

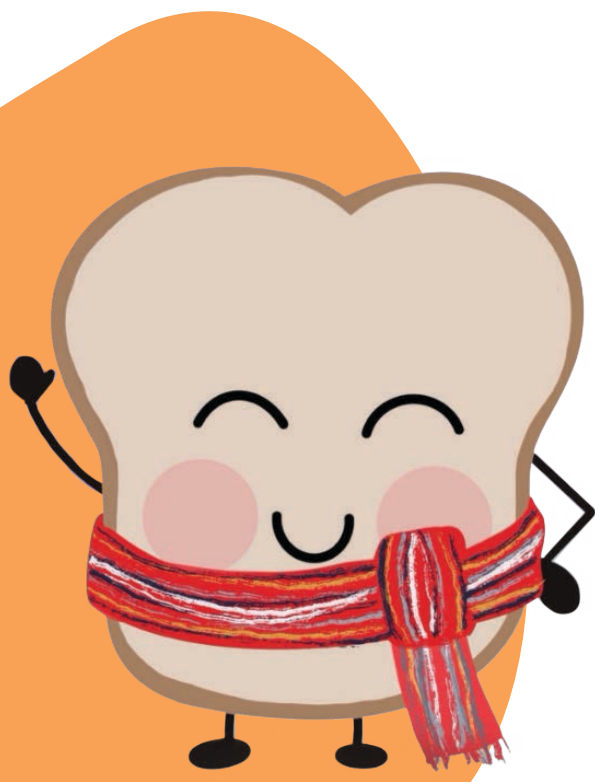
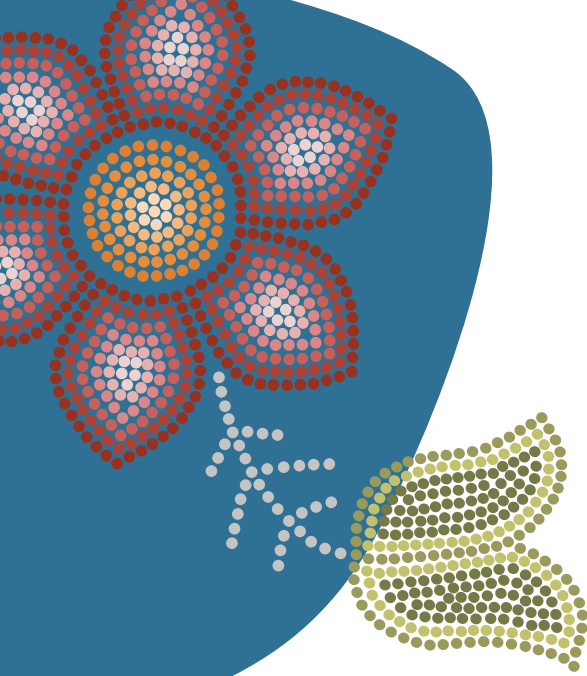
Métis Nation
of Ontario 

Early Learning & Child Care

Tiny Tribune

Fall
Edition

2026



Story Dice Activity with Yeaston



Activity

Written By: Nicole Dubé, Special Projects Camp Developer

Hi friends!

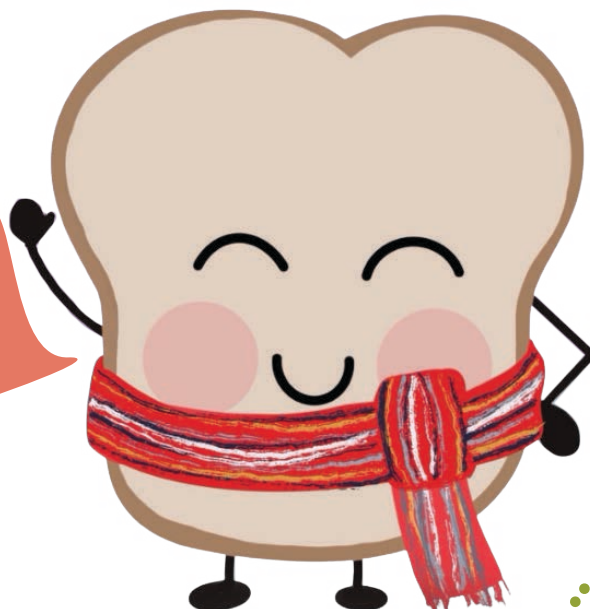
It is me, your camp friend Yeaston, and I have an idea for an activity for your family. What if your family made their own story dice?

I made mine from wooden blocks I had lying around from another craft, but you can use any old box or block. I painted each side of the block with a different place or idea. I used a lot of colours. When I finished creating my dice, I rolled them to help me create my story.

One roll of my dice had me watching a sunset at a beach, and another roll sent my story into space!

Story dice are so helpful because they make us use our imagination, and when we play with friends or family, that is how our stories are remembered and shared. I think the more you play, the better your stories will be.

**Want to try?
Just give it
a roll!**



How Fall Outdoor Play Can Build Fine and Gross Motor Skills Without Realizing!



Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Written By: Sydney Hagedorn, Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Coordinator; Amanda Giroux, Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Coordinator

Fall is a great time of the year to be outside enjoying the fresh air before the chilly winter season arrives.

Everyday activities that children often participate in during this season usually target one or both motor areas without even trying!

As a refresher, fine motor skills use small, precise muscle control. Gross motor skills focus on large, full-body movements.

Common activities and the motor area they target:

Raking Leaves - Do your children enjoy helping with fall clean-up? If they help rake the leaves with their own little rake, they are targeting both fine and gross motor skills! By holding and pushing the rake, they are strengthening their fine motor skills. When they reach out to rake the leaves, their bodies are balancing, targeting that gross motor skill.

Jumping in a Leaf Pile - While raking, why not have some fun? Consider raking a pile of leaves together for your children to jump into! This action helps your child develop their gross motor skills by improving balance and coordination. Bonus: Always a hit for sensory seekers!

