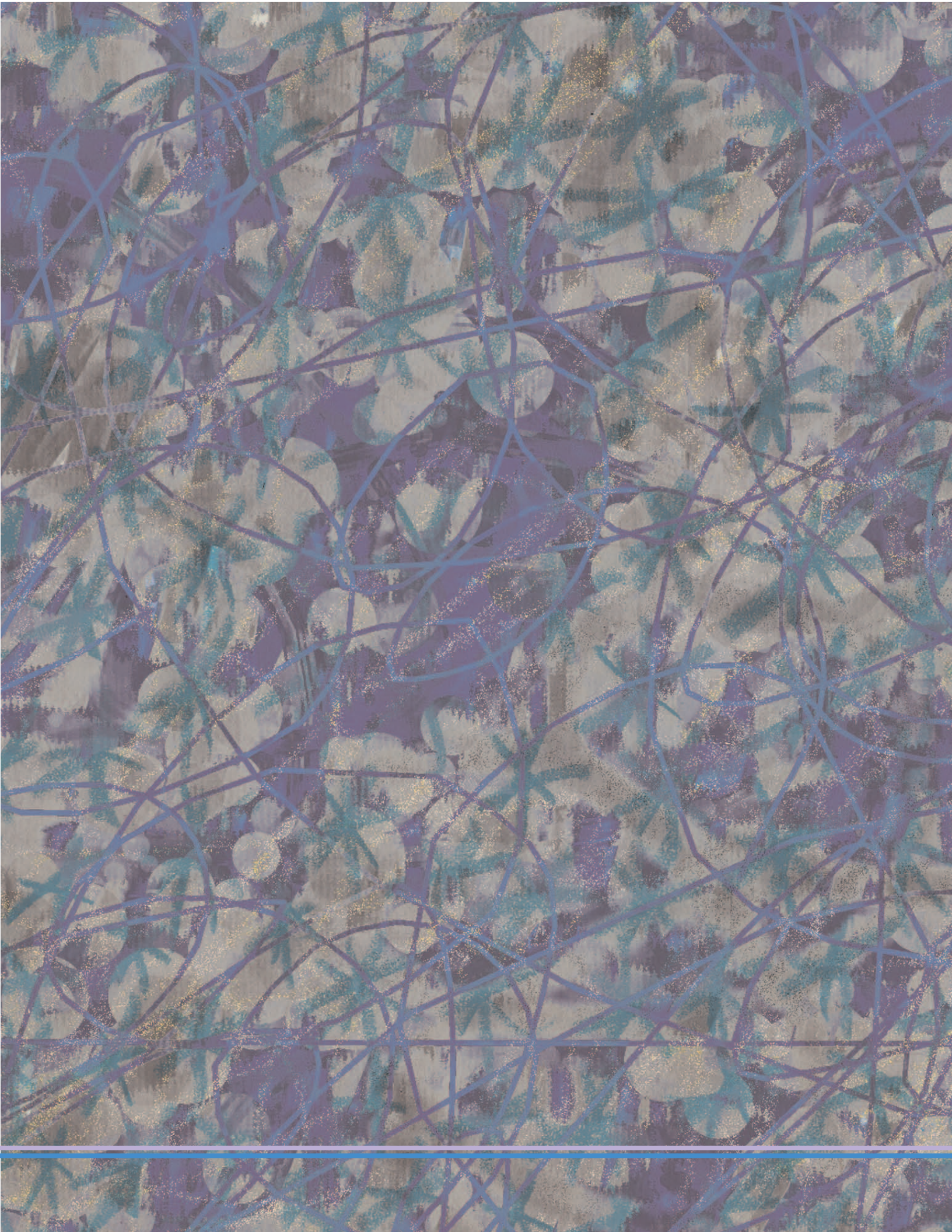


ELCC REPORT 2006

Learning from each other:
Early learning and child care
experiences in Canadian cities





Learning from each other: Early learning and child care experiences in Canadian cities

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Foreword

Canadian cities are important. Our 20 largest municipalities have 40% of the nation's population — the largest single block of Canadians. The trend towards urbanization shows no sign of slowing down. From 1972 to 2001, the number of urban dwellers increased by 50% — from 16 to 24 million.

More important, the local level — cities being the largest example — is the first line where service impacts are felt. The availability of service has a direct impact on the social and economic life of all communities. Cities, with their many and various neighbourhoods, are no exception.

Understanding this relationship and wishing to explore it further in the area of early learning and child care, 11 cities across Canada agreed to participate in Learning From each Other: Early Learning and Child Care Experiences in Canadian Cities. The study, for the first time, takes a national look at local provision of ELCC, including child care, kindergarten, and out-of-school-hours care for 6 - 12 year-olds, much of which takes place via recreation programs.

Why are cities interested in early learning and child care? In Canada, the only part of ELCC where they have direct responsibility is recreation and that sector's role in ELCC is, as the report points out, ambiguous. Local school authorities run publicly-funded kindergartens. With the exception of Ontario municipalities, Canadian cities do not plan, manage, fund or operate child care.

Lack of mandate does not mean lack of interest or diminished responsibility for the well-being of all residents. Approximately one-half of urban dwellers are either in two-parent or lone-parent families, so if a city is going to serve all of its residents effectively, ELCC must be part of the local infrastructure. The changes in family composition and family activity (principally maternal employment) over the last 40 years mean that ELCC is an important support to parents as they work or participate in education or training. Our increased understanding of how children develop and learn, as well as a concern about child health and safety, provide an imperative for high-quality programs for children before they start school and outside school hours.

The study found that cities advocate for more and better ELCC, work in partnership with provincial authorities, school boards and community organizations, carry out research, have local children's advisory committees, take the lead in promoting innovation in ELCC such as the creation of children's services hubs, use zoning provisions and development charges to build ELCC facilities, and support community networks such as those organized by the YWCA and local United Ways. Nevertheless, as the government with the most limited tax base, cities cannot, on their own, strengthen and expand local ELCC to the extent

needed by children and their families. Recognizing that the other governments must join the partnership and that local government must be recognized as a full partner, the report argues for local or regional solutions within strong federal and provincial frameworks.

To start, there is not enough ELCC in any of the 11 cities in the study. Child care, the piece of ELCC with the least local control, is particularly problematic. Montreal, in the province with the most extensive ELCC provisions, has child care for just under 45% of children aged 0 - 12. Most of the other cities cluster in the 10 - 16% range, with the exception of Saskatoon with child care available to 6.9% of children.

Moreover, as can be imagined with provincial, municipal and school authorities in 10 provinces and two territories involved, the report shows that provision of children's programs remains inconsistent nationally, provincially and locally. In addition, there is evidence that provision is inconsistent across cities, favouring communities with better ability to take advantage of whatever funding exists.

The study shows that there is an increasing understanding that collaboration among all governments and community organizations is essential if children's programs are to expand and move towards greater coherence in ways that will help both children and parents. Toronto First Duty, which piloted five integrated ELCC hubs, exemplifies the creativity that can take place when governments, non-governmental organizations and communities work together. TFD informed Ontario's Best Start program, which is developing integrated kindergarten/child care programs across the province. The YWCA worked with communities in Vancouver, Martinsville, Sask., Cambridge, Ont. and Halifax to develop models for ELCC hubs with "one door" access to services for families. In Calgary, the United way has taken the lead in developing a service network.

A number of local initiatives have been shown to work and the most successful have these features in common:

- they are created for all children and not targeted to special population
- they allow for local flexibility and local accountability
- there is ongoing commitment from all partners and the support of a cross-cutting form of organization established in the community sector, by the province, or by the municipality.

Finally, adequate, stable funding to provide programs for children and their families is essential. Even with a strong vision, a clear plan and a well-developed local infrastructure, inequities will arise as long as there is insufficient funding to provide a place for all who want and need it. The very poor and inconsistent levels of service in communities across Canada will continue if the federal government implements its current plan to cancel the funding negotiated through the 2005 federal-provincial bilateral ELCC agreements to create and operate new child care spaces.

*The Learning From Each Other Municipal Reference Group
June, 2006*

I. Introduction

In the last decade, two things have emerged as important for public policy. One is an accumulated body of knowledge pointing to the long-term impact of experiences in early childhood for the sound intellectual and social development of children, and thus for society's well-being. A second is the recognition that what happens in Canadian cities has a major impact on national well-being. These two pieces of social knowledge intersect in the policy area of early learning and child care (ELCC).

The local level is where the integration of services for children and families may occur or may fail to materialize. In its 2004 report assessing early childhood education and care in Canada, the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stressed that the local level might become a key site for integrating early learning and care programs. Describing the current situation as "a patchwork of uneconomic, fragmented services,"¹ the OECD experts recommended both creating an adequate pan-Canadian framework and decentralizing management to the local level, arguing that it is easier to connect the pieces of the ELCC puzzle.

Despite the accumulating evidence, research remains limited and policy-makers do not often concentrate on this intersection of ELCC and the local. As policy communities focus on Canadian cities, for example, they still tend to pay more attention to physical than social infrastructure. Moreover, we still have hardly any knowledge about the child care situation for pre-school and school-age children in major Canadian cities.

This study is motivated by a concern with identifying routes to successful governance as well as adequate services. It starts from two premises: that "cities matter" and that, as numerous studies have documented, a positive environment for early child development builds a solid base for subsequent learning and human development. In an increasingly urban Canada, small, medium and large cities are the place where most Canadian children and families live.² Cities are, therefore, the place where Canadian parents seek to meet their needs for ELCC services, whether these are for pre-school or school-age children, whether they are for out-of-school hours care or recreation programs, whether during the school year or school holidays. Ontario is the only province that assigns a clear responsibility for managing child care to municipal governments.

This study is interested in more than child care. It also surveys kindergarten and out-of-school-hours programs for school-aged children, including before- and after-school programs and summer and holiday day camps. Some of these programs are provided by municipalities, some by other local authorities, such as school boards, and yet others by regional agencies

created by the province. They may be funded directly by a local authority or may use funds provided by the provincial or federal government. Some may be delivered in partnership with the non-profit sector while others are strictly public.

Despite the range of arrangements and multiple actors that we map in this study, we will show that Canadian municipal governments do have considerable scope for affecting the kinds of services available to parents living in their city. As the British Columbia Task Force on Child Care described the situation 1991, “in many municipalities child care programming for families and children is an important part of existing community services — health units (parent/child drop-ins), libraries (story times, reading clubs), community centres (licensed pre-schools, pre-school and school-age activity programs), parks (summer play programs, sports leagues).”³ Such programs are still part of any network of ELCC services. Beyond services, municipal governments may involve themselves in ELCC in an indirect fashion, by using their responsibility for zoning by-laws, license fees, property taxes, and other policies regulating the use of municipal space. Some Canadian municipalities, as we describe below, have made active use of these powers to shape child care services, even when they are provided by other agencies. Finally, municipalities may actively engage in planning the ELCC system, sometimes because they have been mandated to do so, sometimes because they have chosen to do so.

Notwithstanding its obvious importance, there has never been a systematic, pan-Canadian review of this crucial piece of local social infrastructure. We lack basic information about local conditions across the country such as: the amount and types of pre-school services available in each city; services for school-aged children out of school hours; local governments’ roles and responsibilities for service design, delivery and/or regulation; and the connections of municipal policies to provincial/territorial and federal policies on ELCC. This study begins to fill the knowledge gap by mapping the situation in 11 cities across Canada.⁴ The cities selected include both five of Canada’s six largest metropolitan areas (Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal) and six smaller urban centres (Whitehorse, Saskatoon, Sudbury, Sherbrooke, Halifax and St. John’s). These cities are located in nine different provincial/territorial jurisdictions. In two provinces, we have included one large and one small city, to permit reflection on the ways city size and provincial policy regimes interact to shape a local resource base.

