

## Early Childhood Medicine Wheel Teachings

East Direction. Spring - First salmon ceremony, people gather green shoots, nettles, bulbs, salmon berries, thimble berry shoots, wild onions and wild tiger lily. - Ideas & activities which you can incorporate into your early childhood classroom for the direction of East.- Baby ceremony, eagle puppets, introduce tobacco talk about it's traditional use, go for a walk in your community pointing out traditional plants, look for eagles and other birds, if available pick berries. The eagle represents love, talk about love and feelings. Books on berries, hunting, traditional teachings, participate in a salmon ceremony, Paint using feathers, art with small cotton balls for berries.

South Direction- Summer is when large numbers of people relocate to "dry-rack fishery" in the Fraser Canyon and they continue to pick berries in low elevations. Main population of salmon arrive. - Ideas & activities which you can incorporate into your early childhood classroom for the direction of South.- If you have salmon eggs in the classroom from fisheries this is the time to do a field trip to release the salmon. Talk about the body healthy exercise and eating. Cedar activities and crafts. Books on fishing, berry picking the body, deer, host a event to honour the adolescents connected with your program being cousins, older siblings or aunt and uncles. Start a mentoring program for teens. Make drums. Make solar prints.

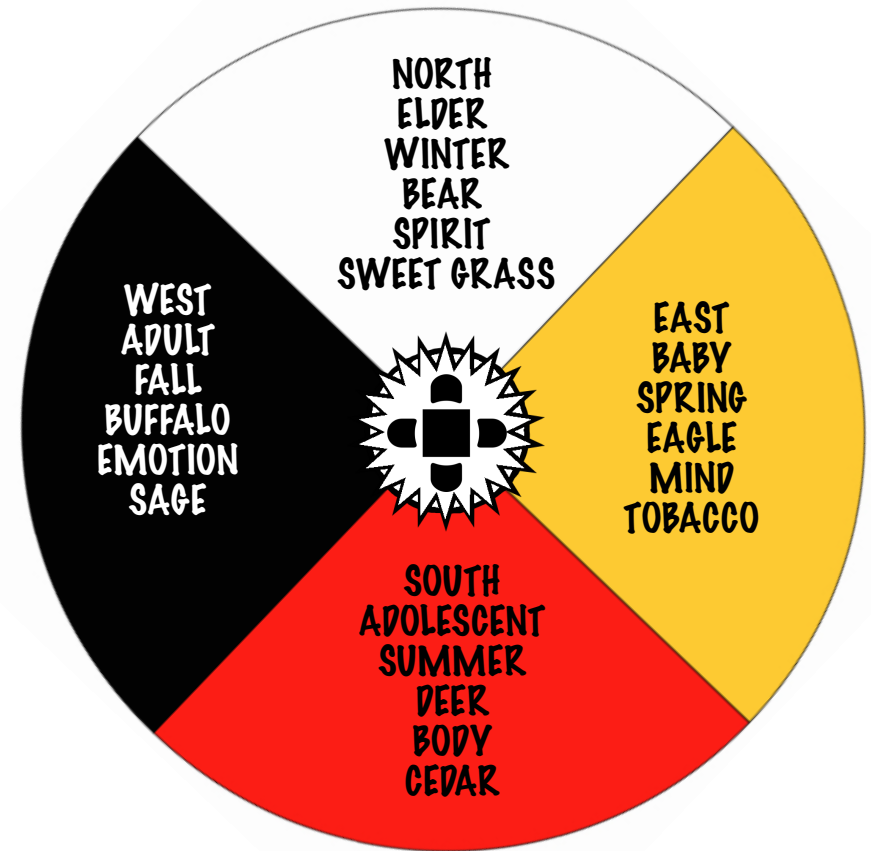
West Direction- Fall is when many childcare programs start for the year. This is a great time to introduce the Medicine Wheel in the direction of the West. Traditionally this is when people travel for Potlatch Ceremonies. This is the main time for hunting and berry picking continues into the fall season. Ideas & activities which you can incorporate into your early childhood classroom for the direction of West. Starting the year having a Potlatch provides many opportunities to strengthen your relationship and collaborate with the families and community. Art using fall items collected on a community walk. Buffalo puppets, stamps, stickers and other items. The buffalo represents respect, talk about respect may introduce talking feather to circle time. Honour the parents by having a family night. Introduce sage. Talk about direction. Look at a variety of hides and furs from animals, talk about hunting, go on a treasure hunt.

North Direction- Winter is traditionally when bears were hunted in hibernation. The represents courage. Honour Elders in your community and program by having a lunch or dinner for them. Make bear cookies. Art with bear stamps, stickers. The children can make a bear den. Have an Elder come into the program and tell traditional bear legends. Books on winter, bears, Elders, Talk about the children's, spirit and what makes them special.

