

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

This month's resource highlights suggestions & strategies that relate to reinforcing Alberta's Early Learning Child Care Licensing Act: 'Principle C': to support engagement of parents, guardians and community members in the provision of childcare supports, the child's optimal development and 'matters to be considered' by providers of childcare programs, diversity in the child's familial and Indigenous or other cultural, social, linguistic, and spiritual heritage are central to the child's safety, well-being and development.

Sponsored Support!

Have a CCC Cultural Mentor visit your program and support these culturally responsive action items.

Families in Alberta and around the world celebrate a variety of festivities over the year, particularly in the fall and winter, including but not limited to: Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali, Onam, St. Lucia's day, Dong Zhi, Toji, Birthdays, Baby Welcoming ceremonies and many more...

The Canadian Child Care Federation resource: Helping Children Respect and Appreciate Diversity (2021) states that in Canada today, families come from many different backgrounds and reflect a wide variety of cultures, languages, life experiences and lifestyles. This trend has continued into the new millennium, making diversity a key dimension of our past, present, and future. Given this reality, children are likely to live and learn with people who may be very different from them. To prepare children for life in a diverse society, and to help protect them from bias and discrimination, families and teachers can encourage children's positive feelings about themselves while fostering understanding and acceptance of differing beliefs, values, and traditions.



As early learning and care professionals, we can foster inclusivity by ensuring seasonal celebrations, traditional celebrations, birthdays and festivals, are comprehensive of the children and families that attend our early learning and care programs. Below are some reflective questions to guide your practice and some action items that you could implement in your programming to better support celebrations that are inclusive of the diversity in your early learning and care communities!



Reflective questions to guide your practice...

- What holidays and festivities are you celebrating in your program and why?
Is the meaning behind those celebrations discussed with families?
- How can you connect with children and parents to know what seasonal festivals, traditions, special days, or holidays they celebrate at home?
- What current seasonal celebrations does your centre celebrate?
Are they culturally inclusive? Do all or most families celebrate those holidays?
- What seasonal festivals, traditions, or holidays do your educators celebrate at home with their families? How could you find out?
- How can parents, children and educators share their home celebrations with the early learning and care community?
- Are you engaging with the families to learn more about their unique traditions?
Where are you learning about the celebrations?
- NAEYC (1991) Are the activities meaningful to the children? Are their needs and interests being met? Is the activity a valuable use of children's time?



Actions for inclusive Seasonal Celebrations...

- Collaborate with families and educators to create a calendar with important dates
- Post the Creating Cultural Connections Inclusive Calendar in an area where families can contribute and share about their special days!

