

Interaction

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 2, FALL 2013

How Child Care Supports Families in Canada



Generation Squeeze

How Affordable Child Care is a Key Part of the Policy Solution to Support Families

Barriers to Closeness in Child Care: The Teacher's Perspective

Online Professional Development

Meeting the Challenge: Effective Strategies for Challenging Behaviours in Early Childhood Environments

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One new resource sheet accompanies this issue:

#102 – *Child Care: A Canadian Snapshot*



The photo for the front cover was taken by Sylvia Sedore at Seneca College's Lab School, King Campus.

Interaction

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Email: info@ccc-fcsge.ca; Web: www.ccc-fcsge.ca

Behind the Scenes

Like most parents, I'll never forget that feeling of leaving my first child, only one and a half-years-old, with my child care provider for the first time. What I didn't realize then was how lucky I was to have my child in a program with such well-educated and trained staff. I began to see that not only was my child getting the best personal care and support for her well-being, but that my husband and I were too. As a new mom, some mornings I arrived in tears, unable to dress my child or feed her without her writhing on the floor, screaming in protest to everything I was asking of her, in my haste to get to work on time in the morning. My child care provider and the director sat me down at the end of the day to discuss ways I could get her to cooperate in the morning and get us out of our power struggle. They talked to me about transitions and emotional development, suggested I create a poster with stickers and rewards to work through the morning dressing and teeth-brushing routines, drawn on the poster in squares of a weekly calendar. They also offered me some good books and DVDs on the subject of dealing with challenging behaviours. But mostly they listened and did not judge me. I felt their support much like an extended family, which I did not have living in my city at the time. This is how quality child care support families.

This issue of Interaction looks how child care programs go above and beyond the immediate care of the children to support Canadian families at the personal level, the family level and the national economic and political level. Read about how military base child cares support the unique emotional and logistics needs of children whose parents serve in the military. And read about how child care is an integral part to building better economic prosperity for the generation squeezed between caring for their children and caring for their aging parents.

This fall also marks National Child Day – celebrated November 20th annually. Send in your National Child Day activities on our Facebook page and look for others on our website in the Topics section.

Claire McLaughlin, Editor
cmclaughlin@ccc-fcsge.ca

Editor	Claire McLaughlin
Design	Fairmont House Design
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CEO	Don Giesbrecht
Publications Manager	Claire McLaughlin
Senior Consultant	Robin McMillan

CCCf is about the value of children. We *value* children.

In order to protect and enhance our children, to promote their safety and their healthy growth and development, we are committed to providing Canadians with the very best in early learning and child care knowledge and best practices.

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INSIDE THE FEDERATION

National Child Day 2013 – November 20th

The right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind

In light of the recent attention on the issue of children's safety and well-being while in child care, the Canadian Child Care Federation would like to use the opportunity of National Child Day to focus on high quality, safe and developmentally appropriate environments for all children. That is why CCCF has selected *Article 19, the Right to Be Protected from Being Hurt and Mistreated, in Body or Mind* as the theme for National Child Day this year.

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

1. *"States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury*

or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child."

2. *"Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement".*

Article 19, in child friendly language:

"You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated in body or mind."

Contact Robin McMillan, Senior Project Consultant at rmmillan@cccf-fcsge.ca, about your National Child Day activities so that they can be shared with others, or share National Child Day ideas on our Facebook page.





CCCF Welcomes New Board Member

CCCF is happy to announce that Taya Whitehead from ECEBC was appointed to the CCCF Board effective August 1, 2013, for a one year term. Christine McLeod will remain on the board for a one year appointment for the same term. Taya and Christine join April Kalyniuk (Chair), Linda Skinner (Treasurer), Marni Flaherty (Director) and Cynthia Dempsey (Director) on the CCCF Board for 2013-2014.

Welcome to New Member Council Representatives

CCCF welcomes Jean Robinson, representing Early Childhood Care and Education New Brunswick, effective August 1, 2013.

Farewell to outgoing Board Member and Member Council Representative

We also wish to thank outgoing Board member, Carol Langner who served eight years on the board. We wish her well in her future professional endeavours.

And we wish to thank Denise Marshall from ECEBC for her contributions to the board during her term.

Online Professional Development - Meeting the Challenge

Based on our popular resource *Meeting the Challenge* by Barbara Kaiser and Judy Skylar Rasminsky, our revised, online course will be offered in a six-unit format to be completed over a period of six weeks. Upon completion, participants will receive a certificate. This is a wonderful opportunity to stay up to date on your PD from the comfort of your home.



Check out our website and Facebook page for more details on this course and our other online PD opportunities featuring CCCF resources!



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FROM WHERE I SIT

Why Invest in Children and Families?

by CCCF President Don Giesbrecht

After a lengthy absence from media, child care was back in the national news and Canadian consciousness, following a series of very troubling incidents in unlicensed, unmonitored, unregulated care arrangements across Canada. It is certainly not our desire that it takes the media and society to ask tough questions about child care in Canada as a result of tragedy, but all too often, tragedy is the requirement for the spotlight to be shone.

The resulting media attention has brought to light the glaring inequities in the care and education of Canada's youngest citizens. Despite the obvious facts, which are outlined below, Canada is without a national plan for children, preferring to this point, to apparently hope for the best and better yet, to politicize the investment in and need for leadership and sound public policy.

Each province and territory has legislation and policy for early learning and child care, yet they apply and enforce it in varying degrees of effectiveness and will. In no other age sector of Canadian society do we witness such ambivalence and lack of policy and commitment as we do for our youngest. Do families have to find care for their elderly members on an ad hoc basis? Do we require families to sit on waiting lists to enter elementary and high schools in their communities and in the meantime, piece together alternate arrangements while they wait? There are many more examples, but the point is obvious: Canadian society, its economy and workforce changed many years ago and our understanding of the science of the early years and

brain development has changed dramatically along with it. It is embarrassing that we continue to spin our wheels and have to continue to rehash why child care and early learning are fundamental to Canadian families and that in fact, inaction is a wasted opportunity.

Why invest in children and families?

- 73.5 percent of mothers with children ages 0-5 are in the workforce
- 84 percent of mothers with children ages 6-15 are in the workforce
- 3.09 million children in Canada ages 0-12 have a mother in the workforce
- 921,841 regulated/funded/monitored child care spaces in Canada
- 22.5 percent of children ages 0-12 have access to a regulated/funded/monitored child care space
- Annual cost of child care in Quebec is \$1,820/year
- Annual cost of preschool age care in Manitoba is \$5,480/year
- Median cost of preschool age care in Alberta is \$9,480/year
- Average cost of a year of undergrad tuition at a Canadian university is \$5,366/year

The above figures demonstrate why we need a national plan for children. Families need care, yet the majority of care is provided in unmonitored/regulated environments (and to be clear, there are some amazing care providers across Canada that work in this market, but each province and territory have spelled out rules on how many children can be cared for in an unlicensed environment. Do they all comply?

Costs for child care continue to rise, adding to the overall debt that families are carrying today. Child care is more expensive than a year of undergraduate university tuition. The child care sector still struggles with issues of wages, benefits and retention of a skilled, qualified workforce. Quality care is paramount and should be developmental and not just custodial, which addresses the need for quality early years education AND care and the science of early childhood brain development. This illustrates why children should be valued and be made a priority. Investing in quality care is not an affront to the sanctity of Canadian families, but rather supports and enhances the modern Canadian family.

Two strengths of the Canadian Child Care Federation have always been its networks and its coast-to-coast-to-coast representation of Canada's early childhood and care sector. As an organization, we know first-hand the value of children and the importance of leadership and public policy for children and families. We also know that Canada is falling short. It's time to do better.



Linda McDonell, Winner of the CCCF's Award for Excellence in Child Care writes about her career

The Life Behind, the Life Ahead: A Career in Early Childhood Education & Care

by Linda McDonell

My grandmother used to state with great conviction, "I tell you, as you get older the time just keeps on going faster. It's true! I know because I watch it happen!" She would make this last statement pointing accusingly at her state-of-the-art digital clock as though the technology itself was to blame. I had to agree (about both the time and technology!). I too experienced the time passing too quickly as I raced through my busy life being wife, mother, daughter, grand-daughter, early childhood educator, manager of my own child care centre, and activist for early childhood. I have to admit that it is different now though. As I look back on my life and long career in early childhood, I recognize that when the years ahead of you can only be fewer than the ones behind, every moment becomes much more precious and the quality of both what lies behind and ahead becomes more important.

A few months ago, the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF) announced that I was the recipient of their *Award for Excellence*. This is a great honour - all the more valued because of the wonderful group of women who nominated me - all of whom have been first colleagues and then close friends throughout the last thirty plus years. These women also had an enormous influence on the professional I would become and my capacity to receive such an honour. When notified that I was the successful candidate, I was asked to write an article for *Interaction* that reflects on my career as an early childhood professional. Interestingly, the timing of the award (and the request to write the reflective article) was just a few weeks after to my retirement from Vancouver Island University. Interesting, because I was already deeply engaged in thought about how I had spent the previous forty years! The following is intended to provide a somewhat abridged account of my long career in early childhood.

