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Early Learning Knowledge Exchange

the power of the pause

Reflecting, Pausing and Forging a Pathway Forward - Together

Steps to Success Program

Fair un pause pour Réfléchir

The Power of the Pause Can Make Magic

...and much more!

Seek First to Understand Then to be Understood

Pause, Reflect, Reconnect

There is Power in Pausing

ELKE is presented by



Spring, 2022 Edition

In this issue, we explore "The Power of the Pause". Covid-19 has caused the last two years to be a tough ride for both children and adults through Canada and around the world. ECEs have remained resilient, showing the importance of being there for children, families and co-workers. With our specialized bank of knowledge and expertise in the first five years of a child's life, we understand that these years are crucial for brain development and the reality is that this doesn't stop because we are in a pandemic.

Make the most of every moment we have with children! Everyone's role, big or small, can be something a child carries with them throughout their lives and their development. Whether you are a Director, ECE, Support Staff, Cook, Student, or any role in between, we are all a vital part of the child's experience. We feel confident that the messages being shared at this year's Spring Conference and within this magazine will reignite your passion for your work in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education, and keep you going as we continue to make the most out of every moment we have with children.

The articles in this edition highlight the importance of pausing and being in the moment with the children. We invite you to come along with us as we begin to embark on a new journey moving forward. We want to really look at our "why's", and how to continue to make moments count in the early years, as we move from a pandemic to an endemic.



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The Power of the Pause Can Make Magic

Jennifer Nangreaves
ECDA Executive Director



With so many responsibilities in the run of a day, ECEs can easily get caught up in the schedule—in doing the next thing, whether it is outside time, lunch, special events or “classroom rules”, we can focus on just getting to the next step. In these moments we either stop or interrupt play in a way that kiboshes the play, but also... let’s face it, wouldn’t be our best moments.

As we dive into the practice of “the pause”—forgiveness would be the word I’d like to focus on. If we see this in ourselves, and begin to recognize the moments that maybe we spoke too soon and stopped something that could have been so good, we can acknowledge it, reflect on how we could handle that moment better, and then work on intentionally putting that “pause” into practice.

I have heard extraordinary stories from educators of when they have practiced “the pause” and the outcomes that have resulted. Pausing can benefit both the ECE in their personal life and the children in their care. One educator shared with me that they take a moment to themselves in their driveway to really finish their day before they enter their home so that they can be present for their partner and son. This enabled them to listen to the answers of “How was your day?” instead of asking to simply ask.

Another example is an educator who is mindful when stopping or redirecting play in their classroom and really thinking of “why” before they do. They shared with me moments of play that they did not stop and were so thankful they hadn’t. We never know where a child is going to take the play, and we could really limit the rich experiences by trying to anticipate, interject, and stop the uncomfortable. When we truly begin to honor the pause, we become comfortable with the uncomfortable.

I love hearing successful stories of implementing the pause. Most recently, it has been within networks that I have heard vulnerable, risky, brave moments that educators gave children the lead, the benefit of the doubt, and were thankful they did. We can help other educators gain this level of confidence in children, leading with good intentions and create spaces where children have the freedom to explore and truly experience play their way

without limitation. Children are confident, capable, and competent. We must trust this, allow this, and see the magic unfold.

During this “pandy” as Dr. Jody likes to refer to it as, ECEs had to change many things about our practice. We had to remove dramatic play items, sensory items, say “no” to special guests, all in the name of safety. We all did our very best at balancing safety, while still understanding that a child’s brain development was not on hold during the pandemic. It would have been easy, and really part of the norm to say things like “we can’t because of Covid”. It was “the pause” that allowed ECEs to pivot, and to think about what the outcome they were trying to reach and how they could continue to scaffold for children within safety directives provided, and this was doing things in different, innovative ways. ECEs are undoubtedly good at rolling with the punches and changing plans on the fly. After all, flexibility and reflection are the cornerstone of our practice.

When you enter your Centre tomorrow, I encourage you to reflect on the times that you stop, warn, redirect children, and think about the why. What would happen if you let it continue? Is it about your control and your schedule? Is it child-lead? We know that children develop at their own pace, what would happen if we gave more time before we interrupted? What would happen if we trusted the process? If we allowed the children to truly take the lead?

I think the answer is magic. The power of the pause can make magic, in your personal life as well as in your professional life as you educate island children. The moments we get are precious, don’t rush them away. Let’s try and honor the children in our care, trust their process, be there for them as a guide, as they show us how very capable and competent, they each are, letting them develop the confidence along the way. We are after all, a resource to their adventure of lifelong learning, and a model for their emotional development. So I ask you, what will make you pause this week?

Taking Moments to Pause and Reflect Creates Growth

Well, I am hoping the next article we won’t have to touch on Covid at all, but here we are and we survived another year! I am so proud of all of the Early Childhood Educators here on PEI. Together we have come together (as we always do) and do what we do best, which is put Island children and their families first. ECDA has had an incredibly busy winter with lots of projects going on.

I want to take a moment to recognize all of the amazing ladies we have in the office at the ECDA which is rapidly growing! Jenn, Bonnie, Megan, Melanie, Jayne, and Megan, These ladies have worked countless amounts of hours getting projects off the ground, being trained, training new staff and the list goes on! These ladies are the crew that keeps things going, so a huge THANK YOU to you all!! We appreciate your work and commitment to Early Childhood greatly!

Covid has been the dominating topic over the last 2 years, but I would like to take a minute to reflect on the gains that we have had from it. The last 2 years have been a whirlwind to say the least, but I also think that it has created a lot of really great opportunities to stop, reflect, take a breath, and slow down. It has created more opportunity to look at ourselves, think about our practice, the things we value and what doesn’t seem as relevant anymore. It has showed many of us the importance of self care, whether you read a book, go for a massage, get your hair done we have learned just how critical these “small” gesture can be in helping us to feel joy, peace, or the excitement of just the opportunity to even get out of the house!

As a board we are always looking at ways that we can best support our members, this required taking a pause for a moment and navigating what that could look like with the ever evolving ways of Covid. For us that meant setting up Zoom calls with government and CPHO, the option for online events and PD, the chance to network with other ECEs and directors in a safe and confidential space. We are always interested in what our members have to share, so please reach out if you have something that we can help out with.

Melanie Cochrane
ECDA Board President



These past few months have been hectic for us all. As a new Director, I can certainly say the last few months have been FULL of many learning opportunities. I have personally found that self reflection and taking a moment to breathe have been my saving grace. It was something that I had to be mindful of and make a conscious effort to do but it has created an immense amount of growth. So, as we walk into this Spring season, with Covid restrictions lifting, I am curious, what have these last few years taught you? What are your take aways? What are you grateful for? What skills or awareness will you take moving forward?

Lastly, I would like to say a huge thank you to this sector! This will be my last article as President of ECDA as my term is up in September. I cannot express the amount of gratitude that I have for the people in this field. I have so appreciated the opportunity to connect and network with many of you. I look forward to seeing all the amazing things that will continue to evolve in Early Childhood on PEI.

“I have personally found that self reflection and taking a moment to breathe have been my saving grace. It was something that I had to be mindful of and make a conscious effort to do but it has created an immense amount of growth.”

Pausing is Essential

These five words, The Power of the Pause, caused me to, well, pause. Immediately, I understood and realized how important and impactful they are. Pause, to support our own well-being. Pause to ensure that we are present for those that we love and cherish. Pause to reflect on our practice. Pause for whatever your reason and to understand—and give yourself permission to do so—why it is essential.

The people and programs that make up Canada's early learning and child care (ELCC) sector have been a rock of stability and reliability throughout the pandemic. Often overlooked by governments for the support they needed (of important note, the PEI government has been a north star as it pertains to supporting the PEI ELCC sector as compared to almost all others in Canada and are to be recognized for their leadership), many ELCC programs initially stayed open to support other essential workers and as the pandemic rolled on, most re-opened to resume their day-to-day support, care and education of children, families and communities. Through it all, ECEs and programs have adapted, learned much and frankly, struggled as well. That is why pausing is such an amazing concept and action to take.

I am reminded of what the CCCF's Code of Ethics says about the importance of ECE practice with young children:

(ECEs) work with one of society's most vulnerable groups – young children. The quality of the interactions between young children and the adults who care for them has a significant, enduring impact on children's lives.

I am always struck by the power of that and how awesome and important the work of ECEs is. Most certainly, the Code of Ethics never contemplated a pandemic, but the code's eight principles are a true reflection on the importance of relationships and practice with and for young children along with their families, communities and with our professional colleagues—especially in a pandemic. Also, this from the eight codes, on the importance of the ECE as a professional:

(ECEs) pursue, on an ongoing basis, the knowledge, skills and self-awareness needed to be professionally competent.



