GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Canadian Children is the journal of the Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC), the only national association specifically concerned with the well-being of children of preschool and elementary age in Canada. The journal is published twice yearly and contains articles, book reviews and announcements of professional conferences.

Canadian Children is a multidisciplinary journal concerned with child development and early childhood education. Authors from across Canada, and elsewhere, are invited to submit articles and book reviews which reflect the variety and extent of both research and practice in early childhood education and child rearing.

CONTENT:
Submissions should appeal to an audience that includes parents, professionals in the field of childhood education and child services, as well as teachers and researchers. Most issues are multi-theme in nature and the editors will attempt to balance articles that are research-related with articles of a practical nature relating to programming, curriculum, classroom practice or child rearing.

FORM, LENGTH AND STYLE:
ARTICLES may be of varying length, written in a readable style. Style should be consistent with an acceptable professional manual such as the Publication Manual (5th Edition) of the American Psychological Association. Articles should be sent as an email attachment to the email address below or sent to the postal address, on a 3.5” IBM or IBM compatible diskette or a CD in Microsoft Word with three (3) printed copies on 21.5 x 28 cm. (standard 8 1/2 x 11”) paper directly to the editors at the address listed below. Type should be double spaced. If appropriate, authors should send accompanying black and white glossy print photographs, tables, figures or illustrations with complete captions, each on separate pages. Authors are to obtain releases for use of photographs prior to mailing. Please include a brief biographical sketch including the author(s) full name, title, professional affiliation, and other relevant information, such as acknowledgements, grant support or funding agency. It is expected that authors will not submit articles to more than one publisher at a time.

ACCEPTANCE AND PUBLICATION:
The editors will acknowledge receipt of, and review all solicited and unsolicited manuscripts received. The final publication decision rests with the editors, and will be communicated within three months. Manuscripts not accepted for publication will be returned only if a stamped self-addressed envelope is included.

DEADLINES:
Submission Deadlines are as follows:
FALL Issue: August 1
SPRING Issue: February 1

Canadian Children est la revue de l’Association pour les Jeunes Enfants (ACJE). Elle demeure la seule association vouée exclusivement au bien-être des enfants de niveau préscolaire et primaire au Canada. Cette revue biannuelle regroupe des articles, des comptes rendus de livres et des avis de conférences professionnelles.

Canadian Children est une publication multidisciplinaire qui traite du développement de l’enfant et de son éducation durant la petite enfance. Les auteurs du Canada et d’ailleurs sont invités à soumettre des articles et des comptes rendus de livres qui mettent en évidence la variété et l’étendue de la recherche et de la pratique dans le domaine de l’éducation au cours de la petite enfance.

CONTENU:
Les articles doivent s’adresser à un public composé de parents, de professionnels de l’éducation et de services à l’enfance, ainsi que d’enseignants et de chercheurs. Chaque numéro traite de divers thèmes et le rédacteur en chef tentera d’y inclure tant des articles portant sur la recherche que des articles portant sur des aspects pratiques de l’éducation comme la gestion et la mise œuvre de programmes d’études, les méthodes d’enseignement en salle de classe et les techniques utilisées pour élever les enfants.

FORME, LONGUEUR ET STYLE :
LES ARTICLES peuvent être de longueur variée et doivent être rédigés dans un style accessible à tous les lecteurs. La présentation doit être conforme aux normes du Publication Manual (5e édition) de l’American Psychological Association. Les articles devront être en Microsoft Word ou Word Perfect (format IBM PC), attachés à un courrier électronique ou enregistrés sur une disquette 3.5” ou sur un CD et envoyés au rédacteur en chef à l’adresse indiquée ci-dessous. Les trois (3) copies doivent être dactylographiées en double interligne. Les auteurs devront fournir, s’il y a lieu, les photographies accompagnant les articles, tirées en noir et blanc sur papier glacé, ainsi que les tableaux, figures ou illustrations avec leurs légendes, imprimés chacun sur une feuille. Ils devront obtenir le permis de reproduction des photographies avant de les faire parvenir au rédacteur. Il est recommandé d’inclure une brève note biographique contenant le nom complet de l’auteur, ses titres, affiliations professionnelles et autres informations pertinentes telles que remunerements, supports financiers ou organismes de subvention. Il est entendu que les auteurs ne soumettront leurs articles qu’à une seule revue à la fois.

RÉVISION, ACCEPTATION, ET PUBLICATION :
Le rédacteur en chef accusera réception et tiendra compte de tous les manuscrits reçus, qu’ils aient été sollicités ou non, et soumettra les textes qu’il aura retenus à au moins trois lecteurs externes au comité de rédaction. La décision de publier est sous la responsabilité du rédacteur en chef et sera communiquée à l’auteur dans un délai de trois mois. Les manuscrits non retenus pour publication seront retournés à leurs auteurs seulement s’ils sont accompagnés d’une enveloppe pré-addressée et affranchie.

ÉCHÉANCIER :
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Please send all publication correspondence for consideration to:
Laurie Kocher, and Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, Editors
CANADIAN CHILDREN JOURNAL
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We write our first editorial for *Canadian Children* with great appreciation for the opportunity to get to know, read first hand and learn more about the amazing work conducted in the early childhood area in Canada and beyond. We are aware how difficult it will be to fit into Mabel Higgins’ role, and hope to be able to continue the profound and generous work she has done for the last 10 years for this journal. Mabel has been a wonderful mentor, offering careful and gentle guidance as we take on this new task. This has been a humbling process as we recognize the limitations of our own knowledge and skills, but we embrace this editorial position with enthusiasm to learn.

We thought we would introduce ourselves by providing a brief background of who we are, what we do, and what we bring to our roles as editors for *Canadian Children*.

Laurie Kocher taught kindergarten in the public school system for many years and is currently an instructor in the Early Childhood Education Department of Douglas College near Vancouver, B.C. Prior to this she coordinated the Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research at the University of British Columbia. During her time at UBC, she organized and facilitated a study tour to Reggio Emilia that included students, professors, artists, and policymakers. She currently directs a provincial network of Reggio-inspired teachers and college educators. Her doctoral research focused on the pedagogical documentation practices of the preschools of Reggio Emilia and how this work has been transformative for teachers in other contexts. She has been involved with the development and implementation of the British Columbia Early Learning Framework and has participated since its inception in the Investigating Quality Project as a planning partner and group facilitator.

Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Early Years Specialization in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, Canada. She co-directs the School’s Unit for Early Years Research and Development. The Unit is involved in several initiatives that promote the active engagement of early childhood educators in discussions and actions that can lead to the formation of dynamic and innovative spaces for young children in B.C. Veronica is also an active member of the international reconceptualizing early childhood group and has contributed important insights regarding racialization debates in early childhood. Currently, she also serves as the pedagogical leader for the University of Victoria’s Child Care Services. Her work continues to be inspired by the many early childhood educators she has collaborated with in Canada and Argentina.

We have worked together since 2006 in a variety of contexts and projects, and are very much looking forward to yet another collaboration and learning opportunity through our involvement with *Canadian Children*.

We also welcome Iris Berger in her new position as publications chair of *Canadian Children*. Iris is the coordinator of the Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research at the University of British Columbia, and is completing doctoral studies with a focus on the area of leadership in early childhood education.

The *Invitational* article as well as those included in the *Child Study* section reflect quite a wide range of perspectives reflecting different practice and theoretical positions: From rough and tumble play and literacy to physical activity and children’s rights! The *Directions and Connections* section allows us to get close to the experiences of a child and a teacher, inspiring us to think differently. And finally, in our *Professional Resources* collection, we have reviews for another wide assortment of resources for educators and young children.

As this issue of *Canadian Children* comes together, ready to go to press, Laurie is sitting in a piazza in Reggio Emilia, Italy, writing on her laptop. A number of Canadian educators are in Italy as participants in a study tour to the world-renowned early childhood programmes of that community, co-organized by the Ontario Reggio Association and the Canadian Association for Young Children. We anticipate contributions to the journal from some of these participants in the months to come.

It has been a delight and a privilege to review this selection of articles and to work with the authors to bring their work to publication. We look forward to what the next months hold as new submissions arrive, from across Canada and from international contributors.

Our very dear colleague, Dr. Sylvia Kind, has generously contributed the cover photo.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw & Laurie Kocher
Introduction

Understandably, rough and tumble play (R&T) can be a form of play which educators can find difficult to interpret. Since the play behaviours of rough and tumble so often mimic aggressive play (Humphreys & Smith, 1984; Reed & Brown, 2000; Tannock, 2008), there is a tendency for educators to modify or prohibit the play in early childhood settings. However, with apprehensions about rough and tumble play and the resulting tendency to limit the play, opportunities for social and physical growth are inadvertently limited.

This paper explores some of the apprehensions and opportunities inherent in rough and tumble play. Further, considerations for educators seeking to reach a level of comfort with the play in their childcare settings are discussed. Ideally, this mediated level would meet the needs of all sites and educators.

Abstract

Young children in early childhood settings are engaging in rough and tumble play, sometimes to the dismay of the educators seeking to guide their behaviour. The children at play often display expressions of delight, as educators become concerned that someone might get hurt. Rough and tumble play evokes levels of apprehension while also affording opportunities for unique experiences. This article highlights research investigating the rough and tumble play of young children and the perceptions of educators and parents who guide the play. The study resulted in an increased understanding of rough and tumble play for early childhood educators and child development specialists seeking awareness and opportunities to effectively interpret and manage the play.

Rough and tumble play?

The rough and tumble play (R&T) of young children in early childhood settings can be difficult to interpret and effectively manage as educators try to distinguish if behaviours are play or aggression. Educators seeking a clear understanding of what constitutes rough and tumble and effective management of the play need to understand and interpret various forms of play. With clarity on the forms of rough and tumble play and how the play is unique from aggression, educators can implement strategies to effectively manage the play in their settings.

King (1992) recognized that children view play as self-chosen, preferred, and gratifying. As with definitions of play, there are multiple definitions of rough and tumble play including the variety of behaviours displayed during the play. Rough and tumble play is defined as fun, social-interactive behaviour that includes running, climbing, pouncing, chasing and fleeing, wrestling, kicking, open-handed slapping, falling, and other forms of physical and verbal play fighting (Freeman & Brown, 2004; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). The elements of rough and tumble play have been similarly categorized by Reed and Brown (2000) to include fleeing, wrestling, falling, and open-handed slaps, running, play fight-
The purpose of this exploratory study was to determine the underlying thoughts of early childhood educators, parents, and young children on the role of rough and tumble play in early childhood settings. The specific questions that guided the interviews of the parents were: (1) Are you aware of any guidelines about the inclusion of rough and tumble play in your child’s daycare? (2) In your opinion, what sort of value do you perceive from this sort of play? The specific questions that guided the interviews of the children were: (1) What do you think about rough and tumble play? (2) Are there rules for play at daycare? (3) What happens if you rough and tumble play at daycare? (4) What do your teachers think about rough and tumble play at daycare? The interview transcripts were then analyzed. The analysis involved grouping the data from the transcripts into common themes, topics, and categories based upon the questions asked by the researcher. “The analysis proceeds by looking for patterns or relationships” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 144). The responses were analyzed for patterns and relationships for each question and for each group of participants (educators, parents, and children) and compared across participant groups. This method of analysis was utilized by Winzer (2003): “after all interviews were recorded, the most common responses were tabulated. Results were determined by calculating the most frequent responses” (p. 18).

**Programming guidelines**

The lack of contemplation of rough and tumble play was demonstrated when educators were asked what the programming guidelines of their setting say, if anything, about the inclusion of rough and tumble play. None of the educators provided clear details of what the guidelines of their specific setting were in relation to rough and tumble play. Rather, the educators indicated that they did not know what the guidelines were, that they were unsure of what the guidelines were, or described what they thought the guidelines of their setting might be.

One educator attached a caveat to her response when commenting on the lack of guidelines. This educator stated, “I don’t know. I can tell you what they should say. They should say rough and tumble play, as long as everyone is safe, is okay with us if no one gets hurt. That’s how kids play because kids are kids.” Three educators thought that their setting did have a policy on rough and tumble play but were unsure of what the policy stated. As acknowledged by one of the educators,
“to be quite honest I don’t know what the guidelines say. I probably read them when I first started here but I’ve completely forgotten” and, “actually I don’t really know if there is anything.” The remaining educators recognized the need for safety in their descriptions of the guidelines on rough and tumble play. One educator stated, “I think safety is a big issue. If it starts to get too rough it’s time to put a stop to it. We don’t want anybody to get hurt. A little bit of roughhousing is okay but when it starts to get to the point where they’re getting carried away it’s not safe anymore, we stop it.” Another educator stated, “what they say is that mainly the children are safe and that they’re not abused in any way by the other children. I know that there’s something to the effect that they feel safe and secure.”

With a limited reflection of rough and tumble play within center policies, educators are left to interpret and make choices about the inclusion of the play on an independent basis. This can be quite uncomfortable for educators seeking to support the philosophy of their program. Clearly, educators need the opportunity to discuss the display of rough and tumble play amongst children in care. Through discussion, common points of understanding on how rough and tumble is interpreted, including the extent to which the play can be included, can be determined. The question of how rough and tumble is included or excluded was of question for parents as well.

Parent perceptions of programming guidelines
The participating parents were asked, “Are you aware of any guidelines about the inclusion of rough and tumble play in your child’s daycare?” Nine of the parents responded that they were not aware of any guidelines, five parents indicated that they were aware of the guidelines for rough and tumble play, and two parents thought they knew what some of the guidelines were.

The two parents who responded that they knew some of the guidelines for the inclusion of rough and tumble play made comments that reflected their uncertainty. For example, one parent stated, “I guess they have the basic ones. They’re not supposed to do it or they get a timeout. They want them to have fun but not to be out of control.” The comments of the parents who indicated that they were aware of the guidelines included details of what the children are not permitted to do. These comments included, “they don’t allow it, someone might get hurt” and “the uncalled for stuff is not allowed, the violent stuff. It’s the same at any daycare.”

Parents need to be made aware of centre policies and guidance strategies employed by educators. However, the role of rough and tumble play has not been effectively conveyed to parents who are left wondering and assuming how the play is being interpreted and managed. Once educators have engaged in discussions on the role of rough and tumble play in their settings, parents should be informed of any developed policy. Equally, the children in care should be made aware of developed guidelines.

Children’s perceptions of programming guidelines
Each participating child was asked if there were rules for play at school. The children acknowledged that there were rules at school and articulated limits on their play. The participating children conveyed limits in terms of what they are not allowed to do rather than what they are allowed to do. The general rules shared by the children included, “don’t yell and scream inside. It might make our ears hurt” and “can’t say bad words and secrets are not good.”

The rules for play articulated by the children indicated absolute bans on rough and tumble play as detailed by comments such as, “there’s no wrestling at school, you’re only allowed to do it at home” and “there’s rules about no wrestling. No wrestling at daycare.” The limitations on physical play were also recognized to include specific details with statements such as, “no punching each other”; “no hitting and no punching and no kicking”; “no pulling hair either”; “I have a rule, don’t kick anyone in the tummy” and “fighting, not allowed.”

These comments from the children on the rules for play at their daycare detail and reveal clear limitations on physical and hurtful play. The children are also clear in their understanding of their teacher’s interpretation of rough and tumble play. This perception of the children was in contrast, to some degree, with the positions of educators. Where educators promote safe play, young children are more connected with what they are not allowed to do rather than what they should be doing. This interpretation of what is not allowed continued in the discussion of rough and tumble play.

What children think teachers think about rough and tumble play
The children were asked what their teachers think about rough and tumble play. Each of the children indicated that their teachers did not approve of rough and tumble play. The children made statements such as, “I know it, I know it, it’s not very good” and “it would be bad.” These children also clearly conveyed consequences of engaging in rough and tumble play through comments such as, “I don’t like it when I play rough because I get sad on a time out”; “sometimes I have to go to the thinking chair” and “you get sent on a time out. It’s not an okay thing.”

Children’s thoughts on rough and tumble play
The participating children were asked what they thought about rough and tumble play. The children responded to this question in four ways. First, there were comments on specific games that they play including, “pushing them around” and “ah, I play rough with Ben and I play the pterodactyl game with Jack and those are dead pterodactyls.” Second, the children commented on the safety of the play. These comments included, “you
can make someone hurt, they could hurt themselves or they could fall down” and “they could cut themselves.”

The third identified theme included the children’s articulated thoughts on what they should be doing in their play with comments such as, “I know what is a good play. A good play is when you talk to your friends nicely.” The final group of comments included reflections on play with family members such as, “I think that it’s fun with my dad.”

For the children who were interviewed as part of this study, the articulations included comments about the types of games they play, the safety of rough and tumble, how they should be playing, and their play with members of their families. These comments were in agreement with the comments of the parents in this study who noted the need for the play to be safe, for their children to avoid physical contact in their play, and that rough and tumble is not appropriate in early childhood centres. However, not all rough and tumble play is dangerous or in contrast to the promotion of positive experiences for young children. Within rough and tumble play are opportunities for young children to engage in socially and physically interactive play which supports development.

Opportunities
Particularly for young boys, rough and tumble play is an avenue for growth, predominantly from a social perspective. While the play appears to be dominated by physical interaction and experiences, the core of the experience is social. This is the avenue in which young boys can express friendship and kindness within a masculine context. Reed and Brown (2000) discuss gender differences in the expression of caring behaviours amongst children. It was their perception that, “boys and girls have different perspectives on intimate relations and different interpretations with regard to connection and expression of care” (p. 105). Indeed, the authors note that research suggests there may be a relationship between rough and tumble play and caring friendships. It was the perception of the authors that rough and tumble play may be one of the few socially acceptable ways for males to “express care and intimacy for another male [and it may be that] our culture’s homophobia [supports the need for boys to engage in rough and tumble play as a] camouflage for expressions of intimacy and care” (p. 114).

While rough and tumble play is not the only means by which young boys are afforded the opportunity to engage in social interaction and develop friendships, it is an important avenue for such development. With an understanding of the social opportunities inherent in rough and tumble play educators can interpret the play from this developmental perspective.

Educators’ thoughts on learning through rough and tumble play
Educators were asked what he or she thought the children learn when engaging in rough and tumble play. One recurring theme was that the children are developing awareness of their physical abilities and the abilities of others. For example, one educator stated, “it’s such good sensory development, and cognitive development because you really get an awareness of your body parts.” This body awareness was recognized by other participants who made statements such as, “they learn about their own abilities, their own bodies, space, the difference between running normally and running and flailing” and, “their own physical strength and ability, I think they gain a greater awareness of themselves and other people.”

