

ELCC ADVISORS' BOOK CLUB

Our Book Recommendation:

Our Ancestors' Kitchen by Willie Poll

Synopsis

In this story, Willie Poll reminds us that “our ancestors teach us there are memories in our meals. There is magic in our cooking. There is culture in our food.” Through time spent in her grandmother’s kitchen, a young girl begins to explore and deepen her understanding of her Métis culture. As she helps to prepare her grandfather’s favourite traditional meal, she reflects on teachings, values and stories passed down through generations, including sustainability, respectful harvesting practices, community, and care.



Purchase from GoodMinds

[Click Here](#)



Age

Recommendation:

Preschool, Kindergarten and
School-Age

Why We Love It

Now more than ever, it is essential to introduce sustainability in the early years. When children are supported to connect not only food but also everyday materials and resources directly to the land, they begin to understand the land as a living, interconnected system that provides for our needs. These early connections create meaningful opportunities to teach children to care for the Earth, harvest respectfully, and to take only what they need. Whether through food, natural materials, or shared resources, children learn that sustainability is rooted in respect, gratitude, and balance. Just as important, these experiences foster the value of sharing with others, reinforcing the importance of community care and collective well-being. Through these teachings, children begin to see themselves as part of a larger community and ecosystem, with a shared responsibility to care for one another and for the land, now and for future generations.

Métis Connection

Our Ancestors' Kitchen shows how food can carry family memories, teachings, and connections to Métis culture across generations.

Through the child's reflections on harvesting wild rice, preparing traditional foods, and learning from her grandfather, the story introduces children to ideas about respectful harvesting, sharing, community care, and learning from the land.

The book provides an opportunity for educators to explore how food, family, and harvesting traditions can help pass Métis knowledge and stories from one generation to the next.



English	French	Michif-Fransè
maple syrup	sirop d'érable	siro dérab
blueberry	bleuet	bleuè
oats	avoine	awèn

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.



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

Language Extension Idea

What is a better breakfast for a big day, full of play, than some hot oatmeal? Try making oatmeal for breakfast or a snack in your early learning environment. Allow the children to top it off with some local or wild berries and sweeten it with a drizzle of maple syrup. Try saying some of the words in French or Michif-Fransè!



The Michif-Fransè app!

Android

IOS



Métis Nation
of Ontario 

Mud Kitchen Extension Activity

Dramatic play does not occur solely within indoor learning environments. When kitchen centres are extended outdoors, children are free to explore, get messy, and engage deeply with natural materials such as sand, soil, water, pinecones, sticks, grass, and other loose parts. These materials are transformed through play into meals to be prepared, recipes to be shared, or imaginative potions to be created. Outdoor mud kitchens invite children to carry their imaginative play beyond the classroom while also supporting rich, hands-on learning. Through these experiences, children engage in sensory exploration, early math concepts such as sorting and measuring, fine motor skill development, and cause-and-effect reasoning. By blending dramatic play with the natural world, educators create meaningful and deeply engaging learning opportunities.

 **READ MORE**



HDLH Foundation Expression

By extending kitchen play outdoors, educators create language-rich environments where communication is purposeful, social, and deeply connected to children's lived experiences and curiosity about the natural world.

HDLH Foundation Engagement

Having children actively engage in caring for their learning environments is a meaningful way to build respect for materials, the land, and one another.

Pedagogy of Care

Caring for learning environments invites children to see themselves as active contributors within their spaces and communities, transforming everyday acts such as cleaning, organizing, and maintaining shared areas into meaningful expressions of responsibility, care, and belonging. Through this lens, care becomes a pedagogy that nurtures respect for both people and place, reinforcing the understanding that learning environments are living, relational spaces rather than neutral or disposable settings.

Maria Montessori viewed children as capable learners who can engage in complex, purposeful tasks when these experiences are introduced in developmentally appropriate ways. By breaking tasks into manageable steps and offering intentional guidance, children are empowered to develop independence, confidence, concentration, and problem-solving skills. Within Montessori-inspired practice, caring for the environment is not an adult responsibility imposed on children, but an essential component of learning through play and purposeful activity.

 **READ MORE**

