

# PLAY & LEARN SUMMER CAMP 2020



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## INTRODUCTION

Now in its tenth year, this summer program aims to provide a rich play-based learning environment for four weeks, immersing children in literacy and numeracy activities designed to foster their existing academic skills, and to improve their self-confidence and enjoyment in these subject areas. The COVID-19 pandemic created unique challenges for the Play and Learn Camp which required a shift and creativity in the structure and planning of this summer program. For many campers they have not experienced a “school-like environment” since the beginning of March. In addition it is very difficult to maintain social distancing indoors within the structure used in past years. These challenges were overcome by limiting the number of campers present at one time, completing games and crafts outdoors and participating in outdoor field trips and nature walks as part of our learning. This year we ran two programs a morning (12 campers) and an afternoon camp (10 campers), this allowed us to maintain COVID-19 protocols ensuring safety, while targeting interventions and creating a fun and engaging environment for our campers. Both groups joined us on Fridays for the full day as field trips were outside making it easier to maintain social distancing than indoors.

This year, the program was funded by the EMCS Society, Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences, the Rotary Club of Sooke, Excellence in Literacy Foundation, Decoda Literacy Solutions, Sooke Harbourside Lions, The Edith Lando Charitable Foundation, HRSDC - Canada Summer Jobs, and School District No. 62 (Sooke). These funders made it possible to offer the camp to families at no charge.

Candidates best suited to the camp were children six to nine years of age from low income families, Indigenous, and who had been identified by their school as not yet meeting expectations in Literacy and/or Numeracy. All children were referred by the school principal and/or School Based Team. Four schools participated: Saseenos Elementary, Sooke Elementary, L'Ecole Poirier Elementary and John Muir Elementary. There were a total of twenty-two children who attended the camp.

Three coordinators facilitated the camp, leading Literacy, Recreation, and Numeracy. The camp coordinators met prior to the beginning of the camp to discuss schedules, field trips, and expectations for the camp and children.

The 2020 camp again took place at Sooke Elementary School, which is the perfect site with classrooms that allowed flexibility for learning. Everything at the school is properly sized for this age group, and we have now been at this location for six years. They enjoyed the two playgrounds, the fields, and the gym. It is also centrally located for parents, providing a more physically and financially accessible location than previous years. The Sooke Elementary playgrounds and close proximity to other outdoor learning spaces was also invaluable in our efforts to adhere to the COVID-19 protocols.

Another focus of the camp is the physical literacy component. Just like the A-B-C's of reading and writing, physical literacy for this age group focuses on A-agility, B-balance, and C-control. Physical activity has always been an important part of the Play & Learn Summer Camp, and with the importance of physical literacy becoming more understood in the general population, improving the campers' abilities in this area is an important aspect of the camp.

## GOALS

The goals of the camp were:

1. To involve participants in literacy and numeracy activities that enhance their present levels of academic functioning and avoid summer learning fall-off.
2. To involve participants in sport and recreation activities designed to enhance their present levels of physical literacy.
3. To develop self-confidence and enjoyment in all aspects of literacy and numeracy through play-based learning.





## OBJECTIVES

The goals of the camp were accomplished by:

1. Integrating Aboriginal content and ways of knowing into all the components of the program.
2. Minimizing barriers to participation by having the camp be at no charge and by including snacks.
3. Involving parents and/or guardians in the child's learning.
4. Increasing opportunities for positive social interactions with peers and adults.
5. Providing positive literacy and numeracy experiences through focused, small group interventions with high adult to children ratios.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

There were a total of 22 children registered, and 20 children attended the camp. The grade listed below indicates the level the child was in this past school year. There were 6 children who were of Aboriginal descent and 11 children who were from low income families.