Figure 1
Child Care Spaces
11 Cities

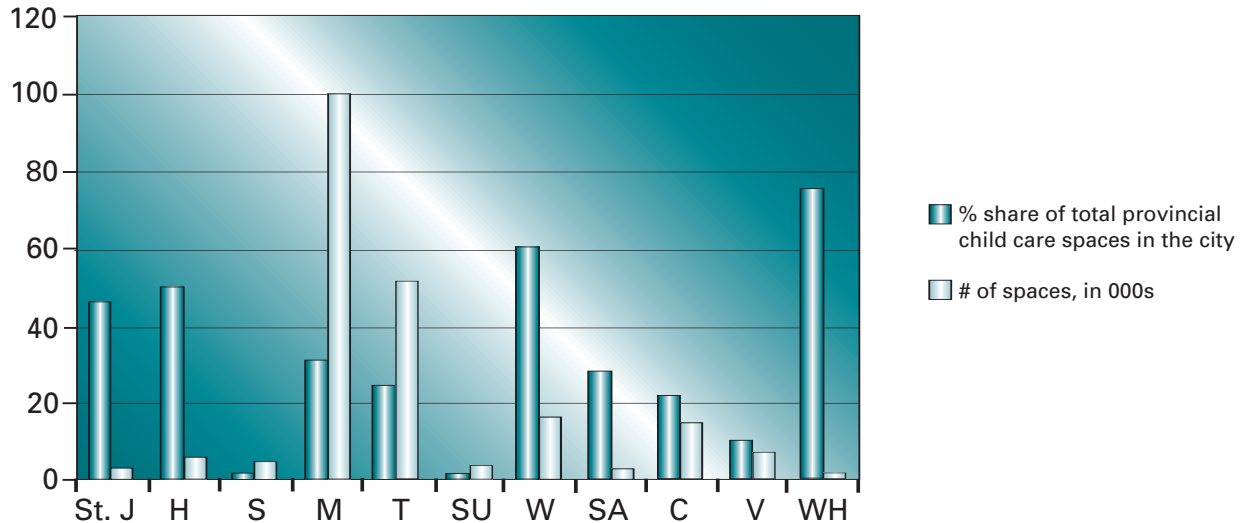
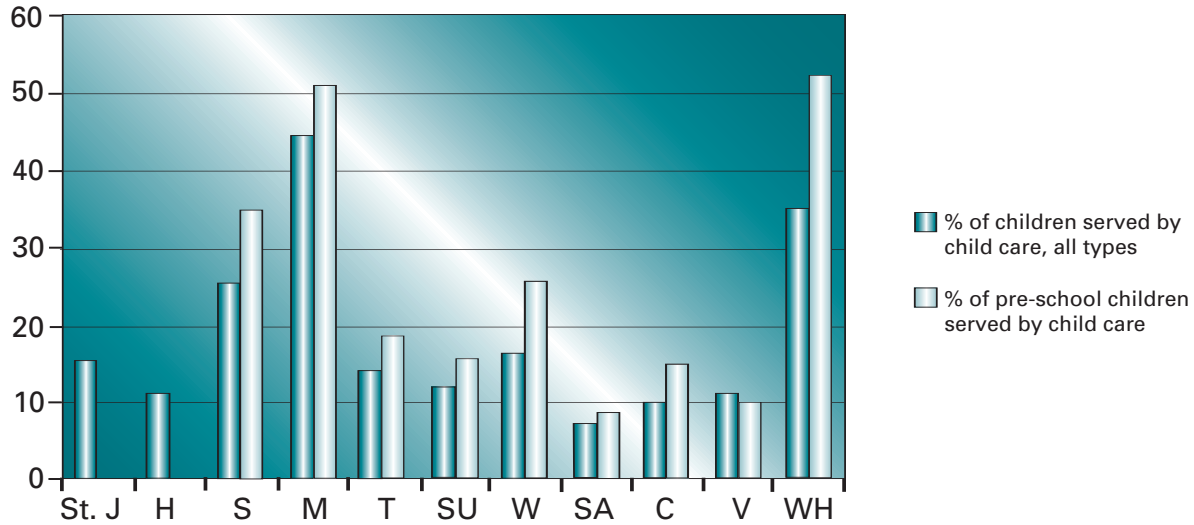


Figure 1 shows the share of the provincial child care spaces for children 0 - 12 that are located in each of the 11 cities. The first bar reveals that in some provinces the largest city clearly is the location for most of the child care action. This is true in Whitehouse, but also Winnipeg, Montreal, Halifax and St. John's. But the second bar is also important. It displays how much child care is actually provided in each city, measured in thousands of spaces. By this measure we see the Montreal and Toronto systems are the largest.

In Canada, provinces and territories have constitutional responsibility for education and social policies, which is where much of ELCC programming has traditionally emerged. Each province and territory has full responsibility for setting its own education policy, establishing its own mechanisms for funding and regulating child care, and creating its own set of rules governing relations with municipalities. These differences in provincial/territorial policies and governance structures affect the quality and scope of ELCC services available in cities. **Figure 2** documents the wide variation in coverage of child care needs that exists in these 11 cities.

**Figure 2
Child Care Provisions
11 Cities**



Here we see that Montreal and Sherbrooke are more like each other than they are like anywhere else. The same is true of Toronto and Sudbury. We can also observe the differences in choices that have been made. In Whitehorse, for example, there has been a clear choice in favour of child care for pre-school children, while in Saskatoon and Vancouver there is a more even distribution of coverage over the 0 - 12 age groups.

Most of these choices do follow from provincial priorities. Nonetheless, we will also document in detail in the next sections that some provinces and territories leave local authorities — school boards, provincial agencies, municipalities — with greater room to manoeuvre than do others. In all jurisdictions, however, there is some scope for local involvement and decision-making.

II. The Context for Emerging Concerns about Canada's System of Non-Parental Child Care

Canadian governments have had some limited concern for early learning and for child care services for more than a century. By the late 1800s, "day nurseries" were being founded by charities to provide child care services to mothers whose family circumstances "forced" them to work. This meant, in other words, that day nurseries were meant to meet the needs of poor mothers. At that time too, boards of education began to offer kindergarten classes (1881 in Toronto) and by 1900, school boards across Ontario were offering such programs.

The distinction between day nurseries for poor working mothers and kindergartens for all pre-school children was immediately inscribed in governance structures and practices. Kindergarten became part of the provincial education system, locally provided by provincially mandated school boards, while day nurseries were organized by local charities, sometimes with municipal assistance and provincial funding and usually for low-income families.⁵ This significant divide in the ELCC system is one that remains to this day in Canada.

The federal government also became involved. The first time was during World War II, when it provided financing for day nurseries for mothers working in war-related industries; these were wound down at war's end. Then in the 1960s, in Canada's major cities a growing chorus of voices — ranging from parents to social planning councils and women's groups — called for publicly supported day care.⁶ The federal government's response came in two quite different forms: one was a tax deduction for mothers who "chose" employment;⁷ and the other was shared-cost financing of subsidies for the cost of child care provision, administered by provincial governments.⁸ At the time, neither of these programs put much emphasis on the educational or developmental quality of care and the programs were available only to families who met the criteria for eligibility.

Both federal programmes contributed to the creation of a child care system in which good quality services were beyond the reach of many families. Parents ineligible for a subsidy frequently found the real market costs of quality services to be too high for their budget. They relied, instead, on more affordable informal care arrangements, such as babysitters, family, friends and neighbours. The child care market has never generated an adequate supply of regulated spaces meeting provincial licensing standards.

Child care on the agenda: Socio-economic changes

The design choices made in the mid 1960s and early 1970s still underpin the ELCC regime of today. Yet, the system is recognized as insufficient for the circumstances of the new century. Canada continues to suffer from a large gap between the number of child care spaces needed and the number available.⁹ Parents remain subject to the pressure-cooker experience of desperately searching for affordable child care arrangements that they can trust and count on. Often, all they can find or afford are informal services or, as we will see below, programs that are intended to serve other purposes, such as recreation, and are not designed to provide reliable child care.

As demand has grown, use of informal forms of child care, such as babysitters and relatives, has increased significantly. Between 1994-95 and 2000-01, reliance on informal care rose eight % across the country, from one in every three children using non-parental child care to more than two in every five. The increase was even greater for children living with one parent. Single parents were the target of many programs to “make work pay.”¹⁰ Faced with the urgent need to find child care and with less disposable income on average, they turned to informal care; their rate of use of such care more than doubled in six years, rising from 8% in 1994-95 to 18% in 2000-01. Couple families also increased their reliance on informal care but less dramatically (from 8% to 12%).¹¹

The result of parental as well as experts’ concerns about who was caring for young children was that for at least a decade early learning and child care was at the top of the Canadian political agenda. A major reason for the attention is the gap between available services and the reality of needs, as families adjust to restructuring of both families and labour markets. Each has given rise to a demand for non-parental child care services for many more children than in the 1970s.

In 1971, only slightly more than one of every 10 of families with children were headed by a lone-parent and had, therefore, only one adult available to both earn market income and provide care. By 2001, fully one of every four families was in that situation. Overall, the labour force participation rate of all mothers, particularly mothers with young children, has skyrocketed (see Table 1).

Mothers in the Labour Force

In 1976¹², only slightly more than a quarter (28%) of women who were mothers of children under age three were in the labour force; by 2003 that number had shot up to more than three of every five (63%).

In 1976, only two of every five (37%) mothers with pre-school children (aged three to five) were in the labour force. In 2003, less than one of every three (31%) was not in the paid labour force.

In 1976, only 28% of single mothers with a child under age three held a job, and only 45% of mothers with children aged three to five did so. By 2003, 47% of mothers with very young children and fully 61% of those with pre-school children were in the paid labour force.

Of course, families continue to provide the vast bulk of care that young children need. Nevertheless, the increase in the labour force participation of mothers means that many parents rely on others to support them in caring for and educating pre-school children and to provide out-of-school-hours (OSH) activities for children age 6 - 12 during working hours.¹³

Such socio-economic changes are not the only reason why ELCC is on the agenda, however. Just as the Abella Commission on Equality in Employment¹⁴ did more than 20 years ago, many jurisdictions recognize that women's equality in work depends on having access to non-parental child care.¹⁵ In addition, economic and social policy makers have come to understand that good quality early learning and child care is a foundation for success in school and life long learning as well as for the well-being of children in the here and now.¹⁶

While there is recognition that all children benefit from good quality ELCC services, two population categories are of particular concern. The exploding numbers of children and youth among Canada's Aboriginal population and the difficult social and economic circumstances under which much of that population lives has convinced Aboriginal leaders as well as governments that improved prospects for future generations depend on quality ELCC now. The federal government is primarily responsible for providing ELCC programming for people living on reserves, while provinces have responsibility for services for Aboriginal children living off-reserve. A key partner of the federal government is the Assembly of First Nations that has developed its own action plan for an ELCC network targeted at children in on-reserve communities.¹⁷ Working in cooperation with both levels of government, the National Association of Friendship Centres, whose mission it is to improve the quality of life

for Aboriginal peoples in urban environments, has sponsored more than 23 Aboriginal Head Start programs. Municipalities and school boards have become involved as well, because nearly half of young Aboriginals live in cities, especially in the West, as Table 1 shows.¹⁸

The second category of particular concern is children of recent immigrants. The rise in immigration from countries where the language is other than French or English is especially marked in Canada's biggest cities, where the vast majority of new immigrants and their families now settle (See Table 1 in the accompanying "Charts and tables" document). This trend has generated the need for Second Language ELCC programs that both help children to develop competence in their mother tongue and improve their capacity in at least one official language.

Child care on the agenda: the intergovernmental context

Cities' capacity to respond to new pressures and policy challenges is very much shaped by the policy decisions taken by federal-provincial-territorial governments. From the mid-1990s until 2005, several major policy actions in intergovernmental relations have shaped the policy context in which child care services are provided:

1. Introduced in 1998, the National Child Benefit brought a significant reform of social assistance financing. The NCB involves a combination of income transfers and spending on services that are aimed both at reducing child poverty and at limiting reliance on social assistance by "ensuring that families will always be better off by working."¹⁹ While the government of Canada provides income benefits to individual families, the provincial/territorial governments and First Nations were meant to reinvest funds that they previously allocated to social assistance. Most provinces and territories have preferred to concentrate their spending on income supplements or other programs rather than on child care programming.²⁰
2. The 2000 intergovernmental agreement on Early Child Development Initiatives listed early learning and child care as one of four areas where the provinces and territories could spend federal money, but it did not require spending in all areas.²¹ In the first years, less than 10% was used for child care and only six of 13 governments invested in regulated care. None of the biggest provinces involved — Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario — did so.²²
3. The 2003 Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care focused directly on pre-school child care. It permitted the provinces and territories to select from a broad spending menu: information provision, fee subsidies, quality assurance systems, capital and operating grants, training and professional development, and wage enhancements. Funding could go to commercial as well as non-profit providers.²³

In October 2004, the OECD released its final report reviewing the Canadian child care system, a critical assessment that supported the substantial evidence and analysis accumulated over the years by Canadian research.²⁴ The very month that it was released, the federal Liberal government announced its intention to set the foundation for “a truly national system of early learning and care.”²⁵ This was followed in February 2005 by a federal-provincial-territorial agreement outlining the principles on which such a system should be founded: quality, universally inclusive, accessible and developmental, or QUAD. In its 2005 budget, the Liberal government indicated it was prepared to commit \$5 billion over five years in support of a new system. Between April and November 2005, it negotiated interim bilateral agreements with all 10 provinces, although only three final agreements (Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec) were signed before the 2006 election was called.

