Process of building and nurturing collaborative networks to support evidence-based early childhood policies, programs, and practices

Families in Canada Conference

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The importance of child well-being

- Providing best start for youngest generation is a growing priority – education, health and economic benefits
- Increasing concerns about vulnerabilities in early childhood and their ongoing impact later in life



Evolving policy landscape in Nova Scotia

- Greater awareness of the importance of early childhood development and investment from government in policy approaches
 - Early Years Centre initiative: Integrated service delivery model with play-based early learning program (began 2014)
 - Universal Pre-primary Program for 4 year olds (began 2017)
- Fed-Prov bilateral agreement funding means more investments in early childhood education and care







Early Years Centres (2014 – present)

Core components:

- No-fee, play based early learning program for 4 year olds
- Family supports and resources
- Regulated child care responsive to the needs of families



Building research capacity

Interest from government and funding partners to build research capacity in early childhood

Received a NSRHF Team Development Award to develop a research advisory network (2016)



Identifying initial connections

- Small meetings with interested stakeholders to identify key focus areas of research
- Large stakeholder meeting to discuss and develop research
- Led to submission of successful research proposals
- Further funding needed to grow the network

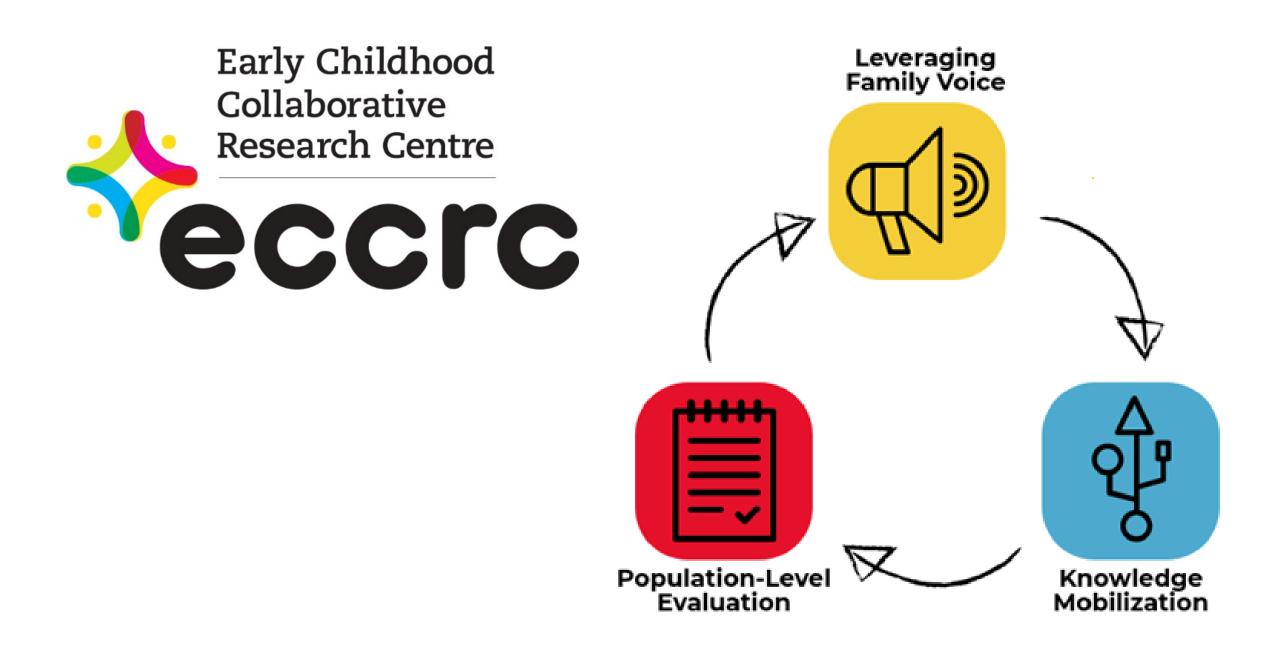




My CRC program of research

- Goal: To enhance well-being during early childhood by ensuring policy and practice supports families that experience inequity
- Approach: Work with community, policy makers and engage families— to co-produce research that mobilizes knowledge and experiences *for* and *with* families to inform policy and practice





Mobilizing Connections for Early Childhood

- Strengthen collaborations
- Promote collective learning
- Identify ways to move forward in early childhood research, policy and practice



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Mobilizing Connections for Early Childhood



~80 participants

Fairly even mix from research, policy, and practice-oriented work

Major components of the day

Systems map activity Storytelling & listening café Moving forward together

Systems map





Sharing local stories of collaboration

Tell us a story of a time where you worked with people from different sectors/roles to collectively learn and find ways to support children and their families.



Ahmed's Story



Reaching Back to Rise Above: Examining How Far We Have Come as People of African Ancestry and Seeing All Our Possibilities



Turning Pavement into Play-Based Learning Through Collaboration

Sharing national stories of collaboration

Tell us a story of a time where you worked with people from different sectors/roles to collectively learn and find ways to support children and their families.



From One Small Meeting Room to Classrooms From Coast to Coast: The Development of the EDI





Walking a Tightrope Between Research and Community-Based Practice: Bridging Interests in a Shifting System

Listening lenses

- Power
- Pivotal Moments
- Resources & Sustainability
- Overcoming Obstacles
- Synchronicity & Magic
- Relationships





Listening café

- Relationship building
- Take risk
- Stories/process matters
- Create solutions through collaboration
- Keep child and family at the center
- Recognize and using our power and privilege
- Equal voices, all the voices





Moving forward together

- Measure early childhood and health outcomes, policy and program impact
- Building on relationships and identifying potential connections to build network across Atlantic Canada
- Supporting early childhood education workforce (e.g., for social emotional learning)
- Talking about our successes through stories
- Asking children what would benefit them



Next steps

- Online seminar series
- Opportunity to build collaborations across Atlantic provinces
- Additional funding is being explored



Our Questions

- What stories of early childhood research, policy and practice are you interested to hear more about?
- What online format do you think would work best to share stories?
- Are you interested in being involved with further in-person networking?

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