

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 Kijipuktuk (Halifax), part of Mi'kma'ki, the unceded ancestral territory which remains the homeland of the Mi'kmaq Nation.

We 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.

Message from Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac

Happy spring to our partners! Our team has continued our collaborative work while also embracing the winter season (the picture to the right is from our recent team trip to the Halifax Oval).

We have completed a number of new research products - see below for a graphic report for our numeracy and literacy project and an environmental scan of child care for newcomer families. We also received the good news of successful research proposals focused on knowledge mobilization. Our SSHRC Connections Grant will support early childhood connections across Atlantic Canada focused on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Our CIHR Dissemination and Planning Grant will enable a family advisory committee to inform our outreach through social media.

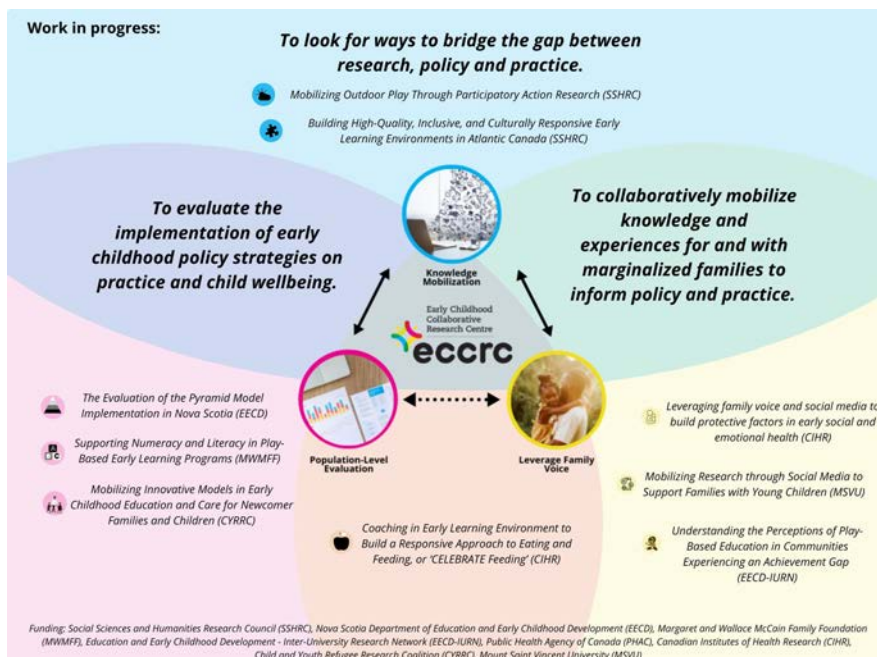


Please take a read below and get in touch if you have any questions about our work.



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

An informative piece in The Conversation Canada by Dr. Christine McLean and Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac.

[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 learning environments;
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 Learning Environments

SUPPORTING NUMERACY AND LITERACY IN PLAY-BASED EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

In the last six months the numeracy and literacy team has presented the initial results of the study to the Pre-primary sector of Nova Scotia during their Provincial Professional Development Day. We have also created a graphic report, a two-page summary and published them on our website (please follow the links below). We are currently in the process of writing a paper based on the findings of this study. All of these deliverables have featured photos taken by the educators and we aimed to highlight participant voice in our analyses. We thank the participants of this study for their valuable contributions.



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!

With a focus on newcomer families



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

Our research on newcomer families has continued to expand through a project funded by the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (as part of a SSHRC Partnership Grant). We continued data collection with key informant interviews/surveys to understand further how organizations support newcomer families and children through child care. At the beginning of 2023, [a report](#) was shared with the participants, and findings were shared through presentations, including in partnership with the CMAS conference (an organization that focuses on caring for immigrant and refugee children). We will also share findings at Metropolis Conference in Ottawa through a poster presentation in March 2023. The next and final step for the team is to publish the study findings in an academic journal.

Knowledge Mobilization

[MOBILIZING INNOVATIVE MODELS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE FOR NEWCOMER FAMILIES AND CHILDREN: A PAN-CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN](#)

With a focus on Black and African Nova Scotian families

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF BLACK FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

The team has been working on Knowledge Mobilization since the last newsletter. In the fall of 2022, our team met with Mayor Mike Savage to share the results of our study. Following this meeting, our team facilitated a discussion with the Halifax Parks and Recreation Management team. In November our team was also a guest speaker for the Child Safety Link Webinar series, which was a part of their celebration of 20 years in injury prevention (see link below). Lastly, three papers have been submitted and are under review as a part of this project. Collectively, we have been brainstorming ways to build on this project.



Knowledge Mobilization

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF BLACK FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS: CHALLENGING ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENTS - COMMUNITY REPORT

CLS SPEAKERS SERIES- Outdoor Risky Play for African Nova Scotian Children.