### References & Acknowledgments

1. Information taken from the following website: [www.Anishinaabemdaa.com](http://www.Anishinaabemdaa.com)
2. Information taken from the following website: [www.fourdirectionsteachings.com](http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com)
3. Information taken from the following website: [www.stipo.info/print.php?id=192](http://www.stipo.info/print.php?id=192)
4. Information taken from the following website: [www.scribd.com/doc/87171945/Medicine-Wheel](http://www.scribd.com/doc/87171945/Medicine-Wheel)
5. Information taken from the following website: [www.mesacreativearts.com](http://www.mesacreativearts.com)

## An Early Childhood Guide to the Medicine Wheel



*"All parts of the wheel are important and depend on each other in the cycle of life; what affects one affects all, and the world cannot continue with missing parts. For this reason, the Medicine Wheel teaches that harmony, balance and respect for all parts are needed to sustain life"*  
- Elder Lillian Pitawanakwat- Ojibwe/Potawotami

Please note that The Medicine Wheel Teachings are practiced by many but not all Aboriginal communities. The teachings vary from Nation to Nation and within communities but hold much of the same meanings.

Guide compiled and designed by Carmen Pereda

### Talking Feather Protocol

- Only one person speaks at a time. Only the person holding the talking feather may speak. Dialogues are not part of the circle, as they can become confrontational.
- Introduce yourself in the first round.
- Speak from the heart- the speaker should address the circle from the heart, and may speak for as long as they need to, with respect for time of others.
- Listen with respect- All people except the speaker listen attentively and give support to the speaker. Listening with the heart allows you to hear the true intent beneath what the speaker is saying. Listening in the way you expect others to listen to you.
- What is said in the circle stays in the circle- never repeat anything that is said within the circle, unless you have permission of the speaker.

### Medicine Wheel Protocol

- There are rules to the Medicine Wheel and please note, depending upon the Nation, these may vary.  
You always enter through the East Gate.
- You always walk **CLOCKWISE** in a wheel; never counter clockwise.
- You always exit out the East Gate. You never break through the circle at any point nor leave the circle in any direction other than the East Gate.
- You enter with humility, humbleness, and open heart and an understanding that as you come to the East Gate, you are there to work **WITH** the energies present within the wheel.
- You come to the East Gate, stop, give tobacco to that Spirit who rules that direction, the Eagle and silently or verbally ask permission to **ENTER** into the wheel. You **NEVER** assume you can go in. By coming to the East Gate you are acknowledging oneness with all relations and by stopping, giving a gift and asking permission is no different than if you went to a neighbour's house and knocked on their door asking permission to go into it.

### Medicine Wheel Explanation

A Traditional Symbol for many First Nation/ Aboriginal people. Although it is important to note that the Medicine Wheel is not necessarily used with all Aboriginal communities and Nations within. However, many communities and nations may not use the actual wheel in their teachings but share some variations of the Wheel teachings and practices of the Traditional Knowledge. It is important for everyone to ask the Elders and community members in your community what interpretation of the medicine wheel is used.

### Medicine Wheel Explanation

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- Have been found in various places throughout North America.
- An estimate of around 20,000 Medicine Wheels in North America before European contact occurred.
- Medicine Wheels made out of stones arranged on the earth have been dated back to around 5,000 years old or more.
- Medicine wheels mark special significance, such as places of energy, ceremony, meeting, meditation, teaching and celebration. Medicine wheel provides spiritual protection as well as protection from illness.
- The circle represents life and various aspects of the world. Ones in which are both seen and unseen.
- Life and aspects of life travel in a circular path they are connected starting in the centre.
- The central perspective is a neutral place where it is possible to develop a holistic vision and to understand the creation and connection between all living things.



### Looking at the Medicine Wheel

- A Medicine Wheel is a circle divided into parts (usually four) they relate with and counterbalance one another to form a whole/circle.
- The Medicine Wheel has 36 stones
- The centre stone represents the creator or yourself.
- Around the centre stone is the inner circle- These seven stones represents the foundation of life – World, Sun, Moon, and the 4 elements necessary for life fire, water, earth, air.
- There are four stones in the four directions East, South, West, North.
- Connecting the 4 direction stones are the stones representing the Twelve moons.
- The thirteenth moon is unseen – Clan mother of the thirteenth moon is located behind the ninth stone which is the directional stone representing North. While not in the wheel, it is to honour the occasional “Blue Moon”. The transition between one cycle and the next, which is the process of transforming.
- The stones between the inner circle and the direction stones are spirit paths, directing energy outward and guiding us inward.