

Spring 2015

## Child Care Connections

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*Step into new beginnings.....*

### *An evening with the College of ECE*

On March 31, 55 RECEs from early learning and care environments, FDK, family support programs and special needs resourcing gathered to learn more about the College of ECE model for continuous professional learning. Melanie Dixon, Director of Professional Practice at the College, began by drawing attention to all the resources available on the College website such as case studies. The 52,000 registered ECEs in Ontario make the profession one of the largest regulated professions in the province. She reminded educators to use the protected professional title of RECE in all professionally related communication. Melanie described the role of the council and encouraged people to participate in the election. The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice distinguishes us from other professions, describing the roots of our work and is something we can refer back to guide our practice. The Continuous Professional Learning model provides a framework for us to fulfill our professional obligation by engaging in life-long learning.

For more information please see... <https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Members/Pages/CPL-Program.aspx>

*“Continuous professional learning is the systematic and intentional maintenance, enhancement and expansion of the knowledge, skills and ethical values and behaviours necessary to ensure ongoing quality professional practice throughout a member’s career.”* CPL Portfolio Handbook



***Learning is the best of all wealth; it is easy to carry, thieves cannot steal it, and tyrants cannot seize it; neither fire nor water can destroy it; and far from decreasing, it increases by giving.***

*The Naladiyar*

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Investing In Quality   
Early Learning and Child Care Peterborough

## *Reflections on Curiosity and a Book.....*

Judy Perron is an experienced RECE who is very excited about the book - *Curious, The Desire to Know and Why Your Future Depends On It* by Ian Leslie.

**How did you first learn about the book?** I had just been involved in some professional learning around *How Does Learning Happen?* and the word 'curious' was on my mind. Shortly after that I happened to be reading the book review section in a news magazine and the title of the book 'Curious' jumped out at me.

**What was the first thing that struck you when began reading the book?** Ian Leslie wrote this book after he became a father and became fascinated with how babies learn in the first few years of life. He identifies 3 kinds of curiosity:

**Diversive:** which describes human attraction to things that are novel

**Empathetic:** curiosity which is an interest in the thoughts and feelings of others

**Epistemical:** which is the quest for knowledge and the deepest form of curiosity

He also describes stages of curiosity. The first is about exploration and understanding dangers. Then come questions... first what and where questions and then how and why questions. Parents and educators play very important roles in fostering children's curiosity.

**Do you see similarities between children's curiosity and adult curiosity?** If I am not curious then how can I support that in others? It's about engaging to reach the next level. As an educator who has worked in the sector for a long time, I find myself re-educating myself and learning new ways to approach my work. The author describes 7 ways to stay curious. I could relate to his retelling of the story of a hedgehog and a fox. The hedgehog only knows one way to defend itself and that is to roll up into a ball. The fox, however, knows a number of ways to defend itself. In other words, the hedgehog knows one way well, while the fox knows many different ways. Leslie believes that today to be successful we need to be a hybrid of both animals, in other words, 'foxhogs' knowing some things really well, but also to be open to learning other ways of doing things.

## *Martha Friendly Speaks in Peterborough*

On March 10 Martha Friendly, founder and executive director of the **Childcare Resource and Research Unit** (CRRU - [www.childcarecanada.org](http://www.childcarecanada.org)), and Canada's leading child care advocate, presented the Margaret Laurence lecture at Trent University. The topic of her lecture was 'Child care shouldn't be just a matter of luck'. Martha briefly traced the history of child care in Canada, explaining the reasons why Canada has never had a national child care program. Securing quality, affordable child care has always been a struggle and it is common to hear families describe themselves as 'lucky' should they happen to find good care. Martha ended her lecture by presenting a vision for Early Learning and Care across Canada in a video prepared for a recently held national research conference. Martha reported that she is thrilled that all three major political parties are discussing child care in the lead up to the federal election. She challenged the audience to take the vision forward throughout the campaigns.

The next morning Moira Vance, Executive Director of Trent Child Care, toured Martha through the campus program, followed by a breakfast meeting with Martha where a group of local child care professionals continued the discussion of the topics raised in Martha's lecture.



**Just a reminder that there is a local CCAN (Child Care Action Network). Members will be planning, implementing and publicizing strategies to ensure that child care remains visible throughout the election campaign.**

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## Professional Learning Highlights

### ECERS-R

An introduction to the ECERS-R rating system for use in child care settings.

*Thursdays: April 23 and May 14*

6:30 - 8:30

IIQ office / 550 Braidwood

### Introduction to Portfolios

An introduction into developing a professional portfolio.

*Monday, May 4*

7:00 — 8:30

IIQ office / 550 Braidwood Ave

### Exploring Materials

A three part series to explore and learn about materials and offering them to children in our programs.

*Tuesdays: May 5, May 26 and June 16*

6:30—8:30

IIQ office / 550 Braidwood

### Teacher Talk C

Fostering peer interaction in early childhood settings.  
(Must have taken Teacher Talk A)

*Thursdays May 28 and June 4*

6:00 - 9:00

Location: Five Counties Children’s Centre

## Focus on Nutrition

**N**utrition is important for all of us and we are fortunate to be supported by the nutritionists with our local Health Unit. Since March was Nutrition month, here is a big thank you to all of the dietary staff in programs who play a key role in the day to day life of early learning and care programs and the well-being of children, families and staff. Some programs also participated in ‘The Great Big Crunch’ celebrating local foods and healthy eating.