By: Don Giesbrecht
Executive Director, CCCF




The Power of the Pause. Yes, that fits so well into our current world, but should not be taken as important only now, but throughout and continually in our professional and daily lives. It is our collective, individual and professional responsibility to do so.

It is also a question for leaders, the Executive Directors, Directors, Managers, Supervisors—whatever your title may be—to ensure that not only are you are pausing, but also that the policies and culture of your organization and workplace supports the power of the pause. This important act does not happen by chance, but by design and leadership.

The historic and transformative Canada-wide child care plan, which PEI signed on to on August 14, 2021, will better support ECEs, programs, children and families. There is incredible change and opportunity already happening in PEI and across Canada with much more to come. Embedding the professional and ethical responsibility to reflect—pause—on practice and why that is so essential for the well-being of children will serve us all very well. Maybe it took the pandemic to remind us to do it, but really, it's something we should have always been doing and need to continue to do.






Special Announcement

After one year in this position and following consultations with stakeholders and our community, the ECDA Board of Directors is very pleased to officially announce Jennifer Nangreaves as our Executive Director!

The ECDA Board is excited to continue working alongside Jenn as she supports all of us into a very bright future in ELCC!



Kind words from the ELCC community:

"Jennifer takes her role as a leader very seriously. She has always represented the ECDA with membership in mind."

"Jennifer has done a great job growing into her position. Her confidence and professionalism is mixed well with humbleness and genuine kindness."

"Jenn communicates clearly and efficiently and is strength based in her approach."

"She is absolutely the best fit. The ECDA - and PEI for that matter - are lucky to have her!"

"One of the greatest signs of a good leader is to not only be informed and knowledgeable, but to admit when unsure or require more information. Jennifer does this. She does not pretend to have all of the answers, but states she is uncertain, seeks the answers and gets back to you."

Save the Dates!

ECDA AGM:
September 17th, 2022
Summerside

ECDA Fall Conference:
November 3rd & 4th
Charlottetown

Details coming soon!

The ECDA AGM is followed by a day with Kristen Peterson! Kristen will join us all the way from Minnesota! She is an advocate for play, speaker, podcaster and content/digital course creator, and we are so excited to host her. Stay tuned for more details through the coming months!



“But, why?”

By: Sandra Gass
Holland College Instructor

How many times have you told a child to do something, and they responded “But, why?” I always made sure to give them an answer. But overtime, I began to question my answers to their why. Who was my answer for? Me or them?

We look at the goals we want children to achieve such as, include everyone, be independent, regulate emotions, help others, take risks. We want them to make their own choices, but how can they do that if we are always quick in telling them what to do and what not to do; who to play and who not to play with; what to make and not make? I have stopped hastily jumping in the second things seem to be going south. I pause. I watch. I hear. I support them when they want or need me too. I encourage the children to give their own “Why.” Why can’t your peer play family? Why will you not give your peer some blocks? Why did you make a gun? Why did you stand on a chair before sitting? Why did you choose the farthest garbage can? Their answers may surprise you! Instead of interjecting in their process, I began to observe the situation. What happens when I pause and then ask them “Why?”

Being a mentor with ECCE students has been a rewarding and a valuable learning experience for me. I want my students to know they have a voice and to stay true to their own beliefs and philosophy. I listen to their opinions, their experience, their knowledge. These students also have their own process. I take the time to observe them and “pause” before stepping in. We look at each situation together, and talk through our understanding and values, using those to move forward. The same with the children in my care: I want them to have a voice. I want them to know I hear them. I want them to know their wants and needs have value. Seeing a student giving children the time and space to process their own actions and opportunities, and them seeing the value in doing so is gratifying for all.



It was not that long ago; I had the opportunity to mentor a student through “gun play.” As soon as the child began pointing their fingers as a suggestive gun, she stopped it. I stepped in beside her and began to ask the child about what they had made, how they made it and why they made it. We had a lengthy conversation about guns, and what they are used for. By the end of our conversation, we discovered the child was hunting. Our first instinct is to stop the gun play. Most of us have been raised to avoid guns and “guns are bad.” I do not want my students to change what they believe in. We just need to be able to see and hear the “why” and all that goes with it. Looking back at the why questions I have asked the children...did you know that allowing another child into family play during “nap time” can wake up the baby? Did you know that all those blocks are needed to make a “sky-scraper”? Did you know that the gun is being used to hunt animals? I did not.

Next time, pause then ask them “Why?”



There is Power in Pausing

By: Chayla Bastian
2nd year ECCE student

As a student in the early childcare program I am consistently learning and picking up on new things every day. During my first practicum I got to put my knowledge and skills to work and made space to learn even more. One of things that I have learned and what really made me reflect was to pause, wait and see what’s to come. There is power in pausing. It’s important to not jump to conclusions especially when it comes to children because we never really know what they’re about to do.

While sitting and playing with the children during free play, I noticed that one of the children was playing with his fingers and acting as if it was a “gun”. I interjected too fast without knowing the context behind what he was using it for. My supervisor stepped in and guided me through the process of pausing and waiting to see what was the child’s reason for it and what was he doing. I then learned it was his way of “hunting”. Because of where I’m from and my beliefs, it made me chime in too quick into his play. Now that I’m reflecting on it, even when I stepped in on his play, I could have asked him what he was using it for before making any comments.

My takeaway from that process is to not always be quick to step in, but to listen, wait, and make a learning opportunity if needed. It’s also important to stand by your beliefs and philosophy as they are what makes you you, but to make sure that you’re equally understanding and respecting others.



Supervisors Network Meetings

The Supervisor’s Network Meeting is open to all Supervisors, Directors, and Administrators of licensed early learning and child care programs. The intention of the group is to encourage open dialogue and knowledge exchange to enhance quality practices, such as human resource practices and policies, pedagogy, and leadership.

The Supervisors Network Meeting gathers on the third Wednesday of each month from 9:30 - 11:30 AM.

For more information please contact:
Jennifer Nangreaves
Executive Director
(902) 368-0070

Early Childhood Development Association of PEI

Family Home Centre Network

Licensed or Aspiring Licensed

Family Home Centres play a vital role in communities and Early Childhood Education, especially now with PEI being part of building a Canada-wide system.

This network will meet virtually one evening per month for anyone who wants to talk about fresh ideas, needs help breaking down barriers, or is interested in professional development.

The goal of the network is to build on the foundation and help more families access high quality spaces in their communities!

For more information please contact:
Jennifer Nangreaves
Executive Director
(902) 368-0070

Seek First to Understand Then to Be Understood

Stephen Covey in his book *The 7 habits of Highly Effective people*, uses the phrase "Seek first to understand then to be understood" as his 5th habit; one that could also be described as the "power of the pause." Seems simple, easy enough to do on the surface, but for many people it can be a difficult habit to implement.

Have you ever wondered why we choose certain communication styles over others? Why do some people choose to push their preferences on others, while others are fearful of standing up for anything and, still others are skilled communicators who are committed to "understand then to be understood?"

One might define such communication in three ways:

1. Careless communication: "It will be my way or the highway." Message: "I matter, you don't."
2. Careful Communication: "I am too afraid to speak up, so I go tiptoeing around most things in life." Message: "You matter, I don't."
3. Caring Communication: "I care enough about you to really listen and we find mutually satisfying solutions." Message: "I matter, and you matter, too."

So, let's explore some ideas presented in "Seek First to Understand. Then, To Be Understood," and the Power of the Pause.

What meaning do these phrases have for you as you communicate with your colleagues, your family and friends, and the children with whom you work?

First, in order to "Seek first to understand, then to be understood," we must learn to listen; we must learn to understand others' perspectives through empathic listening. We must learn the "power of the pause."

Unfortunately, we as people who want to help, often prescribe a solution before we really understand the problem.

Covey says, "we've spent years of our lives learning how to read and write and years learning how to speak. But, what about listening?"

"To listen empathically requires a paradigm shift!" Many of us listen with the intent to reply, rather than to understand. At any given moment we are either speaking or preparing to speak.

It is interesting to think about this. Communication

By: Alice Taylor
ECDA Lifetime
Member



experts along the way have told us that 10% of our communication is verbal (words we use); 30% is how we say what we say (tone used, emphasis on words); and 60% is body language. Nonverbal (body movement, eye contact, etc.)

So, what does that do to the power of the pause; seeking first to understand or to being empathic to the situation? It means that we are speaking from our own perspective as our frame of reference. And we are responding in one of 4 ways.

1. Ignoring: Caught up in our own thoughts and missing the point completely.
2. Pretending: Still engaged in our own thoughts nodding and smiling, pretending to listen.
3. Selective Listening: Giving advice based on our own experience,
4. Attentive: We understand the full conversation and its meaning. In other words, we are using empathic listening.

So, how then do we make a paradigm shift as Covey suggests?

We take time to pause...seek to understand the other person and their situation.

