

# CONNEXIONS

## Understanding an Evolving Landscape: College Surveys New ECE Graduates

Meagan Marwick considers herself fortunate to have found work one and a half months after graduating from Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology in 2013. Marwick is a registered early childhood educator (RECE) with the Northeastern Catholic District School Board in Timmins, ON.

"I like working with the school-age group," says Marwick. "I find the best of myself when I am in the kindergarten class."

Last year, Marwick and other 2013 early childhood education (ECE) program graduates participated in a survey by the College of Early Childhood Educators. The *Early Childhood Educator Entry to Practise and Early Career Transition* survey was sent to College members in every geographic region of Ontario.

### Why conduct a survey?

The recruitment and the retention of competent early childhood educators in the profession are important in maintaining high quality early childhood education and care.

The College created the survey to gather insight on the following:

- Membership application experiences with the College
- Employment opportunities in the ECE sector
- Entry to practise experiences
- Career transition experiences
- Levels of professional confidence and satisfaction

This survey, along with another one conducted of 2012 graduates, will help the College to better understand and serve its members in the public interest. The College also wants to promote an increased understanding and transparency regarding its registration processes and issues that affect the membership, the profession and the public.

### Findings from the survey

Of the 2873 members invited to participate in the survey, 1305 English and 70 French responses were received.



Meagan Marwick RECE  
Timmins, ON

Highlights of the survey's findings include:

- 86% of English-speaking respondents and 96% of French-speaking respondents said they were currently employed in the ECE sector.
- 54% of employed English-speaking respondents and 85% of employed French-speaking respondents were

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# The President's Message



I'm pleased to announce that the College of Early Childhood Educators will be hosting its second leadership symposium on September 25, 2015. I look forward to continuing the discussion on the importance of leadership and collaboration in the early childhood education sector.

This year's election of College Council members will be held in April for District 3 – South East Region, District 4 – Central East Region and District 8 – South West Region. If you are an eligible RECE, please participate in the self-regulation of our profession by voting. I also wish the candidates the best of luck.

The College's sixth Annual Meeting of Members in January was successfully livestreamed. Please contact the College if you have any questions about the presentation or the annual meeting in general.

At the beginning of the year, I began my own continuous professional learning process and would like to share some of my reflections. First and foremost, use the tools on the web site. They helped me organize and understand what I needed to do and reflect upon my practice. Second, even though I feel competent as an RECE, setting a goal will ensure that my practice continues to improve and help to ensure that I focus on striving for practice excellence. There is so much going on in our profession that learning activities are always close at hand.

Our commitment to strive for continuous learning will make our contributions to the people we serve even greater. I hope you will join me in this great journey and see it as I do: an adventure.

**Cheers,**

 RECE

Lois Mahon RECE, President

# The Registrar's Message



In December, the *Child Care Modernization Act, 2014* (Bill 10) was passed by the Ontario government and subsequently received royal assent. Bill 10 amends the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007* as part of the ECE Act's mandatory review. The Bill also repeals the *Day Nurseries Act* and replaces it with the *Child Care and Early Years Act*. We will

keep you informed as these changes are implemented by the Ontario government.

The College's next strategic priorities will be set in June 2015. In order to prepare for the next set of strategic priorities for 2015-2018, we are seeking input from RECEs through roundtable discussions and an online survey. I encourage you to get involved in setting the future direction for the College. More information on how to get involved is available on page 3.

I'm pleased to announce that a second Leadership Pilot project will take place this year. Stay tuned for updates on this exciting initiative.

Our outreach work continues to be important. The College regularly meets with post-secondary schools, has made presentations to school principal candidates in three school boards and held meetings with employers and unions to discuss our regulatory role in the profession. Last fall, the College met with YMCA representatives and First Nations supervisors from around the province.

The College's Program Evaluation Advisory Group met for the first time last fall in Toronto. This group will guide and inform the monitoring and evaluation of the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program.

**Best wishes,**



Sue Corke, Registrar & CEO

# Strategic Priorities 2015-2018

This winter, the College of Early Childhood Educators consulted members, employers, government and other key stakeholders throughout Ontario on its strategic priorities for 2015-2018.

