



early learning & care for every child

A Model of Integrated Early Learning, Child Care & Parent Support

SpecialLink
Winnipeg, MB



What Is the Goal of Toronto First Duty?

An early learning and care program for every child that:

- Supports the healthy development and successful learning experiences for all children, at the same time as it
- Supports families to work or study
- Supports families in their parenting role



TFD Background

Initiated in 1999 with
the aim of:

- Demonstrating the value of integrating kindergarten, child care and parenting supports in an early years strategy
- Affecting public policy



Partners

- Bruce School, TDSB
- Woodgreen Community Services
- Atkinson Charitable Foundation
- City of Toronto



Five Core Elements

- Integrated early learning environment
- Early childhood staff team
- Local governance
- Seamless access
- Family participation



Early Learning Environment

- Common curriculum
- Pedagogy
- Daily schedules & routines
- Shared/joint space
- Monitoring development & skills
- Program quality



Who are the Team?

- ECE and ECA
- K Teachers, Teaching and Special Needs Assistants
- Parenting Workers
- Resource Staff from both streams
- Students
- Parent and Community Volunteers
- Early Years Coordinator, School Principal, and Parenting Program Supervisor



How does TFD integrate children with special needs?

- Seamless access
- Shared resources
- More points of contact - parenting centre, K program
- Partnership with families
- Advocacy



Seamless Access

- Registration in Spring of every year
- Jointly conducted by TDSB and BWELC staff
- Provides opportunity for initial understanding of the goals of family
- Possible discussion of undiagnosed needs of child

