



APRIL NEWSLETTER

2024



THIS MONTH:

- Happy Gardening
- Maple Syrup
- Earth Day
- Active Play in the Early Years
- Hooked on Books - Encouraging Movement
- Snoezelen Room Rentals
- Hooray for Outdoor Play

The EarlyON programs at Empower Simcoe are built on four foundations: Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression, which promote the healthy development of children and provide parents and caregivers with support to ensure their child and family have the resources needed to raise healthy, thriving, resilient children. To register for an EarlyON program with Empower Simcoe click [here](#) [1].



Michele Kapteyn

Supports and Services Manager

Hello EarlyON Participants,

Spring has taken hold; the bulbs are pressing through the soil waking from their winter sleep. Did you know that early childhood is the best time to introduce gardening to children? You will want to set your child up for success, so start small and choose plants that are easy to grow and do not require a lot of maintenance. Whether you have property or not gardening is achievable. Many plants can be successfully grown in container gardens on balconies. Below is a list of ten plants that are easy to care for and will set you and your child up for a successful gardening experience.

1. Sunflower

A must for a child's garden, plant just one or two, since they take a lot of room. Sunflowers will sprout in one week, become a small seedling in two weeks, and should be 2' tall in a month. In eight weeks, the buds will flower revealing hundreds of seed kernels. Be sure to grow 'confectionery' sunflowers, the type grown for food. They will dry naturally in the late summer sun; the seeds, rich in protein and iron, can be roasted for snacks. Save a few for next summer's planting.

2. Lettuce/mescluns

Greens are a quick and reliable crop to give the child fast results, and also a good way to interest kids in salads. Lettuce likes part shade; keep soil moist especially during the first two weeks. The seeds will germinate in 7-10 days; growing season is 40-50 days. You can grow 'head' (space 8" apart) or 'leaf' (space 4" apart) varieties; the leaf varieties will mature sooner, about 30-35 days.

3. Radishes

Radishes bring quick results for the young gardener, germinating in 3-10 days, and with a very short growing season of 20-30 days. They can be planted closely, 4-6" apart. Plant in cool weather for a mild radish, or hot weather for a hotter radish.

4. Snow peas

Snow peas are a quick-growing early crop, and fun for kids to eat right off the vine. They take about 10 days to germinate and mature in about 60 days. Peas prefer cooler, partially shaded locations in the garden; they should be sown closely, about 1" apart at most. Snow peas are popular because the pod is edible and since they are a dwarf plant they can be grown without a trellis.

5. Cherry tomatoes

Gotta have 'em! These may be the most fun crop for a child, aside from strawberries. Plant in full sun and use seedlings rather than planting from seed. Put in a 2' stake alongside each seedling; they need to be tied loosely to stakes as they get taller. Add lots of compost. Water at ground level, trying to keep leaves dry. Growing season is 50-75 days. Cherry tomatoes can also be grown in containers.

6. Nasturtiums

These flowers are easy to grow and yield results quickly, which encourages the young gardener. Nasturtiums bloom about 50 days after the seeds are planted, with orange, yellow and red flowers. They prefer sunny, dry locations and do well in poor soil. Choose the shorter varieties for garden beds. Nasturtiums are also pest resistant, which ensures a successful planting. The flowers are also edible, and can be used to add colour to a fresh garden salad.

7. Bush beans

Fast, easy, high yield and, because they do not grow tall, they are easy for kids to harvest. Bush beans germinate in 4-8 days, and mature in 40-65 days. It's best to plant a small patch, then another in a few weeks. This will extend the harvest. When choosing seeds, select the "low bush" varieties because these will be easier for children to harvest. Plant closely spaced, about 4" apart. Grow in direct sun; water the soil but try to keep the leaves dry. Bush beans don't need poles or trellises to grow.

8. Carrots

Carrot seeds can be sown directly into soil and prefer cooler temperatures. They can be slow to germinate, so be patient. Carrots will mature in about 60 days. The soil should be free of rocks and easy for the carrot to grow 'down'. Keep well-watered and thin to every 3" because crowding will produce foliage but no root. Small varieties are recommended for children, as they're easier to grow and more fun to eat.

