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**A BULLETIN OF THE
CHILD CARE HUMAN
RESOURCES SECTOR COUNCIL**



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Canada

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Occupational standards for administrators available this summer

The sector council's occupational standards for administrators, slated for release in summer 2006, will be a valuable resource for sector stakeholders.

"The standards respond to an identified need across Canada for improving training and support for child care administrators," said Mary Goss-Prowse, CCHRSC board member and chair of the steering committee that guided the work on this project. "They itemize the skills and knowledge a person needs in order to do an administrative job in child care."

Goss-Prowse said the standards include the broadest possible tasks that child care administrators would perform.

"Anyone responsible for the operation of an early childhood education and care program—in a centre, family setting or family resource program—should be able to find the tasks that apply to their job in these standards," she said. "However, it's important to stress that all of the standards taken together won't apply to every job as tasks can vary by job description, program size, and the unique aspects of the program."

The standards identify tasks and sub-tasks for administrators in the key areas of responsibility: child development and care (programs); hu-

man resources (staffing); financial (budget management); and facilities (healthy and safe environments).

The occupational standards are not meant to replace individual job descriptions, but to be used for guidance in defining skill levels and knowledge for administrators in specific settings or jobs. They reflect best practices in child care administration and can be used by practitioners, employers, educators and government in a variety of ways:

- **Employers** can use the standards to identify key administrative skill sets and job tasks when recruiting, hiring, and creating job descriptions.
- **Educators** can use the standards

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Occupational standards for administrators available this summer

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as the foundation for developing improved curricula and training programs

- For **child care administrators**, the standards can help identify skills gaps, training needs, and areas for professional development.
- **Sector organizations** could use them for developing and evaluating certification and accreditation programs.
- For **governments**, the standards provide a nationally recognized set of best practices that can be used when developing and delivering child care programs and training.

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Administrative roles vary

In a sector as diverse as child care, an administrator can be both an administrator and caregiver (for example in a home-based family child care setting); be strictly an administrator with no direct work with children; or be responsible for programs in a number of settings. Some administrators report to a board of directors or to owners, while others report to a corporation or municipality.

“The sector has long been saying that it needs more standardized training and requirements for administrators across Canada,” said Goss-Prowse. “The occupational standards allow everyone to start from a common denominator and build on it within contexts specific to individual provinces and territories, and workplace settings.”

The standards were developed by administrators and validated over a period of 18 months by representatives from a broad range of stakeholders: educators, child care organizations, provincial governments, centre-based child care, family (home) child care, unionized centres, licensing bodies and those working with children who have disabilities.

“People have a real sense of ownership about them. We are a sector that is always mindful of its diversity and the need to be as inclusive as possible.”

Copies of the occupational standards for child care administrators will be available online at www.ccsc-cssge.ca. You can also pre-order your copy by calling (613) 239-3100 or 1-866-411-6960 (toll-free).

Child care quality focus of web site

The Child Care Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) has launched a new project, *Quality by Design*. The project promotes discussion, debate and knowledge about quality in early learning and child care (ELCC). The *Quality by Design* web site includes a section on Human Resources, with links to downloadable reports and other information. Visit the *Quality by Design* site at www.childcarequality.ca. To receive notices of additions and updates to the web site, sign up for CRRU's weekly e-broadcast on the CRRU web site at www.childcare-canada.org.

Research underway for career awareness and recruitment strategy

Research for the Career Awareness and Recruitment Strategy Project has begun! The project will look at ways to increase respect and recognition for the child care workforce and, in turn, attract more people to the sector.


The strategy is being developed in response to the *Working for Change* study, which identified a critical shortage of early childhood educators and an urgent need to increase respect for child care as a career.

During the research

phase, focus groups and key informant interviews will be conducted to examine current perceptions of child care careers. Existing career awareness strategies and material will also be reviewed and evaluated. The findings of these activities will serve

as the foundation for the development of an effective career awareness and recruitment strategy for the sector.

Slated for 2007, Phase II will focus on putting the strategy into action using a variety of outreach tools and activities.



Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) launches *new* web site!

