

# British Columbia Early Learning Framework





**S**o my story is about an open-ended early childhood education in a centre that occupies and contributes to an unfinished world, a place of infinite possibilities, giving constant rise to wonder and surprise, magic moments and goose bumps, and a source of hope and renewed belief in the world: a place, too, where 'freedom, democracy and solidarity are practiced and where the value of peace is promoted'. (Moss, 2013, p. 82)

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# Introduction

The revised Early Learning Framework is the culmination of a collaborative process that included **early childhood educators**, primary teachers, academics, Indigenous organizations, Elders, government, and other professionals. Hundreds of people across the province contributed their feedback on drafts of this framework through provincial regional sessions, town hall conference calls, an online survey, advisory group sessions, and numerous consultation meetings. The process has been lively, with rich discussions that brought forward many perspectives. Central to these discussions was the acknowledgement that this framework has been, and continues to be, vital to early years practices for **educators**, children, and families in B.C.

The first Early Learning Framework published in 2008 changed the landscape of early years practice in British Columbia. It presented an image of the child as capable and full of potential, and introduced **pedagogical narration** as a process for reflecting on the knowledge and understandings of childhood. The 2008 framework served to broaden the dialogue about early learning in our province.

**Note:** Words in **bold blue** can be found in the Glossary.

*expanding an idea*

## **Pedagogical narration**

is 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. Engaging with pedagogical narration is central to the vision of this framework. (See Section Two: Rethinking Learning and Practice p. 45 for an in-depth description)

# What's Changed in the Revised Early Learning Framework

Since 2008, there have been significant developments in the social, political, economic, and cultural context of B.C. that have created new realities for children, families, and communities. These new realities require consideration of concepts, language, and connections that revitalize the thinking about practice. This revised Early Learning Framework acknowledges these new realities and the changing perspectives and relations they bring.

The revised Early Learning Framework:

- ◆ Expands the focus on children from birth to five years in the original framework to children birth to eight years. This means the vision, principles, and context articulated here are relevant to working with children (and their families) from birth to Grade 3.
- ◆ Connects with B.C.'s New Curriculum and **Core Competencies** (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2018b). Concepts in the framework can be interwoven with the B.C. Curriculum to inspire both **early childhood educators** and educators working with children in Kindergarten to Grade 3.
- ◆ Resists language, concepts, and pedagogies that perpetuate legacies of **colonization** and marginalization of Indigenous people. To support this effort, the new framework was developed in consultation with the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and Métis Nation BC.
- ◆ Strives to contribute to lasting **reconciliation** with Indigenous people, which is anchored by the province's cross-government commitment to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Recognizing and acknowledging how Euro-western practices are embedded in mainstream educational **pedagogy**, this framework's intention is to contribute to reconciliation through implicitly and explicitly honouring Indigenous authorities in education.
- ◆ Strengthens the vision of **inclusive** spaces and practices for all children, including **children with diverse abilities and needs**.
- ◆ Envisions learning and being as a **holistic** process that happens as children and adults come together in relationship with each other, ideas, materials, places, and histories.

## *definition*

### **Educator:**

an adult who works in early years settings, school-based settings, community-based settings, and post-secondary settings, including early childhood educators and teachers. While it is acknowledged that many terms are in use and people may have preferences on what they call themselves, this framework recognizes that adults who work in these settings are all educators.

- ◆ Introduces language that may be new to some **educators**. The use of this language is intentional as it helps in expressing new ways of thinking about the complexities of childhood care and learning. Using new language can offer different ways of seeing, which can inspire new conversations.
- ◆ Uses the term “living inquiries” (known as “areas of learning” in the 2008 Early Learning Framework) and “pathways” (known as “learning goals” in the 2008 Early Learning Framework) that will help to describe the thinking, doing, and learning that happens as children, educators, materials, and ideas interconnect.

## Connecting the Early Years with the Primary Years

The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching (2000) provides a structure for primary teachers to foster the continuing growth of children’s knowledge and understanding of themselves, others, and the world. The B.C. Primary Teachers’ Association recommends updates to the Primary Program to ensure that it affirms the need for a safe, caring, stimulating environment where learning flourishes in the primary years, beyond the early learning years of ages birth to five. Any updates to the Primary Program will be closely aligned with and build upon the foundation for learning established within the B.C. Early Learning Framework.

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*“In line with the latest scientific knowledge, supporting the holistic development of children with care and empathy is a strategic priority for reducing inequalities and enduring children well-being” (OECD, 2018, p. 4).*

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See the section Bridging early years and primary years on p. 28 in Section One.

### *expanding an idea*

**Language matters.** The words we use can hold meanings that may narrow how we see what a child is doing. New words can lead to new ways to see.

### *expanding an idea*

**The term “living”** suggests that these processes are ongoing and always evolving. “Inquire” means to pay attention in multiple ways: to study, explore, and ask questions. The term “pathways” evokes a sense of movement that is not linear. These new terms are an intentional shift away from terms that suggest predictable outcomes, and they reflect the First Peoples Principles of Learning (see p. 14). The four living inquiries are described in detail starting on p. 67, and the pathways for engaging with the living inquiries begin on p. 69

### *expanding an idea*

**The revised Early Learning Framework** recognizes the important role of “education as the central driver in achieving equal opportunities with a vision to transform lives through education and guarantee the full development and blossoming of children from their earliest years.” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018, p. 2)



## Using the Early Learning Framework

Every reader will use the framework in a way that suits them best. It is intended to be lived with over time, to be reflected on in collaboration with others, and to inspire **educators** to stop and think about why they practise in particular ways. An individual may choose to read the framework alone or share it with colleagues as a starting point for dialogue. The ideas in the framework are set out in sections, but they are all interconnected. A group may take up the ideas section by section, meander according to interests, or focus on a particular concept. For example, a group may choose to consider images of children and childhood, with each person finding a different section that inspires them. Or a group may decide to choose one principle to think about over time. The Early Learning Framework is a flexible document to be challenged by but also to bring joy.

The Early Learning Framework does not prescribe specific “how-tos” of practice or suggest a “right way” to work with children and families. Rather, it is intended to inspire pedagogical approaches that are relevant and respectful of local communities and the people who live in those communities.

This framework is designed for use by:

- ◆ **Early childhood educators**
- ◆ Primary school teachers/educators
- ◆ Principals and vice-principals
- ◆ College and university educators and researchers



- ◆ Post-secondary students in early childhood and elementary education programs
- ◆ **Pedagogists**
- ◆ Other **early years professionals**
- ◆ Communities, governments, and families



*definition*

**Pedagogist:**  
 a professional responsible for helping to create and sustain quality early childhood education (ECE) programs by supporting educators to continue to implement the B.C. Early Learning Framework; to design, execute, and evaluate inquiries/projects within their practice settings; and to engage in critically reflective dialogue about pedagogical practice through pedagogical narrations. They immerse themselves in the centres, support the educators' efforts to engage with children and families in innovative, critically reflective practice, and extend the practice of the educators and the children by introducing new ideas and materials.





# Section One



## Exploring the Early Learning Framework



The Early Learning Framework is an invitation to re-envision early care and learning spaces, education systems, and society. It is intended to promote dialogue about understandings of childhood, knowledge, education, and learning.

These dialogues are important as a means of challenging the dominance of child development theories formulated within the discipline of developmental psychology. Developmental theories formulated by Piaget, Erikson, and Bowlby (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo, Kocher, Elliot, & Sanchez, 2015, p. 24) set forth universal age-related stages that constitute “normal” child development and suggest that every child learns in a predictable, linear progression, regardless of context or community. Within this view, the **educator’s** role is to be knowledgeable about developmental stages and implement programs and strategies that foster “normal” growth and development in children. Over time, some of this knowledge has settled so firmly into the fabric of early childhood studies that its familiarity makes it just seem “right,” “best,” and “**ethical**” (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 1).



*This framework*

...carries the hope of inspiring and supporting the creation of rich, joyful early childhood spaces where children, adults, ideas, and materials come together, and where knowledge is constructed about learning and living in ways that are local, **inclusive**, ethical, and democratic.

However, many scholars and educators are challenging the dominance of developmental theories and argue that the values and assumptions embedded in them arose from particular social and political contexts. Child development theories privilege certain voices, knowledges, and understandings by suggesting universal ways of thinking about children, educators, and communities, while other perspectives are **marginalized** or silenced (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2015, p. 24). By critically reflecting on the assumptions embedded in developmental theories, educators can explore different theories and different perspectives.

This framework opens dialogues about knowledge, education, and learning. The ideas presented in this document create space for multiple ways of thinking about knowledge and the purpose of education.



# Vision

## *Respectfully living and learning together.*

This section outlines the Vision of the Early Learning Framework and describes the Principles and Context that underpin the Vision. Together these highlight ways of thinking about learning and practice, not to offer criteria or certainties but to promote thoughtful consideration.



### **Early care and learning settings and schools**

serve as places of dialogue in which community members discuss, share, and debate the values they hold about knowledge, education, and how to live well together in ways that are respectful, local, and meaningful.



**Early care and learning for children aged birth to eight** is based on an image of the child as capable and full of potential. All children are celebrated as strong, competent in their uniqueness, and having a secure sense of belonging. Children can **experiment**, investigate, and inquire in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them. They are provided with opportunities to enrich and deepen their relationships with place, land, and community. Within the contexts of their individual and cultural

identities, children are listened to and valued for their ideas and knowledge. Learning and education is envisioned as a continuum as children transition between early care and learning programs, schools, and other services.

**Educators** have opportunities for ongoing dialogue with colleagues, families, and the broader community to consider how developmental theories have shaped perspectives and pedagogies of childhood and learning. By coming together in communities of practice, educators consider many different perspectives and engage with the complexities of practice in a spirit of **experimentation** that is local and respectful.



**Communities and governments** will work in partnership to affirm children as citizens who are valued members of their communities and contributors to their societies. Adults will work to create a space where pride of languages and **cultures** are cultivated, and in which children can take up social and traditional responsibilities. As part of their efforts to understand, value, and accept responsibility for promoting early learning, all levels

of government and all communities will work together to nurture and support children and families, and to support parents, grandparents, and other family members in their efforts to promote children’s learning and overall well-being.



**Reconciliation** acknowledges that there is value for all students when Indigenous content and **worldviews** are shared in early learning settings and classrooms in a meaningful and authentic way. Reconciliation requires **educators** to collaborate and build new relationships with Indigenous communities to better support the education of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and families in learning about residential schools and Indigenous histories.

Where early care and learning programs and schools are situated within or near Indigenous communities, educators can contribute to the social well-being and cultural vitality of the community by exploring ways of honouring and learning from community Elders. With appropriate recognition, this can be a joyful education across deep historical divides. The way to approach it is to respectfully ask, learn from, and contribute to those invited to share, teach, and join early learning communities.

Educators can play an important role in promoting and contributing to healing and justice.

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*“Education has gotten us into this mess, and education will get us out” (Justice Murray Sinclair, as quoted in Watters, 2015).*

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### *definition*

**Pedagogy:**

the method and practice of teaching by exploring ideas and issues and creating environments where learning and thinking can flourish. With this understanding, education and pedagogy are not about learning facts but are concerned with **ethical** questions of living in the world together.

### *definition*

**Experiment:**

in the context of this framework, to be open to something new, a way of thinking and doing that did not previously exist. To experiment with pedagogy means to go beyond the usual practices in order to create and tell different stories of knowing and being in our **common world**.



# Principles of Learning

The First Peoples Principles of Learning and the Early Learning Framework Principles may be considered in many different ways and are intended to inspire pedagogies for all children, families, and communities, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, **culture**, language, abilities, or socio-economic status.

## First Peoples Principles of Learning

The First Peoples Principles of Learning were developed in partnership with the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the B.C. Ministry of Education and are an important element of the B.C. education curriculum. They articulate an expression of the shared wisdom of Elders from Indigenous communities throughout British Columbia and were embedded into the B.C. curriculum and the Early Learning Framework. This was done in an effort to transform B.C.'s education and early learning system to reflect Indigenous perspectives, knowledges, values, and understandings.

### The principles are:

- ◆ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- ◆ Learning is **holistic**, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- ◆ Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- ◆ Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- ◆ Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- ◆ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- ◆ Learning involves patience and time.
- ◆ Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- ◆ Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.



*(First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2012)*





## Early Learning Framework Principles

The Early Learning Framework Principles set forth ways of thinking about childhood, learning, and practicing that underpin the vision of respectfully living and learning together.

### The principles are:

- ◆ Children are strong, capable in their uniqueness, and full of potential.
- ◆ Families have the most important role in contributing to children’s well-being and learning.
- ◆ Educators are researchers and collaborators.
- ◆ Early years spaces are inclusive.
- ◆ People build connection and reconnection to land, culture, community and place.
- ◆ Environments are integral to well-being and learning.
- ◆ Play is integral to well-being and learning.
- ◆ Relationships are the context for well-being and learning.
- ◆ Learning is holistic.

### *definition*

#### **All world relations:**

the understanding that humans, creatures, plants, trees, and non-living entities, forces, and landforms are all interconnected. Western ways of thinking create separation between all these and place humans as exceptional. The notion of all world relations is embedded in a **common worlds framework** and suggests that all beings and non-living entities are entangled and dependent on one another.

The following describes each of the principles in more depth.

### Children are strong, capable in their uniqueness, and full of potential

This framework upholds the image of every child as a gift, as strong and capable in their uniqueness and full of potential, living and growing in complex interdependence with humans and **all world relations**. This image of the child is a key concept in the Early Learning Framework.

- ◆ Everyone has images of children and childhood from their **cultures**, knowledge, personal histories, and aspirations for the future. A person’s images of children reflect their beliefs and ideas about children, as well as ideas about what is possible and desirable for human life at the individual, social, and global level.

- ◆ Images of the child and childhood strongly influence how adults engage with children, and what intentions inform the choices they make in all they do with and for children. Engaging with differing views of children and childhood is essential to education in a socially and culturally diverse society.
- ◆ The vision of this framework is to generate dialogue in early years settings and beyond about images of children and childhood. This will help create conditions where every child and family can participate and contribute to common or shared worlds.
- ◆ Children begin learning from the moment they are born in a continuum that is not linear or universal, but collective and complex.

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The vision for Métis children in BC is that *“Métis children throughout British Columbia experience a state of well-being that allows them to live healthy and happy lives, and to fulfill their full potential as individuals, members of their family, their community, the Métis Nation, and as British Columbians”* (Métis Nation BC, personal communication, March 20, 2019).

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## Families have the most important role in contributing to children’s well-being and learning

Families are the first teachers, the primary caregivers, and the knowledge-holders of their children. Families have the most important role in promoting their children’s well-being and learning.

- ◆ For all communities, learning often involves more than one generation. Elders and grandparents can be central to early learning programs, and their knowledge of cultural traditions and language can be of great benefit to the children, families, **educators**, and community.
- ◆ Family **diversity** may include families who are experiencing challenges. This framework aims to build capacity of professionals to recognize these challenges, and to respond appropriately and work empathetically with all families.

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*“The care of Indigenous children is a sacred and communal responsibility starting with parents and family and extending to community and nation” (First Nations Early Childhood Development Council, 2011, p. 10).*

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*“Strong webs of community relationships provide First Nations children with opportunities to thrive and succeed. These webs of are woven by the love of family members and the wisdom of Elders. They are maintained by hard-working ECEs, knowledgeable educational professionals, multi-talented program managers, reliable service providers and experienced community administrators. The role of parents in a community cannot be underestimated. They must be proud to be their child’s first and primary teacher. Caring parents who feel supported by their communities have strong voices capable of directing how community ECD services are implemented and evaluated. Their voices need to be heard and their roles within the community need to be extended and supported” (First Nations Early Childhood Development Council, 2011, p . 17).*



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## **Educators are Researchers and Collaborators**

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**The early childhood educator as researcher**  
*“is open to the other, striving to listen without grasping the other and making the other into the same” (Moss, 2006, p. 37).*

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**Educators** collaborate with children and their families as partners in research. This means educators are continually observing, listening, and experimenting with an openness to the unexpected. The role of the educator has shifted away from being a transmitter of knowledge toward being a collaborator who creates conditions so that children can invent, investigate, build theories, and learn. Educators work in relationship with children, and strive to ensure children feel safe, confident, motivated, and listened to.

- ♦ Children and adults alike are engaged in thinking deeply, and welcome multiple perspectives, complexity, and **diversity**. Educators work with a **pedagogy of listening** to notice the many ways children express themselves, recognizing that intentional, open listening is the basis of a reciprocal relationship (Rinaldi, 2001, p. 80). (For more on pedagogy of listening, see Section Two p. 48)

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*“Listening is not easy. It requires a deep awareness and at the same time a suspension of our judgments and above all our prejudices; it requires openness to change. It demands that we have clearly in mind the value of the unknown and that we are able to overcome the sense of emptiness and precariousness that we experience whenever our certainties are questioned” (Rinaldi, 2001, p. 80).*

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- ♦ **Educators** foster a curiosity that leads them to seek ways to extend not only children’s learning but also their own. They examine their practices and expectations to consider their biases and expectations and how these may perpetuate racism or prejudices.
- ♦ Educators do not see themselves as holding the “right” knowledge of **pedagogy** and practice. Rather, they are learners as well as educators, continually reflecting. This is not to say that “anything goes” in practice; instead educators make intentional choices inspired by the pedagogical approaches in this framework.