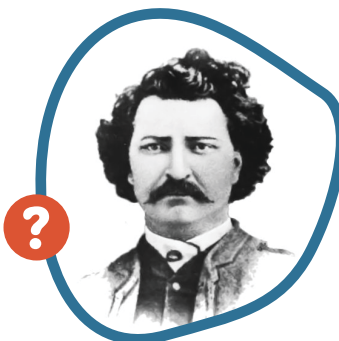
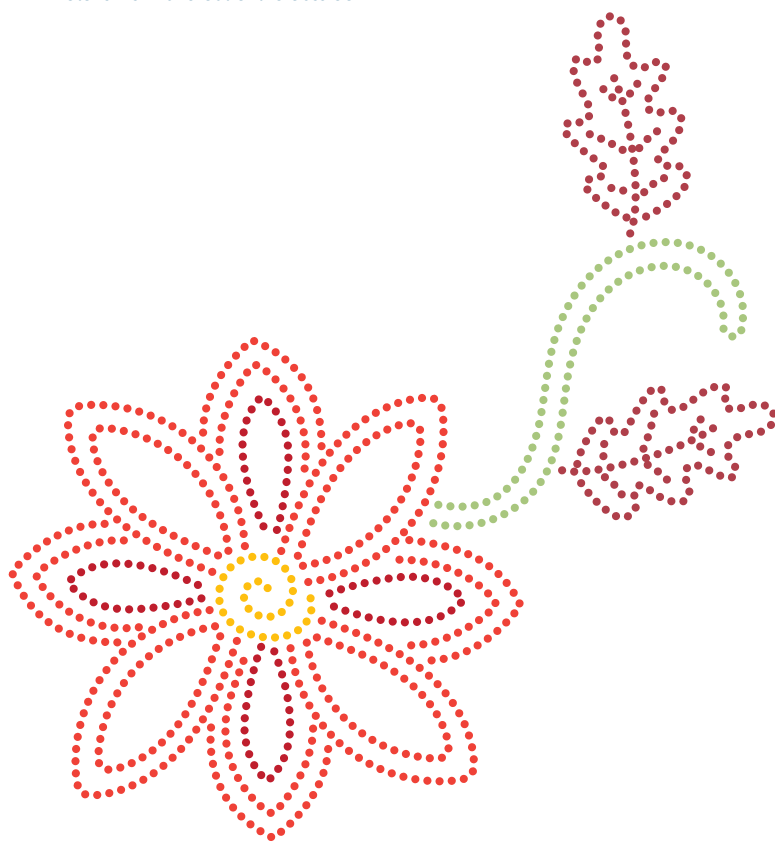
Pumpkin Rolling Races - Set up a race where you and your child roll a small pumpkin from point A to point B. The goal is to roll the pumpkin using their gross motor skills. This activity is great for working on coordination and core strength, all while having fun!

Everyday activities that children participate in work their fine and gross motor skills. However, you may be interested in doing extra work at home to help encourage your child's development in these areas.

On the next page is a free printable for a 30-day fine- and gross-motor challenge!

Sidwell, S. (2024, September 25). 10 fall gross motor activities for kids with sensory needs. Ability Innovations. <https://www.abilityinnovations.com/blog/fun-fall-gross-motor-activities-for-kids-with-sensory-seeking-needs>

Extension, P. (2024, October 17). Supporting fine and gross motor skills in and out of the classroom (news). Supporting Fine and Gross Motor Skills in and Out of the Classroom. <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/news/supporting-fine-and-gross-motor-skills-in-and-out-of-the-classroom>



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



30 DAYS

Of Fall Motor Skills



Created by Sydney Hagedorn & Amanda
Giroux, MHBHC Coordinators

DAY 1

Leaf
Tracing

DAY 2

Pumpkin
walk

DAY 3

Nature
scaven-
ger hunt

DAY 4

Draw a
school
bus

DAY 5

Jump in a
leaf pile

DAY 6

Fall
cutting
practice

DAY 7

Scarecrow
building

DAY 8

Acorn
toss

DAY 9

Fall yoga
for Kids on
Youtube

DAY 10

Decorate
a pumpkin

DAY 11

Leaf
sorting

DAY 12

Walk like
wildlife

DAY 13

Pinecone
painting

DAY 14

Maze
game with
tape

DAY 15

Hole-
punch
leaves

DAY 16

Fall bead
stringing

DAY 17

Wheelbar-
row walk

DAY 18

Pretend
play at an
orchard

DAY 19

Pumpkin
roll race

DAY 20

Leaf
lacing
cards

DAY 21

Nature
bracelet
using tape

DAY 22

Acorn
counting

DAY 23

Fall
movement
dice

DAY 24

Build a
leaf
creature

DAY 25

Fall
obstacle
course

DAY 26

Press
leaves in
a book

DAY 27

Rake
leaves

DAY 28

Follow
the falling
leaf

DAY 29

Apple
counting

DAY 30

Scarecr-
ow freeze
dance



What is a Photo/Video Release and Consent Form For?



Pedagogy

Written By: Courtlynne White, Special Projects Program Developer; Sarah Spethmann, Special Projects Pedagogy Specialist

If you have attended any of our Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) events, such as Camp AGA, In-person Camp, Virtual Camp, or Rendezvous, you have been asked to sign a Release and Consent form.

You may also have wondered what it is for, what it means, and what happens to the collected data. Keep reading to learn how these observations are shaping our future programs!

Hi! Our names are Sarah Spethmann and Courtlynne White. We are the Pedagogy Team with ELCC Special Projects, and you might have seen us at our ELCC events. We have developed a process in which your child's play and interactions help shape the future of our programs!



