

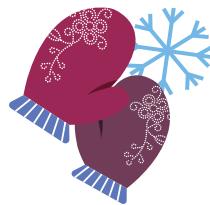
Métis Nation
of Ontario 



Early Learning & Child Care

∞ Tiny Tribune

Winter
Edition



2025



Loose Parts

Seasonal Activity



Outdoor Winter Art

Written By: ELCC I&P Advisors, Ashley Gour, Courtney Scott, and Sylvie Hebbard-Langille

English	French	Michif
Winter	Hivers	Ivér
Ice	Glace	Glas
Icicles	Glaçon	Glason

Winter is a season filled with beauty and wonder. The world transforms under a blanket of clean white snow, where every surface sparkles with the quiet magic of nature.

Shiny icicles dangle like delicate glass sculptures, and frozen crystals glisten in the sunlight, creating a breathtaking winter landscape. Providing children with loose parts while outdoors in winter encourages them to use their imagination in limitless ways. They might design a frozen village, shape a small animal, or explore patterns and mandalas in the snow.

Creative Ice Art Ideas for Winter Play

Adding food colouring to water before freezing opens up endless possibilities for children to explore colour, shape, and texture outdoors. These frozen creations can be used for imaginative play, loose parts exploration, or building dazzling ice structures. Here are some fun ways to make ice art:



Balloon Ice Orbs

Fill balloons with coloured water, tie them securely, and freeze. Once frozen, peel off the balloon to reveal large, smooth ice spheres. Balloons should be thrown away after use. Please supervise children closely when they are playing with balloons to ensure they do not put pieces in their mouths or up their noses. Choking on balloon pieces is quite common among small children, but it is preventable.

Glove Ice Hands

Pour coloured water into plastic gloves and freeze. Remove the gloves once the mixture has solidified to reveal realistic frozen hands.

Shattered Ice Trays

Freeze coloured water in shallow trays or baking sheets. Once frozen, crack the slab into pieces. Children can use these shards like puzzle pieces, mosaic tiles, or pretend "ice gems" to build patterns and designs.



Loose Parts

Seasonal Activity

Ice Cube Jewels

Use traditional ice cube trays for small, brightly coloured ice pieces. These can be sorted, matched, counted, or arranged into mini sculptures.

Ice Bricks

Freeze coloured water in loaf pans to create larger, rectangular blocks. These can be used to construct frozen walls, forts, or pathways. Ideal for collaborative outdoor building projects.

By experimenting with shapes, colours, and sizes, children can create everything from frozen villages and icy mandalas to imaginative animals and sculptures. You can even incorporate floral-inspired designs that mimic Métis beadwork by layering or arranging coloured ice pieces in patterns.

Natural items from the land that can be incorporated:

- ❖ Sticks
- ❖ Stones
- ❖ Pinecones
- ❖ Dried leaves
- ❖ Pine needles

More ideas

- ❖ Coloured water in squirt or spray bottles
- ❖ Paint
- ❖ Seeds or frozen fruit to give animals a treat



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Babysitters Club

Program Information



Métis Nation of Ontario Babysitter's Club

Written By: Jennifer McFarlane, Special Projects
Camp Developer

The Métis Nation of Ontario Babysitter's Club is pleased to see the high number of applications for the next session, beginning in mid-October 2025, with the final session of the season scheduled to take place after Christmas.

There is more about the Babysitter's Club below, but first, let us meet Marshall. Marshall joined the club during the second round and completed all requirements in the spring of 2025. Marshall began a babysitting job over the summer and is happy to keep his momentum going!

Here is what Marshall, age 13, had to say about his experience:

"I am in grade 8 and I love sports. I play tackle football and soccer. I like to babysit because it is fun and I make money. This summer, I babysat some younger kids from my school while their parents worked. Now that school is back on, I sometimes walk them home from school when their parents are working late. The babysitting club helped teach me how to perform First Aid and CPR properly, how to handle when children are acting up and how to babysit kids of all ages. My favourite part of babysitting is playing with the kids and learning with them! I saved my money from babysitting this summer and bought myself a new bike!!!"

His mom had something to add:

"I just wanted to let you know that thanks to the babysitting club Marshall attended this past winter, he

was able to secure a regular babysitting job for the summer. He worked a few hours a week looking after two children. He packed the babysitting backpack that was provided in his babysitter's kit, full of activities, as well as snacks and a first aid kit, every day. It was wonderful.

He was able to use his money from the first half of the summer when our family went on a vacation to Niagara Falls. He loved having his own spending money! The money he made over the second half of the summer has been used to purchase himself a new bike! Thank you so much for facilitating this program. Not only does it help to teach kids financial independence, but it also boosts their self-confidence and self-worth! I can't recommend this program enough."



I hope this boosts your interest in the Babysitter's Club!

Babysitters Club



Program Information

The Babysitter's Club is open to Métis youth in grades 7-10. Sessions run in the spring, fall and winter. Participants receive foundational knowledge of delivering quality child care in a home-based setting.

The program structure is primarily self-guided, with a few scheduled online sessions. Each youth participates in a formal babysitter's course offered online and completes modules designed by Early Learning and Child Care staff to enhance the participant's understanding of child development, mental health, safe advertising, and more. Participants who complete the program will receive a certificate and a Babysitter's Club kit with age-appropriate materials that support cultural activities when babysitting.

The application is now open and will remain open until April 2026.

You can fill it out at any time and pick the session you would like to attend in the menu.

The application can be found at https://Metisnation.smapply.io/prog/Metis_babysitters_club.

Have questions? Please reach out to Jen McFarlane at elccevents@Metisnation.org.



Find Little Louis! Squint, stare or blink, look close with your eyes. Find Louis Riel, his hiding spot's a surprise!



Developmental Resource Consultant Program



Upcomming Programming

Upcoming Workshops

Written by; Leanna Neault, Developmental Resource Specialist and Cassandra Campbell-Gilbert, Developmental Resource Consultant

Navigating the Holidays for Neurodivergent Children and Their Families

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Registration Period: November 12 to December 1, 2025

<https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/RDJMWGL>

The Holidays can be particularly challenging for parents and caregivers of neurodivergent children, or those with their own diverse needs who may require a little extra support. Changes in routine, travelling to new places, and increased free time during the holiday season can all cause stress and anxiety for both the child and the caregiver. To help you navigate this, the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Developmental Resource Consultants (DRC) are excited to offer a workshop that will provide practical tips and strategies to make the holidays less stressful and more enjoyable for you and your child.

Navigating Speech and Language

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EST

Registration Period: January 28 to February 11, 2026

<https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/education-training/early-learning-and-child-care/elcc-developmental-resource-consultant/>

The DRC team is excited to welcome Carolynn

Davidson, a certified speech-language pathologist, as our guest speaker. With over a decade of experience working with children and adolescents, Carolynn is passionate about equipping families with practical tools to support their children's communication journey. She has led numerous workshops and presentations for caregivers and professionals, focusing on everyday strategies to foster speech development and recognizing early signs of communication delays.

Navigating Early Years External Funding

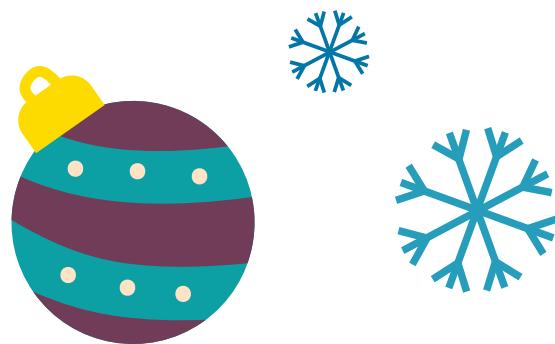
Wednesday, February 25, 2026

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EST

Registration Period: February 4 to February 18, 2026

<https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/education-training/early-learning-and-child-care/elcc-developmental-resource-consultant/>

Join the DRCs for a workshop about early years funding for children with additional support needs. Different funding options can support families of children with diagnosed exceptionalities. The DRCs invite you to attend their session, during which they will provide information on various funding programs available in Ontario.



