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## University of Lethbridge and North & Company LLP readying to present 10th annual Play Day to community

Family Day is just around the corner, which means the annual University of Lethbridge Play Day, presented by North & Company LLP, is gearing up to celebrate its 10th anniversary.

But we can't have Play Day when we're shuttered in our houses and unable to gather, can we? That could not be farther from the truth, in fact, the power of play and all its benefits may be more important now than ever.

"For 10 years we've been able to provide a venue for families to gather on Family Day and celebrate being together in a play atmosphere," says Dr. Mike Mahon, U of L president and vice-chancellor. "We obviously can't supply the venue this year, but the essence of play isn't confined to a specific place — it's the act of play that matters, wherever you are."



Instead of southern Albertans coming to the U of L for Play Day, the University is reaching out to the world and instigating a Play Week that will run Monday through Friday, Feb. 15-20, offering play activities, suggestions and resources for families to take part in on their own time and in their own spaces.

"The heart of Play Day has always been about bringing family units together through play," adds Mahon. "You don't need to be on campus to do that. We'll supply some ideas and some fun activities as a starting point and after that, families can take it wherever they want. The big thing is doing something together, remembering how to have fun and laugh — something I think we are all looking for these days."

Imagination is the theme of the week as the University looks to spark creativity, generate ideas and inspire innovative thought. Through imagination, we learn and grow, and we adapt to changing circumstances.

The week will be comprised of three related elements: a series of interactive play videos aimed at children and families; an online community lecture on play and brain development with neuroscientist Dr. Robbin Gibb (BASC (BSc) '77, MSc '01, PhD '04); and a social media campaign enabling families to share in elements of play and to educate everyone on the benefits of play for brain development and healthy communities.

A full list of activities will soon be available on a dedicated Play Day web page, while a specific [Play Week Facebook Event](#) will allow everyone to engage with the University by sharing their activities for a chance to win participatory prizes. The U of L Music Conservatory, Art Gallery, Pronghorn Athletics, Destination Exploration and PACT (Philanthropy, Advancement, Communication and Traditions student club) are all taking part.

“This is our third year supporting Play Day and we’re thrilled we’ve found a way to keep this tradition going despite the restrictions we are facing. This is an important community event and one families look forward to every year,” says Kerry Gellrich (BA '06), Partner, North & Company LLP, who confirms their sponsorship will continue forward. “That Play Day will now encompass a whole week and be available to everyone online means we can reach so many more families and keep engaging people in activities that support togetherness and community wellness.”

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