Female	Male	Aboriginal	Low Income	Grade One	Grade Two	Grade Three
5	17	6	11	10	7	5

Attendance continues to be of paramount importance, as it is difficult to provide meaningful assessments if a child misses five or more days. Due to necessary precautions related to COVID-19 there were more absences than in the past as children were required to stay home if they exhibited any cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms. Six students had perfect attendance while the most an individual student missed was three days. Four weeks is a long time to commit to a full-time summer program and the demographic served tends to have difficulties with attendance in regular school as well. Many of the parents gave feedback, however, that while it was difficult at times to get their child to attend regular school, that their children were eager and excited to come to camp each day. The students and parents alike “bought into” the camp and it showed!



## STAFF

A Numeracy Coordinator, Literacy Coordinator, Recreation Coordinator, one Literacy and two Recreation Camp Assistants (youth mentors) ran the camp this year.

### COORDINATORS

**Numeracy Coordinator:** Alison has a background in special education and is passionate about supporting students in their journey to become successful readers and mathematicians. She has spent the last several years teaching grades 3 and 4 at Sooke Elementary. In September she is excited to continue teaching in this role. This is Alison's second year with the Play and Learn Camp.

**Literacy Coordinator:** - Marion has a background in the arts, and is especially drawn to outdoor education and literacy skills development. She has been employed in SD62 since 2015 and worked for the past three years as a full-time teacher at Sooke Elementary in a First Peoples Principles of Learning class, incorporating land-based, experiential learning practices. Marion believes in the power of storytelling, nature-based methods of learning, and using inquiry to inspire and explore fundamental concepts. This is Marion's fourth year with the Play and Learn Camp.

**Recreation Coordinator:** - Rhys has a background in music, and teaches music at Sooke Elementary. He started the running club there, and they have done two 5k races and a 10k race annually. This is Rhys' fourth year with the Play and Learn Camp.

### CAMP ASSISTANTS – YOUTH MENTORS

**Summer Camp Leader:** Kyla Lovbakke is entering her third year of teaching elementary school. She has a background in teaching drama, and believes in using drama games and exercises to promote community and team building. She has also spent the past two years partner teaching kindergarten and enjoys being a part of the hands-on learning that takes place at this level. This is Kyla's first year at the Play and Learn Camp.

**Summer Camp Assistant:** Emma Denhoff is entering her fourth year of teaching elementary school. She has taught for several years in isolated and rural communities where she has used trauma informed practices to best support her students. Emma loves to incorporate gamification into her practice to help make learning fun and accessible for struggling learners. This is Emma's first year at the Play and Learn Camp.

**Summer Camp Assistant:** Aaliyah will be entering year 11 of the Cambridge International system. She is currently going to a non-profit international boarding school in the Czech Republic. She moved to Bolivia at a young age and lived there for 7 years. In that time she gained experience in volunteering and teaching at orphanages and schools all over South America. She is currently looking towards a degree in sustainable development.

## THE NUMERACY PROGRAM

The numeracy objective was to support struggling learners in a fun and engaging way that provided daily experiences to develop confidence and encourage numeracy development. The assessment tool was used to get a profile of the child's numeracy development, plan intervention strategies, and implement a program to maintain and improve the child's understanding of math skills and concepts. To help address the diversity of learners and COVID restrictions, the program provided individual sets of manipulatives, tasks targeted to the child's level, and a low ratio of teaching staff to children to ensure immediate reinforcement of concepts and social distancing could be achieved. Various methods of curriculum delivery were used such as engaging whole group challenges, small group teaching and partner games to reinforce the concepts taught.

## WHOLE GROUP INTERVENTIONS



Each day's intervention started off with a whole group activity. The aim of these activities was to engage students and create a positive atmosphere for them to think about numbers. The students used “secret signals” to communicate their thinking silently allowing all students the time and opportunity to engage.

The Flash: The students were quickly shown dot cards and asked to identify how many. This challenge reinforced

subitizing, partitioning, skip counting and basic addition facts.

**SPLAT!:** In this routine developed by Steve Wyborney the students were shown a collection of dots, part of which is then covered by a splat. The students had to determine how many the SPLAT monster ate. Students then had an opportunity to share how they thought about this challenge reinforcing mathematical language, applied problem solving, flexible thinking about numbers and basic facts.



