

# CONNEXIONS

## Modelling Best Practices in Early Childhood Education Through Lab Schools

By Sharon Ho

Katie Mullin knew she had chosen the right profession after visiting Sault College's lab school, the Child & Family Centre.

"It was nice to have trips to the lab school and see if it's the job for you," says the RECE. Mullin graduated from Sault College last year and was employed at the Child & Family Centre this past spring.

Lab schools are child care centres run by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (OCAATs) as part of their early childhood education programs. Students do field placements and perform observations and assessments in the centres as an integral part of their course work. Sault College and Algonquin College are two of about eight OCAATs that operate lab schools. The Child & Family Centre is 40 years old and supports the care and education of 62 children. The lab school at Algonquin College has been operating in its latest inception since 1991 and serves 49 children.

Lab schools show students how to carry out best practices in the field and reflect upon what they learned in the classroom.

"The staff present best practices and model their learning for the students," says Nancy Leindecker RECE, manager of the Child & Family Centre. "Students have the opportunity to see staff change and adapt planning as directed by the children's interests."



**Sault College's Child & Family Centre**

Credit: Child & Family Centre



**Katie Mullin RECE**  
Sault Ste. Marie

Leslie Kopf-Johnson RECE, ECE Program Coordinator at Algonquin College, says that the lab school allows students to undertake curriculum planning and assess the children's learning and their environment.

"If there isn't someplace where the students can go to see best practices, curriculum planning or assessments, they may never see what quality means or see it in practice," says Kopf-Johnson. "If the students don't see it, they may think you're just talking off the top of your head."

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# The President's Message



This year, there was an election of Council members in Districts 3, 4 and 8. Thank you to members who either ran or voted in the election. I would like to welcome the five elected members to Council and look forward to working with them in strengthening the College of Early Childhood Educators' role in the sector. I would also like to say good-bye to the RECEs and publicly-appointed members

of Council who will not be returning. Your work has been invaluable.

In June Council elected me as President, Darlene Edgar as Vice-President and four other members of Council to the Executive Committee.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to serve as President for another term. I look forward to continuing my work on Council as we ensure that the College protects the public interest.

The College successfully held a series of roundtable consultations and conducted an online survey this past winter on our next strategic priorities. Thank you to all of those who participated. Your feedback was greatly appreciated. More information on the new strategic priorities for 2015-2018 can be found on page 16.

My continuous professional learning journey continues to be an adventure. I am part of a Facebook and an e-mail group of RECEs who are passionate about their pedagogical leadership. In these groups I get to read and see inspiring pedagogy and information regarding early learning. Learning opportunities are right at our fingertips. We all have colleagues and co-learners who are there to support us in our CPL adventure. I want to thank those who are there for me and invite you to reach out to your contacts!

**Cheers,**

Lois Mahon RECE, President

# The Registrar's Message



In 2012 the College's Council established strategic priorities to 2015. This past April the Council set strategic priorities to 2018. I'm proud of all the work we've accomplished during the last three years. In particular, we have been given the authority to create a mandatory continuous professional learning program and accredit post-secondary early childhood education

programs. I'm also pleased with the creation of an external relations function and the subsequent outreach work the College has undertaken.

Last January and February were the busiest months so far for the College's outreach work. We were present at 77 events and in contact with more 2,700 individuals. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the College visited many post-secondary schools that have early childhood education programs. The College also continued reaching out to employers, supervisors, RECEs working in school boards, candidates for school principals, high school guidance counsellors, unions and supervisors from the First Nations Métis Inuit communities. In addition, we have worked with local media outlets to bring information about the College to parents and the general public.

The College is planning for its second Leadership Pilot project focused on supervisors in licensed child care centres. Twenty-six municipal service system managers from across the province will support this project. The initiative will launch in September at our second leadership symposium.

Finally, I'd like to remind RECEs of their duty to report suspected cases of children in need of protection. More information can be found on page 9. Stay tuned for a Professional Advisory on this topic from the College.


**Best wishes,**

Sue Corke, Registrar & CEO

# Entry to Practise

# New Case Studies


In April, the College sent its latest *Entry to Practise and Early Career Transition* survey to members who graduated in 2014 from approved early childhood education programs in Ontario. The members come from various geographic regions across the province and are employed in different settings.

