

Winter 2018

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Step into new beginnings.....

What's new

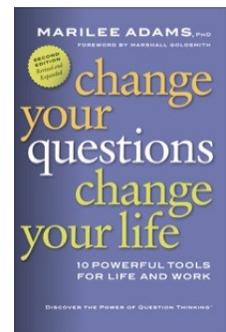
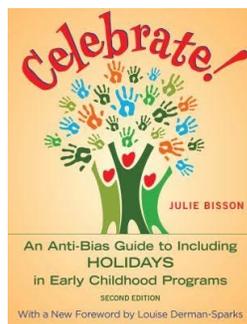
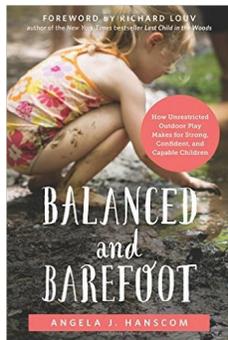
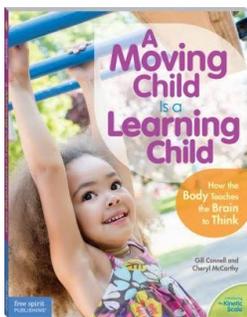
Did you know? The Engagement process for IIQ is changing. IIQ staff will be collaborating with program supervisors in a mentoring role with three scheduled visits over the year. The annual Engagement Submission will become an Action Plan developed by each program.



Did you know? In the past couple of years, **Nursery Two @ St. John** has added an infant room with 10 spaces, **Compass Early Learning and Care** has opened a new child care program in Millbrook, **Pearson Child Care** has moved to a new site in P.A.C.E.—the old PCVS building, and **YMCA Lakefield Child Care** and the **PFRC Lakefield Hub** is moving into newly renovated space at the Lakefield District Public School. Congratulations on these changes!



NEW! Check out some of the new books in the Resource Library: www.investinginquality.ca



“Children are the living message we send to a time we will not see.”

John F. Kennedy



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Early Learning and Child Care Peterborough

Growing a Program - Oshkiigmong Early Learning Centre

In 2011, Michelle Leonhardi came back from a maternity leave at Curve Lake Child Care Centre. Within a short period of time she was asked to step into the role of Program Coordinator and all that this role requires. Over the past six years, this program, like many others in our community, has undergone significant changes. These included the change over to the Ministry of Education and the updating of the Day Nurseries Act.



At the same time, new ideas from around the globe were becoming more widely shared and accessible. There were many voices talking about what child care programs and curriculum might look like. The influence from places such as Reggio Emilia in Italy, the Scandinavian countries and New Zealand and Australia, were filtering through and inspiring early childhood educators to reflect on long held practices and beliefs. Michelle and her team decided to step up to the challenge.

“I decided to check out this new “Emergent Curriculum” that was the talk. I did a little research and started sending some of the staff to workshops. There wasn’t a lot out there or maybe I wasn’t looking in the right places.”

They sought out opportunities for learning. Along the way they connected with Lorrie Baird, a long-time advocate for quality child care. One of the early topics they studied was looking at their values – both as individuals and as a program. Sometimes we get bogged down with the day to day tasks of running a program and can lose sight of the importance of having a bigger vision for the future.

“We started with our Values...we discussed our Why’s...we discussed our DREAMS!!!!”



- Imagine a program where children.....
- Imagine a program where educators.....
- Imagine a program where families and community.....

They were given the opportunity to reminisce about their own childhoods.

“.....what was important to us back when we were children, where did we play, what was our favourite “toy”? What we found was most of us enjoyed being outside more than a “toy”. Take time to remember what it was like being a child. Draw pictures, play with clay, buttons, loose materials and SING!!!!”

As they began to explore their new direction, they landed on these four areas to transform their spaces and their practice:

- ◆ *Our children and our environment*
- ◆ *How are children using the space?*
- ◆ *What materials are they connected with and spend the most time with?*
- ◆ *How does the environment support relationships?*

Growing a Program - Oshkiigmong Early Learning Centre

From the Institute held in September 2018: The Infant, Toddler, Preschool School Age rooms:



Through this process, there were many conversations, many struggles with re-thinking old practices:

"Change is hard, it's "scary". For First Nation People we tend to dislike any changes being put to us. This is a natural feeling. Not just for First Nation People but for everyone as a whole."

