

EARLY YEARS CENTRES

INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION PROCESSES Literature Review

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**INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY
OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION PROCESSES
Literature Review (DRAFT DOCUMENT)**

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OVERVIEW

In this literature review the aim was to locate research on integrated services for early childhood development (ECD), specifically relating to evaluation, outcomes and effectiveness of collaborative, co-located services. This work is to assist with the evaluation activities which the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) is undertaking with the Provincial Office for the Early Years in British Columbia and the launch of the Early Years Centres, the latter which was recently announced by the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development.¹

A brief review of integrated services and the trend toward this type of service provision is provided as background information in Section I. It is important to note that with respect to integrated centres such as Early Years Centres or hubs, several terms are used to describe this type of service delivery and these terms are covered in Section II, Terminology and Methodology. Findings specific to evaluation processes and outcomes for integrated services are reported in Section III, Findings. Overall, this review summarizes information regarding outcomes and evaluation and is an attempt to gather key scientific papers and grey literature. Geographically, the foci of this review are provincial models of integrated service delivery in Canada, while some smaller, regional initiatives are also included, along with models from other countries. For Canadian programs, the Ontario's Early Years Centres and Better Beginnings, Better Futures provide guidance on process evaluation and program outcomes. For international programs, UK's Sure Start and Australia's Communities for Children outline process evaluation and outcome findings as well. Other evaluation information is available for programs as outlined in Tables II and III. Although this review is not exhaustive in scope, the material assembled should provide an initial foundation to support development of an evaluation process with the Early Years Centres and the Provincial Office for the Early Years.

For further information please contact [Michele Wiens](#), Librarian, with the Human Early Learning Partnership.

¹ The intent of Early Years Centres is to enable parents and families in several B.C. communities to connect to early learning, health and family services in one location. Twelve community organisations throughout the province were selected to host new BC Early Years Centres. Centres will offer a variety of programs, services and supports tailored to the needs of families with children aged 0-6 in their community. The sites were chosen by a cross-ministry selection panel that included representatives from the Ministries of Children and Family Development, Education and Health, and are located in a diverse mix of urban, rural and Aboriginal communities.¹

SECTION I INTEGRATED EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

i. Background

Early Years Centres or hubs represent provision of services in increasingly inclusive ways and they act as vehicles for joint planning of activities across sectors. In Canada, a selection of documents that outline service direction oriented toward more progressive, effective and coordinated services include *“With our best future in mind”*,² *“Early Years Study 3”*,³ *“Our emerging plan for an integrated system of early care and learning in BC”*,⁴ *“Stronger Together: Toward more Literate Communities”*,⁵ *“Integrating child care and early education: a central theme in early learning and care. Toward a provincial framework for early learning and care in Alberta”*,⁶ and *“The early years report: Early learning in PEI: An investment in the Island’s future”*.⁷ In Ontario, Child Family Centres demonstrate an increasingly coordinated and integrated system of child and families supports. Alberta has been moving toward this and Atlantic Canada and British Columbia have recently introduced integrated centres. Integrated systems and centres are seen as catalysts to facilitate networking of the family literacy environment which can ultimately help create more literate communities.⁵ Healthy Child Manitoba represents a new way of working together across government departments and with communities to develop policies, programs and services that promote the best possible outcomes for Manitoba's children.⁸ Saskatchewan has initiatives such as Better Beginnings, Better Futures.⁹ In looking at models of early childhood services around the world, Boivin et al. (2012) organized an international conference in which worldwide examples integrated early childhood services were reviewed.¹⁰

In Canada and internationally, the trend toward integrated services for children is growing, and process and outcome evaluation has been carried out for various initiatives.

Terms used to describe integrated early childhood services are covered next. Section III of this literature review will highlight findings related to both evaluation and outcomes for integrated early childhood service initiatives.

SECTION II TERMINOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

i. Terms used to describe integrated early childhood services

In Canada and in other countries, several terms are used to describe integrated early childhood services. In British Columbia, the provincial Ministries of Health, Education, and Children and Family Development launched the *Early Years Centres*, where early childhood services for families are integrated or co-located. In some regions, initiatives have been operating within a *hub* model.² A community service hub for First Nations children and families, Lifeline, is a unique community-university partnership.^{11,12} In Ontario, *Best Start hubs*¹³⁻¹⁵ follow the model of integrated services for children and families. Ontario also has *Family Resource Centres*,¹⁶ *Ontario Early Years Centres*¹⁷, *Our Kids Network Model of Integrated Service Delivery (Neighbourhood Hubs)*¹⁸ and *Neighbourhood Places*¹⁹, along with specific integrated early childhood services projects: *Better Beginnings*, *Better Futures*²⁰ and *Toronto First Duty*.²¹ Saskatchewan also has *Better Beginnings*, *Better Futures* programs.⁹ In Atlantic Canada, the Government of New Brunswick, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of Prince Edward Island and the Department of Education in Nova Scotia partnered with the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation to sponsor community networks to create integrated *Children's Centres*.²² In Manitoba, the Healthy Child Manitoba Office supports *Parent Child Coalitions*, which bring together parents, early childhood educators, educators, health care professionals and other community organisations to plan and work collaboratively to support the healthy development of children.²³ Other provinces have community coalitions working toward helping children and families, e.g., Children First, Success by Six, and Community Action Toward Children's Health (CATCH) in the Central Okanagan.²⁴ In Alberta has a network of community coalitions, and *Neighbourhood Places* have been established to deliver services for children and families.²⁵⁻²⁷ The City of Edmonton established *Schools as Community Hubs* (SACH) which offers a multifaceted hub of programs, including connections to services and support, for families, youth and children in targeted neighbourhoods.²⁸

Internationally, integrated service delivery models are found in several countries and children's centres are at the heart of many communities.²⁹ Because articles were limited to English in this review, the majority of models included here are from the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand, and some European countries. In the UK, *Sure Start Children's Centres*³⁰ operate nationally and in Wales, a similar function of service delivery is administered through *Community Hubs*.³¹ In Ireland a network of *Family Support Hubs* exists.³²⁻³⁴ In Australia, *Communities for Children* is funded by the Department of Social Services, an

² Generally, a hub is a 'one-stop shop'; it is community driven; and it operates collaboratively.

initiative in 52 communities across Australia to provide activities and programs designed to bring about positive outcomes for children aged 0 to 12 years and their families.³⁵ Queensland has established *Early Years Centres*.³⁶ In some communities in Australia, programs are referred to as *Child and Family Hubs*,³⁷ *Schools as Community Hubs*,³⁸ *Early Childhood Education Centres*, and *Early Learning Activity Centres*.^{39,40} In North Rhine-Westphalia, *Familienzentren (Family Centres)* act as the ‘hub’ of a network of local family and child welfare services designed to strengthen parenting skills and improve the reconciliation of work and family life.^{41,42} In Sweden, the same term, *Family Centres*, is used. In the Netherlands, reference is made to Centre for Youth and Families (CJG) and *SPIL Centres*.⁴³ The name SPIL Centre is derived from Spelen (play), Integreeren (integration) and Leren (learning). In South Africa, integrated ECD programs provide ECD centres with a range of support services.⁴⁴ For integrated service provision in the United States, *Best Start* programs exist in cities such as Los Angeles.⁴⁵

ii. Literature search methodology

To pinpoint papers, the scientific literature was searched using EBSCOhost, available through the University of British Columbia, which is a gateway to approximately 70 databases, including Academic Search Premier, Business Source Complete, CINAHL, ERIC, Medline, PsychINFO, and Social Work Abstracts. Grey literature was scoped using Google and Google Scholar. Given the wide-range of terms used to express integrated early childhood service provision, the search terms were listed separately to ensure broad capture of initiatives in conjunction with “evaluation”, “impact”, and “effectiveness” (Table I).

Table I Key search terms and statements

“resiliency hub” OR “school hub” OR “school-hub” OR “community hub” OR “family hub” OR “family support hub” OR “early years care centre ³ ” OR “early years centre” OR “best start” OR “sure start” OR “family centre” OR “integrated early child ⁴ development centre” OR “integrated ECD program ⁵ ” OR “integrated service hub” OR “integrated family support centre” OR “integrated child and family centre” OR “integrated services” OR “service integration” OR “neighbourhood ⁶ house” OR “neighbourhood place” OR “learning centre” OR “early childhood and family resource system” OR “early childhood centre” OR “early childhood community development centre” OR “early childhood development centre” OR “centre for early childhood development” OR “early years family resource centre” OR “circles of support” OR “early years continuum” OR “full service school” OR “whole school”

³ Centre/Center spelling variant considered for all occurrences of this word

⁴ Child/Childhood word variants considered

⁵ Program/Programme spelling variant considered for all occurrences of this word

⁶ Neighbourhood/Neighborhood spelling variant considered for all occurrences of this word

OR “healthy communities” OR “better beginnings” OR “first duty” OR “children’s centre” OR “communities for children” OR “parents’ house” OR “parenting shop” OR “early learning activity centre” OR “community-based centre” OR “shared services” OR “co-located services” OR “shared facilities” OR multisectoral partnerships”⁸

AND

evaluation OR impact OR effectiveness OR results OR findings OR outcomes OR lessons

Additional terms and combinations were used to fine-tune results. A date restriction, 2010 January -2014 December, was imposed, and English-only material was included.

