



EarlyON

Child and Family Centre

Free, high-quality drop-in programs, educational workshops and resources for children 0-6 years and their caregivers.

April 2026

EarlyON YMCA of Niagara Centre Hours of Operation

Fairview Mall Centre

285 Geneva Street, St. Catharines
Monday, Wednesday 9am-4pm
Tuesday, Thursday 9am-7pm
Friday 9am-noon
Saturday 9am-1pm
Sunday 10am-1pm

Grantham Centre

469 Grantham Avenue, St. Catharines
Monday through Thursday 9am-1pm
Friday 9am-noon

Thorold Centre

25 Whyte Avenue N, Thorold
Monday through Thursday 9am-12:30pm
Friday 9am-noon
Friday 9:30-11am Thorold Public Library

St. Anthony Centre

81 Rykert Street, St. Catharines
Monday, Wednesday 9am-4pm
Tuesday, Thursday 9am-1pm
Friday 9am-noon

Niagara West

325 Main St E, Grimsby
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 4pm-6pm
Saturday and Sunday 8:30-11am

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

Our EarlyON programs and services are in alignment with provincial guidelines and local directives to promote positive, meaningful, fun and safe indoor and outdoor experiences for our families and our team.

- **Fun, free interactive programs** for parents/guardians and their children (ages 0-6 years)
- **Pre-registration is not required for our drop in programs:** registration may be required for some programs to ensure we have the appropriate amount of materials, space and resources available.
- **Self screening** in advance of attending the program is required of all staff and participants. Anyone who is unwell should remain home.

April 3—All sites closed for Good Friday

April 5—All sites closed for Easter Sunday



April 6—Thorold, Niagara West, St Anthony closed for Easter Monday

April 6-10—Grantham week of closure

Grantham gym closed Wednesday April 1 and 15

If registration is required, please email earlyon.admin@niagara.ymca.ca

EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES:

- Are places where parents, caregivers and children build strong relationships with each other and connect with other families and EarlyON professionals
- Offer a variety of programs and services that meet the unique needs of children and families in an inclusive environment
- Provide resources and workshops with up-to-date information for all stages of your family life, from preconception and prenatal care, to nutrition, toilet training, toddler curiosity, and early school experiences
- Are funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education through Niagara Region Children Services

Children and Parent Interactive Programs

(Registration not required unless noted)

(Activities available all morning as supplies last unless otherwise noted)

Activity	Date and Time	Location	Description
Infant Picasso Easter Footprint Art	Thursday April 2 9-11 am OR 130-4pm Please indicate time preference when registering	Fairview EarlyON	Celebrate your little one's very first Easter with us! Families with infants are invited to join us for a sweet Easter footprint craft - an adorable keepsake to remember this special milestone. Drop in, get creative, and enjoy a gentle, family-friendly activity perfect for tiny toes! <i>For infants celebrating their first Easter.</i> Registration required, but drop-in anytime during the time frame registered for.
Paper Egg Scavenger Hunt	Saturday April 4	Fairview EarlyON	Join us for an Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt! Families can explore the EarlyON space, searching for hidden eggs in a fun, playful adventure.
Stained Glass Easter Decoration	Saturday April 4	Niagara West EarlyON	Using tissue and contact paper children will create a colorful Easter decoration resembling 'Stained Glass'.
Rainy Day Fun!	Saturday April 11	Fairview EarlyON	In this fun and creative craft, children will make their own fluffy rain clouds using cotton balls and colourful pompoms as raindrops. This activity is a great way to explore weather while practicing fine motor skills and creativity.

