



Early Learning and Child Care

MONTHLY E-NEWS

FEBRUARY 2024

[MOVING FORWARD
ON CHILD CARE
PRIORITIES](#)

[SPOTLIGHT ON
SUCCESS](#)

[ANNOUNCEMENTS
AND REMINDERS](#)

[EARLY LEARNING
AND CHILD CARE
DIVISION UPDATE](#)

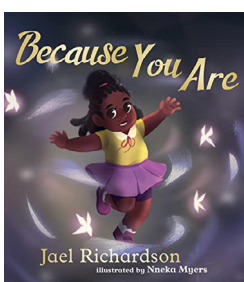
February is **I Love to Read Month** and **Black History Month**:

Celebrating all things 'reading' and a time to honour the legacy of Black people in Canada and their communities.

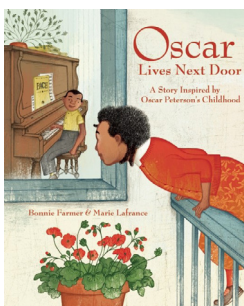
Thank you to our sector for taking part in many opportunities and events this month, including collaborating with community members to join in on the festivities! Continue to celebrate literacy and honour Black history throughout the year with outstanding books by various Canadian authors and illustrators.

Below are a few options to consider. These books are available through local libraries and booksellers:

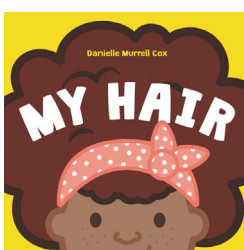
BLACK 
HISTORY
& **I LOVE to**
READ
month



Because You Are is a children's book about self-esteem, inner beauty, and making a difference in the world we live in. This picture book was originally conceived as a letter to Ontario author **Jael Richardson's** younger self—with a focus on being joyful and loving herself as a young Black girl.



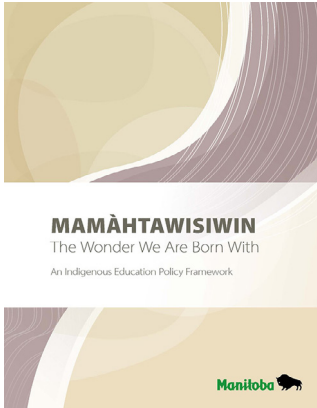
Oscar Lives Next Door is a Story Inspired by **Oscar Peterson's** childhood written by Bonnie Farmer and illustrated by Marie Lafrance. This book provides a fictionalized account of jazz pianist Oscar Peterson's childhood in Montreal.



My Hair is a board book written and illustrated by Quebec author **Danielle Murrell Cox**. It is a celebration of natural hair for babies and toddlers.

Learn more about Canadian children's book authors and illustrators at [Scholastic Canada](#) and the [Manitoba Reading Association](#). View more information as it relates to Black History Month and the early learning and child care system at [Child Care Now](#).

Developing an Indigenous Learning Framework for Early Learning and Child Care—Building from *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework*



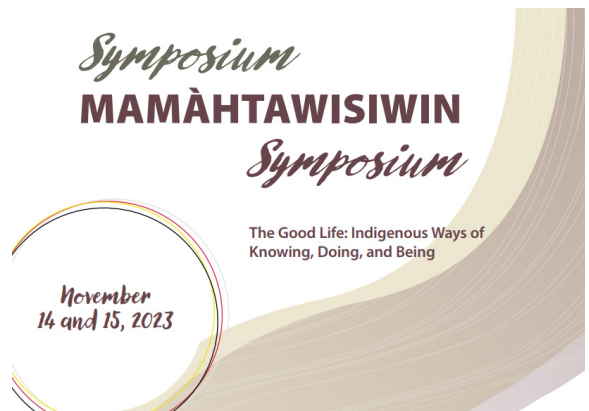
Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework implemented in 2021 supports the holistic achievements of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners by helping Manitoba educators incorporate Indigenous languages, cultures, and identities into their teaching and practices, setting Indigenous children and students up for success in school and beyond.

In keeping with the commitment to build an Indigenous-inclusive early learning education system for Manitoba, the department is beginning a consultative process to develop an Indigenous learning framework for early learning and child care, building from *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework*.

