, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Cost: \$55



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)

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



## Understanding Your Duty to Report *with* Family and Children's Services (FACS) Niagara

Each of us has a responsibility to protect children and youth from harm. As a professional working with children and supporting others who are, you have a legal and ethical duty to report to a children's aid society when you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection. This webinar will provide information on the Duty to Report as outlined under section 125 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA). Participants will gain insight on their obligation and responsibility, as well as the process for reporting to Children's Aid Society.

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

**Tuesday May 19, 2026**

6:30 to 7:30 pm

Cost: No Charge (*This session has been sponsored by Family and Children's Services Niagara*)

**Please note** this session is open to Niagara educators only.



Family and Children's  
Services Niagara

Les Services à la famille  
et à l'enfance de Niagara



**Standard First Aid and CPR-C *with* First Aid Clinics of Canada, a Niagara-Based Canadian Red Cross Training Partner**

This is a blended online/in-person course offering lifesaving first aid skills, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills, and injury prevention skills and knowledge. The course includes the latest first aid and CPR guidelines and meets legislation requirements for provincial/territorial early childhood education and child care worker safety requirements. The online component is self-paced and will take approximately 3-5 hours to complete. This portion of the course must be completed prior to attending the full day (8-hour), in-person portion. Participants must complete the virtual portion, attend and participate in the in-person class, as well as receive a minimum 75% mark for written knowledge evaluation to receive a certificate. Certificates are valid for 3 years.

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

**Saturday April 25, 2026**

9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Cost: \$150

**Please note** that lunch will not be provided, participants are invited to bring a lunch or go offsite during the lunch break.





## Standard First Aid and CPR-C Recertification *with* First Aid Clinics of Canada, a Niagara-Based Canadian Red Cross Training Partner

This is an in-person refresher course offering lifesaving first aid skills, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills, and injury prevention skills and knowledge. The course includes the latest first aid and CPR guidelines and meets legislation requirements for provincial/territorial early childhood education and child care worker safety requirements. Participants must attend and participate in the in-person class, as well as receive a minimum 75% mark for written knowledge evaluation to receive a certificate. Certificates are valid for 3 years.

**Special Requirements:** To attend a re-certification you **must** have a certificate from a **Canadian Red Cross Training Partner** or the **Red Cross** from a full course that is not expired. If your current certificate is expired, or you already have a re-certification card, the full course is required this time.

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

**Saturday April 25, 2026**

9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Cost: \$125

**Please note** that lunch will not be provided, participants are invited to bring a lunch or go offsite during the lunch break.





## Trauma Informed Care 101 *with* Bethesda Services

This training equips participants with foundational knowledge of trauma and its effects on the brain and nervous system. Learners will develop a new perspective on understanding behaviours that may have previously been labeled as non-compliance, manipulation, or attention seeking. The training emphasizes a shift from asking, “what is wrong with the child?” to “what happened to the child?” – transforming how we view and engage with children who have experienced trauma. Participants will gain an in depth understanding of the core principles and values of trauma informed care and will leave with a toolkit of evidence-based strategies to effectively apply trauma informed practices in their daily interactions with colleagues, children, and families.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Wednesday May 6, 2026**

6:00 to 9:00 pm

Niagara Educators: \$10 (*This session has been sponsored in part by Bethesda Services*)

Outside Niagara Educators: \$20





## Practical Menu Planning Guide for Child Care Programs *with* Christina Dupont, MSc, RD, CDE

Child care professionals are invited to learn about the updated “Child Care Menu Planning – Practical Guide” developed by the Ontario Dietitians in Public Health. This guide helps child care providers ensure all meals, snacks, and beverages served in child care settings meet healthy eating recommendations for children one year of age or older. During this interactive workshop, you’ll learn about menu planning, beverages and food to serve, sample menus, and additional resources. Bring your centre’s menus to modify and make changes during the session.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday September 24, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Niagara Educators: \$10

Outside Niagara Educators: \$25



**Christina Dupont** is a Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator licensed in Ontario, with over 15 years of experience supporting individuals and families in making healthy, practical nutrition choices. She has extensive experience in primary care, helping adults manage pre-diabetes, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular health and digestive concerns, with a focus on sustainable, everyday strategies. Christina is passionate about translating evidence-based nutrition guidance into real-world practice. She works closely with families and organizations to ensure meals and snacks meet healthy eating recommendations and has provided support in menu planning for a variety of community settings. Outside of work, Christina enjoys spending time with her family, including her three children, and exploring practical ways to make healthy eating accessible and enjoyable for all ages.



## Mental Health Concerns in Children and Youth *with* Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute

The ability to thrive and manage life's difficulties is greatly influenced by our mental wellbeing from an early age. Children and youth need supports in their lives to help navigate the challenges that come along with mental health, and to connect them with the necessary support and services. This workshop provides a general overview of the common mental illnesses for children and youth, including the signs and symptoms, themes for treatment, and the controversies that surround some of the diagnoses. Participants will learn tips for informal support of children, youth, and their families struggling with mental health concerns.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Thursday October 22, 2026**

6:30 to 8:30 pm

Cost: \$65

**Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute:** We envision a world where everyone is trauma-informed. We provide training (in-person and online), consulting, books, and free resources in the areas of trauma, mental health, counselling skills, and violence prevention. At the heart of our training materials and resources is a belief that everyone should be trauma-informed. We hope that the impact of our work ripples out into the world, inspiring learning and improving lives.





## Experience DROM: Supporting Well Being Through Movement *with* Niagara College

Support your well being through this unique DROM movement experience. DROM offers a blend of rhythm, movement, and mindful breathing as a means of supporting stress management, self care, and to spark joy! No experience is needed, and participants are encouraged to wear clothing that is comfortable and easy to move in. This experience is intended not only to support educator well-being, but also to offer a few simple strategies that can be brought back to your early learning environment!

Presented *In Person in Niagara* (Meridian Community Centre, 100 Meridian Way, Fonthill)

**Tuesday November 10, 2026**

6:30 to 7:30 pm

Cost: No Charge (*This session has been sponsored by Niagara College*)





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



**Beyond the Basics of Leadership: Enhancing Your Skills and Deepening Your Understanding of Leadership in Early Learning and Child Care, A New 3-Part Series**  
*with* **Acclaimed Author Paula MacLean**

This series includes three advanced sessions geared toward supporting ECE leaders wanting to take their skills to the next level. Our first session, “Teams Alive” will explore innovative, science-backed approaches to creating and sustaining motivated teams that embrace a positive, “we’ve got this culture”. If you have ever been a bit puzzled about how to go about developing a truly strategic plan for your organization, then our second session, “It’s NOT Rocket Science: Practical Approaches for Creating Your Next Strategic Plan” is for senior leaders and board members who want to embark on a simple but thorough planning process in the future. If your board and senior leadership have touched on short-term and planned departure succession planning, then you won’t want to miss our final session based on instructor and best-selling author Paula MacLean’s most recent book, “Following the Leader”.

**Session 1: Teams Alive – What Really Improves Motivation**

New research into what truly motivates both individuals and teams is helping leaders understand what we can do to improve the motivation of individuals and positive culture of teams. This session will clarify why some of our traditional, well-intended ways of improving motivation don’t yield the results we hope for. You will leave the session with new, practical, and cost-effective strategies to help teams create a strong connection to your organization’s purpose, strengthening their initiative to solve problems and be creative. Based on the work of Daniel M. Cable (*Alive at Work*) and Dan Pink (*Drive*), the session will help you feel renewed energy for unlocking the potential in your teams.

