Inspiring Educators through the Pedagogy of Care, Reflective Practice and Design of Space with Ongoing Professional Growth as a Learning Community





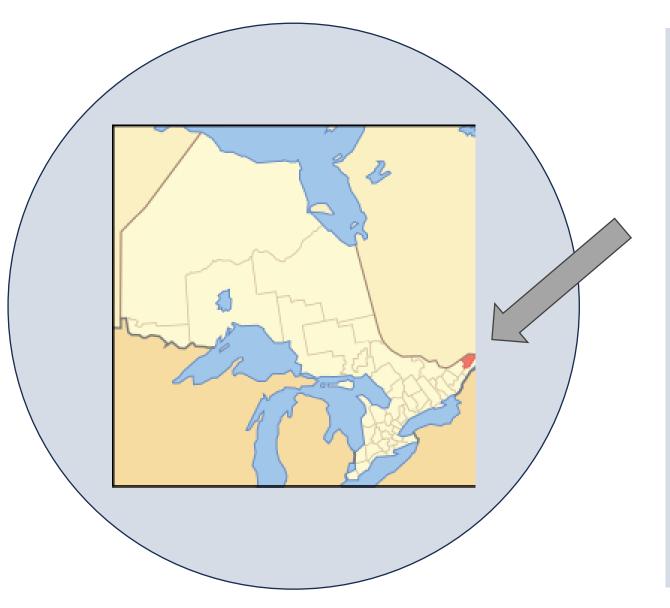
Inspirer les éducateurs par la pédagogie de CARE, la pratique réflexive et la conception d'espaces avec une croissance professionnelle continue en tant que communauté d'apprentissage



We are both registered educators by trade and currently work as quality assurance coordinators, disguised as pedagogical leaders.



### Predominantly Rural French-speaking



- Our workplace, The United Counties of Prescott and Russell, is situated in a predominantly rural, Frenchspeaking region, near the border of Quebec.
- We support 38 centres and 37 home childcare.
- Our Early Years team has 5 inclusion counsellors, 2 home care advisors and us as quality assurance and pedagogical leaders.

As quality assurance coordinators and pedagogical leaders, we support our learning community in implementing Ontario's Early Years Pedagogy How Does Learning Happen? through a diversity of learning activities, mostly communities of practice.

We align our work with structures for thinking and researching with varied resources.

And yes...

- We complicate things;
- We deconstruct ideas to rebuild them;
- We hold a responsibility to better define what quality is and what it could be.

# What we do



# Envisioning our work

The approach we have about our work comes from the way we understand learning, how we draw on our experiences and how we consider evidenced-based practices.

- What does professional learning mean to me, to educators and to the education system?
- Where do my ideas about learning come from, what are my narratives?
- Does it work, like really work? Why?
- What could we do differently?

L'approche que nous de notre travail provient de la façon dont nous comprenons l'apprentissage, dont nous nous appuyons sur nos expériences passées et dont nous considérons les meilleures pratiques.

- Que signifie l'apprentissage professionnel pour moi, pour les éducateurs et pour le système d'éducation?
- D'où viennent mes idées sur l'apprentissage? Quels sont mes narratifs?
- Est-ce que ça fonctionne vraiment? Pourquoi?
- Que peut-on faire différemment?

Research tells us that learning models which emphasize participation, intentional dialogue, and action research are more effective in bringing about change. We want to advance quality by supporting professional learning and building pedagogical leadership in our centres. Our commitment to working with others in building such a place is supported by creating the conditions to engage in new ways of working.

La recherche nous indique que les modèles d'apprentissages qui mettent l'accent sur la participation, le dialogue intentionnel, la recherche-action sont plus efficaces à engendrer le changement. Nous souhaitons faire avancer la qualité en étant un soutien pour l'apprentissage professionnel et en bâtissant le leadership pédagogique dans les centres.Notre engagement à travailler avec d'autres à la construction d'un tel lieu est soutenu par la création des conditions pour s'engager dans de nouvelles façons de travailler.

Continuous learning is an important step in the development of the profession. We believe that reflective practice and dialogues are important aspects of learning and growth for educators as well as pedagogical leaders and management.
Proposed activities include small group discussions, sharing experiences and time for questioning without neglecting experimentation. Through the different activities proposed, we will reflect on our daily experiences in our centers and above all, what we want to move forward.

