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WHAT IS THE FAMILY SUPPORTS INSTITUTE ONTARIO?

The Family Supports Institute Ontario is a new organization that will promote family friendly policy, research and provide opportunities for professional development. Its primary goal is to develop capacity amongst family support practitioners who work in a variety of settings across the province of Ontario. Using the Metro Association of Family Resource Programs and the Ontario Association of Family Resource Programs as its foundation, the Family Supports Institute Ontario will bring together practitioners working in Family Resource Programs, (FRPs), Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC), Community Action Programs for Children and Canada's Prenatal Nutrition Programs (CAPC/CPNP) to name a few.

new

Membership Rates

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE
Organization/agency	\$100
Individual Friends and Supporters	\$80
Full-time students	\$25

Membership Form

Name _____

Home Address _____

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Agency or School _____ Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone: Home _____ Business _____

Email address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please send all mailings to: my home address my business address receipt please

Cheques should be made payable to Family Supports Institute Ontario

Mail to: Family Supports Institute Ontario 489 College St. Suite 206, Toronto Ontario, M6G 1A5

Ontario Connections welcomes your input. For publications dates/submission deadlines, please email program.manager@fsio.ca. Due to time and space restrictions, we are not always able to publish all articles submitted – others may be edited for length and/or content. We do value all contributions and encourage you to continue to participate by sending us your information, articles and responses. The opinions expressed are those of the individual author(s) and not necessarily those of the Family Supports Institute Ontario.

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FAMILY SUPPORTS INSTITUTE ONTARIO

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BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Receive member-only savings of up to 20% on our capacity building workshops and knowledge fairs.
- Members only early bird savings for our biennial provincial conference.
- Establish a dialogue in support of family-friendly policies through our policy development team.
- Networking opportunities with colleagues in the sector.
- Relevant and timely E- news blasts.
- Quarterly newsletter.
- Access to new research, current policy initiatives and the ever expanding sector of practitioners.
- Being connected and finding our voice!

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Definition of Collaboration?

by Trish Hunt



Collaboration and integration are words we are consistently hearing these days as we attend meetings, go to trainings and read reports from our colleagues. They are words that have been part of our vocabulary in Family Support for years and years. Efforts to collaborate with our communities, with our city governments and our funders create the framework that family support practitioners find themselves in day in and day out. Collaboration with all of these entities is a skill that many family support staff developed on the job, in their efforts to keep their programs available to as many families as they could while satisfying the expectations of funding contracts. But much more than that, collaboration is an opportunity to include the services around each of our programs to enrich and enhance the experience of our

participants. One of the lasting goals of family support work is to ensure that families find what they need, when they need it in our programs. Without a doubt collaboration is the only way to ensure those needs are met in the community.

Peter Moss was the keynote speaker at a symposium in February at Ryerson University, and his message was directly connected to the language of collaboration. He spoke of early learning and care as a method of delivering very good technical answers to lots of technical questions about child development, curriculum effectiveness, and readiness for school. In describing these concrete methods of supporting children in their development, he raised some very good questions which currently are being asked in Ontario as well.

Moss describes a need to back up a step, and check in on some bigger picture questions about why these technical ideas are the **one** true way to prepare children for success.

The bigger question is, as Moss describes it, more about our values guiding the programs being developed.

What do we want for our children? Do we believe they all need to get there the same way? Are the answers only found in 'education', and not in other areas of early learning and care? Are they guided by only data, using quantitative benchmarks, or can they be guided by ethics, values and qualitative research?

"I want to argue the need to step back from offering solutions – 'what works?'... to step forward to asking critical questions, as a necessary condition for a democratic and creative politics of early childhood... in which real alternatives call for debate, deliberation and collective choices about things that matter" (Moss, 2011).

The very discussion of the critical questions, where debate, deliberation and collective choices occur is the discussion that needs to happen at the grass roots level, the municipal level, and the provincial level. These questions need to be asked, and then through the asking the process of answering them will enact the collaborative spirit that is needed to develop the vision of integrated services across Ontario. On the ground we have highly **developed** skills in collaboration, in upper levels of planning in cities and towns, the will is there to collaborate, and at the policy level in the provincial ministries the **idea** is taking hold, but the **implementation** remains the most difficult piece to negotiate.

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Currently in the Early Learning and Care sector many, many positive relationships exist. They exist between programs and services for children with special needs, they exist between childcare and schools in many communities, and they exist within relationships of community centres, family support programs and other partners who work with families. There is no right or wrong way to create the positive experience of collaborative service delivery, but it doesn't just happen without skill, effort, passion and a belief in the importance of creating a system that works well.

The more we seem to know about the complexity of learning, children's diverse strategies and multiple theories of knowledge, the more we seek to impose learning strategies and curriculum goals that reduce the complexities and diversities of this learning and knowledge (Lenz Taguchi, 2009)

So as we move ahead in the effort to turn collaborative practice into integrated services for children and families, the question that we could pose to ourselves and then to our potential collaborators could be:

“How can we increase the opportunities for children and families to succeed, given the funding and programs we currently have?”

This might create an opportunity to think outside the sand box, to ask more questions first and not pretend that we (one program or another, one agency or another) have all the answers. True collaboration will enable all of those working and consuming services in the sector to contribute expertise, energy and ideas. We will then begin with a rich collaborative process and move towards what works for all of those engaged in early learning and care.

From the Editor's Desk



Ryerson University Update

Report from OEYC PROVINCIAL NETWORK

Joan Arruda and Lauren Brydges, Co-chairs OEYC PN



The Provincial Network of OEYCs was pleased to host a meeting with Dr. Charles Pascal (With Our Best future in Mind) at our regular meeting on February 18. There was an opportunity for the Network to describe Ontario Early Years Centre programs and emphasize our preparedness to support and help move forward the child and family centres phase. We urged Dr. Pascal to build on what works well in the Province and not to “reinvent the wheel.” Dr. Pascal in turn spoke eloquently about his vision and assured us he has been diligently surveying the Province and has no doubt that existing programs will figure prominently in the child and family centre plans. Dr. Pascal was able to impart information about the external

reference group; some of it was new, some we had heard before, all of it was fresh coming from Dr. Pascal himself. OEYC PN members learned that the role of the CFCs as a conduit for access to service for families with children with special needs is of primary importance. Three important components will be worked out prior to implementation: a legislative framework, a systems vision and an operations vision. At the conclusion of the meeting, all agreed the discussion had provided timely enlightenment around the table. For OEYC Provincial Network, it was a fitting precursor to the release of our position paper, Ontario Early Years Centres and Best Start Child and Family Centres. The OEYC PN Position Paper was circulated to all

OEYCs in the Province through their OEYC PN regional reps and valuable input was incorporated. The Paper received its final approval at the meeting of February 17/18 and was subsequently sent to Dr. Pascal and the Reference Committees. The theme of the Paper was the Provincial Network's assurance that Ontario Early Years Centres are very willing and prepared to support the Government in moving forward with the implementation of Best Start Child and Family Centres in partnership with our local school boards, municipalities and Best Start networks. The paper outlines the work currently done by OEYCs and the significant numbers of families served across the Province (More than 450,000 individual children participated in Ontario Early Years Centre programs and services in 2009. More than 400,000 parents and caregivers learned right along beside them.) and urges the McGuinty Government to incorporate successful existing family support services as it moves forward with this exciting component of its plan for Early Learning and Care.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

by Patricia Hunt



Report from the Sudbury Best Start Child and Family Centre

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Although the McGuinty Government has yet to release direction for the implementation of child and family centres across Ontario, FSIO has had the opportunity to observe a number of models at various stages across the Province, any one of which could become the prototype for the Government's Early Learning Program. In the fall issue of *Ontario Connections*, we described a variety of initiatives underway in Central East Region, all programs in schools and all unique to their own communities. In November, *Ontario Connections* was privileged to join a group of early years' service providers travelling further north to visit the Sudbury Project and learn some of the history behind their Best Start Hubs. What becomes obvious right from the start in the Sudbury experience is the wholehearted commitment from the services community and the Rainbow School Board. As with all the Northern

Best Start projects, Sudbury was directed by their regional MCYS office to form their family resource programs and OEYCs into Best Start hubs over 2 years ago. The Municipality determined how many Best Start Hubs they would need to cover their schools adequately. The magic number was 26. Next they calculated a figure of approximately how much it would cost to run one centre. Agencies that were already providing family support programs (OEYCs, Better Futures projects, Aboriginal programs and Unique FRPs) were asked how many they could run with their existing funds. Those agencies that were found suitable made plans to close their programs in the community and open centres in assigned schools. There were no new dollars except a minimum from the Municipality to top up agencies that needed a boost. Fourteen hubs were established, each having responsibility for outreach to 3 or 4 other schools in

their area. To maintain consistency in the hubs, a coalition was formed and developed the overall framework within which each agency would run their programs. Regular meetings of agency and municipal personnel help maintain the Best Start Hub System. Sudbury has hosted many tour groups such as ours from the Peterborough, City of Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton and Northumberland area and the tours are well organized to give a variety of hub experiences. Our tour included a visit to four Best Start Hubs, an Aboriginal Public School, 2 English Public Schools, and a French Public School. In addition, we were treated to lunch in a huge school that had formerly been a secondary school. At that location, some of us discovered a fifth Best Start Hub in a wonderful space, a renovated auto shop room that offered numerous opportunities for parent engagement and parent/child interaction. For the most part, we were joined in the tour by the principals of the schools, eager to show us the programs in their schools and demonstrate the integration among their staff and community partners. The enthusiasm of the principals and the school and hub staff was impressive, especially considering the fact that they had no choice in the location for the hubs. For more information, visit the Sudbury website at:



The Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC)

READY-TO-USE PLAY-BASED LEARNING KITS FOR PURCHASE



The Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) in St. Catharines, Ontario have developed Play-Based Learning Kits that have been enhanced to make it even easier to link your developmental

program planning to the learning expectations outlined within ELECT (Early Learning for Every Child Today), The Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program, 2010-11 and The Kindergarten Program (revised 2006). Each kit also supports developmental program planning such as found within the Quality Child Care Niagara Phase Two Program components and contains the Brigrance Readiness Activities sequence of skills.

