

**DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE  
OF THE COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS**

Citation: College of Early Childhood Educators vs Karla Coleman,  
2017 ONCECE 8  
Date: 2017-10-19

IN THE MATTER OF the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, S.O. 2007, c. 7, Sched. 8 (the  
“ECE Act”) and the Regulation (Ontario Regulation 223/08) thereunder;

AND IN THE MATTER OF discipline proceedings against KARLA COLEMAN, a current  
member of the College of Early Childhood Educators.

PANEL:           Karen Damley, Chair  
                      Barbara Brown, RECE  
                      Diane Laframboise, RECE

BETWEEN:	)	
COLLEGE OF EARLY	)	Bernard LeBlanc,
CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS	)	Steinecke Maciura LeBlanc LLP,
	)	for the College of Early Childhood Educators
- and -	)	
	)	
KARLA COLEMAN	)	Karla Coleman,
REGISTRATION #20035	)	on her own behalf
	)	
	)	
	)	
	)	Renée Kopp,
	)	Jones Litigation Counsel LLP,
	)	Independent Legal Counsel
	)	
	)	Heard: August 23, 2017

**REASONS FOR DECISION, DECISION AND ORDER(S)**

1. This matter came on for a hearing before a panel of the Discipline Committee (the “Committee”) on August 23, 2017 at the College of Early Childhood Educators (the “College”) in Toronto.

2. A Notice of Hearing dated July 24, 2017 (Exhibit 1) was served on Karla Coleman (the “Member” or “Ms. Coleman”) specifying the charges and requesting her attendance before the Discipline Committee of the College on August 23, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

## **THE ALLEGATIONS**

3. The allegations against the Member, as stated in the Notice of Hearing, are as follows: IT IS ALLEGED that Karla Coleman, RECE (the “Member”), is guilty of professional misconduct as defined in subsection 33(2) of the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, S.O. 2007, c. 7, Sch. 8, in that:
  - a. paragraph 3 (verbally abusing a child who is under Ms. Coleman’s professional supervision);
  - b. paragraph 3.1 (physically abusing a child who is under Ms. Coleman’s professional supervision);
  - c. paragraph 3.2 (psychologically or emotionally abusing a child who is under Ms. Coleman’s professional supervision);
  - d. paragraph 8 (failing to maintain the standards of the profession, particularly Standard I.D, I.E, I.F, Standard II.A.1, II.B.2, II.C.1, Standard III and Standard IV.A.2, IV.B.4, IV.C.1, IV.E.1, and IV.E.2 of the Standards of Practice, and the Code of Ethics, paragraphs A and C);
  - e. paragraph 10 (acting or failing to act in a manner that, having regard to the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional); and,
  - f. paragraph 22 (conducting herself in a manner that is unbecoming a member).

## **MEMBER’S PLEA**

4. The Member plead guilty to the allegations of professional misconduct as set out in the Notice of Hearing.
5. Counsel for the College submitted a plea inquiry signed by Ms. Coleman on July 13, 2017 (Exhibit 3), indicating the following:
  - a) Ms. Coleman understands the nature of the allegations that have been made against her.

- b) Ms. Coleman understands that by admitting the allegations, she is waiving the right to require the College to prove the case against her and the right to have a hearing.
- c) Ms. Coleman voluntarily admitted to the allegations made against her.
- d) Ms. Coleman understands that the Panel's decision and a summary of its reasons will be published in the official publication of the College, *Connexions*, including reference to her name.
- e) Ms. Coleman understands that any agreement between counsel for the College and herself with respect to the order proposed does not bind the Panel.

## **EVIDENCE**

- 6. The facts of the case were established by way of an Agreed Statement of Facts, signed August 23, 2017 (Exhibit 2). The Agreed Statement of Facts provides as follows:

### **The Member**

- 1. Karla Coleman (the "Member") initially registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators (the "College") as a Registered Early Childhood Educator ("RECE") on July 30, 2009 and remains in good standing with the College.
- 2. At all material times, the Member was employed as an RECE at a Summer Camp Program at the YMCA in Kingston, Ontario (the "Centre").
- 3. On October 1, 2015, the Member was terminated from her position as an RECE with the Centre as a result of the events described below.