Children and Parent Interactive Programs Continued

(Registration not required unless otherwise noted)

(Activities available all morning as supplies last unless otherwise noted)

Activity	Date and Time	Location	Description
Baby bird nest—craft	Monday April 13	St Anthony EarlyON	Spring is finally here. We welcome the days of warmer weather and the sweet sound of birds chirping. Honour the coming of spring with a baby bird craft using a variety of different materials
Paper plate umbrellas	Sunday April 12	Fairview EarlyON	Creating umbrella paper plates lets children get creative while building fine motor skills. As they paint, cut, and decorate, they strengthen coordination and connect their work to spring and weather through conversation.
Rain Sticks	Monday April 13	Niagara West EarlyON	Join us while we make fun colourful rain sticks using cardboard tubes, sticks and rice. This activity supports fine motor development and encourages sensory exploration while also introducing children to cause-and-effect seeing how their movements change the sound.
Little Artist's World Art Day	Wednesday April 15	Thorold EarlyON	We're exploring the art of Claude Monet, who loved painting nature using soft colours inspired by flowers and gardens. This simple activity encourages creativity, sensory exploration, and self-expression as children create their own nature-inspired art.
Risky Play: Learning Through Interactive Experiences	Thursday April 16 9-11am	Grantham EarlyON	Risky play is a valuable part of healthy development, helping children build confidence, resilience, and decision-making skills as they explore their limits. With supportive supervision, children learn to assess risk and manage challenges safely. Join us in the gym this morning for activities like climbing, balancing, and exploring new environments!

**Please remember to enjoy our centre another day if you are not feeling yourself. Help keep our friends and staff healthy.
If your older children are home from school feeling sick. Please be kind and do not attend that day.**



Children and Parent Interactive Programs Continued

(Registration not required unless otherwise noted)

(Activities available all morning as supplies last unless otherwise noted)

Activity	Date and Time	Location	Description
Grass Heads	Friday April 17	Grantham EarlyON	Spring is here and the grass is growing! Today we're bringing the outdoors inside by turning grass into "hair." We'll use our math skills to measure soil and seeds, get creative designing a face, and practice our observation skills as we watch the hair grow.
Paper Plate Spring Wreath	Saturday April 18	Niagara West	Creating a paper wreath is a fun and creative craft that allows children to celebrate the arrival of Spring. This activity helps develop fine motor skills as children cut, color and glue.
Salad Spinner Snails	Sunday April 19	Niagara West EarlyON	This is a fun and simple activity turns everyday kitchen equipment into an exciting process art experience where children focus on exploration rather than the final product.
Spring—loose parts fun	Saturday April 19	Fairview EarlyON	Loose parts spring play encourages children to explore, create, and use their imagination with a variety of open-ended materials. As they sort, stack, and design, children develop problem-solving skills, creativity, and fine motor abilities. The activity also supports conversations about spring, sparking curiosity and discovery through play.
Veggie Print Flowers	Saturday April 25	Niagara West EarlyON	Vegetable stamping is a fun, hands-on art activity that offers a wide range of developmental benefits. Grasping and pressing vegetables helps strengthen hand muscles and improve coordination. Join us as we make beautiful flowers using various vegetable scraps.
Coffee Filter Butterflies	Tuesday April 21	Fairview EarlyON	Join us for a cheerful springtime craft as we create beautiful coffee filter butterflies! Families are invited to use coffee filters, markers, and a little water to make colourful, creative wings. It's a simple, fun activity that celebrates the bright and breezy spirit of spring together!
Earth Day 	Wednesday April 22	All Centres	Celebrate Earth Day with us at any of our EarlyON centres today! Families are invited to drop in and enjoy a variety of Earth Day-inspired crafts that encourage creativity and care for our planet. Join the fun and create something meaningful together!