Developmental Resource Consultant Program

Upcomming Programming

Self-Expression in the Early Years

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

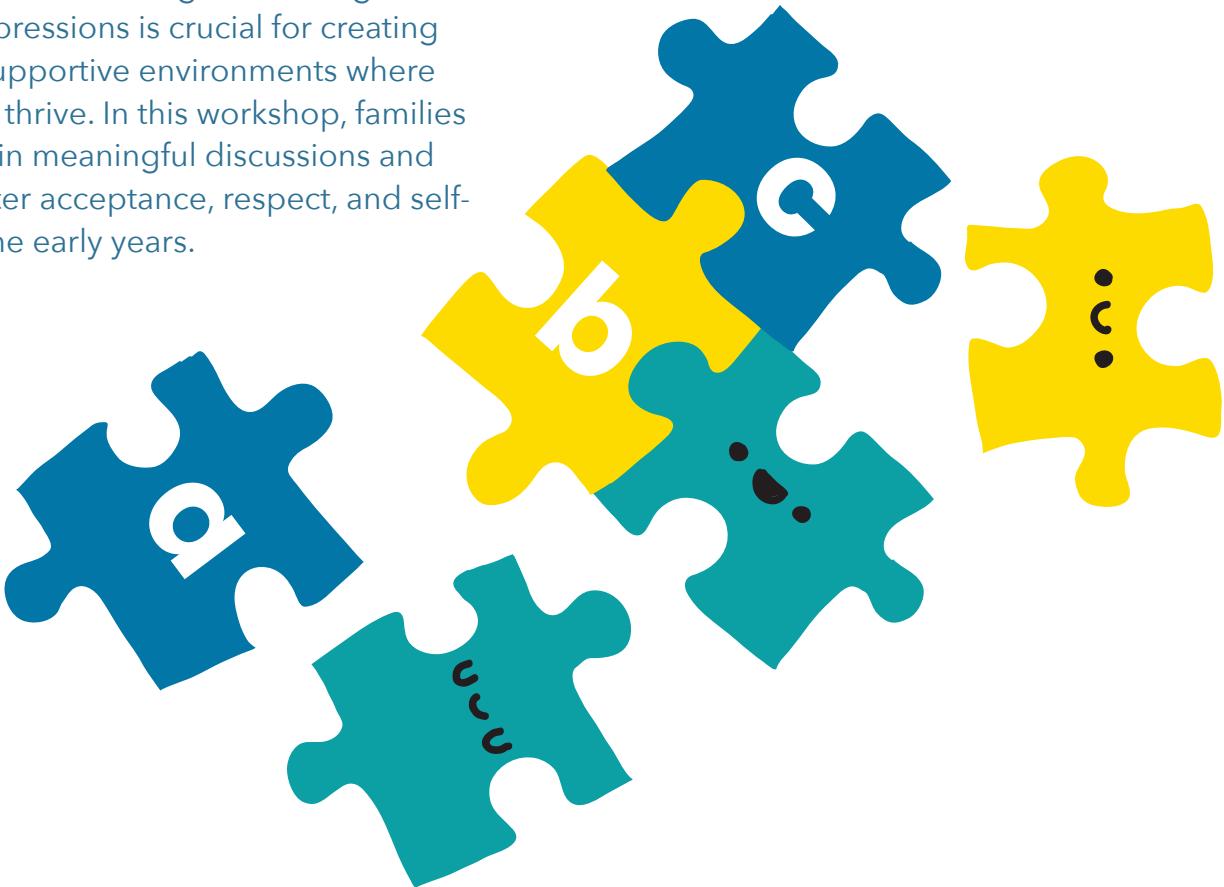
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm EST

Registration Period: March 11 to March 17, 2026

<https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/education-training/early-learning-and-child-care/elcc-developmental-resource-consultant/>

We are delighted to invite you to our upcoming family workshop, "Self-Expression in the Early Years," hosted by the ELCC DRC Team. Join us for an enlightening and inclusive exploration of how families can support and celebrate young children's diverse gender and identity expressions.

Understanding and affirming children's gender and identity expressions is crucial for creating inclusive and supportive environments where all children can thrive. In this workshop, families will participate in meaningful discussions and activities to foster acceptance, respect, and self-expression in the early years.



Staff Spotlight

Recognition

Written By: Jennifer McFarlane, Special Projects Camp Developer & Featured Staff

Madi Thompson

Supervisor of Early Learning & Child Care (Infrastructure & Partnerships)

“ Professionally, I am most proud of the advocacy I do for the early years. It is one of my greatest passions and something I have dedicated my career to.

Personally, I am most proud of the family I have created. Seeing my son grow and blossom alongside my husband is one of the greatest blessings in my life.

A fun fact about me is that I love spending my summers at my trailer with my son and husband. We are able to be in nature and explore the Ottawa River on our pontoon boat. It provides me with so much peace and relaxation, and is a space where I feel like I'm most grounded.”

As a Supervisor of Early Learning & Child Care, Madi is dedicated to leading her team in building and fostering strong, meaningful partnerships with community organizations and stakeholders, thereby increasing the availability of Métis resources and knowledge within the early years sector. Madi tells us that her work is deeply rooted in advocacy for early childhood educators, ensuring educators feel supported, respected, and empowered in their roles. What drives Madi most is the commitment to creating early learning environments where Métis children and educators are represented, valued, and celebrated.

Madi reflected on how very powerful an impact she feels her team's work has on the Early Learning Community: *“I have an unbelievably talented team that I am fortunate to lead. As a team, it is amazing to see the impact we are able to make in early years spaces. I love knowing that the work we are doing is making a difference and*

an impact, especially in regard to embedding Métis ideas into early learning environments”.

You can reach Madi by email at: madisont@Metisnation.org



Sylvie Hebbard-Langille

ELCC Advisor

“ Being able to connect with and support educators in the French community over the past year has been a source of pride for me. Although I grew up speaking French, my professional experience as an Early Childhood Educator has primarily been in the English sector.

Having the opportunity to work with French partners and child care centers has been very rewarding, as they are excited to bring Métis

Staff Spotlight

Recognition

representation and awareness into their learning spaces.

I love being in nature. Taking a walk through the forest, listening to the rush of a waterfall or quietly sitting by a lake; these moments bring me a sense of calm and peace. I feel I can reflect, recharge and reconnect with myself when I am in nature. Nature reminds me of the beauty that surrounds us".

As an advisor, Sylvie supports early years educators in raising awareness and promoting the representation of Métis culture in their learning spaces. As part of the ELCC Infrastructure and Partnership team, Sylvie and her team create meaningful and engaging resources and professional development opportunities that deepen understanding of Métis culture and way of life, as well as support Métis citizens, who are early childhood educators in the field, by providing materials and resources they can use in their learning spaces with pride. As the bilingual advisor on the team, Sylvie is able to work with the French sector and bring these resources to them. Sylvie feels that this work helps build cultural understanding and allies among both Métis and non-Métis educators, ensuring that Métis voices and representation are present for the next generation of learners.

One of Sylvie's favourite parts of her role is spending time with educators and partners, both in person and virtually. Because Sylvie recognizes that it can be daunting to share aspects of a culture and way of life that is not your own, she takes pride in being able to provide educators with the confidence and support they need to bring Métis resources and learning into their classrooms. In doing so, Sylvie and her teammates are also supporting our Métis citizens in sharing their stories. Through many meaningful conversations, she feels it is encouraging to see both Métis and non-Métis educators actively

participating in events and engaging with the resources. Witnessing participants' enthusiasm inspires Sylvie to continue creating new and exciting Métis-specific resources for the early years sectors.

