

# Keeping In Touch

Staying Connected, Growing Together • Spring 2022



Photo by Ben Wicks on Unsplash

## Welcome

The **Keeping in Touch** (KIT) resource was created to celebrate and support the creativity and dedication of all who participate in the quality education of young children. The resource strives to provide inspiration and knowledge to professionals in the Early Learning and Care Sector through informative articles and resources which promote inclusionary practices, cultural diversity and competence, programming ideas and community information. The KIT committee is comprised of professionals from various agencies within the Toronto Children's Services Every Child Belongs model. We welcome you to share this resource with your colleagues, friends, and family.



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Child being bullied in class. Photo by RODNAE Productions from Pexels

# Early Childhood Bullying

## Part 1: Understanding the Act

**BRENDALEE SIMAS**, RT, RECE, Child Care Consultant, Child Development Institute

As early childhood professionals, we all want to believe that the children in our care are little angels and incapable of harming their peers; however, bullying behaviours can emerge in early childhood and needs to be understood within the context early childhood settings. Bullying behaviours are a distinctive pattern of repeatedly and deliberately harming and humiliating others, specifically those who are smaller, weaker, younger or in any way more vulnerable. The deliberate targeting of those of lesser power is what distinguishes bullying from garden-variety **aggression**.” (Psychology Today) Incidents involving acts of bullying generally involve three different roles: initiators (those demonstrating bullying behaviours), targets (those experiencing the direct effects of the behaviours), and bystanders (those who witness the behaviours).

Bullying behaviours have three defining characteristics:

- It is deliberate—Intention is to hurt someone.
- It is repeated—Often targeting the same victim repeatedly.
- It is imbalanced power—Victims are chosen if they are perceived as vulnerable.

There are three main types of bullying behaviours: (1) physical bullying, such as hitting and pushing, (2) verbal bullying, such as yelling and name-calling, and (3) relational bullying, such as excluding or getting others to hurt someone. A fourth type of bullying, (cyberbullying) involves using the Internet, cell phones, or other digital communication devices to post or send hurtful text or images. Although cyberbullying

## The Early Learning Environment

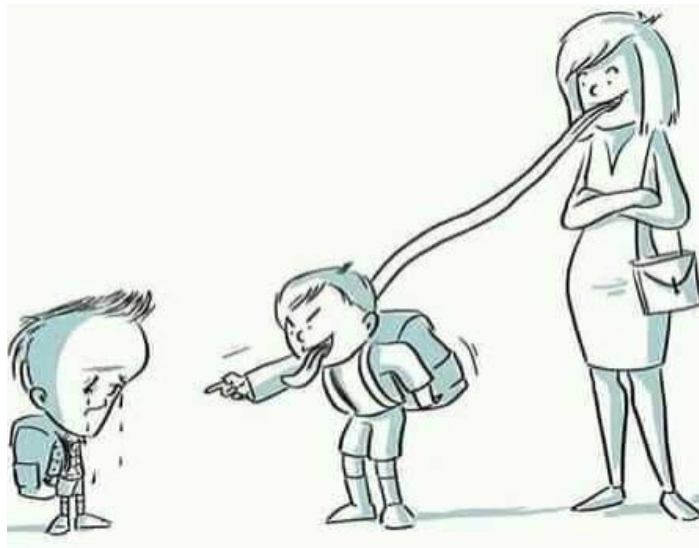
can become an issue for older children, it is not yet a concern for preschoolers.

When children enter our care, they bring a history of experiences. Children may have faced **adverse childhood experiences** (ACE's) through direct and/or observed domestic violence, physical punishment, or verbal/physical aggression towards others. Experiences with siblings and other children can also influence how the child may interact while in your care. These experiences may guide the path towards whether they will engage in bullying related behaviours themselves.

Exposure to media such as television shows, movies and video games that glorify violence can influence young minds that violent behaviours can be rewarding.

Young children can demonstrate bullying behaviours in a variety of ways. Most children who engage in bullying behaviours use direct physical aggression (e.g., hitting, shoving, pinching, or throwing objects) or direct verbal aggression (e.g., yelling, threatening) to take away a toy, make someone do something against his or her will, or just to intimidate. More subtle or indirect forms of physical aggression may look like hiding a favourite toy, taking someone's hat, or destroying someone's artwork or Lego build. They may use relational aggression to ignore or exclude a child by whispering, spreading rumours, or saying, "You can't play." They may also isolate the child by running away from him or her and encouraging others to runaway with them.

