

Interaction

VOLUME 21, NUMBER 2, FALL 2007

School-Age Child Care

Supporting Children
of Lesbian and Gay
Parents

Highlights from
Oceans of Caring

Celebrate National Child Day!
November 20



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20 ans d'excellence en
matière d'apprentissage et
de garde des jeunes enfants

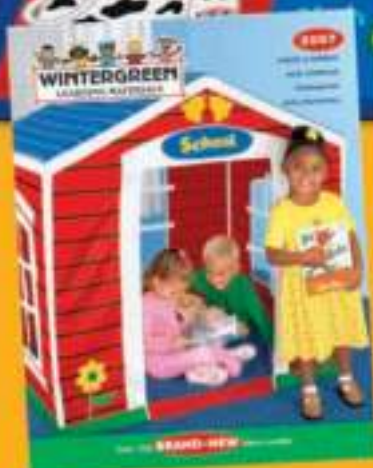
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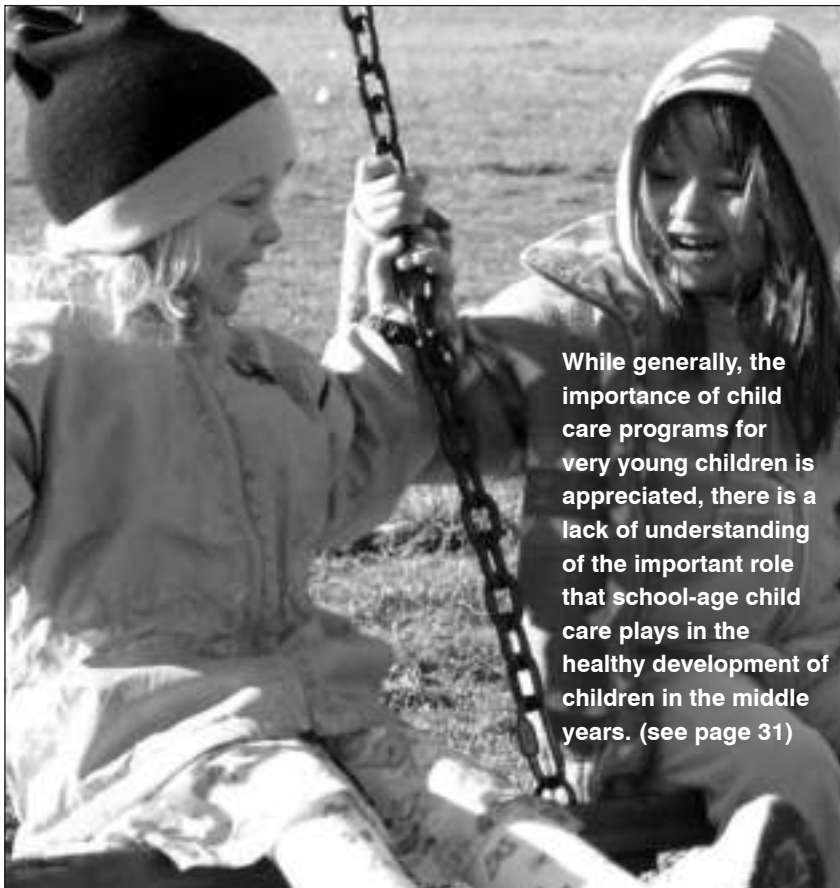
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While generally, the importance of child care programs for very young children is appreciated, there is a lack of understanding of the important role that school-age child care plays in the healthy development of children in the middle years. (see page 31)

School-Age Child Care

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A new resource sheet (#84) accompanies this issue:
Handwashing: The Best Prevention for Colds and Flu.



The photo on the front cover was taken by Shoot for Cover Honourable Mention winner, Cyndi Desharnais.



Behind the Scenes

By the time you read this column your families and child care programs will likely have settled into a back-to-school routine. As the mother of two school-age children (8 and 10), I'm like many parents who think of middle childhood as the "wonder years" – a calm period between the intensity of early childhood and the drama of adolescence. Yet there is increasing concern amongst child development experts that school-age children are falling through the cracks, losing ground in terms physical and mental health. Quality school-age child care can play a huge role in the healthy development of young children. The focus section will highlight some programming and policy ideas to enhance the quality of school age care in your program and across the country.

The Ideas section suggests ways that we can support children of lesbian and gay parents in our early childhood settings. It encourages us to reflect on how we can nurture all families and create an inclusive environment in order to enhance the social/emotional well-being of the children in our care.

Finally, we take a look back at the excitement of Set Sail for Quality on an Ocean of Caring, the successful national conference co-hosted with our Nova Scotia affiliates in Halifax, N.S. Turn to the From Where I Sit column to read Elaine Ferguson's speaking notes upon receiving CCCF Award of Excellence for Child Care at the conference. See snapshots of some of the people and events that made the conference so special to the 600+ women and men who attended.

Lana Crossman, editor
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The mission of the Canadian Child Care Federation is to achieve excellence through early learning and child care. Its core focus areas are best and promising practice; capacity building; and collaborations, networks and partnerships.

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Inside the Federation

CCCF Announces Leadership Circle

On Saturday, June 16, at its annual general meeting, CCCF proudly announced its new Leadership Circle to recognize and involve key individuals working toward healthy child development and provide broader public support and recognition to the overall mission and mandate of the CCCF.

The first members of the Leadership Circle are Charles Coffey, former Executive Vice-President of Royal Bank of Canada and champion of early childhood development; Landon Pearson, former Senator of Canada and longtime advocate for child rights; Sandra Griffin, CCCF's founding president and current Administrative Head of the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, University of Northern British Columbia; Karen Chandler, founding CCCF Board Member and ECE professor at George Brown College in Toronto.

CCCF is pleased to welcome these outstanding leaders to its Leadership Circle and looks forward to working together with them toward achieving excellence in early learning and child care.

Farewell and Thank You to Brigid Rivoire

On August 29, Brigid Rivoire will step down as CCCF's executive director. CCCF will proceed with a co-managed approach with Senior Director of Business Operations, Lynda Kerr, and Senior Director of Projects, Programs and Services, Anne Maxwell, co-managing the work of the office and each reporting directly to the Board on their respective areas of responsibility. President Don Giesbrecht will increase his presence in the organization by assuming the role of primary contact on CCCF's Fund Development work. The Board will be monitoring this arrangement on a regular basis to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the Federation – its staff, members and stakeholders.

CCCF thanks Brigid for all of her contributions, particularly for her leadership in guiding the organization through restructuring, strategic planning and establishing a strong fund development plan.

CCCF E-Learning Courses

Sign up now for winter and spring sessions!

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Pilot-tested by care practitioners from a broad range of settings, this course will help you develop effective intervention strategies and enhance children's prosocial behaviour.

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For more information, visit our website at www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca or contact us at info@cccf-fcsge.ca.

Please note courses may be cancelled if there is insufficient registration.



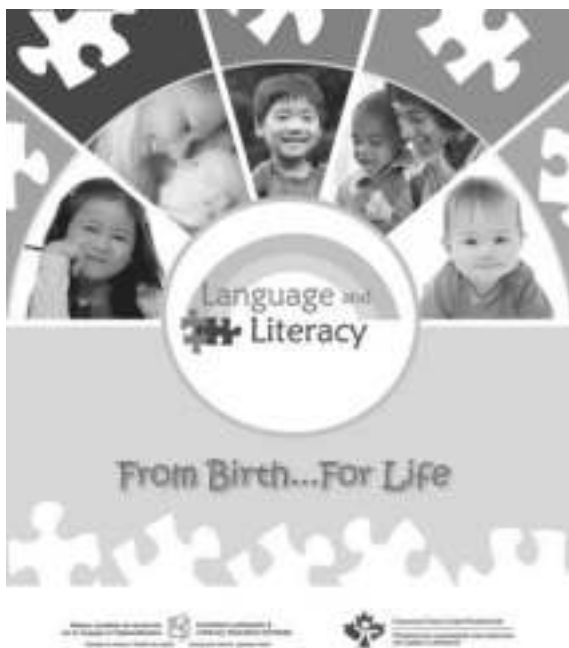
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INSIDE THE FEDERATION

Spreading the Word about Language and Literacy

Through a joint project, the CCCF and the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network produced 15,000 copies of a resource kit to help early learning and child care practitioners support children beginning their lifelong literacy journey. The kit, *Language and Literacy: From Birth... For Life*, includes a research summary of current knowledge on how children develop language and literacy skills, practical resource sheets, a four-colour poster, and a CD Rom including workshops, videos of interviews with experts and footage of real literacy situations in child care settings, additional readings and more! The kit has been mailed to all CCCF members free of charge. While supplies last, additional copies may be ordered free of charge by contacting the CCCF office. A \$10 shipping and handling fee applies.



www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca

CCCF now has a "vanity url" – an easy-to-remember website address that reinforces its commitment to quality child care.



Interaction.ca Launched



In July, CCCF launched the first issue of *Interaction.ca*. This electronic extension of *Interaction* magazine, will keep readers up-to-date on time-sensitive news about CCCF and the broader child care field.

The print version of *Interaction* will continue to be offered to members and subscribers on a semi-annual basis (fall and spring) and will continue to feature in-depth articles and news on pertinent topics in early learning and child care. *Interaction.ca* will be released on a quarterly basis and as it develops will provide more opportunities to exchange stories, ideas and comments with an online community of fellow early learning and child care practitioners across Canada.

If you didn't receive the July issue of *Interaction.ca*, visit the CCCF website at www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca to sign up now. You are encouraged to forward the bulletin to friends and colleagues in early learning and child care and to invite them to subscribe. Watch for the next issue in early December!



INSIDE THE FEDERATION

ECLKC Update

These last few months, the Canadian Council on Learning's Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre (ECLKC) has prepared two papers on parenting skills as part of the Canadian Council on Learning's series called *Lessons in Learning*. The ECLKC has also been busy working on two bulletins. The first one was released in June and focuses on language development and the second one which is scheduled for October will summarize the effects of home visiting programs on children and their families, the key ingredients of the most effective programs and the home visiting programs currently in place in Canada. Visit the ECLKC website to read these documents: www.ccl-cca.ca/childhoodlearning.

The Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, the Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre and the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network are the co-sponsors of the 40th Annual Banff International Conference on Behavioural Science, March 16-19, 2008. The conference, entitled Effective Early Learning Programs: Research, Policy and Practice, will bring together key international researchers to review effective early learning programs on language and literacy, numeracy and social learning. For more information, visit www.banffbehavsci.ubc.ca.

- Valérie Bell

New Métis and Inuit Resources Available Online

New practical tools and program ideas have been posted to the Aboriginal Children's Circle of Early Learning that will support you in your work with children from Métis and Inuit backgrounds. Check out this web-based clearinghouse of information for Aboriginal service providers at www.accel-capea.ca to access these and other valuable resources free of charge. While you're there, be sure to sign up for regular e-bulletins on updates to the site.

Annual Report



CCCF's 2006-2007 *Annual Report* is now available. For an electronic copy, visit the CCCF website at www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca. For a print copy, contact the office at info@cccf-fcsge.ca or (613) 729-5289.

Support CCCF through its Monthly Giving Program

Help CCCF in its mission to achieve excellence in early learning and child care. Contribute to CCCF's monthly giving program. It's easy, it's online and you'll receive a tax receipt for your charitable donation. Visit www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca and click the "Donate Now" button.

National Survey Results

Last spring CCCF invited its members and the broader public to participate in an online survey focusing on strategic directions for the organizations. The 400+ responses provided valuable feedback on awareness of the work of CCCF and the value members and the public place on this work. It also generated thoughtful comments on where the organization should be focusing its efforts. For a report on the survey, visit the CCCF website at www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Your input is invaluable as CCCF continues to work to support its membership (and beyond) in its commitment to achieve excellence in early learning and child care.

**CO-HOSTS**

Nova Scotia Child Care Association,
 Certification Council for Early Childhood
 Educators of Nova Scotia,
 Child Care Connections Nova Scotia

Oceans of Caring, Oceans of Community

*“Extremely inspiring. Truly a worthy event.
 Kudos to everyone for the truly phenomenal event.”*

On June 15-17, over 650 people working in early learning and child care gathered in Halifax, Nova Scotia for the national child care conference, co-hosted by CCCF and its Nova Scotia partners – the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Child Care Association and Child Care Connections NS. Set Sail for Quality on an Ocean of Caring, was an occasion to celebrate CCCF’s 20th anniversary, launch new products and honour outstanding individuals working on behalf of children.

Set Sail for Quality on an Ocean of Caring was the ninth national conference co-hosted by CCCF and its affiliates. The 2008 conference, to be co-hosted with the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia, is planned for May 29-31 in Richmond, B.C.



Seven CCCF presidents (past and current) in front of a poster celebrating CCCF's 20th anniversary and important milestones in its history. From left to right: **Don Giesbrecht, Sandra Beckman, Gail Szauner, Cathy McCormack, Joanne Morris, Karen Chandler, Sandra Griffin**



Thank you to our Nova Scotia affiliates for welcoming us to this highly successful conference. Join the Facebook group created for the conference to see more photos, reconnect with friends and continue the exchange! Visit www.facebook.com, register and search for “national child care conference.”



Elaine Ferguson, conference organizer and recipient of the 2007 CCCF Award of Excellence for Child Care, addresses delegates at the gala awards ceremony. For more information, see page 8.



Keynote speakers **Don Giesbrecht**, CCCF President (left) and **Peter Moss**, professor of Early Childhood Provision at the Institute of Education University of London, England (right).