9. Potatoes

A 'never-fail' crop, you can plant red or white potato varieties with equal success, though red will mature faster. Children seem to favor this variety. Cut seed potatoes into chunks with at least two 'eyes' per chunk. Plant in furrows, about 12-15" apart, with eyes pointing upward. Mound soil up around plant as it grows; harvest when plant collapses.

10. Pumpkin

A 'must' for a child's garden, pumpkins are worth the extra space they take if you have the room. Plant seeds in a small hill; poke three holes in the hill and put one seed in each hole. Seeds will sprout in about one week; after a few days, vine leaves begin to form and creep along the ground. Once there are three pumpkins on the vine, pick off any new blossoms. Pumpkins take 80 - 120 days to harvest: it's ready when it feels hard on the outside and sounds hollow when tapped. Let an adult supervise the cutting, using shears. Seeds can be dried to eat, or save for future planting. The meat can be used for pies, and the pumpkin for carving.

The Bradford EarlyON Child and Family Centre has incorporated gardening into their outdoor programming. Book a visit at that site to participate in a collective gardening experience.

Happy Gardening!

Until Next time,

Michele



Angelia Brooks

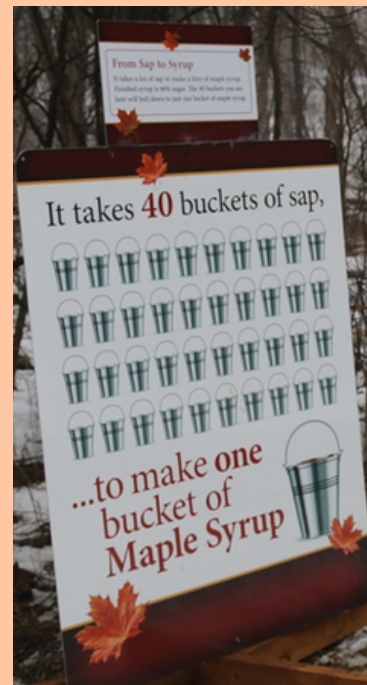
EarlyON Indigenous Coordinator

Do you have questions? Email Angelia at indigenous@empowersimcoe.ca

Spring is here, officially arriving on March 19th! One of my favourite treats of spring is made from the sweet water of the maple tree. And the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) reminds us that Maple Syrup has been significant to Indigenous peoples for thousands of years, helping to sustain them. It was used as a sweetener, an anesthetic, to preserve meats through the process of curing and eventually as a trade item.



MÉTIS LANGUAGES INITIATIVES		
MAPLE SYRUP DUMPLINGS	GRANDS-PÈRES AU SIROP D'ÉRABLE	GRANPÈR O SIRO DERAB
<p>Ingredients for the dumplings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 cups of flour 2 tablespoons of sugar 4 teaspoons of baking powder ½ teaspoon of salt ½ cup of margarine or butter 1 cup of milk <p>Instructions for the dumplings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix all dry ingredients in a bowl. Add the margarine and blend until mixture is slightly lumpy. Add the milk and blend until mixture is homogeneous. <p>Ingredients for maple syrup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ¾ cup of maple syrup 1 ¾ cup of water <p>Instructions for the syrup mixture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place the syrup and water in a large pan with an airtight lid. Bring to a boil. Drop the dough by spoonful into the boiling syrup, spacing the spoonfuls. Cover and simmer over medium heat, never lifting the lid, for 15 minutes. Serve immediately. 	 <p>Ingrédients pour pâte à grands-pères</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 tasses de farine 2 cuillères à table de sucre 4 cuillères à thé de poudre à pâte ½ cuillère à thé de sel ½ de tasse de margarine ou beurre 1 tasse de lait <p>Marche à suivre pour la pâte</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mélanger les ingrédients secs dans un bol. Ajouter la margarine et mélanger jusqu'à texture grumeleuse. Ajouter le lait et mélanger rapidement jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit homogène. <p>Ingrédients pour le sirop d'érable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ¾ tasse de sirop d'érable 1 ¾ tasse d'eau <p>Marche à suivre pour le sirop d'érable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mettre le sirop et l'eau dans une grande poëlonne munie d'un couvercle hermétique. Amener à ébullition. Laisser tomber la pâte par cuillerées dans le sirop bouillant, en espaçant bien les cuillerées. Couvrir et laisser mijoter à feu moyen, sans jamais lever le couvercle, pendant 15 minutes. Servir immédiatement. 	<p>Ingrédzyan pour pawt dé grandpér</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 (deu) taws de farinn 2 (deu) gros kuyéré dsuk 4 (kat) ptsit kuyéré de poud a pawt ½ (unn dmi) ptsit kuyéré dsèl ½ (un tsyèr) de taws dmargarinn ou dbeur 1 (unn) taws de lè <p>Pour fèr la pawt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mélanjé lé zingrédzyan sèk dan unn bawl. Ajouté la margarinn pi mélanjé un peu. Ajouté le lè pi bin mélanjé. <p>Ingrédzyan pour le siro dérab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ¾ (unn pi trouaw kawr) de taws dsiro dérab 1 ¾ (unn pi trouaw kawr) de taws do <p>Pour fèr le siro dérab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mèt Isiro pi lo dan zunn grand pwèlawn èk un bon kouvèr. Fèr bouyir. Lèsé tonbé dé ptsit kuyéré dpawt dans Isiro bouyan pi lèsé dièspaws. Mèt lkouvèr pi lèsé kuir sur un feu mawyïn san lvé lkouvèr pour 15 (kinz) menut. arvir tsuswit.