Work email: SylvieH@Metisnation.org



Winter Recipe

Recipe

Nanny Rose's Hungarian Goulash

Written by: Rose Colacci-Fines, Developmental Resource Consultant Program Developer

Activity: Pinecone Holiday Ornaments

As winter approaches and grocery prices rise, this hearty dish fills hungry bellies with a delicious, nutritious meal. This is an easy, throw-together meal that you can make on a weekend, and it tastes even better when reheated during the week. You can make it in a crockpot, or leave it on the stove in a big pot all day, slowly simmering. You can substitute beef for pork, or leave the meat out altogether. This was a staple my Nanny used to make, and now it is a staple in my home all winter long.

This is nothing fancy; use the root vegetables in your fridge and a few cupboard staples, adding what you have on hand and removing what you don't.

The key to this recipe is sweet Hungarian paprika and a touch of caraway (seeds or ground will do). Serve with buttered bannock on the side, over rice or on egg noodle pasta.

Many Métis settlements had very similar recipes; they would often simmer broth and root vegetables over an open fire all day, then add whatever meat the men had harvested. Hungarian settlers would bring glass beads from their home country and trade with the Métis families, as well as exchange spices, which included sweet paprika and caraway. Fun fact: caraway is excellent for digestion and is a natural source of iron and fibre.

Ingredients

- Onion - 2 medium-sized onions (any kind)
- Garlic - 5 cloves of garlic, finely chopped



- Bell peppers - 2 red medium-sized
- Tomatoes - 3 tomatoes, fresh (or one can of crushed tomatoes)
- Carrot - 3 medium
- Potato - 3 large size
- Celery - 3 stalks
- Bay leaf - 1 leaf (take out after cooking and do not eat it)
- Salt - 2 tsp cooking salt (sea salt tastes best)
- Pepper - 1 tsp black pepper
- Caraway - 2 tsp
- Sweet paprika - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- Beef - 2lb beef chuck or any cut of beef
- Beef stock/broth/bullion - 4 cups



Winter Recipe



Recipe

- ∞ Water - one cup
- ∞ Olive oil - 2 tbs (substitute any oil that is in your pantry)

10. If you would like a thicker stew consistency, cook for longer; if you want more of a soup consistency, serve once the vegetables are soft.

Prep work

1. Cut your onions and garlic into small slices.
2. Cut all your vegetables into similarly sized cubes. The smaller the vegetable, the quicker it will cook.
3. Cut your meat into cubes, large enough to cook but small enough to fit on a spoon.

Cooking

4. Start by putting the oil in a heavy-bottom pot (a Dutch oven or cast-iron pot works best)
5. Once the oil is hot, add the cut-up onions and garlic, and simmer on medium until they are transparent. While they are sizzling, add the sweet paprika and half a cup of cold water; be careful not to burn the paprika, as it will get bitter if it burns.
6. Add the cubed beef and allow it to sear and brown all over. Add the salt and pepper while the meat is cooking. Be sure to stir and evenly coat the onion and garlic with the beef.
7. Once the meat is seared, add the tomatoes and cook until they are soft and most of the water has evaporated.
8. Next, add 4 cups of beef stock and the remaining vegetables.
9. Allow to cook on medium until it starts to boil, then turn the heat down to low and cook for at least 1.5 hours, or until all the vegetables are soft.

Pro-tip:
You can cook extra potatoes, mash them, and add them to the goulash to make it more filling without adding rice or pasta. For an authentic Hungarian taste, add a dollop of sour cream for a creamy finish.



Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children



Programming Updates

Written By: Holly Kinstler, Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Coordinator

Little Learners PBA & Little Learners PBS Bag

Little Learners PBA (fall story time) Participants were provided with a fall-themed story and play-based learning activities, hosted by Sydney and Nicole.

Access the Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program in 17 of the following communities:

Bancroft, Barrie, Brampton, Kitchener, Kingston, Midland, North Bay, Whitby, Owen Sound, Renfrew, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Timmins, Thorold and Windsor.

To access the program's services or for more information, contact our One MNO Navigators at

1-800-263-4889 Ext. 7 or contactus@métisnation.org.

Participant-Based Activities (November 2025 - April 2026)

Participant-based activities are focused on a group rather than an individual. These activities are open to targeted community groups.

Virtual Province-Wide

Childhood Trauma: Conversations That Matter
Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)
Location: Virtual over Zoom

Register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/1EVamRpQSRaST3GCI0f03w#/registration>

In partnership with Victim Services, this session will explore the topic of childhood trauma. This includes potential causes, the different ways that it can present, and ways to support healing around it. Register through the Meeting Registration - Zoom or contact jaclyna@métisnation.org or amandag@métisnation.org for the registration link.

Pre/Postnatal Information Session

Date TBD

Location: Virtual over Zoom

A certified doula will provide participants with information on pregnancy trimesters, tips for a healthy pregnancy, birth plans, and post-delivery care. Please register with Amanda at amandag@métisnation.org.

Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program

Date TBD

Location: Virtual

A virtual parenting program to learn about your child's feelings, behaviours, body, and safety, as well as an opportunity for sharing what it is like to be a parent. All Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children are trained to facilitate this program. Dates will vary depending on the interest. Please get in touch with hollyk@Métisnation.org for more information.

Bancroft

Parenting Learning/Self Care

Date TBD - Registration Required

Location: Bancroft Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Office

An opportunity for parents and caregivers to come together to learn and discuss topics in a safe and inclusive environment, and have the opportunity to engage in an interactive self-care activity. Please get in touch with stacies@métisnation.org or tammyh@métisnation.org for more details.

Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children



Programming Updates

Reading, Rhyming, and Running Around
Every Tuesday from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Location: Hastings Highlands Public Library (Maynooth)

Families are welcomed into an inclusive and friendly safe environment that includes story time, free play, and crafts geared towards children 0-6 years of age. Please get in touch with stacies@métisnation.org for more details.

Food for You, Food for Two
Every Thursday from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Location: Bancroft MNO Office

This program is for expecting parents or those with babies aged 0 to 1 year, aiming to promote healthy nutrition during the pre- and postnatal stages. Please get in touch with stacies@métisnation.org for more details.

Family Skate
Dates TBD
Location: Bancroft, ON

To encourage families to participate in activities to help gross motor development. During family skate, families have the opportunity to enjoy physical fitness, family bonding, socializing with other children, and reduced isolation. Please get in touch with stacies@métisnation.org or tammyh@métisnation.org for more details.

Community Kitchen
Dates TBD
Location: Bancroft, ON

Participants learn how to reduce food insecurity by providing information on proper nutrition, with a focus on food sustainability. Participants will gain knowledge which supports a healthy lifestyle and fosters positive parenting interactions. Please get in touch with stacies@métisnation.org or tammyh@métisnation.org for more details.

Brampton and Whitby Area

Christmas Family Time
Wednesday, November 26, at 6:00 pm EST
Location: Virtual over Zoom

Registered families will receive a holiday book, items to complete a keepsake craft, and ingredients to make a holiday cookie. There are limited spots available. Please get in touch with Sydney and sydneyha@métisnation.org or Nicole at nicolep@métisnation.org to register.



Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children



Programming Updates

Renfrew

Heart Month Family Skate

Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm EST (Tentative)

Location: myFM Centre, 1 Ma-te-way Park Drive, Renfrew, ON

Enjoy an afternoon of family skating, music, and community fun. Wear red, bring the family, and skate for healthy hearts! Healthy snacks provided. No registration required. Please get in touch with amandag@métisnation.org for more details.



Pictures taken by Amanda Giroux, MHBH Coordinator (Region 6) - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - Tuesday, September 30, 2025, Renfrew MNO office.

Kitchener

Cooking Together: Tourtière

Wednesday, November 26, 2025, at 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm EST

Families will be led through preparation of a tourtière (meat pie) from the Métis Cookbook, with ideas for customizing to your family's preferences! Spaces will be limited. Please get in touch with jaclyna@métisnation.org for more details.