*Continued on page 46*

**Beyond the Basics of Leadership: Enhancing Your Skills and Deepening Your Understanding of Leadership in Early Learning and Child Care, A New 3-Part Series with Acclaimed Author and Facilitator Paula MacLean *continued***



**Session 2: It's NOT Rocket Science: Practical Approaches for Creating Your Next Strategic Plan**

This session will provide senior leaders (including executive directors, program managers, and volunteer board members) with a step-by-step approach to creating a well-crafted, three-year strategic plan. Topics include: Engaging the right people in the right ways (employees, families, community partners, funders), designing surveys (including a sample survey) to gather vital information, conducting a SWOT analysis, convening a planning retreat, formatting your plan (writing goals) and monitoring on progress. In addition, we will discuss how to ensure that your goals are truly strategic and not operational. The session will give you what you need to refine your current planning process or to create a strategic plan for the first time.

Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

Session 1: **Wednesday April 22, 2026**

Session 2: **Wednesday May 20, 2026**

Session 3: **Wednesday June 17, 2026**

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

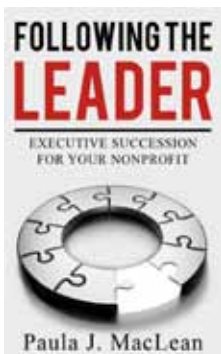
Cost: \$75 for the series

**Session 3: Succession Planning 101: Ensuring Sustainability of Not-for-Profit Organizations**

This workshop will provide practical direction on how to create plans for emergency and planned departures for Executive Directors, Senior Management, and the effective onboarding of new executives. Succession planning is an ongoing commitment of the Board and ED. Effective plans do not leave future leadership to chance and help to ensure organizational stability. Four areas will be explored during this workshop: Emergency Succession Planning, Planned Departure Planning for Retirements, Leader Development Plans, and board Succession Plans.



**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. Facilitator Paula MacLean 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.



**Note:** *Following the Leader: Executive Succession for Your Nonprofit*, Paula's most recent book, is available for \$22. Please ensure your book order is placed by **Monday April 6, 2026**.

*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 taking place at ECCDC.*

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)



## Supporting Staff Retention: Building the Team You Need by Developing the People You Have *with* Dana Sproule, Burning Point Coaching and Consulting

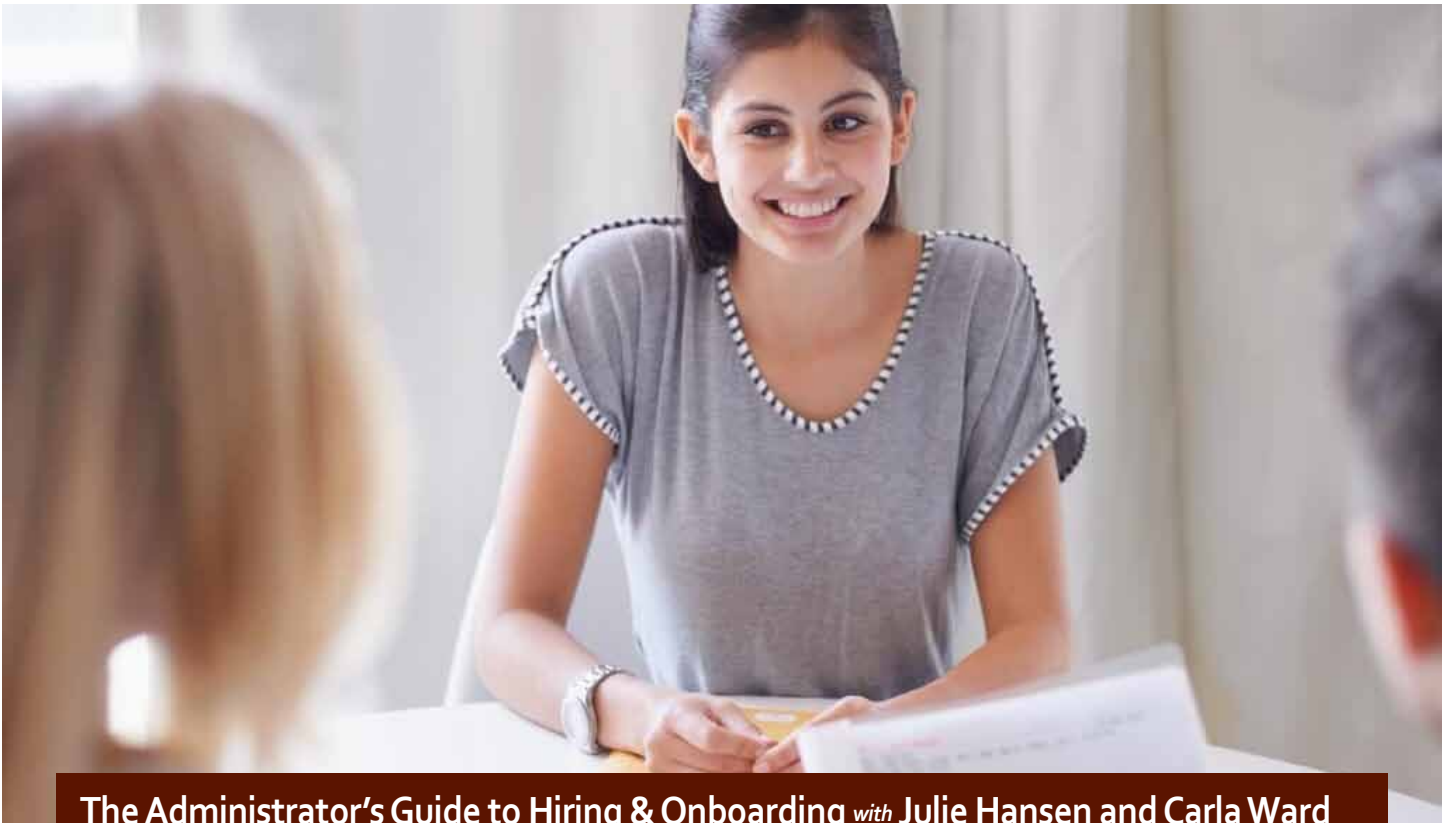
There is a critical shortage of ECEs. Centres are struggling to hire, and keep, staff. Even when they do have a full roster, sometimes those people haven't developed the experience and skills they need. This is a workshop for leaders. It is designed to help supervisors, administrators, and classroom leaders build the team they need by intentionally developing the people they have. A supervisor in an ECE centre hasn't necessarily learned how to intentionally develop adults. That critical leadership skill makes all the difference to the health of their teams. Luckily, it can be taught! In this workshop, participants will learn how to observe their team and identify important strengths, as well as gaps in their skills. They'll learn how to frame those observations so that they can be well-received by the staff they supervise. We will use a tool, The Development Loop, to create plans for growth, and implement ongoing reflection and intentional action to increase the competency of staff.

Presented *Via Webinar*  
**Wednesday September 23, 2026**  
10:00 to 11:30 am  
Cost: \$65



**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.



## The Administrator's Guide to Hiring & Onboarding *with* Julie Hansen and Carla Ward

Join Julie Hansen and Carla Ward for this comprehensive session that encompasses steps of hiring and onboarding that every administrator must master to build a strong team. Participants will attain practical strategies, addressing topics from attracting top talent to crafting effective onboarding programs. This informative session will equip you with the tools and insights needed to recruit, select, and seamlessly integrate new staff members, ensuring your centre thrives with a skilled and cohesive team.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Wednesday October 28, 2026**

10:30 am to 12:00 pm

Cost: \$65



**Julie Hansen** holds a diploma in Early Childhood Education and has been in the field for over 20 years in various roles including program staff, centre management, supervisor and director. Her primary focus has evolved to encompass team leadership, management training and program development. Julie has had articles published in provincial and national ECE journals on the topic of emergent curriculum and leadership. Julie's goal as an Early Childhood Educator and facilitator is to support fellow educators and early years professionals in providing high-quality early learning experiences for children and families.