### **Incident**

- 4. On August 27, 2015, just after lunch, a 7-year-old student, [child 1], began causing a disturbance. He dumped games on the floor, ripped up other students' artwork and struck an educator.

5. The Member approached [child 1], who threw art at her, punched her in the stomach and then ran away.
6. The Member caught up to [child 1], grabbed him by the arm and pulled him towards a chair. CS, another educator in the classroom, told the Member that she was being too rough with [child 1] and was going to hurt him, but the Member continued to pull on his arm even though [child 1] resisted.
7. [Child 1] told the Member that she could not make him sit, to which the Member responded, "Watch me" or words to that effect, in an aggressive tone.
8. The Member then picked [child 1] up and sat him on the chair. She pushed the chair up tightly to a table, pushing [child 1]'s chest against the table, and sat behind him in another chair pressed up against his, so that he was unable to move and/or push the chair back.
9. [Child 1] told the Member that she was causing him pain. The Member responded that she did not care and would press even harder if he tried to get away.
10. The Member then turned his chair and put her arms around his chest and neck area.
11. [Child 1] head butted the Member. The Member became even more angry and said, "Breaking stuff is one thing but hitting a staff that's it!", or words to that effect.
12. [Child 1] continued to try and get up. The Member grabbed him by the collar of his shirt and dragged him back to his chair. He complained of pain, at which point the Member held him pressed against her body for approximately 5 minutes. [Child 1] told her to let him go, but the Member loudly told [child 1] that she would not do so.

13. The Member then grabbed [child 1] again by the collar, pushed him to the floor, dragged him over to the bookshelf and pressed his face into the carpet. [Child 1]'s torso was between his legs and the Member used [child 1] as a support to get down to the ground at his level. During this time [child 1] was screaming that he was in pain and that it hurt.
14. The Member then grabbed [child 1] and threw him to a different spot on the floor, at which time [child 1] again screamed, saying she was hurting him. In response, the Member stated, "I don't give a rat's ass hairdo if it hurts, stay still!", or words to that effect.
15. The Member held [child 1] down on the floor, and then put her leg or legs on top of him and held his shoulder blades down to the ground to restrain him for approximately 15 minutes.
16. MS, another educator in the classroom, indicated to the Member that [child 1]'s behaviour was escalating as result of the Member's behaviour, so she needed to try a different tactic, to which the Member responded that she did not care.
17. MS told the Member that she was going to hurt herself and asked if she could take over, but the Member refused. Throughout this time, [child 1] was yelling that the Member was hurting him.
18. Another staff member then assumed responsibility for [child 1], who calmed down after approximately three minutes. [Child 1] told this staff member that the Member hurt him a lot.
19. The entire incident lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes.
20. Three other staff had observed this incident. One staff in particular did not intervene because she was scared of the Member and did not feel comfortable intervening because the Member would get in "your face" and was very defensive.

## College Standards of Practice

21. The Member agrees that the following are standards of the profession, as set out in the College's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, that were in effect at the time of these events:

- a. Standard I.D: Early Childhood Educators are attuned to the needs of children and families and advocate with families on behalf of children. They provide nurturing learning environments where children thrive and families are welcome.
- b. Standard I.E: Early Childhood Educators establish professional and caring relationships with children and families. They engage both children and their families by being sensitive and respectful of diversity, equity and support by responding appropriately to the ideas, concerns and needs of children and families.
- c. Standard I.F: Early Childhood Educators ensure that in their relationship with the child's family, the needs and best interests of the child are paramount.
- d. Standard II.A.1: Early Childhood Educators demonstrate a thorough knowledge of child development theories. They use this knowledge to plan, implement and assess developmentally appropriate learning strategies.
- e. Standard II.B.2: Early Childhood Educators provide care and education to individuals, small groups and large groups. They make ongoing decisions concerning children's needs for support and assistance.
- f. Standard II.C.1: Early Childhood Educators recognize that children have different learning styles. They focus on the whole child and plan caring and creative learning opportunities that reflect individual learning styles. Early Childhood Educators, through these learning opportunities, foster the development of a child's sense of self.

