

WHAT WE KNEW THEN:

What We Know Now

Carrle Melsom

How old were you in 1970? Were you of an age that would have benefited from a good pre-school daycare program? Perhaps you had young children; perhaps you were a young child yourself; or possibly... your mother was. In 1970 St. Joseph's Children's Centre established the first Early Childhood Education training program in Atlantic Canada. When reading newspaper clippings from that time what is truly remarkable is that St. Joseph's Children's Centre was brand new and trying to be viable in a sector that was struggling to birth itself.

This was the time when Nova Scotia's childcare infrastructure was being created; funding mechanisms; legislation; spaces; public awareness; and in the midst of it all, a training program. Right from the beginning people involved in the field of early childhood education in Nova Scotia recognized the importance of training for early childhood educators. That's not something that

can be said of every province. As early as 1971 a newspaper reports of St.



Dr. John Savage last night presented diplomas to 11 North Preston women and girls who completed courses for instructing pre-school age children. Virginia Cain receives her certificate from Dr. Savage while Mona Downey, second from left, and Mrs. Josephine Johnson look on.

(The Mail-Star, April 2, 1971)

Joseph's, "All of the teachers on staff at the centre have participated in training courses to enable them to give greater care to the children. These courses include teacher college workshops, a manpower preschool training course and an early childhood education course."

The understanding that well trained teachers were important in the early years is reflected in an excerpt from an article in the Chronicle Herald in 1970. Dr. Bartholome of the Dal-

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A Message from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that another school year is coming to an end. We will be holding the convocation ceremonies at the Citadel Hotel on Thursday May 6, 2010 to celebrate the success of the graduates. Many of the soon-to-be teachers are attending interviews where they are practicing the skills they learned in their Professionalism course, while others have already received job offers. We are hoping for another large and enthusiastic group of learners to start the program in September.

As you know Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education is holding a 40th anniversary Gala event on June 10, 2010. This party will give us the opportunity to celebrate and to share our successes – past and present; and to unveil goals for the future. We will be honouring alumni and past

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- *Remembering in the Resource Centre*
- *Book Review—Well Beings 3rd edition*

A publication informing the early childhood education community of events, services and professional development opportunities offered by the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education

Please circulate and post
this newsletter!

E-mail: info@nscece.ca
to be added to our e-mail list or
visit our website at
www.nscece.ca

What We Knew Then: What We Know Now

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housie Department of Education is reported to have said “the best teachers should be allocated not to the universities but to preschool and primary education where their talent can do the maximum good. It is a grave mistake to think that anyone capable of babysitting is qualified to teach the young.”

Another newspaper article from 1975 quotes Ms. Polly Sodhi, head instructor of the training program discussing the fact that most teachers are only paid minimum wage in spite of their training: “What this means is that trained teachers too often move on to other jobs when they are really needed to teach the pre-schoolers.” She goes on to state, “there is a need to certify teachers in day care and nursery work and to make it a requirement that they be trained before being allowed to do the work.”

The College’s early days were the result of a creative partnership initiated by Ms. Sue Wolstenholme of St. Joseph’s Day Care Centre, Dr. John Savage of the North Preston Medical and Child Day Care Centre, the Department of Manpower and Immigration, and the Department of Education. The first graduating class included eleven women from the community of North Preston and three women working for St. Joseph’s. Right from the beginning the SJC course offered a balance of theory and practice with students spending 15 hours per week in classes and 15 hours per

week working with young children in classroom settings. Early courses focused on child development, child psychology, teaching methods, the environment, health and nutrition, and programming. I suspect much of the content would be very familiar to our students today.

In 1989 the St. Joseph’s training program began to offer another type of support to the community with the assistance of Federal Child Care Initiative funding. The Early Childhood Education Resource Centre was created to offer curriculum materials, professional resources and professional development workshops. When



Class of 1998

project funding ended in 1993 the training program continued to offer workshops to the ECE community. In 2003 the Resource Centre was reinvigorated with funding from the Department of Community Services under the Early Childhood Training Initiative. Today the Resource Centre continues to offer professional development, consultation and in-service training. It also makes available a collection of over 3000 books, curriculum materials and toys designed to support the professional practice of early childhood educators and early learning and care programs.

