YWCA CANADA

A TURNING POINT FOR WOMEN

UN POINT TOURNANT POUR LES FEMMES

BUILDING A COMMUNITY ARCHITECTURE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING AND CARE

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

YWCA CANADA

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Building a Community Architecture For Early Childhood Learning and Care

Analysis and Recommendations

Debra Mayer and Farheen Beg

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FOREWORD

The well-being and healthy development of young children is the foundation of a civil society. The United Nations Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank emphasize the importance of public investment in early childhood development. In Canada, the National Children's Agenda and the Innovation Strategy name early childhood as the key point of intervention to improve health and to promote social inclusion and lifelong learning. The research indicates that advances in this area are a prerequisite for Canada's continued health and prosperity.

Yet, child care in Canada (outside Québec) has been internationally criticized and described as an "under-resourced patchwork," which is failing children and families.[1] Policies linking child care to a labour market for low-income families are limited and outdated. Across Canada, there is a shortage of licensed, affordable, quality child care. In rural and isolated communities, it is almost non-existent.

Significant research has been conducted which supports the need for a national early childhood learning and care program. Canadians agree that universal child care is a necessity, yet for the last twenty-five years, federal governments have promised a national system of child care and none have delivered. In 2004, the federal Liberals were re-elected with a commitment to invest $5 billion over five years in a national system of early childhood learning and child care (ECLC). Bi-lateral agreements with provinces and territories were developed and signified a true start to building a 'national system'. With the newly elected Conservative government (January 2006), Canadians are concerned that the progress made toward achieving integrated ECLC may be compromised. It remains an ideological debate: governments want women in the workforce, and yet they do not want to support them with universal access to safe, quality child care.

"The participation of (women) with young children in the labour force creates opportunities and challenges that go beyond individual families and touch every sphere of life — private, social, cultural, economic, and political… While all family members are affected, women pay a disproportionate price when quality (child) care is not available"[2] The development of a comprehensive, integrated early childhood learning and care program is essential to achieve women's equality in Canada.

Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care brings this policy discussion to the community. It provides a practical process for communities to follow, so that new investments can begin to build quality, integrated early childhood learning and care services. This project takes us one step forward; it is a way for communities to articulate their needs, create a plan and take action. Collectively, it is a way to demonstrate that a country as diverse as Canada can have a quality national system of early childhood learning and care that is available to every family.

[1] OECD, 2004.

[2] *From Patchwork to Framework: A Child Care Strategy for Canada*, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. September, 2004.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Y**W**CA Canada has played an important role in developing programs and services that support women at critical turning points in their lives. It is one of the largest non-profit providers of child care in Canada, offering services to over 10,000 children annually in 4,550 licensed child care spaces. This translates into approximately 1.5 million hours of care every year. Beyond service delivery, the Y**W**CA concerns itself with public policy that affects women's rights: Y**W**CA Canada is a voice for women's equality.

Outside Québec, child care in Canada has been internationally criticized as an "under-resourced patchwork," which is failing children and families (Organization for Economic Development (OECD), 2004). Policies regulating child care to a labour market of low-income families are limited and outdated. Nationwide, there is a shortage of licensed, affordable, quality child care. In rural and remote communities, it is almost non-existent.

"The participation of (women) with young children in the labour force creates opportunities and challenges that go beyond individual families and touch every sphere of life – private, social, cultural, economic, and political… While all family members are affected, women pay a disproportionate price when quality (child) care is not available." (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), 2004) The development of a comprehensive, integrated early childhood learning and care program is essential to achieve women's equality in Canada.

The creation of such a program is complex, both from the perspective of public policy development and service delivery. To address this complexity, Y**W**CA Canada received funding from Social Development Canada for a three-year project, *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care*, to build effective models. This work took place in four settings in Canada — Halifax, Nova Scotia; Cambridge, Ontario; Martensville, Saskatchewan; and Vancouver, British Columbia. Task forces of key stakeholders (parents, child care providers, and representatives from education, health, special needs, aboriginal organizations, labour and business) were established to build community models of integrated early childhood learning and care (ECLC). In Vancouver, a system of coordinated ECLC services already existed, so a project-specific task force was not established. The community coordinator for Y**W**CA Vancouver worked to learn from and build upon the City of Vancouver's existing hub model of service delivery. Any reference to 'task forces' and 'blueprints' in this document acknowledges that the *process* in Vancouver was unique compared to the other three participating communities. Nonetheless, Vancouver's model for ECLC, as documented in the 'blueprint' by Lynell Anderson, has notable similarities to the models designed by the task forces in Halifax, Cambridge and Martensville.

The project had five main goals:

1. To determine how existing community resources can be organized to serve as a strong foundation for new Early Childhood Learning and Care (ECLC) investments;

2. To produce community 'blueprints' for a comprehensive, integrated system of quality early childhood learning and care services;

3. To facilitate a community consensus on the best delivery models;

4. To inform policymakers about effective community-based models that:
    a. Simultaneously provide children with early learning opportunities as parents are supported to work/study and parent effectively;
    b. Are accountable to governments and communities;
    c. Make efficient use of limited public resources;
    d. Better respond to the needs of children, families and communities; and
    e. Improve outcomes for children and families.

5. To demonstrate that different communities — each with a different resource base and with different funding and policy frameworks — can develop unique, responsive service delivery options that at the same time meet overarching criteria for quality, accessibility, and accountability.

Each community task force, supported by its local Y**W**CA Member Association, worked collaboratively to develop a 'blueprint' (or in the case of Vancouver, extended work on existing community plans) to achieve the project goals. As a compendium to this process, Y**W**CA Canada developed a guidebook, *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care: Guide for Community Coordinators* (2006), to facilitate others through the process to develop blueprints for early childhood learning and care. The guidebook is available online at http://www.ywca.ca.

Each 'blueprint' was developed to benefit children and families, while recognizing the diverse needs of communities. All four plans include high quality, regulated and well-funded early learning programs ranging from drop-in to full day programs in home, child care centre or school locations. The home, work and academic schedules of parents were carefully considered. Providing parents with real choice was imperative to each community plan.

During task force meetings, 'system integration' was conceptualized on a continuum that stretches from complete fragmentation to coordination to collaboration to authentic integration. Task forces showed substantive movement along this continuum and developed models centred on a 'hub' of service delivery.

The hub model integrates the separate systems into a seamless range of services within the community, providing a centralized "basket" or "menu" of ECLC choices for every parent with young children. The hub "is an approach to the planning, administration, and delivery of child care programs within a defined geographic area. It provides the infrastructure to support and coordinate services across the range of child care options for families in the community." (DYAD Projects, 1995, p. 4)

Integration is both conceptual and structural. "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." (Colley, 2005, p. 11) A misperception among some Canadian policymakers is that a common model for universal, integrated childhood services cannot be applied nationally, due to the unique needs of diverse communities. On the contrary, the results of this project clearly indicate that Canadians in distinct communities across the country *do* support a common model for the provision of early childhood services.

Each community task force identified insufficient government funding and fragmented public policies as the fundamental barriers to achieving best outcomes for children and families.

The success of the collaborative hub model requires adequate and stable public funding. Hub budgets should not rely on parent fees. It is necessary to replace the current user pay and subsidy patchwork with publicly funded, accessible child care programs to the benefit of all children and families, regardless of their need for half / full day care or the employment status of parents. In addition to sustainable and sufficient federal funding, public policy, based on well-defined, enforceable principles for ECLC, is required.

Government accountability and commitment to early childhood learning and care is essential to facilitate the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of their communities. The success of children and families in Canada depends upon it.

INTRODUCTION

Y**W**CA Canada is the national office of 36 Y**W**CAs and YMCA-Y**W**CA Member Associations, offering community-based services to more than one million Canadian women and their families every year. Each Member Association is independently incorporated and offers a variety of programs and services tailored to its community. Y**W**CA is one of the largest non-profit providers of child care in Canada, offering services to over 10,000 children annually in 4,550 licensed child care spaces. This translates into some 1.5 million hours of care every year. Also, Y**W**CA camps and after-school programs provide services to more than 20,000 children annually.

Since 1893, Y**W**CA Canada has played an important role in developing programs and services to support women at critical turning points in their lives. Beyond service delivery, the organization concerns itself with public policy that affects women's rights: Y**W**CA Canada is a voice for women's equality.

For the Y**W**CA, child care is one of the cornerstones of women's equality. Aptly described by Justice Rosalie Abella, child care is "the ramp to equality." (Abella, 1984) Without it, most women struggle to meet the needs of their children, and are unable to fully participate in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of their communities.

The development of a comprehensive, integrated early learning and care program is complex, both from the perspective of public policy creation and service delivery. To address this complexity, Y**W**CA Canada received funding from Social Development Canada for a three-year project to build effective models. *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* is a project that brings both service and public policy development together. This work took place in four settings in Canada — Halifax, Nova Scotia; Cambridge, Ontario; Martensville, Saskatchewan; and Vancouver, British Columbia — where task forces of key stakeholders (child care, education, health, special needs, aboriginal organizations, labour, and business) were established to build community models of integrated child care.[3]

The purpose of the project is to develop an integrated, comprehensive service delivery model for early childhood learning in diverse communities across Canada. The focus of this model is quality child care that meets the needs of children while providing opportunities for women to work, study, or fulfill other family and community responsibilities.

[3] A project-specific task force was not established in Vancouver because an existing structure for integrated ECLC services was in place.

WHY DO WE NEED A NEW SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL?

Canadian child care services, outside Québec, have been internationally criticized as an "under-resourced patchwork" that is failing children and families (OECD, 2004). Throughout Canada there is not "enough licensed child care to meet demand. For families with non-traditional work hours or living in rural communities, it is almost non-existent. When care is available, it may be of questionable quality, yet too expensive for most families to afford. Public financial support in the form of child care subsidies is determined by an intrusive process in which parents must prove themselves deficient in order to qualify. The result is stand-alone service providers ill-equipped to meet the demands placed on them and a patchwork service poorly resourced and vulnerable to political winds." (CCAAC, 2004, p. 10)

According to Cannan and Warren (1997), for society to meet the real needs of children, the very nature of social service must be viewed through a new lens. These authors argue that child and family services need recasting in a community development framework known as 'social action'. Service integration brings the distinct early years service silos together, providing a sound foundation upon which to build an early childhood learning and care system.

This Y**W**CA community development project, *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care,* was based on an interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral approach, involving a full range of agencies, institutions, and professionals providing services to young children and their families. It sought to build a community architecture predicated on community health and women's equality. In order to build such architecture, communities must be consulted and involved. Debra Ren-Etta Sullivan writes,

> Empowerment calls for new leaders, creative women and men, who inspire others to go beyond simply carrying out tasks and to move toward collaboration and consensus building… they must be social 'architects' who mold and shape the…environment so that it supports and encourages group and individual control and influence.
>
> - Sullivan, 2003, p. 108

POLITICAL CONTEXT

During the course of this project, there were significant changes to the politics of child care in Canada. The four participating communities worked against a backdrop of intense public debate over the development of a national child care program.

In 2004, the federal Liberals were re-elected with a commitment to invest $5 billion over 5 years in a national system of early learning and child care, based on the QUAD (Quality, Universality, Accessibility, and Developmental) principles of programming (Child Care Resource and Research Unit (CRRU), 2004). During that year the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC) released its 15 year plan for the development of a national child care system, *From Patchwork to Framework: A Child Care Strategy for Canada.* Also in 2004, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released a report highlighting the shortcomings of Canada's current approach to child care (with the exception of Québec).

The challenges faced by participants in arriving at consensus during the federal / provincial / territorial ministers' meetings in November 2004 and February 2005 shed light on the key barriers to achieving a national child care program. Barriers included the relationships among the various levels of governments; conflicting public values about the appropriate role of mothers with young children; schisms between for-profit and non-profit operators and their respective supporters; and the ideologies that define our various political parties.

Task forces involved in the project grew to understand and appreciate that the work they were engaged in was more than theoretical, and that the funding to implement their models might flow — that the vision for their communities might actually be possible.

With the newly elected Conservative government (January 2006), Canadians are concerned that the progress that has been made toward achieving integrated ECLC nationally may be compromised.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

CHILD CARE

During the federal election in June 2004, the Liberal Party made a commitment to develop a pan-Canadian child care system based on four principles — **Q**uality, **U**niversality, **A**ccessibility and **D**evelopmentally appropriate programming (**QUAD**). These principles, along with the principle of **Inclusion**, are cornerstones of a child care system that works for children and their parents. Simply stated, inclusion means that *all* children can attend and benefit from the same child care programs. It means that children with disabilities can go to the same centres they would attend if they did not have a disability; and that the necessary supports of training, equipment, physical modifications and extra staffing are available to all centres, at no extra cost to parents or to the individual centres. Inclusion means *all* children, not just those who are easy and/or less expensive to include. All means **all**. (CCAAC, 2004)

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

Canada's current patchwork of child care services reflects a lack of social inclusion for women and a public ambivalence about the role of women in Canadian society. Access to child care is often framed as a workforce issue for women. This indeed is part of the argument; however, this project is based on the central notion that women have a right to participate fully in civil society. For Y**W**CA Canada, the involvement of women in all aspects of civil society is the crux of the argument for universal quality child care. It not only gives women the ability to work or go to school and support their families, but it also provides them with the opportunity to engage in social debate and political activity — elements that are key to the true transformation of Canada into an equality-based nation.