Child Well-Being

Through responsive feeding

CELEBRATE FEEDING (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

Since the last newsletter, the CELEBRATE feeding team has completed baseline data collection at our participating child care centres. This consisted of director, educator and parent surveys, two-day observations at centres, and focus groups and interviews with directors and educators. The results from these are currently being analysed, and our baseline research papers are being drafted. In our centres, our nutrition coaches, Elizabeth Dickson (NS) and Margaret Young (PEI), are now carrying out virtual and in-person coaching, providing resources and advise to help centres reach their goals to help achieve a more responsive feeding environment.



Below is our CELEBRATE Feeding concept



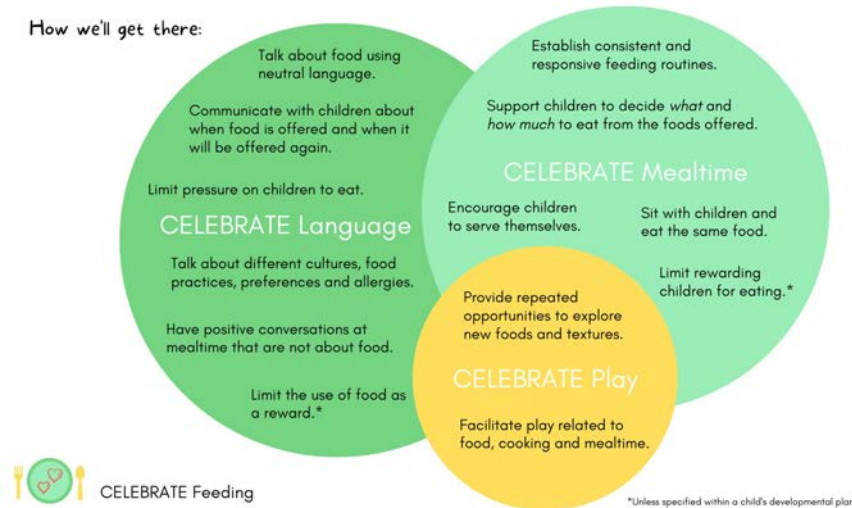
What we hope to accomplish:

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

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

Knowledge Mobilization

Responsive Feeding Environments in Childcare Settings: A Scoping Review of the Factors Influencing Implementation and Sustainability

- [JOURNAL ARTICLE](#)

Through social and emotional learning

EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PYRAMID MODEL IN NOVA SCOTIA

Our implementation evaluation continues with the Pyramid Model. The 2020-21 Executive Summary report was recently released and is available to view on our website. In December, our evaluation team conducted a province-wide survey to understand the current state of early childhood professionals' well-being, reaching out to early childhood educators (ECEs) being coached in the Pyramid Model and those who were not, along with child care directors, owners/operators, program supports and Pyramid Model Inclusion Coaches. We received responses from 429 early childhood professionals and are in the process of analyzing the survey data. Currently, we are preparing an evaluation survey for the Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services (NSECDIS) to distribute to Pyramid Model Leadership Teams twice a year going forward. Our team is preparing to write a qualitative paper based on interviews with ECEs being coached in Pyramid Model and Inclusion Coaches on their experience of practice-based coaching throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Coming up, we are planning how we will move forward to evaluate the family engagement aspect of the implementation and working on an annual report.



Knowledge Mobilization

[NOVA SCOTIA PYRAMID MODEL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT 2020-21, AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH and FRENCH.](#)

Through outdoor play

MOBILIZING OUTDOOR PLAY THROUGH

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Data collection for the Mobilizing Outdoor Play project has been ongoing since September 2022. The project started with a focus group with four early childhood educators (ECEs), followed by the research coordinator making weekly visits to the participating child care centre during outdoor play time to build relationships with children and ECEs, which is ongoing. In December, we conducted go-along interviews recorded with GoPro cameras worn on the researcher's and participants' chest harnesses, following ECEs and children carrying out their typical routine in the outdoor play area. A survey was distributed to the child care centre's stakeholders (i.e., staff, parents, and board members) in November 2022, receiving 36 responses. Our team is currently preparing a visual report based on the survey and focus group preliminary summaries to share with the participating child care centre. In Spring 2023, we will continue to collect and share data to inform outdoor play with this child care.



Building Connections for Early Childhood Development

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

Our team recently received a SSHRC Connection grant focused on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in early learning and child care. This project will consist of 3 springtime virtual seminars on quality, inclusion, and culturally responsive practices in early childhood education environments as well as a series of in-person events focused on these themes in Halifax later in the year.



This connections work is in collaboration with researchers at Mount Saint Vincent University, Dalhousie University, University of Prince Edward Island, Memorial University, University of New Brunswick, and McMaster University; early childhood education professional associations in PEI (ECDA of PEI), Nova Scotia (AECENS), and Newfoundland (AECENL), and other community and governmental partners. Congratulations to all of our partners!