An online survey will be available from March 2 to 23, 2015 to all registered early childhood educators (RECEs) to ask for their input on the strategic priorities. Information on how to access the survey will be e-mailed to all current members. When giving their feedback, RECEs should keep in mind the College's mandate to regulate the profession of early childhood education in the public interest.

In April 2015, the College's Council will hold a strategic planning session to determine the next set of priorities. Members will be updated as the process unfolds this year.

# Annual Meeting

On Thursday January 8, 2015 the College held its sixth annual meeting at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel in Toronto, ON. Members of the College, special guests from the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders in the early learning and care sector attended the meeting.

The annual meeting's purpose was to inform members about the College's activities during the sixth fiscal year. College President Lois Mahon RECE chaired the meeting. Anna Baas-Anderson RECE, Chair of the Registration Committee, shared information about the Committee's mandate. Sue Corke, Registrar and CEO, and Melanie Dixon RECE, Director of Professional Practice, gave a special presentation on continuous professional learning. 

 Visit the College's YouTube channel, [youtube.com/collegeofece](http://youtube.com/collegeofece), to watch this presentation.

## About this Publication

The College of Early Childhood Educators regulates the profession of early childhood education in the public interest and works towards its vision of a profession in which all members accept responsibility for practice excellence. Published three times a year in Toronto, ON, *Connexions* provides members and the public with sector and College news along with regular features on the early childhood education profession.

### Elected Council Members

Lois Mahon RECE, President (District 1)  
Eugema Ings RECE (District 1)  
Lisa Lamarre RECE (District 2)  
Susan Quaiff RECE (District 3)  
Linda Cottes RECE (District 4)  
Roxanne Lambert RECE (District 4)  
Valerie Sterling RECE (District 5)  
Richard (Dick) Winters RECE (District 5)  
Heather Yeo RECE (District 5)

Anna Baas-Anderson RECE (District 6)  
Sophia Tate RECE (District 6)  
Susan (Darlene) Edgar RECE,  
Vice-President (District 7)  
Barbara Brown RECE (District 8)  
Vera Niculena (Nici) Cole RECE (District 8)

### Publicly Appointed Members

Madeleine L. Champagne, Ottawa  
Karen Damley, Mississauga  
Nermin Foda, Mississauga  
Rosemary Fontaine, Toronto  
Christine Forsyth, Toronto  
Bruce Minore, Thunder Bay  
Larry O'Connor, Brock  
Ann Robichaud-Gagné, Ottawa  
Nerene Virgin, Hamilton  
Ron Wideman, North Bay

### College Administration

Registrar and CEO: Sue Corke  
Deputy Registrar: Laura Sheehan  
Director of Corporate Services:  
James Cha

Director of Complaints and Discipline:  
Greg Coutts  
Director of Professional Practice:  
Melanie Dixon RECE

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# Election 2015

From March 20, 2015 until April 29, 2015, eligible members of the College of Early Childhood Educators will be able to get involved in the self-regulation of their profession by participating in an election of Council members.

As the governing body of the College, Council makes significant decisions that impact the future of the early childhood education profession.

The Council is composed of 14 registered early childhood educators (RECEs) who are elected by fellow members of the College and 10 public members who are appointed by the Ontario government.

This year elections will be held in the following districts:

Electoral District	Number of Members to be Elected
3 – South East Region	1
4 – Central East Region	2
8 – South West Region	2

## Voting Information

In March 2015, members eligible to vote who have provided the College with a valid e-mail address will be e-mailed notice of how to electronically access a ballot, a list of candidates and an explanation of the voting procedures along with the candidates' biographies and statements for their electoral districts. Members eligible to vote who have not provided the College with an e-mail address will be mailed voting information at the same time.

Voting opens on March 20. The College must receive all ballots (paper or electronic) in accordance with the voting procedures by no later than 5 p.m. ET on April 29, 2015. Election results will be posted on the website once they become official.

## Other Ways to Get Involved

RECEs who are not elected members of Council will have an opportunity this spring to apply for a position as a non-Council committee member on the Complaints, Discipline, Fitness to Practise, Registration Appeals, Registration, and Standards of Practice Committees.

