

TRAINING NEEDS OF PARENT EDUCATORS:
A NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF BC PRACTITIONERS

by

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ABSTRACT

Parent educators are expected to serve families with vastly differing backgrounds and needs. However, the field has little infrastructure, development, or funding. The skill and knowledge levels of individuals working with parent groups vary tremendously as there is no set path to becoming a parent educator and currently, there is no national standard of knowledge or skills which parent educators should possess in Canada or the U.S. Often, individuals are sent to specific parenting program trainings by their agency without prior experience or training in basic areas such as group development and facilitation, adult education principles, or basic knowledge about child development and parenting.

Working with the BC Council for Families, this project sought to determine whether a foundational training program should be developed for BC parent educators and what it should cover. The perspectives of parent educators with less than three years of experience were elicited through surveys. Insights and experiences of supervisors and trainers of parent educators were gained through interviews. Through these interactions, answers were sought for the following questions: What should be done to better prepare parent educators for the multiple demands that they are expected to meet? What barriers might keep parent educators from accessing further training? What formats for a foundational training might surmount these barriers?

A review of resources, courses, or workshops in BC revealed that no training program covering the “basics” of parent education currently exists. Supervisors and trainers of parent educators indicated that such a training is needed. The feedback from all three groups indicated that the highest priority areas in which to offer training for

parent educators are: group facilitation, counseling and interpersonal skills, working with families with diverse needs, cultural sensitivity, and teaching adults. While desires for further training were strongly expressed, especially by those interviewed, funding, travel, and time were identified by most respondents as universal barriers. It is recommended the BC Council for Families provide a foundation training for parent educators using a mix of workshops, online tutorials, and web seminars, as needed for remote areas of the province.

INTRODUCTION

At twenty-five, I had the privilege of working with teenage and young adult parents facing multiple barriers. I had studied sociology, not family studies, had no experience as a parent and very little with young children. I found myself expected to fill the roles of counselor, social worker, nutritionist, and child development specialist—none of which I felt remotely qualified for. When I mentioned my great sense of inadequacy and lack of preparation, my supervisor told me that my own “healthy” upbringing would provide me with much of the knowledge that I needed to impart. While it was true that I worked with a few parents who were involved with Child Protective Services due to neglect or abuse, I found this nonchalant attitude troubling. I feared that I would be looked upon as an expert in this vital area of life while lacking even basic knowledge or experience.

I chose to pursue a master’s degree in adult education rather than social work because I felt that I would rather work with individuals and families to gain knowledge, experiences, or insights that they needed to have more positive life and family

experiences rather than trying to help them heal after things had gone awry. With my experience working as an untrained parent educator and my studies in adult education, I was particularly excited by opportunity to assess the training needs of parent educators with the BC Council for Families.

This paper describes the purpose, process, and findings of an assessment of the training needs of newer parent educators in British Columbia. The BC Council for Families sponsored this needs assessment in order to determine whether they should develop a foundational training for parent educators.

Part A contains an introduction to the issues surrounding the training of parent educators, why this assessment was undertaken, a review of the applicable literature, and the methods with which we sought to gain insight from parent educators as well as their supervisors and trainers. Part B contains the report which I prepared for the sponsoring agency, the BC Council for Families. Perspectives on BC parent educators' current levels of knowledge and ability, areas where training could be beneficial, possible formats for a foundational training, barriers to accessing training, and recommendations for the Council are included in the report. In addition, there is an extensive appendix which consists primarily of compiled quotes from interviews on various topics and materials used in recruiting participants.

The BC Council for Families is a non-profit agency which "works to build healthy families in a healthy society" (BC Council for Families, 2009). The council provides education, research, resources, and advocacy for families and the professionals

who support them across the province. One aspect of pursuing the mission to strengthen BC families is providing training for parent educators.¹

The BC Council *for* Families (BCCF) offers training in specific parenting programs, as well as professional development topics such as working with fathers, enhancing facilitation skills, and home visiting. BCCF employs the provincial coordinators of several national parenting programs, including Parent-Child Mother Goose and Nobody's Perfect. The council has also developed and offers training in home visiting and the program My Tween and Me.

I was invited to meet with BCCF staff in February 2009 as they considered assessing the training needs of newer parent educators. The focus of the parenting program training that BCCF currently offers is on preparing participants to deliver those specific programs, not to teach the basics of parent education. However, the staff facilitating training indicated that there is an imbalance in who attends: about two-thirds of the participants have prior experience working with groups and are there to learn the specific program, while about one-third of the participants are lacking sufficient background in basic facilitation, adult education, child development, and other key areas. The gap in levels of knowledge and experience places strain on the trainers who must decide how to supplement for the inexperienced parent group leaders without boring their more experienced participants. Furthermore, the training is planned with little time to spare, so time spent teaching general principles of parent education detracts from coverage of the specific curriculum. As a result of this strain, the staff at BCCF indicated

¹ While the professionals, paraprofessionals, and volunteers who work with parents may identify themselves by other roles or names, this paper will focus particularly on their roles as facilitators of parent groups and will only refer to them as parent educators.

that they face a dilemma each time individuals with little prior experience leading parent groups seek to register for training.

Two main concerns about rejecting applicants with insufficient experience were expressed by program coordinators. First, they are unaware of processes or programs to which they might refer applicants in order to gain the necessary knowledge and skills. While some college or university courses would cover the necessary material, there are often barriers of cost and scheduling. For those living in the more remote regions of British Columbia, there is the added issue of traveling to a suitable training opportunity.

The second issue which causes program coordinators to question whether they should turn down inexperienced applicants is that the vast majority of these training applicants are already working in family-serving agencies or community centers. Some of the applicants are the only person at their agency available to lead programs that the agency desperately wants to be able to offer. Some applicants have been recruited to lead parenting programs as support workers for various cultural groups, yet lack a background in parent education. Other applicants may be students with great credentials who lack experience working with groups of adults, ESL workers who are required to work with parents, Early Childhood Educators whose training prepared them for working with children rather than adults, or other professionals entering the field of parent education.

The BCCF seeks to meet the needs of these often under-funded agencies and their communities by accepting their staff into training offerings. However, it also endeavors to ensure that parent education facilitators are sufficiently prepared to meet the requirements and challenges ahead—and such preparation is unlikely to come from attending the training sessions for a single parent education program. The strain of

seeking to provide sufficient training and preparation for a group of educators with such widely varying backgrounds, particularly within tight budgets, presents quite a dilemma, and certainly not one that exists solely in British Columbia.

In response, staff at the BC Council *for* Families began considering the creation of a foundational training program for newer parent educators which could cover basic group facilitation, adult education principles, and possibly child development or general parenting topics. Before seeking grants to develop such a training program, however, they decided to conduct a needs assessment. In particular, staff at the BC Council *for* Families wanted to know:

- Do others in the field see basic parent education and group facilitation as areas where training is needed?
- What should a foundational parent educator training program cover?
- What other resources, courses, or workshops covering similar topics exist in BC?
- What are the barriers that keep parent educators from accessing more training?
- What formats for training would be both appealing to parent educators and overcome the barriers of cost and travel?

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Before discussing how we sought answers these questions, I will situate the particular dilemmas and questions of the BC Council *for* Families within the larger discussions around the preparation and training of parent educators. This review of the literature will cover expectations of parent educators, the discussions and tensions around determining what makes a competent parent educator, and existing training opportunities in the U.S. and British Columbia. Unfortunately, Canadian practitioners and researchers

have yet to publish on these topics, so literature is drawn almost entirely from the United States.

Expected Areas of Competency

Most parent educators were trained in other professions such as medicine, social work, or education. Others have joined the field through paraprofessional or volunteer work. Often their work with parents is just a part of what they do (Carter & Kahn, 1996). Some do not refer to themselves as parent educators—other terms such as family support worker, parent facilitator, or parent group leader are commonly used. However, for the purposes of this paper, all individuals who lead parent groups with educational aims will be referred to as parent educators.

The field of parent education is still only a few decades old. As a result, parent educators are required to work across the disciplines of health care, education, mental health and human service, while keeping abreast of developments in the field of parent education.

A sea of theories and curricula must be navigated. Parent education programming is informed by: child development, attachment, adult human development, family systems, social support, ecological, humanistic and person-centred theories (Carter & Kahn, 1996; Mann, 2008). In order to share an array of content guided by the theories above, parenting curricula draw upon the additional theories of andragogy, emotional context of learning, constructivism, cognitive behavioural approaches, social learning, and behaviour modification. This multitude of theories is then focused to target audiences with universal needs, 'high priority needs,' or 'specific and urgent needs' (Mann, 2008).

There is a remarkable diversity in families which parent educators serve. Families' needs vary according to ages, family structures, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. In addition, parent educators are expected to be culturally sensitive and fluent in the "processes and methods that truly strengthen families" (Carter & Kahn, 1996, p. 45).

Due to the vast array of demands on parent educators, there have been a variety of attempts to define the competencies a parent educator should have. Competencies are defined as what a parent educator "should know and be able to do" (Cooke, 2006, p. 786). Two groups have published lists of parent educator competencies: faculty within the Cooperative Extension System, and a collaboration between the University of North Texas Center for Parent Education and the Texas Registry of Parent Educator Resources (Cooke, 2006).

Faculty at several universities within the Cooperative Extension System developed the National Extension Parenting Educators' Framework (NEPEF), which provides six key areas of knowledge for parents which are related to six key areas of professional competencies for parent educators (DeBord, Bower, Goddard, Kirby, Kobbe, Myers-Walls, Mulroy, & Ozretich, 2002). The six professional competencies called for in the NEPEF are:

1. *Grow*—refers to personal growth and professional development.
2. *Frame*—refers to knowledge of and ability to apply the various theories and frameworks which shape parent education.
3. *Develop*—refers to needs assessments, targeting populations, program planning, and evaluation.
4. *Embrace*—refers to relating with diverse populations, being culturally sensitive and partnering with parents in the educational process.
5. *Educate*—refers to effective teaching and facilitation abilities with respect to the needs of parents as adult learners.
6. *Build*—refers to expanding the field of parent education through advocacy for parents and involvement in professional networks.

(Cooke, 2006; DeBord, Bower, Goddard, Wilkins, Kobbe, Myers-Walls, Mulroy, & Ozretich, 2006).

The University of North Texas partnered with the Texas Registry of Parent Educator Resources (Texas ROPER) to provide a comprehensive picture of what a parent educator should be. This jointly prepared document was produced after nearly 20 focus groups and teleconferences with over 400 professionals (Cooke, 2006). The “Core Knowledge Areas for Parent Educators and Professionals Who Work with Families” are:

1. Child and Lifespan Development
2. Dynamics and Family Relationships
3. Family Life Education
4. Guidance and Nurturing
5. Health and Safety
6. Diversity in Family Systems
7. Professional Practice and Methods Related to Adult Learning and Family Support
8. School and Child Care Relationships
9. Community Relationships
10. Assessment and Evaluation

(Center for Parent Education, 2004; Cooke, 2006).

The NEPEF focuses more on the broad skill areas in which parent educators must become proficient while the focus of the Texas articulation is centered on “Core Knowledge Areas.” Although the approaches to describing parent educator competencies are quite different, there are a number of overlapping areas in the two frameworks.

In both the ‘Educate’ domain of the NEPEF and the ‘Professional Practice and Methods Related to Adult Learning and Family Support’ above, *there is a focus on how parent educators are able to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills*. As this speaks to the concerns raised by the BCCF staff regarding the need for training on adult education principles and group facilitation, I will now focus more directly on these two areas.

Adult Learning

Family-serving professionals need to “acquire an adult learner perspective that enriches their perspective of parents as individuals” argues Barbara Bodner-Johnson (2001, p. 263). Calls for parent educators to understand and be able to apply principles of adult learning (Morris, 1985; Rodd, 1993) are particularly apt when considering the many parent educators coming from other professions and backgrounds. Early Childhood Education, for example, is an area of certification which is often expected or desired when hiring parent educators. The ECE certificate provides extensive training on child development, but no preparation for meeting the needs of adult learners. This section will examine the insights offered to parent educators by three theories of adult learning: andragogy, transitions and life events, and transformational learning.

Adult learning is not restricted to the classroom or other formal settings. Rather learners themselves often identify their most significant learning as occurring in families, work settings, activist groups, and many other informal settings (Brookfield, 1986). For the purposes of understanding the ways in which parents are learning and in which their learning as a group may be facilitated, I will use Brookfield’s definition of adult learning as a “transaction among adults in which experiences are interpreted, skills and knowledge acquired, and actions taken” (1986, p. 4).

Andragogy, or how adults learn, calls for educators to recognize the variety and depth of experiences which parents bring to the learning situation (Carter, 1996; Knowles, 1980). With respect for learners as a guiding principle, educators of adults are encouraged to “work from people’s lived experience rather than simply lecturing them” (Martin, 1998, p.202). Parent educators who see parents as resources can collaborate with

them to shape the educational experience to parents' needs and interests. Sharing of power and acknowledgement that the parent is also an expert are actions which flow from an understanding of principles of andragogy (Carter & Kahn, 1996).

The work of Aslanian and Bricknell (1980) and Cross (1981) on transitions and the life cycle is drawn upon repeatedly throughout the literature which identifies parents as adult learners. Adulthood also involves stages and phases. Some of these transitions are anticipated, such as finishing university, or becoming a parent, while others are not (having a deaf child). These life events, particularly those which are unexpected, may stand out in our memories as experiences which have changed us, our lives, and our behaviors. According to this perspective, "it is the stimulation and challenge of the change integral to life's transitions that promote learning and provide a time when adults are especially receptive to new learning" (Bodner-Johnson, 2001, p. 266; citing Aslanian and Bricknell, 1980 and Cross, 1981).

Merriam and Cafferella (1991) add that this kind of motivated situational learning is often related to family transitions. Awareness of the relation between family transition times and motivation for learning (Morris, 1985; Merriam & Cafferella, 1991; Stehlik, 2003) can help parent educators focus on learning which adults will find immediately applicable (Brookfield, 1980; as cited in Bodner-Johnson, 2001). Indeed, Morris argues that not only should parent educators be aware of the transitions perspective of learning, but their "goal should be the development of lifelong learners who possess the basic skills to seek their own answers to the problems of transitions to new stages" (1985, p. 18).

Another lens for viewing parenting-inspired learning recognizes the transformational power of the experiential and the mundane. Parenting skills and knowledge are obtained

largely on the job with little “pre-service training” (Morris; 1985). Much of parental learning and growth comes through these moments of incidental and informal learning (Fowler, 2002) throughout the lifespan of both parent and child(ren). Stehlik summarizes the cumulative ways in which parents learn:

Parenting skills are acquired through learning by experience, by repeating role models from childhood, by observing and taking advice from other parents, from books or other ‘expert’ sources, and sometimes through non-formal educational programs—but mainly it is *learning by doing* (p. 376, original emphasis).

It is important for parent educators to recognize how parenting beliefs, assumptions and practices are embedded, and to become adept at facilitating parents’ reflection on past experiences. Parent educators may encourage parents to critically reflect upon their own upbringing in order to gain new perspectives on current issues and practices (Morris, 1985). Unless parents engage with and reflect upon the everyday moments and the challenging episodes, the potential for inspiring learning and growth may go untapped. Through listening and asking the right questions, Marienau and Segal (2006) argue that parent educators may guide parents to deeper levels of meaning making:

What helping professionals must do is support parents in reflecting on and creating meaning from their experiences to guide more effective ways of thinking, seeking, feeling, and behaving in the future. Parents must see themselves, and be seen by others, as developing adult learners (p. 782).

In facilitating parents’ critical reflection upon unexamined beliefs, actions, attitudes and experiences, parent educators may provide opportunities for transformational learning. Transformational learning is initiated when ‘disorienting dilemmas’ lead adults to confront their unexamined assumptions. When assumptions are found to be lacking, adults may alter their perspectives, leading to acquisition of knowledge, changed behaviors, roles, and relationships (Mezirow, 2000). When practices

encouraging transformational learning are integrated into parent education, First and Way (1995) assert that:

Parents may also be helped to actually transform their thinking about their own lives so that they can become more loving and caring parents, and more self-directed individuals (p. 106).

As parent educators become aware of parents' identities as adult learners, the approach to parent education may shift. Work with parents may be greatly enhanced by an understanding of the adult education theories of andragogy, transitions, and transformational learning. Applying insights from these theories will allow parent educators to better engage parents (Carter & Kahn, 1996) and better shape practice to meet their current learning needs (Bodner-Johnson, 2001).

Group Facilitation

Group work is a powerful way for parents to learn. It provides opportunities to interact with, learn from and support each other. In a group setting, parents may be able to overcome a sense of isolation as they recognize that other parents are struggling as well. Skilled parent educators are able to draw upon the questions and issues brought by parents, using relevant examples to address the planned or desired topics (Rodd, 1993). Hearing about each others' challenges may also provide a normalizing experience for parents (Deslandes, 1994; Rodd, 1993), such as realizing that their teenager is not the only one who retreats behind locked doors and plays loud music. Parents can be each others' greatest source of information and support (Bodner-Johnson, 2001). Facilitators who understand the power of parents teaching each other and drawing upon their own

expertise may be more willing to admit that they don't know all the answers and encourage parents to turn to one another for ideas, resources, and support (Rodd, 1993).

As with any other tool, the potential for positive effects may also turn sour. Rodd warns, that "Given the complexities of parenting and the level of interpersonal functioning of group members, the need for leaders to be equipped to handle difficult groups is critical" (p. 104). Group leaders may need to attend to disruptive participants, conflicts between parents or with the group leader. As a result, Rodd strongly advocates for practical and theoretical training in group facilitation for individuals leading parent groups (1993).

Existing Training for Parent Educators

As described above, consensus as to what principles and competencies ought to be mastered by parent educators are gradually being discussed, but as yet there is no agreed upon national standard or overarching leadership in determining what qualifies parent educators in the U.S. (Carter, 1996; Cooke, 2006) or Canada. Unlike most professions, pre-service training in parent education is rare, while in-service or on the job training is the norm. Even then, however, "the field is filled with inconsistent standards for practice" (Carter & Kahn, 1996, p. 37).

Parent education programming is primarily staffed by individuals classified as professionals, paraprofessionals, or volunteers. Training realities and expectations vary for each group. As a better understanding of these groups enriches comprehension of the complexities surrounding training for parent educators, each staff group will be briefly described. Pre-service and in-service training will then be discussed.

Professionals are often highly trained in other disciplines such as medicine, social work, or education and are educating parents as part of work within their field. Preparation for work in their own disciplines rarely addresses parenting education (Carter & Kahn, 1996).

Many parenting programs are designed to be facilitated by staff qualified by participating in and then becoming trained in specific curricula. Paraprofessional staff are not expected to have related academic credentials. While this staff model has economic advantages, hiring individuals from within the communities a program seeks to reach may also overcome some barriers to outreach and recruitment. In addition, hiring staff that are qualified because they are parents themselves is viewed as a response to the aversion to “experts” in the family support movement. Carter and Kahn (1996) caution that one drawback to paraprofessional use (which could apply to volunteers and professionals) is that “They can often find themselves in situations for which their training and knowledge base is wholly inadequate” (p. 37).

Some parent education programs rely heavily upon volunteers. Often these volunteers become involved after participating in the programs themselves. Some are then trained in the curriculum and work as unpaid staff. Volunteer involvement is tied not only to the tight budgets of many family-serving organizations, but also to a commitment to partnering with parents to shape programming (Carter & Kahn, 1996).

In discussing pre-training, Carter and Kahn focus primarily on programs slowly emerging through universities and colleges, briefly mentioning that a few national programs have developed training in key competencies. Only a handful of degree-granting programs existed when Carter and Kahn reviewed the state of parent education

(1996). A few more programs were reported ten years later by Cooke (2006). The National Parent Education Network reports the following: 32 Family Studies masters program, 5 graduate certificates in parent education, 3 parent education licensures (all in Minnesota—one administered by the state, the other two through universities), and 4 graduate programs in parent education (National Parent Education Network, 2009). Pre-service training in the form of degrees is especially geared for the small but growing group of professional parent educators (as in professionals who claim parent education rather than social work, etc. as their expertise). It is hoped that as more students graduate with specific training in parent education, accountability, standards, and recognition for the field will increase (Carter & Kahn, 1996).

The most common form of in-service training involves becoming a certified facilitator in a specific parenting curriculum. The content of program specific training usually mirrors what will be taught to parents, with some attention to how the particular program ought to be delivered. Programs often cover child development, communication skills, adult/parent development, self-esteem, effective limit-setting, conflict resolution, family systems, or effective discipline. These programs are generally focused on a specific target population such as teen parents or parents with children aged 0-3. Many parent education curricula do not explicitly identify their underlying theories, sometimes because they have not been adequately considered or they have an “eclectic” approach. Unfortunately, when parent educators lack grounding in the theories themselves (as is often the case), they may unintentionally adapt programs contrary to the theory, undermining the potency (Carter & Kahn, 1996).

Individuals practicing parent education are coming from truly diverse states of preparation, with no universal standard of expectation of prior knowledge or experience (Carter, 1996; Cooke, 2006). Pre-service is becoming more common, but it is generally limited to students intending to become full-time parent educators—a miniscule proportion of the conglomeration of individuals involved in parent education. In-services are primarily focused on training attendees in the curriculum and delivery of specific programs. What is needed, according to Jillian Rodd, is “a general training package which addresses the needs of the various groups of professionals, semi-professionals, and lay providers which is not tied to specific published programs” (1993, p. 101).

Fortunately, Carter and Kahn (1996) observed that the family support movement has led to a shift from ‘tight model-based design’ to an emphasis on core competencies. Their prediction is hopeful:

Well-crafted and tested models may be needed for some time to come, but given the regular adaptations and modifications necessary in this work it is inevitable that training will shift more and more toward a set of core competencies and skills that every practitioner needs to master in order to be effective (p. 51).

According to Betty Cooke’s analysis, progress has since been made toward consensus upon parent educator competencies. However, much of the focus is on national standards and certification, rather than discussing potential leadership toward broader parent education training accessible to the whole range of parent educators (Cooke, 2006). When the difficulties of creating a national standard are questioned, the newness of the field, its multidisciplinary nature, poor infrastructure, and concerns about creating a professional elitism are named as barriers (Carter, 1996). Why the majority of parent educators receive so little competency-focused training, however, has yet to be addressed in the literature.

Training Opportunities in British Columbia

An internet search for training in facilitating parent groups in British Columbia led to a variety of degrees, diplomas, courses and certifications on adult learning or group facilitation offered by colleges, universities, and the Justice Institute. These opportunities range in duration from two-day workshops to four year degrees; with costs varying accordingly (*See Appendix K*). Only two parent-specific training programs are offered, one by Parent Support Services and the other through the Alfred Adler Institute.

Parent Support Services offers a two and a half day workshop on facilitating parent groups. The workshop is designed to train volunteers to lead Parent Support Circles for parents who have harmed or are considered at-risk of harming their children. The workshop covers: 'self-help and the co-facilitation model, group process, stages of group development, group mechanics, anti-oppressive practice and information about child abuse' (Parent Support Services, n.d.). The cost is \$350 but it is free to individuals able to commit to volunteer for a year. Sessions are held in Vancouver, Victoria, Prince George and Central Vancouver Island.