Bibliographies of retrieved articles were reviewed, and select authors were searched forward and backward to uncover additional literature. Google was used to locate grey literature with search specific controls (e.g., file type, institution, title phrases).

The following parameters guided the selection of literature for review:

- * Programs offered at national, provincial, or state levels with integrated service delivery aspects and/or with community-based collaborative features
- * Programs that included a write-up of the process components of evaluation or outcomes
- * Literature from programs offered in Canada, United States, Europe, Australia, Britain, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland, New Zealand and other countries in the Western world
- * Findings presented in English⁹
- * This focus of this review is recent literature, to add to findings of earlier reviews such as Moore, 2008.⁴⁶

The majority of evaluation material found for integrated early services was grey literature – that is, it was not indexed in the scientific, peer-reviewed databases and it was more difficult to locate and required manual entry into bibliographic management software (Endnote). For select programs, such as *Better Beginnings*, *Better Futures*, there were published evaluations in journals but these tended to be more related to impact, effectiveness, and cost-benefit. Although much of the scientific literature did not provide details of the evaluation process, various grey literature was located that related to process components of evaluation.

Overall, it is believed that this review includes key publications so that meaningful information about outcomes and evaluation processes in relation to integrated early childhood services delivery can be drawn from this work.

⁷ Parents/Parents’ spelling variant considered for all occurrences of this word

⁸ These statements were used for Ebsco; variations of these were also run in Google and Google Scholar.

⁹ With some exceptions

SECTION III FINDINGS

This review includes research findings on evaluative process as well as outcomes for integrated service delivery centres or programs, such as early years centres, coalitions, hubs, and other multisectoral/multi-agency partnership initiatives aimed at helping children, families and communities. Below, findings are separated according to (i) General, (ii) Canadian, and (iii) International. Short summaries of evaluations and outcomes are provided in Tables V and VI for Canadian and international initiatives, respectively.

i. General findings related to the outcomes and evaluation aspects of centres/programs focused on integrated early childhood services

Scientific research states that partnership and multi-agency arrangements are important components of a comprehensive service strategy. Armstrong et al. (2006)⁴⁷ present an argument for the development of multisectoral partnerships, where disciplines and sectors collaborate to inform policy and practice. By working across different policy and program sectors, health disparities and underlying social determinants can be addressed. Brown and White (2006) provide a summary of the evidence base for integrated children's services,⁴⁸ as does Moore (2008).⁴⁶ The literature review by Moore (2008)⁴⁶ was conducted as an initial stage in the evaluation of the Australian Communities for Children with the overall aim of identifying best practice approaches to the establishment and operation of children's hubs (see Appendix 2). Moore collated evidence for effectiveness of interagency collaboration and children's hubs and reported on several findings including:

- the extent to which children's hubs contribute to improved access to early childhood education for children, provide support for families, and promote community cohesion;
- the barriers that impact on the establishment and operation of integrated services within children's hubs and the enablers that promote integrated service delivery; and
- the enablers that promote communication and collaborative practice between service providers.

Tables II and III provide a synthesis of barriers and enablers to establishing effective multi-agency networks and teams – these are compiled based primarily on the review carried out by Moore.

Table II Barriers to establishing effective integrated services networks

Barriers	
1.	Fiscal resources/resource allocation: lack of funding; conflicts within or between agencies over resources, sustainability and financial uncertainty, time and resource costs of joint working, lack of joint budgets.
2.	Leadership: lack of leadership or a lead agency proved problematic.
3.	Roles and responsibilities: lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities; issues of too many players and initiatives, developing an effective decision-making mechanisms.
4.	Competing priorities: different priorities, time scale and boundaries.
5.	Aims: lack of consensus, over-ambitious aims, or differences in organisational aims.
6.	Commitment: lack of commitment and support from senior management.
7.	National/provincial versus neighbourhood: weak relationships between the staff of national/provincial agencies and people working in area-based initiatives or localities.
8.	Non-fiscal resources: the 'right' staff has to be available and come together in order to work out any different perspectives on the same issue. Challenges concerning the provision of staff or lack of qualified staff, physical space in which to work together effectively; allocation of time for joint working, constant reorganisation; frequent staff turnover, inadequate or incompatible IT systems, negative professional stereotypes, lack of trust and understanding between individuals and agencies were highlighted.
9.	Government departments not joined up: limited amount of joint working between government departments, and program inflexibilities.
10.	Communication: poor communication and information sharing within and between agencies was also cited as a major challenge to successful multi-agency working (and establishing common use of language).
11.	Professional and agency cultures: different professional ideologies and agency cultures/values were challenges.
12.	Lack of interest or incentive: given that joint working carries a number of costs there need to be clear incentives to promote this way of working.
13.	Management: one of the challenges raised by multi-agency working is how any single initiative is managed at strategic level. There was evidence that multi-agency initiatives had to be seen as strongly supported and promoted at strategic level in order to remain credible at operational level.
14.	Top-down programs: many problems are associated with the nature of top-down programs emanating from national/provincial government departments.
15.	Output- and target-driven programs: some national/provincial programs give no additional weight to assisting those of deprived areas.
16.	Training opportunities: lack of ongoing training skills and capabilities; also a perception among some staff that they required additional multi-agency training in order to meet the demands of any new or extended role, as well as training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of other agencies and the way they operated.
Barriers to establishment and operation of integrated services within children's hubs	
1.	Achieving inclusiveness and equality of access
2.	Communication
3.	Staff morale
4.	Staffing and funding issues
5.	Strategy and planning

Table III Enablers to establishing effective integrated services networks

Enablers
<p><i>General:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Predisposing factors: the history of agency relations; existing informal networks; individual agency cohesion. 2. Mandate: the need, authority or requirement for collaboration; a shared recognition of the need for collaboration; political support and incentives for collaborative activity; capacity to collaborate; links to other partnerships. 3. Shared goals: aspiring as a collaborative toward mutual goals. 4. Strategic planning setting a clear course to follow according to a realistic timeline. 5. Machinery of collaboration: governance; systems and structures; practical issues, such as physical location, access to equipment, and resources. 6. Process: interactional and relational components. <p><i>Specific:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment: of both senior and front-line staff. 2. Collaboration: incentive, willingness, ability, and capacity to collaborate. 3. Common aims and objectives: clear and realistic aims and objectives that are understood and accepted by all agencies. 4. Communication and information sharing: ensuring good systems of communication at all levels, with information sharing and adequate IT systems. 5. Leadership or drive: from key decision-makers. 6. Involving the relevant personnel: strong leadership and a multi-agency steering or management group; team building; shared problem solving. 7. Understanding the culture of collaborating agencies 8. Understanding roles and responsibilities: clearly defined roles and responsibilities, clear lines of responsibility and accountability. 9. Providing adequate resources for collaboration 10. Sharing and access to funding and resources 11. Clear, targeted vision and preplanning 12. Realistic timelines: agreed timetable for implementation of changes; incremental approach to change. 13. Linkages, connections: linking projects into other planning and decision-making processes. 14. Ensuring support and training for staff: including administrative support and protected time for staff to undertake joint working activities; recruitment of staff with the right experience, knowledge and approach; joint training and team building. 15. Monitoring and evaluation of services: policies and procedures reviewed regularly in the light of changing circumstances and new knowledge. <p>Enablers to establishment and operation of integrated services within children’s ‘hubs’</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Successful leadership and management 2. Cohesive multi-agency staff teams; shared philosophy and working practices across services 3. Well-focused training opportunities for staff, leaders and managers 4. A clear focus on quality improvement and assurance 5. A responsive and flexible approach to local community needs 6. Appropriate accommodation, buildings and resources 7. A strategy for monitoring and evaluating services and identifying ongoing challenges

Moore’s 2008 review includes information on ‘lessons learned’ with respect to establishing integrated ECD centres or multi-agency networks (Table IV).

Table IV Lessons learned regarding establishing integrated ECD centres or multi-agency networks (derived using information from Moore, 2008⁴⁶)

Lessons	
1.	Advantages of co-location
2.	Advantages of combining services
3.	Linking services through assessment and client assignment processes
4.	Schools as a venue for delivering human services
5.	Value of community consultation: building trust with the community by creating opportunities for families to participate in community projects and events that are nonthreatening.
6.	Local approach; locally based social partnerships
7.	Appointment of a facilitator with appropriate skills and abilities
8.	Commitment at a senior level; support from senior levels of government: political support and incentives for collaborative activity; appropriate level of representation; agreement by all parties of the importance of collaboration; continuity of representation; service users as primary stakeholders; leadership and ‘collaborative champions’.
9.	Shared philosophical stance: shared recognition of the need for collaboration
10.	Integration initiatives need time to develop
11.	Clear objectives and achievable goals
12.	Building trust and promoting communication between agencies
13.	Importance of funding and administrative arrangements
14.	Promoting innovation
15.	Building and maintaining community participation
<p>Successful management arrangements should be</p>	
1.	Unified
2.	Participative: in the approach to staff management, with effective channels of communication.
3.	Trust-based: allowing staff the freedom to work on initiative and to innovate.
4.	Accessible: with an informal and supportive relationship between management and the front line.
5.	Led decisively: by <i>either</i> the centre manager <i>or</i> a united and experienced governing body.
6.	Supportive: of the centre manager, enabling them to develop partnership working ability, leadership skills and the ability to engage communities, and building in support roles where desired.
7.	Coordinated: in its approach to joint delivery – the role of the centre manager here is not to line manage but to coordinate and align services for maximum impact.
8.	Standardised: in relation to staff terms and conditions, to secure buy in and reduce potential conflict.
9.	Joined up: in delivery.