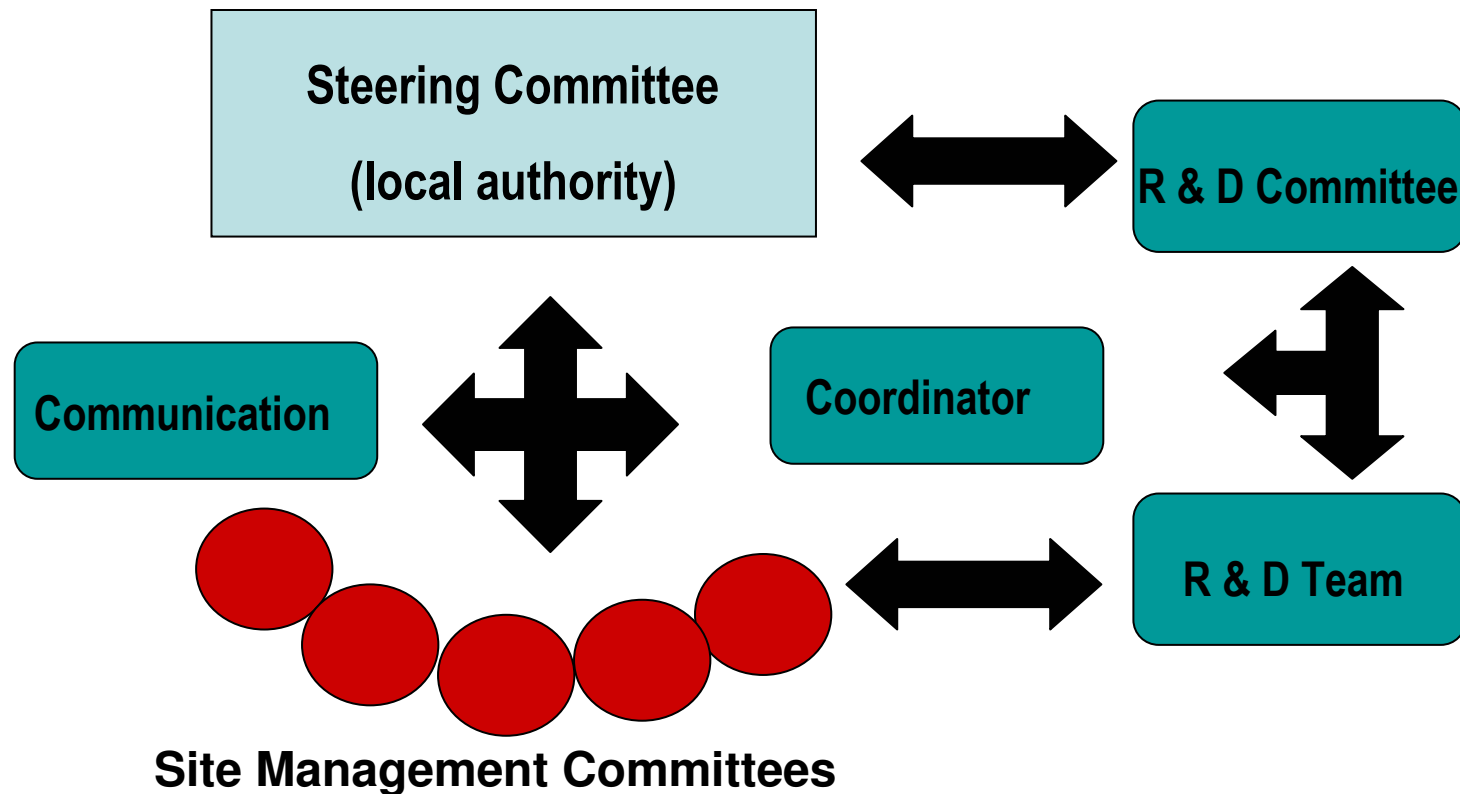


Parent Participation

- Active participation in children's early learning and development
- Enhanced parenting capacity
- Meaningful input into decision-making and programs
- Support families with children with special needs



Governance





Why integrated local governance?

- Builds on community assets
 - Captures a community's existing assets by blending them into a common program with a common mandate, for all children 0 to 6 years and their families.
 - Eliminates winner-loser syndrome that accompanies most systems change by ensuring the resources and expertise of all the stakeholders are retained.
 - Reduces service duplication



Getting started: How does integrated local governance work?

- Identifies who should be at the table
 - Leading representatives of the core partners:
 - child care
 - school
 - family support providers
 - Other partners working with children and families in the community



How does integrated local governance work?

A clear commitment

- Develop a partnership agreement that lays out:
 - What you're going to do
 - How you plan on doing it
 - Who's responsible for making it happen