At the tender age of nine years, I am proud to say, I undertook my first advocacy role as president of *The Kindness Club (TKC)*. TKC was a neighbourhood club of about 10 little girls who raised money through backyard bazaars for the Colonist 500 Fund which provided support to disadvantaged families at Christmas time. I am not so proud that, at that time, I was a bit of a despot as president. While the other girls were quite happy with me in this role in the beginning, later when they wanted a turn to be president I informed them that it wasn't possible as I had to be president because the meetings were at *my* house. When they suggested we could hold meetings at another house I told them, "No I am president, I get to decide where we hold the meetings!" Fortunately, I became considerably more democratic as I grew older and took on new executive roles.

My interest in working with children also started early. I loved to babysit and quite happily accepted my first low wage job in child care (earning twenty-five cents an hour - low even for 1961) looking after a wonderful little girl in my neighbourhood. Later, I was nanny to my sister's five boys in Hawaii. Although that also paid poorly, there were excellent benefits such as swimming at beautiful Kailua Beach with my small charges! In 1971, recognizing both a love and talent for working with small children, I enrolled in the Pre-School Supervisor Training Program at Camosun College. I was very lucky to learn under the tutelage of Roberta 'Bobby' Emery and Barbara West, both teachers at Goosey Gander Kindergarten in Gordon Head, Victoria. These women helped to bring me and others into the seventies with new ideas that challenged us to both cast out old ideas about 'teaching' preschoolers the three R's and instead provide an interesting and stimulating learning environment that supports children to explore and experiment with their world through play.



In this way, we allowed children to create and discover learning that was individually meaningful and intrinsically developmentally appropriate. With my new friend Kathy, who was a student with me at Camosun and who had also become a disciple of the new teaching method, Hobbit Hole Nursery School opened its doors in 1974 in View Royal, Victoria. We began with two preschool teachers and six children attending four mornings a week, expanding by the end of the school year to two buildings, four teachers and twenty-six children. We only had bathrooms in one building so we put a bell on the door so we would know when children came and went to the toilet, dashing up and down the stairs in the rain! While the fours were most often independent in this activity, the threes would always be accompanied. In the main play-room without running water, teachers would run up and down the stairs with buckets of water for washing up. We also had a beautiful, natural playground with an old boat, a huge sandbox, and limited fencing. Our first playground at the front of St. Columba Church had an asphalt pathway that lead to a busy country road from which we protected the children, often furiously pedaling down the path, with a stop sign at the point where they were expected to turn their bikes around! They always did.

In the late spring of 1975, Kathy and I attended our first BC Pre-School Teachers Conference (to become Early Childhood Educators of BC in 1989). It was on the evening of that Annual General meeting when I watched the goings on of the women at the front (the intelligent, beautiful and intensely committed Kay Britton was President at the time) that I vowed to become a 'real' professional and join those women at the front of the room. Thus began my long and unwavering commitment to the development of the early childhood profession, to multiple leadership positions both with the Victoria Branch of the organization and later in the mid-eighties through 1995 holding different positions on the BCPSTA/ECEBC Executive Council, including my final years as President and position on the CCCF Member Council. I was the first President of ECEBC to have an Executive Director (ED). How lucky I was. Joyce Branscombe became my steady Advisor as ED and the one who lead ECEBC in that position for eight years. Those years became what many of us referred to as the 'heydays'! With Joyce's direction and the leadership of an amazing group of women the organization grew to over 1600 members. These

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women including Joyce, Sandra Griffin, Judy Pollard, Trudy Norton, myself, and countless others provided both vision and leadership to move the organization forward, toward a shared goal of establishing a regulated profession for early childhood. While the goal of a legislated profession was not accomplished by the end of our tenure, the funds and work that were generated during those years through both the federal government (Child Care Initiative Fund) and provincial funding helped to solidify a higher profile for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), the importance of extended training and education through a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care, and allowed us to begin to articulate a vision of a Bachelor's degree in early childhood. Much work was

also undertaken in those years, building on the work of earlier BCPSTA/ECEBC leaders, building and supporting national organizations such as the Canadian Child Care Federation, harnessing the support of key government staff such as Gayle Davies (Community Care Facilities Branch, Ministry of Health), and Jean Campbell (Ministry of Advanced Education) to begin to operationalize our dreams. Years of work across many people, government agencies, and organizations influenced positive change to the child care regulation, the legislation of entry requirements to the field, creating a provincial and national Code of Ethics for ECE, strengthening of early childhood occupational standards and many other initiatives. I am intensely proud of my contributions to this vision and to the important work undertaken in those years.

Having completed an undergraduate degree in 1991 in Child and Youth Care (CYC) and a Masters degree in CYC at the University of Victoria, my work shifted from the 'front-line' to both research and post-secondary instruction in the early nineties. When I worked with the Research Unit at UVIC under the direction of Dr. Alan Pence, I was employed by Malaspina University College (later to become Vancouver Island University). This was an exciting time for me as I accepted the challenge to transfer the knowledge and skill of an ECE working with children and families, the skills honed by many years in various leadership positions with ECEBC (including a second term as president in 2000-2002), and my newly developed interest in research, to one who's responsibility it was to prepare ECEs. Over these next two decades I sharpened my skills as a post-secondary educator and began to stretch my learning into new but related areas including program and curriculum development in Aboriginal and International Early Childhood Development. Along with other faculty at Vancouver Island University (VIU) and the Aboriginal communities in the



Central and South Island regions, a new position was created at VIU (2003-2008) to strengthen educational programming to be increasingly culturally sensitive, and further support Aboriginal ways of knowing and being. The position was intended to ensure Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students would increasingly work in ways that would more fully support the healthy, holistic development of Aboriginal children and their families. I was fortunate to finish my time at VIU in this position in March, 2013. This position provided many rich opportunities to work alongside First Nation Elders and other community members, as well as faculty and staff at VIU to refine and further develop our collaborative vision.

I cannot provide an accounting of my professional life without acknowledging the importance of my family to my achievements. My husband, daughters, parents, other family members, and friends have often taken second place as I charged through my exciting and constantly demanding work life. (My 17 year old daughter attended her last year of high school with me commuting weekly from my job at Malaspina. My parents shook their head sadly as I found alternative (and additional) accommodation in Nanaimo so I could take on my new job. My first granddaughter was born while my

colleagues and I cheered my daughter on from a Ottawa hotel. My husband recovered from an angioplasty with nightly phone calls from his wife working with others in Ontario on the development of a book to support parents looking for child care. Without their sacrifices, their love and their willing support I could not have continued doing the work I have loved so much and contributed to the development of our field in the way I have been able to do. I thank all of my family, mentors (both names and unnamed) and friends for this support. As well, I acknowledge all families who have contributed to the advancement of early childhood by supporting their loved ones to be the advocates, the educators and the leaders. I think this is especially important for women, who without others to be there, would not be able to absent themselves from time to time from their children's and husband's lives. Although I too, as my grandmother did, shiver at the rapid passing of time and life I look back on those years that lie behind with pride and admiration for the efforts of so many to transform and advance our ideas about children, family, education, and care and to create a more caring and responsive society. I also look forward to the possibilities and temptations of what *lies ahead* to support the continuation of this vital work!

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Does Child Care Make a Difference to Children's Development?

Clarifying Common Assumptions About Child Care

by Lauren Lowry

Clinical staff writer at The Hanen Centre
(Originally published in 2011 by The Hanan Centre)

Over 70% of children in Canada are in some kind of child care arrangement and this number is similar in other countries. Usually, children are placed in child care because both parents are working. However, sometimes, parents are advised by a professional to enroll their child in child care because this environment will promote their child's development.

Parents have many questions about child care and we thought it would be helpful to identify some common assumptions about the effects of child care and report on what the research actually shows. The first few assumptions relate to typically-developing children, and the final three assumptions relate to children with special needs.

Assumptions about typically-developing children and child care

Children who attend child care have better outcomes than children who are cared for at home by their mothers

FALSE: A study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in the US looked at the influence of both child care and the home environment on over 1,000 typically-developing children [1]. They found that:

- “children who were cared for exclusively by their mothers did not develop differently than those who were also cared for by others”. [1, p.1]

They also found that

- “parent and family characteristics were more strongly linked to child development than were child care features”. [1, p.1]

This means that families have a greater impact on how a child develops than child care does.

Two family features that had a significant influence on children's development were the quality of:

- **mother-child interactions** – children's outcomes were better when mothers were responsive, sensitive, attentive, and provided good stimulation during interactions.
- **the family environment** – families which had organized routines, books and play materials, and engaged in stimulating experiences both in and out of the home (outings, library trips, etc.) had children with better social and cognitive outcomes.

The take-home message...

Children who attend child care have the same outcomes as children who are cared for at home.

Children who attend child care have the same outcomes as children who are cared for at home. Whether a child attends daycare or not, it is the family that has a major impact on their child's development, with the parents' interactions with the child being a critically important factor.

Child care centres are better for children's development than home-based child care settings

TRUE and FALSE: The NICHD study [1] compared children who attended child care centres with children who attended home-based care (e.g. a home-based daycare, or care within the child's home by someone other than the child's parents). They found that centre-based child care was linked to:

- somewhat better cognitive and language development
- better pre-academic skills involving letters and numbers
- fewer behaviour problems at ages 2 and 3
- more behaviour problems at age 4 ½ (such as disobedience and aggression)

Therefore, there appear to be pros and cons to both centre-based and home-based child care settings.

It doesn't matter which child care a child goes to since most are of high quality

FALSE: The majority of child care settings provide children with a warm, supportive environment that protects children's



health and safety [2]. However, only a small percentage of children in child care receive caregiving which promotes and stimulates development.

Studies have shown that:

- “most child care settings in the United States provide care that is “fair” (between “poor” and “good”)” [1, p.11].
- only about a third of child care centres and a third of family home daycares in Canada encourage children’s social, language and cognitive development [2].
- there is some evidence that child care centres that are inclusive (that welcome and accommodate children with special needs) tend to be of higher quality than noninclusive programs [3].

What contributes to high quality child care? The NICHD [1] found that high quality care was related to the amount of “positive caregiving” provided, which means that caregivers or teachers:

- show a positive attitude
- have positive physical contact with the children
- respond frequently to the children’s vocalizations
- ask questions
- encourage the children
- sing songs and read books
- encourage and advance the children’s behaviour
- discourage negative interactions

The language used by the caregiver was the most important factor that predicted children’s cognitive and language outcomes.

Of all of these factors, the **language used by the caregiver** (e.g. making interested comments in response to what children say, asking questions, responding to vocalizations) is the most important factor that predicted children’s cognitive and language outcomes .

The take home message...

Parents cannot assume that all child care centres are of high quality, and should look for the “positive caregiving” qualities above when choosing a child care. The NICHD provides a “Positive Caregiving Checklist” to guide parents in selecting high quality child care. The checklist is available on their website at www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/upload/seccyd_06.pdf (see page 36).

Regulated/licensed child care centres provide better quality child care than centres or home daycares that do not meet such standards

TRUE: In many regions, there are minimum standards outlined by the government known as “regulable features” [1]. These features include factors like the adult-to-child ratio, group size,

and the child care provider’s training. In Canada, child care centres or family child care settings that have met these minimum requirements are known as “regulated” [4].

The NICHD study [1] found that:

- children in child care centres that met more standards (such as adult-to-child ratio, caregiver’s education level, and class size) tended to have better outcomes than children in centres that met fewer standards.

The NICHD also found a connection between these features that were regulated and the extent of positive caregiving provided at a centre:

- “the more standards a child care setting meets, the more positive the caregiving. The more positive the caregiving, the higher the quality of care and the better the children’s outcomes” [1, p.12].

Therefore, regulated child care centres tend to provide more positive caregiving, which means that the children benefit more from this type of high quality care.

Children who attend high quality child care have better outcomes than children who attend lower quality child care

TRUE: We know that a child’s family and home environment influences his development more than child care does. However, the reality is that many children attend child care. The NICHD [1] compared the outcomes of children in high quality child care with children in lower quality care. They found that the children in higher quality child care centres demonstrated [1]:

- better cognitive, language, and social development
- better school readiness (e.g. reading, writing, number skills)

Therefore, when choosing a child care centre, quality does make a difference.

Assumptions about children with special needs and child care

Children with special needs have better outcomes when they are enrolled in child care

FALSE: Booth and Kelly, two authors from the above NICHD study, followed 156 young children with or at risk for developmental disabilities, to determine if child care made a difference to their development [5].

When they compared children with developmental disabilities who attended daycare and children who were cared for at home by their mothers, they found that:



- children who attended child care did not do any better than children who did not

Furthermore, when Booth and Kelly looked at the children with special needs who attended child care, they found that the quality of the caregiving at home affected the outcomes of these children [5].

Therefore, spending time in child care is not necessarily beneficial (or harmful) for the development of children with special needs [5]. Whether a child with special needs attends child care or not, the interactions that happen at home have a great impact on the child's development.

Children with special needs should be enrolled in child care from a very young age to benefit their development

FALSE: Booth and Kelly found that:

- children who were a little older when they started daycare (over 12 months of age) were better able to control and manage their own behaviour than children who started during the first year of life.

Booth and Kelly were of the opinion that, when children begin daycare when they are a little older, it gives them more time at home with their parents, which allows them to benefit from consistent caregiving and routines. This seems to help them develop behaviour regulation skills.

Therefore, starting daycare early, especially in the first year of life, may not be ideal for children with special needs.

Children with special needs benefit from increased hours in child care

FALSE: Parents of children with special needs sometimes wonder if they should increase the number of hours their child spends in child care in order to boost their child's development. However, Booth and Kelly [5] found that:

- the amount of time spent in child care did not influence the outcomes of children with developmental disabilities

Therefore, more hours in daycare doesn't result in better outcomes for children with special needs.

Putting it all together

What matters most?

What is most important to a child's development is the kind of interactions he has with his parents.

Regardless of whether children attend child care, what happens at home matters most in terms of their development. What is

most important to a child's development is the kind of interactions he has with his parents. Frequent back-and-forth interactions within everyday activities, during which parents listen to their child, respond warmly and with interest to what he communicates and provide information that he can learn from are what count. In fact, these kinds of parent-child interactions predict a child's development - far more than child care factors do.

No differences between outcomes of children cared for in child care and at home

Contrary to what many people think, children who attend child care have similar outcomes to children who are cared for at home by their mothers. This is true for typically-developing children and children with special needs.

How to choose a child care centre

When choosing a child care, families should:

- not assume that all child care centres are of high quality
- look for evidence of positive caregiving, especially the language used by the caregiver, as this is linked to high quality care and positive outcomes
- find out if a child care is licensed or regulated, as these centres tend to provide higher quality care
- consider the pros and cons when choosing a child care centre versus a home-based setting

If your child has special needs

Families who have a child with special needs should remember that:

- starting child care after 12 months of age may give the child more time at home to learn to manage his own behaviour
- increasing a child's daycare hours has not been shown to improve his development

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Lauren Lowry is a Hanen staff speech-language pathologist who works in a variety of capacities, including e-seminar instructor and clinical writer. She also offers Hanen Programs® for parents and contributes to the development of resources. She received her degree in speech language pathology in 1996, from McGill University.

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Barriers to Closeness in Child Care: The Teacher's Perspective

by Dr. Sharon Quan-McGimpsey,
Sarah Marziliano and Trevor Hassen

The quality of classroom relationships formed in the first six years of a child's life has a significant effect on a child's development (Oren & Jones, 2009) and plays an important role in establishing a positive and safe learning environment. Moreover, a child's relationship with her first teacher is a powerful predictor of a child's level of social competence as well as determining school success in the early years (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004) and in later life (Pederson, Faucher, & Eaton, 1978). Closeness in classroom settings represents a feeling of belonging to the class and being accepted by the teacher (Osterman, 2000). Hamre and Pianta (2005), in examining close and conflictual teacher-child relationships, reported that teachers who had close relationships with children demonstrated a greater awareness of their own personal and emotional situations and were more caring than teachers who did not feel closeness with children in their care.

But what creates barriers to closeness in the classroom? A child's personality was reportedly one factor that impeded closeness. For example, teachers reported feeling more distant with children who exhibited higher levels of shyness (Rudasill & Rimm-Kaufman, 2009) and who were less able to control their impulses (Rothbart & Bates, 2006). Other factors were teacher-child ratios, class sizes, and changes within the learning environment. Teachers were found to be less sensitive and responsive when teacher-child ratios were lower (Howes, 1997) and group size increased (Vandell, 1996) and were also less likely to form attachments with frequent changes in the caregiving environment (Raikes, 1993). In the toddler room, for example, toddlers were capable of



re-creating the quality of relationships with a caregiver they had previously encountered, but were less capable of adapting to new caregivers (Howes & Hamilton, 1992).

In a study conducted by one of the authors of this paper, 24 early education teachers, who taught children between the ages of 2.5 to 5 years of age, in child care centres in Toronto and the surrounding area, were interviewed about closeness and were asked to describe several scenarios of closeness with children in their class. In this qualitative examination of the dimensions of closeness in teacher-child relationships, the teachers were also asked to identify the barriers they felt impeded closeness in their relationships with children (Quan-McGimpsey, Kuczynski & Brophy, 2011). This paper begins with a presentation of the findings of the larger study which revealed that closeness was experienced by teachers in a variety of situational contexts according to differing relational domains of closeness. But since closeness was not continuously felt by teachers towards children at every moment of their day, the factors that teachers' perceived as interfering with their management of closeness with children were also examined. These results will be reported in the remainder of this paper and the significance of these findings for parents and early childhood personnel will be discussed.



Relational Dimensions of Closeness

Teacher's perceptions of closeness had a significant impact on the ways that they interacted with children. As the nature of teacher-child interactions change throughout the day, the teachers reported that, when there was closeness with children within a teaching framework, the professional domain of maintaining boundaries and impartiality emerged. When children sought care and protection from a teacher with whom they felt close, the attachment domain appeared. A new personal dimension, rarely investigated in teacher-child research, but which emerged in this study, was an intimate form of closeness characterized by pleasurable exchanges that were distinct and co-constructed by teachers and children. Further analysis of these dimensions revealed how teachers appeared to develop a system of moving seamlessly between the dimensions of closeness in order to manage the type of closeness that was warranted in different situations (Quam-McGimpsey, Kuczynski & Brophy, 2011).

Teacher's Perceptions of Barriers to Closeness

When teachers were asked what they thought were barriers to closeness, they reported, in highest order of frequency to lowest, that relationships with parents, the personality of the child, ratios and class size, and changes within the learning environment, were the most prevalent factors. Other factors were identified as barriers to closeness in teacher-child relationships; however, only the barriers that were reported by at least one quarter of the teachers have been presented.

Teacher-parent Relationship

Fifty eight percent of the teachers described how challenges with parents were barriers to closeness with their children. The majority of those teachers emphasized how a strong relationship with parents resulted in closer teacher-child relationships, with the remainder asserting that parent-teacher relationships afflicted with mistrust and poor communication negatively affected the closeness that teachers experienced with their children. As one teacher explained, "When you don't feel like parents want you to have that connection with their children, they're kind of distant with you, they don't want to hear those things that

When teachers were asked what they thought were barriers to closeness, they reported, in highest order of frequency to lowest, that relationships with parents, the personality of the child, ratios and class size, and changes within the learning environment, were the most prevalent factors.

you've done with the child ... you feel kind of shut off from that child... "Okay their parents don't really want me" (16, 8 years). Interestingly, although the questions in the structured teacher interview were focused solely on teacher-child relationships, close to sixty percent of the teachers elected to discuss how they felt parents impacted the closeness that teachers felt with their children. Thus, the majority of the teachers indicated that poor relationships with parents impeded the formation of a trusting parent-teacher relationship, which, in turn created distance in the teacher-child relationship.

Child's Personality

Fifty percent of the teachers identified several traits (e.g. shyness, temperament) and behaviors (e.g. foul language, disrespect, whininess) that were perceived to be barriers to closeness in teacher-child relationships. Teachers experienced difficulties knowing how to interpret and respond to such children. For example, one teacher said of a child's puzzling disposition, "... It's so hard to get close to this child because there's like a little wall around him, which is kind of sad for such a young age" (13, 12 years). It was evident that there was a wide range of characteristics in children's personalities that negatively impacted closeness between teachers and children.

Ratios and Class Size

Forty one percent of the teachers acknowledged that teacher-child ratios and the size of the class were inhibitors to being close to the children in the class. For example, one teacher was emphatic in stating, "You can only spread yourself so thin... there's two teachers with 16 children ...that's a hard time to get around to every child and give them an individual undivided attention" (10, 31 years). In other words, teachers felt powerlessness to modify their teaching environments and considered large class ratios and class size to be barriers to effective teacher-child interactions.

Changes Within the Learning Environment

Twenty-five percent of the teacher's narratives, citing the challenges they faced when there were changes in the learning environment, focused on routines (e.g. inconsistency, lacking flexibility), staffing (e.g. multiple staff changes in the room throughout the day), and the curriculum. For instance, when



A shared moment of closeness between a teacher and child at Seneca College's Lab School, King Campus.

teachers were rigid in teaching the curriculum, one teacher reported how barriers in closeness occurred, and reflected on her experience, “if you try to show, *“Ok, this is what I’ve planned for you, this is what you need to do”*, they will back off or you’ll get their back up basically. Even the little guys, I feel. But if you say, *“Well, this is what I have in mind, what do you think about this?”*, or give them the choice, there’s more chance that they’ll co-operate with you” (05, 22 years). Thus, depending on the circumstances surrounding the changes made in the learning environment, the teachers’ closeness with children was either curtailed or fortified.

What can be learned from investigating the teacher’s perspective of inhibitors to closeness in the teacher-child relationship? Teachers, who are affected by the day to day interactions with the children in their classrooms, may not be surprised that teachers’ spoke of some children’s personalities as being an obstacle to becoming close with children in their classrooms. It appears that if a child’s personal characteristics, be they shy, temperamental or engage in a variety of behaviors that proved to be a mismatch with the teachers’ preferences, teachers found this to be a challenging factor.

Administrators, who wish to cultivate a strong learning environment through the nurturance of close teacher-child relationships, may find the teacher’s perspectives on what

factors hinder closeness with children in this study to be useful. Although licensed child care centres in Ontario must meet the minimum standards stipulated in the Day Nurseries Act (2010), teachers still found teacher-child ratios and class sizes to be a challenge in fostering closeness with the children. Likewise, the teachers were clear in their argument that changes within the learning environment are needed in order to eliminate barriers to closeness. Greater sensitivity in monitoring routines, maintaining consistency in staff shifts, and rethinking approaches to the curriculum to remove barriers to closeness are required. The teachers asserted that staff changes in shifts do not contribute to the maintenance of close teacher-child relationships. Teachers

also found that when centres focused on didactic seatwork, the opportunities to share periods of closeness with children were more limiting than when the teachers engaged in play. What is interesting about the factors discussed in this section is that these factors are in the purview of child care administration to change.

It is noteworthy, for parents, early education teachers, and child care administrators that teacher-parent relationships was the factor featured most prominently in the teacher’s narratives of barriers to closeness with children. Some teachers spoke directly about how poor parent-teacher child relationships produced an obstacle to closeness in teacher-child relationships. Others explained, indirectly, how trust, respect and transparency in communication were necessary in order to support healthy relationships with the children, and that, without it, closeness, with parents, and by association, closeness with their children, would be affected.

The results of this study (Quan-McGimpsey, Kuczynski & Brophy, 2011) reveal that relationship building lies at the core of meaningful early childhood education programs (Pianta, 1999). When reflecting upon closeness and the barriers to closeness between teachers and children within the learning environment, it is important to examine the *‘goodness of fit’* or the degree to which an individual is compatible with the



demands and expectations of the environment. It may be beneficial to enter a new learning environment suspending all preconceived notions about each child and place oneself in the role of becoming a ‘pupil’ of the child—wanting to learn all that can be learned about the child and where they come from. Practicing what is known as ‘*the declaration of ignorance*’ can enhance the feeling of closeness within the learning environment and provide educators with a better understanding of who the child is within their social context. An awareness of barriers to closeness in teacher-child relationships will also better ensure that the environment is set to adjust to each individual and be a safeguard for all children to feel secure and close within the early learning environment.

Dr. Sharon Quan-McGimpsey, Professor, School of Early Childhood Education, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, Ontario.

Sarah Marziliano and Trevor Hassen, Senior bachelor degree students, Child Development, School of Early Childhood Education, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, Ontario.

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The Question of Developing an Aboriginal Addendum for the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)

by Marc Lalonde

Introduction

The Beginning

In 2011, as the manager of the Tsleil-Wuatuth Child and Family Development Centre, I was highly motivated to use the internationally recognized Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R), a standardized tool to measure quality indicators in early childhood environments. An opportunity for funding arose, with the First Nations and Urban Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Steering Committee, and I was able to secure funding to hire a consultant. The successful application required us to apply the scales and provide ideas on how they may be applied in a culturally safe way.

We were fortunate to attract Leona Howard, who has specialized training in administering and interpreting the ECERS-R for the *You Bet I Care* study in 1999 (Doherty, et. al., 2000). Leona was instrumental in recommending an Aboriginal Addendum, which could be developed without compromising the integrity of the ECERS-R itself. We published our experience and recommendations in the Fall 2012 issue of *Interaction* (Lalonde, Howard & Connelly, 2012).

The Connection

I have the great fortune of working with Joan Gignac, the Executive Director for the Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC. Joan, a dynamic individual, applied the ECERS-R in many Aboriginal programs. We discussed the possibilities of moving the concept of an Aboriginal addendum forward. Joan paved the way for a successful application to the Public Health Agency of Canada to fund a national survey. The project was to investigate the use of ECERS-R in Urban Aboriginal Head Start programs and identify if there is an interest in developing an Aboriginal Addendum. Leona was hired to administer the survey and write a report on the results.

National Survey

The Working Group

A working group was established to provide guidance, leadership, national perspective and representation for the development, implementation and distribution of the national survey. The Working Group consisted of representatives from the Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Programs (AHSUNC) from Quebec, the Prairies, as well as the Northern and Western regions. We were very fortunate to also include Thelma Harms, one of the original authors of ECERS-R, and Christa Japel, a leading researcher in Quebec.

Method

The national survey was drafted and underwent several revisions and reviews by the Working Group before its release. The project identified a specific target group of 132 Urban Aboriginal Head Start sites and the on-line survey was geared towards the current use of ECERS-R within their programs. Supplementary interviews were conducted to probe deeper and gather more information into the use of the ECERS-R and the possibility of developing an Aboriginal Addendum.

Results

A substantial number of the invitees responded (54%). Of the respondents, most (59%) have used the ECERS-R and a significant number (38%) used the tool on a regular basis. Most of the active users of the ECERS-R found it supported efforts to improve the quality of programs. A variety of reasons were given for not implementing the ECERS-R on a regular basis, from those who rarely implement the tool. Challenges included staffing, funding and training. The greatest challenge does appear to be training and on-going support for implementation. Most of the respondents agreed with pursuing an Aboriginal Addendum to the ECERS-R and expressed a strong desire to be part of the development of an addendum. The report provided a number of recommendations in pursuing the development of an Aboriginal Addendum.



Recommendations

The recommendations from this project were:

- Request the newly developed curriculum from the Northwest Territories be shared so more can be learned from regionally developed curriculum models.
- Consider all AHS national associations be involved in developing an ECERS-R awareness initiative to inform and introduce all AHS sites to the ECERS-R.
- Research effective training models for ECERS-R and develop an ECERS-R training strategy to include ECERS-R training in post-secondary settings, onsite training, consultation, upgrading to ECERS-R training that reflects the needs of urban, rural and isolated communities.
- Provide AHS sites with survey results and a mechanism to provide feedback.
- Identify what the next steps would be in developing an Aboriginal Addendum. Using what was learned from the NWT Curriculum project.
- Strike a working group committee to develop a strategy on how an Aboriginal Addendum to be used with ECERS-R can be developed.
- Involve post-secondary academics, AHS Program Coordinators, Early Childhood Educators, Elders, Community Members and others to be involved and consult on the development of an Aboriginal Addendum to be used with ECERS-R.
- Research the ECERS-R and the process of what is involved to develop an Aboriginal Addendum.
- Hire a researcher to support ongoing developments of the addendum to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R.

The survey provided valuable information and clearly demonstrated an interest in developing an Aboriginal addendum to the ECERS-R and is definitely an initiative worth pursuing. Having said this, the entire survey was about the ECERS-R and the only choice of incorporating Aboriginal content was an addendum. To be clear, the deliverables for the project were to complete a survey on ECERS-R use and identify any interest in developing an Aboriginal addendum, which the report did. I wonder about other possibilities.

Other Possibilities

Limits of Standardization

One of the advantages of using the ECERS-R is its strength as a standardized tool, however, applying this in cultural settings does have its challenges. Standardization sets universal goals and defines the knowledge and the behaviors that will lead to the goals. Due to the wide range of diversity within Canada's

aboriginal communities, indigenous knowledge is non-homogenous. "For Indigenous scholars, generalization and the pursuit of universal laws has potential for providing incomplete understandings and can be, in some cases, harmful to those who may be affected by such research." (Deer, 2010 p.6)

Standardization also structures the process of gathering and recording evidence, which is assumed to be an efficient and reliable basis for making judgments. This methodology places a reliance on snapshots of time, rather than on changes or improvements in time. Indigenous knowledge is fluid and non-linear and capturing this is more about identifying process.

Defining Quality

Defining quality also presents challenges, "... 'quality' may have different implications for different programs, and assessing quality may have different purposes" (La Paro, et al. 2012, p.10). More importantly, identifying indicators of quality is inherently a value-based exercise. Even the language used in describing indicators represents a worldview and shapes the way people think, what to look for, and how to evaluate it. One of the challenges in defining quality should be reconciling multiple discourses that shape the early childhood space. Children's spaces must be open to multiple meanings "... benchmarks of quality in early childhood are not intrinsic, fixed and prescribed by scientific knowledge of development" (Woodhead, 2010 p.23). An indigenous approach to defining and measuring quality indicators can look very different from the ECERS-R.

Aboriginal Methodology

According to the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (*Indigenizing Outcomes Measurements*, 2010), indigenous research methods will influence components of a framework, such as:

- the values and purpose of measurement.
- the language used to describe indicators.
- how evidence is defined.
- whose needs are being met; and
- the community partners and stakeholders involved.

Indigenous knowledge is communal, holistic and spiritual. "Aboriginal epistemology is found in theories, philosophies, histories, ceremonies, and stories as ways of knowing. Aboriginal pedagogy is found in talking or sharing circles and dialogues, participant observations, experimental learning, modelling, meditation, prayer, ceremonies, or story telling as ways of knowing and learning" (Battiste, 2002 p.18). The process of sharing experiences becomes the stories of people's lives "... embedded with the acts of telling and listening to stories there exists virtually unlimited potential for learning." (Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2007, p. 2) Stories transmit



knowledge and culture which becomes embedded within living systems. By speaking stories, reflecting on them, interpreting and reinterpreting them through discussions and adding other perspectives, a deeper understanding is achieved, as well as validating the process. “Learning stories document the learning culture in the place: this is what we do here, this is what we value here” (Carr, 2010 p.100). This led me to think about Margaret Carr’s philosophy on assessment and learning stories.

Learning Stories

Carr offers guidelines for Assessing Learning Dispositions: (Carr, 2010, p.94)

- Acknowledge the unpredictability of development and seek the perspective of the learner.
- A narrative approach is better.
- Collaborative interpretations of collected observations.
- Many tasks will provide their own assessment. Artifacts, activities and social community will provide their own indicators of.
- Contribute to the learner’s disposition. Dispositions are combinations of being ready, willing and able.
- Protect and enhance the setting as a learning community in whatever way the community defines and provides learning. Assessment will be of the learner-in-action-with-mediational-means.

My interpretation of these guidelines makes me more curious about exploring what is and what can be, instead of looking for what should be. Going beyond standardization and collecting multiple interpretations. This process moves from investigating predetermined indicators of quality to a process of making meaning. Meaning making “... values what regulatory modernity finds problematic: complexity and multiplicity, subjectivity and context, provisionality and uncertainty” (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008, p.7). Although messy, expanding on individual perspectives and sharing stories provides varied interpretations on what is observed and evaluated.

“Learning stories describe episodes of achievements: taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty and uncertainty, expressing an idea or feeling, and taking responsibility” (Carr, 2010 p.107). Persisting in problem solving on difficult tasks provides its own assessment. Instead of looking for predetermined indicators, identify and define the indicators from what has happened, what is present and what can be, through an inclusive and open process of interpretations.

Documentation is then focused on intentions and the process of attempts, taking risks, and working through trials, errors and lessons learned along the way. This process could be applied to programs by gaining multiple perspectives and building

on what is there, what is being attempted and facilitating a process to extend the learning to what could be. This is the methodology used in Appreciative Inquiry.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) focuses attention on the positive potential of a collective wisdom, described as the positive core. It engages members in their own research, investigating root causes of success and discovering a positive core with a common storey line, shared vision, and collective wisdom. “We pass on our values, beliefs, and wisdom in stories.” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010 p.18). By sharing stories, relationships build a common purpose through the collective images held in stories and dreams.

There are a variety of ways the AI process is described; however the core of the process follows a basic 4-D Dialogue. The four “D”s are: Discover, Dream, Design and Destiny. The Discovery phase collects data from interviews and conversations to discover an Affirmative Topic. This is facilitated by crafting questions to explore discussions on experiences and encouraging imaginations of the future. Sharing hopes and dreams are then woven together into one powerful vision or question which becomes an Affirmative Topic.

The Dream portion is engaging all stakeholders in a process to envision the future. By collaboratively creating positive images of the future, participants explore beyond their individual boundaries to consider greater questions of purpose. This solidifies the Affirmative Topic as a collective dream, which then leads to the Design phase.

The Design process is sorting, shifting and making serious choices about what will be. This develops a Provocative Proposition, stated in the present tense and grounded in what works. “Provocative Propositions build bridges between the best of what is and the best of what could be” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010 p.205). From here, the process moves to the Destiny phase.

Destiny is recognizing and celebrating what was learned. Planning out short and long term actions and establishing supportive infrastructures. An important component of this phase is to leverage existing resources and creating news ones.

“One of the key findings is that Appreciative Inquiry gives people the experience of personal and collective power. It gives them practice exercising power – and doing so responsibly, for the good of the whole.” (Whitney & Trosten-



Bloom, 2010 p.266) This power creates capacity to positively influence the future. People recognise social change is through human interaction and creativity.

Conclusion

An Aboriginal addendum to the ECERS-R is an option, and the National Survey does demonstrate a desire to move forward. This article questions the limited choice offered and ponders about indigenous methodology. Although Margaret Carr's work on Learning Stories is used to document children's learning and supports program development, I wonder if the methodology can be extended to identifying quality indicators in Aboriginal programs. Introducing and following an Appreciative Inquiry approach may be an effective means to share stories and discover a vision; to openly dream about a tool which could be designed by and for First Nations, Metis and Inuit people.

Now that would be a destiny worth pursuing.

Marc Lalonde is the Director of Communication for the Early Childhood Educators of BC. He has over 30 years in the field with 20 of those years serving Aboriginal communities. He is presently an Early Childhood Consultant.

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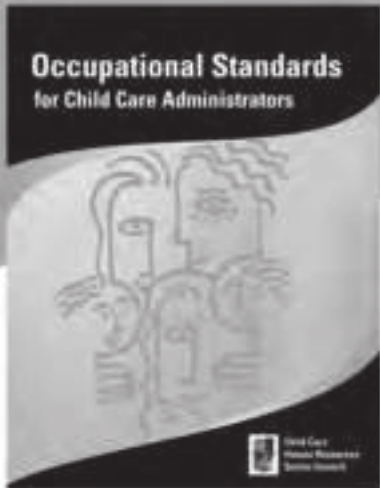
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FOCUS

How Child Care Supports Families in Canada

HOW CHILD CARE SUPPORTS FAMILIES IN CANADA

Generation Squeeze

How Affordable Child Care is a Key Part of the Policy Solution to Support Families

by Paul Kershaw, Lynell Anderson and Andrea Long

The Generation Squeeze campaign (www.gensqueeze.ca) is powered by a network of partners determined that younger generations deserve a chance. A chance to deal with lower wages, higher living costs, a changing climate and an imbalance in government spending *without compromising the family they have, or the family they want.*

To ensure this chance, younger Canadians need to become a political priority on par with an aging population. Presently, they are not. Governments annually spend just \$12,000 on benefits and services per Canadian under the age of 45, compared to nearly \$45,000 for every retiree.

This spending gap made sense a generation ago. In the mid 1970s, 30 per cent of seniors were poor. Too many went bankrupt after being sick at the hospital, and too few had sufficient savings for retirement. In response, Canadians built medical care and the public pension systems. Along with a strong economy, these policy adaptations reduced poverty for seniors to lower than any other age group in the country today.

Now the generational spending gap is out of balance because of new socioeconomic risks challenging younger citizens. Canadians want to sustain health care and pension supports



required by an aging population. No one wants to do so at the expense of their kids and grandchildren.

Avoiding this trade-off requires an evidence-based, non-partisan campaign to update how the public describes changing demographics and government budgets, focusing on the facts of the present, not the past. The Generation Squeeze team is designing this campaign, putting Canadians under the age of 45 on the political radar. We have a proven method, and early success. Now we need scale up in each province to influence political platforms in advance of the federal and multiple provincial elections scheduled for 2015/16.

Why is this important?

Because most of us rely on thought leaders and news reporters to make sense of complex demographic, environmental, fiscal



and social trends, thereby shaping the priorities we signal to the political parties competing for our votes. The interpretative lenses on which many influencers rely build on decades of discussion anticipating the challenges posed by an aging population. By comparison, the declining standard of living for younger generations is often overshadowed in commentary, as is the slow pace of policy response.

Generational equity requires better balance in our political coverage and priority setting. It is time to build a big tent under which a wide range of groups voices an alternate narrative. We can retain the wisdom we've gained about the needs of a greying population without deflecting attention from the social, economic and environmental trends closing the door on young Canadians, and the failure of all political parties to adapt to these trends, which risks slamming the door shut.

We all know housing prices have gone way up. For those who bought homes decades ago, higher housing prices mean more wealth. But what's been good for retiring parents is generally bad for their kids. High home prices squeeze generations under age 45 with crushing debt, which they must pay with wages that have fallen compared to a generation ago, and in jobs that rarely contribute pensions.

Gens X and Y have adapted. To compete for better employment, younger generations squeeze in years more of education and tuition. To buy a place, they accept jobs or contracts that require years more of work to save a down payment. And for many, this means they wait years longer to establish their financial independence.

Seeing the time and money squeeze facing their adult kids, many nearing or already retired are also adapting. They invite their kids to live at home longer, support the cost of post-secondary education, contribute to a down payment, etc.

But as individuals adapt, governments do not... for younger generations. Instead, provincial and federal governments routinely increase medical care spending on which we draw disproportionately as seniors, but claim the cupboard is bare when considering what is left over to invest in younger generations.

Since two earners barely bring home today what one breadwinner did in the 1970s, we've gone from 40 hour work weeks to closer to 80 hours. The result? Generations raising young kids are squeezed for time at home. They are squeezed for income because housing prices are nearly double, even though young people often live in condos, or trade yards for time-consuming commutes. And they are squeezed for services like child care, which are essential for parents to deal with rising costs, but are in short supply, and cost more than university.

Problem is, in the absence of policy adaptation, most in Gen X and Y can't work their way out of the time and income squeeze *unless they give up something fundamental* – the opportunity to have the family they may want or the financial foundation they've patched together.

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There are Policy Solutions

Gen Squeeze doesn't presume to know all the answers. But the campaign does know how to solve the time, income and service squeeze when Gens X and Y start their families. We rally primary audiences around these policy solutions, while encouraging those for whom our policy solutions are not (yet) top priorities to voice their prescriptions in common cause for a Better Generational Deal to help us put Gens X, Y and their kids on the political radar.

The Gen Squeeze ask is simple. Narrow the generational spending gap to build a Better Generation Deal. As a starting point, we propose increasing spending on Canadians under age 45 by a \$1000 per person – from \$12,000 to \$13,000 – while leaving the allocation per senior around where it is.

We've done the benefit/cost analyses about how to spend this money most effectively. We know the pros and cons of various policy tools.

For instance, higher housing prices and lower wages reflect market forces that are difficult for governments to influence. But the affordability of parental leave and child care services is in the power of decision makers. It doesn't have to cost the typical couple the equivalent of a second mortgage to share a year at home with a new baby, or a third mortgage to pay for child



care services. The generation raising young kids in Canada faces these ‘extra mortgages’ only because our country is one of the slowest to respond to the time, income and service squeeze constraining Gens X, Y and their kids. We can change this.

We can make it affordable for couples to share 18 months at home with a new baby, and reduce the cost of child care services to no more than \$10/day. These changes would save the typical family around \$50,000 before their children reached school age. Saving \$50,000 makes it more affordable for parents to achieve work-life balance, reduce by years the time it takes to save a down payment, pay off student debt, or save for retirement.

The policy changes required to narrow the generational spending gap could be implemented by reallocating existing expenditures, collecting new public revenue and/or administering new practices in the private sector. No matter where you sit on the question of taxation, we think all options can be part of the debate – save one.

We can no longer adapt in anticipation of the greying population at the expense of investing in their kids and grandchildren. Government spending on the generation raising young kids has stagnated since the mid-1970s. But in anticipation of the medical and income needs of an aging population, our governments now spend over \$80 billion more a year on health care and public pensions than we would had we maintained the

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share of our economy we allocated in the mid-1970s.

This is NOT a good deal if you are under age 45, nor is it what grandparents want. Despite Canada’s economy producing more wealth than ever before, investments made in younger generations look a little scant, or unbalanced. And that’s before talking about the larger government and environmental debts they inherit.

We can’t afford government budgets that pit generations against one another. As social, economic and climate trends stack the deck against younger Canadians, we can make “A Better Generational Deal” in policy – one that safeguards medical care and retirement security without overlooking the time, income and service squeeze facing Gens X, Y and their children.

Join us at www.gensqueeze.ca to make this Better Deal. You’ll be part of something bigger, something inspiring — a group of Canadians from all walks of life chatting, texting, facebooking, tweeting, emailing, gathering, petitioning and partying in common cause to give all generations a chance. The first step toward making positive change is easy: share our 3-minute video (<http://bit.ly/whatisgensqueeze>) with friends, family and colleagues. And we’ll build momentum from there.

Paul Kershaw is the Founder of the Generation Squeeze Campaign, and a policy professor at the University of BC. paul.kershaw@ubc.ca

Lynell Anderson is a Senior Researcher with the campaign.

Andrea Long is a campaign volunteer.

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Canadian Child-Care Federation
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HOW CHILD CARE SUPPORTS FAMILIES IN CANADA

It's Time to Rethink Child Care

by Margot Young

Too many families are struggling to find child care. Others worry about the quality of care they already have. Most of us are left patching together child care we can afford. Young families are squeezed on all sides. Today's young mothers and fathers need to work harder and longer than did their parents. Many are struggling just to survive.

Child care and other supportive family policies should allow mothers and fathers to work or get an education without enduring years-long child care wait lists or breaking the family budget. All parents can better balance work and family if they can be confident that their children are safe, thriving and happy.

Canadian labour unions along with the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, and the Canadian Federation of Students have come together to collaborate on a new exciting campaign to make child care a pivotal issue in the next federal election.

We have been bringing people together to talk about their own experiences with finding or affording child care. We want to

discover patterns in our experience that will help identify what is working well and what change is needed. We want to inspire a belief that it does not have to be this way and a sense of hope that change is possible.

Everyone has a story

We have found that whether you are a parent, grandparent, friend, aunt or uncle, everyone has a story that shows why child care services need to be a priority for governments. There were many poignant stories about long wait lists and how people cope until they find a spot they can afford and many parents never find a space. Access is especially challenging in small and rural communities, for parents working on shift, and parents of children with special needs.

Many grandparents are now juggling their work and changing their retirement plans to help their grown children with child care. "The high cost of my daughter's child care means that she is relying on me (grandmother) to care for the children. At my age this is not easy."

One grandmother spends two hours a day on the telephone with her grand-daughter who lives hundreds of kilometers away, helping her with her homework and making sure she is safe. Her daughter's shift extension goes two hours longer than the after school care program.

A father told us about how he and his partner 'off-shifted' (he worked nights and she worked days) because they could not find or afford licensed child care. They had to move





close to his workplace so that he could get home in time for his partner to leave to work. “We survived, but this arrangement was very wearing on us as a family.”

A young mother explains, “Not being able to qualify for a child care subsidy and not being able to afford a licensed child care space meant relying on an unlicensed home care provider – really a complete stranger. This was very scary for me.”

The financial burden on families

Parents told us about moving into rental accommodation from home ownership order to pay for child care. Others tell about renting out rooms to help pay for their child care. Child care is the second most expensive cost to a family after accommodation. Home ownership and child care are often impossible to achieve at the same time for families.

People are putting off having children because of the uncertainty around being able to obtain an affordable child care spot. Others are deciding not to have a second or third child due to the challenges of having affordable quality child care.

Parents were agreed - they want child care services, the small monthly federal child care allowance does nothing to help their problems finding and affording quality child care.

The time is right

The kitchen table conversations help people realize that it's just not an individual problem and there are models in other countries and in Canada that provide better services to children and parents. It doesn't have to be this way! Governments have an important role to play to support parents and insure adequate funding, good public policy and accountability.

For most of Canada, the median rate for a toddler is around \$600-\$850 a month but in Quebec, the rate is \$154 a month. We know that economic studies in Quebec and elsewhere show that high quality child care has a huge economic benefit to the economy by reducing poverty, increasing women's equality and better outcomes for children.

The campaign

The kitchen table conversations develop greater awareness of the current child care situation for families and their communities and start the shift the public attitude towards child care from a

personal problem to a collective issue. Changing public attitudes takes time and these kinds of face-to-face conversations.

These conversations engage community and union members at local and regional levels for future mobilizations. We are also educating people of the shortfalls of the free market for child care, and the importance of public funding and public (or not-for-profit) delivery. We are also discussing work-life balance policies, social and economic rights, women's equality and human rights.

We will be working to develop a common position on our vision of how the federal government can contribute to developing and growing quality child care in Canada along with supportive family policies including parental leave. We work with the federal opposition parties to develop and enhance their child care policies and platforms, and mobilize around child care as a vote determining issue.

Please join us

We want to spread these conversations across Canada. We have a great set of tools to help people host a conversation including the conversation guide, some simple fact sheets, a great video, posters, invitations and report forms. Visit www.rethinkchildcare.ca to get the materials.

There is also a new website (www.findingqualitychildcare.ca) that provides information for parents looking for quality child care that's affordable and meets the needs of their families. Find out why it's hard to find good child care, about child care options in each province and territory, general information about child care in Canada, what the best evidence says about quality, and how to improve your chances of accessing high-quality child care.

We also have a modified guide for early childhood educators and students to use to draw out their personal perspectives on the issues. Quality child care depends on well-trained educators that have good working conditions and decent wages. Unfortunately, the field has long been undervalued for their valuable work as study after study shows. The guide for ECEs and students generates discussions about, both their personal experiences with child care, and their experiences as professionals in the field.

Margot has worked in research on the child care file for CUPE since 1995. She had been involved the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council for many years. She is the staff liaison to the CUPE National child care committee and the staff lead for CUPE on the national child care campaign, Let's rethink child care.



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HOW CHILD CARE SUPPORTS FAMILIES IN CANADA

Caring for Families of the Canadian Military

by **Andrea Estensen**

Finding quality licensed child care can be hard, given the norms of waitlists that can be several months or years long. It is particularly challenging for parents whose jobs require them to move frequently, and sometimes with short notice.

Military families don't have the luxury of a lot of lead time between getting the message that they are moving and arriving in their new community. Often they only have about three to six month's notice.

To help alleviate some of the stressors associated with military moves, the Winnipeg Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) has several programs in place to assist families before they arrive in their new community.

There are MFRCs at every military base across the country. All offer mandated programs to military families, but each has the flexibility to tailor programs and services to their community's needs. The Winnipeg MFRC has 11 coordinators on staff who offer adult programs, children and youth programs, deployment support, French services, newcomer support, employment support and social work services. There is also a child care centre in close proximity to Canadian Forces Base Winnipeg, also known as 17 Wing Winnipeg, that provides care to 127 children, Monday to Friday.

When a family finds out they will be relocating, the MFRC is often the first place they turn to for information. It is the MFRCs role to help build the resiliency of military families to help them integrate into the community as seamlessly as



possible. Because of the high turnover in personnel each year, information about their new community is readily available from staff around particular topics of interest, including schools, special needs assistance and child care.

MFRC Childcare Centre director Lois Johnson, helps military members unfamiliar with the child care landscape in Winnipeg network to navigate the child care process. She also offers information about the other child care options available through the MFRC. Alternative care includes Kids Care casual care offered twice per week with full day, half day and hourly options; summer day camps and in-house care that allows parents to attend programs and appointments with MFRC staff.

Johnson is a member of the Winnipeg St. James Director's Support Group and is on the board of directors of the Manitoba Child Care Association. Through those organizations, she is familiar with care options in the city and is able to help connect families with other resources. "I can tell them how the school systems works, explain about open boundaries and schools of choice, in-school care options, provide them with



connections in the community and give information about other centres,” she said. “We don’t refer them, and we don’t guarantee care, but we can provide the information, offer subsidy information and give information about the Manitoba Child Care Association website.”

Working and collaborating with other centres and having MFRC staff available to answer questions that civilian child care centres have about the military lifestyle is crucial to help both groups understand the needs of children in Winnipeg. The connection with the civilian community and civilian agencies is very important, says Johnson, as is the partnership the centre has with 17 Wing Winnipeg.

“We get amazing support from 17 Wing, children bring their parents to daycare for special events and the children get to know about different kinds of jobs,” says Johnson. “We visit the hangar, the Royal Canadian Air Force Band, the fire hall, and we have participated in a Hercules plane pull. We try to get the children as involved in base life if we can,” said Johnson.

Working and collaborating with other centres and having MFRC staff available to answer questions that civilian child care centres have about the military lifestyle is crucial to help both groups understand the needs of children in Winnipeg. The connection with the civilian community and civilian agencies is very important, says Johnson, as is the partnership the centre has with 17 Wing Winnipeg.

have a space in the MFRC’s toddler program, but if the parent wishes, they can go on the waitlist for that program.

The short-term program was launched in October 2013, and was made possible by support from 17 Wing for an additional

24 spaces for kids from birth to two years. In the first year, the program was able to meet the infant care needs of all regular force families who were posted to Winnipeg.

Responding to the needs of the community is just one way that the MFRC helps military families. Having a staff who understands the unique needs and circumstances of its clients is paramount to delivering quality care. Approximately one-third of Johnson’s 30 staff members have extensive experience with the military lifestyle. “A lot of our staff are military spouses, or have grown up in military families,” said Johnson. “It helps with the understanding of the military

Child care in the military community is quite unique because every year, usually between April and the end of August, there is a large turnover in the children attending the centre. On average, 20 to 30 families are posted out, while new families are coming in.

Unfortunately for the families coming in, those already on the waiting list have priority. However, the Winnipeg MFRC Childcare Centre’s innovative short-term infant care is helping ease the stress for some military families. Families who are newly posted into Winnipeg have priority for the short-term program. Johnson explained that care is provided for one year or until the child turns two, whichever comes first. That period gives parents the opportunity to get their names on other waitlists. There is no guarantee that the child in the short-term care will



Hercules plane pull



The nuances of military lifestyle are very small and can be hard to pick up on, especially when working with children who may not be able to fully articulate what they are feeling. There may be new behaviours or fears, especially when a parent is deployed or away from home for an extended period of time, or when a family is moving, the child may show anxiety about the upcoming changes.

lifestyle. It is integral to understand the families and the challenges they may be facing. They have a lot of unique situations like deployment, training and tasking.”

The nuances of military lifestyle are very small and can be hard to pick up on, especially when working with children who may not be able to fully articulate what they are feeling. There may be new behaviours or fears, especially when a parent is deployed or away from home for an extended period of time, or when a family is moving, the child may show anxiety about the upcoming changes.

“It is important to have trained staff who understands what the child is going through. When one parent is gone, things will be different, and the dynamic changes again when the parent comes home.”

For the civilian staff, learning about the military environment can be challenging, but with the support of long-term staff and military spouses, there is a lot of encouragement and explanation along the way. “The combination of military and civilian staff is great. The civilian staff brings continuity to the centre.”

In a military environment, not only can there be a high turnover of the children in care, having a high percentage of military spouses on staff means that they, too, can be posted to a new base at any time. “It can be hard to replace them with another military spouse who is trained,” said Johnson.

Johnson also says that most of the child care qualifications are transferrable when a military spouse arrives in Winnipeg, however, if they need assistance in getting their qualification to Manitoba



standards, the MFRC’s employment and education coordinator can assist them in doing so.

Bringing part of a larger organization together is key to providing resources to not only the staff of the child care centre, but to the families as well. Child care staff can reach out for assistance from program area coordinators at any time.

“They can call on the resources available and collaborate with the greater support network,” said Johnson. In the past, the child care staff have accessed the services of the deployment coordinator to help children understand deployment, and learn for themselves what the deployment cycle looks like and how it can affect children and the rest of the family left behind. The MFRC’s two clinical social workers have answered questions from staff about how to help children cope with challenges of military life, and have offered workshops for the children. One of the social workers’ new initiatives, which started in 2012, includes using some TheraPlay principals in their practice with children. It can be especially helpful in helping children deal with separation, anxiety and fostering strong relationships.

The Winnipeg MFRC and the Winnipeg MFRC Childcare Centre work hard to provide military families with needs-based programs and services is the building block to promote



resiliency and ensure families have the information and tools needed to be adaptable to the military lifestyle, and to truly be the strength behind the uniform.

The Winnipeg MFRC is a provincially incorporated, registered not-for-profit charity serving military families in Winnipeg and surrounding area. It is one of approximately 40 MFRCs in Canada, the United States and overseas. Its mandate is to provide programs and services to enrich the quality of life for those who share in the unique military lifestyle by providing specialized programs and services designed to promote health, education and social well-being. For more information about the Winnipeg MFRC, please visit familyforce.ca/sites/Winnipeg or call 204-833-2500 extension 4500, or the MFRC Childcare Centre at 204-837-3626.