The Alfred Adler Institute in Vancouver offers a Parent Education Certificate. This certificate involves five courses covering: Adlerian psychology, basic principles of Adlerian parenting, group dynamics and group facilitations skills, basic adult education skills, and a practicum of planning and co-leading a parenting program with a certified parent educator. Participants are expected to complete the certification in about six months. The cost for the entire training and certification process is \$1,900 (Alfred Adler Institute, 2009).

Both of these programs address the basic skills for the group facilitation of parent education. However, each program is built more specifically on the philosophies and focus of the sponsoring agency (i.e. “self-help model” and “Adlerian psychology”). In addition, the cost and location of these offerings may be prohibitive for parent educators working within the constraints of small training budgets or remote locations. It appears that the calls for competency-based rather than program-based parent education training (Carter & Kahn, 1996; Rodd, 1993) apply to British Columbia as well.

METHODOLOGY

Assessing Needs

Needs assessment is a key element in program planning which seeks to ground decision-making in an accurate portrayal of the educational situation. This involves seeking out the voices and insights of adult learners about what educational needs exist and how learners hope they will be addressed, for “without knowing the facts about the needs of the community and the interests of people, sound planning is not possible” (Knowles, 1950, p.176).

The process for determining educational “needs” begins when:

the information about the learner is compared with some desirable standards, some conception of acceptable norms, so that the difference between the present condition of the learner and the acceptable norm can be identified. This difference or gap is what is generally referred to as a need (Tyler, 1949, p. 6).

This view of educational needs has come to be known as the “discrepancy model” as it describes the difference between the abilities which exist and those which are desired (Witkin, 1984).

This model for defining educational needs is further developed depending upon who sees the discrepancy between the learner's actual level and desired level of knowledge. When the ideal or desired state is defined externally, by a planner or other non-learner, this definition of needs has been termed as an *ascribed need* (Sork, 2001, p. 101). An example of this kind of prescriptive learning may be found in Knowles' definition of educational needs as "something a person ought to learn for his [sic] own good, for the good of an organization, or for the good of society" (1973, p. 85). If it is the learner, however, recognizing a gap between their actual state of knowledge or competency and an ideal state of knowledge that they themselves perceive, we refer to the gap as a *felt need* (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p.128; Monette, 1979, p. 87; Sork, 2001, p. 101).

Educational needs, however, exist only in comparison with a norm or standard or desired level of ability—with norms defined by planners, learners, or other stake holders (Boyle, 1981; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Davidson, 1995; Fraser, 1989; Monette, 1979). As Monette argues, conducting a needs assessment is "more than a scientific information-gathering procedure. No amount of scientifically derived information can yield a judgment about 'what should be,' because science deals not with normative considerations, but with facts" (p. 85).

Indeed, it is argued that it is not needs 'assessment' that occurs during program planning, but needs 'construction' or "needs-making" (Davidson, 1995, p. 183; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Fraser, 1989). Needs are constructed through communicative interaction and shaped by structural forces (Davidson, 1995). Not all voices have equal weight in these interactions, but are expanded or diminished by the power, influence, knowledge,

and status of the speakers (Alcoff, 1991; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Fraser, 1989). Rather than seeking to escape the “ethical burdens” of deciding what should be done either by relying upon scientific methods to extract answers or by listening solely to “felt needs,” planners must hear the voices of the various stakeholders making claims as to what needs exist and determine what should be done to ameliorate them (Monette, 1979, p.87).

In the case of parent educator training, stakeholders include: parent educators, parents who may receive their services, supervisors and trainers of parent educators, potential funders of the foundational parent educator training, the agencies employing parent educators, other family-serving organizations, and the BC Council *for* Families. BCCF had not yet secured any funding for the potential development of a training program. As a result, our options for assessing the perceived educational needs of parent educators were constrained by finances. In addition, the study was starting in the late spring and many parent educators are off in the summers, which caused time to also be a limiting factor. We determined to focus on three groups of stakeholders: parent educators with less than three years of experience, supervisors of parent educators, and trainers of two parent education programs: Nobody’s Perfect and Mother Goose.

We wanted to understand the *felt needs* of parent educators, to hear from their experiences what kind of training would be most beneficial. Involving potential learners in program planning has been seen to benefit both the learners and the resulting programs (Boyle, 1981; Cahn & Cahn, 1971; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Freire, 1970; Horton, 1996; Knowles, 1950; Rosenblum, 1985). When involved in planning, potential participants bring knowledge and scrutiny from the expertise of their lived experiences (Cahn & Cahn, 1971).

However, because the council was considering creating training for practitioners new to working with parent groups, there was also the awareness that, as one staff member put it, "They don't know what they don't know." We determined that we ought to seek insights into the *ascribed needs* of parent educators from their supervisors and trainers, many of whom have years of experience in the field and might be able to articulate what parent educators "don't know." This decision was based upon the assumption that supervisors would be in a position to have worked with a range of parent-serving staff and could recognize what kind of training best prepares staff for the varied demands ahead. In addition, we believed that trainers, due to their work of teaching individuals from various agencies and backgrounds, would have a broad base of experience with parent educators from which to draw. Trainers would also serve as experts within the field on one of the key topics in question: facilitating groups.

To date, this study has focused the first two of Witkin and Altschuld's (1995) three-phase model of needs assessment: pre-assessment and assessment. The final phase, utilizing the data collected in this needs assessment, has yet to be determined by the BC Council for Families. Such decisions will be largely affected by the funding the council is able to secure for this particular project.

Pre-assessment

The initial exploration of the issue of inexperienced parent educators applying to attend program-specific training had begun some time before I joined the project. They had already determined their interest in assessing the training needs of less experienced parent educators. In our initial meeting, the manager of programs, director of communications, and two program coordinators (of Nobody's Perfect and Home

Visiting) were present. It was apparent that they had already had several discussions concerning the idea of creating a foundation course for newer parent group leaders. I was given a written description of the problem and a very loose idea of what they were hoping I would be able to accomplish. Each individual attending the meeting contributed input. It appeared that consensus building was still occurring as the manager of programs asked the program co-coordinators several times if she was correctly expressing the issues at hand or the proposed course of action.

I met with the manager of programs one more time individually and then submitted drafts of the proposed survey and interview questions to the manager of programs, who then forwarded them to the director of communications. As the three of us met to discuss the proposed questions, one of the program coordinators was also able to join us and provide valuable feedback.

Through these meetings as well as several phone calls and email discussions, it was decided that I would interview supervisors and trainers of parent educators, and that we would invite two groups of parent educators to participate in slightly different online surveys. The first group was individuals registered to attend three upcoming programs: Mother Goose training in Nanaimo and Vancouver, and Nobody's Perfect training in Kelowna. This group will be referred to as pre-training parent educators throughout the report. The second group consisted of individuals who had attended a BCCF sponsored Nobody's Perfect, Mother Goose, or Home Visiting Core Training within the past two years. This group will be referred to as the post-training group, or post-training parent educators throughout the report.

Interviews

It was decided that I would interview supervisors and trainers of parent educators in order to gain more detailed information from them. This decision rested on the assumption that supervisors and trainers, with their more extensive experience, would be able to more fully describe the current abilities of parent educators, areas where they need further training, barriers to receiving training, and formats that might overcome these barriers. In addition, it was felt that supervisors should be consulted with as they would influence whether parent educators would attend the foundational training under consideration.

Telephone interviews were selected as the means through which to hear from supervisors and trainers for several reasons. First, we wanted to use primarily open-ended questions. In this way, we hoped to hear from their insights as the current knowledge and abilities of parent educators, areas for further training, and existing barriers without suggesting answers (Foddy, 1993; Shuman & Presser, 1979). The flexibility of interviewing would also allow me to probe further when needed (Bell, 2005) and gather more detailed information than would likely be shared if respondents were typing in responses to open-ended questions.

Before contacting potential participants for the study, approval was obtained from the University of British Columbia's Research Ethics Board (*Certificate of Approval in Appendix R*). I was given rosters of attendees at various Nobody's Perfect, Mother Goose, and Home Visiting programs held across the province in the past two years. Sessions had been held in a variety of settings including Coquitlam, Terrace, Nanaimo, and Vancouver. Twenty agencies which had sent their employees to one of the three types of

BCCF programs were then systematically selected from participant rosters. Managers at these twenty agencies were then invited to participate in telephone interviews.

Trainers of parenting programs offered through BCCF were selected from lists of trainers shared by the program coordinators of Nobody's Perfect, Mother Goose, and My Tween and Me. Managers and trainers were contacted via email and invited to participate in a brief telephone interview concerning the training needs of less experienced parent educators.

Initial invitations were followed up with a less formal emailed invitation, and finally, a few phone calls to those who still had not responded. Almost without exception, the response of the managers and trainers was that of interest and enthusiasm for the study. In total, fifteen managers and eight trainers completed telephone interviews.

An interview schedule with primarily open-ended questions was prepared for managers and a shorter version was created for trainers (*See Appendices N and O*). Although participants had been told that it would be a brief interview, several managers and a few trainers spent at least an hour sharing their feelings and insights around the training needs of parent educators and other areas which need development in the family serving sector. Notes were typed into the researcher's laptop during interviews.

Quantifiable responses (such as expression of preferences from five format options for training) were tallied and divided either by the number of managers or trainers responding in the affirmative, or when plausible, the responses of managers and trainers were combined.

Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed for common themes. Once categories of response were established, responses were again tallied and divided by the

number of managers or trainers mentioning that category (i.e. each response relating to facilitation skills was tallied as “1” per manager or trainer). Comparisons were then made regarding the frequency with which various themes were touched upon by managers and trainers. In some cases, the responses of the two were contrasted. However, for the question regarding preferred formats for training, manager and trainer responses were combined and divided according to region due to the influence of geography on the accessibility of trainings and/or cost of travel.

In addition, the researcher’s notes from respondents’ comments were compiled in ten separate appendices: Expectations for and Strengths of New Parent Educators, Training Prescriptions from Managers and Trainers, Prescriptions from Parent Educators, Responses to Foundational Training Idea, Barriers to Training, Formats, Timing of Training, Challenges for Parent Educators, Other Areas for Potential Leadership, and Additional Comments from Managers and Trainers. In order to maintain confidentiality, managers were numbered 1 to 15 and trainers were assigned letters A through H (*See Appendices A to J*).

Surveys

Use of online surveys increase overall time efficiency, decrease cost and data entry error, and increase item response rate (Strachota et al., 2006). In addition, online surveys are more likely to have complete responses to open-ended questions (Schaefer & Dillman, 1998). However, when compared with mail-in surveys, the online mode has a lower return rate (Roster et al., 2007; Roy et al., 2005). Recognizing that many parent educators would be off for the summer, we decided that the rapid response time of online surveys and lower cost would offer the most efficient way to reach a large number of

parent educators. Despite our intentions, however, the majority of our survey responses were received through paper copies, as will be explained below.

Two quite similar surveys were designed for the pre- and post-training groups (*Appendices P and Q*). The questions gathered information about the respondents such as levels of prior education and training, the region of the province where they resided, and work responsibilities. A series of questions asking respondents to rate their levels of preparation, confidence, comfort, or sense of challenge for a variety of areas of knowledge and skills followed. Many of the specific areas of knowledge or skills were drawn from Betsy Mann's manual *Working with Parent Groups: A Handbook for Facilitators* (2004). Two open-ended questions asked about areas for training that parent educators perceived they or their colleagues needed when starting. Parent educators were asked to rank 10 categories of possible training topics. Participants were also asked to identify barriers to training by selecting as many of the possible barriers as they felt applicable from a list, which included an "Other" fill-in option.

As the council was particularly interested in understanding the needs of newer parent educators, participation was sought from individuals who had attended programs in the last two years and those who were registered to attend sessions in the summer of 2009. Returning to the rosters of the past two years' training programs, 75 individuals were systematically selected to be a part of the post-training group. These individuals were invited via email to complete the online survey. The link to the survey was embedded in the email. In order to focus particularly on those with less experience, for whom the questions might be most applicable, the email requested that only those with

less than 3 years of experience as parent educators participate. There were only 7 responses.

All of the individuals registered for the three BCCF programs held in June 2009 were invited to participate in the survey. The group in Kelowna was invited to participate by the two trainers leading their session and given the opportunity to fill out paper copies of the questionnaire. Twenty-one surveys were completed out of twenty-two attendees. The trainer leading the group in Nanaimo sent two emails to the individuals registered for her training with a link to the online survey. No one from her group completed the survey. The final group, meeting in Vancouver, was emailed in advance and invited to complete the online survey. Two individuals completed it. When presented with paper copies of the survey during the training session, twelve more training attendees chose to complete the survey. In total, 35 surveys were completed, 14 by Mother Goose trainees and 21 by Nobody's Perfect trainees.

The surveys for both pre-training and post-training parent educators were made available online through the marketing and survey company Constant Contact, with whom BCCF already had an account. Surveys completed on paper were individually entered into the Constant Contact online survey by the researcher. Results were compiled by Constant Contact and delivered in both Excel and pdf formats. The responses to all the questions except the two open-ended questions were displayed in table format. As the response rate from the post-training group was so low, responses of the two groups were combined where appropriate.

FINAL NOTES

Parent-child relationships can be sources of immense joy or deep anguish. Most parents, however, have little preparation for this role and its potential to greatly influence their own and their children's lives. Parenting is often quite a personal and sensitive topic. Parent educators are expected to support parents of diverse backgrounds in this delicate area of learning. Yet, in reviewing the existing training expectations and opportunities for parent educators in British Columbia, I was struck by how little support is provided for these front-line workers.

Recognizing how sensitive an area parenting can be, as well as its tremendous impact both on families and larger communities, I found myself increasingly convinced that truly effective parent educators must embrace adult education principles of respecting learners, focusing on their current struggles and interests, and encouraging re-examination of values and assumptions. Parents as learners could be greatly benefited by such understanding and practice of adult education concepts by well-trained parent educators.

The kind of interactions parent educators have with parents is at least as important as the content shared. It was clear from the interviews that supervisors particularly desire that their staff build respectful, genuine relationships with parents. This desire was communicated as a need for parent educators to work from a strengths-based approach, to be able to work with families facing multiple barriers, or to be non-judgmental of the families they serve. As one manager said, "All the other skills can come, but the interpersonal relationship kind of skills have to be there when hiring."

Throughout the interviews, there was a strong sense of how important the topic of training for parent educators is to supervisors, and how much they would like to provide further support for their workers. It was expressed across the province, however, that several barriers, most especially finances, time, and travel for those in remote areas, keep managers from offering their parent educators as much training as they would like. Having gained a sense of how much it is desired around the province, the BC Council *for* Families has begun pursuing funding to create a training program for newer parent educators. However, I conclude this study feeling troubled about the state of parent education as a field. How will agencies get more funding? How will more infrastructure be developed? Who will advocate for it?

My own shock when given the responsibility to work with teenage and young adult parents facing multiple barriers without training was validated as I heard supervisors and trainers of parent educators speaking to how much is required of parent educators and how much more training and support they need. A provincial or national movement to create more training opportunities for parent educators might raise the bar, but it must be coupled with development of further infrastructure and funding. Such a widespread effort to better prepare parent educators would stand to recognize the great variety of skills and knowledge they are expected to master as well as the grave responsibility they bear by serving families in this vital area.

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Part B:

BC Council *for* Families
Parent Educator Needs Assessment

Report of Findings

July 17, 2009

Prepared by
Shannon McCune Dickerson

Report on Needs Assessment of Parent Educators

Purpose

This study was undertaken in order to better understand the training needs of staff and volunteers leading parent groups, a group which shall simply be referred to as parent educators throughout this report. In particular, this study focused on parent educators with less than three years of experience.

The purpose of this needs assessment was to ascertain the current knowledge and skill levels of less experienced parent educators by consulting with supervisors or managers overseeing parent educators (hereafter referred to as “managers”), trainers of parent educators in several curricula, and newer parent educators themselves. Managers, trainers, and parent educators were also asked to identify areas where the knowledge and/or skills of parent educators fall short of their ideal level of capability. The gaps between where the skills and knowledge of parent educators currently are as compared to where parent educators, managers or trainers desire them to be are considered the *educational or training needs* of newer parent educators.

Feedback was sought through interviews with managers, trainers, and surveys of parent educators as to what barriers keep parent educators from closing the gaps in their knowledge or skills, as well as their preferences for training formats. Recommendations for how the BC Council *for Families* might respond to the training needs of newer parent educators are given at the end of this document.

The letters of contact, consent forms, survey and interview questions used in this process are included in the Appendices, along with compilations of responses to particular topics (*See Appendices K-P*).

Respondents

Managers

Family serving agencies were systematically selected from BCCF rosters of past participants of 2008 and 2009 Nobody's Perfect, Mother Goose, and My Tween and Me trainings. Twenty managers were contacted. Fifteen managers consented to participate and completed interviews.

Trainers

Eight trainers were also interviewed. Four of these trainers work for the BC Council *for* Families. Six other trainers were selected and contacted from the lists of trainers for Nobody's Perfect, Mother Goose, and My Tween and Me. Four of these trainers completed interviews. Three of the four non-BCCF employed trainers also worked as managers in their agencies.

Interviewed Managers and Trainers Grouped by Region

Region	Managers	Trainers
Fraser	4	0
Interior	3	0
North	3	2
Vancouver Coastal	4	5
Vancouver Island	1	1

- A total of twenty-three individuals completed interviews.
- Unfortunately, because 25 % of invited managers and 30 % of trainers chose not to participate, the regions in which respondents are living are not wholly representative of the entire province.

Parent Educators

Additionally, input on training and support was obtained from parent educators themselves. Individuals attending three different trainings were invited to participate in a brief written survey. Those attending the Nobody's Perfect training in Kelowna and the Mother Goose training in Vancouver were given paper copies to fill out at the training. The group attending the Mother Goose training in Nanaimo were invited by the trainer via two emails with links to the online survey site. There were 35 respondents, primarily those who filled out the paper survey at their trainings. This group will be referred to as "**pre-training**" parent educators although some of them were already working with parents prior to attending these specific program trainings.

A very similar online survey was created for parent educators who had attended Nobody's Perfect and Mother Goose trainings in the past two years were emailed and invited to fill out the survey online if they had less than three years of experience leading parent groups. Only seven parent educators completed this survey. This group will be referred to as "**post-training**" parent educators.

Parent Educator Respondents Grouped by Region

Region	Response(s)	Response Ratio
Fraser	16	38 %
Interior	20	48%
North	3	7%
Vancouver Coastal	3	7 %
Vancouver Island	0	0 %
Totals	42	100%

- The responses of the two surveys, having been filled out by very similar populations, have been combined wherever possible.
- Survey respondents were sought across the province, however, responses came primarily from the Fraser and Interior regions.

Characteristics of Newer Parent Educators

Parent educators were asked several questions at the beginning of the survey in order to identify their level of experience, the services they provide, types of agencies they work for and the languages in which they work. These questions and the corresponding number of responses per question and ratios of responses per the 42 individuals completing the survey are included below:

Pre-training Parent Educators' Responses

Indicate the number of years you have been leading parenting groups:

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
less than 1 year	23	55%
1-2 years	10	24%
3 or more years	6	14%
No Responses	3	7%
Total	42	100%

Mark all services that you as an individual currently provide:

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Home Visiting	15	35.7%
Parent-child groups	24	57.1%
Resource and referral services	18	42.9%
Parenting workshops	13	31.0%
Parenting courses/groups	13	31.0%
Other	23	54.8%

Type of organization that you work for (check all that apply):

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Child development centre	6	14.3%
Family service organization	20	47.6%
Neighbourhood house/ family resource place	8	19.0%
Childcare centre or resource referral	12	28.6%
Infant development program / supported child	8	19.0%
Community or recreation centre	7	16.7%
Aboriginal services	6	17.1%
Immigrant services	5	11.9%
Other	12	28.6%

Languages in which Parent Educators work:		
	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
English	42	100.0%
Farsi	2	4.8%
Spanish	2	4.8%
Punjabi	1	2.4%
Chinese Mandarin	2	4.8%
Chinese Cantonese	2	4.8%
Korean	5	11.9%
Japanese	0	0.0%
Tagalog	0	0.0%
Other	8	19.0%
Total number of workers speaking a second language	22	52%

Other languages used at work:

Chilcotin, Arabic, German, French, Nklapacmxcn, Ukranian, and Carrier.

What is the highest level of education you have completed:		
	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Some high school	0	0.0%
High school	3	7.1%
Some post-secondary	8	19.0%
Bachelor's degree	9	21.4%
Graduate degree	9	21.4%
Certificate or diploma	8	19.0%
Other	5	11.9%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	42	100.0%

- Over 70 % of the front line workers responding to the survey have led parent groups for less than two years, with several noting that they had never done it before.
- Seventeen percent stated they had led parent groups for over three years, all of whom were in the pre-training group.
- The responding parent educators represent the broad array of services provided by individual staff as well as the variety of organizations which provide support to parents and families.
- Over half of the survey respondents speak more than one language at work.

- Over 40 % of the parent educators responding have a bachelor's or master's degree. Nearly 20 % said they had completed some post-secondary schooling. Another 19 % cited a certificate or diploma as the highest level of education they had attained. Related certificates attained by respondents ranged from Early Childhood Education to those covering FASD and Addiction, mediation, and Doula training.

Current knowledge and skill levels of parent educators

Managers

The managers were asked about their expectations when hiring staff to work with parents in group settings. Managers were also asked to identify strengths that they generally observe in newer parent group leaders—these responses often returned to what managers look for in new hires.

Expectations of or Strengths Identified in Newer Parent Educators	# Managers Identifying Area (out of 15)
Experience (work, life, practicum)	9
Education (ECE cert, BA, Masters, etc.)	8
Interpersonal qualities (connecting, counseling basics, outgoing personality, etc.)	7
Cultural awareness and non-judgmental flexibility	5
Group facilitation	4
Strengths-based approach, respect for parents' knowledge and abilities	4
Team worker	4
New ideas, asking questions, fresh approach	3
ECE or ECD knowledge	3
Experience as a parent	3
Passion, energy, or commitment	2

In addition, several other areas were mentioned just once: problem solving skills; interest in family dynamics; understanding of adult learners and learning styles; budgeting, organization; multi-lingual; knowledge of behavioral strategies and ability to organize child minders.

This combination of managers expectations of new hires and their recognition of strengths in newer parent educators presents a picture of a very diverse group—with a wide range of work/life experiences and educational levels. These workers may also have, or are expected to develop, broad bases of knowledge and particular attitudes about parents' abilities and towards families of diverse situations (*See Appendix A*).

Because it's considered a paraprofessional or lay trained professional...it's not so much the educational background we look for because we're drawing from eclectic backgrounds. We're more focused on experience, understanding of growth and development, the counseling component.