The agreements included a provision allowing either party to withdraw upon giving a year’s notice. During the election campaign, the Conservative Party announced its intention to replace the plan for a pan-Canadian child care system, with a “Choice in Childcare” allowance.²⁶ The first Conservative budget, in May 2006, confirmed this decision to provide families with \$1,200 per child under six, in the form of a taxable Universal Child Care Benefit.²⁷ The new government also promised to put \$250,000,000 into a program (beginning in 2007) for private and community efforts to create new spaces.

A great deal of child care is provided in Canadian cities (Figure 1, page 8). Yet at no point in the intergovernmental discussions that generated the various plans to design the ELCC system were cities invited to sit at the negotiating table. The pressures they face, the needs they have, the services they provide could only be represented by one or the other of the “senior” levels of government.

III. The Realities of ELCC: Provincial Governance, Local Provision

Although they are democratically elected governments, Canadian municipalities still have the status assigned to them in the 19th century: they are “creatures of the province.” It is, then, provincial and territorial policy that most shape the kind of ELCC options available at the local level and described in Figures 1 and 2. Those governments set basic standards and regulations, as well as making crucial decisions about funding. Provinces and territories have also mandated or permitted a variety of locally-based agencies — especially school boards — to provide some services that parents can access to meet their child care needs.

Because there are now 13 provincial and territorial governments making their own choices, it is not surprising that the Canadian system of ELCC is a patchwork. There is, however, one feature that all provincial and territorial ELCC systems share: the long-standing distinction between kindergarten and child care persists and this distinction translates into differences in the way services are governed and funded.²⁸

Traditionally, child care has been placed under the ministry responsible for social assistance. Recently, however, many provinces have created departments responsible for children and families, and child care is often located within them, as the chart on the next page documents. Quebec’s child care policy has been set by a ministry dealing with the family for a decade, and responsibility is currently located within the Ministry of the Family, Seniors and the Status of Women.

In 2003, the newly elected government in Ontario innovated by creating a Ministry for Children and Youth Services, with child care as one of its responsibilities. British Columbia has the most complex system, with responsibility for child care divided among four departments. While the Ministry for Children and Family Development has responsibility for child care policy and programs, the registration of early childhood educators and approval of early child educators’ training programs, the Minister of State for Early Child Development is responsible for a cross-government integrated early child development strategy. The child care subsidy program is administered by the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, while the Ministry of Health Services looks after developing and implementing legislation, policy and guidelines for licensed child care facilities.

Provincial ministries responsible for pre-school child care and kindergarten		
	Pre-school child care	Kindergarten
British Columbia	Ministry of Children and Family Development; Minister of State for Child Care; Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance; Ministry of Health Services	Ministry of Education
Alberta	Alberta Children's Services	Alberta Education
Saskatchewan	Department of Community Resources and Employment	Saskatchewan Learning
Manitoba	Family Services and Housing	Education, Citizenship and Youth
Ontario	Ministry of Children and Youth	Ministry of Education
Quebec	Ministry of the Family, Seniors and Status of Women	Ministère d'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport [Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport]
Nova Scotia	Department of Community Services	Department of Education
Newfoundland and Labrador	Department of Health and Community Services	Ministry of Education
Yukon	Department of Health and Social Services	Ministry of Education

As the above chart also reveals, kindergarten programs are the responsibility of a quite different set of departments, those of education.

To provide an initial presentation of the situation, the rest of this section describes first the part of the ELCC system that provides pre-school and recreation services; provinces and cities are the major actors. Then we turn to kindergarten and OSH care, where the school boards have a major service delivery role as well.

Provincial child care authorities at the local level

As provinces paid more attention to day care services, especially from the 1960s on, they tended to take on more for themselves and leave less responsibility to municipal authorities. In 2006, only in Ontario do municipal governments maintain significant authority over services for pre-school children. Nevertheless, while basic standards and funding arrangements continue to be set down by provincial ministries, the recent trend toward decentralized administration in provinces means that locally-based agents of the provincial government also may play a role in licensing, monitoring and program support, including quality improvement (see Table 6).

For example, child care for St. John's is handled through the St. John's Regional Health and Community Services Board. Social workers and early childhood education specialists work as a team in the region. While the former focus on licensing, the latter monitor child care centres, working with operators to address issues identified through site visits or operator and parent surveys. Child care consultants play a similar role in Winnipeg, where they form part of regional integrated service delivery teams, organized according to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's boundaries. They have a particular responsibility for supporting the integration of children with special needs into the child care system. Saskatchewan just recently shifted responsibility for monitoring, licensing and consultation to its Community Resources and Employment Regions and the budget for child care now flows through these. As in Winnipeg, the intention is that child care consultants will become part of a team, coordinated through the Regional Intersectoral Coordinating Committees (RICs).

In Alberta, the Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) is active at the local level. In addition to its role in handling the subsidy program, the Calgary CFSA has strongly promoted improvements in services ever since the quality problems with the Alberta system were identified in an internal report (2002) conducted by Alberta Children's Services and KPMG consultants. One of the CFSA's key initiatives has been to establish a regional child care committee to foster sharing of resources, continuous training, resource development and mentoring.²⁹

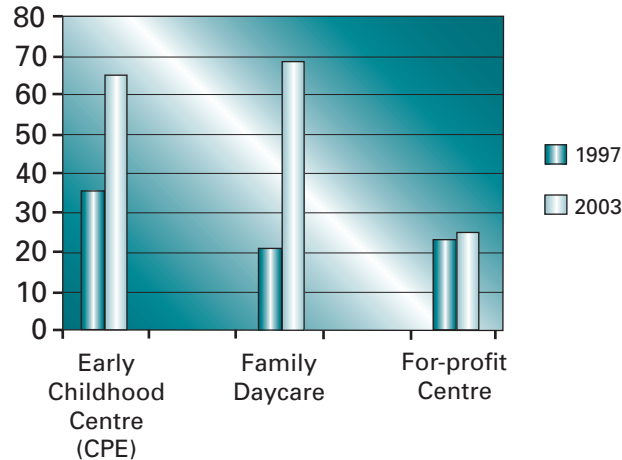
For the most part, the actions of provincial authorities are limited to monitoring and improving the performance of the existing system. They pay less attention to ensuring an equitable supply or distribution of spaces in all kinds of neighbourhoods. An exception to this generalization is Quebec. In 1997, when the government made a commitment to increase dramatically the number of spaces within a few years, the provincial Ministry contracted with provincially mandated local agencies to participate in the process of identifying priorities for locating new and expanding existing provision. The Ministry contracted with regional development councils (now the Conférences régionales des élus — CREs), which worked with the Ministry and the local communities to sort through the

applications from providers seeking to create or expand services. One of the goals of the councils was to ensure that disadvantaged neighbourhoods obtained a good share of new spaces, a task which was often hard to fulfil.³⁰

They consulted with other community-based provincial actors, such as health centres, to construct a priority list for the city, but the final decision rested with the Ministry. This arrangement came to an end in Montreal and Sherbrooke in 2005, when the last of the new spaces promised in 1997 and allocated to each city, were approved.

Quebec has recently introduced a new institution that will affect supply and distribution of spaces across the province.³¹ This change is very important because of its effects on the part of the ELCC system where most expansion of spaces has occurred. As Figure 3 shows,³² the fastest increase since the new system was put into place has been in family day care, no doubt because they are the easiest service to create quickly and at the lowest cost, both for infrastructure and salaries.

Figure 3
Increase in Types of Services
Quebec 1997 and 2003



The way these services will be supervised has been substantially altered from the original model. Beginning in summer 2006, 163 coordinating agencies under contract with the provincial Ministry, each with a defined territory across the province, will supervise family day care provision. Responsibilities include being a central information bank for availability of spaces and distributing them among families. In addition, the agencies will be responsible for inspecting and ensuring that family day care providers respect the terms of their license and any subsidies they receive.

Another example of provincially mandated authorities working at the local level to ensure equitable access to all groups and throughout their region comes from Nova Scotia. The Child Care Information and Support Coordinators (CCIS) program makes grants to community groups to coordinate training for family child care providers, who are currently in the unregulated sector.³³ This can be seen as a way of upgrading the quality of care provided and encouraging these providers to become part of the regulated family child care system.

In general, then, administrative decentralization within a provincial structure may be laying foundations for developing a locally managed delivery system, which could be more responsive to local needs. Only Calgary's CFSA and Quebec's CRE report to their local community, as well as to the province, however. In Calgary's case, the board is not chosen by the local population but appointed by the province, whereas Quebec's Conférences régionales des élus (CREs) bring together elected municipal officials as well as community organizations.³⁴ In both cases, they may have enhanced legitimacy to speak in the name of the local population. In no case, however, have the local representatives of provincial authorities the degree of autonomy available to elected school boards.

Cities as child care managers

In the past, few provinces have given municipal authorities substantial responsibility for providing child care. We will, therefore, only examine three provinces in this section, Alberta, Ontario and British Columbia.

Although limited now, municipalities initially had an important role in the Alberta ELCC system. In 1964, child care became a shared provincial-municipal responsibility. Municipalities used a combination of municipal revenues (20%) and funds transferred from the province to support child care facilities. Many of the centres were municipally-run and financed. In the late 1970s, however, the Conservative government began to assume control over the regulation and financing of child care for children 0 - 6. It left only OSH care as a municipal responsibility.³⁵ The City of Calgary thus manages a substantial OSH program, funded in part via provincial transfers to the municipality. There were licensed spaces for 6,561 school children. This is enough, however, to only cover 7.3% of Calgary children in that age group.

The dual system for financing and regulating child care retains an official role for the municipality, but it also creates some problems. While the city government works with the province's Calgary Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) to minimize the administrative problems for parents, it can do little to close the financial gap resulting from the way resources are allocated from the province to municipalities for OSH child care. Provincial funds subsidize OSH at only 60% of the cost; parents must cover the remainder, thereby putting OSH child care beyond the reach of many low-income families.

In Ontario, some municipalities still provide child care themselves as well as funding other providers, usually through purchase-of-service contracts. They have cost-shared (20% operating, 50% capital) child care with the province since the mid-1960s and in 1997 gained additional responsibilities in the provincial government's major overhaul of administrative structures. Municipal governments became Consolidated Municipal Services Managers (CMSMs) for all social services, including child care. Now, all municipalities in the province must ensure that child care is available and must finance a significant portion of it. The municipal share of costs was increased to include 20% of wage subsidies as well as the costs associated with integrating children with special needs.

The City of Toronto's municipal system dates back to the 1940s and the City was the main provider until the 1970s. Thereafter, although the municipality continued to build municipally operated programs, it increased purchase-of-service agreements with both non-profit and for-profit centres. Although municipally operated child care now accounts for only 6% of its spaces, the City plays an active role in managing agreements with operators. Sudbury has one municipally run centre, and it plays an important role within the local ELCC structure. Of particular note is its highly successful evening program, which addresses the needs of retail, health and telecommunications workers.

When municipalities have significant management responsibilities, they can be innovative. Toronto has long had standards for child care higher than the provincial minimum and the City of Toronto established a wage subsidy for child care providers in non-profit centres (without increasing the cost to parents) before the provincial government did.³⁶ More recently, it has developed a set of operating criteria incorporating the values of program quality, respect for diversity and parental involvement. The City has also been a key driver of innovative pilot projects, such as Toronto First Duty.

Although Ontario municipalities have long had responsibility for funding part of the costs of child care, they could never determine how many child care spaces would be established within their municipal boundaries. When the provincial government imposed a cap on its share of child care financing in the late 1970s, a gap widened between Toronto's plans and the province's willingness to pay. Eventually the City decided to assume substantially more than its required share of child care costs.³⁷ For example, between 1995 and 2003, when, due to provincial funding decreases, Toronto lost over 1,000 child care spaces, the municipal government minimized the loss by maintaining 500 spaces, paying for them with 100% municipal dollars. The City is currently paying 100% of the costs of several other child care supports³⁸ as well as research on children's policy and the *Children's Report Card*.

