

The Professional



A Newsletter for the Early Learning and Care Professional, Creating a Bridge Between Research and Practice in the Field

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page 1: Home Toys in the Play Environment

Page 2: Being Active — Having Fun

Page 3: Beginning with Books

Page 3: KPL's Book of the Month

Page 4: What's New in Child Care

Page 4: Family Literacy Certificate Program

Page 4: Network Update

Page 5: Starting Fresh—A Focus on Calendar Time

Page 5: Resource Teacher Post-Graduate Diploma Program

Page 6: Becoming a Member of the PRC

Home Toys in the Play Environment: *Reflections From the Field*

by Bev Laking, RECE

Becoming a reflective, intentional teacher with children truly at the forefront of my practice has been a constant journey of evolving learning. Incorporating evidence based research, professional development and hands on experience over 21 years I have encountered many situations in the day-to-day events that unfold in childcare. Every month I will share insight into some of these common situations and hope that they will inspire you to reflect, discuss with your colleagues and explore some of these ideas in your practice. I hope that they will guide you in seeing the world through the perspective of a child.

"Children's self-investment in their belongings shows an attachment to their identity, and separating from something that contributes to identity is emotionally difficult."
- Carol Ann Wien

Have you ever left home and forgot something, or lost or misplaced something of importance to you? Your wallet, car keys, an important message...think how you felt in those moments. It's not much different for children: the anxiety, uncertainty, and constant thinking about them. We all put value, importance, and emotional connections on items. We need to remember that security items for children do not have to come in the form of a blanket or cuddly. We as adults have security items too that do not take the form of a blanket.

If we truly have children at the center of our practice, we need to become more connected to the importance that home has for children. We should be striving to bridge the gap between home and childcare. This is just one way to support that.

You will see the stress in both you and the children dissipate, as you are no longer setting yourself up for a power struggle with a child. Parents will also feel less stress as they no longer have to tell their child to leave a precious item behind.

You may ask yourself, "Do we allow anything to come in?" I agree not everything is appropriate. My only guidelines were that toys that had weapons and encouraged violence were not supportive of best practices

for children. Everything else is okay. Who am I to say what is of value and interest for that particular child? What my role was to be a support, encourage positive play and perhaps scaffold their learning with the item they chose to bring.

Bev Laking has worked with Conestoga College in the lab centres for over 20 years. She has taught in the ECE apprenticeship program and is currently working with students and the community as a field placement officer for the ECE department.

References

Wien, Carol Anne. (2004). From policing to participation: overturning the rules and creating amiable classrooms. *Young Children*, 59(1), 34-40.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER
26, 2011
6:30—8:30 PM

ECE BUILDING,
CONESTOGA COLLEGE



Join Brad Simpson, BSc Kin, CK, CEP (Kinesiologist, Exercise Physiologist) and Manager of the Kinesiology Department for KW Habilitation Services as he shares his latest research and newly developed assessment tool that focuses on the levels of physical activity in young children in a childcare setting. Learn how you might use this tool to support the children in your care and develop a better understanding of their physical needs. Every person attending will receive a complimentary package that includes the assessment tool and instructions on how to use it. This is an event you do not want to miss; so register today!

Supervisors, consultants or those working with young children are welcome.

Brought to you in collaboration from the Child Care Special Needs Resourcing Partnership and the Professional Resource Centre.

To register for this event please contact the Professional Resource Centre at 519-748-5220 ext 3388 preregistration@conestogac.on.ca

Sponsored by



Being Active—Having Fun!

By Brad Simpson, Hon BSc Kin, CK, CEP,
Kinesiologist, Exercise Physiologist, Manager of KWHS Kinesiology Dept.

In light of the research surrounding the importance of physical activity in children, the Child Care Special Needs Resourcing Partnership of Waterloo County elected the KW Habilitation Services Kinesiology Department to research and offer support to licensed day care centres in the region. This led to the development of a tool designed to help identify children at risk for being inactive. In May of 2011, Brad Simpson introduced practitioners in the field of early learning to the WatPALA assessment tool through a well received workshop held at the Professional Resource Centre.

