



EarlyON Newsletter



April 2019

EarlyON Staff Profile

Name, Position, Agency:
Kitty Yiu RECE, Program
Facilitator, Malvern Family
Resource Centre

Years of Service: 15 years

**What you love about your
job?**

I find great fulfillment in my job as I love working with children and families. I find satisfaction when the children in the programs are enthusiastically engaged and learning. I feel a great sense of achievement when I see the children learning through play in my programs. It is always a pleasure to see the children leave at the end of the day with a smile. Furthermore, I find it comforting that I have built strong relationship with parents/caregivers. We can share parenting tips and information on child development. It is extremely satisfying when parents/caregivers trust and rely on our guidance and expertise.



**Words of wisdom for other
EarlyON staff in this sector
when they are supporting
children and families.**

“Passion” would be my key word of wisdom. Always remember that each child is unique, be a positive role model for children and parents/caregivers to show them how to master skills at their own pace.



Operational Updates

New EarlyON Program in North East Toronto

We are excited to announce that Agincourt Community Services Association was the successful organization in the EOI process for a new EarlyON Child and Family Centre in North East Toronto. Thank you to all of those who took the time to apply, we continue to be inspired by your desire and commitment to serving children and families in Toronto.

The new EarlyON site is located at Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church, 3223 Kennedy Rd, Toronto, ON, M1V 4Y1.



Consultant Visits

EarlyON Consultants have almost completed their inaugural visits to every EarlyON program in the City. Thank you for your participation in these visits and for sharing helpful information about your program's strengths and challenges. The information collected during these first visits through the **Program Snapshot survey** will be used to better understand individual program approaches and participants, and determine system trends. This foundational data collection process is intended to be a one-time activity that will ensure that system planning decisions are feasible and evidence-informed. With future surveys, we will ensure that we send out questions well in advance as we heard that organizations would like more time to prepare.

Consultants also distributed the **Site Profile Tool** to EarlyON programs. Organizations are asked to complete the Site Profile before their next visit so that it can be reviewed together with their Consultant. The Site Profile Tool evaluates the physical characteristics of Toronto's EarlyON Centres and allows TCS staff to effectively respond to potential future funding or relocation opportunities. We understand that not all organizations will be able to answer all of the questions in the tool, and that the tool may not be relevant for some locations (e.g. library-based programs). Similar to the Program Snapshot survey, completing the Site Profile Tool is a one-time foundational data collection activity. Please speak with your Consultant if you have any concerns about completing the tool. Completing the tool is optional, but not completing the tool may result in limited access to future health and safety funding or relocation opportunities.

A friendly reminder that your EarlyON Consultant is your single point of contact for TCS and is available to assist organizations with any operational or financial questions, support ongoing capacity building, and enhance connections with local community partners.



EarlyON Staff Networks

February marked the first meetings of the four regional EarlyON Staff Networks and the City-wide Leadership Network. The Staff Networks were very well attended and program staff had an opportunity to discuss ideas, connect and collaborate.

Catherine Moher and Valerie Kenny, from the Ryerson University School of Early Childhood Studies, provided a workshop on Family Support Theory and Practice. The workshop reinforced some of the foundational concepts guiding the work in EarlyON Child and Family Centres and provided a great opportunity to reflect on our work with children, families and communities.

We look forward to hosting the next round of EarlyON Staff Networks in June 2019. These network meetings will focus on anti-bias and anti-oppression, and support our collective ability to ensure that all EarlyON programs provide inclusive, safe spaces where diversity is acknowledged, visible and celebrated.



EarlyON Leadership Network

Thank you for your participation in the inaugural EarlyON Leadership Network meeting in February 2019. We appreciated sharing key updates from the work underway with the EarlyON Advisory Committee and Working Tables. Moving forward, we intend to provide brief updates and primarily use the network as a place to gather strategic advice and facilitate sector-wide discussion on items pertaining to implementation, integration and operations. In addition, based on feedback received from participants, we will no longer be including a professional learning component in these meetings.

We will share the agenda for the next meeting on June 27, 2019 well in advance to allow for the selection of appropriate representatives from each EarlyON agency. At the next meeting we will start by hosting an open conversation on what everyone would like to get out of the network as we move forward. In addition, staff from the Toronto Public Library will be joining us to solicit advice on potential City-wide policies and practices related to working with EarlyON service providers. Please email us at earlyon@toronto.ca if you have any feedback on the network or if you would like to add an item to the agenda.



Updates from the EarlyON Advisory Committee and Working Tables

The EarlyON Advisory Committee and Working Tables were established to support specific EarlyON system transformational tasks and are time-limited. These groups are made up of a wide range of EarlyON service providers, community partners and TCS staff. As we complete key activities outlined in the EarlyON Action Plan (2018-2020), this structure will slowly dissolve over the course of 2019 and into early 2020.

The Advisory Committee provides strategic advice on overarching system transformation initiatives. Items that are discussed at the Working Tables go to the Advisory for final review and strategic discussion focused on alignment with other system transformation activities. We thank all of the members of the Advisory Committee for their active participation and helpful advice.

The **Planning Working Table** has helped to develop several planning tools including the planning index, EarlyON planning considerations, the EarlyON Design Guidelines, the Site Profile Tool, and has contributed to the initial phases of the cost analysis. As this group has achieved its mandate, this group will wrap up in June 2019. Thank you to everyone who participated to these very lively discussions. The staff lead for this table is James McLean (james.mclean8@toronto.ca).

The **Professional Learning Working Table** has supported the development of the EarlyON engagement structure including the launch of the Staff Networks. Their current work includes consulting with local community colleges to better understand training options for the EarlyON sector and supporting the development of a Professional Learning Strategy. The staff lead for this table is Jessica Abraham (jessica.abraham@toronto.ca).

The **Program Standards Working Table** was closely involved in developing the 2019 EarlyON Operating Guidelines and is currently participating in the concept mapping project to inform the new EarlyON Program Standards. The standards will help to define consistent quality standards and a shared understanding of the program expectations for EarlyON Child and Family Centres throughout Toronto. TCS has been working with external researchers to collect foundational data using participatory research methods involving a wide range of service providers and families. Thank you to everyone for your participation and invaluable input to this process. We will continue to provide regular updates throughout the development and implementation process. The staff lead for this table is Maureen McDonald (maureen.mcdonald@toronto.ca).



The Inclusion Working Table has contributed to several important discussions regarding how best to support children and parents with extra support needs within the EarlyON sector. Members from this group are also participating in the concept mapping process to ensure that inclusion is embedded throughout the future standards. The staff lead for this table is Maureen McDonald (maureen.mcdonald@toronto.ca).

The Data and Evaluation Working Table has been involved in providing significant feedback to several ongoing data and evaluation projects including the development of the new EarlyON registration and sign-in system, the Program Snapshot Survey, and the early stages of the EarlyON outcome framework. The staff lead for this table is Ellen Tate (ellen.tate@toronto.ca).

Communications and Outreach

The City will continue to promote EarlyON Child and Family Centres in 2019 through a variety of strategies including a bus shelter ad campaign, digital media ads and promotional materials like posters and flyers that will be distributed to community partners throughout the City. If you need materials for your own outreach activities, please contact Shani Halfon at shani.halfon@toronto.ca to put in a request.



Key EarlyON Dates

Staff Networks

June 5 (French), June 6 (North), June 7 (South), June 11, (East), June 12 (West)

Leadership Network

June 27

Semi-annual year-to-date reporting due (Jan 1 – Jun 30, 2019)

July 19

SAVE THE DATE for the 2019 EarlyON Cross-Sector Collaboration Event

September 25