- Manager

Trainers

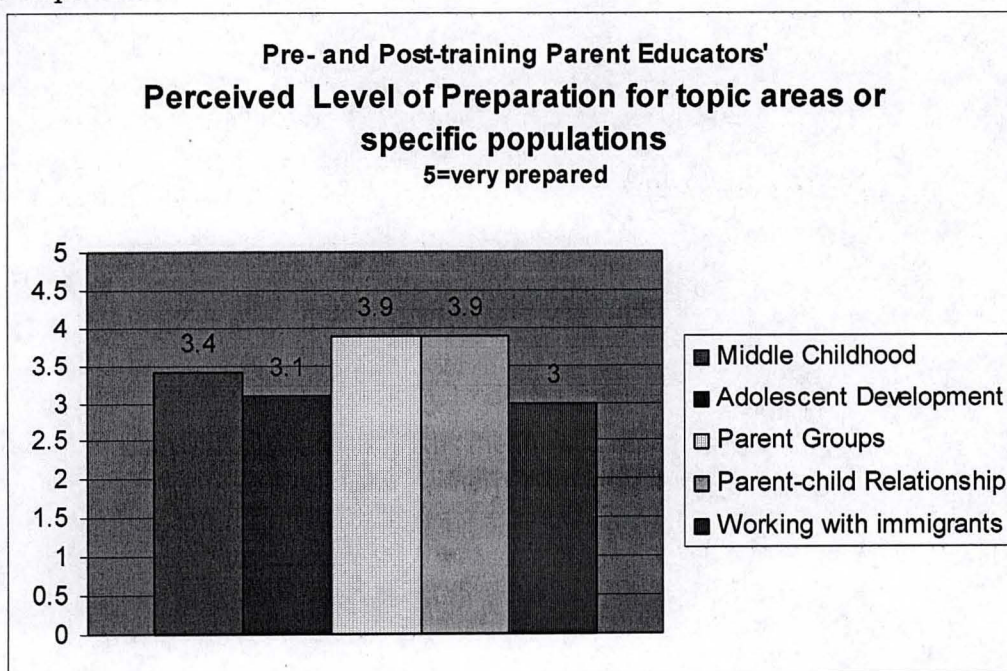
Trainers were asked, “When training newer parent educators, what skills and areas of knowledge do you typically see them bringing to the table?” Their responses have been grouped into seven categories.

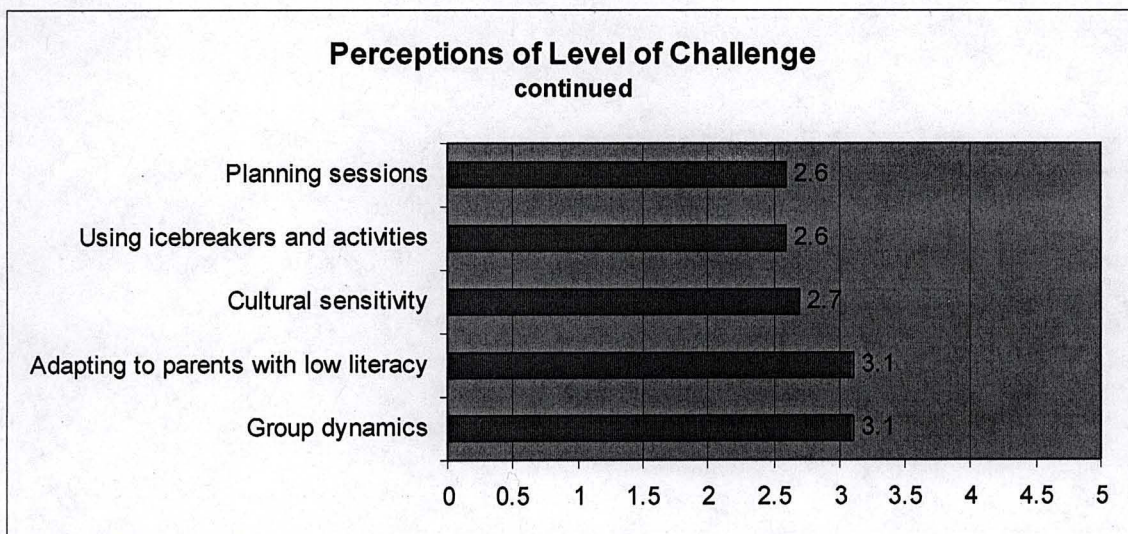
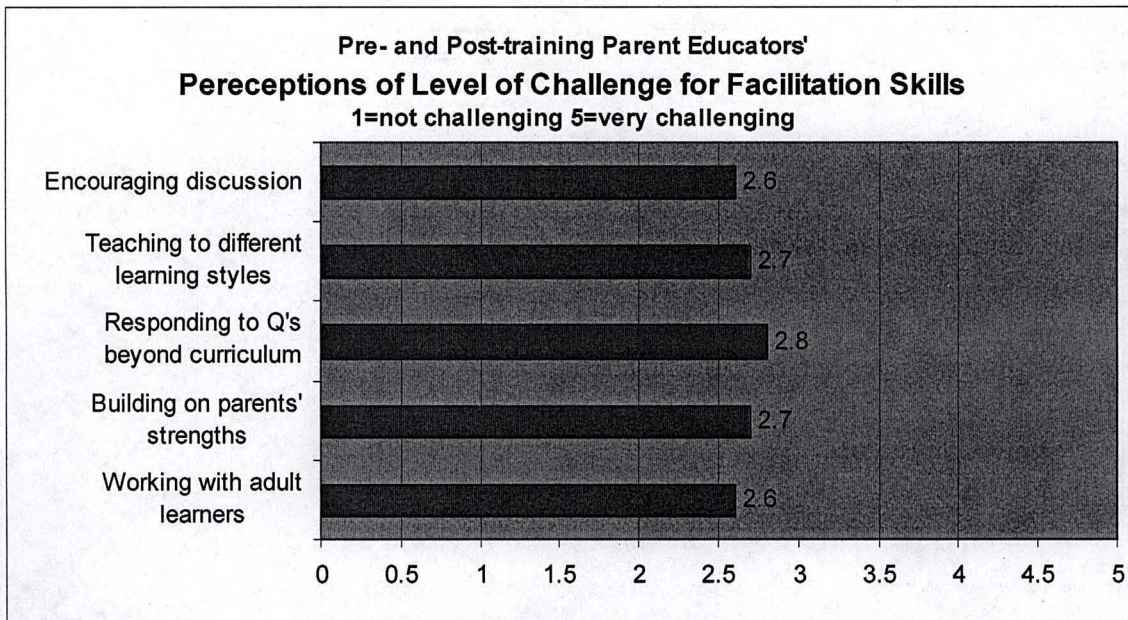
Strengths Identified in Newer Parent Educators	Trainers' Responses (7)
Experience (work, life, practicum)	1
Interpersonal qualities (connecting, counseling basics, outgoing personality, etc.)	3
Cultural awareness and non-judgmental flexibility	1
Strengths-based approach, respect for parents' knowledge and abilities	1
New ideas, asking questions, fresh approach	2
ECE or ECD knowledge	1
Passion, energy, or commitment	1

- Interestingly, the strengths mentioned repeatedly by trainers is the asset of newer parent educators' interpersonal qualities and abilities and their passion for the work.

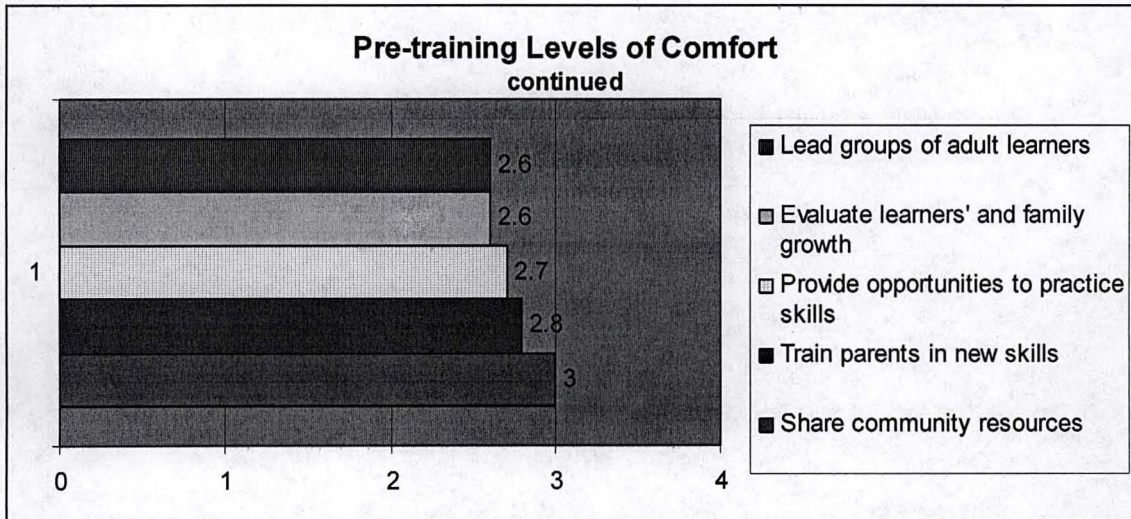
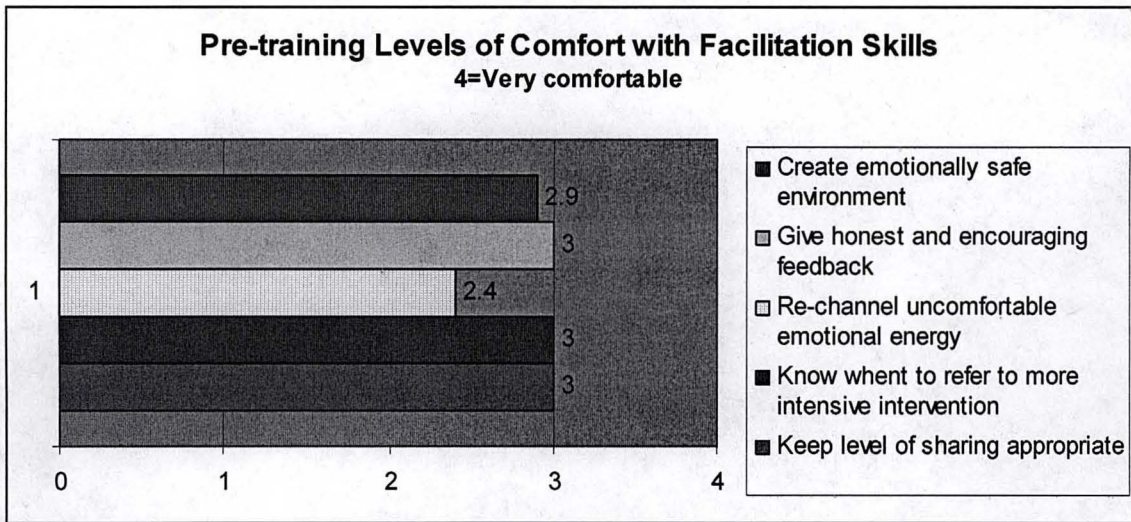
Parent Educators

Both pre- and post-training parent educators were asked to rate their own knowledge and skills in a variety of areas that might be necessary when working with groups of parents.





- Newer parent educators appear to feel quite prepared or comfortable with many of the skills or areas of knowledge included in the questions.
- Parent educators reported feeling less prepared to address adolescent development and work with immigrants and newcomers.
- The respondents also reported that responding to questions beyond course material, adapting to parents with low literacy, and handling group dynamics are more challenging than other tasks such as planning sessions or encouraging discussion.



- Pre-training parent educators indicated that they felt least comfortable re-channeling uncomfortable emotional energy, evaluating learners' and family growth, and leading groups of adult learners.

Prescriptions for Training

Training Priorities from Managers and Trainers

Managers and trainers were asked two questions in order to better understand their perspectives on training priorities for newer parent educators and family support workers. They were first asked, **“What are areas that you see where new parent educators (and family support workers) often need more training or support?”**

Managers and trainers were then asked, **“What do you see as the greatest challenges for new parent educators (and family support workers)?”** This second question did elicit a broader variety of answers, such as the underdeveloped field and funding constraints. However, many of the responses indicated areas where newer parent educators may benefit from further training or support—these responses have been included in the analysis below.

Answers to these open-ended questions were compiled and read through several times in order to group them into emerging themes or areas. They have been listed in ascending order from highest number of managers and trainers combined who mentioned the area in open-ended questions (*Appendix B*).

Managers’ and Trainers’ Responses to Open-Ended Question on Training Needs

Skill or Knowledge Area (number of respondents)	Managers (15)	Trainers (8)	Total
Group facilitation skills	40 % (6)	100 %	61 % (14)
Working with families of diverse needs and backgrounds	53 % (8)	50 % (4)	52 % (12)
Counseling and Interpersonal Skills	20 % (3)	50 % (4)	30 % (7)
Ethical and Emotional Topics for Worker Well-being	27 % (4)	25 % (2)	26 % (6)
Cultural sensitivity	27 % (4)	25 % (2)	26 % (6)
Child development	20 % (3)	12.5 % (1)	17 % (4)
Mental health and related issues	20 % (3)	12.5 % (1)	17 % (4)
Behavior management	20 % (3)	0	13 % (3)
Attachment	20 % (3)	0	13 % (3)

Group facilitation skills included remarks about handling group dynamics, dealing with difficult clients in group settings, having a facilitative rather than “teachey” approach, and helping parents help themselves and become resources to each other.

"Not being the expert—people think they're entering the role to educate where as the philosophy of NP is more support and empowerment. My biggest challenge is to help people understand that they aren't there to give advice." -Trainer

"Confidence. We send them to the training, but when it comes to applying it, they lack the confidence to do it." -Manager

Working with families of diverse backgrounds and needs incorporated the need to be nonjudgmental with families whose circumstances and parenting approaches differ widely from those the workers are accustomed to. Particular populations that were mentioned include young parents, fathers, families of children with special needs, parents who weren't parented themselves, families struggling with addictions, poverty, recent immigration, or multiple sets of issues. Managers especially voiced the need for workers to be able to "meet clients where they are" in strengths-based approaches.

"Participants in the groups and their incredible needs. They may come in and be able to facilitate, but they've never worked with people with these needs before. The group itself and managing the group is a big learning area and a shock." -Manager

"Ways to talk with parents....the whole thing of how to support the parent's strengths as opposed to giving suggestions and telling them what to do. Building their capacity. It's hard for new people." -Manager

Counseling and interpersonal skills covers a broad area of skills ranging from the ability to develop relationships of mutual trust and respect to helping people move along the change continuum. Listening skills, containment, motivational interviewing, grief and loss, mediation, and having difficult conversations were also included in this area. Managers seemed concerned about the level of training involved: either emphasizing that it ought to be very basic, or that their staff would only need more in-depth training.

"Learning how to present things with people—people come here feeling that they've messed up, don't have their kids with them—how to talk with them so they can feel supported and not judged." -Manager

"Dealing with disclosures, people having emotional stuff presenting in the group....those counseling skills, those soft skills. There's not a lot of time spent on that. It would probably be good to role play those types of scenarios. What would you do in this scenario? Even just to brainstorm it if they don't want to be put on the spot." -Trainer

"Critical skills for family support workers—interpersonal skills. They need to be very skilled with interpersonal communication....they need to be able to relate to both children and adults. All the other skills can come, but the interpersonal relationship kind of skills that have to be there when hiring."

-Manager

Ethical and emotional topics for worker well-being include: vicarious trauma for workers handling disclosures; boundaries; knowing what they are capable of giving; knowing when to pull away; when to report and what their role is; not feeling down about low participation rates; and not getting frustrated when high expectations of change in families are not met.

Cultural sensitivity included recommendations for increased training around diversity, aboriginal history and its effects on modern families, and the suggestion that staff at agencies which serve immigrant and refugee families could be involved in teaching staff in other agencies about the particular considerations for working with immigrant families.

When **child development** came up, it was often mentioned that people come with widely varying levels of knowledge and understanding.

Mental health topics included: depression, anxiety, borderline personality disorder, Fetal Alcohol, post-traumatic stress disorder, addictions, disclosures, transference, containment, and domestic violence.

Each time **behavior management** came up, concerns about how to address more extreme behaviors were expressed. Once strategies for sleep and toilet training were mentioned as well.

"Behavior—what about the kids where timeout doesn't work? There's big gaps there—what about kids who trash their room and break the furniture?"

-Manager

Attachment was a topic which seemed to inspire either enthusiasm or a feeling that it had been overly addressed.

Other topics mentioned only once or twice were: integrated case management/community liaison work, choosing resources to recommend to oversaturated parents, affect training, computer and spreadsheet skills, working with children in foster care, emotional intelligence, program evaluation, family law questions, non-violent crisis intervention, community development, family literacy, parent involvement in program delivery and evaluation, and how to handle the childcare component smoothly.

Managers

Later in the interview, managers were given a series of topics and asked whether they believed each topic would be useful for any of the staff in their agency (not just parent educators). Managers were encouraged to answer yes or no.

Managers' Responses to List of Possible Training Topics

Topic for Training	# Yes	% Yes	# Maybe	% Maybe	# No	% No
Working with high-risk families	13	93%	0	0%	1	7%
Safety and crisis intervention	11	79%	1	7%	2	14%
Attachment	10	71%	1	7%	2	14%
Substance abuse	11	79%	9	0%	3	21%
Counseling skills	7	50%	4	29%	3	21%
Domestic violence	10	71%	2	14%	2	14%
Risk identification	10	71%	1	7%	3	21%
Parenting skills	11	79%	1	7%	2	14%
Child development	10	71%		0%	4	29%
Cultural sensitivity	10	71%	2	14%	2	14%
Family theory	8	57%	1	7%	4	29%
Reporting and file management	8	57%	0	0%	6	43%
Screening, assessment & referral	8	57%	2	14%	4	29%

Parent Educators

Pre- and post-training parent educators were also asked two open-ended questions about their own or colleagues' training needs. First, they were asked, **"What kind of training (knowledge or skills) do you wish you could have received before leading your first parent groups?"**

The follow-up question was, **"What areas do you think are essential for new parent educators to receive training in?"** The majority of the survey respondents answered both of these questions. As they address the same ultimate question, "What are the training needs of newer parent educators?" from the viewpoint of parent educators themselves, the responses to these two questions have been combined.

Pre- and Post-Training Parent Educators' Responses (34 Respondents)

Areas for more training	# of times mentioned (each worker could have multiple mentions)
Group Facilitation and group dynamics	16
Counseling, communication and conflict resolution	14
Adult and experiential learning, learning activities	13
Child development	9
Cultural and diversity sensitivity	9
Mental health	8
More practice and feedback	6
Organizing and planning skills	4
Family systems and family dynamics	4
Discipline and parenting approaches	3

- The most frequently mentioned area was **group facilitation** which included comments about group dynamics.
- The second most common area, **counseling and communication skills** include conflict resolution, active listening, recognizing values and assumptions, and remaining impartial.
- The third most recommended area for training was around **adult learning**, learning styles, activities for diverse learners, and experiential learning.
- **Child development** and **sensitivity training** (including addressing cultural, literacy, and low-income needs) were listed an equal number of times.
- **Mental health** was brought up 8 times and included calls for training around abuse, addictions, and depression, as well as 3 references to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. *(See Appendix C for the complete list).*

In a more quantifiable format, workers were asked how they would prioritize their own training budget. They were given 10 topic areas and asked to rank them from highest to lowest priority. Answers differed significantly between the pre- and post-training groups. Responses have been divided accordingly.

Budgeting Question

Workers were asked to rank the following areas as to which they would devote the most money to if they were in control of their own training budget.

	Pre-training (35)		Post-training (7)	
	Rating 10=most money	Ranking 1=highest priority	Ranking 1=highest priority	Rating 10=most money
Constructive conflict resolution	5.8	1	9	2.7
Teaching adults	5.7	2	1	6.1
Child development	5.4	3	8	3.1
Creating emotionally safe environments	5	4	6	3.9
Learning styles	5	4	7	3.7
Group development	4.6	5	5	4.6
Lesson planning	4.3	6	3	5
Inviting discussion	3.6	7	4	4.9
Energizing openers and closers	3.5	8	3	5
Marketing	2.1	9	2	6

- The clearest call for training is in the area of teaching adults—it was rated as the highest priority among the past participant group and rated second among the pre-training group.
- Interestingly, those attending the pre-training rated constructive conflict resolution as their highest priority while those who attended training 1-2 years ago listed it as their lowest training priority.
- Conversely, the post-training parent educators chose marketing as their second highest training priority while the pre-training group rated it as their lowest priority.

Barriers to Training

Managers

Managers were asked an open-ended question, “Which barriers do you think prevent the parent educators you oversee from receiving as much training as they would like or need?”

As location has a large influence on perceived barriers, managers’ responses have been grouped according to location.

Responses of 14 Managers to an open-ended question (# yes / # respondents)

Barriers to Receiving Training	Fraser	Interior	North	Vancouver Coastal	Vancouver Island	Total % of 14 (# responses)
Time (timing, time away from work)	1/4	1/3	1/3	2/3	1/1	43% (6)
Cost	4/4	3/3	3/3	3/3	1/1	100% (14)
Paying workers for attending	2/4	1/3	0	1/3	0	29 % (4)
Coverage of programs	2/4	0	1/3	0	0	21 % (3)
Access/Distance	3/4	3/3	2/3	0	1/1	64% (9)
Availability	0	1/3	0	2/3	1/1	29% (4)
Family Dynamics—babysitting, etc	1/4	0	1/3	0	1/1	21 % (3)

(Appendix E)

Parent Educators

Pre- and Post-training Parent educators were also asked about barriers to receiving training, however, their question was closed-ended.

Which barriers do you think family service workers encounter that prevent them from receiving training in the areas they need or want help with? (please check all that apply)		
	Number of Response(s)	% Yes for category
Time	30	71%
Appropriate trainings are not offered	15	36%
Trainings do not cover to the depth needed	10	24%
Distance to trainings	21	50%
Insufficient funding	33	79%
Lack of agency support	14	33%
Not knowing about good trainings	18	43%
Trainings needed in different formats (online, etc.)	20	48%
Other	3	7%
Number of Respondents	42	

- **Funding** was the most cited barrier to receiving training.
- **Time** was also acknowledged by a large majority of parent educators.
- **Distance** was also cited by one-half of participants.
- Three “other” barriers were named in the open-ended option: “childcare issues for those that must travel to access training,” “funding, funding, funding” and “finding substitutes for work.”

Preferred Formats for Training

Managers, trainers, and pre-training parent educators were presented with five options for training formats.

Managers and Trainers

During the interview, managers and trainers were asked to indicate with a “yes” or “no” if they thought that training in each area “would be helpful for the staff at your agency (not just parent educators).” Responses have been broken down in two ways: managers and trainers separately, and then the two populations’ responses have been combined and grouped by region as location and access was a considerable factor in their responses (*Appendices F and G*).

Managers (14)	Yes	No	Maybe	% Yes
2 day workshop	13	1	0	93 %
Online self-paced tutorial	8	1	1	57 %
Teleconference	7	1	0	50 %
Live web seminar	5	1	1	36 %
Online Video	6	0	2	43 %

Trainers (8)	Yes	No	Maybe	% Yes
2 day workshop	6	1	0	86 %
Online self-paced tutorial	4	1	0	57 %
Teleconference	3	1	0	43 %
Live Web Seminar	2	1	0	29 %
Online Video	1	0	1	14 %

Managers and Trainers Combined by Region (# yes / # responding)

Format Options	North	Interior	Fraser	Vancouver Coastal	Vancouver Island
2 day workshop	3/5	2/3	4/4	2/3	2/2
Online self-paced tutorial	5/5	2/3	1/4	4/9	2/2
Teleconference	5/5	2/3	1/4	1/9	1/2
Live web seminar	2/5	2/3	1/4	1/9	1/2
Online Video	3/5	2/3	1/4	1/9	0

- The **two day workshop** is the most popular option with both trainers and managers. There were a number of comments about

the various benefits of attending a face-to-face training, such as the modeling provided by the trainer, the opportunity for conversations and networking during breaks, the additional learning that comes from learning in a group, and the interaction that can occur.