# Pedagogical Leadership

« For us, pedagogical leadership is not about rank or status. It's not about teaching others what to do or how to think, and it's certainly not about ensuring quality. Pedagogical leadership is about creating the conditions for relationships to flourish. It's about nurturing a very particular kind of culture where connections are formed between the type of work we do and the kind of world we want to live in. »

Source: 6 Principles of Pedagogical Leadership "AN APPROACH TO BEING WITH OTHERS. (McGee Baird, EECD Consultation Session, 2022)

« Pour nous, le leadership pédagogique n'est pas une question de rang ou de statut. Il ne s'agit pas d'enseigner aux autres ce qu'il faut faire ou comment penser, et il ne s'agit certainement pas d'assurer la qualité. Le leadership pédagogique consiste à créer les conditions propices à l'épanouissement des relations. Il s'agit de nourrir un type de culture très particulier où des liens se forment entre le type de travail que nous faisons et le type de monde dans lequel

nous voulons vivre. »



### Finding Our Way

- Where are we at the moment?
- What direction do we want to go in?
- What do we need to move forward?

# Time

- We started thinking about time in a different way, from productivity to slowing down.
- How time could be incorporated in our work for a different kind of learning?
- We started creating activities that extended the 2-hour workshops and the static 'how to' guided experiences, to a more involved participation by gathering educators more often and refer to these gatherings as "Ongoing Conversations". We did the same thing with supervisors and directors.

The Inspired Practice component invites us to work in groups on a long-term project, accompanied by written resources, dialogues and documentation. Being in dialogue with others, designing our work with a new perspective, considering multiple points of view allows us to move from passive to active learning and support the transformation of our practices.

#### 4 projects

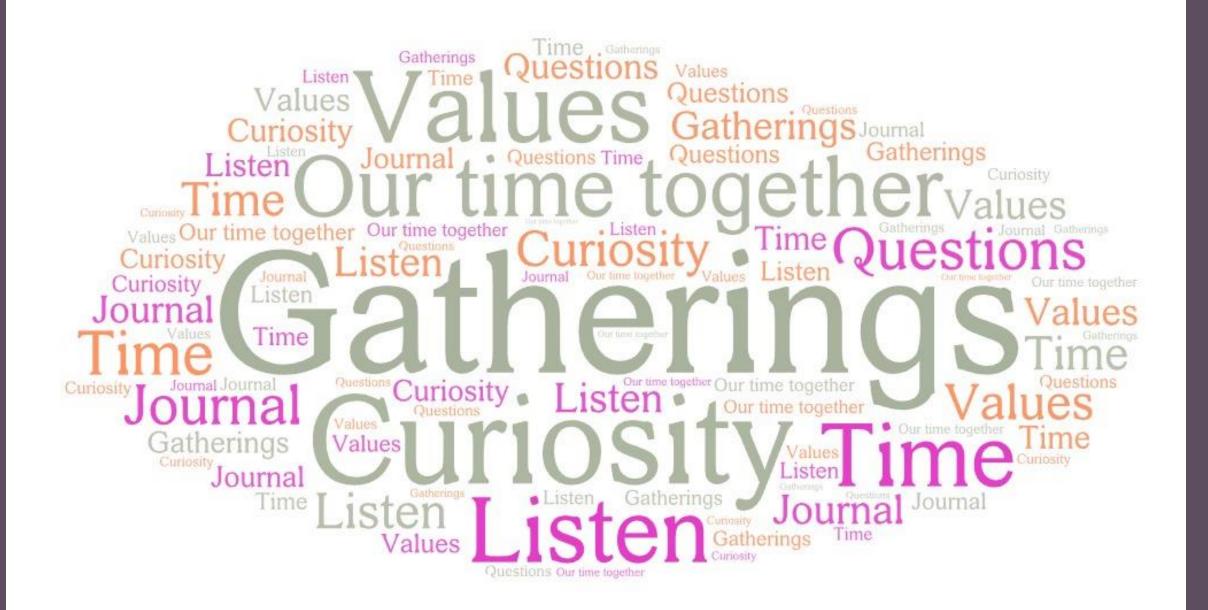
Project 1: Designs for Living and Learning Project 2: Creating a Culture of Reflective Practice Project 3: Mosaic of Marks Words Material Project 3: How does Learning Happen, Simply!

