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connexions

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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 twice a year in Toronto, ON, Connexions provides members and the public with College and sector news along with regular features on the early childhood education profession.

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Design: Giuliana Tarini

Cover: Eva Tsakalis SLP (on left)

Joan Moser RECE (on right)

Elected Council Members

- Lois Mahon RECE, President–District 1
- Eugema Ings RECE–District 1
- Lisa Lamarre RECE–District 2
- Susan Quaiff RECE–District 3
- Stacey Lepine RECE–District 4
- Susan Joy Scoffin RECE–District 4
- Karen Guthrie RECE–District 5
- Nancy Roscoe RECE–District 5
- Richard (Dick) Winters 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 Council Members

- François Bertrand, Hawkesbury
- Madeleine L. Champagne, Ottawa
- Karen Damley CPA, CA, Mississauga
- Rosemary Fontaine, Toronto
- Christine Forsyth, Toronto
- Larry O'Connor, Brock
- Jason Powell RN, Oakville
- Ann Robichaud-Gagné, Ottawa
- Nerene Virgin, Hamilton

College Administration

Registrar and CEO: Beth Deazeley LL.B

Director of Registration and Member Services:
Cynthia Abel RECE

Director of Corporate Services: James Cha

Director of Professional Practice: Melanie Dixon RECE

Director of Professional Regulation: Marc Spector LL.B

Message from our **President**

03



Lois Mahon RECE
President

Another election season is upon us, and for the first time I will not be running in District 1 – North and North East Region. After three consecutive terms on Council, it is with pride and appreciation that I conclude my work and make way for another registered early childhood educator to take part in the regulation of our profession in the public interest.

In 2017, elections will be held in District 1 – North and North East Region, District 2 – East Region and District 6 – Central West Region. Of the five Council seats open this year, three of them will be vacated by long-standing Council members who have served on Council since its inception in 2009 and are nearing the end of their maximum number of years on Council allowed under the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*: Anna Baas-Anderson RECE in District 6, Eugema Ings RECE in District 1 and me, also in District 1.

For any RECE who is reading this and wondering whether standing for election to Council is a worthy pursuit, I tell you this: you have an opportunity to influence policy development for regulating our profession. In doing so, you can have a positive impact on the evolution of the high professional standards of early childhood educators. In this way, you are protecting the children and families of Ontario.

If you are unsure whether you have the experience necessary to sit on Council, know that as a well-established regulatory body we have excellent orientation and training programs for our Council members. We have consistency through policy and succession planning so there are always members of Council who are able to mentor and help newly elected and appointed colleagues.

Also, as a member of Council I assure you that you will have the opportunity to interact with some brilliant minds on the College staff, and the elected and publicly-appointed members of Council; just to be part of all that really is in itself continuous professional learning.

Know that your influence as a member of the College is not limited to sitting on Council. All members in districts up for election can bring their voice forward and exercise their responsibility to their profession by voting in 2017. I am proud that RECEs do vote and we often have better voter turnout than other self-regulatory colleges, but at the same time we always need to encourage people to make their voices heard.

To my fellow RECEs who may be considering standing for election, to you I say even though you are not representing a constituency, you have the opportunity to enlighten the rest of the province about the challenges and opportunities in your geographic district.

Finally, I would like to express the great pride and sense of accomplishment I feel for having served on Council, both as a member of Council from District 1 – North and North East Region and as the College's first President. It has been an honour that I hope many RECEs seek for themselves.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lois Mahon RECE".

Message from our **Registrar**

04



Beth Deazeley
Registrar & CEO

I have had several occasions to speak recently about the relationship between continuous professional learning and leadership in early childhood education. Our understanding of these concepts is constantly evolving – both in the sector and here at the College.

One of the definitions of “leader” in the context of the ECE profession that we particularly like is this one: a leader is a person who can “work with and empower others to join together to improve the quality of diverse education and care settings for children and families.”¹

An interesting indicator of the evolving understanding of the importance of leadership in the profession is the College’s *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. The original Code and Standards was released in February 2011 and continues in force today. It was developed over a period of two years with the benefit of expert advice and an exhaustive consultation process with the profession. Currently, the term ‘leader’ does not appear anywhere in it.