Children and Parent Interactive Programs Continued

(Registration not required unless other wise noted)

(Activities available all morning as supplies last unless otherwise noted)

Activity	Date and Time	Location	Description
Science – Lemon Volcanoes	Saturday April 25 1030am	Fairview EarlyON	In this exciting hands-on activity, children will create their own "lemon volcano." By mixing simple ingredients, they will see a fizzy chemical reaction that looks like a mini eruption. This activity introduced basic science concepts while encouraging curiosity and exploration.
Colour mixing in a bag	Sunday April 26	Fairview EarlyON	Colour mixing in a Ziploc bag is a fun, hands-on way for children to explore how colours blend. As they press and move the paint, they build fine motor skills, spark curiosity, and enjoy a mess-free sensory experience.
Rain, puddles and umbrellas— Literacy Fun	Tuesday April 28	St Anthony EarlyON	We will be celebrating literacy with a fun, rain-themed day! Children will explore stories, songs, and playful learning invitations inspired by rain, puddles, and umbrellas. We can't wait to learn and play together on this rainy-day adventure!
Cherry Blossom tree painting	Wednesday April 29	Grantham EarlyON	The seasons are changing and spring is all around us! Join us as we use paint and bubble wrap to create a beautiful cherry blossom tree your child will love.

Rejoignez-nous pour un cercle en français!

Join our EarlyON Friends from Centre de Santé for French conversation and Circle.

St Anthony Tuesday April 14 morning

Fairview Tuesday April 14 afternoon

For more details, talk to the staff in the centres





STRONGER TOGETHER



Families are invited to join us at any — or all — of our EarlyON centres this April as we host special Pancake Breakfasts in support of the YMCA’s Stronger Together Campaign. This campaign helps remove financial barriers so children, youth, and families across Niagara can access YMCA programs and life changing opportunities regardless of financial circumstances. In exchange for a warm pancake breakfast, families are welcome to donate as much or as little as they can to support this meaningful community initiative.

Activity	Date and Time	Location	Description
Stronger Together Pancake Breakfast 9-11am	Friday April 10	St Anthony EarlyON	Each of our four centres will be offering a Pancake Breakfast to raise funds for the YMCA’s Stronger Together Campaign. Pancakes will be available at each of our centres by donation (no donation is too small!). We hope you’ll join us at each of our centres and consider a donation to Stronger Together!
	Wednesday April 15	Faiview EarlyON	
	Monday April 20	Thorold EarlyON	
	Monday April 27	Grantham EarlyON	

Outdoor programs and Field Trips (no registration required unless noted)

Activity	Date and Time	Location	Description
EarlyON—Thorold Library partnership	Friday April 10, 17 and 24 930-11am	Thorold Library	Join an EarlyON educator first for outdoor program then we will go inside for activities/story time by the librarian.
Farmers Market Trip	Thursday April 30 1030am	St Anthony EarlyON	The City of St. Catharines is collaborating with AgScape to offer field trips to the St. Catharines Farmers Market with engaging, hands-on, curriculum-based lessons guided by certified educational professionals. We will meet our guide at the Field Trips sign at Market Square (91 King Street). REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Infant Interactive Programs

(one infant program per family please)

Registration required by emailing earlyon.admin@niagara.ymca.ca

Activity	Date and Time	Location	Description
Infant Massage	Tuesday April 7, 14 21 and 28 1130am	Thorold EarlyON	Parents/caregivers, join us for this 4-week program designed for you and your infant (birth – pre-crawling) that encourages and promotes bonding, growth and so much more! Please bring a blanket with you.
Sing and Sign with baby	Thursday April 9, 16 and 23 2pm	Fairview EarlyON	In addition to verbal language, introducing simple sign language can encourage babies to communicate and can help parents and caregivers better understand their little one's needs. Join us for this engaging 3-week program, ideal for infants aged 4–10 months. Registration required
Stroller walk and talk	Monday April 20 930am	Grantham EarlyON	Looking for a way to connect with new moms, exercise and enjoy the outdoors? Join us today for a walk around the neighbourhood and discuss different ways in which we are all learning to navigate the good (and sometimes not so good) times of motherhood. NOTE – Meeting in the parking lot across from Port Weller School on Parnell and Bunting. REGISTRATION REQUIRED

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PRESENTS

Around the World Circle

📍 At the YMCA EarlyON St. Catharines!



Explore different cultures through a variety of fun, interactive experiences. Each week highlights a new country in a different way; stories, crafts, songs or books!

Upcoming dates and centres for April and May, 2026:

- April 8th** - Thorold location - Mexico
- April 22nd** - St. Anthony location - Brazil
- May 6th** - Grantham location - China

- *All sessions start at 10:30 am
- *For children 0-6 years old
- *No registration required

For more info, email Claudia at: crothman@bridgesniagara.ca



Adult Programs

(registration NOT required unless noted)

Activity	Date and Time	Location	Description
Why Process over Product matters in Early Childhood— Adult Information	Wednesday April 1	Grantham EarlyON	When children paint, build, and explore, the real learning happens through their thinking and persistence. By focusing on the journey rather than the end result, we nurture confidence, resilience, and a lifelong love of learning. Drop into the centre to learn more about our process-over-product approach.
Picky Eaters— Adult Information	Wednesday April 8	Niagara West EarlyON	Picky eating is common in young children, especially toddlers and preschoolers. This stage often happens as children develop independence and become more aware of tastes, textures and smells. We will have information for parents as well as activity and recipe ideas.
Math talk with infants and toddlers Adult information	Thursday April 23	Thorold EarlyON	Children develop math concepts and skills very early in life. From the moment they are born, babies begin to form ideas about math through everyday experiences and, most important, through interactions with trusted adults. Language—how we talk with infants and toddlers about math ideas like <i>more</i> , <i>empty</i> , and <i>full</i> —matters.
Good Grief: Supporting young children with grief - Adult Information	Friday April 24 11am	St Anthony EarlyON	The information provided offers practical guidance for recognizing and responding to children's emotional needs after a loss. Learn simple, compassionate strategies to foster resilience and coping. REGISTRATION REQUIRED

RESOURCE CONSULTANTS

Resource Consultants from the Niagara Children's Centre are in our EarlyON Centres to answer any questions you might have about your child's development.

Ask the educators in the centre for more information.



Do you have questions about your child’s health or growth and development?

Call @ 905-684-7555 or 1-888-505-6074 ext.7555

With a public health nurse at [Niagara Parents](#).

Nurses are happy to provide reliable advice about; pregnancy, newborn care, feeding your baby, behavioural issues, child or parental mental health concerns, and community supports. A public health nurse is available to answer your questions Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. You are also able to register for many of our clinics and classes at niagararegion.ca/parents. We’re with you every step of the way.



Do you have questions? Are you looking for resources or strategies to support your child’s development?

Reach us by telephone or by email

EarlyON Fairview Mall: 905-646-4988 earlyon.fairview@niagara.ymca.ca

EarlyON Grantham: 905-937-7007 earlyon.grantham@niagara.ymca.ca

EarlyON St. Anthony: 905-650-7019 earlyon.stanthony@niagara.ymca.ca

EarlyON Thorold: 905-658-6907 earlyon.thorold@niagara.ymca.ca

EarlyON Grimsby: 905-359-3049 earlyon.grimsby@niagara.ymca.ca

Visit any one of these sites to find more about resources and contact information.

 Facebook: YMCA of [Niagara](#) EarlyON

 www.youtube.com

 [earlyonatymcaniagara](#)



April 2026 *at a glance*

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

For more details about activities listed, including if registration is required, please read through our monthly newsletter.

<p>5</p> <p>West</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>Fairview</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p> 	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> 	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> 	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>		

Fairview
 Mon, Wed - 9am - 4pm
 Tues, Thurs - 9am - 7pm
 Friday - 9am - noon
 Saturday - 9am - 1pm
 Sunday - 10am - 1pm

Grantham
 Mon- Thurs - 9am-1pm
 Friday - 9am - noon

Niagara West YMCA
 Mon - Wed - 4pm - 6pm
 Sat & Sun - 8:30am - 11a

St. Anthony

Mon, Wed - 9am - 4pm
 Tues., Thurs. - 9am - 1pm
 Friday - 9am - noon

Thorold
 Mon-Thurs - 9am - 12:30
 Friday - 9am - noon

or