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**Appointed by the Board of Directors on an interim basis to fill vacancy*

Interim Coordinator's Update

The AECEO has had a busy and exciting fall! Our **Professional Pay and Decent Work Campaign** is moving full-steam ahead and we continue to fight for professional wages and decent working conditions for all ECEs in Ontario. Our 5 Decent Work Communities of Practice were busy during the Week of Action and ECE Appreciation Day, holding events across the province. We had library art gallery displays and obstacle courses, raffles and appreciation dinners, great celebrations that highlight the important work of ECEs and early years staff in our province.

We also had municipal elections this fall – which brought ECEs, families and community members together to engage with their local politicians and candidates and talk about the value of the early years. We've set our **advocacy** sights on 2019 and are mobilizing ECEs and the community to get involved in Ontario's budget talks - we want to see our government invest more in early years programs and staff. We will be organizing webinars to get ready to talk to MPP's, share our stories, and tell them why we need more funding for the early years in the 2019 budget.

We've also been so grateful to continue our work with the **Guiding Committee on Truth and Reconciliation**. We are just beginning our journey with reconciliation and are privileged to have diverse perspectives and voices supporting and guiding this learning. We look forward to sharing more with you as we continue this important process.

Looking ahead, we will continue to share our '**Humans of ECE**' campaign and encourage you all to take the opportunity to contribute your stories – we've had a great response with over 400 submissions since October 2018! It's an easy way to get involved in advocacy and highlight what makes you unique as an educator, while making visible the challenges we still need our government to address.

We have also convened an ECE led Steering Committee to shape and guide the planning of our provincial **FDK Summit**. We will bring together ECEs, teachers, staff, administrators, and stakeholders from across the prov-

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Issue: Fall 2019

Submission deadline: June 1, 2019

Please email manuscript submission to info@aeceo.ca

Author Guidelines

Subject parameters (unless a special issue is announced): Early Childhood Policy, Early Childhood Practice, Early Childhood Pedagogy, Social Justice in ECE, Professionalism, Disability and Inclusion in ECE, Environmentalism in ECE, Collaborative Practices, Diversity in ECE, Action Research in ECE, Early Childhood Classroom Issues at the Program Level, Pedagogical documentation, Engaging How does Learning Happen?

Form and Style

Style should be consistent with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition). The journal uses Canadian spelling; please consult the Oxford Canadian Dictionary. The editors welcome manuscripts between 5000-8000 words.

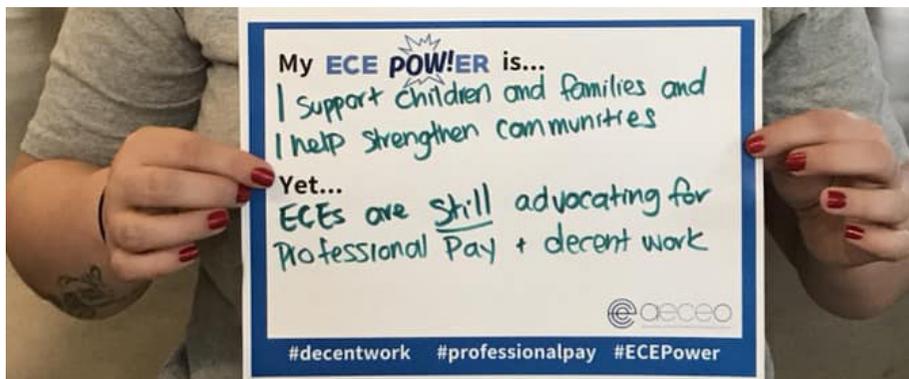
Please email info@aeceo.ca for the full submission guidelines

Please note that you can submit manuscripts following the subject parameters at any time to be considered for the peer review process, please send manuscripts in Microsoft Word format to info@aeceo.ca. You can also submit general content articles (non peer reviewed) at anytime to be considered for publication in the eceLink magazine, please send general content to info@aeceo.ca

ince to begin to build relationships and solutions to the ongoing challenges in the FDK program. Look for more information to come, as the FDK Summit will happen in early July 2019!

Moving ahead together we are going to continue to influence positive change in the early years sector – remember, we are stronger together!

Alana Powell, RECE



The AECEO would like to acknowledge & thank the following contributors:

Beatriz Alvarez

Debbie Burger

Natalie Crisante

Elaine Da Silva

Kim Hiscott

Nicole Land

Shannon Murphy

Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw

Lindsay Sparkes

Humans of ECE participants

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ABOVE GRAPHIC

Humans of ECE Template

ECELINK DESIGN & LAYOUT

kim nelson design

AECEO Welcomes Executive Coordinator: Rachel Lafferty

The AECEO Board of Directors is very pleased to introduce Rachel Lafferty as the AECEO's Executive Coordinator.

Rachel Lafferty is a Registered Early Childhood Educator with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Health Science and a Bachelor of Education degree with an Ontario College of Teachers registration in addition to a Master of Education graduate degree with a specialization in Distance Education. She was the first member of her immediate and extended family to earn postsecondary credentials and did so while owning and operating a small business full-time. Rachel has experience teaching in early learning, elementary school, and college settings. While coordinating an Indigenous Early Childhood Education program for nearly seven years, she wrote ECE curriculum with an Indigenous focus and established successful partnerships with various stakeholders and community organizations. This included the establishment of a partnership with Contact North to provide an online ECE program that would allow students who would otherwise not have the opportunity, due to geographic and other barriers, to earn their ECE credential. Rachel has extensive experience teaching children and adults in both face-to-face and online classrooms in addition to part-time ECE Professorships in the college system. She believes strongly in professional advocacy and is looking forward to working with the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario as Executive Coordinator. Ms. Lafferty currently resides in Peterborough with her spouse and family.



Farewell to Alana Powell

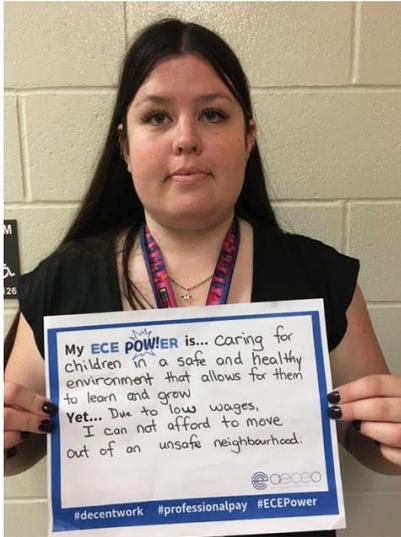
The Board would like to thank Alana Powell for her outstanding work in the role of Interim Coordinator of the AECEO.

