



BC Aboriginal
Child Care Society

www.acc-society.bc.ca

Caring for our Children newsletter

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BCACCS HOLIDAY HOURS

Our office will be closed for the
holiday starting Dec. 20, 2021
until we get back on Jan. 4,
2022.



Why children need to play outside – now more than ever!

By guest writers Rachel Ramsden and
Mariana Brussoni from the University
of British Columbia

“It’s too cold!” “It could be dangerous!” “It’s
so much easier to stay inside!”

For many working in child care, it can
be a struggle to make the time and take
the initiative to spend time outside with
the children. Even in BC’s gentle summer
weather there can be many barriers to get-

ting outside and these barriers increase when
the weather turns cold. Children or educa-
tors may not have the right gear to be able
to stay warm and dry, or educators might
not feel equipped to support children’s
play outside. Educators may be afraid that
licensing officers will consider some outdoor
activities a safety risk.

It can be tempting to avoid these issues and keep children indoors. But research shows just how important it is to make sure children get as much outdoor play time every day as possible. Outdoor play is not the same as indoor play and has unique benefits for children and educators. When we think back to our favourite childhood play memories, many of us were outdoors, playing with friends, making up the rules as we went along, and feeling like we could run and jump and shout in ways that weren't allowed or possible indoors. It also provided an opportunity to learn about the land, including the many creatures and inhabitants, and how the plants changed with the seasons.

These kinds of experiences translate into really critical benefits for children's health, development and well-being. When children are outdoors, they move more, sit less and play longer, helping increase their physical activity levels. And then physical activity leads to many health benefits for children's cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems. When children play outside, they can also enhance their mental well-being, developing their sense of self, and feeling soothed by nature. It can provide opportunities for learning that aren't available indoors, including physical literacy and spatial knowledge. Importantly, navigating and nurturing nature, forests and green spaces provide children with the tools to learn environmental awareness, appreciation and stewardship. And when children are allowed to take risks and choose their own play outdoors, they gain confidence, resilience to overcome challenges, and skills to manage risks for themselves.

A common fear – especially in the winter – is that children will get sick when they go outside. However, children are actually more likely to be exposed to illness in poorly ventilated indoor environments. The outdoors benefit children by exposing them to Vitamin D and fresh air, which can ward off potential



Photo credit: Vika Fleisher courtesy of Unsplash

viruses. During the current global pandemic, the outdoors has been shown to reduce virus transmission.

While it may seem obvious that outdoor play is a good thing, opportunities to play outside are often limited. On those days where the rain is fiercely hitting the ground or we don't have warm enough snow gear, it is easier to just stay indoors. But children learn from adult's reactions to the weather, and if adults make comments about how miserable it is outside and choose to stay inside, children won't want to go outside either. Adults are the 'gatekeepers' to getting children outside and the role models that can model a love of the outdoors in all weather.

Bringing More Outdoor Play into Child Care

There are three key ingredients to supporting outdoor play: Time, Space and Freedom.

Time: While the provincial child care licensing regulations may only require that children participate in outdoor active play for 60 minutes each day, educators can go beyond this minimum requirement. Spending more time outside and supporting rich play opportunities provides children with profound developmental benefits and a foundation for lifelong appreciation of the outdoors – in all weather. This can also benefit their families by demonstrating that it is safe, fun and accessible.

Educators may feel that there are many competing interests throughout the day that are more important than outdoor play. But many of these other priorities can be better met through outdoor play, such as opportunities for learning mathematical concepts, literacy, and socio-emotional competence. Think about how you can engage children with the outdoors throughout the day, either in small increments or by translating typical indoor activities to the outdoors. There is also a fine balance between scheduled activities and free time but it is crucial that plenty of time is allocated for free play. Consider participating with the children, supporting the play children have chosen with you there, or simply getting out of the way.

Space: High quality outdoor spaces offer children ever-changing conditions and loose parts that allow their imagination to shape play. Loose parts are materials that children can move around, such as sticks, rocks, mud, water, tarps, and crates. Fortunately, these are often easy to access and free. Supporting play in different weather conditions, such as the wind, rain or snow, will also allow children to get more comfortable on those non-sunny days.

