SCHOOLS AT THE CENTRE
Findings from Case Studies Exploring Seamless Early Learning in Ontario

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The Study

- Explores impact of FDK and EDP on educators, families and early years administrators
- Three Ontario regions, four school boards
- Mixed methods including surveys, interviews, focus groups and text analysis
- Research partnership between Atkinson Centre, school boards, regional governments, community stakeholders
Policy Context

- With *Our Best Future in Mind* (2009)
- Amendments to *Education Act*
- Merged children’s services and education (FRP, PFLC)
- Introduction of new kindergarten curriculum

- Full day kindergarten (2010-2014) – 250,000 children
- FDK/EDP educator teams
- Created 10,000 new ECE positions (public sector)

- Parent entitlement to before and after school care
- Contracted- and school board- operated extended day programs

- *Revisions to the ECE Act*
- *Child Care and Early Years Act*, 2014
Case Study: Waterloo Region

- 2009 - Licensed care available in 28 schools with 1,523 spaces
- 2014 – EDP in 80 out of 87 schools serving approximately 4,000 children – fees lowered to $24.50
- 53 Youth Development Programs offered by community providers + developed by Conestoga College
- Conestoga College modeled the transition as a child care operator to serving younger children and as a training institution to supporting ECEs in FDK/EDP settings
- Centralized fee collection and registry operated by the region assists families to access services
Case Study: Ottawa Carleton

- 2009 – Licensed care available in 44 schools

- 2014 – Extended Day and licensed child care in 100 out of 117 schools serving approximately 6,000 students – fees range from $22.00 for OCDSB to $32.00 for community

- To accommodate equity of service, Ottawa lowered the 12 child requirement to run an EDP to three children

- Also directly operates preschool programs
**Case Study: Halton Region**

- 2009 – Two school boards – Public and Catholic
- 2010 - Boards offered extended day in all year one schools where there was demand
- 2012 – HDSB contracted out after school programs due funding restrictions to 7 organizations – fees from $31.00- $42.70
- HCDSB – Contract with only the Y
- 2014 – Available in majority of schools
- School Boards have ‘no wait list’ policy but providers cannot find qualified staff
- ‘Record number’ of programs operating with directors exemption
Implementation challenges less significant compared to year 1

PD opportunities for RECEs depend on administrator flexibility and school budgets

Role of educators are becoming clearer

Lack of PD, program planning time for RECEs a problem across all boards

Limited knowledge about RECEs and play-based learning

Significant pressure to ensure literacy and numeracy success
Parent Survey

- Surveys available online through the WRDSB, paper copies distributed by classroom educators
- First draw resulted in 133 parent responses
Key Findings: Parents

Survey and focus groups examined FDK/EDP impact on:

- Child and family life
- Impact on family stress levels
- Access to child care
- Parents’ ability to work
Parent Satisfaction with Services

- Child Has Benefited
  - Agree: 80%
  - Not Sure: 10%
  - Disagree: 10%

- Happy with Quality
  - Agree: 70%
  - Not Sure: 20%
  - Disagree: 10%

- FDK Helps School Readiness Socially
  - Agree: 85%
  - Not Sure: 5%
  - Disagree: 10%

- FDK Helps School Readiness Academically
  - Agree: 80%
  - Not Sure: 10%
  - Disagree: 10%
Parent Satisfaction with Services

- **Increased School Involvement**
  - Agree: 40%
  - Not Sure: 30%
  - Disagree: 30%

- **Want FDK to Continue**
  - Agree: 70%
  - Not Sure: 20%
  - Disagree: 10%

- **FDK Has Provided More Family Support**
  - Agree: 50%
  - Not Sure: 30%
  - Disagree: 20%

- **I Support Other Child Family Services**
  - Agree: 90%
  - Not Sure: 10%
  - Disagree: 0%
• Parents surveyed via the Region’s child care subsidy list – 253 respondents
Parents Receiving Fee Subsidies and Parents on Subsidy Wait List

Child Care Source of Financial Stress

Cost of Child Care Reason for not Working

FDK affected Decision to Work

NO

YES
Parents Receiving Child Care Subsidies are More Positive About FDK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Want FDK to Continue</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDK Provided More Family Support</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Parent Focus Groups

- Value play based learning
- Child and family life less stressful
- Want additional support for family through the school – families with higher needs
- Want programs for their younger children available through school
- Concerned about class sizes and the quality of food
- Equally divided as to whether FDK/EDP has increased or decreased parent involvement in child’s learning
Educator survey: 530 respondents/ 20% response rate

RECEs work school hours more frequently in Waterloo, and more morning and afternoon shifts in Ottawa. Halton is exclusively school hours

All EDP programs in Halton delivered by community providers
- Average experience and years at board of OCTs greater than RECEs

- Significant number of RECEs have an undergraduate degree in addition to ECE diploma
• Differences in the way that RECEs and OCTs view their roles in FDK
• Differences in the way that RECEs and OCTs view their roles in FDK
Most RECEs’ salaries increased or stayed the same particularly in Halton, but in Waterloo and Ottawa significant numbers saw a decrease.

Benefits have increased for most RECEs.
More RECEs agree that having a union has improved their working conditions.

Almost all RECEs felt their professional status has increased or stayed the same.
# Contract Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract Provision</th>
<th>ETFO (Waterloo)</th>
<th>OSSTF (Ottawa)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope of agreement</td>
<td>DECEs and occasional DECEs</td>
<td>Special memorandum of understanding for ECEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Experience grid - $20.09 to $26.27. Supply and letter of permission - $18.54</td>
<td>Starting salary $19.48, no salary schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Time</td>
<td>Within the core hours of work</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Contract Comparison

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<tr>
<td>Pension Plan</td>
<td>OMERS or OTPP (for RECEs with teaching credentials)</td>
<td>OMERS or OTIP for employees with 10 or more month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>Paid by-weekly based on years of service starting at 4% up to 10% after 16 years</td>
<td>15 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit Plan</td>
<td>Dental (50%), health/life/ADD up to $25,000 - 95% employer paid. LTD 100% paid by RECE</td>
<td>Health, dental, long term disability, life insurance up to $45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of times RECE is mentioned in agreement</td>
<td>348 times</td>
<td>None in collective agreement. 16 in letter of agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Educator Interviews**

- Boards with appointed principal lead and/or ECE manager – important factor in team building

- Educator teams vary in capacity, knowledge

- Limited access to professional development and planning time difficult for ECEs — further strain on educators’ capacity to build partnership

- Children with special needs require additional support — core day EA does not extend to EDP
The full report, videos and presentations can be viewed at:

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/
Schools at the Centre: Partnership

Waterloo Region District School Board
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Halton District School Board
Halton Catholic District School Board
Region of Waterloo

Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
Atkinson Foundation
Lawson Foundation

Atkinson Centre, University of Toronto
School of Early Childhood, George Brown College

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