



# YEAR THREE RESEARCH REPORT NEW BRUNSWICK EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES

September 2013

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### Introduction

The Executive Summary provides a concise overview of the three-year early childhood demonstration site evaluation that was funded by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF). The intent of this evaluation effort was to provide a specific means from which to examine initiative activities, and to document lessons learned as a result of the developmental and implementation processes associated with the Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDCs). In addition, this research explored areas of impact or change related to the provision of integrated early childhood services resulting from the initiative. The primary goal of this evaluation was to report on the key perspectives, processes and practices related to the Early Childhood Development Centre demonstration initiative. The project research team was composed of members of the Health and Education Research Group from the Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick.

For this initiative, a case study methodology was employed to facilitate a systematic investigation of situations and experiences. The initial four sites in this study were selected by the Province of New Brunswick through a tendering process, and represented the linguistic, economic and geographical characteristics unique to the province of New Brunswick. Additional ECDCs were selected and funded by the MWMFF using the same program criteria.

### Evaluation Phases

The overall ECDC evaluation design encompassed six phases. A description of the specific data collection activities associated with each phase is presented below.

#### ***Phase 1: Preliminary Consultations and Document Review***

At the outset of the initiative, a series of demonstration site visits were conducted in order to facilitate communications with representatives of the early childhood teams and community partners.

#### ***Phase 2: Creation of a Project Logic Model***

The identification of key insights resulting from the site visits and the preliminary document examination provided the basis from which to create a preliminary ECDC initiative logic model. The logic model provided a schematic overview of the major components of the proposed implementation plan, including assumptions, goals, inputs (resources/participants), outputs and outcomes (immediate, short-term and long-term).

### ***Phase 3: Development of Data Collection Instruments and Processes***

This phase involved the development of data collection instruments and procedures for the proposed evaluation plan. Data collection methods were designed to render both qualitative and quantitative data, and included:

- Site observations
- Review of administrative data
- Interviews with parents, ECDC team members and service providers
- Focus group sessions with ECDC teams, service providers and parents
- Surveys of parents, ECDC team members, service providers, volunteers and community members
- Activity logs
- Operational data with respect to ECDC budgets and in-kind support from service providers and other partners

### ***Phase 4: Implementation of Data Collection Activities***

Prior to undertaking any data collection activity, the purpose of the ECDC research was explained to participants, and the nature of their involvement in the program evaluation was outlined. Data collection activities were ongoing throughout the three-year ECDC implementation. These activities were coordinated to ensure that documentation of key lessons learned could be applied to inform and potentially enhance the ongoing implementation activities of the centres.

### ***Phase 5: Data Management, Synthesis and Analysis***

Data resulting from common areas of inquiry were merged, entered into a project database, and organized into patterns. Data related to these patterns were collated and synthesized into thematic categories. Emergent themes were confirmed through ongoing conversations with ECDC teams, service providers, community partners and parent participants.

### ***Phase 6: Report Preparation and Sharing Lessons Learned***

Research updates and formal reports were presented to the Provincial Evaluation Advisory Committee and to project authorities from the MWMFF, with particular emphasis placed on the identification of lessons learned during the course of the ECDC demonstration initiative.

## Results

### Practices of integration

The Indicators of Change instrument (ICI), adapted from the Toronto First Duty (TFD) program, was used to track the process of integration over a three-year period (2009-2012). The ICI documented this process along a continuum from co-existence, to coordination of services, to full integration. Positive progress in the direction of integrated practices was noted in each of the key elements of the ICI.

Some of the example key accomplishments related to practices of integration are as follows:

- Local governance structures were put in place and were used to provide oversight related to program policies, resource allocation, service planning and monitoring, and human resource decisions (**Leadership and Management**).
- There was evidence of significant growth in the development and implementation of ECDC programs and services that addressed areas of identified regional needs (**Access and Intake**).
- Early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers collaborated through the development of shared learning expectations and routines using existing resources and programs (**Early Learning Environment**).
- Early childhood roles and responsibilities were outlined in partnership agreements between schools and districts; and early childhood educators were included in school-based teacher professional development opportunities (**Early Childhood Staff and Service Providers**).
- ECDC sites were described as community hubs where parents and family members could access services and information, and connect with other resources (**Parent and Community Engagement Opportunities and Activities**).
- The indicator framework was expanded to include the development of a sixth element: Language and Cultural Identity (**Language and Cultural Identity**).
- Francophone ECDCs reported the development and implementation of a range of school and community engagement events to celebrate cultural identity and language (**Language and Cultural Identity**).

### EDCI stakeholder experiences and perspectives

Key informant interview protocols were designed to elicit the perspectives of a range of ECDC stakeholders including parents, early childhood staff, community service providers, and school and government stakeholders. Example key findings included:

- ***Schools as ideal locations to house Early Childhood Development Centers:*** Schools were seen as the most appropriate locations to offer early childhood education and care. The location of ECDCs in schools provided opportunities for the forging of relationships among ECEs, parents, children and school staff.
- ***Principals' roles expanded to include responsibility for ECDCs:*** Principals were identified as filling an essential leadership position in ensuring that ECDCs become fully integrated into the school community.



- ***Universally accessible services offered in a common location:*** Participants expressed that having early childhood services offered in one central hub ensured increased access and support for families.
- ***Common vision and flexible schedules to accommodate families and partner programs:*** Participants underscored the importance of mutual respect and participation in developing a common stakeholder vision for early childhood services and care. Collaborative activities amongst stakeholders included the collective scheduling of programs, and the creation of joint initiatives that provided mutual autonomy-support.
- ***Access to information and appropriate service referrals for parents:*** Participants identified the site director as an essential source of knowledge related to early childhood services, activities and resources for families.
- ***Preparing all children for school (universal versus targeted):*** From participants' perspectives, the early childhood environment and curriculum provided opportunities for all children to gain skills and experiences that would assist them in becoming responsible citizens, and in developing critical thinking skills.
- ***Systems that support parents and expand parenting capacity:*** Participants asserted the importance of engaging and supporting parents in expanding their confidence and capacity related to their children's education and care.
- ***Systems support the development of linguistic and cultural identity:*** Participants identified early childhood as a critical time for the development of linguistic and cultural identity. For EDCDs situated in linguistic minority settings, it was regarded as critical that parents understand these goals, and be engaged in activities that support them.
- ***Impacts on service delivery:*** Participants indicated that EDCDs had a positive impact on regional service delivery, through improved access to programming, enhanced outreach to parents and children (who might not otherwise have accessed needed services), and strengthened partnerships and knowledge exchange relationships among service providers, contributing to a more collaborative model.
- ***Impact on children and parents:*** Many participants noted that, early on, children became comfortable and confident in the school setting through their experiences in the EDCDs. School-based EDCDs were considered to minimize stress and anxiety related to the transition from early childhood to kindergarten. In the francophone sites, EDCDs provided opportunities for prekindergarten children to gain fluency in French, and to enhance understanding of their Francophone culture.
- ***Impact on stakeholders:*** Many participants referred to the emergence of strong relationships among EDCDs, schools and community stakeholders in the process of identifying joint plans and actions to address areas of challenge. Participants underscored the importance of taking time to understand the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- ***Impact on schools:*** Participants felt that schools developed a greater appreciation for and understanding of early childhood education and care. Opportunities for ECEs and kindergarten teachers to work together more collaboratively were seen to ease the transition between early childhood and kindergarten.
- ***Impact on new EDCD sites:*** Insights from the initial four EDCDs were regarded as contributing to the effective implementation of new sites, particularly in the length of time required for planning and initial rollout.
- ***Family challenges:*** Participants expressed concern with a range of key issues still facing some families, including challenges in

accessing services due to lack of transportation or finances, as well as those related to basic living considerations (e.g., need for food, employment and adequate housing).

- **System challenges:** Participants indicated that not all partner services were coordinated or connected with ECDCs. In this regard, areas of concern related to meeting the individualized needs of children included inadequate communication among partners; lack of understanding regarding the roles and mandates of community services; and lack of a structure to ensure coordination of services. Other areas of challenge included the availability of services in rural regions; space considerations and limitations; finding and sustaining quality services in French; guaranteeing uniformity and quality of services; and attracting and keeping qualified early childhood staff.
- **Effective responses and the role of Family Resource Centers:** In supporting the rollout of the ECDC sites, Family Resource Centres (FRCs) played a critical role at both the provincial and regional levels. In addressing regional challenges and needs, collaborations between ECDCs and FRCs have resulted in the provision of key supports, including the donation of equipment, materials and human resources. FRCs have relocated programs into school-based ECDCs, expanded existing programs, and developed new joint initiatives to address local community and family needs. In addition, FRC educators have served as members of Early Childhood Boards or Committees. Specifically, Valley Family Resource Centre has been instrumental in all phases of development of the CYV sites, with involvement in planning, implementation and administrative activities. Further, this organization has been tasked with administering funding and MWMFF grants on behalf of the CYV sites, and continues to play a key role in the ongoing growth and development of early childhood services and supports in the region. Other important partnerships at the community level include those with existing programs such as Talk with Me, VON Healthy Baby and Me, and Early Intervention. Such linkages and relationships have served to break down existing silos, allowing programs and services to be delivered more effectively, efficiently and economically.

#### **Utilization and revenue: Initial ECDC demonstration sites**

All demonstration sites experienced increases in utilization over the course of the three-year evaluation period. At the Bath site, school-supported program expansion included a second four-year-old preschool class, the addition of a three-year-old preschool class, and expansion in the afterschool program. Moncton experienced a significant increase in Year 2 due to the addition of an afterschool program to continue *Francization* at the school level at the request of parents. With the support of a grant from the Department of Social Development, Robertville was able to expand its childcare program to include children aged 15 to 24 months in Year 3. High regional demand for childcare for this age group may provide a niche that moves Robertville towards program sustainability. In Saint John, childcare programming options have increased steadily, with the majority of children supported through integrated funding or childcare subsidies.

The afterschool program has been a key factor in Bath becoming self-sustaining by the end of Year 3. Robertville has indicated its intent to offer an afterschool program at the beginning of Year 4, focusing on special programming such as art and music. The Saint John Early

Learning Centre shares the school with the Boys and Girls Club and an interfaith program that offer programming for K-8 and K-2, respectively.

Bath, Robertville and Saint John partner with their respective Family Resource Centres to offer adult/child services or programs. Saint John offers a drop-in play group three mornings per week. Bath extends the work of the Valley Family Resource Centre by continuing to offer a play group program throughout school vacation times. Moncton offers adult/child programming that is designed to promote linguistic and cultural literacy. *Le Phare* offers *Francization* programming to immigrant families and their children. Other partners involved in delivering adult/child programming include VON Healthy Baby and Me, and Talk With Me. Public Health conducts the 3.5 Clinic at the Saint John and the Bath sites. Adult programs experienced the slowest growth over the first two years of the initiative. However, Year 3 resulted in a pronounced growth in parenting programming across sites.

In terms of revenue sources, all sites received income from parent subsidies and/or integrated funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; however, the amount of revenue from this source varied considerably from site to site. The Saint John site represents a relatively high needs population, and this was reflected in the high level of childcare fee subsidies. Moncton received most of its childcare revenue from parents' fees. In Bath, childcare revenue was realized through subsidies and parent fees, with the latter being the higher of the two. By the third year of the initiative, donations and fundraising activities had diminished considerably at all sites. Saint John and Bath experienced increases in utilization and revenues due to new programming, while Robertville received a grant from the Early Learning and Childcare Trust Fund to provide a new program for children of 15-24 months of age.

Cost per Hour			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Bath	\$ 6.73	\$ 6.51	\$ 6.63
Moncton	\$ 9.46	\$ 7.14	\$ 5.85
Robertville	\$ 13.48	\$ 7.69	\$ 7.44
Saint John	\$ 36.24	\$ 7.68	\$ 6.04
Average	\$ 16.48	\$ 7.26	\$ 6.49

Revenues for the four initial demonstration sites over the three-year period of the initiative were divided by annual utilization figures in order to arrive at an estimated "cost per hour" for services. Revenue was generated from five key sources: government funding, program operating grants, childcare fee subsidies, parent childcare fees, and donations and fundraising. All four sites experienced decreases in the calculated cost per hour of service delivery throughout the demonstration period.

#### **Utilization and revenue: MWMFF supported sites**

All four MWMFF-supported sites experienced an increase in utilization hours in Years 2 and 3. The growth at La Boussole was attributed to an increase in the number of children in childcare, as well to as an expansion in the adult/child programming offered by the centre and its partners. Keswick Start SMART also realized a significant increase in utilization hours, due in part to an increase in the usage of the afterschool and childcare (2-5 years) services. The adult/child programs offered twice weekly in Keswick reported increased attendance by

parents, grandparents and preschool children. Despite the setbacks experienced by flooding in Perth-Andover and the relocation of the centre for a six-month period, Future Footprints reported significant growth in all programs. Centreville was the only MWMFF centre without a childcare component. This site reported continued growth and a strengthening of the partnerships among the ECDC, community childcare providers, and the school.

The four MWMFF ECDCs were not included in the initial, provincially-funded demonstration initiative; and thus, did not receive \$100,000 in annual seed funding from the New Brunswick government. Notably, the highest increases in utilization and revenue were experienced in these non-government sites. This result may be attributed to the fact that the MWMFF centres benefited from the lessons learned from the initial demonstration sites, which were not only beneficial from a financial standpoint, but also from an administrative and operational point of view. The rate of growth at these sites also provides support for the influence of grassroots initiatives that begin with the development of strong community partnerships.

Cost per Hour		
	2010-2011	2011-2012
La Boussole	\$ 16.03	\$ 4.38
Cougar Kittens	\$ 6.83	\$ 6.12
Start SMART	\$ 6.86	\$ 5.30
Future Footprints	\$ 22.97	\$ 16.74

Revenues for the four MWMFF-funded sites over a two-year period of the initiative were divided by annual utilization figures, in order to arrive at an estimated “cost per hour” for services. Revenues were generated from four main sources: program operating grants, childcare fee subsidies, parent childcare fees, and donations and fundraising. All four sites experienced decreases in the calculated cost per hour of service delivery throughout the demonstration period.

## Moving Research into Action

*Our vision is to have an early learning and childcare system that meets the needs of New Brunswick families, no matter where they live. This is an essential element in both social and economic policy — Premier David Alward (Putting Children First, 2012, p.2).*

An overarching theme over the course of the evaluation was the need to break down the barriers that exist among departments. Community partners, service providers and early childhood educators noted two key areas that are directly impacted by these barriers: the sharing of information and data; and the challenge of divergent departmental policies. Participants indicated their belief that the development of policies related to the sharing of information would encourage open communication and the formation of professional partnerships designed to respond to families and children, and would avoid duplication of services. A number of community partners/service providers proposed the creation of a single department responsible for the education and health of all children at the community and provincial levels. Consistent with these evaluation outcomes, the key features of the new provincial action plan include a

central focus on the integration of early childhood services into the newly formed Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This move has created a foundation for:

- Building a continuum of learning and care that begins at birth
- Providing accessible, affordable and inclusive childcare within high-quality learning environments
- Promoting the unique linguistic and cultural elements of New Brunswick communities

A second overarching result of the evaluation included the identification of promising interactions among community partners, service providers, ECDCs and schools. Effective interactions were characterized by the existence of open lines of communication among educators, ECDCs and community partners; and the implementation of consultation practices that responded to unique regional needs. Building relationships among diverse stakeholders was considered essential for breaking down existing silos, and allowing for programs and services to be delivered more effectively, efficiently and economically. In the New Brunswick government report, *Putting Children First* (2012), the integration of education and early childhood services involves creating opportunities for all stakeholders – governmental and non-governmental – to develop a shared vision, to set goals, and to plan key actions for collaborative early childhood services. With respect to such plans, the action plan includes provincial frameworks for facilitating the process of consultation and collaboration among early childhood stakeholders in all educational jurisdictions across the province.

# 1. Introduction

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Canadian children are growing up in complex social contexts that challenge traditional family roles and structures (Corter & Pelletier, 2010). A myriad of services, programs and resources have been developed to support families and young children. At best, these service delivery mechanisms are fractured, segregated into jurisdictional silos, and unable to share information across lines of service. Frequently, the result is duplication of services and the inefficient use of limited resources. Furthermore, access to services is often limited for families with lower incomes, as well as those from minority language groups. While kindergarten is universally accessible and publicly funded, other early childhood services are often a patchwork of fee-for-service programs or targeted interventions for children at risk, and are scattered across public and private service provision structures. These mechanisms and systems include such critical services as childcare, nursery schools, prekindergarten and parenting programs; as well as recreational, library and other community services.

Navigating the service patchwork can be a daunting task for parents, and not all parents are equally positioned to pay for or make connections to services. As a result, inequitable access to preschool services such as quality childcare can actually widen gaps between children living in advantaged or disadvantaged circumstances. However, providing targeted public services is not a complete solution, since targeting will miss some children in high-risk groups (Barnett, 2010), as well as vulnerable children who happen to be in lower risk groups (Willms, 2002). Improving service coherence, quality and accessibility requires new approaches in Canada and elsewhere (Mahon, 2009).

Two approaches that have drawn increasing attention in early childhood contexts are *universal programs* and *service integration* (OECD, 2006). Providing a universally available system of preschool education and other services may help to solve a number of problems (Barnett, 2010; Patel & Corter, in press). For example, universal programs may reduce stigma associated with targeted programs; increase the pressure to raise program quality by drawing in middle-class users and more political support; and reach all children who may benefit, not just those who happen to be targeted for supports (Barnett, 2010). Similarly, integrated early childhood programs reduce service disconnections, with potential benefits for program quality and equitable access. They may also help child and family outcomes and quality of life by providing more coherent programming for children, while supporting families in their parenting and in their need to work or study (Pelletier & Corter, 2006).

A fundamental form of service integration is the blending of childcare, education, and parenting and intervention programs (Kaga, Bennett, & Moss, 2010). This practice represents long-standing policy in some Nordic countries, but is not yet a reality in other parts of the world, including most of Canada and the United States (Mahon, 2009). In addition to childcare and early education, other service types, such as parenting and health programs and parent-child drop-in centres, could be brought into the integration mix to provide better and more cohesive services.