During the 1970s and into the 1980s there was a rapid expansion in the number of centres operating in Halifax/Dartmouth. The St. Joseph’s training program continued to evolve to meet the educational needs of people interested in working with young children. By the time the program began to offer a one-year diploma the practicum component had increased to 650 hours. Throughout this time and into the present the course of studies continued to expand; growing from 360 hours of classes to 475 hours to the 870 hours required to graduate today.

In 1998 the training program was renamed and became St. Joseph’s College of Early Childhood Education. In 2000 the College introduced a two-year diploma program to align with standards that were emerging across the country. Since then the College has continued to evolve. Currently the NSCECE Diploma requires successful completion of 870 hours of classes and 600 hours of practicum. Over the past 40 years the College been part of the professional growth and development of 1033 ECE graduates. We have also contributed to the professional lives of the many other individuals who have participated in our workshops and other services.

An archival St. Joseph’s Children’s Centre ECE Training Program Brochure states:

“In recent years the focus at St. Joseph’s training course has been to give students a firm grounding in a cognitively-based approach to early childhood education. Emphasis is given to developmentally appropriate practice: children are encouraged to be active explorers of their environment and are helped to make decisions whenever feasible. The teacher’s role is to facilitate play and develop an organized and challenging environment, while maintaining an atmosphere of trust and security.”

It is clear is that throughout our history the NSCECE program grew in the community out of needs identified by the community. The result is an educational institution that continues to be flexible and responsive to the evolving needs of the early learning and childcare sector. For this we owe a debt of gratitude to those early pioneers. Like theirs, our passion and commitment to quality for children, families, and early childhood educators is on-going.

Director’s Message Continued

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employees as well as those of you who support us now.

Official invitations will be sent out to individuals and organizations in May but feel free to RSVP to (423-7114 or info@nscece.ca) immediately. We hope to see you there!

Jane Cawley

How We've Looked Through the Years



The Class of 1973 included a graduate who works with the College today.



The Class of 2007 has gone on to work in a variety of ECE programs throughout the region.



The Class of 1983 poses in a hallway familiar to many SJC students and graduates. One of these faces is also on our back page; can you spot her?



Timeline

- **1970** Day Nursery Aide three month training course established
- **1971** course extended to six months
- **1979** the course was extended to 10 months and included 600 hours of practicum
- **1989** the Resource Centre was created to offer the community professional materials, equipment, and professional development workshops
- **1998** the name was changed to St. Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education
- **2000** the curriculum was expanded as the College introduced the two-year ECE Diploma program
- **2003** the Resource Centre and Student Support Services began to receive funding from the Department of Community Services under the Early Childhood Education Training Initiative
- **2009** the College changed it's name to the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education and is now operated under its own Board of Directors
- **2010** Forty years and going strong

Forty Years and Going Strong

Carrie Melsom

Imagine graduating from an early childhood education course and forty years later still being actively involved in teaching young children. Donna Johnson was in the first class of graduates from the St. Joseph's training program. She worked for the St. Joseph's Day Care Centre for a year and then went home to North Preston to work with children in her community; she's been teaching there ever since. Jane

Cawley and I had a chance to chat with her recently:

Tell us what you remember about the about the training program you took at St. Joseph's.



One long-time early childhood educator chats with another. (Donna Wynder (Johnson), SJ '71 & Jane Cawley, RPI '72)

At St. Joseph's they had this junk room that I used to love. I learned about how children like to take stuff and make new things to play with. I took that right to heart. Even today I save stuff for children.

I learned how to have patience with children,

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Still Going Strong

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how to interact with children, and how to help children learn to use their hands.

Getting trained to work with children wasn't that common in 1971. Why did you decide to do the training?

I wanted to work with children and I wanted to do it well. I went to school to learn how to be professional in my care of children.

What kinds of things did you learn in the course that you still use today?
I learned to sit and talk with the children at their level. I learned that you have to pay attention to children—we have to get down there and listen to the children.

You've been working in North Preston for a long time. What can you tell us about what it is like to work with families over a number of generations?