Mamàhtawisiwin provides tools to support a deeper understanding of and progress along a path of Truth and Reconciliation by focusing on four policy directions including, as follows:

1. authentic involvement such as promotion of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and community/family involvement
2. putting children and students at the centre
3. understanding world views, values, identities, traditions, and contemporary lifestyles
4. inclusive and culturally safe learning environments

This past fall, the department hosted the first [Mamàhtawisiwin Symposium](#) on November 14 and 15, 2023, to engage on the Indigenous Education Policy Framework and consider opportunities for its expansion to child care. The symposium included over 130 representatives from the early learning child care sector, along with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, students, teachers, superintendents, senior post-secondary administrators, government staff, and community partners. The department also hired an Indigenous Inclusion Consultant and a Policy Analyst to work within Indigenous Excellence (formerly Indigenous Inclusion Directorate) to support our efforts to develop an Indigenous learning framework for the early learning and child care sector.



This month the department is beginning regional consultations with child care providers who identify as Indigenous or as offering Indigenous programming. Parents, Elders and Knowledge Keepers will also be consulted in the coming weeks to help inform the development of an Indigenous learning framework for the early learning and child care system. Additional consultations will be held throughout the coming months.

To learn more about *Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With—An Indigenous Education Policy Framework* visit: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/iid/mamahtawisiwin.html.

Competencies and Certification Review Project—Consultations to Begin

In partnership with MNP, the department is excited to introduce the Competencies and Certification Review project, an important initiative under Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Agreements with Canada to increase quality and inclusivity of child care services throughout the province. As the landscape of early learning and child care continues to evolve, it is essential to ensure that child care professionals are supported with leading practice skills and competencies to meet the diverse needs of children and families.

The primary objective of this project is to enhance certification processes and competencies, aligning them with current educational needs and professional standards. The department recognizes the importance of addressing cultural needs and inclusivity within the learning landscape, as well as integrating Indigenous perspectives into training curricula.

To achieve these goals effectively, all education stakeholders are invited to participate in a survey that will help us:

- Create clear and comprehensive career pathways for Early Childhood Educators.
- Identify opportunities to enhance certification processes and competencies, including accessibility and transparency of certification procedures.
- Recommend processes for ongoing professional development to keep child care professionals updated with the latest research and best practices.

Your insights and perspectives are crucial as we work together to shape the future of early learning and child care in Manitoba. Watch for the *Early Learning and Child Care—Competencies and Certification Review* survey available mid-March on [EngageMB](#). The survey link will also be shared directly with education and early learning and child care stakeholders.

The Values that Motivate Men in Early Learning and Child Care

Men continue to be significantly underrepresented in the early learning and child care sector. Despite years, even decades, of effort to improve equity and opportunity for women in the workplace, child care work is still perceived by many as a profession almost exclusively for women. There are many reasons behind this, but it's often rooted in 'traditional' views of masculinity and femininity.

Don Milberg, Executive Director of Pinkham Daycare, graduated from Red River College Polytechnic in 1990 as an ECE III. He was one of only four men in a class of 76, and only 21 students who made it through the program.

"So many people still think that we're, you know, glorified babysitters, says Milberg. Our pay is getting better, but we're still undervalued. We are nowhere near Europe regarding the respect that the field has in those regions. Western culture has always put the male as 'the provider,' but that's slowly changing.

I had been in Education [in university] and realized I didn't want to be a teacher. I was with high school students and had an epiphany; they've already established their personalities by the time they're teenagers. If we really want to make an impact, we must get back to the grassroots, so to speak, when they're younger. We teach daily [at Pinkham] and everything we do is educational. That's why I'm in early childhood education—because that's something I value.

I've always been an old spirit, I believe in ethics and morals. What I bring to the table as a male working in early childhood education is a little bit of a blast from the past. I like proper language, being respectful to the elders that come in our doors, and pointing out to the kids, 'You know what? Your mom, your grandmother, your aunt, your guardian is doing an amazing job! Give them a hug!

I believe in being a positive male role model in this area. It's good for our children to have that guidance. It's good for them to see displays of happiness and emotions in a positive way, and to see the appropriate way to handle conflict. Don't ask me to fix something, I'm not very handy, but I can relate to kids very well. I'm not afraid to get goofy, even as the director.

Ultimately, it's most important to have diversity of people in the child care profession who are truly dedicated to the well-being and early the education of children.

You want people who are in early child education to want to be here. We're hiring the best person regardless of your sex, regardless of your race. People have to be motivated from within."



Marco Valera graduated from Red River College Polytechnic in 2019 as an ECE II and has worked with Aleph-Bet Child Life Enrichment Program for the past eight years, starting as a volunteer and later a CCA.

