

College Hosts Symposium on Leadership in Early Childhood Education

The College of Early Childhood Educators proudly hosted a symposium on leadership for early childhood educators and stakeholders on September 27, 2013.

Over 200 attendees gathered in Toronto, ON, to hear provincial, national and international leaders speak about the importance of leadership in the early childhood education sector. Some speakers shared stories of their own professional journeys, while others emphasized the impact of strong leadership on educators, children, families and communities.

Highlights of the day included the keynote address made by Dr. Kate Thornton from Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand and a unique video presentation called *“Leading in the New Reality: Strengthening Early Childhood Education through Leadership”*. The video reinforced Dr. Thornton’s inspiring messages about the broad range of approaches to leadership and the many ways in which early childhood educators can emerge as leaders in their practice settings.

“This was a day where the whole was greater than the sum of the parts. The speakers were great but the excitement and energy around the change in the field was amazing!”
-Tara Matte RECE

“Thank you. The College has highlighted the professionalism of all RECEs and has worked hard to ensure early childhood education is recognized as a profession.” -Natalee Johnson RECE

The Symposium also officially launched the Leadership Pilot project, an initiative created by the College and

partially funded by the Ministry of Education that connects 25 participants with six mentors in the early childhood education sector. Along with receiving valuable mentorship, participants will complete five learning modules, each addressing a specific topic relevant to early childhood educators. The Leadership Pilot will end in May 2014.



Stay tuned – English and French video recordings of the Leadership Symposium will be available on the College’s website this winter!



Keynote speaker Dr. Kate Thornton addressed the various ways that early childhood educators can fill leadership roles.

Continued on page 4...

In this Issue...

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 2 Messages from the President & Registrar | 6 Reinventing Kindergarten | 12 Practice Matters |
| 3 Election 2014 | 8 Centres Count on Professional Accountability | 13 Investigating Complaints |
| 5 CPL Program: A Timeline | 11 Conversation with an RECE | 14 In the Public Interest |
| | | 16 News in the Sector |

President's Message



Over the summer, two important notices were posted on the College website.

The first was about the statutory review of the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007* (ECE Act). As part of the review, the Ministry of Education accepted responses from stakeholders and the public.

The College made a submission, the details of which were posted on our website. This review is expected to be complete by February 2014, five years after the Act was fully proclaimed, and a final report from the Ministry will be made publicly available.

I am very excited about the second important notice, which informed members that the College has asked the Ontario government to enact a regulation made under the authority of the ECE Act requiring all of its members to engage in a Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program.

Prior to its request, the College consulted extensively with members, partners and stakeholders. Providing for the

continuing education of its members is one of the duties of the College set out in the ECE Act, and engaging in continuous learning helps registered early childhood educators (RECEs) remain current in their knowledge, skills and professional values. So many of you have told us how happy you are to be taking this next important step in the development of our profession. You'll find more information about the development of the CPL program in this issue.

In December, the College's fourth election of Council members will kick off in Districts 1, 2 and 6. Whether you decide to stand for election or cast your ballot in April 2014, elections are an opportunity for you to contribute to the regulation of your profession. Find out more about the upcoming election in this issue and on the College website.

I would like to close by extending an invitation to members once again to the College's Annual Meeting of Members on the evening of January 8, 2014. For those of you who will not be able to attend the meeting, a video recording will be available on the College website.

Cheers,

Lois Mahon RECE, President

Registrar's Message



This summer the College achieved a tremendous milestone when it issued its 45,000th Certificate of Registration. Each year the number of registered early childhood educators in the province continues to grow, and we expect this trend to continue.

Leadership is critical in such a rapidly growing and changing sector, and this was clear when over 200 members and sector stakeholders gathered in Toronto on September 27, 2013 to attend the College's first Leadership Symposium. The event featured professionals who shared their journeys to leadership roles and spoke about topics ranging from why leadership is important to how leaders can be fostered in the early learning and care sector. We bring you highlights of the full-day event in this issue.

The Leadership Symposium also marked the launch of the College's Leadership Pilot project, a nine-month learning

program that will address the identified need for building leadership capacity in the sector, and give the College an opportunity to gain feedback from members about different ways to engage in ongoing learning.