- WE Enter into dialogue without knowing or controlling the final result and welcome uncertainty;
- Work with the perspective of being a co-investigator and co-learner
- Work with an image of the child, educator and family as active learners and contributors. They have many ideas and skills within them;
- Work with values of participation, contribution, commitment, openness, courage and curiosity and commit with a shared responsibility despite the challenges that arise.

# Principles



- Entrons dans le dialogue sans connaître ni contrôler le résultat final, accueillir l'incertitude;
- Travaillons avec la perspective d'être un co-chercheur et un co-apprenant;
- Travaillons avec une image de l'enfant, de l'éducateur et de la famille en tant qu'apprenants actifs et contributeurs. Ils ont beaucoup d'idées et de compétences en eux;
- Travaillons avec des valeurs de participation, de contribution, d'engagement, d'ouverture, de courage et de curiosité et s'engager avec une responsabilité partagée malgré les défis qui se présentent.



## uestions

What is possible when we reimagine our work and create a new story?

what do children deserve?	What does the educator descrive?	What dr you deserve?
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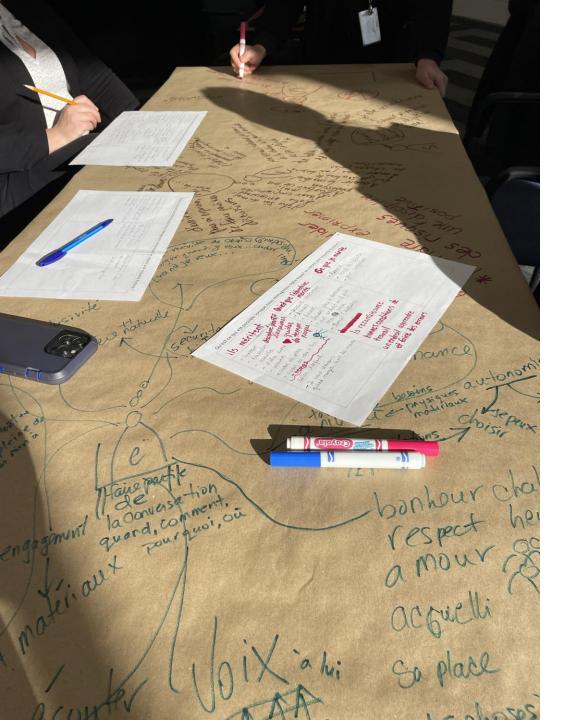
As a pedagogical community, what do we want for the children, families and early childhood professionals of Prescott and Russell?

What do children deserve?

What kind of world do we want to live in?

What kinds of educators and pedagogical leaders do we want to be?

Inspired by Creating a Culture of Reflective Practice, The Role of Pedagogical Leadership in Early Childhood programs; Anne Marie Coughlin Lorrie McGee Baird



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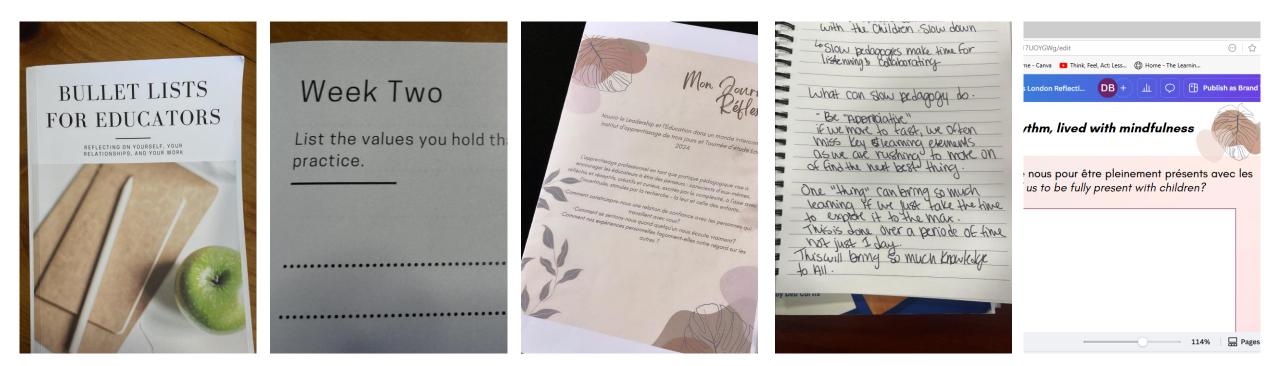
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#### Some of our thinking journals

We are finding ways to linger with our thoughts and make time for listening. It also offers us the possibility to revisit our ideas. By returning to something, we make it more noticeable, it ripples again.