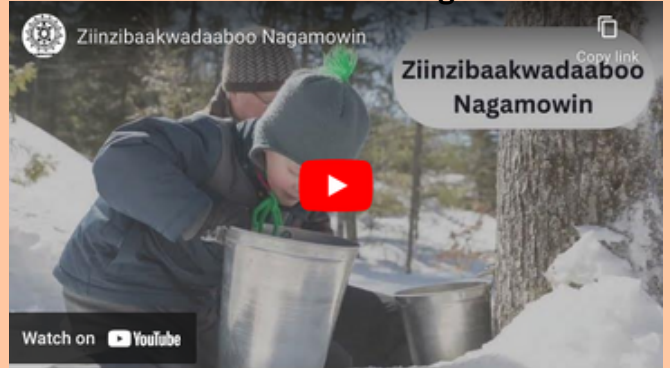
Nanabush & maple syrup.



Practice saying the words for Maple syrup in Mohawk and Ojibwe along with our puppets!



Ziinzibaakwadaaboo Nagamowin



The Story of Maple Syrup: Ziizbaaktoke Dabik-Giizis (Sugar Making Moon) with Grandmother Kim Wheatley



Monday April 22 is the **54th Earth Day** according to *The Old Farmer's Almanac*. The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970.



Here are 10 Earth Day Activities and Ideas:

1. **Support our Pollinators.** Bring native bees and other pollinating creatures to your garden.
2. **Clean Up Plastic in Your Neighbourhood or Park.**
3. **Swap Out Your Kitchen and Household Products** to biodegradable products which do not use chemicals or plastic.
4. **Plant a Tree!** Trees capture carbon, cool overheated places, benefit agriculture, support pollinators, reduce the risk of disease transmission and boost local economies.
5. **Use Wildflowers and Native Plants** to improve pest control and pollination -- bigger flowers means better harvests.
6. **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle in the Garden!** Reuse old plastic pots and trays. Plant biodegradable pots right in the garden. Buy topsoil, mulch and compost in bulk to avoid the plastic bags.
7. **Stop Pesticide and Chemical Use in the Garden.** Focus on growing in nutrient-rich soil that is high in organic matter.
8. **Conserve Water!** Avoid overwatering your plants.
9. **Think About Your Diet!** About 1/3 of the food that we produce every year goes to waste annually. What can you do to reduce your “foodprint”?
10. **Get Kids Involved!** Pass down a love of nature and plants to kids.





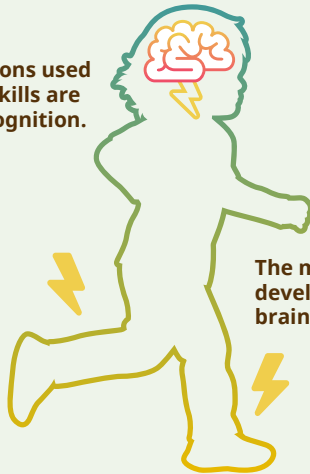
Amy St John Early Literacy Specialist

Do you have questions? Email Amy at earlyliteracy@empowersimcoe.ca

Active play in the early years

Children need physically active play every day for healthy development. Better movement skills mean better brain development and school readiness.