- g. Standard III.A.1: Early Childhood Educators maintain safe and healthy learning environments.
- h. Standard III.B.1: Early Childhood Educators obtain and familiarize themselves with information concerning any relevant medical conditions, exceptionalities, allergies, food restrictions, medication requirements and emergency contact information relating to children under their professional supervision. This information is obtained and reviewed in a timely manner, when a child comes under the member's professional supervision or as soon after that time as the information becomes available.
- i. Standard III.B.2: Early Childhood Educators provide opportunities for young children to experience nature, and to understand their relationship to their natural environment and to the world.
- j. Standard III.B.3: Early Childhood Educators promote a healthy lifestyle including but not limited to nutrition and physical activity.
- k. Standard III.C.1: Early Childhood Educators support children in culturally, linguistically and developmentally sensitive ways and provide caring stimulating and respectful opportunities for learning and care that are welcoming to children and their families, within an inclusive, well-planned and structured environment.
- l. Standard IV.A.2: Early Childhood Educators know, understand and abide by the legislation, policies and procedures that are relevant to their professional practice and to the care and learning of children under their professional supervision.
- m. Standard IV.B.4: Early Childhood Educators observe, assess, evaluate, document and report on children's progress along all domains of child development. As they work with children, families and other adults, Early Childhood Educators set goals, make decisions, resolve challenges, decide on developmentally responsive activities and experiences, provide

behaviour guidance and work collaboratively in the best interest of the children under their professional supervision.

- n. Standard IV.C.1: Early Childhood Educators work collaboratively with colleagues in their workplaces in order to provide safe, secure, healthy and inviting environments for children and families. By supporting, encouraging and working collaboratively with their co-workers, Early Childhood Educators enhance the culture of their workplaces. They build effective relationship with colleagues and other professionals by using clear verbal and written communication, and positive interpersonal skills.
- o. Standard IV.E.1: Early Childhood Educators strive for excellence in their professional practice and critical thinking. Early Childhood Educators access current evidence-based research and are able to transfer this knowledge into practice. They are aware of the need to enhance their own learning in order to support both children and families. Early Childhood Educators demonstrate their commitment to ongoing professional development by engaging in continued learning.
- p. Standard IV.E.2: Early Childhood Educators 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.
- q. Code of Ethics Paragraph A: Early Childhood Educators make the well-being and learning of all children who are under their professional supervision their foremost responsibility. They value the rights of the child, respecting the uniqueness, dignity and potential of each child, and strive to create learning environments in which children experience a sense of belonging.

Early Childhood Educators are caring, empathetic, fair and act with integrity. Early Childhood Educators foster the joy of learning through play-based pedagogy.

- r. Code of Ethics Paragraph C: Early Childhood Educators interact with colleagues and other professionals in ways that demonstrate respect, trust, and integrity. Through their conduct, Early Childhood Educators strive to enhance the status of the profession in their workplaces and in the wider community.

Early Childhood Educators value lifelong learning and commit themselves to engaging in continuous professional learning to enhance their practice. They support experienced colleagues, those who are new to the profession and students aspiring to the profession.

### **Expert Evidence**

- 22. The College retained Karen Chandler, RECE (“Ms. Chandler”), to provide an expert opinion regarding the Member’s conduct.
- 23. A copy of Ms. Chandler’s expert report is attached at **Tab “A”**.
- 24. In summary, Ms. Chandler opined that by grabbing [child 1]’s arm, yelling at [child 1] and physically restraining [child 1], the Member failed to:
  - a. resolve challenges and provide behaviour guidance in the best interests of children under her professional supervision,
  - b. maintain a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment,
  - c. be considerate of children’s needs and learning styles, and
  - d. demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain nurturing, responsive relationships with [child 1].
- 25. By not responding to the family’s concerns that [child 1] was “out of sorts” in the morning and inaccurately reporting the events of the day to the parent, Ms. Chandler opined that the Member failed to ensure that in her relationship with the child’s family, that the needs and best interests of the child were paramount.

26. Ms. Chandler was also of the opinion that the Member failed to work collaboratively with colleagues in the workplace to provide a safe, secure, healthy and inviting environment for the children and families.

27. Finally, Ms. Chandler opined that there were numerous incidences of the Member's conduct that would be perceived as negatively reflecting on the profession.