Alana stepped up to taking on a temporary role at the AECEO and brought with her an intimate understanding of the child care landscape in Ontario as well as an extensive background in community-building and leadership with early childhood educators. Her passion and dedication to the early childhood sector has been a huge asset to the AECEO over the past 5 months as she has led and powered the Association's work. We wish her all the best in her next journey. Thank you Alana!

"It has been a great pleasure and privilege to have had the opportunity to work with the AECEO as Interim Coordinator. I'm truly astounded by the the staff, board, partners, and all the volunteers who contribute to the amazing work happening at the AECEO and all the ECEs across Ontario raising their voice for change. While I will miss it greatly, I am very excited to take on a new journey as my family and I welcome a new baby in the next few weeks. I am excited to welcome Rachel Lafferty as Executive Coordinator, and look forward to the diverse experience and passion she will bring to her work at the AECEO."

Alana Powell
Interim Coordinator
Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

Humans of ECE... Share your short story



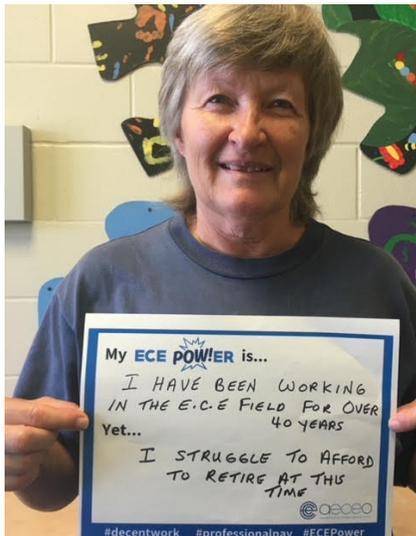
My ECE Power is... caring for children in a safe and healthy environment that allows for them to learn and grow.

Yet... due to low wages, I cannot afford to move out of an unsafe neighborhood.



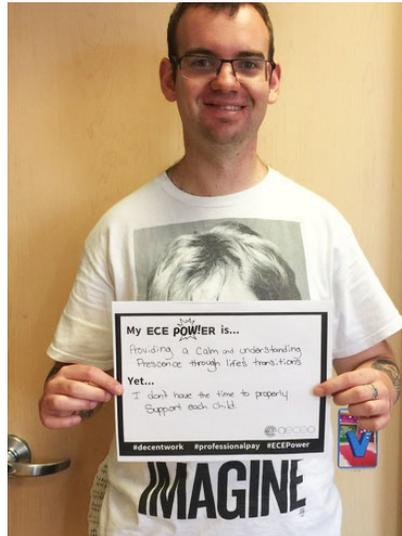
My ECE Power is... educating and caring for young learners.

Yet... the government does not support/fund a professional wage!



My ECE Power is... I have been working in the ECE field for over 40 years.

Yet... I struggle to afford to retire at this time.

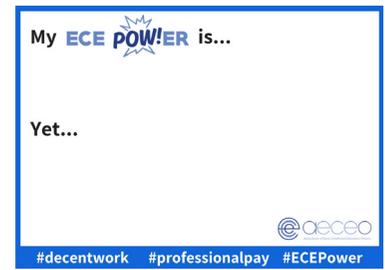


My ECE Power is... providing a calm and understanding presence through life's transitions.

Yet... I don't have the time to properly support each child.

Humans of ECE is an action designed to raise the profile of ECEs and early years staff, while also highlighting some of the challenges faced in the sector. Inspired by the campaign - Humans of Basic Income, our goal is to flood social media with your images and stories.

In sharing your short story, think about what makes you special as an ECE or early years staff and what challenges you may face related to this. You can download the template on our website <https://bit.ly/2QG0HSs>



Write your short story and take a picture of yourself holding it and send it to us at info.aecceo@gmail.com

We believe that ECEs and early years staff are the heart of the Professional Pay and Decent Work campaign. Share your story and let's raise our collective voice.

#ECE POWER



The Kindergarten Partnership: From Vision to Action

An Exercise in Team Building and Reflection

Natalie Crisante

...make building relationships as important as building projects. We have more to learn from the people we work with than we could ever hope to teach them.

Mortenson and Relin, 2006

An effective Kindergarten Program reflects the belief that young children are capable and competent learners. Consistent with this, is the belief that *educators too*, are competent, capable, curious, and rich in experience. They are knowledgeable, caring, reflective, and resourceful professionals, that use their talents to create engaging environments and experiences that foster children's growth and learning as they begin to discover the fullness of their potential.

The Kindergarten program identifies *both* educators as key to children's growth in learning at school. The Teacher and Early Childhood Educator have complementary skills that enable them to create nurturing and stimulating learning environments that support the needs of all children (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Each Kindergarten team reflects the uniqueness of its members, and as such it becomes difficult to define different role responsibilities within the scope of the Kindergarten learning environment. Within an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and open communication, Teachers and Early Childhood Educators work together to plan and implement the Kindergarten program in order to maintain a healthy physical, emotional, and social learning environment.

In Kindergarten classrooms with an educator team, it is assumed that they benefit equally from a collaborative and reflective partnership. Such collaboration

Making full use of play-oriented activities, the two professionals keep track of each child's progress in sound out words, practicing their letters and developing other skills. Throughout the day, they are in a running conversation about what they need to do to support the children's growth. The relationship is built on mutual respect and communication.

Lewington, 2010

takes effort and a commitment to one's own professional growth, and the development and well-being of the children in their care. Teachers and Early Childhood Educators equally have knowledge and skills that benefit the learning environment and it is this complementary relationship upon which The Kindergarten Program was founded.

Challenges vs Opportunity

Unfortunately the reality is different than the theory. While most partnerships are complementary, some struggle in ways that impede the collaborative relationship. Our Kindergarten educators are competent and committed to their vocation. The reality of working partnerships however, presents daily challenges that can affect one's well-being and confidence. It was in listening to these Kindergarten teams and taking note of their challenges, that the Early Years Student Achievement Team at the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board recognized an opportunity to capitalize on the shared vision our Teachers and Early Childhood Educators had for their learning environments.