Nova Scotia Minister of Community Services, **Judy Streach** (right), presented awards of appreciation to all conference presenters.



Anne Maxwell, Senior Director of Projects, Programs and Services, CCCF (left) and **Gillian Doherty**, renowned Canadian child care researcher (right).



Theodore Tugboat, a popular children's character on CBC Television, was docked just outside the conference in Halifax Harbour.



La Baie en Joie Acadian dancers treated the audience to high energy entertainment.



FROM WHERE I SIT

A Great Ride, And More to Come

by Elaine Ferguson

To be recognized by one's peers on the 20th anniversary of the Canadian Child Care Federation is a very special honour. As I strolled down memory lane preparing my speaking notes in receiving the Award of Excellence, many faces, spirits and minds came to me. So many of the folks who attended the Set Sail for Quality on an Ocean of Caring National Conference in Halifax are included in these reminiscences (as are many of you who are reading this piece) and I hope that you all recognize yourselves in my remarks.

Around 35 years ago, in 1972, I entered the working world of child care at the Wolfville Children's Centre in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

Like many of you, I fell into child care. I needed a job. But like many of you, I became enchanted by the children – their perceptions, their intuition and their brilliance. What started as a “job” has become a life-long career that has led me to where I am now and will continue to nourish and delight me.

Fast forward 15 years to 1987 . . . I was assistant director at St. Joseph's Children's Centre. I had completed my Bachelor of Child Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU), was working on my Master's and had nine years of child care administration reality under my belt. MSVU gave me the opportunity to explore different approaches and theories around my image of children and why child care exists; St. Joseph's taught me about the challenges and opportunities facing those working on the front lines. Both provided experience and knowledge that I continue to use and respect.

At this time, my colleagues sent me to Ottawa to suss out the newly-formed organization, the Canadian Child Day Care Federation (eventually renamed the



At the June 2007 national child care conference, CCCF paid tribute to the recipient of the 2007 CCCF Award for Excellence in Child Care – Elaine Ferguson. Elaine has been serving the early childhood education (ECE) community for 36 years as an ECE teacher, administrator, instructor in training programs, researcher and writer, board member and representative on various provincial and national organizations.

She is currently the executive director of Child Care Connections Nova Scotia, a community-based development organization for child care in Nova Scotia that among other things, manages the administration affairs of CCCF's Nova Scotia affiliates, the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Child Care Association. As head of the organizing committee of the Set Sail for Quality on an Ocean of Caring conference, she played a key role in the success of the event.

Elaine has contributed to CCCF significantly throughout her career. She was a founding member of CCCF's Board of Directors and its first appointed Treasurer. She served a second term on the Board of Directors from 2001-2003, and represented CCCF on the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council from 2006-2007.

The CCCF Award for Excellence in Child Care is presented every two years to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the child care field.



Canadian Child Care Federation). It was an amazing time for child care; the connections and dialogue with colleagues who affirmed my expertise and commitment was so exciting. I found friends that I will have forever. With the confidence that developed from our gathering came courage, and with courage we dared to dream. We knew we wanted to be inclusive, we knew we didn't know everything and we expected surprises far beyond anything any one of us could imagine.

Two years later, in 1989, Child Care Connection Nova Scotia was born. In the past eighteen years I have been privileged to work, laugh and cry with my provincial colleagues, and to share the excitement of becoming a profession and settling into my true calling – community-based development. Whenever I thought “There, that’s all I can do,” another amazing person full of hope, commitment, energy and skill would enter my life, reaffirming to me that I will never be able to leave child care because it is deeply

woven into who I am. The Oceans of Caring conference and my Nova Scotia colleagues are an example of that. They are wonderful women who have and are building a child care system in Nova Scotia. Their commitment, insight, skill and joy are truly inspiring. These amazing colleagues nourish my spirit, challenge my mind and care for my soul.

Throughout all this I have been supported by, cared for and cared about by my partner. We met 33 years ago at Wolfville Children’s Centre and share a commitment and appreciation of child care.

On this award night I am surrounded by my family of relatives and my family of colleagues and friends – all of you here in this room, this province, in Canada and beyond. Thank you for all you give to make this world a much better place for children and for all of us. It has been a great ride and I look forward to every single moment to come.

© CCCF 2007

In Memory of Anne-Marie Prediger

On May 1, 2007, the Canadian and BC child care community lost a valuable leader. Anne-Marie Prediger will be missed by many for her contributions to child care and her unique sense of humour and warmth. Anne-Marie played a leadership role with the CCCF from 1999 – 2002, representing the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) on CCCF’s Member Council, then serving on the Board of Directors as Chair of Member Council. Most recently, she was an ECE instructor at the College of New Caledonia. Prior to her role at the College, she was the manager of child care services at the University of Northern BC, and worked for both the ECEBC and the Provincial Child Care Council. She was a founding member of Prince George Advocates for Child Care.

In May 2004, she received the Gayle Davies Award for Professionalism, an ECEBC award given annually by the ECEBC to a member of the organization for dedication to early childhood education and for advocacy and leadership both within and beyond the field.



Anne-Marie Prediger (left) with Diane Tannahill (past CCCF Member Council rep for ECEBC) on the occasion of receiving the Gayle Davies Award for Professionalism.



For Today and Tomorrow

Early Childhood Programming for AIDS Orphans in Botswana

by Catherine McNab

“What do I know about early childhood programming?” I thought as I met the coordinator of House of Hope, an orphan centre in rural Botswana. In this sub-Saharan Africa country of fewer than two million people, over 30 per cent of pregnant women test positive for HIV and there are already 120,000 orphans. My background in HIV/AIDS programming seemed inadequate in my new role as project officer for the preschool. Then the coordinator took me into a classroom where I was completely unprepared to stand before 70 children between the ages of 2 to 6, not one of whom had a mother alive. I fell in love. And I knew there must be something useful I could do.

There were three teachers caring for 70 preschool children. The cleaner was dying of AIDS and the teachers took up her duties because she needed the salary but was too ill to do the work. While one teacher was cleaning, often another was out of the classroom – to clean up diarrhea (common in all preschools, I was told, but more common alongside HIV/AIDS and poor nutrition), to round up food donations, or to attend funerals. Many days, one teacher was left to care for all 70 children. I learned quickly that it is impossible to do any developmentally appropriate activities with a preschool student-teacher ratio of 70:1. Sometimes, when they had materials, each child was given a piece of paper and one crayon to draw with.

“How shall we improve the children’s programming?” I asked the coordinator.



“What’s wrong with it?” he asked in honest reply. After all, most of the children knew their colours and many knew the days of the week.

“How shall we improve the children’s programming?” I asked the teachers.

“We are so few,” they replied. “We are so tired and we have so few teaching materials.”

We needed help. Luckily, friends and family came to visit and brought resources. Students came for summer placements and brought resources. I quickly became a convert to learning through play, convinced that it was not only better for the children, but it made the best use of the few resources that we had.

At the end of the school session, staff sat together for three days to compare play-based learning to lesson-based learning. We talked about how to schedule the cleaning and other out-of-class tasks during the children’s quiet times. Then we agreed to return a few days before school reopened for the next session to figure out how we could use our limited resources to set up two classrooms with activity centres. We decided that two teachers would each supervise a classroom, with the third teacher floating between and supervising outside. Part of the morning, the children would be free to choose any activities in either classroom or outside, and then they would divide into two groups according to age for more focused activities.



The coordinator took me into a classroom where I was completely unprepared to stand before 70 children between the ages of 2 to 6, not one of whom had a mother alive.



The transformation was startling for all of us. The schoolyard was immediately filled with the sound of children's laughter and the sight of 70 orphans no longer inspired sorrow, but joy for visitors passing through. The teachers had less stress and more fun with their days because it's much easier to supervise children at play than to maintain order over 70 preschoolers sitting still. I saw the teachers take pride in their work as they explained play-based learning to visitors. I saw children's personalities emerge when I visited the classrooms in a way I never saw when the children sat quietly in a large group.

My family conducted a toy donation drive in Nova Scotia that outfitted the schoolrooms with educational materials. Donors provided funding to hire two teaching assistants and to train all the staff in HIV/AIDS counseling. I overflow with pride at my colleagues' willingness to embrace change and to try something new – and for their accomplishment in transforming House of Hope into a centre for early childhood development. Introducing play-based learning required an immense change in organizational culture yet the teachers changed the program almost overnight from being teacher-focused to child-focused and they saw their efforts pay big dividends.

Introducing play-based learning is more than simply changing the scheduling and environment, however. Teachers must learn to facilitate and guide children's play

and to evaluate their progress. They must learn to introduce literacy and numeracy into play activities and to guide positive behaviour in a play-based environment. Without continual training and/or mentorship, this will be a challenge. At House of Hope, there is an added challenge of learning appropriate interventions for supporting grieving orphans, or for counseling grandparents to take sick children for HIV/AIDS testing and treatment.

And House of Hope is only one of about 150 centres providing support to orphans and vulnerable children in Botswana.

But the small team at House of Hope proved that change is possible. At least one child who made a miraculous recovery on AIDS treatment has gone on to place second in her primary class of 42 children. The staff know this is the impact of their work and they believe that what they are doing can be replicated across Botswana.

Early childhood programming cannot bring back mothers and fathers, and it cannot turn the tide of HIV/AIDS, but it can help give Botswana a brighter future by preserving and fostering the creativity and resiliency of one hundred thousand vulnerable children.

Catherine McNab is currently seeking funding to extend the work of House of Hope by making it a model centre for early childhood programming, so that other orphanages in Botswana can learn from its successes. © CCCF 2007

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Research shows us that 6 in 10 working Canadians use the internet to conduct job searches. We also know that 78% of Canadians have internet access. Childcare Advantage is Canada's leading resource for finding childcare staff. Childcare Advantage is a website designed specifically to make finding staff easy, effective, and economical. We have over 10,000 highly qualified and eager job seekers searching for jobs in your industry.

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Sector Council Releases Training Strategy

Since January 2006, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) has been working with research team Beach & Associates to develop a training strategy for the early childhood sector. After 18 months of extensive research, consultation, and development the strategy is being released this fall.

A vibrant, stable, qualified early childhood sector is essential for the development and expansion of quality programs for young children. One of the key indicators of high quality is staff with a post-secondary credential in early childhood education (ECE). However, the regulated child care sector faces many challenges in attracting and retaining skilled and educated personnel, including declining birth rates, an aging workforce, and increasing job opportunities for early childhood educators in related positions. The Training Strategy Project was developed by the CCHRSC as one part of a multi-pronged approach required to address those challenges.

The goals of the project are to improve the consistency and quality of training of the early childhood care and education sector across Canada, and to increase the size and capacity of the trained child care workforce in Canada to meet identified needs.

The key objectives of the Training Strategy Project were to:

- Identify current training delivery models.
- Establish the present training status and needs in each province and territory.
- Identify gaps between the current approaches and the occupation requirements as identified in relevant Occupational Standards and other best practices throughout Canada.

- Identify availability, accessibility and barriers to training to help formulate options for training models.
- Develop options to meet current and future training needs of the child care workforce in Canada and to work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a sustainable and effective training strategy for child care.

The final report, to be released in late September, summarizes the overall results of the project and proposes a three-part strategy to address the issues related to:

- People: enhancing the size and capacity of the sector through defining core roles of early childhood educator and director.
- Programs: enhancing the quality and consistency of Early Childhood Education post-secondary programs through voluntary accreditation.
- Practices: enhancing access to and the effectiveness of post-secondary education and ongoing professional development through flexible delivery methods.

To download the report of the Training Strategy Project, visit the CCHRSC's website at www.ccsc-cssge.ca.


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Using Literature to Promote Children's Resilience

by Jennifer Pearson, with contributions
by Darlene Kordich Hall

This is the final article in *Interaction*'s three-part series on promoting resilience in young children. In the first two articles, we outlined some important factors to consider about the development and maintenance of resilience.

1. We can learn to be resilient by challenging how we think about stress and adversity.^{1,2}
2. Resilient thinking is accurate and flexible and enables creative problem solving, the capacity to see multiple perspectives and the ability to move on with daily life despite obstacles.^{1,2}
3. When young children watch warm, nurturing adults model resilient thinking and coping behaviours in everyday situations, they absorb several critical abilities researchers associate with resilience.^{1,3,4}

These abilities include emotional regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, empathy, realistic optimism, self-efficacy and reaching out to others and opportunity. For more details about these resiliency abilities, see "Critical Abilities Related to the Development of Resilience" in the spring 2007 issue of *Interaction* or Guide 2 in the *Reaching IN...Reaching OUT (RIRO) Resiliency Guidebook*.⁴

In this article, we focus on using literature to help children develop resiliency abilities and become more accurate and flexible thinkers.

By age three, children are actively trying to make sense of things that happen to them.³ For example, a child might think to himself, "Mommy and daddy are fighting 'cuz' I'm a bad boy." Or they may silently believe that a friend doesn't want to play because "she doesn't like me anymore, she thinks I'm stupid."

Of course these thoughts are likely inaccurate, but if such beliefs are left unchallenged, non-resilient thinking patterns can be established resulting in a loss of self-worth. When asked directly about what's troubling them, however, many children reply "I don't know" or simply shrug their shoulders. Using an indirect approach can sometimes be more effective.

Exploring children's thoughts and feelings through picture books can be a pleasurable, indirect and safe way to help children articulate their beliefs and imagine positive outcomes for the challenges they face. Children love listening to stories. Good stories offer multiple layers for learning and discussion – opportunities for readers and listeners alike to validate their experience, broaden their perspective, and generate positive solutions to everyday problems.

