



BC Aboriginal
Child Care Society

www.acc-society.bc.ca

Caring for Our Children Newsletter

December 2022 - February 2023 Vol. 25 No. 4

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*“It’s a long process but this is what
capacity building is.”*

-IELCC Leadership Forum Contributor, May 2019



Photo courtesy of Singing Frog AHS Preschool

How Professional Development and Mentorship Can Help the Capacity Crisis

The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS), Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC), and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) have partnered to develop the LOT program. Learning Outside Together (LOT), incorporates traditional wisdom and promising practices to futureproof child care programs.

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Happy New Year!

The LOT program is designed for early learning and child care professionals and guided by peer mentors. ECE professionals develop the knowledge and skills needed to increase children's time and meaningful experiences outdoors, including Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and experiencing land as teacher. This professional development program encourages growth, supports a space for knowledge exchange, and builds community.

We spoke with Leona Antoine, Program Coordinator at Singing Frog AHS Preschool and Sheila Grieve, Professor at Vancouver Island University about the LOT program and how the mentorship model within the program can help the capacity and retention crisis in early learning and child care. Leona was a participant in the program and Sheila was her peer mentor; Leona became a mentor in the second program offering. Both women took part in the program as Indigenous early learning and child care professionals. They believe that everyone who is an ECE can benefit from taking this course and that professional development programs like this play an important role in building capacity.

The mentorship model creates a supportive engagement process that builds confidence, strengthens relationships, and allows for conversation and knowledge sharing in a safe place.



Photo courtesy of Singing Frog AHS Preschool

Mentorship is a key piece of recruiting and retaining educators in Indigenous early learning and child care, as it inspires those currently in the field to stay and support new educators to build a support network early on in their career. Both Leona and Sheila believe that educational opportunities such as LOT enhance and confirm participants' knowledge, build confidence, and acknowledge their own experiences as well as the value of educators. This support enables participants to come together, strengthen their leadership skills, and rekindle their curiosity. "Having peer support throughout this process makes a big difference. Because of the community people created online, even if they were sick or tired, they still wanted to come and participate. LOT brought them back to who they were and their connections. It renewed their energy", said Sheila. She also added that the "LOT program builds individual capacity and the capacity of the entire field." The participants in LOT are people in the field and on the front line who then have the chance to become mentors and leaders who encourage others to be leaders in the field. Leadership building through engagement and sharing knowledge helps to create and maintain professional development opportunities that can retain early learning and child care educators in their field.

The LOT program helps people to consider different ways for educators to be with children. It provides opportunities to discuss possibilities and better understand different teaching and learning experiences. Leona shared, "It teaches us about being outside with children in a more meaningful way and it makes people think differently about the 'classroom.'" Outdoor education opportunities are confirming or expanding children's knowledge and therefore making their time outdoors more meaningful and that makes the early learning and child care educator's time more meaningful. This program provides opportunities for people to learn about and value outdoor education.

Leona and Sheila share a vision for the LOT program. They want the program to continue with more mentors and have the ability to offer it to everyone in the field of early learning and child care (ELCC). They feel that programs such as LOT are the things that can build capacity and drive retention. They told us they know people that were ready to retire or leave the profession then they participated in the program and decided to stay in their job and in the field. Retaining ELCC educators and building capacity can be supported by mentorship and professional development opportunities that share knowledge, breakdown teaching barriers, and strengthen leadership.

Thank you to Leona Antoine and Sheila Grieve for speaking with us and sharing their perspective, experiences, and knowledge.

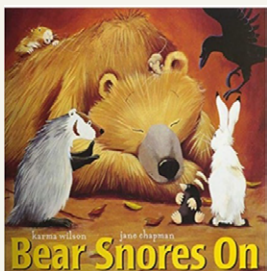
BCACCS Resource Centre Highlight

December brings forth colder days and earlier nights. This is a perfect opportunity to stay cozy with family and read a winter-themed book!