**Food Security:** Although we may not know it, there may be families in our programs who have difficulty obtaining enough healthy food for their families. Here are some links to resources available in our community. Here is the link to the Food For All (Health Unit resource) and some other sites that discuss food programs in the community including free meals. This 2 page poster could be displayed in the program or copies could be made available for all families.

**Food for All:** <http://www.foodinpeterborough.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/2014-11-18-Food-For-All-2nd-Nov.pdf>

**Free meals calendar:** [http://www.peterborough.ca/Living/City\\_Services/Social\\_Services/Food\\_Calendar.htm](http://www.peterborough.ca/Living/City_Services/Social_Services/Food_Calendar.htm)

**Food in Peterborough:** <http://www.foodinpeterborough.ca/need-food/>

**Resources:** In the [IIQ resource library](#) we have several cookbooks including a couple of new books: **Hold the Salt!** and **Hold the Hidden Salt!** by Maureen Tilly. These books are available for borrowing by anyone working in an early learning program.

**Finally,** here is a link to our [website](#) with a menu planned by Pam Putnins, one of the members of the Cooks’ Network including the daily quantities of servings for dairy, vegetables and fruit, grains and meats and alternatives. This has proven very useful for families when they are planning their meals at home. Many thanks to Pam for sharing this!

For information on professional learning events, contact Katherine Orgill :

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## *Spotlight on a Program - Strath-Maclean*

Strath-MacLean Child Care opened its doors in 1992, and has grown to include a staff of twenty with a licensed capacity of 131 spaces. Currently there are 171 children enrolled. Child care services include: toddler room, pre-school, nursery school program, 2 Before school care and 4 After school care groups, and 2 summer camp programs.

Two years ago, educators at Strath-MacLean began a reflective journey to review how children learn and how we see their development with a new 'lens'. It began with earnest conversations about the organization's philosophy of care, the impact of environments, and how educators create and document children's interests and learning. They undertook a book study of 'The Unscripted Classroom' by Susan Stacey, and discussed the flow of emergent curriculum. The Centre is continuing that journey and is fully engaged with this curriculum. Currently, the Strath-MacLean team is reviewing all the new Ministry documents that support children's learning (How Does Learning Happen?; Think, Feel, Act) as well as the College of Early Childhood Education Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, and embracing them in the program's philosophy.

With fewer nursery schools within the region, the Nursery School at Strath is actively attended, demonstrating that it is still an important option for many families. This year, the program is in a new classroom conveniently located close to the child care centre. It is a large bright room that is also used for FDK before and after school care.

Classrooms in schools can be wonderful, large spaces; however, they can also be too large and distracting for children. Using a combination of DECA and ECERS environmental assessments, the educators engaged in making environments more intimate and purposeful, which resulted in more focused play.

Strath-MacLean has 100 afterschool spaces. 40 of these spaces are FDK extended care. More programs have resulted in the child care centre moving into the James Strath Public School space. Supporting a vision of the seamless day for children and families and building these relationships with school partners requires ongoing and open communication and shared values.

With a shift to emergent curriculum, Strath-MacLean is evolving. More care and thought is going into room colours, more natural furniture, and a considerable change in the learning materials being used. They are currently learning how to use 'loose parts', and the extraordinary impact on children's creative thinking.

## *A cold morning in February.....*

During a visit in February, the Preschool room was investigating their thoughts on 'risk taking'. Prior to the visit, the educators and children had many discussions and experiences on what risk taking is and how it impacts children's learning and self-regulation. On the day of the visit, the Preschool room had been transformed into an obstacle course. For more than half an hour, 6 or 7 children jumped, balanced, negotiated and worked together using only materials that were available. The children followed each other in a circuit on mats, chairs, stools and shelves. One part was a row of alternating chairs for the children to cross. As they came to the last chair, some chose to step down while others took great delight in jumping off to land on the ground.

After some important observation time, one of the educators offered an idea for the children to discuss. Enthusiasm ensued when given an opportunity to organize bigger challenges. The obstacle course was changed as new obstacles (with bigger risks) were added. The low shelf in the middle of the room was cleared, the mats/stepping stools were shifted and climbing over the shelf became part of the action. With active supervision and guidance, the children displayed confidence in their risk taking. Most were able to scramble up and over quite easily.

At one point, a child decided to try standing, and with the guidance of the educator, was able to stand and jump to the carpet below. Others followed her lead. After some time, another child cautiously stood for the first time. When asked if he was going to do it himself, he reached out for the educator's hand, readying to jump. Pausing, and paying attention to his own sense of readiness, he sat back down and chose to slide off the shelf. He will be ready to try jumping another day.

It was a powerful example of educators seeing children as capable and full of potential and providing an environment that supported them. The children were able to challenge themselves physically and they were also able to strengthen their knowledge of themselves.