This report represents an overview of the three-year process evaluation of the integrated platform of services being demonstrated at the New Brunswick Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs). Chapter 1 provides a concise overview of the early childhood context internationally, nationally, and provincially; as well as a description of the research purpose, design and methodology. Chapter 2 examines key outcomes from Years 1 and 2 of the demonstration initiative, and presents findings related to the benefits of an integrated model of early childhood services; impacts on children, families, early childhood educators and partners; and challenges encountered at the community and provincial levels. Chapter 3 presents individual site profiles that can be extracted as independent documents for the use each demonstration site in reviewing practices to date, and in planning for sustainability in the years to come. Practices of integration as identified through the administration of the Indicators of Change instrument at each site are outlined in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 focuses on the findings resulting from a cross-case analysis of key informant interviews conducted at each site, as well as at provincial meetings of *Early Intervention*, *Talk With Me/Parle-moi*, *Family Resource* and *VON Healthy Baby and Me*. A cross case analysis of utilization and financial data is included in Chapter 6, while Chapter 7 presents key highlights of provincial policy changes in the context of the emerging restructuring of early childhood services announced in the June 2012 New Brunswick document, *Putting Children First: Positioning Early Childhood for the Future*, which outlines the elements and timelines related to the province's three-year action plan. The final chapter of the report is presented as an Executive Summary of research findings.

## **1.1 Early Childhood Context**

In 2007, the Province of New Brunswick conducted an early learning and childcare consultation whereby parents indicated a need for community-based, integrated services: “....places where they could access information, help their children get ready for school, and receive help with parenting questions” (NB Early Childhood Development Centres Pilot Project, 2009, p.5). In 2009, four provincial sites were identified to demonstrate such an approach to early childhood education and care. The short-term goal of these centres was to provide seamless programming for children and parents through coordinating and connecting kindergarten, early learning and childcare programs, parenting support services and community resources. The long-term goal was to impact the capacity of children to succeed in life by providing a strong foundation during the early years, and to demonstrate models of education and early childhood care and development that might inform public policy.

New Brunswick is not alone in its recognition of the long-term benefits of early childhood supports and services. Early childhood has become the focal point of educational, social and economic reorganization for many countries in the Western world (Vincent & Ball, 2006; Moss, 2007; McCain, Mustard & McCuaig, 2011). Member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development have taken steps to improve the quality of early childhood education and care as part of their economic and social reforms (OECD, 2012). Traditionally, early childhood has been addressed within two sectors – education and childcare – each having radically diverse goals, mandates and understandings (Moss, 2011). Fractured early childhood service delivery systems have the potential to reduce the accessibility and availability of programs and resources, to duplicate services, and to squander resources. Many countries have addressed



these challenges by integrating education and care through shifting responsibility to national or provincial education departments or ministries (Kaga, Bennett & Moss, 2010).

Recent international studies have focused on understanding the process of integrating early childhood education and care under ministries of education. *Caring and Learning Together* (2010), a cross-national study of five countries (Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand, Slovenia and Sweden), reports that while the degree of integration differs widely from country to country, education platforms and infrastructures work together to support “access, affordability, concern for a (relatively) well-trained workforce and curriculum as a basic tool for practice” (p. 80). *Starting Strong III* (2012) focuses on the impact that quality early childhood education and care programs and services have on short- and long-term child and family outcomes. The study suggests that expanded access and affordability will not yield the intended outcomes unless attention is paid to quality.

In the Canadian context, three studies have had a significant impact on provincial policy with respect to early childhood education and care. The *Early Years Study: Reversing the real brain drain* (McCain & Mustard, 1999) became a catalyst, igniting national attention to the relationships among quality experiences in early childhood education and care; the shaping of cognitive structures and functions; and enduring consequences for individuals and society. The *Early Years Study 2: Putting Science into Action* (McCain, Mustard & Shanker, 2007) emphasized the policy framework essential to improving conditions in early childhood, with a long-term goal of creating healthier Canadians. Most recently, the *Early Years Study 3: Making Decisions; Taking Action* (McCain, Mustard & McCuaig, 2011) outlines current provincial promising practices and provides an instrument - *The Early Childhood Index Report* - designed to measure the funding, policies, access and quality of early childhood education and care in each province.

In 2008, New Brunswick responded to the need to improve early childhood education and care by issuing a call for proposals from communities to become *early childhood demonstration sites*. Four centres were chosen, representing both Anglophone and Francophone sectors in two urban and two rural settings. Each early childhood development centre (ECDC) was provided with \$100,000 annually over a three-year period by the provincial government, and became part of a three-year evaluative case study. Toward the end of year one, five additional ECDCs, supported by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF), were recognized as being part of the study. Between September 2009 and June 2012, sites in the Carleton York/Victoria (CYV) network received Foundation grants totaling \$460,000, with Kent La Boussole receiving \$125,000 during the same period. During the 2012-2013 transition year, these sites will continue to receive support from the MWMFF, with \$220,000 allotted to the CYV sites, and \$55,000 to La Boussole. Foundation funding totals are inclusive of secondment costs for a full-time research associate/coordinator beginning in January 2011. All nine sites received support from the MWMFF in the areas of communication, development, and research and evaluation activities led by the Health and Education Research Group (HERG) at the University of New Brunswick.



The provincial research initiative lead by HERG utilized a case study evaluative framework to document the process by which the eight ECDCs coordinated and connected early childhood services within an educational framework. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to detail each unique story. A composite profile was identified by means of cross-case analyses during each year of the study.

## **1.2 Economic Context**

Mikkonen & Raphael (2010) of York University conducted research on the social determinants of health in the Canadian context. Regarding early childhood, they suggest that, “the longer children live under conditions of material and social deprivation, the more likely they are to show adverse health and developmental outcomes” (p. 23). The cognitive and emotional effects of such long-term exposure to poverty and disadvantage have life-long impacts on Canadian children. Further, deprivation in childhood has been found to “create a sense of inefficacy – or learned helplessness – which is a strong determinant of poor health” (p. 23). Lack of early exposure to healthy learning environments in the preschool years has been correlated with lower levels of educational attainment later in life. According to Mikkonen & Raphael, “One way to weaken the relationship between parents’ socioeconomic status and children’s developmental outcomes is the provision of high quality early child education regardless of parents’ wealth” (p. 23).

While access to licensed and regulated childcare services is acknowledged as essential to child wellbeing, “...only 17% of Canadian families have access to regulated child care” (p. 24). The development of comprehensive programs for early childhood care and education has been identified as an essential step toward enhancing health-related outcomes across the country. As such, the implications for policy development are vast, and include issues related to the provision of:

- Affordable and quality childcare for all families, regardless of wealth or income level
- Supports and benefits to families through public policies as a basis for healthy childhood development
- Higher wages and social assistance benefits to reduce child poverty
- Improved community quality of life, reduced social problems, and improved Canadian economic performance (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010, p. 24)

In presenting a cost benefit analysis of early childhood programming, the Early Years Study 3 (2011) identifies benefits derived from public investment in integrated early childhood services. Such benefits include Increased tax revenues from parents who are able to take part in the workforce or upgrade their skills; reduction in the use of health care services, social benefits, child welfare, criminal justice and special education services; improved outcomes for children in terms of school readiness; enhanced high school graduation rates and post secondary achievement; and greater workforce productivity. Researchers have identified early childhood education and care programs as having other economic impacts. Susan Prentice (2004) suggests that childcare be viewed as significant for regional economic

development. She discovered that for every childcare position created in one of Winnipeg's 620 childcare facilities, 2.15 other jobs were created or sustained. An analysis by researcher Robert Fairholm (2009) encourages policymakers to consider preschool as an economic stimulus. According to Fairholm's analysis, an investment of one million dollars in childcare yields "43% more jobs than the next highest industry and four times the number of jobs generated by \$1 million on construction spending" (p. 69). Not only are more jobs created, but every dollar invested in childcare increases GDP by \$2.50. According to Fairholm, the tax implications are astounding. For every dollar invested, the taxes generated by the resulting increased employment rates generate 90 cents for provincial and federal governments. Further, published research (Fortin, 2010) indicates that for every dollar invested in Quebec's early childhood initiatives, \$1.05 is returned to the provincial government.

### **1.3 Promising Practices**

In the past, Canada has relied on research conducted in the United States and beyond to identify viable models of integrated service delivery in early childhood. However, Early Years 3 (2011) reviewed Canadian initiatives that could serve to inform early childhood sectors in this country and its diverse regional contexts. Further, Camil Bouchard's report, *Un Québec fou de ces enfants* (1992), had a significant impact on the lives of parents, families and children in Quebec. In the decade following the release of Bouchard's study, childcare costs in Quebec have been capped at \$7.00 daily; the number of women in the work force has soared (from representing the lowest ranking to being the highest in Canada); 85% of Quebec fathers take parental leave as opposed the Canadian average of 12%; student outcomes on standardized tests have climbed above the national average; and Quebec child poverty rates have decreased by 50%. While governments acknowledge the long-term benefits of early childhood care and education highlighted through such research findings, many continue to be reluctant to commit to the economic investment required to implement new service delivery mechanisms and approaches. In contrast, Quebec demonstrates the long-term benefits of public investment in early childhood services. In fact, the income tax returned to the province by working mothers covers the entire cost of provincial childcare services (Mustard, McCain & McCuaig, 2011).

The Toronto First Duty (TFD) demonstration project was intended to test the "feasibility and effects of a universal model for integrating childcare, kindergarten, family support and other services in school-based community hubs" (Corter & Pelletier, 2010, p. 45), for the purpose of improving the quality of early childhood programs and policy, both regionally and provincially. This integrated service delivery model was designed to bring the various Early Years programs into the school setting and create seamless access to services and care for children, expectant mothers, newcomers and their families, stay-at-home mothers or fathers, single parents, and dual income parents. The program structure was designed to ensure high quality universal services, as well as access and affordability for families. This vision of early childhood education and care reflects the unique needs and diversity of communities, fosters social unity, nurtures social networks, and furnishes rich learning environments for all. Research findings related to the Toronto First Duty project emphasized the importance of a holistic and democratic approach to learning, and the recognition and engagement of families as key partners in their children's development.

Starting Strong III (2012) and the Early Years Study 3 (2011) recognize the strength of the Prince Edward Island approach to early childhood. In 2008, the Government of Prince Edward Island recognized the role of quality early childhood education, and announced a strategic plan created to embrace new social and economic realities. Actions emanating from the strategic plan included the implementation a publicly-funded, full-day kindergarten program in elementary schools across the island; the movement of responsibility for early years to the newly-formed Department of Education and Early Childhood; and the development of a network of publicly managed Early Years Centres providing quality early learning and care programs for children under four years of age.

Drawing upon the lessons learned from the demonstration sites, several promising practices have emerged related to fostering the integration of programs and services that focus on the unique needs of families, parents and children. Lessons learned have been gleaned both from the successes and challenges of the ECDCs. Findings have indicated that the creation and expansion of early childhood programs and services depend upon the relationships and shared visions that have been formed at the community level. These relationships and the policies that facilitated them have been essential in demonstrating how the process of integration takes place at the community-based level. Sustainability and “scaling up” is dependent upon the creation and implementation of public policy to support these initiatives.

At a provincial level, Family Resource Centres (FRCs) have made a commitment to support the development of the ECDC demonstration sites. Collaborations between ECDCs and FRCs have resulted in the provision of resources, including the donation of equipment, materials and human resources. FRCs have relocated programs into school-based ECDCs, expanded existing programs, and developed new joint initiatives to address local community and family needs. In addition, FRC educators often serve as members of the Early Childhood Boards or Committees. Specifically, Valley Family Resource Centre has been instrumental in all phases of development of the Carleton-York-Victoria (CYV) sites, with involvement in planning, implementation and administrative activities. Further, this organization administers funding and MWMFF grants on behalf of the CYV sites, and continues to play a key role in the ongoing growth and development of early childhood services and supports in the region. Other important partnerships at the community level include those with existing programs such as Talk with Me, VON Healthy Baby and Me, and Early Intervention. Such linkages and relationships have served to break down existing silos, allowing programs and services to be delivered more effectively, efficiently and economically.

At the school level, principals, Transition to Schools Coordinators, and Site Directors have worked together to facilitate linkages between the children in the ECDCs and the larger school community. The creation of a transition team comprised of administrators, kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators is a practice that has demonstrated success in bridging gaps and creating opportunities to work as a team with a common vision. Other successful integration practices have included monthly activities between kindergarten and preschool classes, integrated school-wide activities, and shared library, physical education and music resources and classes.

#### **1.4 New Brunswick Early Childhood Demonstration Site Evaluation**

The following section provides a concise overview of the three-year early childhood demonstration site evaluation plan. The intent of this effort was to provide a specific means from which to examine initiative activities, and to document lessons learned as a result of the developmental and implementation processes associated with the respective Early Childhood Development Centres. In addition, this research explored areas of impact or change related to integrated services for early childhood services resulting from the initiative.

#### **1.4.1 Purpose of the research**

The primary goal of this evaluation was to report on the key perspectives, processes and practices related to the Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC) demonstration initiative. Specifically, this final, Year 3 report will examine program implementation issues, including:

- Whether indicators of change progressed along the continuum from co-existence, to coordination, to integration in six categories:
  1. Early learning environment
  2. Early childhood team and service providers
  3. Leadership and management structure
  4. Access and intake processes
  5. Parent and community opportunities for engagement and activities
  6. Language and cultural identity
- Whether emergent service delivery processes are effective and efficient, including those related to client eligibility, application and decision review, planning facilitation, and funding mechanisms
- What expenditures and resources (monetary and in-kind) pooled by partners are necessary for the long-term financial viability of the demonstration sites

While the ability to draw conclusions in terms of program outcomes is somewhat limited by the relatively short, three-year implementation, the research attempts to describe emergent or promising outcomes related to the programs' impacts on children, families and communities.

#### **1.4.2 Research team**

The project research team is composed of members of the Health and Education Research Group from the University of New Brunswick. Team members are responsible for the design and execution of key data collection and reporting activities. In addition, researchers provide consultation to demonstration site leadership and staff members on lessons learned emerging from data collection processes and analyses. The research team conducts regular site visits and in-person meetings with staff members from each demonstration site, and maintains regular communication through email correspondence and phone contact.

During periodic meetings with the Provincial Advisory Committee, progress updates and lessons learned as a result of data collection activities are presented by the research team. Members of this committee provide feedback to the team on issues that arise related to data collection processes, as well as implications from research themes and lessons learned emerging over the course of this investigation.

#### **1.4.3 Research design**

For this initiative, a case study methodology was employed to facilitate a systematic investigation of situations and experiences. Case studies entail descriptive methods that do not involve manipulation of variables, nor establish cause and effect relationships. Being able to provide *thick descriptions* (Geertz, 1973) required that researchers establish an intimate understanding of the context; developing and maintaining reciprocal, authentic relationships with participants over the course of the multi-year study.

Case study approaches may employ a number of data collection techniques, such as narratives, document reviews, observational methods, and key informant and focus group interviews, as well as the inclusion of more formalized and standardized measures (Berg, 1998). For this effort, researchers examined characteristics and features that reflected the unique contexts in which the interventions were being implemented. The initial four sites in this study, selected by the Government of New Brunswick through a tender process, represented the linguistic, economic and geographical characteristics unique to the province of New Brunswick. The additional sites were selected by MWMFF using the same program criteria. The cultural, socio-economic and linguistic diversity represented by these eight locations provided fertile ground for examining the emergent practices, community linkages, and solution-building processes within and across sites.

#### **1.4.4 Areas of Inquiry**

The examination of data collected throughout this three-year case study initiative was guided by following areas of inquiry:

- Was there consistency between the ECDC's goals and activities with the overall project service delivery framework? What areas of convergence and divergence were noted in site operations?
- Did the initiative effectively reach and engage child, family and community participants?
- Were participants, stakeholders and staff satisfied with the implemented activities within the various centres?
- What specific challenges were encountered in the implementation of the program? How were they addressed? Did they impact service delivery?
- To what extent did the initiative contribute to the development of early childhood service practices of integration across major program components?
- What lessons learned were identified as a result of the implementation of this initiative?
- What specific developments should be considered to enhance the effectiveness of early childhood services in New Brunswick?
- What were the operational costs and financial supports associated with each ECDC? How did these considerations influence program development, implementation and service delivery?

#### **1.4.5 Evaluation Phases**

A common theme throughout all aspects of the initiative was the fostering of positive, collaborative working relationships among early childhood staff teams, service providers, community partners, school administrators, parents and children. Emphasis was also placed on engaging participants in dialogue and in sharing lessons learned that assisted in informing the development of processes and practices across sites. The overall ECDC evaluation design encompassed six phases. A description of the specific data collection activities associated with each phase is presented below.

##### ***Phase 1: Preliminary Consultations and Document Reviews***

At the outset of the initiative, a series of demonstration site visits were conducted in order to facilitate meetings with representatives of the early childhood teams and community partners. Initial meetings were also held with community early childhood service providers, the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF), and the Provincial Evaluation Advisory Committee in order to ensure a shared understanding of the vision and goals of the proposed early childhood service delivery model. During this phase, a review of pertinent resources and documents was undertaken to deepen understanding of the demonstration site profiles.

##### ***Phase 2: Creation of a Project Logic Model***

The identification of key insights resulting from the site visits and the preliminary document examination provided the basis from which the evaluation plan was created. Gathered data also contributed to the creation of a preliminary ECDC initiative logic model. The logic model provided a schematic overview of the major components of the proposed ECDC implementation plan, including assumptions, goals, inputs (resources/participants), outputs, and outcomes (immediate, short-term and long-term). Upon completion, the logic model was submitted for consideration and review to the Provincial Evaluation Advisory Committee and demonstration site representatives. Feedback was incorporated and the logic model was finalized (see Appendix A). The accepted framework was subsequently used to structure the planned implementation and data collection activities for the ECDC evaluation. The finalized framework was used as a guide to create a logic model for each demonstration site, reflecting the unique characteristics and needs represented in each region.

##### ***Phase 3: Development of Data Collection Instruments and Processes***

This phase involved the development of data collection instruments and procedures for the proposed evaluation plan. Consultation with the Provincial Evaluation Advisory Committee was undertaken to ensure that approaches to data collection and inquiry were ethical and sensitive to the needs of early childhood teams, service providers, community partners, and parents and children; as well as effective in providing the essential information for this evaluation. Data collection methods were designed to render both qualitative and quantitative data, and included:

- Site observations
- Review of administrative data
- Interviews with parents, ECDC team members and service providers

- Focus group sessions with ECDC teams, service providers and parents
- Surveys of parents, ECDC team members, service providers, volunteers and community members
- Activity logs
- Operational data with respect to ECDC budget and in-kind support from service providers and other partners

At the close of this phase, university ethics processes were completed for the remaining data collection phases. This process entailed outlining the specific procedures required to meet the standards defined by the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. Once ethics clearance was received, the subsequent data collection phases were initiated.