- So, listen
- Stop talking
- Silence our ego and our own agenda

This is what we call active listening!

Think about and practice the art of sharing your ideas in the context of a deep understanding of the other person's needs and concerns. (No assumptions allowed)



What are the benefits to applying these ideas? There is no doubt it will create synergy in creating new possibilities and alternatives. And if applied in a group situation such as in an Early Learning Centre it allows every single person to grow in confidence self-esteem and self-worth.

Just imagine being able to ditch old scripts and create new ones; new ideas; even transformation with both sides getting what they want.

The key to valuing differences is to realize that all people see the world, not as it is, but as they are.

Do you want to apply empathic listening? Here's how to begin:

1. Pay attention...listen, really listen to what the other person is saying.
2. As you listen repeat their words back to them to reinforce a positive connection and trust. Then you can paraphrase to really get their point.
3. Empathizing is most important in empathic listening. Understanding how they feel and their exact position and what happened to take them there. Also, notice if their body language is congruent with their words.
4. Rephrase their content and how they feel: Young child's example: "I understand how much you love to play outside, but Mary has lunch ready so let's wash up and go eat."

Adult examples:

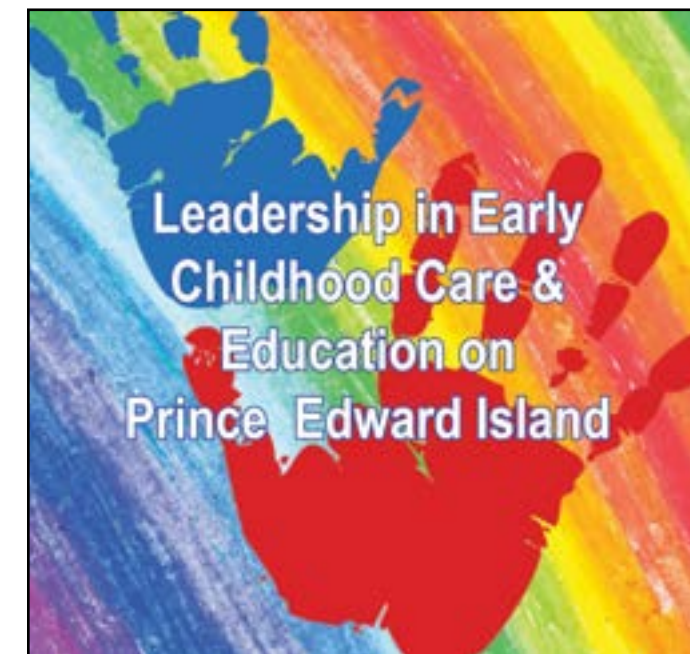
"I know how important fairness is to you, let's discuss your ideas over coffee and decide how to make a fairer workplace for everyone."

"I see where you are coming from and appreciate the conversation, nevertheless, I can't make that change right now but will promise to look at it in next year's budget."

In closing, it is my hope that this brief article encourages self-reflection of Covey's 5th habit, "Seek First to Understand Then to Be Understood." Then, as you reflect think about how you can inspire others by showing them you believe in them, by listening to them empathically and by encouraging them to be proactive.

As Covey says: "Not a day goes by that we can't at least serve one other human being by making a deposit of unconditional love."

ECDA Launches New Podcast Series



ECDA recently launched our first, official podcast series called "Leadership in Early Childhood Care & Education on Prince Edward Island".

Have a listen to our first 5 episodes with special guests, Alice Taylor, Doreen Gillis, Erin Reid-Terrio, Sandra Gass and Jay Baglolle as they talk with Executive Director, Jenn Nangreaves about their careers as leaders in Early Childhood Care & Education. Episodes can be found on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

We hope you enjoy and always welcome your feedback!

ECE Sharing and Networking Sessions



A place to network, seek support and expand upon your practice.

A space to gather with other ECEs, to share what is in your heart and on your mind.

A place to listen, provide encouragement, share resources, and connect with colleagues across the province.

"We were never meant to do this alone!"
- Dr. Judy Carrington

Flexible agendas and no long-term commitment. Come when you can!

Once a month! * 6:30 - 8 PM

Pause, Reflect, Reconnect

The theme of the Spring Conference is impeccably matched with the season but also the reason. Spring is a time of rejuvenation, regrowth, and renewal and as a sector that has had to show our resiliency and adaptability throughout the pandemic; we do need to take the time to “pause”, reflect and renew our own passion and commitment to the children in our lives. COVID has deeply impacted the social and emotional well-being of both children and adults. We must strive to reconnect with intent. Practising the “Power of the Pause” will assist us in reconnection with the people who matter most to us.

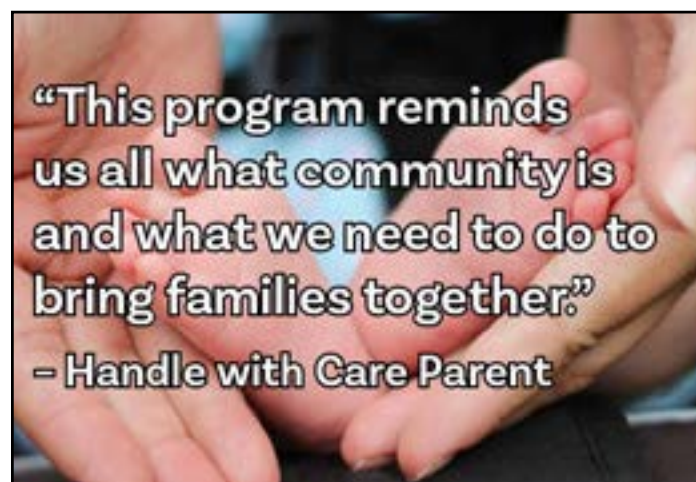
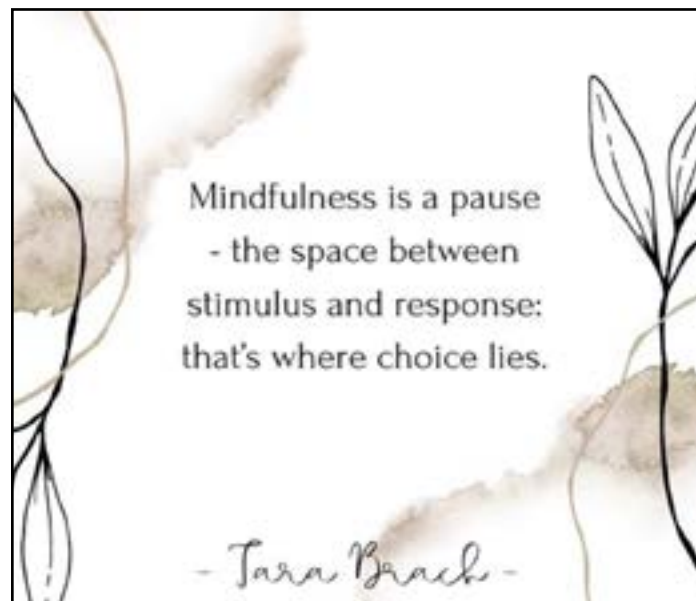
Lyrics from the JJ Heller’s song, “Big Love, Small Moments” is where my mind immediately refocuses to when I think of practising the “Power of Pause”. Specifically, the words, “Big magic in the mundane... Everything is sacred when you take time to notice, Big love happens in the small moments”. The song reminds me that every moment has the potential to be an impactful experience for children and their well-being. Whether it is changing a diaper, encouraging an infant to take their first steps, a greeting ritual, a cheered accomplishment, an embrace, a moment of magical wonder in nature, a dried tear; these moments that we experience with children, lay the foundation of who they will be, and we need to be in that moment with them, all-in!

The Handle with Care program serves as a reminder or it guides parents’ and caregivers’ in an awareness and understanding that in order to form trusting attachment and relationships, enhance self-esteem, express emotions and building healthy relationships with others; that we the adults do have to be present in every moment, interaction and experience and make the most of them for children. No matter how big or small your role is, your interactions with children impact their social and emotional well-being. You are the role model and children will follow your lead. Through your practise of “pause” you will find that you are handling the children in your life with care!

“Mindfulness is a pause – the space between stimulus and response: that’s where choice lies” – Tara Brach

Jayne Crane

Handle with Care
Coordinator, ECDA



Reflecting, Pausing, and Forging a Pathway Forward - Together

Megan McPhee, Professional Learning Coordinator, ECDA



I began my journey as the Professional Learning Coordinator with the ECDA in late 2019. Shortly thereafter the world as we know it was tipped on its axis and was soon facing a global pandemic. Since then I have been doing my job mostly from behind a screen. Most days it’s great, some days it can be frustrating. In the end though, I cannot deny the possibilities that have been created in this digital world. We have had facilitators join us from the UK, from various States, and from all across Canada... all in a day’s work! A feat that simply would not have been possible a mere few years ago, before we knew of the possibilities offered in the virtual atmosphere.

