

Leadership Pilot Project Program Evaluation Executive Summary

Background and Context

In March 2012, the College of Early Childhood Educators entered into a contractual agreement with the province as represented by the Minister of Education. Ministry funding through this agreement was to be allocated to the planning and design of a pilot program to be implemented with a cadre of registered early childhood educators (RECEs) in early learning and care who have expressed an interest in enhancing their leadership capacity. The project was developed to align with the College's plans for the design and implementation of a continuous professional learning program for members of the College of Early Childhood Educators.

The College determined, in the fall of 2012, that it would independently proceed to provide for the implementation of the Leadership Pilot project when the Ministry of Education funding support for the design and development of the project terminated in March 2013.

Purpose

Member participation in a continuous professional learning program demonstrates that early childhood educators are held accountable for engaging in ongoing education and, by doing so, serve and protect the public interest.

Targeted program outcomes included the:

- Integration of the *Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice* into the program expectations and development processes
- Development of a conceptual framework that guides both the design and development of the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program and the Leadership Pilot project
- Involvement of members in a CPL program that supports professional growth, leadership capacity and enhances the provision of early learning and care services for young children and families
- Establishment of options facilitating member engagement in learning and that support the integration of best practice into their own practice
- Design and development of a CPL program and Leadership Pilot project demonstrating that members of the College are professionally accountable
- Enhancement of member and public knowledge about how a continuous professional learning program serves and protects the public interest
- Elevation of the profile of the College and the status of the early childhood education profession by demonstrating that members are held accountable for their involvement in a Continuous Professional Learning program.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles included:

- Ensuring that member input during the program design and development phases was broadly-based
- Recognizing that public input (e.g. employers, families accessing early childhood education services) was an essential component of the design and development process
- Ensuring that the process was accessible to individuals (e.g. both official languages, First Nations, Inuit and Métis, geographic regions, literacy levels, gender, age and special needs)
- Acknowledging that the information gathering process may need to be adjusted based on stakeholder input/feedback or other emergent issues

- Recognizing that the CPL program should adhere to the principles and practices associated with quality professional development and adult learning
- Supporting the design and development of a CPL program and Leadership Pilot project that was grounded in research and best practices
- Integrating the insights and best practices that surfaced during the design and development of the Leadership Pilot project into the ongoing design and development of the CPL program
- Understanding that the development process was to be responsive to an evolving professional context and environment.

Design and Development

Design and development processes involved:

- Using multiple sources of information (e.g. environmental scans, literature reviews of continuous professional learning programs and existing resources such as templates and exemplars, tools used in other professions and in national and international ECE contexts)
- Drawing on the expertise and feedback provided by researchers and leaders from the post-secondary institutions offering early childhood education and sector leadership programming
- Conducting focus groups, roundtables, interviews and online questionnaires
- Examining feedback for re-occurring themes, language and ongoing education needs
- Providing for consultation in each region through at least one face-to-face focus group session as well as additional opportunities for individual and small group feedback
- Ensuring that stakeholder representation was reflective of the membership and the early learning and care sector (e.g. First Nations, Inuit and Métis, Francophone, demographics such as urban and rural, male, female, new, experienced, cultural diversity and work settings)
- Recruiting participants through both self-identification and targeting specific groups/individuals
- Tracking participant demographics throughout the development process
- Respecting the College's ethical research protocol.

Involvement in the Leadership Pilot project was limited to 25 RECE participants including aspiring leaders and RECEs currently in designated leadership roles. In addition, six experienced RECEs with demonstrated leadership capacity and leadership experience, served as mentors supporting the Leadership Pilot project participants.

The implementation of the Leadership Pilot project began in August 2013 with the mentor orientation program and ended in May 2014 with the closing retreat.

During the Leadership Pilot project, both mentors and participants engaged in the equivalent of 80 hours of leadership-related professional learning. This professional learning occurred during the:

- Opening Retreat and Symposium
- Closing Retreat
- Modules of Study (15 hours of distance learning specific to 5 leadership themes offered in 3-hour sessions)
- Self-directed learning with College and mentor guidance and support (21 hours)
- Practicum (12 hours of demonstrated leadership activity).

The Leadership Pilot project design, delivery and resources were provided primarily in the English language. Francophone participants had access to some resource materials and mentor support.

Each Module of Study engaged the Leadership Pilot project participants and mentors in the equivalent of three hours of professional learning specific to each of the five identified themes. The five Modules of Study addressed the following topics:

- Participatory Leadership
- Pedagogical Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Facility Management
- Human Resources, Employment Standards and Labour Relations
- Fiscal Responsibility and Governance.