We hope that you have now visited us at our new website address, college-ecce.ca. I encourage you to regularly check the news section to read about important College updates such as the report on our 2012 survey "Early Childhood Educator Entry to Practise and Early Career Transition", and details of the statutory review of the ECE Act, along with the College's request for a continuous professional learning regulation.

Best wishes,

Sue Corke, Registrar & CEO

Election 2014

In April 2014, the College will hold its fourth election of Council members. Registered early childhood educators (RECEs) will be elected to Council in three of eight electoral districts.

A 24-member Council governs the College. The Council is made up of 14 elected RECEs with skills, knowledge and experience and 10 members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council of Ontario. The Council develops and approves policies regulating early childhood educators in Ontario.

The elections scheduled for April 2014 are as follows:

Electoral District	Number of College members to be elected in 2014
1 – North & North East Region	2
2 – East Region	1
6 – Central West Region	2

Get involved – Participate!

- Will you be a current member as of December 2013?
- Are you a member in District 1, 2 or 6?
- Do you want to participate on the College’s Council as a member of your profession?



If you have answered “yes” to all of these questions, you may be eligible to stand for election. Nomination information will be sent to current members of the College in the electoral districts noted in December 2013.



Visit college-ecce.ca/election for updates and information or contact the College at election@college-ecce.ca.

About this Publication

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

Elected Council Members

- Lois Mahon RECE, President, District 1
- Eugema Ings RECE, District 1
- Lisa Lamarre RECE, District 2
- Susan Quaiff RECE, District 3
- Linda Cottes RECE, District 4
- Roxanne Lambert RECE, District 4
- Valerie Sterling RECE, District 5
- Richard (Dick) Winters RECE, District 5
- Heather Yeo RECE, District 5
- Anna Baas-Anderson RECE, District 6
- Sophia Tate RECE, District 6
- Susan (Darlene) Edgar RECE, Vice-President, District 7

- Barbara Brown RECE, District 8
- Vera Niculena (Nici) Cole RECE, District 8

Publicly Appointed Council Members

- Madeleine L. Champagne, Ottawa
- Carol Crill Russell, Maynooth
- Rosemary Fontaine, Toronto
- Christine Forsyth, Toronto
- Bruce Minore, Thunder Bay
- Larry O’Connor, Brock
- Ann Robichaud-Gagné, Ottawa
- Rosemary Sadlier, Toronto
- Nerene Virgin, Hamilton
- Ron Wideman, North Bay

College Administration

- Registrar and CEO: Sue Corke
- Deputy Registrar: Laura Sheehan
- Director of Corporate Services: James Cha
- Director of Complaints and Discipline: Greg Coutts
- Director of Professional Practice: Melanie Dixon RECE

The College of Early Childhood Educators holds the copyright to *Connexions* but encourages digital or hard copy reproduction of

CONNEXIONS

VOL. 5: ISSUE 1
FALL '13

this publication in its PDF format in whole or in part for educational purposes or non-profit use, providing full acknowledgement is given.

Copying in any other circumstances, including but not limited to any commercial use, re-use in commercial publications, or for translation or adaptation, is not permitted without prior written permission from the College.

To request permission to reprint or republish material from this publication, or if you are unclear of the copyright holder, please contact:


communications@college-ecce.ca.

© 2013 College of Early Childhood Educators

The Leadership Pilot project is an important and unique endeavour that will inform the development and implementation of the College's Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program. Feedback from the participants and their six mentors will inform the development of tools and resources for the CPL program for all members of the College.

The CPL program will require RECEs to self-assess their learning needs and create an appropriate learning plan

to enable them to enhance their professional practice in accordance with the College's ethical and professional standards. It is recognized that learning can take place in a variety of ways and the College does not intend to prescribe the manner in which learning can occur.

A timeline and details of the program's development are provided on the following page. 

