

# Is it time to reconceptualise the approach for professional development for Early Childhood Educators?

Karen Chandler

George Brown College

Ryan Campbell

University of Toronto



# Summary Slide

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- Increased expectations
- Staffing & Leadership linked to quality
- Major Issue Facing Field – Staff retention
- Strategies Directors can use

# Increased Expectations

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- Establishment of the College has *increased expectations & accountability* for emerging Early Childhood profession.
- Heightened parental expectations that 'ECEs play a key role in the development of their children.' *Parents are much more knowledgeable of child development & demonstrate a keen interest in what their children are learning'.*
- Key informants for Occupational Standards noted "ECE must exhibit the ability to *involve parents in the creation of learning & development plans* for children".

# Increased Expectations (cont'd)

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- With Our Best Future in Mind Report notes changing roles, such as *establishment & operations of Early Learning Program..*, shift from *0-12 to 0-8 years*, need to *focus professional development on team work*
- Accountability for using Early Learning Framework ELECT (Operating Criteria)
- Increased *accountability for program quality* through Operating Criteria, public webs sites

# Staffing Linked to Quality

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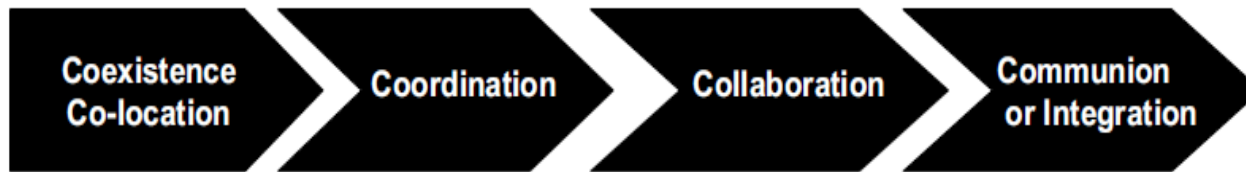
- Knowledgeable & responsive EC practitioners are essential to creation of quality EC settings
- Research identifies the most critical factor affecting children's early learning—after parents—is the *'quality of the professionals' delivering programs.*
- Children benefit most when their teachers have high levels of formal education & specialized EC professional preparation.
- *Effective leaders* create organizational cultures & work environments that support ongoing learning.
- Director's role to *support each team member to reach full potential*

# Leadership Linked to Quality

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- Quality of human resources (*professional education, leadership, & compensation*) is the key predictor of quality early learning & care programs.
- *Quality & Human Resources Expert Panel* report reaffirms the need for *long-term investments to programs, infrastructure & qualified staff* are in place to create & sustain quality programs.
- Pascal recommends PD focus on team to create something larger than their respective contributions
- Gap between education requirements & job expectations is significant for directors/supervisors managing EC programs, & providing pedagogical leadership, meeting higher fiscal, regulatory & reporting requirements.

# Working Towards Collaborative Early Learning & Care Programs



- Programs are located in the same building or neighbourhood
- Programs are planned and carried out independently of each other
- Programs have separate philosophies, goals and objectives
- There is minimal connection or communication between programs

- Programs share plans and general information
- Staff begin to plan together to reduce transitions for children
- Specific child information is shared
- Coordination of some school activities or community events

- Children and families are brought together for joint activities
- Joint curriculum planning
- Programs work together to reduce transitions for children
- Programs develop common approaches
- Joint roles and responsibilities emerge

- Joint curriculum and pedagogical approach
- Common policies and procedures
- Seamless participation
- Shared identity of core staff team
- Shared space and resources