The purpose for integrating the 21-hour Self-directed Learning component into the Leadership Pilot project was to provide participants with the opportunity to:

- Delve more deeply into areas linked to their leadership-focused professional learning priorities and interests
- Choose activities suited to their learning styles, their life and their work schedules, and the availability of programs and resources appropriate to their professional practice setting and/or roles
- Integrate the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* into leadership-related professional learning activities in their practice setting.

The purpose for a 12-hour Leadership Pilot project Practicum component was to provide participants with the opportunity to:

- Apply participant learning in practice
- Gain practical experience as a leader
- Demonstrate new learning in a practice setting
- Illustrate to others new leadership skills and knowledge
- Integrate the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* into a demonstration of leadership capacity.

Overview of the Leadership Pilot Project Program Evaluation

Accountability, transparency, ongoing program improvement and quality assurance were recognized as fundamental to the effective planning, design, implementation and evaluation of the Leadership Pilot project.

The Leadership Pilot project program evaluation was designed to assist College-related decision-makers, the Ministry of Education, other partners and stakeholders and the public to determine to what extent the program met the designated project purposes.

The Leadership Pilot project program evaluation progressed through three phases including the planning phase, an ongoing formative program evaluation phase and a summative evaluation.

Planning Phase

The Standards of Practice Committee (SPC) began its preliminary research regarding its mandate to advise Council on continuous learning and professional development for College members during the summer months of 2011. The Professional Practice Department completed an environmental scan of the ongoing education programs and resources for a cross-section of 18 other Ontario self-regulatory bodies.

The SPC's report, *Promoting High Standards and Quality Assurance*, summarized the policies, practices and program components put in place by 18 of Ontario's regulated professions. The Committee also hosted a structured panel discussion with representatives from other regulatory bodies.

In February 2012, the report, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, was prepared to support the work of the Standards of Practice Committee as it began the process of bringing clarity to a conceptual framework for a future continuous professional learning program.

The College also undertook an environmental scan of selected national and international perspectives and initiatives related to the correlation of leadership capacity and the quality of early learning and care programs. *Leading in the New Reality* summarized a range of issues and program initiatives.

The continuous professional learning initiatives examined through this preliminary research suggested that the following perspectives and strategies should be important considerations as the planning process for the CPL program and Leadership Pilot project continued.

- A vision of leadership as “shared/distributed leadership” rather than “positional leadership” enhances both the quality of early learning and care programs and strengthens the ECE profession
- Members of the profession and the public need to recognize and value the importance of building leadership capacity in the early childhood education profession
- Definitions of leadership in other professional contexts or the corporate world may not be appropriate for the early childhood education profession because of its diversity, required flexibility, individualized programming and workplace environments
- Early childhood education continuous professional learning programs must be responsive to and reflective of the diverse population they serve
- Early childhood education continuous professional learning programs build capacity to foster professional relationships with both children and families
- Self-assessment and reflection are useful tools to initiate personal and professional growth
- Planning for the College's Leadership Pilot project will require that the program curriculum framework not only provides learning opportunities for participants to enhance sector related management and supervisory knowledge and skills, but also to integrate their learning with the ethical and professional standards of the profession as outlined in the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*
- Building leadership capacity in the ECE sector will facilitate the ability for College members to influence local and provincial policy development in the ECE sector.

Early childhood education professionals:

- Value support and mentoring during the learning process
- Value opportunities to learn from real practice experiences and case study scenarios
- Value networking opportunities that facilitate their engagement in communities of practice and learning
- Value online access to resources and learning activities
- Learn by reflecting on their practice by engaging in action-research
- Continue to enhance their oral and written communication skills as their leadership responsibilities grow
- Continue to enhance their technology-based skills as their leadership responsibilities grow

- Acknowledge that specific management knowledge and skills such as human resource management, finance and facility operations are requirements of a positional leadership role.

Preliminary Focus Group Process and Online Questionnaire

The College facilitated 11 focus groups between late September and mid-December 2012. The purpose of these focus groups was to obtain input from members, sector stakeholders and the public about the development of a continuous professional learning program and the Leadership Pilot project.

In conjunction with the focus group sessions, between October 29, 2012 and November 19, 2012, the College posted an online questionnaire link for 32,913 members of the College. Responses were received from 3,364 (10.2%) members.

Special Leadership Advisory Group

A Special Leadership Advisory Group met three times between June 5, 2012 and February 6, 2013.

