

ECE Affinity Group: Something to Share



Enclosed you will find a series of ideas, approaches and resource links for those delivering early childhood education. The information was gathered at the 4th Annual ECE Affinity Group forum, held in Edmonton from November 19-21, 2009. Forum participants were given the opportunity to share best practices with colleagues from across the country during the Something to Share part of the program.

About the ECE Affinity Group

Since it was established in 2005, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Affinity Group has been bringing together faculty of Canada's ECE post-secondary education community to:

- stimulate dialogue, learning and interchange that informs Affinity Group members;
- promote linkages and sharing of resources (curriculum, delivery formats, resources) between and amongst institutions;
- engage participants in ongoing professional development and lifelong learning opportunities;
- advance and advocate for excellence in early childhood education and training that, in turn, promotes high quality early learning and care services for Canada's children and families; and
- collaborate with the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council and other national organizations.

The main activity for the ECE Affinity Group has been the Annual Forum, which was first held in Winnipeg in 2006, followed by Toronto in 2007; Montreal in 2008; Edmonton in 2009; and finally, the upcoming 2010 Forum being held in Vancouver from November 4-6, 2010.

Coordinating Committee

- Gyda Chud – Vancouver Community College
- Jane Hewes – Grant MacEwan University
- Janet Jamieson – Red River College
- Karen Chandler – George Brown College
- Suzane Cormier – Cégep@distance
- Joanne Morris – College of the North Atlantic
- Association of Canadian Community Colleges – Gail Mulhall
- Child Care Human Resources Sector Council – Diana Carter
- Canadian Child Care Federation – Robin McMillan

The ECE Affinity Group is a joint initiative of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

For more information or to join, visit:
www.accc.ca/networking

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Participant: Annette Skavinsky

Organization: Assiniboine Community College, Manitoba

Key Concept/Idea:

Assignment: Workplace Hazard Mapping

Course: Health, Nutrition, & Safety 1 – Distance Ed.

After viewing the DVD, “A Guide to Workplace Health, Safety, and Wellness”¹ and reading content in the text about workplace health and safety hazards related to early childhood settings, students draw a floor plan of the centre they work at or a centre they have visited. They assess the environment and determine which types of hazards are present based on 5 different hazard categories. Each category is colour coded and students are asked to place coloured dots on their floor plan, which includes a legend outlining the hazard that each dot represents. Following the assessment they are asked to select one hazard from each category on their legend and list the potential injury or illness that might occur, followed by a recommendation to resolve or reduce the hazard.

Based on Bloom’s Taxonomy² this assignment addresses the higher order thinking levels of application, analysis, and evaluation.

Success Highlights:

The assignment helps students learn ways to reduce injury and absenteeism while on practicum or in their workplace if they are already employed. Student feedback from this assignment: “practical”, “enjoyed the hands on approach”, “allowed me to evaluate my workplace and recognize hazards that I hadn’t previously paid attention to”, “made me really think about ways to remedy the health and safety hazards so I have a safer work place”.

Where can I find more information? To purchase the \$25.00 DVD go to www.daynurserycentre.ca and click on the “Wellness” tab. To request a copy of the assignment, email Annette Skavinsky at skavinsa@assiniboine.net.

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Participant: Ann Gedrose

Organization: Yukon College, Yukon

Key Concept/Idea:

Yukon College is offering a new Education Assistant Certificate Program. In addition to some newly developed courses, the program includes courses from the Early Childhood Development Program, the Community Support Worker Program, and the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program.

Success Highlights:

Program Overview

The Educational Assistant Certificate program (EACP) is designed to integrate theory and practice associated with providing support to individuals with exceptionalities in the public school system. The program is based on the guiding principle that all human service paraprofessionals need training that ensures the acquisition of knowledge, the competent use of required skills, and the value of caring and respecting individuals leading to the realization of individual potential and inclusion.

Instruction Format

A substantive portion of this program will be available using Yukon College’s Distributed Learning systems and supported by the Department of Education’s own distance learning systems. Coursework is largely based on experiential as well as reflective learning strategies. These include group work, discussion, practicum experiences, reflective journaling, and portfolio development.

Where can I find more information?

www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/programs/info/EACP/

¹ “A Guide to Workplace Health, Safety and Wellness,” Day Nursery Centre. www.daynurserycentre.ca/wellness.html

² A classification of the different objectives that educators set for students (learning objectives). www.wikipedia.org

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Participant: Hope Moffatt

Organization: Keyano College, Alberta

Key Concept/Idea:

One of the ways our department has been recruiting students for our Early Learning & Child Care program while building links with local high schools, is through teaching two courses in Day Care for students in Grade 11 or 12, offered through Alberta Children & Youth Services. Students who complete the high school Day Care course get work experience credits, CTS credits, and can apply for a Child Care Assistant (level 1)³ certification from Day Care Staff Qualifications. This gives them the bare minimum necessary to work in child care centres and school-age care programs. It also qualifies students for a \$2,500 scholarship when they enroll full-time in an ELCC program.

