

ECEBC's Leading Change Community Projects



ECEBC's Leading Change initiative, funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada, is fortunate to have 31 Early Childhood Educators (ECE's) from around the province engaged in conversations about influencing positive change. The group is encouraged to express their leadership, to tell their stories, and to share their voice to elevate the needs of the profession. Each educator is part of implementing a self-directed change project in their local community, which will be presented at a final Showcase in November of 2023. ECEBC is committed to promoting the voices of this passionate group, while sharing their impact stories and projects to uplift and strengthen the Early Care and Learning Sector.

Pathways of Truth led by Cathy Balatti.

In an ongoing sharing circle format, Early Childhood Educators will explore pathways of truth and decolonized practice through critical reflection and collaborative dialogue. The aim is to think less about "reconciliation" and instead listen (and believe) the truth-telling and gain an awareness of the ongoing reality of inequality, discrimination and oppression Indigenous peoples face today. Educators are invited to step into the discomfort of truth to develop a deeper understanding of shared history. The hope is to instigate necessary changes at individual, organizational and sector wide levels.

Connections through Self Compassion led by Amanda Baryluk and Karissa Pelletier.

Through a series of gatherings, Early Childhood Educators, will connect around well-being and compassion practices to promote professional self care while building new connections and relationships. Educators will dialogue using ECEBC's ethics to help prioritize health and well-being as one means of empowerment. Overall, the hope is for retention and promoting educators to stay in the field while providing access to new experiences and connections that educators in rural communities do not typically have.

Mentorship Initiative for ECE Dual Credit Students led by Monique Belanger.

Through collaboration and conversations with the Ministry of Education and Child Care and post-secondary, this project aims to provide positive, high-quality opportunities for Dual Credit students to access early years environments, resources, and ECE mentors throughout their schooling. The "*Evaluation of Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy*" highlights the essential role child care holds in life for Canadians and the impact low or lack of staffing has on families' access to quality child care. This initiative strives to bridge relationships between students and the early years community, quality experiences and connections with passionate educators to help set the foundation for a future in the field.

Finding your Why: Reigniting your Passion led by Ewa Boss, Daljit Dial, and Tamara Jacobs.

In a workshop format, early learning and care professionals are invited to evaluate their values and beliefs, expand on their images of child and educator, and deepen their pedagogical leadership. Inspired by BC's Early Learning Framework, professionals will re-ignite their passion and

purpose while co-constructing knowledge through the power of story and empathy. This project aims to foster connections and empower ECE's to share their leadership in centres, communities, and in the broader field.

ECE Retention: Solutions from the Field led by Brandie Cristales.

The aim of this project is to learn from Early Childhood Educators about how the lack of a coordinated substitute/relief system may be impacting retention in the field. Through a survey and community focus groups, ECE's will be invited to identify staffing support needs and collaborative strategies to meet those demands. The hope is to foster connections, generate innovative ideas, while discovering recruitment and retention solutions from the field.

ECE's for Inclusion in BC led by Narisse Christensen and Alicia Tysick.

ECE's for Inclusion in BC, is focused on examining and uplifting the complexities of inclusive practices within the Early Care and Learning field to inform broader community decisions about inclusivity. The aim is to gather input and perspectives from ECE's via a survey, compile the findings in a report, and share recommendations with decision makers and organizations who have a responsibility in responding to the inclusivity needs of children, families, and educators.

ECE Advocacy led by Jaylene D'Amboise and Janice Shields.

This project initially focused on hosting community gatherings and fostering reconnections among Early Childhood Educators living in a remote Island community. A need for more ECE advocacy, particularly around retention and recruitment concerns, became apparent, resulting in this Leading Change cohort sharing their voice with a variety of stakeholders to promote needed local changes.

Mindful ECE's and Mindful Mini's led by Jenna Fullerton.

This initiative promotes well-being through mindful practices, shared resources, and community connections. The aim is to integrate mindfulness in the early years sector to increase opportunities for empowerment, collaboration, and care of ECEs and caregivers, and children and families. Through resource sharing and mindful activities, inclusive practices will be uplifted.

The Story That Made Us: Empowering Identities of Early Years Professionals led by Karla Gaygay

This project brings together Canadian Filipino Early Childhood Professionals, with the aim to strengthen connections, honour their identities, and celebrate their impact in the community. Through regular virtual connections, the stories of the ECE's will be shared to raise awareness of the struggles and triumphs of these educators, resulting in increased pride and a collective voice. Prouder! Louder!

Evergreen Movement for ECE's Led by and Anastasia Hirst, Andrea McLuckie, and JoAnna Richard.

Through a community gathering and survey, Early Childhood Educators and caregivers will come together with the goal of inspiring ongoing meetings of support, collaboration, activism, and learning. This project aims to amplify the passions of educators, while activating the hopes and a

collective vision for the future in the field. Meaningful actions step to influence positive change will be created with input and insight of the ECE's and caregivers living in this remote community.

Nurturing our ECE Community led by Cindy Hall.

Through a series of workshops, this project will bring together Early Childhood Educators with the aim to foster re-connection, share appreciation, and expand relationships with different community resources. Shared activities will promote collective well-being and expand pedagogy possibilities. The aim is to build connections to inspire longer term collaboration where ECE's have an active voice in the nurturing of community.

Supporting Indigenous ECE's led by Melissa Harris.

Supporting Indigenous Early Childhood Educators through a series of virtual fireside conversations that uplift educator voices, stories, and experiences. Through listening and dialogue, educators will build connections and relationships as they explore how to connect with Elders and learn about cultural traditions and practices that will strengthen collaboration and empower practices.

Re-connecting with your Roots led by Gretta de Carvalho Kawahara.

In a learning circle format, this project will uphold cultural diversity and support Early Childhood Educators to feel confident about integrating their values, ancestral knowledge, and cultural roots into their practice. Personalized documentation and artefacts will be shared showcasing the Tupi-Guarani people, from Gretta's home reserve in Brazil, as an invitation for educators to reflect and dialogue on how expanding cultural perspectives can strengthen team collaboration and enhance well-being for child, family, educator, and community.

Voices of Immigrant Childcare Professionals led by Valerie Lai, Arlene Ordonez and Guohong (Anna) Xia.

Through interviews and video clips, this project will share the voices and stories of immigrant Early Childhood Educators and child care professionals, to raise awareness about the need for wage enhancements for all certified ECE's, regardless of the programming they work within. This project will also advocate for additional support for those who want to upgrade from being a Responsible Adult or ECE Assistant. The overall aim is to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among qualified childcare professionals, while acknowledging the lived experience of immigrant childcare professionals.

Seeds of Hope led by Natalia McGonigal.

Through recorded stories and images, Early Childhood Educators will share sector challenges, strengths, and hopes. In a series of community dialogues, inspired by the Early Learning Framework and First People's Principles of learning, educators will be invited into setting purpose-driven holistic goals and pathways, while connecting to their own agency as ECE's with the ability to instigate change.

Growing Relationships and Connections to the Land led by Leola McMillan.

In a community of practice format, ECE's are invited to engage through a pedagogy of listening, collaborative dialogue, and decision-making processes to cultivate natural outdoor spaces. The aim is to build connections to the land and nature-based practices through Indigenous ways of knowing and being, the TRC Calls to action, and local cultural traditions and stories of caring for the land.

Immigrant Voices in Early Learning led by Doris Reich.

During a community gathering and in interviews, newcomer parents will share their stories and needs for inclusive practices in early learning. Narratives will be gathered and documented via graphic and audio recordings and used to inform organizational change and increase collaboration with decision makers and networks. The aim is to highlight through family voice the important role ECE's play in building inclusivity in early childhood spaces. The impact: Regular parent gatherings on monthly basis to address needs and interests of newcomer families.

Igniting a Circle of Compassion led by Karina Roman.

The complex times we are living in, and the stressors faced in the sector, call for a strengthening of compassionate relationships. In a workshop format, Early Childhood Educators will explore compassion as a tool that will empower their role as family connectors. Using the BC Early Learning Framework, ECEBC's Code of Ethics, and a compassionate care model, ECE's will discover how to foster compassionate care for ourselves, while celebrating the deep connection to the families we work with.

ECE in Rural BC led by Danielle Schmuecker.

In an accessible short series podcast, the complexities, and joys that early childhood professionals experience working in isolated or rural areas in BC will be showcased. This is an opportunity to engage with educators, share the wisdom in the field, and increase networks of support.

The Joy of Child Care led by Leanne Shuparski.

In a series of hands-on workshops, Early Childhood Educators will engage with creative mediums to co-construct new experiences and practices with children, and at the same time inspire dialogue and playful connection among the educators. Each gathering will provide an opportunity to express the joys of being an Early Childhood Educator, the ethics that guide educators, and the vision ECE's hold for their community. The aim is to reduce isolation, renew connections and provide new resources that inspire collective well-being and voice.

Possible Pathways for Educators: A Seamless Day Story led by Alaina Smith.

The creation of a resource book is the focus of this project and the catalyst for sharing the experiences of an Early Childhood Educator in the Ministry of Education and Child Care Seamless Day initiative. This project aims to ignite conversations and provide resources to foster possibilities and ideas for strengthening collaborative partnerships within Seamless Day programs. Through a focus on successes, strengths, and stories, this resource will invite other educators to see their pivotal role in intentionally building relationships and sharing their knowledge.

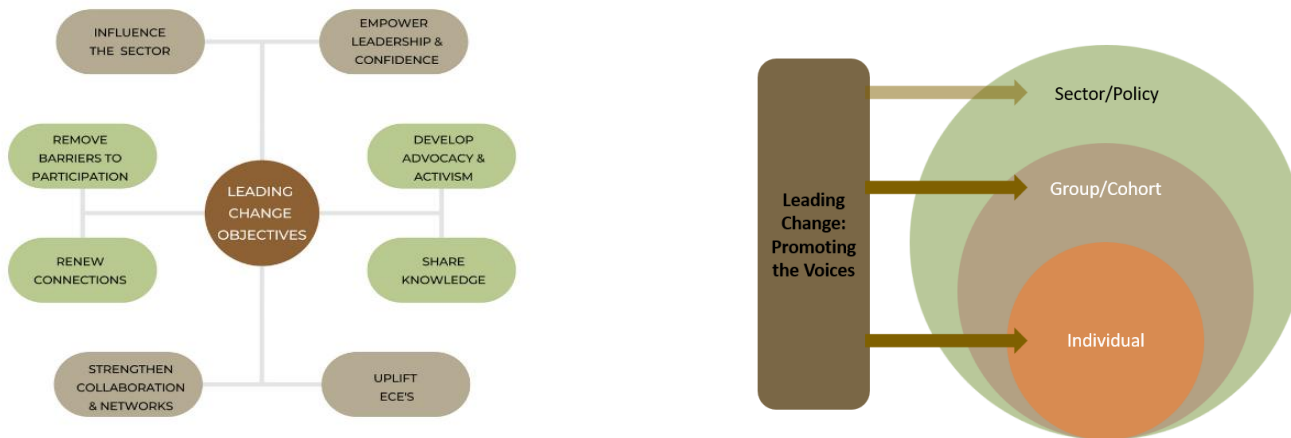
Spaces of Inclusion, Well-being, and Belonging led by Janine Wilson.

Through the creation of a calm, quiet, sensory sensitive space, Early Childhood Educators, Educational Assistants, and Primary Teachers will have a new space to slow down, share resources, and focus on well-being with the children they are engaged with. This project aims to promote that educational spaces need to fit the needs of the children and educators, versus trying to make the children and educators fit the spaces. Within the space, Early Childhood Educators and professionals will be uplifted as their ethics, strengths, and practices are shared with one another. The hope is to increase collaborative opportunities for this local Ministry of Education and Child Care team.

Leading in a Changing Environment: Promoting the Voices of BC’s Early Care and Learning Sector

The above projects, in a personalized and diverse way, are creating the building blocks for meaningful change in the sector, while laying the groundwork for future advancements of Early Childhood Educators. Some of the projects focus on removing barriers to ECE voices being heard, shifting narratives about the field, or encouraging the sharing of ECE knowledge. Others focus on nurturing connections between ECE’s who may feel isolated or fostering relationships with decision makers or key collaborative partnerships that will uplift the sector. Other projects identify educator needs and advocate for the development of policies and practices that will strengthen the sector with community led solutions.

The below graphics, illustrate the objectives embedded in the projects and the spheres of influence these projects embody.



Disclaimer: While supported and deeply valued by ECEBC, the community projects are independent of the work of ECEBC, WAGE, and SRDC and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of ECEBC or the program partners.