#### ***Phase 4: Implementation of Data Collection Activities***

Prior to undertaking any data collection activity, the purpose of the ECDC research was explained to participants, and the nature of their involvement in the program evaluation was outlined. As part of this explanation, stakeholders were assured that, except by express consent or direction from individual participants, responses would be kept confidential and that only aggregate responses would be used to report feedback regarding the implementation and outcomes of the ECDC evaluation initiative. Upon obtaining consent from participants, data collection was initiated. Data collection processes were conducted in the official language preference of participants.

Data collection activities were ongoing throughout the three-year ECDC implementation. These activities were also coordinated to ensure that documentation of key lessons learned could be applied to inform and potentially enhance the ongoing implementation activities of the ECDC. The following provides a range of specific data collection activities that were undertaken as part of the overall project review plan.

##### ***Site Observations***

Visits to each site were carried out on a regular basis. The purpose of these visits was to allow the research team opportunities to participate in a cross-section of the programming offered by each ECDC demonstration site. Informal conversations were held with individual team members, service providers, school administrators, parents and volunteers. Observation notes were recorded both during and following site visits.

##### ***Key Informant Interviews***

A number of interviews were carried out with ECDC team members and service providers over the course of the three-year investigation. While questions were created for each round of interviews, opportunities for open-ended conversations were also provided. Interviews were digitally recorded to ensure integrity of the data. Interviews were also carried out with parents who had actively engaged in ECDC programming. A cross-section of parents who had participated in programming, had volunteered and/or helped plan site programming, or had taken part in the local governance body were interviewed. The selection of informants was made in consultation with each ECDC team and regional service providers. These data collection activities assisted in documenting key themes related to the development and implementation of ECDC programs in the eight demonstration sites.



### *Staff Planning and Implementation Activity Logs*

Following initial planning and implementation activities, staff members were encouraged to complete a two-page activity log. This form assisted in linking major initiatives with the objectives, activities, outputs and outcomes outlined in the ECDC logic model. The activity log form assisted staff members in highlighting observations and reflections relevant to the implementation of outcomes. In addition, parents who took part in special programs were asked to complete an activity reflection sheet.

### *Service Providers, Community Partners and Parent Focus Group Reflections*

Focus group reflection sessions were held individually for teams and service providers to document relevant insights related to the implementation of ECDC activities, specific challenges encountered, accomplishments realized, and lessons learned.

### *Follow-up Surveys with ECDC Teams, Service Providers, Community Partners, Volunteers and Parents*

Surveys were undertaken in Years 1 and 2 with ECDC team members, service providers, parents and community members to document outcomes and areas of impact linked to the execution of integrated service delivery activities and initiatives. This data collection facilitated the documentation of participants' perspectives regarding implemented ECDC programs, taking into account the level of engagement, the nature of participation or collaboration, the degree of satisfaction, potential areas of intended or follow-up action, and areas of change or impact.

### *Administrative Operational Data*

Operational forms were completed as part of the sites' monthly reporting processes. These forms include areas of inquiry, documented activities and outputs completed during given reporting periods, intake and attendance records, and documentation of volunteers and in-kind support from community partners. The synthesis of this data provided an important source of evidence related to levels of integrated service delivery and outreach within communities.

### ***Phase 5: Data Management, Synthesis and Analysis***

Data management, synthesis and analysis activities were concurrent, interactive and ongoing processes throughout the three-year investigation. Data resulting from common areas of inquiry were merged, entered into a project database, and organized into patterns. Data related to these patterns were collated and synthesized into thematic categories. Emergent themes were confirmed through ongoing conversations with ECDC teams, service providers, community partners and parent participants.

### ***Phase 6: Report Preparation and Sharing Lessons Learned***

Periodic updates were presented to the Provincial Evaluation Advisory Committee and to project authorities from the MWMFF, with particular emphasis placed on the identification of lessons learned during the course of the ECDC demonstration initiative. Joint workshops and symposia were held throughout the three-year evaluation period, providing specific opportunities to highlight the major themes and findings of the research with ECDC staff members and community stakeholders. Annual and/or interim reports were submitted to project authorities, culminating with the current final report, which encompasses the overall findings and outcomes of the initiative.



### 1.4.6 Sources of Evidence

Within this case study, data sources were linked to the key elements of the research. In the following table, these links are outlined in detail.

**Table 1: Sources of Evidence**

Area of inquiry: Implementation	Research Instruments
How public policy informs a program delivery model of integrated early childhood services that is closely linked to schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of public policy documents and interviews with policymakers</li><li>• Observational notes from site visits</li><li>• Key informant interviews (all stakeholders)</li><li>• Focus groups</li></ul>
How and why the indicators of change progress along the continuum from co-existence to coordination to integration in six categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early learning environment</li><li>• Early childhood team and service providers</li><li>• Leadership and management structure</li><li>• Access and intake processes</li><li>• Parent and community opportunities for engagement and activities</li><li>• Cultural identity and language</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indicators of Change</li><li>• Adapted Indicators of Change instrument with Francophone sites</li></ul>
How effective and efficient service delivery processes are with respect to the eligibility process, application and decision review process, planning and facilitation, and funding mechanisms in the four demonstration sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation notes from site visits</li><li>• Review of site policy documents</li><li>• Key focus interviews</li><li>• Administrative tracking (utilization)</li></ul>
Which expenditures and resources (monetary and in-kind) pooled by partners are necessary for the long-term financial viability of the demonstration sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial Tracking</li><li>• Set-up (budget statements and in-kind donations)</li><li>• Quarterly tracking of in-kind donations and expenditures</li></ul>
What evaluation processes contribute to an increase in understanding the impact on children, families and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administrative tracking of utilization</li><li>• Key informant interviews</li><li>• Parent/participant feedback forms</li></ul>



## 2. Highlights From Year 1 and Year 2 Research Findings

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### 2.1 Impacts

The perceived impacts of the early childhood centres were gathered through key informant interviews and focus groups with diverse stakeholders throughout the first two years of program implementation. Site visits provided opportunities for researchers to confirm emerging themes through observations and member checking. Findings related to impacts over the first two years of implementation are presented under the following headings:

- Accessibility and availability of programs for children, parents and families
- Creation of more seamless transitions between early childhood and kindergarten
- Impacts on early childhood educators
- Impacts on service providers and community partners

#### 2.1.1 Accessibility and availability of programs for children, parents and families

The gathering of parent stories provided a look at the early childhood centres from a parent's perspective. Embedded in these stories were the advantages that integrated service delivery provides, particularly to families living in at-risk circumstances. Service providers working within the integrated-centre model do not work in isolation with the child, but involve the family and the entire staff team, raising the bar in their practice and creating an environment that reinforces interventions. Benefits were also noted by community partners in the form of decreased travel and administrative duties related to the integrated model, which facilitated increases in the delivery of direct programming to families.

The following actions were identified by stakeholders as being significant in improving access to and availability of services:

- Creation of licensed childcare services that address community needs
- Implementation of programs and services that meet the unique needs of children, parents and families in their communities
- Expansion of services and programming for parents and children
- Creation of a welcoming learning environment
- Early identification, assessment and provision of programs/services for children with exceptionalities
- Creation of the early learning centre as a "hub" providing a continuum of services for children, parents and families

#### 2.1.2 Creation of more seamless transitions between early childhood and kindergarten

Participants reported that the ECDCs foster a culture of learning, which better prepares children for the transition to kindergarten and primary grades. Parents and early childhood educators commented on the change in the way children talk about their learning experiences. The centres' narrative teaching and learning approach provided a vehicle for children to talk about their learning and how

they felt about their accomplishments. Further, ECDC activities were characterized as encouraging students to develop a sense of autonomy and competency that served them well in preparation for school. Learning in a social context was also seen to encourage children to recognize their strengths, to challenge themselves, and to elicit the support of their peers when necessary. Parents and early childhood educators noted that children were learning coping strategies that they could carry into later grades, and into other aspects of their lives.

The following actions were identified by stakeholders as being significant in creating more seamless transitions:

- Facilitating communication between early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers
- Providing opportunities for parents and children to become part of the school community
- Lowering anxiety and concerns with respect to school
- Offering high quality early learning programs that promote emotional, social and cognitive growth

### **2.1.3 Impacts on early childhood educators**

Early childhood educators reported building professional learning communities with other ECEs and kindergarten teachers. According to ECEs, participating in such professional learning environments, both locally and provincially, encouraged and supported personal and professional growth, thereby increasing their sense of value and worth. ECEs highlighted the importance of being part of a team with a common vision. Further, they reported personal growth in the building and acquisition of professional skills with respect to the narrative documentation and sharing of children's learning, as well as through provincial professional development opportunities related to the provincial Early Childhood Framework.

### **2.1.4 Impacts on community partners and service providers**

A number of ECDCs reported meeting regularly with their community partners and service providers. In some cases, the early childhood partners met as part of an Early Childhood Initiative Committee (ECI), while others created partners' committees directly associated with the centres.

The New Brunswick Family Resource Centres provided significant support to the initiative at both the provincial and local levels. Centres that created strong partnerships with FRCs experienced enhanced program offerings, reduced costs, and increased utilization and reach. Being part of an ECDC allowed partners and services providers to:

- Gain access to a space designed specifically for early childhood education
- Provide flexibility in scheduling programming during the day and evening to meet the needs of children, parents and families
- Communicate with a site director who acted as a liaison for parents, connecting them with appropriate service providers or community partners
- Observe and work with children in their learning environments

- Work with parents in familiar settings where they felt safe and secure, and where opportunities for communication were enhanced

## **2.2 Key Challenges**

Many of the successes at the site level were attributed to solid relationships among early childhood stakeholders. However, participants cautioned that good will alone would not sustain the kind of change that is needed for New Brunswick to reap the economic, academic, social and health benefits associated with universally accessible, quality early childhood education and care. The following sections present data pertaining to challenges and barriers to integration that were gleaned through key informant interviews, focus groups, site observations and monthly reports over the first two years of the study.

### **2.2.1 Leadership and Sustainability**

Key informants reported that defining the roles and responsibilities of ECDC board members posed a challenge. Some sites spoke of the need to recruit specific individuals within the community with essential skill sets to serve as board members. In Year 2, concerns with respect to the sustainability of leadership structures were prominent. Government-funded centres expressed concern regarding leadership, governance and sustainability following the completion of the demonstration initiative. Other issues around sustainability included how to engage more partners in becoming involved with the site, how to attract more families to afterschool care services, and how to move forward in planning for parenting programs.

### **2.2.2 Governance**

Participants expressed concerns with respect to the sustainability of leadership structures. Specifically, government funded centres noted challenges regarding leadership, governance and sustainability following the completion of the three-year demonstration. In this regard, all sites prioritized the creation of local governance structures (committees or boards) that were responsible for program policies, resource allocation, service planning and monitoring, and human resource decisions. However, concerns regarding ongoing provincial engagement and leadership persisted throughout the demonstration period.

### **2.2.2 Childcare licensing**

Some early childhood sites described the licensing process as complex and confusing. Understanding the different requirements of the policies and practices of the Departments of Social Development and Education and Early Childhood Development was described as challenging for site directors and coordinators tasked with preparing documentation and ensuring that requirements were met. The sharing of information and experiences among CYV sites, as well as the support of the CYV Coordinator, contributed to the alleviation of some of this stress.

### **2.2.3 Recruitment and retention of early childhood staff**

Finding and retaining qualified staff was reported as a significant challenge, especially for Francophone centres. Concern was noted regarding the pay inequities among early childhood educators, kindergarten teachers and other service providers. Participants noted a

need for additional online spaces in the New Brunswick Community College system's early childhood education programs to accommodate working students.

#### **2.2.4 Partnerships**

Participants noted key challenges in Years 1 and 2 related to the establishment of clear communication protocols with schools and districts, as well as to the lack of specific guidelines in community partnership agreements. Service providers noted the differences in mandates between universal and targeted programs. Also noted as an area of challenge were the differences in geographical boundaries among the Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development, Social Development and Health, which led to difficulties for some centres in trying to connect with their regional service providers. An additional challenge related to partnerships was related to the gap in service delivery during the period between the end of preschool and the beginning of kindergarten. Informants reported that even if children in kindergarten were immediately assessed and services requested, the wait time for services could be between nine months and one year. Finally, participants noted that some service providers and community partners had not yet engaged with the sites, and cited the need for clear communication at the provincial level in terms of their roles and responsibilities regarding the early childhood centres.

#### **2.2.5 Family and community engagement**

While there were many successes to celebrate in terms of family and community engagement, informants reported that there were still some families who were "falling through the cracks". Lack of communication, shared understanding of the function of the early childhood centres, transportation, and scheduling of programs were identified as challenging factors. Informants shared that in several centres, the provision of childcare services was seen as competition by private childcare operators. An additional challenge was related to having a means of understanding the unique needs of families and communities. Parental representation on ECDC boards and the creation of a formalized plan to collect feedback from parents were two strategies used by sites to alleviate this challenge.

#### **2.2.6 Policy Issues at the provincial level**

Stakeholders were united in their belief that the practices of integration were improving care and education for families, parents and children. However, the following four key challenges requiring policy change were identified by stakeholders:

- *Gaps in services that occur between preschool and kindergarten.* Some stakeholders indicated that services could be terminated when the child enters school, and that testing may need to be repeated and interventions reintroduced.
- *Changes to the Schools Act*, which presently includes educational responsibility for children 5 to 21, to accommodate the addition of Early Childhood Development to the Department of Education
- *Resources that are not pooled*, allowing service providers to work together to provide a holistic approach to child and family supports
- *Privacy legislation* that poses a barrier for partners wanting to share information and work together in building comprehensive services for children and families

### **2.2.7 Barriers to integration**

When considering opportunities for integrating four-year-old preschool programming with that of kindergartens, some sites have encountered barriers related to the teachers' collective agreement and its guidelines around class size and teacher work loads. Stakeholders also indicated that a perceived lack of communication between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the New Brunswick Teachers Union posed a significant challenge in moving forward with innovative, integrated programming.

## **2.3 Lessons Learned**

### **2.3.1 Leadership and management**

Lessons learned have emerged from centres with boards that function effectively, as well as from those that have experienced challenges. Where principals and teachers have been actively engaged in the planning of the early childhood initiatives, greater and more rapid success has been attained. Boards with representation from community partners and service providers have tended to move initiatives forward more effectively. At a provincial level, a redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of principals to include the children and staff of early childhood centres could facilitate closer ties to schools, and more effective integration of services and programming. Educational and professional development opportunities could increase principals' understanding of early childhood education and care. Similar to the existing Parent-School Support Committees (PSSCs), it was felt that ECDCs could benefit from leadership/advisory committees with clearly stated guidelines with respect to structure, roles and responsibilities.

Parent representation on ECDC boards has facilitated the development of programs and services that meet the unique needs of communities. Such linkages between ECDCs and their communities have led to closer ties with service providers and regional support systems. Where there has been strong representation from community partners and service providers, sites have moved more fluidly toward engaging stakeholders in joint initiatives, based on common visions that expand capacity and reach. Finally, growth has been experienced most consistently among sites with regularly scheduled meetings that focus on considering site directors' reports, leading to joint decisions regarding program policies and resource allocation, and the prioritization of community-driven service planning and program implementation.

### **2.3.2 Access to programs and services**

The Community Schools model provides valuable lessons for the integration of services at the school level. Within this model, parents and families view the school as the "hub" of the community where they can access services, programs and activities. Five ECDCs are located within designated Community Schools; while others have well established sport and community programs that allow them to function like Community Schools.

It is foundational to the development of an integrated service platform that early childhood centre programs and services evolve in response to family and community needs. Communities benefit from a balance of flexible childcare services, no-cost activities for parents and children (e.g., drop-in play groups, family celebrations), and family/parenting sessions that are accessible to both stay-at-home parents and those who work full-time, part-time or in shifts. Embedded processes and procedures would facilitate an ECDC's ability to develop and implement programming that meets the needs of children, parents and families. Such responsiveness has been observed in sites that have begun to work on minimizing the transition for children and their parents from early childhood to kindergarten. In some sites, the appointment of a transition team facilitated by the principal and transition to school coordinator has resulted in the creation of joint activities that recognize the contributions of both early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers in the development of integrated programming.

### **2.3.3 School-based centres**

The location of ECDCs in schools has facilitated the transition to school for New Brunswick families through increased access to a broad range of early childhood services, and the provision of a hub for accessing information and supports related to child, family and parenting needs. Further, school-based centres serve a role in both preparing children and parents for school, and for preparing schools for the entrance of children with exceptional needs into the public school system. These linkages allow for the identification and application of early intervention services for children and families, building stronger relationships between the school and parents. In this model, parents are encouraged to take a more active role in the ongoing education of their children from pre-kindergarten onward.

Other benefits of school-based centres include more efficient use of spaces left open due to declining enrolments in New Brunswick schools, which have experienced a net loss of nearly 22,000 students in the past decade. Such a decline necessitates and paves the way for the creative allocation of space to ensure ongoing viability for many New Brunswick schools. The inclusion of ECDCs also allows for the use of traditionally unused spaces during school holidays and professional development days.

### **2.3.4 Early learning teams**

Stakeholders have highlighted the importance of provincial policy that articulates how early learning teams should be created, and identifies team mandates, vision, and roles and responsibilities. According to key informants, the development of a successful early learning team depends upon:

- The hiring and retention of qualified early childhood educators
- Opportunities and time to understand each other's vision, mandates, goals and curricula
- Common scheduled planning times for early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers
- Opportunities for common professional development
- Commitment to plan and implement joint initiatives
- The support of the principal in facilitating the factors listed above



### **2.3.5 Family and community engagement**

The embedding of community consultation processes as a consistent component of ECDC services was seen as a critical component in planning programs and services. It was suggested that communication protocols could utilize existing tools such as school newsletters, local bulletin boards, church bulletins, social media, school voice-mail, and email distribution lists to raise community awareness of programs and services. Further, using existing regional committee infrastructures to facilitate relationships between ECDC sites and community partners/service providers was seen as an efficient means of increasing both family and community engagement.