That’s about to change. The College is currently midway through the first review of the Code and Standards since it was published in 2011. After consulting with registered early childhood educators from across the province and obtaining expert input, revisions have been drafted and released to the profession for a comment period. The importance of leadership is highlighted in several areas of the revised Code and Standards.

In the Code of Ethics, leadership is recognized for the first time as part of an RECE’s responsibility to the profession. In the Standards of Practice, Standard IV has been re-named Professionalism and Leadership, to reflect the importance of that concept. Standard IV contains an incredibly important statement – one that we want to ensure is heard, understood and internalized by all members of the profession: **all registered early childhood educators, regardless of position or title, are leaders.**

It is for that reason that the self-assessment under the College’s CPL program requires that RECEs identify opportunities for professional growth and leadership development. Beyond just enhancing the knowledge and skills of individual members providing services to children and families, RECEs who are learners and leaders contribute to the development of their workplaces and the profession as a whole.

I look forward to the ongoing dialogue with the profession on this critical issue.

Best wishes,

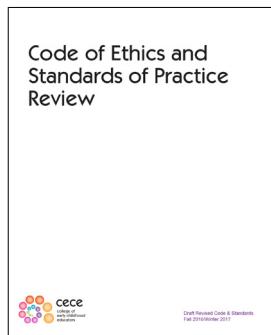
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Deazeley".

¹ [Goffin, S. G., & Janke, M. (2013). Early childhood education leadership development compendium: A view of the landscape, 2nd ed. DC: Goffin Strategy Group.]

Review of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

Following an extensive consultation process in the winter and spring of 2016, the College has released a *Draft Revised Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* for feedback from members and stakeholders. The College will be gathering comments on the draft document through roundtables in each of its electoral districts across Ontario as well as through a member and stakeholder survey.

For more information, visit college-ece.ca/code-and-standards-review.



Notice of Annual Meeting

The College is pleased to notify members about the eighth Annual Meeting of Members.

Date: January 11, 2017

Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Location: DoubleTree by Hilton
108 Chestnut Street
Toronto, ON M5G 1R3

The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to inform members of the activities of Council and the College. No motions are proposed nor votes taken at the Annual Meeting. While not mandatory, members are welcome to attend the meeting. It will also be livestreamed through the College's website.

The meeting will include reports from the College President, the Chair of the Complaints Committee and the College's Auditor. A question period will follow these reports. Following the Annual Meeting, the College is pleased to present a panel presentation **"Because it's 2017: RECEs as Professionals and Leaders."**

Stay tuned for more information about the event and how to register to attend or watch it online.

New! Payment through Financial Institutions

Members of the College can now pay their annual membership renewal fee directly through most financial institutions, either online or in person. The College still requires that members submit their Renewal Form, which is available on our website.

Visit college-ece.ca for more info and a list of financial institutions that offer this service.

Phase-Out of Membership Cards

Beginning in 2017, the College will no longer issue wallet-sized membership cards to new and renewing members.

Registered early childhood educators or employers who wish to obtain proof of membership should use the College's online public register, which is the only reliable and accurate way to demonstrate current membership in the College.

The College is working with employers across Ontario and the Ministry of Education to inform them of the phase-out of membership cards.

More information is available on our website. Visit the public register at college-ece.ca/publicregister.

How Professional Regulation **Protects** the Public Interest

By Marc Spector LL.B



Marc Spector LL.B, Director of Professional Regulation / Photo: Giuliana Tarini

Being a registered early childhood educator means something. It is a symbol that you have made a lifelong commitment to excellence and professionalism in early childhood education. You have shown an ability to practise the profession with a high level of knowledge, skill and judgement, and to do so with care, respect, trust and integrity. The RECE designation is an achievement that is recognized by parents, educators and early learning and child care communities across the province. It is a representation to the world that you are a member of the College of Early Childhood Educators and a skilled professional.

The Professional Regulation Department of the College, and the statutory committees it supports, are here to protect that.

We preserve the integrity of the profession and protect the public by investigating and prosecuting RECEs who engage in professional misconduct. These are RECEs who engage in criminal behaviour, do not maintain the standards of the profession or who refuse to comply with the obligations of being an RECE. This is a very small percentage of the profession, but a critically important part of our role, due to the potential for even a single person to harm a child or damage the reputation of the profession.

