

# Early childhood education and development podcast launched by Dufferin County

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Dufferin County has teamed up with four municipalities to launch a new podcast that looks to change the way early years education is talked about.

The podcast, titled Merrily, is hosted by Stephen Hurley and Michelle Schurter.

It looks to dive deep into the theory, practice and policy of early years education and highlights the importance of nurturing children's development during their formative years.

The podcast was created in partnership with the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, the County of Lambton, the County of Simcoe and Oxford County.

"Together with our municipal partners, Dufferin County is dedicated to building capacity within the early learning system. We are excited to present the Merrily Podcast to our community," said Darren White, chair of the Dufferin County Health and Human Services Committee.

"This podcast is for everyone, and we encourage residents to tune into these honest conversations about the importance of early childhood development."

The podcast features a diverse lineup of guests with varying perspectives on early childhood education, who, through their conversation, explore the theory, practice and policy surrounding the phase of childhood development.

The hosts, Hurley and Schurter, and their guests approach each episode topic through the strategy of "upstream" and "downstream" conversations.

The podcast focuses on "upstream" elements of the registered early childhood education practice, with conversations between early childhood educators and leaders on topics directly related to early learning. It takes conversations "downstream" by bringing in individuals outside the early learning and childcare community to explore their reality and the early years.

"Dufferin County knows the value of early learning and care and is dedicated to highlighting the multifaceted work and role of early childhood educators. ECEs are so much more than a service provided to take care of our youngest citizens, and through projects like the Merrily Podcast, we are working to change the narrative about the value and impact of child care and early years education as a vital element in healthy and prosperous communities," said Anna McGregor, Dufferin County's director of Community Service.

Educators, parents and those interested in listening and learning about the development of future generations can tune into the Merrily Podcast on Spotify, iTunes, or voicEd Radio.