

Exploration & Enlightenment: Reflective Practice in One Inclusion Pilot Project

Raising the Bar: Lifting the Field
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[The Presentation in Nutshell]

- *Quick Summary* of the Inclusion Pilot Project
- *Way more on* how thinking about working in inclusive environments (reflective practices) helped to make environments more inclusive

Why Pilot a New Model for Inclusion?

- Innovative child care community
- Perfect timing
 - Quality strategies in place for a few years
 - Model for inclusion since 2003
- No better time for highlighting ECEs' competencies

[And, really, why:]

- Inconsistencies with IPPs child care programs
- Levels of collaboration between RCs and ECEs varied between child care programs
- ECEs not feeling responsible for the inclusion of children

[Key Features of the Pilot]

- 4 “high quality” child care programs
- Each program given \$1000.00 per child with special needs
 - Additional funding was provided for Professional Development
- ECEs were responsible for the main aspects of planning and programming for children with special needs

Example of Task expectations

Inclusion Pilot

Task	Role of ECE	Role of Supervisor	Role of RC
Observation	<p>The ECE has primary responsibility for observing for the purposes of gathering information about the child, the group of children, and the environment</p> <p>Identify observation and documentation skills they need to further develop</p>	<p>Ensuring that there is sufficient staffing to support the ECE in observing and information gathering</p> <p>Supporting ECE in accessing professional development opportunities</p> <p>Assisting ECE in identifying and articulating needs for support from the Resource Consultant in observation strategies</p>	<p>Providing resources, modeling techniques, etc to support ECE in developing effective observation and documentation skills</p>

[High Expectations]

■ Leadership for Inclusion

(Irwin, Lero, & Brophy, Inclusion: The Next Generation in Child Care in Canada, pages 87-100.)

- Adequate resources in the child care program
- Involvement in Advocacy
- Involvement in Professional Development
- Knowledge, Collaboration, Good Communication

[Objectives of the Pilot]

1. Explore impact of changes to human resources on skills, confidence levels & involvement of ECEs
1. Promote ECEs involvement in observation, documentation, assessment, & IPP development

[Objectives of the Pilot]

1. Promote identification of staff and supervisor as agents for inclusion.
1. Promote dialogue, problem-solving, and active participation among all involved personnel

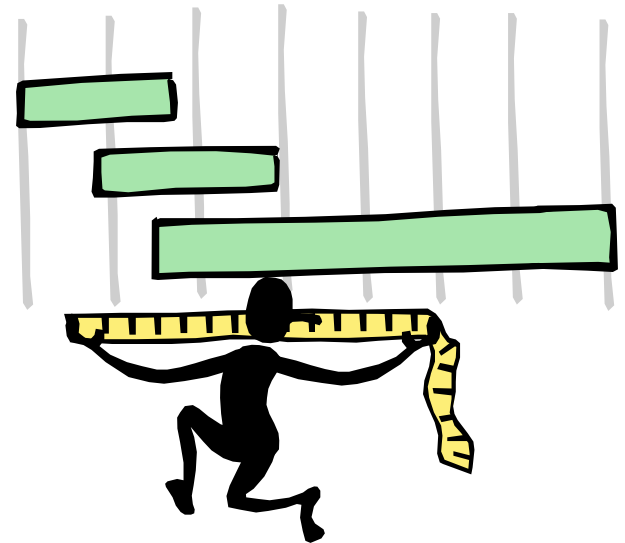
[Review of the Pilot]

- To document the changes that staff and the programme experience
- To determine successes and identify challenges
- To determine the “lessons learned” from the Pilot



[What Changes?]