I think there's a lot of benefit to being in a room with other people. Maybe some of younger staff would like other formats.

- Manager

You're getting more when you're with people than when you're on a computer, watching. If I see the person teaching it, I learn better myself that way.

- Manager

- The **online self-paced tutorial** was the second most popular option, with several managers remarking that the flexibility for workers to fit it in when they could was an appealing feature.
- Every manger and trainer from the north indicated that the **teleconference** would be a useful format for them as it would allow live interaction while avoiding the prohibitive travel time and costs. The popularity of the **live web seminar** was a bit less universal, but the benefits seen by managers and trainers were similar.
- The least popular option was the **online video**, which may be because as one trainer said, "It's like reading—not at all interactive. There's no follow up or support."

I like the online training idea, but I think it would be better later on, maybe once they have already worked together. At least the initial one should be in person. People prefer that personal contact for learning content.

- Manager

Any of the last 3-4 options: teleconference, online, self-paced: where travel isn't necessary.

- Manager

In our area it's very expensive to leave and go take the training, so if there was a way to not have to leave the community to receive the training. And I think having it available frequently as a training opportunity, that would be good.

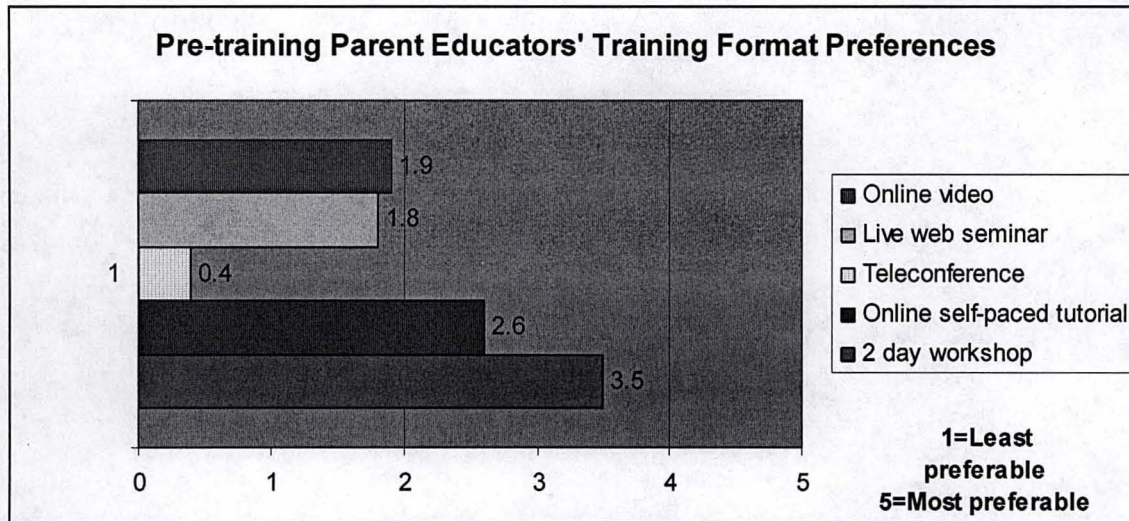
- Trainer

We have to become more comfortable with webinar. Online stuff that's self-directed can be good, gives people flexibility, but you know, if they're brand new, what ever would be next best to face to face- It's good to have dialogue, interaction with people. There's a whole lot of non-verbal stuff that happens that instructor can pick up on, read that class... something that involves at least a couple face to face sessions.

- Manager

Pre-training Parent Educators

A similar question concerning the five options for training formats was included in the survey that the pre-training parent educators completed. Respondents were asked to rate the 5 options in terms of most to least preferable, however the structure of the question allowed for multiple formats to receive the same rating (i.e. teleconference and online video could both receive a 1 for “least preferable”).



- The two day workshop was rated as the most preferable format by pre-training parent educators.
- The online self-paced tutorial again ranks as second most preferable option.
- Parent educators differed from managers and trainers by ranking online video as their third, rather than last, preference.
- The web seminar again ranks fourth.
- The teleconference is the markedly least preferable format among pre-training parent educators, whereas it was ranked third by both managers and trainers.

Certification

Managers were asked: **Would sending staff to a training program which offered a certificate or diploma be more attractive than sending them to a program which did not offer them?**

There were an equal number of managers saying “Yes” or “It doesn’t matter to me.” Also, two managers mentioned that while it doesn’t affect them much, they thought it would be more attractive to their staff who are developing their credentials.

Well, it would not affect my decision as long as the organizer and instructor have a good reputation, but I think my staff would like to commit to a training that after the completion they would receive a certificate or diploma.

-Manager

Summary

Training topics

Group facilitation was the single most commonly recommended training area by managers, trainers, and parent educators when responding to an open-ended question about training needs. In addition, in a closed-ended question, **group dynamics** was reported by parent educators to be one of the top two most challenging areas.

Counseling and interpersonal skills received the second highest number of mentions by parent educators in the open-ended questions about training prescriptions. This area was the third most mentioned by managers and trainers.

Working with families with diverse needs was the second most recommended area by managers and trainers in response to the open-ended question. When managers were asked if training on “working with high risk families” would be useful for staff at their agencies, 93 % said “Yes.” More specifically, parent educators indicated that they felt they had low levels of preparation to work with immigrants and found adapting for parents with low literacy to be one of the most challenging areas in the closed-ended questions.

Cultural sensitivity was the fourth most mentioned area for training by managers, trainers, and parent educators in open-ended questions about training needs.

Teaching adults was ranked as the highest priority in the imaginary training budgets of post-training parent educators and as second highest priority by pre-training parent educators. In addition, concerns around adult learning, learning styles, and more experiential learning activities were the third most mentioned training needs in response to open-ended questions by parent educators.

It is recommended that BCCF move forward with the development of a foundational training for less experienced parent educators. The top five areas of recommended training topics are:

- Group facilitation (including handling strained group dynamics)
- Counseling and interpersonal skills
- Working with families with diverse needs (including immigrants and low literacy)
- Cultural sensitivity
- Teaching adults, addressing learning styles, and experiential learning.

Formats

I like the online training idea, but I think it would be better later on, maybe once they have already worked together. At least the initial one should be in person. People prefer that personal contact for learning content.

-Trainer

In terms of program delivery—partnering with local planning committees might be very successful collaboration. [Then BCCF could be] sending out someone from the Council to train trainers or do more advanced training. We could get together to plan what we'd like and then the Council could send in someone to share more materials.

- Manager

Having shorter more modularized training might be more beneficial—for ECE staff or child care staff. Committing to 2 days is a lot for them to commit to. If possible, half day modules over time contributing to a certificate with different components—more people would be interested and it would be easier for them to send people to that kind of training.

If it were around child development, ages and stages....there might be a first half day with certain fundamentals and another with follow up. If there were people within the Council who could be mobile trainers in many different communities, I think it would really extend that kind of training.

- Manager

Timing: my suggestion would be that BCCF may want to offer at least one training during the summer—so people who could not attend during the year could attend. You could just try it once. My staff would be able to attend because summer is the slow time. Announce it well in advance so people would know and could arrange their schedule.

- Manager

The two day workshop, and all that face to face interaction provides, is still the most preferred training format by each population surveyed. Cost, access/distance, time, and the need for other formats were the most cited barriers by managers, trainers, and parent educators. The majority of managers and trainers from the North and Interior regions expressed interest in all five options and repeatedly expressed interest in using alternative formats to avoid the prohibitive cost of traveling to trainings.

It is recommended that BCCF work to create trainings that cater to the various regions.

- Staff in the Fraser and Vancouver Coastal regions might best be served by shorter face-to-face modules.
- Staff in more remote areas need training that combines face-to-face interaction with online tutorials or webinars as preparation or follow-up.
- Sending BCCF trainers to various locations or training trainers that live in remote areas would allow for the personal interaction and reduce overall costs for training attendance.

In interviewing each supervisor, there was a strong sense of how highly they valued providing good, affordable training to front line workers—several gave an hour of their time and expertise to thoroughly responding to the interview. Each supervisor expressed esteem for the BC Council *for* Families and its leadership roles and capacity (*See Appendix I*). It is clear that this is an area where the leadership of the BC Council *for* Families is needed and welcomed.

Appendices

Appendix A: Expectations for and Strengths of Newer Parent Educators

1: Expect:

Exp depends on education. Typically don't hire anyone without masters for counseling. Don't hire without bachelors for family preservation.

Clinical programming and prevention programming

Might hire someone with just ba with little experience here or there. Depends on what they've been involved in—no experience at all, probably wouldn't look at.

Some life experience or at least employment, practicum or volunteer experience.

On occasion I'll look at certain diplomas from Douglas or Kwantlen—looking for BA or maters

Strengths:

Most people that have had some experience working with families—flexibility in being able to work with variety of different family types and personalities. Experience doing outreach, ability to be self-starter.. Meet client where they're at—pick them up or go into their home, really hands on.

Expect that people do that, strength when they can. Especially working with vulnerable families, little resources.

It doesn't work to expect them to come into the office.

(also what he said they need more support in)

2:

Expect:

For us, they have to have BS in nursing, Speech and Language they have to have a masters, nutritionists are dietitians already.

Program assistants—not teaching parents, just have clerical responsibilities

Strengths:

3:

Interesting Q. Because it's considered a paraprofessional or lay trained professional.....when we first started we had people with ECE, but as time has gone on, ...its not so much the educational background we look for because we're drawing from eclectic backgrounds. More (focused on) experience, understanding of growth and development, the counseling component-- motivational interviewing, stages of change theory, family systems, knowledge of community resources.

Complexity of the families we're serving—our goals are quite broad as a result.

(to put worker in with families without support and without a background—I think you're setting people up for high stress) and not much infrastructure to support and train home visitors.

Fortunately, we have kept our employees long-term. Our full-time employee has been with us 10, our part-time worker for 7 years, and another switched to program a year ago. One is BSW, one with B.Ed with related experience and the long-term employee is

ECE. We've done a ton of wraparound training—motivational interviewing, concurrent, substance abuse, stages of change....we've done a lot of that on our own time, also on attachment.

Strengths: Things I look for: ability to connect with people, establish trusting relationships quickly, warmth, empathic listening, sensitive—make quick assessment, but listen to what families are telling them, reflective listening.

Communication and connection—you can have all the letters behind your name and still not be able to connect.

Many of our clients are from vulnerable populations and have had negative experiences in the past with the Ministry, etc.

Excellent problem solving skills.

Stuff like child growth and development, motivational interviewing—you can teach that stuff. If you had resources, you could add that on.

4: Expectations:

We do expect grade 12 to start with. Normally we go for... could be family service worker program at the college (1-2 years), do hire ECE workers, training in special needs also is good, do hire...we have a nurse on staff right now, has lots of experience working with families. Worker with drug and alcohol counseling courses. Depends, but try for diploma or a degree or some training, or we can send them out because they have some background working with families.

They have varied degrees---SW, family workers, child and family degrees, criminology.

We really promote the education part of it. One thing we do have a more stressful time getting staff for is male role models—we may do a lot of mentoring but we also help out have them registered for course and upgrade their education. There's not many of them in the field, but it's something we need all the time. That's probably the exception. We have had male workers with training, but they go to other things. That's where I see that we fall short.

Very diverse culturally in Kitimat. There's probably every nationality in Kitimat. You may hire someone with Portuguese, or French backgrounds, our staff is very diverse, because we do have people in the community that have the training and are culturally diverse. That part we really don't have a stumbling block with.

Strengths:

Their ideas and strengths—they've got lots of great ideas. They're committed to their job. Definitely struggle with a lot of different things. But they've got this gung ho feeling that I can do this. They stick with the families and try really hard. And their education plays a part in it. Past experience, where they worked before maybe. Somebody new maybe has

more of a struggle if they've been doing textbook work, but trying to apply it and make these good ideas work in reality.

Strengths—willing to research, looks for new ideas, gungho, into family dynamics, see how they go.

5: Have been able to be fortunate—hire very experienced people. Because we're mentors for childcare providers,. People with 20-30 years experience. Have been able to put them in the family resource program.

6:

Hmmm.. it's a real difficult field to hire for. It's something you have to have the knack for. First of all, I need to have people who are very familiar with the concept of ECE—child dev., ages and stages.

I don't necessarily look for a degree because that's very hard to find, I do have some with child and youth degree.

I do look for people with group facilitation skills, work with diverse people, some with hard backgrounds. Need to be able to get info out to parents, but we facilitate. We don't instruct-its has to be an experiential group. We always work with co-facilitation model. Its very difficult to have a criteria because it's a personality things. Have to be extroverts—have command of the room without controlling—be energetic. Have to be aware of the adult learner and the adult learner styles.

Strengths: Passion for their work.
New fresh ideas
Thinking quickly on their feet and working in a team

7: ECE or SW related field, knowledge of aboriginal history and culture, look for people with good people skills, non threatening, easy to relate to, can speak in a way that a variety of people could understand them, not academic sounding, can easily build rapport with people, healthy, how their personality will fit with our team

Strengths: Can't be to overtrained. Very mixed bag as far as backgrounds, experience and education

Look for easy to present materials since many folks are coming with low education or addictions....

8: Parents who are paid an honorarium, people doing Mother Goosefrom a variety of backgrounds, some working for other agencies, also receiving an honorarium. Ppl in daycare and preschool with ECE, person who facilitating family place drop in was out-of school care previously

Stengths: What I look for: Openmindedness, strengths based perspective, willing to learn

Some skills in looking at group dynamics, conflict resolution, outgoingness, skills on how to engage people

9:

Expect: Actually depends on the position. Family Support worker—look at experience and training in program development. And knowledge in ECE and ECD in group facilitation. Team playing—family support worker is leader of group of 3-4 people—to develop and deliver and evaluate the program. With ECE, the person has to have the training, of course. She has to have the experience of working with diverse families and children of different backgrounds and ethnicity. Being respectful is very important for me.

Strengths: When possible I hire people with knowledge, skills and training in the field from previous employment. Working with families esp. immigrants and refugees. Have to have knowledge of settlement—area I look for as well. Must share same philosophy that we have here—belief that parents have strength and know. And skills—parents know best how to be a parent— we are here to listen to them and provide more support to enhance their skills, but we are not the instructor or the person who knows best. Must respect parents and children—have to come from background of high respect of parents of children.

10: Expect that they've done similar work previously. We have a long interview that asks about ethics, judgments, transference and counter transference, to be sure we don't hire staff that make judgments about families that are in various states of repair and disrepair. One hour at least interview process—more subjective. The questions tend to elicit responses that inform us.

In our Family Circle, we've changed employees about 3 times in the last 4 years because people move within the agency, so as far as the Family Resource program, that's been quite stable. ...newest person has extensive background working with children, MG with special needs children.

Very small rural area with a lot of drug use, poverty, early parenthood, lower education, so...needs are pretty high, so I don't tend to hire anyone without BA, right now everyone has masters or is master's candidate. In past had BA in youth and child, or BSW.

Also look for expressive therapies, conflict resolution, non violent communication for FSWers

For folks working in NP and FRS, many have BSW BEd or ECE. We have a hard time finding people with ECE here.

Strengths: I would say, ah, I haven't really had new parent educators. It's helpful if they're parents themselves, but not necessary. If they're following the NP program, it's pretty much laid out.

A strength in group facilitation, in letting groups be self-determining, in looking for and finding resources groups might want. Ability to tell stories and draw analogies that might apply, the support people need. Ability to adapt material to the learning level of the group as a whole—the sum of its parts, kind of individual needs as well.

All kinds of things that make a successful facilitator. Ability to connect with other professionals so you can engage them to come to your program.

Ability to organize child minders. Budgeting skills, Organization.

11:

Expect: ECE coordinator has ECE cert. and several years, exp. BA in music, all we require is ECE cert. (runs parent and tot drop-in programs, tend to be very multi cultural) Then we have FSWr who is ECD specialist, has Early child. Pedagogy BA, many years exp with early child development and settlement

Does 1-0n-1 work, with families, some of it around settlement, health supports, linking to resources, also org. MG, NP and other multi session parent education programs

Part of how she does that is sit on tri cities council of groups who host those programs to decide when and where they will be offered (also You Make the Difference) do common promotion of the programs

After school program with parent involvement

BA in therapeutic recreation and another assistant with 2 years in T.R.

Full time community development worker—req. is BA, but have woman with Masters in Com. Dev.

New Beginnings—supporting refugee families 0-5 year old children

Qualification was BA, she has a masters and lots of exp. Internationally working with refugees

Have pool of casual staff who work as child minders—while parents are at workshop next door, sometimes participate in MG, creating snacks, pulling kids out during parent only times.... (ppl with experience working with children and families, have taken facilitation training, using already have several years experience)

Strengths:

When hiring, we look for people who've worked a lot with parents in strengths based way because we're working to pull community together,

Often look for people with multiple lang. (staff speak 11 languages)

Most staff have experience previously working in team environments

13: Need to be a parent themselves, have positive experience
Driver's license, grade 12

ECE, doula, background with LLL, counseling—that's to my advantage

Values around putting baby before the clock

Need them to be culturally sensitive

Need them to understand that we're providing latest resource, support...but the parent is the expert. There's a lot of conflicting ideas. Suddenly everyone's the expert.

Strengths

Empathy

Parent experience

Breast feeding experience

Sleep strategies. Soothing baby strategies
Managing a home (don't go there, but need to be empathetic)
Car seat tech. s
"Food Safe" as well
most have Modified Interaction Guidance (attachment) training—aware when red flags
around attachment

14:

There is a lot of individual family work—assessing needs, connecting to
resources in community, supportive counseling, behavioral strategies. Positive
parenting, understanding of facilitating groups, be able to run groups. And
sometimes to run children's groups as well

Min req is BA, pref. in SW or CYC
Exp working with families or child with special needs
Not requesting diploma in Ad Ed

Strengths:

Parenting Wisely, Nobody's Perfect
Sibling support groups have curriculum, but not where to take the training, same for
social skills groups—we had to design our own
Watch Wait and Wonder
Parent-child relationship—offer with MCFD

15: Looking for is usually taken some parenting (NP, or some sort of courses to work
with parents, PPP, Right from the Start, to have that parenting. More support for
themselves beside.

our agency puts away training dollars for our staff to be able to take training throughout
the year.

Try to give it to my staff—they look for it instead of me pointing it out—they buy into
rather than me telling them what to do

Any counseling exp., that's great,

More education is even better

Community kitchen staff—has taken course for foods, budgeting, can share that with
families as she works with them

Strengths: Always asking questions Why, why are you doing that way?

I'm very open with my staff—if there's a better way I'm open to changing it.

Trainers on Strengths of Newer Parent Educators

A: Empathy, ability to connect with people easily, curiosity, non-judgmental, lots of First Nations people—they have a strong cultural perspective, Knowledge of own community, passion, sense of purpose

B: Already working with young families, some knowledge for working with them, but lack formal facilitation skills and training. Varying levels of knowledge→how to work with people, basic counseling and facilitation skills. They pick up content on their own, with their kids.

C: They need to have filled out the application form, need experience doing parent facilitation before (NP, MG) because the training is very specific on content, it doesn't teach facilitation skills

So then we know that they don't have to go through the basics (people come with quite a bit of experience) They seem to really understand content, it's better for us if they have done it several years (worked with families)

D: Huge range. The program can be run on a local level, staff from many different agencies can do it well. Highly qualified people—language therapists, librarians, ECEs, infant development consultants, elementary teachers, nurses, and then there's people with backgrounds working in family serving programs and all of them are very experienced. And then there some who don't have much training or skills and that can work well if paired with someone more experienced as a facilitator—co-facilitating.

E: Knowledge largely in child development

People who are in administration of family resource programs

Largely it's the ECE component

Some have backgrounds in theory—like counseling, nursing, and then the training we do is more tangible, practical type of training

F: New energy and especially, well, I'll speak on the side of working with co-worker who've all been trained in the last year or so. One is (quite a bit younger than me) what I see her bring into it is her youth—she fits in with her generation, bring the language from that generation, new fresh ideas. For the other 2, they're older, about 10 years older than her. Everyone is bring their own life experiences and background and that enriches the work as a facilitator—can empathize with the families (yes I know how that is).

When co-facilitation happens with male and female, or a couple--we have more couples come—we hear that they like to hear what a man has to say. And we have very different backgrounds—every couple does.

G: Confidence

Allow them to show if they're nervous—setting environment for parents if they're comfortable. They could mention this is my first time facilitating—getting into parent's...

Appendix B: Training Prescriptions from Managers and Trainers

What areas do you often see as areas where new parent educators need more training or support?

1: Flexibility in being able to work with variety of different family types and personalities. Experience doing outreach, ability to be self-starter. Meet client where they're at—pick them up or go into their home, really hands on. Expect that people do that, strength when they can. Especially working with vulnerable families, little resources.

Meeting clients where they are. **Client-centered approaches.** Not putting your ideas and values upon parents. Asking parenting to identify their needs. Not prescribing what parents need. There's room for that, but you also need to meet them where they are. Any of the affect training right now is fantastic training, like Derek Peterson. That kind of stuff for people who are running groups.

Other topics: Asset building is really important. Community liaison work—being able to **case manage collaboratively** between resources. Teaching new people/new employees how to communicate with other professionals. Connecting the others involved with your client.

2:

Group facilitation.

LEAP BC—learning education, one of 2010 trainings from the ministry Had all our staff attend that—working with young children and their parents, putting play into it.

We're more comfortable with mothers, not as much going on for **fathers**. We do get concerns behavior managements—get questions about how to toilet train—guiding and parenting styles, stuff like that. Especially with more challenging behaviors—helping parents understand and managing challenging behaviors, very practical things.

I think parents are so inundated with so much info—cultural, parenting styles, internet, and there's many different parenting styles, one challenge is deciding what are we recommending—what would be the best practices. We are into health promotion—eating, exercise, finances, poverty.

Coming up with a set of ...we do hand out recommendations from Ministry of Health Prenatal-6 months, 6m-toddler, try to be consistent with those guidelines, other reputable resources. **Which resource do we use?** Is one of the hardest things.

And ways to talk with parents about ...the whole thing of how to support the parent's strengths as opposed to giving suggestions and telling them what to do. Building their capacity. Hard for new people.

3: Mental health, addictions, domestic violence.

As much as we say that we're not counselors, we are. I think we have to recognize our limits, but we have to have trusting relations, and have to encourage them to take next step to counseling, knowing how to move people along the change continuum.

Other things we run into as well.- **Attachment**-supporting families with infant attachment, but the relationship between infant and parent. How sensitive and responsive parent is to child (when distressed—emotionally upset, physically upset)—critical times for parents to respond. How do we foster a strong parent-child relationship? This gets *tricky when dealing with families when have PTSD, mental health*—difficult to do this.

Many of our parents in a lot of distress and they're *young*, the average age is 15-25. Frontal cortex isn't even fully developed—insight, abstract thinking. That's an area that I think there are amazing approaches, (videotaping and playing back) but again, how do I have access to the training for this? I've been scrambling trying to find research to move our program forward. Great things are happening in the field—but its hard to move program forward while also developing the program.

