

## KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW ~ KNOW WHAT YOU NEED Professional Development Plans

### Carrie Melsom

The new training levels for Early Childhood Educators announced by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services last winter have caused a stir as people and programs wonder "How does this affect me/us?" At NSCECE we have seen many people rushing to finish off requirements for equivalency before that process is phased out. We've also seen many people eager to get started with their Level I training courses. Their interest meant that this year was the first time the College has run a summer session of evening courses. Exciting!

All this activity is wonderful. Supporting people in their professional growth and practice is what a College like ours is all about. We offer an excellent and solid foundation for people interested in obtaining a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and their Level II credential. The training courses we offer toward a Level I credential can become the foundation for future education and a Level II credential.

There is, of course, more. Under the new regulations obtaining your level and

retaining your level are two different things. There is now a regulated expectation of ongoing professional development for anyone working in the sector, regardless of the training level already obtained.

For many of us a commitment to professional development is not new. Our professional orientation or employer may have already required it. Still 30 hours over three years may seem like a significant commitment for

those of us who feel underpaid for the education we have already invested in.

Workloads are high and the stresses of rapid turnover in the sector leave some feeling that any further requirements are too much—especially if the professional development previously taken was haphazard or didn't meet our need.

As a training institution that also offers professional development to the early childhood sector NSCECE

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## A Message from the Director

Dear ECE Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that it has been one year since we moved into our new location on Quinpool Road. The relocation process has had its ups and downs but we are almost fully settled. By September the lobby renovation and our much anticipated elevator will be completed and we will finally be ACCESSIBLE.

We are planning to have the Resource Centre open for member use two evenings a week starting in the fall (Tuesdays and Wednesdays). Check the website for details.

This spring we began offering courses for Level I certification and will continue to offer one of the required courses each semester as a night class. The proposed schedule is:

- *Introduction to Curriculum (Fall 2011)*

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### Inside this issue:

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- In the Resource Centre
- Program-Wide Approach to Staff Development

*A publication informing the early childhood education community of events, services and professional development opportunities offered by the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education*

Please circulate and post  
this newsletter!

E-mail: [info@nscece.ca](mailto:info@nscece.ca)  
to be added to our e-mail list or  
visit our website at  
[www.nscece.ca](http://www.nscece.ca)

# Know What You Know ~ Know What You Need

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is working to be responsive to your needs. To help us gain a better understanding of how the new regulations

will impact the sector we will be relying on you to let us know what you need.

Knowing what you need and want is key to any positive professional development experience. Meaningful professional development requires a plan. It is based on your needs and interests and linked to professional standards and positive outcomes for children.

As individuals, each of us is responsible for maintaining our training level credential with on-going professional develop-

ment. It makes sense to make sure we take our learning into our own hands and invest our time in PD activities that support our growth and development as educators.

Making time to create a professional development plan allows you to focus on your career goals as well as the quality of your daily practice and teaching. Relate your goals to your self-assessment and align them with occupational standards.

A workshop can only play a small part in real learning and knowledge transfer. It can excite you and affirm you, or maybe bore you, but unless you use workshop information and apply it in your classroom there is no benefit to your practice. PD hours do not equal learning; although, under the new regulations, they are how we demonstrate accountability for licensing purposes. Workshops can be part of

your strategy for reaching learning goals. But you will have to use additional strategies if you want to put your new skills or knowledge into action.

Additional strategies might include: taking a night class; participating in a discussion group; finding a mentor or being a mentor; professional reading; conducting classroom research; or participating in an online forum. Thirty hours over three years isn't much when it's part of becoming a better teacher and gaining skills that make your job easier and more meaningful.

So make a plan and tell us what you need. Our goal is to be as responsive to community needs as our resources allow us to be.

## Message Continued

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- *Child Growth & Development (Winter 2012)*
- *Behaviour Guidance (Spring 2012)*

We hope to have the *Guided Workplace Experience* ready for delivery sometime this fall. Check the website for updates.

Those of you who mentor our students for their practicum experiences you will notice that we have changed the format. The feedback process is now based on the *Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators*. We believe that this will support the consistency of standards and language within our sector.

**Korea Project:** We are partnering with the government of Korea to support post-secondary training for a small group of Korean students. This group is coming to Halifax to study English on a full time basis and ECE on a part time basis. They will be taking Introduction to Curriculum and Health & Safety in the fall and a modified practicum placement each Wednesday in January/February. We are very excited about this pilot project and if you are interested in hosting a student for practicum please call me at 423-7114 Ext. 222.

**Jane Cawley, Executive Director, NSCECE**  
[www.nscece.ca](http://www.nscece.ca)

## INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

### Self-Assessment—What do I already know and what skills do I have?

- Reflect on your current job responsibilities, challenges and accomplishments
- Utilize ECE Occupational Standards Checklist ([www.cpsc-cssge.ca](http://www.cpsc-cssge.ca))

### Prioritize and Set Goals—What do I want to learn and develop next?

- What am I excited about? What professional standards do I need to meet?
- Set measurable short and long term goals that support your career path

### Strategies and Resources—How will I do this?

- How do I learn best? What resources might I need?
- Define steps/strategies to help you meet your goals
- What obstacles might I face and what's my plan to get through them?