**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.

*Niagara Registrants are invited to attend the Executive Directors and Administrators Network following this session to connect about issues and opportunities to share strategies, suggestions and best practices with their colleagues from 12:00 to 1:30 pm taking place at ECCDC.*

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)



## Fostering Growth Mindset: Creating a Safe Culture for Innovation *with* Inclusivity Insight

People with a growth mindset believe that ability and talent can be developed. This mindset allows us to better adapt and respond to challenges and opportunities, as well as unlock the potential in ourselves, our teams, and our colleagues. It turns out that organizations have mindsets too – and that fostering a growth mindset influences their ability to attract, promote, and engage people from diverse backgrounds. In this session, participants learn about a growth vs. fixed mindset and identify their own mindset and its impact on their team/organization. Leaders taking this course will also leave with practical tools and strategies to promote a growth mindset in themselves and their teams.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Wednesday December 16, 2026**

10:00 to 11:30 am

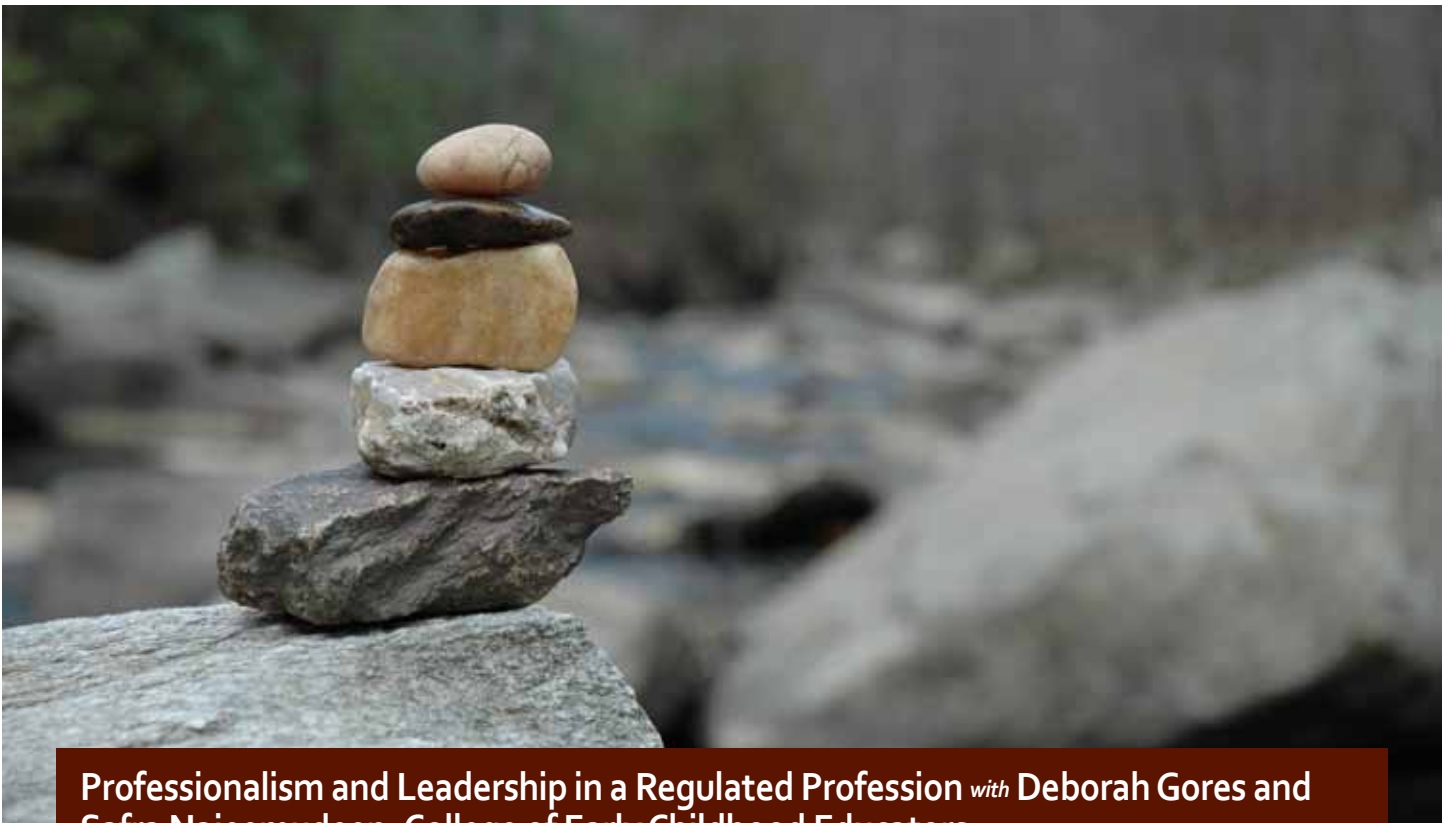
Cost: \$65

**Inclusivity Insight** was founded in June 2016 and offers practical, data-informed solutions that empower inclusive and high performing teams. Inclusivity is IBPOC owned with more than 50% women in leadership positions and brings their work a diversity of lived experiences and interdisciplinary expertise.

inclusivity

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# **Inspiring Professional Growth in Early Learning and Child Care**



## Professionalism and Leadership in a Regulated Profession *with* Deborah Gores and Safra Najeemudeen, College of Early Childhood Educators

This presentation takes a closer look at the concepts of professionalism in early childhood education in Ontario. Topics include ethical and professional standards, using professional judgement, continuous professional learning, accountability for professional practice, and conduct.

**Deborah Gores** RECE is a Professional Practice Analyst at the College of Early Childhood Educators. She holds a Master of Science in Family Relations and Human Development from the University of Guelph, where her research focused on supporting RECEs in addressing the development of sexuality in early childhood. Her current research interests are early childhood education policy and sexuality education in early childhood. Prior to joining the College, Deborah worked in the research and evaluation department at the Dr. Jay Children's Grief Centre.

**Safra Najeemudeen** RECE is a Professional Practice Analyst at the College of Early Childhood Educators. She has an MA in Early Childhood Studies and a BA in Early Childhood Leadership. She is a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at York University. Her research focuses on teaching and learning in contexts of cultural diversity. Prior to joining the College, Safra worked as the professional learning coordinator at the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, and as a professor in early childhood diploma and degree programs.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Tuesday November 3, 2026**

6:30 to 8:00 pm

Cost: No Charge (*This session has been sponsored by College of Early Childhood Educators*)



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)



**The EQ Edge: Leadership Success Through Emotional Intelligence** *with Claudia Valle,*  
**Leaders for Leaders**

Unlock the secrets to greater job satisfaction, stronger relationships, and unwavering confidence. In today's dynamic workplace landscape, intelligence alone is not sufficient. Discover why emotional intelligence, or EQ, reigns supreme as the key to leadership and personal fulfillment. Join us as we delve into the EQ Edge and how it can elevate your career to new heights.

Presented *Via Webinar*

**Wednesday November 18, 2026**

10:00 to 11:00 am

Cost: \$65



**Claudia Valle** has worked with Tim Arnold for over 20 years. She leverages her background in experiential education so that the leaders and teams she works with reach their goals and their full potential. This has resulted in her designing programs for Fortune 500 companies that include Enbridge, Procter & Gamble and Sysco; and delivering cutting edge learning experiences in various countries throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

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# **Position Specific Training Series**



Pour les éducateurs/éducatrices francophones avec Helene Pouliot-Cleare



### Séance 1: Apprentissage en plein air

Cet atelier vise à maximiser l'environnement comme troisième éducateur, enrichir les expériences que vous pouvez offrir aux enfants pour stimuler leur cerveau, la résolution de problèmes, leur prise de risques et spécialement l'empathie envers la nature pour assurer un meilleur avenir pour nous tous.