# Child Care – Operating Criteria

Section 9 Working Together	1 Does Not Meet Expectations	2 Needs Improvement	3 Meets Expectations	4 Exceeds Expectations	Score
<b>2. Talking to staff at neighbourhood schools &amp; family support programs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Child care supervisor & staff do not speak to principal or teachers at neighbourhood elementary schools <input type="checkbox"/> Child care supervisor or staff do not speak to staff at Family Support Programs in neighbourhood	<input type="checkbox"/> Child care supervisor & staff sometimes talk to school staff <input type="checkbox"/> Child care supervisor & staff sometimes talk to Family support program staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Child care supervisor & staff talk to the principal(s) &/or teachers at the school on a regular basis <input type="checkbox"/> Child care supervisor & staff talk to family support program staff on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/> **Early Years Management Team has been formed & hold documented meetings <input type="checkbox"/> **Early Years Staff Team has been formed & hold documented meetings	<b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b> <b>4</b> <b>N/A</b>

## Comments

\*\* Early Years Management Team: May include some or all of the following, child care supervisor, school Principal, family support coordinator, parent, Children's Services consultant, school board early years advisor

\*\*Early Years Staff Team: The frontline staff working with young children and their families in kindergarten, child care and parenting/family support programs comprise the Early Years staff team. Other staff may include: school administrator, ESL teacher, child care consultant, resource educators, special education and support services through school boards, teacher, librarian, literacy co-coordinator, school boards' early years advisors.

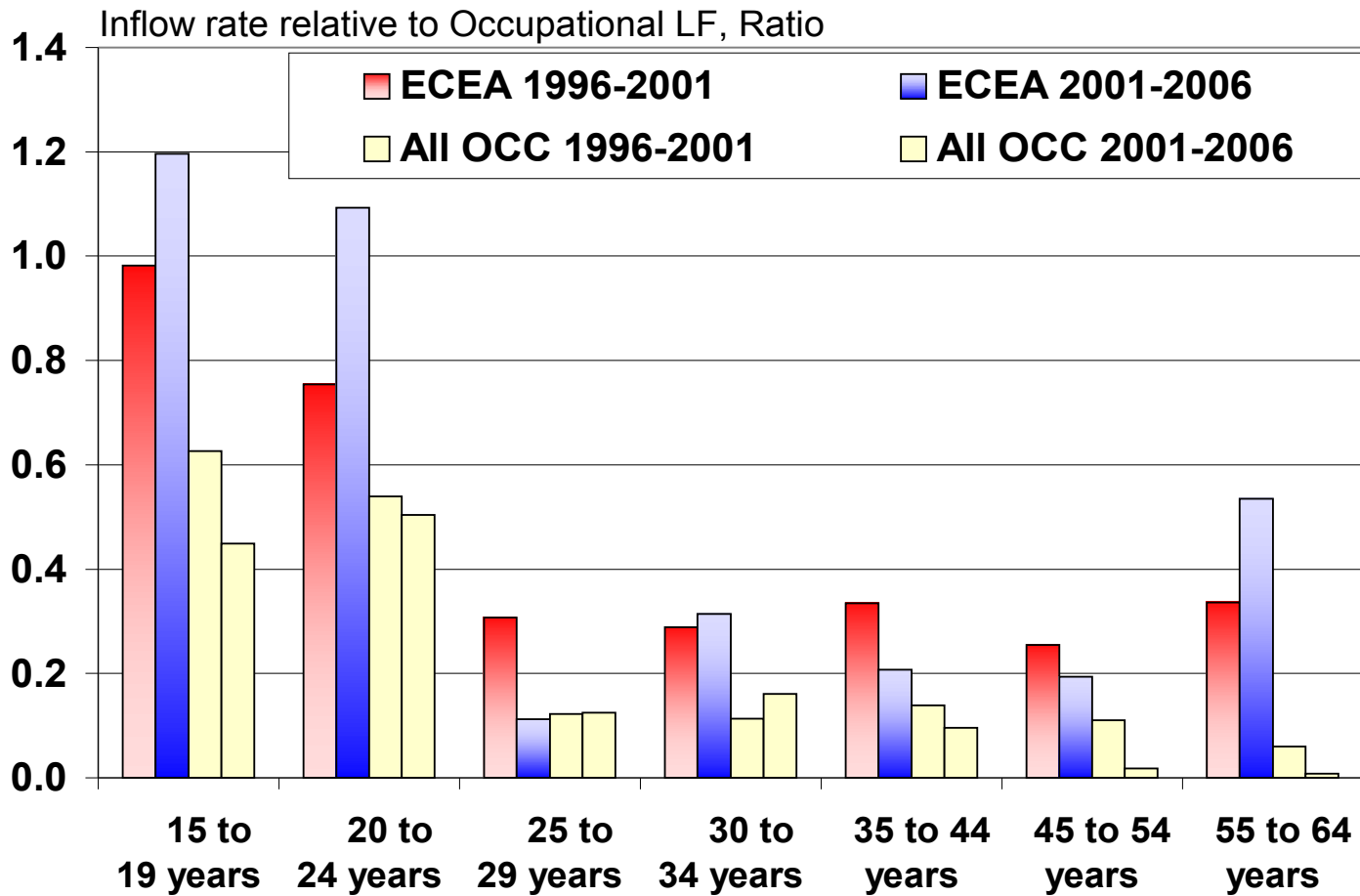
# Major Issue Facing Sector – Staff Retention

