

EXAMINING THE HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF EMERGING ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) /COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Integration of ECEC and Education

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Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background to the Emerging Issues and Communication Strategy Project	1
2	RECOGNITION OF IMPACT OF EARLY YEARS ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES	3
3	INTERNATIONAL TRENDS	4
4	CANADIAN TRENDS	6
	Birth rates	6
	Literacy	7
	Shift from Social Services to Education or Children's Ministries	9
	Emergence of Early Learning Curriculum/Frameworks	10
5	CURRENT INVOLVEMENT OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE	12
	Kindergarten	12
	Pre-kindergarten	15
	Other Education Sector Initiatives in ECEC	18
6	PERSPECTIVES OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SECTOR ON THE INTEGRATION OF CARE AND EDUCATION	22
	Perspectives of Faculty in Post-secondary Institutions	22
	Perspectives of Employers	24
	HR Issues Prioritized	24
	Perspectives of Key Informants	26
	The Broad Reach of Impacts	27
	Inter-Governmental Considerations	28
7	PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION	30
	Engaging the Sector	30
8	CONCLUSION	32

List of Tables

1	Ministries responsible for regulated ECEC programs in Canada	9
2	Ministries of Education plans for kindergarten as of 2009/10	12
3	Role of Ministries of Education in provision of early childhood education for four-year-old children as of 2009/10	16
4	Role of Ministries of Education in other types of ECEC initiatives as of 2009/10	18
5	Breakdown of survey respondents by jurisdiction, language spoken, and place of work	22
6	Top HR priorities to address should collaboration between “Education” and child care increase: employers, staff and post-secondary faculty	26

List of Figures

1	Birth Rates in Canada and US 1940-2000	6
2	Birth rates by province/territory: 2004/2005 – 2008/2009	7
3	Top three HR priorities to address should collaboration between Education and child care increase	25
4	Reciprocal impacts of integrated ECEC and Education policy on program policy and models	28

EXAMINING THE HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF EMERGING ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) /COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT:

INTEGRATION OF ECEC AND EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is one of four reports prepared for the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council as part of Phase One of the Examining the Human Resource Implications of Emerging Issues in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)/ Communications Strategy Development project.

In examining the issues and trends that have emerged during the last decade, the CCHRSC has recognized the need to examine them within the context of their relevance to human resources for the ECEC sector. The CCHRSC has specifically identified the integration of ECEC and Education as a public policy issue with potential human resource implications, and is the main focus of the research component of the project. At the same time, the CCHRSC has also identified the practice of inclusion as a program policy topic to be examined for potential human resource implications, along with program delivery models of school age and family home child care.

Preliminary research on these four topics was undertaken through a sector survey, key informant interviews, and literature searches.

Background to the Emerging Issues and Communication Strategy¹ Project

In the past ten years, there have been considerable efforts made across Canada to advance the development and delivery of early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs at the pan-Canadian and provincial / territorial levels.

At the same time, Canada participated as one of 23 countries in the 2003 International Thematic Review of ECEC conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The resulting OECD policy recommendations provided Canadian jurisdictions with an international framework of reference with respect to future ECEC policy and program directions.

The CCHRSC has recognized the need to examine emerging issues in the ECEC sector within the context of their relevance to human resources for the sector. The CCHRSC identified four issues requiring further exploration:

- Human resource implications of integration of ECEC and Education as an emerging policy trend across Canada
- Human resource implications inclusion in ECE (cultural diversity, special needs)
- Program delivery model of school age child care
- Program delivery model of family home child care

(The latter two issues represent gaps in the HR knowledge /research about the sector, vs. 'emerging' issues)

The project team conducted preliminary research on these four topics through:

- a sector survey
- key informant interviews
- literature searches.

¹ The evaluation of the current CCHRSC communication strategy as well as recommendations for communication efforts for the coming years is a concurrent aspect of the work on emerging issues, and will be the subject of a separate report.

Emerging Issues and Communication² Survey

The purpose of the Emerging Issues and Communication Survey was to gather a wide range of perspectives on the human resource implications of the identified emerging issues in ECEC and to identify priority areas for key stakeholders. The survey helped to identify any key trends or themes to be examined in further detail in key informant interviews, and provide information for reports on each of the four issues to be examined.

The survey was developed for several target stakeholder groups:

- Employers, directors and front-line staff of full-day, part-day and school age centre-based child care programs
- Regulated family child care providers, and where applicable, family child care agency staff
- ECE provincial/territorial/pan-Canadian organizations
- Post-secondary ECE faculty
- Government officials responsible for licensing child care programs

The survey was not intended to provide a representative sample, but rather to be a preliminary look at the four identified issues, which will inform further examination.

Key Informant Interviews

The project team conducted a total of 30 key informant interviews regarding emerging issues in the ECEC sector. Key informants were selected from the following groups:

- Provincial/Territorial (PT) Directors of ECEC
- Pan-Canadian and PT child care organizations
- ECEC Employers / Centre Directors
- Labour groups
- Post-secondary institutions
- Municipal policy staff
- Researchers
- ECEC stakeholders/experts in Integration of ECEC and Education

Literature Review

The project team has conducted a review of recent studies and reports available from Canadian and international sources. Relevant literature is referenced within the context of reports on each of the four identified issues.

² Survey findings specific to communication issues are intended to inform the development of recommended communication strategies for the CCHRSC.

2. RECOGNITION OF IMPACT OF EARLY YEARS ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

In almost all jurisdictions, there is increasing interest from the education sector to explore the feasibility of developing integrated approaches to and have greater involvement in the ECEC sector. The rationale for such interest stems from a substantial body of evidence that documents the relationship between positive experiences in the early years and successful outcomes in school. Examples of such findings include:

The New Zealand Ministry of Education notes in their recent *Outcomes of Early Childhood Education: Literature Review - Report to the Ministry of Education*:³

- Consistent evidence from a large body of international and New Zealand evidence found ECE participation is positively associated with gains in mathematics and literacy, school achievement, intelligence tests, and also school readiness, reduced grade retention, and reduced special education placement. Medium to large effect sizes on the outcome measures were reported in United States (U.S.).
- Learning dispositions and key competencies are seen as combinations of ability, inclination, and sensitivity to occasion, and refer to the competencies and skills that enable children to keep learning. Learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki*, the national early childhood curriculum, are summarized as learning dispositions and working theories. Learning dispositions in the studies reviewed included attitudes of perseverance, curiosity, confidence, and social competence such as the ability to work with others. In general, the small number of New Zealand and international studies that examined associations between ECE participation and learning dispositions found positive impacts.

The National Institute for Early Education Research⁴ (USA) notes that:

- Dozens of studies have examined preschool education's long-term effects, providing information on effects into elementary school and beyond. Recent meta-analyses of these find that preschool education has significant lasting effects on cognitive abilities, school progress (grade repetition, special education placement, and high school graduation), and social behavior.
- Early care and education programs have positive effects on young children's cognitive and social development, and these effects can be substantial. Rigorous studies find not only immediate gains, but lasting benefits for learning and educational achievement, school progress and educational attainment, and social behavior, including delinquency and crime. The methodologically strongest studies find the largest effects, and the earliest and smallest studies have been replicated repeatedly and on a large scale. Research from other countries indicates that findings of long-term educational and social benefits generalize across a tremendous range of social, political, and educational environments. This evidence indicates that policies supporting the provision of effective preschool education can produce important improvements in children's learning and development.

³ Mitchell, L., Wylie, C., and Carr, M. (2008) *Outcomes of Early Childhood Education: Literature Review - Report to the Ministry of Education*. New Zealand Council of Educational Research.

⁴ Barnett, W. S. (2008). *Preschool education and its lasting effects: Research and policy implications*. Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved March 8, 2010 from <http://epicpolicy.org/publication/preschool-education>

A review of evidence to support the recommendations contained in *With Our Best Future in Mind – Implementing Early Learning in Ontario*⁵ noted that children benefit from participation in pre-kindergarten /junior kindergarten programs. The report notes that:

- In the United States, approximately 24 per cent of all 4-year-old children and 4 per cent of all 3-year-old children are attending state-funded preschool programs (Barnett et al., 2009). Several studies of pre-kindergarten programs report that children who attend are improving in language, literacy, and math at least through the end of their Kindergarten year (Barnett, 2008; Frede et al., 2007). Children who attend preschool for two years at both age 3 and 4 significantly out-perform those who attend for only one year at 4 years of age or who do not attend at all (Frede, et al., 2007). A study of the impact of pre-Kindergarten on children's outcomes in a sample of five states reports positive effects on children's cognitive skills, although the magnitude of these effects varied by state and by outcome (Wong, Cook, Barnett, & Jung, 2008). State-funded, school-based universal pre-kindergarten programs report benefits for all children (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, & Dawson, 2005).

In April 2008, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) released a joint declaration *Learn Canada 2020*, which encompasses four pillars of lifelong learning, including “early childhood learning and development.” Ministers of Education have identified eight activity areas and accompanying objectives, and will engage stakeholders, including parents, educators and other orders of government in reaching the stated goals and objectives.

3. INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

In recent years, efforts have clearly been undertaken in a number of countries to both conceptualize and organize ECEC programs and services in an integrated fashion. Peter Moss notes “*early years services in European countries, as well as in North America, have a divided history which left its mark on structures. Typically, one group of services developed providing care for working mothers, either in nurseries or with childminders. Initially these services were for poorer women, since employment was uncommon among middle-class mothers in the 19th century. Alongside, there developed more educationally-oriented services for children from 2 or 3 years of age, either school-based or (especially where there was a strong Froebelian influence) in kindergartens separate from school.*”⁶

Peter Moss argues that an integrated system implies not only that all ECEC programs and services are organized with a single administrative body (such as in New Zealand, Spain, Slovenia, England, Scotland, Brazil, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, France, Italy, Belgium, Austria and Germany⁷) but that a common curriculum, common requirements for teacher qualifications, and a unifying philosophical perspective regarding children's rights to education must accompany this administrative shift in order to solidify the integrated nature of such services.

Internationally, there are numerous initiatives underway to re-conceptualize and re-organize early childhood services:

- Victoria, Australia: The ***Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*** advances children's learning and development from birth to eight years by early childhood professionals working together,

⁵ Pascal, C. (2009) *An Updated and Annotated Summary of Evidence - A Compendium To: With Our Best Future in Mind*. Report to the Premier by the Special Advisor on Early Learning, Toronto.

⁶ Moss, P. *Farewell to Childcare?* National Institute Economic Review No. 195 January 2006

⁷ ECEC services in France, Belgium, Austria and Germany have always been the responsibility of the Education ministries.

and with families, to achieve common outcomes for children. The Framework is intended for all professionals who work with children from birth to eight years including maternal and child health nurses, all early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood settings, school teachers, family support workers, preschool field officers, inclusion support facilitators, student support service officers, primary school nurses, primary welfare officers, early childhood intervention workers, play therapists, health professionals and teachers working in hospitals, and education officers in cultural organizations.

- New Zealand: The Ministry of Education has established 2012 as the target date at which time 80% of all adults working with young children in early childhood settings must possess qualifications to allow them to be recognized/registered as Early Childhood Teachers with the New Zealand Teachers Council.
- England: All three- and four- year-olds are currently entitled to 12.5 hours of free early learning sessions each week, for 38 weeks of the year. This can be taken in various forms, such as through places at nursery, playgroup, childminders or through places at preschool. In 2010, this entitlement will increase to 15 hours per week.
- In 2002, the European Union established the “Barcelona Targets”, which set out objectives for children’s participation in ECEC programs. At the Barcelona Summit, the European Council⁸ established targets that by 2010, at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age, and at least 33% of children under 3 years old would be able to participate in ECEC programs.⁹

Recommendations made by the OECD stemming from the first phase of their Thematic Review of ECEC¹⁰ were intended to promote this type of equality of relationship and strong continuity between early childhood provision and the education system:

- *“Early childhood services should be recognised, like compulsory schooling, as a public good and as an important part of the education process. All children should have a right to access quality ECEC services before starting school.*
- *A more unified approach to learning should be adopted in both systems, recognising the contribution that the early childhood approach brings to fostering key dispositions and attitudes to learning.*
- *Attention should be given to transition challenges faced by young children as they enter school, or transit from one type of service to another. There should be a greater focus on building bridges across administrative departments, staff-training, regulations and curricula in both systems.”*

In 2004, the OECD international review team for the Canada review recommended that Canada *“build bridges between child care and kindergarten; conceptualise and deliver care and education as one seamless program; and have a single responsible department within each province and territory.”*¹¹ The OECD advised that integration of kindergarten and child care would bring real advantages in Canada.

⁸ The European Council is the EU’s main decision making body. It represents the member states, and its meetings are attended by one minister from each of the EU’s national governments.

⁹ Some researchers have criticized the Barcelona Targets as having a focus on quantity vs. quality. The EU has no direct control over childcare, but can monitor progress, exchange information, and encourage members states to pursue relevant research.

¹⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2001) *Starting Strong*. OECD: Paris, France.

¹¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2004) *Canada Country Note*. OECD: Paris, France

4. CANADIAN TRENDS

Interviews with key informants and review of current literature have identified issues and trends in Canada – often beyond the immediate scope of ECEC programs – which, taken collectively, have influenced policy and program development and practices across the country.

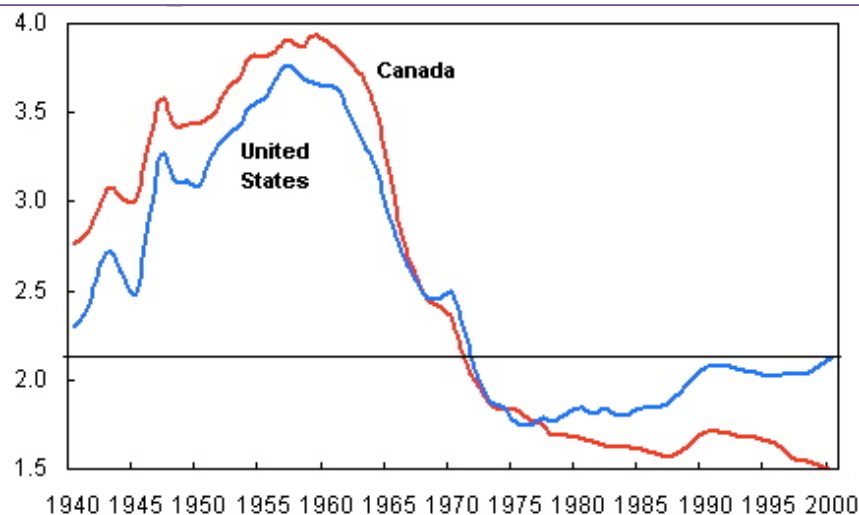
While none of these trends or issues on their own may be seen to be causal agents of a trend toward greater integration of the ECEC and Education sectors, an analysis of these often diverse factors suggests that on the whole, there has been an impact on current thinking, and a reciprocal influence on policy and program development at many levels. Trends toward specific language, e.g., “early childhood educator” vs. “child care worker”; early childhood education and care vs. child care vs. day care; and intergovernmental initiatives focused on early learning and child care within quality frameworks suggest a fundamental shift toward a discourse/dialogue that is focused on the early learning components of regulated ECEC services vs. the “care” aspects these programs.

In addition to the broad topics presented in this section, key informants shared numerous examples of singular practices that demonstrated a close working relationship between early childhood educators, directors and public school principals/school board officials. Taken collectively, these examples show a significant trend toward mutual professional appreciation and recognition, and a shift in Canadian thinking about how ECEC programs may be conceptualized and organized. However, program initiatives based on such types of personal relationships are seldom sustainable at a public policy level. Even so, they suggest a shift in philosophical perspectives in both the ECEC and Education sectors.

Birth Rates

In recent decades, the birth rate in Canada (similar to the United States) has declined sharply. Figure 1 demonstrates the decline in the number of births per woman over the past 60 years for both Canada and the United States. The horizontal black line indicates the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman.¹²

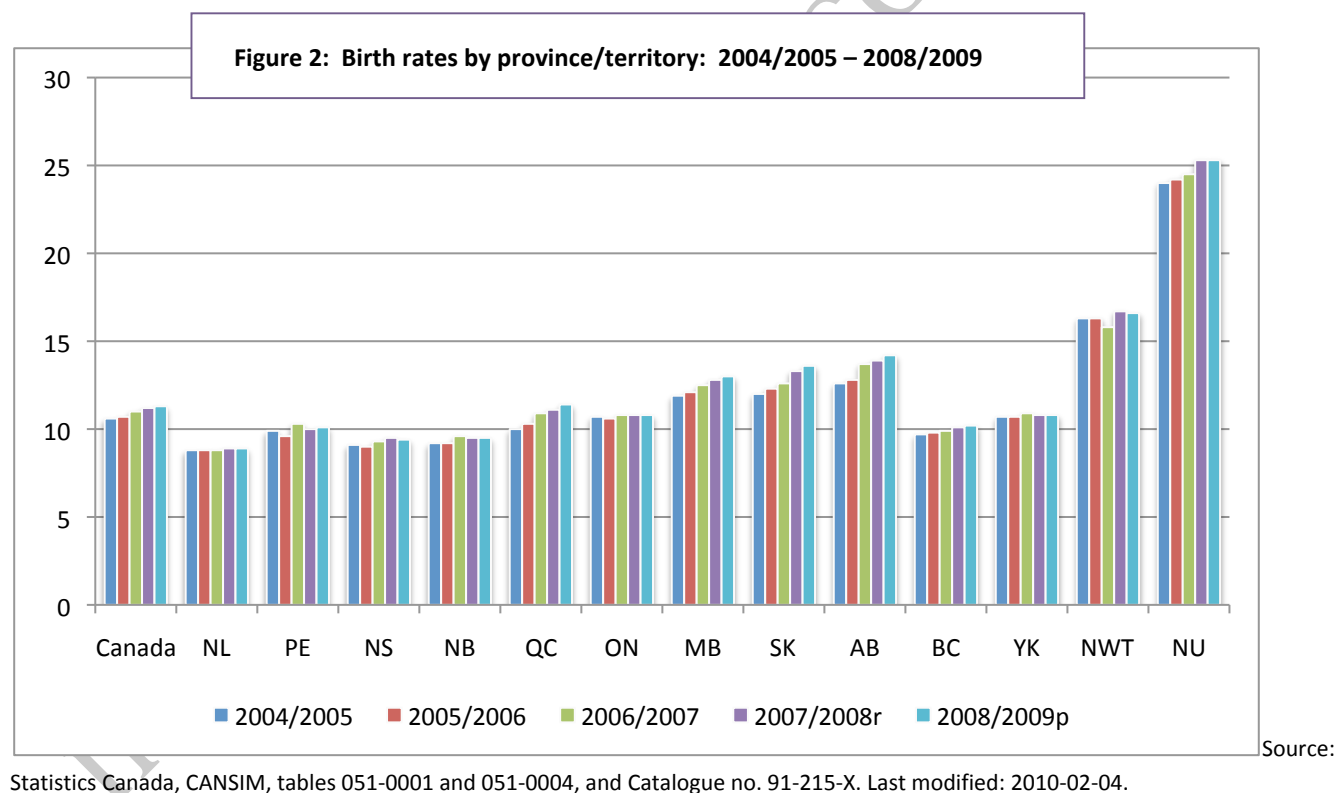
Figure 1. Birth Rates in Canada and US 1940-2000 - Number of births per woman



¹² Statistics Canada: Chart 1: Total fertility rate, Canada and the United States, 1940-2000. Retrieved March 8, 2010
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/kits-trousses/issues-enjeux/c-g/c-g1-eng.htm>

Key informants noted that declining birth rates have translated into declining school populations, and suggest that this may be one of the important contributing factors to the education sector's growing interest in extending their mandate to include younger children. Declining school populations have left many school districts in Canada with empty classrooms and excess space. These factors have encouraged some provinces to introduce alternate uses of existing school space. For example, Manitoba and Ontario have long standing policies to encourage the use of school space for early childhood/child care programs. In Prince Edward Island, a recent decision by the province's largest school district has closed 8 rural schools by moving children to other nearby schools, thus maximizing the available facilities.