Physical limits
The educators recognized rough and tumble play as a vehicle for children to learn about the limits of physical play with others. One educator stated, “it’s whole body play and it’s a way of being gentle with your body in a way so as not to hurt others. It’s active play without injury” while another comment was, “they learn their own strength, they learn about someone else’s strength.” This element of learning the limits of physical play is reflected in an educator’s comments when stating, “I think they learn about other people’s body language, about physical proximity, about your own body space, they learn about other people.”

Judgment
Within the play, the educators detailed, the children are learning judgment in determining the limits of the play. An educator stated, “they learn judgment, when to stop, when it’s getting too far. Yes, judgment I guess. To learn when it’s dangerous, when their play has gone over the top. When a simple game of pass the ball and run after it has turned into a fight. When to stop.” This element of discovering limits was reflected in the following responses: “boundaries and respect, they learn to recognize when they’ve gone too far” and, “how rough to be because there’s a point when it’s not fun anymore and they’re starting to learn that. Some kids have hurt someone else and they’ll say I’m sorry, they’re starting to get it.” One educator identified the educators working with the children in their description of the learning of limits when they stated, “limits, how far can you push the teachers and get away with it, how far you can push your friends before they get mad at you and don’t want to play with you anymore.”

For one educator, personal rough and tumble play experiences guided her comments on what the children are learning. This educator stated, “I think I used to be in the rough and tumble stage and I remember it taught me some skills, some defense skills. How to stand up for myself. I remember being five and six and being rough and tumble. I think it helps the kids to stand up for themselves later on in life, not necessarily right now.”

These educators, as with the parents, commented on learning opportunities in rough and tumble play. The children are, according to the educators, learning social skills as they make judgments about the intentions of other players and learning what their physical abilities and
limitations are. As with social development, physical skills are supported in a variety of experiences in early childhood programs. However, particularly for physically interactive children, the opportunity to experience their physical abilities within a rough and tumble experience affords variety of play experiences which enhances overall development.

Educators’ thoughts on the value of rough and tumble play

The participating educators were asked what value they thought rough and tumble play holds. Several of the educators responded to the question with reference to the physical aspects of the play. As detailed by one educator, “I think it’s very valuable. It keeps kids active, price-less. You don’t want kids sitting down doing nothing all day, pudgy little kids. You’ve got to keep them active at that age, any age when you’re a kid. Being active involves rough and tumble play.” Another educator stated, “I say that it has a very high priority. Physical fitness too, it’s a big thing now. There’s many, many children now growing up who don’t have that opportunity for that kind of physical activity, it’s just unfortunate.” However, not only did educators recognize the value of rough and tumble for combating obesity, but also for the release of energy and social development.

Energy release

The educators’ perception of the play was that it was valuable, “especially for energy release.” As one educator indicated, “I think are some boys that need to get that out. And some girls as well, obviously the ones who like to do it. They obviously need that outlet, to roll around and jump around and get crazy.” This energy release through the play was identified as influential in the programming of the individual setting by one educator who stated, “it keeps them out so they nap, so they sit still during snack time. How do you expect them to sit still at a table all morning? It burns off their energy so they can focus on the quieter things.”

The educator’s recognition of the value of energy release, which is connected with the development of endurance and strength, has been demonstrated in early childhood research to be of value for children in educational settings. As detailed by Pellegrini and Smith (1998), “exercise play might, by breaking up cognitive tasks, provide spaced or distributed practice rather than massed practice” (p. 584). This distributed practice might, according to Pellegrini and Smith, help children to attend to cognitive tasks. If children are given opportunities to be physically interactive their ability to attend to cognitive tasks is improved. Educational programs must provide opportunities for large body movement as a functional element of any program or curricular schedule. Especially for young children, the need to be physically interactive at regular intervals is vital. The ability to attend to focused activity is dependent upon opportunities to engage in varied forms of physical interaction, including rough and tumble play.

Social competency

The educators recognized rough and tumble play as being of value in the development of social competency. One educator noted, “it teaches you control and compassion, how to play together. You’re always going to be in contact with people, always in one way or another so you might as well learn to deal with them,” while a second educator stated, “definitely there’s a social bonding thing with rough and tumble play.” This recognition of the social elements of rough and tumble play was reflected in the statements of an educator who commented, “it’s just a large body experience. Being in contact with another human being really cultivates a wonderful feeling. You create a relationship with that person. Developing emotionally, too. And spatial awareness, comfort with people in general.”

Children learn about their world and the social expectations of others through play with peers. Peers play an important role as children interact within equal relationships, unlike their relationships with adults. The peer relationships offer opportunities to explore a variety of social behaviours such as disagreement, cooperation, competition, and aggression that might not be experienced in the same way as in relationships with adults (Hartup & Moore, 1990).

The elements of developing social skills were reflected in the comments of three of the educators who identified the limits or boundaries in social interactions as a valuable element of rough and tumble play. One educator stated, “I don’t know if it’s good to say that they get to know their limits. Like what is rough and tumble and what is over that line, boundaries of what they can do.” A second educator observed, “they’re learning that everyone has tolerance levels, patience levels, everybody is different” while the third educator commented, “all kids do it and they have to learn what is acceptable and what is not. So if they’re doing something and it’s not acceptable they’re learning what’s okay and what’s not because somebody is going to come in and say that’s not acceptable, you’re going to hurt someone, that’s not okay. They’re learning. I guess, about what’s okay and what’s not okay, what’s acceptable.”

The value that educators placed on rough and tumble play was primarily as a means for energy release as highlighted in the surplus energy theory of play (e.g., Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). This view of
Parents, particularly those who were not into the misunderstanding of the play. tumble play, yet also provide a glimpse understanding of the value of rough and intent to engage in play or be aggressive. Expressions and actions are indicators of physical contact. These emotional children will clench their fists during play have open hands where aggressive children participating in rough and tumble play are smiling, where aggression is accompanied by angry facial expressions. Further, children who engage in rough and tumble play are smiling, where aggression is accompanied by angry facial expressions. Further, children participating in rough and tumble play have open hands where aggressive children will clench their fists during physical contact. These emotional expressions and actions are indicators of intent to engage in play or be aggressive.

The responses of parents demonstrate understanding of the value of rough and tumble play, yet also provide a glimpse into the misunderstanding of the play. Parents, particularly those who were not rough and tumble players as children, may interpret the play as aggressive due to the mimicking feature of the play. Educators can support parent interpretation of the play by providing information in a newsletter or via a presentation during a parent information session. Some parents may need additional information on rough and tumble play which can be effectively conveyed by educators.

The participating parents were asked what sort of value they thought rough and tumble play holds. The participating parents mirrored the educators in consideration of the physical nature of rough and tumble play which was detailed as valuable in comments such as, “It’s an outlet for energy. It’s a huge value” and “It helps them develop their physical skills and is good for keeping them in shape physically.” Another value identified was the enjoyment of the play as reflected by one parent, “It’s fun. I don’t know, it’s fun, it’s important to have fun when they’re little. If he is enjoying it, that’s cool.” Another parent recognized the building of relationships when stating, “My son and his dad have a different relationship because of rough and tumble play. My son sees his dad as his friend because they rough and tumble play.”

Confidence
For four of the parents, the value of rough and tumble play is reflected in a developing confidence within the players. The comments of these parents included, “I think it helps children to gain confidence in themselves. They learn what their strengths are and their physical limitations”; “It makes them more sure of themselves so others don’t take advantage of them”; and “It’s part of a lot of team sports and can help to make kids tougher. They feel more competent when they can play rough without being aggressive. It builds confidence.”

Ideals
The variety of values associated with rough and tumble play were reflected in the comments of two of the parents. The first stated, “They learn about boundaries. They learn to empathize and to anticipate what other people are going to do. They have fun with it. It’s a physical contact that’s reassuring of their relationship with mom and dad. It’s a chance for them to test their limits but it’s not so passive and cozy.”

The second parent detailed, “First, it’s a good opportunity to explore social interfacing. They learn what’s appropriate and fun versus what is hurtful to others. Second, there’s the physical learning. They learn to control their bodies. And third, it’s a fun activity for him. He gets lots of attention from me and lots of physical contact. He needs that. We also do the nurturing touching as well with hugs and back rubs. But he needs the physical, playful touching that comes with rough and tumble play.”

The comments indicate that 15 of the 16 parents interviewed (94%) place value on rough and tumble play. These parents were able to articulate how rough and tumble play enhanced their child’s play experiences and supported personal growth within social contexts. This value in rough and tumble play was congruent with the educators in this study. Both groups claim there is value in the participation in rough and tumble play by young children. The social benefits of rough and tumble play were recognized by Kranowitz and Miller (2006) to aid in the development of skills such as give and take, taking turns, cause and effect, and playing by the rules.

However, the parents in this study did not appear to have communicated their thoughts to the early childhood educa-
uninterrupted. That’s when you generally see the more rough and tumble play. And not that it’s not supervised, but the children have more freedom outside. There’s more rules about running and jumping and all those things you can’t do inside. Yes, I think that it’s provided for in that way.”

Three of the participating educators stated that rough and tumble play was not actively provided for in their programs. Of the three educators who stated that rough and tumble was not provided for, two were the only participants from Setting 4 and one was from Setting 3 where one co-worker detailed that they do provide for rough and tumble play. The comments from the educators who acknowledged that they do not provide for rough and tumble play included, “we don’t encourage it, no” and “we don’t, I don’t think, if they do start it’s usually stopped.” The third educator stated, “no, it just happens. But when it gets too rough we try to settle it down.”

Two educators commented that they will adapt the program to include elements of rough and tumble play even though they did not state that they actively attempt to make provision for the play. One educator stated, “not to the extent where they are rough, pushing and shoving. When they are outside they’ve got room to run and play and roll around.” The second educator explained, “on a day when it’s crazy we’ll say let’s get outside, let them run around a bit.”

Two of the educators commented that while they would like to provide for rough and tumble play in their programs, circumstances have prevented them from doing so. The first of these two educators stated, “I used to and then I was rough and tumble playing with a child and I knocked their head on the wall and that was the end of that. She had a big bruise and welt on her face so that was basically it for me. I don’t do it anymore.” The second educator detailed, “I would but I’m also a new educator here so I’m not setting up my own program necessarily.”

To conclude, it is an action based on misunderstanding. Brown, it is an action based on misunderstanding. Reed and Brown (2000) recognized that research on rough and tumble play has been dominated by a focus on the play of boys. As a result, boys engaging in rough and tumble play in early childhood settings stand a greater risk of being reprimanded for engaging in the activity. This is not a malicious act on the part of the female educators; rather, according to Reed and Brown, it is an action based on misunderstanding.

The participating educators were asked if they actively attempt to make provision for rough and tumble play in their program. Of the eleven educators, four stated that they do make provisions for the play. The comments from the educators ranged from, “I think so” to “yes we do, we certainly do... we do make provision for that.” Another educator stated, “I think the fact that there’s a lot of free play time outside is the centre’s provision for physical activity. They use nice names like gross motor activity but it really is the provision for letting off steam and letting the children really get out there and do things uninterrupted. That’s when you generally see the more rough and tumble play. And not that it’s not supervised, but the children have more freedom outside. There’s more rules about running and jumping and all those things you can’t do inside. Yes, I think that it’s provided for in that way.”

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‘The other staff’ and rough and tumble play

The participating educators were asked how the staff with whom they work felt about rough and tumble play. Of the eleven educators, two commented that rough and tumble is discouraged. These educators stated, “they discourage it pretty quickly” and, “I think they probably all think it’s not highly valued. Maybe we’re not educated enough on it I would say because it’s stopped so quickly.” Eight of the remaining nine participants made similar responses when commenting on how the other staff feel about rough and tumble play. The common element of these participants’ responses was that rough and tumble play is acceptable as long as children are not being hurt.

Differences were noted among the educators in how they phrased their responses. Five of the educators phrased their responses in a positive tone such as, “I like it. I think we all have the same thought on it. We all like it as long as it’s not too rough. As long as no one’s getting hurt. As long as everyone’s safe I think we all have the same thoughts.” Another educator responded, “we just basically know the key ones who would really rough and tumble and we make sure somebody’s in that vicinity with them. You can’t really stop them. I think we’re all kind of on that same, hopefully we’re all on the same page.” Additional comments included, “you know I think we pretty much agree and work as a team to foster good, positive rough and tumble play” and, “if the children are being respectful and no one’s getting hurt then we are okay.”

Three of the educators commented that, while respecting the play, they viewed rough and tumble play as needing to be controlled. The comments from these participants included, “just that if it starts to get out of hand then it’s either slowed down to more acceptable level or they’re redirected to find something else” and, “I think we just basically agree that it can only go so far. When somebody starts pushing and shoving where there’s danger of somebody getting hurt it’s got to
stop.” This element of respecting the play while also expressing concern for the safety of the children involved echoed through the interviews.

One educator, however, recognized that staff play a significant role in how rough and tumble play is managed in their setting. This educator stated, “I think we all know that it’s part of the child’s day, that it’s going to occur. I think it depends too on staff, how they feel that day. If they’re having a bad day, it’s harder to cope with it. We have to cope with it but if you’re having a stressful day, you can’t tolerate it quite as well. But we all know it’s important, we all know it occurs.” However, the educators commented that they do not regularly speak with one another about rough and tumble play. Rather, the educators responded to physical play when it appeared that someone might get hurt.

### Staff discussions and comments on rough and tumble play

The educators were asked if the staff at their setting ever discussed or made comments about rough and tumble play. The responses of the educators can be categorized into three groups: those who have not made comments or discussed the play, those who discuss the play on an incidental basis and those who have discussed rough and tumble play in a more formal atmosphere such as a staff meeting. Six of the educators stated that they had not entered into discussions with the staff from their setting. Comments from these educators included, “I don’t remember ever having a talk about it” and, “not since I’ve been here, not that I recall.”

Two of the educators stated that they have talked about rough and tumble play with their fellow staff on an incidental basis. These comments reflect the daily events of a setting such as, “so and so is very, really energetic today so you’re kind of monitoring them more.” One educator detailed that they talk with the other staff about the rough and tumble play in specific situations. This educator remarked, “we’ll watch what’s happening with the kids and say that’s borderline or do you want to step in or not. If someone comes out and sees a situation that’s developed into something that they go ‘oh, that’s rough’ then the person who’s been watching the whole situation can say ‘well, actually, it’s just a game and this is how they’re playing and it’s okay and under control I’ve got my eye on it.’”

The remaining three educators described discussions that appeared more formalized. One educator spoke of lunchtime discussions when they stated, “sometimes if things are getting really rough... we’ll talk among ourselves at lunchtime and we’ll say this day is going to be something else. So we know it’s coming so we discuss it with each other, we are all more aware and actively watching.” This meeting of staff to discuss rough and tumble play was detailed by another educator who reflected, “sometimes at our room meetings we’ll say that they’re wild and crazy. It’s more on a daily basis. So if it happens, if it occurs, we try and accommodate for some of it. We don’t want the whole day rough and tumble though.”

The educators commented that they did not engage in planning conversations about rough and tumble play. Rather, the conversations the educators reported did have about physical play resulted from difficulties arising from the play. The educators participating in this study responded to rough and tumble play rather than actively providing for the play.

Reed, Brown and Roth (2000) interviewed early childhood educators and elementary teachers on rough and tumble play. The findings of this research concluded that rough and tumble is a continuing concern, yet rough and tumble continued to exist despite efforts to eliminate it. The main factors influencing negative attitudes to rough and tumble include the dominance of female staff, concerns about injury, difficulty distinguishing rough and tumble play from aggression, and attitudes about play from a gender and educational perspective.

These identified concerns are likely to continue due to increased cautiousness related to liability injury within educational settings; concerns about the impact of media in promoting aggression amongst children and the imitation of media during role play while in school (Sherburne et al. 1988; Reed, Brown & Roth, 2000) and the promotion of strategies to managing challenging behaviours in educational settings (Powell, Dunlap, & Fox, 2006). As detailed in these studies, educators are interacting with a complex dynamic of ensuring developmentally appropriate and supportive environments and externally influenced positions of concern. There is a need for educators to plan for discussions on the influence of the media or community interpretations of the impact of group care on individual children.

### Children’s thoughts on what happens if they engage in rough and tumble play at school

The children were asked what happens if they rough and tumble play at daycare. The responses of the children fell into two main categories. First, the children stated that they would be reprimanded. Second, there were comments that some children would get hurt from the play. In both cases the children were quite certain about their responses. The children commented on the behavioural consequences from the play and focused on injury as a consequence of the play.

The comments of the children included, “if you do it then you’re going to get in trouble and have a timeout.” This position was supported by additional comments such as, “you get sent on a timeout” and “and on a chair.” While one child provided a context to their answer when stating, “if I kick someone in the face, then I will go on a timeout.” For the participating children in this study, a focus on the possibility of getting hurt as noted in the comments such as, “we’ll get hurt.”

The comments from the children in this study reflect two common perceptions on the results of rough and tumble play: that they will be reprimanded and they...
may be hurt in the play. However, as demonstrated in the comments on the value and learning inherent in rough and tumble play, the result of engaging in rough and tumble play can be beneficial within the context of normative development. It is this paradox which holds rough and tumble play in an uncertain space, with inherent value yet perceived concerns. Yet, researchers and educators must consider the developmental impact of excluding rough and tumble play from a child’s experiences. Research conducted by Pellis and Pellis (2007) resulted in recognition that the lack of rough and tumble play resulted in organizational changes in the brains of young rats. Pellis and Pellis related their findings to the development of young children when noting that, “it may not be the case that the more socially competent children engage in more play fighting, but rather that the play fighting may promote the development of social competency” (Pellis & Pellis, 2007, p. 97).

Educators need to be able to respond to rough and tumble play from an informed position as it is both an opportunity for development and a form of play which can cause concern or apprehension. The benefits from a social and physical development perspective should not be overlooked and must be considered within the framework of concerns.

The choices educators make in how they respond to young children engaged in this play is an area which can be prepared for. Through the utilization of standard observation techniques, educators are able to create a plan which not only supports the developmental benefits, but also ensures the safety and well-being of the children. A standard method for reconsideration of play behaviours should begin with a period of observation in order to fully understand the extent and form of the rough and tumble play within programs. As with any sequence of observations, educators should ensure that recordings of behavior are made over a course of several days encompassing varied aspects of the program, particularly outdoor play and transitions. With data in hand, educators can examine behavioral manifestations in order to determine if the play is causing harm or is a positive experience for the children. It may be that the aggressive mimicking of rough and tumble play is resulting in premature limits being palced on the play.