We are blessed with many natural wonders in this province. With mountains, lakes and rivers, there are an abundance of outdoor play opportunities nearby. But even a small patch of nearby nature can offer wonderful play opportunities. Sticks

can serve an infinite number of purposes – building shelter, stirring the latest mud pie, drawing in the sand. Foliage can provide shelter, a game of hide and seek or an imaginative house to play with friends. Trees can offer opportunities to climb, use gross motor skills and take risks. Slopes allow for tumbling and rolling or sliding. With the proper gear and an outdoor safety plan, colder weather can bring forward new and exciting opportunities to get children outside.

Freedom: Educators often shift their roles from educational to supervisory when outdoors, limiting children's outdoor play choices because they're afraid children will get hurt, and afraid other staff and parents may see them as neglectful if the children get bumps and bruises. Keeping children safe means letting them take risks. Serious injuries are extremely rare, while not supporting children in taking risks can mean they don't develop the risk management skills to keep themselves safe. When given the chance, children show great skill in navigating challenging spaces and enjoying cold and wet weather. Avoiding overprotective supervision tendencies can be hard at first, but you can start with little steps like The Seventeen Second Rule: count to 17 the next time you want to say "be careful."

By supporting children's outdoor play this winter, you may just be surprised at how much you enjoy it and how it transforms your relationship with the children! Looking for more information and help in making the transition outdoors? Check out the Outside Play app for early childhood educators and for parents at <https://OutsidePlay.ca>

Photo credit: Suraj Shakya courtesy of Unsplash

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Mary Thomas Memorial Scholarship Winners Announced

Congratulations to all the recipients of the Mary Thomas Memorial Scholarships 2020 and 2021 years!

Due to the much-needed attention to support caregivers at the onset of the pandemic we did not put out a call for applications in 2020. However, this year we expanded the eligibility for the 2021 call for applications to include graduates from 2020.

\$1000 Basic Scholarship 2020

Skyler Genaille

Vancouver Community College

Skyler is a Two-Spirited Métis person. Their Mooshum was from Duck Bay and Their Kookum was from St. Madelaine. They have big dreams to manage a space, be a licensing officer, a teacher and open their own space. Skyler is very creative and is actively pursuing their goal to write children's stories. They are continuing their education and have applied to complete a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

\$1500 Post-Basic Scholarship 2020

Janean Hunt

North Island College

Janean is a strong and resilient mother of two beautiful daughters. She has overcome many challenges and credits her family as being her number one motivator. She has worked tirelessly to pursue a post secondary ECE certification. Her hard work and perseverance are inspiring.

For the 2021 scholarship year, because the pandemic put a large amount of extra pressure, caused a lot of hardships, and resulted in a loss of employment in the ECE sector, BCACCS decided to award scholarships to all eligible applicants.

\$1000 Basic ECE Scholarship for 2021

Grace Sarlandie

North Island College

Grace is from the Tseshalt Nation. Amazingly, at only 17 years old, she has completed her Basic Early Childhood Education. Grace feels that "she has found her passion for educating in early childhood" and plans to complete her post-basic training and continue to work in the field of Early Childhood Education.

\$1000 Basic ECE Scholarship for 2021

Taylor Parker

North Island College

Taylor is a member of the Métis Nation in BC. Despite enduring multiple hardships and having to overcome many challenges during her studies, Taylor found the strength to finish her course by putting the children first. Dedicated to her calling, Taylor has plans to continue her education by obtaining her Special Needs Diploma.

\$1000 Basic ECE Scholarship for 2021

Francis Racy

Vancouver Island University

Francis is from Gitwangak. Even though going to school during the pandemic was very destabilizing, Francis never gave up. She overcame many challenges and found out how strong she is. Francis is ready for what the future brings and she is more aware of how valuable her contribution is.

\$1000 Basic ECE Scholarship for 2021

Chantelle Paul

Capilano University

Chantelle comes from Sechelt First Nation. She is an adoring mother of her 12-year-old daughter, who she hopes to inspire to live her dreams. Chantelle's dedication to her community and young children at the child care centre is profound. She believes in the power of learning their Indigenous language and how it will support the

children to feel proud and confident in who they are. Chantelle has also begun work on her Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

\$1500 Post-Basic ECE Scholarship for 2021

Patti Gladstone

North Island College

Patti grew up in her home with her natural parents and lots of foster cousins. This experience helped Patti decide that she wanted to go into the Early Childhood Education field. She has completed the Haida-Gwaii Language Diploma and her Infant Toddler Diploma. As a single parent, she knows the struggles and hardships that single parent families go through. Patti offers her services so parents can do their errands and not worry about their children's well-being. By providing this service she has helped so many families' children from entering a life in care. Patti has also been a supervisor for two years at Let's Play Infant & Toddler Daycare a program of the North Island Crisis and Counselling Center.