But it wasn’t an instant shift. At the beginning of the pandemic everything went on pause, it was difficult to plan things, and not many people were yet prepared for a digital world. We hadn’t done the work yet, we collectively took a pause and just like that everything began to fall into place, and somehow more than two years have passed. It has been a blur, and I can’t help but wonder have we forgotten to pause since then? Have we allowed the pandemic to consume our focus and our thoughts?

As I pause and reflect upon the past couple of years it is quickly evident that we’ve had some pretty amazing opportunities arise. We have had many times where we could grow ourselves, connect with others of like mind, and find our communities. As I take stock of the work we’ve done and the things we’ve accomplished together, the thing that fills me with the most pride are the times we’ve banded together united for children in search of best practice, and often times these are outside of the typical professional development opportunities. Whether it was ROW, Coffee Chats with ECEs, ECE Network, Supervisors Network or the most recent Trauma Informed Practice Certificate with Mothercraft College, ECEs are committed to the work they do in the name of children. Often the journeys that impact us the most are those that intrinsically motivate us, those that reignite our passion, those that help us find the way forward, because when we know better, we do better and our goal is always to do better.

The Trauma Informed Practice certificate is an opportunity in which Mothercraft College chose to partner with organizations across the country in order to have participants in each province, with the hope for it to benefit and impact children and families from coast to coast. I think it is going to be a wonderful initiative that honors the journey of adult education, allowing for a deep dive over a longer period of time and having participants walk away with a tangible certificate when they are done.

As we search for opportunities like these, ones that fill our buckets and help us reconnect with

others in a time of mass disconnection, I’m reminded of the words of the great Anne Pelo and Margie Carter: “I need to be part of this community that continues to learn and is willing to sit in the brave spaces, even when it is not comfortable being in a state of disequilibrium is not easy. I much prefer balance, but what I know for sure is that being off balance pushes me to seek knowledge. In order to write myself again, I need information, new perspectives, insights, and self-awareness, all of which leads to forward motion and positive change. I am energized and inspired by teaching and learning.” (Pelo and Carter, 2018)

So, join us in this community, be part of something bigger and begin to look outside the four walls of your centre. Use your voice and influence and the face of Early Childhood Education. The children are depending on you. Sometimes the most powerful tools are the Educators you network with, the communities you build, or the village you are part of! Attending networks, professional learning, participating in pilot projects-- anything outside of your centre can show you how big and expansive the world of early childhood is.

Interacting and networking with other ECEs is a wonderful time for collaboration. You may come in with your own ideas, but given the time and space to connect you often leave with so many more. These communities we build are essential. As we take the time to pause and reflect after each session, network, or throughout a pilot we often think about how what we have learned can better the children’s world? How can we help them develop into who they are set out to be? How can we be better and how can we do better?

It’s time to stop waiting for the world to change, waiting for the so called “normal life” to return. We know that the most important years of a child’s life are at our feet, we need to make the best of it! What we do is infinitely more important during a pandemic than it was before, and I’d argue that we have the most important job ever, even on a regular day! So, I ask you to pause with me, and remember why you started this journey in the first place. Whether you fell into the sector by accident finding your passion along the way, you went through the full 2 year program knowing early childhood was what you were meant for, or someone enticed you here. However you got here, we welcome you wholeheartedly.

May your journey find a few more pauses, perhaps without a pandemic, and be filled with lifelong learning and intrinsic motivation. Whatever you choose to do, whatever learning you choose to pursue, we hope you continue to do it for the sake of learning. For the sake of growth. For the intrinsic motivation inside you. We hope you do it for the children. Because that’s what we are here for—the children!

Pausing to Reflect

By: The Early Childhood Coaching Team



Erica Yee
Ann Hayes-McKenzie
Claire Doucette
Francine Bernard
Jaime Stewart
Krista MacEachern
Nicolle Hogan
Karla Carnegie MacDonald
Sharon Hachey

Faire une pause pour réfléchir

Équipe de mentores auprès de la petite enfance



Erica Yee
Ann Hayes-McKenzie
Claire Doucette
Francine Bernard
Jaime Stewart
Krista MacEachern
Nicolle Hogan
Karla Carnegie MacDonald
Sharon Hachey

“Time has a wonderful way of showing us what really matters.” (Peters, as cited by Coughlin & Baird, 2022, p.ix)



As we are given this opportunity to pause and reflect on the past two years living within a pandemic, we continue to challenge ourselves daily to accept the past (we cannot change it), acknowledge the present (we are in it), and alter the future (we have the power to create change).

Over the past few months, The Early Childhood Coaching Team has devoted some time to pause and reflect on our role as a team and within the early learning and child care sector. As our team continues to grow, new relationships are established built on trust and mutual respect. Based on our own experiences, assumptions and beliefs, perspectives are shared and sometimes challenged as we listen and learn from each other. In our reflective practice we have examined our processes and approaches and are considering new possibilities. As pedagogical leaders we value a community that learns together by fostering a culture of inquiry powered by curiosity, collaboration, openness, courageousness, self-awareness and optimism, as learning dispositions.

“As pedagogical leaders we are curious to know what educators and directors think, feel, and wonder. We expect to learn from them, as well as with them. We anticipate that others will give birth to new ideas - not just new to them, but new to us. We join educators and directors on a mutual quest for understanding, just as they join children on such a quest.” (Pelo & Carter, 2018, p.127)

We invite you to take the time to pause, to accept the past, acknowledge the present, and alter the future. Challenge your beliefs and assumptions, share together experiences, perspectives, and ask questions to deepen your own curiosity and that of the children within your care. Think about ways to determine and honor your personal and professional values. Use these values as a foundation to make intentional decisions.

“Reflective questioning is a challenging process that requires deep thought. Reflective questions probe the educator’s values, assumptions, and professional knowledge.” (ELF, 2010, p.79)

Consider using the following questions to promote your own reflection:

How has my thinking and practice grown and evolved over time?

How do my decisions and practices honor my values?

What is my image of the child?

How do I demonstrate respect for myself, children, families and co-educators daily?

“While your eyes may give you vision to see what is in front of you, it is your imagination that enables you to see what is not yet there” (Coughlin & Baird, 2022, p.35)

References:

Coughlin, Anna Marie, Baird, L. 2022. Creating A Culture of Reflective Practice: The Role of Pedagogical Leadership in Early Childhood Programs. St. Paul, MN: Red Leaf Press.
Flanagan, Kathleen. 2011. PEI Early Learning Framework: Relationships, Environments, Experiences. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/eecd_eyfrwrk_full.pdf
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“Le temps a une merveilleuse façon de nous montrer ce qui compte vraiment”. (Peters, tel que cité par Coughlin & Baird, 2022, p.ix)

Alors que nous avons l’occasion de faire une pause et de réfléchir aux deux dernières années passées à vivre au sein d’une pandémie, nous continuons à nous mettre quotidiennement au défi d’accepter le passé (nous ne pouvons pas le changer), de reconnaître le présent (nous y sommes) et de modifier l’avenir (nous avons le pouvoir de créer le changement).

Au cours des derniers mois, l’équipe des mentors en petite enfance a pris le temps de réfléchir à leur rôle en tant qu’équipe et au sein du secteur de l’apprentissage et de la garde des jeunes enfants. Au fur et à mesure que notre équipe grandit, de nouvelles relations s’établissent, fondées sur la confiance et le respect mutuel. À partir de nos propres expériences, hypothèses et croyances, nous partageons nos points de vue et les remettons parfois en question en nous écoutant et en apprenant les uns des autres. Dans notre pratique réflexive, nous avons examiné nos processus et nos approches et nous envisageons de nouvelles possibilités. En tant que leaders pédagogiques, nous valorisons une communauté qui apprend ensemble en favorisant une culture de la recherche alimentée par la curiosité, la collaboration, l’ouverture, le courage, la conscience de soi et l’optimisme, en tant que dispositions d’apprentissage.

“En tant que leaders pédagogiques, nous sommes curieux de savoir ce que les éducateurs et les directeurs pensent, ressentent et se demandent. Nous nous attendons à apprendre d’eux, ainsi qu’avec eux. Nous prévoyons que les autres donneront naissance à de nouvelles idées - non seulement nouvelles pour eux, mais aussi nouvelles pour nous. Nous rejoignons les éducateurs et les directeurs dans une quête mutuelle de compréhension, tout comme ils rejoignent les enfants dans une telle quête.” (Pelo & Carter, 2018, p.127)

Nous vous invitons à prendre le temps de faire une pause, d’accepter le passé, de reconnaître le présent et de modifier l’avenir. Remettez en question vos croyances et hypothèses, partagez ensemble vos expériences, vos perspectives et posez des questions pour approfondir votre propre curiosité et celle des enfants dont vous avez la charge. Réfléchissez aux moyens de déterminer et d’honorer vos valeurs personnelles et professionnelles. Utilisez ces valeurs comme base pour prendre des décisions intentionnelles.

