

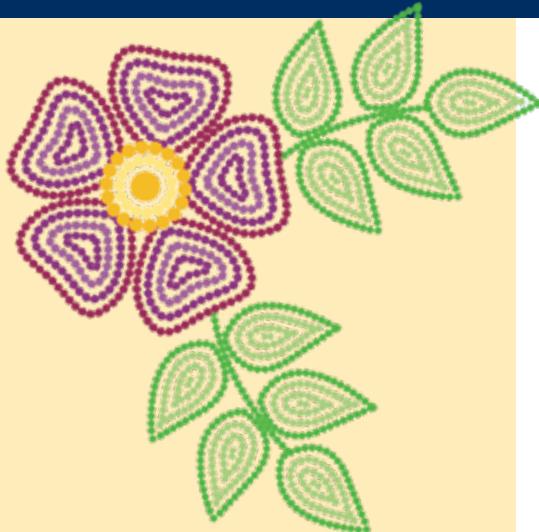
Le Villazh Maachi Kashkihtow

The Village of Learning

FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS

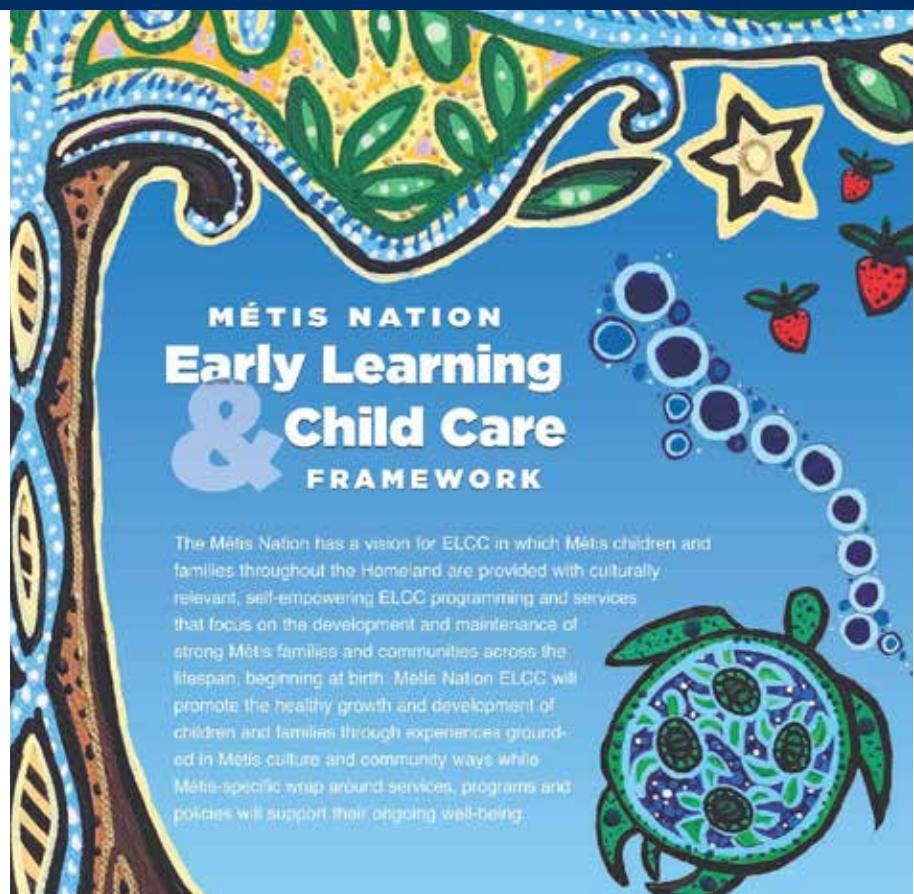
Welcome to the Winter 2025 edition
of *Le Villazh Maachi Kashkihtow*,
The Village of Learning





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Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care Framework

A central feature of the Métis Nation Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) system is the development of ELCC programming which is holistic, self-determining, anchored in Métis culture and the unique needs of Métis children and families. To realize this vision, our work is informed by the 9 Goals of the Métis Nation Early Learning & Child Care Framework. For the Winter edition of Le Villazh we are focusing on goal 5.