### Séance 2: Communications efficaces avec les parents

Cet atelier favorisera la discussion d'une variété de sujets traitant de communications efficaces, parfois courageuses avec les familles pour établir une relation de confiance, maintenir des relations saines et faciliter leur contribution, leur participation. Des précisions seront données pour différencier le rôle d'une gardienne d'enfants et celui d'une professionnelle de la petite enfance afin d'être appréciée et reconnue comme professionnelle. Entre autres, la planification requise pour le développement et l'apprentissage optimal de l'enfant sera présentée.

### Séance 3: Problème de comportement ou situation d'apprentissage

Le comportement qu'il soit positif ou négatif est le langage de l'enfance. Lorsqu'il est dérangeant, il nous pose un défi qui peut frustrer, stresser et nous amener à nous questionner et parfois même à nous sentir inadéquat. Voilà pourquoi il est si important d'acquérir une compréhension profonde du développement normal et des façons dont les enfants apprennent. Cet atelier vise à vous aider à comprendre et à découvrir des stratégies de prévention et d'intervention.

Présenté *via webinaire*

Séance 1: **le mercredi 22 octobre 2025**

Séance 2: **le mercredi 11 février 2026**

Séance 3: **le mercredi 29 avril 2026**

18h30 à 20h30 (Toutes les sessions)

\$65 toutes les sessions



## Supporting Children and Families in Your EarlyON Program Through the Lens of How Does Learning Happen? 3-Part Series *with* Christine Zupo

### **Session 1: How Does Learning Happen in EarlyON?**

EarlyON Child and Family Centres are built on principles that support children, parents, and caregivers in learning, growing, and connecting. This workshop invites educators to explore how the overarching values of EarlyON align with the Four Foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* (HDLH). Participants will deepen their understanding of HDLH, reflect on its application to their programs, and practice strategies to ensure programs meet these foundational goals effectively. In this workshop, participants will;

1. Deepen understanding of the *How Does Learning Happen?* framework.
2. Explore how the Four Foundations relate to children, parents, and caregivers in EarlyON programs.
3. Develop strategies to align program delivery with the Four Foundations.

### **Session 2: Fostering A Sense of Belonging for Families/Caregivers in EarlyON Centres**

EarlyON Centres are welcoming spaces where families and caregivers come together to connect, build relationships, and feel a sense of belonging. This workshop invites educators to explore ways to make EarlyON environments inclusive and supportive for all families, strengthening relationships through caring and effective communication. Participants will gain tools to foster belonging and create connections that celebrate the diversity of their communities. Participants will;

1. Discover ways to foster belonging for all families, including dads, grandparents, and LGBTQ+ families.
2. Enhance non-verbal communication to create a warm and welcoming environment.
3. Learn strategies for effective communication with families when language is a barrier.

*Continued on page 56*

Supporting Children and Families in Your EarlyON Program Through the Lens of How Does Learning Happen? 3-Part Series *with* Christine Zupo *continued*



**Session 3: The Emergent Curriculum Approach and Pedagogical Documentation in EarlyON**

Pedagogical documentation is a powerful tool for making children’s learning, strengths, and capabilities visible to the learning community. Through narration, photographs, videos, and artifacts, educators can capture meaningful moments, reflect on their observations, and plan responsive experiences. This workshop invites participants to explore strategies for documenting learning in creative and inclusive ways while fostering a sense of belonging and celebrating diversity. In this workshop, participants will; 1. Discover diverse methods for documenting children’s learning, including learning stories, photos, and videos. 2. Explore how documentation can highlight diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and inform future planning. 3. Reflect on how documentation builds connections and strengthens the learning community.

Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

Session 1: **Thursday December 18, 2025**

Session 2: **Thursday February 19, 2026**

Session 3: **Thursday May 14, 2026**

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

Niagara Educators: \$45 for the series

Outside Niagara Educators: \$65 for the series



**Christine Zupo** is a professor at the University of Guelph-Humber and Humber College in the Early Childhood degree/diploma and Electives programs, bringing over 35 years of experience working with young children and families in a variety of Early Learning and Care settings. Christine has been teaching post-secondary education for over 20 years. She holds a Master of Arts degree and is a passionate advocate for social justice issues and carries a strong commitment to promoting Truth and Reconciliation in education with consultation from surrounding Indigenous communities.



**Building Relationships and Exploring *How Does Learning Happen?* in a Home Child Care Program, 2-Part Series *with* Jinder Virdee, Seneca Polytechnic**

**Session 1: How Does Learning Happen in Home Child Care**

This interactive and hands-on session explores the principles of *How Does Learning Happen?* within the unique context of home child care settings. Participants will engage in practical activities, reflective discussions, and collaborative exercises that support the connection between theory and everyday practice. This session emphasizes relationship-building, responsive caregiving, and creating environments that support children’s learning and well-being.

Presented *Via Webinar* (both sessions)  
Session 1: **Wednesday March 11, 2026**  
Session 2: **Wednesday May 13, 2026**  
6:30 to 8:00 pm (both sessions)  
Niagara Educators: \$45 for the series;  
Outside Niagara Educators: \$55 for the series

**Session 2: Communicating with Parents & Caregivers for Home Child Care Providers**

Home child care providers will explore strategies for building trusting relationships with parents, along with key skills such as responding to upset caregivers and explaining educator concerns. Participants will also investigate cultural differences and how they can affect communication between educators and caregivers.



**Jinder Virdee**, Bachelor of Education, has been involved in the Early Childhood Education field for over 30 years. Jinder teaches at Seneca College, and operates her own consulting business offering keynote speaking, workshops, webinars and seminars. Through these hands-on workshops, Jinder shares personal experiences and shares many personal stories.



## The Art of Being a Home Child Care Provider, 2-Part Series *with* Cara Caudle, Childhood Connect

The Art of Being a Home Child Care Provider is a two-part workshop designed to support home-based educators in refining their practice with confidence and purpose. Participants will explore both the fundamentals of pedagogy and the unique demands of running a home child care program, from daily caregiving routines to long-term planning. Through reflective exercises and practical strategies, this series empowers providers to create enriching environments and sustain high-quality care over time.

Presented *Via Webinar* (both sessions)

Session 1: **Wednesday October 21, 2026**

Session 2: **Wednesday November 25, 2026**

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

Niagara Educators: \$45 for the series

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55 for the series

### Part 1 - Foundations of Home Child Care

Dive into the essential principles of pedagogy and care and how they integrate with home child care programs. This session covers key aspects like balancing meal prep with caregiving, programming planning, and navigating the distinct challenges of working on your own.