Our Early Years leadership team took an inquiry stance in examining how to support our educators in working through the challenges. We discovered that in understanding how to work with others, we first have to understand what works within ourselves. This discovery shaped

the professional development opportunity offered to *all* Kindergarten teams throughout the Board.

The Vision

Team development is based upon teamwork skills and team process skills. These process skills involve team goal setting, roles, protocols and effective meeting skills (Tozer, 2012). The Ministry of Education's Program Policy Memorandum 159, "Collaborative Professionalism" outlines the shared commitment of all Educators to a culture of collaborative professionalism in Ontario's education system. This commitment is grounded in:

- building a shared understanding of collaborative professionalism;
- transforming classroom culture;
- optimizing conditions for learning, working, and leading;
- recognition of, and building on, the strengths of all individuals to support professional growth;
- professional learning that supports and enables the conditions for student achievement and student and staff well-being;
- a trusting environment where educators create the necessary conditions that enable learning with, and from each other.

(Ministry of Education, 2016)

As the Kindergarten Program identifies the educators as key to child learning at school, little attention is paid to the development of the Kindergarten team itself. Barriers to successful team collaboration exist within all schools and include: a lack of trust between educators; miscommunication; unrealistic expectations; time limitations; blurred roles; and additional school responsibilities that interfere with time for collaboration and planning.

Action: Our Impact in the Early Years

The barriers are real, and can pose a significant threat to the learning poten-

tial in Kindergarten classrooms and the well-being of the educators. In response to the needs of our educators and concern for the impact on early learning, we needed to change the narrative and refocus the vision. With a commitment to high quality learning programs for our students, and responsive to research based professional development for our educators, we sought to create a professional learning opportunity that allowed Kindergarten teams to explore their personal strengths and tendencies and examine their professional standards of practice within the context of the Kindergarten Program and partnership.

All Kindergarten teams were released in small groups for the half day session of professional reflection and learning. The session opened with the question, "What impact do you want to have on your students and fellow educators?" This question grounded all learning as it is our intended impact as early years educators that brought us to this vocation in the first place.

The question revealed more similarities than differences. All educators regardless of role, identified similar goals for their impact: collaboration; trust; communication; honesty; respect; safe learning environment; love of learning; etc.

Learning Goal

The professional learning goal was to identify shared values among team members to support a shared vision for their Kindergarten learning environment. The learning environment was referred to for this context as the working and learning conditions within the classroom. We established that before we can begin to know how to work with another, we need to reflect on what works within ourselves. This involved all participants completing the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument to identify individual preferences, tendencies and characteristics. Once participants completed the survey, they had an opportunity to reflect on their personal tendencies and characteristics in light of how they affect, and are affected by others. These discussions opened eyes and doors to greater conversations about

how perceptions and assumptions can hinder positive working relationships.

Putting it into Context

With a new theory of mind and awareness of self, educators examined their role in the Kindergarten learning environment specifically in the areas of:

- self-regulation and learning engagement
- learning through play and inquiry
- assessment and evaluation

Educators reflected on their newly identified strengths and weaknesses and their application in these areas. Teams then discussed how each of their strengths and weaknesses could complement each other to yield efficient and effective practice in the classroom. Through examining current practice and identifying barriers, teams were supported as they worked through how they could work together to mitigate the challenges and remove the barriers. We sought to create a safe environment whereby courageous conversations were encouraged, and differences were celebrated.

Positive educator interaction was identified as an essential factor in effective teaching and powerful learning. Educators were encouraged to focus attention and energy on the opportunities that two professional educators provide in Kindergarten in these areas, over the challenges that exist beyond our control.

Educators worked through the rationale for not having a checklist of roles for each professional. Our goal as early years educators is to provide healthy, safe, inclusive and welcoming learning environments that help each child reach the fullness of their potential. The question of how specific duty lists support this goal brought the discussion to the more relevant question of how we can capitalize on the strengths and talents of each educator.

The Elephant in the Room

When discussing the responsibilities that Teachers and Early Childhood Educators share within a Kindergarten

classroom, the issue of fairness came to light. The reality of the job dynamic is the discrepancy in salary and work day between the two professions. There needs to be mutual respect for each other in establishing norms for the classroom including responsibilities and expectations that might occur outside of the scope of salary and/or work day for the RECE. While the inequities that exist are beyond educator control, ongoing open communication is necessary. Our sessions brought forth the importance of each team member sharing not only a vision for the classroom, but also an understanding and value for each other's capacity within their roles. It is through this understanding that we can begin to fairly balance the work flow and classroom responsibility.

Moving Forward

When sessions were completed, educators were thankful for the experience and the opportunity to reflect and re-evaluate. It was agreed that the pace at which we work often enables us to lose sight of what is necessary and important. These sessions brought attention back to the partnership and the direct impact that it has on our students – positively and negatively. We work with the most vulnerable members of the population and must be ever mindful of our professional interactions and what we are modelling for our students.

Conversations continued long after the sessions ended. Discussions were carried back to schools as educators sought to include Principals in exploring opportunities for team planning and collaboration. Lines of communication have opened up as educators continue to navigate the new Kindergarten landscape. These sessions could not remove all of the challenges facing educators in public education. The Kindergarten partnership is relatively new, and as education continues to evolve, it is important that educators not lose sight of their value as

professionals in their individual role, nor the impact of a mutually respectful working relationship. Recognition of, and respect for, what each professional brings to the classroom partnership must be present for educators to realize the fullness of their potential; as individuals and teams, in creating safe and dynamic learning environments for the students in their care.