First of all, I would like to thank all the wonderful people who attended our first evening on how to use WatPALA. WatPALA is a new tool that enables a child care centre to discover children who are not active enough to meet the standards that have been established for certain age groups. Various strategies can be used to enable children to be more active and to establish a lifestyle that meets or exceeds the suggested level of activity. Establishing an active lifestyle has many health benefits that last a lifetime. I am available for consultation if you need assistance in this area.

For those who already have the tool, we did have a bit of a late start to the summer and once it hit, there were some very hot days where it was not easy to be active. Hopefully you found some time to try WatPALA out and get use to how it works. I did send out an e-mail to everyone from the first evening and am interested in how it worked for you and what kind of results you got. Once you have had the opportunity to try it, I would appreciate an e-mail with your comments and findings. If you were not able to attend our first night, we have a second night planned for September 26th (see left-hand column for details).

As I study the research that is being produced, it is interesting to see how people across the world are awakening to the impact that inactivity has on health and quality of life. As researchers look at the issue, it is becoming more evident that it is paramount to establish a healthy, active lifestyle when the children are very young. Researchers support the idea that child care centres are a logical place to teach the children to choose activity rather than inactivity, and are encouraging them to be proactive in this area. Several studies have demonstrated that activity levels of children were closely associated with the philosophy of physical activity of the child care centre they were attending along with the amount of time spent outdoors. A diversity of outdoor

environments is also another factor that encourages physical activity and should be a consideration when constructing or renovating a playground. Through the Child Care Special Needs Resourcing Partnership, Waterloo Region is being proactive in establishing active lifestyles with the children we serve. It is thrilling to be involved in a region that is one of the first to take such a firm stance on the issue. Our children will certainly benefit.

If you are in the stage of planning a new playground or renovating your current one, an important concept to consider is the affordance of the environment. Affordance is defined as the perception of the environment that supports the individual's actions. For example, a ladder affords climbing and a trampoline affords jumping. This of course is true if you are able to do those actions. If you are an infant and can only roll over, a ladder and a trampoline do not afford you the same qualities. As you select fixed or movable equipment, consider the affordance of that equipment for the children who will be using it. Some equipment, such as a ball, will afford a variety of opportunities, where other equipment, such as a small slide affords more limited opportunities. As you choose, think about how a child would perceive the equipment you are considering. Even better, ask them what they think and involve them in the process of selecting equipment that promotes activity. You might be surprised as to what you end up purchasing. Through preliminary studies, it has become evident that moderate to vigorous activity levels take place on playgrounds with open space, circular tracks for tricycles, and with playground climbers that offer the appropriate challenges. If you are construction or renovating a play area, consider this information when planning.

As I have travelled around our region, I see wonderful things happening to encourage activity. I have had lots of great conversations with people who are excited to see children being active. Keep up the great work and may you have a safe and active fall!



Beginning with Books

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

Back to School, Back to Books

From old standards to brand new favourites, back to school books are always welcome in your library at this time of year. Here are a few that we particularly enjoy.

First Day of School by Anne Rockwell (2011)

A gentle picture book by the prolific Anne Rockwell. The kids in Mrs. Madoff's class are preparing for a brand new school year. What will school be like this year?

Llama Llama Misses Mama by Anna Dewdney (2009)

Llama Llama is starting pre-school and he's worried about missing his Mama. After a busy day at school for Llama Llama, Mama reappears and little Llama realizes he can love both Mama and school.

Dinosaur Starts School by Pamela Duncan Edwards (2008)

Dinosaur, a stegosaurus, is worried that school will be too big and too noisy with yucky food at lunchtime. The little boy reassures him and soothes away all his imaginary friend's fears. A good choice for children who may be apprehensive about starting school.