Recent research builds on Moore's 2008 review and indicates that early childhood intervention programs have a greater impact on the life chances of children when there is effective collaboration between the program, parents, and the community.^{49,50} Enablers for multisectoral collaboration have been cited as: a powerful shared vision of the problem to be addressed and what success would look like in solving it; strong relationships and an effective mix of partners; leadership; adequate, sustainable and flexible resources; and efficient structures and processes to do the work of collaboration.^{49,51,52} With respect to the research on the development of multisectoral collaborations designed to support early childhood development in rural communities, similar enablers for success were identified: skills, knowledge and resources of internal and external leaders.⁵³ Goodall and Vorhaus (2011)⁵⁴ state that partnership and multi-agency arrangements are an essential component of a comprehensive strategy for parental engagement – "an evidence-based model that looks to build relationships across the family, the school, and the community can improve outcomes for low income and socially culturally marginalized families." Sanders (2009) provides examples of how multi-layered interventions contribute to enhanced outcomes for families and neighbourhoods.⁵⁵

Hayes et al. (2012) states that local partnerships delivering environmental interventions result in health gain, although more evidence is needed.⁵⁶ Milton et al. (2012)⁵⁷ state that more evidence is needed to determine the population health impact of initiatives that aim to engage communities, although their synthesis found that initiatives did have positive impacts on housing, crime, social capital and community empowerment. Head and Stanley (2007)⁵⁸ confirm that the network approach of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) which includes stakeholders from three sectors - research, government policy, and professional practice – is making a difference in attracting support for evidence-based advice about effective early intervention. Also, in an evaluation of the Australian Government's Communities for Children (CfCs) program, Purcal et al. (2011)⁵⁹ report that the program increased the number of agencies working together to support families with young children (0–5 years), and it enhanced the working relationships between providers. These outcomes assisted the engagement of disadvantaged families into the early intervention program and helped to increase their trust of service providers.

In Sweden integrated family centres provide high quality and educational services that are available to all families.⁶⁰ In these centres there is co-location of the health service with the social service and the open pre-school. In places like North Rhine-Westphalia, childcare centres have been developed into family centres in order to foster Integration of services which is considered to have highly positive effects on the development of children and on the prevention of child neglect and maltreatment.⁴² In Scotland, various authorities have developed single entry points to local services, sometimes known as One Stop Shops.^{61,62} In

the US, the National Education Association, which has formed multisectoral partnerships in sixteen communities to advance student learning, reports that these partnership programs can have a powerful impact.⁶³ In California, the Children's Outcome Project promotes integrated, multisectoral place-based initiatives to improve the health and well-being of children.⁶⁴

Saewyc and Stewart (2006) identified that multi-strategy approaches, especially those which incorporate community development/coalition building and multisectoral collaboration, appear to be more effective than single strategies.⁶⁵ Collaboration and multi-layered interventions can contribute to enhanced outcomes for families and neighbourhoods.⁵⁵ Child and family hubs can strengthen children's social capital in those communities with few social facilities.⁶⁶ Moore and Fry (2011) synthesized the literature on place-based approaches to meeting the needs of young children and their families and proposed a framework for a comprehensive community-based approach with these characteristics: universal; tiered, multi-level; place-based; relational; partnership-based; governance-structure.⁶⁷

According to Hayes (2012), evaluation of interagency collaborative arrangements is reported to face many challenges.⁵⁶ Results demonstrate that collaborative community partnerships can be established to deliver interventions but it is important to agree on goals, methods of working, monitoring and evaluation before implementation to protect program fidelity and increase the potential for effectiveness. Dyson and Todd (2010) report the use of a theory of change evaluation approach to the full service extended schools (FSES) initiative in England. It argues that an approach of this kind is better able to deal with complexity.

- ii. Canadian findings related to the outcomes and evaluation aspects of centres/programs focused on integrated early childhood services

Canadian integrated service models for early childhood development are provided Table V. The models are alphabetically listed, with key findings briefly described here.

[Best Start](#) is a long-term plan initiated in 2004 and overseen by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (CYS) to better integrate services for children, youth and their families. A key aspect of the plan involves an integrated, seamless approach to early learning and care for children and families. In an evaluation of *Best Start (Ontario)*, practitioners reported professional benefits of working together while continuing to address challenges of the practitioner team relationship.⁷² Integration improved with time. Key informant interviews showed less focus on challenges related to the ECE/kindergarten teacher relationship and more focus on governance issues related to child care, class sizes and space. Findings indicate that there was improvement in the early learning environment since Year 1.

[Better Beginning, Better Futures \(BBBF\)](#), one of the early integrated programs in Ontario, included process evaluation of collaboration and partnerships based primarily on descriptive, ethnographic data (e.g., interviews, field notes) collected through surveys. For *Toronto First Duty (TFD)*, evaluation elements have included governance, access, learning environment, staffing team, parent participation and feedback (provider and participant). For both BBBF and TFD, process evaluations highlight common factors underlying successful integration:

- developing common goals and vision; “conceptual integration” to frame and guide partnership activities;
- arranging time to understand, develop and maintain integration among front-line staff and community members;
- ongoing monitoring, review and organisational learning;
- strong local leadership, where strong “bottom-up principles were balanced with general “top-down design principles,” such as bringing services into a more seamless system and increasing quality in programs;
- adapting programs on the basis of local participation to fit community characteristics.

Further to the BBBF, findings on partnerships revealed (excerpt from Corter and Peters, 2011):

(a) Benefits of partnerships

Benefits included increased levels of programming available to community residents, an increased visibility of the projects in their communities over time, joint programming with other agencies, increased funding for programs, changes in attitudes and practices of other service providers in the community, increased collaboration among partner agencies, and the development of new settings in the community designed to improve the well-being of children, parents, and families.

(b) Process of partnerships

Process findings on partnerships included learning how to select partners, creating a shared vision for collaboration, developing an organisational structure that facilitated partnerships, the importance of clarifying roles of partners, using a consensus approach to decision-making, the need to decide who represents partner organisations in the BBBF project, and the importance of agency support and resources for the participation of partners.

(c) Challenges of partnerships

Challenges for partnerships included learning how to collaborate, differing levels of agency commitment and support for partnerships, and developing trust and positive working relationships.

For [Ontario Early Years Centres](#), evaluation was undertaken by Ryerson University and it consisted of focus groups with parents; two different questionnaires also given to parents and staff; and formal observations of the interactions between staff and children, between staff and parents, and among children and how they interacted with the OEYC environment. As part of the evaluation, children were asked to talk about their experience in the OEYC drop-in programs. In evaluating the Toronto network of Ontario Early Years Centres, six overarching research questions were examined:

1. What are the characteristics of program participants?
2. Why do families participate in OEYC programs?

3. Are participants satisfied with OEYC programs?
4. Are OEYCs integrated into the community?
5. Are OEYC programs addressing the needs of their community?
6. Do OEYCs offer quality programs?

Key findings of the OEYC Toronto network (as drawn from DiSanto et al. 2013, pp. 1-3) include:

(a) Demographics

The families served by the Toronto OEYCs are highly diverse in their socio-economic backgrounds, education obtained, and ethno-cultural backgrounds. OEYC participants include both newcomers to Canada and to the community, which suggests that the OEYC sites may provide the link that is needed for newcomers to connect with others in their community and to resources.

(b) Participation in OEYC programs

Participants in OEYCs participate for a wide range of reasons. These include opportunities to connect with others and to socialize within their community, preparing children for school, providing opportunities for their children to socialize and play with other children, and learning about activity ideas that could be used in the home environment.

OEYC programs are well attended and in some cases are not able to serve everyone who wants to participate. Limited space and over-crowding are an issue at some programs. There are also limits on the number of participants able to access registered programs. Both may be the result of limited program funding.

(c) Satisfaction Ratings

Families participate in OEYC programs because of their high satisfaction with their experiences, including the parenting support they receive from OEYC staff. Children's developmental outcomes are reported by family members to be a result of their participation in OEYC programs.

Participants who have children with special needs reported very high satisfaction ratings with the programs. This is encouraging and indicates that the OEYCs are meeting the needs of those families participating in the program.

High satisfaction ratings are also a result of staff characteristics, the welcoming atmosphere, program spaces, and the opportunities for children to play and learn in a safe, stimulating environment.

Children also described their participation in a range of activities and articulated their favourite activities, play areas, and toys. Children's drawings, photographs, and conversations revealed that the dramatic play centre was their most favourite area to play. They also reported that they enjoyed gross motor, literacy, numeracy, and visual arts activities.