The continuity of early childhood staff positions, along with the trusting relationships forged among staff, families and community partners, was believed to strengthen the impact of ECDCs. Specifically, the role of the Site Director was seen as critical in:

- Providing information to the community regarding services and programs for parents
- Connecting families to essential services
- Coordinating programs and services at the centre that meet identified community needs
- Facilitating the delivery of partner programs

### 3. Individual Site Profiles

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#### 3.1 The Step Ahead Bath Family Learning Centre

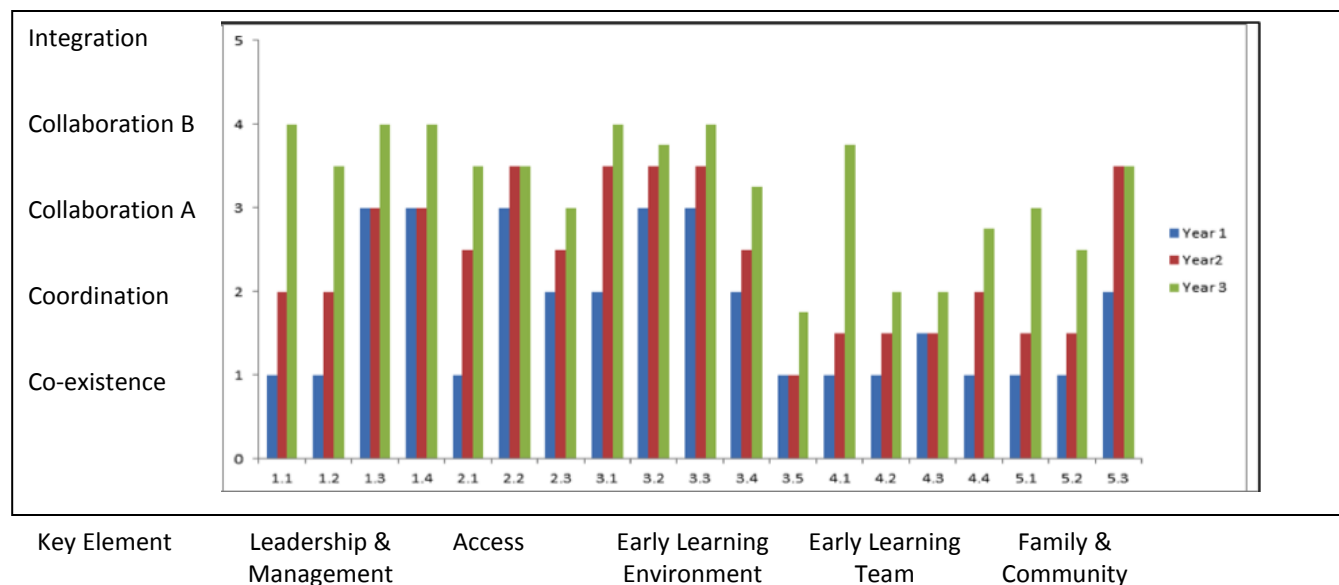
The Step Ahead Bath Family Learning Centre (SA-BFLC) is located in Bath Middle School, adjacent to the Bath Elementary School. A number of key events paved the way for the development of the early childhood development centre. In November 2007, a local presentation of the McCain-Mustard Early Years Study (1999) resulted in initial discussions between the Parent School Support Committees (PSSC) in both schools regarding the possibility of establishing an early childhood development centre. In May and June of 2009, a series of “kitchen table meetings” were held, patterned after the *Communities Achieving Responsive Services* (CARS) process, which seeks to build community capacity by working with communities to identify needs and to match existing government and non-government resources with community priorities. Subsequently, two public meetings identified early childhood development as one of the community’s most pressing needs. As a consequence of these meetings and the community’s successful application to become a New Brunswick Early Childhood Demonstration Site, there was a mobilization of community members and resources to ensure that the ECDC became a reality.

A number of factors have contributed to the success experienced by Bath Step Ahead. The community consultation that preceded the opening of the ECDC clearly identified early childhood development as one of the primary community needs. Secondly, the site engaged all relevant stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the centre. Many of these partners have continued to serve as board members over the last three years. Further, the choice to implement both preschool and afterschool childcare contributed to the site’s ability to reach a sustainable level of operation by the end of Year 3. Afterschool programs have also contributed to a positive cash flow. Working closely with the school principals, the transition to school coordinator and the CYV coordinator ensured that programming continued to expand, creating a more seamless transition from early childhood to kindergarten for both children and parents. A final factor that has contributed to the success of Bath Step Ahead is the continuing presence and leadership of the site director, who understands the needs of the community and is known and trusted by parents and service providers.

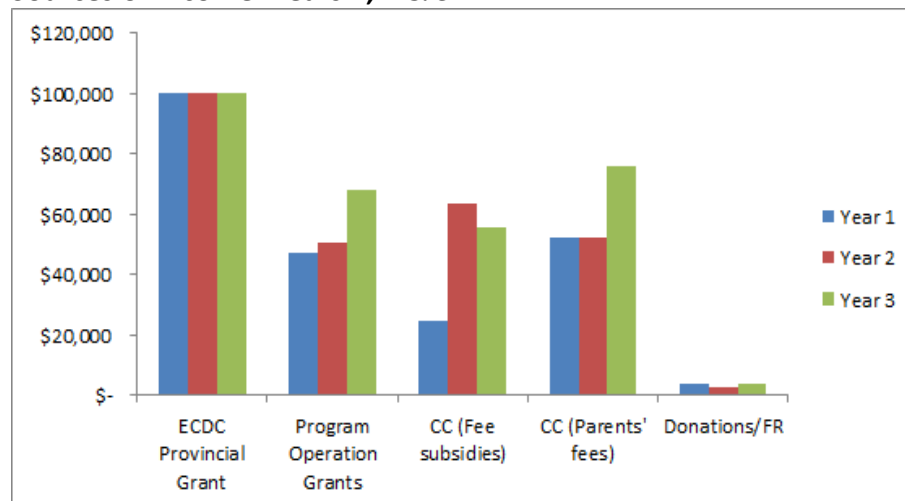
Bath Step Ahead Family Learning Centre															
Partners		Programs	Capacity: 39 licensed spaces												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Andrew and Laura McCain Library</li><li>• Andrew and Lara McCain Gallery</li><li>• Carleton York Victoria Early Childhood Development Centres</li><li>• Early Intervention</li><li>• Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation</li><li>• New Brunswick Community College</li><li>• Public Health</li><li>• School principals and teachers at Bath Elementary and Bath Middle</li><li>• School District 14</li><li>• Talk with Me</li><li>• Village of Bath</li><li>• Valley Family Resource Centre</li><li>• VON</li></ul>		<b>CHILD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preschool (3 &amp; 4 year olds)</li><li>• Childcare (2-5 year olds)</li><li>• After school Care (5-11 year olds)</li></ul> <b>ADULT/CHILD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VFRC Drop-in</li><li>• VON Healthy Baby</li><li>• Public Health 3.5 Clinic</li><li>• Talk with Me</li><li>• Family Celebrations</li><li>• School Celebrations</li><li>• Community Visits</li></ul> <b>ADULT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk with Me</li><li>• Literacy Evening</li><li>• Early Intervention</li></ul>	<b>Childcare:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full time: 9</li><li>• Part time: 12</li><li>• Integrated: 5</li></ul> <b>Afterschool:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full time: 9</li><li>• Part time: 21</li></ul> <b>Preschool: 4 year old</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 16 children</li></ul> <b>Preschool: 3 year old</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7 children</li></ul> <b>VFRC Drop-in</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 11 adults</li><li>• 19 children</li></ul> <b>Program Reach:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 71 families</li></ul>												
<div><div><div>50000</div><div>45000</div><div>40000</div><div>35000</div><div>30000</div><div>25000</div><div>20000</div><div>15000</div><div>10000</div><div>5000</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Child</div><div>Child/Adult</div><div>Adult</div></div><div><div>Year 1</div><div>Year 2</div><div>Year 3</div></div></div> <div><div>Utilization:</div><div>Years 1, 2 &amp; 3</div></div> <table><tr><td>Year 1</td><td>33076</td><td>745</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Year 2</td><td>37329</td><td>1626</td><td>26</td></tr><tr><td>Year 3</td><td>43963</td><td>1589</td><td>105</td></tr></table>		Year 1	33076	745	0	Year 2	37329	1626	26	Year 3	43963	1589	105	<div>Strengths of the Site</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A history of collaboration among partners has facilitated the planning and implementation of initiatives.</li><li>• Both school principals are key participants and supporters of the Early Years’ Initiative.</li><li>• Bath Middle School, although not a designated Community School, continues to engage in numerous initiatives that connect children and their families with the school and community (e.g., family events, sports teams).</li></ul>	
Year 1	33076	745	0												
Year 2	37329	1626	26												
Year 3	43963	1589	105												

<p><b>Accomplishments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Childhood Board has strong representation among service providers, community partners and parents.</li> <li>• Step Ahead Family Learning Centre is financially sustainable as of the end of Year 3.</li> <li>• Preschool programs now being conducted in the prekindergarten room in Bath Elementary School have expanded, and a three-year-old preschool program has been added.</li> <li>• With the increase in licensed spaces, the afterschool program has expanded.</li> <li>• Bath's Community Nutrition Project received a grant from the Social Inclusion Network.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Noteworthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of the children preregistered for kindergarten in September 2012 attended the Preschool Transition to School Week. The preschool early childhood educator conducted the week's activities with input from elementary school teachers.</li> <li>• Speech and Language programming has been delivered to individual children and small groups. Programming continues throughout the summer months.</li> <li>• Step Ahead has applied for and received grants to open a fitness centre for parents, staff, middle school students and community members.</li> <li>• A transition team is in place to co-facilitate and plan pre-kindergarten registration and kindergarten roll-out week.</li> <li>• Step Ahead now delivers the school breakfast program.</li> <li>• Parents have identified Step Ahead as an early childhood hub where they can access information and services.</li> <li>• The site director and CYV coordinator serve on the Early Intervention Board, assisting with the proposal to amalgamate Woodstock and Fredericton agencies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identified Community Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents have expressed a need for parenting programs at the centre.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site director will work with existing partners to create partnership agreements that reflect current joint projects and activities.</li> <li>• The Step Ahead board members, the site director and the ECEs will explore possibilities for delivering parenting programs.</li> <li>• Working with the school and other partners, Step Ahead will create a behaviour protocol/code of conduct.</li> <li>• Stakeholders involved in the site's Nutrition Program will circulate a nutrition needs assessment.</li> </ul>

## Practices of Integration Comparison: Years 1, 2 & 3



## Sources of Income: Years 1, 2 & 3



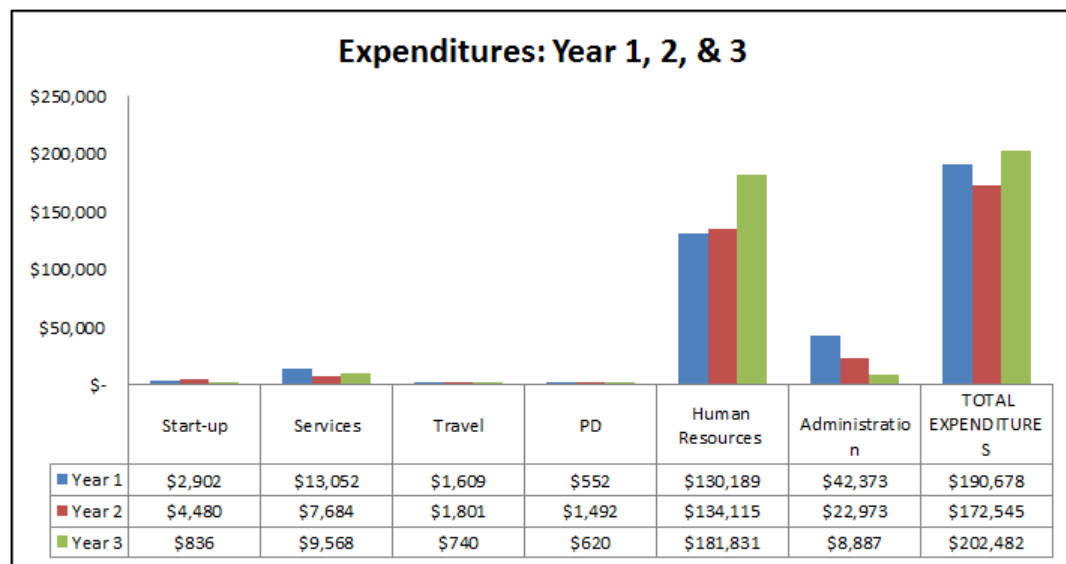
### Funding Sources

- ECDC Provincial Grants (\$100,000 per year for three years)
- Program Operating Grants (Additional grants such as IWK, Active Kids, Communities Raising Children, Social Inclusion Network, Wage Enhancement Grants)
- Childcare Fee Subsidies (Education and Early Childhood Development funding for working parents who meet program criteria, as well as children who have been identified by the Public Health 3.5 Clinic or Early Intervention). Bath currently has four integrated students.
- Child Care Parents' Fees
- Donations and Fundraising

## Program Delivery Costs

The hourly cost of delivering programming has remained almost the same for Bath throughout the three-year demonstration period (Year 1: \$6.73; Year 2: \$6.51; Year 3: \$6.63). For other sites there has been a significant decrease from Year 1 to Year 3. Due to the fact that Bath began with an afterschool program and was also filled to capacity, the hourly delivery cost was lower beginning in Year 1. A slight increase in hourly costs between Years 2 and 3 reflects the expenses associated with the afterschool program and the delivery of the Breakfast Program.

## Expenditures: Years 1, 2 & 3



### Expenditures

The chart to the left reports expenditures for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3. Most notable are the decreases in the categories of Services and Administration, and the increase in expenditures in Human Resources. The increase in human resource expenses reflects the hiring of additional staff to address additional utilization hours. Program expansion includes an additional four-year-old prekindergarten class, a three-year-old kindergarten class, and additional afterschool licensed spaces. In the expansion of the afterschool program, Bath shares the cafeteria with the Middle School. As part of this partnership, Step Ahead has taken over the delivery of the Breakfast Program. At this point, the expenditures and in-kind donations are primarily supporting the delivery of programming and services to children, parents and families.

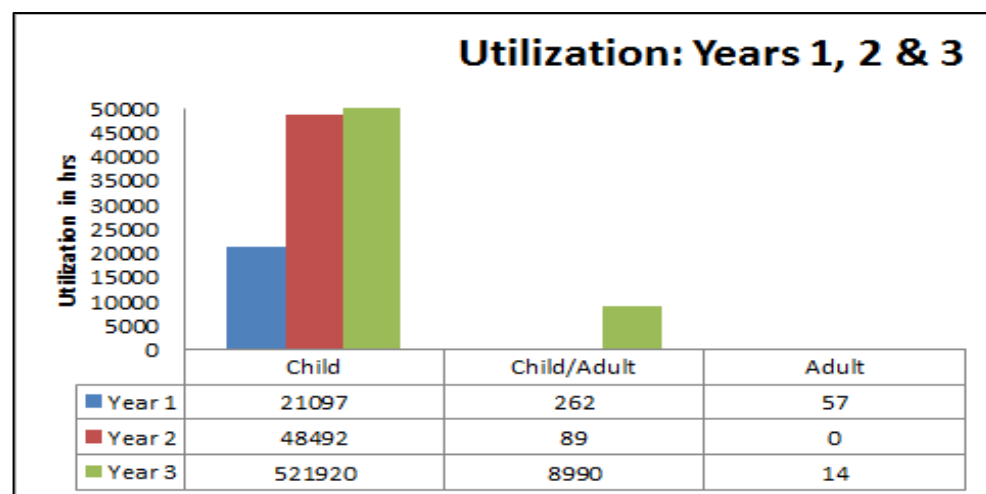
### 3.2 Moncton Le Phare

*Le Phare* is located at the Sainte Bernadette primary school, serving just over 160 students from kindergarten to Grade 5. The Greater Moncton community is predominately Anglophone. In the past decade, Moncton has experienced major economic expansion and population growth. Francophone residents of the Moncton region face the challenge of maintaining their linguistic and cultural identity in a predominantly English-speaking community. This task can be further complicated when one parent is Anglophone and the other is Francophone. In such cases, children may arrive at school without a full understanding of their French culture or language. Since 1967, the Province of New Brunswick has recognized linguistic duality, offering two educational systems – one French; the other English. All parents have the right to choose either educational system if their child meets the language requirements before entering school. There is one important exception – when at least one parent is Francophone, these families are considered *ayant droit*; and they have the right to choose the school system of their choice without having to undertake a language entrance exam.

Some children from *les familles exogames* require special attention when they start school. This linguistic and cultural support is called *Francization*. Frequently, immigrants who speak neither English nor French will choose to attend a Francophone school; thus requiring *Francization* as well. Moncton's regional school district reported that in 2006-2007, 23% of students received *Francization* when they arrived in the kindergarten program. The risk of assimilation is considered to be very high among Francophones who live in areas that are mainly English, and parents express concern about the difficulty of preserving their culture and language. At Ste. Bernadette School, more than 68% of students who arrived at kindergarten in 2010 required *Francization*. This significant increase from prior years was attributed, in part, to changes in the provincial French immersion programs in English schools. Previously, children from *ayant droit* families elected to take the early French Immersion programs within the English education sector. Since the Early Immersion program was eliminated in 2007, parents have increasingly exercised their right to enroll their children in the French school system. The increased need of this population for *Francization* has further taxed already limited resources.

*Le Phare* recognized the challenges being faced at the kindergarten level, and has been committed to offering a strong Francophone early childhood program that includes *Francization*, as well as programs that promote cultural and linguistic identity. Beginning with a preschool (3-4 year olds), *Le Phare* quickly expanded to add afterschool childcare in Year 2 at the request of parents. *Le Phare* has also formed strong, viable partnerships with provincial and national Francophone agencies and committees. In Year 4, with the provision of additional space in the school, the afterschool program will expand. As more space becomes available, *Le Phare* will continue to add programming, offered both by partners and the centre itself.