28. The parties substantially agree with the opinions expressed in Ms. Chandler's report.

### **Admissions of Professional Misconduct**

29. The Member admits that she engaged in and is guilty of professional misconduct as described in paragraphs 4 to 20 above, and as defined in section 33(2) of the ECE Act, in that:

- a. She verbally abused a child who was under her professional supervision, contrary to paragraph 3 of section 2 of Ontario Regulation 223/08;
- b. She physically abused a child who is under her professional supervision, contrary to paragraph 3.1 of section 2 of Ontario Regulation 223/08;
- c. She psychologically or emotionally abused a child who is under her professional supervision, contrary to paragraph 3.2 of section 2 of Ontario Regulation 223/08;
- d. She failed to maintain the standards of the profession (particularly Standard I.D, I.E, I.F, Standard II.A.1, II.B.2, II.C.1, Standard III and Standard IV.A.2, IV.B.4, IV.C.I , IV.E.I, and IV.E.2 of the Standards of Practice, and the Code of Ethics, paragraphs A and C), contrary to paragraph 8 of section 2 of Ontario Regulation 223/08;
- e. She acted or failed to act in a manner that, having regards to the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional, contrary to paragraph 10 of section 2 of Ontario Regulation 223/08; and

- f. She conducted herself in a manner that is unbecoming a member, contrary to paragraph 22 of section 2 of Ontario Regulation 223/08.

## **DECISION**

7. Having considered the facts admitted to by the member, the exhibits filed, the Member's guilty plea and the submissions of the parties, the Discipline Panel found the Member, Karla Coleman, guilty of all of the allegations of professional misconduct as alleged in the Notice of Hearing. In particular, the Panel finds that Ms. Coleman breached Ontario Regulation 223(08), paragraphs 3 and 3.1; Standards of Practice I.D, I.E, I.F, II.A.1, II.B.2, II.C.1, III, IV.A.2, IV.B.4, IV.C.1, IV.E.1 and IV.E.2 and Code of Ethics, paragraphs A and C.

## **REASON FOR DECISION**

8. The Panel received a written plea inquiry signed by the Member, Exhibit 3. The Panel also conducted an oral plea inquiry and was satisfied that the Member's admission was voluntary, informed and unequivocal.

Ms. Coleman's voluntary admission of allegations of professional misconduct, the agreed statement of facts presented and the expert opinion tendered as evidence led the Panel to find the Member guilty of professional misconduct.

The ASF as well as the opinion of the College's expert point to numerous actions on the part of the Member, which amounted to verbal, physical and emotional or psychological abuse of a child. She inappropriately restrained the child by grabbing his arm and shirt collar, pulling him repeatedly, picking him up and sitting him in a chair and pressing the chair tightly against a table so that the child was unable to move. She also admitted to pushing the child to the floor, pressing his face into the carpet, placing her arms around the child's chest and neck area, then placing her legs on top of the child for 15 minutes to restrain him, all the while yelling at him repeatedly. While the child's behaviour might have been challenging, the Member failed to maintain the standards of the profession

and failed to resolve these challenges and provide appropriate behaviour guidance in the best interest of the child under her professional supervision.

The child expressed several times that the Member was causing him pain. After the child told the Member that she was hurting him on one occasion, the Member responded with "I don't give a rat's ass hairdo if it hurts, stay still". Professor Chandler states threats or derogatory language undermines the child's dignity and self-worth.

Professor Chandler writes: The RECE "physically, verbally, psychologically and emotionally abused a child under her professional supervision." Her use of 'physical force by restraining a child'; along with 'grabbing a child by the arm', as well as 'using an aggressive tone' can lead to the risk of emotional harm to the children". The RECE did not fulfill her professional obligation to resolve challenges and provide behaviour guidance in the best interests of the children under her professional supervision in Standard IV.B.4. The RECE was 'physically rough, grabbing the arm', 'yelling and physically restraining [child 1]. "Staff who shout at children or use sarcasm, mocking or harsh words negatively affect the child's self-esteem." Professor Chandler states that Ms. Coleman conducted herself in a manner that could be perceived as reflecting negatively on the profession of Early Childhood Education.