“Le questionnement réfléchi est un processus difficile qui exige une réflexion approfondie. Les questions réflexives sondent les valeurs, les hypothèses et les connaissances professionnelles de l’éducateur.” (ELF, 2010, p.79)

Pensez à utiliser les questions suivantes pour promouvoir votre propre réflexion :

Comment ma pensée et ma pratique ont-elles grandi et évolué au fil du temps ?

Comment mes décisions et mes pratiques honorent-elles mes valeurs ?

Quelle est mon image de l’enfant ?

Comment est-ce que je fais preuve quotidiennement de respect envers moi-même, les enfants, les familles et mes collègues ?

“ Si vos yeux vous permettent de voir ce qui se trouve devant vous, c’est votre imagination qui vous permet de voir ce qui n’est pas encore là ” (Coughlin & Baird, 2022, p.35).

Références:

Coughlin, Anna Marie, Baird, L. 2022. Créer une culture de pratique réflexive : Le rôle du leadership pédagogique dans les programmes de la petite enfance. St. Paul, MN : Red Leaf Press.
Flanagan, Kathleen. 2011. Cadre d’apprentissage de la petite enfance de l’Î.-P.-É. : relations, environnements, expériences. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/eecd_eyfrwrk_full.pdf
Pelo, Ann, Carter, M. 2018. De l’enseignement à la pensée : une pédagogie pour réinventer notre travail. Lincoln, NE: Exchange Press.

The ECDA Resource Library is Open for Business!

The ECDA Resource Library provides ECDA members with hundreds of books for lending, including a new order of new and relevant books! We also have a full-colour printer/copier, tools and supplies, and videos. We are pleased to include resources on various Early Childhood topics which are organized according to the Early Learning Framework. ECDA has a collaborative relationship with the Early Years Coaching team and they are able to take books directly to centres as well!

Our full catalogue of available resources is online through the ECDA website. Members are able to search for, read about, check the status, and request to loan any item in the library from their computer or phone at www.ecdaofpei.ca.

The Resource Library is free to use for all members. Drop-ins are welcome Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. To book a visit outside our business hours, please contact Bonnie at bell@ecdaofpei.ca or (902) 368-1866.

Please remember that we have moved to 161 St. Peters Road, Sherwood Business Centre. We are not hard to find as we have a sign hanging outside our office, next to the stairs/cafe. Please send us a note or a quick call prior to drop-off or pick-up. We look forward to seeing your friendly faces!

The Autism Society of PEI is proud to be working with the ECDA during their launch of their new Sensory Spaces - Calming Communities Sensory Kits!

With generous support from Easter Seals PEI, the Autism Society of PEI has created and developed portable Sensory kits. Each kit includes the following items:

- 1 felt wall
- Fidget toys from Owl's Hollow Toys and Games
- 1 pair of kids sunglasses
- 1 Needoh ball
- 1 colouring book
- 1 pair of noise cancelling headphones with Bluetooth
- 1 white board
- 1 visual timer
- 1 wall projector



The Autism Society has donated ten kits to the ECDA Resource Library. The kits can be borrowed by centres and ultimately purchased through the Society. Ultimately, it is the hope of the Autism Society that a sensory friendly environment can be attained in all spaces. They look forward to feedback from centres as they have the opportunity to access these kits!

To learn more on how to purchase one of the sensory kits or to receive our sensory space audit checklist, contact Nick or Nathalie at Nick@autismsociety.pei.ca or Nathalie@autismsociety.pei.ca.



Outside My Window: How COVID Changed my View on Teaching

By: Angelique Davies,
RECE M.Ed

"Looking out my window at this hour of the day, the world outside your window seems so far away..."
~ Linda Ashman, Outside my Window

When COVID-19 first sent the world into isolation, I wondered, as an ECE working in Full Day Kindergarten: How would families cope? How would children separated from their friends be impacted? What would early learning look like in this "new normal"? And, what could I do to help? This time of remote teaching would become a time of great reflection, while viewing the children I was teaching, through a computer screen, and looking within for creative solutions to this strange new problem. One way I tried to help was through my blog – providing parents with curated lists of weblinks and educational resources, and sharing teaching ideas with other educators. While searching for good picture books, I came across one on YouTube called Outside My Window by Linda Ashman and knew right away that this book spoke in simple but important ways to the fact that even though we might feel alone, we were all together in feeling alone.



Wherever we might be in the world, we would all be spending many days looking out our windows, seeing certain familiar things, hearing comforting sounds, and this would be what connected us.

Looking out my window actually gave me a lot of inspiration for remote teaching. For example, last spring, I spotted a robin's nest in the tree in my yard, and was able to turn this into an amazing inquiry with the children in my classroom. Each day I reported what I could see – the male robin delivering worms as the female sat on her nest, rain or shine. I watched and listened and we counted the days until at last I heard the sounds of the chicks and could just see their open beaks, waiting for food. I got to witness this amazing cycle of life, and we shared all the new things we'd been learning, until the birds finally left their nest. The children posted pictures of nests they had discovered near their homes, and shared their own observations. COVID gave us some time to become really engaged in something we might not otherwise have noticed. We realized that being "stuck inside" didn't have to limit our experience of the world, and the magic and the unexpected miracles it can offer us.



There has also been time for looking within, and being comfortable with seeking, and finding, quietness and stillness inside ourselves. My teaching partner and I made mindfulness a priority, making sure that each day there was time for movement and dance that would give us little "brain breaks", for yoga, for exploring different breathing techniques, and for listening to quiet, meditative music that would provide a background for building or for creative art. Some of our favourites included new age music by Andreas Vollenweider and Don Ross' evocative compositions for acoustic guitar. I enjoyed creating miniature drawings using oil pastels, and encouraged children to use whatever art materials they had available to express themselves, to put whatever was going on inside onto their paper. But if anyone wanted to just lie quietly under a blanket, close their eyes and be transported to some dreamy place by the music... well... that was OK too. This represented a different pace and tone compared to the higher energy that was typically experienced in our classroom. While COVID has posed some big challenges to what we usually do as educators, it has allowed us to dream of new possibilities for connecting – through small miracles in the world, and within ourselves.

*"But in the darkness of the night, after I turn out the light
I look up at the moon we share, that shines in windows everywhere
And then, somehow the world feels small,
and you don't seem so far at all."*

~ Linda Ashman, Outside my Window



Angelique Davies is a retired Early Childhood Educator from Toronto, Ontario. If you are interested in reading more about creativity, both for children and ECEs, please feel welcome to visit her blog at <https://earlychildhoodartsconnection.ca>

Life in the Sector: Profile of an ECE

Hannah MacDonald, Just for You Children's Centre



Current position: Level 1/ Infant Educator

How long have you been an ECE?
I have been in the field just over a year now.

What motivates you to do what you do?
I was definitely a daycare kid growing up. The memories I have of all the centres are good ones. I remember the educators all being so kind, loving, patient and understanding. Those educators are definitely what lead me down this path! I hope to help shape the minds and memories of the littles that I get to work with. You never know what you can inspire without even realizing it!

What is/are your professional goal(s)?
My goal is to continue with my education to further my knowledge and understanding.

What are your favourite hobbies outside of work?
When I'm not working I like going for drives, reading, or just going out on adventures!

What is your favourite song/book/quote? (work related or personal)
I'm bad when it comes to picking favourites! As soon as I think I have it chosen, I think of multiple more!
This quote is one that stays in the top though:
"Those who dare to fail miserably can achieve greatly"
~ John F. Kennedy

What is typically the best part of your work day?
I love when I'm just getting in for the day or the children are just getting dropped off. The joy when they see you for the first time that day always just fills me with happiness. The excitement they have seeing you and knowing you will be hanging out together for the day - the smiles, waves, getting yelled for - it's just incredible!

What has been your favourite Early Childhood moment?
Earlier this week a parent told me I was the only way they could get their child into the car to get to daycare that day. Just asking if they wanted to go see Hannah completely changed their mood and got them ready to leave the house. It may not seem like much, but knowing I am making a difference in their life no matter how small is really touching!

What does "The Power of the Pause" mean to you and how do you incorporate that into your daily work as an ECE?

The Power of the Pause to me just means take the time to see everything that is happening. It is okay to take a step back and enjoy what is happening while it's happening. You don't have to be planning the next step right then and there.

Let the children be children, give them time and space to figure things out for themselves or ask for help before just jumping in and fixing everything ourselves.



For many years, Co-operators & ECDA have maintained a mutually beneficial relationship. Two well established, local businesses, who have worked together to secure insurance protection and piece of mind for all members.