Other instruments that Toronto uses to shape the local ELCC system are development agreements under Section 37 of the *Ontario Planning Act*. With these it negotiates agreements with developers who, in exchange for being granted increased height or density in zoning decisions, commit to providing child care services or cash to be used for the same purpose.

As Consolidated Municipal Service Managers, Toronto and Sudbury are also responsible for planning local ELCC systems. Since 2000, all service managers are obliged to produce local service plans, following consultation with the community. Such planning efforts can have an impact not only on quality and equitable access but also on number and type of services. Between 2000, the date of Sudbury's first plan, and 2004, the total number of licensed spaces increased by 34%. Toronto's 2005–2009 Child Care Service Plan reports a 6% increase in spaces for infants since the last plan, and equity for toddlers has been achieved in several wards. Both cities recognize the need for spaces for school-aged children. Both city governments provide support to OSH child care provided in schools. Both are also now moving towards treating summer day camps as a part of the ELCC system. Sudbury, for example, is favouring purchase-of-service agreements with recreation providers, while Toronto is working on a new programming model for 6 – 12-year-olds, involving collaboration between the Children's Services and the Parks, Forestry and Recreation divisions of the City government.

Toronto and Sudbury have also used their planning capacity to rectify geographic imbalances in the distribution of spaces and identify and reduce service gaps. Sudbury has worked especially hard to increase provision of evening and weekend care to meet the needs of workers in the retail, health and telecommunications sectors. Both cities have collaborated with school boards and community associations to ensure that francophone children have access to services in French. Among the after-school programs Sudbury supports is one run by the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre.

Ontario requires cities to consult parents, child care service providers and other local stakeholders as well as obtain Council approval for each Child Care Service Plan. Moreover, in both cities, the Children's Services division reports through advisory committees to the Mayor and Council. In Sudbury, the committee is charged with the task of developing and implementing a city-wide "children first" strategy, a point to which we will return in the last section.

Municipalities have no official responsibility for child care in British Columbia. From the province's standpoint, the "local" element of the administrative structure is provided by Medical Health Officers who are responsible for licensing and monitoring child care. Greater local engagement has been discussed and even at times actively supported by provincial actors, however. A provincial task force, established to develop a child care strategy for the 1990s, recommended "community-based child care planning structures that can identify need, plan, coordinate, develop and deliver services consistent with community needs and priorities. With adequate assistance, such structures can be responsible for ensuring that their communities have both the necessary direct services and related information, referral and resource services to make 'one stop shopping' a reality for parents and

caregivers.”⁴⁰ In response, the B.C. government made local planning grants available to municipalities, but the program was cancelled after two years, following a change in government.

Despite the absence of any provincial mandate or funding, Vancouver has assumed an active role in developing its ELCC system for more than a decade. In 1990, it adopted a Civic Child Care Strategy, based on the principles of quality, accessibility and affordability, and appointed a Child Care Coordinator. It has a number of instruments at its disposal. As the Department of Social Planning notes, “the City prioritizes its investments in childcare through a limited direct operating Childcare Grants program, capital grants, facilities development through the Development Cost Levies (DCL) and Community Amenity Contributions (CAC), infrastructure support and community capacity building.”⁴¹

Particularly useful are Development Cost Levies, which provide funds to the City’s coffers, and Community Amenity Contributions, by which developers receive extra density allowances if they deliver to the City a child care facility built to the City’s standards. To develop the capacity to use these instruments, the City devised child care formulae for local areas and industrial, commercial, general residential and family housing developments. The information gathered can be used in negotiating with developers over the rezoning and to determine child care targets for local area plans.⁴²

While this strategy has contributed in important ways to the municipal government’s ability to fund and promote child care services over and above provincial allotments, one drawback is that the majority of the funds and the facilities thereby obtained have to be used in the areas where the new developments are sited. This makes it somewhat difficult to overcome geographic imbalances across the city. The City is trying to address the problem, however, by allocating a portion of Development Cost Levies to other parts of the city.

As we shall later show, the City of Vancouver has also used its fiscal and human resources to play a key role in constructing strong partnerships with community associations, the School and Parks Boards and West Coast Child Care Resource Centre, an important part of the local child care infrastructure.

Although municipalities outside Ontario have a very small, if any, official role as managers of the local ELCC system, all can have an impact through routine decisions made on zoning by-laws and licensing fees. For example, in Montreal, the Conférence régionale des élus was able to use its municipal connections (many municipal councillors sit on the CRE) to help eliminate bottlenecks arising from zoning regulations and decisions.⁴³ All cities might learn, moreover, from the ways the cities of Toronto and Vancouver have negotiated development agreements to secure new child care spaces and funds.

Municipal recreation: part of the ELCC infrastructure

In all cities in the study, municipalities hold a potentially important piece of the ELCC puzzle — their after-school recreation programs and the day camps run during school holidays. Some cities and boroughs only play an indirect role as partners to private sector providers, but most are involved in provision and in many cases, seek to promote social inclusion. We tend not to think of these programs as a component of the ELCC system, however, in part because the needs of school-aged children have not received the same attention as the pre-school years.

Treating recreation as part of the ELCC system is not without controversy, but such treatment is justified because the pronounced gap between level of need and availability of classic child care services for school-aged children (Table 2) often means that parents use recreation programs to fill the gap, especially for older children. There are a number of other reasons too: the fees may be lower than in licensed child care, because recreation infrastructure costs are often heavily subsidized through the local tax base; there may be more flexibility regarding attendance; there is often program variety and older children, in particular, appreciate skills-based activities. Difficulties can arise, however, when there is little or no recognition that recreation programs are used for OSH care by default.

The important but at times ambiguous role that recreation plays in the child care continuum also created data-gathering challenges, especially in the area of after-school programs. The array of after-school recreation activities was too extensive to document, and programs often do not keep track of whether a family is using the program as child care. The most stable recreation data are those for summer and other holiday programs. Most of the after-school program information actually rests with school boards.

The information gathered shows that few after-school recreation programs have been developed to serve both recreation and child care needs, with, for example, supervised transport or extended hours.⁴⁴ Our evidence documents that after-school recreation programs consist of a wide variety of activity sessions that take place at an enormous range of times across many different locations. The programs meet the mandate and goals for recreation programming, but leave to parents the job of cobbling together after-school and school-break arrangements often on a day-by-day basis. Nor is there always supervision, as children move from school to the recreation program. Summer day camps fare somewhat better on the “family-friendly” front, with greater provision of extended hours and lunchtime programming.

There are also concerns about program quality and child safety, as recreation programming does not fall under provincial/territorial standards for regulated child care.⁴⁵ There are, however, ways to ensure that these programs are stimulating, age-appropriate, provided in secure environments, accessible and inclusive. For example, High Five is a training and

accreditation program, developed by Parks and Recreation Ontario, designed for recreation and sport providers and intended to equip them with the tools to provide programs based on knowledge of child development. Three cities (St. John's, Halifax and Sudbury) are moving to make High Five certification mandatory in their summer camp programs

Our cities also vary widely in their capacity to provide holiday care for school-aged children in summer day camps and during school holidays or professional development days. Saskatoon, for example, runs no day camps, but has a partner that makes them available (Table 4). Montreal's 20 and Sherbrooke's six boroughs are responsible for summer holiday programming as well as during some school breaks; there is, then, immense variety in services.⁴⁶ Several boroughs run their own camps, while others rely on contracting with a partner. For example, the Borough of Lennoxville in Sherbrooke runs a summer-long day camp for English and French-speaking children, which accepts children from across the City of Sherbrooke (with priority for Lennoxville residents) for its enriched programming. In contrast, the Borough of Jacques Cartier runs no program itself and contracts with the non-profit organization, Loisirs Sherbrooke Nord, as its service provider for summer and school holiday programming. Nevertheless, both are attuned to the fact that they are providing a child care service as well as recreation programming; they offer extended hours and/or programs for professional development days.⁴⁷ Indeed, all boroughs in Sherbrooke offer extended services (7:30 – 8:30 a.m. and at the end of the day) for parents who need them for children registered in day camp programs.⁴⁸

Cities are coming to the realization, although at not the same pace everywhere, that day camps are part of the ELCC system for many families. Extended hours (Table 4) are available in all the camps run or sponsored by Montreal's boroughs and Calgary, but only, in some of the camps in Toronto, Sudbury, and Vancouver. Other cities hew to the idea, as Halifax does, that camps are primarily about recreation, and therefore extended hours are not the norm. St. John's' "activity camps", Winnipeg's "Awesome Adventures" and Whitehorse's camps are not designed to provide full-day, full-week programming for the children of employed parents. Despite these differences, however, in most cities, an increasing number of programs include not only lunch-time supervision, but also the possibility of early drop-off/late pick-up.

A Montreal study identified one problem that turns out to be common to many summer programs: there is often a gap of two to three weeks between when camps finish and the school year begins.⁴⁹ One of the reasons is that school facilities are sometimes used as sites for summer programming and in August buildings need to be prepared for the new school year. Another is that the young counsellors, on whom these camps rely for the majority of their staff, want a break to get ready to return to school or university.⁵⁰ A third is lack of financing: some city budgets only include enough for six to eight weeks of programming.

Although fees range from completely subsidized activities (certain areas of Toronto), partially subsidized (e.g., several of the Montreal and Sherbrooke boroughs) to market rate, most cities do provide subsidies for children from low-income families, either directly (St. John's, Halifax, some boroughs in Montreal and Sherbrooke, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary), through partners such as Canadian Tire's Jump Start (Sudbury and St. John's) or through provincial authorities (in some Montreal boroughs the local health agency provides the subsidy). Most cities provide support for integrating children with special needs and some also run camps for children with exceptional needs. One borough in Montreal runs a small day camp for autistic children, for example. Some cities have made an effort to develop special programs for minority language and Aboriginal groups. Sudbury and Winnipeg run several francophone camps, and in Toronto one of the large outdoor camps has a French section. In conjunction with Native Child and Family Services, Toronto runs summer camps targeted to Aboriginal children. In Winnipeg, the Aboriginal Sports Achievement Centre runs a variety of activities while Saskatoon supports the First Nations-run White Buffalo Lodge, which has part-day activities for school-age children, and community associations offering Ma Ta We Tan drop-in programs.

Fee subsidies, supports for including children with special needs, and special programs for language minorities contribute to equitable access in socio-economic terms. But what is done to ensure equitable geographical distribution across the city? St. John's and Sudbury both run neighbourhood playground programs and St. John's also runs programs in disadvantaged areas, which are usually less well served by market-based providers. None of these programs include lunch-hour supervision, however. Toronto's recreation program is organized according to district and its city-wide information base allows it to identify and support under-serviced areas.⁵¹ Vancouver addresses the issue of equity by using the Parks Board to monitor local arrangements and identify areas that need more assistance.

In Quebec, some integration of recreation and child care for older children has come via the move towards local Family Policies by cities and by boroughs. Both Montreal and Sherbrooke (and their boroughs) have been developing these integrated planning mechanisms for over a decade. Elsewhere, recreation programs may be formally recognized as meeting child care needs where municipalities are not only active in the field of recreation, but have also assumed responsibility for child care for children 0 - 12. Sudbury's Child Care Service Plan, for example, commits the City to "work with recreation providers to further develop High Five accredited summer programs that can fill the gaps and offer choices to parents for children requiring child care between the ages of 6 and 12."⁵² Toronto City Council allocated \$3.7 million to implement an innovative after-school child care/recreation program, part of an on-going collaboration between Children's Services, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Toronto Public Library and the School Boards outlined in *Best Generation Yet*.⁵³ Vancouver's Joint Council similarly brings together the Parks Board, the Vancouver School

Board and the City to develop “a comprehensive range of childhood education and care services.”⁵⁴

Nevertheless, in most cities in the study, a disconnect remains between recreation and the other parts of the children’s services sector, and notably child care. Most recreation departments see their mandate as activity, skills and fun. At the same time, the other players in the ELCC sector are slow to recognize the need to work with recreation departments as a legitimate player in the field. Too often, recreation and child care are seen as competitors for scarce program dollars, rather than as allies in a campaign for more and better children’s programs. A formal recognition on the part of all players in the children’s services sector of the role of recreation in ELCC, and its use by families to meet child care needs, especially for school-aged children, is required in any integrated and well-functioning ELCC system.

