



# Symbols of Canada

Owl - John Sweeney: Preschool 2

## Background

This project began on June 7, 2017 and went until August 31, 2017. The staff involved were Janeth Rodriguez RECE, Simone Haughton RECE and Jennifer Schiedel RECE. The age range for the children involved was 2.5 to 4 years of age.

## Phase 1: Beginning the Project

Our interest in Canada began when Simone introduced the children to the song “Canada In My Pocket” so that we could talk about Canada and its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. The children became fascinated with the song and began to point out maple leaves everywhere they saw them. We then asked them what they know and wanted to know, to expand on their interest.

What We Know	What We Want To Know
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trudeau is the Prime Minister – Salif</li><li>• That maple leaf is the Canada leaf – Valentina</li><li>• The beaver works all night – Jacobo</li><li>• I want to say thank you to Canada – Ella</li><li>• I’ve been in Canada a long time – Gabriel</li><li>• The beaver has money in his hand – Valentina</li><li>• The schooner goes to two different countries – Gabriel</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What places does the schooner go? – Sydney</li><li>• Why is the maple leaf important? – Sydney</li><li>• What is Canada? – Salif</li><li>• To know about the Canadian flag and learn about the Queen – Salif</li><li>• What about Trudeau? – Benicio</li><li>• Why do we have soldiers? – Ella</li><li>• What are totem poles, Mounties and Parliament Hill? (The class after reading “ABC of Canada”)</li></ul>

## Phase 2: Developing the Project

On Monday, June 12, Janeth brought out the iPad and played the song of interest “Canada in my pocket”. The children were excited to hear the song and try to learn the words. “The maple leaf!” Silas shouted. The other children started pointing out the maple leaf as well.

**Chorus:**

I've got Canada in my pocket  
A little bit of history,  
A penny, and a nickel  
And a quarter and a dime  
Mean a lot to you and me.  
It's more than pocket money,  
They're the symbols of our land,  
They're pictures of important things  
For which this country stands.



The maple leaf, the maple leaf  
Is a beautiful sight to see,  
It waves 'hello' to us below  
From the top of a maple tree.  
And with every year that passes  
It grows like you and me,  
So should we all grow straight and tall  
Like the lovely maple tree.

**Chorus**

The beaver, oh the beaver  
Is a beautiful sight to see,  
He's a happy, furry animal  
Like a teddy bear with teeth.  
He's never ever lazy  
He works all night and day,  
Building houses for his family  
He's got no time to play



**Chorus**

The schooner, oh the schooner  
Is a beautiful sight to see,  
It's a great big wooden sailing ship  
That can sail across the sea.  
It brings to other countries  
The things their people need,  
And brings back things  
Like chocolate bars  
And books for us to read.



**Chorus**

The caribou, the caribou  
Is a beautiful sight to see,  
He's a really big strong animal  
I'm sure you'll all agree.  
He looks like Santa's reindeer,  
And he loves it when  
The wind blows cold,  
So he lives up north  
With the polar bears  
'Cause he likes the ice and snow.



**Chorus**

After the song was done, Janeth asked, "Where else would we find a maple leaf?" "Look outside" said Claire, "It's up on the flag." We all observed the school flag floating in the wind with the maple leaf. "I

have an idea," Janeth suggested, "What if we look around for maple leaves and when you see one with mommy, daddy or any other family member, you take a picture and ask them to send it to Jo or Judy?" The children got very excited at the thought of this. We sent an email to our parents about our challenge. We also made a chart on where we spotted our maple leaves. Here are some examples of the pictures that we received:



John finds a maple leaf in his yard.

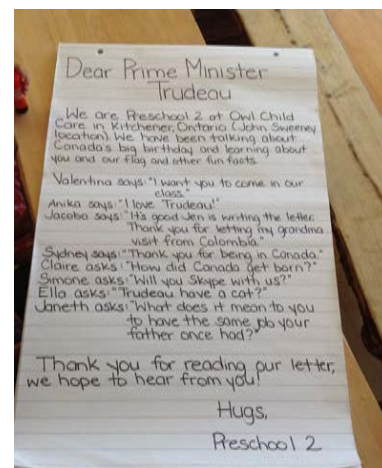


Charlotte finds a maple leaf like the ones on her dress.