Leadership Pilot Participants

Shelley Brandon RECE, District 8 - South West
Patricia Couroux RECE, District 7 - Hamilton/Niagara
Angela Crooks RECE, District 7 - Hamilton/Niagara
Nicole Cummings-Morgan RECE, District 5 - Toronto
Valerie David-Landry RECE, District 2 - East
Venessa Genier RECE, District 2 - East
Lauren Goldsmith RECE, District 4 - Central East
Rawia Hammad RECE, District 5 - Toronto
Kaitlin Kinchen RECE, District 8 - South West
Lisa Lalonde RECE, District 2 - East
Tricia Mohamed RECE, District 6 - Central West
Chrystal Morden RECE, District 1 - North & North East
Sharon Petshe RECE, District 2 - East
Laura Rasmussen RECE, District 7 - Hamilton/Niagara
Atia Sajid RECE, District 6 - Central West
Leanna Salvati RECE, District 1 - North & North East
Sharon Simmons RECE, District 5 - Toronto
Silvia Souto RECE, District 5 - Toronto
Shannon Stewart RECE, District 3 - South East
Katie Stortz RECE, District 8 - South West
Stephanie Toulouse RECE, District 1 - North & North East
Leanna Tuba RECE, District 5 - Toronto
Valerie Vallieres RECE, District 2 - East
Kelly Walker RECE, District 8 - South West
Ann Wilke RECE, District 6 - Central West

Leadership Pilot Mentors

Kim Cole RECE, District 7 - Hamilton/Niagara
Gillian Jackson RECE, District 3 - South East
May Jolliffe RECE, District 5 - Toronto
Susan Scoffin RECE, District 4 - Central East
Jane Tousignant RECE, District 1 - North & North East
Elaine Winick RECE, District 5 - Toronto



Leadership Pilot participants and mentors.