Bullying behaviours are gender and age specific. It's important to recognize that demonstrations of these behaviours in young children, often look different from those in older children. Young children typically experiment with diverse ways of behaving, and it's important for early childhood educators to recognize that some of these behaviours may be precursors to bullying behaviours. For example, young children may make mean faces, say threatening things, grab objects, push others aside, falsely accuse others, or refuse to play with specific children. Children as young as 2-4 may be observed using aggressive or early bullying type behaviours to defend their possessions, space, or friends. This may be quite hard to recognize as this is also considered part of a toddler's typical



Child imitating adult behaviour. Illustration from Cherie White blog (<https://cheriewhite.blog>)

development. Children ages 4-6, begin to use these behaviours to threaten or intimidate other children.

While pre-bullying type behaviours may be hurtful, they may not necessarily be an act of bullying because the behaviours were not used to hurt another less powerful child deliberately and repeatedly. However, if these behaviours are ignored and allowed to continue, they could evolve into full-blown acts of bullying.

Early childhood educators need to be aware that both girls and boys engage in a wide variety of bullying-related behaviours. It is more common for boys to deliver and receive direct forms of physical and verbal aggression related to issues of power and dominance. These behaviours, demand immediate intervention and are easy to detect and observe. Girls, on the other hand, often begin to deliver and receive more complex, subtle, and indirect forms of relational acts of bullying associated with patterns of affiliation and exclusion. For example, girls begin to manipulate relationships, exclude peers, spread rumours, tell secrets, and threaten not to play if their demands are not met.

Engaging in acts of bullying can be contagious! In group situations, other children are often watching the behaviours unfold. These bystanders, learn who's involved and which behaviours are permitted and rewarded. They may become fearful of the

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## The Early Learning Environment

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child demonstrating these acts, reject the victimized child, and passively accept a climate where bullying behaviours are permitted. They are observing successful displays of power and dominance over a victimized child and may be persuaded to join in or act out the behaviours themselves.

The results of experiencing acts of bullying are physical and emotional and can last far beyond childhood. But it does not have to be a part of growing up. The good news is that these behaviours are easier to stop in the initial stages. Young children usually adjust their behaviour depending on the responses of their peers and/or educators.

“Bullying is a learned behaviour, and anything learned can be unlearned.” (Dr. C. Sally Murphy—Lecturer in Literacy and Early Childhood, School of Education, Curtin University)



Child being bullied in library. Photo by Mikhail Nilov from Pexels

You may have noticed that other than the title, the word or term bully, has been replaced with alternative language such as acts of bullying behaviours and engaging in bullying behaviours. This was done intentionally to support a new mindset towards the term. To call a child a bully is to suggest that he or she may never break out of that role, whereas to say that the same child is engaging in bullying behaviours is to acknowledge that he or she is capable of stopping the behaviour. Rather than labeling children, we want to label the behaviour in hopes that the child can move on to more positive behaviour. “It’s really important to think of bullying as a verb and not a noun, so bullying is a behaviour that can be changed, not a character trait within a particular child. When we treat them as ‘a bully,’ then we send the message to that child that ‘You can’t change’ or ‘I don’t think you can change.’ And so, we really want to communicate to these kids, ‘You know you can change, and I can believe that you can change.’” (Dr. Susan Swearer, Co-Director of the Bullying Research Network.)

## References

- Bullying—We Can All Help Stop It** (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/bullying-we-can-all-help-stop-it>)
- Pacer Center’s Kids Against Bullying** (<https://pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/>)
- PREVNet | Canada’s authority on bullying prevention** (<https://www.prevnet.ca/>)
- Psychology Today. (n.d.). Anger. Anger. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/basics/anger>
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (n.d.). Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>
- Watch for the upcoming Part 2: Recognizing the Signs**

“We have got to dispel this myth that bullying is just a normal rite of passage.”

Barack Obama

# Flip Flop Over the Top Sequence

Many children need support when learning new skills. Breaking a skill down into smaller steps can help a child learn one step at a time. The number of steps a skill or task is broken into depends on the needs of your child.

You may want to provide your child with a visual sequence. This is basically a series of pictures showing the steps that are necessary to complete a task. You can use real photos, line drawings, or picture symbols. When using a visual sequence, post it at your child's eye level, point to the picture, and read the step out loud before completing the action.

This is a fun way for children to learn how to put their coats on. Just follow the steps below. If your child is unable to bend down or sit on the floor, you may want to put the coat on a low table before working on this sequence.

