

London's first-ever Indigenous child care centre gears up for summer opening ^[1]

The centre, located in SoHo, will offer traditional language and cultural programming

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EXCERPTS

A first of its kind Indigenous-led child care and family centre plans to open its doors this summer for Indigenous families in the London area.

The Nshwaasnangong Child Care & Family Centre is set to open in the city's SoHo neighbourhood. It will be filled with traditional languages and culture, with the building itself being developed into the shape of a turtle to signify Turtle Island, which is North America.

Jan Martin, director of Indigenous relations at Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre, says London has a big population of Indigenous people and the Indigenous community has been asking for a centre like this for years.

"It will be ingrained in the language and in culture. So we honour all of the, you know, the Haudenosaunee, Ojibway, Lenape, territory around [us]," said Martin.

It's an 88-seat child care centre and will have traditional parts to it, such as land-based healing and a family centre attached to it. The child centre will be available for infants to preschoolers, while the family centre programming will be offered to other ages.

For the building, which is still under construction, Martin says the inside will be rounded and people will be greeted in their language when they come in, along with ceremony and even song and drums.

"It'll be quite different than any other child care," said Martin.

She says people can register their children online and some have expressed interest in registering their children but are waiting for an uptake because they don't have a firm start date as of yet.

Martin says getting this centre up and running has been a "fast process," with some minor setbacks and delays due to the pandemic, but they are hopeful for the future of their opening.

"We're hoping with everything being said, with the weather, all of it, that we are going to be open at the end of the summer."

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: indigenous ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 7 Apr 2021): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/04/londons-first-ever-indigenous-child-care-centre-gears-summer-opening>

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