Viewing child care through a lens of women's equality allows for the recognition of the underlying concepts about families and markets that are part of mainstream Canadian neo-liberal political economic ideology. This ideology assumes children to be the private responsibility of women, and values only market-based work. Even though a significant majority of women with young children are in the paid labour force, child care remains the prime responsibility of women. This indicates that, while child care has always been a 'women's issue', it is essential to reaffirm child care as a key element in the strategy for achieving women's equality.

Meg Luxton (2002) concludes that "the more individuals and families have to bear the costs of social reproduction, and the more children are the individual responsibility of their mothers in a context that assumes women's primary role is as mothers, the more likely children are to risk poverty and other forms of social exclusion." (Luxton, 2002, p. 8) Social inclusion theory suggests that a transformation of the existing status quo is needed and that we need different assumptions. "While children have the right to expect support, care and love from their parents, they also have the right to expect other sources of support and care from their society." (Luxton, 2002, p. 9)

To ensure social inclusion for women and their children, we need transformative processes of policy and program. Closing the social inclusion gap requires vision, commitment, and the political will to turn aspirations into reality.

> The solution to this crisis does not lie in paying mothers to stay home or giving families money so that they can "choose" a child care option, as the right wing has proposed. These arguments ignore the realities of women's lives (mothers are in the workforce to stay) and their aspirations, as well as the social and developmental needs of children. In any case, the price tag would far exceed the cost of developing a child care system, which is the reason proponents of the pay-to-stay-at-home option never say what it would cost to make it truly viable. And giving money to families does nothing to ensure the creation and sustainability of an adequate supply of quality, affordable early childhood services for those who want and need them.
>
> - Canadian Coalition of Women's Equality Organizations (CWE), 2005

DEFINING INTEGRATION

Sue Colley, Director of the Integration Network Project, defines integration as both conceptual and structural. "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." (Colley, 2005, p. 11)

During task force meetings, 'system integration' was conceptualized on a continuum that stretches from complete fragmentation to coordination to collaboration to authentic integration. All task forces showed substantive movement along this continuum and developed models centred on a 'hub' of service delivery. The hub model integrates the separate systems into a seamless range of services within the community, providing a centralized "basket" or "menu" of early childhood learning and care choices for every parent with young children.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

PROJECT GOALS

The purpose of the project was to develop an integrated, comprehensive service delivery model for early childhood learning in diverse communities across Canada. The focus of this model is quality child care which meets the needs of children while providing opportunities for women to work, study, or fulfill other family and community responsibilities.

The project had five main goals:

1. To determine how existing community resources can be organized to serve as a strong foundation for new Early Childhood Learning and Care (ECLC) investments;

2. To produce community 'blueprints' for a comprehensive, integrated system of quality early childhood learning and care services;

3. To facilitate a community consensus on the best delivery models;

4. To inform policymakers about effective community-based models that:
    a. Simultaneously provide children with early learning opportunities as parents are supported to work/study and parent effectively
    b. Are accountable to governments and communities
    c. Make efficient use of limited public resources
    d. Better respond to the needs of children, families and communities
    e. Improve outcomes for children and families

5. To demonstrate that different communities — each with a different resource base and with different funding and policy frameworks — can develop unique, responsive service delivery options that at the same time meet overarching criteria.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

1. A **guidebook**, *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care: Guide for Community Coordinators*, to facilitate the deliberations of the local working groups. The guide will be transferable to other communities wanting to undertake a similar process.

2. Four reports describing four models of a "Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care."
    a. Each model will meet the following criteria:

i. Provide children with early learning opportunities at the same time as parents are supported to work / study and parent effectively;
ii. Be accountable to governments and communities;
iii. Make efficient use of public resources;
iv. Better responds to the needs of children, families and communities; and
v. Improve outcomes for children and families.

b. Each community model will make recommendations and describe mechanisms:
    i. To organize existing community resources to form a strong foundation for new ECLC investments;
    ii. For governance, professional qualifications, and funding;
    iii. For public accountability; and
    iv. For assessing outcomes for children and families.

c. In addition, each community model will:
    i. Identify barriers — legislative, professional, institutional — that impede the development of comprehensive, integrated ECLC services and recommend ways to overcome these barriers.
    ii. Identify the social and economic benefits of a comprehensive, integrated system to children, parents, stakeholders, and Canadian society.

3. A **final report** analysing the four communities' models to assess the:
    a. Feasibility/practicality of the models;
    b. Adherence to criteria;
    c. Community process — depth of representation, mechanisms used to maintain representation, barriers to the process, how they were addressed; and
    d. Identifying overarching barriers to comprehensive, integrated ECLC service delivery.

THE PROCESS

PARTICIPANTS

Y**W**CA Canada issued a call for proposals to all 36 of its Member Associations. Four distinct cities were selected: Halifax, Nova Scotia; Cambridge, Ontario; Martensville, Saskatchewan; and Vancouver, British Columbia. A community task force was established in each city and met regularly from Fall 2004 through Spring 2005.

In Vancouver, a vision for integrated ECLC services already existed, so a project-specific task force was not established. The community coordinator for Y**W**CA Vancouver worked to learn from and build upon the City of Vancouver's developing system of integrated service delivery. Any reference to 'task forces' and 'blueprints' in this document acknowledges that the *process* in Vancouver was unique compared to the other three participating communities. Even with a distinct process, Vancouver's model for ECLC, as documented in the 'blueprint' by Lynell Anderson, has notable similarities to the models designed by the task forces in Halifax, Cambridge and Martensville.

As a compendium to this process, Y**W**CA Canada developed *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care: Guide for Community Coordinators*, a guidebook to assist in the development of the 'blueprints'. The guidebook is available online at http://www.ywca.ca.

Representatives from the local child care community (family resource staff, non-profit and for-profit child care providers, licensing personnel, directors of child care centres, and others) were members of community task forces. Parents of both genders were also included. As well, senior staff and board members of Y**W**CA Member Associations actively participated in each community.

A deliberate effort was made to engage the interest of key stakeholders representing diverse sectors in each community, including women's organizations, labour unions, aboriginal organizations, government representatives, bureaucrats, media, advocates for people with disabilities and other marginalized communities, anti-poverty organizations and others.

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY CONSENSUS

Y**W**CA Canada developed seven questions to guide discussion and to facilitate a consensual, collaborative and transformative approach to this project:

1. How would a system of early learning and child care look to children, parents and communities?

2. How can existing community resources be organized to serve as a strong foundation for new investments?

3. What are the components of a comprehensive, integrated system of quality early childhood learning and child care services?

4. How can services be organized to:
    a. Respond to the needs of children, families and communities by providing children with quality early learning opportunities at the same time as parents are supported to work, study and parent effectively?
    b. Be accountable to governments and communities?
    c. Make efficient use of limited public resources?
    d. Improve outcomes for children, families and communities?

5. What outcomes for children, families and communities do we expect from public investments in early childhood learning and child care?

6. What are the barriers — legislative, professional, institutional — that impede the development of comprehensive, integrated early learning and child care services? How can these barriers be overcome?

7. How do we identify the social and economic benefits of a comprehensive, integrated system to children, parents, stakeholders, and society?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES[4]

Each blueprint adhered to the following guiding principles to ensure early childhood learning and care is:

Accessible

Canada has one of the highest labour participation rates of mothers in the industrialized world. All children, regardless of their families' income level or employment status, are entitled to access quality child care and early childhood experiences, programs and services. Currently, access to child care is not equitable across Canada. Some of the barriers encountered by families are: socio-economic factors, living in rural and/or northern communities, raising a child who requires extra supports due to disability or other special needs, shift work, etc.

Comprehensive

A continuum of services must be available in every region of the country for children from birth to 12 years in both centre and home-based settings. Services must be for all children (including those with special needs), and respond to diverse communities (including those who need part-time, extended, seasonal, emergency and non-traditional hours of care).

[4] Adapted from the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/ and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada's "Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis," http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca/SOS/sos .cc.pdf

High Quality

A growing body of research confirms that the quality of care that children receive during their first six years affects them throughout their lives. High quality child care positively influences children's health and learning while poor quality care can do harm.

High quality child care has the following characteristics:

- High adult to child ratios
- Stable, consistent care giving
- Small group sizes
- Caregivers who are well trained in early childhood development
- Adequate health, safety and physical environment precautions
- Decent wages and working conditions
- Good workplace morale
- Unionization

All of these characteristics are dependent on and related to adequate funding.

Affordable

Cost should not be a barrier to children's participation in child care, but affordable fees may be charged. Currently, child care costs often constitute the second biggest item (after housing) in family budgets and can cost more than a year of university tuition. Some provincial governments provide a subsidy to some low income families for child care costs. Maximum subsidy rates are well below the actual cost of care and families are required to pay the difference. The very children who could most benefit from access to enriched experiences are least likely to receive it. When quality care is affordable, parents choose it. When it is not affordable, parents have no choice but to use any care they can afford.

Publicly funded

Child care is a public service, just like education and health care. Child care serves the public interest and must be publicly funded and publicly accountable in its governance and service delivery. The current 'user fee' child care system is individualized and market-based, whereas it requires sound public policy. Public funding should support the construction, renovation and maintenance of facilities and equipment; the operating costs of child care programs; and infrastructure supports including licensing, monitoring, caregiver training and upgrading, research, communications, and resource development. An effective system would be based on the federal and provincial/territorial governments sharing the cost of a range of early childhood learning and care programs, while child care and related services would be community-based and delivered.

Responsive

Child care must be responsive to the needs of Canada's diverse communities. It must promote social inclusion and facilitate community and parent input.

Accountable

Given that the majority of children are in some form of unregulated care, accountability for quality is grossly inadequate. In a publicly funded, community-based system, child care services would have higher levels of accountability. They would be accountable to the families they serve. They would be accountable for using public funds to enhance quality, affordability and accessibility, and they would be accountable to the broader community for promoting the healthy growth and development of each child.

Each blueprint was to demonstrate how integrated child care is an early learning and care program that supports the healthy development of all young children, while simultaneously providing support to:

- Parents to work, study and / or care for other family members
- Parents in their parenting role
- Women's equality

The four community blueprints define the benefits of an integrated system for early childhood learning and care. Each plan suggests practical ways to enhance the quality of early childhood programs by building community capacity, helping to convert profit operations to publicly funded, accountable services, offering a full menu of choices to parents, and engaging community stakeholders in a collaborative and integrated approach to service provision.

A SHARED MODEL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING AND CARE

A misperception among some Canadian policymakers is that a common model for universal, integrated childhood services cannot be applied nationally, due to the unique needs of diverse communities. On the contrary, the results of this project clearly indicate that Canadians in distinct communities across the country *do* support a shared model for the provision of early childhood services.

Each of the four communities (Halifax, Cambridge, Martensville, and Vancouver) share a common vision for quality, accessible, integrated early childhood learning and care opportunities for all children. Halifax, Cambridge and Martensville followed a similar process, forming a task force of key stakeholders who participated in planning integrated ECLC services. The community coordinator in Vancouver worked with an existing municipal structure for integrated ECLC services that has already implemented the hub model of service delivery in several Vancouver neighbourhoods.

THE "HUB" MODEL

Each blueprint details distinctive plans for the implementation of the Hub Model; however, all four blueprints describe the Hub with the following qualities in *common*:

Hubs:

- Are committed to integrating and/or coordinating all neighbourhood-based services for children in the early years and their families;
- Require stable core funding to achieve the goals of quality, affordability and accessibility for all children and families, regardless of financial status;
- Are managed by the public, non-profit sector;
- Are accessible and centrally located in public facilities such as community centres, neighbourhood houses, schools or purpose-built early childhood centres;
- Recognize the diversity of families and communities, as well as a common interest in the well-being of all children and families;
- Provide opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's ECLC programs;
- Are staffed by qualified professionals that are adequately compensated;
- Actively lobby governments and individuals regarding the importance of early learning and care programs, while also raising the profile and advocating for services that meet the needs of families; and
- Develop partnerships with community resources (i.e. schools, libraries, art galleries, recreation facilities, museums) to extend children's learning opportunities.

WORKING MODELS

Successful international child care systems demonstrate that integration works for children. The report *Starting Strong* (OECD, 2001) lists service integration as one of the policy lessons of their review of 12 industrialized countries. The report identifies several key elements which can serve as key policy lessons for Canadians, including:

- A systematic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation — with strong links across services, professionals and parents; and
- Substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure — with clear and consistent strategies for efficiently allocating scarce resources, including investment in an infrastructure for long-term planning and quality enhancement efforts.

In Canada, due to the fragmentation of service, few models of integrated service exist; however two working models have been implemented: 1) Toronto First Duty, and 2) The Province of Québec.

