

# Interaction



VOLUME 32, NUMBER 2, SPRING 2019

## Principles, Professionals and Practice

How we apply our principles and beliefs to our professional practice

Children's Impulse Control – Using Nature as the Guide

PUBLICATION OF THE CANADIAN CHILD CARE FEDERATION



Early Childhood Education  
**looking back  
moving forward**



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The photo on the cover was taken by KOLTS forest school Program – Seneca King campus Observation Laboratory Teaching School.

# Behind the Scenes

Spring has come to Canada after what has been one of the toughest winters in over a decade. This we know from the varied complaints across the country and the statistics on record snow, new extreme cold temperatures and topped off with freezing rain and ice. So when we hear the Beatles song, of Here Comes the Sun, the lines really resonate, "It's been a long cold lonely winter". Canadians feel the relief of spring and some pride for making it through a tough winter. We develop a kind of resilience from these hardships and for many, we get through it by adopting principles and attitudes of survival that after many years we take for granted.

This issue of *Interaction* looks at how we as early childhood educators apply our values, principles, and beliefs to our professional practice. Examples of core principles and beliefs include: children learn through play, every child is unique, children guide their own learning in caregiver interactions.

But we will learn in Nicole Royer's article that, "despite our best intentions, the basic principles of educational activity, if misunderstood at their root, are often squandered in practice and addressed in an isolated manner." And feel inspired by our own CCCF Senior Consultant's article about how hope is her guide and principle as a mother of a child with childhood apraxia of speech (CAS), knowing deeply that her child is learning at his own pace and for her, the primary principle being whether he is happy, not where he ranks among his peers. And check out the book review on the book *Inquiry Based Early Learning Environments Creating, Supporting and Collaborating* by author Susan Stacey – an inspiring book that guides educators to understand and implement inquiry-based learning in their important work with young children.

Hopefully, by the time you've read this you will be, or have been to CCCF and ECEBEC's National Child Care Conference in Vancouver, BC, April 10-13, 2019 — Looking Back Moving Forward. The conference brings together new friends, re-acquaints old ones, and deepens our understanding and passion for our profession as early childhood educators.

Finally, this is our last printed, bi-annual issue of *Interaction* in this current state. We are moving to a more fluid, regularly updated online professional child care periodical, with more regular postings, blogs, updates of child care news, stories and professional development content.

Keep sending in your research, ideas, articles, events, news and opinions to us so we can share it among our great Canadian Child Care sector. *Your voice matters!*

**Claire McLaughlin**

Editor, *Interaction*

cmclaughlin@cccf-fcsge.ca

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## INSIDE THE FEDERATION

### CCCF National Affiliate Meeting

The CCCF had the opportunity and pleasure to host a meeting of its affiliates—Canada’s provincial child care organizations—from across Canada in early November thanks to the Lawson Foundation funding. It was the second time in two years that CCCF was able to host a face to face meeting like this. Bringing

together the CCCF affiliates in person solidifies our relationships. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Jean-Yves Duclos joined the meeting, taking questions from CCCF affiliates and engaging in discussion about the future of child care policy and direction in Canada.



Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Jean-Yves Duclos at Ottawa Affiliate Meeting in November

#### Alberta and Saskatchewan Early Learning Leadership Caucus'

With funding provided by the Muttart Foundation, CCCF has continued to assist with the development of the leaders caucus' in Alberta and Saskatchewan. With the support and involvement of the CCCF, these groups of Alberta and Saskatchewan ELCC leaders is focused on the future of early learning and child care services in their provinces and also focused on the professional organization of the ECE sector and how to further their collective voice and work.

#### ELCC Professionals Working with Military and Veteran Families

The CCCF is proud to be a partner with the Vanier Institute in the just released resource for Canada's ELCC sector—ELCC Professionals Working with Military and Veteran Families. Military and veteran children and families have unique needs, experiences and realities, which are too often misunderstood or worse, overlooked by ELCC professionals. This resource is the first step in educating and bringing awareness about our collective practice with and for them.

It is available for download via the CCCF website here:

<http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/wp-content/uploads/WorkingWith-ELCC-EN-2019.pdf>

If you would like printed copies to share at conference, etc. please email Robin at [rmmcillan@cccf-fcsge.ca](mailto:rmmcillan@cccf-fcsge.ca) and she will arrange to have them shipped to you.





## BOOK REVIEW

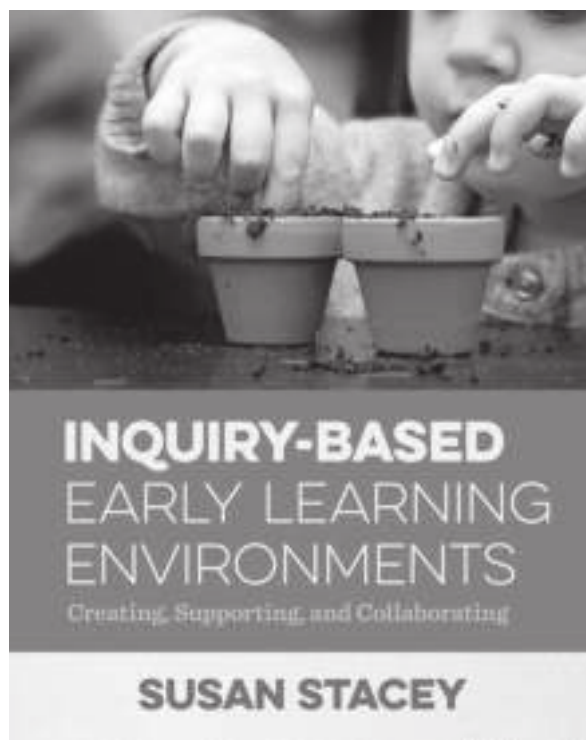
## ***Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments Creating, Supporting and Collaborating***

**review by MaryAnn Farebrother**

This book is a welcome addition to resources required by early learning and care educators, administrators and post-secondary faculty as an effective tool to encourage educators to be curious along with the children. Stacey encourages Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) to demonstrate an inquiry disposition as they engage with children in ELCC environments. The book provides valuable insight of how ECEs and children can co-construct knowledge. Stacey weaves together the Cycle of Inquiry for both educators and young children for clarity and understanding of the role of the ECE.

As is the case in her other books, Stacey writes in a very practice-based learning manner, sharing stories that lead to understanding of research-based practice. Key terms are provided and explained in a very readable style with effectively explicit diagrams, stories and photographs i.e. difference between *invitation*, *provocation* and a *proposal*. Questions are asked to stimulate the inquiry of ECEs: questions about the materials, questions about the space, considerations of time... ECEs are encouraged to take time to let ideas and questions “bubble” to demonstrate values in practice and as a way of being with children.

Educators are encouraged to consider action research questions as they reflect and plan for and with children. These questions help ECEs gain an understanding of how to be intentional in creating meaningful environments for young children when they “revisit, think again and repeat” to foster inquiry. Children’s curiosity and wonder are nurtured through inquiry-based learning. Inquiry leads to deeper engagement and valuable meaning making for both children and ECEs. In turn, “inquiry is a natural outcome of deep engagement.” Stacey suggests that ECEs should value children’s questions and ideas and also ask their own questions



### ***Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments: Creating, Supporting, and Collaborating***

By Susan Stacey - [www.suestacey.ca](http://www.suestacey.ca)  
Redleaf Press; on-sale September 4, 2018;  
ISBN: 978-1-60554-581-3; \$36.95; 168 pgs.

*Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments* takes an in-depth look at children’s inquiry. What does inquiry look like in early childhood settings? How does the environment affect children’s inquiries and teachers’ thought processes? It examines inquiry in all its facets, including environments that support relationships, that create a culture of risk-taking in our thinking, that support teachers as well as children, that include families, that use documentation as a way of thinking about our work, and of course, the physical environment and all the objects and spaces within it.

Throughout the book, 70 full color photographs illustrate stories about environments and approaches to inquiry from around the world are included as examples

and be open to new ideas. Inquiry is a way of being, that should be noticed and nurtured by ECEs.

Stacey demonstrates a clear understanding of the role of an ECE as they engage with young children in early learning and care programs. *Inquiry Based Early Learning Environments Creating, Supporting and Collaborating* is an inspiring book that guides educators to understand and implement inquiry-based learning in their important work with young children!

MaryAnn teaches in the ELCC Major in the Bachelor of Child Studies at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta. MaryAnn was the recipient of the 2014 AECEA Award of Distinction and is a on the board of the AECEA and CCCF member council.



# The Effect of the Child Care Work Environment on the Well-Being of Young Children

Rashin Lamouchi, RECE and Leah Brathwaite

***“A promising future belongs to those nations that invest wisely in their youngest citizens”***

– Dr. Jack Shonkoff

## Early Years Work Environments

The first five years of life is a time of rapid growth and development. Creating and sustaining high quality environments for children to thrive and develop is crucial. As a society, it is our responsibility to ensure that children grow into emotionally healthy adults (Canadian Institute of Health, 2018). Existing data suggests that high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs significantly impact the well-being of children, and provide foundations for lifelong learning (Giguère & Desrosiers, 2010; Geoffroy et al., 2010). In Canada, parents have few choices in terms of ECEC, and the top three methods as measured by Statistics Canada are home child care, centre-based care, and private programs (Sinha, 2014; McCuaig, Bertrand, & Shanker, 2012). Research has shared much about the pros and cons of each form of care, and while opinions differ around the best type of program for individual children; the quality of care is considered to be the most important and consistent factor. The environment in which children grow makes a difference, and the optimal quality of ECEC programs requires both, the availability and the retention of highly skilled staff (Canadian Institute of Health, 2018; Beach et al., 2004).



A number of research studies have suggested that significant predictors of ECEC program quality include: the level of wages paid to staff (Bigras et al., 2010; Goelman, Doherty, Lero, LaGrange, & Tougas, 2000; Whitebrook, Howes, & Phillips, 1998); staff-to-child ratios and group sizes (OECD, 2012); working conditions (OECD, 2017); and, professional development (OECD, 2017). Research has found that unionization is an effective way for professionals in a number of sectors, including ECEC, to positively affect quality through higher wages and benefits; thereby improving staff retention (Gananathan, 2015; Halfon, 2014; CUPE, 2016). Unionization gives workers a collective voice and has a potential to enhance their working conditions (Flanagan, Beach & Varmuza, 2013). On an individual level, research demonstrates that being a member of a union improves job security and fairness in the workplace, as well as increases job satisfaction (CUPE, 2016; Goelman et al., 2000). In comparison to non-unionized staff, unionized staff are more likely to be paid overtime, receive release time for professional development training, and get access to a proper rest area, such as a staff room (Goelman et al., 2000). Despite these positive implications, unionization in the North American childcare sector is low. In Canada, only 21.5% childcare educators are unionized (Halfon, 2014) and in the United States, less than 5% of childcare staff are unionized (Brooks, 2003).

Multiple studies suggest that employers can help improve centre quality by offering better compensation packages to staff (Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). Findings from a quantitative analysis of 170,000 employers and 6,000,000 employees in Norway proved that there is a strong correlation between higher wages, benefits and staff retention (Olsen, 2012). Benefits that provide

a measure of “longer-term security” (Doherty & Forer, 2002, p. 17), include disability insurance, wage enhancement, and benefits to improve the staff’s salary. One study emphasized that “until higher wages and decision-making roles for teachers are incorporated in best practices, young children will miss critical opportunities to experience teachers who can promote children’s emotional well-being and development” (Cassidy, King, Wang, Lower, & Kintner-Duffy, 2017, p. 1676).

## So What?

Quality in ECEC is not a single homogeneous concept, but is “a multi-dimensional phenomenon that involves a complex and dynamic interaction of different factors” (Goelman et al., 2000, p. 3). Within the early childhood environment, there are a number of individuals who regularly come together and engage in the context of the classroom (Cassidy et al., 2017). This system of interconnectedness suggests that factors impacting the lives of educators, such as the level of their emotional and financial satisfaction in their work environment, may influence the emotional well-being and overall health of the children and families in their care (Cassidy et al., 2017). This is especially true in infant, toddler, and preschool environments, where “emotion modelling” (Cassidy et al., 2017, p. 1667) is crucial to help children to develop their own emotional intelligence, and to support them to practice exhibiting appropriate emotional behaviors (Moris, Denham, Basset, & Curby, 2013).

Child well-being is one of the four foundations of Ontario’s pedagogical document for the early years, *How Does Learning Happen?* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) and is a crucial part of the province’s vision for all children’s future potential. According to the document, educators play a

multidimensional role in supporting young children and families (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). In order to become reflective practitioners, educators must listen, observe, document, and discuss with others, in order to better understand children as individuals (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). However, this task is not a simple one, and there are many factors, including emotional and financial well-being which impact the efficacy of an educator to support the children in their care.

The interactions between registered early childhood educators (ECEs) and young children has the potential to have lifelong impacts on development (Cleveland, Gunderson, & Hyatt, 2003; Ackerman, 2006). High quality child-educator interactions often produce short-term benefits of effective socio-emotional and competent literacy and numeracy skills, which may lead to long-term gains seen through improved test scores and higher graduation rates (Ackerman, 2006). In addition to favourable developmental outcomes, research has consistently found a positive relationship between process quality (i.e. provider-child interactions and relationships, and behavior guidance techniques) and overall program quality (Taguma, Litjens, & Makowiecki, 2012; Boo, Araujo, & Tomé, 2016; Barros, Carvalho, Franco, Mendonca, & Rosalem, 2011; Peisner-Feinberg, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, & Kagan, 1999). It is also important to note that structural quality (i.e. provider education, and overall working conditions) significantly impacts process quality (Boo, Araujo, & Tomé, 2016; OECD, 2012; NICHD, 2000). It is fair to conclude then, that it is essential for programs to establish a balance between both process quality and the structural quality in order to successfully achieve high quality of care (Slot, Leseman, Verhagen, & Mulher, 2015).



High quality ECEC is dependent on a diverse, educated, and well-paid workforce (McCuaig, 2004). Research finds that safe, consistent, and stimulating relationships with caregivers are essential for optimal child development (McCuaig, Bertrand, & Shanker, 2012). Creating high quality ECEC must go beyond just opening a centre and hiring educators; it requires programs to provide benefits and trainings, as well as competitive wages to not only recruit but also retain qualified and knowledgeable educators (Ackerman, 2006; Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016).

*How Does Learning Happen?* states that programs which effectively support child well-being are expected to “nurture children’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 23), but this is a difficult goal to meet when staff in complicated work environments are struggling to develop their own professional identities and foster their own sense of well-being. In order to ensure a high level of quality, ECEC programs must cultivate environments which intentionally provide support not only for children, but also for the educators who care for them (Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016). In their recent study, Cassidy et al. (2017) stressed that the best way to support children’s well-being in early education and care settings is to invest in the educators’ compensations and work environments.