However, data from Statistics Canada (Figure 2) suggest that the birth rate decline has leveled off and in fact has been showing small but consistent increases, since 2005. The total fertility rate (average number of children per woman) increased from 1.59 in 2006 to 1.66 in 2007. This was the highest fertility rate since 1992, although it remained below the "replacement rate" (rate at which the population can be replaced in the absence of migration) of 2.1 per woman. The number of births has been increasing since 2003 and increased by 1.5% in 2005, 3.6% in 2006 and 3.7% in 2007, which was the fastest annual increase since 1989. The number of births is projected to continue to increase until 2021.¹³¹⁴



¹³ Projected population by age group and sex according to a medium growth scenario for 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021, 2026 and 2031, at July 1 (2016, 2021) Statistics Canada: <http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo23b-eng.htm>

¹⁴ Both the *number of births* and the *birth rate* have shown increases in recent years. These numbers show two different measures. There are currently more women in Canada in the child-bearing age group; therefore, the *number of births* has increased faster than the *birth rate*, which measures the number of children each woman gives birth to.

Literacy

Canada's ministers responsible for education have identified literacy as a key component of life-long learning, and have noted that "improving provincial and territorial literacy levels will benefit individuals and society as a whole — contributing to personal empowerment and fulfillment, social progress, and the furthering of democracy."¹⁵ In April 2008, ministers issued a joint statement on a vision of education for Canada. Within this vision, it is recognized that literacy needs an integrated approach, from the early years through to adulthood.

In the same year, the Canadian Council on Learning reported that "based on demographic conditions, population growth and immigration patterns, Canada is expected to have more than 15 million people aged 16 and over - representing about 46 per cent of the population - with skills below the internationally accepted standard of literacy required to cope in a modern society. Currently, about 48 per cent of the adult population is considered to have below-standard skills."¹⁶

ABC Life Literacy Skills¹⁷ provides similar statistics:

- Adult literacy is often measured on a prose and document literacy scale of 1 to 5. Level 3, equivalent to high school completion, is the desired threshold for coping with the rapidly changing skill demands of a knowledge-based economy and society (*International Survey of Reading Skills (ISRS), 2005*¹⁸).
- Four out of 10 adult Canadians, age 16 to 65 struggle with low literacy. They fall below level 3 on the prose literacy scale (*Adult Literacy and Life Skills (ALL) Survey, Statistics Canada and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005*).
- Considering those adult Canadians with low literacy, 15 per cent have serious problems dealing with any printed materials; an additional 27 per cent can only deal with simple reading tasks (*Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2005*).
- In 2003, about 62% of employed Canadians between the ages of 16 and 65 had average scores in the document domain at Level 3 or above (*International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS): Building on our competencies, 2003*).

Preschool and kindergarten programs do affect young children's development of conventional literacy skills as well as important emergent literacy skills. Results of the meta-analyses examining the overall effects of preschool and kindergarten programs across outcome measures revealed two main findings. The largest impact of the preschool and kindergarten programs was on the composite measure of readiness, indicating that they were highly effective in preparing children for school entry.

National Early Literacy Panel, 2008

Low literacy impacts employment rates, economic/financial security, and health. The Education sector has long recognized that learning to read and write is an ongoing process. Efforts to improve literacy rates across the country have underscored the fact that the process of learning to read and write does not suddenly begin in kindergarten or Grade one. Early childhood education has the potential to make a significant difference in outcomes for young children with respect to literacy. From birth, everything that adults do to talk

¹⁵ Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. (2010) *Progress Report on Literacy 2009*. Ottawa, ON: Author

¹⁶ Canadian Council on Learning. (2008) *Reading the Future: Planning to Meet Canada's Future Literacy Needs*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

¹⁷ ABC Life Literacy Canada. Adult Literacy Facts Retrieved March 6, 2010 from <http://abclifeliteracy.ca/en/adult-literacy-facts>

¹⁸ All references in bullets in this section are as cited in ABC Life Literacy Canada

to children, explain things, read stories, sing songs and recite nursery rhymes makes a difference.¹⁹

The Canadian Education Association has identified systemic barriers to successful literacy outcomes for children and youth in Canada. Included among these barriers is the inability of many Canadian children to access high quality early childhood education and care programs. It is noted that access tends to be a particular challenge for those children who are most vulnerable to poor literacy outcomes because they lack adequate supports though their home and neighbourhood environments.

Shift from Social Services to Education or Children's Ministries

In Canada, constitutional responsibility for early childhood education and care programs lies with provincial and territorial governments. Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) discussions regarding ECEC programs and services are coordinated by the Ministers/Deputy Ministers responsible for Social Services. For example, the 2003 Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care, and the 2004/1005 Agreements in Principle on Early Learning and Child Care were both negotiated between Ministers Responsible for Social Services and the Government of Canada.²⁰

However, a recent scan of provincial and territorial governments indicates a clear shift in the designation of responsibility for ECEC programs. While social service ministries have traditionally held administrative and responsibility for intergovernmental affairs, policy development, regulation, and funding for regulated ECEC programs, in 2010 jurisdictions responsible to Ministers of Social Services are in the minority. In four jurisdictions, responsibility lies with Education; in six jurisdictions responsibility lies with a child/youth/family ministry;²¹ and in three jurisdictions responsibility lies with social services.

PT	Table 1: Ministries responsible for regulated ECEC programs in Canada
NL	Department of Child, Youth, and Family Services
NS	Department of Community Services
PE	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
NB	Department of Social Development
QC	Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés
ON	Ministry of Children and Youth Services
MB	Family Services and Community Affairs
SK	Department of Education
AB	Alberta Children's Services
BC	Ministry of Children and Family Development

¹⁹ Hart, B. and Risley, T. (1995) *Meaningful Differences in Everyday Parenting and Intellectual Development in Young American Children*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing

²⁰ The Multilateral Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care was signed in March 2003. Efforts to establish FPT Agreements for Early Learning and Child Care were not successful. The current Government of Canada introduced the Universal Child Care Benefit in its place, earmarking funds directly to parents.

²¹ In Manitoba, the Department of Family Services and Community Affairs is responsible for a number of social service activities.

YK	Department of Health and Social Services
NT	Education, Culture, and Employment
NU	Department of Education

Emergence of Early Learning Curriculum/Frameworks

In the Education system, curriculum is generally considered to describe the course of study, student learning outcomes, and the general objectives of the various grade levels throughout the system. In Canada, since education is the responsibility of provinces and territories, curriculum for Kindergarten through to Grade 12 is developed in each jurisdiction. In some provinces, curriculum standards and learning outcomes are also defined for post-secondary level programs of study.

There are now six jurisdictions in Canada with formally developed early learning frameworks/curricula focused on the preschool population. In five of these provinces, the framework/curriculum was developed within the past five years. In the sixth (Quebec) the curriculum was significant modified three years ago. One jurisdiction (Manitoba) is currently in the pilot stage of introduction.

There are commonalities and differences in the approaches taken in each of the six jurisdictions:

New Brunswick: In Canada's only officially bi-lingual province, government has funded the University of New Brunswick and the Université de Moncton to develop English and French curricula for early childhood education. ECEC centres may choose which curriculum framework to follow. Implementation of one or the other curriculum frameworks is mandatory in all regulated ECEC programs.

Québec: In 1997, Quebec introduced an educational framework for early childhood programs as part of their Family Policy. This curriculum framework was revised in 2007, following a two year consultative process with broad representation from the ECEC sector, including early childhood educators, universities, and the education sector.

Ontario: The 2006 *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT): A Framework for Ontario's Early Childhood Settings* describes how young children learn and develop and provides a guide for curriculum in Ontario's early childhood settings, including child care centres, regulated home child care, nursery schools, kindergarten, Ontario Early Years Centres, family resource programs, parenting centres, readiness centres, family literacy, child development programs in CAPC, Healthy Babies Healthy Children and early intervention services. ELECT will integrate with Ontario's Kindergarten Curriculum for delivery in the province's planned full day early learning programs for four and five year olds.

Saskatchewan: The *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide* (2008) is intended to promote high quality, age-appropriate, play-based learning experiences for three-, four- and five-year-old children in a variety of settings. *Play and Exploration* is not a formal curriculum; it is a guide to support early childhood educators, in all settings, to move towards higher quality practice.