Le Phare Familial: Un centre de développement de la petite enfance		
Partners	Programs	Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFPNB - Association francophone des parents du Nouveau-Brunswick</li> <li>• CNPF - Commission nationale des parents francophones</li> <li>• CAFI (Centre accueil et d'accompagnement francophone des immigrants du sud-est du NB)</li> <li>• (FANB) Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick</li> <li>• GRC-Codiac</li> <li>• Mike's Bike shop</li> <li>• School District</li> <li>• Ste Berndette principal and staff</li> <li>• Talk With Me/Parle-Moi</li> <li>• Toys R Us</li> <li>• Université de Moncton</li> <li>• Ville de Moncton-services d'incendie</li> </ul>	<p><b>CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preschool (3-4 yrs)</li> <li>• Afterschool (K-3)</li> </ul> <p><b>CHILD/ADULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alphabétisation familiale</li> <li>• Parle-Moi (Vitalité NB) (La Mère l'Oie)</li> <li>• Petit Crayons</li> <li>• School activities and celebrations</li> <li>• Centre de santé sexuelle - atelier - Les tous-petits : des êtres sexuels</li> <li>• Stagiaires du programme travail social - L'information sur l'intimidation et le taxage</li> </ul> <p><b>ADULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bilingual child</li> </ul>	<p><b>Preschool:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full time: 13</li> <li>• Part time: 4</li> <li>• Integrated: 2</li> </ul> <p><b>Afterschool:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full time: 22</li> <li>• Part time: 8</li> </ul> <p><b>Petits crayons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults: 13</li> <li>• Children: 24</li> </ul>



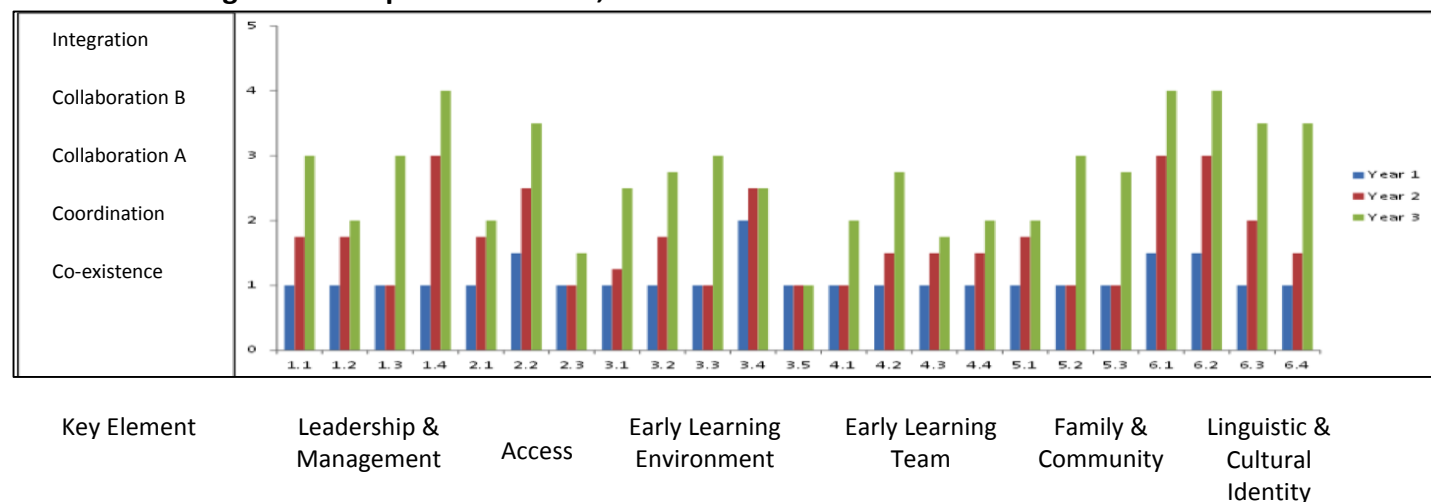
#### Strengths of the Site

- Partnerships with provincial and national associations focusing on cultural and linguistic identity
- Strong representation of parents on the board and committees
- Inclusion of children with special needs in the preschool and afterschool care

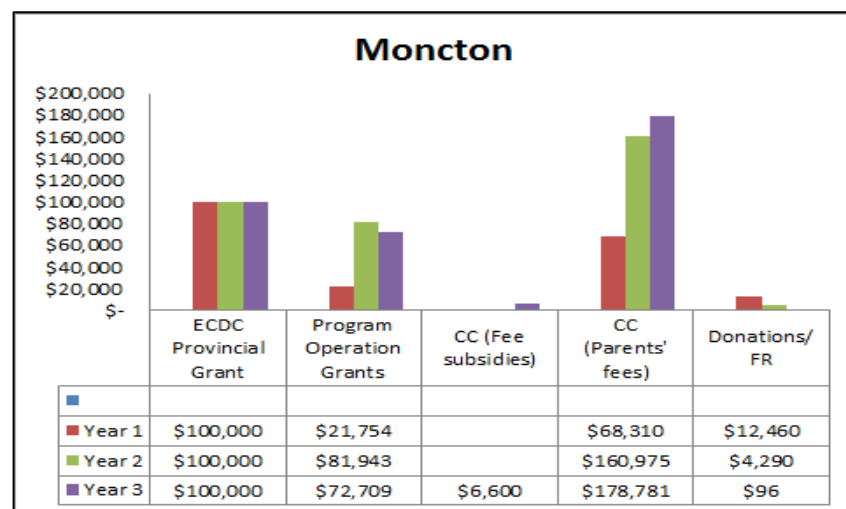


<p><b>Accomplishments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a strategic framework</li> <li>• Review of the mission and vision</li> <li>• Formation of new partnerships that focus on the health and well-being of children and families</li> <li>• Creation of a joint initiative among partners to focus on family literacy and francization</li> <li>• Delivery of afterschool care since September 2010 serving 27 children from kindergarten to Grade 3</li> <li>• Provision of childcare for pre-kindergarten (ages 3 and 4) with flexible options (full day, half day and occasional care)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Identified Community Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a community that promotes Francophone linguistic and cultural identity for children who are growing up in a predominately English milieu</li> <li>• The lack of adequate and sufficient space for <i>Le Phare</i> to expand programs and activities for children, parents and families</li> <li>• Low levels of literacy in the provincial Francophone community</li> <li>• Local programs and services that are not available in French</li> </ul>
<p><b>Noteworthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Le Phare</i> has partnered with CAFI to offer the program <i>Petit Crayons</i> to newcomers to Canada.</li> <li>• The afterschool program is expanding by 18 spaces, using the music room for additional space.</li> <li>• The board created and adopted a salary scale for early childhood educators.</li> <li>• <i>Le Phare</i>, with local partners, organized and implemented a “Safety Day” for children, parents and families.</li> <li>• The site director and colleagues wrote a supporting document for the Early Childhood Framework entitled, <i>Construction identitaire Francophone en petite enfance</i>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The director of the centre will continue to work with existing partners, and to develop new partnerships.</li> <li>• Representatives of <i>Le Phare</i> will meet with representatives of the School District to discuss the construction specifications of the new school, and to advocate for the centre to be included in these plans.</li> <li>• The board will investigate the possibility of using technology as a tool for engaging parents who live long distances from the school.</li> <li>• <i>Le Phare</i> will renew its contract with the new school district.</li> <li>• The board will create a communication plan, and will speak with AFPNB to discuss the results of their recent parents’ survey.</li> <li>• <i>Le Phare</i> will work with the school to look at adopting a common behaviour protocol.</li> </ul>

## Practices of Integration Comparison: Years 1, 2 & 3



## Sources of Income: Years 1, 2 & 3



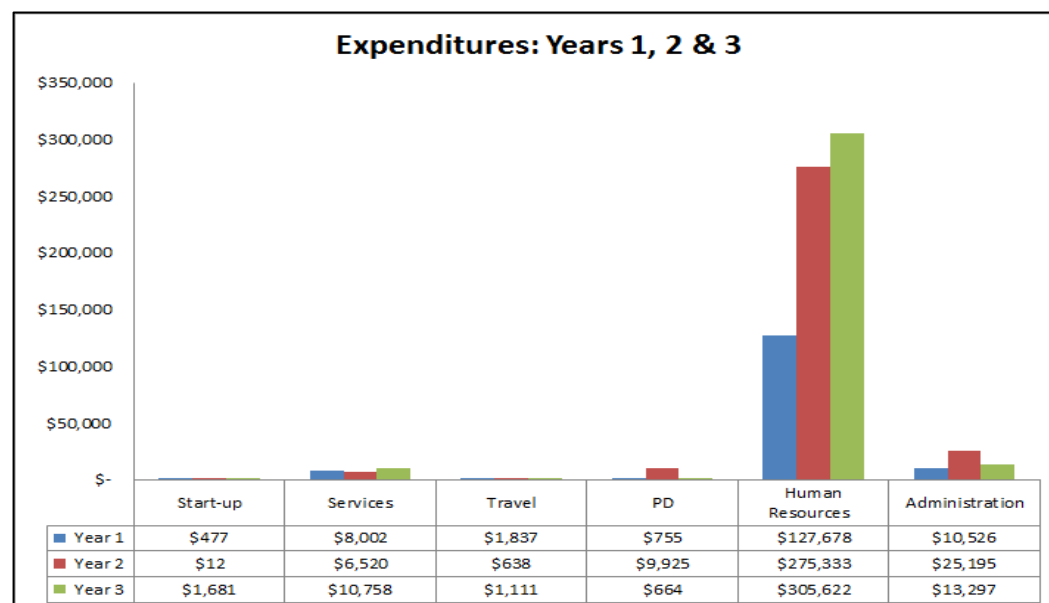
### Sources of income:

- ECDC Provincial Grants (\$100,000 per year for three years)
- Program Operating Grants (Additional grants such as *IWK*, *Active Kids*, *Communities Raising Children*, *Social Inclusion Network*, *Wage Enhancement Grants*)
- Childcare Fee Subsidies (Education and Early Childhood Development funding for working parents who meet program criteria, as well as children who have been identified by the Public Health 3.5 Clinic or Early Intervention). *Le Phare* does not currently have any children who are integrated or being subsidized by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- Child Care Parents' Fees
- Donations and Fundraising

## Program Delivery Costs

The hourly cost of delivering programming has decreased over the three-year demonstration period (Year 1: \$9.46, Year 2: \$7.14; Year 3: \$5.85). In Year 2, the addition of the afterschool program and in Year 3, the decrease in administrative costs and expansion of *Francization* programs for newcomers, contributed to the reduction in program delivery costs.

## Expenditures: Years 1, 2 & 3



### Expenditures

The chart to the left presents expenditures for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3. Most notable are the decreases in the Administration category, and the increase in expenditures in Human Resources. The increase in expenses related to human resources reflects the hiring of new staff to address additional utilization hours. Expenditures and in-kind donations are primarily supporting the delivery of programming and services to children, parents and families.


### 3.3 Le Centre de développement de la petite enfance et familles de Robertville

*Le Centre de développement de la petite enfance et familles de Robertville* is located in *L'école la croisée de Robertville*. Robertville, with a population of 800, is a predominantly French-speaking rural community in north-eastern New Brunswick, about fifteen kilometers from the city of Bathurst. *L'école la croisée* serves a population of 3200, including those in the surrounding communities of Beresford, Petit Rocher and Dunlop. Due to the fact that there is no community centre in Robertville, *L'école la croisée* has become the nucleus of the community, offering a variety of services and programs.

Robertville has a strong network of community partners known as *Comité de la petite enfance*. This committee, composed of representatives from Public Health, Early Intervention, and the Family Resource Centre, has launched several programs and projects since its inception in 1994. One of these initiatives was a research project (2003) in collaboration with the Université de Moncton. The aim of the research project was to better understand the profile of children in the region, and to assess the level of learning skills in order to prepare children for school. To meet the needs of the community, the committee applied for status as a provincial demonstration site, an action that was supported by the school principal. A second network of early childhood partners in the Chaleur region, the *Table de concertation Chaleur*, was established in 2003. Since September 2005, the school has offered a variety of programs and services, including a Centre for Early Childhood Development (CDPE).

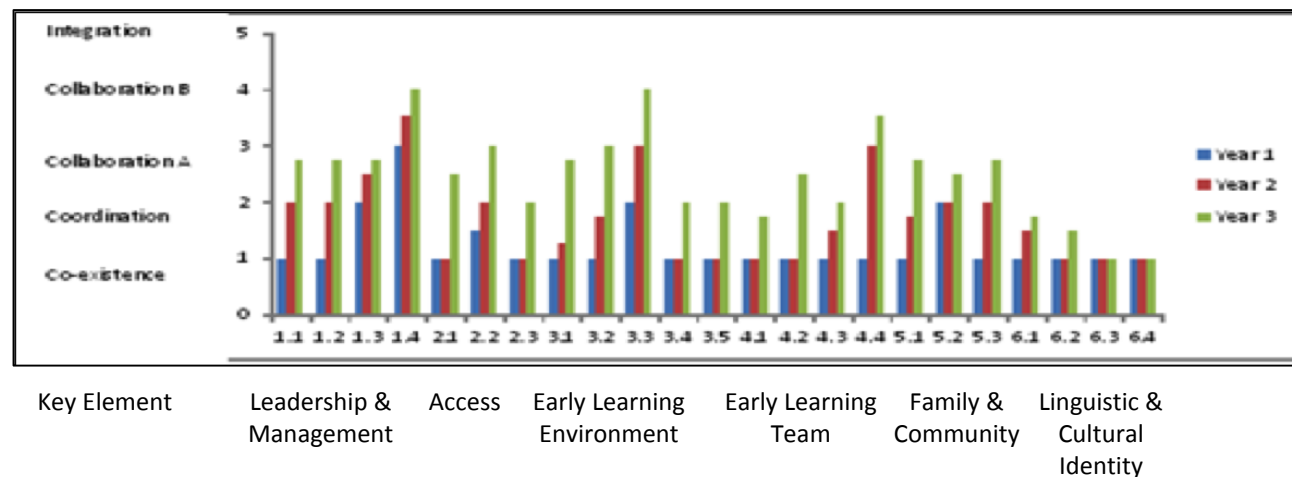
Over the past three years, *le Centre de développement de la petite enfance et familles* has been successful in maintaining consistent staff and board membership, and has maintained roughly the same number of children in the childcare facility. The utilization of part-time childcare services may be indicative of the number of community parents who are involved in shift work. Other parents use the centre as a way of preparing their children for school. In considering the sustainability of services, the centre has developed the following strategies:

- Promoting services within the community
- Increasing childcare fees from \$22.50 to \$23.25 per day (other local daycares charge \$30 per day)
- Offering a second afterschool program (in addition to the private program located in the school)
- Partnering with the school to offer help with homework, painting classes, and other collaborative efforts
- Securing \$70,000 from the New Brunswick government to cover the salary of the director, and the costs related to additional part-time spaces

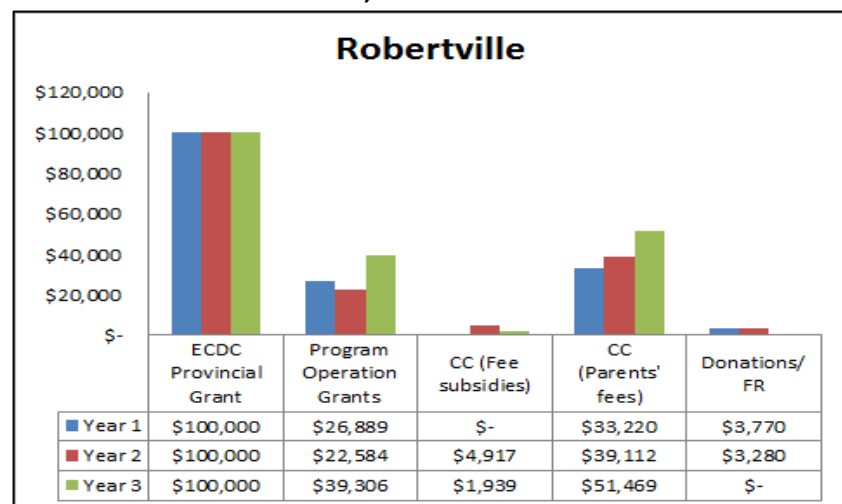
Le Centre de développement de la petite enfance et familles de Robertville																		
Partners	Programs	Capacity: 24 licensed spaces																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bathurst FRC</li><li>• Paquito Early Intervention</li><li>• School District 5<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Transition to school Coordinator</li><li>○ <i>Francization</i> Coordinator</li></ul></li><li>• <i>La Croisée</i>, Community School</li><li>• <i>Vitalité</i> - Talk to me</li><li>• Robertville Community<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ La Coopérative</li><li>○ Post Canada</li><li>○ La Villa Sormany (Nursing home)</li><li>○ Volunteer fire fighters</li></ul></li><li>• Parents</li></ul>	<p><b>CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Childcare (2-5)</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT/CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FRC Drop-in</li><li>• FRC Playgroup</li><li>• Family Celebrations</li><li>• School Celebrations</li><li>• Pajama Literacy</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Jeune actif</i></li><li>• Parenting with Early Intervention</li></ul> <p><b>NUMBER OF STAFF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 full time and 1 half time</li><li>• Director</li></ul>	<p><b>Childcare</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6 Full time</li><li>• 16 Part time</li></ul> <p><b>FRC Playgroup</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 13 adults</li><li>• 15 children</li></ul> <p><b>FRC Preschool</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 adults</li><li>• 8 children</li></ul> <p><b>FRC Play to Learn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6 adults</li><li>• 6 children</li></ul> <p><b>Francization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 15 adults</li><li>• 15 children</li></ul> <p><b>Program Reach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partners: 60 families</li><li>• Childcare: 20 families</li></ul>																
<div><h3>Utilization: Year 1, 2 &amp; 3</h3><table><thead><tr><th></th><th>Child</th><th>Child/Adult</th><th>Adult</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>■ Year 1</td><td>10105</td><td>1911</td><td>161</td></tr><tr><td>■ Year2</td><td>17474</td><td>4392</td><td>221</td></tr><tr><td>■ Year 3</td><td>22906</td><td>2618</td><td>376</td></tr></tbody></table></div>			Child	Child/Adult	Adult	■ Year 1	10105	1911	161	■ Year2	17474	4392	221	■ Year 3	22906	2618	376	<p><b>Strengths of the Site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The centre director is a member of <i>La table concertation</i>, whose focus is early childhood development.</li><li>• The membership of the <i>conseil d'administration</i> has remained consistent throughout the three years of the project.</li><li>• The early childhood staff members have remained the same.</li><li>• The School District has created <i>l'Equipe de transition</i> to study the issues surrounding the transition between early childhood and kindergarten. This committee consists of representation from <i>Parle-Moi</i>, <i>District Scolaire</i> and <i>Intervention precoce Paquito</i>.</li><li>• The principal and transition to school coordinator are members of the <i>conseil d'administration</i>.</li></ul>
	Child	Child/Adult	Adult															
■ Year 1	10105	1911	161															
■ Year2	17474	4392	221															
■ Year 3	22906	2618	376															
HERG, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick		4																

<b>Accomplishments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The childcare program (2-5 years) offers flexible options (full day, half day and occasional care).</li> <li>The childcare has expanded to offer services for children 15 to 24 months of age.</li> <li>The early childhood team has undertaken the provincial early childhood training.</li> <li>The centre has developed a strong relationship with the school community.</li> </ul>	<b>Identified Community Needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community requires clarity regarding the mandate and purpose of the centre.</li> <li>There is a need to build partnerships between the centre and private childcare facilities in the community.</li> <li>There is a need for the private and not-for-profit childcare centres to develop collaborative working relationships.</li> </ul>
<b>Noteworthy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the beginning of Year 4, the centre has opened an afterschool childcare program. The school has provided two additional classrooms for this endeavour.</li> <li>An additional ECE has been hired to support the program expansion.</li> <li>The addition of the afterschool program and the expansion of childcare services to include children of 15-24 months of age are expected to lead Robertville towards sustainability.</li> </ul>	<b>Next steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site director will become a member of <i>L'Equipe de transition</i>.</li> <li>Plans are underway for the school principal to designate planning time for the kindergarten teacher to meet with the early childhood staff.</li> <li>The school and <i>Table de concertation</i> are planning to include the centre in their communication protocols (print and social media).</li> <li>The centre will implement a version of the school's behaviour policy, revised for early childhood.</li> </ul>

### Practices of Integration Comparison: Years 1, 2 & 3



## Sources of Income: Years 1, 2 & 3

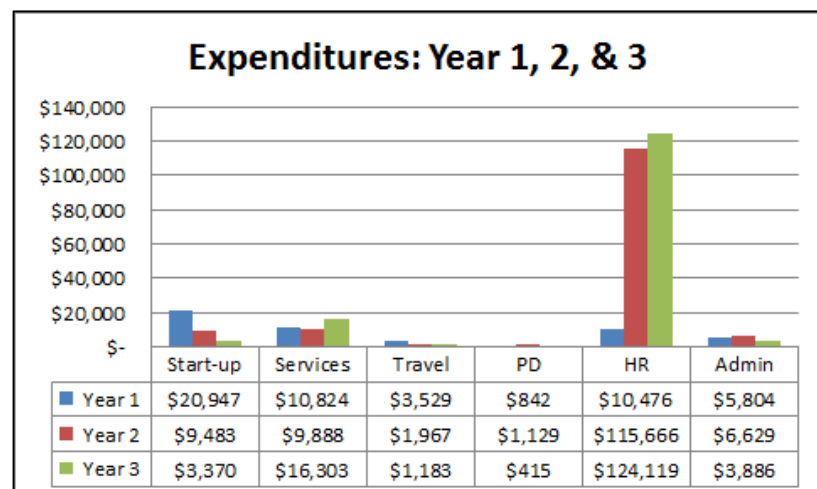


### Sources of Income

- ECDC Provincial Grants (\$100,000 per year for three years)
- Program Operating Grants (Additional grants such as *IWK*, *Active Kids*, *Communities Raising Children*, *Social Inclusion Network*, *Wage Enhancement Grants*)
- Childcare Fee Subsidies (Education and Early Childhood Development funding for working parents who meet program criteria, as well as children who have been identified by the Public Health 3.5 Clinic or Early Intervention)
- Child Care Parents' Fees
- Donations and Fundraising

## Program Delivery Costs

The cost of program delivery has decreased over the past three years for Robertville (Year 1: \$13.48, Year 2: \$7.69, Year 3: \$7.44).