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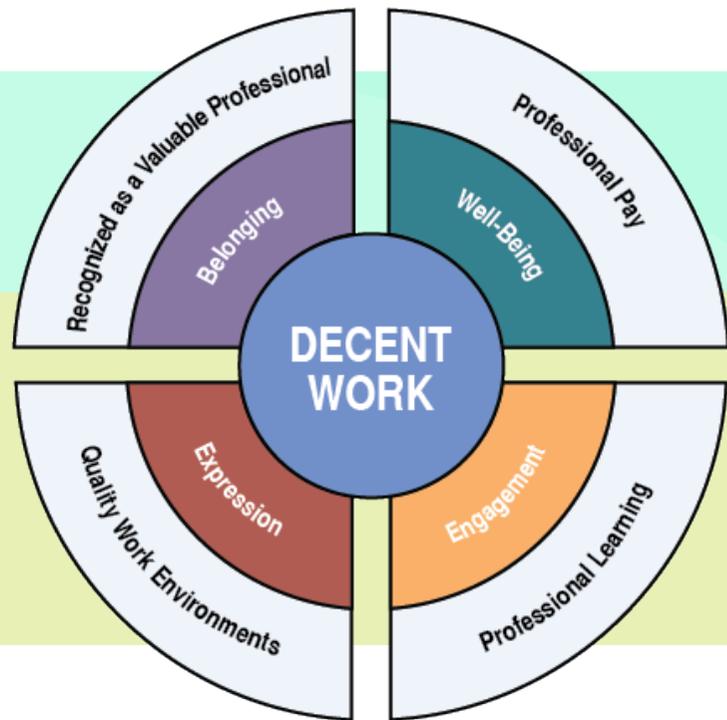
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Natalie Crisante, BES(Hons), BEd(Hons), OCT

Natalie Crisante is an Ontario Certified Teacher with the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board. She has worked as a classroom teacher in Kindergarten to Grade 3, as well as being a Certified Reading Recovery teacher. Committed to supporting educators and students in realizing the fullness of their potential, Natalie is currently serving as Early Years Student Achievement Consultant with the HWCDSB.

PROFILES OF DECENT WORK



Introduction

The AECEO's believes that decent work for Ontario's Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and early years staff is a foundational pillar in building a better future for children and families in Ontario. In our Professional Pay and Decent Work campaign, we have been working to address the long-standing issue of low and inequitable compensation and challenging working conditions for RECEs in Ontario. This campaign calls on the government to fund professional pay for all RECEs in Ontario regardless of where they work. In this journey, we have also heard success stories, where early years programs do provide decent work. It is important we highlight these stories, where decent work is alive and at the heart of organizations and programs, and staff feel valued and appreciated. We would like to thank all of the RECEs who shared their stories of decent work, and Kim Hiscott RECE, from Andrew Fleck Children's Services for sharing her perspective as an employer. If you would like to share your story of decent work, please email us at info.aeceo@gmail.com.

ECE POW!ER

[RECEs share their experience of Decent Work

In the fall of 2018, in support of our Professional Pay and Decent Work initiative, we reached out to RECEs through e-blasts and social media, requesting that those who were interested in sharing their experience of decent work contact us. Thank you to all who responded to our questions!

Question #1 – Why did you respond to this request?

I responded to this request because I wanted to share with others the importance of what we do. I want to, if anything, empower RECEs. I wanted to share my passion for what I do every day. **CM, Hamilton**

I responded because my workplace has given me great opportunities, not only professionally but personally as well. I am able to better my education through paid PD. We as RECEs struggle with getting *recognition* for the great work we do with families but also within the community. My workplace gives me a sense of belonging. **SB, Waterloo**

Question #2 - How do you define Decent Work?

I believe decent work is a right that all humans who choose to enter the workforce have. It is a workplace where people are physically and emotionally comfortable yet are still challenged. I believe a decent work place has competent, compassionate human resources available and able to offer support when exceptionalities arise for the employee. **KH, London**

Safe working conditions, stable funding and salaries in proportion to the amount of responsibility and education. Advocacy for improved workplace conditions and better salaries should focus on not-for-profit models of child care so appropriate money is going to staff salaries. Opportunities for professional development and time off the floor to complete responsibilities. Unionized workplaces. **JS, Ottawa**

Question #3 – What is your workplace doing to provide you with Decent Work?

My workplace has provided all educators with opportunities to attend personal development not only in Hamilton, but other part of the province as well as Italy! We are able to share our knowledge and create learning opportunities with other educators. We are also building our team mentorships amongst each other, allowing educators to share their passions and build a learning community. **CM, Hamilton**

Life Long Learning is one of our core values. We have the support around us to push us and support us to the next place on our learning journey. That support comes in the form of mentors, peers to collaborate with, non human resources such as books, technology and time. **KH, London**

Very good pay, benefits and pension, professional development opportunities, strong management/leadership, non-contact time to focus on documentation, communication and professional development. **JS, Ottawa**

Question #4 – How has having Decent Work impacted your life?

Improved workplace satisfaction, made me feel secure for retirement, allowed me to access benefits to address health. **JS, Ottawa**

I feel safe in my position but also feel that we have a great management system that gives us the opportunity to advocate. **SB, Waterloo**

Question #5 – What do you think has to happen for all ECEs in Ontario to have Decent Work?

I believe our leadership must feel confident in questioning the status quo. We need to research and take inspiration from outside of the child care sector. We need to empower our educators to be critical thinkers; when we change our thinking we change our practice. To promote self reflection and create a community that learns together. **KH, London**

A national child care plan that has secured funding and decent conditions for ECEs so we don't have a continued cycle of funding cuts. A move to a fully not-for-profit model of child care where workers salaries benefit and ECEs don't have to continually subsidize child care costs by not demanding wage increases in order to keep parent fees down. Recognition of value of ECE work. **JS, Ottawa**

To gain professional recognition. RECE's struggle to find an identity within Canada. We have a struggle to be looked at *more than just babysitters*. I feel that educating parents and the community that we are Educators, would play a big role in giving us the credit we deserve. **SB, Waterloo**

Interview with Kim Hiscott RECE, Executive Director, Andrew Fleck Children's Services



How does your organization define Decent Work?

We define decent work as engaged employees who are appropriately compensated for their work and are provided respectful balance between work and family responsibilities

What is your organization/workplace doing to provide employees with Decent Work?

To keep employees engaged we use a number of different strategies. We provide interesting projects, opportunities to participate on external and internal committees, and we ensure effective communication (agency meetings, team meetings, emails) that demonstrates their value as professionals. We also ensure we have policies for a purpose, non-contact time, stretch assignments, career assignments, transparent hiring process, employee surveys, internal professional learning and employer supported external PD, performance review structure, and a process that supports parent/employee engagement. Through all of this, we try to demonstrate that we value our employees as professionals. We also have a variety of ECEs in many different roles and we value and prioritize opportunities for growth within their career with us.

To ensure our early years staff are appropriately compensated we provide a transparent salary scale, for ECEs in ratio the \$2.00 Wage Enhancement Grant is added to all hours employees are paid by AFCS - including all paid time away on special leave/personal days, 10+ vacation days and sick leave that is less than a two

week consecutive period. These paid away hours not eligible for the funding, but we make a point to ensure our staff have access to these benefits. We've also absorbed the difference between the funded amount for benefits and our actual benefit costs, and made a commitment to a clear job evaluation process through our HR Manager in partnership with CUPE, including regular salary reviews.