Non-Council committee members will be appointed by Council to serve on committees. As the composition of the committees is complex, it is expected that only a small number of non-Council members will be appointed each year.

All current members of the College will receive more information on how they can apply for non-Council committee positions.

With the upcoming election, **Heather Yeo RECE**, vice-chair of the Election Committee, would like to encourage members to participate in the process. *Connexions* asks her what it means to get involved.

## Why is Council important to the profession?

The College Council does many things to meet its mandate to protect the public interest including approving College by-laws and Council policies, overseeing its budget and receiving staff updates.

## Why should RECEs vote?

RECEs should vote because it is their professional responsibility and right as a member. Voting is an opportunity to voice their opinion.

## What impact does voting have on the profession?

Being able to vote validates us as professionals and elevates our status. By voting for a candidate, you know you are picking the best person to carry out the mandate of the College.



The electoral districts can be found on the College's website, [college-ece.ca/election](http://college-ece.ca/election). The names of the candidates will be available online as of March 20.



Visit the College's YouTube channel, [youtube.com/collegeofece](https://youtube.com/collegeofece) to watch Council members share their experiences of participating in an election.

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- hired in the ECE sector in two months or less. The same per cent of respondents were employed full-time.
- Employment environments included licenced child care centres, school boards, a cultural association, a military family resource centre, parenting and family literacy centres, a centre for student mothers and a community shelter.
- 23% of the English-speaking respondents and 8% of the French-speaking respondents said they were working part-time or engaged in casual/supply work.
- Many of the part-time and casual/supply RECEs said they regretted not being able to participate in professional learning activities made available to full-time employees.
- Approximately 72% of the English-speaking and 84% of the French-speaking survey respondents said that they found the registration process "very easy" or "easy".

### Next steps

The College may use results from the survey to assist with future program planning, decision-making and development.

Interested in finding out more information? The complete report on the survey is available at [college-ece.ca/members/resources](https://college-ece.ca/members/resources).

# Early Childhood Educators and Teachers Discuss Interprofessional Collaboration

By Danielle Wagner RECE

September 2014 marked the fifth and final year for the provincial government's roll-out of the full-day kindergarten (FDK) program in elementary schools across Ontario. As a result of the program, schools have been exploring uncharted grounds by bringing together two distinct sets of professionals – Ontario Certified Teachers (OCT) and registered early childhood educators (RECE). These two groups of educators are working together to provide children with inquiry- and play-based learning experiences. Interprofessional collaboration is not unique to either profession. However opportunities to reflect and discuss the benefits and complexities of the partnership are essential.

In July 2014, the College of Early Childhood Educators and the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) co-hosted the Summer Institute, a forum for the two professions to explore interprofessional collaboration and ethical leadership. The Institute sought to create a shared understanding of ethical collaborative practices within the FDK program context.

Members of both professions working in an FDK program were invited to participate in the two-day event in which participants would receive the opportunity to reflect on their practice and engage in collaborative activities and discussions. The College and the OCT each selected 25 members based on specific criteria, including the reason for wanting to participate in the Institute and varied experiences in an FDK program. The Institute worked towards developing a shared resource that would support the ethical and professional standards of both regulatory bodies and serve as a reference tool for interprofessional collaboration.

On the first day of the Institute, Monica Faye OCT and Amanda Sarria RECE, an FDK program educator team from Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, spoke about their experiences creating and building a successful professional relationship. They shared their experiences about how they grew to understand and apply the principles of the FDK program and how they overcame challenges in and out of the



classroom. Both professionals also elaborated on how they switched from seeing themselves as “educators” to “co-learners” with each other and the children.

After hearing Faye and Sarria’s story, participants of the Summer Institute were invited to share and reflect on their own narratives and ethical dilemmas from working in an FDK program. They engaged in a consensus building exercise that focused on the essential dimensions of interprofessional collaboration in order to build a framework for reflection.