Healthy Baby Food on a Budget

Date TBD (Winter)

Families will see a demonstration of how to make and store single-ingredient purées for baby's first foods, and will discuss budget-friendly tips on homemaking baby's starting solids! Please get in touch with jaclyna@métisnation.org for more details.

Cooking Together: Chicken and Hidden Veggie Soup

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm EST

Families will be led through preparation of a Chicken and Hidden Veggie Soup, with ideas for customizing to your family's preferences! Especially good for picky eaters. Spaces will be limited. Please get in touch with jaclyna@métisnation.org for more details.

Sudbury

Read with me

Saturday, November 15, 2025, at 11:00 am - 2:00 pm EST

Location: Sudbury Office - 875 Unit 102 Notre Dame, Sudbury, ON

Reading with children is about more than just the words on the page, especially for little ones. Join us for a story time, followed by a craft activity and a light lunch. Participants must pre-register. To register, please get in touch with dalex@métisnation.org

Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children



Programming Updates

Children's Christmas Craft

Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 11:00 am - 3:00 pm EST

Location: Sudbury Office - 875 Unit 102 Notre Dame, Sudbury, ON

Welcome, parents and children! Join us to create a Christmas craft, share snacks, and talk about traditions. Participants must pre-register. To register, please get in touch with dalex@métisnation.org.

No Stepping On My Toes

Saturday, January 10, 2026, at 10:00 am - 4:00 pm EST

Location: Sudbury Office - 875 Unit 102 Notre Dame, Sudbury, ON

Discussion and activities to set and maintain boundaries. Crafting moccasins, snacks and a light lunch provided. Participants must pre-register. To register, please get in touch with dalex@métisnation.org.

Cooking With Kids

Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 11:00 am - 1:00 pm EST

Location: Virtual over Zoom

Participants (caregiver and child) local to Sudbury, Ontario, will create a snack over Zoom geared toward cooking with young children (0-6), with ingredient drop-off at the doorstep. Participants must pre-register. To register, please get in touch with dalex@métisnation.org.

Importance of Self Care

Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm EST

Location: Sudbury Office – 875 Unit 102 Notre Dame, Sudbury, ON

Are you a parent and/or caregiver for a child under 6 years old? Join us for a discussion and activities aimed at reducing stress and finding healthy ways to calm and re-collect yourself. Participants must pre-register. To register, please get in touch with dalex@métisnation.org.

Timmins

Finger Stitching (2 Sessions)

November, 2025 (Date TBD)

Location: Timmins Office

Participants will learn the skill of finger stitching. The goal of this activity is to provide participants with the skills to make blankets, scarves, or mitts. Each participant will be provided with supplies. Contact marrisap@métisnation.org for more information.

MNO Winter Gathering

Saturday, December 6, 2025

The annual Winter Gathering is an MNO Council event open to all Métis citizens in the Timmins community. A turkey dinner is provided by the council, along with traditional fiddling music and gifts and crafts for our Métis children. Contact marrisap@métisnation.org for more information.

Métis Christmas Mittens

December, 2025 (Date TBD)

Families will participate in a session of learning about the "Métis Christmas Mittens" story while decorating their own felt mittens. Contact marrisap@métisnation.org for more information.

Kingston

Mini Métis Playgroup

First Wednesday of the Month, at 9:00 am - 11:00 am EST

Location: Kingston Office, 107-61 Hyperion Court, Kingston, ON

You are invited to join us for a fun and welcoming playgroup in Kingston. Your little ones can enjoy sensory play, crafts, songs, and story time in a relaxed, inclusive space. While the kids play, Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Coordinators and Developmental Resource Consultants will be available to share tips, answer questions, and support your child's growth and development. Please get in touch



Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children



Programming Updates

with tracyr@métisnation.org for more details.

Community Kitchen

Monday, November 24 and Monday, January 26, at 10:00 am EST

Join the Kingston Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program for a community meal. Bring your family (childcare is on-site). We will cook together, sit down, and enjoy the meal. Please get in touch with tracyr@métisnation.org for more information.

Midland

Mini Métis Playgroup

First Thursday of the Month, at 9:30 am - 11:30 am EST

Location: Midland Office, 845 King Street, Unit 10

You are invited to join us for a fun and welcoming playgroup in Midland. Your little ones can enjoy sensory play, crafts, songs, and story time in a relaxed, inclusive space. While the kids play, Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Coordinators and Developmental Resource Consultants will be available to share tips, answer questions, and support your child's growth and development. Please contact lisat@métisnation.org for more details.

Family Skate

Friday, November 14, 2025 and Friday, January 30, 2026

Location: Georgian Bay, ON

Registration is required. Children are not permitted on the ice without a helmet. Light snacks and refreshments will also be provided. Please contact lisat@métisnation.org for more details.

Owen Sound

Community Connections: Family Fun Day

Friday, February 13, 2026, Time TBD

Location: MNO Owen Sound office, 1198 2nd Ave East, Owen Sound

The Métis Nation of Ontario, in partnership with the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC), invites you to join us for Community Connections - Family Fun Day! Enjoy an afternoon of crafts, activities, and refreshments while making new connections with friends, neighbours, and community members—this is a free, family-friendly event. Please contact for kayleao@métisnation.org details.

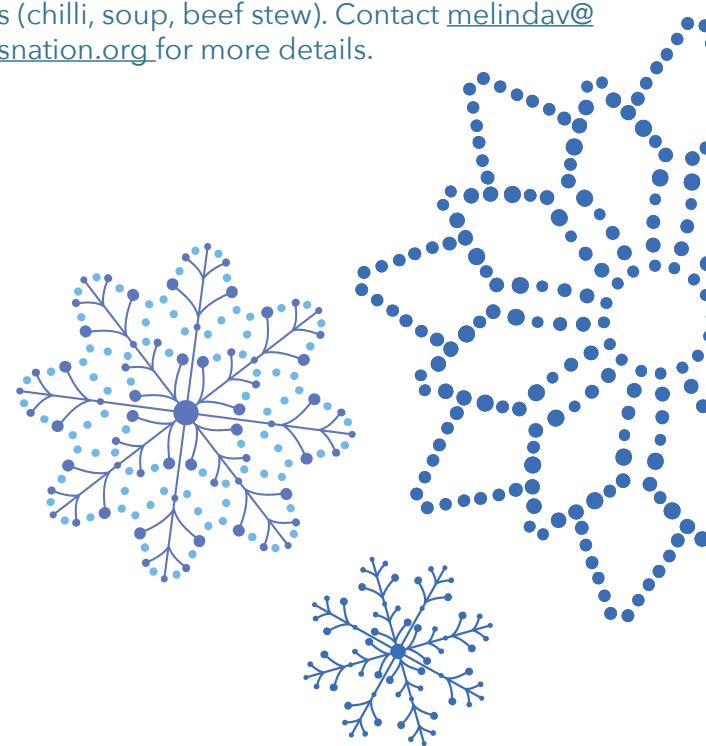
Sault St. Marie

Family Cooking Series

January, February, and March 2026 (1 Session per month)

Location: TBD

Participants will be provided with the ingredients to cook a healthy recipe made mostly from foodbank items (chilli, soup, beef stew). Contact melindav@métisnation.org for more details.



Child Development



Fine and Gross Motor

Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Written By: Sydney Hagedorn and Amanda Giroux,
Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Co-ordinators

What are motor skills?

Motor skills refer to the various ways our bodies use muscles to perform specific tasks. Activities such as walking, picking up toys, and sitting up are examples of motor skills in action.

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills utilize the small muscles in our hands and wrists.

How can you help promote the development of these skills at home?

