

ISSUE 35: February 2026



The Here and Now: Reimagining Early Childhoods In Urgent Times



ECPN Updates

Pedagogist Program

We recently completed the first half (August 1 – January 31) of the third and final year of this phase of the Pedagogist Program (see [Issue 30](#) for more information about this Program phase). So far this school year, pedagogists have provided more than 8,500 hours of professional learning to 1,000+ child care professionals in 231 licensed programs through centre visits and collaborative dialogues (e.g., learning circles, gatherings, proD days). The Pedagogist Program has also provided an additional 3,000+ hours of professional learning to 1,000+ child care professionals through local/community focused dialogues and ongoing engagements, the [Conversation Series](#) webinars, and the [Waste-as-Material course](#), both collaborations with [ECEBC](#).

Program feedback surveys have been submitted by educators who regularly work with a pedagogist in their centre (completed in January) and by educators attending a local/community focused dialogue

and webinar offering. Based on 670 partially or fully completed surveys, most respondents report positive impacts and would recommend participation in the B.C. Early Childhood Pedagogist program.

- ⇒ 98% of respondents reported the content presented and discussed in the webinar/focused dialogue session had added to their knowledge
- ⇒ 98% of respondents reported that working with a pedagogist supported their engagement with the BC Early Learning Framework
- ⇒ 86% of respondents reported that working with a pedagogist added to their knowledge, understanding and practices of working with young children
- ⇒ 85% reported YES, they would recommend participation in the Pedagogist Program

“All of my experiences with pedagogists have been eye opening but also create a hopefulness in the future of this field.” (Northern region, ECE, Midpoint survey January 2026)

re:materia

Grounded in social and ecological justice frameworks, [re:materia](#) proposes new directions for early childhood education that rethink the Three Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) and refigure young children’s waste futures. In January and February, early childhood educators and students have been working with the re:materia team at the re:materia Waste Library, spending time with waste materials to creatively and critically reimagine pedagogical processes and collective curriculum-making in early childhood spaces. In March, students, with the support of educators, will be experimenting with bringing the waste materials into their classrooms.

The re:materia team is grateful for the ongoing support from local businesses and groups for adding to the growing number of waste materials available at the Waste Library in the Early Childhood Building at Thompson Rivers University, located on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc.

Upcoming Event at the Kamloops Art Gallery: Thinking With Materials



Join ECPN co-directors Kathleen Kummen and Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, with pedagogist Teresa Smith and local early childhood educators at the re:materia Waste Library. Together, we will do some hands-on experimentation and consider how thinking with waste materials might open possibilities for childhoods in 21st-century Kamloops/Tk'emlúps. We will also provide details about how you can access locally sourced non-toxic waste materials for your classroom.

Professional development hours will be provided.

Location: Kamloops Art Gallery, 465 Victoria St. #101, Kamloops, V2C 2A9

Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Registration: email tsmit286@uwo.ca to register

Upcoming Events

Conversation XII: Pedagogists' Engagements in Early Childhood Centres

Registration is open on the [Events](#) page of the ECPN website for the next Conversation Series. Conversation XII: Pedagogists' Engagements in Early Childhood Centres is a four-part series that will invite pedagogists to discuss various aspects of their work and how they collaborate with educators to create lively pedagogical spaces across British Columbia. This series builds on and continues conversations from last year's Conversation XI. If you are interested in revisiting previous conversations, visit the [Series](#) page of the website.

Part II: In Conversation with Children

Date: February 24th, 2026

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Pacific Time

How pedagogists work alongside educators to foster meaningful conversations with children.

Part III: Attending to Children's Lifeworlds

Date: April 16th, 2026

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Pacific Time

How pedagogists engage observation practices that connect to pedagogical processes.

Part IV: Working with Pedagogical Commitments

Date: June 2nd, 2026

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Pacific Time

How pedagogists and educators work with pedagogical commitments in their practice.

ECPN Highlights

Most Presentation Series and Conversation Series webinars have recordings available on the [Series](#) pages of the ECPN website shortly after the event. Our two most recent webinars, [Pedagogists' Engagements in Early Childhood Centres: Engaging Children's Processes](#) and [Rethinking Digital Technologies in the Early Years: Philosophy, AI, and Practice](#), are now available, if you were unable to attend or want to rewatch the session.

"Participation in these provide a depth of knowledge and learning, opportunities for reflection and digging deeper into engagements with children, families, educators and communities."

(November webinar Zoom poll survey)

While many educators will watch webinars on their own, we know there are also educators who are attending Conversation Series and Presentation Series webinars together with their colleagues, in their teams, and in their postsecondary classrooms. We think this can be wonderfully generative and encourage educators to consider attending webinars and/or (re)watching the recordings together. Watching alongside others creates space for dialogue—for noticing what resonates, what inspires, what provokes, what challenges taken-for-granted assumptions—about our early childhood education understandings and practices. When we pause collectively with an idea, it can be less about absorbing content and more about thinking in relation.

What do we hear differently when listening beside one another? What possibilities emerge in conversation that might not when we watch, listen, and think on our own?

In a field that is deeply relational, professional learning also benefits from relational engagement. Bringing webinar recordings into staff meetings, professional development days, or informal gatherings may be an avenue to nourish collective thinking beyond the event.

"I look forward to sharing these ideas with future early childhood educators in the college classroom."
(Metro, College Instructor, Webinar survey)

Continuing the Conversation

On February 17, 2026 the B.C. Government released the 2026-2027 fiscal budget. [Budget 2026](#) lays out three main priorities for this fiscal year: safeguarding critical services, investing in B.C.'s future, and updating the tax system while managing government expenses. The budget aims to protect critical services such as health care, education, and child care, making new investments across all sectors.

Budget 2026 provides a \$330-million investment in ChildCareBC, framed as a period of "stabilization" while provinces and territories continue negotiations with the federal government. The funding is intended to maintain lower parent fees, sustain existing spaces, and continue support for operators and educators. At the same time, enrolment of new providers into the [Operating Funding Model](#) and the [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC](#) program will pause. Families and providers currently in the \$10 a Day program will see no changes. Government has also indicated a shift in expansion priorities, completing previously funded [New Spaces Fund](#) projects while increasingly focusing on before- and after-school care, including a \$25-million investment to expand child care on school grounds.

The language of stabilization is raising questions in the field, with advocates, educators, and operators wondering what comes next ([ECEBC Statement](#)). What specifically is being stabilized, and for whom? What does it mean to pause growth in the name of flexibility and resilience? And importantly, how long is a "pause"? What timelines are attached to this period of stabilization, and what conditions will signal its end? While maintaining affordability and creating flexibility are significant, we might also ask how pauses in expansion shape access for families still waiting. How will equity be meaningfully addressed during this period? What changes to funding models might emerge? How will educators and operators be engaged in shaping what comes next? Additionally, how might new funding models influence the conditions of educators' work and the possibilities for future care? These are some of the questions we are hearing from the field.

Although Budget 2026 makes clear some investment commitments, many questions remain. As more details unfold, we look forward to continued dialogue across the sector. We encourage all to stay attentive to how policy language, timelines, and fiscal decisions shape the everyday realities of early childhood education in British Columbia.