

MOBILIZING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH For Early Childhood Well-being

The Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre's Newsletter

We would like to acknowledge that the ECCRC is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

We also recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

The ECCRC values the implementation of principles and practices that reflect and support equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) in its day-to-day work, in its research processes, with its partnerships, and in the creation of knowledge mobilization materials. [Learn more about EDIA at the ECCRC.](#)

Message from Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac

I hope this finds our partners and friends doing well after a beautiful summer in Nova Scotia and beyond.

The spring/summer has moved quickly for our team - we have been busy with data collection, events, grant writing, reports, and publications. We also took time to have focused reading and conversation on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility among our team. We did this through virtual brainstorming to ensure all of our team could participate and continued this at a local beach to enjoy the beauty of Nova Scotia at the same time. As we look ahead to the fall, we are excited about our continued work with our partners. We are developing a process to embed a family advisory committee at the Centre and look forward to announcing more information very soon.



Please read below and get in touch if you have any questions about our work.



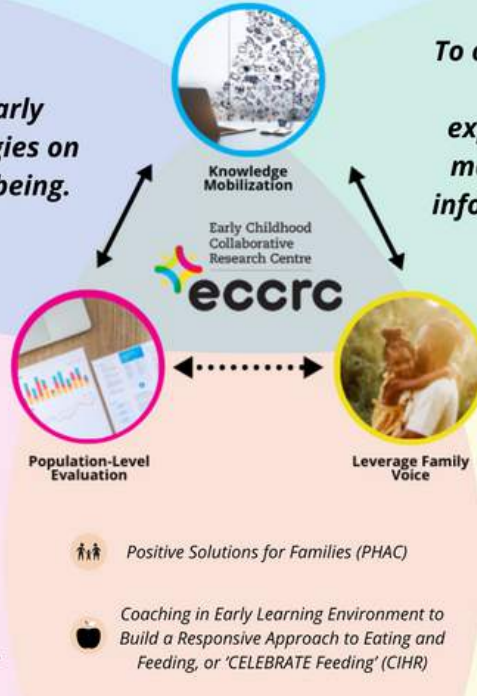
Work in progress:

To look for ways to bridge the gap between research, policy and practice.




-  Mobilizing Outdoor Play Through Participatory Action Research (SSHRC)
-  Data Systems for Early Childhood Development in Atlantic Canada: A Collective Discussion to Build Aspirations for the Future (SSHRC)

To evaluate the implementation of early childhood policy strategies on practice and child wellbeing.

-  The Evaluation of the Pyramid Model Implementation in Nova Scotia (EECD)
-  Supporting Numeracy and Literacy in Play-Based Early Learning Programs (MWMFF)
-  Exploring program quality in publicly funded early childhood education (MWMFF)
-  Geographical variation in early childhood development (EECD-IURN)
-  Mobilizing Innovative Models in Early Childhood Education and Care for Newcomer Families and Children (CYRRC)



To collaboratively mobilize knowledge and experiences for and with marginalized families to inform policy and practice.

-  Illustrating the Experiences of Newcomer Families in Nova Scotia (SSHRC)
-  Understanding the Perceptions of Play-Based Education in Communities Experiencing an Achievement Gap (EECD-IURN)
-  How is the Pandemic Influencing the Lives of Maritime Families with Young Children: A COVID-19 Focused Research Project (CIHR)

Funding: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF), Education and Early Childhood Development - Inter-University Research Network (EECD-IURN), Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC)

IN THE MEDIA

CHALLENGING ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENTS

A team of researchers from Dalhousie University and Mount Saint Vincent University is amplifying the voices of Black Nova Scotian families and educators and challenging anti-black racism in early childhood environments.

N.S. RESEARCHERS TEAM UP TO LOOK AT BARRIERS FACED BY AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN CHILDREN

There continues to be an opportunity gap between Black and White children in Nova Scotia, especially during the early years.

[See all project descriptions](#)

Project Updates

The ECCRC has a few key areas of focus that fit into our three pillars (population-level evaluation, leverage family voice, and knowledge mobilization). Each of our projects fits into one of these key areas of focus:

1. High-quality, inclusive, and culturally responsive early childhood;

- 2. Child well-being through (a) responsive feeding, (b) social and emotional learning, (c) outdoor play;
- 3. Building connections for early childhood development.

High-Quality, Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Early Childhood

SUPPORTING NUMERACY AND LITERACY IN PLAY-BASED EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Since the last update, we have implemented and completed our participatory workshops with Nova Scotian pre-primary educators. Participants gave us insight into how they support numeracy and literacy in their play-based classrooms by sharing pictures and stories.