British Columbia: The *Early Learning Framework* describes the vision, pedagogical principles, and key areas of learning for children birth to five years (before school entry). The Framework was developed in partnership with the Ministries of Children and Family Development, Healthy Living and Sport, and Education. The document was designed to be applicable to all early learning environments, including child care, "Strong Start BC" programs, and any other preschool and early childhood development or child health program.

Implementation of the Early Learning Framework is mandatory in all Ministry of Education “Strong Start” programs, and voluntary in other regulated ECEC programs.

In each province, the early learning framework/curriculum has supported consistency between and among regulated programs, and allowed early childhood educators to use a common language and reference point when discussing their programs with parents, with colleagues, and with the education system.

The emergence of these early learning frameworks/curricula has also meant that initiatives have been developed for in-service training and curriculum implementation and support. Some jurisdictions have created new positions for staff to support early childhood educators in the implementation of the new curriculum. ECE faculty in post-secondary institutions have participated in curriculum training, (and in some cases have led this training) and are now giving consideration to their own curriculum modifications in order to integrate the new framework/curriculum objectives in their teaching.

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5. CURRENT INVOLVEMENT OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

The changes outlined in the previous sections to provincial/territorial (PT) policy, programs and jurisdictional responsibility for early childhood programs reflect the current perception that participation in high quality ECEC programs contributes to positive child outcomes over the long term. Increasingly, ECEC programs are understood to be more than simply a support to parental labour force participation or study. Several provinces/territories (PTs) have increased to the length of time required for recognized post-secondary ECE credentials, or percentage of staff required to hold such qualifications. As well, there has been an increase in the number of post-secondary institutions offering degree programs in ECE, and six provinces have introduced early learning/curriculum frameworks for use in ECEC programs.

At the same time, there has been an increased awareness of and interest in the early years on the part of ministries of education and school boards, and an expanding role in delivering and/or supporting programs for children age 0-5 years.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten programs for 5-year olds have been widely available across most of the country for many years, as preparation for entry into the formal school system. In three provinces, the beginning of the 2010/2011 school year will see the introduction of new developments regarding the delivery of kindergarten, and as a result, impacts on the early childhood sector:

- Prince Edward Island will implement full-school-day kindergarten for all five-year-olds, delivered through the school system instead of the early childhood system, staffed by qualified ECEs.
- Ontario will begin a five-year phase in of full-day early learning for all 4- and 5-year-olds in 600 schools, staffed with both a certified teacher and a Registered ECE, eliminating the previous split between kindergarten and child care.
- British Columbia will phase in full-school day kindergarten over a two-year period, beginning with half of the schools in 2010; discussions about options for full-day programs for four-year-olds and three-year-olds continue.

Table 2 describes PT approaches to kindergarten delivery by ministries of education.

PT	Table 2. Ministries of Education plans for kindergarten ²² as of 2009/10 ²³
NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part-school-day; average of 2.5 hours/day; 475 instructional hours/year. ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ Maximum class size: 20. ▪ Children often alternate morning and afternoon sessions on a bi-weekly or monthly basis.

²² In Table 2, all references to Kindergarten indicate participation in a program during the year prior to Grade 1. Age of entry to kindergarten varies from one jurisdiction to another, although the most commonly used date for eligibility is for the child to have his/her 5th birthday by December 31st in the year of kindergarten.

²³ Sources: Beach, J.; Friendly, M.; Ferns, C.; Prabhu, N. & Forer, B (2009). *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2008*. Toronto, ON: Childcare Resource and Research Unit.; updated with information from PT Department/Ministries of Education websites

PT	Table 2. Ministries of Education plans for kindergarten ²² as of 2009/10 ²³
NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade Primary²⁴, full school-day, with a minimum of 4 hours instructional time/day. Attendance is compulsory. Maximum class size: 25.
PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In September 2010, the province will introduce compulsory, full-school-day kindergarten for all 5-year olds. Early Childhood Educators with experience since 2000 have been given preference for new positions as Kindergarten teachers within the public school system. Educators were required to have at least one year experience, be certified by the Child Care Facilities Board, and be willing/eligible to obtain a Bachelor of Education with an Early Years Concentration by 2016. The University of PEI will begin delivering the program in the fall, 2010 and ECEs will be given full credit (2 years standing) for their ECE diploma. They will be members of the PEI Teachers' Federation. Current teachers holding Bachelor of Education degrees without an ECE diploma or courses in child development will be required to complete additional courses in child development to be eligible to teach kindergarten.
NB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-school day, for a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 4.5 instructional hours/day; 187 days of instruction. Attendance is compulsory, but may be delayed for a year if the child turns 5 after September 1. Maximum class size 22; if there are more than 20 in the class, a kindergarten support worker is included, funded through the Department of Training, Employment and Development.
QC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-school-day, 23.5 hours/week; 846 hours/year. Participation is voluntary. Maximum class size is 20.
ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ontario government will begin to phase in a new full-day early learning program for 4- and 5-year olds over a 5-year period; 600 schools will offer the program in September 2010; they have been selected based on space availability, community need, and lack of disruption to child care programs. Criteria for school selection for 2011/12 will be based on geographic distribution and space availability. Ministry of Education is reviewing need for capital funds for retrofits and additions to accommodate full day early learning. Classrooms will be staffed by a team, including a certified teacher and a registered early childhood educator, with a maximum class size of 26. Participation will be voluntary and children may attend for a part-school day, full-school-day, or extended day (to meet the needs of working parents). The extended day component and summer programming will be staffed by early childhood educators and parents will be charged a "reasonable" fee; fee subsidies may be available for eligible families. The ECEs will be school board employees and will be organized by CUPE and other unions. On Feb 17, 2010, government introduced legislation that if passed will mandate that all school boards offer full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, including the integrated extended-day programs. The Full-Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010, will also give boards the authority and responsibility to set, charge and collect fees for the before- and after-school programs.

²⁴ Nova Scotia refers to "kindergarten" for children in their year before Grade 1 as "Grade Primary"

PT	Table 2. Ministries of Education plans for kindergarten ²² as of 2009/10 ²³
MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part-school-day; hours are determined by each school board. ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ There are no maximum class sizes.
SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part-school-day; hours vary by school division, but are usually equivalent to 100 full-day equivalents/year. ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ There are no maximum class sizes.
AB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some school boards, including Edmonton and Medicine Hat offer full-school-day kindergarten. ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ Maximum class size is not specified; average size for ECS-Grade 3 is 18.4 children. ▪ ECS may be provided through a school authority or an approved private provider, who may not charge parents fees for the basic 475 hours/year. Many kindergarten programs are located in child care centres, taught by a certified school teacher. ▪ If the ECS program is offered at a child care centre, parents may be eligible for a fee subsidy to assist with the cost of the additional hours of service. ▪ Several other school authorities are establishing full-school-day kindergarten programs and programs for three- and four-year-olds, using a variety of available funding streams. They are typically targeted to disadvantaged communities or specific children with identified special needs.
BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full-school-day kindergarten will be phased in over two years, beginning in September 2010. Participation will be voluntary and maximum class size will be 20 children. ▪ Note: full-school-day kindergarten is already available for eligible ESL students, Aboriginal populations and children with special needs.
YK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approximately 2/3 of kindergarten programs operate for a full-school day (950 instructional hours/year), the rest are part-school day (475 instructional hours/day). ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ Maximum class sizes vary between 18-20; territorial average is 15.
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Both full-school day (minimum of 780 instructional hours/year) and part-school day (475 instructional hours/year). ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ No maximum class size.
NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provided on a half-day equivalent basis; 475 instructional hours/year, no more than 6 hours/day. ▪ Full-day, every-day kindergarten has been carried out on a pilot project basis in the French language school in Iqaluit. ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ No maximum class size.

In recent years, some provinces have introduced policies and programs to include child care and other family support programs within schools. This type of expansion of early childhood programs delivered by school boards under the auspices of ministries of education has largely occurred over the past 10 years.

During these years, Early Childhood Educators have seen increased job opportunities within the school systems as classroom assistants. Key informants noted that in some jurisdictions school boards are actively recruiting early childhood educators for these types of positions. This was also noted during focus groups held for the 2007 CCHRSC Training Strategy Project. As well, ECEs are seeing additional opportunities in some provinces and territories (notably PE, ON and BC) with the introduction of new early childhood programs. Early Childhood Education credentials are being recognized at some post-secondary institutions towards an Education degree and there are now a number of concurrent BA/ECE programs delivered through community college/university partnerships.

Pre-Kindergarten

In North America, the term “pre-kindergarten” is generally understood to mean early childhood education/preschool programs for children in the year before entry to the public school system – in other words, programs for four-year-old children. Internationally, the term “kindergarten” refers to early education programs for children who are both four and five years of age. In some countries, this is referred to as kindergarten 1 and 2 (KG1, KG2). In some countries, “kindergarten” also refers to programs for young children from three to five years old.

In the United States, the availability of “pre-kindergarten” programs for four-year-old children has grown substantially in the past ten years. Currently, 38 of 50 states provide state funded pre-kindergarten programs for four-year-old children, with 33 of those states reporting increased enrollment during 2008. The National Institute for Early Education Research reports that for the year 2008:

- Enrollment in state funded pre-kindergarten programs increased by more than 108,000 children. More than 1.1 million children attended state-funded preschool education, 973,178 at age 4 alone.
- States’ pre-kindergarten enrollment of 3- and 4-year-olds approaches 1.4 million in both general and special education.
- When general and special education enrollments are combined, 28 percent of 4-year-olds and 6.3 percent of 3-year-olds are served nationally.
- Total state funding for pre-kindergarten rose to almost \$4.6 billion. Funding from all reported sources exceeded \$5.2 billion, an increase of nearly \$1 billion (23 percent) over last year.²⁵

In Canada, there is considerable variation across PTs as to the level of involvement of ministries of education and school boards in early childhood programs for all children, including those in the year before entry to the public school system. Key informants described a variety of initiatives in school boards and school districts across the country, but emphasized that many of these innovative types of partnerships and collaborative efforts are based on the quality of the relationship between officials at the school board, school principals, and ECE directors in regulated programs. Many key informants cautioned that in the absence of provincial policy, these innovative practices are not supported by sustainable policy, and tend to “come and go” at the discretion and good will of key players involved in their management.

²⁵ Barnett, W.S.; Epstein, D.J.; Friedman, A.H.; Boyd, J.S.; Hustedt, J.T. (2008). *The State of Preschool 2008*. NJ: The National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University.

Even so, within the current Canadian context, greater integration of care and education is resulting in increased delivery of early childhood programs by ministries of education. Many recent initiatives have been targeted to specific populations, or have been undertaken on a pilot project basis. In other cases, the involvement of school boards in the design, delivery of, and/or support for ECEC programs has a long history, including:

- In Prince Edward Island:
 - School boards have allowed use of schools for non-profit ECEC programs since the early 1980s. These programs have typically been for five year olds (given PEI's history of kindergarten as part of the ECEC sector). As well, children attending these early childhood programs have been allowed to travel on school buses provided the child lives on a current bus route, and there is space available on the school bus.
 - Since 2000, the Department of Education has funded universal access to half-day kindergarten in the early childhood sector.
 - The Department of Education has provided curriculum advice and support to ECEC centres offering kindergarten programs.
- In Quebec, delivery of school age child care has always been the responsibility of the education system.
- Ontario has a long-standing "school use policy" that allows ECEC programs to use any existing available school space.
- Manitoba has a long-standing policy regarding the use of surplus school space for ECEC programs, and the requirement that new school construction include space for ECEC programs.
- Approximately 30% of ECEC programs in Saskatchewan are located in schools.
- In Alberta, government has funded school boards to purchase modular units to house child care programs on school property.
- In British Columbia, over 600 early childhood programs are operating with support from the Ministry of Education, serving a range of age groups.

Table 3 provides an overview of PT initiatives with respect to four-year-old children.

PT	Table 3. Role of Ministries of Education in provision of early childhood education for 4- year old children as of 2009/10 ²⁶
NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Between 2005-2008 the province piloted full-day 4-year-old kindergarten programs in 19 sites. The programs were staffed with Early Childhood Educators who had either a diploma or a degree. Maximum class size was 18. The pilot was cancelled after three years. ▪ In 2008 the Halifax Regional School Board launched the pilot Early Learning Opportunities (ELO) for 4-year olds in at five schools. ELO employs Early Childhood educators and is funded through the school board budget. The program is based on the YMCA Playing to Learn Guide. The Nova Scotia Teachers' Union filed a grievance over the hiring of ECEs. ▪ The Department of Education continues to support an Early Learning Coordinator position.

²⁶ Sources: Beach, J.; Friendly, M.; Ferns, C.; Prabhu, N. & Forer, (2009) *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2008*. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Toronto: ON; updated with information from provincial/Territorial Department/Ministries of Education websites

PT	Table 3. Role of Ministries of Education in provision of early childhood education for 4- year old children as of 2009/10 ²⁶
PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
NB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A
QC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part-school-day programs in selected communities; expansion of the program ended with the implementation of the Family Policy in 1997; they operate between 332-412 hours/year, either 4- or 5-days/week. Some programs include parent participation. Most are located in low-income communities in Montreal. ▪ Maximum class size is 18. ▪ If a 4-year has an identified special need, they are entitled to participate in a kindergarten program at the request of the parent. ▪ A number of English school boards are offering a half-day kindergarten program for 4-year olds on a pilot basis. In at least some boards, parents pay \$100 registration fee for the year.
ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Ontario government will begin to phase in a new full-day early learning program for 4- and 5-year olds over a 5-year period; 600 schools will offer the program in September 2010. ▪ Classrooms will be staffed by a team, including a certified teacher and a registered early childhood educator, with a maximum class size of 26. ▪ Participation will be voluntary and children may attend for a part-school day, full-school-day, or extended day (to meet the needs of working parents). ▪ The extended day component and summer programming will be staffed by early childhood educators and parents will be charged a "reasonable" fee; fee subsidies may be available for eligible families. ▪ The ECEs will be school board employees and will be organized by CUPE. ▪ In those schools not yet selected for phasing in the new program, junior kindergarten for four-year-olds will continue to be offered. Junior kindergarten is typically a part-school day program, although some boards offer full-school day programs (approximately 8% of 4-year olds attend full-day); the number of instructional hours are not specified. ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ Maximum class size is 23; 90.5% have 20 or fewer.
MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part-school-day in two school divisions (approximately 17.5% of 4-year olds attend). ▪ Participation is voluntary. ▪ Average class size is 20, a classroom assistant may be provided to assist the qualified teacher.
SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-kindergarten for 3- and 4-year olds in approximately 200 schools serving vulnerable populations; programs are at least 12 hrs/week, usually 3hours/day, 4 days/week. ▪ Parent participation in the program and in family education programs is encouraged. ▪ Most programs include speech and language assessment, developmental assessment, technological supports and referral for psychological assessment as required. ▪ Maximum class size is 16, with a teacher and an assistant. ▪ The Early Learning and Child Care Branch is reviewing teacher requirement for pre-kindergarten and considering ECE qualifications in place of teacher qualifications.
AB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part-school-day ECS is available for children who have a designated, mild to moderate special need,

PT	Table 3. Role of Ministries of Education in provision of early childhood education for 4- year old children as of 2009/10 ²⁶
	<p>and those who do not have adequate English proficiency (or French if they are to attend a francophone program) to succeed in school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several school authorities are establishing kindergarten programs for three- and four-year-olds, using a variety of available funding streams. They are typically targeted to disadvantaged communities or specific children with identified special needs.
BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
YK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part-school-day programs in eight rural communities, targeted to children considered to be at risk. Children attend mixed 4- and 5-year kindergartens.
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Other Education Sector Initiatives in ECEC

In addition to initiatives targeted specifically to four-year-old children, education ministries and school boards in many Canadian jurisdictions have also introduced a number of ECEC related programs for younger children. Table 4 describes other types of involvement of ministries of education in ECEC delivery and support across provinces and territories.

PT	Table 4. Role of Ministries of Education in other types of ECEC initiatives as of 2009/10 ²⁷
NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The March 2010 Throne Speech announced the development of a 10-year Early Learning and Child Care Strategy, led by the Departments of Education and Child, Youth and Family Services. The Division of Early Childhood Learning within the Department of Education was created in January, 2005, to focus on the learning needs of preschool children. The Division provides Early Childhood Learning grants to non-profit organizations for projects that support early literacy and numeracy. The division also provides KinderStart, a kindergarten orientation program. Eight sessions are scheduled at the time of kindergarten registration – 17 months prior to entry: five with a parent/caregiver and three with parent/caregiver attending workshops on child development and children attending sessions on their own. The sessions include an observational component conducted by teachers; any concerns are noted for future follow up. The Department of Education also provides resources to parents and early childhood programs in addition to Kinderstart. Itinerant home based services are provided for preschool children who are visually impaired/blind and deaf/hard of hearing. Approximately one year before school entry a school district psychologist provides assessment services and assists with the transition to school.
NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

²⁷ Sources: Beach, J.; Friendly, M.; Ferns, C.; Prabhu, N. & Forer, (2009) *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2008*. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Toronto: ON; updated with information from provincial/Territorial Department/Ministries of Education websites

PT	Table 4. Role of Ministries of Education in other types of ECEC initiatives as of 2009/10 ²⁷
PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As of April 2007, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development became responsible for child care, as well as Family Resource Centres and Best Start – a home visiting program for families with children from birth to 24 months. ▪ All Island children who are entering kindergarten this fall will be assessed using Early Years Evaluation – Direct Assessment (EYE-DA), to determine children’s development in four key areas, including self-awareness, cognitive skills, language and communication, and gross and fine motor development. ▪ Families are invited each spring to attend the “Welcome to Kindergarten” program held at the child’s school. The purpose of the program is to meet the child’s kindergarten teacher and for parents to have a better understanding about how to prepare their child for transition to school. ▪ Smart Start, an initiative of the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF), is a partnership between the Eastern School District, CHANCES non-profit community agency, Public Health Nursing, Holland College, the University of PEI, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the MWMFF. Services include a preschool program for children 3-4 years, an early development program for infants and toddlers, parent-child activities, nutrition counseling, pre- and post-natal support and parent resources and information. SmartStart is located in two schools in Charlottetown. ▪ An Early Childhood consultant has been hired to guide the development of an Early Childhood Development Framework with a five-year action plan. This work will be completed by April 30, 2010.
NB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As of 2008/09 all children registered for kindergarten are invited to participate in the <i>Early Years Evaluation: Direct Assessment</i> (EYE-DA). Assessments focus on several domains, and if results warranted, interventions are planned prior to school entry. ▪ The province is supporting four integrated early childhood development centres demonstration sites over a three-year period to establish, implement and evaluate integrated early childhood development and parenting centres. The MWMFF is working with the government to support an additional five sites. This initiative is aligned with the province’s poverty strategy Core programs to include full-and part-time child care, playgroups and drop in centres. Additional programs, such as toy-lending, immunization clinics, healthy lifestyle programs may be offered according to community need. ▪ The centres are located in schools, operated by a non-profit board of directors. Parents pay for the child care services and may be eligible for fee subsidies. The sites are intended to provide opportunities for parents to develop relationships with the education, health and non-profit sectors and ease children’s transition to school. ▪ Participating departments include Social Development, Education, Health and the Wellness and Culture and Sport. The research and evaluation component of the demonstration sites is being funded by the MWMFF, and will be carried out by the Health and Education Research Group based at the University of New Brunswick and l’Université de Moncton. ▪ Each school district has a transition-to-school coordinator who coordinates transition activities, including conducting EYE-DA assessments at school registration and connecting children and families with early intervention or compensatory activities in the community as appropriate.

