Interaction

Challenging Ourselves in Our Practice

Building Interest, Knowledge and Skills for Inter-Professional Collaboration

NATIONAL
Child Day
November 20th

Interaction

Challenging Ourselves in Our Practice (pg. 21)

Challenging Ourselves in Our Practice

Departments

One new resource sheet accompanies this issue: #106 – *Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviours*

The photo for the front cover was taken by Chanequa Cameron from Toronto.

Behind the Scenes

In mid-September, I took on one of the greatest challenges of my life: I set out to hike the White Mountains of the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire and summiting several of the highest peaks in eastern North America. Five days of seven-to-nine hour hikes on very tough rocky terrain with an eight pound backpack. I accomplished it with five women and I can safely say we are now bonded together for life. What I have taken from this is the same life lesson that can be applied to any challenge in life. You need to stay focused on the task at hand, go deep inside yourself when you know you must move forward even though you are scared, and laugh at yourself and at the absurdity of the unknown territory for which you may or may not be prepared. It is, in a nutshell, perseverance and reminding yourself that you can do it.

This issue of *Interaction* is an invitation to both self-reflect and open up when facing challenges in our practice. Whether it be challenging behaviour of a child, challenges in the workplace, work conditions, or program policy, we need to delve inside and reach out at the same time. You can better understand this process in the focus article *The Challenges of Cultural Competence — Exploring the impacts of Race, Culture and Identity on Early Childhood Educator Practice*. And learn about educators' perspectives on experiencing challenging behaviour in the classroom and also about the support out there for those who have felt burnout from it.

By the time most of you have read this, the election will have passed and we could be under a new government who may or may not be a strong leader that supports a national universal child care system in Canada. Our challenge, always, is to help our leaders see the value of supporting such a national early learning system for families and children in Canada, and to work together to build such a framework through our ECEC network, the provinces/territories and the federal government.

Claire McLaughlin, Editor, *Interaction*
cmclaughlin@cccf-fcsge.ca

INSIDE THE FEDERATION

CCCF Awards Ellen Hamilton, as the recipient of the CCCF Award for Excellece in Child Care

The CCCF is proud to announce the 2015 recipient of the CCCF Award for Excellence in Child Care – Ellen Hamilton, Coordinator of Early Childhood Education Programs at Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit.

In August 2013, she began rebuilding the Early Childhood Education Program for Nunavut Arctic College by envisioning and developing a territory-wide ECE strategy. Through widespread consultations and research, she designed, and now manages, the delivery of two new programs that meet the cultural and professional needs of future child care workers and build capacity in the existing Nunavut child care system:

1) A two-year Diploma Program in ECE (the first of its kind) commenced in September 2014, with 14 beneficiaries who are being educated to become leaders in the field;

2) The first workplace ECE training program in Nunavut for current child care workers. The Applied Certificate program is successfully piloted in 7 communities across the territory with 67 beneficiaries enrolled.

In 2014, Ellen raised over one million dollars in annual third-party program funding for the three-year pilot of the ECE Strategy and oversaw a 1.5 million dollar budget.

In 2015, Ellen was successful in being awarded funding of approximately one million dollars to continue delivering and developing the Nunavut ECE Strategy. She supervises 10 ECE instructors and 10 Inuit elder-instructors, and manages adult programming to 80 adult students, all of whom are Nunavut beneficiaries. Ellen designed and supervises the ongoing development of a Nunavut-specific curriculum that integrates Inuit language

and culture, is recognized by southern Canadian colleges and has achieved post-secondary designation.

More than 200 beneficiaries from all three regions of Nunavut have received training in early childhood education between 2013-14 due to Ellen's perserverence.

Welcome New Board and Member Council

After a voting session following CCCF's Annual General Meeting via webinar across Canada, we are very pleased to tell you that the following have been (re)elected to the CCCF board for the November 2015 to November 2018 term:
- Cynthia Dempsey, New Brunswick (re-elected)
- Marni Flaherty, Ontario (re-elected)
- Cathy Ramos, Nova Scotia (New board member)

We look forward to working with them in the next few years.

Farewell Outgoing Members

After 13 years on the Board of the Canadian Child Care Federation April Kalyniuk will step down from her role on the Board this November.

April began her time with the CCCF in 2002 on the Member Council moving to the Board the following year. She spent many years as the Chair of the Member Council and has been the Chair of the Board under the new organizational and governance structure for the last number of years.

April will be returning to the role of President for the Manitoba Child Care Association for the next two years, starting in May 2016.

Ellen's ECE class.

INSIDE THE FEDERATION

National Child Day 2015 – Focus on Helping Child Refugees

November 20 is National Child Day in Canada. It's a day to celebrate and shine a spotlight on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - the world's most ratified human rights treaty. The rights outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are legal obligations governments and other authorities have to children. The government's role in protecting children and providing for their basic needs is based on clear duties rather than favours, delivered unconditionally.

At present, there are 2,073,905 registered refugee children awaiting registration (UNICEF Canada). With the world refugee crisis at hand, it's imperative that we take special note of UNCRC *Article 22* and do what we can to help child refugees and their families upon their arrival in Canada and into our cities, communities and early learning programs.

Article 22 (in child friendly language)
You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in the Convention.

Article 22 (in formal language of UNCRC)
States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.

2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate,

N A T I O N A L
Child Day
November 20th

co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

A helpful resource for practitioners working with children and families new to Canada is the Canadian Child Care Federation's online resource, *Partnerships in Support of Children's Social Well- Being*. It's available for free download by CCCF members at http://bit.ly/1GfYVwF. User-friendly accessible tools address key elements of social development, including learning positive behaviour, building self-esteem, enhancing problem-solving skills, strengthening communication skills and supporting cultural identity. The tools have been developed using an asset-based approach that recognizes and honours the strengths of families, while acknowledging the perspectives and experiences of practitioners.

Meeting the Challenge 2.0

This past spring, 27 practitioners (English and French) from Aboriginal Head Start (AHS)programs across Canada completed Meeting the Challenge 2.0, CCCF's most recent version of the popular Meeting the Challenge online training course. CCCF partnered with the Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Colombia (AHSABC) The initiative provided training resources and support to AHS Early Childhood Education staff members on how to more effectively support children with challenging behaviours and special needs in our AHS programs. This virtual classroom provided training to our AHS sites without having to take them from their communities to receive the training. The training was accessible requiring only an internet connection in the comforts of an AHS office space in groups or individually and followed the "*Meeting the Challenge – An Aboriginal Perspective*" training resource developed by the Canadian Child Care Federation which is available in print and CD formats. http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/fr/store-fr/relever-le-defi-une-perspective-autochtone/.

Special thanks to AHSABC Executive Director Joan Gignac and CCCF board member Cynthia Dempsey for their dedicated work on this initiative.

"I enjoyed this Meeting the Challenge course, it's been a great learning experience and refresher."

"It is important for professionals to see young children as individuals and they are smarter than one often thinks."

"It has been such a wonderful course and I will definitely provide more positive interactions with the child moving forward"

"I have learned a lot and it was great doing this challenge. It definitely will help me more in the future."

Election Blog 2015

Why giving parents cash-for-child-care isn't the answer

by Martha Friendly

I opened a recent Globe and Mail to the Opinions page before the coffee reached the breakfast table and was confronted by a letter to the editor asserting that child care policies I endorse have been "done on the backs of parents... and on the backs of our kids." The letter writer, representing the Kids First Parents Association, took king-size exception to Globe columnist Leah McLaren's eloquent analysis of why Canadian politicians must act on a universal national child care program. Kids First, a charitable organization, argued that "these policies are harming families, especially single-mothers..." Oh, and the policies McLaren and I (and many others) advocate for "are hogging funding" and are elitist to boot!

This inexplicable line of reasoning may dumbfound parents who search for affordable, high quality child care and can't find or afford it for love or money. But it can serve as a basis for exploring a key, tediously recurring theme in Canada's child care debate over the last decade: should public money fund the creation of an early childhood education and care system, or should government instead send cash directly to parents to use as they choose? ("Fund families, not spaces" as the Globe letter pitches).

It also reflects the bigger story of what has happened to Canadian child care over the last decade. In 2004, the federal Liberals finally committed to bringing in a national child care program. Over the next year, they negotiated agreements with all the provinces and territories based on written "action plans" in exchange for new federal money. The plan was that province/territories would use the funds to expand their regulated child care services and make them more accessible-that is, the public funding was to be used for regulated services. Then, to quote Leah McLaren: "...Stephen Harper was elected and immediately cancelled the program. The end." But the postscript to this February 2006 unhappy ending was the "Choice in Childcare Benefit", later called the "Universal Child Care Benefit" or UCCB, the cash payment-to-parents. The first cheque was in the mail the following July.

The Harper "choice in child care" scheme wasn't the first Canadian fund-the-parent scheme. The old "baby bonus" (or family allowance) had sent a monthly cheque to every mother from 1944 to 1992. Then the National Child Benefit was introduced by the federal Liberals in 1998. The main part of the NCB still arrives as monthly cheques to the majority of families with children. It, unlike the "baby bonus", is geared to income. Neither of these child benefit schemes was ever understood to be about delivering choice or anything else to do with child care. Rather, the objectives were linked to reflecting the value of raising children or "helping prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty."

The Child Care Expense Deduction, introduced in 1971 and expanded a number of times, most recently in 2015, however, is about child care costs, especially child care costs allowed as deductable expenses associated with earning income under the Income Tax Act. In this case, receipts for child care (regulated, unregulated — even summer camp) are required.

None of these programs has been put forward as an alternative to developing a child care service system. The UCCB was the first family policy program to be framed as competition to what the Harper government and its supporters such as Kids First have positioned as "institutional day care", pitching the unnecessarily divisive idea of "funding for parental child care vs daycare."

Of course, for many families, all this is silly stuff akin to debating how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. The reality is that today most women work outside the home while their children are small—have careers, work non-standard hours and non-traditional jobs, go to dental school, etc. As well, today the value of high quality early childhood education and care is well documented and recognized as is the importance of supporting the families who are of primary importance for children.

Generally, most families need multiple things and not only are all families not the same but their needs change over time. In

addition to having different preferences, what a family needs at one time may not be what they need when their children are a little older or they are in different circumstances.

Practically, what this means is that good family policy needs to include a "basket" or package of real options for families; the basket needs to include both service and income options, and it's important to recognize that these are not the same thing. It is well documented in international literature that it's well nigh impossible to translate cash benefits given out to parents into the accessible, high quality, equitable ECEC services most families need. In a Canadian context, it is noteworthy that the almost $20 billion Canada has sent out in $100/month UCCB cheques over almost a decade has not translated into the early childhood education and care that many families are looking for their children. Far from it—indeed, expansion in regulated child care slowed down considerably during that period.

Countries with well-developed family policies generally fund early childhood education and child care services directly, arranging the programs and how families access them in a variety of ways. The service system usually includes early childhood education (usually non-compulsory) for all children sometime after age two, integrating some (or all) of the care and education elements. Usually most (not all) parents want their children to attend these programs regardless of the parent's work situation.

Most countries also provide about a year of decently paid, often somewhat flexible, maternity and parental leave to all families; the international benchmark for parental leave also includes a paid period of father-only (paternity) leave, which in Canada is currently offered only in Quebec. Furthermore, some families need other income support—some more than others, depending, in part, on how many parents are available (or choose) to work outside the home). This often takes the form of a child benefit.

In addition, families also need affordable housing, good jobs and access to health care, recreation and so on.

The assertion that Canada's regulated child care is "hogging" public money, thereby hurting families is utter nonsense. Broken down on a per capita basis, a rough calculation shows that in most provinces, public spending for each regulated space is less than $3000 a year, while the mean spending per child in Canada outside Quebec is only $436 a year. Including public kindergarten in the ECEC mix is appropriate but it is only five year olds who can be assured of a full-or part-school day space in most of Canada whereas the norm for kindergarten—like programs across Europe is two or three years before compulsory school.

At the same time, Canada's current cash-for-child care scheme, the UCCB, together with the less costly Child Care Expense Deduction, will cost almost $8 billion a year in 2017. So child care is hogging public dollars? I think not.

Our proposals for a universal publicly funded high quality national child care program are harming single parents? That doesn't hold up at all. What is harming many is that they can neither find nor afford the quality child care they need and don't have enough money to pay the rent and feed the kids.

Pitting an early childhood education and care system, similar to what families in many other countries enjoy, against a child benefit (even a much better-designed child benefit than the UCCB), is doing all families, no matter who they are, a real disservice. Canada, as Leah McLaren pointed out, needs to do much better for all families, all children. And it's the politicians who have the power to change this.

Why giving parents cash-for-child-care isn't the answer is the fifth blog in the series. All blogs in this series can be found on the CRRU's website.

Advocacy in Early Childhood Education

A view from BC

by Christine Buttkus

In this article, I have chosen to focus on advocacy, a topic that has resulted in significant conversations recently. Over the past four years, I have had the opportunity to capture reflections from the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) Leadership Initiative Alumni and the leaders who support them. The intent of this article is to share what we are learning in BC, to offer some considerations from the literature, and to foster continued exploration of this important topic at all levels of our work.

Advocacy is a part of leadership and is an important part of the work of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs). For purposes of illustration, I offer Kagan's Five Faces of Leadership

model (2013, p.33). Kagan's model was one of the guiding documents reviewed by ECEBC in the formative stages of the Leadership Initiative and it shows advocacy as an interrelated part of leadership. The words 'advocacy' and 'advocate' are present in the occupational standards for ECE and Child Care Administrators in Canada. In the United States, the National Association for the Education of Young Children includes advocacy in the code of ethical conduct and statement of commitment as follows: "members work through education, research and advocacy toward a society in which all young children have access to high-quality early care and education programs" (2005, p. 7).

What is advocacy?