To support balancing work and family responsibilities we offer overtime for after work activities, 10 Personal and Special Leave days, sick benefits including long-term disability, and employees start at 20 holidays

How has providing Decent Work impacted your employees' lives?

Our employees report feeling viewed as professionals, which increases their feelings of accomplishment and success. This translates to fewer challenges with recruitment and retention, and more effective employees. At Andrew Fleck, employees are empowered and shown respect to make decisions in their programming with families and the children. Educators have program budgets that they can use for their own classroom needs. This ensures they have responsibility, control, choice and a sense of ownership of their program. And for example when calls for proposals come out we often engage with ECEs about what we should apply- we know they are the experts on their needs and we want to ensure they have decision making power. We also celebrate ECEs that leave us for further leadership roles, as we feel we have contributed to their abilities

and their success. We do pay close attention to lateral position moves, and try to find out from employees through exit interviews why they would be leaving. For example, is it something that we should be paying attention to, like support to ease their commute for example.

As an employer what do think needs to happen for all ECEs in Ontario to have Decent Work?

The first step is a commitment to building the early learning and care system. The current patchwork market-based approach is not sustainable. ECEs in Ontario need a standardized compensation scale, secure base funding, and the creation of a real system of early learning and care.

The government needs to pay attention to Decent Work. I was surprised to hear that Ontario had the lowest unemployment rates in November, and we need to think about how these figures are connected to decent work. Being a decent work employer and using a decent work lens has helped us to recruit people in to the sector. This needs to happen across the sector and across the province.

As employers, advocates, ECEs, we also need to do more showcasing of what is happening in the sector, in particular the great employers and great jobs that exist. We need to let ECEs know there are options, and they don't have to leave the sector to feel valued.

Ontario's Centres of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care

Introduction

In June 2017, Ontario and Canada signed the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement, a component of the National Early Learning and Child Care Multilateral Framework (Ontario Ministry of Education [MOE], 2018). Included in the ELCC was a commitment to establish Centres of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care in Ontario. The Centres of Excellence are intended to support professional learning across the sector in Ontario, with the goals of strengthening pedagogical approaches and practices to align with *How Does Learning Happen?*, building pedagogical leadership of program staff, and providing professional learning resources and connections that are accessible online (MOE, 2018).

The Ministry of Education opened a call for proposals for the Centres of Excellence, and announced in March 2018 the three Centres, representing a variety of partners and collaborators across the province. They are the Indigenous Centre of Excellence, led by Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association and Kenjgewin Teg Education Institute, the Francophone Centre of Excellence, led by Collège Boréal and Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario, and the Provincial Centre of Excellence, led by Western University and Ontario Reggio Association (MOE, 2018). A Secretariat has been established to ensure consistency, collaboration, and accountability across the work of the Centres, and to ensure representation across the six regions designated by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2017).

The three Centres of Excellence have all begun work, establishing their networks and implementing their plans. While early in the implementation, we asked them to share some reflections on their plans and journey so far.

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Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care



The Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association and Kenjgewin Teg are the co-leads for the Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence.

The Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence has a mandate to provide professional learning supports across the province through streams in all Ministry regions to support culturally relevant programming and the delivery of high-quality Indigenous child care and early years programs in the broad spectrum of Indigenous communities and organizations on and off-reserve, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

The Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence promotes Indigenous pedagogy and the inherent right of Indigenous children and families to have culturally relevant early years and child care programs that respect the diverse cultures of Indigenous (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) peoples in Ontario and aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Calls to Action 2015. Indigenous knowledge, ways of knowing and being and connection to all of creation is the foundation for educators, children and families to be in relationship together in a safe environment that contributes to Indigenous identity formation.

The Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence embraces the values of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (2014). We believe that each child carries their own gifts, that they are strong, resilient and capable; they have the right to explore, test, inquire and learn on the land and to be in relationship with the land alongside their educators.

Overview of the Indigenous Centre's Goals and Objectives with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (2014)

Key Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for educators to critically reflect on their practice through an Indigenous lens. Educators will consider how Indigenous world-view intersects with current practice and how that view can begin to create high quality culturally safe space within the child care and early years programs
- To offer professional learning that supports culturally based early childhood education for Indigenous children across the province that reflects current research, promising practices and Indigenous ways of knowing and being
- To support safe dialogue and relationship building with non-Indigenous educators to create awareness and understanding of the history of colonization in Canada; reconciliatory practices and Indigenous concepts that reflect the diversity in Ontario

The Centre will reach these goals by:

- Establishing and coordinating seven (7) Indigenous Community Educators in the six (6) regions to foster relationships across the early years sector
- Indigenous Community Educators will offer cultural contexts and concepts for consideration and Indigenous pedagogy will be the foundation for communities of practice. The role of Elder, Senator and traditional knowledge keepers, the place of ceremony and relationship with the land will be seamlessly integrated
- Being responsive to identified community learning aspirations and developing innovative culturally relevant professional learning resources in various mediums
- Committing to continuous reflection, documentation and evaluation to support vibrant learning communities
- Collaborating with the Secretariat and the Provincial and Francophone Centres of Excellence
- Honouring the critical roles of Indigenous culture and language in the restoration of well-being

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A Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Care Initiative

Learning to Teach from the Heart

Beatriz Alvarez, RECE, B.Ed

For the past 10 years, I have been working as a toddler and preschool educator within an Inuit community at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (OICC). Working in this community has taught me many things about myself. Time spent with the children and families, and my own self-education have changed me into someone who is 'taking a long view' of things by becoming more patient and heart-centred. Through my learning and gradual understanding of the Inuit principles, I have become a better children's educator and a better educator to the Inuit adults who assist me in the program. Adults, like children, will learn in their own time and in their own style. It has been through my reflection that has allowed me to see things from another perspective--another culture.

Many theorists and researchers have come and gone in the field of early childhood education. After decades of advocacy, early childhood educators achieved professional status with the establishment of the College of Early Childhood Educators in 2007. Our profession has undergone many changes and with all the new developmental checklists, assessment tools, and behaviour management strategies, the view of the child has also gone through its changes.