(d) Community Integration

Practitioners are proud of the degree to which they are integrated into their professional communities, as well as the communities they serve. They discuss the capacity for OEYCs to support and strengthen family links to other people in their communities. Practitioners in OEYCs are particularly proud of the degree to which their programs are responsive to their communities.

Service integration networks are particularly important for supporting children with special needs in the universal drop-in programs and should be considered as ongoing systems change takes place.

(e) Children's Programming

Overall, good quality programming is reported for the domains of language-reasoning, and the range of activities available. Recommendations for expanding activities in music, sensory play, numeracy, and scientific inquiry are made in this report.

The quality of interactions amongst children and between adults and children is a program strength and provides a basis for quality inclusion practice in OEYC programs.

(f) Quality Programs

The findings of this evaluation indicate that overall Toronto Network OEYCs are of high quality, meet the objectives of supporting children and their families, and are active in their professional communities as well as in the communities that they serve.

The [Early Years Continuum Project](#) evaluation was carried out by Krupa et al. (2014) and the project team developed evaluation tools for community voice (PhotoVoice and “most significant change stories”), parent and service provider engagement (focus groups and surveys), team capacity (site coordinator focus groups), capacity for analysis and planning (community and province). Krupa et al. reported (excerpt):

- (a) **“Communities learned how to engage parents and service providers, create continua of services and supports, and transform environments.”** This was facilitated by *“direct communications, use and sharing of diverse processes and tools, increasing depth of engagement with service providers, and uncovering barriers and facilitating factors for accessing services. Linking service providers increased communication and collaboration, and increased referrals in some cases... Two sites reported ability to reach children earlier, which increased service impact and efficiency.”*
- (b) **“Community and provincial teams built capacities to learn, create and sustain change. Teams encountered major challenges in the first 3 years, but emerged from them with capacities (to transform ECD environments and services) in key domains, e.g., stakeholder participation and collaboration; sense of community; leaders; networks.”**
- (c) **“There were six keys to success in ECD community capacity building and action:**
 - **Project Management Team:** wise mentors, well-connected, able to navigate complexities.
 - **Site Coordinators:** resourceful, respected communicators, in touch with their communities.
 - **Evaluation support:** helped clarify situations and decisions, and built capacity.
 - **Community-controlled resources:** empowered the sites to respond to local needs/dynamics.
 - **Strategic assessment/ planning/ action:** enable the right people to understand and decide.
 - **Enough time:** to allow community development, build relationships, clarify roles, engage stakeholders, create collaboration, understand complexities, take action and improve it”.

[Schools as Community Hubs](#) (SACH) involved multiple community partners in a crime prevention pilot project working to build a safe community for children, youth and their families in Edmonton. This project intended to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors of vulnerable families while building a sense of community in the process. The project was delivered over a three-year period, starting in three schools and growing to six schools/locations by Year 3. The key evaluation questions asked:

1. To what extent did this project achieve its goals and objectives?
2. What worked well, what did not, and why?
3. What is the Social Return on Investment from this work?
4. What were some unintended outcomes of the project?

5. What lessons were learned?

Overall the project produced a value of \$4.60 for every dollar invested in the SACH. Participation grew over the three-year project and youth reported feeling more satisfied with self, improved relationships with family, less conflict at home, more aware of services available, being involved with a better group of friends, and better able to get help if needed because of the program. Parents of children attending Out of School Time (OST) programming, most often report having improved relationships and a greater connection to the community. Additional outcomes were noted:

- Schools as hubs increased the effectiveness of services;
- Informal parent networks were formed;
- Students from SACH went on to leadership positions;
- Tremendous demand emerged for SACH programs and services; and
- Greater sense of trust in the schools was recognized.

The REACH report includes a summary of best practices for operating school hubs (see Table V – Canada – Schools as Community Hubs (SACH)). Key lessons learned from SACH were that this program was integral to school systems and requires ongoing funding, dedicated resources, and a backbone organisation with one project coordinator. As well, as part of the program it is important to include shared measurement, reinforcing activity, and have continuous communication.

For [Toronto First Duty \(TFD\)](#), an Atkinson Centre research team led the evaluation and analysis of this early childhood demonstration project. Process evaluations indicated that factors underlying successful integration included developing common goals and vision - “conceptual integration” to guide partnership activities, develop and maintain integration among front-line staff and community members. Ongoing monitoring, review and organisational learning were also noted to be important to successful integration in the communities studied. Strong local leadership was key where strong “bottom-up principles were balanced against general “top-down design principles,” such as bringing services into a more seamless system and increasing quality in programs such as child care or integrated care and kindergarten. Models were adapted on the basis of local participation to fit the unique characteristics of each community. Evaluation elements included governance, access, learning environment, staffing team, parent participation and feedback (provider and participant).

Phase 1 research described the implementation process in terms of variations and adaptations of the model across the five communities, as well as common struggles and successes across the sites. Struggles included issues related to professional turf; missing elements of space and funding; staffing and leadership turnover; and working without system support across sectors

“siloes” at higher levels of government. Nevertheless the process evaluation also showed successes. Strong leadership and time to meet allowed staff teams to come together over time to improve program quality and delivery. Progress was made in each of the sites on five dimensions of service integration (staff team, programming, access points, governance and parent involvement).

iii. International findings related to the outcomes and evaluation aspects of centres/programs focused on integrated early childhood services

For international initiatives, the national evaluation of [Sure Start](#) has extensive documentation of how centres served areas, aspects delivery of services and activities to families, managerial approaches, etc. Evaluation captured views of staff, as well as parents who were attending the centres to obtain a broader picture of centre provision. Australia’s [Communities for Children \(CfC\)](#), too, has evaluation material available that outlines broad aspects of its national initiative. The evaluation of the CfC initiative involved the collection of data from a number of sources using a range of methodologies. Key findings (excerpt from Edwards et al., 2014)⁶⁸:

- CfC has had some of the desired effects on parents and children, but these were not strong or sustained for long enough to make statistically significant differences over the long term.
- Over the five waves of Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA), the vast majority of findings indicated that the wellbeing of children and parents in CfC communities was better than in comparison communities, even if these differences did not reach statistical significance.
- Very few studies of early intervention services follow children for six years and provide the depth of information that SFIA has been able to deliver.
- Many other studies of early intervention services have also failed to find sustained positive effects over the longer term (e.g., National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) Team, 2012).⁶⁹
- Whether another model, a more intensive version of CfC or a set of evidence-based interventions would have had a greater effect is not known.

A detailed description of the evaluation methodology is provided in the *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy: National Evaluation Framework*.^{68,70} Please see Tables V and VI for further information on select programs from other countries which have outlined evaluation aspects.

Table V Evaluations of integrated services (Canada)

Project	Reference	Abstract
Best Start (Ontario)	Corter and Peters (2011) ^{20,21,71} Pelletier (2012) ⁷²	Little specific information available on evaluation components for the provincial initiative. Key findings: Research that has been examining the implementation and impact of school-based integrated early childhood services, specifically kindergarten, child care and parenting support in the Peel Best Start program indicates the following:

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	Reference	Abstract
		<p>“This research has shown that there has been improvement in the relationship and the early learning environment since Year 1. Key informant interviews show less focus on challenges related to the ECE/kindergarten teacher relationship and more focus on governance issues related to child care, class sizes and space. Staff survey results show that practitioners report professional benefits of working together while continuing to address challenges of the practitioner team relationship. The Indicators of Change focus group data show that sites are working together to develop more integrated teams and programs. For most of the sites, integration continues to improve with time.” (Pelletier, 2012)</p> <p>For individual programs see Sudbury¹³, Hamilton¹⁴</p>
Better Beginnings, Better Futures (Ontario) ¹⁰	Hayward et al. (2011) ⁷³ ; Corter and Peters (2011) ²⁰ ; Pancer et al. (2013) ⁷⁴ ; Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (2008) ⁹	<p>Better Beginnings, Better Futures (BBBF) is a large-scale, multi-year, longitudinal research-demonstration project designed to reduce children’s problems, promote healthy child development, and enhance family and community environments in eight economically disadvantaged communities in the province of Ontario. The initial intervention was implemented from 1993 to 1997. Five project sites focused their programs on children from birth to age four and their families (“the younger child sites”), and three project sites on children 4- to 8-years-old and their families (“the older child sites”). One key principle of BBBF was “service integration” in order for children and their families to receive seamless support from the BBBF projects, schools and other services. Process evaluation of collaboration and partnerships was based on extensive descriptive, ethnographic data (e.g., interviews, field notes) collected and analyzed by site researchers in the eight BBBF sites during the start-up phase from 1991-93, the intervention phase from 1993-97, and in a follow-up study in 2003. Outcome evaluation was based on a broad range of measures collected during the four years of project involvement, and again several years later both in the BBBF project sites and also in demographically matched comparison sites to assess effects on the children, their families and the local neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Key findings: Longitudinal results provide evidence that universal, comprehensive, community-based programs can successfully promote long-term development of children and families from disadvantaged neighbourhoods at a modest cost, and with the potential for a return on investment within seven years after program completion. Some specific outcomes for children included decreases in over-anxious emotional problems as well as improvements in social skills. Outcomes for parents and families included reduced smoking by mothers and others in the home and positive impacts on social supports, but no clear evidence of improvement in family functioning. Neighbourhood and community outcomes indicated increases in parents’ satisfaction with the condition of their personal dwellings, a large increase in children using neighbourhood playgrounds, higher levels of parental involvement in neighbourhood activities, and a greater sense of community involvement.</p> <p>Findings on partnerships revealed:</p> <p>(d) Benefits of partnerships</p> <p>Benefits included increased levels of programming available to community residents, an increased visibility of the projects in their communities over time, joint programming with other agencies, increased funding for programs, changes in attitudes and practices of other service providers in the community, increased collaboration among partner agencies, and the development of new settings in</p>