We also go after those persons who pretend to be an RECE when they are not. These *fake RECEs* falsely advertise themselves as an RECE to their employers and colleagues and, in some cases, even create fictitious diplomas and Certificates of Registration.

To deal with *fake RECEs*, we will go to court. It is against the law to pretend to be an RECE if you are not a member of the College. *Fake RECEs* can be charged and face a fine of up to \$5,000 for a first offence.

We can also get an injunction to force an individual to stop pretending to be an RECE. This is what we did earlier this year when the College obtained a court order against Tania Theresa Mariotti. Ms. Mariotti had obtained a diploma in early childhood education in 2007. Even though she was not a member of the College, the College believed that, for at least a year, Ms. Mariotti had been misrepresenting herself as an RECE to her employer and with the Ministry of Education in order to support her application to be an RECE supervisor at a child care centre. If Ms. Mariotti ever holds herself out as being an RECE again, she would be in violation of the court order and could face significant fines and possibly even time in jail.

For RECEs who engage in professional misconduct, the College will prosecute them at a public hearing in front of the Discipline Committee.

We have prosecuted RECEs who have:

- failed to adequately supervise children
- physically restrained or abused children
- falsified records regarding children's attendance
- failed to report suspected cases of child abuse to CAS
- committed sexual abuse
- produced child pornography

Discipline proceedings are fair and transparent. The names of all

RECEs (and even those people who used to be an RECE) appear on the College's public register forever. So do decisions of the Discipline Committee. That means that there is a permanent, public record of what a member did. If an employer considers hiring an RECE, they can check the public register to learn about the member's disciplinary history.

The Professional Regulation Department is busy. In the last three months, we received nearly 80 mandatory employer reports and 12 complaints from members of the public. We also received information about five *fake RECEs*. These figures are consistent with the numbers faced by the regulators of other professions.

The figures suggest that parents, employers and RECEs are becoming more aware that the College is here to protect the public. Parents want assurance that their children will be cared for by the very best educators. Employers want to hire skilled and trained professionals. And RECEs want to be rightfully proud of their professional status. You should get mad when you hear about those who damage the reputation of all RECEs or who take short cuts and pretend to be an RECE without the education, training or commitment to professionalism that you have.

Everyone wants those RECEs who engage in professional misconduct to be held accountable and the fake ones stopped. That is what we do. ■



Superior Court of Justice, Toronto, ON
Photo: Giuliana Tarini

Understanding How the College Differs from a Professional Association

08

There is still some confusion about what the College of the Early Childhood Educators does – and what it does not do. Some early childhood educators have recently approached the College wanting to know why they have to be registered and why the College does not “do more” for them.

What is self-regulation?

Early childhood education is one of approximately 40 professions (including nurses, lawyers, teachers and occupational therapists) that the Ontario government has recognized as being worthy of the privilege of self-regulation. The government believes that early childhood education requires specialized training and expertise, and that only people who have made the commitment to ongoing learning, training and meeting the highest professional standards should be allowed to do it.

The government also believes that early childhood educators can regulate themselves. It created the College to do this. The College is the mechanism by which the ECE profession regulates itself. It is governed and directed by a Council made up of elected members of the profession and public members appointed by the government.

The College protects the public

The College regulates the profession of early childhood education in the public interest. This means that everything the College does is, first and foremost, designed to protect children and families. The College does this by:

- setting registration requirements
- establishing ethical and professional standards for registered early childhood educators
- ensuring continuous professional learning
- administering the complaints and discipline process, where the conduct of RECEs is judged by specially trained panels composed of their peers and members of the public.

RECEs should understand that being a member of the College is a hallmark of being an accountable professional, and is a requirement in order to work in the scope of practice or to use the RECE designation.

Professional associations advocate for you

Advocating on behalf of the profession on issues such as wages and working conditions for early childhood educators is also very important, but is not part of the College’s mandate. There are other bodies with the mandate to take on those kinds of issues, for example the professional associations, the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO) and the *Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario* (Aféseo). It is their job to advocate on behalf of the profession. It is an important job. A strong profession benefits from having both a strong regulator and a strong association. ■

To learn more about the College’s role in protecting the public interest, please visit our website at college-ece.ca.