Both groups of professionals were also encouraged to further explore the key principles associated with collaboration and ethical leadership inherent within the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* for RECEs and the *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice* for OCTs. One participant, in particular, considered the ethical standards of both regulators and acknowledged that she “didn’t realize [the] ethical standards aligned so closely with each other.”

The educators learned that a certain level of conflict is necessary for adult learning and professional collaboration by watching a video clip hosted by Steve Katz, an expert in cognition and learning and teacher education, on the *K to 2 Connections* website. According to Katz, a moderate level of productive conflict is essential in order for both professionals to grow individually and together in their practice.

“I learned that in order to foster professional growth, it’s important for educators to maintain open communication and have those courageous conversations, which may be unfamiliar to them,” said one participant.

At the end of the Institute, participants were invited to write down their commitments to action for the upcoming school year. Several acknowledged the need to gain a better understanding of the ethical and professional standards from both regulatory bodies so that they could use them to guide dialogue and build constructive partnerships amongst themselves and the broader FDK team.

The first Institute hosted by the College and the OCT was successful in providing early childhood educators and teachers with a special opportunity to share and listen to



positive experiences and challenges experienced in the FDK program by both professions. Many of the participants were excited about what lies ahead now that they have deepened their understanding of interprofessional collaboration. After discussion and reflection, they recognize how open dialogue between educators is essential in providing a quality program and a place of belonging and engagement for Ontario’s four- and five-year old learners. In the upcoming months, Institute participants will continue to help shape the development of a shared resource that will be available to early childhood educators and teachers in Ontario. [C](#)

# Community Building

## *Intergenerational programs connect seniors and children*

By Jann Lee

Meagan Bell RECE is known for her creativity in developing programs for the kindergarten students at Kanata Research Park Family Centre in Ottawa, ON. Whether through planting, taking nature walks or building ice kingdoms, the registered early childhood educator (RECE) finds great satisfaction in watching the children enjoy and build skills from each activity.

One program from this centre brings joy to another group – the seniors who live in Chartwell Kanata Retirement Residence. Children from the child care centre have been meeting with the seniors monthly since 2008.

Bell, who has been involved in intergenerational programming since 2010, attributes its success to the multiple benefits it brings to the children. Although the children's visits only last an hour, the benefits to them are long-lasting.

"For children, it's a great way to build respect and compassion," says Bell. "Seniors act as mentors for them and help build their pre-reading and literacy skills."

Activities vary and include singing, arts and crafts, story time and conversations. Children learn social

skills by interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. Reading is a favourite and both groups alternate between choosing and reading books for each other.

"The children are not only listening to others, but they are also being heard themselves," says Bell who reflects on and discusses every visit with the children. "A lot of them comment on how they feel happy that they've been given the chance to read to others."

The positive sentiment is shared by the seniors, many of whom find themselves retracing their roots by interacting with the young. "There was a lady who came out after an activity and especially thanked us," relates Bell. "She used to be a teacher and she said that it's been a while since she's had the chance to read to children."

Bell says these kinds of stories confirm how important it is for centres to continually reflect on their activities and programs. Intergenerational programming began at Kanata Centre after it explored ways that children could make connections with the community.

*The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice is a foundational tool for Bell, who says that she and her colleagues often refer to the standards when they make decisions. "When we're having that kind of conversation, we're always*

*going back to our roots," she says. "We look at how we're connecting our philosophies to our practice."*

Standard IV: C.4 of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* states that early childhood educators should "access the resources and expertise available in their communities" and that "they strive to facilitate community partnerships for the benefit of children and families." Bell says that standard encompasses the goal of the program.

Building strong connections is also the reason why A Child's World (ACW) partnered with the Lookout Ridge Senior Residence in the Niagara Region. In 2008, ACW opened a centre within the seniors' residence. These days the children visit the seniors at least once a week to participate in activities that include line dancing, planting flowers, crafts and sing-alongs.

"Seniors and children love to do similar activities, so I find it easy to plan activities they can both engage in," says Shannon Goss RECE, who has been a supervisor at the centre for four years.

Like Bell, Goss also thinks the benefits of intergenerational programming are obvious and encourages other RECEs to consider this programming. "It has a huge benefit," says Goss. "It broadens the children's minds – they don't stereotype the elderly and they start to understand the aging process."