Royea and Appl (2009, p.89) share these definitions:

> *Advocacy is telling or demonstrating something you know to someone you know in order to improve the quality of life for others (Mitchell and Philibert 2002; Zeitler 2007). Child advocacy is any individual or cooperative action that strives to enrich the lives of children, including challenging injustices and promoting overall welfare." (Pithouse and Crowley 2007)*

There are different forms of advocacy: personal, public policy and private sector (Robinson and Stark, 2005, p. 9). In conversations with our leadership alumni, advocacy for direct needs of individual children and families appears to be most easily embraced and accepted. This form of advocacy is well embedded in the ECEBC Code of Conduct, that guides advocacy by ECE's on behalf of all children for public policies, programs and services that enhance their health and well-being (ECEBC, 2008, p. 7). The Code also adds that ECEs advocate

for public policy and community services that are supportive of families, (Ibid, p. 9).

Considerations and Lessons Learned

Results take time. "The more people who are part of an intentional advocacy effort, the stronger the collective voice and the more likely that change will be brought about as a result of the advocacy efforts" (Robinson and Stark, 2009, p. 9). Advocacy is important and makes a difference over time. In Canada, Turgeon outlines the difference that strategic action by activists and third sector organizations made over a period of decades with reference to child care policy change in Ontario. (2014, p. 243). One seasoned advocate from the sector shares the observation that, results over time are due to "forceful advocacy and leadership" (Blank, 1997, p. 39).

Leaders in BC are defining their own strategies that are intentional and fit with their local contexts. Over the past 18 months our leadership Alumni have been informally discussing how to create a shared vision for leadership. A sub-group brainstormed small steps that ECE leaders in any setting can engage in without feeling overwhelmed and in a way that does not reinvent the wheel. This dialogue resulted the compilation of a resource list shared with peers via e-mail, social media and shared by the Canadian Child Care Federation via their e-publication *Interaction*. Over time, we have also heard about less public and still valuable efforts of ECEs who are sharing materials like the Coalition of Childcare Advocates of BC and ECEBC's $10/Day Child Care Plan with parents in their centres. ECEs are also helping those parents to understand and share in their own circles. In recent discussions we have heard ECE leaders observe and speak about the pattern they are seeing emerge across the country relating to some common elements such as a national child care plan with set fees.

Education and professional development make a difference. Mevawalla and Hadley in their study of ECEs in Australia, discussed a high resonance with internal advocacy or getting the best for children, families and staff (2012, p.76). They found that 2/4 of the diploma trained participants are uncertain of the meaning of the term 'advocacy'. These ECEs were the least qualified and least experienced in the study. They also found that ECEs (diploma and degree) and Directors predominantly demonstrated internal advocacy, but that they were reluctant to access and utilize power in external contexts (p. 77-78). In wider contexts it was felt that directors, licensees, major organizations and regulatory bodies advocated, empowered or protected best interests. Of interest was that directors also deferred to these external bodies (p. 76). Administrators are well-positioned to provide opportunities, role modeling,

capacity development and support in relation to advocacy.

The ECEBC Leadership Initiative has provided professional development that has helped ECEs explore philosophies within a peer group. Participants have applied their learning as part of their Communities of Innovations projects and many have continued this growth beyond the formal time of their projects. In following the five cohorts of the ECEBC Leadership Initiative, we have seen participants and alumni take on a variety of advocacy projects that focus on a range of topics, for example, Children's Rights. ECEBC has documented how ECEs have shared their voices using events, presentations, imagery and media to raise awareness of important issues. Samples of this work are available from the ECEBC virtual lending library. For some, the role of advocate seems to come naturally. At other times, discussion about advocacy raises mixed feelings in practitioners and even discomfort. At the ECEBC Leadership tables the word 'advocacy' is heard regularly, followed by an anecdotal set of messages and perceptions arising in relation to the topic of advocacy. Sometimes ECEs express feeling blocked in their ability to advocate for social causes that they feel are important because of the potential for reflecting on one's place of work even if the advocacy is conducted as an individual. Some reflect that they feel frustration at limits placed on advocacy by the government. Occasionally there is a nervous laughter as some of us joke about being pushy: 'we're advocates'. New ECE leaders have also articulated discomfort if their personal manner of advocacy does not fit with a philosophy and approach espoused by others in collective environments. We have heard loudly from leadership participants about the inspirational effects of the powerful female advocates that they have heard speak. Leadership Alumni worked with ECEBC to design the content for the first Leadership Pre-Conference Day this spring. The program included a session on advocacy to help continue this exploration more broadly in the sector.

Fostering Effective Advocacy

Blank (citation) offers some key characteristics of leaders who are effective advocates for ECE:

1. Vison and forward thinking must move beyond the press of day to day responsibility to lay groundwork if to proceed. Being able to share and communicate that vision with the broader community.
2. Reaching out and working with people beyond familiar colleagues and away from perception of self-interest. In Canada we have examples of external professions who have stepped forward to advocate for enhanced Early Childhood Development services in Canada. Denburg & Daneman call on their colleagues in medicine and science to play as role as

colleagues have done elsewhere (2010, p. 236).

3. Scanning the environment to seize strategic opportunities to move an issue forward.
4. Making strategic use of data and expert support.
5. Developing new approaches to reach the public and policymakers.
6. Making tough decisions and risking being unpopular.
7. Hanging tough, being relentless and continually developing new approaches to highlight issues.
8. Knowing how and when to compromise.
9. Inspiring and supporting new leaders and collaborating with colleagues (Blank, 1997, p. 39).

Providing a supportive group for collective reflection helps. In BC, there is the presence of supportive spaces where ECEs can dialogue about their experiences with trusted colleagues is valued. In some cases these may be within ECEBC Branches. Our 'All-Cohort' calls for Leadership Alumni are another example. During one recent call, participants from past cohorts talked about how they are sharing the $10/Day Plan. In this dialogue there appeared to be a theme emerging in how ECEs are staying resilient or at times 'failing well'. Some key comments from the discussion included:

• Sometimes not having success the first time around is positive, because you get more media. It takes a little longer, but also provides an opportunity to educate the community more fully and broadly about the issues.
• In discussing activities, one of our alumni reflecting on some efforts that haven't gone well by saying, "maybe not this time, but next time."
• Over time Leadership alumni who have presented have had a number of successful endorsements. They are building support by attending community events, planning their own events and continuing to talk about 'the Plan'.
• Our leaders report they are making connections and actively supporting one another in their work.
• All of us can do something by saying the plan is a good one. Sending letters and postcards makes a difference.
• Having the tools available helps answer questions when ECEs are asked tough questions. For those able to attend, Child Care 2020 really helped provide background (Leadership Alumni, July 27, 2015).

"ECE Leadership has a strong component of advocacy. It's important to be part of and understand the big picture" shares Emily Mlieczko, ECEBC Executive Director and Cohort 1 Alumni (Personal Communication, July 27, 2015). Mlieczko adds, "I have noticed more advocacy content in the curriculum in post-secondary education." "This (advocacy) isn't an add-on. "Advocacy is part of what we do and we're here to help and offer

support to new grads", shares Natalie Lucas (Cohort One) of her visits with fellow alumni Sharon Nazaroff to ECE students in her region.

Learning across and with other sectors can be helpful. As an inter-disciplinarian, find it interesting to compare and contrast experiences in the literature about ECE with that of other professions that are experiencing similar journeys in learning to understand advocacy. For example, "psychologists are not taught how to advocate for their profession and often must learn how to be an effective advocate after they graduate" (Frain, 2014, p. 1). Frain shares her thoughts in her President's address to members along with a video at their association's annual general meeting. Nemec (2013) provides suggestions for 'everyday advocacy' success in the setting of public libraries. While each profession has unique contexts and considerations, there may be times when drawing on others or working across disciplines adds efficiency and opportunities for learning and partnership. In response to complexity, there is a growing field of *complexity theory* that offers new tools to inform our leadership and may call for us to slow down, allowing more large group dialogue beyond typical boundaries and reflection time (Snowden and Boone, 2007, p.73). Leaders may also find the tools of 'Dialogue and Deliberation' useful as a complementary approach for achieving change (Carcasson, 2009). During the ECEBC Leadership Institutes, participants have been introduced to some tools that are aligned with tools for learning as community e.g. Appreciative Inquiry (Raelin, Ch. 5, np). In BC, we are having discussions that encourage ECEs to join tables in the community including the Early Years Planning tables where ECEs might share their expertise with other disciplines and agencies beyond their workplces.

Guidelines Governing Political Activity

If you are part of a registered charity in Canada, it is important to understand the rules and implications. Be clear who you are representing, particularly during times like the current election. Imagine Canada's Sector Source and the Canada Revenue Agency have some good online information outlining what is considered advocacy, what is considered political activity and what charities are permitted to engage in. This material also helps when analyzing professional messaging we are crafting or using if we are acting on behalf of a registered charity.

Emerging leaders in BC are finding their voices and exploring their own ways of advocating. It is important for us to continue to value and nurture the next generation of leaders. As we have shared in other documents, advocacy like other leadership skills, takes time to grow. We encourage leaders to support one another in this growth and to recognize and celebrate the small

steps as well. Learning requires practice. Sharing with others can help to deepen that practice and our understanding so that we can move forward individually and collectively whether things go as planned the first time or not (Raelin, Chapter 6, np).

For some it has taken time to get comfortable with their own form of advocacy leadership. We wish to acknowledge and encourage the dialogue and sharing between ECEs who continue to evolve as effective advocates in a way that works for them.

> *Advocates are risk takers who challenge the status quo. A person who advocates is substantially different from one who keeps silent and travels "the path of least resistance." Following a path of least resistance can result in a professional who is "immobilized throughout a career, stagnates, and loses rather than gains competence." (Jalongo 2002, p. 65, In Royea & Appl, 2009).*

We invite all ECEs to continue to learn with one another and to continually evaluate their contributions to the sector as advocates and leaders.

Future Considerations

As leaders in the sector, we need to continue to support emerging leaders in a way that builds capacity. In-service and pre-service training is paramount (Mevawalla & Hadley, 2012, p. 78). Continuing dialogue about advocacy and what advocacy means in ECE workplaces, and beyond is important in building a culture of support.

At the personal level, ECEBC and its branches are great places to get involved. Remember, progress takes time and it is important to connect with others for support and learning. Choose your starting point. Effective advocacy requires people to advise, collect background, as well as people who are visible public voices. Getting involved in a great way to learn.

For more information about the Leadership Projects, please visit the Facebook Page by entering "ECEBC Leadership" in the search box, or visit ECEBC's virtual Leadership Library at: /www.ecebc.ca/library/. Christine Buttkus is contracted to support ECEBC's Leadership Initiative and can be reached at 604.849.2252 or christine_buttkus@telus.net.

References

Blank, H. L. (1997). Advocacy Leadership. In S. L. Kagan & B. T. Bowman (Eds.), *Leadership in Early Care and Education* (23-33). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Canada Revenue Agency. Policy Statement on Political Activity. http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/cps/cps-022-eng.html

Canadian Child Care Federation. (April 15, 2015) BC Celebrates the Leadership of ECEs (ECEBC Information Release). In *Interaction*. Retrieved from http://multibriefs.com/briefs/cccf/cccf%20april%20article.pdf

Carcasson, M. (2009). Beginning with the end in mind: A call for goal driven deliberative practice. Center for Advances in Public Engagement. Occasional Paper. Retrieved from http://www.publicagenda.org/files/Pa_caPe_Paper2_beginning_SinglePgs_rev.pdf.

Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. (2010). *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators.* Retrieved from: http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/ECE-Post-Secondary-docs/OSECE_2010_EN.pdf

Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. (2012). *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Administrators*. Retrieved from http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/Projects-Pubs-Docs/EN%20Pub%20Chart/OS_Admin_Web%28final%29.pdf

Coalition of Childcare Advocates of BC and ECEBC. $10/Day Childcare Plan http://www.ecebc.ca/news/integrated_project.html

Denburg, A. E., & Daneman, D. (2010). Pascal's wager: From science to policy on early childhood development. Canadian Journal of Public Health / Revue Canadienne De Sante'e Publique, 101(3), 235-236. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.royalroads.ca/docview/722692689?pq-origsite=summon

ECEBC. (October, 2008). Early Childhood Educators of BC Code of Ethics: 6th Edition. Vancouver, BC. Retrieved from http://www.ecebc.ca/resources/pdf/ecebc_codeofethics_web.pdf

Frain, J. (2014). Advocacy required. Canadian Psychology, 55(1), 1. DOI: 10.1037/a0035517

Imagine Canada Sector Source (2014). *Advocacy*: http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/narrative-issue-sheet-advocacy-en.pdf?utm_source=imagine_canada&utm_medium=policy_issues&utm_campaign=political_activities

Kagan, S.L., December 2013. Leadership for Young Children. ECPC Leadership Institute, University of Connecticut Health Centre Presentation. Retrieved from http://www.ecpcta.org/pdfs/Leadership_FINAL_12-9-13.pdf

Mevawalla, Z., & Hadley, F. (2012). The advocacy of educators: Perspectives from early childhood. Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 37(1), 74-80. Retrieved from http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.royalroads.ca/ehost/detail/detail?sid=aa97788f-6c6c-4d32-b88f-ed436ef58f8a%40sessionmgr4004&crlhashurl=login.aspx%253fdirect%253dtrue%2526scope%253dsite%2526db%253daph%2526AN%253d76251114%2526msid%253d603995394&hid=4101&vid=0&bdata=#AN=76251114&db=aph

National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment*. (2011). Retrieved from: http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/image/public_policy/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011_09202013update.pdf

Nemec-Loise, J. (2013). Everyday advocacy: The many seasons of advocacy. Children & Libraries, 11(3), 57. http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.royalroads.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=e4e4b66c-1edb-42e3-9d45-945bc229524c%40sessionmgr4005&vid=1&hid=4101

Raelin, J. A. (2008). *Workbased Learning.* San Francisco: JosseyBass.

Robinson and Stark. (2005). Advocates in Action: making a difference for young children Revised Edition. NAYEC, Washington, DC.

Royea, A. J., & Appl, D. J. (2009). Every voice matters: The importance of advocacy. Early Childhood Education Journal, 37(2), 89-91. Doi:10.1007/s10643-009-0335-y

Snowden, D. and Boone, M. (2007). A Leader's Framework for Decision Making. *Harvard Business Review*. November. Retrieved from hbr.org.