Goal #5 - Integrating Métis culture, languages and values into the design and delivery of ELCC programs for Métis Nation children and families.

Métis Nation British Columbia's (MNBC), Ministry of Education, works actively to increase access to culturally relevant resources across the province to support cultural connectedness and community wellness. This work involves collaborations with Michif language speakers to create Michif language learning opportunities for ELCC programming, as well as partnerships with early learning and child care programs and services to share culturally relevant resources, learnings, and trends across the 39 Métis Chartered Communities.

We are all committed to maintaining Métis cultural values, language, and identity. Fostering a positive self-identity within children at an early age contributes significantly to their future well-being. Practices of cultural inclusion involves actively integrating Métis values, language, traditions, and community-based knowledge, into daily interactions, activities, and the environment.

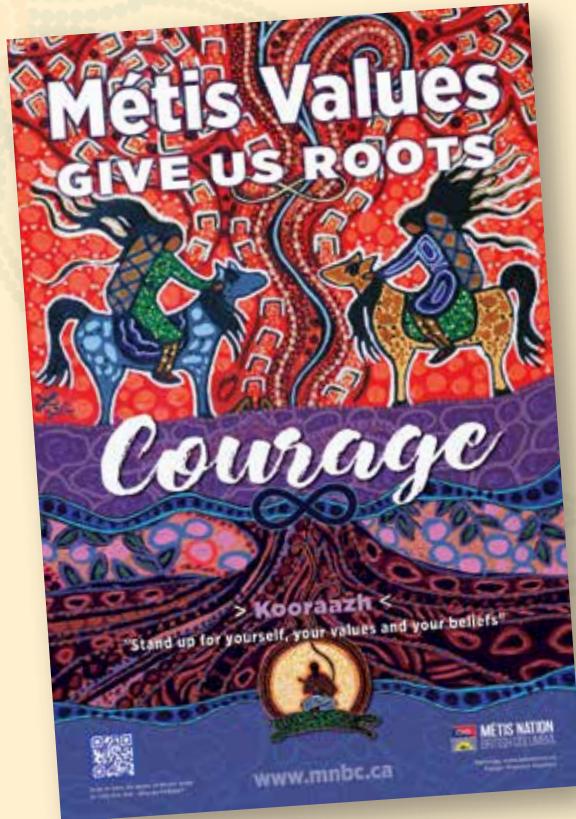
For more information on the Métis ELCC Framework please visit [Métis Early Learning Framework](#)

Métis Core Values

COURAGE (Kooraazh)

"You have to have courage to pass on our culture and values. And when you do so, it gives you more courage to move forward, to share with others."

– Métis Elder Norman Fleury



As Elder Norman shares, the recognition and revitalization of Métis culture, history, and identity thriving is fostered by the Core Value of Courage. With courage usually comes the discovery of important new lessons and ways of thinking, doing, and being.

In early learning settings, we can foster Courage by...

- Allowing children the opportunity to resolve issues organically and empowering children to advocate for their individual needs and boundaries. Offering guidance and support in the process, for children to develop confidence in self-advocacy.
- Introducing new experiences such as story sharing in front of their peers to help children to practice courage when speaking in front of others.
- Sharing stories of times when you had to use courage and assertiveness to communicate your values and beliefs. ☺

Michif Language On The Go!

The Michif languages are historically linked to Métis communities across the Métis homeland. The three Michif languages, commonly referred to as Southern Michif, Northern Michif, and French Michif, and are made up of elements from both First Nations languages and European languages – predominantly Cree and French.

Southern Michif uses mostly Plains-Cree verbs and French nouns, but also borrows nouns from English, Saulteaux, and Cree [1]. Southern Michif is most associated with communities in southern Saskatchewan and North Dakota [2]. Southern Michif may also be referred to as Heritage Michif, Mixed Michif, or Turtle Mountain Chippewa Cree.