The College conducted the survey to learn more about the graduates' experiences with applying for membership, finding employment in the sector, career transition and levels of professional satisfaction. The information gathered from the survey will help provide the profession and stakeholders with insight on how to recruit and retain competent early childhood educators. 



Stay tuned for the report to be published on the College's website.

In June, the College published new case studies to help registered early childhood educators (RECEs) reflect on their work and contribute to the dialogue about the practice of early childhood educators within the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice's* framework. The cases, written by RECEs, highlight the dilemmas and emotional tension associated with professional decision-making and action. Analyzing a case encourages RECEs to examine problem-focused issues from a variety of perspectives and explore the implications of a range of decision-making options or solutions.

Members are encouraged to read and discuss the cases with colleagues to gain an enhanced understanding of their practice within the broader professional community. 



The case studies can be found on the College's website under Members - Professional Practice. Please contact the College at [practice@college-ece.ca](mailto:practice@college-ece.ca) to share your thoughts with us.

## 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 College and sector 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)  
Stacey Lepine RECE (District 4)  
Susan Joy Scoffin 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 Members

François Bertrand, Hawkesbury  
Madeleine L. Champagne, Ottawa  
Karen Damley, Mississauga  
Nermin Foda, Mississauga  
Rosemary Fontaine, Toronto  
Christine Forsyth, Toronto  
Larry O'Connor, Brock  
Jason Powell, Oakville  
Ann Robichaud-Gagné, Ottawa  
Nerene Virgin, Hamilton

### 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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# Election 2015 Results

College members have voted in three electoral districts and the results are in! Congratulations to the following five elected Council members.

## District 3 – South East Region

### Susan Quaiff RECE

Susan is the Executive Director of The Hub Child and Family Centre in Prince Edward County, ON. As a member of Council, Susan has been the chair of Fitness to Practise committee, member of the Standards of Practice and member of the Elections committees. Susan is a member of the Children and Youth Services Network for Hastings and Prince Edward County.

## District 4 – Central East Region

### Stacey Lepine RECE

Stacey is a manager for early years at the Durham District School Board in Whitby, ON. She has worked in diverse early years settings including for-profit and non-profit child care centres, Ontario Early Years Centres, full day kindergarten and school-based child care environments.

### Susan Joy Scoffin RECE

Susan is the quality initiatives coordinator at Investing for Quality in Peterborough, ON. During her career Susan has worked with children, in administration and as a college professor. She was previously a mentor as part of the College's Leadership Pilot project.

## District 8 – South West Region

### Barbara Brown RECE

Barbara is a program manager at the Connections Early Years Family Centre in Windsor, ON. She has served on the College's Council since 2011. Before her current position, she taught kindergarten, served as the assistant director of a child care centre and worked as an early childhood educator in a parent cooperative.

### Nici Cole RECE

Nici is an early childhood education professor at Fanshawe College in London, ON. She has been a member of Council for the past six years and previously chaired the Discipline Committee. She has previously worked as a manager at an Ontario Early Years Centre and been a professor for the Native Early Childhood Education Diploma program at Anishinabek Educational Institute for St. Clair College.

## What's next?

Future elections of Council members are shown in the table below. More information will be available for members in the months leading up to the election. ©

Year	Number of Council members to be elected	Districts up for Election
2016	3	5 - Toronto Region
	1	7 - Hamilton/Niagara Region
2017	2	1 - North and North East Region
	1	2 - East Region
	2	6 - Central West Region



For more information about College elections and how you can get involved, visit [college-ece.ca/election](http://college-ece.ca/election).



# Modelling Best Practices in Early Childhood Education Through Lab Schools

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Algonquin College's lab school

Credit: Algonquin College

Mullin says that her placement at the Child & Family Centre proved to be an invaluable learning experience.

“Everything I learned in school is making sense,” she says.

For instance, at the Child & Family Centre, she witnessed the necessity of building relationships with family and children, a principle highlighted within Standard I: E of the College of Early Childhood Educators' *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. According to the RECE, it is such relationships that makes early learning and child care a positive experience for everyone involved.

Mullin also found her colleagues at the Child & Family Centre invaluable because the professors, educators and students work together to plan curriculum and brainstorm developmentally-appropriate activities.

Kopf-Johnson says that lab schools reflect the latest knowledge in early childhood education taught in the classroom. For example, Algonquin College's lab school uses the document, *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* as a learning resource.

