DIFFERENCES CAN LEAD TO THE MOST ENDURING FRIENDSHIPS
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- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Childminding Monitoring, Advisory and Support (CMAS)
- Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre (MCC)
- London Cross Cultural Learner Centre (LCCLC)
MERRYMOUNT

History

• Merrymount has been providing programs and services to London’s families and children for 142 years.

• Merrymount Children’s Centre was established in 1874 as the Protestant Home for Orphans, Aged and Friendless. When the child welfare system took responsibility for the wardship of orphans in the 1890’s, the Home began to focus on residential care for children of families in crisis or transition.

• A new Home was built as a Centennial Project in 1967 and at the time of its opening, the name Merrymount was adopted to reflect its non-denominational approach. Today’s wonderful facility, at 1064 Colborne Street, was built in 1991.
Merrymount is a recognized and respected leader in the field of crisis support and transition services for children and families.
Merrymount is a caring organization committed to providing around the clock support and crisis care for children and families. We deliver responsive and innovative services and programs to strengthen children and their families in times of transition. The ultimate goal of Merrymount is to provide support and services to help families stay together.
MERRYMOUNT CHILDREN’S CENTRE: VALUES

- Compassion
  - Keeping children and families together
    - Safe environment
    - Unique, customized solutions
  - Consultative
    - Proactive partnerships
  - Professional
We recognize the value, strength and potential of the individual and the collective
We believe in the value of empathy, dialogue, trust and respect
We value research, collaboration, and innovation leading to the design and implementation of adapted solutions
We consistently demonstrate discipline, efficiency and effectiveness in our work, our structure, communications, decisions and collective actions
We believe empowerment leads to shared responsibility and leadership
We value diversity and inclusion
MERRYMOUNT PROGRAMS

- Family and Child Support Program
- Crisis Residential/Respite Program
  - Family Resource Program
  - Supervised Access Program
  - All Kids Belong
  - EarlyON

merrymount
Family support and Crisis Centre

cclc
newcomers, diversity, community
MERRYMOUNT IS THE ONLY CENTRE OF ITS KIND IN CANADA
The London Cross Cultural Learner Centre has been operating in London since 1968.

The CCLC was the first Global Education Centre in Canada.

During the movement of Vietnamese refugees to London in the mid-70's, the CCLC extended its support and linkages in the community to assist with refugee needs. Having provided education to the community on global issues, the CCLC was able to connect the refugees with an informed community, ready and willing to provide a helping hand.

In 1980, the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre incorporated as a non-profit, charitable organization. CCLC is now well known locally and nationally as a one-stop, multi-service support network for newcomers yet still maintains its reputation in the global education field.
**Mission**

The London Cross Cultural Learner Centre is a community organization that exists to provide integration services and support to newcomers and to promote intercultural awareness and understanding.

**Vision**

To build a more welcoming community where newcomers can succeed.
Accountability:
- Assuming responsibility and being answerable and transparent in relation to stakeholders for the quality and outcome of the services provided by the organization

Advocacy:
- Actively supporting or intervening on behalf of another individual or group for rights, services and privileges

Compassion:
- Expression of caring thoughts and feelings that motivates and impels one to action

Diversity:
- Actively demonstrate respect for the uniqueness of each individual and to promote inclusion

Empowerment:
- Support individuals and groups to make informed choices and become confident, self-sufficient contributing members of society

Ethics:
- Conducting ourselves in an unbiased manner with integrity and respect for others
THE LONDON CROSS CULTURAL LEARNER CENTRE SERVICES

- Settlement Counselling
- Resettlement Assistance Program
- Settlement Workers in Schools
- Jeremiah's House
- Josephs' House
- Partners In Caring Program - Client Support Services (Care for Newcomer Children)
- LiNC Assessment
- Job Search Workshop (JSW) Program
- Community Connections
- Translation Services / Interpretation Services
- Intercultural Competency Advantage Program
CREATING CNC FOR THE LONDON CROSS CULTURAL LEARNER CENTRE

- In 2016, LCCLC contacted Merrymount about assistance with the influx of Syrian refugees arriving to London.

