

MOBILIZING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD WELL-BEING

The Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre's Newsletter

We would like to acknowledge that the ECCRC at MSVU is located in Kjiptuk (Halifax), part of Mi'kma'ki, the unceded ancestral territory which remains the homeland of the Mi'kmaq Nation.



Message from Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac

As fall begins, our ECCRC team is celebrating the recent renewal of my Canada Research Chair position at the Mount. This means another five years to continue to build our capacity for research focused on early childhood well-being!

In this renewed phase of the ECCRC (see below), we will continue equity-focused research that mobilizes child, family and community voices to understand the impact of early childhood policy. We will also move toward co-designed innovations to enhance the available support for families and practitioners. An example of this is our CIHR-funded [Celebrate Feeding project](#), where our Nutrition Coaches worked in child care programs to help create responsive feeding environments. Our intervention phase is now complete, and we will be exploring ways to scale up components of this project, so more programs can access our resources and support.

Building on the momentum of our [Virtual Storytelling Series](#), this fall we hosted a series of in-person events as part of our SSHRC Connection Grant to advance an Atlantic-wide network focused on equity in early childhood.

Many more exciting project updates to come in this new academic year. Check out our project updates below, and please get in touch if you have any questions.

IN THIS ISSUE

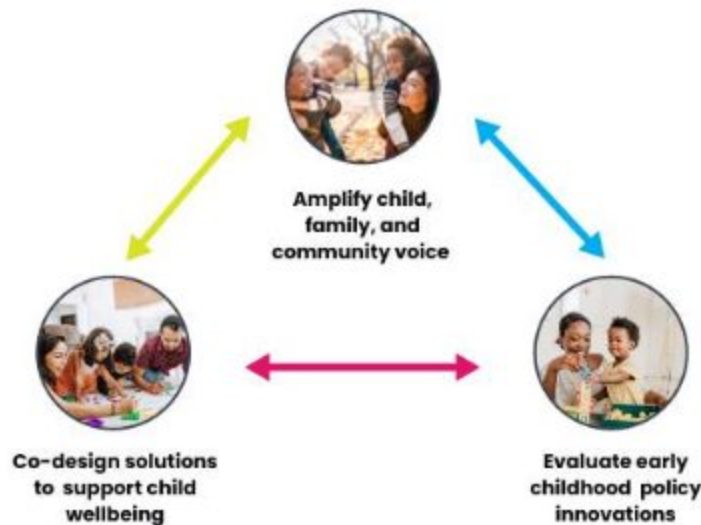
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

PROJECT UPDATES

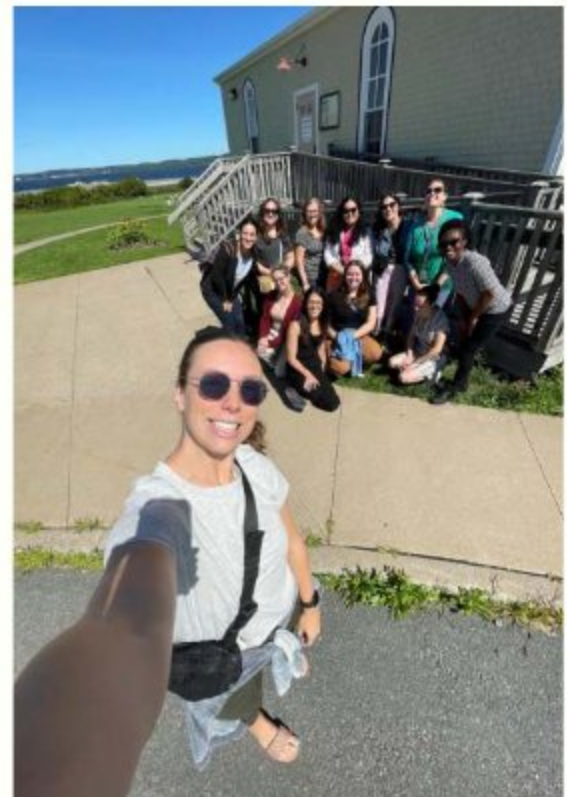
KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION: CHILD WELLBEING

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

ECCRC TEAM



High-Quality, Inclusive, and Culturally Responsive Early Childhood Learning Environments



EDIA at the ECCRC

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.](#)

IN THE MEDIA

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A HIGH-QUALITY 'PRE-PRIMARY' OR JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

A timely read with children beginning Pre-primary this fall published in *The Conversation Canada* by Dr. Christine McLean and Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac

Image: The ECCRC Team visited the Africville Museum this summer and learned about the rich history of the African Nova Scotian community.