It fascinates me! When I tell a child "I was

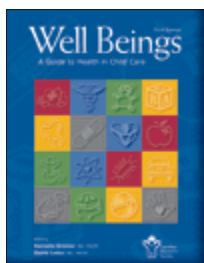
your dad's teacher," or "your mom's teacher," you know they sparkle. I think we should bring children up in a mannerly way. I tell their parents, "make sure you are teaching them good things and that they are in good programs; make sure your children are getting the best learning—the best you can give them."

How do you keep fresh and keep learning in this work?

I love it. Little voices have to be heard—I don't hear noise I hear play. You know I give them books. They can't read but they think they are reading. I get them to look at the pictures in the book and ask them to tell me about the story.

I'm not ready to retire—I keep looking for new young teachers to come in but they are not coming. We need to have more teachers start. I think we need to put money into young children's education. The best thing we can give them is a good education.

Well Beings—A New Edition of an Old Classic



Well Beings: A Guide to Health in Child Care Third Edition, Canadian Paediatric Society, 2008 (371.7 GR)

Review by Carrie Melsom

Many of us in the field of early childhood have done the early morning rummage as we searched for *Well Beings* and the definitive answer on this or that health ailment. Fortunately it, like all good reference books, was hefty enough not to be easily lost—sheer weight kept it from walking off on its own. I remember thinking that it was the type of resource where someone had thought of all the questions and put the answers in a book with an index that worked. The **Facts About** sheets were readable, clear and became an essential element in communication with staff and families. The previous edition was published in 1996 so it was exciting to

learn there was a new edition available for early learning and child care programs.

The 2008 edition is slimmer and trimmer, coming in at about half the size of the old one. Despair not; the information is still all there, only now the fact sheets and similar information are housed and available for download at, www.caringforkids.cps.ca/wellbeings/.

When scanning the table of contents it is clear that *Well Beings* continues to be about more than just children's health. It offers a context for ELCC in Canada and covers a diverse range of topics from safety, to nutrition, to managing infections, special needs, and child and educator emotional well-being. If you are looking for sample forms and checklists; cleaning and sanitization schedules; or how to manage common and emergency conditions you will find the information in *Well Beings*. The only thing I'd like to see added for the next edition is information on cultural diversity and health practices that reflect the growing diversity of our communities.

Resource Centre Professional Development Opportunities for Centres or Groups

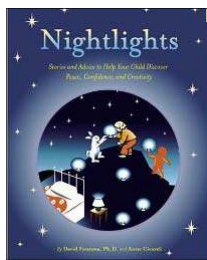
- Reaching In ... Reaching Out - Promoting Resiliency in Young Children in Child Care (2 day training)
- Meeting the Challenge: Effective Strategies for Challenging Behaviours (full day or 3 sessions)
- What are we doing here? Reconnecting with your vision (documentation visit + workshop + coaching)
- Tumble Bugs Active Play (1/2 day leader training)
- The Affective Curriculum (five, 3-hour workshops focused on cultural competence, self-esteem, optimism, problem solving, and emotional intelligence)
- Hold a Staff Meeting or Work Bee in the Resource Centre
- Talk to us about how we can help with your Early Childhood Enhancement Grant—Professional Growth Work Plan

Have a professional development need you don't see listed here? Call Carrie Melsom, NSCECE Resource Centre Coordinator at 420-1492 to discuss the possibility of a workshop designed for your centre or group.

Remembering: In the Resource Centre

The Resource Centre, like any library, is a wonderful place to leaf through history. In today's world of instant access information it's sometimes easy to forget what we already knew. Katrina Braun is a second year NSCECE student who took the opportunity to review two books that have long helped early childhood educators think about how to create peaceful classroom environments.

Reviews by Katrina Braun



Think of Something Quiet by Clare Cherry, 1981; **Nightlights** by David Fontana, PhD, & Anne Civardi, 2003

These two books provide a wonderful guide for both teachers and parents on how to create a peaceful, serene atmosphere with any sized group of children. Although *Think of Something Quiet* was written almost 30 years ago, the ideas are still fresh and relevant to our practice today. This book highlights how the simple, seemingly small things we do each day like stretching and reading stories, can make a big difference in children's behaviour if done with thought and intention

Nightlights is a great companion to *Think of Something Quiet*. It is full of a variety of stories that are meant to be read aloud to children while they close their eyes and imagine themselves in the stories. The stories are diverse and adventurous with a sense of magic and discovery. They provoke feelings of excitement, hope, anticipation and comfort.

