The Integration Kit
Policy Papers: How Can Integration of Services for Kindergarten-Aged Children be Achieved?

Susan Colley  |  September, 2006.

Integration Network Project
Institute of Child Study
OISE/University of Toronto
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Integration Network Project was established to address one of the critical issues in the development of Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada today: the abrupt division for kindergarten-age children between “care” programs in child care centres and “education” in public kindergarten. The Project’s focus is on seeking effective solutions to the problems and issues facing parents of kindergarten-age children.

While recognizing that any model for care and education of young children must take into account the need for links between the early learning and care system for children from 0 to 6 and the compulsory education system, this paper analyzes the problem of current arrangements in Canada and explores possible solutions. This was stated as a key element of successful ECEC policy in the OECD publication Starting Strong. Kindergarten programs are the only truly universal ECEC programs offered to Canadian children under the age of six. However, they are viewed as “educational” programs, with no attempt to meet the child care needs of working parents. Child care services are largely market-driven, with some government regulation and fees that range (with some subsidization of low-income or at-risk families) from $154 (Quebec) to $600 (Northwest Territories) a month for kindergarten-aged children. (Friendly et al, 2005)

Only Quebec and PEI have attempted administrative integration between the two systems. Quebec introduced its new Family Policy in 1997-9. Jurisdiction for early childhood education was split at age 5. Children 0-4 attend child care programs under the responsibility of the Ministère de l’Emploi de la Solidarité Sociale et de la Famille. At age 5, responsibility for over 5’s lies with the Ministry of Education. Children can attend non-compulsory full-school day kindergarten in the education system. Also in inner city schools there are pre-kindergarten programs for four year olds operating for half a day. The other half-day is spent in the school based child care setting which must meet provincial child care licensing requirements but is run by the school board with principals having ultimate responsibility. There is extensive coordination between the kindergarten teachers and the child care staff as they function as a team.

Prince Edward Island has also introduced an innovative model. Kindergarten in PEI operates for half a day in child care centres, is taught by early childhood educators (minimum qualification two year early childhood education diploma plus two years’ experience), is free to parents, maintains the child care ratios of 1 teacher to 12 children and permits children to stay in the same centre for the balance of the day on a fee-for-service basis.

Recently there has been interest in the interface between child care and kindergarten. In 1998, a study by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy compared kindergarten and child care programs in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. It concluded that a majority of both kindergarten and child care programs received acceptable to good ratings. The study concluded that three-quarters of parents supported the concept of a new program model which would combine full-day, year-round care and education programs through the school system for children of kindergarten-aged. (Johnson and Mathien, 1999) Similar studies in the U.S. have found that full-day programs provide a relaxed, unhurried school day with more time for a variety of experiences; allow more time for assessment opportunities and for quality interaction between adults and children; allow more time to explore topics in depth; reduce the ratio of transition time to class time; provide for greater continuity of day-to-day activities; provide an environment that favours a child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach; and relieve parents and children of the stresses associated with changing locations during the day.

Although North America has not made much progress integrating its kindergarten and child care programs, several European countries have now integrated ECEC programs for children from 0-6 under one government department and regard early childhood education and care as essential in preparing children for public school as well as an important component of family support, and a venue for identifying children and families who will need special services. (OECD, 2001) Australia and the United States have also been addressing the needs of kindergarten-aged children.
Examples of Services for 3 – 5 year olds in Other Countries

- Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Portugal provide full day care for children from age 3 or younger.
- Norway and the Netherlands commence full-day preschool access at age 4.
- The United Kingdom provides guaranteed access to free part-day preschool for all 3 year olds and older.
- Australia provides part day preschool at age 4 and full day at age 5.
- The United States now provides full-day school kindergarten programs for over 60% of 4 and 5 year olds (Cleveland & Colley, 2003)

Sweden is a case in point. In 1996, responsibility for child care in Sweden moved from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Science and the government introduced a uniform framework for training child care teachers, school teachers and school age care providers (known as leisure time pedagogues). There were many fears about preschool becoming rigid and formal, losing its emphasis on play and children’s holistic development. Child care teachers also feared that the shift in focus towards “education” would threaten their profession and that preschool would become the poor sister of education.

However the reverse happened. Prior to 1996, a national study urged Swedish schools to become more responsive to children’s individual learning needs and styles, arguing that integration of the two systems would allow preschools to transform schools. Revision of the school curriculum took on many pedagogical practices of preschools; learning came to replace teaching, shifting the focus from teachers to students or learners. The Swedish Prime Minister reinforced this approach in 1996 when he announced his vision of lifelong learning for Sweden and stated that preschool education should be a component and that it should influence school education, at least in the early years. (Choi, 2002) Following Sweden’s shift, New Zealand, Spain, Slovenia, England and Scotland also moved to unify services under one department.

One indicator of the success of integration is the unification of the divided workforce. (Cohen et al, 2004) In those countries that have made the most progress in integrating early childhood services, a ‘core’ profession has emerged. These professionals work across the whole early childhood age spectrum from birth to age 5 or 6 and undertake all aspects of education and care.

Integration of ECE Professions

- New Zealand, Spain and Sweden have integrated the professions into the early childhood teacher working with children under and over 3 years. (Teachers in divided systems typically work with children from age 3 and up in the schools; in Canada this applies to children 4 and up).
- Finland, Norway and Denmark have adopted the profession known as the pedagogue, who works with children of all ages, addressing the whole child with body, mind, emotions, creativity, history and social identity.
Most countries combine core professionals with assistants. In Spain, for example, most staff working with children over 3 are teachers, while most working with younger children are assistants. (Moss 2004)

In Sweden basic education for teachers or pedagogues is a university degree (equivalent to school teachers). Assistants are generally qualified to the equivalent of a Canadian community college diploma, with career ladders in place to allow them to become ‘core’ professionals.

In virtually all of the countries mentioned, the public commitment to early childhood education and care is considerably greater than in Canada (with the exception of Quebec). Canada spends 0.23% of its annual GDP on pre-primary education; most other countries spend 0.4% to 0.6%. (Cleveland & Colley, 2003)

Towards Change

The purpose of this paper is to generate a discussion in Canada about the policy changes that would be needed to bring about integration for kindergarten-aged children. The OECD Report suggested that reconciling the differences between kindergarten and child care is a prerequisite to achieving a coherent system of early education and care in Canada. It explained that the advantages of bringing together early education and care within integrated departments include: a more unified approach; more effective investment producing greater savings; improved public supervision leading to higher quality; more coherent policy and consistency; and enhanced continuity of children’s early childhood experiences. (OECD, 2001)

Achieving integration of kindergarten and child care services in Canada will require a major paradigm shift for all involved. Because both education and child care are in the provincial jurisdiction, each province and territory will need to devise its own strategies. Each will also need to respond to the same challenges. These will be comprised of both “structural” and “conceptual” components.

This discussion paper focuses on four key concerns: program design and delivery; program framework (curriculum); the reorganization of the workforce; and governance and funding issues. It explores possible policy solutions in these areas.

Program Design and Delivery

The goal of integration is the delivery of a seamless program oriented to all aspects of children’s developmental needs. Children will attend one program oriented to all aspects of children’s developmental needs for health and physical development; emotional wellbeing and social competence; positive approaches to learning; communication skills; cognition and general knowledge. No longer will children be attending public kindergarten for a few hours to get “education” and then be shuffled back to a different program to be cared for while their parents work. Programs will be seamless. Existing “kindergarten” and “child care” will be integrated into one coherent and comprehensive program for at least six hours per day (maintaining and extending the portion of the day that is free to parents). Extended hours programs will exist to accommodate parents’ work schedules (at either end of the day or during school holidays) as an integral addition to the core program, or as a wrap-around service offered in, or close to, the same physical location. Children with special and diverse needs will be included within
activities and provide links to other early intervention, health and community resources. These programs will be designed to accommodate parents’ needs for flexibility. Parents who wish their children to attend part-time could be accommodated without sacrificing developmental opportunities.

Curricular framework

All early learning and care programs should have a child-centred curriculum focusing on cognitive, social, emotional and physical development, and advocating developmentally appropriate practices within an activity-based/play-based approach to learning and care linked to the Grade 1 curriculum. Programs should be oriented to broad developmental goals rather than just cognitive goals, such as literacy and numeracy. (Bennett, 2004)

Reorganizing the Workforce

The success of integrated early learning and care programs will depend primarily on the excellence of the human resources employed. The OECD recommended a review of professional profiles, improved recruitment levels and strengthening of the initial and in-service training of staff in both kindergarten and child care. As we move toward harmonizing developmental ambitions for young children, early childhood centres will become the foundation for lifelong learning. Staff in these centres will be required to deal sensitively with cultural issues, respond appropriately to special needs children and provide individualized support to every child in moments of vulnerability or stress.

In reviewing the training issues, the key questions raised in the other OECD countries will also be raised here in Canada.

- Is integration of the workforce possible? If so, who will be the ‘core’ profession and what will be the balance between professional and others working in the system? What educational requirements will this professional have? Who will pay for training and who will pay for a properly qualified workforce?
- What kind of phase-in period will be established for the new “core” professional? In New Zealand all early childhood teachers are required to have a teaching diploma by 2012. Incentive grants and prior learning assessment, together with time for phase-in, has made upgrading possible. Is this a model for Canada?
- Will all staff be required to have the same training – as in New Zealand – or will there be a role for an “assistant” trained at a lower level but with access to opportunities to gain additional qualifications?
- How will the workforce be reorganized to accommodate longer hours, and a longer year?

However these questions are answered, without reform to ensure adequate core funding, Canada’s ability to provide proper remuneration, training and development for a substantially underpaid and undervalued workforce will be severely compromised.
Governance and Funding Options

In view of the fact that both education and child care operate in Canada within the provincial jurisdiction, governance models that promote integration may differ across Canada. Three options are offered for consideration and discussion:

- Locating the entire ECEC system (0-6 years) within a ministry of education;
- Locating the entire ECEC system (0-6 years) within a social welfare/family services ministry;
- As in Quebec, adopting the ‘split ages’ model by locating children’s programs (kindergarten-age and above) in the school system; locating children’s programs below kindergarten-age in a social welfare/family services ministry.

There are not necessarily any perceived advantages between any of these types of ministries. The key is to ensure that there is a commitment to a vision, principles and appropriate policies.

Conclusion

There are many structural, political, professional and historic barriers to overcome before there is an integrated approach to ECEC services for kindergarten-aged children in Canada. The Integration Network Project hopes that through this paper and its other activities, the dialogue will be stimulated. The goal is to strive for collaboration, mutual respect between sectors and communities and develop options based on collective imagination. Working together – parents, teachers and child care staff – can develop a strong policy framework followed by a strategic plan, lobby for change and effectively advocate to communities of interest. The full paper and other information about the Project can be found at www.inproject.ca.
SEEING THE FUTURE

An answer to questions of integration

The Integration Network Project presented this Vision Paper to an international Symposium held in Toronto in November, 2005, following lots of discussion and input from network participants.

We’ve used our imaginations to answer key questions about what an evolved system for young Canadians might look like. We invite you to think about it, critique it, add your own suggestions and, of course, consider strategies for change.

The Vision

Remember, this is entirely imaginary!

Let’s first imagine the year is 2010. The Early Learning and Child Care system has been revolutionized across the country and enjoys high levels of public support. How did we get there and what would this mean for young children and their families?

How we got there?

Imagine that this fundamental change began in 2005 when policymakers questioned the foundations of the current early learning and child care systems. Early learning and child care in Canada was still deeply rooted in the split systems of “Education” and “Social Services” (or welfare). Attention to growing child poverty, apparent increase in violence, high drop-out rates and an increased focus on high levels of achievement for all students, particularly those who do not do well in school, precipitated a momentous public discourse about how to change the system to give children the best foundation for learning throughout their lives. Earlier, the federal government released a major report to launch an invigorating national dialogue on the future of Early Learning and Child Care in Canada in the context of lifelong learning. A broad discussion across Canada produced consensus about far-reaching recommendations for the system of Early Learning and Child Care for children aged 0-6 years.

The key recommendation involved a transformation from current arrangements to a system characterized by both vertical and horizontal integration between early learning and child care and formal schooling. Support emerged for the adoption of a new approach that emphasized the holistic nature of the child and the necessity of integrating caring, nurturing and learning under one roof. During the dialogue, the public embraced the concept of a system of lifelong learning from birth to adulthood in which the “child” became the focus of the institutions that served him or her. Learning and care were understood as interrelated and inseparable within an “integrative” approach. A focus on the full development of the child requires programs that support activities where care, nurturing and education form a coherent whole.

Strong support for this initiative was fuelled by public recognition of the value of kindergarten programs which were already universal, very popular and taught by well qualified staff who did not necessarily have a background in early childhood education. The need to build on the existing kindergarten programs was evidenced by the majority of parents who wanted and needed a learning opportunity for their younger children. Integration was achieved both conceptually and practically. Policies and programs for all children under 6 are now integrated into a universal Early Years Program...
under a single provincial ministry or department. For 4 and 5-year old children, whose experience had previously been split between ‘education’ and ‘child care’, full integration took place between the two programs. Previously, early years programs had frequently been described as “patchwork”, roughly sewn together to meet the needs of working parents. Child care centres, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens and a myriad of drop-in programs existed side by side in an attempt to provide a semblance of quality programming for parents who needed or wanted them.

What it means for young children and their families

As a result of the reform, all early years programs are available under one roof with programs founded on the same principles and similar general approaches; most are in schools but some communities developed Early Years Centres in their own buildings. Considerable local autonomy is reflected in specific program implementation. This means that programs starting with parental leave are now universally available. After one year’s parental leave (now accessible to all new parents), parents can choose learning and care environments for children on a full-time, part-time, or drop-in basis.

Our imagination continues....

Subsequently, the federal/provincial/territorial governments entered into agreements to infuse new federal funding to develop a unified, integrated or coherent system of lifelong learning starting at birth. All of the provinces and territories embraced the reforms. Public enthusiasm emerged for transforming our systems so that ‘child care’ and ‘kindergarten’ became merged. Issues of governance, financing, access, curricula, human resources, and program delivery were all reshaped with an understanding that all parts of the system must come together and inform the other. By taking account of the best of what we had learned from the pre-school and early school years policies and programs, we ensured a system that served children and families rather than institutions.

The sweeping changes covered five basic areas:

Funding and Access
Governance
Curriculum Framework
Workforce Reform
Program Delivery

Funding and Access

Funding was transformed. A key departure from the 1990s was the move away from the “marketization” of child care, based on purchase of service by parents, towards the introduction of direct (supply side) funding to the programs. Canada now spends 1% of GDP on early years’ services. One of the features of the new system is that programs for all ages of children are funded with a block grant from government. Parental fees still exist but they are limited to affordable amounts. Some provinces adopted a system of “flat parental fees” for early years’ education and out-of-school care. For example, the programs could charge a flat fee ranging between $3 and $10
per day per child for programs offered beyond six hours. Other provinces introduced a sliding scale limiting the maximum parent fee to 20% of net parental income. This resulted in universal access to all early learning and care programs for children aged 0-6 years.

In 2010, jurisdiction for early years’ programs, together with funding, is provided by a provincial/territorial Ministry of Learning. For programs beyond six hours in length, modest parent fees are charged ranging between $3 and $10 per day per child, with additional subsidies available for those parents who cannot afford them. This was achieved over a five-year period. Like Quebec in the 1990’s, most provinces expanded their systems by introducing universal access on an age-related basis. The general pattern was:

- 2005-06 5 year olds gained universal access to integrated programs
- 2006-07 4 year olds gained universal access to integrated programs
- 2007-08 3 year olds gained universal access to integrated programs
- 2008-09 2 year olds gained universal access to integrated programs
- 2009-10 Under 2’s gained universal access to integrated programs.

**Governance**

Because both child care and education are within provincial jurisdiction, provinces and territories had flexibility about how the changes were implemented. The former social services and education ministries were each vested in their own cultures, traditions and value system. The change discourse focused on how these old cultural traditions and values could be transformed and which administrative environment would work the best. All provinces and territories are now working to create horizontally (between early learning and child care and kindergarten) and vertically (between younger and older children) an integrated system for children of all ages.

Following extensive dialogues, all provinces and territories decided to locate the new integrated services in a Ministry/Department of Learning. Schools were already well established in the community, they had a strong infrastructure, a tradition of universality, highly qualified staff and an ability to adapt to changing community needs. Hence, the Ministries/Departments of Education were transformed to become Ministries/Departments of Learning with responsibility for the public provision of learning programs from birth through to the time of transition to work or post-secondary education. The fears held by many early years’ educators that locating programs for young children in schools could result in a greater emphasis on a highly prescriptive curriculum, were alleviated by a major shift in the perspective of the education sector. Growing acceptance of research from the learning sciences had shifted the curriculum emphasis from what teachers teach to how children learn. The renewed focus on creating learning environments that best suit young children and on the quality of the relationship between adults and children and among children was welcomed by all early years’ educators, whether previously working in the pre-school or school-age sectors.

Both teacher education programs and early childhood education programs were enhanced and a curriculum framework was introduced which reinforced the practice of keeping the child at the centre of the curriculum. The importance of the child’s activities as fostering all areas of development - social, emotional, physical, and intellectual is emphasized and celebrated. Recognizing the fundamental importance and interests of parents most school boards established early years advisory groups at the system and local school level to assist in the implementation and management of the programs.
Curriculum Framework

All programs were developed as part of a seamless whole. This occurred both horizontally and vertically. Child care is no longer a welfare service for working parents. It is a vital program supporting the emergence of a culture of lifelong learning, making an essential contribution to the well-being of families and serving an economy that is reliant on the employment of parents. Governments recognized that both education and care are essential and unified their provision.

Teams of educators, drawn from both the early childhood and kindergarten sectors, work together to provide the best experience for all children in all time periods throughout the day. Because early learning and child care programs are unified, communication vertically – across all of the age groupings under 6 as children make transitions from one class to another – is routine. For example, teachers share information about individual children under 3 when they move into the 3-5 year old program, just as they did when children moved from kindergarten to grade 1.

Previously, child care curriculum was not prescribed by policy, although individual programs may have had particular curricular approaches based on local program philosophy; kindergarten programs generally had clear expectations for learning outcomes but were fairly child-centred programs with play-based activities. Elementary school curriculum was usually prescriptive as to content, expectations or outcomes. Now, the program frameworks are developmental in orientation offering a consistent theoretical underpinning throughout the early years. The curricular and pedagogical framework for children of 0-6 years now includes the following:

- Statements of principles and values that guide early learning and child care programs.
- Policies that establish program standards covering staff to child ratios, educator qualifications, health and safety provisions, indoor and outdoor learning environments. These policies are made available to parents.
- The broad goals that the program pursues includes the attitudes, dispositions, skills and knowledge that children at different ages can be expected to attain across all five developmental areas – social, emotional, physical, learning and language, recognizing a developmental continuum rather than age-specific milestones;
- Pedagogical guidelines outlining the processes through which children achieve these outcomes; for example, through experiential learning, open, play-based programming. These guidelines now describe how educators support children in their learning through adult interaction and involvement; family involvement, centre and group management; providing enriched learning environments; programs for small group experiences; and theme or project methodology for leading children to conceptual understanding.
- At the local level, curriculum incorporates local concerns, languages and culture. Early childhood professionals work with parents to develop a specific curriculum approach that is consistent with the provincial/territorial guidelines and evaluate their own performance and children’s development. The development and delivery of specific programs and activities to achieve the broad curricular goals are determined at the local level – along with the approach. Some implement specific curriculum approaches for example, High Scope, Reggio Emilia, or Montessori.

The changes went beyond the introduction of a curriculum framework. There was recognition, emphasized in a government Report that schools needed to be transformed to be “ready for students”. Schools are now engaged in shifting focus from the idea of “school readiness” in reference to the state of the child to the idea of the school being ready to receive a community’s children through ongoing engagement with parents and community organizations and agencies.
Workforce Reform

Prior to 2005, two discussions dominated the field of early childhood education. The first centred on issues of recruitment and retention of child care staff in the face of stagnant wages, few benefits and poor working conditions; and the second focused on how to provide a more highly qualified workforce to meet these growing challenges.

The OECD Report delivered in 2004 as well as the federal government’s report concluded that the current pre- and in-service training for the early years professions had not kept pace with more complex demands, nor did it sufficiently equip staff to respond to the social, economic and cultural challenges facing today’s families with young children. Most of the discussion focused on finding career paths for early childhood educators with diplomas through easier access to degree-level programs.

The introduction of sustained public investment in early learning and care in 2005 led to narrowing the gap in training and pay differentials between the professions because they became members of the same unions which negotiated salary scales based on experience, qualifications and specific work responsibilities.

School principals were offered training and new resources to support their leadership to all teachers involved in early years’ programs. This was achieved through special courses and professional development opportunities on a regular basis. Experience teaching the younger children also became identified as an important criteria for a promotion to the position of principal.

Beginning in 2005, funding for early years programs substantially increased making the prospect of attaining higher level qualifications a valid option for early childhood educators. The third step, then, was to reform the education and training for all staff working with children under 6 years old. There are now three qualifications for senior teachers of young children. Senior teachers, as they are called, have one of the following options for credentials:

- a) A 4-year university degree, plus a teaching certificate, holding an Additional Qualification specialist in Early Childhood Education;
- b) A 5-year Bachelor of Education with a specialist in Early Childhood Education
- c) A 4-year university degree in Early Childhood Studies, plus an Early Childhood Education Diploma and/or a teaching certificate.

Additional educators who must have diplomas in Early Childhood Education and/or Special Needs are integrated into the local staff teams. These educators work in the program alongside the senior teachers so that all staff working with young children have training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

By 2010, most provinces have adopted the seamless day model with teams of teachers. Certified teachers and early childhood educators were given a six-year window to complete their upgrading qualifications, where necessary, to meet the new standards.

Based on the experience in other countries, the government had discussed the possibility of a more major workforce reform which would move the workforce towards one “core” profession whose members work across all centre-based early learning and child care programs, not just in “education” or in “child care”. The government Report recommended that eventually all staff working with children under 6 should pursue a four-year degree...
towards the same “core” profession. They envisioned that all teachers would take the same basic training for the first year and a half of course work and then specialize in specific subject areas or early childhood work. Existing teachers with early childhood specialization certification and professionals with a degree in Early Childhood Studies would continue to teach in the classroom while the transition to the new qualification occurred. But, the government Report recognized that this would have to be a later step.

**Toward The Seamless Day Program**

The following stories of two families show us what difference the new early learning system makes for children and families.

Awet was born in Toronto. His parents were refugees from Eritrea. His mother, Tigist, a health care aide working in a nursing home, took parental leave so that she could care for her son in the first year of his life. The maximum federal Employment Insurance of $413 per week was significantly less than her prior average earnings and so her husband Bairu, worked overtime hours at the airport to lessen the impact of his wife’s income loss.

Tigist often took Awet to the drop-in program for parents and children at the local school where Awet’s sister, Sawee, who had been enrolled in all program segments of the Early Years’ Centre before Awet’s birth, now attended the Early Learning and Care program segments. Tigist developed friendships with other parents some who were on parental leave and others who had stepped out of the work world. They learned new activities that enhance children’s development, shared insights into the issues they faced as parents and watched with pride as their children flourished. Tigist made a point of being at the drop-in on Wednesdays until the noon school break so that she could provide a special treat for Sawee – lunch at home with a friend from school.

As the year progressed Tigist began to think about her return to work. Like many parents she had mixed feelings. **Was Awet ready to be left for a full day? What would his experience be like?** The staff of the drop-in program arranged an opportunity for working parents to share their experience of this first important transition in young children’s lives. Tigist was able not only to visit the child care programs within the Early Years Centre and get to know the staff but also to leave her son for parts of the day. When the time came for her full-time return to work, Tigist and Bairu had confidence in the choice they had made for the care of Awet.

The flexibility of program segments allows Tigist and Biaru to have both Awet and Sawee in the same Early Years Centre. They usually arrive before 8:00 am so that Tigist could begin work at 8:30 a.m. and left between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. The moderate fees of $3.00 for the breakfast program and $5.00 for the care and learning components allowed Bairu to give up his overtime shifts when Tigist returned to regular wages.

Awet and his sister, Sawee, attend first the morning breakfast program operated from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. Then Awet goes to his early learning program at 9 a.m. and Sawee goes to her Grade 1 class. Awet’s next-door neighbour, Paolo, who is also three years old does not attend for the whole day. Paolo’s grandmother lives with the family and takes care of Paolo while his parents work. Paolo attends the program from 9 a.m. till 3 p.m. when his grandmother picks him up and takes him home.

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**The program is seamless,**
**starting with the breakfast program early in the morning; engaging the children in planned activities until lunch; providing lunch in the same facility; providing an afternoon program to 3:30 p.m. and then a relaxed after-school program until parents finish work and can pick up their children.**
All three staff are called “teachers” and work side-by-side to create the program, plan activities, assess children and communicate with parents. They have different responsibilities and hours. Awet’s class includes two children with special needs playing alongside him and the other children. They are supported by an educational assistant with a community college “special needs” diploma. All three of the staff are at various levels of working towards upgrading their training to reach the new goals. Rose, the lead teacher, has a four-year bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Studies plus an early childhood education diploma from a community college. Sejel, a part-time teacher, has a four-year science degree plus a teaching certificate with specialization in early childhood studies. The other teacher, Michael, has a two-year community college early childhood education diploma.

The Early Years Centre operates fully all year round with staff vacations scheduled according to individual preference and the needs of the Centre.

The program is seamless, starting with the breakfast program early in the morning; engaging the children in planned activities until lunch; providing lunch in the same facility; providing an afternoon program to 3:30 p.m. and then a relaxed after-school program until parents finish work and can pick up their children. Some children opt for a part-time (mornings or afternoons only) program, while others just stay for the regular school day and others stay for the entire day. The program is also available on professional development days and school holidays.

The lead teacher, Rose, is accountable to the school principal for the quality and effectiveness of the early years’ programs. She supervises Centre staff, prepares staff schedules and oversees the child assessment processes. She manages relationships with the food service and community agencies.

At the end of the Grade 1 program each day, Saweep’s “seamless day” continues with attendance in the after-school club run by the school and supervised to ensure appropriate safety and security. There she is able to play with her friends, do homework in a quiet area, or join one of the many after-school activities offered, such as swimming, soccer, art, pottery, dance, musical instrument, computer games or chess, etc. Awet continues in his program until one of his parents picks him up after work.

Tigist’s and Bairu’s story of parenting and working remains unlike that of most families in Canada today. It is the dilemmas of David and Jennifer that still resonate with many parents.

David and Jennifer have four children. After staying home until the youngest was two years old, Jennifer was ready to return to paid work. As well as the importance of increasing the family’s income, Jennifer was well aware that the likelihood of being able to resume her professional career was reduced by every year she stayed out of the labour force. The two older children Michael and Karen, were in Grades 3 and 4 at the neighbourhood school. Since it had an after school day care program and a minimally supervised lunch program, Michael and Karen could stay where they were. David, a computer company sales person, could plan his work schedule to enable him to walk the older children to school around 8:30 am where they met up with friends in the school yard and later he met them back at home after the child care program ended.

But what about Tim and Samantha who were in Junior and Senior Kindergarten? Jennifer located an elementary school not far from her new office that had a childcare centre on site. Both the centre and the school had excellent reputations. Jennifer felt extremely fortunate to find that space would be available for the younger children, if she could make other arrangements until September. A newspaper ‘want ad’ turned up a qualified nurse seeking a short term home based position as a nanny. Jennifer interviewed and hired her. References were difficult to check
because of no previous experience in Canada. Although Jennifer was determined to provide proper wages and
some benefits, the employment had to be ‘under the table’ because the nanny was a visitor without the legal right
to gain employment. But the arrangement worked well for the first few months.

In September with Tim now in senior kindergarten and Samantha beginning Grade 1 the family began a new
regimen of before school care, senior kindergarten, grade school and lunch programs and afternoon childcare.
A gregarious child, Tim settled in quickly. Samantha’s experience was more painful. The school was much larger
than her previous school and she felt lost as she tried to find her way from the breakfast program to her Grade 1
class and back again after school. She missed the sense of her older siblings looking out for her and was quite
desperate for her friends in the old school in her home neighbourhood. After six weeks, David and Jennifer
found their daughter’s sadness in the face of valiant efforts to adjust, too much to bear, and re-enrolled her in
kindergarten in her original school. They prayed that the older children were sufficiently responsible to ensure
that Samantha arrived home safely with them every day.

Although sometimes Jennifer wondered if all the juggling of work and activity schedules, arrangements for
professional activity days and school holidays in two different schools and the high costs of child care and
summer programs, was worth the effort, she felt sure that her children had adjusted well and tried hard to repress
the nagging fear about her seven year old should she arrive home before either parent. At the end of the school
year, an excited Tim asked if he could return to school with his sisters and brother since “I don’t need day care
anymore”. Jennifer knew this would be easier for the parents and good for the siblings but she also wondered
whether organizing and disrupting children’s lives around school and childcare services was the best we could do
for the care and learning of young children.

Concerted efforts will be needed to bring about such a paradigm shift in the organization of care and education.
The following action demands were supported by the 2005 Symposium on Integration in Toronto, Canada:

1. A call for a National Dialogue on Early Learning and Child Care in the context of Lifelong
   Learning
2. Active support of campaigns for additional public/direct funding for early learning and
   child care programs
3. Monitoring of curriculum initiatives to ensure they are consistent with program goals
   focused on the child’s needs
4. An overhaul of training and education for both early childhood educators and school
   teachers
5. Integration of all early learning and child care programs into one ministry/department so
   that barriers caused by exclusive silos can be eliminated.
INTRODUCTION

The Integration Network Project was established to address one of the critical issues in the development of Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada today: the abrupt division for kindergarten-age children between “care” programs in child care centres and “education” in public kindergarten. The Project’s focus is on seeking effective solutions to the problems and issues facing parents of kindergarten-age children.

It is recognized that any model for care and education of young children must take into account the need to link with both an early learning and care system for children from 0 to 6 as well as to the compulsory education system. Any restructuring of programs for kindergarten-age children must occur within the context of improvements to the entire system. This was stated as a key element of successful ECEC policy in the OECD publication Starting Strong:

A strong and equal partnership with the education system supports a lifelong learning approach from birth, encourages smooth transitions for children, and recognizes ECEC as an important part of the education process. Strong partnerships with the education system provide the opportunity to bring together the diverse perspectives and methods of both ECEC and schools. (OECD, 2001, p. 5)

This paper explores some of the policy solutions to overcome the complex problems of disruption and inconsistency inhibiting the healthy development of children; the insecurity, inconvenience and stress for parents; the problems of status and salary differentials for teachers and caregivers; and the problems of duplication, policy inconsistency and inappropriate resource allocation for governments. It will review the context within which the problems exist. It will then review selected characteristics of program models in other OECD countries. The paper will then focus on proposing a vision and some policy options to achieve change.

The kinds of questions to think about include:

• What does a Seamless Day mean to you? What types of services would be available for kindergarten-age children in a seamless day model? (see page 41)

• How should integrated programs be financed? Who should pay? In what proportions? (See page 41)

• Should an integrated program retain the staff:child ratios of the Education System, the child care system, or should new staff:ratios be introduced? Are there other regulations that need to be addressed in an integrated system? (See page 42)

• What would an integrated system mean for the curriculum or program guidelines? (See page 43)

• Should the workforce be integrated or continue to be divided? If integrated, who will

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1 This paper will use the definition of Early Childhood Education and Care provided in Starting Strong, the summary report from the recent OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care. The review which profiles policies and programs in 12 member countries sums it up as follows: “The term early childhood education and care (ECEC) includes all arrangements providing care and education of children under compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or programme content.
be the ‘core’ profession. (for example, a teacher, an early childhood educator or a new profession embodying teaching and early childhood education? (See page 44)

- Should there be different levels of professionals (e.g. early education teacher and assistant early educator)? (See page 45)
- What kind of qualifications and training should professionals working in integrated programs have? Degrees? Diplomas? A mixture? (See page 45)
- What kind of research would be appropriate to conduct in relation to “integration” systems? (See page 46)
- Which Ministry/Department should have overall responsibility in an integrated system?
- What safeguards would you suggest? (See page 47)

Please use the bulletin board section of the website to post your comments and feedback.

Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Recommendations

The OECD Canada Report, tabled in October 2004, focused attention on the problems created by the two solitudes: Education and Child Care.

The OECD Report, Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Canada: Country Note (2004) (OECD 2004) stressed the need to heal the rift between kindergarten programs and child care and emphasized the need to:

Build bridges between child care and kindergarten education, with the aim of integrating ECEC both at ground level and at policy and management levels. (OECD, p. 7)

There is recognition that learning begins at birth and that it is important to provide developmental opportunities at a young age, but North America does not have good models of integrated early learning and care programs. Historically in Canada, policies for the “care” and “education” of young children have developed very separately with different systems of governance, funding streams and training for staff. Both provincially and locally, responsibility for early childhood services is often divided among several ministries/departments, based more on the traditional divisions of governments than on the needs of families and young children.

This fragmentation produces different problems for young children, parents, educators/staff, and even governments. In practice, many programs offering similar curricula for children of the same age operate side by side in each of the two streams (“child care” and “education”) merely separated by a classroom or a hallway. Often, children are shuffled from one program before school, to kindergarten in the public education system for 2-1/2 hours, and then back to child care for the balance of the day until their parents come to take them home. Even where “child care” programs occupy space in the same schools as the kindergarten programs, teachers and educators often have very little communication, if any, about the content and curriculum in their programs, let alone case conferences about individual children.
The negative consequences of this fragmentation and inconsistency for both children and families have been well documented. In addition, linkages with other child-related programs and services such as maternity and parental leaves, public health, family support, parent and parenting programs, social services and employment policies are virtually non-existent.

This paper will therefore attempt to generate a Canada-wide discussion about the possibilities of policy change for this age group in order to bring about integration. Full conceptual and structural integration of programs is at the far end of a long continuum that starts with communication, may involve co-location, then more collaboration, coordination, joint working through to full integration. Eliminating fragmentation will involve a process of integration. In the past, terms such as “coordination”, “collaboration”, “partnership” and “integration” have often been used interchangeably. In the context of services for young children, coordination, collaboration and partnership characterizes situations in which two or more organizations work together, through a formal or informal arrangement, to meet one or more goals. The goal for resolving the fragmentation of the child’s day requires more than coordination; it requires both structural and conceptual integration. But the route to achieving it will, in all likelihood, involve a process of greater coordination and collaboration ultimately leading to full integration.

Integration is defined as both “structural and conceptual” integration such as common intake and ‘seamless’ service delivery. Structural integration occurs when the child receives a range of services from different programs without repeated registration procedures, waiting periods, different philosophies, human resource practices and funding systems. Experiences from countries, such as New Zealand and the United Kingdom, indicate that a simple switch into one jurisdiction or ministry will not guarantee “integration”. The ‘conceptual’ aspect of integration will be key to an effective integration process.

In the case of the ‘split day’ for kindergarten-aged children, so common in Canada, the need for full integration is urgent. Splitting the bulk of the child’s day between one program (kindergarten) mandated to provide “learning” for preschool children and another program (child care) which provides ‘care’ for children while their parents work is redundant, cost-ineffective and unhealthy for optimal child development.

Splitting the bulk of the child’s day between one program (kindergarten) mandated to provide “learning” for preschool children and another program (child care) which provides ‘care’ for children while their parents work is redundant, cost-ineffective and unhealthy for optimal child development.
Summarizing the Canadian Context

The following table summarizes the major types of ECEC services available to preschool children in Canada.

### Summary of Service Characteristics: Kindergarten and Child Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Half-day kindergarten</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ranges between 475 and 570 instructional hours, averaging 2-1/2 hours per day; outside urban areas programs often offered for a full day on alternate days to reduce transportation costs. Working parents have to juggle to make sure their children attend kindergarten and receive child care</td>
<td>Newfoundland, PEI, On, Man, Sask, Alta, BC, Yukon, NWT, Nunavut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Full-day kindergarten</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nova Scotia offers a minimum of 4 hours per day; (usually 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.) New Brunswick 832.5 instructional hours/year; Quebec 846 instructional hours/year.</td>
<td>NS, NB, Quebec; francophone schools boards in Ontario; Nunavut also offers up to 6 hours/day in some places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior kindergarten (Ontario), Nursery classes (Manitoba), Pre-kindergarten (Saskatchewan), Pre-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Approximately 50% of 4 year olds attend public kindergarten</td>
<td>Universally offered by school boards in Ontario; offered in other provinces in areas of disadvantage; pre-kindergartens in Sask. for example. Pilot projects at 19 sites in Nova Scotia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (Nova Scotia)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Location(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public kindergarten operated in child care centres</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Funded by the Department of Education; licensed and monitored by Department of Health and Social Services; taught by child care staff. 50% of children then continue to participate in child care for the rest of the day on a fee for service basis. System improves the transitions for parents and children. Teachers are required to hold a minimum of a two-year diploma in Early Childhood Education. Wages are very low (averaging $12 per hour in 2005) Parents pay for the non-kindergarten part of the day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-around if children are in the “education” system</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>School boards organize and operate wrap-around child care for all children enrolled in public kindergarten programs. Fees are $7 per day.</td>
<td>Quebec – ($7 per day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-around child care operated by independent programs in schools</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Some school boards/districts rent space to independent child care or schoolage programs to facilitate transitions between public kindergarten and child care. Preschool child care fees apply.</td>
<td>On a discretionary basis across the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed system of free kindergarten in child care centres run by schools and funded by the Ministry of Education</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Certified kindergarten teacher goes to child care centre rather than vice versa.</td>
<td>Alberta; occasionally in Ontario, one centre in Winnipeg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Some parents keep their children in child care centres for the kindergarten years rather than scramble with difficult arrangements. Parents who do not qualify for a subsidy have to pay high fees, averaging $450 p.m.</td>
<td>All provinces/territories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-day free kindergarten in schools and half-day ‘fee for service’ kindergarten in schools</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Usually operated by school districts with certified teachers. One half of the day is offered for a fee ranging between $310 and $490 p.m.</td>
<td>BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private schools recognized by Ministry of Education (can be in a child care centre)</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Kindergarten curriculum taught by a certified teacher within a child care centre; but operated as a private school.</td>
<td>BC, Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free kindergarten: half-day taught by certified teachers; half-day operated by qualified early childhood educators.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Close coordination between the kindergarten and child care teachers. The child care staff earn higher wages than their counterparts in local child care centres, but lower than certified teachers. The rationale for this program is the importance of retention, recruitment and expansion of the French language.</td>
<td>Most Francophone School Boards across Canada.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 More details about arrangements for ECEC programs in the provinces and territories can be found in Appendix B.
Key Features: Kindergarten

Kindergarten programs are well established and the only truly universal ECEC program offered to Canadian children under the age of six. However, they are viewed exclusively as “educational” programs with no attempt to meet employment needs of working parents. Kindergarten is clearly very well accepted by parents and beneficial to children (98% of 5 year olds attend) but it is separated geographically, jurisdictionally and culturally from other ECEC programs. As a result, kindergarten children may participate in several ECEC settings during the day (e.g., before kindergarten, kindergarten, after kindergarten). Depending on the arrangements this can be difficult and stressful for children and parents. There were an estimated 469,000 children enrolled in Canadian Kindergartens (including pre-kindergartens) in 2003/4 mostly part-time. Expenditures were estimated in 2001 at $1.5 billion (Doherty, Friendly & Beach, 2003) Average class sizes vary across the country but range between 15 in the Yukon up to 25 in Nova Scotia. Prince Edward Island kindergarten classes have adopted the legislated child care staff:child ratios of 1:2 children. (Friendly et al, 2002)

All provinces/territories have curriculum or program goals for kindergartens. The OECD: Background Report observed that:

Statements of desired child outcomes for kindergarten tend to exhibit commonality across the provinces/territories in their goals – assisting children to develop a positive self-concept, a positive attitude towards learning, an understanding of appropriate social behaviour with peers and with adults, communication skills that set the foundation for learning to read and write, an understanding of numbers and of basic concepts such as length and weight, and some basic understanding of the community in which they live. These goals all reflect the objective of providing children with the basic skills for success in grade one and are consistent in intent with the goal of the early kindergartens established in the late 1800s. (Canada: Background Report, 2004, p.33)

- Quebec is the only province or territory which has attempted administrative integration between the two systems. With the introduction of new Family Policy in 1997-98, jurisdiction for early childhood education was split at age 5. Children 0-4 attend child care programs run by the Ministère de l’Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille. At age 5, children can attend non-compulsory, full-school day kindergarten in the Education System. In inner city schools, there are also pre-kindergarten programs for four year olds operating for half a day. The other half-day and after-school child care are spent in the school child care centre, which is part of the school system, run by the school boards with Principals having ultimate responsibility. School based child care centres are expected to meet the child care licensing requirements. As a result there is extensive coordination between the teachers and the child care staff.

- Prince Edward Island has also introduced an innovative model. Kindergarten in PEI operates for half a day in child care centres. Programs are taught by early childhood educators (minimum qualification two year early childhood education), is free to parents, maintains the child care ratios of 1 teacher to 12 children and permits children to stay in the child care centre for the balance of the day on a fee-for-service basis.
• Kindergartens do not undertake regular program evaluation. The focus is on assessment of individual children through report cards and testing at Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 plus the national and international testing organized through the provincial and territorial education authorities. Often, a large amount of money is spent on the organization of such testing. Despite the dollars available for testing, there are very limited resources to do the extra follow up work to help children who are having problems to improve. (Cleveland, Colley, 2003)

• The Toronto First Duty Project is a partnership among City of Toronto, Toronto District School Board and participating City Agencies with funding support from Atkinson Foundation and the Canadian Autoworkers Union. It has developed a pilot project to integrate and expand early education, family support and child care activities in five neighbourhoods. This pilot project is designed to demonstrate how existing early childhood and family programs can be transformed into a system for children 0-6 years and to explore possible options for integration of kindergarten and other ECEC services. Each of the five sites: Bruce Woodgreen Early Learning Centre, Corvette Early Years, Queen Victoria Partners for Early Learning Project, York Early Years Wilcox Project and Action for Children Today and Tomorrow Secord-Dawes Hub has engaged in activities to bring together and integrate early years services to children and families in their respective communities. (City of Toronto, Toronto First Duty, 2004)

• As an example, at the Bruce WoodGreen Early Learning Centre, the kindergarten classrooms were licensed to meet provincial child care regulations to provide extended programming. Parents are encouraged to take part in their children’s activities and to participate in the parenting and family literacy activities which serve children 0-6 years. Qualified teachers and early childhood educators work side by side with each other, collaborate on program and curriculum and parent communication. There is also an active parenting and literacy program where parents can bring their children for daily activities. For children who stay in the program beyond the school day, Bruce WoodGreen has adopted the Quebec model and is charging parents a fee of $6 for the full six hour school day and an additional $6 per day for the extended hours period of child care.

• Unfortunately, Toni Schweitzer’s experience is not shared by many parents of kindergarten-aged children in Canada, because kindergarten programs are separated physically jurisdictionally and culturally from other ECEC programs. As a result, kindergarten children may participate in several ECEC settings during the day. Many

_Toni Schweitzer can’t believe how lucky she is to have a fantastic kindergarten program for her four-year-old twins. The program runs from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the local community school where certified teachers and early childhood educators work side by side to offer a child-centred program that covers her entire working day. The program is part of Toronto First Duty, a pilot project operating in five sites in Toronto, bringing together and integrating early years services to children and families in their communities. This three-year project is designed to demonstrate how existing early childhood and family programs can be transformed into a system for children 0-6 years and to explore possible options for integration of kindergarten and other early childhood education and care (ECEC) services._
programs offering similar curricula operate side by side in two streams, fee-based child care and publicly funded education, separated merely by a classroom or hallway. Often children move from child care before school to kindergarten for 2-1/2 hours, then back to child care for the balance of the day. Even where a child care program occupies space in the same school as the kindergarten program, teachers and educators communicate very little about the content, curriculum, or individual children. The result is fragmentation that is stressful for children, parents and teachers.

Fee for service half-day Kindergarten in British Columbia, taught by certified teachers, has emerged in several BC school districts offering an additional half-day kindergarten program for fees ranging between $310 and $490 per month.

Key Features: Regulated Centre-based Child Care

In Canada, outside Quebec, child care services are largely a market service with some governmental regulation and subsidization of low-income families or families deemed to be “at risk”. Programs are provided in child care centres, nursery schools and family homes, licensed by the provincial government and regulated under the Day Nurseries Act. There is a mixture of municipal, private for-profit and not-for-profit programs.

The care services in Canada are based on a fee-for-service arrangement. Fees in the regulated sector range between $154 (Quebec) to $600 (Northwest Territories) a month for kindergarten-aged children. (Friendly and Beach, 2005) Usually, child care programs charge parents for the full day even if they are taken to kindergarten in the school for part of the day.

• Regulated child care in Canada is governed by child care legislation and regulations in each province and territory. This legislation provides for licensing, monitoring and enforcement. The regulations set out the standards and regulations for the operation of these group programs, including maximum child:staff ratios, group sizes, minimum staff qualification requirements and guidelines for parental involvement.

• In most provinces and territories, a social services/family/children’s ministry is responsible for developing policy and legislation, coordinating planning, licensing child care programs, ensuring compliance with the regulations and administering funding. Often there are decentralized ministries with regional offices. Ministry officials based in the regions license child care programs, monitor them and enforce the legislation and regulations through an annual license renewal process to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards.

• The Northwest Territories is the only jurisdiction in which the Department of Education is responsible for both child care and education.

• At present statistics are not collected on enrolment of children by their actual age so it is unclear how many kindergarten-aged children are enrolled in regulated or unregulated child care programs. In 2003/4, there were an estimated 745,250 licensed spaces for children in Canada aged 0-12; an estimated 149,000 families receive some fee subsidy. There are also waiting lists for fee subsidies in most places. (Friendly and Beach, 2005)

• Quality in child care centres is typically measured for research and evaluation purposes using scales such as the Infant-Toddler Environments Rating Scale (ITERS) and the...
Early Childhood Environments Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS). The ITERS, ECERS and FDCRS scales are 7-point scales, where a score of 1 represents inadequate, 3 represents minimal, 5 represents good and 7 represents excellent. Following the publication of the You Bet I Care Study, some provinces and territories used federal funding to work on improving quality. A number of initiatives were taken ranging from a wage enhancement grant in New Brunswick to an accreditation system in Alberta.

Family Home Child Care

Many kindergarten-age children use family child care in a caregiver’s home (both regulated and unregulated) before and/or after kindergarten. Fee subsidies for low-income parents are also available in regulated family homes or in ‘registered’ homes in British Columbia.

A large number of children spend more than 7 hours a day in unregulated care, supplemented only by 2-1/2 hours of public kindergarten. As the OECD Report pointed out this raises serious problems because the research shows that unregulated care in all OECD countries is of lower quality than regulated care. They also observed that it raised equity issues because public funding of provision reaches only a very limited number of families. The quality of a system must also include equitable outcomes. Access cannot be a preserve for the fortunate children in recognized settings, but for all families and young children seeking child care. (OECD, 2004)

Children with Special Needs

Kindergarten-age children with special needs are also accommodated within the regulated child care system. Most provincial/territorial governments encourage integration and inclusion of children with special needs into community child care services, but provide insufficient resources to meet the needs. Special needs funding programs provide assistance for staffing, equipment, supplies or services to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care.

Aboriginal Child Care

Programs on reserve are usually administered under agreements between First Nations communities and the federal government. Some provinces license on-reserve child care; other provinces do not license but provide support. Licensed child care centres and family child care off reserve also serve aboriginal children.

Support Services (Family Resource Centres, etc.)

Family resource centres, Early Learning Centres, Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, Community Action Program for Children (CAP-C) and a variety of prevention and intervention programs provide various support services to parents, public education, and programs for specific target groups. Most of these are not, strictly speaking, providing either education or care services to preschool children (and are therefore not included in the OECD definition above), but they may provide related services, which influence child development in different ways. Some of these programs are operated by provincial/territorial/municipal governments, others by non-profit agencies and some by the federal government. Coherence of these programs within an overall system of services is typically lacking. Some of these programs carry small user fees.
Funding

• The operation of child care programs tends to be driven by funding and financing issues. Unlike kindergarten in the schools, parents must pay for child care. This leaves child care programs subject to the vagaries of the market place, placing considerable emphasis on ensuring that the revenues will cover expenditures.

• The main form of funding available in the regulated child care sector is fee assistance paid directly to licensed service providers on behalf of parents, whose eligibility for subsidy is determined by an income or needs test. Income ceilings and other factors vary from one province/territory to the other. Most parents receiving a fee subsidy are also charged a user fee. Some provinces/territories do not require financial eligibility as a condition for subsidizing care for children with special needs; other provinces require financial eligibility for the basic fee but will support assistance for the additional supports.

The following table summarizes the essential differences between public kindergartens and regulated child care programs:

### Arrangements for Kindergarten-Age Children at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences Between Public Kindergartens and Regulated Child Care Programs</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departmental</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Various : Ministry of Social Services/Family/Children’s Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular/program guidelines</td>
<td>Wide variations across the country</td>
<td>Virtually non-existent except for Quebec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Delegated to superintendents of education</td>
<td>Regulated by provincial/territorial legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Universal entitlement</td>
<td>Fee-for-service and subsidy based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Publicly funded</td>
<td>Fee-for-service and government subsidies for low-income and at risk children, plus a small portion of special grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>All teachers must have a degree plus teacher certification.</td>
<td>One or two-year community college diploma in child care. Not all staff are qualified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and Working Conditions</td>
<td>Average wages in 2000: $53,764. Full benefits, school holidays; career ladder</td>
<td>Average wages $19,000 pa (Sector Council 2004); 37-40 hour week; 2 weeks vacation; generally no benefits; no career ladder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical Approach</td>
<td>No systematic approach in either sector</td>
<td>No systematic approach in either sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community linkages</td>
<td>Minimal in both sectors Full of seams!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Delivery</td>
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3 Links to provincial/territorial websites containing details of curricular/program guidelines for kindergarten programs are available on the Project website at www.inproject.ca.
Summarizing What the Research Tells Us

Importance of the Early Years

- All children are born wired for feelings and ready to learn; early environments matter, and nurturing relationships are essential; society is changing, and the needs of young children are not being addressed; interactions among early childhood science, policy, and practice are problematic and demand new interdisciplinary approaches (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

- The period between birth and age six is a critical one when children acquire the essential language and cognitive skills needed to learn reading and mathematics as well as the ability to cope socially and to interact well with teachers and other children (McCain and Mustard, 1999).

- Children who go to Grade I with these skills are more likely to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered; children who do not demonstrate these skills are more likely to risk later difficulties in school. (Doherty, 1997).

- Early development has a significant impact on mental and physical health later in life. (Health Canada, 2000).

- School readiness should not be focused on the narrow goals of cognitive development but broadened to encompass a definition, which takes into account the development of the whole child.

Children are ready for school when, for a period of several years, they have been exposed to consistent, stable adults who are emotionally invested in them; to a physical environment that is safe and predictable; to regular routines and rhythms of activity; to competent peers; and to materials that stimulate their exploration and enjoyment of the world and from which they derive a sense of mastery. These factors alone would be better indices of readiness for school than any measurable aspect of child performance. (Pianta & Walsh, 1996, p. 34).

- Recognition that it’s not just poor children who need early learning experiences. For example, the data from the Early Development Instrument administered in North York, Ontario in 2003 indicated that about 32% of all children (approximately one out of three) scored poorly on two or more of the measures and were judged likely to have future problems. (TDSB, 2003);

- Parental input is a key factor in language and literacy development (Sylva et al 2000). When parents are sensitive to children’s needs, encourage independence, are non-authoritarian or highly controlling, not too permissive (overly nurturing with few standards for child behaviour), children get large benefits. Many parents need knowledgeable advice to support their children’s learning and development. Parenting skills and socio-economic status are not highly correlated; low incomes do not play a strong role in determining parenting abilities. (Willms, 2002) Any new system model clearly needs to be more creative in providing support to parents – all parents.
Quality


• The 2001 OECD review of early childhood care and education in twelve countries concluded that “children who receive high quality care and education in their early years show better cognitive and language abilities than those in lower quality arrangements.” (OECD, 2001)

• High quality child care “is associated with outcomes that all parents want to see in their children ranging from co-operation with adults, to the ability to initiate and sustain positive exchanges with peers, to early competence in math and reading.” (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000)

• The large-scale Canadian study, You Bet I Care, found that higher levels of staff sensitivity were associated with: higher staff wages; teaching staff with higher levels of ECCE-specific education; better benefits; higher staff levels of satisfaction with their relationships with colleagues and the centre as a work environment; the centre being used as a student-teacher practicum site; the centre receiving subsidized rent and/or utilities (a factor that allows higher wages); the centre having favourable staff:child ratios; and the centre being non-profit. Strikingly, the mean scores did not approach excellent in any province or territory.

• The Trust for Early Education (TEE) in the U.S. concluded that pre-kindergarten teachers with bachelor’s degrees and specialized training in child development raise pre-kindergarten program quality and result in better outcomes for children. (Whitebook, 2003)

• A study of pre-kindergarten staffing in California, Georgia, Chicago, New York, and Texas found that teachers employed in publicly-operated programs attained more formal education, received higher wages and benefits and experienced greater job stability than did their counterparts in privately-operated programs. (Belim et al, 2002)

• A Report for the U.S. National Research Council (National Academy of Science) suggests that bringing the practice in line with the theory about what is needed to realize the full potential of preschoolers will require efforts in: professional development of teachers; development of teaching materials that reflect research-based understandings of children’s learning; development of public policies that support the provision of quality preschool experiences (such as standards, appropriate assessment, regulations and funding), and communication of the recent research and knowledge about the importance of developments in the preschool years. (Bowman et al, 2001)

• Auspice also matters. A recent study indicates that “on average there appears to be a substantial difference in quality between commercial and non-profit centres”. (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 2004, p.1)
Full Day or Half-Day Kindergarten

- Very little research has been conducted in Canada, but in 1998, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy study comparing kindergarten and child care programs in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta concluded that:

- A majority of both kindergarten and child care programs received acceptable to good (ECERS-R) scores in the program observations, although child care scores in New Brunswick and Quebec raised concerns.

- Provincial jurisdiction (Education or Social Services) made a difference in that kindergarten quality was more dependable across the country, probably because teacher certification results in more program similarity province-to-province;

- That the presence of trained staff was the most important predictor of quality in both child care and kindergarten;

- Parents and educators agreed that social features (cooperating and sharing with others) and language activities were the most important aspects of early childhood education. Learning to read and write was ranked at the low end; either 19th or 20th out of 20 program elements by both groups.

- Program integration in early childhood education is no more expensive than split provision and may cost less per child.

- Parents supported a new program model combining full-day, year-round care and education programs through the school system for children of kindergarten-aged.

- The Caledon study of kindergarten and child care in four provinces found that three-quarters of parents supported the idea of a full-day integrated program. (Johnson and Mathien, 1999).

- The rapid U.S. growth in expansion of full-day kindergarten programs has engendered many studies. In 1969, in the U.S. kindergarteners usually attended short half-day programs. Only 11% were in full-day programs (more than four hours, but usually closer to six). By 2000, the percentage enrolled in full-day programs had grown to 60%. (U.S. Census Bureau of Population, 2001) The majority of studies conducted on the impact of full day kindergarten on children are extremely positive. To summarize, full-day programs:

  - Provide a relaxed, unhurried school day with more time for a variety of experiences,

  - Allow more time for assessment opportunities and for quality interaction between adults and children.

  - Were welcomed by parents who pointed out a number of advantages: no more shuttling children from school to an afternoon babysitter or worrying about whether their child had been safely picked up.

  - Allow children and teachers time to explore topics in depth, reduces the ratio of transition time to class time;

  - Provide for greater continuity of day-to-day activities; and

  - Provide an environment that favours a child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach. (Holmes and McConnell, 1990; Karweit, 1992; Elicker & Mathur, 1997; Weiss & Offenberg, 2002; Welsh, 2002; Humphrey, 1983; Herman 1984)
Curricular and Pedagogical Frameworks Matter

- Broad developmental goals were identified by the United States National Education Goals Panel in 1997 (NEGP, 1997). The goals contributing to the child’s overall development and later success in school include: health and physical development; emotional well-being and social competence; positive approaches to learning; communication skills; cognition and general knowledge.

- Effective pedagogy includes the provision of enriched learning and play environments, freely-chosen activities by children and responsive accompaniment of children by educators who guide, inform, model and instruct, but do not dominate the child’s thinking. At the same time there is some evidence that endorses a greater emphasis on basic skills and direct instruction or teacher/adult-directed activities, particularly for children living in economically disadvantaged families where literacy is not modelled and valued. (Stanovich, 1993) The overall evidence, based on empirical research, does not support a basic skills approach over a child-centred approach if the goal is overall optimal child development. It does suggest the need to ensure basic skills are embedded in the program.

- The social pedagogue sets out to address the whole child, the child with body, mind, emotions, creativity, history and social identity, e.g. German Bildung define it as “a comprehensive process of developing the abilities which enable human beings to learn, develop their achievement potential, to act, to solve problems and to form relationships”. (Bundesjugendkuratorium u.a., 2002).

- Despite the apparent expert consensus that curricular emphasis for young children should be focused on broad developmental goals, the OECD identified two different traditions during the 12-country review. These trends are summarized in the Table below. The ‘social pedagogy’ approach tends to emphasize broad development goals, which contribute to children’s overall development. The pre-primary approach tends to place more emphasis on focussed cognitive goals such as mathematical development, language and literacy. (Bennett, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Primary Tradition</th>
<th>Social pedagogy tradition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralised development of curriculum with frequently detailed goals and outcomes.</td>
<td>A broad central guideline with local curriculum development encouraged and supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A focus on learning standards, especially in areas useful for school readiness. Teacher-child relationships tend to be instrumentalised through reaching for detailed curriculum goals</td>
<td>Focus on broad developmental goals as well as learning are stressed, interactivity with educators and peers encouraged and the quality of life in the institution is given high importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often prescriptive: clear outcomes are set at national/provincial/territorial level to be reached in all centres.</td>
<td>Broad orientations rather than prescribed outcomes. A diffusion of goals may be experienced, with diminished accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment often required. Goals are clearly defined. Graded assessment of each child with respect to discrete competences is an important part of the teacher’s role.</td>
<td>Assessment not required. Goals are broad. Outcomes for each child are set by negotiation (educator-parent-child) and informally evaluated unless screening is necessary. A growing focus on individual language and communication competences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• According to the OECD review, Canada’s kindergarten and child care programs share similar broad development goals described in broad program statements. In practice, they tend to blend aspects of this preschool tradition and the social pedagogy tradition. For example, in kindergarten programs, curricular and child-staff ratios are less constraining. Kindergarten teachers organize children in small work groups and pursue broader developmental aims. Buildings and resources are generously funded. Some provinces and territories do however aim for more detailed and narrow outcomes, e.g. that children by the age of 5 years should know their letters; count fluently; have a knowledge of basic phonics and be able to read and/or write a range of familiar words. Curriculum and pedagogical approaches in Canadian child care centres are quite varied and run the gamut from pre-primary, (structured, adult-directed curricula that focus on basic skills such as letter recognition, letter-sound associations, counting and printing) to social pedagogy (very open-ended, child-directed programs that follow the child’s interests.)

• Children may be able to take on the challenge of a focussed cognitive curriculum, but the prescribed detailed literacy goals for all young children may put undue pressure on educators and children. (Wood, 2004; Schweinhart & Welkart, 1997). When begun too early, literacy instruction may actually harm the self-concept of young children, leading to anxiety, low self-esteem and mediocre literacy results.

• There’s a need to guide the staff in centres, especially when they have low certification and little training. A curriculum helps to ensure that staff cover important learning areas, adopt a common pedagogical approach and reach for a certain level of quality across age groups and regions of the country.

• At present, Quebec is the only province to include a curricular requirement in its child care legislation. But, most educational jurisdictions do have kindergarten curricular or program guidelines. There is a wide variation across the country ranging from the “social pedagogy” approach to the “pre-primary” approach as expressed by Bennett in the table above. There seems to be a wide variation depending on the current curriculum emphasis, the materials and resources available and, in particular, the size of the classroom. Experts in curriculum indicate that it is very difficult for educators to deliver a play-based curriculum with a choice of activities for children when there is one teacher to over 20 children. (Bennett, 2004). One of the key recommendations of the OECD Canada Country Note was to develop national curricular guidelines.

• The social pedagogic approach to curriculum is found in the Nordic and central European countries. In the US there has in recent years been a swing towards a pre-elementary school approach, giving rise to concerns that there is becoming too heavy an emphasis on subject areas. (Bennett, 2004). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) continues to promote a social pedagogy approach, known as developmentally appropriate practice. However increasing attention on emergent and early literacy and numeracy encroach on more open-ended practices and environments, even when the broad goals are holistic and developmental.
• Curricular frameworks also help to involve families in curriculum development and implementation. Although knowledgeable about their children, many parents need professional assistance to support their children’s learning and development.

• It is not yet clear that any jurisdiction has figured out the appropriate amount of literacy, numeracy, scientific/technological knowledge in the early childhood curriculum or how it should be ensured. But experts are clear that programs must be oriented to the broad developmental goals and not just focused on cognitive goals. (Bennett, 2004)

Summarizing the International Context

• Although North America has not made very much progress integrating its kindergartens and child care programs, nine European countries have now integrated their entire ECEC systems for children from birth to age 6 under one government department and now regard early childhood education and care as an essential part of preparation of children for public school, an important component of the supports to families with special attention to those with employed parents, and as a venue for identifying children and families who will need special services. (OECD, 2001)

• Most countries which participated in the OECD 12-country review (Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) provide universal preschool ECEC services for the vast majority of children who are 3 years of age and older. 4 Belgium, Italy, Portugal and the U.K. provide universal access usually free of charge for children over 3 years. Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden also provide universal services but require a modest contribution from the parents usually between 10% to 30% of the costs.

• Most countries have developed curricular (or pedagogical frameworks) for children aged 3-6 years. These include the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy; Portugal; the Netherlands for children over 4 years and the UK. Some States in the US, New Zealand and Australia have also issued curricular guidelines for ECEC. The majority of US states have adopted early learning standards for young children (some covering children under 3) focussing on language/literacy and cognition/general knowledge. Although many states still follow the National Association for Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAE CS/SDE) - guidelines which recommend that early learning standards focus on broad overall developmental goals - the most common areas adopted are language/literacy and cognition/general knowledge areas giving rise to concerns that there is becoming too heavy an emphasis on subject areas. (Bennett, 2004)

• A number of OECD countries have moved towards integrating divided systems. For example, in 1996, responsibility for child care in Sweden was transferred from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Science under the School Act. Among a number of reforms, the government also introduced a uniform framework for training for child care teachers, school teachers and schoolage care providers (known as leisure time pedagogues). Of course, there were many fears about preschool becoming rigid and formal, losing its emphasis on play and children’s holistic development. Also, child care teachers were anxious about the focus shifting towards “education” representing a threat to their profession and that preschool, which had

4 See Appendix C: The International Context for more specific details of arrangements and costs in these countries.
enjoyed prominence in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, would lose its primacy and become the poor sister under education.

The reverse happened. In Sweden, child care philosophy influenced integration. Prior to moving preschool under the Ministry of Education in 1996, a national study urged Swedish schools to become more responsive to children’s individual learning needs and styles. It argued that integrating preschools with schools would allow the former to transform the latter. This point was also taken into consideration in the revision of the school curriculum, which took on many pedagogical practices of preschools. Learning came to replace teaching, shifting the focus from teachers to students or learners. The Swedish Prime Minister reinforced this approach in 1996 when he announced his vision of lifelong learning for Sweden and stated that preschool education should be a part of the country’s lifelong learning vision and that it should influence school education, at least in the early years. (Soo-Hyang Choi, 2002)

- Following this development in Sweden, New Zealand, Spain, Slovenia, England and Scotland also moved to unify services under one department. Early childhood services are now the responsibility of one government in nine European countries – either welfare or education. But departmental integration, in New Zealand and the U.K., for example, does not automatically mean full integration of the two systems. (Cohen et al, 2004)

One indicator of how far integration has gone is what happens to the divided workforce and, in particular, whether the workforce has been reformed around a ‘core’ profession whose members work across all centre-based early childhood services: both child care and education.

Two ‘core’ professions have emerged in countries which have gone furthest in integrating early childhood services. Both work across the whole early childhood age spectrum from birth to age 5 or 6. Both engage in all aspects of education and care.

- New Zealand, Spain and Sweden have integrated the professions into the early childhood teacher working with children under and over 3 years. (By contrast, teachers in divided systems typically work just with children from 3 and upward in the schools; in Canada this applies to children 4 and upward).

- The Nordic countries of Finland, Norway and Denmark have adopted the profession known as the pedagogue who works with children in a holistic way addressing the whole child with body, mind, emotions, creativity, history and social identity. In fact, pedagogues work across a wider range of occupations. In addition to early childhood services, they work with school-age children, youth in residential settings and also care for adults with disabilities and the elderly. (Moss, 2004)

- In countries with core professions, there is usually also an assistant. In Spain, staff working with children over 3 are mostly teachers, while those working with under 3’s are mostly assistants. In countries like Denmark and Sweden about half of all workers are teachers or pedagogues. In New Zealand, the government has set a target of having the entire workforce trained by 2012.

- Whether teachers or pedagogues, basic education is a university degree (equivalent to school teachers). Assistants are generally qualified to the equivalent of a Canadian community college diploma. There are career ladders in place to allow early childhood educators to move up.
• In virtually all of these countries, the public commitment to Early Childhood Education and Care services is considerably greater than in Canada (with the exception of Quebec). Canada spends 0.23% (i.e., 23 hundredths of 1%) of its annual GDP on pre-primary education. Most other countries spend 0.4% to 0.6% of GDP. As a result, ECEC is a low priority in Canada, apparently a much lower priority than in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden or the U.K. Even the U.S. spends more public dollars as a percent of its GDP on pre-primary education than Canada. (OECD, 2001, p. 189)

Towards Change

Achieving integration of kindergarten and child care services will require a major paradigm shift from the fragmented patchwork currently available to a coherent system of services for children as a right. Because both education and child care are in the provincial jurisdiction, specific strategies for change will ultimately have to be worked out in each province and territory. Quebec has already forged ahead with the creation of a new unified system. PEI has launched its kindergarten program with integration in mind.

Getting there will, of course, present major challenges. The rest of this paper will explore issues and elements that would be addressed in a strategic plan dedicated to “healing the rift” as the OECD so aptly describes it. It is also recognized that this paradigm shift is equally necessary for all children 0-6, but as a strategic option, this paper will address the issues for transforming the system for kindergarten-age children.

The integration of kindergarten and child care is not a new idea. A long list of policy documents recommend the integration of programs – both structure and content – for kindergarten children. In fact most recommend starting earlier. (McCain and Mustard: Early Years Study; Laurier Lapierre: To Herald a Child; Royal Commission on Learning: For the Love of Learning; Panel on the Role of Government, Investing in People: Creating a Human Capital Society for Ontario; OECD Canada Report) But the structural barriers seem to have maintained the boundaries. Moving towards integration will require more than gradual changes. It will require willingness to leave old identities behind – professional and programmatic. It means restructuring both teaching and early childhood education sectors to create a new, blended workforce. It will also require a re-conceptualization of curriculum and pedagogy. The structural elements – funding, legislation and regulation are essential, but not enough.

The elements of a proposed strategic plan focus on: the Vision; the Principles; the Policy Changes. Obviously budgets and timeframes would also have to be included in any Strategic Plan.

The Ten-Year Vision

• All children are recognized as unique human beings with diverse needs for nurturing and support from their families, communities and society;
• Parents are validated as the first and most important teacher of their children and are afforded supports, advice and information about their child’s development on a regular basis.
- All children have access to universal, high-quality, developmental and affordable programs in which care, development and learning are no longer foreign concepts alongside education, and where “learning” has replaced “teaching” and the focus has shifted from teachers to “learners”.

- All children have access to early learning and care programs at no cost to their families for at least six hours per day. An affordable parent fee may be charged for extended hours services amounting to no more than 5% of their income or 20% of the costs; services are available year round and cover the parents’ working day; these programs are publicly resourced for long-term sustainability.

- All children in special circumstances or with special needs are entitled to services and facilities alongside other children of their age;

- Programs are delivered by well-qualified, professional staff that are supported by pre- and post-employment training and development and are paid at a reasonable level.

- All governments, authorities and organizations involved in programs for young children and families work together to plan, develop, administer, fund, regulate, deliver and are accountable for a new service system built on goals and targets for quality, expansion, accessibility and effective use of resources. Separate services have become a coherent system of services;

- Communities welcome children and are engaged in developing supportive programs for families and children that are coordinated to allow parents easy access to health, social and other services in the community.\(^5\)

**Principles**

The QUADI principles\(^6\): quality, universality, accessibility, developmentally focused and inclusive are the foundation for developing an integrated ECEC system in Canada:

**Quality**

A high quality ECEC system provides all children with excellent learning opportunities to optimize their physical, cognitive, cultural, social and emotional development. Research confirms that “quality” can be found in an enriched learning environment - indoors and outdoors; high adult to child ratios; well-qualified, well-trained and well-supported staff to plan and support developmentally appropriate programming and to provide care that respects diversity and values all children and families; public and not-for-profit delivery so that public funding is directed solely to the delivery of the ECEC programs; legislated standards and capacity for monitoring and enforcement; and stable public funding and adequate infrastructure.

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5. This vision was inspired by the City of Toronto’s Children’s Charter and the Vision Document developed by the Children’s Working Group, 2004.

6. A detailed description of what is meant by these principles prepared by the Canadian Child Care Advocacy Association is contained in Appendix D: the QUADI Principles.
Universality and Accessibility
Universal systems are publicly funded systems that entitle access for all children, without discrimination based on income or other criteria. Effective universal systems work to eliminate a range of social, ability-based, cultural, geographic and other barriers to equitable access and participation. Universal and accessible programs are available for all children in the community who need or want to use them. They are publicly funded and paid for through the tax system.

Developmentally Focussed
It is now widely acknowledged that learning begins at birth and has a profound affect on life long development and adult well being. A developmentally focussed program would have broad developmental goals for health and physical development; emotional well-being and social competence; positive approaches to learning; communication skills; cognition and general knowledge.

Inclusive
This means that all children can attend and benefit from the same ECEC programs. Children with disabilities go to the same programs they would attend if they did not have a disability. For children with disabilities, this means that the necessary supports of training, equipment, physical modifications and extra staffing are available to all programs at no extra cost to parents or to the individual programs. The principle of inclusion goes beyond the notion of physical integration and fully incorporates basic values that promote and advance participation, friendship and a celebration of diversity. Children with all disabilities are active participants, not just observers on the sidelines.

Policy Changes
This vision suggests a major paradigm shift from the fragmented patchwork currently available to a coherent system of services for children as a right. Such a shift will require major policy change. Many of these changes will require significant movement by governments. For example, making the funding commitment to create a universally accessible, affordable, and high quality system will require a mammoth effort. While recognizing the importance of these policy changes, the next section of this paper will focus on some of the “newer” areas of policy discussion, particularly those issues that have been raised as a result of the OECD twelve-country review or the OECD Canada report.

Under the headings: Program Design and Delivery; Funding; Regulations and Standards; Curriculum/Program Framework; Human Resources, Training; Research, Monitoring and Evaluation; and Governance, this paper sets out a list of policy guidelines. This is followed by explanatory paragraphs and a box asking for feedback. These are policy suggestions only and are submitted for discussion, amendment and elaboration. It is hoped that readers will participate fully in the Network Website Forum which can be found at http://www.inproject.ca/Forum/phpBB2/index.php

Program Design and Delivery
- Children will attend one program oriented to all aspects of children’s developmental
needs for health and physical development; emotional wellbeing and social competence; positive approaches to learning; communication skills; cognition and general knowledge. No longer will children be attending public kindergarten for a few hours to get “education” and then be shuffled back to a different program to be cared for while their parents work.

- Programs will be seamless. Existing “kindergarten” and “child care” will be integrated into one coherent and comprehensive program. There will be one coherent program for at least six hours per day throughout the year.
- Extended hours programs will exist to accommodate parents’ work schedules (at either end of the day or during school holidays) as an integral addition to the core program, or as a wrap-around service offered in, or close to, the same physical location.
- Children with special and diverse needs will be included within this framework with additional supports and resources.
- The system will establish parent support programs and activities and provide links to other early intervention, health and community resources.
- These programs will be designed to accommodate parents’ needs for flexibility. Parents who wish their children to attend part-time will be accommodated without sacrificing developmental opportunities.

Developing such a program raises some challenging questions. Will the currently split programs be integrated into one kindergarten program (like Quebec), or into one early learning and child care program in a child care centre setting (like PEI)? If it is integrated into the school kindergarten program, how will extended hours programs be organized? The organization of these programs will inevitably have to be flexible to accommodate existing services.

Ideally, the outcome will take the form of the “seamless day” blending the kindergarten and child care components into one program. Under this scenario, the free kindergarten (in the form of an integrated seamless program) could be extended to a full school day (or a six hour period). An implementation plan may involve starting with full-day kindergarten with wrap-around child care for either end of the school day, professional development days and school holidays, moving towards a completely seamless model for the entire day, entire year, over time.

Adequate Public Funding

- Governments will be responsible for ensuring that all programs are adequately financed. Secure and stable funding will be established by governments and paid to programs in a fair and equitable manner so that the system becomes universally affordable to all Canadian parents. The presence of stable government funding will eliminate the downward pressure on salaries and benefits as a result of the elimination of total dependence on parent fees. It will enable programs to raise quality, provide enriched learning materials, outdoor and indoor environments, etc. It will provide the opportunity for a majority of young children to have access to high quality early learning programs.

**FEEDBACK QUESTION:**

*What does a Seamless Day mean to you? What types of services would be available for kindergarten-age children in a seamless day model?*
• Financing will cover full operating costs, capital depreciation, full funding for resource teachers and specific grants to cover special and local conditions.

• Early learning and care programs will be established and financed in all new schools; capital programs will be available for expansion of programs in existing schools and community facilities.

• A revamped ECEC system will, like the public education system, provide a significant portion of the day (e.g. 5-6 hours like school) free to parents and funded by government.

• Currently, parents are responsible for between 34% and 82% of child care costs, no cost for public education and approximately 15% for post-secondary education. This Early Years contribution will be significantly reduced in order that children have equitable access to important developmental services. The Canadian parental share compares to a maximum 15% parental contribution in Finland or approximately 25% across Europe. (OECD, 2004)

• Modest parent contributions for services outside the regular school day could be required as in Quebec and other European countries (to a maximum of 5% of after-tax income, or 20% of actual costs, with reduced contributions for second and subsequent children). Parents who cannot afford the parent contribution will receive subsidy in an anonymous, non-stigmatized manner.

Regulation and Standards

Strong regulatory standards covering group size, physical space – indoors and outdoors, health and safety precautions, nutrition, equipment and materials will exist.

Curricular/Program framework

• All early learning and care programs will have a child-centred curriculum, or program guidelines, focusing on cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and advocating developmentally appropriate practices within an activity-based/play-based approach to learning and care. This new curriculum should be linked to the school-based curriculum, which begins in Grade 1.

• The aims of the ECEC curriculum/program guidelines will be broad and contribute to the child’s overall development as well as to later success in school.

• There must be recognition that the learning patterns of young children vary and that social-emotional and cognitive progress will proceed at the child’s own pace and take place through play and active methods, governed in so far as possible by the self direction of the child. These considerations suggest caution about designing a detailed cognitive curriculum, which staff should ‘deliver’ to compliant young children.

• Curriculum/program guidelines will also be a focus for further training.

The emphasis on approaches to program development suggests that it would be preferable to issue guidelines rather than developing a narrow curriculum. Program guidelines can also be a great help to parents.
Human Resources

- The success of integrated early learning and care programs will depend primarily on the excellence of the human resources employed.
- Adequate core government funding is key to Canada’s ability to provide proper remuneration, training and development for a substantially underpaid and undervalued workforce.

The OECD Country Report recommended a review of professional profiles, improved recruitment levels and strengthening the initial and in-service training of staff. The rationale is not a moral one. It points out that OECD societies are moving away from traditional notions of “child care” toward more developmental ambitions for young children, where early childhood centres become the foundation for lifelong learning. Staff, in these centres, are required to deal sensitively with immigrant and cultural issues, to respond appropriately to special needs children and to provide individualized support to every child in moments of vulnerability or stress.

The OECD team also notes that:

*ECEC professionals will be expected to participate in the evaluation of achievement and learning. Increasingly, they will be trained to perceive the centre as a learning organization requiring intensive collective participation in strategic planning, self-evaluation and professional development planning. In sum, a new ECEC professional profile is emerging.*

(OECD Canada Report, 2004, p.81)

Key questions raised in the OECD countries have also been raised here in Canada:

- Will the workforce continue to be divided, or integrated?
- If integrated, who will be the ‘core’ professional;
- What will the balance between professional and assistant be?
- What level, type and content of education will this professional have?
- If Canada also moves to establishing this “core” professional, what training and qualifications will be required?
- Who will pay for their training?
- Who will pay for a properly qualified workforce?

**FEEDBACK QUESTION:**

Do you think that, in your province, the integrated program should retain the staff: child ratios of the Education System, the child care system, or should new staff: ratios be introduced? Are there other regulations that need to be addressed in an integrated system?

**FEEDBACK QUESTION:**

What would an integrated system mean for the curriculum or program guidelines in your province/territory?
Another question raised concerns the transition to a new “core” professional.

- Will there be long period of phase-in? In New Zealand, for example, all early childhood teachers are required to have a teaching diploma by 2012. Incentive grants and prior learning assessment, together with time for phase-in, has made upgrading possible. Is this a model for Canada?

- A related question is whether all staff will be required to have the same training – as in New Zealand – or whether there will be role for an “assistant” trained at a lower level but with access to opportunities to gain additional qualifications to become the “core” professional?

- Another challenging issue will be working out how the workforce will be reorganized to accommodate longer hours, and, even a longer year, to accommodate the needs of working parents.

Training

- Training and development should be provided to all staff working with kindergarten-age children to ensure that all staff are able to provide programs which facilitate development and learning involving child-initiated activities, play and involvement.

- One of the central recommendations made in the OECD Report was the need to improve the training level of all staff. Staff training for child care was viewed as insufficient to develop skills and understanding required to administer a developmental program for children in an increasingly complex organization and society. The OECD also noted that although teachers are required to complete a university degree and receive, in general, practical training in the delivery of a curriculum, kindergarten teachers did not, generally, receive specific enough training for this age group. They suggested that:

  obtaining a university degree tends to hide the fact that the degree in question may not carry a significant module of early childhood theory or training. It is problematic to have teachers working in kindergarten who have not been trained for the role – even if they receive a top up or in-service training course – particularly if that role is likely to expand downwards to junior kindergarten, as already in several provinces. (OECD Canada Report, 2004, p. 68)

- The OECD was also critical of levels of training in child care settings:

  Kindergarten teachers typically work in a larger setting, a school, where the focus of the institution as a whole is also on learning. While one might not agree with a narrow school-readiness approach or the high child:staff ratios, kindergarten classes are generally well-invested with trained teachers, good pedagogical materials and suitable (indoor) furnishings.

**FEEDBACK QUESTION:**

Should the workforce be integrated or continue to be divided? If integrated, who will be the ‘core’ professional?

Should there be different levels of professionals (e.g. early education teacher and assistant early educator)?
In contrast, child care centres and family daycare homes may not work to a curriculum at all, even a developmental one. Moreover, child care centres are usually small and there is no immediate wider professional reference group for staff or a tradition of professional development, as in a school.

- Kindergarten credentials would be an obvious first step in reforming this situation.
- A comprehensive review of training requirements would be a good starting point to begin the important work of improving training for all professionals working in ECEC to ensure that a significant portion of basic training is specific to the early childhood field and to the understanding and delivery of early childhood programs.
- Coordination will, of course, be required between governments, universities and community colleges.

**FEEDBACK QUESTION:**

What kind of qualifications and training should professionals working in integrated programs have? Degrees? Diplomas? A mixture? How would the transition occur?

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

- The challenge is to retain a broad canvas of developmental aims in early childhood programming while developing the appropriate management and support networks to ensure high quality and accountability.
- Programs will be required to set clear objectives and monitor their achievement. Again, New Zealand has produced clear monitoring guidelines for staff which are inspected by government officials at regular intervals. (Te Whariki Early Childhood Curriculum, 1996)
- Programs will be regularly evaluated using tools such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) or improved tools.
- The impact of early learning and care programs on the development of children can be monitored by regular assessment of children’s early development outcomes before entry into Grade 1. For example, the Early Development Instrument (EDI) could be used to measure social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development. The teacher report tool that is completed when children are four and five years old would not be used as an individual assessment tool, but be combined with other demographic and family socio-economic data and information about available developmental resources in order to monitor how well a community – and its early learning and care programs – is doing in supporting children’s early development.
- The Early Learning and Care system will be subject to regular data collection and research.
- Programs will be accountable for their performance to a government funding agency.
Governance

- The system will be established under one ministry or department with the capacity to create a legislative framework, plan and develop services, provide resources and mechanisms for efficient and equitable service delivery and evaluation.
- Overlap between differently named programs for the same age group will be coordinated as much as possible. Overlap can cause administrative inefficiency and wasted resources;
- The entire ECEC system will be administered by one coherent ministry capable of understanding and communicating important aspects of provincial/territorial early learning and care programs to parents.
- One ministry will enable parents – increasingly new immigrants to Canada – to have smooth access to the entire system of care and education.
- The program preceding primary education will be designed to facilitate the child’s preparation and transition to formal schooling. Pedagogical continuity between the last year of ECE and first year of formal schooling is very important.

Governance Options

The OECD Report suggests that reconciling the differences between kindergarten and child care is a prerequisite to achieving a coherent system of ECEC in Canada. It also elaborates on the advantages of bringing together early education and care within integrated departments, including:

- A more unified approach to all young children, focused on early development and learning;
- More effective investment in the younger children (1-4 years) and significant savings brought about by better integration of services.
- More coherent policy and greater consistency across the sectors in regulations, funding and staffing regimes, costs and opening hours. For example, a unified approach to services would encourage a shift in kindergarten opening hours toward full-day provision – with real advantages for young children and their parents;
- Enhanced continuity of children’s early childhood experiences as variations in access and quality can be lessened, and links at the services level – across age groups and settings – are more easily created.
- Improved public supervision of services and thus easier identification of, and access by parents to quality care. Monitoring and evaluation of critical elements can be more efficiently undertaken from a single department with its own pedagogical advisors;
- The eventual emergence of a specific early childhood professional profile, trained to work with both young children and families; (OECD, 2004)

Nine European countries have now unified their systems under one ministry. Some countries have chosen to locate their integrated departments under ministries of education (e.g. New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom); others have chosen to locate their unified programs under social welfare ministries (e.g. Norway, Finland, Denmark). Both options have had some success. Because both education and child care operate in
Canada within the provincial jurisdiction, there may not be a single model adopted across Canada. There are perhaps three options for further discussion:

- Locating the entire ECEC system (0-6 years) within a ministry of education;
- Locating the entire ECEC system (0-6 years) within a social welfare/family services ministry;
- As in Quebec, adopting the ‘split ages’ model by locating children’s programs (kindergarten-age and above) in the school system; locating children’s programs below kindergarten-age in a social welfare/family services ministry.

There are not necessarily any perceived advantages between any of these types of ministries. The key is to ensure that there is a commitment to the vision, the principles and the appropriate policies as described above.

It is hoped that the above policy directions provide:

- a template against which to assess new policies
- a template against which to measure change
- a framework to develop a strategic plan

There are many structural and political barriers as well as professional and historic barriers to overcome before there is an integrated approach to ECEC services for kindergarten-aged children in Canada. The integration network provides a ‘safe place’ for practitioners and policy makers to explore a new approach to see how it fits and what adjustments are necessary. It may not be possible to bring together institutional support but perhaps some individual leaders will be able to fashion a new model to guide the way forward.

The goal is to strive for collaboration, mutual respect between sectors and communities and develop options based on collective imagination. Working together – parents, teachers and child care staff – can develop a strong policy framework followed by a strategic plan, lobby for change and effectively advocate to communities of interest.

The Integration Network Project is interested in establishing (or connecting with existing) committees across the country dedicated to working through these policy and strategy issues. Hopefully, the outlined vision and principles will form the basis for discussion and the eventual emergence of a strategic plan.

If you are interested in participating in a group in your province or territory, please contact us at suecolley@sympatico.ca. For more papers and information about the Network, please visit: www.inproject.ca
THE RESEARCH

Importance of the Early Years

For decades, it has been recognized by academics and researchers that nothing is more important to children’s future than getting a good start in the early years. The findings have been publicized with increasing crescendo over the last thirty years. Even though learned commissions and task forces from across Canada have included recommendations for immediate action, the message still hasn’t penetrated the consciousness of most politicians, so it is worth repeating yet again. (Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education of the Young Child, 1979, Royal Commission on Learning. 1994, The Early Years Study, 1999, Alberta Commission on Learning: Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds, 2003, etc.)

This growing body of evidence confirms that the experiences of children with caregivers during their first few years of life are critical to children’s self-esteem, their capacity to form relationships and their ability to handle stress. Children who do not get a good start in life have difficulties rebounding and achieving their future potential. (Willms, 2002).

A summary assessment of a range of reviews on the impacts of early childhood programs on child development can be found in an unpublished literature review, Early Childhood Learning and Development in Child Care, Kindergarten and Family Support Programs (Cleveland, Corter, Pelletier, Colley, Bertrand, 2006, p. 1). The summary suggests that:

"Early Learning and Child Care Programs (ELCC programs) affect children through their cognitive, language and social-emotional development in the early years of childhood. By the time children reach school, there are striking disparities in abilities among different children according to different markers of development. These disparities are associated with difference in these children’s circumstances and experiences in the early years. Furthermore, these differences among children are predictive of future academic and life performance. (Cleveland, Corter, Pelletier, Colley, Bertrand, 2006, p.1)"

In the ground-breaking The Early Years Study: Reversing the real brain drain, the Hon. Margaret McCain and Dr. Fraser Mustard identify the period between birth and age six as a critical one, when children acquire the essential language and cognitive skills needed to learn reading and mathematics as well as the ability to cope socially and to interact well with teachers and other children. (McCain and Mustard, 1998). Children who go to Grade I with these skills are more likely to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered; children who do not demonstrate these skills are more likely to risk later difficulties in school. (Doherty, 1997) They also have a higher drop out rate before graduation. Research also shows that early development has a significant impact on mental and physical health later in life. (Health Canada, Early Childhood Development Strategy Paper, 2000).

By grade 3, children who go on to drop out academically are behind academically, have low achievement test scores, and are already showing problems. This cycle of behaviour leads to rejection by their peers, increased conflict with teachers and deteriorating self-esteem. Studies support early identification of students-at-risk in kindergarten as a key strategy to deal with later problems. Being ready for school gives children the opportunity to benefit from all that school has to offer both academically and socially. (Doherty, 1997). The long term effects of poor school performance are also well known. Thirty-nine percent of the Canadian labour force has post-secondary credentials. Conversely, twenty percent of students leave high school without a diploma. This high dropout rate makes Canada rate with the bottom-ranked developed countries in terms of workforce literacy. (Statistics Canada, 2000). The Conference Board of Canada estimates a loss in lifetime earnings of $4 billion for every year of school drop-outs. (Conference Board of Canada, 1999).
Developing supportive partnerships between families, child care, community resources and schools can go a long way towards enhancing the child’s kindergarten and elementary school experience.

School Readiness

Because researchers are generally agreed that kindergarten teachers’ assessments of children’s readiness to learn are the single strongest predictor of future elementary school success which, in turn, are the single strongest predictor of high school completion, (Doherty, 1997; Pelletier, Morgan & Mueller, 1999; Tremblay, Masse, Perron, Leblanc, Schwartzman & Ledingham, 1992) there has been a ‘boom’ in the literature on the subject of “school readiness” or “transition to school”, particularly in the United States.

But what does being “ready for school” or “transition to school” mean? Teachers consider school readiness to include factors such as:

- good health,
- ability to attend to his/her needs;
- ability to communicate needs,
- regulate behaviour;
- having a curious disposition.

For some researchers, readiness is not simply a measurement of the child’s skills on entering kindergarten, but a product of the cumulated experiences children have had at home, in child care or other preschool settings, by community supports and level of coordination and integration of those experiences to the community school. (Pianta, 2003) And it is not just children who are in transition. Families are in transition too. Developing supportive partnerships between families, child care, community resources and schools can go a long way towards enhancing the child’s kindergarten and elementary school experience. (Pianta, 2003). Pianta and Walsh adopted the following definition of readiness:

Children are ready for school when, for a period of several years, they have been exposed to consistent, stable adults who are emotionally invested in them; to a physical environment that is safe and predictable; to regular routines and rhythms of activity; to competent peers; and to materials that stimulate their exploration and enjoyment of the world and from which they derive a sense of mastery. These factors alone would be better indices of readiness for school than any measurable aspect of child performance. (Pianta & Walsh, 1996, p. 34).

The implication is that improving school readiness must also be focused on the settings and resources experienced by children in the very early years. As we know, the experience of Canadian children is extremely fragmented and very little attention has been directed to this wider approach. Rather, kindergartens have tended to focus solely on whether children know their colours or the letters of the alphabet. (Love et al., 1992; Meisels, 1999)
From infancy, children learn to negotiate transitions such as signalling parents to meet needs or adapting to brief or prolonged parent absence. Thus, by the time children enter kindergarten, they have a well-established pattern of coping (or not) with transitions.

Research into fourteen “Readiness Centres” in Ontario early childhood programs also showed impressive results. (Pelletier, 2002) The Centres organized kindergarten curriculum programs offered to both parents and children of four years of age, many of whom spoke languages other than English. The programs were staffed with experienced kindergarten teachers using the provincial kindergarten curriculum. In addition to activities geared to the children, the Centres also offered parent education programs covering issues such as discipline, routines, health and nutrition, parent support and local community services. As the parents accompanied the children, teachers were able to explain to them what was being taught and offered suggestions about how this learning could be extended into the home.

Of the children who participated in the study (186 in Year 2), one third had attended the Readiness Centre with their parent the preceding year; one third had not attended, but had some other form of preschool experience and one third had not participated in either a Readiness Centre or another preschool program. Results of the study showed that participation in the Readiness Centers was linked to children’s readiness in kindergarten. (Pelletier, 2002) The importance of parent participation in programs with their children is critical, but with over two-thirds of two-parents or single parent families participating in the workforce, creating such opportunities becomes another challenge for policy. Any new system model clearly needs to be more creative in providing support to parents.

There is debate about how readiness should be measured. In a meta review of 70 longitudinal studies, La Paro and Pianta (2000) report that assessments of children’s skills and abilities are not adequate to determine readiness but that children’s social and emotional development may be more predictive of subsequent adjustment. School readiness, in this view, emphasizes the child’s ability to self-regulate. Children who are anxious, with elevated cortisol levels, are less able to attend to tasks, less able to develop positive relationships with peers and adults and less able to enjoy the kindergarten experience (Blair 2002). Children who like and are liked have greater opportunities for interaction and thus greater opportunity to learn.

Another approach current in Canada is contained in the Early Development Instrument (EDI) developed by Drs. Offord and Janus at McMaster University. It has been widely adopted as a community measurement tool in Canada (PEI, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia). The EDI has been a standard tool in the national Understanding the Early Years (UEY) project conducted at 12 community sites across Canada (Brink and Bacon, 2003). In UEY, community mapping is used to chart patterns of risk and supports, and to inform efforts to maximize outcomes.

The EDI does not provide diagnostic information on individual children, nor does it measure a school or teacher’s performance. Rather, it is an indicator of the community’s capacity to prepare its children for learning and entry to school. Students in kindergarten, in the spring of the year, are assessed individually by their teachers in five domains: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. This data is then interpreted at the level of the classroom.
In each of these domains, children are compared to the average of the Canadian population, from an earlier data collection exercise. The thresholds in each domain are set at the level reached by the 25th percentile of Canadian children. Children scoring poorly would meet the following descriptions:

- Physical Health – average or poor motor skills, flagging energy levels, tiredness and clumsiness
- Social Competence – regular problems with one or more of the following: getting along with other children, accepting responsibility for their own actions, ability to work independently, self confidence, tolerance
- Emotional Maturity – minor problems with aggression, restlessness, distractibility or inattentiveness, or excessive sadness on a regular basis
- Language and cognitive development – no mastery of the basics of reading and writing, little interest in books, reading, and/or problems with numerical skills (e.g., recognizing numbers, counting)
- Communication and general knowledge – problems understanding or communicating in English, articulating clearly and/or little general knowledge

Problems in one of these domains is not considered to be evidence of lack of readiness to learn. However, problems in two or more of these five domains are judged to be evidence that a child would be more likely to have difficulty in learning.

For example, in 1998-99 when the EDI was administered in North York, Ontario, about 19% of kindergarten children had problems with physical health and well-being, 26% had problems with social competence, 24% had problems with emotional maturity, 22% had problems with language and cognitive development, and 24% had problems with communication skills and general knowledge. There was a great deal of variability within the scores for a population attending any particular school in each of the components. In addition, schools would often score well on one index and poorly on another, averaged across all children.

Overall, about 32% of all children (approximately one out of three) scored poorly on two or more of these measures of school readiness, and were judged as likely to have problems. Most children scored well, but a significant number, spread across the district and in different schools, scored poorly on readiness to learn. (Toronto District School Board, 2003)

The Lessons

The lessons to be drawn from this voluminous literature suggest that the preschool years are critically important in establishing the child’s course of early development and learning. Children’s experiences at home, in child care, preschool and in kindergarten programs have a strong effect on their school experience. What, then, does research specifically demonstrate about parenting, preschool, child care and kindergarten as it relates to providing appropriate developmental opportunities for early learning?
Parenting matters. When parents are sensitive to children’s needs, encourage independence, are non-authoritarian or highly controlling, not too permissive (overly nurturing with few standards for child behaviour), children get large benefits. But, parenting skills and socio-economic status are not highly correlated; low incomes do not play a strong role in determining parenting abilities.

The following factors are found to be associated with cognitive difficulties in children aged 0-5: stay-at-home mother, recent immigrant family, poor parenting style (as above), maternal depression, and poor family functioning. The following factors are found to be associated with decreased likelihood of cognitive difficulties: being a female child, being the first child, parents reading regularly to the child, and neighbourhood support. (Willms 2002)

Factors found to be associated with behavioural difficulties in children aged 0-5 include: single parent household, teenage mother, poor parenting style (as above), maternal depression, and poor family functioning. Factors found to be associated with decreased likelihood of behavioural problems include: being in a high-SES family, having siblings, and parents reading regularly to the child. (Willms 2002)

Vulnerable children – children who do not achieve learning and behavioural outcomes appropriate for their age – come from all different types of families and the majority come from families whose income is above the poverty line. Research suggests that at least one out of every four Canadian children is vulnerable.

Child Care and Preschool. Research on the effects of early child care on children has concluded that child care is not necessarily harmful or beneficial for children, but the quality of the child care experience is the prime factor in determining child care’s effects on children’s development. (Hayes, Palmer & Zaslow, 1990; Lamb, Damon, Sigel & Renninger, 1998; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Vandell, 2004). The evidence suggests, with significant consistency, that the quality of child care services experienced by children (measured by process quality or structural features) has significant positive effects in their cognitive, language and socio-emotional development and are related to child developmental outcomes during the elementary school years. (McCartney, 1984; Ruopp et al., 1979; Goelman and Pence, 1987; Burchinal et al., 2000; NICHD 2000a, 2002b)

There has also been research on the long term effects of quality in child care. The National Bureau of Economic Research in the U.S., Garces, Currie and Thomas (2000) investigated the longer- term effects of Head Start, the most important publicly-funded preschool program in the United States. Over 800,000 children are served by this program annually and the cost is about US $2.2 billion per year or about US $3,500 per child. They used data on young adults (in their 20’s) who had attended Head Start in the 1960s and 1970s from the nationally-representative data in the Panel Study on Income Dynamics. (Hofferth, 1997). This paper, Longer term effects of Head Start, found long-run positive effects of early attendance in Head Start on education for whites (20% more likely to complete high school, 20-28% more likely to attend college), and reduced participation in undesirable behaviours for African-Americans (12 percentage points less likely to participate in criminal activity), holding all other factors constant. These are remarkable long-term effects of a program that obviously changed the path of development of many young children.

The Perry Preschool Project also measured the long-term effects of early childhood programs on children’s future activity. Conducted in Ypsilanti, Michigan in 1962, the project was a treatment- control experiment with children randomly assigned to control and treatment groups. Children participating in the part-day preschool and parent education program were tested at different intervals up to age 19. The Project involved a sample of 123 educationally high-risk preschool children. Fifty-eight took part in the project and 65 served as controls. At age 19, there was a clear pattern of differences between experimental and control children, as shown in the Table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Controls (%)</th>
<th>Experimental (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classified as mentally retarded</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed high school</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or job training</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had been arrested</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charged with serious crime</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On public assistance</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Osborn and Milbank, 1987, p. 15

**Kindergarten**

The child’s experience in kindergarten is viewed as essential for establishing the foundation for the child’s later school experience. Early predispositions and achievements in kindergarten predict long-term educational and adjustment outcomes. (D’Arcangelo, 2003; Tremblay, 1996) As referenced above, children who begin school ahead of others in academic achievement, tend to stay ahead. (Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001; Speer & Esposito, 2000; Taylor, Anselmo, Foreman Schagsneider & Angelopoulos, 2000) These children make greater gains over time due to the cumulative benefits of early learning, as well as teacher expectations, home environment and parent involvement. The research has tended to centre on the value of kindergarten and whether programs should be half or full day.

**Full-day kindergarten**

Other than in Quebec, there has been very little commitment to the development of an early learning and child care system in Canada. (Jenson, 2002) Much has been made of the lack of public funding and the inability of private, under-funded child care programs to meet the developmental needs of children or the needs of working parents. Lack of public funding virtually ensures that quality in child care programs will continue to be mediocre. The sector is increasingly less able to attract qualified staff – the underpinning for a high quality program.

One of the solutions to this public policy dilemma is to attempt to provide higher quality programs for young children in the education system. The debate, in Canada, is in its infancy and is currently centred on the expansion of kindergarten from half-day to full-day and on extending kindergarten programs to younger children.

Most provinces and territories in Canada offer only half-day kindergarten programs for five-year olds. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec offer full-day programs. Some school districts in other provinces also offer full-day programs targeted to specific populations. Ontario also offers universal half-day kindergarten to four year olds. Other provinces offer some half-day programs for four year olds usually targeted to children otherwise deemed to be at “high risk”. The introduction of full-day kindergarten is currently under discussion in the provinces of Alberta and Ontario. (Alberta: Commission on Learning In 2003; Ontario Best Start, 2005).
There has been a rapid expansion of full-day kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs in the United States. In this area, there is no shortage of research demonstrating the value of full-day kindergarten compared to half or alternate day kindergarten programs.

In 1969, in the U.S. kindergarteners usually attended short half-day programs. Only 11% were in full-day programs (more than four hours, but usually closer to six). By 2002, the percentage enrolled in full-day programs had grown to 63%. (U.S. Census Bureau).

Full-day programs provide a relaxed, unhurried school day with more time for a variety of experiences, for assessment opportunities and for quality interaction between adults and children. (Herman, 1984). Parents pointed out a number of advantages: no more shuttling children from school to an afternoon babysitter or worrying about whether their child had been safely picked up. Full-day kindergarten allows children and teachers time to explore topics in depth, reduces the ratio of transition time to class time; provides for greater continuity of day-to-day activities; and provides an environment that favours a child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach.

Research, mainly in the U.S., generally shows that attendance in full-day kindergarten has no detrimental effects on children. (Akerman,, Barnett and Robin, 2005; DeCesare, 2004; Watson and West, 2004) Conversely, research confirms that attendance in full-day kindergarten results in academic and social benefits for students, at least in the primary grades. (Cryan et al., 1992; Karweit, 1992). Cryan et al (1992) found a broad range of effects, including a positive relationship between participation in full-day kindergarten and later school performance. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, in the US, (a major US, nationally representative study) shows that children who participated in full-day kindergarten made statistically significant gains in both reading and mathematics when compared to children who participated in half-day programs. These findings held true even after adjusting for gain score differences associated with race/ethnicity, poverty status, prior reading and math abilities, gender, class size, amount of time for subject-area instruction and the presence of an teaching assistant. (Watson and West, 2004). Similar results have been found in other U.S. Studies (Holmes and McConnell, 1990; Karweit, 1992; Elicker & Mathur, 1997; Weiss & Offenberg, 2002; Welsh, 2002; Humphrey, 1983). The findings on the longer term effects are less certain.

- The introduction of the US National Educational Goals focusing on math and literacy competencies in the early grades has also boosted the expansion of full-day kindergarten. This has also led experts to warn teachers, administrators and parents to resist the temptation to provide full-day programs that are didactic rather than intellectually engaging in tone. Seat work, worksheets and early instruction in reading or other academic subjects are largely inappropriate in kindergarten.

Full-day kindergarten allows children and teachers time to explore topics in depth, reduces the ratio of transition time to class time; provides for greater continuity of day-to-day activities; and provides an environment that favours a child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach.

Research in Canada is more limited. A report for the Calgary Board of Education, summarizing previous research on full-day kindergarten programs, concluded that: All studies indicated a positive relation between participation in full-day kindergarten and subsequent school performance. Higher achievement in academic development as well as greater growth in social and behavioural development is consistently reported... All studies reviewed here suggest that a full-day developmentally appropriate kindergarten program is especially beneficial to children from low socioeconomic levels and/or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. (Blades, 2002, p.8) Results from 15 full-day kindergarten programs in Edmonton also showed that children who began kindergarten with lower levels of...
reading and writing skills were able to catch up to the other children who attended only half day kindergarten. (da Costa & Bell, 2003). Similarly with the Northern Lights School Division. At the beginning of the full-day kindergarten program, 24% of students were identified as having special needs. By Grade 1, teachers only identified 9% of the students as needing special assistance to meet the Grade 1 goals. (Northern Lights School Division, 2002).

Nevertheless, there is considerable resistance to the push for more kindergarten programming amongst early childhood professionals in Canada. Kindergarten class sizes are seen as being too large to offer developmentally-appropriate programs and teachers may not have the necessary early childhood education background to deliver a quality program.

**Quality Settings Matter**

Regardless of whether children attend child care and/or kindergarten programs, research is conclusive that quality matters. The 2001 OECD review of early childhood care and education in twelve countries concluded that “children who receive high quality care and education in their early years show better cognitive and language abilities than those in lower quality arrangements.” (OECD, 2001) These findings are confirmed in studies linking high quality to developmental outcomes, regardless of family income or background. (Bowman et al., 2000; Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes, CQCO Study Team, 1995, 1999; NICHD, 1997). In fact, the emphasis on “quality” is re-emphasized throughout these reviews and in all the literature. The recent comprehensive review of research on child development by a committee of experts set up by the American National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (Neurons to Neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development) finds that high quality child care “is associated with outcomes that all parents want to see in their children ranging from co-operation with adults, to the ability to initiate and sustain positive exchanges with peers, to early competence in math and reading.” (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000)

The quality of the kindergarten experience is also fundamental to positive child development outcomes in just the same way as it is in child care. Probably because kindergarten is generally a secure publicly-funded program in Canada, its effects on children has not been studied as intensely as child care programs. As a result there is very little research on issues of program quality and curriculum effects on children’s development.

The elements of high quality kindergarten programs tend to focus on conditions of service: qualified teachers, small class size, age-appropriate program, early identification and intervention of learning problems, support personnel and parental involvement. (Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, 2001).

Class size has long been viewed as an important factor in providing quality experiences for young children. Alhussein et al (2004) studied US classrooms and found that smaller classrooms showed higher quality instructional and emotional support and that children in smaller class sizes demonstrated higher literacy skills than children in larger classes. Children from “disadvantaged” backgrounds showed stronger results than other children.

Definitions of quality are not uniform across either Canadian child care or kindergartens; much less so between them. What and how children learn in these settings are highly variable. (NICHD ECRN, 2003, Pianta, 2003, Johnson & Mathien, 1998) It is unclear whether the variation in classrooms is because teachers are attending to the children’s needs, or whether it is a function of a lack of consensus on how and what to teach young children.

There is, however, no reliable research on the quality of Canadian kindergartens, A Study of State Policies in the United States authored by the Education Commission of the States suggested that in the absence of such research, future action needs to centre on “learning standards” and teacher qualifications. (Kauerz, 2005).

The study of quality in Canadian child care has garnered more research attention. Historically, child care quality
has been viewed in terms of its structural qualities: staff:child ratios, group size; staff education and training; quality of physical space, etc. Advocates have spent decades lobbying to improve or retain provincial/territorial regulations that define these elements. By international comparison, most Canadian child care programs have high standards for staff:child ratios, group size and facility conditions. We do less well on qualifications and training. (Cleveland, 2003)

A national study, You Bet I Care!, was conducted by a team of pan-Canadian researchers to study staffing and quality in child care centres and regulated family child care. To measure quality, the researchers used standardized observation scales and child assessment measurements, ECERS-R for preschool children, including children of kindergarten age. The findings were not encouraging. The ECERS-R are rated on a seven-point scale defined by the authors as follows:

Inadequate describes care that does not even meet custodial care needs, minimal describes care that meets custodial and to some small degree basic developmental needs, good describes the basic dimensions of developmental care, and excellent describes high quality, personalized care. The inadequate (1) and minimal (3) ratings usually focus on provision of basic materials and on health and safety precautions. The good (5) and excellent (7) ratings require positive interaction, planning, and personalized care, as well as good materials.” (Doherty, Lero, Goelman, LaGrange & Tougas, 2000)

**Process Quality Ratings: Mean ECERS-R (1998)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>ECERS-R</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>211</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Doherty et al, 2000

The researchers found that higher levels of staff sensitivity were associated with: higher staff wages; teaching staff with higher levels of ECCE-specific education; better benefits; higher staff levels of satisfaction with their relationships with colleagues and the centre as a work environment; the centre being used as a student-teacher practicum site; the centre receiving subsidized rent and/or utilities (a factor that allows higher wages); the centre having favourable staff:child ratios; and the centre being non-profit. (Doherty, et al, 2000). Strikingly, the mean scores did not approach excellent in any province or territory.

The large-scale and path-breaking U.S. study by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) went further. Researchers found that the sensitive and stimulating interactions with adults in child care and early education settings that benefit children’s readiness, are more likely to occur in child care and early education settings that emphasize staff professionalism; provide training in early education and care; and have staff with degrees in child development, education, or related fields and who are more experienced. (NICHD ECCCRN, 1999)

There have not been any similar large-scale studies of kindergarten programs in Canada. The most useful study
was conducted by Johnson and Mathien for the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. It compared kindergarten and child care programs in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. The purpose of the project was to document changes and their impact in the four provinces that had made changes to both kindergarten and child care since 1990; to investigate how kindergarten and child care combine to meet the needs of children and families; to document similarities and difference in kindergarten and child care; to obtain the views of parents, teachers, child care staff and key informants on current early childhood education and prospects for the future.

The study found:

- That a majority of both kindergarten and child care programs received acceptable to good (ECERS-R) scores in the program observations, although child care scores in New Brunswick and Quebec raised concerns.
- Provincial jurisdiction (Education or Social Services) made a difference in that kindergarten quality was more dependable across the country, probably because teacher certification results in more program similarity province-to-province;
- That the presence of trained staff was the most important predictor of quality in both child care and kindergarten;
- Parents and educators agreed that social features (cooperating and sharing with others) and language activities were the most important aspects of early childhood education. Learning to read and write were ranked at the low end, either 19th or 20th out of 20 program elements by both groups.
- That program integration in early childhood education is no more expensive than split provision and may, in fact, cost less per child.
- Parents, educators and policymakers were asked to give their opinions on a new program model. The model was described as:

> “These new programs provide a combination of year-round care and education programs through the school system for children of kindergarten age. Like kindergarten and child care now, children can attend but do not have to attend. Parents may choose to have their child in half school day or a full school day or an extended day. The programs are staffed by trained staff, both teachers and early childhood educators.” (Johnson and Mathien, 1998 (p. 16)

There was support for the implementation of a new model. Three-quarters of parents supported an integrated program which would provide a combination of full-day, year-round care and education programs through the school system for children of kindergarten age. No parents valued the current split provision. The parents were even more favourable if there was no fee, the program involved more government funding in order to serve more children and if all 4- and 5-year olds could attend. Less enthusiasm was displayed by teacher and child care staff for a new integrated model.

Elements of Quality

Three areas of early childhood study are key to an understanding of quality: a) curricular framework; b) workforce reform; and c) design of the program.

Curriculum

Kindergarten curricular frameworks or program guidelines exist in all provinces and territories; none of the provinces or territories have yet established a program or curriculum framework for its child care programs
While there are shifting trends in the curriculum debate in Canada, the child care sector has perceived itself as at the “social pedagogic” end of the spectrum and kindergarten has been seen as more firmly located in the pre-primary tradition.

New Zealand is a case in point. New Zealand was the first country to administratively integrate its child care and kindergarten programs under one department. An important element in the integration process was the development of an integrated, national early childhood curriculum, Te Whaariki, which was developed in partnership with Maori and after months of consultation across the country. The aims of Te Whaariki include: well-being; belonging; contribution; communication and exploration. Implementation requires staff understanding of theory and reflective practice. It has been incorporated into teacher education, professional development and ECE resources. More recently, the New Zealand Government has developed a strategic plan emphasizing improving quality and collaborative relationships. Although divisions still exist, integration is based on theory, philosophy, research and political action. Status, recognition and support for ECE has increased greatly and the system has moved from an ad hoc to a planned approach. Carr and May have found that general support for the curriculum is high but, as observed elsewhere, current regulations and funding make it difficult for centres to meet the quality expectations. Several training institutions have begun using Te Whaariki as a framework, and evaluation and assessment guidelines are underway.

Regardless of their pedagogical approach, major obstacles to curriculum quality and implementation met commonly across countries are structural failings (lack of financing, unfavourable child/staff ratios, poorly qualified and poorly remunerated staff) and inadequate pedagogical theory and practice. Against this background, three emerging issues are under debate: accountability and the new learning standards; the expansion of literacy practices and the re-positioning of educators in the early childhood field.
Workforce

The second element in the production of quality programs centres on the quality of the workforce. Early learning and care programs in both Canada and the United States receive children with increasingly diverse levels of skills. In order to provide a learning atmosphere that is supportive of all children, early childhood education teachers must be equipped to adapt to each child’s needs. In child care programs, the professional reality of low pay, low job satisfaction and high turnover does not provide this kind of support and has led to a crisis of staffing in child care across Canada.

The OECD Country Report recommended a review of professional profiles, improved recruitment levels and strengthening the initial and in-service training of staff. It points out that OECD societies are moving away from traditional notions of “child care” toward more developmental ambitions for young children, where early childhood centres become the foundation for lifelong learning. Staff, in these centres, are required to deal sensitively with immigrant and cultural issues, to respond appropriately to special needs children and to provide individualized support to every child in moments of vulnerability or stress. (OECD, 2004) Another recommendation made in the OECD Report was the need to improve the training level of all staff. Staff training for child care was viewed as insufficient to develop skills and understanding required to administer a developmental program for children in an increasingly complex organization and society. The OECD also noted that although teachers are required to complete a university degree and receive, in general, practical training in the delivery of a curriculum, kindergarten teachers did not, generally, receive specific enough training for this age group. They suggested that:

> obtaining a university degree tends to hide the fact that the degree in question may not carry a significant module of early childhood theory or training. It is problematic to have teachers working in kindergarten who have not been trained for the role – even if they receive a top up or in-service training course – particularly if that role is likely to expand downwards to junior kindergarten, as already in several provinces. (OECD Canada Report, 2004, p. 68)

The OECD was also critical of levels of training in child care settings:

> Kindergarten teachers typically work in a larger setting, a school, where the focus of the institution as a whole is also on learning. While one might not agree with a narrow school-readiness approach or the high child:staff ratios, kindergarten classes are generally well-invested with trained teachers, good pedagogical materials and suitable (indoor) furnishings. In contrast, child care centres and family daycare homes may not work to a curriculum at all, even a developmental one. .... Moreover, child care centres are usually small and there is no immediate wider professional reference group for staff or a tradition of professional development, as in a school. (OECD, 2004)

This situation is mirrored in the U.S. where there have been several studies focusing on staff qualifications, training and on the merits of the public sector vs. the community-private sector.

The concern about ensuring that pre-kindergarten programs in the U.S. retain high quality teachers has led to the conclusion that pre-kindergarten teachers with bachelor’s degrees and specialized training in child development raise pre-kindergarten program quality and result in better outcomes for children. Marcy Whitebook reviews the research on pre-kindergarten teacher qualifications to highlight teachers with bachelor’s degrees and their direct...
Among the findings of the studies reviewed are the following:

- teachers with four-year degrees in early childhood education rated higher in positive interaction with children than those without these credentials, and were less detached, less authoritarian and less punitive;
- children who had teachers with a bachelor’s or associate’s in early childhood education demonstrated stronger receptive vocabularies that those with teachers holding only a high school diploma; and
- retaining the greatest number of teachers with bachelor’s degrees or more was the strongest predictor of whether a center maintained a high level of quality over time. Taken as a group, these studies strongly show the importance of not simply more education, but specifically how the requirement of a bachelor’s degree with specialized early childhood training can be used to develop high quality center-based pre-kindergarten programs. (Whitebook, 2002)

A previous study of pre-kindergarten staffing in California, Georgia, Chicago, New York, and Texas found that teachers employed in publicly-operated programs attained more formal education, received higher wages and benefits and experienced greater job stability than did their counterparts in privately-operated programs. (Belim, Burton, Whitebook, Broatch, Young, 2002) This study also found that salaries and turnover rates of pre-kindergarten teachers in publicly operated programs more closely resemble those of K-12 teachers, while the characteristics of staff members in community-based pre-kindergarten programs operated by private non-profit and for-profit groups, more closely resemble those of workers in child care centres.

With increased discussion of universal preschool in California and the reality that at least 20 states and the District of Columbia now require bachelor’s degrees for teachers in state-financed pre-kindergarten programs, the possibility of increased educational standards for early childhood educators is under serious consideration. It has become critically important to assess the capacity of the state’s higher education system to meet rising demands for teacher preparation. (Whitebook, 2004) Thus far, the discussion is moving toward raising the bar higher than California’s current Title 5 standards, possibly as high as a bachelor’s degree with a credential for lead teachers, and an AA and Child Development Permit for assistant teachers.

From the UK, Cameron presents a vision that by 2020 the early education and care workforce will mainly be educated to degree level and will be capable of meeting the challenges of working in highly complex environments, where children’s learning and being are highly valued and demand a high level of skills and knowledge. The workforce will be drawn from all sections of the community, including men, and the current split between ‘teachers’ and ‘childcare workers’ rethought around a model of an integrated worker who employs a holistic, pedagogical approach. (Cameron, 2002)

In Europe, the focus has moved on towards a discussion of the need for and the way to create one ‘core’ profession. This discussion has been stimulated by the administrative integration of education and child care in nine countries. In assessing the impacts of integration, Peter Moss suggests that one indicator of how far integration has gone is what happens to the divided workforce and, in particular, whether the workforce has been reformed around a ‘core’ profession whose members work across all centre-based early childhood services: both child care and education. (Moss, 2004)

Two ‘core’ professions have emerged in countries which have gone furthest in integrating early childhood services. Both work across the whole early childhood age spectrum from birth to age 5 or 6. Both engage in all aspects of education and care.
• New Zealand, Spain and Sweden have integrated the early childhood educator and kindergarten teacher professions into the early childhood teacher working with children under and over 3 years. (By contrast, teachers in divided systems typically work just with children from 3 and upward in the schools; in Canada this applies to children 4 and upward).

• The Nordic countries of Finland, Norway and Denmark have adopted the profession known as the pedagogue who works with children in a holistic way addressing the whole child with body, mind, emotions, creativity, history and social identity. In fact, pedagogues work across a wider range of occupations. In addition to early childhood services, they work with school-age children, youth in residential settings and also care for adults with disabilities and the elderly. (Moss, 2004)

In countries with core professions, there is usually also an assistant. In Spain, staff working with children over 3 are mostly teachers, while those working with under 3’s are mostly assistants. In countries like Denmark and Sweden about half of all workers are teachers or pedagogues. In New Zealand, the government has set a target of having the entire workforce trained to degree level by 2012. Whether teachers or pedagogues, basic education required is a university degree (equivalent to school teachers). Assistants are generally qualified to the equivalent of a Canadian community college diploma. There are career ladders in place to allow early childhood educators to move up. (Moss, 2004) Services in Sweden share a mainly graduate workforce with (from 2001) a common framework for training for preschool and child care staff and teachers (Cohen, Moss, Petrie & Wainwright, 2004) These developments are being closely watched from Canada and pilot projects, such as Toronto First Duty, are taking their queue from these experiences.

Program Design

Undoubtedly, the OECD Canada review has elevated the discussion about program alternatives in Canada. A recurring theme is whether programs be designed around the child’s needs, school schedules or the needs of the child? The backbone to the accumulated knowledge and suggested alternatives in this area in OECD countries comes from the OECD thematic reviews.

In Sweden, all children are entitled to a preschool place. For almost three decades, child care has been an integral part of the Swedish welfare state and of most families’ everyday lives. In 1996 the government moved responsibility for child care from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Science as part of an effort to reform and expand early childhood education and care. In short, Sweden continues its commitment to a child care system that is designed to meet the twin aims of supporting early childhood education and promoting gender equality.

In Sweden “whole-day” schools have been introduced which combine education and child care in one setting. Schools are also increasingly linked with pre-school education and care services for children from age one, under the leadership of the school principal. In Sweden, there were already extensive publicly-funded child care services before reforms were introduced in 1996. Swedes also pay higher taxes but have low child poverty, universal and affordable services for children from the age of one and high levels of satisfaction with the services provided.

Such findings serve to emphasize the need for collaboration and coordination between parents, schools and communities. One U.S. collaborative initiative between pre-kindergarten and community child care programs is the North Carolina Partnership for Children’s Smart Start. The primary goal of Smart Start is to ensure that all
children enter school healthy and prepared to succeed. Smart Start has funded a variety of technical assistance (TA) activities to improve child care, including on-site technical assistance, quality improvement and facility grant, teacher education scholarships, license upgrades, teacher salary supplements, and higher subsidies for increased child care quality or increased teacher education levels. A study of this initiative between 1994 and 1999, found three main conclusions:

1. between 1993 and 2002, child care quality in this sample steadily and significantly increased;
2. participation in Smart Start-funded activities was significantly positively related child care quality, and
3. children who attended higher quality centers scored significantly higher than children in lower quality centers on measures of skills and abilities deemed important for kindergarten success. Although the study cannot identify which Smart Start TA activities have been most effective at improving quality, it does show that Smart Start-funded activities are significantly related to preschool classroom quality. Classroom quality was significantly, positively related to children’s outcomes, over and above the effects of gender, income, and ethnicity.

In Canada, examples of practice innovation can be found in programs such as Toronto First Duty, Manitoba’s Educaring: Strengthening partnerships between schools and child care, the YWCA’s project, Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care, and Schools of the 21st Century program. (Finn-Stevenson and Zigler). More models like these can demonstrate how schools can provide child care, outreach services, home visits, health and nutrition services, and parenting programs.

One of the five Toronto First Duty sites, BruceWoodgreen Early Learning Centre (BWELC) has moved furthest in Canada in terms of integrating child care, kindergarten and family support programs. Features of the program as articulated in the Toronto First Duty Guide to Early Childhood Service Integration include:

- The integrated early learning and care program is delivered by a teaching team of early childhood educators, kindergarten teachers, parenting workers and educational assistants, using shared curriculum, resources and space;
- Parents choose a half, full, or extended day for their children. The parent fee for the extended day program is one-third to one-half the cost of traditional child care services;
- Kindergarten classrooms and the parenting centre are licensed by the province under the Day Nurseries Act, so that space can be used in multiple ways and that child development, health and safety standards are met.

Approximately 144 families (parents, other caregivers and children from infancy through school age) are registered in the children’s program and/or regularly attend parent-child activities; of the children 2.5 to six years, 45 attend part time; 24 attend the full day; 26 the extended day. Another 13 children attend the Grade 1 transition program and 43 parents/caregivers regularly participate in parenting workshops and drop-in activities.

2006 research on this project concluded that:

integrated professional supports improve the quality of early childhood programs and reduce risks for parents and children. By engaging parents in the school and their children’s early learning, children’s social,
emotional, and academic readiness for school is enhanced. Integrated program delivery is also cost-effective, serving more families, more flexibly, for the same costs. (Corter, Bertrand, Pelletier, Griffin, McKay, Patel & Ioannone, 2006, p. 5)

Although there are very few models of integration between kindergarten and child care programs in North America, as well as research studies, Europe has been proactive in this direction. Since 1996, nine European countries have now integrated ECEC programs for children from 0–6 under one government department and now regard early childhood education and care as an essential part of preparation of children for public school, an important component of the supports to families with special attention to those with employed parents, and as a venue for identifying children and families who will need special services. (OECD, 2001).

An international review of early years integration studies reports that integrated care and education was beneficial for children, particular children facing multiple risks and that early access to such programs was advantageous (Penn, Barreau, Butterworth, Lloyd, Moyes, Potter & Sayeed 2004). A study of preschool education in Britain reported that children who attended integrated early education and care programs and those who attended nursery school made better intellectual progress by the time that they entered the primary school than did children who attended regular child care centres, supervised family child care or other combinations of non-parental care and early education programs (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, Taggart & Elliot 2003).

Following the integration of education and child care, Sweden, New Zealand, Spain, Slovenia, England and Scotland also moved to unify services under one department. Early childhood services are now the responsibility of one government in nine European countries – either welfare or education.

Leadership from organizations such as the YWCA Canada are beginning to show changing perspectives and new encouragement in Canada. Four communities across Canada (Vancouver, British Columbia, Martinsville, Saskatchewan, Cambridge, Ontario and Halifax, Nova Scotia) undertook to build community models of integrated early childhood learning and care. Despite their widespread distribution, each community task force identified fragmentation of services and inadequate public funding as the fundamental barriers to achieving the best outcomes for children and families. Each of the communities produced blueprints which had a remarkable consistency and were based on a common model. (Robinson and Mayer, 2006). These are the kinds of experiences that research and practice should surely build upon in the future.

Additional research is needed. In particular, action research of the kind conducted in conjunction with the Toronto First Duty pilot project will serve to advance our thinking – and eventually our practice – in this crucial area.
THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

The Family Context of ECEC in Canada

Families have changed dramatically in the last couple of generations. The most obvious change is in the labour force participation of women in general, and of mothers of young children in particular. The figures are familiar but worth repeating. In 1967, one out of every six mothers with preschool children (17%) was in the labour force in Canada. (Friendly, Beach, 2005). By the year 2003, three out of every four mothers with children 3-5 and six in ten (65.8%) mothers with children less than 3, were in the labour force. The rise in the employment rates of mothers continues each year, for children less than 3, as for children 3-5 years of age. As a result, more and more children are in non-parental care situations for substantial portions of their preschool years. The 1988 Canadian National Child Care Survey found that 75% of children 18 months through 5 years of age were in non-parental care arrangements (including kindergarten) on a weekly basis. (Lero, 1988)

As family situations have evolved and researchers have explored effects on the development of children, governments around the world have supported different forms of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services. Some have been targeted at specific groups of children, for example Head Start and other early intervention programs in the United States. Some have provided universal full-day pre-school educational services, such as the écoles maternelles in France and the scuola materna in Italy. Some have provided an integrated mix of education and care services directed at parents who are employed or in school, as with the Swedish and Danish municipal child care centres and family homes. Some of these have been free to parents, others have required parental contributions.

Some governments have scarcely supported early childhood programs at all. In the United States and Canada, outside Quebec, ECEC services are largely a market service with some governmental regulation and subsidization of low-income families or families deemed to be “at risk”. In some other countries, the quality of ECEC services is strongly regulated and substantial direct or indirect assistance is provided to reduce the costs to parents of good quality care. In many other countries, an integrated system of ECEC services is provided at relatively low cost to parents from age 2 onwards or from the end of maternity/parental leave. Different countries have a wide range of other policies related to Early Childhood Education and Care, ranging from tax deductions of child care expenses, paid and job-protected maternity and parental leaves, and inducements to employers to provide services for employees. (Cleveland, 2003)

The Federal Policy Context Of ECEC

The discussion of ECEC policies for kindergarten-age children in Canada is better understood with a little context, particularly concerning the federal government. Child care and education policy are in provincial jurisdiction; taxation issues are shared jurisdiction; payments under Employment Insurance are under federal jurisdiction. From the 1960’s through to the mid-1990’s, child care policy in all provinces and territories was shaped by federal willingness to cost-share (50-50) provincial/territorial expenditures on child care that met certain criteria (being directed at families in poverty or likely to be in poverty;

From 1995 on, with the CHST (Canada Health and Social Transfer), federal funding for child care was part of a block grant with no strings attached, including no necessity to spend on child care.

In this way, the federal government vacated its role in ECE and services across provinces/territories began to show even more differentiation. For example, Ontario used this opportunity to reduce its expenditures on both child care and kindergarten. At the other end of the spectrum, Quebec used the opportunity to introduce a radical
family policy reform. This reform introduced full-day kindergarten programs in the schools for five year olds and made early childhood education services more widely available for a $5 per day fee (later increased to $7 per day). (Cleveland, Colley, 2003)

Advocates continued to press the federal government and in 1998, the federal government announced a National Children’s Agenda, making early childhood development a national political priority. A number of major initiatives followed in rapid succession. In December 2000, the federal government extended maternity and parental leave to cover virtually a full year of the child’s life. Fifteen of these weeks were designated as maternity leave and thirty-five weeks as parental leave available to either parent. Since take-up of paid leave by Canadian families has traditionally been very high, it is expected that these provisions will dramatically reduce the need for expansion of infant ECEC facilities.

In addition, the federal government also provided substantial funding which provinces used for Early Childhood Education and Care services and for related child development programs. The Early Childhood Development Initiatives Agreement (ECDI) was reached with all provinces and territories except Quebec in September 2000, providing for $2.2 million of federal funds to flow over 5 years to provinces. The significance is not the size of the budget but the renewal of the federal funding role in this area, which had been suspended with the ending of the Canada Assistance Plan in 1995. Provincial and territorial governments agreed to use this funding to improve and expand services in four key areas: (a) healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy, (b) parenting and family supports, (c) early childhood development, learning and care, and (d) community supports. The agreement included provisions for provinces/territories to report regularly to their citizens on expenditures and child development. Some provinces and territories used this funding to enhance their existing early childhood care and education services; others ploughed the money solely into health-related programs.

In early 2003, as a supplement to the ECDI agreement, the federal and provincial/territorial governments (except Quebec) signed the Multilateral Framework Agreement (MFA) which provided approximately $1 billion of federal funding over five years to support investments in early learning and child care in particular. The objective of this initiative was to promote early childhood development but also to support the participation of parents in employment and training by improving access to affordable, quality early learning and child care programs and services. As the Agreement indicates, approaches to early learning and child care will be based on the principles of availability and accessibility, affordability, quality, inclusiveness and parental choice.

In the fall of 2004, the federal Liberal Minority Government announced a proposal to create a national Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Program in Canada with an infusion of funding of $5 billion over five years. Federal/provincial/territorial ministers met to hash out an agreement. The principles of Quality, Universally Inclusive, Accessible and Developmental were agreed to. The provinces/territories were reluctant to sign an agreement without a budget commitment and so talks were postponed. The federal political crisis in the Spring of 2005 prompted a number of provinces/territories to sign bilateral agreements with the federal government in an attempt to secure the funding should the government fall. Despite the shortcomings of the proposals, the initiative and funding stimulated an optimism and excitement about child care prospects in Canada for the first time in decades.

In fact, the Liberal minority did fall in January 2006 and was subsequently replaced by a minority Conservative Government. One of the first acts of this new government was to cancel the ELCC agreements between the federal and provincial governments and to cancel the $5 billion commitment. The funding would only continue until March 31, 2007. The Conservative Government replaced the ELCC program with taxable allowances of $1,200/year for all children under 6. It is widely acknowledged that this program will do little to improve the supply, access to and quality of child care.
Definition of Early Childhood Education and Care

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECEC) for kindergarten-age children in Canada refers to arrangements for the care and education of children aged 3 to 5 years, not including compulsory public schooling.

The definition of Early Childhood Education and Care provided in Starting Strong, the summary report from the recent OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care policies and programs in 12 member countries sums it up:

“The term early childhood education and care (ECEC) includes all arrangements providing care and education of children under compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or programme content. ...it was deemed important to include policies – including parental leave arrangements – and provision concerning children under age 3, a group often neglected in discussions in the educational sphere.” (OECD, 2001, p. 14)

Sheila Kamerman, of Columbia University (2000a) provides a companion definition of ECEC policy:

“ECEC policy includes the whole range of government activities designed to influence the supply of and/or demand for ECEC and the quality of services provided. These government activities include direct delivery of ECEC services, direct and indirect financial subsidies to private providers (such as grants, contracts and tax incentives), financial subsidies to parents both direct and indirect (such as cash benefits and allowances to pay for the services, tax benefits to offset the costs, or cash benefits that permit parents to stop working and remain at home without loss of income) and the establishment and enforcement of regulations.” (Kamerman, 2000, p. 8)

The care and education of these young children is conducted through a multitude of arrangements ranging from kindergarten and preschool programs in public schools to private informal or formal child care, centre-based to care within a family home, commercial to non-profit to public. Support programs for parents and caregivers, such as Family Resource Centres and Early Learning Centres and specialized programs oriented to specific target populations also exist. Five general categories can be identified as:

- Kindergarten
- Regulated child care programs
- Cash Benefits
- Support Services (such as family resource centres)
- Unregulated Child Care

Kindergarten programs in the public school system

The majority of Canadian programs for five year olds are part-time operated as part of the public education system. A minority of four year olds attend part-time kindergarten in the schools. Programs are free to parents.

Since 1867, Canada has exercised responsibility for young children in the fields of health, education and social services. Public school kindergarten programs are operated within provincial jurisdiction under the auspices of provincial/territorial Ministries of Education. Kindergarten programs are free.
In 1883, Dr. James L. Hughes and Ada Marean Hughes introduced the Froebel kindergarten from Germany into the Toronto public schools. Kindergartens spread rapidly through the province and in 1887 they were recognized by the Ontario Government and funded with a provincial grant.

In every province and territory, kindergarten teachers must have a teacher’s certificate and/or a Bachelor of Education/Bachelor degree. Although some provinces require an elementary specialization, only Quebec requires teachers to take mandatory practica in preschool and primary. Saskatchewan is the only province that requires pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers to specialize in early childhood development. Local authorities set the criteria for hiring classroom teaching assistants and they are not generally required to have any qualifications. (Friendly, Beach, 2005).

Teachers negotiate their rate of pay through their federations. Teacher assistants are generally not unionized. In 1999-2000, it was estimated that the average salary of teachers across the country (including kindergarten teachers) was $53,764. (Table 19, Interprovincial Education Statistics Project, 1999-2000). The relative provincial/territorial salaries for teachers and early childhood educators are set out in Table 2, in the Appendix. The Canadian Teachers Federation currently estimates that minimum starting salaries range, by province, from $34,000 to $52,000 annually; maximum salary for the same levels of training ranges from $50,000 to $72,000 annually.

Comprehensive learning expectations are contained in a Kindergarten Curriculum or program guidelines laid out by each province and territory.

There were an estimated 469,000 children enrolled in Kindergarten in 2003-4, mostly part-time. It is estimated that about 98% of eligible children attend Kindergarten at age 5 and where it is available at age 4, approximately 84% of eligible children attend. The provinces/territories of Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories do not have legislated limits on class size, but in practice class sizes range from 12-13 children up to 30. Prince Edward Island kindergarten classes have adopted the legislated child care staff:child ratios of 1:12 children. Information concerning the number of children with special needs in kindergarten is not readily available.

Kindergarten programs are well established and are the only truly universal ECEC program offered to Canadian children under the age of six. However, these are viewed exclusively as “educational” programs with no attempt to meet employment needs of working parents. Kindergarten is clearly very well accepted by parents and beneficial to children but it is separated geographically, jurisdictionally and culturally from other ECEC programs. As a result, kindergarten children may participate in several ECEC settings during the day (e.g., before kindergarten, kindergarten, after kindergarten). Depending on the arrangements this can be difficult and stressful for children and parents.

A number of new approaches to kindergarten have been undertaken by provincial governments in the last several years. Since the introduction of the new Family Policy in Quebec in 1997-98, jurisdiction for early childhood education was split at age 5. Children 0-4 attend child care programs run by the Ministère de l’Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille. At age 5, children can attend non-compulsory, full-school day kindergarten in the education system. In inner city schools, there are also pre-kindergarten programs for four year olds operating for half a day. The other half-day is spent in the school child care which is part of the school system. The child care is operated by the school boards; the Principals have ultimate responsibility and the child care centres are expected to meet the child care licensing requirements. As one staff team, there is extensive coordination between the teachers and the child care staff.
New Brunswick and Nova Scotia also introduced full-school day, compulsory kindergarten programs in the schools. In 2005, Nova Scotia introduced a two-year pre-primary pilot project in 19 schools offering full-time pre-primary (junior kindergarten) programs on a full-school-day basis for children who are 4 on or before October 1st of the school year. The programs are staffed by educators with early childhood degrees or 2-year diplomas; the maximum class size is 18 with two early childhood educators per group. Provision has not yet been made for out-of-school programs for children of working parents, but officials anticipate that after the pilot period, this will become the next challenge.

Prince Edward Island introduced kindergarten by combining it with existing child care programs. The Department of Education provides half a day’s instruction in the centres for free; if the parents wish to keep their children there all day, they pay a fee or apply for a subsidy. The school boards are not involved in the delivery of kindergarten. Manitoba has launched an active coordination project: Educaring: Strengthening Partnerships between Schools and Child Care, emphasizing communication, collaboration and consistency.

Among other projects, Saskatchewan allocated $200,000 to Saskatchewan Learning to expand their pre-kindergarten programs for four year olds. The report of the longitudinal study of pre-kindergarten in Regina Public School Division #4 has interesting findings. The School Division hired teachers with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in the Early Childhood Intervention Program; they also had strong ECE backgrounds, which contributed to the high ECERS-R scores received.

Alberta is also reviewing changes. Alberta’s Commission on Learning, published in October 2003, recommended the establishment of new junior kindergarten programs on a phased-in basis. The Commission also recommended that kindergarten programs should be mandatory for all children and provided on a full-day basis.

In Canada, evaluation of program effectiveness is not mandated. The focus is on assessment of individual children through report cards and testing at Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 plus the national and international testing organized through the provincial and territorial education authorities. Often, a large amount of money is spent on the organization of such testing. For example, in Ontario, the Education Quality Accountability Office has a $50 million budget. Despite the dollars available for testing, there are very limited resources to do the extra follow up work to help children who are having problems to improve.

Regulated Child Care

Regulated child care programs are provided in child care centres, nursery schools and family homes, licensed by the provincial government and regulated under the Day Nurseries Act. There is a mixture of municipal, private for-profit and not-for-profit programs. The preschool child care services in Canada are based on a fee-for-service arrangement. Fees in the regulated sector range from an average of $154 per month ($7 per day) in Quebec to $600 in the Northwest Territories. (Friendly and Beach, 2005)

Centre-based Care

Even though the first child care centre in Ontario, The Creche in Toronto, was established as early as 1881, current child care policy in Ontario mirrors the policies established during the Second World War when 28 day nurseries were established in Ontario to provide services to care for preschool children of women workers needed for the war effort. Since that time, child care has been shaped based on the needs of working mothers. Historically, the provincial governments’ role was to pass legislation to license and regulate child care programs and to cost share the operating costs of the services on behalf of working parents deemed to be “in need” or whose children were otherwise deemed to be “at risk”.
Regulated child care in Canada is primarily governed by child care legislation and regulations in each province and territory. This legislation provides for licensing, monitoring and enforcement. The regulations set out the standards and regulations for the operation of these group programs, including maximum child:staff ratios, group sizes, minimum staff qualification requirements and guidelines for parental involvement.

In most provinces and territories, one Ministry is responsible for developing policy and legislation, coordinating planning, licensing child care programs, ensuring compliance with the regulations and administering funding. Often there are decentralized ministries with regional offices. Ministry officials, based in the regions license child care programs, monitor them and enforce the legislation and regulations through an annual license renewal process to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards. Non-compliance of a serious nature may result in a refusal to renew or revocation of license. Legislation provides authority for immediate closure if children’s well-being is in danger.

The Child Care Resource and Research Unit estimated in 2005 that there were a total of 745,254 regulated spaces for children 0-12. (Spaces available for 15.5% of children in this age group.) At present statistics are not collected on enrollment of children by their actual age. (Friendly and Beach, 2005)

The Child Care Resource and Research Unit also estimated that there were 148,852 children (0-12) in Canada receiving some fee subsidy. This does not include the 321,732 children in Quebec, all of whom receive a substantial fee subsidy because the programs are globally funded. There are also waiting lists for fee subsidies in most places. (Friendly, Beach, 2005)

The median full monthly price to parents of full-time ECEC in a child care centre in Canada was estimated in 2000 to range from $531 per month for infants to $477 per month for toddlers and $455 per month for preschoolers (including children of kindergarten-aged. (Doherty, et al, 2000)

Quality in child care centres is typically measured for research and evaluation purposes using scales such as the Infant-Toddler Environments Rating Scale (ITERS) and the Early Childhood Environments Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS). Trained observers score classrooms on a 35-43 item scale in a measurement exercise lasting for at least several hours. A study in 1998, funded by the federal government and conducted by a network of university researchers, has provided one of the first quality assessments of Canadian child care centres and licensed family homes. Data were collected in 122 infant-toddler rooms and 227 preschool rooms in 234 child care centres and 231 regulated family home child care providers across six provinces and one territory providing comparative quality estimates. The ITERS, ECERS and FDCRS scales are 7-point scales, where scores of 1, 3, 5 and 7 are associated with the terms inadequate, minimal, good and excellent respectively. Process Quality Ratings (ECERS-R) from the You Bet I Care! Study (1998) are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECERS</th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Doherty et al, 2000
This study had a significant impact on governments across Canada. Some governments immediately introduced initiatives to improve quality, others were expecting to allocate a portion of the new ELCC program funding for this purpose. For example, Alberta introduced an accreditation program to provide quality improvement incentives to providers and New Brunswick allocated funds to the Enhanced Child Day Services to improve quality and staff wages.

Regulated Family Child Care

Many kindergarten-age children use family child care before and/or after kindergarten. The provincial territorial policies for family child care is also defined by legislation and regulation, providing for the licensing, monitoring and enforcement. In some provinces and territories government individually license family child care programs; in other provinces and territories the government licenses agencies to organize, and monitor the care. Care may be provided in homes for a specific number of children from 0-12 years. Generally, caregivers are not required to have qualifications, although some provinces require caregivers to take orientation courses, have first-aid certificates and have clear criminal record checks. Fee subsidies are also available for regulated family child care in all provinces and territories.

Children with Special Needs

Kindergarten-age children with special needs are also accommodated within the regulated child care system. Governments encourage integration and inclusion of children with special needs into community child care services. Special needs funding programs provide assistance for staffing, equipment, supplies or services to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care.

Aboriginal Child Care

Child care programs on-reserve are usually administered under agreements between First Nations communities and the federal government. First Nations and Inuit organizations have responsibility for administration of funds and for developing services which are operated and controlled by their own communities in order that they reflect their traditional cultural norms and practices. Some provinces license on-reserve child care; other provinces do not license but provide support.

In May 1995 Health Canada announced its intention to develop an Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) program. Health Canada allocated 83.7 million dollars nationally for the program. For example, Alberta received an allocation of approximately 10.4 million dollars for the four-year period April 1, 1995 to March 31, 1999. The AHS programs across Canada continues to operate today. Programs are located in Northern and Urban areas. Across Canada there are 131 Aboriginal Head Start sites off reserve and more than 307 sites on-reserve. The principles and guidelines of Aboriginal Head Start are based on a holistic approach to education which emphasizes the needs of the children within family, school and community through: culture and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, social support programming and parental involvement. Aboriginal Head Start aims to facilitate whole family growth and development through parental involvement at all levels of the site’s activities. Many of the sites are licensed through Nursery Schools. In Alberta, five sites have ECS operating status—where kindergarten is taught in the sites. Mostly all the other sites partner with their local school districts to help assist with children that
have special needs. Most sites have developed partnerships and networks with their local health units for dental, speech, audiology etc. (Murphy, 2005)

Funding

The operation of child care programs tends to be driven by funding and financing issues. Unlike kindergarten in the schools, parents must pay for child care. This leaves child care programs subject to the vagaries of the market place, placing considerable emphasis on ensuring that the revenues will cover expenditures. At the same time, strict regulations must be met. Provincial/territorial funding for regulated centre-based programs includes fee subsidies, wage subsidies, special needs resourcing, and some funding from other social assistance programs.

The main form of funding available in the regulated child care sector is fee assistance paid directly to licensed service providers on behalf of eligible parents. Eligibility for subsidy is determined by an income or needs test. Income ceilings and other factors vary from one province/territory to the other. Most parents receiving a fee subsidy are also charged a user fee. Some provinces/territories do not require financial eligibility as a condition for subsidizing care for children with special needs; other provinces require financial eligibility for the basic fee but will support assistance for the additional supports.

Cash benefits

Pregnancy and Parental Leave (and Federal Benefits)

Provinces legislate job protection during pregnancy and parental leave under their respective Employment Standards legislation. The federal government provides compensation to mothers who have been employed for at least 600 hours in the last year, generally at a rate of 55% of the previous wage up to a maximum of $413 per week, under the Employment Insurance Act. Benefits after the first fifteen weeks can be taken by the father or shared. Birth mothers are entitled to take 15 weeks of pregnancy leave. New parents can take up to 37 weeks of leave; maximum allowable job-protected leave means parents could be at home for up to 89 weeks. (15 weeks pregnancy leave – birth mother; plus 35 weeks of leave (birth mother); plus 35 weeks of leave (other parent) This combined program was estimated to cost $2,924,000,000 in 2003-04. (Friendly and Beach, 2005)

Child Care Expense Deduction

The Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) is a federal tax measure which allows eligible taxpayers to deduct the cost of child care used to earn income, go to school or conduct research from their taxable income. Generally, this deduction must be claimed by the lower income spouse. The CCED allows deduction of expenses up to $7,000 for each child less than 7 years of age and up to $4000 per year for each child 7 – 16. The tax savings available depends on the marginal tax rate of the parent claiming the CCED. This program was estimated to cost $545,000,000 in 2003/04 (Friendly, Beach, 2005)

The Child Care Expense Deduction does not reduce the amount of the parent fee that has to be paid for child care. Rather, the CCED reduces the tax that would otherwise be paid on the income used to pay for child care. Therefore, the Child Care Expense Deduction plays an important role in increasing horizontal tax equity between different types of families in Canada. (Cleveland, Colley, 2003). As the Ontario Ministry of Finance puts it “Horizontal equity...
in the taxation system requires that persons in similar circumstances bear an equal tax burden. Individuals who incur child care costs are less able to pay income tax. This deduction recognizes this reduced ability to pay tax faced by parents with young children.” (Cleveland and Colley, 2001)

**Support Services (Family Resource Centres, etc.)**

Family resource centres, Early Learning Centres, Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, Community Action Program for Children (CAP-C) and a variety of prevention and intervention programs provide various support services to parents, public education, and programs for specific target groups. Most of these are not, strictly speaking, providing either education or care services to preschool children (and are therefore not included in the OECD definition below), but they may provide related services which influence child development in different ways. Some of these programs are operated by provincial/territorial/municipal governments, others by non-profit agencies and some by the federal government. Coherence of these programs within an overall system of services is typically lacking. Some of these programs carry small user fees.

Family Resource centres (also known as child care resource centres) have historically provided support services to parents and caregivers in their caregiving roles. The centres offer drop-in programs, resource lending libraries, playgroups, training opportunities and educational workshops. Family Resource Centres, are usually part of the child care service sector as a provincial/territorial responsibility.

**Unregulated child care**

Unregulated child care is provided in a child’s own home or a caregiver’s home. The vast majority of working parents use this option for their children.

**Other Innovations and Developments**

**Toronto First Duty**

The Toronto First Duty Project, funded by the City of Toronto and the Atkinson Foundation has developed a pilot project to integrate and expand early education, family support and child care activities in five neighbourhoods.

This pilot project is designed to demonstrate how existing early childhood and family programs can be transformed into a system for children 0-6 years and to explore possible options for integration of kindergarten and other ECEC services. (Toronto First Duty). There are five sites: Bruce WoodGreen Early Learning Centre; Corvette Early Years; Queen Victoria Partners for Early Learning Project; York Early Years Wilcox Project; and Action for Children Today and Tomorrow Secord-Dawes Hub. Each site has engaged in activities to bring together and integrate early years services to children and families in their respective communities.

As an example, the Bruce WoodGreen Early Learning Centre, has integrated its half-day kindergarten programs for both four and five year olds with the child care centre into a seamless model of service. Qualified teachers and early childhood educators work side by side with each other, collaborate on program and curriculum and parent communication. There is also an active parenting and literacy program where parents can bring their children for daily activities. For children who stay in the program beyond the school day, Bruce WoodGreen has adopted the Quebec model and are charging parents a fee of $6 per day for the extended period of child care.

**Fee for Service Kindergarten in British Columbia**

West Vancouver and Abbotsford are two examples of school districts in British Columbia which have started to offer half-day programs (including lunch) after the regular kindergarten program. KinderKids, in Abbotsford, describes itself as
“an innovative theme and academic-based program that complements the regular kindergarten offering. This additional half-day learning opportunity will have a monthly fee of $350.00 (for the five-day a week program). Parents will be asked to provide an expression of interest when they register their children for kindergarten this month (Jan, 2004). Space is limited - max. 20 per class. Registration forms and brochures will be made available at each elementary school in January and February.”

The K Plus Program in West Vancouver School District has expanded its pilot project conducted in three schools. The evaluation of the pilot project received rave reviews by parents, children and teachers. K Plus describes itself as “an innovative new program for Kindergarten-aged children that encourages active experiential learning, is developmentally appropriate, increases independence and promotes joy in learning – staffed by teachers who are professionally prepared to work with young children. It was established in response to community needs and is designed to complement the Primary Program.” The cost is $310 per month for a three-day program and $390 per month for the five-day program.

Overview

In conclusion, there seems to be considerable commitment to the “idea” of integration and the need for high quality services – including a learning component – for young children. Thus far, bold experimentation has been extremely limited, although there are many attempts across the country to consciously improve collaboration and coordination between the two sectors.

Appendix B below sets out more details of both kindergarten and child care programs in each province and territory. 90% of this information comes from the invaluable resource provided by the Child Care Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto: Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2005 by Martha Friendly and Jane Beach.
THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Overview

Early Childhood Education services have become nearly universal for older preschool children in many countries over the last twenty years. Most European countries now regard early childhood education and care as an essential part of preparation of children for public school, an important component of the supports to families with special attention to those with employed parents, and as a venue for identifying children and families who will need special services. There is wide variation in policy toward ECEC for children less than three years of age, but full-day care with a developmental purpose is practically a norm in most of these countries for children of three and over. The OECD report on Early Childhood Education and Care systems summarized the variation across child age levels in this way: “A pattern of coverage is seemingly emerging across the industrialized countries: a coverage rate ranging from 20-30% in year 1-2, and reaching over 80% coverage in full-time places, some time in the fourth year [i.e., from age 3].” (OECD, 2001a, p. 148)

The United States maintains policies that are much less supportive of early childhood education and care. The United Kingdom, Australia and Quebec have moved strongly to expand financial support of ECEC services in recent years. Taken from the OECD Review, 2001 and 2006, the notes below provide a brief written overview of some of the main lines of ECEC policy in each of these countries. Several broad conclusions can be drawn from this overview:

1. Most countries reviewed provide preschool (usually free) ECEC services for the vast majority of children who are 3 years of age and older, and sometimes 4 and older.
   - Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Portugal provide full day care for children from age 3 or before.
   - Norway and the Netherlands commence full-day preschool access at age 4.
   - The United Kingdom provides guaranteed access to free part-day preschool for all 3 year olds and above, with school commencing at age 5.
   - Australia provides part-day preschool at age 4 and full-day at age 5; 61.5% of the 3-4 year olds using services are in licensed child care settings; 83.5% of children attended free kindergarten for 5-6 hours a day.
   - The U.S. provides regulated services to about 38% of children 0-3; 56.4% of 3-5 year olds; over 90% of 5-6 year olds.
   - In Canada, preschool starts later than in other countries and is only part-day at age 5 (although Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick now have full-day kindergarten at age 5, and Ontario has part-day kindergarten at age 4 for most children).

2. Outside of this core of ECEC services, there are a wide variety of different models of ECEC provision and funding adopted by different countries.
   - Australia provides substantial benefits in the form of tax measures (demand-side funding) to parents for ECEC services.
   - Netherlands is aggressively expanding its public commitment to ECEC services, experimenting with a move to demand-side funding, along with substantial
amounts of employer funding.

- Belgium provides public services above 2.5 years and demand-side subsidization below.
- Denmark provides very good public ECEC services, with a parental contribution up to one-third of the cost.
- Finland provides public ECEC services with parents paying 10% of costs.
- Italy has well-developed preschool services for all children 3 and above, usually free, but very few services for under 3’s.
- Norway has extensive public ECEC services, with a goal of universal access for all children under 6. Parents fees are capped at 20% of costs.
- Portugal provides educationally-oriented care for 3–6 year olds, free of charge under the Ministry of Education.
- Sweden provides high quality public ECEC services for children from 1 year of age, if parents work or study. Parents pay about 9% of costs (no more than 2% of income for the first child, with declining amounts for second and third children).
- In the U.K., local education authorities provide free early education places for children from 3 years up. A new and extensive set of ECEC services called Sure Start is free for children 0-3 in less advantaged communities.
- The United States provides part-day Head Start services to disadvantaged children, and some other child care subsidies to low-income families, along with part-day kindergarten at age 5. Apart from that, ECEC services are a private market service.

3. In virtually all of these countries, the public commitment to Early Childhood Education and Care services is considerably greater than in Canada. Canada spends the least of all the countries reviewed: 0.23% (i.e., 23 hundredths of 1%) of its annual GDP on pre-primary education. Other countries spend 0.4% to 2.0% of GDP. As a result, pre-primary education is a low priority in Canada, apparently a much lower priority than in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden or the U.K. Even the U.S. spends more public dollars as a percent of its GDP on pre-primary education than Canada. (OECD, 2006)
Summary of Services in Different Countries

Australia
Responsibility for Australian early childhood education and care (ECEC) involves both the federal and state governments. Federally, responsibility is shared by the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and the Department of Education, Science and Training. The state and territorial governments are responsible for preschool education. This has fostered a traditional separation between care services (seen as employment and family support) and education services (for child development). There are two years of (nearly) universal preschool provided largely in schools, with half days at age four and full school days at age five before compulsory schooling starts at age six. (Australian Background Report.

The OECD reports that 61.5% of children 3-4 years old are in licensed child care settings and that many of these children also attend sessional pre-school or kindergarten classes for some hours/days in the week and child care for other hours/days. (OECD, 2006). It also reports that there is a wide variation of provision for 4-6 year olds across Australia. Usually preschool services are attached to schools and operate for 5-6 hours/day during school term time. Programs for children the year before they attend primary school are publicly funded and free to parents.

Over the last decade, the government has reduced operational subsidies to community child care centres and replaced them with the Child Care Benefit which goes directly to parents and is scaled to income. Full assistance ($133 Aus per week for the first child) ends at about $30,000 (Aus) of family income; the average assistance is about $45Aus per week. Child Care Benefit is only available to families using formal or registered-informal child care services (about 22% of children 1-4 years). There are important quality problems in some centres that Australia has been addressing, through a Quality Improvement and Accreditation System. There is no statutory paid pregnancy or parental leave in Australia. (OECD, 2001)

Belgium
Belgium is split into Flemish and French communities and policies and services are determined and administered separately, although they are broadly very similar. In early education, a universal and well-organized system has been in place for decades so that children from 2 1⁄2 to 5 attend free preschools which operate 7 hours/day. Almost 100% of children attend. Extra funds are directed towards low-income and immigrant areas to promote equity and the quality of schooling.

In the Flemish community of Belgium, 38% of children aged 0-2.5 years have access to regulated services, and only 18% in the French Community. Children less than 3 years may attend child care centres and family child care, with some parents receiving subsidies according to income and all parents eligible for substantial tax benefits related to the cost of care. Paid maternity leave lasts for 15 weeks at 80% of earnings; paid parental leave for another 3 months (full-time) or 6 months (part-time), paid at a flat rate. Time-credit breaks are also available for all workers. (OECD, 2001)

Denmark
In Denmark, services for children 0-6 years have traditionally been considered an integral part of the social welfare system. The major aim is to support the development of young children, in collaboration with parents, and to provide caring and learning environments for them while their parents are at work. Policy responsibility is with the Ministry of Social Affairs, but local authorities (municipalities) are responsible for many policy and operational matters. The Ministry of Education is responsible for policy covering preschool classes and after school care, but
again much responsibility for funding, policy and operations resides at the local level. Frequently, these local authorities have established unified departments bringing together care and education. Integrated services bringing together care and education for children 0-6 years are growing in Denmark.

94% of children 3–5 years have access to regulated services; 12% of 0-1 year olds; 83% of 1-2 year olds. (OECD, 2001) Fees to parents are capped at 30–33% of costs with low-income families paying much less. The average parental contribution amounts to approximately 22% of costs. Children in kindergarten classes in the primary education system (between 4 yrs-10 months and 6 years) are free. Danish child care services are generally very well run and considerable attention is paid to enhancing the developmental quality of play and educational experiences.

Compulsory school does not start till age 7; nearly all children at age 6 attend preschool classes in schools and organized after-school care. Paid maternity leave covers 14 weeks, paternity leave another 2 weeks, and an additional 14 weeks parental leave all paid at full unemployment benefit rate, to which 26 weeks of child care leave may be added, paid at 60% of the unemployment rate. (OECD, 2001)

Finland

Finland provides an unconditional right to every child to have access to ECEC services from 1-6 years of age to support the development and learning of young children. The ECEC system is predominantly public, with some private provision. In general, municipalities provide services directly through municipal day-care centres, family day-care homes or preschool groups.

Free preschool education is available for 6 year olds for about 20 hours per week during the school year (compulsory education begins at 7 years). Access to regulated services: 27.5% of children 1-2 years of age; 43.9% of children 2-3 years; 62.3% of 3-4 year olds; 68.5% of 4-5 year olds; 73% of 5-6 year olds and almost 100% of 6-7 year olds in the pre-school class, about 70% of whom also attend day care. Parents may alternatively request a private childcare allowance to be paid by the municipality to the childminder or day care centre of their choice (about 120 Euros per month). Full fees amount to about 15% of the cost and fees. They are geared-to-income so that fees are not a barrier to low-income parents and they are also capped at EUR 200 per child per month and preschool education is free.

There are 18 weeks of paid maternity leave (six before birth), 26 weeks of paid parental leave and 3 weeks of paternity leave, paid at 66% of earned income.

In addition, for those parents opting not to enrol their children in municipal day-care, a flat-rate, three-year child care allowance is available (no job-protected leave) with payment of approximately 250 Euros per month for the first child, and 80 Euros for successive children. Finnish authorities are concerned about the negative effects of these prolonged home care allowances on children and on the position of these mothers in the labour market and in society (OECD, 2001, p. 164)

Italy

Policy responsibility of ECEC in Italy is split between the Ministry of Education and the regions and municipalities. Responsibility for the “scuoladell’infanzia” for 3-6 year olds falls to the Ministry of Education and the regions and municipalities are responsible for the “nidi d’infanzia” for children 3 months to 3 years. These facilities operate eight hours per day, September to June.

In Norway, an integrated system of services for children from 0-6, with an extensive system of public child care centres (barnehager) has existed for many years.
18.7% of children 0-3 years have access to regulated services; 98.1% of children - 3-4 years; and 100% of children 5-6 years. Most of the provision is by municipalities and is centred in urban northern Italy. Fees: For children 0-3 years, fees are based on parents’ income but capped at a maximum of 18% of costs. For children 3-6 years, services in state and municipal services are free.

Paid maternity leave is available for 5 months at (usually) 100% of earnings. Either parent can take up to 10 months of parental leave until the child is 8 years old; it is available at much lower compensation. (OECD, 2001)

Netherlands
The Dutch government is moving toward an integrated framework of services for children from 0-6 years, crossing traditional education, social welfare and preventative youth healthcare lines, and achieving consensus with local authorities about ECEC policy goals. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for children 4-6 years, with compulsory schooling beginning at age 5. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has responsibility for family support, socio-educational activities and the funding and supervision of out-of-home child care.

Much work has recently been done to tighten up regulatory frameworks, training regimes and quality control. A special focus is given to children-at-risk, including children from immigrant families. Another striking feature of Dutch early childhood policy has been the use of an experimental phase to trial innovative programmes in ECEC. A number of such programmes are now being mainstreamed. Dutch employers have a much bigger direct role in the funding of child care than in most other countries.

Children who are four years of age have a legal right to a place in pre-primary school for 5 hours per day, 40 weeks per year. Attendance is virtually 100%.

22.5% of children 0-3 years have access to regulated services; 89% of children between 2.5 and 4 years and 100% of children 4-6 years. (OECD, 2001) Child care provision is private (both for-profit and non-profit) but publicly co-funded. Parents pay, on average, 44% of costs, with government and employer subsidization taking up the balance. Many employers either set up their own child care services, or, more usually, purchase or rent “company places” in child care centres. These places represent about 50% of all child care places for children 0-4 in 1998. There is a marked tendency for middle and high-income parents to use services more than low-income families. Playgroups are used by about 50% of children 2-4 years of age. These playgroups are established by private and community foundations; almost all are subsidized by local government but with some parental contribution. Children usually visit the playgroups twice a week for 2-3 hours to play with peers or participate in an intervention programme. Expenditures on child care are tax deductible from income.

Paid maternity leave is available for 16 weeks (4-6 weeks before birth) at 100% of earnings, plus additional unpaid parental leave of 6 months for parents who work at least 20 hours. (OECD, 2001)

Norway
In Norway, an integrated system of services for children from 0-6, with an extensive system of public child care centres (barnehager) has existed for many years. The Ministry of Education and Research has been responsible for ECEC since 2005. Much responsibility has been devolved to county and municipal governments, which generally have unified early childhood services and schools under one administrative department. The county administers government grants to child care centres, family day care, and drop-in centres and supports its municipalities on ECEC policy issues. There is a national regulatory framework for child care centres, and national guidelines concerning values and objectives, curricular aims, and pedagogical approaches.
Most barnehager are public (municipal), but a significant number are private. Both receive national government subsidies covering between 30%-40% of costs, and municipal subsidies covering a variable further amount. Fees are geared to income, depending on income and municipality, and are now capped at 20% of the cost. (OECD, 2006). Services are free at age 6.

48% of children 1-3 years attend regulated services; and 88% of children 3-6 years.

Compulsory school begins at age 6. About 80% of children 4-6 are in child care centres and family home arrangements and about 50% of children 1-4 years of age. It is a declared political priority to achieve universal access for all children under 6 years of age. In addition to family allowances and lone-parent allowances, all families are able to claim tax deductions of child care expenses. There is also a cash benefit scheme that provides a cash grant (approx. $400) to a parent who looks after a child at home, or who uses ECEC that does not receive government grants (an informal childminder). The parents most likely to use this cash benefit and stay at home with their children are lone mothers, mothers with several children, and mothers in low-income one-earner families. (OECD, 2001, p. 173)

As of July 2005, there has been a universal parental leave of 43 weeks at 100% of earnings, or 53 weeks at 80% of earnings. Where both mother and father qualify for parental leave, five weeks of “use-it-or-lose-it” paternity leave is included in the paternity leave quota. Time accounts are used to enable parents to work part-time and benefit from parental leave for two years or more. Women who do not qualify for parental benefit receive a lump sum amount of USD 4,852 in 2005.

Portugal
Since the mid 1990’s, Portugal has extensively reformed the ECEC sector. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour share responsibility for ECEC pedagogical quality in all settings and funding of kindergarten education for 3-6 year olds. The 1997 National Framework law provides the definitions, major policy aims, and implementation strategies for pre-school education, with pre-school viewed as the first stage of lifelong learning.

11% of children 0-3 years have access to crèches or crèche familiare (1.5%) 8-9 hours daily. The jardims de infancia (pre-schools or kindergartens) provide pre-school education for 3-6 year olds, free of charge for five hours per day, five days a week. Approximately 60% of 3 year olds, 75% of 4 year olds and 90% of 5 year olds attend, or 76.3% of the 3-6 age group. Care is available beyond five hours per day but is charged according to the parents’ income (11% of average annual salary).

Up until a few years ago, early childhood services in Portugal tended to be loosely structured, play-oriented and geared towards care and social aims, according to the preferred aims of the providers. The new curriculum guidelines, improved inspection methods, and enhanced training of staff are increasing the focus on learning. Every pre-school class has a qualified kindergarten teacher with a four-year post-secondary education degree. Crèches are staffed either by kindergarten teachers, nurses or social workers, who have tertiary level professional qualifications.

Sixteen weeks of job-protected maternity leave at 100% of earnings or 20 weeks at 80%. Fathers can also take the leave; an additional six months of unpaid parental leave for each parent is also available. (OECD, 2001, 2006)

Sweden
Sweden has long been a leader in the provision of early childhood education and care, with strong emphasis both on the quality of ECEC services and the support that ECEC services can provide to equitable gender roles. Responsibility for central policy, for the goals, guidelines and financial framework of ECEC lies solely with the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science, no matter what the age of the preschool child. Distinctions between
day care and kindergarten have been removed; all services below age 6 are known as pre-school services, and classes at age 6 are known as pre-school classes (compulsory schooling begins in Sweden at age 7).

Municipalities in Sweden are responsible for the provision of pre-school services, for monitoring the quality of ECEC services, and for funding. There is a National Agency for Education which is responsible for overall evaluation, data collection, and the development and supervision of ECEC service delivery at central and regional levels.

By law, every child who has reached one year of age has a right to ECEC services (within a reasonable time limit – 3 months) if both parents work or study. If a parent is unemployed or on child-related leave, children have a right to 15 hours per week of care. Pre-school (förskola) offers full-time care for children aged 1-6 years. Preschools are open all year and their hours meet the working needs of parents. Open preschools (öppen förskola) offer part-time programs for children at home or with a family care provider. Preschool classes for 6-7 years olds (förskoleklass) are dedicated to the transition to primary school.

45% of 1 to 2 year olds and 86% of 2-3 year olds attend regulated programs. 91% of 3-4 year olds attend; 96% of 5-6 year olds. Virtually all children 6 years of age are in pre-school classes, or already in compulsory schooling. Parental fees cover about 9% of preschool costs amounting to about 2% of average income. Parents with one child pay a maximum of USD 135 monthly; with two children USD 107 monthly; and with 3 children USD 54 monthly. From age 4 years preschool is free for 3 hours in the morning.

98% of staff in Swedish pre-school centres are trained to work with children. 60% have a three-year tertiary degree; the remaining 38% have a senior secondary, three-year vocational training in “Children and Leisure-time Activities”. Staff-child ratios are not regulated on a national basis, but they are monitored regularly. In pre-school centres the average ratio is 5.6 children per adult; in pre-school classes, the average ratio is 13 children per adult.

There are 480 days of parental leave divided between the two parents. 390 days are at 80% of earnings and the remaining 90 days at a flat rate of USD 8 per day. 60 days are reserved exclusively for mothers; 60 days exclusively for fathers; the remaining days are divided between them as they choose. Temporary parental benefit is paid to a parent caring for a sick child up to age 12 (16 in some cases). An average of 7 days per child are drawn each year. An additional pregnancy benefit of 80% of earnings is available for pregnant mothers who are unable to work from 60 to 11 days before birth. (OECD, 2006)

United Kingdom
Historically, responsibility for ECEC policy has been shared between national governments and local authorities, with considerable fragmentation of service delivery; ECEC services were not seen as an important public responsibility. Since 1997, the government has developed a plan of action to reform the early years system. Special funding for disadvantaged areas is provided for through the “Sure Start” initiative that, from birth, brings together health, early learning and parenting support. An “Early Excellence Centre” programme has been established to test integrated approaches to care and education. Curriculum Guidelines for the Foundation Stage (3-5 years) have been developed. The Office for Standards in Education is mandated to formulate national standards to ensure clarity about the requirements for good quality service. A Childcare Tax Credit has been implemented for employed parents, targeted at low-income families. The responsibility for implementing policy and delivering outcomes has been assigned at the national level to the Department for Education and Employment and Skills. (DfEES).
Compulsory education begins in the U.K. at 5 years of age. All children 3-5 years have 12.5 hours/week of free early education for 33 weeks/year. The plan is to extend this to 20 hours by 2010 for 38 weeks. The entitlement will rise to 15 hours in 2007. Some Local Authorities are piloting free entitlement for disadvantaged 2 year olds. All forms of provision are now being changed to become part of a Children’s Centre or Extended School. Local Authorities are responsible for quality improvement and ensuring seamless coverage of ECEC provision for all who want it. Costs to parents for regulated services vary greatly according to service type and income.

Twenty-six weeks of paid maternity leave paid at 90% of earnings for 6 weeks followed by a fixed rate for twenty weeks of GBP 106/week as of 2005. An additional 26 weeks of unpaid leave is available if a mother has worked for an employer form more than 26 weeks. The goal of a 12-month paid maternity leave has been set for 2010. One or two weeks of paid paternity leave is available at birth. (OECD, 2006)

United States
Responsibility for ECEC funding and policy is divided between states and the federal government in the United States. The federal government concentrates on funding services to children considered to be “at risk”. Head Start and Early Head Start programs are managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Child Care and Development Fund has consolidated four separate funding streams to provide child care funding from the federal government to the states. As part of welfare reform, through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, the federal government provides additional funding to the states to expand provision of child care for welfare recipients seeking work. State policies towards child care and preschool education vary widely. Child care subsidies are in many states available to some low-income or disadvantaged families. There are moves towards universal access to pre-kindergarten programs in many states.

By 2002, 42% of children 0-3 had access to regulated services; 56.4% of 3-4 year-olds. Over 90% of 5 year olds enrolled in state kindergarten. At both 3 and 4, children attend a complex patchwork of public and private programs that include preschool, pre-kindergarten (pre-K), 4-year-old kindergarten, (pre-Kindergarten covers about 2.5% of 3-year-olds and 16% of 4 year olds). Georgia and Oklahoma make pre-kindergarten available to all 4 year olds. State kindergarten for all 5 year olds and increasing numbers of 3 and 4 year olds is free. Head Start programs for low-income families cover 11% of all 3-4 year olds. (OECD, 2006) In 1998, of the 4 million children attending kindergarten, 85% were in public school, 15% in private school. 55% were in full-day programs and 45% in part-day programs. (U.S. Department of Education)

Spurred by then-President Clinton’s 1997 State of the Union Address: a “Call to Action” urging a priority on improving the quality of American teachers, the demand for accountability and improved student performance has swept the U.S. The issue of “school readiness” has become a national passion. The National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) and SERVE\(^1\) conducted a survey of readiness initiatives in all 50 states. There is a lively debate on what it means to be “ready” for school and politicians have been rapidly recommending the expansion of pre-kindergarten education across all states. (Kagan, 1999, Pianta (2003), Pianto and Paro, 2003, Meisels, 1999, The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) began following a nationally representative sample of 22,000 kindergarten-age children in the fall of 1998. This cohort of children will be followed from their entry to kindergarten until the fifth grade.

\(^1\) The National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) is a national early childhood research center. SERVE is one of 10 Regional Education Laboratories across the United States and the lead laboratory in early childhood research.
The Trust for Early Education (TEE), based in Washington, D.C., was established in 2002 to provide a strong advocacy voice for high quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four-year-olds. The Trust has emphasized the research on the need for high quality teachers and teacher education. It believes that “one of the most important components of any high quality pre-kindergarten education is a teacher with at least a B.A. degree and specialized training in early childhood education. Teachers with B.A. degrees are more likely to possess the skills and abilities necessary to create and maintain a high-quality learning environment. Therefore it is critical to attract and retain these high quality teachers.”

For new mothers working in firms with over 50 employees, there is a statutory right to a 12 week unpaid leave at the time of pregnancy, childbirth or illness. Employers can require that employees use their vacation and sick leave before claiming family leave. Workplace contractual agreements give paid maternity leave to some percentage of employees. Five States pay temporary disability benefit for 10 weeks.