Visit aecko.ca and afeseo.ca to learn more about the roles of the AECEO and the Aféseo in advocating for early childhood educators.

New Resources for Members Starting the CPL Program

09



The College launched its mandatory Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program for all members on September 1, 2016. Since then, many members have contacted the College with questions about how to start this unique program.

New! Short Video about the Program

The College has developed a one-minute video overview of the program and how to get started. The video is available on the College's website, college-ece.ca and YouTube channel, youtube.com/collegeofece.

New! Monthly Webinars for Renewing Members

- Do you learn best by hearing someone speak and share information live online?
- Are you feeling confused or overwhelmed about the CPL program requirements and the timelines?
- Do you just want to know that you're on the right track?

If you are looking for a brief, 30-minute overview of the CPL program, watch your e-mail for an invitation to a live webinar during the month your renewal is due. The webinar is not mandatory, and members who are not able to attend will receive a link to a recorded webinar by e-mail.

Learn about the CPL Program Requirements for Members

The College has published a Notice of CPL Program Requirements and shared it with members by e-blast, through renewal notices and on the College's website. This notice describes the:

- requirements of the CPL program rules about timelines
- order and frequency for completing the requirements
- records members must keep
- consequences of non-compliance with the CPL program.

Get started! Complete the Expectations for Practice Module 2016

The first step in participating in the CPL program is to complete the Expectations for Practice Module 2016. It is now available on the College's website.

This edition of the module incorporates important legislative updates that all members need to know. The module will help you understand your ethical and professional responsibilities as an RECE, the legislation that impacts your practice and more.

Members who completed the previous version of the module as part of the voluntary CPL program will need to complete the 2016 edition to remain current in their professional practice. ■

■ Members are to start the CPL program following their first renewal on or after September 1, 2016. Visit college-ece.ca/cpl to find your start date on our CPL Start Date Chart.

Better Together

How RECEs and Speech-Language Pathologists Work Together in Windsor

By Sharon Ho

Erin Haldeman has experienced first-hand the impact that effective collaboration between different professions can have on a child. Through drop-in visits at the Connections Early Years Family Centre in Windsor, ON, her daughter's language delay was recognized and addressed by a team of professionals working together through a program called Talk 2 Me.

"We started the program when my daughter was 14 months old after we noticed that her communication was a little behind because she was a preemie," says Haldeman. **"They [the staff] were great because they had lots of information and tips for helping us get organized, get her speech going and get her interacting."**

The improvement in her daughter's language is one example of the successful interprofessional collaboration between RECEs and speech-language pathologists in the Talk 2 Me program, which provides preschool speech and language services, infant hearing services and blind-low vision early intervention for children from birth until they go to school.

Interprofessional collaboration is an important part of the work of early childhood educators and is even highlighted in the standards of the profession. Standard IV: C.4 states, "Early Childhood Educators,



Eva Tsakalis SLP (left) and Amy Taylor RECE (right) with a family (middle) / Photo: Giuliana Tarini

working collaboratively with community resource persons and members of other professions, access the resources and expertise available in their communities. They strive to facilitate community partnerships for the benefit of children and families."

As the program assistant for Talk 2 Me, Joan Moser RECE conducts the phone screenings for prospective participants. Moser also works with two speech-language pathologists to co-facilitate two speech-language programs, Toddler Talk and Say & Play.

"The phone screen goes over a lot of developmental areas of the child – physical, gross and fine motor [skills]," says Moser. "It provides a baseline of where a child should be at different ages."

Amy Taylor RECE works at Connections and appreciates the benefits to children and families when different professionals work together as a team.

"If any of the families recognize that their child needs help with any speech-language challenges I'm able to get help for the family," says Taylor. "They [the families] are already at a place where they're comfortable with staff because they see the speech-language pathologists walking through the building."

Eva Tsakalis SLP is one of the speech-language pathologists who works with the RECEs. Tsakalis co-facilitates the Say & Play program with Moser, where both women work with families to improve their children's language skills.

"RECEs bring their knowledge of early childhood development," says Tsakalis. "RECEs help us look at the whole child in terms of their development and how we [RECEs and speech-language pathologists] can work with them. For families that come to the Ontario Early Years Centre, it becomes a second home. It's the best thing for families if they're using the strategies here and we're all working towards their goals."