PROJECT UPDATES

ECCRC has a few key areas of focus that fit into our renewed pillars (amplify voice, evaluate policy innovations, and co-design solutions). Each of our projects fits into one of these key areas:

- High-quality, inclusive, and culturally responsive early childhood learning environments;
- Child well-being through (a) responsive feeding, (b) social and emotional learning, (c) outdoor play;
- Building connections for early childhood development.

SUPPORTING NUMERACY AND LITERACY IN PLAY- BASED EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

As the first phase of the project has wrapped up, a panel exhibit was created using participant photos which were shared at both the ECE Excellence Award Ceremony and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

We have just started a scoping review to better understand what is known about how play supports literacy in publicly funded early learning programs and early education.

In addition, the second phase of our research has just begun. We are currently recruiting both early childhood educators and grade primary teachers working in NS to participate in community of practice sessions focused on supporting numeracy and literacy through play. Please share [this link](#) with anyone you know who may be interested!



Margaret and Wallace McCain
Family Foundation Inc.

BRIDGING THE KNOW- DO GAP

Our research assistant Milena Pimental received a Scotia Scholar Award from Research Nova Scotia to learn about the experiences of early childhood educators who completed the "Culturally-Responsive Practice in NS's Early Learning and Child Care Settings" professional development (PD) modules. She will be exploring how the PD influenced knowledge, confidence, and culturally-responsive practice. Milena has just wrapped up interviews and is working on the data analysis. Results will be shared on our website soon.



RESEARCH
NOVA SCOTIA

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

SUPPORTING NUMERACY AND LITERACY IN PLAY-BASED EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS: GRAPHIC REPORT

SOUTENIR LA NUMÉRATIE ET LA LITTÉRATIE DANS LES PROGRAMMES D'APPRENTISSAGE PRÉCOCE BASÉS SUR LE JEU: RAPPORT GRAPHIQUE

NUMERACY AND LITERACY - IT'S EVERYWHERE!

LA NUMÉRATIE ET LA LITTÉRATIE - C'EST PARTOUT!

MOBILIZING COMMUNITY VOICE

Knowledge mobilization is ongoing for a number of projects focused on newcomer and Black families.

- In partnership with the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, we prepared a [report](#) participants from our jurisdictional scan of child care programs (funded by CYRRC), and findings were shared through a number of presentations.
- We pay respect to the histories, contributions, and legacies of African Nova Scotian communities that have been here for over 400 years and the 52 African Nova Scotian communities throughout the region today. We continue to explore new opportunities to advance our research to amplify the voices of Black families and educators.



EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



Child Well-Being Through responsive feeding

CELEBRATE FEEDING (Coaching In Early Learning Environments to Build a Responsive Approach to Eating and Feeding.)

In May 2023, our Early Years Nutrition Coaches, Elizabeth Dickson (NS) and Margaret Young (PEI) completed the six-month coaching intervention at our 8 participating child care centres. During coaching, which occurred both virtually and in-person, Elizabeth and Margaret provided resources and advice to help educators create a more responsive feeding environment. Coaching was individualized for each centre and/or educator to allow centres to reach their own specific responsive feeding goals. Once coaching concluded, post-intervention data collection of observations, interviews with directors and educators, and surveys for educators and parents occurred. This data is now being analyzed, and the itinerary for a scale-up event in December with directors, and educators from our centres, and our advisory committee is being organized.



CELEBRATE Feeding!