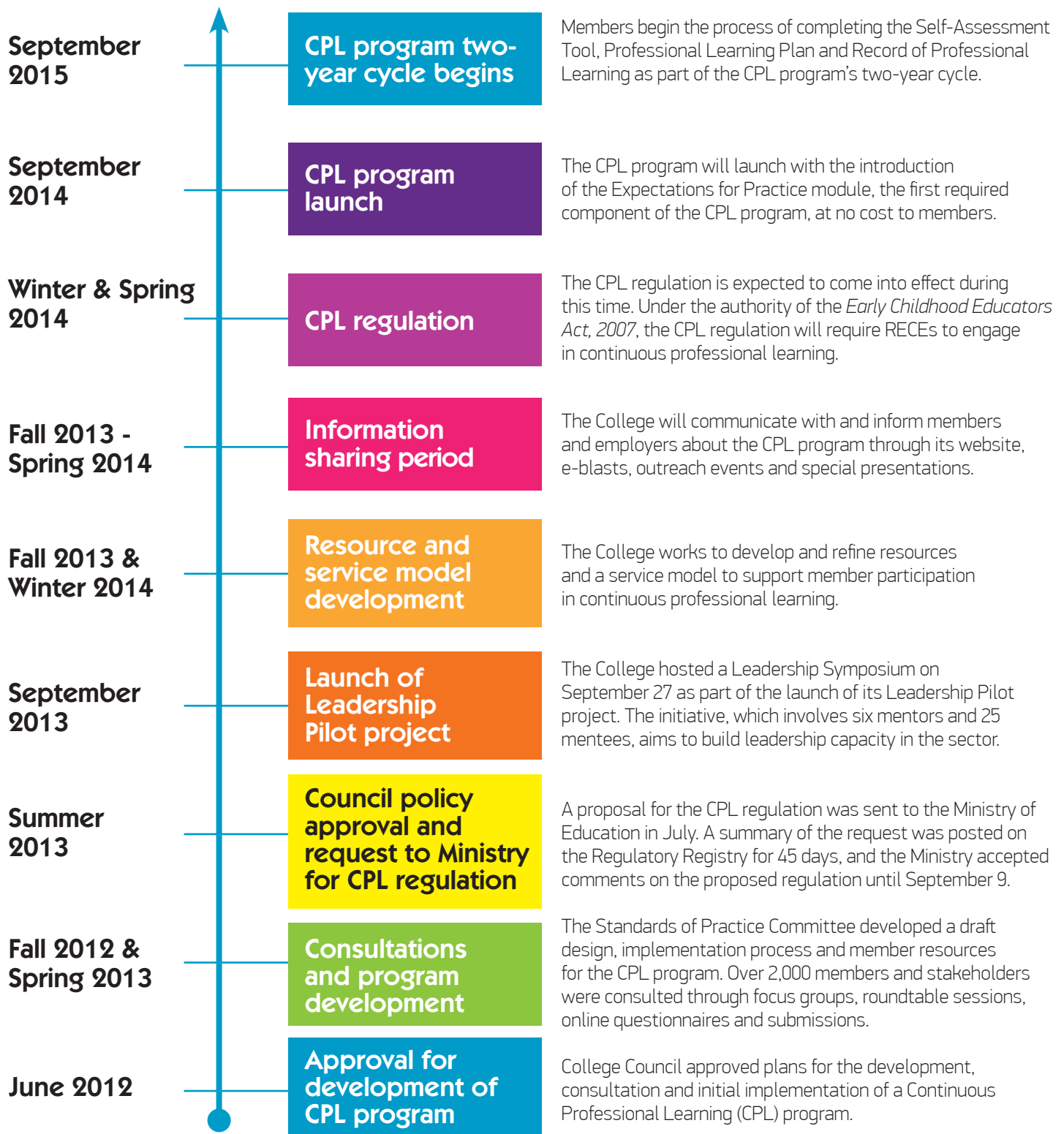


**Continuous
Professional
Learning**
LEADERSHIP PILOT

The College's symposium on leadership united professionals in the early learning and care sector.



Building Up to the Continuous Professional Learning Program: A Timeline



*Timelines are approximate and subject to change.

Reinventing Kindergarten

Teams of RECEs and teachers have policy makers, education professionals, children and families taking notice

By Julia Lipman Baker and Sharon Ho

On the first day of school in September, young children in Ontario walked into their full-day kindergarten classrooms and were greeted by two important people they'd meet this year: their designated early childhood educator (DECE) and their teacher.

Their DECE will serve as a champion of learning through play and will skillfully assess their cognitive, emotional, social, behavioural and physical development throughout the school year. Working collaboratively with the teacher, the DECE will help to ensure that our province's youngest learners are well prepared for the next decade of school and beyond.

Since DECEs and teachers joined forces to deliver Ontario's new full-day kindergarten in 2010, the program has expanded to about 2,600 schools across Ontario. By next September, every child in Ontario will have the opportunity to be guided by a team of two professionals with diverse knowledge and educational backgrounds.

A New Face in the Classroom

The position of DECE is held by members of the College, registered early childhood educators (RECEs) who meet the entry to practise requirements of the profession and are accountable to the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. As many as 20 per cent of College members may be working in a DECE position. With extensive training in child development and a holistic approach to early learning and care, RECEs bring a distinct and complementary set of skills to children and families in the kindergarten program.

RECEs are trained to observe and assess children in the context of their families, and pay attention to all aspects

of their development. If a child is excelling in most but not all areas, RECEs will seek out learning opportunities that help the child work on their developing skill and, when necessary, highlight areas where more support may be required.

The approach RECEs take to engage and assist children in their learning is emergent. Rather than following prescribed units that are aligned with the curriculum, such as studying the seasons and months of the year, RECEs plan programming around what interests the children so that they can turn that curiosity into greater opportunities for successful learning and development.

Providing opportunities for play-based, interest-driven learning and raising awareness about its importance is not new to RECEs. In fact, the profession of early childhood education has been citing the benefits of this approach for decades. Aided by the research



To learn about the use of the different titles and designations, please visit the Members section of the College's website.



RECEs plan programming around what interests the children so that they can turn that curiosity into greater opportunities for successful learning and development.

of Dr. Fraser Mustard and policy-making support in Ontario from Dr. Charles Pascal and others, over the last several years the province of Ontario has maintained a commitment to modernizing and enhancing early learning and care for both pre-school and school-age children.

Parents, policy makers and researchers increasingly recognize the value of this play-based approach to learning. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada says, “at the recent World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, organizers, keynote speakers, scientists, experts and political figures underscored the enormous benefits of early learning. CMEC agrees with this position and believes that purposeful play-based early learning sets the stage for future learning, health and well-being.”

Early Observations

Early evaluations of Ontario’s full-day kindergarten program indicate that outcomes have been mostly positive. In an October 2013 report, the Ministry of Education concluded that “the evaluation of full-day kindergarten during the first two years of implementation provides preliminary evidence that FDK is having a favourable impact on four- and five-year-olds in Ontario”.

While early program results are positive, the feedback from DECEs and teachers who are learning to combine their skills and experience in the classroom is just as important.

A preliminary report released this fall by researchers at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto shows that DECEs and teachers surveyed in the Peel region largely reported feeling a sense of equality in their full-day kindergarten teams. Of those who said the team is hierarchical, more of them were DECEs, indicating

that the perception among ECEs may not consistently be the same as that of teachers.