PT	Table 4. Role of Ministries of Education in other types of ECEC initiatives as of 2009/10 ²⁷
QC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Passe-Partout, a targeted program for 4-year olds that assists with school readiness, consists of a minimum of 16 sessions a year with the children and eight with parents. Expansion of the program ended with the implementation of the Family Policy in 1997 ▪ Before and after school care for children attending kindergarten or elementary school is provided by School Boards.
ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Ministry of Education supports 144 Parenting and Family Literacy Centres in 30 school boards across the province. Program Facilitators in the parenting and family literacy centres work in partnership with kindergarten teachers and local community programs. ▪ Beginning in 2000 as a demonstration project, Toronto First Duty (TDF), a partnership between the Toronto District School Board and the City of Toronto, tested integrated service delivery of early childhood programs, including of kindergarten, child care and family supports. Five community organizations and schools partnered to test and evaluate the program. The success of TDF influenced provincial early childhood policy and resulted in the development of the Ontario Best Start Strategy, to develop an integrated approach to early learning and child care. In 2005 47 Best Start Networks and 4 regional French Best Start Networks were established to support local implementation. ▪ The report recommends that the Ontario College of Teachers require all teachers who do not have early childhood knowledge to complete an early childhood Additional Qualification course (or equivalent experience) within five years in order to hold a position in the Early Learning Program for 4- and 5-year-olds. ▪ In December 2009, <i>Every Child, Every Opportunity</i>, the curriculum and pedagogy for the Early Learning Program, specifically designed for the transition from preschool into the primary grades was released as compendium report to <i>Our Best Future in Mind</i>. It, the current Kindergarten Program, and <i>Early Learning for Every Child Today</i> will inform the development of a new Early Learning Program to guide the full and extended day programming.
MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early Childhood Development Initiative funding is provided to school divisions for intersectoral services for preschool children age 0-5. The funding is to respond to local needs and to facilitate children's readiness to learn prior to school entry. Funds are based on the greater of \$300/eligible child or \$5,500, but may not be used for child care or nursery school programs. ▪ As part of the 2008 <i>Family Choices: Manitoba's Five-Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care</i> a building fund was announced to provide capital to convert surplus school space to child care. Funds are provided by the Manitoba Child Care Program and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.
SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2006, the Early Learning and Child Care Branch moved to the Ministry of Education. The Child Care Program, Kids First and the pre-kindergarten program were amalgamated into one branch.
AB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children with severe disabilities according to specific criteria may be eligible for ECS for two years prior to Grade 1, and in some instance be provided in the child's home, in combination with a centre-based program. ▪ In May 2009 a retrospective report was prepared by Alberta Learning, summarizing the department's related activities in response to a 2002 Alberta Commission on Learning (ACOL) comprehensive review of the Alberta K-12 education system. The ACOL report <i>Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds</i> contained 4 recommendations related to early childhood education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the role of parents by establishing parenting centres closely linked to elementary

PT	Table 4. Role of Ministries of Education in other types of ECEC initiatives as of 2009/10 ²⁷
	<p>schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish new junior kindergarten ▪ Expand kindergarten programs to include full-day kindergarten ▪ Coordinate services for children provided by the provincial government and at the community level. <p>As a result of the ACOL recommendations, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services established 46 Parent Link Centres in 160 communities. These centres provide information and support for parents and caregivers on a variety of issues related to child development, child care and health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although government did not support the second and third recommendations (as listed above), a number of school boards have reallocated instructional funds to implement such programs.
BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2006, the province implemented <i>StrongStart BC</i>- a school-based early childhood education program for children 0-5, accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Programs are typically offered for 3-4 hours/day, 5-days/week, and are available on a drop-in basis. Programs are free of charge, and most operate on the school calendar. <i>StrongStart BC</i> facilitators must be a certified Early Childhood Educator with a current license to practice, or actively enrolled in an approved ECE training program and mentored by an ECE with a current license to practice. In 2008 there were more than 200 sites across the province. ▪ In September 2008 the government announced the Neighbourhood Learning Centres initiative and expanded it in 2009 to nine schools in six districts. School Districts work in consultation with community partners to design schools to incorporate education and community services under one roof. The services may include child care, family resource centres, health clinics and sports programs. ▪ In June 2008 the <i>Early Learning Framework</i> for children 0-5 was released. The framework was developed in partnership with the Ministries of Education, Children and Family Development and Health. It applies to all early learning environments, including child care, preschool, and <i>StrongStart BC</i>. ▪ The Ministry of Education is revising its Primary Program document to reflect full-day kindergarten and has prepared a Kindergarten Program Guide.
YK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Whitehorse Child Development Centre, funded by Yukon Health and Social Services, supports children with special needs in 4-year-old kindergarten programs and provides an outreach worker in some schools.
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for all early childhood programs, including child care.
NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Department of Education is responsible for all early childhood programs, including child care.

6. PERSPECTIVES OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SECTOR ON THE INTEGRATION OF CARE AND EDUCATION

Responses to the emerging issues survey and the key informant interviews suggest that while there is strong support in principle for a greater role for ministries of education in early childhood programs, there is also concern about the impact of this trend on the child care sector and the future stability and viability

of programs. Survey respondents from PEI, Ontario and BC – where province-wide changes have been announced – expressed the greatest concerns, possibly as the anticipated impacts are current under significant discussion within the child care community.

As the survey was not intended to provide a representative sample of each stakeholder group or geographic region, it must be emphasized that any conclusions made from these results are tentative. The survey was intended to provide a preliminary, broad look at the emerging issues, to identify human resource implications of the issues, to prioritize the issues, and to inform a more detailed examination of them in a subsequent phase of the project.

The CCHRSC sent information about the project and the survey via email to a stakeholder list compiled from their database, inviting individuals and organizations to respond, and asking organizations to circulate the survey to their members. A total of 825 individuals and organizations responded to the survey, with representation from each province and territory, and from all stakeholder groups.

Table 5: Breakdown of survey respondents by jurisdiction, language spoken, and place of work				
PT	English	French	Total	Urban/Rural
NL	28	0	28	
NS	21	1	22	
PE	13	0	13	
NB	19	4	23	
QC	17	69	86	
ON	319	14	333	
MB	94	6	100	
SK	46	3	49	
AB	55	14	69	
BC	73	0	73	
YK	14	0	14	
NT	12	0	12	
NU	3	0	3	
TOTALS	714	111	825	

- 67% of respondents work in an urban area
- 21% work in a rural area
- 12% work in both urban and rural areas

Approximately half the respondents worked in centre-based programs, evenly split between employers and front-line staff. The survey provided the opportunity for respondents to answer questions about each of the four issues, questions specific to each target group and questions about the most important HR issues to address in each issue area. The findings related to inclusion, school age care and family child care are contained in a separate report.

Survey responses indicate that there is a considerable amount of involvement of schools in the delivery of early childhood programs across much of the country.

- 69% indicated that there had been discussions in their PT about the roles of teachers and ECEs in the classroom
- 46% indicated that some school boards in their community operate part-day nursery school programs, 40% indicated that some operate parent/child drop in programs and 34% indicated that some operate child care programs for children 0-5
- 50% indicated that more ECEs were moving to the education system than in the previous three years

Results from Ontario indicate greater involvement in a number of areas. 87% of respondents from Ontario indicated that there have been discussions about the role of teachers and ECEs in the classroom and 54% indicated that more ECEs are moving to the education system than in the past. It appears that more school boards operate school age child care programs, child care programs for younger children and parent-child drop-ins than in other jurisdictions.

Perspectives of Faculty in Post-secondary Institutions

ECE faculty are often in a unique position to observe program and trends in their communities. They are in numerous child care facilities observing students, they are aware of changing demographics in their student populations and experience the impact in a change in policy direction on the academic choices the students make.

Overall 66% of faculty respondents indicated that they have noticed an increased involvement from ministries of education and school boards in the ECEC sector. Responses were highest in BC and Manitoba (89% and 85% respectively) and lowest in Alberta and the Atlantic provinces (50% in each). In Ontario 56% reported an increase in involvement.

However, the reported involvement was not necessarily related to the extent to which more ECEs expressed an interest in working in the education system. Interest was considerably higher in Ontario than in other jurisdictions, with 78% of faculty respondents reporting more ECE students expressing an interest in working in the education system. In BC, 60% of faculty respondents reported an increase in ECEs expressing an interest, and in Manitoba 30% of faculty respondents reported the same.

Sixty-two percent of all faculty respondents reported an increase in the number of graduates who have gone on to get a degree in Education or a related degree.

One key informant noted that many students report they would prefer to work with younger age groups of children, but that they anticipate they will not be able to afford to support their families given the low wages and lack of benefits in the regulated ECEC sector. This key informant noted that while some of the new graduates who prefer to work with younger children opt for employment in ECEC related positions such as family resource programs or hospital based programs, many feel they must pursue careers in the education system.