Sault College's Child & Family Centre also stays current and provides time for their staff's continuous professional learning. The centre encourages RECEs to show students how to engage in meaningful practice.

Leindecker finds satisfaction in seeing students progress at the lab school.

“Our lab school believes every student should have the best opportunity to succeed,” says Leindecker. “We offer them support to help ensure they meet requirements and we encourage them to stretch their learning. It's very rewarding when I see students excel or when I see growth in them.”

Kopf-Johnson adds that lab schools form a reciprocal relationship with the students.

“Students take the tools we've created and try using them,” says Kopf-Johnson. “They then give us feedback on them so that they're effective in the real world.”

Despite their pedagogical benefits, lab schools face ongoing financial challenges because they are expensive to operate. Several schools have closed in recent years, leaving a void in the post-secondary education of early childhood educators.

“Colleges view them (lab schools) as nice things if they stay in the black and make money,” says Kopf-Johnson. “But lab schools are crucial to ensure students can come out from a two-year diploma program at the college knowing what quality practice should look like.”

# CPL Program: Portfolio Cycle Begins this Fall

By Jann Lee

This September, registered early childhood educators (RECEs) who began the College of Early Childhood Educator's Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program a year ago can continue building their professional portfolios. The CPL program's Portfolio Cycle provides the tools for members to create, act and reflect on goals relevant to their practice.

During Year 1 of the Portfolio Cycle, members will complete a Self-Assessment Tool that helps them look at different areas of growth or leadership development in their professional practice. After identifying areas of interest, they will set concrete goals and draft a Professional Learning Plan to write down activities, strategies and timelines for achieving their goals.

Some College members experienced the CPL program's Portfolio Cycle when they participated in the Leadership Pilot (LP) project. In 2013, the College created the initiative so that RECEs could test the CPL program's tools and framework.

Leanna Neault, RECE and a supervisor at a North Bay military family child care centre found that lessons learned from her LP and CPL experience still resonate in her daily practice. Determined to grow in her profession, Neault focused on three areas of development. One of particular importance was learning more about quality assurance.

Neault is responsible for leading 23 staff (15 of whom are RECEs) and ensuring that the centre receives funding from its District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) by meeting its high standards of quality. To learn more about quality assurance, the RECE created a program with a colleague who had experience on the topic. She also met once a month with staff so that they all learned about standards of a high quality curriculum. These measures helped Neault achieve a level 6 out of 7 in the next quality assurance testing and helped secure the centre's future.

After witnessing the power of professional learning, Neault encourages other RECEs to be pro-active in achieving their professional goals through the CPL program.



**Sharon Petsche RECE**  
Ottawa, ON



**Leanna Neault RECE**  
North Bay, ON

“At first, it can be very intimidating, but there’s so many things you can do,” says the RECE who appreciated that the program accommodated different schedules and learning styles.

“You can base [your plan] off what you do whether you work as a supervisor, as an educator in child care or as a college professor. It gave me steps and helped me push myself.”

Neault found group work and speaking with mentors effective in her learning. Once she realized what worked for her, the path to success was straightforward.

“If you’re willing to put time into your career to engage in professional learning, the CPL program is the perfect opportunity to do that,” said Neault.

Continuous professional learning has also had a lasting personal and professional impact on Sharon Petsche, RECE and LP participant who works at the Children’s Centre in Ottawa, ON.

“I cannot believe how much I’ve grown. It’s opened so many doors,” said Petsche who has delivered workshops on the power of learning. “Before I was petrified to talk in front of a group, but since then, I’ve created and facilitated three workshops.”

From a hesitant participant to becoming a confident leader, Petsche’s proudest moment was when the Nursery Network Association invited her to be the keynote speaker for Professional Development Day where she shared her continuous learning experience with other early childhood educators. She also delivered a workshop on pedagogical learning and how it relates to child care settings. Petsche finds her learning is most effective when she shares and discusses materials with other professionals.

It was during the CPL program’s Portfolio Cycle that the RECE discovered her passions and strengths. Her goal was to change the way she shared children’s information with parents. So she looked at the ELECT framework to find the missing pieces on existing templates of child profiles. She was able to accomplish this goal in different ways. The CPL program’s flexibility allowed Petsche to leverage learning styles that suited her personality.