IV. School Boards and ELCC Programs

There is less cross-provincial variation in the quality of kindergarten than there is in child care, precisely because kindergarten's integration into the educational system encourages all provinces and territories to assure a relatively similar level of quality.⁵⁵ Changes in governance, finance and funding are also making education more provincially than locally directed, as taxing and education funding are shifted from the local to the provincial level.⁵⁶

Provinces and territories still differ significantly in what they require of local school boards, however (see Table 5). Full-day kindergarten for five-year olds is the norm only in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec, and there is only limited provision for four-year-olds in all provinces but Ontario, where most boards provide junior kindergarten even though it is not mandated. School boards in Quebec also offer junior kindergarten for four-year olds living in neighbourhoods officially designated as "disadvantaged" or children with special needs. Most of these kindergartens have historically been in Montreal. Sherbrooke offers only the Passe-partout program, which consists of more than 20 sessions, some for children alone and some with their parents.

Even when required to provide kindergarten services, school boards still have considerable latitude about how to do so. Most boards have the ability to decide whether to offer more services than the province mandates, if their revenues permit. For example, the Rainbow District School Board, which covers Sudbury, provides enriched full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds, based on a "literacy enhancement activity program." The Halifax Regional District School Board has been offering its 4 Plus program for four-year-olds in disadvantaged neighbourhoods for some time, and four Halifax schools are currently participating in the province's "pre-primary" pilot program for four-year-olds.⁵⁷ Although only required to provide half-day programming, the Saskatoon Public School Board offers full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds in five of its schools located in disadvantaged areas, and the Catholic Board runs full-day programming for five-year-olds at three of its schools. Winnipeg School Division 1, the largest of five local boards, has part-day "nurseries"⁵⁸ for four-year-olds in all 59 elementary schools, and the four other boards run nursery programs in several of their schools. The Vancouver Board has all-day kindergarten for five-year-olds in 46 of its 91 elementary schools, while six of 10 elementary schools in Whitehorse run full-day kindergarten programs for five-year-olds.

School boards sometimes deliberately use their resources to put pressure on provincial governments for improved programming. For instance, when the Alberta government ignored the recommendation of its own 2003 Commission on Learning⁵⁹ to introduce full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds, the Calgary and Calgary Catholic Boards joined several others across the province in setting up their own programs. Because these programs are

funded entirely from local revenues, however, the boards can only afford to offer them on a selective basis. Thus, the Calgary board offers full-day kindergarten programs in only 23 of its 133 schools, with priority to schools with: a high need for English-as-a-second-language training; many children lacking pre-school experience; and a large proportion of children with special needs.

In many provinces, the francophone boards exceed provincial norms to develop language skills and cultural identity (francization) in areas where French is a minority language (Table 1). For example, the four francophone boards serving children in Toronto and Sudbury offer full-day junior and senior kindergarten. The six Winnipeg elementary schools of the Franco-Manitoban board offer part-day “nurseries.”⁶⁰

A number of boards of education offer special programs for Aboriginal children. The Toronto Board has language training in Ojibway, beginning in junior kindergarten, at three of its primary schools. There is also a small First Nations School whose program starts at junior kindergarten and offers a curriculum based on Aboriginal cultures. Two elementary schools in Winnipeg District 1 have a strong Aboriginal cultural focus. The Saskatoon Tribal Council is working with the Saskatoon Public Board on a pilot project to deliver a kindergarten program to support the retention of the Cree language and culture for students at the Confederation Park Community School. The Calgary Board has several programs. Two are run in partnership with the Métis Association and there is one based on Blackfoot-Cree culture. Several of the Vancouver board’s elementary schools also offer programming oriented to Aboriginal children.

School boards have sometimes also played an important role in assisting the expansion of regulated child care. This assistance can be of several types. First, some school boards provide, support or host out-of-school hours (OSH) child care. Across Quebec, and therefore in Montreal and Sherbrooke, the Ministry requires school boards to provide OSH programming when school is in session, wherever there is demand. The fees are set at \$7.00 per day. In Halifax, the Halifax Regional Board runs its own OSH care program, called Excel.

Second, school boards sometimes provide space and other supports for child care centres located in school buildings, although they do not run the centres. The Manitoba government has been actively promoting the provision of space for child care centres in new or renovated schools, and in Winnipeg the initiative has generated 13 new school-based centres. Ontario’s Best Start initiative has a “schools first” policy, whereby the preferred location for new child care spaces and neighbourhood hubs is local elementary schools. The school boards are heavily involved in implementing the first phase of Best Start — an expansion of child care spaces for kindergarten children.

In Toronto, the pre-amalgamation Toronto Board of Education began providing free space and administrative help to non-profit child care operations in the 1970s. Other local school boards followed suit with the result that one-third of centres in the city are already located on school premises. When changes in the provincial education funding formula made this support impossible to continue, the city government filled the gap and is currently spending over \$5 million annually on child care rental subsidies to the amalgamated Toronto District School Board.⁶¹

Third, the boards may target particular populations. The Toronto city government has helped to expand the number of francophone child care centres through agreements with the two francophone boards serving the area. When the lone francophone school in St. John's got a new school building, space was also reserved for a child care centre. The francophone Catholic board that covers Sudbury has also developed a curriculum for pre-school children which it makes available to non-profit centres located on the premises of its schools. It also offers support for the professional development of child care staff, including organizing at least one annual meeting for all on-site child care services. The Franco-Manitoban board has gone even further. Their schools must share resources, such as libraries and concerts, with the child care centres, and the principals of schools are required to sit on the centre's board to help facilitate the integration of kindergarten and child care into one early learning and care system. Here again, the desire to promote francization has contributed to board interest in promoting on-site child care.

V. Putting Humpty Together – Moving towards an Integrated ELCC system

Numerous studies have documented the importance of establishing a comprehensive, flexible and integrated ELCC system, capable of providing seamless support to children and their families from the early years until age 12. Canada has yet to achieve such a system. Creating a truly integrated system will involve not only political will but also coordinating an existing system made up of both public and private providers, a range of ministries, and different expectations about mandates.

In this context, creating an integrated system, supportive and stimulating for children, is a “wicked problem.” As Neil Bradford explains, such problems “are resistant to traditional monosectoral interventions designed from above by insulated, distant bureaucracies. Instead they demand place sensitive, holistic approaches. That is, strategies built from the ‘ground or street up,’ on the basis of local knowledge and delivered through networked relations crossing program silos, even jurisdictional turf.”⁶² An important element in the problem is the challenge of integrating child care, an ELCC program that is still part of the marketplace, with its public partners such as education and recreation.

Currently, there are often no integrating mechanisms linking public and private providers. A fragmented governance structure separates programs for pre-school and school-age children. Institutionalized over decades, it poses a clear challenge. In cities where child care has become a policy focus, children’s services divisions or departments have traditionally operated in isolation from recreation departments. School boards and municipal authorities may co-ordinate very little. Silo effects are exacerbated by perceived (and real) competition for scarce funds and professional recognition.

Despite the challenges, an understanding of the need to focus on the system, and not simply on the program, has already generated new policy approaches, many of which take the local area as the unit of analysis.⁶³ In this section, we will examine attempts to foster integration at two levels — those of the community and of the city/region.

Community-based hubs

Community-based ELCC hubs in which a school or child care centre functions as a support for home-based care providers, both parental and family day home, have been advocated for several decades. This principle featured centrally in the recommendations of the B.C. Task Force on Child Care (1991) and Ontario’s Early Years Study, and constituted the organizational core of Quebec’s path-breaking child care program between 1997 and 2006. Both Ontario, through Best Start, and the Manitoba government planned to use the dollars promised in the 2005 federal budget to develop along these lines.

The basic idea is that a centre or school oversees and supports a variety of child care options, including group care, support for family day homes, toy lending library, and parent resource centres related to community needs. The centre may also fulfil the following functions: information and referral; networking, coordination and planning; serving as a development vehicle for new child care services; establishing indicators of quality; accrediting caregivers; and advocacy on child care issues.⁶⁴

Rooted in the community, such centres also report to an elected board or advisory council, composed of parent users, community groups and local experts. The 1999 *Early Years Study* by Margaret McCain and Fraser Mustard recommended a classic hub model.⁶⁵

Examples of hub practices exist in several of our cities. For instance, Calgary's Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) has contracted with several community organizations to establish "parent-link centres," offering parental education, early child development programs, family support, information and referrals. The Saskatoon Public School Board is planning to turn a renovated school into an ELCC hub.⁶⁶ Other cities have embraced the hub concept more generally. Neighbourhood-based hubs constitute the building blocks in Vancouver's plan to create a coordinated, comprehensive system of child development services.⁶⁷ With at least a dozen hubs in place by the end of 2005, the plan is to extend the idea to most of Vancouver's 23 neighbourhoods.⁶⁸ Lessons from Toronto First Duty's five pilot sites⁶⁹ informed the work of the Mayor's Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education, which led to the adoption of Best Generation Yet in 2005. Its 10-year plan for children's services envisions a system of integrated children's services hubs.

The Province of Ontario's Best Start initiative, launched in 2004, is an example of provincial/municipal/school board cooperation to develop a hub model, anchored in the community. In Toronto, as Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, the City has the lead, chairing the local implementation network, which has representatives from divisions of municipal government, the province, school boards, community agencies and advocacy groups. Schools will be the sites for the hubs.

Quebec's Early Childhood Centres (Centres de la petite enfance - CPE) also represent the hub vision. The CPEs are non-profit, community-based centres with parents constituting the majority on the governing councils. Until 2006, the CPEs formed the hub of a system composed of a child care centre offering centre-based ELCC and supervising family day care providers in the area. Through this system, "family day care providers have access to the resources and educational programs of the centres, which provide a variety of programs open to the community in collaboration with other agencies — particularly that other important local institution in Quebec, the CLSC."⁷⁰ The OECD Babies and Bosses team also noted that the Early Childhood Centres provide important support for children with special needs, in cooperation with the local health centres, the CLSCs.⁷¹

The value of the hub concept was explicitly ignored in the 2005 legislation on early childhood education (Bill 124, *The Educational Childcare Act*) described above, however. The 163 coordinating agencies cover a territory substantially larger than any CPE.⁷² Among the requirements for obtaining a contract to provide this coordination are demonstrated links with both parents and family child care providers. A CPE or a group of CPEs may apply to become such an agency, which will employ on average five people. So too, however, may other local non-profit associations. The new system will be functional as of summer 2006, and only after that will it be possible to assess the extent to which the CPEs have been able to adapt to the new legislation and continue to act as hubs in the system.

Nor has the Quebec system bridged the longstanding divide between schools and early learning. As we noted above, responsibility for pre-school ELCC resides with the Ministry of the Family, Seniors and the Status of Women, which licenses and oversees the CPEs, while OSH programs for school-aged children are provided by the school boards, which answer to the Department of Education. Among other things, there are issues around coordinating curricula between the two systems and personnel management, because employees of the CPEs and OSH child care workers each have their own collective agreements and salary schedules.⁷³

A third experiment with hub design is found in the community task forces in four places, two of which are included in our study (Halifax and Vancouver) organized by the YWCA Canada with support from Social Development Canada. Throughout 2005, each interdisciplinary, community-based community task force worked with its local YWCA member association to create a plan for comprehensive, integrated services for children. The project provides some useful lessons.

The task forces opted for governance by non-profit groups with elected boards, representing parents and the various partners involved in the hub. All stressed the importance of stable and adequate funding and less reliance on parent fees. The Vancouver task force concluded that while “hub models can be delivered by a number of different organizations working together in different ways, leadership from at least one organization in the neighbourhood is required.”⁷⁴ Moreover, the lead organization requires sufficient publicly funded support to develop an adequate service infrastructure. Finally, the task forces called for links with other hubs to ensure services are coordinated and development is equitable across a given territory. The task force that developed the Halifax model envisioned a clear role for the municipality here. It recommended that “municipal governments will be responsible for developing, with stakeholders, facility location criteria to ensure accessibility.”⁷⁵ The Vancouver proposal also suggested that municipalities could ensure efficient use of scarce resources via centralized finance and administration of the hub system.

The Vancouver task force also raised the problem of dispersion and that problems can arise when there are multiple local tables all dealing with ELCC, but with different mandates, priorities and resources. Some mechanism is needed to pull the pieces together at the local level.

