



THE ECPN PROJECT AND THE PEDAGOGIST ROLE FAQs – JANUARY 2021

OVERVIEW

What is the ECPN?

The ECPN is the governing body that is establishing and coordinating a provincial network of pedagogists to serve communities by supporting early childhood educators (ECEs) in British Columbia.

What is the aim of the ECPN?

The ECPN's aim is to engage educators in ongoing professional learning that is connected to and meaningful for the context of where they work.

How will the work of the ECPN be evaluated?

Both internal and external evaluations will be conducted. There will be opportunities (e.g., through discussion groups, survey feedback) to hear from participating educators, as well as from the families and communities they work with, about their experiences and learnings.

Is there a cost for my early childhood education centre/organization/program to work with a pedagogist?

No. The ECPN is a project funded by MCFD, and there are no costs for programs or educators.

What prompted or identified this project as a need?

The ECPN expands the pilot work of two MCFD-funded projects. Between 2005 and 2011, the Investigating Quality (IQ) Project, developed by Drs. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and Alan Pence at the University of Victoria, worked to broaden and deepen discussions on quality in the field of early childhood education. In 2011, MCFD provided funding to extend the IQ Project with the Pedagogical Facilitators Pilot Project, which ran until 2018 and was led by Dr. Pacini-Ketchabaw. For an overview, please see the article “Pedagogists and the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network” for ECEBC’s *The Early Childhood Educator Journal* (Winter, 2020).

Where is the ECPN hosted?

As noted above, the ECPN expands the pilot work of two MCFD-funded projects that operated between 2005 and 2018 and was originally connected with Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw’s work at the University of Victoria. Dr. Pacini-Ketchabaw is a professor of early childhood education in the Faculty of Education at Western University. Western University hosts the ECPN.

Is the ECPN a research project?

As noted above, the ECPN is an MCFD-funded project, and ongoing internal and external evaluations will be conducted. Evaluating this project can be understood as research in the sense that both government and the ECPN are learning how best to implement the pedagogist role within the early childhood education sector in British Columbia. If you would like to learn more or review the ECPN pedagogist privacy of information agreement, please email ecpn@uwo.ca.

PEDAGOGISTS

How long does it take to become a pedagogist, and what kind of education do you need?

ECPN pedagogists participate in an intensive education process on an ongoing basis. Becoming a pedagogist takes time. ECPN pedagogists have degrees in early childhood education or a related field and a minimum of 3 years of experience working in a leadership role (e.g., education director, lead teacher, practicum supervisor, teaching faculty).

How do pedagogists work with educators' various interests, understandings, and philosophies?

The ECPN understands that educators working with pedagogists have different interests, experiences, understandings and educational philosophies. Pedagogists work to support collaborative thinking and the creation of a shared pedagogical project - which does *not* mean everyone is thinking the same or doing the same work. Pedagogists endeavour to support educators' thinking with the BC Early Learning Framework in ways that connect to the context of their work.

How do pedagogists include children with additional needs/support?

Pedagogists do not work in the same capacity as educators (i.e., pedagogists are not employees of the child care centre in which they work, nor are they counted in the centre's ratio calculation). Their role is also different from the role of a supported child development consultant. While pedagogists attend to the creation of pedagogical spaces and the making of collective curricula through pedagogical narrations within early childhood programs, they do not conduct individual assessments of children or educators. For examples of inquiry projects, please see: <http://commonworlds.net/childrens-relations-with-place/facetiming-common-worlds/> and <https://movingpedagogies.blog.ryerson.ca/>

How long do centres/programs have access to working with a pedagogist?

In the current phase of the pedagogist rollout, the intention is for pedagogists to work with centres from September 2020 to June 2021. Our aim is for pedagogists to continue with their centres next school year.

How will a pedagogist work with me/my centre/organization/program?

A pedagogist's work is about collective curriculum engagement, critical thinking, and fostering curiosity. It is not about the individual assessment of children or educators.

The majority of a pedagogist's work is supporting the educators within a cluster of early years programs. Generally, this involves regularly meeting with educators in program, alongside their work with children.

Pedagogists work with a cluster of ECE centres/programs. Pedagogists might work with a cluster of programs spread out over a large geographic area, are all located within one centre/institution, or something in-between those two ends of the spectrum. The specific configuration of the pedagogist's cluster will shape the specific engagements with the centre/organization/program.

Pedagogists visit programs regularly (e.g., once a week, every two weeks) to work with educators and children on a pedagogical project/inquiry, to think together about curriculum and pedagogy, and to think with educators about their engagement with the BC Early Learning Framework.

Pedagogists create opportunities for educators in their early years cluster to think together (e.g., online discussion group, monthly learning circle gatherings).

Pedagogists share resources (e.g., an article to read, a video to watch, a podcast to listen to) and ideas (e.g., introduce a new material, suggest a way to organize the physical space, reflections on a visit) with the educators in their early years cluster. These resources and ideas connect with the interests/questions/project/desires of the whole cluster and/or each program/centre.