- Changes among:
 - Child Care Programmes (4)
 - ECEs (n=27)
 - Supervisors (n=4)
 - Resource Consultants (n=4)
- Measuring Change
 - surveys
 - journal entries
 - networking themes
 - environmental reviews



[The Participants]

- ECEs are the focus (n=27)
 - 4 Resource Consultants
 - 4 Supervisors
- A few important details about each group
- Journal summaries include ECEs, Supervisors, & Resource Consultants

[Reflective Practice]

- Why is reflective practice important?
 - Why we wanted it to be part of the Pilot
- How could reflective practice be a part of everyday life in a child care program?
 - How we tried to encourage its occurrence

[A few assumptions]

- Reflection assumes competence
- What is reflected upon is a choice
- What is written or said enables the practitioner to understand & read what is going on in practice: descriptions become researchable, and open for discussion & change (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, Beyond Quality in ECE & Care, page 147)

[The Reflective Journals]

- Earliest thoughts on the Project
 - Fear
 - Frustration
 - Not enough information
 - “Children will suffer”



[On the other hand:]

- Hope
- Excitement
- “An opportunity”



Seeing some patterns ...

- Resource Consultants

- Concerned about the ECEs
 - we're fine, they're not



- ECEs

- Concerned about their own abilities
 - Shakey pudding



- Supervisors

- Philosophical
 - It's all good

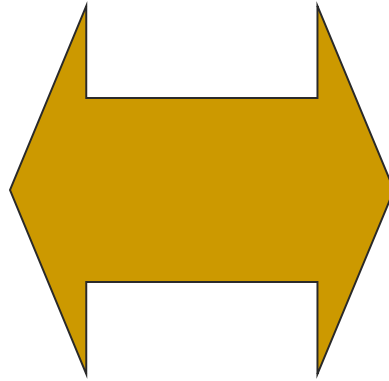


[After a couple of months]

- Active involvement in IPPs
- Networking meetings
- Lingering coordination and communication challenges
- A whole new set of fears
- Practice changes starting to emerge

[The Turning Point ... Spring!]

Enthusiasm
& Recognition!



Reality Sets
In!

- ECEs: Surprised at what they know!
- Overwhelmed by all the work

[Is this Enlightenment?]

Yep ...

- Confidence
- Belonging
- Most Critical Supports



[The Value of the Journals]

- Captured and documented successes
- Uncovered personal biases
 - Related to practices
 - Related to the Pilot
- Helped to keep track of paperwork
- Place to pose questions and find the answers

[Biggest Impact]

- Early Childhood Educators
 - Personal growth – knowledge base
 - Networking
- Supervisors
 - Reinforced need for planning time
 - Benefits of family involvement in IPP
 - Reflective Practice
- Resource Consultants
 - Adult education focus
 - Reinforced collaboration with ECEs
 - Increased workload

Farewell to the Pilot

- “I can’t believe this pilot is finished! Although this pilot may draw to a conclusion, we will continue to reflect on our practices. This pilot in a way will never be done for us, as we can always grow and learn.”



Lessons Learned

Objectives 1&2

- Strategic approach to staffing has an impact on confidence levels
- Additional funding alone does not improve inclusion quality
- Involvement in regular, topic-specific networking improves inclusion quality

Lessons Learned

Objectives 1&2

- Inclusion-specific Professional Development improves confidence and quality
- *Applied Vygotsky* Experience with IPP development increased confidence
- Adaptations to Resource Consultant support had a lasting impact

Lessons Learned

Objective 3

- Supervisor involvement in inclusion advocacy is related to higher inclusion quality
- Change in perception of ECE to include assessment in daily practice has an impact on inclusion quality

Lessons Learned

Objective 4

- More involvement in regular discussions about the Pilot led to more comments about desired change
- Centres that included other staff in regular discussions about the Pilot had higher inclusion quality

Changes in the Environments

Child Care Programme	<i>Practices</i> Score Pre-Pilot	<i>Practices</i> Score Post-Pilot	<i>Principles</i> Score Pre-Pilot	<i>Principles</i> Score Post-Pilot
One	5.2	5.3↑	4	6.5↑
Two	4	4.4↑	4.5	4.5↔
Three	5.8	6.1↑	6.3	6.7↑
Four	4.8	4.9↑	4.4	5.2↑

[Thank you!]

Want to know more?
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