Intergenerational programming unites seniors and children through activities such as reading. At ACW Child Care-Lookout Ridge, seniors share their favourite books from their childhood through story time.

Photo Credit: ACW Child Care - Lookout Ridge

Children from the Kanata Research Park Family Centre in Ottawa regularly visit seniors at a local retirement residence. Activities such as cookie decorating allow children to build on various skills and forms friendships between the participants.

Photo Credit: Kanata Research Park Family Centre



Other organizations within the early learning and care sector are recognizing the program's value. The Early Childhood Community Development Centre hopes to encourage centres within the Niagara Region to explore intergenerational programming. It has launched a pilot project, *Building Strong Community Connections in Niagara through Seniors and Children*, which will support child care programs and seniors residences with ideas, resources and tools to facilitate engagement between children and seniors.

For ECEs who want to try intergenerational programming, Bell says that most organizations and families are receptive to having children and seniors interact. Although it requires some work in planning and organizing, the RECE says the benefits are long-lasting, proven by one of her experiences.

"Sometimes, when we visit the seniors' home, parents join us," says Bell. "In one instance, a child's mom attended and was excited to come along. As we walked to the centre, she shared with me that her father had lived at

the seniors' home a long time ago. He would have been there when the program first started."

Bell continues, "She told me that he used to tell her stories about how he got excited whenever the children visited and how, looking back, it's really special for her to be able to now go to the same residence with her son." 

# Insights from the Leadership Pilot project

By Maya Chivi RECE

It has been over a year since the College launched its Leadership Pilot project involving registered early childhood educators (RECEs), but its stories and testimonies can still serve as a model of ongoing learning for RECEs.

Launched in September 2013, the eight-month initiative involved 25 participants and six mentors. The group learned about leadership in the context of early childhood education by testing and providing feedback on the tools developed for the College's Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program. Participants demonstrated that regardless of their experience in the sector they were able to learn and grow in their practice through ongoing learning.

"Since I began this project, I have been 'on fire', passionate to follow my ideas, questions and interests," said one RECE.

Participants first completed the Self-Assessment Tool, which helped them

identify their professional learning needs. Then they used the Professional Learning Plan to draw concrete goals by breaking them down into achievable steps. One participant noted that her plan was critical in helping decide which leadership-focused activities she could engage in given time and location constraints. Upon completing their activities, participants reflected on their experiences and documented how they applied their newfound knowledge to their practice in the Record of Professional Learning.

## Designing One's Own Learning

The Leadership Pilot gave participants an opportunity to explore and choose from a range of learning options. For instance, Rawia Hammad RECE used self-reflection to determine that an area of growth or leadership she wanted to focus on related to Standard II: A.1 of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. She set professional learning goals to help expand her knowledge about

emergent curriculum and programming that facilitated learning opportunities for children. One of those goals included attending workshops about the topics at her local college and reviewing resources available on the Ministry of Education's website.

Another participant, Venessa Genier RECE focused on Standard IV: B.2 of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. The Standard addresses the role of ECEs in observing the stages of children's development to determine appropriate programming and curriculum. Genier felt that a greater understanding of this area would help her practice and provide more support to her colleagues. So she read a book on enhancing children's fine- and gross-motor skills.

Many of the participants felt that the Leadership Pilot project deepened their understanding of professionalism and the value of continuous learning throughout an RECE's career. ©



Visit [college-ece.ca](http://college-ece.ca) for a longer version of this article.

# Conversation with an RECE



The College of Early Childhood Educators comprises unique members – each with a different background and story to tell. Conversation with an RECE features registered early childhood educators (RECEs) who are passionate about their profession and the people they serve.

Throughout her 30-year career Lynne Besner RECE has served in all aspects of early childhood education from working at a child care centre to teaching early childhood education. Now as a senior policy advisor at the Early Years Policy and Program Branch for the Ontario Ministry of Education, Lynne supports the government's decision-making in early childhood education.