- 1.** Place the coat on the floor or table with the hood and sleeves flat. If the coat doesn't have a hood, make sure the label is clearly visible. You can put a colourful sticker on the label if it is small or difficult to see.
- 2.** Child stands behind the coat's hood or label.
- 3.** Child places his arms in the sleeves of the coat. You may have to help him by keeping the sleeves straight.
- 4.** Flip! Child puts his arms straight out.
- 5.** Flop! Child lifts his arms up over his head.
- 6.** Over the Top! Child brings his arms back down and the coat is on! You may have to help him pull the coat down.

## Reference

**ConnectAbility** (<https://connectability.ca>)

Connect**ABILITY**.ca



Child demonstrating flip flop over the top sequence.  
Photo courtesy of ConnectABILITY.ca



### Using Vertical Space Outdoors

**BRENDA WILSON**, RECEAS, Montessori, Resource Consultant, Terry Tan Child Centre

Take advantage of vertical space while creating exciting areas for all children to play outside. Bring the indoors outside! Thank you to Mindwerx4Kids Learning Centre for sharing their musical and water walls that were built on their fencing.

Pictures provided by **Mindwerx4Kids Learning Centre** (<https://mw4k.com/>)—with permission.

All other pictures sourced online as indicated.



↑Vertical play space. Photo courtesy of Mindwerx4Kids.



↑Vertical play space. Photo courtesy of Mindwerx4Kids.

“Let Nature be your teacher.”

—William Wordsworth



↑Child playing at vertical play space. Photo by doublestars. (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/55047780@N00/9671877283/>)



## The Early Learning Environment



↑Children playing peek-a-boo in hoops and ribbons. Photo by Dinosaur Tales. ( <https://pin.it/5wWsVTy> )



↑Water Wall by Mark Nordall from Familylicious.com. ( <https://pin.it/1A8pPiB> )



↑Kidsunlimited Barrow builder's yard. Photo by Bright Horizons Early Years. ( <https://pin.it/6KzOrtU> )



← Resourceful use of recycled timbers creates an innovative building site play area for children at OAC Rhodes. Photo from Only About Children. ( [pic.twitter.com/ZbMgKJ0cPX](http://pic.twitter.com/ZbMgKJ0cPX) )



# Two-Eyed Land-Based Play: Engaging Spirit, Heart, Mind & Body

**LOUISE ZIMANYI B.A.A ECE**, Ryerson Med (OISE),  
Doctoral Candidate, Royal Roads

In the Humber Arboretum, we know it is winter when we can hand-feed black-oiled sunflower seeds to friendly black-capped Chickadees, notice in wonder a camouflaged long-eared owls in the Cedars and know the Sugar Maple will soon produce sap.

Wintering time, in the words of Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall: when nature rests, reflects, and prepares for new growth, as do we.

At Humber College, aligned with Indigenous strategic and education plans, we engage in cultural safety training and co-learn from local Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Holders, and Storytellers. We embrace Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing in the Mi'kmaq language.) Brought forth by Elder Albert Marshall, Two-Eyed Seeing is about weaving the strengths of Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing for the benefit of all and Mother Earth.

**Building on the importance of outdoor/nature play,** Humber ECE's new course, uniquely co-taught by Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty celebrates:

- Land as teacher
- Respectful, reciprocal and responsible relationships with the Land and each other
- Wholism: engaging spirit, heart, mind and body in balance and together
- Personal, social and intergenerational knowledge
- Connections to local ecosystems following natural seasons and rhythms
- Infusion of the teachings of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders
- The energy and medicines of the Land, place-based stories, circle learning
- Risk as part of real-life experiences



A long-eared owl perched in the Cedars. Photo courtesy of Faris Khan.

**Action and Responsibilities:** As Early Childhood Educators, how do we move forward in our practice and pedagogy?

- **KNOW** the Indigenous Lands you live, play and work on
- **ACTION** the Truth and Reconciliation Report's Calls to Action (#12 is on ECE)
- **APPLY** the College of ECE Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice by **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS** and providing space and time for the Indigenous community to engage authentically about their culture and experiences.

## Resources

Humber College. **Students focus on feel and connection.** Humber Today (January 2022). (<https://humber.ca/today/news/instead-taking-notes-students-new-humber-college-class-focus-feel-and-connection>)

Humber College. **Two-Eyed Seeing: Changing the way we think about land-based play.** Humber Today (January 2021). (<https://humber.ca/today/news/two-eyed-seeing>)

Zimanyi, Keeshig and Short, 2020. **Children make connections to Aki (Earth) through Anishinaabemowin teachings.** The Conversation. (<https://theconversation.com/children-make-connections-to-aki-earth-through-anishinaabe-teachings-133669>)





10 ways to greet from 6 feet. Illustration from Toronto Public Health

## Mastering Resilience Among Educators

MARY-KATE ASANTE-ANTWI, RN., RPN., BScN., MSN EdD(c), Humber College

Did you know that constant change in public health regulations and policies can affect an Early Childhood Educator's (ECE) role and well-being?