Sample partnership agreement:

→ Tool: Partnership Agreement

This agreement is signed by the school superintendent and principal, the executive directors and program managers of the community agencies, and the directors and supervisors of specialized services.

Partnership Agreement

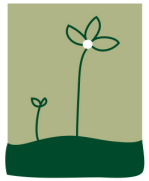
Mandate

The management committee is the governing body, accountable to the funder and the community to ensure that all commitments of the early childhood services integration project are met. The management committee sets overall strategic direction, vision, objectives, and operating policies for the project considering the advice of the community reference group and the site committee.

Committee Responsibilities

The management committee's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

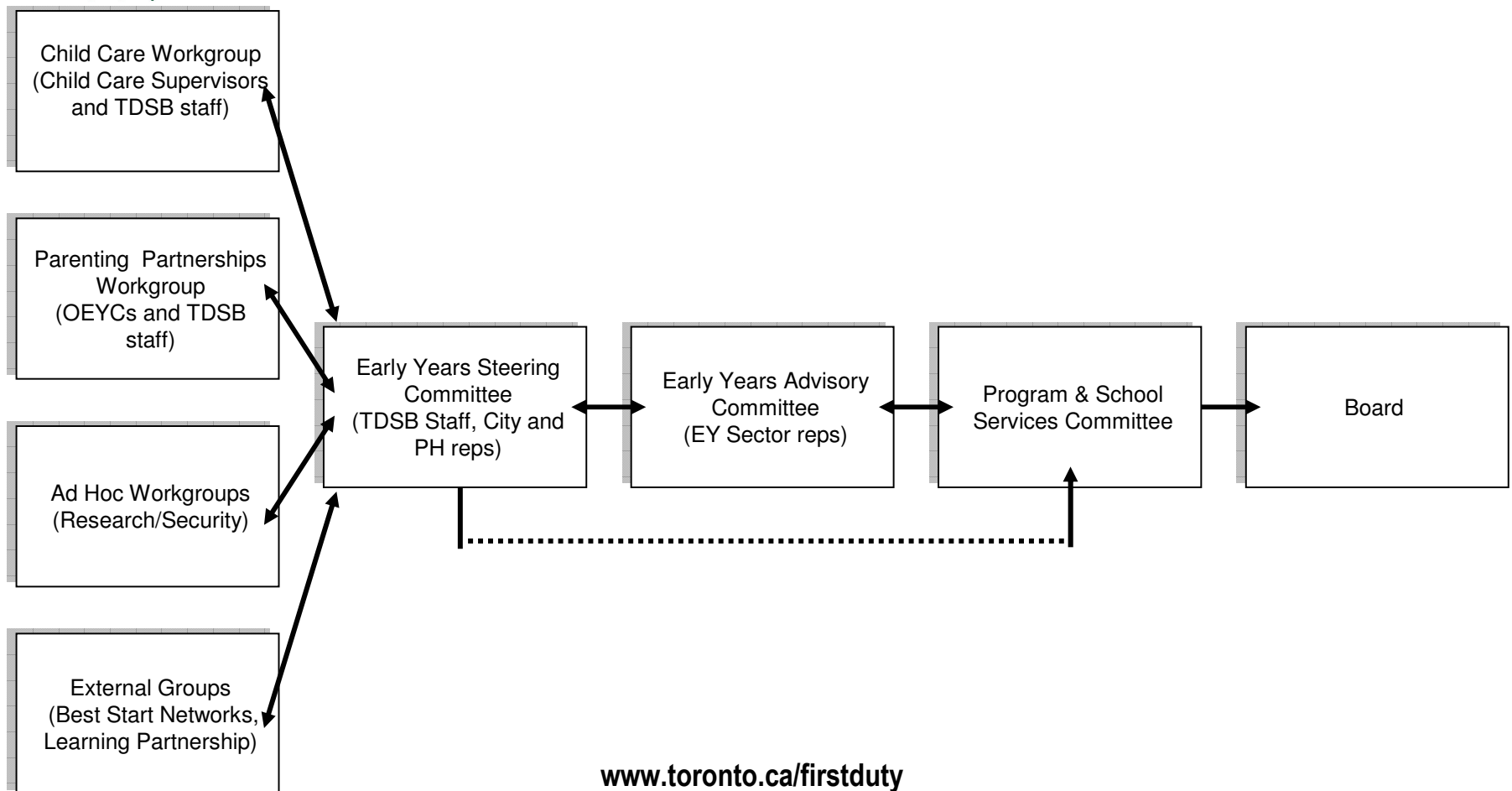
- setting overall direction and priorities for the project,
- approving the project model and individual components;
- ensuring that the project components meet the objectives;
- allocating and monitoring the project budget, with the support of the project manager;



