

Slowing, desiring, haunting, hospicing, and longing for change: Thinking with snails in Canadian early childhood education and care ^[1]

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Abstract

This paper is a collective attempt to respond creatively to a research project we were part of entitled Sketching Narratives of Movement: Towards Comprehensive and Competent Early Childhood Educational Systems Across Canada. We share our slow process of thinking, collaborating, wondering, and pausing along with the figure of the snail as we improvise a nonlinear path towards an unknown future. We think-with various theories of change as a response to narratives shared by participants in the project's knowledge mobilization events: two public webinars and the production of a series of short video interviews. The pandemic simultaneously (re)inscribed ECEC with familiar discourses and narratives, yet, it also issued forth the potential for new imaginaries. ECEC was suddenly positioned as a critical community life-sustaining space for entire systems stressed by a pandemic. Amidst the attention, however, "slimy" traces of chronic neglect, underfunding, and undervaluing of ECEC were gleaming. Given the unpredictable momentum, we argue that it is essential that we open up ECEC to different narratives of movement. To this end, we offer five theoretical capsules titled: Slowing, Desiring, Haunting, Hospicing, and Longing as provocations for storying care otherwise and for stirring ethical consideration with potentialities for slow activism in ECEC.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: COVID-19 ^[4]

early childhood educators ^[5]

system building ^[6]

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