We are currently in the process of coding, analyzing and summarizing this data for future graphic reports, papers, and knowledge mobilization opportunities.



Knowledge Mobilization

RESEARCH PUBLICATION: A SCOPING REVIEW OF QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PUBLICLY-FUNDED PROGRAMS

With a focus on newcomer families

ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCES OF NEWCOMER FAMILIES IN NOVA SCOTIA

We participated in the Metropolis conference in March and the Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) conference in June by sharing a poster with results from this project. Also, the team has been working on an academic paper which we plan to submit in the early fall.



Knowledge Mobilization

POSTER PRESENTATION OF RESULTS FOR CAHSPR CONFERENCE





MOBILIZING INNOVATIVE MODELS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE FOR NEWCOMER FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

The team has completed the environmental scan of all settlement agencies that deliver child care to newcomer families across Canada. We recruited settlement organizations to participate in our research study. Currently, we are conducting interviews with these organizations across Canada.



With a focus on Black and African Nova Scotian families

UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PLAY-BASED EDUCATION IN COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING AN ACHIEVEMENT GAP

In July, our team organized a community event in the East Preston community to share the results of our study. We officially released our community report at the Amplifying the Voices of Black Families in Nova Scotia: Challenging Anti-Black Racism in Early Childhood Environments. The event was a success in engaging community members as well as those working within early childhood environments. The event included brainstorming actions needed to create culturally safe and responsive early childhood programs for Black and African Nova Scotian educators, young children, and their families. Our team is also currently working on two academic publications. Though this project is wrapping up, stay tuned for how our team will build off this project and the ideas gathered at the event to continue this crucial work.



ON THESE SHOULDERS
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

NOVA SCOTIA

EDUCATION AND
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Knowledge Mobilization

PROJECT WEBPAGE

COMMUNITY REPORT (RESULTS)

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Child Well-Being

Through responsive feeding

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

It has been a busy and exciting time for the CELEBRATE Feeding project over the last couple of months. We have recruited 9 child care centres (4 on PEI and 5 in NS) to participate in the project. Our nutrition coaches, Elizabeth Dickson (NS) and Margaret Young (PEI), have conducted meet-and-greets at all the centres. We are currently completing observations, surveys and focus groups at the centres. Once these are completed, coaching will begin! For more information about the project, please check our website: www.celebratefeeding.ca and follow us on social media @celebratefeeding.



Knowledge Mobilization

RESPONSIVE FEEDING VALUES AND PRACTICES AMONG FAMILIES ACROSS THE CANADIAN MARITIME PROVINCES

- **JOURNAL ARTICLE**
- **INFOGRAPHIC**

Through social and emotional learning

EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PYRAMID MODEL IN NOVA SCOTIA

Our implementation evaluation continues with the Pyramid Model. An annual report is awaiting approval and is soon to be released. Keep an eye out on our website



for an executive summary to learn more!

Currently, our team is working on evaluation plans for the new year, which will center on considerations from the annual report.



POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILIES (PSF)

Since the last update in February 2022, in partnership with NSECDIS, we have delivered PSF workshops to 147 families. Some families participated in online facilitated workshops, and some participated in self-directed online workshops. Almost all participants indicated the workshops were useful, and all participants indicated they would recommend them to other families.



After evaluation, the desire for evidence-based resources for families that would help them support their children's social and emotional development was evident. As a result, we are now working with NSECDIS to determine the next steps for PSF.

Through outdoor play

MOBILIZING OUTDOOR PLAY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

In April 2022, we received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Explore Grant (Internal MSVU Grant) for a new project focused on outdoor play opportunities in early learning and child care environments.

Through participatory action research and an ethnographic case study approach, this study explores stakeholders' (i.e. early childhood educators, children, parents, etc.) experiences and perspectives of outdoor play across various weather conditions and seasons. We hope to



understand how these may shift with increased access to quality outdoor gear. We began the project this summer with a focus group of early childhood educators to discuss goals to increase outdoor play opportunities and to gather their input on how we can best refine our research tools to support them in reaching their goals.