"The staff told me how well I communicated and built relationships with the children. It was my gift, how well I was able to understand them.

During my studies at Red River, my instructor, Marc Battle, had a big impact on who I am as an educator today. He gave me confidence that men belong in this field just as much as women. Being a male and working in the field has been a constant challenge. I hear the discrimination; that men 'can't' care for children. There have been times I've second-guessed pursuing my career but knowing that I can help children everyday made me stick to what I do.

Being the only male staff at my centre gives the children a different view of the caregiver. Being a 'father figure' to the children gives them more opportunities for rough and tumble play and different ways to relate to a male staff member for the older school-age children. I believe once other men start seeing how much of an impact we have in this field, it will have an impact on the amount of men starting to work on the floor and impact kids."

If you are interested in helping to champion men in early learning and child care and connect with other men in the sector, contact **Ron Blatz** with the Men in Early Learning and Child Care (MECC) support group at ron.d.blatz@gmail.com.

If you would like to share some of your facility's success stories, email us at CDInfo@gov.mb.ca with the subject line "Success Story." We will continue to feature some of the interesting and innovative projects in future editions!

Listening to Manitoba's Early Childhood Educators

Meet the ELCC Team—Crystal Carvalho, Policy and Program Analyst, ECE III

Ever since Grade 1, I wanted to be a Grade 1 teacher. Mme. Farion—I remember how she said, "'Q' and 'U' go together like me and my best friend!"—just made learning fun.

After high school, I was excited to start working and saving money for education. I went into the childcare field, and I really fell in love with that age group, the four and five-year-olds and the preschoolers, and how absorbent their brains are and how much they can learn.

I started pursuing my education when I was pregnant with my daughter, taking courses through distance education. Just after I had my third child in 2010, I was ready for a new challenge but wanted to remain in the sector and grow my skills through the regulation side of things.

I have worked exactly 25 years in the sector this year and have been with Early Learning and Child Care since 2011. When I first started as a child care coordinator, we were in the bilingual service centre in Saint Boniface and provided support to Francophone facilities. Working with children, being able to incorporate songs, and learning and French was something families really appreciated.

For someone just starting in childcare, I would say never stop learning. Do what you can to keep learning about child development and to remember the impact you will have on children's lives going into this career. I see children I knew from child care in the community, because now they're getting older and getting jobs, and then they're like, "I remember you from the child care centre I went to!" Seeing them mature and grow up into careers of their own is a rewarding part of the field. I'm not sure Mme. Farion would remember me, but I hope she knows that her career was inspiring to her students and hopefully she'd be proud.



Crystal Carvalho, Policy and Program Analyst, ECE III

Announcements and Reminders

Monthly Attendance Reporting/Facility Reporting

Reminder to submit Facility (Child Attendance) Reports within 30 days of the end of each 28 day reporting period as per [The Child Care Regulation \(M.R. 62/86\), Section 42.1](#).

- Include the days attended and absent days for all children (subsidized and non-subsidized) on your *Facility Reports*.
- To see a listing of reporting periods, visit [Reporting Periods](#) or look for the **Subsidy Reporting Period Calendar** in Child Care Online under *Facility Report*.
- Submit your facility reports in Child Care Online. To access, visit: www.gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/centres_homeproviders/cco_login.html.

Destination Canada Education—Online Job Fair, March 1 and 2, 2024

Canadian employers seeking to hire francophone early childhood educators and assistants, primary or secondary school teachers, or teachers of French as a second language are invited to participate as exhibitors.

Representatives of the Early Learning and Child Care Division are also registered to participate to explain requirements for classification and employment in Manitoba.

Learn more at <https://destinationcanadaeducation2024.vfairs.com/>.

The first Canadian International Conference For Men in Early Years and Fathers and Caring: A Man For All Reasons—April 15, 2024

This empowering event will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia. Men and women from all walks of life are invited to participate and discuss opportunities to address recruitment, outdoor play, nature play, the importance of fatherhood and men in early years. Keynote speakers from England, Scotland, Wales, USA, and Canada.

More information, including registration, is available at www.eventbrite.com/e/a-man-for-all-reasons-tickets-749386534297?aff=oddtcreator.

Department representatives attend First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Conference

On Thursday and Friday, February 1 and 2, department representatives attended the First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Conference at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg, hosted by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. “Our Ways, Our Beadwork: Supporting and Strengthening Early Learning and Child Care” was the theme of this year’s conference and guided much of the programming and workshops available to attendees.