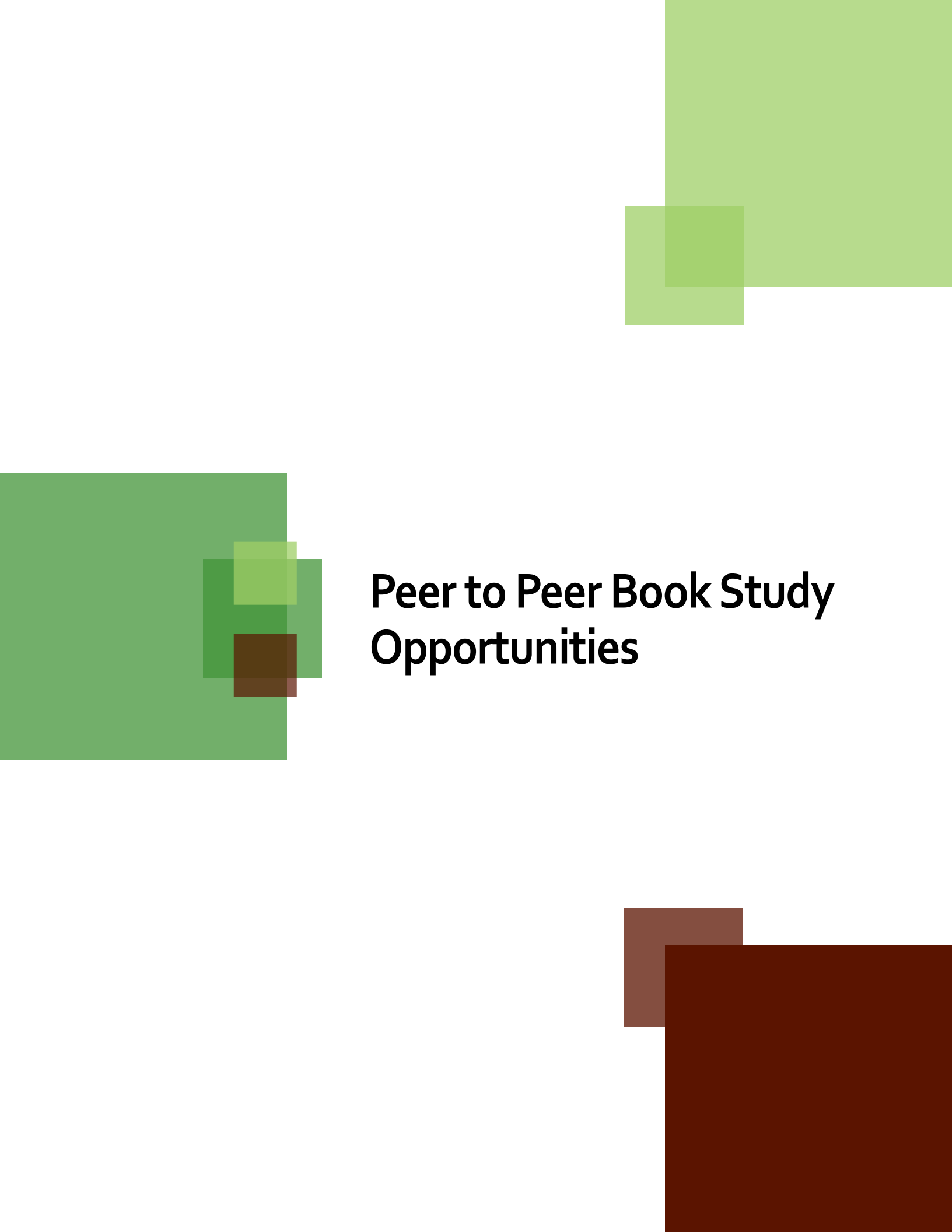
### Part 2 - Designing for Longevity and Growth

Take your home child care practice to the next level with hands-on exercises in environment design, planning for long-term sustainability, and fostering a strong, intentional approach to caregiving. This session focuses on refining daily routines and building a foundation for years of meaningful, high-quality care through intentional goal setting and action planning.

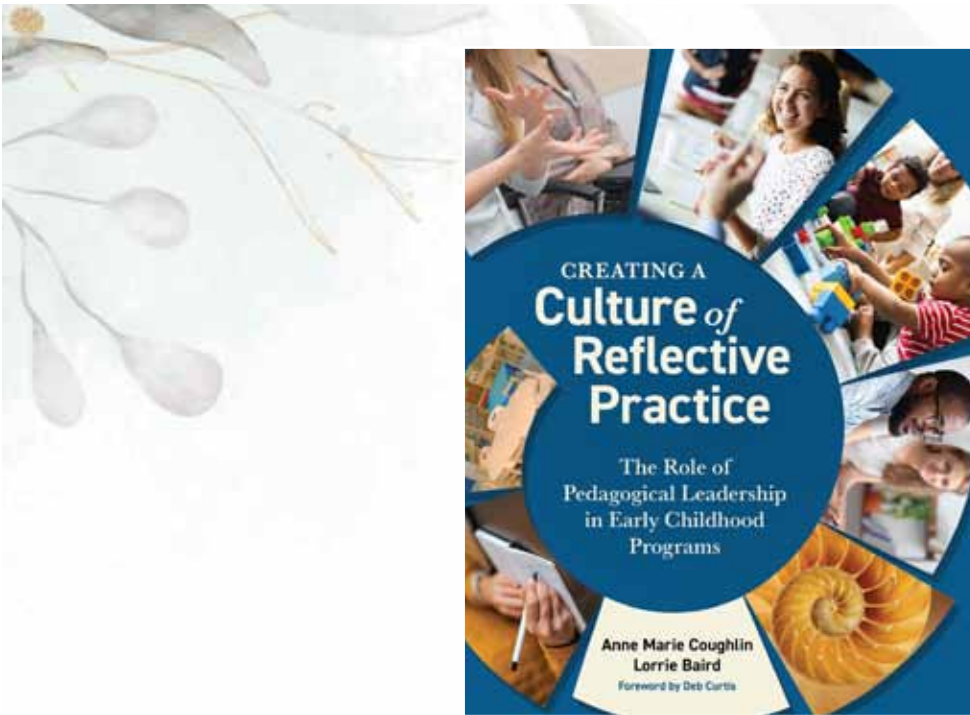


**Cara Caudle** MEd, BAsC, RECE is a dedicated early learning professional with a passion for all things early years and professional development. Cara views learning as relationship-driven and pivotal to personal and collective growth. With a master's in education and undergraduate in child studies, Cara blends supportive approaches to adult learning with various early learning topics. Currently, Cara leads the growth of her business Childhood Connect, while teaching with First Nations Technical Institute's Early Childhood Education program.

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)

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# Peer to Peer Book Study Opportunities



## Creating a Culture of Reflective Practice: The Role of Pedagogical Leadership in Early Child Programs *with* ECCDC

Early learning and child care continues to grow and evolve and as a result, educators need to consider the impact of current approaches to collaborating with adults and children. Through this reflection, we will explore the balance between administrative tasks, ensuring program quality, and supporting the growth of others.

During the book study participants will have an opportunity to take a practical look at creating systems, structures, and protocols for supporting people in large and small organizations, and individuals working as mentors, coaches, or pedagogical leaders to invite educators into a thinking and learning process about their work. Participants will develop the skills and mindsets that can enhance their performance and affect organizational change. The institute will offer stories and structures connected to four principles of pedagogical leadership with specific ideas to enhance the work of educational leaders from a place of values and vision.

The book study will focus on four principles of pedagogical leadership – working from a place of values and vision, building strong relationships, seeing and supporting strengths and competencies, and supporting professional learning in multiple ways.

Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

Part 1: **Tuesday January 13, 2026**

Part 2: **Tuesday February 10, 2026**

Part 3: **Tuesday March 10, 2026**

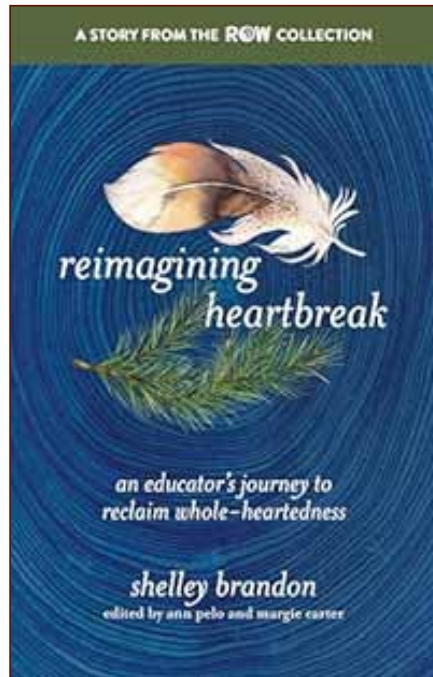
Part 4: **Tuesday April 14, 2026**

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

Niagara Educators: No Charge

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55

Participants may choose to purchase a copy of the book through ECCDC for \$70. Please ensure your book order is placed by **January 5, 2026**.



