



THE ECPN PROJECT AND THE FACULTY 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.

FACULTY PEDAGOGISTS

Who is the Post-Secondary Institution (PSI) Faculty Pedagogist?

ECPN Post-secondary Institution (PSI) faculty pedagogists are teaching faculty from post-secondary institutions working alongside practicum students and mentor educators within childcare centres/agencies.

How do faculty pedagogists work with both the practicum students and educators?

Faculty pedagogists offer meaningful and professional learning opportunities that help students feel welcome and valued in the centres where they are engaged in their practicum experience. As well, faculty pedagogists work with educators and students in their centres to engage collectively and think deeply in pedagogical dialogue while responding to current and ongoing conditions. Faculty pedagogists will spend time to create the conditions to develop dedicated centres for practicum placements for students.

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

Currently, ECPN collaborates with 7 public post-secondary ECE programs/departments that host one or more faculty pedagogists to work within the PSI Stream. Faculty pedagogists, in collaboration with their ECE programs/department and the ECPN directors, choose one or two early years centres that are their current or future dedicated practicum sites to work with a faculty pedagogist.

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

Faculty pedagogists work specifically with centres that are (becoming) dedicated practicum sites. Faculty pedagogists reach out to their practicum sites to coordinate potential involvement. Centres interested in working with an ECPN pedagogist are encouraged to visit the ECPN website to learn more about the (currently) three streams of service delivery. Interested centres may also contact ecpn@uwo.ca. We aim to continue to grow the ECPN and educators' access to pedagogists across BC.

THE ROLE OF ALL PEDAGOGISTS

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/facetimeing-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 centres 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 newsletters (e.g., local CCRR Program)



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.