While ELCC educators and staff interact with you at events, we are noticing what your child is interested in, how they are using the materials, and what they may enjoy next. We write these down and call them observations! These are snapshots of the play, so we can reflect on our work as educators and expand upon learning through play.

When we are writing down our observations, we do not include any identifying information, such as your child's name or exact age. We include whether they are a bunny (0-3 years old), a fox (4-7 years old), or a moose (8-12 years old), and the event at which the observation was taken.

Take a peek at an observation we have taken at our March 2026 Virtual Camp:

Observation Note

Event/Date: March Virtual Camp

Age Range: Bunny 0-3 **Fox** 4-7 Moose 8-12
Please Circle

Staff Initial: ND Consent Confirmed: ☒

Observation: Child says "I want to share my home with you." They showed the group a sewing machine tucked into a room. "I put this here for my mom. She likes to sew." This child then holds the camera steady and brings the sewing machine closer to the camera.

Remember...

- 1-3 sentences
- Take at least 1 photo
- Your observation should be fact based.

What is a Photo/Video Release and Consent Form For?



Pedagogy

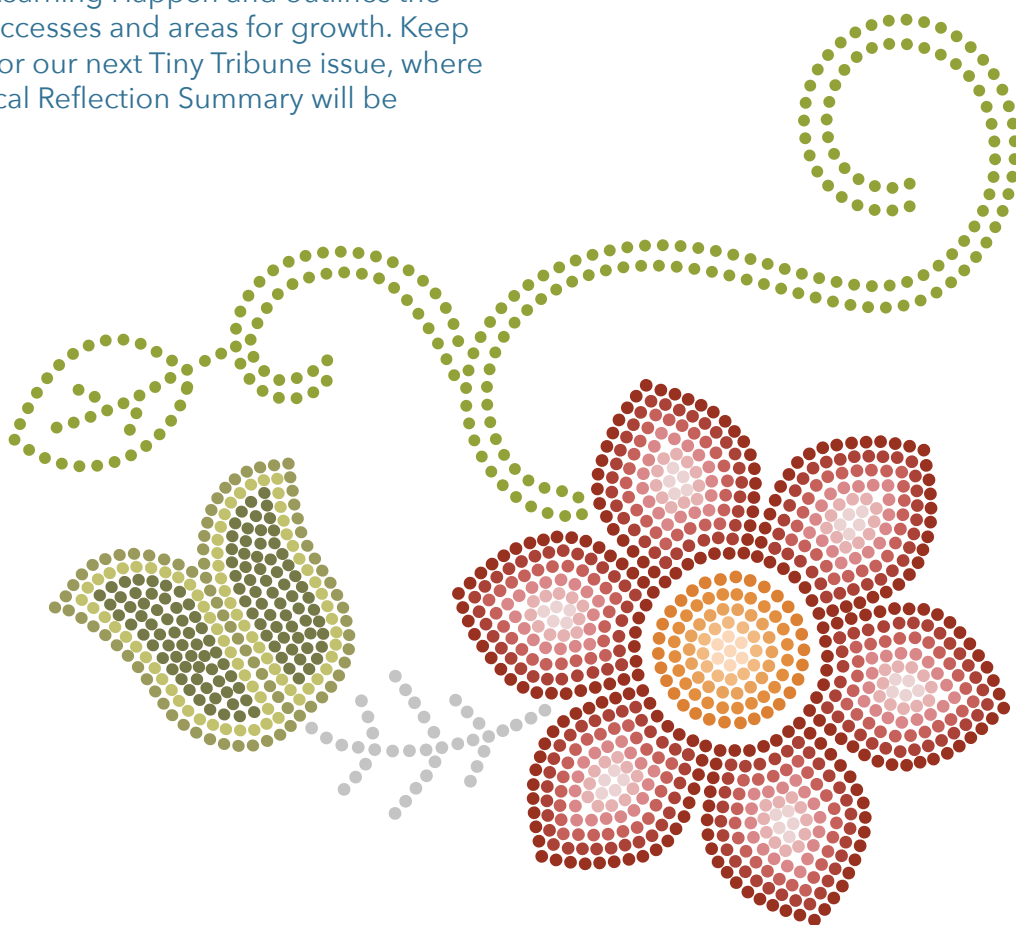
After each event, we use these observations to host a Living Wall meeting with the staff in attendance. We begin our reflections by connecting learning observations to the How Does Learning Happen? Framework: Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, identify any learning that is happening, and make connections to Métis culture. These reflections help event staff to understand better and interpret the learning that has occurred. Next, we turn the reflections into a mind map to visually demonstrate how staff follow children's interests, how we can expand our thinking in delivering programming, and to provide considerations for intentionally introducing materials.

After the Living Wall meeting, the Pedagogy team formats the reflection into a newsletter-style document, a Pedagogical Reflection Summary, that highlights connections to How Does Learning Happen and outlines the activities' successes and areas for growth. Keep an eye out for our next Tiny Tribune issue, where a Pedagogical Reflection Summary will be included!

Finally, at the end of the year, as we plan future programs and events, we look back at these Reflection Summaries to ensure we connect the learning from that year and build on what your child is interested in.

The next time you sign an Observation Data Collection Consent form, know that those moments of play are helping us build even better experiences for children and families that are responsive, meaningful and rooted in Métis culture.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). How does learning happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>



Michif-Fransè Words of the Season



Learn Michif-Fransè

Written By: Sarah Spethmann, Special Projects
Pedagogy Specialist



**Michif-Fransè is the
variety of Michif French
found in Ontario.**

**For more information on
Michif-Fransè, download
the app today!**



Fall - Otawn



August - Ou



September - Sèptanb



October - Awktawb



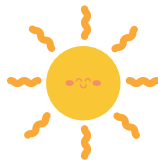
School - École



Colour - Kouleur



Friend - Ami



Good Morning - Bon Matin



Good Night - Bawn Nwui



Sash - Sintsur Fléché

Métis Nation of Ontario. (n.d.). MNO language app [Mobile app]. Google Play.
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mnolmf.production>

Métis Nation of Ontario (n.d.) "Métis languages initiatives".
<https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/education-training/métis-languages-initiatives/> ([metisnation.org])

Update on the MNO's Quality Improvement Project



Quality Improvement Project

Written By: Noah Ricciardi, MAP QIP Research Specialist

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is excited to announce that the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Quality Improvement Project (QIP) has completed the pilot of its reflective toolkit.