Adults who have triumphed over severe childhood adversity often refer to literature as "an influential and satisfying companion in their childhood, because they felt the author was writing to them personally."⁵

Exploring children's thoughts and feelings through picture books can be a pleasurable, indirect and safe way to help children articulate their beliefs and imagine positive outcomes for the challenges they face.

Literature can provide children with concrete examples of how accurate and flexible thinking makes a positive difference in the way a character handles adversity. In the story, *King of the Playground*,⁶ Kevin's dad gently challenges his son's belief that he is helpless in the face of outlandish verbal

threats made by the playground bully, Sammy. The next day Sammy threatens, "If you play here, I will put you in a cage with bears in it." Encouraged by his father's guidance, Kevin playfully responds, "Then I will ride on their backs and teach them tricks." After a few more menacing tries, Sammy realizes he can no longer intimidate Kevin. In no time they are in the sandbox building a fort together.

Children's storybooks also help us promote accurate and flexible thinking by challenging children's assumptions and biases. Used as an inclusionary tool, picture books provide an effective means to explore diversity and educate about differences.



For example, *The Ugly Vegetables*⁷ tells about a young girl of Chinese descent who hates her family's vegetable garden and longs for a plot full of beautiful flowers like her neighbours. Her perspective changes when, enticed by the aroma from her mom's vegetable soup, the neighbours offer bouquets of flowers in exchange for a taste. Her mother invites everyone to join for supper and her daughter glows with pride.

Current resiliency literature tells us that the capacity to value and identify with one's own culture and at the same time value the culture of others is an important protective factor for children's development of resilience.⁸

Most good stories contain themes related to critical abilities researchers associate with resilience. Pointing out how the characters in the story demonstrate these abilities provides children with examples to emulate. For instance, you might say, "The little foxes figured out what the problem was, [causal analysis] then they made a plan to solve it [realistic optimism]. They didn't give up, did they? They kept on trying [self-efficacy]."

According to research, imagination and creativity play a significant role in helping people live through harsh circumstances and construct a healthy future.^{9, 10} We can use good literature to ignite children's imaginations. Children love to make up their own stories based on pictures in storybooks. We can say, "Let's make up a story about the people in this picture." When teachers use this technique, they are surprised and fascinated with children's enthusiastic and creative responses. As children express their ideas about why the characters in the picture act in certain ways, teachers report gaining valuable insight into their beliefs about the world. And this, in turn, helps them better understand children's feelings and behaviour.⁴

For guidelines on how to use this technique, see "People in Pictures: Let's make a story!" in the *RIRO Resiliency Guidebook* (p. 42). And, for an annotated list of children's storybooks that highlight various critical resiliency abilities, go to www.reachinginreachingout.com and click on "Books and Articles."

You probably have your own resiliency favorites – stories that are rich with examples of optimism, perseverance, dealing with emotions, triumphing over setbacks and making the most of life's opportunities. We encourage you to share! Email jennifer@reachinginreachingout.com so we can add your favorites to the booklist on the RIRO website.

Developing resilience is an ongoing process – something we continue for our whole life. The magic of reading and listening to stories joins adults and children in the spirit of lifelong resilience development.

This article is adapted from Guide 11 in the Reaching IN...Reaching OUT Resiliency Guidebook, pp. 42-45.

Jennifer Pearson is lead writer/trainer and Darlene Hall is coordinator of Reaching IN...Reaching OUT (RIRO), an evidence-based skills training program that helps professionals and paraprofessionals promote resilience in young children. For more resiliency resources and information about RIRO's skills training and train-the-trainer programs, please visit RIRO's website (www.reachinginreachingout.com) or contact the coordinator at info@reachinginreachingout.com. RIRO's Train-the-Trainer Program in Ontario is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

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Sowing the Seeds of Advocacy at Humber College

by Marsha Barrett, Laura Oyama and Julie Valerio

“I was telling some friends about my decision to come to the ECE program here and they couldn’t believe that I am going to college to learn how to look after kids!” said a new ECE student in class one blustery fall morning.

“How did you respond to your friend?” the teacher asked.

“Well, I was just so shocked, I didn’t know what to say, so I just said ‘yes’. What should I say anyway?”

As faculty members of the Early Childhood Education program at Humber College and the University of Guelph-Humber, we realised that it was time to take more action toward learning to advocate for our profession and to pass these skills to our students. We embarked on a brainstorming session and came up with projects that yielded some incredibly positive and surprising results.

We decided to introduce an assignment as part of a graduating semester Administration Procedures course that required each class of students to organize and implement an advocacy display at a special event and present it to the Humber community. Our key objective was to enable students to identify what advocacy is and how they, as early childhood educators, can be involved.

In order to be facilitators and role models for our students, we recognized that a discussion regarding any knowledge of or



experience with advocacy would first need to take place. This discussion allowed us to clarify what advocacy is and to bring to their attention that many of them had already experienced advocacy. Had they, for example, ever found themselves defending their career choice? Had they questioned why a family could not find sufficient child care?

Students then identified current issues in the field with the dual goals of informing the public and motivating an active response. The issues they addressed included the lack of importance society places on the early years, the impact of poverty on children and the need for quality child care. Following a visioning activity, students became increasingly passionate to respond to the injustice of these issues and felt motivated to take action. After they were directed to various national resources the students gained momentum and the seeds of advocacy were sown. Working together as a large group was the next task.

The students divided into small working groups based on interests and task assignment. For each issue, they were required to produce the following:

- an outreach flyer to briefly explained the issue, draw people to the event and inform of necessary action



- a 1-2 page background paper to inform and educate the public
- a visual display/poster to capture public attention and highlight key points
- letters sent to three levels of government with a request for action

Given that these were graduating students, they had previous experience working on group assignments which allowed us to review how interdependence in a team (class advocacy) is critical for ensuring success. Furthermore, while we allowed students to identify their interests and how they would be involved, we, the teachers, provided the parameters of the requirements in order to support a positive outcome.

Finally, a portion of our class time was devoted to allowing the students to work on the advocacy project requirements, so that we could monitor how things were going, and make ourselves available to both model and guide problem-solving strategies, communication and progress.

Prior to the students' display event, an invitation was sent to all full-time faculty and coordinators, the Humber child care director and children from the college child care centre to encourage them to come out and show their support. This was integral to the students' morale.

The day of the advocacy display arrived, and the results were impressive. Some classes created a "branding" effect with co-ordinated flyers, fact sheets and T-shirts to present a unified look and theme for their issue. Others produced posters using photographs of children in the Humber child care centre that they had taken involving both parents and staff.

We observed students who were quiet in class approaching strangers to talk to them about the importance of the early years, while others solicited signatures for petitions. The entire display evolved into a highly energized, fun and meaningful time. Not only were students engaging the public, but taking photographs of their activities, supporting each other and acting as vital advocates for children and families. We were amazed by their talents!

Some classes included fundraising bake sales as part of their display and donated the proceeds to a local food bank and to the Humber child care centre. Other students took the initiative to contact local television stations and key politicians.

As a result of the project work, the students discovered personal characteristics and qualities in themselves and each other. They took risks by approaching strangers to speak on issues important to them.

As one student recalled, "I had no idea that I could do that. It felt so good to finally stand up for something I believed in about children. I found myself getting really passionate."

Another wrote about her own experiences growing up in poverty with a new appreciation, "I grew up with only my mother and myself and she had to work two jobs, and even then she couldn't afford day care for me. I understand so much more now about how we have to speak out to governments and the public to change things for children."

After receiving responses from all three levels of government, one student emailed excitedly, "I wanted to forward this response from the mayor! Advocacy is fun!" For us, as ECE teachers, it doesn't get better than that.

Marsha Barrett, Laura Oyama and Julie Valerio are faculty members of the Early Childhood Education program at Humber College and the University of Guelph-Humber. © CCCF 2007

Hot off the Press!

National Statement on Quality Early Learning and Child Care

\$15

A must-have for anyone working in child care in Canada, this evidence-based document outlines the nine interconnected elements of quality early learning and child care. Substantially updated from the original (1991) document, the national statement is used nationwide by practitioners, government officials, training institutions and others to inform policy and programming.

Available as a pdf for \$8.

For more information on this or other CCCF products, visit our e-store at www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca or check out the latest publications catalogue mailed with your fall issue of *Interaction* magazine.

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HEALTH WATCH

Playground Safety

Kids love playgrounds. But the playground is also a place where children can get hurt. Five to nine year olds are the age group most frequently injured on playgrounds. This is likely because they are able to play at greater heights but lack a sense of danger. A typical injury for five to nine year olds is a fracture after a fall from a climber.

You can help make sure the playground is a safe place for the children in your care.

Check the children

- Clothing can get trapped in equipment and strangle a child. Remove drawstrings and other cords from clothing. In the winter, use a neck warmer rather than a scarf. Use mitten clips instead of cords.
- Children should not wear bicycle helmets while they are on playground equipment because a child's head may get stuck in narrow openings.
- Be sure that children younger than five years of age are supervised by an adult.

Check the playground

- Choose playgrounds that “fit” the child. Children five years of age and younger should use only playgrounds that are designed for preschool children because the equipment is smaller.
- Look for proper surfaces. Grass, dirt, asphalt or concrete are not safe surfaces for playground equipment.
- Good materials for playground surfaces include sand, pea gravel (smooth, round, pea-sized stones), wood chips and synthetic (man-made) materials that are soft. These materials will help absorb a child's fall.
- The fill should be deep and loose. For preschool equipment, the fill should be at least 15 cm (6 inches) deep. With full-sized equipment, the fill should be at least 30 cm (12 inches) deep.



- If you are concerned about the safety of your local playground, contact the people who operate it. Check the blue pages of your phone book for local contact information.

As a community, get involved

Communities should ensure that their local public playgrounds meet Canadian standards. How can you do this?

- Have a certified expert inspect the playground to look for dangers. The expert will prioritize any changes that should be made.
- Ensure that the necessary changes are made so that the playground is safe.
- Keep the playground equipment, surface and grounds in good shape.
- Report any injuries to the playground operator (the municipality, school, daycare, etc).
- When planning future play areas, be sure they meet Canadian standards.



Some communities create nontraditional outdoor play environments instead of playground equipment. These play areas are less expensive to develop, and can be designed to challenge children's development without the risk of a child falling from equipment. Visit www.evergreen.ca to see examples of alternative playgrounds.

Contact your local or provincial injury prevention centre or Safe Kids Canada for more information on playground safety. A community action kit with a catalogue of Canadian resources such as playground checklists, fact sheets and videos is available from Safe Kids Canada (1-888-SAFE-TIPS, www.safekidscanada.ca).



www.cps.ca • www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Paediatricians warn against backyard trampolines

Trampolines should not be used in homes or in playgrounds, according to a new position statement from the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) and the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine. Although they are easily available and growing in popularity, the risks associated with backyard trampolines are just too high, warns the statement.

Trampoline injuries are on the rise, and the majority of them affect children and youth. Between 1990 and 2001 in Canada, trampoline injuries requiring hospitalization increased 56%.

The CPS recommends that:

- Parents should not buy trampolines to use at home.
- Trampolines should not be used by children at home for play.
- Trampolines should not be considered play equipment.
- Trampolines should not be part of outdoor playgrounds.

Children's Playspaces and Equipment Standard

\$65


Each year an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 children in Canada are treated in hospital emergency departments for playground injuries.

Make sure the playground you use for the children in your care is safe. *Children's Playspaces and Equipment Standard*, 4th edition, is the latest edition (2007) of the Canadian Standards Association (CSA)'s guide to help prevent child injuries through proper playspace design and maintenance. Available in hardcopy or PDF.

To order, visit the Canadian Child Care Federation e-store at www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca.

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As the Children's Affiliate of the Canadian Health Network, the Canadian Child Care Federation offers you over 1,000 online resources on topics that are essential to your work, including nutrition, breastfeeding, parenting and child care, special needs, environmental health, and child development. Our lively homepage features a variety of articles of interest and our FAQ section connects you directly to some of parents' and practitioners' most commonly asked questions.

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Emerging Voices

Child Care Professionals & Immigrant Families in Canada

by Danielle Downing and Sally Wylie

Settlement of newcomers has become increasingly important to our society, as the number of immigrants entering our country has grown significantly over the years. Given this trend, it is crucial for professionals working within the child care community to acknowledge and understand the special challenges faced by newcomer families.

In his work on deepening and broadening definitions and understandings of quality child care, professor Alan Pence of University of Victoria's School of Child and Youth Care has invited child care professionals to consider the following questions:

- Whose voices are heard in your program, training or policy development activities?
- Whose voices are not heard?
- What things do I know? How do I know them? How do they keep me from learning about other things?

These fundamental questions gain special significance when considering the families who have recently immigrated to Canada. Are we, the educators, students and researchers in the child care field, listening to these new voices?

For many newcomer parents, their main purpose for coming to Canada is to provide a better quality of life for their children. In so doing, they leave behind relatives, homes, familiar cultural practices, employment and personal and professional recognition. In order to start over again, they are willing to go to school, learn English/French, and take jobs for which they may be over-qualified. Immigrant parents are willing to make short-term sacrifices for the long-term benefits of their



Fast Facts on Canada's Diverse Population

- More than 200 ethnic origins are represented in Canada.
- Roughly 13.5 per cent of the population is a member of a visible minority group and that proportion is expected to reach 20 per cent by 2016.
- Immigration now accounts for more than 50 per cent of Canada's population growth; and, it is projected that after 2025, Canada's population growth will be based solely on immigration.