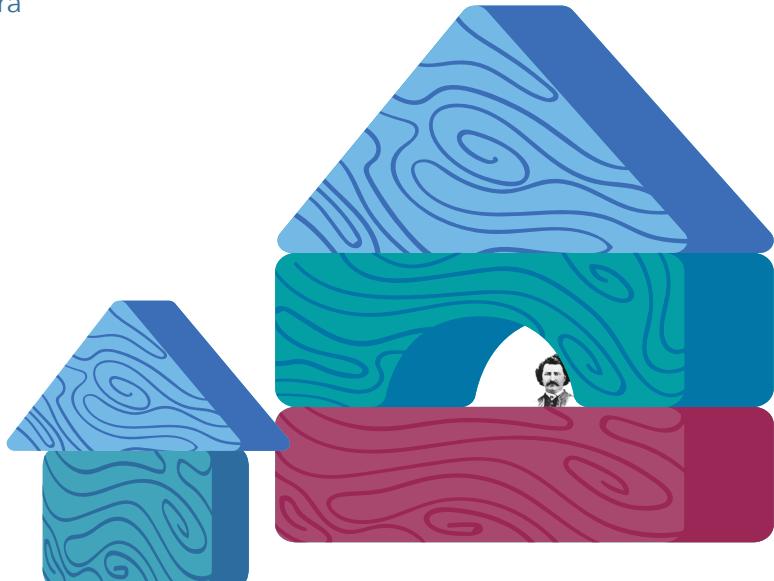
- ❖ Sorting items around the house, such as extra pom poms
- ❖ Building with blocks
- ❖ Using playdough
- ❖ Placing stickers
- ❖ Help decorate a fall wreath
- ❖ Help hang Christmas decorations or ornaments

Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills utilize our large muscles, such as those in our legs, arms, and core.

How can you help promote the development of these skills at home?

- ❖ Skipping, hopscotch, obstacle course
- ❖ Throwing or kicking a ball
- ❖ Dance party!
- ❖ Riding a bike
- ❖ Pumpkin rolling at the pumpkin patch!
- ❖ Husking corn
- ❖ Go on a leaf and pinecone hunt!
- ❖ Snowshoe stomps!



Child Development

Fine and Gross Motor

Activity Alert!

With cold weather around for a while, it can be hard to get outdoors and move as much as you may like. Below are some fun ideas to promote fine and gross motor development at home.

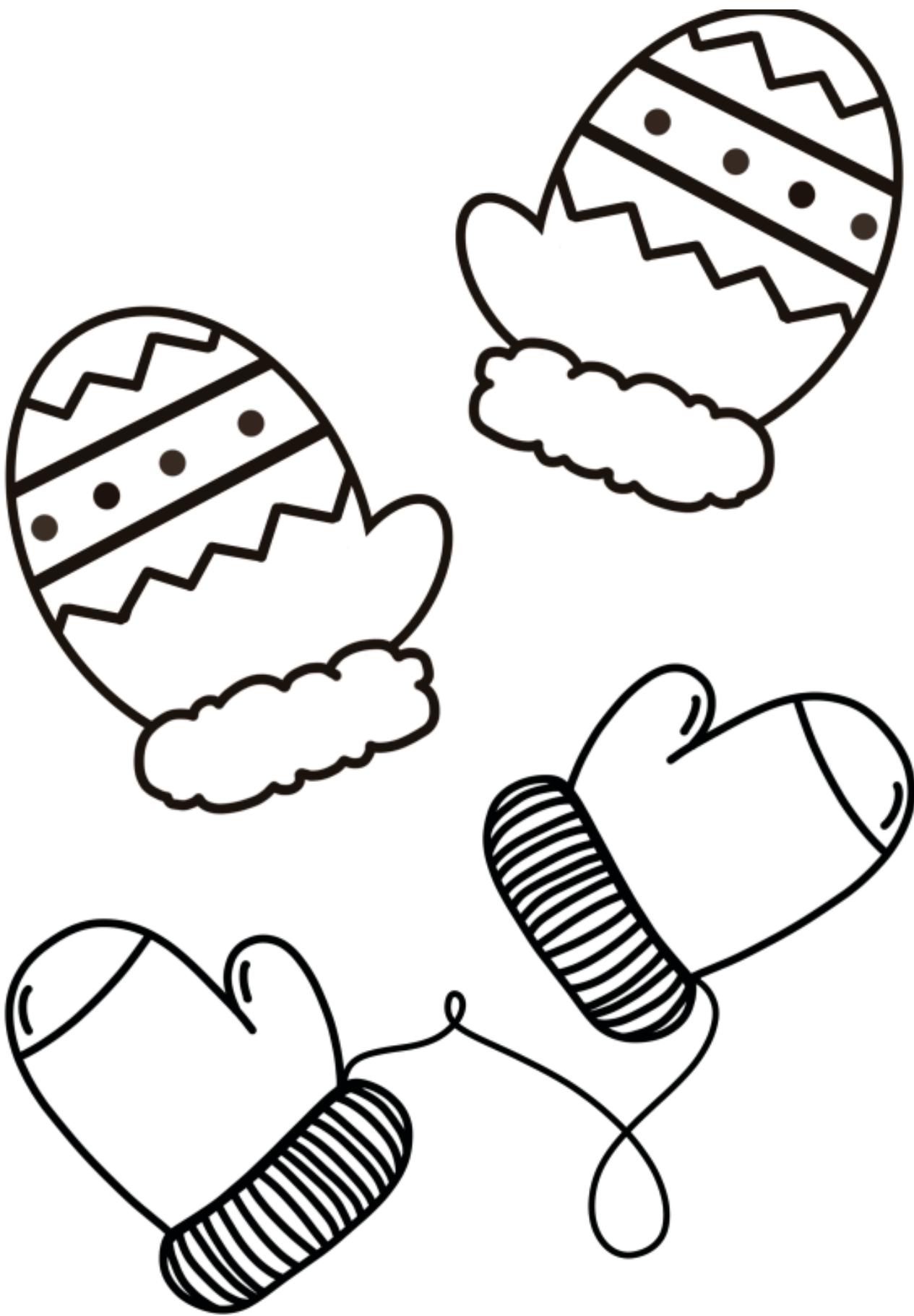
- ❖ Arctic Animal Yoga (there are a lot of great videos for free on YouTube!)
- ❖ Build a snow fort
- ❖ Design your own mitten or stocking with pencils, markers, or crayons (printable on page 19)
- ❖ Cut, paint, and decorate individual Christmas ornaments
- ❖ Make a 'snow' sensory bin for a day that might be too cold to be outside
- ❖ Snowman suncatchers with pieces of construction paper and liquid glue (printable on page 20)
- ❖ Having your little one help in the kitchen with age-appropriate activities. Such as pouring milk into a bowl or scooping flour
- ❖ Practice wrapping gifts

References

Cava, P., Paula Cava, Author.; A. the, Verdolotti, M., d'Hemecourt, K., & Craine, R. (2022, December 20). *Children's developmental milestones: Gross and Fine Motor Skills*. Brown University Health. <https://www.brownhealth.org/be-well/childrens-developmental-milestones-gross-and-fine-motor-skills>



Printable





Winter Blues

Mental Health

Written by: Mental Health and Addictions Navigators, Emily Ford, Tabitha Stevens, and Krista Young, and Clinical Care Team Lead, Brianna Zynomirski

Winter has arrived for another season. Homes glow with festive lights. And warmth can be found under a cozy blanket or by a fire. Mornings welcome us with a fresh layer of snow. Outside is where we can play and create until our toes are cold. Nature takes its turn to hibernate, as daylight sets earlier rather than later.

For the Métis, we call this time of year "overwinter". We slow down to prepare for the long, cold months. We live in balance with the four seasons. But, with less sunlight this time of year, it could lead to something called "The Winter Blues" (Newman, 2025).

