

# MOBILIZING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH for Early Childhood Well-being

The Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre's Newsletter:  
Looking back at 2021

We would like to acknowledge that the ECCRC is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. Please read the [ECCRC's Reconciliation Statement](#).

## Message from Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac

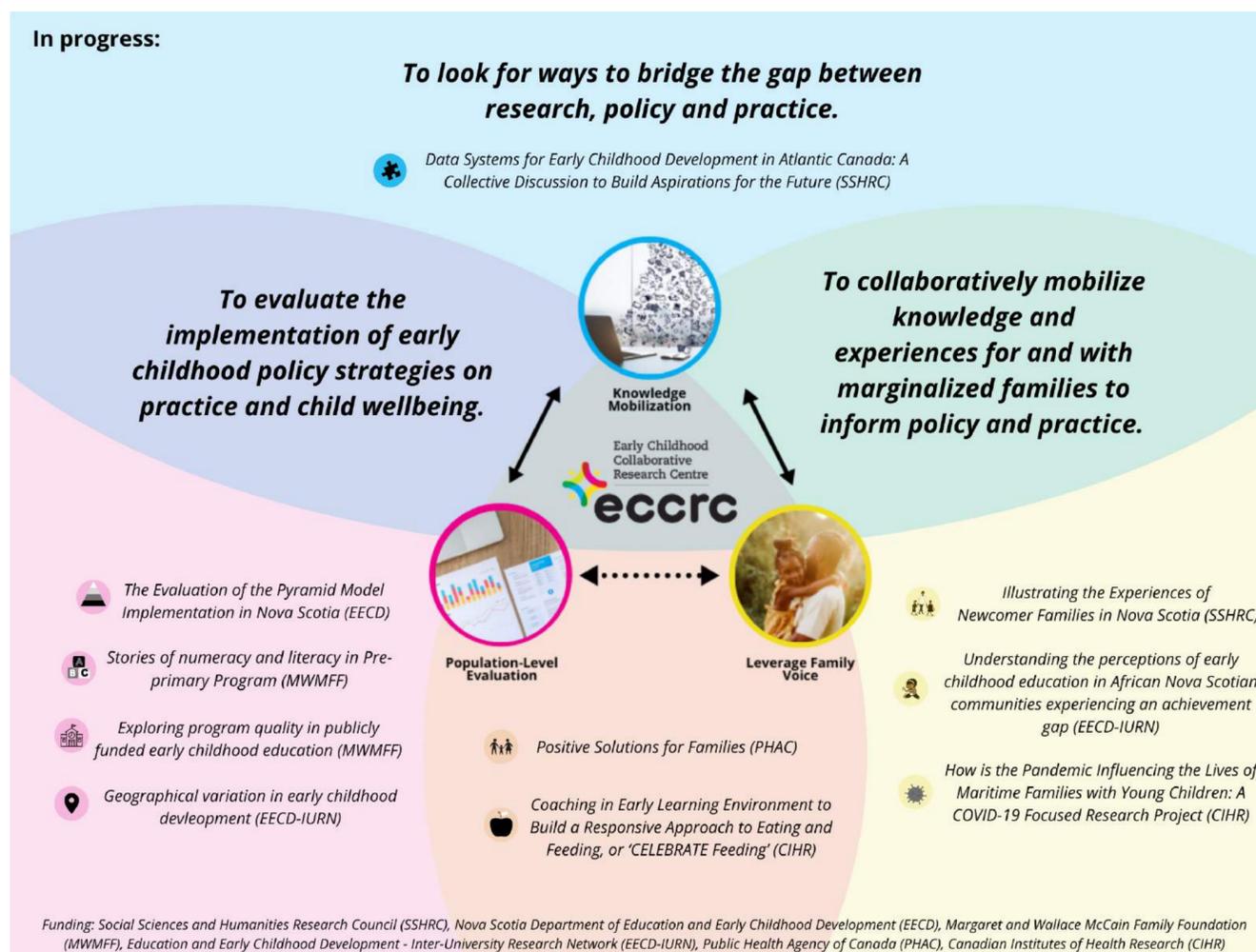
This inaugural newsletter marks a special time in the life of the Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre – or the ECCRC. The Centre is made possible through my position as a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Early Childhood: Diversity and Transitions at Mount Saint Vincent University. Over the last four years, we have built our collaborative research program to respond to emerging early childhood policy and community issues. The pandemic has impacted all of our lives, including our work. We have pivoted projects and deepened our focus in critical areas to achieve our vision of supporting child well-being, such as leveraging the voices of families that experience marginalization.



