



## The College's Leadership Pilot: Lessons Learned

The College of Early Childhood Educators concluded its Leadership Pilot project this spring at a two-day closing retreat on May 29 and 30, 2014.

The retreat reunited the Leadership Pilot's 25 participants and six mentors to reflect on and share their experiences with each other. It also provided the College with an opportunity to seek feedback from the 31 RECEs regarding draft tools and resources for the College's Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program set to launch in September 2014.

Over the eight-month Leadership Pilot, participants learned about important aspects of leadership in the context of early learning and care by completing the Expectations for Practice Module and engaging in five other online modules. They were required to be self-directed and use self-reflection when completing components of a CPL Portfolio, which included a Self-Assessment, Professional Learning Plan and a Record of Professional Learning. Participants were also

encouraged to seek feedback from their mentor groups and share their discoveries with their employers and workplace colleagues.

The webinar modules focused on participatory leadership, pedagogical leadership, facilities management, human resources management, fiscal responsibility and governance.

Participants had a wide range of experience in the sector and through feedback to the College demonstrated that regardless of their backgrounds, they were able to learn and grow through the process.

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## President's Message



In late April, Council members were elected in Districts 1, 2 and 6. I'm thrilled to have been re-elected as a Council member in my district and subsequently re-elected as your president at the first meeting of the new Council in June.

Congratulations to this year's candidates for their commitment to contributing to the regulation of our profession and thank you to the members who voted in this year's election. My experience in College governance has been rewarding and I encourage RECEs who would like to get involved and explore opportunities in their sector to participate in their district's next election.

As we near the end of our 2012-2015 strategic priorities, we are starting to plan for our 2016-2018 priorities. In April, Council participated in a risk management exercise that will help inform the development of the College's next set of priorities. We will invite member input during this process.

I am excited about the preparations for the launch of the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program in September. As RECEs, we have a responsibility to the children and families we serve to remain current in our knowledge of early childhood education and the advancements in our profession. The CPL program will support us in meeting these expectations. You'll find more about the implementation of the program in page 8.

If you were unable to attend the Annual Meeting in January, a video recording is now online at [college-ecce.ca](http://college-ecce.ca).

Finally, congratulations to the Ontario Liberal Party for its victory in the June 2014 provincial election. We look forward to our continuing relationship with the Ministry of Education.

*Cheers,*

Lois Mahon RECE, President

## Registrar's Message



At the end of May, the College hosted the Leadership Pilot's two-day closing retreat where participants reported on their learning experiences over the course of the project and discussed their successes and future plans as leaders in the profession.

We were very pleased to welcome a couple of our regulatory colleagues from Scotland as part of the closing retreat. The delegation from Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) spoke about the development of the early years and child care workforce in their country. You can find more information about the SSSC on page 5.

We have received requests from many members for online services, and we are pleased to share that the College has entered into an agreement with a service provider to develop online member services. It is anticipated that members will have access to a special area on our website that will

provide relevant sector news, information and links to resources. Members will also be able to change their contact information and renew their membership with online payment. Access to this special online area will be introduced in phases by early 2015.

Video clips of the College's 2013 Leadership Symposium are now available on the College's website at [college-ecce.ca](http://college-ecce.ca).

At the close of the 2013-2014 fiscal year in June, the College had issued over 49,000 Certificates of Registration and finished the year in a stable financial position.

On June 12 Ontarians elected the Liberal Party to a majority government. The College congratulates the Liberal Party on their success and looks forward to working with them.

*Best wishes,*

Sue Corke, Registrar & CEO

Patricia Couroux, RECE, has 19 years of experience; yet, she found that the Leadership Pilot strengthened her role as a supervisor at Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre, which has grown over the years she has worked there.

"I was used to doing everything, and I always did the programming," says Couroux. "When the centre grew and more staff members came in, it was a challenge to relinquish some of the control."

But after learning about the different types of leadership, the RECE feels more confident in entrusting her staff to make decisions. "Leadership comes in many forms," Couroux says. "I now know that being a leader doesn't always mean you have to be the leader. You can choose to work with somebody else to improve their leadership skills."

