

# 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-ecce.ca](mailto:practice@college-ecce.ca) for more information.

impair their professional judgement or in any way increase the risk of exploitation or harm to the children in their care (Standard V: C.2). It is also important to consider how other individuals, such as your employer, colleagues or other parents may view your behaviour and relationships.

One strategy that may assist you as an RECE in keeping your interactions on a professional level is to remember your responsibilities to families outlined in the Code of Ethics and Standard I. While you should always strive to maintain an open relationship with family members, you should be mindful that your interactions remain focused on exchanging knowledge and sharing practices and resources (Ethic B. Responsibilities to Families). You can maintain a positive, cordial and collaborative rapport with families while respectfully steering your interactions to matters that directly relate to the child under your supervision.

**As an RECE, there are times when parents or guardians of the children under my supervision will make personal remarks or ask me for details about my life outside of work that I am not comfortable sharing. How can I avoid engaging in personal conversations without putting our positive professional relationships in jeopardy?**

As a professional, it can sometimes be challenging to establish and maintain boundaries between our professional and personal lives. This can be particularly difficult if you have built caring, empathetic and trusting relationships with children and families over time.

There are several scenarios where parents may inadvertently challenge the boundaries of your professional relationship. Some examples may include asking personal questions, divulging personal information about their family, inviting you to attend their child's birthday parties or other functions, asking you to babysit their child, etc.

In these instances, your professional responsibility is to use your judgement to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained. RECEs need to avoid situations that may

## Put it into Practice!

For more information on the complex professional challenges that RECEs face in their practice, read the article, "A Fine Line: Navigating the Professional World" in the Winter 2013 issue of *Connexions* and watch Professional Boundaries Expert Claudia Newman's special presentation at the College's Fourth Annual Meeting available on the College website.

Get together with one or more colleagues to create a list of potential scenarios that would challenge your ability to maintain professional boundaries with children and their families. For each scenario, decide on a strategy you could use to ensure appropriate boundaries are maintained. It may be helpful to practice these strategies through role-playing exercises.