Speech-language pathology is also a self-regulated profession governed by the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO). Both professions follow a code of ethics, are held to standards and require mandatory continuous learning.

"We share information from professional development events with each other," says Tsakalis, who finds it useful that the two professions share their learning at each other's staff meetings.

Barbara Brown RECE, Executive Director of Connections, believes families benefit the most from the interprofessional collaboration.

"When you have professionals doing different things but all working with families with young children, you can see the connections," says Brown. "Being able to make the programming accessible and easier for families to navigate is the biggest benefit." ■

The focus on the importance of interprofessional collaboration between RECEs and other regulated professionals has gained more attention through full-day kindergarten in Ontario, where RECEs and teachers work together to deliver the program.

The College of Early Childhood Educators co-hosted with the Ontario College of Teachers two summer institutes in 2014 and 2015.

These were forums for the two professions to explore interprofessional collaboration and ethical leadership. The resource, *Exploring Interprofessional Collaboration and Ethical Leadership*, was created as a result.

Working Together to Support Early Learning



A professional learning resource to support registered early childhood educators and Ontario certified teachers with a focus on interprofessional collaboration and ethical leadership. Use this resource independently or as a team to encourage critical dialogue and reflection in your practice.

Available at oct.ca or college-ece.ca/collaborate.

cece | Ontario College of Teachers

■ *Exploring Interprofessional Collaboration and Ethical Leadership* can be found at college-ece.ca/collaborate.

■ To find out more information about CASLPO and answers to questions about audiology and speech-language pathology services, and the importance of seeing a professional regulated by CASLPO, visit caslpo.com.

Myths and Facts about the Continuous Professional Learning Program

Myth 01



The College doesn't trust that RECEs are already participating in ongoing learning.

The College believes that RECEs are committed to ongoing professional learning. The CPL program was developed to complement and formalize the ongoing professional learning many RECEs do every day.

The CPL program is a framework designed to facilitate self-reflection and make direct connections to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

Participating in CPL demonstrates to employers, families and the public that RECEs are current in their knowledge, skills and practice.

Myth 02



Participating in the CPL program will take a significant amount of time outside of working hours.

In order to engage successfully in continuous professional learning, RECEs need to set aside some time to reflect and to develop goals and learning plans. Professional learning may occur in many different ways, some of which may occur during working hours.

Each member will determine the amount of time they need to spend in order to meet their unique learning goals.

Myth 03



Participating in the CPL program will not benefit me.

Ongoing learning will empower you and increase your confidence as you gain skills and knowledge about the latest research, practices and policies affecting your work.

RECEs value lifelong learning and by continually growing as a professional, you will be able to provide a higher standard of care and education to the children and families you serve.

In addition to professional growth, you will also find that reflective learning enables you as an RECE to articulate the skills, knowledge and values that make your profession distinct and worthy of public trust and respect.

Myth 04

The College should be focusing on advocating for RECEs, not on a mandatory CPL program.

The College's purpose and mandate is to regulate and govern Ontario's early childhood educators in the public interest. The College helps to serve and protect children and families by setting registration requirements and ethical and professional standards for RECEs, and governing member conduct through a complaints and discipline process. Setting a framework and requirements for the ongoing education of members through a Continuous Professional Learning program is an important part of the role of the College.

Advocating on behalf of the profession is not within the College's mandate. RECEs themselves, along with professional associations, unions, and other local networks can advocate on behalf of RECEs and the profession.

Myth 05

Participating in the CPL program will cost me money.

Not necessarily. While there are costs associated with some learning opportunities, such as conferences, courses and workshops, there are a number of options you might want to consider that have very little or no cost at all.

Here are a few examples of low-cost professional learning activities:

- case study analysis, alone or as a group of RECEs
- online video or audio resources
- job shadowing another role in your practice setting
- reading and reflecting on sector related books or articles
- mentorship.

The introductory Expectations for Practice Module 2016 and CPL Portfolio components are free to all members and a number of professional resources produced by the College are available for free on our website and YouTube channel.

Myth 06

There is a minimum number of learning hours required to complete my CPL requirements.

The CPL program does not require members to complete a specific number of learning hours.