The pilot marks an important milestone in the development of practical, repeatable and accessible ways to support Ontario Métis cultural learning in early years settings.

The reflective toolkit is designed to support educator learning, confidence, and respectful practice. Through a guided reflection process, educators are encouraged to recognize what they are already doing well, identify growth opportunities, and build steady Ontario Métis-based learning and activity routines over time. The toolkit also offers MNO-vetted cultural activities tailored to children ages 0-6, helping educators bring Métis culture into everyday programming in meaningful and appropriate ways.

From May 8 to June 5, 2026, educators and partners participated in the pilot and shared feedback on how the toolkit could best support real ELCC environments. Participants emphasized that culturally grounded quality is strengthened when educators have clear guidance, accessible resources, and practical examples that fit naturally within daily routines. Their feedback is helping refine the toolkit and related supports so educators across the province can continue building welcoming spaces where Métis children and families see their culture reflected.

The QIP team is now reviewing pilot learnings and strengthening the next version of the reflective toolkit to support broader implementation. The MNO extends sincere thanks to the educators, partners, and community members who contributed their time, knowledge, and experience to this work. Their participation is helping ensure the toolkit remains grounded, respectful, practical, and responsive to the needs of Métis children, families and early learning communities.





Seasonal Activity

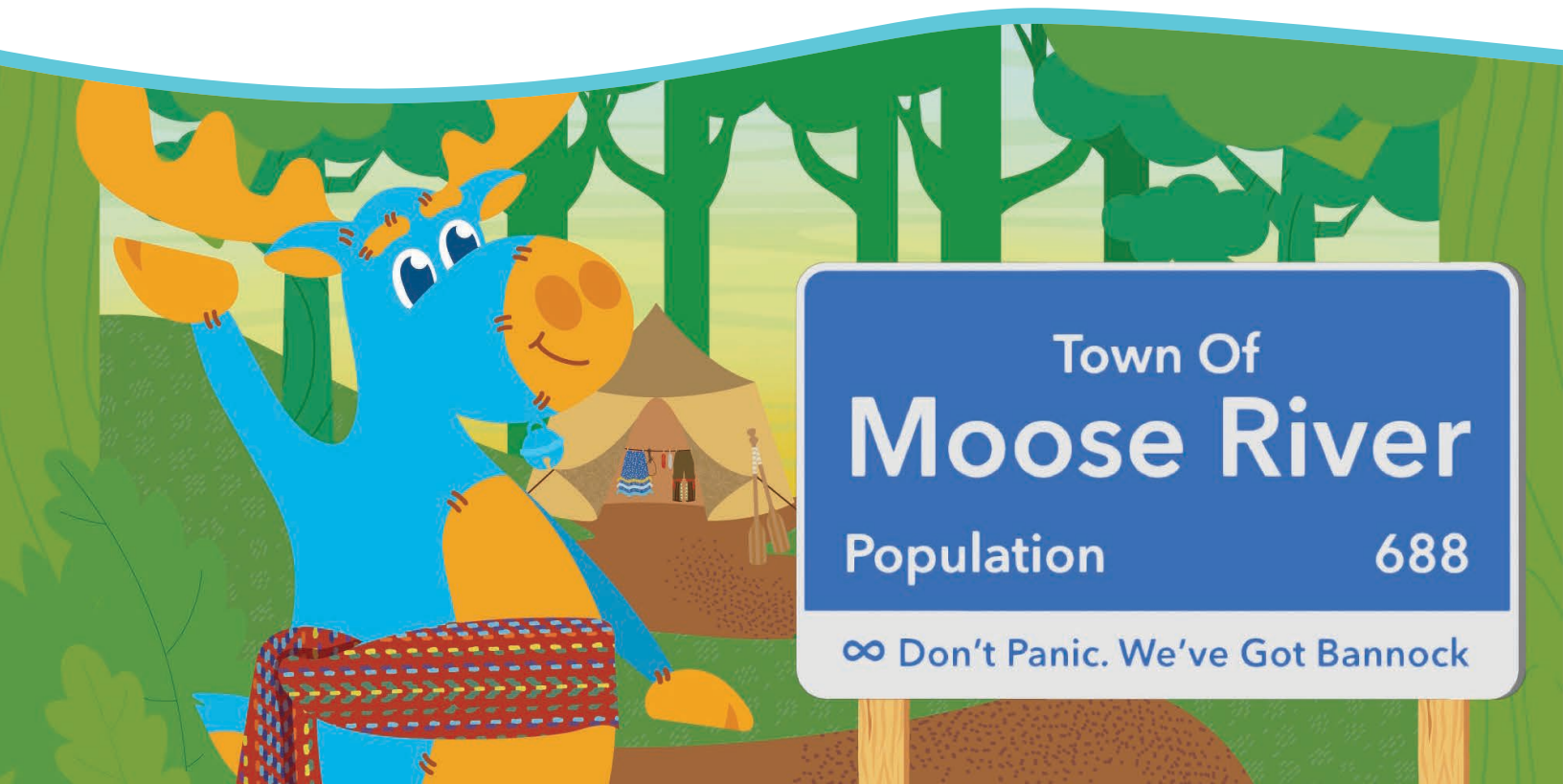
Written By: *Chris Darton, Documentation Specialist, Moose River Writer and Director, and Nicole Dubé, Camp Developer, Moose River Writer and Host*

Around the bend with my best friends,
Is a place where we laugh and play.
The forest green, the air is clean,
And the syrup runs all day.
In a place you know where the jack pine grows,
There are folks you know by sight.
A familiar place and a friendly face.
You can fiddle and jig all night.
(lyrics from the theme song)

Moose River is a digital children's show produced by the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Special Projects team.