Turgeon, L. (2014). Activists, policy sedimentation, and policy change: The case of early childhood education in Ontario. Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Études Canadiennes, 48(2), 224-249. doi:10.1353/jcs.2014.0026

Centralized Supply Educator Recruitment, Training and Deployment
Developing a Solution

by Ginette Bédard, RECE/EPEI

My 26 year old daughter is returning to school so I suggested that she re-join the supply educator list. "No Thanks" was her quick response. She disliked being called multiple times very early in the morning particularly when she was already scheduled or had already indicated she was unavailable. When I explained the new tool we were using she was thrilled, and because of it, is willing to be a supply educator again.

Every supervisor knows the dread of hearing the phone ring at 6:00 a.m; you feel bad that one of your team members is unwell but it also means a replacement has to be found. The search begins not always knowing who is available.

From the supply educator perspective there is the frustration that your phone rings five times between 6:00 to 6:15 when you are already scheduled to work somewhere – but last week when you were available no one called! Committing to an erratic work schedule may not be financially feasible and ultimately dissuades individuals from this opportunity.

In 2011, with the financial assistance of a private donor, Andrew Fleck Child Care Services (AFCCS) developed an internal supply educator service by centralizing the recruitment and deployment of supply staff for our own licensed child care sites. We wanted to reduce duplication of recruitment efforts and eliminate the stress educators felt in having to find someone last minute often when feeling unwell. We were able to capitalize on our existing Short Term Child Care Program, where we send a caregiver to the parents' home when the child is mildly ill, when regular child care arrangements are interrupted, or when other family emergencies

arise. This service was already recruiting caregivers, answering telephone requests for care, and deploying individuals to parents' homes so it was an easy extension to offer this service to our licensed locations as well. Our educators quickly came to appreciate that they only had to call one number to have a friendly person take over the process of contacting and deploying a supply educator to their program site.

As expected, we had other centres asking if there was any way that they too could use our centralized deployment system, always wanting to be supportive of the sector as a whole, we started thinking about this as a possibility but we were intimidated by the potential volume of calls and data management.

We had the opportunity to showcase our initiative at the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) 2013 provincial conference and there was the answer to our concerns! How exciting it was to learn about SmartFind Express—eSchool Solutions - an automated supply educator deployment tool being used effectively by the City of Peterborough and by school boards in Canada and the USA for the past 20 years, to manage the deployment of teacher replacements.

We have now been using SmartFind Express—eSchool Solutions since 2014 to facilitate the management and deployment of all of our supply educators; an average of 90 placements a month for eight sites. The tool is extremely robust and customizable and full of features highly beneficial for the early years' sector. Here is how:

• Employees login or call to create an absence, send messages, attach notes etc.
• The centre identifies parameters when a supply educator will be called – e.g. if the absence is due to planned vacation, the absence has to be approved by the supervisor first –

> *I have finished interviewing one of your graduates from the training course and she was wonderful! I had to email to let you know how great it was to see her confidence. She came fully prepared with all of the necessary paperwork and is so eager to start supplying. Thanks for putting together this wonderful course.*
>
> Audrey Richards, RECE, Director

but if the absence is due to a sick day, absence is approved automatically.

- Supply staff manage their profiles and update their availability – so they are only called when available and if they have accepted a job elsewhere they are not called.
- When an absence has been created, the system calls available supply educators and continues to call supplies that are approved by the individual centres until a replacement is found.
- The system follows a certain order in its calling supply educators that is based on established rankings entered by the centre and/or program room and/or educator.
- There is a great variety of reports that can be easily saved in Word, Excel, PDF and printed off.
- There is the option of using the system for maintaining staff attendance records & payroll as well.

Once we became comfortable with the tool, we were ready to share its features with other licensed child care agencies in and around the Ottawa area. We are thrilled that the cost is so reasonable: $1.00 per month for each employee. So for a centre with 10 staff, the cost is $10.00 a month or $120.00 a year! Each centre is still responsible for recruiting, approving and employing their own supply staff; the employee or supply information from one centre to another is not shared but if a supply educator is approved for multiple centres and is already booked by one site they will not be called. Each site also has the flexibility of setting their own parameters; for example, when calls for replacements are made (e.g. calling for available vacancies starts at 5:30 p.m. for the next day but another site might choose that calling but does not start until 6:00 PM when their centre closes).

While the tool has been of great assistance, one challenge continues to be recruiting *quality* individuals interested in being supply educators. To address the growing demand in Ottawa we applied for and received a small amount of funding from the City of Ottawa to recruit and train individuals interested in becoming supply educators. The intention of the funding was to provide introductory training to non-ECE individuals interested

in being considered as supply educators so they could apply directly to any licensed centre in the community. We surveyed our community to identify what skills and information were most important for potential supply educators to have and from there we developed four training modules, in English and French to support the success of untrained individuals. Forty-nine people participated in the training. Since completing the training we have been sending the participants' surveys asking if they are working out. We are proud to share that 50 percent are working as much as they would like. Our hope is that, for individuals who have an interest and enthusiasm to work with children, this minimum training opportunity will support their success and lead them to continue their education.

This year, we have over 200 additional individuals interested in participating and recently we posted the training on our website at www.shortermchildcare.ca

We are really looking forward to continue working on the training and recruitment of supply educators, partnering up with both English and French child care programs from our community and working even more closely with SmartFindExpress—eSchool Solutions staff.

We are very excited to implement some additional integrated functionality, specifically the *TeacherMatchThrive* Management System which has features to support the recruitment of supply educators in math.

> As a newer child care site of Andrew Fleck Child Care Services using SmartFindExpress, I think that this tool is amazing! I get notified if any staff are booking a supply if they are sick; it's easy and user friendly; it's extremely convenient since we can book in a weekly block; it's nice that we can access it from any computer; I like how you can request certain supply teachers, and it's also nice to pre-arrange work coverage with a supply teacher in advance.
>
> Christine Rahal, RECE, Program Coordinator

Building Interest, Knowledge and Skills for Inter-Professional Collaboration

The Oral Health Promotion with Young Children project, involving Early Childhood Education and Dental Assistant students

by Barb Pimento and Taras Gula

"I was surprised how much I had to offer the Dental Assistant students that they found helpful. I could see the benefits of working together to plan the best experience for the children."

— Early Childhood Education Student, participant in the Oral Health Promotion with Young Children Project 2015

"I really liked learning from ECE students and staff, because we could watch them with the kids on the first visit, and that gave us some confidence about how to talk to them with respect and be positive. It helped us plan our oral health experience for the second visit, too. Also, then the ECE students watched us…so it was the other way around. They told us they learned info about dental from us."

— Dental Assisting Student, participant in the Oral Health Promotion with Young Children Project 2015

Introduction

Students enrolled in community services and health related programs may gain significant knowledge and skills when they have opportunities to connect theory to practice. Interprofessional collaboration is a relevant example of this type of opportunity, offering students the chance to learn 'outside the classroom', and often as part of a practicum. This article describes the *Oral Health Promotion with Young Children* project, involving Early Childhood

Education and Dental Assistant students from an Ontario college. This article includes results of a research component, including pre and post surveys, and phone interviews, which highlight the interprofessional component of the project.

What are interprofessional education and interprofessional collaboration?

Interprofessional education (IPE) occurs when two or more professions learn about, from and with each other, to enable effective interprofessional collaboration (IPC) to improve health outcomes. At times, the difference between IPE and IPC may seem subtle, but, essentially IPE may take place in a workshop or course, and utilize simulation, hypothetical question, or case study, whereas IPC is the process of directly working together in a team to enable shared decision making in a participatory, collaborative approach with the goal of optimal health outcomes for an individual, family, or community (Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative, 2010)

In most recognized IPC practice, professional is an all-encompassing term that includes individuals with the knowledge and/or skills to contribute to the physical, mental and social well-being of a community (World Health Organization, 2010). Interprofessional collaboration is recognized as one of the best ways to move forward in effective health and social service practice (World Health Organization, 2010). When various professionals work collaboratively to support children and families, everyone benefits. Professionals who work collaboratively learn with, from and about each other, build mutual

respect as well as shared knowledge, and support decision-making that is in the best interests of children and families. The additional benefits of drawing a number of services together include reducing duplication, improving the delivery of service, and possibly reducing costs. As early childhood educators who have close relationships with children and their families, we often have much to contribute as part of a team which includes the family, and other professionals, all committed to understanding what is most beneficial to their wellbeing. Our professional and ethical responsibilities must, of course, be at the forefront of communication. (Pimento & Kernested, 2015). All professions call for ethical standards; certainly early childhood educators, in a profession involving vulnerable populations, are not exempt! Confidentiality requirements regarding children and their families, professional boundaries, and conflicts of interest are ethical matters that must be understood and followed. (refer to: College of Early Childhood Educators, 2011)

While not a primary topic in this article, it is relevant to define health promotion as "the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. It moves beyond a focus on individual behaviour towards a wide range of social and environmental involvement." (World Health Organization, retrieved June 2015). Health is a broad term, encompassing early childhood educators' need to view themselves as health promoters, integrating this reality in their many roles and responsibilities. Planning and developing ways to support and promote children's health, safety and wellbeing via updated policies, and practices, as well as working together with families and community, ensures that health is a cornerstone in high quality early childhood education. Health is integrated with children's growth, development and family

realities. Interprofessional collaboration experiences render the 'health promoter' role of ECEs evident.

How do we learn to collaborate with other professionals?

One of the essential aspects of preparing for inter-professional teamwork in the workplace is ongoing opportunities for collaboration during the pre-service educational journey. (Nelson, Tassone, & Hodges, 2014) Students in pre-service early childhood education programs may be overwhelmed when they think about developing relationships with other professionals, and need to be reassured that building the necessary skills doesn't happen overnight. However, it is important that they see the benefits of working collaboratively, learning from others, and sharing their developing expertise to contribute to health and well -being of a child, family, and/or community.

Although ECE students learn to work in teams, until they graduate it is likely that they experience teams solely within the ECE profession. The majority of college ECE diploma programs include rich and diverse placement experiences, but communicating and working with professionals from different areas (such as resource consultants, public health inspectors, social workers, licensing assessors and many others) are not usually in a student's 'scope of practice'. It is realistic that placement students not be included in most teams which are inter-professional, particularly when confidentiality for children and families is essential and broadening the team 'membership' may pose ethical issues. For this and other possible reasons, interprofessional collaboration among pre-service students from other programs is a low risk, less intimidating approach to build confidence in their abilities to work with other professions. Students learning about, from and with students

in other programs as they work in collaboration with a common goal is less daunting, and more 'forgiving' of missteps. Whether these IPC experiences take place within the college, or in a placement agency, supervision by faculty and/or agency staff offers the students guidance and support.

What type of pre-service experiences best support IPC?

Research suggests that attitudes toward interprofessional education can be improved via direct instruction (Kenaszchek, et al., 2012). In the study discussed in the Kenaszchek et al article, students at a college in Ontario attended an Interprofessional Education (IPE) workshop (learning about, from and with each other). The hypothesis in this study was that inter-professional education (IPE) for health and social care students may improve attitudes toward IPE and inter-professional collaboration (IPC). Their results indicated that four of eight models showed statistical significance ($p <.05$) between pre and post workshop scales for attendees. The four interprofessional attitudes that may be influenced by a short IPE workshop were: "perceived competency and autonomy of others, perceived need for cooperation, self-assessed communication and teamwork, and attitudes toward interprofessional learning. Educators who are considering brief interprofessional initiatives may wish to concentrate their training efforts on these domains". (Kenaszchek, et al., 2012, p.p. 662-663).

What is the *Oral Health Promotion with Young Children* project?

This project provided pre-service students in early childhood education (ECE) and dental assisting (DA)

programs with an authentic interprofessional experience. To determine whether pre-service practise in interprofessional collaboration helps participants to value collaboration and build their knowledge and skills working with other professionals, we developed a pilot project titled *Oral Health Promotion with Young Children.* This experience has occurred annually for 3 years and includes the cooperation of the college's child care centres, as well as many additional child care centres and schools – 30-35 agencies annually- in the downtown Toronto core. The project is ongoing but the research results presented here were based on students who participated in the spring of 2015.

Oral Health Promotion with Young Children teams included two Dental Assisting (DA) students visiting preschool, and school-age classrooms in agencies where ECE pre- service students were completing placements. The DA students were paired with ECE students completing 2nd semester field placements. Each DA student team visited a single classroom twice. These two visits were at least two hours, scheduled for two consecutive weeks. During the first visit the DA students observed children in play and routines, inside and/or on the playground. As well, they observed

the ECE students responding to the children. The purpose of the first visit was to help DA students gather information pertaining to beginning knowledge about the children's developmental skills and interests relative to planning an effective oral health experience for the particular group of children.

For fifteen minutes toward the end of their visit with the children, the DA and ECE students had an opportunity to discuss the experience and ask each other questions, ideally (but not always), with an experienced ECE staff present. The purpose of the second visit was for the DA students to implement their planned oral health experience with the children. During this visit, the ECE students observed and assisted the DA students as they facilitated their oral health experience with the children. As with the first visit, the ECE and DA students had an opportunity to discuss/ debrief the experience, possibly, but not necessarily, with an ECE staff present.

Why focus on oral health in young children?

This article focuses on the evaluation of the IPC components of the project, but it would be remiss not to describe the potential benefits to children of a focus on oral health. These include

practise in effective tooth-brushing, participation in an age appropriate activity based on oral health, and having their questions answered in developmentally appropriate ways. For example, focus on the here and now benefits like 'mouth feels clean' and 'brushing helps take the sticky food off your teeth so you won't get a cavity (a hole in your tooth)' are based on cognitive understanding of health in the preschool and early school age years. A comment like 'brushing and flossing your teeth every day will make sure they are healthy when you are an adult' is easily memorized by young children, but this future orientation does not have real meaning for children until adolescence and later (Pimento and Kernested, 2015).

The mutual goal for the ECE and DA students was to develop their skills in supporting young children in good oral (dental) routine habits. Essentially, how were the oral health activities and presentations developed and facilitated by the DA and ECE students informed by the collaboration between ECE students' knowledge of child development and early childhood curriculm with DA students' knowledge of oral health?

What were the intended IPC benefits for the ECE and DA students?