The role of the Special Leadership Advisory Group, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, was to “provide the College with knowledgeable advice and recommendations in order to guide and inform the Continuous Professional Learning program and the Leadership Pilot project design and development”.

The Leadership in Early Childhood Education Resource Inventory

In February 2013, the College designed an online survey to be forwarded to Ontario stakeholder groups, organizations and institutions offering professional development programs related to leadership development in the early childhood education sector.

CPL Program and Leadership Pilot Project Consultations

In spring 2013, the College initiated a series of province-wide member and public stakeholder consultations including:

- Roundtable small group responses to the CPL draft design booklet
- Individual responses to an online questionnaire
- Individual and group responses to the CPL draft design booklet sent to the College electronically or by mail.

Between April 18 and June 13, 2013, the College hosted 32 roundtable sessions across Ontario. The College designed the roundtables to facilitate participation in both a face-to-face setting concurrently using teleconference and web-based technology. Twenty-two post-secondary institutions and community organizations assisted in hosting the roundtables at both the face-to-face and satellite locations.

Four-hundred twenty College members and stakeholders participated in the English-language and inter-regional French-language CPL program roundtable sessions. Input was also obtained through an online questionnaire answered by almost 2,000 members.

Leadership Pilot Implementation and Formative Evaluation Phase

The Leadership Pilot Project Candidate Application Form and Mentor Application Form were sent to all College members by email on March 1, 2014. In order to be considered for selection, in addition to fully completing the application form, applicants were required to arrange for a

nominator who works in the early learning and care sector in Ontario (not necessarily an RECE). Applicants were also required to obtain their employer's statement of support.

The employer statement of support required the employer to agree in writing, to support the full participation of the applicant in the Leadership Pilot project, to allow the applicant the time away from work that would be required to attend the in-person sessions in Toronto and to participate in program evaluation activities to assist the College in assessing the achievement of its objectives for the project.

Applications were received from 121 potential participants and 72 potential mentors. College staff completed a preliminary screening to ensure that applications met the mandatory criteria.

A selection committee used a prepared rubric and a 5-point rating scale to assess each application. The selection committee members also tried to ensure that applicants were representative of all of the College's electoral districts, a range of experience and a variety of roles. All successful applicants for candidate and mentor roles accepted the opportunity to participate in the Leadership Pilot project.

Mentor Orientation

A Leadership Pilot project mentor orientation was held at the College of Early Childhood Educators on August 19, 2013.

Mentor feedback, obtained through a survey using rating scales and options for comments, was overwhelmingly positive. The mentors appreciated receiving the materials ahead of time and found them to be helpful and professionally prepared. They also indicated that the resources would be useful in their own professional practice setting.

Opening Retreat and Leadership Symposium Participant Feedback

The Leadership Pilot Opening Retreat and Leadership Symposium were held from September 26 to 28, 2013. Thirty-one Leadership Pilot mentors and participants took part in the Opening Retreat and Symposium. Approximately 220 people attended the one-day Symposium held on September 27, 2013, as College guests.

When asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 the degree to which the Leadership Pilot project participants thought that their time on day one of the retreat was well spent, one-hundred percent of the 31 respondents indicated that the program on day one was a valuable learning experience.

One-hundred percent of the respondents indicated that the presenters were knowledgeable and helpful.

All participants indicated that the knowledge and skills they acquired during the day would be useful in their professional practice.

All Symposium participants were invited to complete a feedback form at the end of the day-long program.

Approximately 97% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement "My time at the Leadership Symposium was well spent."

Ninety-four percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement "By the conclusion of the Leadership Symposium I gained new knowledge that could enhance my leadership capacity or could assist me in supporting leadership in the ECE sector."

One-hundred percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement “The Leadership Symposium illustrated the College of Early Childhood Educator’s commitment to and support for enhancing the leadership capacity in the ECE sector.”

Feedback from over 92 % of the pilot respondents indicated that they were in agreement with the statement “Mentor and mentee participation in the Leadership Pilot project enables them to enhance leadership competencies.”

Participants in both days one and three of the Opening Retreat made frequent references to how much they had learned about how the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* is integral to the practice of early childhood education and to their commitment to enhancing their leadership capacity. They were introduced to and worked with the draft CPL Self-Assessment Tool based on the ethical and professional standards and developed Professional Learning Plans designed to enhance both their professional practice and their leadership capacity.

Symposium participants also acknowledged the powerful role the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* has in enhancing the status of the profession and the proficiency with which they can describe the knowledge, skills and personal attributes relevant to the role of all RECEs.

