

# BEST START: THE COLLEGE OF ECEs

## DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

# AECEO SURVEY RESULTS

**AECEO's call for feedback on the College of ECE draft model in late October 2005, resulted in close to 500 responses across Ontario. The overwhelming response we received was due in a large part to the assistance of our branches.**

**Respondents were 60% AECEO members, and 85% ECE.**

### THEMES IDENTIFIED BY SURVEY:

- 1) A College of ECEs is important and welcome**
- 2) The Occupational title of "Early Childhood Educators" was recognized and accepted** in the field though suggestions were made to add the designation of "Registered or Certified" to the name as is common practice in other professions.
- 3) The minimum standard of a 2 year ECE diploma was acceptable** as a start with the hopes of an entry to practice process (similar to the current process delivered by AECEO) to be established in the future with provisions for mandatory ongoing professional development to maintain registration. Concern over the training consistency of graduates in future and current ECE programs were raised, identifying the need for accountability for all ECE diploma programs via accreditation.
- 4) Clarification was sought for the definition of "equivalency" for credentials** with the hopes that the field will be more flexible and open to giving credit to experience and building a multi-disciplinary team environment.
- 5) Membership category for full membership was acceptable** but concern was raised over the:
  - a. Need for a limited membership category
  - b. Current standards of ECE Apprenticeship programs
  - c. Need for recognition of current AECEO certified members
  - d. Omission of ECAs, supply teachers, part time staff, ECE students, school age complementary staff in the limited membership category
- 6) Mandatory registration and deadline date of 2011 was acceptable** so long as:
  - a. Strategies and supports (financial and accessible training) were in place to ensure that non-ECEs currently working in the field will be able to meet the proposed deadline.

- b. Current salaries of ECEs are considered when setting membership registration fees.
- c. Government ensures budget monies allotted to programs are increased to support the increase in salaries, benefits, training and staff replacement, that will be required to meet the standards set by the College.

**7) Mandatory Reporting process was acceptable** but many wanted clarification of what this process would look like.

**8) Transitional Council member expertise was acceptable** with the suggestion that representatives be considered with the following additional criteria:

- a. Cultural diversity
- b. Geographical diversity
- c. Community diversity
- d. Larger representation of ECE practitioners from diverse program settings and age groups
- e. Parent representation
- f. Special needs representation
- g. Socio-Economic diversity

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The AECEO response was only one of the avenues from which MCYS gathered feedback on the proposed model. The AECEO was responsible for feedback from its members. MCYS also held consultation meetings in several communities throughout Ontario.

The AECEO presented its findings to MCYS in November 2005. MCYS has taken all the feedback into consideration and is in the process of drafting their final proposal. This proposal will be presented in the form of a bill to legislature for voting. The AECEO plans to continue to be actively involved in the process and lobby for the interests of its members and the ECE profession.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS? (FAQ)

### **1) What and how will the College affect the Day Nurseries Act (DNA)? How will the DNA be adjusted to support the demands of the College during the transition?**

*AECEO Answer:* The AECEO has been made aware that MCYS recognizes the need to review and revise the Day Nurseries Act to support their vision of the Best Start Plan and are currently in the process of proposing changes. AECEO members and the ECE community must be prepared to respond to these proposals. Keeping informed and actively involved will ensure a voice from the ECE profession.

### **2) How will the Ministry address the current wages and working conditions of staff?**

*AECEO Answer:* The Ministry, as part of their Best Start Plan, formed a working panel on Human Resources. One of the areas the panel is looking at is compensation and benefits for the field. The panel is scheduled to release a report listing recommendations for the government in 2006. The AECEO will respond to its findings when it is made public.

### **3) What will be the model for the mandatory reporting process?**

*AECEO Answer:* The model for this process will be based on the same principles and policies governing all current Professional Colleges.

### **4) What will happen to the AECEO? Their role? Their membership?**

*AECEO Answer:* The AECEO will and must continue to exist separate from the College in order to continue to advocate for the profession. When the College of ECEs is established, the AECEO's role and funding base will have to change to allow it to continue. This must be determined by the current membership in advance to prepare for the upcoming changes. Membership input is crucial and will be sought in branch and provincial meetings and communication in the next few months.

### **5) Will there be a certification process for entry to practice standards? Will AECEO certified members be given recognition?**

*AECEO Answer:* Members of the College will be required to meet both entry standards and continuing competence in order to be licensed with the College. AECEO Certified members will receive recognition. However, it will be the responsibility of the College's council to determine how additional credentials above and beyond the required ECE diploma will be recognized.

### **6) How will the Ministry address the effect of the College's credential requirements in communities already facing retention and recruitment issues? Eg. school age programs, supply staff, part time staff, ECA's, in certain communities where qualified ECEs are already hard to find.**

*AECEO Answer:* The Ministry has been made aware of the current problem of retention and recruitment facing the field. The Human Resources Working Panel is expected to address this issue in their final recommendations.

### **7) Define early learning and care settings. Does this include private schools that do not have play based curriculum ie. Montessori/Waldorf. OEYC's? Special programs not conforming to traditional child care model? Parent cooperatives?**

*AECEO Answer:* The term refers to programs where Early Childhood Educators are hired to work with children and families.

### **8) What is the selection process for Transitional Council?**

*AECEO Answer:* The Minister for Children & Youth Services will appoint members to the council from the sector and the community at large.

**For a copy of the draft model and further updates check our website at [www.cfc-efc.ca/aeceo](http://www.cfc-efc.ca/aeceo)**