When educators consider the developmental benefits of rough and tumble play in conjunction with the actual behaviors displayed, effective planning for the play can occur. Such planning results not only in common policies and procedures which can be communicated to parents, but also with a common framework in which educators can guide the play.

**Conclusion**

Scott and Panksepp (2003) recognized that rough and tumble play encourages children to learn and to develop prosocial behaviors. As educators develop an awareness and understanding that rough and tumble does not involve aggression, they may be able to develop a more positive perspective on this form of play. Rough and tumble play is not an event which educators are typically comfortable with. However, educators need to be able to deconstruct what forms the basis for the discomfort. If the play is uncomfortable for educators there will be a natural tendency to discourage the play, to redirect and avoid the tumbles despite the accompanying laughter. Yet, educators can take an active approach as they consider what is of concern and how the play can become more acceptable. A change in venue, a limit on the form of physical interaction, and an understanding of the developmental necessity of rough and tumble play will aid educators in recognizing value within the play.

Educators are understandably uncertain of how to effectively manage rough and tumble play in early childhood settings. The uncomfortable experience of guiding the play can lead to a predominance of efforts to eliminate or severely constrain the play. Certainly this is understandable as educators ensure that each child is safe, however, educators also need to keep in mind the loss in terms of developmentally appropriate experiences. Social understanding develops within multiple contexts, over a life span of experiences, including rough and tumble play. It may be that young children, particularly boys, will gain the understanding gained during rough and tumble play through other experiences. However, if physical play is consistently limited or modified, the loss of experience will impact social cognition. It may be that the benefits of rough and tumble play may serve as the catalyst for educators to seek opportunities to include the play within early childhood settings.

**References**


Early Childhood Education Students’ Emergent Skills in Literacy Scaffolding

Jodi Nickel

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Abstract
This study examined how four early childhood education students applied their knowledge of emergent literacy in their practicum settings. Literacy research has shown that in order for young children to become effective readers, they must develop 1) a vocabulary-rich knowledge base, 2) the ability to reason about story messages, and 3) the code-related skills of phonological awareness and print awareness. The students’ college instruction focused on ways to promote emergent literacy by scaffolding children’s skill development in these three early literacy areas, particularly during story reading. At the conclusion of their practicum, the students were asked to identify the specific ways in which they had promoted emergent literacy skills. The resulting data suggested students were sometimes confused about the code-related skills of phonological awareness and print awareness. Students reported they seldom had conversations with the children that focused on code-related skills as part of their story reading activities. Furthermore, their application of discussion techniques in support of children’s vocabulary development and the ability to reason about story messages were of questionable quality. This data suggests that early childhood educators require significant modeling and practice to develop the complex skills needed for effective instructional scaffolding during story book reading.

Introduction
While sharing stories with young children is seemingly common practice among early childhood educators, research suggests educators may not be engaging in the kind of book discussions that provide children with the emergent literacy skills they need to be successful as early readers (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Hindman, Connor, Jewkes & Morrison, 2008). A key research summary (Millard & Waese, 2007) highlights the importance of evidence-based strategies to foster children’s emergent literacy skills, particularly developing phonological awareness, print awareness, oral language enrichment, and story comprehension through book interactions. The importance of these emergent literacy skills is echoed throughout the research (Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2007; Justice & Kaderavek, 2002; Pullen & Justice, 2003; Yopp & Yopp, 2000).

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Vygotskian theory (1978) supports the premise that adults can influence children’s emergent literacy development by scaffolding children’s understanding—that is, by working with children to enable them to achieve more than they could independently. Scaffolding in teachable moments is widely believed to be the best way to show children how words sound and look alike, how to talk about new words, and how to understand stories (Cabell, Justice, Vukelich, Buell & Han, 2008). Effective scaffolding is practised by skilled teachers, but how does this complex skill emerge for new professionals?

Study Background
I began this study because I wanted to understand how my students used the literacy content in my course in their literacy activities with young children. I knew that my students read stories to children, but I wanted them to do so in ways that would build those critical skills recommended in the research literature, namely print awareness, phonological awareness, oral language enrichment and story comprehension. I taught them about the importance of emergent literacy skills, but had I done so in ways that would help them to foster these skills for children?

During the semester this study was undertaken, I was the professor for the study participants in a curriculum course entitled “Learning Through Play II”, a course that included literacy components. All four students who volunteered to participate in the study were concurrently participating two full days each week for the four month semester in a practicum under the supervision of a...
practicum instructor. This was their second semester in a four-semester early childhood education diploma program. In their practicum placements, they worked with children ranging in age from 3 to 6 - three in child care centres and one in a kindergarten program for children with “special needs.”

Prior to the study, the practicum literacy assignment sheet asked students to record the story titles they read with children, without asking for reflection upon their learning or their interactions with children. To prepare for this study, the practicum instructor and I together revised the assignment to help the students better scaffold children’s learning and engage in reflective self-assessment of their own practice. (See Figure 1). The assignment was designed to help students attend to specific ways they could introduce conversations about literacy skills and the story meaning during teachable moments with children. Students were required to complete this practicum assignment for five stories and five songs or poems throughout their practicum.

To prepare for this assignment, students brought a book to my class that would be appropriate for their practicum age group and interests. I used children’s literature to illustrate how literacy skills instruction (phonological awareness, print awareness, vocabulary development, and story comprehension) could be incorporated in story reading. On an assignment sheet similar to the practicum assignment, the students recorded how they might scaffold children’s literacy understanding with the books they brought to class. When I reviewed these in-class assign-
ments, I offered written feedback to clarify misunderstandings and offer further suggestions. This in-class assignment was designed to prepare them for the required practicum assignment.

The data for this study included all of the literacy related assignments completed by the students in practicum, video recordings of the students’ story reading with children, and an audio-taped interview with me. During the interview, we discussed most of the assignments using an interview guide, with the following questions:

- What do you think the children understood about phonological awareness (how words/sounds work)? Did you talk about specific words during or after reading?
- What do you think children understood about how print works? What did you do to show this to them?
- What words might have been new to the children? Did you talk about these words?
- What questions did you ask or what things did you explain to help them understand the story?
- Other questions related to the specific story/song/poem or questions related to what was recorded on the student’s assignment.

When analyzing the data, I used a qualitative method, describing and interpreting key points in student understanding (or gaps in that understanding) using rich description.

Subsequent pages identify some specific ways the students in the study illustrated their understandings and misunderstandings of key literacy skills in their practicum assignments, in the videotaped story reading, and in their interviews with me. I also examine ways they engaged the children in discussions about the stories and attempted to scaffold children’s literacy understanding.

Results

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness has been defined as “the ability to recognize and manipulate the individual sounds in speech” (Millard & Waese, 2007, p. 12) and includes the awareness, whether implicit or explicit, of syllables, rhymes and alliteration. Children learn that speech is made up of sounds that can be broken into parts. Phonological awareness is fostered through activities such as rhyming stories and songs, texts with alliterative writing, and inviting oral cloze or “chime in.” These experiences are particularly valuable when the adults use teachable moments to point out sound features (e.g., “Your names both start with a /k/ sound”). Research has shown that:

Teachers who understand the critical importance of phonological awareness in reading development are likely to spend more time sharing nursery rhymes with their children and engaging children in sound play activities than teachers who may view these kind of activities solely as fun and do not recognize their teaching value. (Purcell & Rosemary, 2008, p. 227)

I have often observed students sharing rhymes and songs with young children, but I wanted them to recognize the “critical importance” of these experiences for fostering phonological awareness and subsequent reading development.

Cabell et al. (2008) compare implicit and explicit ways to promote phonological awareness:

- Implicit Attention to Phonological Features
  “This book is called Tooth Trouble. It looks like the walrus has a toothache!”

- Explicit Attention to Phonological Features
  “This book is called Tooth Trouble (accentuating the /t/ sound). That’s interesting. Each word in the title starts with the sound /t/. Listen for it.

I’ll read the title again: Tooth Trouble. It looks like the walrus has a toothache!” (p. 208)

Such explicit instruction is very important for scaffolding young children’s phonological awareness, but many adults fail to capitalize on such opportunities during reading. Cabell et al. (2008) remind readers that such instruction should not bombard children; when embedded in story reading, it can promote children’s curiosity and enjoyment of sounds and sound patterns in words. Children often find such word play amusing.

When reviewing the practicum assignments, it became apparent that the students experienced some confusion about what sorts of words or phrases might be appropriate for fostering phonological awareness. In some cases, students appropriately identified rhymes (“Jill/hill”) or alliteration (“Jack/Jill”), but in many cases this assignment box was filled with other unrelated information such as new words that seemed to belong under the vocabulary development column. In the cases where students did correctly identify words or phrases they could discuss with children, they admitted that they never had such discussions. I specifically asked, “Did you ever point out that those words rhyme or sound the same?” The response in every case was, “No.” This illustrated to me that it was one thing to understand the concept of phonological awareness; quite another to promote this understanding in dialogue with young children. During the interviews, I modelled how the students might do this in a developmentally appropriate way. For example, I showed one student, “You might say, ‘Piddle and Paddle - their names sound almost the same don’t they?’ ” This illustrated to her how a brief comment during story reading could call children’s attention to the sounds in language without necessarily interrupting the flow of the story or creating a tedious and complicated phonics lesson.
Print Awareness

Print awareness includes recognition of alphabet letters, recognition of environmental print, and understanding of print concepts (understanding that print carries a message and that print moves from left to right and top to bottom on the page) (Pullen & Justice, 2003). Children begin to “read” familiar signs in their environment, including the golden M at McDonald’s restaurants or stop signs on the street. Reading such symbols is an important aspect of letter recognition and early reading. Children typically attend to the pictures when adults read aloud to them, but educators can draw children’s attention to print by asking children to find the title of the book or to notice key words or letters (e.g., “Look! This book starts with a B like Brendan’s name.”).

My data suggests that of all my target skills, the students were most clear about ways to promote awareness of print concepts, particularly modeling to children how text moves from left to right. All four students described how at times they would track the words with their fingers while reading or point to certain key words as they read them to build print awareness. However, they admitted they seldom explicitly talked about the print by calling attention to key words or particular letters.

Regarding the story, Don’t Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late by Mo Willems (2006), Jillian wrote on her assignment, “The bigger the words, the louder the voice gets.” However, she actually noted this under phonological awareness, not print awareness suggesting some confusion about the terms. Furthermore she confessed that she didn’t actually point out the size of the text to the children as she read. In an amusing part of the story the pigeon asks readers to let it stay up late, and then queries, “No!?“ The children joyously chimed in “No!” though Jillian agreed that this was probably because of the story pattern more than the print. While preschoolers can seldom read lengthy sentences, calling their attention to such key words in print-salient books is an important way to show them the connection between print and spoken language.

Another student, Mani, created a book for the children using Bill Martin Jr.’s book Brown Bear, Brown Bear (1992) as a pattern. She wrote, “When I pointed to the words with my finger, some of them stopped me to show the letters of their name. Amy stopped me and said, ‘Turn the page and look. There is some of my name letters.’“ Mani was thrilled that the larger text of a handmade book could invite this attention to print.

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\text{...the number of “rare words” that children encounter triples during story reading as compared with typical conversation...}
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Vocabulary and Oral Language

A children with a large vocabulary is at a distinct advantage when they begin to read (Weizman & Snow, 2001), so it is critical that early childhood educators expand children’s vocabulary. Adults may introduce complex words during daily routines, but research suggests it is in story reading that children are exposed to the greatest number of rare words, those outside the common everyday lexicon (Trelease, 2006). Adults might stop to discuss those new words or simply allow children to glean their meaning from the context. Children often understand words from the context when they hear a story repeatedly (Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005).

I shared with the students a chart illustrating that the number of “rare words” that children encounter triples during story reading as compared with typical conversation (Trelease, 2006). The students were impressed by this idea and were, not surprisingly then, very attentive to out-of-the-ordinary words in books they shared with children. However, when I asked students during the interviews, “Did you ever stop to talk about what those words meant?” they almost invariably admitted that they had not. Justice et al. (2005) argue that although a child’s vocabulary grows by exposure to words in context where the context supplies clues about the word’s meaning, some explicit discussion of new words can help scaffold a child’s understanding and reduce confusion. It is exciting that students now recognize the potential of story reading for vocabulary development; the next step is for them to scaffold that development for children in their care.

Story Comprehension

Hart and Risley (1995) are concerned about variations in children’s language development when beginning school; they recommend not only vocabulary enrichment but also interactions that deepen comprehension of stories. Beck and McKeown (2001) have designed a program called Text Talk which shows educators:

• the difference between simply retrieving information from a text and actually constructing meaning from that text, and

• how to incorporate children’s background knowledge in ways that will build understanding and not elicit unrelated personal anecdotes.

These recommendations are important for building a rich understanding of stories. As I discovered, these ideals did not characterize story reading discussions for my students.

In a prerequisite “Learning Through Play 1” course, students completed an interactive story reading assignment designed to foster children’s engagement and story comprehension. These interaction skills were reinforced in “Learning Through Play 2” and practicum. The practicum assignments I examined offered some insight into the kinds of discussions students had with children.
but the videotapes were much more informative – and disappointing.

First, I noticed that the students’ story discussions with children tended to “test” rather than start dialogue. Here are some examples of questions students asked during story reading:

• How many ducks are there?
• Are they dressed like each other? (evident from illustration, significance was not discussed)
• What is he riding on?
• What do they run into here? (points at illustration)
• Who did they have to rescue?
• What did they use to help rescue the bats?

These questions could be answered using simple recall or by referring to the illustration. Furthermore, when the children responded, the student briefly acknowledged their responses; there was seldom any extended interaction. Although the questions did not necessarily require higher level thinking, at least they reminded children that illustrations help tell the story and inferences can be made from illustrations.

Second, asking children to make predictions about what will happen in a story is often recommended because predictions help children problem-solve about the character’s intentions or recognize the story pattern (Beck & McKeown, 2001). One student asked:

• How are they going to get across the big hole?
• What do they need to turn into to help them?

This story was familiar to the children so it seemed the questions were based more on recall of previous reading than on problem-solving and predictions about the story’s development.

During the interview with Mani, I helped her see how a prediction question could help children recognize the characters’ feelings and story pattern. In the book Little Quack’s New Friend (Thompson & Anderson, 2006), four ducklings are watching their brother play with a frog. The illustrations show their longing to join the play and, one by one, each of them finally does. I prompted Mani to ask a question about the illustration, particularly the ducklings’ feelings and what might happen next.

Researcher: How is this guy feeling?

Mani: He wants to join them and play with them and he is wondering, “How can I ask them?”

Questions that focus children on the character’s feelings often help them to anticipate what will happen as a result of those feelings. Ultimately, such predictions can build comprehension of the story themes: prejudice, rejection, regret, and friendship.

The students need to first learn how to have authentic conversations with children that are child-oriented and genuinely responsive, whether about books or in play.

Third, literacy researchers encourage educators to ask children to make personal connections between the story and their own lives to build story comprehension (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Rosenblatt, 2005). Such personal connections may help children to compare the story to their own lives and, in doing so, understand the character’s situation and anticipate how the story might unfold. These students often asked personal questions but unfortunately, they tended to be closed questions requiring simple yes or no responses. For example, in reading Little Quack’s New Friend, Mani asked personal questions such as, “Do you like to splash?” and “Do you like to bounce?” While these questions kept the children focused on the book, they did little to build story comprehension. As I suggested during the interview, more appropriate questions might be, “Have you ever had a friend who didn’t want to play with you? What happened?” These questions encourage the children to relate their experiences to the character’s experiences and thereby predict how the story will develop.

During the interview, I asked Mani to define the difference between an open and closed question. She rightly responded that a closed question typically has a yes or no answer, but an open question requires thinking. However, an interesting misunderstanding emerged while watching the video of herself. In the video, she asked the children, “How many ducks are there?” As we watched together, I asked, “Was this an open or closed question?” Mani responded, “Open. Because they have to count.” For her, counting meant thinking. She did not understand that an open-ended question should promote dialogue and divergent thinking. Professors need to be aware of how literally students may interpret definitions; application of such concepts to practice may have unexpected results.

Finally, in at least one case, the student did not stop to discuss the story at all. It appeared to me that the children were restless and inattentive, probably anxious for their lunch that was clearly being prepared. If the student tried to engage the children in discussion, she probably feared prolonging the story time and managing increasingly restless behaviour. Management is an often expressed concern of students and may limit effective story dialogue, especially when reading to larger groups.

Discussion and Summary

Sometimes storybook reading may be something adults do “to” children - an occasion where they read all the words
on the page to get through the story. I was pleased that these students seemed to recognize the interactive value of storybook reading. They asked questions and paused to ask for children’s input. However, closer examination of the data suggests that the quality of these discussions did not necessarily promote higher level thinking or awareness of the literacy skills identified as important for emergent readers (Millard & Waese, 2007). Scaffolding - engaging children in interactions that would help them to achieve more than they could achieve independently - was limited.

Perhaps these results should not be surprising. Promoting higher level thinking among young children is a complex skill, and other research has shown the difficulty of achieving this goal. A large scale study used CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System), an observation tool used to measure the quality of classroom interactions in early childhood settings (Hamre, Couch & Pianta, 2008), to assess the following:

- **emotional support** including sensitivity and regard for children’s perspectives,
- **classroom organization** including behaviour management and learning formats, and
- **instructional support** including concept development and purposeful language and literacy development.

When comparing 700 preschool classrooms in 11 different states, the researchers found that programs had moderate quality in emotional support and classroom organization, but instructional support was typically at a low level of quality. They suggest that instructional support is a highly complex set of skills and only the most accomplished educators are successfully achieving this goal. Flowers, Girolametto, Weitzman, and Greenberg (2007) found similar results on a smaller scale. After only a 2 hour in-service, early childhood educators improved in their abilities to integrate children’s input into story discussion but they still were not fostering predictions and inference making.

Girolametto and Weitzman (2002) describe similarly disappointing data on linguistic responsiveness in child care settings:

Research on child care providers suggests that while they are often responsive to the topics children initiate, they seldom invite extended interaction with multiple conversational turns, and their questions tend to test the children rather than extend thinking with explanations and predictions. (p. 269).

