



Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC)

INCLUSION, TRAINING AND THE ECEC WORKFORCE

August 2008



THE CCHRSC

- Sector councils are permanent organizations that bring together key stakeholders in a sector to address HR issues (HRSDC funded)
- CCHRSC formally incorporated November 2003
- Led by an 19-member pan-Canadian volunteer board:
 - Directors at large (7) including: employers, P/T director of child care, employers, trainers...
 - National Child Care orgs: CCCF (3)/CCAAC (3)
 - Labour (6) including: Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), La Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
 - Ex-officio member representing provincial/territorial directors of child care
 - 3.5 Staff & 2 project coordinators (consultants)



THE CCHRSC

Strategic priorities guide the work of the CCHRSC:

- Provide leadership and coordination on human resource issues in the sector;
- Foster enhanced human resource management practices in the sector;
- Foster enhanced skills development practices in the sector;
- Develop mechanisms to increase the portability/recognition of credentials;
- Increase access to, and understanding of, labour market information, trends, and issues in the sector.



THE CCHRSC

- Develops research, tools, and strategies to address strategic priorities and move sector forward;
- Project approach, steering committees, and board help ensure that projects reflect/address needs of the sector.



CCHRSC: PREVIOUS WORK

- Labour Market Update Study *Working for Change* (2004)
- Shedding New Light (from YBIC!, 2004)
- Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators (2006)
- Career Promotions & Recruitment Strategy project (2006)
- The Training Strategy Project (2007)
- Supporting Employers in ECEC (2008)
- ECE Affinity Group (on-going)
- Web site for more information: www.ccsc-cssge.ca



WORKING FOR CHANGE: LABOUR MARKET UPDATE STUDY (2004)

- Study provided an in-depth profile of the ECEC workforce and the context in which they work
- Identified 2 main occupations:
 - ECE's (Practitioners) and assistants
 - Child Care Administrators
- Inclusion and need for related training identified as a key issue facing the workforce



WORKING FOR CHANGE & INCLUSION (2004)

- Some initiatives re: inclusion existed, but few training programs specifically addressed special needs
- Lack of inclusion training paired with increasing expectations re: working with children with special needs led to higher levels of stress among ECE's
- Inability to recruit and retain qualified staff identified as having an impact on quality of care for children with special needs



WORKING FOR CHANGE AND INCLUSION (2004)

In-house capacity seemed to be the best predictor of quality inclusion. Inclusion happens in the centre that has a well-supported staff team with its own capacity to continue to keep including children with disabilities, built on training and information—a virtuous circle that is mostly about experience and building capacity. Outside consultation and resources help but the quality of the centre for all children is the key element.

- Sharon Hope Irwin, Specialink
(LMU Key Informant Interview)



SHEDDING NEW LIGHT STUDY & INCLUSION (2004)

- Study examined recruitment and retention challenges drawing from You Bet I Care! Study
- Found that feeling competent in the job could serve as a buffer against stress by enabling staff to feel they can make a positive difference in children's lives
- Pointed to the need for training that prepared ECE's to work with children with a wide range of needs



OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

- **Occupational Standards** have been developed for the core roles in child care
- **Child Care Practitioner:** developed by the Canadian Child Care Federation (2003)
- **Child Care Administrator:** developed by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2006)



OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PRACTITIONERS (2003) & INCLUSION

- Practitioner (ECE) Occupational Standards seek to document core knowledge, skills, and abilities required for child care practitioners
- Inclusion is referenced generally throughout the document in relation to child development, but specific skills, knowledge & abilities not detailed
- Code of ethics: ***Plans inclusive programs that communicate respect for diversity regarding ability, culture, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and family composition***



OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ADMINISTRATORS (2006) & INCLUSION

- First Occupational Standards defined for child care administrators
- Increasing awareness of inclusive practices at this time (reflecting research from 2003-06)
- Occupational Standards 'Task Areas' note the principles and importance of:
 - Developing an inclusive and developmentally appropriate curriculum
 - Ensuring the viability and sustainability of inclusive, quality early childhood education and care programs



OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ADMINISTRATORS (2006) & INCLUSION

- Occupational Standards 'Sub Tasks' note importance of:
 - Inclusive principles and practice for all children
 - Anti-bias and inclusive theories and practices
 - Knowing the goals/practices of quality inclusive programs



CAREER PROMOTIONS AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY PROJECT (2006) & INCLUSION

- Special needs/inclusion not a focus but secondary findings indicated:
 - ECE's often enter the field because they want to make a difference, particularly with special needs and at-risk children
 - There is a need to educate guidance and career counselors re: the complexity of the occupation, including around the need to be inclusive and work with children with special needs



CCHRSC PROJECT – RECENTLY COMPLETE: **TRAINING STRATEGY**

The final report: ***People, Programs, and Practice: A Training Strategy for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Canada*** has a three-part focus:

- The *people*—expanding the size and capacity of the sector by defining the core roles of early childhood educator and director.
- The *programs*—enhancing the quality and consistency of early childhood education post-secondary programs through voluntary accreditation.
- The *practices*: enhancing access to, and the effectiveness of, post-secondary education and ongoing professional development through flexible delivery methods.



TRAINING STRATEGY PROJECT (2007) & SPECIAL NEEDS

- How prepared did students feel to work with children with special needs based on length of training:
 - One-year certificate – 50% felt quite or very well prepared
 - Two-year program – 74% felt quite or very well prepared
 - Three-year program – 76% felt quite or very well prepared
- New graduates felt less prepared to work with children with special needs & other professionals in education or social service settings, as compared to other groups
- Employers and other stakeholders agreed with finding above



TRAINING STRATEGY PROJECT (2007) & SPECIAL NEEDS

- However, stakeholders felt that rather than adding more material to the two-year programs, introducing mentoring or coaching initiatives for new grads would be most effective.
- Found that ECE is the core occupation on which other areas of expertise may be built. Need additional or specialized positions/training for other roles, including special needs resource.



SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS PROJECT (2008) AND INCLUSION

- Equity of access and meaningful inclusion are reliant on a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, and on funding to provide supports where needed.
- As the child care sector become ever more inclusive, the need / challenge to find & retain well-trained staff becomes more pronounced.
- Increasing pressure on employers to find qualified, well trained staff who are ready to work in inclusive environments.



OTHER RESEARCH

- Several provinces are working on human resources strategies/plans including addressing 'inclusion'.
- CCHRSC involved in Ontario's Expert Panel on Quality HR. The panel noted:
 - High quality care important for children with special needs
 - Knowledgeable practitioners are key for delivery of quality programs;
 - There is a need to provide more training and additional staff for programs for children with special needs



ECE Affinity Group

- Joint initiative of ACCC and CCHRSC
- Brings together post-secondary educators from across Canada to work together and share best practices
- Can serve as a vehicle for discussion and action



UPCOMING PROJECT: REDEVELOPING OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE PRACTITIONERS (ECE'S)

- Several factors since then have contributed to the need for an revision since original standards released in 2003
- First phase would explore the scope of the occupation (what roles should be included) and the title
- Standards development would follow completion of exploratory phase
- Re-developed standards estimated release: Winter 2010



UPCOMING PROJECT: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Project activities will:

- Build on Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators;
- Focus on creating curriculum in up to four key areas, including special needs and inclusion training.

Anticipated results:

- Enhanced availability and quality of training programs and courses for administrators.



MORE INFORMATION

CCHRSC Project Information & Research:

www.ccsc-cssge.ca

Child Care Practitioner Standards:

<http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/subsites/training/pdf/occupational-final-e.pdf>

ECE Affinity Group:

<http://www.accc.ca/networking/>