Check out www.ccsc-cssge.ca for:

- Up-to-date information on Canada's child care workforce and CCHRSC projects and activities
- The latest research and publications on child care human resources issues
- Training programs and courses in early childhood education and care, including links to distance and on-line learning opportunities
- Human resources tools and information in areas ranging from compensation to occupational standards to health and safety
- Links to related organizations across the country and much, much more

www.ccsc-cssge.ca

Training and work: *what do ECE students think?*

A student survey and focus groups conducted for the Labour Market Update study provide valuable insights into the views of early childhood education (ECE) students on their training programs and their work prospects after graduation:

- Students rated their education and training programs highly—at least 75% rated all components as “good” or “excellent”.
- More than 75% said their programs prepare them “quite well” or “very well” to work with almost all groups of children, especially typically developing children. However, almost one-third negatively rated their preparation to work with children with special needs.
- Most students felt training should be longer and that all child care staff should have a postsecondary credential. (Most also agreed, however, that higher requirements are difficult to justify when training has little impact on wages.)
- Students cited the cost of postsecondary education and distance from programs as barriers to access.
- Only about half of focus group participants thought they would work in child care after graduation, mainly due to perceptions of low quality programs and poor working conditions. Other reasons cited included lack of respect and low wages.
- Only 55% of students surveyed planned to work in regulated child care in five years.

Immigrant students were distinct from other ECE students in a number of ways: they were older, had more education, and were more likely to plan on working in a child care centre—despite being less optimistic about the ease of finding child care-related work.

New paper identifies factors influencing compensation

A new sector council paper concludes that improving recruitment and retention in child care depends in large part on resolving the issues underlying wages and benefits in the sector.

This paper looks at what determines the compensation of Canada’s early learning and child care workforce and analyzes a range of influencing factors, including the socio-economic status of parents, operating costs for child spaces, and program size. The paper will also address the impact of public policies and funding, gender, the unregulated part

of the sector, and minimum standard legislation on wages and benefits.

The paper’s findings serve as a starting point for analyzing compensation issues from different perspectives, including those of employers, workers, policy makers, governments, unions and child care organizations.

Download your copy at: www.ccsc-cssge.ca. You can also e-mail info@ccsc-cssge.ca, or call 1-866-411-6960 to request your free copy.

Workforce changes needed for a seamless day

The Integration Network symposium in Toronto kicked off a process last November to discuss policy changes that could help overcome the divide between education and child care for kindergarten-age children.

The symposium examined the possibility of an integrated system of early education and care where child care centres, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens and drop-in programs could exist side by side. Such a system is being considered by a number of provinces.

What kind of funding, governance, curriculum and program design would be needed? And what would it mean for the child care workforce?

Workforce training and education was a key issue for the symposium's 230 participants. There was consensus that training and education for early childhood educators and school teachers would have to be revised in order to bridge "care" programs in child care centres and "education" (kindergarten) programs in the schools.

"Participants generally agreed that at least some child care staff needed to have higher qualifications; it was observed that higher qualifications would also attract higher wages," said the symposium report. Existing early childhood educators could be grandparented, while new ECEs would require degrees.

Increased funding needed

Participants felt school teachers would also need to upgrade their qualifications to include study in early child development. As well, principals and administrators would require training. To make all of these changes possible, governments would have to increase funding for training and education, upgrading, joint professional development and recertification.

"We had some wonderful, dynamic discussions that helped us identify ideas for future actions," said Sue Colley, Integration Network project director. Education and training of the workforce will be the topic of an ongoing Integration Network forum on-line and in local communities in the coming months. As well, the network will explore ways to collaborate with faculties of education and community colleges on training and education changes that an integrated system would require.

To find out more about the Integration Network's symposium results and participate in the discussion about achieving a more holistic approach to caring, nurturing and learning, visit www.inproject.ca.

Training Strategy Project

How can we improve the quality and consistency of child care training at a pan-Canadian level? What are promising strategies for the future of training and education in the sector? These questions and more are at the core of our new Training Strategy Project.

This project responds to the need for a consistent approach to child care training in order to help provinces and territories meet increasing demands for well-trained staff, as identified in the *Working for Change* study. The strategy will recommend ways to improve the quality of, and standardize approaches to, child care training in Canada. Marta Juorio and Gyda Chud—co-chairs of the project steering committee—are pleased to announce that Jane Beach, Jane Bertrand, Louise Bourgon, Kathleen Flanagan, Barry Forer and Donna Michal will serve as the consultants for this project.

"Jane and the team are extremely knowledgeable about the issues, are greatly respected in our sector, and bring critical research and analysis expertise to this important initiative" says Juorio, a member of the CCHRSC board.

Chud, director of Continuing Education at Vancouver Community College, noted that she is "delighted to be working with the council and excited about the potential involved in this initiative."

To ensure the recommendations are focused and relevant, the strategy is being developed in consultation with key stakeholders including trainers, policy makers, unions, and provincial and territorial governments. To date, surveys of students at post-secondary institutions have been completed. Focus groups and key informant interviews are next on the agenda.

For project updates and information, visit our web site at www.ccsc-cssge.ca.

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