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The Here and Now Reimagining Early Childhoods In Urgent Times



The Time is Now: Radically reimagining the Role of the Early Childhood Educator in BC

This edition of the Here & Now focuses on ECEBC's new position paper, [The Role of the Early Childhood Educator in British Columbia](#). Here & Now conversations are guided by a commitment to [reimagine early childhoods in urgent times](#) and this is precisely what ECEBC is calling on professionals in the field to do. By reimagining who early childhood educators might become in

our province, this position paper takes a clear stand for early childhood education as an ethical and transformative pedagogical project.

As creators of the [original paper](#) that ECEBC builds on, we support the vision of the role of the educator laid out by ECEBC, the implications of which cannot be overstated in terms of raising expectations for the commitments educators carry with them into everyday practice with young children and families, as well as raising expectations for the type of education and ongoing professional learning [necessary to support educators](#) in realizing this new vision of their role. We congratulate our colleagues at ECEBC for taking such a strong stance at this critical juncture for early childhood education in BC.

In this edition, we hope to provoke deeper consideration of this new vision of the role of the educator in connection with the role of the pedagogist, as a professional figure who walks with educators and young children along the path of radically reconsidering what it means to live well together within the here and now of a rapidly changing world.

How are we, as pedagogists, called to meet with and support ECEBC's new vision of an early childhood educator? What is required for us to respond in a way that brings the commitments named in the position paper to life in everyday practice within unique educational contexts?

To begin, ECEBC's position paper provides us with something tangible to engage in dialogue with in a way that invites all citizens to consider the dispositions and knowledges required of educators in the 21st century. By stating that **educators work with pedagogical commitments to respond to current conditions of our time**, BC early childhood educators are tasked as professionals with always becoming ready to walk with children in responsive ways. This means that the education of current and future early childhood educators must be steeped in educational projects and pedagogical matters. Their education needs to support them to take up the challenging task of engaging in careful, **ethical** and **pedagogical responses** that have the potential to enact **lively curriculum**.

For instance, if we believe educators are obligated to **respond to legacies of colonization**, it becomes critical for early childhood educators to learn Indigenous histories and the legacies of colonization in ways that honour the strengths and resilience of Indigenous peoples. Together we must attend to the history of knowledges and education practices to understand how they are implicated in and maintain colonization. In alignment with [new provincial requirements for secondary students](#) to complete [Indigenous-focused courses](#) prior to graduation, the TRC Calls to Action, and commitments highlighted in the BC Early Learning Framework, this learning must become a requirement of all future early childhood educators.

To **build responsive relationships** in accordance with ECEBC's position paper, we must envision notions of childhood and models of families that go beyond normalization, romanticization and universality. As pedagogists, this document obligates us to consider how families and children are differently situated and respond to the complexities of individual situations. This is a profession

that is far beyond a call for individuals who love children. Rather, it is a profession for those who are ready to commit to walk with children and their families in the everyday messiness, joy, and complexities of life.

Put simply, this position paper offers us a vision of something to strive for in a profession that asks us always to be a 'becoming educator'. This visionary document asks us to continually rethink our pedagogical practices, not to simply critique what was learned in the past but to be open to ethical decisions around pedagogical practices. As pedagogists, we must never forget our own histories and how they are implicated in inequities and other violences within the project of education. We too must honour those who came before us, but not be held to images that maintain the gendered, docile female subject.

ECEBC's release of this important position paper coincided with ECPN co-directors, Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and Kathleen Kummen, conducting in-person community visits around BC to engage in conversations about collaborative work in progress led by community and PSI pedagogists. These visits afforded us new considerations of what ECEBC's visionary document means for communities in every corner of the province. Recognizing the strength of ECEBC's position paper as contingent on the way it gets lived (or not) by educators in the field, we take seriously ECEBC's intention to signal new obligations for ECEs working with young children, families, and colleagues as co-collaborators in the shaping of collective pedagogical modes of engagement within local community contexts in our province.

We must begin to work together, labouring collectively to create the spaces that today's children and those not yet born deserve. This is hard work, but the ECPN believes that educators are competent, strong, powerful and able to collectively world towards this vision.

We conclude by offering questions for educators, student educators, and others in the field to consider as they respond to the position paper in their everyday practice.

1. How do we know and honour the lands on which our ECE centre is located? How can we create space to actively engage with (read and discuss) the TRC Calls to Action? How do we weave [UNDRIP](#) into our centres' policies? What steps are we actually taking to gain fuller understandings how ECE as an educational project is implicated in residential schools?
2. What opportunities are we creating to collectively think/articulate pedagogical commitments that allow us to respond to the current conditions of our times in ethical new ways?
3. How are we building responsive (joyful, respectful) relationships with families and children – in particular those who resist our overtures to be in a relationship? How do we recognize that families and children come with current generational hurts from educators?

4. How can we support educators to think together with children about the problems and challenges they are trying to make sense of? For example, how might we approach learning together about 'sharing' in a centre beyond potential 'behaviour problems' located within individual children? In what ways are we cultivating considerations of the modes of relating required to disrupt inequitable patterns of consolidating power and hoarding wealth/resources in our society? In this way, sharing becomes a problem of the world for deeper consideration within a centre, it is not a problem particular to 4 years old children.

Continuing the Conversation

Revisiting Bill 14, 2021

In light of the release of ECEBC's position paper outlining a vision of the 21st educator in British Columbia, it is important to revisit the [two pieces of early learning and child care](#) legislation enshrined in British Columbia law on October 27, 2021. Hailed by Minister Katrina Chen as "the most important policy shift for families that B.C. has seen in decades", [The Early Learning and Child Care Act](#) and the [Early Childhood Educators Act](#) were created by the government as part of the [ChildCare BC Plan](#) as our province moves toward a more inclusive, accessible and publicly funded system of early childhood education.

What does [Bill 14](#) do to support and make visible the complex, multifaceted work of the educator? How do these new pieces of legislation help create the conditions to help realize the role of the early childhood educator as one that continually shifts and transforms in order to respond to an ever-changing world? Will this legislation be enacted in ways that nurture the ability of educators to rethink their pedagogies and everyday practices, in accordance with the [BC Early Learning Framework](#) (ELF)?

Join the conversation! [ECEBC](#) is encouraging feedback on their visionary paper be sent to ECEBC Executive Director, Emily Gawlick (executive.director@ecebc.ca). ECEBC members are also invited join ECEBC pedagogist Nancy van Groll for a collective reading of the position paper on Tuesday, April 19 at 6:30 pm. If you are not a member but are interested in becoming one and attending this event, contact syggren@ecebc.ca.

Read and follow us on Twitter to continue the conversation!

Join the Conversation

Upcoming 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.

A Conversation with Gunilla Dahlberg: Educating 21st Century Educators

May 4th, 2022 | 8:30am – 10:00am PDT

This timely and relevant conversation is a response to federal and provincial government initiatives and funding announcements regarding a publicly funded early childhood education system.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Encountering Worlds (ECPN Panel Discussion at the ECEBC 2022 Conference)

May 13th, 2022 | 1:00pm – 3:00pm PDT

Panelists: Nicole Inesse-Nash, Fikile Nxumalo and Peter Moss

Discussant: Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw

This session will consider what conditions are necessary to create a livable, inclusive and just early years system that reflects the complex pedagogical work undertaken by early childhood educators.

[REGISTER HERE](#)