Valerie Vallieres, RECE, also viewed leadership in a different light after completing the Leadership Pilot. Before the program, Vallieres thought that only RECEs in management positions were leaders. Now she believes everyone has the potential to lead and actively seeks opportunities to enhance her own leadership skills.

"I came out a much more confident person," says Vallieres. "I'm more driven, passionate and dedicated to the profession. I now see the importance of leadership in our field."

As part of her practicum in the Leadership Pilot, Vallieres attended full-day kindergarten classrooms. Her goal was to gather information in regards to the observation, assessment and documentation of play-based learning. She realized that this was a difficult task to observe in such a short time frame.

So, Vallieres created a questionnaire asking all the RECEs within her board how they observed, assessed and documented children's learning. Many RECEs felt as though their teaching partners were not aware of the specific skills that they brought to the table and as a result did not contribute as much in this area.

Equipped with knowledge that she developed from the Leadership Pilot, Vallieres felt confident in explaining the scope of practice and value of RECEs.

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## About This Publication

The College of Early Childhood Educators regulates the profession of early childhood education in the public interest and works towards its vision of a profession in which all members accept responsibility for practice excellence. Published 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 Cottés 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
- Karen Damley, Mississauga
- Rosemary Fontaine, Toronto
- Christine Forsyth, Toronto
- Bruce Minore, Thunder Bay
- Larry O'Connor, Brock
- Ann Robichaud-Gagné, Ottawa
- 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

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"I'm able to communicate our role and how we can contribute equally to a team atmosphere in the early learning and full-day kindergarten program," says Vallieres.

The RECE's transformation and keen interest to open up to the opportunities within the sector is similar to what her Leadership Pilot mentor May Jolliffe, RECE, experienced in the early years of her career.

Over 25 years ago, Jolliffe worked as a program coordinator in a small child care centre and only focused on the activities within her own workplace. Her perspective shifted after she attended a sector event where someone in the audience spoke about the future of early childhood education.

"That person was so articulate that I felt *that's who I want to be*," she explains. Jolliffe engaged in continuous learning to further her knowledge about early childhood education and sought mentors to provide guidance.

To this day, she continues to expand her opportunities by participating in professional initiatives such as the Leadership Pilot. Similarly, the College's upcoming CPL program provides an opportunity for RECEs to grow within their practice (For more information, turn to page 8).

The CPL program aims to keep College members current in their profession by engaging in continuous learning just like the Leadership Pilot participants, many of whom noted that their experience not only changed how they viewed themselves as professionals, but also how they viewed learning.

The participants were pleased about the Leadership Pilot's flexibility and how it accommodated various learning styles. Couroux found it beneficial to discuss ideas with the people in her district, while other participants like Vallieres learned essential skills through listening to online modules and testing the theories through her practicum.

Just like other professionals such as doctors, social workers and nurses, RECEs have a professional responsibility to ensure that they keep current in their knowledge. The *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* emphasizes this in Standard IV: Professional Knowledge and Competence.

Beyond Canada, other countries are starting to recognize the value of early childhood educators in shaping children's future learning. The Leadership Pilot's closing retreat brought an international perspective by featuring professionals from the early learning and child care sector in Scotland.

To read more about the Scottish early childhood education profession, turn to page 5.

While change can be challenging, it can also reap many rewards. "I try to relay to my group that these bumps in the road are part of a bigger change and that's okay," says Jolliffe.



For more information about the Leadership Pilot outcomes, visit the College's website. [C](#)



Patricia Couroux, RECE (left) found it beneficial to discuss ideas with the people in her group including her mentor Mary Jane Tousignant, RECE (right).



May Jolliffe, RECE (far left) mentored Valerie Vallieres, RECE (far right) and other participants during the Leadership Pilot project.



# Scotland's Early Learning and Child Care

The Leadership Pilot closing retreat featured special guests: delegates from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the regulatory body for workers in social services including early years and child care professionals. The College's regulatory colleagues attended the closing retreat to speak on how Scotland's early years and child care workers earned professional recognition over the years.