Source: *Serving Canada's Multicultural Population: Practical Approaches for Public Servants*, a 2004 workshop sponsored by Canadian Heritage.

children. However, the most significant leap of faith they make is leaving their children in our care while they work or attend school.

Child care settings are one of the first places of trust for newcomer families that build bridges between one culture and another. What can we do to ensure that we meet some of the basic needs of newcomer families and help them feel welcome, comfortable, and willing to build relationships?

An Inclusive Perspective of Child Care Needs

In the summer of 2006, the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare (OCBCC) released a revision to *A Guide to Childcare in Ontario* that reflected findings from a project conducted with the support of the Laidlaw Foundation. The project, Connecting the Voices, involved conducting



focus groups to examine the needs of marginalized communities in Ontario, including new Canadians, in order to develop a socially-inclusive perspective of the province's child care needs. According to OCBCC's revised child care guide, the following needs should be highlighted:

- access to affordable, high quality and inclusive child care
- child care professionals who act as a liaison between home and school and who will explain the practices and expectations of a Canadian child care setting
- well-educated, professional and approachable child care providers
- a centralized resource "hub" where parents can access community resource information, articles on childrearing and education, English-as-a-second-language classes, information on housing, employment and continuing education, child care subsidies, food banks, etc.
- assistance with transportation between home, child care and the parents' place of employment/schooling.

Looking Beneath the Surface of the Iceberg

We, as child care professionals, are all familiar with the obvious ways to acknowledge different cultures in the classroom, by incorporating culturally-inclusive books, music, food, games, artifacts, examples of ceremonial/festive dress, posters, words of greeting and comfort in many languages. Yet, recent research suggests that these ways of identifying culture are only the tip of the "culture iceberg." In his article, "Respecting Culture in our Schools and Classrooms," Robin Pearson uses the image of an iceberg to reflect that some cultural indicators are obvious and visible – the tip of the iceberg – while many are hidden below the surface.

"When a newcomer arrives in another country, s/he brings a rich cultural background from his/her country of origin. Much of this is unspoken, much of it is sub-conscious, and the most important aspects are not visible."

The hidden portion of the iceberg includes concepts and ideas around tempo of work, notions of leadership, conception of beauty, approaches to problem-solving, and incentives to work. In terms of child care, it can also include expectations around behaviour, politeness, methods of child-rearing, and the role of the parent in supporting the (child's) education. How often

Child care settings are one of the first places of trust for newcomer families that build bridges between one culture and another. What can we do to ensure that we meet some of the basic needs of newcomer families and help them feel welcome, comfortable, and willing to build relationships?

do we try to see and understand these different cultural practices and perspectives?

Have we used our personal and professional experiences to understand the needs, fears and challenges of immigrants? Have we stopped to imagine what it would be like to leave our own children with people who can't speak our language or understand our cultural norms?

Ties and Emerging Trust

As part of the holistic and inclusive approach to child care, early

childhood educators can facilitate a wide range of community services for newcomer children and their families, such as women's organizations, community dietitians, health care professionals, public library representatives, police officers, child care resource representatives and continuing education and job search services. Facilitating these ties with newcomer parents contributes to the integration of families into Canadian society. Encouraging parents to become involved with skilled educators/community leaders provides all parties with a better understanding of what the other has to offer. These ties build trust and benefit the children as they embrace their new experiences with other children in a group setting.

A holistic approach also means building strong parent/teacher relationships. These partnerships directly benefit the child and in the case of immigrant families, they help to:

- ensure a cooperative effort to determine the developmental levels and needs of children
- introduce parents to the expectations of Canadian society with regard to behaviour management, education and social customs of children
- encourage preschool and primary school teachers to understand parental expectations with regard to behaviour management, education and social customs of children
- maintain continuity between home and school by encouraging parent involvement within the program, e.g. having parents share presentations in their own language with resources from their own countries
- demonstrate the importance of maintaining pride and ability in use of first language (L1)
- provide emotional support and assistance to parents with settlement issues such as finding child care, employment, housing, medical assistance, counseling and social services



Educators working with immigrant families should make time for regular meetings with parents in order to:

- assure parents that their opinions are valued and their voices heard
- foster bonds between home and school through open communication
- introduce child development information to parents
- suggest activities outside of the early childhood setting
- begin to introduce parents to the participation expectations at the public school level
- introduce parents to the community. A parent resource area is very helpful and could include information about community events, child health, local public schools, various social assistance programs, local public interest items and parenting magazines.

Creating a culturally-sensitive environment for newcomer parents provides excellent opportunities to hear their voices. They, in turn, hear the voices of educators, children and other parents within the child care setting – a microcosm of Canadian society. This everyday exchange of voices builds respect and understanding, and facilitates the integration of children *and* their families. As child care professionals,

we are taught to create an environment where children can flourish. Imagine how rich this environment can become when it blends Canadian culture and educational practices with the sights, sounds and philosophies of diverse cultures from around the world. The combination of parent involvement and informed, responsive educators provides a strong foundation for young children to embrace their own culture while developing a place for themselves in their new community.

Danielle Downing is a primary school teacher from Guelph, Ontario with a specialization in early childhood education. Her passion for working with new Canadians began four years ago in her tenure as supervisor of an ESL program for children of new immigrants and convention refugees. Sally Wylie is working on her 3rd edition of *Observing Young Children*, teaching at Mohawk College in the Continuing Education ECE Department and working on various projects in the field of early childhood. © CCCF 2007

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i d e a s

Emotional Well-Being in Child Care



Supporting Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents in Early Childhood Settings

by *Zeenat Janmohamed*

Systematic research on children of lesbian and gay parents has appeared in many professional journals for over two decades. (Patterson, 1998), and only recently has grown into a considerable body of research (Patterson, 2004) that has been conducted primarily in the United States and Western Europe. Estimates on the number of lesbian and gay parents in the US vary from two to eight million (Rudolph, 2007). There is a growing body of evidence that points to increasing numbers of lesbian and gay adults that choose parenthood (Casper, 2003; Janmohamed, 2006; Patterson, Hurt & Mason, 1998). According to Statistics Canada the 2001 census revealed that 15 per cent of households headed by lesbian couples had children versus 3 per cent among male same-sex households. This represents approximately 2,800 Canadian families (Statistics Canada, 2001). These numbers probably underestimate the situation to some



extent due to lower self-identification and reporting. Moreover, these data omit lesbians and gays who are single (not partnered) and have a child living with them (Ambert, 2005).

Like families led by heterosexual parents, families led by lesbian and gay parents are diverse. Individuals – whether lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and queer (LGBTQ) or heterosexual – identify

themselves based on a wide variety of factors such as their gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, cultural heritage, family creation, where they live, etc. In addition to more commonly understood identities, children of lesbian and gay parents may be adopted, may have been created with a known or unknown donor, have more than two parents, may have been born through surrogacy or may have been part of

a previous heterosexual relationship” (Janmohamed, 2006, p. 8). Unlike differences based on race, children growing up with lesbian and gay parents are often considered to be “invisible” minorities, and they warrant care, consideration and sensitivity. In trying to understand the needs of LGBTTQ parented families, early childhood educators need to understand the multiplicity of identities connected to individual children and families.

Extending Our Understanding of Diversity

With a growing population of LGBTTQ identified individuals planning and having children, it is necessary that early childhood program policies and practices reflect a broader understanding of diversity that is reflected at all levels in an organization from how staff interacts with parents and children to the design of the philosophy of the early childhood program. The purpose of this article is to help to further develop an understanding of lesbian and gay families in early childhood settings. However, in order to make the shift toward a more inclusive approach to early childhood practice, a broad understanding of the role of the early childhood educator is necessary.

The role of an early educator involves a complex set of responsibilities. Early childhood educators need to ensure that children are safe and have their primary needs cared for. They are responsible for providing an environment that is stimulating and emotionally nurturing. They are expected to build positive relationships with children, integrating

a respectful approach based on the child’s ability without shaming or demeaning children. Further, early childhood educators should promote learning by creating developmentally appropriate opportunities within a culturally-relevant context.

The role of an early educator is infused with the responsibility of providing a holistic emotionally supportive environment for young children. Early childhood educators support families in giving children a foundation in morals and values through discussions or through modeling appropriate behaviour. Early childhood educators have the capacity to play an influential role in the development of young children and in the process of establishing relationships with children, early educators can support or undermine a child’s self-esteem depending on their ability to encourage, interact and support a child’s development.

Although early childhood education work is challenging, the desire to make a difference in the lives of children and families is cited as a primary motivator for early childhood educators (Beach, Bertrand, Forer, Michal & Tougas, 1998). The relationship between caregiver, child and parent is encouraged and rewarded. The success of developing relationships is dependent on the early childhood educator’s ability to effectively integrate the family and cultural background into the program curriculum, while maintaining an integrated approach to anti-discriminatory education practices. Extending an understanding of diversity to include families that identify themselves as LGBTTQ creates a more challenging pedagogical framework in early childhood education that includes a broader definition of family structure.

Same Sex Families’ Perceptions

A common fear identified by lesbian and gay parents is that their children will not be accepted by their extended families and the children’s teachers. In a recent study of lesbian and gay parents with young children in early childhood settings in Toronto, Collison (2005) found that the parents had experienced both positive and negative situations in their child’s centre. Generally speaking the parents felt they were accepted and valued within the child care centres but that view also conflicts with the feeling that LGBTTQ parents are more closely scrutinized. Common assumptions were made that the birth parent had more “importance” in the family than the non-birth parents, often represented by how early childhood educators extended more attention to the birth mother. The parents felt somewhat uncomfortable raising these issues due to perceived homophobia. Examples include limited dialogue with parents regarding their family composition, while more attention was given to the birth parent and a consistent pattern of encouraging gendered play.

In addition, Collison (2005) found that LGBTTQ parents agreed that many of these challenges began during the preschool and kindergarten years when there was an increased focus on gender and identity among the children. Common to children in preschool programs is a growing interest in how families operate, often played out during dramatic play experiences. In Collison’s study (2005) parents overheard children discussing family composition

while engaged in play where the conversation centred on which child can be a parent based on gender, while the staff made no effort to challenge the children's heterosexist assumptions. According to Oschner (2000), the process of identifying diverse beliefs about gender and reflecting on what we say and do influences children's learning about gender concepts. Our awareness of our and others' differing beliefs begins to reveal how femininity and masculinity are socially constructed and how heterosexuality is the standard that we follow in our practice with children.

It is possible that some LGBTTQ parents may be more attuned to issues of gender identity than heterosexual parents but this sensitivity does not diminish the responsibility of the early childhood educator to create early childhood environments that support an exploration of all areas of development. A supportive environment is created by teachers who understand the necessity of consciously challenging sex stereotyped and exclusively heterosexist conceptions about human behaviour in order to include each child's experience of what it means to be male or female. Challenging traditional definitions of gender in children and adults enables educators to critically consider other ways of thinking including the integration of queer theory which proposes that gender is a socially constructed rather than biologically driven phenomena. Blaise (2005) suggests that by "recognizing and questioning concepts of normalization and privileges found within heterosexual culture, queer theory helps deepen understandings of the social construction of gender." (p. 20)

Cahill & Adams (1997) argue that the gender role beliefs of early childhood educators may be predictive of their behaviours and as a result shape children's gender role perceptions and children's behaviours. A truly inclusive environment requires not just the neutralizing of gendered play but the active encouragement of non-traditional gender roles and representations of diverse family structures.

Actively Including Same Sex Families

The invisibility of lesbian and gay family representation is prevalent in early childhood programs and in school classrooms. While early childhood educators have become increasingly comfortable and conscientious about including program materials that represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, and religions, individuals with special needs and various heterosexual family structures into their curriculum, they appear less comfortable including same sex families. For example, recently an early childhood education student shared a story about a teacher reading a book entitled "The Family Book" which celebrates all kinds of families including single parents, bi-racial families, same sex families and others. While reading the story, the classroom teacher intentionally avoided the section on same sex families. Although not engaged in overt homophobia, one could argue, the teacher's decision to avoid telling the story of same sex families to the children perpetuates heterosexist stereotypes. Similarly, school officials stopped using the video titled "That's a Family" because it showed same-sex couples as part of third-grade curriculum in New Jersey. The

video was produced by Women's Educational Media and showed children discussing the different types of families they come from including homes led by single parents, adoptive parents and same-sex couples. (Gay Chicago Magazine, 2007)

The Surrey Board of Education's attempt to ban primary school use of *Asha's Mums*; *One Dad, Two Dads*, *Brown Dads*, *Blue Dads*; and *Belinda's Bouquet* was overturned by the British Columbia Court of Appeal when it reinstated these books in the junior kindergarten curriculum. All of these are picture books designed for children as young as kindergarten and none have any sexual content. In her deposition to the court, Lawyer Susan Ursel (2002) argued that "The family is one of the most fundamental expressions of our humanity, and families in all their myriad forms are entitled to constitutional protection. Children with lesbian or gay family-members are harmed by the deliberate exclusion of their families from the curriculum at a time when all their other classmates are learning about their families" (Ursel, 2002).

Children's Development and Well-Being

Since the inception of Building Bridges, a public education project for early childhood educators working with lesbian and gay families (www.childcareontario.org), I have had the opportunity to make a number of presentations on how to build closer connections with LGBTTQ families in early childhood settings. The opening discussion of my presentation is framed within the context of a growing population of LGBTTQ families using child care services.

It leads the participants to recognize that after the child's paediatrician, an early childhood educator may be the next professional a family comes into contact with.