The Winter Blues may make you sleep or overeat. Or, you might feel tired a lot. You may feel more grumpy than usual. You might not see friends or family as much because of the weather. This may upset your mental health. Sometimes it can lead to Seasonal Depression, or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

There are many ways to work through the Winter Blues. Here are some tips to help lift your mood!

- 1. Share Stories:** Share and listen to stories of traditions and Métis history.
- 2. Dancing or Jigging:** Métis across the Homeland love dancing all winter long. Traditionally, we call this "Kitchen Parties". They are filled with music, food, and dancing. They are an essential part of Métis culture ("Métis 'dance all winter,'" 2024).

3. Northern Lights: Look to the night sky on clear nights, you may see the Northern Lights! Bursts of beautiful colours will paint the sky.

4. Stargazing: Our Métis ancestors used the stars as guides for travelling. Learn more about the stars in your area.

5. Wildlife Tracking: See what animals are awake during the winter months. Look for footprints, markings, or things they leave behind.

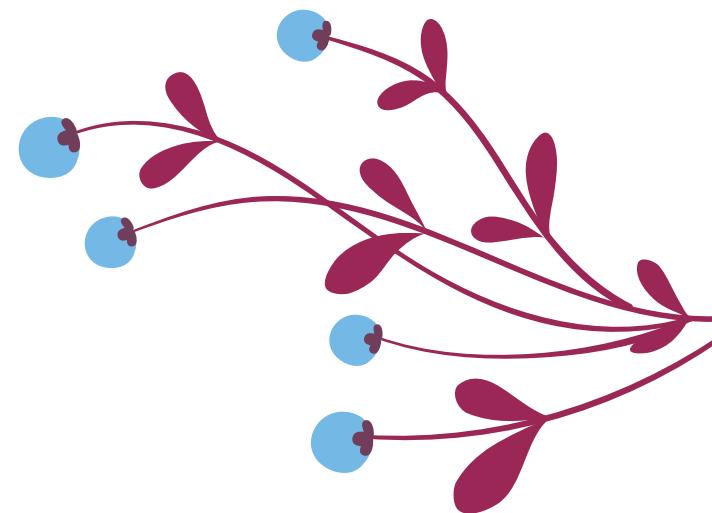
6. Connect with Nature: Many trails are open year-round. Many libraries rent snowshoes (with a library card). Or, you can rent from an Ontario Park (Ontario Parks, 2025).

7. Foraging: Harvest some cedar to make cedar tea. It can be sweetened with real maple syrup.

8. Make Bannock: Enjoy the warmth of a bonfire by making bannock over the coals.

9. Connect with Culture: Make sure to check out your local Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) office for events. MNO Councils and programs organize activities each month!

10. Find Support: The Mental Health and Addictions program helps link Métis youth to services.



How to Make a Memory Book



Mental Health

Written by: Mental Health and Addictions Navigators, Emily Ford, Tabitha Stevens, and Krista Young, and Clinical Care Team Lead, Brianna Zynomirski

Things you will need:

- ❖ Glue
- ❖ Scissors
- ❖ Photos and/or drawings
- ❖ Memory book

To make a memory book:

1. Get the materials you would like to use. You can use photos, drawings, or tickets.
2. Pick a blank book with empty pages.
3. Get creative! You can use anything you like that helps you remember happy times and makes you smile.

Newman, T. (2025, January 4). Seasonal depression: 14 surprising ways to beat the post-holiday blues. Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/seasonal-depression-winter-blues-coping-strategies>

Ontario Métis Facts. (2024, December 30). Métis "dance all winter"

<https://www.ontarioMetisfacts.com/post/Metis-dance-all-winter>

Ontario Parks. (2024, January 7). Where to rent winter equipment at Ontario parks. Ontario

Parks Blog. <https://blog.ontarioparks.ca/winter-gear-rentals/>

Meet Jiggy! [Online Image]. Métis self-government: The time is now—Métis—Métis Nation of

Ontario. <https://www.Metisnation.org/governance/self-government/>

Young, Krista. (2025). Winter 2026 [Photograph]. Retrieved from

<https://www.canva.com/design>



Salt Dough

Activity

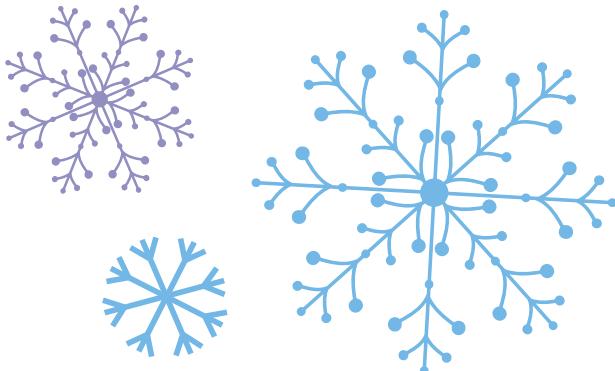
Written by: Kayla Carrigan, Developmental Resource Consultant and Nicole Dubé, Special Projects Camp Developer

A long time ago, when the snow was falling and the air was chilly, kids would cuddle up by the warm fire while their parents baked bread. Sometimes the dough didn't quite work right, either too hard or didn't rise properly. But instead of throwing it out, the kids squished it, smashed it, and turned it into fun little shapes and silly creatures! They used their imaginations and turned baking "oopsies" into playtime.

Now that winter is on the way, you can do the same thing! Try making salt dough ornaments. It is not a traditional craft, but it uses the same simple ingredients—flour, salt, and water—that people have used for generations to make bannock. It is a fun way to get creative and remember how clever and crafty people have always been!

What you need:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water (add slowly – you may not need it all)



Here are the steps:

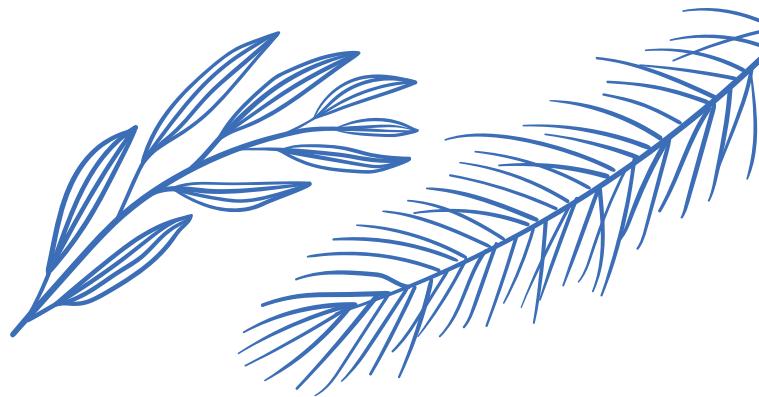
1. Mix Dry Ingredients – In a big bowl, stir together the flour and salt.
2. Add Water Gradually – Pour in about half the water and stir. Add the rest a little at a time, gradually, until the dough starts coming together.
3. Knead – Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead with your hands for about 5-10 minutes until smooth. (If sticky, sprinkle in flour; if crumbly, add a spoonful of water.)
4. Shape – Use cookie cutters, roll into beads, or sculpt by hand.
5. Dry – Leave pieces to air dry for 2-3 days, or bake on a tray at 200°F (90°C) for 2-3 hours, turning halfway through.

As kids play with salt dough, they're also learning math, science, and creativity—shaping symbols, making prints, and painting with bright, traditional colours.

Winger, J. (2023, December 27). *Homemade salt dough ornaments*. *The Prairie Homestead*.

<https://www.theprairiehomestead.com/2019/11/homemade-salt-dough-ornaments.html>

L. Wicke, personal communication, September 15, 2025 – an elder



Camp AGA 2024

24

Special Recap

Written By: *Hannah Parkin, Special Projects Program Developer, Early Learning and Child Care*

From August 15 to 17, 2025, the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) team hosted Camp AGA at the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Camp AGA welcomed 30 children, providing a valuable child care service to MNO citizens and staff families. Under the attentive care of the ELCC Registered Early Childhood Educator team, Camp AGA facilitated a variety of activities and cultivated a safe space for children to explore and celebrate Métis culture. The weekend was packed with



excitement, featuring an engaging scavenger hunt at the Métis Heritage Centre, Métis Games and Music presentations delivered by the Summer Youth Program, and a special visit from Entomica Insectarium! Camp AGA offered an opportunity for new friendships, connections, and memories!