“You have to have faith in the partnership and that the partnership works well,” says Gigi Uson RECE, a DECE with the Toronto District School Board. “The whole thing is about working together as a team. If the team doesn't work, full-day kindergarten doesn't work.”

Two recent surveys of DECEs indicate that the key to successful partnerships may be in joint professional development and planning time. The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario recently surveyed over 500 DECEs on their experience in the program. Professional development in applying ECE principles and pedagogical leadership in the program, and best practices in team dynamics, were the top choices for future professional development.

Some teaching teams have found ways to plan and collaborate that work for them.

“Once a week, [the teacher and I] get together to reflect upon our observations and programming,” says Shelley McLaughlin RECE, a DECE with the Kawartha-Pine Ridge District School Board. “We both have communication with the families. We're implementing our observations in a Google Document program. Right now we're in the process of putting our photos, observations and video in the program to give parents a snapshot of their child in the program.”

Continued on page 10...

Centres Count on Professional Accountability

By Jann Lee

The snowball effect applies to fraud. It starts out seemingly small: a child care centre supervisor decides to pocket the cash a parent hands over to her for a child's registration fee. Months later, she collects money from families for enrichment program activities and keeps it rather than depositing it in the centre's bank accounts and recording it as revenue.

With no one looking over her shoulder, the supervisor's confidence grows. As she builds a reputation in the community and garners the confidence of board members, she decides to increase her salary without authorization from the board. It is not until a tip reveals that the centre's financial records do not add up that anyone suspects something is amiss.

This situation of accumulated unethical behavior may seem dramatic, but in the past year the College's Discipline Committee heard three similar cases, all of which have resulted in the suspension or revocation of a member's Certificate of Registration.

According to Phil Cowperthwaite FCPA, whose firm audits 130 non-profit child care centres annually, fraud can sometimes involve large amounts of money, some totaling tens-of-thousands of dollars. "Typically, management or a board member with control of finances is involved, and when it happens, it's always a shock," he says.

However, Cowperthwaite notes that cases like these are quite uncommon, and that he's only had clients involved in about a dozen illegal activities within child care centres during his 25-year tenure. "There's probably more [fraud] going on, but the amounts involved are quite small. Audits are not designed to specifically look for fraud, but when we do catch something, it's usually big."

Who is Accountable?

Even when incidents of fraud involving large amounts of money occur, perpetrators are not always reported to the proper authorities. Child care centres often wish to get back some of these stolen funds by working out a settlement with the employee.

However, in the early learning and care sector there is not only legal misconduct, but also professional misconduct. Since the establishment of the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, when a registered early childhood educator (RECE) violates the ethical and professional standards of the profession, their actions can be reported to the College and investigated.

When a case of alleged fraud is referred to the College's Discipline Committee, a panel of Committee members determines if and to what extent the RECE has failed to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, and what sections of the Ontario Regulation 223/08 Professional Misconduct have been violated. Past College hearings have revealed



that in all instances, fraud and theft took place over many years before it was noticed. Members admitted to some of their misconduct in some instances but also tried to rationalize their behaviour.

“Everybody has a reason,” says Cowperthwaite. “But, fraud often occurs in a triangle that comprises motivation, opportunity and rationale. When these factors align, the chance of fraud occurring is much more likely.”

It is up to a centre’s Board of Directors to ensure the proper checks and balances are in place so that opportunities for fraud are reduced. Additionally, boards have a fiduciary responsibility to parents and children as they ultimately suffer the consequences of fewer services and reduced funds for staff compensation.

Cowperthwaite says most centres have insurance that partially covers financial losses resulting from fraud, but that is not always the case. When there is no insurance and the fraud exceeds a centre’s financial resources, child care fees must be raised to cover the loss.


Checks and Balances

Board members have the ability to minimize the risk of fraud by adopting a system that identifies risks and puts proper internal controls in place.

While child care centre boards usually comprise parents and volunteers who may have limited background in financial matters, financial management can be learned through literature, professional development and consultations with auditors.

Board members can also put in place certain protocols that will lessen opportunities for fraud to occur such as always requesting monthly financial statements from management to ensure accountability for expenditures and income. Cowperthwaite says systems that include controls over changes to authorized salary levels and regular comparisons of budgeted to actual expenditures go a long way.