The show celebrates Métis culture through an educational lens geared towards early learners aged 4-8. Set in the fictional town of Moose River (population 688), the show follows a colourful, diverse group of characters in their day-to-day lives in the small Northern community. The pilot episode was released on YouTube in April 2026, with two new episodes being filmed this year.

The show follows Marty, a precocious blue moose who is curious about Métis culture and the community he belongs to. The show mixes live-action character segments, animation, and visits to various locations, including maple syrup conservation, a museum, a provincial park, and a historic site. Moose River rejoices in its depictions of the culture. Stories, play, and special guests keep children engaged, knowing that children learn the most when they are having fun.



Town Of
Moose River
Population 688

∞ Don't Panic. We've Got Bannock



Seasonal Activity

Written By: *Chris Darton, Documentation Specialist, Moose River Writer and Director, and Nicole Dubé, Camp Developer, Moose River Writer and Host*

Fun Facts

1. There are hidden details in every episode of Moose River. For example, the refrigerator in the first episode has birthday and graduation photos of a young Marty.
2. Marty's actual name is Martholomew.
3. The Marty puppet was handcrafted by creative director Tom Stewart and his team at Creature Works in Hamilton, Ontario.
4. Marty's favourite food is Froot-de-Loops.
5. Citizens in the small town of Moose River usually have multiple occupations: Aunt Rose's Fiddle and Griddle; Winslow Polson is a meteorologist who also calls bingo and works at the bowling alley, Louis' Lanes and Planes.

Check out episode 1 on YouTube!

youtube.com/watch?v=qkoKGiYI_tE





Written By: Alaina McMonigle, MNO Health Promotion Specialist; and Liv Miller, MNO Health Promotion Specialist

Raising Grounded and Strong Kids in a Fast-Moving Digital Age

Parenting in today's digital world can often feel like a balancing act.

Technology can bring so many amazing benefits, but it can also make it harder to stay connected as a family. People often have to choose between screen time and real-life connection. For many parents, the real power lies in choosing to connect with their kids beyond screens.

We are raising kids in a world that is very different from the one we grew up in. We try to guide them through it, even though we are still learning ourselves. Building healthy habits in a tech-heavy world is not just about teaching our kids; it also means looking honestly at our own screen use. Kids learn by watching us, and they notice how we use technology. Setting healthy limits for everyone can help create a calmer home.

Recently, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Health Promotion team hosted a "Socials - Free Spring" event as part of the Adult Mental Wellness Connection series. These virtual workshops provide a welcoming space for people to talk about mental wellness. During the session, we explored simple ideas and tools to help create more breaks from the digital noise. Participants shared their goals to increase self-care by limiting screen use for themselves and their



children, without feeling too strict or punitive. The conversations at that event inspired this article and underscored the need for more creative ways to connect with kids without screens.

One simple idea for parents is to create a 'no-screen family challenge'. This can be a fun and easy way to build stronger bonds with our kids. Spending time together through movement, storytelling, and laughter helps everyone feel more relaxed and connected. A challenge like this also gives the whole family something to look forward to. Research shows that play and shared family experiences support healthy child development and strengthen family bonds. Outdoor exploration is one example that many Métis families enjoy.

Here are three fun "screen-free" family challenge ideas for the upcoming school year that work for all ages, plus a few suggested rewards to help motivate the kids (and adults) to join in the fun.

1. A 20-Minute Adventure Challenge

"Choose your own adventure" outside together for 20 minutes with no agenda or screens.

Examples include: a nature scavenger hunt, a tree identification game, creating a fun land-based obstacle course, or 'find something beautiful' and name it.

Why it works: shared outdoor time is a way to 'unplug' and reconnect with the natural elements, helping you feel more grounded, supporting your mood and reducing stress.



Navigating Digital Parenting and Staying Connected Beyond the Screens



Program Information

2. The Creativity Swap Challenge

Everyone in the family makes something for someone else.

Examples include: creative storytelling, drawing a quick doodle, beading together, making a clay or mud sculpture, dancing a jig, or making a funny, creative snack to enjoy together (like a broccoli tower that needs everyone's help to demolish).

Why it works: It is meant to be fun and playful, encouraging everyone to use their imagination. This can lead to more new and creative ideas in your home life, while still supporting rest and relieving tension from those screens.

3. The Unplugged Hour Jar

Fill a jar with quick activities and draw one at random for a designated screen-free hour, or for a time that works for the whole family.

Examples include: playing cards, spending time with Elders, fishing, animal tracking, making a traditional meal, building a fort, going for a walk, or harvesting medicines.

Why it works: Having more traditional, predictable, and engaging routines can help kids transition away from screens more easily.

Below are some examples of motivating, non-material incentives for everyone in the family:

- ∞ Choosing the next family meal
- ∞ Staying up 15 minutes later
- ∞ Picking the next weekend activity
- ∞ Being the family "DJ" for the day

- ∞ Earning tokens towards bigger shared rewards (picnics, special outing, dinner out, etc.)

Lastly, if you are looking for a few strategies for yourself or older children, here are some recommendations we provided during our Socials-Free Spring session:

- ∞ Create a "Screen-Free Zone" drop-spot: Designate a special place where all devices go during meals, family activities, or wind-down time before bed. This could range from a simple "screen-free" basket to a powered lockbox specifically for phones. Want to make it more fun? Turn it into a family craft night and decorate your device-free spot together.
- ∞ Set time limits on your devices: You can restrict certain apps on your phone or laptop to shut down after a set amount of time or at a specific time of day.
- ∞ Turn on a custom do not disturb: Trying to drown out your phone's notifications while still needing to hear it ring? You can set up custom "Do Not Disturb" settings on your phone to allow some notifications to come through and mute others.

