



Child Care Connection Nova Scotia (CCCNS), located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, is a community-based development organization incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act. Since December 1988, CCCNS has developed a modest infrastructure to provide support and resources to early childhood practitioners and others interested in quality child care in Nova Scotia. CCCNS serves a constituency that includes early childhood practitioners, owners and boards of child care facilities, families, early childhood studies programs, government departments, university faculty, business, the media and the community as a whole. In applying a community-based development approach to all its projects and activities, the results are reflective of and responsive to the needs of our clients and provide additional resources for them to increase the quality of their early childhood practice.

The Board of CCCNS articulates and evaluates the ends of Child Care Connections, annually reviewing and revising CCCNS policies as part of its governance process. The means to achieve these ends is determined by the Executive Director within the parameters outlined in executive limitations policies.

In 2010-2011, in accordance with the ends determined by our Board of Directors, CCCNS focused on the goals of:

- Building capacity in the Child Care Sector through community-based development,
- Promoting the value of child care , and
- Sustaining an infrastructure to support the child care sector

### **Building Capacity in the Child Care Sector**

In 2004, CCCNS conducted a review of its services and sector forums to identify the key priorities for the sector. Five priorities were identified and these will continue to guide the activities of CCCNS through to 2010. Two of these priorities guide our capacity building activities. They are:

- ◆ Developing a strong professional infrastructure
- ◆ Building relationships and working together within the sector

Child Care Connections has built capacity within the child care sector through- support of early childhood organizations, its Board and its community-based development projects. We support and consult with child care practitioners, organizations, programs and services, assisting them in strategic planning, communications and organizational structure; providing current research updates and information on issues and trends; and providing an access point for information, resources and support. Our professional development activities and partnerships develop skills, build support networks and increase professionalism. Connections operates from a model of a professional child care delivery system developed in 1995, supporting existing organizations linked to professionalism and developing proposals to secure funding to carry out its community-based development projects.

After 22 years of operation, CCCNS has achieved its ends to a great extent. In 2011-2012 CCCNS will be reexamining its ends through conversations with the sector, child care organizations and other stakeholders and restructuring its means to achieving these ends.

### ***Support of Child Care Organizations:***

Child Care Connections (CCCNS) provides meeting space, develops and sustains web sites, maintains registers, manages finances, mail outs and conference/ professional development registrations and other administrative tasks for the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (CCECENS), the Nova Scotia Child Care Association (NSCCA), and Partners In Practice Mentoring Group (PIP). Both NSCCA and CCECENS appoint representatives to the CCCNS Board of Directors. Over the past year, NSCCA has been integrating the administrative tasks into their organizational structure and by 2012 will be handling all of its affairs. Partners In Practice Mentoring Group has disbanded. We facilitate the All Together Now inclusion champions' network in meeting arrangements, communications and conference organization.

CCCNS also assisted in the organizational tasks involved with an Emergent approach master class with Peter Green Hall.

June 11 & 12, 2010, *Nurturing Nature ~ La nature: un jeu d'enfant* the third provincial child care conference jointly convened by provincial partners, CCCNS, le Centre provincial de ressources préscolaires, the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of NS, and the Nova Scotia Child Care Association was held. Each organization had representatives on conference committees to design and execute the conference. Workshops in both English and French increase the accessibility of resources to Acadian colleagues. The conference we well attended. The second Awards and Recognition dinner gala was held recognizing

colleagues and programs for their work.

January 2008, the organizations formed a committee to dialogue on coming together as one association that supports child care professionals. Each organization appointed representatives to the committee and since then the committee has been examining what that coming together would mean for the sector and for each organization. Over 2009, the Boards have met together to develop a strategic plan for moving the concept forward. It is a complex process and challenging to keep moving each organization forward in its mission while planning to merge into one organization. It is not always a straight line to get to where we need to be. Continued dialogue, commitment and respect for our colleagues and the organizations they represented have brought us to appreciate the developmental stage each organization represents and the resources available for each to accomplish its mandate. At this time, NSCCA is moving toward being a stand-alone sister organization, and le Centre provincial de ressources préscolaires will remain a sister organization. CCCNS and the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators continue to work towards a merger.