As part of its educational programs, the SSSC has produced a short film, which explores the evolution of Scotland's early learning and child care profession.

For decades, early childhood education wasn't a recognized profession in Scotland, but in recent years, the public has started to recognize the value of the individuals who are responsible for the development of young children. Public awareness formed after much lobbying from early years workers who were frustrated about issues including the lack of professional development opportunities available to them.

Today, early years workers are regulated by the SSSC, which ensures that only qualified individuals can work in the sector and shares educational opportunities with its members.

Specifically, the regulatory body encourages managers and leaders of child care programs to earn a BA in Childhood Practice by supporting their learning with multimedia resources. The degree is work-based, which means that established professionals in the field can undergo training and perform at their jobs concurrently. Those who have completed it reported that they are pleased with how professional development has changed their practice.

Mairi-Anne Macdonald, Director of Sector Development, produced SSSC's short film, which also highlights the impact that a Childhood Practice degree had on some of its graduates. She was inspired from listening to stories on how ongoing education had changed perspectives and practices.

Learning is not limited to SSSC members who have years of experience. The SSSC ensures that early learning professionals remain current in their field through post-registration training and learning requirements. Members have the opportunity to learn beyond formal training by engaging in other learning styles such as reading, job shadowing, engaging in independent research and mentoring.

Frances Scott, Workforce Development and Planning Manager at SSSC, says that ongoing education ultimately benefits the children and parents that early years workers serve.

"It has heightened the quality of service," she says. "There is a certain consistency, but also there are skills that have been developed that people perhaps didn't have before. We now have research evidence that shows the efficacy of the programme in providing additional confidence; understanding of early years pedagogy and practice; awareness of children's rights and professional confidence." 



To watch SSSC's short film, please go to: <http://workforcesolutions.sssc.uk.com/CPvideo/video1.html>



Scottish Social Services Council delegates Frances Scott (far left) and Mairi-Anne Macdonald (centre) met with Ministry of Education representatives Michelle Braakman (second from left) and Rupert Gordon (second from right) along with College Council President Lois Mahon, RECE during their visit to Canada.

# Election 2014 Results Are In!

In April, the College conducted an election of Council members in three electoral districts. The final results of the election are now available. The following five members of the College have been re-elected to Council.

## District 1 - North and North East Region

### Eugema Ings, RECE

Eugema Ings currently resides in Thunder Bay. A graduate of the Early Childhood Education program at Mohawk College, she has been in the field for over 20 years working in various positions. Eugema has served on Council since 2009. In the same year, she became the chair of the Nominating Committee for two terms and has been a member of the Executive Committee and Standards of Practice Committee.

### Lois Mahon, RECE

Lois Mahon has over 40 years of experience in all areas of early learning and care and resides in Sudbury. She was part of the nine-member transitional Council that set the foundation for the College and was elected as the College Council's first president in February 2009. This is her third term on Council.

## District 2 - East Region

### Lisa Lamarre, RECE

Lisa Lamarre has been involved in the field of early childhood education since 1985. She has been a member of Council since 2011. Her experience spans all age groups, with the last 15 years focused on educator training at Algonquin College in Ottawa. In 2012 Lisa was a recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education.

## District 6 - Central West Region

### Anna Baas-Anderson, RECE

As a faculty member in the early childhood education programs at Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Anna Baas-Anderson brings to the College her expertise in teaching and mentoring students along with professionals in the community. She was previously elected to the College's Council in 2009 and 2011. Anna continues to advocate for quality in early childhood programs and services as she participates in various committees and promotes high standards for training professionals.

### Sophia Tate, RECE, AECEO.C

Sophia Tate has worked as a Roots of Empathy facilitator, Intensive Behaviour Interventionist Therapist, Special Services at Home worker and Program Assistant for an Early Intervention Program. She has a certificate in

Infant Mental Health and Dual Diagnosis. Sophia enjoys learning new information and putting what she has learned into action. She has an Early Childhood Education Diploma and Early Childhood Education - Advanced Studies in Special Needs Certificate from Humber College. She has been a member of Council since 2011.