## Early years spaces are inclusive

Classrooms and early care and learning settings are welcoming, **inclusive**, and enriching places where every child and family feel they belong. Each child has histories, contexts, gifts, capabilities, and potential that can be honoured and nurtured with responsive practices and environments. Regardless of socio-economic status, geographic isolation, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, abilities and learning needs, family structure and values, every child should be welcomed and empowered to pursue their gifts.

- ◆ Educators reflect on their personal histories and their images of child and childhood to challenge outdated beliefs, prejudices, and cultural opinions.
- ◆ The goal of inclusion requires educators to create physical spaces, routines, and approaches that allow each child to participate, to think, and to discover in their unique ways. As educators create opportunities for each child to learn and participate, they are aware of a range of additional supports and services and the importance of engaging collaboratively with families in seeking supports when required. This framework is rooted in a vision of inclusion and sensitivity to the multiple and diverse ways of learning and being.

### *definition*

#### **Inclusive learning and care:**

The principle that children of all abilities, including **children with diverse abilities** and needs, have equitable access to quality learning and child care and are supported in play and learning along with other children in a regular program. Inclusive learning and care supports the individual strengths and needs of each child, allowing them to meaningfully engage, learn, and contribute to the community and **culture** of their program. All **educators**, providers, and parents/caregivers collaborate as a team to meet the needs of children in their programs. The presence and engagement of a diverse group of children provides significant opportunities to learn about, value and celebrate **diversity** in communities.

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*“The focus is on gifts and not deficits*

*Children’s spirit knows what they need*

*If you can find that child’s gifts, that  
child can do anything.”*

*(Participant, as cited in B.C. Aboriginal  
Child Care Society, 2017, p. 30).*

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## Indigenous Values and Beliefs

- ◆ **First Nations** children are sacred gifts from the Creator
- ◆ Each child is born with gifts.
- ◆ Children are the present and future of our families, communities, and Nations.
- ◆ Caring for children is a sacred and shared responsibility.
- ◆ Parents and families are recognized as the first teachers and caregivers of their children.

*(First Nations Early Childhood Development Council, 2011, p. 20).*



## definition

### **Diversity:**

the different beliefs, customs, practices, languages, behaviours, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and physical differences of individuals and cultural groups. Honouring diversity is based on the principle that differences that are recognized and celebrated benefit our communities. Honouring diversity requires that we encourage understanding, acceptance, mutual respect and **inclusion**, in order to make schools, communities, and society more equitable for all people.



## People build connection and reconnection to land, culture, community, and place

Children develop a sense of place when they connect with their local communities and outdoor environment. Early learning is “of a place” when children and **educators** engage with local histories with respectful curiosity and a desire to contribute and share. Indigenous peoples have been the knowledge keepers of these places for hundreds of generations. Indigenous languages are some of the voices of these places.

- ◆ British Columbians face numerous challenges related to a legacy of environmental damage (such as climate change, damaging waste emissions, mass species extinction) that humans are responsible for and vulnerable to. Education is among many disciplines faced with the question of how to respond to the environmental crisis, to consider our interdependence with the natural world, and to generate dialogue about our collective responsibility. A common worlds framework recognizes that we collectively share this world with all creatures, plants, trees, and non-living entities and landforms. Humans are dependent on one another and these **all world relations**.

### *expanding an idea*

**Place is any environment, locality, or context** with which people interact to learn, create memory, reflect on history, connect with **culture**, and establish identity. The connection between people and place is central to **First Peoples** perspectives of the world (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2016).

- ◆ Educators can reflect on practices that enrich and deepen children’s relationships with place, land, and community. Children, with their boundless imaginations and sense of adventure, will be the leaders and innovators who will both inherit and re-create our societies in the future.



## Environments are integral to well-being and learning

The importance of the early care and learning environment – sometimes referred to as the “third teacher” – cannot be underestimated in shaping the experiences of children and adults. Children and adults live and learn in relationships with the people around them but are also profoundly affected by their relationships with spaces and materials.

- ◆ **Educators** pay attention to how children, both individually and in groups, interact, respond and engage with all aspects of the environment. Educators **experiment** with environments with the intention of promoting **inclusion**, building relationships, and provoking more complex thinking.
- ◆ Educators incorporate culturally responsive objects and materials, implemented with regard to the individual school context, the diversity of the children using the space, and the aspirations of the community.
- ◆ Educators consider and include every child’s way of being, doing, and learning so that every child can participate, and their abilities and interests are honoured.
- ◆ **Pedagogy** takes place outdoors and indoors, and both are inherently valuable.
- ◆ Environments are made up of three elements:
  - Space and place
  - Materials
  - Time: rhythms and flows





- ◆ Each of these elements can be discussed and reflected on individually; however, they are inextricably connected, and each has an effect on the others.
- ◆ These elements are always in a relationship with people, place, ideas, and **culture**.

### Space and place

The arrangement of furniture, structures, and objects in a space – whether indoors or outdoors – sends messages about how people can move and relate to others. The arrangement of spaces can invite small- and large-group interaction, inspire collaborative learning, celebrate **diversity**, and invite children to explore and express their identities and cultures. When educators notice how space is accessed, they can creatively respond, providing spaces to open possibilities for children to extend their thinking and experiment with new ways of being.



### Materials

Children and adults have relationships with materials. Different materials (such as toys, objects, art supplies) that children encounter invite different kinds of participation and engagement. Some materials are limited in how they can be used while other materials open many different possibilities for experimentation and lively interaction.



- ◆ Educators carefully observe what happens between materials and children, and consider materials in relation to the image of the child, and in relation to the other principles in this framework.
- ◆ Offering culturally responsive objects, materials, and design that recognize, support, and reflect the value of children’s identities, languages and cultures convey to children that their culture is acknowledged and valued, and that they will not have to shelve or conceal their cultural identity to participate and achieve within the environment.



*“Materials live in the world in multiple ways. They can evoke memories, narrate stories, invite actions, and communicate meanings. Materials and objects create meeting places. In early childhood education we gather around things to investigate, negotiate, converse, and share. Materials – a block of clay, pots of paint, a brush, a colourful wire, a translucent sheet of paper, a rectangular block – beckon and draw us in. Materials are not immutable, passive, or lifeless until the moment we do something to them; they participate in our early childhood projects. They live, speak, gesture, and call to us” (Kind, S., 2014, p. 865).*

### Time: Rhythms and flows

How time is organized can have a dramatic impact on how children and adults engage with one another and affect the kind of play and learning that occurs. Designing schedules that minimize transitions and create long periods of uninterrupted time allow children to develop their ideas and to pursue their inquiries. Fewer transitions also allow adults to spend time alongside children, observing, noticing, and co-researching.

- ◆ Considering time as having rhythms and flows can invigorate **educators** and children to reimagine their days together.

### Play is integral to well-being and learning

Play is vital to children's learning, growing, and making meaning. This framework uses many terms related to play, such as "engagement," "**experimentation**," "**inquiry**," "building theories," "participating," "making meaning," and "investigating." By broadening the vocabulary around play, educators may begin to see play in different ways, which in turn can enrich conversations.

- ◆ Play can be individual, collective, spontaneous, planned, experimental, purposeful, unpredictable, or dynamic. This framework promotes the importance of play for children to experience the world through seeing, feeling, touching, listening, and by engaging with people, materials, places, species, and ideas.
- ◆ Play is an approach to inquiry, a way to research the world. By providing diverse materials and experiences, educators create spaces for experimentation and transformation.
- ◆ Educators can record moments of play using **pedagogical narrations** to make learning visible, to invite others (colleagues, children, families) to share their perspectives, and to consider different theoretical perspectives.



- ◆ Educators can use pedagogical narrations to critically reflect on children’s play and to notice when play is unfair, or when uneven relationships of power or injustices are enacted.
- ◆ By paying attention to play, educators can make decisions about further provocations for thinking for both adults and children.

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*“To say that we play together is an unjust oversimplification: Rather we are in an ongoing process of becoming... Our curriculum is lived out daily; it exists with[in] all of us. Clay, paper, materials, children, educators, objects, music ... are all powerful forces and they bring forth movement, history, and multiple layers of meaning” (Argent, 2014, p. 848).*

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## Relationships are the context for well-being and learning

People thrive in responsive, reciprocal, respectful relationships with others, and with place and **culture**.

- ◆ Working within a **pedagogy of listening** (see p. 48) means **educators** are living and learning alongside children and families, with an openness to new possibilities.
- ◆ Strong relationships are nurtured through respect, time, care, and understanding.

## Learning is holistic

People learn with the mind, body, and spirit and in a relationship with others and the environment. Children are gaining knowledge as they create and test theories, explore the world, and express ideas. Learning does not occur in a predictable linear progression; rather learning is **rhizomatic**, moving in unexpected and surprising directions as children are in relationships with people, place, ideas, and materials.

### *definition*

#### **Rhizome:**

A plant, such as a fern, that sends underground shoots off in many directions with no predictable pattern. The image of the rhizome is a useful way to think about pedagogies. Thinking of learning as rhizomatic leads to understanding that learning cannot be predetermined or have a prescribed outcome but is always producing something new.

- ◆ **Children with diverse abilities** may use different approaches to construct knowledge, test theories, explore, and express ideas. Some children may prefer more auditory or visual approaches, while others may depend on social responses.
- ◆ It is important to recognize that learning may look and be approached differently.
- ◆ A **holistic** approach recognizes that all areas of learning: physical, emotional, social, linguistic, visual, auditory, and intellectual are closely interrelated and occur simultaneously.




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*“It’s hard to pull the culture and the education together. It’s hard in a setting different from our way of life*

*You have to pull worlds together  
People don’t understand*

*Adults themselves need to learn*

*Preschool ‘comes down to mainstream’ [is mainstream]. It’s hard to find teachings ...*

*In our ways, these are taught by elders, not by institutions. This is teaching for the survival of our people.”*

*(Participant, as cited in B.C. Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2017, p. 30).*

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## Context

This section addresses important social, economic, theoretical and historical contextual factors that contribute to the many ways educators approach practice. It identifies legislative commitments and frameworks, provincially, federally, and internationally, including human rights agreements that affirm commitments to equality, dignity, and respect and deeply influence education and care.

Considering these contextual factors can provide **educators** with a deeper understanding of the diversity of perspectives that shape learning in B.C. Bringing forward these factors opens space for community engagement to acknowledge and discuss the complexities of practice, and the realities of educating in the 21st century.

## Engaging with complexity

Early childhood and primary pedagogies are dynamic and complex and involve multiple, diverse, and changing relationships. There is no “one-size-fits-all” way to practise. Rather, pedagogies occur in relationship with families, children, communities, legislation, policies, places, ideas, materials, and histories. This complexity may bring tensions and difficult conversations as educators grapple with questions of what learning and education can be, and who children and educators can be. Education and care without these complexities and uncertainties are unavoidable in a democratic **culture**. While tension can be uncomfortable, it can also help educators focus on what children bring into the world and what the world brings to children. Engaging with complexity means accommodating many ways of thinking, seeing, doing, and knowing as well as being a condition of professionalism in early learning.

## Theory and practice

Theory and practice are sometimes thought of as separate: theory is the realm of academics and practice is the realm of educators. However, theory and practice are interconnected, each influencing the other. Daily practices (rules, routines, and habitual words or phrases) are grounded in theories that shape what is expected from children and how the role of the educator is viewed.



For example, circle time is often considered an important daily routine. If educators begin to question why circle time is embedded in practice, they may consider the image of the child and the image of the educator that underpin it, and the theories these images have emerged from. They may ask: What is expected of children in circle time? What is the purpose of circle time? What theories underlie the purpose? Critically reflecting on circle time makes visible how theory and practice are deeply intertwined. When educators pause, notice, and reflect on their work with young children, they can notice how theories are embedded in practice and can begin to consider different theories and possibilities. This process of stretching thinking beyond known understandings is called **critically reflective practice** and is central to the framework.

**Educators** draw on a range of perspectives in their work, which may include:

- ◆ **Socio-cultural theories** that view children as active and inventive learners and emphasize the central role that families, culture, historical, economic, and political contexts influence how and what children learn.
- ◆ **Post-foundational theories** that challenge taken-for-granted systems of knowledge and invite us to examine our assumptions about power, equity, and social justice.
- ◆ Indigenous theories expressed within systems and models of caring for children in a variety of ways based on unique **worldviews**, distinct languages, cultures, traditions, and practices.
- ◆ Developmental theories that view children as developing and learning in linear and universal stages over time.



This framework aims to support change by inviting educators to engage with theories and perspectives that are respectful of all **cultures**.

## Bridging early years and primary years

The Early Learning Framework's expanded focus from early years to primary years means the vision, principles, rethinking of practice, and context are relevant to working with children (and their families) from birth to Grade 3. This framework puts forward an image of every child being capable and promotes **inclusive** pedagogies through discovery and **inquiry**, as well as through attending to place and history. In articulating this vision for children birth to eight years, this framework has the potential to create a continuum of care and learning with children and families through transitions between early care and learning programs, schools, and other services.

The Early Learning Framework's Living Inquiries and the B.C. Education Curriculum **Core Competencies** have shared philosophies that support educators in designing environments that are flexible, responsive, and relevant to their local community so that children and adults think and learn together.

## The B.C. Education Curriculum Core Competencies:



**Communications:** The communication competency encompasses the set of abilities that students use to impart and exchange information, experiences and ideas, to explore the world around them, and to understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media.



**Thinking:** The thinking competency encompasses the knowledge, skills and processes we associate with intellectual development. It is through their competency as thinkers that students take subject-specific concepts and content and transform them into a new understanding. Thinking competence includes specific thinking skills as well as habits of mind, and metacognitive awareness.



**Personal and Social:** Personal and social competency is the set of abilities that relate to students' identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society. Personal and social competency encompasses the abilities students need to thrive as individuals, to understand and care about themselves and others, and to find and achieve their purposes in the world.

*(B.C. Ministry of Education, 2018b).*

## The Early Learning Framework Living Inquiries:

- ◆ Well-being and belonging
- ◆ Engagement with others, materials, and the world
- ◆ Communication and literacies
- ◆ Identities, social responsibility, and diversity

## Educating in British Columbia in the 21st century

Educators work within the challenges, tensions, and possibilities of the 21st century. The realities of changing technologies, an environmental crisis, social and cultural **diversity**, and righting the wrongs of **colonialism** are the context within which children, educators, and families live.

### Environment

British Columbians are faced with the challenges of an environmental crisis that includes climate change, species extinction, risks to our food and water supplies, and massive migrations. Scholars and **educators** are rethinking pedagogies and practices to respond to this crisis, and are considering the interdependencies of humans, non-humans, plants, creatures and non-living entities.

**Common world** pedagogies embrace the complexities of human/non-human relationships and seek to engage in dialogues that produce new ways of relating.

*expanding an idea*

**This framework** is intended to be a careful, **ethical**, and attentive guide to be interwoven with the B.C. curriculum to inspire and invigorate educators working with children in Kindergarten to Grade 3, as well as educators working with young children.

## Technology

Technology has changed the way we interact with each other and the ways knowledge and information can be accessed. Children live in this technology-rich environment as consumers, creators, and producers.

## Social and cultural diversity

The Early Learning Framework supports the individual, social, cultural, and linguistic identities of children and families living in B.C. The province is home to people who come from many different parts of the world – some are new to B.C. while others have descended from those who have lived here for generations and millennia. These diverse peoples with their distinct histories contribute to the rich social fabric of this province.

Social and cultural **diversity** also characterize the nature of family life in B.C. In many families, parents are the primary caregivers while in others, grandparents, older siblings, and other relatives play equally significant roles. Children grow up in a variety of family and household formations: two-parent-led households, lone-parent-led households, stepfamilies, adoptive families, multi-generational households, families headed by same-sex parents, multiple families, and foster families. Whether children receive early education and care in the home or the community, it is important that their experiences are connected to, and supportive of, their relationships with their families.

While all families have strengths, many families experience vulnerabilities. It is recognized that families may move in and out of vulnerability, and that vulnerabilities are not reflections of flaws in a person or family. Poverty, domestic violence, access to affordable housing or child care are complex issues that can have strong impacts on children's ability to engage in learning. Families of **children with diverse abilities** may face unique challenges that require additional support. Recognizing that most families, at some point, experience vulnerabilities helps to reduce the stigma of vulnerability.

Acknowledging and supporting the richness of these identities and diversities are essential elements of the framework in its role in **reconciliation** with Indigenous peoples, responsibility to the environment, and engagement with technological change.

## Indigenous context in Canada<sup>1</sup>

Understanding Indigenous historical and current political, economic, and social contexts is critical in the development of respectful relations with Indigenous people. Children who grow up in British Columbia are living within the context of changing Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations.