Across the Curriculum Kits offer a variety of resources to cover all learning domains and include an activity card with curriculum extension ideas for use in eleven learning centre areas.

Supplementary Materials Kits offer equipment and materials to enhance specific learning centres and activity cards with suggestions on how to use the materials.

Skill Enhancement Kits are designed to introduce and develop a specific skill set such as lacing and/or dressing and feature activity cards for each resource in the kit.

WHY CHOOSE ECCDC LEARNING KITS?

All kits are developed using consistent criteria and support children's development in the areas of: fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, language and literacy, social skills and self help skills. The kits contain resources for learning centre areas that can be adapted for infants, toddlers, preschoolers or school agers. All kits (where possible) have French resource materials and translated activity cards included and many have Spanish resources. They include hard, soft, natural and manufactured items that appeal to children's multiple senses. Diversity is an important consideration when developing the kits. The pictures and images represent a variety of occupations, gender roles, abilities, ages, cultures, lifestyles, languages and racial characteristics. Wherever possible, the posters and pictures offer realistic images rather than cartoons.

The ECCDC's Play-Based Learning Kits are available to purchase for \$450.00 plus shipping and handling. Please note that prices may vary should suitable items need to be found due to discontinued resources. For further information contact us at eccdc@eccdc.org.

GRAB AND GO LEARNING PROJECTS

Like the ECCDC's Play-Based Learning Kits, our Grab and Go Learning Projects are designed to ensure your developmental program planning meets all relevant learning expectations. There's simply no easier way to plan your classroom time. Just pick your topic, then Grab and Go!



The ECCDC's Grab and Go Learning Projects are available to purchase for \$50 per set plus shipping and handling. To purchase Grab and Go Learning Projects go to their website at www.eccdc.org or contact us at eccdc@eccdc.org.

Grab and Go Learning Projects are available in 19 topics including;

SWING INTO SPRING SET includes: Spin the Umbrella, Randy the Raindrop flipbook, It's Raining Umbrellas patterning activity, Charting the Weather chart and Spring Time Puddle Play music and movement activity.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL PLAY SET includes: My Food Journal, Fruit Basket Upset circle activity, Picnic Surprise memory game, Roll & Exercise set Healthy or Unhealthy Food sorting game and Find a Friend matching game.

SPREADING THE SEEDS SET includes: A Seed Grows sequencing activity, April Showers Bring May Flowers circle activity, Name that Flower Part science activity, Gardening on the Go classroom set, Counting Sunflowers match activity and I See a Ladybug, What do you See? Circle time glove.

Report from the Ontario CAPC/CPNP Coalition

Tyler Campbell, Chair, Ontario Coalition of CAPC/CPNP Projects



CAPC and CPNP Programs in Canada

Real Help Right Here Right now

The Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) helps families with young children (birth to 6) living in conditions which may impact on their ability to reach optimal health.

The program assists vulnerable families to increase both adult and child health, develop problem-solving skills and social networks, and to engage in their communities.

CAPC projects provide parents with the support and information they need to raise their children. Our programs reach women, children and families who are most vulnerable:

The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) assists pregnant women and new mothers living in conditions of risk. It aims to reduce the incidence of unhealthy birth weights and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, and to improve the health of both mother and infant.

Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) aims to lower the number of unhealthy birth weight babies born and improve the health of both infant and mother. Mothers are also encouraged to breastfeed their babies.

SOME INTERESTING CPNP STATISTICS

In Ontario

- 35% of CPNP participants are teen parents
- more than 40% are born outside Canada
- 35% of CPNP participants are single
- 62% have an income of less than \$1,000 per month
- 20.8% are under 19 years of age
- 42% have lived in Canada for less than 10 years
- 45% have a grade 10 to 12 education
- 14% have less than a grade 9 education
- 76.6% of participants breastfed for at least one month and 40.7% for at least three months

Keys to CAPC and CPNP success in improving the health of Canadians:

- Our programs are focused and outcome-based
- Our programs are responsive, innovative, and flexible
- Our programs are as unique as the communities they are in
- Our programs are unique from community to community
- Our programs take a preventative and systematic approach
- Our participants are an integral part of program planning, evaluation, and governance
- We partner with many other organizations in a variety of sectors to maximize the effectiveness and reach of our programs
- Together, we help eliminate barriers to participation, including help with transportation, low or free fees, help with child care and more.

SOME INTERESTING CAPC STATISTICS

- 42% of CAPC households have incomes of less than \$ 15,000
- 35% of CAPC participants were lone parents
- 38% of CAPC parents had not finished high school

The bottom line

We provide real help – right now – for families who need it most.

For a listing of CAPC/CPNP locations please visit

www.realhelp.ca