

A newsletter for the early learning and care professional, creating a bridge between research and practice in the field.

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The Mentoring Pairs for Child Care Special

The Waterloo-Wellington Mentoring Pairs for Child Care Group Presents their Learning Stories

The Mentoring Pairs for Child Care program has been delivered in partnership with Conestoga College and the Professional Resource Centre, with the aim of assisting licensed child care centres and local initiatives with improving centre quality through better administrative practices. Through communitybased mentoring monthly study groups, participants examined the Child Care Human Resource Sector Council's Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators and then assisted each other in between classes in identifying local best practices and practical solutions by applying these to their own programs, services, policies, and practices.





Mentoring Pairs Celebrated and shared the odyssey of the program with the community at the November Supervisors Meeting



Process By Lisa Horst, RECE,

The

Conestoga Child Care

Approximately one year ago Mentoring Pairs for Child Care was introduced to those of us attending a monthly meeting of the Child Care Network of Waterloo Region. Supervisors from the local Early Learning and Care community were invited to begin the process of becoming a part of this project which was being brought to the Region of Waterloo. The pilot project, funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services through the Early Childhood Community Development Centre was beginning its third and final stage. There would now be a total of 23 communities participating.

The process began with obtaining permission from the employer to participate in the program. From there an online application was completed.

This application included a type of "personality" questionnaire which was used to find a "match" between two supervisors. (and based on the instant friendship that all partners reported it was evident that this questionnaire is certainly well designed!)

Once accepted into the program, the concept was simple, a seasoned, experienced Supervisor (the mentor) was paired with someone newer to this role (the mentee) to form the Mentoring Pair.

Beginning in January of this year, the Mentoring Pairs began attending monthly group meetings. The monthly meetings were led by 2 animators who had attended training sessions on the Mentoring Pairs Project and were able to guide the group with their extensive knowledge and enthusiasm. The Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators provided the focus at these monthly meetings and the frame work for the program. Each month a new topic from the Occupational Standards was introduced to the large group.

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The Mentoring Pairs for Child Care Participants of 2010

Supervisors of the Waterloo-Wellington Area that participated

Debbie Ainlay
Cheryl Anderson
Bonnie Aultman
Jennifer Batine
Christie Braendle
Lori Clayfield
Sylvie Davis
Mary Lou Duggan
Brenda Gavloski
Christine Helgerman

Lisa Horst
Joanne Need
Kris Parsons
Lori Prospero
Tracey Rees
Lisa Rintoul
Krista Schott
Denise Sharpe
Alisha Williams
Bonnie Zehr

Animators for Mentoring Pairs for Child Care:

Cathy O'Toole Samantha Burns

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The topics from the Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators included "business" type focuses such as Governance models, Finance, and Facilities, focuses specific to the field such as Family and Community Relationships and Child Development and Care, as well as a large section on Human Resources. In our ever changing world, a section on technology was also included.

The individual mentoring pairs would meet before the next monthly meeting to complete assignments associated with that month's topic. During these individual mentoring pair meetings or conferences, the chosen monthly topic was studied in depth using one of the given facilitation methods. This provided the pairs with a variety of methods that can be used to study and analyze topics. Case studies, critical review, external speakers and cause and effect processes were all introduced and used. All processes involved the use of check lists and reflective journals.

At the next meeting one of the mentoring pairs would present their assignment to the larger group. The presentations always became quite interactive as lively discussions were sure to be a part of the afternoon.

The second part the afternoon was spent introducing the next topic from the Occupational Standards and the same format would be followed with another pair making the presentation to the larger group at the following month's meeting.

This proven process of group learning complete with one- to-one conferencing networking and guided communications would help all participants take their supervisory skills to the next level.

By participating in this project it was hoped that supervisors would be revitalized helping them renew their commitment to their field and see the value of lifelong learning. In the end, the increased knowledge of the Supervisors led to higher quality child care centres.