TORONTO FIRST DUTY (TFD)[5]

The intent of Toronto First Duty is to demonstrate to policy makers how existing early childhood and family programs can be transformed into a system for children up to six years of age. At the end of the three year project, each site is required to provide a working model.

Toronto First Duty (TFD) integrates and expands early education, family support and child care activities in five Toronto neighbourhoods. The TFD sites are surrounded by local public schools and supported by lead non-profit agencies.

The three year project (2002-2005) supported each site to:

- Create a high quality learning environment that combines learning expectations, activities and routines from existing kindergarten, early childhood education/child care and parenting programs;
- Develop an early childhood staff team that works together to deliver and achieve program goals;
- Form a local governance structure to determine the allocation of resources, service planning and monitoring, and program policies;
- Provide seamless access to an expanded and comprehensive early learning and care program providing a continuum of supports and services to all families and children; and
- Increase parent participation in their children's early learning and development through direct involvement in programs, planning and decision-making.

[5] http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty/index.htm

Toronto First Duty:

- Supports parents' need for child care whether they are at home and require respite time or are earning or preparing to earn a living;
- Provides young children with consistent early learning and development opportunities;
- Recognizes mounting scientific evidence that the young children are active learners and that good experiences have a positive impact on later learning, behaviour and well-being; and
- Respects the primary role of parents and other family members and promotes learning opportunities at home.

Funding and Support

In TFD's initial stage, the Atkinson Charitable Foundation put out a province-wide challenge to communities to pilot this model. Municipal councillor Olivia Chow acted, from the outset, as TFD's champion and the City of Toronto responded first with a three million dollar commitment. The City of Toronto, the Toronto District School Board, the Atkinson Foundation, the automakers and the Canadian Autoworkers Union invested five million dollars in Toronto First Duty sites to provide a policy blueprint for early learning and child care. Human Resource and Skills Development Canada is contributing to research and evaluation costs. This unique funding and partnership arrangement has made the pilot possible and has had some significant outcomes for children and families involved.

LEADING THE WAY – QUÉBEC'S FORWARD THINKING[6]

Championed by Pauline Marois, Member of the Québec National Assembly, the implementation of a public system of early childhood education and care has garnered the most attention because it represents new, progressive thinking about social policy and confirms the social responsibility of government. Rather than merely targeting low-income families, Québec's policy recognizes that it is essential to promote the well-being of all children and all families. There is recognition that all of Québec society will benefit socially and economically, from public investment in strong, healthy families and communities. Equality is at the heart of Québec child and family policy. This objective is absent nationally and in other provinces and territories.

Québec's model sets out to establish a universal, non-profit child care system, available to all children, whether their mothers are employed outside the home or work full-time in the home. The initial cost to parents was $5 a day. In 2004, that increased to $7 a day. On average, monthly child care costs for parents in Québec would amount to $140 a month, or $1,620 a year. In the rest of the country, parents foot a bill for regulated child care ranging between $3,300 and $13,000 a year. (Campaign 2000: Diversity or Disparity: Child Care Policy and Programs in Canada, Dec. 2003, p. 3)

[6] http://canadianlabour.ca/unionize/pdf/childfact5.pdf

Key Elements of Québec's Model

- Early Childhood Centres (ECC) *(centres de la petite enfance – CPE)* were created from existing non-profit child care centres and family child care agencies. ECCs began to respond to family needs for weekend and evening care, emergency care and respite care in addition to child care offered during traditional hours.
- The ECCs are non-profit, community-based and controlled by parents who comprise the majority of the board members of the centres.
- In order to receive government funding, the child cares must be licensed and meet regulations for their operation. Free training is provided to allow previously unregulated centres to meet the regulatory standards.
- Schools must provide half-day kindergarten to disadvantaged four-year-olds, and this may be combined with a half day of regulated care. They must also offer before- and after-school child care at the same $7 a day rate if there is sufficient parental demand.
- The government established a core educational program which must be incorporated into the services.
- The wages of workers employed by the centres increased significantly, by between 38% and 40%. A pension plan was established and pay equity adjustments are in progress. Stricter regulations were set for child care workers' credentials; financial support is provided to upgrade credentials.

The Québec model is in its infancy, and it will take time to realize its full vision. In the meantime, the number of regulated child care spaces doubled to 164,410 by 2002-03 to accommodate almost 50% of the need for care, compared to the 12% rate elsewhere in Canada. In 2005, there were 180,000 regulated child care spaces to accommodate 60% of the need for care in Québec.

COMMUNITY REPORT SUMMARIES

Currently, there are thousands of distinct child care operators in Canada, including many independent licensed family child care providers who often function as small businesses. Most child care centres are volunteer-run, non-profit organizations or charities, with boards of directors comprised primarily of parents whose children attend the programs. Others are delivered by a municipality, or are privately or commercially owned and operated. Some have established informal links with schools or health organizations where they are housed. As previously mentioned, there are few Canadian examples of well-established, well-resourced, integrated systems that provide a range of services to families, including child care, early education and family support.

Each community task force prepared a comprehensive report detailing a blueprint for integrated early childhood learning and care. The following synopses provide a description of the extensive work completed by the community task forces. For a more thorough description of the work of each community task force, please consult the *Blueprints for Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* (2006) document, available online at www.ywca.ca.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

Participants

The Halifax community task force included YWCA Halifax, child care organizations, private (for-profit) child care operators, family child care staff, federal and provincial government representation (including Status of Women Canada), the public school board, government employees' and teachers' unions, immigrant services, advocates, parents, teachers, public health workers, representatives from Dalhousie University, and others.

In addition to task force meetings, members made presentations to government bureaucrats, politicians, the Halifax Regional School Board, and other groups and individuals, to share the vision of the blueprint and to elicit feedback from multiple community sources.

Halifax Model Summary[7]

The early childhood learning and care architecture envisioned by the Halifax community task force is a "Hub" model — an umbrella network of delivery organizations that are community board operated (non-profit) and primarily neighbourhood-based.

In the Halifax vision, all currently existing child care centres (for-profit, non-profit and school-based) and parent resource centres would be included as part of the funded system, and would be equal stakeholders in its development and implementation. Expansion of ECLC services, however, would occur in the non-profit sector.

Early childhood learning and care (ECLC) programs would be at the core of the hub, along with family learning/ support programs. The core ECLC programs would be for all children aged 3

[7] For detailed Halifax report, see *Blueprints for Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* (2006)

months to 5 years whose parents choose to use them. Programs would include full-day, part-day and drop-in programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

As defined in the Halifax blueprint, the hub umbrella organization would administer several early childhood learning and care centres, including family home-based care, and would provide extended hours when warranted. Programs would be open to all children, including those with extra support needs. Parenting programs and resources would also be central to the mandate of the hub, as well as programs and resources that meet various needs of families, e.g. health, skill development, leisure and social activities. The hub would provide opportunities for parents to be involved, to whatever extent they choose, in their child's ECLC programs. The Hub would develop partnerships with community resources — e.g. schools, libraries, art galleries, gymnasiums and recreation facilities, museums, etc. — to extend children's learning opportunities.

ECLC programs would be located in all neighbourhoods: in free-standing facilities; incorporated into larger buildings (e.g. apartment complexes), in public schools, in higher education institutions, or in workplaces. Design criteria would be developed to ensure optimal facilities. Capital funding would be required to ensure that both new and renovated facilities meet these criteria.

Ongoing needs assessments would be completed to develop community program delivery plans. For the hub to be successful, all staff working in ECLC programs must be qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and/or primary school teachers. A Human Resource Strategy would be developed and implemented leading to a new, post-secondary credential for working in all ECLC programs, consistent with credentials in other provinces and countries with progressive early childhood systems.

Accountability and Funding

To ensure the success of the Halifax model, accountability measures would be built in at all levels — child care centre, hub, and government. A municipal planning process would ensure equitable distribution of the hub centres throughout the municipality. At least one third of each community board would be parents of young children.

The task force suggested a complete restructuring of provincial ministries to create a new Department of the Family to fund and administer this system. Operations and programs of the hub would be publicly funded, with parents paying a nominal fee (no more than $7.00 per day, gradually phased in). Funding criteria would encompass the costs of all the programs including new system-wide, equitable salary scales. System funding would include capital funding for new construction or for renovation/improvement of existing facilities.

The community blueprint states that commercial centres established after the funding program begins would not be funded. Limited transferability options could be established to let current single owner-operators hand off to a family member or staff member, for example. A plan would be developed to enable conversion of commercial centres to non-profit status, or permit buy-outs. A plan would also be established to provide current "unlicensed" providers with opportunities to participate in the new system, for example, as licensed family-home programs or with training grants to qualify for employment in the system.

Barriers

There is a lack of understanding and awareness of the importance of early childhood learning and care.

Currently, there is a deficiency of funds from senior levels of government for an integrated 'hub' system of early childhood learning and care.

Current child care fees are unaffordable for most parents.

Recommendations

Federal and provincial governments must recognize that universal, accessible, integrated early childhood learning and care services are a key priority. Federal funding to provinces and municipalities is critical to meeting the needs of children in the early years, and the needs of their families.

The Hub model is effective and would be the most beneficial foundation for delivery of ECLC and parent/family support programs. Municipal planning processes must be in place to ensure Hub centres are available in every community.

A new provincial Department of the Family, with a mandate to create a "Family Policy for Nova Scotia," would be responsible for all programs for children and families, and for implementing the Hub model of service coordination and delivery.

Parent user fees for ECLC programs must be reduced (to a maximum of $7.00 per day), and additional subsidies for low income families are necessary.

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO

Participants

The task force was comprised of various groups/agencies that focus on healthy communities, including Y**W**CA Cambridge, the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries, Community Living, immigrant services, family child care, private (for-profit) child care operators, Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo Catholic District School Board and Cambridge Memorial Hospital. The task force also included major employers, a journalist, the parent of a child with special needs, and a former Corrections worker. Overall, participants represented a cross-section of socio-economic classes and ethnic backgrounds. Agencies that participated on the task force are committed to the principle of diversity.

To ensure extensive community participation, the coordinator attended meetings and made presentations about the project to the Child Care Network of Waterloo Region, Region of Waterloo Children and Parents Services, and the Child Care Area Network (local branch of Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care). In addition, the coordinator held telephone conferences with stakeholders and local planners; and hosted a focus group of child care supervisors.

Cambridge Model Summary[8]

The Cambridge model consists of three main parts: "The Vehicle," "The Hub," and "Tubs" providing direct services.

The Cambridge task force determined that the community would have one "Hub". The Hub would be staffed by an Executive Director, support staff, and four Area Coordinators representing each of the four areas of the city — North, South, East, and West (North Dumfries). The community task force refers to these four areas as "Tubs".

The Hub would liaise with the Region and receive funding for early learning and care programs in Cambridge. It would be responsible for educating the community about the value of early childhood learning and care, monitoring standards in each of the four area Tubs, resource distribution, organizing and delivering professional development for staff; and ensuring all of the needs of families in the City of Cambridge and North Dumfries are met. The Hub would actively lobby governments and individuals regarding the importance of early learning and care programs, while also raising the profile and advocating for services that meet the needs of families. Finally, the Hub would be the connector that coordinates all four areas in the city for programs and services for children up to age six.

Coordinators of the four area "Tubs" (North, South, East, West) would support and connect services to ensure early childhood learning and care is inclusive, accessible, comprehensive, high-quality, accountable, and responsive. Services available in each area would include access to special needs support services, infant development, literacy, early intervention, subsidized child care, work-based child care, centre-based child care, school-based child care, home child care, play groups, supports for families and supports for parents. "Tubs" will have Parent Advisory Committees and all will provide opportunities for parents to become involved. According to the community blueprint, all existing programs and services for children and families in Cambridge would be affiliated with the "Tub" in the region where they are located.

Establishing "Tubs" in four geographic areas would develop a sense of community and build long-lasting relationships from the beginning of a family's commitment to early learning and care services until the child is finished with after-school care. Parents could choose to use services in their home neighbourhood or their work community and could expect the same high quality services that meet their needs wherever they access service.

Families would benefit from the social support network and increased access to regional services and resources made available through early learning and care programs. In general, parents are more productive in their work/study when the pressures of child care are removed.