Andrea Estensen is the Information and Outreach Coordinator at the Winnipeg MFRC. As a military spouse, she understands the challenges faced by military families, and enjoys working with them and helping them navigate the military lifestyle. Before joining the MFRC, she was a reporter and editor at community newspapers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, and has work published in a variety of national newspapers and magazines.

Lois Johnson is a Class 3 Early Childhood Educator and Director of the Winnipeg MFRC Childcare Centre. Lois joined the MFRC in 1994 as a nursery school teacher and program facilitator. She is the secretary for the Winnipeg St. James Directors Support Group, a member of the Manitoba Child Care Association board of directors and is involved with the Manitoba Nature Action Collaborative. Lois was involved in the design, construction and development of the MFRC Childcare Centre in 1999 and became its first Director in 2000. She continues to do the work she loves in an organization that she is honoured to work for.

ACROSS CANADA AND BEYOND

ALBERTA

The Alberta government wants ideas for a children's charter which aims to reduce poverty and improve early learning across the province. The government launched a consultation process this summer, called Together We Raise Tomorrow, intended to collect ideas that will contribute to a new children's charter and to new strategies to reduce poverty and improve early learning across the province. In spring, Human Services Minister Dave Hancock introduced Bill 25, the Children First Act. The new law initiates a review of all policies, programs and services affecting children and requires the government to establish a "children's charter" to guide decision making. The government hopes to have a draft charter ready in late fall that can be introduced in the legislature in the spring.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The University of British Columbia has increased child-care fees by 25 percent in just three years, according to a union official. Trish Everett is the president of Local 2278 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represents more than 3,000 graduate and undergraduate students at UBC who work as teaching assistants, markers, and tutors. Many of them have young families. The rate hike, announced in April, comes on top of the back-to-back 10-percent increases made in the previous two years. Everett of CUPE is fighting for the students and staff who rely on affordable care to continue their education. "These are people who are highly educated, highly skilled, and will be entering the work force, going on to make B.C. a better province. And yet they are being held back because they can't afford to take care of their children."

MANITOBA

Manitoba Family Services and Labour Minister Jennifer Howard announced 80 new child care spaces will open in Winnipeg in 2014. Minister Howard also announced the launch of consultations on the province's next multi-year plan for expanding child care in Manitoba. The government of Manitoba has set up an online feedback form to get public input on what is working and how to move forward with early learning and child care. This year, the province will spend \$5 million to build and expand a number of child care centres across Manitoba. In addition to the new 80 spaces, six other major projects are under construction now and are expected to open early in the new year, creating more than 250 new spaces.

NEW BRUNSWICK

The National Farmers Union in New Brunswick is asking the provincial government to extend daycare subsidies to farmers. The farmers' organization calls the rule of not allowing self-employed business partners to qualify for daycare subsidies a discriminatory policy. They say the way the policy is made right now either discourages people from farming or discourages people from having children. Farmer families say the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's rules puts their family at an unfair disadvantage. Juggling childcare and helping on the farm is not

easy. The farmers union is now lobbying provincial government to make daycare assistance available to all low-income families.

NOVA SCOTIA

In March 2013, the Nova Scotia government announced the expansion of the department of Education to include an Early Years Branch, thus creating the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education. The department is opening four centres across the province to provide families with easier access to services for young children. Education Minister Ramona Jennex says the centres will provide early intervention programs, before- and after-school programs, regulated child care, early learning programs and parent education. The new centres are expected to open early next year.

But since the wages are so low for daycare teachers, there is a high turnover rate and the centres are forced to employ workers with little training. Early childhood educators in Nova Scotia are the lowest paid in the country, with a median hourly wage of \$12.84, according to a survey called You Bet We Still Care, published this year by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council. The median wage across Canada is \$16.50 per hour.

NUNAVUT

Nunavut will train more early childhood educators says Dan Shewchuk, the Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College. The college will use \$1.1 million in federal funds to train more early childhood educators for jobs in daycares, schools or as operators of their daycare centres. The money to pay for the program flows from the federal government's Aboriginal Head Start Strategic Fund and has been approved for the next two years. The program is aimed at training people to work with children from infancy to the age of six, for work in day care centres, nursery schools, schools or as operators of their own day care homes with a strong emphasis placed on the preschool years. He also said the money will help the college expand early childhood education across the territory and "support and enhance culturally sensitive programming in our communities."



ONTARIO

The Ontario Teachers Federation is investing in for-profit UK child care centres. Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan is in advanced talks to buy Busy Bees, the UK's largest nursery operator, from a former bond specialist Michael Milken. Ontario Teachers, one of Canada's largest retirement funds with \$129 billion of assets under management, is now the preferred bidder for Busy Bees, which operates 212 nurseries throughout the country and cares for 19,000 children from the age of six weeks to five years old.

The Ontario government is announcing the success of its yet-to-be fully implemented full-day kindergarten policy. But daycare advocates say the program is making it difficult for parents of younger kids to get daycare. The Ministry of Education announced the results of a study involving 600 students who were enrolled in the first two years of full-day kindergarten. The study, suggests

children enrolled in full-day kindergarten were less likely to experience inhibited learning, health or behavioural problems that could interfere with learning when entering Grade 1. The education policy and full-day kindergarten is scheduled to be fully implemented across Ontario in September 2014 despite problems with budget and infrastructure.

In August this year, Education Minister Liz Sandals promised a searchable online registry after news that provincial inspectors had ignored four out of five complaints against a recent unregulated daycare where a young child. Sandals says the province's child care legislation is currently under review.

QUEBEC

Private daycare operators in Quebec are protesting the Marois government, which has ordered \$15 million in daycare cuts while adding 28,000 new spaces. The daycare operators are threatening more protests, legal challenges and even

layoffs, but the government said that it's not budging from its plan.

Quebec's Family Minister Nicole Léger announced that the province is moving toward a universal wait list that will allow parents to register their children online for publicly-subsidized daycare. The aim is to have it up and running by June 2014. The service will be free for parents, who will also be able to access their file to track the status of their application. CPEs and private subsidized daycare centres will be required to use the system to fill their eligible spots. Private daycares will not be required to use the system.

SASKATCHEWAN

The Saskatchewan Government is considering changes to the rules for unlicensed home daycare centres in the province. Social Services Minister June Draude and Education Minister Russ Marchuk spoke of the issues around lack of legislation around child care in the province and Canada after a two-year-old girl died this

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summer at an unlicensed home daycare facility in Ontario. The Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association (SECA) supports the government regulating unlicensed child care centres, and wanting to see all the child care centres throughout the province to be licensed. The ministry responsible for regulated child care confirmed its office doesn't have the authority to shut down an unlicensed daycare and the ability to investigate is limited. Both ministers said they look forward to the results of the work of MLA Greg Lawrence, who earlier this year was appointed a legislative secretary tasked with looking at foster and child care.

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

17-19

Richmond, BC

16th Annual Provincial Training Conference

BC Aboriginal Child Care Society annual conference, *Treading Softly: Honouring Children, The Land and Our Culture*. Visit www.acc-society.bc.ca for more information.

18-20

St. John's, Newfoundland

21st Annual AECENL Provincial Conference: Valuing Early Childhood Education & Care

For more conference information and registration: www.aecenl.ca

24-26

Mississauga, Ontario

8th Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Faculty Forum: Evolution and Revolution in Early Childhood Education Programs

Hosted by Sheridan College. Please visit: www.regonline.com/ecefacultyforum for program, travel/hotel information and to register.

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Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

2013 SECA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

"Taking Care of YOU" will focus on YOU as a Professional Child Care Director & Provider. Visit <http://saskcare.ca> to register.

JANUARY 2014

January 30-February 1

Vancouver, BC

The Early Years Conference 2014 – Shaping Childhood: Factors that Matter

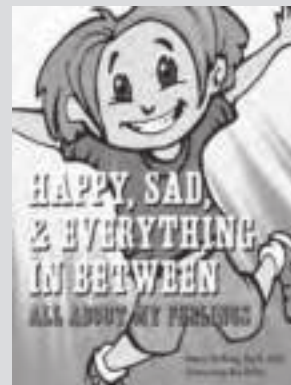
Sponsored by Interprofessional Continuing Education, UBC in collaboration with Human Early Learning Partnership. Visit www.interprofessional.ubc.ca to register.

RESOURCES

Happy, Sad, & Everything in Between
All about my feelings

lilSprout Press, April 2013,
Hardcover

by Sunny Im-Wang, Psy.D
\$ 16.99



With all the emphasis on preparing our kids to succeed in a high tech, competitive world it's easy to forget one of the most essential life skills-emotional literacy. HAPPY, SAD & EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN: ALL ABOUT MY FEELINGS offers kids ages 4-8 a fun and easy program to learn how to identify and manage their feelings.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012

Martha Friendly, Shani Halfon, Jane Beach and Barry Forer

Childcare Resource and Research Unit
August 2013, 69 pg.
ISBN 978-1-896051-55-0

Available online only at: http://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/CRRU_ECEC_2012.pdf

Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012 is the ninth edition of similarly collected information developed by the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU). These reports on cross-Canada data on early childhood programs have been compiled and published about every two years since the early 1990s. This report, published in 2013, considers early childhood education and child care (ECEC) in Canada during the period 2011-2012, using cross-Canada and longitudinal data.