One of the most common issues raised is the perception that educators have concerns about whether children in lesbian and gay parented families are emotionally stable and that their parents' sexual orientation affects the children's well-being. Research shows that educators need not have these concerns. A study comparing the development of gender identity in children with lesbian mothers indicates that the pattern of gender development is similar to children with non-lesbian mothers (Kirkpatrick, Smith & Roy, 1981). The children indicated no interest in changing their gender. Kirkpatrick also found that children of lesbian mothers showed no particular difference in toy preferences, activities or interests when compared to children of heterosexual mothers. Similarly, there is a growing body of literature that concludes that children with lesbian and gay parents enjoy healthy development in all domains and that the sexual orientation of the parents is not a significant predictor of successful child development (Fitzgerald, 1999). Over two decades of research have revealed that children who have gay or lesbian parents appear no different than children raised by heterosexual parents in terms of any aspect of their psychological social or sexual development (Gold, Perrin, Futterman, & Friedman, 1994).

Providing high quality, inclusive early childhood programs is our professional responsibility. We need to work proactively to create

both physical and, perhaps most importantly, social environments that welcome and reflect LGBTTTQ headed families. If our intention is to raise the quality of caring and learning in early childhood education, it is imperative that we create environments that recognize, respect and value all forms of difference and diversity and challenge misunderstanding whenever it occurs. Children growing up in LGBTTTQ families are generally being raised in caring and loving families. Outside the family unit, their experiences vary widely depending on how well their family is accepted and not judged about its composition. Early childhood educators need to be conscious of nurturing all children and families. They need to be aware of the critical role they have as professionals to move beyond the status quo toward an inclusive social environment that recognizes that both families and early experiences have an influential impact on the development of young children.

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The Inclusion of Sexual Diversity in Early Childhood Curriculum

by *Ryan Campbell*

The 2006 Canadian census revealed that ours is a country with an increasingly diverse population (Statistics Canada, 2006). The 2001 census revealed that the current face of the Canadian family stands in stark contrast to the nuclear stereotype that was traditionally accepted as a societal norm (Statistics Canada, 2001). In light of this reality it is clear that educators can no longer ignore the diversity that is an integral component of the Canadian experience. As such, the planning and implementation of early childhood curriculum that is sensitive to all aspects of diversity remains one of our most important challenges. This is especially true for educators who are ultimately called upon to address issues of sexual diversity in support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and queer (LGBTQ) parents who are raising a significant number of children in this country (Ambert, 2001).

Unfortunately, despite many educators' commitment to providing an equitable and bias-free environment, the notion of sexual diversity continues to yield a general sense of discomfort. In extreme circumstances it is met with overt resistance. Arguably, it is the one facet of anti-bias education that is



routinely neglected in most early childhood programs. The reasons for this vary. For instance, a blatant disregard in many early childhood programs for issues important to LGBTQ parents and their children may be a direct manifestation of ongoing homophobia that continues to construct gays and lesbians as inferior to their heterosexual counterparts. Still, others would contend that the general inattention sexual diversity receives in early childhood education is due to a lack of available resources. This includes professional development initiatives aimed at equipping educators with the necessary tools to nurture sexual

diversity in a meaningful and respectful manner. A third crucial issue is the discrepancy between personal beliefs and professional ethics and practice for people whose cultural or religious beliefs do not advocate acceptance of gender diversity. For some, coming to the realization that it is possible to practice inclusion without invalidating personal beliefs is challenging.

Despite the obstacles, educators have an obligation to support LGBTQ families. The following recommendations may serve to help educators implement early childhood curriculum that is sensitive to the issues that LGBTQ families face. While this list is by no means exhaustive, it does offer a framework for celebrating gay and lesbian families without positioning them as exceptional.

1. Recognize and address personal prejudices and fears.

The challenge to integrate experiences that support sexual diversity into early childhood curriculum becomes especially difficult for educators who, themselves, harbor personal prejudices or negative beliefs against LGBTQ individuals. In fact, Boyd's research contends that educators often feel torn between their personal beliefs and their commitment as educators to issues of diversity (Boyd 1999, as cited by Wilson, 2001). Ultimately, it is essential that these prejudices and fears are immediately recognized and confronted so that attempts can be made to overcome them in support of same-sex families. This is especially important for

professionals who commit to the practice of early childhood education and, by extension, to the health and well-being of all families.

2. Educate yourself and model a sense of openness to sexual diversity.

It is unrealistic to expect educators to be experts on every issue of social relevance. As such, commitment to professional development in this field is imperative. This is especially true for those who routinely work to support families from diverse backgrounds. Still, it is not enough that educators merely plan to support sexual diversity in the classroom. Because children are as sensitive to subtle cues as they are to overt messages, educators must make it their mission to model an ongoing sense of openness and respect for all types of families. Ways of communicating a sense of respect for LGBTIQ families and making them feel welcome include: posting positive space stickers on doors, displaying photographs of same-sex families engaged in everyday activities throughout the room, and providing materials and books for the children to explore that portray gays and lesbians in a non-stereotypical fashion.

3. Take advantage of daily teachable moments.

Teachable moments include those spontaneous occurrences during which children are especially responsive to taking in new information. For example, the child who inquires about two men displaying public affection toward one another invites an opportunity for a discussion about what it means to be gay. Educators have an

obligation to address these inquiries immediately and with sensitivity both out of respect for the child's natural curiosity and because this expression of interest indicates that a prime opportunity for learning has surfaced.

4. Maintain open communication with children and respond to questions at a developmentally appropriate level.

Children as a group are purposeful and inquisitive. As such, they frequently seek adult input to clarify the array of curiosities that surface as a result of their interactions with the world around them. Questions pertaining to sexual diversity continuously challenge educators to address these inquiries in a manner that aligns with a child's individual level of understanding. According to Lynn Ponton (2002), it is not necessary to talk about sex when discussing sexual orientation. In her opinion, "it is more important that children understand that an intimate, loving relationship is sometimes shared between two men or two women in the same way men and women who are heterosexual care for one another" (p. 4). For preschool-aged children (i.e. 3 to 5 years), this message is conveyed through the use of simple, concrete answers that provide basic information. School-aged children, on the other hand, have a tendency to view novel ideas in relation to their own lives. Additional questions may therefore be required to help educators ascertain the origins of the child's initial curiosity and to help guide a discussion about sexual orientation that is developmentally appropriate and relates to their specific interests. Regardless of the age of the child, however, Ponton (2002) argues that when questions pertaining to

sexual diversity are openly answered from an early age and in a way that is appropriate to the child's level of understanding, children will ultimately come to learn tolerance and respect for differences, and feel reassured about any personal worries they may have.

5. Include opportunities for the exploration of gay and lesbian issues as part of an ongoing commitment to sexual diversity in early education.

Sometimes daily teachable moments are not a sufficient means by which to ensure that issues pertaining to gay and lesbian families are adequately addressed. As such, educators should make a concerted effort to integrate gay-positive experiences into the curriculum whenever possible. For example, a story like *King and King* by Linda De Haan and Stern Nijland (2002) could be used to introduce a unit on fairy tales for younger children. For older children, however, an appreciation for the contributions of gays and lesbians to society might be instilled during an exploration of scientific inventors or a discussion of various literary authors.

6. Use caution when exposing children to various forms of mainstream media.

In contemporary Canadian society, television has become an increasingly influential agent of socialization during a child's formative years. In fact, the average Canadian child watches approximately 20 to 30 hours of television a week (Hogarth, 1996). This is especially problematic as popular television programs rarely offer a perspective

on families that encompasses the diverse family forms that currently characterize Canadian society. To this end, TV families tend to be of the stereotypical, nuclear structure, offering children in LGBTTTQ families little to relate to. For these children, this poses serious potential risks to the development of their sense of self if he/she is routinely exposed to these exclusionary media messages. In addition, the absence of gay and lesbian families on television serves to sustain the status quo, encouraging all children to accept the heterosexual, nuclear stereotype as a societal norm.

7. Use children's literature that reflects pro-social values and attitudes to encourage dialogue.

Children's literature is often one of the best ways in which to give rise to classroom discussions that address issues relevant to the experiences of the children in the program, as well as the world outside the classroom. In addition, quality works can prove useful in helping answer some of the more difficult questions children ask in relation to sexual diversity. For example, when asked by a preschooler what gay meant, a quote taken from *Daddy's Roommate* by Michael Willhoite (1991) served as the genesis for a discussion about the meaning of the term: "Being gay is just one more kind of love. And love is the best kind of happiness" (p.34). Keep in mind that the some of the best selections for children that support sexual diversity are those that make attempts to integrate gay and lesbian characters into the plot without striving to preach to readers. Some recommended titles include: *And Tango Makes Three* (Parnell and



Richardson, 2005), 1, 2, 3: *A Family Counting Book* (Combs, 2000), *King & King & Family* (De Haan, Nijland, 2004), *The Family Book* (Parr, 2004) and *The Boy Who Cried Fabulous* (Newman, 2007). For additional resources, see Building Bridges at www.childcareontario.org.

8. Examine materials available to children for stereotypes/biases. Where possible, create materials for children to explore that promote openness and respect to sexual diversity.

The majority of materials marketed to today's children continue to reflect dominant ideologies that position heterosexuality as the preferred norm. Fortunately, educators can counter this tendency by creating their own materials that recognize and celebrate same-sex families. Inclusion of these images in the materials children explore is an important measure in helping nurture the self-identity of children reared in non-traditional households. According to Derman-Sparks (1989), inclusion of materials that

are reflective of all family types is important because "what is in the environment alerts children to what the teacher considers important or not important" (p. 11). Moreover, "children are as vulnerable to omissions as they are inaccuracies and stereotypes" (Derman-Sparks, 1989, p.11). To this end, neglecting to represent same-sex families could have a detrimental impact on the emotional well-being of children cared for in these environments. In light of this, educators can use real-life images depicting gay and lesbian families engaged in everyday experiences to create an array of materials appropriate for any age group. This might include a selection of everything from magnetic puzzles, matching games and posters to bingo games, puppets and picture files to inspire storytelling.

9. Avoid tokenism or the "tourist" approach.

Bisson (1998) strongly argues against using a holiday or special calendar event to introduce a particular group of people. In addition, these occasions should not be the only time the group is discussed. The danger with these tendencies, according to Bisson (1998) is that they ultimately lead to stereotyping (p. 379). For example, educators should not wait until Gay Pride month in June to integrate experiences into their curriculum that are supportive of Canada's gay and lesbian population. Instead, regular opportunities should be provided throughout the calendar year that acquaints children with various aspects of gay culture in a meaningful and respectful manner.

For instance, the rainbow (a symbol that has become synonymous with gay pride) can be introduced in response to an array of interests expressed by children. As an extension of this interest, educators can plan and implement an art experience that affords children the opportunity to create and display their own rainbow flags. Children could also be encouraged to create the colours of the rainbow using primary-coloured paints or reproduce the sequence of colours in the rainbow using peg boards as a means to sustain their interest in this natural phenomenon.

10. Encourage gay/lesbian parents to participate in your school/child care program.

Lynn Wilson (2001) asserts that “developing partnerships with families is an integral part of the role of an early childhood educator. To work effectively with children, teachers must [also] work effectively with their families” (p. 72). One of the best ways to achieve this feat is to communicate a sense of appreciation and respect for same-sex families by encouraging gay and lesbian parents to participate in their children’s program through volunteering, becoming members of the boards, and holding special events for all parents. Regardless of the strategy employed, however, it is imperative that educators strive to celebrate same sex families without positioning them as “exceptional.” In addition to sustaining a healthy working relationship with these particular families, educators who make attempts to communicate a sense of openness and respect

will also nurture the social-emotional wellbeing of the children.

Conclusion

Although sexual diversity continues to be regarded as a taboo subject in most early education programs, the changing Canadian demographic is a clear indicator that the presence of same-sex families in this country can no longer be ignored. In fact, early childhood educators play a pivotal role in ensuring that LGBTTQ parents and their children are celebrated and respected as an integral part of broader Canadian society. Ultimately, educators committed to diversity that is inclusive of sexuality will support the social emotional well being of the children who grow up in same-sex families, as well as those children who may one day identify as gay or lesbian themselves. In addition, thoughtful attention to the inclusion of gay-positive curriculum holds the promise of producing a future generation of adults who embrace homosexuality as a fact of life.

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School-Age Child Care



“There is general agreement in Canadian literature now that the middle years are significant. Children in the middle years comprise a large number of our children and youth – there are nearly three million children in Canada between the ages of 6 and 12. They represent the diversity of the Canadian population. Developmentally, this is a time of significant emotional, social, cognitive and physical development. These children are laying down the building blocks for future well-being and participation in society,” according to the National Alliance for Children and Youth’s Middle Childhood Initiative.

While generally, the importance of child care programs for very young children is appreciated, there is a lack of understanding of the important role that school-age child care plays in the healthy development of children in the middle years. This focus section looks at some of the issues affecting middle childhood and how they can be addressed in school-age child care.



SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

School-Age Child Care

Where Does it Fit in the Child Care Patchwork?

Child care in Canada is often described as a patchwork of services and policies across the country. Dotted through that patchwork is school-age child care – hanging on resolutely, but pulling at the seams. While most policy makers acknowledge the importance of quality early learning and child care, there remains a lack of appreciation of the role that school-age child care plays in the healthy development of children in middle childhood.

Ironically, it's just at the stage that children need quality child care the most – when parent participation in the labour force surges (in 2003, of the 3,051,900 children with mothers in the paid labour force, 1,828,800 were in the 6 to 12 age range) – that the minimal community and policy supports to child care collapse.

