



# Spring 2020 Newsletter

Dear Friends of the Early Learning Centre

All of us are feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. I hope that all of you are safe and taking care of yourselves and those closest to you.

There have been a lot of changes here at the Early Learning Centre. There are no children currently coming to the Preschool; our Early Years Family Centre sites are closed; most staff are working from home and all group programming has been cancelled.

However, we know that our children and families are struggling - in many cases more than usual. So despite the lack of face to face contact, we are continuing to reach out to and support families and children. Staff are conducting home visits over the phone, they have put together activity kits to drop off at families' door-steps, we are posting videos on Facebook with stories, songs and activity suggestions. Finally, we are linking families to emergency food sources and linking them to emerging income support programs and providing them with information they need to manage their lives during this crisis.

The response so far has been very positive as any contact can reduce the feeling of isolation which can so quickly lead parents to feel overwhelmed and unable to cope. In some cases, families have requested more frequent home visits than usual. I am proud of how flexible and creative staff have been.

At the moment, it appears that our major funding contracts remain secure. However, it is definitely a time of uncertainty. Fundraising and donations are a particular area of uncertainty.

Brighter Futures for Children 2020, our major annual fundraising event has had to cancel our live event on April 2 and move what we can to an online format. We are very grateful that our event sponsors have agreed to continue to support Brighter Futures without the live event.

You can help make Brighter Futures as success. Please consider following us on FaceBook: Brighter Futures for Children or on our event website: [www.brighterfuturesforchildren.com](http://www.brighterfuturesforchildren.com). We will soon be launching an online auction to replace the Silent Auction. We are also running an online 5050 raffle ([www.brighterfutures5050.ca](http://www.brighterfutures5050.ca)). We will be wrapping up the raffle and the auction on April 30.

You can also donate directly to us online through our website: [www.earlylearning.ca](http://www.earlylearning.ca). As well as ensuring the Centre can continue to function, we expect that we will be receiving requests for emergency support from families. At the moment, we are anticipating the need to provide phone cards to families who are at risk of losing phone service and any contact with the outside world.

*Mary Ann*

Mary Ann McGrath, Executive Director