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## Becoming a Certified Canadian Family Educator

Elizabeth Fitzner, who works in a family resource centre called Maggie's Place in Truro, Nova Scotia, can now add the letters "CCFE" after her name. They stand for "Certified Canadian Family Educator," a designation that was recently accorded her by Family Service Canada. After over four years in her position as Parent Education and Support Coordinator, she finally felt ready to submit her application this fall. "Filling out all the documents for the certification process really made me realize how much I've accomplished," says Elizabeth. "It was good for my self-confidence."

Elizabeth is qualified to give more than ten different parenting programs, some developed in house and some nationally recognized programs. "We find that lots of parents at Maggie's Place take one program after another," she observes, "so we need to offer quite a variety." For some programs, she was able to receive training locally. She either got on-the-job training by co-facilitating with colleagues or she was able to attend a workshop in town. For instance, trainers from the Hanen Centre in Toronto have come to Truro twice to train facilitators in the "You Make the Difference" program.

For other courses, she has had to go elsewhere. "I have found the FRP Canada national conferences

really helpful," she comments. "I attended the training day for the Beyond the Basics Parenting Course in Ottawa in May 2005. I included that and some other workshops I have taken at the association's conferences in my application for certification."

One course that did not require training and that Elizabeth has used is the online Healthy Parenting Home Study course that was developed by the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute, available at [www.healthyparenting.sk.ca](http://www.healthyparenting.sk.ca). "Some parents are uncomfortable coming to a group, or just aren't suited to groupwork for various reasons," she explains. "Sometimes I will sit down with a couple and work through the course with them. They learn lots of good information and the process can start fruitful discussions about different parenting styles between mother and father." She adds that mandated parents find it helpful to receive the certificate that is sent to participants on completion.

Elizabeth's path to being a Certified Canadian Family Educator has not been direct, but her education and former work experience were in a related field. "I got my degree in Human Ecology," she says, "and coordinated a soup kitchen for seven years, working with people and coordinating volunteers. We were a happy bunch, like a big family. Then my husband got trans-

ferred and I became a stay-at-home mum. My kids are eight and six now, but back then I was bringing them to Maggie's Place, and one day the staff member at playgroup suggested to me that I apply to work there." Although her job at first involved only coordination of parent programs, Elizabeth did have an opportunity to take the Nobody's Perfect facilitator training within her first few weeks at work. Then she found a copy of the "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen" course and videos buried in the centre's attic. "It was easy to follow," she recalls, "so I tried it out. I guess I got inspired and now I can't stop!"

Receiving the CCFE designation doesn't mean Elizabeth is resting on her laurels. She plans to attend the FRP Canada national conference coming up next May. "I'm looking forward to hearing some good presenters and getting the chance to talk to people who are giving some of the same courses in other parts of the country," she says. "Every time I get another training, I bring it back to incorporate it into our programs here and share it with parents, volunteers and other staff members." □

For more information about how to become a Certified Canadian Family Educator, visit

[www.frp.ca/CCFE](http://www.frp.ca/CCFE)