Lynne Besner RECE  
Toronto, ON

## Q: What work do you do at the Early Years Division of the Ministry of Education?

**A:** I provide advice that helps the government make decisions on legislation, regulations, policies, programs and strategies. We review current trends and research. We look at multiple perspectives – how will decisions impact parents, children, child care operators and early childhood educators?

## Q: How has being an RECE helped your program or policy development work?

**A:** It's helped me look at the importance of RECEs and their work at a bigger picture level and have an understanding of how RECEs might be impacted by certain decisions. There are a lot of people on our team who aren't RECEs. Everybody brings a unique perspective from their backgrounds in early intervention, family support programs and public policy.

## Q: What pedagogical resources have you worked on at the Ministry of Education?

**A:** I supported the development of resources including videos for our website on ELECT (*Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings*). *Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research about Young Children* (a research brief and videos) was published in 2013. *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* was released last April. This was the culmination of everything we learned about early years pedagogy in the last few years.

## Q: How do you envision RECEs will use these resources in continuous professional learning?

**A:** I hope these resources support them in ongoing discussion and reflective practice. There's no one way to use them. The questions can be a starting point for people to think about

their own practice or on a community-wide level, for group discussion and for developing learning communities.

## Q: Do you have any advice for RECEs interested in program or policy development work in early childhood education?

**A:** There are opportunities at the municipal level and in provincial government. Some large organizations as well as First Nations communities hire policy staff. There isn't a specific career path or required education. Interested RECEs should consider pursuing additional courses in public policy or administration. 🌐

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Nominate an RECE you'd like us to have a conversation with by sending an e-mail to [communications@college-ece.ca](mailto:communications@college-ece.ca) or call **1 888 961-8558, ext. 307**.

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# Practice Matters



**Practice Matters** features questions regarding the College and the early childhood education profession. The College's Director of Professional Practice, Melanie Dixon RECE, addresses issues that members face and applies the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* to various situations.

Do you have a Professional Practice question? E-mail [practice@college-ece.ca](mailto:practice@college-ece.ca) for more information.



Previous columns of **Practice Matters** can be found on the Professional Practice section of the College's website, [college-ece.ca](http://college-ece.ca)

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## Put it into Practice!

Reflect on a time when a parent may have made a request that did not align with your ethical and professional standards as an RECE. Through self-reflection or with colleagues, brainstorm scenarios where similar requests may be made, and the actions you might take, while considering them from different roles and/or in different contexts. Make connections to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* while considering the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

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**Q:** I am the supervisor of a child care centre where a male registered early childhood educator (RECE) works in the toddler room. The parents have asked that he not change their child's diapers. How should I respond to their request?

**A:** It is important to explore why the parents may have made the request. Sometimes, such requests are based on performance issues and should be addressed with the parents and the staff. In others, it could be as a result of the parents' personal views which may relate to gender or factors that are cultural, religious or based on past experiences. Relationships with families are based on trust, openness and respect for confidentiality. Standard I: E of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* states that RECEs "establish professional and caring relationships with children and families."

Assuming gender is the issue, it is important to consider that the parents' personal views may stem from, for example, cultural or religious beliefs, which are recognized as protected grounds under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. In such a case a supervisor would have a duty to ensure that the parents' request is accommodated to the point of undue hardship ("undue hardship" takes into account factors such as cost or health and safety risks). The male RECE has a right to be free from discrimination on the basis of gender in his employment. Since there is no hierarchy of rights under the *Human Rights Code*, you would be required to balance these competing rights with the aim of resolving the concerns in a mutually-satisfactory manner.

It is important to inform the parents that the staff member has been trained in the profession, is registered with the College and is accountable to practise according to the ethical and professional standards that apply to all RECEs. Irrespective of their gender, RECEs are expected to be caring, empathetic, fair and act with integrity when supervising children. Ethic A: Responsibilities to Children states that RECEs "make the well-being and learning of all children who are under their professional supervision their foremost responsibility." ©

# Investigating Complaints

The College takes professional accountability seriously by investigating written complaints about members that relate to alleged professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity. Its Complaints Committee reviews complaints and either refers them to the Discipline Committee or Fitness to Practise Committee for a hearing or resolves the matter by other means.