Most children in Canada do not have access to quality school age programs. There are scattered services offered across the country, with only Québec offering a school-age strategy as part of its overall family policy.

From province to province to territory, school-age child care may be the responsibility of departments of education

“Family child care is an important option in school-age care. I’ve seen such value in the child staying in their own neighbourhood in a home setting, as opposed to staying in the school building.”



“Why does society value children from 9 am-12 noon and 1pm-3:30 pm when they are in school and then ignore them before school, at lunch and after school?”

or social services. Legislation is uneven across the country and is generally less stringent than for the care of younger children. For example, in some provinces, staff may not need training; summer programs may not need licenses. Often legislation fails to address the specific developmental needs of this age group in terms of staff qualifications, regulations and physical environment. Fee subsidies to parents below a minimum income level are usually not extended as child enters the school years.

Federally, the picture is even grimmer. With the exception of child care tax credit which can be applied in a limited way to school-age child care, the federal government plays no role in child care for this age group. The Universal Child Care Benefit launched in July 2006 – a direct payment of \$100 monthly (taxable) to parents – is limited to children under six. Where existing federal-provincial agreements (such as the Multilateral Framework Agreement) dedicate some funding to enhance child care practitioner wages



“Committed child care professionals can help support school-age children through the challenging times of peer pressure, bullying, and other social issues that this age group faces or will potentially face as they transition into their youth years.”



and programming, the funding is specifically dedicated to programs serving children in the early years (0-6).

The school-age child care community is of course aware of the importance of quality care and its needs for policy supports. The National Alliance for Children and Youth, comprised of approximately 50 organizations concerned with healthy child development, recognized the importance of school age child care through its Middle Childhood Initiative. As part of the initiative, it asked CCCF to submit a policy brief as one of several briefs on a range of topics pertaining to middle childhood. (see page 34 for more details).

The brief was developed through research and consultation with school-age child care practitioners that highlighted the evidence for stronger policy in support of school age child care and some of the issues affecting it. These issues include: as a lack of understanding of the developmental needs of

school-age children on the part of policy makers at the school-board, provincial and federal levels; lack of affordability, funding and spaces; the physical and environmental challenges of school-age programs which often don't have dedicated facilities; and lack of training and professional development for practitioners that address the specific developmental needs of this age group.

The brief also proposed a number of policy directions, such as establishing national standards for developmentally appropriate programming, provincial/territorial legislation that acknowledges the developmental stages of school-age children, more Canadian research on the middle years and the impact of child care, and a professional development strategy to build expertise in practitioners working with this age group.

Adapted by Lana Crossman from the Canadian Child Care Federation's *Policy Brief on School-Age Child Care*, 2006. To read the policy brief, please visit the "Interaction" page on the CCCF website: www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca

“While a good program is about child development, it needs to address the fact that children need down time after school, not more rules and expectations of sitting still and being quiet.”

Coming Next Issue!

Don't miss the spring 2008 issue of *Interaction* for an article by Diane McKean about a unique grade 4-6 leadership program at her Calgary school-age centre. The play-based, community-based program involves children in planning and facilitating clubs for the younger children with the support of a staff member, and involves them in projects addressing community and global issues.



SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

The Middle Years Matter

Toward a Policy Framework for Middle Childhood

by Lana Crossman

What do we know about the well-being of children ages 6-12? What do they need? How can we support their healthy development? Researchers, policy makers and community service providers from health, education and social sectors gathered at a national learning summit this past spring to discuss these questions and to work toward solutions.

The National Learning Summit on Middle Childhood was hosted in Ottawa by the National Alliance of Children and Youth (NACY). Guest speakers from across Canada provided overviews for participants of the latest research, knowledge and trends affecting children ages 6-12. These touched on the changing demographics of Canada and the increase of children in this age group from Aboriginal descent and from families who are new Canada. They also addressed as increasing rates of obesity and type 2 diabetes in school-age children, the impact of new technologies such as the Internet, changing dynamics of families and growing trend of mothers in the workforce. Breakout sessions explored these issues in more detail and provided opportunities for discussions around specific research, policy implications, and successful practices in program and service delivery.

The summit was the culmination of a Middle Childhood Initiative carried out by NACY, which brings together approximately 50 member organizations concerned with healthy child development. Funded by Human Resources and Social Development, the Middle Childhood Initiative involved participants from across the country to promote greater understanding of the complexity and inter-relatedness of issues affecting children ages 6-12 and their families through research,



community consultations, the development of policy briefs and policy framework for middle childhood.

The “calm years” of middle childhood?

NACY initiated this project in response to research showing that while this age group as a whole is doing well, more and more children in the middle years are experiencing or are at risk of significant physical and mental health problems and vulnerability. New research demonstrates that the middle years, once considered a calm period in comparison with the early years and adolescence, has become a time of concern in terms of physical, emotional and social health – to the point where this cohort of children could be the first generation to have poorer health status as adults than their parents.

A working group, consisting of NACY members and partner organizations with a demonstrated interest in the middle years, met regularly by teleconference and virtual communities. A literature review of current research and accompanying discussion paper highlighted the main concerns for this age group, which led to the development of policy papers on such topics as school-age child care, Aboriginal children, and physical education in schools. Drawing on this research, a policy framework was developed to suggest ways in which federal, provincial and municipal governments, schools and community-based organizations can together form a web of support for children during these years. Consultations then took place in communities across the country, from which common issues were identified and the policy framework was reviewed.

A Framework for the Middle Years

The framework was based largely on one developed by the Child and Youth Health Network for Eastern Ontario,



the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and United Way/Centraide Ottawa. It focuses on four key elements of healthy development – meeting fundamental needs, stable and nurturing relationships, opportunities to develop competencies, and safe and caring environments.

These elements in turn are influenced by the three major environments in which children live: Families, schools and communities. Research shows that in the middle years, families continue to be children's major influence. Nurturing, supportive families and positive consistent parenting styles have a strong influence on healthy child development, as do family income, social and educational status and employment experience.

The transition to middle childhood is marked by starting formal education, so that school begins to be a major

influence. Also, during these years, children begin to reach out to other community resources to take part in recreation, arts, club activities, taking important steps to become a citizen of the community. The graphic below illustrates how these environments and elements of healthy development can work together to support children.

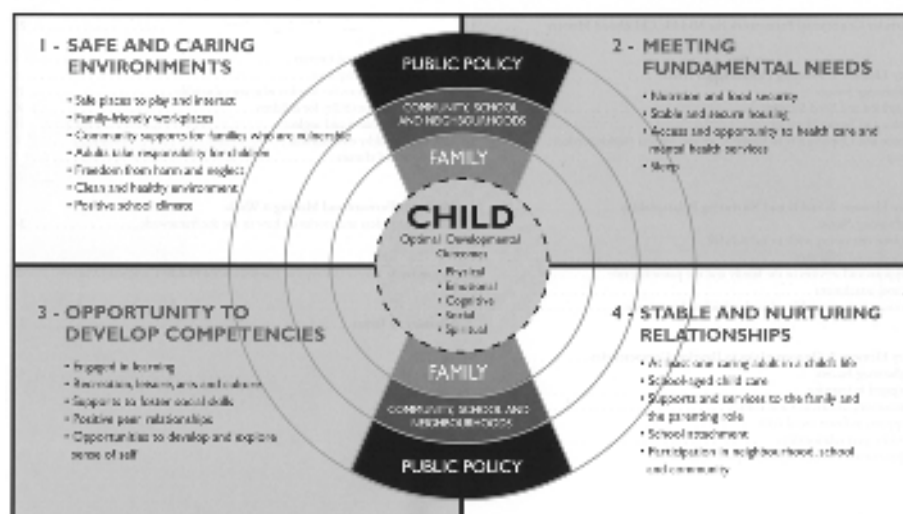
In his closing remarks at the summit, then executive director of NACY, Larry Gemmel, invited participants to “think of this event not as the end of a project, but as the beginning of a discussion to be continued in communities across Canada.”

For more information on the Middle Childhood Initiative and the issues it explored, visit the NACY website at www.nationalchildrensalliance.com.

Lana Crossman is communications manager at the Canadian Child Care Federation and editor of *Interaction*. © CCCF 2007.

School-Age Child Care and the Middle Years Framework

A Framework to Promote Healthy Development of Children 6 to 12



Policy, Community, School, and Family levels and families are all responsible for the healthy development of children aged 6 to 12 years.

Courtesy of the Child and Youth Health Network for Eastern Ontario, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and United Way/Centraide Ottawa.

School-age child care is a major foundational element in a middle years framework, as outlined in *Middle Childhood Matters – A framework to promote healthy development of children 6 to 12*, developed by Child and Youth Health Network for Eastern Ontario, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and United Way/Centraide Ottawa:

- Quality school-age programs provide **safe and caring environments** where adults have the best interests of the child at heart, where family/parent participation is encouraged, and where high standards of safety and cleanliness are met. In this environment, children have the opportunity to make friendships and be themselves, without worries of bullying.

- Strong public policy in terms of school-age care can help families **meet the fundamental needs** of their children. If affordable accessible care is available, parents can take part in the workforce and be able to provide nutritious meals, safe and stable housing, and health services.
- A well-developed curriculum in a school-age program provides children opportunities to **develop competencies** during this critical period as they begin to define their identities. Often school-age child care includes physical and arts activities that aren't covered in the school day or that parents cannot afford to provide otherwise.
- Children can **develop stable and nurturing relationships** with peers and with caring adults in a quality school-age program. If well integrated with school and community services, it encourages a sense of belonging to the school and neighbourhood.

Adapted from the Canadian Child Care Federation's *Policy Brief on School-Aged Child Care*, 2006.



SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

Building a Caring and Supportive Community

Setting the Stage for Positive Social Behaviours

by Deborah Stone-Zukowski

A school-age program offers children many opportunities to learn about themselves, get along with others, care about their friends, and be respectful, kind and compassionate. By being part of small community of peers, teachers, parents and others, children can learn and experience concepts of justice, fairness, responsibility, democracy and the importance of rules that make our society function.

As school-age child care professionals, we want to prepare the children in our program to be caring, compassionate individuals in society, who feel good about themselves and make positive contributions to their communities.

This is a big responsibility and the process is a long and challenging journey. Many school-age child care professionals find it difficult to meet the needs of children who engage in disruptive and anti-social behaviours. Some of these behaviours are situations of bullying, where children are harassed, alienated and isolated by others. At times when school-age professionals are desperate, they resort to a "time-out" for the child who displays inappropriate behaviour. This may stop the behaviour temporarily, but it will not help the child learn about what appropriate behaviour is expected, how to express their feelings effectively or how to work through conflicts by using problem solving skills.

School-age child care professionals are encouraged to examine all aspects of their programs carefully. Rather than focussing only on individual negative behaviours, they should strive to develop a caring and supportive community where appropriate social behaviours are nurtured. This involves a collaborative

effort on the part of staff, children and parents within the school-age program community.

A positive focus on desired social behaviours will help prevent inappropriate, anti-social behaviour. Children will learn what appropriate social behaviours are. They can practice strategies for getting along with others, and learn how to problem solve and work through conflicts in a positive way. They can learn how to recognize when they are losing control and how to respond respectfully, with caring and compassion. In this way, school-age children can develop social competence and inner control of their behaviour.

It is also important to talk about bullying; to recognize signs of bullying, step in and respond appropriately so that children learn about the impact of their behaviour on others and how to work through conflicts effectively. Parents also should be informed about goals that the school age program has established for promoting positive social behaviours.

In the process of developing a caring and supportive community, we need to understand what school-age children need in order to become socially competent and what school-age child care professionals can do to nurture this. Guidelines for establishing rules, alternatives to time-out and the steps of conflict resolution will also assist in this process.

What do school-age children need to become socially competent?

1. to **respect** themselves
2. to **recognize** their strengths, talents and uniqueness
3. to **respect** others regardless of any person's race, culture, beliefs or appearance
4. to **respect** toys, materials and furnishings in their program
5. a curriculum that is focussed on **their interests** and ideas
6. to be able to make **choices**
7. a **schedule that allows for flexibility** of meeting individual and group needs
8. to take on **responsibilities** by doing simple jobs and tasks
9. to **recognize conflict**, to know how to solve problems effectively
10. to **express a range of feelings** and emotions appropriately

What can school-age child care professionals do to support these developing needs?

1. Take **responsibility** for recognizing individual needs; take action to nurture and develop appropriate social behaviours.
2. Watch, look and listen to the children. **Anticipate** problem situations such as bullying.
3. **Step in** and assist them with what to say and do. Help them understand the effect of their behaviour on others.
4. **Be a detective.** Find out what may be causing repeated negative behaviours



5. **Consider the curriculum.** Is it age appropriate, interesting and challenging? Does it match their interests?
6. Ensure that the **schedule allows enough time** for working on activities and long-range projects
7. Be sure that the **space is suitable**. It shouldn't be restrictive of what they can do and should reflect a "home-like" atmosphere
8. Encourage the **sharing** of individual strengths and uniqueness.
9. Practice **conflict resolution skills** of conflict resolution.
10. Involve the children in setting a **few simple rules**. Be fair and consistent and follow-through.

Joyce Chapman and Louise Laturney at Conestoga's Silverheights Lab School were asked to comment on how school-age professionals can develop a positive sense of community in their program. They replied:

"In order to build a positive sense of community in a school-age program there must be a strong commitment to foster respect. Daily experiences promote problem solving, choice making, opportunities for success and positive social interactions. Respect for ones self, others and their belongings, and the environment is essential. To help children resolve problems relating to disrespectful behaviour, the following steps are taken: identify the behaviour; identify how the behaviour impacts others; identify alternatives and develop more effective strategies for next time."

