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*Partnering Towards Excellence*

## Ontario Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care

### Executive Summary

Western University and the Ontario Reggio Association (ORA) are pleased to lead the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care with invaluable support from a growing number of partners in the six ministerial regions of Ontario.

The Provincial Centre of Excellence promotes the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and embraces the values of Ontario's pedagogical framework *How Does Learning Happen* (2014), including the view of children as protagonists in their own lifeworlds with participatory rights and responsibilities. It recognizes children and educators as capable, resourceful co-researchers, interested in inquiring seriously into the world around them. At the core, the Centre is a *public forum for the advancement of early childhood pedagogies* in Ontario where educators, children, families, instructors, leaders, and researchers are invited to collaboratively reimagine early childhood education as spaces for democratic possibilities.

### Overview of Centre Goals and Objectives

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The Centre's goals include the following:

- generate a culture of and context for dynamic pedagogies through pedagogical documentation
- improve and sustain the liveliness within early years programs
- support dynamic and holistic early years programs with long-term commitment to continuous, innovative professional learning
- foster, advance, and nurture the views of children, families, educators, and early years outlined in *How Does Learning Happen?* and *The Kindergarten Program*
- enact a commitment to truth and reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities within the early years
- respond to the nuances of locally-situated communities within contexts that promote a coherent vision of early years programs for Ontario

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The Centre will reach these goals by:

- establishing and sustaining an innovative network of pedagogists that has local, regional, and provincial reach to advance public pedagogical forums that
  - respond to truth and reconciliation
  - promote innovation in pedagogical approaches and practices
  - foster innovative pedagogies through reflective professional learning
  - build democratic and situated early years programs
- conducting ongoing documentation, assessment, and evaluation of the pedagogist network to extend knowledge about professional learning
- encouraging sector relationship building and resource development that can support policy makers and government officials in developing and sustaining sector dialogues and policy among various early years programs
- building a long-term, sustainable learning network across the early years sector
- establishing collaborative, ongoing, intelligent accountability measures
- collaborating with the Secretariat and the Indigenous and Francophone Centres

## Pedagogists

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The Centre is premised in an emergent design-process that welcomes the multiplicities of which children and educators are capable and is expressed through the unique structure of a province-wide pedagogist network giving shape to an ecology of relations.

Pedagogists accompany, care for and about, and bring learning to life alongside children and early childhood educators. They are situated within the ongoingness of their communities across the province (see Figure 1). The Centre will leverage the roles of individuals in community organizations and postsecondary institutions already responsible for professional learning to become Ontario's pedagogists.

Pedagogists do not train educators.

Using *How Does Learning Happen*

(2014) and, where appropriate, *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), they foster democracy, social justice, and a culture of research, while supporting pedagogies at a community level. Through deep engagement with pedagogical documentation, pedagogists both promote innovation through the provision of learning initiatives within early years programs and connect the everyday pedagogical projects of individual programs with the social and cultural issues that are posed within communities.

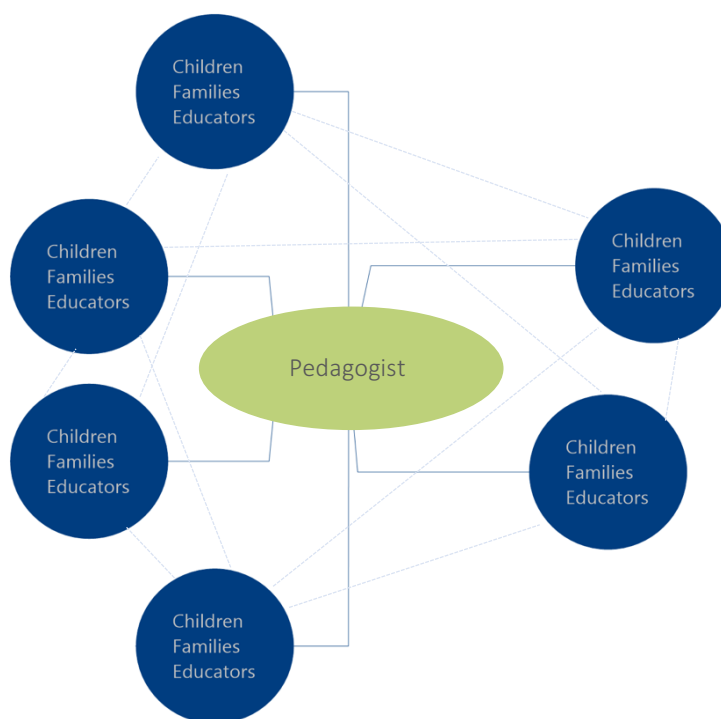


Figure 1. A pedagogist's relations in a community