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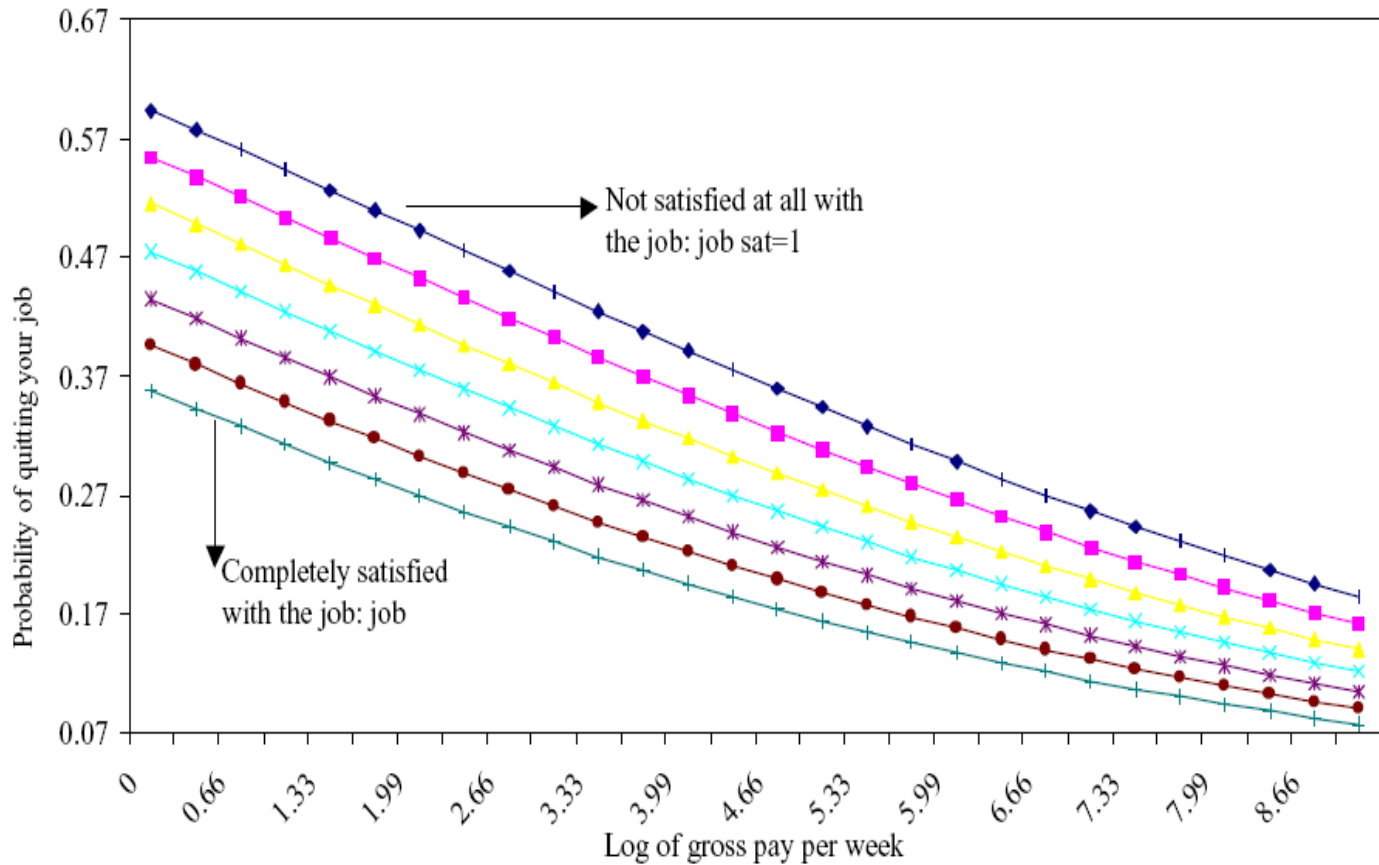
- LMIRA found that when employees are *satisfied with their job*, they are *less likely to leave*.
- Project found that the *sector was good at recruiting*
- Major *challenge is retention* –keeping the staff
- Major concern when relationships with children, parents, staff key
- Unlike other fields, job satisfaction is not so closely equated with compensation

*LMIRA -Labour Market Information Research Agenda –  
Child Care Human Resources Sector Council 2009*

# LMIRA – Retention more important than recruitment



# Job Satisfaction & Wage



# Conduct Retention Interviews

- What your employee's compelling reasons are to stay?
- Asking them is the first step in enhancing retention.
- Many programs do **exit interviews**, but **few do retention interviews**.
- Find out what your people like/dislike **before they decide** to leave **than when they have already decided to leave**.
- Interview a range of people & all of your top performers to find out what is making them stay & what would make them consider leaving....

Ask the following:

- If you could change one thing in your area, what would it be?
- Would you recommend your job to a friend? Why or why not?
- If you left, what would you miss?

## What directors identify as their top training needs

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- Re-directing staff without hurting feelings
- Staff motivation
- Financial management
- Recruiting staff
- Effective communication
- Long-range planning
- Legal issues
- Organizational management
- Parent needs vs. staff needs
- Delegation
- Staff retention
- Accreditation

# Exercise

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1. Consider feedback from the Operating Criteria. Identify one or two goals for your program to strengthen ratings.
2. Consider the goals your individual staff members need to achieve in order that your program can progress toward improving ratings.
3. In small groups, identify 3 strategies to facilitate individual staff growth to build your program's capacity.

# Strategies Directors Can Use

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- Provide pedagogical leadership
- Create a culture of learning
- Use a developmental perspective with staff – students, new staff, experienced staff
- Focus professional development on teams
- Use of documentation to evaluate performance
- Delegate admin. tasks in order to focus on supporting staff development

# Leaders Provide Pedagogical Leadership

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- Be knowledgeable about, & able to apply, current theories & research findings in early childhood education.
- Effective leaders are reflective learners who have a passion for children's learning.
- Provide leadership through the development of a vision & philosophy which guides curriculum & pedagogy;
- Support & value the development, implementation, & evaluation of a coherent curriculum such as ELECT. (Recommendations With Our Best Future in Mind)
- Explain educational practices to staff, parents, & the public.
- Create a workplace that enhances the work of practitioners through the provision of support & ongoing professional development.

# Create a Culture of Learning

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- Expect all ECE's to be life long learners
- Leadership learning about **coaching mentoring**, & professional development of staff
- Environment
- Support creation of a teaching portfolio

# Staff Resource Area

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- Reference materials on early childhood, parenting, & community resources.
- Information posted about upcoming conferences & workshops on a variety of topics.
- Computer(s) with Internet access to facilitate staff use of online resources.
- Subscribe to online announcements such as Child Care Information Exchange, CCRU
- Subscribe to journals & publications of professional organizations.
- Catalogues & brochures from distributors of equipment & materials.
- Newsletters & information on current legislation.
- Textbooks & audiovisual resources concerned with child development, administration, child guidance, curriculum, ...