## Recommendations

Professional-level pay, work benefits, and appropriate working conditions are essential for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified ECE professionals (Cleveland, Gunderson, & Hyatt, 2003). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2017) has indicated that the following realistic



strategies may be implemented to support ECE staff retention and job satisfaction, and thereby the overall quality of the program (p. 34):

1. Low child-to-staff ratios and low group sizes
2. Competitive wages and work benefits
3. Reasonable schedule/workload
4. Reduce staff turnover
5. Good physical environment
6. Competent and supportive management

It is important to consider the strategies stated above because there is increasing evidence that educators who are well supported and well equipped provide the best quality care for children. Educators provide young children with the tools to navigate through life by ensuring the well-being of both their physical and mental health. It is therefore critical that we extend the same courtesy,

by creating a positive working environment, for those trusted who have taken on the monumental task of caring for our children.

**Rashin Lamouchi** is a registered early childhood educator (RECE) who is recently graduated from the Early Childhood Leadership program at George Brown College. In the early childhood sector, Lamouchi has worked in different capacities including teaching, research, and policy. Amongst many research projects supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), her contribution to *Cognitive Sensitivity and Toys or Tools? Using Tablet Applications for Open-Ended Literacy Learning* are to name a few. Rashin Lamouchi is an advocate for children, families, and the ECE profession, and her current research interests include workplace equality, social justice, and education policy.

**Leah Brathwaite** is a recent graduate of the Honours Bachelor of Early Childhood Leadership program at George Brown College, and was a student researcher on the federally funded research project, *Toys or Tools? Using Tablet Applications for Open-Ended Literacy Learning*. Her research interests include early childhood program quality, as well as early years related policy and advocacy.

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The Canadian Child Care Federation publishes IDEAS twice a year in partnership with George Brown College's School of Early Childhood and the Child Development Institute. For submission to IDEAS please contact Noor Jehan Kabani. Phone (416) 415-5000 extension 3935, fax (416) 415-2565, email [NKabani@georgebrown.ca](mailto:NKabani@georgebrown.ca)

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FOCUS

# Principles, Professionals and Practice



## PRINCIPLES, PROFESSIONALS AND PRACTICE

# A better implementation of founding principles of preschool education in child care: Why and How?

by **Nicole Royer**

Département des sciences de l'éducation  
University of Quebec Trois Rivières

### Introduction

The author has taught over one thousand early childhood practitioners over the past 15 years, from educators working in public child care centres to operators of family daycares, educators in private daycares and educational or technical support officers/advisors. She uses examples to reveal some fallacies or misconstrued ideas that create barriers to implementing the primary principles in early educational activity.

### Background

The ideas developed in this document began in a university certificate training program for adults with work experience in early education. As part of one of the courses, students must explain their understanding of various basic principles by relating them to their practice or current practices, or by commenting on situations depicted for analytical purposes. These ideas also emerged from informal discussions held

**Despite our best intentions, the basic principles of educational activity, if misunderstood at their root, are often squandered in practice and addressed in an isolated manner.**

with practitioners during conferences or non-credit training activities. Therefore, they are not the findings of a systematic study, but rather a summary of what we have learned as instructors, and that we submit with a view to contributing to the reflection on how best to prepare practitioners (initial training) and on their support over their career (coaching from colleagues or management, ad-hoc enrichment activities, help with planning time) in the preschool setting.

For the most part, child care workers can cite the basic principles prescribed in Quebec through the Meeting Early Childhood Needs (Gouvernement du Québec, 2007) educational program: Each child is unique; Children are the primary agents of their development; Child development is a comprehensive, integrated process; Children learn through play; Cooperation between child care personnel or home child care providers and parents is essential for the harmonious development of the child. In these pages, we are going to examine the concepts involving implementation of the first four principles.

The challenges of cohesive and consistent application of the guiding principles surrounding educational activity are real. We are aware that staff have little time to plan and prepare projects and activities, and that they must often deal with groups of children who present widely differing development characteristics and interests.

Despite our best intentions, the basic principles of educational activity, if misunderstood at their root, are often squandered in practice and addressed in an isolated manner. We give examples of the basic principles being applied based on an insufficient understanding. We show the weaknesses in a slightly caricatured and condensed manner, in order to highlight the value of revisiting and expanding over time the understanding of the basic principles so that they take root in the daily routine.



## Misconstrued idea about the “Each child is unique” principle

*“Every fall, we spend a week on fruit trees and I have a bunch of activities already planned.”*

This guiding principle states that each child develops at their own pace and has their own interests and specific needs. The practitioner who follows this principle on the practical level will keep in mind that each child has experienced different events in the previous months and that not all children have the same interest in the activities she has planned (e.g., fruit tasting, outing, drawing, craft, nursery rhyme, yoga posture, puzzle). For example, two children in the group may have watched cherry and apple trees grow in their neighbourhood over the summer, and even participated in picking and cooking the first harvests. The practitioner will also examine the degree of difficulty of the craft she has in mind based on her observations over the past few weeks.

We know that children and their parents generally enjoy these types of themed activities and that they give rise to shared moments that foster interpersonal connections. Children can also make discoveries and engage in meaningful learning. However, the principle *that each child is unique* does not call for this type of preplanned activity to have examples of typical outcomes. This is important to be aware of. Simply think about the importance of being tuned into intrinsic motivation, in other words tuned into the impetus that comes from the child and the pleasure of doing the activity without regard for the adult’s desired outcome.

We also know that practitioners must be able to count on a range of possible activities, to deal aptly with a host of changing factors. That’s why they develop and share, with good reason, their activity banks with colleagues.

But how do we ensure that we get to the heart of the principle and that we are respecting it, that we are acting in a way that maximizes the benefits for each child? We believe that the cornerstone of this ongoing reflective review is daily observation combined with examination and listening. This requires time and a relaxed context in which the practitioner is not under pressure to look good, or under pressure to assert their place in the team, or under pressure to meet the pressing needs of children with difficulties. This pressure to look good appears to us to be a fairly widespread phenomenon whereby practitioners fear that they will be considered incompetent if the work or performances of the children in their group do not match the representations conveyed in their community or the performances of past years.

Planning by theme (e.g., one theme per week) creates opportunities to vary strategies and approaches. It also carries the risk of overlooking useful information (verbal and non-verbal) coming from children during the process and focusing on an outcome instead of a discovery and ownership process for the children, a process that would lead to unusual and unimagined solutions.

Does the practitioner take the time to survey the interests of the group and develop new ideas that reflect what she observes? Does she have the opportunity to do so during her working hours and to perform the reflection that follows? In order to document her practice and develop her critical perspective, the practitioner must observe, examine and listen to reactions as ideas are implemented. This requires time and the confidence of employers and colleagues (Craig and Paige-Smith, 2011).

## Misconstrued idea about the “Children are the primary agents of their development” principle

*“I foster children’s independence when I leave it to them”*

Children need to be independent, that is very true. But the adult educator remains the guide to social integration, to acceptance of reality’s requirements, to self-discovery. In other words, by remaining constantly active, the adult educator assesses the child’s needs on an ongoing basis and offers support through words, gestures or the concrete environment that they create. Therefore, when a child is actively occupied discovering and exercising their skills, and does not require assistance, the practitioner uses this perfect time to observe, examine and reflect.

Let’s take the example of Ms. Mireille who tells herself: “Children will learn from their mistakes” or “If children learn on their own, they remember it more.” How does she see her role with respect to educational objectives? Has she taken the time to ask herself whether the challenge planned for this child is appropriate, considering not only their abilities but also their emotional disposition at the time? Is she attentively following what is unfolding so she can offer her support if needed (in addition to observing)?