How do Dinosaurs Go to School? by Jane Yolen (2007)

With easy rhyme and rhythm this back to school story will charm dinosaur lovers and other. For non-dinosaur experts, all 10 dinosaurs are identified in the end papers.

David Goes to School by David Shannon (1999)

David has a hard time following the rules at school – no running, no cutting in line, no talking out loud during class, no swinging his paint brush around. His teacher spends most of the day admonishing him, until David finally does something right and receives a gold star.

Froggy Goes to School by Jonathan London (1996)

Froggy's mother knows it's okay to be nervous before your first day of school but Froggy insists that he isn't nervous at all. Full of opportunities for participation, this title will be a sure hit with preschoolers.

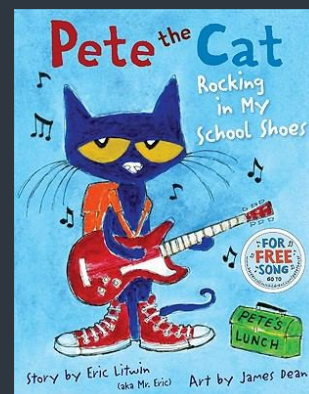
Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes (1991)

Chrysanthemum thinks her name is perfect until the first day of school when all her friends start to tease her. Mrs. Delphinium Tinkle, her new music teacher, comes to her rescue when she announces that she plans to name her new baby Chrysanthemum too!

Visit your local library for lots more great back to school choices. We will help you get the kids ready for their new adventures.



Children's Book - of - the Month

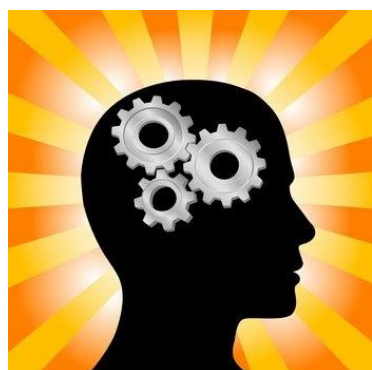


Pete the Cat, Rocking in My School Shoes
by Eric Litwin; illustrated by James Dean

We love Pete the Cat. We first met him when he was wearing his white shoes, and stepping in piles of ... well, you should read the book. The great thing about Pete is that he just keeps smiling, and he lives by the motto "it's all good." Now, Pete the Cat is back, this time getting ready for school. No matter where Pete goes, he never stops moving and grooving and singing his song. For cool cats everywhere.

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

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



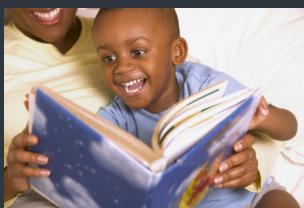
Save The Date!

Fall Symposium for Early Learning and Care
Saturday November 19, 2011
Conestoga College

"Shifting Ideas, Shifting Practices"

A focus on the changing landscape of Early Learning and Care

Scholastic is Back!



Home Child Care Providers, Members, Students and Community members can now order Scholastic through the Professional Resource Centre. You can pick up your Scholastic flyers at the PRC, or check out [Scholastic on-line](#)

Please drop off your order to the PRC during our regular scheduled hours of operation by the 15th of each month. We will call you when your order has arrived! Purchases over \$100 will receive a free children's book with their order.

We can only accept cheques made payable to Scholastic Canada Ltd. Please ensure that you follow Ontario pricing in the flyers.

Scholastic Canada supports hundreds of schools, and literacy programs across the Country.

SCHOLASTIC

READ
Every Day

Lead a Better
LIFE

What's New in Childcare

Links to the News in Early Learning and Care



A report by Mussio Associates and the British Columbia Ministry of Education has identified the correlation between [kindergarten grouping and student achievement](#). The studies presented in this report indicate there are negative, long-term effects caused by the practice of organizing kindergarten children into one-year age groups by birth date.