### Expenditures

The chart to the left presents expenditures for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3. Most notable is the decrease in the Administration category and the increase in expenditures related to Human Resources and Services. The increase in human resource expenses reflects the costs for staffing for the additional utilization hours, as well as costs associated with program expansion in the Services category. Program growth includes the expansion of childcare services to include children of 15-24 months of age.

### 3.4 Saint John Early Learning Centre

The Early Learning Centre (ELC) is housed at St. John the Baptist King Edward School, a K-8 school that serves the South End and Waterloo Village in the City of Saint John. A 2008 study, *Poverty and Plenty 11: A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Saint John*, provides insights into the demographics in these areas. People living in poverty tend to reside in one of five communities in Saint John, two of them being Waterloo Village and the South End. In these communities, those living in poverty are mainly single parent families with low levels of education and labour force participation. Of the single parent families in Saint John, most are headed by women.

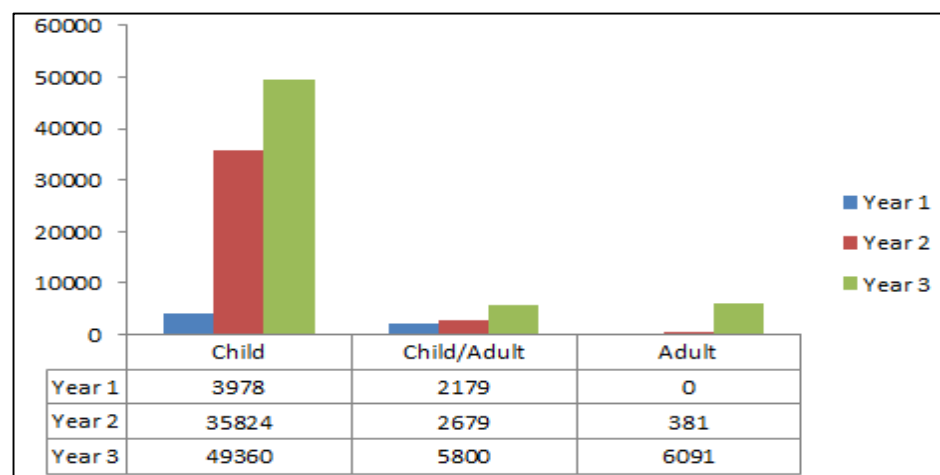
The school functions as the hub of the community, with many programs already in place by virtue of its designation as a PALS Community School (Partners Assisting Local Schools). Initiated in 2000 by J. K. Irving, the PALS initiative encourages local businesses and community organizations to partner with school staff, students and parents to enhance students' learning environments. Impacts of these programs have been noted in the areas of academic achievement, school spirit, social skills, motivation and behaviour, students' involvement in sports and cultural events, and increased parental involvement. The school is also designated as the South End Community Centre, which offers opportunities for children and adults to participate in sports activities, arts and crafts, and other social programs. The Saint John Boys and Girls Club oversees the Community Centre, providing daily afterschool programs. Afterschool programming is also provided for primary students by the local faith communities. The school's location provides easy access to a variety of other services, including the Family Resource Centre, Community Policing Program, and the Turnbull Nursing Home. Government and other service providers are within walking distance (Public Health, Community Mental Health, St. Joseph's Community Health Centre, and the Department of Social Development).

Members of the Saint John community have been involved in early childhood initiatives for many years. The Early Childhood Development Coalition (ECDC) was created by a group of Saint John community agencies who recognized the need to collaborate and share ideas with respect to children. In 2005, this coalition became a research site for Understanding the Early Years, a national program designed to enable Canadian communities to gain a better understanding of young children and their families with the goal of identifying the best programs and services to meet their needs. Another significant event was the hosting of the Early Childhood Conference in Saint John, featuring special speakers the Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain, Jane Bertrand of the MWMFF, and Dr. Charles Pascal. As a result of these initiatives, the community recognized that early childhood development was a prime factor in reducing poverty and preparing individuals to become contributing members of society. The Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative has also undertaken a number of initiatives to break the cycle of poverty in Saint John's vulnerable communities. The Early Learning Centre is an example of how partners can work together toward these goals. Over the past three years, the growth of the ELC has demonstrated how such a centre can help to engage and empower children, parents and families; minimize potentially negative impacts related to transitions; break down institutional barriers; and create a community hub of activities and services.



Saint John – Early Learning Centre		
Partners	Programs	Capacity: 39 Licensed Spaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation (Therapeutic Services, Community Health Centre, Pubic Health, Women and Children Program) and NB Department of Health</li> <li>• Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI)</li> <li>• Crescent Valley Resource Centre</li> <li>• Early Intervention Inc.</li> <li>• Family Plus</li> <li>• Family Resource Centre</li> <li>• The Greater Saint John Community Foundation</li> <li>• Irving Oil: Breakfast Program; special events</li> <li>• IWK Hospital</li> <li>• KPMG Breakfast Program</li> <li>• Mental Health (Rainbows)</li> <li>• NB Community College</li> <li>• ONE CHANGE</li> <li>• People United in the Lower South End (PULSE)</li> <li>• PRUDE (Pride of Race, Unity, Dignity Through Education)</li> <li>• Saint John Boys and Girls Club</li> <li>• Saint John Early Childhood Development Coalition</li> <li>• Saint John Free Public Library</li> <li>• Saint John YMCA-YWCA</li> <li>• Saint John YMCA Settlement Services</li> <li>• School District NB Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</li> <li>• NB Department of Social Development</li> <li>• Stepping Stones</li> <li>• Talk with Me</li> <li>• University of New Brunswick</li> <li>• Vibrant Communities Saint John</li> </ul>	<p><b>CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare (2-5)</li> <li>• After school enrichment</li> <li>• Sunbeams</li> <li>• Breakfast Program</li> <li>• Special Events</li> <li>• Monthly Visits to Kindergarten</li> <li>• Kindergarten Readiness Program</li> </ul> <p><b>ADULT/CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRC Drop-in</li> <li>• Playgroup</li> <li>• Public Health 3.5 Clinic</li> <li>• Young Mom's Support Group</li> <li>• Family Celebrations</li> <li>• School Celebrations</li> <li>• Community Kitchen</li> <li>• Heart Healthy with Ticker</li> <li>• Early Intervention Visits</li> </ul> <p><b>ADULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prism</li> <li>• Learning Through Play</li> <li>• Monthly Book Club</li> <li>• Signing Training</li> <li>• Rainbow Facilitation Workshops</li> <li>• School/ELC Coffee House</li> </ul>	<p><b>Childcare:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full time: 20</li> <li>• Part time: 23</li> </ul> <p><b>Afterschool Enrichment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 children</li> </ul> <p><b>Sunbeams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 children</li> </ul> <p><b>Breakfast Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 children</li> </ul> <p><b>Kindergarten Readiness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 children (April – May)</li> <li>• 18 children May – June)</li> </ul> <p><b>Playgroup</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 children</li> <li>• 10 adults</li> </ul> <p><b>FRC Drop-in</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 adults</li> <li>• 19 children</li> </ul> <p><b>Public Health 3.5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 children</li> </ul> <p><b>Young Mom's Support Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 children</li> <li>• 6 moms</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Kitchen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 families</li> </ul> <p><b>Program Reach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 198 families</li> <li>• 100 families with the Boys &amp; Girls Club</li> </ul>

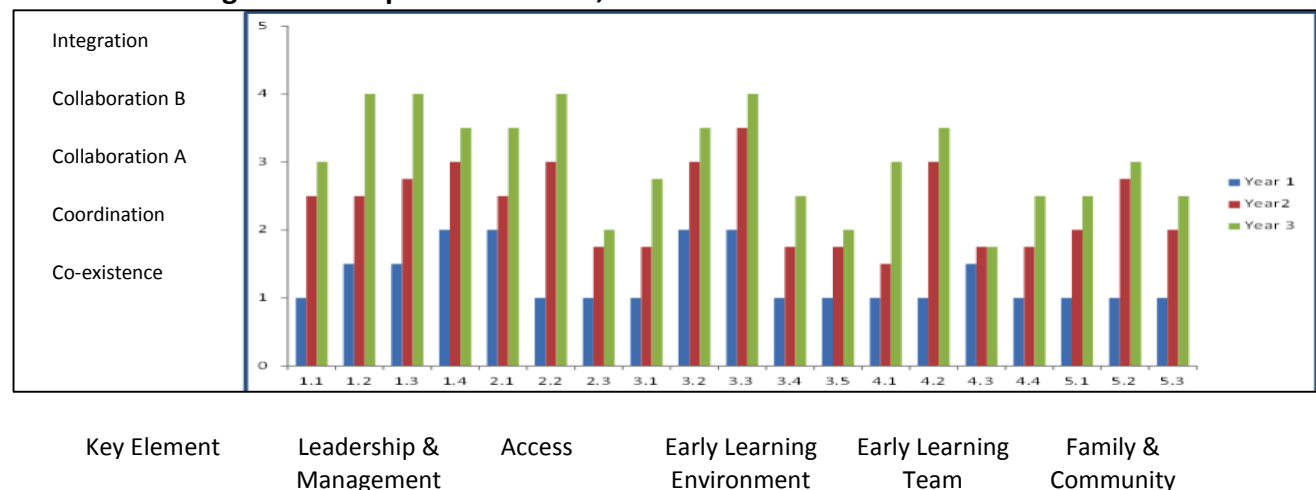
## Utilization Comparison: Years 1, 2 & 3



## Strengths of the Site

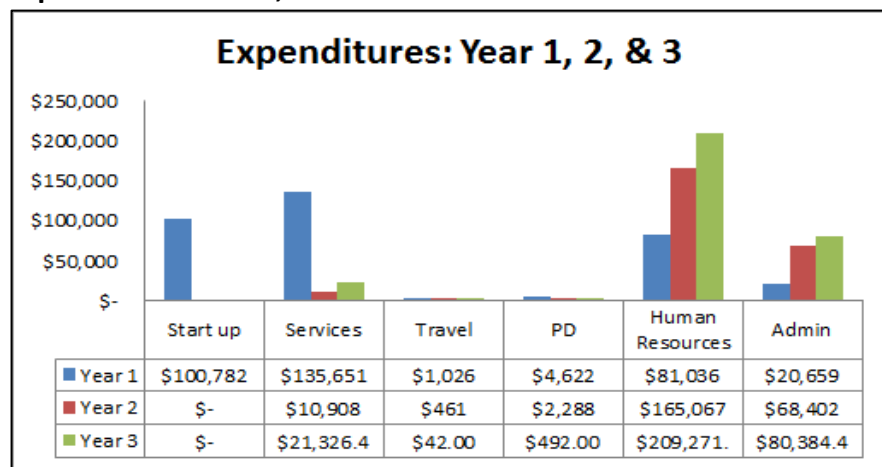
- A history of early childhood service providers and community partners working collaboratively
- A commitment on the part of the principal and the community schools coordinator to be actively involved in the centre
- A collaborative culture at St. John the Baptist King Edward as a community school working with partners to enrich the lives of school-aged children and their families
- A vision of the school as a community hub offering services and programming in the ELC
- A big picture approach to early education and care as part of the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI)
- The growth in trust between the centre and community families
- The provision of services for children with special needs at the location, which reduces stress levels in parents
- Home visit programs with Early Intervention, the centre and Public Health

## Practices of Integration Comparison: Years 1, 2 & 3



<p><b>Accomplishments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>New Joint Partner Initiatives:</i> The Early Learning Centre has created a number of joint initiatives with PULSE, the Anglican Church, and Family Plus; and has expanded existing partnerships with FRC, YMCA, Talk With Me, Early Intervention and the school.</li> <li>• <i>Flexible Childcare:</i> There are a variety of childcare options (full day, half day, occasional care). The enrollment in childcare programs has increased substantially from 25 in Year 2 to 54 in Year 3.</li> <li>• <i>No Cost Services:</i> Programming includes two weekly drop-in mornings for families. Joint partner activities/programs include parenting workshops with child-minding. Rainbows, Sunbeams and Prism programming is offered free of charge to the community.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Identified Community Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low literacy scores</li> <li>• 50% of preschool children in the South End of Saint John live in poverty</li> </ul>
<p><b>Noteworthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 66% of the children attending kindergarten in September 2012 took part in programming at the ELC.</li> <li>• Pre-kindergarten registration increased by 35% from Year 2 to Year 3.</li> <li>• One of the early childhood educators worked with two retired teachers to lead the Transition to Schools week in the spring of 2012.</li> <li>• Social Workers and Early Interventionists from the Department of Social Development are meeting with clients weekly at the ELC.</li> <li>• <i>Talk With Me</i> offered a signing course onsite at the ELC for 7 staff members and 10 children.</li> <li>• The Director of the ELC co-facilitated a parenting program with the Family Resource Centre.</li> <li>• The ELC provides child-minding for many of the parenting programs offered by the Family Resource Centre.</li> <li>• Partnerships continue to strengthen, which in turn enhances programming for children, families and community.</li> <li>• The Grade 8 Social Studies class works with the children and families of the Early Learning Centre on special projects.</li> <li>• The centre has experienced the ongoing integration of preschool children into school-wide activities, such as music, physical education, kindergarten classroom visits and school special events.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Joint Activity Partnership Agreements:</i> The site director will work with the principal and other partners to create agreements that reflect current joint projects and activities.</li> <li>• <i>Parental Representation:</i> The ELC intends to create a Parents' Advisory Committee.</li> <li>• <i>Big Picture Planning:</i> The Program Committee will meet to take a "big picture" look at proposed activities, programs and services. These planning and implementation steps will be driven by the needs of children and families within the community.</li> <li>• <i>Marketing/Communication Plan:</i> The centre has undertaken the first steps to implement a <i>Key Messages to the Community</i> service.</li> </ul>

## Expenditures: Years 1, 2 & 3



## Expenditures

The chart to the left presents expenditures for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3. Most notable are the decreases in the categories of Services and Start-up, and increases in expenditures in Human Resources and Administration. The increase in human resource expenses reflects the hiring of new staff members to address additional utilization hours. Utilization has increased in the childcare program (2-5 years), and adult/child programming. New programming includes initiatives with Saint John Family Resource, Talk With Me, onsite visitations from Early Intervention and the Department of Social Development, and weekly integrated activities with the Grade 8 social studies class.

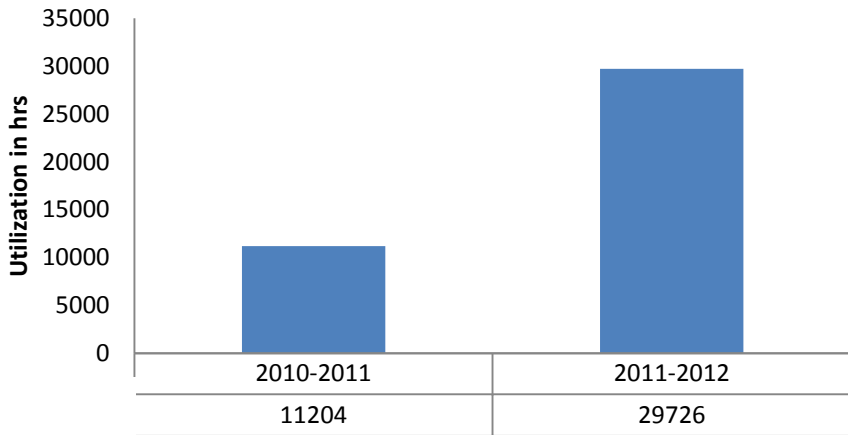
### 3.5 Kent La Boussole

The region of Richibucto includes the Town of Richibucto, the Village of Grande St. Louis, the parishes of Saint-Charles and Richibucto, as well as Rexton and Sainte Anne. The county of Kent is located in the east-central region of New Brunswick, 100 kilometres from the city of Moncton. The county boasts a unique blend of cultures, including Mi'kmaq, Acadian and French. The mostly rural population of Kent (31,449) has remained stable over the past ten years as compared to the decline experienced in the northern regions of the province. Residents of Kent enjoy a well-diversified economic base that has benefited from the economic growth experienced by the greater Moncton region. The number of families with children is approximately 5336, with an estimated 8737 children. Fifteen hundred of these children are between the ages of nine months and five years, with an additional 300 infants born annually.