The mentor and participants, on days one and three of the Opening Retreat, focused on how to construct effective mentoring relationships, the expectations for professional practice using case studies, working with the draft CPL tools and discussing the new learning and perspectives acquired at the Symposium. Their feedback confirmed that the Opening Retreat was a professional, enriching and motivating learning experience. Many of the participants stated that they would be using project resources in a leadership role in their own practice setting.

Participant feedback during both days one and three of the Opening Retreat and the Symposium emphasized the excellent opportunities both forums provided for not only networking, but also exposure to a variety of leadership styles and roles.

Leadership Pilot project mentors and mentees provided detailed feedback on the project resources and the draft CPL tools introduced during days one and three.

Symposium participants expressed their appreciation for the high quality presentations and resources made available throughout the event. Many of these participants indicated that they planned to share these resources and their Symposium learning with colleagues in their workplace and in their community.

Both Leadership Pilot project mentors and participants and Symposium participants viewed the program as motivating, enriching and inspiring. Participant feedback acknowledged the College’s organization of the events and activities, professionalism, quality and variety of presentations and the outstanding resources. Many indicated that they felt a renewed sense of pride in their profession and the role that they could assume in advocating for the profession and serving the children and families.

Modules of Study

The Modules of Study facilitated Leadership Pilot participant and mentor involvement through distance learning methodology that utilized the web-based program GoToWebinar and audio-teleconferencing.

The modules were scheduled on:

- October 22, 2013
- November 12, 2013
- January 15, 2014
- February 12, 2014
- March 19, 2014.

All sessions were held between 6 and 9 pm. Some participants were able to meet in small face-to-face settings during the GoToWebinar sessions and others were linked with other participants through teleconferencing technology to carry out small group discussions.

Facilitators, with expertise and experience in the module content area, prepared and presented the session. A wide range of learning resources supported the presentations including PowerPoint slides, photographs, video clips and online links to legislative resources and other recommended resources.

A review of the participant feedback regarding the five modules of study indicated that:

- Participants were able to identify the links between module content and the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*
- Some modules, such as Pedagogical Leadership and Participatory Leadership, were perceived by participants to be more obviously linked to the standards than others such as Facility Management, Human Resources and Labour Relations
- Participants appreciated the resources prepared for the modules and the fact that they were available before the session
- Some participants perceived that the Facility Management, Human Resources and Labour Relations and Fiscal Responsibility and Governance modules were management focused rather than leadership focused
- Participant comfort level and skill, related to the use of technology to enhance professional learning, increased through the five modules to the point where 100% of the respondent feedback for Module 5 indicated that they “Strongly Agreed” (rating of 5) that GoToWebinar and teleconferencing technology were suitable for professional learning” (an increase from 24% following Module One)
- Participants applauded the College efforts to demonstrate how technology may be used in different ways to facilitate professional learning
- Several participants suggested that module content should be adapted and made available using technology to all members.

Self-Directed Learning Experience Participant Feedback

The Leadership Pilot project self-directed learning experience included professional learning experiences identified by project participants that were selected in order to support their own Professional Learning Plan. The self-directed learning experience involved the equivalent of 21 hours of professional learning activity. Participants were able to accumulate the 21 hours by completing one extended program such as a short course, a multi-day conference, or a series of shorter learning activities such as participating in online webinars, reading print resources or engaging in meetings with colleagues.

Feedback provided by participants indicated that they valued the opportunity to delve more deeply into their own leadership professional learning priorities and interests, to choose activities suited to their learning style and life and work schedule and to access resources suited to their own professional setting or role.

Practicum Participant Feedback

The practicum component of the Leadership Pilot project was designed to provide participants with the opportunity to apply their learning in practice and to gain practical experience as leaders. In addition to providing participants with the opportunity to transfer theories explored during the Leadership Pilot project, the practicum also gave participants an option to enhance the learning of other colleagues and stakeholders and to make a contribution to the early learning and care sector. The program expectation for the practicum component involved the equivalent of 12 hours of professional learning on the part of participants.

Participant feedback indicated that they valued the opportunity to gain practical experience as leaders and to demonstrate their new learning and enhanced leadership capacity in their practice setting.

Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Program Portfolio

All participants in the Leadership Pilot project were sent an electronic version of a 23 item survey requesting feedback on the CPL Program Portfolio. The CPL Program Portfolio contained the:

- Continuous Professional Learning Program Portfolio Handbook
- Focus on Capacity Building: Completing my Self-Assessment Tool Tip Sheet
- Self-Assessment Tool
- Focus on Capacity Building: Completing My Professional Learning Plan Tip Sheet
- Professional Learning Plan
- Focus on Capacity Building: Completing My Record of Professional Learning Tip Sheet
- Record of Professional Learning

Participants provided the College with detailed feedback about the design and contents of the CPL Program Portfolio.

Sample comments include:

I felt it is monumental to making the standards of practice a living document.

I loved all the sample entries throughout the portfolio and referred to them frequently.

I can see this as particularly useful for individuals who are at the beginning stages of identifying their areas of growth or those who have little experience in reflective practice.

Opening Retreat and Closing Retreat Leadership Participant Self-Assessment Survey

This report will summarize the leadership self-assessment survey feedback provided by participants prior to the beginning of the Leadership Pilot project Opening Retreat on September 26, 2013 and again, using the same survey, on the final day of the Closing Retreat on May 30, 2014.

The participant pre and post self-assessment survey was part of the College of Early Childhood Educator's commitment to assessing the quality and impact of the Leadership Pilot project through the ongoing formative and summative program evaluation.

In addition to fostering the leadership capacity of College members, the College wanted to determine the extent to which participants perceived that the Leadership Pilot project effectively addressed their professional learning needs and goals and the extent to which the participants

reported changes in their perceived leadership competency over their period of involvement in the Leadership Pilot project.

This leadership pre and post surveys were distributed on the first day of the Opening Retreat in September and on the final day of the Closing Retreat in May 2014. The surveys were used to assist the College in determining the self-reported change in 10 leadership dimensions during the period of the Leadership Pilot project. Participants were not asked to add their names to the surveys and responses were not used for individual participant evaluation purposes.

The Leadership Pilot project participant mentors and mentees self-reported significant growth in all 10 leadership dimensions.

Closing Retreat Participant Feedback

The Leadership Pilot Closing Retreat was held May 29 and 30, 2014.

Participants engaged in a SOAR activity focused on how participation in the Leadership Pilot project helped them develop their **S**trengths, identify **O**pportunities to grow in their practice, clarify their **A**spirations and vision of leadership and experience the **R**esults or outcomes of their learning. Twelve participant mentees also presented a 20-minute overview of their practicum to the participant group and two representatives from the Scottish Social Service Council shared the Scottish experience related to “growing a profession.”

Feedback provided by participants indicated that their Closing Retreat learning experiences were very positive. One hundred percent of the participants believed that their learning experiences during the Closing Retreat were highly valuable.

The Leadership Pilot project has exceeded all my expectations and I am grateful for the opportunity. I feel more confident as a leader and inspired to advocate on behalf of our profession. I am feeling very proud to be a Registered Early Childhood Educator and to count myself amongst such a strong and dedicated group of RECEs as the ones I had the pleasure of working with during this project. Thank you to the College of ECE for this wonderful opportunity. We now have a group of RECEs who see themselves as leaders and will go out into their communities to grow more. I believe one of the presenters said “Let’s plant good trees”.

Employer Feedback

In July 2014, the College invited the employers of each of the 25 mentees to provide feedback about their perceptions of any impact the Leadership Pilot project may have had in their employment setting. The questionnaire included 10 items using a rating scale to illustrate levels of agreement from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, two open-ended questions and two yes/no items.

Feedback was very positive with the majority of responses indicating strong agreement with each of the items. The items rated the highest by the responding employers included:

- I recommend that other employers encourage RECE involvement in continuous professional learning initiatives such as the Leadership Pilot project (100%)
- I was kept well informed about the College expectations for RECE continuous professional learning through the College Employer Bulletin and other College publications and website postings (94%)
- Having an employee involved in the Leadership Pilot project was “good value” for our workplace (94%)

- My employee's involvement in the Leadership Pilot project was of benefit to other employees in our workplace (89%).

Eleven employers indicated an interest in becoming involved in an employer advisory group should the College make a decision to establish an Employer Roundtable.

Leadership Pilot Summative Program Evaluation

The summative evaluation followed an adaptation of Guskey's (2000) five-level model for evaluating professional development initiatives. This model is hierarchical in format from simple to complex – with each level building on the previous level. The five levels include:

- Participant reactions
- Participant learning
- Organizational support and change
- Participant use of new knowledge/skills
- Impact of children, families and early learning and care programs.

Information gathered about participant reactions during the ongoing formative evaluation was extremely positive.