In addition to accomplishing goals during the Portfolio Cycle, the RECE found great satisfaction in sharing her portfolio with participants and mentors at the College’s Leadership Pilot closing retreat.

“As I watched other people overcome their fears, I thought I can give this a try too,” says Petsche. She encourages RECEs who will be starting their own continuous learning to be brave despite hesitations. “It’s okay to admit that you’re nervous. When you’re open and honest, people respect that.”



Visit [college-ece.ca/cpl](https://college-ece.ca/cpl) for more information about the CPL program.



# Encouraging RECEs to Embrace their Inner Researcher

By Sharon Ho

As a registered early childhood educator at the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant, Debbie Eberth often uses the Ontario Ministry of Education's learning resource, *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

"I find it (*How Does Learning Happen?*) completely useful," says Eberth. She uses the publication in workshops to teach early childhood educators (ECEs) about mindfulness, specifically about being in the moment, making connections with children and keeping an open mind.

*How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* was published in 2014. It emphasizes the significance of positive relationships in determining the success of early learning programs. The publication also encourages RECEs to reflect upon their work. Such reflections may help leaders in the early learning and care sector think critically about their practices, try new ideas and put into action the knowledge they've gained.

*How Does Learning Happen?* focuses on the four foundations illustrated in the adjacent image. Children, families and educators are the core of these foundations that complement the ethical and professional standards of the College of Early Childhood Educators' *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

## Using Action Research to Provide Quality Care

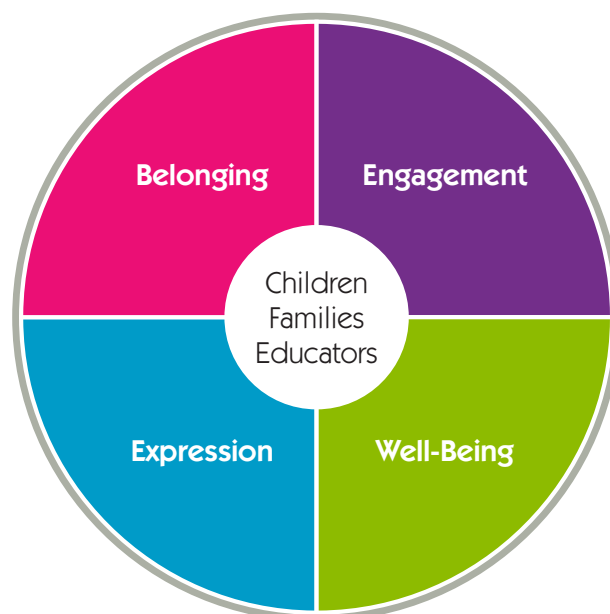
One project, *The Care Project: A Community of Action Research with Educators (CARE)*, is encouraging RECEs to use action research in conjunction with *How Does Learning Happen?*

What is action research? It aims to solve problems through a reflective process according to Melodie Spencer RECE, manager of the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant.

"Action research takes a piece of an RECE's practice, asks a question (from the practice), focuses on the question and is mindful of it," says Spencer. "You then take your observations and documentation and determine if you've met your goal or if you need to implement some more strategies."

Spencer believes RECEs naturally conduct research as part of their daily work. But most don't have the time to reflect upon their findings.

The CARE project is being led by Dr. Maria Cantalini Williams and Jenny Giubert of Nipissing University. The 19 participants each chose a foundation from *How Does Learning Happen?* to examine as part of their research. Next, they narrowed this focus down to a single reflection question taken from *How Does Learning Happen?* From that question, they developed a goal and strategies to meet that goal.



**Credit:** *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* from Ontario Ministry of Education



Eberth was one of the project’s participants and chose to look at snack time as part of her research because “it’s more free flowing and the parents have more control over what the children eat.”

Her research question focused on whether parents were given enough information about healthy eating and the importance of teaching children independence skills such as learning to pour juice for themselves.

“It was a learning opportunity for parents regarding their child’s independence,” says Eberth.

The Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) program has several challenges when it comes to snack time – little room for children of different ages to have their snack at the same time and the same children don’t go to the centre every day. The ECEs also have to be cognisant that the parent or caregiver is the child’s first teacher and that they may hold different customs and beliefs.