Deborah Stone-Zukowski is a professor of Early Childhood Education at the Conestoga Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Kitchener, Ontario. © CCCF 2007

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Guidelines for establishing rules

1. Identify a few necessary rules; realistic rules that are easy to follow.
2. State rules positively; what the behaviour is that is expected.
3. Discuss what the rules mean; what respect means.
4. Discuss the reasons for rules.
5. Involve the children in the process of making rules.
6. Reinforce rules consistently.

Alternatives to "time-out"

1. Stop the behaviour; stay calm.
2. Set up a "Listening Table/Area".
3. Talk about the behaviour.
4. Help put feelings of anger into words.
5. Problem solve.
6. Discuss how to handle the situation better next time.

Process of conflict resolution

1. **Stop** the conflict. Separate the individuals; take time to cool down.
2. **Define** the problem. Listen, without judging or criticizing.
3. **Ideas**. Discuss how to change the situation – compromise, problem solve and cooperate.
4. **Evaluate**. Repeat ideas, discuss, ask questions and determine consequences.
5. **Decide** on a solution and plan on how to follow it through.

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SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

Media Education

Giving School-Age Children Essential Skills in an Information Age

by Warren Nightingale

Many children today spend more time interacting with media than they do attending school. Data from the 2005/2006 Health Behaviour and School-age Children Survey (HBSC) shows that children aged 10 to 16 are spending, on average, six hours per day watching television, playing video games and/or using the computer.

While young people are immersed in media environments – watching, reading, listening, interacting, and creating – they are learning about the world and forming perceptions of themselves and others. This “informal” learning is happening largely without adult guidance or critical reflection. In order to be literate today, young people need to develop a whole range of critical thinking, communication and information management skills to apply to their use of media – and media education is an essential tool in helping them acquire these skills. The following is an adaptation of an article by Warren Nightingale, entitled *Media Education: Make it Happen*.

Educators overwhelmingly agree that helping young people think critically about popular media is an important part of their job. In research conducted by Media Awareness Network in 2005, 88 percent of teachers see a critical role for themselves in developing media literacy skills in their

students, and 81 percent felt that media literacy should be an important part of a student’s education.

Educators may understand the importance of nurturing critical literacy skills, however, integrating media literacy into their program can seem intimidating, whether it is being done formally or informally. Educators needn’t be apprehensive. Here’s why:

Media education can be a shared experience for students and teachers.

“My students know more than I do!” This is the common concern among educators when it comes to multimedia. While students may have more familiarity with certain kinds of media (such as video games and social networking over the Internet), teachers have the life experience and critical thinking skills to pass on to students. Unlike any other topic, media education is the subject area where knowledge is equally shared between educators and students. This generates a unique dynamic, to foster creativity and enthusiasm from both parties.

Media education isn't about having the right answers: rather, it's about asking the right questions.

Because media issues are complex and often contradictory and controversial, the educator’s role isn’t to impart knowledge, but to facilitate the process of inquiry and dialogue. Media education encourages an approach that is always probing, posing questions such as: Who is the audience of a media production and why? From whose perspective is a story being told? How do the unique elements and codes of a specific genre affect what we see, hear or read? How might different audiences interpret the same media production?

Media are a part of life all kids enjoy and share.

Media is a stimulating and relevant topic for students – something they all have an opinion about and enjoy discussing. And they love the power that comes with understanding that all media productions – be it a drama or documentary, news report or advertisement – are constructed with a viewpoint and for a reason.

Media education has been called the perfect curriculum.

Media education is timely, it’s multidisciplinary, it’s easily assimilated into the classroom, and it promotes critical thinking skills. Media education is also embedded in reading, writing, listening and oral communication outcomes and lends itself perfectly to thematically organized education in the elementary and secondary grades. A wide range of themes can be addressed within a media education context including consumerism, global



issues, body image, representation of gender and diversity, and much more.

Media education acknowledges and builds on the positive and creative dimensions of popular culture.

Media education incorporates production of media texts and critical thinking – decoding, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating media – to help us navigate through an increasingly complex media landscape. That landscape includes not only traditional and digital media, but also popular culture texts such as toys, fads, fashion, shopping malls and theme parks.

This role of the education as a facilitator and co-learner in a student-centred learning process is not only the model for media education; it has also become an accepted new critical pedagogy. Today, the chief challenges are to locate and evaluate the right information for one's needs and to synthesize what one finds into useful knowledge or communication. Media education – with techniques of critical thinking, creative communication and computer, visual and aural literacy skills at its core – is a key part of a 21st century approach to learning.

Warren Nightingale is a media education specialist with the Media Awareness Network. Media Awareness Network (MNet) is a Canadian not-for-profit centre of expertise and excellence in media education and Web literacy. MNet's vision is to ensure children and youth possess the necessary critical thinking skills and tools to understand and actively engage with media. © 2007 Media Awareness Network

To help educators understand and facilitate media literacy in their classrooms, MNET has created *Media Education: Make It Happen!* – a program of free, bilingual media education resources. For more information, visit www.mediaeducationweek.ca.

National Media Education Week 2007 November 5-9

Media Awareness Network (MNet) and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) are partnering for the second consecutive year to present National Media Education Week, November 5-9, 2007. The purpose of the week is to promote media literacy as a key component in the education of young people, and to encourage the integration of media education into Canadian schools, homes and communities.

Mark your calendar and plan a media education activity for your program. For more information and activity ideas, visit www.mediaeducationweek.ca or contact Media Awareness Network at info@media-awareness.ca.

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SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

An Innovative Project to Address School-Age Child Care Training in Québec

by Monique Laprise

In Québec, school-age child care programs (SGMS) care for children before and after classroom hours, at lunchtime and during professional development days. School-age child care programs provide stimulating and attractive programs for children while providing parents with the assurance that their children are safe while they are at work. These programs have been part of the Québec child care landscape since 1979, and have expanded significantly as a result of education reform and family policy under the jurisdiction of the provincial ministry of education (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport – MELS).

In September 2006, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation du Québec (CSE) published a brief concerning SGMSs as part of its mandate to advise the Minister on all education-related matters and to report to the Minister on the status and needs of education. The report *School Daycare Services: Placing Quality at the Heart of Priorities*, is tabled in the National Assembly.

In its report, the CSE proposed five challenges for school daycare services which it deemed should be the object of particular focus for the next few years. One of these challenges is “upgrading the complementary education function of educators in school daycare services.” The report notes that it is often by demonstrating their pedagogical competencies that educators can make others recognize their skills and highlight the advantages of forging closer links with the school. However, it acknowledges this only happens through a planned approach that requires time and a certain level of competency in the field of child development and activity leadership.

With this in mind, the CSE made the following recommendations to enhance support of training of educators:

- that the MELS, the school boards and union leaders... raise educational and specialization requirements and improve wages and working conditions for SGMS staff
- that the MELS add to the SGMS regulations an obligation requiring SGMSs to develop a program of activities
- that the school boards adopt a professional development plan designed to promote access to training programs linked to employment qualifications, attendance at conferences and symposiums, and organizing and attending training sessions
- that school principals and the SGMSs facilitate access to continuing training activities for their staff in addition to developing and implementing an ongoing process for the self-assessment of SGMS quality

Training Innovation for School-Age Educators in St. Jérôme CEGEP¹

An innovative training project has been launched at the St. Jérôme CEGEP that addresses the challenge of staff training identified in the CSE brief. The project, coordinated by Camille Gariépy of the CEGEP's department of early childhood education techniques, was developed out of consultations with the SGMS educators in the Rivière du Nord school board and in collaboration with the school board.

In the consultations, early childhood educators noted that they found it difficult to get to evening classes under the traditional part-time teaching structure. This meant that at a rate of two courses per year, it could take 6 to 8 years for an educator to obtain their attestation of college studies (AEC) or diploma of college studies (DEC). The challenge, then, was to considerably reduce the length of training time while ensuring that it met a high standard.

After some consideration, we suggested the implementation of an AEC or DEC following the work/study approach – allowing early childhood educators to continue to work while taking courses during the day following a common schedule. In this approach, the educator's employer agrees to arrange the staffing schedule accordingly (by managing the shorter hours and work schedules), and pay for some of the training and other costs.

We are currently using this approach to train two cohorts of educators. One group is working towards an AEC on a work/study basis and one group that already has the AEC is working towards a DEC.

This approach recognizes that the students are working, gives consideration to their individual career paths, significantly reduces the training time required, and offers individualized and personalized supervision.



An individualized plan

After we receive the students' applications, we analyze them and establish a profile of the group and a list of appropriate competencies to offer them as a group. We then suggest to each student an individualized plan based on the list of competencies provided to be taught to the group. We complete the individualized plan by adding personalized solutions for any competencies or training elements not covered in the group list. Generally speaking, the participants complete their training in less than three years, rather than the six to eight years it was taking them to complete it on a part-time basis.

There are three training sessions per year: one in the fall (September to December) and two in the winter (January to March and April to June). Depending on the ability of the group, each session covers 180 hours – the equivalent to four 45-hour courses or three 60-hour courses.

Prior learning assessment (PLA) is offered for some courses to those candidates who are considered to have performed at a high level on the essential features of a competency. PLA is not appropriate for everyone, but for some students it formally recognizes their competencies, further reducing the training time required.

In evaluating competencies, the ability to perform and demonstrate the skills in question needs to be assessed. In the work/study approach, we transform work practicums to assess competencies, but also to develop an important and stimulating supervision structure with the students. Resources are allocated to the supervision of students, enabling us to offer an average of 25 hours of supervision per student to individualize and personalize teaching strategies.

The results of this innovative training approach have been overwhelmingly successful – so successful in fact that we came up with similar proposals for a group of family child care providers and early childhood educators working at private child care centres in the Laurentides area. Other school boards are also looking into the possibility of providing their employees with training using the work/study approach.

For more information on this training initiative, contact Camille Gariépy at cgariépy@estj.qc.ca or (450) 436-1580, extension 120. For general information about SGMSs in Quebec, please consult the Association des services de garde en milieu scolaire du Québec Web site at www.asgmsq.qc.ca.

Monique Laprise is a manager with the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation and an instructor at the St. Jérôme CEGEP. She also sits on the Canadian Child Care Federation's member council, representing CCCF's national members. © CCCF 2007

Footnotes

1. CEGEP is an acronym for Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel, meaning "College of General and Professional Education." CEGEPs are post-secondary education institutions exclusive to Quebec. Students enter CEGEP after grade 11 in order to prepare for university or technical college.

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RESEARCH UPDATES

What We Don't Know About Early Learning

A new report by the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) calls for a comprehensive strategy to gather more and better data on how our youngest Canadians learn. *The Report on the State of Early Childhood Learning* provides an overview of data available in terms of indicators of early childhood development, including birth weight, physical development and movement, cognitive development, language and communications skills development, and emotional and social development. However, the report points to significant gaps in knowledge on early childhood learning, that if not addressed, emerging challenges may be overlooked and effective tools to address learning challenges may not be developed. To read the full report, visit www.ccl-cca.ca.



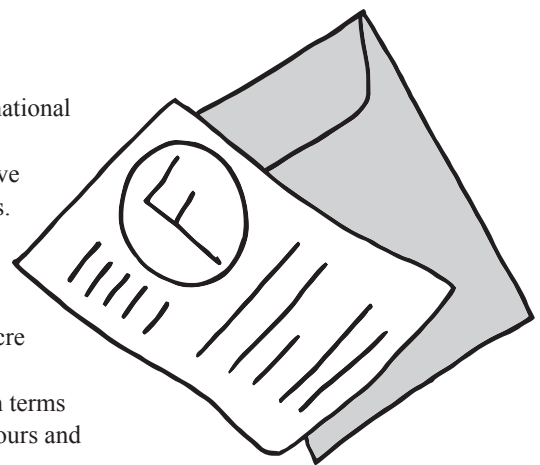
Work Family Balance

According to a recent Statistics Canada report, more Canadian fathers are taking time off work following the birth or adoption of a child, rising to 55 per cent from 38 per cent. The report, entitled *Navigating Family Transitions: Evidence from the General Social Survey*, speculates that this increase is due to extended leave benefits of up to 35 weeks, making mother more inclined to “share” leave time with their spouse or partners. The report also found that 62 per cent of mothers found the transition back to work to be stressful, one-fifth of them described it as very stressful, and nearly two-thirds of fathers said the return to work gave them little trouble. The report also shows that 8 in 10 parents would have stayed home longer with their children if finances had permitted. To read the full report, visit www.statscan.ca.

Disappointing Report Cards

Canada recently received low marks on three significant national and international report cards on child poverty and well-being.

- *Campaign 2000 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada* gave the federal government an “F” for cancellation of the bilateral agreements. The report calls for a universally accessible system of early learning and child care as one of the key pathways out of poverty for Canadian families. www.campaign2000.ca
- *2007 UNICEF Report Card on Child Well-Being* ranked Canada a mediocre 12 out of 21 countries in overall child-well-being as defined by the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Although Canada placed second in terms of educational well-being, it ranked close to the bottom for health behaviours and risks and parent and peer relationships. www.unicef-icdc.org
- *Save the Children's Eight Annual State of the World Mothers Report* ranked Canada 25th (down from 5th last year) out of the 43 most developed countries in the children's index of the report. Canada's drop in part comes with the inclusion of new survey criteria, such as pre-primary school enrollment, and the exclusion of indicators that most wealthier countries are doing well on, such as access to safe water and malnutrition.). www.savethechildren.ca.