The main objectives for the students in this project were:

• to gain some familiarity about the roles of the other profession
  – ECE with DA: to share their knowledge of child development and appropriate interactions with the children
  – DA with ECE: share their knowledge about oral health promotion
• to work together to implement positive oral health experiences with children

Who participated in the Oral Health Promotion with Young Children Project?

Participants were recruited from the ECE and DA diploma programs at a large community college in southwestern Ontario. All DA students in the final semester of their 2 semester program, and all ECE students in their 2nd placement at the agencies participating in the *Oral Health for Young Children* project, were required to participate in the project itself, but volunteered participation in the research component. The placement agencies included a range of licensed: College Lab child care centres, non-profit early childhood agencies (with preschool and after school kindergarten and school age programs), as well as public school full day kindergartens. ECE students in those agencies for field placement were part of the project, and DA students were placed at the specific rooms in these (34) early childhood agencies in teams of two.

Who participated in the research component?

In all there were 192 potential participants in the Oral Health Promotion Project– 80 ECE and 112 DA students with an additional 5 Health Information Management (HIM) students acting as research assistants. The HIM students were invited to participate in the research as well. In the pre-experience on-line survey there were 84 participants and for the post-experience survey there were 75. This indicated a response rate of 42.6% for the pre-experience survey and 38.5% for the post experience survey. Furthermore, 11 students participated in a one-on-one interview after the experience. Because participation was anonymous there was no data of breakdown by program.

What were the research questions?

We investigated student perceptions of the Inter Professional Collaboration

before and after their experience. The researchers hypothesized that student perceptions of their understanding of IPC and the potential for collaboration with other health science departments would improve. Specifically, we chose the following research questions:

1. Will students' ratings of the value of IPC improve after the experience?
2. Will students' ratings of their own knowledge and skills contribute when communicating with persons from other professions?

The hope was that a quick assessment of the above questions would help answer a bigger question. Does *practising* interprofessional collaboration via health promotion projects have an impact on students in valuing and starting to build the knowledge and skills to be part of interprofessional collaboration teams?

What research methods and measures were employed in the current year's project?

The research study methods were:

A. a short, on-line survey (identical survey, pre and post visits to the agencies) which included the following two questions:
   1. Do you see the value in inter-professional collaborative experiences in your future profession?
   2. Do you believe that you have knowledge and skills to contribute when communicating with persons from other professions?
B. follow up, 10-15 minute phone interview with one of the researchers. The purpose of the interview was to obtain detail on answers given on their online post-survey for questions.

The Oral Health Promotion for Young Children Project was described to all participants, by the first author in their classes and an information letter describing the project was distributed and posted electronically on the college's learning management system. During the class visits student questions and concerns were addressed. A follow up email was sent from the HIM students reminding ECE and DA participants of the 'window' during which the pre-survey was available to complete. The pre survey was completed prior to participation in the Oral Health Promotion project. HIM students sent a second email to all DA and ECE participants informing them about the post- survey window. The post survey was completed after participants had completed their involvement in the Oral Health Promotion project.

Recruitment for each of the pre and post online survey(s):
ECE and DA students who were about to participate in the Oral Health Promotion Project were provided with a link to the electronic survey. The first page of the survey included an informed consent that participants agreed to in order to continue with the remainder of the survey questions. The survey included no personally identifying information and because it was completely anonymous potential participants were provided with the following message: "Thank you for choosing to participate in the study. The data collection is anonymous: we will not be able to remove your data after you save your responses. If you do not wish to participate please exit the survey now." Informed consent and the above message regarding participant anonymity were included in both the pre and the post participation surveys.

Recruitment for post IPC one-to-one phone interview
Directly following the second visit to the agencies, the researchers posted a message on the colleges' electronic learning management system (Blackboard) inviting interested students to participate in a one-to-one interview, describing the interview purpose and agenda, as well as the following script:

"All your information will be kept confidential, only to be used to enhance our knowledge of explanations for answers given. The last question in the post survey is a request for your GBC email address if you are interested in a phone interview."

Again, it was stated that the interview was voluntary, with no pressure to 'sign up'. Students were reminded that they could withdraw at any time if they had signed up (i.e. given us their email address). When we contacted potential participants, 4 of the 15 volunteers declined following through with the phone interview, for a total of 11 interviewees.

What were our findings?

Below are the findings from each of the two focus questions asked in the pre and post surveys, followed by some examples of responses offered by the phone interview respondents.

Figure 1
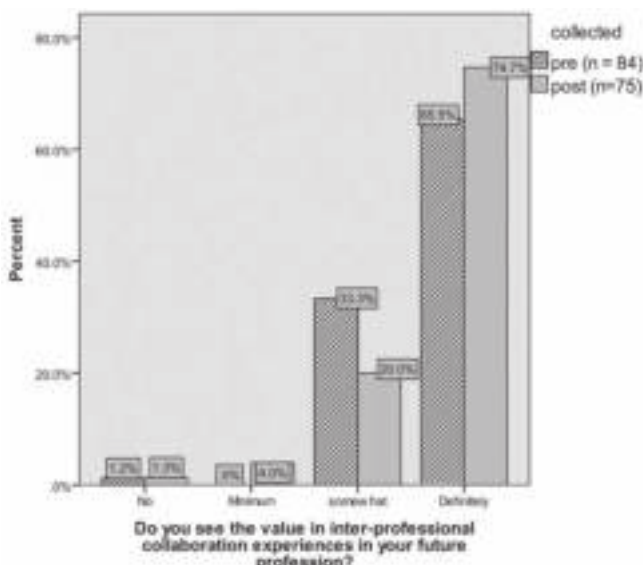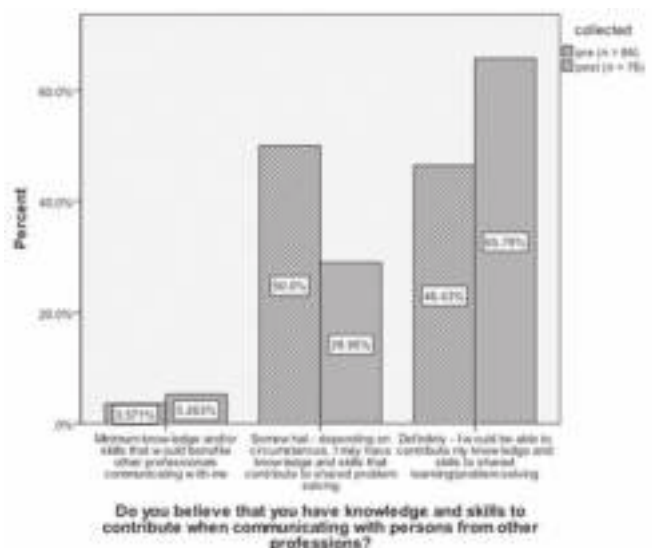Comparison of students' ratings of the value of IPC

Figure 2
Comparison of numbers of students' pre versus post-experience on self-rated knowledge and skills to contribute to IPC experience.

Question regarding value: Do students recognize value in inter-professional collaborative experiences for their future profession?

The rate of respondents who said 'definitely' went up nominally from 65.5% in the pre-online survey to 74.7% in the post-online survey. The rate of those who responded somewhat went down from 33.3% pre-experience to 20% (15/75) post-experience (1 response was missing for this question).

Given the fact that individual students could not be tracked pre to post-experience it is hard to say whether students changed their rating. Nevertheless it is clear that some change did take place, as evident in Figure 1.

With regard to the 11 individual phone interviews conducted, the data included the following examples of responses to the question regarding value of IPC:

- ECE student (who responded 'definitely'):"This experience has motivated me to give my best and be more open to learning in this and upcoming ECE placements, including more focus on communicating with families."
- DA student (who responded 'definitely'):"We were able to give each other important advice (e.g. ECE helped me learn how to put children at ease, and I helped ECE know about specific cariogenic foods: may be healthy food but not good for teeth), which is good information to share with kids and parents."
- ECE student: (who responded: 'somewhat'**):** "This IPC experience was okay but both the DA students and I were a bit unsure of ourselves. Maybe more opportunities while at college would help."
- DA student (who responded 'somewhat'): "I hope the college puts more of them into our training, because it is good practice to talk

about what you know and come up with ideas with students from other professions. It makes you realize you may know more than you think you do."

Question regarding knowledge and skills: Do students believe that they have knowledge and skills to contribute when communicating with persons from other professions?

Although almost half (46.4%) of student respondents felt 'definitely able' pre-experience, 65.8% of students felt 'definitely able' post-experience. The rate of students that felt 'somewhat able' dropped from 50% at pre-experience to 28.9 %. These percentages demonstrate that more students felt confident in their ability to contribute to shared learning and/or problem solving after the experience.

With regard to the 11 individual phone interviews conducted, the data included the following examples of responses to the question regarding knowledge and skills to contribute:
- ECE student: (responded: 'definitely'): 'I was in my second placement, and I surprised myself that I could answer the questions the DA students asked me. It made me feel smart. And then, when I saw them do their dental activities, I

told them I really liked it and why. So I think we all learned a lot. Hope we do more IPC projects in ECE next year.'
- DA student (responded 'definitely'): 'I found that the positive experience has helped me believe that I have a lot to contribute with other professions also interested in promoting health.'
- ECE student: (responded 'minimum'): 'I'm still 'shaky' and feel a bit intimidated when asked to contribute knowledge and skills, but I hope to build my confidence with experience. I'm thinking of refreshing (more reading) from a couple of the theory based courses I have taken.
- DA student (responded 'somewhat'): 'Profession related confidence increases with education and experience (and comfort level – I am male in a female dominated profession, so it takes a while to feel comfortable in a team with few if any other males)

Discussion

Many respondents in this study reported seeing the value of IPC experiences. This was also true in their ratings for "contributing knowledge and skills to shared learning and problem solving"- an indicator, in our opinion, of some increased confidence.

One interesting observation emerged when reviewing the phone interview

responses, specifically the example each student offered for choosing their response. The examples of reasons for 'valuing' IPC were closely connected to those for believing they have knowledge and skills to contribute to IPC. Upon reflection of this connection, it is reasonable to believe that a comfort level during the interprofessional experience (re: confidence), could lead one to equate this with a higher value for IPC experiences overall. Rational thought may lead us to believe that future IPC experiences would be valuable to build competence and confidence. However, emotionality, particularly if the student found the experience to be somewhat intimidating, may lead to fear for, and thereby less value rating for, future experiences. This idea may be a good springboard for discussion with students! As educators, we may find that an opportunity for a fulsome debriefing discussion with groups of students, which might result in ideas for diminishing this issue. One example may be: additional preparation for the experience.

Specific to ECE students, a benefit for continuing IPC experiences during their pre-service education may be a beginning recognition that strong relationships with children and families contribute significantly to an interprofessional team. Deference to highly credentialed authorities can (and certainly has in the past), humbled early childhood educators into placing less value on their own knowledge. However, many experienced ECEs are finding, or already know, that interprofessional teams help ECEs appreciate that their knowledge and insights, adhering to ethical standards, can be invaluable to a problem solving approach for the child and family's well-being. Their day to day observations and documentation of children's development and behaviour can add much needed information. Of course, credentialed experts have much to share that is essential and important, but this does not diminish the ECE ongoing observations and relationships with children and families.

What were the limitations of our study and future research implications?

We need to track individual responses pre and post, to know how many of the same students changed their rating, and how they changed. The current findings suggest an increase but in order to really find out if knowledge and skills, and valuing increased, individual responses need to be tracked.

One student's response to our question in the phone interview to offer suggestions for future, was the wish to have an opportunity to meet the other students with whom they would be working. This would be an excellent way for DA and ECE students to feel more comfortable before working together at the agency. It may also be an opportunity for an IPE session-focusing on the competencies important for IPC published in the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative (Feb 2010). The effects of instruction are not always significant in changing participants' attitudes towards and confidence in IPC (Kenaszchek, et al., 2012). Although the logistics of this suggestion are complex due to scheduling and classroom availability, it may be doable and worthwhile in order to increase comfort and confidence about working with students from a different professional training program. If not, it may be possible to find a way to at least connect the students.

The outcomes (pre and post surveys and phone interviews) were based on self-reports which has its limitations. Using solely informant ratings is sufficient to address certain research questions, and are certainly the most commonly used method, practical, efficient, easy to administer, and inexpensive. However, when there is some doubt about whether the concept being investigated can be represented to its fullest, the use of multiple methods should be considered. The bottom line is that we simply need to take the time to consider measurement while conducting research. (McDonald, 2008, p.12)

In future research, it may be helpful to use other methods that could be generalized to the settings and situations where they naturally occur (ecological validity). Examples of these methods are peer reports, behavioural assessments, and possibly use of a reliable tool such as Interprofessional collaborative competency attainment survey (ICCAS) (MacDonald et al, 2009) which results in scores that predict meaningful outcomes with regard to attitudes toward interprofessional competency,

which, arguably, can be connected to perceived value as well as developing knowledge and skills in interprofessional collaborative experiences.

Conclusion

There are several reasons to promote further interprofessional collaboration opportunities for students in health and community services (including early childhood education) programs:

- the worldwide recognition of IPC as one of the best ways to move forward in effective health and social service practice (World Health Organization, 2010, p.36).
- the 'practical experience' in IPC makes it possible to apply the definitions of IPE and IPC, so that students will be more ready, or at the least, less anxious about, working with a range of health and social service professionals in their future career.
- communication with students from other professions, and finding that they can contribute their developing knowledge and skills, may also help them begin to recognize the importance of 'becoming' a professional.

With regard to the research questions focusing on perceived value of future IPC opportunities and students' perceived knowledge and skills to contribute when working with students from other programs, it is evident that this study had relatively positive results for both questions. For next year's project, the most likely ways to improve both ECE and DA students' knowledge and skills for the experience is for us to place more emphasis on their preparation. Ideally, this will include a strategy to ensure that the students meet in a session before the first visit to their agency, and focus on interprofessional education (i.e. topic on competencies important for IPC). In addition, a recently written, and now available resource handbook for DA students: '*What to Expect & FAQ's'*, as well as a yet-to-be-developed similar handbook for ECE students, will hopefully reduce anxiety for the experience. Due to

the likely, albeit subjective, connection between student confidence and perceived value of IPC in their future professions, we are hopeful that having positive IPC experiences increased interest in post-graduation interprofessional collaboration.