We are excited about our work ahead in early childhood, especially with the [critical vision in Nova Scotia](#) through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. We are currently working on a plan for the next phase of the Centre and look forward to sharing those details with you soon.

We wanted to use this newsletter as a way to update our partners and the early childhood community about the progress of our ongoing work. We are also active on social media, so feel free to follow along to see what we are up to.

We are so grateful to the many partners, collaborators, co-investigators, educators, families, and children that make our work possible.



## Project Updates

### Leveraging Family Voice

#### PANDEMIC INFLUENCES ON ATLANTIC CANADIAN FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN



In 2020-21, we explored the impact of the pandemic on the lives of Maritime families with young children. With funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, we conducted a survey and interviewed families in 2020, and again in 2021. We have developed and shared several infographics with our results and have manuscripts currently undergoing peer-review. Stay tuned for more!

## In the Media

### [SURVEY SAYS: FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN STRUGGLING AMIDST PANDEMIC](#)

Preliminary results to the ECCRC's second COVID-19 survey reveals how some Atlantic Canadian families are coping almost one-year into the pandemic.

### [N.S. CHILDCARE SPACES TO BE CUT TO \\$10 A DAY BY 2026 WITH NEW FUNDING DEAL](#)

The Nova Scotia Government announces a child care agreement with the federal government. Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac provides her remarks.

### ["IT'S A CALL TO ACTION": PHOTO EXHIBIT LOOKS THROUGH THE LENS OF NEWCOMER FAMILIES IN HALIFAX](#)

The language barrier, financial struggles, and difficulties making connections are some of the concerns that will be showcased in a public photo exhibit held at the Emera Oval in the Halifax Commons

## Knowledge Mobilization

### COVID-19 MARITIME FAMILY SURVEYS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

### COVID-19 MARITIME FAMILY INTERVIEWS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCES OF NEWCOMER FAMILIES IN NOVA SCOTIA



With funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and in partnership with the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), we engaged families and early childhood educators in a project to learn about how newcomers find and use programs for their children. We used the Photovoice methodology, where participants took photos that illustrated their experiences and we discussed what this meant to them. Participants decided to share their photos through a photo exhibit at the Emera Oval in Halifax in October 2021. Since then, our exhibit has traveled to various locations in the province, such as the Museum of Industry in Stellarton, Halifax Central Library, and government departments. We look forward to continuing work with newcomer families and ISANS to support key goals of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility of early childhood programs and services.

## Knowledge Mobilization

### SCOPING REVIEW OF FAMILIES' EXPERIENCES WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS OF NEWCOMER FAMILIES INFOGRAPHIC

### LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS OF NEWCOMER FAMILIES; FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS INFOGRAPHIC



## UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEPTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING AN ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Anti-Black racism is a social determinant of health. Still, there is limited research that explores this area in early childhood. We have recruited parents and early childhood educators in 2021 to share their experiences in African Nova Scotian communities. Currently, we are analyzing data from our participants - results are coming soon!

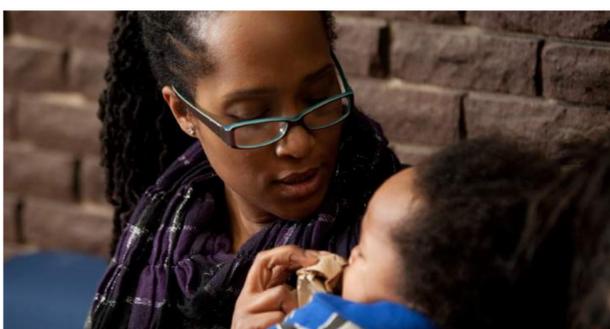
## Population-Level Evaluation

### EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PYRAMID MODEL IN NOVA SCOTIA

In 2021, the Pyramid Model transitioned into a permanent program under Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services. The program expanded implementation across the province, with more early childhood educators receiving coaching to support children's social and emotional development. Our implementation evaluation continues, with an annual report available in spring 2022.

## Knowledge Mobilization

### NOVA SCOTIA PYRAMID MODEL ANNUAL REPORT 2020



## POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILIES

We have partnered with Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services (NSECDIS) to adapt and implement the evidence-based Positive Solutions for Families program amidst the COVID-19 pandemic with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada's Mental Health Promotion Innovation Strategy (MHP-IF). In fall 2021, we delivered online workshops facilitated by Developmental Interventionists in English, French, and Arabic in partnership with regulated child care centres. There was an incredible response to our call for participation in the workshops. In addition, we received numerous participant requests from families. As a result, we are exploring ways to expand the program's offering to meet the demand! In addition, Nova Scotian families are currently completing a self-directed version of the workshops to help inform our next steps.