[Language \(ameliaodouglasinstitute.ca\)](http://ameliaodouglasinstitute.ca)

Try out these simple phrases in Southern Michif and challenge the children to try and use them

throughout the day! To find out how to say these phrases go to https://www.Metismuseum.ca/michif_dictionary.php or download the App "Heritage Michif to Go" on iTunes or google play.

ENGLISH	SOUTHERN MICHIF
Wind	li vaan
It's snowing	Mishpoon
Family	faamlii
Grateful	kishchii itaytamihk
Pine Cone	iii gренн dipinet



Translations by "Heritage Michif To GO" App

[Michif To Go \(Metismuseum.ca\)](http://Metismuseum.ca)

Opportunities For Learning and Investigation



Music and Movement— Spoons/Jigging/ Fiddle Music

As we know, music plays a significant role in the Métis lifestyle and culture. Music is involved in community events, gatherings, and in family homes, often referred to as "kitchen parties."

The fiddle is a common musical instrument played by Métis people and is a key instrument within traditional Métis songs, such as the Red River Jig. The Red River Jig has many unique styles, techniques, and movements. There is no right or wrong way to jig. The goal is to encourage creative expression, to build community and pride in Métis culture, and most of all to have fun!

Musical spoons often accompany the fiddle music as it gives a clapping rhythm to the song.

Wooden spoons are traditionally used although MNBC's Ministry of Education has included steel spoons in cultural kits to use within classrooms. The Métis Cultural Kit can be borrowed from your local Child Care Resource & Referral.

[Child Care Resource and Referral centres - Province of British Columbia](#)

In Métis culture, music and dance are powerful vehicles for storytelling and the power of courage and determination.

Activity:

Hand out spoons and play the Red River Jig. Have participants play with spoons in diverse ways...slow, fast, behind back, on one knee, on their head. Make it fun.

- Create a space for children to investigate the spoons and ask questions.
- Support children as they create their own songs, rhythms, and beats using metal spoons.
- If desired, share the following video: [How to Play the Musical Spoons. Métis - Spoons as instruments](#)
- Put out spoons and masking tape and welcome children to make their own spoons (Hint: To create a gap between the spoons to make a clapping noise, cut a piece of straw and place it between the two spoons, fastening it with an elastic band.) [Making Musical Spoons](#)
- Encourage them to create musical instruments from natural materials and compare the sounds.
- Turn on the Red River Jig and allow children to dance freely. [Red River Jig music](#)
- Create an opportunity for children to display their musical talents using metal spoons with their peers. ☺



Fun Fact with Louis the Buffalo Did you know?

Métis spoons mimic the sounds of horses galloping ☺

Image from the Aansaamb aen kiskayhtaamaahk Learning Together Guide.

[Aansaamb aen kiskayhtaamaahk - Learning Together | MNBC](#)



Connecting to the Land

INTRODUCING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

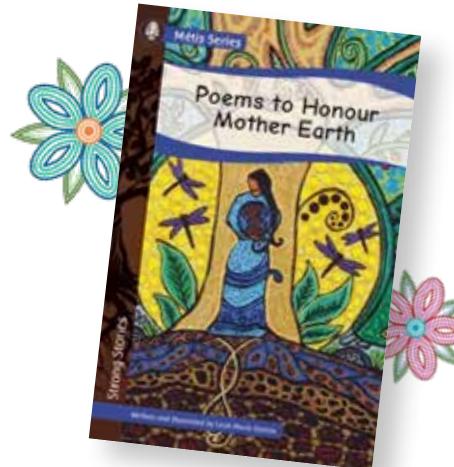
By demonstrating to children that land is sacred and represents a vast geography of knowledge and stories, we will strengthen community connections as we collectively work towards preserving our sacred land teachings. Land-based learning in child care is an educational approach that emphasizes outdoor, nature-based experiences as a core component of child development. It encourages children to engage directly with their natural environment, fostering curiosity, creativity, and physical activity. By spending time outdoors, children develop a deeper connection to the land, learn to appreciate biodiversity, and gain hands-on knowledge about ecosystems and sustainability. Land-based learning promotes holistic growth by integrating cognitive, social, emotional, and physical learning in a way that supports a child's well-being and enhances their ability to think critically and problem-solve. This method also nurtures a sense of responsibility and respect for the environment, which is essential in today's world.

