

EarlyON
Child and Family Centre

December 2026

A Place to Play, Learn, and Connect

EarlyON Child and Family Centres are free, welcoming spaces where children from birth to age six can play, learn, explore, and make new friends while parents and caregivers connect, ask questions, and find support.

Whether you're dropping in for your very first visit or you're a familiar face, there's always something new to discover at EarlyON.

Children and Parent Interactive Programs

Play, create, sing, and explore together through hands-on activities designed for children and their parent or caregiver.

Outdoor Programs and Field Trips

Enjoy stroller walks, nature play, and outdoor adventures that get everyone moving.

Infant Interactive Programs

Small-group programs for babies from birth to 12 months and their caregivers.
Registration is required and spaces fill quickly.

Adult Programs

Workshops, resources, and practical parenting information from trusted professionals.

December Updates:

Friday, December 4 - ALL centres closed
Thursday, December 24 - Saturday, December 26 - ALL centres closed
Thursday, December 31 & Friday, January 1 - ALL centres closed
Please see back calendar for each centres holiday closures

Decorating Mittens & Snowflakes

Niagara West | Tuesday, December 1

Using our fine motor skills and creativity, children can decorate a pair of mittens and/or a snowflake using a variety of materials on-hand. When complete, hang them in your windows to enjoy all winter long.

Holiday Stamping

Fairview | Wednesday, December 2

Children will create unique holiday masterpieces by stamping paint-covered holiday cookie cutters onto paper. Through this palyful art activity, they will explore colours, shapes and patterns while celebrating the season.

Science with Sandra

Fairview | Thursday, December 3
5:30pm and
Fairview | Saturday, December 12
10:30am

Sandra is calling all young scientists to come experiment, explore and discover! Children will have the opportunity to make predictions and ask questions while observing what happens. You never know where science will take you!

Reindeer Paper Bag Puppets

Grantham | Tuesday, December 8

Create a festive paper bag reindeer puppet using simple craft materials! Children can add antlers, googly eyes, and a bright red nose, then enjoy imaginative play and storytelling with their creation. This fun holiday activity encourages creativity, fine motor development, and self-expression.



Ribbon Tree

Niagara West | Tuesday, December 8

Creating a ribbon tree by tying on colourful ribbons onto a branch is a fun, open-ended activity that encourages creativity and fine motor skills. This is a wonderful keepsake ornament you can enjoy for years to come.

Sandpaper Gingerbread People

Fairview | Wednesday, December 9

Children will create Sandpaper Gingerbread People by rubbing cinnamon sticks onto gingerbread person-shaped sandpaper and decorating them with a variety of craft materials. This festive activity engages the senses while encouraging creativity, fine motor development, and imaginative expression.

Gingerbread Houses

Niagara West | Saturday, December 12

Join us as we decorate gingerbread houses made from graham crackers. Children will spread on icing and use various candies to make patterns on their house. This activity encourages creativity while exploring shapes, colors and textures.

Paper Plate Evergreens

Fairview | Sunday, December 13

Children will create paper plate evergreens to celebrate the winter season, transforming simple materials into festive works of art. Those who choose can decorate their trees with sparkling gems and jewels, turning them into bright and beautiful Christmas trees while exploring creativity and fine motor skills.

Smash Paint Wreath

Thorold | Monday, December 14

Get ready for festive fun! Children will use toy hammers to create colourful paint splatters and design their own holiday wreaths. This hands-on activity encourages creativity while developing fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Christmas Around the World Bracelets

St. Anthony | Monday, December 14

Join us as we explore Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Hanukkah through a fun and creative beading activity! Learn about the colours and traditions of each holiday while creating your own festive beaded craft.

Cinnamon Applesauce Ornaments

Fairview | Tuesday, December 15
Drop-in between 5pm-6:30pm

Children and families are invited to drop in and create their own cinnamon applesauce ornament to celebrate the holiday season. This hand-on keepsake can be enjoyed for years to come.

Science - Snowstorm in a Jar

Niagara West | Wednesday, December 16
4:45pm

A snowstorm in a jar is a fun, hands-on science experiment that encourages children to explore, observe, and discover how different materials interact. As children watch the swirling movement inside the jar, they develop curiosity about winter weather and begin to explore early scientific concepts through play.

Branching Out! Pine Tree Creative

St. Anthony | Thursday, December 17

Children can explore, arrange, decorate and transform natural pine branches into their very own unique tree creation!