Through my work with the Inuit community and research, I began to understand the beauty of the Inuit way of be-

ing--the Inuit way of looking at a child and the education of a person. Education is understood as "the making of a human being—*inunnguiniq*." Inuit understand education as the lifelong endeavor of becoming a person who is capable, respectful and a responsible learner who takes care of others, contributes to the greater good, and is prepared to cope with whatever comes her/his way. The child is viewed as a gift that comes to the community. Through her/his name, this gift comes already with an established relationship to the community. The child inherits the relationship that her/his ancestor/special person had with the family members. As the child reveals her/himself over time, Inuit also believe that the ancestor's traits are transferred to the child.¹

Traditionally Inuit children learned through these relationships. By listening and observing the performance of a rich tapestry of daily community work, the child was slowly assigned tasks and began contributing to the community's functioning based on her/his strengths. The community nurtured the child to realize their uniqueness through their work. Skills were honed. Mistakes were made and used as a natural part of understanding and skills building. The child's work was to be practised, improved upon over time, and with perseverance, the child would become a valuable contributor to the community's success. It was a way of being and becoming that worked.¹

The survival of the Inuit is owed to the beliefs and values that kept family groups working for the common

good. Sharing, generosity, caring for others, honesty, perseverance, innovation, creativity, adaptability, and many more values make up the core of living a good life. Before European-Western involvement, these values, commonly known as *maligait* or IQ principles, were instilled over a lifetime in all Inuit.¹ Wisdom, *silatuniq*, was achieved when one lived in harmony with all things and people and was prepared to use their knowledge to overcome life's hardships. Inuit Elders say that the loss of these values and ways of being are what has interfered with today's Inuit parents and children's success.²

OICC early years curriculum was culturally re-inspired after my colleague, Ina Zakal, and I were fortunate to attend the 2nd International Indigenous Early Childhood Gathering in Victoria, BC in 2016, and the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education in Toronto in 2017. Listening to Indigenous educators who are reclaiming their culture through their children's education, gave my colleague and I the push to reconnect to Inuit traditions and ways of being. After all, Inuit had had teaching figured out for millennia. My Inuk colleague said it best when she said, "It's about time!"

At the centre, we have more intentionally begun teaching and assessing our children through IQ principles. We have become more heart-centred and value-driven. The stories we share with parents and our colleagues speak to the importance of looking at children's strengths and demonstrating how the children are working towards

understanding these values. They enhance and complement Ontario's *How Does Learning Happen* and the *Six Components of the Aboriginal Head Start* curriculum approaches. Over these past few years, our educators have learned to make the children's learning visible, highlighting all three educational frameworks. It feels good to be honouring the Inuit traditional ways of being and becoming more bi-culturally competent.

The Inuit ways of being lines up with Ontario's Ministry of Education's Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: "In order to ensure that all students feel safe, welcomed and accepted, and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning, schools and classrooms must be responsive to culture."³ The Ontario brief *Think, Feel, Act* speaks about the importance of relationships to our children, families and communities. It speaks to how indoor and outdoor environments shape and help define children's identities and their sense of belonging.⁴

The brief also speaks to how educators need to rethink how we work and learn from one another. As researchers, we observe, reflect and celebrate little achievements in our children but we must not forget to observe the gains in attitudes, practices and teaching skills in our young educators. Like Inuit, we can hold high expectations, but we must also extend guidance and supports to those emerging teaching skills.

By using this bi-cultural lens, I am learning to adjust my expectations and timelines for the sake of our younger Inuit educators. They represent the program's future. They are learning the skills of teaching through listening, observing and slowly taking on new tasks. Being value-driven, I must be teaching and leading with my heart. My growth as an educator increases my ability to support Inuit in being proud of who they are, and what their

ancestors have accomplished. In turn, this builds capacity and empowerment, and may lead to Inuit teachers educating Inuit children at this urban centre in the south of Canada.

My learning path continues, as a new educational role has begun to unfold. I have been asked to continue sharing my voice/learnings through the Indigenous Centre of Excellence (ICOE) to help create a platform for voices from Inuit communities.

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¹Tagalik, S. (2009-2010). *Inuit qaujimatqangit: The role of Indigenous knowledge in supporting wellness in Inuit communities in Nunavut*. National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health.

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Conversations with Pedagogists in the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care

Nicole Land, Elaine Da Silva, Lindsay Sparkes, and Debbie Burger

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care is an education service project that supports timely, innovative, critically-grounded professional learning for early childhood educators across Ontario. A partnership between Western University and the Ontario Reggio Association, the Provincial Centre brings together educators, pedagogical leaders, graduate students, and college and university faculty. Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education in partnership with the Government of Canada as a Canada-Ontario *Early Learning and Child Care* initiative, the Provincial Centre works alongside the Indigenous Centre, Francophone Centre, and Secretariat. The professional learning model the Provincial Centre utilizes – where collaborators work collectively to weave ongoing, rich professional learning with the everyday relationships educators co-create with children, families, and communities – is based on a pilot project in British Columbia (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Hodgins, 2017; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Pence, 2010) and draws upon the role of a pedagogista or pedagogic coordinator in Italy, Belgium, and Sweden.

Currently, the Provincial Centre is creating a network of pedagogists who will work with in-service early childhood educators and support pre-service educators and students in practicum college programs. Pedagogists, who are pedagogical leaders in their communities, hold a unique role: they connect with approximately fifty educators in sustained communities of practice. Together, educators and pedagogists engage in inquiries that explore and answer to the local environments, communities, and complex worlds children and families inherit. Central to the work of a pedagogist is an emphasis on *thinking pedagogically* to activate the approach to education, learning, and childhood the Provincial Centre forwards. That is, the work of a pedagogist is deeply and intentionally pedagogical; they focus on thinking collectively amid ongoing inequities in education, situate curriculum as an ethical and political undertaking, understand pedagogy as a relational practice, see themselves as implicated in their work and accountable to the pedagogies they create, and animate ECE as a complicated, valuable, vibrant intellectual space. The Provincial Centre's orientation to professional learning is pedagogical, not technical. We care about relationships, politics, ethics, and commons, and complexify taken-for-granted connections with developmentalism, instrumental practic-

es, compliance, and quality. Pedagogists and educators engage in interdisciplinary conversations, pedagogical documentation, and generate locally-meaningful, collective, and responsive early years pedagogies.