There are many opportunities to introduce land-based practices into early learning environments. Here are a few ideas.

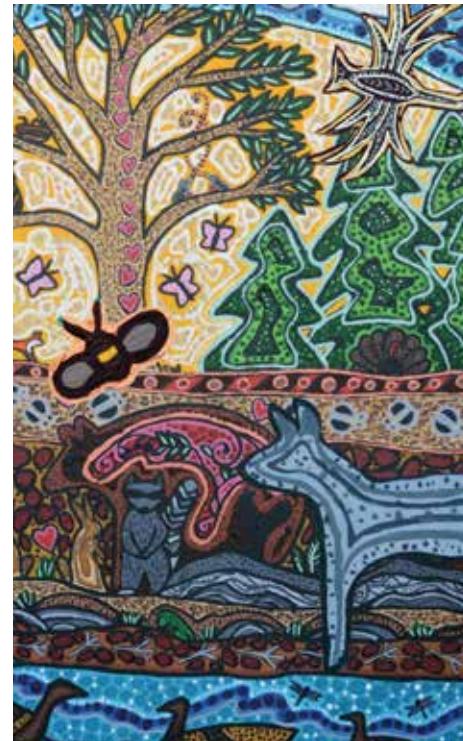
- Cultural Connection to the land: Invite Elders or community members to share knowledge about the area's traditional uses and respect for the land. Children can learn how communities historically and currently interact with the environment in sustainable ways.
- Sound and Smell Exploration: Explore the sounds of the environment (birds, wind, rustling leaves) and the smells (flowers, wet soil). This can help children develop awareness and appreciation of the natural world.
- Exploration Zones: Create different exploration zones with various textures (sand, gravel, grass), and elements like water features or small plants. Children can learn about the different ecosystems, observe plants and insects, and engage in sensory exploration.

Connecting to the Land Through Vibrant Colours in Child Care

A great exercise for encouraging exploration and connection with the land among children is by asking children to find colours in nature. Leah Dorian's book "Poems to Honour Mother Earth," influenced this activity. Leah speaks about the connection between colours and the land in her poem, "Wrapped in Fine Colours." Like other poems included in her book, this poem gently recognizes all that is around us and the importance of being respectful to our land. Leah speaks about how an abundance of colours are reflected in nature and connects them with Métis importance through symbolism. Leah refers to regalia, used to describe an emblem, symbol, or significance in Métis Indigenous culture. The line "*Dressed in her mighty fur robe, regalia of grey and white, Grey wolf runs sure-footed and determined, over finely packed trails, to her winter solstice northern council meeting*" (Dorian, 2018, p. 10) refers to her fur coat as regalia, indicating her power and honour in her community at their council meeting.



A great follow up to this poem is to explore nature-based activities with children, engage with Métis Elders and Indigenous teachings, and foster learning on how to protect the environment for future generations.



Connecting to the Land Activity

- Have a scavenger hunt sheet with colours, ask the children to find things that correspond to the colours.
- Allow children to explore nature through textures, weight, smell, colours.
- You can have an area of exploration with different grasses, flowers, rocks, dirt, and allow the children to explore how they feel, the colours, what is similar, what is different, what lives here.

[Strong Stories Métis: Poems to Honour Mother Earth, 2018 - Indigenous & First Nations Kids Books - Strong Nations](https://strongnations.com/strong-stories-metis-poems-to-honour-mother-earth-2018-indigenous-first-nations-kids-books-strong-nations)

Cite: Dorian, L. (2018). Poems to Honour Mother Earth. Strong Nations Publishing Inc.