**Count Off:** This routine helped students get their wiggles out while reinforcing the number sequence and skip counting. Standing in a large circle students took turns each saying a number till they had reached 100. After their turn students sit, on their next turn they stand, and so on. Each time they completed the activity they would try to beat the time it took them to previously complete. This routine was particularly beneficial for reinforcing the pattern within numbers, the sequence of decades and building efficiency.

#### SMALL GROUP INTERVENTION



After these warm up activities students participated in small group interventions targeting their individual needs. Participating in small groups of no more than 3 allowed for direct, explicit instruction, built students confidence through immediate feedback and created engaging, positive numeracy interventions.

**Number Scrolls:** The students created number scrolls to reinforce the number sequence, skip counting by 2's and 5's and proper number formation. The students recorded their thinking on receipt tape and used a calculator to confirm their thinking.

**Number Bonds:** Using number bond mats and individual sets of manipulatives and dice students were taught a variety of strategies to efficiently add and subtract facts to 20. Using manipulatives and organizers were key supports for many students, allowing them to visualize their thinking and turn abstract problems into concrete solutions.

**Daily Games:** To round out our daily interventions students reviewed and practiced the concepts taught in their targeted small group by playing a variety of games such as connect 4 and Bingo. Students left these daily interventions with increased confidence and positive associations with numeracy.



## THE LITERACY PROGRAM



The literacy portion of the camp created opportunities for small group interventions, large group activities, and "free-time" activities to support literacy development and enrichment. The Coordinators created a "language rich" environment for the children, where they could develop confidence in reading, writing, and communicating. Due to COVID 19, there were many changes and challenges that were overcome to provide quality learning opportunities, while maintaining social distancing and hand hygiene.

### SMALL GROUP INTERVENTION

The groups explored literacy concepts three times per week during the second and third weeks of camp. Within the groups, the children read out loud and participated in literacy related games and activities. The Literacy Coordinator differentiated within each group to best meet the children's abilities and needs, and to reflect the week's theme. During the first and fourth week of camp, the Literacy Coordinator worked with each child 1:1 to provide a higher level of individualized instruction and assessment.

Leveled Readers – Children spent time reading with a focus on specific strategies such as decoding, punctuation, summarizing, fluency and expression.

Phonemic/Phonological Awareness – Children played games that focused on building words and manipulating letter sounds.

Sight Word Activities – Each group used a variety of games to help retain sight words based on the Dolch word list. Words were chosen for each group based on reading ability.

### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES

Group Meeting – Group Meeting was conducted every day during the camp. Led by the group leaders, this time promoted good listening skills, oral language development, turn taking and appropriate methods of group communication. Names were drawn each morning and afternoon for a "Camper of the Day" activity. This child was interviewed by Mr. Turtle, a

puppet with a personality, and their answers were recorded by the camp assistants to create a profile to go into their scrapbooks.

Story Time - Story time occurred almost every day (exceptions were field trip days). The time devoted to story time was about 15 minutes after Camper of the Day and a movement break were complete. The stories were selected to connect with the themes running throughout the camp, and were related to traits we wanted the children to connect with (respect, grit, stewardship, generosity, and creativity).

Writing Time – Children participated in a 30 minute writing activity once a week. One of the coordinators took pictures of the children during beach day field trips, thus allowing children to write about something meaningful. The children watched a slideshow of their field trip as a group, brainstormed sentence starters and words of interest. They then used these to reflect on their favourite/memorable parts of field trips. These pages were then compiled and bound into a scrapbook/memory album for children to take home and share with their families at the conclusion of the camp. They especially enjoyed reading Mr. Turtle's replies to their reflections.

#### "FREE-TIME" AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES



“Free-time” took place at the beginning of each session while children arrived during the 15 minute drop-off window and in between literacy and numeracy activities. Social distancing, language and social skills development were focused on here. Primarily the children engaged in physical and imaginative play on the school play structures. Furthermore, the children participated in outdoor activities such as nature sketching, learning about local plants, forest clue and scavenger hunt games, and free time exploring the Seaparc forest area. The kids’ curiosity inspired the coordinators and mentors to create and engage with them.



