



SJC Spring Newsletter

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS: Turnover, training, and quality

Carrle Melsom

Staff turnover has long been a challenge in early childhood programs but in today's economy with its changing demographics and competitive labour markets child care programs are challenged as never before to find and keep qualified staff. Understanding the links between turnover, training and quality is important if we are to make improvements as individual programs or in the sector as a whole.

The pressure to expand the sector is making an already difficult situation more difficult. It is challenging to meet the increased demand for trained staff when current needs are not being met. As demand increases it may be tempting to hire less skilled and non-credentialed staff to cover ratios. Research confirms that not only does this compromise quality but it also has a negative impact on retention and is actually associated with increased turnover. In fact, "teachers who contribute the most to rapid turnover are those who have little or no college-level experience or specialized early childhood training." (Schwarz, et al., 2003)

The reasons for this are many, but perhaps the one that rings most true for me

"A low percent of a centre's staff without at least a two-year ECCE credential predicts staff retention difficulties and centre turnover rate."

(Shedding New Light on Staff Recruitment and Retention Issues, 2004)

is that "education related to child development and the provision of child care assists the individual to understand what needs to be done, to experience success in the job, and acts as a buffer against the intrinsic stress of the occupation." (Manlove, 1993).

Understanding the cost associated with turnover is critical for early childhood programs not only from a quality of care perspective but also from a strictly business perspective. Turnover includes direct costs and hidden costs that are not so obvious but potentially

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A Message about training ...

Dear Colleagues,

At a recent consultation session with the Department of Community Services and ECE stakeholders, I stood up and said, "Just ask us and we will come to you to meet your training and professional development needs." Since that day, several people have asked what exactly I meant by this offer so I am going to be more specific.

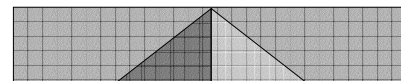
We are very proud of the professional development workshops offered every Tuesday night at the College and Wednesdays in Dartmouth. The content is varied and relevant and the proof of our success has been the record-breaking attendance by participants. However, we recognize that each early childhood environment is unique with seasoned teachers, new graduates and untrained staff all working together to provide the best education and care possible.

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Inside this issue:

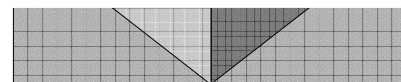
- *Workshops April—June 2008*
- *Inuksuk—A curriculum story from Mawio'mi Child Care Centre*
- *Calling all SJC Alumni*
- *SJC Recruiter— Road stories*

A publication informing the early childhood education community of events, services and professional development opportunities offered by St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education.



Please circulate and post this newsletter!

**E-mail:
ecestjoe@ns.sympatico.ca
to be added to our e-mail list.**





Making the Connections

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very damaging to your program. These can include reduced customer satisfaction (children and families) and the loss of valuable knowledge and expertise (Finders Keepers, Government of Alberta, 2003). Accounting for the total cost of turnover in your organization is an important step to take; it can help move your organization from the realm of reactive short-term solutions to more proactive long-term strategic solutions.



- 3. Job Stress leads to lower job satisfaction,
- 4. The hiring of lower-qualified employees further decreases job satisfaction,
- 5. Low job satisfaction leads to turnover in remaining qualified employees.

This study also found, "...it quickly became apparent that compensation, including wages and benefits, is not the only cause of turnover. Education and training incentives, when linked to higher wages ..., can also reduce staff turnover. For example, one of the keys to the military's success was directly tying compensation increases and promotions to the completion of training, which is mandatory" (Schwarz et al., 2003, p.4).

The turnover cycle outlined by (Schwarz, et al, 2003) in *Staffing Your Child Care Center: a Theoretical and Practical Approach*, works in the following way:

- 1. Low wages lead to turnover in qualified employees,
- 2. Turnover of colleagues leads to job stress for remaining employees,

Look for **Staffing Your Child Care Center** at www.mfri.purdue.edu. It offers many tools to help you explore the dynamics of turnover in your centre.

Director's Message

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We also know that the workshops on our roster do not always meet the specific and unique needs of your environments.

We are willing to come to your environments... In or out of the Central Region

- Evenings
- Weekends
- Over the lunch hour

...to facilitate experiences and supports designed specifically for you!

Examples of topics might include:

- Team building
- Facilitation of family meetings
- Support for inclusive practices

- Curriculum development
- College courses

The ideas are only limited by a lack of imagination and motivation. I assure you that we, at the College, have both in abundance.

Jane Cawley 423-0040



St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education. Education is the key to success.

Criteria of a great workplace:

- 1. I know what is expected of me at work.
 - 2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work well.
 - 3. At work I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
 - 4. In the past seven days I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
 - 5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
 - 6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
 - 7. At work my opinions seem to count.
 - 8. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
 - 9. My fellow employees are committed to doing high quality work.
 - 10. I have a best friend at work (a trusting relationship with a co-worker).
 - 11. In the last six months someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
 - 12. This last year I have had opportunities to work, to learn and to grow.
- *These statements, known as the Q12, are protected by copyright of the Gallup Organization, 1992-1999. All rights reserved.