After talking about Trudeau on a daily basis and watching his message to the country for Canada Day, we finally wrote him a letter on June 13. We explained who we were in the letter and what we were learning. Valentina, Anika (4yrs), Jacobo, Sydney, Claire (4yrs), Ella, Janeth and Simone all had questions they wanted to ask our Prime Minister.



Working on our letter to Trudeau



Our completed letter



On June 15, we went on a class walk to the mailboxes across the street from our centre and mailed our letter to Justin Trudeau. The mail carrier, who was sorting her mail into slots at the time, closed a door for us so that we were able to insert our letter. Christopher was given the envelope, and inserted it into the proper slot. We were eager for a response! Unfortunately, at the time of this write up we still had not received a response.



Walking to the mailbox



Christopher (age 3.5) inserts the letter to Trudeau

Seeing the interest the children had in the maple leaf, our Conestoga College Early Childhood Education student Le did a hand painting activity with the children. Claire, Vienna, Valentina, Nicky, Silas and Le counted how many fingers were on each hand. She drew the children's attention to a maple leaf and showed them how the maple leaf has similar points on it, like the fingers on our hand. The children then had their hand painted and got to make their own maple leaf prints on a large piece of brown paper. Le then drew a Canada flag and used her hand to represent the maple leaf in the center. We hung up the finished product to help decorate our room for our upcoming Canada Day party.

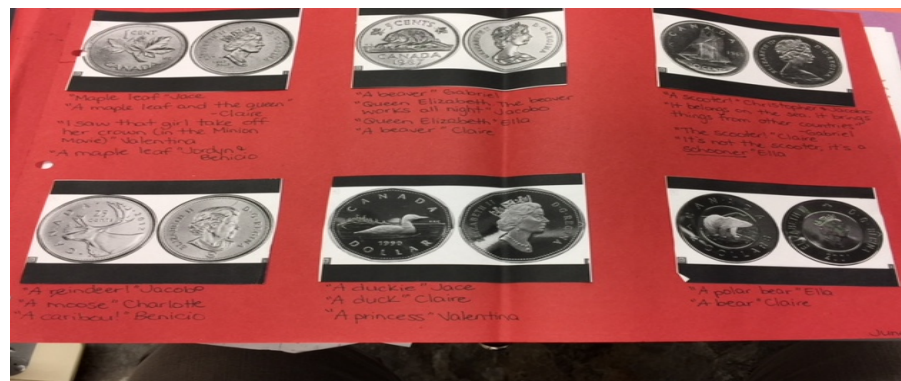


Creating hand painted maple leaves with Le.



Our finished work

With growing interest in the “Canada In My Pocket” song, we began to examine our Canadian currency. We printed off pictures of both sides of each coin and pasted it on a piece of paper. Jen then asked the children what they were seeing, to come up with our own coin definitions. This is where Salif took an interest in the Queen and wanted to learn more about her, and what she does. This is also, where we had an opportunity to see Silas in his learning in how he would revisit this poster and point out what each symbol meant and stood for.



Our coin sheet



In preparation for our Canada day party, we created a scavenger hunt. We allowed the children to help cut out the pictures, which we then put all around the room for the children and their families to find together. We sang *O Canada* to our family members and we decorated our cupcakes we made for our families. We encouraged everyone to get his or her sheets to do the scavenger hunt. The hunt was then on! Vienna and her parents found many of the symbols around the room (32 in total).



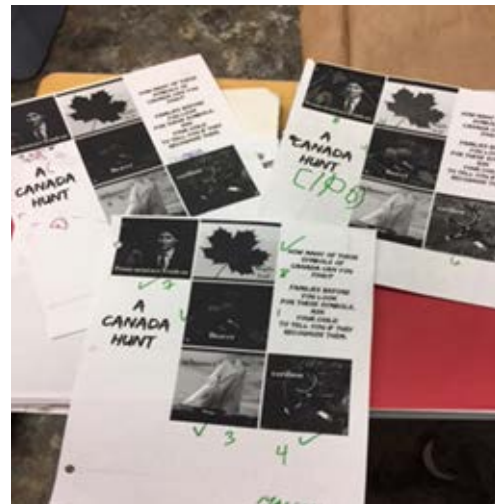
Christopher (age 3.5) is cutting out the pictures for our scavenger hunt



Claire (age 4) "I'm ready for our party!"



