



EarlyON 'Let's Play Together' Activity Centres

We are pleased to announce something **NEW** for **9 Middlesex County Library Branches!**

Starting in mid-February, EarlyON 'Let's Play Together' Activity Centres will be featured in the following Library Branches:

- ❖ Ailsa Craig
- ❖ Dorchester
- ❖ Glencoe
- ❖ Komoka
- ❖ Lucan
- ❖ Mount Brydges
- ❖ Parkhill
- ❖ Strathroy
- ❖ Thorndale

Background

The 'Let's Play Together' Activity Centres are interactive and self-directed stations. Each Activity Centre features a variety of different play materials focused around a particular theme. The seven themes of the Activity Centres include:

- ❖ Sensory
- ❖ Construction
- ❖ Imagination
- ❖ Math
- ❖ Science
- ❖ Music
- ❖ Loose Parts

For example, the *Imagination* Activity Centre features a variety of small wooden kitchen appliances, tea set, wooden fruits and vegetables and more, of which children and their parents/caregivers can imagine themselves as chefs in the kitchen preparing a meal, brewing a coffee or enjoying tea.

As well, to accompany the play materials, print resources are available as a means to highlight to parents/caregivers ways to explore and learn with their children at the Activity Centre and the benefits this type of play has for their child's growth and development.

Purpose of the Activity Centres

According to a recent survey (2018), 38.2% of over 500 parents/caregivers are not aware of EarlyON Child & Family Centres. Of those that are aware and do not use, the times and days of the programs were a barrier. Respondents were also asked to describe elements of a welcoming community space for their children/families. A common thread in the responses was for “activity centres”.

The ‘Let’s Play Together’ Activity Centres are intended to provide a welcoming and fun space for parents and caregivers with young children to explore, learn and connect together. As well, they are intended to bring EarlyON to the Library and extend reach in the community.

Overall the objectives of the Activity Centres include:

- ❖ To increase awareness of EarlyON
- ❖ To increase access to EarlyON programs
- ❖ To support community interest in activity centres in a child/family friendly space

Evaluation

To help us understand the effectiveness of these Activity Centres, we will be engaging parents/caregivers! Each of the 9 Library Branch will receive a stack of evaluation cards. Once a parent/caregiver completes the evaluation card, they can provide to Branch Staff to be placed in a box for collection. The parent/caregiver will then be provided with a ballot to enter into a prize draw.

There will be one prize draw for each of the 9 branches participating. Each prize is valued at \$150.00. The prizes contain a variety of items that are featured in the Activity Centre you are featuring. The evaluation will be open until March 18th.

Thank you kindly for your support to promotion of these Centres!