How will the ECPN pedagogists work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The ECPN is committed to following all rules, regulations and guidelines concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the CDC guidelines (July 8, 2020) to "**minimize the number of additional adults** entering the centre, unless that person is providing care and/or supporting inclusion of a child in care (e.g. supportive child care assistants, speech-language pathologist, etc.)", in-person work with programs is not possible. However, *until the CDC guidelines change*, the ECPN has put in place processes for pedagogists to work virtually with educators:

- virtual meetings (e.g., through Zoom), one-on-one, with teams
- virtually joining into a program (e.g., bringing pedagogist via zoom to 'observe' the program)
- virtually running learning circles with an early years program team or their whole cluster of centres
- meeting in person with educators only, *outdoors with social distancing*, as per group size guidelines (e.g., currently, that is no larger than a small group of 2 to 6)
- dialogue and information sharing via email
- asynchronous discussion groups on the Hub for pedagogists' cluster of programs

In addition to working with programs in their clusters, pedagogists will extend their work to the larger BC early childhood community by offering:

- resources via the ECPN website (e.g., blog writings, pedagogical vignettes (reports), videos about pedagogy and curriculum making)
- asynchronous online discussion groups for the sector/community educators
- a virtual pedagogist-led series for the entire sector/community educators
- short pieces/updates through CCRR program newsletter

What if everyone in my centre/organization/program is not interested in working with a pedagogist?

Not everyone in **your centre/organization/program** must participate. Pedagogists will work with those who are *open* to the process of thinking together about pedagogy and curriculum. Pedagogists work to grow relationships and to think collectively; this work happens over time. The work of a pedagogist may look different across their cluster. A pedagogist may work with an entire centre/program/organization, or with some individuals within a centre/program/organization.

What is an inquiry or pedagogical project and how/why does a pedagogist work with an inquiry?

Inquiries can be understood as focused pedagogical projects with intentional questions/curiosities/ interests. For example, inquiries might focus on:

- a particular material (e.g., paint, clay, charcoal, blocks),
- a particular place (e.g., an outdoor space, a place in the community, a spot on campus),
- a particular activity (e.g., working with textiles, walking/tracking, dance),
- particular relationships (e.g., with raccoons, with deer, with trees),
- particular ECE routines and practices (e.g., snack/lunchtime, circle time, indoor/outdoor transitions (the cloakroom), nap time, educator break time)
- or a particular question (e.g., What are our images of the child/educator/family? How do we understand and practice care? What do the conditions of our times demand of us as educators?).

Please see the [BC Early Learning Framework](#) – Section Three – Living and Learning Together for a discussion of inquiry work.



What are pedagogical narrations?

The practice of documenting children's learning, often called pedagogical documentation or learning stories, is commonplace in many child care centres in various places, including New Zealand, Australia, Sweden, Italy and cities in North America. [The BC Early Learning Framework](#) describes pedagogical narrations as "the process of noticing and collecting moments from daily practice and sharing these with colleagues, children, and families to make children's learning processes and inquiries, as well as educators' pedagogical choices, visible and open to interpretation and reflection" (p. 3).

ECPN pedagogists work with educators to engage with pedagogical narrations not as an individual assessment, but as a critically reflective process integral to living collective curriculum inquiries. Pedagogists will work with each of the program/centre/classroom's privacy protocols regarding documentation, including protocols for making, storing, and sharing documentation.

How/why does a pedagogist work with pedagogical narrations?

Pedagogists lead a pedagogical project with educators and children, create opportunities for dialogue with their early years hub/cluster, and share resources/ideas that connect with the interests, questions, project, and desires of the whole hub/each program. Pedagogical narrations play an important role in this work.

Because a pedagogist engages in collective curriculum inquiries, rather than the individual assessment of children or educators, they create pedagogical narrations with careful pedagogical and curricular intentions.

PROGRAM SELECTION – COMMUNITY/CCRR STREAM

How does an early years centre/organization/program get to work with a pedagogist?

Currently, the ECPN collaborates with 17 CCRR Program agencies that host one or more pedagogists to work the CCRR Stream. In collaboration, the ECPN directors and CCRR representative(s) in each participating CCRR community will explore the most suitable and effective ways to reach out to early years programs to assess interest in working with a pedagogist.

What are the criteria for choosing a centre/organization/program to work with a pedagogist?

Primarily, we engage with early years centres that work with children *before* school age. Any early years program may express their interest in working with a pedagogist. If a community has more interested programs than one pedagogist can reach, programs will be selected based on factors such as program location, size and type. An expression of interest form is available to fill out and submit to participating CCRR Programs. Early years centres/organizations/programs will be selected that the pedagogist will work with regularly.

Who chooses the centres/organizations/programs to work with a pedagogist in the CCRR stream?

The ECPN directors, the CCRR Program representative and the pedagogist will select those interested programs based on the criteria described above.

My program has not yet participated in the ECPN. Will we be able to work with a pedagogist?

Programs interested in working with an ECPN pedagogist may contact ecpn@uwo.ca. We aim to continue to grow the ECPN and educators' access to pedagogists across BC.

How will I know if my program has been selected to work with a pedagogist in the CCRR stream?

If your centre/program/organization applied to work with a pedagogist, the contact person in the application will be contacted by the pedagogist to discuss 'next steps' for working with a pedagogist (e.g., setting a date to meet, learning more about the program).