## Examples of Culture's of Learning

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- Mentoring Project for supervisors – coming together to share ways of doing, values & beliefs;
- Importance of close relationships with colleges/universities
- George Brown's regular age focused meetings for practitioners
- Networks
- Involvement in Professional orgs

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- Administrators need to delegate some administrative responsibilities in order to spend time focusing on supporting & leading staff

# Focusing Professional Development on Teams

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- Full day of learning depends on teachers & ECE's learning together to create something larger than their current important contributions
- They need to build capacity to engage in respectful, reciprocal mentoring

## Developmental perspective to supervise staff

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- Carry out multistage orientation for new staff
- Encourage practitioners to persevere toward credentialing
- Incorporating unique strategies for the mature practitioners

# What motivates mature teachers?

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- Encourage leadership roles in staff committees
- Seek their insight on past initiatives, “what worked, what didn’t”
- Gather their input when redesigning staff orientation
- Support them to form linkages to community colleges, supervising students, and/or presenting to ECE classes
- Provide opportunities for networking with colleagues in areas of professional interest
- Offer a two-week sabbatical to pursue a special teaching interest or develop a training program on a successful initiative

## Use of Documentation to Demonstrate Performance

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- *Documentation is a tool to construct understanding of the complexities of teaching & learning*
  - Help ECE's gain skills in identifying, analyzing & interpreting children's learning
  - Get ECE's to work with colleagues to experience how collaboration influenced their thinking about children.

### Questions to prompt thinking:

- What happened?
- What prior knowledge have children applied/drawn from?
- What is the underlying developmental concept?
- What strategies, approaches or problem-solving techniques did children use?
- What are the implications for your teaching practice?  
This learning could be shared in an evening for parents
- Secondary benefits - process for the staff team in sharing professional insights, supporting one another

# Invest in Development of Staff as Key Supervisors of Students

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- Students identify field practicums as #1 in 'learning to teach'
- Students often say course work is often 'not visible in field experiences'
- Cooperating teachers have strong influence

## Strategies:

- Acknowledge time & energy spent with students
- Encourage & coach teachers to initiate conversations about classroom practices
- Mentoring by senior staff & role playing to can help teachers-in-training develop confidence & skill
- Ask students to evaluate their experience
- Collaborate with supervising faculty

# Time to make leading & development of staff a priority

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- Most practitioners approach professional development in an ad hoc manner.
- Some do not view ongoing growth as a priority
- Budget restrictions- PD budget may be inadequate or cut
- Administrators must consider a more systematic approach for professional development, aligning it with program goals & meeting standards of practice.

# Brainstorm

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- What obstacles may prevent the reconceptualisation of approaches to professional development in your programs?
- What are some strategies to overcome these obstacles?

# Resources

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- Caruso, J. and M. Fawcett. *Supervision in Early Childhood Education: A Developmental Perspective*. 2d ed. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1999.
- Working Together Child Care [www.toronto.ca/children](http://www.toronto.ca/children)
- Early Learning Advisor Report by Charles Pascal  
"With Our Best Future in Mind"  
[www.ontario.ca/earlylearning](http://www.ontario.ca/earlylearning)
- Jorde Bloom, P., M. Sheerer, and J. Britz. *Blueprint for Action: Achieving Center-Based Change through Staff Development*. 2d ed. Lake Forest, IL: New Horizons, 2005.
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- Jorde Bloom, P. *A Great Place to Work: Improving Conditions for Staff in Young Children's Programs*. Rev ed. NAEYC. 1997.
- Sciarra, D.J. and A.G. Dorsey. *Leaders and Supervisors in Child Care Programs*. Albany: Delmar, 2002.