The Best Start Resource Centre has released a new online tool. The [On Track Guide](#) is an online reference guide for early learning and child care practitioners working with children ages 0 - 6. The guide is designed to support healthy development, provide possible indicators of risk, and highlights strategies for supporting children and their families.

As the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division in Alberta enters its fifth year of [full-day kindergarten](#), statistics gathered from the last four years have shown consistent progress with kindergarten students every year.

A longitudinal study conducted by researchers at the University of British Columbia and the Child & Family Research Institute has shown that [parental stress](#) can leave an impression on children's genes during the early years of development. This effect has been found to last well into adolescence, and findings suggest that it may also affect how these genes are expressed later on in life.

The Professional Resource Centre's website has a new look! We are continuing to grow our services, and have now included a Networking section, as well as direct links to all the PD events in our Region. Visit [www.eceprc.ca](#) and see how we are growing. We welcome feedback, so please share your ideas with us! Contact the [PRC team](#) anytime.



Raising the Bar
Early Childhood Education
An ASCY Community Initiative



Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES
Children's Services

**A Quality Initiative
for Waterloo Region**



For Further Information: Debbie Jones, Supervisor, Quality Initiatives
Phone: 519-883 2111 x. 5044—**Email:** djones@regionofwaterloo.ca

PRC Professional Networks

Currently the Networks are looking for strong individuals who are passionate about their work. We are seeking outgoing professionals with exceptional communication skills who are willing to step into the role as a facilitator for our networking groups. Currently we are looking for leaders to volunteer their time for the Emergent Network, the Nursery School Network and the Full-Day Kindergarten Network. If you are interested please contact the PRC for more information about our networks.

Upcoming event dates:

- Home Childcare Network Mon. Sept. 19, 2011 @ PRC
- FDK Network Mon. Oct. 3, 2011 @PRC
- Preschool Network Tues. Oct. 4, 2011 @ Butterfly Learning Centre
- Infant/Toddler Network Wed. Oct 5, 2011 @ PRC



A Message from your Local AECEO President, Cathy Barrie:



Join Cathy Barrie and the executive team of the Waterloo-Wellington Branch of the AECEO as they host their next branch meeting on

Wednesday, September 21, 2011 from 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Afterwards stay for our popular popcorn series session—based on the video workshop series by Lisa Murphy, facilitated by Cathy Barrie!

Together we will view the video *The Importance of Early Experiences: Strengthening the Foundation that Supports the House of Higher Learning* - a workshop designed to reinforce the importance of hands-on, play-based learning in the early years that focuses on how play prepares children for school and fosters natural cognitive development. We will take a closer look at seven key elements that support play as a foundation to life long learning, and higher thinking. Afterwards we will discuss the learning environments from which we practice, how we support play as professionals in the field of early learning and care, and the consequences of not making time for authentic play to happen. Discover what everyone is talking about and join the discussion when we come together to share, laugh and rediscover the power of PLAY!

Starting Fresh: A Focus on Calendar Time

by Amber Holmes, RECE, Professional Resource Centre Staff, Conestoga College

Spring is often said to be a time of renewal, but for educators, the fall is a great time to start fresh. Change is in the air in the field of early learning and care, and professionals all over the region are rethinking old concepts and developing new ideas for their classrooms.

It's a common event in preschool and elementary school classrooms everywhere; children sit in front of the calendar to learn time concepts such as the days of the week and the months of the year (among other math concepts). The biggest problem with "calendar time" is the tendency to expect young children to pick up on these time (temporal) concepts through daily repetition. Jean Piaget identified how preschool children are developmentally incapable of understanding time the way adults do. Adults can distinguish between three types of numbers – nominal, ordinal and interval. Piaget found that children develop their understanding of number concepts along the same line. Children's first understanding of numbers begins with nominal numbers; those that have no numerical value, such as the number on the back on a sports jersey. This understanding is acquired around 2 or 3 years of age. Between the ages of 3 or 4, children develop an understanding of ordinal numbers, which are used to establish the order or rank of someone or something (Rashimi is 1st in line, then Brandon is 2nd, etc.) The last type is interval scales; real numbers that reflect units (I have two cupcakes, there are 60 minutes in one hour). Understanding interval numbers is critical to a child's ability to comprehend time, and is also the foundation for learning simple arithmetic concepts. The ability to perceive interval numbers typically does not begin to emerge until the ages of 7-11 years (Ethridge & King, 2005). This means that children are often forced to endure daily attempts to learn these concepts for years before they are even capable of understanding them!