Accountability

In the Cambridge task force blueprint, the "Vehicle" refers to sources of funding and systems of accountability for an integrated system of early childhood learning and care. The blueprint identifies the federal government as the source of full funding for a successful integrated system. These federal

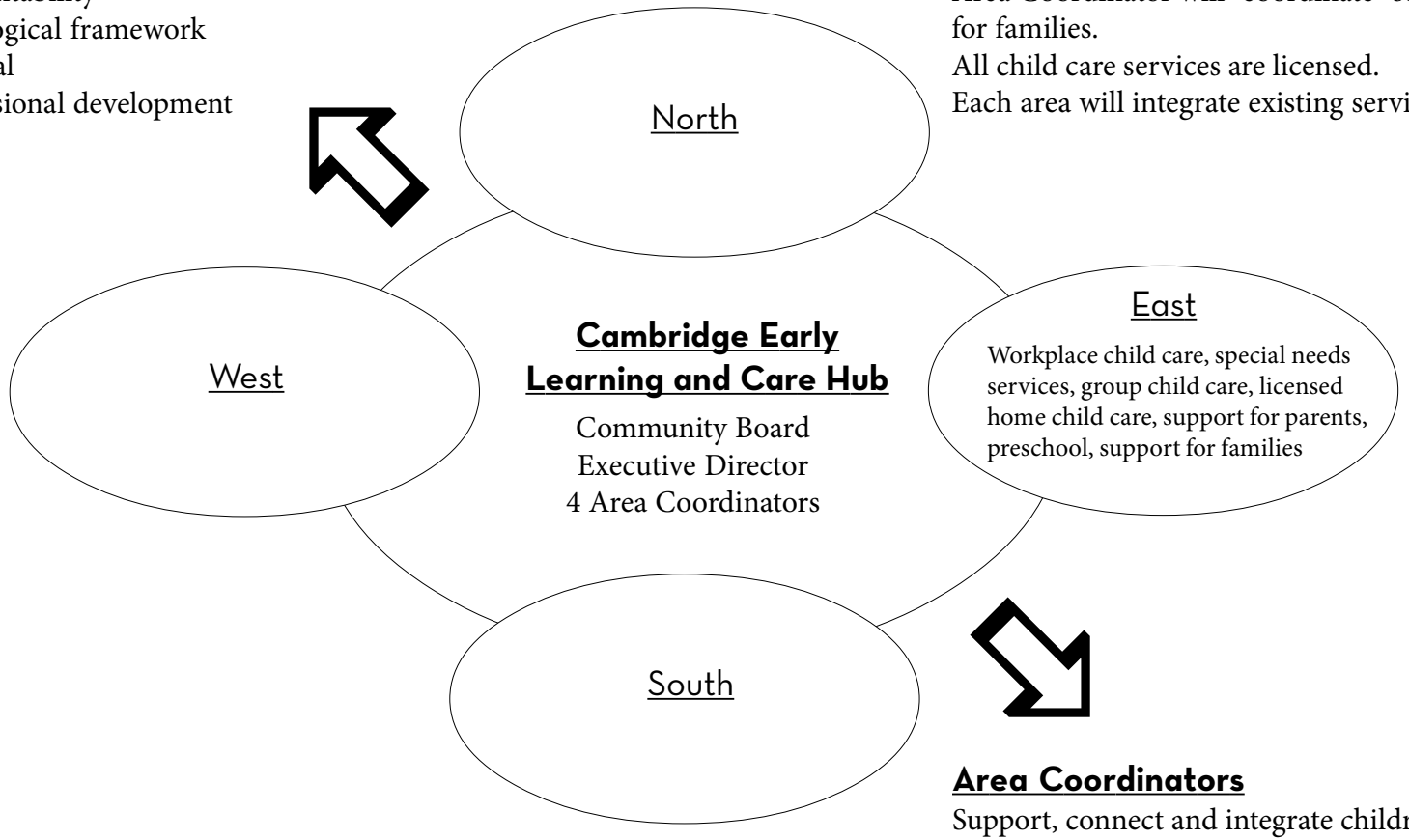
[8] For detailed Cambridge report, see *Blueprints for Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* (2006)

Hub Functions

Communication with public, 4 Areas and the Region
Receive/disperse $ from the Region
Accountability
Pedagogical framework
Referral
Professional development

4 Area Services

May be customized as area requires.
Families will have access to all services, not necessarily on site.
Area Coordinator will "coordinate" services for families.
All child care services are licensed.
Each area will integrate existing services.



Area Coordinators

Support, connect and integrate children's programs in each area to provide comprehensive service delivery to families.

Cambridge Community Model of Integrated Services for Children and Families

funds would flow through the Province of Ontario to the Region of Waterloo at 100%. Provincial funding would continue and new federal funds would be layered on top to create this new cohesive system.

The Hub would be governed by a community Board of Directors, with representation from parents, staff, school boards, children's services/programs. Community consultation in service planning would be essential to the success of the plan, as well as the establishment of Parent Advisory committees. The Region of Waterloo would continue to play a leadership role in planning, development, funding, and maintaining accountability processes.

Barriers

There is a general lack of public awareness of the importance of early childhood learning and care programs.

There is no federal legislation to ensure early childhood learning and care services for children in all communities. Those that do exist lack universal quality standards.

The lack of pan-Canadian standards means children across the country are receiving inconsistent care, if any, and are therefore being treated inequitably.

Existing programs are not easily accessible to families.

Recommendations

Immediate federal legislation is required to ensure public policy and sustainable funding for high-quality, integrated early childhood learning and care services. The provincial government must make a commitment to provide federal money at 100% to the municipalities to operate services for children and families. Funding must be directed toward programs, not subsidies.

It is essential that services be made accessible to families by situating them close to home, on public transit routes, and in rural communities.

In addition to government commitment to integrated early childhood learning and care services via policy and sustainable funding, public and parent education about early years development and services is necessary.

MARTENSVILLE, SASKATCHEWAN

Participants

YWCA Saskatoon worked collaboratively on this project with an existing multi-sectoral planning group, Success by 6, which already brings together key stakeholders on children's issues.

The community task force included representation from both Martensville and Saskatoon. Key stakeholders from the following sectors participated: recreation, education, the Early Childhood Professional Association, early intervention services, business, work/family specialists and others. When gaps in representation were identified, the local project coordinator developed innovative outreach strategies to ensure missing voices were heard. She attended the Busy Fingers Preschool Board Meeting to discuss the project, invite participation and get advice about hosting a parent meeting. The coordinator developed a parent survey form which was distributed throughout public libraries, preschools, and elementary schools. She met with individual parents and hosted a parent meeting to review the preliminary environmental data developed by the task force.

Martensville Model Summary[9]

The Martensville blueprint integrates existing early childhood learning and care (ECLC) programs, related services, and new services under one hub. The hub model would integrate the separate systems into a seamless range of services within the community, providing a "basket" or "menu" of early childhood learning and care choices for every parent with children up to six years of age.

The hub would be physically located at the existing Civic Centre, already home to the Public Library, Busy Fingers Preschool, Public Health Services, and Recreation Department. The addition of a full day child care program, an indoor playground and a Parent Resource Centre would provide the core ECLC services in a very central public location, easily accessible to all parents. Also, specialized services (early intervention, speech/language therapy, behavioural consultants) would be offered at this central hub location.

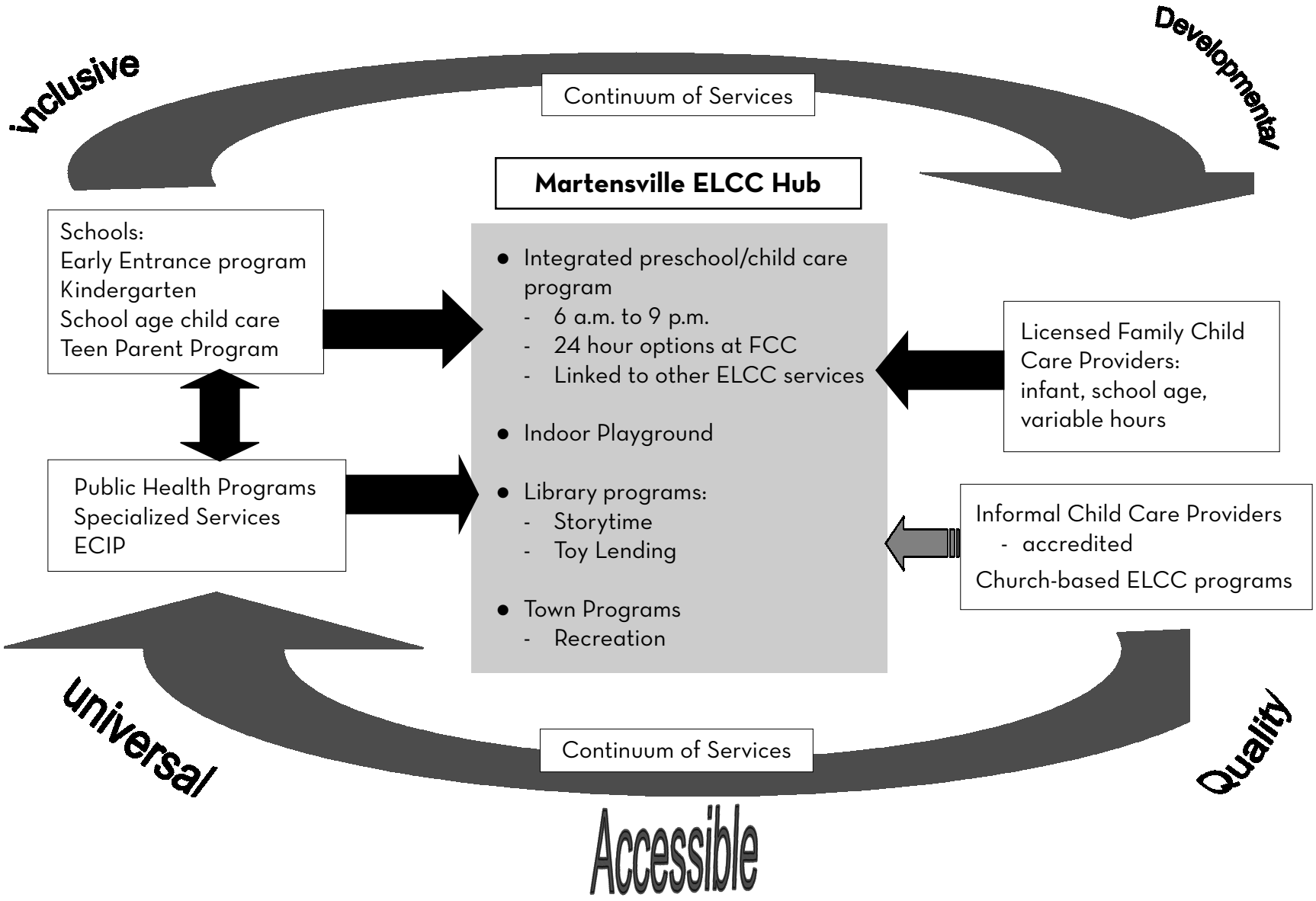
In the blueprint, the community task force specified that family child care providers would each care for a maximum of 6 children under the age of 12. Family child care providers would be hired as staff of the hub, or contracted as independent child care providers. Unlicensed providers would be "accredited" by either the municipality or the provincial licensing body, and meet basic public health and safety standards.

In Martensville, the Public Library and Recreation Office are natural community sources for information on community programs. The addition of a Parent Resource Centre strengthens this function.

Each elementary school would be a satellite hub, meeting the Government of Saskatchewan's "School PLUS" mandate, providing early entrance kindergarten for children with disabilities, integrated child care/ kindergarten for five-year-olds, and referrals/access to specialized services. School satellites might also provide an integrated child care/prekindergarten program for four-year-olds.

[9] For detailed Martensville report, see *Blueprints for Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* (2006)

Martensville Community Early Learning and Child Care Hub Model



The Martensville hub model is based on direct funding of programs, ensuring that parents — regardless of financial status — would have equal access to the programs that meet their needs and the early childhood needs of their children. The model recognizes the diversity of families and communities, as well as a common interest in the well-being of all children and families. The blueprint provides a mechanism for community based solutions. Also, it minimizes and/or eliminates transitions from program to program, and in effect, reduces parent stress in organizing and managing the complex 'child care day'. The plan developed by the community task force respects the importance of early childhood learning and care opportunities for *all* children, whether their parents work in or outside the home.

As the community of Martensville continues to expand with young families, integrated early learning and care system will:

- support the development of neighbourhood networks of families;
- encourage long-term relationships among their children;
- discourage a divide between parents who work in the home and outside of the home; and
- provide employment for a significant number of community members.

Accountability

The integrated early childhood learning and care (ECLC) service (preschool, child care, family child care, indoor playground service) would be governed by one community board with representation from each program's Parent Advisory Council, and from each community partner (Schools, Public Health, ECIP[10], Library, Recreation Department, etc.) This integrated hub system would be funded primarily by the provincial and federal governments, with affordable parent fees (that could consist of a flat fee or a sliding scale fee geared-to-income) for the core early childhood learning and care services. All other services would be provided to parents at no cost. Existing child care subsidies would be phased out and replaced with a direct grant system to the early childhood learning and care programs. All ECLC programs would be licensed and monitored by the provincial government, meeting the QUAD (Quality, Universal, Accessible, and Developmental) (CRRU, 2004) principles and Saskatchewan's "best practices standards"[11] based on current research. Hub staff would have relevant accredited Early Childhood Education training that would include early childhood development philosophy, pedagogy, curriculum development, and inclusion and intervention theories and practises.

Barriers

There is a systematic undervaluing of early childhood learning and care (ECLC). In communities and government there is a lack of understanding of the importance of ECLC, and an unwillingness to examine differing values and beliefs.