Because we work with variety of other professionals in community—**integrated case management**. Have had very interesting experiences in the community- we're not all on the same page. I think there's lack of congruence, between MCFD program that provides housing with its rules and regulations for clients, and we come and will do things with the parent there's places where there's intersection—they've got requirement for parent to be doing things at least 20 hours a week or looking for work but they've got a 6 month old and working on attachment---we're at odds with each other.

Collaboration-we operate from different understanding of what that means.

Integrated case management would be helpful for all service providers so we're talking the same language.

Infant mental health—social, emotional development of child. Some materials, such as ages and stages assessment tool—looking at 5 domains, but not very sensitive to social emotional. Early childhood development is a determinant of child health. 25% of children in province are showing some delays in development.

It would be great if we had access to training for the **Ages and Stages social emotional assessment, the AFQSE**. Let's say you're going to early identify. You have to have resources in community to respond. If you're providing an intensive home visiting program, the parents are still isolated—need to connect them to parent groups, supports. If you notice to real concerns with attachment, what's the capacity in your community to respond? This is something I have been exploring.

Other: Understanding **vicarious trauma for workers**—families often disclose their horrific stories. **Containment**—how do you contain that? What does that mean? You don't want to shut somebody down, but need to contain. **Transference**.

4: Changing values of family systems—its changed dramatically over the years. What happened in your childhood may not be appropriate now. Making those changes, making it work.

If you have **young parent**, 18 years old and you're older, there's definitely a difference in the way people are being brought up. I think that's where the education. And the Fetal Alcohol, how you work with that, it's a struggle. It's a lifetime thing. **Fetal Alcohol** is a big component of it. One of the things lately--not totally new--**parents that have not been parented**. They don't have bedtime techniques. If working with families, if parents haven't had those experiences, how do they help them try it? (ie. turn TV off and talk) If you're working with families and they haven't had that as children, that's a really hard component to teach them and they question it all the time, "Why? I didn't have it and I'm fine."

I did a job interview lately for a Life Skills worker. We had applications with Masters degree working with life skills. It was saying "We're going to do this" but the person that got the job it was "We're going to work with the families on this". It was the person who said "Let's see what the parents want, go to the parents first." The other people despite their qualifications, they hadn't had that.

It's a really hard one. It is something that I do see—**expectations** what they're going to do. They go in with belief—expectations for families. It's not going to happen over night—you have to change directions quite often and how to get them to recognize that and that every family is different and it is a slow process. Don't get discouraged. I do find that with the newer ones, that's what they struggle with. Even if they have the same situations in their own families, they have to see that maybe that won't work with this family.

It takes 2-3 years for them to see that they have made progress. I think that's probably the hardest part for new workers. The goals they set up..... I honestly don't know how you would ever do that for training, even if an instructor would say that ...it would still be a struggle for the first few years.

5: Critical skills for family support workers—interpersonal skills. They need to be very skill with interpersonal communication and understanding regarding conflict of interest, ministry policies, confidentiality, need to be able to relate to both children and adults.

All the other skills can come, but the interpersonal relationship kind of skills that have to be there when hiring.

Other: **Computer skills** would be good-spreadsheets. For newer family support workers, several of the above they would need. **Attachment** training for the newer people for sure, that would be one of the most important for me.

Because of the generally low salary level, people come with not much training.

6: Training in the **curriculum** itself. New facilitators who have the potential but not the skills—training in **group dynamics**. You're managing the group—everything has to benefit group while meeting individual needs.

Different training with different areas. I like to send them to different trainings—working with **parents with multiple barriers**, substance abuse issues, training for working with different types of people in groups.

Other training I would like—training to work with children in foster care and their transition

Working with kids with substance abusing parents—specifically courses that the JJ doesn't do.

We don't do therapeutic groups but attachment (would be helpful)

Participants in the groups and their incredible needs. They may come in and able to facilitate, but they've never worked with people with these needs before. The group itself and **managing the group** is a big learning area and a shock.

7: Understand more about **aboriginal history** and how that plays into things facing modern aboriginal families. Residential schools, colonization who they affect families now. A **flexibility so people aren't judgmental**. So they can think about it critically without being judgmental or parental. Need to realize that families are all different, values for their families

Communication—how to have difficult conversations with families. Learning how to present things with people—people come here feeling that they've messed up, don't have their kids with them—how to talk with them so they can feel supported and not judged.

Behavior—what about the kids where timeout doesn't work? There's big gaps there—what about kids who trash their room and break the furniture?

Confidence. We send them to the training but when applying it, they lack the confidence to do it.

Other: **Anger management** always comes up when working with families, grief and loss, **mediation** having quite a few parent team conflicts—skills in how to help families come to family agreements, difficult conversations, self-care is a big one as well, boundaries,

8: I think they need more training and support dealing with **conflict in a group**. How to help people that there's more than one way to be right—accept multiple solutions and help others do that.

Diversity education.

Helping parents help themselves. Don't take over and do for, but help parents find what they need. Facilitate parents learning from each others.

Good grief. For some people doing this work, it is sometimes hard to **accept people's different parenting styles**, it can be difficult for them to manage the group dynamics. People come with different amounts of information about child development and parenting and that kind of thing.

9: I would say more about **group facilitation, but not the basic level**. I think what is lacking out there is someone to provide Level 2 group facilitation. What I observe that there is not much discussion, but we must decide between level 1 and level 2. I don't participate in the discussion, I don't know what has been said. If we have a clearer training agenda of level 1, 2 and 3, in a year we would provide to level 1 to new workers and the upper levels later.

I would like to see more planning in providing training, not just group facilitation. I think its time for us to look beyond providing basic training to workers. With different areas we could go to a deeper level.

- Early Child Development
- How to support parents
- How to run a group
- How to deal with difficult clients in group
- How to work with **parents with multiple issues**, challenges (parents feel overwhelmed—workers need to be able to form action plan with parents, which needs to address 1st, 2nd issues). This would be for others at neighborhood houses, etc. working with immigrant parents.

Emotional intelligence—new topic Justice Institute offers it, but the fee is quite high. It would need to have a series of workshops.

You see having a basic or even better, deeper, knowledge of emotional intelligence would be benefit in one on one work on needs assessment of parents and children.

Topic for workshops:

Working with **fathers**, working with men. Before they are fathers, they are men: working with them requires a different approach, using what we do with mothers would not work with them. Even though the workers do not just work with fathers—they work with parents- how to approach father and how to work with them and how to support.

Other: **Evaluation—of programs**

Diversity of skills needed for this job (FSW)—need certain set of skill for mainstream program, but those working with immigrant and refugees need more skills, need knowledge in integration, community resources—a very important component.

10: Parents come in **with family law questions** and that's something that we did get a professional development morning on family law—it comes up. We're looking for support there. Found it our advocacy centre. I think our victim support worker has now ordered quite a bit more material.

They seem to... there's enough other people in the agency—there's 2 people with art therapy degrees in the agency. If they're struggling with what to do for families, they can find resources within the agency.

So far, because its fairly parent directed, that hasn't been an issue

When do we assist and when do we pull away? If someone is borderline being able to provide care (don't have warm water to their house) When is the child at risk? When do you go to MCFD? Worker defining role? Ethical dilemmas that way. When is our role as NP facilitator over when it's clear what's happening for people?

MCFD reporting.

With compassion drawing boundaries around when to give service

For accreditation we have to have non violent crisis intervention and cultural sensitivity—gender as well as race. Concrete progress has to be shown.

12: I guess one area that we tend to look at is in **community development**, so we tend to do that kind of training in-house. We also find that a lot of staff have lots of experience with parents and kids, but not with **program evaluation**. We have done a lot of training in that this last year.

The other area that's become increasingly important to us in the past few months is **family literacy**. What's some of the literature, how might we bring more of that lens to the work that we're doing. There's a number of programs where we have different activities for parents and children simultaneously, but not family literacy focused—we're working to bring more in.

Cultural sensitivity: so much of our work is with families that come from diverse backgrounds. Our staff would probably have a lot to contribute on working with immigrants and refugees. How to help families connect to resources very different from their country of origin.

One approach that we have in ECD —**parent led activity**. Our team has some ideas about how to do that and we work a lot with volunteers, trying to dev. more volunteer support for our program. Maybe a session around how to involve parents in practical and meaningful ways in programs. Lots of parents are quite shy bout leading songs, etc. Part of why we're keen on MG trainings—once parents have experienced MG, then they're more comfortable leading song, play this kind of role esp. if know other parents, take more turns do in that. Finding strategies for involving parents in ECD programs. we're quite interested in MTM training. Our challenge has been finding the resources to provide it for our staff.

I'm thinking about in the ECD community committee and middle childhood committee we've been talking about how to **involve parents in how to evaluate programs** hear parent voice on how to support their child/them, how to work with parents for seamless transition for early childhood to school age programs—parent involvement we've been looking at in community level.

We'd probably be interested in looking at it. One thing we just registered our coordinator in the new certificate program—FRPS.

Some of the generic skills we'll be looking at are:

Working with vulnerable families

supporting families with children with special needs,

One thing we've found with families we're working with—we meet them at the family drop-in with their first child (new to parenting). Some new parents have really appreciated **6-8 week parenting overview program** that we offered with Adler Inst. Master's students. Have done a couple of those at our various sites and parents seem to really like that. Some of that kind of training might be really helpful for staff who haven't come through ECD training—ages and stages, trips for parenting'

We've also been interested in PALS (parents as partners in learning), used to partner with schoolsthey've now created special PALS program for immigrant families, pilot coming from family literacy perspective. Lots of learning from their project, the I-Pals training might be something to look at.

13: We give them the HV core training, but need more training on:

- Assaultive relationships
- Drug and alcohol
- Mental health

Other: **Mental health issues**—finding that's really big. Depression and anxiety and borderline personality disorder, a little about assaultive relationships

14: I think it's around **dealing with difficult group members**--people that monopolize the group, always bringing in issues outside group. General group dynamics. They're educated, have a degree, can learn the material, but dealing with the dynamics within the group--there's usually one problem member in each group.

How to be **respectful** but bring it back to the group

Other: A lot of referrals that we're getting—**children's behaviors are getting more difficult**—asking for beyond basic parenting—the complicated family and social situations that these families are with . children with a lot of different diagnoses (ADD, oppositional defiant disorder). Really young children with a lot of labels stuck on them. Their parents say "That doesn't work" (for parenting strategies). Frankly I don't think they've tried everything yet, but they're asking for more.

15: It's hard when a newer staff comes in because the staff who already have relationships with the families, it's harder for the new staff to break in. It takes a while to break in. Family Resource Program—parents get very comfortable with some staff and others, they see and think, "Hmm, I don't know that person."

Everyone knows everything in FRP. Sometimes you don't think to take that time to show it to new staff—it's no one's fault, but you just don't remember to share with them this goes here, etc.

And they're trying to fit in too.

Trainers:

A: Working with difficult or resistant clients, working in situations of conflict or crisis intervention.

Getting out there—putting themselves strongly in front of a group—taking charge.

Working with dads (can be resistant, aggressive)—they need to be approached differently

Utilizing the new skills from a training in their own way—making them work for them.

Adapting to make it work in their own situation. It's different with every family.

Being confident and in control of a group.

Group skills—dealing with conflict, resistant or talkative clients, all fall under "Being in control of a group"

It's hard to apply skills in the real world. They need support—someone to call and ask.

Some of it is practice or having a mentor.

B: More ideas—basic facilitation.

Planning, organizing---planning, being on top of it. Plan for week to week. Recognizing the importance of using co-facilitation.

Being able to read the body language of parents, less obvious signs—just comes with time, experience.

Working with difficult clients either one-to-one or in groups. How will they handle them in a group setting?

C: At the beginning of the training with the first people I don't know if it was lack of experience, they didn't have the concept of facilitating rather than lecturing. We've had some people who don't understand the difference between giving a class and facilitating.

The thing is too, in some cultures, they tell us that the parents want a class, they want us to tell them what to do, they don't want a facilitation,

Some coming from other cultures have harder time with facilitation

There are lots of requests for how to work with at-risk families or how to work with multi cultural families. Lots of people want to, need to learn about that, they don't have any training. The other thing is how to work with difficult clients, mandated clients who don't want to be there.

D: May be more judgmental, harsh, more ready to be fed up because people come late. And if people don't get trained ("I'm already ECE, I don't need this")....often **attitudes** change during the training.

It really depends on their background: the ECEs are scared stiff of working with adults, scared to sing in front of them. Librarians have no experiences looking at the relationship between parent and child. Some people come very **teachey**, you know "I'm the one that's going to teach you...." Expecting to pass on gems of knowledge and others will appreciate it.

Holes that I notice the most:

Huge differences in how much people understand about **child development**.

It's a world of difference when someone comes in as a **confident leader**. My question is how do you provide support to help them get there---need for more practice and training is.....Program offering (should) provide support, mentoring, someone with more experience

Being able to **develop relationships** with people you're working with based on mutual respect and curiosity, a sense of joint goal—supporting their abilities as parents.

Developing a **realistic assessment** of who you are and **what you can give**. I see people who drive themselves really hard. Myself, feeling I wasn't sure I knew what I was doing—training can definitely help with that.

E:

Listening skills and techniques

Not being the expert—people think they're entering the role to educate where as the philosophy of NP is more support and empowerment. My biggest challenge to help people understand that they aren't there to give advice.

Thinking that they know more than the parents

Feeling they need to have solutions for people

Balancing their time management and prioritizing

Understanding the whole concept around family support, they don't seem to understand the big picture—guiding principles of family resource programs.

And to think of ourselves as facilitators not educators

It's becoming more clear to me, for ECE there's really different skills when working with the adults as well. Because the work is not well paid and the hours can be short, you get ...sometimes it's hard to find people with experience. (once they get in they never leave). It can be hard to get new blood. Sometimes you just hire anyone who applies—just nice people. Some have the philosophy that nice people can't do any harm—I don't agree—people are looking for an expert sometimes. A family support worker may say something in passing that can be harmful for the family looking for expert answers. It can be dangerous to have inexperienced people who don't know the big picture.

Because I've done so many groups and there's been adequate and excellent child care. The success of the group is really affected by the quality of the childcare. Should be acknowledged in training—have good communication and training with care givers. Sometimes you have kids coming and going, and others where there is never a need for a kid to come in. You can go to great depths in a support group if kids aren't coming.

F: One of our staff members took the HV training and brought back the binder and from various trainings, we've all been trained in HV aspects—but I think everyone should attend that intensive HV training—I don't think anyone should be able to move on to attend other trainings until they take that one. We just had 2 people from our program attend but we've got a binder now that we can all access- get the information.

Training on safety, homes, it's a privilege to be able to visit families—not our place to be critical. We might see many areas that need, might be lacking, but might now be areas that family sees—need to work with them where they are. Same for working with groups.

I think foundation training is good. I think its one that everyone should go to. Like I know agencies are continually having new staff. Like the HV training and NP I think its an awesome one. I recommend it everyone, whether they're going to teach it or not—it applies anything in life. I use the problem solving in my postpartum group. I think it would be too intensive to combine them, but I think if people are going into homes they should do the HV one. **(also in format)**

Hmmmm....well, that would be a very difficult one to answer for me because in our program, we get lots of training. Each staff member gets tons. We do support each other, our office is very balanced—we support each other in that way. However, there are 2 new facilitators in our community at other agency and they often come here and ask us for ideas, how do you do this, or that. Obviously they feel like they can get support over here. Just because our building, the resources are for birth to 5, so we don't have to go through the community to find this information, we have it at our fingertips. Whereas for these other facilitators, they have to go find it.

Even for **activities**—the NP activities that they provide in the binder, they're fine, but because we're constantly doing activities in our home visiting, we often use those as well.We do a lot of fun activities like that—and because we do that at our building, it's at our fingertips. But I can see how others without those resources might struggle more with that.

G:

Being with the families, not as an educator but as a parent. If they have the experience that they're teaching about with parents—letting them know where they are. Bring in their own experiences. Trust—if the parents trust in you. Educators trust in themselves enough to do the education.

Finding out if they have any resources to offer. Ask the parents what resources do you have available to you and maybe I could use them.

Drawing the parents in as an educator.

Networking—a sharing circle with all the educators, having a talking circle, sharing how they feel about things. With sharing, everyone takes something back with them. To know where the other parent educators are in their work and their life. It loosens something in them if they can have a sharing circle.

I think **when the parents aren't ready** and they don't show up or if you just have a small number of parents coming in--not feeling really down about it. That was one of my challenges starting out. How am I going to present myself? I'd have a Plan A and Plan B. I learnt in time that I could have a workshop and whoever showed up was who was supposed to show up. If less people came, it was more intimate

In the training, just have on the spot or spontaneous idea and just go with it, especially for the different ethnic groups. Ask them to be ethnic friendly. Because of the work that I do, 2 of my co-workers and I, could identify and present about how the work we do goes with MTM. You could look at what agencies people are coming from (and have people from different agencies present on cultural groups they work with).

It worked out really well.

Be **ethnic friendly**. Canada is so multicultural. I'm fortunate to be first nations, so there's a lot that I incorporate. I just incorporate a cultural component. Teachings after each lesson.

H: I think the most challenging thing for me is in **group situations**—when there's... stuff is triggered for people in the group. When it gets uncomfortable. With MTM, you reflect on your own history as a child being raised by our parents—some people have a traumatic history, that can be a challenge. Dealing with disclosures, people having emotional stuff presenting in the group. Or for people, they can be quite challenging and you don't have the answer to their problem—that can be really undermining for young facilitators.

Now I'm fine with that, I get that I'm not supposed to have all these answers.

Also, those **counseling skills, those soft skills**. There's not a lot of time spent on that.

Probably be good to role play those types of scenarios- What would you do in this scenario? Even just to brainstorm it if they don't want to be put on the spot.

You have a client who says they had this exp. Growing up or you have a client who says they're okay with spanking and they think it's fine.

That was quite tricky when I was younger.

Appendix C: Training Prescriptions

from Parent Educators

**(as compiled by Constant Contacts from
2 open-ended questions in the survey)**

What kind of training (knowledge or skills) do you wish you could have received before leading your first parent groups?

review of developmental stages
adult learning
more family systems work

Nobody's Perfect is an excellent course. Early Childhood Education crash course
More hands-on experience
practice sessions and feedback
flo-chart; list of thing to do or learn

guide to be great facilitator
counselling, cultural diversity, medicine wheel
how to organize it

If only experience could be taught in courses! I don't think any amount of training can fully prepare someone for leading parenting groups, you just have to jump in and do it, and learn from what is successful and what isn't.
information on icebreakers and energizers. also training and information on different ways individuals learn and how to address those styles as a facilitator.

haven't led one yet
workshops about referral and other services useful for parents of young children, more knowledge about cultural diversity of newcomers,

ability to play on one musical instrument, getting wiser..
not applicable/ this is my first time experience
group dynamics
more about how to encourage fathers to be involved
Group facilitation
Program background and theories like this course for trainers that I'm taking right now.
More role-play
Dealing with different socio-economic status; dealing with abuse
I need to know the curriculum
How to manage group dynamics

How to work with parents with literacy or ESL
I am new and could better answer after having led a session
build up experiences
How to remain impartial

Refocus negativity
Basic skills to run a mother goose program
keep group interested
Planning and structuring groups,

learn activities that would encourage experiential learning
how to lead a group of parents who have FASD
Discipline workshops

Facilitating workshops
Ice breaker training

Mild Counsellor Training

Support Training
Facilitating
Nobody's Perfect (I took it after already doing the groups for more than a year)
Ice Breakers, creating and maintaining emotionally safe environment

What areas do you think are essential for new parent educators to receive training in?

Child development---depends on background for other training.
conflict resolution; re-channeling and not getting "pulled into a situation"
how to deal with problems
growth and development children

group process
All
Practical time in darycares, working with children
Different communication styles and learning needs

cultural sensitivity
Control and adequate resources

Funding for neighborhood house, etc. Community kitchen, etc.
Literacy
organization and keeping interest
Learning styles and philosophies

Group dynamics
information on how individuals learn and different ways of teaching the same material.
Facilitating groups/ keeping control of discussion yet allowing fluidity

knowledge about family dynamic in our diverse society, interpersonal and communication skills
conflict resolution

group dynamics
cultural sensitivity, planning sessions
adult learning cycles/models, active listening

effective speaking, monitoring/recognizing values and assumptions
Cultural ((if working with) Aboriginals), substance use, sexual abuse (Little Warriors)
Guidelines---new knowledge and practical experience
Learning to listen and respond affectively to the group
Fundamental development of the family as a unit.

Different parenting approaches
Course content and communication skills
Learning about stages of their child growing
Implementing creative activities to promote learning in parents (ie. teach to different learning styles in fun creative ways)
not sure yet
Any areas where they hope to settle down in New Country
How to teach their babies to learn
MG
Planning and structuring groups,

learn activities that would encourage experiential learning
Learning to build on parents' strengths
cultural differences especially First
Nation

working with brain damaged parents
(FASD)
Mental Health and addiction issues
FASD
Conflict resolution

Depression and coping techniques
Mild Counsellor Training
Home Visiting Training
Infant Development Training
Child Development Training
Cultural Awareness
Child growth and development
everyday parenting questions, ages and
stages
How to develop rapport and trust

Appendix D: Responses to Foundational Course Idea “covering group facilitation and adult learning”

1: I think it's fine. As with any type of coursework, how do you get them to be able to be away from the worksite to be trained? I'm making some assumptions about what you guys are doing.

Likelihood of sending staff:

I think it would depend—what the course material is, what they're actually going to learn. Group facilitation for sure, most people don't come with training in that. The topics, however, are more specific to everyone—each agency, person. More generalized training in group facilitation I would be interested in.

7: Hurry up!!

8: I certainly think its...parent educators need some training, yes. I think having something that is tailored to that audience would be helpful. I think it's challenging, the part around funding and in the climate we've got now—it's a real transition phase, different philosophies with FRPs we've been running for years, now Strong Starts, possibly Full day kindergarten. Field is feeling very uncertain right now for a lot of people.

9: I would be interested in sending staff, but—don't know how I could fund their time.

13:

I don't know about that. Everybody's a bit different. Our HV work part-time—they do facilitation all the time. For us I don't know that that's as necessary. They've had all these trainings that cover it. Facilitation and how to present this is a big part of those trainings.
It's going to be so different in each community –client centered

14: I think it would depend on where it's offered, what the fees are. I think some of the staff that are newer, they could benefit, but some of the staff, have worked for 4 years, it would be redundant.

15: I think that would be great. I think we'd all benefit—lots of time we could all benefit by learning new styles, new ideas. When working with a new facilitator, it's nice to go to the training together.

I think it's wonderful because then people would be all on one pages, get some extra training too. Might pertain more to family resource programs, you're doing all those things, help support them in their job.

F: I think foundation training is good. I think its one that everyone should go to. Like I know agencies are continually having new staff. Like the HV training and NP I think its an awesome one. I recommend it everyone, whether they're going to teach it or not—it applies anything in life. I use the problem solving in my postpartum group. I think it would be too intensive to combine them, but I think if people are going into homes they should do the HV one.

Appendix E: Barriers to Training

1: Richmond

Cost.

Time away from the agency/work actually doing the job.