- After 3 months, LCCLC wanted to continue the program within their agency. LCCLC and MCC collaborated to bring the program to their building so parents could focus on their orientation to Canada and their children would have a safe space to learn, play and be children.

- CNC opened its doors on April 22, 2016 at the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre.
WHY A COLLABORATIVE MODEL?

- Sharing of ideas and experiences
- Knowledge Exchange
- Knowledge Interpretation
- Cultural Brokering
- Cultural humility
WHAT IS CARE FOR NEWCOMER CHILDREN AND WHY ARE WE UNIQUE?

- Children age 19 months to 12 years
- Long term and short term children
- Sharing personal experiences
- Children help develop the curriculum while attending
- Staff, students and volunteers
- Helping families progress with confidence into their new lives in Canada
CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING CARE
Parents do the best they can with their skills and resources but their ability to connect, respond, and care for their children may be compromised by their own trauma, suffering and struggles.

- Direct vs indirect traumatic experience
- Risk Factors
- Trauma informed care.
- Stress Behaviours (fight, flight, freeze, shutdown)
- Trauma can affect all areas of development: - Physical
  - Emotional
  - Cognitive
  - Behavioural
  - Social
SEPARATION ANXIETY

Presenting Concerns

- Children have never been in a childcare setting
- Children have never been apart from their parents
- New sights, new sounds, new smells, different language
- Sometimes a parent will drop them off and leave - the child does not know where their parents are or if they are coming back

Proven Strategies

- Encouraging parents to show up a bit early at first and play with their child to integrate them to the classroom
- Encourage parents to tell the child when they are leaving and when they will return. This helps the child to develop trust that this is a safe place and their parents will come back.
EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND COPING SKILLS

- Providing an outlet for a child’s emotional regulation is key in making them feel comfortable and feel heard.

- Newcomer children can escalate quickly when experiencing an overwhelming emotion. It is important to encourage the children that it is okay to feel that way, whether it be sadness, anger, etc. and to help them to find ways to express their feelings in a constructive manner.

- Something simple like asking a child what makes them happy, and what they do when they’re happy, what makes them sad and what they do when they’re sad.

- Telling a child to stop crying or stop feeling a certain way can cause them to “shut down”
Some immigrant children (refugee or newcomer) have never really had the opportunity to be children and just play.

In some cases they care for younger siblings and take on the role of parent (especially when the family is going through such a massive transition and the parents are learning about their new life in Canada).

These children should still be able to care for their younger sibling when separated from their parents, but they should also be encouraged to try some things on their own.

Patience is key as well as letting the child know that it is okay to do things for themselves and not feel guilt for it.
POTENTIAL TRIGGERS

- Something simple like a water table could potentially trigger a child because fresh clean water was not available.
- Snack time can sometimes lead to a child becoming aggressive or overeating because they may be used to not knowing when their next meal is coming.
- Fire alarms can potentially be a new experience for them and seeing people gather up and then evacuate can lead to lots of anxiety and stress. The uncertainty of what is happening in an emergency situation can be very stressful.
- Hearing sirens (police, firetruck, police car) from the street can frighten children who are unfamiliar with the sounds, or associate them with negative connotations.
Some children could have been exposed to harsh conditions for either their entire lives, or for part of their lives which may have predisposed them to exhibit what we may classify as “odd” behaviour. The “odd” behaviours children may exhibit is purely based off their normality of survival.
OTHER CHALLENGES

- Gaps in services
- Discrimination
WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

- Participating with National Film board of Canada for a documentary

- Life As A Refugee Conference, June 2018

- CMAS: considering using our model nationally

- Community Collaboration award (2017)
SINCE APRIL 2016

- **Community Clients**: 792
- **RAP Clients**: 382
- 17 different languages spoken
- Children from 24 different countries
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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