One of the daycare mandates is to foster social integration. In order to fulfil this mandate properly, the practitioner shows the child the importance of accepting reality’s requirements and following social rules. For example, the child has no choice but to wait their turn at meal, snack and daily care times. The child also has various occasions during which they must figure out what to do, what game to play or what toy to take, taking into



account the choices that their peers are making at the same time. These are challenges inherent to life at daycare, controlled by the contingencies of the setting, it is important to be clear: these are not requirements of harmonious development in all children 12 or 24 months old... Often, expressions of impatience seem to win out and the practitioners and the children suffer because the children have to shoulder a responsibility that does not belong to them anymore than to the practitioner most of the time. Therefore, it is important that the practitioner recognize this and deal with this reality without anger, without judgment and with support. It seems to us that this is a major challenge for practitioners.

When Ms. Mireille says to a child “You have to wait your turn, other children are waiting too, I don’t have 10 hands...” or “You have to share,” she seems to forget that the child is not criticizing her, that the ratio is not up to her, that she is there to help the child deal with these constraints while preserving the child’s feeling of well-being in the daycare. Many practitioners, pressured by administrative demands, find these situations socio-emotionally difficult. Of course, the child must wait their turn because there are several children, and sharing the space is a must. However, it appears to us that many of the “You have to...” statements that the practitioners assert or struggle to implement derive or stem from the children/adult ratio, the layout of the space and the work schedule, not developmental requirements themselves.

What complicates the practitioner’s work is that young children need to test the limits that have been set many times. They need to check the validity of limits and their stability. They are seeking to find out: Is this really a limit and does this limit hold with this practitioner, and does it still hold today? And what complicates the work of the practitioner is that these repetitions can suck their reserves of patience dry.

For example, Christine, two years old, thinks she remembers that Ms. Marie told her that she could not draw on the wall. She needs to be told again, to confirm. She seeks to integrate this rule, but it isn’t easy to accept. Later, she will approach the wall again with two crayons in her hands: she will need to be told again. “Is it still prohibited?” If the practitioner lets it go until her anger grows, she risks damaging her relationship of trust with the child. Normally egocentric, the child cannot understand the adult’s impatience in any other way than by feeling at fault. Ideally, the practitioner calmly shows the child that as they accept reality and social conventions, they will have access to new possibilities. This is how the practitioner shows the child that they can trust her, because she knows how to guide them to new discoveries and they can pursue their development. Sometimes, it is enough to simply turn their attention to what they can discover other than the wall that they want to colour on.

Take the analogy of a plant stake, let’s say that the stake is there, solid, that it invites the plant to grow while respecting the plant’s pace. The stake does not attack the roots of the plant, it guides its growth. And if the plant needs fertilizers and supplements, no problem, the stake continues to play its role. As paradoxical as this seems, it is also through these trying repetitions for the educator that the child develops their independence, their ability to integrate rules and norms in order to progress toward new learning (Falk and Rasse, 2016).

### **Misconstrued idea about the “Child development is a comprehensive, integrated process” principle**

*“I am working on overall development when I make the children sing while swinging their arms.”*

Based on our teaching experience, **the most difficult principle** for practitioners is with respect to implementation of the overall development approach. The training given to future practitioners, for example in the initial training and in preparation for employment, divides development into spheres and highlights expectations based on age groups, which is very well founded. So, how is it conceivable that the child develops simultaneously in many spheres and that it is not necessary to make the child do exercises that involve the weakest sphere to bring them along in various spheres, including the weakest one? How do you convince yourself that respecting the overall development approach is not summed up by stimulating various spheres throughout the day? For example, when Ms. Lauriane leads the children in her group to sing the alphabet while swinging their arms, we cannot assert that she is working in line with the overall development approach, for various reasons. On the one hand, prompting a specific performance by an entire group in a uniform manner goes against what the approach promotes (remember the principle that each child is unique and that it is more effective to pay attention to the process than the result). On the other hand, these two skills, reciting the alphabet and swinging the arms in unison, may not be accessible to some children in the group at the time they are sought by Lauriane (remember that the development levels and interests vary widely in a preschool group and that the educational program requires us to take this into account). In addition, reciting a series of letters holds no meaning for the child, which compromises the intention to offer situations for meaningful communication for the child, in other words that anchor them in reality.

To work in the perspective of overall development, clearly understanding development from various angles and seeing





the overlap between domains is necessary. And this is what forms the strength of many early childhood practitioners, their strong knowledge of the development stages in the main spheres. So, when Ms. Lauriane recites the alphabet with the children who want to do so, while also encouraging those who want to swing their arms or dance, or listen cheerfully, or produce the sounds that they can make, she then shows greater support for development in a global perspective. She is aware that an enriching activity teaches various skills simultaneously, and that the skills learned vary from child to child. For example: the rhythm, the pleasure of making sounds all together, body expression, memorizing the sequence of letters, participation in the group activity. Ms. Lauriane recognizes that each child may draw benefits specific to them as a participant, and does not focus her attention on the group's performance from a spectator's standpoint.



In reaction to this line of thinking, practitioners will not hesitate to ask the following question: "And the plays and shows that we put on in daycares, are you telling us that they're not relevant?" The answer to this question merits qualification and discussion on a case by case basis. A top concern would be to make sure that the practitioner clearly grasps that it would be inappropriate to pressure children for a specific performance that she deems necessary for the success of the activity. Let's be clear, the activity must meet the development needs of the children, not the practitioner's need for recognition. That said, when the practitioner keeps in mind that play is not only possible, but desired, she gives the children the power to express their interest or disinterest and she tangibly recognizes that enjoyment is a key ingredient, the educational context takes on a whole new appeal for opening the door to creativity and discovery. The practitioner then puts the overall development approach into action by participating in the creation process herself.

As adults, it is very likely that we all experienced education focused on the educator, centred on the teacher who explains the why of things and tells the entire group what to do and how to do it. The preschool education recommended in Québec prescribes focusing on the learner, in other words the child, their interests, their needs. However, the contingencies

and constraints of the work context do not always meet the prescribed ideal. Some practitioners feel pressure with respect to the performance of their groups and are subject to expectations from their colleagues, managers, or parents with respect to duly rehearsed and orchestrated shows. That is why it would be useful to return to the essence of the guiding principles and examine the benefits that the young children are getting from this activity, not only during the final performance but throughout the process leading up to it.

### **Misconstrued idea about the "Children learn through play" principle**

*"To motivate children to write letters and numbers, I tell them that we are going to pretend we are at school, so it's a game for them."*

When Ms. Évelyne is preparing a group craft for her group, with a model to follow, she orchestrates a directed activity. Of course, she allows each child to choose the colours. The children have fun and are proud, with good reason. Some may feel anxiety faced with this challenge. This activity conveys a representation of the performance that is expected, which does not really fall in line with the overall development approach. In addition, when Ms. Évelyne announces that they are going to pretend they are in kindergarten, it is highly likely that she is the only one who knows what kindergarten is from experience. Most of the children, who are three or four years



old, have heard of it, but how could they faithfully represent this educational context and pretend they are there? Moreover, this type of imposed group activity in reading or writing is not even recognized by all experts as being appropriate in kindergarten, for four- or five-year-old children (Larouche, April and Boudeau, 2015). However, Évelyne may want to make available to the children the letters of their first name, the numbers for their age, various types of paper or stamp pads, scissors and various types of crayons, and let them explore, talk to each other, imitate one another, ask questions and have fun. Évelyne then creates a situation suitable for observation, which will provide her with information on the current realities in her group and guide her in upcoming activities while respecting differences. This example shows how much adult educators have a tendency to recreate the learning framework that they knew as a child, and that, most of the time, is more appropriate for school-age children.