## Demographics

Understanding the demographics of the Indigenous population can serve to support the creation of connections and partnerships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to work together with children and families.

Indigenous children represent a fast-growing child demographic in the province, and students who self-identify as **Aboriginal** compose approximately 11% of British Columbia's public school population (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2018a). While Indigenous peoples amount to 6% of the total population, Indigenous children

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<sup>1</sup> The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) contributed this section.



are 10% of the child population (Government of Canada, 2018). These children live in a variety of settings, including urban, rural, remote, on-reserve, and off-reserve communities.

Of the Indigenous population in B.C., just under half are under age 25. They often move between cities and their traditional territories to remain connected both to their **cultures** and traditions and to educational and economic opportunities. There are profound and far-reaching adverse impacts of **colonization**. These adverse impacts are perhaps nowhere more acute than in the over-representation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system, as currently more than half of children in government care are Indigenous.

While Indigenous peoples have faced a long history of colonialism, the inherent rights of Indigenous children and their families as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2008) are recognized and upheld by federal and provincial governments. Considerable work is underway by all levels of government that seeks to protect and promote Indigenous **culture**, language, communities, leaders, and organizations.

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015a) published 94 calls to action, including a call on federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Indigenous children. Like the UNDRIP, the TRC report articulates the rights of Indigenous families and communities to retain and recover shared responsibility for the upbringing, education, and well-being of their children.

These two declarations clearly outline that much work is needed in the **decolonization** of Canadian society and its institutions.

Whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, **educators** in all communities have an important role to play in responding to the TRC and UNDRIP by learning and educating others about Indigenous peoples' experiences of systemic marginalization and forced **assimilation**, and how we all have an obligation of redress for the damage done, and being done, to Indigenous communities.

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*“Reconciliation includes anyone with an open mind and an open heart who is willing to look into the future with a new way”*

*(Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, quoted in Reconciliationcanada.ca, 2019)*

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*This [the problem of education in the wake of Canada’s history of residential schooling] is not an Aboriginal problem. This is a Canadian problem. At the same time that Aboriginal people were being demeaned in the schools and their culture and language were being taken away and told that they were inferior, that they were pagans, heathens, and savages and that they were unworthy of being respected – that very same message was being given to the non-Aboriginal children in the public schools. As a result, many generations of non-Aboriginal Canadians have had their perceptions of Aboriginal people ‘tainted’.*

*(Justice Murray Sinclair, quoted in the Vancouver Sun, May 2015 [as cited in Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom, 2015b, p. 6])*

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### **Diversity among Indigenous communities**

Recognizing the diversity and richness of Indigenous communities throughout B.C. contributes to pedagogies that are local and meaningful. There are three distinct groups of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and B.C.: First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

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*“It’s the most beautiful thing when you start drumming a song and all the little ones come gathering around. She just started to drum. And all the children came and sat at her feet. And then the parents noticed, and they came too and all gathered around. An Honour Song: to honour them for showing up every day. The light that it brought to their eyes, to be recognized! If you show up, it is for yourself. Our songs have a gift that comes to our people.”*

*(Participant, as cited in B.C. Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2017, p. 32).*

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### **First Nations**

- ◆ There are 203 First Nations across eight regions that are represented by the Assembly of First Nations of B.C. These nations constitute an unparalleled linguistic and cultural diversity in the world. Canada is home to approximately 60 First Nations languages spanning 10 separate and distinct language families. B.C. is home to approximately 34 First Nations languages spanning seven language families, and 60% of Canada’s First Nations languages are in British Columbia. Virtually all First Nations languages are endangered, but many are in processes of active revitalization.

- ◆ Due to historical impacts of colonization, First Nations people have faced economic hardship and poverty. In early learning, First Nations children and families have inherent rights including the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions as affirmed in the UNDRIP, and as a fundamental aspect of their inherent right of self-government. These rights are recognized by Canada and British Columbia (pursuant to section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982). Recognition of First Nations rights leads to reconciliation, where First Nations' own legal and social systems may again come to enrich and sustain them.



### Métis<sup>1</sup>

*Miyo-pimatisiwin translates (approximately) into English as 'living well,' the 'good life,' or as 'being alive well.' But these English phrases are impoverished translations of the concept. While miyo-pimatisiwin certainly addresses notions of well-being and the good life, it does so by situating us, as Métis people, in a network of relationships.*

#### *Wichētowin*

*As with miyo-pimatisiwin, Métis inherit the term wichētowin from our Cree cousins. Wichētowin can be translated, simply, as 'fellowship.' However, this simple translation misses the ethical nuances of the concept. As a value, wichētowin means fellowship, community, and kinship based on the principle of caring for one another. In this sense it is intimately connected to the concept of miyo-pimatisiwin. We care for one another and in doing so help one another so that we are all able to be 'alive well.'*

*(Métis Nation British Columbia, 2018, p. 5)*



<sup>1</sup> Métis nation BC (MNBC) contributed this section.

The “children of the fur trade,” “flower beadwork people,” “one-and-a-half peoples,” “Otipemiiwak,” “half-breeds,” “lii Michif,” and “Bois-Brûlés” are only some of the names used to describe the Métis. Métis communities have a rich history of blended cultures and unique identities. The historic Métis emerged as a distinct people and nation on the plains of western North America during the late 1700s. As the fur trade expanded westward, many of the employees, who were of European origin, found it both necessary and beneficial to establish familial relationships with First Nations women. These relationships resulted in children of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry.

- ◆ Despite their economic interest in delaying large-scale agricultural settlement, the fur trade companies eventually adopted a policy of discouraging unions between employees and First Nations. As a result, mixed Indigenous people married other mixed Indigenous people and developed a culture that was neither European nor First Nations, but rather a unique fusion of the two cultures: the Métis Nation was born.
- ◆ Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) was first incorporated in 1996 as the Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia. In 2003 the Métis leadership ratified the Métis Nation British Columbia Constitution, thereby establishing a new Métis Nation governing structure. Since 2003, the MNBC leadership has implemented a number of institutions of governance such as the senate, Métis Nation Governing Assembly, Métis Youth British Columbia, Métis Women British Columbia, Métis Veterans British Columbia, and the British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources as well as the provincial Métis identification registry.
- ◆ As the democratically elected political representative and governing organization for nearly 90,000 self-identifying Métis, nearly 17,000 of whom are registered Métis citizens in British Columbia, the MNBC represents the political, legal, social, and economic interests of Métis people in B.C. to local, provincial, and federal levels of governments, funding agencies, and other related bodies. MNBC undertakes advocacy, coordination, and policy-making roles on behalf of Métis people in B.C. on matters related to provincial and federal programs and services. MNBC acts to protect and preserve Métis history, promote and develop Métis culture, ensure Métis rights are understood and protected, and helps coordinate and facilitate local activities of Métis communities.



(Ministry of Youth, Métis Nation British Columbia, 2018).

## Inuit

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*“A central idea of Inuit education is to cause (or cause to increase) thought: isummaksaiyuq” (Briggs, 1998). In order to prepare children to become solid thinkers, equipped to handle all the rigours and challenges of the world, a pedagogy where ethical and moral questioning is continually being used, and where direct answers are seldom supplied is the basis for inunnguiniq. It is thought that in this way children will develop the areas of qanuqtuurunnarniq (being resourceful to seek solutions) and iqqaqqaukkaringniq (being innovative and creative in solution seeking).*

*(National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2012, p.3).*

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- ◆ Of the 50,480 Inuit living in Canada, 78% live in Inuit Nunangat (Inuit Homeland). There are four geographic regions that make up Inuit Nunangat: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik in northern Quebec, and Nunatsiavut in Newfoundland and Labrador (Statistics Canada, 2016). The Inuit population is the smallest among Indigenous groups in B.C. representing 0.6% of B.C.’s Indigenous population. Inuit are among Canada’s youngest citizens, with a median age of 23 (National Committee on Inuit Education, 2011, p. 67).



- ◆ Roughly 60% of Inuit report an ability to conduct a conversation in Inuktitut (the Inuit language), and people harvest country foods such as seal, narwhal, and caribou to feed their families and communities. However, statistics and research paint a distressing picture of Inuit society, in which too many people are struggling with violence and trauma. These challenges exist against the historical backdrop of Canada’s colonization of Inuit Nunangat, in which federal government policy directed the institutions and systems that have destabilized Inuit society by undermining their ability to be self-reliant (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018).

- ◆ The 2011 National Strategy on Inuit Education called for a bilingual education system founded on Inuit societal values, worldview, and beliefs. Key to this vision is that Inuit education is delivered by Inuit educators through quality bilingual programs based on Inuit-centred curriculum. The education system should inspire young Inuit to stay in school longer and advance the process of restoring confidence lost during the residential school experience.

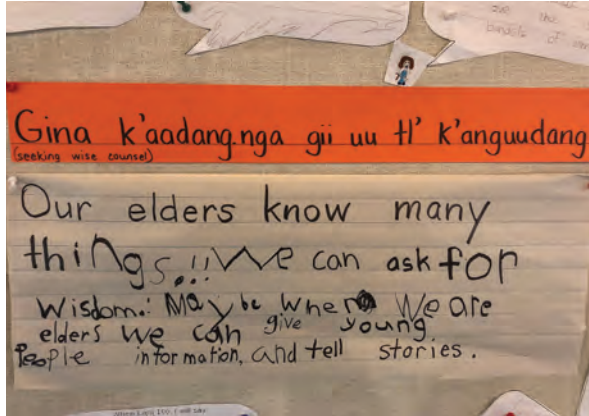


## Legislation, frameworks, and human rights agreements

This framework works within the realities of legislation, human rights agreements, and other early care and learning frameworks, curriculum, and competencies. These works are vital to maintaining and strengthening the infrastructure that supports exemplary early learning and child care experiences in B.C. At the same time, this framework supports a vision of early learning that is localized and reflects B.C.’s diverse communities through its principles and recommended practices.

Most young children in B.C. experience early learning both in their homes and in other settings. B.C. sets minimum standards so that certain settings employ qualified educators, and that the physical environment promotes children’s health, safety, and well-being. The *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and the *Child Care Licensing Regulation* define required child/staff ratios, group size, health and safety measures, and early childhood educator training requirements for various licensed child care settings, including group child care, family child care, preschool, and childminding.

Early care and learning programs build a solid foundation and have a role to play in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system. Specific roles and responsibilities are set out in the *School Act*, *Independent School Act*, *Teachers Act*, *First Nations Education Act* and their accompanying regulations.



## United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008)

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states that Indigenous peoples have the right to all levels and forms of education without discrimination. Further, it states that Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions and provide education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. States are also expected to take measures to ensure that Indigenous peoples have access to such an education, including those living outside their community, when possible. This right to education is broad and should include education through traditional methods of teaching and learning, and the right to integrate their own perspectives, cultures, beliefs, values, and languages in mainstream education systems and institutions. Of importance is section 14.2, which states that Indigenous children and youth should be free from discrimination in all levels of education.

UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples have the right to access education in their own culture and that it should be provided in their own languages and traditions. The declaration further states the right of Indigenous peoples to pursue self-determination and Indigenous autonomy and self-government

in which systems of early learning are distinct Indigenous social and cultural institutions. As such, Indigenous early learning is a part of Indigenous cultural revitalization that will direct Indigenous control of educational systems and institutions.

## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

In 1991, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It affirms the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, including children, as the necessary foundation for freedom, justice, and peace in the world. The convention recognizes children as citizens with the right to reach their fullest potential, to be treated with dignity and respect, to be protected from harm, to exercise a voice, to engage in play and recreational activities, and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. This convention can help adults ensure these rights are upheld.



In 2002, Canada participated in the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children. This meeting led to the development of A World Fit for Children declaration and plan of action to improve the situation of children around the world. Based on this declaration, Canada has developed A Canada Fit for Children, a national plan of action that

identifies key issues affecting children and opportunities to improve their lives. One of the four central themes of Canada’s action plan is promoting education and learning.



### **CMEC Early Learning and Development Framework, Canadian Council of Ministers of Education (2014)**

The purpose of the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) framework is to present a pan-Canadian vision for early learning, to foster continuity across jurisdictions and across all settings that provide education and care for children from birth to eight years of age, including preschool and formal schooling environments. Provinces and territories describe children as unique, active learners, creative, curious, natural explorers, playful, competent, expressive, knowledgeable, joyful, capable of complex thinking, and rich in potential as contributors to society. Articulating a shared understanding of children and how they learn – and taking up this understanding to shape systems, policies, curriculum, and practice – is critical to ensuring continuity and quality across all early learning settings and at all levels of the system.

### **Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (ELCC), Government of Canada, (2017)**

This 10-year framework sets the foundation for federal, provincial, and territorial ministers most responsible for early learning and child care to work toward a shared long-term vision where all children experience quality early learning and child care that supports them to reach their full potential. The Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia have committed to work together to further develop child care. The Canada-BC ELCC agreement objectives include: enhancing the accessibility of child care options by increasing the number of spaces; increasing the affordability of child care, beginning with Infant/Toddler care; enhancing the quality of licensed child care programs by supporting the training and professional development of early childhood educators; and enhancing equity through targeted investment in underserved communities.



### **Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework (2018)**

Indigenous peoples have “an inherent and sacred” responsibility for their children and families. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Principles of Reconciliation refer to the UNDRIP as



the “framework for reconciliation ... at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015b, p. 3). Since 2016, early learning and child care for Indigenous children and families subject to UNDRIP rights has seen the co-development for nation-to-nation governance of a National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care framework. This framework identifies principles from a nationwide Indigenous engagement process that was carried out in 2017 and outlines transformative actions at structural, systems, program, and services levels with respect to governance and service delivery, quality programs and services, funding approaches, research, and capacity development.

## **Métis Early Learning and Child Care Framework (2019)**

In March 2019, the Government of Canada and the Métis Nation entered a 10-year Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care Accord with the goal of implementing the Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Framework. The Métis Nation, as represented in British Columbia by Métis Nation British Columbia, and the Government of Canada recognize the significant need for culturally-appropriate and high-quality ELCC programs and services for Métis children and families. A distinct Métis Nation ELCC Framework recognizes the importance of a distinctions-based approach in ensuring that the rights, interests and circumstances of the Métis Nation are acknowledged, affirmed and implemented.

## **The BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Framework (2011)**

The BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Framework was developed by the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council. It was first published in recognition of the urgent need to

support First Nations in their efforts to drive their own traditionally and culturally rich systems of early childhood development. The mission, values, and beliefs described in the framework are grounded in the founding principles of a system that values high-quality care and a child-centred approach. The three major goals that the BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Framework describe are:

1. Increased availability, accessibility, and participation in early childhood development programs.
2. Enhanced quality of early childhood development programs.
3. Improved integration and collaboration at all levels.



## **Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies, B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development (2004)**

The Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies set out the knowledge, skills, and abilities that early childhood educators must demonstrate to be certified in B.C.

## B.C. Curriculum and Competencies, B.C. Ministry of Education (2018b)

The B.C. Education Curriculum has been revised to provide greater flexibility for educators to allow space and time for students to explore their passions and interests, to develop their skills, and to extend Indigenous perspectives throughout the entire learning journey.

Understanding and applying knowledge are at the centre of the curriculum, as opposed to the memorizing and recalling facts, which was central to much of education around the globe for many decades. Core Competencies are at the centre of the curriculum redesign and come into play when students are engaged in “doing” and thinking in any area of learning. The Early Learning Framework and the B.C. curriculum have a shared philosophy and provide a continuum of care and learning for children birth to eight years (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2015a).

From Kindergarten to graduation, students will experience Indigenous perspectives and knowledge as part of what they are learning to ensure that the voices of First Nations people are heard in all aspects of the education system. British Columbia’s education transformation incorporates the Indigenous voice and perspective by including Indigenous expertise at all levels, ensuring that this content is a part of the learning journey for all students.





# Building professionalism of educators

In B.C., the government’s blueprint for an accessible, affordable, and high-quality early care and learning system signals a shift toward creating systemic structures that support children, families, and educators. The implementation of full-day Kindergarten and programs such as StrongStart B.C. and Changing Results for Young Children has begun to build some connections between school-based programs and community-based early childhood programs and educators. This framework was developed to further dialogue locally, regionally, and provincially about policy, funding, and education in creating a system in which all educators are supported for their work and through ongoing collaborative professional development.



# Early Learning Framework

## Overview

### **Vision:** respectfully living and learning together

This framework carries the hope of inspiring and supporting the creation of rich, joyful, early childhood spaces where children, adults, ideas and materials come together, where knowledge is constructed about learning and living in ways that are local, inclusive, ethical, and democratic.



Pedagogy of Listening

Collaborative Dialogue

Critical Reflection

Pedagogical Narration

## Early Learning Framework Principles

- ◆ Children are strong, capable in their uniqueness, and full of potential.
- ◆ Families have the most important role in contributing to children's well-being and learning.
- ◆ Educators are researchers and collaborators.
- ◆ Early years spaces are inclusive.
- ◆ People build connection and reconnection to land, culture, community, and place.
- ◆ Environments are integral to well-being and learning.
- ◆ Play is integral to well-being and learning.
- ◆ Relationships are the context for well-being and learning.
- ◆ Learning is holistic.