¹⁰ Also in Saskatchewan: Better Beginnings, Better Futures. effective practices policy and guidelines for prekindergarten in Saskatchewan.⁹

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	Reference	Abstract
		<p>the community designed to improve the well-being of children, parents, and families.</p> <p>(e) Process of partnerships Process findings on partnerships included learning how to select partners, creating a shared vision for collaboration, developing an organisational structure that facilitated partnerships, the importance of clarifying roles of partners, using a consensus approach to decision-making, the need to decide who represents partner organisations in the BBBF project, and the importance of agency support and resources for the participation of partners.</p> <p>(f) Challenges of partnerships Challenges for partnerships included learning how to collaborate, differing levels of agency commitment and support for partnerships, and developing trust and positive working relationships.</p> <p>Positive outcomes were found for BBBF children, their families and the local neighbourhood at the end of the four-year intervention period, however, follow-up measures indicated positive BBBF outcomes in the older child sites but not in the younger child sites. Further, measures collected when these children were in Grade 12 indicated lasting positive BBBF outcomes for the children and their parents - there was evidence that parents in the intervention communities were engaging in fewer risk behaviours, had lower levels of depression and had more community involvement than parents in the comparison communities. An economic analysis demonstrated a cost savings to the Ontario Government funders of more than \$2 for each \$1 originally invested in the project. (Corter and Peters, 2011, pp. 2-3)</p> <p>For more on findings see: Corter and Peters, 2011; Hayward et al., 2011 (p. 10). For evidence-based impact research, see Pancer, 2013. For Saskatchewan’s BBBF, see Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2008.</p>
Early Years Centres (Ontario – Toronto Network)	Di Santo et al. (2013) ⁷⁵ ; Mothercraft (2013) ⁷⁶	<p>In 2003 the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services introduced Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs) and the opening of the OEYCs was intended to provide universal programs that were adapted to meet the unique needs of their local communities. Each OEYC was also expected to ensure that all families across the province, regardless of where they lived, had access to the same set of effective, core early years services. In 2013, the Toronto Network of Ontario Early Years Centres (TNOEYC) commissioned a research team from Ryerson University to conduct the first ever city-wide evaluation, which consisted of: focus groups with parents; two different questionnaires also given to parents and staff; and formal observations of the interactions between staff and children, between staff and parents, and among children and how they interacted with the OEYC environment. As part of the evaluation, children were also asked to talk about their experience in the OEYC drop-in programs. The study occurred in the TNOEYC’s 24 main sites across the city of Toronto.</p> <p>In evaluating the Toronto network of Ontario Early Years Centres, six overarching research questions were examined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the characteristics of program participants? 2. Why do families participate in OEYC programs? 3. Are participants satisfied with OEYC programs?

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Reference	Abstract
	<p>4. Are OEYCs integrated into the community? 5. Are OEYC programs addressing the needs of their community? 6. Do OEYCs offer quality programs?</p> <p>Key findings (drawn from (DiSanto et al. 2013, pp. 1-3))</p> <p>i. Demographics The families served by the Toronto OEYCs are highly diverse in their socio-economic backgrounds, education obtained, and ethno-cultural backgrounds. OEYC participants include both newcomers to Canada and to the community, which suggests that the OEYC sites may provide the link that is needed for newcomers to connect with others in their community and to resources.</p> <p>ii. Participation in OEYC programs Participants in OEYCs participate for a wide range of reasons. These include opportunities to connect with others and to socialize within their community, preparing children for school, providing opportunities for their children to socialize and play with other children, and learning about activity ideas that could be used in the home environment. OEYC programs are well attended and in some cases are not able to serve everyone who wants to participate. Limited space and over-crowding are an issue at some programs. There are also limits on the number of participants able to access registered programs. Both may be the result of limited program funding.</p> <p>iii. Satisfaction Ratings Families participate in OEYC programs because of their high satisfaction with their experiences, including the parenting support they receive from OEYC staff. Children’s developmental outcomes are reported by family members to be a result of their participation in OEYC programs. Participants who have children with special needs reported very high satisfaction ratings with the programs. This is encouraging and indicates that the OEYCs are meeting the needs of those families participating in the program. High satisfaction ratings are also a result of staff characteristics, the welcoming atmosphere, program spaces, and the opportunities for children to play and learn in a safe, stimulating environment. Children also described their participation in a range of activities and articulated their favourite activities, play areas, and toys. Children’s drawings, photographs, and conversations revealed that the dramatic play centre was their most favourite area to play. They also reported that they enjoyed gross motor, literacy, numeracy, and visual arts activities.</p> <p>iv. Community Integration Practitioners are proud of the degree to which they are integrated into their professional communities, as well as the communities they serve. They discuss the capacity for OEYCs to support and strengthen family links to other people in their communities. Practitioners in OEYCs are particularly proud of the degree to which their programs are responsive to their communities. Service integration networks are particularly important for supporting children with special needs in the universal drop-in programs and should be considered as ongoing systems change takes place.</p> <p>v. Children’s Programming</p>

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	Reference	Abstract
		<p>Overall, good quality programming is reported for the domains of language-reasoning, and the range of activities available. Recommendations for expanding activities in music, sensory play, numeracy, and scientific inquiry are made in this report.</p> <p>The quality of interactions amongst children and between adults and children is a program strength and provides a basis for quality inclusion practice in OEYC programs.</p> <p>vi. Quality Programs</p> <p>The findings of this evaluation indicate that overall Toronto Network OEYCs are of high quality, meet the objectives of supporting children and their families, and are active in their professional communities as well as in the communities that they serve.</p> <p>The summary (Mothercraft, 2013) and full report (Di Santo et al., 2013) are available for details.</p>
Early Years Centres (Ontario)	Ontario Early Years Centres Provincial Network (2011) ⁷⁷ ; Ontario Early Years Centre (Simcoe)(2010) ⁷⁸ ; E3 Community Services Inc ⁷⁹	Outcome evaluation guidelines and program tools for Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC) are available for centres – see references noted.
Early Years Continuum Project (Alberta)	Krupa et al. (2014) ⁸⁰	<p>The Early Years Continuum Project (EYCP) was designed to create and sustain a comprehensive continuum of community supports for families with young children. Three Alberta communities were engaged to help build an understanding of the essential qualities of family and community environments needed for healthy early childhood development. The evaluation team began working with Early Years Continuum Project in July 2011 to support project development, build capacity for evaluation and action, and provide data and analysis for assessment. Frequent Project Team communications (i.e., Think Tank days, 1-2 hour conferences), facilitated collaborative relationships, analysis of situations and issues, common understanding, sharing resources and strategy, and solving problems. The Project Team also developed common tools for project work and evaluation, and capacities for evaluative thinking, planning and decision-making. The evaluation tools enhanced community voice (PhotoVoice & Most Significant Change Stories), parent and service provider engagement (focus groups & surveys), team capacity (site coordinator focus groups), and Community and Provincial capacity for analysis and planning.</p> <p>For EYCP, there were 3 over-arching goals (drawn from Krupa et al., 2014, pp. 1-2):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Families have access to a continuum of early learning and care services in their communities; 2. Children have opportunities to build a strong foundation of learning and development prior to school entry; and 3. Parents needs and interests inform decisions regarding environments to support ECD. <p>As this larger Project Team refined understanding of the communities and factors influencing progress, and began a Developmental Evaluation (DE) approach, two “cross-cutting” capacity-development goals emerged:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Communities develop capacities to create positive change (i.e., engage stakeholders, establish governance and network structures, nurture leaders, analyze situations and

