



SPRING 2024 E-NEWSLETTER

WHAT IS CCC?

CCC is a 3 year regional initiative intended to guide culturally sensitive mentoring and resource strategies aimed at enhancing educator capacity reflective of unique program needs and diversity. With a focus on the Alberta context; support and resources are centered on the Early Learning Child Care Licensing Act and Regulations aligned with the principles and matters to be considered as the cornerstone of enhancing quality early learning environments.



GET INVOLVED!

Interested in enhancing culturally sensitive practice within your program? Access resources & self-refer for specialized site support by completing a [Service Request form!](#)

SHOWCASE OF LEARNING

Have you heard that Creating Cultural Connections CCC is hosting its first-ever Showcase of Learning? Yes, it is happening on **May 3-4, 2024!** Whether you are already getting support OR not yet participating and interested in learning more about CCC we invite you to register for the event.

BettyAnn Little Wolf is a knowledge Keeper and Spiritual Elder in the Blackfoot community, and **Maurice Little Wolf** is a Blackfoot member of the Piikani First Nation. They will give their blessings and share their indigenous ways of knowing with participants. The keynote speaker is **Dr. Jan Stewart**, Dean of Education and Professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Foundations, and Psychology at the University of Manitoba.

Presentations from participating programs! All programs engaged with CCC are invited to share highlights demonstrating how they nurture culturally sensitive practices unique to your program's needs and families served. This may include new ways of including families, promotional materials you have developed, unique ways of engaging families, or ways you have supported children's cultural diversity in your programs. Ask your Mentor for support to develop presentations!

Who is eligible?

Licensed Day Care, Licensed Family Day home Agencies, Out of School Care Programs, Preschool Programs, Innovative Programs i.e., Women's Shelters, Group Family Child Care Programs, Indigenous and Métis Programs, Isolated/Remote Licensed Programs

REGISTER HERE!

MENTOR RECRUITMENT & TRAINING

Creating Cultural Connections needs YOU! Do you have the passion and knowledge to help shape culturally sensitive practice? CCC is looking for dynamic individuals to attend 2-day intensive training to deepen understanding of cultural diversity, supporting newcomers, and honouring Indigenous and Metis communities. Cultural mentors then aid programs in developing philosophies and aligning front line practice associated with these program values.

If this sounds like you, contact Amaka at amendy7200@gmail.com



MEET A MENTOR

Hello! My name is Sabrina Nesbit. I am a Creating Cultural Connections (CCC) Coach for ARCQE. It is an honor and a pleasure to introduce myself to you. I have been working in the Early Childhood Education field for a total of 17 years. I have an abundance of experience working with children, families, and other professionals in a number of early learning settings.

When I am not working, I love to be outside! I genuinely enjoy each of the seasons that Canada has to offer. Some of my favorite activities are camping, fishing, gardening, and going on adventures with my partner and two dogs. I am a huge advocate for outdoor play. In the past, I was part of a pilot project

that introduced an outdoor classroom to a traditionally indoor only preschool program. It was a wonderful opportunity to share my passion and knowledge for outdoor play with other early learning professionals, the children, and their families.

I am inspired everyday by the curiosity, wonderment, and excitement that the children bring to programs. My favorite part of CCC is getting to create new relationships with the members of each community I work in. I am excited to be a part of this experience, and I look forward to seeing what the future brings for the program.



CELEBRATIONS AROUND US

Did you know that **February was Black History Month**? Was this something your program took time to honour? As we reflect back on Black History Month, it is important to take pause to acknowledge the continued significance of discussions on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Black History Month provided an opportunity for diversity, equity, and inclusion in workplaces, communities, and anywhere else that human beings live. In early childhood environments, educators must use this month to reflect on their practices and how they intentionally and authentically bring different cultures into their shared environment with the children.

Representation matters, and while this might seem impossible in some cases, some individuals, and organizations champion DEI, which is commendable. It can be easy to have minorities at workplaces become invisible and voiceless, and so highlighting them quite often helps to give them voices and recognition. Representation also motivates others to act. How did you highlight your colleagues in February?

We all have a collective role in ensuring the children we work with have a solid foundation for inclusion and diversity. Through our daily actions, we role model what we want the next generation to become. By using age-appropriate language and materials, we can teach children how to be kind, demonstrate empathy and understand that our differences make us unique and strong. We need to be present now as children's brains are still being formed to build positive experiences that will change the world in the future. **Culture and heritage must be celebrated every day, not only in February. Please check out the books that we shared in ARCQE website under CCC Resources.** (Photo: Shane Homes YMCA Child Development Center, Calgary)

March 25th | Holi Festival was celebrated with every color of the rainbow! This Hindu celebration known as the festival of colors and the festival of love signifies the end of winter, the arrival of spring and the victory of good over evil. A time to laugh, play, visit friends and get messy! Little ones will love exploring the colors of Holi.



Ramadan - Every year, Muslims fast each day of Ramadan from dawn until dusk, for a month. The Islamic Calendar follows a lunar cycle, which can differ from place to place based on moon sightings. The day after the end of Ramadan is a religious holiday called Eid-al-Fitr. Each culture celebrates this holiday differently with family and friends.



Do you know April is Stress Awareness Month? What can you do to decrease the effect of stress in your life? Try this [2-minute guided meditation for stress relief here](#).

April 13, 14 | Sinhala & Tamil New Year - This is the biggest celebration in Sri Lanka that features numerous rituals and customs. Based on the sun's movement from the Meena Rashiya (House of Pieces) to the Mesha Rashiya (House of Aries) Sri Lankan welcomes the new year with a lot of firecrackers, fireworks, traditional games, gourmet food and traditional games. It's also known as the sun festival.

April 13th | Visakhi (Baisakhi) - This is the spring harvest festival in Punjab, and an important day for Sikhs. Celebrations traditionally include singing, chanting, dancing & music and enjoy parades and special processions wearing traditional Indian clothes through the street called "nagar kirtans". In the evening, Sikhs tend to have a traditional Indian meal with family and friends.

April 22-30 | Passover - The 8-day Jewish holiday of Passover is celebrated in the early spring. Passover starts with a big ritual meal known as the Seder. Family and friends come together to eat traditional dishes, retell stories, eat Matzah & bitter herbs and drink four cups of wine or grape juice, and avoiding leavened bread.

Join us in broadening awareness of important culturally diverse events reflecting the children and families served in your programs. Share learning stories, photos, & special events you celebrate in your community to help CCC create meaningful resources reflective of Southern Alberta's rich cultural diversity. CCC will continue to make information available to programs via the CCC website and in future newsletters!

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

We have had two successful Community Conversations recently, and have another on the way! 'Children and Nature', and 'It's Ramadan!' brought together many people in the Southern region who shared ideas, experiences, and learned from one and other.

'[Supporting Creative Expression](#)' is the next Community Conversation, happening on April.24th at 7:00pm via Zoom. If you are in the Southern Region join in and be a part of the exchange and network coming to life!

[REGISTER HERE!](#)

CONNECT WITH THE PROJECT COORDINATOR

Amaka Amadike, the Project Coordinator was in Southern AB in February and March to meet and greet programs participating in CCC. She also met with many new programs in Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Pincher Creek, Taber and Brooks who had the chance to sign up for support. She will be returning to visit more programs soon and would love to meet with you!

Contact her at amendy7200@gmail.com to book a time to connect.

OUTDOOR PLAY WITH MENTORS

CCC mentors had fun with a group of educators during their outdoor nature play in Lethbridge. We can't wait for the Spring season to keep the outdoor learning going!