## NEW EXHIBIT IN STELLARTON OFFERS NEWCOMER PERSPECTIVE

A new exhibit at the Museum of Industry in Stellarton aims to offer a glimpse of what it's like to try to access services as a newcomer in Nova Scotia.



## Knowledge Mobilization

### POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILIES 2020 INTERVIEW RESULTS

#### **COACHING IN EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TO BUILD A RESPONSIVE APPROACH TO EATING AND FEEDING (CELEBRATE FEEDING!)**

Coaching in Early Learning Environments to Build a Responsive Approach To Eating and Feeding, or 'CELEBRATE Feeding!' is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). We will use a coaching model to support early childhood educators and other child care staff in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island to build a responsive feeding environment in their centre. In 2021, our team completed Behaviour Change Wheel training and will apply this knowledge to develop our intervention. More information to come in 2022 as we recruit centres and build our resources. We also have papers currently under review that describe current practices in responsive feeding locally and internationally. More on this soon!



#### **BUILDING POLICY-RELEVANT EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH IN NOVA SCOTIA**

Our team had the opportunity to conduct policy-relevant projects, including those that explored the concept of program quality. The projects are made possible by the generous support from the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation.

We are just setting out to begin an exciting new project to understand better the many ways that numeracy and literacy are supported in early learning programs. Early childhood educators will use photographs and reflective notes to share their unique perspectives and stories through a series of workshops.



## Knowledge Mobilization

### THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF A UNIVERSAL EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM: A PARENT PERSPECTIVE

### A CALL FOR CHANGE IN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN NOVA SCOTIA

### FAMILIES' EXPERIENCES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

### QUALITY MATTERS: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Knowledge Mobilization Projects

#### **DATA SYSTEMS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN ATLANTIC CANADA**

With funding from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, we invited early childhood policymakers, researchers, and practitioners across Atlantic Canada to discuss data systems for early childhood development with plenary presentations from key experts. There was rich discussion and a clear desire to find ways to collaborate across the region. We look forward to exploring ways to continue to build this partnership. We produced the [recording of the seminars](#) and a [graphic report](#) to inform next steps.



#### **EXPANDING CONNECTIONS TO SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA**

Between February and April, we hosted three virtual [professional development sessions](#) for early childhood educators in Nova Scotia with key experts on topics such as social and emotional development, COVID-19, and responsive feeding.

## ECCRC Team



**MARLENE RAMOS, RESEARCH PROJECTS MANAGER**

[Marlene.Ramos1@msvu.ca](mailto:Marlene.Ramos1@msvu.ca)

Marlene is involved with every project at the Centre through managing finances and administrative project details. She is also a fantastic baker, and our team is looking forward to enjoying her cakes again soon.



**DR. CHRISTINE MCLEAN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND YOUTH STUDY**

[Christine.McLean@msvu.ca](mailto:Christine.McLean@msvu.ca)

Dr. McLean contributes her passion and experience in the field of early childhood education to the ECCRC, along with her incredible sense of humor. She is involved with many of our projects, including co-leading the play-based numeracy and literacy project funded by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and as a co-investigator on our newcomer Photovoice project.



**DR. JOAN TURNER, PROFESSOR WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND YOUTH STUDY**

[Joan.Turner@msvu.ca](mailto:Joan.Turner@msvu.ca)

Dr. Turner is a key collaborator with the ECCRC that always kindly reminds us about the importance of a child's voice. She is involved with many of our projects, including co-leading the COVID-19 Family Impacts study and as a co-investigator with CELEBRATE Feeding and work funded by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation.



**JANE HARLEY, RESEARCH PROJECT EVALUATOR**

Jane has been involved with evaluation and quantitative data analysis at the ECCRC, including the Pyramid Model Evaluation, Positive Solutions for Families, and COVID-19 projects. We wish Jane the best of luck at her new position with NSECDIS.



**STEPHANIE GELDART, PROJECT COORDINATOR**

Stephanie has been with the ECCRC since 2018 and has made tremendous contributions to the growth of the centre. Stephanie will be continuing her work with the Pyramid Model Evaluation under NSECDIS. We know she will do amazing in her new position.



**MARLA SMITH, RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

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Marla is responsible for the evaluation of the PSF workshops. She has been at the ECCRC since 2018 and has made tremendous contributions to the growth of the centre.