## Challenging assumptions

« We like to say that the child is competent, but it is not enough to declare it. If we really want the child to be competent, we need to change time, space, roles, and rules to allow that competent child to exist » Carlina Rinaldi.

« It is by constantly challenging our beliefs that we will be able to continuously improve as teachers. »

HDLH p.13



## Perspectives

What if we took this time to rethink the purpose of our work in early childhood?

How might we re-examine the purpose of education and think more deeply about what kind of educators do we want to be?

FY

### CHARD LOUV & The NATURE PRINCIPLE

The Hundred Languages of Children The Reggio Emilia Experience in Transformation, Third Edition

AUTHENTIC CHILDHOOD Experiencing Reggio Emilia in the Class BALANCED and BARMOOT HANS BALANCED and BARMOOT HANS Nature Preschools and Forest Kinderga Nature Preschools and Forest Kinderga METER KASHIN Outdoor and Nature Play in Early Childhood Education

INQUIRY-BASED EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMEN NATURE SPARKS

Child Care Design Guide

Et si nous profitions de ce temps pour repenser l'objectif de notre travail en petite enfance ?

Comment pourrions-nous réexaminer le but de l'éducation et réfléchir plus profondément au type d'éducateurs que nous voulons **être ?** 

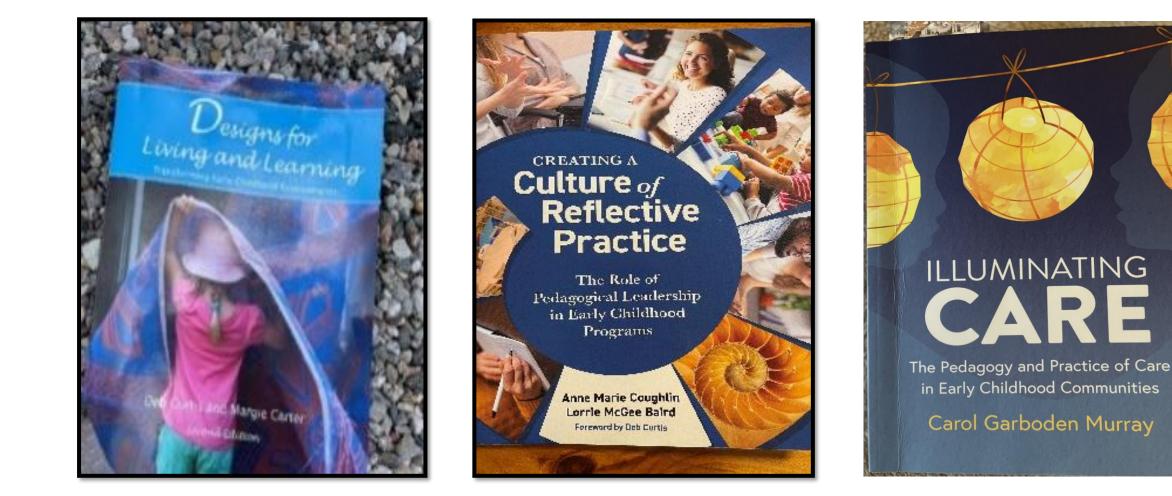
# Advocacy

« If we stand up forcefully in advocacy for children's strengths and children's rights, why not forcefully advocate for teacher's strengths and teacher's rights? »

Loris Malaguzzi View of the teacher

- Recognized paid time
- Time to gather outside the centre
- Translation of documents, books, articles for our French community.
- Free work materials (books, journals, etc.)
- Healthy meals and snacks
- Conversations with school boards and Health Unit