Despite this, Eberth created an inviting space by adding a plant, child-friendly utensils and a binder with information on healthy eating and the Canada Food Guide. She wanted children and parents to feel comfortable asking questions, eat healthy snacks and take part in conversations. Eberth’s research observed that children wanted to eat together and that parents started to ask questions and noticed that their children ate different foods, which became conversation starters. She plans on sharing her action research with the four OEYC sites in Brant. ©



More information on *How Does Learning Happen?* can be found on the Ministry of Education’s website, [edu.gov.on.ca/childcare](http://edu.gov.on.ca/childcare).

## Duty to Report

As a professional working closely with children and youth, you have a duty to report suspected cases of child abuse, neglect or family violence.

The *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) states that the public, including professionals who work with children, must promptly report any suspicions that a child is or may be in need of protection directly to a Children’s Aid Society (CAS). This is referred to as one’s “duty to report”. The CFSA recognizes that people working closely with children have a special awareness of the signs of child abuse, neglect or family violence and a particular responsibility to report their suspicions.

For more information, please visit:

[www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx)

For contact and other information for Ontario’s CASs, please visit the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies’ website [www.oacas.org](http://www.oacas.org)

Please feel free to contact **Jill Dubrick**, Manager of the Prevention and Protection Services Unit, Child Welfare Secretariat, Ministry of Children and Youth Services at [Jill.M.Dubrick@ontario.ca](mailto:Jill.M.Dubrick@ontario.ca) or by phone at 416-327-0273, should you have any questions. ©

# Conversation with an RECE

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.

Samantha Lico RECE has worked at an Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) for 13 years. OEYCs are centres where children 0-6 years old and parents/caregivers can participate in a range of early learning and parenting activities. Parents/caregivers can also find information about programs and services available to young children and their families, speak with RECEs and other service providers and make connections with families in the community.



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*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. 307.***

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## **Q: What can you tell us about your work as an RECE in an OEYC?**

**A:** I'm part of a team that offers both drop-in and registered programs. There are opportunities for children to learn through play. We also offer activities that are parent or adult-assisted. We usually label those as such so that it's a clear message to families that we are not only here to educate children but also to inform parents and care providers. One of our goals is to link families with one another so that they make those connections and build relationships not just for children but for the adults as well.

## **Q: How do you plan activities or a curriculum in a setting where you may not see the same children every day?**

**A:** My goal is always to have a play-based learning environment that is inclusive. I try to have lots of opportunities and activities planned for different age groups. We try to plan activities that children are interested in. I try to take my leads from the children and families.

## **Q: How do you work with parents and caregivers to provide them with information about early learning and child development?**

**A:** Often it's the day-to-day relationship that my colleagues and I build with families, care providers, parents and grandparents. It gives us the opportunity to see a need or to develop a relationship where they can ask us for information.

## **Q: How do you form relationships with children or parents?**

**A:** We find that once families visit the OEYC, they come back regularly. We have shorter relationships with people who are on parental leave because they go back to work. But as people choose to have a second or third child, we get to see them again. It's a great place for children and adults to socialize and learn, and for parents/caregivers to feel supported. ©



**Samantha Lico RECE**  
Georgetown, ON

**Q:** I am a recent graduate and a newly registered member of the College. What are the College's expectations of me? Do you have any tips or advice for registered early childhood educators (RECEs) who are beginning their professional career?

**R:** RECEs work in a wide variety of settings and bring with them a range of experiences and expertise. Despite this diversity of experiences, all new grads and members of the College are required to “know, understand and abide by the legislation, policies and procedures that are relevant to their professional practice. . .” (Standard IV: A. 2). This includes the *Early Childhood Educator's Act, 2007*, workplace policies and procedures and the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

One way a new RECE can learn about their responsibilities as a professional is by completing the online Expectations for Practice Module. The module guides members through related legislation, regulations and by-laws applicable to all RECEs.

The College's website, resources related to professional practice e.g. sector news and updates, the College's publication *Connexions*, case studies, Continuous Professional Learning program tools, YouTube videos and links to publications and websites are all useful resources. Connecting with a variety of professional associations and organizations that support and advocate on behalf of RECEs and the profession might also assist new graduates in charting their professional paths.