**While I do not dispute the research showing that phonological awareness, print awareness and vocabulary development are important skills for pre-readers, I question their importance relative to the value of fostering higher level thinking through interactive discussions.**

To address this lack, Dickinson, Watson, and Farran (2008) invited early childhood educators to audio tape their conversations with children to self-assess their own skills in linguistic responsiveness, specifically with multiple turn-taking and the introduction of complex words. Not surprisingly, this self-assessment helped the educators to be more conscious of their own language use and to use language more skilfully to promote children’s cognition.

These research findings prompt me to reconsider my instructional goals and expectations. Students are beginning to interact with children during story reading. However, actually scaffolding children’s understanding seems to be a complex skill that may require a series of sub-skills. The students need to first learn how to have authentic conversations with children that are child-oriented and genuinely responsive, whether about books or in play. With such sub-skills serving as a foundation, students will be better able to refine conversations into effective discussions of print, rhyming words, new vocabulary and story line. I considered interactive reading and story comprehension to be something that was addressed in a prerequisite course, and so the focus in my course was upon the emergent literacy skills of phonological awareness, print awareness and oral language development. In retrospect, I see what a complex process interactive reading is. Students were still learning how to effectively discuss stories with children; inserting comments about code-related literacy skills that were still unclear to them was beyond their capability.

While I do not dispute the research showing that phonological awareness, print awareness and vocabulary development are important skills for pre-readers, I question their importance relative to the value of fostering higher level thinking through interactive discussions. It seems Dickinson et al. (2008) agree:

Assessment pressures could lead programs to narrow the focus on skills for which they are held accountable, with these being heavily weighted toward the basic literacy and numeracy skills that are most easily and reliably measured (e.g., letter knowledge, phonological awareness, print concepts, counting and number recognition).... A narrow focus on discrete pre-academic skills does a disservice to children from low-income homes, those served by Head Start, and most public Pre-K programs. These children’s greatest need is in the area of oral language. (p. 138)
Finally, students may benefit from more explicit instruction and modeling. I discussed how certain storybooks lent themselves to promoting phonological awareness, print awareness, and vocabulary development, but students needed clear models of what this would look like in discussions with children. In the aforementioned example by Cabell et al. (2008), they demonstrate an explicit reference to alliteration in the book’s title, and a contrasting implicit example making only a general reference to the book’s title. Similar contrasts would make it clearer to students exactly how they might embed early literacy skills instruction in their story reading with young children.

I was disappointed by the students’ misunderstandings and transference, but I must adjust my expectations, recognizing that scaffolding is a complex skill; the students need time to grow as professionals. Furthermore, factors like group size and management concerns may affect sophistication of story reading discussions. Students who are anxious about managing children’s behaviour may be less effective in practising effective literacy scaffolding. Research by Pellegrini and Scopesi (1990) shows that larger groups tend to receive less responsive language and more directive language to manage behaviour. Further research might compare the quality of dialogue in small group reading to large group situations. Group management is also a skill that develops with experience and coaching in effective strategies.

There is now a strong degree of consensus regarding the importance of preschool literacy development and even some funding to support it. The resource kit Language and literacy: From birth...for life (Millard & Waese, 2007), was provided free of charge to our students. Print resources may inform early childhood educators about preschool literacy, but my research demonstrates that the application of these skills to practice requires extensive modeling and coaching to share books in the most productive way.

Note: Pseudonyms were used for the Early Childhood Education students and the children.

References


Moving Onward:
Reflections and Re-interpretations of the Reggio Approach

Linda A. O’Donoghue

Linda O’Donoghue began her career as an early childhood educator in Vancouver, BC. In 1991, she received a Diploma in Early Childhood Education from Vancouver Community College with a specialization in Special Needs Education. Linda worked in a variety of settings including preschools, child care centres, after school care programs, and elementary schools. In 1999, Linda graduated from the University of Victoria, with distinction, receiving a Bachelor Degree in Child and Youth Care. She continued her work with young children and families as a director and owner of two early childhood centres. In 2003, Linda and her family moved to Calgary, Alberta. Linda was employed as an instructor in the Early Learning and Child Care program at Bow Valley College and, eventually, became the Program Lead. Currently, Linda continues her work at Bow Valley College while she pursues a Master’s Degree in Education. Her interest in the Reggio Emilia philosophy is the focus of her studies.

Abstract
This article offers an insight into teaching and learning from various interviews I conducted with educators about their journey with the philosophy of Reggio Emilia. Many early childhood educators in North America are captivated by the philosophical fundamentals of Reggio Emilia. Emerging from Reggio Emilia, Italy after the destruction of WWII, this approach embraces several key principles that guide the educator. These include: the importance of teachers as researchers, documenters, observers and listeners; the environment as the "third educator," and the image of the capable, competent child (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998).

Within particular post-secondary early childhood training programs in Canada, the Reggio philosophy is a source of inspiration. I wonder if reflecting on the fundamental principles of the Reggio philosophy could influence teaching and learning and deepen these experiences? The approach is not a replicable model and cannot be applied to other socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, a re-interpretation of the principles can be considered. Through a reconceptualist lens (Cannella, 2002; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007), this article offers an insight into teaching and learning from various interviews I conducted with educators about their journey. Throughout the interviewing process, tension surfaced with regards to being considered a ‘Reggio Inspired Program’ while exposing the themes of ‘disruptions’ and ‘difficult conversations’. A dialogue developed about the co-construction of meaning within a community of adult learners as dissimilar truths about knowledge and multiple perspectives were revealed.

A dialogue developed about the co-construction of meaning within a community of adult learners as dissimilar truths about knowledge and multiple perspectives were revealed.

Introduction
In North America, many early childhood educators are turning towards the innovative work located in the infant-toddler and pre-primary schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. The Reggio Approach is multifaceted and intricately tied to its own contextual history. While educators in Reggio Emilia live and work within their present settings, they are influenced by the rich history of the schools, the communities, and the regions in which they teach and learn. Influences from the past, present and future are interwoven as educators in Reggio Emilia work with a fluid pedagogy that invites change, conflict, reciprocity, collaboration and dialogue. As Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (1998) put it, “the educational work in Reggio Emilia never becomes set and routine but instead is always undergoing reexamination and experimentation” (p. 12). The approach cannot be separated from its origin. Nevertheless, Reggio Emilia has captured the attention of educators circling the world. Yet, as this interest is pervasive in North America, it is important to remember that this philosophy is not a method and that reproduction is impossible. Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (1998) describe how, in Reggio Emilia:

Education is seen as a communal activity and sharing of culture through joint exploration among children and adults who together open topics to speculation and discussion. The approach provides us with new ways to think about the nature of the child as learner, the role of the teacher, school organization and management, the design and use of physical environments, and curriculum planning that guides experiences of joint, open-ended discovery and constructive posing and solving of problems. (p. 7-8)

My own interest in Reggio Emilia began
I am intrigued by the diverse interpretations or reconceptualizations of the philosophical principles of Reggio Emilia.

Pat Tarr and Susan Fraser (2002) investigated the principle of collaboration and how it exists in a Canadian context for early childhood educators. The writers were wondering about the impact of the Reggio Approach on Canadian early childhood education (Tarr & Fraser, 2002). They spoke with college instructors and teachers in child care centres from across the country which explore Reggio principles. In one of the interviews, a college instructor shared:

We encourage students to identify their own learning style and the strengths they bring to group work. Some of them, for instance, may see themselves as resource people, others may identify their interpersonal skills. We then have them develop a working contract to set a professional tone and positive atmosphere. (Tarr & Fraser, 2002).

The article suggests that collaboration is present in college programs and child care centers, but the nature of the collaboration is situated in its particular context.

I am intrigued by the diverse interpretations or reconceptualizations of the philosophical principles of Reggio Emilia. Cannella (2002) observes that “truth, reality, and knowledge are always changing and constructed by human beings in multiple forms” (p. 13). Through the reconceptualist lens (Cannella, 2002), social, political, and cultural contexts must be considered to impart a socially just and accurate view.

In this article, I present an interpretation of my research experience. In seeking to learn more about how Reggio principles are enacted in early childhood teacher education programmes, I visited an early childhood post-secondary program to seek guidance and contemplate possibilities. I wondered if, through reflection and discussion, faculty members could re-interpret the Reggio principles to deepen educational experiences within their unique settings? Re-interpretation of the principles provokes an opportunity for dialogue in an adult educational setting. Dahlberg et al., (2007) elaborate on the idea, saying, “the discourse of meaning making therefore not only adopts a social constructionist perspective, but relates to an understanding of learning as a process of co-construction, by which in
relationship with others we make meaning of the world” (p. 107). Interviewees acknowledged that their community creates pedagogical impressions. This group includes children, families, early childhood educators and faculty. Difficult conversations occur within this community of learning while they co-construct knowledge and understanding. The focus of this article is on one particular setting, although I visited two universities for my larger research study. For purposes of clarity, I have chosen to center my attention on one setting.

Capilano University

Some of my research was located at Capilano University in North Vancouver, British Columbia. I interviewed several of the faculty members in the university early childhood program and the manager of the on-campus Children’s Centre. I was interested to see how Reggio principles had been incorporated or had influenced other early childhood programs. The early childhood care and education program has existed at Capilano since the late 1960s and the program has evolved and changed since that time. Interest in the Reggio philosophy for faculty members commenced in the early 1990s. During this time, faculty traveled to Reggio Emilia and educators from Italy came to Capilano to engage in pedagogical discussions. From this rich history, Capilano began to question, explore, and challenge ideas, while embracing change (Early Childhood Care and Education, Capilano University).

The ECCE program works collaboratively with the Children’s Centre on campus, providing teaching and learning experiences for the students. Particular faculty in the department work closely with the children and educators in the child centre, and this has played a vital role in sustaining their relationship. As I analyzed the interviews and my observations, several interesting themes emerged.

Journeys
Jen Moses¹, the Coordinator of the ECCE program, explains that, from her perspective, the principles of the Reggio Emilia philosophy are viewed as “touch stones” or points of reference. “I think they are so integrated, so embedded, that they have become touch stones for us” (J. Moses, personal communication, October 23, 2009). The interviewees, Jen Moses, Sylvia Kind, Cristina Delgado and Janet MacDonald share that the Reggio principles have been but one inspiration for the program. Capilano creates a unique and distinctive program. Educators examine diverse philosophies and theories of early childhood education that exist within Canada and abroad:

We have embraced our own journey. I would say that in the last three or four years we have totally embraced our own journey. Certainly, we have acknowledged that a lot of the jump-start came in the 1990s from Italy when we looked at what they are thinking, but it also has come from England, New Zealand, Finland, Sweden, and Australia (J. Moses, personal communication, October 23, 2009).

“taking a postmodern perspective means that we can no longer fall back on knowledge as universal, unchanging and absolute, but must take responsibility for own learning and meaning making”

(Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence, 2007)

The construction of meaning is evident in Moses’ comments. The educators at Capilano are immersed in understanding their own context. The influence of the principles from Reggio Emilia is not explicit. Cristina Delgado, an instructor at Capilano, shares her view: “I do see that everybody in the faculty are influenced, or at least intrigued, by Reggio Emilia, in different ways, in different understandings and in different moments of their own history with these ideas” (C. Delgado, personal communication, October 22, 2009). The interviewees place an emphasis on thinking deeply about individual journeys of teaching and learning. These personal experiences provide an entry point for the construction of knowledge that reconceptualists refer to. As Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (2007) point out, “taking a postmodern perspective means that we can no longer fall back on knowledge as universal, unchanging and absolute, but must take responsibility for our own learning and making” (p. 56).

The metaphor of a journey reoccurs throughout the interviews. The use of the word ‘journey’ implies to me that knowledge is acquired through thoughtful action. I am reminded of John Dewey’s interpretation of knowledge as a “philosophy of action.” “This connection between knowledge and action is especially relevant for those who approach questions about knowledge primarily from a practical perspective – such as educators and educational researchers” (Biesta & Burbules, 2003, p. 9). The voyage these educators describe is one that is ever changing and evolving. Faculty member Dr. Sylvia Kind reiterated that the work from Reggio Emilia provides one of many examples worthy of study. She explains:

Reggio is an inspiration for some but not at all the only one. It is just a place that has done amazing things and has taken a long time to actually get to where they are. I think what they are doing is incredible… but I am interested in how you actually get to that point, rather than just taking ideas from them (S. Kind, personal communication, October 23, 2009).

Kind alludes to an overarching issue that is present when one philosophy or approach becomes idealized. In his article, “Colonialism And Cargo Cults In Early Childhood Education: Does Reggio Emilia Really Exist?” (1999), Richard Johnston explains:

¹ Note: All participants have given permission for their names to be used
Those things about Reggio that we honor and hope to simplistically import, are unrealistic in most early education settings I am familiar with…We pretend we are discovering a ‘new and improved’ way of implementing good practices into our own centers, while in fact we are appropriating traditional practices from local situations [Reggio Emilia] and reinscribing in American imperialist discourse. (p. 69).

The journey that Capilano refers to is one that must exist in their context with opportunities and limitations that belong to them. Culturally and socially, Capilano lives within a Canadian early childhood framework, the unique context of North Vancouver, British Columbia and the university community. Everyone within this community brings their ideas and knowledge together, weaving a path to follow.

Tension
Tension emerged during my research at Capilano. I felt resistance on the part of the faculty to subscribing to one particular philosophy. Cannella (2002) writes, “The assumption that particular knowledge is worth more than other knowledge privileges those who possess that chosen information, those exclusive skills” (p. 100). The essence of the interviews reveals that the faculty shares an understanding of their program - how they interact, communicate and participate in teaching and learning as a community. I notice a prevalent resistance to relate their program to one philosophy - they interact, communicate and participate in teaching and learning as a community. I notice a prevalent resistance to relate their program to one philosophy at Capilano, the notion of disruptions in the learning environment surface. In my interview with Delgado, she explains that questions inspire her teaching:

Knowledge, identity and culture are constituted and reconstituted in relation to others – they are co-constructed. Relational concepts abound: dialogue, conversation, negotiation, encounter, confrontation, conflict. If knowledge is no longer viewed as an accumulation and reproduction of facts, but as perspectival and open-ended, then knowledge can be viewed as an open-ended conversation, privileging no party and seeking neither consensus nor a final truth. (p. 58).

The story that unfolds at Capilano is one of re-invention, a continuous journey and resistance to being reduced to holding one perspective informing pedagogy. The tension that I sense perhaps simply exists as the educators within the program continue along this path of teaching and learning with others. The narrative was layered and complex, requiring me to listen closely. The “portraitist”, a term coined by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) to describe a method of inquiry in the social sciences, is used here to describe my point of view as a researcher. “Voice speaks about stance and perspective, revealing the place from which the portraitist observes and records the action, reflecting her angle of vision, allowing her to perceive patterns and see the strange in the familiar” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 105). The dissonance I felt at Capilano coincides with my own struggles as an educator. I work within a unique setting at Bow Valley College, alongside other faculty in collaboration with an on-site early childhood center. At Bow Valley College, we hold multiple perspectives while continuous discussions about different ideas, philosophical thinking and visions for our program are negotiated. It is within my own context that I can create a portrait of Capilano’s story.

Disruptions
As conversations continue with the faculty at Capilano, the notion of disruptions in the learning environment surface. In my interview with Delgado, she explains that questions inspire her teaching:

I would say that the main inspiration in my teaching is what it means to live with a question, what it means to live life in the love of questions and how can we create spaces for difficult conversations and for conversations with students that welcome uncertainty. (C. Delgado, personal communication, October 22, 2009).

Opening up conversations that invite questions may create discomfort and cognitive dissonance. Uncertainty allows for new ways of thinking to emerge. John Dewey once explained, “to see that a situation requires inquiry is the initial step in inquiry” (as cited in Biesta & Burbules, 2003, p. 58). The educators at Capilano purposefully create moments that will disrupt thinking. Kind mentions an example from her work with Cristina Delgado in the Children’s Centre:

One thing I always wanted to do was to be in an education space, as a gallery space. So what would it be if you actually brought in some artwork and it actually disrupted the space? That was my beginning point of starting to work with her (Cristina)... They (the Children’s Centre educators) didn’t know exactly what we were going to do and so it was that moment of just seeing how art can actually interrupt a space and it began to open up different ways of talking
with teachers about what is art, what does it mean to engage with children. How you bring in who you are... your passions, the things that you use to make sense of the world and how that connects with your work. (S. Kind, personal communication, October 23, 2009).

This provocation of ‘interrupting a space’ provides an excellent example of how meaning may be created for individual faculty and in their context of working with others. Kind proposes a question to examine with the educators in the child care centre, which demonstrates her stance as a teacher-researcher. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) provide a rich explanation of how meaning is made by the researcher:

The identity, character, and history of the researcher are obviously critical to manner of listening, selecting, interpreting, and composing the story... She is seen not only in defining the focus and field of the inquiry, but also in navigating the relationships with the subjects, in witnessing and interpreting the action, in tracing the emergent themes, and in creating the narrative. At each one of these stages, the self of the portraitist emerges as an instrument of inquiry, an eye on perspective-taking, an ear that discerns nuances, and a voice that speaks and offers insights. (p. 13)

I believe that the description of the researcher that Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) provide reflects how each of the faculty at Capilano approaches their work. The researcher is active and is part of the story that emerges. She is present within the inquiry she investigates. Her presence is not controlling but instead she is waiting for the happening to occur. She may then offer an understanding of the event for herself and for others to contemplate.

Efforts to peel back the layers of personal meaning that speak to the work with children, with students, with the early childhood educators and among the faculty are critical within the program at Capilano. The narratives reveal that this uncovering is not always easy or comfortable. Finding spaces to reflect and discuss ideas is part of the co-construction of knowledge that happens in their setting.

The narratives reveal that this uncovering is not always easy or comfortable. Finding spaces to reflect and discuss ideas is part of the co-construction of knowledge that happens in their setting.

**Difficult Conversations**

Discussions between instructors and students create interesting discourse to expose diverse ideas. However, diversities is not always comfortable or welcomed. Moses explains her opinion on these types of discussions:

I think we are at a critical point right now, a conjunction of how many ideas that we are working through. I think that some faculty would tell you there are some basics that need to be unified and I think other faculty would tell you it is all up for discussion...for students to hear the diversity and the disagreements and the discussion and the discourse is good. It is healthy, it is vibrant but I know it can drive some students really wild...some students don’t like the contradictions and yet what we do is come right into that and say this is interesting...for me, my goal is to make the space for the disagreement and have the courage to face the disagreement (J. Moses, personal communication, October 23, 2009).