Details of College investigations remain confidential until such time as a case is referred to the Discipline Committee or the Fitness to Practise Committee. The Complaints Committee decisions below are published solely for educational purposes and do not identify the people involved.



*Visit the Complaints and Discipline section of the College's website to learn more about hearings, decisions, rules of procedure and available resources.*

## Complaint

Two members failed to maintain a child's health records, causing the child to be exposed to an allergen while at a centre.

## Committee's Decision

Written reminder

## Summary

The College received two complaints concerning negligence on the part of two registered early childhood educators (RECEs) resulting in a child having an allergic reaction at the centre. It is alleged:

- The Members were both informed of the child's new allergy by the child's parents, but neither of them updated the child's anaphylactic plan to reflect the new information. Member A also failed to communicate the information to catering staff.
- While at the centre, the child was served food containing the new allergen, consumed it and went into anaphylaxis.
- The child's educator attempted to administer an EpiPen, however, it did not work. The educator then sought assistance from Member B, who provided the child's sibling's EpiPen to administer.
- Since the sibling's EpiPen was used, Member B was directed to obtain the sibling's spare EpiPen from the adjacent school to have on hand when the child returned for the afternoon program. Member B failed to obtain it.

The Members were individually notified of the complaints filed against them. They responded to their allegations separately.

- Member A denied the allegations. She indicated that the parents only informed her that the child would be undergoing new allergy testing, not that the child had a new allergy.
- Member B denied the allegations. She indicated that she noted the new allergy in the communication book and verbally shared the information with centre staff including her supervisor, Member A. She said she intended to get the spare EpiPen from the school, but did not have the time to obtain it.

The Complaints Committee concluded that the Members' behavior was unbecoming of RECEs and reminded them of the College's ethical and professional standards.

As allergies can be life threatening, the Committee stressed to the Members the importance of taking such medical conditions seriously. "Supervisors are ultimately responsible for every aspect of the program, including obtaining new allergy forms and maintaining Centre records," wrote the Committee in its decision for Member A. The Committee noted that Member B "...did not make the effort to seek the necessary assistance from her colleagues to fulfil her responsibility," when she failed to retrieve the spare EpiPen, thereby putting a child at risk of harm. As she failed to work collaboratively with her colleagues for the safety and well-being of the children, Member B violated Standard IV: C.1.

# In the Public Interest

The Discipline Committee hears matters regarding professional misconduct or incompetence while the Fitness to Practise Committee addresses those related in incapacity.

## **Peggy O'Meara Certificate of Registration Number: 10502 Reprimanded; Ordered to complete a research and writing assignment**

A panel of the Discipline Committee found Peggy O'Meara guilty of professional misconduct when she repeatedly and intentionally violated sections of the *Day Nurseries Act*. At the December 5, 2014 hearing, O'Meara, who received her Certificate of Registration in May 2009, was in attendance via teleconference, without legal representation.

At the time the professional misconduct took place, O'Meara was the owner and operator of an unlicensed child care centre. Although she had applied for a licence with the Ministry, her application had yet to be approved.

During several site inspections, Ministry officials observed O'Meara enrolling more children in the centre than she was permitted to under the *Day Nurseries Act*. The centre's attendance records confirmed this. The Ministry repeatedly told O'Meara to reduce the number of children at the centre. Although she informed the Ministry that she had, O'Meara continued to operate with more children than she was allowed.

In her submission, O'Meara highlighted the mitigating factors that caused her to contravene the *Day Nurseries Act*. O'Meara stated that when she submitted the centre's licencing application, she anticipated the process to only take a few months. However, three months after applying, she was notified by the Ministry that she would have to resubmit her application as the Ministry had made changes to the application process.

O'Meara stated that while she was waiting for the centre to be granted a licence, she operated the centre in accordance with the same rules and standards as licensed child care centres. She maintained that the reason the centre had not been issued a license was due to an administrative backlog at the Ministry, and not due to any defects of the facility itself.