### Our most recent stories in Communities of Practice

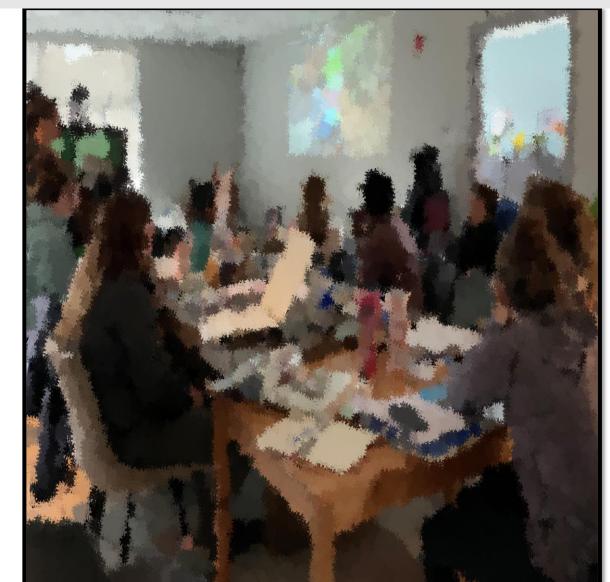




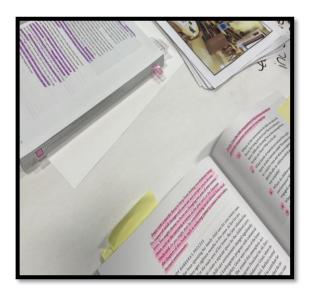
### Designs for Living and Learning: Transforming Early Childhood Environments



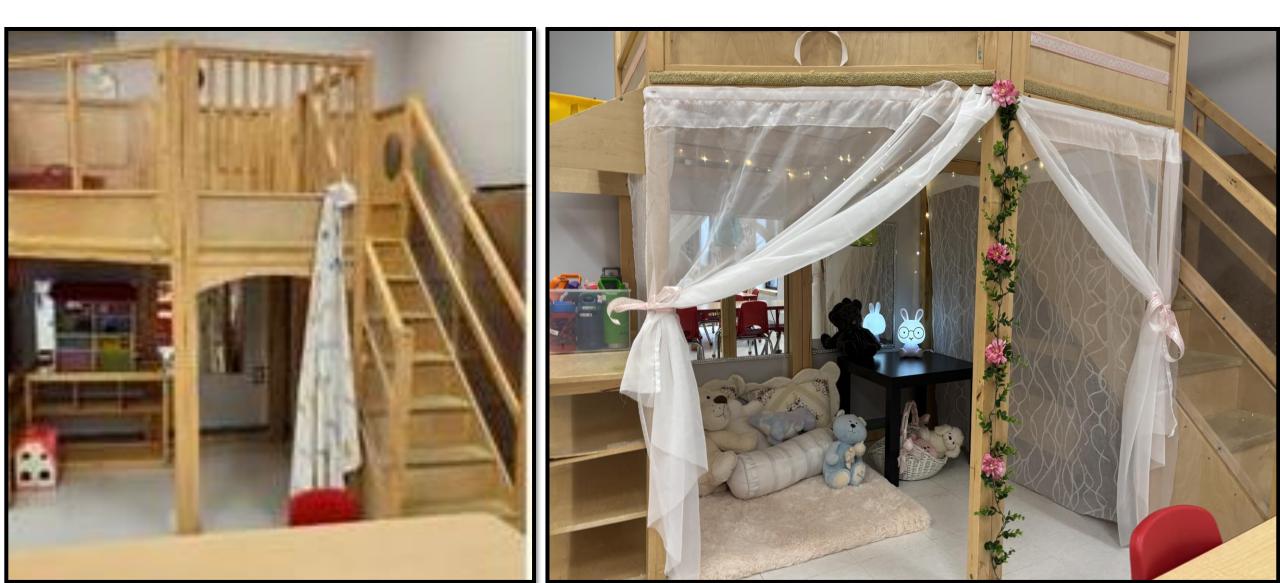
The environments we create are shaping children's memories of about who they are in the world and what they deserve! p. 21



Les environnements que nous créons façonnent les souvenirs des enfants sur qui ils sont dans le monde et ce qu'ils méritent!

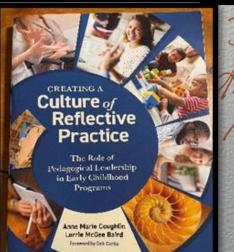


#### Designs for Living and Learning: Transforming Early Childhood Environments



#### what dow think it move an means to be competent?

How do you create time and space for teams to come together to create shared agreement?