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Toronto District School Board

Early Years Initiatives: Co-ordination and Governance



www.toronto.ca/firstduty

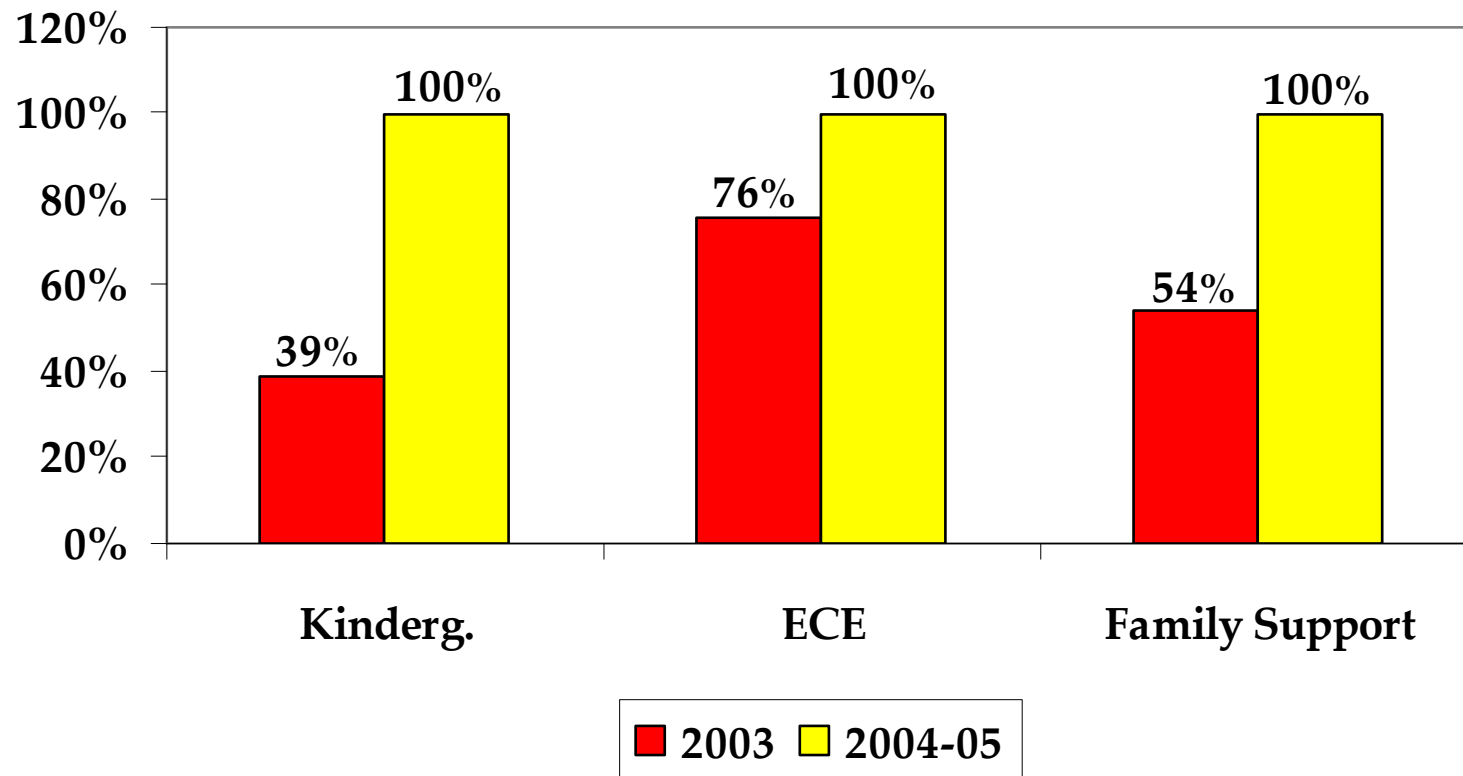


Research and Evaluation

- Quantitative
 - Child outcome
 - Family, staff & community surveys
 - Program quality
 - Economic analysis
- Qualitative
 - Focus groups
 - Interviews
 - Field notes