## THE PHYSICAL LITERACY PROGRAM

Each child participated in literacy and numeracy activities, small group periods of academic work, a period of recreation in the morning, and a whole group recreation period and academic period in the afternoon.

During the camp, the children were involved in fun recreational activities that emphasized all the components of fitness. It was the Physical Literacy Coordinator's aim to develop each child's health and fitness needs while also developing self-confidence and self-esteem. Specifically, the intention was to foster a love for physical activity while increasing fitness, coordination, motor skill development, and interpersonal skills such as respect, cooperation, sportsmanship, teamwork, and fair play.

## INDIGENOUS CONTENT

The Play and Learn Camp incorporated Indigenous culture, language, and ways of knowing throughout the camp. The coordinators created an inclusive environment where all children could see themselves and their culture reflected in the resources that were available.



The camp had an Elder of the T'Sou-ke Nation attend and lead workshops for both morning and afternoon groups throughout the camp.

While she was unable to do the annual smudging and drumming workshops due to COVID 19, Shirley Alphonse led storytelling, SENĆOŦEN language work, and traditional ecological knowledge with the children. The children looked forward to their time with her.



## EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM (EOTC)

EOTC adventures are an important part of the camp, and each week the children would go on a different adventure. As COVID-19 has closed or restricted many activities we chose to explore our local beaches. This included China Beach, Witty's Lagoon, Aylard Farm, and French Beach. These outings required transportation on a school bus. In addition to these weekly field trips, the children enjoyed a weekly trip to the local forest. Many campers have since taken their families to explore these beaches!

### GOLF & FOREST DAYS



Forest Days proved to be very popular with campers again this year. Campers working on their physical literacy had a choice of participating in activities in the forest or golfing at the nearby DeMamiel Creek Golf Course. In the forest students enjoyed building with natural materials, learning about our local plants and wildlife and having an opportunity to use imaginative play and continue to develop social skills. A highlight of our forest days was working together to create a wooden fort out of fallen branches.



On the golf course, students played one or two holes and practiced putting and driving, as well as learning basic golf etiquette.

### CHINA BEACH



Our trip to China Beach was lots of fun! It was a beautiful hike down to the beach where campers played in the sand and the driftwood for hours. The tide was way out that day and so there was a huge area to play in. A highlight of the trip was our short trek up Pete Wolf Creek to explore the scenic waterfall.



### WITTY'S LAGOON

Planning ahead of time was essential for a trip to Witty's Lagoon. Ideally the group arrives at low tide so the children have time to explore the beach. From the parking lot it is a 20 minute walk with some





moderately difficult sections. Appropriate footwear and packs that are not too heavy were recommended for the children. At the beach, children enjoyed wading through the water and sifting through the sand and rocks. They found lots of sea creatures and built many sand and log structures.

## AYLARD FARM

Our trip to Aylard Farm connected well with the week's trait of generosity, the land being donated to the CRD. At this beach the children were eager to climb on the rocks exposed by the tide to reveal many tide pools. The pools were teeming with sea life just waiting to be discovered, and campers enjoyed identifying many of these creatures and playing with the sea anemones. A beach swing that had been set up was also a highlight of this trip! This warm and sunny day ended with an exploration of the neighbouring beach. Here, campers made a "crab aquarium" and explored the biodiversity of the area. A highlight for the children was writing in and climbing on a sand rock they discovered!



## FRENCH BEACH



The trip to French Beach was a chilly and windy one, but that didn't dampen the campers enthusiasm! Students found creative ways to stay warm by playing together on the play structure, creating imaginative story lines, and using found objects such as kelp in their play. They explored the nearby woodland creating forts, playing hide and seek, and going on a short hike in small groups. After lunch the whole group learned how to play Kick The Can, and make rock stacks with the many flat rocks at this beach. Each beach provided a unique opportunity to learn and play.