The lack of a legislative act for ECLC has produced inconsistent accountability between the provinces and the federal government.

[10] Early Childhood Intervention Programs
[11] Saskatchewan School Services. Licensee's Manual.

Key stakeholders were missing from the task force to develop a community blueprint for ECLC in Martensville.

The pedagogy of ECLC is unclear and inconsistent.

Recommendations

It is critical that the research and evidence indicating the importance of the early years is recognized.

Senior government support (financial and legislative) is essential for local hubs to be developed and sustained. An integrated jurisdictional framework, with multi-lateral agreements (federal, provincial, First Nation, Métis, municipal), is required to support a seamless, integrated early childhood learning and care system for all families in the province, wherever they live. Such a jurisdictional framework will specify who the decision makers are, how families access services, who pays for what services, working relationships between First Nations and provincial programs, etc.

A comprehensive, integrated family support policy is necessary. Also, an ongoing campaign to encourage employers to create "Family Friendly Workplaces" will benefit children and families.

The community development process must continue to engage key stakeholders to participate in organizing and supporting an integrated model of ECLC.

Post-secondary Early Childhood Education and training for professionals must be well funded, consistent, based in current research, early childhood pedagogy and best practises.

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Participants

In Vancouver, a vision for integrated ECLC services already existed, so a project-specific task force was not established. The community coordinator for Y**W**CA Vancouver worked to learn from and build upon the City of Vancouver's developing hub model of service delivery. Any reference to 'task forces' and 'blueprints' in this document acknowledges that the *process* in Vancouver was unique compared to the other three participating communities. The project was supported by, and received input from, the City of Vancouver's Joint Council on Child Care — which includes staff and elected officials from the City, School Board and Park Board — as well as representatives from the University of British Columbia, West Coast Child Care Resource Centre and community service providers.

In addition, a specific stakeholder group composed primarily of existing Vancouver hubs formed the equivalent of the community task force. They participated in two focus groups to examine the function and implementation of the hub model. They represented a range of services such as:

- Child care (centre-based for infants through school-age children, including preschool, and links to family child care);
- Family support (parent/child drop-in, early literacy, parent education, etc.); and

- Other community services for children and youth, immigrants, women, families at risk, children with special needs, resource and referral services, health and wellness and employment support programs.

Some participating organizations provide services to aboriginal children and families, while others serve families from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Focus group participants came from both unionized and non-unionized environments. Some work on social justice issues such as poverty and homelessness, and others work in or with recreation, education and crime prevention services. Other active key stakeholders were senior government officials and local business leaders.

Between June 2004 and April 2005, more than 30 other groups and individuals received project materials, attended presentations and/or participated in discussions related to the project. The coordinator also spoke at a large cross-sectoral Vancouver forum on early childhood development (ECD) and child care, where questions about hubs and child care's central role were discussed.

Finally, during May and early June 2005, the coordinator provided keynote presentations about the project for a provincial workshop tour. Approximately 600 participants from various sectors (education, social services, child care, municipal government, early intervention, faith groups, etc.) and communities across the province met to hear about the research support for integrated ECD/child care hubs.

Vancouver Model Summary[12]

The City of Vancouver currently has a network of neighbourhood hubs that strive to provide service integration for child development and child care. Y**W**CA Canada and Y**W**CA Vancouver collaborated with the City of Vancouver to advance its pre-existing plan and vision for integrated service based on the "hub" model.

The city's vision of the "hub" minimizes the barriers that families face in accessing services. Varieties of hub configurations exist and/or are emerging in Vancouver. Currently, the city has at least 12 hubs at various stages of development. Some have been in existence for as long as a decade. In 2002 consultations, the City established the following definition of a "hub" and its commitments to communities:

Hubs:

- Offer a range of integrated child development services, with child care as a cornerstone;
- Build healthy child development opportunities;
- Support both parental and non-parental care;
- Utilize public and community facilities, such as schools, community centres and neighbourhood houses;

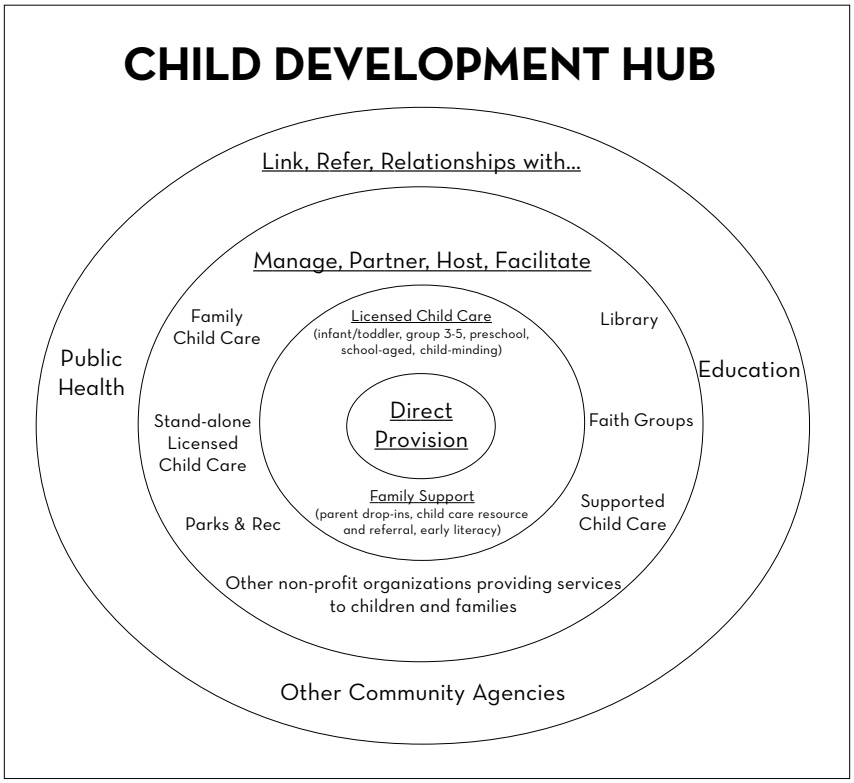
[12] For detailed Vancouver report, see *Blueprints for Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* (2006)

- Require stable base funding to achieve the goals of quality, affordability and accessibility for children and families; and
- Require infrastructure support for planning, outreach and administration.

Hubs are committed to:

- Integrating and/or coordinating a range of neighbourhood-based child care and child development services;
- Proactively assessing and supporting broader family needs — through direct delivery combined with outreach and various linkages in neighbourhoods; and
- Highlighting the importance of — and need for — the full range of high quality, affordable, accessible services for families.

Hub models can be delivered by a number of different organizations working together in different ways, however, providers who work in hubs indicate that leadership from at least one organization in a neighbourhood is required.
Hubs are centrally located in public facilities such as community centres, neighbourhood houses, schools or purpose-built early childhood centres.



The Vancouver Child Development Hub Model consists of three distinct yet inter-related levels of service provision and coordination:

1. An inner core of services that provide a cornerstone for integrated family support and child care. Hubs operate a range of licensed, group, centre-based programs (infant, toddler, 3-5, preschool, child-minding and/or school age care).
   They also provide family support programs such as family place drop-in, resource and referral services, parenting programs and early literacy supports.

2. Management arrangements, partnerships, hosting and/or facilitation providing more formalized links between external and core services, allowing families ease of access. Services may include links and referrals to family child care providers, stand-alone licensed child care, parks and recreation services, libraries, immigration and settlement services, faith groups, supported child care, prevention and early intervention programs and other non-profit organizations providing services to children and families.

3. Less formal relationships with, and linkages to, other systems and services in the community such as public health, justice and education.

Vancouver's hubs develop unique responses to different neighbourhood needs, so no two are identical. For example:

- *Britannia Community Services, working with Eastside Family Place*, has shared space and/or arrangements with various partners providing or linking to 325 licensed group child care spaces as well as family support programs, school, recreation and library services.
- *Collingwood Neighbourhood House* has one main building and multiple locations throughout the neighbourhood. It provides 265 licensed group child care spaces, as well as child care resource and referral, supported child care, family support programs and a range of services for children, youth, adults and seniors. Collingwood Neighbourhood House's relationships throughout the community help families access other nearby services. Through their on-site child care resource and referral program, Collingwood Neighbourhood House also has links with registered and licensed family child care providers in the area.

Accountability

In Vancouver, hubs are operated by non-profit groups with elected Boards of Directors who reflect and respond to the needs of their neighbourhoods. These boards have representation from various partners involved in the hub. Links with other hubs, municipal and provincial staff, and neighbourhood-based stakeholders help to ensure that services are coordinated, responsive and accountable. This is achieved through mechanisms such as centralized finance and administration, staffing flexibility among programs, enhanced community use of public spaces, and leverage of other funding sources.

Barriers

The lack of consistent, stable, and adequate funding and policy support is the most widely recognized barrier to advancing early childhood learning and care in Vancouver. Without it, Vancouver will likely continue to experience a chronic shortage of licensed child care spaces. The relatively few licensed spaces that do exist (serving less than 20% of Vancouver's children) are too expensive for many families. Families who can't access licensed or regulated spaces will continue to experience the stress of trying to 'patch' together services, sometimes with unlicensed, unregulated caregivers where the quality of care is unknown.

Successful hubs do exist in Vancouver, despite the lack of public funding for their operations and infrastructure and the resulting challenges of quality, affordability and access. Nonetheless, most neighbourhoods still have services that are fragmented and under-funded, limiting user access and causing confusing gaps in, and/or duplication of, service.

Recommendations

Vancouver's child development hub model is dependent upon adequate and stable public funding. Hub budgets should not rely primarily on parent fees. With substantial public funding from senior levels of government in place, programs can be affordable, accessible and of high quality. Reasonable user fees will likely still be required for child care. Family support programs will be more accessible while maintaining minimal or no user fees.

Public funds are required for resources and support for service infrastructure, such as:

- Program planning and development
- Administrative support and financial management
- Leadership in neighbourhood outreach, collaboration and networking
- Enhancing service integration
- Program consultation / continuous quality improvement
- Increasing program capacity
- Innovation in programming

Well-resourced hubs do not exist in a policy or funding vacuum. In order to improve outcomes for *all* children and families, high quality health and education services, food security, adequate housing, and employment opportunities are essential.

The City of Vancouver will continue to provide small but significant financial support for program enhancements, special projects, new approaches, etc.; however, most of the funding for hubs should flow from the provincial government (through both dedicated provincial funds and federal transfers).

Collaboration is essential to moving forward with integrated services for children and families. Yet, local collaboration alone is not enough to establish a comprehensive ECLC system. Policy coordination and substantial funding from senior levels of government are required for full system implementation.

Quality services are dependent on a well-trained, well-compensated work force with adequate wages and satisfactory working conditions. Staff must be well informed and aware of the continuum of services in the community in order to utilize community resources and work in partnerships to meet the specific needs of each family.