By taking these measures, centres might be able to lower the risk of fraud occurring or remaining undetected. Overall, prevention is always key.

The College takes allegations of professional misconduct seriously, and holds members accountable in ensuring their behaviour aligns with the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. 

Leadership Pilot Project Module: Fiscal Responsibility and Governance

The College has launched a Leadership Pilot project aimed at increasing leadership capacity among registered early childhood educators. The participants will complete five learning modules, one of which specifically addresses fiscal responsibility and governance.

The learning module will include exercises around budgeting, policy and governance. While a financial background may not seem like an important skill for early childhood educators, it is critical for anyone who would like to take on a leadership role in the sector.



Visit the College website for more information.

A network of school boards in the Greater Toronto Area recently conducted research with ECEs and teachers to find out about their experience of the partnership. According to the reported feedback, one of the most common challenges was lack of planning time, including both regular planning time during the school day and the fact that many DECEs and teachers do not begin to work together until the start of the school year in September. However, some teams do attend workshops prior to the school year.

McLaughlin and her teaching partner find that their strategy helps to foster collaboration.

“When you meet once a week, you realize you’re working from the same perspective because you’ve planned together,” says McLaughlin. “Based on your reflection, you say this is what we are going to be intentional about or what we’re looking for opportunities to speak about.”

Other identified areas for program growth include more clarity around the roles of ECEs and teachers and training and support around the implementation of play-based learning in the full-day kindergarten curriculum. In its evaluation report, the Ministry of Education also cited a need in some cases to further define the roles and responsibilities of ECEs and teachers to ensure that children get the most out of the program.

Opportunities for Growth

As with any new initiative, early findings indicate that there are areas for further growth and attention in the program.


For Shannon Stewart RECE, a DECE with the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, the key to a successful partnership is communication.

“Specifically for me, it’s open, clear communication,” Stewart says. “It’s not just what you’re communicating. It’s what you’re not communicating. You have to go as far as to say it’s what you’re communicating with your body language.”

As DECEs demonstrate leadership and adaptability in learning to work with other professionals and larger groups of children within the framework of the public school system, they will be called upon to demonstrate many of their core ethical and professional standards as partners in the full-day kindergarten teaching team.

The core values of responsibilities to colleagues and to the profession and responsibilities to the community and society will serve ECEs well, and Standard IV of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* will guide ECEs in their professionalism with colleagues and other professionals, and as individuals.

RECEs like Gigi Uson are excited about full-day kindergarten and the opportunities it offers for early childhood educators.

“I like the partnership and team-building that happens when you plan a kindergarten curriculum together,” says Uson. “The full-day kindergarten creates a seamless program where everyone - parents, children, the ECEs, teachers - are happy. When it does come together it’ll look amazing.” 



Conversation with an RECE



Melissa Guest RECE
St. Thomas, ON

Melissa Guest, RECE has worked in the early learning and care sector for 14 years. As an early childhood facilitator in the Parenting and Family Literacy Centre at Locke's Public School, Guest helps parents become involved in their children's learning.

Recently, the RECE has continued her professional learning by taking courses at Fanshawe College. With her employer's support, Guest is on her way to earning a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Leadership.

Why did you decide to enroll in the program?

It was a personal goal, and with the field changing, I wanted to gain more knowledge and skills. Right now, I'm happy with what I'm doing, working with families. But, when my kids are older, I would like to do something involving research and policy-making.

Your thesis project studied the link between literacy and full-day kindergarten students. Can you tell us more?

I interviewed three teachers and three early childhood educators working in full-day kindergarten to gain perspective on their experiences.

We compared the students' skills in September and February. What we found was that students from different family backgrounds had different readiness skills and the gap between them decreased over several months in full-day kindergarten.


Why is research important for the early learning sector?

There have been so many changes in past several years, but the amount of attention on early learning still needs to increase. Policy-makers are now finding research that suggests a child's success is based on experiences prior to the age of five.

What kind of leader do you see in yourself?

I like to lead with people beside me, not behind me, and I want to inspire people to be best they can be. In this field, it's always better to have more leaders.

How does research feed into leadership?

Leaders are able to see where research needs to be done and direct it in the best way to improve lives. To be a leader, you need to look at a situation, detect the gaps and pinpoint the ways that you can improve existing systems. 