3: Kelowna

Finances. That's the biggest thing and access. If it's held in lower mainland, for us to get there it's just really expensive.

Time—no, we can make that happen.

4: Kitimat

Distance.

Travel costs are horrendous.

Family dynamics at home, babysitters. They need a lot of support in that.

Isolation and distance. Lots of courses we'd love to see. We do take part of anything that's up north, and that's not Prince George. We do go to Prince George also.

.....then if a training comes up. That's probably the biggest stumbling block. If we send someone down for a BCCF course-- we sent someone last year for a 4 day training in Kelowna—we paid for the training, hotel, flight. Probably \$500. If someone is interested, we probably wait 6 months to make sure they like it before we would send them. We just don't have the ability to do it all the time. It's expensive. We do offer training as often as we can for all our workers.

We're choosy on the conferences and what they can get out of it. We do teleconferences when they're available and partner with the hospital

They can go to college at night if they want, it's an hours drive from Kitimat and it's in the winter, there's usually snow.

We often see offerings from BCCF and I think, I'd like to go to that, but not for a half-day. We'd like to see them offer more up north, and do things in Prince George, but that's still expensive—7 hours.

For every program we have at least one training they can go to. We do have a lot of in-house core training too. We send them out if there's something they're interested. It could be something like Fetal Alcohol because that may be their stumbling block and do some more specialized training in that. That is one of the things we really work on.

5: Prince Rupert

Funding. Here they would have to travel to Vancouver or another centre quite often.

Have to close the program for them to attend trainings.

6: Abbotsford

Because they're facilitating groups, a lot of training is while they're working. M-F evening daytime, but don't want to attend on Saturdays.

Cost

Travel time

7: Prince George

Time is a big one. Money is another big one.

8: Nanaimo

Ohhhh, funding.

Availability—how, when and where its delivered.

Access

How they manage it around their own family needs.

How much time is involved—what kind of commitment are we looking for? 2 days every 6 months or 2 days every week. Fitting it with work family balance?

9: Vancouver

Finances

Hours—reimbursement. But you cannot please everybody. You can only offer the training at certain hours and if you had funding, you would offer it at different hours—there are no hours that would be perfect for everyone

I don't have means to send my staff to 2 or 3 day trainings because the fee is 300-7 or 8000 dollars. Those are intense trainings. It's not only about the fee, but also the reimbursement about the hours they attend. They have to take additional hours to attend. If it's a 2.5 hour workshop, they are required to rearrange the schedule, but if it's 2 or 3 day training, I have to pay them and I don't have the money. I have to rely on free or low-cost workshops, just to enhance the skills of the family support works.

10: Kaslo

Funding and distance and availability of courses

Rural agencies especially ones in north, remote 1-2 hours drive really prefer those options where it can be concentrated time on the phone or whatever. It won't happen because of funding.

...the problem with us is that we need to have a budget of \$1200 per person to get people to the coast. Our counseling and administration people get that but we can't do it for our 4 hour people. We see the webinar with BCCF, but NP is happening in Kelowna, it's a 5 hour drive, cuts the bill in half and it's at least a 1 if not 2 night stay. It's a lot of money Ends up being 6-12 hundred dollars: 600 for Kelowna, 1200 for Vancouver. There is a possibility of us doing that when we run 2 NP programs,extra money in our pool....

Money. What are they making when they're working?
Don't have funding for professional development for those folks.

11: Sechelt

Cost and time—expensive for us because of the ferry. Sometimes the times that they start doesn't work for us. If group starts at 8:30 am—it means that people would have to get up at 5 to get the 6:20 ferry—then sit for an hour and half. Having workshop start at 9:30 if it's a day workshop, that's a better use of our time.

12: Port Moody

Time—each position is pretty unique—if program coordinator isn't at drop-in we don't have a backup—we tend to be careful about when they attend training so it doesn't take away from program delivery

Tight funding.

Being able to pay them for the time to take the training.

Sometimes it's that training isn't available in our community—more around time than anything. Training in Vancouver that's half day becomes full day with the commute.

Having training nearby would be helpful

13: Hundred Mile House

Time—because they work part-time

Cost

Geographic location—access

We get \$300 each for training—can't even get to Kamloops. When training is paid for and we get to just come, that's great.

Cost of training. Access to it. Also, all our HV are part-time. If it takes a week to do training, that could be three of their weeks—with travel, etc.

But its one of our strongest values—having skills and education to do the work

14: Abbotsford

I think there's always where courses are being offered. For some staff it's a long ways to go into Vancouver—might mean staying in a hotel. Some live in Chiliwack and Aggaiz-Harrison, Mission.

Finding the funds to pay for their training time, course fees

We only get a certain # of days for professional development

.....
Additional training/support for new staff:

When do you think additional training would be most useful for newer parent educators?

Realistically, we don't have time for that. We have to hit the road moving.

I guess, when you're starting a new group, when working with new materials.

The way our contracts are set up there isn't is a lot of extra time or money for it

Most staff do a lot of other things besides run groups.

Lots of on-the-job learning, modeling, co-facilitating—9 staff.
Depends on how comfortable they are with the materials.

15: Aldergrove

We get certain amount of training dollars—sometimes it would be nice to do more, but its hard for families for people that work to say, I want to do more training.

They would go to more if they could.

Financial.

Appendix F: Formats

1: Richmond

 2 day workshop Yes. I'm still pretty old school, a lot of people are still. Want to be face to face to do group interaction. Most expensive but probably the most effective. If I'm going to pay for someone do something, that's what I want them to go to. Workshop atmosphere is a good learning environment.

3: Kelowna

We have to become more comfortable with webinar, online stuff that's self-directed can be good, gives people flexibility, but you know, if they're brand new, what ever would be next best to face to face- It's good to have dialogue, interaction with people. There's a whole lot of non-verbal stuff that happens that instructor can pick up on, read that class... something that involves at least a couple face to face sessions.

Any one of those modalities could work.

4: Kitimat

 2 day workshop Also good. Good because you get to meet, some people don't like the web because they don't like to talk. Face to face training would be the best, but the rest would work, as good options.

A computer one you could put people on it all the time. Something they could connect to. For new staff. All are good alternatives.

Going to Vancouver is hard.

 Online tutorial (self-paced) Would be good.

 Teleconference training Do it quite often.

 Live web seminar Very good, quite effective. Participate with that quite often.

5: Prince Rupert

 2 day workshop Then we're into the financial cost more and either deciding to close the program or find somebody to take over, which there's almost nobody.

 Online tutorial (self-paced) Yes

 Teleconference training Would work well too

 Live web seminar

 Online video Those would be good.

6: Abbotsford

You're talking to a dinosaur, I would prefer the 2 day training, I think there's a lot of benefit to being in a room with other people. Maybe some of younger staff would like other formats

7: Prince George

- ☐ *2 day workshop* Yes
- ☐ *Online tutorial (self-paced)* Would be good too
- ☐ *Teleconference training* Yeah might be tricky
- ☐ *Live web seminar* Yeah that wouldn't my first preference
- ☐ *Online video* would be good.

We have a small building so having a teleconference getting everyone in would be tricky. I like face-to-face. I like to ask questions. I get flustered with computers. I like the self-directed course and then maybe get together once a week online or something. If you missed one section if it would rotate and you could pick it up later.

8: Nanaimo

- ☐ *2 day workshop* Yep
- ☐ *Online tutorial (self-paced)* That could work for some
- ☐ *Teleconference training* Don't find it terribly effective
- ☐ *Live web seminar* Webinar would be difficult for some of our people. Technology availability
- ☐ *Online video* Hmmm, don't have experience with it. Timing and stuff—if it's stuff that people could open up at their own time, that's good, but I always lean towards being there—can see each other, have interaction.

9: Vancouver

- ☐ *2 day workshop*
- My staff, all of them have English as a second language—some speak it very well, so not very well. A conversational classroom/workshop setting is best for them—can see, listen to instructor, and can ask questions. That would work best for them.

Open Doors to Learning (Windows of Opportunity—Vancouver city wide coalition. Funding from MCFD, United Way as well—they put aside funding each year for free training working for their programs—agencies receiving they funded, but now they opened to front line workers that don't receive that funding but work with parents and children. They offer 6-10- workshops per year. Also put aside funding to reimburse hours for staff), NP Coalition(regional training once per year, one day. Only open to workers who graduated from NP training—more about exchange of experience and group facilitation. Minimal fee (\$25 fee for full day and lunch.).

You've got to make training accessible not only to attendance but to the agencies that send the workers to the workshops.

The time to offer the workshops. Open Doors to Learning—most of training they offer during the year, but not in the summertime, not July nor August. Those the 2 months that people take off and even some programs or agencies are close, but my suggestion would be that BCCF may want to offer at least one training during the summer—so people who

could not attend during the year, could attend. You could just try it once. My staff would be able to attend because summer is the slow time.

Announce it well in advance so people would know and could arrange their schedule.
Need to be interesting and relevant.

10: Kaslo

- ☐ *Online tutorial (self-paced)*
- ☐ *Teleconference training*
- ☐ *Live web seminar*
- ☐ *Online video*

Any of the last 3-4 telephone, online self-paced where travel isn't necessary. It's always good when people can do things that are self-paced. I prefer those options because we don't really have the budget to pay their wages either—if they can do it while their doing planning work that that would be a good thing.

11: Sechelt

I think they're all possibilities—they all could be useful depending on what the topic is.

12: Port Moody

- ☐ **2 day workshop** Probably
- ☐ **Teleconference training** Might be useful—depends on the content. Face to face would be the preference for our staff over web-based delivery.
- ☐ **Online tutorial (self-paced)** Probably not of interest. It would be hard to find the time to do that. Much more of a preference for face to face interaction.

Having shorter more modulized training might be more beneficial—for ECE staff or child care staff. Committing to 2 days is a lot for them to commit to. If possible, half day modules over time contributing to a certificate with different components—more people would be interested and easier for them to send people to that kind of training. If around child development, ages and stages....there might be a first half day with certain fundamentals and another with follow up. If there were people within the Council who could be mobile trainers in many different communities, I think it would really extend that kind of training.

13: Hundred Mile House

I always think *face to face* is much better--all the stuff that happens after hours. It's the most expensive way unfortunately.

To be honest. I have 4 Home Visitors and 3 are really experienced--- in a couple years these guys are going to be retiring, then I'm going to need all the stuff that would possibly in there.

14: Abbotsford

Just only because I've done some myself. I did training through AZ—prior to attending we did *online tutorials and webcasts*. I found those very helpful. You can do it when you have time. No travel fees.

We still had *core training together*—getting together, hearing what others are dealing with. It was really helpful to have the training ahead of time.

Webcasts—not much interaction, you can't see each other, not a lot of discussion that's why I think the face to face interaction is still really important. You don't network the same way online. Though lots of my staff are much younger than me or more tech savvy.

15: Aldergrove

I would say the *2 day workshop*, that would be good. *Maybe the video*, maybe.

I just think that when you're with a group of people, you're getting more when you're with people than when you're on a computer, watching. If I see the person teaching it, I learn better myself that way.

Doing it *self-paced*, I don't know, you might set it aside, maybe not happen.

Trainers

A:

It needs to be a combination. *In person is the best* if you remove all the obstacles (travel, cost, time away from work) because you're teaching something about doing something in person. What happens when you're training is that you're also modeling what you're training them in.

There is real value to the *electronic things supporting a 2 day workshop*—as follow up or an extension of it.

I think if you can't get past the obstacles for person to person training, then self-paced tutorial with checking in with an instructor is good—you're getting feedback from someone. There's someone to moderate, supervise.

The online video is the least useful. It's like reading—not at all interactive. There's no follow up or support—the others at least potentially have someone to follow up and see what you've learned.

B:

___ *2 day workshop* For the personal interaction, group setting, the trainer can see skill levels—you can't get that through media. Actual facilitation and interacting with people needs to be personal.

___ *Online tutorial (self-paced)* Could be used around basic knowledge

C:

___ *2 day workshop*

I have been to trainings such as Nobody's Perfect, the direct connection with other people is important, seeing others who work in the same field

I like the online training idea, but I think it would be better later on, maybe once they have already worked together. At least the initial one should be in person. People prefer that personal contact for learning content.

D:

I'm not interested in any of them. As coordinator, I want the program to flourish. There is so much need for follow up work once people get started.

Our training is quite good and sought after. I wouldn't want there to be a preliminary training. I would be afraid that it wouldn't.....It's important to me that people start off gradually in training with relationships there (not just ice breakers). I want the way people get to know each other to be there through the theory of the program, linking theory and practice.

It's a world of difference when someone comes in as a confident leader. My question is how do you provide support to help them get there---need for more practice and training is.....I don't trust any of the 5 formats to provide that. Program offering (should) provide support, mentoring, someone with more experience

What I see needed more than introductory training is more follow up and more support for the organizing agency. For instance, if the supervisor has also attended the training. Otherwise, people attend the training, but don't get how everything works. They need informed support at the local level.

It's more of a challenge than getting teachers who are ready to get started.

E:

Online video Like that idea, but also the 2 day trainings.

BCCF is so much more proactive and tangible in the trainings they've been offering, it's just been wonderful. The key difference—it used to only be ECE trainings, and now there's more for working with adults and family support work. It's becoming more clear to me, for ECE there's really different skills when working with the adults as well. Because the work is not well paid and the hours can be short, you get ...sometimes it's hard to find people with experience. (once they get in they never leave). It can be hard to get new blood. Sometimes you just hire anyone who applies—just nice people. Some have the philosophy that nice people can't do any harm—I don't agree—people are looking for an expert sometimes. A family support worker may say something in passing that can be harmful for the family looking for expert answers. It can be dangerous to have inexperienced people who don't know the big picture.

I doubt you can teach interpersonal skills online. In terms of a video, it would be something that could only accompany experiential learning. I don't see any better way to learn that than to do it, have people watch you and learn, or watch other people do it. When I lead NP trainings and we do the mock groups, they get the feeling of what it would be like to be in a NP group and be triggered by other people's stuff. I don't think support work can be taught any other way.

I've been taught in theory and in experiential learning.

If it was only 2 days, it would have to be largely experiential. Because you mostly get people from ECE field with no experience at all with sitting up on a pedestal with parents (because that's where they keep putting us)...and not realizing. Being nice just doesn't cut it.

F:

I think for our area the things that would work would be *online self-paced* or the *teleconference*, we do that up here.

Or the 2 day workshop.

Like in our area it's very expensive to leave and go take the training, so if there was a way to not have to leave the community to receive the training. And I think having it available frequently as a training opportunity, that would be good. I know for our agency this year, we have no training budget. Recognizing that agencies can't send people sometimes, but having other options available would be great.

G:

I think the *self-paced* is good and the *2 day workshop*. If it's too lengthy they may not have the time to do it. In that one, one would mention this was a longer training, because its time sensitive, we've put it into 2 days.

H:

You need that interactive you know. It's really hard to pick up and travel from the north. But that interaction is vital. So whichever has interaction but you don't have to leave home would be the best—*web conferences*.

What would be important—you definitely need it if people don't already have a background in it. I think you definitely need interaction, that group thing going on, that group experience. Online by your self isn't adequate.

Appendix G: Timing of Training

When do you think additional training would be most useful for newer parent educators?

1: Annual training is important. If you can schedule training and make it part of you infrastructure—more structured, cost effective. I schedule in all of our training, staff know when to expect it. Regularly scheduled straining if affordable is great.

2: Closer to time they're actually going to do it. We offer group facilitation as an in-service. Look through manual before, on growth and development and then also to actually sit in on another group with an experienced nurse, maybe lead group with another person present (8-12 weeks long) and then actually do it.

Some people are uncomfortable in groups. We don't have a specific course on educating parents. Nurses come with experience, usually anyway.

8: I think it's helpful for them to have someone to go to to ask questions (mentor) and then after about 6 months out doing it, and have an idea of the issues that they're coming across and can articulate that a little more

9: From October to November

I would like to see them after the first several weeks (that would be too overwhelming). From the second month to 3rd or 4th month'

10: Initially, we do an orientation as to parent profile, what kinds of cases we have. For parent education programs it's somewhat the same. Often the person whose had the job will train them. Of course we send them to NP. We get people to whatever is available when we can afford it.

About 4 months in, when reality has hit, it would be good to have another. "What's happening for you?"

14: Realistically, we don't have time for that. We have to hit the road moving. I guess, when you're starting a new group, when working with new materials. The way our contracts are set up there isn't is a lot of extra time or money for it

Most staff do a lot of other things besides run groups.

Lots of on-the-job learning, modeling, co-facilitating—9 staff.

Depends on how comfortable they are with the materials.

E: Hmm.....I think annually is good thing. This has become way more sophisticated than it used to be. National Conference—AGM for NP—business in morning and then

workshop in the afternoon. The trick is, I think, for people to be able to attend. Unfortunately it's the people that need to attend that can't attend. It needs to come from the top down that if there's an NP meeting in your region, your NP group should be cancelled so you can attend. You see the same people all the time. Management needs to be more encouraging and supportive of staff attending.

(because people only get to go to the initial training and don't get to check back in with how to utilize it...) I have seen horrific uses of NP curriculum—the nurse said “And of course you'll all get your kids immunized” That's not what NP is about!

When should they get training? They should all be able to, it should come from the very top, that anyone leading groups should attend training—need to cancel their group that week and add a day onto group. I think it should be annual.

We miss a lot, those ECE folks in family resource centres miss all kinds of trainings and they're the ones who need it.

F: I think foundation training is good. I think its one that everyone should go to. Like I know agencies are continually having new staff. Like the HV training and NP I think its an awesome one. I recommend it everyone, whether they're going to teach it or not—it applies anything in life. I use the problem solving in my postpartum group. I think it would be too intensive to combine them, but I think if people are going into homes they should do the HV one. Like in our area it's very expensive to leave and go take the training, so if there was a way to not have to leave the community to receive the training. And I think having it available frequently as a training opportunity, that would be good. I know for our agency this year, we have no training budget. Recognizing that agencies can't send people sometimes, but having other options available would be great.

G: After making their decision if this is what they want to do, allow them to sort it out. It's never to late to learn. I started this when I was 45.

Appendix H: Challenges for Parent Educators

1: Getting that education is a barrier. You get thrust into the job, where do you get that education?

And how to make that stuff available to parent educators?

And there's always the funding part of it. The contract from MCFD doesn't cover training. It comes down to finances, who do you get to that training?

2: I think parents are so inundated with so much info—cultural, parenting styles, internet, and there's many different parenting styles, one challenge is deciding what are we recommending—what would be the best practices. We are into health promotion—eating, exercise, finances, poverty.

Coming up with a set of ...we do hand out recommendations from Ministry of Health Prenatal-6 months, 6m-toddler, try to be consistent with those guidelines, other reputable resources. Which resource do we use? Is one of the hardest things.

5: Because of the generally low salary level, people come with not much training.

7: Money to provide childcare and transportation is a big one.

9: With ECE staff the challenge is not having enough hours to debrief. Not enough hours to improve quality of services that they could offer to the parents. Many ECE workers are part-time and work more than 1 job. The stress of having multiple jobs they have to handle. They are focused on each program—(the stress) is less than if one worker works for one program. I try to really support them with being flexible with their hours, try to find funding to support them for extra hours and finding the trainings to attend.

Diversity of skills needed for this job (FSW)—need certain set of skill for mainstream program, but those working with immigrant and refugees need more skills, need knowledge in integration, community resources—a very important component. Clients coming saying “I need to know where to go for my children, where to go for myself, for employment, ESL, recreation of families....” There are a lot of questions from them. Workers need to have information for them and referrals to provide for them.

If they speak the language of the clients, they need to have connection with that culture—need to be involved in that community. They need to attend meetings that FSW working for mainstream programs wouldn't need to go.

11: Since parent groups are a small part of what we do, I think the challenges for any services are low funding, large caseloads and waiting lists. And now there are increased stresses on families with the economy. In terms of groups—it's small community. We know there's a need, we put on groups, but don't get many people coming.

We have found 2 that work—offering groups for couples and My Tween and Me—nice preventative group. A lot people in crisis don't want to come to a group. I think you have to be fairly middle class and comfortable to come to a group, especially in small town. More preventative groups seem to be less of a threat—more people come.

Offer parenting after separation—more education.

13: Cost of training. Access to it. Also, all our HV are part-time. If it takes a week to do training, that could be three of their weeks—with travel, etc.
But its one of our strongest values—having skills and education to do the work

14: Getting the people that need the groups to come to the groups. None of ours are mandated. We're lucky that everyone that comes, chooses to come. Sometimes we get referrals (and they could really benefit) but they don't come—childcare, motivation, lots of reasons they don't attend.

We offer classes at different times to try to offer something that works for everyone.

Trainers

C: Some people have lots of experience. They do know how to work with parents, maybe they don't see themselves as experienced people, but don't recognize it as professionalism

I try at the training to recognize it, telling them, "You know your stuff." They like that, but maybe at other programs they don't do that. But they come with 3-4 years experience
Maybe its standardization? Recognition of their profession-- they've asked if there is a certificate for parent educators.

D: Massive organizational challenges—this field is so vastly underdeveloped and under funded. We have passion and ideas that are huge and resources that are small. People go into situations without sufficient development, support along the way.

F: I think it would be having an agency that's very supportive and have a co-facilitator that you feel balanced with.

When I started out, I was from one agency and the other 2 facilitators came from another agency. We came from different areas. We weren't' balanced. One was super strong and I was new, it was hard to find times to meet and prepared. They'd have to struggle through and find a system that works for them.

Appendix I: Other Areas for Potential Leadership by the Council

Resources the Council could compile:

2: It would be really good to have some kind of an inventory of parenting programs by different agencies—just as a resource, to refer parents to. There doesn't seem to be one register for parent education. We would really use that, especially if it's by location.

3: It's an exciting and dynamic field. They're starting to put out research that helps us in best practice ways—what really works.Education for staff vs. supervisors—would be so good to have a conduit of information, a clearinghouse.

9: If we have a clearer training agenda of level 1, 2 and 3, in a year we would provide to level 1 to new workers and the upper levels later.

I would like to see more planning in providing training, not just group facilitation. I think its time for us to look beyond providing basic training to workers. With different areas we could go to a deeper level.

Teaching or Leading on how to better support staff:

12: Mentoring with more experienced people. For example, we've had two new Nobody's Perfect facilitators this year and several Mother Goose trainees and so we intentionally teamed them with someone who had done it for a number of years—support from experienced. That's something we do a lot.

11: One thing that I think would be really beneficial—getting together all these people that work in the area together once a year—very affirming, a bit of a change, we haven't had that in years. Being able to brainstorm and hear what folks are doing. They promised a couple of years ago that they were going to do it and I haven't heard anything about it.

D: What I see needed more than introductory training is more follow up and more support for the organizing agency. For instance, if the supervisor has also attended the training.

Support of Childminders:

6: We offer childcare with each of our groups and with our childcare groups we like to use the format that we're using with the parents—all the skills we use with the children (I messages, telling them what we want them to do rather than what not to do). I think that training for those group facilitators with the children—I have no trainings to send them to. I would love to see something offered for the childcare workers. They're working with children with high behavioral needs.

