



# ECEBC LEADERSHIP

Featuring Alumni of the ECEBC Leadership Initiative

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## Clarity

Crystal had long felt there was a tension between her tendency towards a feeling approach and the expectation of professionalism in work. She felt that she could best relate to others when she brought things to a personal level- enabling her to better understand situations herself. However, this approach to relationships in her professional world challenged her when she was faced with conflict or negative attitudes.

Crystal joined the second cohort of the Leadership initiative. During her year with the Initiative, she collaborated with her two colleagues to develop and

share childcare advocacy materials province-wide. The team worked intensely with support from ECEBC and through the Initiative's exercises and training to develop an articulate, concise and inclusive message. Through this process, each team-member grew and became more self-aware, learning about their roles and personal leadership styles within a team.

Over the year, differences among Initiative participants emerged; it became apparent that everyone had very different ways of "being" early childhood educators. Within herself, Crystal became aware of how she existed in the group as in her professional life; she saw that she was very sensitive and empathetic. While Crystal had previously understood these traits to be ingrained for her, it started to become obvious that extreme empathy could be a barrier for standing her ground.

At the Institute and beyond, Crystal's awareness and understanding of the significance of this "empathy overload" became acute. She experienced clarity: the clarity to really know and balance who she was and what she stood for, and to make the two work together.

*"I know what I need to acknowledge, and what I need to work on."*

*-Crystal Janes*



*Crystal has been a member of ECEBC since July 18, 2005.*

*Interview by Charlene Gray. Source: Context Research Evaluation Report, 2014.*

## Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC: Building Advocacy and Leadership Capacity

Project developed and delivered advocacy related public presentations and workshops using shared presentations and resources (Community of Innovation Project Report, 2011).

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Now, at work, Crystal leads and manages a large and diverse group of people. Crystal leads by example, with a sensitive, even-keeled and empathetic approach. She finds there is no need for harshness. She is empathetic, but she knows that as a manager, she needs to set the tone for how work moves forward.

Crystal continues to push herself into areas that make her feel uncomfortable and she lets conflict exist. The need to make everyone feel better has eased and in its place is a “certainty about uncertainty”. She continues her advocacy work that began with her entry into the Leadership Initiative, on her own and with her own strong leadership style. Crystal advocates and leads from a sensitive, empathetic, courageous