Coaching in Early Learning Environments to Build a Responsive Approach To Eating and Feeding



KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

[NEW PAPER: Looking through the lens of newcomer families](#)

[NEW PAPER: Anti-Black racism in the early years](#)

The CELEBRATE Feeding Approach:

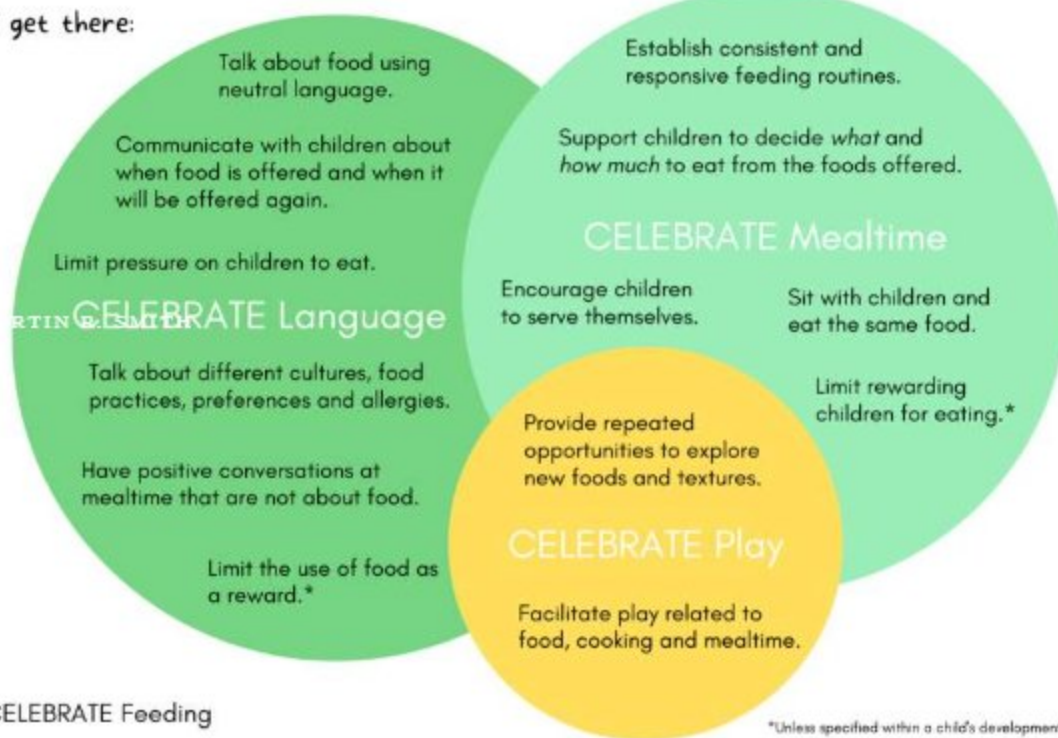
What we hope to accomplish:

Children gain eating competence and have a positive relationship with food.

Children accept a wide variety of foods and textures.

Children practice self-regulation and tune into hunger and fullness cues.

How we'll get there:



CELEBRATE Feeding

*Unless specified within a child's developmental plan.

For more information about the CELEBRATE Feeding project:

Please visit our website: www.celebratefeeding.ca

and follow us on:

Instagram: [@celebratefeeding](https://www.instagram.com/celebratefeeding), X (formally Twitter): [@CELEBRATE_Feed](https://twitter.com/CELEBRATE_Feed) and Facebook: [@celebratefeeding](https://www.facebook.com/celebratefeeding)



The CELEBRATE Feeding Team

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

NEW PAPER: Responsive Feeding Environments in Child care Settings: A Scoping Review

Child Well-Being Through social and emotional learning

EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PYRAMID MODEL IN NOVA SCOTIA

Our evaluation continues with the Pyramid Model. Since our last newsletter we have shared internal and public preliminary reports on the Nova Scotia Early Childhood Professional Well-being Survey.

This spring we conducted interviews with child care centre directors, Pre-Primary Leads, Pre-Primary early childhood educators (ECEs), and parents to explore how Pyramid Model programs are engaging families. As we work toward our annual report, we are conducting evaluation activities with those working at different levels of the implementation through focus groups, surveys, and case studies with program sites.

