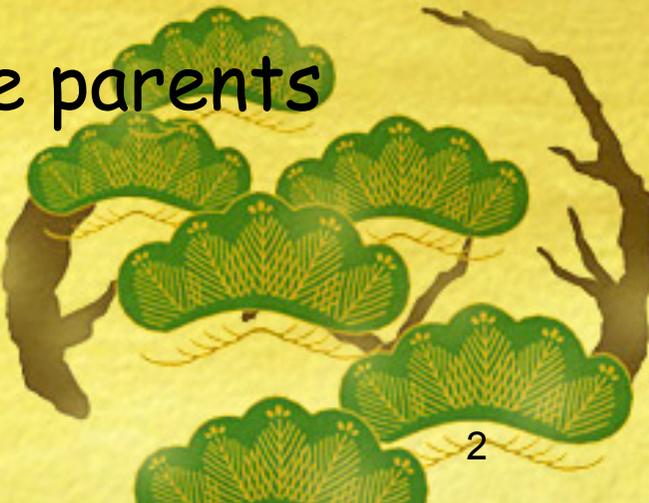




# Queering Early Childhood Studies: Challenging the Discourse of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

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## Presentation Outline

- How can we integrate queer perspectives into ECE training?
- What's the problem with DAP in Ontario, Canada?
- Research Study: What the parents have to say.

## Why queer?

- Alberta Journal of Educational Research, Fall 2010
- Theoretical Framework
- Bridging the gap between developmentalists and critical reflective practitioners

## Queer Rights in Canada

- Canadian Criminal Code: homosexuality is decriminalized (1969)
- Charter of Rights and Freedoms: sexual orientation added (1996)
- Charter guarantees equality, liberty and security and prevents discrimination of all individuals

## Queer Rights in Canada

- equality rights battle challenged the government's actions as unconstitutional based on Charter
- Same sex adoptions in Ontario (1995)
- Canada legalizes Civil Marriage Act (2005)
- Responsibility to tax laws and rights to social benefits

# Queer Rights in Canada

- Birth Registry Charter (June 2006)
- Multiple Parents' Recognition AA vs. BB (January 2007)
- UNDHR - statement to end violation of queer rights (December 2008)
- But not all is glorious in Canada and we are not ready for a pluralistic analysis citizenship

## A growing trend

- 2001 Canadian census: the first to inquire about same-sex partnerships
- Census Canada data (2006) indicates an increase of 33.9% of same sex parents
- Does not include people who don't self-identify on the census
- Family law has changed significantly but ECE remains dominated by a heteronormative lens



'Heteronormativity' refers to the 'normal' and 'natural' status accorded to heterosexuality in Western society, routinely reinforced through a societal preference for "all things straight" (Robinson, 2005, p. 20).

# Queering Early Childhood Studies

- **Research questions**
- what is a queer family? Who counts?
- what do early childhood educators understand about gender identity?
- what are the experiences of queer parents in EC settings?
- What changes are required in pre-service training?



## Common educator misconceptions

- ⊙ Development of sexual and gender identity
- ⊙ Vulnerability to emotional development
- ⊙ Difficulty in social relationships
- ⊙ Majority of children between 5 - 12 experience normative developmental patterns (Patterson 2005)

## What do queer parents say

- 16 sets of parents in rural, small town and large urban communities
- random sampling with semi - structured interviews
- Trans, lesbian, gay dads, bisexual mothers

## What do queer parents say

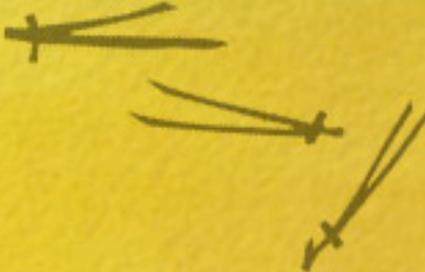
- focus on relationships between teachers and children
- Parents worry about subtle forms of homophobia through exclusionary practice
- Principals and managers can set the tone by establishing progressive anti-harassment policies and practices

## What did queer educators say?

- Pre-service training has to be the first place to discuss the presence of queer families and staff
- Personal life of educators is silenced due to fear of homophobia
- remaining closeted creates a sense of low morale and stress

## What did queer educators say?

- homophobia is not always overt - assume everyone is "straight"
- School principals have to show leadership to create safety and inclusive policy
- Encourage the integration of queer stories into pre-service curriculum



# Queering Early Childhood Studies: The exploration continues

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