As we draw near to the completion of this project.....I look back on the past 11 months. It is hard to believe that over 142 hours of professional development has occurred. But that is the technical analysis of the past year. When I look back on the time we spent together, I see one common thread and that is the strong relationships formed between all of the participants. From mentor to mentee, from pair to pair it is evident that everyone has grown not only in knowledge, but also in friendship.

It is clear that we all face the same victories, the same defeats.... the same challenges. It is clear that we all had knowledge to give, knowledge to gain, knowledge to exchange. At times it was not clear who was mentor...who was mentee.....as we all had something valuable to bring to the group. A true example of reciprocal learning.

So we find ourselves here today to share with all of you just what has been going on during the past 11 months.

MARK YOUR
CALENDARS!!!
23rd Annual EARLY
LEARNING AND CHILD
CARE CONFERENCE

Saturday April 2, 2011
Conestoga College
Doon Campus

Our high quality conference will offer some familiar things including quality workshops based on research, training and practice along with some exciting changes this year:

- No Friday night program so funds can be put towards other parts of the conference
- Opportunity to tour the Professional Resource Centre (PRC) on the Doon Campus over the lunch hour
 - A chance to have lunch with symposium speaker in small group forums
 - Goodie giveaways!

As always, our committee wants to hear your suggestions and feedback. Let us know how we are doing! This is YOUR conference!

New this Year: Mini Symposium Cost of Caring – Rebecca Brown



How the Centre Changed

By Joanne Neeb, RECE, Supervisor for OWL Child Care Services.

Twenty supervisors from a wide variety of centres in Cambridge, Conestoga, Guelph, Kitchener and Wellesley joined together in January 2010 for three or four days of intensive training. This began the year long journey of the Mentoring Pairs for Child Care program.

We began this process with eager participation and optimism ready to commit and share the learning process. Throughout our monthly meetings, a plethora of knowledge and information based on the occupational standards for administrators was gained which we were able to take back to our centres.

Relationships were formed and [or] strengthened between mentors and mentees and within the whole group that continue to grow and flourish due to the dedicated commitment of supervisors who pledge to "honour, respect and with modesty become better coaches, mentors and child care administrators".

The Mentoring Pairs for Child Care program provided the opportunity for supervisors to work with and become acquainted with other supervisors outside of their comfort zone which allowed for knowledge sharing from different perspectives. This enabled supervisors to try innovative ideas within their own centres with much success.

As supervisors were introduced to the Occupational Standards for Administrators, the knowledge gained has begun to be reflected in the day to day operations of each centre. Supervisors are now using this knowledge as a basis for sound decision making as well as introducing the Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators to front line staff. These standards are holding Registered Early Childhood Educators to a higher standard of professionalism.

Supervisors and administrators have stated that confidence levels in their abilities were refined and increased during the course of the Mentoring Pairs for Child Care program and that leadership was more effective and reflective. This increased confidence had a positive impact on relationships between supervisors and staff, supervisors and parents and supervisors and board of directors

Participating centres became more cohesive which was displayed to front line staff through monthly visits of the mentors/mentees. The Mentoring Pairs for Child Care program was very visible. An increase in collaboration and networking between participants of the Mentoring Pairs for Child Care continues to occur on a daily basis in some shape or form (e.g., email, phone, meetings etc.) This collaboration has formed a unified goal that centres are all striving to improve the quality of care for children in our communities.

Supervisors have adapted and in some cases implemented new strategies with their boards of directors for improved communication and goal setting.

Technology, although not a current occupational standard, became an important component of information sharing. Each participating centre has been impacted through increase use of technology from websites to advertising to communication with families

As supervisors and administrators have become more reflective in their personal practices, staff have also begun to reflect on theirs. Subtle changes are now occurring in the areas of pedagogy and performance.

The wealth of knowledge and experience that twenty two professionals collectively shared could not be learned from any course or book. This knowledge has either directly or indirectly filtered throughout the individual programs represented through the participants of the Mentoring Pairs for Child Care program.