The panel finds that Ms. Coleman's pattern of verbal and physical abuse, inappropriate language, rough and aggressive tone and behaviour towards the child was unacceptable and reprehensible. She did not consider the effect of her actions during this incident on the other children present in the classroom. .Also, by declining assistance from the other educators in the classroom when it was offered on two separate occasions during the 30-45 minutes that the incident lasted, the Member disregarded and disrespected her professional colleagues. The panel finds the conduct of the Member in the circumstances, dishonorable, disgraceful and unprofessional and unbecoming of an RECE.

## **POSITION OF THE PARTIES ON PENALTY**

9. The parties provided the panel with a Joint Submission as to Penalty signed by the Member on August 23, 2017 (Exhibit 4), and asked that the panel impose a penalty order which included the following terms:

1. Requiring the Member to appear before the Panel to be reprimanded within 30 days of the date of this Order.
2. Directing the Registrar to suspend the Member's certificate of registration for a period of 5 months. The suspension will take effect from the date of this Order, and will run without interruption as long as the Member remains in good standing with the College.
3. Directing the Registrar to impose the following terms, conditions and limitations on the Member's certificate of registration:
  - a. Prior to the Member commencing or resuming employment as a Registered Early Childhood Educator ("RECE") or engaging in the practice of early childhood education, as defined in section 2 of the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007* ("Employment"), the Member must successfully complete, with a minimum passing grade of 70% and at her own expense, course(s) pre-approved by the Director of Professional Regulation ("Director"), with respect to behaviour guidance and supporting children with exceptionalities. The Member must provide the Director with proof of enrolment and successful completion of the course(s) with a minimum passing grade of 70%.
  - b. Prior to the Member commencing or resuming Employment, the Member, at her own expense, will arrange for a mentoring relationship with a Mentor, who:
    - i. is an RECE in good standing with the College,
    - ii. is employed in a supervisory position,
    - iii. has never been found guilty of professional misconduct and/or incompetence by the Discipline Committee of the College,
    - iv. is not currently found to be incapacitated by the Fitness to Practise Committee of the College,
    - v. does not currently have a matter before the Discipline Committee or the Fitness to Practise Committee of the College, and

- vi. is pre-approved by the Director. In order to pre-approve the Mentor, the Member will provide the Director with all requested information, including (but not limited to) the name, registration number, telephone number, address and résumé of the proposed Mentor.
- c. For a period of 12 months after the Member commences or resumes Employment, and within 14 days of commencing or resuming Employment, the Member will ensure that the Director is notified of the name, address and telephone number of all employer(s).
- d. The Member will provide the Mentor with a copy of the following documents within 14 days of being notified that the Mentor has been approved by the Director, or within 14 days after the release of such documents, whichever is earliest:
  - i. the Panel's Order,
  - ii. the Agreed Statement of Facts,
  - iii. the Joint Submission on Penalty, and
  - iv. a copy of the Panel's Decision and Reasons.
- e. As soon as the Mentor has been approved by the Director and the Member has commenced or resumed Employment, the Member will meet with the pre-approved Mentor every week to discuss the following subjects:
  - i. review of the College's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice,
  - ii. the acts or omissions by the Member, which resulted in the Discipline Committee finding the Member guilty of professional misconduct,
  - iii. the potential consequences of the misconduct to the parents/children affected, and to the Member's colleagues, profession and self,
  - iv. strategies for preventing the misconduct from recurring, and

- v. the Member's daily practice and any issues that arise, to ensure that she is meeting the College's standards of practice (without disclosing personal or identifying information about any of the children under the Member's care, or clients of her employer(s)).
- f. After a minimum of 5 sessions, the Member can seek the Director's permission to stop participating in the weekly sessions with the Mentor, if the Member first provides the Director with a report from the Mentor that sets out:
  - i. the dates the Member attended the sessions with the Mentor,
  - ii. that the Mentor received a copy of the documents referred to in paragraph 3(d),
  - iii. that the Mentor reviewed the documents set out in paragraph 3(d) and discussed the subjects set out in paragraph 3(e) with the Member,
  - iv. the Mentor's assessment of the Member's insight into her behaviour, and
  - v. why the Mentor believes that the Member no longer requires weekly sessions with the Mentor.
- g. All documents delivered by the Member to the College or the Mentor will be delivered by registered mail or courier, and the Member will retain proof of delivery.
- 4. Requiring the Member to pay the College's costs fixed in the amount of \$2,500 within 60 days of the date of this Order.