The pedagogist network is constantly evolving and will continue to grow through 2020. In becoming a pedagogist, educators participate in a 12-week online orientation where we read together, engage in online discussions, and have face-to-face gatherings. Following the orientation, pedagogists connect with educators in the field to begin pedagogical inquiries. As we build a sustainable network of pedagogists, they continue to connect with the pedagogist network online and in regional meetings to share pedagogical documentation, ideas, tensions, and stories. Currently, the Provincial Centre's first cohort of pedagogists is moving through the last weeks of their orientation.

What follows is a conversation between three pedagogists on their experience with the Provincial Centre since October 2018. Lindsay Sparkes is an Interim Director at Stoneybrooke Early Childhood Learning Centre with London Bridge Child Care, Elaine Da Silva is Director of Pedagogy at London Bridge, and Debbie Burger is the EarlyOn Supervisor at the Oakville Parent-Child Centre. Lindsay

and Elaine are located in the London Ministerial Region, and Debbie in the Toronto Ministerial Region. The questions are offered by Nicole Land, a regional coordinator in Toronto.

Nicole: We have had many conversations over the past 11 weeks about “becoming” a pedagogist and what this might mean or ask of us on multiple levels: our approach to pedagogy, our reading practices, the stories we share and the stories we disrupt, how we respond in conversations, and how we inherit and disrupt powerful narratives in the field. I think that we are learning there is nothing simple about becoming a pedagogist. I am wondering if you can share some reflections on your experience of becoming a pedagogist: what has this role asked of you so far? How has your experience with becoming a pedagogist unfolded?

Elaine and Lindsay: The role of pedagogist has invited us to think about re-inventing ways of being with children, educators and families. We have been challenged to pay attention to the stories and scripts that exist in our work. Through this noticing, we are asking ourselves which stories belong to us and which ones we have inherited. And does anything even belong to us? This work has cultivated a disposition of being in question, like the Provincial Centre’s pedagogista Cristina Delgado always reminds us. Why do we have these stories? What are the implications of these stories on our relations with others? Daily activities such as our routines, transitions and the way we document are all things that we are putting into question. Our ideas around pedagogy have shifted from a focus on teaching, learning, and making meaning of what is happening towards thinking about what early years pedagogy looks like in a more-than-human world. At London Bridge we are constantly evolving our practice and the work that we have done in our organization has brought us to a place in which this position of pedago-

gist has allowed us to continue to evolve our thinking.

Debbie: In the spirit of “100 Languages” (Malaguzzi, 2011) I’d like to answer this metaphorically. I dove into this stream of consciousness called The Provincial Centre of Excellence, mesmerized by its quality and inviting waters – not knowing what I would find. I travelled through the rapids of perception, hitting my head on rocks like neoliberalism and hermeneutics...breaking apart. My old, conceived notions of my world and my place within it dissolved. The speed of the learning waves left me breathless at times. I dove deeper under the surface of the language and looked into the abyss of mankind: child care social history, ethics, politics... the very soul of human consciousness. It left me cold and shaking. I have emerged a changed person. I see my world as a much bigger place now and think of all the seriousness of this realization.

Nicole: The Provincial Centre’s approach to professional learning is a theory-practice initiative. We believe that engaging with complex analyses and theoretical exposures is inextricably tied to thinking pedagogically in everyday relationships with children and families. This is a complex proposition; living critical analyses or pedagogical orientations in ordinary moments can be demanding, unsettling, and exciting. I am curious to hear more about your experience bringing the offerings of the pedagogist work to your practice: how have the ideas and conversations we’ve shared influenced your current work? How are you noticing, thinking, speaking, or reflecting in unfamiliar ways within your everyday relationships in practice?

Elaine and Lindsay: The role of pedagogist is not one that can be done in isolation. It demands us to think with others and we are noticing that the conversations in our work are being influenced by the ideas that are being offered in our pedagogist group through dia-

logue and readings. The piece *Towards a Pedagogy of Listening* (Dahlberg & Moss, 2004) references the idea of “de-constructive talk” (p. 111) as resistance practices. It challenges our complacency and pushes us to a place of thinking critically about our work. This is a practice that we have brought forward into many of our encounters with others. As a result of these conversations, we are living in question and have taken up Cristina’s invitation to be in “the double movement of being-in-question and putting-into-question” (Vintimilla, 2018, p. 22). This work is calling us to think about: who are we? What kind of world do we want to live in? What kind of people do we want to be in the world? For example, we have been considering what happens when we talk about “my” classroom and “my” children: what are the implications of those statements? By noticing these common “scripts” that we hear in the classrooms, we are able to question others and begin to ask ourselves how the “stuff” we do and the “things” we say support what we stand for or what we are working towards.

Debbie: Recently, I found myself in the middle of a Toronto bookstore not knowing what to do. I was to purchase ECE resource books in a short amount of time. The book list I brought with me wasn’t effective. Many of these books were not in stock. However, there seemed to be other new books of good quality. How was I to choose? This is how I dealt with it. I mostly needed beginner and intermediate level books of understanding. So, I looked at the footnotes for authors and recalled the Provincial Centre articles that we had been studying. One book was footnoting Veà Vecchi, Peter Moss and Carol Anne Wien. This was a YES book because they think with politics and ethics in ECE. Another author was discussing ‘school readiness’ using many checklists. Flashback to a Provincial Centre discussion on *developmentalism* and the work we have been doing to notice how developmental relations with children are con-

nected to neoliberal and settler colonial worldviews. This was a NO. Saw 'Turtle Island' as I was coming around a corner. I remembered this to have come up in our discussions. Yes! for the pile. And so on. I finished this task in the time provided because of the kind of clear vision and scrutiny I gained from my Provincial Centre experience.

Nicole: Elaine and Lindsay, I hear in your responses how your work with the Provincial Centre has invited you to ask and stick with particular questions: questions about stories, concepts, and relations. Debbie, I read you speaking of beginning to notice how you are implicated in wider webs of politics in complex worlds, and how this noticing shapes the questions that you ask of yourself and the materials or stories you bring to your program. As you move into the next phase of your role as a pedagogist, I wonder if you can please share a few questions or propositions that you might carry with you: what

questions might you keep returning to, to guide your own thinking? What propositions might you want to lend to those you collaborate with?