Technology can help us stay connected to family, community, culture, and learning. The goal is not to avoid screens altogether, but to create a healthy balance. Remember, it takes time to change our habits, especially when it comes to technology. At our community session, we focused on one simple question as we discussed alternatives to screen time: what brings us joy? If you want help getting started with tech changes for you or your kids, try asking yourself what made you (and them) happy before screens took up so much time. Think about activities that lift your mood and make your family feel good, and look for ways to bring more of those moments into your day without using screens. It is never too late to make a change. Our kids may even thank us for it in the end.

Calendar of Events



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

August 19	September 19	September 30	September 30
World Humanitarian Day  More Information	Powley Day  More Information	Orange Shirt Day & National Day for Truth and Reconciliation  More Information	Rowan's Law Day  More Information

October 2026	October 11	November 8	November 16
Women's History Month  More Information	International Day of the Girl Child  More Information	National Indigenous Veterans' Day  More Information	Louis Riel Day  More Information

November 20	December 3
National Child Day  More Information	International Day of Persons with Disabilities  More Information

What's Going on in Special Projects?



ELCC Updates

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

OneApp

Moving or moved? Update your address through the OneApp by visiting: oneapp.mnoelcc.org

Camps

May Virtual Camp was another success! 39 Ontario Métis families spent a fun evening (or 3) "Thinking Outside the Blocks" with dice. Families were encouraged to create their own dice and games while they learned a thing or two about dice and the importance of family time and story time, all traditions anchored in the Métis ways of being.

Kits

Our Back-to-School Kit program supported 1,979 school-age children this year! We hope everyone has a wonderful year at school filled with learning and laughter. The Back to School Kit program is part of the OneApplication. Learn more at oneapp.mnoelcc.org

We want to hear from you!

Our 2025/2026 Annual Learner Kit, "Roots Across Time," invited families to connect and explore their "roots" together! Have you tried drawing on your tiles, rather than using words? Try drawing out an imaginative story or memory, and see how you can fit it together!

We want to see how you have been using your Roots Across Time kit over the past few months! Send feedback to elccevents@metisnation.org



Coming Soon!

Stay tuned for our 2026/2027 Annual Learner Kit, with a cooking theme, which will ship to approved OneApp applicants this upcoming Spring!

Did you know...

Our Métis Baby Bundle Kit is always open for registration to those who meet the eligibility criteria! Learn more here: [Métis Baby Bundle Kits are now available! - Métis Nation of Ontario](#)

Our Dolly Parton Imagination Library Early Learning Book Program is also always open for registration to those who meet the eligibility criteria! Learn more here: [Early Learning Book Program - Métis Nation of Ontario](#)

Babysitter's Club

Our Babysitter's Club is open to Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) youth in grades 7-10 who meet the eligibility criteria. Learn more about the Babysitter's Club Program here: https://metisnation.smapply.io/prog/metis_babysitters_club/

Healthy Children and Families Update



Programming Updates

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

Virtual Province-Wide Participant-Based Activities

Perinatal & Postpartum Mental Health: Supporting Neurodivergent Families Webinar

Thursday, August 6 at 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Join the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children team and presenter Chloe Houlder for a discussion about perinatal/postpartum mental health. This presentation will focus on topics such as anxiety, depression, burnout, sensory overwhelm, sleep deprivation, and nervous system regulation. Participants will learn practical, compassionate strategies to support emotional well-being, realistic expectations, and sustainable family support systems. Register here: <https://zoom.us/join/register/9OGHzPZ2RdeWmWiVE1frA>

Anti-Bullying Presentation

Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 6:00 pm EST

Please join the Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program and the Victim Services team for a collaborative event focused on anti-bullying for kids and parents. Email rebeccav@metisnation.org to register.

Mini Métis Playgroups

Attention, families with children ages 0-6! You are invited to join us for a fun and welcoming playgroup in Kingston, Midland, Barrie, and North Bay. 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.

Midland MNO Office

Location: 845 King Street, Unit 10

Time: 9:30-11:30 am EST

Date: Third Thursday of the month

Contact: LisaT@metisnation.org

Kingston MNO Office

Location: 107-61 Hyperion Court

Time: 9:00-11:00 am EST

Date: First Wednesday of the month

Contact TracyR@metisnation.org

Barrie MNO Office

Location: 64 Cedar Point Dr., Unit 1402

Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST

Date: First Tuesday of the month

Contact TonishaM@metisnation.org

North Bay MNO Office

Location: 156 McIntyre Street West

Time: 9:30-11:30 am

Date: Last Wednesday of the month

Contact AylaS@metisnation.org





Programming Updates

Whitby, Brampton and Thorold Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Fall Storytime

Date: September 2026

Join us for a fun fall-themed Storytime in Brampton and Whitby featuring engaging stories, songs, and interactive activities that promote early literacy and learning through play. Each family will receive a fall-themed play-based learning kit with activities and materials to continue the fun and learning at home. Contact Sydneyha@metisnation.org for the Whitby area and Nicolep@metisnation.org for the Brampton area.

Smart Snacks

Date: October 2026 via Zoom

Location: Durham Region, Brampton, and Thorold MNO Offices

Join us for a virtual session on making 'smart' snacks for little ones. All ingredients will be provided. Dates will be determined closer to the event. Kindly reach out to your closest coordinator: Sydneyha@metisnation.org for the Whitby area, Nicolep@metisnation.org for the Brampton area, and RebeccaV@metisnation.org for the Thorold Area.

Fun in the Sun - Let's Get Active!