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Reference	Abstract
	<p>problems, think evaluatively, develop strategies, obtain resources, facilitate and monitor); 5. The Project Team develops capacities for capacity building, evaluation, communication and translating learning to inform/support evolution of policies and practices.</p> <p>Key findings:</p> <p>1. Communities learned how . . . to engage parents and service providers, create continua of services and supports, and transform environments Site teams used extensive direct communications, developed diverse processes and tools, and shared them with one another. They created Resource Directories and events for various purposes: network stakeholders, engage parents, and train These increased ECD understanding, built confidence in parenting, enabled access to supports and services, and added a parent voice to policy consultations. EYCP engaged service providers, increased the depth of their engagement, and uncovered barriers and facilitating factors for accessing services. Linking service providers increased communication and collaboration, and increased referrals in some cases. Service providers became more responsive to family and community factors, reducing some barriers to access. In 2 sites, they reported ability to reach children earlier, which increased service impact and efficiency.</p> <p>2. Community & Provincial teams built capacities to learn, create and sustain change Teams at both local & provincial levels encountered major challenges and changes in the first 3 years, but emerged from them with capacities (to transform ECD environments and services) in key domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder participation / engagement (numbers, diversity and depth); • Sense of community (interdependence among local stakeholders); leaders and champions; • Organisational structures and networks; • Obtaining supports and resources for community action; • Inquiry (evaluative thinking, ability to assess & plan [including capacity building]); and, • Collaboration among stakeholders. <p>3. There were 6 keys to success in ECD community capacity building and action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management Team: wise mentors, well-connected, able to navigate complexities; • Site Coordinators: resourceful, respected communicators, in touch with their communities; • Evaluation support: helped clarify situations and decisions, and built capacity; • Community-controlled resources: empowered the sites to respond to local needs/dynamics; • Strategic assessment/ planning/ action: enable the right people to understand and decide • Enough time: to allow community development, build relationships, clarify roles, engage stakeholders, create collaboration, understand complexities, take action and improve it. <p>For more, see Krupa et al. (2014)</p>

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	Reference	Abstract
Integrated Child Centres (Atlantic Canada)	Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (2014) ²²	Evaluation methods are not yet provided on website.
Schools as Community Hubs (SACH)	REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Families (2013) ²⁸	<p>The Schools as Community Hubs (SACH) involved multiple community partners in a crime prevention pilot project working to build a safe community for children, youth and their families in Edmonton. The intention of this project was to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors of vulnerable families while building a sense of community in the process. The project was delivered over a three-year period, starting in three schools and growing to six schools/locations by Year 3. Project aims were to: 1) build a coordinated partnership and strategy that positions schools as key access points for high needs families, children and youth and results in changing systems delivery and processes, and 2) connect with families, youth and children in targeted neighbourhoods to offer a multifaceted hub of programs, including connections to services and support, recourse and mentoring, critical hours activities and capacity building. The project was evaluated using the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework.</p> <p>Key findings: Overall the project produced a value of \$4.60 for every dollar invested in the SACH. Participation grew over the three-year project and youth reported feeling more satisfied with self, improved relationships with family, less conflict at home, more aware of services available, being involved with a better group of friends, and better able to get help if needed because of the program. Parents of children attending Out of School Time (OST) programming, most often report having improved relationships and a greater connection to the community.</p> <p>The REACH report provides the detailed results of the pilot project, including how the work evolved over the course of the project's three-year lifespan, the significant outcomes achieved, the SROI analysis and other lessons learned. Also, the report includes a summary of best practices for operating school hubs. In brief, best practices include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordination 2. Strong relationships with school administration in each location 3. Protocols/Terms of Reference 4. Consistent meetings with service providers 5. Designated space in schools 6. Program variety 7. First language supports 8. Staff diversity that reflects student/community population 9. Designated staff 10. On-site coordinator 11. Academic education assistant 12. Cultural competency training 13. Childcare 14. Shared meals 15. Welcoming environment 16. Natural supports and mentors 17. Trained volunteers/post-secondary students 18. Meaningful opportunities for parents 19. Free access – Service for all

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	Reference	Abstract
		20. Leadership/mentorship opportunities for jr/sr high school students in the program 21. Searching for alternative partners 22. Healthy Students/Healthy Families 23. Afterschool class management strategies 24. Teacher support/involvement 25. Reflection and evaluation 26. Orientation and relationship building for new teachers 27. The OST program of Schools as Community Hubs Model 28. Multi-age group programs 29. Research
Toronto First Duty	Corter et al. (2012) ⁸¹ ; Corter and Peters (2011) ²⁰ ; Corter and Pelletier (2010) ²¹	<p>Toronto First Duty (TFD) is a universal early learning and care program model. It began in 2001 as a demonstration project of service integration across early childhood programs of child care, kindergarten and family support in school-based hubs. Phase 1 of TFD, with implementation of the model in five community sites, concluded in 2005. Phase 2, covering the period 2006 to 2008, focused on knowledge mobilization, policy change, and further development of the TFD model in one of the original five sites, Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre (BWELC). Phase 3 of TFD extended to 2011 with focused research on integrated staff teams and learning environments in full day early learning programs, and additional studies on integration of community services for children under four.</p> <p>An Atkinson Centre research team led the evaluation and analysis of the TFD early childhood demonstration project. Process evaluations indicate that factors underlying successful integration include developing common goals and vision - “conceptual integration” to guide partnership activities, develop and maintain integration among front-line staff and community members. Ongoing monitoring, review and organisational learning were also noted to be important to successful integration in the communities studied. Strong local leadership was a key. Strong “bottom-up principles were balanced against general “top-down design principles,” such as bringing services into a more seamless system and increasing quality in programs such as child care or integrated care and kindergarten. Models were adapted on the basis of local participation to fit the unique characteristics of each community. Evaluation elements included governance, access, learning environment, staffing team, parent participation and feedback (provider and participant).</p> <p>Key findings: Phase 1 research described the implementation process in terms of variations and adaptations of the model across the five communities, as well as common struggles and successes across the sites. Struggles included issues related to professional turf, missing nuts and bolts of space and funding, staffing and leadership turnover, and working without system support across sectors “siloed” at higher levels of government. Nevertheless the process evaluation also showed successes. Strong leadership and time to meet allowed staff teams to come together over time to improve program quality and delivery. Progress was made in each of the sites on five dimensions of service integration (staff team, programming, access points, governance and parent involvement). For outcomes, integrated provision of care, education and family support in TFD appeared to reduce parental daily hassles in negotiating disconnected kindergarten and child care arrangement. It was reported that the TFD project contributed to both local policy development in several school boards and municipalities and to provincial policy in Ontario’s Best Start and Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten educare initiatives. (Corter and Peters, 2011, pp. 3)</p>

Table VI Evaluations of integrated services (International)

Australia		
Children’s centres (Victoria)	Moore (2008) ⁴⁶	<p>This literature review was conducted as Stage 1 of the evaluation of Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) children’s centres with the overall aim of identifying best practice approaches to the establishment and operation of children’s hubs (see Appendix 2). In this review, Moore collates evidence for effectiveness of interagency collaboration and children’s hubs. The specific aims of the review were: to examine best practice models both nationally and internationally related to the development of integrated children’s hubs and identify the framework and principal elements that make them best practice; to identify examples of innovative centre governance arrangements that promote service integration and include parents in decision-making roles; to identify the extent to which children’s hubs contribute to improved access to early childhood education for children, provide support for families, promote community cohesion and reduce the impact of social isolation; to identify the barriers that impact on the establishment and operation of integrated services within children’s hubs and the enablers that promote integrated service delivery; to identify the extent to which children’s hubs encourage communication between staff and families and collaborative practice between service providers.</p>
Communities for Children initiative	Muir (2010) ⁸²	<p>This article summarises the key findings of the national evaluation of the Communities for Children (CfC) initiative. The evaluation of the CfC was undertaken as part of an evaluation of several area-based interventions known as the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS). The study was undertaken by the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), University of New South Wales (UNSW), and the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) for the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The evaluation of the CfC initiative involved the collection of data from a number of sources using a range of methodologies.</p> <p>Key findings (excerpt from Edwards et al., 2014)⁶⁸:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CfC has had some of the desired effects on parents and children, but these were not strong or sustained for long enough to make statistically significant differences over the long term. • Over the five waves of SFIA, the vast majority of findings indicated that the wellbeing of children and parents in CfC communities was better than in comparison communities, even if these differences did not reach statistical significance. • Very few studies of early intervention services follow children for six years and provide the depth of information that SFIA has been able to deliver. • Many other studies of early intervention services have also failed to find sustained positive effects over the longer term (e.g., National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) Team, 2012). • Whether another model, a more intensive version of CfC or a set of

