

## Integration of Indigenous Culture

### April Focus-Interconnectedness of All Living Things

#### What is Indigenous Pedagogy?


*It is a holistic practice of teaching that incorporates Indigenous worldviews throughout all components of our learning environments, including how we interact with children and families, how we develop our daily routines, how we set up our physical spaces, and how we intentionally engage children in learning opportunities. Educators are viewed as active learners and researchers alongside children, and role model looking and listening as part of the learning process. Some world views we will introduce as we proceed throughout our integration of Indigenous culture include the respect for the environment, animals, and each other, the interconnectedness of all living things, oral traditions, land-based teaching, the appreciation for the wisdom provided by Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Cultural Advisors, and spiritual wellbeing.*



Our next series of activities will focus on the following:

#### The Interconnectedness of All Living Things

##### Activities:

1. Print the word **“interconnectedness”** on a piece of paper and display to the children. State the word clearly for the children. Explain that it means all living things are part of one whole, and each of us depends on all other members to make kind, respectful choices that help all of us be the best we can be. Provide some examples of this. For example, you may describe that the meaningful act of composting food scraps helps to create strong soil that helps grow new plants. You may even comment that worms can be added to composted materials to help feed them and create even stronger soil for our plants, fruits, and vegetables, which benefits all.
 
2. As an extension to explain **“interconnectedness”**, ask children to sit in a circle. Present a ball of yarn. Begin by rolling the ball to one child and state a positive attribute that describes that child. Tape the yarn at the point it reaches the child and encourage each child to continue the process until every child has received the ball and shared a positive attribute about another. When the process has been completed, have the children stand up and appreciate their taped “interconnected” classroom masterpiece. Play music and encourage children to dance around their beautiful classroom connection.

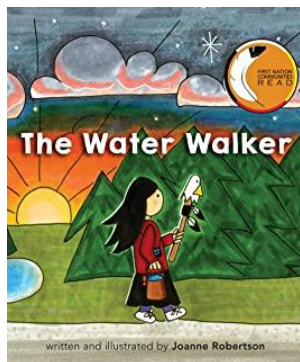
3. As an extension to explain “**interconnectedness**”, ask children to sit in a circle. Present a series of photos displaying the beauty of nature or a set of animals. Engage the children in a discussion about the positive attributes these elements of nature provide us and that it is important to take care of and respect each piece. Cut these photos into two jagged puzzle halves and place in a bowl. Shake the bowl and ask each child to select one piece. Once all children have selected a piece, task the children to find their peer who shares their other half. Play music during this discovery process. Upon completion, encourage the children to assist in gluing all pieces back together onto a poster board for display. Remind the children that it takes each of us to work together to create the best outcomes!



### Book Suggestion:

#### “The Water Walker”

Joanne Robertson



New vocabulary is presented in this story that fosters discussion, and new dialogue for the future.

*The story of a determined Ojibwe grandmother (Nokomis) Josephine Mandamin and her great love for Nibi (water). Nokomis walks to raise awareness of our need to protect Nibi for future generations, and for all life on the planet. She, along with other women, men and youth, have walked around all the Great Lakes from the four salt waters, or oceans, to Lake Superior. The walks are full of challenges, and by her example Josephine challenges us all to take up our responsibility to protect our water, the giver of life, and to protect our planet for all generations. (From Second Story Press)*