



FAMILY  
DAY

FOCUS

WELCOME  
ISSUE 2021



**Welcome!**



MESSAGE FROM  
**DIANE DALEY, CEO**

**It's my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to new and returning families.**

We're happy to have you with us and look forward to a time we can connect in a more personal way.

Seeing and hearing children outside again in their school playgrounds and communities is heartwarming. Reduced restrictions are positive and so welcome!

I have missed the freedom of going to the gym and working out, as well as connecting socially with others in a restaurant. For me, these activities now feel extra special. It's also an example of how many of the things we do are centred on social connection. Recognizing that we still have a way to go in terms of returning to "normal", Family Day remains focused on managing the risks of COVID-19 and variants of concern. We are working with our respective public health departments and support the mandatory vaccinations effort for staff across the agency. We will do everything possible to protect the children in our care.

As early learning educators, we know that young children thrive on social connections. It is so evident during play-based learning, daily routines, meal and snack times or indoor and outdoor play. Social connections are central to all Family Day curriculums. Our skilled educators have worked hard to maintain a sense of connectivity—despite wearing full PPE and adhering to rigorous health and safety protocols. Just imagine, for our very youngest children – *born during*

*the pandemic* – this is the only world they know. Our usual spontaneous physical connections and interactions look different now.

In this edition of FOCUS, we shine the spotlight on resiliency: "the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity." We acknowledge the negative social and emotional impacts of the pandemic on everyone (*young children in particular*). However, as you will read on the next page, FOCUS describes some evidence-based but simple things to reduce the negative impacts.



Family Day is very proud of the skills, knowledge, and expertise of educators. They play such a critical role in fostering the well-being of young children. With the federal election behind us, we hope the national commitment to providing a high-quality, licensed childcare system maintains its momentum. Accessible, inclusive, high-quality childcare along with skilled educators must be a priority for the sector.

***Here's hoping we can all be together soon!***

# A Time for Building Resilience

As educators, it's important to acknowledge how the ongoing social and emotional ramifications of the pandemic have affected our children – and ourselves.

With a new school year underway, we need to explore recultivating resilience – something that may have diminished in many of our children.

## What is resilience?

It's a child's ability to adapt and thrive in the face of hardship and adversity.

Picture a seesaw. Negative experiences (like not seeing friends or cancelled extracurricular activities) pile up on one side, weighing it down. On the other side, positive relationships and supportive resources help tip the seesaw the other way, to achieve positive balance.

## How do you foster resilience in children?

Dinah, RECE, Assistant Supervisor, Don Valley East EarlyON Child and Family Centre says, "we encourage families to try as much as they can to establish and stick with mealtime, play, homework and bedtime routines – even on weekends. We share that the recommended goal for children is two hours of movement every day; the more physically active they are, the healthier their bodies – and the more tired they'll be at bedtime. In our Mindfulness program, we focus on gratitude; keeping gratitude in mind helps children and families keep positive. Recently, one of our little ones said, 'I'm grateful for myself.' How amazing is that?"

EarlyON Program Facilitator Lovely adds, "Remember, before we can take care of our kids, we must take care of ourselves. During our Mindfulness program wind-down, we guide parents through breathing exercises while they give their

babies a small massage." At home, Lovely and her teenagers cook healthy meals and work out together. "We help each other with sit-ups!" she laughs.

## Other ways to help bolster resilience:

### • Be a safety net

A caring adult can acknowledge a child's feelings (which is critical to supporting self-regulation) and help them cope in any situation.

### • Rediscover daily rhythms

Drumming can be fun and engaging for all ages: on their own personal drum, each student produces a unique beat to communicate how they're feeling. Drumming can happen each morning, during transitions, or towards day end. Then, lead a discussion: were the rhythms soft, slow, fast, loud? Which rhythms felt relaxing or comforting?

Help students return to the rhythm of school by chunking assignments between movement, water, and snack breaks. Shorter work periods (that emphasize quality, not quantity) can help sustain engagement and focus.

### • Move! Then move more!

Integration Services Resource Consultant Rakhee shares, "offering opportunities to move, play and rediscover creativity helps children co-regulate – which also fosters resilience. We say, 'if the bum is numb, the brain is the same.'"

Rakhee also suggests relaxing the focus on behaviour management – in the classroom and at home. "If we actively observe and listen to our children, they will tell us what they need. When children feel seen and heard, they feel safe and secure. And that's when we'll see them excel."

This kid-friendly recipe is a real keeper!



## Pizza Sushi

A great use for bread that's less than completely fresh.

### Ingredients

- 4 slices sandwich bread
- 4 mozzarella cheese sticks or 1/2 cup grated mozzarella
- 4 pepperoni, diced optional
- 1/2 cup marinara sauce, warmed
- 1 tablespoon butter

### Preparation

- 1 Cut off the bread crusts.
- 2 Using a rolling pin, roll out the bread until flat.
- 3 Place a cheese stick or 2 tablespoons of cheese on the edge of the bread closest to you and add the diced pepperoni.
- 4 Tightly roll up the bread pressing the seam/end down to adhere.
- 5 Heat butter in a frying pan over medium heat and cook the roll-ups seam side down for 1-2 minutes or until golden.
- 6 Continue sautéing the roll-ups on each side until golden all over.
- 7 Cut each roll-up into 4 "sushi rolls" and serve with marinara sauce.

[weelicious.com/grilled-pizza-roll-ups-recipe](http://weelicious.com/grilled-pizza-roll-ups-recipe)



**FAMILY DAY**

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