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		<p>evidence-based interventions would have had a greater effect is not known.</p> <p>A detailed description of the evaluation methodology and outcomes is provided in the <i>Stronger Families and Communities Strategy: National Evaluation Framework</i> (SPRC & AIFS, 2005)⁸³ and in the full evaluation reports (Edwards et al., 2014⁶⁸ and 2009⁷⁰; Muir et al., 2009)⁸⁴.</p>
Communities for Children programme	Purcal et al. (2011) ⁵⁹	The article investigates findings from the evaluation of the Australian Government's Communities for Children (CfC) programme, and reports on the number and quality of partnership activities, factors contributing to improved partnerships, organisational and practical factors, and challenges and barriers.
Communities for Children (Broadmeadows)	Centre for Community Child Health in partnership with Hume Early Years Partnership (2010) ^{85,86}	The results parallel the National CfC Evaluation. This Local Evaluation of the CfC program (Broadmeadows) uses multiple methods that offer triangulation of results from parents, program staff and cross-sectoral partners of the Hume Early Years Partnership (HEYPP). The results, collected over a three-year period, indicate that parents and children involved in the program increased their social and community connectedness and that improvement was maintained or enhanced over the three-year period. The Broadmeadows CfC site worked with at least three thousand families, on both an episodic and programmatic basis.
Early Years Centre initiative (Queensland)	Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment (2013) ⁸⁷	The Queensland-based service was externally evaluated in an effort to generate knowledge of the efficacy of the Early Years Centre (EYC) integrated service delivery model. The report identifies the impacts of integration and partnerships; discusses the challenges and opportunities of multidisciplinary programming; reinforces the value of integrated community development and capacity building; demonstrates the benefits of culturally responsive service strategies; and assesses the governance and management systems required to deliver the EYC initiative. This report is a summary of the external evaluation of the Queensland Government funded Early Years Centre (EYC) initiative. The evaluation was undertaken by Urbis Pty Ltd from December 2010 to October 2012. This report presents the background context of the initiative, key findings from the evaluation relating to the establishment of key aspects of the model, and outcomes for children and families. It also highlights some of the strengths and future considerations for the EYC initiative.
Early Years Centre (Queensland)	Benevolent Society (2014) ⁸⁸	The Early Years Centres (EYCs) are one-stop-shops or service hubs supporting the health, development, wellbeing and safety of families who have young children aged up to eight years. The centres offer a range of universal and targeted early childhood education, care and health services, such as playgroups, parenting support and education programs, home visiting, family support, and long day care and kindergarten. The Benevolent Society runs three of the four Early Years Centres in Queensland, covering nine locations in total plus mobile outreach. This snapshot presents the key interim findings of an internal evaluation of two of these centres. A final report, assessing the impact of the Early Years Centres on children and families, will be available later in 2014.
Family support services	Australian Institute of Family Studies	This website provides a brief overview of evaluation and innovation in the context of family support services. Child Family Community Australia (CFCA) provides a number of evaluation resource sheets covering further aspects of program evaluation: broader

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	(2013) ⁸⁹	issues relating to evidence and ethics in evaluation; the basic terms, types and principles of evaluation; getting an evaluation plan under way and keeping it on track; and what happens when the evaluation is complete. For more information see website of reference noted.
Family and Child Centre. FamilyZone Ingle Farm Hub	McInnes and Diamond (2011) ³⁷	The key findings of the evaluation of the FamilyZone Hub are provided, along with a list of recommendations which was generated during the evaluation process. The recommendations were grouped around the key themes: Service Integration; Service Catchment; Quality Children’s Programs, and Parenting Support. The recommendations were intended to guide considerations by FamilyZone Hub stakeholders about service development at the site.
Neighbourhood Houses & Learning Centres’ experience in 30 Community Hubs	Perry and Savage (2012) ³⁹	This report presents the findings and recommendations regarding Neighbourhood Houses in community hubs. The Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC) investigated relationships between variations in the ways community hubs were established and the outcomes for Neighbourhood Houses and their participants. Recent government policy has encouraged the development of community hubs where various services are co-located, and Neighbourhood Houses have been encouraged to be part of these hub arrangements. Neighbourhood Houses have been identified as ‘shared facilities’, however, a definition that entails co-location of these ‘shared facilities’ with other services is more consistent with the current policy direction.
Evaluation step-by-step guide	Pope and Jolly (2008) ⁹⁰	This site provides step-by-step guides to design an evaluation and help assess whether a project or program has met its objectives and achieved its desired outcomes.
GERMANY		
Family centres in North Rhine-Westphalia	Stöbe-Blossey (2013) ⁴²	This paper deals with the implementation of integrated services providing early support for young children and their families. The integration of services is considered to have highly positive effects on the development of children and on the prevention of child neglect and maltreatment. Therefore, childcare centres have been developed into family centres offering different services in order to foster this integration. The implementation of integrated services requires adequate governance structures on different levels. The external level concerns the framework the state offers for the integration of services. On an intermediate level, the cooperation between different institutions on the local level is to be considered. The internal level is related to questions of management, organisational development and team building. Based on experiences from family centres in the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany), the paper focuses on these different aspects of the governance of integrated services.
IRELAND		
Case of ‘youngballymun’	Habib et al. (2012) ³⁴	This report involves evaluating complex community change initiatives in a ‘real world’ example from Ireland. In an attempt to apply general principles to ‘real world’ challenges and opportunities in the field of evaluation of complex community initiatives, experienced researchers, practitioners and policy makers were invited to work together over two days in a workshop to identify key messages that would be relevant to the work of the participants in the Ballymun community. The workshop was organized by the Centre for Effective Services and members of the International Network of Child Policy Research Centres (INCPRC). The Network consists of 13 centres

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		from eleven countries and all of the centres work in research, policy formation and practice development concerning the well-being of children and families, but the balance and focus of the work varies between the centres.
NEW ZEALAND		
Early Years Service Hubs	New Zealand Family and Community Services (2009) ⁹¹	An evaluation of the Early Years Service Hubs initiative was completed in 2009. The evaluation identified several factors that contributed to the successful establishment of the Hubs, including: good community consultation and partnership, identification of a high quality and independent host organisations, early appointment of coordinators and widespread community support. Other achievements arising from the work of the Hubs were identified in this evaluation as follows: community relationships built and strengthened through working together towards the shared goal of the betterment of children; raised awareness about the services available for young children in communities which had an Early Years hubs; increased collaboration amongst service providers who did not previously work together; identification of gaps in services for young children and exploration of solutions; and the set-up of new early years services in Hub communities. For more information see website of reference noted.
UK		
Children Centres in England: parenting services	Evangelou et al. (2014) ⁹²	This is the sixth report from the Evaluation of Children’s Centres in England (ECCE) project, which is a six-year study commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) and undertaken by NatCen Social Research, the University of Oxford and Frontier Economics. ECCE aims to provide an in-depth understanding of children’s centre services, including their effectiveness for children and families and an assessment of their economic cost in relation to different types of services. The ECCE evaluation is producing a very detailed picture of the first two phases of children’s centres in England – those which are aimed at the most disadvantaged areas. It aims to describe how effective centres are in terms of using different managerial approaches, and the delivery of services and activities to families. ECCE also considers the cost of delivering different types of services, and it will establish estimates of the impact of children’s centres upon a range of child, parent, and family outcomes. It was deemed important to capture not only the views of the members of staff, but also of the parents who were attending the centres to obtain a broader picture of centre provision.
Evaluation of Children Centres in England	Smith (2014) ⁹³	This report forms part of the national Evaluation of Children’s Centres in England (ECCE). The evaluation focuses on national samples of children’s centres, which particularly focused on the 30% most disadvantaged areas in England. It includes studies of the management, organisation and programmes offered in the centres; a longitudinal study of families and children who used these children’s centres and their outcomes; and a cost-benefit analysis of the programme. A key objective of the Sure Start Children’s Centre programme was that centres should serve areas, families and children with high social needs. This report addresses three main questions in relation to this: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How were the local areas, served or ‘reached’ by each centre, defined? 2. What were the principal characteristics of these areas and how were they changing over time? 3. How well were centres serving these areas in terms of take-up or ‘reach’ and levels of use?
Sure Start	Melhuish (2010; 2012; 2013) ^{29,94,95;}	Documents include the history and impact of the Sure Start initiative, and what has been learnt so far.

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	Birbeck University of London ⁹⁶	
Sure Start	Lloyd and Harrington (2012) ⁹⁷	This article uses the example of Sure Start, a national initiative introduced by the UK Government in the late 1990s, as a case study to explore the reasons why large-scale, complex, national initiatives often fail to adequately evidence the impact of their work. The authors explore a range of structural, cultural, methodological and practical factors that have acted to inhibit effective evaluation of the impacts of Sure Start. They argue that the potential exists for more effective and efficient evaluation of the outcomes of complex community initiatives such as Sure Start, if factors such as those outlined within the article are adequately addressed. This article provides important learning for those funding, commissioning and delivering complex community initiatives.
United States		
Best Start LA pilot community evaluation	Benatar et al. (2012) ⁴⁵	Best Start LA (BSLA) is a place-based community investment that aims to improve the well-being, development, and care experienced by children ages five and under, and their parents. Multiple interwoven strategies have been designed to strengthen the capacity of families to raise children, and the capacity of communities and broader systems to support families. While Best Start LA will ultimately operate in a total of 14 communities across Los Angeles County, First 5 LA (F5LA) has launched the model in a —pilot community, which is being referred to as Metro LA.
Community schools evaluation toolkit	Shah et al. (2009) ⁹⁸	This toolkit is designed to help community schools evaluate their efforts so that they learn from their successes, identify current challenges, and plan future efforts. It provides a step-by-step process for planning and conducting an evaluation at community school site(s). The toolkit is a practical, hands-on guide that makes it possible to improve your community school’s effectiveness. Equally important, it offers a menu of data collection tools (i.e. surveys, public databases) for evaluating whether and how a community school is achieving results.