## First Peoples Principles of Learning

- ◆ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- ◆ Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- ◆ Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- ◆ Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- ◆ Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.
- ◆ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- ◆ Learning involves patience and time.
- ◆ Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- ◆ Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2012



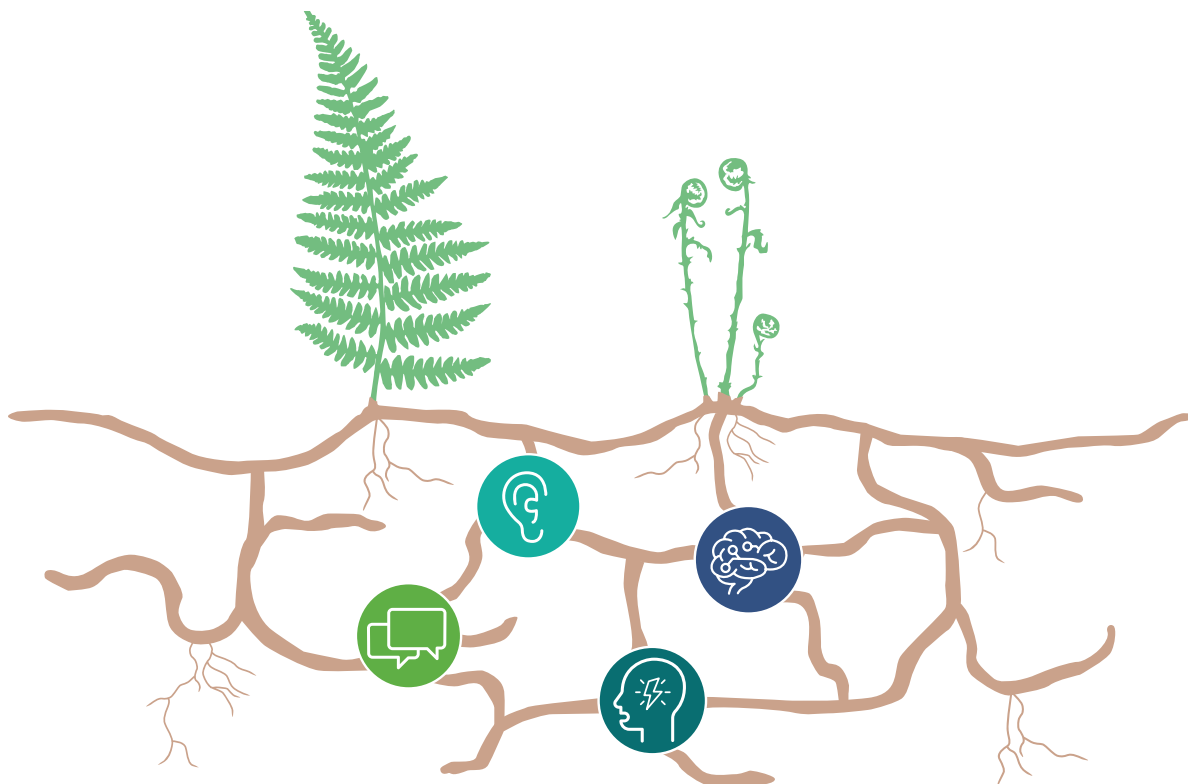
# Section Two



## Rethinking Learning and Practice







Rethinking learning and practice is central to the vision of this framework. This section describes the following practices (pedagogies) which are intended to enhance learning and be woven into all other sections, not in linear ways but in multiple and unexpected ways. The image of a fern with its underground **rhizomes** can be useful in thinking of pedagogies that are dynamic and exploratory, where new possibilities can emerge for transforming and re-creating early learning pedagogies.



*pedagogy of listening*

Pedagogy of listening is an approach to practice that means listening to the thousand languages, symbols, and codes we use to express ourselves and communicate.



*critical reflection*

Critical reflection involves thinking carefully about fundamental beliefs that shape our senses of self and others and how we view the world.



*collaborative dialogue*

Collaborative dialogue means inviting comments, questions, and interpretations from children, families, colleagues, and community members to elicit multiple perspectives.



*pedagogical narration*

Pedagogical narration is the process of noticing and collecting moments from daily practice and sharing these with colleagues, children, and families.



## What Is a Pedagogy of Listening?



Central to the vision of this framework is an approach to practice called a **pedagogy of listening**. Rinaldi (2001, p. 80) describes this as:

“Listening to the hundred, the thousand languages, symbols, and codes we use to express ourselves and communicate, and with which life expresses itself and communicates to those who know how to listen.

Listening as welcoming and being open to differences, recognizing the value of the other’s point of view and interpretation.

Listening as an active verb that involves interpretation, giving meaning to the message and value to those who offer it.

Listening that does not produce answers but formulates questions; listening that is generated by doubt, by uncertainty, which is not insecurity but, on the contrary, the security that every truth is only such if we are aware of its limits and its possible falsification.

Listening as sensitivity to the patterns that connect, to that which connects us to others; abandoning ourselves to the conviction that our understanding and our own being are but small parts of a broader, integrated knowledge that holds the universe together.”

### *expanding an idea*

Listening or attending to the other person is not always comfortable. The words “attend,” and “tension” share a common root, **tendere**, which means “to stretch.” To really attend to another or to pay attention to another person, we must stretch ourselves; we must really strain to listen, to see, to feel – it is not a casual process.

**Educators** listen to the incredible range of children’s expression, and to what children bring forward that may never have been heard before. Educators notice gesture, silence, movement, gaze, and stillness, as well as the materials, the objects, light, and sound, and how these are all interrelated, each affecting the other as they circulate within a space and a time. In this sense, listening is letting go of what we thought we knew to open ourselves to something new.



## What Is Critical Reflection?



*Critical reflection means that there are always far more questions than there are answers. (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 15)*

**Critical reflection** involves thinking carefully and methodically about fundamental beliefs, with the goal of better understanding the various cultural, social, material, and historical forces that shape our sense of self and others and how we view the world. Critical reflection is both an individual and collective process that includes dialogue with colleagues as well as with the broader community.

The Early Learning Framework invites critical reflection on taken-for-granted understandings of early childhood and primary education. Images of children and understandings about learning and education are not universal, but vary in different histories and in response to people’s experiences, beliefs, and aspirations. With that in mind, educators need to challenge accepted mainstream knowledge to explore different understandings and **worldviews**. This can be done through critical reflection.

Through critical reflection you can:

- ◆ Explore where ideas about “how the world works” have come from, who has generated these ideas, who benefits from these ideas, and who they have excluded or neglected.
- ◆ Seek many perspectives on “truths” about teaching and learning and turn the notion of truth itself toward a process of collective research.
- ◆ Understand that the world has histories of marginalizing and silencing certain peoples.
- ◆ Reconstruct and reinvent what educators can do, who they can be, and open different ways of thinking.
- ◆ Uncover potential biases, such as the racism of low expectations, and consider how this may affect pedagogical practice.
- ◆ Celebrate and honour diversity in pedagogical practices.

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*I am curious about why I notice what I notice about how the children and materials relate with each other, joining and moving together in the landscape of the StrongStart room. What thinking, frameworks, or pedagogies drive what I choose to photograph?*  
(Wanamaker, 2014, p. 1)

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### *expanding an idea*

It is important for all educators to be aware that within the B.C. public education system, racism has been demonstrated to take the form of educators having low expectations for **Indigenous** students based on preconceptions or biases stemming from social attitudes. This is the concept of the racism of low expectations, which is a form of systemic racism that was identified in the B.C. Auditor General's (2015) report. This may require educators to have difficult and perhaps uncomfortable conversations, but these conversations also provide the opportunity to ensure that all children are given the best possible chance to fulfill their highest potential.

## What is Collaborative Dialogue?



**Collaborative dialogue** means inviting comments, questions, and interpretations from children, families, colleagues, and community members to elicit multiple perspectives. This process opens avenues for discussion not to find answers but to explore the different ways of thinking about **pedagogy**, and to invite reflection on assumptions, values, and unquestioned understandings. Ongoing collaborative dialogue can enrich and deepen perspectives, and can challenge educators to consider new ways of seeing, thinking, and practising.





## What is Pedagogical Narration?



**Pedagogical narration** is 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.

### Keeping learning alive

Pedagogical narrations challenge **educators** to let go of predetermined outcomes and to remain curious, open, inventive, and respectful of children’s thinking. The intention is not to provide answers or a predictable goal for children’s learning but to connect with the living inquiries and keep the learning process “alive.” The educator’s role is to be actively engaged in **co-constructing knowledge** with children in a learning collective that includes family and community. In this way, educators create space for new ideas to flourish.

### Making learning and practice visible

Pedagogical narration is much more than a tool for recording and planning pedagogical choices. The process of discussing pedagogical narrations makes children’s learning visible and brings forth many different interpretations, voices, and possibilities. Engaging in this process can show the complexity of practice and open ways to see and think differently. By working with pedagogical narrations, adults can examine the values and understanding they hold about children, learning,

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*Simply put, pedagogical narration may be thought of in this way:*

*Listen deeply*

*Be curious*

*Embrace wonder*

*Share the story*

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and education, their potential biases and expectations of children and families, as well as what knowledge is privileged and what knowledge is **marginalized** or silenced.



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*“My displaying of pedagogical narrations, along with my desire to make my choices in practice more visible, is not done with the intention of making others think the same way I do, but rather ‘for stirring the wind of thought’ (Berger, 2015) within us, expanding our perspectives and generating ongoing, critical dialogue and debate about important issues such as race, class, gender, and age” (Wanamaker, 2017, p. 47).*

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## Leading and advocating

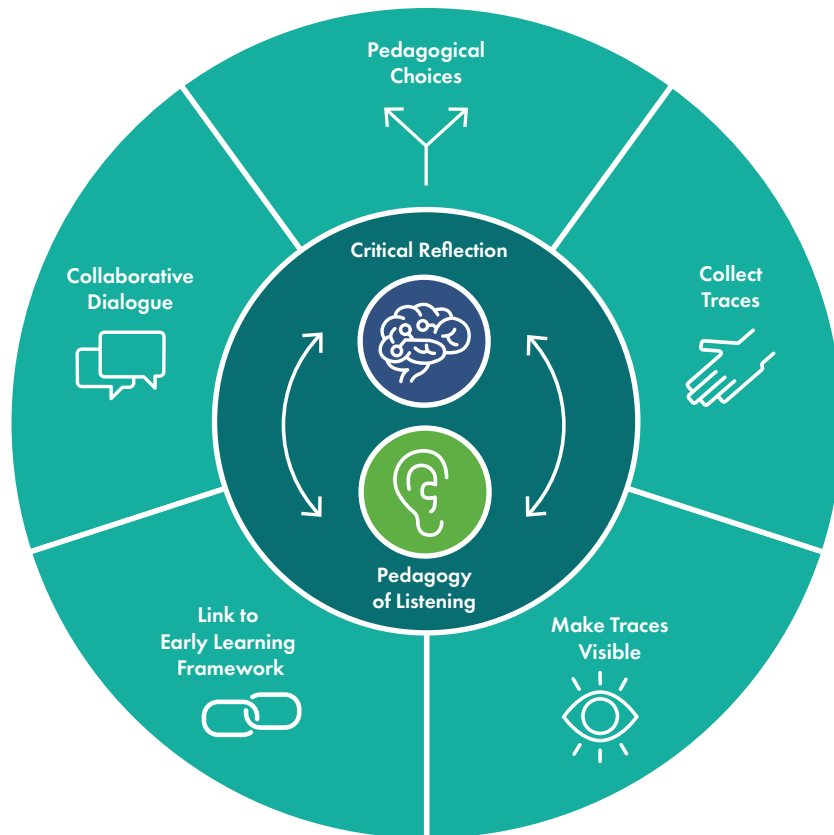
**Pedagogical narration** is also important for advocacy and educational leadership. When pedagogical narration is brought into the public sphere and the competencies, capabilities, and relationships of children (and adults) are made visible, children are brought out of anonymity. Children become the focus of a dialogue in which their voice is listened to and their role is respected. At the same time, pedagogical narrations can highlight the role of **educators** as researchers and critical thinkers, rather than caretakers or technicians who follow set procedures. By making the complexities of practice and the intentional work of educators visible, people see early learning settings as sites of vibrant, critically reflective, and **democratic practice**. Educators who bring pedagogical narration into the public sphere are contributing to broadening the dialogue of childhood, learning, and education by opening spaces for multiple perspectives and multiple ways of doing and being. By engaging the community in these conversations, educators resist a “one-size-fits-all” model of early learning and open possibilities for generating **localized pedagogies** that respond to the diverse historical and cultural contexts of B.C. communities.

## The process of pedagogical narration

The following describes the components of pedagogical narration; however, it is important to remember that there is no single way to engage with this process. Each person or group must experiment to find what works for them. Working with pedagogical narration is not predictable or linear; instead it is a cyclical process that has stops and starts, with moments of clarity and moments of uncertainty. Be patient. It takes time and practice to become used to noticing, recording, reflecting, and dialoguing about moments. Individuals and groups can start from where they are and take small steps.



Figure 1 provides an overview of the process of pedagogical narration.



*definition*

**Pedagogical choices:** everything educators choose to do with children, with the environment, materials, traditions, and routines, is a pedagogical choice. This framework is designed to provoke educators to examine why particular choices are made, and to support their efforts to be attentive and intentional in the choices they make.

*expanding an idea*

The 2008 British Columbia Early Learning Framework used the term pedagogical narration to describe a critically reflective process. In adopting a “made in B.C. term,” the framework can help to build common language. **Educators** use other terms such as “learning stories,” “living stories,” “making learning visible,” “documentation,” or another term meaningful within their community, to highlight the connections with emergent or responsive curriculum and to engage in **critically reflective practice**.



## Collect traces of practice



Collect traces of moments with children. In daily life with children, there are a multitude of moments in which ideas, objects, materials, adults, other children, other species and the environment engage with each other.

Choose a moment that draws interest. It may be a moment that surprises, intrigues, is uncomfortable, or brings tension.

Work with an **inquiry** question that guides the focus of noticing and recording. It is not about capturing an outcome or assessing an individual child.

Traces make visible a moment of practice and bring attention to learning, thinking, the connections and relationships.

Traces of practice in pedagogical narrations can take the form of:

- ◆ Materials created by the children, such as drawings, paintings, constructions
- ◆ Written field notes
- ◆ Digital audio-recordings
- ◆ Photographs
- ◆ Video clips

### *definition*

#### **Traces:**

artifacts such as materials created by children, notes of text, photos, audio, video, journals or digital data that are collected for pedagogical narrations.



**IMPORTANT:** Photographs, video and audio recordings, and notes about children are all sources of information that must be treated carefully. Ensure that families know how this information is used in the program for pedagogical narrations, as well as how the information is stored. Respect families' wishes if they do not grant permission for their child to be photographed or recorded.

## Reflect on the traces

Reflect on the **traces** of practice that you have collected. Write thoughts about this moment. Ask yourself, Why did I record this moment? What interests me about it? What ideas or theories might the children (and/or educators or others) be thinking, learning, or experimenting with? Think about the ideas that have been presented in the framework about **critical reflection** and a **pedagogy of listening**. In Figure 1, on page 53, critical reflection and a pedagogy of listening are drawn at the centre of the **pedagogical narration** process and also connect to all of the other process elements. Educators cycle through this element regularly throughout the pedagogical narration process. The critically reflective questions in this framework (pages 69 – 90) are useful to help engage in reflection.

## expanding an idea

Noticing and interpreting what children do and why they do it probes the connection between thinking and questioning and shows or makes visible the way children are making meaning of their learning or of their interaction with the world. As one interprets and critically reflects on a moment/observation, intriguing questions and insight can be gained without requiring absolute certainty about the situation.



Teresa Dixon

Martin - This is the bird house we saw this morning in Chinese. There are birds in there. It's home for birds! The trees are so, so tall!

Olivia - Birds are hiding in this house

Owen - Looking at the birdhouse. That's where the garbage truck was. It was at the road.

Jacob - That's a birdhouse. There is a hole for the birds to fly in. It's dark in there!!

Elleana - Bubble Bumble bees hide in there! →

Amelia - Birds hide

## Make the traces visible



Share the **traces** of practice and the emerging **pedagogical narration** with others, such as the children and families of the program, as well as colleagues. Sharing this with others makes the moments visible or public.

Pedagogical narration can take many forms and can be shared in myriad ways; however, they are never complete. Templates (digital or written) offer formats for pedagogical narration, but can limit opportunities for ongoing reflection and dialogue about the complexities of children's and educators' learning and thinking.

Bulletin boards that simply display images of children are not pedagogical narrations. Documentation of practice becomes pedagogical narration only when brought to life with questions, thoughts, and the interpretations of different people. Pedagogical narration is not intended to be a record of what happened; rather, it is a lively invitation to share, discuss, challenge, debate, and rework pedagogical understandings and practice.