The program has been designed as a self-directed, flexible ongoing learning framework to help you continually grow as a professional. It is up to you to decide on learning goals related to your ethical and professional responsibilities, and how much time you require in order to achieve your goals.

Visit college-ece.ca/cpl to learn more about the 10 common CPL Myths and Facts or to discover more about the Continuous Professional Learning program.

The Careers of two Passionate RECEs

By Sharon Ho

One of the College of Early Childhood Educators' strategic priorities is to develop member services that build on a deep knowledge of the membership's diversity. With that in mind, the College decided to meet two registered early childhood educators to talk to them about entering the profession at different times in its evolution.



Mike Davis RECE (Left) Sandy Shields RECE (right)
Photo: Sharon Ho

Michael (Mike) Davis became an RECE this past April after working in construction and the technology sector. He began the Honours Bachelor of Childhood Development program at Seneca College this year after completing a diploma in Early Childhood Education. He previously worked at a child care centre in Newmarket, ON as an RECE.

Sandra (Sandy) Shields has worked in the early learning and care sector since 1977. She graduated with a diploma in Early Childhood Education in 1984 and now co-owns four child care centres in Markham, ON with her daughter who has been an RECE for 25 years.

Sharon: Sandy, how did you enter the profession?

Sandy: I started in 1977 and I worked at York Mills Day Nursery. I had a passion to be part of a child's first educational experience and to form deep and professional relationships with parents. That was my goal.

My role back then seemed to have the stigma of being a professional babysitting service. People would call asking, "Do you have babysitters there? Are you open on the weekend?"

Sharon: When did you open your child care centres?

Sandy: I left York Mills and went to work at Upper Canada Child Care in York Region. I worked there for 18 years. In 2002 my daughter and I opened our first child care, Discovery Preschool. She studied to be an ECE and followed in my footsteps. She graduated in 1991 and worked for Upper Canada as well. Then I opened a second centre, a third centre and a fourth centre last year. I love it. I feel the energy from Michael as well.

Mike: You can't fake passion. That's what I tell everybody. You look at different educators in a room and you can tell who's passionate about it.

Sandy: It's so true. I do most of our hiring. I always look for that passion and that energy. You interview people for 15-20 minutes and you get a feeling if the passion is showing.

We look for the educator who loves enriching the lives and educational experiences of children. I also love to mentor staff.

Sharon: Why do you love to mentor staff?

Sandy: When the educators can build great relationships with the children, parents and their colleagues, then the spiral of learning can connect them and their experiences.

Sharon: Mike, why do you think it's important to have men as RECEs?

Mike: Children should have the support of more than one educator to help promote healthy development. Male educators are important as they represent the male gender, but they also need to be seen as providing the same level of support as any other educator.

Sharon: What does it mean to you to be a member of the College?

Mike: We didn't get respect until we got it [the College].

Sandy: That's right. When you register with the College you can go online and see if the person is in good standing. It's very important.

Mike: For accountability and transparency.

Sandy: Accountability, transparency. We will check [the public register] to see if a person is in good standing when we hire an RECE.

Sharon: Do you have any advice for someone entering the profession?

Sandy: Stay current.

Mike: Stay current.

Sandy: You are staying current (to Mike). You've been encouraged by your mentor. You've had two or three careers. You've chosen early childhood education. I encourage you to follow your feelings.

Sharon: Mike, can I ask you what difference it's made to be mentored?

Mike: If you look for someone who wants to mentor you, you will find them. It really helps to leverage the knowledge that they provide as we need to retain all this awesome knowledge that everyone has gained (Mike nods to Sandy).

Sandy: I'm still learning through mentoring. It's a continual learning process. It's a great journey. (Sandy says to Mike) Pursue your dream. ■

Conversation with an RECE

16



Tzu Yu (Grace) Chen RECE immigrated to Canada from Taiwan in 2010. She moved to Canada with her husband, an English as a Second Language teacher from Ontario working in Taipei. Grace has a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Tzu Chi University and worked as a kindergarten teacher for three years before immigrating to Canada. Grace now works as a registered early childhood educator at Lullaboo Nursery and Childcare Center in Mississauga, ON. She spoke with Connexions about her experience as an RECE in a new country.

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 who are passionate about their profession and the people they serve.

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

Q: Can you describe your early childhood education training in Taiwan?