Based on the Agreed Statement of Facts, a Joint Submission as to Penalty and the Member's submissions, the panel found O'Meara guilty of professional misconduct. She was directed to appear before the panel for a reprimand and was ordered to research and write an essay of at least 1,000 words *Ten Ways of Demonstrating Professionalism as an ECE and as a Leader in Professional Sector Practice*. This must be submitted to the Registrar for approval within three months of the Order.

The panel found O'Meara to have breached Ontario Regulation 223/08, section 2, subsections 8, 10, 21 and Standards III: A.1, IV: A.2 and IV: E.2 of the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

A notation regarding the panel decision appears with the Member's status on the College's public register.

The Discipline Committee usually orders that a summary of its decisions and findings related to professional misconduct or incompetence be published in the College publication, *Connexions*. In the Public Interest contains the most recent summaries. It directs attention to the process the Committee follows and the standards the Committee adopts in arriving at its decision.



**Rebecca Coleman**  
**Certificate of Registration**  
**Number: 46381**  
**Reprimanded; Ordered to**  
**complete a course**

At the December 19, 2014 hearing, Rebecca Coleman was found guilty of professional misconduct by a panel of the Discipline Committee for failing to report suspected child abuse on multiple occasions. Coleman, who received her Certificate of Registration in October 2013, was in attendance at the hearing and was represented by legal counsel.

Coleman had been working at the centre, where the misconduct took place, since February 2010. Despite being informed on multiple occasions by the child's foster parent that the child may be the victim of abuse and that they saw extensive bruising on the child's back, Coleman did not contact Family and Children's Services.

At the hearing, Coleman was remorseful and apologetic. Counsel for Coleman indicated that up until this time, Coleman had a discipline-free record and that the matter at hand is not an accurate representation of her abilities as an educator. Coleman's counsel continued, saying that Coleman made a mistake, and while it was a serious mistake, it was not pre-meditated or intentional.

Based on the Agreed Statement of Facts, a Joint Submission as to Penalty, a plea of guilt and counsel submissions, the panel found Coleman guilty of professional misconduct. She was directed to appear before the panel for a reprimand and was ordered to complete a course in Ethics and Professional Standards, at her own expense and to the satisfaction of the Registrar.

The panel found Coleman to have breached Ontario Regulation 223/08, section 2, subsections 8, 10, 21 and Standards I: B, I: F, III: A.1, IV: A.2 and IV: C.1 of the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

"Despite learning of concerns from the child's foster parent and observing signs of abuse, the Member did not alert the appropriate authorities as quickly as she should have," the Committee wrote. "While it does not appear that the Member's intention was to harm the child, her inaction and her failure to carry out her obligations as an educator who has responsibilities to care for a child, put the child's health, safety and well-being at risk."

A notation regarding the panel decision appears with the Member's status on the College's public register. 

# NEWS *in the* SECTOR

## Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) has announced the retirement of its Executive Director Eduarda Sousa. Below is an edited and condensed excerpt of a letter to AECEO members from Board Director Rachel Langford about the retirement.

*On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to announce that Executive Director Eduarda Sousa will be leaving her position at the AECEO as of January 1. Eduarda has served the AECEO with tremendous dedication since 1994. Under Eduarda's leadership, the AECEO has played a central role in Ontario's early childhood education and care field. Eduarda championed the professional growth of early childhood educators through a range of initiatives including a focus on leadership skills, equivalency for internationally trained early childhood educators, and AECEO certification.*

*On January 5, Shani Halfon will lead the organization as the AECEO's interim coordinator. Shani is an RECE with a degree in Early Childhood Education and a Masters of Arts in Early Childhood Studies. She is a passionate advocate for ECEs and the larger child care workforce, and is dedicated to being a leader in finding ways to put ECEs at the centre of discussions around early childhood education and care policy, research and practice.*

## The Early Childhood Education Report 2014

The Atkinson Foundation released *The Early Childhood Education Report 2014* last fall. This report provides a snapshot of provincial early childhood education services using 19 benchmarks organized in five categories. The report can be found at [timeforpreschool.ca](http://timeforpreschool.ca).

## Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

Carolyn Ferns is the new Public Policy and Government Relations Coordinator for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. She was previously a researcher at the Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

## Contact Us...

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