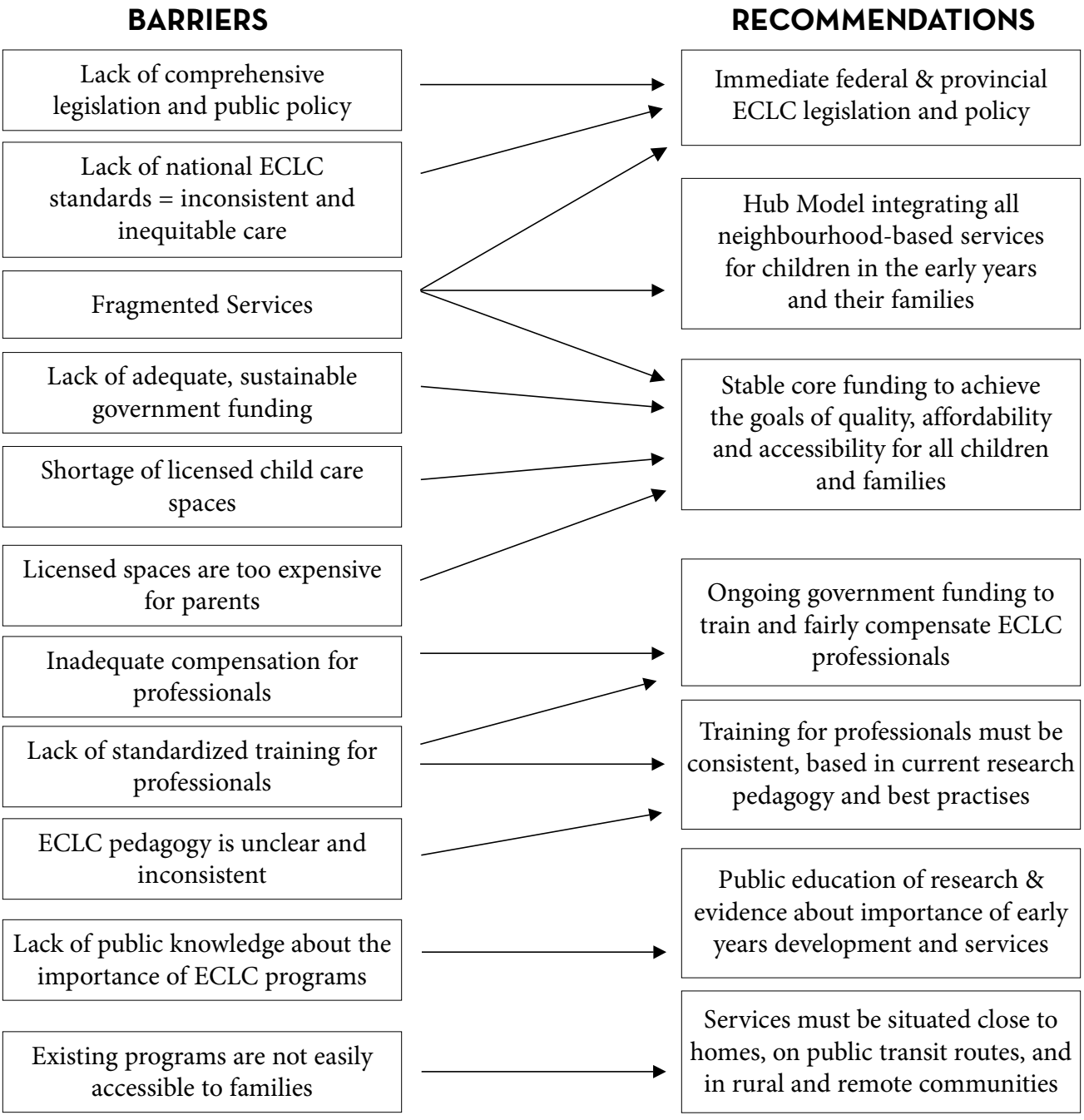
Cost and Benefit Analysis

Working with consultant DanRosen, the Vancouver community coordinator developed a series of financial models to estimate the costs of the city's hub model strategy. First, the estimated costs and benefits of a universal ECLC system for children aged 2-5 confirmed that every $1 invested yields a return of approximately $2. Building on these cost estimates, the second analysis incorporated the incremental costs of universal, quality and inclusive child care for children under 12 within child development hubs in Vancouver. The third and final analysis provided options for the existing Vancouver child development hub strategy to advance under various scenarios of increasing public investment.

These models may be helpful to organizers in building their own community-specific cases for investment in early childhood learning and care, as per the recommendation made by the Halifax task force. The models are preliminary and based on broad estimates, yet they demonstrate an approach to ensuring that new federal and provincial government funding for child care will result in concrete progress toward the goals of quality, affordability, accessibility, and expansion.

SHARED BARRIERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project participants in Halifax, Cambridge, Martensville, and Vancouver identified barriers to achieving a quality, integrated, accessible early childhood learning and care system, and offered recommendations to address those barriers. Though there were issues unique to each community[13], the following chart documents the barriers and recommendations *shared* by all four sites[14]:



[13] See *Blueprints for Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care (2006)*
[14] The barriers identified in this chart resemble barriers experienced by Toronto First Duty and in Québec.

FRAMING AND RESOLVING THE BARRIERS

Understanding the types of barriers, and how they interact, can facilitate the development of effective strategies to manage and overcome them. The following subheadings frame the barriers and potential resolutions, and are interconnected.

POLITICAL BARRIERS

Political barriers are linked to entrenched policy positions held by particular governments or political parties. Many political barriers stem from a lack of understanding that child care is good for childhood development, the community, and the economy. Conflicts arise when fiscal conservatism and limited definitions of 'family values' collide with the views of advocates for women's equality and human rights. The existing value-laden political discourse is a significant barrier to achieving a high-quality, effective child care system in Canada.

Political Commitment

Prior to recent federal / provincial / territorial agreements (i.e. Early Childhood Development Initiative, the Multi-lateral Framework Agreement), the role played by governments in child care was primarily "residual."

Child care (like health care, education, public housing) is a type of social policy "conventionally labelled (as part of) the welfare state… in order to protect or promote the material well-being of individuals, families or groups on grounds of fairness, compassion, or justice." (Brooks and Milijan, 2003, p. 146) Each country defines its welfare policy differently. Some leave many parents to their own devices when it comes to services such as child care.

The French use a mechanism called *Contrats de Ville,* to ensure community responsible plans that still reflect their macro-level principles of insertion, preventing exclusion, economic and social development, and partnership. These include social welfare services for the protection of children and the promotion of families, and associated family benefits (Cannan, 1997, p. 86-87). France views social development "as the paradigm for a future welfare state, tackling as it does the connected issues of citizenship, employment, exclusion, the quality of neighbourhood life, and the changing structures and ties of family." (Cannan, 1997, p. 101)

In July 2005, Britain's Labour government announced the goal of enshrining in law parents' legitimate expectation of accessible high quality child care and early years provision as part of the modern 21st century welfare state (Hughes, 2005). The British government states that the needs of children and their parents are at the heart of the proposed legislation.

To achieve meaningful and equal rights for women, governments must deliver high quality, affordable early childhood learning and care services that are accessible and attractive to families whatever the employment status of mothers. Mothers and their young children have continued to pay a high price due to a lack of public action. Recent events — for example, the 2004 federal budget,

which included five billion dollars over five years for the development of a national program of ECLC — indicate political commitment. This is a change that YWCA Canada and others have long advocated, yet much more progress is necessary.

Intergovernmental Responsibility

Member of Parliament John Godfrey, a champion for Canada's child care system in former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's and former Prime Minister Paul Martin's governments, addressed professionals at the International Meeting on Developing Comprehensive Community-Based Early Childhood Systems. He described some of the macro-level barriers that had challenged the Liberal Government of the day, including:

- Lack of integration among government departments and programs, both within each level of government and between levels;
- Difficulties negotiating change and including the voices of advocates because the legislative and executive branches are the same at both the federal and provincial levels;
- Local governments' ability to make improvements only with the full support of all levels of government; and
- Need for politicians at all levels to work together to accomplish the creation of a universal system for all children (Halfron et al., 2003).

Hirota, Jacobowitz and Brown point out that "A focus on policy often requires reform efforts to move from local city-level arenas to the realm of state politics and policymakers. Policy work requires the organizational capacity to look toward and act at both the state and local levels simultaneously. Policy change is not a one-step process. It requires solid groundwork and the ability to juggle multiple strategies, leveraging energy and influence across them." (Hirota, Jacobowitz and Brown, 2004, p. 3)

In the process of developing 'blueprints' for ECLC, community coordinators invited senior level bureaucrats, school trustees, city councillors, and opposition members of provincial legislatures, among others, to participate. While each blueprint is community-specific, all project findings will be shared with municipal, regional, provincial and federal levels of government.

Jane Jenson points to the benefits of partnerships and a redesign of relationships between communities and the state along with a heightened role for municipal governments (Jenson, 2004, p. viii). The Halifax task force recommended the creation of a Municipal Planning Process to ensure that Hub centres are available in every neighbourhood, and to develop an expansion schedule consistent with funding available from Nova Scotia, through the National ECLC program (Wolstenholme, 2005).

Fragmentation to Integration

"In the absence of coherent public policy, a confusing array of services for young children has developed resulting in gaps and duplication that makes a shaky foundation for new investments." (CCAAC, 2004, p. 15)

Current public policy and a lack of funding have resulted in fragmentation of service. For example, programs targeted to the poor do not build a comprehensive system in which all children receive equitable quality care. Such targeting also continues to marginalize lower income families. The universal approach advocated by the child care movement actually builds community cohesion because when "all families and children benefit equally, there is a high level of public support and ownership of the system, … (while) 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." (CCAAC, 2004)

Sue Colley defines integration as both conceptual and structural. "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." (Colley, 2005, p. 11)

During task force meetings, 'system integration' was conceptualized on a continuum that stretches from complete fragmentation to coordination to collaboration to authentic integration. All task forces showed substantive movement along this continuum and developed models centred on a 'hub' of service delivery. The hub model integrates the separate systems into a seamless range of services within the community, providing a centralized "basket" or "menu" of early childhood learning and care choices for every parent with young children.

Sheila Kamerman (2003) analyses a number of international variations on early learning and care, and contrasts integrated systems. She praises Sweden and Denmark as exemplary models for their emphasis on quality, low parent fees, universality, good salaries for caregivers, and their fundamental assumption "that all children will have a right to participate regardless of their parents' employment status." (Kamerman, 2003, p. 9)

Penny Milton (2001) points out the quintessential problem facing integrated child care services — the complex interaction among federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments that complicates both regulation and funding. To make it desirable for parents, an integrated model needs to "allow participation for variable lengths of the day, avoids increased bureaucratization, addresses the anxieties of practitioners (possibly through cross-training) and provides sufficient resources to support coordination and integration." (Milton, 2001 p. 191) When this revolutionary model was first envisioned, no one in Canada was doing it yet. To reach that goal, institutional barriers must be resolved.

The European "Save the Children" child care service delivery model (Lloyd, 1997) resembles the Canadian concept of the "hub." According to this model, "the sum of centre-based family support services is greater than its parts… The centre lends strength and acts as a resource to other family support activities in the community… Its impact derives to a large extent from this particular method of delivery." (Lloyd, 1997, p. 154) Lloyd describes child care centres that extend to become multi-functional. This breaks down the care-education divide and the tendency to fragment services, conceptually and in practise. According to Lloyd, the success of such a model depends on a national child care policy, and strategic planning on the part of local and central governments.

The Government of Canada currently funds the Integration Network Project. Its mandate is to develop new policy recommendations to address the fragmentation of "care" programs in child care centres and "education" (kindergarten) programs. The Network produces and disseminates information about the problems and engages the broader early childhood learning and care community in a "new dialogue" about integrated service delivery. McCain and Romanow (2005) recommend a single service with multiple functions as more cost-effective and more responsive to the changing needs of families. Their advice to government officials before they met together in February 2005 was that "any agreement should encourage provinces to rationalize their early years services to provide a stable platform for expansion." Simultaneously, "system transformation is enormously complex, and cannot be blueprinted in advance. What is needed is a broad new vision, a statement of directional goals, and mechanisms (strategies and structures) for implementation, monitoring and problem-solving as the reform evolves." (Fullan, 2003, p. 115)

Women's Political Representation

Another political barrier to achieving a comprehensive early childhood learning and care system is the under-representation of women in decision-making positions. Marilyn Gittell and colleagues (1999) point out that women are often excluded from political and other power networks. "Evidence shows that women's issues receive a higher priority and are more likely to be acted upon when there is a critical mass (at least 30%) of women in policy-making bodies. Canada has not yet achieved this critical mass." (FAFIA, 2004) The province of Québec is an exception, where women in leadership positions, such as Pauline Marois, championed child care at the political level. The result of this is evident in Québec's present comprehensive child care system.

Organizational Champions

Champions, or influential leaders, are significant to transformational change. Kira Heinrichs (2003) defines the "champion" as either a politician or critic for the portfolio who wants the support of advocates as much as advocates want his or her support. She suggests perceiving the champion as an "ally in the struggle to promote children's issues inside the government of the day." (Heinrichs, 2003, p. 21)

The British government appoints local authorities as their "champions," to voice their views in the planning and delivery of services addressing the real needs of families. Children, Young People and Families Minister Beverley Hughes said:

> All children deserve the best start in life, and we know that early education and child care is central to ensuring that. High quality integrated care and education helps lay the foundations for success at school and in later life, and help to address the effects of poverty and disadvantage. But the availability of child care is also a key factor in allowing parents to make a real choice about how they better balance their work and home lives.
>
> - Hughes, 2005

Toronto Councillor Olivia Chow was one such champion for the Toronto First Duty concept. Pauline Marois was a champion for early childhood learning and care in Québec, while Premier Gary Doer and Minister Christine Melnick were champions in Manitoba. Another political champion is Ken Dryden. He is publicly recognized as the champion for Canada's Foundations program and has worked tirelessly in the past year to promote his vision and engage the support of provincial counterparts, the media and the public at large.

Champions for child care come from all sectors. David Dodge of the Bank of Canada, in his 2003 annual general meeting address to child advocates, said:

> We are well organized with respect to investment in post-secondary education… but for ECD, there is no institution or small set of organizations to provide such an institutional framework… If… an authority were created, it could only function effectively by acting through, and in concert with, very local community groups, employers, local health authorities, and other government departments. This is a tall order!
>
> - Dodge, 2003

ECONOMIC BARRIERS

Economic barriers exist when new ideas require enhanced funding by municipal, provincial or federal partners; or the sharing of financial resources between agencies.

Tax Cuts vs. Services for Women and Children

Making child care a publicly funded social program is often pitted against the idea of providing tax breaks for parents. Tax breaks have been used in some provincial jurisdictions and have not resulted in building new child care spaces. "Since 1998 Canada has had annual surpluses, but the federal government has been more interested in tax cuts and debt reduction than in reinvesting in social supports that help women." (Yalnizyan and Associates, 2005)

According to Evelyn Ferguson (1998, p. 209), the Conservative position that tax breaks will offer choices to parents is regressive. Tax breaks would offer the greatest benefit to high income families, while subsidies help only the lowest income. Middle income families receive no real benefit. Ferguson suggests governments provide more direct funding to the system and/or to families/women that buy or provide that care.