In preschool, beneficial play is a fun activity, self-guided by the child (Gillain-Mauffette, 2011). In other words, an activity in which the child makes choices, explores, expresses themselves. We know that at this age, children explore using all their senses, ask questions, like to check, like to test. They need time and space to hug a doll, then throw it on the floor, show signs of regret, sit in a chair to feed it and shake it to see its eyes blink. Whether or not the practitioner wants to show the child how to take care of a baby would have little relevance here because that is what is happening, this is what the child needs to explore.

This is how you can distinguish an exercise from free play:

*“Fun, spontaneity, free choice of material (possibly not used for its intended purpose), partners, direction (we don’t automatically know where things are going, they change along the way, no predetermined result expected) and length (we stop playing when we want) are the essential components of so-called “free play.” If one or more of these components are absent, we move away from pure play. If the child is obliged, for example, to play with a certain toy and in a designated way then this becomes an exercise, not play.” (Gillain-Mauffette, 2011).*

If a child asks Ms. Évelyne to write down the letters of their name so that they can copy it, this is an entirely different situation. In this case, the request comes from the child who, for all kinds of reasons, wants to master these letters. In this case, the practitioner will be well advised to provide the child with the requested model. She will take interest in its production without extra pressure and also without telling the other children that it would be good for them to do what this child is doing and write letters.

## Conclusion

These examples show the need to have a good grasp of the basic principles in an integrated manner, to see the overlap between them and to be able to juggle with these principles on a daily basis in the reality of the daycare setting. We could not apply them correctly by doing so separately. In fact, an integrative perspective of the guiding principles gives the practitioner beacons for avoiding pitfalls. For example, one would not be justified in planning only free play, because the practitioner must suggest equipment and activities adapted to the various interests and development levels, on the basis of regular observation, reflection and listening. In contrast, one would not be justified in planning only directed activities, because we want to support the child as an active learner and play provides the optimal context. Finally, the overall development perspective recognizes the contribution of a multitude of learning sources conducive to the development of young children without limiting the areas of action to a number of predefined academic disciplines. In other words, the overall development perspective encourages placing the emphasis on meaningful situations for the child and from there, enriching, stimulating and guiding. It does not require bending to the performance expectations defined by specific subjects such as French, math or science. The overall development perspective opens the doors to a multitude of creative projects, gives practitioners great latitude to match activities to the realities and interests of children and to use their creative strengths and spread their own joy in working with children. We can only hope to see preschool daycare practitioners seize this opportunity to create a daily routine adapted to the realities of the moment.

Just like child development, the professional development of daycare practitioners finds more fertile ground when the focus is placed on the process, instead of standardized performance, when the person evolves in a context of support instead of sanction and is valued for their uniqueness. We could not complete the analogy without recalling the importance of joy at work, which will be conveyed to the children and be able to nourish the creativity of the practitioner and children alike, in an environment with a promising potential for fun.

Nicole Royer is a professor in the Department of Education Sciences at UQTR. She has been teaching preschool educators for several years. Her research focuses on the quality of work life of preschool early care workers and the socio-emotional development of young children.

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## PRINCIPLES, PROFESSIONALS AND PRACTICE

# Children's Impulse Control: Using Nature as the Guide

by Olivia Donato, Samantha Quinn,  
Eden Barrow, Nicole MacIsaac &  
Dr. Sharon Quan-McGimpsey

The promotion of outdoor play as an important part of the children's daily routine is not a new concept for parents and teachers. Influential educators, like Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, emphasized the importance of contact with nature and hands-on play (Turtle, Convery & Convery, 2015). Likewise, Indigenous peoples have provided land-based education to their children for thousands of years (Andrachuk, 2015). Outdoor play has the potential to promote cognitive, physical, social, language and emotional development (Maynard, Waters & Clement, 2013). More specifically, children's connection with nature, it has been argued, promotes personal development, a sense of purpose and resilience (McArdle, Harrison & Harrison, 2013; Roe, & Aspinall, 2011).

Despite all of the known benefits to outdoor learning, it is still not an entirely common practice to include nature as part of the daily curriculum. It is speculated that this decline in children's outdoor play may be due to societal views on children's safety, a pronounced increase in electronic media consumption by young children, and a lack of support from school administration (Ridgers, Knowles, & Sayers, 2012). Sadly, less than one in ten children spend time in wild spaces or can identify wild creatures (Savery, Cain, Garner, Jones, Kynaston, Mould, & Wilson (2017). In our modern world, that is sensitive to risk, parents may view keeping their children indoors as means of protection. As a result, opportunities for positive risk taking and independence in the outdoors is limited, all features which may have consequential influences on children's ability to feel a sense of control over their behaviors.

Interestingly, child-led outdoor learning, "appear[s] to have a positive effect on children who were seen as 'underachieving' in the classroom setting" (Maynard et al., 2013). This is fascinating when one considers the potential positive effect that outdoor play may have on children's behavior management. When examining the literature focusing on the influence of nature on one's behaviour, there is limited research on how children are able to control their impulses in outdoor environments. In other words, when children are able to manage their impulses, educators find that they use less behavior management strategies.







This exploratory study compared the perspectives of four ECEs' on children's impulse control when in the outdoor environment and the classroom setting. The educators were asked for their definition of impulse control, descriptions of scenarios depicting occasions when children's impulses were challenged, and their thoughts on the strategies that they used to support the children's ability to control their emotions. Embedded in the ECEs' narratives, were clear comparisons of how children's impulse control differed in natural settings as opposed to interactions indoors. The gathering of this information, through the lens of early educators, was gathered in order to determine the efficacy of nature and its impact on children's impulse control in a Forest School setting.

## Forest School

Forest School is an educational approach that has existed since the late 1950s, and may be called by a variety of different names (ex. Forest and Nature School, Foundation Phase, Kindernature) (O'Brien & Murray, 2007). Although Forest Schools may be implemented in many ways, it is usually based on a holistic approach to learning that is carried out in a natural, outdoor setting and is child led (Maynard et al., 2013). In a forest school program, children engage in regular, repeated outdoor learning facilitated by a qualified forest school leader (Harris, 2017).

## Impulse Control

Impulse control, sometimes called, inhibitory control, is related to self-regulation, which is the ability to control behaviours, emotions, or thoughts (Maynard et al., 2013). When asked to provide their own definition of impulse control, the ECEs provided similar definitions, and one described lack of impulse control as "...not being able to regulate emotions and things that happen[ing] within a child's body, or an adult's body for that matter. Goes back to self-regulation." This ECE also referred to lack of impulse control as being full of "adrenaline", resulting in the inability to stay focused on the task at hand.

After identifying how the educators' defined impulse control, the ECEs' provided narratives of situations. These situations described their encounters with children who

faced challenges exercising impulse control. An analysis of the ECEs' transcripts revealed several overarching themes that seemed to most affect the children's control over their impulses. These themes include: Physical Space, Time Spent, and the Teacher/Child's Strategies.

## Physical Space

The findings, overall, reported that the degree of stimulus provided by the outdoor environment positively benefited children's impulse control. The interviews with the ECEs' revealed that children are perceived as needing more support inside the classroom as compared to when interacting with their outdoor environment.