Ugly Christmas Sweater Day

All centres | Friday, December 18

Today is National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day! We invite children and families to wear their favourite festive, funny, or ugly holiday sweater to the centre and join in the holiday fun with us.

Holiday Party! 🎉

St. Anthony | Friday, December 18
Niagara West | Saturday, December 19

Join us as we celebrate the upcoming holidays with a festive Holiday Party filled with fun, laughter, and special memories for children and families. We look forward to celebrating the season together before the winter break! Please note that St. Anthony EarlyON and Grimsby West EarlyON will be closed for the two-week winter break and will reopen in the new year.

Handprint Reindeer

Fairview | Sunday, December 20

Children will create adorable handprint reindeer keepsakes using their own handprints and festive craft materials. This fun holiday activity encourages creativity while making a special decoration families can treasure for years to come.

Macaroni Christmas Tree Ornaments

Grantham | Monday, December 21

Get creative this holiday season with a fun and festive macaroni Christmas tree ornament craft! Children will use macaroni pasta to create and decorate their very own Christmas tree ornament, exploring different textures, shapes, and colours along the way. Each child will have a special handmade ornament to take home and hang on their Christmas tree!

Holiday Parachute Play

Thorold | Wednesday, December 23
10:30am

Come join us for fun parachute play while we jump and sing along to some holiday songs.

New Year's Wishing Wands

Grantham | Wednesday, December 23

Make a wish as you ring in the new year! Children will create their own New Year's wishing wand using colourful craft materials and sparkles.

Infant Interactive Programs

Please register for **ONE** infant program per month

Love My Baby

Niagara West | Wednesday, December 2,9 and 16
5pm
Registration required*
Celebrate baby's first Christmas with a special keepsake mistletoe made from their tiny footprints—a sweet holiday memory to treasure!



Shaker Making & Holiday Sing-A-Long

St. Anthony | Monday, December 7
1:00pm
Registration required*
Create festive sensory bottles to take home, then enjoy a holiday sing-along exploring sound, movement, and connection.



Infant Picasso - Mistle"toes"

Fairview | Wednesday, December 16
9:00am - 3:00pm
Registration required*
Celebrate baby's first Christmas with a special keepsake mistletoe made from their tiny footprints—a sweet holiday memory to treasure!

Babies & Bubbles - Holiday Edition

Grantham | Thursday, December 17
10am
Registration required*
Join us for a festive morning of bubbles, music, and holiday cheer! Enjoy bubble play, favourite holiday songs, and special moments of fun and connection together.



*To register for these programs, please email earlyon.admin@niagara.ymca.ca

EarlyON Child and Family Centre

Ontario



Adult Activity - Holiday Sensory Bottles

Thorold | Tuesday, December 1
9:30am
Registration required*
Learn all about the benefits of sensory bottle play and create your own Holiday theme bottle to take home and enjoy.

Adult Information - Mattering in Early Childhood

St. Anthony | Wednesday, December 2
Explore why feeling valued, seen, heard and included matters in early childhood. Discover how everyday interactions and relationships help young children develop a sense of belonging, connection, and self-worth.

Adult Information - Winter Car Seat Safety

Grantham | Thursday, December 3
Winter is a great time to review your child's car seat safety! Stop by our centre to pick up helpful information and tips on proper harness fit, why bulky winter coats should be avoided, and how to keep your little ones warm and safe while travelling during the colder months. Grab an information handout and learn simple ways to make winter travel safer for your family!

Adult Information - Winter Health Checklist

Thorold | Monday, December 7
The winter season brings chilly temperatures, holiday festivities, and, unfortunately, more opportunities for illness. As caregivers, it is natural to want to keep your children as healthy as possible during these colder months, especially with the excitement of the holiday season and New Year right around the corner. A few proactive steps can make a big difference in keeping your family healthy, happy, and ready to start the new year on the right foot.

Adult Information - Giving & Gratitude

Fairview | Thursday, December 10
Looking for ways to encourage kindness, gratitude, and giving this holiday season? Be sure to pick up some parent information sheets and articles for simple ideas on helping young children build caring habits and spread holiday cheer.





Outdoor and Library Adventures

Thorold Public Library | Friday, December 11 & 18

9:30am - 11am

Join an EarlyON educator for an outdoor program, followed by a visit inside the library for fun activities and story time led by the librarian. A wonderful opportunity for children and families to explore, learn, and enjoy the library together!

