

Bonnie Mihalicz has been an educator throughout most of her life.

Her first formal teaching began at the age of 11 when she provided piano lessons for two neighboring children. She continued teaching piano through high school and university as she advanced in her musical studies, obtaining an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto diploma in piano pedagogy in 1978. Later, as a young mother, Bonnie took up teaching piano again. While maintaining a piano studio, she continued to refine her teaching philosophy and pedagogy through advanced studies in Suzuki piano.

Bonnie began a Fine Arts program in music after high school but decided to switch to education after the first term. She convocated with a Bachelor of Education from the University of Regina with a double Reading major and a minor in Music. Her first teaching position was at Confederation Park School in Saskatoon, Grade 1. Being young and adventurous, she spent only one year in the city before heading to northern Saskatchewan to teach in Sandy Bay from 1981-1984. These three years in an early childhood position were formative. Bonnie learned much from her Kindergarten students and their parents as they embarked on diverse learning experiences together, both in and outside the classroom. The program Bonnie designed was experiential and place-based. With a growing interest in a constructivist approach, Bonnie facilitated workshops in other communities within Northern Lights School Division.

In 1984, Bonnie left Sandy Bay for another adventure. This time it was to cycle through Europe for a year with the person who would become her life partner. Upon their return from Europe, they both obtained teaching positions in Wollaston Post. Here Bonnie was the Resource teacher. In working with students whose first language was Dene, Bonnie used and refined the background knowledge in the teaching of reading and language arts she had gained through her university courses.

Bonnie's other teaching positions have been in Saskatoon. They include Grade 1 at King George School, Grade 4 at Dr. John G. Egnatoff, resource teacher at Brightwater Science and Environmental Centre, substitute teacher with both Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, and 5 years as a Prekindergarten teacher at Bishop Klein School.

Developing the Prekindergarten program at Bishop Klein reignited her interest in early childhood education. Bonnie attended many workshops and conferences, developing a deeper understanding of early childhood development and play-based pedagogy. In 2007, Bonnie was seconded to the College of Education to focus on the area of early childhood teacher education. From 2009 to 2015, she was the Consultant of Early Childhood Education for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. In the fall of 2015, Bonnie returned to the College of Education as the Early Childhood Education Undergraduate Program Facilitator. Bonnie continues to enjoy her work in this position as she learns alongside colleagues and teacher candidates.

Bonnie obtained a Master's of Education in 2012, with a focus on parent engagement in early childhood settings. Her studies have taken her to Reggio Emilia in Italy; to the *Wonder of Learning* exhibits and associated conferences in Calgary, Vancouver, and Toronto; and to Logan Square and the Dewey Lab School in Chicago. Bonnie has served on many committees in the province and currently serves as co-director of the Saskatoon Satellite of the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Canadian Association for Young Children.