The *Soleil Levant* school was built in 1989 and welcomed its first students in January 1991. The school is home to students in the Richibucto region. Since September 2008, *Soleil Levant* has been designated a Community School. The support of the town council and the commitment and involvement of the staff were instrumental in the school obtaining this designation. A variety of committees (academic, sports, artistic, cultural and social) organize activities.

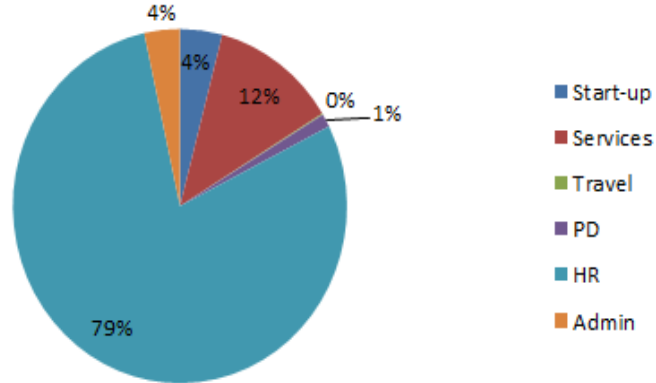
In 2008 and 2009, 48% of regional children entering kindergarten were identified at some level of risk. *La coalition d'aide aux familles et enfants de Kent* (CAFEK), an early childhood committee working together since 2002, identified a need for the creation of a centre that would consolidate existing early childhood programs and services. When the opportunity arose to become one of the provincial early childhood demonstration sites, *La Boussole* made application. While the site was not successful in being nominated as a provincial centre, stakeholders continued to move forward. With seed funding from MWMFF, *La Boussole* conducted an extensive community consultation that culminated in a public meeting in which findings were shared. Based on these consultations, the board made plans to create an early childhood centre to be housed at *Soleil Levant* school.

Programming delivered by community partners and service providers began almost immediately. The childcare program (2-5 years) opened its doors in November 2010. *La Boussole* has continued to expand programming and has experienced an increase in utilization hours in all programs. This expansion included the addition of afterschool childcare, as well as programming that supports cultural and linguistic literacy.

Kent La Boussole								
Partners	Programs	Capacity: 35 licensed spaces						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School principal and teachers at <i>Soleil Levant</i></li><li>School District</li><li>School based Community Schools Coordinator</li><li>Village of Richibucto</li><li>Family Resource Centre</li><li>Talk With Me/<i>Parle-moi</i></li><li>VON</li><li>Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF)</li></ul>	<p><b>CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Childcare (2-5 years)</li><li>Afterschool Care (5-12 years)</li><li>Francization (4 year olds)</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT/CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Talk With Me (Mother Goose, Baby Massage, etc.)</li><li>VFRC School Readiness</li><li>VON Rock n’ Talk</li><li>Family and School Celebrations</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>VON Prenatal</li><li>Talk With Me/<i>Parle-moi</i></li><li>FRC</li><li><i>Café Jazette</i></li></ul>	<p><b>Childcare:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>9 Full time</li><li>13 Part time</li></ul> <p><b>Afterschool:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>13 Full time</li><li>10 Part time</li></ul> <p><b>VFRC School Readiness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>10 adults</li><li>10 children</li></ul> <p><b>VON Healthy Baby and Me:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>7 adults</li><li>7 babies</li></ul>						
<h3>Utilization</h3>  <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>Utilization in hrs</th></tr><tr><td>2010-2011</td><td>11204</td></tr><tr><td>2011-2012</td><td>29726</td></tr></table>		Year	Utilization in hrs	2010-2011	11204	2011-2012	29726	<p><b>Strengths of the Site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strong public consultation during the planning of <i>La Boussole</i></li><li>Strong partnerships with the schools, CRF, Talk With Me, VON and the District Advisor of Preschool Intervention</li><li>Consistency in board membership since the beginning of the project</li><li>Receipt of donations and grants from various sources to subsidize activities and equipment purchases</li></ul>
Year	Utilization in hrs							
2010-2011	11204							
2011-2012	29726							

<p><b>Accomplishments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public consultation with community members, teachers, parents and stakeholders</li> <li>Joint initiatives between partners that have focused on literacy</li> <li>The provision of flexible childcare that provides full time, part time and occasional care</li> <li>The creation of <i>Café Jazette</i>, a joint partnership between <i>La Boussole</i> and FRC, to attract at-risk parents</li> <li>The creation of programs to support cultural and linguistic development</li> <li>The creation of a number of integrated programs and activities (e.g., <i>Café Jazette</i>, Community Garden, <i>Filme en famille</i>, etc.)</li> <li>Services provided by the community Autism Centre for children from <i>La Boussole</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Identified Community Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of understanding of the vision and role of <i>La Boussole</i> on the part of some parents, community members, and private childcare owners</li> <li>Low levels of literacy in the community</li> <li>Linguistic and cultural services for <i>les familles exogames</i></li> <li>Lack of full range of early childhood and parenting programs available to rural areas</li> </ul>						
<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The board will review the results of public consultations and conduct analyses to determine where the needs of the community are not being met</li> <li>The board will continue to dialogue with partners and service providers to determine gaps in programming.</li> <li>The board will plan joint ventures with partners to fill gaps, and to formulate common project descriptions, objectives, roles and responsibilities.</li> <li><i>La Boussole</i> will continue to survey parents to understand their needs and areas of interest in the planning of new joint programs and activities. This survey will also seek to identify barriers to program access.</li> <li>The board will consider the establishment of a communication plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Noteworthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilization hours more than doubled from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012.</li> <li>Program delivery costs have decreased substantially from Year 1 to Year 2.</li> </ul>						
<div data-bbox="174 894 1003 1370"> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Revenue</h3> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Revenue</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2010-2011</td> <td>\$179,626</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011-2012</td> <td>\$130,098</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>		Year	Revenue	2010-2011	\$179,626	2011-2012	\$130,098
Year	Revenue						
2010-2011	\$179,626						
2011-2012	\$130,098						
<p><b>Funding sources include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Operating Grants (Wage Enhancement Grants; additional funding from the provincial government and MWMFF)</li> <li>Childcare Fee Subsidies (Education and Early Childhood Development funding for working parents who meet program criteria, as well as children who have been identified by the Public Health 3.5 Clinic or Early Intervention)</li> <li>Childcare Parents' Fees</li> <li>Donations and Fundraising</li> </ul> <p><b>Program Delivery Costs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The hourly cost of delivering programming has decreased from Year 1 (\$16.03) to Year 2 (\$4.38).</li> </ul>							

## Expenditures



## Expenditures

The chart to the left presents site expenditures for 2011-2012. Notably, 79% of expenditures are related to human resources, due to the hiring of staff to support the growth in utilization hours that occurred with the opening of afterschool care. Services account for 12% of expenditures, including the purchasing of resources to support the expansion of programming as well as the cost of lunch and snacks for the childcare program.

## Practices of Integration Comparison: Years 1, 2 & 3

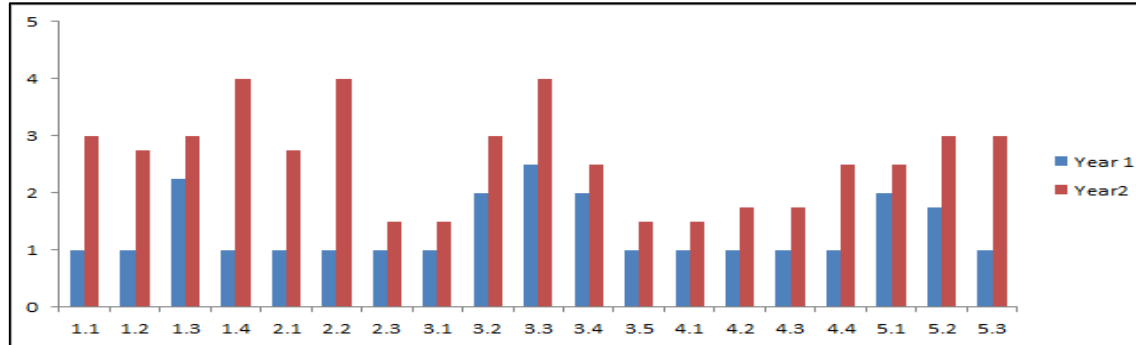
Integration

Collaboration B

Collaboration A

Coordination

Coexistence



Key Element

Leadership & Management

Access

Early Learning Environment

Early Learning Team

Family & Community



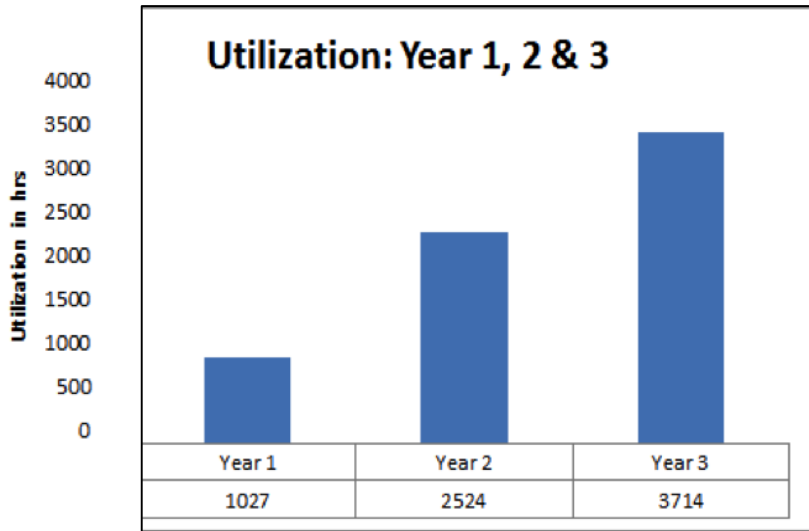
### 3.6 Centreville Cougar Kittens Family Centre

Centreville, a predominantly Anglophone rural community with a population of 535, is situated in Carleton County, near the Canada – United States border on the most fertile agricultural land in New Brunswick. According to the mayor, Centreville is a “family-oriented community, strengthened by the quality of its people, their hardworking ethics, their generosity of spirit, and their belief in community”. Eighty-four percent of the population has lived in Centreville for at least three generations. A large number of the multicultural work force being employed by McCain Foods Ltd. has chosen to make Centreville home. Historically, forestry and farming were the main industries of the area. Today, three companies – BWS, Thomas Equipment and Metafab – provide employment for members of the village and surrounding communities. The average family income in Centreville is \$36,577, with 34% of families having a stay-at-home parent. In the surrounding communities, the yearly family income and educational levels tend to be lower. Much of the population in this region is still involved in agriculture and forestry related work.

Centreville has strong community networks that have combined resources, hosted joint workshops, and shared spaces for service delivery. Three churches within the village limits are actively involved in the community. A large group of non-profit organizations (Royal Canadian Legion, Ladies’ Auxiliary, Kinsmen and Kinettes’ Clubs, Elks and Royal Purple, Women’s Institute, Centreville Child Care and the Centreville Access Centre) collaborate regularly to plan and host community events. Centreville Community School, known for its academic and athletic leadership, frequently hosts community musical, sport, and dramatic events. The Centreville Cougar Kittens Family Centre is located in Centreville Community School. In 2007, concerned parents met to consider the creation of an early childhood centre to respond to the needs of children and families in the community. Membership in this committee has grown to include parents, caregivers, resource providers, business owners, the local churches, the village childcare centre, and the town council. Centreville Cougar Kittens Family Centre (CKFC) opened its doors in October 2009.

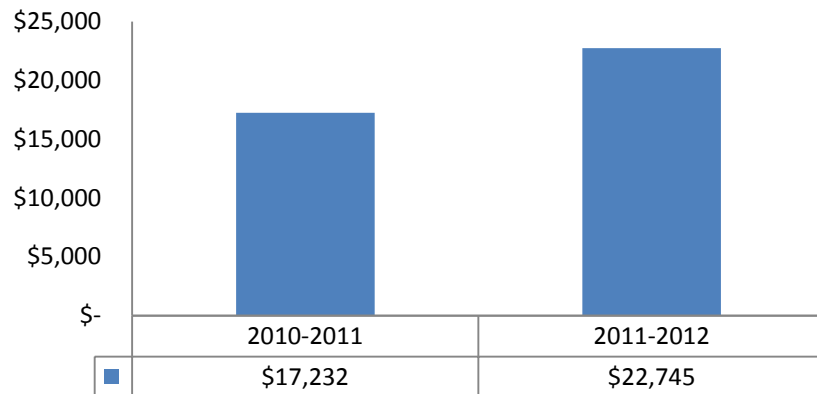
The CKFC management committee recently incorporated and became a not-for-profit board. The board meets on a monthly basis. Initially, the village council acted as the sponsoring body; however, with their incorporation the funds will now be managed by the board. In 2009, a part-time coordinator was hired, funded by a grant from the Early Years’ Action Group.

CKFC programs do not include a childcare component, as the community has in place a successful and high quality not-for-profit licensed daycare. In the early stages of the EDCD development, the director of Centreville Child Care (CCC) joined the board and partnered with CKFC. Located across the street from the school, Centreville Child Care and CKFC have been able to share resources, ideas and programming. Most recently, the school’s Prekindergarten Week was taught by the early childhood educator from CCC and one of the kindergarten teachers. The success of this endeavour has led to the delivery of CCC’s preschool program at the Centreville Community School. As CKFC enters Phase 2, they have agreed that the ECE from CCC will also act as the coordinator for CKFC. As the province moves forward with its early childhood mandate, Centreville offers many promising practices and lessons learned that the newly formed Early Childhood Networks will be able to draw upon.

Centreville Cougar Kitten’s Family Centre								
Partners	Programs	Capacity						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School principals and teachers at Centreville Community School</li><li>• School District</li><li>• School-based Community Schools Coordinator</li><li>• Village of Centreville</li><li>• Valley Family Resource Centre</li><li>• Talk With Me</li><li>• VON</li><li>• Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF)</li><li>• Carleton York Victoria (CYV) Early Childhood Development Centres</li></ul>	<p><b>CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pre-K week</li><li>• VFRC preschool</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT/CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VFRC Drop-in</li><li>• VON Rock n’ Talk</li><li>• Family Celebrations</li><li>• Story Time with Mrs. T</li><li>• Wellness Fair</li><li>• Summer Reading Program</li><li>• Talk With Me</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VON Prenatal</li><li>• Parenting Programs</li></ul>	<p><b>VFRC Drop in</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 13 adults</li><li>• 14 children</li></ul> <p><b>VFRC Preschool</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20 children</li></ul> <p><b>VON Healthy Baby and me</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 adults</li><li>• 8 babies</li></ul> <p><b>Story time with Mrs. T</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20 adults</li><li>• 26 children</li></ul> <p><b>Program Reach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 40 families</li></ul>						
<div><div><div>Utilization: Year 1, 2 &amp; 3</div><table><thead><tr><th>Year 1</th><th>Year 2</th><th>Year 3</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>1027</td><td>2524</td><td>3714</td></tr></tbody></table></div></div> <div><p><b>Strengths of the Site</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a well-established not-for-profit childcare in the Village that is involved with the CKFC.</li><li>• The Centreville School is a Community School, and is already acknowledged as the “hub” of the community.</li><li>• Parents are highly involved in the ECDC, with five serving on the board in 2011-2012.</li><li>• The principal and the community schools coordinator are committed members of the Early Childhood Committee.</li><li>• The strong partnership among the village, the school, Centreville Child Care and CKFC has allowed for a number of joint initiatives to take place.</li></ul><p><b>Noteworthy</b></p><p>In 2008, 16% of children coming to kindergarten in Centreville did not participate in the Early Years Evaluation – Direct Assessment (EYE-DA) pre-screener. 100% of the children registered for kindergarten in 2012 took part in the EYE-DA screening.</p></div>			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	1027	2524	3714
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3						
1027	2524	3714						

<div><div>Accomplishments</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The CKFC is providing provincial leadership in demonstrating how an early childhood centre works in partnership with community childcare providers to move toward an integrated early childhood service delivery model.</li><li>• The Early Childhood Committee has become an incorporated board and established roles and responsibilities for members (i.e. Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary/Site Coordinator).</li><li>• The newly appointed coordinator will be the early childhood educator from CCC. This will facilitate the integration of all early childhood programs, activities and resources.</li><li>• The CCC, the school, and the CKFC planned and implemented a <i>Transition to School Preschool Initiative</i>, which was co-taught by one of the kindergarten teachers and the early childhood educator from CCC.</li><li>• A preschool room at Centreville Community School has been licensed and the CCC will deliver the preschool program in the school.</li><li>• A digital sign has been purchased in partnership with the village and the school. This will assist in communicating the activities of all three partners in the community.</li></ul></div></div>	<div><div>Identified Community Needs</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A large population of newcomers who need to build a network of community support and activities to build English Language Skills</li></ul></div></div> <div><div>Next Steps</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Leadership Team will conduct an Environmental Scan with all partners and service providers to create a pamphlet for service providers.</li><li>• The information collected will be housed on the centre’s website, as well as on the websites of other service providers. A parent-friendly pamphlet will also be generated.</li><li>• The Early Childhood Team will create a <i>Centre Handbook and Partnership Agreement</i> describing the unique relationship between the CKFC and the CCC.</li></ul></div></div>						
<div><div>Practices of Integration Comparison: Years 1, 2 &amp; 3</div><div><div><div>Practices of Integration</div><div><div><div><div>Integration</div><div>Collaboration B</div><div>Collaboration A</div><div>Cooperation</div><div>Coexistence</div></div><div><div><div><div>1.1</div><div>1.2</div><div>1.3</div><div>1.4</div><div>2.1</div><div>2.2</div><div>2.3</div><div>3.1</div><div>3.2</div><div>3.3</div><div>3.4</div><div>3.5</div><div>4.1</div><div>4.2</div><div>4.3</div><div>4.4</div><div>5.1</div><div>5.2</div><div>5.3</div></div><div><div><div>Year 1</div><div>Year2</div></div></div></div></div><table><tr><td>Key Element</td><td>Leadership &amp; Management</td><td>Access</td><td>Early Learning Environment</td><td>Early Learning Team</td><td>Family &amp; Community</td></tr></table></div></div></div></div></div>		Key Element	Leadership & Management	Access	Early Learning Environment	Early Learning Team	Family & Community
Key Element	Leadership & Management	Access	Early Learning Environment	Early Learning Team	Family & Community		

## Revenue



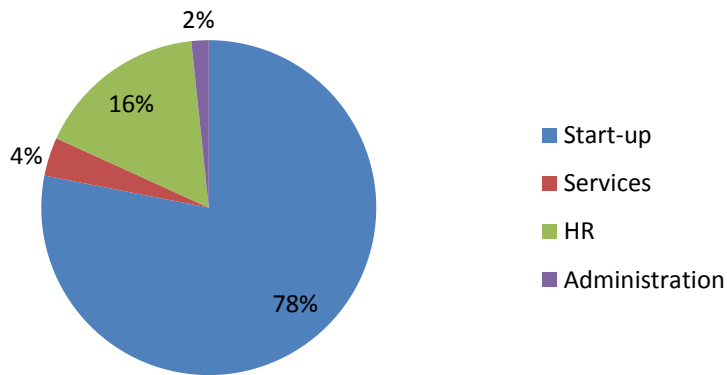
### Funding sources include:

- Program Operating Grants (Wage Enhancement Grants, Additional funding from the provincial government and MWMFF following the flood)
- Donations and Fundraising

### Program Delivery Costs:

The hourly cost of delivering programming has decreased between 2010-2011 (\$6.83) and 2011-2012 (\$5.82). Centreville conducted many fundraisers and partnered with different community groups and service providers. They received limited program grants. In essence, they were virtually self-sufficient during their second year of operation.