The Mentor Relationship

By Krista Schott, RECE, Supervisor of Inspiring Minds Early Learning Centre

The Waterloo-Wellington odyssey continues with the mentor-mentee relationships. Before the process started, a feeling of excited anticipation, a yearning to learn and some anxiousness were felt by many. Who is this person with whom we were paired? For some, just a name on a screen and for others someone already known.

The first meeting... January 2010. Looking for the person or name of the person with whom we were to partner, hoping that we would connect, that a relationship based on honour, respect and modesty would form. There was a hope that we would live up to the expectations of being in a mentor-mentee partnership and trusting that this partnership would grow. The initial feelings of nervous excitement and being overwhelmed would grow into a sense of camaraderie, acceptance and competence. A supportive community of mentoring pairs was beginning to unfold!

From the start, the room was filled with open-honest discussions, sharing of experiences, a receptiveness for the mentor-mentee partnership and much laughter. All knew that during the group and pair meetings, the environment was confidential and safe; each mentor and mentee drawn into the discussions knowing that her input was valued.

We could never be called a 'quiet' group. From day one, when we had a spirited discussion about our most offensive and least offensive characters, our animators, Cathy and Sam, knew it would be a concern to keep us to the time frames! And as the year progressed, the reflections between mentor and mentee increased, small group conversations expanded and whole group sessions grew livelier, but somehow we would fit in everything and finish within the recommended time. Throughout the year,

personalities were seen... those who like to forge forward, those who need time to contemplate and those who need to question to fully understand before going forward. Whether mentor or mentee, each personality was accepted, come to be expected and welcomed.

As mentors and mentees, we have come to realize that our differing perspectives, vast array of knowledge and use of reflective practice binds us closer together, not only within our mentor-mentee partnerships, but as a whole Mentoring Pairs group. While at times, we felt as though we had so much to learn, we also realized that we all have so much to offer.

As we worked through the Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators, utilizing the checklists, journals and reflections, the mentor- mentee pairs gained greater personal insight and a better understanding of each other. Through the monthly pair meetings, both mentor and mentee were able to determine strengths and goals for each of the Occupation Standards with each person in the partnership able to contribute to the conversation and expand on their partner's understanding, knowledge and reflections.

With each standard, the mentoring pairs raised the bar on quality through monthly presentations that were informative, charismatic and professional as we shared our learning and helped other pairs build upon their own learning. Key informants within our group and from the wider community expanded our understanding of the Occupational Standards for which the group felt less competent and confident. Individually, each one of us does not need to be an expert in all Occupational Standards, for now, we have a community of supportive supervisors upon whom to call. When in doubt, check it out. The transfer of knowledge from one expert to another, from one centre to another and one community to another allows for an increased competence as effective, reflective leaders for all supervisors, administrators, mentors and mentees.

This realization and transfer of knowledge are the foundations for the Waterloo-Wellington Mentoring Pairs group and the keys for our continued success as we strive to grow as professionals, reflective practitioners, managers, leaders and mentors. For even though almost half the group began as

mentees, we have all become mentors - mentors for each other, within our programs and within our community. The relationships and partnerships formed over the past 11 months can only continue to strengthen early learning and care in our region. There is strength in numbers, especially when those counted within that number are committed to ongoing learning and to a mentoring approach within the early learning and child care sector.

For the Waterloo Wellington Mentoring Pairs group, the relationships will continue. As our formal sessions are coming to a close, in a way we have come full circle. The original feeling of anticipation, a desire for ongoing learning and a need for partnerships have resurfaced as we begin to determine where we go from here. As a group, we have tended to work outside the box. There is no doubt that the original mentormentee relationships, which have matured into reciprocal partnerships, will continue to have a meaningful impact on each one of us, on our roles in our centres and in our community. There is no doubt that the increased learning and confidence that has taken place will be felt within the early learning and care community for years to come.



The Impact on the Community
By: Mary Lou

Duggan, RECE, Supervisor of Woodland Park Child Care Centre

I consider myself to be a reflective practioner and as such I enjoy looking at the meaning of words. First I googled the meaning of "impact". I learned that for something to have an impact, it must have an effect upon something else. It must exert a strong influence or have a forceful consequence. Has Mentoring Pairs for Child Care done this within our community? This led me to think about what community meant.