## **ORDER**

10. **THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE FINDS** that the Member is guilty of professional misconduct as defined in the following paragraphs of section 2 of Ontario Regulation 223/08 under the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, S.O. 2007, c. 7, Sch. 8:
- a. paragraph 3 (verbally abusing a child who is under Ms. Coleman's professional supervision);

- b. paragraph 3.1 (physically abusing a child who is under Ms. Coleman's professional supervision);
- c. paragraph 3.2 (psychologically or emotionally abusing a child who is under Ms. Coleman's professional supervision);
- d. paragraph 8 (failing to maintain the standards of the profession, particularly Standard I.D, I.E, I.F, Standard II.A.1, II.B.2, II.C.1, Standard III and Standard IV.A.2, IV.B.4, IV.C.I , IV.E.I, and IV.E.2 of the Standards of Practice, and the Code of Ethics, paragraphs A and C);
- e. paragraph 10 (acting or failing to act in a manner that, having regard to the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional); and,
- f. paragraph 22 (conducting herself in a manner that is unbecoming a member).

**THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE ORDERS** that that Ms. Coleman pay the College's costs fixed in the amount of \$2,500 within 60 days of the date of this Order the Member appear before the Panel to be reprimanded within 30 days of the date of this Order.

**THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE FURTHER ORDERS** that the Registrar suspend the Member's certificate of registration for a period of 5 months. The suspension will take effect from the date of this Order, and will run without interruption as long as the Member remains in good standing with the College.

**THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE FURTHER ORDERS** that the Registrar impose the following terms, conditions and limitations on the Member's certificate of registration:

- a. Prior to the Member commencing or resuming employment as a Registered Early Childhood Educator ("RECE") or engaging in the practice of early childhood education, as defined in section 2 of the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007* ("Employment"), the Member must successfully complete, with a minimum passing grade of 70% and at her own expense, course(s) pre-approved by the Director of Professional Regulation ("Director"), with respect to behaviour guidance and supporting children with exceptionalities. The Member must

provide the Director with proof of enrolment and successful completion of the course(s) with a minimum passing grade of 70%.

- b. Prior to the Member commencing or resuming Employment, the Member, at her own expense, arrange for a mentoring relationship with a mentor (the "Mentor"), who:
  - i. is an RECE in good standing with the College,
  - ii. is employed in a supervisory position,
  - iii. has never been found guilty of professional misconduct and/or incompetence by the Discipline Committee of the College,
  - iv. is not currently found to be incapacitated by the Fitness to Practise Committee of the College,
  - v. does not currently have a matter before the Discipline Committee or the Fitness to Practise Committee of the College, and
  - vi. is pre-approved by the Director. In order to pre-approve the Mentor, the Member will provide the Director with all requested information, including (but not limited to) the name, registration number, telephone number, address and résumé of the proposed Mentor.
- c. For a period of 12 months after the Member commences or resumes Employment, and within 14 days of commencing or resuming Employment, the Member ensure that the Director is notified of the name, address and telephone number of all employer(s).
- d. The Member will provide the Mentor with a copy of the following documents within 14 days of being notified that the Mentor has been approved by the Director, or within 14 days after the release of such documents, whichever is earliest:
  - i. the Panel's Order,
  - ii. the Agreed Statement of Facts,
  - iii. the Joint Submission on Penalty, and

- iv. a copy of the Panel's Decision and Reasons.
- e. As soon as the Mentor has been approved by the Director and the Member has commenced or resumed Employment, the Member will meet with the pre-approved Mentor every week to discuss the following subjects:
  - i. review of the College's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice,
  - ii. the acts or omissions by the Member, which resulted in the Discipline Committee finding the Member guilty of professional misconduct,
  - iii. the potential consequences of the misconduct to the parents/children affected, and to the Member's colleagues, profession and self,
  - iv. strategies for preventing the misconduct from recurring, and
  - v. the Member's daily practice and any issues that arise, to ensure that she is meeting the College's standards of practice (without disclosing personal or identifying information about any of the children under the Member's care, or clients of her employer(s)).
- f. After a minimum of 5 sessions, the Member can seek the Director's permission to stop participating in the weekly sessions with the Mentor, if the Member first provides the Director with a report from the Mentor that sets out:
  - i. the dates the Member attended the sessions with the Mentor,
  - ii. that the Mentor received a copy of the documents referred to in paragraph 4(d),
  - iii. that the Mentor reviewed the documents set out in paragraph 4(d) and discussed the subjects set out in paragraph 4(e) with the Member,
  - iv. the Mentor's assessment of the Member's insight into her behaviour, and
  - v. why the Mentor believes that the Member no longer requires weekly sessions with the Mentor.