The educator's also discussed that when needing to support a child in the forest environment, the strategies used to manage behaviour took effect more quickly in the natural setting than in the classroom. For example, one ECE proposed that "when you're in the brick and mortar classroom you're confined to this space [and] that's where the energy has to stay". Another ECE explained that "In the classroom you can see it in their [the children's] body, they are so tense, you actually feel the vibration coming off them". It was speculated that the large open space in the forest provides a calming and therapeutic effect on children. One ECE stated, "In the forest there is just a lot more space for that energy to move and it just invites...you to be more who you are."

Another aspect of physical space that the ECEs felt influenced children's impulse control was the children's relationship with the environment. Compared to the classroom, one educator contended that there was a greater sense of equality found in nature, whereas, in the forest you can't own anything, and thus, everything is neutral. With this lack of ownership children are better able to control their impulses when all things are equal. She went on to provide an example by saying "Someone will bring a toy from home and it's "Look what I brought" but in the forest it's like "Look at my stick" "Okay? And look at MY stick"... you can't own a stick, you can't own a tree so you're able to control your impulses because there is no sense of "If I have this, I am better than you."



Further, during one of the interviews an ECE referenced the children's self identification with the physical and sensorial features of nature and how this contributed to the management of the children's impulses. They mentioned that since the children were exposed to endless opportunities for equal exploration of the outdoors, their unique identities were presented through their play and interactions with one another and the educators.

It was also asserted that the physical aspects of the natural environment can likewise impede children's impulse control. In some cases' children may experience a sensory overload that leads to dysregulation. An example of this was given by an ECE who described an experience where wind had become an element of chaos due to its strength. The wind was loud and hindered mobility which caused children to no longer be able to control their impulses as they were trying to navigate how to

stay safe. Overall, the participant concluded that "As much as the forest is great, there are things that hinder it."

## Time Spent

When comparing the outdoor and classroom environments, the amount of time spent in each setting played an interesting role. The educators' narratives revealed that the amount of time spent within the classroom doing daily activities were very different from outside in the forest school. An ECE mentioned that, outside, the children were given the opportunity to relax and pace themselves, thereby resulting in the children displaying an increased ability to wait their turn. The practitioner provided an example of a scenario in which the children were using hand drills. The problem was that there were only two hand drills available. However, the children resolved the issue by simply sitting on the tarp and waiting for their peers to finish their turn.





The children were able to accommodate one another without chaos. Chaos was also deterred during the process of hand washing outside. An educator from one of the interviews stated that, “There’s never an issue of *me first*” when comparing the forest school to the classroom.

Ultimately, the interviewees had used the hand washing and hand drilling scenarios as visual examples of the children’s ability to control their impulses along with the ability to solve problems using patience, turn taking and waiting. They were also able to attest to the fact that the forest school encouraged them to slow down and enjoy the time spent outdoors. This is in contrast to the confined space of the classroom, which could potentially inhibit patience and instead encourage hastening through daily activities. The educator discussed the differences in behaviour in the forest school with the classroom by describing it as freeing, open, exploratory and slower paced. She explained “...they have freedom, they have time, they have that openness to grow and explore whatever they want.”

## Teacher/Child Strategies

The data collected for this study indicated that behaviour management strategies were less frequently implemented when children were in their outdoor setting. With this said, the ECE’s highlighted four key strategies used in the Forest School that impact children’s impulse control.

First, the ECE’s agreed that determining the appropriate time to intervene and offer support is an important part of their role. They identified that there must be balance between controlling children’s behaviours and offering a sense of freedom. One ECE defined this as “Seeing if they [the children] can manage it [their behaviour] themselves, and... we step in if they do need support.” Second, following the children’s lead also proved to be an important strategy used within outdoor learning environments. An ECE contested that providing children with opportunities that give them time and space, such as Forest School, better align with how they naturally learn; ultimately improving their impulse control. Third, modeling appropriate behaviour was deemed a major strategy. The ECE’s noted that children often took cues from their educators. For example, when discussing environmental stimuli, one interviewee identified that the educators’ reaction to rain had a greater effect on children’s impulse control than the rain itself.

Last, and most importantly, a strategy discussed by the ECE’s was allowing the environment to act as an educator. Strategically, the teachers relinquished their roles as ECEs and left it not only to the environment to help guide the children, but also to allow the children to guide themselves. As an educator, the ability to give up control and allow the children to take risks within the outdoor environment can be extremely challenging. However, it emphasizes the strength of the role that relationships play between the educator and the child. For example, one of the ECE’s attested to the importance of strong child-teacher relationships as it enables the teacher to use the appropriate strategies for each individual child (Eg. “...I know this works for me and this child but it may not work with this child and someone else”). This relational bond also sets the foundation for adults trusting that the children can identify danger and risk and that the teachers are able to oversee these risks. One ECE stated, “Its more about me being comfortable with the risks that do come with being out in the forest. Being

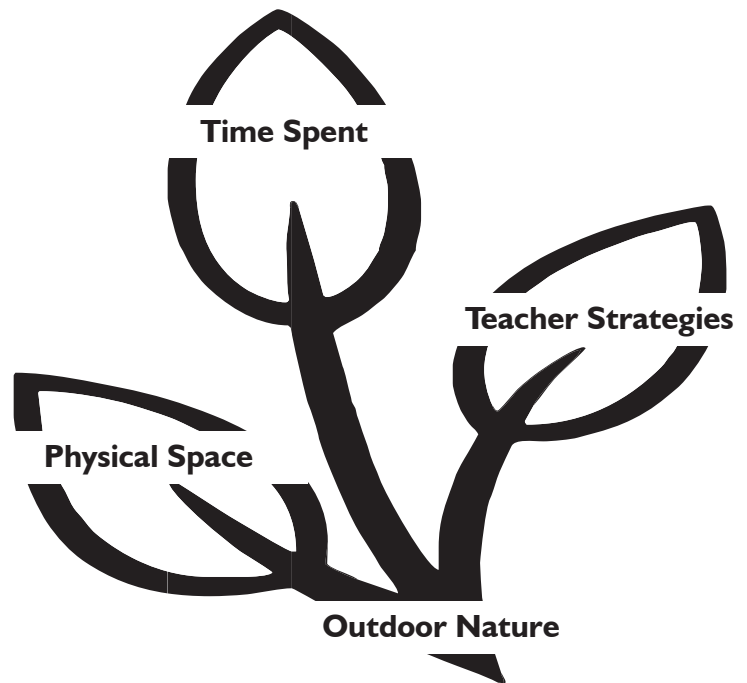


more comfortable with risks and questioning myself, is this risk or is this danger?'. Teachers let nature guide the actions and interactions of the children and to empower the children, with teacher oversight, to judge the risks involved in the children's choice of activities. Thus, when teachers gave children the power to control their actions within children's outdoor learning experiences, teachers judged the children as being better able to control their impulses and it being less onerous on the adults to monitor their impulsivity.

## Discussion

Overall, the study found that there is a significant difference in children's ability to manage their impulses when in the forest compared to their classroom setting. Educators are said to be using less behaviour management strategies when outdoors. Additionally, ECEs reported more efficient conflict resolution amongst children in this natural setting. The research concluded that there is something about the way energy moves freely in natural space that supports children's impulse control in a way that the four walls of the brick and mortar classroom cannot.