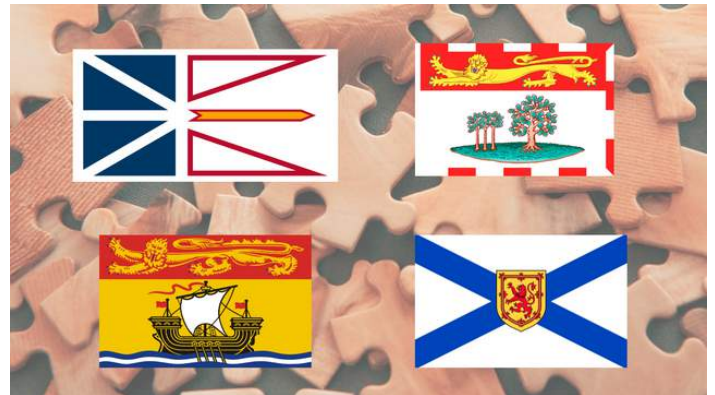
Building Connections for Early Childhood Development

DATA SYSTEMS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Since the February 2022 update, we have been meeting with the planning committee to determine the next steps. We want to continue to build the connections we made with and between policymakers, researchers, and practitioners across Atlantic Canada. We also want to explore an opportunity for these connections to support the development of high-quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive child care in each province following the signing of federal-provincial early learning and child care agreements. Stay tuned!

Knowledge Mobilization

GRAPHIC REPORT



Community Highlight

East Preston Day Care and Family Resource Centre

The East Preston Day Care and Family Resource Centre is a non-profit organization that has been in the community of East Preston for over 40 years. The staff are extremely dedicated to and passionate about nurturing and supporting families in their region, surrounding communities and beyond.



They have created a supportive community that feels like a big family.

The centre offers day care to children aged 3 months to 10 years. They also facilitate parenting and information classes through the family resource centre. They have programming for people ages 0- to 99 years old.

We want to give a special thanks to Trina Fraser, Director of the East Preston Day Care and Family Resource Centre, for all her support with the Amplifying the Voices of Black Families and Educators community event. She does so much for the community and is passionate about high-quality, culturally-responsive, and inclusive child care.

[Learn more](#) about the centre.

Community Highlight

On These Shoulders Research Collaborative

On These Shoulders Research Collaborative (OTS is led by Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch, Associate Professor in the School of Health and Human Performance and Assistant Vice-Provost Equity and Inclusion at Dalhousie University. It is a research centre dedicated to producing evidence-based research to address racial inequities and empower marginalized communities. Its team is multidisciplinary, including members from

faculties of medicine, nursing, health administration, health promotion, law, child and youth studies, education, social work, dentistry, and more. On These Shoulders Research Collaborative is based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the School of Health and Human Performance at Dalhousie University. They collaborate with other groups and institutions around the globe.

We worked in partnership with On These Shoulders Research Collaborative on the Understanding the Perceptions of Play-Based Education in Communities Experiencing an Achievement Gap project.

[Learn more](#) about On These Shoulders Research Collaborative and the research and actions they are taking.

Find them on Twitter (@OTS_Research) and Instagram (@ots_research)



ON THESE SHOULDERS
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

ECCRC Team



**MARLENE RAMOS,
RESEARCH PROJECTS
MANAGER**

Marlene.Ramos1@msvu.ca

Marlene is involved with every project at the Centre through managing finances, day-to-day operations, and administrative project details.

She is like our team mom. She keeps us all organized and feeds us with her fantastic baking.



**SARAH WARWICK,
RESEARCH COORDINATOR**



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

Christine.McLean@msvu.ca

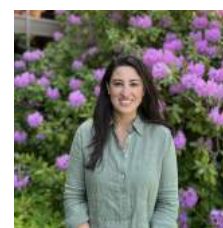
Dr. McLean contributes her passion and experience in the field of early childhood education to the ECCRC, along with her incredible sense of humor. She is involved with many of our projects, including co-leading the play-based numeracy and literacy project funded by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family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

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 as a co-investigator with CELEBRATE Feeding and work funded by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation.



**NAHAL FAKHARI,
RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

Sarah.Warwick@msvu.ca

Sarah joined the ECCRC in March as the Research Coordinator for the CELEBRATE Feeding Project. She is passionate about helping promote good health and well-being, with a particular interest in nutrition. We also want to say an early congratulations to Sarah for her wedding in September!



**ELIZABETH DICKSON,
NUTRITION COACH**

Elizabeth.Dickson@msvu.ca

Elizabeth is the Nova Scotia Nutrition Coach for the CELEBRATE Feeding project. She is currently working with early childhood educators in five centres across Nova Scotia, coaching them and supporting them with implementing responsive feeding practices in their child care.



**EMMA CAMERON,
PROJECT COORDINATOR**

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Emma leads the project that explores the experiences of early childhood educators (ECEs) and parents in Nova Scotia who have and care for young Black children. Emma just recently moved to British Columbia, but



**ROBYN ASHLEY, RESEARCH
COORDINATOR**

Robyn.Ashley@msvu.ca

Robyn has been working with our team collaborator, Dr. Christine McLean with research on the application and interpretation of jurisdictional early learning frameworks since 2021. As of April, she has joined the ECCRC as the Research Coordinator for the Outdoor Play project and is assisting with the Pyramid Model Evaluation. Robyn hopes to graduate with her Masters in Child and Youth Study at MSVU in the fall.