Outdoor - Fresh Air Fun!

Thorold | EVERY Wednesday & Thursday

11:15am - 12:15pm

Families will enjoy seasonal, engaging and meaningful provocations designed to encourage exploration, curiosity, and a lifelong love of the outdoors at our Thorold EarlyON outdoor play space. Please dress for the weather and come ready to play, discover, and connect with the outdoors. Our indoor play space will remain open for families who prefer to stay inside.

Outdoor - Nature Walk

Malcolmson Eco-Park | Saturday, December 5

10:30am

Join Sandra promptly at 10:30 a.m. at Malcolmson Eco-Park for a nature walk along the beautiful trails. This is a wonderful opportunity to explore the outdoors, enjoy the fresh air, and discover nature together. In the event of incelement weather, the walk will be postponed and we look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Intergenerational Connection Linhaven Nursing Home

Adult Day Program | Tuesday, December 15

11am - Noon

We will connect with seniors from the adult day program for stories, songs and other fun activities.

Additional Support for Families

Niagara Region EarlyON

Looking for more EarlyON programs and resources across Niagara? Visit the Niagara Region EarlyON website to explore locations, parenting supports, program calendars, and helpful family resources.
www.niagararegion.ca/living/childcare/early-years/

Niagara Parents

Parenting comes with plenty of questions, and you don't have to figure them out alone. Through Niagara Parents, you can **connect with a Public Health Nurse** on weekdays for trusted advice, helpful resources, and support on topics like pregnancy, newborn care, feeding, child development, behaviour, and family well-being.

Call **1-888-505-6074 ext 7555** or visit niagararegion.ca/parents





Inclusion Quality Coordinator

Through our partnership with **Niagara Children's Centre**, Inclusion Quality Coordinators are available to support children, families, and educators in creating welcoming, inclusive experiences for everyone. They can offer support with:

- Developmental Milestones
- Inclusive Play Strategies
- Family Support

Fairview | Mondays (9am - noon) & Thursdays (1pm-4:45pm)
St. Anthony | Tuesdays (9am - 11:45am)
Thorold | Wednesdays (9am - 11:45am)
Grantham | Thursdays (9am - 11:45am)

Highlights This Month

Early Forest Explorers 🌿🍂
Every Thursday | 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Malcomson Eco Park

Come explore, play and create in the great outdoors!
Every season brings something new to discover! Join us at the beautiful Malcolmson Eco-Park for outdoor adventures where children and caregivers can connect with nature through hands-on play, sensory experiences, scavenger hunts, storytelling, bird watching and seasonal discoveries.
From exploring the forest floor to discovering the sights and sounds of the natural world, there's always something new to spark curiosity, encourage movement and inspire young explorers.
Dress for the weather and join us for some outdoor fun!





Professional Development Day – Friday, December 4

All YMCA of Niagara EarlyON Centres will be closed on Friday, December 4, as our staff participate in a Professional Development Day. This is an opportunity for our team to learn, share ideas, and build on their knowledge and skills to continue providing quality experiences and support for children and families. We look forward to welcoming everyone back when our centres reopen!

Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP)

Date: Wednesday, January 6 to Wednesday, March 3
Time: 5:45 PM to 7:45 PM
Location: Fairview Mall EarlyON (285 Geneva Street, St. Cath.)

Learn about understanding your child's needs, improving communication, and implementing effective & loving discipline strategies.

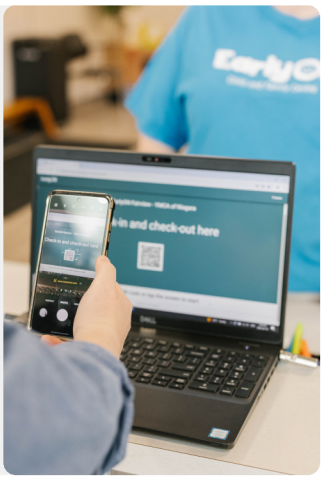
Strengthen your connection and empower your parenting.
Register today at www.niagararegion.ca/parents/courses



Find an EarlyON Near You

Your First Visit
EarlyON staff can help you sign up during your first visit.

Return Visits
For return visits, simply scan the QR code to sign in.