Date: August 4, 11, 18, and 25 at 1:30 pm EST

You are invited to join us for an afternoon of "Fun in the Sun" in the park every Tuesday in August. Mingle and make connections with other families! Activities will include Splash Pad, Fun in the Sand, Nature Walks, Crafts and more! Locations and activities may vary! Snacks and a chance to win a prize at each session. Please contact Rebeccav@metisnation.org for more details.

Harvest Dinner

Date: Monday, October 5, 2026

This community cultural event is designed to bring people together in a welcoming and inclusive environment, fostering meaningful social interaction and strengthening community connections. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet new friends, share experiences, and celebrate cultural traditions. Please contact Rebeccav@metisnation.org for more details.

Bancroft Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children and Community Action for Prenatal and Child Health Program

Parent Learning Series Session One

Date: September 10, 2026 at 6:00 pm EST

Location: Bancroft MNO Office

Parents and caregivers are invited to join our Positive Parent Learning series. This series helps build knowledge and confidence through professional guest speakers and group discussion. Each session offers a safe and welcoming space to learn about important parenting topics and connect with others. Each session includes an interactive self-care activity that encourages parents to pause, reflect, and take care of themselves. Registration is required; please contact andstacies@metisnation.org for more details.

Community Kitchen Skill Share

Date: October 8, 2026, at 10:00 am EST

Location: Bancroft MNO Office

Join our welcoming Community Kitchen Skill Share program! Learn practical cooking tips, budget-friendly meal planning, and ways to make the most of your food resources. While we will not be cooking together in person, participants will receive a food resource kit to try at home. Connect with others, gain helpful tips, and explore healthy, affordable meals in a friendly and supportive space. Registration is required; please contact andstacies@metisnation.org for more details.

Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children



Programming Updates

Reading, Rhyming and Running Around

Date: Tuesdays at 10:00 am EST

Location: Hastings Highlands Public Library

Families are welcomed into an inclusive, friendly, and safe environment at the library, where they can participate in story time, free play, and crafts geared toward children ages 0-6. Please contact stacies@metisnation.org for more information.

Growing Together

Date: Thursdays at 10:00 am EST

Location: Bancroft MNO Office

Expecting parents or parents with babies from 0-1 year of age are invited to join us on Thursdays to hear from guest speakers and learn from group discussions on topics that aim to promote healthy nutrition for pre- and post-natal stages, infant nutrition, infant development and many more topics that are related to pre/post natal education. Please contact stacies@metisnation.org for more information.

Fun in the Sun

Dates: Friday, August 14, 2026, at 10:00 am EST
and Friday, August 21, 2026, at 10:00 am EST

Location: Foster Park

Families participate in outdoor activities at the park, helping children develop their gross motor skills through play. Families will also have the opportunity to participate in story walks that encourage early literacy through a different lens. Please contact stacies@metisnation.org for more information.

Renfrew Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Early Years Development

Date: August 10, 2026

Location and time to be confirmed

In this in-person collaboration with the Renfrew County and District Public Health Unit, families will

learn practical, easy-to-use tips they can bring home to support their child's growth throughout the early years. Participants will have the opportunity to track, screen, and understand developmental milestones through a screening tool. Please contact amandag@metisnation.org for more details.

Back to School Sharing Circle

Pembroke Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2026 at 1:00 pm EST

Pembroke Location: Riverside Park

Renfrew Date: Thursday, August 20, 2026 at 1:00 pm EST

Renfrew Location: Ma-te-Way Park

These in-person events support early learners as they get ready for school by exploring what to expect, how to prepare, and how to talk about their feelings during this transition. Each child will receive an "activity bag" filled with a small selection of school supplies and age-appropriate activities for families to enjoy together, helping make the back-to-school experience positive and engaging. Spots are limited. Please register in advance by contacting amandag@metisnation.org.

Fall into Fun: Family Celebration

Date: October 24, 2026 at 10:00 am

Location: Hugli's Blueberry Ranch, Pembroke

A celebratory in-person event to celebrate the Harvest season. This event will take place at Hugli's Blueberry Ranch in Pembroke and will include social and recreational activities. This event is open to the community at large. Please register with amandag@metisnation.org.

Sudbury Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Moms on the Move

Date: Monday mornings at 9:30 am EST biweekly

Location: Sudbury District (The trails will be determined a week before the walk)

Take a break, enjoy the fresh air, and connect with other local Métis moms during our biweekly nature walks! Each walk will feature a wellness topic, with educational resources and brochures provided to encourage



Programming Updates

learning, reflection, and conversation. You will also receive a family challenge to try at home, offering simple and meaningful ways to continue exploring the session's theme with your loved ones. Every participant who joins a walk will be entered into a monthly draw for a self-care basket. Whether you are looking to connect with other moms, spend time in nature, or discover new ways to support your well-being, we look forward to walking alongside you! Please contact AshleyD@metisnation.org for more information.

Tiny Tales and Learning

Date: Friday mornings at 9:30 am EST
Location: Sudbury MNO Office

Join us for Tiny Tales and Learning, a fun and interactive playgroup where stories come to life! Little ones and their caregivers will enjoy an engaging puppet story time, connect with other families, and share a light snack in a welcoming environment. Each session also includes a simple and educational activity for parents to take home, making it easy to continue learning through play. These hands-on resources are designed to support early literacy, language development, and family connection in fun, meaningful ways. Please contact AshleyD@metisnation.org for more information.

Thunder Bay and Community Action for Prenatal and Child Health Program

Community Kitchen

Date: Monthly (Date and time to be determined)
Location: Thunder Bay MNO Office

The goal of this program is to combat food insecurity and to promote healthy eating, teaching skills, sharing recipes (cultural) and money-saving techniques while meeting other participants. The program will cover pre-made meals, canning, saving money, healthier recipes, cost comparisons, and reading labels. Please contact madelineo@metisnation.org for more information.