Jonah (age 4) showing off his maple leaves



Our scavenger hunt results

We then took a survey in the center to ask “Do you know someone who lives in another province?” and “Do you know someone who lives in another country?” We went to the toddler room, preschool 1, school age, Jo and our cook, Deb to ask. The children made a line under either the ‘yes’ or ‘no’ column.



Nicholas and Silas asking questions and marking responses



Once we finished taking the survey, we counted our tally together.

Going forward, this inspired us printing off a large map of Canada and individual pictures of the provinces and territories and made a booklet for the kids to explore. Jonah was able to identify many of the provinces in the book and list the provinces and territories based off the song “We Are Canada.”

Jen brought in maple keys from her house and a small maple tree. Since we were beginning to plant for our garden outside, we used this opportunity to plant our maple tree and keys outside to see if we could grow our own maple trees. We filled a large pot with potting soil and then began to examine what we were planting. We then worked as a team, watered the keys and newly planted maple tree. We kept track of the growth throughout the summer, but unfortunately, our maple keys did not take. We were happy to see that our maple tree survived the transfer and grew fresh maple leaves once outside.



Jen held up the maple keys and asked Anika, Claire, Nicky, Charlotte (3yrs), Ella and Isabelle (2.5yrs), what they were seeing. Claire responded, "Maple keys."



Each child was given a turn to dig a hole and plant a maple key inside, covering it up with dirt.



We transferred our maple tree.

To help answer Sydney's question "Where do schooners go," we decided to build our own schooner. A schooner is a sailing ship with two or more masts; foremast and a mainmast stepped nearly amidships, which is why Jen brought in half of a water jug to use as the base of the schooner. She also pulled out bamboo sticks, large garden cutters and safety rules and off we went. The children were asked to think about what other materials could be used to help make parts of the schooner. Claire and Valentina wanted to use paper to make the sails. Since we needed the sticks to hold the sails, we got to work on cutting the sticks down to size. Each child was given the opportunity to use the large garden cutters. Some children needed to do some problem solving to figure out their body placement to make the cutters cut properly. After the sticks were cut and attached to the base, Valentina, Claire, Vienna and Ella made the four sails we needed for our two schooners. Each child was asked how to apply their sail. Their solutions were a hot glue gun and tape. The children drew their own sails on a piece of paper, cut them out and then applied it using their method choice. Once that was complete, we had two schooners!





Gabriel cutting a stick



Vienna drawing a sail



Valentina gluing her sail



Completed Schooner

Valentina pointed out “Our schooners needed people in them to drive,” so we made a batch of playdough for the children to build their own people. We provided cut up pipe cleaners and googly eyes and let the children make their own creations.



The children making their people



The finished product

Now that the schooners were built, we wanted to answer Sydney's question "Where do schooners go." We discovered that the Blue Nose Schooner, which is on our dime, sailed from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, to Barbados – a trip that was 3,522 km one way! To help the children understand this we got out a meter stick and some tape. We decided that every meter was 100 km. The children took turns taping the route for the schooner. It took us 35-meter lengths to complete our trip. We used our main door as our home base of Lunenburg and taped a picture of the pier on it. Our tape went through our cubby area, into the school and all the way to our fire exit door.



We looked at where the schooner traveled.



Jordyn is putting tape down for our route.



Gabriel explains to Sara (staff) what we are doing.

We put our picture of Barbados on that door to remind us it was our destination. Jen then sat at the Nova Scotia door and showed the children the supplies that Canada sent to Barbados.





Our supplies  
ready for  
delivery



Jace and Silas are  
unloading at the  
Barbados port.

We had flour, salt, lumber, and fish to give to Barbados. Each child was given a turn to load the supplies into one of the two schooners. They then sailed their schooner, which was placed on top of a scooter, all the way to Barbados by following our taped route. Once they arrived in Barbados, their peers helped them unload their commodities and loaded their new commodities into the schooner. Barbados was giving Canada sugar and rum. A new child then sailed the schooner back to Canada from Barbados and unloaded at the pier. We did this process of loading, driving, and unloading, until each child who wanted a turn had a turn. This allowed us to practice the names of each commodity so that we could have an easier time remembering them.