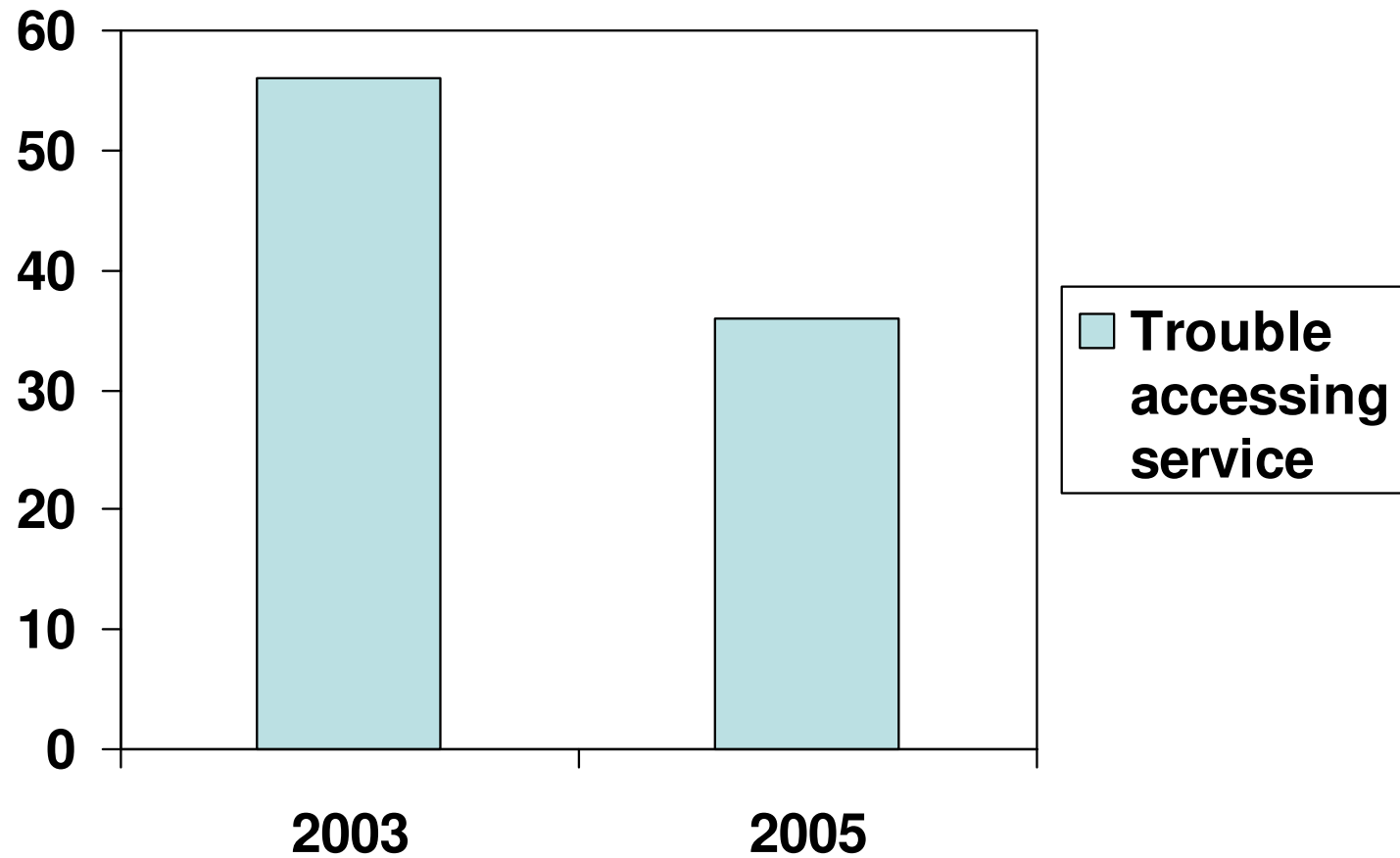


Staff survey: *I have benefited professionally*





Increasing access





Cost comparisons: TFD vs. traditional impact on special needs resources

- **Based on comparison of BWELC & other child care programs for 4 & 5 year olds**
- **Similar costs but more flexibility and choices for families at BWELC**
- **BWELC resources limited with child enrolled in TDSB component**



Toronto First Duty Integration Tools



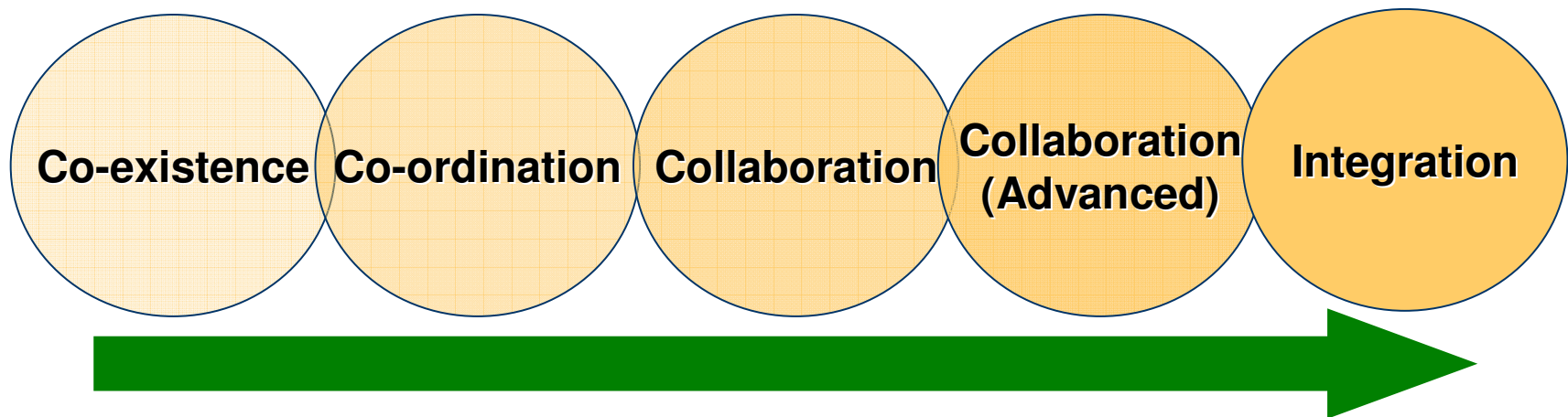
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Service Integration Benchmarks



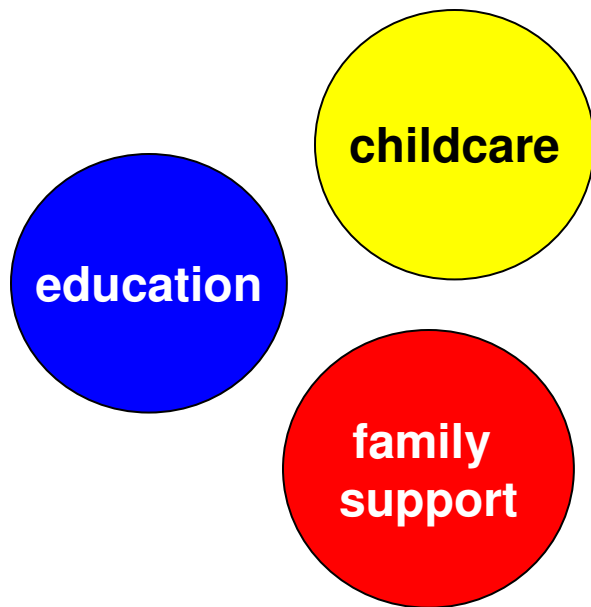
Toronto First Duty integration of three core early childhood services:

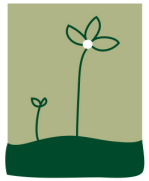
- child care
- Kindergarten
- family supports