Traces of practice and your (emerging) pedagogical narrations can be made public by:

- ◆ Posting on the wall, on a bulletin board, or in the entryway.
- ◆ In newsletters to parents, families, educators, the community textually, or visually.
- ◆ Sending text, audio recordings or digital video to families through email.
- ◆ Sharing digitally through social media (some educators/programs use Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and/or online blogs to share documentation and reflections). Reminder: use of online technologies requires parent or guardian consent and must be password protected for privacy.
- ◆ Printing or projecting on a screen or wall at discussion meetings for families, colleagues (for example, a team meeting, a **community of practice** with a group of colleagues), and children in the program.
- ◆ Posting on sandwich boards placed inside or outside the centre or school.

Consider the diverse abilities in the community and explore multiple ways of sharing pedagogical narrations such as by Braille, with pictures and symbols, or using closed captioning, voice-over, or translations.





## Invite collaborative dialogue



Invite comments, questions, and interpretations from children, families, colleagues, or community members. Try to elicit ideas about the children’s thinking and learning that invite multiple perspectives. What theories are the children thinking with? What theories are adults thinking with? Ask about and discuss assumptions, values, and unquestioned understandings. Where do these come from? Whom and what do they serve or not serve?

**With children:** Draw from ideas and thoughts from pedagogical narrations and continue in conversation with children. This is what is meant by “**co-constructing knowledge**” with children. Remembering the event or moment and retelling it and wondering more about it engages children and extends their thinking.

**With colleagues:** With ongoing reflection of pedagogical narrations, dialogue with colleagues becomes richer and deeper, making both children’s and educators thinking and learning visible. Through documenting what educators notice, they may begin to plan differently and think differently about what might be possible. It is also important to consider what is not being documented, and to critically reflect on what motivates **pedagogical choices**. Doing this regularly and collaboratively allows for ongoing exchange of ideas, invites multiple ways of seeing, can uncover biases, facilitates open conversation on biases, and can provide the support needed to shift practices that can lead to meaningful transformations.

### *expanding an idea*

Educators are not imposing their ideas on the children, but truly recognizing the children and their efforts. In a way, it is like viewing a child through new eyes. It is challenging to really listen and get to know a child anew and to resist previous ideas of who that child is. Through carefully and intentionally noticing children and what they do, educators have an opportunity to wonder at what they are seeing and hearing.

These discussions are not always easy, and tensions and discomfort may arise. Building relationships of trust and creating a **culture** where dialogue is ongoing takes time and requires a willingness to listen and to be open to uncertainty. The goal is not always to come to agreement, but to accept dissensus (not always agreeing) as a way of generating new thinking and seeing.



**With families and communities:** Making traces visible to families creates an opportunity to ask for their input and reflection. Share with families that what they have to say is important to further understand what children are learning and experiencing. Consider asking families:

- ◆ What do you think your child is doing/learning in this moment?
- ◆ Can you help me deepen my understanding of what is happening in this moment?
- ◆ Is there anything you could add to this story (background information, personal experiences, insights into personality)?
- ◆ How do you see this moment in relation to your image of the child?
- ◆ What prior knowledge does your child bring to this moment?
- ◆ What does knowledge mean to you? What knowledge is important to you?

Find opportunities to make **traces** visible in the community. Think about partnerships with galleries, community centres, schools, colleges or universities, or other organizations where the public could engage with pedagogical narrations.

## Link to the Early Learning Framework



Link **critical reflection** and the ongoing **collaborative dialogues** to the Early Learning Framework. Which living inquiries (pages 66 – 90) do the traces relate to? Are there particular critically reflective questions (pages 69 – 90) that connect to or would support individual reflection and collaborative dialogue with others?

## Make Pedagogical Choices



**Pedagogical choices** include the plans, materials, and provocations that educators choose in their daily practice with children.

Through the process of engaging with a **pedagogical narration**, educators can think about why particular choices are made and can **experiment** with ideas. Choices and experimentations will likely lead to further documentation, reflection, continued collaborative dialogue, new links to the Early Learning Framework and theory, and new and more pedagogical choices in practice. Together educators and children can invent new ideas or try different materials or processes, all the while remaining open to other possibilities. In this way pedagogical narration can support emergent curriculum.

### *expanding an idea*

**Thinking with multiple perspectives:** Pedagogical narration offers the opportunity to make the complex thinking of children and educators visible and to place this thinking alongside thinkers in other disciplines, such as (but not limited to) artists, scientists, philosophers, musicians, anthropologists, sociologists, environmental scientists, technicians, tradespeople, and educators. For example, discussing a child's block construction with an engineer opens perspectives educators may not have considered.





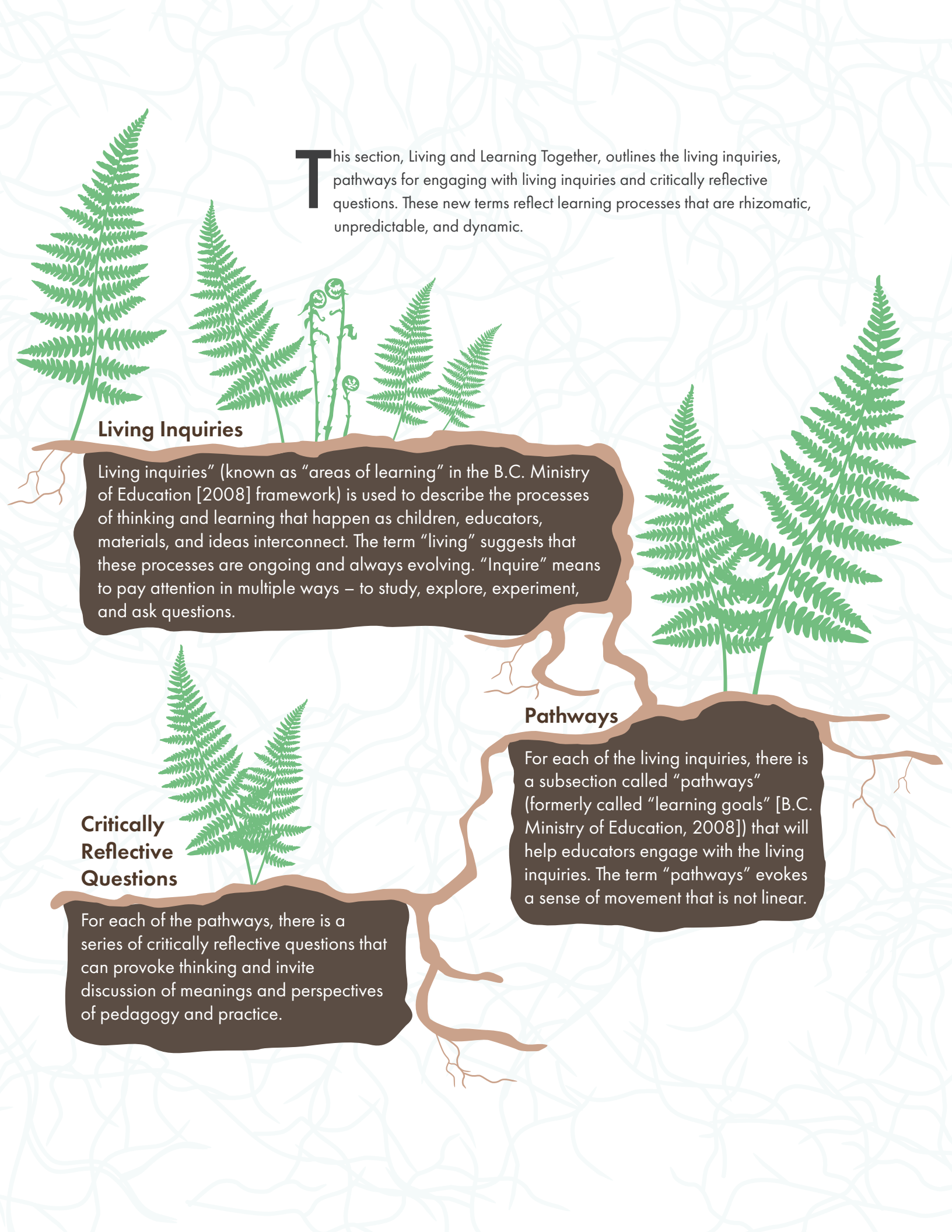
# Section Three



## Living and Learning Together







**T**his section, Living and Learning Together, outlines the living inquiries, pathways for engaging with living inquiries and critically reflective questions. These new terms reflect learning processes that are rhizomatic, unpredictable, and dynamic.

### **Living Inquiries**

Living inquiries" (known as "areas of learning" in the B.C. Ministry of Education [2008] framework) is used to describe the processes of thinking and learning that happen as children, educators, materials, and ideas interconnect. The term "living" suggests that these processes are ongoing and always evolving. "Inquire" means to pay attention in multiple ways – to study, explore, experiment, and ask questions.

### **Pathways**

For each of the living inquiries, there is a subsection called "pathways" (formerly called "learning goals" [B.C. Ministry of Education, 2008]) that will help educators engage with the living inquiries. The term "pathways" evokes a sense of movement that is not linear.

### **Critically Reflective Questions**

For each of the pathways, there is a series of critically reflective questions that can provoke thinking and invite discussion of meanings and perspectives of pedagogy and practice.

The living inquiries, pathways, and reflective questions, offer provocations to think about children, learning, and practising. As educators pay attention to moments, encounters, ideas, materials, and people, they can “think with” the living inquiries, pathways, and reflective questions to focus on their fundamental beliefs and understandings of childhood, education, and **pedagogy**.

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*As they move together through time and encounter one another, these paths interweave to form an immense and continually evolving tapestry. (Ingold, 2011, p. 9)*

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This framework describes four living inquiries:

- ◆ Well-being and belonging
- ◆ Engagement with others, materials, and the world
- ◆ Communication and literacies
- ◆ Identities, social responsibility, and diversity

Learning is not an individual act but happens in relationship with people, materials, and place. All aspects of children’s learning and growing are interconnected and overlapping.

Recognizing Indigenous knowledge, and respectfully seeking collaborative partnerships with Elders and other knowledge holders in the community, enhances the learning in each of the living inquiries.

There are no pre-set ways to engage with the four living inquiries; instead, **pedagogy** should be grounded in the place, land, families, histories, and **cultures** of local communities.

The living inquiries are closely linked to the B.C. curriculum and competencies and reflect shared philosophical understandings.

Living inquiries are rooted in the belief that children learn by doing when they are engaged in projects and inquiries that extend their interests.

Table 1 summarizes the living inquiries and pathways.



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*“The path is made by walking...” (Machado, 2004, p. 281)*

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Table 1: Table of Living Inquiries and Pathways

Living Inquiries				
	Well-being and belonging	Engagement with others, materials, and the world	Communication and literacies	Identities, social responsibility, and diversity
<b>Definition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>What is it?</i></li> <li>◆ <i>Why is it important?</i></li> </ul>	Nurturing a sense of well-being and belonging supports children as they learn about and investigate the world around them.	Children construct meaning as they engage with materials, other children and adults, the environment, the community, and the world.	Children use multiple modes of expressive languages to communicate ideas, participate in relationships, and make meaning in their homes and communities.	A positive personal and cultural identity is the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of all the facets that contribute to a healthy sense of oneself.
<b>Pathways</b>	<p>Joy in relationships with people, place, materials and ideas</p> <p>Culture and worldviews</p> <p>Indigenous voices and perspectives</p> <p>Diversity and difference</p> <p>Family composition and gender orientation</p> <p>Safety and respect</p> <p>Nourishment, sleep, and physical activity</p> <p>Emotions, thoughts, and views</p> <p>Every child is a gift</p> <p>Interests and inquiries</p>	<p>Knowledge and theories</p> <p>Spaces, objects, and materials</p> <p>Reconnection to land, place</p> <p>Time for Engagement</p> <p>Local community connections</p>	<p>Multiple modes of communication</p> <p>Culture, family, traditions, and knowledge</p> <p>Language and communication</p> <p>Vocabulary, symbols, and written language</p> <p>Sound and word play</p> <p>Technology</p>	<p>Family origins, cultural background, place of origin, allegiance and affiliation, citizenship, and other identities</p> <p>Democratic practices</p> <p>Individual differences</p> <p>Social responsibility and justice</p> <p>Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples</p> <p>Interrelationship of humans and their common worlds</p>



## Well-Being And Belonging

Nurturing a sense of well-being and belonging supports children as they learn about and investigate the world around them. This sense is fostered through reciprocal relationships with people and places where each child is valued both as a gift and for their gifts – a feeling of being grounded in their immediate environment, their communities, their **culture**, and the wider world. Educators create environments in which every child feels confident to achieve to their highest potential, and where differences are recognized and celebrated. Each child is valued for their contributions and for the knowledge they can share.

By developing responsive relationships with adults and peers, each child feels a sense of well-being and can contribute to the well-being of their family, community, and society. This confidence is essential for children as they explore their capacities as family members, friends, thinkers, citizens, and discover their connections to the natural environment.

### Pathways for Engaging with Well-Being and Belonging

To inspire a sense of well-being and belonging, adults design environments and engage in pedagogies considering these pathways:

- ◆ **Joy in relationships with people, place, materials, and ideas**  
Children and **educators** are open to joy and wonder.
- ◆ **Culture and worldviews**  
All children's cultures are welcomed, valued, and woven into programs in ways that are transformative.

- ◆ **Indigenous voices and perspectives**  
Educators consider Indigenous resources and begin conversations with colleagues, families, and children about Canada's history of colonialism.
- ◆ **Diversity and difference**  
Each child and each family is included, welcomed, and celebrated.
- ◆ **Family composition and gender orientation**  
Educators resist perpetuating gender stereotypes; children can play with or transgress gender norms.
- ◆ **Safety and respect**  
Children are listened to and their identities and abilities are respected.
- ◆ **Nourishment, sleep, and physical activity**  
Children have control of their bodies and contribute to determining routines and schedules.
- ◆ **Emotions, thoughts, and views**  
Children's thoughts, emotions, and views are listened to and respected.
- ◆ **Every child is a gift**  
Every child can contribute their gifts in relationship with adults and other children.
- ◆ **Interests and inquiries**  
Children can engage with their own ideas, theories, and inquiries in ways that are meaningful to them.



## Putting Critical Reflection to Work: Reflective Questions for Well-Being and Belonging

This section offers directions and ideas for furthering thinking about practice in relation to the living inquiry Well-Being and Belonging and each of its pathways. Considering these pathways and questions individually and with colleagues, families, children, and others invites discussion of meanings and perspectives in a spirit of wonder, justice, and research.

### Pathways for Engaging with Well-Being and Belonging

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Joy in relationships with people, places, materials, and ideas	<p>Moss suggests that childhood spaces can give “constant rise to wonder and surprise, magic moments and goose bumps, and a source of hope and renewed belief in the world” (Moss, 2013, p. 82).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ What does this mean to me?</li> <li>◆ Could I use this quote as an invitation for dialogue with colleagues?</li> <li>◆ What brings me joy in my work? Can I create ways to extend and build on this joy?</li> </ul> <p>Children often find joy in their relationships with materials, people, and ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ How might I provide opportunities to extend or build on these joyful encounters?</li> </ul> <p>Do materials, spaces or rituals/routines invite joyful engagement? What materials, spaces or rituals/routines seem to inhibit joyful engagement?</p> <p>What does it mean to be in reciprocal relationships with children, families, and colleagues?</p>

## Pathways for Engaging with Well-Being and Belonging

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Culture and worldviews	<p>How are children’s <b>cultures</b> welcomed, valued, and woven into my setting in ways that are transformative?</p> <p>How do policies, procedures, and administrative practices honour and strengthen connections to the diverse cultural communities in my region (including deaf culture, diverse ability culture)?</p> <p>In what ways are community members invited and welcomed into my program to enhance cross-generational, cultural, and relational learning?</p> <p>Consider styles and languages of communication including gesture, eye contact, expression of feelings, independence, and assertiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ How do these vary among different cultural groups?</li> <li>◆ How might I learn more about the cultural practices and histories of the diverse communities in my region?</li> </ul>
Indigenous voices and perspectives	<p>How might I bring ideas and concepts I have learned through Indigenous partners and resources into my program?</p> <p>How might my biases and perceptions impact my work?</p> <p>How can I ensure that I have high expectations for Indigenous children while accommodating, recognizing, and celebrating differences?</p> <p>How might I begin conversations with colleagues, families, and children about Canada’s history of colonialism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ About Indigenous peoples’ experience of systemic marginalization and forced assimilation?</li> <li>◆ About the importance of redress for historical damage done to Indigenous peoples and their communities?</li> </ul> <p>How might I respectfully ask Elders for guidance on cultural protocols, and then share them with staff, parents, and children?</p> <p>What can I do to ensure that the diversity of Indigenous cultures are recognized and reflected in my program?</p>