ACROSS CANADA AND BEYOND

NATIONAL

According to the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS), all provinces and territories should adopt legislation requiring booster seats for children between 18 and 36 kilograms. CPS made the recommendation in its 2007 report, entitled *Are We Doing Enough?*, based on studies showing that motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of injury-related deaths for children. In a collision, children using seatbelts instead of back-seat booster seats are 3.5 times more likely to suffer a serious injury and four times more likely to suffer a head injury. Currently, less than half of the provinces and territories have any specific legislation regarding booster seats. Note: This summer, British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador announced changes to legislation making booster seats mandatory for children in a specified height, weight and age range. For more information, contact the individual provincial websites.

In May, Bill C-303, the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, passed at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with

Disabilities with a number of amendments. It will be presented at the House of Commons in the fall for the third reading. If passed, it will proceed to the Senate for review.

Throughout the spring and summer, Dr. Khristinn Kellie Leitch, met with stakeholders across the country (including the Canadian Child Care Federation) to inform recommendations on key federal priorities and opportunities in the domain of child and youth health. Dr. Leitch carried out these consultations as part of her mandate as advisor on Healthy Children and Youth by federal Health Minister Tony Clement. It is expected that she will submit a report to the Minister this fall based on the consultations.

In the spring, Canada came under fire for failing to meet its commitments to human rights and to the rights of the child. The Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission regarding lack of funding for First Nations child welfare, pointing to the "national disgrace" of 27,000 First Nations children currently in state

care in Canada. Further, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights tabled a report, entitled *Children: The Silenced Citizens* that urges the federal government to act immediately on its recommendations and to comply further with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The report maintains that children's rights are being ignored because of federal-provincial differences and recommends the establishment of an independent children's commissioner to monitor government implementation of children's rights and a federal interdepartmental implementation working group to coordinate and monitor federal legislation and policy affecting children's rights.

ALBERTA

In May, the Alberta government announced close to \$16-million toward creating more child care spaces, attracting and retaining qualified staff and making child care more affordable for parents. The funding includes \$5.6-million to improve subsidies for parents and to help child care programs cover the cost of processing subsidies; \$2-million to help cover the start-up costs of creating more child care spaces; and \$400,000 to create a marketing campaign to promote child care as a profession and to establish a staff-attracting incentive, including a \$5000 bonus to encourage those who

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BRITISH COLUMBIA

Families in British Columbia with children ages six to 12 who receive a child care subsidy for out-of-school child care received a subsidy increase effective September 1. The rate increased to \$8.50 per day or \$170 per month (up from \$147.56) for children in care for four hours or less per day. It increased to \$10 per day or \$200 per month (up from \$173) for those in care for more than four hours per day. The increase affects an estimated 13,300 children and 10,000 families across the province.

In June, the BC Chamber of Commerce passed a Childcare Resolution at its annual general meeting stating that the business community views child care as one of the key factors in addressing the province's labour shortage and believes that "a comprehensive strategic plan for the child care in BC is critical to staying competitive in today's global economy." It also states that "recent cuts from the federal government to the childcare industry in BC are having a domino effect on the workforce of BC."

MANITOBA

In May, the New Democratic Party won an unprecedented third majority in Manitoba's provincial election. The government has committed to investing an additional \$11-million over 2008 and 2009 to create 2500 newly funded child care spaces, set up a \$1-million training and recruitment fund for early childhood educators and increase operating grants to allow for a six per cent salary increase (three per cent in both 2008 and 2009).

NEW BRUNSWICK

The Government of New Brunswick held public consultations through the summer to gather input leading to the development of a new long-term plan for early learning and child care in the province. At time of printing, the results of the consultation were not yet available. In June, the province announced plans on how it will use its \$8-million trust fund for ELCC, which was established through the bilateral agreement reached with the previous federal government in November 2005. The one-time fund will be available to applicants for projects to develop and implement English and French early learning and child care curriculum; provide training for child care workers; and create new rural, infant, non-traditional and seasonal child care spaces. The province estimates that 750 new spaces will be created through the fund.

NEWFOUNDLAND

In July, the Government of Newfoundland announced increases under its Poverty Reduction Strategy to the private child care allowance, the Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit (NLCB), and the Mother-Baby Nutrition Supplement (MBNS). Those on income support who cannot access a regulated child care provider in their community will receive an increase from \$325 to

\$400 per month for the first child and from \$125 to \$200 for each subsequent child. The first child rate under the NLCB will be increased by \$5 per month to reach \$332 annually. The MBNS will be increased by \$15, from \$45 to \$60 per month.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

In the spring, the NWT government announced a 30 per cent increase in contributions for both the start-up and operation of family child care and child care centres. Also, \$125,000 in new funding will be made available to provide licensed, non-profit child care facilities with assistance towards rent or mortgage costs. The government will also be investing \$5.1-million over the next five years toward its action plan on family violence, including programs for children who witness violence and identifying best approaches to implement family violence prevention actions.

NOVA SCOTIA

In July, Nova Scotia's Department of Community Services announced a \$4.9-million Outdoor Play Space Grant available to child care centers to upgrade their playgrounds. Full-and part-day licensed child care centres, including school-age centres and family home agencies, were invited to apply for the grant, to be used for expenses such as landscaping, fencing and equipment. In the spring, the NS government also announced a \$22-million investment in family child care, allowing child care providers access to professional support to enhance their services, and \$10-million to assist licensed child care facilities to expand or add new child care spaces.

ONTARIO

In July, the province of Ontario announced a \$142.5-million funding boost to sustain 7000 new licensed spaces and to create a regulatory College of Early Childhood Educators to maintain professional standards of practice among child care practitioners. This includes \$105.7-million in new funding to sustain child care spaces, including 300 new licensed and culturally-appropriate child care spaces for Aboriginal children in targeted off-reserve communities, and support to municipalities for their child care requirements. \$24.8 is earmarked to provide an average wage increase of three per cent for close to 34,000 child care practitioners across the province. Finally, \$12-million will be set aside to provide improved access to training and to support the creation of the College for ECEs.

In response to extensive media reports that complaints of abuses taking place in child care centres were insufficiently addressed by Ontario's licensing department, the province launched a public website (www.ontario.ca/licensedchildcare) that lists all licensed child care programs and indicates if there are licensing issues associated with a particular program.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

After a provincial election in late May, a new majority Liberal government was sworn in. Doug Currie is the new minister of the Department

of Social Services and Seniors, the ministry responsible for child care.

SASKATCHEWAN

In late May, the Government of Saskatchewan announced \$1.4-million in funding to create 550 new child care spaces in early learning and child care centres across the province. Almost half of the spaces are planned for rural communities, with the others split between Prince Albert and the North, Regina and Moose Jaw, and Saskatoon. The spaces have been allocated based on priorities set by the government reflecting school-linkages, rural and Northern development, services offering non-standard or extended hours of care, services linked to post secondary education and those that support immigrant families.

YUKON

In late May, the Yukon government announced that it will increase funding to child care by \$5-million over the next five years. \$500,000 will be immediately applied to improving wages and increasing the parent subsidy program. In the second year, \$1-million will be provided to enhance these areas further and for training to assist in the recruitment and retention of child care workers. In years three to five, there will be additional funding of \$1.1-million, \$1.2-million and \$1.2-million. Also a one-time child care capital fund of 1.3-million has been established to create more spaces for infants, in locations with an identified need, and for spaces that specifically accommodate the educational and cultural needs of parents and children.

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

13-14

Gander, Newfoundland

15th annual conference of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador

For more information, visit www.aecenl.ca

19-20

Calgary, Alberta

Children Matter Symposium – Halfway There: A Canada Fit for Children in a World Fit for Children

This symposium aims to promote a broader understanding of the rights of the child and to provide participants with opportunities to consider how their understanding of children's rights can inform practices. 150 delegates are expected, primarily child care and health care professionals. Key note speakers include the Honorable Landon Pearson, Dr. Margo Greenwood, and Sandra Griffin. Practical workshops and plenary session will provide participants with practical ways



to implement children's rights in their work with children and youth. Contact Ellen Murray for more information, emurray@mtroyal.ca.

24-26

Hamilton, Ontario

Rising to the Challenge

This annual conference of the Home Child Care Association of Ontario will feature keynote speakers Charles Coffey and Stephen Lewis, and workshops on curriculum & research, human resources, leadership & professionalism. For more information, visit www.hccao.com.

NOVEMBER

2-4

Markham, Ontario

2007 Management in Action Conference

Hosted by the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario, this conference offers sessions designed to meet the needs of owners and managers, and top quality professional development opportunities for staff. For more information, visit childcaretoday.ca.

5-9

National

National Media Education Week

Media Awareness Network (MNet) and the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF) are partnering for the second consecutive year to present, National Media Education week. The purpose of the week is to promote media literacy as a key component in the education of young people, and to encourage the integration of media education into Canadian schools, homes and communities. For more information, visit: www.mediaeducationweek.ca.

20

National

National Child Day

National Child Day commemorates two historic events for children – the adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Child* in 1959 and the UN adoption of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1989. This is a day when people across the country take time each year to celebrate Canada's most precious resource—our children. It is a day to remember that children need love and respect to grow to their full potential and to celebrate the family and think about how adults effect the development of children close to them. **2007 theme: "I have the right to be active!"** For more information, visit www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca.

22-24

Vancouver, B.C.

Journeys of the Spirit: Inclusive Aboriginal Child Care

10th annual conference of the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society will feature workshops on supporting children with special needs. For more information, visit: www.acc-society.bc.ca.

JANUARY 2008

January 31 - February 02

Vancouver, B.C.

The Early Years Conference 2008: Valuing All Children

This conference promotes the idea that all children have the right to opportunities for realizing their full potential. Some children, due to different circumstances are more vulnerable and will need extra support in achieving their potential. For further information, visit www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Early_Years.htm

MARCH

16-19

Banff, Alberta

Effective Early Learning Programs: Research, Policy and Practice

40th annual Banff International Conference on Behavioral Science. This 3-day conference co-sponsored by the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, the Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre and the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network will gather key international researchers to review effective early learning programs on language and literacy, numeracy and social learning. For more information, visit: www.banffbehavsci.ubc.ca.

APRIL

26

Richmond Hill, Ontario

Explore the Power of Studio Art Materials to Expand and Deepen Inquiry and Learning

This conference hosted by the Acorn Collaborative includes a hands-on presentation, centre tours and reception. For more information, visit www.acorncollaborative.ca

RESOURCES

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: First Nations, Inuit and Métis (2007)

This adaptation of the Canada Food Guide addresses growing health concerns such as childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes within Aboriginal communities. It incorporates traditional foods such as bannock, wild game and wild plants. For more information, visit the Health Canada website at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/pubs/fnim-pnim/index_e.html.

Acting Out: Understanding and reducing aggressive behavior in children and youth (2007)

This new publication presented by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health aims to help parents, caregivers and teachers to understand

the causes of aggressive behavior in children and discusses approaches to handling it. For more information, visit: <http://www.camh.net>.

What is all That Crying About? (2007)*

This issue of the Bulletin of the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development highlights current research on infant crying. It looks at why babies cry at various developmental stages and discusses how the ways a parent deals with infant crying can have an impact on the social and emotional development of the child. Further, it suggests ways to cope with crying to avoid Shaken Baby Syndrome. For more information, visit www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca.

Child Care Human Resources Sector Council: Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project (2007)

The Career Promotions and Recruitment Strategy Project was carried out by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council as part of a strategy to address the serious problems of recruitment and retention that face the field. This document summarizes the results of the project, highlighting the reasons why early childhood educators leave the field and why people are not choosing child care as a career. It also addresses the positive aspects of the career and common misconceptions about the field. For more information, visit: www.ccscc-cssge.ca.

Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre: Language Development in Young Children (2007)

This issue of the Bulletin of the Canadian Council on Learning's Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre was produced in collaboration with the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network. It demonstrates the need for evaluation of young children to identify different types of speech disorders. It also includes suggestions on how to treat these disorders as a means of preventing further harm to the child's language, academic and social development. For more information, visit: www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/AboutCCL/KnowledgeCentres/EarlyChildhoodLearning/index.htm.

Erratum:

Please note on page 41 of the spring issue of *Interaction* (Vol. 21, No. 1), there were errors in the brief news item on the significant subsidies announced by the Saskatchewan government in fall 2006. All eligible child care providers did indeed receive the subsidy in September/October 2006 – which represents the largest single-year increase in the history of the province's 30-year subsidy program. Also the information noting that parents pay 15 per cent of the cost while 85 per cent is covered by the provincial subsidy is meant to be an average; in some cases parents pay more than 15 per cent.

Early Childhood Education Media Resources

*Current, Canadian and relevant
for colleges, universities and practitioners.*

The Science of Early Child Development

(developed in partnership with the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, University of Toronto)

A media rich, online 'live' curriculum that presents current research and links it to early childhood practice.

Available as a resource (multimedia textbook) and as a course package

Information / Order

www.scienceofecd.com



Family Resource Programs

DVD with 4 programs:

*Supporting Babies
Supporting the Early Years
Supporting Communities
Supporting Families*

Available in English and French

Our Children, Our Ways: Early Childhood Education in First Nations and Inuit Communities

DVD with 6 programs:

*Childcare in Our Communities
Keeping Our Languages
Telling Stories, Reading Books
Supporting Children's Art
Music and Dance
Exploring the Natural World*

Machines

DVD

A realistic and entertaining example of an emergent curriculum project in which staff and children explore a common interest in machines with moving parts.

One of many videos included in *Science of ECD* - now available separately.

Information / Order

www.rrc.mb.ca/ece