Métis Nation Early Learning & Child Care

TEA WITH A KNOWLEDGE KEEPER

Fall 2024 Highlight of Marlee Patterson and her way of sharing the culture and language within Island Métis Child Care Centre.

Marlee visits Island Métis Child Care Centre in Victoria BC for tea with the children. Before her arrival, the children and the educators often set up a table for tea. The children have even made a special spot for Koohkom (Grandma in Southern Michif) Marlee to sit and place her belongings. Marlee does a variety of activities when she visits including beading, crafting, singing, jigging, reading books, telling stories, and sharing other Métis teachings. She uses Southern Michif as much as possible during her interactions with them.

The children greet Koohkom, say their meal blessing as well as play several games using Michif. While having tea together, Marlee will speak only Michif and prompt them with actions, "If a child uses Michif to request something, I will do what they ask." For example, a child may ask for milk for their tea, so Marlee will pass them the milk. If they

meant something else, she waits patiently while gesturing for the word to come to them. That sense of pride they get when they connect the words with the action makes it all worth it.

"Children don't know they are learning to speak Michif, it is just the words we use with Koohkom," Marlee said, and went on to say "I think the part I want to stress is that I use the Michif language as much as possible while doing these activities with the kiddos and with so much repetition they are starting to use some of the Michif words when they are doing that same activity."

Just like our Métis culture, the Michif language is relational so the way we use words is dependent on the relationship with who you are speaking to what you are talking about. Speaking in full sentences is one way to learn the use of words and how they fit into your conversation."

Koohkom Marlee has committed much of her time to learn Southern Michif, and she

continues her deep dedication collaborating with a team to help revitalize the language. They have developed a website,

southernmichif.org. This website was created

to reinforce learnings from immersion lessons. The website features games, songs, prayers, and activities to be done in the language. Marlee is incredibly involved in the community, she shares her tea, Michif and wisdom regularly at community tea with Elders, as well as community cultural workshops and in classrooms. She shows patience and passion while teaching Michif to children, families, and community members. Her dedication is inspiring. Maarsii Marlee for all you do in the community. ☺



Marlee Patterson
Koohkom

Métis Nation Child Care Projects

On November 2, 2024, Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), Métis Community Services Society of British Columbia (MCSBC), and Kelowna Métis Association (KMA) celebrated the grand opening of the Métis After School Child Care Centre (Mamawapowin After School Club) in Kelowna, which began welcoming families on September 16, 2024. This centre provides a culturally enriched environment for Métis children and families, fostering a deeper sense of identity and connection to Métis heritage. It is part of MNBC's mission to expand access to high-quality, culturally based child care across British Columbia. The centre offers flexible and inclusive services tailored to the Kelowna community, made possible by funding from the Province through the Distinctions Based Space Creation Funds, which helped transform an existing space within Mamawapowin's family services building into this new after-school care program.



November 2 Grand Opening of the Métis After School Child Care Centre (Mamawapowin After School Club) in Kelowna

There are currently three Requests for Proposals (RFPs) available for the upcoming MNBC child care builds in Terrace, Fort St. John and Port Alberni. These RFPs are posted on BC Bids, and you can find the links to each of them here:

Terrace Child Care - [Childcare Operator: Terrace, BC - Lot : 1 / Amendment : 1: BC Bid](#)

Fort St. John Child Care - [Childcare Operator: Fort St. John - Lot : 1 / Amendment : 1: BC Bid](#)

Port Alberni Child Care - [Childcare Operator: Port Alberni - Lot : 1 / Amendment : 2: BC Bid](#) ☺

From the Hearts and Minds of the Pedagogists

Connecting Virtually by Yolanda M. and Cara K.

Technology has transformed education, reshaping how students learn, teachers instruct, and institutions function. The *BC Early Learning Framework* (2019) encourages early learning professionals to reflect on both the creative and negative aspects of technology in childhood (p.81). Pedagogists recognize the downsides, such as increased screen time, and aim to use screens as a tool to inspire children and adults to engage with the outdoors.

Each month, pedagogists host 30–60-minute Zoom meetings with child care centres, presenting provocations, through PowerPoint rooted in Métis was of knowing. The topics included pine trees, eagles, ravens, dandelions, bugs and sage. Through imagery, videos and interactive discussions children are encouraged to explore these subjects and connect with the land. These sessions emphasize the 12 Métis Core Values- such as respect, kindness, and balance-and promote land-based learning. Meanwhile, educators gain cultural knowledge and skills to better support Métis Nation children and their families (*Métis Nation Early Learning Framework*, 2018).

After visiting child care centres virtually, through Zoom, the educators often follow-up with the pedagogists highlighting things children share after

virtual engagements. As an example, the pedagogists receive photos of children searching the skies for eagles or searching the ground for dandelions. To enhance the virtual engagements and further explore the children's topics of interest, the pedagogists send packages of materials to the child care centres in the mail. For instance, when discussing the Saskatoon berries the pedagogists collected a large basket full of the berries and used them to dye yarn and sent the dyed yarn to the child care program for the children to explore and learn how historically, the Métis used the berries to dye yarn and thread before using the medium to create sashes, clothing, and beautiful beadwork.

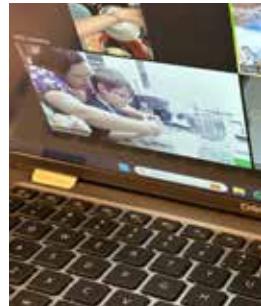
Another example of pedagogy expanding an exploration of a natural material (sage plants), is from when pedagogists sent sage scented playdough they had made with buffalo cookie cutters and a recipe to child care centers.

The children could then also make their own playdough. As they follow the recipe, they share stories and get to know each other better. For instance, while cooking together, they may share their family names and their family traditions. Using screens and virtual events has significantly enhanced the way families connect, especially in the context of virtual classes held in their homes.

Métis Family Services in Surrey has collaborated with a pedagogist to host virtual cooking classes (Kids Kiishish, in Michif). During these sessions, the pedagogist, educators, children, and families all tune in from the comfort of their own homes to create dishes that are favored by the Métis people. With the ability to join classes from anywhere, families can stay connected not only with each other but also with community, regardless of geographic barriers. Virtual events offer flexibility and convenience, making it easier for families to bond, participate in learning, and share moments that might have otherwise been missed in traditional in-person settings. Through these interactive experiences, screens have become powerful tools for building connection, understanding, and collaboration.

"Technology is a reality of the 21st century, requiring reflection and ongoing dialogue between educators, families and communities" (BC Early Learning Framework, 2019, p. 80). Technology can be used in many ways and can open new and exciting possibilities for children to engage with the world we live in!

For more information about pedagogy please email pedagogy@mnbca.ca



Virtual engagement with Prince George, Kiki Awasis.

Dyed yarn and thread that was sent to child care center in Victoria, BC. It was dyed using fresh Saskatoon berries from Lake Country, BC.

Zoom teaching



Are you an Early Childhood Educator or Interested in Early Childhood Education as a Profession?

WE HAVE A VARIETY OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORTS THAT YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR.
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMS BELOW EMAIL ECESUPPORTS@MNBC.CA

Paid Early Childhood Education Funding

In Partnership with STEPS (Skills, Training |Employment |Post Secondary), the Ministry of Education provides access to funding for Early Childhood Education Post Secondary Programs. This includes the cost of tuition and books.

Student Wrap Around Supports

These supports are designed to provide a Subsidy to help “bridge the gap” & provide financial support to students who are actively engaged in ECE training programs. Full time students can access 1000 a month in wrap around support and part time students can access 400 a month.

Student Practicum Support

Registered Métis students entering practicum placement may be eligible for a paid supplement.

Wage Subsidy for Employers

Employers who hire qualified Métis ECE's can access a financial wage subsidy for a maximum of up to six months.

In addition to educational supports, we also provide:

Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) Paid Membership

In partnership with ECEBC, MNBC is pleased to offer Métis Early Childhood Educators, and Métis ECE students with a paid ECEBC membership.

Early Childhood Educator Supplement

This supplement is paid twice per year and is designed to support our licenced Métis ECE'S and

ECEA's who are working in licenced child care programs across the province with a financial supplement.

Métis Community of Practice (COP)

The COP is open to all early childhood educators and early learning professionals inside and outside the Métis Nation. Our COP provides a virtual environment that is culturally appropriate and confidential, providing space for participants to network, connect, ask questions, and share knowledge and resources.

ELCC Appreciation Evening

This virtual celebration is held on May 1, honouring early childhood professionals nominated by their employers, & peers. This event will recognize individuals who significantly contribute to the care of Métis children and integrate culture and language into their environment's. Each nominee will receive a small gift of appreciation.

Professional Development Opportunities

Open to Early Learning professionals inside and outside the Métis Nation in community and virtually.

Annual Métis Early Years Conference

Early Learning Professionals from inside and outside the Métis Nation come together for a weekend of Métis professional development, collaboration and networking. Attendees engage in sessions led by Métis keynotes speakers, facilitators, authors and knowledge keepers who

share invaluable insights rooted in Métis culture, traditions, and experiences. Métis Educators who live over 50km away from the conference location and are registered Métis citizens can apply for an **accommodation bursary** for up to 500 to supplement their travel costs to attend the conference. Watch for more information on our 2025 Métis Early Years Conference.

“Aansaamb aen Kiskaytaamaahk- Learning Together” Professional Development Opportunity

We invite early learning and child care professionals to explore Métis culture and pedagogy in more depth. By incorporating Métis-specific resources, educators can help increase awareness of Métis identity and culture among young children, their families, and communities. We are pleased to offer “Aansaamb aen kiskaytaamaahk – Learning Together” (Heritage Michif, translated by Norman Fleury), a professional learning guide and resource kit, along with three engaging professional development workshops. These workshops are designed to support early learning professionals in integrating Métis content into early years programming. They also provide additional opportunities to create learning environments where Métis culture is celebrated and recognized.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to book a free professional development workshop for your staff, please contact us for more information, mccb@mnbc.ca.

Resources

Shop MNBC's Trading Post for cultural resources
[Métis Trading Post \(<https://metistradingpost.shop/>\)](https://metistradingpost.shop/)



Michif To Go App

[Michif To Go \(\[metismuseum.ca\]\(https://metismuseum.ca\)\)](https://metismuseum.ca)

Métis Nation BC YouTube Link to subscribe

www.youtube.com/@metisnationbritishcolumbia

Ameila Douglas Institute

[ADI Institute: \(<https://ameliadouglasinstitute.ca/>\)](https://ameliadouglasinstitute.ca/)

Métis Nation B.C. Programs and Service Programs & Services | MNBC

Poems to Honour Mother Earth

[Strong Stories Métis: Poems to Honour Mother Earth, 2018 - Indigenous & First Nations Kids Books - Strong Nations](https://strongstoriesmetis.com/poems-to-honour-mother-earth-2018/)

“Aansaamb aen kiskaytaamaahk - Learning Together” (Heritage Michif, translated by Norman Fleury)- Workshop facilitated by Child Care Navigators

metiseducation@mnbc.ca

[Aansaamb aen kiskaytaamaahk - Learning Together | MNBC](https://mnbc.ca/aansaamb-aen-kiskaytaamaahk-learning-together-mnbc/)

Contact Information

For more information about Métis programs and services, contact us at metiseducation@mnbc.ca

Our Métis Child Care Navigation and Support Coordinators

The Métis Child Care Navigation and Support Team supports early learning and child care programs, Early Childhood Educators, families, and communities throughout BC. Through the Métis Child Care Benefit Program, families can access additional funding to bridge the connection to the Affordable Child Care Benefit. The Child Care Coordinator team also provides cultural learning and connections to Early Childhood Educators and Early Years Providers.



**MÉTIS NATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA**