



Early Learning and Care
For Every Child

Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre A Toronto First Duty Site

The Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre (*BWELC*) serves a mixed income community with a large new immigrant population in the South Riverdale/Leslieville neighbourhood of Toronto. It is a Toronto First Duty (*TFD*) site demonstrating integrated, accessible child care/kindergarten/family service delivery. The Centre is located in Bruce Public Junior School, 51 Larchmount Avenue. Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday to Friday year round. BWELC serves children and families from pre-natal to grade three. The school has classes up to grade six.

Site partners:

Bruce Public Junior School and WoodGreen Community Services (a multi-service community agency) are the lead site partners. The school principal and centre manager (employed by WoodGreen) jointly supervise the program. The management committee includes parents, WoodGreen; Bruce School; the City of Toronto's children's services and public health divisions; Toronto District School Board (TDSB); the Atkinson Charitable Foundation (ACF); the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto.

Integrated service delivery:

Five elements identify a TFD program:

- **Integrated governance:** The partners pool their resources to plan and deliver the program. Bruce School supplies the physical space and staffing including the principal, kindergarten teachers, parenting staff, teaching assistants and administrative support staff. WoodGreen supports the centre manager, ECE staff and resource teacher in addition to providing administrative assistance, professional development and family support referrals. TDSB contributes professional development and meeting release time for the principal and kindergarten teachers in addition to the support of its superintendents and early years' department. The Foundation for Student Success supports the nutrition program. Toronto Public Health delivers additional parenting programs and early identification & referrals. Children with special needs and families requiring additional assistance access help through WoodGreen, TDSB and the City.

Research and development are provided by the Atkinson Centre and the Institute for Child Studies, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

The Atkinson Charitable Foundation and City of Toronto provide funding for minor capital, start-up, and transition and program and professional development. The TDSB funds the half day program for children 3.8 – 6 years. Communications and research is supported by ACF.

- **Seamless access:** Through a single enrolment process families are able to access the full range of activities the program offers. Participation is flexible – parents may attend at anytime with their children. Fees are charged for some components of the program.
- **Integrated early learning environment:** The school's classrooms are licensed under the Day Nurseries Act allowing multi-use of space to support child development and meet health and safety standards.
- **Staff teams:** The whole school approach to families allows all staff to meet regularly to set goals and assess progress. Programming is planned and delivered by teaching teams including early childhood educators, teachers, family support staff and educational assistants using a common curriculum framework, resources and space. Integrated staffing allows a child/adult (teacher or ECE) ratio approximating the requirements of the *Day Nurseries Act* and is well below the provincial 20-

children/teacher cap proposed for kindergarten-aged children.

- **Parent participation:** Parent participation is paramount to children's success. Parents are welcome to take part in all the activities of the Centre all the time. This includes participating on governance bodies, eating lunch or snacks with their children, participating in their children's activities and taking parenting classes.

After school programs:

- After school programming for older children is also offered at the site. ECEs (employed by WoodGreen and supervised by the BWELC manager) support classroom activities during school hours and direct after-school programming. The continuity of consistent adults is viewed as important particularly for children in the earlier grades.

BWELC demonstrates the potential of integrated early years programming. It meets the multiple and changing needs of families for a variety of parenting supports and resources.