Mechanisms for local coordination

To ensure equity and efficiency, any community-based integrated system needs to be embedded in a wider set of arrangements, while avoiding the kind of bureaucratic control from the centre and isolation from the rest of the parts of the ELCC infrastructure which plagued, for example, the Ontario Early Years Centres until recently. In this section, we look at the different structures currently governing ELCC at the city or region-wide level. Three broad patterns can be identified:

- regional representatives of the province (Saskatoon, Winnipeg, St. John's and Halifax)
- province as partner within a wider local network (Calgary, Montreal and Sherbrooke)
- "city as the spider in the web" (Sudbury, Toronto and Vancouver).⁷⁶

1. Regional representatives of the province: In Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, the impetus for a children's strategy came from the province during the 1990s,⁷⁷ and with this, new initiatives to break through departmental silos. In 1993, Saskatchewan put forward its first Action Plan for Children, designed by the Interdepartmental Steering Committee, which brought together seven departments. The action plan was implemented at the local level through "RICs" (regional intersectoral coordinating committees). While these initially only brought together local representatives of the provincial departments involved in the action plan, they now include representatives of school districts, the police, tribal councils and municipal representatives, and child care can now be integrated into the RICs' operations. As yet, however, child care has not been a core part of the Saskatoon RIC's agenda.⁷⁸

Nova Scotia also began to develop a coordinated approach to children and youth in the 1990s, when it established "CAYAC" (Child and Youth Action Committee). This coordinating committee brings together the executive directors of Health, Justice, Community Services, Education and Sport and Recreation. CAYAC now has coordinators in each region. More recent initiatives include the establishment of early childhood development regional collaboration teams, under the leadership of the provincial Department of Community Services and with 50% of membership from government units and 50% from community-based agencies and services. The central (Halifax) region's team is co-chaired by an Early Childhood Development specialist from Community Services and the Executive Director of the Dalhousie University Child Care Centre.⁷⁹ The interim report the committee submitted to the province took a strong stance for child care as a

cornerstone of any strategy to promote early child development. The two key gaps identified in the report were inadequate access to regulated quality child care and the fact that “the programs are not working as an integrated system.”⁸⁰

Manitoba’s Healthy Child Strategy is, similarly, a responsibility of a senior, multi-departmental Cabinet committee. Like Saskatchewan, part of the strategy has involved an effort to secure service integration at the local level and offers the municipality opportunities to get involved. The administrative structure was described in Part II of this report. Of particular interest here are the “parent-child centred coalitions,” which bring together local representatives of the various departments along with voluntary associations and the municipality to identify neighbourhood priorities and develop a local action plan. Child care could form an element of these strategies under “literacy and learning” but they are very small-scale and lack a Winnipeg-wide perspective.

In each of the above examples, the province establishes the parameters of the ELCC vision and recognizes that this requires horizontal integration at the local as well as provincial level. In all three examples, the province remains the central actor, although provincial authorities in Winnipeg and Halifax seem to have been more successful than those in Saskatoon in establishing partnerships with local community groups. In Halifax, however, it seems as if the provincial ministry may not be prepared to grant adequate leeway to local committees to implement proposed initiatives, while in Winnipeg, the parent-child-centred coalitions appear to operate in the absence of the kind of framework that a local children’s strategy could provide.

- 2. Province as partner:** In some instances, regional agents of the province have contributed to the development of local initiatives. In Calgary, both the provincial Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSA) and the City have a role to play in developing its ELCC network. The CFSA has been an active partner through its mandate to provide child care services for younger children, while the municipality has a role through Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), “... a partnership among the two orders of government and the voluntary sector to support a local social infrastructure... The program places primary emphasis on planning and administration occurring at the municipal level, with project operation remaining largely the responsibility of voluntary agencies.”⁸¹

One other way that local agents of the province can work to bring the pieces together at the local level is suggested by the way Quebec relied on the Conférences régionales des élus to play a role in implementing during the initial push to expand places. For several years, the Quebec government has also been encouraging local governments to take the lead in developing their own family policies. As the OECD’s *Babies and Bosses* report noted, “the provincial government of Quebec sees a key role for local authorities

in developing a new approach towards synchronizing various services so as to support the parental work-life balance on a daily basis.”⁸² The Montreal and Sherbrooke CREs, which bring together elected municipal representatives, local community groups and members of the National Assembly, are now playing a role in developing these policies across their respective regions. This version of the second model has the advantage of linking elected officials, local and provincial, with representatives of community groups to elaborate on a common framework. As Quebec cities develop effective family policy that takes the ELCC dimension into consideration, they are moving towards a third model.

- 3. The city as spider in the web:** A third model is one where the city is a lead actor, the spider in the ELCC web. When they act as CMSMs with planning and funding responsibilities, Ontario cities may play this role, one that Toronto actively pursues. Several initiatives provide an example of this role in a web. Since 1999, the City has worked on the Toronto First Duty integrated hubs with the Atkinson Foundation, the Toronto District School Board and community agencies. In 2003, the Mayor’s Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education, established to engage the wider community and advise the Mayor and Council, brought together 26 people representing all levels of government, including four councillors and the chairs of the two main school boards, representatives of business, labour, and child and youth NGOs and advocacy groups as well as the research community. In January 2005, City Council adopted a set of principles developed by the Children’s Working Group of the Roundtable, and these became the backbone of Best Generation Yet, a policy framework for integrating children’s services. Through these initiatives, the City of Toronto has worked to develop a web (or coalition) of service providers who share a vision and recognize the need to work together.

It is not only big cities in Ontario that are able to play this role. In December 2000, Sudbury’s City Council established a Children First Roundtable as a “partnership of elected representatives, local experts in child development, business and citizens working together to build a sense of civic responsibility to improve the quality of life of Sudbury’s children.”⁸² The Roundtable advises City Council and is responsible for promoting community-based initiatives. By 2002, it had produced a Children’s Charter, endorsed by City Council, that commits the City and the community to improving the quality of life for all the children of Greater Sudbury. The *2004 Children First Report Card* was endorsed by the two major school boards, District Health and Family Services, and numerous community-based service providers.

Cities outside Ontario can be the lead actor. Vancouver is another one of Canada’s big cities where the municipality forms the centre of a strong ELCC web. As we saw earlier, despite the lack of official mandate, it has played an important role in supporting crucial parts of the ELCC infrastructure. In the late 1990s, it initiated a Regional Umbrella

Group (RUG) that brought together 18 of the major Vancouver-based child care organizations. Over four years, RUG members met on a quarterly basis to develop coordinated responses to common challenges; to strengthen linkages with institutions providing training, mentoring and support; and to increase capacity to plan child care services both at the micro (organizational) and macro (city-wide) scale.⁸⁴

In 2004, the City, the Vancouver School Board and the Parks Board signed a child care protocol, which “sets out a framework for the City and the two Boards to work towards a more coherent approach to policies and practices, in order to build a comprehensive range of childhood education and care services” with equalized access “across the city to a full continuum of care,” including developing a system of child development hubs.⁸⁵ This in turn led to the formation of a Joint Council on Child Care, with elected and staff representatives from each of the parties, community members from the city-wide networking committee and researchers. The Council offers an important vehicle for coordination among these local agencies.

The coordination role of non-profit NGOs

We have already described the role that YWCA Canada played in initiating and supporting pilot projects that led to a focus on hub-centred development in several pilot projects. Another example of the leading role of the NGOs comes from Calgary, where the United Way is the lead agency in the Calgary Children’s Initiative, a grouping which includes the CFSA and the City as active participants. The Initiative brings together various levels of government, community groups, business, labour and researchers and acts as a catalyst, bringing local forces together to identify the gaps, and sponsoring research and pilot projects to think about how best to fill them. Working groups have been established for 0 – 5-year-olds and for 6 – 12-year-olds and child care forms an important part of the agenda. United Ways in a number of cities have played important roles in prodding ELCC projects and networks into action.⁸⁶

V. Summary

There is no single way to “put Humpty together” but the approaches that work best have several features in common. First, an ELCC system requires a holistic vision or strategy for creating an appropriate environment so that all children can develop to their full potential. This element was strongest in Calgary, Toronto, Vancouver and Sudbury, but Montreal’s CRE is also working with the City of Montreal and its boroughs to develop family plans.

Second, as local challenges and capacities differ, effective solutions allow for, and encourage, the cooperative identification and pursuit of local priorities. This requires mechanisms for consultation with, and accountability to, local communities. Toronto and Sudbury are required by the province to consult with their citizens in developing their child care plans, which also must be approved by Council. Vancouver’s plans were also a product of community consultation. In Calgary, the CFSA is responsible to a board selected from the local community, albeit appointed by the province. Montreal and Sherbrooke have community representation via the elected boards governing the CPEs as well the CREs, which could play an important role.

Third, turning the vision into a reality requires an ongoing commitment on the part of the various partners — provincial authorities, local school boards, municipalities, community groups — to work together. This needs to be reflected in some form of cross-cutting organization whether that is established in the community sector, by the province, or by the municipality. Halifax’s early childhood development regional integration committee has the potential to do this, given sufficient support from the province. Winnipeg’s parent-child coalitions are certainly addressing concerns at the neighbourhood level, but they appear to lack a common framework and meeting ground. Quebec’s CREs, with their region-wide perspective, have the potential capacity to link community and elected representatives to achieve a balance between (neighbourhood) diversity and (region-wide) equity. In Toronto, Vancouver and Sudbury, as we have seen, the municipality has taken the lead in linking elected representatives, city officials, experts in early learning and child care and community organizations. Private initiatives can also play a role. The Calgary Children’s Initiative, under the aegis of the United Way, offers an important forum for identifying local priorities in the city, and included municipal and provincial agencies and other community associations.

Still much to do

Clearly, a lot of effort has gone into laying the foundations for an early learning and child care system in cities across Canada. Yet there is still much to do. One of the key problems is equitable access to services in Canada, in regions across provinces, in cities and in communities.

Although the Manitoba government has increased the number of spaces substantially and is the only province outside Quebec to place a cap on fees, a study of the distribution of child care spaces in Winnipeg has documented the inequitable distribution across city wards and different age groups. There were seven times more spaces for pre-school (2 - 5) children than for infants and, while 6 - 12-year-olds accounted for one half the children, only one third of the spaces were for OSH care.⁸⁷ The study was particularly critical of how, in the absence of local planning, there was no distribution of spaces according to need, but rather neighbourhood “social capital” tended to prevail and more proactive neighbourhoods were able to organize and establish programs. As a result, “group centres started up when and where non-profit parent groups, private owners or workplaces established them. One result is that areas high in ‘social capital’ tend to have more services, while those with lower social capital have less.”⁸⁸ The distribution of social capital, in turn, largely coincides with family income and education levels. Richer neighbourhoods tend to do best.

Despite Quebec’s substantial commitment to child care provision and central planning structures, the problem persists there as well. Thus Japel, Tremblay and Coté found that children from middle and upper-class backgrounds were more likely to have a space and in better quality settings than those attended by children from lower-income families. The latter are often forced to rely on inferior for-profit centres, lower quality family day care or unlicensed care.⁸⁹

This pattern is visible in Montreal. Another study done by the Conseil régional de développement for the Island of Montreal documented the difficulty of establishing good quality family child care in poor neighbourhoods.⁹⁰ The study focused exclusively on low-income neighbourhoods, but if there were a survey covering the whole island, it would likely parallel those of the pan-Quebec study by Japel et al. These results follow in part from the way Quebec planned the implementation of its family policy in 1997. The process involved a bottom-up process, in which proposals for a centre had to be generated from the community. While funds were made available for groups interested in developing a proposal and the CRDs were able to work with them to do so, there was always a problem in generating sufficient proposals from low-income communities. The outcome was similar to the pattern found in Winnipeg: more proposals tended to come from areas where income and education levels are above average.

This problem appears even where municipalities have developed proactive child care plans. Toronto has the largest network of children’s services outside Quebec and has had a local planning process in place for several decades. Yet it has to deal with the legacy of the past.

Although licensed child care has been the responsibility of the former Metro government since the early 1950s, the patterns of distribution reflect to a large degree the attitudes of

the pre-amalgamated municipalities and school boards. The availability of facilities, subsidized operating costs, and proactive urban planning resulted in an above-average supply of physical and subsidized spaces in the downtown core.⁹¹

Amalgamation and the commitment of the new city to an integrated children's agenda have helped reduce the gap in infant and toddler care, but geographical inequities in access to licensed spaces and subsidies have proved more difficult to overcome, especially between 1997 and 2005, when the City had to cut 1,800 subsidized spaces to deal with rising costs and frozen transfers from the province. Thus, while 61% of Toronto's pre-school children have working parents, only 19% have access to licensed spaces. In other words, problems of equitable distribution are most likely to arise when there is insufficient funding to offer a space for all.