When in the Forest environment, the curriculum strays away from subject based learning allowing the children to immerse themselves in a unique relationship between rich physical space, unlimited time, and child-directed teaching strategies (see Figure 1). Analyzing the data collected for this study, helped unpack how these three elements are inseparable in nature and work together cohesively to support children's impulse control. The sense of unlimited time outdoors, encourages children to explore their abilities and make thoughtful decisions rather than hastening through activities, thus bettering their impulse control. When paired with physical space, the forest school eliminated conformity, ownership, and provided children with the opportunity to connect, understand, share and collaborate within the environment. Thus in turn brought in an element of freedom that is not typically seen in the classroom. This leads to the last element involving the shifting of roles. Diverting control from the educators and relinquishing it onto the children, encouraged the educators to put their trust in the child's abilities to make decisions that are thought out and wise. It also pushed the children to trust themselves. In shifting roles (educator and child), time and space, the children embraced their experiences as they encountered it when outdoors. From the collected data, it is assumed that the element of time and space cannot be separated. Both components uniquely work together to create a learning environment that supports both child and educator. This relationship allows children to connect deeply with nature; challenging their perception of self, and promotes self affirmation. Although this research



**Figure 1:** Model of Factors Contributing to Children's Impulse Control in Outdoor Nature

focused on children enrolled in a Forest School program, it is assumed that all open and genuine interactions with nature can support children's inhibitory control as unlimited time and physical space are found in all aspects of nature.

A particular area of interest for the research team was the effect of the outdoor learning environment on children's sense of self. Self-identity is rooted in social roles and social context. An underlying theme throughout the research was the allocation of power within the classroom compared to the outdoors. The current research suggests that when moving from the classroom to Forest School, social roles, for both teacher and child shift; creating a space which support children's impulse control. In relation to physical space, ECEs compared the value of specific classroom materials, such as toys, and how the possession of these materials were often equated with superiority among the children. However, when outside, all materials were of abundance thus the children viewed themselves as equals and were no longer searching for their identity through the ownership of things. Additionally, this work looked at the role of educators in relation to children and their learning in nature. Similar to prior research, the study revealed that when outdoors the educator surrendered aspects of their role, transitioning to more of a collaborator/facilitator. This resulted in an equal balance of power between child and teacher that allowed for



children to make decisions and act more autonomously. This supports past research which suggests children create new social roles when out in nature (Harris, 2017; Maynard et al., 2013). The current work argues that the indicators of power and social roles within the classroom are not viable in outdoor learning environments. It can be said that this benefits impulse control, because children can take on social roles that reflect their interests and strengths, ultimately keeping them more engaged. Furthermore, it empowers the children to discover their individual identity through the means in which they interpret nature. This may explain why prior research has

concluded that children who don't take on leadership roles in the classroom, are able to take on these roles outdoors (Maynard et al., 2013).

In conclusion, the research suggests that authentic interactions with outdoors, plays a significant role in the improvement of children's impulse control. The outdoor environment removes formal structure and replaces it with unlimited time and space resulting in a shift in roles for both child and educator. The results from this study present a clear change in children's behaviours from the classroom to the forest school. It can be said, this improvement is justified by the distinct and complex aspects of nature's environment working together to support mindful learning.

Corresponding Author – Olivia Donato, BCD

Eden Barrow, Nicole MacIsaac, Samantha Quinn, Honours Bachelor degree in Child Development, School of Early Childhood Education, Seneca College.

Dr. Sharon Quan-McGimpsey, Professor, School of Early Childhood Education, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, Ontario.

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## PRINCIPLES, PROFESSIONALS AND PRACTICE

# Hope and Expectations of a Mom

by Robin McMillan

Senior Consultant, Canadian Child Care Federation

Hope is something I will always have. Hope for a better day tomorrow. Hope for applying what I have learned today to tomorrow's challenges. Being a mother of a child with childhood apraxia of speech (CAS) has ensured that I will always have hope.

My son Ewan is a beacon of hope. I won't lie. It's not easy to see his peers moving through developmental stages at a totally different pace than him. What is encouraging is that he makes progress each and every day. His progress has taught me to not rule anything out. It's not been a matter of **IF** Ewan will learn something/how to do something, but **WHEN**. He has his own schedule that keeps advancing, just at a slower pace.

Ewan is a happy 12-year-old boy. While he doesn't have the many close friends I had at his age, that's okay. He is a different person than me. Perhaps he doesn't need or want what I had. I try not to put my expectations on his life experiences. I try to guide my actions with my response to the question, "Is he happy?" If not, what can I do to help him achieve that happiness?

In spite of his challenges with childhood apraxia of speech, such as communicating complex thoughts and participating in detailed conversations, he is such an inspiration. He continually puts himself out there. He wants to be involved with his peers and try new things. The key is exposure. Since he was a young child, my husband and I have sought out activities for him to try. Without a doubt, I do my research to ensure the softest



landing possible at these activities. Meaning, he will feel supported while trying these new feats. We concentrate on one extra-curricular activity at a time. He attends private speech and language therapy once a week and we feel that one activity at a time is best. So far, he has played soccer, hockey, ultimate Frisbee, baseball, tried ukulele, guitar, choir singing, hip hop dancing, swimming, mountain biking, BMX biking, golf, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, hunting, fishing, quad riding and snowmobiling. Some of those activities have proven to be favourites while others he tried and then didn't want to sign up again which is A-Okay. I love how brave he is to try new things and how much effort he puts into each new activity.





School has been a struggle. We have tried segregated (special needs) classes and integrated (mainstream) classes. Neither seems to be the perfect fit, as a combo of the two would be the ideal but is not offered. That doesn't mean we lose hope! Working part time from a home office has allowed me to home school him one day a week. This year, for his home school day, he attends a Forest School which has been amazing for our child who loves being outside. All year long, even in winter's coldest days, Ewan and 11 other students are outside in the forest all day learning math, language and survival skills in the woods. Grade 6 has been his best year yet. I have high hopes for grade 7 to be even better with what we have learned.



Meaningful integration and inclusion is vital. Ewan was fortunate to benefit from the services of Children's Inclusion Support Services (CISS) from Andrew Fleck Children's Services when he attended licensed child care centres here in Ottawa. Right from the start, we sought out support so he could be included and we feel that has helped him build the confidence he has today for trying new things.

I want other parents to know there is always hope. Hope for tomorrow. Don't apply expectations from your experiences on your child's life. It's not realistic or fair to the journey you are on with your child now. Be open to new experiences and seek out new learning opportunities for both of you. Take challenges on one at a time. Each experience will teach you something to lead you to future success. Let your child lead when they can. Sit back, watch and learn. Like me, you will likely be surprised at what you can learn from your child when they are flying ahead of you.

*This article by Robin McMillan originally appeared in the September 2018 edition of ACCESS Inclusion newsletter of the Children's Inclusion Support Services*

Robin and her husband Derl are the proud parents of Ewan McMillan age 13. Robin and Derl started a parent support group, Ottawa Parents of Children with Apraxia that has an active online following on Facebook. In July 2010, Robin accepted the Consumer Advocate of the Year Award from the Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association (CASANA-Apraxia Kids) and has presented at their national conference.

## ACROSS CANADA

### NATIONAL - CANADA - FEDERAL

The Trudeau government's federal budget announced in March, that *leading into 2020, the Government will negotiate renewed early learning and child care agreements with provinces and territories, while seeking additional investments, more transparency, and better outcomes from underperforming partners.*

From the budget:

#### Recent Actions

Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework: Through Budgets 2016 and 2017, the Government of Canada committed \$7.5 billion over 11 years for more high-quality affordable child care. Through these investments, the government is on track to create up to 40,000 more child care spaces across the country by 2020. As part of this investment, a new distinctions-based Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework— co-developed with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council—is delivering \$1.7 billion over 10 years since 2018-19 to strengthen services for Indigenous families. These investments are in addition to support provided through the Canada Child Benefit, the Canada Social Transfer, and new Parental Leave programs.