Co-operators would like to take this time to thank ECDA and all it's individual members for the trust they've placed in us. We look forward to continuing our relationship for many years to come.

Moving forward, Jansen McKinnon & Associates Inc, is pleased to have been appointed the new agency to manage the Early Childhood Development Association commercial policy.

Our commercial specialist, Lena Jenkins, is more than equipped to take on this new chapter. Lena is a leader in her field and brings more than 5 years of solid commercial experience. With a strong desire to learn, Lena is steps away from completing her CIP designation, and has a keen knowledge of policy wordings.

We trust this transition will be seamless and welcome the opportunity to review each individual policy. Reach Lena directly to schedule a time that works best, either in office (Montague/Stratford) or by phone.

Thank you again!
Jansen McKinnon & Associates
5315 AA MacDonald Highway, Brudenell
902/838-2230
Lena_Jenkins@cooperators.ca

Life in the Sector: Profile of a Supervisor

Karen Fraser, Just for You Children's Centre



Current position: ECE Supervisor/Infant Educator

How long have you been an ECE? I've worked in the field about 25+ years but only certified for almost 8 years.

What motivates you to do what you do?
I am motivated by a caring nature to help support young children and their families. Many programs that have touched my life and my learning experiences as an ECE made me wish I'd had similar help, programs and knowledge when I was a young parent. My desire is to share that with the children and families that are in my care and others.

What is/are your professional goal(s)?
The achievement of gaining my ECE Diploma so late in years makes me feel empowered that we never stop learning. I have been fortunate enough to meet and work with such professionals who are passionate about this work. If I could share my experiences, knowledge and ideals to others it would be a great opportunity and an honour for me.

What are your favourite hobbies outside of work?
Outside of work I enjoy spending time with family, reading, knitting, traveling, and cooking/baking.

What is your favourite song/book/quote?
Typically I always tell children that I don't have a favourite colour because its too hard to choose just one. I have a lot of favourite songs, books, and quotes. Mostly I listen to country music and like a song with a message. I love reading true life stories particularly about the triumph of people even through adversity. One of my favourite quotes is by former first Lady Barbara Bush: "You must read to your children and you must hug your children and you must love your children. Your success as a family, our success as a society, depends not on what happens in the White House, but on what happens inside your house."

What is typically the best part of your work day?
Once the best part of my day was pick up time, and not because children are leaving; but because of interactions with parents and building that relationship with the families. It's nice to connect especially at the end of the day and share with them how their child's day was and anything fun, special, or just interesting that their child has done or said. Unfortunately, Covid has made that quite different now.

What has been your favourite Early Childhood moment? My favourite moments as an Educator are when children want to give you something like a dandelion, picture, or just a hug. I love when they see you out somewhere else and recognize you and are excited. It is an honour and a privilege to still have connections with some families even long after their children have grown.

What does "The Power of the Pause" mean to you and how do you incorporate that into your daily work as an ECE?
The Power of the Pause has a few different meanings to me. One is to step back, watch, and wait. To think about what is happening with work, the children, even in training, or just life in general. Another 'pause' is to try to understand the situation of someone or something, to really listen and think, to not rush to judgement or conclusion, and work together to come to an understanding, or compromise. Another is to personally breathe and relax, clear my mind of whatever I can, to re-group, refresh, and re-set. Try not to get caught up in everything and to re-focus on my personal priorities.

"The achievement of gaining my ECE Diploma so late in years makes me feel empowered that we never stop learning."



Melanie Taylor is the Communications & Registry Coordinator at ECDA and the editor and designer of ELKE.

She is a seasoned communications professional with experience in various environments including non-profit, union and business. Her passions include both children and the non-profit realm, so she is very happy to be working for the ECDA!

Melanie also enjoys writing and producing meaningful, inclusive, and well-designed content. Through her management of the ECDA's social media channels, weekly newsletter, the bi-annual magazine, video production, radio and print advertising and more, she strives to engage stakeholders, the early learning and child care community, instill pride in the sector, and celebrate the important work of educators. Melanie holds a Bachelor of Public Relations degree from Mount St. Vincent University.

Life in the Sector: ECE in Training

Taylor Tremere, Super Stars Daycare

Current position: Participant of 'Steps to Success', Level 1 ECE by the end of the program.

How long have you been an ECE?
I have been in the field for a few months now but spent some time in centres as a teenager.

What motivates you to do what you do?
What really motivates me to do what I do is without a doubt, the children! They make the job worth every minute! But, the person who I would say motivates me to do what I do is definitely my mom, Jayne Crane. She has really helped to make my love truly blossom.

What is/are your professional goal(s)?
I would say my goal right now is to complete my introductory courses and move forward into a career as an ECE with more educational goals to obtain in the future.

What are your favourite hobbies outside of work?
I enjoy being outside whether it is walking my dog or going to the beach. I also have a love for reading and writing. I also enjoy dirt biking, quading, and lawn mower racing. I also enjoy spending time with my nieces and nephews in my free time.

What is your favourite song/book/quote? (work related or personal)
I have two quotes that I really enjoy. One is, "Speak to your children as if they are the wisest, kindest, most beautiful and magical humans on the Earth, for what they believe is what they will become," from Brooke Hampton. The other quote I really enjoy is, "The most valuable resources that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspectives," from Robert John Meehan. I picked the last one because the most valuable knowledge that I have learned thus far has been from another educator.

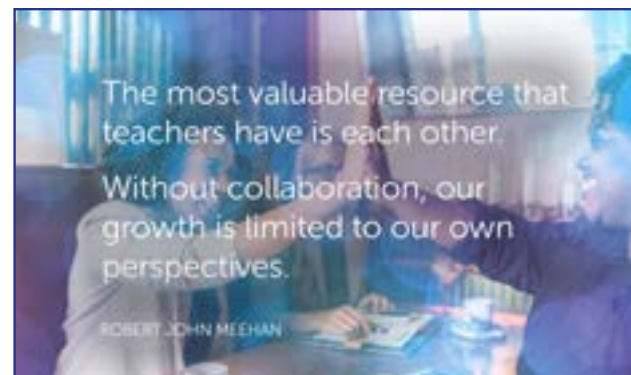
What is typically the best part of your work day?
The best part of my work day would have to be the mornings! Even though it can be hard for most; I enjoy welcoming the children back with a smile. But also to have lots of extra hugs ready for the ones that need it the most.

What has been your favourite Early Childhood moment? (for example, something a child has said to you, an "A-ha" moment – any kind of funny or meaningful story)
I would have to say one of my favourite moments that I



didn't expect, was coming back from break and having a child stop me on my way to my room to give me a super big hug and to let me know that they loved me a lot. It really showed me that I'm doing the right thing for the children.

What does "The Power of the Pause" mean to you and how do you incorporate that into your daily work as an ECE?
What the Power of Pause means to me is to really just take the time to pause in the moment to really be able to take in the experience with the children. I also feel like it could also mean to even just take that second you need before you respond to a certain situation. As we telling the children, "deep breaths" is key and it is key for us, too.



Are you looking for a new career? Have you ever wanted to work as an educator of young children? This project could be for you!

Steps to Success is a 6-month project intended to give workplace experiences to qualified candidates. It also provides the opportunity to gain the post-secondary training required to apply for a Level One Early Childhood Educator certification on PEI. It will get candidates on their way to full-time, part-time or substitute work in the ELCC system - a win-win! The next intake of candidates will begin in Fall, 2022.

For details, please email: projects@ecda@fpei.ca

Early Childhood Development
ASSOCIATION OF PEI

Life in the Sector: ECE in Training

Graham Putnam, Precious Jewels Daycare



What interested you about the Steps to Success program? In early 2021 I randomly applied for a substitute ECE position, The contact at the time, Elizabeth Jeffrey, told me I wasn't qualified but told me about the program. I forgot about it until the Fall where I reached out again and the new person in the position Megan Drummond motivated me to try it out even though I was hesitant.

How have the centre Director and ECEs supported your workplace training experience? Every day the centre director and other staff are fully supportive by suggesting insights with anecdotes and lessons from years of experience. Also they are very responsive to all the questions I have. I was very new to not only teaching but children in general. Wary to pick them up and unsure how to change a diaper. The mentor I was initially replacing with my practicum placement is exceptionally strong in all aspects of an educator role, including facilitating, inspiring, empathizing, regulating so it has been a great starting point.

What has been your favorite Early Childhood moment?
There are countless. Every day is something hilarious or surprising. It's nice to get positive feedback from parents about the feedback they are getting back at home from the kids about me. One big moment for me was when an infant who wouldn't settle with anyone decided I was ok, and now as long as I hold her she is fine.