Fairview Mall Centre
285 Geneva Street, St. Catharines
(905) 646-4988
earlyon.fairview@niagara.ymca.ca

Monday & Wednesday 9am - 4pm
Tuesday & Thursday 9am - 7pm
Friday 9am - 12pm
Saturday 9am - 1pm
Sunday 10am - 1pm

Thorold Centre - Pope Francis
25 Whyte Avenue North, Thorold
(905) 658-6907
earlyon.thorold@niagara.ymca.ca

Monday - Thursday 9am-12:30pm
Friday 9am - 12pm
Friday 9:30 - 11am (Thorold Public Library)

Grantham Centre
469 Grantham Avenue, St. Catharines
(905) 937-7007
earlyon.grantham@niagara.ymca.ca

Monday - Thursday 9am - 1pm
Friday 9am - 12pm

Niagara West - YMCA of Niagara
325 Main Street East, Grimsby
(905) 359-3049
earlyon.grimsby@niagara.ymca.ca

Monday - Wednesday 4pm - 6pm
Saturday - Sunday 8:30 - 11am

St. Anthony Centre
81 Rykert Street, St. Catharines
(905) 650-7019
earlyon.stanthony@niagara.ymca.ca

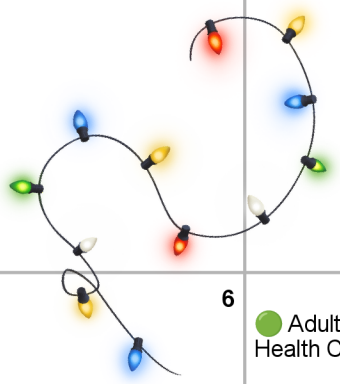
Monday, Wednesday 9am-4pm
Tuesday, Thursday 9am - 1pm
Friday 9am - 12pm

EarlyON Child and Family Centre

Ontario

December
2026

EarlyON Child and Family Centre

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 🟢 Adult - Holiday Sensory Bottle 9:30am (Registration required) 🟡 Decorating Mittens & Snowflakes	2 🔴 Adult - Mattering in Early Childhood 🟣 Holiday Stamping	3 🔵 Adult - Winter Car Seat Safety 🟣 Science with Sandra 5:30pm	4 **All centres closed** 	5 🟣 Outdoor - Nature Walk at Malcolmson Eco-Park 10:30am
6	7 🟢 Adult - Winter Health Checklist 🔴 Infant - Shaker Making & Sing-A-Long 1pm (Registration required)	8 🟡 Ribbon Tree 🔵 Reindeer Paper Bag Puppets	9 🟣 Sandpaper Gingerbread People	10 🟣 Adult - Giving & Gratitdue	11 🟢Outdoor & Library 9:30 - 11am	12 🟡 Gingerbread Houses 🟣 Science with Sandra 10:30am
13 🟣 Paper Plate Evergreens	14 🟢 Smash Paint Wreath 🔴 Christmas Around the World Bracelets	15 🟣 Cinnamon Applesauce Ornamanets Intergnerational Connections @ Linhaven Adult Day Program 11am - NOON	16 🟡 Science - Snowstorm in a Jar 4:45pm 🟣 Infant - Mistle"toes" 9am - 3pm (Registration required)	17 🔴 Branching Out! Pine Tree Creative 🔵 Infant - Babies & Bubbles Holiday Edition 10am (Registration required)	18 🟢Outdoor & Library 9:30 - 11am 🔴 Holiday Party!  Ugly Christmas Sweater Day	19 🟡 Holiday Party!
20 🟣 Handprint Reindeer 🟡 CLOSED	21 🔵 Macaroni Christmas Tree Ornaments 🟡 CLOSED 🔴 CLOSED	22 🟡 CLOSED 🔴 CLOSED	23 🟢 Holiday Parachute Play 10:30am 🔵 New Year's Wishing Wands 🟡 CLOSED 🔴 CLOSED	24 **All centres closed**	25 **All centres closed** 	26 **All centres closed**
27 🟡 CLOSED	28 🟡 CLOSED 🔴 CLOSED 🔵 CLOSED	29 🟡 CLOSED 🔴 CLOSED 🔵 CLOSED	30 🟡 CLOSED 🔴 CLOSED 🔵 CLOSED	31 **All centres closed** 	**EarlyON Centres** 🟣 - Fairview 🔵 - Grantham 🟡 - Niagara West 🔴 - St. Anthony's 🟢 - Thorold	

For more information regarding activities listed, or to see if registration is required, please read through the newsletter.

*Please email earlyon.admin@niagara.ymca.ca to register