## Pathways for Engaging with Well-Being and Belonging

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Diversity and difference	<p>How do I include and celebrate the <b>diversity</b> of each child and each family in my program?</p> <p>How do parents and families contribute to my program?</p> <p>How do I ensure parents/families, Elders, people of all cultures, languages, and spiritual knowledge keepers feel welcome in my program?</p> <p>Consider traditions, rituals, or practices that are taken for granted in my program. Which of these may not be <b>inclusive</b>?</p> <p>Are children given the opportunity to discuss issues of racism or privilege?</p> <p>How can my practice be anti-racist or anti-biased?</p> <p>How can I give children the opportunity to discuss social justice? Equity and equality?</p> <p>How is behaviour a form of communication?</p> <p>What do the responses of <b>educators</b> communicate in turn?</p> <p>What are differing <b>worldviews</b> of diversity and inclusion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ How can I or my program express views on inclusion?</li></ul>



## Pathways for Engaging with Well-Being and Belonging

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Family composition and gender orientation	<p>What books, posters, or other materials in my centre perpetrate gender stereotypes? Family stereotypes?</p> <p>Do children have opportunities to <b>experiment</b> with transgressing gender stereotypes?</p> <p>What is the story of how I came to understand gender?</p> <p>What are my assumptions about girls and boys? How might I share the stories of my understandings with others, with children?</p> <p>How might I pay attention to responses as children play with or transgress gender norms and share new ideas with colleagues and with children?</p> <p>What are my assumptions of transgendered children? Transgendered adults?</p>
Safety and respect	<p>How do adults convey to children that experimenting with identities in the early learning setting is accepted?</p> <p>How are diverse abilities respected and valued?</p> <p>How do meanings of respect vary in different cultural or historical contexts?</p> <p>How does a child show respect? How does an adult show respect? Is respect reciprocal?</p> <p>This framework is grounded in a <b>pedagogy of listening</b>. Is this a new idea? How might I explore it further?</p> <p>What does it mean to be in a reciprocal relationship with an adult? With a child?</p> <p>Consider adult voices and children's voices: Who speaks more? Who listens more?</p>
Nourishment, sleep, and physical activity	<p>In what way are infants involved in their routines, such as diapering, feeding, and sleeping?</p> <p>Are each child's preferences for sleep and food recognized and responded to? Could more be done?</p> <p>Are children asked to stand, sit, walk, eat, or dress in particular ways during the day?</p> <p>Are children able to have control of their bodies all of the time? Some of the time?</p> <p>Do children have choices about when they can be physically active? About how they can be active?</p> <p>How do children contribute to determining the routines and schedules of indoor time? Outdoor time?</p>

## Pathways for Engaging with Well-Being and Belonging

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
<p>Emotions, thoughts, and views</p>	<p>Spend time noticing the multiple (verbal and non-verbal) ways that thoughts, emotions, and views are expressed by children. What did I learn? What surprises me?</p> <p>Children sometimes express frustration, sadness, or anger. What choices do I make in these moments?</p> <p>What is my image of the child? What is my image of the <b>educator</b>? How do these images influence the ways that I respond to children’s frustration, sadness or anger?</p> <p>What tensions arise when children’s behaviour challenges me?</p> <p>How do I respond to the strong, exuberant emotions and excitement that children bring to their play and learning?</p> <p>What is the role of the educator in solving conflicts between children? Is there a “right” way to do this? Think about images of children.</p> <p>Do children have opportunities to discuss major life events, such as birth, illness, and death?</p> <p>Do children have opportunities to discuss difficult life issues, such as violence, guns, fear, compassion, <b>inclusion</b>, or power?</p> <p>In what ways could I engage colleagues in discussions in these difficult areas?</p>
<p>Every child is a gift</p>	<p>How can each child contribute their gifts in relationship with adults and other children?</p> <p>Consider routines, schedules, or traditions. How do rhythms and flows of the day invite children to participate in the program that support and honour their individuality and learning styles?</p> <p>How might children and adults seek to know one another’s gifts?</p> <p>How do I identify and name the distinct qualities that I recognize in each child?</p> <p>How do I create time and space to co-construct knowledge alongside each child?</p> <p>What could I do to contribute to a child’s sense of pride in their gifts?</p>

## Pathways for Engaging with Well-Being and Belonging

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Interests and inquiries	<p>Do children have opportunities to engage with objects and materials in unusual or surprising ways? How could I <b>experiment</b> with this idea?</p> <p>Are children's ideas, theories, and inquiries listened to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ What new ideas could I implement to ensure I have time to listen to children's theories?</li></ul> <p>Can children investigate interests and passions over days? Weeks? Months?</p> <p>What materials invite transformation and inquiry? What materials inhibit transformation and inquiry?</p> <p>How do adult expectations shape/limit how children engage with materials?</p>



# Others, Materials, and the World

Children construct meaning as they engage with materials, other children and adults, the environment, the community, and the world. Objects, space, place, rhythms, rituals, gestures, sound, children and adults – these are all interconnected and participate in the interactions and inquiries that emerge in early care and learning spaces. Adults and children interact in reciprocal relationships where knowledge is co-constructed and outcomes cannot be predicted. Within a **pedagogy of listening** (Rinaldi, 2001, p. 80) **educators** create environments in which both adults and children can reflect, investigate, and be provoked to deepen understandings.



Play is an avenue to these vibrant engagements that is the basis of all learning. As children engage with the world they delve into inquiries, generate new ideas, solve problems, and build theories of people, places, and materials. These engagements can be vibrant, exhilarating and noisy, or they can be quiet, focused, and solitary. Providing time, space, and materials rich with possibilities for experimenting, imagining, and transforming allows children to create and explore in diverse ways based on their interests. Creating contexts for each child's engagement and participation is perhaps the most important way to inspire meaningful learning experiences.

## Pathways for Engagement with Others, Materials, and the World

To inspire engagement with others, materials, and the world, adults design environments and cultivate practices considering these pathways:

- ◆ **Knowledge and theories**  
Educators reflect on the concept of knowledge and respect the knowledges and theories children hold.
- ◆ **Spaces, objects, and materials**  
Children can investigate and **experiment** with materials in ways that are meaningful to them.
- ◆ **Reconnection to land and place**  
Children and educators consider what it means to be in relationship with land, including the stories of land that are told and the stories that have been silenced.
- ◆ **Time for engagement**  
Educators and children experiment to reimagine routines, schedules, and transitions.

- ◆ **Local community connections**

Early care and learning spaces become places of gathering, and children are active participants in the community.

## Putting Critical Reflection to Work: Reflective Questions for Others, Materials, and the World



This section offers directions and ideas for furthering thinking about practice in relation to the living inquiry Engagement with Others, Materials and the World and each of its pathways. Considering these pathways and questions individually and with colleagues, families, children, and others invites discussion of meanings and perspectives in a spirit of wonder, justice, and research.

### Pathways for Engaging with Others, Materials, and the World

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Knowledge and theories	<p>Think about the concept of knowledge. What does it mean? What knowledge is important? Who decides what knowledge is important?</p> <p>What kinds of questions do I ask about children’s engagements? How does my language reflect children as creators of theories? How do my questions reflect children as constructors of knowledge?</p> <p>Consider a culture of research. What does that look like to me?</p> <p>How can I pay attention to the ways children bring multiple subjects or disciplines together? As I notice children using shovels to move water from one puddle to another, I might consider hydraulics, physics, geography, flow, waves, and diffraction and how children work with these complex ideas.</p> <p>How does thinking with multiple disciplines enrich how I see children’s engagements?</p> <p>Consider the knowledge children bring into the program. What opportunities do they have to share and extend this knowledge?</p>

## Pathways for Engaging with Others, Materials, and the World

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Spaces, objects, and materials	<p>Can children engage with materials in ways that are meaningful to them?</p> <p>What limits are placed on how children can engage with materials? Who decides the limits? Why are those limits in place?</p> <p>What opportunities do children have to access materials that can be transformed or investigated?</p> <p>What materials invite <b>experimentation</b>, problem solving, or intrigue?</p> <p>Consider how materials are presented. How does this limit or invite experimentation and investigation? For example: paint. Is it presented on tables or on the floor? In small or large vessels? One colour or many colours?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ How could I creatively consider materials and/or their presentation?</li></ul> <p>What might emerge to consider children as artists? Think about the many ways artists approach and engage with materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ How might I investigate this further?</li><li>◆ Could I invite an <b>atelierista</b> into my program?</li></ul>



## Pathways for Engaging with Others, Materials, and the World

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Reconnection to land and place	<p>How might I contribute to children’s reconnection with land and place?</p> <p>What does it mean to be in relationship with land? To be of a place?</p> <p>Whose stories of land are told and whose have been silenced?</p> <p>What are the local Indigenous stories of the land? In what ways might the stories be different from those you know?</p> <p>What are the children’s stories of the land?</p> <p>Think about how childhood and nature have been idealized or romanticized in Western thought. What examples can you think of?</p> <p>Do idealized notions of childhood and nature appear in my practice? In my community?</p> <p>Consider a <b>common worlds framework</b>. How might I begin a dialogue with colleagues and invent new pedagogies together?</p> <p>Think about mainstream <b>worldviews</b> and how people are shaped by them. How might I begin to consider worldviews outside of the mainstream?</p> <p><i>We need to encourage knowledge of self – the sense of place: “Where are you from?” (Participant, as cited in B.C. Ministry of Education, 2015b, p. 26)</i></p>
Time for engagement	<p>What opportunities do children have to explore ideas and questions over days, weeks, or months?</p> <p>Is it important for children to have space to store projects or inquiries so they can be revisited? How could I talk to children about this?</p> <p>How many transitions are there in my day? Could I try different ways of transitioning?</p> <p>Do my routines and schedules limit or enhance opportunities for deep involvement in or with ideas?</p> <p>Consider routines and schedules. Do I have the same routine every day? Every year? Could I <b>experiment</b> with routines and schedules?</p> <p>What might emerge if I considered rhythms and flows rather than routines?</p> <p>What role does the clock play in my day? Do routines follow the clock or the people in my program?</p>



## Pathways for Engaging with Others, Materials, and the World

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Local community connections	<p>How might families, community members, Elders, and intergenerational knowledge holders be welcomed to enrich children's theories?</p> <p>How can children's theories be made visible to the broader community? What local partnerships might I find that would be helpful?</p> <p>How can I connect or reconnect to local Indigenous communities?</p> <p>What relationships in the community could be cultivated? (Think about gardens, hospitals, seniors' organizations, farms, galleries, museums, academic institutions, industry, or cultural organizations.)</p> <p>How might my setting become a place of gathering for cross-generational learning?</p>





## Communication and Literacies

Children use multiple modes of expressive languages to communicate ideas, participate in relationships, and make meaning in their homes and communities. From birth, children communicate through sounds, gestures, movements, and eye contact. As children grow they explore symbolic systems to think with and make meaning of the world. They explore expressive languages such as movement, dance, constructing, drama, play, art, mathematics, science, music, and storytelling.

Educators notice and reflect on the incredible range of practices and languages children use to communicate, respecting and supporting the diverse abilities and knowledge that children bring.

Technology is part of everyday life for most people, changing how we interact with one another to create new information and new ways to access and share knowledge. Children are living in this digital environment not just as consumers of technology, but also as producers as they create, improvise, and repurpose. As well, some children rely on technology to support interaction and living; for example, technologies that aid in communicating verbally or symbolically.

A technology-rich world opens new and exciting possibilities for children to **experiment** with images, print, gesture, sound, and video that can contribute to multiple modes of literacies and communication. At the same time, there are differing views on the use of technology in childhood, and not all children, schools, and families have the same access to technology. It is important that both children and adults become critical and **ethical** users of digital media. Technology is a reality of 21st century, requiring reflection and ongoing dialogue between **educators**, families, and communities.

## Pathways for Engaging with Communication and Literacies

To inspire communication and literacies, adults design environments and cultivate practices considering these pathways:

- ◆ **Multiple modes of communication**  
Educators listen to and honour the incredible range of expressive languages children use to communicate.
- ◆ **Culture, family, traditions, and knowledge**  
Children hear stories, poems, rhythms, chants, and songs that connect to the child's **culture**.
- ◆ **Language and communication**  
Children and **educators** engage in meaningful, reciprocal conversations.
- ◆ **Vocabulary, symbols, and written language**  
Children have opportunities to engage with verbal, symbolic and written languages that are meaningful to them and their community.
- ◆ **Sound and word play**  
Educators recognize the sounds children make as forms of communication, and provide opportunities for children to explore and play with sounds and words.
- ◆ **Technology**  
Educators reflect on both the creative and the negative potentials of technology and childhood.



## Putting Critical Reflection to Work: Reflective Questions for Communication and Literacies

This section offers directions and ideas for furthering thinking about practice in relation to the Communication and Literacies living inquiry and each of its pathways. Considering these pathways and questions individually and with colleagues, families, children, and others invites discussion of meanings and perspectives in a spirit of wonder, justice, and research.

### Pathways for Engaging with Communication and Literacies

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Multiple modes of communication	<p>How do adults accept and honour all children’s (babies, toddlers, <b>children with diverse abilities</b>) expressions of fear, joy, happiness, sadness, disgust, etc.?</p> <p>Think about children as they engage in movement, dance, construction, drama, play, art, mathematics, science, music, and storytelling. How are these modes of communication? Or expression?</p> <p>In what other ways do children communicate?</p> <p>Do children have opportunities to communicate in various modes? How could these be extended?</p> <p>How could I create space, time, and materials for children to communicate in all these modes?</p> <p>Consider intentionally listening to all modes of expression. What could I and my colleagues discuss about this?</p> <p><i>Your stories are a part of me. Your stories teach me about the many languages you use to show me your feelings. Your stories are written in your movements. Your stories are written in pitch and cadence. Your stories teach me how to dance with my own story (Rose, 2018).</i></p>
Culture, family, traditions, and knowledge	<p>What opportunities do I provide for children to hear stories, poems, rhythms, chants, and songs? How do these connect to the child’s <b>culture</b>?</p> <p>What opportunities are there for oral storytelling (e.g., personal narratives, traditional stories)?</p> <p>How are the children’s cultural backgrounds represented in the stories and symbols used from day to day? How are these representations integrated into other aspects of practice?</p> <p>Do children experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures?</p>

## Pathways for Engaging with Communication and Literacies

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Language and communication	<p>What opportunities do children have for one-to-one interaction, both with adults and other children?</p> <p>How do I extend and deepen conversations with children?</p> <p>Think about <i>intentionally</i> listening. How might this shift how I converse with children?</p> <p>What opportunities do children have to listen to one another?</p> <p>In what ways do I encourage children to explore different ways of expressing a single idea? (e.g., Can you draw joy? What is a joyful sound? A joyful shape or colour? A joyful movement, a joyful facial expression?)</p>
Vocabulary, symbols, and written language	<p>How can children learn about a <b>diversity</b> of languages (e.g., sign language, local <b>Indigenous</b> languages, other languages used in the child's community)? How could I extend these interactions?</p> <p>In what ways do I welcome the use of languages other than English in the child's environment (e.g., by encouraging bilingual children to use both languages or by singing songs in other languages)?</p> <p>Consider symbolic representation; that is, making marks that have meaning. How could I explore these ideas with children?</p> <p>In what ways can children <b>experiment</b> with numbers, measurement, and form in meaningful contexts?</p> <p>How is written language made part of the rhythm of the program?</p>
Sound and word play	<p>How do I respond to the sounds infants make (e.g., their squeals, growls, grunts, and babbling)? How do I respond to the sounds non-verbal children make? In what ways do I show that I recognize these sounds as forms of oral communication?</p> <p>In what ways are children exposed to a wide range of singing and speaking voices, and in a variety of contexts?</p> <p>Sounds can be a source of delight and enjoyment. How can I enhance this (e.g., rhymes, alliteration, poems, chants, songs, dances)?</p> <p>In what ways do I encourage children to explore their sense of rhythm and melody (e.g., through listening, singing, and dancing in a variety of musical styles)?</p>

## Pathways for Engaging with Communication and Literacies

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Technology	<p>What are my personal views of technology, childhood, learning, and creating in the 21st century?</p> <p>What are the possibilities for children’s engagement with technology? What are potential negative aspects?</p> <p>What creative opportunities does technology present for thinking about <b>pedagogy</b>? For making children’s learning and thinking visible?</p> <p>In what ways does technology present opportunities for children’s creative expression?</p> <p>How might I begin to dialogue with families and colleagues about the complicated issues of technology and childhood?</p>

## Identities, Social Responsibility, and Diversity

A positive personal and cultural identity is the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of all the facets that contribute to a healthy sense of oneself. It includes awareness and understanding of one’s family background, **culture**, heritage, language, values, beliefs, and perspectives in a **pluralistic** society. Together, adults and children who have a positive personal and cultural identity and value personal and cultural narratives understand how these constitute identity and contribute to **common worlds**. Supported by a sense of self-worth, self-awareness, and positive identity, children become confident individuals who take satisfaction in who they are and what they can do to contribute to their own well-being and to the well-being of their family, community, and society (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2014).

Educators view children as citizens of their communities as well as citizens of the world and foster engagement and meaningful relationships with people and places, pasts and futures. Children can, and do, contribute to reflective dialogue, critical thinking, and decision making. Children’s voices are listened to and their opinions valued, and they are supported to listen to and value the voices of others.