What are your professional goals? I hope to continue writing and performing comedy. So, for now when the program is complete, I'm aiming to stay on part time and substitute position at the centre I am at, and maybe substitute elsewhere if needed.

What are your hobbies outside of work? I do a lot of theatre and some screen work. In the past couple years my lifestyle seems to be mainly at home and beyond walking my dog and housework it seems to be a lot of watching shows and such.

What is typically your best part of the work day? I like arriving to a bunch of energized little people in the morning, generally happy to see me. If my shift starts a bit later, like 9:30, there is a spirited cacophony as I approach the entrance door.



The ECDA is partnered with Dougan Insurance Group for our Health Benefits plan through Medavie Blue Cross. Dougan Insurance Group is a locally owned and operated insurance advisory firm specializing in group health benefits. They take pride in offering quality service, competitive pricing, quality products and customized benefit solutions.

By leveraging the size of the ECDA Membership base, Dougan Insurance Group is able to get preferred rates for our Benefits plan to help all participating ECDA Members save on their premium costs. Insurance companies charge fees based upon the size of the group for health benefits, so you benefit in being part of a larger group like the ECDA.

"We would like to thank the ECDA Members for their ongoing support and for their valued work within our community". ~ Craig Dougan, Advisor – Dougan Insurance Group Inc.

The ECDA group benefits plan offers the following coverages for Members:

- Group Life, AD&D and Dependent Life
- Extended Health Care
- Prescription Drug Coverage
- Travel Insurance
- Dental Care
- Vision Care

Reach out for more information and pricing if you are not already covered under the plan!

CRITICAL ILLNESS INSURANCE...are you covered? Dougan Insurance Group is offering all ECDA Members voluntary critical illness insurance. Critical Illness is a lump sum payment in the event of being diagnosed with one of the 18 covered conditions (including cancer, heart attack, stroke, coronary bypass surgery, heart valve replacement/repair and others). ECDA Members are able to get critical illness coverage with the following features:

- No Medical Evidence
- No Pre-Existing Conditions clauses
- Competitive Rates
- Coverage of up to \$30,000 per person

Contact the ECDA or Dougan Insurance Group for more information on this offering.

Documentation As A Pause to Think



By: Susan Stacey
Author, Educator,
Consultant, Presenter

Over the past two years, despite all the challenges, the pandemic has also given us the opportunity to pause and re-think many of our practices. Perhaps you were required to lock down and close your setting for a time. And while it was closed, or operating in a reduced capacity, there were chances to re-consider our environments and our practices. To think about not just what we do, but the 'why' behind our work, and how we may want to re-visit and re-configure.

My own work involves supporting others, collaborating with educators to learn about and further their journey with pedagogical documentation – that is, documentation that we can learn from. Over the past two years, I have been thinking about documentation as a learning tool for educators, and considering documentation as a 'pause to think.'

Why do you document? In other words, what is your documentation for? What is its purpose?

For many educators, the immediate response to those questions might be 'to communicate,' and I would agree that documentation is indeed a powerful and necessary communication tool. We attempt, through text and images, to communicate children's ideas and understandings, and hopefully include our own interpretation of the event as well.

Perhaps you also use documentation to revisit – with the children themselves, to hear what they have to say about what they were doing. And here is where we as educators can also revisit and think together, examining our documentation through the lens of 'what can I learn about my practices from this documentation?'

Or maybe you use documentation to make your decision-making and philosophy visible to others. When we document well, we show our Cycle of Inquiry – for instance, the journey from observation to reflection, to invitation/responses, and back again to observation. Thoughtful documentation makes our process visible, and this is important if families and society at large are to truly understand what we do, and why.

But what I encourage educators to consider, in addition to all the important aspects mentioned above, is documentation as a pause to think. After all, just the process of developing documentation provokes us to make decisions and choices about what is important to document,

how to make this event visible in a meaningful way, how we are going to articulate what was going on, and the meanings behind the event that we want to uncover and bring to the surface. This decision-making makes us pause to think, before we write one word or post one photograph. Documentation should be intentional, and the pause to reflect empowers us to think through or recognize our intentions, making for richer and deeper documentation.

Through reflection, particularly if we are in dialogue with colleagues, we learn. Through hearing others' perspectives about what was going on with the children, we are able to see through different lenses, to consider other possibilities, and to grow with each other.

Documentation, when we slow down, can be seen as a form of listening. We listen to children through watching their actions and listening to their thinking. We listen to other adults as we discuss and decide what to document and why. But documentation can also be a form of listening to ourselves. As you look at your documentation, for instance, you might ask yourself:

- What am I drawn to? What do I tend to document, and what does this say about my own curiosities and interests?
- What challenges me? What do I have difficulty understanding or articulating? How can I grow and learn?
- Will others be able to understand what I am saying? Can others – whether families or educators – learn something from my documentation?
- What does this documented event tell me about my own practices?

When we document, the role of 'slowing down to think' cannot be emphasized enough. Think of yourself as a researcher, someone who has a particular interest or curiosity about children and their thinking. As an astute four-year-old once said to me, research is simply 'finding out about stuff!'

As a researcher and documenter, there is huge value in slowing down rather than rushing through the process of documentation – taking time to reflect, and most of all, to question, consider, and learn.

Supporting Challenging Behaviors with a Pause

By: Nicole MacRae, BA, MSW
Owner & Therapist, Oak & Cedar
Counselling Services

Let's be honest, sometimes working with kids can be challenging. They can have behaviors that test limits, create safety concerns, and can leave us as the parents or educators feeling confused, overwhelmed, and unsure of how to help.

So what do you do when dealing with challenging behaviors? Well, many of us fall into the traditional response of reward and consequence. Basically, we reward kids for behaviors we want to see more of, and use consequences (such as removal or withholding of a reward) to deter behaviors we don't want to see. The reason we often use these strategies is because they are easy to implement, and allow us to be clear and concise with regards to our expectations. The challenge with these methods though, is that they don't leave a lot of room for the child's feelings, perspective or need for connection. It also leaves us vulnerable to the binary distinctions of "good" or "bad", and kids can quickly internalize their "bad behaviors" as meaning they are a "bad kid." The truth though, as Charles Appelstein writes "There is no such thing as a bad kid" (There is No Such Thing as a Bad Kid, 1998). Kids are not maliciously, or intentionally, difficult or challenging. They are not bad, and if we believe that to be true, then we have to start flipping the script on how we view challenging behavior, and how we respond to it.

My son is three years old. He is charming, sweet and incredibly kind. But, being three, he does not yet have the emotional literacy and executive functioning skills needed to navigate social challenges such as someone stealing his toy, breaking his Lego tower, or turning off his favorite tv show in order to get ready for supper. The only real form of communication he has readily available at this stage is the use of his body. His body knows how to communicate his feelings and needs. So what does it do? It yells. Screams. Throws the remote. It pushes or pulls. It cries or hides under the blanket. When we view his behavior not as intentional, or mean, or bad – but as a three year old communicating the only way he knows how, it shifts how we respond. Now, instead of me yelling at him, putting him on time out, or taking something away, I am going to pause. I am going to figure out what skill he is missing and how I can model that skill gently and respectfully, because that's really the goal of discipline – to teach, not punish – so that he can learn the skills he deserves to know.

The other way we can flip the script on challenging behaviors is to pause and ask ourselves, what feeling or

need is driving this behavior? When working with clients, I often tell them that they have two brains. A Rational brain that is logical, factual, literal, and black and white; and an Emotional brain, that is driven by images and feelings, needs and desires (from Dialectical Behavioral Therapy).

When my six year old daughter yelled and screamed at me on Monday mornings for not going through the roundabout at her school drop off, my first instinct was to think of her as unreasonable and irrational. I mean, I only parked three feet away from the roundabout, is there really a difference? Does it really matter? It's easy in these moments to see her as being "bad", when in fact, she actually had a valid, emotional reason. In order to understand what was happening, I needed to pause and ask her why it mattered to her, not just react to the behaviors. Turns out she had seen her peers use the roundabout lane, and wanted to feel grown up just like them. She wanted to feel trusted and independent. When I drop her off and walk her over to the teacher, she doesn't get the chance to feel this way, and it bothers her. With this new information, gained from pausing to learn more about the feelings and needs driving the behavior, the meltdown over me parking the car instead of going through the roundabout made a lot more sense. Once her feelings were validated, we both made a plan for how drop offs could occur for the remainder of the year, a plan that validated and acknowledged her needs while also supporting mine (and her brother's).

It's easy to assume that challenging behaviors are the result of a rude, defiant or bratty kid; but, it's never that. Challenging behaviors come from missing skills, honest feelings, and real needs. For most kids, these needs are to be seen, heard, and validated and to feel a sense of authentic connection and empowerment. When you start to see challenging behaviors, pause, and ask yourself what is this child feeling? What does this child truly need? What missing or lagging skill is needed? Once you uncover the answer to those questions, you almost always find your next move to handle the challenging behavior.



