

# New Graduates and Their Aspirations—Are you ready?

**Carrle Melsom**

On May 7<sup>th</sup> the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education will graduate the class of 2009. It's an exciting time. The students have spent two years as full-time students, more if they studied part-time, learning, thinking, practicing, and reflecting on the care and education of young children. They are ready to embark on their careers in early childhood education—are you ready for them?

I recently spoke with members of the graduating class about their hopes as they prepare to leave college and become members of the ECE workforce.

**Tell me why you decided to get a Diploma in Early Childhood Education rather than just starting to work in the field?**

- *"To be recognized as a professional."*
- *"To make a difference in children's lives."*
- *"To have a College experience."*
- *"So I can provide quality care."*

- *"To be more educated."*
- *"To get a better understanding of children."*

- *"To meet others who share the same passion."*

**What are you hoping for yourselves as you get started on your careers?**

- *"Positive feedback."*
- *"Flexible scheduling."*
- *"Opportunities for growth."*
- *"Chances to share what I know."*
- *"To continue learning from more experienced teachers."*



**Members of the NSCECE Class of 2009**

(Continued Page 2)

## A Message from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

Are you aware that the **Continuing Education Program** from the Department of Community Services makes funds available to child care staff to pay for the tuition and supporting materials (textbooks) for any courses taken on a part time basis? All of the courses in the program of studies at the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education have been approved. If you work in a licensed child care facility, you qualify for up to \$5000.00 per year (full time employment) or \$1000.00 per year (part time employment).

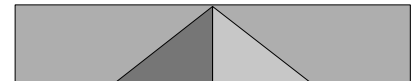
- Must work in a licensed child care or FHDC agency for a least six months prior to the start date of a course.
- Complete a Continuing Education Program application for course reimbursement form.

(Continued Page 2)

**Inside this issue:**

- *Building Blocks for Inclusion*
- *Superhero Play—Book Review*
- *Graduating College after all these years!*

*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.**



# New Graduate Aspirations

# Inclusion Training

(Continued from Page 1)

- “To be valued for what I bring.”

## What do you hope to see in a centre when you walk in the door?

- “A welcoming, warm environment.”
- “An inclusive environment.”
- “Educated teachers.”
- “Teamwork and good communication.”
- “Teachers interacting with children at the children’s level.”
- “Smiling faces.”
- “Children treated with respect.”
- “No discrimination.”

## We know salaries in this field are not reflective of the skills, knowledge, and care early childhood educators bring to their work; are there other things that employers might offer that would attract you?

- “A clear sense of direction and a plan for quality.”
- “Program planning time.”
- “Paid lunch.”
- “Better than licensed ratios—especially for toddlers.”
- “Sick time.”
- “Supports to include children with special needs.”

## Director’s Message

(Continued from Page 1)

- Submit official transcript with application.
- Submit original receipts for all costs connected with the course (tuition, books, etc.).

This is an incredible opportunity for everyone wanting to obtain training or to upgrade their current training. If you have any questions please feel free to call.

**FYI—funding for our full time program is available through the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program—call for details! (902) 423-7114**

Jane Cawley

- “Paid workshops and PD.”
- “Good cost sharing on benefits.”
- “Flexible scheduling and good time off.”
- “Opportunity to have lunch with co-workers.”
- “A convenient location.”
- “A sense of community—being part of the community.”
- “A fair wage.”

## Do you have any fears about starting your careers at this time?

- “I want to make sure I find a good fit.”
- “I have some anxiety about turn-over and people leaving just as I’m starting.”
- “I’m worried that I’ll be judged for making normal beginner mistakes.”
- “I’m concerned that my teaching style may not be supported or accepted.”
- “I worry that people will not value my learning in early childhood education the way I value my learning.”

## How will you know you’ve found a good place to work?

- “We’ll feel comfortable, included and respected.”
- “We’ll be part of the team.”
- “The children will be happy and learning.”
- “It will be a good place to learn and enhance our knowledge and skills.”
- “Inclusion and diversity will be valued.”
- “The Director will be approachable.”
- “Relationships will be good.”

The students have thought a lot about issues of Retention and Recruitment, not just in relation to themselves, but in relation to the field as a whole. During courses in Administration, Professionalism, and Advocacy they’ve read, researched and discussed many of the challenges faced by the sector. As part of their Advocacy course the students have designed a workshop that they will offer at the **Engaging Creative Minds Conference** in June 2009. They invite you to come and find out more about their perspectives on Retention and Recruitment issues.

## Jocelyne Lucas

Second year students from the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education participated in a two-day training entitled *Building Blocks Strategies for Inclusion* in January of this year. A number of teachers from the College Lab Schools were also able to attend.

The training had many hands-on activities that allowed participants to engage with ideas and demonstrate what they were learning. We had problem solving and in-depth conversations within our table groups and with the group as a whole. The facilitators answered questions, showed a PowerPoint presentation and spoke in detail about the process of inclusion.

Groups talked about and analyzed the “Power Tools” for building an inclusive childcare centre. The “Power Tools” are: *Observation, Motivation, Communication, Breaking Skills Down, Setting up for Success, and Choices*. As a group we made a building out of blocks with all the “Power Tools” the group thought we would need to make a centre inclusive.

Participants problem-solved and presented a case study using the R.A.I.D.E. problem solving process. This process stands for *Recognize, Analyze, Identify, Decide Evaluate*.

Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education students are using the R.A.I.D.E. process in our *Program Planning for Children with Special Needs* course. I personally found the training better prepared me for work in this course. Having the participant manual to look back at and use as a reference has also been very helpful.

The *Building Blocks* training helped us understand these processes better and helped us reflect on what we have to do to provide inclusive environments for children. We’ve taken our new knowledge from the training and are now using what we learned in our coursework and at our practicum placements.

**To get more information about Building Blocks contact Callie Cooper, ECDO at (902) 424-4700; or The Progress Centre for Early Intervention at (902) 423-2686.**

# In the Resource Centre

## Jocelyne Lucas

*Magic Capes, Amazing Powers* explains how to guide children and make superhero play a part of your classroom in a positive way.

The book details in-depth about how to redirect and support superhero play in a positive and safe environment by making the classroom's physical environment adaptable for whatever play is happening. Setting rules for superhero play before it begins is important because play can be fast, loud and physical. The book shows how to set rules and how to write them down for the children to refer back to when needed.

Hoffman identifies three typical stages of superhero play: imitative, reality base and fantasy-oriented. He describes in detail how to create an enriched curriculum environment indoors and outdoors



to support all three kinds of play.

Divide the classroom and playground into activity zones:

- *High Active Play*: swings, climbing, and open space
- *Moderately Active Play*: sandboxes, sensory tables, play houses
- *Less Active Play*: reading, artwork, puzzles and tables.

This can help control the type of superhero play that goes on in these zones.

In the book Hoffman identifies how to support superhero play through story telling. It is important to understand how children's storytelling develops, as children mature they create story ideas together that are more sophisticated, they add settings, characters, conflict or suspense. Hoffman outlines how to use and introduce writing, props and theater into children's storytelling, to make the classroom a safe and positive place for all the children.

I am about to embark into the world as a fulltime early childhood educator and found this book a valuable read. I will take the knowledge from this book and use it in my classroom and with my co-workers when we see this type of play.

*Jocelyne Lucas is a second year student at the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education. She reviewed this book while on practicum in the Resource Centre. Jocelyne will be graduating in May 2009.*

## Graduating Mom

(Continued from Page 4)

ey back from the government.”

### **Working full-time and going to school is hard. What kept you going?**

My family kept me going. Once you've gone so far you can't stop. My children are excited that I'll be a College graduate before they are. I had to stay motivated and tell myself I could do it. I knew if I kept working at it, it would come to an end. Now I'm wondering what I'll do next. It's never to late to learn.

## Resource Centre Professional Development Opportunities for Centres or 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 or 3 sessions)**
- **What are we doing here? Reconnecting with your vision (documentation visit + workshop)**
- **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**

**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.**

### Related Materials in the Resource Centre

- **Bad Guys Don't Have Birthdays: Fantasy Play at Four**
- **Boys and Girls: Superheroes in the Doll Corner**
- **Best Day of the Week**
- **Exploring Emotions Educator Kit**
- **Beyond Behaviour Management**
- **The Great Outdoors: Restoring Children's Right to Play Outside**
- **Think of Something Quiet**
- **So This is Normal Too? Teachers and Parents Working Out Developmental Issues in Young Children**



**NOVA SCOTIA COLLEGE OF  
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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.*



**Lorretta Sampson and some children from her classroom visit the NSCECE Resource Centre to borrow materials.**



**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



# “I’m graduating from College before my kids do!”

**Carrle Melsom**

Lorretta Sampson has been working in child care for over twenty years. In May Lorretta will graduate with an NSCECE Diploma in Early Childhood Education. I spoke with her recently to find out more about her decision to get an her Diploma.

**How long have you been working in daycare?**

“I’ve been working with children for twenty-three years and haven’t regretted a minute of it.”

**What drew you to the field?**

“It feels like I always cared for children. After I had my own children I started to take children into my home because a friend needed child care and there weren’t many options where we lived.”

**Why did you decide to get your Early Childhood Education Diploma?**

“After I moved to Nova Scotia I started as a substitute in a centre where a full

time position opened up. I was told I would need a letter of equivalency if I wanted the job. I got equivalency in 1995. About three years ago I decided to get my Diploma because this is my chosen career. I plan to keep doing this work and I believe in continuing education.”

**How has what you’ve learned in your classes effected your work?**

“In a good way. I’ve learned different methods and strategies. I’ve taken something from every class that improves my work in my classroom.”

**You work full-time; what kinds of options were available to you when you wanted to register for classes?**

“I was able to take night classes. I was also able to use my experience and on-the-job knowledge to PLAR courses for credit. I did a fair number courses as independent studies under the direction of College Director Jane Cawley. I also saved my vacation time to do two block practicum place-

ments; I was able to PLAR the other two.”

**What was it like to do practicum after all your years of work experience?**

“It was sometimes hard to remember I was a student and be in the student role but I learned things on each placement. I had a chance to see different ways of doing the work. At one centre staff told me how much they were learning from me and that felt really good; that we could be learning from each other.”

**How did you afford school?**

“In the beginning my employer paid for my courses up front and deducted a portion from my pay until they were paid back. I also received some bursaries. The College allowed me to pay in installments as long as I finished paying before the course was over. And now it’s just like having it for free! You send in your receipt and transcript and get your mon-