\$1500 Post-Basic ECE Scholarship for 2021

Carol Arlene Frank

North Island College

Carol is a member of the "Language Keeper Society" in Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation. She is recognized for her commitment to her studies and hopes to bring back her knowledge to her community. She has been in the field of Early Childhood Education for over 20 years and completed her Infant Toddler Diploma in 2021. Carol has been a leader as a manager of her program which she started from the very beginning from the ground to the physical building. She takes pride in the policies she has developed to help guide the direction of the program staff. Carol loves what she does for her community's children. She is dedicated to language revitalization and was instrumental in translating children's books into traditional language.

Holiday Care Package Drive - Still Time to Contribute

This year for Giving Tuesday, the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) started a Holiday Care Package Drive for the two Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) preschools that we host in Vancouver's urban environment for Indigenous children ages 3-5 years old.

During 2021 families have dealt with the ongoing pandemic conditions, the devastation of wildfires in their communities, and now flooding. Many have been challenged with food security, access to safe transportation, access to safe family friendly entertainment for their children, and self-care supports.

This holiday season BCACCS, Eagle's Nest, and Singing Frog preschools would like to make sure that families are able to safely celebrate and treat themselves to fun, relaxation, and making long-lasting family memories.

Each basket consists of basic household and personal items, food and treats, grocery cards, department store gift cards, gas cards, vouchers for safe local family outdoor entertainment, etc. that assist a family well into the New Year.

Consider contributing to the Holiday Care Package Drive so all the families and staff at the preschools are able to focus on safely spending time together and enjoying the holiday.

Thank you to all of you who have so generously donated! We haven't quite made it to our goal of raising \$2000.00.

There is still time to help fill a basket. Use the link below and select "Eagle's Nest and Singing Frog Aboriginal Head Start Preschools" contribution stream.

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/3760>

Help Fill the Basket.
Donate today!



How to Make a Woven Cedar Reindeer Ornament

The snow has fallen and reminded us it is the season for baking cookies, playing in the snow, and doing holiday crafts.

Our Aboriginal Child Care Resource and Referral Advisors were kind enough to share the steps they learnt for making reindeer ornaments with cedar strips while they were in Haida Gwaii.

Although this craft is great as an in-person project it also works well to do with people online. So, if you aren't able to travel this year and still want to do something fun with family and friends to celebrate the holidays, consider getting together virtually to make a reindeer ornament.

We are providing the basic steps, but please take a look on the website listed below to get detailed graphics of how to do this project.

To get started you'll need to soak some strips of cedar or reed until they are pliable enough to easily bend. Make sure you soak as many strips as you

need to make a full reindeer and add strips if you want to make more than one. Soaking takes approximately 30 minutes for cedar.

For each reindeer you will need to cut your strips into specific lengths so you end up with:

- * 2 long strips 22 inches long
- * 3 short strips 11 inches long

It's also helpful to have some additional tools with you as you work to finish the craft more easily.

- * a pair of scissors
- * some thread or string to use to hang your reindeer
- * a towel to work on (those strips will be wet)
- * if you want a fancy reindeer, maybe use some ribbon, dyed cedar or reed strips, or small pompoms?

To do the weaving, follow steps A-N on this website <https://tanglewoodbaskets.com/2017/318/>

Once you finish the weaving it is time to cut or trim the legs, tail, antlers, ears, and hooves.

- * Cut the 4 reindeer legs to 3 inches from the body
 - * Angle cut for tail about 1 inch from the body
 - * Cut ears to a point 3/4 inch from head
 - * Cut the antlers vertically part way down the center however far you like
- You can get creative when you cut the antlers. Curl them over a pencil or fold the different lengths over so they really resemble an antler rack.

To get the ornament ready for hanging, slip a thin ribbon through one of the reeds on the deer's back and tie the ends together to create a loop.

Have fun!! Happy holidays.