Success Highlights:

Through this initiative, we were able to make new links with high school counsellors and high school students – which was mutually beneficial. We piloted a course in Winter 2009 and are offering it again in 2010. In our first year, we hoped for 10 students to enroll in the course – 20 joined (from both grade 11 and 12) and 19 graduated. While their friends were hanging out, the students came on their Friday afternoons from February 1st until early June! In addition, they did 1 1/2 hours per week of field placements. Five went on to enroll in our Keyano College ELCC program for the 2009/2010 college year. These students have been some of our best ambassadors in terms of what they've learned and the joys of working with young children. Not only are they telling their friends about the rewards of choosing child care as a career, but they have also been educating their high school counsellors about our program. It's a win-win!

Where can I find more information? Contact the Chair of Childhood Studies, Sherry Duncan, Sherry.Duncan@keyano.ca

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Participant: Karen Troughton

Organization: Red River College, Manitoba

Key Concept/Idea:

“Guide a Variety of Challenging Behaviours” assignment preparation for completing a Functional Assessment – a collection of methods for obtaining information about a child’s challenging behaviour and then creates strategies that will improve that behaviour.

Success Highlights:

Before I start teaching this course I hand out 5 index cards to each student and a coloured paper clip. Each student is asked to think about a child in their centre who’s behaviour is challenging for the staff, and to keep that child in mind for documentation. After I teach each objective, I ask each student to think of that specific child and to jot down any thoughts/ideas that would relate to the current topic and that child’s behaviour. At the end of the day (these students are in the class from 9am-4pm) the students have a number of points about that specific child that will help them prepare for the assignment. After four days of classes they have substantial amount of information about the child they are documenting.

Where can I find more information?

Contact ktroughton@rrc.mb.ca

³ Training Standards and Requirements, Government of Alberta www.child.gov.ab.ca/home/746.cfm

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Participant: Pam Gudmundson
Organization: Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement⁴/Jasper Place Child and Family Resource Society, Alberta

Key Concept/Idea:

Two Program Coordinators (one for the Infant/Toddler room and one for the Preschool/ Kindergarten room) are translating their knowledge base and long-term experience to new and existing staff in the child care rooms through direct role modeling approximately 3 hours per day. The staff has 1 hour per week to work on their goals, planning, programming, documentation, and familiarization with the centre's policies and practices. They also have 1 hour per week where the room meets as a team (called planning time) so they can work on planning and events. We also have a 'team meeting' where staff from all four rooms for the different age groupings at the centre meet with their Coordinator in the evening for 2 hours every other month to discuss goals/activities for each age group based on our guiding principles, accreditation/QEP standards, and best practices.

Success Highlights:

Enhanced ratios and inclusive programming.

Where can I find more information? Contact pammyg@shaw.ca

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Participant: Janet Jamieson
Organization: Red River College, Manitoba

Key Concept/Idea:

The ECE Workplace Diploma Program⁵ is being streamed to regional campuses to increase access to ECE training for rural students. Students are all experienced childcare workers who attend classes two days a week and work in their centres 3 days a week. Classes in Winnipeg meet in the college TV studio and stream in real time. The process is very interactive.

Success Highlights:

ECE instructors have done a great job of making the classes engaging and creating a sense of community among the four sites. There has been virtually no attrition and we are now in the 2nd final year with 25 rural and 25 Winnipeg students expected to graduate with ECE Diplomas in June 2010.

Where can I find more information? Kim Hanna, Program Coordinator. khanna@rrc.mb.ca

⁴ ARCQE is an agency dedicated to providing technical assistance to the Early Learning and Care Service sector through provision of supporting quality and building capacity to those it serves, www.arcqe.ca

⁵ <http://me.rrc.mb.ca/catalogue/ProgramInfo.aspx?ProgCode=EARWF-DP&RegionCode=PC>

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Participant: Debbie Phythian

**Organization: Assiniboine Community College,
Manitoba**

Key Concept/Idea:

For my Child Development course, I use “My Virtual Child”⁶ which is an interactive web-based simulation as a resource that allows students to raise a child from birth to age 18 and monitor the effects of their parenting decisions over time. Students get access to this program with the purchase of their textbook “Development Through the Lifespan” by Laura Berk.⁷ As students raise their child on-line, they are periodically asked sets of questions where they must apply the key concepts that they are learning in class.

Success Highlights:

Students love this activity because it is interactive and on-line. When they answer the questions I can see that they are applying the concepts learned in class directly to their “child” and therefore I see a much higher level of reflection in their answers than I would in a test situation.