There are enormous expectations on ECEs to provide safe and effective service to the children they support. ECEs must adhere to public health measures and their agency policies to ensure that everyone is safe in the childcare environment to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Due to this, ECEs must find innovative, fun, and developmentally appropriate teaching methods and strategies to teach and support children to comprehend the importance of public health measures, such as handwashing and physical distancing.

Engaging in developmentally appropriate support for children in child care will ensure children's understanding of these times and what they can do to feel safe. As we all know, touch and hugs are limited

due to COVID-19 protocols; however, there are ways we can have fun and greet each other without hugs or physical contact.

### Reference

Toronto Public Health (Ed.). (n.d.). 10 ways to greet from 6 feet. 10 Ways to Greet from 6 Feet . cartoon.

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.

—Socrates

# Promoting Communication Development While Masked and Distanced

**INGE LOUW**, B.Sc., Reg. CASLPO, Speech-Language Pathologist, Early Abilities, Lumenus Community Services

As a Speech-Language Pathologist, some of the first things I typically encourage a parent or caregiver of a young child with communication delays to do, is to come closer, get down lower, become a part of their child's play and most importantly: let them see your face. After all, when you implement these strategies, you are letting the child know that you are interested in having an interaction with them which may allow for more language learning opportunities. In the era of COVID-19, implementation of these strategies becomes challenging—while parents/caregivers may still be able to follow through on most of them in the home environment, it is not always possible in a childcare setting where masking and distancing are present.

Allowing a child to see your face and mouth is particularly important when we consider that, as children grow, they use lip-reading as part of speech and language development. Furthermore, children growing up in bilingual homes rely even more on lip-reading to see and hear the differences in sounds and grammar between different languages. When we wear a mask (which covers almost 80% of your face):

- Facial expressions are more difficult to read—it is more challenging for a child to judge the safety and acceptability of their activity when they cannot see your smiling (indicating safe/acceptable) or frowning face (indicating possible danger)
- It is more difficult to show interest in what a child is doing or saying—a child is more likely to keep an interaction going when they see your excited facial expression (i.e., a sign of your interest)



Masked Children learning in class. Photo by RODNAE Productions from Pexels

- Speech may become less clear—children pay more attention to clear speech. It is also easier to notice subtle grammatical features when speech is clear

Add distancing and:

- Speech can sound quieter because it must travel a greater distance
- It may be more difficult for the child to focus on what you are saying
- It may be more difficult for you to notice the child's interest and follow their lead.

**So, what can we do when much of our face is obscured, and we are physically distanced from a child? Here are some tips:**

- Make sure you have the child's attention—call their name, wave at them, hold up a sign
- Face them directly—reduce/remove obstacles blocking their view of you
- Reduce background noise if possible—move away from the radio or noisy play
- Lower yourself to their physical level—even if you are farther away
- Talk a little slower and louder (but do not shout)—words, speech sounds and grammar stand out more

