



eccdc

Building Connections, Knowledge, and Strong Early Learning Communities: A Spring Virtual Learning Institute

Saturday May 6, 2023

9:00 am Morning Keynote Presentation: Keeping the Momentum with our Educator Wellness Practices as We Move Out of the Pandemic

As we have been navigating the pandemic, we have also been navigating our wellness practices. As we move out of the pandemic what can we consider to keep the momentum? What wellness looks and feels like will be different from educator to educator, and wherever you are in your journey, it's important to remember that you are the creator of your own path. During this session participants will have the opportunity to review their past goals, explore tools and resources that have been shared with the early learning community, and consider new tools and resources.

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Saturday May 6, 2023

10:15 to 11:45am Morning Presentations (please choose one session)

Session One: Laying the Foundation for Family Engagement

Building and maintaining responsive and collaborative relationships with families is an ongoing journey that presents opportunities to reflect on our own beliefs and values as educators, build reciprocal trust and communication with families, and embark on the process of having the conversation. In this session we will look at strategies to develop relationships, understand how we can engage families as co-learners about and with their children, consider strategies for difficult conversations, and gain information on how we support families in experiencing a sense of belonging in our program.

Session Two: What Does Indoor Risk Look like for Child Care? For Educators

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years highlights the importance of providing children with interesting opportunities for a reasonable degree of risk taking. However, much risk taking for children tends to take place during active outdoor play and often focuses on physical risk taking. This session will explore all forms of risk taking during children's play; physical, emotional, and social risk and how educators can facilitate experiences during indoor play for all age groups.

Session Three: Natural and Found Loose Parts for all Ages

Participants will have an opportunity to consider the who, what, where, when, and why of loose parts while considering what implementing loose parts into the curriculum looks like at different ages. Natural and found loose parts can be incorporated into the curriculum on a daily basis, supporting children's exploration and imagination. We will consider how we communicate to our families and colleagues the importance of loose parts, reflect on how they support the Four Foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* and how we can utilize their properties to enhance children's developmental skills. A resource listing with loose parts to collect will be provided to participants, as well as resources available for loan or purchase from ECCDC.

11:45 to 12:45 Lunch Break

12:45 to 2:30 pm Afternoon Sessions (please choose one session)

Session One: Exploring Nature through Creative Experiences

This workshop will explore how educators can incorporate creative opportunities and nature-based experiences into their environments which utilize natural items. The session will support educators to connect with the outdoor environment and minimize the impact that materials, children, and educators have. Participants will have an opportunity to discover how the natural outdoor environment acts as the Third Educator and develop a range of activities that will engage and encourage children to respect the natural world all around them.

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Session Two: Inclusion in the Early Learning Classroom

This session will focus on how educators can support the needs of children with exceptionalities within an emergent framework. During the session educators will look at how exceptionalities may present in children, developing partnerships, working with families and other professions to facilitate child-focused strategies to support all children, and the benefits of inclusion within the classroom for all. There will also be opportunities to consider how inclusion in the classroom links to early learning frameworks.

Session Three: Naturalizing your Indoor Early Learning & Child Care Environment

This workshop will consider how educators can enhance their existing early learning and child care environments by bringing 'the outdoors indoors' to create aesthetically attractive natural environments that spark the curiosity and sense of wonder for children and adults. The session will consider how educators can actively engage children and families in the naturalization of their indoor environments. Participants will have an opportunity to engage in thought-provoking discussions and engage with a variety of natural materials that they can add to their indoor environments.



Presented *Via Webinar*

Saturday May 6, 2023 from 9:00am to 4:00pm

Niagara Educators: No Charge (sponsored through funding provided by Niagara Region Children's Services)

Outside Niagara Educators: \$55

To register, call 905.646.7311 ext. 304, email eccdc@eccdc.org or visit www.eccdc.org

2:30 to 2:45 pm Break

2:45 to 4:00 pm Strategies for Promoting an Equitable and Discrimination Free Early Learning Environment



This session is being offered by Dane Marco Di Cesare, PhD, Assistant Professor, Brock University, Faculty of Education. Dane will offer strategies to support early childhood educators in providing an environment free of gender identity and gender expression discrimination through creating gender-inclusive and gender-affirming spaces. The session will introduce gender vocabulary and discuss children's developmental milestones related to gender, speak to strengthening self-awareness to check assumptions and interrupt biases about gender. Dane will offer practical and tangible ideas and strategies for co-creating gender justice curricula in early years' classrooms.

4:00 pm Closing