Engaging in difficult discussions is a common thread in multiple interviews. It is apparent to me that the faculty value difficult conversations. Delgado comments that she encourages discomfort with her students to deepen thinking:

Something that inspires my work is how I can talk with the students in ways that are inviting them to be in suspension in that space of difficulty and uncertainty that happens when you read something that you don’t understand... you don’t have to ‘get it’ but instead think about it and have a conversation in the classroom and with other people. Engaging in ways that will push others’ thinking further. So that is the way I try to think about being with the students... where we don’t come together just to share an understanding of something but actually to create dissensus and questions and contradictions and even dilemmas, instead of trying to hide them. (C. Delgado, personal communication, October 22, 2009)

I hear gentle echoes of Reggio principles within these narratives alongside a strong postmodern voice. Re-construction of knowledge is proposed, instigated, and encouraged which allows for multiple perspectives. The postmodern perspective allows for the educator to interpret their own understanding of an observed event, whereas, the modernist perspective views events as objective truths that occur on the outside of the educator (Dahlberg, et al, 2007). Finding absolute truth is not the goal, whereas seeking personal truth is:

Living in postmodern conditions therefore puts considerable demands on the process of pedagogy. The challenge is to provide a space where new possibilities can be explored and realized through enlarging the reflexive and critical ways of knowing, through construction rather than reproduction of knowledge...It can contribute to the emergence of a plu-
The faculty at Capilano work together to create meaning in partnership with the children, the students and the early childhood educators. The path is not smooth or straight, however, the passion for their work is palpable as they share their stories.

Conclusions
As I stand back and interpret the information I have gathered from Capilano, I see a program shaped from many different perspectives and one that lives within its own cultural and educational context. The principles from Reggio Emilia may have inspired various educators within the program at some moment in time, but perhaps the principles are present in another form. My observations indicate that their presence can only exist if the educators choose to re-interpret them in their ever-evolving journey of teaching and learning. For select faculty, ideas from Reggio Emilia seem deeply rooted within the way they work. However, a co-construction of understanding occurs which illustrates the reinvention of these notions. For others, the principles perhaps exist only as points of interest and the work occurring in the context of Capilano is where teaching and learning must begin. The work at Capilano continuously moves and evolves as the faculty research alongside their students. Dahlberg et al., (2007) write about the process of inquiry as it relates to the “Stockholm Project, a collaborative project that occurred between Reggio Emilia and Sweden:

We have tried to construct processes of inquiry into the pedagogical practice, requiring a self-reflective attitude from all participants. All this needs time and a lot of work. But despite the hard work, it has also given us a lot of inspiration. It has been a way to take us beyond ourselves, to think the unthinkable and to avoid romanticizing practice.

Within stories that transpire, instructors search for opportunities to discuss, question and imagine new possibilities. Students and faculty are encouraged to embrace unsettling thoughts or ideas about early childhood education to discover new understandings about themselves and their work within a community of learners. Diverse perspectives can be unpacked and deconstructed while reaching consensus is not the end goal. Learning together while embracing uncertainty and doubt push the community to recreate a living pedagogy together.

The exuding story from Capilano enables me to reflect upon my teaching and learning complexities at Bow Valley College. As the Reggio Approach offers inspiration, I am now more attuned to the value within my professional context. I have the unique opportunity to collaborate and discover possibilities with children, families, early childhood educators, and faculty. Our journey is significant for our community of learning. The Capilano landscape opens a window of professional pursuits. My viewpoint elicits a scene of similarities and differences. Our North American community is comparable as we are composed of children, families, early childhood educators and faculty. However, our social and cultural context is different, geographically, economically and politically. Bow Valley College is located downtown in Calgary, Alberta – a different city, a different province. Within these similarities and differences, reflections are the shared understanding, shadows are the differing perspectives, and points of light are the diverse approaches that add to the richness of the community. Reggio Emilia has historical socio-cultural roots that frame their identity. The Canadian communities of learning at Capilano University and Bow Valley College are also planted in a rich heritage. I have learned the importance of reflecting on dissimilar perspectives while a glaring curiosity spurs me to move onward.

References
Physical Activity and Nutrition in Early Years Care Centres: Barriers and Facilitators

Amanda Froehlich Chow and Louise Humbert

Abstract

Physical activity and good nutrition are key components of healthy living and reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases. Current research indicates that young Canadian children are not active enough for healthy growth and development (Temple et al., 2009). In addition, their diets are lacking in fruits and vegetables, and excessively high in processed foods. Parents play a key role in establishing healthy behaviours; however, early years professionals also have a strong influence, as many young children spend a large portion of their day in child care centres. This study aimed to use an ecological framework to identify specific factors (facilitators and barriers) that professionals in urban child care centres faced when promoting physical activity and nutrition. Seven urban child care centre professionals participated in one on one semi-structured interviews, with questions developed around McLeroy’s (1988) ecological model. Reported facilitators and barriers were categorized using the ecological model at individual level (i.e., intrapersonal) or social environmental (interpersonal, institutional, community, and policy) level. The classification of factors into distinct categories was important, as this information can aid in designing initiatives that target facilitators and alleviate barriers; in turn supporting Canadian children to establish health-promoting lifestyles and make healthy transitions from toddlers to adulthood.

Introduction

Eating well and being active work together to promote healthy lifestyles for all ages (Health Canada, 2009). Early child development sets the foundation for an individual’s subsequent health and general well-being; thus the benefits of healthy living are most effective when established during early childhood (Black & Hurley, 2007; Keon, 2002). Despite the importance of establishing healthy behaviours in the early years (ages 1-5), research suggests that children under the age of 6 are not engaging in healthy physical activity patterns (Pate, Dowda, Trost, Almedida & Sirad, 2004; Temple, Naylor, McFayden, Rodes, Wolski & Wharf-Higgins, 2009). In addition, their diets are lacking in fruits and vegetables, and are excessively high in processed foods that have little nutritional value (Desrosiers & Bedard, 2006; Wilkinson & McCargar, 2008).

Parents and early years professionals are children’s first teachers and role models. Therefore, they play a key role in establishing and determining lifelong physical activity and healthy eating patterns during these years (Segal & Gadola, 2008; Timmons, Naylor, & Pfeirrer, 2007). Although parents play a key role in the development of children’s behaviours and lifestyle patterns, over 50% of Canadian parents rely on non-parental care for their children (Bushnick, 2003). In addition, there has been an increase in the use of child care centres over the last ten years, with children spending approximately 29 hours per week in care. Recent studies suggest that both early childhood education centres and early childhood educators have a large influence on children’s physical activity and dietary patterns (Bower et al., 2008; Story, Kapinhingst, & French, 2006). Recently, experts have emphasized that child care centres are ideal environments for understanding and exploring the health behaviours of children and their educators. In order to understand the educators’ decisions to engage in behaviours that promote or discourage behaviours such as physical activity and healthy eating, it is necessary to identify the factors influencing their decisions (Naha, Goldfine, & Collins, 2003). These factors can be identified as barriers (factors that discourage behaviour) or facilitators (factors that encourage behaviour).

An ecological model is a conceptual framework that assumes that multiple types of factors influence behaviour (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, & Glanz, 1988). The ecological model designed by McLeroy and colleagues (1988)
uncovers personal factors and different levels of social environmental factors influencing behaviour. Previous research has used an ecological model to understand factors that influence an individual's decision to engage in health promoting behaviours (Gyurcsik, Spink, Bray Chad & Kwan, 2006; Humbert et al., 2006; Needham, Dwyer, Randal-Simpson & Heeney, 2007). By using McLeroy's ecological model researchers can group personal and social environmental factors (barriers and facilitators) influencing behaviour into the following five categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, community and public policy. The classification of factors into specific categories is important because it allows barriers and facilitators to be analyzed at multiple levels and aids in the identification of interactions among these factors (Bauman, Sallis, David, Dzewaltowski & Owen, 2002).

To date an ecological framework has not been used to investigate personal and social environmental factors (barriers and facilitators) perceived by early years care centre workers in the provision of both physical activity and healthy eating for young children in their care. The purpose of our study was to identify the barriers and facilitators associated with the educators' decisions and abilities to promote physical activity and health. We used an ecological framework to identify and classify the perceived barriers and facilitators into one of the five categories outlined in McLeroy's model.

Method
Through the use of qualitative methodology, the barriers and facilitators influencing decisions to provide and promote physical activity and healthy eating opportunities in early years care centres was obtained through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. The study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board.

Child Care Setting
The research took place in six urban childcare centres. Five were located inside a community facility such as a school or physical activity complex and the sixth centre was located in a house that had been developed into a child care centre. Some centres were licensed to care for 25 children, where as other care centres were licensed to care for up to 40 children, with the average child to educator ratio of 4:1. One centre cared for infants/children ages 6 weeks to 6 years of age; however the majority of centres did not accept babies younger than 6 months of age. They were all equipped with their own kitchen and thus each centre employed a full time cook. Two of the six care centres were located near the downtown of the urban centre; the four remaining centres were located in residential neighbourhoods. All contained both indoor and outdoor areas.

Participating Educators
Seven female educators from six centres in an urban centre in Saskatchewan participated in the study. Before contacting potential participants we obtained permission from centre directors. The directors were identified through their attendance at a board of directors meeting. A letter describing the study was distributed to the directors. If they were participating in the study, the directors were given an opportunity to leave their contact information with us. Following the meeting we contacted interested directors. Upon verbally granting their permission for participation in the study, we asked the directors to provide the educators with a brief overview of the study and what their role would be if they chose to participate. Additionally, the director was asked to emphasize that participation in the study was completely voluntary, and their choice to participate would not affect their job in any way. The directors identified those interested and the researcher then contacted the centre staff to arrange time (before hours, after hours, or during a break) for the interviews to take place.

In order to gather rich descriptive information, we used a semi structured interview guide, containing open-ended questions (eg., Does the physical environment play a role in determining whether or not the children are active? Do behaviours of co-workers influence the eating patterns of the children?) The use of open-ended questions also allowed informants to provide their insights and opinions. The questions in the interview guide were developed around the ecological model; this is beneficial because it applies a systematic approach for data collection and analysis (Humbert et al., 2006). The interview guide contained prompts that were used to probe the participants for more detailed responses when necessary. Using an interview guide developed around an ecological framework, allowed barriers and facilitators identified by participants to be classified into one of five personal or social environmental factors.

The one-on-one interviews lasted about an hour and were carried out in a private room at the child care centres. We made every effort to create a relaxed and open atmosphere for the interviews. It was clear the centre workers were comfortable as they seemed excited to share their knowledge and experiences. The interviews were tape recorded to ensure that we had a thorough and accurate account of the participants' responses. Each participant was able to request that the tape recorder be turned off at anytime during the interview.

Data Preparation and Analysis
The audio recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. We arranged to meet with the participants following the transcription of the interviews. This meeting provided an opportunity for participants to comment on and revise their transcript. In order to confirm that we had accurately analyzed their transcripts, we discussed the key factors that we had identified with the participants. No major changes were made to the transcripts, nor were new factors identified following the second meeting. Once participants felt that the transcripts were accurate, they were asked to sign the transcript release form. No names or means of identification were used in any printed or published reports. Anonymity or protecting the participants' identities

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CHILD STUDY

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was assured in the reporting and in any aspects of the study. Confidentiality of all data provided was assured.

We followed three steps to classify the barriers and facilitators identified by participants. First, the transcripts were read multiple times and meaning units such as words and phrases containing either a barrier or facilitator were identified; meaning units containing similar barriers and facilitators were then grouped together. Second, participants identified both personal (intrapersonal) and social environmental factors (interpersonal, institutional, community, and public policy) influencing their decisions; as such the researcher coded the barriers and facilitators as either personal or one of four social environmental factors. Third, some meaning units were reclassified and similar barriers and facilitators were grouped together to develop themes based on the participants’ responses.

Results

Seven key themes emerged from the five categories outlined in the model (see Table 1). We then selected supporting quotations to represent and illustrate the themes. It should be noted that the early years educators reported significantly more barriers than facilitators. Examples of specific factors identified by them are provided in Table 2 and exemplify the high number of barriers reported.

### Intrapersonal

There were two themes perceived as promoting physical activity and health eating by the care centre workers in this study. The first theme, personal health and wellness, was identified by all educators and this was closely related to and influenced by the second theme, personal values and practices. It was evident that child care centre workers who valued and engaged in physical activity and healthy eating on a regular basis, were more likely to encourage these behaviours among the children. For example, one care centre staff explained that she understands the importance of engaging in healthy behaviours and had recently revamped her families eating habits and began to regularly engage in physical activities with the family. As result of these personal values and behaviours she now works hard to provide and promote physical activity and healthy eating among children at her child care centre. Thus personal physical activity and nutritional practices facilitated this care centre worker to engage in behaviours that promote physical activity and healthy eating.

### Interpersonal

During the interviews all the child care centre workers provided a number of examples of barriers related to both co-worker and parental behaviors. Participants reported that their co-workers were not very comfortable participating in physical activity. The participants in this study stated that without the support and involvement of co-workers it was difficult to not only incorporate physical activity but also encourage the children to participate in the activities. The majority of workers described parental behaviors as being unresponsive to their requests to provide children with the appropriate clothing for playing outdoors. Moreover, it appeared as though parents were not concerned with how much physical activity their child received. Instead, parents were more concerned with issues such as whether their child had gotten dirty that day.

Most child care centre workers felt that centre cooks and directors played the largest role in the provision of healthy eating opportunities. Directors would work with the cook to put together six week rotating menus based on government regulations. These regulations stipulated that snacks must contain foods from two food groups and meals must contain foods from all four food groups. As such, participants suggested that cooks and directors should receive training to provide them with the knowledge of what is needed to prepare healthy meals for the children. Additionally, child care centre workers often reported that children would not eat healthy foods such as vegetables and many dairy products because they were not introduced to these foods at home. Thus informants attributed parental behaviours and lack of knowledge as a barrier to the promotion of healthy eating practices in the child care centres. For example some parents complained that they could not get the children to eat healthy meals at home and they did not have the energy to argue with their children. As a result they often gave in to their children and served convenience foods that children liked, such as french fries and chicken fingers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</th>
<th>Theme (F = Facilitator    B = Barrier)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal health and wellness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>1. Personal health and wellness (F)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Personal values and practise (F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>3. Poor attitudes, Knowledge and</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>practices of Co-workers (B)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Lack of parental support and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>5. Lack of Resources and Facilities (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>6. Lack of Resources and Facilities (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>7. Lack of Public Policy (B)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional
Chid care centre workers in this study identified lack of resources and facilities as a barrier to the provision of physical activity. Many of the centre workers in the study identified the combination of weather and lack of space as a barrier influencing their ability to provide physical activity opportunities for the children. Specifically their child care centre did not have an indoor physical activity facility they could use and when the weather did not permit them to go outdoors, they were unable to provide indoor activities. The budget at most care centres played a large role in determining the healthy eating opportunities that could be provided to early years children.

All care centre workers felt their centres would benefit from a resource, such as a book or online website with easy to make recipes that consisted of affordable ingredients. Additionally the recipes would be assessed by a nutritionist. Child care centre workers were clearly thinking about resources that could be easily accessed; as they reported that accessibility was necessary to ensuring that physical activity and healthy eating resources would be used to promote these practices within child care centres.

Community
The community factor that participants in the study found most constraining was also lack of access to resources and facilities within their neighbourhood and in the city. Specifically, a number of child care centre workers expressed their desire to have access to facilities in the community such as church or school gym. Most child care centres were located within walking distance of an elementary school, but if the centre workers wanted to use the gym in the nearby school they were required to pay for the use of the facility.

Public Policy
Chid care centre workers expressed concerns about the lack of physical activity policies in early years care centres. All

<table>
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<th>Table 2. QUOTATIONS PROVIDED BY EARLY YEARS CARGIVER</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Personal health and wellness (F)</td>
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<td>2. Personal values and practises” (F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Poor attitudes, knowledge and practices of coworkers (B)</td>
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<td>4. Lack of parental support and knowledge (B)</td>
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<td>5. Lack of resources and facilities (B)</td>
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<td>7. Lack of public policy (B)</td>
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care centre staff reported that provincial nutritional policies were closely followed at their centres and this facilitated early childhood educators in providing healthy foods for children in their care. Informants felt it would be beneficial to develop and enforce provincial policies around the provision of physical activity in early years child care centres. The majority of participants interviewed felt the implementation of physical activity policies would increase co-worker involvement in physical activities within the centre. Additionally, centre workers thought that a provincial physical activity policy would increase parental awareness and understanding about the importance of establishing physical activity patterns in the early years.

Discussion
The results of this study are consistent with previous research which shows that there are a number of factors affecting centre staff’s ability to provide and promote healthy behaviours among young children in care (Needham et al., 2007; Greves, Lozano, Liu, Busby, Cole & Johnston, 2007). As indicated in Table 2 participants identified significantly more barriers than facilitators in the provision of physical activity and healthy eating opportunities in early years child care centres. The facilitators that were identified by centre staff pertained largely to intrapersonal factors, such as personal health and wellness and personal values. The participants reported being satisfied with their personal health and wellness, but were disappointed with their co-workers attitudes towards physical activity and healthy eating. For example, one of the most commonly cited interperson- al barriers in the current study was co-worker and parental lack of awareness, knowledge and understanding. Early childhood educators felt that their co-workers generally had negative attitudes and behaviours towards physical activity. As a result, they did not like to participate in physically strenuous activities with the children. Thus, children in their centre were not given many opportunities to be physically active. In regards to healthy eating, lack of parental knowl- edge was a common concern reported among participants in this study. Participants felt that some parents put very little thought into ensuring that their children were developing healthy eating behaviours. Some parents complained that they could not convince their children to eat breakfast, so they stop at a gas station or a drive thru and purchase their children food before dropping them off at the child care centre. Clearly attempts to promote healthy eating in the centres were not supported by parents.