**EMMA CAMERON, PROJECT COORDINATOR**

[Emma.Cameron3@msvu.ca](mailto:Emma.Cameron3@msvu.ca)

Emma joined the ECCRC in early 2021 while she was completing her Masters in Health Promotion at Dalhousie University. She jumped into the role of Project Coordinator for the project Understanding the Perceptions of Early Childhood Education in African Nova Scotian Communities Experiencing an Achievement Gap.



**MADISON MACQUARRIE, RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

Madison has taken on multiple roles this year. She has been the Research Coordinator for both the COVID-19 Maritime Family project and the CELEBRATE-Feeding project. We are so excited for Madison as she moves to a new role with the provincial government.



**NAHAL FAKHARI, RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

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Nahal is the Research Coordinator for the project involving newcomer families voices and experiences. Nahal organized the entire photo exhibit while working part-time and completing her Masters in Health Promotion at Dalhousie University.



**MILENA PIMENTEL, RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

[Milena.Pimentel@msvu.ca](mailto:Milena.Pimentel@msvu.ca)

Milena assists with multiple projects at the ECCRC. She spends most her time working with the evaluation of the Pyramid Model and the project involving African Nova Scotian communities. Milena is managing this work while also completing her degree in Child and Youth Study at MSVU.



**SARAH MORRIS, PROJECT COORDINATOR**

Sarah was the project coordinator for our two knowledge mobilization projects. She developed and organized two webinar series; one for early childhood educators and one for early childhood policymakers, researchers, and practitioners. Sarah has since taken on a new role with the Nova Scotia Government. We wish her all the best in this role and know she will do amazing!



**RANDI CUMMINGS, LEAD RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

[Randi.Cummings@msvu.ca](mailto:Randi.Cummings@msvu.ca)

Randi assists with multiple projects at the ECCRC as the Lead Research Assistant. Specifically, she has worked with the evaluation of the Pyramid Model, the COVID-19 project, and building policy-relevant early childhood research in NS. We are excited that Randi will take on a new role at the ECCRC as the Research Coordinator for the play-based numeracy and literacy project.



**DR. DE-LAWRENCE LAMPTEY, POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW**

Dr. Lamptey joined the ECCRC at the beginning of 2021. He worked with the COVID-19 Maritime Families project. He has taken a new post-doc role with York University. We are fortunate to have him continue to collaborate with us on our papers.



**ROBYN ASHLEY, RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

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Robyn joined the ECCRC mid-2021. She works primarily with our team collaborator, Dr. Christine McLean with research on the application and interpretation of jurisdictional early learning frameworks. She is assisting with this work while completing her Masters in Child and Youth Study at MSVU.



**LAKEN CROWELL, COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT**

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Laken joined the ECCRC at the beginning of 2021. She is a Public Relations student at MSVU and completed two co-operative education work terms in the Winter of 2021 and the Fall of 2021. Laken assists mainly with the knowledge mobilization at the ECCRC. She will continue her work with us part-time in 2022 while she completes her degree.



**MINAKSHI GONZALEZ CERDEIRA, RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

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Mina joined the ECCRC toward the end of 2021. She is a graduate student assisting with the CELEBRATE Feeding project and will be completing her Master's thesis related to the project.



**NICHOLAS HICKENS, RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

[Nicholas.Hickens@msvu.ca](mailto:Nicholas.Hickens@msvu.ca)

Nicholas joined the ECCRC toward the end of 2021 to assist with the project that explores the perceptions of early childhood education in African Nova Scotian communities. Nicholas is also a student in the psychology department at MSVU.



**ELIZABETH DICKSON, NUTRITION COACH**

[Elizabeth.Dickson@msvu.ca](mailto:Elizabeth.Dickson@msvu.ca)

Elizabeth joined the ECCRC toward the end of 2021 as a Nutrition Coach for the CELEBRATE Feeding project. Elizabeth will be coaching early childhood educators involved in the project about responsive feeding environments in early childhood.

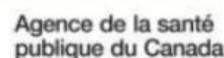
**Stay Tuned...**

So much more to come from the ECCRC in 2022. We look forward to sharing the results of our ongoing work and our new research directions.

New Employment Opportunities

[Check out our current employment opportunities!](#)

Thank you to our funders and supporters:



**About the ECCRC**

The ECCRC is at Mount Saint Vincent University led by Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac, Assistant Professor and Tier II Canada Research Chair in Early Childhood: Diversity and Transitions. The goal of the centre is to ensure policy and practice are in place to support families across different early learning environments. This is achieved through population-level evaluation, leveraging family voice, and knowledge mobilization.



Website:



Moving forward, the ECCRC will be distributing a biannual newsletter. It will be sent via email in February and August.