As RECEs often work in teams, new members have much to gain from colleagues who have experience in the profession. Seasoned RECEs are uniquely positioned to support, assist and mentor new graduates. The College encourages professional collaboration and co-learning between its members. Standard IV: C. 2 states that ECEs “support experienced colleagues, those who are new to the profession and those students aspiring to the profession.” As a new member, it is important to remember that all RECEs, regardless of their experience, have more to learn and lots to share with their professional community.

Working with other RECEs and professionals in the sector, striving for practice excellence, accessing current evidence-based research, following the required legislation, policies and procedures, as well as using the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* are all key elements to beginning a successful professional career as an RECE. ©

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



Previous columns of **Practice Matters** can be found on the Professional Practice section of the College's website, [college-ece.ca](http://college-ece.ca)

## Put it into Practice!

For experienced RECEs, consider how you might support new RECEs in their practice. How could you share your skills, knowledge and experience with others? What tips and advice do you have? How might you enhance your own learning in your interactions with new grads?

# Investigating Complaints

The College 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 to 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 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.



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

## Complaint

The Member failed to uphold her duties as an RECE and supervisor. She used excessive physical force to restrain a child, left children temporarily unsupervised and failed to comply with the *Day Nurseries Act*.

## Committee's Decision

Advice

## Summary

The College received a complaint alleging that the Member repeatedly used physical force to restrain a child, failed to properly display fire safety procedures and left children unsupervised. The complaint resulted from a routine compliance review at the centre conducted by the Ministry of Education

The Member was notified of the complaint filed against her and she responded to the allegations. In her response, the Member did not deny the allegations.

- The Member indicated that shortly after starting at the centre, she was offered the position as supervisor. Despite her inexperience, the centre director/co-owner, assured her that her responsibilities would not change much and convinced her to take the job.
- Regarding the missing fire safety procedure signs, the Member holds the centre's manager partly responsible as he was the one who removed them in order to paint the centre and forgot to hang them back up.

- The Member indicated that a child in her room was very challenging and made constant attempts to run out of the room. In the Member's opinion, the child "was nowhere near the level of the rest of the children in my group" and required more attention than she could provide and monopolized her time. Despite asking the centre director/co-owner for help, she did not receive any assistance. When the child continued to run out of the classroom, the Member felt that her only option was to physically restrain the child.
- With respect to the unsupervised children, the Member stated that on the day of the compliance review by the Ministry, the program advisors were waiting to be let into the centre, so she quickly left her classroom to unlock the door.

The Complaints Committee advised the Member to seek support when confronted with challenging situations.

As physical force should never be used against children, the Committee reminded the Member of her responsibility to follow appropriate behaviour guidance strategies. The Committee wrote in its decision "...it is the responsibility of the educator to address the behaviour in a way that focuses on the child's individual needs..." The Committee highlighted the Member's violation of Standard II: B. Citing a violation of Standard III: A.1., the Committee noted that the Member was not responsible for removing the fire signs. But as the centre's supervisor, it was her responsibility to adhere to safety standards and make sure the signs were put up. ©



# In the Public Interest



## **Sarah Scott** **Certificate of Registration** **Number: 34628** **Reprimanded; Ordered to** **complete a research and** **writing assignment**

At the January 22, 2015 hearing, Sarah Scott was found guilty of professional misconduct by a panel of the Discipline Committee for bringing a marijuana cigarette to the centre where she worked and storing it in a classroom. Scott, who received her Certificate of Registration in September 2011, was in attendance at the hearing and unrepresented by legal counsel.

Scott was employed as an RECE for approximately seven months at the centre where the misconduct took place. In August 2014, Scott brought a marijuana cigarette to the centre with the intention of giving it to her colleague to help relieve insomnia. The marijuana cigarette, stored in a Tylenol container inside Scott's purse, was discovered by the other RECE working in the room when she smelt marijuana in the classroom cupboard containing Scott's purse. After discovering the marijuana, the RECE volunteered to have the cigarette kept in her car for the remainder of the day.

At the hearing, Scott was remorseful and apologized for her conduct.

Based on the Agreed Statement of Facts, a Joint Submission as to Penalty, a plea of guilt and counsel submissions, the Committee found Scott guilty of professional misconduct. She was directed to appear before the Committee for a reprimand and was ordered to research and write an essay of at least 1,000 words on *Ten Ways of Demonstrating Professionalism as an ECE and as a Leader in Professional Practice*.