Conclusion
The findings of our research are applicable to early years professionals, parents and researchers. This article provides insight and knowledge regarding factors that influence the provision of physical activity and healthy eating in urban early childhood educator centres. The findings of this study support the growing body of research which stresses not only the challenges, but also the importance of establishing health promoting behaviours during the early years (Keon, 2009). The data gathered can be used to develop targeted physical activity and healthy eating interventions in early childhood education centres. Specifically, interventions could be designed to incorporate the facilitators and alleviate the barriers identified by the centres. This would support early years professionals to promote and provide physical activity and healthy eating for children in their care. In turn, young children in care will be more likely to adopt physical activity and healthy eating patterns, thus fostering better health status in childhood and later in life. Future research should investigate factors perceived by educators in the provision of physical activity and healthy eating in a variety of early years environments. This information could then be used to support many types of professionals and thus the physical activity and healthy eating necessary to promote and provide physical activity and healthy eating opportunities during the early years. Opportunities could be provided to a larger number of young children.

References
The Rights Project: How Rights Education Transformed a Classroom

Pamela Wallberg and Maria Kahn

Abstract
Current research has suggested many possible benefits of rights education, including increased empathy, tolerance and respect (Alderson, 1999; Allan & I’Anson, 2004; Covell, 2005; Decoene & De Cock, 1996). In this case study of a rights education project - the Rights Project - we demonstrate some ways rights discourse served to transform the understanding of a group of four-year-olds in a preschool. Rather than contributing to the maintenance of a hierarchical, rules regulated classroom, rights education transformed the classroom into a new learning environment based on equity, inter-dependence and group accountability. This article focuses specifically on children’s discussions around, and practical use of, two articles stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 13, ‘the right to be listened to’ and Article 31, ‘the right to play’ (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). As children explored the meaning of each right, their understanding of social being transformed and their recognition of the relationship between rights and responsibilities seemed to shift their perspectives from ‘me’ to ‘we’.

Introduction
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was compiled in 1989 to recognize the protective, provisionary and participatory rights of children. Ratified by 193 countries to date, the UNCRC was a significant step towards recognizing children as citizens and included articles that can be classified into three categories of rights: protective, provisionary and participatory.

Article 12, one of the participatory rights, guarantees that all children have the right to express their views of matters affecting them, with their views given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. Article 12 has the unique distinction of being both groundbreaking and controversial - identified by some as the “most significant article in the Convention” because this right recognizes that “the child is a human being, able to have and to consider reasons for actions and with interests which may be separate from those of his or her family” (Coady, 2008, p. 8). Others have criticized Article 12 and its ‘autonomy rights’, citing children’s alleged lack of rationality and moral immaturity as obstacles to children’s participatory voice (Woodhead, 2008).

As a signatory to the UNCRC treaty, Canada is bound by international law to uphold the UNCRC and all of its articles. Further, Canada has the legal obligation to ensure Canadians understand the principles and provisions of the treaty and all of its articles (Covell & Howe, 1999). In a 1994 UN report, however, Canada’s failure to improve Canadian understanding of the UNCRC was noted, and the country was urged to include rights education within its school curricula (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1995). The British Columbia Ministry of Education includes democracy and democratic thinking as a part of the performance standards in their K-3 social responsibility standard (Ministry of Education, 2001) and as a part of the British Columbia Early Learning Framework (Ministry of Health & Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2007), but does not mention rights education or the UNCRC as a required learning topic.

Advocates for rights education ask if children do not understand their rights, how can they be expected to experience and exercise them? (Covell & Howe, 2000; Lansdown, 1999). Crick (2007) argues:

The problem with human rights is that we experience them as important but often as remote forms of legal protection against threats to our safety and security, but in general people do not exercise their human rights until they
are confronted by a crisis. (p.13)

Remarking on the root of the issue, Alderson (1999) states that “to have rights, people have to know what the rights are, who sanctions them, and how they can ensure that their rights are respected” (p. 193).

‘Rights education’ is in its infancy, still without national curriculum or standards. (Covell & Howe, 2008). The New Hampshire RRR Initiative (referring to the teaching of Rights, Respect and Responsibilities) is one of the few known curricula implemented specifically to educate children ages 4 - 11 about their rights and to acknowledge the rightful position of children as active citizens.

In a five-year study of this program, Covell and Howe (2008) found that:

The RRR initiative makes a major contribution to citizenship by recognizing that children, including very young children, are rights-bearing citizens. The initiative has shown that when children become aware of this, and when their rights are respected in classrooms and schools, then they are much more likely to think and behave as rights-respecting citizens. (p.33)

Many obstacles exist for integrating the UNCRC in the classroom. Rights education research cites various barriers against implementing rights education programs within the classroom: fears of an adult loss of authority, prevailing cultural attitudes towards children as the property of adults, teacher concerns about lack of time or space in the curriculum and lack of adult education as to what the UNCRC is and includes. Despite these barriers, growing interest in citizenship education has led some educators to consider the UNCRC as a potential foundation for active citizenry experiences within the classroom community. The ‘social responsibility and diversity’ area of learning found within the B.C. Early Learning Framework (2009) suggest that there may be space in early childhood classrooms for exploration of the UNCRC. The social responsibility and diversity area of learning includes learning goals for children such as:

- Understanding fairness both for themselves and others
- Beginning to recognize discrimination and inequity and to respond appropriately
- Understanding that all persons have value; accept and welcome individual differences
- Participating in the making, following, and reworking of rules, rituals, and procedures in their everyday world. (p. 33)

Although rights education is not mentioned directly within the B.C. Early Learning Framework, rights education can easily provide opportunities for a classroom to reach the social responsibility and diversity learning goals.

The Rights Project

In 2010, teachers at Alderwood House School (Alderwood) in Richmond, British Columbia explored each of the articles within the UNCRC with a 4-year-old class over a three-month period through what was referred to as the ‘Rights Project.’ Alderwood is a full day early childhood program, with four small class groupings (8 – 10 students) spanning one, two, three and four years of age. While the classes work in age-specific groups for a portion of the morning, the remainder of the day is primarily multi-age, and the open layout of the school facilitates play by skill and interests, as opposed to by age group.

The ‘Rights Project’ was born out of group discussions about freedom. Within the 4-year-old classroom, the terms ‘free’ and ‘freedom’ are often used in casual conversation. Teachers proposed the question “What does ‘free’ mean?”

Using primarily individually based definitions, children explained freedom through the creation of a ‘free’ and ‘not free’ list.

However, as group discussions and artistic renderings of freedom were explored, teachers noticed an interesting development within the group. Multiple children began to claim their “freedom” in an individualistic way. For example, Taylor, one of the three year olds, was riding one of the most coveted bikes: a shiny, yellow two-seater tricycle. Sarah, 4 years of age, walked up to Taylor and pushed her off the bike. Tears ensued as Taylor lay on the cement and Sarah pedaled off. The teacher approached Sarah and asked her why Taylor was so upset. Sarah confidently responded that she had freedom and was free to take the trike if she wanted it.

This observation served as a catalyst for teacher dialogue about child understandings of freedom and led to a question teachers were unable to answer: what were the consequences of discussing ‘freedom’ as it relates to individual children? Rather than increasing personal accountability for individual decisions and actions it seemed as though the ‘freedom’ discussions may have resulted in an increased pursuit of individual desires at the cost of responsibility and accountability. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) state that “the emphasis placed on individual character and behaviour obscures the need for collective and public sector initiatives; that this emphasis distracts attention from analysis of the causes of social problems and from systemic solutions” (p. 243).

Concerned about the emerging ‘individual-at-the-cost-of-other’ understanding of freedom, the teachers decided to contest the reigning definition by introducing the UNCRC to the class of 4-year-olds. This was done through, first, reading pages in ‘Colour It Rights! A Child’s Introduction to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child’ (Cape Breton University Children’s Rights Centre, 2009), and, then, discussing the articles and drawing and/or acting out what each article meant to each child. Teachers hoped that this exploration might provoke
a deeper, more balanced understanding of ‘freedom’: not blanket permission to exercise and defend personal wants and whims but an equitable dance between rights and responsibilities. Introducing the term rights – which, unlike ‘freedom’, was a novel term to the children, without preconceived definitions – teachers hoped to shift the children’s understanding of ‘freedom’ from individualized wants to community needs.

Bandman (1999) states that “rights need not be understood primarily as expressions of unrestrained individual liberties” but instead understood as a group value system; expressions of “human respect, dignity and maturity” (p. 5). A group value system is not a set of rules, but is an understood social contract, emerging out of shared values and beliefs. While the value system protects the individual, the individual has an obligation to the group to endorse, affirm, challenge and refine the value system, in order to maintain it.

When viewed as a group value system or a social contract, the important relationship between rights and responsibility is highlighted. If there is an over-concern with individual freedom and rights, there is a risk of an under-concern with responsibilities to community, family and friends which are inherent in social living. When the symbiotic relationship between rights and responsibilities is understood, there is room for a new conversation, not one about “me”, but about “we” (Etzioni, 1996; France, 1998).

Just as Hall (2011) proposed that “new conversations are the cornerstone of social change” (p. 22), teachers speculated that the introduction of a rights discourse might alter the children’s experience of responsibility and inter-dependence - potentially leading to greater cooperation, altruism and empathy. Previous studies (Alderson, 1999; Allan & T’Anson, 2004; Covell, 2005; Decoeue & De Cock, 1996) investigating the effectiveness of rights education in primary and secondary schools have reported an increase in empathy, tolerance and respect as by-products of the awareness of rights. Throughout the course of the Rights Project, Alderwood teachers also reported similar results within the early childhood classroom.

Further, teachers observed an unexpected shift in the children’s relationships both with each other and in their ways of being within the classroom. Rather than the traditional hierarchical, authoritarian or autocratic classroom, the classroom was repositioned as a site of political practice: a “place of encounter and dialogue between citizens, from which many possibilities can emerge, some expected, others not” (Moss, 2007, p. 13) - a site in which children experience rights, responsibilities and the inevitable tensions that occur within this practice. This article shares some of the children’s responses during the ‘Rights Project’, illustrating how the children’s recognition of the relationship between rights and responsibilities transformed their understanding of social being from an individualistic pursuit to an interdependent, community-minded one.

The right to be listened to

What does this right mean?
If Francis wants to talk something, you have to listen. – Darren
If your mommy starts to talk to you, you need to listen. – Sarah
My mommy listens to everyone. You listen and you cheer! – Aaron
When you want to share something, you pass it around. – Darren
What happens when you hurt someone’s right by not listening to them?
They will cry. – Aaron
Sometimes you go home. – Daniel
You don’t run away from circle. – Darren

An established ‘rule’ of group time was that children needed to raise their hands to get a ‘talking stick’- a specially decorated stick that gave the one holding it the opportunity to speak while the rest of the group listened. This was a moderately effective technique, albeit one that required a power differential. The holder of the stick would have the ‘power’ of passing it on or the teacher would need to intervene and remove the stick from one child and grant it to another. When the talking stick was not present – either in group time or in other social play scenarios – the children struggled with managing the flow of dialogue, particularly when in the listening role. Frequently, during group conversations, everyone would start talking simultaneously, necessitating teacher intervention to control ensuing chaos. Following the introduction of the right to listen, a perceptible shift occurred in group conversations.

During one particular group time, this transformation was quite visible. The children were all very excited and wanted to add their thoughts to the conversation. Darren, who had begun the conversation, was unable to finish his comment as the other children were eagerly chiming in and speaking over him. In frustration, Darren yelled, almost in tears: “You’re hurting my right to be listened to!” Instantly, the group quieted and, without any further adult intervention, the conversation morphed from chaotic chattering into an exchange of ideas. Darren finished his comments, and the children each took turns in an orderly fashion, contributing to the dialogue.

This experience suggested that the children could agree to rules in theory, but in practice, they needed external power-holders or mediators to sustain and enforce them. Alderson (1999) notes how educators control the temporal and physical environments in the primary and secondary school classroom: “Teachers give reprimands, punishments, detentions without trial, and permission whether to go to the toilet, and they confiscate property, without any requirement that they explain, justify or be accountable for their actions” (p.188). Similarly, within early childhood settings, during napping, feedings, dressing and other routines under teacher jurisdiction, the role of power-holder can be that much stronger – creating a significant barrier against which children must push, resist or rebel in order to gain autonomy (Leavitt, 1994).

However, once “rights” replaced “rules” in the classroom, it became every child’s responsibility to protect and uphold those rights – for both self and others. Rights discourse enabled a social structure that facilitated children’s autonomous social participation, thus minimizing the need for teacher control. As Dahlberg and Moss (2005) assert, policies are “sites of power, because they govern what it is possible to think and say” (p. 169). It is possible that a rules-governed classroom limited children’s autonomy and created an environment in which children struggled to find ways to increase their own standing within the power hierarchy, leading to decreased group cohesion and communication. However, rights discourse and the ‘right to be listened to’ transformed power relationships: to negotiate the responsibilities inherent in exercising and defending rights, classroom relations became interdependent rather than teacher negotiated. The universality of rights created a high demand to defend the rights of all, even at the cost of immediate gratification of individual wants. If a right was withheld from one child, it could be withheld from any child. In order to protect one’s own rights, it was therefore necessary to protect the rights of others. While the children may not have been able to articulate this concept, their actions demonstrated their understanding that a right required universality, regardless of individual wants or feelings.

The right to play

What does this right mean?
Toys. When you play with toys. When you play with your friend... when you read a story to yourself. - Isaiah
And when you walk in the playground straight and you find a person who like them and they play. - Aaron
Swimming lessons. - Geoffrey

Do you think children have the right to take swimming lessons?
Yes!

All the children in the world?
Yes!
No. Not some of them. Because, because they need to go to the beach. But you can play in the jungle. – Isaiah
In the forest, too. – Aaron

Daniel was part of the ‘big kids’ class and participated in the ‘Rights Project’ discussions. Sean belonged to the three-year-old class and was not an active participant of this project. One day, while the duo was outdoors, Daniel refused to let Sean into the tree house (which had recently been converted into a popular ‘construction’ zone for the children) and blocked the entrance way. As these children were prone to escalating arguments into physical fist fights or biting, teachers watched closely but did not intervene. Sean and Daniel verbally argued for about two minutes. The heated verbal exchange was not resolving the issue, and Sean gave up. He ran into the nearby playhouse, sticking his head out of the window so that he could see Daniel, who was still blocking the tree house entrance. “You are hurting my right to play!” Sean shouted from the window. Responding to this statement, Daniel promptly left his post at the entrance, so that Sean was able to access the tree house.
After observing this exchange between the children, the teachers began reflecting on the use of ‘rights language’ as a social problem-solving tool. The school as a whole has traditionally focused on language that encourages assertiveness and confidence with phrases such as, ‘Please stop, I don’t like it when…’ While this has had great success in empowering children to use their voices in situations of conflict, its actual effectiveness in resolving conflict was moderate, especially in emotionally charged scenarios. Children were able to voice their position but were not as easily able to listen and respond to their peers’ perspectives. Teachers wondered if ‘rights language’ removed some of the emotional ‘I want/they want’ tension inherent in social conflicts and instead repositioned conflicts as a universal problem: the need for everyone to have protected rights.

**Summary**

Within this classroom, rights discourse became an effective problem-solving tool for the children to utilize when in social or emotional conflict. Children utilized rights discourse to solve problems within the classroom when working with teachers or with direct teacher supervision. Similar outcomes were found by Covell and Howe (2005): “Teachers reported children using rights discourse to settle problems, and they reported that children are more ready to accept responsibility for their errors and behave appropriately when a rights-based explanation of what is unacceptable is used” (p. 10).

It also became clear that children were also using rights discourse to solve social problems outside of the classroom when engaged in multi-age play, as this ‘tool’ spread to children in other classrooms not involved in the ‘Rights Project’. Much like a popular game within a social group, rights discourse was contagious, shared and spread between children when in play. Teachers speculated that rights education may enable these children to develop a stronger self-image, and thus empower them to protect and defend their own rights as well as the rights of others. A study by Decoene and De Cock (1996) similarly describes a ‘contagion effect’, where children who became aware of their own rights as a result of rights education became increasingly aware of the rights of others and as a result became more tolerant, sensitive and supportive of others.

The exploration of rights and responsibilities clearly transformed the children’s perspectives from an individualistic approach to a pro-active and genuinely inter-dependent understanding of community being. While the reasons for this transformation are not fully known, the teaching team discussed various possibilities throughout this project: power dynamics shifted from a hierarchical to an equitable organization; children shifted goals from independent to inter-dependent outcomes; and rights discourse provided children with a tool that neutralized emotionality in social problem solving and was therefore effective for children who are still developing emotional regulation.

While this was a short project embarked upon with a simple goal in mind – to reposition the concept of freedom with the 4 and 5 year olds – it highlighted the transformative value of rights education. The authors hope that further research specific to early childhood can be undertaken to offer exemplary practice for educators wanting to take up rights discourse within their early childhood education environments.

**References**


A Journey with Jacob: Pedagogical Documentation of a Child with Special Rights

By Neomi Tsekhman

In the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education, pedagogical documentation is seen as a major part of the educational process (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). It is a tool which allows us to slow down our thinking and observe learning through an analytical, yet open and non-judgmental lens. Pedagogical documentation lets the teacher take a closer look at the students’ interests, strengths, and understandings. It includes talking to children, taking notes of their actions and speech, photograpbing, video- and audio-recording, as well as allowing children the opportunity to represent their understandings in visual ways (Katz, 1998; Malaguzzi, 1998). But what form does documentation take when a child is unable to communicate through the conventional methods of speech and art?

Students with special rights in Reggio Emilia schools are understood to be just as capable as their non-disabled counterparts at making meaning of the world around them (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kocher, Berger, Isaac, & Mort, 2007). They are included in all aspects of school life, and are documented just like all other children at the Reggio Emilia centres. But what does the documenter do when a child is unable to participate in discussions and interviews, and is incapable of creating graphic representations of his thinking? How does one engage in deep and meaningful pedagogical documentation with a child with special rights who has communication difficulties? Is there a limit to this type of documentation?

To help me explore the process of documentation with a child with special rights, I visited a “special” friend named Jacob. My experience of documenting Jacob was difficult, yet very telling. It allowed me the opportunity to enter the mind of a child whose understanding of the world is a mystery to everyone around him.

Who is Jacob?

Jacob is a twelve-year-old boy who loves Disney movies. Instead of watching them, however, he will spend hours fast-forwarding and rewinding the movies to watch his favourite parts over and over. Jacob has severe autism. He also has developmental delays, an anxiety disorder, a seizure disorder, and Tourette Syndrome. Like most people with autism, his main difficulties are with communication - especially verbal communication. Jacob can talk, but he generally does not use language in a predictably meaningful manner. He has what is called “echolalia” and “delayed echolalia” – the involuntary repetition of the words or phrases of another person (Ozonoff, Rogers, & Birtha, 2003). For example, he will repeat phrases from his favourite movies, even weeks after seeing them. Our world sees verbal fluency as a major factor in intelligence. But there is a lot more to Jacob’s intellect than his lack of linguistic ability.