A: I received a four-year bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. The first three years of my program included basic course work in child care and early education and the last year was a work placement in the field.

Q: What are some differences between working as an ECE in Canada compared to Taiwan?

A: There are very few differences. I face the same challenges working in Canada as I did in Taiwan because every child is unique. I accommodate a range of children's needs and help them learn and feel comfortable in their surroundings.

Q: What do you enjoy about working as an RECE in Ontario?

A: I love Canada's multiculturalism. In Taiwan I never had the chance to work with children from other countries. One child at Lullaboo wore clothes from her culture to school and it was such an interesting learning opportunity for me. I've worked with children who recently immigrated from China and their parents encouraged me to speak Mandarin to help them feel comfortable. I then translated into English to help them learn the language. The fun part was that the other children learned a little Mandarin, too.

Q: What was your experience like finding work as an RECE?

A: I needed to complete a language equivalency exam and verify my qualifications in order to become a member of the College of Early Childhood

Educators. The newcomers centres were extremely helpful because they offered job training and work placements. The longer I lived in Canada, the easier it was for me to understand the culture and start building strong professional connections.

Q: What advice would you give to an ECE who has just immigrated?

A: Be yourself and don't feel pressured to adjust to the new culture too quickly. Rely on your professional skills to help you solve problems. Take advantage of the resources available to new Canadians, like the newcomers centres and language classes, because they will help you build your skills and make connections. If you love your job as an RECE then you'll be okay! ■



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

Do you have a Professional Practice question? E-mail practice@college-ece.ca for more information.

Q: Following some discussion with colleagues, I am looking for clarification about how RECEs should behave outside of work hours. What are the College's expectations?

Consider the following...

All registered early childhood educators are part of a regulated profession and therefore are accountable for their conduct both during and outside of work hours. Though you may not be at work, you still hold the protected title and designation of RECE at all times. This indicates that you have committed to uphold the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* of the profession and are accountable as a trusted professional in your community, regardless of the situation or setting. This also means that if you fail to live up to the College's expectations, you can face allegations of professional misconduct ranging from failing to maintain the standards of the profession to conduct that is "unbecoming of a member" of the College.

According to Standard IV: E.2 of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, RECEs "recognize that they are role models for children, families, members of their profession, supervisees and other colleagues and avoid conduct which could reasonably be perceived as reflecting negatively on the profession

of early childhood education." This means that RECEs should reflect on their professional role and responsibilities, including but not limited to, the following situations:

- interactions with children, families, colleagues and supervisees outside of the workplace
- behaviour in all public settings (community events, public forums and spaces, etc.)
- postings on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, etc.)
- communications with the College of Early Childhood Educators

It is important to remember that being recognized as a regulated profession depends on the trust and confidence of the public in individuals who hold the title of RECE. This means that the public must be assured that all RECEs conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner.

Families in Ontario associate the title and designation of RECE with qualified, accountable individuals who educate and care for young children and support families and communities. Therefore, RECEs are required to demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct both at work and outside of work, all of which is essential to the continued growth of the profession. ■

Put it into Practice: Reflect on your own identity as a professional outside of work. What does it mean to you to be part of a regulated profession? How do you want to be viewed by the public? Consider behaviours that could put your professional reputation at risk. Consult the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and the *Professional Misconduct Regulation*.

In the Public Interest

The Discipline Committee hears matters regarding allegations of professional misconduct and/or incompetence. When it makes a finding of guilt, a summary of its decision and reasons must be published in the College's publication, *Connexions*. This section contains the most recent summaries.

Colleen Stewart (the "Member")
Certificate of Registration Number: 17552

Discipline Committee Order:

- Six month suspension
- Reprimand
- Coursework
- Restrictions on ability to work as a supervisor or manager

The Member was a supervisor at a child care centre.

At a hearing on April 13, 2016, a panel of the Discipline Committee found the Member guilty of professional misconduct because she had falsified a child's enrollment form and had failed to maintain a safe and healthy environment for the children at the centre.

Although the Member did not attend the hearing, she was represented by a lawyer. The College and the Member's lawyer agreed on the important facts of the case and provided the Discipline Committee with a summary. This meant that witnesses did not have to testify. The College and the Member's lawyer also made a joint submission to the Discipline Committee on what they believed was an appropriate sanction. The Discipline Committee agreed with their joint proposal.