Baby Food Making

Date: November 2026 (Date to be confirmed)
Location: Hybrid (in-person at the Thunder Bay MNO Office and virtual)

This series empowers young caregivers to take charge of their baby's nutrition by mastering the art of homemade baby food. We will explore the vital role healthy ingredients play in early development and provide the skills and confidence needed to create fresh, nutritious meals right at home. Please contact madelineo@metisnation.org for more information.

Nurturing the Mother, Nurturing the Child

Date: Weekly starting in August until September at 12:00 pm EST
Location: Thunder Bay MNO Office

This information series is designed to empower expectant mothers and new mothers with essential knowledge on prenatal and postpartum care. We will focus on identifying potential health concerns during and after pregnancy and provide practical coping strategies to help you prepare for the postpartum period. My goal is for mothers to feel confident and informed about their pre- and post-natal journey. Please contact madelineo@metisnation.org for more details.

Baking on a Budget

Date: Weekly at 1:00 pm EST
Location: Thunder Bay MNO Office

This program focuses on developing essential culinary skills by teaching participants how to prepare simple, nutrient-dense recipes from scratch. By prioritizing homemade alternatives over processed store-bought items, we empower families to improve their nutritional health while also maintaining their budget. Please contact madelineo@metisnation.org for more information.



Programming Updates

Barrie Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Meal Prep Workshop - Breakfast Foods for Back to School

Date: Tuesday, August 25, 2026, at 10:00 am EST

Location: Orillia Native Women's Group

Join us for a hands-on workshop to prepare healthy freezer meals to take home. Learn practical planning skills, connect with other families and share time in a welcoming community space. Workshop in collaboration with Orillia Native Women's Group. Please contact tonisham@metisnation.org for more details.

Dental Information Session

Date: Thursday, October 1, 2026 at 12:00 EST

Location: Virtual

Join us online for an informative session with Melissa Lesk, Registered Dental Hygienist, Oral Health - Community Program, to learn more about maintaining good oral health and accessing dental care services in the community. Please contact tonisham@metisnation.org for more details.

Dental Screening

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2026, at 4:00 pm EST

Location: Barrie MNO Office

We are pleased to offer an on-site dental screening clinic in partnership with the Health Unit. This screening provides an opportunity for children and families to have their oral health assessed by qualified dental professionals and receive information about available dental services and supports. Please contact tonisham@metisnation.org for more details.

Sault St. Marie Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Ready, Set Grow!

Date: August 2026 (Date and time to be determined)

Location: To be determined

Bringing big kids and little kids together to talk about school and reduce anxiety. Handouts will be provided for parents on school and child care routines, healthy snacks and activities for kids. Each child will receive a backpack with supplies, either for child care or school. Contact Melindav@metisnation.org to register.

Little Voices, Big Smile

Date: September 2026 (date and time to be determined)

Location: To be determined

Bringing parents together to learn nursery rhymes with actions will bring awareness about play-based learning. Promoting early language development, memory skills, and parent-child bonding in a fun, interactive setting. Contact Melindav@metisnation.org to register.

Windsor Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Infant Massage

Date: September 2026 (Date and time to be determined)

Location: In-person (location to be determined)

In partnership with Ska, this hands-on infant massage workshop will introduce parents and caregivers to gentle massage techniques to promote relaxation, bonding, and overall well-being for their baby. Participants will be guided through the massage process in a supportive, welcoming environment as they practice the techniques with their infant. Each family will receive an infant massage kit to take home, allowing them to continue the practice after the workshop. Spaces are limited. To reserve your spot, please contact chantalp@metisnation.org.

Written By: *Jen McFarlane and Featured Staff*

Nicole Barron, Early Learning Developmental Resource Consultant

Nicole is a new staff member on our Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) team! Nicole is a Developmental Resource Consultant (DRC) on the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) team. Nicole works collaboratively with children and their families, as well as teachers, educators and other professionals, to improve educational and developmental outcomes for our young citizens. As a DRC, Nicole brings all parties together to discuss recommendations for resources and support from external community-based partners or from MNO. She is available to support families as they navigate those supports and resources, ensuring the family feels comfortable and confident working with others on their child's care team, including being available to attend meetings with families virtually, review documents with families to ensure understanding, investigate and refer families to community and MNO resources and provide advocacy support with the child care of schools as needed.

In her new role, Nicole is most excited to immerse herself in supporting families in their child's development, building positive relationships, and deepening her journey with those families.

Most Proud of / Fun Fact:

Nicole is most proud of furthering her education: "I have recently finished my Bachelor of Science with a major in Early Childhood Studies. I'm also proud of being part of the MNO. A fun fact about me is that I love to step dance to fiddle music." You can reach Nicole Barron by email at: NicoleB@metisnation.org



Jalna Crotty, Early Learning Developmental Resource Consultant

Jalna is a new staff member on our MNO Team! Jalna is a

Developmental Resource Consultant (DRC) on the ELCC team. Jalna partners with families to support each child's unique strengths and developmental journey. She provides developmental information and screenings, shares practical strategies and educational resources, and helps families navigate early years programs, school entry, and transitions to grade one. By working closely with families and other professionals, Jalna helps families build confidence, celebrate progress, and create supports that encourage every child to thrive.

After working for years in an educator role, Jalna is most excited about this new role for the opportunity to connect with families more, both virtually and in person.

Most Proud of / Fun Fact:

When asked what Jalna is most proud of, she responded with "I am very honoured to have been invited into communities to work in partnership on the development and success of early intervention community programs that benefit the support, inclusion, and learning of Indigenous children in the early years. I am always looking for new experiences and places to explore. From hiking with Alpacas to feeding sharks, if there are animals involved, you'll find me there!" You can reach Jalna Crotty by email at: JalnaC@metisnation.org