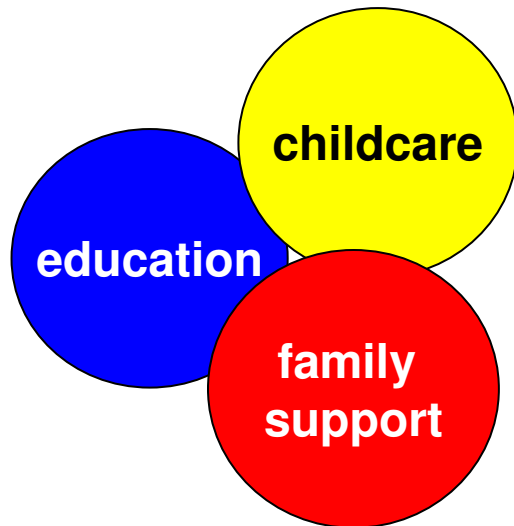
Co-location

- Programs located in same building or neighbourhood
- Families make separate arrangements to participate
- Programs have an individual vision, philosophy & goals
- Minimal connection between programs
- Programs are considered tenants in the space





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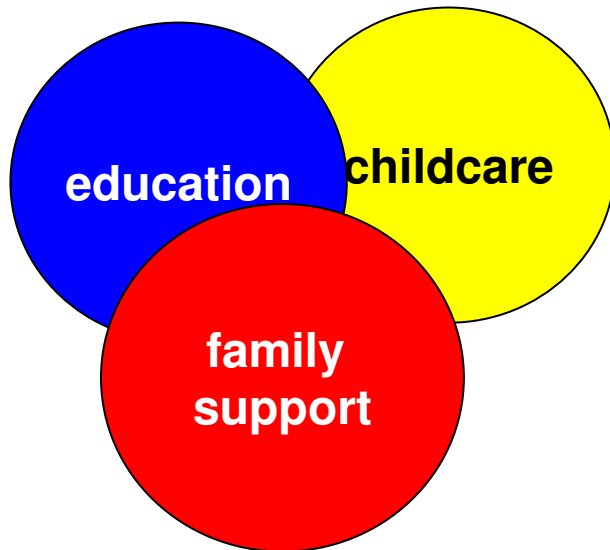


Coordination

- Staff from all programs meet to discuss children's individual needs
- Program plans are shared
- Behaviour guidance strategies are discussed
- Staff plan together to coordinate some activities, schedules & space (e.g. use of the playground)
- Staff plan together to reduce transitions for children
- Staff work together to organize joint events in the school



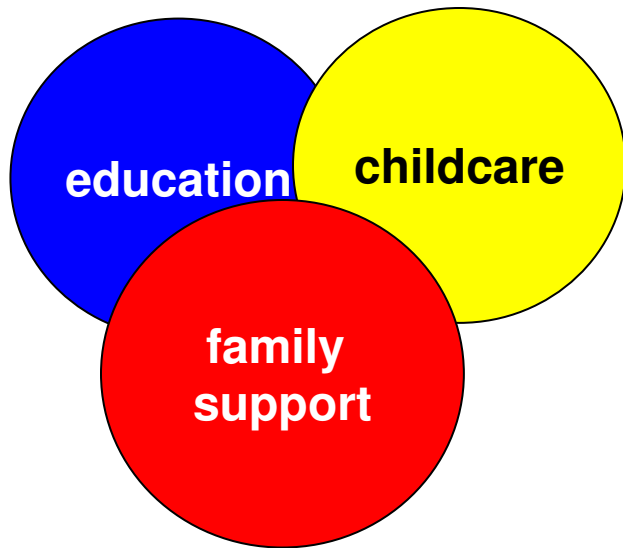
Collaboration



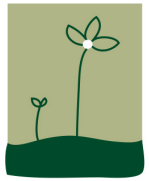
- Staff team meet and discuss programming, curriculum and assessment
- Principal, supervisor & family support coordinator (site managers) meet regularly to plan and work through challenges
- Joint confidentiality agreements & consent forms
- Pertinent information regarding children is shared, including developmental progress and behaviour
- Resources and equipment may be shared
- Team jointly develops a transition plan for children starting kindergarten



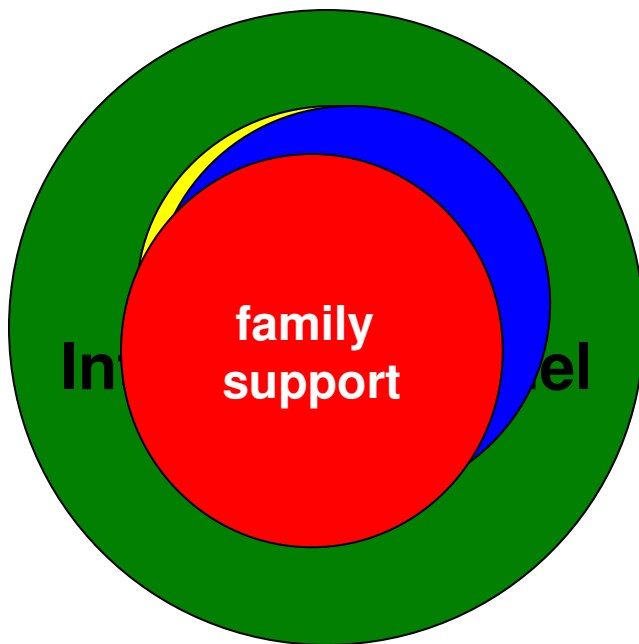
Collaboration (advanced)



- Joint professional development opportunities are made available
- Policies & procedures revised to more accurately reflect collaborative behaviour
- Site managers work together to develop annual professional development plans, review & make revisions to protocols, schedule staff meeting times etc.

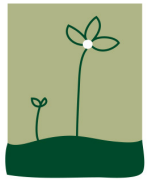


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Integration

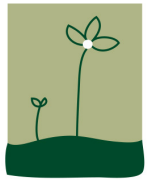
- Child care centre & kindergarten class share space
- Family support activities integrate with child care & kindergarten program
- Joint curriculum & pedagogical approach
- Joint program policies and practices
- Core staff team includes ECE's, teachers, family support practitioners teaching assistants
- Site managers work together as a team to plan, allocate/access resources based on community need



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The Indicators of Change

- Integration Benchmarks applied to TFD core elements:
 - Governance
 - Access
 - Early Learning Environment
 - Staff Team
 - Family Participation



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Indicators of Change

- Describes predicted, incremental steps for each area
- Allows partners to identify priorities and activities towards integration
- Provides a management tool that guides, tracks and assesses progress towards integration



Guiding Principles for the Development of the Toronto District School Board SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

- We adhere to the Toronto District School Board Mission and Values Statements.
- All exceptional students, their families and the staff who support them have the right to be treated with respect.
- All exceptional students have the right to reach their potential.



TDSB Special Education Plan

- A partnership of students, school, family and support services is essential to the success of all exceptional students.
- TFD puts the plan into action
- Typical limitations of resources, staff training and family partnership
- KIP within geographic clusters



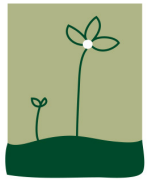
Applying integration into practice

- Manitoba's Family First - 40% of cc located in schools
- Joint seamless registration
- If child has *identified* needs, parent submits diagnosis letter, assessment, speech and language reports
- At joint team meeting, all children's reports are discussed
- plan of action developed



The early years team

- TDSB teachers
- Early childhood educators
- BWELC coordinator
- School principal
- TDSB resource teacher
- BWELC resource teacher
- Parenting Centre worker



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Supporting children that are not identified at registration

- At team meetings, staff identify the child and observations are flagged
- Team decides who will access necessary supports (child care program or TDSB)
- Both resource teams work in tandem to ensure efficient response



Supporting children that are not identified at registration

- BWELC resource teacher sets up service coordination for parents through extra support agencies like CITY KIDS
- TDSB kept informed for student records
- early years team given support and guidance



www.toronto.ca/firstduty



Every Child Belongs:

http://www.toronto.ca/children/sp_needs.htm

CITYKIDS:

<http://www.mothercraft.ca/dispatcher.asp?page=206>

[**zjanmohamed@oise.utoronto.ca**](mailto:zjanmohamed@oise.utoronto.ca)

[**www.toronto.ca/firstduty**](http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty)



Toronto First Duty Guide to Early Childhood Service Integration

Provides:

- Guidance on how to develop a joint vision
- Suggestions on how to set goals & direction
- Ideas on developing joint policies & procedures

Guide to Early Childhood Service Integration

January 2006



The goal of Toronto First Duty [TFD] is to provide an early learning and child care program for every child, that promotes the healthy development of children at the same time as it supports parents in their work or study and in their parenting role. For more information about the TFD project visit: www.toronto.ca/firstduty

In This Publication

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-  C. Getting Started
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 -  Early Childhood Staff
 -  Parent Participation
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Early Learning & Care for Every Child ... Informing Toronto's Best Start



1 Integrated, Local Governance Structure

Guide to Early Childhood Service Integration 2006



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The following provides a suggested format for meetings with the purpose of developing a single governance structure. The partners will define their shared goals and develop the protocols necessary for daily decision-making. There are suggested activities to help participants identify their differences and commonalities and to reach consensus on moving forward.

Goal: As described in the *Indicators of Change* tool, the goal of integrated governance is to develop a single body, responsible for financial, human resource and program decisions.



What the Research Says



Developing a Common Vision



Where We Are



Partnership Agreement



Summary



Support Tools ...

Vision statement

Job description for operational lead position

Job posting for early learning team member

Partnership agreement

School/principal/staff commitment

Case study: Unions & integration

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Documents open in a new window

-  Full manual
-  Indicators of change
-  TFD core program elements
-  Definitions
-  Community / social service providers
-  Service providers survey
-  Building Consensus Presentation

I. Local Governance:

-  Vision statement
-  Job description - Operational lead position
-  Job posting - Early learning team member
-  Partnership agreement
-  Principal/Staff commitment package
-  Case Study: Unions & integration




II. Seamless Access:

-  Family survey
-  Common intake form
-  Case Study: Flexible enrolment

III. Integrated Early Learning Environment:

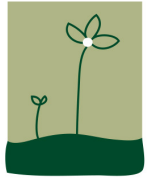
-  Common program pedagogical philosophy
-  Principles for an integrated learning env't
-  Health screening workplan
-  Daily program & staffing schedule
-  Health, safety & nutrition policy
-  Professional development workshop agenda
-  Information sharing consent form
-  ECERS-R quality assessment tool
-  Case Study: Integrated program profile
-  Case Study: Joint child care/ kindergarten

IV. Early Childhood Staff Team:

-  Program planner & curriculum review
-  Behaviour guidance policy
-  Staff team meeting agenda

V. Parent Participation:

-  Program evaluation
-  Case Study: Soliciting parent involvement



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Connections - ELECT and the Kindergarten Program



↔ ELECT



Resources

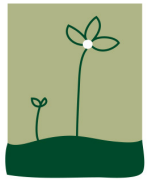
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- Early Learning for Every Child Today
- http://www.children.gov.on.ca/NR/CS/Publications/en_elf.pdf

Early Learning for Every Child Today

A framework for Ontario early childhood settings



Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning
December, 2006



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Statement of Principles for early learning for every child

- Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health
- Early learning experiences are crucial to the future well-being of children, and establish the foundation for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will affect later learning and behaviour.



Statement of Principles

- Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.



Statement of Principles

- *Teachers, early childhood educators, members of the community, and families should work together to provide challenging and engaging learning experiences that will build children's confidence, encourage them to continue to see learning as both enjoyable and useful, and provide a **strong foundation** for their future intellectual, physical, and social development.*



Statement of Principles

- Respect for diversity, equity and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children's rights, optimal development and learning.



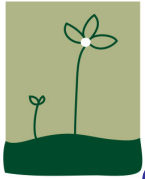
Statement of Principles

- *To ensure that all students in the province have an **equal opportunity to achieve their full potential**, the education system must be free from discrimination and must provide all students with a safe and secure environment so that they can participate fully and successfully in the educational experience.*



Statement of Principles

- A planned curriculum supports early learning.



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Statement of Principles

- *A well-planned Kindergarten program provides teachers with many opportunities for ongoing observation and assessment of children's strengths, needs, and interests.*



Statement of Principles

- Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and exuberance.



Statement of Principles

- *Young children actively explore their environment and the world around them through a process of learning-based play - for example, manipulating objects, acting out roles, and experimenting with various materials. **Play is a vehicle for learning. It provides opportunities for learning in a context in which children are at their most receptive.** Play and work are not distinct categories for young children, and learning and doing are also inextricably linked for them.*



Statement of Principles

- *Kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators perform a complex and multidimensional role.*
- *They are responsible for implementing a program that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, integrated, developmentally appropriate, and culturally and linguistically responsive, and that promotes positive outcomes for all children.*



Small group activity - Scenarios

1. Each of the programs at the site have specific policies in place regarding health & safety of children & staff. Unfortunately the policies are not consistent with each other, and have caused problems in the past.

How would you as a team of leaders facilitate a resolution?

2. You are in a community with limited parent involvement.

How would you as a team of leaders engage and support your parent community in children's early learning & care.

3. Early learning and care staff (both on-site & off-site) are eager to work together but are finding it difficult due to time constraints.

How can you as a team of leaders support their efforts?

4. The Kindergarten teacher, ECE, and Family Support staff meet to discuss a child who attends their programs and has behavioural challenges. The members of the team have different views as to how to deal with the child.

How can you support the staff?



In your groups:

- Identify the key issues, barriers and challenges
- How would the integrated governance committee deal with the issues?
- What conclusion/solutions were you able to come up with?
- What benefits are there for children & families of this more collaborative approach