Barb Pimento was a professor at George Brown College since 1983. She taught a range of courses in The School of Early Childhood, with a focus on Health, Safety & Nutrition, and Health Promotion. Other courses included Working with Families, and Observation, Planning & Evaluation. Barb has been working as a Health Promotion Specialist in The Centre for Health Sciences since January 2013. Barb is co-author (with Deborah Kernested) of Healthy Foundations in Early Childhood Settings, published by Nelson Canada. Now in its 5th edition, Healthy Foundations was first published in 1994.

Taras Gula has been a professor at George Brown College since 2002. He teaches courses in mathematics, statistics, research methods and accounting to students in both the Health Information Management and the Office Administration – Health Services programs. Before coming to George Brown, Taras taught for 12 years in a variety of secondary school settings including a few alternative schools within the Toronto District School Board. He has been involved in large and small research studies. Most have focused on understanding college students' learning in the areas of numeracy, foundations mathematics, statistics, and interprofessional education. Taras has presented papers at RUME (Research in Undergraduate Math Education) conferences, and is a member of OCMA (Ontario College Math Association) and CMESG (Canadian Math Education Study Group).

References

Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative. (Feb 2010). A National Interprofessional Competency Framework, Vancouver: University of B.C., College of Health Disciplines

DiVall, Margarita V, Kolbig,Leslie et al. (November 2014*). Interprofessional socialization as a way to introduce collaborative competencies to first-year health science students.* Journal of Interprofessional Care Vol. 28, No. 6, Pages 576-578

Kenaszchuk, C., Rykhoff, M., Collins, L., McPhail, S., & van Soeren, M. (2012). Positive and null effects of interprofessional education on attitudes toward interprofessional learning and collaboration. *Advances in health sciences education*, 17(5), 651-669.

MacDonald, Archibald, Trumpower, Jelley, Cragg, Casimiro, & Johnstone.2009. *ICCAS – Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey.*Retrieved August 2015 from: ennovativesolution.com/WeLearn/IPE-EN/ICCAS.Final.pdf

McDonald, Jennifer Dodorico. (June 2008). Measuring Personality Constructs: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Self-Reports, Informant Reports and Behavioural Assessments. *Enquire, Volume 1, Issue 1,1-18.*

Nelson, S.,Tassone M & Hodges B.D. (2014). *Creating the Health Care Team of the Future: The Toronto Model for Interprofessional Education and Practice*. New York: Cornell University Press

Pimento, B. & Kernested, D. (2015). *Healthy Foundations in Early Childhood Settings 5th edition.* Toronto: Nelson Canada

World Health Organization. (2010). Framework for action on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice. Geneva, Switzerland: Department of Human Resources for Health.

World Health Organization. (n.d.). Health Topics. Retrieved June 2015 from: http://www.who.int/topics/health_promotion/en/

ideas
Emotional Well-Being in Child Care

Challenging Ourselves in Our Practice

CHALLENGING OURSELVES
IN OUR PRACTICE

The Challenges of Cultural Competence

Exploring the Impacts of Race, Culture and Identity on Early Childhood Educator Practice

by Chanequa Cameron and Lyndsay Macdonald

Introduction

The notion that early childhood is a critical period for establishing a strong foundation for cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development has become well established within the sector (NAE, 2015). As many experts would agree, children begin to make sense of their world in early childhood, making it a prime time for children to develop positive ideas about their self-identity which goes hand in hand with a child's ethnic background and culture (Friendly & Prabhu, 2010). There is also a growing trend in professional learning and training across the early childhood sector that is reflective of the diverse makeup of the Canadian population.

This article will explore, from the professional perspective of the authors, how race, culture and individual identity impact the professional practice of early childhood educators (ECEs) and workers in Canada. This topic will be explored through a cultural competence lens as the authors' present research alongside culturally competent recommendations for professional reflection and personal stories.

To begin, we must look closely at the term, *cultural competence*, and what that means to the professional work of ECE's. Although

research in the field dating back as early as 1993 has examined cultural competence in pre-service training (Brunson, 1993), there is currently no operational definition of cultural competence that is specific to the Canadian ECE sector (Obegi & Ritblatt, 2005). Other countries, such as Australia operate a professional learning program that recognizes cultural competence as an element of supporting a child's understanding of who they are. (Professional Learning Program, 2013).

There is further research in several other professional areas to support embedding cultural competence in training and work practices, such as in immigration work, medical care and child and youth care work. To truly define cultural competence, one must draw from past research which says that, "cultural competence" is "the ability to think, feel, and act in ways that acknowledge, respect, and build upon ethnic, [socio]cultural, and linguistic diversity" (Lynch & Hanson 1993). Furthermore,

Obegi and Ritblatt (2005) support that culturally salient care provides children with "a sense of security, belonging, and personal history" (p.1).

Reflective Practice

Cultural competence is not a given skill for every early childhood educator or child care worker, but rather an individual's level of cultural competence depends on a number of professional characteristics such as educator beliefs. Becoming culturally competent is a continuous professional practice that requires intentional effort and development. This brings us to the importance of including cultural competence in the reflective practice of ECEs. As ECE's reflect upon their work with children they should be mindful of how their actions and reactions to culture and racial identity craft their relationships with families and more specifically the children that they serve. Reflective practice has long been used in the early childhood education and care sector, but what are the key elements of reflective practice? Arguably, reflective practice can mean different things to ECEs (depending on where they live and the populations they serve). However, if we look specifically at the work of ECEs in Ontario it can be noted that not only is personal and professional reflection important but so is ongoing professional learning. An article titled, The Evolution of Professional Learning for RECEs in Ontario looks at why it is an integral part of our work by saying,

> "Decades of research have identified that the learning and ongoing professional learning of early childhood educators and staff is a critical element in the provision of high quality ECEC. As regulated professionals, registered early childhood educators also have ethical and professional responsibilities to enhance their practice and gain new skills and knowledge to cope with the ever changing needs of children and families. In the context of Ontario's going agenda to 'modernize' childcare and the broader ECEC sector, increased attention has been devoted to the professional learning of the ECEC workforce," (Dixon & Halfon, 2015)

Due to the fact that ongoing professional learning and reflective practices are tied to ethical and professional responsibilities we believe that this is where the underlying elements of cultural competence fit in. Within the realm of professionalism we urge ECEs to question what moral and culturally competent responsibilities they may appreciate based on specific areas of

their work. With this article we also ask you to question what cultural competence specifically means to you. Our hopes are that with the information presented in this article, ECEs will move toward a more sound appreciation of differences and will make efforts to both question and recreate their methodology for understanding differences through critical pedagogy.

Five Elements of Cultural Competence Found in our Review of the Research

A search of both national and international literature on cultural competence was completed to compile a working list of suggestions to guide ECEs in their reflective practice. The authors suggest these six elements of culturally reflective principles as a starting point for Canadian ECEs to model what it means to provide culturally competent care.

1. To understand and evaluate our teaching beliefs by reflecting on our own racial and cultural identity and understanding of biases

Research offers that, unexamined biases keep us from fully recognizing when we profile children and families in ways that limit possibilities for teaching and learning (Long et al, 2014). Teachers' racial identities do influence their conceptualizations of teaching and understanding culturally diverse young students

(Han, West-Olantunji & Thomas, 2011). Moreover ECE's need to continually evaluate their teaching beliefs through reflecting on what impact our own racial and cultural identities and biases have on relationship building and learning facilitation offered to children.

2. To embody and demonstrate qualities of ethics, morality and empathy

ECE is a valuable sector of our society, and with this come many professional obligations due to the vulnerability of the young children in our care. Clarke and Watson's (2014) study of an inner city child care centre located in London, England found that failure to employ ethnic minority staff or have appropriate translation services was the reason the centre failed to attract or meet the needs of minority groups. This tells us that employers have a duty to make the workplace reflective of clients served whilst providing services that meet the needs of clients specifically in the area of language services. Most importantly, ECEs need to demonstrate ethical, moral and empathetic proficiency in order to embrace the magnitude of culturally salient care.

3. To engage in and value reflective practices individually and as part of a team

While engaging in reflective practice ECEs should identify and record goals to help them build strong trusting relationships with all of the children and families in the program. One article which examined cultural competence in ECE settings stated that, "Becoming culturally competent is about building respectful relationships. It occurs over time, by our connection with others and through our daily experiences with children and families in local communities. It is as much about what we do every day, the little decisions we make and words we use, as it is about what we think, what we understand and what we believe." (Connor, 2012)

4. To make an honest and on-going commitment to research topics initiated by children and families in ECEC settings

A well-established approach to early childhood education that has gained considerable recognition internationally is the idea that children learn best through play experiences that are

> **It became clear to me that, like my own African-Canadian culture with which I identify, all of the families were so different: their needs were different, dialect and often understanding and appreciation of the care given were different. That is when I realized that I needed to also pay specific attention to the learning environment that I created with the children — to maintain culturally inclusive versus culturally offensive climates.**

reflective of their interests and developmental needs. ECEs can often be found recording detailed observations of children as they play and interact with others; this practice supports educators to plan within individual zones of proximal development while adjusting learning experiences to meet the individual learning needs of each child. When educators and child care workers do not have a well-established understanding of specific topics, it is critical to acknowledge that there is room for growth and move towards conducting research. An article on supporting cultural competence for teachers' states, "Far too often educators focus on teaching multiculturalism and diversity without first engaging in learning that ensures that they are themselves fully competent in the cultural aspects of the knowledge they seek to impart to their students (Day, 2014)." Therefore teachers need to see themselves as lifelong learners as well as researcher.

5. To work from a perspective that each situation and individual is different due to their unique experiences with culture, race and identity

As ECEs it is important that we both recognize differences while also valuing them. By valuing differences through a culturally competent lens ECEs play a huge role in supporting children's development of positive self-identities. These two main points are supported in research where it states, "as diversity grows, the challenge to early childhood services grows to address the dimension of equity these important traits raise. On the surface, their impact may appear to be manifest strictly as classroom practice issues. Yet, as early care and education settings are working to deepen their sensitivity to culture, it is increasingly acknowledged that cultural values and their resultant interaction styles also manifest themselves within the infrastructure of the programs (Phillips, 1993)." This tells us that our attitudes towards certain preconceived notions and understanding helps us create the programs offered to children. Our competent understanding of children and diversity has a big hand in the development of programs as well. So the key is to start with staff development so that they are prepared to appreciate and value the differences in

children they serve and create learning environments that will foster both global citizenship as well as culturally competent individuals.

A culturally competent lens:

Chanequa's Experiences with Cultural Competence

I have always taken pride in my work as an ECE and the opportunity I have to look at my work through the lens of being an ethnic minority. In my formal training as an ECE I was taught to be a reflective practitioner and to value reciprocity, resiliency and most importantly to listen. For me, reflective practice means that I should take my experiences and reflections and build upon my skills, to become a better ECE, better caregiver and to make better connections with families. Of course we all have difficulty at times connecting with people, however the core elements of ECEC should propel each and every ECE to find true purpose and meaning within their work.

My first hugely meaningful and culturally competent experience came from my work in a small suburban city just north of Toronto. In my three years of work at this centre with children from infancy to school age, I learned the value of connecting with families through language, as many of the families that enrolled at the centre were new immigrants. What I reflected on most often was how I could ease the stress of change and transitions for the families I served. This is why I dedicated myself to learning how to read some *Pin Yin* and to speak and correctly address families in Mandarin. I was also very mindful to learn and observe the core values of the families I served.

This working experience has made me appreciate the notion of cultural competence and will forever guide my professional work as an RECE.

...Had the educational team approached the situation from the standpoint of "Let's find out how we can best support this child and his family", rather than "Let's find out how can we get this dangerous kid out of our classroom", perhaps we could have positively impacted the trajectory of this child's life.

The children and the families I work with now and in the future have so much to teach me and I welcome those lessons- after all part of my job is not to become what I am not but rather to try to understand what I am not and where I have not come from.

Lyndsay's experiences with cultural competence

For me, the idea of cultural competence as a critical element for working with, educating and caring for young children became obvious through reflections of my own practice but also through attentive observations and research.

An anecdote from my professional practice serves as a reminder to be aware of and attentive to biases that we undoubtedly hold in order to serve children and their families to the best of

our ability. I was working in a school-based kindergarten program where biases were left unexamined and lead to the profiling of a young child experiencing behavioral challenges. His educators had him labeled as a "problem", he was "aggressive", "dangerous" and his parent was profiled as "unhelpful" and "uncaring". Decisions were made hastily with very little reflection or discussion and the child was removed from the program.

My training in early childhood education left a lasting impression of the importance of research – not just in universities – but within the classroom and with children as researchers. Early childhood professionals *are* researchers who investigate topical issues related to their practice and to the field at large. In the scenario I described above,

Culturally competent educators have the ability to think and feel in a way that builds upon respect, understanding and acknowledgement of ethnic and cultural diversity. Cultural competence is not a given skill, it requires continuous professional development.

students." (Han, West-Olantunji & Thomas, 2011)

Chanequa Cameron works as a Registered Early Childhood Educator with a public school board in full day kindergarten. She is also serving her 3rd term on the board of directors for the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario, while also fulfilling the role of member council representative for the Canadian Childcare Federation's member council. Chanequa's written achievements include articles surrounding ECE awareness and advocacy and curriculum consulting and development for Vanuatu.

Chanequa is an advocate for several social causes and initially engaged in advocacy initiatives at the age of twelve by writing local MP's and other constituents to have a crosswalk installed near the middle school she attended. Chanequa has also mentored and peer tutored numerous ECE students during her career. Chanequa is an active member and pursues advocacy initiatives with professional associations such as the AECEO, CCCF, OCBCC and CUPE Local 4400.