Salif is sailing to Barbados.



Valentina and Salif are  
delivering to Barbados.



Valentina unloads goods  
for her peers to have a  
turn.



The Blue Nose Schooner was also a racing boat. To teach the children this, we created a race space in our playground. We pulled a string through the holes in our schooner and attached the string from one fence all the way across the playground to another fence. We noticed our schooners were too light. They kept flipping upside down! Jen asked the children, "What can we use to keep the schooners from tipping?" Salif said "wood," so the children collected broken off log pieces from the playground and filled the schooners with them. That helped to solve our tipping problem. The children then took turns, in teams of two, to race the schooners. They would stand on one end of the playground, wait for Jen to call out "1, 2, 3, go!" and would race to the other fence. Salif, Jacobo, Sydney and Claire really enjoyed this activity, participating in multiple races.



Jacobo and Sydney race their schooners



After our schooner races, we added a schooner to our sensory bin

One of the things Simone discussed with the children was about the aboriginals. They took time going through history books. We read the book "The Flag" where we learned that the aboriginals were the first people that came here to plant corn and beans. They also taught them to plant squash around the corn to keep animals out. After reading the "ABC of Canada", the children wanted to know why they have totem poles. After a little research, Simone found out that it is how they write their stories like our storybooks. The children understood it better that way and John thought that was very cool. We found out that they believed their job was to take care of the earth around them. This was brought up again while watching the movie "The Lorax" when Ella exclaimed, "They are taking care of the earth like the aboriginals."

We also found that puzzles of Canada was something that was of great interest throughout out the project no matter the size.



Jen, Jace, Dominic, Jacobo, John and Silas work together to put Canada together



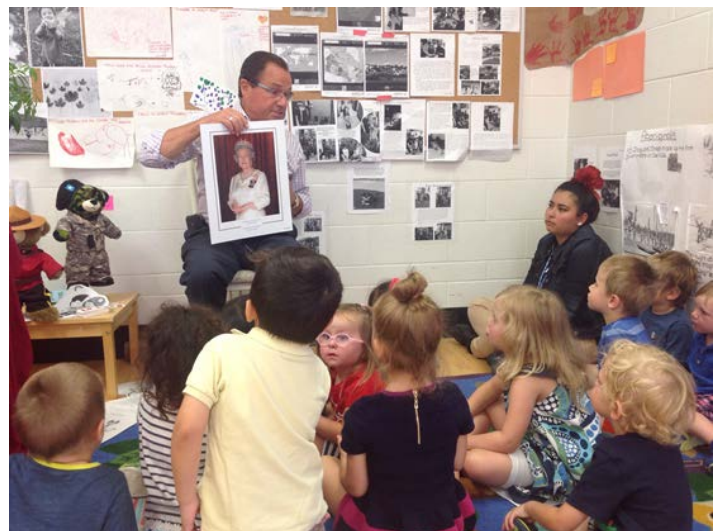
Dominic and Simone work on a small Canada puzzle.

## Phase 3: Concluding the Project

We had the privilege of having our MP Harold Albrecht visit our classroom. He brought some items like a picture of Queen Elizabeth, a Mountie bear, a picture of Parliament Hill where Trudeau works, and read us a story. He answered Salif's question of where the Queen lives. Jace asked if Trudeau drives a backhoe. Harold did not think he did but shared that he himself drives a tractor on his farm. The children were so engaged in listening to our MP and recalled information after the visit. After Harold Albrecht's visit, we also had the children do their second representation of a maple leaf.



Harold Albrecht shows us a Mountie. He is a Canadian Hero.



"Where does the Queen live?" -Salif. Harold explains she lives in England.





Harold Albrecht  
reads us a story.



A group picture with Harold Albrecht.