Another issue with young children's understanding of time is their inability to separate temporal and spatial concepts. In fact, research has shown that children have a tendency to measure the passage of time using physical distance (Casasanto, Fotakopoulou, & Boroditsky, 2010). It is easy for young children to grasp the concept of physical space with no consideration for time, yet they cannot contemplate time without the element of space. When three-year-old Macy described her impending trip to Myrtle Beach, she was asked "When are you going?" and her systematic response was "Tomorrow!" Explaining to Macy

that she was going in March, not tomorrow, was futile. Notions such as "yesterday", "today" and "tomorrow" are often too broad a concept for children this young. Showing her the calendar for March may seem like a step closer to comprehension, but for Macy, March may as well be years away.

That is not to say that calendars have no place in early education classrooms, but how the calendar is "taught" and our expectations of the child is something to think about. Many teachers treasure "calendar time" as being one area they can actively teach in, and they see this as an opportunity to show the parents that the children really are learning something. See, we don't just play all day long! After all, a basic understanding of time is something parents come to expect from their children. But there are many ways to teach the underlying concepts behind calendar time without the tediousness that goes into instructional rote memorization of the calendar. You can teach sequencing by using picture schedules, which allow the children to see the sequences of the day. This supports the child's innate tendency to connect space with time. If the children are counting down the days to an event or learning concepts like before and after, you can facilitate an understanding of days as units of time by using linear representations. An example would be moving links from a paper chain, or adding a daily photo to the wall (Beneke, Ostrosky, & Katz, 2008). Again, these ideas are easier for a child to grasp if you are tying the temporal concept to a physical tangible.

There are so many alternatives to the traditional way to teach time concepts; through play you can look to nature and the weather to show the passage of time, through documentation of classroom events you can provoke natural conversations and take the opportunity to introduce time-related vocabulary. Learning about time doesn't have to be tedious and time-consuming for children, it can be as fun and naturalistic as the rest of their daily curriculum.

References:

- Beneke, Sallee J., Ostrosky, Michaelene M., Katz, Lilian G. (2008) Calendar time for young children: Good intentions gone awry. *Young Children*, May, 12-16
- Casasanto, D., Fotakopoulou, O., Boroditsky, L. (2010). Space and time in the child's mind: Evidence for a cross-dimensional asymmetry. *Cognitive Science*, 2010; 34 (3): 387 DOI: 10.1111/j.1551-6709.2010.01094.x
- Ethridge, E.A., & King, J.R. (2005). Calendar math in preschool and primary classrooms: Questioning the curriculum. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 32 (5), 291-296.

BEGINNING FALL OF 2011

THROUGH PART TIME
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Build on your previous experience in working with children and families while strengthening your knowledge of supporting children with special needs.

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- Advocate for children with special needs and their families.

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Diploma or Equivalent, plus work experience with children.

For more information on this course [click here](#) or visit www.conestogac.on.ca under Continuing Education/ Current Offerings If you have any questions please contact :

Brenda VanBeers
(519) 748-5220 ext. 3765
bvanbeers@conestogac.on.ca



CONESTOGA
Connect Life and Learning

Hours for September 2011



PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE

Hours of Operation

Monday 1-9pm

Tuesday 10-6pm

Wednesday 1-9pm

Thursday 10-6 pm

Friday 10-4pm

Closed Monday September 5, 2011 for the holiday.

