

ELCC ADVISORS' BOOK CLUB



Our Book Recommendation:

Lights Along the River
by Pat Lamondin Skene

Synopsis

Set on a cold winter morning in 1952, this story follows young Patsy Lamondin as her small town along the Magnetawan River and the shores of Georgian Bay prepares for a life-changing moment, the arrival of electricity. As excitement builds around the community celebration, Patsy reflects on her Métis family's deep connection to the land, the river, and the traditions of music, dance, and outdoor life that have shaped generations before her. While change is in the air, Patsy finds comfort in knowing that no matter what the future brings, her sense of belonging will always remain.



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Age

Recommendation:

Preschool, Kindergarten and
School-Age

Why We Love It

Georgian Bay and the Environs Historic Métis community provide the rich backdrop for a story that allows children to see their culture, land, and lived experiences reflected in literature. When children recognize themselves and their communities in books, it nurtures identity and a deep sense of belonging. Métis people have long lived, learned, and thrived in relationship with the land and water, and many families continue to carry these land-based ways of knowing forward today. Through Patsy's childhood perspective, this story beautifully honours Métis culture while also grounding readers in the historic communities that remain so profoundly connected to Métis identity. It is a meaningful reminder that culture, place, and belonging are woven together across generations.

Language Extension Activity

In the story, Patsy delights in large family gatherings where her uncles and cousins play traditional instruments, and she joyfully dances a jig alongside her cousins. Scan the QR code or click the link to bring fiddle music into your early learning environment. You might invite children to play Freeze Dance, Freeze Jig, or dans pi arèt (jèl) to help them connect the lively music to their bodies through movement and rhythm.

Métis Dancing



Métis Fiddle Music



English	French	Michif-Fransè
jigging or step dancing	giguer	jigé
freeze jig	danse et fige (gèle)	dans pi arèt (jèl)

Let's Chat About the Book!

Join us on the MNO Education Hub's "ELCC Professionals" discussion area! See you there! Don't have the app? Download it by scanning the QR code.



Métis Connection

Lights Along the River draws on author Pat Lamondin Skene's childhood in the Georgian Bay Historic Métis Community. Through Patsy's story, children are introduced to a Métis family and community experiencing change while remaining connected through family, place, music, dance, and community life.

The book also provides an opportunity to learn more about the Georgian Bay Historic Métis Community, one of the seven historic Métis communities recognized in Ontario.



Métis Nation
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Nurture children's natural linguistic curiosities. Be a co-learner with the children in your early learning environment using the NEW Michif-Fransè app

The Michif-Fransè app!

Android

IOS



Centring Ontario Métis Stories in Early Learning

Literacy experiences can be a meaningful way to uplift and centre Ontario Métis voices in early learning environments. Inviting children to engage in a read-aloud such as *What a Hippopota-Mess!* by Métis author Pat Skene creates space for children to hear stories that reflect Métis perspectives, humour, and ways of knowing while building vocabulary and comprehension.

Centering Métis authors aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 12 and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework, supporting Indigenous-led, culturally relevant learning opportunities for all children.



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HDLH Foundation Belonging

Centring Ontario Métis stories nurtures children's sense of belonging by reflecting diverse identities, cultures, and lived experiences within the learning environment. children begin to see themselves and others as valued, connected, and respected members of their community.

HDLH Foundation Engagement

STEM activities encourage children to think critically, take risks, and adjust their strategies as they learn. By offering opportunities to problem-solve in real time, educators nurture children's curiosity, confidence, and engagement in meaningful learning.

STEM Circuit Extension Activity

STEM learning does not need to be limited to formal science settings. When children explore simple circuits using batteries, wires, and lights, they are invited into hands-on, inquiry-based play where they discover how connections make things work.

Through this experience, children test ideas, make predictions, and problem-solve when something does not work as expected. They explore cause-and-effect relationships while strengthening fine motor skills as they manipulate materials. Children may wonder, "Why isn't it working?" and adjust their approach, building persistence and critical thinking.

By engaging in circuit exploration, children develop early STEM concepts in a playful and meaningful way, while building confidence as capable thinkers and problem-solvers.



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