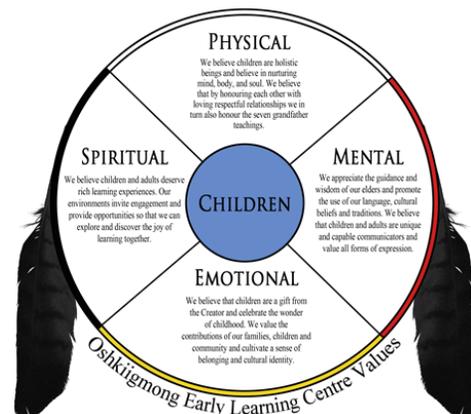
"(we were) challenged..., made (to) think outside the box.... thinking about environments, our values, what was important to us, our children and our centre."

*The school age was the first of our environments to change. Once we started, we looked at the children's interests and adding more of what they were playing with, taking out what they weren't playing with, adding new ideas. **We noticed that the children's behaviour changed."***

Along the way, the name of the centre was changed from Curve Lake to Oshkiigmong Early Learning Centre. To celebrate their successes and share the story with others, they held an Institute and study tour in early September of 2017. Their journey continues.

"I can't express enough that everyone learns differently and everyone is exactly where they are supposed to be when they start their journey."

Michelle Leonhardi



Exploring STEM

Susan Scoffin RECE

At the Early Learning Network in June, 2017, staff from Strath shared their recent experiences exploring STEM. What is STEM? It is an acronym.

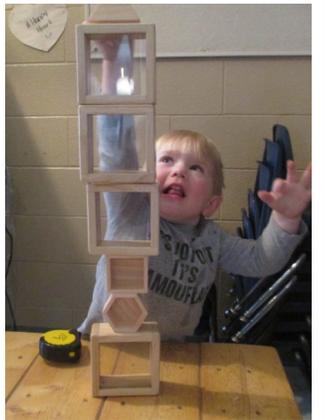
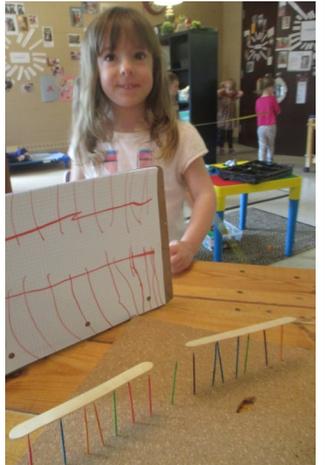
* Science * Technology * Engineering * Math

STEM is all around us. Cooking is about chemical reactions...hopefully delicious ones! Gardening is about natural science. Art and crafts are often full of mathematics. In their play children are constantly exploring principles of STEM. As educators, we see it every day but often without realizing it. Researcher and writer Alison Gopnik describes children as scientists:

- A baby who drops a toy from their high chair is exploring gravity. (Does this fall straight to the floor each time? Will it break, bounce etc.? What sound does it make? Will someone pick this up for me?)
- A toddler who watches ants at work in the sand is studying natural science.
- The preschooler who builds ramps in the block area is exploring STEM. (How do I support the ramp? How far will something travel? How can I make it go faster?)

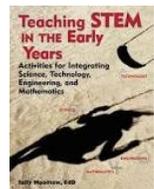
In recent years, there has been an effort to bring an awareness of these topics in programs for young children. But don't let the titles put you off!

- **Science:** science is about the physical world - about observing and describing and sometimes doing experiments. It is about properties and the way things work and covers just about everything. Every time you ask a question there is probably a connection to science.
- **Technology** is about how humans make things to make it easier to do things like go places, transport things, grow and harvest, communicate with each other etc.
- **Engineering** is about materials and how things work. There are many types of engineering.
- **Mathematics** is a way of describing the world. It includes geometry, numbers, patterns, probability, managing data and measurement.



The staff at Strath added a variety of new loose parts which naturally lend themselves to the exploration of STEM and schemas. While most educators are already bringing in and supporting elements of STEM, the discussion recognized that we may not be aware of this. When we are aware, we will notice it throughout our programs. We can use language to support it and make sure we are bringing visibility to it in our environments.

Note: The Resource Library has a copy of the book 'Teaching STEM in the Early Years' for those who may be interested.



For information on professional learning events, contact Katherine Orgill :
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For full details and registration information, visit www.investinginquality.ca
Check periodically to see new additions.



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