- g. All documents delivered by the Member to the College or the Mentor will be delivered by registered mail or courier, and the Member will retain proof of delivery.

**THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE FURTHER ORDERS** that Ms. Coleman pay the College's costs fixed in the amount of \$2,500 within 60 days of the date of this Order.

## **REASONS FOR ORDER**

11. The Panel found that the penalty proposed by the parties was reasonable, in keeping with similar cases and serves to protect the public interest.

An oral reprimand provides the Panel with the opportunity to remind the Member of her professional obligations as an early childhood educator. The fact that the Member breached multiple Standards of Practice was of concern to the Panel. The Panel hopes that by hearing the disapproval of her actions directly from her peers, the Member will be able to understand the effect of her actions on her colleagues, the profession, the children, their families and the public. Reprimands, particularly ones delivered orally, are generally unpleasant experiences for members receiving them. For this reason, the Panel feels that a reprimand will discourage the Member from committing any acts of misconduct again. Requiring the Member to appear before the Panel to receive an oral reprimand not only holds the Member responsible for her actions, but it demonstrates that the College takes matters such as professional misconduct seriously and will address concerning behaviour by members. By recording the fact of the reprimand on the register, the public is assured that the Panel recognizes the seriousness of the Member's inappropriate behaviour and responds to acts of professional misconduct fairly and transparently.

Suspension of the Member's certificate of registration for 5 months is appropriate given the fact that the Member physically, verbally, psychologically and emotionally abused a child in her care. A suspension holds the Member accountable for her actions and communicates the severity of her professional misconduct. While the suspension demonstrates the Panel's disapproval of the Member's conduct, it is not intended to be solely punitive. A suspension provides the Member with an opportunity to reflect on her practices and behaviour, learn from her mistakes and refocus on her professional responsibilities.

Successful completion of a pre-approved course with respect to behaviour guidance and supporting children with exceptionalities will provide the Member with much needed knowledge, effective strategies, reflective practice and continuous learning based on evolving theoretical foundations of early education and care which will enable her to gain better perspective of children's needs, insight into, and understanding of her work.

Ordering the Member to participate in a formal mentor relationship with a pre-approved mentor is intended to bring her practice in line with acceptable College standards. The Panel encourages the Member to develop and apply positive guidance strategies to maintain nurturing and responsive relationships with children, always in a proactive and professional manner, acting as a role-model for those around her. Moreover, by correcting her errors in practice, the Panel expects that in the future, the Member will avoid abusive behaviours and maintain fair and trustworthy relationships with her co-workers, thereby reducing the chance of her committing any acts of professional misconduct.

The significance of holding the Member financially responsible for the sourcing and securing of a formal mentor requires her to make an investment in her rehabilitation, thereby holding her accountable for her own learning and success. While the order states that after a minimum of 5 mentoring sessions, the Member can seek permission to stop the mentoring sessions, the Panel strongly encourages the Member to continue her professional development through ongoing mentorship.

Publication of this matter promotes awareness of the high standards to which the College holds its members. It assures both the public and members of the profession that the College will not tolerate this type of misconduct. Publication will ensure that future potential employers are made aware of the Member's professional misconduct and are able to reference the Panel's findings prior to making hiring decisions. It is also meant to act as a general deterrent for the membership of the College.

Finally, requiring the Member to pay costs of \$2,500 reflects the Panel's belief that the burden of professional regulation should fall on the Member who has committed the professional misconduct and not the general membership of the College. In addition to acting as a specific deterrent, it also notifies all Registered Early Childhood Educators that professional misconduct is very serious and the consequences are significant.

Date: October 19, 2017



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Karen Damley  
Chair, Discipline Panel



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Barbara Brown, RECE  
Member, Discipline Panel



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Diane Laframboise, RECE  
Member, Discipline Panel