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. 251.

Practice Matters



Practice Matters features questions regarding the College and the early childhood education profession. 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 for more information.

Does the College have rules and regulations for RECEs when using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or YouTube?

For most of us, it is hard to envision our lives untouched by social media. Registered early childhood educators (RECEs) are not exempt from the effects of social media, and many utilize online communities to share personal and professional information.

As professionals, RECEs have a responsibility to be aware of issues that may arise while interacting within the social media environment. The College does not prohibit the use of social media by RECEs, nor does it have specific guidelines in place to direct member interactions. However, many of the standards from the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* apply to social media by addressing appropriate professional practice.

Standard V: B states that RECEs must “establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in professional relationships . . . and do not violate those boundaries.” Additionally, Standard IV: E.2 states that RECEs are role models for children, families and other members of the profession and must “avoid conduct which could reasonably

be perceived as reflecting negatively on the profession of early childhood education.” For example, an RECE needs to consider the risks associated with accepting a Facebook friend request from a child, parent or colleague as this action may blur the line between the professional and the personal.

Another situation that might become compromising for members relates to confidentiality. Posting information and pictures of families and children that RECEs work with may seem harmless, but disclosing such content could breach privacy policies and be deemed as professional misconduct. Standard VI: A states that RECEs “respect the privacy of children under their professional supervision and the families of those children by holding in strict confidence all information about them and by complying with any applicable privacy and other legislation.”

RECEs are required to be aware of confidentiality agreements, social media privacy policies and legislation that pertains to their workplace and the families they serve. Members sometimes unintentionally forget to consider confidentiality when using social media. RECEs need to be aware that during an investigation of a complaint against a member, content posted on a social media site may be used as evidence. It is important to take some time to consider our actions and employ professional judgment prior to interacting and posting content on any social media site. ©

Put it into Practice!

Read Investigating Complaints on page 13.

Brainstorm with your colleagues

on how you could use social media in a way that upholds your professional reputation and the standards of the profession while also enriching your professional practice. What sites, blogs or networks could be best suited to this endeavour? Send the College your

ideas at practice@college-ecce.ca.

Investigating Complaints

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

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

Complaint:

Posting a photo of a child on Facebook that breached centre policies on confidentiality and lying about obtaining consent from the child's parents to post the photo.

Committee's Decision:

Written caution

Summary:

The supervisor of an RECE contacted the College with concerns about the Member's conduct, and the Registrar of the College initiated a Registrar's complaint.

The supervisor indicated that they discovered a picture of a child from their centre on an employee's personal Facebook page. The photo was allegedly taken during one of the centre's field trips and belonged to the centre and not the Member.

In response to the complaint, the Member indicated that she took the picture and had permission from the child's parent to use the photograph for her own use.

The Committee carefully reviewed the Registrar's complaint, the Member's response and a statement from the child's parent and concluded that the photograph belongs to the centre and not the Member. The Committee verified that the centre obtained permission from the child's parent to use the photograph for promotional purposes for the use of the centre but that there was no information, such as written consent, to show that the Member obtained permission from the parent or the centre to use the photograph.


Therefore, the Committee strongly advised the Member not to use photographs of children in her care for her own purposes unless she had obtained consent from the owner of the photograph in writing.

Reminder of Duty to Report

If a registered early childhood educator (RECE) or early childhood education placement student knows a child is being abused or is at risk of harm or injury, at home or in a licensed or unlicensed centre, they have a duty to report to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) under Section 72 of the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA Act). They may wish to consult with other professionals, including a centre supervisor or academic supervisor, as to the best way of handling this kind of situation, but doing this does not relieve them of their responsibility under the CFSA Act to report to CAS.

Recently, the College's Complaints Committee has observed a trend of early childhood education placement students witnessing incidents at their placement centre that they correctly raised with their academic supervisor, with the

appropriate authorities and ultimately, with the College. The Committee would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those students who demonstrate the courage to come forward with their concerns and to remind all RECEs of their duty to report.