The brain regions used for motor skills are also used in cognition.



The more motor development, the more brain development.



Children with strong motor development do better in school.



Remember, active play is more than simple fun. It's how young children learn, and it's an essential part of their holistic development.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

ActivePlay.ca [2]

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The Best Things in Life are Free

Active play doesn't have to come from a store. Here are some free ideas to incorporate movement:

Cardboard Boxes

Boxes make great building materials. Don't forget the cardboard tubes, kleenex boxes, and tape!

Sticks & Stones

They make great game pieces, building materials, stepping stones, and more. Let your kids' imagination be your guide.

Mud, Sand, Water

Messy fun is the best kind! Make mud pies, build sandcastles, create rivers and dams or race twigs down the gutter. See what your child explores.

Leaves

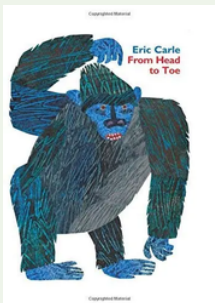
Gather leaves for a craft project, go on a nature scavenger hunt or just rake them up and dive in!

adapted from: [3] www.outdoorplaycanada.ca



Hooked on Books - Encouraging Movement

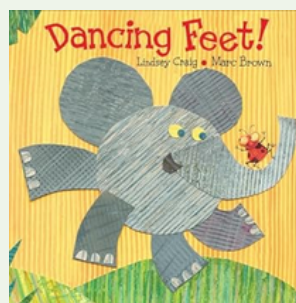
Living a healthy lifestyle includes daily movement. Here are some books to encourage children to move their bodies!



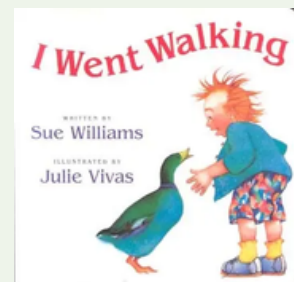
From Head to Toe
By: Eric Carle



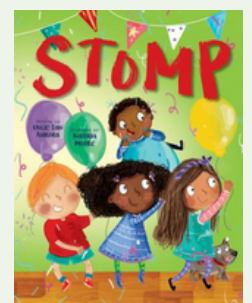
The Button Book
By: Sally Nicholls



Dancing Feet
By: Lindsey Craig



I Went Walking
By: Sue Williams



Stomp
By: Ian Aurora



**Empower
Simcoe**

BE • BELONG • THRIVE

SNOEZELN ROOM RENTALS

For children 6 years and younger

WHY

These multisensory spaces provide community partners with access to developmentally appropriate materials and equipment.



WHEN

Bookings are available Monday afternoons and Friday mornings in Barrie. Thursday afternoons and Friday mornings will be available in Bradford

WHERE

EarlyON Child and Family Centre
129 Ferris Lane, Barrie

EarlyON Child and Family Centre
118 Bradford Street, Bradford

COMING SOON



PRICING

\$25.00 - 30-minute bookings
\$225.00 - Ten 30-minute bookings

ORIENTATION

An orientation is required and will be provided by program facilitators who are familiar with the equipment.



For pictures of the space or to book the Snoezelen Room visit:
www.empowersimcoe.ca
Questions? Contact us at:
ffs-129Ferris@empowersimcoe.ca



Hooray
FOR OUTDOOR
PLAY!



Support the Hooray for Outdoor Play campaign and help build a new, accessible playground at the EarlyON Child and Family Centre, 129 Ferris Lane, Barrie. With a \$300,000 goal, this initiative aims to create a recreational and outdoor learning space, expanding the EarlyON Programming.

Your donation today directly contributes to constructing this vital playground, fostering holistic child development through social interaction, physical activity, and imaginative play. The playground is under construction, set to be ready later this year, providing a safe space for children to build friendships and have fun. Make a difference – donate now to create lasting memories for families like yours at Empower Simcoe's EarlyON Child and Family Centre in Barrie.

**TO DONATE, VISIT
EMPOWERSIMCOE.CA [4]**



[1] www.empowersimcoe.ca/earlyon-child-family-centres/

[2] www.activeplay.ca

[3] www.outdoorplaycanada.ca

[4] www.empowersimcoe.ca