I turned to Wikipedia to see how Community was defined. It states that a community is a group of interacting organisms sharing a populated environment. This is a

biological definition of community. Fair enough, I thought, that describes us. But then I read further and there was a definition for a human community. In human communities, intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs, and risks need to be present and common, affecting the identity of the participants and their degree of cohesiveness.

Mentoring Pairs for Child Care did bring a group of organisms who interacted with each other to various degrees together so we were a biological community. Yet were we a human community in the true sense of the definition?

I believe that participation in the Mentoring Pairs for Child Care program has helped us to develop into that true definition of a human community. When we first began this process we were a fragmented group of child care supervisors and administrators. We had a vague idea of who the others were as we had seen each other at meetings. Some of us came from multi-site organizations and so knew those people but we had rather stuck together and not gotten to know the others. We didn't really need to, we had each other. Some came from single site centres and they had reached out a little to each other. There also seemed to be a bit of a divide between the profit centres and the not-for -profit centres. We certainly weren't cohesive.

Within the first couple of days of the program a change came about. We began to get to know each other. Preconceived notions were dispelled and new relationships were being built. We were coming together.

We did have intent. We were all there to learn more about the Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators. We discovered that each of us believed in delivering the highest quality programmes to the children and families that we served to the best of our abilities.

We discovered that we had many resources available to us. The study of the standards and the sharing of experiences certainly reinforced this. We all discovered that as individuals we each had varying degrees of knowledge in each of the areas depending upon our experiences. None of us knew it all. Through research, reflection, discussion and sharing we supported and taught each otherbut let me state, there is still so much more to

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learn only now, this thought is much less daunting as we have each other to call upon.

The definition also mentions needs and risks. The field of early childhood education is evolving and that means we have to come together to discuss what new needs these changes will bring and to identify the related risks. With the implementation of full day learning, early learning and child care under the Ministry of Education, RECE's working in the school board and the formation of Family and Children Centres, we will need to support each other within our profession. A strong networking relationship will provide this support as we are faced with many new challenges.

So has Mentoring Pairs for Child Care had an impact on the Community?

I believe it has. Each participant has grown in their understanding of the Occupational Standards and this is reflected in their administrative practices further raising the quality of education and care for our children. Mentoring Pairs has led to a stronger group identity as we have come to know each other and it has led to a sense of cohesiveness within the group. At network and community meetings there has been an increase in participation from mentors and mentees as a result of increased knowledge, confidence and sense of belonging.

The participants have become stronger leaders. Leaders who are better able to see the larger picture and help shape the future. Leaders who willingly share our passion with the Early Learning and Care community using our practical intelligence based on an increased understanding of the occupational standards.

You are invited to join us for an open house at the Professional Resource Centre (PRC)

The Professional Resource Centre is hosting an open house Monday January 10, 2011 from 6:30— 8:30pm in the PRC. Everyone is



welcome to join in the fun!

We will be offering a mini workshop on setting and writing goals. Not only will we help you define your goals, we'll help you to develop a plan on how to achieve them! So come to the PRC and see what we can do to help you achieve your goals!!

Come and see first hand how the PRC can support you in your professional growth. There will even be time to experiment and play with our tools and resources.

The centre will be open to browse around, but there will also be mini demonstrations on how to set goals, the future of the PRC and the benefits of membership.

Already a member? That's great! Bring a friend or come to find out more information about the resources available, and all the exciting new features that the Professional Resource Centre will be offering soon!

Is this the year you resolve to increase your learning and Professional Development?

Make this the year you did something for YOU!

What's New in the Professional Resource Centre?

- The Napping House, large book and character plush set.
 - The mitten plush animal character set with book
- Children's rights workshop—3 new workshops designed to highlight and strengthen your teams awareness of children's rights and how we use them to guide our daily practice
- Ramps and Pathways: A constructivist approach to physics with young children (DeVries & Sales, 2011)
 - Young Investigators: the project approach in the early years (Helm &Katz, 2011)





Conestoga College ECE Apprenticeship Program

Are you currently working with young children in an ECE setting?