[Mouse Celebrates the Winter Solstice by Terri Mack](#)

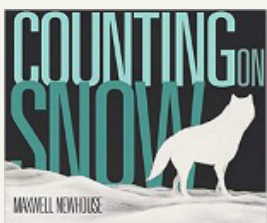
The significance of Winter Solstice for Indigenous people is highlighted in an enchanting story of a very special celebration and a tiny mouse.



[Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson](#)

A bear hibernates during the winter while all the other animals watch. When he wakes up, he is very hungry. On a cold, winter night many of the animals gather to have a party as the bear sleeps and snores loudly.

When he wakes up, he protests about missing out on the food and fun. The bears anger worries the other animals. Read the book to find out if they were able to persuade him to join the party and have some fun!



[Counting on the Snow by Maxwell Newhouse](#)

A beautiful exploration of the isolation and the beauty of northern winter. This book invites children to count with him from ten crunching caribou down to one lonely moose, by finding other northern animals - from seals to wolves to snowy owls - as they turn the pages.

These books are all available at the BCACCS resource centre. Please contact library@acc-society.bc.ca for assistance on how to borrow these and other resources at the BC Aboriginal Child Care Resource Centre.



Stand Up to Bullying

Pink Shirt Day falls on the last Wednesday of February every year. On February 22, 2023, help to create a more kind, inclusive world by raising awareness for anti-bullying initiatives.

Bullying affects so many people physically, emotionally and mentally. How can you help? Take a stand against bullying and be an advocate for kindness and inclusivity by wearing pink and sharing the message. www.pinkshirtday.ca



Start the New Year by Sharing Your Generosity

There is often a big push to donate just before the holidays, but the need for food and essentials doesn't end with the New Year. This has been an especially difficult time. If you are able, please consider donating to a food bank or Indigenous non-profit near you. Your generosity is appreciated.

Making the Most of Moe® Workshop

The February workshop is full. Anyone who missed out on the opportunity to take part can look out for the upcoming March workshop.

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 for our E-News](#) to make sure you are the first to know when registration opens.



Family Day in BC is February 20th

Start thinking now about what you're going to do for the Family Day long weekend. Visit with family, tell stories, look at photos, cook together, and remember how important it is to appreciate the love and joy you get from connecting.

Don't forget to get outside and explore nature. Share photos of your adventures using #familydaybc



Celebrate Have a Heart Day

Have a Heart Day is observed on February 14th. It is a child and youth-led reconciliation event that brings together caring Canadians to help ensure First Nations children have the opportunity to grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy, and be proud of who they are.

No matter where you live, you can still celebrate Have a Heart Day in your own way.

Join the celebration on Have a Heart Day to help create a Canada where honour and possibility is the reality for First Nations children.

Find out more about celebrations near you or ways you can join in by visiting fncaringsociety.com/events/have-heart-day.

Measuring Early Childhood Outside

Outdoor play allows children to explore, create and discover freely. Many children spend a lot of their time at early learning and child care (ELCCs) centres. ELCC centres can be important in providing children with regular opportunities to be and play outside.

We do not know very much about outdoor play in ELCC centres in Canada, such as how often and how long children play outside, what their play looks like, and what teachings and policies shape their play. Knowing this will help us better understand what is working well and how to support and measure progress in the future.

This project is currently seeking participants to test the survey tool. If you are an early childhood educator or administrator, please email outdoorplay@bcchr.ca to sign up or visit <https://playoutsideubc.ca/measuring-early-childhood-outside/>

Event and Early Years Professional Development Links

- [Children the Heart of the Matter Conference!](#)
February 3 - 4, 2023
- [Early Learning & Child Care Conference](#)
February 25, 2023
- [Spring BCACCS Online Conference](#)
April 1, 2023
- [ECEBC 2023 Conference – “Power of Story”](#)
May 11 - 13, 2023

- bcearlyyearshub.ca
- earlyyearsbc.ca/events
- bcfcc.ca/events
- www.childcareoptions.ca/child-care-providerstraining-and-workshops
- www.ecebc.ca/professional-development
- <https://www.gv.ymca.ca/training>

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 Ministry of Education and Child Care. BCACCS is a proud affiliate of the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF). 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 ancestral lands of the (X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ/sełilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh).

**Funded by the Province
of British Columbia**