What Did the Member Do?

The Member changed a child's enrollment form without parental permission and then falsified the mother's signature. When the Member was confronted by two staff members who discovered the discrepancy, the Member initially denied any wrongdoing. She also encouraged the staff members to provide false information to the Ministry of Education and to destroy evidence showing the forged signature. After the staff members raised their concerns with the Ministry, the Member terminated their employment.

When the Ministry of Education inspected the centre, it found numerous deficiencies. The Member:

- Did not update emergency contact information
- Allowed the centre to have an incomplete or out-of-date policy with respect to allergy and anaphylaxis procedures
- Provided inappropriate staffing and supervision
- Failed to follow the Ministry of Education's criminal reference check policy
- Failed to supply the classrooms with age-appropriate furnishings and equipment, which caused some of the younger children to fall and injure themselves, and lied to one of the children's parents about the seriousness of the infant's injuries.
- Provided insufficient and improperly prepared food to children.

The Ministry of Education concluded that the Member had created an unsafe environment for the children in her care. The Ministry was also concerned over the fact that, during the inspection, the Member had initially lied about the fake enrollment form to the Ministry's Program Advisor.

What Did the Committee Do?

The Committee concluded that the Member had violated the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and engaged in professional misconduct contrary to Ontario Regulation 223/08. In so doing, the Committee observed that the Member had shown a "blatant disregard for the interests of children" and described her conduct as "reprehensible", "deceitful", showing a "lack of integrity" and "not only unbecoming, but would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional". It stated:

Far from inspiring confidence in the profession, the Member abused her position of authority to manipulate records, have staff lie to Ministry of Education officials and parents, as well as enforce strict policies on certain staff members. Her deliberate attempts to create a challenging work environment for [...her staff] is not only unprofessional, but malicious and mean spirited.

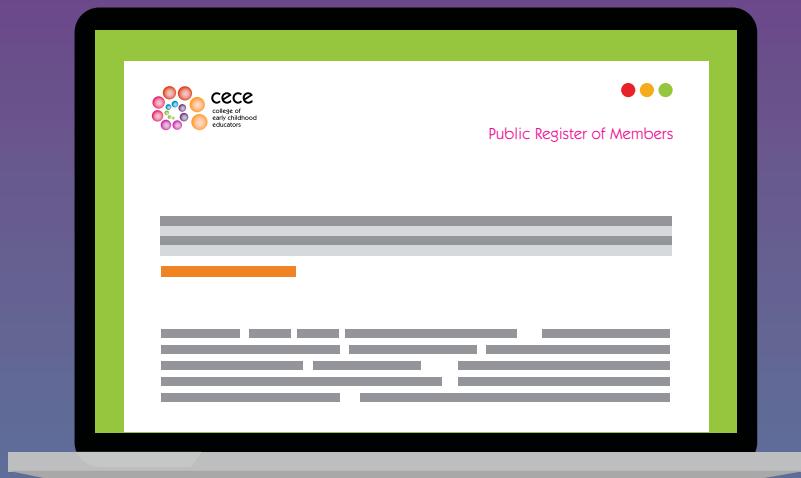
The Committee was also mindful, however, that the Member had agreed to plead guilty and that she did not have a prior discipline history.

Ultimately, the Committee agreed with the joint proposal on sanction and directed the Registrar to suspend the Member's Certificate of Registration for six months. The Committee ordered the Member to complete a course on professional supervision in early learning and care. Before she can return to work as a registered early childhood educator, the Member must also notify the Registrar and provide her employer with a copy of the Discipline Committee's Decision and Order. The Member's Certificate of Registration was also restricted so that, when the Member does return to work, she cannot work as a supervisor or manager for at least six months.

How Can I Find Out More Details?

The full decision is posted on the College's website. There is also a notice below the Member's name on the College's **public register**. This means that there is a permanent, public record of the Committee's decision. ■

The public register is the fastest and only accurate way to confirm an RECE's current membership status.



The public register protects the RECE designation by preventing individuals from falsely advertising themselves as an RECE to their employers, colleagues and families in Ontario. The online public register, can be accessed from anywhere, any time at college-ece.ca/publicregister.

College of Early Childhood Educators

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