The Committee found Scott to have breached Ontario Regulation 223/08, section 2, subsections 8, 10, 22 and Standards III: A.1 and IV: E.2 of the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

"While the Member's actions were deliberate, there is no indication that they were maliciously motivated or intended to expose the children, her colleagues or the Centre to any undue harm," wrote the Committee. "Rather, the evidence presented suggests that the Member exercised very poor judgment in an ill-planned attempt to relieve her colleague's insomnia."

A notation regarding the Committee's decision appears with Scott's status on the College's public register.

## **Brooke Reid** **Certificate of Registration** **Number: 45406** **Revoked**

At the January 22, 2015 hearing, Brooke Reid was found guilty of professional misconduct by a panel of the Discipline Committee for engaging in inappropriate discussions with children in her care. Reid who received her Certificate of Registration in 2013, was not in attendance at the hearing, nor was she represented by legal counsel.

Between January 2014 and July 2014, Reid was working as a school yard supervisor at the elementary school where the misconduct took place. During this time, Reid text messaged grade five and six students after school hours and told the children not to tell their parents that she was texting them. While she was with the children at the school, Reid discussed graphic sexual activities and other mature conduct with them, including stories of personal sexual encounters and behaviours when she was drunk. Reid also dared two students to kiss one another in a game of "Truth or Dare" in the school yard.

Based on the Agreed Statement of Facts, a Joint Submission as to Penalty, a plea of guilt and counsel submissions, the Committee found Reid guilty of professional misconduct. Reid was given a written reprimand and had her Certificate of Registration revoked.

# In the Public Interest



The Committee found Reid to have breached Ontario Regulation 223/08 section 2, subsections 8, 10, 22 and Standards IV: E.2 and V: B of the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

"Without considering the potential impact of her anecdotes, the Member promoted a reckless and dangerous lifestyle to impressionable children," wrote the Committee in its decision.

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

**Maria Walters**  
**Certificate of Registration**  
**Number: 11031**  
**Reprimanded; Suspension;**  
**Ordered to complete courses**

A panel of the Discipline Committee found Maria Walters guilty of professional misconduct for engaging in a physical altercation with a parent while at the centre. Walters, who received her Certificate of Registration in May 2009, was not in attendance at the January 29, 2015 hearing, nor was she represented by legal counsel.

Walters worked for approximately seven years at the centre where the misconduct took place and held the position of Supervisor. On July 21, 2014, Walters accused a parent of making a complaint against her to

the centre's operator. Despite the parent denying the allegation, Walters was adamant that she had made a complaint. When the parent motioned Walters to stop pointing her finger so close to her face, Walters slapped the parent, causing the parent to lose balance and fall to the ground. A physical altercation then followed. The incident took place in a classroom with children present, including the parent's child.

Based on the submissions made by College counsel, including witness testimony from the parent and the centre operator, the Committee found Walters to be guilty of professional misconduct, more specifically, breaches to Ontario Regulation 223/08, section 2, subsections 8, 10, 22 and Standards I: D, I: F, IV: B.4 and I: E.2. In addition to a six month suspension, Walters was given a written reprimand and ordered to take two courses – one in "Stress and Anger Management" and the other in "Ethical and Professional Standards."

"Without considering the effect of her actions on the psychological and emotional well-being of the children, the Member intentionally and maliciously attacked a parent in the presence of the children," the Committee wrote in its decision.

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

**Melissa Smits**  
**Certificate of Registration**  
**Number: 00948**  
**Reprimanded; Suspension;**  
**Ordered to complete a course**

At the March 18, 2015 hearing, a panel of the Discipline Committee found Melissa Smits guilty of professional misconduct for physically abusing a child under her professional supervision. Smits, who received her Certificate of Registration in April 2013, was not in attendance at the hearing, nor was she represented by legal counsel.

At the time the professional misconduct took place, Smits had been working as an early childhood educator at a centre for approximately five months. While placing several students in a time-out along a brick wall because of their behaviour during outdoor play time, Smits forcefully shoved one child into the wall, causing the child's back to be scraped and bruised. Ms. Smits was charged by the police with assault.

Based on the submissions made by College counsel, including witness testimony from the centre's director, the child involved and the child's parent, the Committee found Smits to be guilty of professional misconduct, specifically, breaches to Ontario Regulation 223/08, section 2, subsections 3, 8, 10, 20 and Standards III: A.1, III: C.1 and IV: B.4 of the College's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*.

