

**PROVIDING QUALITY
INCLUSIVE
ENVIRONMENTS: MORE
THAN JUST LIP SERVICE**

Delivered by Dixie Lee Mitchell

NBACL

Winnipeg, August, 2008

The Beginning

- Origin and History
 - * You Bet I Care – national project
 - * 1999 Keeping the Door Open Proposal
 - * 2002 Opening the Door – NB government funded to “increase level of global quality while increasing the centre staff capacity to include all children

- Research used for foundation of the program:

- * Palsha and Wesley: On-Site Consultation Model

- * Irwin and Lero- research on Director Leadership

- ie. Inclusion the Next Generation



- Measurement Tools Used:
 - * ECERS-R; ITTERS-R; SACERS
by Harms and Clifford
 - * Caregiver Interaction Scale
by James Arnett
 - * Principles and Practices for Inclusion
by Dr. Sharon Hope Irwin -
SpecialLink



- Real reflections of their lives, not commercial or cartoon renditions
- Real “work”, not meaningless tasks or projects.



Number of centres in last 4 phases: 148

Approximate number of ECEs trained
and supported – in excess of 3,000

First 4 phases – concentrated on supporting
those staff in 3 & 4 year old programs

Introduced Infant/Toddler component in
2007/08 through the Quality Enhancement
Project of Opening the Door

- Phase 5 begins September, 2008 and focus will be on both infant/toddler programs and 3 & 4 year old programs



What are the benefits of Opening the Door to Quality Child Care and Development ?

- The model has:
 - * given educators an opportunity to learn through a mentoring process, has provided resources, and has led educators, directors and management to ask the following questions:

- What is our current capacity to include all children?
- How do we enhance that capacity?
- And how do we sustain it?
- What do we provide for children on a daily basis and how independently can all children involve themselves in what we offer?

- What constitutes exemplary inclusive programming for those of us who work in this centre, and what are the implications for all families/children enrolled here?
- Can all children participate in activities that assist them in making friends and feeling good about themselves?

- How do all interactions in the centre look, feel and sound? What is the overall tone of the centre?
- Do we see the strengths of all children and do we see the child first and the needed support second?

- Participating educators have learned that to embrace all children and to become change agents in the early learning and childcare environment includes commitment in:
- 1. Relationship Building between all adults involved with the child and between children

- 2. Evaluation of programming and environments, which includes self-reflection on practice throughout the year
- 3. Development of Collaborative Action Plans in which all staff participate to change and impact children's daily environments

A Commitment in:

- 4. Circles of Exchanges in which collaborative brainstorming, ideas, dialogues of learning, current research, and written and visual resources are shared and used to enhance skills
- 5. Enhancement of techniques, abilities and knowledge through affordable, accessible, long and short term educational and training opportunities

- 6. Consensus Building towards similar philosophies, goals, objectives and mission statements, thereby providing a map for staff to navigate in their daily journeys with children.
- 7. A commitment to growing personally and professionally

- 8. A commitment to the belief that the child is first and that support needs, cultural background and ability level are second.

Not a deficit model that focuses on children's deficiencies but a strength-based model focusing on ability!

The First Three Phases

- Each approximately 18 months in length.
- Followed the on-site consultation model adapted from Palsha and Wesley study
- Final report to government at end of each phase- Lessons Learned, Key Findings and Recommendations

- Over 90% of those recommendations have been put into practice and policy by changes to the NB early learning and child care system



- “Booster Shots” at end of each phase
- Enhancement Proposal at end of Phase Two – provided funding for:
components: Newsletter



Each Child Matters
D2D Mentoring
Further training in
all measurement tools

Supporting Those Who Support Children Project

- Written at end of Phase Three

3 components: Infant/Toddler Dev. &
Environments

Parent Power- born out
of Investing in Children,
Families and
Communities – then
FUN/NB; now NBACL team
MEP



Phase Five, September/08

- 27 more centres and two project facilitators
- Primary focus on both infant/toddler and 3 & 4 year old programs
- Enhancement and Continuation of Partnerships – Universities, NBCC, PD Committee, government ad hoc committees

Effective Changes inside Centres

- Increased awareness and understanding of principles for and practices in quality inclusion.
- Enhanced partnerships between families and early learning and child care centres.
- Enhanced inclusion training through SpecialLink material and the new Each Child Matters inclusion training guide.

- Enhanced reflection on the overall practice of ECEs with better teamwork and collegiality within centres throughout the province.
- Higher levels of inclusive quality and global quality in centres which is being sustained.

- Directors demonstrating more leadership, mentoring and coaching of staff.
- Directors and early childhood educators advocating for quality inclusive environments in all centres throughout New Brunswick.