Adults and children actively consider the interdependence of people, their environments, and fellow creatures, thereby supporting the ability to value individual, social, and cultural **diversity** through multiple perspectives. Practices and environments that encourage active participation in democratic practices create **ethical** foundations for social and environmental health and well-being, now and in the future.

Environments and practices are created in which diverse abilities, cultures, languages, traditions, and heritages are celebrated and woven together. Educators have an important role to play in contributing to **reconciliation** by educating others about the impacts of colonialism and clarifying how Indigenous peoples have had so much taken from them – including their children.

*expanding an idea*

*Learning requires exploration of one’s identity (First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2012).*

Acknowledging Canada’s past and continuing colonial history is an important step that **educators** can take toward the development of respectful relations, redress, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

To meaningfully participate in **pedagogical narration** and to contribute to transformative change, educators need to be willing to examine their practices and expectations of children to guard against the perpetuation of biased educational practices. It is critical for educators to believe in the capacity of all children to achieve at high levels.

## Pathways for Engaging with Identities, Social Responsibility, and Diversity

To inspire thinking about identities, social responsibility, and diversity, adults design environments and cultivate practices considering these pathways:

- ◆ **Family origins, cultural background, place of origin, allegiance and affiliation, citizenship, and other identities**  
Children become confident in their identities, including cultural, racial, physical, spiritual, linguistic, gender, social, and economic.
- ◆ **Democratic practices**  
Educators create a culture in which different opinions and views of both adults and children are accepted, welcomed, and valued.
- ◆ **Individual differences**  
Children and adults accept and value difference in others and in themselves.
- ◆ **Social responsibility and justice**  
Children and educators discuss social justice issues such as segregation, diversity, poverty, race, war, gender, discrimination, and inequity.
- ◆ **Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples**  
Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators recognize their role in educating others about Canada’s history of colonization and seek ways to contribute to reconciliation.
- ◆ **Interrelationship of humans and their natural environments**  
Educators and children recognize that humans and the natural world are connected and mutually dependent on one another and begin to reimagine pedagogies to respond to our environmental crisis.



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*Our pedagogical intention is not to examine nature as a separate subject or as something humans should look to as an educational benefit or cure, but rather as an interconnected network of relationships. It is from our social, cultural, and geographic locations that we begin to re-envision new pedagogical practices and modes of thinking that are designed to respond to a time of ecological crisis (Argent, Vintimilla, Lee, & Wapenaar, 2017, p. 5).*

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## **Putting Critical Reflection to Work: Reflective Questions for Identities, Social Responsibility, and Diversity**

This section offers directions and ideas for furthering thinking about practice in relation to the living inquiry Identities, Social Responsibility and Diversity and each of its pathways. Considering these pathways and questions individually and with colleagues, families, children, and others invites discussion of meanings and perspectives in a spirit of wonder, justice, and research.





## Pathways for Engaging with Identities, Social Responsibility, and Diversity

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
<p>Family origins, cultural background, place of origin, allegiance, affiliation, citizenship, and other identities</p>	<p>What opportunities do I provide for children to see their cultural background reflected in my program? How might I include cultural books, stories, or artifacts?</p> <p>What opportunities do I provide for children to see diverse abilities reflected in my program? How might I include books, stories, or artifacts?</p> <p>In what ways do children have opportunities to discuss and learn about worldviews outside of dominant Euro-Canadian perspectives?</p> <p>How are children encouraged to think, speak, and learn about their identities? What does this look like to me?</p> <p>How can connections to Elders, knowledge holders, families, and community members enhance children’s pride in identity?</p> <p>In what ways do I encourage children to become confident in their identities, including cultural, racial, physical, spiritual, linguistic, gender, social, and economic? Could discussions with colleagues generate new ideas about this?</p> <p><i>“When we say we are Musqueam, we say we are xwəlməxw, which means to belong to the land. Like a child belongs to their mother. So when the land is removed from our care, from our stewardship, it’s like removing a mother from her child” (Pape &amp; Dodds n.d., p. 7).</i></p> <p>How can I make sense of this quote in relation to my practice?</p>
<p>Democratic practices</p>	<p>What opportunities do children have to express opinions and values?</p> <p>What opportunities do children have to listen to the opinions and values of others?</p> <p>Democracy means making space for many opinions and views, not necessarily agreeing. How can I create a culture in which different opinions and views for both adults and children are accepted, welcomed, and valued?</p> <p>Can children participate in the making of rules, rituals, and procedures in their everyday world? How could this be done in ways that resist being tokenistic?</p> <p>In what ways are democratic practices incorporated into daily living in my program?</p>

## Pathways for Engaging with Identities, Social Responsibility, and Diversity

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Individual differences	<p>How can children be encouraged to accept and value differences in others?</p> <p>How can children be encouraged to accept and value differences in themselves?</p> <p>How can I initiate conversations with colleagues about values, practices, and procedures (eating, sleeping, self-care, etc.) embedded in the program? What assumptions about childhood are implicit in these practices? How are they aligned with mainstream culture?</p> <p>Do these practice and procedures make every child feel that they belong?</p> <p>How might I begin conversations with families about the values, practices, and procedures that are important to them?</p> <p>How might I begin conversations with children about individual differences? How can differences be celebrated?</p>
Social responsibility and justice	<p>How might children become involved in community or global projects related to social justice?</p> <p>In what ways do children have opportunities to discuss real-life issues such as segregation, diversity, poverty, race, war, gender, discrimination, and inequity?</p> <p>How are relationships fostered among children and adults of diverse abilities, heritages, histories, and cultural backgrounds?</p> <p>How can children become aware of diverse worldviews and perspectives?</p> <p>How can children begin to recognize and respond to discrimination and inequity?</p> <p>Dialogues can bring tensions and disagreement. How do I create a culture where disagreement is a positive force?</p>

## Pathways for Engaging with Identities, Social Responsibility, and Diversity

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
<p>Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples</p>	<p>What do I know about Canada’s colonial history and the systemic marginalization and forced assimilation of Indigenous peoples? How can I find out more?</p> <p>Think about the resource <i>This Land</i>, Indigenous Cultural Competency video modules (Lantern Films, n.d.). How might I bring this resource to my colleagues?</p> <p>Educators have an important role to play in educating others about Canada’s history of colonization. How can I contribute?</p> <p>Indigenous social and cultural revitalization is underway in many communities. How can I contribute? How can I find out more?</p> <p>In what ways have I included and honoured knowledgeable community Elders in my program?</p> <p><i>Reconciliation needs to be part of the future, but we need to acknowledge what happened in the past (i.e., the attempted assimilation). Everyone has a role in that – Elders, youth – knowing what happened and connecting it to everyday life. Students need to think about how that history affects “me” and learn to look from the eyes of those who experienced it: this is the connectedness – taking everyone’s ability to perceive and building empathy with the sharing. One can’t force people to accept reconciliation, so there is still a lot of work to do (Participant, as cited in B.C. Ministry of Education, 2015b, p. 20).</i></p>



## Pathways for Engaging with Identities, Social Responsibility, and Diversity

Pathways	Critically reflective questions
Inter-relationships of humans and natural environments	<p>How can I encourage children to recognize that humans and the natural world are connected and mutually dependent on one another?</p> <p>In what ways can I acknowledge children’s small moments with ants, birds, or worms as meaningful relationships?</p> <p>What practices do I cultivate that enrich and deepen children’s relationship with place, land, and the creatures and forms within it?</p> <p>What stories do children have of land, place, and the creatures and forms within it?</p> <p>What opportunities do children have to care for their environments (e.g., cleaning, fixing, gardening, helping others)?</p> <p>How can I learn more about a common worlds framework?</p> <p><i>We want young children to sense and register, in more than cognitive ways, that it is never just about us. And we also want to stay open to the possibility that other species and life-forms shape us in ways that exceed our ability to fully comprehend (Taylor &amp; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015, p. 7).</i></p>

## Examples of Engaging in the Process of Pedagogical Narration

This section presents two examples of pedagogical narrations to illustrate how the educators engaged with the components (see Figure 1, p. 53 and Section Two) and with critical reflection and a pedagogy of listening. The intention is to show ways of engaging with a pedagogical narration, and to highlight the multiple layers of meaning that can emerge, and its potential to transform practice.

The process of engaging with pedagogical narration does not follow a step-by-step progression; instead each component is taken up again and again. As adults and children work with a pedagogical narration they learn something and grow in their thinking. Then new questions are formulated, and choices are made about what to do next. As the arrows in Figure 1 indicate, each component is connected and overlapping and always illuminated by critical reflection and a pedagogy of listening. The process is living, ongoing, and continually producing something new. In this way the complexities of practice are made visible. These examples are not intended to serve as templates for the “right way” to create or engage with pedagogical narrations; rather they are intended as provocations or invitations to enliven curiosity about why, and what if.

Two examples follow:

1. **“The Educator I Once Was”** describes an ongoing inquiry in which the educator engages with the vision and principles of the framework over many months.
2. **“Rapunzel’s Tower”** describes how an educator collected traces of a moment and used them to engage with a living inquiry and pathways to inspire collaborative dialogue.

## Example One: The Educator I Once Was<sup>1</sup>

Shannon McDaniel



“I began working at a toddler centre where the educators were exploring different practices as they went for walks in the forest. Instead of everyone walking in a group, the educators were spreading out in the forest and allowing children to explore freely. I was conflicted: I thought this was an amazing idea, but not realistic. I worried that children might run down trails where they could not be seen, or that I would not be able to keep track of

everyone ... but I wanted to experience this and grow! I had confidence in my colleagues, and as I watched the children explore the forest it was amazing to see how each child was able to do what interested them most! I still felt anxious and concerned about safety, but I tried to push past this and enjoy the moment. However, after about 20 minutes, I called out that I couldn’t do this anymore; I was much too nervous. So, with support from all the educators, we collected the children together. It was amazing to have so much support from the others. I never felt they were disappointed or that I had ruined the fun. Instead they congratulated me for trying. I was able to tell them I liked this idea and wanted to continue but needed further support to grow more comfortable.

As time went on I began to be more spontaneous in the woods. We climbed hills, built forts with the large sticks we found on the ground, lay in the moss to stare at the sky and watch the trees sway in the wind. It’s amazing to see how much you can do and how time goes by so fast when you can explore more than just the trails in the woods.

But questions come to me: What we are doing to nature when we veer off the trails? As we walk around the forest are we destroying plants? Should we allow children to pull moss off the ground? What are we killing as we walk? Are child and adult feet destroying insect habitats? The children love going off the trails, but I often ask myself: Who are we responsible to?

<sup>1</sup> From "Pedagogical Narration: Becoming More Comfortable with Taking Risks" by S. McDaniel, 2017, *The Early Childhood Educator*, Vol 32, No. 2. Reprinted with permission.



Recently I read an article about the importance of children being barefoot. This made sense to me as I often see children trying to take off their socks and shoes. I wondered what it would be like to have children explore the mud pit in the forest in their bare feet.

One day in the forest a child was in the mud pit squishing his boot into the mud, but I wasn't prepared for the experiment! I didn't have a towel or spare clothes, and I struggled with the thought that maybe this was the best time to try even if I wasn't prepared. So, I encouraged the child to feel mud with his hands. I too touched mud with a finger and picked it up with my hand. One boy was interested in touching mud so I offered to take off his boots. He had a look on his face that said, Are you serious or are you joking? I took off one of my boots and my sock, put my foot in the mud and held my breath from the cold feeling! It was definitely different on my feet compared to my hands. Is it because we always explore with our hands? He seemed to love it! I took off his second boot and sock so he could have both feet in mud. This attracted other children, and they began taking off their boots and socks. One child touched her foot to mud but quickly made it clear she wanted her sock and boot back on. Another child began lifting one foot and then the other in mud, then

sat down and looked carefully at mud on his toes. He seemed more interested in mud on his feet than the mud pit. He walked away barefoot and explored for a while, then came back to ask for help with his boots. We didn't have anything to clean our feet off with so I used moss and rocks to wipe off our feet and we put our socks back on. I wondered if anyone would complain about socks and boots over muddy feet. No one seemed to even notice!



The educator I once was would have never have allowed bare feet in mud. I have become more willing to take risks and explore practices and ideas." (McDaniel, 2017, p. 22)

## Critical reflection and a pedagogy of listening

Critical reflection and a pedagogy of listening are central to each component in the process of engaging with pedagogical narration (see Figure 1, page 53).



Working with a pedagogy of listening means paying attention to the incredible range of children's expression and to what they bring that may never have been heard before. When we listen we are suspending judgment and being open to difference.



Critical reflection involves thinking individually and with others about fundamental beliefs and understandings, and considering how these have shaped how we view the world.

*"I worried that children might run down trails where they could not be seen, or that I would not be able to keep track of everyone ... but I wanted to experience this and grow!"*

(See more in Section Two p. 48 – 49)

Shannon is curious about exploring the forest in different ways and opened herself to trying something new. Her curiosity led her to:

- ◆ Consider images of the educator: what is her role in the forest?
- ◆ Consider images of children: what can children do in the forest?
- ◆ Critically reflect alone and with colleagues.
- ◆ Make pedagogical choices to extend her thinking and the children's thinking.

Curiosity provoked Shannon to try something, to think, to respond, to engage in difficult dialogue with colleagues, to experiment with pedagogy, to challenge her assumptions.



### Collect traces

Traces of practice in pedagogical narrations can take the form of:

- ◆ Written field notes
- ◆ Digital audio-recordings
- ◆ Photographs
- ◆ Video clips
- ◆ Materials created by the children such as drawings, paintings, constructions

*expanding an idea*

Where can curiosity take us? How does curiosity provoke a responsibility to do differently? Whose curiosity matters?

Shannon's curiosity about adult/children/feet/mud provoked her to call on a colleague to take photographs. In this sense Shannon is making a pedagogical choice, by choosing this moment to focus on the many possible moments in a day.

- ◆ She wrote notes, and, upon further critical reflection, added more thoughts.
- ◆ Of the many photos taken, Shannon chose which ones to share and which ones not to share – choices that shape how others see this moment. She knows there is not a “true” account of what happened with children, the forest and mud; rather her photos and notes tell her personal perspective.



### Make traces visible

The photos are shared with the children, reminding them of the mud, reconnecting them to the moment, inviting new conversations and planning.

- ◆ Shannon shares the photos with colleagues at her centre, and together they reconsider the pedagogical choices they make in the forest.
- ◆ Shannon shares the photos with a pedagogist, extending thinking and learning through collaborative dialogue.
- ◆ She writes a pedagogical narration which is posted on a sandwich board outside the centre for families to read.

Through further collaborative dialogue and further reading, Shannon expands on the narration with more thoughts and questions.



### Collaborative dialogue

Shannon engaged in collaborative dialogue in multiple ways with others:

- ◆ With colleagues, discussing ways of being in the forest, reflecting on photos and notes.
- ◆ With families, sharing the narration, inviting multiple perspectives.
- ◆ With children, noticing moss, building with sticks, sharing photos of mud, revisiting the forest, mud sticks, retelling stories.



*“My colleagues and I continue to support one another to challenge what quality in early childhood care can look like.”*



- ◆ With a pedagogist, thinking with theory, images of children, and images of educators, and linking back to the Early Learning Framework.
- ◆ With conference participants, as she presented the narration.

*“What we are doing to nature when we veer off the trails?”*

Collaborative dialogue extended and added complexity to how Shannon (and her colleagues) saw this moment, and more questions emerged. For example:

- ◆ This new question provokes further curiosity, and further dialogue, taking Shannon, (and her colleagues and children) deeper into questions, and into more complexity, looking at a common worlds framework, reading about mushrooms and moss.
- ◆ Collaborative dialogue is ongoing. Curiosity keeps conversations with colleagues and children alive. To “challenge what quality is” Shannon continues to reflect on different ways of thinking about and doing pedagogy.

*expanding an idea*

Critical reflection – what you have noticed, what you chose to share, who you share it with.



### Pedagogical choices and extending thinking and learning

*“One boy was interested in touching mud so I offered to take off his boots. He had a look on his face that said, Are you serious or are you joking?”*

Shannon is paying attention to the interests and theories of children and is reflecting on her role in the forest. She makes a pedagogical choice to go off the trail, lay in the moss, and experiment with being in the forest for long stretches of time, then to record these moments in a pedagogical narration. As Shannon considers the children’s theories and interests and her role, she makes another pedagogical choice – to go barefoot in the mud. In this way pedagogical narration is a process for planning with the intention of extending thinking and learning for both educators and children. These choices and the narration are revisited and rethought, and further pedagogical choices are made. Educators and children are co-constructing knowledge.

### Pedagogical choices and advocacy and leadership

Shannon enacted leadership and engaged in advocacy by:

- ◆ Submitting her pedagogical narration to a provincial journal for publication.
- ◆ Presenting the photos and sharing the narration at a provincial early year’s conference.

*“I often see children trying to take off their socks and shoes...”*

In making her narration public, Shannon has opened dialogue in the broader community about images of childhood and children, and the deeply complex work of educators. In this way she has contributed to resisting

a “one-size-fits-all” model of early learning by inviting continuing collaborative dialogue on pedagogies that are localized and responsive to their diverse historical and cultural contexts.