## What's next?

The new Council met June 17-18, 2014. Prior to this, Council members took part in a half-day training session. Future elections of Council members are shown in the table below, and more information will be available in the months leading up to the election. 

Year	Number of Council members to be elected	Districts up for election
2015	5	District 3 - South East Region District 4 - Central East Region District 8 - South West Region
2016	4	District 5 - Toronto Region District 7 - Hamilton/Niagara Region
2017	5	District 1 - North & North East Region District 2 - East Region District 6 - Central West Region

# College Plans to Introduce CPL Program for RECEs

“Early Childhood Educators value lifelong learning and commit themselves to engaging in **continuous professional learning** to enhance their practice.”  
(*Code of Ethics C. Responsibilities to Colleagues and to the Profession*)

Since 2012, the College has been seeking feedback from members and stakeholders on the development of a Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program. This included online questionnaires, focus groups and roundtable discussions across Ontario and a voluntary Leadership Pilot project. As a result, member voices and expertise have helped shape the program’s structure. Looking towards the CPL program launch date in September 2014, the College is excitedly preparing for what will be another first in the history of early childhood education in Ontario!

The program aims to support professional growth and enhance public trust by integrating continuous professional learning into the early childhood education profession. The 25 RECEs and six mentors from across Ontario who participated in the Leadership Pilot project have completed and helped test the tools and resources developed for the CPL program.

The first phase of implementation will roll out over three years, beginning in September 2014.

## CPL Introductory Phase

During the first year, new and renewing members of the College are encouraged to complete an online learning module called “Expectations for Practice”. The one-hour module empowers educators with information on the legislation, regulations and College by-laws that govern their profession. RECEs have one year to complete the module.

## CPL Portfolio Cycle

During the second and third years of implementation, which begin in September 2015, members begin to complete the three CPL Portfolio components. The first component, the **Self-Assessment tool**, is based on the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and allows RECEs to reflect on their own professional skills, knowledge, values and experiences. Using the second component, RECEs develop

a personalized **Professional Learning Plan**. With the third component, members track the formal and informal activities and strategies experienced and used in their learning through a **Record of Professional Learning**. By doing so, they demonstrate engagement in the CPL program.

Designed to reflect the principles of adult learning, the CPL Portfolio will guide RECEs through self-reflection, self-directed learning and personalized decision-making with the goal of enhancing their individual professional practice and quality in early childhood education as a whole.

Once a member completes the initial three years, he/she starts another two-year CPL Portfolio Cycle of Self-Assessment, development of a Professional Learning Plan and completion of a Record of Professional Learning. The CPL program is an ongoing learning experience and provides a framework for continuous professional learning for the diverse professionals who practice early childhood education in Ontario. 

## Coming soon!

The College will be sharing more information with members about the CPL program in the coming months.



Visit [college-ece.ca/CPL](http://college-ece.ca/CPL) to learn more or e-mail [practice@college-ece.ca](mailto:practice@college-ece.ca). Stay tuned!

# A Broad Scope of Practice: the diverse career paths available to early childhood educators

As many registered early childhood educators (RECEs) know first hand, significant transformation is taking place throughout Ontario's early learning and care sector. While the career paths available to RECEs have always been diverse, the potential for challenging and impactful employment only continues to grow.

More and more research is confirming the life-long value and importance of early learning and care for both children and their families, and this fact is being recognized by governments, parents and the general public.

Ontario's Ministry of Education is working to integrate the province's child care, education and family support programs together and has recently published several significant documents to support early learning curriculum and program quality.

The College of Early Childhood Educators, now five years old, has established ethical and professional standards for the profession and will soon introduce a Continuous Professional

Learning (CPL) program to support all members in their practice, regardless of their roles and responsibilities.

Although working directly with children is one of the most commonly understood roles of an RECE, there are many other ways in which members of the College are making a difference in their profession.

## Academia

Early childhood education professors at the college and university level develop curriculum for early childhood educator (ECE) training and pedagogical strategies for early childhood education programs. They also advise and guide early childhood education students and serve as inspiring leaders for future RECEs.