Chanequa holds a Diploma in ECE and a Bachelor of Child Development from Seneca College and is currently enrolled in Ryerson University's Masters Program for Early Childhood Studies. chanequacameron@tdsb.on.ca

Conclusion

Cultural competence and the idea of exploring the impact of race culture and identity on ECE practice came up as a topic of interest because as our nation diversifies, so will the ECE sector and the clients they serve. At the beginning of the article the authors were mindful to state why ECE is a critical period for supporting healthy development as well as the fact that this is a period when children begin to make sense of their world which is prime time for supporting positive understanding of self and identity related to ethnic background and culture. The paper also explored from a professional perspective how race culture and individual identity impact our individual practices. This was done by sharing personal stories, reviewing research and tying it in to professional learning and development trends.

In summary, cultural competence is supported in other sectors such as immigration, health care and child and youth care so it should also be supported through training, certification and professional development for ECEs. Culturally competent educators have the ability to think and feel in a way that builds upon respect, understanding and acknowledgement of ethnic and cultural diversity. Moreover, cultural competence is not a given skill, it requires continuous professional development. Finally, we would like to end this article with the following anecdote. "Although reflecting on and challenging one's identity is a life-long process, embedding racial identity development theory into the multicultural courses for early childhood teacher candidates as well as professional development for practicing teachers can help decrease their resistance while increasing their knowledge and skills in order to become effective educators of culturally diverse

Lyndsay Macdonald currently works as Research Officer at the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) and as National Coordinator of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC).

Lyndsay's research interests include the history of child care policy and the development of child care systems in Canada and internationally. Lyndsay has also researched how the professionalization of the early childhood education and child care workforce has impacted the child care movement in Canada.

Lyndsay advocates passionately for child care policies that support all Canadian families, parents and guardians to maintain a healthy work life balance and that put children at the centre of system building.

Lyndsay holds both a BA in Early Childhood Education and an MA in Early Childhood Studies from Ryerson University School of Early Childhood Studies. lmacdonald@childcarecanada.org

References

Bernard Van Leer Foundation. (2015). A good start: advances in early childhood development. *Early Childhood Matters*.

Connor, Jenni. (2012). Becoming Culturally Competent- Ideas that Support Practice. *National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program*. 65, pages 1-4. http://earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Day, Stephanie. (2014). Helping Educators Become Culturally Competent. Women in Higher Education. (8).

Dixon, Melanie & Halfon, Shani. (2015). *College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario*: The Evolution of Professional Learning for RECEs in Ontario. Retrieved August 1, 2015 from http://www.college-ece.ca/en/Public/News/Pages/The-Evolution-of-Professional-Learning-for-RECEs-in-Ontario-.aspx

Friendly, M., & Prabhu, N. (2010). Can early childhood education and care help keep Canada's promise of respect for diversity? *Childcare Resource and Research Unit*, retrieved author, from http://childcarecanada.org/publications/occasional-paper-series/10/01/can-early-childhood-education-and-care-help-keep-canada%E2%80%99s

Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, (2011). Use or Racial Identity Development Theory to Explore Cultural Competence among Early Childhood Educators. *STRATE Journal*, 20(1), 1-11.

National Education Association. (2015). Early Childhood Education. Retrieved August 2, 2015 from, http://www.nea.org/home/18163.htm

Obegi, A.D., & Natan Ritblatt, S. (2005). Cultural Competence in Infant / Toddler Caregivers: Application of a Tri-Dimensional Model. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 19(3).

Phillips, C. (1993). Early childhood reform: innovative approaches to cultural and racial diversity among families. *National Association of State Boards of Education*.

Taylor, Jim. (2012). Developing Your Childs Healthy Self-identity. Retrieved August 2, 2015 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-jim-taylor/self-identity_b_2063761.html

The Early Years Learning Framework (2013.). Becoming Culturally Competent- Ideas that Support Practice. *NQSPLP e-newsletter*, volume 64 #72011, pages 1-4. Web. http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/e-newsletters/

CHALLENGING OURSELVES IN OUR PRACTICE

Registered Early Childhood Educators' (RECEs) Perceptions of Children who Exhibit Challenging Behaviours in the Classroom

by Diana Chow, Cristina DiNardo, Amy Nicole Garthson, Oi Ling Helen Kwok, Susan Elizabeth O'Neill, Dr. Sharon Quan-McGimpsey

Understanding and managing children who exhibit challenging behaviours is a professional expectation many registered early childhood educators (RECE)[1] face in the classroom. McCready & Soloway (2010) found that educators reported this to be one of the main challenges they encountered. Educators approach challenging behaviours based on their previous knowledge and experiences, and this shapes their perceptions of the children who exhibit them. Challenging behaviours have been defined as any repeated pattern or perception of behaviour that interferes with the child's learning and development, presents physical, instructional, or social concerns to the educator, and is harmful to other children and to others (Fettig, Schultz & Ostrosky, 2013; Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor & Miels, 2012; Westling, 2010). The early childhood teachers' perceptions of challenging

behaviours as well as the strategies they use are based on the educators' own working experience and support provided by their team members (Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor & Miels, 2012; Henricsson & Rydel, 2004; Westling, 2010). However, educators also felt that they were inadequately prepared to support the capabilities of these children based on their pre-service early childhood training (Gettinger, Stoiber, & Koscik, 2008).

A case study approach involving 30-minute in-depth semi-structured interviews was conducted in order to ascertain how RECEs' knowledge and experiences influenced their perceptions and practices of working with children who exhibited challenging behaviours in early childhood classrooms. Four RECEs, who each held a two-year diploma in early childhood education, had between four to twenty-seven years of work experience in the field, and were presently working in child care centres in York Region and the greater Toronto area (GTA), were interviewed regarding their beliefs and perceptions about children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom, previous education and training preparing RECEs for work in the field, support received from co-workers, and the challenges that they faced in the classroom.

When the RECEs were asked about their perceptions of children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom, they focused on their direct and indirect experiences with the children. In other words, not only did they gain insights through their daily interactions with the children, but their perspectives were also influenced by their active engagement with other educators, parents, and the classroom environment. They also reflected on their pre-service education as another source of knowledge that contributed to their current views of how they conceptualized children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom. The sections that follow document the specific dimensions and experiences that affected the RECEs perceptions of the children who exhibited challenging behaviours.

> "… you have to see that what works with one child may not work with another child. I think redefining the child and not labelling them."

Experiences with Children

All RECEs reported how their working knowledge and experiences with children who exhibited challenging behaviour influenced their practice in the classroom. Experiences of working with children who exhibited challenging behaviours enabled the educators to recognize the children's need for individualized support. Whether it was experiences in their past or the present, the RECEs acknowledged that relationship building was of

paramount importance. Approaches that were a *one size fits all* needed to be replaced with unique strategies that would take into consideration individual temperaments and relational attachments. As one educator stated, "… you have to see that what works with one child may not work with another child. I think redefining the child and not labelling them." (RECE 2, 14 years)

Experience also promoted the RECEs' ability to be proactive and develop instincts for predicting triggers of challenging behaviours before they occurred. "I'm always watching… the interactions that the child has and if I see a negative behaviour I'll redirect that negative behaviour. I try to be proactive if I know a child is about to throw, hit or run" (RECE 1, 27 years). All RECEs' found that with experience they developed what was perceived to be an important quality when working with children who exhibited challenging behaviours: patience. One RECE said that she learned patience, to not fix problems right away and to take time in better understanding the child's individual needs (RECE 2, 14 years). What prepared the educators for successfully dealing with challenging behaviours were the RECE's direct interactions with the children based on those experiences.

Experiences with Other Educators

Another way the RECEs learned how to handle challenging behaviours was through their experiences working with other educators. On the one hand, one educator found herself resisting the temptation to listen to the input of others. She stated that, "There are always teachers who are going to say there are challenging students but you have to get to know the child first before you bring in those biases and not treat the child how the teachers have labelled them" (RECE 3, 8 years). On the other hand, another educator found that working with a colleague supported her in gaining an understanding of the challenging behaviours. As she pointed out, "In the classroom there are two primary care teachers who can also pick up on the child's behaviours and we share what we know about the child and help each other out" (RECE 2, 14 years).

The RECEs felt most supported by their co-workers when they shared the same teaching philosophy, stepped in to help, as well as offering insights in managing difficult situations from a different perspective. Sharing the same teaching philosophy was

> **Creating relationships and engaging in open communication with family members enabled educators to find out pertinent pieces of information relating to the child in order to provide further support and strategies for the child, parents, and co-workers.**

said to minimize misunderstandings in their communication and heightened the stability of care for the children. When viewpoints between co-workers conflicted, one RECE stated, "I have had team members who were not on the same path and others who did not want to deal with the child's behaviour. Someone would say one thing and another would say something different, then we started to lose respect for each other" (RECE 1, 27 years). In addition, it was crucial to have team members willing to step in and help when challenging situations arose and to offer alternative perspectives. As one RECE pointed out, "I may see the child's behaviour as attention seeking, but then my team member will see it differently. They will help broaden my view about how to view behaviour differently" (RECE 4, 4 years). Creating cooperative and supportive relationships with team members in the classroom encourages RECEs to focus on the factors contributing to children's challenging behaviours and to collaborate in developing strategies to support them.

Experiences with Parents

All RECEs felt that developing trusting relationships with the family provided them with a different understanding of the causes of children's challenging behaviours. They stated that parental involvement improves parent-teacher relationships and increased their confidence in supporting the child's challenging behaviours. As well, communicating and listening to the family was said to lead to positive outcomes in classroom practice. One of the RECEs indicated that, "Past history and family situation[s] would help us understand their behaviour more" (RECE 4, 4 years). Creating relationships and engaging in open communication with family members enabled educators to find out pertinent pieces of information relating to the child in order to provide further support and strategies for the child, parents, and co-workers.

Experiences Within a Variety of Classroom Environments

The classroom environment was viewed by the RECEs as playing a role in triggering challenging behaviours as well as supporting strategies to support that behaviour. The RECEs found that as they worked in different early learning classrooms, their perceptions of dealing with challenging behaviours changed. The more experience they had, the more competent they felt about developing a positive environment for children who exhibited

challenging behaviours. With experience, the educators felt better equipped to combine their knowledge of the child with their recognition of the importance of adapting the environment based on the child's needs. One of the educators explained, "It only makes me strive to get to know the children more so I can accommodate them in the classroom… just being able to deal with the behaviour and accommodate it" (RECE 3, 8 years). The RECEs learned, through experience, the importance of the environmental set up and its potential negative impact when adaptations have not been made to suit children who exhibited challenging behaviours. For example, one of the RECEs stated, "I'll have to set up an environment where the child can be alone because some children don't like it when other children are so close to them and it bothers them" (RECE 1, 27 years).

Reflections on Pre-service Education

Prior to working in the field, field placements in pre-service education at colleges and universities provide ECE students with opportunities to learn through their experiences interacting with children. As ECE students, the RECEs being interviewed found that experiences in field placements where there were children with challenging behaviour contradicted their on- the-job experiences they had after graduation. The RECEs stated that in a field placement setting, it was the responsibility of the RECE, employed by the centre, to redirect and manage challenging behaviours, while the ECE student's time was spent engaging in observations and facilitating learning opportunities. In addition, one of the educators being interviewed noted that the duration of pre-service field placement days did not always enable ECE students to be present during challenging transition times, thus limiting their times to observe, manage and develop strategies for children who exhibited challenging behaviors (RECE 2, 14 years). The RECEs felt that they had few opportunities to practice working with children who exhibited challenging behaviours, just one part of their future role, which they would potentially experience in the classroom.

As well, the RECEs being interviewed felt that their pre-service education, while offering some theoretical perspectives on how to work with children in the classroom (e.g. child development theory, program planning and reporting child abuse), it did not provide them with a comprehensive view of what misbehaviour could look like (RECE 4, 4 years), or about the different behaviours they would later encounter in the field (RECE 1, 27 years). In addition, one RECE expressed her concern that the safety of educators, when working with children who exhibit challenging behaviours, was not adequately addressed (RECE 4, 4 years). These reported gaps in pre-service education reported by the RECEs revealed common concerns about how to prepare educators working with children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom.

What Have We Learned?

The findings of previous research and the current study revealed that, when early educators think about children who exhibit challenging behaviors, they initially feel ill prepared to face the degree of challenge due to the gaps in their pre-service education. More specifically, the RECEs felt that the extent of harm the child and they themselves may face in the classroom was not adequately addressed when confronted with challenging behaviours in their daily interactions. Despite the concerns expressed by the RECEs, it was through first hand experiences of interacting within the classroom environment that contributed to their perceptions of supporting children who exhibit challenging behaviours. These first hand experiences include collaborative thinking with like-minded co-workers, developing individualized strategies and adapting the environment to support the capabilities of the children, and willingness to listen to and understand parents' sharing of the child's history.

These interviews reveal the dimensions that shaped the educators' understanding of children who exhibited challenging behaviours and how their perceptions were re-conceptualized with each subsequent layer of experience. One would anticipate that this process of how early educators perceive children who exhibited challenging behaviours is ever changing and never stagnant. Thus, the RECEs' reflection of past practices, including pre-service knowledge, may be eclipsed by these more recent lived experiences which become synthesized into the teachers' current state of thinking. With this growth in experiences with children, other teachers, parents and the developing environment comes potential growth in confidence in the classroom.

What is concerning is the consistency in the reportedly limited impact that pre-service education had on not only RECEs in this study, but those who were interviewed in other research studies as well (Gettinger, Stoiber & Koscik, 2008; Westling, 2010). In this study, limited field placement exposure and experiences in being able to work directly with children who exhibited challenging behaviours, along with an incomplete repertoire of what "misbehavior" is and how to support the children's capabilities, were viewed as areas that need to be strengthened in ECE pre-service programs.

There are a number of dilemmas that pre-service providers of early childhood education programs face. The first dilemma is how pre-service providers can more successfully orient field placement students with hands-on experience in supporting children who exhibited challenging behaviours without compromising the safety others in the classroom. The second dilemma is that, while it is important for field placement students to understand how children with challenging behaviours present themselves, it would be next to impossible to present a complete archive of "misbehavior" for

them to learn. The third dilemma is that, as stated by the RECEs in this study, when working with children who exhibited challenging behaviours, children have their own distinctive qualities. It is only through these relational interactions with children and their parents that educators come to understand the most successful strategies for supporting their individual capabilities. Thus, while pre-service programs can prepare student teachers with the basic foundational knowledge, the true relational understanding of children who exhibit challenging behaviours are best revealed case by case.