## Re-imagining Heartbreak: An Educator's Journey to Reclaim Whole-Heartedness *with* ECCDC and Shelley Brandon

Stop. Look. Listen. Feel. Come fully alive in your encounters with young children. Reimagining Heartbreak is a call to return to full-hearted, 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?

This 4-part book study will go into the stories of young children that will allow your heart to open up to happiness and sadness, and reconsider what it means to be truly present in your interactions. Through these stories, we will uncover the values we wish to bring into our work with young children, and the ways in which we can do so.

**The last session will be presented by the author, Shelley Brandon!** Participants will gain insights directly from the presenter and have the opportunity to ask questions that arose throughout the book.

Presented *Via Webinar* (all sessions)

Part 1: **Tuesday May 26, 2026**

Part 2: **Tuesday June 23, 2026**

Part 3: **Tuesday July 14, 2026**

Part 4: **Tuesday August 25, 2026** - *Closing with Book Author Shelley Brandon*

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

Niagara Educators: No Charge

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55

Participants may choose to purchase a copy of the book through ECCDC for \$36. Please ensure your book order is placed by **May 8, 2026**.

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



**Cultivating Positivity and Developing Strengths-Based Communication Skills**  
Professional Learning Institute *with* Internationally Respected Researcher and  
Author, Susan MacDonald

**Morning: Sparking Joy: Cultivating Positivity and Resilience**

We all want early childhood programs that are buzzing with positivity, but how can you create that kind of atmosphere when energy and engagement are low? Discovering the lasting benefits that vibrant, joyful, and engaging learning environments have on the well-being of teachers and children will be our starting point. Participants will then engage in a series of reflective exercises to refresh their outlook and create a vision to re-energize daily work. You will leave this workshop with an abundance of resources and actionable strategies that will rekindle your spark and reignite your passion for early childhood education!

**Afternoon: Conversations That Matter! Developing Strengths-Based Communication**

Effective communication is at the heart of successful leadership. Without it, inspiring and motivating educators becomes an ongoing challenge. In this transformative workshop, you will learn how to engage educators in meaningful dialogues that will impact program quality. You will also develop crucial skills for effective communication aligned with individual and program goals to foster a culture of growth and collaboration. Key strategies covered include:

- **Appreciative Inquiry (AI):** A strengths-based framework for inspiring positive change
- **Reflective Practices:** Techniques and powerful questions that deepen professional conversations
- **Observation Protocols:** Tools to enhance feedback and support continuous improvement

By the end of this workshop, you will gain a fresh perspective on your communication and leadership practices and be empowered to lead with increased clarity and confidence.

*continued on page 64*

Cultivating Positivity and Developing Strengths-Based  
Communication Skills Professional Learning Institute *with*  
Internationally Respected Researcher and Author, Susan MacDonald  
*continued*



**Susan MacDonald, M.Ed.**, will be your inspirational and informative guide on this journey. She will share her expertise from her books, *Inspiring Early Childhood Leadership* and *Inspiring Professional Growth*, and her first-hand knowledge of leading early childhood programs from her years as a director of a Reggio-inspired preschool.

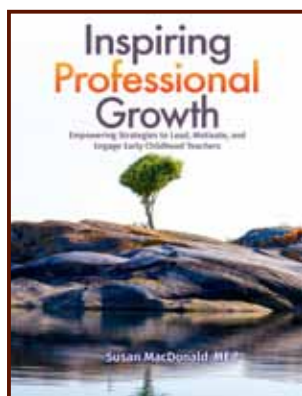
Susan will bring her broad knowledge of the early childhood field and her unique background as a professional coach, with certifications through the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching and the Center for School Transformation into all aspects of this program.

Presented *Via Webinar*

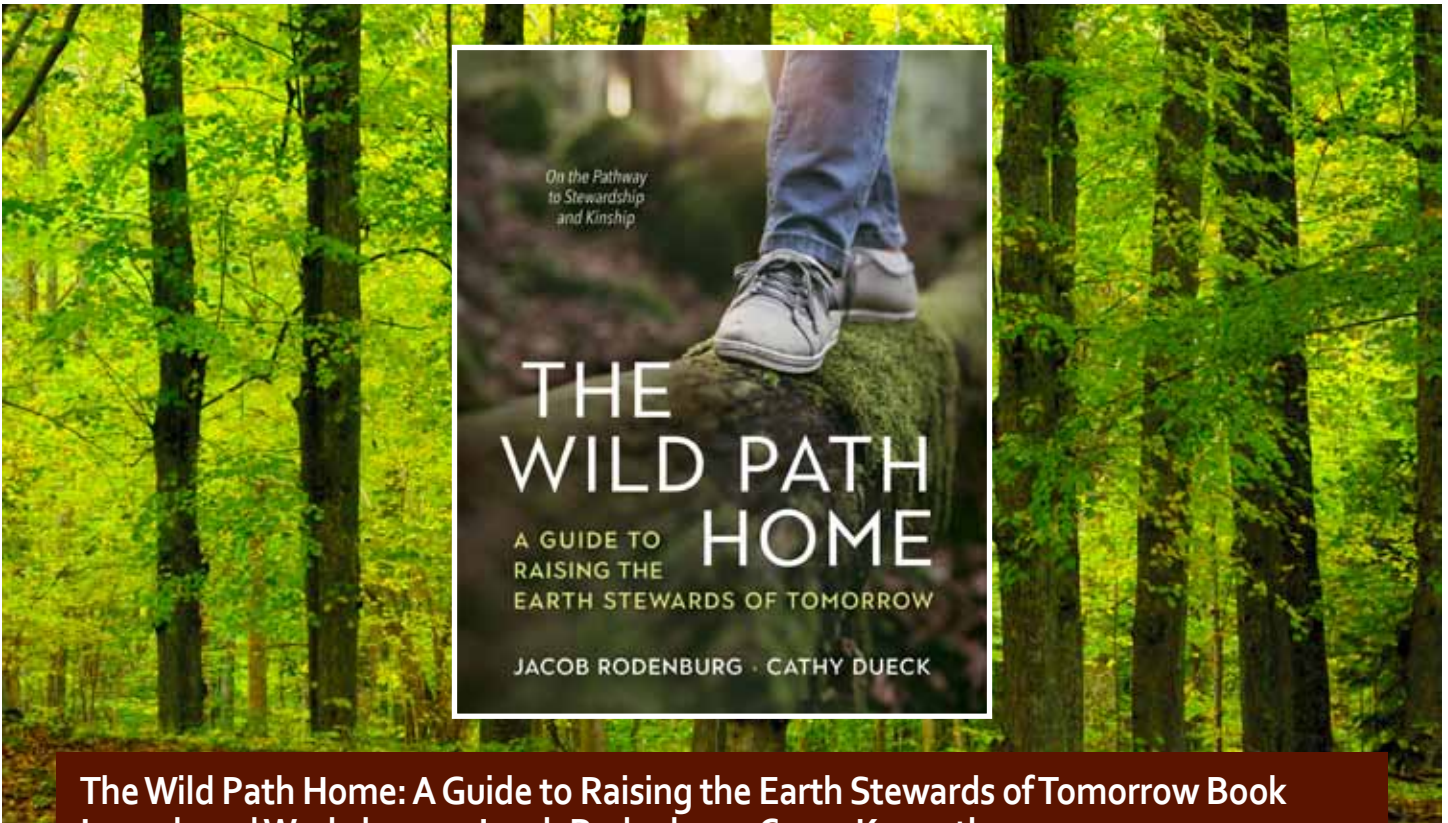
**Saturday March 28, 2026**

9:30 am to 2:30 pm

Cost: \$100



**Note:** Participants may choose to purchase a copy of the book, *Inspiring Professional Growth*, through ECCDC for \$45.



