

Recognition

We, the Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre (ECCRC) team, acknowledge that the ECCRC at Mount Saint Vincent University is in Kijipuktuk, part of Mi'kma'ki, the unceded ancestral territory which remains the homeland of the Mi'kmaq Nation. This territory is covered by the Covenant Chain of Treaties of Peace and Friendship signed between 1725 and 1779. These treaties are affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada and recognize Aboriginal Title. We are all Treaty people and have a responsibility to uphold these treaties through relationships of peace and friendship. We pay respect to the knowledge embedded in the Indigenous custodians of the lands and waters and to the Elders, past, present, and future.

We also recognize that we are a part of Mount Saint Vincent University, established by the Sisters of Charity. Mount Saint Vincent University has apologized for its role in residential schools through the Sisters of Charity, supported both the Shubenacadie and Cranbrook Residential Schools. It is necessary for us to reflect on our past, identify our privilege as settlers who have benefited from colonialism, and consider how we can move toward reconciliation.

Continuous Learning and Action

At the ECCRC, we recognize that we still have much learning to do toward truth and reconciliation. As a team, we are engaging in further education to better understand the history of the residential school system and its lasting effects. Additionally, we need to continuously reflect on and adapt our work to advance our commitment toward truth and reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. To do this, we have created space for our team to reflect, discuss, and plan for action through bi-weekly meetings. We will also be actively creating opportunities to learn from and work with Indigenous people and communities to ensure our learning is translated into action.

The ECCRC is committed to advocating for children's well-being. We recognize that Indigenous children are more likely to experience intergenerational trauma as a result of the legacy of colonialism and residential schools. Therefore, we understand the importance of high-quality, inclusive, and culturally responsive early childhood environments and advocate for Indigenous children's access to such supportive learning environments, to enhance the positive support and experiences for the community.

Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

While we continue our journey of intentional learning of the history of Turtle Island—particularly around the colonial systems of violence which have and continue to contribute to the violence and harm perpetuated against Indigenous people—we will continue discussing and implementing actionable ways that we can work toward truth and reconciliation. We have been reflecting on our own worldviews and examining the privilege we have as settlers that have resulted from colonization. We will continue to document the process of our conversations around reconciliation, and how we continue to decolonize our mindsets through these conversations.

Our team recognizes the rich cultures, knowledge, and wisdom of Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. Through our shared roles as settlers at the ECCRC, we are committed to uplifting and amplifying the voices of Indigenous communities. Over the last year, our team has been eager to learn more by

participating in sessions that are delivered by Indigenous peoples and we appreciate the opportunity to learn from them. We are committed to learning and will continue to look for opportunities like these.

We are also providing our social media platform to spark conversation about our collective responsibilities. As a part of our ongoing outreach to families and early childhood professionals, we will continue to share resources related to early childhood to help our followers in their journey toward reconciliation. We are also committed to sharing our social media platform to amplify the voices of diverse stories. We will further use the power and privilege we possess as academics in our collaborations with politicians and policymakers to demand further action.

We are committed to this journey towards truth and reconciliation. To hold ourselves accountable, we will continue to be open and transparent about the steps we are taking. We will continue to share our reflections and learnings with you. We will also be reevaluating our work continually.

Sincerely,

The ECCRC Team

Glossary

Intergenerational Trauma: Due to the traumatic history of stressors that Indigenous communities have experienced across Turtle Island, this has led to the lasting adverse intergenerational challenges on Indigenous communities physical and mental health and wellbeing (Bombay A., Matheson K., Anisman H., 2009).

Treaties: Treaties are agreements made between Government of Canada, Indigenous groups and often provinces and territories that define ongoing rights and obligations on all sides (Government of Canada, 2023).

Truth and Reconciliation: Reconciliation refers to the establishing and maintaining mutually respectful and reciprocal relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This requires a collective awareness of the past, the harm it has caused Indigenous communities, and action to change behavior to build the future by learning from the best, and doing better in the future.

Turtle Island: For some Indigenous peoples, Turtle Island refers to the continent of North America. Indigenous oral stories tell the story of a turtle holding the world on its back, therefore, the turtle is considered an icon of life.

Residential Schools: Indigenous children were stripped from their homes and families and sent to residential schools by Canada against their will. Canada's objective was to break their link to their culture and identity and assimilate them to the Canadian mainstream.