CCCNS involves sector partners (Organizations and Early Childhood Development Support Centres) in the planning and shaping of activities and promotions which have traditionally been led by CCCNS. The ECLC Awards of Excellence for Program and Practice, Child Care Awareness Days, and the annual conference are examples of working together to maximize our resources.

### ***Board of Directors***

CCCNS Board Members are representative of administrators of full and part day programs. Also included are representatives from the

### **Connections Ends**

*"Investments in children will be maximized through recognizing, valuing and supporting the development of an effective, quality early childhood community in Nova Scotia.*

- ◆ *There will be a comprehensive, coordinated early childhood community that maximizes resources.*
- ◆ *Early childhood practitioners in Nova Scotia will be self confident, skilled and professional*
- ◆ *There will be a favourable public image of early childhood practice."*

Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia, the Coalition of Non Profit Directors of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Child Care Association and the Private Licensed Administrators Association. Other appointed board members provide the perspectives of post secondary training institutions, women's issues and unions as they relate to child care. With this make up, the CCCNS Board is well equipped to set the direction of the organization and establish relevant and practical ends for the organization to support the child care sector.

### **Projects:**

#### **Mentoring Pairs for Child Care**

The Early Childhood Community Development Centre in the Niagara Region of Ontario has contracted with CCCNS to develop aspects of their mentoring program for supervisors in Ontario child care. Our Executive Director's expertise in developing the Partners In Practice Mentoring Model has been utilized in developing a matching program on the web, part of the evaluation process and study group training package based on the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council's Occupational Standards for Administrators. This exciting project began early 2008 with the development phase completed in March 2010. Evaluation of the project conducted throughout the project and reported in 2011 yielded exemplary results in the awareness and skill of all the participants. Interest in implementing the project in other provinces has been instigated.

#### **Supporting Community Boards:**

In recognizing the need to support the boards of directors of licensed child care programs incorporated as a society the Early Childhood Development Services of NS Department of Community Services have funded CCCNS to carry out the Supporting Community Boards Project. This project will identify existing community resources for boards, have conversations with a sample of community boards regarding what supports they want and effective ways and media for accessing them, and customize some resources for the sector.

#### **Promotion of the Value of Child Care:**

A sector priority identified in 2004 "increasing awareness within and outside of the sector" that continues to be a main concern of the sector is reflected in our promotion of the value of child care activities.

#### **Awards and Recognition**



**Caring At Work Awards:** During Child Care Awareness Days each June, colleagues and peers nominate early childhood practitioners for the Caring At Work Award in recognition of their commitment and dedication to children. Each nominee receives a pin and certificate at awards events across the province. Attendees at the awards ceremonies hear the stories of the recipients and celebrate their contribution to child

care in NS. In 2010 fifty-eight (58) child care practitioners were recognized by their peers.

#### **Early Childhood Learning & Care Awards for Excellence in Practice & Program:**

The Early Childhood Learning and Care (ECLC) Awards of Excellence for Educators and Programs honour the accomplishments and dedication of exceptional early learning and care practitioners and programs. Design and development of the awards process was completed in 2005.

Recipients in 2010 were *Andrea MacDonald* receiving the ECLC Award for Excellence in Practice and the *Giant Steps Children's Centre* the ECLC Award for Excellence in Program.



Service Award

#### **Early Childhood Care and Education Service**

**Award:** To celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009, CCCNS instituted a Service Award to recognize child care programs which have provided child care services to children and families for twenty or more years. Seven programs were presented with a certificate at the annual conference with a range of 28

years to 100 years in operation. Their stories were distributed to conference participants and the child care sector as well as appeared in an issue of Metro news.