Perspectives of Employers

Employers were asked about their perceptions of the impact of an increased involvement from ministries of education and/or school boards in the ECEC sector on their child care programs. As noted in Figure 3,

there were clear differences among employers in the three provinces (BC, PE, and ON) with recently announced expansion.

Employers in these provinces were more likely to anticipate adapting their programs to care for younger children and school age children since a large number of children would be moving from the regulated ECEC sector into school based programs. In BC, five year olds will be moving to a full day kindergarten program; in PEI, five year olds are moving from half day kindergarten and half day child care in regulated ECEC programs to school based full day kindergarten; and in Ontario, a five year plan to phase in full day early learning for four and five year olds will begin in September 2010. Employers also anticipate a decline in overall enrolment; several key informants noted that in five years, there would be no more “school age child care” in Ontario, as all children would be accommodated in the school based program. Given the re-adjusted focus on younger children (and the corresponding requirements for additional staff due to the need to maintain child:staff ratios), employers anticipate that this will result in an increase in parent fees.

Perhaps one of the more significant impacts anticipated in these three jurisdictions is the increased challenge with recruitment of qualified staff. In Ontario and PEI, large numbers of registered/certified ECEs will move to positions in the new school based programs, with better wages and benefits.

One-third of employers indicated that they had lost more staff to the education sector this year than they did three years ago. Approximately half of the staff who left were qualified ECEs; the top three reasons for leaving were better wages, better hours of work and better benefits. Sixty-one percent of employers anticipate having greater difficulty recruiting qualified ECEs with increased involvement of the Education sector.

HR Issues Prioritized

Respondents were asked if collaboration between schools and child care programs increases, what they thought were the top three topics that need to be addressed from a list provided. In addition they were asked if there were other priorities in their top three that were not on the list. There was considerable consistency across all jurisdictions in identifying top priorities. Respondents were asked for their top three HR priorities, which are presented in Figure 3. In addition, the responses were then weighted according to priority ranking and the top five identified. Again, there was considerable consistency among PTs and among categories of respondents, but the order of priorities varied. Table 5 shows the priority ranking of employers, staff and faculty in post-secondary institutions.

Figure 3. Top three HR priorities to address should collaboration between Education and child care increase

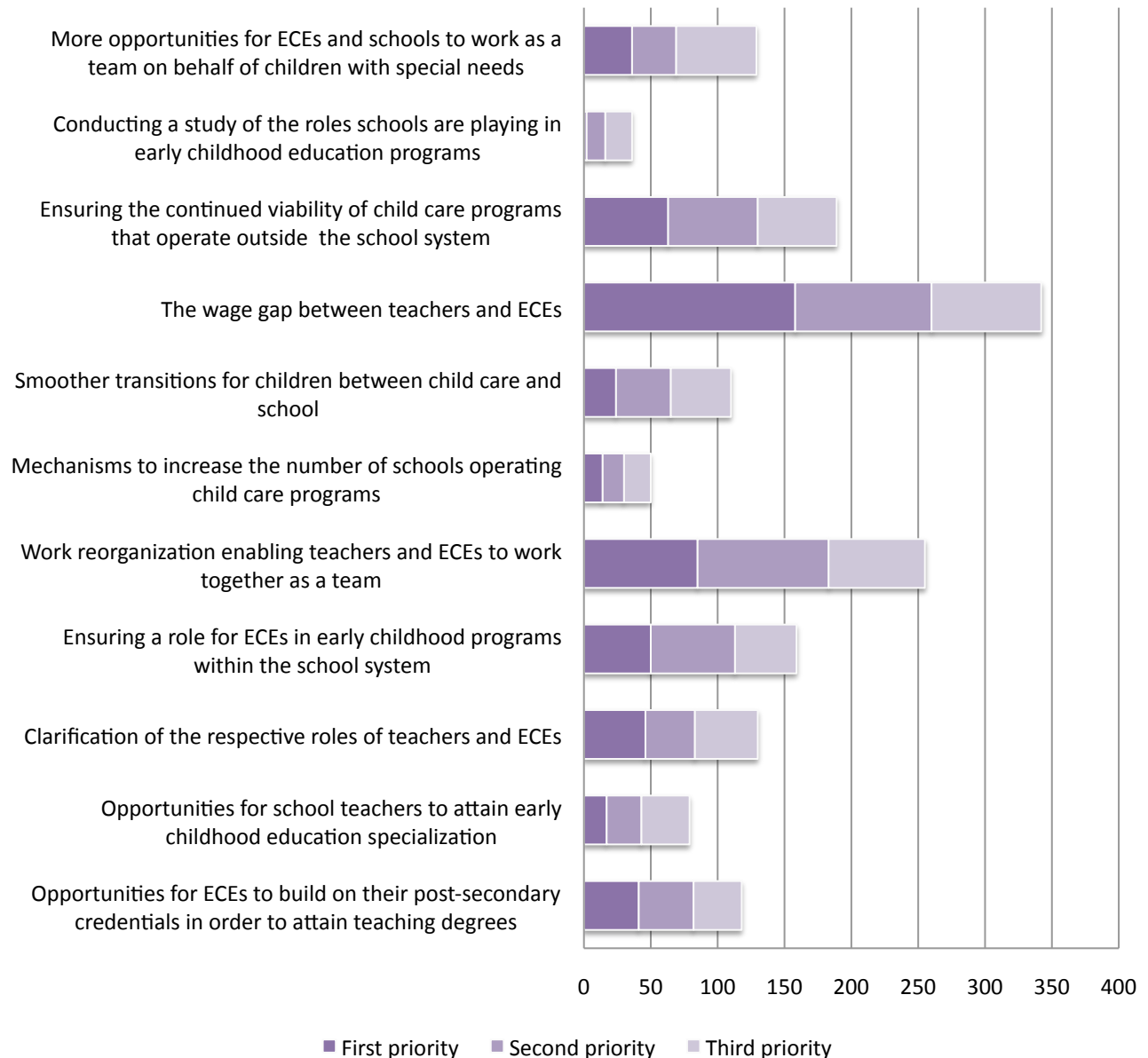


Table 6 shows that the top two priorities – addressing the wage gap and work reorganization enabling teachers and ECEs to work together as a team – were common among the three stakeholder groups, but ensuring a role for ECEs in early childhood programs within the school system was a higher priority for staff than the other groups. Priority five for staff - opportunities for ECEs to build on their post-secondary credentials in order to attain a teaching degree – was not identified as a priority for the other two groups.

	Table 6. Top HR priorities to address should collaboration between “Education” and child care increase: employers, staff and post-secondary faculty		
Priority ranking	Employers (n=131)	Staff (n=122)	Post secondary faculty (n=66)
1.	The wage gap between teachers and ECEs	The wage gap between teachers and ECEs	The wage gap between teachers and ECEs
2.	Work reorganization enabling teachers and ECEs to work together as a team	Work reorganization enabling teachers and ECEs to work together as a team	Work reorganization enabling teachers and ECEs to work together as a team
3.	Ensuring the continued viability of community-based child care programs that operate outside of the mandate of the school system	Ensuring a role for ECEs in early childhood programs within the school system	Ensuring the continued viability of community-based child care programs that operate outside of the mandate of the school system
4.	Ensuring a role for ECEs in early childhood programs within the school system	Ensuring the continued viability of community-based child care programs that operate outside of the mandate of the school system	Clarification of the respective roles of teachers and ECEs
5.	Clarification of the respective roles of teachers and ECEs	Opportunities for ECEs to build on their post-secondary credentials in order to attain a teaching degree	Ensuring a role for ECEs in early childhood programs within the school system

Perspectives of Key Informants

The trends and priorities identified through the survey were reviewed with key informants and examined in further detail. The key informants were selected for their expertise and in-depth knowledge of the child care sector from a variety of perspectives.

Almost all key informants indicated that the integration of care and education was by far the most important emerging issue facing the sector and a priority area for the CCHRSC to address. This was the case even in PTs where there is currently little activity in this area. Several key informants noted that it was a challenge to consider the other three “emerging” issues, except through the lens of integration, and the impact it will have in these areas.

There was a mixed response from key informants as to whether or not ECEs were moving to the Education system. Movement often had little to do with increased integration, and more to do with job opportunities and pay, which often varied regionally. A number of key informants indicated that they had heard more ECEs were moving to the education system, but not actually seeing it. Among several key informants there was a perception that integration is happening at the policy level, but not necessarily at the school level.

Issues identified by multiple key informants include the following:

- The education gap (2-year diploma vs. 4-year degree) between ECEs and teachers and the related wage/benefit gap needs to be examined.
- There is a lack of clarity about who are the appropriate teachers of young children (i.e. teacher credentials or ECE credentials) and what the staffing structure of the classroom should look like.
- There is a need for greater leadership skills among ECEs, and a better understanding of how systems work.
- There is a need to articulate a clear role for ECEs in an integrated system.
- Concern about the lack of early childhood credentials among many kindergarten teachers. It was noted that in the typical education system, a teacher could move from the high school level to kindergarten without any additional/specific training for the age group.
- A number of informants felt there was a need for better articulation of the value and nature of ECE work, and how it differs in approach from traditional teaching. It was noted that currently there is not a good understanding of ECE approaches among those in the school system. The nature of emergent curriculum was noted many times as an example of the difficulty in integrating an early childhood program into a school system with schedules and rigid time frames.
- Teachers and early childhood educators need to learn from each other, as each group brings a specific skill set that the other lacks. For example, early childhood educators have better skills in understanding child development and guiding behaviour while teachers have better skills in purposeful teaching.