Examples illustrating participant learning include:

- 97% indicated strong agreement that the case studies and practice examples provided a context for legislation and the ethical and professional standards governing the profession
- 95% indicated strong agreement that the overall design of the Leadership Pilot project facilitated both mentor and mentee professional learning
- 95% indicated strong agreement that the knowledge and skills that they acquired would be useful in their professional practice
- 94% indicated strong agreement that they were able to link the self-directed learning to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

Selected examples of organization support and change include:

- The College supported the design, development and implementation of a program modelling risk-taking, innovation and change. The Leadership Pilot project has been a source of pride for College Council members, participating RECEs and staff.
- In terms of the impact on the College, the Council and the profession in general, the Leadership Pilot project has opened up a series of discussions about the role of the regulatory body in promoting professionalism and leadership and the importance of these characteristics in the broader quality agenda for early learning and care.

Selected examples of participant use of new knowledge and skills include:

- 100% of the mentors indicated following the Mentor Orientation that they would be able to use some of the resources in their practice setting
- 95% of the participants expressed strong agreement with the statement, "The knowledge and skills that I acquired will be useful in my professional practice"
- Many participants commented about how much they had learned about using the CPL program Self-Assessment Tool and Professional Learning Plan. Some also noted that they would be creating workshops to share the CPL program and tools with colleagues in their workplace setting

- When participants were asked to identify one strategy that they would use to share their new knowledge and skills in their practice setting, responses included focusing on the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* at staff meetings, implementing an online forum/blog, networking, establishing a mentoring program, using the case studies at staff meetings, using the SOAR activity with colleagues and using storytelling in presentations
- A review of the Practicum activities illustrated how participants were able to apply their new knowledge and skills in their practice setting.

Selected examples of how participant engagement in the Leadership Pilot project had an impact on children, families and early learning and care programs include the:

- Increase in all 10 leadership dimensions included in the participant Leadership Pilot project pre-test and post-test Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire'
- College emphasis on the importance of the continuous professional learning of members, the importance of leadership development in the early childhood education sector and the willingness of program participants to engage in these activities
- Validation provided by the College regarding the importance of members being able to access quality professional learning opportunities which recognize and value their ability to make professional choices about their professional learning needs, learning styles, career aspirations, personal life and the cultural and geographic realities of the children, families and communities they serve
- Awareness that the CPL program expectations and the Leadership Pilot project support the recently revised Ministry program guidelines for College-approved ECE diploma and degree post-secondary programs
- Commitment, on behalf of the College, to continue to work in consultation with the Ministry of Education, ECE stakeholders organizations and institutions to ensure that the CPL program and the Leadership Pilot project address the realities of Ontario children, families and communities
- Commitment of the College members and Leadership Pilot project participants to advocate on behalf of Ontario children, families and the communities they serve.

Summary

A review of the information gathered through the formative evaluation instruments and through other participant feedback indicated that the Leadership Pilot project met or exceeded all targeted program outcomes. The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* were integrated into the design, development and implementation processes for the CPL program and Leadership Pilot project.

The project demonstrated that members who participated in the Leadership Pilot project engaged in professional learning opportunities that supported and enhanced their professional growth, leadership capacity and the provision of early learning and care services for young children and their families.

The variety and combination of learning options and the ability to engage in self-directed learning made it possible for project participants to select activities that were relevant to them and that could support the integration of best practice into their own practice setting.

Participants recognized the importance and value of being held accountable for their own professional learning. Participants acknowledged that being held accountable as a professional best serves both the public interest and early childhood education professionals. As College members and participants in the Leadership Pilot project, they recognized the potential impact

that this commitment to continuous professional learning can have on the elevation of the profile of the College, the status of the early childhood education profession and the provision early learning and care services in Ontario.

The participants, facilitators, College Council members and staff were committed to enhancing excellence in professional practice. Being involved in the project was inspiring and energizing. The Leadership Pilot project exemplified moral purpose in the context of early learning and care. It empowered participants and encouraged them to identify and plan their own professional learning journey. They were challenged and celebrated.

The participants achieved a level of accomplishment as a team that far exceeded what any of them could have experienced as individuals. They knew, as a group, that they could explore, problem-solve, create new ways of achieving their goals and contribute in positive ways to their workplace and communities. Without exception, participants believed they could make a difference.

The Leadership Plot project program evaluation illustrates how a group of six mentors and 25 mentee RECEs grew in ability, confidence and potential to serve their profession and the children and families with whom they work as agents of change. They feel empowered, hopeful and optimistic about the contributions they can make to children and families and their profession.