## Making visible the complexities of practice

In developing and interpreting throughout the pedagogical narrations process, the educator strives to make meaning of what has been observed and to make that meaning visible to oneself, colleagues, children, and families.

In reflecting on a moment, the educator asks the following questions: Do we observe children:

- ◆ Building theories?
- ◆ Developing their narratives of meaning?
- ◆ Making observations?
- ◆ Finding joy in movement, noise, touch, etc.?
- ◆ Using their senses/their bodies?
- ◆ Exploring, building, inventing?
- ◆ Exploring power, drama, excitement?
- ◆ Developing relationships and learning to negotiate within them?
- ◆ Making connections with families?
- ◆ Wondering about and exploring representation and literacy?
- ◆ Revisiting/remembering an action, a theory?

As you reflect on these questions, what pedagogical choices can you make to find out more?



### What do we mean by Collaborative Dialogue?

When educators notice and document a moment in practice they can then engage in collaborative dialogue to consider the meanings, questioning taken-for-granted understandings. Educators are, in this sense, researching, asking why, and what if? These dialogues are open, uncertain, and do not seek a predictable outcome, challenging us to always ask more questions.



### Link to the Early Learning Framework

Each component of engaging in the process of pedagogical narration can be linked to the Early Learning Framework.

Look at the vision, principles, and context: how do these relate to the traces you have collected? What could you do to learn more? What pedagogical choices could you make to extend thinking and learning in relation to one of the principles? To the vision?

Look at the living inquiries: which ones relate to your interests? Read the descriptions and consider how you might incorporate them into your narration.

Look at the critically reflective questions for each pathway: What questions intrigue you? What step could you take next to dig deeper into these questions?

What theories are you working with in your practice? What theories could you learn more about?

## Example Two: Rapunzel's Tower

*Natsuko Motegi*



"Look what I made! It's Rapunzel's tower," Ellen announces. She has been working quietly on her own at the art table with the recycled boxes and rolls that we recently put out. The educators are astonished by Ellen's careful construction and creative ideas to use these new materials.



"I'm making a chimney now," says Ellen as she folds a paper in half, and then draws squares on it. She carefully glues the chimney and roof over the tower and asks us to save it because the glue is too wet.



Before Ellen built the tower, she asked an educator to come and help her make a "recipe." The educator was busy at that moment, and by the time she came to help, Ellen had already started the building. We, the educators, are often surprised at Ellen's creativity and resourcefulness when she works by herself. As Ellen worked with the materials, her plan of making a "recipe" was changed to building a tower. She found the materials and tools she needed, and constructed it on her own with confidence.

It seemed she carefully planned to get the walls up, and knew how to add a roof on top using construction paper. The details of roof shingles were added by drawing as well (N. Motegi, personal communication, January 13, 2016).

Working with a pedagogy of listening and being open to the unexpected, Natsuko pays close attention as Ellen engages with paper, glue, and pens. Natsuko's curiosity leads her to collect traces by taking photographs and recording Ellen's words.

By making traces visible, Natsuko can critically reflect on this moment and engage in collaborative dialogue with colleagues, families and with children, including Ellen.

Natsuko and her colleagues link to the Early Learning Framework by focusing on the: Engagement with Others, Materials, and the World living inquiry.

They choose two pathways:

**Pathway: Knowledge and theories**

Educators reflect on the concept of knowledge, and respect the knowledges and theories children hold

**Pathway: Spaces, objects, and materials**

Children can investigate and experiment with materials in ways that are meaningful to them

Natsuko and her colleagues use the critically reflective questions for each pathway (see p. 69 – 90 ) as provocation for dialogue, and these questions and thoughts emerge:

- ◆ As educators we were astonished by Ellen's creativity and construction. We reflected on why we were astonished, which led us to think about our image of the child. How does our image of the child shape what we expect from children?
- ◆ What knowledge did Ellen bring to this project? Ellen's ability to build a three-dimensional structure out of two-dimensional material requires spatial perception, knowledge of building design, structural balance and stability, and an understanding of the properties of paper and glue. As we think about the complex process Ellen engaged in, we wonder how we as educators might pay closer attention to the knowledges of children. We are curious if this might shift how or what we see as children engage with materials.
- ◆ What does "recipe" mean to Ellen? What can Ellen tell us about her thinking as she built the tower? Might she share this knowledge with others?
- ◆ Do other children have thoughts about how this tower was constructed?
- ◆ Why did Ellen name this a Rapunzel Tower? Does she have a story to tell? Could this story be expressed through words? Song? Dance? Clay?
- ◆ How did the placement and presentation of materials contribute to Ellen's engagement? What might happen if the paper and glue were placed alongside blocks? Or clay? How can we experiment with materials to provoke different kinds of engagements?



- ◆ As educators, how did we respond to Ellen’s creation? Did our questions and comments reflect the depth of knowledge Ellen brought to her project?

As Natsuko and her colleagues delved into these conversations, they uncovered multiple layers of meaning and brought different perspectives to the pedagogical narration. They did not seek a conclusion or answer, instead they recognized that there were many pedagogical choices open to them. The process of thinking together is never finished, and the dialogue continues.

# Glossary

**Aboriginal:** a term defined in the Constitution Act 1982 that refers to all Indigenous people in Canada, including “Indians” (status and non-status), First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. More than 1.5 million people in Canada identified themselves as Aboriginal on the 2016 Census, the fastest growing population in Canada. While still appropriate, the term “Aboriginal” is being replaced by “Indigenous” (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2016).

**All world relations:** the understanding that humans, creatures, plants, trees, and non-living entities, forces, and landforms are all interconnected. The notion of all world relations is embedded in a common worlds framework and suggests that all beings and non-living entities are entangled and dependent on one another.

**Assimilation:** the practice of bringing into conformity with the customs and attitudes of a group. In the context of this framework, assimilation refers to blending in and dominant Euro-Canadian culture, without distinction (Pape & Dodds, n.d., p. 69).

**Atelierista:** an educator who works with children and educators facilitating artistic engagements, small-group arts-based projects, and various artistic interventions and events in addition to studio investigations and inventions. It is a role similar to an artist-in-residence.

**Children with diverse abilities and needs:** children whose learning is supported through access to additional or specialized supports, services and instruction. They may experience, or be at risk of, developmental delay or disability and may require support beyond that required by children in general.

**Children with extra support needs:** children who are experiencing, or who are at risk of, developmental delay or disability and who require support beyond that required by children in general. The developmental delay or disability may be in one or more of the following areas: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, communicative, or behavioural. Children may be experiencing, or at risk of, developmental delay or disability as a result of neurobiological factors or social/environmental factors.

**Co-constructing knowledge:** the process by which educators are actively engaged in building knowledge alongside children in a learning collective that includes family and community. Educators draw on ideas and thoughts from pedagogical narrations, a moment or event to continue conversations that extend thinking and create space for new ideas. This process recognizes children as competent contributors to their own learning.

**Collaborative dialogue:** the process of educators engaging in collaborative dialogue to consider the meanings and questioning taken-for-granted understandings from a moment in practice. Educators are, in this sense, researching, asking why, and what if? These dialogues are open, uncertain, and do not seek a predictable outcome, challenging us to always ask more questions.

**Colonization, Colonialism:** the action or process of taking control of people, land, and waters by an outside entity who then occupies the land, extracts its value, and dominates the people (Pape & Dodd, n.d., p. 69).

**Common worlds framework:** a framework to reconceptualize childhood pedagogies that includes taking account of children’s relations with all the others in their worlds – including the more-than-human others. The term ‘common world’ suggests that worlds are not just human societies, but a collective of human and non-humans. Instead of positioning children, along with animals, in an idealized, depoliticized, and generically pure natural domain, a common worlds framework is geo-culturally attuned and responsive to the considerable challenges of ethical multispecies cohabitation in anthropogenically damaged life-worlds. It situates diverse children’s lives within the real, messy, imperfect, and undivided natural and cultural worlds they (and we) inherit and inhabit (Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2017, p.3).

**Community of practice:** a model of professional learning in which educators meet regularly to critically reflect on knowledge, experiences, values, and practice. By engaging with pedagogical narrations, educators share, discuss, and challenge ideas and practices. Resources (readings, articles, books) are provided to support the discussions. These sessions invite educators to think deeply about issues and moments from their practice, not to find final answers or “truths,” but to generate richer, meaningful pedagogical understandings.

**Core Competencies:** a set of intellectual, personal, and social competencies that students develop to engage in deeper learning and to support lifelong learning through the course of their schooling. The Core Competencies are embedded in each area of learning and are activated through the learning experiences and activities. In B.C., the Core Competencies are the Communication competency, Thinking competency, and Social and Personal competency. (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2016)

**Critically reflective practice/critical reflection:** the practice of questioning taken-for-granted understandings, assumptions, and values that are implicit in how we think about children, education, and learning. Reflection alone is not transformative; becoming critically reflective means stretching our thinking beyond our known understandings.

**Culture:** the shared understandings that help groups of people make sense of their worlds and communicate with one another. Culture is a group’s accepted values, traditions, and lifestyles that guide the way people lead their day-to-day lives.

**Decolonization:** the process of exposing the effects of colonization, supporting healing from the injuries inflicted by colonization, revitalizing affected cultures and peoples, and seeking to transform the institutions that enforce ongoing colonization (Pape & Dodds, n.d., p. 68). See also Colonization.

**Democratic practice:** the practice of creating a culture in programs in which children and adults can participate with others in shaping decisions affecting themselves. This means creating opportunities for sharing, exchanging, and valuing perspectives and opinions of children. In this sense, democracy is a way of relating that can and should pervade all aspects of everyday life. Democratic practices create the possibility for diversity to flourish. By so doing, it offers the best environment for the production of new thinking and new practice (Moss, 2007, p.3).

**Diversity:** the different beliefs, customs, practices, languages, behaviours, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and physical differences of individuals and cultural groups. Honouring diversity is based on the principle that differences that are recognized and celebrated benefit our communities. Honouring diversity requires that we encourage understanding, acceptance, mutual respect, and inclusion in order to make schools, communities, and society as a whole more equitable for all people.

**Early childhood educator:** a person who has been certified by the B.C. government's Early Childhood Educator Registry. Early childhood educators must complete the basic Early Childhood Education training program and meet the character and skill requirements outlined in the legislation. This includes an assessment of the individual's suitability to work with children. Depending on the level of certification, work experience hours may be required.

**Early years professional:** a general term used to describe a person with specialized education, training, and/or experience in supporting children's learning and/or development in the early years. An early years professional may be a licensed early childhood educator and/or a person with other specialized training.

**Educator:** an adult who works in early year settings, school-based settings, community-based settings, and post-secondary settings, including teachers. While it is acknowledged that many terms are in use and people may have preferences on what they call themselves, in this framework the term educator refers to adults who work in these settings.

**Ethical:** practices which foreground active personal responsibility for making ethical choices...an ethical actor in relationship with others and located in a particular context. (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.13)

**Experiment, Experimentation:** in the context of this framework, being open to something new, a way of thinking and doing that did not previously exist. To experiment with pedagogy means to go beyond the normative practices in order to create and tell different stories of knowing and being in our common world.

**First Nations:** the self-determined political and organizational unit of the Indigenous community that has the power to negotiate, on a government-to government basis, with B.C. and Canada. Currently, there are 615 First Nations communities in Canada, which represent more than 50 nations or cultural groups and about 60 Indigenous languages. This term does not have a legal definition but should be used instead of the term "Indian," which is inaccurate, and offensive to many (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2016).

**First Peoples:** First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada, as well as Indigenous peoples around the world (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2016).

**Holistic:** an approach to early learning that encompasses the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and creative nature of a child. A holistic approach focuses on the whole child, rather than concentrating only on individual components.



**Inclusion/inclusive:** the practice of having children with diverse abilities and disabilities attend their neighbourhood schools or learning centres in age-appropriate, regular education settings, participating alongside their peers in all aspects of learning where each student is supported to meaningfully engage, learn, and contribute to the learning community and culture. Specialized assistance and instruction, when required, is provided to each child, within the regular education environment. Additional support may also be provided in a small group or individual setting.

**Inclusive learning and care:** the principle that children of all abilities, including children with diverse abilities and needs, have equitable access to quality learning and child care and are supported in play and learning along with other children in a regular program. Inclusive learning and care supports the individual strengths and needs of each child, allowing them to meaningfully engage, learn, and contribute to the community and culture of their program. All educators, providers, and parents/caregivers collaborate as a team to meet the needs of children in their programs. The presence and engagement of a diverse group of children, including those with diverse needs, provides significant opportunities to learn about, value, and celebrate diversity in communities.

**Indigenous:** a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three distinct groups of Indigenous (Aboriginal) peoples: Indians (referred to as First Nations), Métis and Inuit. Increasingly, and in keeping with international agreements, “Indigenous Peoples” is being used instead of “Aboriginal peoples.”

**Inquiry:** a framework that allows educators to think with and to bring focus to pedagogies. An inquiry may emerge for educators while they are paying attention to the theories children build, or when they are working with their own questions, or a combination of both. An inquiry should provoke educators to challenge themselves to see and do differently without having clear answers. It becomes a focal point for discussion among colleagues, parents, and children. Inquiries have no preset outcomes but emerge organically as children and adults think alongside one another. For example, an educator may pose an inquiry question such as, How might I think about time differently? What might emerge if I thought about time as flow, rather than in schedules?

**Inuit:** an Indigenous people united by a common culture and language. In Canada, the majority of the population lives in 53 communities spread across Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland encompassing 35 percent of Canada’s landmass and 50 percent of its coastline (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018).

**Localized pedagogies:** methods and practices of teaching by exploring ideas and issues about learning and thinking in ways that are relevant, meaningful, and inclusive of a community’s people, place, and history. Localized pedagogy is based on respecting the diversity of people and communities and resisting a “one-size-fits-all” approach to practice. See also Pedagogy.

**Marginalized:** to be placed in a position of being unimportant or powerless within a society or group.

**Métis:** a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Indigenous peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.

**Pedagogical choices:** everything educators choose to do with children and with the environment, materials, traditions, routines, songs, and books. In examining why particular choices are made, educators may become more intentional in their pedagogical choices.

**Pedagogical narration:** 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. Engaging with pedagogical narration is central to the vision of this framework.

**Pedagogist:** a professional responsible for helping to create and sustain quality early childhood education programs through supporting educators to continue to implement the B.C. Early Learning Framework; to design, execute, and evaluate inquiries/projects within their practice settings; and to engage in critically reflective dialogue about pedagogical practice through pedagogical narration. The term “pedagogist” is being taken up across Canada, though local communities may adopt terms more suited to their locale. For instance, Indigenous communities may consider knowledge keepers or knowledge holders as pedagogists.

**Pedagogy:** the method and practice of teaching by exploring ideas and issues and creating environments where learning and thinking can flourish. With this understanding, education and pedagogy are not about learning facts but are concerned with ethical questions of living in the world together.

**Pedagogy of listening:** means paying attention to the incredible range of children’s expression and to what they bring that may never have been heard before. It means suspending judgement and being open to difference.

**Pluralistic:** a system or state of society in which many groups, ethnicities, races, and religions coexist while maintaining their distinctiveness and culture.

**Post-foundational theories:** theories that challenge foundational ideas, which are ideas that allude to the privilege of rational human subject as the basis of knowledge, and which can be expressed through language that conveys pure truth unfettered by values, beliefs, politics, and power (Moss, 2006). Post-foundational theories include post-structuralist, queer, post-colonial, and socio-material theories, among others, all of which interrogate how “their effects have been devastating to many people on the wrong side of humanism’s subject/object binaries ... [who] have struggled to reclaim and rewrite untold histories, to subvert what counts as knowledge and truth, and to challenge those who claim the authority to speak for them” (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., [2015, p. 207]).

**Reconciliation:** an ongoing individual and collective process that follows from engaging the truth of colonial histories. It is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in this country. For reconciliation to happen, “there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 6).

**Rhizomatic/rhizome:** a term borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to describe approaches in early childhood that create movement, that are always becoming, and that hold potential for multiple trajectories and lines of flight. For example, a rhizomatic plant such as a fern spreads without a central root, a place of origin, or even a logical pattern. The image of the rhizome can illustrate the complexities of early childhood pedagogies—pedagogies that are always in motion, proliferating new ways of knowing, and becoming with children in relationship with the things and spaces that come together in everyday practice (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2015. p. 213).

**Socio-cultural theories:** theories that focus on how societal factors contribute to children’s learning and development. They emphasize the impact of the culture, history, beliefs, attitudes, and social interactions that surround a child and how these influence what learning takes place.

**Traces:** artifacts such as photos, notes, text, audio, journals or digital data, and materials created by the children, such as drawings, paintings, constructions that are collected for pedagogical narrations.

**Worldview:** a way of seeing the world as connected to histories, traditions, modes of thought, and types of ideas about existence, values, social and economic systems, and relations between living beings as well as between living beings and non-living ones.

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