In addition to issues raised by key informants about the working relationships between teachers and early childhood educators, a number raised questions about the potential for the development of “split systems” in the early childhood sector in Canada.²⁸ As noted in an earlier section of this report, there have been efforts in the international community to move from systems where younger children have access to child care that is managed/administered by social service agencies and older children have access to educational programs that are managed by ministries of education and school boards/districts.

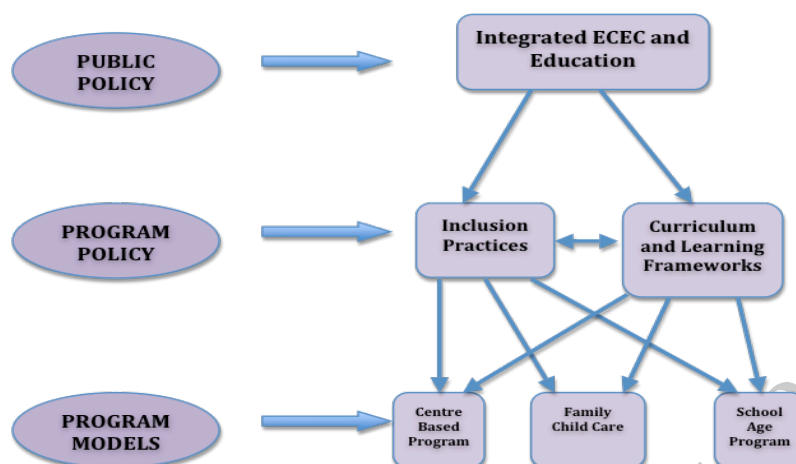
The Broad Reach of Impacts

Although this report focuses on the impacts of emerging integration practices between the education and ECEC sectors, this project has also given full consideration to three other topics identified by the CCHRSC for consideration, i.e., inclusion, school age child care, and family home child care.

A number of key informants commented that emerging examples of greater integration between the education and ECEC sectors would naturally have impacts on these other three areas as well. This is because the issues identified represent public policy considerations, program policy and development, and program delivery models. As Figure 4 shows, there are reciprocal impacts between and among all issues:

²⁸ In a “split system”, responsibility for ECEC programs is split between two ministries, e.g., programs and services for children under 3 years old are the responsibility of ministries of social services, and responsibility for programs for children from 3 years to school entry is designated to ministries of education. In a split system, there are often different levels of qualifications for teachers, different curricula, different funding options, and different standards for quality. In split systems, standards are typically higher for programs for older children.

Figure 4. Reciprocal impacts of integrated ECEC and Education policy on program policy and models



Inter-Governmental Considerations

A number of key informants suggested that the CCHRSC would be strategically wise to identify the implications of emerging trends regarding integration of education and ECEC on intergovernmental relations at the FPT levels. Education is a provincial/territorial responsibility, and there are no formal inter-governmental FPT relationships. There are no FPT forums of ministers, deputies, or officials in the education sector. The Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) represents provincial and territorial Ministers of Education – there is no federal ministerial counterpart. Key informants asked what this might mean for federal funding for human resource issues, research, and future opportunities for provinces and territories to cost-share new initiatives with the federal government. It was also questioned whether PT Directors of ECEC would develop a relationship with CMEC or if there will be revisions to their current reporting structure within the social services sector.

7. PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

While there was general support for the expansion of a publicly delivered system of early childhood education and a greater role for ministries of education, considerable anxiety and apprehension was expressed at an individual level, particularly by employers and child care organizations. This appears to be caused by the uncertainty of their own futures and a sense of being “overtaken” by a stronger and unfamiliar infrastructure.

Key informants identified a number of activities for the CCHRSC to undertake to address HR issues related to the greater integration of care and education. Some of the suggested areas for activity, however, are not necessarily within the scope or mandate of the CCHRSC. These suggestions included such activities as:

- Identify the additional ECEC related training needs of kindergarten teachers
- Examine the feasibility of developing a common credential for all (ECEs and teachers) who work with children 0-8 years old
- Undertake a recruitment campaign to encourage former ECEs to return to sector related employment
- Coordinate data collection on the implementation of full day kindergarten/early learning on changes to union affiliation, job descriptions and related wage scales, career opportunities, and additional training/education required for ECEs
- Conduct a research study on the impacts of integration on the ECE sector as they emerge in order to identify best practice, anticipate and be responsive to the changing needs of the sector, and inform future policy development process across PTs.

Priority areas specifically identified for the CCHRSC fall into two main areas:

1. Managing Change

Several key informants spoke about the need for the child care sector to be better positioned to engage in meaningful dialogue with the Education sector. Employers and child care organizations indicated that the move to a greater integration of care and education was not resulting in a partnership between the two sectors, but rather a sense of take-over by Education. They also noted a perceived lack of understanding within the Education sector of the value and nature of ECE work, and how it differs in approach from traditional teaching. Building on the issues identified by survey respondents, key informants identified priority areas for the CCHRSC to help the sector gain skills to participate effectively in the changing policy environment, and to support career development and ladder opportunities within a more integrated system:

- Develop tools to help facilitate change at a systems level, including change management, critical thinking, strategic policy change, how to work cross-sectorally.

I fear that the ECE sector will disappear – last one out, turn off the lights!
(child care organization)

How can this be a partnership when it feels like a hostile takeover?
(child care employer)

We have not integrated with education - we have been submerged by them.
(child care employer)

The education sector indicates that early childhood programs are important, but they want to do it their way.
(child care organization)

- Develop a framework for a job analysis of the ECE role, with a recommended wage scale that takes into account experience and education, and can be adapted for each region.
- Examine the feasibility of an articulation process for an ECE credential into an Education degree.
- Examine mechanisms to support unqualified staff currently working in child care to get an ECE credential.
- Develop a national ECE certification program.

2. HR impacts of integration

Greater integration of care and education is occurring at varying degrees across the country. A number of questions and issues have been raised about changes to program delivery, viability of child care programs, future educational requirements and career paths that will need addressing in the future, and other resulting HR issues have yet to be identified.

A number of key informants noted that given the potential time frame for the CCHRSC to support follow up activities (e.g., Phase 2 of the Emerging Issues and Communication Strategy Project) on the issue of integration of ECEC and Education, it may not be possible for the CCHRSC to take a pro-active approach to this issue, given the swift pace of change across jurisdictions. Suggested activities for CCHRSC action focused on infant/toddler programs, and included program requirements, pre-service training and professional development needs:

- Since employers anticipate serving younger age groups in the future as more preschool age children move into the education system, questions have been raised about the viability of these types of programs as infant/toddler programs are more expensive to operate. To date, most of the activity related to integration involves programs for 5-year olds and some 4-year olds. What is the future of programs for younger children and the implications for staffing? What can be learned from the European experience of working within split systems of child care and early education?
- Examine the need for revised educational requirements for ECEs and work with post-secondary institutions to respond to these changes. Expected changes include a greater focus on programming for younger children, and adaptation of B.Ed. curricula to include more emphasis on child development and behaviour guidance.
- Identify appropriate types of professional development for ECEs working with infants and toddlers
- Using the new Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators, prepare a summary document that focuses on skills and abilities required to work with younger preschool children.

Examine links to other sectors and don't work in isolation.

Almost all sectors are impacted by child care and there is a broad base of interest in it.

(municipal policy staff)

Ensure the Sector Council supports the occupation, regardless of a school or child care centre setting.

(Labour representative)

Engaging the Sector

In general, key informants indicated that although travel is becoming more difficult for many, the most effective way to engage the sector is through face to face meetings. Key informants were unanimous in

reporting that face to face dialogue is the best for depth of discussion, opportunities for meaningful conversation, and for creating ongoing working relationships.

However, a number mentioned that webinars and other forms of virtual meetings could be effective, especially among younger members of the sector. Some also noted that virtual meetings might be less intimidating for some and a more comfortable way to participate.

A number of key informants indicated that if the CCHRSC want to engage the next generation of ECEs it will be important to look at new technologies, including Facebook and other social media networks.

Priority activities identified for sector-wide forums on emerging issues were:

- A forum for early childhood education leaders/employers on change management, critical thinking, strategic policy change, how to work cross-sectorally, to support the child care sector to be more effectively engaged with the education sector
- A facilitated dialogue with representatives from the Education sector and the child care sector on the HR implications of integration and the respective roles of and opportunities for ECEs and teachers.

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8. CONCLUSION

According to survey respondents and key informants, the involvement of the Education sector in early childhood education and care is the most important emerging issue in Canada today, and is relevant at a pan-Canadian level. The full impact and range of implications are still emerging, and are expected to result in rapid and substantial changes in PT policies and programs, and to have significant effects on the ECEC sector.

The concerns and anxieties expressed by child care employers and child care organizations are indicative of the fast pace of change, as well as the lack of experience, organization, and skill in the ECEC sector with respect to negotiation of sectoral partnerships. Even within governments, the education and social service sectors operate from different philosophical perspectives and approaches, and emerging partnerships need to be developed with care and consideration of these differences.

Given the CCHRSC's mandate to focus on human resource issues in the early childhood education and care sector on a pan-Canadian level, many of the activities suggested by key informants may be unrealistic, given the range of new developments across Canada. The CCHRSC may need to consider regional or multi-jurisdictional efforts, and the CCHRSC Board of Directors' strategic planning efforts will need to consider the most appropriate and timely responses to an emerging issue that appears to be bringing substantive and significant changes to the ECEC sector in Canada.

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