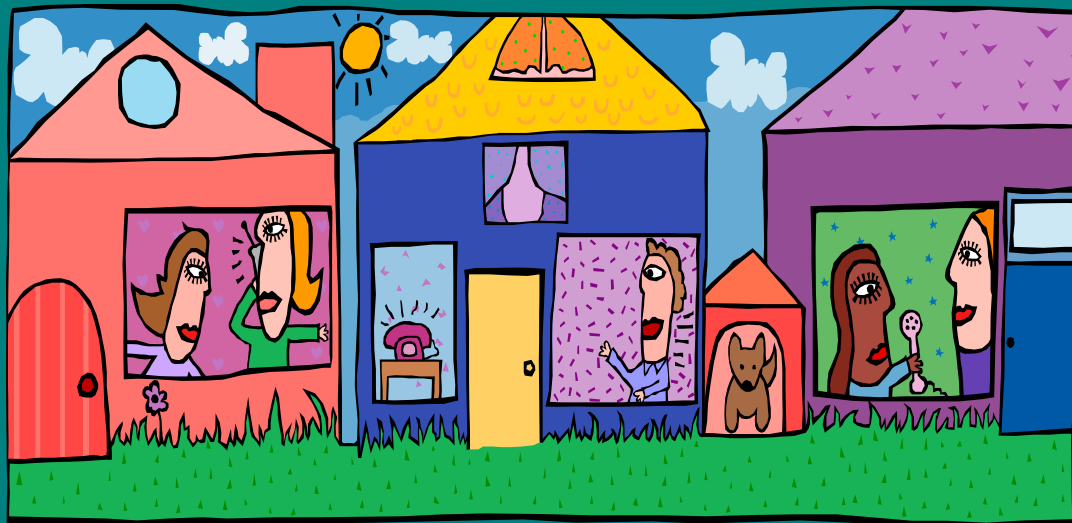
- Board of Directors, and Owner/Operators opening wider doors for children with disabilities in their centres and effecting changes in their policies.
- Enhanced support for all staff implementing the new mandatory curriculum in centres throughout NB

- A greater awareness of the importance of qualified staff. A greater number of staff enrolling in part-time and full-time training programs and professional development opportunities.
- Increased teamwork in centres.



- Greater number of centres with a written philosophy and principles which form a foundation for the way inclusion looks in their centre and does not look.
- Increased motivation, and professionalism.

- Greater connections and liaisons between the Community Colleges; the universities, ECCENB (provincial organization) and NBACL.



Effecting Change Outside the Centres -Recommendations

- Establishment of a Round Table comprised of various stakeholders to address long term training and formal community –based professional development – Done – PD Committee
- Development of a Strategic Plan for training- Done- 10 year training plan

- Development of a model for the recognition of professional development – credit hours to be given and a PLARS process to be developed – both done
- Increased entrance level for those working directly with children in centres- now a part of new Certification Model
- The review and rewriting of monitoring and licensing checklist forms to “raise the bar”

- on the standards supporting a Minimal level of inclusive quality.- Done- Rewriting of the Quality Improvement Assessment used by Regional Coordinators
- ECERS/ITERS & Ps&Ps Training for all regional coordinators employed by Social Development and monitoring early learning and childcare centres. Was completed but now new ones hired so a small percentage now need training.

More Changes



- Government to provide additional funding to support the development and delivery of Inclusion Training Guide for the sector- done- SQIP and EACH CHILD MATTERS
- Government to support the development of a Mentoring Process – done- D2D in development- MEP

- Promote the need for a two year diploma level ECE training program – still in the works, but moving forward
- Government to work with ECCENB in establishment of committees to deal with sector issues- retention, recruitment, salary grids, promotion of quality- done

- The need for government reporting on issues related to the ECI funding- done- government completed a review of the ECI program- resulted in changes in funding policies to centres, families etc.
- Development of an Inclusion Newsletter to be disseminated throughout the province- done- sent out by NBACL quarterly.

- Enhanced connections in early learning and child care throughout the Atlantic provinces – MIKE in PEI; PFI in Nova Scotia; EQUIP in Newfoundland

Products – Conferences and Resources

- Professional Development opportunities such as: Team Work and Motivation; Healthy Workplaces in Early Learning and Child Care; Productive Staff Meetings; Relationship Building- staff to staff; staff to families; staff & director; staff and other community professionals; Leadership, Mentoring and Coaching; Conflict Resolution; Attitudes and Values;

- On-site consultation conferences and linking research to practice- Pat Wesley; Debra Mayer; Sharon Hope Irwin
- Presentations at annual Braiding Our Resources Conference and other Atlantic and National events
- Hosted Quality Practices Through Interactive Curriculum forum in March/07
- October/08 The Colors of Change- directors

- November/08 – Infants & Toddlers: Learning and Living Their Rhythm
- Resources Developed: Each Child Matters – 10 modules
- 4 Phase Reports with charts demonstrating the overall results in measuring for global quality

- Training: Saskatoon, Regina, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, PEI, Guelph, Ontario, First Nation communities in NB and in northern Quebec; and pieces with SpecialLink in British Columbia and Saskatchewan
- Awareness/Connectedness/Action
- Government commitment in next ten years



Thank you so very much for taking this time
to see how NBACL has moved the vision
for inclusion forward.