## FOOD

Normally the children were provided with two daily snacks and a lunch, at no charge to the families. This year, due to the altered structure and regulations of the camp, we only were able to offer prepackaged snacks and bottled water. We ensured good hand hygiene before snacks were eaten, thanks to Sheringham Distillery for the generous donation of hand sanitizer. On field trip days, children were asked to bring their own food, and had to "pack out what they packed in." We found that continuing to be able to provide some food enabled our learners to participate to their fullest potential during learning and playing activities.

## INITIAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators conducted an assessment on the camp participants at the beginning and end of camp to track the results of the 4-week literacy and numeracy intervention. Physical literacy was not assessed this year due to COVID-19. The first portion of this report reviews the initial test results. The children's performances during assessments gave direction to the planning of the camp, the creation of small learning groups, and allowed us to provide targeted intervention. The intent behind the assessments for each coordinator was to not only ascertain where the child was at academically, but also to discover how they learn best and what barriers they might have. Our hunch was that confidence and self-perception played a key role for many of the learners. We also recognize school disruptions and prolonged absence from academic routines due to COVID 19 may affect individuals performances on the assessments.

## THE NUMERACY ASSESSMENT

Children were assessed using the First Steps in Math assessment tool. The purpose of this tool is to determine a child's development in number sense, the foundation of mathematics. It included tasks such as matching/correspondence, partitioning, counting, skip counting, applied problems and basic addition and subtraction facts to 20.

Quantifying these results, children showed an average of 73% in numeracy on their initial assessment, with the lowest at 18% and the highest at 97%.

## LITERACY ASSESSMENT

Two assessments were required to ascertain literacy levels. Unfortunately, due to time and resource constraints this year, we were unable to use the Excellence in Literacy Assessment (ELF). We look forward to reintegrating this assessment next year, but did use the principles and pedagogy from this program to influence our program delivery. We used the Writing and Reading Assessment Profile (WRAP) to test letter name and sound correspondence, phonemic awareness, rhyming, and sight word mastery. The PM Benchmark leveled readers we used to assess instructional reading levels.

The children's average initial WRAP testing showed a skill level of 65.3% for 22 participating students. The scores ranged from 34.4%-97.3%. The PM Benchmark leveled readers assessment ranged from level 1-30 readers. We had largely diverse learning groups, but through building community and creating hands-on learning experience, that was targeted to their abilities and sensibilities, we were hoping to be able to help each child make gains.

## FINAL ASSESSMENTS

Children were assessed during the last week of the camp utilizing the same assessment tools as the initial assessment. Due to absences we were unable to assess 4 students in literacy and 5 students in numeracy.

### NUMERACY ASSESSMENT

All students demonstrated improved confidence and growth in their numeracy development. The final numeracy assessments show an average score of 82%, an increase of 9% from the initial assessment with a range of 32-100%. The greatest areas of improvement being in the areas of basic addition and subtraction facts to 20 and counting.

### LITERACY ASSESSMENT

During the course of the Play and Learn Camp, all children tested improved their reading abilities. With the initial assessment indicating several different levels, we developed several learning groups and focused the literacy program on phonemic awareness, confidence, decoding, and fluency. There were 4 students who did not participate in the final assessment, and this is reflected in the results. After the final assessment, the average score on the WRAP assessment raised to 77.65%, with a range of 49.-100% for 18 students. The average percentage increase was +10.4. Of those who were tested by the PM Benchmark, most increased their skills by one reading level, or showed an increased ability at their current level. The levels ranged from 1-30. Anecdotally, each child approached the assessment with a tangible increase in tenacity and confidence.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The following recommendations were made at a post-camp debriefing meeting:

- 1) Sooke Elementary should continue to host the camp whenever possible. It was a perfect site as it is located in a central location, easily accessible by parents/caregivers to pick up and drop off the children. The facilities are also the right size for the children, compared to past locations like Edward Milne Community School where the facilities are sized for teenagers.
- 2) Should the Play and Learn Camp occur again during a pandemic, we recommend keeping groupings small (12 students), maximizing time outside and using masks during small group and one-on-one teaching.
- 3) The Coordinators would like to recommend that classroom teachers or school based teams complete a nomination form that could be shared with the coordinators upon registration. This may include their current level of performance in

literacy/numeracy, any services they received that year (SLP, LA etc.) and any diagnoses they may have (ex. ADHD, LD). Having access to this information at the beginning of camp (with parental permission) would allow us to more quickly target interventions and better understand how the students learn. In conversations with several parents of campers they referenced psych-ed reports and diagnoses their children had that we did not learn about until well into the camp. This information could allow us to provide an even higher quality camp.

- 4) The Coordinators continue to benefit from a 3<sup>rd</sup> youth helper with an interest in literacy. This provides additional support for reading groups, allows Coordinators to have prep time or short breaks, and enables the camp to have an extra set of hands on field trip days.
- 5) Continued careful selection of children for the camp by principals and school based teams is essential. They also noted that the age of the campers should remain ages 6-9, within grades 1, 2, and 3. It is recommended that the children vetted for the program should continue to not include children with designations, as well as school-phobic or children with bolting tendencies, for safety and management purposes.
- 6) Continue the weekly emails that were sent to the parents and included photos, highlights of the week, and reminders for the following week. This proved to be an effective way of communicating with and involving the parents.
- 7) Assessments should continue to be conducted by one consistent person, to avoid any discrepancy in the subjective nature of some aspects of said assessments.



## APPENDIX A: NUMERACY ASSESSMENT

Child	Grade	First Steps in Math Pre-test (%)	First Steps in Math Post-test (%)	+/-
A	1	62	83	+21
B	2	80	N/A	N/A
C	2	88	95	+7
D	3	86	93	+7
E	1	55	N/A	N/A
F	2	61	N/A	N/A
G	2	93	96	+3
H	2	90	99	+9
I	3	92	92	+0
J	1	78	90	+12
K	1	53	58	+5
L	1	63	68	+5
M	3	95	98	+3
N	1	52	60	+8
O	1	77	87	+10
P	2	18	32	+14
Q	1	54	65	+11
R	3	84	95	+11
S	2	97	100	+3
T	1	67	90	+23
U	1	73	N/A	N/A
V	3	82	N/A	N/A

## APPENDIX B: LITERACY ASSESSMENT

	Grade	WRAP Pre-test (%)	WRAP Post-test (%)	Change	PM Benchmark Pre-test Reading level	PM Benchmark Post-test Reading level
A	1	56.5	68	+11.5	4	5
B	2	83.7	N/A	N/A	9	N/A
C	2	95.2	98	+2.8	30 (94%)	30 (98%)
D	3	78.2	98	+19.8	23	25
E	1	40.8	N/A	N/A	0*	N/A
F	2	44.2	55.1	+10.9	0*	2
G	2	53.1	68.7	+15.6	2	3
H	2	83.7	86.4	+2.7	3	4
I	3	97.3	100	+2.7	22	30
J	1	80.3	93.2	+12.9	0*	2
K	1	56.5	66	+9.5	2	3
L	1	55.1	68	+12.9	0*	2
M	3	91.2	97.3	+6.1	17	22
N	1	35.4	46.9	+11.5	0*	1
O	1	59.2	76.2	+17	3 (94%)	3 (97%)
P	2	34.4	49.7	+15.3	0*	1
Q	1	58.5	65.3	+6.8	5	6
R	3	87.8	96.6	+8.8	19 (91%)	19 (91%)
S	2	89.1	95.2	+6.1	16	17
T	1	57.8	72.1	+14.3	0*	2
U	1	47.6	N/A	N/A	0*	N/A
V	3	52.4	N/A	N/A	2	N/A

\*0 SCORE FOR READING LEVEL REFLECTS STUDENTS NOT YET ABLE TO READ LEVEL ONE.

## THE EXCELLENCE IN LITERACY FOUNDATION



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