#### **Media Promotion**

CCCNS provides local perspective to the media on child care issues and the findings of national research projects. Our resource library contains a good sampling of these reports plus other statistical and demographically relevant information that is used by media researchers. We provide accurate, relevant information on child care in NS and connect the media with practitioners and parents for their perspective.

#### **Participation in Groups**

##### **Building Connections Working Group**

CCCNS Executive Director represents CCCNS on this Ministerial Committee of Service Providers and NS Department of Community Services staff with the purpose of connecting and building relationships through dialogue, communication, and sharing resources and information.

#### **Sustaining an Infrastructure to Support the Child Care Sector**

CCCNS provides an infrastructure to support child care practitioners in Nova Scotia. The services include:

##### **Communications services.**

These include an 800 number, network access, Connections mini-journal, Celebration newsletter, and web site <http://www.cccns.org>. A diverse network of members of the child care sector is kept informed of and consulted on current issues and trends affecting child care in NS, Canada and other countries, through email, mail outs and faxes. Consensus is built when time and resources are available.

##### **Program and Organizational services**

CCCNS provides services to child care programs and organizations such as board development, strategic planning, development of promotional materials, resources, consultation, meeting space, mailings and assistance in operational needs.

##### **Web Site**

The web site includes an online resource library; a job posting bulletin board; a centre listing that includes three web pages per centre; resources for practitioners including our mini-journal, publications, professional development opportunities, advocacy campaigns, organization information, relevant links, and a calendar of events. The web site hosts the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of NS (CCECENS)

Between Jan 2010 and December 2011 we had 21,984 visits, 1572 less than 2009 (23,556 visits) and 14,770 unique visitors, 1355 less than 2010 (16,125 unique visitors). Throughout the year, the centre search and centre details have had the most hits. The website had an average of 60 visits per day overall in 2010; most between 2 pm and 4 pm; most between the months of January to June. Our usage has gone down modestly.

### Professional development activities

Professional development opportunities that CCCNS provides are administrator workshops on the topics of recruiting and retaining staff, participatory decision making, leadership; reflection and self-awareness and effective meetings; and mentoring skills. Other professional development services include our resource library, mini-journal, presentations and consultations. Staff and Board Members of CCCNS participate in national and provincial consultations, projects and organizations.

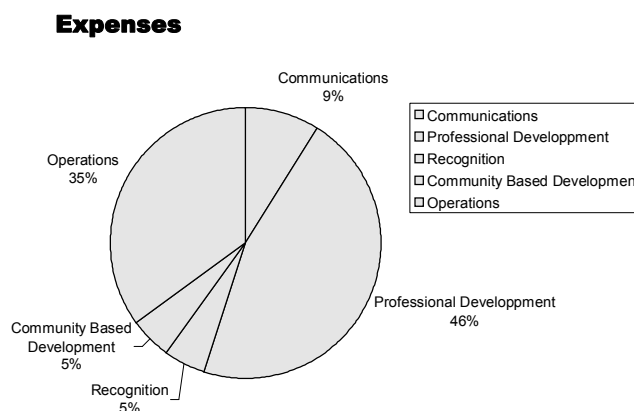
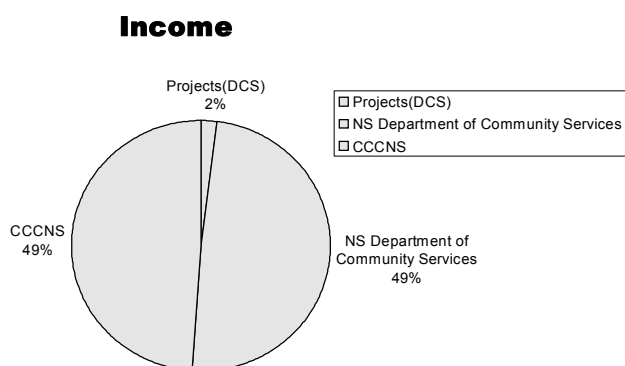
### Support services