As measured by a developmental psychologist, Jacob’s mental age is currently at a range between four and six years old. However, in the two years that I spent working with Jacob, I learned just how easy it is to underestimate him. He certainly understands more than we give him credit for. For example, on one particularly difficult day that I spent with Jacob, he was displaying a lot of negative behaviours. Assuming that he was merely trying to get out of doing work, I ignored the negative behaviours and focused on reinforcing positive ones – a key method in Intensive Behavioural Intervention therapy, the type of therapy I had been using in my work with Jacob. We were working on his fine motor skills, and I was desperately and unsuccessfully trying to get Jacob to colour in the lines of a colouring book page. He just would not co-operate. Frustrated, Jacob suddenly grabbed my right hand, put a crayon into it, and began writing on the paper, using my hand. I held onto the crayon, but allowed him to fully lead my hand. Slowly, Jacob began to spell: “S-H-O-W-E”. He then looked up at me and I said “R”. He added an “R”. He wanted a shower (which was not an unusual request, since showering was his very favourite activity). Although he did not get his shower until later that evening, he was quite visibly overjoyed at the fact that he was able to express what he wanted and to be understood. His mood and behaviour improved dramatically in a matter of seconds. Jacob had never before had any sort of spelling/ writing/alphabet instruction. Nobody had thought that he had the ability to benefit from it (yet). But obviously Jacob was picking up writing skills from his surroundings (i.e., books, television, signs, etc.). Needless to say, writing instruction was quickly integrated into our therapy plan for Jacob.
Through his school, community services, and his parents’ own means, Jacob is involved in various therapeutic programs. He attends a partially self-contained classroom for children with autism. He receives occupational therapy and physiotherapy to help him with fine- and gross-motor skills. My role with Jacob was in providing Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) therapy, also known as Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA). IBI, as its name implies, is an intensive program which is very personalized and yet very structured. Like the Reggio Emilia approach, IBI is based on observation, documentation and analysis of the child’s behaviour. However, unlike Reggio Emilia, the information that is gathered is then used to alter and shape the child’s behaviour in order to improve his functioning in social situations and in life skills.

During this visit, my primary focus was on documentation. I had many questions. How could I document Jacob in a way that was not simply a recount of what I saw him doing? How could I understand Jacob’s thinking, when it was impossible for me to interview him in a conventional manner? How could I use pedagogical documentation to learn more about Jacob than I would be able to do through simple, everyday observations? I attempted to find the answers to these questions through some experimentation with emergent curriculum.

Planning the Experiment: Where is the book?
To support students with special rights, Reggio Emilia schools employ a psychologist-pedagogista, whose focus is special education (Smith, 1998). The infant-toddler centres and pre-primary schools take a whole-child approach to educating children with special rights. As such, the psychologist-pedagogista connects with the child, the parents, and the different health and social service personnel who are involved in the care of a child in one of their centres (Smith, 1998). The student, therefore, has continuity between the school, home and therapeutic and medical services. Collaboration is one of the major components of the Reggio Emilia system. It is one of the reasons that the Reggio Emilia approach has been so successful in the education of young children. There is a constant stream of communication between the educators, the parents, and the students (Bersani & Jarjoura, 2002). Understanding this importance, I took the place of Jacob’s psychologist-pedagogista, and started my experiment by interviewing Jacob’s mother, his personal support worker, and one of his therapists. I wanted to know what Jacob had been up to in the months since our last encounter. I asked them questions about Jacob’s health, mood, and current interests. Children with autism often develop very narrow interests and obsessions (Moldin & Rubenstein, 2006). These obsessions are discouraged by some parents and health care professionals, but I believe that through these interests, we can engage children with autism and increase their motivation to take part in other subject areas.

Lately, Jacob has been really interested in a children’s television show called “The Wonder Pets”. While I spoke to Jacob’s mother, his personal support worker, and his therapist, Jacob was happily leafing through a “The Wonder Pets” picture book. He was looking at the pictures and giggling. I thought that his interest in the book would make an excellent starting point in an emergent lesson. I suggested to Jacob’s caregivers that I engage with Jacob by reading the book, looking at the pictures with him, and asking him simple questions about the pictures – these are all things that Jacob is used to doing. Then my plan was to take the book and hide it in a location that would be easy for Jacob to find. I would then ask Jacob, “Where is the book?” and see what Jacob would do. Jacob’s caregivers agreed that it would be interesting to see what he would think of such an activity.

The Experiment: Where is the book? Or maybe not…
I sat down next to Jacob and looked at the pictures with him. I pointed to some words and read them. Jacob turned the page, pointed at a swimming duck, and looked at me, laughing. The fact that Jacob pointed at a picture and looked at me, shows that he was trying to share his interest with me. This is termed “joint attention”, and is a milestone reached by infants at a fairly young age. Children with autism, however, often lack this ability to share their interest with another person (Wong, 2007). For this reason, I found it significant that Jacob wanted to show me the picture of the swimming duck. I thought that this would be a good chance to have some dialogue with Jacob. I said, “The duck is swimming. Jacob, do you like swimming?” Jacob responded by saying, “Like swimming”. Unfortunately, it is hard to tell whether Jacob was truly sharing his opinion towards swimming, or simply echoing part of my question.

Jacob and I continued looking at the pictures. I asked him questions such as, “Where is the duck?”, and he would point and say “duck”. At one point, Jacob’s attention was drawn away from the book. I took this as an opportunity to “hide” the book. I made sure, however, that Jacob saw where I put it. I did not want to worry or frustrate him by suddenly taking away his favourite book. I then asked Jacob, “Where is the book?” Jacob stood up, got the book, and brought it back to me. He then walked over to his bookshelf and picked up a small plastic duck. As he sat down to play with his duck, I once again took the Wonder Pets book and hid it. I asked Jacob, “Where is the book?” It took Jacob a little bit longer this time, but he found the book and brought it back to me. He then went right back to the couch to play with the toy duck. Once more, I hid the book and asked Jacob to find it. Again, Jacob complied. Through Jacob’s lack of expression and the fact that he would go right back to playing with the
toy duck, I could tell that this game was not engaging him. I decided to try and reverse the roles. I gave Jacob the book and said, “Now it’s your turn to hide the book”. Jacob took the book to the bookshelf and put it away.

The Reggio Emilia pedagogical approach sees children as protagonists in their education. They believe that children will make choices that are appropriate to their own learning style, interests, and development (Katz, 1998). Trusting that Jacob was making a decision that would benefit his own inquisitive learning experience, I decided not to push him to continue playing the book-hiding game. Instead, I decided to observe Jacob with his toy duck.

Just as I sat down with Jacob to see if we could talk a bit about the toy duck, he stood up and went back to his bookshelf. He picked up a toy pond, with pretend water. He came back to me, sat down, and put the duck in the pond. As I wrote down what I was observing, it suddenly hit me: Jacob was showing me that, just like the duck in the book, his toy duck could swim as well. For children with autism, pretend play is a difficult feat. With their difficulty in understanding “Theory of Mind”, using inanimate objects to symbolize real objects is something that few children with autism will do spontaneously (Stanley, 2007). Yet Jacob, a child on the severe end of the autism spectrum, was not only engaging in spontaneous pretend play, but also making a connection between the two-dimensional duck in his book and his three-dimensional toy duck. I found his ability to make this complex connection fascinating, and was disappointed that we did not have enough time to go to a pond and observe some real live ducks.

After playing with Jacob’s toys for a little while, I decided to give Jacob the opportunity to communicate his thoughts to me. I had given much thought to how I could enable a child like Jacob to express himself, when a defining characteristic of his disability is extreme difficulty with communication. Carla Rinaldi describes the pedagogy of listening as one that involves more than hearing a child’s words and interpreting what they say, “but also observing and ‘hearing’ their hundred languages through all forms of expression” (Phillips, 2001, p. 52). I understand this to mean that the documenter must work extra hard to observe and take note of even the smallest of triumphs of students with special rights. If something seems significant to the child, it probably is significant. If I had not taken note of Jacob’s attempt to bring my attention to the picture in the book, or his initiative in starting a game of “make ducky swim”, I might never have realized Jacob’s deeper understandings of the objects with which we were interacting. For a typically developing child, these are everyday actions; for a child like Jacob, these actions are momentous. If my interpretation of the pedagogy of listening is correct, then it seems that I did, indeed, allow Jacob the opportunity to express himself to me. Still, I wanted to give Jacob the chance to work with some art supplies I had brought, and see whether he would show me more of his understanding.

As I went to lay out the various art supplies, I noticed Jacob eyeing my camera. I showed Jacob the pictures I had taken of him that day. Jacob noticed the button I was pressing to go from picture to picture, and when I stopped pressing the button (because I had come to the last picture I had taken that day), Jacob took his finger and continued to press the button. He started going through all the other photos I had on the camera. I allowed him to do this for some time, before I switched settings on the camera and showed Jacob which button to press to take his own photos. He seemed amazed by the camera’s ability to show him on a screen what he was seeing in real life. He began snapping pictures of everything. For a moment, I thought of stopping him and showing him the “proper” way to take a picture, by aiming at a desired person or object and taking deliberate photographs. I decided against this. The Reggio Emilia approach values play and fun as “elements of any authentic cognitive and educational process” (Rinaldi, 2001, p. 43). I allowed Jacob to play with the camera, seeing how joyful he was as he took pictures of his surroundings. Eventually, he held the camera up and realized that he could take pictures of the people around him. This was even more intriguing to Jacob, and he began taking pictures of his personal support worker and the therapist. He even took a picture of himself holding the toy duck.

Next, I took Jacob to the table, where I had placed some paper, crayons, play dough, scissors, and glue. I had brought various art supplies in the hopes that Jacob would choose the ones with which he wanted to work. Jacob sat down and immediately took a crayon and a piece of paper. I said to Jacob, “Jacob, draw a ducky”. I observed him as he drew a semi-circle, then a circle and what looked like the letter “N”. I was confused. What was Jacob trying to draw? I looked around and realized that I had placed my camera on the table. He was looking at the camera and writing “Canon”, the brand, which was written on the front of the camera. Jacob had not understood my directions to draw the duck (or perhaps he was simply more interested in the camera), so I decided to try something different. I took a piece of paper and started to draw the camera. I then said, “Jacob, draw the camera”. Jacob, once again, wrote “Canon”. Taking Jacob’s lead, I took his piece of paper and wrote “camera” and “pictures” on the bottom. I took Jacob’s finger and pointed at the words I had written, while reading them out loud. I then said, “Jacob, write camera”. Jacob did so. At this point it was time to say goodbye to Jacob. This visit had lasted quite some time and I felt that Jacob had enjoyed his time with me.

Discussion and Conclusion

My evening with Jacob was enlightening. I felt confident that I was able to
engage Jacob and allow him the opportunity to experiment with interesting objects. He had surprised me with his ability to make meaning of his surroundings. I felt that I was able to take a glimpse into Jacob’s mysterious world and understand some of his thinking. Yet I still feel flustered when I think about the process of documentation with a child with special rights.

I leave this project with some answers, but many questions. Was my documentation of Jacob similar to the documentation of children with special rights in Reggio Emilia? Was I truly able to connect with Jacob in a meaningful manner and gain a deep understanding of his thoughts, feelings, and experiences? If the type of documentation I did with Jacob was done with a typically developing child, would it still be considered pedagogical documentation? Does it matter?

I have learned that documentation of a child with limited methods of communication takes a lot of vigilance, creativity, analysis, insight, and especially listening. Listening to his words, but also to his body language, facial expressions, subtle signals and cues, and to my own intuition, largely based on my knowledge of the child and his prior experiences. I knew that Jacob’s display of joint attention was significant, because I knew that this was not his typical response. Had I not engaged in deep analysis of Jacob’s actions, I do not believe I would have caught the connection he was making between the toy duck and the duck in the picture book. And if I had persisted in playing the game of hide-the-book rather than noting Jacob’s display of boredom, I may never have given him the opportunity to make the connection in the first place.

I could not help but feel slightly disappointed that Jacob did not choose to make a graphic representation of the evening’s events. On the other hand, the fact that Jacob copied the words he saw on the camera showed me how observant he was; another important piece of information, which I may not have learned had he not done this. Documenting Jacob was certainly an experience I could not have anticipated. Reggio Emilia educators believe that children communicate through their own unique, important, and meaningful languages. Through my experiences with Jacob, I was able to get a glimpse of one of those special languages.

References
When first introduced to the Reggio Emilia approach in 1994, I became profoundly attuned to my childhood experiences – to me as child. I was reminded of this when I sat down with this book. It fell open to page 135 where photographs of the authors appeared, both as adults and in childhood. I was delighted to meet them as children, and immediately understood the intent of these authors. Ina Hughes states in the foreword, “...Sylvia Chard and Yvonne Kogan take us back into our own childhoods, but more importantly, they enable us to recognize, even to name, the child like qualities we as human beings need to preserve as we grow up.”

More than a beautiful coffee table book that might grace any centre’s reception area, it nudges the readers to contemplate a trip back to their own childhoods, and invites that child in each of us to join in our continuing journey’s work with the young children.

The book’s authors are Sylvia Chard and Yvonne Kogan. Chard, a long-time Review Board Member for Canadian Children, Professor Emeritus of Early Childhood Education at the University of Alberta, is well known for her work on the Project Approach. Co-author Kogan, a Principal of the Early Childhood Department is co-owner of the Eton School in Mexico City, Mexico. Throughout this book, they help teachers and families to understand what it means “to be a child”. The book is presented in six sections:

- Section 1 “I am here.” Children Where They Are
- Section 2 “What’s that?” Noticing and Wondering
- Section 3 “How does that work?” Investigating and Recording
- Section 4 “Let’s make one!” Representing: Making and Doing
- Section 5 “Can you help me?” Consulting, Collaborating and Sharing
- Section 6 “Where next?” Reflecting, Disengaging and Moving On

“When the sun is up young children’s minds and bodies are seldom still.

They are continuously acting and reacting,

thinking and speaking, anticipating and reflecting.

There is a cyclical rhythm
to the way children engage with their surroundings
in action and in thought.” p. 7
The first section brings us into the child’s world, illustrating the places that children live out each day. Children are engaged in activities that might be directed or suggested by adults or were initiated by the children themselves. I liked this view across cultures and activities. We are accustomed to seeing children ‘at the centre’ or in their classrooms and observing them from this vantage point, rather than the view that the authors present of children in their family, community and natural environments. I am reminded that at one time I would visit with children and families in their homes (outside the centre) as part of my getting to know them.

Each photograph in this section and throughout the book is cleverly identified by country of origin in a thumbnail index at the back of the book. This also serves as an index of children from varying countries. The collection includes photos from China, Cambodia, Canada, England, France, Nepal, Mexico, USA, Kenya and others. My 5 year old grandson was visiting today – he enjoyed exploring the index and then matching their origin with our flag collection.

Section two identifies the many interests and curiosities of children. Whether in an urban or a natural environment, children can master that closer look when adults are nearby. Likewise adults can learn more about the child by observing what it is they are wondering about. There were a few adults in my own life, who wondered along with me – but some were overly concerned with schedules and cleanliness.

Section three, children are transported to a world of investigation and report making. They explore everything their communities have to offer. Photographs include intense involvement and observation in a variety of locations from an apple orchard to a mechanic shop. Their engagement leaps out of the pages. I sat with each photograph for a moment. I recalled changing the tires of my small car with the children at the centre – and why not? They too were so capable, observant and engaged in the task.

Section four, let’s make one points to the child’s possibilities. Children drawing in detail, weighing, measuring, thinking and recording their take on what is going on, is so beautifully portrayed. Other children should see this book.

Section five illustrates children reaching out to others in their community – engaging in talk and listening, in action and reflection, in role play and community performance. The child finds ways to ask, “can you help me?” This section will summon readers to think about their conversations with children, and how they might become more responsive adults in their lives.

Section six asks, where next? How do we reflect, then disengage and then move on with children’s experiences? Moving away from one exploration and onto another is often more challenging for adults than children. They seem to find their way and can engage our interest when we allow it. I noticed in these photographs a sort of respite or relaxation, a necessary part of each day.

The stories in this ‘book of few words’ are just as engaging as any textbook I’ve read. I hope that you will enjoy and learn from this exposé of the child from their side. I would venture to guess that, for the authors, this publication was a labour of love. When you see these images you will agree with Ina Hughes, who so eloquently states, “Often when we watch children at play, our hearts grow too big for our bodies” (p. 4).

ISBN 9780876590744    136 pages
Publisher Gryphon House, U.S.A., September 2009
In this book, author Pamela Proctor chronicles her experiences as a teacher and lifelong learner which spanned over three decades in the Vancouver School District. Her journey begins as a newly hired teacher at Renfrew Elementary School, during a time when a rigid education system was still widely sanctioned. Proctor then takes us through her paradigm changing experience while teaching abroad in Britain. From then on, Proctor becomes a strong advocate for play-based learning, demonstrating through her work and utmost respect for children the benefits of a child-centred approach to teaching. Each chapter title and quote serves as an effective hook, beckoning the reader to continue uncovering more about Proctor's past.