### ALBERTA

A newly-released report on child poverty in Alberta is alarming for families, children, stakeholders, including politicians at every level. Prepared by Public Interest Alberta, the Alberta College of Social Workers and the Edmonton Social Planning Council, the "One in Six is Too Many: An Alberta Children Poverty Report" found that more than 17 per cent of all kids in the province now live below the poverty line. And most troubling of all is the finding that the child poverty rate has increased markedly over the past decade.

Last year, the province expanded its \$25-a-day child-care program to 122 centres across Alberta. Parents are expected to save an average of \$425



a month with the Early Learning and Child Care Centres program. Access to \$25-a-day child care is not dependent on having a lower income. It is available to any family if they can find space in the popular program, although a separate subsidy continues to be available to low-income families.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

The NDP's \$10-a-day child care may not have been directly mentioned in the government's provincial budget, despite it being one of the party's key election promises, but the government is still on the right track with what was announced in February's budget. Sharon Gregson with the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C. called the budget in BC "a funding envelope" that supports a move to \$10-a-day care. Finance Minister Carol James announced an additional \$9 million for child care during the budget unveiling in Victoria, on top of \$1 billion over three years announced in last year's budget, to increase wages for early childhood educators and provide bursaries and programs in colleges and universities.

## MANITOBA

Manitoba's Brian Pallister government presented its 2019 budget in March committing \$581,000 increase for home-based child care providers, \$1.4M operating grant commitment for 5 school-based child care projects representing 496 new spaces and continued funding for the Child Care Development Centre Tax Credit. While there are no proposed cuts, there continue to be urgent issues that must be addressed, most notably for the early learning and child care workforce.

Manitoba child care leaders will be following up with Minister Stefanson addressing our concerns, working to find solutions and commitments for MB's early learning and child care system

## NEWFOUNDLAND

More families in Newfoundland and Labrador are getting help with child care expenses, as the provincial government bumps up the income threshold for the first time in a decade. Starting in 2018, a family with an annual income of \$32,000 or less will qualify for a full or partial

subsidy. That compares with the previous threshold of \$27,500 which has been unchanged since 2007. Addressing the cost and availability of child care in Newfoundland and Labrador is key to attracting and keeping young people in the province. The high cost of daycare and the difficulty in raising a child in this economic environment has made the province an unsuitable place for people to raise a young family say early childhood education advocate with the Jimmy Pratt Foundation.

## ONTARIO

The Ontario government is changing regulations a home child-care provider or unlicensed child-care provider will be allowed to care for up to three children under the age of two, rather than two children. Further, a home child-care provider with two caregivers can include up to six children under the age of two, instead of four. The Conservative Ford government states this change will make it easier for parents to find daycare spaces, but which child care experts and opposition warns could put kids at risk. NDP leader Andrea Horwath argues this risks putting kids in a situation where they may not have the amount of adult supervision that they require. She reminded not to forget the tragic situations in this province in recent years due to unregulated care ... where kids actually died. The proposed change is one of many included in an omnibus bill designed to ease regulations for businesses and take away unnecessary red tape.

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

PEI continues to enhance and build on its ELCC system, addressing wages of the sector with a significant announcement in March. The ECDA had engaged in a significant public awareness and advocacy campaign leading up to yesterday's news. A new \$2.8 million annual investment will provide an immediate wage increase to early childhood educators, special needs assistants and autism tutors. The early childhood educator wage grid will include the following increases:

- \$1 per hour increase for uncertified early childhood program staff
- \$2 per hour increase for level 1 and 2 early childhood educators
- \$3 per hour increase for level 3 early childhood educators and center directors.

Program staff working in private, licensed centers will receive two payments through the Quality Enhancement Grant as follows:

- \$1,500 for certified staff; and
- \$750 for uncertified program staff.

On April 1, autism tutors and special needs assistants will also receive an increase of \$1.00 per hour.

## QUEBEC

The Legault government is promising to create thousands more spaces in Quebec daycares over the next two years. Families Minister Mathieu Lacombe said Wednesday that while additional daycare spaces have been promised many times, he was committed to creating 2,500 spaces as quickly as possible with a focus on infants and parents who are students. Lacombe said he would then make 11,000 spots promised by previous governments a reality. The daycare pledge comes on the heels of another CAQ promise to hire thousands of pre-kindergarten teachers across the province, shifting four- and five-year-olds to a classroom setting

## SASKATCHEWAN

A report released recently by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives gave Saskatchewan a failing grade in childcare. According to the report, Saskatchewan's more than 17,700 licensed childcare spaces are only enough for 18 percent of children under the age of five, but 70 percent of parents with children under five years old work for a living. Certified early childhood educators in Saskatchewan are under-compensated, making it difficult to keep them employed. The report agrees, stating ECEs in Saskatchewan are amongst the lowest paid in the country, second only to Alberta.



## CALENDAR

## APRIL

11-13

Vancouver BC

**ECEBC's 48th Annual Conference** will take place at the Hyatt Regency co-hosted by CCCF and ECEBC: *Looking Back Moving Forward - Children Families Communities*

Register online: <https://register.ecebc.ca/conference-listing>

25-27

Calgary, AB

**Student's Day\*, Leader's Day & Essential Pieces Conference 2019**

**AECEA** is pleased to present this year's Leader's Day and Essential Pieces Conference, along with our first ever Student's Day\*!

Located at the Roderick Mah Centre for Continuous Learning at Mount Royal University

Registration: <https://aecea.ca/webform/aecea-essential-pieces-conference-2019>

## MAY

3

Summerside, PEI

**2019 Early Childhood Development Association Spring Conference**

The Early Childhood Development Association is pleased to announce the 2019 Spring Conference! The provincial annual PD day will take place between the College of Piping, Quality Inn, Credit Union Place and the Atlantic Superstore all in Summerside PEI.

Information and brochure: <http://www.ecdaofpei.ca/events/events/registration/registration-login.php?id=3008>

4

Regina, Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association is hosting a one day workshop with break out sessions held at the Delta Hotel in Regina, Saskatchewan with many Keynote speakers.

Registration: <http://seca-sk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SECA-May-Conference-2019-Registration-Form.pdf>

23-24

Winnipeg, MB

**2019 MCCA Conference**

*Annual Manitoba Child Care Conference – Explore, Dream, Discover* at the Victoria Inn.

Online registration for the conference is now open: <https://mccahouse.eventsair.com/explore-dream-discover/42nd2019>

24-25

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

**The Annual Nova Scotia Child Care Association Spring Conference and Trade Show: *Broadening and Deepening Our Professional Practice***

Presented in partnership with the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia and the support of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

<https://nschildcareassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/May-2019-Registration-Pkg.pdf>

## OCTOBER

18-20

Nefoundland

**27th Annual AECENL Provincial Conference**

Mark your calendars for the AECENL Annual Provincial Conference 2019, will post the conference registration package later this summer! [www.aecenl.ca](http://www.aecenl.ca)

## RESEARCH

## Developmental milestones: Child care fees in Canada's big cities 2018

Macdonald, D.  
& Friendly, M.

**Publication Date:**

7 Feb 2019

**Source:**

Canadian Centre for  
Policy Alternatives

**Availability:**

Access full PDF  
online (EN);

Access full PDF  
online (FR)



This report updates the ranking of the most and least expensive cities for child care in Canada. The study finds that fees have risen faster than inflation in 61% of cities since 2017. However, in 2018, the number of provinces with policies directly targeting fee affordability has doubled.

The study, the fifth in a series, provides an annual snapshot of median parental child care fees in Canada's 28 biggest cities for full-time regulated child care of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Fees were surveyed between May-August 2018.