Do you hold an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent?

Is your employer willing to sponsor your training and professional development?

Interested in earning a

College diploma in Early Childhood Education?

Conestoga College and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities may have the solution for you!

Explore this unique ECE

Apprenticeship program--offering you the option of learning while

continuing to work!

Part-time evening classes
College level credit courses offered at a
nominal fee.
Receive an Early Childhood
Education Certificate of
Apprenticeship from the Ministry
of Training, Colleges and Universities.
Explore this alternative pathway to a
Conestoga College ECE diploma!

Ready to Register?

Ministry of Training
Colleges and Universities,
Apprenticeship Branch
519-653-5758
or drop in at MTCU
4275 King St. East, Suite200
Kitchener, ON
N2P 2E9



For more information contact Cathy O'Toole Coordinator, Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship 519-748-5220 ext 3603 cotoole@conestogac.on.ca

Register Now for the Private Home Child Care Certificate Program

Conestoga College is very

happy to be offering a Private Home Child Care Certificate program that will contribute to recognizing home childcare as a valuable profession. Courses will be offered part-time during evenings and weekends and will include both classroom and on-line delivery. Placement can be completed in your private home childcare setting and completing the program will provide advanced standing into the ECE Diploma Program.

People and Places in the Caregiving Relationship is a 30 hour course that will explore the principles of building culturally competent, non-judgmental, accepting, and honest relationships with families, home childcare providers, and local agencies in Ontario. This course will be offered on Thursday evenings at Conestoga College Doon campus.

Contemporary Issues II course will focus on specialized knowledge and skills for family child care providers. Private Home Childcare Providers will attend 13 hours of professional development opportunities. Students will work with a supervisor to achieve goals and participate in reflection about their learning

For more information please contact the Private Home Child Care Coordinator

Tricia Dumais M.A tdumais@conestogac.on.ca 519 748 5220 x8269 299 Doon Valley Drive

What's New in Childcare

Links to the news in Early Learning and Care



December 15th marked an interesting turn of events for full day kindergarten in our province. Based on the concerns and challenges identified by child care provides and the school boards regarding the implementation of the extended day program, the Government of Ontario announced intended changes to the Education Act.

For more information about these changes check out these related article:

Province to scrape key piece of



full-day kindergarten plan (Toronto Star, Dec 15, 2010) http://www.parentcentral.ca/parent/education/schoolsandresources/article/907090--province-to-scrap-key-piece-of-full-day-kindergarten-plan

Ontario Backtracks on offering one-stop daycare, kindergarten (Globe and Mail Dec 15, 2010) http://

www.theglobeandmail.com/news/ national/ontario/ontario-alterskindergarten-program-openingdoor-to-private-daycares/ article1839071/

Ontario sanctions school board hirings of existing daycare providers (The Record, Dec 16, 2010) http://www.therecord.com/living/article/301874--ontario-sanctions-school-board-hirings-of-existing-daycare-providers

Send your thoughts to the premier by logging into the link below!

https://www.premier.gov.on.ca/ feedback/feedback.asp?Lang=EN

A Message from your Local AECEO President, Cathy Barrie:



The local branch meeting for the AECEO will be held on Wednesday January 19th, at the Professional Resource Centre (located at Conestoga College in the ECE building). Not a member? That's

okay, come see what we are all about! We will be showing the key note address *What If Today Was Their Only Day?* from Lisa Murphy a.k.a The Ooey Gooey Lady®. This DVD looks at the impressions of Early Learning and Care and the effect we have on the children in our care. Come and view the video, and then stay for a guided conversation and networking opportunities with other professionals in the field. This is a free event for AECEO and PRC members. Tickets for the general public are available for \$10.00 each (payable at the door).

If you would like to connect with our branch or have any questions please leave us a voice mail by calling 519-748-5220 ext 8026





A Quality Initiative for Waterloo Region



January Update 2010

Are you an ECERS-R Trainer? Check out the newly updated ECERS-R Training kits available through the PRC or RTB. They included the PowerPoint presentation, handouts and DVD.