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SECTION V APPENDIX 1 Early Years Centres, Hubs, Multisectoral Partnerships

a. Coalitions, hubs, multisectoral partnerships - Canada

[Best Start Hubs \(Sudbury, ON\)^{13,14}](#)

[Blackfalds Neighbourhood Place \(Blackfalds, AB\)²⁵](#)

[Braeburn Neighbourhood Place \(Region of Peel, ON\)¹⁹](#)

[Children First Regional Initiative \(BC\)⁹⁹](#)

[Early Years Continuum Project \(3 communities: High Prairie, and in Edmonton: Knottwood and Lymburn, AB\)⁸⁰](#)

[Hamilton Best Start \(Hamilton, ON\)¹⁴](#)

[Healthy Communities Approach \(Canada\)¹⁰⁰](#)

[Integrated Children's Centres \(Atlantic Canada\)²²](#)

[Integrated Early Childhood Services in Canada: Evidence from the Better Beginnings, Better Futures \(BBBF\) and Toronto First Duty \(TFD\) Projects \(ON\)²⁰](#)

[Lifeline: creating a community service hub for first nations children and families \(BC\)¹²](#)

[Penfold Neighbourhood Place \(Penfold, AB\)²⁶](#)

[Ontario Early Years Centres and Child and Family Centres \(ON\)¹⁷](#)

[Otonabee Valley family hub \(Peterborough, ON\)¹⁵](#)

[Rimbey Neighbourhood Place \(Rimbey, AB\)²⁷](#)

[Schools as Community Hubs \(SACH\) \(Edmonton, AB\)²⁸](#)

b. Select coalitions, hubs, multisectoral partnerships – International

[Best Start LA \(US\)⁴⁵](#)

[Campbelltown Communities for Children \(Australia\)¹⁰¹](#)

[Centre for Youth and Families \(CJG\) and SPIL Centres \(Netherlands\)¹⁰²](#)

[Child and Family Hubs \(Australia\)¹⁰³](#)

[CHILDREN 1st\(UK\)¹⁰⁴](#)

[Communities for Children \(Australia\)^{85,105}](#)

[Community Childcare Hubs \(UK\)¹⁰⁶](#)

[Community Connections: Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative \(Australia\)¹⁰⁷](#)

[Community Hubs \(Wales\)³¹](#)

[Early Years Centres \(Queensland\)³⁶](#)

[Early Years Service Hubs \(New Zealand\)⁹¹](#)

[Familienzentren \(family centres\)\(Germany\)⁴¹](#)

[Family Support Hubs \(Ireland\)¹⁰⁸](#)

[Family Support Programme \(Sweden\)⁴³](#)

[FamilyZone Ingle Farm Hub \(Australia\)³⁷](#)
[HighScope Perry Preschool Study \(US\)¹⁰⁹](#)
[Integrated ECD Programme \(South Africa\)⁴⁴](#)
[Invest for Children \(US\)¹¹⁰](#)
[Parenting Shop \(Belgium\)¹¹¹](#)
[Parents' House \(France\)¹¹²](#)
[Partnerships in Early Childhood \(PIEC\)\(Australia\)¹¹³](#)
[School Centred Community Hub Initiative \(Sydney, Australia\)⁴⁰](#)
[Sure Start Children's Centres \(England\)³⁰](#)
[Tambellup way \(Australia\)¹¹⁴](#)
[Wyndham Early Learning Activity Centre \(WELA\)\(Australia\)¹¹⁵](#)
[youngballymun \(Ireland\)¹¹⁶](#)

Section V Appendix II: Best practice principles for children's centres (Appendix B from Moore, 2008)

Integrated services

- **Co-location of services** – The services to be integrated are housed in the same premises if possible.
- **Centre accessibility** – Centres are easily accessible to parents, both in the physical/geographical sense and the psychological sense.
- **Service accessibility** – Access to the different services and programs provided by the centre is made as simple as possible.
- **Principles of integrated working** – These are embedded into all policy and practice documents and are communicated to all staff and parents.
- **Information sharing** – There is effective information sharing within the integrated team and with relevant external services, based on obtaining consent from the family for information sharing at the start and through any interventions.
- **Service networks** – Each centre is part of a comprehensive integrated service system that is able to address all the factors known to put children and families at risk.
- **Referral to and from other services** – There are standardised referral processes for referrals into or out of the service, with obtaining consent from parents for information sharing and providing feedback to referrers as an integral part of the process.
- **Community use of facilities** – Facilities are available for use by parent and community groups.

Governance

- **An integrated governance model** – Centres have a governance structure that has control over a pooled budget and a mandate and accountability to provide management, planning and administration and ensure the delivery of comprehensive services and supports.
- **Commitment to integrated service model I** – All those involved in the governance of the centre as well as other service and community stakeholders are strongly committed to the integrated service model.
- **Parental involvement in governance and planning** – Services should be planned in partnership with parents who, if given the opportunity, can be highly perceptive about their own needs
- **Community consultation and involvement in planning and governance** – The local community (including residents, interest groups,) should be regularly consulted about community service needs and directly involved in the planning and governance of children's centre services.

Management and structure

- **Effective leadership** – Strong leadership is critical to making integrated service provision a success. Leaders need to be able to inspire and support all staff through a process of change. Effective leaders need to be able to work across traditional divides and create new solutions to service delivery challenges.
- **Support and training for leaders** – Leadership of an integrated service is a challenging role, and ongoing support and training for managers is needed.
- **Positive organisational climate** – The Centre manager and senior staff seek to build a positive organisational climate based on mutual respect and effective communication with staff, parents and other stakeholders.
- **Industrial issues** – Differences in staffing conditions and responsibilities can create tensions between staff, and these need to be addressed.
- **Clarification of staff roles** – Delivering programs within an integrated service model is challenging for staff used to working within traditional standalone service formats, and clear descriptions of their new roles within an integrated service need to be developed.

Service philosophy and practice

- **Clarity of focus** – Centres develop a clear understanding and agreement as to who is the principle focus of Centre activities, and how the sometimes competing needs of children, parents and families are to be met.

- **Outcomes-based approach** – Staff and parents develop agreements as to what outcomes the centre should be seeking to achieve, and staff keep these outcomes in mind at all times when designing and implement programs.
- **Logic modelling** – Staff have a clear understanding of how the services provided achieve the desired outcomes.
- **Common service philosophy** – All services and service providers share a common philosophy regarding staff relationships with children and families.

This should incorporate family-centred and strengthbased approaches.

- **Universal and inclusive service provision** – The core services provided by centres are universal (i.e. available to all children and families), and centres adopt an inclusive and non-stigmatising approach to programming and planning.
- **Cultural sensitivity** – Services are sensitive and responsive to family and community cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity.
- **Family care-giving practices** – Wherever possible, family care-giving practices should be incorporated into the centre's care, so that the child and family see the centre as a natural extension of the home.

Service provision

- **Services for children** – Centres provide children with stimulating and safe learning environments and a wide variety of learning and social experiences and opportunities.
- **Early care and learning** – Centres seek to integrate traditional forms of child care and kindergarten practices into a seamless early care and learning approach.
- **Family and community priorities** – Programs and services are based upon the needs and priorities of families and communities.
- **Evidence-based practice** – Both the manner in which services are provided as well as what form the services take are based on the best available evidence regarding effective service delivery.
- **Monitoring children's development** – Staff help parents monitor children's developmental progress and wellbeing, and take parental concerns about their children seriously.
- **Services for families** – Families have available to them a range of support and intervention programs and services, including parenting programs.
- **Provision of information** – Centres ensure that parents are fully informed about the services and facilities that available to them, both within the centre and outside.
- **Parent-to-parent contact** – Centres provide a range of opportunities for families to meet other families, and promote the development of supportive social networks.

Relationships with children

- **Engagement with children** – Relationships with children are characterised by a fundamental respect for each child, and a recognition of the importance of them building attachments with caregivers.
- **Child-centred practice** – Work with children is based on the core principles of child-centred practice, including responsiveness and building on children's strengths and interests.
- **Protection from harm** – The social and physical environment will be designed to protect children from harm.

Relationships with parents

- **Engagement with families** – The commitment and consistency with which staff engage with families is critical. The starting point of this relationship is a fundamental respect for families, which is reflected in policies as well as practices.
- **Family-centred practice** – Work with families is based on the core principles of family-centred practice, including building partnerships with parents, basing services on family priorities, and recognizing and building on family strengths and competences.
- **Family-friendly environment** – The Centre provides a welcoming and family-friendly physical and social environment.
- **Reaching marginalised families** – Special efforts are made to reach and engage marginalised families, such as those with limited social networks and few experiences of working positively with child and family services.

Teamwork

- **Relationships between team members** – Effective integrated working is founded on and sustained by strong personal relationships between staff. Training and support should focus on building and maintaining such relationships.
- **Models of teamwork** – Teamwork is based on an interdisciplinary teamwork model, with transdisciplinary and key worker models used for selected families.
- **Commitment to integrated service model** – Staff selection and training is based on ensuring that staff are committed to the integrated service model.

Training

- **Pre- and post-establishment training** – To ensure the successful establishment of new Centres, the staff involved are provided with support and training in integrated service delivery (including teamwork).
- **Skills for engaging children** – Staff are provided with training and ongoing support in the core skills needed to work effectively with children.
- **Skills for engaging parents** – Staff are provided with training and ongoing support in the core skills needed to work effectively with parents, including relationship building, partnership building, family-centred practice and strength-based approaches.
- **Monitoring child and family needs** – Staff are provided with training in helping parents monitor their children's development and in discussing parenting and family issues.
- **Cross-disciplinary training** – Training in core skills and knowledge areas is conducted on a cross-disciplinary basis.
- **Induction of new staff** – There are induction processes designed to support new staff in becoming effective members of the integrated service team.