

Lambton/Chatham-Kent Best Start Demonstration Site



Toronto Best Start Community Forum
March 29, 2011



Our Vision

A community that enriches the lives of children and families for a better tomorrow...



Successes & Highlights...

Structure and Process

- One Best Start site – two municipal jurisdictions
- One Steering Committee and two local planning and implementation tables
- Cross-sector, cross-jurisdiction planning and decision making structures
- One vision and one strategic plan, coordinated communication
- Increased cross-sector collaboration
- Enhanced service and system integration
- Developed platform upon which to build the next phase of Best Start...Best Future



Successes & Highlights...

Enhanced Services and Improved Access

- Increased investments across Lambton and Chatham-Kent not just in demonstration area
- Developed 15 primary and 4 secondary Best Start Hubs
- Created 1667 new child care spaces
- Developed 35 wrap around programs
- Opened Pre-School Early Learning Programs which have been attended by 1663 children
- Created 2 Parent and Professional Resource Centres
- Developed a Children's Charter of Rights



Successes & Highlights

- Developed and delivered local training to support ECEs and other practitioners to apply principles of ELECT
- Improved quality of child care programs through professional development and training and implementation of a consistent play based curriculum (ELECT)
- Achieved a continued commitment of partners to move ahead with the goal of fulfilling the Best Start...Best Future vision



Successes & Highlights...

- Developed 6 Neighbourhood Advisory Committees
- Developed Best Start services for French speaking and Aboriginal children and families
- EDI results show that vulnerability rates have decreased by at least 3% over the past five years
- Significant improvements for children with special needs: dramatic increase of children served “in the community”; average wait time has decreased by two months; age at first intervention has decreased by seven months



Challenges & Mitigations...

Challenges

- Maintaining momentum and partner commitment during period of transition
- Sustaining the child care system during period of transition and redesign
- Securing sufficient funding to transition children with special needs into the school system
- Legislative barriers that prevent data linking
- Legislative barriers that prevent alignment of day nurseries and education act requirements



Challenges & Mitigations...

Lessons Learned

- Best Start is a movement not a program – organic not cosmetic
- We have come a long way but we are not there yet
- Leadership matters – engage the decision makers
- Rely on the communities' wisdom of what is needed
- Engage parents
- Develop the capacity to solve challenges collaboratively
- Build on what has been demonstrated to work



Challenges & Mitigations

Lessons Learned

- Integration takes time and resources
- Effective communication is vital
- The most positive sign of progress in the integration of services is that distinct identities of service providers are “blurring”
- Success in Best Start is indicated by the fact that service providers navigate the system rather than families
- Keep working until you have created a “tipping point”



Where to from here...

- Continue to redesign the architecture of the early years' system in the context of Best Start...Best Future
- Align services for children -9 to 3.8 years of age with those provided in FDELK to create a seamless experience
- Sustain the child care system



Where to from here...

- Undertake neighbourhood development
- Strengthen the Neighbourhood Advisory Committees
- Strengthen the Best Start Network
- Continue to document and share lessons learned



Thank You...Any Questions?

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