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## Specialized Consultation

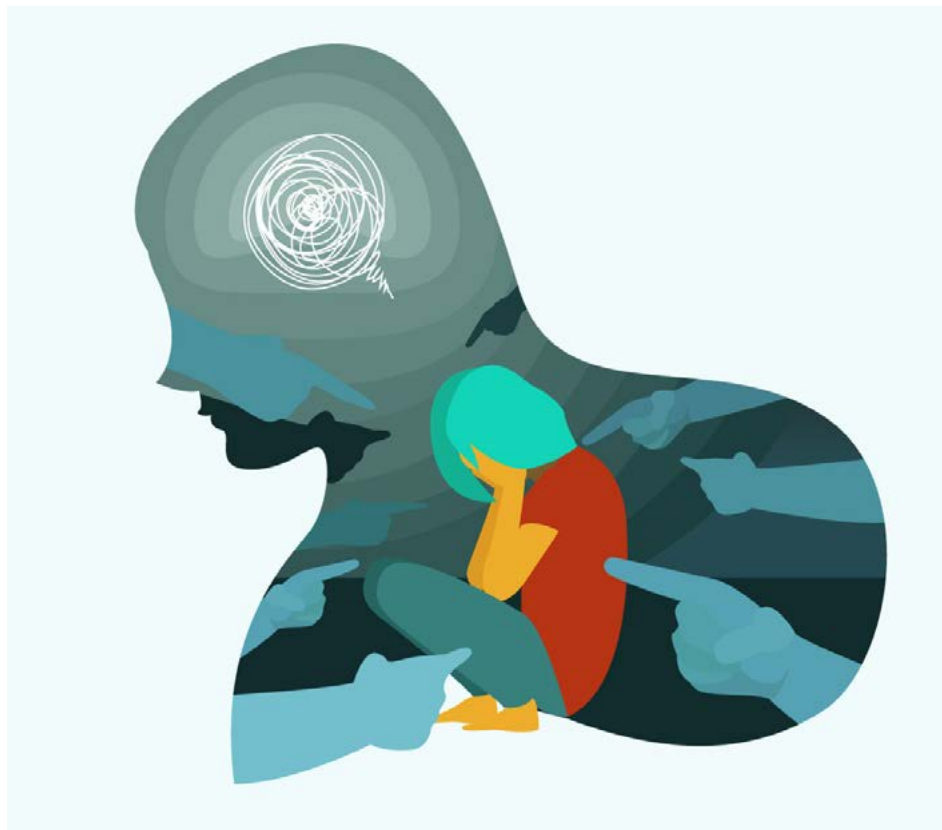
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- Use body language—thumbs up to show that what they are doing is safe/acceptable
- Exaggerate your intonation and gestures—a child might focus more on you and what you are saying
- Make a lot of specific comments—talk about and describe what is happening in the environment; describe feelings

Research on the possible effects of masking and distancing on communication development is slowly starting to come out. In the meantime, we should be encouraged by the fact that children are resilient thanks to their still-developing brains—they will figure out other ways to communicate and understand communication and are highly likely to adapt quickly when masking and distancing are no longer required. Good news!

### References

- Greenberg, J & Livshits, H. (2020). COVID-19: How Educators Can Build Interactions While Balancing Precautions
- ASHA. (2020). Communicating Effectively While Wearing Masks and Physical Distancing
- Scanlon Speech Therapy. (2020). A Child-Friendly Approach to Face Masks
- Thomas, C. CBC News. (2021). How masks could affect speech and language development in children



Individual suffering from trauma. Illustration by swayaway1 from Vecteezy.

## Looking Through a Trauma-Informed Lens

### Part 1

**AMANDA BOYD**, BA, CYC, CTP; Behaviour Consultant, Lumenus Community Services

Stress and trauma can significantly impact the emotional wellbeing of children and influence the way they interact with others, form relationships, and engage in different environments. Exposure to repeated or long-lasting stressful situations may impact a child's health and development. When this happens, the brain shifts to a heightened state of survival and instead of growing and learning, focuses on survival: simply staying alive, safe and meeting basic needs.

### What is stress?

Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain/tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances. Stress can be associated with negative and positive experiences.

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### What is trauma?

Sometimes we have experiences that are far beyond our ability to manage. These experiences, if left unsupported or experienced for long periods, can be traumatizing. Trauma is a lasting emotional response to the impact of reoccurring negative experiences associated with danger, harm, neglect and/or abuse and may persist even after the experience has ended. Feelings associated with trauma can leave lasting effects on a child's emotional, social, physical and cognitive development, making it difficult for children to reach their full potential. Understanding childhood trauma and the impact this has on children's brain function will help adults respond to the needs of children through a trauma informed lens.

### Think of the brain in three parts:

Consider the child's brain in three parts that work together to create a child's identity, relationships with others and responses to life's experiences.

1. **Survival Brain** keeps us safe at all costs. It controls our instinctive responses for survival, and does so through fight, flight, or freeze responses.
2. **Emotional Brain** is responsible for our emotional experience—how we emotionally assess or judge a situation and respond or engage.
3. **Thinking Brain** is responsible for rational thought and higher cognitive functions. Examples of higher functions include:
  - Concentration, organization, judgement, reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, emotional regulation, thinking before responding
  - Social skills and reading social cues
  - Abstract thinking and memory
  - Language, empathy, and creativity

### How do these parts of the brain work together?

The **thinking brain** is responsible for our personality, sense of humour, ability to interact, form relationships



Child living through trauma. Photo by Pixabay from Pexels.

and show empathy towards others. This helps children manage tricky situations faced in life. This **thinking brain** receives information from experience, analyzes and communicates this analysis to the emotional brain. The **emotional brain** determines how to feel and respond. If a threat is determined, the **emotional brain** communicates this information to the **survival brain** activating a survival response to the situation or experience.