Image credit: Surrey BC Events



Upcoming Days of Interest

Family Literacy Day

Family Literacy Day takes place every *January 27th* to raise awareness about the importance of reading and engaging in literacy activities as a family.

Family literacy focusses on parents, grandparents and other family members to improve the reading and writing skills of the whole family. For more information visit <https://abclifeliteracy.ca/family-literacy>



Image credit: First Nations Child & Family Caring Society

Have a Heart Day

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society's Have a Heart Day — *February 14, 2022* — is a child and youth-led reconciliation event that brings together caring Canadians to help ensure First Nations children have the services they need to grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy, and be proud of who they are. To find out what you can do visit <https://fnccaringssociety.com/have-a-heart>.

Family Day In B.C.

This year Family Day is *February 21, 2022*. This long weekend gives families an opportunity to schedule in time to spend with loved ones.

International Mother Language Day

International Mother Language Day has been observed every year on *February 21st* since 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

Three out of four of the 90 different living indigenous languages in Canada are said to be endangered.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/international-mother-language-day/>

Workshop – Making the Most of Moe®

Date: January 14, 2022

Time: 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM (PST)

Location: Online

Cost: \$25.00

Professional Development Hours: 5

Making the Most of Moe® is a five-hour online workshop created, owned and facilitated by Anne Gardner and Margaret Chesterman, the Speech-Language Pathologists who developed Moe the Mouse® for BCACCS.

In this workshop educators are shown how to use the Moe the Mouse® Curriculum Box. The basics of speech and language development in young children, strategies for supporting children's speech and language development, and strategies for supporting children with speech and language delays in childcare, preschool, and home settings are reviewed.

Sign up now

<https://register.acc-society.bc.ca/code/register.php?event=27>

Making the Most of Moe®

Facilitator: Margaret Chesterman, SLP
Online
Registration Link:
<https://register.acc-society.bc.ca/code/register.php?event=27>

Friday January 14, 2022
9:30 AM – 3:30 PM PST
5 hour pro-d certificate
(There will be a 1 hour lunch break)

Making the Most of Moe® is a five-hour online workshop created, owned and facilitated by Anne Gardner and Margaret Chesterman, the Speech-Language Pathologists who developed Moe the Mouse® for BCACCS.

In this workshop educators are shown how to use the Moe the Mouse® Curriculum Box. The basics of speech and language development in young children, strategies for supporting children's speech and language development, and strategies for supporting children with speech and language delays in childcare, preschool, and home settings are reviewed.

BC Aboriginal Child Care Society

Caring for Our Children is published by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS). It is distributed to BCACCS members, on and off reserve child care centres, Head Start programs, Bands and Tribal Councils in BC and individuals interested in Indigenous early childhood education and care.

Readers are invited to reprint articles provided proper credit is given. We welcome the submission of articles, book reviews, artwork, photos, letters and poetry.

We acknowledge current funding support from The BC Ministry of Children and Family Development. BCACCS is a proud affiliate of the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCC). BCACCS membership also means membership with the CCCC, including automatic subscription to the CCCC *Interaction* magazine.

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Our provincial office is located on the unceded territories of the (Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ/seliłwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh).



BECOME A MEMBER

Membership at BCACCS provides a provincial forum to network and share ideas regarding Aboriginal child care and child development issues. Direct benefits and privileges of membership include:

- Free annual subscription to the Society's quarterly newsletter "Caring for Our Children"
- Resource Library borrowing privileges, with access to more than 1400 child-focused books, articles and videos, as well as BCACCS ECE curriculum boxes (including Moe the Mouse®)
- Discounted rate on BCACCS publications
- Discounted rate on registration for the BCACCS Annual Provincial Training Conference
- The ability to participate and vote on the business of the Society
- Membership with the Canadian Child Care Federation which includes receipt of their quarterly magazine, "Interaction"
- A voice in a professional Aboriginal organization dedicated to quality child care
- Opportunity to support, shape and influence Aboriginal child care policy, research and practice, both provincially and nationally

To learn more visit our website <https://www.acc-society.bc.ca/about/become-a-member/> or contact library@acc-society.bc.ca 604-913-9128 ext. 229.

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We Value Children

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CANADIAN
CHILD CARE
FEDERATION
FÉDÉRATION
CANADIENNE DES
SERVICES DE GARDE
À L'ENFANCE

Nos enfants : notre richesse