In this setting, RECEs can also undertake research roles that allow them to focus on things like the effect of new programs or policy development work.



RECEs can become administrative leaders who have an important role in building effective teams.



Some RECEs advise and guide early childhood educators entering the profession.

## Administration

Administrative leaders have the important role of building effective teams. This begins with hiring quality staff and continues with developing innovative programming, care, curriculum, systems and workplace initiatives.

Administrative leaders can also make significant contributions by serving as committee members or advisors for professional organizations or government.

## Advocacy

RECEs can advocate for their profession to parents, employers, colleagues and the broader public, other sectors or the government. Professional associations such as the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) and *Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario* (Aféseo) promote the interests of their members and the early childhood education profession and support ECEs through professional development and networking opportunities.

## Governance and Regulation

RECEs can hold several positions on staff and on the Council of the College, including the areas of registration,

establishing professional standards, promoting continuous professional learning and handling complaints and discipline issues.

RECEs can also work in the areas of public policy and municipal planning and development.

## Supporting families and communities

Some of the ways in which RECEs work with families and communities are by organizing and delivering workshops on parenting and engaging parents to take on volunteer roles. RECEs can also support families by helping connect them to services and resources that support children's growth and development.

These areas provide a glimpse of the opportunities available to those with an early childhood education background.

The College's new CPL program helps RECEs identify the skills and experiences they may want to consider as they work toward new opportunities in their profession. 



For more information, please visit [college-ece.ca/CPL](http://college-ece.ca/CPL).



Sonya Stevens RECE

## Meet the College's first-ever intern!

I am very excited to be joining the College in the Professional Practice Department! I was initially inspired to enter the early learning and child care sector following a secondary school cooperative education credit program in which I assisted in an elementary school classroom in the primary grades. It was during this opportunity when I discovered my interest in how children learn and develop and my enthusiasm for providing support and resources to families.

I completed my Early Childhood Education diploma at St. Lawrence College in Kingston, ON. and am now a registered early childhood educator. I am currently completing the Bachelor of Arts Early Childhood Leadership degree program at George Brown College in Toronto, ON. My expected graduation date is spring 2015.

When applying for internships, I was drawn to the College's commitment to protecting the public interest. I believe that the College is essential to the provision of safe and high quality early learning and child care and I wanted to contribute to its mandate. I expect that the knowledge and skills learned during my time here will be valuable to my entire academic and professional career. In the future, I wish to pursue more education. Following the completion of my studies, I plan to seek a position in the sector that provides me with the opportunity to contribute to the best possible care for all parties involved in early childhood education.

# Leadership Area: Facilities Management

Since last September, the College's Leadership Pilot participants have been building their leadership capacity along with integrating the knowledge, skills and values found in the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* into their practice settings. Part of the Leadership Pilot included the completion of five webinar-based learning modules designed around key leadership themes.

In January, the participants completed a module called Facilities Management Leadership.

Participants became knowledgeable about how to:

- ✓ Identify health and safety standards and regulations and address potential risks and hazards in child care facilities.
- ✓ Describe and discuss health and safety regulations applicable to children, families, staff, visitors and contractors from the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- ✓ Prepare a plan to inform everyone about the regulations.
- ✓ Identify the components of an inviting child care centre and discuss processes to anticipate and correct potential risks and hazards.
- ✓ Review the importance of assessing, scheduling and monitoring repair and maintenance needs.
- ✓ Recognize the importance of preparing an inventory of equipment and negotiating contracts for maintenance, leasing and/or purchasing equipment.

Rawia Hammond, RECE and Leadership Pilot participant, found the module useful to her daily work at The Creative Preschool in Toronto.

It helped her realize all the different laws and regulations RECEs must be aware of in their daily work. For example, not only do RECEs have to be conscious of the *Day Nurseries Act*, they also have to keep in mind legislation such as the *Safe Drinking Water Act* and the *Smoke Free Ontario Act*.