Thank you to ELCC Documentation Specialists, Madeleine Rae and Chris Darton, for the photo submissions.

Winter: More Than a Time for Reflection!

Written By: Megan Southwell, Program Developer, Culture and Way of Life Projects

Fishing...in the Winter?! Awesome!
Ice fishing is a fun winter activity that allows people to catch fresh fish even in cold weather.

Anglers drill or cut a hole in the ice and use specialized fishing gear to catch fish in the cold winter water. Anglers can catch fish using a fishing rod with a hook and line, gill nets, or even an ice fishing spear. You might have seen, or even been inside, an ice shack/hut, a small, sometimes heated shelter that helps people stay warm while fishing on the lake.

Métis people have always had a deep connection to the land and water, and fishing has long been an essential part of the way of life for Métis families and communities in Ontario. With all the bodies of water in Ontario, many families have relied on fish for food (subsistence fishing) and for income (commercial fishing). Ice fishing, in particular, has been a big help in keeping Métis families and communities fed during the long winter months. Have you ever gone ice fishing, or have you ever seen someone ice fishing? What did you notice?



Be Ice Smart: Cool (and Important) Tips for Staying Safe on The Ice



Winter offers plenty of icy fun, including activities like skating, snowmobiling, and ice fishing.

However, before stepping onto a frozen lake or pond, it is essential to follow ice safety practices. Ice conditions can vary widely, from snow-packed to smooth, glaring: the gear you bring and how you behave should match the conditions. These ice safety reminders are not exhaustive, and every trip is different; therefore, plan for your specific activity and the ice you are heading onto to keep everyone safe.

- ∞ Bring a buddy: It is always best practice to go on the ice with someone.
- ∞ Share your plan: tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
- ∞ Dress for the weather: layer up with warm, moisture-wicking clothes.
- ∞ Pack safety gear: items to consider include ice picks, rope, a spud bar/ice chisel, a cell phone in a waterproof pouch, navigation tools, and a small personal safety kit (lighter, waterproof matches, magnesium fire starter, pocket knife, pealess whistle).



- Check the ice: look for cracks, slush, grey patches, running water, or anything poking through the surface that could weaken it.
- Measure ice thickness: before walking on a frozen lake or pond, make sure the ice is at least 10 cm thick; thicker ice is needed for larger groups or heavier activities.
- Consider wearing a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) or flotation suit: it can help if you fall through ice.
- Consider wearing ice cleats or crampons, especially when on extra slippery ice.
- Stay alert: keep an eye out for changing ice conditions.
- Avoid the ice at night: it is harder to spot hazards after dark.
- Call for help right away: dial 911 if someone is in danger.

What are ice picks?

Ice picks are an essential safety tool that can be worn around your neck. If you fall through thin ice, use them to grip the surface and kick your feet to pull yourself out. Ice picks can be life-saving if you or someone else falls through the ice. Always being prepared is key!



Have you heard of a spud bar?

A spud bar is a long, strong stick that people use to check ice before walking on it. By tapping or poking the ice a few paces ahead, you can check its thickness and safety, helping you avoid falling through.

These tips are just a few reminders; ice safety can vary depending on the activity. Parents and guardians are responsible for keeping their families safe on the ice and are strongly encouraged to review ice safety practices with children each time they head out.

For more information on identifying safe ice and rescuing, you can visit [Ice Safety: Know when it's safe to play](#), published by the Canadian Red Cross.

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A Season for Visiting

Cold winter weather and early sunsets can make it hard to spend as much time outdoors as we might in other seasons!



That is why winter is an extra special time for visiting friends and family. Gathering together helps lift our spirits and keep us cheerful. Storytelling and decorative arts are also among the most popular historical pastimes, offering a fun and cozy way to spend a winter evening with others, especially by the glow of a warm fire.

The winter also brings Christmas and New Year's, when families and communities gather for joyful festivities full of singing, fiddling, dancing, storytelling, games, and delicious feasts.

Métis people are often very skilled at storytelling. Métis culture, history, and way of life are shared through stories. Some stories teach valuable lessons and share wisdom, while others are meant for fun and to make people smile. Stories can help people feel close to each other and are passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. What better time to share a story than when visiting with family and friends over the holidays?

Gather 'Round

Oftentimes, Métis people sat together in a circle, sharing tall tales that made everyone listen and laugh. The storyteller with the most imaginative story might even have received a small prize! Here's another great activity that Métis people sometimes enjoyed, perfect for exercising your creative storytelling skills:

1. Gather in a circle.
2. Pass around a bag and have each person drop an item in.
3. Elect someone to be the storyteller for the round.
4. For an extra spin, the host can pick a theme, such as Christmas, animals, or winter.
5. Listen as the storyteller weaves a story on the spot using the items they pull from the bag!

Stories can be spooky, silly, sweet, strange, spectacular, serious or soothing - they can be whatever you may like them to be! Do you enjoy telling stories? What about listening to stories?

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Rae, A. (2025b). Ontario Parks [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://blog.ontarioparks.ca/icefishing-safety-season-long/>.

S, W. (2014). Ice-fishing huts on Rice Lake [Photograph]. Flickr. Retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wiless/12594972655>

Voelkerer, L. (1870). Métis dance, Devil's Lake, Dakota Territory [Drawing]. Retrieved from <https://www3.mnhs.org/mnlopedia/search/index/group/m-tis-minnesota>.



What's Happening in Special Projects?



ELCC Updates

Written By: Madison Frias, Special Projects Supervisor, and Laura Dika-Holmes, Special Projects Program Developer

Check out our [Special Projects website](#) for up-to-date information!

AGA

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Team proudly offered a day camp at the 2025 Annual General Assembly (AGA) in August in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

At Camp AGA, child care is provided to children ages 0-12, while family members attend the AGA in a Métis Nation of Ontario Citizen, MNO delegate, or MNO staff capacity.

This year at Camp AGA, children enjoyed learning about Self-Government, exploring culture with the Summer Youth Program, and connecting through play!

The Moose Room (ages 9-12) ventured to the Sault Ste. Marie Métis Heritage Centre. During the field trip, the children participated in a scavenger hunt to discover and learn about the centre's artifacts. They also enjoyed playing games, building, and beading.

The Fox Room (ages 4-8) connected over games, explored our new paper dolls, and tried out traditional clothing.

The Bunny Room enjoyed exploring books, playing in the kitchen and with the "camping" equipment, and had fun creating art (cultural sensory bottles, drawing, and more!).



What's Happening in Special Projects?



ELCC Updates

Back-to-School Kit

Our Back-to-School Kits shipped in August and have been well-received!

We were once again excited to help students kick off their year on a positive note by providing stationery items, lunch kit essentials, and more! This year, the Back-to-School Kit reached 1,916 early learners across the province.

Back-to-School Kits are available through the MNO ELCC One Application. Registration has now closed for the year. Please check our [Special Projects website](#) in the spring for more information.



Early Learner Kit

We are excited to announce that the Early Learner Kit theme is “Roots Across Time.”

This kit will help families tell their story, explore their genealogy, and preserve memories in a fun and tangible way.

We anticipate the kit will ship in Spring 2026! Stay tuned!

Early Learner Kits are available through the MNO ELCC One Application. Registration has now closed for the year. Please check our [Special Projects website](#) in the spring for more information.