### What happens to the brain when we experience stress and trauma?

When a person experiences a stressful or traumatic experience, this threat activates the **survival brain**. Staying safe is typically the immediate response. For example, if there is a tiger at our door ready to pounce, we are not reviewing our shopping list in our minds; we need activation NOW, to get away and be safe. We need our **survival brain** to react.

### Why is prolonged stress and trauma a problem?

The problem arises when the brain is in a constant state of survival. When the **survival brain** is activated, the **thinking brain** shuts off. During this time, the



## Specialized Consultation

**emotional brain** takes cues from the survival part of the brain and goes into “danger mode”, expressing emotional responses such as, fight, flight, or freeze. When the **thinking brain** shuts off, this prevents the child’s ability to store and access all of the skills needed for learning. If the **thinking brain** is deactivated, we cannot use any of the skills that will help the situation and cannot learn new skills. This is especially risky for children when their learning and development is interrupted. Potential lifelong risks for children experiencing prolonged stress and trauma may include:

- Cognitive or learning delays
- Difficulties interacting with others and forming positive relationships
- Emotional and self-regulation difficulties
- Physical illnesses

## What can we do?

The brain grows through experience. If a child has learned through the experience of stress and hardship, they can re-learn through different types of experiences, such as nurturing, attentive, and caring relationships and connections. Consistent, predictable, nurturing, and patient relationships with familiar adults can help calm a child and support them to feel safe. When this happens, they may grow and develop to their fullest potential.

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- Van Der Kolk, B (2015) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Penguin Books.

## Links to further information on Connectability

**Part 2—Signs of Stress and Trauma in Children** (<https://connectability.ca/2022/01/07/signs-of-stress-and-trauma-in-children>)

**Part 3—Steps to Supporting a Child Experiencing Stress and Trauma** (<https://connectability.ca/2022/01/10/steps-to-supporting-a-child-experiencing-stress-and-trauma>)

**Part 4—Setting up For Success** (<https://connectability.ca/2022/01/10/setting-up-for-success>)

## Educator Wellness

**BRENDALEE SIMAS**, Child Care Consultant, Child Development Institute

### What is wellness?

Wellness is a multidimensional and holistic state of being that is conscious, self-directed, and focused on promoting and maximizing human potential (National Wellness Institute, n.d.). Wellness is something that you choose to pursue. It's a choice you make in life that requires constant effort to achieve. While associated with a healthy lifestyle, wellness goes beyond the confines of general health. It encompasses a positive outlook on your mind, body, and soul and is something we often have more control over than health.

When considering wellness, we are looking at the overall physical and mental well-being of an individual. Our current early years pedagogy highlights the importance of fostering children's well-being, and since educators play a key role in children's development, it is essential to also consider and support educators' overall well-being.

### Why is wellness important?

Wellness is important because it impacts so many areas of life. Honestly, everyone wants to live their life to the fullest potential. Unfortunately, this is not easy. Life often comes with challenges and things we can't control. Educators are experiencing greater and more substantial amounts of pressure and stress as essential workers during this pandemic. Regrettably, many educators don't have the proper tools or mindset to overcome these challenges. Research tells us that children are affected by how their educators view themselves (Khattar & Callaghan, 2015) and that children are at the greatest risk when the people caring for them are experiencing persistent and severe adversities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). Educators play many roles and need to take a moment to reflect. Critical reflection enables educators to become more intentional, responsive, informed, and confident (CECE, 2017). Reflective practice helps us to create coping strategies, problem-solving skills,



Educators enjoying the outdoors. Photo by PNW Production from Pexels

and to build resiliency in order to continue effectively practicing a profession that is increasingly dynamic (CECE, 2017). Make a *commitment* to take better care of yourself, so that you can better take care of the children you work with.

### Dimensions of Wellness

Dimensions of wellness play a major role in how we either experience happiness and satisfaction or experience unhappiness or dissatisfaction. These experiences influence our overall health. When one of these areas is in distress, we experience higher levels of stress.

