

Muskoka ELCC
Connections and Updates Bulletin
July 2026

We're happy to share the latest news and learning opportunities from the District Municipality of Muskoka ELCC team. Please share widely with your colleagues and teams

⏱️ A QUICK UPDATE

You may have noticed a shift happening with our emails! Based on feedback from across the ELCC community, we're splitting what's historically been one newsletter into two distinct pieces going forward. The newsletter itself is moving to seasonal issues, four times a year, with a more in-depth format: think themes in practice, the kind of thing you settle in with a cup of tea. In addition, these biweekly 'bulletins' will be the quick-hit spot for must-know and nice-to-know events, opportunities, and updates, easy to scan on a lunch break. Both will have PDF versions linked for easy printing.

🖂 AN INVITATION TO SHARE

We want this space to exist as a dialogue, not a one-way broadcast. If there's something happening in your centre or community, an event, an opportunity, a timely resource, anything you think the broader Muskoka ELCC community would want to know, we'd love to include it! Send it our way!

👀 FREE STUFF! LOOSE PARTS & BEAUTIFUL JUNK!

Looking to refresh your loose parts collection or inspire the imaginations of children and adults alike in your program? Steph Turner has put together a community Padlet of available loose parts and "beautiful junk" from across Muskoka, a living, growing list of materials educators are looking to share or pass along. Browse the Padlet here. Just comment below the item or reach out to your MELP Case Manager or Home Visitor and we will be sure to get you the item(s) you want!

🎙️ CALL FOR VOICES – PEDAGOGY OF CARE 2026

Got something happening in your practice that you'd love to talk about, big or small? This is an open invitation, not just for the "polished" stuff. Maybe it's a tiny shift you made that worked, a question you're still chewing on, or an idea you can't stop bringing up at staff meetings. We want to hear it!

Two ways to share:

- **Lightning Opener:** A relaxed 5-minute share with 20–40 people before one of our main speakers.
- **Poster Presentation:** Set up a simple display and chat with folks one-on-one over lunch, low-pressure, science-fair style.

You don't need to be an expert; your own experience is enough, and our team will help you prepare! All selected participants receive a $150 honourarium. **Submit by July 12**!

🗓️ SAVE THE DATE

Pedagogy of Care 2026 | October 23–24, 2026 | Bayview Wildwood Resort, Severn Bridge

Mark your calendars! Two days of connection, learning, and inspiration are on the way. Registration and the full speaker lineup coming soon.

💻 FREE ONLINE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING — JULY 2026

Métis Nation of Ontario: **Toddlers and Land-Based Learning**
Free, self-paced. How play schemas, intentional planning, and time outdoors support curiosity, connection, and children's mental health. Available anytime.

Outdoor Learning: **Activities & Resources for Nature-based Learning** — July 14, 7–8 pm, recording provided to registrants.

Early Childhood Webinars: **HuUbuntu: I Am Because We Are - Reconceptualizing Family Engagement** — July 9, 2:00–3:30 pm, recording provided to registrants.
Explore HuUbuntu, the African relational philosophy of "I am because we are," and reimagine family engagement as interconnectedness rather than checklist.

Early Childhood Webinars: **Creating Connections with Teen Parents: Practical Strategies to Engage and Empower Young Families in Early Childhood Settings** — July 15, 2:00–3:30 pm, recording provided to registrants.
Trauma-informed, culturally responsive strategies for building trust and confidence with young families navigating both adolescence and parenthood.

Early Childhood Webinars: **Play-Based Literacy Through Storytelling and Storyacting** — July 16, 2:00–3:30 pm, recording provided to registrants.
Research-backed, hands-on strategies for building vocabulary, narrative skills, and print awareness through child-led storytelling and storyacting.

Early Childhood Webinars: **Good Grief! Effective Practices for Supporting Conversations about Death in Early Childhood Settings** — July 23, 2:00–3:30 pm, recording provided to registrants.
A supportive look at reflecting on your own values around loss and building sensitive, practical language for talking with young children about death.

Autism Ontario: **Navigating a New Diagnosis (Children Under 5)** — August 12, 12:00–1:00 pm
For caregivers and professionals. Covers services, support networks, and the Ontario Autism Program.

Words to Walk With is a new weekly language resource from FIREFLY's **Indigenous Professional Learning Opportunities** program, introducing one Indigenous phrase a week to weave into greetings, daily routines, and conversations with children, families, and colleagues. It's a gentle invitation for all of us, not just programs serving Indigenous families, to think about how we might incorporate the Indigenous languages of this land into our everyday early learning spaces (work that speaks directly to TRC Calls to Action 13–15 on language revitalization). A quick search pairing each phrase with its language often turns up lovely pronunciation videos too, just look for genuine sources.

We are grateful to live, work, and play on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg — including the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. We also acknowledge the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee Nations who have walked this territory, the Wahta Mohawk community near Bala, the Moose Deer Point First Nation along Twelve Mile Bay, and the Métis whose roots run deep in the Moon River and Georgian Bay area. We honour the stewardship of these lands and waters throughout the ages and carry that responsibility into the work we do with young children and families every day.

Miigwetch, Niá:wen, Merci, Thank you.