### Set a Timeline—When will I do this? When will I review it?

- How will I honour and communicate my learning to others?

(Based on: Nancy Sugarman, YC, May 2011)

# In the Resource Centre

The Resource Centre has many new learning materials and books available to support you in your work. Here is a small sampling. You can look for membership information and an updated inventory list at [www.nscece.ca](http://www.nscece.ca)



## GM 193 Scooter Boards

Children and adults can propel themselves along the floor using hands or feet. Sit or lie flat. Link up with friends. A nice inclusive toy for children with mobility issues.

## C 847 Jumbo Magneto Blocks

A construction toy that allows children to indulge their fascination with building higher. The large size of the pieces and magnetic connection mean that children with fine motor challenges can also experience the joy of building.



## CM 118 Feel the Beat Drum Songs

This large drum has been paired with two books about drumming: *The City Speaks in Drums* and *The*

*Drum Calls Softly*. Also included are CDs of the books and their drum songs. Explore urban and First Nation rhythms.

## C 844 & C 845 Magna Tiles

These construction sets allow children to experiment with building enclosed spaces.



## SM 044 Frog in a Box

Younger children will delight in the anticipation and surprise of this soft body frog suddenly erupting from her house. It also offers great motivation for language delayed or reluctant communicators "Jump frog, jump!"



## GM 195 Ultra Foam Jr. Bowling Set

This sturdy, weighted bowling set means no more pins falling over accidentally. The

bowling ball is large and weighted too. The foam offers good noise reduction which is especially nice in a busy classroom.

## FM 183 Latches Memory Box

Challenge fine motor and memory skills as children hide items in the various compartments. Pick a door, any door—is it the right one?



## FM 200 & FM 201 Lacing Bears

These wooden bears need a change of clothes. Discuss weather concepts and fashion choices while practicing fine motor lacing skills.



*We have recently added 120 items to the collection. Stop by and see what's new!*

Photos—Louise, Kool & Gault Catalogue

## Resource Centre Discussion & Support Groups



### All Together Now! Inclusion Support Group

We meet 9:00—11:00 AM on the last Thursday of each month at the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education. Join colleagues for facilitated discussion about issues relating to inclusive early learning programs. Share strategies, insights and challenges as part of a learning community.

### The Leading Edge: Discussion/Support Group for Administrators

A discussion and support group for people who have a leadership role in an early childhood program. This facilitated group meets 10:00—Noon, the second Thursday of each month in the NSCECE Resource Centre.

### For more information:

**Call Carrie Melsom**

**423-7114 Ext. 227**

**[resourcecentre@nscece.ca](mailto:resourcecentre@nscece.ca)**

*Resource Centre services are offered with support from the Department of Community Services, Early Childhood Education Training Initiative.*



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At the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education, we provide an opportunity for students to study and gain experience in Early Childhood Education through a diverse range of courses and practical settings.

We are proud to lay a foundation for the personal and professional growth and development of our students. It is our hope and goal that NSCECE graduates continue to learn, practice and reflect throughout their years in early childhood education.



A few of the 3,500 professional resources available in the Resource Centre



**Join the crowd—become a member today!**

Take advantage of the many services provided with a NSCECE Resource Centre membership

**Resources for the early childhood community**



To download an Information Brochure or Membership Form visit [www.nscece.ca](http://www.nscece.ca)

E-mail: [resourcecentre@nscece.ca](mailto:resourcecentre@nscece.ca)

Tel: (902) 423-7114 ext. 227



## A Program-Wide Approach to Staff Development

### An Interview with Susan Willis, Executive Director Point Pleasant Child Care

After the 2011 Provincial Conference Point Pleasant Child Care took advantage of Margie Carter's trip to Nova Scotia and invited her in as a consultant to work with staff and extend their conference experience into their classrooms. We asked her a few questions about this approach to staff development.

#### 1. Can you tell me a little about your centre's approach to staff development?

*Our organization has strong values and one of them is the value we place on professional development. We have been consciously building a learning organization characterized not by the demands we place on our employees but by the methods we use to support them in their practice, the way we mentor and guide them to achieve their personal best. We have high performance standards therefore we must assume responsibility, organizationally speaking, to assist employees to achieve them. If we believe this to be true then we*

*must provide a common PD experience for our team.*

#### 2. Why have you decided to use your professional development resources in this way?



*We know that the traditional workshop format does not affect lasting change in employee behaviour so we wanted to design a PD experience that would build or scaffold over time. The goal is to have a collective experience where all employees*

*are engaged and challenged.*

#### 3. How do you decide what areas to focus on each year?

*We think of it as a journey. Each PD experience sets the stage for the next. We have moved from the specific to the complex – sound familiar?! So far each experience has fallen into place quite naturally. I suspect this is because we have a vision or picture of where we want to go. We move at the pace that is appropriate given our staff at the time.*

#### 4. Do you have any tips or cautions for other centres that might be considering an approach like this for program?

*Be passionate about where you want to go, inspire your employees and be prepared to invest in the process with time, money and personnel. Use an external consultant or hire an appropriately experienced and qualified employee to facilitate the process and to provide support and guidance to employees. Be patient.*