Vancouver, too, has struggled. As the Inclusive Cities report on Vancouver notes, "Existing pre-school and child care programs are seen as good — for those that have the possibility of accessing them. The problem is access — demand for services (especially licensed) is high, and a shortage of spaces has been identified as a significant area of concern."⁹² Here, too, there is a problem of equitable geographic distribution. There is a ten-fold differential in neighbourhood access and the least served areas are in the working class areas of the east side.⁹³ Here again, despite the concerted effort of the City and the Joint Council, local efforts have been undermined by cuts in provincial transfers.

What these experiences suggest is, first, that "bottom-up" processes, on their own, will do little to address geographic and age-based inequities. What is needed, especially if the neighbourhood hub becomes the principle on which the new ELCC architecture across Canada is founded, is local planning capacity to ensure equitable development across the city. As the OECD argued, "the provision of services across a city or territory — not the least in terms of mapping where services should be placed — should be overseen by a public agency."⁹⁴

In Toronto, Sudbury and Vancouver, the municipalities have developed the technical, organizational and policy resources to take the lead. In Montreal and Sherbrooke, a similar role might be played by the CREs (conferences régionales des élus). All of these bodies have the advantage of being accountable to local communities as well as to the province. Other cities have the beginnings of such an infrastructure — the RIC in Saskatoon, the integrated service teams and community coalitions in Winnipeg, the regional early childhood development team in Halifax, and the St. John's Health and Community Service Board represent a start, but in both cities the school boards and municipalities have yet to be recognized as full partners. As we have shown, municipalities hold an important piece of the solution to this puzzle in the recreation programs. Second, local planning capacities mean little in the absence of access to a sufficient and stable level of funding, as the Toronto and Vancouver stories suggest.

VI. Conclusions

- Early learning and child care programs are an essential part of local social infrastructure. They have multiple purposes and multiple outcomes: they support optimal child development, parental employment, education or training, and women's equality.
- The development of early learning and child care (ELCC) systems poses a “wicked problem” requiring a locally-based, holistic response. Child care forms a critical part of the early child development puzzle.
- None of the cities in the study have sufficient coverage for children ages 0 - 12, with the exception of kindergarten provision, which is universal and, in three provinces, compulsory.
- Municipalities hold the key to recreation programs that play an important, if de facto, role in providing out of school hours care.
- In a number of cities, local schools are a popular site for existing or proposed integrated children's service hubs. The facilities are purpose-built for children and encourage integration between the two main programs for children under six — child care and kindergarten. Schools are also sites of important recreation facilities, which can be used for summer programs for 6 - 12-year-olds.

Lessons Learned:

1. Providing licensed, regulated child care is the most difficult part of the LCC puzzle to resolve. In most provinces, municipalities do not have any responsibility for child care. Unlike recreation and kindergarten, which are funded and provided locally, child care is still largely market-based and beleaguered by major access/affordability problems. Only in Ontario, and for school-aged children, only in Alberta are municipalities mandated to play such a role. Other provinces might encourage municipal involvement in other ways. One way to do so might be to establish local child care planning grants to support local planning and coordination.
2. Even if the province decides to maintain the lead role at the local level, as it currently does in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, it needs to work in full partnership with municipalities and school boards to plan for equitable distribution of ELCC resources.
3. Local/regional planning capacity is essential to ensure equitable development across entire cities. While community consultation is important, a bottom-up exercise is insufficient on its own. Proactive planning is required if age and class-geographical inequalities are to be addressed. The situation where the communities with the greatest social capital obtain the most resources is far too common. Municipalities, as elected governments, have an essential role to play here.

4. Adequate stable levels of funding are essential. As the Toronto and Vancouver stories show, even with a strong vision, a clear plan and a well-developed local infrastructure, inequities will arise as long as there is insufficient funding to provide a place for all who want and need it. The source of funding may vary, depending on the program. The limited municipal property tax base will not sustain the cost of initiating and maintaining a broadly-accessible ELCC program, and we have shown that purely local solutions do not result in equitable access to services. Municipalities now fund large parts of recreation and could expand in this area. School boards can continue to enhance ELCC through kindergarten and other supports to school-based child care. Ultimately, building a strong web of ELCC services may mean integrating funding as well as services;
5. Service integration, following the hub or other designs, is important and is most effective when supported by a strong vision, shared by all, and organizational and fiscal mechanisms that create a plus-sum game.
6. “Hubs,” organized around non-profit child care centres and responsible to elected boards composed of users and community representatives, can respond to community needs. Hubs have the capacity to integrate many types of children’s services, including child care, parent supports and recreation. Integrated service hubs build in transitions as children move throughout the day and as they grow and develop over time. They can also provide a unified point of access when parents are looking for services. To be successful, they need stable and adequate funding and a lead organization with the administrative support needed to play a coordinating role.
7. A number of local initiatives have been shown to work and the most successful have these features in common:
 - they are created for all children and not targeted to special population
 - they allow for local flexibility and local accountability
 - there is ongoing commitment from all partners and the support of a cross-cutting form of organization established in the community sector, by the province, or by the municipality.

End notes:

¹*Early Learning and Child Care in Canada: Country Report*, OECD (Paris, 2004), p. 6.

²In 2001, 80% of the Canadian population lived in an urban setting and 67% lived in one of 27 large agglomerations, labelled census metropolitan areas (CMA) by Statistics Canada.

³*Showing We Care: A Child Care Strategy for the 1990s*, Report of the Task Force on Child Care, Government of British Columbia, January 1991, p. 53.

⁴Our findings are based on information gathered from documentary sources, responses to questions submitted to school boards, authorities responsible for child care, and municipal parks and recreation units as well as key informant interviews. All interviews were conducted by Rianne Mahon except in Quebec, where Jane Jenson interviewed some officials and where she was responsible for gathering information from the 20 Montreal and six Sherbrooke boroughs.

⁵Julie Mathien, *Children, Families and Institutions in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Ontario*, MA Thesis, OISE, University of Toronto, 2001.

⁶Rianne Mahon, "The Never-Ending Story: The Struggle for Universal Child Care Policy in the 1970s." *Canadian Historical Review* 81: 4, 2001.

⁷The Child Care Expense Deduction was created in 1971 and is still available. It is an income tax deduction claimed by parents with employment income; the parent with the lowest income must take it. It can be used for any kind of child care (regulated or not, centre-based or family day care, day camps or pre-school) as long as parents provide a receipt for payment to the provider.

⁸Between 1965 and 1995, the Canada Assistance Plan provided a range of funding from the federal government to the provinces for social assistance. Two of the categories supported were: child care subsidies to providers of a space for a qualifying low-income parent and capital/operating grants. Each province developed its own regulations for the use of these funds, and cross-provincial variation increased as conditional grants gave way to block funding over the 1980s.

⁹On average, less than one in four children aged 0 to 6 whose mother was in formal employment had a space in a child care centre in 2001. OECD, *Early Learning and Child Care in Canada: Country Report*, p. 31.

¹⁰Over the last decade or more, provincial social assistance and employment policies have been significantly redesigned. For example, social assistance rules no longer permit lone mothers with school-age children — and in some provinces young pre-school children — to substitute parental child care responsibilities for the requirement to seek paid employment. The National Child Benefit also has built-in inducements for parents to take jobs, even low-paying ones.

¹¹ Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, February 7, 2005.

¹² Statistics Canada (2004), *Women in Work: Work Chapter Updates 2003*, Catalogue # 89F0133XIE, Ottawa: Statistics Canada

¹³ In 2000-01, 53% of children aged six months to five years received non-parental child care, an increase of 11% in only six years. Statistics Canada, *The Daily* of February 7, 2005.

¹⁴ Rosalie Abella, *Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment*, Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1984.

¹⁵ The European Union, for example, has adopted the following position: "The importance of ensuring suitable childcare services is recognised by the European council and commission as an essential step to achieve gender equality and to raise female participation. In fact, the targets agreed upon at the Barcelona European council state that 'Member States should remove disincentives to female labour force participation and strive, taking into account the demand for childcare facilities and in line with national patterns of provision, to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under 3 years of age.'" Janneke Plantenga and Melissa Siegel, "Position Paper - child care in a changing world." Prepared for *Child Care in a Changing World*, Groningen, the Netherlands, October 21-23, 2004, p. 1. Available at: www.childcareinachangingworld.nl. Consulted April 19, 2006.

¹⁶ One example is the report to the Government of Ontario by Margaret N. McCain and J. Fraser Mustard, *Reversing the Real Brain Drain: Early Years Study Final Report*, April 1999.

¹⁷ Assembly of *First Nations, First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Action Plan* April 2005. At <http://www.afn.ca/cmslib/general/elcc.pdf>. Consulted 19 April 2006.

¹⁸ Recognizing these demographic realities, school boards in western cities such as Saskatoon, Vancouver and Winnipeg have created programs designed to integrate Aboriginal culture into their curriculum.

¹⁹ See the original 1997 pamphlet outlining the NCB, at http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/ncb/ncbpamp_e.html, consulted April 19, 2006.

²⁰ For example, in the report on 2001 investment plans, four jurisdictions (PEI, Ontario, Saskatchewan and the Yukon) reported no spending on child care, although some might have occurred in Ontario under the category “municipal investments” (see *The National Child Benefit Progress Report 2001*, Catalogue number: SP-119-05-02E, May 2002). By the time of the 2004 report all were reporting some spending, but levels tended to be small, especially in comparison with the always popular income supplements (see *The National Child Benefit Progress Report 2004*, Catalogue number: SD15-1/2004E-PDF, November 2005). Both are available at www.nationalchildbenefit.ca

²¹ The other areas were: promotion of healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; improvement of parent and family supports; and strengthening community capacities.

²² Charles Coffey and Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain, *Final Report of the Commission on Early learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto 2002*, www.torontochildren.com, page 19.

²³ http://www.ecd-elcc.ca/en/elcc/elcc_multiframe.shtml, consulted April 21, 2006.

²⁴ OECD, *Early Learning and Child Care in Canada: Country Report*.

²⁵ Speech from the Throne, October 2004

²⁶ This policy stance favouring “choice” has been popular in some policy communities for years. “Through 2003 the strongest resistance [to public support for child care services] came from the neo-liberal government of Ontario, and to a lesser extent from Alberta. These governments prefer to promise tax relief so families can make their own choices. Advocates call this stance ABC — ‘anything but childcare.’” From Jane Jenson, “Changing the Paradigm: Family Responsibility or Investing in Children.” *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, vol. 29: 2, 2004, p. 188. For one example of the original phrase ABC, see Charles Coffey and Honourable Margaret N. McCain, Commission on *Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto, Final Report, May 2002*, p. 20. <http://www.toronto.ca/children/report/elcc.pdf>

²⁷ The flat payment of the taxable \$1,200 will have perverse effects in terms of equity. “... wealthy single-earner families stand to gain more than those in which both parents work but make less money.” *Globe and Mail*, May 3, 2006. These “winners” are couples with only one earner (and therefore presumably no child care costs), while two earner couples and single parents will receive only a fraction of the amount after taxes and they risk losing other income-tested benefits. For a full analysis see Ken Battle, *The Choice in Child Care Allowance: What You See is Not What You Get*, Caledon Commentary, Caledon Institute, January 2006 and *The Incredible Shrinking \$1,200 Child Care Allowance. How to Fix It*, Caledon Institute, April 2006.

²⁸ The consequences of this distinction were pointed out almost a decade ago in Laura C. Johnson and Julie Mathien, *Early Childhood Services for Kindergarten-age Children in Four Canadian Provinces: Scope, Nature and Models for the Future*, Caledon Institute, September 1998, p. 6. The need to better integrate kindergarten and child care services was a major theme in the OECD country report on Canada, released in 2004.

²⁹ Region 3- Work Plan Template, Child Care Services, Website work plan template, 09/11/03 and interview with Marg Cutler of the CFSA, October 6, 2005.

³⁰ As a detailed analysis of Winnipeg shows, when the creation of new facilities depends on bottom-up initiatives, as it does in Quebec as well as Manitoba, the proposals coming from disadvantaged neighbourhoods tend to be limited in number and may be of lower quality. See Susan Prentice, *Time for Action: An Economic and Social*

Analysis of Childcare in Winnipeg, Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, 2004, pp.15-16. Data from Quebec's Longitudinal Study of Child Development show, moreover, that poor children tend to be placed with services (with the exception of those in a Early Childhood Centre) that are of lesser quality. "About 20 percent of children in the first socio-economic quartile are in an inadequate service, in contrast to 9 percent of fourth quartile children."