By comparing federal budget promises with federal public accounts, Yalnizyan and Associates (2005) were able to trace where the money was cut during Canada's deficit era, and where it was spent during the surplus era. Cuts and changes made to vital programs — such as Employment Insurance, the Child Tax Benefit, housing, and the Canada Health and Social Transfer — during the deficit era were never fully reversed during surplus years. Almost $12 billion annually was cut from these social supports between 1994 and 1997. Once the federal government began registering surpluses in 1998, it allocated $152 billion to tax cuts and $42 billion to new program spending on initiatives such as

defence and innovation, while programs that benefit women lost out. Only a fraction of new spending went to affordable housing or quality child care — programs that make a central difference in women's lives (FAFIA, 2005). In 2004-2005, the government of British Columbia reduced support to the regulated child care sector at a time when transfer payments from the federal government for early childhood increased (Anderson, 2005). This is another example of economic policy decisions that negatively affect women.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

One of the key barriers across Canada has been the "historical reluctance of many stakeholders, including governments and the child care community, to analyse and discuss the actual public investment required to achieve returns. In recent years, with support from economists, the Canadian child care community has worked to quantify and share both the costs and economic benefits of child care." (Anderson, 2005) The Vancouver community coordinator conducted a three-stage analysis of the costs and benefits of the city's child development hub model, given different funding scenarios. They further estimated the incremental costs of high quality, universal child development Hub models and provided options for the existing Vancouver child development Hub strategy to advance under various scenarios of increasing public investment.

Several other cost and benefit analyses have also been conducted, for example: *Patchwork to Framework* (CCAAC, 2004), the Cleveland/Krashinsky document *Financing Early Learning and Child care in Canada* (CCSD, 2005), and *The benefits and costs of good child care: The economic rationale for public investment in young children* (CRRU, 1998).

The French have found their way around early childhood systems barriers by integrating budgets from separate departments in common programs. The American Finance project also recommends more flexibility in existing funding streams such as coordinating funds at the program level, blending funding streams at the county or state level, or braiding these funding streams (Halfon, et al., 2003).

Collaborative Funding

Hirota, Jacobowitz and Brown's analysis of American school reform (2004) asserts that collaborative funding can heighten the potential for policy impact and social change by:

- Engaging a range of private and corporate foundations;
- Making available a large pool of funds; and
- Leveraging members' interests, influence and knowledge.

The funding provided to Toronto First Duty by the Atkinson Foundation and others is a Canadian example of how collaborative funding can jump-start reform efforts. The Atkinson Foundation stated from the outset that it is not responsible for funding programs that should be publicly funded. Foundations and fundraising are not substitutes for public policy and funding. The Vancouver task force blueprint suggests integrated hubs will themselves leverage other local funding sources (for example the municipality, foundations, etc.) to strengthen coordination and support for hub services (Anderson, 2005).

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

Institutional barriers may arise when new ideas conflict with the "current operation of established social and political institutions." (Halfon, et al., 2003) Coordination of different community services demands the harmonizing of existing policies and operations across health, social services, and educational agencies. This can be problematic. "Professionals often let their personal biases and interests interfere with the coordination of services. Thus, it is important to create incentives for people and organizations to act in a new way. Such incentives need not necessarily be financial but should emphasize how coordination would result in improved services and outcomes." (Halfon, et al., 2003)

According to Gábor Halász (2003), major system change and reform occurred in Hungary during a period of overall social-political transformation.

Bîrzea and Fartusnic, in reporting on major system change in the Rumanian school system, suggest it is during the stage of *transformation* when structural reforms must occur. "Once structural reforms are implemented, change becomes an ongoing part of the system; and for the first time in the reform process, real institutionalization becomes possible." (Halász, 2003, p. 77) This leads organizers to the reassuring conclusion that not all the answers need to be known at the beginning, but rather that critical problem-solving allows stakeholders to recommend or make decisions based on emerging realities rather than hypothetical models, while transformation is underway.

Sustainable systemic reform can be achieved by projects that combine policy change strategies with efforts to build permanent, broad-based constituencies that will advocate for and monitor such reform (Hirota, et al., 2004, p. 1).

The task force in Saskatchewan evolved into a more permanent organizational structure for the community — a child care advocacy organization, the Early Learning Child Care Coalition of Saskatchewan. Its mandate is to promote and support quality community-based early learning and child care services that benefit children, families and the public; and is in the best interests of society. YWCA Halifax and CUPE Nova Scotia (key members of the Halifax task force) are discussing a joint application to Status of Women Canada to fund a more permanent child care advocacy structure as well. In British Columbia and Ontario, connections to the existing child care movement were strengthened.

GEOGRAPHIC BARRIERS

Geographic barriers exist due to the inequitable access to services in rural, northern, First Nations, and inner-city communities. Most resources are found within large- or middle-sized urban areas and much creativity is required to ensure fair and equitable access to services. Many families are not within practical distance of child care resources. Distance can also hamper collaboration between professionals who work in rural or remote areas.

WORKFORCE BARRIERS

Workforce barriers are endemic to Canada's under-resourced child care patchwork. Low wages and inadequate working conditions hamper the expansion of a child care system for Canadians. There are inconsistencies in provincial and territorial training requirements. In Canada, there are labour supply problems in nearly all 'care' services, including health care, social work, and child care. In the case of child care, this labour shortage is a reflection of inconsistent and inadequate wages for ECLC professionals. When these child care workforce realities are juxtaposed with the higher paid, unionized, and well trained teacher workforce, the nature of the barrier to integrated models becomes clear.

There are no training or qualification standards for ECLC professionals in Canada, resulting in the delivery of inconsistent care. Some international child care advocates support the integration of various types of ECLC jobs into one core, multi-skilled position to work across settings and age groups. This position is not yet widely held by Canadian child care or education advocates.

Great Britain began its National Child Care Strategy in 1998, "when major expansion of child care and early years services was envisaged to support parental employment." (Cameron, 2005, p. 9) Since then, government has been slowly realizing the importance of developing the workforce. Currently, Britain seems to hold three main policy positions for this issue: 1) To improve the present workers; 2) To recruit workers from more diverse backgrounds; and 3) To upgrade the quality of child care jobs. Reforming the occupational model into a children's worker or teacher/pedagogue requires reassessing pay and conditions to make the rewards appropriate to the job. This will require more direct public subsidy than is currently available and may create new opportunities for a New Zealand style system of subsidy related to levels of trained staff (Cameron, 2005, p. 19).

In Canada, Québec encountered challenges when first trying to expand the integrated child care system due to a lack of trained staff. Wages were increased to attract new entrants.

In *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care*, three of the four task forces described barriers that prevent workforce integration. Since post-secondary education is under provincial jurisdiction, then provincial policy change is the priority.

Sue Colley researched international examples of early childhood workforce integration. New Zealand, Spain and Sweden integrated their professions into *the "early childhood teacher."* Alternatively, Finland, Norway and Denmark adopted the "*pedagogue,*" who works with the "whole child" addressing body, mind, emotions, creativity, history, and social identity. Colley reports that, in general, most countries connect core professionals with assistants. In Spain, for example, children over 3 are typically taught by teachers, while most working with younger children are assistants (Colley, 2005, p. 6).

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Psychological or attitudinal barriers can emerge when beliefs and values held by various members of the community conflict. As a result, personal resistance to new ideas can occur. The community coordinator in Vancouver attested to challenges posed by psychological barriers in her blueprint analysis:

> The Vancouver work under this project indicates that research and evidence are not always understood or accepted by the public, including decision makers, government staff, and even some of our partners and allies working more broadly within the child and youth movement. Acceptance appears particularly difficult when the evidence and research contradict individually held values.
>
> - Anderson, 2005

Christiane Frischmuth's study of Zambia (1997) stated that community transformation altered the perceptions and behaviours of all community members, including the organizers themselves. Organizers realized they did not need to know all the answers. Instead, by asking the people in the community about their hopes and dreams, and motivating them to take action, important progress was made.

SOCIOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Sociological barriers arise when new ideas diverge from "the established mores or cultural values of subgroups within the society." (Halfron, et al., 2003) Each community is diverse and various groups may have different child-rearing beliefs and strategies. Sociological barriers can cause differences in the way common policy goals are implemented internationally, and even between provinces within Canada.

Successful social action campaigns address societal problems, strengthen community organization, empower members of that community and raise the level of public discussion. To accomplish these goals, organizers must frame the issue in a way that speaks to broad social problems such as social justice and economic inequality, helping the public to recognize its agreement with the values on which the proposed actions are founded (Rubin and Rubin, 2001).

Identification with a group, the sharing of values and the development of trust are significant precursors to the "creation of social capital and to civic action." (Gitell, 1999, p. 62) Members who act together based on common values and norms build networks and coalitions, and thus experience increased status and greater power to influence decisions and public policy.

Transformative organizing also means mobilizing the power needed to get things done. When consensus is not reached, politicians and decision-makers often delay action when presented with contradictory voices and divergent requests. "For implementation to be successful, power means

focusing on reconciling differences and establishing alliances among diverse parties. You cannot alter a complex system unless you mobilize a critical mass of different groups working together." (Fullan, 2003, p. 115)

Valuing Care

To be fully engaged in their communities, all parents require access to quality child care, regardless of whether they are stay-at-home parents or employed outside of the home. An important factor "missing from the debate has been the theoretical perspective that highlights the centrality of the work of caring in all child care situations, including those within the family." (Ferguson 1998, p. 191) This observation directly addresses the concerns expressed by task force members around conflicting attitudes toward parental care vs. child care, when they could be conceptualized as more alike than different. All four community blueprints included family choice for part-time care, full-time care, occasional care, as well as education and family support programs geared to support women in their myriad roles — parents, workers, community volunteers, and students.

Ferguson (1998) correctly anticipated a time when child care would no longer be seen as a private responsibility and the welfare of children would be recognized as a public concern. Ferguson conceives of children as Canadian citizens with a right to quality care, not left poor and vulnerable because society does not financially value their mothers' work (Ferguson, 1998, p. 209).

Public Education

Sociological barriers can be resolved via public meetings and workshops to share information (Mazmanian and Nienaber, 1984). When community members and policy makers understand the importance of the issue and are engaged in the realization of a plan, sociological barriers can be overcome.

Project task forces encouraged community involvement through focus groups with parents and child care providers and face-to-face meetings with unrepresented groups. The community coordinator of the project in Vancouver made presentations about *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* in May and June 2005. Almost 600 participants from diverse backgrounds (education, social services, child care, municipal government, early intervention, faith groups, etc.) across the province met to hear about the research support for integrated ECLC hubs, the Vancouver process, and to discuss their own successes and challenges with integrating ECLC services in their communities.[15]

To increase public awareness and consistent knowledge transfer, the community coordinator of the project in Vancouver developed several clearly-written papers (Anderson, 2004-2005) to provide a context for the project. These types of tools were transferable from one province to another, and were shared between the four participating communities.

Another tool for effective communication and negotiation is the use and analysis of data (Hirota, et al., 2004). Project coordinators of *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* conducted environmental scans to provide the current data and reality checks that were instrumental in the early stages of the project.

[15] See http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/mapping_pres.htm for the presentations.

Community Involvement

- ***Coalitions***
  Rubin and Rubin (2001) point to the power of coalitions that gather together various constituencies and strengthen their voices via single, powerful campaigns. The Child Care Advocacy Association's Council of Advocates is an example of a mega-coalition in Canada. The coalition includes the Canadian Labour Congress, Campaign 2000, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Canadian Association for Community Living, the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, Y**W**CA Canada and others.

- ***Engaging Stakeholders***
  Battle and Torjman (2002) recommend waking Ottawa from what they term a 'Rip Van Winkle slumber' by engaging a number of community stakeholders as working partners in transformation, including business, labour, municipalities, education, advocates and researchers. The four community task forces were deliberately structured to include key stakeholders, including families.

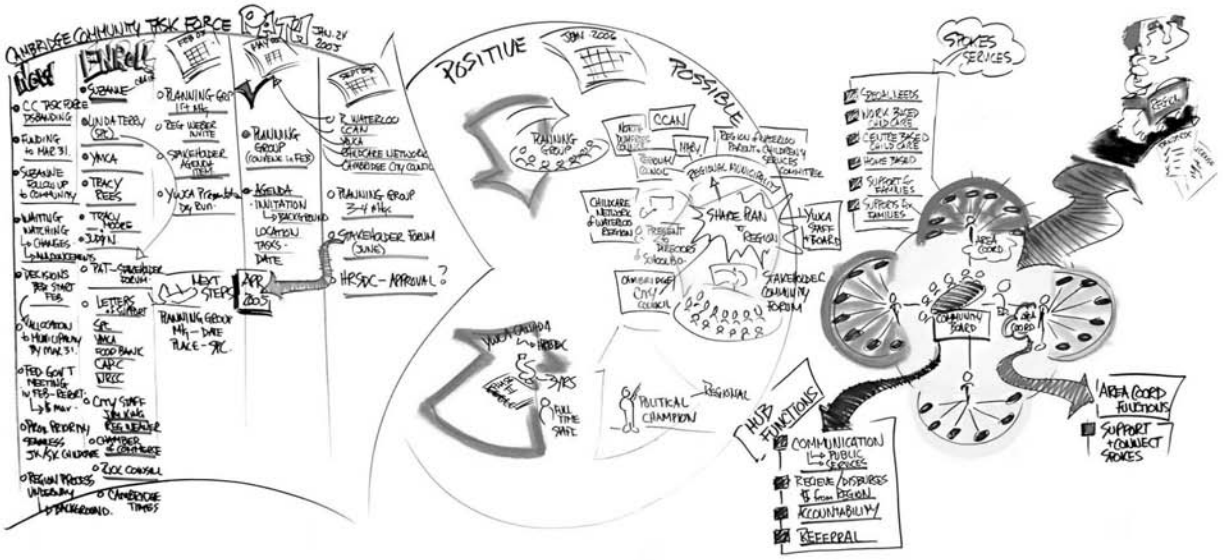
- ***Accountability***
  Mazmanian and Nienaber (1984) describe the benefits of highly visible, "fishbowl" processes that are completely transparent to the wider community, addressing the accountability concerns expressed by child care activists. The establishment of a citizen's committee composed of community and organizational leadership informs and mobilizes people. The publication of an evolving study brochure can encourage public debate on significant issues. Mazmanian and Nienaber emphasize the need for one lead organization charged with facilitating community-based organizing and discourse, the role played by Y**W**CA Member Associations in each of the four project sites. They conclude that these strategies promise to "enrich the public interest regulatory model with elements of civic republicanism and discursive democracy." (Mazmanian and Nienaber, 1984, p. 447)

  The child care agreements signed "in principle" by provincial and federal governments to date offer some limited opportunity for transparency, monitoring and sharing in order to ensure accountability; however, most provinces are reluctant to agree to a reporting process that makes them accountable to the federal government or even other provinces. The child care advocacy movement is left to be the watchdog for public policy for children and families.

  With funding from Social Development Canada, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada is working with interested parties to analyse ECLC policy developments and investments, including those under existing and new federal / provincial / territorial agreements.

  The task force process of this project resulted in participants making a commitment to the action plan and varying degrees of "ownership" about who would do what to actualize the plan. The Cambridge task force used a creative facilitation technique called PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope)[16] to visually capture the action plan and identify responsibility:

[16] PATH was designed and developed by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien and Marsha Forest beginning in 1991.



- ***Communication and Technology***

  The Internet is a revolutionary organizational medium that adds to traditional grassroots strategies. It has the ability to transform the way non-profit groups organize, energize and mobilize activists in support of a cause. In some parts of the world, it has become a staple of political dissent (Proudfoot, 2005). Blogging is being used as an alternative media and outreach tool. As activists interact with each other through online community forums or physical meetings in the offline world, they become more engaged and passionate." (Proudfoot, 2005, p. 5)

  The Integration Network Project[17] is using the Internet in a more public way, to offer a discussion forum for the work of integrating kindergarten and ECE systems in Canada.

  The four community task forces made extensive use of the Internet to sustain connections among community developers who were engaged in pan-Canadian work, but who were geographically isolated from one another. An electronic bulletin board provided opportunities to post reflections, respond to participants, share important information and provide a safe place to vent, albeit in virtual space. Frequently used modes of communication were emails and teleconferences.

  This report and accompanying documents are available to the public for download on Y**W**CA Canada's website – http://www.ywca.ca.

  A "thorough, decisive, and inclusive strategic planning process that can serve as a foundation for results accountability to funders and community members" can foster community ownership of social change (Halfon, et al., 2003, p. 37).

[17] http://www.inproject.ca/

CONCLUSION

All four communities involved in *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* developed or expanded individual community visions that are remarkably similar. Centred on the neighbourhood Hub Model, they demonstrate that diverse communities can develop common goals and approaches. The results of this project clearly indicate that Canadians in distinct communities across the country *do* support a common model for the provision of early childhood services.

The barriers and proposed resolutions pinpoint the systemic changes that are required in order to develop integrated systems of ECLC. Interestingly, these barriers are overarching and affect all four communities involved. Relying on information from international examples, Toronto First Duty, and the emerging Hub system in the four sites, it is understood that there are solutions to these barriers.

The good will demonstrated by project participants fuelled a momentum to go farther toward a more fully articulated integrated service model; however, the scope of this project did not allow for the development of full fledge pilots. Nonetheless, the vibrant synergy that informed the discussions at the community level, flowed between the four sites, and shows the value of continuing this important work on behalf of Canadian children and families.

In the four communities involved in this project — Halifax, Nova Scotia; Cambridge, Ontario; Martensville, Saskatchewan; and Vancouver, British Columbia — the key development work has been done. The community engagement model has been validated, and interest from larger stakeholders in various jurisdictions continues. There is interest in making the quantum leap toward fully integrated systems from the macro to micro level.

Universal quality child care is the foundation on which Canada will transform itself into an equality based society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All four communities[18] taking part in *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care* demonstrated a desire and need for a universal, integrated, quality system of early childhood services. The blueprint developed by each community highlights specific yet similar challenges. Moving from early childhood service fragmentation to integration requires a progressive, ambitious and transformative vision with realistic and achievable goals.

The barriers to a comprehensive approach to early childhood services are grounded in insufficient public funding, disjointed public policies, professional differentials, and attitudes that influence our understanding of the needs of Canadian families with young children. The community task forces developed many useful strategies to help mediate these obstructions; and identified tools to carry out the transformations required.

Based on their findings, Y**W**CA Canada has developed a series of recommendations, to move from the current service patchwork to a comprehensive system of early childhood learning and child care.

1. **Governments must establish the necessary mechanisms for funding, legislation and accountability, including:**
    a. Public funding – Governments have primary responsibility to fund early childhood learning and care services. Funding must be sufficient to promote quality, with predictable increases to provide access for all children whose parents wish them to participate. Affordable parent fees would not hinder participation.
    b. Legislation – A Federal Early Learning and Child Care Act would entitle all children access to early childhood learning and care services that are high quality, developmentally appropriate, affordable and inclusive of all children regardless of their socio-economic status, location, differing abilities, culture or language.
    c. Public accountability – Provincial and territorial governments would be required by federal legislation to develop five-year plans reflecting the principles and containing timelines, quality and service level targets and mechanisms to measure real progress in building comprehensive family and centre-based early childhood services. The federal government would be held accountable to Canadians through regular reporting to Parliament. Funding to service providers would be conditional on their meeting service and quality standards.
    d. Service coherence – Service integration would provide a stable base for expansion. As the first phase of a Canadian early childhood learning and care strategy, incentives to provinces/territories would encourage the integration of early learning, care and family support services, including directly-funded federal programs such as the Community Action Plan for Children and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program.
    e. Public/Non-profit delivery – To support accountability, services would be delivered and expanded in the public/non-profit sector with a transition plan developed for existing commercial operators.

[18] Halifax, Nova Scotia; Cambridge, Ontario; Martensville, Saskatchewan; Vancouver, British Columbia.

2. **All levels of government must develop coherent public policy focusing on the integration of early childhood services, including:**

    a. Rationalize funding mechanisms:
        i. Replace targeted, stigmatizing child care fee subsidies for parents with adequate and stable base funding for programs. Direct funding of child care programs removes a major barrier to service integration.
        ii. Promote flexibility in existing categorical early childhood funding streams including coordinating funds at the program level, blending funding streams at the local or provincial/territorial level, or braiding these funding streams (Halfon, et al., 2003).
        iii. Move toward a single funding stream for early childhood learning and care services.

    b. Rationalize service delivery:
        i. Provide incentives and supports to existing service providers to develop multi-functional, fully integrated care, education and family support services. This breaks down the care-education-parenting divide that fragments services, conceptually and in practise.
        ii. As a more cost-effective and family-responsive approach, develop new early childhood programs as a single service with multiple functions.
        iii. Support service providers to respond to the changing needs of families by offering flexible enrolment options.
        iv. Equitably distribute resources to ensure fair access for communities outside large- or middle-sized urban areas.

    c. Rationalize policy:
        i. Harmonizing existing policies and operations across health, social services and educational agencies by providing incentives that emphasize how coordination results in improved services and outcomes for families (Halfon, et al., 2003).
        ii. Develop a common early learning, care and family support curriculum drawing from the best of each of the early childhood service streams.
        iii. Develop a common regulatory and accountability framework for early childhood service providers drawing from the best of the early childhood service streams.

3. **Support the development of a qualified early childhood workforce**

    An integrated early childhood service requires a qualified workforce. The current pre- and in-service training of the early years professions has not kept pace with modern pedagogical demands, nor does it sufficiently respond to the social, economic and cultural challenges facing today's families with young children. Provincial/territorial governments must take steps to:

    a. Improve wages and working conditions in child care to promote the recruitment and retention of qualified staff.
    b. Recognize a continuum of qualifications facilitating a career path for an early childhood workforce that reflects differentiated education and levels of responsibilities.

c. Support the capacity of ECE university degree programs to offer an integrated education/early childhood education credential that combines responsibilities and skills required to take a lead role in integrated early childhood settings.

d. Support the capacity of post-secondary education institutions to provide professional development and continuing education.

e. Move toward a single, gradated credential as the qualification for early childhood settings.

4. Support research, resource and accountability development

a. Develop criteria that measures improvements in system integration and provide incentives to jurisdictions that reward movement toward integration.

b. Expand support for demonstration sites to act as models of service integration.

c. Document and communicate the useful policy and implementation lessons of system development. This would include details on intergovernmental collaborations, governance agreements, training materials for integrated early childhood staffing, and assessment and research tools.

d. The Federal government continues its support for research and policy development that addresses service fragmentation. This includes the work of the Child Care Research and Resource Unit (University of Toronto) and the Integration Network Project.

e. Further develop the costing models developed by Anderson and Cleveland detailing the cost/benefits of the hub and service integration strategies. These tools can quantify the actual public investment required to achieve social and economic returns.

5. Municipal, provincial, territorial and federal public officials must take responsibility for horizontal and vertical integration among and between government departments at all levels

a. Improved channels of negotiation and communication between and among all levels of government (municipal, regional, provincial and federal) such as the development of an intergovernmental strategy model that would redesign the relationships between communities and the state and a heightened role for local governments (Jenson, 2004, p. viii).

b. Support the creation of local planning processes to ensure that integrated services are available in every neighbourhood, and develop an expansion schedule consistent with available funding through the National Early Learning and Child Care program (Wolstenholme, 2005).

6. Create social change

a. Support stakeholder/community involvement – The creation of a national system of early learning and child care requires fundamental social change. Change requires resources to support individual and organizational champions and the meaningful involvement of women and other stakeholder groups. Governments are responsible for informing the public of the value of early learning and child care.

i. Support community involvement that allows diverse groups of stakeholders to engage in

all levels of system development. Working partners in transformation, include parents, business, labour, municipalities, education, service providers, advocates, and researchers.

ii. Make resources available to organizations charged with acting as champions for integrated early learning and child care services. They will facilitate community-based organizing and discourse about early childhood care and education services. Politicians, corporate leaders, academics and organizations must be willing to champion early learning and child care.

iii. Support advocacy organizations as the prime knowledge base of early learning and child care.

b. Child care and other key social issues directly affecting the lives of women can be positively impacted when women are proportionally represented in political office and civil dialogue. This includes:

i. The active participation of women, as the primary users and providers of early learning and child care services, must be included at all levels of systems planning.

ii. Political parties actively perusing the engagement of women candidates as "Evidence shows that women's issues receive a higher priority and are more likely to be acted upon when there is a critical mass (at least 30%) of women in policy-making bodies. Canada has not yet achieved this critical mass." (FAFIA, 2004) The province of Québec is an exception, where women in leadership positions, such as Pauline Marois, championed child care at the political level. The result of this is evident in Québec's present comprehensive child care system.

c. Promote public awareness of the assets of quality early learning and child care service. This includes:

i. A pan-Canadian public awareness campaign demonstrating the broad community outcomes of public investments in early learning and child care.

ii. Promoting early learning and child care as a service for all families that responds to the growing and varied needs of families for pre- and postnatal information, drop-in, playgroups and respite programs, as well as full-time, part-time or occasional early learning and care. These are all part of an integrated system of early learning and child care.

iii. Promoting the cost-effectiveness of early childhood services. Spending on quality early learning and child care programs is a social investment that returns $2 for every $1 invested. Public funding to parents in the form of vouchers for child care does not provide comparable social or financial benefits. Parents of young families need financial supports, but these are not a replacement for an early learning and child care system anymore than vouchers are a replacement for an education or health care services.

d. Educate policy makers

i. Require governments to use a gender based analysis in the creation of municipal/provincial/territorial and federal budgets.

ii. Develop education materials for decision makers.

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