



E.L.C.C. & COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | FAMILY FACILITATION | RESOURCES

**The importance of enriching the lives of children cannot be overstated, giving them opportunities to meet new people, share new experiences and be exposed to new situations. This is the role of TOPPS KIDS Out of School Clubs and ELCC & Community Development, providing an essential community of care for families, children and educators.**



Started by Leslie Topp after 25 years working in the field of early learning and development, TOPP KIDS was a passion project designed to inspire children to Play, Grow, Laugh & Learn in a safe environment. The ELCC & Community Development initiative grew from this, satisfying a clear need for a hub of resources and learning opportunities for childcare professionals. Two years in, her son Cody, an advocate in the ECE Sector in Canada, picked up the torch and built the company from strength to strength spreading through Calgary and across Alberta.

The company is focused on providing a community of care to families, children and educators, creating opportunities for youth in the community during the critical afterschool hours of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. This time is crucial for childhood physical activity, focused on providing a blend of care, education, recreation and ultimately inspiration for children in a play setting. TOPP KIDS runs a variety of programs that explore how children can express themselves, through social and emotional literacy as well as exploring what it means to be a community citizen. Combined with the important work being undertaken at ELCC & Community Development, the team work tirelessly to improve the standard of care and resources for the entire Early Childhood Education sector.

The expansive nature of TOPP KIDS' purview, especially when combining the Out of School Clubs, Kindi-Care Clubs and Summer Camp with the ELCC & Community Development initiative, allows it to function as employer of choice, lead in quality programming and culture standards and maintain its family feel. The innovative approach that characterises the programs for the children also applies to the training and support structures that have allowed the organization to build its capacity at such an impressive rate. Employee retention is demonstrably higher as a result of this approach, meaning the focus can remain squarely on providing the best possible care, experiences and opportunity for the kids.

With the Early Childhood Education Sector frequently seeing

changing opinions and trends, the approach taken by TOPP KIDS has been to capture new ideas from around the globe, with a network of experts to assist in implementation. The curriculum is constantly updated to meet best practice within the industry and the last two years have seen innovations including the growth of the STEM, STEAM and STREAM aspects of programs.

Moving forward, the company recognizes that the time has come to separate the ELCC & Community Development initiative from TOPP KIDS Out of School Clubs, with the goal of obtaining not-for-profit status. This would open up new opportunities for funding that are currently closed to ELCC & Community Development. In the long run, the intention is to reach beyond the physical education centre, towards an online system, engaging people who can't attend due to time or geographic boundaries. The hope is to eventually become the go-to option for training outside of post-secondary. As ever, community remains at the heart of the company and building this for both aspects of the business is of the utmost importance.

For TOPP KIDS, the next five years will hopefully see the doubling of the services it offers in Calgary, with more social and community projects taking centre stage. The ideal situation would be the ability to provide no-cost care, thus removing any barriers between families and children who need quality care programs. A significant portion of the work is advocating for school aged children to receive the same supports and recognition that Early Childhood Education focused on children aged 0-5 years receives.

TOPP KIDS and the ELCC & Community Development initiative do incredibly valuable work for the families and communities of Calgary, and have made their innovative approach one to admire across the province. With youth enrichment the name of the game, this company's success has made them one to watch.