

Interaction

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 1, SPRING 2013

Caring for Aboriginal Children



Inunnguiniq – Inuit Child Rearing That Builds on Cultural Strengths

Are Child Care Workers Stressed or Happy at Work? Findings of a First Quebec-wide Study

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#101 – *Promoting Indigenous Languages in Early Learning and Child Care*



The photo for the front cover was taken by Kukik Baker from Arviat, Nunavut.

Interaction

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 1, SPRING 2013

PUBLISHED BY THE CANADIAN CHILD CARE FEDERATION, 600-700 Industrial Avenue,
Ottawa, ON K1G 0Y9; Tel: (613) 729-5289 or 1 800 858-1412; Fax: (613) 729-3159;
Email: info@cccfcscge.ca; Web: www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca

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Printing	PSI Print Solutions Inc.

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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.

Publication Mail Agreement #40069629
GST Registration No. - 106844335 RT
ISSN 0835-5819



Behind the Scenes

The Idle No More movement in Canada began in November 2012 when four women from Saskatchewan held a “teach-in” in Saskatoon to educate people about the government’s omnibus budget legislation, Bill C-45, which was introduced a few weeks before. More meetings and teach-ins spread to other communities and soon rallies and protests were taking place all over the country. Importantly, many of the protests grew to include additional pieces of legislation introduced or passed by the government that affect First Nations but which First Nations leaders say they were not consulted about. Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence engaged in a hunger strike for six weeks, camped on an island in the Ottawa River near Parliament Hill, in an effort to convince the country’s top leaders to take First Nations concerns seriously.

In this movement, Aboriginals want the federal government to repeal all legislation that violates treaties, including those that affect environmental regulations and how they govern their own. It seeks to educate and revitalize aboriginal peoples, empower them and regain sovereignty and independence. More than anything, the movement reopens the conversation about the poor conditions in which many Aboriginals live in Canada. The NDP leader, Tom Mulcair decried the housing conditions on many First Nations reserves saying that First Nations children have 30 per cent less per capita than other Canadian children.

This issue of *Interaction* hopes to open the conversation on how we are caring for Aboriginal children in Canada. What innovative child care programs or approaches are there to encourage autonomy and independence that Aboriginals are striving for? How can we encourage Aboriginal cultural identity at home and in child care?

In IDEAS, we look at how we need to reframe our language, terminology and ideology on temperament in children in relation to identifying a child’s predominant style to ensure that all children have a “level playing field” where they can explore and express who they are, both as a unique individual and as a member of a group.

Lastly, please check our website in April to see the winners of the CCCF Awards for Excellence in Child Care.

Claire McLaughlin, Editor
cmclaughlin@cccfcscge.ca



FROM WHERE I SIT

CCHRSC Closing Doors

by Diana Carter

Canada's early learning and child care sector lost an invaluable partner on March 31, 2013 when the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) ceased operations, due to significant federal government funding cuts. The CCCF and the CCHRSC have worked together as partners since the CCHRSC first came to be 10 years ago. In fact, the CCCF originally housed and worked alongside the CCHRSC. The organization leaves a legacy of research for Canada's early childhood sector, has helped us better define ourselves, and has quantified many of the issues that were once only anecdotal. Their closing is our loss and while their work has benefited us all, the people of the CCHRSC, from their executive director, Diana Carter to all of the staff, will be missed. They will be missed not only for their expertise and knowledge, but also for the fact that they are wonderful people whose contribution will now benefit other sectors and organizations, not just ours. To board chair, Denise Gilbert, and the entire CCHRSC Board, congratulations on work well done and for your sage and wise leadership for Canada's early childhood sector. Thank you to all of you for all that you have done for Canada's early childhood workforce.

CCCF President, Don Giesbrecht

Introduction

February 2013 marked 10 years since I joined the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC), as the Executive Director of a brand new organization. Ironically, this is just before the CCHRSC officially is to close its doors on March 31, 2013. The organization will dissolve once Human Resources and Skills Development Canada–Sector Council Program (HRSDC-SCP) core funding ends and the criteria for project funding to councils changes.

Working in early childhood education and care (ECEC) has been an exciting and challenging journey and my knowledge

of the sector has grown enormously. Since 2003 the CCHRSC – the only organization with a specific mandate to address human resource (HR) issues in Canada's ECEC sector – has become the go-to organization on HR issues in ECEC. There has also been a significant growth in awareness and capacity of the sector, and a more developed pan-Canadian approach to defining and advancing HR issues and professionalism in ECEC has evolved.

Advances resulting from CCHRSC's work

By implementing an extensive research and labour market agenda, the CCHRSC has:

- provided leadership and coordination on HR issues
- built and shared knowledge and improved the sector's understanding of workforce issues
- developed tools and resources and strengthened HR management practices
- fostered the development of education, training and a skilled workforce; and
- brought together national and provincial/territorial (PT) partners and sector representatives to collaborate and advance HR issues across Canada.

In 2004 *Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce* – sector study update – resulted in a labour market strategy being developed, which served as road map for CCHRSC projects in the nine ensuing years. During this time, 17 projects were undertaken, details of these can be found on the CCHRSC website www.ccscc-cssge.ca¹. The following projects are just a few that I believe were foundational for a more unified pan-Canadian approach and validated the importance of ECEC across Canada.

- The development of national *Occupational Standards* – for Administrators in 2006 (updated in 2013) and updated standards for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in 2010 – helped to define these two key occupations, identify related skills, knowledge and abilities required and unify this understanding across Canada.
- The *Training Strategy* (2007) project demonstrated the importance of an improved, more consistent and standardized approach to education and training to advance the skills of the workforce.
- The *Workforce Shortages* (2009) project was instrumental in making a strong socio-economic case regarding ECEC workforce shortages and for investing in ECEC - in a way that had not been previously achieved. A new comprehensive research agenda was also developed through the *Labour Market Information Research Agenda* project (2009).
- The *Supporting Employers* (2009) and the *HR Toolkit* (2012) projects defined who the employer is and led to the development of an electronic HR Toolkit to be used by employers to improve HR management skills and increase awareness of the importance of good HR management practices.

1. The work of the CCHRSC will continue to be available at no cost from www.ccscc-cssge.ca. The CCHRSC Trust has been established to handle intellectual property questions/requests, should they arise.



- The *Certification/Credentialing* project (2010) defined credentialing practices in each province and territory and was the basis for increased labour mobility across Canada.

Cornerstones of success

The challenges in the ECEC sector are complex and often difficult and I hesitate to suggest generalized advice, because there are no ‘easy-button’ solutions. However, I can share principles that contributed to the CCHRSC’s success and engaged participation by so many stakeholders.

Leadership and engagement

CCHRSC had inspired, determined, visionary leaders who made things happen, especially:

- the three Chairs of the Council – *Gyda Chud* from Vancouver Community College, BC (from 1996 before CCHRSC was formed – 2005); *Joanne Morris* from the College of the North Atlantic, Newfoundland and Labrador (2005-2010); and *Denise Gilbert*, Executive Director of Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham, Ontario (2010-2013);
- an amazing board – all leaders in their own right in the jurisdictions and organizations that they came from;
- a dedicated, expert staff experienced in communications, project and financial management and in the art of getting things done on time and within budget;
- the critically important participation of leaders and experts from across Canada, who enthusiastically joined steering committees, served as key informants, participated in focus groups, attended workshops, delivered workshops to their colleagues and became ambassadors across the country.

Organizationally based approach

CCHRSC’s board structure was largely organizationally based, including representation from key partners including the Canadian Child Care Federation, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Confédération des syndicats nationaux, and Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Selection criteria for other board members emphasized the importance of connection to ECEC organizations. This ensured the work reflected a wide range of perspectives, not solely the view of individuals.

Sector-wide participation

The strength of CCHRSC’s approach came from the diverse and differing opinions of a wide range of stakeholders involved. Significant participants in the work of the CCHRSC included child care Administrators (employers) Early Childhood Educators, (employees) and the key national ECEC organizations already mentioned; and also involved:

- Post-secondary ECE faculty and the *ECE Affinity Group* (co-sponsored with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges);

- PT Directors of child care across Canada by including ex officio representation from the *PT Directors of ECEC Working Group* on the CCHRSC Board;
- PT child care and labour organizations and networks;
- First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals and organizations involved in ECEC

Because of these often-diverse perspectives, the CCHRSC work was strong and rich, and the uptake and use of the tools developed was much broader as a result.

Creating a research agenda/being strategic

When working with governments and with changing political objectives some things are possible and some are not (irrespective of how compelling and right an initiative may be). The CCHRSC sought to advance issues in the ECEC sector by setting priorities, making the case, determining what was possible, seizing the opportunities and continually reorganizing the priorities to meet changing contexts.

Working with the funder

Almost all CCHRSC funding came from the HRSDC-SCP. Over 10 years close to \$10,000,000 - a significant amount of money – was used to conduct important research, develop key tools and resources and create strategies to advance the sector. CCHRSC worked collaboratively with HRSDC-SCP to ensure each project met important needs of the sector, fit the department’s mandate and utilized expertise of other sector councils. CCHRSC was extremely fortunate to work with many (HRSDC) analysts who provided excellent advice, understood the value of the work being done and respected the passionate engagement by the sector.

Conclusion

Working for the CCHRSC has been enormously fulfilling. Many concrete results have been achieved and a strong foundation and understanding about HR and labour market issues now exists. There are also many indicators of increased cohesion and collaboration in the sector. Most of all, the passion, dedication and engagement of partners, organizations and individuals in CCHRSC’s work is truly inspirational. The opportunity to work with so many talented people and be part of this important movement has been such a privilege. There is much still to be done, and this will be challenging without necessary resources. So it will be especially important to keep connected with PT, national (such as Canadian Child Care Federation, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Childcare Resource and Research Unit) and labour organizations. However, I am confident that continuing to work together and creatively finding opportunities will realize further progress.

Diana Carter, Executive Director of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) between 2003 and 2013, was invited to write this article to: discuss ECEC in Canada from an HR perspective, summarize the work and legacy of the CCHRSC, offer her views on how the ECEC sector can continue to advance HR issues, as well as to say goodbye from the CCHRSC.



Dr. Clyde Hertzman

A Man Who Epitomized “Children: the Heart of the Matter” Leaves a Legacy for Early Childhood Learning

by Sandra Griffin

As I began to write this, I tried to think back to when I first met Clyde. But I couldn't pinpoint the moment at all. It seemed he had always been there - as a scientist and a visionary who so fully comprehended the enormity of the importance of paying attention to what happens for young children and what it meant for the future of us all - that he was woven into the very fabric of early childhood care and education as I knew it.

When we founded the Canadian Child Care Federation, we entitled the first national conference “Children: the Heart of the Matter”. I still have the t-shirt - it represents an important story. Clyde and his work over the years provided a loom and so many of the threads we needed to weave that story to show Canadians why the early years mattered for a life time. Clyde was a man who truly wore his heart on his sleeve when it came to children. He did believe that “children were the heart of the matter” and knew that as a society, if we could make a difference in the lives of our young children, we could indeed create a better world for all. He was a brilliant scientist but more important, he could translate the science into passion for making a difference - making the science an instrument for change, making the link between science and the “heart of the matter”.



When the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) honoured Clyde's work in 2010, naming him the CIHR Health Researcher of the Year, they noted: “Dr. Hertzman has gathered a wide range of scientific evidence to support the idea that what happens to children during their early years is important to lifelong health and wellbeing. . . his research findings have helped shape national and international policy”. What we all know is that it helped to shape policy from the micro to the macro level. Clyde made the science accessible at every level - for child care centres, preschools, community associations, schools, city councils, municipal organizations, parent associations, a wide range of professional groups, provincial and federal governments and bureaucracies, right through to the World Health Organization and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child . . . and the list goes on and on. If you review his presentation schedules over a short period of time in 2012, you would see him at an International Data Linkage conference in Perth, Australia then five days later, he would be in Moose Jaw Saskatchewan presenting on the Interplay Between Genes and Family Process, then off to an International Children's Rights Monitoring Symposium. And in my position as Assistant Deputy Minister in the Ministry for Children and Family Development that year, responsible for the contract with Clyde and the HELP research team, he would also be meeting with us, making presentations, etc. ALWAYS busy at every level.

In saying goodbye to their honoured colleague, CIHR stated that Clyde had advanced global policy through his work by “providing evidence that the early years matter to healthy human development” and they hoped “that researchers and decision makers will continue to be inspired by his work in support of stronger and healthier populations.”

And that is what it came down to I think - he epitomized what making “children the heart of the matter” really means - he dedicated his career to making it matter. He was often quoted saying, “from cell to society” and used his brilliant mind to explore and make evident the science that demonstrated the link - then put his heart and soul into advocating for using the science to make a difference. It is why he was honoured with an Order of Canada this year. It is why he was named Canada's Research Chair in Population Health and Human Development. It is why we are all going to miss him so very much.

The Globe and Mail described Clyde as a “disarming, down to earth personality...” Indeed, he always felt like one of us. And



it breaks our hearts to have him gone so early. He leaves an enormous legacy and an enormous hole in our fabric. But he was such an inspired and passionate “weaver” and provided so many strong threads, we will continue to weave the story he was telling with such passion. The Globe and Mail noted he coined the term “biological embedding” to describe how experience and social environments alter developmental processes in children that lead to long term changes in health and well-being. He will be forever a part of the story as it is retold over the years and his commitment to embedding children as the heart of the matter will be realized. Thank you never seems enough, but thank you Clyde. You were so appreciated and you did make a difference.

Sandra Griffin is founding President of the CCCF, past president of the Early Childhood Educators of BC and the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children. Sandra has worked in the field of early childhood education and child and youth care for close to 40 years as a family child care provider, a day care centre director, a preschool teacher, a researcher, a policy maker, a teacher in post-secondary, chief of staff for the former Ken Dryden, a founding Director with the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health and an Assistant Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Child and Family Development in BC. She is a recipient of the CCCF Award of Excellence, a Canada Volunteer Award, and a Queens Jubilee Medal for her contributions to the field. Recently retired, she is the proud mother of two wonderful daughters and Nana of two exceptional grandsons.

INSIDE THE FEDERATION

The Canadian Child Care Federation’s Award for Excellence in Child Care



The Canadian Child Care Federation’s biennial *Award for Excellence in Child Care* honours individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the field of child care.

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Are Child Care Workers Stressed or Happy at Work?

Findings of a First Quebec-wide Study

by Claire Moreau and Nicole Royer

The quality of preschool child care services and their accessibility are at the heart of some debates currently under way in Canada. Researchers and government decision makers are weighing a range of data evaluating the quality of services, the cost/benefit ratios of regulated child care services, and the appropriateness of expanding public school access to four-year-olds. These concerns clearly merit further attention, and additional studies are essential to clarify future decisions. However, it appears to us that the work life experience of preschool child care workers has received little attention from researchers; this situation is, in fact, underlined in the United States (Shpancer et al., 2008) and Australia (Williamson et al., 2011), along with the need to examine child care workers' perceptions and experiences so as to ensure the delivery of quality services.

A Quebec-wide study¹ has been conducted to identify child care workers' perceptions of their work life and thereby understand what causes them concern and what underlies their motivation at various stages of their careers.

Objectives of the study

- 1) To evaluate the perceived levels of stress and of psychological wellness among child care workers;
- 2) To determine whether stress and psychological wellness vary based on workers' experience and workplace, i.e. group child care centre versus home-based child care setting.

Sample

A total of 1,535 educators participated in the study, with 64.1% (n= 984) working in home-based child care settings and 33.9% (n = 520) working in group child care centres; 2% (n = 31) did not provide this information.

Table 1 categorizes the participants by their workplace and experience. This breakdown indicates that the largest portion of the sample consisted of workers in home-based settings with between 10 and 20 years of experience.

Table 1: Distribution of participants by experience and workplace

Experience	Type of workplace	
	Home-based setting	Group centre
0 to 5 years	26% (n = 255)	26% (n = 135)
5 to 10 years	22.7% (n = 222)	25.6% (n = 133)
10 to 20 years	36.4% (n = 356)	34.6% (n = 180)
Over 20 years	14.9% (n = 146)	13.8% (n = 72)

Instruments

The *Index of Psychological Well-Being at Work* by Boyle, Borg, Falzon and Baglioni (1995) was adapted for the purposes of this study. The Francophone version of this instrument, produced by Loiselle, Royer, Dussault and Deaudelin (2001), consisted of 18 items about which the participants indicated the degree of stress they experienced on a scale from 0 (no stress) to 4 (very high stress). Five sources of stress were considered, namely workload, children's characteristics, professional recognition, resources within the workplace, and interpersonal relations. The internal consistency of the instrument was 0.91.

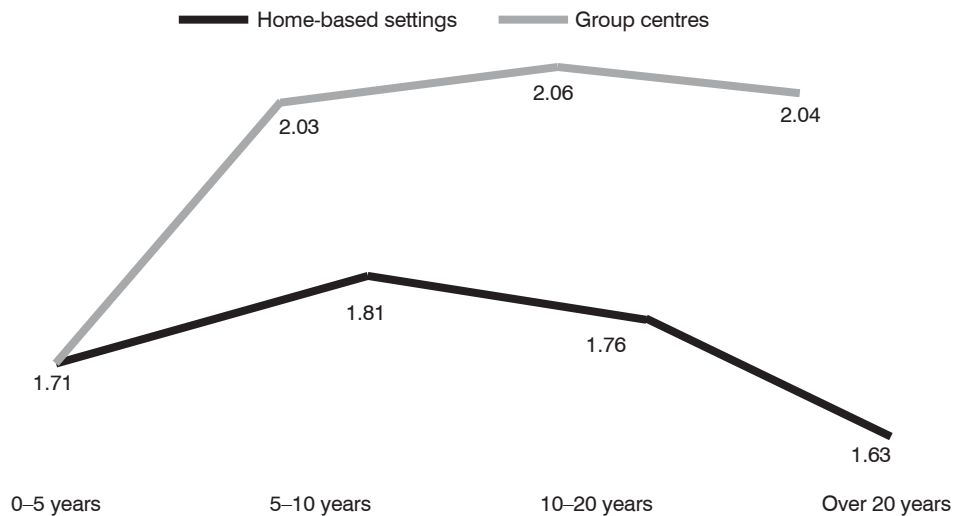
The second instrument used was the *Indice de bien-être psychologique au travail* developed by Dagenais-Desmarais (2010). This instrument consisted of 25 statements about which the participants indicated the degree of wellness they experienced on a scale from 1 (disagreed) to 5 (strongly agreed). Five aspects of psychological wellness were considered, namely interpersonal relations, development, competency, recognition, and engagement. The internal consistency of the instrument was 0.92.

Findings

The findings summarized in Figure 1 indicate the average stress levels experienced in each workplace correlated with experience. In short:



Figure 1: Average stress levels in each workplace correlated with experience



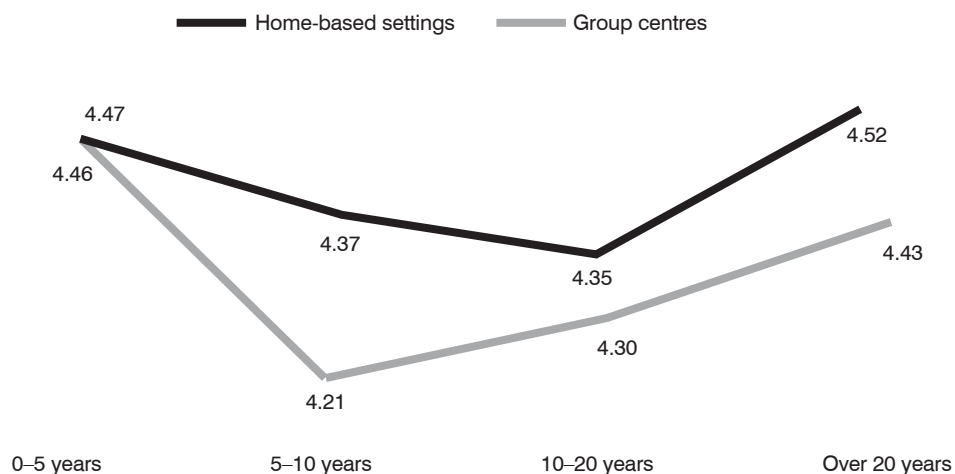
- 1) Irrespective of setting, workers experience low to moderate stress (the highest average being 2.06 out of 4 in group centres and the lowest being 1.63 out of 4 in home-based settings);
- 2) Workers in home-based settings are less stressed than workers in group centres;
- 3) Workers in home-based settings are more stressed at the beginning than at the end of their careers; they experience the greatest stress when they have between five and 10 years of experience;
- 4) Workers in group centres experience increasing stress through their careers, with the greatest stress occurring when they have between 10 and 20 years of experience;

they experience slightly less stress toward the end of their careers but still more than at the beginning.

The findings summarized in Figure 2 indicate the average wellness levels experienced in each workplace correlated with experience. In short:

- 1) Irrespective of setting, workers experience a certain level of workplace wellness (the highest average being 4.52 out of 5 in home-based settings and the lowest being 4.21 out of 5 in group centres);
- 2) Workers in home-based settings experience greater workplace wellness than workers in group centres;

Figure 2: Average wellness levels in each workplace correlated with experience





- 3) Workers in home-based settings experience greater wellness at the end of their careers than at the beginning, this despite the fact that their workplace wellness drops from year to year until its lowest point occurs when they have between 10 and 20 years of experience;
- 4) Workers in group centres experience the least wellness when they have between five and 10 years of experience. Their wellness then recovers in subsequent years. By the end of their careers, they have almost recovered the level experienced at the beginning of their careers.

Generally speaking, it appears that workers in home-based settings experience greater wellness and less stress than workers in group centres. Also, after five years of experience, workers appear to enter a more difficult stage of their careers during which they experience more stress and less wellness.

We propose the hypothesis that this period (between five and 20 years of experience) coincides with exposure to greater irritants related to the composition of groups, to workload, and to interpersonal relations among adults. We can also assume that these workers are experiencing greater needs in terms of their work-life balance, which may, for example, require better salaries or flexible schedules.

Finally, the late career stage brings reduced stress and increased wellness at work, particularly among workers in home-based settings. We may surmise that during this period, irritants have less impact on experienced workers, who, in addition, appear to have developed the various aspects of psychological wellness at work.

Conclusion

This study is a first in Quebec. It shows the relevance of pursuing research to gain a better understanding of the quality of work life of child care workers in order to improve not only their working conditions but also the quality of the child care services provided.

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Nicole Royer (professor, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières) Nicole.Royer@uqtr.ca. Nicole Royer is a professor at the université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. She heads the programme du certificat en soutien pédagogique in early childhood centres and other child care services.

Claire Moreau and Nicole Royer also co-authored the online course "La qualité de vie au travail des intervenantes en services de garde."

Note

The authors wish to thank the Conseil Québécois des Services de Garde Éducatifs à l'Enfance for their logistical support in compiling the sample, and the Centre d'Études Interdisciplinaires sur le Développement de l'Enfant and de la Famille for their financial support.

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BOOK REVIEW

Stand Together or Fall Apart Professionals Working with Immigrant Families

Author: Judith K. Bernhard

ISBN: 9781552665251

\$18.95 CAD

Publication Date: Sep 2012

by Gyda Chud

What a pleasure and an honour to recommend *Stand Together or Fall Apart*, a new publication with a bold title!

Designed for the wide variety of professionals who work with immigrant families, this book is so very timely and relevant for our early childhood world.

Author Judith Bernhard, Professor in the School of Early Childhood Education at Ryerson University, is very well respected at the pan-Canadian level for her groundbreaking work in the areas of multiculturalism, diversity and immigrant issues over the past several decades.

In this volume, she introduces us to some historical contexts, critical data, theoretical perspectives and current practice that has

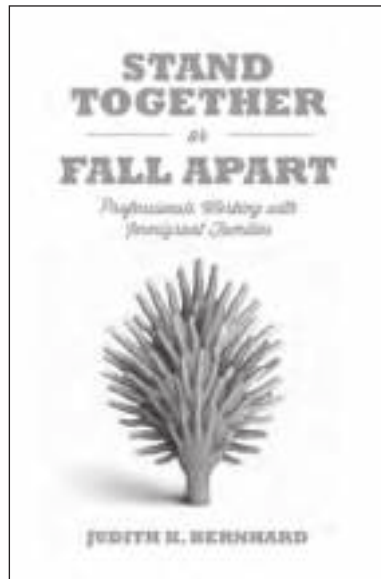


much to teach us about immigrant families. Integrating all of these dimensions, Judith also introduces her readers to a number of initiatives that she and her colleagues have been involved with, both here and afar.

Did we know that globally, there are approximately 200 million immigrants? Did we know that Canada accepts an average of 250,000 immigrants and 40,000 Convention refugees each year? This new “Us” can be attributed to our multiculturalism policies and our humanitarian reputation, yet at the same time is a story of isolation, depression, precarious legal status and economic hardship that paints the real picture for so many newcomers.

I was immediately drawn to the powerful titles of many chapters and themes including such examples as Uncomfortable Truths; Voices That Have Been Silenced: Day to Day Struggles of Newcomers; Discrimination is Ugly but Common; The House Cleaner with a PhD, and to the compelling personal stories that tell us about the realities of immigrant life here in Canada. At the same time, Judith introduces us to several progressive, social justice and advocacy oriented concepts such as “social and cultural capital” and “funds of knowledge” that define immigrant contributions to our society.

I remain committed to her comment about the fact that we need to begin thinking outside the box and recognize that even with the best of intentions, we are an expression of our dominant cultural discourse—another dimension for thoughtful reflection and change at both the personal and professional levels.



Of particular interest to our early care and learning sector is the discussion about various intervention programs designed for immigrant parents and their young children. On the one hand, we learn about offerings that place parents “on the side” and focus on an “I talk, you listen” approach. On the other hand, we are introduced to offerings that treat parents as equals, honour and respect them, motivate them and in essence empower them.

Bernhard commends the radical educator Paulo Freire for his compassion and passion to empower oppressed communities as the philosophical foundation for this empowerment of newcomers.

For those of us who are Faculty in Early Childhood Programs or facilitate community gatherings, a brilliant bonus is the free “Teaching Resources” supplement. Developed by Vicki Mulligan, a collaborator and colleague of Judith, this chapter-by-chapter document offers a multitude of activities for participants to assist with the teaching/learning process as they explore the book. Having now used a variety of these activities with different groups, I can attest to the ways in which they were stimulating, engaging and provocative and thank Vicki for her amazing breadth and depth of ideas to encourage group reflection and conversation.

It has been said that reading remains an unsurpassed vehicle for the transmission of new ideas and perspectives, and in this regard, “Stand Together or Fall Apart” truly shines. I urge you to bring this book into your world, devour it, reflect on it, return to it, share it, and most importantly act upon the multitude of learnings it offers.

For more information, please visit the website at www.standtogetherorfallapart.com

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Emotional Well-Being in Child Care



A “Level Playing Field” for All Children Reframing the Ideology & Language of Temperament

by *Tina Bonnett*

The 1968 New York Longitudinal Study by Thomas, Chess and Birch, which highlighted the relational and academic outcomes of a child in correlation to their “*Easy*”, “*Difficult*” or “*Slow to Warm*” temperament style, has long shaped the way in which we understand, care for and guide children in our early years environments. In the 1990’s Lieberman’s research further solidified the findings of Thomas, Chess and Birch and suggested similar outcomes for a child in correlation to their “*Flexible*”, “*Feisty*” or “*Fearful*” temperament (Lieberman, 1993). Both of these widely recognized and well validated bodies of research continue to inform the knowledge base and practice of Early Childhood professionals and the children and families in our care.

As educators, we are keenly aware of the importance of reflecting on each child’s temperament needs, especially within the context of a group setting as “*the child affects the group and the group affects the child*” (Donnenfield & Lieberman, 1990). Our approach to temperament in the early years, for the most part, has become increasingly progressive. We are now more adept at identifying the nine temperament traits and the common patterns, and recommended strategies with which to best support the variation in spectrum of temperament strengths and needs. Our temperament language, however, in relation to identifying a child’s predominant style of “*Easy*”, “*Difficult*” or “*Slow to Warm*” as labeled by Thomas and Chess (Lieberman, 1993) or



“Flexible”, “Feisty” or “Fearful”, as identified by Lieberman (1993), requires a more current framing of ideology and terminology to ensure that all children have a “level playing field” where they can explore and express who they are, both as a unique individual and as a member of a group.

The Image of the Child in Relation to Temperament

The words “easy/flexible”, “difficult/feisty” and “slow to warm/fearful” most definitely conjure immediate images of children. As early year’s practitioners, we are quickly placed at ease when it is shared with us that the young child, who has recently enrolled in our program, has an easy or flexible temperament. This child is often perceived as the ideal child to have in our playroom because they are viewed as being cooperative and easy to care for. The same unfortunately does not hold true when we are presented with a child who holds the label of “difficult/feisty” or “slow to warm/fearful”. We may assume that this child will pose barriers and challenges for us as practitioners, and that they will negatively impact the group.

How is it that, as professionals, we are most often well versed in the above temperament based theories, and their impact on development, but then so readily affix negative temperament labels to the young child? One of our core standards of practice states that “*Child care practitioners work in ways that enhance human dignity in trusting, caring and co-operative relationships that respect the worth and uniqueness of the individual*” (Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2010, p.28). Actively practicing this standard means that as early childhood practitioners we accept and embrace the differences of all children, and that we represent the *worth* and *uniqueness*, of each and every child, in our approach and terminology.

This article does not dispute the researched and validated concept that both the “difficult/feisty” and “slow to warm/fearful” styles of temperamental often require the educator to consider alternate strategies to meet temperament needs. Rather it asserts that *in order for each child to be truly accepted and valued as a unique individual with unique strengths and needs, we must reflect on the ideology and terminology that we use to describe the temperament style of each child, and its impact on the child’s sense of self.* Only when we approach and describe the “difficult/feisty” and “slow to warm/fearful” styles with the same level of acceptance and value as the “easy/flexible” style, and strive to ensure a “good fit” in meeting temperament needs, are we truly engaging in current and inclusive practice.

As we seek to understand and best support each child it is vital that we have a concrete understanding of the nine characteristics which influence a child’s temperament as determined by Thomas and Chess (Lieberman, 1993).

- 1) **biological rhythms:** Is the child regular in bodily functions such as hunger, sleep/wake cycle, bowel movements?
- 2) **activity level:** How much does the child wiggle around when being read to, sitting at a table or at play?
- 3) **approachability:** What is the child’s response to new experiences, unfamiliar people or new materials?
- 4) **adaptability:** How quickly does the child adapt to shifts in his or her schedule, different environments and experiences?
- 5) **physical sensitivity:** What is the child’s response to touch, noises, differences in temperature, textures of clothing or sensory experiences?
- 6) **mood:** How much of the time does the child exhibit pleasant, joyful behavior or crying and unsettled behavior?

- 7) **distractibility:** Does the child continue to play when there is noise, other children nearby or a distraction in the room
- 8) **persistence:** How does the child respond when faced with a challenging task?
- 9) **intensity of reaction:** How strong and intense is the child’s reactions? Does the child laugh and cry energetically or gently?

As traditionally labeled, the “Easy” child is typically regular in biological rhythms, is moderate in activity level, approachability, adaptability, physical sensitivity, intensity of reaction, is generally high in positive mood and persistence and is low in distractibility. The “Difficult” child is typically low in biological rhythms, adaptability, positive mood, persistence and is high in activity level, approachability, physical sensitivity, distractibility and intensity of reaction. The “Slow to Warm” child is often moderate in biological rhythms, physical sensitivity, mood, distractibility, persistence, and low in intensity of reaction, activity level, approachability, and adaptability.

The Link Between Temperament and “Goodness of Fit”

As we strive to better understand and describe the strengths and needs of the young child it is imperative that we closely evaluate the link between temperament and goodness of fit. Contrary to the traditional belief that there are “good” or “bad” temperament traits and styles, a more current view holds that the only “good” or “bad” that exists is in relation to “fit” (Lally, 2011, p.1). Goodness of fit unfolds when the adult can clearly identify the child’s temperament traits and find strength in those characteristics. When we take the time to observe and truly reflect on

what the child is telling us about the way in which they process and view relationships and their environment, only then do we have the vital information that we need to interact, plan curriculum and set up the physical environments in our early years settings. *“When caring for a child whose high or low extremes of temperament are troublesome, the goal should not be to insulate the child from those situations which are distressing. Rather, the approach to such a youngster involves finding what we call a ‘goodness of fit’.* (Lally, 2011, p.1).

For varying reasons we (parent or educator) frequently either avoid situations or stimuli that could potentially lead children to express their temperament traits in ways that make the adult feel uncomfortable or we resist and ridicule. Highs and lows within the nine temperament traits can also lead us to feel incompetent as we do not have strategies to support the child to showcase his or her strengths as opposed to his or her needs. For parents, the concern about being judged by others in relation to parenting capacity or the “normalcy” of their child may directly shape the way in which they view, relate to and articulate the temperament style of their child.

The same can hold true for the early childhood educator who may feel inadequate when they have a child in their group who poses challenges or is in need of additional support and guidance. The incompetence that the adult may feel, in relation to how they guide the child, can directly reflect misinterpretation of the child’s temperament. In the best interest of the child, and in an effort to obtain a “goodness of fit”, it is crucial that as practitioners we objectively observe and document the temperament traits of each child in our care and that we focus our energy on becoming attuned to each child’s temperament strengths. Exploring



how we can provide opportunities and experiences that allow each child to become in touch with and share their strengths will undoubtedly result in a more confident, settled and secure child. *“Any temperament attribute may become either an asset or liability to a child’s development, depending on whether the caregivers recognize what type of approach is best suited for that child.”* (Lally, 2011, p.1).

Finding assets within the context of the child’s temperament requires the early childhood educator to put aside the emotions and judgments that often accompany interactions with a child who they feel challenges their authority, skill and knowledge base. It then calls for the educator to explore, through a neutral lens, the strategies that best provide a foundation for the child to emerge from their formative years with the comfort and confidence to express who they are and what they need to feel settled and be successful.

Now that we have become much more familiar with the impact of temperament in the development of the whole child, it is time for us, as a collective profession, to re-think the impact of language such as *“difficult/ feisty”* and *“slow to warm/fearful”* to describe children. Using more respectful language will remind and encourage us to use positive strategies, rather than ignoring or responding in unhelpful ways when a child’s behavior reflects personal styles of coping with routines or stress. As the following testimonials demonstrate, temperament traits and styles are perceived and articulated by families and educators in a way that definitely suggests a “goodness of fit” which leads to a positive and affirming message for the child:

Layla is a 14 month old infant who is new to attending an early year’s program. Her

mother reported during an introductory visit that Layla has never been cared for by anyone other than herself. Each day upon arrival she enters the room crying and holding onto her mother. On occasion Layla cries so intensely that she vomits. Layla settles for intermittent periods during the day and tends to seek one particular educator when an unfamiliar face enters the playroom. Layla often begins to cry when she sees the lunch tray arrive and when an educator takes her to the change table to have her diaper changed.

Layla is most fortunate to be enrolled in a progressive early year's program that actively practices primary care. Through keen observation, the educators in this environment have identified that Layla feels safe when in close proximity to Nouhad, one of the infant educators in the program. Nouhad, the primary caregiver, has recently completed a home visit in an attempt to gain further information about Layla and her family and to support the development of a secure attachment relationship. Nouhad discovered in the home visit that Layla often accesses her special plush monkey when needing to self-regulate, and that her favourite story book is "The Teddy Bears Picnic". At drop off in the morning and when transitioning to the diaper table, Nouhad has both Layla's special monkey and book readily available for her to access. Nouhad also sings the "Teddy Bear Picnic" song and remains in close proximity when the lunch tray is about to arrive. Layla is now beginning to independently seek these transitional/comfort items when Nouhad communicates that it will soon be time for a diaper change or that lunch will soon arrive. Nouhad also periodically takes Layla with her to the kitchen to pick up the lunch tray and

Layla is beginning to smile and offer eye contact when the cook enters the playroom. On days that Layla cues that she is feeling overwhelmed, Nouhad holds her on her lap for lunch or waits to feed her when most of the other children have already eaten and the lunch area is quieter. Nouhad is now beginning to see that Layla is much more settled at drop off and that she is becoming increasingly confident at expressing her needs. Nouhad also routinely documents Layla's play and takes supporting photos to share with Layla and her family in an effort to demonstrate her emerging skills, specifically within the emotional and social domains. Layla's family has expressed gratitude to Nouhad for her gentle, slow and nurturing approach and for her sensitivity to Layla's "cautious approach" and "secure base focus" which requires a need for "time to observe and process".

Paisley, a 27 month old toddler, attends an early year's program two days a week. At drop-off, which takes place in the outdoor environment, she usually searches for a quiet space in the sandbox and once she has played with the sand for a few minutes moves to sit on the bench under the climber. In the playroom Paisley typically plans to start her indoor play at the creative table and then most often moves to the dramatic play area, once this centre is not so busy. When advance transition warnings are offered by the teacher, Paisley is often observed visually seeking one particular educator, with a look of concern on her face. When a peer takes her toy, she responds in a quiet and gentle manner and usually will move away from the area without requesting her toy back from the other child. Paisley spends a large amount of her

play time cutting with scissors, pasting, and gently caring for the babies in the dramatic play area. While engaging in these activities she observes her peers at play and at times will appear to lose focus on the task at hand. Paisley is very expressive at pick-up when Ben's mother (a peer in her playroom) brings her newborn baby into the playroom. Paisley babbles and sings to the young infant and is quite animated and joyous in these interactions.

Having observed and identified Paisley's need for a quiet place to settle at drop-off, her primary educator, Wendy, places sand toys in the back of the sandbox area where traffic is at a minimum. During yard check in the mornings, Wendy also places a blanket and a basket of books and puzzles on the bench under the climber. Once indoors Wendy ensures that she is both physically and emotionally available, especially when a transition is near, to ensure that Paisley has access to her secure base. Wendy is supporting Paisley to express her needs to the educators, as well as to her peers and actively supports her to move through the steps of a problem solving process. Since Paisley self-regulates through sensory and creative activities Wendy takes this into consideration when developing curriculum and setting up the physical environment. Wendy also makes certain to find one on one time with Paisley and will often sit beside her when she is engaging in an activity in the creative area to help her verbally describe the observations that she is making in relation to her peers play, to offer support with play entry skills and, when required, to help her maintain focus with the task at hand. Since Paisley is most expressive when interacting with Ben's baby

sister at pick-up, Wendy ensures that there is time at the end of the day for Ben's mother to bring her baby into the playroom. During this time Wendy supports Paisley to share her knowledge about babies and to model, for her peers, how to interact with an infant. Last week Paisley read the "Round and Round the Garden" book to the baby and then sang the rhyme to the baby while her peers joined in. Wendy is now planning to have the "Roots of Empathy" (Gordon, 2005) program facilitated in the centre because she believes that this experience will allow for Paisley's temperament strengths to blossom. In a recent conversation with Paisley's family, Wendy shared that Paisley is an "observer" who is very "reflective" and therefore benefits from a "gentle and gradual approach".

Nikolas is an energetic child. When he arrives at his JK/SK classroom each morning he immediately begins to run from one activity to the next in anticipation of all that he may explore that day. Nikolas responds to both his peers and his caregiver's interactions with a loud voice that is most often filled with emotion. When it is time to tidy up the playroom, transition to the outdoor environment and have quiet time on his mat, Nikolas cries loudly and sometimes hits his friends. Nikolas's eating, sleeping and bathroom routines vary from day to day and he often expresses frustration when he is not able to successfully complete a task at first attempt. Nikolas eagerly participates in music and movement experiences and outdoor play.

Luis, Nikolas's father, openly and routinely shares the strategies that they use in their home to support Nikolas

with his teacher. Luis packs a container of breakfast food and gives Nikolas the choice as to whether he prefers to eat the food at home, in the vehicle on the way to school or once he is at school. He also verbally helps Nikolas to plan his first activity of the day (which most often involves using the trampoline or large yoga ball) and then Luis shares Nikolas's plan with the teacher upon their arrival at school. Luis uses language to describe his son's feelings and the educators report that they are now beginning to see Nikolas express himself verbally more consistently. Luis has also shared that Nikolas is settled when playing with water in the pool, sink or bathtub so the teacher has the water table accessible at all times during the day, especially at drop-off when Nikolas cues that he is need of support to regulate both his emotions and his attention. Luis meets with his son's teacher regularly to discuss the strategies that are being shared with the children during the "Kids Have Stress Too Program" (Psychology Foundation of Canada). Luis has noticed that this program encourages his son to express his frustrations in a much more safe and pro-social manner. Both Luis and Nikolas's teacher have identified that Nikolas is much calmer during a transition period if it is accompanied by music or if he has a leadership role such as sweeping the floor, putting blankets on cots or helping to set up equipment in the play yard. Nikolas's temperament traits are indicative of his "passion for life" which leads him to be an "active and energetic explorer" who is very "expressive". The goodness of fit that exists between this child and the adults in his life are vividly apparent in the expectations set out for Nikolas in relation to his temperament and in the strategies used to further develop and build upon his many strengths.

Temperament Self-Care of the Early Childhood Practitioner

When reflecting on the way early childhood practitioners sometimes think about and define temperament in the formative years, it immediately comes to the forefront that our own personal childhood experiences can deeply impact the philosophy and language of our practice. The manner in which our temperament traits or style were described when we were children can directly translate into our vision of, and interactions with, the children in our care. It is not uncommon to hear adult educators define themselves, or at times their colleagues, as "feisty", "stubborn", "challenging", "fussy", "difficult" "shy" or "withdrawn". Although it is seldom the intent to purposefully impose hurt on oneself or our adult peers, these perceptions and labels can be self-destructive and damaging. These terms may have been seen as progressive when they were developed, however our current temperament language is much more strength based and reflects our understanding of the diversity of human temperament. If, like many adults, you find yourself defining your temperament attributes in less than positive terms then it may prove beneficial to revisit the nine temperament traits described by Thomas and Chess and to think about what these indicators suggest about **your** adult temperament style, especially in relation to your aptitudes. Instead of framing your high intensity of reaction as difficult, view and present this trait as "being committed to the process" or as being "passionate". View your need to have time to process prior to responding to a colleagues request for input as being "reflective, your need to move

around frequently during the day in order to help you regain focus as being “energetic”, and your “go with the flow” approach as “adaptable”. As you seek to redefine your own temperament in a positive light consider the merit of exploring the following in collaboration with your Early Childhood team members:

- Positively framing your own temperament style. Often others view you based on the way in which you reflect on and articulate your childhood and adult temperament style.
- Explore the “best fit” when pairing colleagues to form teams. It is most definitely in the best interest of children, families and educators when there is a “goodness of fit” within professional teams of early childhood professionals.
- Openly discuss your temperament style and the strategies that you need to feel supported, as well as the gifts that your traits bring to the team.
- Hold one another accountable to use positive temperament language. When feeling stretched and frustrated by the needs of a child in your group, work collaboratively to identify the strengths of the child within the context of their temperament.
- Seek to understand and celebrate, rather than judging or try to change, the temperament styles of others.

Reshaping our Views and Language in Relation to Temperament

Given the fact that upwards of 60% of the young children that we care for have predominantly “spirited” or “cautious” temperaments *or* hold some of the traits from these temperament styles (Poole, 2007) it is essential that

we examine how our understanding of temperament shapes our practice. Bronfenbrenner’s idea that “*The child’s temperament influences the adult(s) behavior and may alter the physical world and experiences the child will have*” (Lally, 2011, p. 1) speaks profoundly to the impact that temperament, and the way in which we conceptualize and accommodate temperament, has on relational and learning experiences of the young child. Our profession has grown leaps and bounds over the last few decades as many domains of our pedagogy have become increasingly research based, innovative and forward thinking. It is now time for us to reframe the way in which we view and describe temperament, and consider how we achieve a “goodness of fit” in relation to temperament, to ensure that both our philosophy and language offer value, respect and a “level playing field” for the special gifts that each child brings to our playroom, and the world as a whole.

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The Canadian Child Care Federation publishes IDEAS twice a year in partnership with George Brown College's School of Early Childhood and the Child Development Institute. For submission to IDEAS please contact Connie Winder. Phone (416) 415-5000 extension 3018, fax (416) 415-2565, email cwinder@georgebrown.ca

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Caring for Aboriginal Children





CARING FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Inunnguiniq – Inuit Child Rearing That Builds on Cultural Strengths

by Shirley Tagalik

Inuit have long been known as a happy, independent people who struggled to survive in the harshest conditions at the edge of the world. Often, those who encountered Inuit and wrote historically about Inuit assumed a society that was a loose collective living day-to-day without much organizational structure. In fact, Inuit were able to survive their harsh conditions because they were a highly regulated society with many finely evolved and adaptive structures that were consistently applied. It is important to note that the values and beliefs which underpin and support these structures are shared across circumpolar groups of Inuit and that the processes which ensured the continued application of the structures were highly defined and have changed little over many generations.

The culturally prescribed goal for all Inuit is to “live a good life”. In order to live a good life, the focus of life is on the constant pursuit and hoped attainment of four big laws or *maligait*. Research in Nunavut into Inuit *Qaujimagatuqangit*/Inuit worldview has identified these foundational beliefs as: working for the common good, being respectful of all living things, maintaining harmony and balance, continually planning and preparing for the future.¹ The expectations for achievement were laid out through societal structures designed to support achievement and processes for teaching individuals to become successful in applying these expectations in their own lives.

One such process is that of *inunnguiniq*—making a human being. A human being is defined as someone who has great capability and can provide for others through using his/her abilities to benefit the common good. It is also about preparing



a child with the abilities to both overcome obstacles and to avoid creating obstacles through attitudes and valued behaviours such as perseverance, solution-seeking, deep thinking, skilled inter-dependence and service to others. Living a good life also included strong emotional control, the avoidance of conflict, confession of wrongdoing, seeking forgiveness and returning to harmony with others. The teaching was delivered through, and grounded in, strong respectful relationships and networks of social supports set up for a child at birth.

When you are a child, you will not be told everything at the same time, but will be given small bits to practice. The person who instructs always has the bigger, holistic picture in mind, but breaks it down for the child. Without the foundation of respect, the child is unable to apply the laws to have a good life. Learning to become a human being, to be a good person, to live a good life—cannot be set aside. (Joe Karetak, personal communication, Sept.8th,2010)

The *inunnguiniq* process of child rearing was very intentional and holistic in application. It was administered, consistently across communities, by all members of the community as a shared responsibility. Everyone had a role in nurturing,



protecting, observing and creating a unique life path suited to each child. Learning was viewed as a lifelong process and parents continued to advise and set expectations for their children even as they became adults and had their own families. Community elders had this same role in continually teaching, advising and correcting, based on their lived experiences and the wisdom gained through those. The strength of relationship, both between individuals and with the collective, was essential to all teaching/learning.

The colonization of Inuit through forced relocations that occurred as late as the 1960s resulted in many broken or damaged cultural systems.



We agreed to this life because we thought it would be better. Today we should be weeping with contentment rather than with anger if those promises had been kept. In this new life, it is more difficult to find contentment today. We used to live a life where everything was connected. Today's life is tangled and without clear purpose.”
(N. Attangala, personal communication, August, 2012)

The Elders recognize the much greater challenge of equipping children with skills to live a good life today.

Our children's way of life is so different. But, in spite of all these changes, we still need to pass along the teaching about a good life because these basic things do not really change. Many of our children are lead into addictions because they are looking for the good life. They look in the wrong places because they think life should be easy.”
(L. Angalik, personal communication, August, 2012)

The high incidence of youth drug and alcohol use and suicide is a clear indication for Inuit elders that the application of mainstream socialization processes are not leading their children down the path to a good life.

In Nunavut today, elders believe that *inunnguiniq* is a key stabilizing factor in Inuit life and that through revitalizing the *inunnguiniq* process strength can be rebuilt in Inuit youth. *Inunnguiniq* builds on cultural strengths and connections—

strengths of selfreliance, healthy self-concept and deep thinking, and is supported by a clearly articulated set of values and beliefs, grounded in high expectations for every member of the society. It is expected that by revitalizing this childrearing process children and youth today will become equipped with a sense of belonging and purpose.

The work of these elders has resulted in an *Inunnguiniq* Parenting Curriculum for Nunavut and a set of 22 pamphlets mentitled *Inunnguiniq: Advice from Elders*.² The pamphlets provide information on the developmental stages of children and youth from pre-natal to 18 years, what parents can do to support healthy development and the values and beliefs that should be the focus of each stage of development. These initiatives provide a starting point for revitalization of culturally specific childrearing practices that are grounded in Inuit values and beliefs and set as foundation the cultural strengths that have sustained Inuit society over generations.³

Shirley is an educator, researcher and community wellness advocate. Her recent work focuses on documenting Inuit cultural knowledge through work with Elders. Shirley and her husband, James, live in Arviat, Nunavut with their three daughters, two sons-in-law and five grandchildren.

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CARING FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

“Salmon Speaks” at Grand Coulee Dam

by **Natalie Lucas**

Grand Coulee dam “is the largest concrete structure ever built”(www.nwcouncil.org/history/grandcouleehistory.asp), and its base is almost four times larger than the great pyramid in Egypt (www.grandcouleedam.com/aboutdam.html). Twelve million cubic yards of concrete was used, comparable to building a sidewalk 4 feet wide and 4” thick and wrapping it twice around the equator (50,000 miles) or building a four lane highway from

Seattle to Miami (www.usbr.gov/pn/grandcoulee/pubs/factsheet.pdf). This was where our “Salmon Speaks” project hoped to go.

Ever since that first conversation the children and I had at Valhalla Center, when we talked about the salmon being missing in our river, when I drew the map and told them how salmon traveled up the Columbia River system, and when I drew in the dam to block the salmon’s journey, the Grand Coulee loomed in the children’s thoughts and over our project. Often referred to as “the eighth wonder of the world”, Grand Coulee Dam’s construction raised the level of the Columbia River back 151 miles right up to the Canadian border and created Lake Roosevelt. With a 600 mile shoreline, it flooded 82,000 acres of farm land, towns, and an entire Aboriginal way of life (see *A River Lost*, Bragg, Lynn & Marchand, Virgil. Hancock House. 1995). It “wiped out spawning up 645 river miles and twice as much tributary miles equaling 1,100 miles permanently destroyed.” (www.nwcouncil.org/history/grandcouleeimpactsonfish.asp)

The children didn’t need to know all those statistics to feel the injustice. They knew we needed to bring the salmon back home. From that moment the children of Valhalla and Wee

Ones, moved forward with the Salmon Speaks project by learning about the spawning process of salmon and sturgeon. The children shared their concerns with other children and adults in their communities, helped make up a song, “Great Wild Salmon”, and illustrated a story about a salmon named Sammy. For the full journey the children participated in, see www.salmonspeaks.ca.

At their request, we wrote a letter to the CEO of BC Hydro and he responded with a letter that told us we should look up the different programs for children that BC Hydro supports in regards to fish habitat and environmental concerns. Sadly, those programs were for children of school age and young adults, so we could not participate.





We decided to go directly to the dam itself, a field trip to Grand Coulee! What better way to get hands-on and multi-sensory learning? I had already been down to Grand Coulee and shared the “Salmon Speaks” project with people I met there (motel owner, museum employees, store merchants and Colville tribal members). Families needed passports, the project needed funds. Sounds easy? It turned out to be almost a year of struggles.

The Columbia Basin Trust (established to support Basin residents) seemed the wisest place to start. CBT’s focus: “to foster quality of life and address issues in the Basin”, “improve community engagement”, and “determine the feasibility of returning the salmon to Columbia River” seemed promising (www.cbt.org/initiatives/water). We were confident that our field trip grant application to travel to Grand Coulee would be successful. You can imagine how disheartening it was to get a phone call saying we were refused because they thought our children were too young to benefit from this project, and “that a dam closer to home would suffice”. By letter, they informed us that CBT funds were not to be spent outside the country. We did not get their funds but they got an earful about the intellectual capacity of preschool children, their sense of social justice and their understanding of the catastrophic event that took the salmon away from their home area.

After reassessing our situation, we decided to continue our search for funds. We researched environmental grants, school project grants, provincial and national programs, and even contacted the David Suzuki Foundation. The answer was the same: “funds must be spent in Canada” or “for school-age children.”

We reassessed again and decided to raise funds ourselves with our “Cookie-Rama” and “Family Carnival”.

These efforts were a lot of work but gave us many opportunities to talk to people about the Salmon Speaks project, the wisdom of children, environmental issues and the importance of having our salmon come back.

We did it! We raised the money and five families packed for the trip to Grand Coulee Dam. At our gathering place, every child received a camera for their own documenting of the trip and then we were off follow-the-leader style all the way to Coulee Dam.

People welcomed us with interest and enthusiasm. The children too, were very excited. Keshet’s smile spread from ear to ear as she sat in her cot and stared at the TV set in the motel room. It wasn’t on.

Her father asked her, “Are you hungry?”

“No, I want to go to bed.” She answered from her cot. She took a picture of the TV set and began to giggle.

“I’m happy!” she proclaimed. We all agreed she certainly looked it.

The next day we began with the tour of the dam.





“Pockets emptied, shoes off, beep, buzz, walk through, go this way, that way”, finally we were all on the bus that took us onto the dam with only our cameras and car keys. When we got off the bus, we walked by a soldier with a rifle standing close to the elevator entrance. As we walked past, Jordan says, “He has a really BIG gun!” We definitely don’t see that every day in Canada. We were told Grand Coulee dam played a big role in winning the world war. Apparently it could still be a target for sabotage? Our elevator ride took us into the dam to see the twelve enormous turbines. Then the bus took us up on top of the dam. It was very windy! It was very high! Dare we look over? It was a rush for the senses!

Finally at the end of the tour, one of the children asks, “Where are the fish? We want to see the salmon.”

The tour guide responded, “It is too dangerous for them to go over this dam, they would die.”



“But what about making it safe?”

“There are no future plans to focus on the salmon.” was her reply. But we know plans can change.

When we visited the Colville Tribal Museum, we were greeted by two wonderful ladies from the tribe and the words, “You came! Welcome everyone!” The museum showed what the dam tour did not, the way of life that disappeared with the salmon as the Columbia water rose. Their voices weren’t heard, their humanity was dismissed as insignificant. But not to us, we share their goal and we’ll share their story.

“The salmon will come.” Henry Stensgar informs us with confidence after hearing our story. I remember his name from his picture in the museum. He refers to himself as a Sinixt, he lives along the San Poil River (which empties into the Columbia). To this day he drives down to the Chief Joseph Dam to fish for salmon. As the custom, his first fish is given away. The next fish he keeps to share with his family. All that’s left over, he returns to the river. He picks up two rocks, with singing and praying, he hits two rocks together at the waters edge, and calls the salmon home.

“You tell your children, let them call to the salmon, let them hit the rocks together like this. The more children calling, the louder the song, the salmon will hear, and one day the dams will fall and the salmon will come.”

I answered, “for sure.”

Was it worth it? You bet! Our future plans? We have been invited to the Salmon Festival in Lumby to share our story.

This article was reprinted with permission from the ECEBC’s Early Childhood Educator, 2013, Vol 27 No 4.





CARING FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Integrating Aboriginal Culture into Your Child Care Setting 10 Ways to Weave it into Your Program

by Mary Jane Swain

Study Aboriginal Child Care

As an Aboriginal in the early childhood field, I find it important to share my Aboriginal culture with the staff, parents and children at our centre. During my Early Childhood career, I was grateful to attend Red River College on Saturday mornings from 1994-1996. Five out of the six courses were paid through my centre. I studied Aboriginal Child Care. My instructors were Betty Anne Lavallée and Carol Beaulieu. The six subjects that I excelled in with flying colours were the following:

- Aboriginal Beginnings
- The Dynamics Of Aboriginal Family
- Diversity Of Aboriginal Cultural Beliefs
- Integrating the Aboriginal Culture in the Child Care Curriculum and
- Research and Presentation, which I did on Treaties

Anyone who enrolls in these courses at Red River College can learn a lot about Aboriginal culture and receive their diploma upon graduation.

Learn About Aboriginal Culture

There are several ways to learn about Aboriginal culture. First, you can find an Aboriginal elder in your community. Elders are

well respected in their communities. It is important to offer tobacco to an elder before asking for their knowledge and wisdom. This is a way to show respect to the elder and show that you value his/her knowledge. The elder may suggest you attend some Aboriginal ceremonies such as a Powwow, teaching of the Medicine Wheel, or maybe participate in a Sweat Lodge Ceremony.

Second, you can do research through the internet on different topics such as Residential Schools, 1969 White Paper, Aboriginal languages, treaties, traditional medicines, etc. This will give you a better understanding of an Aboriginal way of life and the values we possess.

Share Aboriginal Knowledge with Music

Now that you have the knowledge of Aboriginal culture, you can use it in your centre in many ways. I brought in the Spirit Sands and Whitehorse Cd's for the children to listen to as well. There are many other talented Aboriginal musicians like Shane Yellowbird, Don Amero, Tracy Bone Campbell, Billy Joe Green, Melissa McKinney Band, just to name a few that you can listen to. With ECER's, it is important to introduce appropriate music whether it is rock and roll, blues or country, etc. You can also purchase hand drums for your music area. If you know a hoop dancer, you can hire him/her to teach the children the meaning of hoop dancing. You can email brianclyne@hotmail.com if you live in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He has travelled to Sweden to hoop dance. At Christmas time, I put on a CD called "Anishinabe Christmas" by Teddy Boy Houle. This CD is your basic Christmas carols sung in Ojibway.

Share Aboriginal Stories

Aboriginal people are great storytellers. Bring in an elder to share some legends with the children. If not, books can be purchased online at www.nativerellections.com or at Nichii Foods in Winnipeg, Manitoba. You can also check McNally Robinson or Chapters Book Store. Some great books are the following:

- *The Bead Pot*. Written by Thelma Poirier Illustrated by Nona Foster
- *The Yesterday Stone*, or *The Missing Sun*. Written by Peter Eyvindson, Illustrated by Rhian Brynjolson
- *Mama, Do You Love Me?* Written by Barbara M. Joesse, Illustrated by Barbara Lavallée
- *A Name For A Métis*. Written By Deborah L. Delaronde, Illustrated by Keiron Flamand
- *Amikoonse (Little Beaver)* Written and Illustrated By Ferguson Plain
- *Nanabosho (How The Turtle Got its Shell)* or *Nanabosho, Soaring Eagle And The Great Sturgeon*. Written by Joe McLellan, Illustrated by Rhian Brynjolson



Connect with Nature

When there is snow on the ground, another great activity is to visit your local park and check for animal tracks in the snow. Aboriginals depended on animals for food and learning about different animal tracks was a necessary way of life. This activity could lead to foot painting. For your science area, you could talk at circle time about the four traditional medicines (in clear sealed containers) for the children to discover. You can also do a smudge using Sweetgrass (outside to avoid setting off your smoke detectors).

Paint, Draw, Craft

For your craft area, you can put out red, yellow, black, and white paint, construction paper, feathers and beads. Explain to the children about traditional colours. The children can be taught how to make dream catchers and what a dream catcher symbolizes. Hang one up where the children take naps. Put out a few star year round blankets in your cozy corner for the children to use.

Take a field trip to the Manitoba Museum or other museums or art galleries with Aboriginal art or artifacts. The children can view Regalia. Regalia is what the First Nations call their outfits used for dancing at powwows. They can learn about the buffalo and see a teepee. You can get a guided tour, or go on a self-tour.

Aboriginal Puppet Play

Aboriginal dolls can enhance your dramatic play area. We have a two-person teepee that we set up for quiet time, talking or reading. You can also use animal puppets in your puppet area and print out the letters of the animals in an Aboriginal language. For example, Waboose means Rabbit, and Amik means Beaver in Ojibway. My friend Pat Ningewance owns her own book company called "Mazinaate" and published a book

called "Pocket Ojibwe For Kids and Parents". This book could be helpful to your centre as well.

Bannock in the Kitchen

Once a month, I make baked or fried bannock for morning snack. Sometimes I add raisins or put melted margarine on raw dough and add a mixture of cinnamon and white sugar on top and bake it in the oven for a different taste. I have even added apple pie filling to the fried bannock for a new experience. While it is cooling, add some powdered icing sugar on top and it tastes like apple pie. A child requested rainbow bannock, so I added food colouring to my water and I made different colours and then combined them to make rainbow bannock. It is all about emergent curriculum. I have taught the children how to make bannock themselves as well. The children get to experience the dough and texture. Blueberry jam adds a nice touch to the bannock while serving it.

Highlight the Seven Sacred Teachings

I have posters of The Seven Sacred Teachings and I laminated and put them up for the children to view. My preschoolers may not be able to read, but the pictures attract them to it. The Seven Sacred Teachings are honesty, humility, truth, wisdom, love, respect, and bravery. We use these teachings at daycare as well. It is important to teach children to respect each other, the staff, and the toys they play with. We show our love to the daycare children each day through hugs, guidance and caring. We want the children to be honest and tell the truth to us.

June 21st is our National Aboriginal day

I challenge all early childhood educators to learn some Aboriginal culture and plan activities all year round. If there are Aboriginal parents who could come into your daycare and do a circle time on Aboriginal culture, invite them; it would be an added bonus. Just research and begin planning.

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CARING FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Walk a Mile in Their Shoes

ECE Reflections Working in a Remote Métis Community

by Lois Coward

Fifteen years ago, I was able to fulfill a long time goal of becoming an Instructor of Early Childhood Education. I had accumulated 10 years of experience in the child care field, hours of leading training seminars and plenty of organizing skills. On paper, I was a great fit.

My position would be Lead Instructor to 12 students in the Early Childhood Education Program in their home community – a 200+ km drive from my home in Winnipeg. I would commute every day as there were no accommodations in the community.

The classes were held in the newly built child care centre. I was nervous, and the students were quiet. I had the full second year of courses to teach, set up their last practicums and get them to graduation in eight months and the opening of the new child care centre. I had full knowledge of the course work and had some great examples to use in order to paint a picture of what the curriculum is set out to prepare students for the workforce. But, I was on their turf, and the traditional way of teaching through reading and self study was going to go out the window – fast.

One of the first courses was Nutrition and Health. The students were to make a menu plan based on the Canada Food Guide. Handouts of the guide were distributed and I could see



for some, it was like reading a Greek encyclopaedia. Even with the bright coloured pictures, the information was not making an impact on the students – why did they need to include all of those foods

and why do children need to eat them? My explanations were met with confused looks. In order for the task to be understood, I reflected upon an ancient proverb that says

“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.”

I announced that I would provide lunch for the class the next day. We would be making our own pizza in the daycare kitchen. I gathered all the ingredients for pizza, cheese, vegetables and pita shells for crust. The students were excited and most stayed for the activity. I gave each a pita and access to a variety of vegetables. One student shocked me when she asked what the vegetables



were named – and another mentioned it was the first time she had ever tasted certain items. I will always remember how they were fascinated by yellow and red peppers – they knew of green peppers but had never seen, held or tasted a sweet red or a crispy yellow pepper. A variety of vegetables were not available in the community – and access to these items was an hours' drive away. The room was filled with an amazing aroma and the sound of laughter as they each watched each other try their individually created pizza. We went into class in the afternoon and the menus were coming alive. The students talked of having “taste tests” with the children to choose items to add to their menu. Some students wanted their menu to be as colourful as the Food Guide and their pizzas they had for lunch.

Being the only instructor and teaching in the community, I had the flexibility to alter the way the course information was taught. Another aspect I had to consider was the isolation of the community from “main stream” child care. The nutrition course was just the start to making the information relatable to the community and to the students, who were going to take the lead once the program was completed.

I then had the amazing opportunity to teach the Early Childhood Program in a fly-in First Nations community in Northern Manitoba. My first course was to be in June, after

the ice had melted and there was access to the community from the airport by boat. The 90 minute flight in the tiny 9-seater airplane was an adventure in itself but I also got to see from the sky the amazing province I live in and where my new students call home. I arrived one sunny morning. I unloaded my gear and loaded up for my first day. I piled into the Lund fishing boat and donned my lifejacket. The boat ride was fairly short across the choppy waves and my “taxi driver” dropped me off at the main dock. I unloaded and asked for directions. “Walk down the main road – you’ll see the daycare”. I started my trek on the muddy, rolling hill road. I decided upon what road I determined to be the “main road” and started up the hill. There was no one to be seen. It was 8:30 a.m. and it was so quiet. I heard birds chirping... and myself heavy breathing lugging my papers up the steep hill. I looked up to see a lone man approaching me. As he came upon me he asked, “You lost?” I said that I was and I needed to get to the daycare – he pointed me in the right direction and he was off. I always laugh to think how I looked that morning – like a fish out of water. I came to learn that this community of 4,000 people (10,000 in all four communities) was as close knit as a small family. Everyone helped each other; they laughed at each other and cried with each other. It would be one of the most profound things I learned in my time in their “home”. We laughed along with

each other, and at my expense. We cried for the lives that were lost from the isolated, helpless feeling some youths experience within their community. We celebrated the birth of babies. And we ate. A lot.

This time, I felt that I had more experience teaching the curriculum and was ready for the creative ways I was going to modify the presentation and not the content. But then, I met a small, 4-year old boy. I was observing and role modeling one week when the centre was open for business (they closed their doors for one week a month to have classes). Two boys were creating with small Lego pieces. They created very elaborate guns and proceeded to walk around the small centre, hiding behind shelving units and jumping out quickly pointing their home made guns, making shooting sounds. In several courses, readings, text





the highly used “no guns in daycare” apply in this case? It is not as black and white as it seems to be. The community shuts down school and no one works for one week in September so the community can walk into the bush to set moose traps for the late fall/early winter. The small migration of moose begins in October. It is a staple, not only in their culture, but for feeding their families – and one moose can go a long way.

My inquisitive nature has always been received well when I ask someone about their culture, their traditions or their view on certain subjects and how it affects their way of life. I felt very close to the students in Northern Manitoba as I travelled there for four years. The students and the community welcomed me into their world, and I got to be the butt of many a joke, which was absolutely delightful! My experiences have lead me to be an advocate for access to affordable, healthy food in isolated communities. I have also become very protective of isolated communities and the saying, “Walk a mile in their shoes” has never been more profound to me.

Lois Coward has been in child care for 25 years and in every role possible - from front line worker to instructor or Assiniboine College and Red River College. She had the most amazing opportunity to travel to some remote First Nations communities in Northern Manitoba to teach the Early Childhood Program to their current child care staff. She spent 2 years in a Métis community teaching the ECE program for Red River and is currently the Executive Director of Niigaanaki Day Care Centre - an child care facility in downtown Winnipeg with Aboriginal roots.

books and social discussions over many years, guns in daycare are a “no-no”. How many times have ECEs found themselves saying “no guns in daycare”, “take it apart”, etc? I jumped up with my adult students watching my reaction and listening to what I would say. I stopped in my tracks and asked them what they made. “A Gun”, one boy answered. “Why did you make a gun? Guns can be very dangerous for people.” I quipped. “I go hunting with my Dad. We hunt for moose. I stay very still and my Dad looks for the moose. I never use the gun.” I sat down and had an amazing conversation with a 4 year old about going hunting for moose. He taught me a thing or two about gun safety and about his life. So, does





RESEARCH UPDATE

Nunavut Kids Most Active in Canada, Says Active Healthy Kids Canada Report

Report (2012) Used Pedometers to Measure the Number of Steps Taken

Toronto-based organization Healthy Active Kids Canada says children in Nunavut are the most active in Canada.

Each year, Active Healthy Kids Canada reports on activity levels across the country. Pedometers are given to select children in each province or territory to measure the number of steps taken.

In 2012, kids in Nunavut came out on top. The average daily steps of children and youth taken in Nunavut was 13, 103 (between 2009 and 2011).

Cowie Bonne of Active Healthy Kids Canada said kids need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. But when it's too cold to play outside, it's a challenge keeping kids busy. <http://www.activehealthykids.ca/>

settings with children 0-5 years of age. The curriculum framework will be based on a holistic view of children and will build common language across diverse delivery settings around the importance of play in early learning, emergent program planning and responsive care.

Full day kindergarten potentially delayed

Alberta's budget woes could delay Premier Alison Redford from making good on her promise to bring in fully funded full-day kindergarten. Last year, the government said it wanted to start rolling out the program this fall at an estimated annual cost of up to \$200 million. Alberta Education says it is working on its kindergarten plan, including different times for it to begin, but much will depend on the March 7 budget.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Premier of British Columbia Christy Clark unveiled a B.C. Early Years Strategy in February -- an eight-year government commitment to support early childhood development and help families with child care. Government spending on early years services will increase by \$76 million in the first three years of the strategy with \$32 million to support the creation of new child-care spaces and \$37 million in support of improving the overall quality of early years services, including child care and \$7 million to strengthen the co-ordination of early childhood development programs and child-care services. The foundation of the strategy is the establishment this year of a Provincial Office for Early Years to co-ordinate all policy and service improvements. Working closely with communities and the early years sector, the office will lead the implementation of a network of early years centres throughout the province that will offer one-stop access to a range of services.

MANITOBA

The Province of Manitoba's Department of Family Services and Labour rolled out a consultation on the child care sector's wages this fall to assist in the development of a Provincial Wage Scale.

ACROSS CANADA AND BEYOND

National News

A landmark federal court decision in February 2013 stated workplaces are obliged to accommodate reasonable childcare-related requests from their employees. Lawyers and ECE's believe this signals significant changes ahead for the country's employment law landscape. The decision handed down by Justice Leonard Mandamin explicitly states that requests for childcare accommodations stem from genuine need and are not simply the product of lifestyle choices.

UBC and the child care and early learning sector in Canada mourn the death of Clyde Hertzman, a world leader in early childhood development. He passed away at age 59 in February this

year, just a month after receiving the Order of Canada. Dr. Hertzman coined the term "biological embedding" – the concept of experiences and social environments altering human biological and developmental processes, leading to long-term changes in health, well-being, learning or behaviour. Dr. Hertzman's influence in the fields of early child development, population health and epidemiology has been significant locally, nationally and internationally.

ALBERTA

Early Learning and Care Curriculum Framework under development

The Ministry of Human Services is sponsoring Grant MacEwan University and Mount Royal University as community partners to develop a "made in Alberta" curriculum framework for child care educators working in centre based child care and family day home



The Department of Family Services and Labour is also undertaking a study called, "Voice of the Early Learning and Child Care Service Providers", doing an in-depth and strategic examination of ELCC services and delivery in Manitoba.

All parent fees for child care will be increasing by \$1.00/day in 2013. This is the second \$1.00/day increase in two years.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development Jody Carr made an announcement in June 2012 that he was restructuring the education districts and diminishing from 15 to 7. With this announcement was also the creation of four new positions within the department with the title of Early Childhood Service Directors.

Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development Jody Carr made an announcement in June 2012 for funding to create 10,000 child care spaces. This is a concern as many

centers are unable to keep the spaces already open full. Minister Carr has yet to outline their action plan for these spaces and coordinate with leaders in early childhood education in the province.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

The province officially announced the 10-Year Child Care Strategy, *Caring For Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient and Affordable Child Care* in Newfoundland and Labrador in February 2013. The strategy, which is in its first year of implementation, details an approach to creating long-term improvement in regulated child care services by focusing on the three key areas of quality, sufficiency and affordability. The province also announced developmental and operational funding for a number of child care centres under the department of child, youth and family services, *Child Care Capacity Initiative*. This initiative provides start-up and/or operating grants to non-profit community-based organizations to aid in the creation of

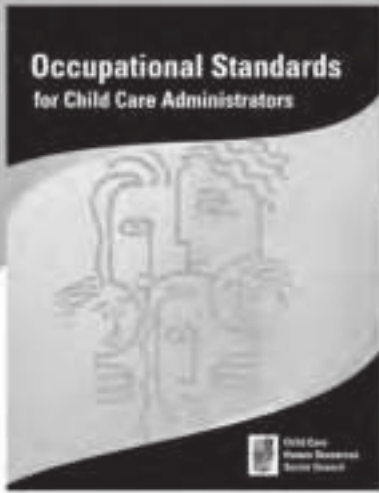
more regulated child care spaces. Since its introduction in 2006, more than 380 spaces have been created through this initiative which will continue under *Caring For Our Future*.

NORTH WEST TERRITORIES

The North West Territories government has released its new *Child Day Care Regulations* which came into effect on February 1, 2013. The new regulations state that at least half of the staff in a centre must be Primary Staff and must have successfully completed a post-secondary program in child development. This regulation forces centres to hire trained staff but the funding dollars have not been increased to pay for the staff with the higher standards of training.

NOVA SCOTIA

The results of the *Early Years Consultation* that took place in 2012 are now available from the province's child care committee. The report, "What We Heard: Giving Children the Best Start – The Early Years" is available online at:



New Resource

in the CCCF E-Store

Occupational Standards for Administrators from the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC)

Available for Purchase or Free Download

Go to: www.cccf-fcsge.ca/store/occupational-standards-for-administrators/



http://novascotia.ca/earlyyears/pub/What_We_Heard.pdf

The first round of “Orientation for Staff Working in Licensed Child Care Facilities” was successfully completed in the province of Nova Scotia this winter. The fall 2013 sessions are rolling in this spring. Training for Orientation of Facilitators will follow for ECE staff. This orientation must be taken by all persons working in Licensed Child Care facilities during first year of employment. It is also required for anyone working toward Entry Level Classification; School Age-Approval with additional education requirements.

ONTARIO

The new Early Years Framework announced in Ontario describes the creation of Best Start Child and Family Programs by September of 2014. Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC) and other family support programs will join licensed child care (which includes licensed home child care) under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MOE).

In an effort to strengthen licensed child care, the Ministry of Education, Early Learning Division is hosting a live webcast for child care operators, school boards, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs)/District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs), and other interested stakeholders to provide information about the process of licensing before and after school programs (including those for full day kindergarten) for the 2013-14 school year.

Full Day Kindergarten for four and five year olds is now in its third year out of four years of implementation across the province. The Kindergarten Early Learning Program (ELP) consists of a full school day of learning for four and five year olds, as well as an optional fee-based integrated extended day for those same students. About 48 percent of Ontario’s four and five year olds accessed the full day of kindergarten by September 2012. All four and five year

old children will have access to full day kindergarten by September 2014.

QUEBEC

Faced with the addition of 1,200 new spaces in January 2013 to an already under-utilized network of private daycares, Family Minister Nicole Léger has suggested she might impose a moratorium on unsubsidized spaces. The minister wants to resolve a situation where strong growth in private daycare has led to thousands of vacant daycare spaces and complaints from private operators. A number of private operators complained that the vacancies are the result of unfair competition from state-subsidized public \$7-a-day early childhood education centres. Private operators demonstrated in Montreal in February after Léger told the private network it was not eligible to bid on the majority of 15,000 new public spaces to be created by 2016.

CALENDAR

MAY

2-4

Richmond, BC

42nd Annual Early Childhood Education British Columbia (ECEBC) Conference

Celebrate the Essence of the Child and Champion a Better Future
www.ecebc.ca

3-4

Whitehorse, Yukon

Yukon Child Care Association National Child Care Conference

The Key: Unlocking the Potential of Early Human Development
<http://www.yukonchildcareassociation.org>

3-5

Nanaimo, BC

BC Family Child Care Association Annual Conference:

Early Literacy: More than ABC's and 123's.

11

Calgary, Alberta

Alberta Child Care Association Conference

You are an Essential Piece
<http://www.albertachildcare.org/>

23, 24 and 25

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Manitoba Child Care Association Annual Early Childhood Educators Conference

Unleash Your Mind

<http://www.mccahouse.org/conference.htm>

24-25

Toronto, Ontario

Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario Provincial Conference

Moving Toward Greater Professional Recognition 2013 Provincial Conference

www.aecce.ca

JUNE

7-8

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

The Child Care Connections Nova Scotia Conference 2013

Connecting...Connexions

Co-sponsored by CPRPS, CCECENS, CCCNS, NSCCA

www.ccns.org

RESOURCE

Putting the concept of biological embedding in historical perspective

Edited by Gene E. Robinson, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL, and approved July 16, 2012 (received for review February 7, 2012)

This paper describes evidence that led to the concept of biological embedding and research approaches designed to elucidate its mechanisms. Biological embedding occurs when experience gets under the skin and alters human biological and developmental processes; when systematic differences in experience in different social environments in society lead to systematically different biological and developmental states; when these differences are stable and long term; and, finally, when they have the capacity to influence health, well-being, learning, or behavior over the life course.

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care be considered
a national asset?

We're the Canadian Child Care Federation, and frankly, we'd like everyone to take a whole new look at the importance of early learning and child care. Across Canada this crucial system is driven by excellence in research and education, and expressed by professional practitioners and educators.

Early learning and child care prepare our youngest citizens to be all that they can be. We believe they are essential services, given – from the heart – by Canadian professionals who place enormous importance on the value of our children.



Quality early learning
and child care:
let's make our children
a national priority.

www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca



CANADIAN CHILD CARE FEDERATION

FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE DES SERVICES
DE GARDE À L'ENFANCE