In summary, the RECE's perceptions of children who exhibited challenging behaviours are ever changing with each additional experience. This may explain, in part, why content in pre-service programs pales in comparison with the rich influx of new information gained through experiential on-the-job learning. With this in mind, it is highly unlikely that pre-service programs will provide everything that ECE students need to know about children who exhibit challenging behaviours, both theoretically and in field placement. However, it is important for those administering pre-service programs to heed the specific recommendations of the RECEs in this study and to examine alternate ways to equip future early childhood educators with the knowledge and experiences they need to work confidently with children who exhibit challenging behaviours in the classroom.

Corresponding Author: Diana Chow, RECE, BCD

Cristina DiNardo, RECE, BCD, BEd

Amy Nicole Garthson, Oi Ling Helen Kwok, Susan Elizabeth O'Neill, Senior Bachelor Degree Students, Child Development, School of Early Childhood Education, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Sharon Quan-McGimpsey, Professor, School of Early Childhood Education, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, Ontario

Endnote

1   **Editor's note**: *Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are identified as Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in Ontario, registered and belonging to the Ontario College of ECE.*

References

Fettig, A., Schultz, T. R., & Ostrosky, M. M. (2013). Collaborating With Parents in Using Effective Strategies to Reduce Children's Challenging Behaviors. *Young Exceptional Children*, *16*(1), 30-41. doi:10.1177/1096250612473127

Gebbie, D., Ceglowski, D., Taylor, L., & Miels, J. (2012). The Role of Teacher Efficacy in Strengthening Classroom Support for Preschool Children with Disabilities Who Exhibit Challenging Behaviors. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 40*(1), 35-46. doi:10.1007/s10643-011-0486-5

Gettinger, M., Stoiber, K., & Koscik, R. (2008). Effects of a preparation program focused on accommodating children with challenging behaviors. *Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children*, *31*(3), 164-181.

Henricsson, L., & Rydell, A. (2004). Elementary School Children with Behavior Problems: Teacher-Child Relations and Self-Perception. A Prospective Study. *Merrill-Palmer Quaterly*, 50(2), 111-138

McCready, L. T. & Soloway B. G. (2010). Teachers' perceptions of challenging student behaviours in model inner city schools. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 15,* 111–123

Westling, D. L. (2010). Teachers and Challenging Behavior Knowledge, Views, and Practices. *Remedial and Special Education*, *31*(1), 48-63.

CHALLENGING OURSELVES
IN OUR PRACTICE

Management of Stress by Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in Classrooms with Children who Exhibit Challenging Behaviours: A Delicate Balance

by Diana Chow, Cristina DiNardo, Oi Ling Helen Kwok, Amy Nicole Garthson, Dr. Sharon Quan-McGimpsey

Children who exhibit challenging behaviours in early childhood classrooms are one of the leading causes of stress for early childhood educators. Educators were reported spending 20 percent of their working time engaged in negative interactions and five percent in positive interactions with the children (as cited in Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor, & Miels, 2012). When supporting the capabilities of children who exhibit challenging behaviours becomes a source of stress (as cited in Hastings & Bham, 2003) it can elicit a negative emotional reaction and response (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011; Rose, Horne, Rose & Hastings, 2004). Stress can be defined as a condition resulting from challenging situations that can create emotional strain, which may increase overtime (The American Institute of Stress, 2014). Ducharme & Shector (2011) found that highly stressed educators may resort to harsh discipline strategies and may spend less time engaging in positive interactions with children. This may eventually lead educators to feel burnt out.

In contrast to feeling stressed by children who exhibit challenging behaviours, educators found that the support they received from their co-workers influenced the way they

perceived the children in the classroom. This collegial support validated their struggles or assisted the educators in managing those difficult situations (Henricsson & Rydell, 2004). It was the teachers' daily support provided by others which became the catalyst in helping to alleviate the teachers' increased levels of exhaustion (Grieve, 2009).

A study involving four registered early childhood educators (RECE), who were working in the York Region and Greater Toronto Area (GTA), were interviewed on how their knowledge and perceptions of children who exhibited challenging behaviours influenced their practice in the classroom. Insights into the challenges that they faced and what could be done to reduce or buffer these feelings were revealed. The RECEs were asked to describe the challenges that they faced when working with a child who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom, the strategies used to nurture the inclusion of these children, and how professional training influenced their practice in the classroom.

In this study (as reported in another article appearing in this issue), the RECEs described how their perceptions of children who exhibited challenging behaviors were primarily conceived through their multiple and varied relational experiences with children, through work with co-workers and parents, and, to a lesser extent, from the content and experience gathered through pre-service education. When the RECEs shared their accounts of the challenges they faced, it became evident that some opportunities to enrich their understanding of children who exhibited challenging behaviours were either deficient or absent. The lack of prospects in adding to their knowledge base was a challenge that created varying degrees of stress for the RECEs. In spite of the challenges faced, the RECEs showed strengths and capacities that helped them overcome specified adversities that triggered feelings of stress.

Challenges Causing Stress

When describing the challenges the RECEs faced and the strategies used with children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom, the educators reflected on several challenges: the *lack of support and communication* received from others, the *inability to maintain the classroom environment,* and *lack of desired resources* required to better prepare for and manage the classroom where there were children who exhibited challenging behaviours. These specified challenges outline the accumulation of feeling stressed when there was inadequate support to buffer the adversities encountered.

Lack of support and communication. The conceptualizations of children who exhibited challenging behaviours are heavily influenced by the support received from co-workers and parents. When there is a lack of support and communication from co-workers and parents, this can create barriers to establishing partnerships and supporting the capabilities of children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom.

The RECEs reflected on how insufficient support received from co-workers and parents contributed to their feelings of stress. One of the RECEs felt unsupported, for example, when her co-worker did not want to address the child's behaviour, leaving her to feel unable to adequately provide care for the child (RECE 1, 27 years). The RECEs require the support from their co-workers to buffer their feelings of stress when supporting the capabilities of children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom. Without the perceived support, another RECE speculated on the outcome by stating, "I think you get burnt out with one child if the support wasn't there in the classroom" (RECE 2, 14 years). This insufficient support perceived by RECEs, can intensify their feelings of stress and create barriers in fostering partnerships with co-workers and parents.

Despite the fact that the RECEs expressed the importance of communication between staff and parents, there were gaps in information being shared that would have provided insight into what was being observed in the classroom. For example, one of the RECEs mentioned how critical information relating to a child in the classroom was not communicated to her until she had expressed her concerns to her supervisor, by stating "Yeah, I didn't know until I brought it up with my supervisor about me being slapped and then she said, " oh yeah, he has autism". It would have been nice to know he had autism before going into the classroom" (RECE 2, 14 years). In addition, one of the RECEs felt that there were barriers in communication when parents would only share positive stories with the educator and not the bad ones (RECE 4, 4 years). When there is a lack of support and communication between parents and the educators, it limits the RECEs ability to address concerns for the individual child (RECE 1, 27 years; RECE 4, 4 years) and creates greater stress for the RECE.

Inability to maintain the classroom environment. The RECEs' responsibility of supporting a child who is exhibiting challenging behaviours, while maintaining a positive classroom environment, can be stressful and may contribute to emotional exhaustion. The behaviours of that child had a negative emotional impact on the other children in the classroom, as it created tension and stress when learning activities were disrupted and routines were inconsistent (RECE 4, 4 years). For example, when another child was having a temper tantrum, other children would be distracted and their learning was interrupted (RECE 2, 14 years). That said, the RECEs also observed resiliency in the other children who were able to overlook the child exhibiting challenging behaviours, thus enabling the educators to de-escalate the situation (RECE 2; 14 years; RECE 4, 4 years).

The RECEs stated that the emotional impact challenging behaviours had on the other children, and concerns for their safety, could potentially lead the educators to feel stressed in the classroom (RECE 1, 27 years; RECE 4, 4 years). The need to continuously anticipate unsafe behaviours, such as, hurting others in the room, or that they might run away, was a constant concern (RECE 1, 27 years). Another RECE described her feelings of insecurity, as the child was dangerous to teachers, children, and property (RECE 4, 4 years). She felt vulnerable because she did not learn "how to be safe or to prevent RECEs from getting hurt" during her pre-service education, and this led her to consider quitting her job.

Lack of desired resources. To bridge the gap between feeling stress and supporting the capabilities of children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom, the RECEs reflected on how their effectiveness could be enhanced by receiving external support from an interdisciplinary team such as an early interventionist, social worker, and doctor (RECE 1, 27 years; RECE 2, 14 years). A challenge for another RECE was the uncertainty of knowing where to go for support as she expressed that early intervention services were only available in certain geographic areas and did not apply to her centre (RECE 2, 14 years). Even if services were available, there was still difficulty accessing them, because, as she indicated, "There's always going to be a waitlist for services and services aren't always readily accessible" (RECE 2, 14 years).

Access to professional development training was seen as a desirable resource in providing the RECEs with additional strategies to support children who exhibited challenging behaviours. In this

venue, they could connect with other educators and emphasize that they were not alone in this situation (RECE 2, 14 years). Unfortunately, two of the RECEs indicated that professional development which included topics about the management of challenging behaviours were unavailable or not addressed in previous workshops they'd attended (RECE 1, 27 years; RECE 4, 4 years). Another RECE specified, "It would be nice to have workshops that discuss the different strategies on how to deal and handle these behaviours" (RECE 1, 27 years). Aside from workshops, an RECE expressed her desire for one-on-one professional training through an evaluation. She felt that this would better provide her with opportunities to reflect on her practices in the classroom in order to see her strengths and weaknesses (RECE 4, 4 years). The RECEs felt there was a need for additional workshops and individual professional development involving strategies for supporting the capabilities of children who exhibited challenging behaviours. They were frustrated by a lack of community resources that they perceived to be inaccessible.

Despite feeling stressed by the challenges faced in classrooms with children who exhibited challenging behaviours, the RECEs also shared their views on how they managed the adversities encountered, thereby alleviating some of their stress.

Factors Alleviating Stress

In order to lessen their stress when working in classrooms where there were children who exhibited challenging behaviours, the RECEs indicated that *partnerships with parents* needed to be nurtured in order to support the capabilities of the children. The RECEs narratives also revealed that feelings of *self-efficacy and resilience* gave them a positive outlook in supporting the capabilities of the children and overcome adverse challenges.

Partnerships with parents. The RECEs indicated that communication between educator and parent was vital. It would further the RECEs' insights into the children's lives (RECE

2, 14 years; RECE 3, 8 years; RECE 4, 4 years) and help them determine what strategies would best support the children. Partnerships between parents and educators that promote children's well-being are a prominent factor, which can assist the RECEs in supporting the capabilities of children who exhibit challenging behaviours.

Furthermore, as partnerships are nurtured with parents, the RECEs abilities proved to be beneficial as they were able to re-direct parental concerns and help them find the support needed. For example, one RECE reflected, "I remember back in the past I would have parents coming in saying that their child has ADHD… and we as the ECE can't give that diagnosis… [however] we can help get support for the parent… and tell them where to go for further assessment" (RECE 1, 27 years). As well, the RECEs' conceptualizations of children who exhibited challenging behaviours motivated one educator to support the parents in managing their child's behaviour by "seeing what you can do to help, what resources you can lend to parents and advice you can provide to them. Making suggestions to make the parents day go smoother in terms of transitions" (RECE 2, 14 years).

Self-efficacy and resilience. Along with the RECEs' need to be supported when working with children in challenging situations through their connections with others, they also expressed an inner strength and desire to cope with adversities. The RECEs viewed self-motivation as a key contributor in enabling them to try different strategies when supporting the capabilities of children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom. For example, one RECE recollected, "Sometimes I would hold the child to calm [him] down, I would use lavender and place it under the child's nose because it relaxes [him] down" (RECE 1, 27 years). The use of different techniques to calm and relax the child also helped the educators to calm themselves down (RECE 3, 14 years). This shared comfort inspires educators to believe in themselves and strive to make a positive impact with the children they work with in the classroom. Two RECEs confirmed, "I try to empower the children in my classroom in controlling their behaviours. I am a strong believer in empowering children and advocating for them" (RECE 2, 14 years) and "I can be that mentor and teacher for them" (RECE 3, 8 years). Thus, self-motivation was not only viewed as an on-going practice for RECEs to reduce stress, but, it potentially heightened their feelings of self-efficacy and resilience when challenges occurred in the classroom.

The resiliency of the RECEs requires the development of well-balanced coping mechanisms to persevere when situations turn stressful. One coping mechanism used to minimize stress was to remain in control when difficult situations arose as one RECE stated, "I focus on what we're going to do to regain

control of the situation [with] the child" (RECE 1, 27 years). Another RECE emphasized the importance of her ability to regain emotional control within by stating, "I think it is very stressful, but I don't let my stress reflect my practice in the classroom. I don't show the children that I am stressed; I just take a breath and carry on" (RECE 3, 8 years). She also stated how her previous experiences of feeling unsupported by her co-workers contributed to her self-efficacy in seeking out resources to support herself and her colleagues now (RECE 3, 8 years). In order to mitigate stress, the RECEs learned to be self-reliant and not to give up. This inner strength is the foundation leading educators to be competent, confident and resourceful supporters for co-workers, parents, and children who exhibit challenging behaviours in the classroom.

What Have We Learned?

Difficult as it may be at times, it is an expectation that educators will find strategies that will work with children who exhibit challenging behaviours and buffer adverse situations. Based on the findings of the current study, it would appear that the RECEs encountered many instances in which they felt stressed when working with children who exhibited challenging behaviours in the classroom. The RECEs attributed their feelings of stress to the lack of support received by others within the classroom community (co-workers and parents) and outside the classroom (community resources and professional development) when trying to support children's capabilities. Most of the RECEs, however, shared strategies about their successful maintenance of inner homeostasis by adopting a positive outlook and internal belief in their own resourcefulness.

The RECEs' narratives revealed both positive and negative insights when trying to expand on their opportunities to gain greater knowledge and experiences in working with children who exhibited challenging behaviours. Within the classroom, they felt unable to gather the evidence needed to support the children, as there were barriers that prevented them from buffering the specified challenges revealed. They felt equally ill prepared to support children who exhibited challenging behaviours due to a lack of appropriate professional development and the inaccessibility of community resources. These desired professional supports could potentially heighten their effectiveness in the classroom and minimize feelings of stress. Despite the challenges they encountered and the accompanying stress it may have caused, the RECEs were clear in their resolve to tap into their inner beliefs in order to buffer and manage difficult situations that were encountered in the classroom. It is safe to say that "it takes a village to raise a child" as collaborative relationships, inside and outside the classroom, can positively impact the child's well-being.

RECEs are one of the frontline workers who work with children who exhibit challenging behaviours in the classroom. At times,

educators may be required to balance the feelings of stress which arise, as a result of the interactions encountered that are not in their control, with their own beliefs about how they can control the situation (See Figure 1).

The ways in which RECEs control and maintain the demeanour of the classroom environment, demonstrates the strengths and capacities they possess from within, which, in turn, helps them find strategies to buffer the effects of adverse situations, and minimize feelings of stress when supporting the capabilities of children who exhibit challenging behaviour. The field of early childhood education is ever changing and unpredictable, yet RECEs continue to persevere when adverse situations arise.

Figure 1: RECEs Management of stress when facing the challenges of working with children who exhibit challenging behaviours

Corresponding Author: Diana Chow, RECE, BCD

Cristina DiNardo, RECE, BCD, BEd

Oi Ling Helen Kwok, Amy Nicole Garthson, Senior Bachelor Degree Students, Child Development, School of Early Childhood Education, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Sharon Quan-McGimpsey, Professor, School of Early Childhood Education, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, Ontario

Endnote

1   **Editor's note**: *Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are identified as Registered Early Childhood Educators' (RECEs) in Ontario as they are registered and belonging to the Ontario College of ECE.*

References

Ducharme, J. M. & Shecter, C. (2011). *Bridging the gab between clinical and classroom intervention: Keystone approaches for students with challenging behavior. 40*(2), 257-274.

Gebbie, D., Ceglowski, D., Taylor, L., & Miels, J. (2012). The Role of Teacher Efficacy in Strengthening Classroom Support for Preschool Children with Disabilities Who Exhibit Challenging Behaviors. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 40*(1), 35-46. doi:10.1007/s10643-011-0486-5

Grieve, A. M. (2009). Teachers' beliefs about inappropriate behaviour: challenging attitude? *Journal OF Research In Special Educational Needs,* 9(3), 173-179. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-3802.2009.01130.x

Hastings, R. P., & Bham, M. S. (2003). *The relationship between student behaviour and patterns and teacher burnout. School Psychology International, 24,* 115-127. doi: 10.1177/0143034303024001905

Henricsson, L., & Rydell, A. (2004). Elementary School Children with Behavior Problems: Teacher-Child Relations and Self-Perception. A Prospective Study.*Merrill-Palmer Quaterly*, 50(2), 111-138

Rose, D., Horne, S., Rose, J. L., & Hastings, R. P. (2004). *Negative emotional reactions to challenging behaviour and staff burnout: Two replication studies,*17, 219–223.

The American Institute of Stress. (2014). *What is stress*. Retrieved April 20, 2014, from http://www.stress.org/what-is-stress/
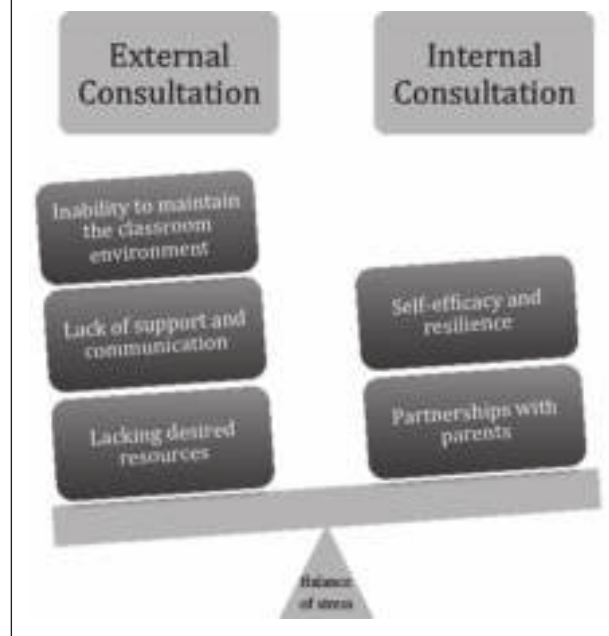
ACROSS CANADA AND BEYOND

NATIONAL

On October 19th, Canadians elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, forming a new majority Liberal government. In their political platform, the Liberal government has committed to a meeting within their first 100 days with provinces, territories, Indigenous communities and ministers responsible for child care to create a National Early Learning and Child Care Framework, to deliver affordable, high-quality, flexible, and fully inclusive child care for Canadian families. The party platform stated that "a one-size-fits all national program – particularly one that imposes pre-determined costs on other orders of government – is impractical and unfair". The Liberal party is promising to also invest nearly $20 billion over the next 10 years and this will be funded through their investments in social infrastructure.

The framework they design together will be administered in collaboration with, and in respect of, provincial jurisdictions.

ALBERTA

A local developer is building a 36,000-square-foot daycare centre in southeast Calgary that's set to be ready in just under a year, but some are concerned as to the level of care it will provide. The Quarry Park Child Development Centre, the largest privately-funded childcare in Canada will offer 348 new spaces for kids under the age of 6. Remington Development Corporation's Cody Clayton say it's so big because of demand in the city The child care centre will be the biggest centre run by the Calgary YMCA.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society just released a new resource, entitled *BC First Nations Early Childhood Educator*

Occupational Standards 2014 First Edition. It is built out of the original work by the CCCF and the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council on the Occupational Standards for ECE, and has now been updated to reflect the occupational standards for First Nations ECE's.

MANITOBA
The province promises to invest $375,000 into child care nutrition to ensure children are eating healthier. As part of its new Child Care Nutrition Strategy, the Manitoba government will invest the money to promote healthy eating among young children by encouraging positive eating environments in child care settings. Healthy Living and Seniors Minister Deanne Crothers said the strategy was developed through a consultative process including Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care branch of Manitoba Family Services as well as representatives from the Manitoba Child Care Association and Dietitians of Canada, a national professional association for dietitians.

Day care is largely unavailable and unaffordable for University of Manitoba student parents, and more child care spaces are desperately needed on campus.That is the conclusion of the most recent in a series of reports issued as part of the University of Manitoba child care working group, commissioned by the university to study options for improvement of campus child care services.The report outlines the challenges facing student parents who must juggle between their obligation to their children and their study commitments, arguing that many parents either do not have access to child care at the University of Manitoba or simply cannot afford child care fees on top of their tuition payments.

NEW BRUNSWICK
Canada's Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, Robert Goguen, announced Government of Canada funding for a new project to increase economic opportunities for women employed in the care-giving sector in New Brunswick. The New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity is receiving $239,704 for its 36-month project to help women advance within New Brunswick's care-giving sector,

which includes child care, home support, community residences and special care homes. Through the project, the organization will work with educational institutions, employers, professional organizations and the provincial government to address institutional barriers that limit women's economic prosperity. This will include exploring how policies, funding structures and standardized training within the industry can be updated to better support women.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
The provincial government launched a new website that lists all regulated child care services in Newfoundland and Labrador as well as information on violation orders. Premier Paul Davis launched the searchable database, called the Early Learning and Child Care Directory in September. The site includes an array of information on child care centres, including their location, contact information, age range, space availability, and any violations orders they have been issued. The site also includes information on family resource centres.

NOVA SCOTIA
Sharon Hope Irwin, a resident of Sydney, is being named to the Order of Nova Scotia. Hope Irwin has devoted 40 years to ensuring that child care is inclusive, affordable, accessible and comprehensive. She moved to Nova Scotia in 1974 to create the Town Daycare Centre in Glace Bay and served as its executive director as the centre successfully integrated children with a range of disabilities, from visual impairments to those coping with cerebral palsy. And while many strides and improvements have been made in the area of child care for children with disabilities, Hope Irwin said much work remains to be done and being named to the Order of Nova Scotia gives her a chance to highlight the challenges ahead.

In recent years, Hope Irwin has continued her work in the field with the non-profit organization SpeciaLink: The National Centre for Early Childhood Inclusion, which she founded. Its main goal is to "encourage the inclusion of more kids with disabilities in regular programs."

ONTARIO
Ontario's new child care rules have come into effect this September. The law limits unlicensed home daycare providers to look

after a maximum of two children under the age of two, where previously they could care for five children of any age. They must also now include their own children, who are under age six, in the group of five children. The Childcare Modernization Act includes more restrictions for unlicensed home daycares and tougher fines for violators. The legislative reforms came in the wake of a series of four baby deaths in unlicensed home daycares over seven months in 2013-14.

Ontario families are waiting for Ontario to begin requiring school boards to provide before- and after-school care for students ages 6 to 12, where there is sufficient demand. The initiative is already part of a package of child care reforms passed last December, that came into force September. But with provincial consultations on that particular provision still months away, parents are wondering when Ontario will make good on its promise. A government official says the province hopes before- and after-school care will be available for 6- to 12-year-olds by 2017.

QUEBEC
The provincial government plans to make almost $75 million in cuts this year to Quebec's daycare system is as follows:
- public daycares and administration will lose approximately $38 million
- private subsidized daycares will lose roughly $22 million
- the daycare system's surplus fund will lose about $13 million

Members of the opposition said Family Minister Francine Charbonneau is making cuts too swiftly and cuts will affect salaries and ultimately increase child to care worker rations.

RESOURCES

Canadian Child Care Federation's online resource, *Partnerships in Support of Children's Social Well-Being*
A helpful resource for practitioners working with children and families new to Canada is the CCCF's online resource, *Partnerships in Support of Children's Social Well- Being*. It's available for free download by CCCF members at http://bit.ly/1GfYVwF. The user-friendly accessible tools address key

elements of social development, including learning positive behaviour, building self-esteem, enhancing problem-solving skills, strengthening communication skills and supporting cultural identity. The tools have been developed using an asset-based approach that recognizes and honours the strengths of families, while acknowledging the perspectives and experiences of practitioners.

Toute la famille entre à la maternelle! (French only)
Le Collectif pour l'éducation a mis sur pied un livret qui rassemble beaucoup d'information pour aider les familles à faire la transition vers le milieu scolaire avec joie et succès pour tous.

Ce livret a été créé à l'intention de toutes les familles qui auront un premier enfant qui franchira bientôt l'étape d'une première rentrée scolaire. Il peut tout de même être un bon outil pour tous les parents d'enfant d'âge préscolaire. Voici le lien : http://online.flipbuilder.com/ynuq/llnx/

RESEARCH UPDATE

Solving BC's Affordability Crisis in Child Care

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released a report in July: *Solving BC's Affordability Crisis in Child Care*. This study shows how BC can implement a $10 a day child care plan, either as a federal-provincial partnership or as a BC-only program. The province can easily afford it, and it will provide huge benefits for families, communities and the economy. The study uses the $10 A Day Plan, developed by BC child care experts, as its basis. More information about the plan is at 10aday.ca.

Read the full report at: www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/solving-bc%E2%80%99s-affordability-crisis-child-care

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

22-24
Winnipeg, Manitoba
10th Early Childhood Education Faculty Forum

The 10th Anniversary, partnered with the CAYC in Winnipeg to host a unique learning opportunity for faculty of ECE programs.

NOVEMBER

5 – 7
Vancouver B.C.
Footsteps toward a Brighter Future: Encouraging Healthy Living Practices BC Aboriginal ChildCareSociety - 18th Annual Provincial Training Conference: Register at: www.acc-society.bc.ca
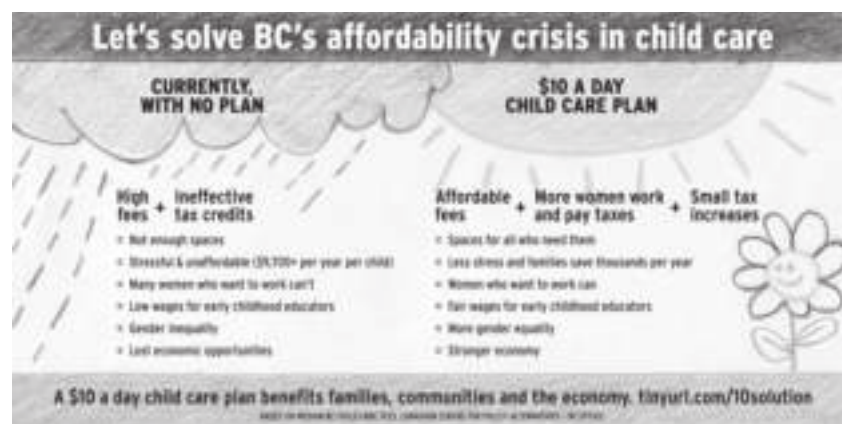
6-7
Edmonton, Alberta
Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement's (ARCQE) 6th Annual

National Child Day conference: *Responsive LEARNING Around the World!*
An opportunity to share and explore Early Learning Curriculum Frameworks and practice around the world! Register online: www.arcqe.ca/services/professional development/conference

20
National – Canada
National Child Day – Events and activities to celebrate children all across Canada. www.facebook.com/groups/5657406573/

JANUARY 2016

28-31
Vancouver, BC
UBC - Early Years Conference 2016 *Nurturing Developmental Wellbeing, Strengthening Children and Families*
Join the University of British Columbia to celebrate 20 years of innovative professional development with its 10th

conference in Canada for early childhood development and family support.

FEBRUARY

17 – 19
Toronto, Ontario
Best Start Resource Centre 2016 Annual Conference
Info at: www. beststart.org

MAY

5 to 7
Vancouver, B.C.
ECEBC's 45th Annual Conference *The Ripple Effect: Continuing the Journey Through Our Ethical Practices*, 2016. Online registration will be available in late January 2016 at www.ecebc.ca

26 – 28
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Manitoba Child Care Conference
More information: www.mccahouse.org