Nova Scotia Pyramid Model



Child Well-Being Through outdoor play

MOBILIZING OUTDOOR PLAY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Since our last newsletter, we continued data collection for the Mobilizing Outdoor Play project with the participating child care centre and completed the process in June 2023 with several more go-along interviews recorded with GoPro cameras worn on the researcher's and participants' chest harnesses, following eight children in their typical routine in the outdoor play area. Our team has been busy transcribing this video data. The research coordinator is currently analyzing their own reflexive journal that they kept during the study to explore how they built relationships with educators and children as a researcher with prior experience working as an early childhood educator. We are also currently preparing for an upcoming project focused on enhancing children's voices and play outdoors across different early learning and child care settings.



KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

NOVA SCOTIA EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL WELL-BEING SURVEY, PRELIMINARY RESULTS APRIL 2023

Building Connections for Early Childhood Development



SSHRC CRSH
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines

BUILDING HIGH-QUALITY, INCLUSIVE, AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN ATLANTIC CANADA

The main goals of this project are to highlight the incredible work being done to promote equity in early childhood across Atlantic Canada and to build and sustain a network of individuals and organizations who work in early childhood across a variety of governmental, professional, and community settings.

We hosted a three-part virtual Atlantic storytelling series focused on: Culturally Responsive Programs, Anti-Oppression, and Accessibility and Inclusion. [Recordings and graphic summaries of each of these sessions can be found on our project website here.](#)

We also hosted a two-day in-person event; a fireside chat and a workshop in Halifax this October to advance our partnerships and finalize details for a grant to further build and sustain our network. Click [here](#) to view the recorded session and check our social media pages for more updates on our gatherings. Below is a graphic summary of the fireside chat.



MOBILIZING RESEARCH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA TO SUPPORT FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

In January, our team received two grants from CIHR and MSVU Standard Grant to build a new area of research focused on the use of social media to support families with children's social and emotional health. This research aims to build family protective factors by leveraging evidence-based social and emotional health information using social media and identify research priorities through an Atlantic-wide family advisory committee.

Our team is currently conducting an environmental scan of social media influencers who post about the social and emotional health of young children to better understand what content is posted on Instagram. Our next phase aims to build a diverse family advisory group to learn more about the informational needs and use of social media when parenting young children. Stay tuned for more details in the next newsletter.



Darlow SA, Brown C. "Map Rise With Others": Social-emotional learning and Academic Success. *Early Educ Dev.* 2019;21(1):622-630. doi:10.1080/10420269.2018.1477450
Jones DE, Greenberg M, Crowley M. Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship Between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Well-being. *Am J Public Health.* 2018;108(11):2285-2290. doi:10.2196/ajph.2015.300430
Viviani H, Doreen H. The Role of Socio-Emotional Development in Early Childhood. *J Phys Educ Res Plus.* 2014;3(3):166-192.

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

NOVA SCOTIA EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL WELL-BEING SURVEY, PRELIMINARY RESULTS APRIL 2023

Community Spotlight

Virtual Storytelling Series Speaker Highlight: Promoting Equity in Early Childhood to Build Atlantic Connections

In this issue we would like to thank all our storytellers who made the virtual storytelling session titled "Promoting Equity in Early Childhood: A storytelling Series to Build Atlantic Connections" a success. We also want to highlight two of our incredible speakers from the virtual storytelling series; Adam Braye and Moashella Shortte.

We are grateful to Adam Braye (he/they) and Moashella Shortte (she/her), in sharing their stories titled "Life outside the lines: Supporting gender diversity in the early years" & "Making room for all in the circle of change."

Adam Braye is an Early Childhood Educator and consultant at the Jane Norman College and an active advocate for the transgender community. The core of his practice is to create a healthy community through positive relationships in a way that everyone is seen heard and valued. Adam has continued to collaborate with the centre and share his passion in supporting gender in the early years and insights on our social media platform.

Moashella Shortte is a mother, educator, author and child youth advocate. She is a faculty member for the Africentric learning Option of the Adult learning program at NSCC's Akerley campus and she defines her mission as providing learners with exceptional learning experiences that will help them build a strong and positive foundation for learning for life.

Moashella continues to collaborate with us and moderated our in-person fireside chat on October 3rd as we continue the conversation on Promoting Equity in Early Childhood: to continue the conversation to build Atlantic Connection.