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Doyou spend much time treaming about possibilities In your work! What King of things do you dream about

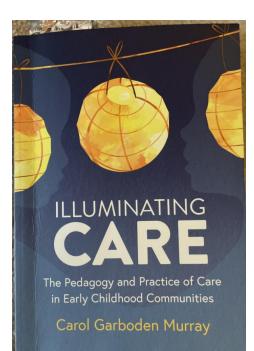
How do you what Kind of Cluestions help you understand other's thinking and Behavior

> How do you get to know new tamilies?

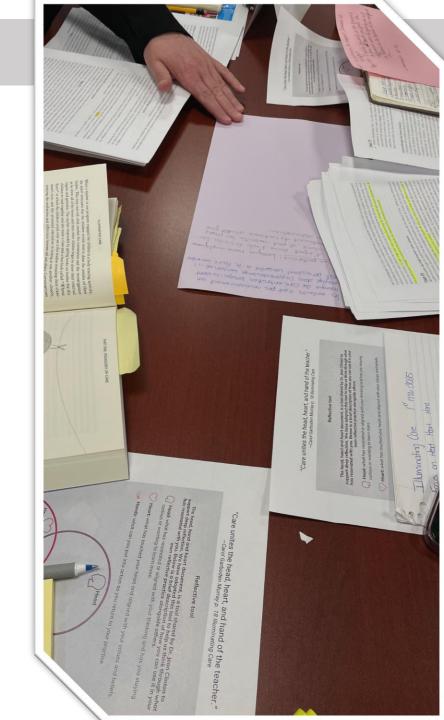
What values and practices no you make visible when you often tolers to new and prospective families?

## **Illuminating Care**

- How can we rethink with intentionality the moment of the day when we are eating with the children?
- If the child could tell us about this moment, what would he say?

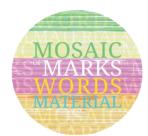


- Care is Education
- Care is a Right
- Care is a Partnership
- Care is Bodily
- Care is an Art
- Care is a Science
- Care is what makes us Human





### Mosaic of Marks Words Material Exhibition and Atelier - Kanata







- We must be present and engaged with the children. I believe that by slowing down, we allow ourselves to live beautiful moments and take more time to appreciate the little things.
- A community where children are respected and valued, where children are seen as competent, capable and listened to. They take the time to really listen and observe the children before making decisions. They are not afraid to ask questions and bring up topics that may bother others.
- To be in relationship with the spaces, not just to consume but to respect them, to become part of the group. They try new things.
- Nurture and care for the spaces, build relationships with spaces. To have an intention, why is each object present, what is it for?
- Bring your own joy in your space, see yourself in the classroom. Slow it down breath, look, observe, wait, listen, notice more.
- All the documentation was the children's words. They live the routines with them, at their own pace 'not take for granted the moments that give us the most sustenance' e.g., dinner, nap, diaper change, toilet routine.

### S L O W / L E N T



Slow pedagogies make time for listening, for collaborating. Slow pedagogies allow for slow knowledge and slow practice. Les pédagogies lentes créent du temps pour écouter, pour collaborer. Les pédagogies lentes permettent une connaissance lente et une pratique lente. What we have noticed in our community

- Higher participation in our communities of practice. Pedagogical leaders are engaging in ongoing professional learning to support their own practice.
- More questions about practices and social justice issues: children's rights, equity, diversity, inclusion as well as beliefs, values, and biases.
- Pedagogical leaders are starting to encourage educators to explore questions to better construct their own understandings.
- Teams are slowly changing the way they gather and discuss curriculum.
- We notice conversations that are generative of a more intentional environment that fosters comfort and exploration through play.
- Financial support is welcomed, every time.

#### Conclusion

We are guided by our commitment in providing children and adults with an intentional pedagogical space that supports a sense of belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

We hope to inspire individual and teams to identify as part of a learning community; one that thinks, engages, collaborates, and creates with others. An approach that not only benefits children but also revitalizes the teaching environment for educators.

Collaborative work fostering educator's satisfaction and hopefully, long-term retention. We will continue to work with curiosity and draw on the daily experiences of educators and partners.

We will continue to invite more complexity in our work and engage in innovative learning practices in our small but motivated French community in eastern Ontario, the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