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 attentions to the process the Committee follows and the standards the Committee adopts in arriving at its decision.

Ms. Smits received a written reprimand and her Certificate of Registration was suspended for a period of six months, commencing on the date at which the Member pays her fees and penalties to the College. She was ordered to take a course in “Professional Supervision in Early Learning and Care,” within six months of paying her fees to the College.

“Far from inspiring confidence in the profession, the Member subjected a child in her care to significant and avoidable harm when she resorted to dangerous and ineffective behaviour guidance techniques,” the Committee wrote in its decision.

A notation regarding the Committee’s decision appears with the Member’s status on the College’s public register.

**Debra Warden**  
**Certificate of Registration**  
**Number: 36473**  
**Reprimanded; Suspension;**  
**Ordered to complete a course**

At the March 19, 2015 hearing, Debra Warden was found guilty of professional misconduct by a panel of the Discipline Committee for abusing multiple children in her care. Warden, who received her Certificate of Registration with the College in February 2012, was in attendance at the hearing and was not represented by legal counsel.

At the time of the misconduct, Warden was working as an early childhood educator at a centre. Security cameras in Warden’s classroom recorded her forcing a child into a sitting position, lifting a child by one arm then dropping the child on the floor, using her feet to push children out of her way and handling a child in a rough manner.

At the hearing, Warden apologized for her conduct and recognized the inappropriateness of her behaviour.

Based on the Agreed Statement of Facts, a Joint Submission as to Penalty, a plea of guilt and counsel submissions, the Committee found Warden guilty of professional

misconduct, more specifically, breaches to Ontario Regulation 223/08, section 2, subsections 3, 8, 10, 22 and Standard I: D, III: A.1 and IV: E.2 of the College’s *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. She was directed to appear before the Committee to receive an oral reprimand and her Certificate of Registration was suspended for three months. Additionally, terms, conditions and limitations were placed on Warden’s Certificate of Registration, requiring her to alert the Registrar if she undertook employment as an early childhood educator. She was ordered to complete a course on Professional Supervision in Early Learning and Care prior to beginning her employment.

“In a profession where one serves as a role model for children, the public and fellow RECEs, the Member’s harmful and undignified behaviour provided a poor example for others to emulate,” wrote the Committee in its decision.”

A notation regarding the Committee’s decision 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 the Available Legal Support Program.

## The College's Strategic Priorities for 2015-2018

In April 2015, Council members held a workshop to determine the College's strategic priorities for the next three years. They deliberated with the help of facilitator Sue Hunter RECE while taking into account the ideas and opinions that resulted from 19 roundtable sessions involving members and stakeholders and survey input from almost 2,000 members. At the end of the session, Council members came to a consensus that the following strategic priorities will guide their energies and funding priorities until 2018.

- 1 Enhance the College's relationships with government and other policy makers. This will be very important as the College works to finalize the continuous professional learning regulation and develop its new accreditation authorities.
- 2 Review and update the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* and develop related documents in the context of the new Continuous Professional Learning program. The second Leadership Pilot project and forthcoming symposium on leadership will be key activities under this theme.

- 3 Develop and implement an information technology strategy to support the College's regulatory mandate. A major initiative will be building on our three-year IT transformation plan and providing online membership renewal.
- 4 Develop member services that build on a deep knowledge of the membership's diversity. College members work in diverse cultural, linguistic and workplace settings. We will commit to getting to know our members better in order to understand the support they need as accountable professionals.
- 5 Build and enhance the profile of the College. We will build on external relations achievements to ensure that members, stakeholders, employers and parents are aware of our regulatory mandate and have confidence in our ability to protect the public interest in a fair and timely way.

The next step will be for College staff to develop individual key activities that will implement our strategic priorities. We will keep you posted on our progress.

### Upcoming Retirement

Sue Corke, Registrar and CEO, will retire December 31, 2015 after four years of service.

### Appointment of Public Members to the College Council

The College would like to welcome Jason Powell and François Bertrand to the College Council. More information about these new public appointees can be found on the College's website at [college-ece.ca/aboutus/pages/council-members](http://college-ece.ca/aboutus/pages/council-members).

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