**Emotional wellness:** Has to do with your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. It allows you to clearly recognize and accept your feelings, both positive and negative. This includes adapting to stress, life changes, and difficult times. Ways to improve your emotional wellness include:

- Being optimistic and focusing on the positive aspects of life, smiling as much as possible
- Learning to accept your emotions, whether good, bad, or ugly
- Building and maintaining strong relationships
- Maintaining a good work/life balance, managing stress through positive coping methods
- Seeking professional support when necessary



## Wellness and Self-Care

**Spiritual wellness:** The process by which you seek meaning and purpose in life. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including organized religion, prayer, meditation, yoga, as well as a careful assessment of your morals, values, and beliefs. Ways to improve your spiritual wellness include:

- Performing daily positive affirmations, take time to think about who you are
- Practicing yoga, meditating, reflecting on the meaning of past events that occurred in your life
- Forgiving and forgetting the actions of those who have wronged you, practicing acceptance

**Physical wellness:** Keeping your body in optimal condition and health. It can be achieved through a well-balanced diet, exercise, and practicing self-control. Ways to improve your physical wellness include:

- Exercising for at least 30 minutes a day
- Consuming a well-balanced diet and limiting the consumption of unhealthy foods and drinks
- Eating breakfast every day, getting enough sleep at night
- Learning to listen to your body and recognize early signs of illness

**Social wellness:** Your ability to connect with others and maintain strong relationships. It can be achieved by surrounding yourself with positive people and being comfortable with who you are in social environments.

Ways to improve your social wellness include:

- Scheduling time to be with family or friends, making an effort to build new relationships
- Being respectful in the way you communicate with others, embracing laughter
- Refraining from blaming, judging, or criticizing others

**Occupational wellness:** Maximizing your workplace happiness by focusing on work that brings you a sense of joy, satisfaction, and accomplishment. It can be achieved by exploring various career pathways and successfully managing working place stressors.



Individual enjoying the outdoors. Photo by RF...studio from Pexels

## References and Resources

### Resilient Educator: Teacher Wellbeing Strategies

(<https://resilienteducator.com/collections/wellbeing/>)

### Physical Health Impacts Mental Wellness (<https://www.avma.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/Personal/PeerAndWellness/Pages/Physical-Health-Impacts-Mental-Wellness.aspx>)

### The Importance of Early Childhood Educator Mental Health & Well-Being: A guide to supporting educators, 2019, V2 ([https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/QCR\\_Importance\\_of\\_ECE\\_Mental\\_Health.pdf](https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/QCR_Importance_of_ECE_Mental_Health.pdf))

### What Is Wellness and Why Is It Important? (<https://introwellness.com/health/what-is-wellness/>)

### Wellness tools (<https://nationalwellness.org/resources/free-wellness-tools/>)

### Wellness Together Canada (<https://wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA>)

“Love yourself first, and everything else falls in line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world.”

—Lucille Ball

# The Chocolate Mug Cake

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How often do you promise yourself that despite the busy mornings, you start making balanced, nutritious, and delicious breakfasts that satisfy your family members and will take almost no time at all? If the taste of chocolate puts a smile on your face, and you like soft cottage cheese the way I do, then this recipe is for you!

When I discovered it for the first time, I instantly knew it was a keeper. I make this breakfast at least twice a week and can hardly wait while the Chocolate Mug Cake is baking in the oven (if I am not in a rush) or cooking in the microwave (if I have no time). Besides being inexpensive and delicious, it has all the components of a balanced diet for children and adults, such as protein, complex carbohydrates and unsaturated fat. It is also versatile and can satisfy your taste buds with a bit of adjustment if you desire. If you are not a big fan of pressed cottage cheese, you can use soft cottage cheese. Suppose you have a hard time finding whole grain rice flour? Not a problem! Alternate with whole grain wheat flour. If you are not sure about using stevia as a sweetener, use regular sugar. I hope I managed to reassure you to indulge yourself in trying out this delicious breakfast with an irresistible aroma and healthy ingredients.

## Ingredients

(serves two):

- Wholegrain Rice Flour – 55g (¼ cup)
- Cottage Cheese (2%) – 220g (1 cup)
- Eggs – 2
- Baking powder – 2 g (½ tsp)
- Cocoa powder – 9g (2 tsp)
- Stevia or granulated sugar – by taste
- Dark (or milk) chocolate – 16 g (1 tbsp)
- Berries (any) – by taste



Chocolate Mug Cake. Photo by Larissa Kostevskii.

## Directions

1. Mix all the ingredients, except for the chocolate and berries. If making the mug cake in the microwave, divide the dough into two parts and pour it into two mugs. Let it cook for 3-5 minutes, depending on the power of your microwave.
2. If you are baking it in the oven, preheat it to 350 F; pour the dough in a silicone form and bake it for 20 minutes.
3. When the cooking/baking is complete, decorate it with pieces of chocolate and berries.

Bon appétit!

## References

Pachirko, N (2021) Instagram. Healthy Breakfasts.

“As long as there is chocolate,  
there will be happiness.”