Stories help children to understand the world and how relationships work. Quality stories are important. We all have an innate need to be creative. Unless this need is satisfied in the early years of our lives, as adults we will find creativity difficult and part of us will feel unsatis-

fied. (Fontana, p.14)

Nightlights shows educators how to help children calm their minds and reach a state of relaxation so that they can really experience the story. There is a beautiful collection of bold, yet calming illustrations with of each story. The author's writing style in *Think of Something Quiet* flows nicely and the book is full of imagination activities and relaxation games. Often these activities are used mainly for nap time or bedtime, but they can be used to help bring peace and a feeling of calmness that children can carry throughout the day.

Both books focus first on the reasons behind the chaos and how to respond in effective ways. The author of *Think of Something Quiet* explains that we must remember that there is always a reason behind children's behaviour. Children deal with a wide range of emotions every day. It's difficult to really understand what is causing the child to feel a certain way - but there is a lot that we can do to change the child's mood.

Most activities and stories are appropriate for children aged 3-8. There are many real life examples from the author's own classroom. These examples give the book a richness and give me confidence in the author's ideas.

Here are some of the ideas that *Think of Something Quiet* offers:

- Alter the environment – Light, colours, ventilation, humidity and noise level all affect a child's mood.
- Leave some areas and walls empty! Allow children to make changes to the classroom set-up.
- Paint a large cardboard box, cut a door and place a large quilt and pillows inside for a quiet place.
- Allow children to choose where they want to sit during circle time – some children feel uncomfortable having their back to the door or to their peers.
- Why not an after lunch walk? A walk can help them to burn off that energy and they may have a better sleep.

The practice of redirection and distraction, while effective behaviour guidance strategies, can be used too much. It's important for children to be able to express how they feel – in a safe and positive way. We should help children to express their feelings; even when they are angry or jealous.

After reading these books, I have found myself reflecting on my own behaviour guidance strategies. There is real value in the methods suggested by the authors of these books and I can't wait to try them out!

All children benefit from calm, quiet moments in their day, everyday! Children do not yet have the problem solving skills to deal with the stress a noisy environment can cause. There are many ways we can cultivate a peaceful learning environment and these books explain the strategies in a way that is practical and that anyone can do. All you need is an open mind and endurance. Remember that change does not happen over night, but with practice a routine can be established.

Other Oldies but Goodies

- Emergent Curriculum (372 JO)
- A Great Place to Work (371 JOR)
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Real Life (371.3 WIE)
- Supporting Young Learners (372 BR)
- Constructivist Early Education (372 DE)
- Constructive Play (375.3 FO)
- The Magic Years (155.4 FRA)
- To Listen to a Child (150 BR)
- The Good Preschool Teacher (371 AY)
- Two to Five (371.3 PA)

Resource Centre services are offered with support from the Department of Community Services, Early Childhood Education Training Initiative.



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At the Nova Scotia 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 NSCECE graduates continue to learn, practice and reflect throughout their years in early childhood education.



**play safe! be safe!
Fire safety program
for children, 3–5**

Friday, May 28th,

8:00–12:00

Cole Harbour Fire Hall, 1150 Cole Harbour Rd.

Sponsors: Hfx Regional Fire & Emergency; NS Fire Marshal

**participants receive a free play
safe! be safe! kit**

Register at www.halifax.ca/fireprevention



Join the crowd—become a member today

Take advantage of the many services provided with a NSCECE Resource Centre membership

Resources for the early childhood community



Organization members \$100

Individual members \$25

E-mail: resourcecentre@nscece.ca

Tel: (902) 420-1492



The NSCECE Job Fair gave centres a chance to meet first and second year students. Eighteen centres had a chance to meet over 50 students. (Feb. 2010)



40th

*Please join us for an anniversary
gala honouring*

Alumni, Staff and the ECE Community

*for an evening of refreshments,
recognition and fun!*

Thursday June 10, 2010

6 pm – 9 pm

Compass Room

Casino Nova Scotia

1983 Upper Water Street

Halifax

RSVP before May 7, 2010

info@nscece.ca

(902) 423-7114

Limited Guest Tickets available