

# Interaction

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 2, FALL 2012

## Child Care in a Wired World

**Webcams in Child Care Centres –  
Yes or No?**

**Keeping up with Technology – A  
Home Day Care Provider's Story**



PUBLICATION OF THE CANADIAN CHILD CARE FEDERATION

# NEW AND IMPROVED: HR TOOLKIT

## for Administrators, Board Members, and ECEs

Launched in 2012, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC)'s online **HR Toolkit** features free tools, policies, and templates that can be tailored to meet your HR management needs. Designed for use in a wide range of early childhood settings, the toolkit covers:

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The CCHRSC is offering free print copies of many of its' publications to educators who can use them in lessons/with their students. Simply select On-line Order Form on the CCHRSC home page and enter the number of copies you require, up to a maximum of 40 copies. Orders accepted until October 15, 2012.

## HR TOOLKIT



### Coming Soon: Updated Occupational Standards for Administrators

Seven years after the first set of *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators* were released, an update is underway to capture the latest skills, knowledge and abilities required to do the job.

The new standards will be available in Winter 2013, along with occupational profiles focused on school-age and infant child care.

Visit Us!



Visit [www.ccsc-cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca) to download tools from the HR Toolkit and learn more about the current CCHRSC projects.





## Child Care in a Wired World

- 26** Integrating Technology and Social Media Tools to Enhance Learning and Collaboration Among ECCE Students  
**Laura Fowler-Massie**
- 28** Discussion Issues in ECE: Using Webcams in Child Care  
**Kids & Company; Kanata Park Family Centre**
- 30** Robert Johnson Made a Deal with the Devil – An ECE Instructor's Introspective Account on How Technology Can Be Used to Express Our Potential  
**Marc Battle**

## Departments

### OPINIONS

- 2** Behind the Scenes  
**Claire McLaughlin**
- 3** Inside the Federation
- 5** From Where I Sit  
**CCCF President Don Giesbrecht**

### PRACTICE

- 6** Applying a Standard Measurement of Quality Indicators in an Aboriginal Early Childhood Setting  
**Marc Lalonde, Leona Howard, Patrick Connelly**
- 11** Inside the Grade 1 Classroom – A Reflective Log about Play and Worksheets  
**Evelyn Daly**
- 12** The Mandala Experience – Piecing Emergent Curriculum Together  
**Shelley Secrett**

### FAMILY CHILD CARE

- 14** Keeping up with Technology – A Home Daycare Provider's Story  
**Heidi Harris**

### IDEAS

- 16** Self and Other: Critical Connections  
**Jan Blaxall**
- 21** Supporting Individual Development for Successful Group Involvement  
A Faculty Member's Journey  
**Janet Foster**

### NEWS

- 32** Across Canada and Beyond
- 33** Calendar
- 34** Resources

One new resource sheet accompanies this issue:

**#50** – *Choosing Good Video Games*



The photo for the front cover was photographed by Claire McLaughlin of Wakefield, Quebec.

# Behind the Scenes

Many children use and understand media devices and platforms better than adults. But their technological abilities are often ahead of their emotional maturity and judgment," according to James Steyer, founder of Common Sense Media. In *Work & Family Life* (September 2012), Steyer shares research results on the impact of screen time on preschool children, including the risks of developing behavioural problems after age 7 from watching violent TV shows in preschool years.

But other research shows some benefits for young children who learn on iPads. Lisa Guernsey, in *Slate*, "Can Your Preschooler Learn Anything From an iPad App?" reviewed studies around North America and in some research, learning on an iPad seemed to be as effective as learning in a classroom setting and more effective than watching a video. As early childhood educators, we mostly agree that young children learn best when they are truly engaged and have a sense of control.

Regardless of what research findings tell us, technology is intricately woven into our everyday lives and it is here to stay. Cutting children off from these technologies outright is no better than leaving children unattended for hours in front of computers or TVs. So the trick is to harness the best of what our media technologies have to offer but with cautionary balance and mindfulness.

As early childhood educators, we can access and connect to emerging ideas and approaches in early learning more than ever before. But are we losing something in the experience of face-to-face community dialogue when we spend more time posting our thoughts on Facebook than discussing our issues in person?

This issue of *Interaction* will look at the various ways technology and social media have both helped and hindered our profession and the children we care for. What about webcams in child care centres? We look at both the benefits and limits to a virtual world in child care.

This issue is also the first online issue of *Interaction* magazine as the CCCF moves to a more virtual presence and launches our new highly enhanced website for our members and the public. You will see better access to resources, networks, webinars and current information and social networks.

The IDEAS section explores the complexity of "self and other" in development and how we can support it. What critical experiences are important in the development of understanding of self and other? How do we support individual development for successful group involvement?

And don't forget to celebrate National Child Day on November 20 in your area. Please share your ideas and activities on our CCCF Facebook page.

**Claire McLaughlin**, Editor  
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CCCF is about the value of children. We value children.

In order to protect and enhance our children, to promote their safety and their healthy growth and development, we are committed to providing Canadians with the very best in early learning and child care knowledge and best practices.

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# Inside the Federation

## Watch for CCHRSC releases in early 2013

Tools, more tools—and a survey. The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) has a lot on the go these days—updating occupational standards, expanding the HR Toolkit, and wrapping up the ECEC sector’s first major pan-Canadian employer-employee survey in more than 15 years. All resources and survey results will be available on the CCHRSC web site ([www.ccsc-cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca)) by early 2013.

### Updating the Occupational Standards for ECEC Administrators

The CCHRSC is updating its *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators*—the first time since the standards were developed in 2006—to incorporate the latest skills, knowledge and abilities required to do the job. This is an important step as occupations change and evolve over time.

If the overwhelming popularity of the first set of standards is any indication, the updated version will also be extensively used. Based on preliminary research findings, suggested content additions include:

- leadership skills, including pedagogical leadership;
- communication skills, such as making presentations and interacting with different agencies;
- project planning;
- risk management; and
- use of technology in areas such as communication and information management (when the first standards were written, many centres did not yet use the internet).

The standards can be used in a variety of ways. Employers will be able to use them for everything from identifying skills and training gaps to developing job descriptions and helping board members better understand what the occupation entails. The standards can also be used by other sector stakeholders. For example:

- sector organizations can use the standards when developing and evaluating certification and accreditations programs;
- government can use the standards as a guide for best practices when developing policy;

- educators can use them as a framework and guideline for curricula; and
- students can use them to learn more about child care administration as a career option.

To date, key informant interviews have been conducted to identify gaps in the current standards/areas that need to be updated, and a comparative analysis of standards for jurisdictions in and outside of Canada has been completed. Development sessions with ECE administrators are currently underway to gather input on the updated draft standards from end users. Validation sessions are set for Fall 2012. The final step in the development process, validation sessions will bring sector stakeholders together to discuss the draft standards.

Other project activities include an analysis of existing administrator training to determine whether gaps exist to meet current occupational requirements and the creation of workshops that will explore how the standards have changed and how they can be used. The workshops will be offered across the country in January 2013.

### Occupational profile for school-age child care also being developed

A new occupational profile focused on school-age child care is also under development, while the infant care profile—created in December 2010 as a pilot project—will be enhanced. The profiles will compliment the current *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators (OSECE)*. When the *OSECE* were being developed “we found enough commonalities across all child care settings to have one set of standards,” said Kathryn Ohashi CCHRSC Project Manager. “But we did recognize that there are some unique aspects to different age groups and settings and that’s where the profiles come in.”

### Expanding metrics, labour in HR Toolkit

When the Sector Council went “on the road” to present the HR Toolkit across Canada last spring, there was a lot of positive feedback and some good suggestions for additions to the online toolkit that offers ECEC-specific resources and templates on a wide range of HR issues. The toolkit has since been expanded to include new information on metrics (data) and unionization, along with tools submitted by employers from across the country. Highlights include:

- A data collection spreadsheet that will give employers the ability to track typical metrics such as employee qualifications, length of employment, and leaves;



- A staff turnover calculator tool that will help employers calculate their organization's turnover rate year over year;
- Information on unionization in the workplace, including ways to promote a collaborative management-union relationship; and
- A fact sheet on the collective bargaining process with a checklist for employers preparing for negotiations.

### **You Bet We Still Care! will help the sector**

Launched this past summer, the *You Bet We Still Care!* survey is one of the largest surveys of the ECEC sector workforce in recent years and was open to everyone working in centre-based, full-day, licensed child care programs for children 0-6. The survey collected data on the impact that working conditions, wages, benefits have on job satisfaction and retention of program staff. With the analysis piece underway, the data will provide important information that the field can use for years to come. Project results will be available in Winter 2013.

### **The next phase for the CCHRSC**

As of March 31, 2013, HRSDC's Sector Council Program will no longer provide core funding to sector councils. The CCHRSC's office will close at that time. It's been an exciting, rewarding, and productive time for human resource research in child care and we are currently exploring options to ensure that the resources produced over the past ten years continue to be available to the sector. We encourage you to visit [www.csc-csge.ca](http://www.csc-csge.ca) over the next few months to download the tools and information most useful to you and stay-up-to-date on the latest developments.

## **National Child Day 2012 – November 20<sup>th</sup>**

### **The Right to Practice Own Culture, Language and Religion!**

The Canadian Child Care Federation has selected *Article 30*, the *Right to Practice Own Culture, Language and Religion*, as the theme for national Child Day this year.

*Article 30* of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

*"In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language."*

Contact Robin McMillan, Senior Project Consultant, about your National Child Day activities so that they can be shared with others. [rmmillan@ccc-fcsge.ca](mailto:rmmillan@ccc-fcsge.ca), or share National Child Day ideas on our Facebook page.







## FROM WHERE I SIT

# Twenty-Five Years and Going Wired!

## CCCF President Don Giesbrecht

This edition of *Interaction* marks a significant milestone for the CCCF. *Interaction*, after 25 years of being a print-only publication, is turning into an online publication. This is, perhaps, a bold move by the CCCF—taking a recognizable and reputable magazine and changing how it is delivered and accessed. We prefer to look at it as a move that is in keeping with the times and one that will put a valuable resource into a more accessible and relevant format for the ECE sector (not to mention the benefit to the environment of going paperless).

This change is in keeping with the increased presence that the CCCF is taking in the virtual world.

It better aligns with the vibrant CCCF Facebook community, our Twitter feed, the CCCF's weekly e-newsletter *Interaction.ca*, the new webinars and web based meetings that are used to connect the ECE sector across Canada.

And of course, all of this online networking and dialogue will culminate in the hub of our newly launched, improved CCCF website.

This is all part of a larger strategy to ensure that Canada's ECE sector continues to network together, be informed about best practices, relevant news and political happenings as they pertain to the valuable and critical work that we collectively provide for Canada's children and families. Our video states, "We Value Children". What work can be more important than one that values the needs and well-being of children.

Since its creation 25 years ago, the CCCF has delivered on its critical mandate to connect the ECE sector across Canada. The

importance of this cannot be understated. But this profession, the collective community and the CCCF aspire for more. In this case, "more" can be defined in many ways, from best practice and quality learning and caring environments for children, all the way to better wages and recognition for the ECE workforce in Canada. There are numerous pieces to the definition of "more" as it pertains to ECE, but suffice it to say that these many pieces create the pursuit of excellence and in this pursuit, our collective work, will, and passion create an essential force. As a sector, we will not achieve more if we do not collectively work to keep our national partnerships, professional associations, friendships and connections alive and prospering—especially in the absence of meaningful political leadership on a national level.

All things considered, the CCCF's strategic move to increase our online web presence is a key ingredient to moving forward on the above. We do not waver in our belief and need for a national professional association for the ECE sector in Canada. And we are equally as passionate about strengthening our provincial and territorial professional associations—as this translates into a strong national association. If you look at other professions that have achieved a more prominent role in our society, they demonstrate this very fact. Amongst the day-to-day realities, demands and issues of working in the ECE sector, we believe that our sector cannot lose sight of this.

**We believe this greater access and visibility will work towards the continued value and importance of the CCCF in our pursuit of a vibrant and sustainable presence.**

*Interaction* has long been the face of the CCCF, the source that brings recognition to the organization and the reminder to the over 9000 CCCF members that they are part of a profession and national body larger than their home child care, child care centre, place of study or organization. Having this colour magazine fully accessible at the click of a mouse button or the tap on a tablet signifies a continued progression

and maturation of the ECE sector, one that is on a global and national platform but also in the privacy of your home or office. We believe this greater access and visibility will work towards the continued value and importance of the CCCF in our pursuit of a vibrant and sustainable presence.

I invite you to join us and your colleagues from across Canada, if you have not already, on Facebook, Twitter and our new weekly e-newsletter, *Interaction.ca*. You will find links to each of them on the CCCF website at [www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca](http://www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca) or if you prefer, email me directly at [dgiesbrecht@cccf-fcsge.ca](mailto:dgiesbrecht@cccf-fcsge.ca) and I will send you the links.



# Applying a Standard Measurement of Quality Indicators in an Aboriginal Early Childhood Setting

by Marc Lalonde, Leona Howard, Patrick Connelly

## Introduction

The Tsleil-Waututh Child and Family Development Centre (The Centre) is located on the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation's reserve land in North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The Centre receives funding to provide services to Tsleil-Waututh families with children under the ages of six years. Services include an Aboriginal On-Reserve Head Start Program (AHS), an Aboriginal Infant Development Program, Aboriginal Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, and weekly parent groups. The centre also provides full-time child care for children from six months to school age. This program is also open to non-aboriginal families from the surrounding community.

The Centre first opened in November 2003 providing child care for two families. A steady growth followed in the development and implementation of a variety of services and the number of families being served. The Centre is dedicated to providing a high level of quality programs and services for families. In the tradition already set to provide quality programming, the centre embarked on an opportunity to conduct an audit of the Child Care Program.

Funding has been provided by the First Nations and Urban Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Steering Committee (British Columbia Association for Aboriginal Friendship Centres, 2012). The purpose of the funding was two-fold.

The initial questions this project seeks to address is:

- How does The Centre's child care program measure and meet the quality indicators using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales – Revised (Harms, et al. 2005) and the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales – Revised (Harms, et al. 2006)?
- How can this project inform the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS/ITERS) program developers to consider input for future use in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs?

## Method

The ECERS/ITERS are standardized environment assessment tools that measure quality indicators in child care programs. These tools have been developed and used for research and program improvement purposes and are internationally recognized (Sylva, et al. 2010; and Worcester County Council, 2011).

An independent third party consultant was hired to administer the application of the scales. The Centre was fortunate in obtaining the services of a consultant who received specialized education in inter-rater reliability administering the tool (Goelman, et al, 2000). This was considered an essential element of this project to eliminate potential biases. Contracting a highly skilled person to administer the scales was also seen as an asset in identifying how the ECERS/ITERS quality indicators can be informed on being more culturally safe.

One day of observation was spent with the Preschool and Infant/Toddler programs. Administration of the ECERS-R and the ITERS-R was done independently in each age setting, pre-school and infant/toddler. Staff provided program feedback throughout the day. A designated staff member was interviewed and provided additional input on professional and parental involvement in the program. Tabulation of the ECERS/ITERS scores was completed by the consultant and an interview was held with the program manager to discuss the results.

The second observation, again using the ECERS/ITERS tool, was completed three months after the initial visit. The staff obtained a broader understanding of the tool and its administration, as well as an increased awareness of the purposes and use of standardized methods. Staff, were able to reflect upon the initial scores from the first observation and were able to make program adjustments immediately to improve consistency and standards of quality practices in program delivery.

## Six Components of Aboriginal Head Start (AHS 6)

The Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) Programs are a federal initiative in Canada, to support the development of young children and their





families who are of Aboriginal descent. Each AHS site is unique and the program allows communities to address their specific needs. There are many models to deliver the AHS, from home outreach services to and including centre-based approaches. Child care and preschool programs are one of the options.

The AHS is guided by six program components:

- 1) **Culture and Language:** to enhance the process of revival and retention of the nation's culture and language
- 2) **Education:** to engage children in the possibility of becoming enthusiastic life-long learners
- 3) **Health Promotion:** to promote self-care and healthy lifestyles
- 4) **Nutrition:** with the purpose of enhancing nutritional eating habits
- 5) **Social Support:** to empower families to access resources
- 6) **Parent and Family Involvement:** to support the family's role as the primary teachers of children.

## Results

### FIRST OBSERVATION ADMINISTRATION

During the first observation, suggestions and recommendations were made to assist The Centre in some quick fix areas of quality program improvement. As a result, immediate benefits were achieved. The initial results of the ECERS/ITERS identified a

wide variety of areas which needed to be addressed to reach a higher level of quality. Areas of significant need were outlined as were those in need of ongoing development. Other areas requiring building improvements were identified and will be addressed in seeking capital funding. A number of indicators highlighted how practice could be improved significantly with more consistency in centre wide application. The manager met with Centre staff and shared the findings. The manager and staff have made a commitment to use the results as a guide to improving the quality of the programs and care provided to the children and their families. Overall, the process provided a solid baseline to begin a reflective process to achieve a higher standard and quality of care. The consultant provided many practical examples of how The Centre could accomplish better results on the quality indicators and best practices on an immediate basis and in planning for the future.

### SECOND OBSERVATION ADMINISTRATION

The second observation administration of the ECERS/ITERS, documented where The Centre's staff and manager have acted upon the implementation of some standards of practice in the centre. The second administration of the tool indicated some improvements in program quality indicators. The staff and manager understand that some program improvements can be gained quickly, while others will be long term and will require funding. The TWN Centre staff took on the challenge of this



program audit to build on the development of their program. The manager and staff are cognisant of the need for ongoing program evaluation and development.

### ECERS/ITERS AND THE AHS SIX

There are many quality indicators in the ECERS/ITERS which can be used to capture much of the AHS Six. The authors found direct correlation between the AHS Six and the following items of the ECERS/ITERS.

- 1) **Culture and Language** – coincide with the ECERS/ITERS in the following:
  - **Activities**, which includes: Promoting acceptance of diversity.
- 2) **Education** – coincide with ECERS/ITERS in the following areas:
  - **Language and Reasoning**, which includes: Encouraging children to communicate, Using language to develop reasoning skills; Informal use of language; and Books and pictures.
  - **Activities**, which include: Fine motor; Art; Music/ movement; Sand/water; Dramatic play; Nature/science; Math/numbers, Use of TV, video, and/or computers; and Promotion acceptance of diversity.
- 3) **Health Promotion** – coincide with ECERS/ITERS in the following areas:
  - **Personal Care Routines** – Greetings/departure; Meals/snacks; Nap/rest; Toileting/diapering; Health practices; Safety practices.
  - **Interactions** – Interactions among children; Staff –child interactions; and Discipline.
  - **Parent & Staff** – Provisions for parents;
- 4) **Nutrition** – coincides with ECERS/ITERS in the following areas:
  - **Personal Care Routines** – Meals/snacks; and Health practices.
  - **Interactions** – Staff–child interactions.
  - **Parent & Staff** – Provisions for parents.
- 5) **Social Support** – coincides with ECERS/ITERS in the following areas:
  - **Interactions** – Provisions for parents.
  - **Parent & Staff** – Provision for parents; and Opportunities for professional growth.
- 6) **Parent and Family Involvement** – coincides with ECERS/ITERS in the following areas:
  - **Activities** –Promoting acceptance of diversity;
  - **Parent & Staff** – Provisions for parents.

### Observation

The initial results of this project provided a solid baseline for further investigation, reflection and identification of

areas to focus on in The Centre’s ongoing efforts in program improvements. It provided solid evidence for future funding needs to improve the physical infrastructure. The addition of specific suggestions from the consultant significantly enhanced The Centre’s ability to deliver immediate quality improvements. The results of this project will be used as a tool in guiding future planning. The use of the ECERS/ITERS has been an educational learning experience.

The process was an opportunity to apply an internationally recognized standardized measurement tool in an Aboriginal child care setting. The Centre has gained substantial benefits from implementing the standard ECERS/ITERS. This project joined together the use and administration of the ECERS/ITERS and the Aboriginal Head Start Program Components and raised the potential to develop an Aboriginal Component Addendum.

## Recommendations for Aboriginal Component Addendum

### CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

It is suggested the Language-Reasoning subscales of the ECERS be expanded to include, traditional language opportunities to better reflect the *Culture and Language* component. Potential indicators could identify:

- Children being taught some of the language (alphabets, numbers, and labels of objects).
- Fluent speakers visiting and interacting with the children.
- Children speaking the language.
- Staff provided with Aboriginal language classes.
- Resource materials made available to staff to incorporate and expand the aboriginal language.
- Staff who are fluent and speak the language.
- A full language immersion program.
- Elder involvement.

### EDUCATION

The Education component seems to be embedded through-out the ECERS/ITERS.

### HEALTH PROMOTION

Health Promotion is widely evident in the ECERS/ITERS. A suggestion to reinforce the ECERS/ITERS, to reflect the AHS Six, is to add indicators on how an environment supports families’ access to health care professionals.

### NUTRITION

The ECERS/ITERS does identify many aspects of the Nutrition component. A suggestion to strengthen the ECERS/ITERS is to add indicators on educating children and families with opportunities to develop healthy eating habits.



Additional indicators in the activities subscales could identify culturally specific activities:

- Art indicative of the culture is prominently displayed.
- Children engaged in activities representing the culture.
- Culturally steeped people involved in the program.
- Books available to children which represent the nation's culture.
- Cultural resources for staff to draw on.
- Toys and equipment, representing the culture.
- The program is involved with community activities.
- Children have easy and regular access to toys, dramatic play (regalia) and art materials representing the culture.

### SOCIAL SUPPORT

As documented in a wide range of previous work, the Parent and Staff subscales could be expanded to reflect the *Social Support* component. Suggestions for additional indicators could include:

- Staff display an interest in supporting families and have access to resources to accomplish this goal (Epse-Sherwindt, 2008; Lerner, 1997; McWilliam, et al, 1997).
- Staff support families in accessing resource/services (Kyle, 2000; Lerner, 1997; Raab & Dunst, 1997;).
- Staff understand families may experience barriers to accessing resources/services (McCain & Mustard, 1999; Statewide Special Services, Scope, 2005).
- Staff convey respect for individual choice and lifestyles (Raab, 1997; Wilson & Dunst, 2005).
- The Centre acts as a bridge to other services (Kyle, 2000; Raab & Dunst, 1997).
- The program offers families opportunities to network with each other (Dunst, et. al., 2007; McCain & Mustard, 1999).
- The Centre actively provides information on child development (Dunst et al., 2007; Raab & Dunst, 1997).
- Families are supported in advocating for themselves (Dunst, et al., 2007; Kyle, 2000; Lerner, 1997; Raab & Dunst, 1997).
- The Centre operates as a hub/link to a variety of resources and services (Kyle, 2007).
- The Centre provides multiple opportunities for families to interact with each other and to form informal support networks (Dunst, et al., 2007; McCain & Mustard, 1999).
- There is a conscious effort to promote well-being and foster individual and family strengths (Dunst, et al., 2007; Kyle, 2000).
- Staff are responsive to families changing emotional life stages (ERIC Clearinghouse on Child Care, 1996; Espe-Sherwindt, 2008).

### PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

To further the *Parent Involvement* component, other potential indicators could include:

- Staff understand the principles of family centred practices (ERIC Clearinghouse on Child Care, 1996; Dunst, et al., 2007).

- Staff have resources to support family participation (Lerner, 1997; Statewide Special Services, Scope, 2005).
- There is a mechanism to resolve potential conflicts between families and the centre's staff (Lerner, 1997).
- Families are provided opportunities to learn and use the aboriginal language (ERIC Clearinghouse on Child Care, 1996; Lerner, 1997).
- There is a policy to involve families (Dunst, et al., 2007; National Child Care Information Centre, 1996).
- Respect for choice and participation is seen as strength (Dunst, et al., 2007; Lerner, 1997; McWilliam et al., 1997).
- Families are encouraged to take creative roles in establishing goals for their children and the program (ERIC Clearinghouse on Child Care, 1996).
- Families know their input and feedback will affect change (Dunst, et al., 2007; ERIC Clearinghouse on Child Care, 1996; McWilliam et al., 1997; Raab & Dunst, 1997).
- Staff receive ongoing training in Aboriginal Culture (ERIC Clearinghouse on Child Care, 1996; Lerner, 1997).

### Conclusion

The ECERS/ITERS captures a very wide range of quality indicators for child care programs. The Tsleil-Waututh Child and Family Development Centre benefited from the initial assessment by establishing a baseline to make immediate improvements on standard and consistency of practice. Long-term benefits are projected by referring to the ECERS/ITERS while reflecting on the ongoing process of planning for the future and in supporting funding for infrastructure improvements. Although promoting acceptance of diversity is a component of the tools, culture specific indicators are not addressed. This project has identified a number of suggestions to enhance use in First Nations communities.

### Future Exploration/Direction

Using an internationally recognized, standardized measurement tool in an Aboriginal First Nations setting and incorporating an Aboriginal Program Component the AHS Six was an exceptional learning experience. Further investigation and evaluation could ensure the potential development of an addendum to the ECERS-R/ITERS-R as an "Aboriginal Component Addendum" for use in First Nations communities.

There appears to be value in exploring the merits of an addendum to address culturally specific child care programs, particularly in the Aboriginal community. As an example, the *SpecialLink Early Childhood Inclusion Quality Scale* (Irwin, 2009) was developed for special needs programs. This tool follows many of the characteristics, ratings and evaluation of the ECERS-R, but the focus is on special needs programs. The authors, therefore,





suggest further study and investigation in developing an Aboriginal Component Addendum for the ECERS-R/ITERS-R.

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# My ECE Fieldwork Inside the Grade 1 Classroom

## A Reflective Log About Play and Worksheets

by Evelyn Daly

### Weekly Log #4

**Monday, April 23rd to Thursday, April 26th, 2012; Evelyn Daly; Fieldwork III**

I read an article in Today's Parent once about mothers who swore they would never expose their children to certain elements before becoming parents and how things changed when they had their children. The mothers were doctors, teachers, psychologists and very educated professionals who felt strongly about the fact that once they had children, they would never allow them to watch six straight hours of television, or eat a happy meal at McDonalds or put up with a crying laying-on-the-floor-in-a-grocery-store tantrum. But these women's children **did** end up watching too much television and eating very unhealthy food and having fits of want in public places. I was reminded of that article this week when I was to correct my grade 1's work which I had planned, painstakingly photocopied and implemented. It was a worksheet. As a hard working and dedicated early childhood educator I believe that worksheets, or the like, can be reinvented to encompass elements of fun as well as skills necessary in social, physical, cognitive, creative and emotional development. I have come to loathe worksheets because I believe that learning can be fun. Worksheets are anything but fun. Just like B from class groaned, "I'd rather eat dirt!" So would I, B.

**Worksheets are anything but fun. Just like B from class groaned, "I'd rather eat dirt!" So would I, B.**

To me, worksheets seem the easy way out of truly planning and researching fun ways to teach children skills required of them at certain ages and stages of development. Perhaps it is much easier to print and photocopy a random page of words from a random website than to incorporate necessary blocks of learning into fun games and exciting feats. So why then did I hand out the children their activity for the day as a worksheet? The answer is a little complicated. I'm at this school to learn from educated teachers and to be exposed to their personal philosophies. When I planned fun educational activities – in which the children seemed to love – I received remarks of what seemed to be resentment for not having given the children something more academic. Perhaps I blew this out of proportion or perhaps she was alluding to the fact that the children needed quieter desk time alone, but I quickly changed my tune to please my supervisor. Was this the right thing to do? I am still not sure. I wanted the grade 1 teacher to think that I was smart, resourceful and capable enough to provide for her classroom of children the opportunity to reinforce their language, reading and writing skills. I was not impressed with my activity nor did I enjoy the correcting of it.

I have never done things during placement that I was not proud of, so this was a shocking revelation. I have tried hard to think of fun ways to still encompass the requirements she needs to meet in order to fulfill her responsibilities. I have been having trouble with the idea that if the teacher was to see the children laughing and playing together that she would deem that activity as not teaching them the fundamentals of the English language – that she is required to teach them. I have come to a conclusion. I have seen the teachers at this school, particularly this one in question,

talk to the children in incredibly thoughtful ways and reinforce behaviours with tools I have never though imaginable. I have learned how best to get children's attention and what to say in order to soothe them. I will have extracted from this placement amazingly unique and intelligent tools and techniques in which I will always remember. So,

my dislike in the way that worksheets are common place is sort of like picking my battles. I will continue, not to incorporate worksheets into my repertoire of activities, but to understand their place and value within this classroom. For this grade 1 teacher, an incredibly experienced and educated professional has placed such great importance on their worth. So I will take this with a grain of salt. I did it – I feel guilty about regretting it and I will think very seriously about doing it again.



# The Mandala Experience

## Piecing Emergent Curriculum Together

by Shelley Secrett

### A peaceful activity...

Early one morning a meditative art experience was set up in the Rainbow Room at Emmanuel at Brighton Child Care to introduce the concept of mandalas to preschool children ages ranging between 4 and 6. Mandalas are a form of sacred art and they represent wholeness and balance. In Buddhist and Hindu traditions, monks spend weeks creating intricate sand mandalas only to brush them away upon completion, a reminder of the fleeting beauty of existence. The children at Emmanuel arrived to a calm classroom lit by lamps and the art table had several mandala colouring sheets to choose from along with soothing music from the CD player and a laptop showing a mandala meditation video with bursting colours and designs. As each



child curiously came to the art table, I told them that we were going to colour mandalas and that it would be a very peaceful activity. I said, "Do you notice that each mandala has a centre?" I encouraged the children to point to the centre of their designs. I leaned in and whispered, "That's where you make a special wish for your life. It's special only for you so keep it a secret. As you colour your mandala, I want you to be thinking about your wish." The children sat calmly colouring their own mandala and watching the meditation video. They kept letting me know when the meditation ended so that I could restart it for them. Even children who do not often choose to come to the art table were enthralled in this activity. Later when the whole group had gathered for circle, we discussed mandalas in greater detail to learn more about their meaning.

### A child-centred approach...

During the week following this activity I noticed a child cutting paper into a circle and creating a beautiful design. When she finished, she said, "Look Shelley, I made a mandala!" At Emmanuel at Brighton, we have blossomed over the past year with putting emergent curriculum into practice. "In this child-centred approach, play is at the heart of curriculum. RECES support play with ample time, materials and coaching." (1)







The idea of child-centred curriculum lets go of plans around traditional school topics, popular cultural holidays and pre-packaged seasonal curriculum themed books. Instead, one way curriculum is introduced is by ECEs sharing their own passions and interests which may end up being a source of children's interests as well. A few parents have since mentioned that their child will often talk about mandalas at home in their art or out in the world when they see circular forms. My passion for the peacefulness and meaning of mandalas made for a lasting positive impression in the minds of these young children.

### **A serendipitous moment...**

I truly doubt it was coincidental when I found a unique and beautiful mandala puzzle at a nearby thrift shop for only \$1.50 on my lunch break. When the children gathered for circle time after their rest, I was very excited to say I had a surprise for them. I held up the puzzle box for them to see and I asked, "What does this look like to you?" Very quickly, several children responded excitedly, "a mandala!" I nodded and smiled and then asked the group if this would be a project that they would like to do together. I told them that the puzzle has 500 pieces and that there would need to be a lot of team work to complete it. I also said that this puzzle would take a long time to finish and that we must respect each other by not breaking it. The group agreed.

### **It takes a village...**

Throughout the month of April 2012 this group of mainly 4 and 5 year old children began this project to collaborate and complete this 500 piece puzzle which is 5 times larger than any puzzle we have attempted. We started by collecting all of the outside edge pieces and setting aside the rest of the inner pieces. As you can see from the photos, this is a very abstract image and it was definitely a challenge. As the children would put a piece together, they got very excited and we gave those children high-fives. After a couple of days, I got the idea to add a teacher's bell to the table and whoever put a piece together would signal their success by ringing the bell. This was a hit for children and I have to admit it personally gave me a sense of satisfaction as well. The puzzle table had a mini white board with a stop sign and message that said, "Work in progress". The table was situated very close to the classroom door. We often had parents contributing as well by connecting some pieces when they were dropping off or picking up their children. It really became quite the community collaboration.

### **Take a close look at curriculum...**

When you take a few moments to consider how child development relates to this activity, you may be amazed at all the skills which were involved in accomplishing this puzzle.



Throughout the process of assembling this 500 piece puzzle the children were engaged in conversations which increase their confidence, attention to task, vocabulary and patience while developing their eye-hand coordination, memory skills, problem solving, spatial awareness, physical dexterity, ability to match patterns and recognize colours.

The value of sharing in the experience of doing puzzles together with children is priceless. Not only do the children naturally gain countless of important skills but opportunities are created for social interaction and very happy childhood memories.

### **A glimpse of the extraordinary...**

This entire mandala experience in the Rainbow Room has a much greater meaning beyond child development, curriculum and the classroom. These children were invited to participate in a project that through the process would give them a sense of community, expose them to the beauty of abstract art and introduce a new way to feel peaceful and be grounded. These are all incredible experiences and ways of being that they can take with them throughout their lives. Accomplishing this puzzle and hearing the last "ding" of the bell taught the children you can be part of something big and that each person has something valuable to contribute.

### **At the centre of it all...**

At the heart of this mandala is the wish for loving friendships, the intention of caring community and the hope of lifelong learning and growth.

To leave you with a mandala meditation, please visit [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u\\_xhP52E4cw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_xhP52E4cw)



# Keeping up with Technology

## A Home Daycare Provider's Story

by Heidi Harris

### Pre-Technology Day Care

I began caring for children in my home in 1997. My youngest son was 5 months old, I had been a stay-at-home mom for 5 years and was beginning to explore the possibilities of returning to the work force.

The idea of returning to work filled me with anxiety. Computers were just beginning to immerse in the workplace when I left, basically replacing typewriters and calculators. Was the internet even around in 1992? Not to my knowledge. Home computers? No. Cell phones? Well, they were called "car phones". Cameras used film and Sony Video recorders were the exciting new toy to document special events, resulting in shelves full of home videos, or shoeboxes full of tapes, waiting to be transferred onto VHS cassettes.

The five years that I was home with my children were filled with mind-boggling advancement in technology. "User-friendly" did nothing to ease my computer-illiterate mind and I felt left out of the loop.

When the opportunity to care for my neighbour's children presented itself,

I jumped at the chance. I wasn't planning to start a home daycare. I was planning to take some extra time to catch up with the world.

We bought a home computer. I enrolled in computer courses. The World Wide Web made its debut. MSN had me playing backgammon, cribbage, euchre with people from all over the world. And having typed conversations with them!

My home daycare evolved almost without me realizing it. Two other families on the street asked me to care for their children. Openings were quickly filled by families that I did not know, but who had heard about me through the "social network" of the early '90's: *word of mouth!* My business thrived and I was surprised at how much I enjoyed the job.

### The hand-written journal

Something I sent home, each day, with each child was a hand-written journal. It documented what we ate, what crafts we did, our outings, behavioural/discipline issues, successes and little anecdotes. The parents treasured these notebooks. They felt connected to their child and would sometimes return the journal to me with their own comments and questions. It avoided long-drawn out conversations in my driveway at the end of the day and resulted in fewer phone calls during my family time.





We moved from Ottawa to Chelsea, Quebec in 2003. I decided to continue to run a home daycare. Parents on the Quebec side of the river also treasured their children's journals.

My first group of children were all under the age of 3 and had long 2 hour naps in the afternoon. I had time to write in the journals and still have some time to myself. Then at the age of 3, some of the children went to nursery school in the afternoon. Since I drove them to and from school, the 2 hour naps became 1 hour naps in order to make time for before and after nap activities.

### **Sadly, the handwritten journals fell to the wayside**

I got my first cell phone in 2005....the old flip up one, pay as you go, used only for emergencies. Then my own children got cell phones and I eventually got up to speed with my own "smart" phone. But, it still basically languished in the bottom of my purse only to be used for emergencies.

Daycare photo ops are always presenting themselves. Habit had me charging up the digital camera but usually bemoaning the fact that the battery was dead and the "moment" had passed. My phone came out of my purse and instantly became a fun and useful tool.

### **Facebook!**

We are an active little group, out the door in all kinds of weather, off on some adventure, somewhere. And now, thanks to my phone, we are able to instantly pass on pictures and comments to parents through Facebook. Parents, who are working, maybe missing their children, or may be just in need of a smile and a mid day pick me up - have instant access to a picture of their child feeding a duck, building a snowman or decorating Christmas cookies. They can also look at the pictures together with their child at the end of the day and learn all about their day. And parents are also able to share the photos with other family members and friends. It's lovely for me to read comments made by aunts, uncles or grandparents!

### **Other welcome technological intrusions into my daycare? Texts!**

Parents can let me know if they're stuck in traffic, if there has been a change in plans regarding pickup. When I take the children on an overnight to the cottage, I can send a reassuring text at the end of the day, that all has gone well and their children are tucked snugly into bed for the night.

## **I use Google to get craft and recipe ideas, advice on discipline and behavioural issues. Networking with other caregivers is my newest discovery!**

### **Google!**

I am a Google addict! I Google everything. If the children ask me a question that I just don't have an answer for... "let's google it!" I use Google to get craft and recipe ideas, advice on discipline and behavioural issues. Networking with other caregivers is my newest discovery! I have even introduced the children to bits of my childhood via YouTube - old school Sesame Street, a delightful Mr. Rogers PBS remix and we all

know what an interjection is thanks to School House Rock!

Another interesting "use" of technology in my daycare...old cell phones have become the most cherished toy! Tucked into a purse during dressup time, pulled out to make a quick call to mum, or to take a picture, flipping the phone around and saying "Oh, that's a good one! Let's send that to your mom!"

I also use the computer to do my "dirty work". Discussions about money, contracts, obligations - I run a business but would never call myself a "business woman". I think running a daycare requires a balance of being a good business person but also being warm, thoughtful and empathetic. The computer and emails compensate for my lack of business edge. I can fire off a very concise email, outlining contractual obligations and expectations without sounding defensive or weak (remember, I like to think of myself as empathetic and understanding!). Emails help me find that balance.

I want to use the computer to track my expenses, but remain loyal to my shoebox full of receipts - maybe next year!

Face-to-face contact, a smile, a hug, "been there . . . know what you are going through" comments are still my most preferred way of communicating with my clients. And emergencies, your child "is sick", "has lice", "has injured themselves" must always be dealt with by a personal phone call. But I now have the reassurance that I can contact the parent, wherever I am, and that they can be reached on their cellphone, wherever they are!

I have never regretted not rejoining the "work force". Technology is still evolving at a rate that I will always be several steps behind. But I have evolved enough with it, to be able to put it to good use within my active home daycare setting. It will be interesting to look back at this in another 5 years and see how much farther technology and I have evolved.





## Self and Other: Critical Connections

by Jan Blaxall

Self and other are two frequently used and seemingly simple “self”-explanatory words and concepts.

- **Self** - myself, yourself, themselves, self-aware, self-centred, selfish,
- **Other**– not me, but like me – group members, those who belong, those to be tolerated, accepted and respected.
- **Other** – Not me, not like me – those to be feared, mistrusted, rejected, excluded.

In reality, in day-to-day interactions, families, relationships and group situations, these two concepts are anything but simple. The challenge of balancing Self and Other is complex even with others we know and with whom we have relationships. Sometimes it is Self and Other. In different circumstances it is Self in opposition to Other. The dynamics of Self and Other range from love, respect and belonging to exclusion, bullying, alienation and even violence.

Several questions follow from a more in-depth look at the connections between self and other. Is there innate wiring that determines our view of self and other? Or are our views and relationships with others determined through socialization and personal experiences? What critical experiences

are important in the development of understanding of self and other? What happens to individual development when there is a mismatch between one’s sense of self and what others (and various media) seem to value and/or portray as valuable? How does it impact the child when she perceives her developing sense of self to be displeasing to others? How does the process of exclusion, overt or covert, impact the emerging sense of self?

On a societal level there are important questions as well. Are we predisposed to experience conflict in interactions as we develop and assert our individuality? Or is it possible to establish interdependency in our essential relationships?

And for those professionals working with young children and families, what are the preconditions of relationships, experiences and competencies necessary for balancing Self and Other in our lives, social relationships, communities and in the global experience? A long-standing component of Early Childhood Education philosophy and practice recognizes the essential nature of emotional and social development as the foundation for effective interpersonal interactions and relationships. This article and the companion article affirm

the importance of building these skills and values in the early years.

### Forming a Sense of Self

In 1975, Margaret Mahler identified the second half of the first year of life as the beginning of the “psychological birth” of the infant, a process which continues into the third year. This early self-awareness coincides with the understanding that the significant Other, often the mother, is a separate person with whom a mutually pleasing attachment must be developed for a sense of security and well-being. The increasingly mobile and competent infant learns that he has ways of engaging the attachment figure when needed but also has skills to meet some of his own needs to acquire objects, master the physical environment and communicate feelings and desires.

The quality of the attachment relationship is a significant influence. When the attachment relationship is secure, the child is more likely to experience positive social and emotional outcomes, such as a positive sense of self, positive self esteem and self worth (Benoit, 2004). The attachment relationship allows for the development of trust in others and frees the child to express himself with confidence, autonomy and initiative.

The late Dr. Stanley Greenspan (1985) identified the sense of self as the fourth milestone in the emotional development of children, emerging after the child has begun to demonstrate self-regulation strategies, attachment and intentional communication. The ability to successfully send messages to attachment figures and receive prompt and sensitive responses sets the stage for the child's development of her self-perception as worthy of the attention and support from others, able to resolve her own problems and engage others.

### Other: The Attachment Relationship

Dr. Bruce Perry, a psychiatrist who studies traumatized children, is well known for his explanation of the connection of the early development of the brain with the template that each of us forms to understand human relationships. In his work he identifies essential early achievements that enhance relationships, affiliation and group dynamics. These achievements include developing secure attachments, tolerance and the ability to interact in with others in constructive and mutually satisfying ways.

Our brain is designed to promote relationships. Specific parts of the human brain respond to emotional cues (such as facial expressions, touch, scent) and, more important, allow us to get pleasure from positive human interactions. The systems in the brain that mediate pleasure appear to be closely connected to the systems that mediate emotional relationships. Indeed this inter-relationship-the capacity to get pleasure from other people-creates a major positive learning tool of infancy and childhood (Perry, 2001b, p.29).

Attachment theory tells us that the young child experiences feelings of safety and

security when parents are responsive and predictable (Benoit, 2004). When a young child feels special, valued, and accepted, it empowers her and gives her a sense of competence. "This belief and feeling grows in a child when the important adults in his life tell him, and show him repeatedly, how important and loved he is. When the child feels this unqualified acceptance, it is so much easier for him to accept others" (Perry, 2002b, p.26).

### Self: The child who doesn't please the parent

What if the child has characteristics that are perceived by parents to be difficult or unwanted? What if the parent is not able to be consistently responsive and warm, creating an insecure attachment? This can jeopardize those crucial early experiences that communicate acceptance and love (Benoit, 2004). If the child feels that she is always disappointing or frustrating to the parent, she may begin to doubt herself and feel unsure. "*Am I not pleasing to others? Am I not worth attention, affection and support?*" This can lead to negative outcomes in the early development of self concept and self esteem.

If a child has few positive relationships in early childhood or has had a bad start due to problems with the primary-caregiving experiences of infancy, this child is at risk for a host of problems. In a very real sense, the glue of normal human interactions is gone. A child with poor attachment capacity is much harder to "shape" and teach (Perry, 2001b, p.29).

This can reach an extreme degree in situations where the child fails to develop empathy or remorse about hurting others. Over time, such a child is often punished, and rejected by both adults and peers, which can lead to anti-social, even violent behaviour. Without help, this

child's life path will most likely include negative interactions and behaviour. Perry states that both "research [and clinical experience] show that attachment capacity is easiest to shape if early identification and intervention takes place" (20001b, p.29). Attachment insecurity needs to be addressed within the family, but can also be supported by educators.

### Other: Venturing out to early learning settings

New experiences outside the family and home can be threatening and anxiety-provoking for young children. The child's brain responds to anxiety by activating stress-regulating systems in the brain. The brain works to identify whether the newness signals danger, and the stress response remains activated until the child's perception of the new experience changes to a positive and secure one (Shore, 2001). Separation reactions when young children enter unfamiliar early learning settings can last for days, or sometimes weeks, before the child develops the secure attachment relationship with the early childhood educator or caregiver.

When a child is able to establish this secondary attachment in the early learning setting, that relationship with the educator can support both learning and social emotional development.

The invisible yet powerful web of relationships in the classroom ... creates an optimal learning environment. The most important learning "tool" is the teacher. And it is the teacher who creates the safe "home base" from which the child will explore. A sense of safety comes from consistent, attentive, nurturing, and sensitive attention to each child's needs... (Perry, 2000, p.36).

Perry goes on to explain how the child's "strong connection with an attentive

and nurturing teacher... provides social and emotional opportunities that help a child's attachment capabilities mature..." (2001b, p.29). This spills over into the social peer environment, where young children take risks in social situations, and with adult guidance, learn the necessary skills for pleasurable relationships with peers. Because young children often want to please their teachers, they cooperate, use the skills they have been taught and imitate both adults and children they admire.

### **Self: The child who doesn't please the educator.**

But what about the child who doesn't please the educator, maybe because of temperament, self-regulation difficulties, inappropriate response to direction or resistance to authority? Challenging behaviours often result in criticism, disapproval, even anger. Children, who do not get supportive responses from educators, often have difficulty forming positive concepts of themselves in educational settings. Many children receive more negative than positive feedback from adults in their lives, leaving them vulnerable to a negative sense of self. Erikson (1959) warned that children like this begin to experience self-doubt and shame in place of the more adaptive experiences of positive autonomy and initiative.

Perry (2001b) also talks about the risk that insecure attachment relationships and negative self perceptions pose to the children's relationships with others. "Without the capacity to use human interactions to 'reward' and 'punish', the teacher and parent often are confused and frustrated in their attempts to promote appropriate social behaviour" (p. 29). When children come to expect negative experiences their social interactions, automatically activate stress responses in the brain. The child's stress response interferes with learning and threatens the quality of the child's

relationships with adults that she needs to trust and rely on.

### **Belonging: Inclusion in the peer group**

In addition to his relationship with the educator, the child engages in various peer interactions and relationships that also affect developing social capabilities. Early relationships with peers are often temporary and situational. "Best friends' emerge. Temporary alliances form and may exclude one child and then later incorporate him or her. Being 'in' or 'out' can shift from hour to hour and day to day..." (Perry, 2002a, p.31). These early exclusions, such as hearing that one is not being invited to a birthday party or is not a friend, are a hurtful but necessary part of learning how to cope as a member of a group. It is within these relationships that children learn the rules of social behaviour.

As children spend more time in groups, they begin to experience acceptance and belonging which is the basis of a social identity. Most children develop meaningful friendships that evolve into strong emotional bonds within the preschool or early school age period. These friendships enable and encourage the skills necessary for empathy, caring and meaningful relationships. One's social identity is a key aspect of how each of us defines who we are in our interactions outside the shelter of home and family.

Perry discusses differences among children in achieving these social skills.

Learning and mastering the rules of groups are very important yet difficult processes for many children...Some children manage this process well. Others do not; these tend to be children with immature attachment or self-regulation skills. (Perry, 2002a, p.31)

Unsuccessful children may demonstrate socially challenging behaviours such as withdrawal, aggression, teasing, bossing, bullying or impulsivity.

### **Rejection: Children who don't please the peer group**

When children draw responses of frustration and negative consequences from educators, this does not go unnoticed by the other children. Quickly children come to identify the child as a problem or "bad" child and they will begin to avoid, ignore or reject the child, leading to further negativity for the less socially skilled child. The child's own under-developed social skills add to this exclusion.

A child's acceptance into a group depends heavily on his or her capacity to regulate anxiety, impulsive behaviour, and frustration. Without these prerequisite strengths, a child will have difficulty forming and regulating the relationships with others that are necessary to develop affiliation skills (Perry, 2002a, p.30).

This situation can be made worse when there are children in the group who are struggling with tolerance. "An intolerant child will be judgmental of others. She may tease, berate, and attack others who are different. Sometimes this can be overtly hostile and aggressive" (Perry, 2002b, p.27). Perry (2002b) believes that an intolerant child is "essentially, insecure - insecure about her status, skills, beliefs, and values" (p.27). We have all observed children who struggle with tolerance and contribute to an atmosphere of exclusion and bullying. The results of peer rejection and bullying are devastating for the victimized child. Perry (2002a) warns that "over time, the excluded child can take this pain and turn



it inward, becoming sad or self-loathing. Or the pain can be directed outward, leading to aggression or even violence” (p.31).

Neither outcome is acceptable. Pain turned inwards can lead to long term mental health issues, depression, even suicide for older children and adolescents. Pain turned outward can lead to negative acting out with the possible result of the child’s behaviour being addressed by the police and justice system and lifelong implications of failure and alienation (Cicchetti, Ganiban, & Barnett, 1991).

### What can early years educators do?

The foundation for positive social interactions is formed in the first years of life. Parents and early educators have a critical responsibility to lay the foundation for tolerance and interdependence of self and other.

#### Establish secure attachment relationships:

“The presence of familiar people projecting the social-emotional cues of acceptance, compassion, caring, and safety calms the stress response of the individual: *You are one of us, you are welcome, you are safe.*” (Perry, 2009, p.246)

#### Be engaged:

“One of the most pleasurable things to do [with children] is just **stop, sit, listen and play** with these children. When you are quiet and interactive with them you find that they will begin to show you and tell you about what is really inside them. Yet as simple as this sounds it is one of the most difficult things for adults to do— to stop, quit worrying about the time or your next task and really relax into the moment with a child.” (Perry, 2001a, p.9)

#### Be responsive to children’s needs:

When an educator does this regularly, children will sense that you are there just for them, and that you care for them. “It is during these moments that you can best reach and teach these children.” (Perry, 2001a, p. 9)

#### Model and teach tolerance:

Within the early childhood peer group, models for group formation, belonging and exclusion are being formed that will influence a lifetime of social experience. “The development of tolerance requires active learning... active modelling by adults and repeated exposure of children to different ways of living in our world” (2002b, p.27). Perry advocates for the importance of creating multiple opportunities to build tolerance, acceptance and respect as the basis for day to day interaction and conflict resolution with others.

### Affiliation and Social Identity

When the child demonstrates qualities valued by the peer group, she experiences a sense of acceptance and belonging, one of the most significant aspects of human development. Perry describes affiliation as “the strength that allows us to join with others to create something stronger, more adaptive, and more creative than any individual: the group” (2002a, p.30). The capacity of individuals to develop the skills necessary to be able to work together for the good of the group depends on the complex combination of security, positive sense of self, tolerance for others, affiliation and belonging in a group that values differences.

The importance of a sense of belonging is recognized as crucial to personal well-being. “We consider ourselves to be individuals but it is our membership of

particular groups that is most important in constructing a sense of identity. Social identity is a fundamental aspect of what it is to be human” (Marsh, Bradley, Love, Alexander, Norham, 2007, p. 4).

### Self with Other: Building a caring and compassionate society

What can we learn from various expert voices?

Peter Marsh and his colleagues have studied the issue of belonging as an important issue for our rapidly changing society.

In modern society it makes sense to think of humans as individuals — after all, we have individual bodies, individual minds, and individual goals and ambitions. But in very important ways, being human is not about being an individual at all — it is about belonging to a particular group of individuals. At a very basic level, who we are is defined by the social networks and communities to which we belong (Marsh et al, 2007, p.7).

They also point out the significance of how we define Other as well, in terms of politics, globalization and conflict.

There are also new ways of distinguishing ourselves from others. New forms of social and economic inequality serve to divide social groups, while the global, post-9/11 politics of terrorism and immigration play an important part in framing our sense of belonging to both nations, people and ideas (Marsh et al, 2007, p.9).

In order for the next generations to be equipped to address these important issues of Self and Other, we as educators need to enhance the prerequisite skills

in the children we touch, utilizing all the expertise available to us.

Dr. Perry (2002a) believes that society benefits when habits and attitudes developed in childhood allow innate social attitudes and behaviours to flourish.

... as we grow, we do not gradually become independent of others; rather, we become interdependent. In the course of our lives we form many give-and-take relationships, building a healthy interdependence with family, community, and culture. Humans are so adept at this because we are biologically designed to live, play, grow, and work in groups. We are, at our cores, social creatures (p.30).

Barbara Coloroso (2009) warns that society can model values that are in opposition to Perry's ideal of interdependence. Coloroso has often stated her opinion that our children and youth are "swimming in a culture of mean". (Canadian Press, 2007) There has been a shift in cultural values that allows selfishness and bullying to continue in many different forms and situations. But Coloroso believes that children have an innate capacity for compassion and caring that can be nurtured and guided throughout childhood. She regularly speaks to parents and professionals regarding parenting and discipline practices that support children to develop skills in decision-making and appropriate behaviour.

Jonathan Haidt (2012) is a psychologist who has made a number of thought-provoking observations about self and other in his recent book, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*. Haidt identifies many factors, both innate and experiential, that lead to choices that we make throughout our lives. He recognizes human capacity for both self-serving and other-serving behaviour. He argues

that we need to address these issues with intent because they have a significant impact on our work, politics, religion and quality of life.

Human nature was produced by natural selection working at two levels simultaneously. Individuals compete with individuals within every group. ... This gives us the ugly side of our nature... selfish hypocrites so skilled at putting on a show of virtue that we fool even ourselves... But human nature was also shaped as groups competed with other groups. ... The most cohesive and cooperative groups generally beat the groups of selfish individualists.... We're not always selfish hypocrites. We also have the ability, under special circumstances, to shut down our petty selves and become like cells in a larger body or like bees in a hive, working for the good of the group (p. xv).

The complexity of life and the many relational situations through which we manoeuvre on a daily basis allow for both intricate connections and potential conflict between Self and Other. There are implications for individual and group behaviour, politics, values and ethics that will determine whether the Self and the Other make the choice to collaborate for the betterment of all, or compete, dominate, overpower and ultimately destroy the potential for compassion and caring.

Haidt's (2012) conclusion, which we should all keep in mind, for optimal quality of life:

We may spend most of our waking hours advancing our own interests, but we all have the capacity to transcend self-interest and become simply a part of the whole. It's not just a capacity; it's the portal to many of life's most cherished experiences. (p. 317)

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# Supporting Individual Development for Successful Group Involvement

## A Faculty Member's Journey

by Janet Foster, B.A., R.ECE, ECE.C

My passion for early childhood education (ECE) started when I entered an ECE diploma program in the eighties. Upon graduation, I had the privilege of working with preschool children. My journey has taken me full circle, as I now teach in the ECE program (for the past twenty years) at the same local college I graduated from.

My focus throughout this journey was, and continues to be, on supporting children's emotional and social development. The message I give my students is the necessity of **understanding and supporting children emotionally, so we can help them socially**. This sets them in a positive direction to be able to learn in group settings, as they will have the foundational skills needed to make friends and work in groups, which are lifelong needed skills.

I like to share with my students how my learning has continued since graduating. This helps students understand that successfully working with children requires a lifetime of continuing one's own education. I use myself as an example. Had I not continued studying and learning, I would not be able to teach how to implement a developmentally appropriate environment for young children.

When I began my career in the 1980's many programs focused on large groups and theme-based activities. In my early experiences circle time carried on for long periods and we expected all children

to be able to sit with their feet tucked up and engage in teacher-directed lessons. Calendar time was also done, separately, to familiarize children with dates and number recognition. Large group time also included literacy, as we read books or enacted stories through flannel boards. Pre-cut crafts were made to support the theme of the week. When children didn't listen or get along with each other, time-out was the discipline strategy.

Was it all wrong? Of course not! I also supported individual children then, but if I could go back today and do it all over again, that would be my only focus. If you can recognize and meet children on an individual level, then you can help them develop the skills that enable them

to be successful in group interactions. **It is essential to help children develop the skills necessary to be successful interacting in groups, as this is such a large part of their life.** To do this we must work to understand a child's emotional and social development.

I provide many examples to my students to show how some children struggle emotionally and socially. I remember the four year old, who was behaving at the developmental level of a toddler. He had two professional parents who had tried for years to have children. When they finally conceived, they were told that he would probably be their only child. His needs were catered to by his parents, as they did everything for him.





His verbal skills appeared to be delayed. When he entered our program, children didn't want to play with him because he "acted like a baby". He had impulse control issues, screamed and cried when he didn't get his way, and he did not make friends. As a team we modelled how to enter into groups, how to maintain play and how to deal with conflicts. We also provided acknowledgement when he was successful and explained why some of his strategies didn't work. We encouraged the children to describe how they were feeling when he did something inappropriate rather than exclude him and with this support he was increasingly able to enter and maintain play with other children in the group.

Family trauma can cause stress, which can also contribute to difficulties interacting with others. While supervising a student on field placement, I became aware of the circumstances that were underlying a child's anger and aggression. When conflict occurred between herself and her peers, she responded very violently. Upon discussion with the mentors, I found out that she had witnessed her grandparents being hit by a car and passing away. This stressful situation overwhelmed her ability to cope and use social skills previously demonstrated. Luckily she was at a very supportive centre that understood this and tried to make her day as stress free as possible, by acknowledging her feelings and supporting her in her problem solving ability.

A current example comes from one of our students on field placement in a kindergarten class. While at the play dough table she commented to one boy that his snowman looked sad, to which he replied that he was sad because mommy doesn't live with them anymore. As she was supporting this child in conversation, another child sat down to talk about how she was sad because her mother also left and she hadn't seen her. When it was time to "tidy up" to go outside, the first boy

was not ready to give up his snowman with the sad face. The student suggested to the child that they show him to his teacher, and tell her about his mother. When they showed her the snowman, she quickly commented that it was time to tidy up and go on to the next transition. She then proceeded to make a "ball" out of the play dough for the child to put away. The educator wasn't intentionally being mean or insensitive to the child, she just didn't take time! By taking a moment to listen to this child before continuing with the next routine her response would have been more respectful and supportive. We need to commit to making time in order to support children's individual emotional needs, if they are to be successful in our programs and in their lives

When we meet individual needs, we are recognizing the work of Erik Erikson (1959) and Stanley Greenspan (1986, 1999). Erikson believed that there are eight stages of psychological growth, and how one interacts in each stage can have a positive or negative effect on the person. Knowing the stages that encompass the early years - trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame and doubt and initiative vs. guilt - is a critical first step in establishing a positive relationship with children (Marion, 2011). If children are successful in the areas of trust, developing autonomy and initiative, then they will have a solid foundation for social development.

Greenspan believed that there are six milestones of emotional well-being, which educators need to understand in order to support children. Children need a sense of security, a strong attachment base, the ability to communicate their needs effectively, to develop a sense of self, the ability to express their full range of emotions and the ability to make good choices. (Blaxall et al, 1996) It is crucial that ECE's recognize the importance of Erikson and Greenspan as their theories can be the guidelines in establishing a developmental curriculum that supports children's social and emotional growth.

Emotional literacy supports children's social competence. The ability to express yourself, and understand how others are feeling are skills that need to be taught and integrated in preschool curriculum. In the article *Enhancing Emotional Vocabulary in Young Children*, emotional literacy is defined as "the ability to recognize, label and understand feelings of one self and others. It is a prerequisite for emotional regulation, successful interpersonal interactions and problem solving and is one of the most important skills a child is taught in the early years." (Joseph and Strain, 2003, p. 21)

Social competence is defined as "being liked by others and having the skills to interact effectively in social settings" (Trawick-Smith, 1994, p.86). This is a skill we must assist children to achieve in order for them to be successful in group interactions, not only now, but for the rest of their lives. From the time children enter childcare, then elementary school, high school, maybe higher education and the work force, they will encounter many different types of group situations. Their skills interacting with others will have an impact on their success in these settings as well as their physical, social and emotional well being (Adler, Rosenfeld, Proctor & Winder, 2012) It starts in the early years!

One benefit of having social competence is making and keeping friends. "Most preschool children have at least one reciprocated relationship with a peer; those who maintain long term friendships tend to be more socially competent". (Trawick-Smith, 1994, p. 103) Trawick-Smith cites Hartup and Moore, who state that "a single friendship can insulate a child from some of the negative effects of being rejected or neglected by other peers" and that the "peer group is an important arena in which children learn the give and take that is important for

mature, successful social interaction” (p. 103) How can this happen if a child is struggling with emotional or social issues?

I introduce my students to a project called “Making Friends: A guide to using the Assessment of Peer Relations and Planning Interventions (APR)” (Littman, Carr & Guralnick, 1992) Although the video is dated, the material is timeless (a good reminder that this awareness of the importance of social and emotional development has been part of the ECE tradition for decades). Michael Guralnick, a child development specialist, developed the APR for educators to record observations of children’s social interactions and level of play. From these observations, educators can design their program taking into consideration the child’s individual needs. Rather than labelling a child as “aggressive” or “attention seeking”, educators can focus on any noted social delays and plan ways to help children attain and practice social skills.

Guralnick and his colleagues (1992) believe that there are three social tasks that children need in order to become successful socially. The first task is peer group entry. They state that 50% of the time, even children with fairly good social skills who try to enter into groups get turned down by their peers. The reason is that children ask, “Can I play?” which gives the group an opportunity to say no. We can force children to play together because we, as educators, have the power, but does this really support children in making friends? Our goal is to help children develop ways to successfully enter and maintain play, without adult assistance. We might suggest to a child that she could offer to build a bridge for the town the group is creating with blocks in order to gain entry or pretend to be a patient with a sore throat in order to enter the group’s hospital related dramatic play. Sometimes we might join the play briefly in order to support the child’s entry. What these strategies have in common is they

model entry into play and they help children develop peer group entry skills they can use in the future.

Once in play children need to be able to carry out the other two tasks, conflict resolution and maintaining play. If a child has never been taught problem solving, she will not be able to maintain play. If a child cannot regulate his emotions, he cannot maintain play. These skills are part of everyday learning and responsive care. The development of emotional regulation is supported by caring, responsive relationships that recognize the child’s individuality (Thompson & Lagattuta, 2008). Adults can model problem solving by talking out loud

when they are trying to figure something out and routinely engaging children in identifying problems, generating and evaluating possible solutions, trying their ideas out and evaluating how well they worked (Joseph & Strain, 2010). Children also need to have a “shared understanding” in order to play successfully, which means they have to have an understanding of how the play is to be carried out and acquire the basic social skills to interact in this situation. An example would be a pretend play situation that involves a doctor’s office or ice cream shop. This type of role play requires children to draw on their own experiences in these settings. If children do not understand the social interactions involved in these settings (e.g. the role of

**Rejected**

“Some children are rejected by their peers. Sometimes it is because they do not know how to insert themselves in a positive way into a play situation. Sometimes they do not have the skills to express themselves or to maintain appropriate behaviours, and are pushed away by other children.”

**Ignored**

“Some children are ignored by others and go about the room as though they cannot be seen by other children. They may want to play with others, but end up standing back and watching. They do not know how to join in, to become participants in the play.”

**Anxious**

“Some children are so tense and anxious that they are unable to enjoy play. Their anxiety may keep them from relaxing or being comfortable in the classroom. They may appear withdrawn, tentative or worried.

**Wandering**

“Some children have difficulty getting involved or are unable to make choices or to stick with a choice. They may bounce from activity to activity, or area to area. Even if encouraged to play at an activity, they may stay for a few minutes and then move away to something else.”

**Dabbling**

“Some children stay at an activity, but their play lacks depth. They do not seem to be really involved. They often look disinterested and vague as they stare around the room. Their movements tend to be repetitive. Over time, there seems to be little growth in their play.”

**Aloof**

“Some children choose to be alone and turn away from other children and/or teachers. They may seem to be on the periphery of the room even while in the middle of it. These are not children who sometimes like to play alone, as most children do. These are children who remain aloof from their play environment.”

Excerpt from: *Hand- in-Hand* (1993) *Supporting Children with Play Problems*. Video Series. Portland Oregon: Educational Productions Inc.

the doctor, and patient or the shop keeper and the customers purchasing ice cream) conflicts about how to play may occur. Children without personal experience in these settings may have difficulty negotiating roles and maintaining play sequences.

“Ownership” and “taking turns” happen when children know that they have a right to what they are playing with and can lend the item, but can ask for it back. Before they develop the concept of ownership they may have difficulty maintaining play, because they worry that other children will take the toys they are playing with and they will not be able to get them back. Children who do not understand the concept of ownership often have difficulty sharing and taking turns. They may “horde” items they are not yet using, because they plan to play with them, and don’t understand that they have a right to ask for them back. Once again, it is up to us as educators to understand where a child is socially and plan individual play, coaching, and interventions in order to support the development of these skills.

The introductory video of an excellent DVD series, “*When a child doesn’t play: identifying play problems and teacher interventions*”, discusses six common behaviours that signal play problems (Hand-in-Hand, 1993). The remaining modules include information about the rejected child, neglected child, anxious child, wandering child, dabbling child and aloof child. There are various reasons why children might experience difficulties in social interactions; some of them are summarized in the box on the previous page.

It is through the educator’s observational skills and reflections about what is preventing the child from being successful in play, that interventions can support the development of social skills, using a play based curriculum. Once again the educator focuses on individual child’s social and emotional needs in order to provide for

successful group interactions. The goals are the enjoyment of play and playing successfully with others.

This is valuable practice in early childhood programs and also essential content for an Early Childhood Educator college curriculum. Understanding our role as Early Childhood Educators in supporting children in the early years does not stop when you graduate from a two year diploma. Formal education can provide the foundation of what is needed, but as professionals, we must all continue our education. As John Dewey said, “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”

Janet Foster has been a faculty member of Fanshawe College Early Childhood Education program since 1991. She has a B.A. in child development as well as a diploma in Early Childhood Education. Her background includes several years as part of the ECE team in Fanshawe College’s Child Care Program. Areas of teaching and expertise include children’s social and emotional development, early relationships, guidance and professionalism. Janet is a certified trainer for *Second Step - A Violence Prevention Curriculum* and *Kids Have Stress Too! Preschool Program*.

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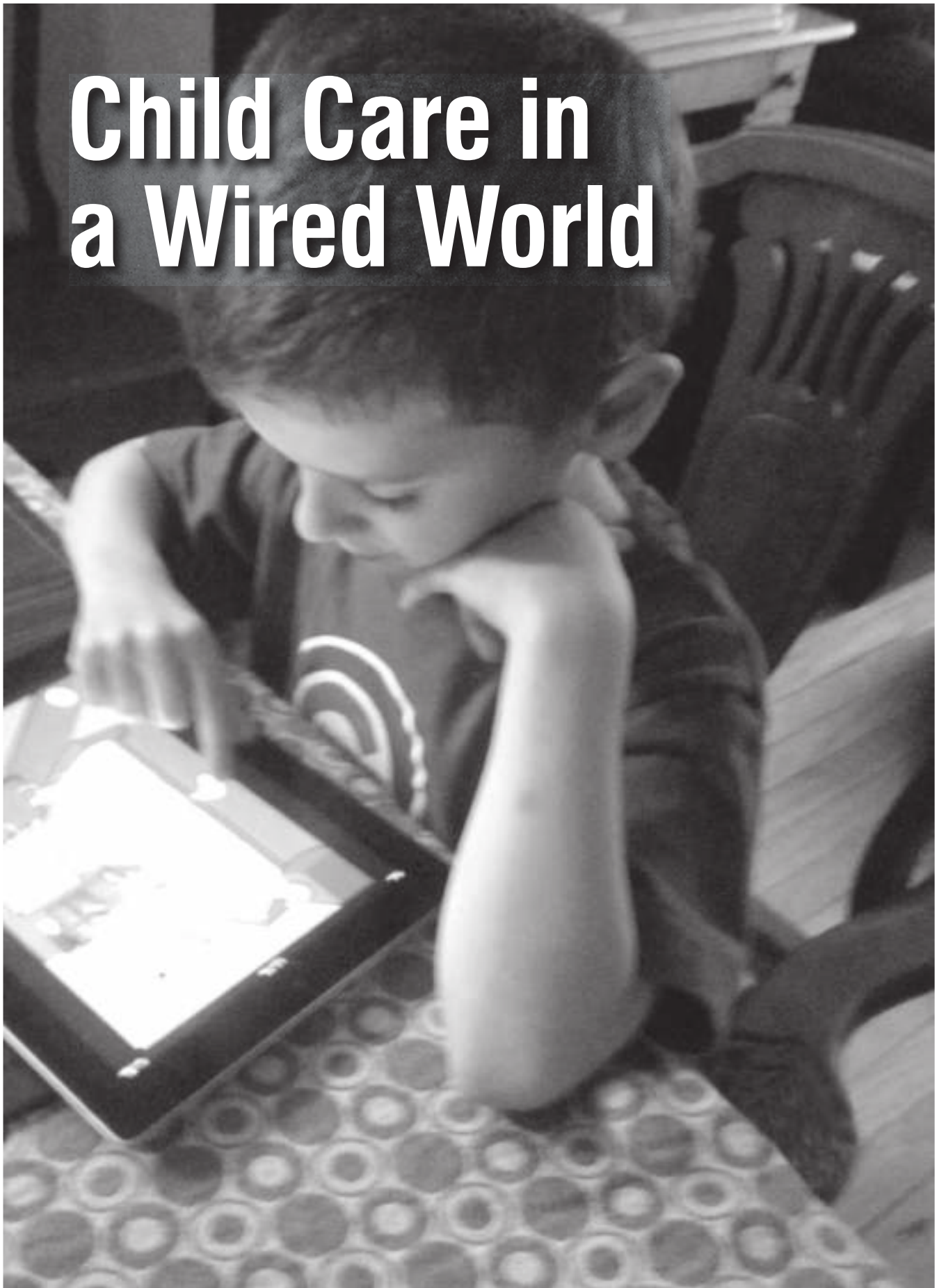
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# Child Care in a Wired World



## CHILD CARE IN A WIRED WORLD

# Integrating Technology and Social Media Tools to Enhance Learning and Collaboration Among ECCE Students

by **Laura Fowler-Massie**

Faculty of Early Childhood Care and Education  
Heritage College, Gatineau, QC

### Tools for Increasing Communication and Collaboration Among Students in ECCE Locally and Abroad

My area of pedagogical concern relates to *increasing communication and collaboration*. More specifically, I would like the students in one of my courses to communicate and collaborate with others on their team, as they work together on a specific project. I intend to use groups within forums on my Moodle course site and Google Docs for collaborative, team planning work.

In another class I hope to promote communication using technology between my

class and a partner in Africa. Through social networking technology such as Skype we will collaborate to develop early childhood teaching resources for child care staff in a small village in Africa.

#### Feature Tool:

Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet. Calls to other users within the Skype service are free, while calls to both traditional landline telephones and mobile phones can be made for a fee using a debit-based user account system. Skype has also become popular for its additional features which include instant messaging, file transfer, and video conferencing. The network is operated by Skype Limited, which has its headquarters in Luxembourg and is partly owned by eBay. (<http://www.skype.com/intl/en-us/get-skype/>)

#### Pedagogical relevance, application and limitations

As a communication tool, Skype has proven very helpful to me. In one of my courses students are involved in a collaborative project with child care workers in a small village in Mozambique. With the help of a webcam, a built-in microphone, speakers and the free Skype download my class has been able to hold video calls with Africa in real-time. From a pedagogical point of view, being able to see and speak directly with our contacts in Africa, has made this project an “authentic learning” activity. Students are able to ask



questions, problem-solve, demonstrate techniques and view the environment directly. I feel that this level of engagement has contributed considerably to student learning and understanding. These Skype conversations are free and are not constrained by time limits.

In addition to the video calls we have also used Skype to IM (instant message). Through IM, our partners in Africa have sent us website links where they post photographs of the children in their daycare centre. We can then view and talk about these pictures during our video calls. This kind of dialogue has sparked wonderful interest in learning more about Africa and the reality for parents and families there, as well thinking about the possibilities for travelling and working abroad after graduation.

Although Skype has functioned very well so far, there are a few limitations that must be mentioned. Obviously, consistent, strong internet access is required for the successful use of this technology. Unfortunately this is not always the case in rural African villages (not to mention lots of other places in the world). In addition to that, in order to have video access where both parties can see, webcams must be available. Not all computers are equipped for this purpose so additional hardware must be purchased.



In order to have audio available for a room full of people it is necessary to also have a microphone. I purchased a webcam with a built-in microphone and it worked wonderfully. One-to-one video calls also work well with the use on a headset if the webcam does not have a built-in microphone. It should be noted however that if you are using Skype in a public place other people can hear what you are saying, so privacy issues might be an issue. In this case the IM features work like a dream.

Overall I highly recommend this technology as a tool to assist and promote communication. My students now know how to use Skype and how to access the software themselves. I hope that they will take this knowledge and explore the possibilities.







## CHILD CARE IN A WIRED WORLD

### Discussion Issues in ECE

The following two articles are the first in a new series in *Interaction* which will discuss emerging issues in child care and early learning. We hope to open discussions with our readers to encourage conversations on various topics important to our sector.

This first of the series looks at the pros and cons of using webcams in child care centres. Any ideas expressed in these articles are not the expressed opinions of the CCCF, but are simply included to open discussions within the sector.

## Benefits of Webcams

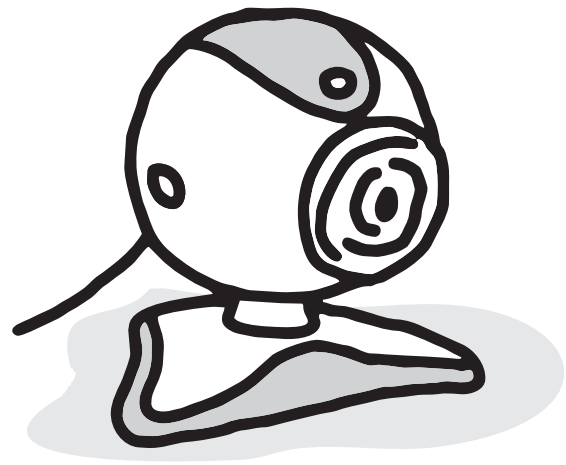
### Kids & Company

Since Kids & Company's inception 10 years ago, they saw the value of installing web-enabled cameras in their first centre in Toronto. As Kids & Company continued to evolve and grow, from one centre in one city to currently over 40 centres in 20 cities they have continued to install webcams in each classroom in each centre. Kids & Company understands that their tech savvy clients are busy professionals yet parents who want to check in on their child or children periodically.

Webcams allow family members to share in their child's day by delivering live video from the child's classroom as cameras have been strategically placed. One of the many advantages to the web camera operation is that virtually anywhere there is an Internet connection there can be viewing access with their personalized and secure account.

Many parents must put their child or children in some type of child care environment. It's a tough and emotional decision to make, and one that worries many parents. Therefore, when parents have the option to choose a child care company that offers internet viewing via webcam, this puts many parents' minds at ease. Webcams allow people to have the sensation that they are in close contact and provide a deeper and more satisfying level of visual communication.

A new mom recently told us how emotional she was to leave her child in the care of people she did not know. She was convinced



her child would not settle without her around. When she arrived to work, she logged on and watched her daughter laughing and playing with other children!

Parents can see their child in their classroom throughout the day and during regular scheduled hours. For security reasons, parents are only able to view the classroom where their child resides. Each webcam is approximately the size of a smoke detector and captures all the play and learning action from the ceilings giving parents a wide-angle view. However, parents can't hear sound when watching their children online as this would violate another privacy issue we protect.

It's sometimes hard to stay focused at work when someone else is caring for your child, and therefore having the opportunity to "look in" on your child(ren) from your place of work or home via the secure web makes many parents feel better. Although parents are not able to be with their child all day, every day, they are still offered the opportunity to have a "birds" eye view.

Kids & Company partnered with Daycarewebwatch.com as security was of the utmost importance to both companies.



In order to use webcam technology, the parent receives a secure password and code. The system uses verified individual credentials for each individual user, and therefore only authorized viewers can see the child in question.

One of the other great features of this technology is that not just the parents can see their little loved ones, but also grandparents. Kids & Company has received countless heartwarming stories from grandparents around the world that have never met their grandchild. Because of their ability to access Kids & Company's webcams, they are able to see their grandchildren laughing and playing. This provides them with a great sense of comfort and relief. Other grandparents have said they've met their grandchild, but because they live in another country accessing the webcam allows them to stay connected and see them grow.

Webcams add to the sense of security and assurance a parent feels when they choose a centre who will be watching over their child during the day. Another parent informed us recently that the ability to click into her child's life was one of the reasons she chose Kids & Company easing her own separation anxiety.

Webcams contribute to Kids & Company's "open door" policy, so families can see all the great things going at the centre, and with their child(ren). Parents today expect this policy and access to their children.

From a company perspective, the site directors who manage their specific centre, also have access to view each classroom. The webcams allow for more organized and powerful communication which can be extremely effective in education settings. It helps to ensure the teachers are maintaining high standards of care. As well, the webcams are great coaching tools to view and assist the teachers. Site directors are also able to provide virtual tours, after regular operating hours, to show out-of-town potential clients and parents what the child care centre looks like, and their child's classroom.

The benefits of a webcam system with Kids & Company are many. Enrollment for child care companies that implement webcams continues to increase since it provides a parent the opportunity to watch their child when they please. This helps to decrease phone calls and classroom interruptions since a parent can simply click the button on their mouse to see what is going on. Another great reason is for the children themselves. Parents can leave and the child knows that their mom and/or dad are "with" them during the day, decreasing separation anxiety with some children.

Kids & Company, a proudly Canadian company, works directly with family-oriented corporations to develop progressive child care options that help address employees' work-life balance and productivity. By partnering with Kids & Company, top tier companies from a variety of industry sectors, are able to add child care assistance, including guaranteed full-time, part-time and emergency back-up care, and elder care to their suite of employee benefits. Certain locations also offer community based child care. Co-founded by Victoria Sopik and Jennifer Nashmi in 2002, Kids & Company is committed to continuing its expansion of high quality and consistent child care services in every region across Canada.

## Concerns with using webcams in child care centres

CCCF interviewed Esther Seaman, the Director at Kanata Research Park who was an educator when the cameras were in place in 2004.

**CCCF:** Why were webcams introduced in the KRP centre initially?

**ES:** They were introduced as a pilot project by March Networks, a private sector high tech company in the Kanata Park area. The company funded the whole project and also managed the whole program – handling the technical logistics, hook up and ongoing technical maintenance.

**CCCF:** How were the webcams used?

**ES:** These webcams were not equipped with sound, so you could see the physical interactions but not hear what was spoken. So that was an initial concern . . . that parents and viewers of the children may read into things that aren't there.

**CCCF:** And what were some issues or concerns, if any, with using the webcams and having parents watch their children?

**ES:** It posed a problem for us with regards to children in protective care, or children whose parents were involved in custody disputes. These parents stipulate no photos or images can be taken of their children, so we would have to shut down the webcam for that child or even the entire class or group of the program they were in.

**CCCF:** Yes, I hear concerns are often raised about security with webcams. Could you comment on that?

**ES:** Yes. In my opinion there is no such thing as security on the Internet. There is no way to know who parents share the video with, or who gets access to it, even with passcodes. Families share with other members of their families and that extends to friends and so it is hard to know who gets to see them in the end. There is an open vulnerability.



**CCCF:** How did the webcam impact the centre as whole or the early care programs?

**ES:** We were lucky that the pilot was completely funded and managed by the private company, but overall it is very costly and out of our budget. I could not justify spending that much money when it could be better spent going into educators' salaries or supplies and good programming initiatives and training. There is a fear that people feel this could replace better program solutions.

**CCCF:** How do the educators feel about webcams, being watched when they are with the children? How does it impact them?

**ES:** We have an open door policy here at the centre and we encourage parents to drop in and stay whenever they can to be engaged in the whole program. So having a camera in the room doesn't change much. But we must be clear and careful to ask whether some centres are using webcams for judging ECE's and put them under a microscope. We also don't want to give parents a false sense of security. Human contact is more important and we strive for that here. Parents spend a lot of time in the initial orientation where we stress the importance of developing relationships and connectedness to the program, the centre and educators. We build a community, though, in person connectedness.

**CCCF:** What were some of the benefits to the webcams in your centre? Do you miss the cameras?

**ES:** It was fun when children could connect to grandparents overseas who they otherwise don't see. We do documentation anyway and e-mail photos to parents and grandparents, but this added some excitement to the routine to connect these families in other countries. But overall I don't miss the webcams. And I think the money can be better spent on creative program solutions.

Kanata Research Park family centre is an onsite, licensed, non-profit Early Learning Centre with continuum of care for children from 18 months to 10 years including part-time care. They are based on developmentally appropriate practices that provide opportunities for active engagement with other children and adults in a positive environment

## CHILD CARE IN A WIRED WORLD

# Robert Johnson Made a Deal with the Devil

## An ECE Instructor's Introspective Account on How Technology Can Be Used to Express Our Potential

by Marc Battle

*"It is the framework which changes with each new technology and not just the picture within the frame."*

—Marshall McLuhan

### July 29 2009. Six miles north of Clarksdale, Mississippi.

My son turns the radio on as we head south on Highway 61 to the infamous Crossroads. AC/DC's *Highway to Hell* blares out on the first station we tune in to and we look at each other and laugh. It's fitting. We are going to the Crossroads. We are going to the place where Blues musician Robert Johnson sold his soul to the devil to play the guitar. We are going to the place where the Highway to Hell begins.

When the song ended we arrived at the junction of Highway 61 and Highway 49 in the town of Clarksdale. It was at this place where the Faustian deal was done. Sometime in the mid 1930's, a young musician named Robert Johnson, with guitar in hand, met a large man named Legba; a voodoo trickster also known as the devil. According to the legend, Legba asked Robert Johnson for his guitar. He then tuned it up, played a little song and handed it back to Robert. "We are done," he said and then Legba disappeared into the night.

Robert returned to a juke joint on the banks of the Mississippi not far from Clarksdale and played guitar like no one had ever heard before. He went from being, as described by fellow Blues legend Son House, an average harmonica player and terrible guitarist to the man who would herald modern guitar playing. It is said that all roads for guitar players end at Robert Johnson.

However, like all Faustian deals they tend to end badly. At the tender age of 27, Robert Johnson died slowly, painfully and mysteriously. Although his life was short its impact on music was monumental.





For the record, I don't believe Mr. Johnson sold his soul, but I do adore the story and all of its hoodoo and voodoo. The most accurate reason, to me, for his miraculous transformation does not lie in superstition, but probably in technology. There are reports that Robert spent most of his formative years traveling from town to town throughout the South. Apparently on one of those journeys he lived for a time with a much older woman who had a record player and an abundantly diverse record collection. Robert did what most young guitar players do: he played along with the records and developed his craft (which is why he sounded so different from everyone else). The devil was a record player, the new technology of the 1930s.

Today the Crossroads glows under traffic lights and is surrounded by a furniture store, a vacant lot, a gas station and a fast food restaurant. Things sure have changed since Mr. Johnson was last here, but one thing has not. Technology, if used wisely, can change the world. A record player was all it took to awaken Robert Johnson's potential and change music forever. Just look at what happened when Gutenberg built the first printing press. This simple machine awakened the potential in people and they used it to create a new religion, democracy and champion individualism and freedom. The technology did not cause these changes, but how it awoke the spirit in the people that used it did.

That reminds me of a séance I attended the other night. I was talking with the ghost of Marshall McLuhan. He told me that when educators think about using technology as a tool for their own craft or in the classroom for the child's, we have to ask ourselves a few questions first.

Marshall's ghost had a good point because sometimes I feel so inundated with technology and gadgets in my work as a college teacher. How do I weed the toys that merely entertain me from the tools that will change what I do?

A few years back, my department at the college invested in professional film equipment for the faculty to use. With training from the college and collaboration with colleagues, we filmed an observation series following the life of a five-year-old girl in day care over a ten-month period. Each observation is a little story, a vignette in which we bear witness to some of the curiosities, wisdom, beauty and dramas of childhood that unfold without interruption.

This film series, *Training the Eye: Jordyne*, is my record player. Each time I watch Jordyne interact with her world I get new ideas about my work. Each time I learn something new about children and about myself. Each time I spend time watching the films I understand child development a little more and get what those twenty dollar words truly mean. In doing so, I'm unlocking the potential in my work and life with kids. It is the same thing that happens when we photograph and document the experiences of children in our child care centres. The right tool will change what we do and who we are.

What about technology for the children that we work with? Wouldn't the same principles apply? Shouldn't they have access to technology that unleashes their potential, helps them build stronger relationships with each other, helps them understand each other more? I am not talking

about computers or smart phones and their apps in the classroom. Keep the technology simple and relevant. We wouldn't give a child Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and say "read", or a French Horn and say "play". We give them picture books and drums, so let's give them pulleys and gears and things that move. Things you listen

with and things you look through. Things that make marks and things that make things and lots and lots of noise. The right tool that changes what they do and who they are.

Driving out of Clarkesdale at dusk leaving the devil behind, my son puts one of his hip hop CDs into the player. Over a pulsing, surging beat, a guy recites rhythmic poetry while another guy scratches melody out of a record on a turntable. Both they and Robert Johnson draw from the same well of inspiration and both are affected by and using technology to express their potential. No superstition needed at all.

As we pass the cotton fields and rows and rows of corn my son uses his smart phone and books us a room at an upscale hotel in nearby Batesville. The right tool will change what you do and I needed a bath.

Marc Battle is an ECE Instructor at Red River College. He wrote this article with a pen and paper while listening to records, but did use an online resource for writing references in APA.

#### Reference:

Guralnick, P., + Scorsese, M. (2003). *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues: A Musical Journey*. New York: Amistad

## What technology will best unlock the teacher and the child's potential? Which technology will create new and more meaningful relationships with each other? Which technology will help us understand each other more?



## ACROSS CANADA AND BEYOND

### United States

FTC studies rules to curb collection of online data on children

The Federal Trade Commission said Wednesday that it is considering online privacy rules that would make it harder for advertisers and social networks to collect information about children without permission from parents. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/ftc-studies-rules-to-curb-collection-of-online-data-on-children/2012/08/01/gJQANGpPQX\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/ftc-studies-rules-to-curb-collection-of-online-data-on-children/2012/08/01/gJQANGpPQX_story.html)

### Alberta

A child care investment plan released by the Alberta government will increase the availability of child care, assist child care operators in their efforts to recruit and retain staff and help low- and middle-income parents, including parents of school-age children, with the cost of child care.

### British Columbia

B.C. child care advocates aiming to create affordable child care in the province have presented a proposal for universal child care to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C., who met with a deputy minister in September, say the proposal

envisions a network of centres for children aged one to six in communities run by the Ministry of Education. The plan is proposing that childcare would be at a cost for \$10 a day for full time programs and \$7 a day for part-time, and for families making \$40,000 and under, childcare would be free. The provincial government's response has been unenthusiastic, in part because of the \$1.5-billion cost of fully implementing the plan.

### Manitoba

In April 2012, the Honourable Jennifer Howard, Minister of Family Services and Labour, announced two years of new funding to child care facilities. The combination of increases to operating grants and new maximum parent fees over the next two years will provide an additional \$17 million in revenue to assist centres in enhancing staff wages and help to offset increases in operating costs.

To reflect changes to market rates in Manitoba, as well as the relationship of relative salaries between jobs in the scale, Manitoba Child Care Association has recommended that the most current Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale for Early Learning and Child care Centres should be the minimum salary range for full and part time Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Assistants, along with the definitions and job descriptions for all 9 positions and all 5 levels of experience.

Manitoba's governing NDP announced in September 2012 it will fund 65 new child care spaces in the Whyte Ridge area, citing a commitment to add 900 spaces across the province this year with a \$9.1 million investment. The NDP announced that they have more than doubled funding for child care over the last 10 years because it's a priority for Manitoba families.

### New Brunswick

The provincial government announced, effective October 1, it is investing an additional \$1 million in the Day Care Assistance program to increase child care subsidies and to expand the program eligibility to help families with early learning and childcare costs. These increases are part of the provincial government's \$38-million three-year action plan Putting Children First. These new changes bring the total investment in the program to nearly \$15 million. The initial changes are part of a phased approach to increase the subsidies and eligibility over the next three years. Further adjustments will be implemented in October 2013 and October 2014.

New Brunswick Association for Community Living has approved their three year initiative with the Focus on Inclusion by hiring three Early Learning Inclusion facilitators to implement on-site inclusion models. There is additional training to support both French and English curricula.

### Newfoundland and Labrador

The provincial government has announced that by 2016, the minimum qualification for those working in child care centres will be Level I Certification (one year Certificate in ECE) and that up-grading to that level will be made more accessible. The amounts of the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement will be increased for those with Level I Certification and for those with Level II who are operators of centres. Those with Level II who are not operators will receive no increase.

The Department of Education's Early Childhood Learning Division is developing an Early Learning Curriculum Framework. AECENL is involved in that work.

### Nova Scotia



The province is currently consulting the people of Nova Scotia on a plan to ensure young children are getting the support they need to develop to their full potential.

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& Youth Care



The first six years are considered crucial in a child's development. The province-wide consultation will help inform an innovative and integrated approach to early childhood development that offers families quality, accessible and more affordable services. This June, they are meeting with key stakeholders and host focus groups with families.

### Ontario

As child care continues to transition from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Education is formally asking for feedback from the Early Childhood sector on how to stabilize and transform the system to enable higher quality, consistent services. The "Modernizing Child Care in Ontario" discussion paper asks for feedback on operating funding formulas, capital funding priorities, quality programs, legislative and regulatory frameworks and accountability and capacity building. The province says it needs a child care plan in sync with its \$1.5-billion kindergarten initiative, which focuses on locating programs in or linked with schools to enhance seamlessness for children and families.

The province pledges to introduce a new funding formula, make capital investments to help operators adapt programs to suit younger children, develop mandatory program guidelines for childcare operators and update the Day Nurseries Act, which hasn't been reviewed for almost 30 years.

### Prince Edward Island

The Government of Prince Edward Island and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development released Healthy Living Guidelines to Islanders in March this year. The province believe the earlier healthy behaviors are established in life, the better. It is therefore critical that Healthy Living Guidelines supporting these positive behaviors be implemented in early learning and child care centres across Prince Edward Island.

The main purpose of these Healthy Living Guidelines is to provide Island early learning and child care centres with effective direction, meaningful advice, and where appropriate, specific instructions

on how to create the healthiest and safest environments possible for children. Importantly, successful implementation requires that the Healthy Living Guidelines be modeled by both early childhood educators, staff and parents.

### Quebec

The Parti Québécois won a minority government in the Québec election September 4<sup>th</sup> with the PQ leader Pauline Marois at the helm. The PQ election platform included a promise to provide a space for every child in Québec's \$7-a-day child care program. Marois, a mother of four and grandmother to two, started the popular \$5-a-day daycare program in 1997. On election day, she said she now wants to complete the project by adding an extra 15,000 spots on top of those already promised by the Liberals, to bring the total to 250,000 by the end of a PQ mandate.

Marois said the cost for the extra spots would be \$177 million and that costs to parents would not increase.

### Saskatchewan

Long wait lists, a lack of government funding and a shortage of professionally trained early childhood educators means licensed day care in Saskatoon is getting more expensive, providers say. Most of the dozens of licensed day cares say they have or will increase rates by an average of \$20 to \$30 per month in the coming months. For infants - children 18 months and younger - the average price for a licensed day care is anywhere from \$800 to \$1,225 per month. The cost of day care for toddlers is anywhere from \$450 to \$800.

## CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

5-9

#### National Media Literacy Week

Activities for Media Literacy based on the theme: Privacy Matters. Visit [www.medialiteracyweek.ca](http://www.medialiteracyweek.ca) to get involved.

6-8

#### Winnipeg, Manitoba National Child Day Forum 2012

*Coming Back to the Drum: A Shared Journey*  
The focus of this year's forum is working with Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) Children and Families in Manitoba. Dr. Rob Santos, Early Years Development; Dr. Herman Michell, Cultural Content Inclusion.

15-17

#### Vancouver, BC The 3rd Health & Wellbeing in Children, Youth and Adults with Developmental Disabilities Conference

This conference will provide educational and informative updates on psychiatric, behavioural and complex health components specific to individuals with DD, and showcase best practices in the field. For further information and future updates, please visit the website at [www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/HealthAndWellbeing](http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/HealthAndWellbeing)

17

#### Calgary, Alberta Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement: 3rd Annual National Child Day Conference

Early childhood specialist and popular speaker Carol McCloud on a first time visit to western Canada sharing how she has adapted this compelling message for children based on her book: *Have you filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Young Children*. Visit: [www.arcqe.ca](http://www.arcqe.ca) to register.

20

#### National National Child Day

Activities will take place in communities across Canada to celebrate National Child Day. [www.cccf-fcsgc.ca](http://www.cccf-fcsgc.ca)

### JANUARY

17-20

#### Watrous, SK 2013 SECA Winter Retreat

This year the SECA Winter Retreat will be held at beautiful Manitou Springs Resort Hotel and Mineral Spa. The Directors Retreat will be on Thursday and Friday January



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17th and 18th. The ECE Retreat will be on Saturday and Sunday January 18th and 20th.

**Jan 31-Feb 2  
Edmonton, Alberta  
6<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Autism  
Services of Edmonton  
Conference**

Keynote speech from Arthur Fleishman, author of "Carly's Voice" along with a host of other exciting speakers! Conference topics this year include feeding issues, recreation and sport in ASD, early language development, technology use, social thinking for higher functioning children and youth, and more. Visit [www.childre autism.ca](http://www.childre autism.ca) to register.

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**FEBRUARY**

**6-8  
Toronto, ON  
Best Start Resource Centre  
2013 Annual Conference**  
The conference addresses issues of interest to service providers working in the area of reproductive health and early childhood development. Visit: [www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org) for information.

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**MARCH**

**8-9  
Lethbridge, Alberta**  
Presented by The Alberta Child Care Director's Association of Southwest Alberta in partnership with Lethbridge College and Alberta Human Services. Visit [www.albertachildcare.org](http://www.albertachildcare.org)

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**MAY**

**2-4  
Richmond, BC**  
ECEBC's 42<sup>nd</sup> annual conference. Visit [www.ecebc.ca](http://www.ecebc.ca) for information.

**23-25  
Winnipeg, MB**  
Manitoba Child Care Association's 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Provincial Conference. Visit [www.mccahouse.org](http://www.mccahouse.org) for information.

## RESOURCES

### Digital Decisions

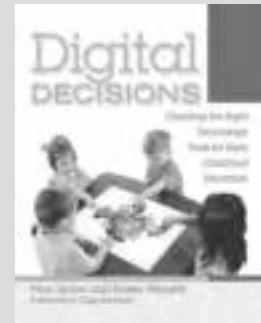
#### Choosing the Right Technology Tools for Early Childhood Education

Whether you are a technology enthusiast looking for new ideas and guidance about developmentally appropriate practices, or you are new to the idea of using technology with young children, this book will guide you to choosing and implementing the most appropriate technology tools for your early childhood classroom.

This jargon-free guide will help you evaluate the tools and opportunities technology has to offer and integrate them into your early childhood classroom so you can offer real-life, hands-on, interactive activities to children.

Each chapter provides supporting guidance to make technology most effective for those working with children who are dual language learners or may have special needs. To purchase the book visit: <http://www.ecetech.net> or <http://www.gryphonhouse.com>.

Author: Fran Simon, Karen N. Nemeth; ISBN: 978-0-87659-408-7; Publisher: Gryphon House; Paperback; Pages: 192, © 2012; Item: 10023; Price: \$34.95



### Non-standard employment and child care

Produced using data from the 2009 Survey on Childcare Use, Needs and Preferences of Families (EUSG), this newsletter examines the relationship between non-standard employment of parents and child care used for children under age five for work or study reasons. Two forms of non-standard employment are studied in the analyses for both parents, and then separately for the mother and the father: non-standard schedule and non-standard status of employment. The publication looks at the type of child care (regular or irregular), the main type of child care arrangements used, the use or non-use of a second type of child care, the number of regular child care hours, the frequency of difficulty organizing child care, and regular child care preferences.

ISSN 1913-4460 (printed version); ISSN 1913-4479 (online); Number of pages: 28; Release date: 2012-06-19. Le travail atypique et la garde d'enfants (770 KB) in French

### Web sites:

#### ECEtech.net

ECEtech.net is a community for early childhood educators who want to explore the practical side of technology use in preschool settings. It is a collaboration between two technology-minded early childhood education experts, Karen Nemeth and Fran Simon, who believe that teaching and learning in early education settings can be enhanced by supporting the developmentally appropriate use of educational technology. <http://www.ecetech.net>

#### Best Start Resource Centre is pleased to announce a new resource

##### **Building Resilience in Young Children Booklet for parents of children from birth to six years**


This booklet is for parents of children from birth to six years and anyone who cares for children – like grandparents, relatives, foster parents and other adults. Many of the ideas will also help families with older children.

Building Resilience in Young Children is a resource to help you boost your child's ability to bounce back from life's challenges and thrive, and includes:

- Up-to-date information
- Helpful tips
- Parent stories
- Links to other resources



The booklet is available free of charge in PDF version or in a print version. To view or download go to: [www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy\\_chld\\_dev/index.html](http://www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/index.html). To order print versions go to: <http://beststart.org/resources/order.html>



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[www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca](http://www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca)



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