Christa Japel, Richard E. Tremblay and Sylvana Côté, *Quality Counts! Assessing the Quality of Daycare Services Using the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development*, IRPP Choices, vol. 11: 5, December 2005, p. 31. This study included all forms of care available in Quebec, including family daycare outside of the formal system that is "regulated" as to numbers but not program quality or price. For a full list of kinds of services offered in Quebec, see p. 8 of this study.

³¹ See http://www.mfacf.gouv.qc.ca/thematiques/famille/loi/index_en.asp. Consulted on April 20, 2006.

³² Figure 3 is constructed from Japel, *et al.*, *Quality Counts!*, p. 9

³³ The coordinators are also charged with making connections among informal care providers, drop-in centres, play groups and parent education.

³⁴ In 1997, these were Conseils de développement régional. They were reorganized into Conférences régionales des élus (CREs) by the Charest Liberal government. While representatives of community groups formed as much as two-thirds of the membership of the former, in the new bodies elected municipal councillors predominate.

³⁵ For more on this history of Alberta municipalities, see Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon, *Bringing Cities to the Table: Child Care and Intergovernmental Affairs*, Ottawa: CPRN Discussion Paper F|26, October 2002, pp. 24-25.

³⁶ Rianne Mahon, "Childcare as Citizenship Right? Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s", *Canadian Historical Review*, 86:2, 2005, pages 285-316

³⁷ Toronto began to pay more than its share in the late 1980s and by 2000 had assumed responsibility for nearly 40% of costs. See *Toronto 2005-2009 Child Care Service Plan*, approved by Toronto City Council in May 2005.

³⁸ These include programs such as *Toronto First Duty*, a pilot consisting of five integrated, school-based children's services hubs developed in co-operation with the Atkinson Foundation, the Toronto District School Board and community agencies. The City also covers 100% of school occupancy costs, summer day camp programs, and the Child Care Capital Reserve Fund. The Fund was created in 1998 when the formula for calculating municipal contributions was changed to allow municipalities to count user fees toward their 20% cost share. Half of the municipality's savings were used to eliminate minimum user fees and the other half to create the reserve. The funds are used to support new construction and for interest-free capital loans. Communication with Petr Varmuza, October 27, 2005.

³⁹ City of Greater Sudbury, *2005-2009 Child Care Service Plan*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ *Showing We Care*, p. 20.

⁴¹ www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/childcare/index.htm, consulted July 22, 2005.

⁴² *Moving Forward Childcare: A Cornerstone of Child Development Services*, City of Vancouver, April 2002.

⁴³ Interview with Suzanne Pion, Family Committee, CRE de Montréal, conducted by Jane Jenson, October 21, 2005.

⁴⁴ In Vancouver, OSH programming occurs in recreation centres, but is actually licensed as child care, similar to the OSH programming in Calgary and that provided in Quebec by school boards (see below).

⁴⁵ A very preliminary 1999 study in Toronto evaluated both licensed after-school child care and recreation programs. The analysis showed that, while quality differences existed across the 19 programs in the study, the licensed, regulated after school child care and recreation looked more alike than different. Julie Mathien (Author) and Leela Viswanathan (Contributor), *Taking Stock: The Status of Child Care and Children's Services in Toronto. A Joint Report of the City of Toronto and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto*.

⁴⁶ The boundaries of the boroughs often correspond to the borders of municipalities that were merged to form larger cities in Quebec's municipal reform of 2002. The merger legislation left many key services as borough responsibilities, including parks and recreation. This means that pre-existing distribution of revenue, administrative practice, and physical and social infrastructure were little changed. Boroughs which were active and revenue-rich as independent cities tend to have maintained their programs while poorer boroughs have fewer programs.

⁴⁷ In its 2006 budget, Quebec sought to address the problems that arise during school breaks, which are not covered by the \$7-a-day OSH child care services. On average, parents have had to pay \$25 a day during school breaks and professional development days. The budget set the cost at \$14 a day and still allows parents to claim the childcare deduction, which they cannot do for the ordinary OSH fee.

⁴⁸ For details for 2006 see *InfoSherbrookoise*, vol. 2:1, <http://www.ville.sherbrooke.qc.ca/fr/zMainFrame.html>. Consulted on May 2, 2006.

⁴⁹ *Rapport d'analyse de la problématique entourant les services de garde en milieu scolaire pour les 5 à 12 ans lors des périodes de fermeture scolaire*, Conseil régional de l'Île de Montréal, February 2003.

⁵⁰ In Quebec the problem is systemic. Many counsellors are drawn from the population of post-secondary CEGEP students. The school year for CEGEPs begins in the third week in August. Therefore, some boroughs provide day care services in the schools for the last weeks of August.

⁵¹ Prior to amalgamation, the City of Toronto offered free recreational programs. After amalgamation Toronto adopted the practice common in the suburbs of charging for recreation services. Deborah Cowen, "Suburban Citizenship? The rise of targeting and the eclipse of social rights in Toronto," *Social and Cultural Geography*, vol. 6:3, 2005.

⁵² City of Greater Sudbury, *Best Start Child Care Plan*, Children Services Section, October 2005, p. 42.

⁵³ *Best Generation Yet*, passed by Toronto City Council in July 2005, commits the City to developing a 10-year plan for achieving a comprehensive, integrated, high-quality ELCC system for children 0 - 12. All divisions working with children must submit a joint service plan.

⁵⁴ *Child Care Protocol*, Policy Report to Vancouver City Council from Carol Ann Young, Child Development Coordinator, February 3, 2004.

⁵⁵ Laura C. Johnson and Julie Mathien, *The Early Years' Project. Early Childhood Services for Kindergarten-age Children in Four Canadian Provinces: Scope, Nature and Models for the Future*, Caledon Institute, September 1998, page 38.

⁵⁶ All provinces in this study have a tradition of local governance of education. Elected boards previously possessed a degree of autonomy, due to their revenue base. As late as 1992, the typical financial arrangement saw the province covering 60% of expenditures, with local property taxes covering the rest. In the 1990s, provincial governments began to exercise greater control over local school boards. In Saskatchewan and Manitoba, local taxes continue to provide a significant share of revenue, but such taxes account for only 10% to 20% of revenues in Quebec and Nova Scotia. Everywhere else the province has taken control of school financing. Provinces have also sometimes engineered board mergers in the name of fiscal restraint and administrative efficiency. The Yukon Territory has a mixed system. The only board of education is the francophone one, serving the entire community across the territory. For the rest, the territorial ministry is in charge, with school councils providing local input.

⁵⁷ Announced in September 2005, the program is located in schools but taught by early childhood educators.

⁵⁸ In Manitoba, programs for four-year-olds are called "nurseries" not kindergarten.

⁵⁹ *Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds*. Report and Recommendations of Alberta's Commission on Learning, October 2003.

⁶⁰ The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial is participating in the Nova Scotia pilot program for four-year-olds, although neither of its schools is located in Halifax.

⁶¹ The subsidy rate has also created a strong incentive for boards to choose non-profit providers. Interview with David Letra, Toronto Catholic District School Board. September 20, 2005.

⁶² Neil Bradford, "Place matters and multi-level governance: perspectives on a new urban paradigm," *Policy Options*, February 2004, p. 40.

⁶³ This insight informs the Understanding the Early Years (UEY) program, which provides federal dollars to communities to assess the quality of the local environment for child development. www.sdc.gc.ca/en/hip/sd/300-UEYInfo.shtml. It also led the OECD country report on Canada, as we have noted in the Introduction, to call for locally-based integration.

⁶⁴ *Showing We Care*, p. 29.

⁶⁵ For a critique by the same authors of the actual implementation of their proposals, see *The Early Years Study Three Years Later: From Early Child Development to Human Development*, Hon. Margaret N. McCain and J. Fraser Mustard, August 2002, CIAR.

⁶⁶ Interview with Karen Anderson, December 8, 2005.

⁶⁷ *Moving Forward Childcare: A Cornerstone of Child Development Services*, City of Vancouver, April 2002.

⁶⁸ Lynell Anderson, "Lots to Build On, More to Do: Vancouver, British Columbia" in *Blueprint for Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care*, YWCA Canada, November 2005, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁹ The project, a partnership of the City, the Atkinson Foundation and the Toronto District School Board, involves five projects exploring different ways to integrate education and care for preschool children. Each brings together formal education (kindergarten), child care and family resource programs to provide seamless access to these and other core services. All have a governance structure involving parents, which has control over a pooled budget and a mandate to deliver comprehensive services.

⁷⁰ Jane Jenson, "Against the Current: Child Care and Family Policy in Quebec." *Child Care Policy at the Crossroads: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring*, Sonya Michel and Rianne Mahon, eds. Routledge (2002), page 323.

⁷¹ *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life: Canada, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdoms*, volume 4, 2005, p. 128.

⁷² In the interest of saving money by cutting jobs from the system, the Charest Liberal government's White Paper proposed creating 126 coordinating agencies, but under pressure from the association of Early Childhood Centres providers, the Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance (AQCPÉ), the number was slightly increased, but not to the 253 the Association had wanted.

⁷³ Interview with Carmen Lemire, Conseil scolaire de Marguerite-Bourgeoys, by Jane Jenson, October 5, 2005.

⁷⁴ Lynell Anderson, *Lots to Build On, More to Do*, Vancouver Blueprint for Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁵ *Blueprint for Community Architecture for Early childhood Learning and Care*, YWCA Canada, 2005, p. 6.

⁷⁶ Whitehorse, Yukon Territories, stands as an outlier where these categories are concerned. It is the most densely populated centre of a large territory. There is one local school board (Francophone) and otherwise, schools are governed by school councils. Responsibility for children's services remains centralized in the Territory. This has not inhibited the formation of local partnerships. Territorial authorities work with Yukon College, the Child Development Centre, local schools and community agencies on a number of initiatives like the "whole child" program, focused on children at risk. The closest thing to a child care planning body is the Ministry of Health and Social Services Child Care Working Group, which brings together NGOs to meet and provide recommendations to the Minister on the development of a four-year strategy for child care.

⁷⁷ Newfoundland did not adopt a children's strategy as such but children figured within its broader plan for social development, to be implemented through the new regional health and community service boards.

⁷⁸ Telephone interview with Paul Gauthier, General Manager of Saskatoon Community Service and co-chair of Saskatoon's RIC. December 6, 2005.

⁷⁹ Others involved include the executive director of a second non-profit child care centre, the CAYAC regional coordinator, the Halifax Regional School Board, the executive director of a family resource centre, two owners of commercial child care operations, and representatives from Child Welfare, Public Health and Early Intervention.

⁸⁰ Community Collaboration Team, Central Region, *Interim Report and Work Plan*, May 2005.

⁸¹ "Family and Community," *Perspectives. Calgary's Window on Social Issues*, Winter 2004, p. 7.

⁸² *Babies and Bosses*, p.129, footnote 12.

⁸³ 2002 Children First Report Card, Greater Sudbury, 2002. www.city.greatersudbury.on.ca.

⁸⁴ This was funded by Human Resources Development Canada. See "Outcomes of Vancouver Child Care Regional Delivery Model Pilot Project," http://www11.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/pls/edd/VCCRDM_124004.htm

⁸⁵ City of Vancouver, Policy Report to Vancouver City Council from the Director of Social Planning on the Child Care Protocol, February 3, 2004.

⁸⁶ For example, Centraide in Montreal was the sponsor of *1,2,3 Go!*, an important community development project focused on pre-school children, and the United Way's *Success by Six* program has provided funds for consultation as well as programming in Halifax and Vancouver, among others. Caroline Beauvais and Jane Jenson, *The Well-Being of Children: Are there neighbourhood effects?*, Discussion Paper F|31, Ottawa: CPRN, 2003, pp. 25, 30, 35.

⁸⁷ Susan Prentice, *Time for Action: An Economic and Social Analysis of Childcare in Winnipeg*, Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, 2004, pp. 15-16.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 15

⁸⁹ Japel, *et al.*, *Quality Counts!*

⁹⁰ CRDIM, *Services de garde à l'enfance. Constats et recommandations pour le développement de services de garde en milieu familial sur l'île de Montréal*, 2003.

⁹¹ *Toronto Report Card on Children Update 2000*, Toronto Children and Youth Action Committee, 2001, p. 28.

⁹² *Inclusive Cities Canada- Vancouver/North Vancouver Preliminary Report from Community Voices, Perspectives and Priorities*, March 2005, p. 7.

⁹³ Clyde Hertzman, "Making Early Childhood Development a Priority: Lessons from Vancouver," p. 9.

⁹⁴ OECD, *Canada: Country Note*, p. 77.

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