



# ECEBC LEADERSHIP

Featuring Alumni of the ECEBC Leadership Initiative

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## “Right Now! Right where I’m at!”

When I began my leadership journey, I didn’t have a clear image of the project or the purpose of the Leadership Initiative but I did have a pretty clear image of a leader. A leader was someone in a business suit whose personality was best described as directive and authoritative. A role I did not see myself in. I’m a front line worker

engaged in my practice and I did not associate leadership with my role as a dedicated child care provider. I was interested in the advocacy work but didn’t really see it as part of my role or within my capacity as a child care provider. That kind of work was for managers and directors.

At the leadership institutes I began picking apart what leadership is. Over time my image of the leader changed and the new image dissolved the boundaries I had placed on my abilities to be a leader. I began to see leaders as people who inspire others, understanding rather than waiting for another time or role.

The project work in our community also demonstrated to me the many ways of being an effective



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*Jamie Anderson*

*Jamie has been a member of ECEBC since May 21, 2008 . She is an active member of the Campbell River Branch. She joined the ECEBC Board on May 13, 2011.*

## Creating Connections

The project established a leadership/mentoring forum that set the stage for creating a video, which paints a new picture of the work of ECEs in the region (Community of Innovation Project Report, 2010).

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who make connections with people, who speak from their current knowledge and speak from their current knowledge and understanding rather than waiting for another time or role.

The project work in our community also demonstrated to me the many ways of being an effective leader. Because our project was making connections, it was important to get people out to our events. To encourage this I visited the child care programs in our communities to introduce myself. Because I had gone out to centres and made those connections first, people began coming out to our branch meetings and project events. It was a style of leadership I'd not seen before; it wasn't part of my image of "the suit's way" of doing leadership. It was the way ECE's do leadership; with connection, emotion, and relationships.

I remember clearly when my new image of a leader became something I could apply to me. Our team had worked very hard on a slide show about our project work. After presenting it at one of the institutes Sheila Davidson, who was very moved by our work, asked if it could be shown at the ECEBC conference. I introduced our project over the lunch hour and our slide show was put on the big screen. Our project received a standing ovation from all the conference delegates!

Through this reimagining of leadership I have found a stronger voice. I realize that what I have to say is valid and true. I have always been comfortable with my communication style and had strong communication abilities but now I speak from my heart and I don't apologize for what I have to say.

I realized the contribution I have to make is beyond the walls of my child care program. I don't just have to be great in my practice; I can inspire and create engagement in others in addition to the families and children in my program. This is the big piece-making a contribution just the way I am, just where I am at in my career. I don't have to become someone else or do something else to make my contribution. I can embrace the person I am, in the role that I am in, and from that strong place speak from my heart to influence others.

I'm thankful I can speak from the perspective of a front line child care provider. My perspective is often different but it's from my heart and I can speak with more conviction because of that. It's become very important for me to speak from my heart as an Early Childhood Educator.

My experience with the Leadership Initiative has led me in directions I had never considered before. My new image of leadership changes everything, I take more chances now, and I make long term commitments to my field and take risks. I speak with more confidence. I have made so many new connections in our sector that when I go to conferences in related fields I see people I know and those relationships facilitate further opportunities. I'm on the Board of Directors of ECEBC!

My new image of a leader has strengthened my voice and encouraged me to speak from my heart as an Early Childhood Educator, right now, from right where I'm at!

Interview by Bev Christian.