"The module provides the basic foundation for an RECE to take a leadership role," said Hammond, who hopes to start addressing elements of facilities management in the monthly staff meetings at her centre.

Hammond learned that managing a facility involves multiple aspects including a centre's human resources, environment, children and families and programming. She believes RECEs should keep in mind the elements of facilities management as part of their daily work.

"If a future leader doesn't have a solid foundation in this area, then I believe that they will struggle to become a leader," said Hammond. 



To learn more about the other modules, please visit [college-ece.ca](http://college-ece.ca).

# Conversation with an RECE



Scott Murray RECE  
Toronto, ON

The College of Early Childhood Educators comprises unique members – each with a different background and story to tell. **Conversation with an RECE** features registered early childhood educators (RECEs) who are passionate about their profession and the people they serve.

Approximately two percent of the College's members have identified themselves as male. In this edition, we speak with Scott Murray, RECE, for a male perspective in a female-dominated profession.

## What type of work do you do?

I'm an early childhood educator in full-day kindergarten and work on a supply basis for the Toronto District School Board. I'm also halfway through studying in the Early Childhood Studies degree program at Ryerson.

## What do you enjoy about your work?

I love working hands on with the kids. I enjoy being involved with what they're doing by observing them, watching their development and seeing them interact with each other. The kids – they make you smile and laugh. How could you not like working with them?

## Do you feel it's important to have male role models in early childhood education?

As an RECE working in a school board, I meet far fewer men than when I worked in a child care centre. I think having a teaching team of a man and a woman is great. Both have something different to offer to the children.

## Why do you think support needs to be provided to male RECEs?

I would love to see ECE programs promote themselves more to prospective male students and have some male ECE alumni or professors run regular meetings for networking. I remember my orientation at George Brown College in my first year. I was in a class of about 35 women, and the only man. It was intimidating at first. It would have been nice to have someone to speak to about my initial concerns or if there had been some kind of get-together for male students and men working in the field.

## How important is it for you to encourage other men to enter the profession?

I think it would be great to get involved in helping to promote early childhood education to men considering the profession. It can seem like an uphill battle to get into the field and be successful. But working as an RECE is rewarding and enjoyable. I would recommend it to any man interested in pursuing a career working with children.



Nominate an RECE you'd like us to have a conversation with by sending an e-mail to [communications@college-ece.ca](mailto: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. 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.

# 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:

Being overly stern and rough with children and demonstrating noticeable favouritism toward some children.

## Committee's Decision:

Written caution

## Summary:

The College received an employer notification regarding the Member's professional conduct after her Supervisor had filed a Serious Occurrence Report in response to a parent's complaint.

The Supervisor indicated that the Member had held blankets over children's faces so they would fall asleep. She had also been observed being stern and rough with children and showed noticeable favouritism to some of them.

In response to the allegations, the Member indicated that she had not been provided adequate time to familiarize herself with the Centre's policies and procedures governing nap time. As placing a blanket gently over a child's face, which the child could remove, was common practice at other centres the Member had worked at, she was unaware that this was against the Centre's policies.

The Member indicated that she did not show favouritism but rather assessed the needs of the children in her care, determined who required more attention and acted accordingly.

After carefully reviewing the complaint, the Member's response and the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, the Committee found that the Member did not uphold her responsibilities as an RECE. As stipulated in Standard IV.A.2 of the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, the Member "has the responsibility to seek out the information she needs in order to do her job properly, irrespective of whether her employer provides enough time for her to read all of the Centre's policies and procedures."

The Committee issued a written caution to the Member, advising her to use her professional judgement and the support of a credible body of professional knowledge in the field of education related to helping children to fall asleep. In accordance with Standard IV: B.5, the Committee is of the view that the Member is accountable to ensure that her "decisions and actions in her professional practice are appropriately supported by a credible body of professional knowledge in the field of early childhood education."

Continued on page 14...