Elaine and Lindsay: Not only are we part of the Provincial Centre's Pedagogist orientation but are also close partners in the SSHRC-funded project *Rethinking Waste* with Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw from Western University. These collaborations have shaped our thinking at London Bridge. We are gathering around ideas of more-than-human pedagogies and continue to revisit questions such as: what does the role of pedagogist ask of us? What are the dispositions required? What kinds of pedagogies and skills do we consider? How do we move beyond human centredness, and what actions can we take to make this work visible?

Debbie: This course provides a rich lens to wonder in new and interesting ways. How will I be mindful of these thoughts? So many thoughts. Colonialism. Empiri-

cism. Disrupting Enlightenment logic. How can I listen more sincerely without "taking over" or "claiming" the learning? How can I value the learning that isn't "measurable"? How can I help further inquiry without having "viewpoint" intentions? It's repeatedly humbling.

For more information on the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care, please contact pedagogy@uwo.ca.

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Thinking about staying for the Canadian Association for Research in Early Childhood (CAREC) post-conference on June 6th? This year's theme is "Post-developmentalism in Early Childhood Education" and CAREC is honoured to welcome Dr. Mindy Blaise (Professor, Edith Cowan University) and Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw (Professor, Western University) as the keynote speakers. If you are interested in presenting, watch for the post-conference call online for proposals in January 2019.

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The names listed are those who have successfully completed the AECEO Certification Process and hold current AECEO membership. They are entitled to use the AECEO.C designation to denote their achievement.

Special congratulations go to Ashley Zurevinski AECEO.C on becoming AECEO Certified as of December 2018!

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2019-2020 AECEO Provincial Board Nominations

Would you like to take on a leadership role in shaping the future for RECEs in Ontario? Becoming a member of the Board of Directors is an important way to do just that.

The AECEO is in the process of recruiting officers for its Provincial Board of Directors 2019-2020 term. Provincial Board members are elected for a one-year term of office with a limit of six consecutive years for any individual on the Board. It is understood that this will be a working board and all board members will be expected to lend their expertise and skills to Ad Hoc Committees as needed. The AECEO values diversity and encourages nominations from a range of backgrounds to bring a variety of ideas, perspectives and experiences that will better inform the Board's work. Most meetings are held remotely and in the evening to facilitate participation by members from all areas of the early childhood profession/sector. Nominations from members are welcomed. Members should forward nominations to the Nominations Committee c/o AECEO Provincial Office. Nomination forms must be accompanied by a one paragraph profile of nominee and what they see as the major issues of the AECEO.

Nominations Deadline Date: March 20, 2019

NOMINATION:

We nominate _____, (please print)

Membership # _____, an AECEO member in good standing, to stand for a Provincial Board Position in the 2019 elections.

NOMINATORS: (TWO NOMINATORS REQUIRED)

Name: _____ Member #: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____ Member #: _____

Signature: _____

NOMINEE CONSENT:

I, _____, am a member in good standing and consent to stand for a position with the AECEO Provincial Board. Signature: _____

Nominations must be submitted by March 20, 2019 to:

AECEO Nominations Committee
c/o AECEO Provincial Office
206-489 College St., Toronto ON M6G 1A5
Email: info@aeceo.ca Fax: (416) 487-3758

Member's Motion Guidelines/Form

This form provides you, an AECEO member, with the opportunity to propose a motion for consideration by the general membership during the 2019 elections. The motion will be shared via electronic means (hard copy for comprehensive members) in accordance to our bylaws.

Deadline date for submission is: March 20, 2018

(Use separate page as required)

MOTION:

BACKGROUND:

RATIONALE:

Submitted by (Name of Member): _____

Branch: _____ Member #: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Send completed forms by March 20, 2019 to:

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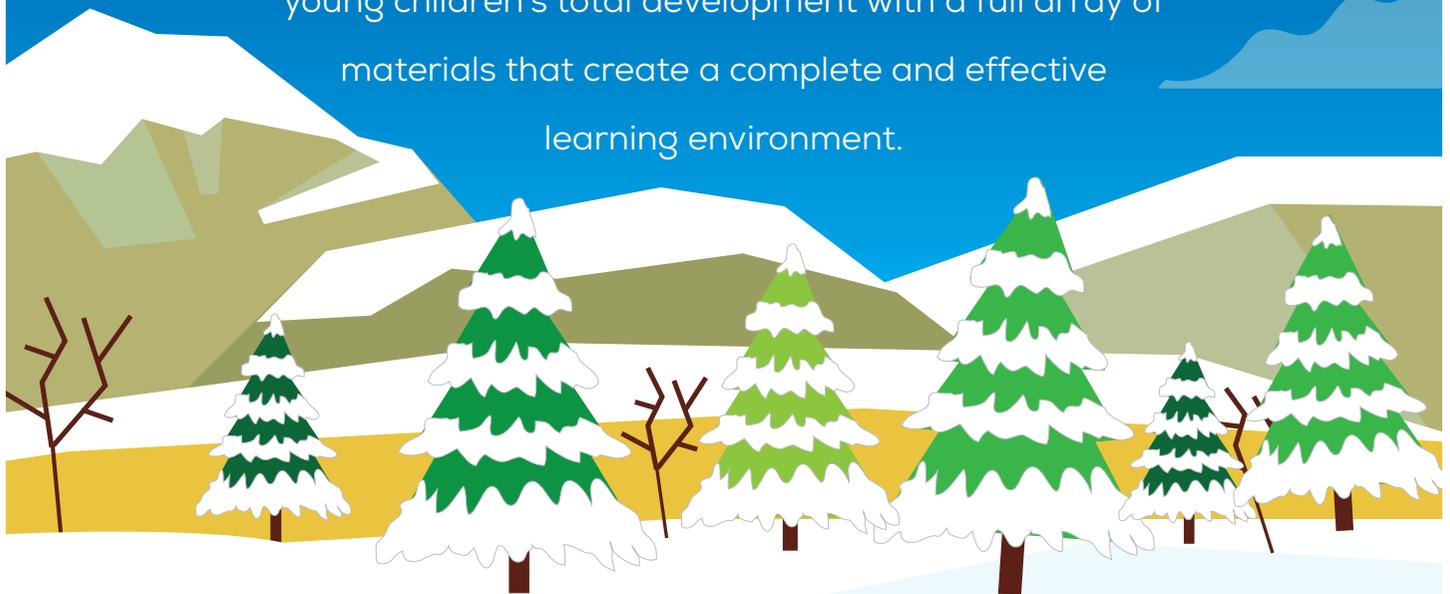
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