## The Wild Path Home: A Guide to Raising the Earth Stewards of Tomorrow Book Launch and Workshop *with* Jacob Rodenburg, Camp Kawartha

In a technologically saturated world, how can we nurture the next generation's connection to nature, community, and responsibility for the Earth?

Join environmental educator and award-winning author **Jacob Rodenburg** for an inspiring and practical workshop based on his new book, *The Wild Path Home*. Grounded in science-based research, outdoor education practice, and Indigenous wisdom, this interactive session introduces the **Pathway to Stewardship & Kinship**, a developmental framework designed to help children and youth grow into caring, capable Earth stewards.

Through stories, discussion, and hands-on activities, participants will explore ways to foster wonder, empathy, and environmental responsibility in early childhood. This workshop offers practical strategies to help young people build meaningful relationships with the natural world and their communities.

Participants will leave with creative ideas for outdoor learning, mentorship approaches that build resilience and confidence, and tools to help children develop lifelong stewardship values.



**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.

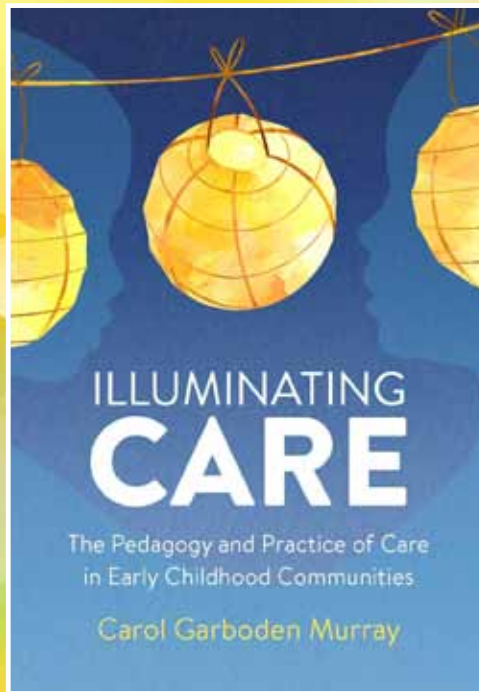
Presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

**Saturday April 18, 2026**

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Cost: \$70 includes lunch

Participants may choose to purchase a copy of the book through ECCDC for \$55. Please ensure your book order is placed by **April 1, 2026**.



## ILLUMINATING CARE: The Power of Ritual, The Joy of In-Between Time and the Magic of the Mundane *with* Author Carol Garboden Murray

During this thought-provoking presentation, Carol will enliven the principles of the seven lamps of care through stories that illustrate what a pedagogy of care looks like during mealtime, toilet learning, dressing, transitions, and resting. As we live life alongside children, we will embrace care as education. Together, we will examine care as an improvisational art, a situated knowledge, an embodied intelligence, and an ethical encounter.



**Carol Garboden Murray** is the author of *ILLUMINATING CARE: The Pedagogy and Practice of Care* (Exchange Press, 2021). She has been working with young children, families, and teachers for many years. She holds a Master's degree in

early education and special education/early intervention. She is the author of numerous articles and books for early childhood educators. Carol has worked as a preschool and toddler teacher, kindergarten and first grade inclusion teacher, Early Interventionist, and Director of Campus Child Care Programs. She is currently the Director of the Wimpfheimer Laboratory Nursery School at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York.

Presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold) and *Via Livestream*

**Saturday May 23, 2026**

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Cost: \$125 includes lunch or \$100 for Livestream

Participants may choose to purchase a copy of the book through ECCDC for \$70. Please ensure your book order is placed by **May 6, 2026**.



## Extending our Understanding of Documentation and Reflecting on Environments that Nurture and Support Relationships: A Professional Conversation *with* Acclaimed Educator, Author and Researcher Susan Stacey

The early learning environment sets the stage for early learning professionals to engage with children in learning experiences. When we as educators thoughtfully communicate, document, and respond to children, we support their growing curiosity and extend their ability to learn and explore. In this workshop, acclaimed author Susan Stacey will share stories and strategies for nurturing and supporting relationships with children as educators, through the use of materials, and in relationship with families and the community by revisiting the role of documentation. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in conversation with colleagues, reflect on their current practices, as well as immerse themselves in a deep dialogue with Susan Stacey through sharing thoughts, stories, and insights. We invite you to come ready to listen, reflect, and share experiences to deepen your understanding of the impact the environment has on developing nurturing relationships with children and families.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Develop thoughtful strategies for building relationships with children and families through the use of documentation
- Enhance understanding of how the environment and materials can support and nurture relationships in early learning programs
- Educators will have the opportunity to reflect on the role of documentation in relation to building a sense of community
- Participants will be able to engage in conversations with colleagues and explore how communities of practice can deepen their understanding of documentation and how it impacts relationships.

*Continued on page 68*

Extending our Understanding of Documentation and Reflecting on Environments that Nurture and Support Relationships: A Professional Conversation *with* Acclaimed Educator, Author and Researcher Susan Stacey *continued*



**Susan Stacey** has been engaged with young children and their teachers in many ways over the last 30 years, as an Early Childhood Educator, Director, Practicum Supervisor, and Teacher Educator. She teaches curriculum courses at the NS College of Early Childhood education, and provides professional

learning experiences for educators across Canada and the U.S. She is very much inspired by the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia schools. Susan's practices and writing are based on inquiry-based, emergent approaches, reflective practices, and inquiry. She is the author of *Emergent Curriculum in Early Childhood Settings*, *Unscripted: Emergent Curriculum in Action*, *Pedagogical Documentation in Early Childhood*, and *Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments*, all published by Redleaf Press. Susan was raised and educated in England, received her graduate degree from Pacific Oaks College, and now lives in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Participants may choose to purchase a copy of the book, *Inquiry Based Early Learning Environments*, through ECCDC for \$80. Please ensure your book order is placed by **May 27, 2026**.

Presented *In Person* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold) and *Via Livestream*

**Saturday June 6, 2026**

10:00am to 3:00pm

Cost: \$85 includes lunch or \$65 for Livestream

**Praise for Susan Stacey's 2025 Pedagogical Documentation Session**

"Susan provided a hands-on, easy to digest workshop that made me feel supported in sharing back with my agency"

"Appreciated the opportunity to practice documentation and view the different interpretations and styles - very informative"

"Lots of information with examples and hands-on practice in groups."

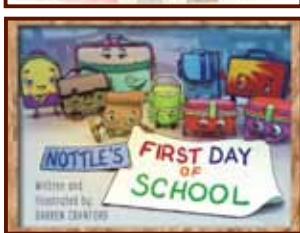
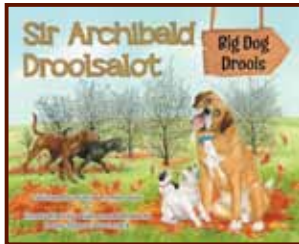
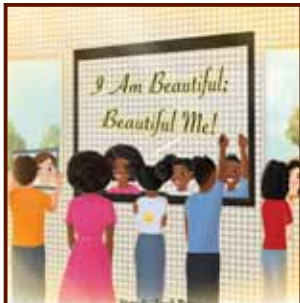
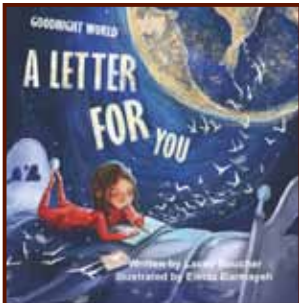
"The speaker was very engaging and the seminar very interactive."



