

**Expanding Early Childhood Education and Care Programming:
Highlights of a Literature Review, and Public Policy Implications
for British Columbia**

References and Information Sources



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November 2008

About the Human Early Learning Partnership

The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) is an interdisciplinary collaborative research institute that is directing a world-leading contribution to new understandings of and approaches to early child development.

Directed by Dr. Clyde Hertzman, HELP is a partnership of over 200 faculty, researchers and graduate students from six BC universities:

- University of British Columbia
- University of Victoria
- Simon Fraser University
- University of Northern British Columbia
- University of British Columbia Okanagan
- Thompson Rivers University

HELP's mission is to create, promote and apply knowledge through interdisciplinary research to help children thrive.

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Overview

In May and June of 2008 HELP conducted a literature review of early childhood education and care (ECEC) for the Early Childhood Learning Agency (under the auspices of the Ministry of Education). In November 2008 HELP issued the resulting report *Expanding Early Childhood Education and Care Programming: Highlights of a Literature Review and Public Policy Implications for British Columbia* (available on the HELP web site at www.earlylearning.ubc.ca).

The purpose of this document is to share the main references and other information sources used to generate the literature review. By sharing this information we hope to support governments, communities and others to explore in more detail specific areas of ECEC interest.

As this reference list makes clear, there are many names used to describe programs in communities that provide non-parental education and care services for children under six. In our literature review highlights report we primarily use the term 'early childhood education and care' abbreviated to ECEC. This is the term used by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and it includes services in a range of community settings, including schools.

Within the compressed time frame available to complete the literature review, every effort was made to select and include the most important, relevant and current information sources. We also included material published in the 1990's that is still applicable to discussions today.

We provided the Agency with summaries of material from refereed, peer reviewed academic literature; reports published by governmental bodies (ministries and departments of education) and respected think tanks; reports written by Canadian and international non-governmental organizations; relevant websites; and whenever necessary, phone contacts with key informants. The material provided the Agency with a representative review of major findings rather than a comprehensive review of all research that has ever been published.

The literature review addressed specific questions posed by the Agency and was provided in two parts:

- Part 1 reviewed the child development outcomes from various ECEC programs (including early childhood intervention programs, part-day (preschool) and full employment-day child care programs, half-day and full school-day kindergarten programs) and the common elements of quality that can be found in all of them. Part 1 also summarized the public policy and funding approaches utilized across Canada and around the world and included an examination of recent trends in staff training and qualifications.

- Part 2 explored a range of policy, administrative and implementation approaches and the current realities of ECEC programs in British Columbia. We expanded upon the research reported in Part 1 on the importance of play in ECEC programs and introduced research on ECEC programs for diverse groups of children. We reviewed the research on leadership in ECEC, and we explored the expansion and integration of education and care. We discussed the literature on program monitoring, methods of accountability and the use of learning standards in ECEC programs. We provided an overview of the opportunities and challenges of ongoing research and data collection, and concluded with relevant public policy implications arising from the literature review.

We would like to express our deep thanks to Dr. Allison Preece of the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria and to Denise Hodgins, a doctoral candidate at the University of Victoria for their major contributions of time, energy and knowledge to this report. We also wish to thank our UBC colleagues and support staff in the Human Early Learning Partnership. We are indebted to the many different individuals across Canada who promptly returned phone calls and who were generous in their time in responding to our questions.

The growing international interest in the potential educational, social and economic benefits associated with early childhood education and care led the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to conduct a *Thematic Review* of this topic between 1998 and 2006. Twenty nations, including Canada (and specifically the Province of BC) participated in a systematic review of their ECEC policies and programs.

The OECD *Thematic Review* is widely recognized as the most extensive comparative ECEC policy analysis to date, and for this reason it provided the major organizing framework for our review of international approaches to ECEC. Information sources included:

- the OECD *Starting Strong* Reports (2001, 2006)
- the *Canada Country Note* (2004)
- the Country notes on the remaining 19 countries included in the *Thematic Review*
- the section in *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada* (2006) entitled, “Looking Beyond Our Borders” (pages 237 – 240)
- a range of other reports that were commissioned throughout the *Thematic Review* time period.

Following our comparative analysis of different international jurisdictions we provided a similar analysis of the various approaches to ECEC in the provinces and territories of Canada. An extensive comparative analysis of ECEC approaches in Canadian provinces and territories is regularly published by the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU), utilizing information provided by respective governments. The most recent analysis, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006*, formed the foundation for this section of the report.

We acknowledge the important work of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, whose database of research, public policy analysis and commentary provides an invaluable source of information for researchers, governments and communities.

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