—Wayne Gerard Trotman

## Hidden Activity Places in the GTA for Families

**BRENDA WILSON**, RECEAS, Montessori, Resource Consultant, Terry Tan Child Centre and

**SHERI ROBB**, CYW, CTP, Resource Consultant, Lumenus Community Services

(As COVID-19 guidelines allow)

### Allan Gardens

(<https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/parks-gardens-beaches/gardens-and-horticulture/conservatories/allan-gardens-conservatory/>) Visit the 6 conservatories.

### Brueckner Rhododendron Gardens

(<https://www.mississauga.ca/events-and-attractions/parks/brueckner-rhododendron-gardens/>) Various plants and garden paths in Mississauga.

### Crock a Doodle

(<https://crockadoodle.com/>) Pottery, painting, birthday parties, family fun, baby and toddler, and kids' activities.

### Don Valley/Evergreen Brick Works

(<https://evergreen.ca>) Child-designed spaces, garden beds growing fruits/vegetables, with climbing and water play features, in Toronto.

### High Park

(<https://www.highparktoronto.com>) Hiking trails, beautiful lakefront, dog park, zoo, playgrounds, greenhouses, picnic areas/eateries and cherry blossom trees.

### Hiking Trails

(<https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/recreation/walking-hiking/trails/>) Get outside and be in nature as you walk through woods or follow paved paths.

### Lakeshore Art Trail

(<http://www.lakeshorearttrail.com/>) Scenic villages of Clarkson, Lorne Park and Port Credit, takes place the weekend following Thanksgiving.

### Outdoor Movies

(<https://www.topictureshow.com/>) See an outdoor movie. Various places across Toronto.



Cherry Blossoms blooming in High Park. Photo by Brandon Law on Unsplash.

### Harbourfront Centre

(<https://harbourfrontcentre.com/>) Waterfront parks and trails, galleries, theaters, special events and access to the ferry to Toronto Island, all along the shores of Lake Ontario.

### Public Art

(<https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture/public-art/public-art-map/#location=&lat=&lng>) Over 400 locations of art displayed in the city.

### Splash Pads

(<https://www.toronto.ca/data/parks/prd/facilities/splash-pads/index.html>) Various cooling stations across the GTA.

### Scarborough Bluffs

(<https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/parks-gardens-beaches/scarborough-bluffs/>) 11 parks covering 15 km along the Lake Ontario shore.

### Textile Museum

(<https://textilemuseum.ca/>) A place to explore textiles. Children and families can participate in hands-on classes.

“Oh! The places you’ll go! You’ll be on your way up! You’ll be seeing great sights! You’ll join the high fliers who soar to high heights.”

—Dr. Seuss



## Professional Learning and Links

### **City Wide Training Calendar**

([www.citywidetraining.ca](http://www.citywidetraining.ca))

### **College of Early Childhood Education (CECE)**

(<https://www.college-ece.ca>)

### **Connectability**

Information and tools supporting inclusion

([www.connectability.ca](http://www.connectability.ca))

### **Early Abilities**

Speech and Language, Vision, Hearing

(<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/children-parenting/pregnancy-and-parenting/parenting/speech-language-vision-hearing/>)

### **The Garry Hurvitz Centre for Community Mental Health**

(<https://sickkidscmh.ca/>)

### **The Hospital for Sick Children**

([www.aboutkidshealth.ca](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca))

### **How Does Learning Happen?**

(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-does-learning-happen-ontarios-pedagogy-early-years>)

### **Toronto Public Health**

(<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/children-parenting/pregnancy-and-parenting/parenting/healthy-child-development/>)



Photo by Monstera from Pexels

## KIT Resource Committee Partners

### **Child Development Institute**

Brendalee Simas, Child Care Consultant

(<https://www.childdevelop.ca>)

### **George Brown College**

Jennifer Cloke-Campbell, Resource Consultant

(<https://www.georgebrown.ca/>)

### **Humber College**

Josie Iannaccio, Resource Consultant and Larissa

Kostevskii, CWT Training Coordinator

(<https://humber.ca/>)

### **Lumenus Community Services**

Amanda Boyd, Behaviour Consultant, Diana Burgess and Sheri Robb, Resource Consultants

(<https://lumenus.ca/>)

### **Strides Toronto**

Nicole Livingstone, Child Care Consultant

(<https://strides-toronto.ca/>)

### **Terry Tan Child Centre**

Brenda Wilson, Resource Consultant

(<https://www.terrytan.ca/>)

### **WoodGreen Community Services**

Janet Scott, Resource Consultant

(<https://www.woodgreen.org/>)

“All things share the same breath—the beast, the tree, the man. The air shares its spirit with all the life it supports.”

—Chief Seattle, (The Stable Company)