Inuksuk: a curriculum story

Leigh-Ann MacDivitt and Tish Petite
Mawio'mi Child Care Centre

The children at Mawio'mi Child Care Centre have been very busy over the winter months. Their main focus has been creating inuksuks. This interest started with a book that one of the children found at a book fair. We purchased



the book and began to learn about inuksuks. The children quickly grasped the meaning and building of them. Each inuksuk has a meaning for which they



were built; from letting people know they were there, for directions, etc. The children have given their inuksuks many different meanings. We are lucky enough to have a beautiful rock garden outside of the NSCC building. It is filled with nice granite stones that are the perfect building materials for our inuksuks. The children took their time gathering and searching for specific sizes and shapes to build with. The children also started making inuksuks out of other materials in the classroom. They

have explored their ideas about inuksuks through drawing and painting pictures, using play dough and modeling clay. They have built inuksuks out of blocks, legos, and stickle bricks, and even snow. When we visit local playgrounds, the children will often build an inuksuk and if we ask them why, they say, "It is to let other people know that we were here and that this is a good playground".



This is one of countless exciting curriculum stories happening in Nova Scotia. We'd like to share yours too. E-mail your story to Carrie Melsom at resourcecentre@ns.sympatico.ca

Resource Centre

**Professional Development
Opportunities for Groups**

- Reaching In ... Reaching Out Promoting Resiliency in Young Children in Child Care (2 day training)
- The Encouraging Classroom: social problem solving for preschoolers (full day workshop)
- Magical Environments (1/2 day workshop)
- Meeting the Challenge: effective strategies for challenging behaviours (full day workshop)
- What are we doing here? Reconnecting with our vision (documentation visit + workshop)
- Tumble Bugs Active Play (1/2 day training)
- Hold a Staff Meeting or work bee in the Resource Centre

Calling all SJC Alumni

Carrie Melsom

In 2010 St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education will be celebrating forty years of educating and graduating Early Childhood Educators. We've graduated over 1000 students since 1970. Now we would like to find alumni so that we can invite you to our 2010 celebrations. If you are a graduate of St. Joseph's College e-mail us at ecestjoe@ns.sympatico.ca. If you know someone who is an SJC graduate, let them know we are looking for them. The more names we can get on our 40th anniversary database the happier we'll be.

We know that over the years many of our graduates have left the field of early childhood education or decided to provide child care in their own homes. Perhaps some of you are looking at the sector and wondering about the changes you've been hearing about. Salaries and benefits have been improving over the past few years; partly

due to direct investment by government and partly due to new realities in the sector. If this is work you've always loved it may be time to consider returning. Stay tuned, SJC can help. This fall we'll be offering a series of free workshops to Alumni who are considering returning to work in early childhood programs but want to know more about what to expect in today's workplace.

**SJC Class of '98 is celebrating
their 10 year reunion
July 2008.
Please contact
Glenna Inghram at
gingraham@ns.sympatico.ca
for details by
April 15,
if interested in participating.**



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**ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

2326 Brunswick Street (2nd Floor)
Halifax, NS B3K 2Z3
Phone: 902-423-7114
Fax: 902-423-3346
ecestjoe@ns.sympatico.ca

www.stjosephsece.ns.ca



Staff from Edward Jost Children's Centre enjoy a staff meeting at the Resource Centre.

At St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education, we provide an opportunity for students to study and gain experience in Early Childhood Education through a diverse range of courses and practical settings.

We are proud to lay the foundation for the personal and professional growth and development of our students. It is our hope and goal that SJC graduates continue to learn, practice and reflect throughout their years in early childhood education.



Join the crowd—become a member today

Take advantage of the many services provided with a St. Joseph's Resource Centre membership

Resources for the early childhood community

	Organization members	\$100
	Individual members	\$25



Tel: 420-1492 E-mail: resourcecentre@ns.sympatico.ca



St. Joseph's College Recruiter on the Road

Selln Oren

This year, as in previous years, SJC was on the road recruiting potential early childhood educators from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. As the College's High School Recruiter, I started traveling mid-September, and I traveled until December. My first stop was Cape Breton. Knowing that we have previously had students from Cape Breton gave me encouragement my first week on the tour.

In the following weeks, I traveled all over Nova Scotia to meet interested students and answer their questions about St. Joseph's College, the field of early childhood education, job opportunities in HRM, and the City of Halifax. After Nova Scotia, I continued to travel to Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick to visit high schools. As much as it can be a challenge to recruit along-side 40-45 other universities and colleges, the

moment you meet a student who is enthusiastic about the program and the field, you forget all the challenges.

Some of the challenges come from guidance counsellors. Some guidance counsellors direct students toward universities and ignore colleges. Other guidance counsellors are not fond of the early childhood education field. These guidance counsellors can negatively influence students who are specifically interested in ECE and may even change the student's mind. The same negative feelings can come from parents. A lot of parents ask about wages. There is an assumption out there that every ECE makes minimum wage. Addressing these objections and questions is part of my role as a recruiter.

In terms of recruiting, I also visit career centres in the metro to give presentations

and we hold information sessions regularly at the College. SJC also hosts "Student for a Day", a day where potential students have a chance to spend the day with us at the College. We offer workshops which show potential students what SJC offers.



"Student for a Day" is also a way for us to get the feedback from the recruitment tour. I am happy to say that the students that I met during the tour attend ready to learn more about our program. Furthermore, most

students who attend that day apply on the day of the event or send in an application shortly after. At every information session we hold here, I see one or two familiar faces and they are always excited to be on their journey to St. Joseph's College. I hope you'll welcome them when you meet them next fall.