La vie dans le secteur : Profil d'une éducatrice de la petite enfance



Jenny Hustler,
Centre L'arc-en-ciel

Position actuelle : Ece 3 Prematernelle

Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous Éducateur de la petite enfance? 15 année

Qu'est-ce qui vous motive à faire ce que vous faites ? Ce qui me motive à travailler dans le secteur de l'éducation préscolaire, c'est de savoir que je contribue à former les esprits de notre avenir. De plus, j'adore mon travail. Lorsque vous aimez ce que vous faites, c'est comme si vous ne travailliez pas.

Quel(s) est (sont) votre (vos) objectif(s) professionnel(s) ? Mes objectifs professionnels sont de continuer à faire de mon mieux en tant qu'éducatrice et de continuer à apprendre chaque jour.

Quels sont vos passe-temps favoris en dehors du travail ? Mes loisirs sont le bateau, la plage, les voyages, la famille et mon chien Walter !

Quelle est votre chanson, livre ou citation préférée ? (liée au travail ou personnelle) Ma citation préférée est "Elle croyait qu'elle pouvait, alors elle l'a fait".

Quel est le meilleur moment de votre journée de travail ? Le meilleur moment de ma journée est probablement de regarder les enfants apprendre et jouer. J'adore écouter leurs histoires lorsqu'ils jouent et interagissent avec d'autres enfants, ils sont comme de petits adultes.

Quel a été votre moment préféré dans la petite enfance ? (par exemple, quelque chose qu'un enfant vous a dit, un moment "A-ha" - toute sorte d'histoire drôle ou significative) Il est difficile de choisir un moment particulier, mais si je devais le faire, je dirais probablement que je travaille avec un enfant qui a des problèmes de comportement et que je vois les choses changer et que je crée un véritable lien avec cet enfant. C'était incroyable de voir ma formation utilisée pour aider cet enfant à réussir et à grandir ! Cela m'a vraiment rempli le cœur.

Que signifie pour vous "le pouvoir de la pause" et comment l'intégrez-vous dans votre travail quotidien d'éducateur de la petite enfance ? Pour moi, le pouvoir de la pause et la façon dont je l'utilise, c'est quand on prend du recul pour réfléchir dans des situations stressantes. Il ne s'agit pas d'agir rapidement, sans réfléchir, pour régler une situation. C'est mieux. Il faut être préparé et gérer chaque situation avec les meilleures intentions pour l'enfant. Si j'ai besoin d'aide ou de conseils, je demande à mon directeur ou à mes collègues.



A Steps to Success and Accelerated Program Partnership

Amanda Allain

What interested you about the Steps to Success program? I am currently working at Bright Futures Child Development Centre. I was in the childcare field for 10 plus years before I decided to try something else and quickly learned that childcare is where my heart was. When I saw the ad for Steps to Success and got accepted I knew this was my second chance.

How have the centre Director and ECEs supported your workplace training experience? When I got placed at my centre, I was an emotional wreck but so excited to see what it was all about. The second I walked in I knew this was where I wanted to be. I was welcomed by every single staff and honestly they are some of my closest friends now. I had so many questions and they were always so willing to answer them or help with whatever I needed help with.



What has been your favorite Early Childhood moment? The hardest part for me was trying to feel like it was my classroom, even though I was told daily this IS your class. The moment I knew I could 100000% be a ECE was when I changed my classroom around. As strange as that sounds, it gave me the confidence I needed.

What are your professional goals? My professional goals for myself would be to complete my Level 3 ECE!

What typically is your favourite part of the work day? My favourite part of the day is walking in every morning and seeing all my little friends!

What advice can you give to others considering the Steps to Success program? If I can give one piece of advice it would be just go for it! Not in a million years would I think that going back to school at 38 would be on my agenda. This has changed my life!

Megan Drummond is the Steps to Success Coordinator at ECDA.

Megan is a Holland College graduate of the ECCE program, and has experience in project management as well as a passion for our sector and continuing to elevate PEI's ELCC system. She has worked within the field of early childhood for over 13 years.



Hailey MacKinnon

When I first heard about the Accelerated Program, I thought it was an opportunity too good to be true! As a student who had just received their ECE Level 1 certificate in December 2021, I was eager to continue my education journey in early childhood. I remember feeling incredibly shocked and surprised when I received my acceptance letter to attend Holland College in February, 2022 as a full-time student. After finding it challenging to balance working full time as an infant educator, raising two very busy little boys at home aged 4 and 7, and staying on top of due dates and assignments, I was very excited for the opportunity to fully focus on my studies and truly grow as an Early Childhood Educator!

As excited as I was to be accepted into the Accelerated Program, I must admit there were a lot of nerves involved as well! Attending college full time is something I have never done before and I am incredibly grateful for the support and guidance I received from my amazing team of directors and co-educators at Bright Futures Child Development Centre. Another reason I felt fully supported for this journey was knowing that the Steps to Success program had arranged a more than perfect replacement in my absence from the infant room. From my first encounter with Amanda, I knew she would be a wonderful addition to our team with her strong passion and excitement for learning! I knew she would have no issues building strong relationships with the infants in my care and their families. I have learned an enormous amount from mentoring my new friend Amanda, collaborating on our big ideas and what we have recently learned in our programs at Holland College.

It is a rewarding accomplishment to look back and see how far I have come in such a short period of time. I am beyond grateful for this opportunity to push myself out of my comfort zone and further my education at an accelerated pace. What is even more rewarding is the amazing friendships I have made along the way. Not only with my new friendship with Amanda but with so many other amazing ECE students across the island who I wouldn't have otherwise had the opportunity to meet!

Over the last few months, together either on campus or online with our instructors, we have built strong relationships and a community of Early Childhood Educators that I am very proud to be a part of. I wish all the best to my accelerated ECE Level 2 educators. This was truly a symbolic training experience and hope our paths cross again soon. Bring on Level 3!

ECDA Membership Benefits

Did you know, the Early Childhood Development Association offers a variety of perks for being a member of the ECDA? Here is a list of benefits that we offer:

- ✓ Voting power to impact the direction of your organization (Professional and Lifetime members only). As well, an opportunity to potentially join the ECDA Board of Directors.
- ✓ Reduced rates for conferences, workshops and events. This applies to all our members, except our Corporate members as they have different benefits to meet their needs.
- ✓ Access to 6 hours of specialized, members-only training each year for free.
- ✓ Access to a top-of-the-line group benefits plan offered through our partnership with Medavie Blue Cross (some restrictions apply).
- ✓ Access to liability coverage for centres offered with our partnership with the Cooperators. We have been partnering with the Cooperators for over 25 years on this coverage!
- ✓ Bi-annual glossy print magazine, “Early Learning Knowledge Exchange” magazine delivered to your mailbox! (This is what you are reading now!)
- ✓ Discounts at local retailers including:
 - Michael’s Crafts - 15% discount
 - Lawton’s Drugs (Health Plan subscribers only) - special pricing on various items when you show your Lawton’s card
 - Hearts & Flowers - 10% discount
 - Drs. Hickey, Burkey & Associates - 15% discount on retail
 - Island Optical & Eyecare - 15% discount on retail
- ✓ Access to the Resource Library including books, story sacks, a colour printer and photocopier.
- ✓ Exclusive access to members-only sections of the ECDA website.
- ✓ As mentioned above, if you are a Professional or Lifetime member, you have voting privileges at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) that occurs each September. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring your concerns, recommendations or maybe something you want the ECDA Board to investigate further or have it recognized and brought to the Board’s attention.
- ✓ Our membership enrollment has been increasing over the last two years and at last count, we have 635 current members! It is great to know that we are a strong organization and that we are the collective voice of our members that reflects their concerns and thoughts. It is our role to represent and be there for our members as their collective voice.

ECDA Board Members



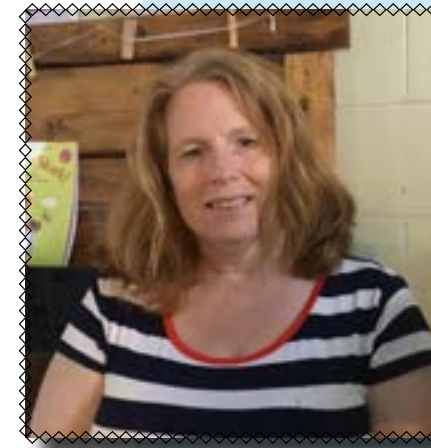
Melanie Cochrane



Cheryl MacKay



Jamie-Lynn Mosher



Deidre Scott



Melissa White



Tammy Shields



Ashley Bernard



Sara Arsenault-Kennedy



Mandy MacNevin-Reynolds
CCCF National Board Member

Missing from photos: Brenda Burhoe