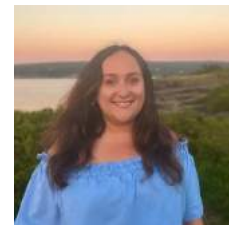
**NICHOLAS HICKENS,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

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Nicholas assists with the project that explores the experiences of early childhood educators (ECEs) and parents in Nova Scotia who have and care for young Black children. Nicholas is also a student in the psychology department at MSVU and will be graduating this October. He has played a big role in helping with recruitment for the project and has helped create connections for the ECCRC.

Nahal.Fakhari@msvu.ca

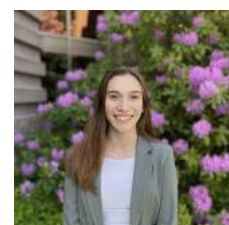
Nahal was the Research Coordinator for the project involving newcomer families voices and experiences and is now the Research Coordinator for Mobilizing Innovative Models in Early Childhood Education and Care for Newcomer Families and Children. Nahal successfully defended her Master's thesis in June titled "Child Immigrant Post-Migration Mental Health: A Qualitative Inquiry into Caregivers' Perspectives."



**RANDI CUMMINGS,
RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

Randi.Cummings@msvu.ca

Randi transitioned from her position as Lead Research Assistant to Research Coordinator for the Numeracy and Literacy project in May. As well as leading this project, she assists with the Pyramid Model project and the PSF project. Randi is our go-to-gal for training new team members in anything related to data analysis.



**LAKEN CROWELL,
KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION
COORDINATOR**

continues to work on this project from a distance.



**MILENA PIMENTEL,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

Milena.Pimentel@msvu.ca

Milena assists with multiple projects at the ECCRC. She spends most her time working on the project exploring the experiences of early childhood educators (ECEs) and parents in Nova Scotia who have and care for young Black children, and with the evaluation of the Pyramid Model. Milena is managing this work while also completing her degree in Child and Youth Study at MSVU.



**MINAKSHI GONZALEZ
CERDEIRA, RESEARCH
ASSISTANT**

minakshi.gonzalezcerdeira@msvu.ca

Mina is a graduate student assisting with the CELEBRATE Feeding project and will be completing her Master's thesis related to the project.



**HEATHER PODANOVITCH,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

Heather.Podanovitch@msvu.ca

Heather joined the ECCRC in March as a research assistant. She works on the CELEBRATE Feeding project and the Numeracy and Literacy project. While working at the ECCRC, Heather is also attending classes at MSVU in the Applied Human Nutrition program.



**EMMA COUGHLAN,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

Emma.Coughlan@msvu.ca

Emma joined the ECCRC in March as a research assistant. She works on the Mobilizing Innovative Models in Early Childhood Education and Care for Newcomer Families and Children project. Emma is also in Quebec working for a day camp for children with diverse needs.



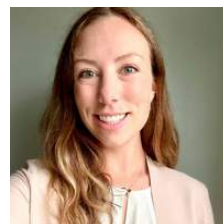
**DINA MOHAMED,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

Dina.ElMahdy@msvu.ca

Dina joined the ECCRC team in July. She is a research assistant with the numeracy

Laken.Crowell@msvu.ca

Laken assists mainly with the knowledge mobilization at the ECCRC. She is a Public Relations student at MSVU and completed two co-operative education work terms with the ECCRC. She has stayed on with us while she completes her studies and will work with us through the winter after her graduation in October.



**JULIE CAMPBELL, DATA
ANALYST**

Julie.Campbell7@msvu.ca

Julie joined the ECCRC in March as the Data Analyst. She works primarily on the CELEBRATE Feeding project. While working at the ECCRC, Julie is working towards her PhD in the Faculty of Health at Dalhousie University, studying outdoor learning and play with school-aged children.



**TAYLOR HILL, GRADUATE
RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

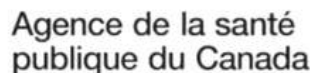
Taylor has worked at the ECCRC for a few years. While she now works for Engage Nova Scotia and teaches psychology part-time, she still is helping finalize some older projects.

and literacy project. Dina is also a graduate student in the Master's of Education Curriculum Studies program at MSVU and her thesis is on promoting early literacy skills through play.

Stay Tuned...

More to come from the ECCRC through the fall and winter of 2022. We look forward to sharing the results of our ongoing work and our new research directions. The next newsletter will be released in February 2023.

Thank you to our generous 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:

