

ECE Small Group Summaries

What has been happening, NOW Play-wise, over the past year or so?

Language revitalization in the home space has been a large subject of focus that was based on research data analysis. Through the use of home kits complemented by an Ojibwe specialist, the aim is to develop a community of practice with educators for the purpose of knowledge transference and mobilisation. Policy documents have been used in combination with research in Indigenous communities to ensure that practices relating to NOW Play 1 and 2 (reciprocity, cultural relevance, relationships and positionally) are met. Finally, reverence is deeply considered and fostered given that stories and teachings are not often documented but are transmitted orally or through memory; subsequently, self-determination has been identified as a practice that must be supported by NOW Play.

What would you like to do in the upcoming year?

Steps forward are focused on extending community research. Action research has been of large benefit – its continuance is essential for the success of the project. Having a stronger focus on language learning in the home space is of large interest as observation and interviews have evidenced that the learning process does not often extend to the home space for various reasons. Family literacy programs are a key target for language revitalization.

What supports will you need?

To continue this collaborative action research, more play-based resources for children to engage with are necessary. Making material both fun and hands-on, strongly supports this work. Additionally, better tools for translations are necessary given that there are none currently online. Finally, support is needed with accessing and hiring native language speakers (Elders, knowledge holders) to serve as specialists in the research that is being conducted.

What is the response of the community?

There has been a struggle surrounding families integrating the home kits that promote language revitalisation in their space. It is important to consider that language use is affected by intergenerational trauma and may be associated with shame amongst other negative feelings. It is understood that this process is slow, but extremely impactful for current and future generations.

Advice and Feedback

Through relationship building within the community, a line of conversation needs to be created where resources, knowledge, and materials can be shared. Given the busy and important work that ECE's partake in on a daily-basis, resources need to be made about planting seeds rather than "how to" instructions. These resources should intertwine play-based pedagogy and language revitalisation so that children are engaged. On a more systemic level, there is a responsibility from the government to support this work by increasing wages for ECE workers so turnover rates decrease. Finally, action research is identified as being extremely important to continue with, as it largely benefits diploma and certificate programs with creating a personalized experience for each student that participates.