The average quality of centre-based care in the United States is not high. Only 14% of centres and 13% of family child care homes are estimated to be of good quality. Regulations governing child care vary across states. In general, legislated child-staff ratios are from 4:1 to 6:1 for infants, from 10:1 to 20:1 for 4 and 5 year olds, with ratios for 2 and 3 year olds being somewhere in the middle.

The First 5 California initiative is perhaps the best-known US preschool experiment. In 1998, California voted in a state-wide ballot to add a 50 cent tax on tobacco products to fund services promoting early childhood development and school readiness for children prenatal to age 5. The First 5 California initiative provided for the 58 County Commissions to fund a wide range of programs within the framework of a formal but flexible strategic plan. The initiative provides for five elements:

- Integrating early child care and education services with kindergarten transition programs;
- Providing parent/family support services
- Incorporating health and social services
- Assisting schools to develop capacity to prepare children and families for school success; and
- Providing program infrastructure, administration and evaluation.

- $700 million is spent on administration, technical assistance, special projects, public media, infrastructure development, research and evaluation;
- $413 (over 4 years) is spent on the School Readiness Initiative;
- $100 million (over 5-7 years) implementing voluntary preschool for all 4-year-olds;
- $20 million (over 5 years) to ensure early identification of children with disabilities and other special needs to provide early intervention services in 10 demonstration projects linked to School Readiness sites. (Marc R. Thibault, 2004)

Apart from kindergarten services, most of the costs of child care are borne almost entirely by parents. Even with low child care worker wages and relatively low quality, the average price of child care in the U.S. is over $4,500 annually. As a result, low-income families pay, on average, 18% of their income for child care and many families choose cheaper forms of care. The Dependent Care Tax Credit permits eligible parents to pay for part of the cost of child care with pre-tax rather than after-tax dollars.
Research on child care and education in the United States is much better funded, more ambitious, and better done than similar research in other countries. This is true of evaluation studies and of original research. Much of what we know about child care, quality and the development of children comes from U.S. research. (OECD, 2001)

Notes
The average participation rate of women with children under 6 in the labour force in 2000 was 59.9% - as high as 74.7% in South Dakota with California the lowest at 53.1% (Williams, 2004). 14.8% of four-year-olds were served by state-funded pre-kindergarten programs in 2001-02, ranging from a high of 55.6% in Oklahoma to nil in Alaska, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. 18.3% of children received state child care studies with an average income eligibility limit for child care assistance for a family of three (2002-03) at $28,268, rising to $53,722 in Alaska. Specialized training in Early Childhood Education was required of state-funded pre-kindergarten teachers in 29 states but not required in 21 states. 21 states and the District of Columbia required a BA for Pre-kindergarten Teachers in 2001-2002.

Only 14 states and the District of Columbia required pre-service training in Early Childhood Education for child care center licensing; this meant that pre-service training was not required in 26 states.
APPENDIX A: THE QUAD PRINCIPLES

Quality, Universality, Accessibility and Developmental Approach

A growing body of research confirms that access to quality child care provides benefits across all social and economic classes. Effective universal systems work to eliminate a range of social, ability-based, cultural, geographic, and other barriers to equitable access and participation. Universal programs and services are available for anyone in the community who needs or wants to use them. Universal systems are publicly funded and are paid for through the tax system. The earlier we invest in our children, the longer we all reap the benefits.

In the June 2004 federal election, the federal Liberal Party made a commitment to develop a pan-Canadian child care system based on four principles – Quality, Universality, Accessibility and Developmentally appropriate programming. This set of principles is referred to as QUAD.

These principles, along with the principle of Inclusion, are cornerstones of the child care community's agenda. To ensure that these principles provide the foundation for developing a new child care system, we need to clearly understand what they mean.

Quality Child Care and Developmentally Appropriate Programming

Quality child care promotes healthy child development at the same time as it supports families, reduces child poverty, advances women’s equality, deepens social inclusion and builds a knowledge-based economy. Educators and researchers have concluded that the quality of child care is positively impacted by:

- the learning environment – a quality child care setting is one that is child-centred, providing care integrated with developmentally appropriate activities.
- adult to child ratios – the number of adults as compared to the number of children are crucial given that high adult to child ratios enhances the capacity of staff to more sensitively interact with the children and parents, and to engage the children in a range of developmentally appropriate activities.
- qualifications, remuneration and morale of staff – highly qualified, well-trained, well-paid and well-supported staff who experience high job satisfaction are better able to respond to all children, to plan and support developmentally appropriate programming, and to provide care that respects diversity and values all children and families.
- public and not for profit delivery – public and not-for-profit service delivery promotes accountability, community development, and stable, community based services delivered in the best interests of children and the public. Public funding is directed solely to the delivery of the child care programs.
• legislated standards and capacity for monitoring and enforcement – strong regulations regarding group size, physical space, health and safety precautions take into consideration the needs of all children, best practices to stimulate play and learning, and approaches to promoting wellbeing and safe care of all children.

• funding – stable public funding and adequate infrastructure positively affects adult to child ratios, employees’ wages and benefits, staff morale and job satisfaction, provision of resources to sustain a quality physical environment, capacity for long term service delivery and accountability to the community and funders.

Experts agree that children benefit from a high quality child care system and that development suffers when children experience poor quality care. Even an advantaged family background can’t protect children from the effects of poor quality care.

High quality child care programs have the capacity to provide all children with excellent learning environments to optimize physical, cognitive, cultural, social and emotional development. The most critical factor in determining quality is the stable, consistent and developmentally appropriate care and early learning opportunities provided by staff. This requires predictable public funding and infrastructure, good wages and working conditions for all child care employees, a supportive working environment which enhances job satisfaction, and a well educated workforce.

High quality child care programs provide day-to-day support to families and complement parenting responsibilities; they reflect the racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the population; and they support the inclusion of children with disabilities. Quality programs have the resources to coordinate and liaise with other education, health and social services in the community in order to provide a seamless transition as children grow and develop.

Canada’s current investment in child care is significantly less than most other developed countries and achieving high quality across all child care programs in Canada with the status quo presents serious challenges.

The Benefits of High Quality Child Care and Developmentally Appropriate Programming?

It is now widely acknowledged that learning begins at birth and has a profound affect on life long development and adult well-being. Parents are the child’s first and most powerful teachers. Successful learning environments for children emphasize positive communication with families.

While the majority of today’s parents are in the workforce and seeking quality non parental care, many parents who are not in the workforce are also seeking developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for their children for some part of the day.

High quality child care programs simultaneously support families to balance work and family commitments while they provide developmentally appropriate learning environments for children.

Population health studies highlight the importance of positive early childhood experiences in determining healthy outcomes for all areas of children’s development. Nurturing, stimulating child care helps strengthen children’s dispositions to be life-long learners and productive participants in society.
Universality and Accessibility

Universal systems are publicly funded systems that entitle access for all. At a minimum, universal systems provide access for all without discrimination based on income or other criteria. Effective universal systems also work to eliminate a range of social, ability-based, cultural, geographic, and other barriers to equitable access and participation.

By definition, universal systems are publicly funded and paid for through the tax system. In Canada we have universal systems where we agree that it is more effective to pool our resources and fund services together than it is to pay for them individually.

Public parks, libraries, fire halls, schools, hospitals, and streets are examples of publicly funded, universal systems paid for primarily through the tax system. While none of these systems are perfect – we expect that they will be there for anyone in the community who needs or wants to use them.

However, this is not the case for child care. Other than in Quebec, child care in Canada is primarily a user-fee system where individual families pay fees directly to their child care providers. Some public funding exists, but it is ‘targeted’ and mainly delivered through provincial and territorial subsidy programs. While these subsidy programs are implemented in slightly different ways, all of them are based on a ‘market commodity approach’. This approach accepts that child care is a user fee system and directs limited public funding to assist some families who are disadvantaged in the child care market. As a result, all subsidy systems have income, employment and/or ability-based eligibility criteria that restrict and limit access.

Research over the last 30 years in Canada and elsewhere clearly demonstrate that this approach does not work. In spite of a range of attempts to ‘fix’ targeted, subsidy systems, we do not have:

- an adequate supply of quality child care.
- equitable access to the child care that does exist.
- public policy that entitles children equal access to child care.

A commitment to universality requires a fundamental system shift away from this user fee and subsidy system to a system that is publicly funded through the tax system.

As in Quebec and universal child care systems around the world, this will require:

- adequate public funding that provides a stable and primary source of operating funds for child care services.
- a significant reduction in parent fees resulting in a minimal, capped parent fee with support still available for families who can’t afford even this fee.
- a long-term commitment to grow the system so that there is adequate capacity.
Advantages of Universality and Accessibility?

There are a number of reasons why a publicly funded, universal child care program is the right way to go. In brief, the key reasons are:

- A growing body of research confirms that quality child care provides benefits across all social and economic classes. These benefits accrue to children, families and society as a whole. As compared to other market goods, the consumers of child care are not the only beneficiaries, yet the broader public good can only be maximized if equitable access is achieved.

- An overwhelming and growing majority of mothers with young children are in the paid labour force. Their children are and will continue to be in some form of non-parental care. Positive population health outcomes can only be achieved if we ensure quality child care experiences for all of these children.

- Universal systems build community cohesion. When all families and children benefit equally, there is a high level of public support and ownership of the system. On the other hand, targeted systems lead to stigmatization and lower levels of overall public support as middle income families are expected to help pay for services that they cannot access.

- User fees and subsidies create two-tiered systems. In a market-based system, higher income families will always be able to pay more, and therefore demand more than those receiving a targeted subsidy. Increases in subsidy levels generally leads to increases in user fees for all families who do not qualify for targeted subsidies.

- Criteria used to identify and direct public funds to ‘at risk’ children and families will always miss the mark in one or more ways. Income eligibility thresholds place families whose income falls just above the ‘cutoff line’ at a particular disadvantage. Even targeted systems based on neighbourhood characteristics ignore the reality that, while there are higher concentrations of ‘at risk’ children in low income neighbourhoods, larger total numbers of ‘at risk’ children live in middle and high income neighbourhoods.

Finally, our response to the argument that if we only have limited resources, we should direct them to those ‘most in need’ rather than to those who can afford to pay is:

- Universal systems that are publicly funded through the tax system address this concern. Higher income families do pay more, but they pay it through their taxes rather than at the door of the child care centre.

- Families are at their lowest earning power when their children are young. When they most need child care, they are least likely to be able to afford it. Later on, as their earning power increases, their tax contributions will increase accordingly.

- Children’s development is time sensitive and cannot wait until their families can afford quality care.

- The earlier we invest in our children, the longer we all reap the benefits.

Inclusion

Simply put, child care inclusion means that all children can attend and benefit from the same child care programs. It means that children with disabilities go to the same programs they would attend if they did not have a disability. Inclusion means all children, not just those who are easy and/or less expensive to include. All
means all. For children with disabilities, this means that the necessary supports of training, equipment, physical modifications and extra staffing are available to all programs, at no extra cost to parents or to the individual programs. The principle of inclusion goes beyond the notion of physical integration and fully incorporates basic values that promote and advance participation, friendship and a celebration of diversity. Children with all disabilities are active participants, not just observers on the sidelines.

Children with disabilities need child care for the same reasons that all other children need child care. They need child care for:

- early education and learning;
- parental employment, training, and respite; and
- friendships and social inclusion.

Research is clear. Inclusion works. Children with all levels and types of disability benefit from social and developmental experiences with their typically developing peers. There is no evidence that children with even severe levels of disability are poor candidates for integrated programs. Demonstration programs and comparative studies have shown that children with severe disabilities can be successfully integrated. Typical children also benefit from inclusive experiences.

Social inclusion matters. Children are more vulnerable in communities without connection to needed supports, in segregated settings, or isolated from recreational opportunities. In inclusive settings, all children learn about respect for difference, new forms of communication, empathy, friendship and solidarity across difference. Inclusion begun at an early age leads to better inclusion for all citizens later in life.

Inclusion in child care includes six key elements:

- zero reject — no child is excluded on the basis of level or type of disability;
- natural proportions — programs include children with disabilities in rough proportion to their presence in the population;
- full participation — activities and routines are modified and adapted to include all children;
- same range of program options — parents of children with disabilities have the same options (e.g. full day, part day, flexible hours) that other parents have;
- maximum feasible parent participation — parents are actively encouraged to participate in the child care program; and
- pro-action for community inclusion — staff and parents promote inclusion in the whole community.

Each of these elements must be present if inclusion is to be a reality in child care.

In Canada, many children with disabilities are still excluded from child care. Parents of children with disabilities can still be told, “We can’t include your child.” While many child care practitioners and programs have worked tirelessly to include children with disabilities, the necessary resources, training and support are often not present. Children with disabilities are excluded when programs feel overwhelmed at the challenge of providing service to
them, and are unable to access necessary supports.

Inclusion as a core principle in a pan-Canadian child care system would eliminate any exclusion based on disability and would go beyond non-discrimination — assuring that children with disabilities get the supports they need to benefit from child care.

Disability crosscuts all income gradients and cultures. Approximately 10% of children have a disability, health condition or disorder that requires extra support if the child is to benefit from child care. Some of these children will require very limited extra support; other children will require one-to-one staffing support, intensive consultation, specialized equipment and physical modifications to the program facility.

In a high quality child care system, many of the necessary attributes of child care for children with disabilities will already be present — in particular well-trained staff, limited staff turnover, reasonable wages and benefits, appropriate staff-to-child ratios and group sizes, developmentally appropriate curricula, and appropriate physical environments. Disability-specific supports would be added, as necessary, to assure that the system is inclusive.

In a universal and inclusive system, most child care programs will enroll some children with disabilities some of the time — in natural proportions to their presence within the general population (10%). In a small program, this might mean that in one year, one or two children with mild-to-moderate disabilities would be enrolled, but in another year, there might be a child with severe disabilities. In still another year, there might be no children with disabilities enrolled. But over time, all programs would enroll children with disabilities. Staff learn from formal training and from their experiences of including children with differing abilities; programs develop resources that help them better accommodate other children with disabilities. Eventually all programs can accommodate all children, regardless of the level or type of disability they may have.

Accountability, transparency, and third-party monitoring will be essential to assure that programs and provinces/territories are moving toward inclusion in child care. Programs must be regularly monitored for inclusion quality and governments must be responsible for assuring that targets and timetables are set with regard to enrollment of and support for children with all types and levels of disability. The tools for measurement are available; the skills for third-party monitoring already exist.

Source: Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, October 2004
### APPENDIX B: SUMMARY PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL ARRANGEMENTS

#### Newfoundland and Labrador

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>In public and private schools. It is non-compulsory and available to all five year olds on a part-time basis. There are 575 instructional hours a year. The right of access to education mandates kindergarten in every school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Responsibility</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Five years old before December 31.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</td>
<td>No provincial class size limits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Qualifications</td>
<td>B.Ed is required. Concentration in Primary Methods desirable. Student assistants provided to work in the classroom to assist children with special needs require a minimum of high school diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>Policy of inclusion. Extra support available including student assistants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>5,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Provincial curriculum guide: Early Beginnings: a focus on a holistic approach with outcomes for all academic areas and different developmental aspects and an emphasis on hands-on experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Costs</td>
<td>Average cost: $7,700 K-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs</td>
<td>No information available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>Kinderstart— an orientation program to kindergarten – is available for eight one-hour sessions for children and their parents or caregivers in the year prior to kindergarten entry. These programs are provided at the discretion of school districts; approximately 5,000 children attended in 2003/04.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prince Edward Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>First introduced in September 2000, PEI’s kindergarten programs operate within non-profit and for-profit child care centres under the Child Care Facilities Act. A kindergarten program must operate no less than three hours per day, five days per week, or the equivalent, and provide 2.5 hours of instructional time. Programs may operate for between 5 and 10 months in a 12-month period. A 2-1/2 hour day is available at no charge to the parent. Parents whose children attend a full day in the child care service either pay fees for the balance of the day, or, if eligible, receive a child care subsidy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for licensing, teacher/staff certification and supports for children with special needs. The Department of Education is responsible for funding, curriculum development and in-service training. School Boards have no jurisdiction over kindergarten, even if they are located in schools. Both departments are collaborating on a review of the curriculum and regulations in 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Five years old by October 31. (August 31 by 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</strong></td>
<td>No provincial class size limits but child:teacher ratios of 1:12 are legislated under the Child care Facilities Act in classes between 12 and 24 children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Qualifications</td>
<td>Qualifications are the same for both kindergarten and regulated child care. Early Childhood Certification as outlined in the child care legislation is required. (Centre supervisors and one full-time staff member in each program must have at least one year early childhood development diploma or university child study degree. Thirty hours of in-service training every three years is required for all staff).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>Policy of inclusion. Child specific special needs grants are available to centres for additional staffing from the DHSS. A school-aged child with a special need may attend a second year of kindergarten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Kindergarten: 1,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Department of Education adopted core components of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation curriculum K to 12 for Atlantic Provinces. Language, arts and math are integrated into the curriculum while the approach remains play-based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Costs</td>
<td>Total annual spending for kindergarten: $3.2 million. Per child average expenditure is $1,904.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs</td>
<td>One unlicensed kindergarten centre on reserve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Nova Scotia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>In licensed child care centres, family homes or child development centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known as Grade Primary delivered in public and private schools. It is compulsory and programs for all five year olds operate for a full primary day (approximately 9-2:30 p.m.)</td>
<td>In licensed child care centres, family homes or child development centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education</td>
<td>Department of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Five years old before October 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On payment of fee averaging $470 full-time p.m. for children age 3-5 years, or in receipt of one of 2,706 fee subsidies (for all children 0-12)</td>
<td>On payment of fee averaging $470 full-time p.m. for children age 3-5 years, or in receipt of one of 2,706 fee subsidies (for all children 0-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</strong></td>
<td>36 months- 5 yrs (full-day) 1:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class sizes limited to 25 (Grade Primary to Grade 2); average class size (for elementary) is 23.1 students.</td>
<td>30 months- 5 yrs (part-day) 1:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>604 full-time kindergarten teachers.</td>
<td>5-12 yrs - 1:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max group size not specified</td>
<td>The centre director and one full-time staff must have at least a training program in early childhood education development diploma or university Child Study degree; 30 hours of in-service training every three years is required for all staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Qualifications</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers: A teacher’s certificate (B.Ed) is required. Teacher’s Certificate issued upon completion of a minimum of 5 years of undergraduate education including 3 years of approved undergraduate studies, two years of an approved program of professional studies including a practicum and receipt of an approved Bachelor’s degree. Teachers required to take 100 hours of professional development every five years.</td>
<td>The centre director and one full-time staff must have at least a training program in early childhood education development diploma or university Child Study degree; 30 hours of in-service training every three years is required for all staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Assistants, with high school diploma or equivalent, are hired to work with students who have IPPs under direction of supervising teacher and as a support for the instructional program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>Policy of inclusion. Extra support is available and children have Individual Program Plans (IPPs). Resources such as assistants and technology are provided. A per pupil special education grant is available to school boards. Approximately 3% of all Grade Primary students have IPPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>9,550 in public schools; 302 in private schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidies: 3,700 (for all children 0-12)</td>
<td>No provincial curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Provincial curriculum Foundation for Grade Primary. The focus is on the transition from home to school, on the foundations for lifelong learning and on fostering development in all areas. Specific curriculum outcomes in all areas are included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Costs</td>
<td>Average spending per kindergarten student: $5,970.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs</td>
<td>On-reserve child care as part of the First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative is the responsibility of the Tri-Partite Social Working Committee. There are 13 on-reserve child care centres with 233 spaces. Centres follow provincial regulations but are not provincially licensed or funded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>A two-year pre-primary universal pilot program in 19 sites is underway. The programs is located in schools and taught by early childhood educators (with a two-year early childhood diploma or degree). The Departments of Education and Community Services and Health are collaborating on the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### New Brunswick

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>In licensed child care centres or family homes individually licensed by the provincial government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public and independent schools. It is compulsory and programs for all five year olds operate for a full primary day (approximately 9-2:30 p.m.) in both French and English communities. There are 832.5 instructional hours per year.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A number of independent schools may choose to offer a kindergarten program. For a child to attend, a parent must request an exemption from the Minister of Education for the child to attend an independent school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Five years old before December 31. Parents may defer attendance until the next school year if the child is not 5 on or before September of the given year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</strong></td>
<td>Class sizes limited to 20 students. (All province: 19.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average/mean class sizes:</td>
<td>Max group size: 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglophone sector: 20.6</td>
<td>Max group size: 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francophone sector: 18.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Teachers: A teacher’s certificate, an undergraduate degree and a B.Ed are required. There are no specific requirements for kindergarten teachers, but there is usually preference in hiring for teachers with some early childhood courses. Teacher Assistants, who have completed Grade 12, are hired to support children with special needs. They are paid $14.80 per hour and work 25 hours per week (on average). Kindergarten support workers are hired under a Department of Training, Employment and Development scheme. They are paid minimum wage for 20 weeks to assist teachers in the kindergarten classroom with more than 20 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>The Education Act mandates the inclusion of exceptional pupils. Extra supports include possible provision of physical accommodations such as ramps or elevators; assertive technology when needed; development of Special Education Plans, and teacher assistants and school intervention workers. Some children’s physical needs or medical fragility necessitate the provision of a teacher’s assistant. There are approx. 422 students with identified special needs in the regular kindergarten programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>7,836 (Anglophone: 5,567; Francophone: 2,269.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Provincial curriculum Kindergarten Curriculum focuses on cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. It is student-centred and advocates developmentally appropriate practices within an activity-based approach to learning. The curriculum identifies specific curricular outcomes across a variety of subject areas. It is currently being revised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Costs</td>
<td>No information available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs</td>
<td>The Department of Education has a one-time ESL grant of $600, which may be used for tutoring in English. “Ready Set Go” is a program which provides information to parents to help four year olds ‘get ready’ for school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>A two-year pre-primary universal pilot program in 19 sites is underway. The programs is located in schools and taught by early childhood educators (with a two-year early childhood diploma or degree). The Departments of Education and Community Services and Health are collaborating on the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Quebec

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Maternelle for five year olds delivered on a full-time basis in public and private schools (both English and French). It is non-compulsory and available to all five year olds for a full school day; there are 23.5 hours/week for 36 weeks or 846 hours a year. There are two programs for four year olds: <strong>Pré-maternelle:</strong> From 9 to 15 hours/week for 36 weeks (or 332 hours) to 11.45 hours/week for 36 weeks (or 412 hours). It may be four half-days or five half-days. Some programs include parent participation. Initially pré-maternelle was developed for inner-city children (although this is no longer their sole clientele). Most pré-maternelles are in Montreal and were developed prior to the new family policy and child care expansion. There is no new development of Pré-maternelles; those existing are being maintained. <strong>Passe-partout:</strong> Programs exclusively for 4 year olds were developed for low-income children living mostly in rural Québec. Passe-partout consists of a total of 24 sessions, 16 with the children only and eight with their parents. There is no new development of passé-partouts; those existing are being maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Ministère de l’Éducation du Québec. (MEQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Five or four years old by September 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</strong></td>
<td>5 year olds: Maximum 20; Average 18. 4 year olds: Maximum 18; Average 15; Multi-age groups: Maximum 15 children per group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Teachers: Four year degree – Education préscolaire et primaire. There are mandatory practica in kindergarten and elementary. Teaching Assistants are not provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Children with Special Needs** | Policy: Politique d’adaptation scolaire, addressing inclusion issues, specialized services and corresponding budgets. School boards can adopt additional policies that expand on it but cannot restrict it. About 50% of children with special needs are included in regular classes. Others either attend special classes in schools or attend specialized schools (e.g. schools for the deaf). For 4 year olds with special needs, the school board has the obligation to deliver a kindergarten program if parents request it.

In 2004, 778 children out of 1,552 identified with special needs were included in regular kindergarten classes. |
|---|---|
| **Enrollment** | Regulated preschool centre spaces (0-4 years): 76,240 (no breakdown for 4 year olds)
Total school-age spaces including 5 year olds: 141,977 spaces.
No breakdown for 5 year olds. |
| Five year olds: 76,200  
Four year olds: Pré-maternelles: 6,126; passé-partout: 8,500 | |
| **Curriculum** | Joues c’est magiques based on High/Scope |
| Provincial curriculum - the same for four and five year olds. | |
| **Funding and Costs** | Total spending for children 0-4: $1,400,000,000 or $7,788 per child in regulated child care; or $3,775 per child age 0-4; Parents must pay a fee of $7 per day. |
| Estimated average spending per:  
Five year old maternelle student: $1,700  
Special needs: $3,370;  
Four year old maternelle student: $2,000  
Special needs $3,700.  
Four year old passé-partout student: $970.  
Five year old children with special needs attending specialized establishments: $5,709. | |
| **Aboriginal Programs** | Regulates child care on-reserve. 41 child care centres, three family child care services and no garderies on-reserve. |
| No information | |
| **Special Features** | Uses a province-wide planning process with representation from municipalities, social services and child care organizations; priorities set by regions. They develop five-year plans based on population and labour force statistics, funding and relative regional equity. |
| Allophone children have access to services particulières under the regulations. The policy and formula for this is established at the Quebec level. School boards receive and distribute budgets for these services to schools. For inner-city children, there is a reduction in ratio in Grades 1 and 2 based on Statistics Canada data for the area.  
Kindergarten for four year olds is no longer being developed as they have access to regulated child care. |
### Ontario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>In licensed child care centres, nursery schools or family homes under contract with a licensed family child care agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior kindergarten for five-year olds provided by school boards. Senior kindergarten is usually part-time except in francophone school boards where it is full day for five year olds as well as some four year olds. Junior kindergarten for four year olds is provided by the majority of school boards (but not necessarily in every school), usually part-time. Some Catholic School Boards also offer full-day kindergarten. Both SK and JK are non-compulsory. They are both delivered in public and private schools. Instructional hours are not legislated by the Education Act. School boards decide on normal day schedule. Four models: - half day; every day, JK or K - Full day; alternate day, JK or K - Full day; every day, Junior K or K - Combined JK and K.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Ministry of Children and Youth Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Ministry of Education. Ontario continues to fund and deliver denominational education. In all regions, both “public” and “separate” school boards are publicly funded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>On payment of fee averaging $541 p.m. for preschool children age 3-6 years; or in receipt of one of 103,820 fee subsidies for children 0-12.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio** | 3 years 8 months – 5 yrs: 1:10  
5-6 years: 1:12  
Max group size: 20  
Max group size: 24 |
| As of 2007-08 all primary (JK to Grade 3) classes will have a cap of 20 students per class. The provincial average class size for JK to Grade 3 in 2000-01 was 22.2. School boards determine whether and when to employ teaching assistants. |
| **Staff Qualifications** | Centre supervisors must have a two year diploma in ECE (or equivalent) and at least 2 years experience. One staff person with each group of children must have a 2 year ECE diploma or equivalent. |
| Teachers: Valid Ontario Teacher’s Certificate (undergraduate degree plus one year of teacher training) required. Many JK and K teachers have age-appropriate qualifications such as primary specialist or Early Childhood Certificate but it is not required. Teaching Assistants: School Boards set the criteria for hiring teaching assistants. |
| **Children with Special Needs** | No written policy. Encourages integration and inclusion. Municipalities responsible for special needs resources to provide assistance for staffing, equipment, supplies or services to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care. A resource teacher must hold a diploma in ECE (or equivalent) and have completed a post-secondary school program related to children with special needs. |
| Policy of inclusion. In practice, there are long waiting lists for special education students. |
| Enrollment      | SK 129,993 (2002-03)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JK 116,194 (2002-03)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimated 206,743 for all children 0-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                 | Provincial curriculum outlined in The Kindergarten Program (1998). It is designed to help children broaden their base of information, form concepts, acquire foundation skills and positive attitudes to learning, and begin to develop their abilities and talents in a wide range of areas. It is also designed to prepare children for the new Ontario curriculum for Grades 1 to 8. The document identifies a variety of learning expectations. Among these are expectations related to children’s development of literacy (including technological and computer literacy) and knowledge and skills in mathematics and science. This curriculum has been revised in 2006 with an emphasis on learning through play.  
|                 | No provincial curriculum. Government has set up a panel to explore the possibility of introducing a “curriculum” for child care. |
| Funding and Costs | Estimate per pupil (FTE): JK and SK: $3,800 (part-day)  
|                 | Total spending $497,400,000 or $2,406 per child in regulated child care; or $258 per child age 0-12;  
|                 | Fees for preschool children average $541 per child per month |
| Aboriginal Programs | No information  
|                   | Ontario funds and regulates on-reserve child care. 64 licensed child care centres on-reserve with 2,513 spaces. |
| Special Features | It is up to individual school boards to determine additional policies or resource allocations for ESL or inner city kindergarten students.  
|                  | Responsibility for managing and delivery child care services is with 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs).  
|                  | Government announced Best Start Strategy in 2004. It proposes a major expansion of child care for children enrolled in JK and SK during non-school hours. Over the next 10-15 years, Ontario is proposing to extend wrap-around child care programs, first to four and five year olds, and then to children aged 2.5 to four years with a universal and free component for 2-1/2 hours per day. The system will be based on “neighbourhood hubs” with preference given for school sites. Since the cancellation of the Early Learning and Child Care agreement between the Government of Ontario and the federal government, it is expected that this program will proceed at a much slower pace. |
## Manitoba