**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!

Presented *In Person in Niagara*  
 (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)  
**Wednesday July 8, 2026**  
 6:30 to 8:30 pm  
 Niagara Educators: No Charge





**Developing an Inclusive Early Learning and Child Care Community: Strategies for Supporting Inclusive Practices in your Early Learning Environment for Educators and Leaders *with One of the Featured Authors in *Think Feel Act*, Dr. Kathryn Underwood, Toronto Metropolitan University***

In this session, Dr. Kathryn Underwood will offer the opportunity for participants to think deeply about inclusive practice and how inclusion is embedded within their early learning programs. Participants will explore new research-based strategies for supporting inclusive practice, informed by both educator and family experiences. Early learning and child care programs are deeply embedded within the community, and children’s experiences are intertwined with the faces and places they interact with each day. This workshop will offer participants the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge base and provide new tools and approaches to build upon our understanding of what inclusion is and how it can look in early learning. Among these ideas that will be explored are the importance of knowing and understanding each individual child, considering the language that we use, as well as exploring the idea that inclusion is not just for children, it is for everyone within that space, including families and staff teams.

Presented *In Person in Niagara* (ECCDC Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold) and *Via Livestream*  
**Saturday October 17, 2026**  
10:00 am to 2:00 pm  
Cost: \$85 includes lunch or \$65 for Livestream



**Dr. Kathryn Underwood** is a professor in the School of Early Childhood Studies at Toronto Metropolitan University. Dr. Underwood’s interests are in disabled children and their families’ experiences and contributions to our understanding of social services, social life, and society. The focus of her program of research has been on how constructions of disability in early childhood programs and care, early intervention, and health and social service contexts are used to organize children, with particular interest in intersectional identities of all disabled children. Dr. Underwood has conducted a number of studies that focus on parent viewpoints and the work of families to engage with institutions.



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)

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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 2026 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 Spring 2026 (March to May 2026)

### 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? If so, this Network is for you. We will have the opportunity to consider and discuss ways to support children's behaviour. Attendees will leave with new ideas, resources, and tools to implement in their early learning environment. Come to tour the ECCDC, borrow resources, problem solve with your peers and engage with others in similar positions. Registration in advance is required by contacting [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org).

- **Wednesday January 28, 2026** | 7:00 to 8:30 pm | In Person at ECCDC (3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

### Menu Planning and Nutrition Community of Practice Network

This network offers Niagara's early learning and child care professionals an opportunity to connect and consider how they support children with daily nutrition and to consider diverse options for their weekly menus and food experiences.

- **Wednesday April 1, 2026** | 6:00 to 7:30 pm | In person (location to be announced)

### Niagara Nature Alliance Community of Practice

This network supports educators that have a passion and curiosity for connecting children to nature through the exploration of current trends and research, best practices, and sharing experiences offered in Niagara's early learning and child care programs.

- **Wednesday April 8, 2026** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In person (location to be announced)

### Early Learning and Child Care Educator Community of Practice Network

This network supports infant, toddler, preschool, and school age educators in exploring current trends, best practices, brainstorming solutions, and the opportunity to build capacity within Niagara's early learning and child care professionals.

- **Monday April 13, 2026** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In Person at A Child's World Tiny Travellers (301 St. Paul Street, St. Catharines)

### Executive Directors and Administrators Network

Executive Directors and Administrators 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 the webinar *Beyond the Basics of Leadership: Enhancing Your Skills and Deepening Your Understanding of Leadership in Early Learning and Child Care, Session 2: It's NOT Rocket Science: Practical Approaches for Creating Your Next Strategic Plan with Paula MacLean*. Participants are invited to register for the webinar and watch it at the ECCDC and join the in-person meeting which follows. For more details on this session, please refer to page 81.

- **Wednesday May 20, 2026** | 12:00 to 1:30 pm | In Person at ECCDC (Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

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## **Réseau de la communauté de pratique des éducateurs francophones en apprentissage et garde des jeunes enfants**

Ce réseau aide les éducateurs des nourrissons, des tout-petits, des enfants d'âge préscolaire et scolaire à explorer les tendances actuelles, les meilleures pratiques, les solutions de remue-méninges et la possibilité de renforcer les capacités des professionnels de l'apprentissage et de la garde des jeunes enfants de Niagara.

- **mercredi 20 mai 2026** | 18h30 à 20h00 | En personne (lieu à annoncer)

## **Licensed Child Care Supervisor Community of Practice Network**

The Licensed Child Care Supervisor Network will offer Niagara's supervisors an opportunity to connect and collaborate with their colleagues to share and discuss current trends, best practices, and resources to support them within their role.

- **Wednesday May 27, 2026** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In person (location to be announced)

## Niagara Networks Fall 2026 (September to November 2026)

### Licensed Child Care Supervisor Community of Practice Network

The Licensed Child Care Supervisor Network will offer Niagara's supervisors an opportunity to connect and collaborate with their colleagues to share and discuss current trends, best practices, and resources to support them within their role.

- **Wednesday September 23, 2026** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In person (location to be announced)

### Early Learning and Child Care Educator Community of Practice Network

This network supports infant, toddler, preschool, and school age educators in exploring current trends, best practices, brainstorming solutions, and the opportunity to build capacity within Niagara's early learning and child care professionals.

- **Wednesday October 7, 2026** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In Person (location to be announced)

### Niagara Nature Alliance Community of Practice

This network supports educators who have a passion and curiosity for connecting children to nature through the exploration of current trends and research, best practices, and sharing experiences offered in Niagara's early learning and child care programs.

- **Wednesday October 14, 2026** | 6:30 to 8:00 pm | In person (location to be announced)

### Executive Directors and Administrators Network

Executive Directors and Administrators are invited to attend this network to connect about issues and have opportunities to share strategies, suggestions, and best practices with their colleagues. The Executive Directors and Administrators Network meeting will take place following the webinar *The Administrators Guide to Hiring & Onboarding with Carla Ward and Julie Hansen*. Participants are invited to register for the webinar and watch it at the ECCDC and join the in-person meeting which follows. For more details on this session, please refer to page 83.

- **Wednesday October 28, 2026** | 12:00 to 1:30 pm | In Person at ECCDC (Conference Room, 3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

### Menu Planning and Nutrition Community of Practice Network

This network offers Niagara's early learning and child care professionals an opportunity to connect and consider how they support children with daily nutrition and to consider diverse options for their weekly menus and food experiences.

- **Wednesday October 28, 2026** | 6:00 to 7:30 pm | In person (location to be announced)

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## **Réseau de la communauté de pratique des éducateurs francophones en apprentissage et garde des jeunes enfants**

Ce réseau aide les éducateurs des nourrissons, des tout-petits, des enfants d'âge préscolaire et scolaire à explorer les tendances actuelles, les meilleures pratiques, les solutions de remue-méninges et la possibilité de renforcer les capacités des professionnels de l'apprentissage et de la garde des jeunes enfants de Niagara.

- **mercredi 4 novembre 2026** | 18h30 à 20h00 | En personne (lieu à annoncer)

## **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? If so, this Network is for you. We will have the opportunity to consider and discuss emergent curriculum through interactive materials, displays, and discussion. Attendees will have the opportunity to create a hands-on activity that they can bring back to their early learning environment. A light snack will be provided. Come to tour the ECCDC, borrow resources, problem solve with your peers and engage with others in similar positions. Registration in advance is required by contacting [eccdc@eccdc.org](mailto:eccdc@eccdc.org).

- **Wednesday November 4, 2026** | 7:00 to 8:30 pm | In Person at ECCDC (3550 Schmon Parkway, Thorold)

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

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