“I found the conference inspiring, uplifting, and thought-provoking,” said Maxine Lam, Senior Policy Analyst with Early Learning and Child Care Division. “The diversity of the sessions kept everyone interested and engaged. I was excited to learn about the Naskapi Niistim outdoor learning program that celebrates the Naskapi way of life, the Caribou, the land, the language, and the knowledge of their Elders. Loretta Robinson spoke so eloquently about her journey of creating and introducing her outdoor learning program in her community and the impact on her young learners.”

“My biggest takeaway from the conference is learning about all the amazing people and projects that work towards fostering and incorporating First Nation cultures and traditions as part of their early learning and child care programming.”



Clockwise from top left: Grand Chief Cathy Merrick; children with Riverbend’s Anishinaabe Hoop Troop; ELCC staff: Policy and Program Analyst, Carla Fleury-Charles; Workforce Curriculum Consultant, Shelly Marques; Senior Policy Analyst, Joanna Flores; Senior Policy Analyst, Maxine Lam; Child Care Program Subsidy Clerk, Jiefang Zhao; hoop dancer, Rylee Sandberg; Strong Warrior Girls Anishinaabe Singers, Riverbend School.

ELCC Staff Making Connections at Career Fair Canada

On Thursday, February 15, staff from the Early Learning and Child Care Division (ELCC) attended Career Fair Canada at the RBC Convention Centre. Lindsay Ortlieb, Robyn McEvoy, Glen Arnould, and Isabelle Raharijaona dedicated their day to meeting with hundreds of job seekers, emphasizing the advantages of a career in early childhood education. As part of their outreach, they also raised awareness of the department’s role as the regulator for licensed child care in the province, paths people can take to obtain certification as early childhood educators, and drawing attention to opportunities available in Winnipeg and around Manitoba.



Left to Right: Senior Policy Analyst, Robyn McEvoy; Bilingual Child Care Coordinator, Isabelle Raharijaona; Child Care Coordinator, Glen Arnould; Acting Policy Analyst, Lindsay Ortlieb

Early Learning and Child Care Division Update

Staffing Updates

We continue to welcome new staff into our division to support Manitoba's priorities for early learning and child care and support career growth and development of existing staff.

Serif Akinlabi joined the Financial Accountability and Reporting Branch as Manager, Accounting Services on February 20. Serif joins us with over 10 years of experience in the private sector, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting with Honours, and experience in information systems management, financial planning, analysis and reporting, treasury management, and SAP implementation.

Tatiana Guido joined the Financial Accountability and Reporting Branch, as a Financial Analyst in the Accounting Services unit on February 26. Tatiana holds an Advanced Business Management Certificate from The University of Winnipeg as well as a Masters degree in International Relations, and brings with her several years of expertise in grants management, financial planning, and accountability within the non-profit sector.

Nikhil Prabhu joined the Financial Accountability and Reporting Branch on February 12 as Senior Financial Analyst in the Financial Reporting unit. Nikhil has a Bachelor Degree in Chemical Engineering and a Post Graduate Diploma in Business and Finance, and has worked in the financial sector for close to 10 years.

Maria Verbrugge, Lisa Mallery, and Karen Popowich joined the Licensing and Compliance Team on February 12, as Child Care Coordinators. Our new coordinators come with dedicated years of service in the child care sector. While Maria will support the Winnipeg region, Lisa will be based in Brandon and Karen will be based in Dauphin, Manitoba.

Staff Role Transitions

Marilyn Sacramento, Senior Financial Analyst within the Financial Reporting Unit, will be moving to the Accounting Services team and **Michael Chen**, Financial Clerk with Accounting Services Unit, will move to the Financial Reporting Unit as a Financial Analyst.

Farewell to Jane Delos Reyes who has accepted a position in Manitoba Housing, Addictions and Homelessness. Her last day was February 23. Jane has been instrumental in recent key process improvements her warm personality and pragmatism will be missed. We wish her the very best in her new role!

For the list of key department contacts, visit: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aboutus.html.

We Value Your Input!

Would you like to share some of your facility's ideas or tell us about a program or celebration at your facility? Would you like to share a quote about why you love being an early childhood educator? Email us at CDInfo@gov.mb.ca with the subject line "ELCC Newsletter" and you could be featured in our next edition.

For general inquires about the Early Learning and Child Care Division:

Website: www.manitoba.ca/childcare

Email: cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca

Phone: 204-945-0776

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