Although the Committee respects that centres may have their own reporting procedures, it wishes to remind all members of the College that it is ultimately the responsibility of the RECE who is aware of or has suspicions of abuse to contact the proper authorities. Knowledge of abuse of children under the age of 12, or even the suspicion of abuse, must always be reported to CAS and, depending on the specific concern, may be reported to the Ministry of Education, the police and the College. It is every member's responsibility to ensure they have fulfilled their duty to report and protect a child, and failure to do so is considered professional misconduct. 

In the Public Interest

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

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

Debbi Kelly Certificate Registration Number: 8402 Revoked

The College's Discipline Committee found Debbi Kelly guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke her Certificate of Registration.

Kelly did not attend nor was she represented by legal counsel at the hearing on April 24, 2013.

The former RECE worked as a supervisor at the Highview Wilson Childcare Centre for 23 years. After the Centre's auditor raised concerns about financial management, the Centre's Board of Directors reviewed its operations. An investigation concluded that Kelly had misappropriated funds of over \$300,000 since 2008, and the Board terminated her employment.

In particular, Kelly was found guilty of issuing corporate credit cards, making purchases without authorization, stealing from petty cash funds and writing cheques payable to her. Additionally, she concealed her activities by falsifying documents and forging signatures.

Kelly agreed to these facts and entered a guilty plea to the College's Discipline Committee, which found her guilty of professional misconduct and imposed

the maximum penalty of revocation. The Committee concluded that the Member has contravened a law relevant to her suitability to hold a Certificate of Registration by failing to maintain Standards IV: A.2., IV: C.2. and IV: E.2. of the College's Standards of Practice.

"The Member's behaviour...is disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional," said the panel. "Her failure to maintain the standards and to act honestly and dutifully has caused the public to question the integrity of the profession."

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

James Mallais Certificate Registration Number: 04063 Revoked

The College's Discipline Committee panel found James Mallais guilty of professional misconduct and ordered the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Registration.

Mallais did not attend nor was he represented by legal counsel at the hearing on May 27, 2013.


The Committee found Mallais, who had been working as an early childhood educator since 2011, guilty of committing physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse.

Mallais was employed at a centre in 2004. Children, who were under his care then, came forward with allegations of abuse several years later. One child testified that the Member patted her buttocks and pinched her during a game. Another child testified that he touched her inappropriately on several occasions. A third child testified that the Member put her head on his lap, and proceeded to rub or stroke her head. All the witnesses recalled being uncomfortable about the incidents, but said they didn't confide in anyone at the time because the Member was an adult and in a position of authority.

College Counsel presented the evidence, and no submissions were made to contradict the evidence.

The Committee concluded that Mallais exhibited a record of crossing professional boundaries. The panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and felt revocation was the only appropriate penalty.

"Through his egregious conduct, [Mallais] has demonstrated that he is unsuitable to hold a Certificate of Registration," the panel said. "Sexual abuse is misconduct of a very serious nature, and to allow the Member to practise as an early childhood educator would be to create a risk for members of the public."

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



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

News in the Sector

Ministry reviews ECE Act

In August, the College made a submission to the Ministry of Education, Early Learning Division, on the five-year review of the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007* (ECE Act). This review is required under Section 58 of the ECE Act.

In its submission the College acknowledged that the Act is generally adequate for achieving its objective, but proposed revisions that would improve upon the College's ability to protect the public interest.



The Ministry will complete its review and share its report by the deadline of February 14, 2014. For more information, visit the College's website.

Notice of Annual Meeting of Members

The College of Early Childhood Educators is pleased to notify members about the 5th Annual Meeting of Members.

Date: January 8, 2014


Time: 7:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.

Location: DoubleTree by Hilton (formerly known as Metropolitan Hotel Toronto)
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.

The Annual Meeting will include reports from the College President, the Chair of the Discipline Committee, and the College's Auditor. A question period will follow these reports. Following the Annual Meeting, Richard Steinecke, a senior partner of a law firm dedicated to professional regulation, will speak about regulatory trends in professional accountability.

The Annual Meeting is not mandatory. For members who are not able to attend, a video recording in both English and French will be available on the College's website in winter 2014.

Details on how to register will become available to members in December. 

The College's website and e-mail have changed.

CONTACT US...

College of Early Childhood Educators
438 University Avenue, Suite 1900
Toronto ON M5G 2K8

Telephone: 416 961-8558
Toll-free: 1 888 961-8558
Fax: 416 961-8772

e-mail: info@college-ece.ca | website: college-ece.ca