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Kindergarten: In public and private schools. It is non-compulsory and available to all five year olds on a part-time basis. There are 506 instructional hours a year. Students may choose between English language, Français, or French immersion programs. Nurseries: Winnipeg School Division 1 and Frontier School Division offer part-day kindergartens for four year olds with an average class size of 20 and sometimes with an assistant. These are referred to as “nurseries” but are not licensed as nursery schools under The Community Child Day Care Standards Act.</th>
<th>In licensed child care centres, nursery schools or family homes licensed individually by the provincial government.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Responsibility</td>
<td>Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth</td>
<td>Manitoba Family Services and Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Five years old by December 31.</td>
<td>On payment of fee averaging $376/month in centres and $328/month in family homes per preschool child, or in receipt of one of 11,568 fee subsidies covering children 0-12. Maximum fees are set by the provincial government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio | No provincial class size limit. Some collective agreements specify class size. | 4-5 years 1:9  
Max group size: 18  
5-6 years 1:10  
Max group size: 20 |
| Staff Qualifications | Teachers: Certified teacher (B.Ed), requiring three-year undergraduate degree followed by two years of education training. Early childhood qualifications not required. Teacher Assistants: No provincial policy regarding teaching assistants, but some school divisions do provide them to generally assist teachers and to assist with children with special needs. | Three qualification levels:  
a) ECE III: Approved ECE III program and a recognized certificate program or an approved degree program from a recognized university;  
b) ECE II: An approved diploma in child care services or completion of the Child Day Care Competency-based Assessment (CBA) Program;  
c) Child Care Assistant (CCA) Not eligible for classification at the ECE II or III level.  
Two-thirds of staff in centres for 0-6 year olds must be classified as ECE II or III and half of staff employed in school-age centres and nursery schools must be classified as ECE II or III. |
| Children with Special Needs | Policy of inclusion. Extra support provided through both block funding to schools and specific levels of funding allocated to identified child needs (these are determined on a case-by-case basis). | Manitoba Children with Disabilities Program integrates children with special needs into mainstream child care. Parents pay the same basic cost of care as other families regardless of family income but parents do not pay the cost of the additional resources to support the child’s participation in a child care program. Funding for the additional supports is paid to the program. |
| Enrollment | Fives: 13,170  
Fours: 2,654 | Total regulated child care: 25,634 (Preschool 2-5); 9,859 full-time; 4,049 part-time  
Subsidies 11,568 ages 0-12 |
**Curriculum**
Provincial curriculum offers an activity centre-based approach; it includes exposure to language arts, math, science, social studies, physical education, arts and French. **

**Funding and Costs**
Average spending per kindergarten student: $3,896. Total spending $73,003,600 or $2,848 per child in regulated child care. $406 per child age 0-12; Average fee is $328/child/month

**Aboriginal Programs**
Aboriginal Achievement Grant given to school divisions

**Special Features**
ESL grants of $750 per child per year to a maximum of 3 years. Inner-city children are considered a school division responsibility. School divisions allocate funds to specific schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Provincial curriculum offers an activity centre-based approach; it includes exposure to language arts, math, science, social studies, physical education, arts and French. **</th>
<th>Development of a curriculum for early learning and child care is currently under review.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Costs</td>
<td>Average spending per kindergarten student: $3,896. Total spending $73,003,600 or $2,848 per child in regulated child care. $406 per child age 0-12; Average fee is $328/child/month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs</td>
<td>Aboriginal Achievement Grant given to school divisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>ESL grants of $750 per child per year to a maximum of 3 years. Inner-city children are considered a school division responsibility. School divisions allocate funds to specific schools.</td>
<td>Manitoba does not license or fund child care programs on reserve but the Child Day Care Branch assists facilities on-reserve to meet licensing requirements. A certificate program in Aboriginal child care is offered through Red River College. There are 50 Aboriginal Head Start programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In July 1994, the Manitoba government released Renewing Education: NEW DIRECTIONS, A Blueprint for Action, a comprehensive plan designed to renew the kindergarten to senior 4 educational system through a partnership approach with stakeholders. This plan identified four foundation skill areas-literacy and communication, problem solving, human relations, and technology-to be included in teaching and learning within all subject areas.**

In 1995, as part of the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, Manitoba, with the other western provinces and two territories, developed the document Common Mathematics/Mathématiques Outcomes from Kindergarten to Senior 4. This initiative led Manitoba Education and Training to publish Manitoba Curriculum Frameworks of Outcomes and Standards in mathematics. This new curriculum emphasizes creative thinking, logical thinking, problem-solving skills, data analysis skills, and cooperative interaction in kindergarten to senior 4 mathematics. Although mathematics should be viewed as a connected whole of concepts, skills, and procedures, the curriculum is divided into four strands: patterns and relations; statistics and probability; shape and space; and numbers (each of which is further divided into sub-strands). For each sub-strand, general and specific learning outcomes describe the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn at each grade in mathematics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saskatchewan</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Kindergarten: Saskatchewan funds and delivers non-compulsory denominational education. Both “public” and “separate” schools are publicly funded. Part-time kindergarten is provided to all five year olds. The Education Act requires at least 80 full school day equivalents. Pre-Kindergarten: Over 100 pre-kindergartens are provided part day for children aged 3 and 4 and deemed to be “at risk” in targeted communities that meet specified eligibility criteria. Schools in these communities may be designated “community schools” and if they choose to offer Pre-K, can receive provincial funds. Selected 3 and 4 year old children in community schools are referred by public health nurses, school board offices or Social Services. The family may also make a request because of inability to afford other options or the child may meet criteria for special education. The parents must make a commitment to participate in the programs which must be offered for a minimum of 12 hours/week. In 2003/04 there were over 100 Pre-Kindergarten programs.</td>
<td>In licensed child care centres, group family child care homes or family child care homes individually licensed by the provincial government. Non-profit centres are administered by parent boards; 51% of the board must be parents using the program. For-profit child care centres are required to have parent advisory committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Saskatchewan Learning</td>
<td>Responsibility for Early Learning and child care was transferred to Saskatchewan Learning in 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>There is no provincially legislated specific age; this varies between divisions. For Grade 1, a child must be 6 by December 31. Usually children must be five years old by December 31 the year in which they begin kindergarten.</td>
<td>On payment of fee averaging $409 (ages 3 to 6 years), or in receipt of one of the 3,716 subsidies available to all children 0-12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</strong></td>
<td>No provincial class size limits. Some school divisions set limits. Average mean class size not known. Pre-kindergartens: staff:child ratios: 1:8 with maximum group size of 16 (1 teacher and one assistant)</td>
<td>30 months to 6 years 1:10 Max group size: 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Staff Qualifications

Teachers require certification. This requires a minimum of four years post-secondary education and either a Bachelor of Education, or other recognized degree, plus 48 semester hours of teacher education including a practicum. Average kindergarten teacher salaries in 2003/04 were $49,981. Teacher Assistants: No qualifications required. No provincial policy regarding teacher assistants; many school divisions provide teacher assistants when a class reaches a certain size.

Three certification levels:
- **d)** ECE III: two year diploma in child care or equivalent;
- **e)** ECE II: one year certificate in child care or equivalent;
- **f)** ECE I: 120-hour child care orientation course or equivalent.

Since 2001, centre directors had to meet or exceed the ECE III. As of January 2002, all staff employed in a centre for at least 65 hours/month had to have an ECE I. Since January 2005, 30% of staff must have a one-year certificate and by January 2007, a further 20% of staff must have a two year diploma or equivalent.

### Children with Special Needs

Provincial policy set out in Children’s Services Policy Framework (2002) outlining policy and procedures for Early Childhood Education for children with disabilities within the school system. Children three years and older who meet the criteria for designation are eligible for early entrance programs. Funding is provided to school divisions. During the 2003/04, school year funding was provided for more than 500 children between 3 and 5. Approximately 300 of these children were three or four years old. Identified children have a Personal Program Plan.

The Child Care Inclusion Program provides three types of grants:
- individual inclusion grants of $200-$300 per month (depending on the need) to centres and homes;
- an enhanced accessibility grant up to $1,500/month may be provided to assist with the additional costs for a child with exceptionally high needs; and
- a training and resource grant of $100-$200 per child with diverse needs, plus $600-$1,200 for adapted equipment required.

Parents pay for the child care space but not for the additional supports.

### Enrollment

Five year olds (in both public and private kindergarten) (2003/04): 11,229; Three and Four year olds, approx. 1,500.

Regulated child care: 7,910 (0-12)
Preschool: 3085 (30 months to 6 years)
Subsidies 3,716 for all children 0-12

### Curriculum

Provincial curriculum: Children First: A Curriculum Guide for Kindergarten (1994). Approach is “learning through play” in a developmentally appropriate curriculum. For Pre-K, schools expected to develop a program based on the K curriculum and to collect data and information for evaluation purposes.

No provincial curriculum

### Funding and Costs

Avg. per child spending on kindergarten: grants per child: rural: $2,429; Regina/Saskatoon: $2,330.
Cost of pre-kindergarten is estimated at $3,022 per child.

Total spending $19,639,000 or $2,483 per child in regulated child care.
$123 per child age 0-12; Fees average $409 per child per month for preschool children.

Saskatchewan does not license child care programs on-reserve. The First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative has resulted in approximately 45 on-reserve child care centres. Approximately 15% of all regulated child care programs off-reserve have an Aboriginal program component.

### Aboriginal Programs

No Special Program

### Special Features

Two community schools serving vulnerable children are piloting full-day every-day kindergarten. Saskatchewan Learning is undertaking a province-wide needs assessment that includes questions about full-day kindergarten. The Saskatoon School Board is seeking funds to pilot an “integrated” kindergarten/child care model to be launched in the Fall of 2007.

Kids First: Established in 2001, this is a five-year initiative to provide “early childhood supports” targeted to “high Risk” families. Intergovernmental unit staff assist communities with the development and implementation of the program.

In 2004, the government announced Child Care Saskatchewan, a plan to develop 1,200 new regulated child care spaces over four years as a result of the Saskatchewan and federal government Early Learning and Child Care agreement. Cancellation of this agreement will result in a reduction of this program.
### Alberta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td><strong>In licensed child care centres, nursery schools or family homes.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Early Childhood Services (kindergarten) (ECS) may be offered in public schools, private schools, by private ECS operators (non-profit society or for-profit company).

Funding is provided to approved ECS operators on a per diem basis ($2,272/child to deliver the program). The program must offer 475 instructional hours. Parents pay approximately $50/year to offset non-instructional costs such as supplies, snacks, field trips and additional program hours. If the program is provided at a child care centre, parents may be eligible for child care subsidy for the balance of the day. Full subsidy is given to eligible families with kindergarten children if they are in the child care component for more than 100 hours. The schedule of the “normal day” depends on the operator. ECS is not compulsory but is an entitlement. 98% of five year olds attend kindergarten. There is no ESL or inner city policy.

Alberta is one of the three provinces that funds and delivers denominational education. Both ‘Public’ and Catholic school boards are publicly funded.

Alternative kindergarten programs are also offered, including: Aboriginal, French Immersion, Galileo Technology, German Bilingual, Learning Through the Arts - Fine Arts/Technology, Mandarin (Chinese) Bilingual, Medicine Wheel Centre - Aboriginal Culture Based Learning, Montessori, Spanish Bilingual, Traditional Learning Centre (Direct Instruction and Character Education) Workplace schools

Kindergarten is also available for children from 2-4 with disabilities.

In 2004, Medicine Hat School District #76 became the first to offer full-day every day kindergarten in all 12 district schools. In addition, schools offer school-age programs run by the schools.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Responsibility</th>
<th>Alberta Learning, Early Childhood Services (ECS)</th>
<th>Alberta Children’s Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Five years old by February 28. 2 1/2 years if the child has a severe disability; 3 1/2 if child has a mild or moderate disability</td>
<td>On payment of fee averaging $532/child/month for children ages 19-83 months, or in receipt of one of 10,614 fee subsidies (for all children 0-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</td>
<td>No policy on class size</td>
<td>3-5 years: 1:8 - Max group size: 16 5-6 years: 1:10 - Max group size: 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Qualifications</td>
<td>ECS teachers must have a valid Alberta Teaching Certificate (B.Ed). Teacher certification requires a minimum of 4 years university study in a basic teaching program or a bachelor’s degree supplemented with a basic teacher program (2 years post degree for teacher training and practicum). There are no ECE requirements for ECS teachers. Teachers must complete a professional development Growth Plan as outlined in the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation policy. Teacher Assistants are not required to have qualifications. They are hired based on the budget at the discretion of the school. They help children with activities, prepare materials for lessons, provide one-to-one care to children with special needs under the supervision of a certified teacher.</td>
<td>Three qualification levels: <strong>Level three:</strong> completion of a two year ECE diploma or equivalent, or a four year bachelor of Education degree with a major in ECE; <strong>Level two:</strong> completion of a one year ECE certificate or equivalent or a four year Bachelor of Elementary Education; <strong>Level one:</strong> completion of the government’s orientation course or equivalent. (This involves at least 45 hours of courses related to early childhood education). Centre directors required to have level three certification or exemption. 25% of staff in each centre required to have level two; all other staff required to have level one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>Integration is recommended to the fullest extent possible. Extra supports are available with appropriate funding allocated to specialists.</td>
<td>Inclusive Child Care Program provides for inclusion of children with special needs. Funding varies depending on the needs of the child, the type of service required and the region. Funds are paid to operators on behalf of eligible children. Additional training for staff working with children with special needs not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Five year olds: 41,562 Four year olds: 1,704 (with mild/moderate disability) Three year olds: 287 (with severe disability) Total: 43,553</td>
<td>Total regulated child care spaces 0-7: 65,726 Subsidies for children 0-7: 10,614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Alberta (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory provincial Kindergarten Program Statement.</td>
<td>No provincial curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It describes expectations in six learning areas:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts, Mathematics, Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Environmental Awareness, Person and Social</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility, Physical Skills and Well-Being and Creative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Cultural Expression.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding and Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita costs for kindergarten: $2,272.</td>
<td>Total expenditures: $53,600,000; or $816 per regulated space for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>children 0-12; $104 per child (0-12) Average fees for preschoolers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ages 19-83 months): $532 per child per month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aboriginal Programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Head Start programs on and off reserve. Five sites have ECS</td>
<td>Child care centres on reserve not licensed. On-reserve child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operating status—where kindergarten is taught in the sites.</td>
<td>centres are eligible for federal government funding equivalent to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parent subsidies if provincial licensing standards are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 approved child care centres on reserve with 1,114 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(March, 2004) Significant number of Métis children and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in Aboriginal Head Start. Significant Inuit population receiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>funding from both Health Canada First Nations and Inuit Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Branch and from the Northern Secretariat. The Northern Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>monitors the off-reserve portion of the funds that go towards the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North as well as the First Nations funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Features</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta’s Commission on Learning (2003) recommended extending kindergarten</td>
<td>In 2002, Alberta introduced a voluntary Child Care Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from part to full-day and the introduction of Junior Kindergarten. These</td>
<td>Program by which early childhood programs demonstrate that they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recommendations are still under review. The government is involved in</td>
<td>meet defined child care standards (exceeding current regulatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussions with stakeholders.</td>
<td>standards). In 2003-04, the Pre-Accreditation Funding program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provided funds to assist programs to gain accreditation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public and private schools. It is available to all five year olds on a part-time basis. There are 2.4 instructional hours during the day on standard school days. Limited provision exists for four year olds targeted to ‘special’ populations.</td>
<td>In licensed child care centres, preschools for groups for no more than 4 hours/day for a maximum of 20 children (30 months to school-age), or family homes individually licensed by the provincial government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Responsibility</th>
<th>Ministry of Education</th>
<th>Ministry of Children and Family Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Eligibility | Five years old before December 31. Parents may defer their child’s enrolment to the next school year. | On payment of fee averaging $494 per child per month for children ages 3-5, $419 for kindergarten children, or in receipt of one of the estimated 11,000 fee subsidies (for all children 0-12) |

| Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio | Specified in The School Act which sets a maximum of 22 students; the average in aggregate must not exceed 19 students. | 30 months to school-age 1:8 Max group size: 25 Preschool (3-5) 1:15 Max group size: 20 |

| Staff Qualifications | Teachers require certification which requires a B.Ed or Bachelor degree plus post-degree teacher training. No ECE requirements. Average Salaries (2003/04): $60,844. Teacher Assistants: Hired at the discretion of the local school board. Qualifications are established by school boards and paid on average $20/hour. | Three types of staff: Early Childhood Educators; Assistant Early Childhood Educators and Responsible Adults. The training requirements for each are: **Early Childhood Educator:**  
• Early Childhood Educator: basic (at least 10 months) program + 500 hours of supervised work experience;  
• Infant/toddler educator: basic one year early childhood education training plus specialized training related to infant/toddler care and education;  
• Special needs educator: basic early childhood education program plus specialized training related to children with special needs. **Assistant Early Childhood Educators**  
• This category includes staff in the process of qualifying for an ECE certificate or who have completed a training program recognized as equivalent to one course of a basic early childhood education program. **Responsible Adults:**  
• These staff must have completed a course on the care of young children or have relevant work experience. Staffing requirements vary depending upon the type of care provider and the age of the children. For group care 30 months to school-age; each group requires one ECE plus Assistants ECEs. Special needs facilities (where at least 25% of children have special needs) require one Special Needs Educator for every group of four or fewer children. Larger groups require one Special Needs Educator plus Early Childhood Educators. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children with Special Needs</th>
<th>School boards are responsible for providing facilities to allow equality of access to educational programs. Children with special needs are typically included in full-day kindergarten. Learning Assistance Teachers provide the link to support services in the community.</th>
<th>A special diagnosis is required for a child to access supported child care (range payments). The additional supports are not income-tested and parents do not pay fees for supports but there are waiting lists.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Kindergarten: 36,552 904 children with identified special needs (752 part-day; 152 full-day).</td>
<td>Total regulated spaces: 80,230. Subsidy spaces: 11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>A K-Grade 1 curriculum is provided as part of the “Primary Program”. It includes prescribed learning outcomes specific to K-Grade 1 for each area of study.</td>
<td>No provincial curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Costs</td>
<td>$5,520 for full-time equivalent; for part-time $2,760. Total provincial spending on kindergarten is $111,460,000.</td>
<td>Total expenditures: $140,725,000; or $241 per child 0-12; or $1,754 per regulated space for children 0-12; 25% of children receive one of the 11,000 subsidies; 75% of parents must pay the full fee which, for all kindergarten children is $419 and for preschoolers (ages 3-6) averages $494/child/month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs</td>
<td>No information available</td>
<td>BC funds and licenses on- and off-reserve child care in 65 First Nations communities. Training is available for First Nations early childhood educators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>Full-time kindergarten may be available for special populations. These include Aboriginal children, children with special needs or ESL. There are approximately 4,000 full-day kindergarten children. The Ministry of Children and Families has a policy on inner-city schools that may provide a school meals program. Some local school boards also have policies. Additional half-day programs are offered by some school divisions (such as West Vancouver and Abbotsford) providing kindergarten children the choice of an additional half-day program (3 days or 5 days) at a monthly fee of $310 or $390. A Teacher Assistant is hired to supervise the children over lunch.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Northwest Territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>In licensed child care centres, nursery schools or family homes individually licensed by the Territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public and private schools. It is non-compulsory and available to all five year olds on a part-time basis. There is a maximum of 570 hours and a minimum of 485 hours of instructional hours a year. Within this, decisions about hours are made by local school boards. Continues to fund and deliver denominational education; both “public” and Catholic school boards are publicly funded.</td>
<td>Nursery schools available for children less than six years of age for four consecutive hours or less a day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Department of Education, Culture and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education, Culture and Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>On payment of fee averaging $600/preschool child/month full-time, or in receipt of a fee subsidy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five years old before December 31.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</strong></td>
<td>4 years: 1:9 - Max group size: 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No territorial class size limits,</td>
<td>5 years: 1:10 - Max group size: 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Staff Qualifications**                                                   | **Must be at least 19 years of age and have a first-aid certificate and a clear criminal record with regard to offences respecting children. No early childhood education training requirements.** | Teachers: A teaching certificate (B.Ed. or post-secondary degree plus one year course work in a Faculty of Education) or one of the following three levels of education and experience specific to kindergarten:  
**Interim Kindergarten Teaching Certificate:** 2 year diploma in Early Childhood plus 25 hours of teacher training;  
**Standard Kindergarten Teaching Certificate:** Holds an interim Kindergarten Teaching Certificate and has completed two academic years of teaching;  
**Kindergarten Specialist Certificate:** Holds a Standard Kindergarten Teaching Certificate and has successfully completed an approved one year teacher training program. Teachers are required to take 120 hours of professional development over 5 years, with a minimum of 15 hours each year.  
**Education Assistants:** Student support funding is provided to school boards based on the number of students and school boards usually assign assistants to assist with students who have special needs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children with Special Needs</th>
<th>Policy of inclusion. Children have access to the education program in a regular instructional classroom setting. Boards are required to provide support through School Support funding. There is an exemption for children with extreme needs (e.g. medical); the child may be in a treatment centre instead of a classroom.</th>
<th>Policy of inclusion. Care providers are funded to provide extra support and parents are eligible for fee assistance for their children with special needs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>Total regulated child care spaces (2-5 years) 1,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>The approved Kindergarten curriculum for the NWT is Children First: A Curriculum Guide for Kindergarten (1994 Saskatchewan) with NWT content in most subject areas.</td>
<td>No territorial curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Costs</td>
<td>Average spending per kindergarten student: $5,900; total territorial spending on kindergarten, $3.6 million.</td>
<td>Total spending for regulated child care (2001) $2,542,000; or $2,085 per child (0-12) in regulated child care; or $273 per child 0-12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs</td>
<td>There is block funding to school boards for Aboriginal Language and Culture. In some places Aboriginal Head-Start is becoming the other half-day of kindergarten. Aboriginal languages are recognized as Official languages alongside English and French. (11 official languages)</td>
<td>NWT is comprised of Inuit and Dene communities outside Yellowknife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>The culture(s) of the community is / are reflected in all aspects of the school. Culture, in this context, links respect for and pride in the past, understanding of and involvement in the present, and visions and aspirations for the future. Culture encompasses the languages, values, beliefs, lifestyles and issues that are integral to the community. The community school seeks the guidance of Elders and other key people in the children’s lives, and actively incorporates their visions and their knowledge into all school programs. A number of school boards offer half-day kindergarten with half-day Early Childhood programs focusing on Francisation and literacy. Programs are co-located, may be coordinated and parents may pay a fee depending on funder and type of program.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Nunavut

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>In public schools under regional school operations. It is non-compulsory and available to all five year olds on a part-time basis. There is a requirement for no less than 485 hours and no more than 6 hours/day instructional hours/year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Five years old before December 31.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</strong></td>
<td>No territorial class size limits,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Staff Qualifications** | Teachers: Must be a certified teacher with a B.Ed. or a certified kindergarten teacher which requires a 2-year program in ECE, successful completion of two academic years of classroom teaching and completion of courses for one-year teacher training, or have a Letter of Authority which requires one year ECE or some course work towards a B.Ed. and must be renewed annually.  
Student Support Assistants (SSA) used to enable a child with special needs to have access to the program. No qualification requirements but there is a certificate program available. | Must be at least 19 years of age and have a first-aid certificate and represent the cultural background of the children.  
No ECE training requirements. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children with Special Needs</th>
<th>Policy of inclusion. Extra supports include student support assistants, Individual Education Plans and specialists provided through Department of Health.</th>
<th>Care providers funded to provide extra support for children with special needs through daily operating grants based on the age of the child and the area. Funding also available from the Healthy Children’s Initiative for adaptive equipment and extra staff supports. Financially and eligible parents with a medical referral receive fee subsidies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Enrollment                  | 671                                                                              | Regulated spaces 0-12: 1,014  
Preschoolers: 547 full-time and 214 part-time |
| Curriculum                  | There is a two year process involving elders underway to work on developing territorial curriculum which will incorporate cultural traditions and language and will integrate High/Scope materials within a Northern context. | No territorial curriculum |
| Funding and Costs           | Average per capita cost $8,545                                                   | Total spending $1,786,000 or $1,761 per child in regulated child care, or $205 per child 0-12. |
| Aboriginal Programs         | Since 1996, the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) has provided funding for the development of approximately 20 centres in Nunavut. There is an Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy (AHRDS) regional office in each of the three regions. Each regional office took on the responsibility for the delivery and administration of the Inuit Childcare Program in their region.  
All child care centres receive block funding from their AHRDS office (in addition to capital funding) Approximately 20 centres + 7 Aboriginal Head Start programs funded through Health Canada. | In 2004, the Department of Education began the development of Nunavut-based resources for early childhood programs relevant to local communities. All written materials will be available in the four official languages of the territory. |
| Special Features            | Instruction in Inuktitut is provided from kindergarten to Grade 3. A transition to English in Grade 4 with some Inuktitut follows from that point on. 95% of the children have a first language other than English or French. |  

### Yukon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Regulated Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Regulation is provided in licensed child care centres or family homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education funds and delivers denominational education. Both public and Catholic school boards are funded. There are no private schools in the Yukon. Kindergarten is non-compulsory and available to all five-year-olds on a part-time basis. There are 475 instructional hours a year. Experiments undertaken with the operation of a full-day kindergarten program for five-year-olds that included four-year-olds on a half-day basis, and combined 4 and 5-year-old kindergarten programs offered to provide children with more time to prepare for Grade 1. There are 28 kindergarten programs, 6 full-day. Three are in Whitehorse, two in rural communities and one francophone program. Where 4 year olds are enrolled, the Child Development Centre may provide assistance for particular students.</td>
<td>Regulated child care is provided in licensed child care centres or family homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Four years and eight months as of September 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size/Child-Staff Ratio</strong></td>
<td>There is a territorial class size limit of 22. Average/mean class size: 14. Smaller class sizes exist in rural schools (5-10 students).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Teachers: Teachers’ certificate requires a B.Ed or a Bachelor degree plus an approved program of teacher preparation of at least one year. No special requirements for kindergarten but applicants with Early Childhood training are given preference. Classroom Assistants: Two types: Education assistant and remedial tutor. Some training is provided through Special Program Staff, who determine the needs of individual students. Average salaries: Kindergarten teacher full-time: $67,200; half-time: $33,500.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child Care Worker III: 2 or more years of training in ECD or equivalent Child Care Worker II: One year training in ECD or equivalent Child Care Worker I: 60-hour introduction to ECD course or equivalent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>Policy of inclusion. Children are included in regular kindergarten unless they have severe, multiple special needs. Extra support available; the Department of Education assigns educational assistants. Services such as speech and language, physical and occupational therapies and psychological services for testing are provided. The number of children with special needs is approximately 48 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Five year olds: 334; four year olds 44 (approx) Special needs: 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Uses the BC curriculum. The focus is child-centred with a balance between play-oriented centres and group instruction. In some schools, First Nations language time is included. The focus is on pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills as well as language and social development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Costs</td>
<td>Per capita spending K-12 is $5,500, excluding capital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs</td>
<td>No special programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features</td>
<td>Eight rural schools and one urban school combine four year olds with the regular kindergarten program. The targeted communities are mainly First Nations with many children determined to be at risk. The focus is on language development, social skills, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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REFERENCES


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For more information:

Susan Colley
Project Director
Integration Network Project
Institute of Child Study
OISE/University of Toronto
45 Walmer Road
Toronto, On. M5R 2X2
416 538 1950
http://www.inproject.ca