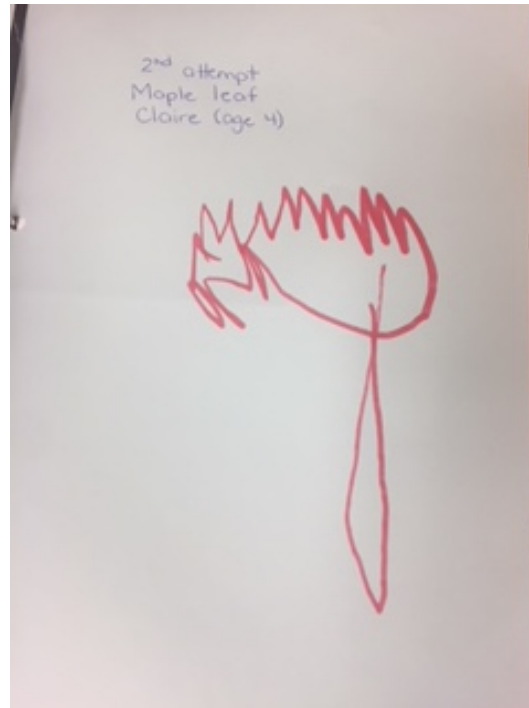


Nicholas H. gives him a high five before  
he heads back to work.





Claire's first representational picture of a maple leaf.



Claire's second representational picture of a maple leaf.

Our project concluded with our visit from our MP, as this was the last week we had all of our friends involved in the project. Many of the children involved went off to kindergarten and the project did not continue after it as we embarked on a new journey with our new friends.

## Teacher Reflections

### Simone H, RECE Reflection

As a facilitator for children's learning I am always so in awe of how much they learn and retain. This project was no different. You had them learning the ten provinces and three territories and knowing where they live. Then understanding the difference that they may live in Ontario but they also live in Kitchener, Waterloo or even Elmira. When parents commented, "What were they learning today? Are they talking about Trudeau?" It was great to see how they revisited and recalled what they had learned. I enjoyed having the parents so involved in this project. The moment that always made me so emotional was to see Silas going and identifying what he's learned and hearing him sing "Canada in my pocket" and singing our national anthem, knowing all the words. I found the most difficult part was seeing how interested they were but also having to remember that they were 2 1/2 to 4 years old and keeping the information of such a big topic on their level, and not making it information overload. The whole project surprised me on how much the children were able to retain and understand about Canada. How involved and how interested their parents were and how much they talk about it at home with their child. I was also very surprised to see how much our MP and his office were able to help us in his visit and even setting up his visit.

**Janeth R, RECE Reflection**

The Symbols of Canada project was a true surprise for me as an educator. All I could think was, 'with so many directions we could go on, this is really what they want to learn about?' I found it difficult at first to truly see where this was going to go, but as I saw what the children were taking in, how much excitement there was in every little thing we explored, I got on board and began to enjoy our learning. Jen's idea to build a schooner with the children was a great hit. Not only were the children involved in the making of it, they were very eager to test it out and figure out why they would use this "boat," as Christopher first called it, and where they would send it? There was so much engagement throughout this project that it made me excited to learn something new as well. I loved how some of our children with language difficulties were able to learn all the words from our "Canada in my Pocket," song. When the children sang O Canada to our parents, it was a touching moment for me as I observed how well they knew it, and how respectful they were of our nation by standing up to sing. The children were so proud of singing for their parents. I also enjoyed how much parent engagement we had throughout the project. When we did the "find a maple leaf challenge," the pictures came pouring into Jo and Judy. The children felt a sense of pride and belonging as they saw their own photos on our wall leading into the classroom, and would have discussions with their parents about their peer's photos as well. This was a fun, learning filled project that allowed me to observe the children enhance language skills; they used motor abilities with our schooner making, and schooner races, they were able to practice their memory recall, we observed some great teamwork and cooperation, made predictions, tested theories and applied math skills. What a rewarding time seeing all of this learning happen.

**Jennifer S, RECE Reflection:**

I really enjoyed learning alongside the children during this project because I found it to be such a unique topic. I loved seeing their excitement to find a maple leaf, and how often they would request to hear '*Canada In My Pocket*' and call out the different symbols as they popped up. My favourite part of this project was working on building the schooner and having it travel around the center to represent Nova Scotia and Barbados. I loved how involved the children were and how they each wanted a turn to load, unload, and drive the schooner. I also enjoyed that we were able to use our schooner for so many activities, such as the schooner races and for our sensory bin. I really loved being able to see each child engage in what interested them the most and see children of all abilities find a way to take part in our project.