12: We're looking at ...couple of other agencies with casual child minders....because they don't have ECE training, we've tried to support the work they do with our more

experienced staff—support work, ideas for activities, We're looking at how to do more bridging or laddering between those activities. More training or support for our staff that don't have it—we don't have much budget , but we'd like a bit more time to do workshops for those frontline workers, would come down to the topics that you shared earlier.

Appendix J: Additional Comments from Manager and Trainers

2: It would be really good to have some kind of an inventory of parenting programs by different agencies—just as a resource, to refer parents to. There doesn't seem to be one register for parent education. We would really use that, especially if it's by location.

3: As a supervisor I feel that I'm often flying by the seat of my pants, not very supported. I'm offsite from my colleagues as a public health nurse. I feel a lot of responsibility on program development. There is not a lot of continuity in the program around the province....so we have acquired over the years a number of resources.

UBC Infant mental health part of summer institute from York
Elements that would be awesome for home visiting—look at that program and tweak it to really tailor it for home visiting. Based on IMH course from York University.

Infant mental health from Toronto . sickkids.ca/imp type in competencies for
practice 120 hour certificate.

You know, back to the group parent facilitators piece—group facilitation like the theory they do for NP, it's a really critical part. We talked about family systems and family theory, didn't we?

One of things I really like about Growing Great Kids that we could do a better job of with families—the component of coaching. How do you coach and how do you help people identify their strengths and build on them?

BC Women's Hospital – booklet available online –self help guide. Self Care Program for women with postpartum depression and anxiety. Using cognitive behavior therapy—understanding about things like CBT and how to use in a coaching kind of way—blending of those skills together. The booklet is not meant to be just handed to people. PPD groups or nurses work through this.

Mental health is a huge piece.

It's that social connectedness piece, but that's not training. Getting people connected to community.

Teen parents have unique needs—understanding adolescent growth and development and strategies specific to working with teens. 0-3 in US publishes a magazine with the same name, they have resources for working with teen mums, needs some updating, its getting a bit old, but as soon as we say teen parent it begs a bunch of other questions—why is this teen girl a parent—often there's whole history that lies underneath. Opening a Pandora's box that speaks to whole to a bunch of things we've already covered.

It's an exciting and dynamic field. They're starting to put out research that helps us in best practice ways—what really works. For so many years we were intuitive, emotionally driven, which, at least we were right on about relationships.

We know with Motivational Interviewing, 4 sessions with MI is as effective with long-term work one-on-one. We're starting to see results.

Another program, Supporting Security in Ontario. I think it's at Sick Kids .

Education for staff vs. supervisors—would be so good to have a conduit of information, a clearinghouse...

Long-term studies in states with young parents in school, daycare connected to school and also home visiting---Perry Preschool Project. Over 30 years studies, those children have better education, lower encounters with law, etc.

We know certain components that would facilitate that, now we need to train people how to deliver that kind of service.

5: Make sure what certification is given can be transferable to the colleges or is given through the colleges. It could build for the participants, whether they want to go into counseling, childcare or education.

If they come up with their own training and it doesn't link up with others, I think the better thing to do would be to have it through colleges or distance education so it keeps working for the students.

8: I certainly think its...parent educators need some training, yes. I think having something that is tailored to that audience would be helpful. I think it's challenging, the part around funding and in the climate we've got now—it's a real transition phase, different philosophies with FRPs we've been running for years, now Strong Starts, possibly Full day kindergarten. Field is feeling very uncertain right now for a lot of people.

9: I would say more **about group facilitation, but not the basic level**. I think what is lacking out there is someone to provide Level 2 group facilitation. What I observe that there is not much discussion, but we must decide between level 1 and level 2. I don't participate in the discussion, I don't know what has been said.

If we have a **clearer training agenda of level 1, 2 and 3**, in a year we would provide to level 1 to new workers and the upper levels later.

I would like to see more planning in providing training, not just group facilitation. I think its time for us to look beyond providing basic training to workers. With different areas we could go to a deeper level.

Well, I understand that BCCF has taken the lead for **fathering programs**. That is the role that I think BCCF should continue to do. In my program we have a fathering program I really want there to continue to be a network that my staff and I could participate in.

11: What has been helpful is the publications that we can give to our families—parent handouts, pamphlets and so forth.

All of us attended a half day on physical discipline—part of a package—3 separate topics on 3 separate days—felt like they had to make a big exception for us to just come to the first. They had the latest knowledge on the damage from physical violence.—really had to pursue and advocate to be able to just attend the one—just if they could try to be more flexible with training offering.

If they are going to do other trainings—try to have it be more like Bagels and Babble format—9:30 -11:30- great breakfast and you could attend just for the half day. Cost about \$25 different keynote speakers. Different topics (Dale Trimble talking about working with violent men—you can get into stuff even just in a half day)

12: I was thinking that I know the BCF has done a lot around **Father Involvement Network**. And involving dads in caring for children, seeing selves as having role. That would be another topic that would be interesting for us.

In terms of program delivery—partnering with local planning committees might be very successful collaboration—tri cities ECD committee has chosen a couple of trainings each year for people in front line work. Get together to plan—LEAP BC came in, very successful because provides training, additional training resource, allows them to network—pretty rare that people get that opportunity. If the BCCF had someone like Beth to come in and do additional MG training with the people here, parents are asking about MG or more advanced training. Someone from council to training trainers or more advanced training.

We get together to plan what we'd like and then the Council sends in someone to share more materials, that might help with your work.

We're looking at ...couple of other agencies with casual childminders....because they don't have ECE training, we've tried to support the work they do with our more experienced staff—support work, ideas for activities, We're looking at how to do more bridging or laddering between those activities. More training or support for our staff that don't have it—we don't have much budget, but we'd like a bit more time to do workshops for those frontline workers, would come down to the topics that you shared earlier.

13: Just that as I said, I think **face to face with all the HV, all the FSW would be really great**. The Council's previous ED had said they would do it. They took over some funding (Building Blocks contract)—I thought they were going to organize a conference and bring everybody down. Then David organized the HV program and maybe that's where it went.

The HV has less support in BC than other provinces. Don't have teleconferences anymore **Don't even know who the other programs are anymore**. It would be nice to have more contact in anyone's spare time. Everyone's running off their feet.

One thing that I think would be really beneficial—getting together all these people that work in the area together once a year—very affirming, a bit of a change, we haven't had that in years. They promised a couple a of years ago that they were going to do it and haven't heard anything about it
To brainstorm and hear what folks are doing.

14: The whole idea of **more challenging behaviors**—Partnerships program through Ministry for trainer. They tend to be offered and then not offered again.

Frustrating for managers to find trainings for new staff.

If something's online with that competency based approach—then you can plug into it at any time.

It should say, what are the prerequisites for this course. If you already done this this and this, probably not for you, but if you're brand new this is for you . Rating courses.

C: Basically, we all talk about this here, how to make things interactive and fun. We try to do that with our trainings, not just sitting down, working through the delivery of it. Just make it fun and I think adults will remember more from that. Just how we notice how people react. That would be my suggestion.

There are lots of requests for how to work with at-risk families or how to work with multi cultural families. Lots of people want to, need to learn about that, they don't have any training. The other thing is how to work with difficult clients, mandated clients who don't want to be there.

E: Because I've done so many groups and there's been adequate and excellent **child care**. The success of the group is really affected by the quality of the childcare. Should be acknowledged in training—have good communication and training with care givers. Sometimes you have kids coming and going, and others where there is never a need for a kid to come in. You can go to great depths in a support group if kids aren't coming.

F: I think they put out a great training and the information they put out is really good. I'm a firm believer in the HV training and NP. I would just like to see that that info continues to be available.

Appendix K: Educational Offerings

Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and Workshops relating to
Group Facilitation, Adult Education or Parent Education

Vancouver Community College/Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development

- Train the trainer certificate
- Instructor training certificate
- Provincial Instructor diploma
- Instructional Skills Workshop Program
- Facilitator Development Workshop Program
- Native Adult Instructor Diploma Program

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved/>

Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) Program

The ISW is a workshop designed to enhance the teaching effectiveness of both new and experienced educators. One or two peer facilitators lead this 24-30 hour workshop for small groups. Offered around the province at post-secondary campuses.

Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW) Program

The FDW is a five-day training event that prepares experienced faculty to lead the Instructional Skills Workshops. The FDW participants refine their teaching techniques through the mini-lessons and, with guided practice and feedback, develop strategies for facilitating the group process.

ISW and FDW contact Roseanne at VCC
604-443-8313, rashworth@vcc.c

Native Adult Instructor Diploma Program (NAID)

NAID provides learners with skills and training related to instructing Native adults. Applicants must have completed Grade 12 or equivalent, or obtain special admission by the NAID program coordinator. Students are required to complete six 30-hour modules and a 20-hour practicum. Contact (NAID):

Verna Billy-Minnabarriet

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

Tel: 250-378-3381

Email: vbilly@nvit.bc.ca

The Provincial Instructor Diploma Program provides new instructors with the competencies needed to design, manage and evaluate the instruction of adults in post-secondary education, business, industry and non-traditional adult learning environments. It also provides instructors with an accredited development program leading to diplomas and degrees at Vancouver Community College and other institutions. Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to design Curriculum, plan lessons, select activities, conduct classroom instruction in various environments, deal with individuals and groups effectively, assess learning and evaluate student performance, as well as assess course and instructor effectiveness.

The program consists of six 30-hour courses, and a practicum. On successful completion of the program, graduates are awarded the British Columbia Provincial Instructor Diploma.

The program is delivered by Vancouver Community College on behalf of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education. The PIDP is recognized by public and private colleges and institutes. Courses are offered throughout British Columbia on a regular basis. <http://www.instructordiploma.com/webpages/content.cfm?contentID=5>

Vancouver Community College

Diploma in Adult Education provides advanced skills and knowledge in reflective practices, adult development and education, educational technology, educational management, communication skills (especially writing skills), and instructional techniques. Students must complete six core courses and two optional courses. A 3-week practicum is also required.

Applicants for both programs must have completed BC Grade 12 or equivalent and have a proficiency in English.
\$125 to apply. \$ 849 per course.

Justice Institute of British Columbia

Adult Education Certificate. The certificate program is 15 days long, with nine days of required courses and six days of electives. Courses may be taken

individually or as part of the certificate. All courses can be customized for your organization, agency, or group. Full attendance is required. The program must be completed within three years.

Guided by training and education professionals with a background in adult education, you'll learn how to design, deliver, and evaluate creative, effective training sessions and programs. Small class sizes and hands-on teaching practice allow you opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge you acquire.

Contact: Program Coordinator, Centre for Leadership, 604.528.5633 or Program Assistant, 604. 528.5630, or leadership@jibc.ca. Each course is \$ 180-550, usually \$260-375

Trainer Development Certificate Program

The Trainer Development Certificate Program was designed to provide trainers with the core skills and knowledge they need to deliver training in an adult learning environment. Developed with input from trainers in a variety of settings, the program focuses on the core skills and knowledge required to plan and deliver creative, effective training sessions. It also provides opportunities, in the classroom, for participants to apply the skills and knowledge that are the foundation for each course.

The program is designed for both full-time training professionals and persons who provide training as part of their overall job responsibilities within an organization. The program is delivered on site at the Justice Institute of BC, and has contract offerings offsite for various organizations and agencies.

University College of the Fraser Valley

Bachelor of Arts in Adult Education

The UCFV BA in Adult education is designed primarily for people presently working with adult learners. Applicants must have a minimum of three years experience and have acquired a field of practice related to one or more of the following areas: teaching or training adults, development of educational programs for adults, managing of educational programs for adults, or counseling/advising adults.

The program requires the completion of 120 credits for graduation. Up to 90 credits can be completed at other institutions.

Douglas College

Community Support Worker Diploma

Includes classes on understanding families. Found listed on the Credit Transfer website, but never able to locate it.

University of Victoria

Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education (CACE)

CACE is an exciting professional development program for those responsible for helping adults learn. The Certificate is jointly developed and delivered by the University of Victoria, University of Alberta, University of Saskatchewan and University of Manitoba.

Applicants must have completed Grade 12 and have three years of experience related to adult education. Appropriate and equivalent experience and education will also be considered.

The program may be taken entirely by distance delivery (print materials, with Web conferencing), or on site by summer immersion and workshops. CACE requires the completion of eight courses (four core; 4.0 electives) or equivalent elective credit through workshops.

MEd (Curriculum Studies/Adult Education)

A professional degree for practitioners working in any adult education setting. This is usually a 2-year cohort program, offered in a community with sufficient demonstrated interest during the winter semesters (part-time), and at the University of Victoria during the summer session (full-time).

University of British Columbia

- Adult Education Diploma
- Graduate Student ISW

Graduate Student Instructional Skills Workshop

Participants benefit from practicing skills and sharing ideas in a cooperative environment. You will work closely with peers and trained facilitators (who are themselves UBC graduate students and teaching assistants from across campus). In this supportive atmosphere you will have a chance to begin to develop new teaching skills, to enhance existing skills, and/or to try new and challenging ideas. The workshop consists of teaching practice, theory application, and topical sessions specifically relevant to Teaching Assistants and Graduate Students at UBC. We take a learner-centered approach that may have you looking at your students in a whole new light!

ISWs run for 3 days, from 8:30am-5:00pm each day, or 4 days, from 10:30am - 5:00pm.

Athabasca University (online and distance education)

Program Planning in Adult Ed., Adult Learning Development, and Facilitating Adult Learning are offered in Career Development Diploma

Group Facilitation Workshops

Parent Support Services Initial Facilitator Training Workshop

The Parent Support Services Initial Facilitator Training Workshop helps new volunteers to understand their role and strengthen the knowledge and skills needed to facilitate a Parent Support Circle. The PSS Initial Facilitator Training Workshop is also available to professionals who wish to hone their facilitation skills and learn more about the PSS self help facilitation model. The training workshop places an emphasis on:

- Self-help and co-facilitation model
- Group process
- Stages of group development
- Group mechanics
- Anti-oppressive practice
- Information on child abuse prevention

Training Schedule The Parent Support Services Initial Facilitator Training Workshop is held at least 3 times per year for 2.5 days usually over a weekend.

Training Venues Vancouver, Victoria, Central Vancouver Island, Prince George

Training Cost The PSS Initial Facilitator Training Workshop is FREE to volunteers OR \$350.00 for individuals and/or professionals from community agencies who are interested in participating the training for skill development. The training fee includes a complete training manual with resources, a Facilitator's Handbook, lunches and snacks.

Possibilities Training

Kelowna, BC

Fabulous Facilitation: Refresher for Facilitators of adult or young adult groups

Icebreakers and get-to-know-you games to welcome and warm groups up. Team energizers and group games to spice things up and keep everyone on their toes. New ways to creatively brainstorm with your group. Fast and fun ways to separate people into groups. Tips and tools on how to make the "fundamentals" (ie: the boring stuff!) more fun! Ideas to close groups on a high note that can be adapted for any adult learning situation. **Cost?** \$100/person, including GST

Train the Trainer

This intensive training is designed to provide participants with a wealth of training ideas to spruce up summer training sessions! Interactive and dynamic, this workshop will give participants many concrete tools that can be implemented directly into new or existing staff training programs. At Possibilities, we believe in "learning-by-doing", and participants can expect to be actively involved in all parts of this workshop. Since participants from many organizations and municipalities attend, the day also offers a wonderful chance to network between organizations. **Cost?** \$50/person, including GST

jocelin@possibilitiestraining.com.

Hollyhock Leadership Insititute

Cortes Island

<http://www.hollyhockleadership.org/programs/programpostingfolder/artoffacilitation/>

Building Blocks of Effective Facilitation

Experiential two-day workshop that introduces you to the basics of effective group facilitation. An intensive classroom session that will teach you how to plan and design your meetings or events, while providing practical tips on supporting groups to make enduring decisions together. Effective facilitation can extend your leadership capabilities and encourage greater effectiveness of the teams within your organization.

This two-day workshop is designed to provide a first introduction to the intricacies of effective group facilitation. At the conclusion of the course, participants will have: a basic toolkit for planning & preparing for meetings, workshops or other events; the foundations of appropriate process design; a basic set of practical skills to help you effectively lead a group of people towards shared decisions on complex subjects.

Material for this course is drawn from our more comprehensive 5-day residential workshop The Art & Craft of Effective Facilitation \$475. (Doesn't look like they're offering the Building Blocks these days)

Facilitating Grassroots Groups \$350-400 4 day workshop

Includes: tools for effective group process, planning and organizing, and “dealing with difficult dynamics.

Another workshop (packaged in four 3-hour workshops) addresses communication skills, problem-solving and decision, effective group development, and power and diversity.

Facilitator's Resource Library. PeerNetBC's lending library includes over 200 books, manuals, toolkits, and reference materials for facilitators and members of peer support or community groups. The library is open to community members by appointment only, as many groups use our resource centre's meeting space. PeerNetBC members may borrow and remove resources, and book our meeting room for peer support or community groups.

The Alfred Adler Centre

The **Certificate program in Parent Education** provides the necessary training for Parenting Facilitators to lead Adlerian recognized Parenting Programs. The training will provide participants with the necessary understandings and practical skills required to effectively lead parenting programs. The program is designed to ensure a high quality of facilitation for the variety of parent populations served within this diverse society.

Training Components: [18 hours and 1.5 credits]

- Introduction to Adlerian Psychology (2 credits)
- Introduction to Basic Principles of Adlerian Parenting (0.5 credit)
- Group Dynamics/Group Facilitation Skills (0.5 credit)
- Basic skills in Adult Education (0.5 credit)
- Planning / Co-leading a parenting program with a Certified Parenting Facilitator

Program Costs: -One time Application Fee of \$150.00 (non-refundable)

-Course and practicum tuition (5 credits @ \$275.00 per credit) = \$1,375.00

Books/materials (approximate) \$80.00

Certification Fee (post-program): *Certified Parenting Facilitator (CPF)* \$200.00

Registration Fee for On-going Status as a *Certified Parenting Facilitator* \$95.00

Windows of Opportunity

Open Doors to Learning Workshops

A variety of workshops are offered throughout the year at various locations throughout Metro Vancouver. Last year some of the topics were: active listening, attachment and bonding, talking with parents/caregivers about difficult topics, dealing with parent/caregiver disclosure, child abuse, early identification, early language development and enhancing well-being.

Workshops are free for our ODL and other FRP facilitators. They have to register through their agencies. Contact: Sanja Sladojevic ssladojevic@yahoo.com

Another unexpectedly helpful resource: The BC Transfer Guide, "Studying Adult Education in BC" section.

<http://www.bctransferguide.ca/program/adulted/credittransfer.cfm>

This site also has a page of helpful links on adult education:

<http://www.bctransferguide.ca/program/adulted/websites.cfm>



September 3, 2009

Addressee Name
Title
Company Name
Town, BC

Dear Supervisor,

We are writing to invite you to participate in a study being sponsored by the BC Council for Families titled: *A Needs Assessment of Parent Educators in British Columbia*. Recent attendance by one or more staff at your agency at a parent educator training offered by the BC Council for Families leads us to believe that you may be interested in participating in this study.

This study aims to better understand the learning needs of family service workers who are seeking training to work with parent groups. Through this study we hope to better understand what kinds of foundational training may be needed by family service workers as they begin working with parent groups and how it might best be offered for them. Your insights about what strengths and gaps in knowledge new and less experienced parent educators bring to your agency are vitally important to this study.

We would like to invite you to share your expertise and views with us through a telephone interview that may be completed in 15-30 minutes. If you are willing to share your knowledge with us through a phone interview, please respond to this email and indicate when we could schedule an interview.

Windows of time currently available are:

Friday, June 5	1-4 pm
Monday, June 8	12-5 pm
Tuesday, June 9	9 am – 5 pm
Wednesday, June 9	8-11 am
Monday, June 15	3-6 pm
Tuesday, June 16	8 am - 5 pm
Friday, June 19	11 am – 5 pm
Monday, June 22	9 am -5 pm
Tuesday, June 23	9 am -5 pm
Wednesday, June 24	9 am -5 pm

More detailed information regarding the study is attached to this email. Should you have questions regarding the study, please contact Shannon McCune Dickerson via phone (1-604-288-7602) or email (shannonupnorth@gmail.com).

Thank You.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Shauna Butterwick & Shannon McCune Dickerson

Principal Investigator: Dr. Shauna Butterwick
Associate Professor
Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia

Co-Investigator: Shannon McCune Dickerson
M.Ed Student
Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia



September 3, 2009

Addressee Name
Title
Company Name
Town, BC

Dear Trainer,

We are writing to invite you to participate in a study being sponsored by the BC Council for Families titled: *A Needs Assessment of Parent Educators in British Columbia*. Your work as a trainer of one or more of the parent educator trainings offered by the BC Council for Families leads us to believe that your insights would be invaluable.

This study aims to better understand the learning needs of family service workers who are seeking training to work with parent groups. Through this study we hope to better understand what kind of foundational training may be needed by family service workers to better prepare them for the trainings you lead and as they begin working with parent groups. Your experiences and opinions about what needs and strengths less experienced parent educators bring to your trainings are vitally important to this study.

We would like to invite you to share your expertise and views with us through a telephone interview that may be completed in 15-30 minutes. If you are willing to share your knowledge with us through a phone interview, please respond to this email and indicate when we could schedule an interview.

Windows of time currently available are:

Friday, June 5	1-4 pm
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Associate Professor
Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia

Co-Investigator: Shannon McCune Dickerson
M.Ed Student
Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia



September 3, 2009

Dear Family Service Worker,

We are writing to invite you to participate in a study being sponsored by the BC Council for Families titled: *A Needs Assessment of Parent Educators in British Columbia*. Your registration for an upcoming parenting program training leads us to believe that your insights would be invaluable.

This study aims to better understand the learning needs of family service workers who are seeking training to work with parent groups. Through this study we hope to better understand what kind of training might best serve those who are working with parents. Your personal experiences and opinions as a front line family service worker are vitally important to this study.

We would like to invite you to share your experiences and views with us through an online survey that may be completed in 7-15 minutes. More detailed information regarding the study is enclosed within. Should you have questions regarding the study, please contact Shannon McCune Dickerson via phone (1-604-288-7602) or email (shannonupnorth@gmail.com).

Thank You.

Sincerely yours,

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Co-Investigator: Shannon McCune Dickerson
M.Ed Student
Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia



September 3, 2009

Addressee Name
Title
Company Name
Town, BC

Dear Family Service Worker,

We are writing to invite you to participate in a study being sponsored by the BC Council for Families titled: *A Needs Assessment of Parent Educators in British Columbia*. Your completion of a parenting program training offered in the last year leads us to believe that your insights would be invaluable.

This study aims to better understand the learning needs of family service workers who are seeking training to work with parent groups. Through this study we hope to better understand what kind of training might best serve those who have more recently begun working with parent groups. Your personal experiences and opinions as a front line family service worker are vitally important to this study.

We would like to invite you to share your experiences and views with us through an online survey that may be completed in 7-15 minutes. More detailed information regarding the study is enclosed within. Should you have questions regarding the study, please contact Shannon McCune Dickerson via phone (1-604-288-7602) or email (shannonupnorth@gmail.com).

