

Frequently Asked Questions

Learning Outside Together: Incorporating traditional wisdom & promising practices to futureproof child care programs (LOT)

General program information:

What is the Learning Outside Together (LOT) program?

The LOT program is an online professional development opportunity for Early Childhood Educators. It consists of 10 weeks of learning over a 12 week period with one week for a break (decided by each group), and one week for an online group celebration. Each week there is an average of a **3 hour** commitment that includes an hour of online learning, an hour of activities, an hour of online meetings with your group.

What will I learn?

The program will cover a multitude of topics that will help early childhood educators become enthusiastic and more confident about bringing their ECE practices outside.

Participants will watch videos, read, listen and reflect on:

- Indigenous traditional knowledge and wisdom
- Concepts of land as teacher
- How educators adapt their practices to the different seasons
- How to talk and work with licensing officers, managers, and parents
- Ways to improve your outdoor spaces
- How to explore alternative outdoor spaces for your program
- Sustainability practices
- Honoring the land and traditional territories
- The role of the educator
- and much much more!

Who is the LOT program for?

Educators who have an ECE Basic certificate and are currently employed at a child care workplace in British Columbia, in a role working directly with children.

Does it matter where I live or where I work?

All ECEs working in BC are welcome to apply. It doesn't matter if you live in an urban, rural or remote setting. As long as you can access the internet! (And if you can't please let

us know, we may be able to help.) Unfortunately, we cannot currently accommodate those who live and work outside of British Columbia.

Who made the LOT program?

The LOT program is a partnership between ECEBC, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, and the non-profit Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. The project partners are supported by a Steering Committee composed of experts, Elders, and passionate educators. The content for the LOT program includes interviews from 24 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, was developed by Dr. Enid Eliot and numerous individuals provided additional feedback and insight (including our colleagues at Metis Nation BC). It took a community to develop this course and we are incredibly grateful to all those who generously provided their time, stories, wisdom, and insights.

Can I participate if I am working full time?

Yes, the LOT program was designed to be completed by ECEs who are currently working. You will receive a selection of times to meet when you are applying. Please apply if one or more of the available times suit your schedule for the full 12 weeks of the program. The majority of the meetings will take place outside of 9-5 Monday to Friday to accommodate ECEs working full time. The program will take place over 10 virtual meetings and an online wrap-up celebration over 12 weeks.

I applied for cohort 1, do I need to apply again?

Yes, you are required to apply again. Cohort 2 and 3 will be a separate round of intake than cohort 1.

Costs, certificates and accessibility:

Is the LOT program free?

Yes, the LOT program is free right now thanks to funding from Future Skills Centre Canada and an anonymous donor.

How much time will it take?

We estimate you will need to commit to three hours each week over a period of 12 weeks.

Every week there will be an hour of online learning, an hour of exploring your outdoor space/offline activity, and an hour of online meetings with your small group and peer mentor. There will be 10 weeks of navigating through the online program, and a 2 hour wrap up celebration where all of the participants from this cohort will gather online and end in a good way together.

Additionally, evaluation is a fundamental part of the LOT program. Participants will be invited to complete a series of surveys before, during, and after they complete the LOT program. While these surveys are voluntary, they are an important component of the program.

What if I have issues accessing internet / devices for accessing internet?

Please consider applying and letting us know any relevant details. We should be able to help, but we need to know what you need!

How can you teach an online course about land as teacher and moving your ECE practice outdoors?

We made the choice to put the program online so that we can reach as many people across the province as possible. Each week you will be asked to go outdoors (in your local area), to observe and reflect. You will then come back inside and meet with a small group online.

Will I receive a professional development certificate for participating in the LOT participant program?

Yes, you will receive a Pro-D certificate for 32 hours if you complete the entire program.

The entire program includes 10 hours of online learning, 10 hours of activities, 10 hours of online meetings, and 2 hours of a celebration.

Timelines and time commitments

When does this program start and end?

Cohort 2 will run from September 19th to December 16th. There are 10 weeks of content, a week for getting oriented on the hub and meeting with your mentor, one week of a break, and a celebration at the end. The break will be scheduled at a time convenient for most of the group members. The content is largely self-paced and can be done during the evenings and weekends but the weekly meetings will be the same time and day set each week for the duration of the cohort. Exceptions and changes can be made by unanimous decision of your group.

Cohort 3 will run from February 11 until May 12th.

Cohort 4 will run in the Fall of 2023 (dates to be confirmed closer to the time).

Invitations for Cohorts 2 and 3 will be sent via email starting in August 2022.

I want to participate but I am away for a week, can I still participate?

Yes! Please apply anyway and note this in your application. As each small group can choose a “break week”, we should be able to accommodate your schedule.

How much time do I need to commit?

Each week there will be approximately 1 hour of self-paced learning, 1 hour of reflection outdoors or activities, and a 1-hour meeting with your mentor group.

Can I work at my own pace?

Yes. However, the weekly online and outdoor components must be completed before each small group meeting.

When does the small group meet?

You will select from the available times that you can meet. The groups will be formed by availability and additional criteria.

What if I can't join now? Will you offer this program again?

Yes! We are recruiting now for cohort 2 (starting fall 2022), and cohort 3 (starting February 2023). Invitations to either the Fall or Spring session will be done via random draw. We will be running a cohort 4 in Fall of 2023 which will have a separate recruitment process.

After the program & Mentoring opportunities

Will I be in a community of practice?

Yes. You will be in a small group with a mentor (5-7 people). As a group you can decide whether or not you want to keep in touch after the program is completed.

Who are the mentors?

The mentors will be ECEs from across the province who have the skills and interest in mentoring participants and facilitating group discussions. They are your peers. Mentors of Cohort 2 and 3 will have taken the LOT participant program in previous cohorts.

Can I become a mentor?

You are welcome to apply to be a mentor after you complete the LOT program.

Do mentors receive training or support?

Yes. There is a mentorship program to give ECEs the skills and knowledge to support and mentor their peers.

Mentors meet weekly during the program to ask questions and share thoughts, reflections and experiences.

Mentors will continue to meet as a group to support each other as they support the ECEs going through the 12-week LOT project. Mentors will meet weekly for the first 4 weeks of the program, and bi-weekly for the remaining weeks.

(This means that during the 12-week LOT project mentors may have up to two meetings per week: one with the mentor group and one with their small group)

Who made the mentorship program?

This project is a partnership between ECEBC, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society and the non-profit Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. The project partners are supported by a Steering Committee comprised of Elders, experts, and passionate educators. The content for the mentorship program includes interviews from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, was developed by Liz Brown and Karolyn Hendra. Numerous individuals provided additional feedback, insight and support of Liz Williams. It took a community to develop this course and we are incredibly grateful to all those who generously provided their time, stories, wisdom, and insights.

Is the mentorship training program free?

Yes, it is free right now thanks to the funding provided by Future Skills Centre Canada and an anonymous donor.

Is there compensation for being a mentor?

Yes! Mentors will receive a professional development certificate for 8-10 hours as well as an honorarium.

Evaluation:

Who is doing the evaluation and how will I be involved?

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, a non-profit and partner on the Learning Outside Together project, is conducting an evaluation. They use quantitative and qualitative data collection, such as surveys and interviews. These will be distributed pre and post program implementation with an additional 3-month follow up survey.

Why am I being evaluated?

You are not being evaluated, our program is!

Evaluation is carried out to evaluate and improve the online program and to evaluate the short and long term impact the Learning Outside Together program has made to educators' practice across BC.

How will my information be stored?

SRDC handles and stores participant data appropriately and securely within Canada. Only authorized SRDC staff and contractors have access to SRDC's corporate network infrastructure, and permission to access individual files is granted based on a need-to-know basis. The survey platform being used for this project (Qualtrics) is compliant with all privacy protection legislations in Canada.

Each time SRDC collects data it provides an informed consent process. This process describes how data will be collected, stored, and used. SRDC provides email support to answer further questions. Its practices comply with privacy principles and requirements of federal and provincial legislation and Treasury Board policies. It holds Facility Security Clearance at the Secret level and Document Safeguarding Capability up to the Protected B level. SRDC's clearance was renewed in 2009 indefinitely.

SRDC has been subject to several external data and security audits over the years and met requirements on each occasion.

Additionally, Learnbase will store basic contact information from participants who register on the Early year's professional development Hub (where you will access the online content).

Will my information be shared?

We will not share your name or personal details without your informed consent. Personal information will only be shared with those involved in delivering the program. They are not permitted to use or share your information for any other purpose.

We will share the impact of the project with the funders and others who are interested. You will not be identified within these documents.

We may share quotes you have given us, but they will only be attributed to "a participant". They will not be attributed to you by name or used if they can identify you.