The RTB Network Leaders met on December 8, at the Professional Resource Centre in the ECE building at Conestoga College to discuss their current needs and future direction. At this time, the Preschool Network leader position is vacant. Please contact Debbie Jones if you are interested in leading this informal preschool network.

Look for the Umbrella Network Information Insert in the February PD Newsletter from the PRC!

For further information...Debbie Jones, Supervisor, Quality Initiatives Phone: at 519-883 2111 Ext. 5044 Email: djones@regionofwaterloo.ca



Early Literacy Skill of the

Phonological awareness or, as

we call it at the Kitchener Pub-

lic Library, I Hear Words! is all

words are made of small sounds

Here are some tips for develop-

ing phonological awareness in

Read nursery rhymes and

Read stories with repeated

Ask children to identify words that rhyme in a story

and then ask them to make

up some rhyming words of

about hearing the individual

sounds in words. Beginning

readers gradually learn that

that are put together.

poetry books

patterns

their own

children:

Month - Phonological

Awareness!

Beginning with Books

Laura Dick, Literacy Librarian and Laura Reed, Coordinator of Children's and Teen Services, Kitchener Public Library.

Play with words and the sounds that words make

- Have fun dividing words into segments and clapping out the syllables
- Songs are a great way to develop phonological awareness as each syllable in a song is represented by a different note
- Make up silly words by changing the first sound in a word
- Say words with a pause between the syllables ("car" - "rot") and have children try to guess what word you are going to use

Most children who have difficulty in reading have trouble in phonological awareness so practice this skill as much as possible with the children in your life.

Here are a few picture books to help you reinforce phonological awareness while having fun and reading a great story:

Orange, Pear, Apple, Bear by Emily Gravett

By rearranging just four words, Gravett creates a series of playful images to pique children's imaginations.

Rhyming Dust Bunnies by Jan Thomas

A group of dust bunnies rhyme all the time--well, everyone except Bob. Much to the other bunnies' frustration, Bob can never get the rhythm right.

Bears on Chairs by Shirley Parenteau

Can five bears share four chairs? The infectious rhymes and easy charm of this winsome readaloud are sure to make little ones stand up and take notice.

Drop by your local public library for more suggestions. We love rhyming books!



For more information about early literacy visit the Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region's blog site:

www.earlyliteracyalliance.blogspot.com

Children's Book - of - the Month



In Front of My House by Marianne Dubuc

This book is the first by Montreal author-illustrator Marianne Dubuc to be translated into English. It is one of my favourites of 2010. It is seemingly simple, but surprisingly complex. It plays with children's space perception. It starts and ends with a little house on a little hill, in between there is lots of room for the imagination to soar. From the belly of the big bad wolf, to the belly of a great blue whale named Babette, each page is a delightful surprise. A fantastic read-aloud, just be prepared to read it twice!

If you have any questions about books or early literacy, please send us an email.

Laura.Dick@kpl.org Laura.Reed@kpl.org

Hours for January 2011 PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE

Monday 1-9pm Tuesday 10-6pm Wednesday 1-9pm Thursday 10-6 pm Friday 10-4pm Saturday 10-2pm

Closed January 1, 2011 for New Years Day. Re-open Monday January 3, 2011.

Conestoga College
ECE Building
299 Doon Valley Drive
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4M4
519-748-5220 ext 3388

The Early Childhood Professional Resource Centre Tell a friend today!

Did you know that being a member of the Professional Resource Centre is recognized as belonging to a professional organization? Our evidence based resources combine current research and quality materials to enhance your programs, and understanding of learning. Our members receive a monthly newsletter, discounts on in-house workshops, lending privileges for our library and access to our data bank of research and early learning and care articles. Members also receive updates on current information in the ELC community and have access to our work stations and equipment (laminator, computer, binding machine etc). Join today and discover the value of belonging to a professional organization that is invested in your professional growth, our community, and the future!