Proctor successfully threads together her experiences both as teacher and learner, seamlessly forming the connections between theory and practice. Her vivid descriptions of various classroom settings in which she taught leaves the reader feeling transported in time to the aforementioned spaces. Proctor effectively demonstrates how to marry a multi-age classroom setting with a play-based approach to learning. Through accounts of children's experiences at Charles Dickens Annex (a primary school in Vancouver), Proctor emphasizes how children have the capacity to take initiative in their own learning while developing strong relationships with other children in the school. The philosophy espoused by Proctor and colleagues at the school helped children foster empathy towards one another. The following example demonstrates the power of promoting positive social experiences among the children:

“Sometimes, the children themselves showed the way. One day, just at nine o’clock, I noticed that six-year-old Clinton was lingering outside crying after everyone else had entered. New to our school, he had been upset due to a family break-up. Seven-year-old Melissa noticed, too...Our staff assistant heard her say to him, “I used to feel like crying when I came to school.” She bent down and picked up a stone. “Put this in your pocket,” she said, “and every time you feel sad, touch it and remember that your mum will be coming later to get you.” Then she handed him a tissue and led him into the school.” (p. 159)

Proctor’s child-centred approach to teaching young children has become a living testament of how one can give children more autonomy in their learning without risking the possibility of unleashing chaos in the classroom:

“One or two of the main school teachers expressed surprise that the children were so quiet. I was less confused by this remark than I had been in the past. The quiet was not silence. Involved in activity, the children talked in conversational tones pleasant to the ear. Trained as most of us were, it was natural for teachers to think that letting go would mean having noisy classes.” (p. 116)

Proctor also addresses the concerns raised by parents and other education stakeholders with regards to the question of how to account for students learning in a play-based setting. An important element of the multi-age environment crafted carefully under the watchful guidance of Proctor and colleagues was that of building community. Proctor identifies in her book with the need to adopt inclusion of families of the children, forming strong partnerships with those intimately involved in the students’ lives.
Families were encouraged to attend potlucks and other events hosted by the staff at Charles Dickens Annex. Parents were also welcome to volunteer their time imparting their various talents with small groups of children during certain times of the week. Staff were always receptive to hearing concerns and objections raised by parents while dispelling doubts around the school's child-centred philosophy of learning.

“Honouring the Child” struck a personal chord with me as I was once Mrs. Proctor's student. From 1980 to 1984, I attended Charles Dickens Annex and was fortunate to be in Mrs. Proctor’s class. The photographs shared with readers in Proctor's book evoke nostalgia within me, causing me to fondly recall those days when I first officially embarked on my journey as a student in the public school system. Proctor mentioned me briefly on p. 199, in reference to a transcript of children being called upon to choose what they would undertake during “Activity Time.” As a former student, I can attest that the learning environment I was privileged to experience strongly shaped me into the individual I have become. My passion as a life-long learner and love for both reading and writing were mostly nurtured during my early years. Having the ability to regularly engage in play-based learning as a young child in the company of peers helped me develop skills critical to working constructively with others whilst adapting to an ever changing environment we face in today's world.

“Honouring the Child” is food for the teacher's soul, serving as a reminder of the importance of adopting play-based learning within educational spaces for young children. Proctor’s work is an urgent call to educators and policy makers to return to sound educational practices in today's classrooms where there is increasing pressure to normalize the acts of filling out worksheets and testing our youngest students. This book will leave the reader that supports child-centred teaching practices both inspired and supported in one's sometimes seemingly arduous journey as a teacher.


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**Once Upon a Bathtime**

by Vi Hughes and illustrated by Sima Elizabeth Shefrin

Reviewed by Dr. Christianne Hayward

Dr. Christianne Hayward, founder of Christianne’s Lyceum of Literature and Art, has been engaging children and adults in learning journeys for over thirty years. She also teaches at Capilano University, works as a teacher consultant, facilitates parent groups in the ANCHOR Program at the Vancouver Child Study Centre, works at Vancouver Kidsbooks, and is the mother of two sons. As a professional storyteller, she is always seeking new material.

The bath to bed routine has never been so much fun. Vi Hughes from Vancouver and Sima Elizabeth Shefrin from Gabriola Island have created a visual and lyrical treat for the 2-5 year-olds and their caregivers. Bathtime becomes storytime as familiar folktale characters engage a young girl while she gets clean from a day of play. Text is kept poetically simple, as a provocation for extended storytelling between reader and child when they encounter well-known story friends.

Richly textured papers are masterfully collaged against a pale yellow background creating stark contrasts that help bring clever details to the attention of little ones. Both adult and child will be compelled to linger over double spreads and decode details for possible layered meanings. Shefrin’s choice to depict a multiracial family living the ordinary moments of life makes this an especially attractive picture book in a society seeking to embrace diversity. This little picture book earns a secure home on the bookshelf of every early child care centre.

Tradewind Books, 2010
Ten Birds

written and illustrated by Cybèle Young

Reviewed by Dr. Christianne Hayward

This full sized picture book is so much more than your average counting book. To start, the exquisitely detailed chiaroscuro pen and ink illustrations beg close examination by both young and old; each page inspiring an engineering project that could be constructed either in the classroom or at home.

Ten birds have a dilemma, they need to get to the other side of a river. Luckily, some careless humans have left an eclectic array of tools and materials on their side of the water. The birds attack the intriguing piles and begin designing contraptions that will assist them in reaching their destination. The one called Brilliant is first to cross using cleverly constructed stilts. Quite Advanced is close behind having engineered an underwater paddle wheel. Birds named Extraordinary, Outstanding and Exceptional design equally sophisticated machines to get themselves across the water. Each time a bird leaves, a numeral visually representing the birds left behind is constructed from the same materials used in the building of their invention. The last bird, called Needs Improvement has nothing to work with, but gets to the other side just the same. She boldly walks across the footbridge that was there all along, leaving nothing behind except her footprints in the shape of a zero. This last page always earns a giggle and secret cheer for the underdog who rises above all expectation. One can’t help but to think of report card comments as they turn the pages of this whimsical yet serious new picture book.

In a way, this work is a commentary on contemporary society’s obsession with exceptionality. Families strain to hear words like “outstanding” or “brilliant” attached to the names of their children and sigh at words like “ordinary” or “satisfactory.” Yet, it is often the ordinary child, out of the limelight of over zealous adults, who manages to gain the experiences that reinforce common sense and self-reliance.

Kids Can Press, 2011

In Memoriam: C. Doris Paton

We take note of the passing of C. Doris Paton, founding president of the Canadian Association for Young Children. Doris was given the name Catherine May at birth, but later chose the name “Doris” just because she liked it. Doris was born October 23, 1921, in Toronto, and died December 1, 2010, in Burlington, Ontario, of complications from pneumonia. She was 89. According to her granddaughter, Julie Donnelly, Doris always knew she wanted to be a teacher. She began her career as an educator by stepping into a fourth grade classroom right out of high school, and continued teaching elementary school until her retirement in 1981. In 1973, Doris graduated from the University of Toronto with a BA degree. She was the oldest graduate in the university’s history at that time, receiving her degree at the age of 52. Doris was also an avid golfer, having played the links at prestigious St. Andrews and Pebble Beach, and twice hitting holes-in-one in her golfing career. Clearly, Doris was a life long learner. We honour her for her contributions to education, and to the children of Canada.
A time for ‘new’ beginnings…

As I immerse myself in a new role as the Publications Chair of Canadian Children with the publication of the 2011 spring edition, I am reminded that spring has been thought of as a time of beginnings in numerous traditions. Nature’s relentless capacity for rejuvenation at this time of year has become a metaphor for hope, continuity, and change. I would like to invite you, the reader, to think in what ways the articles in this edition of Canadian Children might have proposed a new beginning for you. Perhaps you were intrigued by an idea, a word, or a question and you felt compelled to begin a conversation with a colleague, a friend, a student, a parent, or a child. Perhaps you were inspired to embark on a new experience with children or students. Perhaps you felt obliged to respond to one of the articles in writing…

The idea of a ‘beginning’ remains a wonderfully ambiguous term, full of energy, possibilities, and potential, yet abundant, at the same time, with uncertainties, questions, and re-connecting with what has been. Beginnings are inevitably entangled with history and the future. With this in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Dr. Wayne Eastman who has been the Publications Chair for Canadian Children over the past 10 years. Dr. Eastman’s support and mentorship over the last few weeks has been extremely generous as I have been learning this new role.

Where are the children in current Canadian political agendas?

The upcoming Federal elections in Canada present an opportunity for surveying how the various parties address children in their election platforms. I decided to peruse the parties’ platform documents focusing on where and how children are situated in relation to the parties’ social and political goals. My intention in this exercise was simply to bring to light in a non-partisan way how children are discussed in our present Canadian political landscape. I approached the exercise in a straight forward manner. First, I read each party’s platform, then I counted how many times the word “children” or “child” appeared in each document, and finally, I re-read the textual contexts in which children were discussed. Not surprisingly, children were often discussed in relation to family policies. As well, across most platforms children were mentioned alongside broader social issues such as poverty, health, and safety. Special attention was also given to any mention of child care and early childhood education initiatives.

The Liberal Party

In the Liberal Party election platform children were discussed in relation to three main topics. Emphasis was placed on the need to protect children from crime and abuse (safety issues) through introducing new tougher laws. Another area that was highlighted was the promotion of children’s physical health and participation in arts related activities through family tax credits for sport and art programs. The word “children” was mentioned over 30 times in the document. However, on a number of occasions the word “children” was used not to discuss children’s matters per se, but rather to invoke a sentiment in order to make broad statements about Canada’s future, as exemplified in the following sentence: “We’re creating jobs now, and building a bright future for our children and grandchildren.”

The New Democrat Party

The NDP, known for its support for family-oriented social policies, promised to improve access to child care by creating “integrated, community-based, child-centred early learning and education centres that provide parents with a ‘one-stop shop’ for family services.” In the NDP platform children are mentioned 8 times, primarily in the contexts of combating poverty and improving children’s health and safety.

The Green Party

The Green Party, which has the most detailed platform, mentioned children over 50 times. The goal of addressing children’s needs is the third item on the vision statement of the Green Party. Children are mentioned under almost all the sections of the document and are discussed within a myriad of contexts. For example, the Green Party stressed the need to increase the time that families spend with their children (including time for breast-feeding infants!). To this end, the Green Party platform suggested better planned transit and workplace child care. The Green Party called for enhancing the welfare of children through better nutrition, protection from inappropriate exposure to marketing of junk foods, facilitating access to the Roots of Empathy Program, creating universal, federally-funded child care (which is conceived as an aspect of early childhood education), and establishing a national Children’s Commissioner (as recommended by UNICEF) to ensure children’s best interests are considered in policy development.

The Bloc Quebecois

While Quebec established universal and affordable child care in the late 1990s, in the current Bloc Quebecois platform there was no mention of children or child care.

What stood out for me in this review was the fluidity of the concept “children” and how the social-political agendas that are associated with children in Canada are inevitably constructed in relation to competing societal values. I offer this brief review with the hope that you will be enticed to research the various parties’ platforms with a renewed sense of curiosity and a new set of questions about what is envisioned for Canadian children and consider how, as citizens, we might participate in shaping this vision.

The Conservative Party

In the CP’s election platform children were discussed in relation to three main topics. Emphasis was placed on the need to protect children from crime and abuse (safety issues) through introducing new tougher laws. Another area that was highlighted was the promotion of children’s physical health and participation in arts related activities through family tax credits for sport and art programs. The word “children” was mentioned over 30 times in the document. However, on a number of occasions the word “children” was used not to discuss children’s matters per se, but rather to invoke a sentiment in order to make broad statements about Canada’s future, as exemplified in the following sentence: “We’re creating jobs now, and building a bright future for our children and grandchildren.”

The Bloc Quebecois

The Bloc Quebecois

While Quebec established universal and affordable child care in the late 1990s, in the current Bloc Quebecois platform there was no mention of children or child care.

What stood out for me in this review was the fluidity of the concept “children” and how the social-political agendas that are associated with children in Canada are inevitably constructed in relation to competing societal values. I offer this brief review with the hope that you will be enticed to research the various parties’ platforms with a renewed sense of curiosity and a new set of questions about what is envisioned for Canadian children and consider how, as citizens, we might participate in shaping this vision.
Ellen Jacobs has a career that has spanned over 30 years. During these 30 years, Ellen has contributed to the educational field in numerous ways. She has taught and coordinated in preschool programs. She has been a faculty member at Concordia University for over twenty years. During her tenure at Concordia she established the Observation Nursery Program and has been actively responsible for overseeing the program and ensuring that it maintains high standards. Ellen has a reputation amongst students as being a tough professor, but one who is there for her students and will always go the extra mile for them. Students also often mention Ellen’s sense of humour and how much they learn from her courses. Besides being an outstanding professor, Ellen has also contributed to the university by successfully bringing in funding to help do much needed research in the ECE field. Ellen has always had a passion for ensuring that educational programs should be of high quality. Among her many published works, Ellen helped to create the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), an international measure for ECE programs which is still one of the few tools of its kind. Ellen has also worked as a program consultant for the Canadian Sesame Street, and for numerous preschools in Montreal. At the university Ellen was the chair of the Education department, the director of the Child Studies program, and an academic professor. In her role as a professor, Ellen always made herself available to sit on numerous committees, oversee students and manage the Observation Nursery. She has supervised a substantial number of graduate students. Ellen has been a tireless advocate for children and educators alike, trying to ensure that educators are well-trained, furthering research in the ECE field and advocating for high quality childcare for all children. The list of Ellen’s accomplishments is lengthy. I have only highlighted a few of the highlights of Ellen’s career. To fully understand why Ellen Jacobs deserves this award one would have to meet her. Her love for children instantly becomes evident when one talks to Ellen about children. Her eyes light up and she begins to readily share her expertise. Ellen is still very comfortable around children. She often stops by the Observation Preschool and is quick to get down (almost!) to the children’s level and to listen with interest to any of the stories that many of the children want to share with her. Ellen Jacobs will be retiring from Concordia University next year. She truly does embody all the qualities that the CAYC looks for in the Friends of Children award. I am proud to know and work with Ellen. She is truly an outstanding contributor to our field.

Nominated by Fiona Rowlands
Friends of Children Award

Carol Anne Wien

Reggio Children

The Canadian Association for Young Children is proud to present **Reggio Children** with the “Friends of Children” Award for its outstanding scholarly, advocacy, innovative and practical contribution to the well-being of young children.

Reggio Children is an association that formed after the death of Loris Malaguzzi in 1994, with the intention that the work he had begun would continue: to defend and promote the rights and potential of all children. They have formed a vast network of educators, researchers, parents, policy-makers, and organizations interested in children. With its continuous work in relations, their aim is to make ideas, practices, theories and experiences available and shareable so that childhood should be more visible, more audible, without boundaries of geography, ideology or culture. Reggio Children offers itself as an opportunity for re-launching dialogue and sharing around a culture of childhood based on the necessity of respecting each child’s identity and promoting his/her potential and rights.

This organization has been in dialogue with educators in over 80 countries. Every day in their work, they show what it means to cross borders, to listen, to collaborate. In addition to their intense work and research with educators and academics from all over the world, they have also worked closely with philosophers, designers, and artists of all types. Their long-term collaboration with Harvard University has produced a rich body of research and has helped us to begin to reconceptualize childhood and early education.

The educators in Reggio Emilia have not only developed this philosophy that is inspiring other educators around the world, they continue to build on their understandings, to challenge themselves to deepen their understandings, never still, never setting a curriculum in stone, always emphasizing that childhood is a social construct, and that its meaning continues to change in every context. They also have the courage and generosity of spirit to do this work on a world stage, inviting others to think with them, without certainty, without arrogance, but with sincere curiosity and interest in co-constructing knowledge. They are giants.

The books and exhibits of the work by the children and educators in Reggio Emilia have revealed a level of competence in young children that has provoked us to want to think better and do better with and for children and families. The work by the children and educators that has toured the world has astonished us, inspired us, provoked us, and made us restless to build contexts of dialogue where such rich lives with children could be lived.

It is an honour to present the Friends of Children award to this most worthy organization during the Canadian Study Week in Reggio Emilia.

*Submitted by Karyn Callaghan*
# THE FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AWARDS

*Recipients to date include:*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recipients</th>
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| 1995 | David Booth (ON)  
Brenda Clark (ON)  
| 1999 | Jenny Chapman (BC)  
Barbara Coloroso (QC)  
Susan Fraser (BC)  
Elsie Perkins (SK)  
Robert Munsch (ON)  
Judy Steiner (QC)  |
| 1996 | Anne Luke (SK)  |
| 1997 | Hollie Andrew (MB)  
Dr. Leora Cordis (SK)  
Dr. Mona Farrell (QC)  
Dr. Jennifer Hardacre (ON)  
Dr. Frances Haug (SK)  
Dr. Caroline Krentz (SK)  
Imogene McIntyre (MB)  
Dorothy Sharp (NL)  
Barbara Stange (SK)  |
| 1998 | Elnor Thompson (NS)  
Wally Weng-Gerrity (QC)  |
| 2000 | Gayle Robertson (MB)  
Vicki Warner (AB)  |
| 2002 | June Meyer (BC)  
Lynda Philips (BC)  
Larry Railton (BC)  
Cathleen Smith (BC)  |
| 2003 | Kathryn McNaughton (SK)  |
| 2004 | Dr. Wayne Eastman (NL)  |
| 2005 | Mary Cronin (SK)  
Darlene Dixon (SK)  
Judy Wainwright (AB)  |
| 2006 | Lorraine Maskiwi (MB)  
Dr. Jack Newman (ON)  
Dr. Wayne Serebrin (MB)  
Sylvia Taylor (MB)  |
| 2007 | Bev Bos (USA)  
Patricia Breen (BC)  |
| 2008 | Barb Bigelow (NS)  
Judy Fry (SK)  
Carol Jonas (QC)  
Beth Warkentin (SK)  |
| 2009 | Valerie Blauuw (NS)  
Ron Blatz (MB)  
Charles S. Coffey (MB)  
Martha Friendly (ON)  |
| 2010 | Linda Sutherby (AB)  
Karen Westphal (SK)  
Dr. Carol Anne Wien (ON)  |

## Friends of Children Award Guidelines

The CAYC “Friends of Children Award” was established to give CAYC a way of recognizing outstanding contributions, by individuals or groups, to the well-being of young children. If you wish to nominate an individual or group for this award, please use the criteria and procedure below.

### CRITERIA

The Friends of Children Award may be presented to an individual or group, regardless of age, who:

- Has a history of commitment to the CAYC mission statement and/or aims.
- Has shown an outstanding scholarly, advocacy, innovative or practical contribution to the well-being of young children.
- May or may not be of Canadian citizenship.
- May or may not hold CAYC membership although it is encouraged.

### PROCEDURE

- A nomination must be made by a member of the Board of Directors and be seconded by a member of the Board of Directors. Board members can, however, receive recommendations for nominations from individual CAYC members or from other organizations.
- Nominations will be brought forward at a Board of Directors or National Executive meeting by the board or executive member assigned responsibility for the award. This board or executive member will present and speak to the nomination.
- The nomination will be voted upon and passed by the Board of Directors with a consensus decision.
- The award will be presented promptly and in person when possible.
- Publicity of the award and the recipient(s) will appear in the journal, *Canadian Children*, and other publications where possible.
- The number of awards per year will vary.