CCC Featured Resource - Winter Resource 1

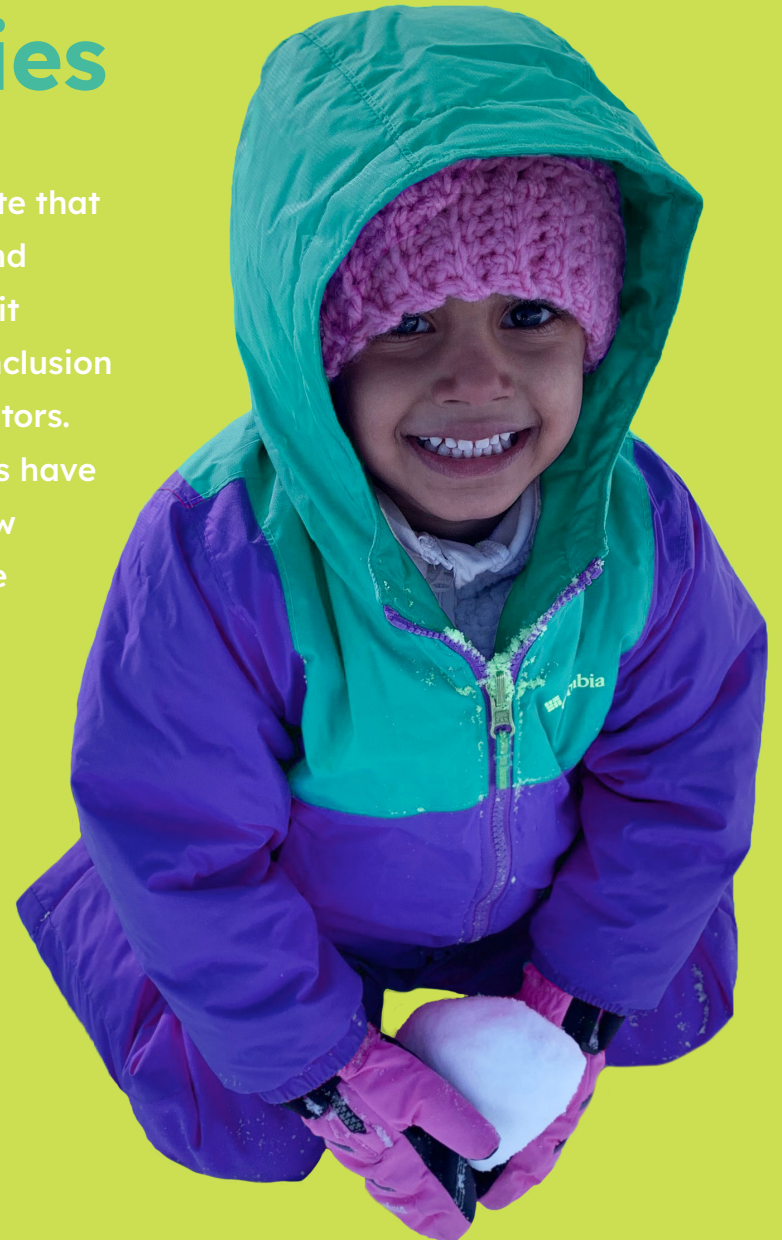
- Create a Learning Story or Pedagogical Documentation highlighting the special days children celebrate in their homes.
- If a parent has shared that they celebrate a special occasion, invite them to share an oral or written story about their celebration.
- Invite children to discuss their knowledge of their celebrations with their families and their peers. (see page 5)
- NAEYC (1999) shares that Teachers may survey families at the beginning of the year to determine what holidays to celebrate. They may even ask the children to create a holiday to help them learn the concepts that underlie such valued traditions. Spend time exploring the meaning and significance of each holiday.
- NAEYC (1999) encourages children to share their feelings and information about the holidays they celebrate. Doing so helps children make distinctions between learning about another person's holiday rituals and commemorating their holidays. Children may participate as "guests" in holiday activities that are not part of their own culture.



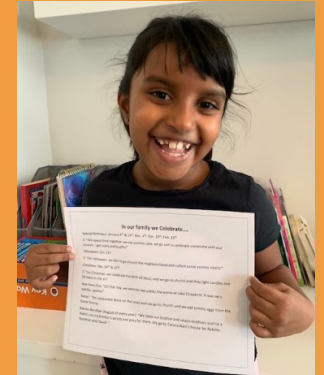
Collaborating with Families

NAEYC's article *Celebrating Holidays in Early Childhood Programs* (1999) shares that decisions about what holidays to celebrate are best made all together by teachers, parents, and their children. Families and staff are more comfortable when both have expressed their views and understand how a decision has been reached. The important thing for all to remember is that when planning holiday activities, the rules of good practice continue to apply: Are the activities meaningful to the children? Are their needs and interests being met? Is the activity a valuable use of children's time? (PBS, 2022)

Massing & Matheson (2021) state that when ECE program's respect and affirm children's home culture, it sends a powerful message of inclusion to children, families, and educators. They see that their perspectives have value and can contribute to new understandings about childcare practices (p.238).



In our family we Celebrate...



Birthdays

January 4 & 14, Nov. 4, Dec. 10, Feb. 15

Z: We spend time together, we eat yummy cake, we go out to celebrate sometime with our cousins. I get really, pretty gifts!

Halloween

Oct. 31

Z: On Halloween, we like to go around the neighbourhood and collect some yummy treats!

Christmas

Dec. 24 & 25

Z: On Christmas.. we go to church and they light candles and lift them in the air.

New Years Eve

Jan.31

Z: On that day, we went to see pretty fire works at Lake Chaparral. It was very sparkly, sparkly!

Easter

April.9

Z: We celebrated.. and go to church, and we eat yummy eggs from the Easter bunny.

Raksha Bandhan

August

Z: We bless our brother and cousin-brothers and tie a Rakhi's on my brother's wrist and pray for them. We go to Taruna Nani's house for Raksha Bandhan and Diwali!

References

Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014).
Flight: Alberta's early learning and care framework.
flightframework.ca.

Massing C., Matheson, M., (2021).
Introduction to Early Childhood Education & Care:
An intercultural perspective

Canadian Child Care Federation (2021)
Helping Children Respect and Appreciate Diversity

Precious Children: Celebrating Holidays in
Early Childhood Programs (1999)
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for the Education of Young Children.

https://www.pbs.org/kcts/preciouschildren/diversity/read_celebrating.html

