



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Sharing land-based knowledge for generations – ELCC conference a success

**March 23, 2024** – For the third year in a row, the Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) team hosted a successful conference in Saskatoon. Educators and care givers from across the province gathered to share knowledge and gain hands-on land-based experiences that fortify their cultural references.

“To nurture a strong Métis family we instil the eight principles of trust, respect, caring, feeling, tolerance, understanding, acceptance, and forgiveness which builds a strong foundation of identity, culture, values, and language,” said MN–S President Glen McCallum. “Some of our parents had that taken away from them as children through residential school. With the help of our educators and care givers we can provide the teachings in the ‘classrooms’, whatever form they take. That’s the value of this gathering.”

The ELCC conference team partnered with the MN–S Culture, Heritage, and Language department to present the theme “Aen Kishkayhtamihk la tayr”- Knowing the Land”. Complementing the indoor workshop sessions this year, more than 350 early learning educators and childcare professionals grabbed their knapsacks and went outdoors to explore how to use nature as a classroom and to listen to the river.

“The most crucial learning period in any child’s life is from the age of zero to five. Teaching them about eco-systems leads to a lifetime of respect for their surroundings. Our intent was to provide professionals with enough knowledge to introduce opportunities that take our Métis children on a culturally appropriate land-based learning journey from zero to graduation,” said MN–S ELCC Minister Sherry McLennan.

In its three years, the ELCC conference has grown to become an important venue for professionals, who otherwise wouldn’t cross paths, to network and take their learnings back to their respective teaching environments and Métis communities.



Métis Elders helped guide the organizing team and rounded out the teachings over both days of the conference. The Michif language was carefully interwoven throughout the knowledge sharing.

MN–S Language Minister Laura Burnouf said, “Our Michif language is such an integral part of our Métis heritage. Our children should have access to high quality and culturally appropriate early learning education to set them up for a future full of success. That includes helping to learn the Michif language from the moment they begin to speak so they become a crucial part of Michif revitalization for future generations.”

The ELCC conference has proven an effective means of obtaining important citizen information that has formed the basis of many MN–S ELCC programs such as the Child Care Subsidy, the Backpack Program, and Let’s Soar. It is Métis citizens who drive government policies. When citizens lend their voice, their opinions matter, and together we rise as Métis people.

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**About Métis Nation–Saskatchewan:**

Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) is built on a foundation of Métis identity, culture, values, and language. Empowered by the Métis within Saskatchewan, MN–S works to advance Métis rights and strengthen capacity. MN–S represents the political, socioeconomic, cultural, and educational interests of the Métis in the province through an elected representative system at local, regional, and provincial levels. Social media Links: [@MNSask](#), [@metisnationsask](#)

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