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Co-Investigator: Shannon McCune Dickerson
M.Ed Student
Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia



Consent Form

A Needs Assessment of Parent Educators in BC

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Shauna Butterwick
Associate Professor
Department of Educational Studies
University of British Columbia
(604) 822-3897

Co-Investigator:

Shannon McCune Dickerson
M.Ed Student
Department of Educational Studies
University of British Columbia
(604) 288-7602

Purpose of the Study:

The BC Council for Families (BCCF) desires to better understand the current skill and knowledge levels of family service workers across the province. This information may be used in developing a foundational training for newer family service workers. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are either a trainer or supervisor of family service workers, or a family service worker yourself.

The information gathered in this needs assessment will also be used for the graduating essay of Shannon McCune Dickerson, which will become a semi-public document.

Study Procedures:

You have been invited to participate in this study through either a telephone interview. The interview may be completed in 10-30 minutes.

Potential Risks:

You will be asked to share your opinions about your own or others' abilities and experiences as parent educators. As this could be sensitive information, if you choose to participate in a telephone interview, your identity will be kept **confidential**. All notes from interviews will be identified only by code number and kept on a password-protected flash drive which will be stored in the locked cabinet of the co-investigator's office.

No names or personal identification will be used in any reports of the completed study.

Potential Benefits:

Anyone who completes the interview and chooses to give their email address below (which will not be connected with the information they share in the interview) will be included in a drawing for a prize. The winner will be able to choose between \$100 off of a BCCF training or a \$100 gift certificate for any of the publications BCCF offers (training manuals, books, pamphlets, etc.).

Additionally, information collected in this study will be used to determine if and how the BC Council *for* Families will develop a foundational course for newer parent educators. This service may become available for your staff or family service workers that you train.

Contact for information about the study:

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to share more information about this study, please contact Shannon McCune Dickerson at (604)288-7602 or shannonupnorth@gmail.com. Ms. McCune Dickerson is acting both as a researcher affiliated with the university and as a paid consultant for the BC Council *for* Families.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your relationship with the BC Council *for* Families, any of its staff, or program trainers who may be teaching a program connected to the BC Council *for* Families.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Subject Signature

Date

Results from this study will be published in the fall issue of the magazine *Family Connections*. If you do not currently receive this magazine and would like to receive a copy of the fall issue, please provide your name and mailing address below:

Name

Street Address

City

Postal Code

**After signing this form, please fax the second page to the BC Council *for* Families
Attn: Shannon McCune Dickerson
Fax #: (604) 732-4813**



A Needs Assessment of Parent Educators in BC

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Shauna Butterwick
Associate Professor
Department of Educational Studies
University of British Columbia
(604) 822-3897

Co-Investigator:

Shannon McCune Dickerson
M.Ed Student
Department of Educational Studies
University of British Columbia
(604) 288-7602

Purpose of the Study:

The BC Council *for* Families (BCCF) desires to better understand the current skill and knowledge levels of family service workers across the province. This information may be used in developing a foundational training for newer family service workers. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are either a trainer or supervisor of family service workers, or a family service worker yourself.

The information gathered in this needs assessment will also be used for the graduating essay of Shannon McCune Dickerson, which will become a public document available through the UBC library system.

Study Procedures:

You have been invited to participate in this study through a questionnaire. Filling out the questionnaire may take 7-15 minutes.

Potential Risks:

You will be asked to share your opinions about your own or others' abilities and experiences as parent educators. The survey has been designed to allow complete **anonymity** for those who complete it. The information you choose to share in this study will not be connected to any of your personal information.

No names or personal identification will be used in any reports of the completed study.

Potential Benefits:

Anyone who completes either the interview or the online survey and chooses to give their email address (which will not be connected with the information they share in the interview or the survey) will be included in a drawing for a prize. The winner will be able to choose between \$100 off of a BCCF training or a \$100 gift certificate for any of the publications BCCF offers (training manuals, books, pamphlets, etc.).

Additionally, information collected in this study will be used to determine if and how the BC Council *for* Families will develop a foundational course for newer parent educators. This may become available for you, your staff, or family service workers that you train.

Contact for information about the study:

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to share more information about this study, please contact Shannon McCune Dickerson at (604)288-7602 or shannonupnorth@gmail.com. Ms. McCune Dickerson is acting both as a researcher affiliated with the university and as a paid consultant for the BC Council *for* Families. You may also contact Shannon's masters advisor, Shauna Butterwick via email shauna.butterwick@ubc.ca or via phone: 604-822-3897.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your relationship with the BC Council *for* Families, any of its staff, or program trainers who may be teaching a program connected to the BC Council *for* Families.

If the questionnaire is completed, it will be assumed that consent has been given.

Thank you.

Interview Schedule for Managers or Supervisors of Parent Educators

Before calling, fill in the following:

1. Participant Code:
2. Region of BC: Fraser Interior North Vancouver Coastal Vancouver Island
3. How long have you been working with families?
4. What is your job title?
5. How long have you been supervising parent educators?
6. What types of parent support programs do you oversee?
7. How many employees do you supervise?
8. Are you involved in hiring parent educators at your agency?
 - A. What kind of experience do you (or your agency) expect when hiring parent educators?
 - B. What kind of education or credentials do you (or your agency) expect?
 - C. Under what circumstances do you or would you make exceptions to these expectations or requirements?
(What about cases of language or cultural needs?)
9. Does your agency provide for any pre-service training for parent educators? (in-house or external?)
 - A. If so, what kind of training do you provide?

10. What areas are typical strengths that your new parent educators bring to the table (that don't require further training)?

11. What areas do you often see as areas where new parent educators need more training or support?

If unable to think of areas, I will list:

- ☐ Working with adult learners
- ☐ Building on parents' strengths
- ☐ Making program content relevant to parents' lives
- ☐ Teaching to different learning styles (visual, hands-on, etc.)
- ☐ Encouraging discussion
- ☐ Group dynamics (handling dominant learners, resolving conflict, etc.)
- ☐ Adapting to parents with low literacy
- ☐ Cultural sensitivity
- ☐ Providing opportunities to practice new skills
- ☐ Using icebreakers and activities
- ☐ Planning sessions
- ☐ Making referrals to other needed services or supports
- ☐ Responding to questions beyond the course materials

12. What do you see as the greatest challenges for new parent educators?

10. When do you think additional training would be most useful for newer parent educators?

13. What supports is your agency able to offer new parent educators?

- A. What additional supports would you like to be able to offer?
- B. What do you think about the idea of offering foundational course covering topics such as group facilitation and teaching adult learners for newer parent educators?
- C. How likely would you be to enroll new staff in such a training? (or would you expect it to be completed before hiring?)

14. I will read you a list of several other topic areas. Please indicate with a "yes" or "no" if you think training in these areas would be helpful for the staff at your agency (not just parent educators):

Y N Working with high-risk families
 Y N Safety and crisis intervention
 Y N Attachment
 Y N Substance abuse
 Y N Counseling skills
 Y N Domestic violence
 Y N Risk identification
 Y N Parenting skills
 Y N Child development
 Y N Cultural sensitivity
 Y N Family theory
 Y N Reporting and file management
 Y N Screening, assessment & referral
 Other _____

15. Which barriers do you think the parent educators you oversee encounter that prevent them from receiving as much training as they would like or need?

If they need help, I will read the following list and they may indicate which apply:

___ Distance to trainings
 ___ No one to cover for absent staff
 ___ Lack of funding
 ___ Work overload
 ___ Unsure of quality of trainings offered
 ___ Not a financial priority at the agency
 ___ Not a problem at agency
 ___ Other:

16. 10. The BC Council *for* Families is considering the following formats for sharing this foundational course to better prepare new parent educators. I will read you a list of 5 options for the format of a foundational training for new parent educators. Please share with me which formats would be most effective for the parent educators you work with and why:

___ 2 day workshop
 ___ Online tutorial (self-paced)
 ___ Teleconference training
 ___ Live web seminar
 ___ Online video

Which formats would be least useful? (and why)

17. Would sending staff to a training program which offered a certificate or diploma be more attractive than sending them to a program which did not offer them?

18. Do you have any other comments or ideas that you would like to share with us as we consider developing a training program for new parent educators?

Thank you so much for your time. We really appreciate your willingness to share your time and insights with us.

Your email address will be included in a drawing for a prize of \$100 off a BCCF training or any publications available through BCCF.

Results from this needs assessment will be published in the BC Council *for* Families' magazine, *Family Connections*, in the fall. If you do not already receive a copy of the magazine, would you like me to arrange to have the fall issue sent to you?

Interview Schedule for Trainers of Parent Educators

Before calling, fill in the following:

1. Participant Code:

2. Region of BC: Fraser Interior North Vancouver Coastal Vancouver Island

Thank you for being willing to participate in this interview. Information from this interview and others will be used in developing a new foundational training for new parent educators. It is the hope of the BC Council *for* Families that participation in this foundational training will enhance the abilities and participation of new parent educators attending trainings that you lead.

All of your personal information will be kept confidential. I will be the only person to see your name attached with the information you share.

3. How long have you been working with families?

4. What trainings do you teach?

5. How long have you been training parent educators?

6. When training newer parent educators, what skills and areas of knowledge do you typically see them bringing to the table?

7. What areas do you often see as areas where new parent educators need more training or support?

If unable to think of areas, I will list:

- ☐ Working with adult learners
- ☐ Building on parents' strengths
- ☐ Making program content relevant to parents' lives

- ☐ Teaching to different learning styles (visual, hands-on, etc.)
- ☐ Encouraging discussion
- ☐ Group dynamics (handling dominant learners, resolving conflict, etc.)
- ☐ Adapting to parents with low literacy
- ☐ Cultural sensitivity
- ☐ Providing opportunities to practice new skills
- ☐ Using icebreakers and activities
- ☐ Planning sessions
- ☐ Making referrals to other needed services or supports
- ☐ Responding to questions beyond the course materials

8. What do you see as the greatest challenges for new parent educators?

9. The BC Council *for* Families is considering the following formats for sharing this foundational course to better prepare new parent educators for trainings such as the one(s) you lead. I will read you a list of 5 options for the format of a foundational training for new parent educators. Please share with me which formats would be most effective for the parent educators you work with and why:

- ☐ 2 day workshop
- ☐ Online tutorial (self-paced)
- ☐ Teleconference training
- ☐ Live web seminar
- ☐ Online video

Which formats would be least useful? (and why)

10. *When do you think additional training would be most useful for newer parent educators?*

11. Do you have any other comments or ideas that you would like to share with us as we consider developing a foundational training for new parent educators?

Thank you so much for you time. We really appreciate your willingness to share your time and insights with us.

Your email address will be included in a drawing for a prize of \$100 off a BCCF training or any publications available through BCCF.

Results from this needs assessment will be published in the BC Council *for* Families' magazine, *Family Connections*, in the fall. If you do not already receive a copy of the magazine, would you like me to arrange to have the fall issue sent to you?

Family Service Worker Survey

Pre-training

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.
There are 16 questions and it may take you 10-15 minutes to complete.

1. Please mark the area of British Columbia in which you work:

☐ Fraser ☐ Interior ☐ North ☐ Vancouver Coastal ☐ Vancouver Island

2. Indicate the number of years you have been leading parenting groups:

less than 1 year 1-2 years 3 or more years

3. Mark all services that you as an individual currently provide:

☐ Home Visiting ☐ Parent-child Groups ☐ Resource and referral services

☐ Parenting Workshops ☐ Parenting Courses/Groups

☐ Other (please describe): _____.

4. Indicate how you learned your skills as a family services worker (check all that apply):

☐ On the job ☐ Program specific training ☐ School (college or university)

☐ Being guided by more experienced family service worker(s)

☐ Professional development trainings ☐ Other: _____.

5. Highest level of education you have completed:

☐ Some high school ☐ High school ☐ Some post-secondary

☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Graduate Degree

☐ Certificate or diploma ☐ Other _____.

6. List other related certificates or credentials: _____.

7. Type of organization that you work for (check all that apply):

- ☐ Child development centre
- ☐ Family service organization
- ☐ Neighbourhood house/f family resource place
- ☐ Childcare centre or resource referral
- ☐ Infant development program /supported child
- ☐ Community or recreation centre
- ☐ Aboriginal services
- ☐ Immigrant services
- ☐ Other (please explain) _____

8. Mark all languages that you work in:

- ☐ English
- ☐ Farsi
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Punjabi
- ☐ Chinese Mandarin
- ☐ Chinese Cantonese
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Tagalog
- ☐ Other: _____.

The next 3 questions ask about your comfort level with various areas of knowledge or skills. We recognize that many work situations would not require you to tap into all of these abilities.

If you have not yet begun working with parents in group situations, please answer according to how you believe you would feel if you were in leading a group of parents today.

9. When working with parents in group situations, how **prepared** do you feel to address the following? Use this scale to mark the appropriate response to your situation.

1. Not applicable to my work 2. Not very prepared 3. Somewhat prepared 4. Prepared 5. Very prepared

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| A. Early childhood development (ages and stages) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| B. Middle childhood development (7-12 years) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| C. Adolescent development | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| D. Working with parents in groups | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| E. Parent-child relationships | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| F. Working with immigrants/new comers | 1 2 3 4 5 |

10. When working with parents in group situations, how **challenging** are the following areas for you?

1. Not applicable 2. Not challenging 3. Somewhat challenging 4. Challenging 5. Very challenging

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | A. Working with adult learners |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | B. Building on parents' strengths |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | C. Making program content relevant to parents' lives |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | D. Teaching to different learning styles (visual, hands-on, etc.) |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | E. Encouraging discussion |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | F. Group dynamics (handling dominant learners, resolving conflict, etc.) |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | G. Adapting to parents with low literacy |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | H. Cultural sensitivity |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | I. Using icebreakers and activities |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | J. Planning sessions |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | K. Responding to questions beyond the course materials |

11. How **comfortable** would you feel if you walked into a parent group right now and needed to:

1. Not comfortable 2. Somewhat comfortable 3. Comfortable 4. Very comfortable

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 | a. Lead groups of adult learners |
| 1 2 3 4 | b. Create an emotionally safe learning environment |
| 1 2 3 4 | c. Give honest and encouraging feedback |
| 1 2 3 4 | d. Re-channel uncomfortable emotional energy |
| 1 2 3 4 | e. Train parents in new skills |
| 1 2 3 4 | f. Provide opportunities to practice skills |
| 1 2 3 4 | g. Evaluate learners' individual and family growth |
| 1 2 3 4 | h. Share useful community resources with learners |
| 1 2 3 4 | i. Know when learners need to be referred to more intensive interventions |
| 1 2 3 4 | j. Keep the level of sharing and disclosure in class appropriate |

12. What kind of training (knowledge or skills), do you wish you could have received before leading your first parent groups? _____.

_____.

13. What areas do you think are essential for new parent educators to receiving training in? _____.

_____.

14. Which barriers do you think family service workers encounter that prevent them from receiving training in the areas they need or want help with? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Time
- ☐ Appropriate trainings are not offered
- ☐ Trainings do not cover to the depth needed
- ☐ Distance to trainings
- ☐ Insufficient funding
- ☐ Lack of agency support
- ☐ Not knowing about good trainings
- ☐ Trainings are needed in different formats
(online, correspondence, teleconference)
- ☐ Other: _____

15. Please rank the following 5 options for the format of trainings for how preferable and accessible each format would be for you.

1 = Most preferable 2 = Preferable 3 = Somewhat preferable 4 = Less preferable 5 = Least preferable

- ☐ 2 day workshop
- ☐ Online tutorial (self-paced)
- ☐ Teleconference training
- ☐ Live web seminar
- ☐ Online video

16. Imagine that your agency gives you \$100 to spend on training for yourself.
Please rank from 1 to 10 which of the areas below you would make the highest priority.

(1= most money 10= least)

- ☐ Child development
- ☐ Teaching adults
- ☐ Group development
- ☐ Energizing openers and closers
- ☐ Inviting discussion
- ☐ Marketing programs
- ☐ Creating and maintaining emotionally safe learning environments
- ☐ Learning styles and learning theories
- ☐ Constructive conflict resolution
- ☐ Lesson planning

Thank you so much for your time. We really appreciate your willingness to share your time and insights with us.

The next two requests are only to share benefits with you. **The information you enter will not be connected with your responses to the survey above.**

If you would like to be included in a drawing for a prize of \$100 off a BCCF training or a \$100 certificate for any publications available through BCCF, please enter your email address here:

_____.

Results from this needs assessment will be published in the BC Council *for* Families' magazine, *Family Connections*, in the fall. If you do not already receive a copy of the magazine, and would like to see the results, please enter your name and mailing address:

_____.

If you've filled in your personal information,
please detach this sheet from the rest of the survey.

Thank you!

Family Service Worker Survey

Post-training

This survey contains 15 questions and may take 7-15 minutes to complete.

1. Please mark the area of British Columbia in which you work:

☐ Fraser ☐ Interior ☐ North ☐ Vancouver Coastal ☐ Vancouver Island

2. Indicate the number of years you have been leading parenting groups:

less than 1 year 1-2 years (if you have more than 2 years experience,
this survey is not for you, sorry!)

3. Mark all services that you as an individual currently provide:

☐ Home Visiting ☐ Parent-child Groups ☐ Resource and referral services

☐ Parenting Workshops ☐ Parenting Courses/Groups

☐ Other (please describe): _____.

4. Highest level of education you have completed:

☐ Some high school ☐ High school ☐ Some post-secondary

☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Graduate Degree

☐ Certificate or diploma ☐ Other _____.

5. List other related certificates or credentials: _____.

6. Type of organization that you work for (check all that apply):

- ☐ Child development centre
- ☐ Family service organization
- ☐ Neighbourhood house/f family resource place
- ☐ Childcare centre or resource referral
- ☐ Infant development program /supported child
- ☐ Community or recreation centre
- ☐ Aboriginal services
- ☐ Immigrant services
- ☐ Other (please explain) _____

7. Mark all languages that you work in:

- ☐ English
- ☐ Farsi
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Punjabi
- ☐ Chinese Mandarin
- ☐ Chinese Cantonese
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Tagalog
- ☐ Other: _____.

8. When you began working with parents in group situations, how **prepared** did you feel to address the following? Use this scale to indicate what best applies to you.

1. Not applicable to my work 2. Not very prepared 3. Somewhat prepared 4. Prepared 5. Very prepared

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|------------|
| A. Early childhood development (ages and stages) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (circles |
| B. Middle childhood development (7-12 years) | | | | | to mark |
| C. Adolescent development | | | | | in each |
| D. Working with parents in groups | | | | | row) |
| E. Parent-child relationships | | | | | |
| F. Working with immigrants/new comers | | | | | |

9. When you began working with parents in group situations, how **challenging** were the following areas for you?

1. Not applicable 2. Not challenging 3. Somewhat challenging 4. Challenging 5. Very challenging

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | A. Working with adult learners |
| | | | | | B. Building on parents' strengths |
| | | | | | C. Making program content relevant to parents' lives |
| | | | | | D. Teaching to different learning styles (visual, hands-on, etc.) |
| | | | | | E. Encouraging discussion |
| | | | | | F. Group dynamics (handling dominant learners, resolving conflict, etc.) |
| | | | | | G. Adapting to parents with low literacy |
| | | | | | H. Cultural sensitivity |
| | | | | | I. Providing opportunities to practice new skills |
| | | | | | J. Using icebreakers and activities |
| | | | | | K. Planning sessions |
| | | | | | L. Making referrals to other needed services or supports |
| | | | | | M. Responding to questions beyond the course materials |

The next two questions will ask you about how you gained **skills** (leading group discussions, answering questions, etc.) and **knowledge** (parenting theories, discipline strategies, ages and stages, etc.).

10. Thinking about your experiences as a new parent educator, what experiences best helped you gain the **skills** (leading group discussions, etc.) you needed:

Please rank the following. 1 = Most helpful 8= Least Helpful

- ___ Leading parent groups
- ___ Program specific training
- ___ School (college or university)
- ___ Working with more experienced family service workers
- ___ Professional development trainings
- ___ Feedback from supervisor or colleagues
- ___ Feedback from learners
- ___ Other: _____.

11. Thinking about your experiences as a new parent educator, what experiences best helped you gain the **knowledge** (parenting theories, ages and stages, etc.) you needed:

Please rank the following. 1 = Most helpful 8= Least Helpful

- ___ Leading parent groups
- ___ Program specific training
- ___ School (college or university)
- ___ Working with more experienced family service workers
- ___ Professional development trainings

- ☐ Feedback from supervisor or colleagues
- ☐ Feedback from learners
- ☐ Other: _____.

12. What kind of training (knowledge or skills), do you wish you could have received before leading your first parent groups? _____.

_____.

13. What areas of knowledge and skill do you think are essential for new family service workers that could be addressed through training? _____.

14. Which barriers do you think family service workers encounter that prevent them from receiving training in the areas they need or want help with? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Time
- ☐ Appropriate trainings are not offered
- ☐ Trainings do not cover to the depth needed
- ☐ Distance to trainings
- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Lack of agency support
- ☐ Not knowing about good trainings
- ☐ Trainings are needed in different formats
(online, correspondence, teleconference)
- ☐ Other: _____.

15. Imagine that your agency gives you \$100 to spend on training for yourself. You are told that you can choose 6 areas, but you must spend a different amount in each area. How much money would you allot to the following areas:

- ☐ Child development
- ☐ Teaching adults
- ☐ Group development
- ☐ Energizing openers and closers
- ☐ Inviting discussion
- ☐ Marketing programs
- ☐ Creating and maintaining emotionally safe learning environments
- ☐ Learning styles and learning theories
- ☐ Constructive conflict resolution
- ☐ Lesson planning
- ☐ Preparing for diverse groups
- ☐ Group facilitation

Thank you so much for you time. We really appreciate your willingness to share your time and insights with us.

The next two requests are only to share benefits with you. **The information you enter will not be connected with your responses to the survey above.**

If you would like to be included in a drawing for a prize of \$100 off a BCCF training or a \$100 certificate for any publications available through BCCF, please enter your email address here:

_____.

Results from this needs assessment will be published in the BC Council *for* Families' magazine, *Family Connections*, in the fall. If you do not already receive a copy of the magazine, and would like to see the results, please enter your name and mailing address:

_____.



The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Shauna Butterwick	INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT: UBC/Education/Educational Studies	UBC BREB NUMBER: H09-01211
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:		
<small>Institution</small>	<small>Site</small>	
N/A		
Other locations where the research will be conducted: Research will be conducted via telephone interviews and an online survey conducted among family service professionals across British Columbia.		
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): N/A		
SPONSORING AGENCIES: BC Council for Families		
PROJECT TITLE: An Education and Training Needs Assessment of Parent Educators in British Columbia		

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: June 1, 2010

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:	DATE APPROVED: June 1, 2009	
<small>Document Name</small>	<small>Version</small>	<small>Date</small>
Protocol:		
Research proposal	N/A	May 21, 2009
Consent Forms:		
consent form for interview subjects	N/A	May 21, 2009
Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:		
interview schedule for trainers	N/A	May 19, 2009
past participant survey	N/A	May 19, 2009
pre-training survey	N/A	May 19, 2009
interview schedule for supervisors or managers	N/A	May 19, 2009
questionnaire cover letter	N/A	May 19, 2009
Letter of Initial Contact:		
Letter of contact trainer	N/A	May 19, 2009
Letter of contact supervisor	N/A	May 19, 2009
Letter of contact registered	N/A	May 19, 2009
Letter of contact past participant	N/A	May 19, 2009

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board
and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair
Dr. Ken Craig, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair