



# ECEBC LEADERSHIP

Featuring Alumni of the ECEBC Leadership Initiative

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## “Enriching quality of care through play and family connections”

Jodi Penner (Cohort 4) from Dawson Creek reflects on her experience during the one year leadership project. While creating our presentations and delivering them more than 34 times to elementary, high/school and ECE students, we had a chance to reflect about what children gain through play. The feedback we received from the school district, college faculty and the

word of mouth was really rewarding. As a result of that reflecting on the presentations, Jodi changed her practice to be more inclusive of families. I focus on “how to pull members together to be strong.” I now have a program that helps support positive interaction with infants. I bring in guest speakers who are making contact with vulnerable families and that programming has increased from one to two days a week because the sessions are so well attended. Families are making connections. I know the service is needed.

When asked what the most significant change in her leadership, Jodi shares, “I’m really proud of the work I do.” The ECEBC Leadership Initiative made it a little clearer that we make a difference. I have a voice and more confidence. Those skills were enhanced by Institute. I speak up and represent families

*“I’m really proud of the work I do.” The ECEBC Leadership Initiative made it a little clearer that we make a difference. I have a voice and more confidence.”*

*Jodi Penner*



*Jodi has been a member of ECEBC since February 23, 2012. She is an active member of the Dawson Creek Branch.*

## Growing a Solid Career in Early Childhood Education

To address the shortage of ECEs in the South Peace region, this group developed a travelling road show to bring to schools throughout the school district for grades 7 and up. The presentation highlights the world of early childhood and the importance of professionalism of early childhood educators (Community of Innovation Project Report, 2013).

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community.

Jodi speaks about her shift of practice. I now focus more on family support, teaching parents in a positive way and “letting people know they are not alone.” I had a personal shift as I worked with broken families and single dads. “At times I felt like I didn’t make a difference and now I realize the importance of our sharing our voices. “Even if they are small voices, you may be planting a seed.” Now I know we often make a difference to the families and children we work with. The journey through leadership gave me that clarity. Bringing colleges together and hearing their stories also helped me find clarity. Jodi is the winner of the 2014 *Helping Little Hands Award of Excellence* in the Community Early Care & Learning Individual of the Year category for being dedicated to caring in our community.

Jodi who doesn’t have a computer at home and isn’t connected through social media, found the Institutes and networking as leaders particularly powerful. The most amazing part of Institute was seeing leaders like Emily who are so passionate and seeing Emily go from a small community classroom working on the floor to ECEBC. Jodi also notes the pride she feels seeing the impact colleagues make. She names enriching culture, improving quality care, educating and advocating for fair wages as a few examples. At Institute, I got so refreshed and charged up. Jodi finds networking and social media a bit intimidating and wants to continue to grow in that area.

I help support ECEBC table and advocate for lower costs for families. When I advocate for families, I realize I do make a difference. I’d really like to help parents advocate for themselves. In the future, Jodi is hoping to support local branch leadership and provincial branch leadership. I’d like to take more training to provide additional supports for parents of infants and toddlers. “I see myself daily as a professional. I no longer feel alone. I’m proud of my career choice and I’m proud of my colleagues and the amazing work they do.”