Conestoga College

ECE Building

299 Doon Valley Drive

Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4M4

519-748-5220 x. 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!



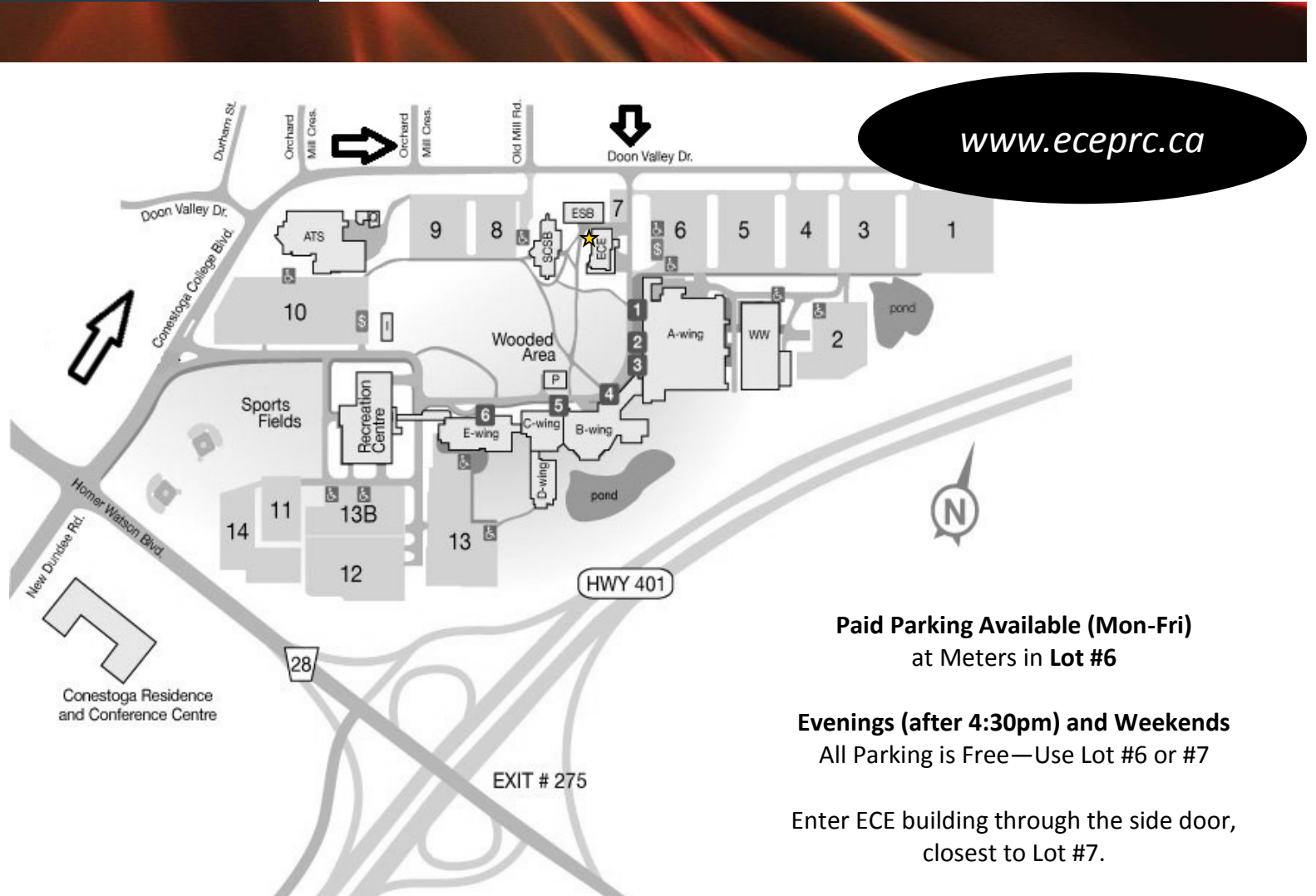
Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES
Children's Services



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