### Complaint:

Using inappropriate methods to discipline children that could be construed as physical and psychological abuse

### Committee's Decision:

No further action taken

### Summary:

Faculty members of a post-secondary institution contacted the College after an early childhood education student completing a field practicum, expressed concerns about an RECE's professional behaviour. The student indicated that the Member forced a child, who would not settle for nap time, to stand in front of her with his hands on his head. If the child sat down or dropped his hands, the Member would force him to resume the position.

On another occasion, the student indicated that the Member's assistant used a similar form of discipline when she forced a child to stand in a corner with his hands on his head for over 45 minutes.

The Committee reviewed the information and determined that further investigation was required. Soon afterwards, the College's Investigator learned that the student wished to remain anonymous and that no additional documentation was available to support the allegations. Subsequently, the faculty members withdrew the complaint against the Member.

Without a formal complaint in writing and without supporting evidence, the Committee determined that it could not take any further action and that the matter should not be investigated further.



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

# 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 usually 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.

## Donna Desson Certificate Registration Number: 05749 Reprimanded, Resigned

The College's Discipline Committee found Donna Desson guilty of professional misconduct for physically, verbally, psychologically and emotionally abusing children under her supervision and failing to provide appropriate care and education.

Desson attended the hearing on September 24, 2013 and was represented by legal counsel.

At the time the professional misconduct took place, Desson was employed at two child care centres. Between 2011 and 2012, she was observed being abusive to the children in her care by speaking harshly, threatening them, using physical restraint against them, force-feeding children and intentionally writing inaccurate information in a child's daily food log.

As a result of the concerns that were raised by Desson's conduct, her employer filed a report with the Ministry of Education and the Children's Aid Society (CAS), alleging child abuse and inappropriate child behaviour management. While the CAS investigation findings were not verified, Desson was reassigned by her employer to a different centre in order to allow her a fresh start in a new environment. Shortly after starting at the new centre, Desson was observed physically restraining a child.

Although Desson resigned from the College prior to the hearing, the allegations made against her were related to events that took place while her membership was still current. As such, the Committee had jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter.

Desson pled no contest to the allegations against her and the Discipline Committee found her guilty of professional misconduct. In addition to resigning from the College, Desson agreed not to reapply for reinstatement of her membership for at least six months and agreed to complete a course in professional supervision before reapplying to the College.

The Discipline Committee concluded that Desson breached Ontario Regulation 223/08, section 2, subsections (3), (8) and (10), and Standards II: A, II: B and V: A.1 of the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

In its reprimand, the Committee noted that they considered Desson's conduct to be ethically and morally reprehensible and that "her actions would reasonably be regarded by early childhood educators as disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional."

A notation regarding the Committee's findings and the stipulations of her undertaking appear with the Member's status on the College's public register.

# News in the Sector

## Liberals Win Ontario Election

Ontario's Liberal Party won a majority government in the June 12 provincial election. Premier Kathleen Wynne has committed to re-introducing the May 2014 budget, which promised additional funding of \$33.6 million over the next three years to further support the ongoing operation and modernization of Ontario's child care system. The Liberals have also pledged support for increased licensing activity and enhanced investigation and enforcement capacity, and will provide an additional \$269 million over three years to support wage increases for front-line child care workers.

## Ministry Releases Resource for ECEs

Ontario's Ministry of Education recently released the professional learning resource *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*. This new tool builds on the government's *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* released in 2013 and their commitment to ensuring that programs are centered on the child and the family.

*How Does Learning Happen?* helps early childhood educators challenge the status quo, inspire critical thinking and transform practices in early years settings. It also describes program expectations, goals for children and reflection questions to promote learning through collaboration with children, parents, colleagues and the community.



*How Does Learning Happen?* can be found at [edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf](http://edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf)

## Webinar Series for RECEs in FDK

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) has introduced a three-part webinar series to support early childhood educators working alongside teachers in Ontario's full-day kindergarten program.

The webinars focus on the six principles that guide Ontario's early learning programs and the community of professionals that supports them along with strategies for how to apply the learning principles in the full-day kindergarten program.



The webinars and accompanying workbooks are free to AECEO members. Visit [aeceo.ca](http://aeceo.ca) for more information.

## CONTACT US...

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