Promoting Equity in Early Childhood

Fireside Chat Moderator

INSTAGRAM TAKEOVER

MEET THE EXPERT

ADAM BRAYE



Adam is an instructor and a consultant with the Jane Norman College

@eccrc_msvu



MOASHELLA SHORTTE

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

To rewatch the virtual storytelling series please click: [Virtual storytelling series](#)
To rewatch the fireside chat held on October 3rd please click: [Fireside chat](#)

ECCRC Team

Shella A. Brown Centre For Applied



ECCRC Team



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.



ELIZABETH DICKSON,
NUTRITION COACH

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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.



SARAH CALDWELL,
RESEARCH MANAGER

Sarah.Caldwell@msvu.ca

Sarah is also 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.



ROBYN ASHLEY,
RESEARCH COORDINATOR

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Robyn is the Research Coordinator for the Outdoor Play project and the Pyramid Model Evaluation project. Robyn graduated with her Masters in Child and Youth Study at MSVU in October 22. Her thesis defense on perspectives of child-nature relationships in early learning curriculum frameworks was very successful, and she is excited to continue her work with the ECCRC.



DR. JOAN TURNER,
RETIRED PROFESSOR EMERITUS
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

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Nahal is the Research Coordinator for Mobilizing Innovative Models in Early Childhood Education and Care for Newcomer Families and Children. Nahal started her PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies at Dalhousie University in September 2022. Her ability to balance school and work is inspiring to us all.

ECCRC Team



MILENA PIMENTEL,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

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Milena assists with multiple projects at the ECCRC. She spends most her time working on the "Amplifying the Voices of Black Families and Educators" project and with the Pyramid Model Evaluation project. Milena is managing this work while also completing her degree in Child and Youth Study at MSVU.



DR. JEANNIE LARSON,
DOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

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Jeannie joined our team in September 2022 as the Doctoral Research Associate to assist with the Atlantic Connections work and the data analysis for the Pyramid Model Evaluation project. Jeannie recently received her PhD from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. She brings to our team 8 years of mixed-methods research experience in early childhood education and social work



HEATHER PODANOVITCH,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

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Heather is a Research Assistant at the ECCRC. She works on the CELEBRATE Feeding project and the Numeracy and Literacy project. Heather has recently graduated from MSVU's Applied Human Nutrition program. In October she will be starting her dietetic internship at NSHA alongside working part-time at ECCRC.



OLGA LEVIN,
DATA ANALYST

olgalevin@msvu.ca

Olga joined our team in April 2023, primarily working on the Celebrate Feeding project. She is also involved in a scoping review for numeracy and literacy learning through play project. Olga holds a bachelor's degree in nutritional science and a master's degree in applied human nutrition from MSVU



RANDI CUMMINGS,
RESEARCH COORDINATOR

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Randi is the Research Coordinator for the Numeracy and Literacy project. She did such an incredible job with the project and helped organize a successful presentation for the Pre-primary educators professional development day in October 2022. Randi also works on the Pyramid Model Evaluation project. Randi is our go-to-gal for training new team members in anything related to data analysis.



JULIE CAMPBELL,
DATA ANALYST

Julie.Campbell17@msvu.ca

Julie is the Data Analyst for 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.

ECCRC Team



JANICE OSEI-ESSAH,
KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION
COORDINATOR

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Janice joined our team in February 2023. She has an MA in Communication studies and a BA in History and Theatre Arts from the University of Ghana. Janice is currently enrolled in the MA communication program at the Mount. Janice will be assisting on the Connections 2023 project.



HANNAH COSMAN,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

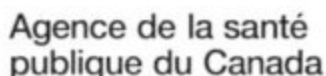
Hannahcosman@msvu.ca

Hannah is a research assistant working on the Pyramid Model Evaluation analyzing data. She has been working at the ECCRC since April 2023. Hannah has a Bachelor of Science with a double major in biology and psychology from Dalhousie University.

Stay Tuned

More to come from the ECCRC throughout 2023. We look forward to sharing the results of our ongoing work and our new research directions. The next newsletter is planned for first quarter of 2024.

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.

Our Website