Early Learning and Child Care Camps

Upcoming Virtual Camp

The Early Learning and Child Care team is excited to offer a special virtual series over four (4) evenings in November 2025. Beyond the Crust - Baking with Heart, invites Métis families with early learners aged three (3) to twelve (12) years old to deepen their bread-making skills and explore creative baking together using a bread machine.

This series blends hands-on cooking, family connection, and Métis cultural learning through interactive guided sessions, designed for young learners and their parents. Participants will attend four sessions, completing fun activities between meetings to extend their knowledge and understanding.

Registration for the Beyond the Crust - Baking with Heart virtual camp is now closed.

Fall Family Camp Recap and Upcoming In-Person Family Camp

On October 2-5, 2025, the ELCC Special Projects team hosted the 2025 Fall in-person Family Camp at Camp Wanakita in Haliburton, Ontario. The Early Learning

What's Happening in Special Projects?



ELCC Updates

in-person Family Camp is designed to provide Métis early learners between the ages of three (3) and twelve (12), their siblings, parents/legal guardians, and grandparent(s) an opportunity to learn more about Métis culture and way of life from an early learning perspective. At the in-person fall camp, Métis families engaged in activities that connected them to the land, received learning experiences about their Métis culture and way of life, and connected with other Métis families across Ontario.

The team is excited to invite Métis families to our Métis Early Learning Winter in-person Family Camp, taking place from Thursday, January 29 to Sunday, February 1, 2026, at the Canadian Ecology Centre in Mattawa, ON. Registration for winter camp is now closed.

For future camp opportunities, please visit our page on the MNO website and the MNO Hub app!

Recipe Callout

Are you a Métis family that loves cooking together? We want to hear from you! The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) program is gathering favourite family recipes from Métis children and families to celebrate the joy of cooking, culture, and connection.

Whether it is bannock, berry jam, or a modern twist on a traditional dish, use this application to send us the recipes you love to make together. Let us celebrate the delicious traditions that bring us to the table!

The Métis Nation of Ontario's Early Learning and Child Care Program and Services team will be accepting recipe applications for an upcoming

cookbook. Recipe submissions can be entered until Tuesday, March 31, 2026.

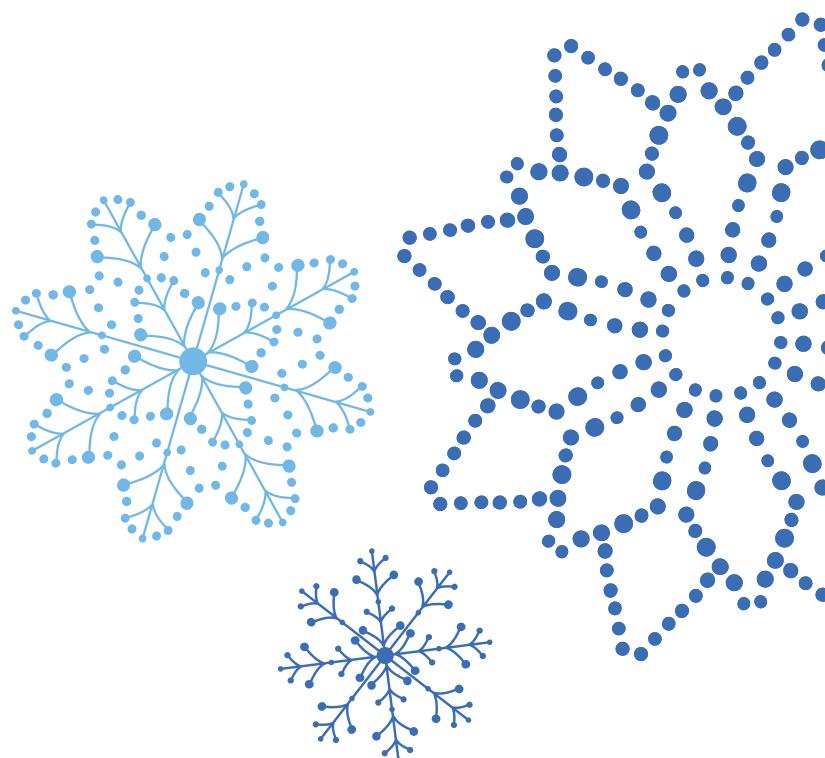
You can find more information and submit your recipes [here](#):

Métis Tales Recipes

Did you know...

Our [Métis Baby Bundle Kit](#) is always open for registration! Learn more [here](#): Métis Baby Bundle Kits.

Our [Dolly Parton Imagination Library](#) Early Learning Book Program is also always open for registration! Learn more [here](#): Dolly Parton Imagination Library Early Learning Book Program.



Council Classifieds



Upcomming Events

Written By: Jennifer Boston, Infrastructure and Partnership Advisor

Annual Fall Festival and General Citizen Meeting

Métis Nation of Ontario - Sudbury Métis

Council: smc@métisnation.org

Saturday, October 25, 2025, from 10:30 am to 3:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Mine Mill Local, 598 Campground, Sudbury, ON

Join us for crafts, face painting, outdoor games, a bonfire with s'mores, and culturally specific entertainment.

Sudbury Métis Council Annual Children's Christmas Party

Métis Nation of Ontario - Sudbury Métis

Council: smc@métisnation.org

Saturday, December 13, 2025, from 10:30 am to 3:00 pm EST

McLlland Community Center, Copper Cliff, ON

Join us during our annual children's Christmas party. The Sudbury Métis Council will provide gift-giving, children's Christmas crafts, and a children's lunch. Mr. and Mrs. Claus will also be visiting.



MNO Timmins Council Annual General Assembly and Kids Christmas Party

Métis Nation of Ontario - Timmins: Jennifer Frappier, jenniferf@métisnation.org or 705-264-3939

Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 4:00 pm EST

Saint Dominique Hall, Timmins, ON

Join us for our annual General Meeting at 4:00 pm EST, followed by a sit-down dinner and entertainment. Santa will be paying us a visit with gifts for all children 12 and under.

Submit Your Events To Be Featured In Our Next Newsletter!

Submit council events to help share family and child programming with Métis citizens across the province.

Submitting your events is optional for your council. Submit your events to Jennifer Boston - jenniferb@métisnation.org and include:

- Title of Event
- Important Dates (Ex, Registration / Event Date)
- Contact Information and Location
- Brief Event Description (Optional)

Calendar of Events



Upcomming Programming

Written By: Madison Frias, Special Projects Supervisor,
Laura Dika-Holmes, Special Projects Program Developer

December 3

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

[More Information](#)

DRC Program Presents:
Navigating the Holidays for Neurodivergent Children and Parents

[More Information](#)

December 19, – January 4

MNO Office Closure Dates



January 7

DRC Program Presents:
Seasons of Change: Part III

Registration was previously provided in June during Seasons of Change Part I. Please reach out for more information



February 22

Pink Shirt Day

[More Information](#)



February 25

Navigating External Early Years Funding

Registration open from Wednesday, February 4 – Wednesday, February 18, 2026

[Registration Link](#)

March 18

DRC Program Presents:
Seasons of Change Part IV

Registration was previously provided in June during Seasons of Change Part I. Please reach out for more information

March 25

Early Years Self-Expression

Registration open from Wednesday, March 11 – Wednesday, March 17, 2026

[Registration Link](#)



March 31

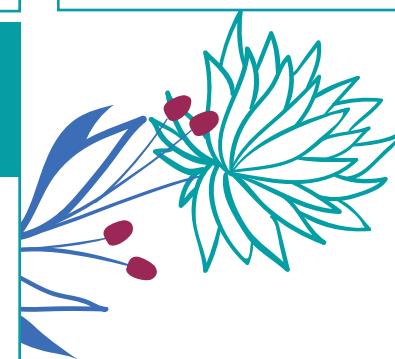
Recipe Callout closes for Métis Tales

[Submit Recipes Here](#)

April 2

World Autism Awareness Day

[More Information](#)



April 22

Earth Day

[More Information](#)

