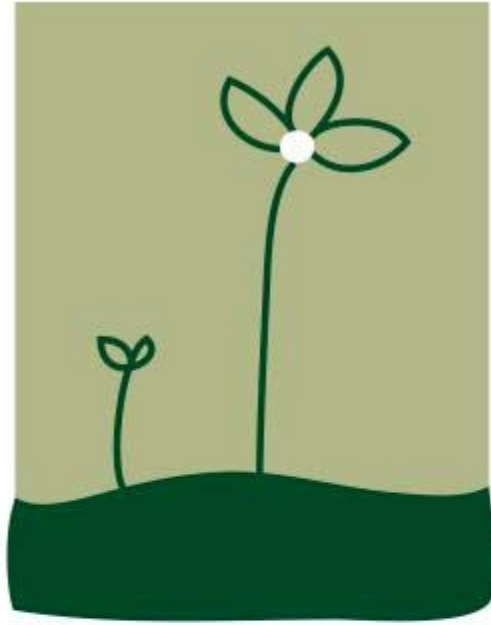


December 2003 Progress Report



TORONTO
FIRST
DUTY

Toronto First Duty Research Team

Acknowledgements

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The research team takes full responsibility for the content of the report.

Toronto First Duty Report – December 2003

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Appendices

1.0 Introduction

July 2003 to July 2004 will mark the second full year of the Toronto First Duty (TFD) project. The December 2003 Progress Report describes development in each of the sites as they move beyond the initial implementation year. The last progress report documented the implementation of new programming and site-level organization to support the integrated operation. **The Site Progress Reports in Section 2 below** show that sites are moving beyond rolling out programs to focus on ways of improving integration and impacts on parents and children.

At the general project management level, the Joint Steering Committee continues its focus on broader policy issues and discussions. Sustainability has been a particular focus, with sustainability subgroup meetings to find ways to sustain and expand the project. Some meetings dealt separately with the childcare and school sectors, but more recent meetings have merged these two sub-groups. The sustainability discussions have also operated to integrate the efforts of sites and general project management as they meet together in the subgroups on matters of common concern. As an example of the integration of top-down and bottom-up concerns, the sites have shown leadership in pushing funding boundaries to make innovative approaches possible rather than waiting for the funders to find all the solutions.

The new political landscape at the federal, provincial and municipal level may provide additional opportunities for TFD to test-drive systemic changes including innovative funding mechanisms and governance structures. The sustainability subgroup and the Joint Steering Committee juxtapose competing interests and collaborative possibilities. The major task ahead will be to develop a consensus on how TFD could be sustained and provide a base to transform existing early childhood programs into a delivery system

The December 2003 Progress Report marks a period of considerable research and development activity for TFD. Cross-site analyses of data on programs and parent impact collected during the implementation year have been carried out. Data at the program -level include learning environment quality, as assessed by the ECERS, and front-line staff experiences and attitudes from interviews. Findings on Parent impact include findings from focus groups on parents' experiences and attitudes. **Findings on learning environment quality are presented in the individual site reports and in a cross-case analysis in Section 3. Preliminary findings on front-line staff are presented in Section 4. Preliminary findings on parents are presented in Section 5.** These analyses of "baseline" staff and parent data were used to construct staff and parent survey instruments. Broader survey samples of staff and parent data are currently being collected to follow further developments in how staff work together and how parents are involved in the TFD. Direct measures of children's development are also being collected as a preliminary step in seeing how children in First Duty sites may benefit. These direct measures will be repeated in 2004 as more children will have spent more time in more fully-developed First Duty programs. Together with intake and tracking data on program participation, community-level data from the Early Development Instrument, and interviews with children, these data will permit assessment of TFD impact on children.

The major dissemination activity was the Toronto First Duty September policy symposium, with participation by the research team and policy specialists from several provinces. **A report on the**

September policy symposium is presented in Section 6. The research team also worked on a number of other fronts; **other research and development activities are described in Section 7.** The team continued its participation in the development and implementation of two management tools designed to support self study and accountability. The Indicators of Change process has provided valuable opportunity for sites to reflect on their progress towards TFD aims. **Findings from this process are reported in the individual site reports and in a cross-case analysis in Section 7.1.** The Client Information /Intake and Tracking System is beginning to provide data on program use that will benefit the sites, the funders and the research team in understanding the impact of the project. Plans for an economic analysis and exploration of community-level impacts of TFD are underway.

2.0 Site Progress Reports

The research team prepares a Site Progress Report that documents the developments at each site as part of the bi-annual progress report. The reports bring together monthly site coordinators' reports and data collected by the research team including field notes, interviews, focus groups, surveys, and indicator and outcome data as they become available.

Toronto First Duty's Terms of Reference identify five core criteria that guide the activities at each site. The three year project (2002–2005) will support each site to:

1. Create a high quality **learning environment** that combines learning expectations, activities and routines from existing kindergarten, early childhood education/child care and parenting programs.
2. Develop an **early childhood staff team** that works together to deliver and achieve program goals.
3. Form a **local governance** structure to determine the allocation of resources, service planning and monitoring, and program policies.
4. Provide **seamless access** to an expanded and comprehensive early learning and care program providing a continuum of supports and services to all families and children in the community.
5. Increase **parent participation** in their children's early learning and development through direct involvement in programs, planning and decision making.

The Site Progress Reports include a narrative account of the progress to date within these five core aims for the project. The reports are also framed within the three evaluation strands in the evaluation plan for the project (for details, see January 2003 Progress Report, Appendix 1). The **program strand** describes the local groups involved and pay particular attention to dimensions of organizational change as service integration unfolds. The **child and family strand** describes changes in utilization patterns, families' perceptions of TFD activities, and child and parent indicator and outcome data. The **community and public** strand evaluates changes in awareness and describes changes in the community's ability to develop partnerships, respond to information about programs, and sustain new service delivery models.

The Site Progress Reports and the individual case studies included in previous progress reports describe the process of implementation in each site and the changing community contexts in

which implementation take place. Both are instructive in illuminating not only what progress each site has made along TFDs five core components, but how progress was achieved, and why there are differences across sites. Differences in progress along the key components can be attributed to the different community contexts, actions taken, and levels of support provided sites. Understanding these differences contributes to our understanding of the kinds of supports required to implement and sustain the core components. For example, some sites are further along the change continuum in creation of an integrated early learning environment and early years staff team, while other sites have made considerable progress in collaborating with a broad range of partner agencies to develop a local governance structure and seamless access. When we unpack why dramatic progress was made along the learning environment dimension at one of the sites, we find that that site receives strong school and district level support from TDSB which probably has facilitated the creation of an integrated early learning environment. Although there are other differences across sites that may contribute to differences in programs, bolstering school support across sites is likely to be an effective strategy.

2.1 Action for Children Today and Tomorrow / Secord Dawes (ACTTSD)

Early Years Learning Environment

Creating an integrated learning environment in a context in which the core program components are not co-located is challenging. On the other hand, it is a context common to many communities. ACTT/SD began working towards this goal by “bridging” both programs and staff. The “bridging” programs – Infant ACTTion, Parent ACTTion, KinderACTTion and Kinder Camp – link neighbourhood children and families with and fill gaps in existing community programs and services. The programs are developed and delivered collaboratively by the site’s Early Years Team and partner agencies. The site also created new staff positions – three Cultural Linguistic Workers and a Special Needs Worker – who “bridge” by working across programs, facilitating connections, increasing capacity to respond to cultural linguistic differences and special needs. This has resulted in increased, more flexible, responsive services. As staff from across partner programs / agencies collaboratively plan and deliver “bridging” programs, and negotiate the roles played by Cultural Linguistic Workers and the Special Needs Worker, they learn about each other’s programs, identify ways of enhancing each other’s efforts, and are developing a common approach to the delivery of early years services.

For example, the site is currently reviewing how its partner agencies monitor children’s development, identify special needs, and develop early intervention strategies with a view to co-ordinating early identification and intervention strategies that support children’s development across programs and over time. They are coordinating efforts around behavioral concerns through the provision of parenting programs, like *Beyond the Basics* for parents of children “in care”, the *Incredible Years* social skills groups / training for children experiencing social and emotional difficulties, parents and the staff who work with them and, finally, through a series of workshops on *Guiding Behaviours* for childcare staff and home childcare providers.

This fall a drop in Secord School’s enrollment enabled the school to contribute classroom space in addition to the use of a kindergarten classroom and the school’s staff room for Kinder ACTTion on Saturdays and Kinder Camp over the summer. This provides opportunities for new

joint activities in the school. The Project Coordinator is now located in Second School. More activities, meetings and planning sessions are held at the school, which facilitates connections with the kindergarten, allowing for more frequent interactions between the core Early Years Team and the kindergarten teachers, enhancing the visibility of TFD activities within the wider school community. Joint use of space in the school may enhance collaborative efforts across programs, particularly between childcare and kindergarten. An important step in this direction occurred in June when childcare and kindergarten staff met to plan the grouping and placement of incoming JK childcare children that took into account children's needs as well as those of the kindergarten and childcare. As this collaborative work expands, though the core program components are not co-located, it is hoped that an "integrated early learning environment" will be reflected in an alignment of efforts which reinforce and strengthen core program delivery and provide a more flexible, inclusive approach that responds to children's and families' needs and interests.

Early Years Staff Team

The Early Years Team consists of the Project Coordinator, three Early Years Workers, three Cultural Linguistic Workers and one Special Needs Worker who work across partner programs / agencies as well as in the "bridging" programs. Their primary focus initially was the development and implementation of the "bridging" programs. Partner agency staff participate in the planning of these programs, but the Early Years Team takes the lead role in delivery and evaluation. "Debriefing sessions" are key to continuous program improvement and team effectiveness. In June the Cultural Linguistic Workers and the Special Needs Worker began to work in the childcare, family resource and kindergarten programs. They provide an important source of support and facilitate connections across programs. As of October the Special Needs position changed from a part time one funded by TFD to a full time position funded by the Early Years Centre significantly expanding special needs support across early years programs.

Two additional strategies that facilitate connections is the inclusion of the recently established Early Years Centre as a partner in the ACTT coalition and an expansion of the ACTT/SD Project Coordinator's role to include responsibility for programming in the Early Years Centre. This integration of roles and responsibilities ensures a consistent approach and should contribute to its long-term sustainability. It also ensures staff and program stability as part time positions are increased to full time ones shared across programs as partner programs / agencies pool their resources. To further facilitate the integration of services and development of a common philosophy to guide efforts, ACTT is planning to use Challenge Fund monies to provide integrated training and networking opportunities for the staff of partner agencies, their volunteers, and community board and committee members. These are planned for delivery beginning in January 2004.

Local Governance

Governance structures, which include the Steering Committee and four subcommittees (Childcare, Nipissing Early Identification, Special Needs and Parent Engagement), provide opportunities for broad community input. The subcommittees ensure that more individuals within partner programs are involved in decision making and provide opportunities for input from organizations that are not yet partners. There is a need to expand input into decision making to include parents and representatives of various cultural linguistic groups.

Because Ontario's Early Years funding policy put continued funding for family resource programs in jeopardy, ACTT, being committed to family support principles and practices, played a significant role at four of the provincial Early Years Planning Tables. This resulted in EYET Family Resources being designated as the lead agency for two Ontario Early Years Centres in East York East Toronto. Both Early Years Centres are now members of the ACTT coalition and have coordinated their efforts with ACTT's membership and ACTT/SD's partner agencies. As collaboration expands, common human resource policies for staff positions that work together and common program policies for joint activities are necessary. Issues around intake, confidentiality and information sharing are to be resolved. The site's Steering Committee and subcommittees recently completed the indicators of change document and are now planning next steps that address these concerns.

Seamless Access

Comprehensiveness and inclusiveness are two dimensions of seamless access. The "bridging" programs facilitate seamless access through the provision of a comprehensive continuum of programs / services. *ACTTion for Infants* continues Toronto Public Health's CPNP's parenting support for parents of infants to one year of age. This program, along with Parent ACTTion which serves all families of children zero to six, educate through workshops and parenting courses, break down social isolation by creating social support networks and awareness of other programs and services. Through families' participation in Infant ACTTion and Parent ACTTion, links and referrals are made with the local family resource programs, with childcare providers, other service agencies, and the neighbourhood school. Kinder ACTTion, and Kinder Camp, both preschool readiness programs, provide a "bridge" to the school, easing parents' and children's transition to the education system. Inclusiveness is addressed through attention to those children and families who require additional support. The Cultural Linguistic Workers facilitate the inclusion of various cultural linguistic groups while the Special Needs Worker provides supports that enable children with special needs and their families to access and successfully participate in programs. Although these are significant steps, there is still a need to expand the reach and capacity of all early years services in the Secord Dawes community to ensure "seamless access". To be comprehensive, services must include affordable access to respite and occasional and flexible childcare (which is consistently flagged as a high need). To be inclusive, greater efforts are needed to engage families who continue to be isolated because of cultural, linguistic and economic barriers. These continue to be challenging goals as the site plans "next steps."

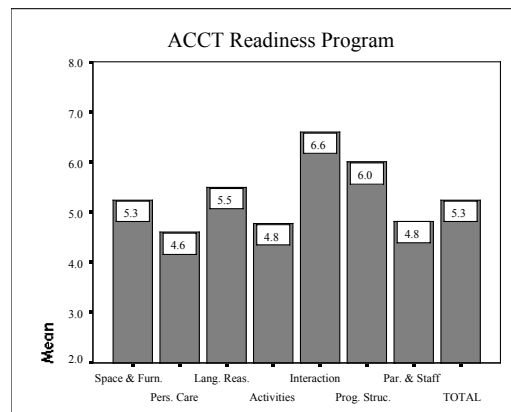
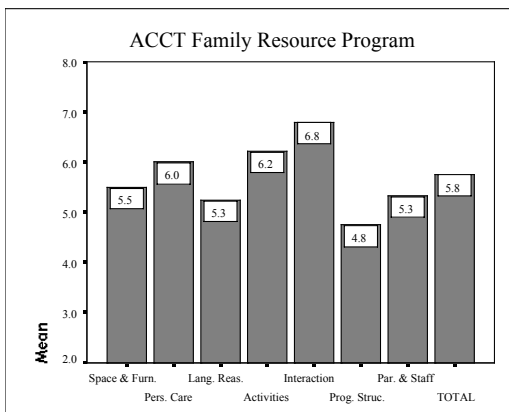
Parent Involvement / Community Engagement

Since inception parent involvement and broad community engagement has been a major focus of ACTT/SD. The site provides a range of programs to support and engage parents. The Engaging Families Committee has identified two major strategies: Providing more opportunities for families to come together – the spring Fun Fair, Community Dinner, and Bengali Teas are examples of this. Working with the community to expand parents' involvement in Secord School and the school council.

One of ACTT's unique contributions is its local, provincial and federal advocacy work that focuses on the creation of an integrated infrastructure in support of enhanced services for children and families. The ACTT coalition not only supports collaborative efforts at the community level but provides mechanisms for influencing policy and funding decisions at the

municipal, provincial and federal levels.

Evaluation Strand	Progress To Date
Program & Policy	<p>Assessment of progress on the Indicators of Change show the site is moving from co-existence to co-ordination to initial collaboration in most areas and extensive collaboration in others.</p> <p>Bridging programs have expanded and filled gaps in services.</p> <p>A range of social skills programs and training activities for children, parents and the staff working them are ensuring a more consistent approach to behavioral concerns.</p> <p>Cultural Linguistic and Special Needs staff are providing more inclusive and responsive services and supports.</p> <p>The sharing of staff, roles and responsibilities is ensuring stability and continuity by creating full time positions with responsibilities for early years programming across agencies / programs, facilitating the development of an integrated approach through the pooling of resources.</p> <p>Joint professional development activities across partner and community agencies is contributing to development of a common approach.</p> <p>The ACTT coalition continues its advocacy work around policy development at municipal, provincial and federal levels of government.</p>
Child & Family	<p>Participation in programs is growing among various cultural-linguistic groups in response to the site’s outreach strategies.</p> <p>Children and families with special needs are being supported, and that support has expanded significantly in recent months.</p> <p>Verbal and written feedback indicate a high level of parent satisfaction in response to new program activities, particularly those that focus on parenting support and social events.</p>
Community	<p>Provision of opportunities for parents / families to socialize and at the same time learn more about community programs and services is leading to increased parent involvement / engagement .</p> <p>The Fun Fair, Community Dinner and Teas are well attended as are the more structured activities provided by the site’s “bridging” programs. This is enhancing awareness of ACTT/SD’s activities.</p> <p>Advocacy strategies being planned by the ACTT coalition are facilitating an alignment of efforts around early years at all levels.</p>



Indicators of Change Summary	Early Learning Environments						Early Childhood Staff Team				Governance					Seamless Access						Parent Participation									
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4						
ACTT - Secord/Dawes																															
Integration - Level 5																															
Collaboration - Level 4																															
Collaboration - Level 3																															
Co-ordination - Level 2																															
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2.2 Bruce/Woodgreen

The Bruce/WoodGreen Toronto First Duty team has marshaled an effective campaign to realize the site's mission of bringing together kindergarten, childcare, parenting and family literacy in a comprehensive, high-quality program that parents can access for a full, part, extended day, or occasionally as their family situation requires. The growth seen in the second half of the first year, following some initial slowdowns, continues to occur in seamless fashion as new pieces of the process are integrated straightforwardly into a strong framework.

Learning Environment

Following the developments to the end of June 2003, BWG initiated a summer program. The summer program was designed to complement the curriculum goals of the integrated model that was to start up in September 2003. Children were registered for one week programs from Monday to Friday between 9 am and 12:30 pm. Since September a full range of program options have been available to families:

- Half day program (9 to 11:30 a.m. or 1 to 3:30 p.m.) at no charge
- Extended program (3:30 to 6 p.m.) at \$5 per day
- Full day program (8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) at \$5 per day
- Extended full day program (8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.) at \$10 per day

The parenting and family literacy program operates full days Monday to Thursday.

Other program features:

- joint teacher/ECE interviews with families regarding the report cards
- parenting worker surveys of families regarding topics for afternoon discussion groups
- discussion of a once-a-month support group for parents
- attempts to respond to families' requests for additional care through policy development
- new social skills and Roots of Empathy program

- outdoor playground now licensed for childcare and renovations will include beautification, new sandbox, picnic table and gates

The results of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) analysis showed that the two areas selected for observation, the integrated area and the parenting centre, were both in the “good” overall range. The space and furnishings scores were average to good for the integrated and parenting areas respectively in spite of the general declining state of repair of this old school. Since the observation, already the outdoor space area has improved for the integrated program. The personal care routines were outstanding in the integrated program and very good in the parenting centre. Language reasoning was slightly higher in the integrated class because of the teachers’ explicit attempts to encourage children to communicate and to use language for reasoning. Activities scores were slightly lower than other areas due to lack of certain materials listed on the measure, for example, music activities and a good supply of blocks. The integrated class had some dramatic play materials but did not represent diversity and the parenting centre lacked enough dramatic materials. The interaction and program structure scores for both areas were very good to excellent. At the time of the observation the parenting centre had very good provisions for parents whereas the integrated area was lacking in parent involvement. This has already changed quite significantly since the June observation. The Indicators of Change analysis showed that BWG moved up one level in program quality and up several levels in daily schedules, routines and use of space. Other aspects of the early learning environment such as curriculum, pedagogy and children’s development moved up slightly more than one level this past year.

Staff Team

A new staff team was established this year: two new kindergarten teachers, 1 new full-time ECE, 1 new part-time ECE, longer hours for the ECA, and a new project manager. A staff team committee was formed as one of the site’s sub-committees. Examples of issues for this committee are discussion of children’s strengths and goals, identification of children who would benefit from Right Start Social Skills offered through the Creche, curriculum development and organizing time for small group meetings.

The Indicators of Change show particularly remarkable change in areas related to the early childhood staff team. Program planning and implementation, staff development and clarity around roles and responsibilities have shown significant growth. Given that this site experience slowdowns out of the starting gate, the progress in this (an all areas of the Indicators of Change) is particularly significant.

Local Governance

At the September 25 management meeting, members discussed a new governance structure concerning membership status at the management level which was drawn up and approved at the October 23 meeting. Two categories of membership were approved: Voting and ex-officio members. Other points in the new governance model clarified responsibilities of the management committee, project manager and partner organizations. It was agreed that ad hoc committees could be formed by the management committee to carry out time-limited tasks. Decisions will be made by consensus or by vote when quorum is present (quorum is 50% plus one of membership).

A new site committee was established comprised of the principal, lead agency, manager of parenting and literacy programs, the Atkinson Centre representative and the project manager. This committee has responsibility for management of the day-to-day operational issues of BWG ELC at Bruce School. Other existing committees include the program committee and staff team. The program committee oversees program and policy development and review, monitoring program implementation processes and ongoing planning and evaluation of program components. See Staff Team for staff issues.

Indicators of change show that BWG is moving close to achieving its goals related to governance in most of the five areas, except for program policies. Perhaps this will be an area of concentration over the following year.

Seamless Access

As noted under Learning Environment, parents may access a range of programs that suit their family needs, from part to seamless full-day care and education along with parenting programs. As the fall term progressed, the site continued to increase the integration of the programs. For example, a daily shared morning program was established between the parenting centre and an ECE with a group of nine children. On some days the ECE engaged in joint programming with the kindergarten teacher; for example, cooperative play opportunities. Parents have been participating in the extended program during lunch. Finally the parenting worker has been bringing small groups of children from the integrated classroom to the parenting centre.

Indicators of Change show a mixed picture in change regarding seamless access. BWG is close to achieving its goals for capacity and child care provision, whereas goals for responsiveness to community may require concerted attention.

Parent and Community Involvement

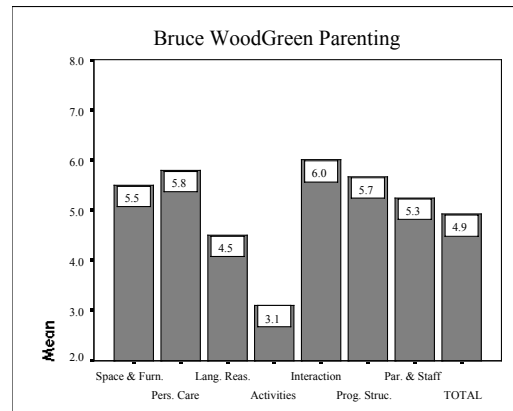
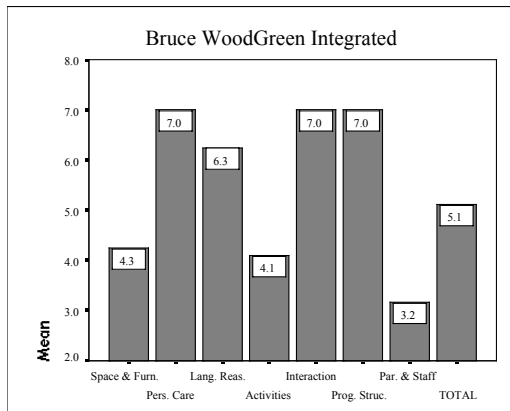
Parents. In June 2003, the project manager became a member of the school council which includes attending school council meetings and social events such as the end of year barbeque. These events provide a context for further communication about the BWG Early Learning Centre and other services for the parent community. Curriculum Night on Oct 21 gave parents, caregivers and team staff an opportunity to engage in purposeful discussion.

Community. The Creche began a social skills program at the school; in addition, the Roots of Empathy program started up this fall with 20 children on Wednesday afternoons. The project manager and school principal met with Toronto Public Health to explore ideas for supportive programming in the ELC. Several members of BWG ELC participated in the September 10 symposium entitled, Closing the Divide, which was held at Metro Hall. The Children's Services Conference on November 19 featured a TFD exhibit by the BWG site manager. The TDSB's Director of Education held a ceremony for the Fund for Innovation Excellence and featured TFD as one of the projects. This ceremony was attended by the school principal and one of the teachers. Other community activities include upcoming placements for co-op and teacher education students from Danforth Tech, George Brown College and York University.

Indicators of Change for parent participation show particular growth in parent participation in programs and in relationships with families, although the latter goal is to achieve level 5. Goals

for parent input remain salient and this goal nicely parallels findings on the ECERS (across sites) that there is room for more parent input in programming.

Evaluation Strands	Progress to Date
Program	Programming has expanded with additional hours of operation. Parents can access part time, extended part time, full time or extended fulltime at a cost of \$5 or \$10 per day, depending on length of program.
	Integrated programming has increased across the core KG, childcare and parent support. Explicit efforts made to integrate parenting programs more regularly.
	Additional programs have been added (2003 summer program, Roots of Empathy, Right Start Social Skills offered through the Creche)
Child & Family	Additional hours have been added so that more children can be accommodated, discussion of increasing hours to accommodate parent requests for more care. Parenting programs have been integrated more into BWG ECL. EDI results show better than average K readiness.
Community/Public	Significant efforts to connect with parent community and beyond. Program manager member of school council, BWG site members participate in TDSB and HRDC sponsored events. BWG received media attention, TFD video. Explicit attempts to bring in more community partners such as the Creche. Beautification of playground.



Indicators of Change Summary BWELC	Early Learning Environments						Early Childhood Staff Team				Governance					Seamless Access						Parent Participation									
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4						
Integration - Level 5	█						█				█					█						█									
Collaboration - Level 4	█						█				█					█						█									
Collaboration - Level 3	█						█				█					█						█									
Co-ordination - Level 2	█						█				█					█						█									
Co-existence - Level 1	█						█				█					█						█									
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2.3 Corvette Early Years

Corvette Early Years (CEY) has made substantial progress in the past six months. Existing programming continues to expand and an ambitious summer program attracted new families into the school and CEY. CEY is adapting to a number of recent changes in the leadership and staff team.

The development and delivery of new child and family programs has brought together staff members from child care, family resource centre and kindergarten to create a shared understanding of common program goals. The community's enthusiastic participation in new and expanded program activities at the school site indicate CEY is responding to community needs. The coordinator's leadership and facilitation is at the core of CEY's momentum and success to date.

The next challenge for CEY is to transform the project initiatives, the on-site partner programs and off-site partner resources into a more integrated delivery model that is able to expand its reach to increased numbers of young children and their families.

Learning Environment

The shared vision and guiding principles document is a work-in-progress that summarizes a common philosophy and approaches. CEY program activities (toddler time, preschool program, drop-in program & summer program) are based on the joint philosophy and pedagogical approach. Common strategies and approaches (that blend kindergarten, FRP and NYAD) were applied in the summer program.

The Learning-Together Preschool Program and Learning-Together Drop-In continue to operate and incorporate an emergent curriculum approach, an awareness of kindergarten expectations and respect for parents' preference for activities that have an explicit link to early reading and mathematics (e.g., letter and word recognition, counting, printing of numerals and letters, etc.). The Corvette Family Resource Program operates in the morning with more structured learning centres and a designated infant play space. Kindergarten staff are experimenting with elements of emergent curriculum.

The results of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) analysis indicate that the Learning Together Preschool Program (the integrated site) was in the very good to excellent overall range. The Corvette Family Resource Centre was in the average to good overall range. Interaction, language reasoning and personal care scores for Learning Together were excellent while all other scores were good to very good. The interaction score for the Family Resource Centre was in the good range while other scores (space and furnishings, personal care, language reasoning and program structure) were in the average level. Lower scores reflect a lack of materials listed on the measure (such as plenty of blocks, range of picture books, diverse dramatic play materials and open-ended creative materials). Both programs received good scores for the parent and staff category.

The Indicators of Change analysis indicated that CEY has made substantial progress in coordinating and collaborating a curriculum framework, pedagogical approach, daily schedules and use of space over the past year.

Staff Team

The joint staff team continues to evolve. CEY staff participate in kindergarten and Corvette Family Resource Centre on a regular basis. Two kindergarten teachers, 1 educational assistant, two NYAD staff and 1 CEY staff are attending further Reggio Emilia training at York University.

Frontline staff changes and time for meetings and discussion hamper the team's ability to develop common curriculum and daily approaches that transcend program boundaries. School staff attended a Toronto First Duty orientation session in November. Biweekly joint team meeting will start up and include frontline staff from CEY staff, kindergarten, NYAD and family resource program

The summer program intensified team work. A Corvette kindergarten teacher and CEY staff coordinated the programming. They were joined by three facilitators supported by HRDC funding and ECE students. Staff training began the week of June 27th and included workshops on curriculum, school readiness and working with parents. The majority of the site partners were involved in the delivery of the workshops.

The summer program introduced daily debriefing sessions to review day's activity and plan for the following day. Learning-Together Preschool team continue short daily debriefing sessions as well as weekly planning meetings. Daily debriefing sessions support an emergent curriculum approach.

Behaviour challenges have raised a number of issues. Partner programs use individual behaviour management policies and practices which create significant differences in responding to disruptive behaviour. Margie Calla (TDSB) will be facilitating a Behaviour Management workshop in January for all frontline staff.

The Indicators of Change show growth in CEY's emerging early childhood staff team. There is considerable collaboration in joint staff development opportunities and program planning. In spite of numerous changes in staff team and managers there was increased coordination and collaboration in all of the indicators in this area.

Local Governance

Children's Aid Society and Scarborough Southwest Early Years Centre are becoming CEY partners and joining the Management Committee.

The grant application to support additional nutrition programming was successful and has supported increased programming that supports community outreach and links with the school. Plans are underway to seek out additional support for school-age programming.

Indicators of change indicate that CEY is making considerable progress in building a more integrated governance structure.

Seamless Access

CEY continues to build in-house capacity to provide coordinated services and supports and to refer families to other community resources when appropriate. Cooking Healthy Together workshops were piloted in the summer and staff prepared an extensive manual to support further workshops. Hiring is now taking place for a Community Development Worker, further workshops and a salad bar in the New Year.

The need for flexible, regulated child care continues alongside substantial barriers to even fully use the existing capacity at CEY. The child care fee subsidy system is a barrier to expanding the use of unused existing capacity at NYAD. Staff collaborations among NYAD, CEY and kindergarten teachers have not resulted in expanded capacity. Discussions are underway to consider how to provide additional respite and occasional child care within the NYAD/CEY capacity in collaboration with City of Toronto Children's Services.

The common Toronto First Duty intake form is used for joint activities. Some partners (CFRP & NYAD) reviewing their intake process to include a TFD intake package. Input of intake information into electronic system is slow and still catching up on summer information.

CEY joint program activities have expanded numbers of children & families participating in on-site early childhood and family support activities (e.g. Learning-Together programs, summer program, nutrition program). More than 100 additional young children and families participate or have increased their level of participation through the CEY network of programs.

Indicators of Change illustrate increased coordination and some collaboration in creating a seamless access at CEY. The biggest challenge in this area is creating capacity to meet the needs of the community for a range of program activities, particularly a continuum of child care options. Almost one-quarter of senior kindergarten children appear to be entering grade one with developmental problems that are likely to impede academic achievement. Increased participation in early learning and care programs that involve parents is likely to reduce the numbers of vulnerable children in grade one.

Parent Participation

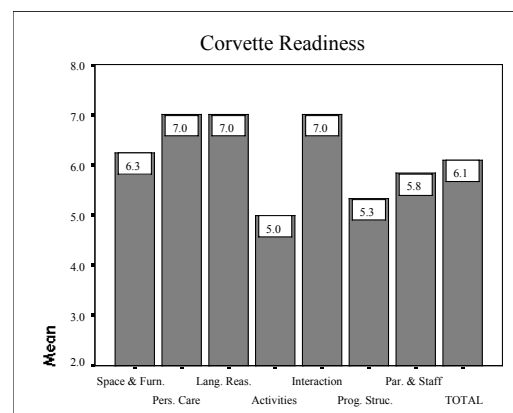
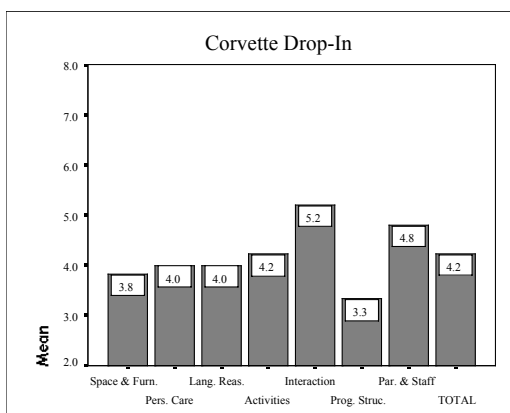
There is now parent/family representation on the CEY management committee. The summer program solicited feedback from parents which included suggestions for next years' programming.

The Indicators of Change items for parental involvement demonstrate CEY's continued efforts to find meaningful avenues for parent involvement and participation. The numbers of parents and other family caregivers participating in program activities at the Corvette school site has increased over the past year and CEY is sensitive to responding to needs and soliciting on-going feedback.

Summary of Progress to Date

The activities above document the progress at Corvette. The narrative account is summarized below according to the three strands of evaluation that are tracking the process and outcomes of the Toronto First Duty project.

Evaluation Strand	Progress to Date
Program & Policy	Indicators of Change indicate progress in moving from co-existence to coordination and initial collaboration in most areas.
	Program review suggests a solid foundation with opportunities to focus on child-centred materials and activities.
	CEY appears to exist as a fourth program stream that is well coordinated and linked to existing partner programs that are located at Corvette School.
	Need for common behaviour guidance approach and coordinated efforts to support children with behaviour problems.
Child & Family	Participation in CEY programs growing – approximately 100 new families over the past six months.
	Baseline EDI data indicate about 22% of children in the community enter grade 1 experiencing difficulties that may impede academic achievement. Suggest particular emphasis on social and emotional development as programming focus for CEY.
	Response to new program activities and parent feedback (verbal & written) suggests high level of parent satisfaction.
	Anecdotal feedback from kindergarten suggests children’s participation in CEY activities increases their readiness for school environment.
Community	Growing awareness of CEY activities.
	Need for expanded continuum of regulated child care needed.



Indicators of Change Summary	Early Learning Environments						Early Childhood Staff Team				Governance					Seamless Access						Parent Participation									
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4						
Corvette Early Years																															
Integration - Level 5																															
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■	June 2005																														
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2.4 Queen Victoria Partners for Early Learning Project

Since June 2003, the focus for the Queen Victoria Partners for Early Learning Project (QVEPL) has been on the integration of partner services that complement all programs, using the school as the base or hub for a variety of program offerings. Much of the program development was driven by the responses to community consultation. Great strides have been made in extending community involvement with the cooperation of new agencies, community volunteers and a funder in the community. Data from the 'Indicators of Change' process, completed by project Steering Committee show significant progress in all areas of project development.

Learning Environment

QVEPL offered, once again, a Summer School Readiness programme for children entering junior kindergarten at Queen Victoria Public School. The School's Cool curriculum was used. Additional staffing was provided through an HRDC grant that allowed for the hiring of a student. 80 Children registered in the programme of whom 74 'graduated'. 8 to 10 children went to other schools. 3 families moved. 54 are currently registered at Queen Victoria P.S. Two special needs staff from the Crèche visited the School's Cool programme in the summer. Plans were developed for sharing information between the School and Crèche staff. Plans for next year will be developed in the New Year, but it is hoped to have provision for children with special needs and to have more integration with partner and local child care programmes. The Crèche and Parkdale Community Health Centre hosted two parenting sessions, one in July and another in August. In addition, a Parent/Child picnic was held and a fire station visit was completed.

5P's had a successful summer programme seeing a total of 40 prenatal women. This programme has new partners – Four Villages Health Centre, providing a dietician and Parkdale Community Health Centre providing a Community Development worker. Unfortunately, this programme was

put into some jeopardy by staff layoffs and re-organization at St. Joseph's, but for the time-being the programme is continuing with new staff.

A worker was hired to work with children with special needs in the School, the Parenting and Literacy Centre, Parkdale Beach Child Care and Parkdale Crèche. Her work began quite successfully and was building good communication between the programmes, but unfortunately she has been ill for most of the term so the work has been on hold.

The Parenting and Literacy Centre has been running Monday art and Wednesday drama programmes. The drama programme has been very popular and numbers are increasing in the art programme. The Community Parent Outreach Programme (CPOP) has been working closely with the Parenting Centre, spending time in the programme and becoming familiar with the families. As they work in Mandarin, Tamil and Vietnamese, this has been helpful to both parents and staff. They also offer Parents and Children Together (PACT), which is an early intervention programme. Interested families may access intake at the Parenting and Literacy Centre. Thursday Family Fun was begun again in November. Initial numbers were low, but as word of mouth spread, they increased. The QVPEL family outreach worker supports a parenting worker from Regent Park, who runs the programme.

Parkdale Focus offered five workshops at the Queen Victoria parenting centre. The topics were:

- Relaxation, fitness and fun,
- Drug awareness,
- Nutrition,
- Budgeting and finance and
- Health promotion.

In early December, a health screening morning was offered for children in the junior kindergarten. The event was planned by the QVPEL coordinator, a teacher from Queen Victoria P.S., a staff from the Crèche Child and Family Centre, 2 staff from Parkdale Community Health Centre, and 2 Early Years II consultants. The programme was immensely successful with 26 children being screened and approximately 10 were referred to a variety of health practitioners.

Significant progress in the development of the learning environment is clear from the 'Indicators of Change' (IOC) data. Partnerships have been strengthened through the development of many jointly planned and operated programmes.

Staff Team

From the 'Indicators of Change' data it is clear that QVEPL has made significant movement towards a shared understanding of the project and its activities. The project coordinator has met with over 50 frontline staff from partner agencies, during the fall. Orientation sessions were completed and information packages were distributed. Project partners are developing a wider understanding of community services and are developing an awareness of cross-sectoral relationships. The health screening morning was an excellent example of how the staff team is planning together, but also how every participant extended their understanding of available community services. A need for a joint in-service programme has been identified. The IOC indicates a need to have further discussion of programme plans and perspectives on programmes for young children has been identified. There are many joint activities between the Parenting and Family Literacy Programme, Parkdale Community Health Centre, CPOC and the QVELP staff.

Local Governance

The QVELP steering committee meets monthly. It includes members from every partner and 2 active parent representatives. The committee has developed a planning and development framework, a regularly reviewed work plan. It has also developed a site logo and an information sharing protocol is being prepared. Joint decisions about programmes are made by the steering committee. Programme staff is hired jointly by the co-chairs or by the coordinator and a committee member. The committee applied for and received an EYCF grant for the special needs worker. Resources from the TFD were identified by the committee and used to expand the hours of the parenting centre and evening programmes. Work with a local Rotary Club provided both financial supports for translation and volunteers for the health screening. This relationship has potential to be built to provide some ongoing community support for the project.

The Programme committee meets monthly with representation from every partner. 2 JK/SK teachers rotate attendance along with the vice principal. This group also has many work project focused work groups who report to the full committee. The work groups involve staff from the partners and the community, who are not necessarily members of the programme committee. The IOC shows that a clear decision making structure between the programme and steering committees has facilitated the implementation of programmes smoothly and full knowledge of all partners.

Seamless Access

There are many examples of the development of seamless access that are clearly evident in the IOC data.

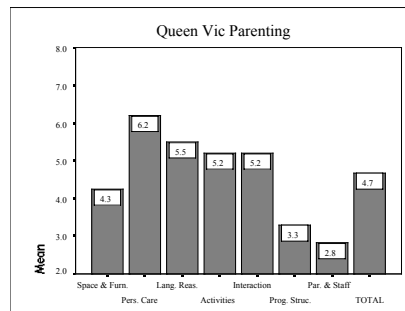
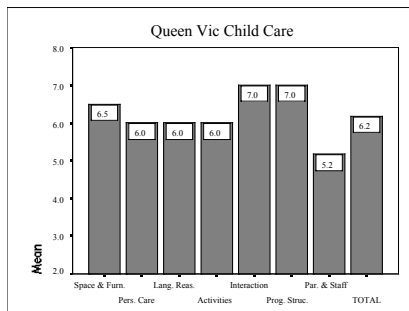
- In response to the community consultation, the special needs resource worker position was created in the programme. As she works across programmes, this creates seamless assessment and referral along with unified approaches to work planning for and working with children with special needs.
- The Health screening day brought together health professionals from 5 agencies and 2 community volunteers.
- Child care staff and the Parenting and Literacy programme are sharing rooms and resources.
- Two SK/JK teachers are active members of the programme committee.

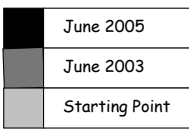
- One SK/JK teacher worked in the summer programme.
- The summer parenting programme brought together staff from QVEPL and two agencies.
- The steering committee has identified the need to work with the two partner child care programmes and other community child cares to develop flexible programmes.
- The parent support worker is working with the community.
-

Parent Participation

The IOC data points to an increase in parent involvement and participation. Parents are active participants in the evening programmes, the programmes of the Parenting and Literacy Centre and other outreach programmes. As noted above two parents are active members of the steering committee. All participants strive to involve parents at all levels, but the availability and cost of translation services is ongoing to challenge for successful parental outreach.

Evaluation Strand	Progress to Date
Programme	Partnerships have been strengthened through the development of many jointly planned and operated programmes.
	New programme activities have continued the expanded outreach of the Parenting and Literacy Centre, the evening fun programme and the health screening.
	A clear decision making structure between the programme and steering committees has facilitated the implementation of programmes smoothly and full knowledge of all partners.
	The work of the special needs worker will facilitate communication and access across programmes.
Child and Family	Participation in the programmes has increased. This was particularly evident in the Parenting and Literacy Programme and the health screening.
Community	The extensive community outreach was responded to through the development of new programmes (e.g. the special needs worker).
	Community partners such as the Rotary Club and the volunteer health professionals are enthusiastically joining QVEPL activities.



Indicators of Change Summary QVPELP	Early Learning Environments						Early Childhood Staff Team				Governance					Seamless Access						Parent Participation			
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4
Integration - Level 5																									
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2.5 York Early Years/Wilcox

Learning Environment

A rich program array of learning supports for children and parents continues to develop. For example, The successful Kinderfun summer readiness program to help children make the transition to kindergarten was expanded with a weekly Family Day that brought in siblings and parents for parent education opportunities. The Parenting and Family Literacy Centre also expanded its work with additional hours of operation during July. Efforts to integrate across the service array also continue in earnest. Learning themes for children are carried across the kindergarten classes, Make and Take, and the Parenting Centre. Parenting Centre staff are exploring new integrative programming in family literacy with community workers from MacCauly who are not currently engaged in First Duty programming; this effort would target minority language families. The November 2003 site report notes that more integration is needed in the array of parenting supports in order to address specific children's needs in social-emotional development.

Learning environment data from the ECERS: The ECERS scale was applied to the YEY/W JK program and the Parenting and Family Literacy Centre. Total scores were 5.4 and 5.8 respectively and are thus between "good-5" and "very good-6". Quality of interaction was high in both settings. The lowest score in the JK observation was 3.4 for space and furnishings. The lowest score for the PFLC was 3.7 for program structure. Low scores in program structure were generally obtained across PFLC's in most sites, and presumably reflect the inherently less structured nature of these programs.

While the ECERs scores show that the learning environments are of generally high quality they do not convey the specific program inputs to children and parents that may contribute to more positive outcomes. For example what program elements in the JK and PFLC are intended to contribute to children's social and emotional development? The Senior Kindergarten EDI scores

collected in 2002 (see June 2003 Progress Report) showed that teachers rated more children at Wilcox School as low readiness in social and emotional competence, as compared to overall TDSB ratings. Improving outcomes such as these requires a focus on results (see the June 2003 Progress Report) and looking at learning environment in terms of inputs that may contribute to better outcomes. This point is taken up in the November 2003 site report from YEY/W which notes the need for better integration of family supports across programs and development of focused activities for this area.

Staff Team

Team cohesiveness is reported to be high on the Indicators of Change Assessment. In fact, this area was rated as most advanced in comparison to the other areas. Regular planning meetings take place and there is joint PD to prepare for specific joint work. EC Educators’ roles have been integrated around common project activities and roles. There is no longer a distinction in roles between the three original Child Development and Parenting Specialists and the Daycare core staff member.

Local Governance

Consent procedures including a common core consent need to be developed to underpin integration. These policies would need to include provision for some consent dimensions unique to individual agencies. HR issues need to refer to policies of individual agencies, placing limits on how far integration can go.

Seamless Access and Integration

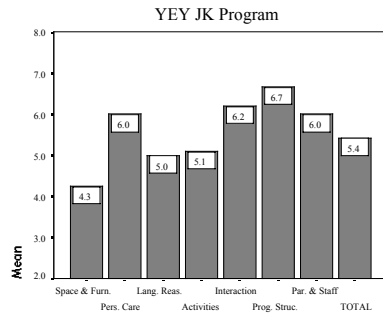
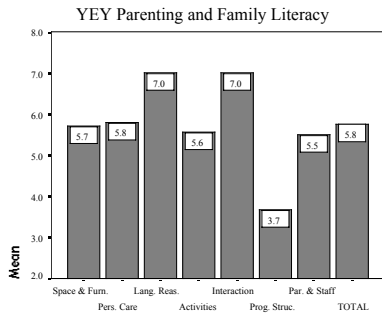
An early ID Intervention Workgroup has been exploring ways of integrating and improving early ID and Intervention across the integrated learning environment. This is a strong local initiative with interest coming into the work from a number of the participating agencies and different professional perspectives. There is also an intention to review each other’s approaches to quality monitoring, but joint approaches may be limited by governance issues. Traditional categories of service such as childcare and family relief are giving way to “family programming”.

Parent Involvement/Participation

Parent client satisfaction surveys collected on some of the service array, indicate that the parents are happy with the programming. Barriers to parent participation on committee work including scheduling and childcare have been noted. The role of the Family Support worker is focused on widening parent participation.

Evaluation Strands	Progress to Date
Program	Programming has expanded with additional care spaces and hours of summer operation in the summer for the PFLC.
	Integrated programming carries across the core KG, childcare and parent support (Make and Take program)
	Additional programs have been added (a
Child & Family	Feedback forms from several programs show that parents are highly satisfied with the services.

Community/Public	Family Support Worker worked on school and service agency contacts, contacting parents at other schools in catchment area during am kindergarten dismissal times. Flyers on events such as the Speech and Language Coffee Chat held in October are distributed to community agencies.
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Indicators of Change Summary YEY JR Wilcox	Early Learning Environments						Early Childhood Staff Team				Governance					Seamless Access						Parent Participation									
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4						
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3.0 Learning Environment (ECERS) Cross-Case Analysis

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised (ECERS) provides a total environment rating score as well as individual subscale scores in each of seven areas. It is important to note that the evaluative use of these scores is limited by the fact that the ECERS-R is not designed *explicitly* for use in all of these types of programs. However, the analysis allows us to draw attention to issues related to learning environments and the possibilities for improvement.

Overall, the ECERS evaluation shows us that the Toronto First Duty early learning environments are of good quality. Close analysis of the subscale items suggests a few areas for possible improvement. Although space improvements will be tightly constrained by infrastructural issues

at each site, one general recommendation from the ECERS is to work toward creating spaces where children can both be part of a large group as well as have privacy for quiet individual reading and rest in a cozy space. This may enhance staffs' and parents' ability to carry out individualized reading with children according to their interests. Integrated programs should strive to include outdoor play time as part of a high quality early childhood program. Many programs offer meals and snacks to children; where possible, these times can be optimized as learning opportunities when staff and parents sit with children and enjoy meaningful conversations. Shared meals and snacks are often ideal times to foster social skill development such as conversational turn taking, and everyday vocabulary development. Play materials were found to be of good quality, although observations showed there could be more representation of diversity in the dramatic play areas. It was also noted, in general, that children did not spend much time in the dramatic play areas, a finding that parallels children's own reports about their time "at school," that is, relatively little mention of play. Perhaps the dramatic play areas could be used in more integrated and meaningful ways in the programs and could encourage children to take on roles that foster an appreciation of diversity and inclusion. In addition, play materials might be added as needed in meaningful ways to enhance children's understanding of concepts. Finally, the ECERS subscale observations in the Parents and Staff category suggest that improvements could be made so that staff have places to store belongings and to carry out administrative work (such as tracking, paperwork). Since the time of the June observation, there may have been changes in the provisions offered to parents. One area that may be particularly relevant to TFD programs is including parents in program planning and including parents' ongoing written feedback.

This next section provides a critical cross-site analysis of the subscale findings of the Spring 2003 ECERS-R observations along with November 2003 observations of the Queen Victoria JK/SK/Childcare. The ECERS-R provides subscale scores in seven areas and a total score. Scores in each subscale can range from 1 (poor, inadequate) to 7 (excellent). The subscale area findings are discussed here.

Space and Furnishings. Scores in this subscale ranged from 3.8 (minimal-adequate) to 6.5 (excellent). Across sites, furnishings were generally considered adequate to good and for the most part were clean and in good repair. Room arrangements were generally in keeping with the ECERS recommendation of separating noisy and quiet spaces so that these activities did not collide. It appeared to be less possible to arrange the rooms in this way in the spaces in which there were JK/SK programs because generally in these classes there was less space per child. Across sites, it was generally found that cozy spaces for privacy were lacking – the ECERS recommends that early childhood environments should include such space for children. Use of outdoor space is one of the items that was variable across sites; some programs had access to excellent outdoor playground space and staff planned programs to include good use of this space on a daily basis. At other sites or in particular programs, it was not possible to include outdoor activity as a daily part of the program. It is important to note that Canadian weather may also impede use of outdoor space on certain days. Displays of children's artwork and activity were variable across programs. JK/SK programs had more and a greater variety of children's artwork displayed, including 3-dimensional artwork, whereas drop-in centres had less child-produced displays that related to the theme. It is noteworthy that drop-in programs tend to send children's

artwork home on a daily basis, thus it is not surprising that this item would be reflected differently on the measure.

Personal Care. Scores ranged from 4.0 (adequate-good) to 7.0 (excellent), and all programs scored the maximum on greeting and departure procedures; in some sites, staff were able to greet families in multiple languages. Almost all programs scored in the good to excellent ranges for quality of snacks or meals provided (where applicable). However, snack time was generally not used by staff as an opportunity to foster conversational skills. In many cases, staff did not sit with children and families during snack time. Only one of the programs encouraged children to help in snack preparation which, on this measure, is considered a good way to foster independent personal care skills in children. All programs had excellent safety practices and most had excellent health scores. Occasionally sites were not equipped with top quality sanitary provisions.

Language Reasoning. Scores ranged from 4.0 to 7.0. Quality of books ranged from mediocre selection to excellent selection. Rotation of books was not done consistently except in classes in which kindergarten programs were offered. In these classes, books reflected the themes and were changed often. In some programs, staff read books to children informally which, on this measure, is considered to be indicative of high quality, and this occurred most often in drop-in and family literacy programs. Kindergarten staff were less able to do informal reading with individual and small groups of children. The degree to which materials in programs were used to foster communication skills varied individually. Kindergarten programs most often scored higher on this factor because staff explicitly used materials for the purpose of teaching language and reasoning and for solving problems. Drop-in, readiness and parent and family literacy programs tended to introduce concepts according to children's interests and questions; this in turn resulted in slightly higher scores on this factor for these programs. Ideally both factors would be included in a high quality program.

Activities. Scores on this subscale ranged from 3.1 to 6.2, slightly lower than other subscale areas. The variety of activities on this measure included art, fine motor, science, math, language, music, blocks, sand, water and drama. Furthermore, the availability of activities during both structured and free play time is considered important on this measure. Blocks tended to be of higher quality in classes where kindergarten and readiness programs were offered and there were generally enough blocks for more than two children in these programs. Dramatic materials were available in all programs, although the degree varied considerably. Generally across programs there was very little rotation of these materials and children did not play much with these materials during the environment observations. All sites scored lower than average on the factor of representation of diversity in dramatic play materials. It should be noted that the activities score may partly reflect the quality and availability of materials more generally in the school/site.

Interaction. Scores ranged from 5.2 (good) to 7.0 (excellent), which represents a very high mean score across all TFD sites. Four programs scored the maximum score of 7. High interaction scores were noted for supervision and discipline. Variation in the interaction subscale arose from the degree to which staff talked to children about their play and ideas; some staff tended not to explain concepts nor ask children questions during activity time, whereas other staff did so frequently. Very high scores were noted for the degree to which staff across sites interacted with

children, for the positive interactions among staff members themselves and for the positive ways in which children interacted with each other.

Program Structure. Scores in this subscale ranged from 3.3 to 7.0. Most programs had a daily schedule and most had a schedule posted in the room; however some did not. Programs that were able to include both indoor and outdoor play on a daily basis received higher scores. Another area of program structure included use of grouping strategies, specifically how well groups were used for instruction. All programs scored in the good to high average range on effective use of ‘large group’ time. When materials were added to enhance the program, for example, novel materials brought in during free play time to enhance the play, a higher score was given. This did not occur often across programs. . Finally, program structures that permitted adequate and enriching free play time for children were considered to be of higher quality in this subscale area.

Parents and Staff. Scores ranged from 2.8 to 6.0, somewhat lower than other subscale areas. Most sites had good provisions for parents; three sites had explicit policies to get feedback from parents. However, in most cases during this initial observation, parents were not involved in planning. Across sites, this subscale tended to be lower in the area of provisions for staff. Although cooperation among staff and between staff and supervisors generally was in the excellent range, there was not enough physical support for staff in the way of space and schedules. There was not enough space for staff to store belongings or to carry out their own office or administrative work. Some staff did not have flexibility in taking breaks. Professional development opportunities for staff were generally perceived by staff across sites to be good, although program staff at one site reported wanting more professional development opportunities.

The graphs depicting the subscale scores in each of the TFD program samples are embedded in the site Program Reports.

4.0 Front Line Staff Cross-Case Analysis

Overview

This analysis summarizes the results of key informant interviews conducted with frontline staff from the three positions of kindergarten, early childhood education, and family support across the five Toronto First Duty (TFD) project sites during the implementation phase of the project – for the most part, from June 2002 to June 2003. Thirteen interviews were conducted with frontline staff, including kindergarten teachers, early childhood educators, and with family support staff. Interviews at Queen Victoria were not conducted during this time. It is important to note that this report summarizes data from early project implementation; more recent data from the sites indicate that staff attitudes are changing as staff teams become more cohesive. Current developments are being assessed through a frontline survey. Findings will be reported in the next TFD report.

Data reported here are from individual interviews lasting between 45 minutes to an hour. Interviews tapped into the following categories: education, awareness of changes in the early childhood education field, reasons for being in the field/positive/negative aspects of the work, satisfaction (job, leader, communication, and team-building), definitions of integration, perceived differences in professional roles, outcomes/goals (parent, child, frontline), parent involvement, additional training/professional development required, barriers/facilitators, decision-making/curriculum/evaluation, challenges/lessons learned, and philosophy of education/views of family and children (see Appendix A for frontline interview questions).

All interviews were audio-taped. Audio-taped interviews were then summarized in note form with examples of key informant quotes. Data analysis for each interview involved the following steps: Notes were entered onto a database for each major category (e.g., goals, barriers, facilitators) with direct quotes; Interview data were coded; Frequencies were generated for categories mentioned (see Appendix B for frequency tables). Overall patterns and frequencies were then identified across interviews and participants from the three positions. Results were examined in terms of commonalities and differences among the three positions of kindergarten, early childhood education and family support. Based on cross-case analysis, preliminary factors influencing frontline collaboration across sites and frontline staff were identified. These factors, were also identified by a review of research literature on factors influencing successful collaboration conducted by Mattesich, Murray-Close, & Monsey (2001) and were used in the reporting of interview findings. These findings further suggest a number of components critical to creating an early childhood staff team.

Factors Influencing Collaboration

Factors related to PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

- Staff are grappling with issues of professional role identity. A number of issues were raised regarding professional roles. Frontline staff from kindergarten, early childhood education, and family support have adopted different objectives, curriculum approaches, and methods as a result of their professional training. Consequently, a number of misperceptions and stereotypes seem to exist between the fields of early childhood education and kindergarten.

... Purpose of childcare is to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for the children when the parents can't be with them, whereas in kindergarten we are preparing them for success in grade one and introducing them to routines and expectations even though it is play-oriented where there is time for teaching – and I don't think those come up in a daycare program...I mostly see it come up around the literacy. Because we are teaching the children to read and write we use every opportunity to teach through play. For example – if we have to make a sign for something we use that as an opportunity. It sounds very picky be we are always modeling to them when they are reading, like how to handle a book and I see things that would have been labeled as things no to do in the daycare (Kindergarten Teacher)

- Decision-making among colleagues is not always consensual with kindergarten staff making most of the final decisions, especially when it comes to making curriculum decisions. Interview responses related to decision-making at each site seem to be either 'involved' or 'consensual'. Involved decision-making refers to staff being involved in decision-making

with a leader or a certain professional group ultimately making the final decisions. On the other hand, consensual decision-making refers to staff and leader making decisions with staff until a consensus is reached. Decision-making by leaders at each site seem to be split with either leaders involving staff (n=6) or leaders making decisions until a consensus has been reached (n=6). Interestingly, leader decision-making with early childhood educators seemed to be the most consensual (n=4).

- Most practitioners seem to recognize the benefits of an integrated early childhood program within the school. Interview responses indicate that most staff seem to recognize the benefits of integration for staff, children, and parents. Interestingly, integration was also mentioned as a means to advance the field of early childhood education (n=3 early childhood education, n=2 family support, n=1 kindergarten).

Integration is a multi-level kind of concept...about creating an integrated environment...creating a seamless system of learning...and recognizing that learning extends beyond school, beyond childcare, and beyond the home...learning is happening with every breath children take...by integrating parents and programs...different agencies...well I see it as an integration of ideas...it doesn't have to be a physical integration...one person from each agency working in the same room...I really believe that integration is an integration of ideas, a philosophy...that's what First Duty is all about in my mind. (Kindergarten Teacher)

- Frontline staff (n=2 kindergarten, n=1 early childhood education, n= 1 family support) also mentioned that while they agreed with the benefits of integration they also discussed the limits of integration mainly as it relates to working with other frontline staff.

It is exhausting work and I think a lot of people think that it's easy. I am committed to my role as a teacher, but I see my own limits are in terms of collaboration. I need a certain amount of solitude and it is hard to get. It has been insightful because I learned about myself – I do think of myself as a team player but this degree of teamwork is too much...we are all making a lot of big decisions (Kindergarten Teacher)

Factors related to PROCESS and STRUCTURE

- Frontline staff mentioned a number of organizational challenges that may be acting as hurdles to team building. These include lack of unity among frontline staff (n=9), lack of clear consensus on the definition of integration/lack of awareness of the roles, responsibilities and practices of other frontline staff (n=8), the hierarchy between kindergarten staff and early childhood education (n=7), lack of regular meeting times (n=6), working with the different partners (n=5), lack of time (n=5), and scheduling differences (n=3).
- Interestingly, the most frequently mentioned challenge to integration was parent participation (n=12). A number of challenges related to parent participation were mentioned. These included, different languages (n=8), culture (n=7), off-site location (n=3), and parents' lack of trust in the system (n=3), and funds(n=2).

Factors related to PURPOSE

- A lack of clear purpose and vision seemed to be a major challenge. Kindergarten staff tended to mention lack of unity (n=4), lack of clear consensus on the definition of integration and lack of clear roles/responsibilities (n=4).

Factors related to COMMUNICATION and RELATIONSHIPS

- The importance of taking the time to build relationships, especially at the beginning of project implementation, between practitioners is a consistent theme that surfaces across TFD frontline staff. Practitioners consistently stressed the need to have more informal opportunities to get to know each other in order to establish trust. This seemed to be especially important in the initial phases of project implementation. Trust is also an outcome mentioned for frontline staff, parents, and children. It would seem that trust among team

members facilitates open communication, mutual respect for people and opinions, and a willingness to participate in the partnership. Trust can also help staff see conflict both as inevitable and as constructive. However, frontline staff acknowledge that building trust takes time.

- While staff were divided when it came to communication satisfaction, staff expressed dissatisfaction with team building opportunities. When it came to satisfaction with communication opportunities, six were satisfied (n=3 family support, n=2 early childhood education, n=1 kindergarten), three were somewhat satisfied (n=1 kindergarten, n=1 early childhood education, n=1 family support) and 4 were unsatisfied (n=2 kindergarten, n=2 early childhood education). Family support staff seemed to be the most satisfied with communication opportunities, while early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers seem to be the least satisfied. However, most striking was the dissatisfaction expressed by staff with team building opportunities (n= 7 unsatisfied, n=4 somewhat satisfied).

... need time to plan/work together... need to be familiar with other agencies -their mandate and role... need time dedicated to 'getting to know one another' ...should have developed a philosophy together first. I felt that we can do this 'integration' we had already been doing it...Developing the philosophy first might have facilitated communication and identified our 'common philosophy' and the roles of frontline staff....what is the hierarchy? (Early Childhood Educator)

Factors related to RESOURCES

- Interview analysis confirmed that there is a need for professional training on collaboration, as well as training in doing outreach with families from diverse backgrounds. Practitioners agree that it takes more than just informal get-togethers in order to become a successful team and that more formal training opportunities are needed as well. The majority of frontline staff reported not having received appropriate training on ways to collaborate as a major challenge.
- While practitioners seem to value parent involvement and are interested in promoting parent and family involvement, frontline staff do not always feel skillful in promoting family involvement. In fact, the most frequently mentioned challenge to integration was parent participation (n=12). The majority of staff (n=7) mentioned the need for professional training in doing outreach with families from diverse backgrounds. Staff also mentioned a number of challenges to parent participation. These included language (n=8), culture (n=7), lack of time (n=5), and parents' lack of trust in the school system (n=3).
- *All participants interviewed (n=13) expressed obtaining deep satisfaction in their jobs. Furthermore, most staff interviewed across the three positions were generally satisfied with the support provided by their leader (n=9 satisfied, 1 somewhat satisfied).*

Implications For Creating An Early Childhood Staff Team

- Opportunities for team building – opportunities for team members to come together both informally and formally, especially in the initial phases of project implementation. As well as

opportunities for members to obtain training in collaboration, team-building, and working with parents as partners.

- Common purpose/clear goals – all team members share and are committed to a mission that provides focus and direction.
- Clear roles – team members know what is expected of them and how they can best contribute to team success.
- Supportive leader – leadership is needed to guide full-day schedules, integrated staff teams, design of physical space, daily routines and activities, joint curriculum planning, and assessment of individual children’s progress. The leader needs to balance their role as a facilitator and as a manager.
- Open communication with staff and parents – team members and parents continually share information, ideas, concerns, ideas, skills, and knowledge.
- Flexibility/ability to think outside the box – teams must be willing to experiment, remain open, and think creatively.
- Buy-in – team members must believe in their mission.
- Diversity – team members recognize and value their differences in styles, ideas, cultures, backgrounds, expertise.
- Balance of task and relationship – team members work to balance the need to get work done with the need to maintain personal relationships.
- Trust – team members believe in each other, work for each other’s success, and know that they can count on each other.
- Home-school-community links – team members work to strengthen connections between schools and community members; children and families are viewed in a holistic, ecological manner.

Future Research

Survey – a frontline survey has been created to obtain a more complete picture of frontline experiences with integration. A survey will also allow the research team to get a deeper understanding of the factors influencing collaboration across project sites. The survey will specifically tap into the following areas: personal background; wages, benefits and working conditions; staff turnover, educational background; professional development; feelings about program site; history of interdisciplinary collaboration; challenges to interdisciplinary collaboration; recommendations; attitudes towards the Toronto First Duty Project; and index of interdisciplinary collaboration. Surveys have been distributed to frontline staff across the five project sites during November 2003. Survey analysis and findings will be including in the next TFD report.

5.0 Parent Involvement Cross-Case Analysis

(From Staff And Parent Interview/Focus Groups)

Parent Involvement in TFD Programs as Described by Parents

One of the main objectives of the TFD project is to increase parent participation in programs, planning and decision-making. During the implementation year, 2002-03, focus group sessions were conducted at four of the five TFD sites to explore parent involvement: ACTT/SD, YEYW, BWG and CEY. Parents were asked to discuss their

experiences with community services. The questions included the goals they set for themselves and goals in accessing community services, benefits they received and barriers to access and participation encountered when accessing services. Questions about participation in TFD and recommendations for the TFD project were also included.

The overall sample consisted of 36 participants representing considerable ethnic diversity. Most of the participants had used TFD services. Almost all participants were mothers. There were 3 grandmothers and one father. Despite the diversity of the samples, some general trends emerged. Parents are happy with the services and report that they participate in programs directly. However, they also report that they are not generally involved in planning service or in governance. When parents were asked directly if they were involved in programs, parents at Corvette, Bruce WoodGreen and YEY responded “no.” A parent at one site stated her input had not been sought until the focus group session with the TFD research team. Surprisingly though, parents went on to discuss their participation in several activities such as attending workshops and completing homework with children.

Some of the ways parents *were* involved varied across sites. Parents at one site described listening to their children and talking to them about their day. They were the only families who discussed working with their children on homework and other assigned activities by the TFD programs. Parents at one site valued their attendance at various workshops. Several parents at one site expressed their desire to participate in meetings with the staff but were frustrated by scheduling conflicts. Two sites reported father involvement in programs. One participating father initially reported feeling uncomfortable because of the lack of a male presence in the centre. Eventually, he overcame his apprehension and now feels at ease in attending the program.

Yesterday, they gave us a package of activities: drawings and puppets and all those things. And then she took it home. She was showing her work to her grandpa, her daddy and all those things and she was very proud. Now she has started listening to the stories. She likes to sleep by a bundle books. After she has listened to the Three Bear stories, and she now repeats, “Not by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin.” She made a caterpillar at home and she was showing them to everyone and she was telling about the hungry caterpillar. And even she borrows the book from the library.

The family resource centre, they organize trips where the parents and caregivers get to go with the kids, like Riverdale farm, or Cullen Gardens. They also have potluck where we get to make something different dishes of their culture. We get to see and learn and taste. They have toy-lending, book-lending also.

Parents reported several outcomes of participating in the TFD programs. Parents experienced a strong sense of community while participating in the First Duty project. At two sites, parents expressed strong satisfaction because their children experienced a great sense of pride in their work. For parents at most sites, establishing a social network by meeting other parents in the program was one of the most rewarding outcomes from participating in this project. Parents at two sites were very pleased with the development of strong parent-staff relations. At most sites parents gained life skills and a deeper understanding of child development.

For me I probably have the oldest children in there and yes as my children got older I realized not just for the education but for the social part for the stay-at-home mom that you need to connect with other moms and dads, other parents and now that I've got some really old children, it's really nice to have people who have children the same age because believe me from 2 year old to 20 year old, lot's of stuff happens. Lots of normal stuff happens and being able to connect with programs that are diverse enough to have programs for two year olds. That has become important.

Parent involvement as described by Staff

This report summarizes the results of 13 key informant interviews conducted with frontline staff from the three positions of kindergarten, child care, and family support across all five project sites. Staff included kindergarten teachers, child care educators, and family support staff. The interviews were conducted in Year 1 (2001-2) of TFD project implementation.

Parents appreciate the program and services...this is an opportunity for them to come out...to understand Canadian cultural, educational system; it's free so why not. (Family Support Staff)

...it's very positive to bring parents into the system and introduces the children into the space and the environment. It can help lessen the separation and anxiety and it helps having the parents get a closer look at what is expected. They can do things at home to support your efforts. I find that the parents and families are very supportive of us as staff and a lot of them are looking for ways to support us at home and some of them have expectations that are off the mark for this age – they Pwant homework – worksheets that are not appropriate. I would like to spend more time with parents and do a little more PR but I don't have time (Kindergarten Teacher)

Frontline staff discussed parent involvement (PI) in terms of three main categories: parent education/skills, support/referrals, and parents as partners. Practitioners reported that fostering PI was an important initiative; however, they did not feel adequately prepared or confident to implement it. Interestingly, the most frequently mentioned challenge to service integration was parent participation. Practitioners felt that the diversity of languages and culture were barriers to effective communication. Staff wanted more professional training to engage in more successful outreach with families from diverse backgrounds. Practitioners also felt that some parents had a lack of trust in the school system, making it difficult for staff to establish a secure relationship with these families.

An overwhelming majority of staff members believed that parent participation in the TFD project increases parental support for child development. Staff stated that parent involvement increases parenting skills and confidence. Five of thirteen staff discussed a gain in parents' trust in the system through program participation. Only family support staff mentioned several other benefits: reduction in stress and isolation in parents, opportunities for parents to socialize, and strengthening of the family unit.

Parent versus Staff Views on PI

A comparison of parent responses with staff responses generated some interesting results. While parents and staff agreed on several outcomes of PI, there were also differences. Both groups agreed that decreased isolation and increased social support are results of participating in

integrated services. They also agreed that involvement in the programs developed parenting skills. An outcome cited by some staff was a heightened level of comfort and trust in the school system. Interestingly, parents did generally mention this benefit. A number of staff also reported that parent involvement included reduced stress for the parent. However, parents themselves did not make any mention of it.

Parent reports suggest that they would like to be more involved in planning programs. Staff would like to extend parent participation but were unsure about how to do it and did not mention parent participation in planning or governance access they would like to see developed. Based on this report, it is apparent that parent involvement requires clarification for both parents and staff. A clear, uniform PI definition provides programs with concrete methods of involving parents in ways that can accommodate the diverse needs of families. Establishing clear guidelines and expectations of the roles of both parents and teachers minimizes confusion and communication barriers.

In order to develop parent participation in integrated services, it is important to ask both parents and staff members how they view PI in order to establish realistic expectations. Both parents and teachers need to contribute to developing the roles each of them are to play in the program.

6.0 Dissemination – Toronto First Duty September Policy Symposium

The TFD policy symposium, Closing the Divide, on September 10th intended to:

- Develop policy recommendations for an integrated early learning and care delivery system.
- Broaden awareness at provincial and national level about Toronto First Duty (TFD)

The day's events included

- Policymakers' Panel: Panelists discussed how the vision complements and challenges current federal, provincial and municipal directions, policies and initiatives in the social service and education sectors.
- Evidence-Based Understanding: Toronto First Duty Research Report: TFD researchers presented Toronto First Duty's research framework and the Community Early Development Report, including updated analyses based on Census 2001 data.
- Can Toronto First Duty be Exported and Replicated? Out-of-province reviewers responded to the TFD model and research framework.
- Sustainability: Participants took part in guided small group dialogues. Each group had at least one knowledgeable person with direct experience at one of the TFD sites (lead agency, coordinator, partner).

One hundred and thirty participants from TFD, ECE/child care sector, education, family support programs, family health, colleges and universities, policy researchers, and municipal, provincial and federal governments attended the symposium. About a third of the participants were from outside of Toronto area and included representation from four other provinces.

Summary of Policy Discussion

1. What kind of system infrastructure is needed?

Short-term strategies:

- A clear vision for young children;
- Flexibility in current funding/policy requirements to allow innovation
- A dedicated innovation fund
- Ensure child care is a core component of any early years strategy
- Joint training opportunities with a goal of blending early years training programs into a single credential with an focus on child development
- Blended curriculum
- Expand the players to ensure the broader community is represented

Medium-term strategies include a single operating criteria and partnership requirements at all levels.

Longer-term strategies:

- Public policy that consists of: a timeframe which establishes goals for service levels; quality standards; outlines who is responsible for the management and funding of child care, and includes accountability tools;
- A lead ministry [Ministry of the Child/Ministry of Human Development] charged with: putting the vision into action; co-ordinating strategies with other departments, jurisdictions and sectors; developing and maintaining strong ties with the child care sector to facilitate knowledge sharing and determine resource and research needs; and ensure public accountability.

Comments: Ensure research informs practice and practice informs research. The TFD vision of children and families at the centre must drive everything from including pre- and in-service training, the physical space and legislative changes. Change can happen now without massive provincial legislative change. The current TFD partners are strong agents for change. TFD needs to value the contribution of all partners equally.

2. What are the challenges to sustainability?

Human resources issues require a cultural shift in the three streams. Team building requires respect for all the skills. The funding is inadequate funding for existing kindergarten and child care programs – the base of TFD is being eroded. The role of coordinators need clear guidelines. It is unclear if co-ordinators are seen as part of the infrastructure, or part of start up.

Comments: TFD leaders need to beware of what is really happening 'on the floor' and stress the value of play in early learning so all professionals understand its role.

3. What are the stages of implementation?

It is important to state expectation of participations from the start, bring community leaders on side and clearly articulate the incentives and rewards for participation (shared resources, efficiencies and broader range of supports.) TFD should be rolled in stages with new sites applying to join, rather than imposing model on those who do not wish to or are not ready. TFD ‘innovators’ could be available to help new sites get established.

Comments: The ‘model is never done’. It must be an ongoing process to remain true to its goal of putting children and families first.

4. What policy incentives help?

A federal department with a lead for early learning and care is a start and the Canada Social Transfer put a policy mechanism in place. Human resource incentives include good child development courses, joint training and/or new qualifications and common in-service training. A TFD model needs the development of a single curriculum and policies to ensure participation of children with special needs. Changes are needed to the Ministry of Education’s funding formula and policies on space. Perhaps Crombie’s ideas about school buildings could be adopted. .

Comments: Political will is behind public opinion on public support for the early years but the public is unclear on what effective supports would be.

7.0 Other Research Activities

With the participation of the research team, TFD is developing two management tools to track and monitor development: Indicators of Change and a Client Information System.

The development of the management tools and the information collected has four purposes: Inform local TFD site decision-making.

- Provide information to TFD Steering Committee and funders.
- Provide data for research team’s analysis.
- Establish tools to support replication of TFD pilot sites and development of new public policy to support an integrated delivery system.

7.1 TFD Indicators of Change

TFD Indicators of Change tracks the progress each site is making towards the integration of community early child development programs (child care/early childhood education, family support programs and kindergarten) that are linked to early intervention, community and public health and social services. The TFD Indicators of Change set out the details of the vision and the predicted incremental steps towards that vision.

TFD Indicators of Change includes:

- TFD five **core elements** - early learning environments, early childhood staff teams, local governance, seamless access and parent participation – establish the framework of the tool.
- **Program indicators** define specific activities and practice for each of the core element. Indicators are used to track the progress that TFD sites are making towards implementing the five core elements. There are a total of twenty-five program indicators.
- **Benchmarks** track progress from co-existence, to coordination, collaboration and integration for each of the program indicators. The benchmarks are organized on a five point scale from 1 (co-existence) to 5 (integration).

TFD Indicators of Change was piloted with four of the five sites in June 2003. Sites identified initial, current and projected progress, first as a small group and then as part of a facilitated site management committee workshop. The indicators were revised to clarify understanding of the indicators and reduce duplication. Site reports were prepared for each of the sites and discussed at site meetings in September and October 2003. The revised tool was piloted at the fifth site (QVPEL) in November.

The results in the summary charts reinforce that each site is unique and site partners have identified their own priorities, activities and developmental trajectories based on logistics, opportunities and resource availability. The individual site indicators need to be placed in context of the extent of expanded child and family participation, community partnerships and economic resources in relationship to the size of the potential community. This will be possible to do when the Intake and Tracking and Economic Analysis tools are implemented. At this point the results from the Indicators should be viewed as individual reports that are not necessarily comparable across sites.

Each site has made progress along the integration continuum and is striving for further changes over the course of the project. Patterns of development and projected development identify some specific program indicators (e.g. staff team roles and responsibilities, allocation of financial resources, human resources, child care provision and child care affordability) will not reach an integration level at any site without significant policy change and substantial increase in resources.

The current and projected benchmarks at each site indicate specific priorities. Taken together, the Indicators illustrate the potential to pull together a comprehensive package or blueprint of policies and practices that could guide the implementation of an integrated system. Projected benchmarks include:

- ACTT Secord/Dawes: Projected integration of child development monitoring tools, shared mechanisms to ensure equitable participation from community; common approaches to support inclusion of children with special needs and cultural/linguistic minorities; and, common approach to ensure meaningful parental input into programming decisions.
- BWELC: Projected integration of kindergarten, child care and parenting centre learning environments and staff team (with the exception of fully blended staff roles and responsibilities); integrated program policies and practices; resources to ensure affordable costs for non-parental care; integrated intake and attendance tracking and common practices

that build responsive, reciprocal practices with parents.

- CEY: Projected integration of a common program quality monitoring tool; common approach to behaviour guidance; integrated service planning within the catchment area; and access to early childhood and family support programming for all children in catchment area.
- QVPEL: Common approach to special needs resourcing and inclusion of children with special needs; common early identification monitoring; and, collaborative governance model that includes the major early years service providers in catchment area.
- YEY: Projected increased levels of collaboration among several partners delivering programs on site; integration of behaviour guidance approach; and significant efforts to increase parent's input into and participation in program activities.

Indicators of Change will be revisited at each site late spring 2004. The process will involve the local management committees and front line staff. Sites will use the opportunity to monitor progress over the year and consider revisions to projected benchmarks (June 2005) accordingly.

7.2 Client Information System / Intake and Tracking

The cross-site information and tracking system has been fully implemented at two sites, YEY and Corvette, and is being implemented at the other sites. Piloting of the system and data entry procedures at the initial sites will facilitate full implementation at the other sites. Training is being provided and a user's guide has been developed. Implementation with entry of both intake and enrolment/attendance data is underway at the Bruce WoodGreen site and has proceeded rapidly. Implementation is underway at the Secord site and will begin at Queen Vic in January.

For administrative and accountability purposes, the intake and tracking data will be presented in standardized semiannual reports lined up with the quarterly financial reports from the sites. The data will be analyzed twice a year for inclusion in the December/June reports. The analysis will include the period covered in the report plus retrospective views necessary to draw conclusions to the date of the report. These data will be rolled up for the final TFD report to provide a view of progress over the full term of the project.

To examine broader evaluation questions, representatives of the City, Atkinson Foundation and the Research Team have met to develop specific ways of using the intake and tracking data to meet the evaluation aims of the project. Seven specific questions will be explored using these data:

1. Who participates in what Toronto First Duty site activities? Ages of participants; participant type: child, child-family, adult only; numbers of participants overall and by program type: child care/early childhood development, kindergarten, and family support.
2. What is the intensity of their participation? How many days/per child/per family in each program type by day, month, year?
3. How does participation change over time?
4. What are the changes in the type and availability of programs and services offered through TFD sites (including new programs and core partner programs): type of services, hours/days?
5. What are the changes (plus or minus) in program capacity (actual amount of service by program type (care/ECD, kindergarten, family support) and specific subtypes: full-time, part-time,

occasional, registered, drop-in early learning, care, parenting, etc.) created by TFD in addition to the pre-existing core programs?

6. What is the overall increase/decrease in capacity and usage over the life of the project? What proportion of children and families in the catchment area are participating in TFD activities?

7.3 TFD Economic Analysis

Is Toronto First Duty a cost-effective system to deliver early learning and care programs to children and families?

The development of an economic analysis model is designed to answer the question. Real program costs represent the value of the resources used to deliver TFD programs that are in addition to the existing costs of the various program components. Program costs comprise the direct expenditures necessary to run the programs. The costs will be considered in relation to the actual utilization rates that will be gathered through the City of Toronto's Client Information System. It will be possible to compare the cost of integrated early childhood activities in the TFD model with the costs of traditional programs (e.g. child care, kindergarten and family support programs). It may be possible to compare outcomes of TFD participation with the costs.

The research team is working closely with the City of Toronto and will consult with an economist to set up the model and assess the findings at the end of the project. Financial and utilization data collected during the start-up year provide the baseline to develop the model. The Client Information System and the quarterly financial reports from the sites will provide ongoing data.

7.4 Community Impacts

Community Consultation and Toronto First Duty – Update

Community consultation as a means of fostering community outreach and capacity building has been identified as an integral part of Toronto First Duty's efforts to meet the needs of children and families. A survey of community consultation processes undertaken to date at the site level is currently underway, and will consist of reviewing site reports and community consultation reports prepared since launch of the Toronto First Duty project. Survey and questionnaire tools and methods used to facilitate the community consultation process at each site will also be collected and an inventory of measures prepared. A meeting of the project coordinators is planned for January, 2004, to discuss and evaluate outreach efforts (successes as well as challenges) site and project-wide, and to table "next steps" planned in the community consultation and outreach process.

8.0 Issues For Reflection

8.1 Site and System Level School Leadership

When schools are identified as the "hubs" for service delivery at the community level, site and

system level school leadership and commitment are essential to moving along the integration continuum. The principal's involvement at the site level is critical, as is the visible active involvement of senior school district staff at *both* site and system levels. Where this exists there is noteworthy progress along the learning environment and staff team components / dimensions. Site and system level school leadership is uneven across sites and may be one factor contributing to differential outcomes. The smallest school / site receives the most visible TDSB support. That site's Steering Committee has several senior TDSB staff as members: the superintendent responsible for TFD, TDSB's early years supervisor who chairs the Board's early years team, the Board's community / childcare liaison, and the manager of the Board's parenting and family literacy programs. Their participation has facilitated decisions supportive of collaborative work at the site level and highlighted TDSB's commitment to the project as a whole. This support is not as visible at the other schools / sites, all of which are larger, with many more partner agencies and competing priorities at the school level. A principals' network could be a mechanism that provides necessary system level support from TDSB to all TFD schools / sites.

8.2 Cross-Site and Site Specific Joint Professional Development Opportunities

Frontline staff have limited opportunities to meet and communicate with each other at the site level and still fewer opportunities to communicate across sites. The research findings demonstrate that these opportunities are critical to building relationships, developing a common understanding of the work of TFD, generating commitment to TFD aspirations / goals, providing opportunities to share and reflect on the lessons learned throughout implementation, and developing a systems perspective — an understanding of how individual and team efforts at the site level contribute to change at the systems level, which in turn enables sites to sustain their efforts over time. In short, professional development contributes significantly to the formation and growth of a “learning community” and helps build the capacity of individuals, site teams and organizations to respond to change. *Both* frontline staff and management committee members would benefit from further cross site and site specific professional development opportunities. Potential professional development topics identified include:

- collaboration and team building
- behavior challenges and related strategies for multidisciplinary teams
- school readiness
- child development monitoring tools
- early identification and intervention
- summer program curriculum
- cultural competence
- parent involvement and community engagement
- system change and sustainability

It is also important to broaden the TFD learning community by seeking out opportunities for TFD staff and committee members' participation at workshops, conferences and events hosted by others (such as, the April 17th event for kindergarten teachers, early childhood educators, and parent support professionals hosted by TDSB). Resurrecting the electronic communication forum as part of the TDF website might be another way of “reaching out.” Earlier attempts to establish an electronic forum were not successful but the public, professional, and academic interest in and understanding

of TFD has expanded and could provide another mechanism for furthering the development of a learning community (inside and outside of TFD) focused on improving services for children and families.

8.3 Dissemination and Discussion of Research Reports

The data contained in research reports should support strategy development and contribute to improved practices and policies. This cannot happen unless the individuals who design and implement TFD interventions access and use the data, not only to validate their strategies but to inform their positions and decisions, strengthen programs, and build capacity for change among community members. Using the data in this way is an important part of “focusing on results” and ensuring the results support TFD goals. The Indicators of Change profiles, the client information system, and the economic analysis also provide important data. The data should be “collectively analyzed” at the site and project level. Ideally, this involves discussion across sectors, as well as across levels within sectors. Little time is devoted to this kind of discussion within sites, and certainly across sites, between frontline staff, management committee members, and community members. Most discussion occurs within levels and rarely with the broader community served. The focus on results could be improved by consciously attending to the need for more careful reflection across levels and sectors on what specifically the research reports and indicators of change profiles say about progress to date and the factors facilitating and / or inhibiting progress within individual sites, across sites and at the system level. Devoting more time to this kind of careful deliberation could provide valuable direction when deciding “next steps” and would facilitate sustainability planning. While this is happening to some extent it needs sustained attention. A key question is: How can data from the project be made most accessible and “usable” to all personnel so that the data gathering functions of the Project and the related dissemination of it become sources of “inspiration” and “innovation” for practice, promoting coherent and consistent practices and programmes within each of the sites?

8.4 Understanding Collaborative Relationships

Collaborative relationships are key to the development of an integrated service system. It is important, therefore, that TFD’s partner agencies understand what characterizes a “collaborative relationship” and how it is different from cooperation and coordination. It is equally important that partner agencies recognize there are many different types and levels of collaboration: interprofessional, inter-organizational, intra-organizational, family-centered and community collaboration – each with its own requirements and dynamics. All are necessary to create and sustain an integrated service system for children and families. There is evidence of confusion about the nature of collaboration which impedes progress along the integration continuum and explains why there are few examples of transformational change that really integrate existing programs. We find program pieces versus program integration. Collaboration is not a “special project” running parallel to individual organizations’ regular programming. Much of collaboration is an internal affair involving an organization’s examination of itself. Collaborative organizations must grasp the fact that to accomplish the goals of collaboration, they need to make internal changes. Furthermore, if partner agencies are not doing the necessary internal work, the collaboration puts that problem on the

table by calling for discussion from each of its partner organizations about the progress of their own organizations reinvention. How then should this confusion be addressed? How can the various types and levels of collaboration be encouraged and brought to a reality? How can interprofessional, inter-organizational, intra-organizational, family-centered and community collaboration be more fully developed and sustained, so that this and similar projects, might make a lasting difference in the lives of children? A key question, and one related to an issue that has the potential to erode the potency of some of the outcomes of this project, is this: How can philosophical coherence with regard to the fundamental goals and practices of TDF be achieved across diverse sites and agencies / systems and the professionals who work therein?