FAMILY VOICE AND SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Our team recently received two grants to build a new area of research; focused on the use of social media to support families with children's social and emotional health.

Our MSVU Standard Grant will describe the current landscape of social media influencers on Instagram by conducting an environmental scan and interviewing families with young children to identify priority knowledge needs and useful social media strategies/platforms. The results of the research will directly inform our CIHR Dissemination and Planning grant which co-design of a social media strategy and help to inform our understanding of the landscape and use of social media among families with young children.

Through a planning and dissemination grant, we will co-design a social media strategy with a diverse family advisory committee with representatives from across Atlantic Canada. The co-designed social media strategy will increase access to evidence-based information that meets the identified needs of diverse families related to early social and emotional health. We also seek to identify future research questions and priorities for families to support early social and emotional health.

Community Spotlight

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

We are grateful to our community partner, the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), and their early childhood educator (ECE) team for their support of our projects in the past couple of years.



ISANS supported us in recruiting participants for our photovoice project with newcomer families and has been connecting us to organizations across Canada that deliver child care to newcomer families

To learn more about the services offered at ISANS please visit: isans.ca

Partner Spotlight

Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention

Services

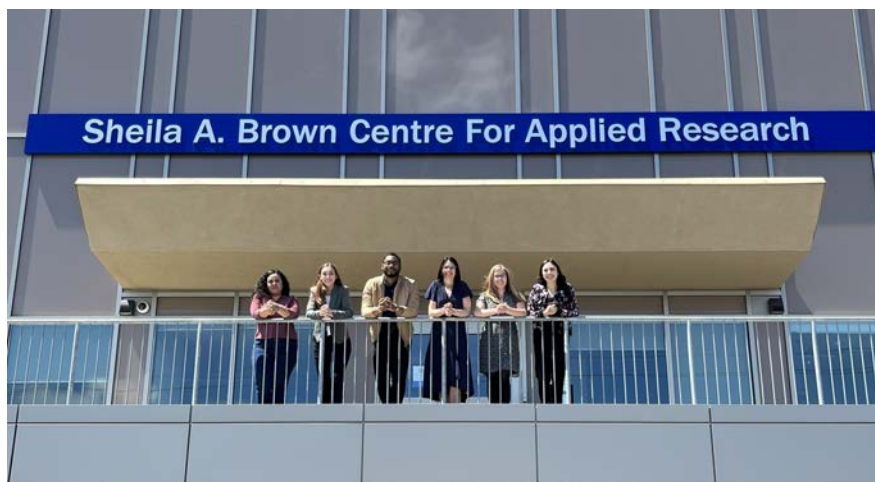
In this issue, we also want to highlight our incredible partners at Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services (NSECDIS). NSECDIS provides province-wide specialized services to families of young children between birth and school entry and is funded by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. More recently, the Pyramid Model program transitioned from a Pilot to a Program and is now housed under the umbrella of services offered by NSECDIS.



NSECDIS is partnered with the ECCRC through our evaluation of the implementation of the Pyramid Model program within child care centres and pre-primary programs in Nova Scotia. NSECDIS offers services across 8 regions from 30 locations. Pyramid Model is available in all 8 regions and is based within 9 of the NSECDIS locations. Pyramid Model services are offered in both English and French. NSECDIS is committed to expanding their reach of support to educators through practice-based coaching of the Pyramid Model, to support educators capacity to support children's social and emotional development.

To learn more about the services offered at NSECDIS please visit: <https://www.nsecdis.ca/>

ECCRC Team



**SARAH CALDWELL,
RESEARCH
COORDINATOR**
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Sarah is 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. Sarah has done a fantastic job keeping the CELEBRATE work rolling in Nova Scotia.



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



**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



**ROBYN ASHLEY,
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Robyn is the Research Coordinator for the Outdoor Play project and the Pyramid Model Evaluation



**NAHAL FAKHARI,
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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

feeding practices in their child care.



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.



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 is currently completing her doctoral program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. She is exploring the validity of a test of teacher candidate competency in supporting multilingual learners in Ontario schools.

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.



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. While working at the ECCRC, Heather is also attending classes at MSVU in the Applied Human Nutrition program.



SARAH PERRY, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

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Sarah is a Research Assistant on the CELEBRATE Feeding project. While working at the ECCRC, Sarah is also completing her Bachelor of Arts in Child and Youth Study at MSVU and working on her honour's thesis which is related to the CELEBRATE Feeding work.

Studies at Dalhousie University in September 2022. Her ability to balance school and work is inspiring to us all.



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

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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.



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.



Stay Tuned

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

Thank you to our generous funders and supporters:



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada



researchNS

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:

