

ISSUE 4: February 2022



The Here and Now Reimagining Early Childhoods In Urgent Times



Photo credit: Sylvia Kind, Atelierista

Moving beyond readiness: What is possible when early childhood education is a project of today

On February 18, 2022, the Honourable Minister of Education, Jennifer Whiteside announced that the Government is investing \$125,000 to expand the [Just Be Four \(Just B4\) early childhood education program](#). The Just B4 programs are licensed half-day early years programs for children entering kindergarten the following year. The introduction of more publicly funded early childhood spaces that will operate in conjunction with the [Strong Start programs](#) is welcome news as the province continues to develop a publicly funded child care system.

However, with the introduction of this and each initiative, we have an opportunity to ask critical questions regarding the values that shape early childhood education policy. At first glance we could read the JustB4 programs as a school readiness initiative. Digging deeper into its intention, however we find out, that its unique title gestures towards the image of the child outlined in the

[BC Early Learning Framework](#) (BC ELF). The BC ELF holds an image of children as capable, with individual strengths and grounded in their unique, social, linguistic and cultural heritage. Children are seen as active participants their world, already learning and creating new understandings in their relationships with others. This image envisions early childhood education as spaces where children and adults come together to co-construct curriculum together as they respond to the complexities and challenges of living.

A misunderstanding of the title of this new initiative invites us to remember that it would be a missed opportunity to reduce early childhood education to simply a project of readiness implying that children are incomplete and their value is measured by their future contributions to society. It is imperative that we attend to the possible dangers of an early childhood system that is primarily concerned with assimilating children into a universal standard void of difference and diversity. It is the [ECPN](#)'s hope that by dethroning the discourse of readiness, we can open up new possibilities for developing early years programs and social policies that allow today's children the spaces to learn to live well together in conditions yet unknown.

Continuing the Conversation

In December, 2021, Ministers Chen and Whiteside announced that the [BC Government is seeking input from early childhood educators](#) and other child care professionals on the future of early childhood education in British Columbia. [Five themes](#) were highlighted to guide the consultation process. The ECPN contributed to this discussion with a piece titled [Engaging with Theme #2 of BC Childcare Plan: Educators' Obligations and Responsibilities Towards Difference and Diversity](#). Given current national and international developments, it is fitting to return to the issue of ["making childcare culturally safe and inclusive of all children"](#).

On Wednesday, February 23, 2022, many of us wore pink shirts in support of anti-bullying. This day, known as [Pink Shirt Day](#) began in 2007 by two students to support a Grade 9 student bullied for wearing a pink shirt. Yet, the conditions that make bullying, racism and acts of hate continue to flourish in our province, country and beyond. Early Childhood Education needs to tackle racism and other oppressions if we wish to create safe and inclusive spaces for all children. We invite all educators to recommit to the call in the [BC Early Learning Framework](#) that asks to create a curriculum that considers children's well-being and belonging, grounded in a vision of ["respectfully living and learning together"](#). The current events in our world are a stark reminder that we actively need to disrupt pedagogical practices that allow for the ongoing systemic injustices embedded in early childhood education.

Read and follow us on Twitter to continue the conversation

[Join the Conversation](#)

ECPN Events

For updates on upcoming events and viewing recordings of ECPN's most recent activities and public events, please follow the links below. To stay up to date with ECPN's events and news, [subscribe](#) to our website.

Drawing as a Passageway for Movement

A Pedagogist Vlog by Courtney Amber, Chelsea Hann, Frances Smyth, Haideh Hashemi Nouri, Janet Lacroix and Karen Boley in which they came together to engage with their documentation to provoke us to thinking about how we might engage with drawing pedagogically in relation with children, educators, and each other.

[View Vlog](#)



Using Drawing to Visualize Changing Landscapes

On January 26th, 2022, ECPN's fourth Exposure engaged in dialogue with Nick Conbere's work. Using drawing, printmaking and related digital techniques, Nick shared ways he juxtaposes and layers imagery to encourage connections among disparate ideas and to evoke a sense of memory and history.

[View Recording](#)

Conversations V: Pt. 2-"This is so Bad!"

On January 25, 2022, early childhood educators Iryna and Katina joined faculty pedagogist Michelle as they shared their living inquiry. Through investigating with bear scat, they shared their inquiry with the children, educators and families in thinking about the complexities in which we coexist on this land.

[View Recording](#)



Save the date!

More details coming soon



A Conversation with Gunilla Dahlberg: Educating 21st Century Educators

Wednesday May 04, 2022

In partnership with ECEBC, this conversation between Gunilla Dahlberg and Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw will consider the myriad conditions necessary to create a more livable, inclusive and just early education system that reflects the complex pedagogical work undertaken by educators.

More details forthcoming



Early Childhood: Encountering Worlds

Panel with Nicole Ineese-Nash, Fikile Nxumalo, and Peter Moss – Moderated by Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw

More details forthcoming