Where can I find more information? For a brief 3-minute walkthrough video, you can visit their YouTube site: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyC2vL_Wt8U

⁶ My Virtual Child, www.vchild.pearsoncmg.com

⁷ Berk, Laura E. (2009). *Development Through the Lifespan, 5th Edition*. Allyn & Bacon.

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Participant: Cathy Coulthard, Debbie Bright, Leslie Corbet, and Kathy Bailey
Organization: Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Ontario

Key Concept/Idea:

Fully Equipped Curriculum Labs at both campuses.

The “mobile” side of each room utilizes learning management technology as a course delivery method. Each student and the professor have the use of a laptop within these environments; enriching the learning opportunities as they access the latest research and educational trends through internet exploration, as well as employ specifically designed software for observing and recording children’s development and behaviours. The “mobile” computer learning encourages collaborative, team-based learning within the classroom while offering the student the chance to develop technical skills needed for our competitive and increasingly technology-driven world. The bonus of this delivery method is that the curriculum is available to the student 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The curriculum side of the room has all new equipment that you would typically hope to find in any quality early childhood setting. To share a few, sensory equipment, water table and props, sand table and props, manipulative toys, blocks, dramatic play materials, musical instruments, and children’s books, too many to list! All the equipment is open-ended and encourages all areas of Active Learning. The rooms were specifically designed with aesthetics in mind. They were designed as an environment that encourages and fosters early learning based on current research including the decisions surrounding the colour on the walls, the natural furniture, the colour of the blinds, the flooring and the attention to detail that “brings the outdoors in”.

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Success Highlights:

Our completely equipped ECE curriculum rooms were designed to accommodate the diverse learning that is required to fully understand the practicalities of the importance of play in a young child’s life—our students need to experience the environments and experiences hands-on to be able to transfer the theoretical knowledge and untested skills to working with children in a developmentally appropriate way. The programs practicum experiences in the early childhood community definitely provide valuable learning opportunities for our students to practice their theoretical knowledge, but there is an element missing if we cannot help them practice this knowledge and skills in a controlled and accepting environment prior to, and during their placements. The students can try things out, demonstrate, retry experiences, and test their abilities and experiences in a safe environment that encourages diversity of thought and ideas before, and while they come face to face with the community experiences. Children from the on-site child cares are invited into the curriculum rooms, further allowing our students the opportunity to test out their skills, experiences and abilities with children, yet have the safety of experienced faculty and ECE professionals close at hand to help explain the processes and learning as it is occurring.

Where can I find more information? Please contact Cathy Coulthard. cathy.coulthard@sheridanc.on.ca

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Participant: Jen Moses and Cristina Delgado
Organization: Capilano University,
British Columbia

Key Concept/Idea:

Since 2006, the program has included a Pedagogista (part time faculty) who works closely with both the ECCE faculty and the Early Childhood Educators at the campus Children's Centre in cultivating an environment of provocation and inquiry. Cristina was hired as a Pedagogista in February, 2005 and was deeply involved in examining teaching directions and practices with all the Early Childhood Educators. This work involved numerous meetings with individual Early Childhood Educators, teams, the Manager, the entire group of Children's Centre Early Childhood Educators, the ECCE department and the Coordinator of ECCE.

Success Highlights:

The ECCE department maintains an active partnership with the Children's Centre that provides students and faculty with the opportunities to examine and develop the skills of leadership. This partnership provides rich educational experiences for the students, resourceful inquiry-based curriculum for the children, current and challenging professional development for the Early Childhood Educators at the Children's Centre and extensive learning opportunities for local and regional ECCE communities.

The ECCE program (2009) now offers the first Bachelor of Early Childhood Care and Education in British Columbia.

Where can I find more information? For more information visit www.capilanou.ca

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Participant: Najma Rashid
Organization: Madrasa Resource Centre,
East Africa

Key Concept/Idea:

Culturally appropriate Early Childhood Development curriculum.

Success Highlights:

We serve marginalized communities and have created access for more than 67,916 children in over 203 communities across East Africa. There are over 8,000 trained teachers who are serving in both community and private pre-schools across the region. We developed an integrated Islamic curriculum, which has been adopted to serve other faiths. Also part of the program is a strong community mobilization and development component, as well as a health and nutrition aspect. The parental component also serves to integrate and strengthen community social cultural aspects, which is an extension of learning for their children. Work at the primary lower grade areas has assisted in focusing on transition issues from pre-to-primary schools, enabling children's progression from one grade to another, which ultimately adds to an increase in completion rates. We are also working towards influencing government to support policies on early childhood development across East Africa.⁸

Where can I find more information? For more information visit www.akdn.org

⁸ Najma Rashid was one of the keynote speakers at the 4th Annual ECE Affinity Group Conference. Her presentation included a video and PowerPoint presentation about the Madrasa Resource Centre. They will both be posted on the CCHRSC website www.cpsc-cssge.ca