Support and collaboration is given to the numerous child care organizations and post secondary Early Childhood Education programs in Nova Scotia in the form of information distribution, consultation, meeting space, use of office equipment, mail drops, maintenance of data bases of members, membership services, brochure development, web site postings, handling and routing inquiries. We also provide assistance regarding quality child care to government departments, political parties, media, businesses, parents and community agencies

## Sustaining an infrastructure to support the child care sector

### Financial Support of the CCCNS infrastructure (2010-2011)

Child Care Connection Nova Scotia's fiscal year runs from April to March of the succeeding year. Financial statements for 2010-2011 (April 2010-March 2011) indicate that forty-nine percent (49%) of operating income was derived from our own; forty-nine percent (49%) from a service agreement with the NS Department of Community Services and two percent (2%) from the NS Boards project funded through the NS Department of Community Services. Operating expenditures percentages are: Communications, professional development, recognition and projects account for sixty-five percent (65%) of expenditures and Operations (administration & facilities) account for thirty-five percent (35%) of expenditures.



### Challenges:

Since 2005, with the drying up of federal development funding for child care community development, CCCNS has repeatedly experienced an annual deficit between \$25,000 and \$30,000 in its core operations expenditures. This year we cut back on expenses and thus reduced our service capacity and have ended our fiscal year with a deficit of around \$15,000. In the upcoming year, we have cut back staff time in order to have a balanced budget, however, there will have to be a corresponding reduction of services. The Board of CCCNS is assessing the situation and the implications, examining our ends and searching our efficiencies.

CCCNS services and resources are well documented above; however, there are less obvious contributions that CCCNS makes to the ongoing growth and development of the child care sector. Some of these aspects are:

- ✧ CCCNS is a physical and conceptual place to gather and meet, a place where dialogue on issues and trends, recognition and direction for the sector can take place. It is a place where organizations can voice their comments, concerns and considerations and where they can hear that of other organizations. It is a place where organizations can work, grow and develop together as a sector. Quarterly, our board examines CCCNS ends, and the representatives of our sector's diverse organizations around the table bring their perspectives to those ends. This is a unique function that moves us forward in establishing professional practices and standards.
- ✧ CCCNS is a touch point, a contact for information, dialogue and reflection. Daily we receive an inquiry that starts with "Do you know anything about..." and an ECE, executive director, parent, student, media person, etc. will start on an information gathering or reflection adventure. Sometimes we have the information, sometimes we provide contacts that might have the information ~ whatever we can do, it is a privilege to be part of the journey.
- ✧ CCCNS provides a safe, respectful and ethical environment for ECE's, Executive Directors and ECE students to work through some of the challenges and dilemmas that face them. Sometimes talking through comments, concerns and considerations makes the challenge less formidable.
- ✧ CCCNS mentors organizations and individuals in leadership, community based development and mentoring skills.

These are a few of the less evident contributions to the child care sector made by CCCNS, ones which would be missed should we have to pare our operations down even further.



## CCCNS Board of Directors:

Barbara Bigelow  
*Co-Chair, Administrator*  
Donna Stapleton  
*Co-Chair, Administrator*

Joann Sweet  
*CCECENS*

Sue Melanson  
*NSCCA*

Kathleen Couture  
*NSCNPD*

Denzil David  
*PLAA*

Vacant  
*Women's Issues perspective*

Leanne McMillian  
*Union perspective*

Vacant  
*Post Secondary ECE Program  
perspective*



## CCCNS Staff:

E. Elaine Ferguson  
*Executive Director*

Patricia McComack  
*Office & Resource Coordinator*

# What you can do to assist Child Care Connections in our work for you~

- **Champion the contribution that quality child care makes to our province's social and economic well being**
- **Support our community based development initiatives**
- **Participate in our promotional and fundraising activities**
- **Tell us how CCCNS works for you.**

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### **Contact us:**

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