## Expenditures: 2011-2012



### Expenditures

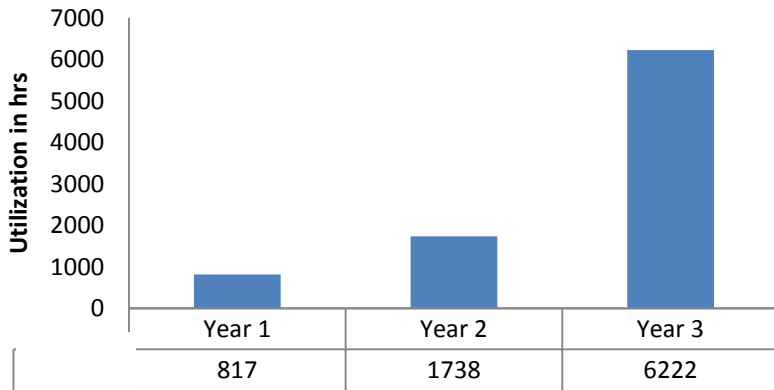
The chart to the left presents the expenditures for 2011-2012. 79% of expenditures are related to Human Resources, due to the hiring of staff to support the growth in utilization hours that occurred with the implementation of afterschool care. Services account for 12% of expenditures, including the purchasing of resources to support the expansion of programming, as well as the cost of lunch and snacks for the children in the childcare program.

### 3.7 Perth Andover Future Footprints Family Learning Centre

The Early Years initiative was slated to serve the families in the tri-communities of the Village of Perth-Andover, the Village of Aroostook and Tobique First Nations. With a population of 1797 within the village limits and 6000 in the service area, the tri-community area has over 180 preschool children, 0-4 years of age, who are eligible to be served by the Early Years Initiative. The combined median income of all three communities falls well below the provincial average. A significant number of adults in these three communities have not completed high school or post-secondary education.

The presentation of the Early Years Study in Spring 2007 sparked interest in developing a local initiative. In Fall 2007, Perth-Andover became part of CARS (Communities Achieving Responsive Services), where the community was engaged through kitchen table meetings that explored community strengths and areas for potential improvement in the community. The community established a vision statement – *to promote, encourage and support tri-community connection through one Community Centre*. Subsequently, a Developmental Assets review was undertaken. More community partners became involved, committed to the idea of a family-centred approach to the provision of early childhood services. The 2008 EYE-DA results (Early Years Evaluation: Direct Assessment) raised the level of concern among school and community with respect to the developmental needs of children entering school. An executive committee comprised of village officials, parents, community members, and the Transition to Schools Coordinator, partnered with the Perth-Andover Partners for Community Literacy to move forward with a plan to address the needs of the preschool population. At this time, the committee applied to be one of the New Brunswick Early Childhood Demonstration Sites. The application was not successful. A series of events caused the momentum to come to a halt. When the elementary school in Aroostook closed, students were moved to the Perth-Andover School, utilizing the space designated for the ECDC. The resignation of two key committee members brought activities to a temporary standstill.

The spark was rekindled when the Transition to School Coordinator organized a day for all of the Early Years Sites in the district to come together to learn from each other, and the committee re-emerged. The Early Years Action Group (EYAG) announced the availability of seed grants through the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation. The committee prepared a proposal and was successful in receiving funds. The newly hired Community Schools Coordinator became involved with the project, providing a liaison with the school district. The Valley Family Resource Centre, who had not run programs in the area for six years, agreed that if Perth-Andover could demonstrate a need for the program, they would fund it. In September 2010, the high school designated a room for Early Years activities. In September 2011, Andover School agreed to house the early childhood development centre, providing two rooms. A grand opening was held, and the childcare program opened its doors in January 2012. Over the past year, Future Footprints has continued to grow despite the challenges resulting from the flooding of the centre, the relocation to an alternative site, and the refurbishment of the two classrooms. The centre stands as an example of the commitment and tenacity of those involved in Future Footprints.

Perth Andover Future Footprints Family Learning Centre										
Partners	Programs	Capacity: 21 childcare 19 afterschool								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School principals and teachers at Andover Elementary and Southern Victoria High School</li><li>School District</li><li>Community Schools Coordinator</li><li>Village of Perth Andover</li><li>Valley Family Resource Centre</li><li>Talk With Me</li><li>VON</li><li>Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF)</li><li>Carleton York Victoria (CYV) Early Childhood Development Centres</li><li>Partners for Literacy (Community Group)</li></ul>	<p><b>CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Childcare (2-5 years)</li><li>Afterschool Care (5-12 years)</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT/CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Talk With Me (e.g. Mother Goose, Baby Massage)</li><li>VFRC School Readiness</li><li>VON Rock n’ Talk</li><li>Family and School Celebrations</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Healthy Family Sessions</li><li>VFRC Drop-in</li><li>VON Rock n’ Talk</li><li>Family Celebrations</li><li>Breast Feeding Support Group</li><li>Joint Partnership Initiatives (e.g., Toddler Tunes and Getting Ready for School)</li></ul>	<p><b>VFRC Drop in</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>16 adults</li><li>30 children</li></ul> <p><b>VON Healthy Baby and me</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>10 adults</li><li>10 babies</li></ul> <p><b>Program Reach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>40 families</li></ul>								
<div>Utilization: Year 1, 2 &amp; 3</div> <div><table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Utilization in hrs</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Year 1</td><td>817</td></tr><tr><td>Year 2</td><td>1738</td></tr><tr><td>Year 3</td><td>6222</td></tr></tbody></table></div>		Year	Utilization in hrs	Year 1	817	Year 2	1738	Year 3	6222	<p><b>Strengths of the site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A history of collaboration among partners</li><li>Key players who embrace the integrated service delivery model in early childhood education (principal, community schools coordinator, early childhood director)</li><li>Located in a Community School with a history of engaging the community in events that involve families and children (0-5 years), including Roots of Empathy, Preschool programs, and Community Literacy Day</li></ul> <p><b>Noteworthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Utilization hours doubled between Year 1 and Year 2. Between Year 2 and Year 3, utilization hours increased by over 350%.</li><li>Numbers in the childcare program have increased considerably.</li></ul>
Year	Utilization in hrs									
Year 1	817									
Year 2	1738									
Year 3	6222									

### Accomplishments

- The centre has the only licensed childcare within the community.
- Staff members include a site coordinator and two early childhood educators.
- Incorporated not-for-profit board provides management and leadership for early childhood activities.
- Key members of the committee include the principal, site coordinator, community school coordinator, village council and parents.
- A Moms' Group meets biweekly to provide feedback to the board. Presently, there are several mothers who sit on the board.
- The centre demonstrates the cost effectiveness of delivering programs in an ECDC. VFRC pays the ECE who lives in Perth Andover, thus saving travel costs.
- Future Footprints has applied for and received grants to purchase toys and equipment for the early childhood room, as well as outdoor playground equipment suitable for preschool-aged children.
- Future Footprints demonstrates that the sustainability of an ECDC can be realized with 55% of the funding received by government-funded sites.
- The Transition to School Preschool program provides an example of effective partnerships among school, school district, VFRC, Future Footprints and the Rotary Club.

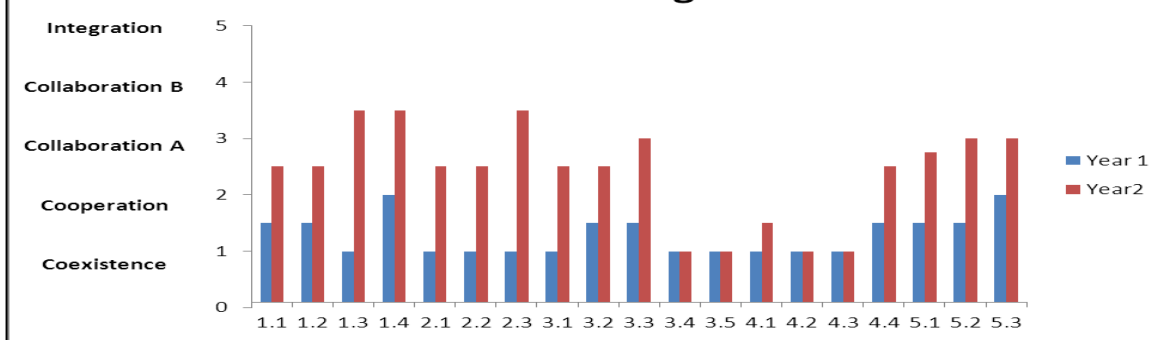
### Identified Community Needs

- Large kindergarten population with some of the highest needs in the district
- Low literacy scores
- Significant number of teenaged mothers who do not finish high school due to lack of childcare and other supports

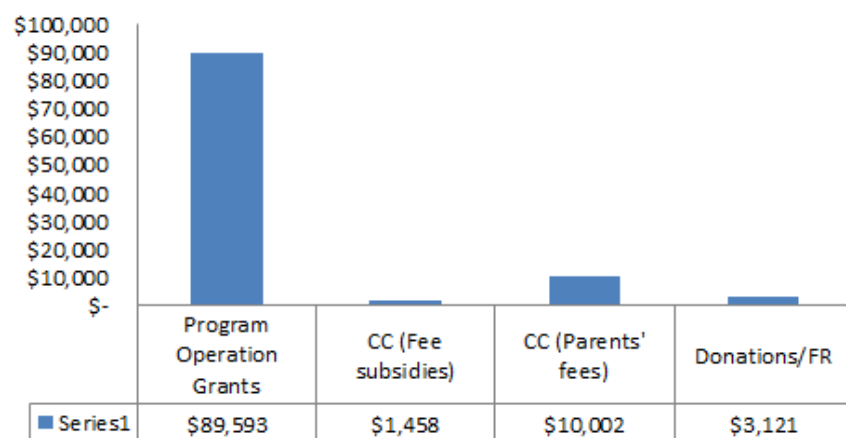
### Next Steps

- Conduct an environmental scan with all partners
- Expand partnerships with existing service providers and build new partnerships, especially with Public Health
- Address issues related to information sharing among partners by creating a joint release form for parents when they register for programs at Future Footprints
- Continue to receive feedback from parents and the community with respect to programming needs
- Document existing joint partnership initiatives

**Practices of Integration**



### Sources of Revenue: Year 3



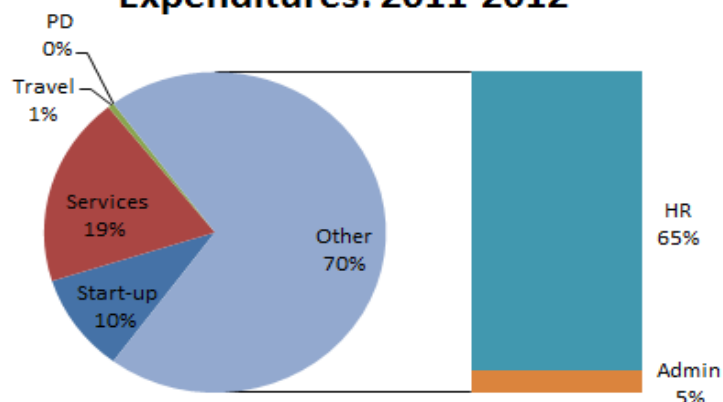
#### Funding sources include:

- Program Operating Grants (Wage Enhancement Grants, Additional funding from the provincial government and MWMFF following the flood)
- Childcare Fee Subsidies (Education and Early Childhood Development funding for working parents who meet program criteria, as well as children who have been identified by the Public Health 3.5 Clinic or Early Intervention)
- Child Care Parents' Fees
- Donations and Fundraising

#### Program Delivery Costs:

The hourly cost of delivering programming has decreased from Year 1 (\$22.97) to Year 2 (16.74). The hourly cost of program delivery has remained substantially higher due to the expenditures associated with renewing the rooms and purchasing resources following the flood in the spring of 2012.

### Expenditures: 2011-2012



#### Expenditures

The chart to the left presents expenditures for 2011-2012. 65% of expenditures are related to Human Resources, due to the hiring of staff to support the growth in utilization hours that occurred with the opening of the childcare (2-5 years) and afterschool care programs. Services account for 19% of expenditures, including the purchasing of resources to support the expansion of programming. Additional costs associated with Start-up reflect the expenditures due to loss when two classrooms were flooded in the spring of 2012 and the centre had to relocate to an adjacent church facility.



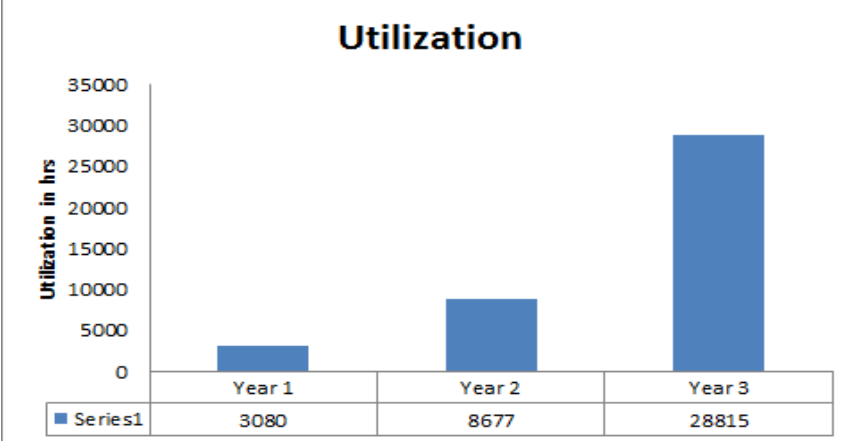
### 3.8 Keswick Start SMART

Keswick Valley is a small rural community located 30-40 kilometers north of Fredericton. Residents of the area must travel to Fredericton to access most service providers. The school catchment area includes Hainesville, Stone Ridge, Keswick Ridge, Dorn Ridge, Kingsley, Burt's Corner, Zealand, Tripp Settlement, and Sisson Settlement. Families from these and other nearby communities have accessed the services offered by Start SMART. Public awareness of program quality and parent/child satisfaction is attributed to word of mouth recommendations and publicity in the local newsletter. There are no large businesses in the region, and a high percentage of families are dependent on low or minimum wage positions, or seasonal work. Educational preparedness is, historically, an issue of concern in the Keswick Valley area. Some students arrive at school without basic skill sets such as alphabet and number recognition or fine motor skills. Improvements have been noted with the implementation of early childhood programming over the past few years. There is a great need for parenting support services, equalized opportunities for early learning programs, and access to affordable, licensed childcare.

Keswick Valley has a history of community initiatives that are designed to improve the quality of life for residents. In 1996, the not-for-profit group, Neighbourhood Alliance of North York (NANY) was founded. NANY is a resource for all residents of northern York County, and provides assistance with developing community projects. It is operated by volunteers and has assisted with community projects in Stanley, Taymouth, Nackawic and Keswick Valley. Throughout the years, a number of initiatives have been developed and implemented.

In 2005, the children entering kindergarten at Keswick Valley Memorial School had some of the lowest preschool screening results in the province. This raised the level of concern of school personnel and community members. Consequently, NANY and KVMS began to work together to support young children (0-5) and their parents through early childhood development programs. Three programs have been instituted since 2005, one of which is known as Literacy Increased by Networking, Knowledge and Skills (LINKS). This program was designed, organized and implemented with support from a Communities Raising Children grant from the Department of Social Development. Beginning with just seven families, this initiative has impacted more than 100 children since its inception. Over the years, early childhood programming has included periodic visits from other service providers, including Talk With Me, Healthy Baby and Me (VON), nutritionists, Learning Begins (Social Development), Seeds of Empathy (Public Health), Developmental Assets (Public Health), and Home Economy (Social Development).

When Start SMART was unsuccessful in its application to become one of the provincial demonstration sites, stakeholders continued to move forward with the support of seed funding from the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and other provincial grants. In the past year, collaborative meetings have been held with service providers and community partners with the view of strengthening community networks. Start SMART, located within the Keswick Valley Memorial School, opened its doors in October 2011 offering childcare (2-5 years) as well as afterschool care.

Keswick Start SMART										
Partners	Programs	Capacity								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NANY (Neighbourhood Alliance of North York)</li><li>School principal and teachers</li><li>School District</li><li>Laubach Literacy</li><li>Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF)</li></ul>	<p><b>CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Childcare (2-5 years)</li><li>Afterschool Care (5-12 years)</li><li>Summer Reading Program</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT/CHILD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>WINKS, CLINKS, LINKS</li><li>Family Celebrations (e.g. Family Fun Night, Community Literacy Day)</li></ul> <p><b>ADULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Walking Club</li><li>Parenting Information Sessions</li></ul>	<p><b>“INKS” programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adults</li><li>Children</li></ul> <p><b>Program Reach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>40 families</li></ul>								
<div><h3>Utilization</h3><table><tr><th></th><th>Year 1</th><th>Year 2</th><th>Year 3</th></tr><tr><td>Series1</td><td>3080</td><td>8677</td><td>28815</td></tr></table></div>			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Series1	3080	8677	28815	<p><b>Strengths of the site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There is a history of collaboration between the school and Start SMART to plan and implement early childhood initiatives.</li><li>The school principal is a key participant and supporter of Start SMART.</li><li>Although Keswick Valley Memorial School is not a designated Community School, it has already engaged in many initiatives connecting children and their families with the school and the community (e.g., Roots of Empathy, WINKS/CLINKS/LINKS, Drop-in programs, Summer Reading Program, Walking Club, Community Literacy Day, Family Fun Night, Sports teams, Summer Sports Camps).</li></ul>
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3							
Series1	3080	8677	28815							

## Accomplishments

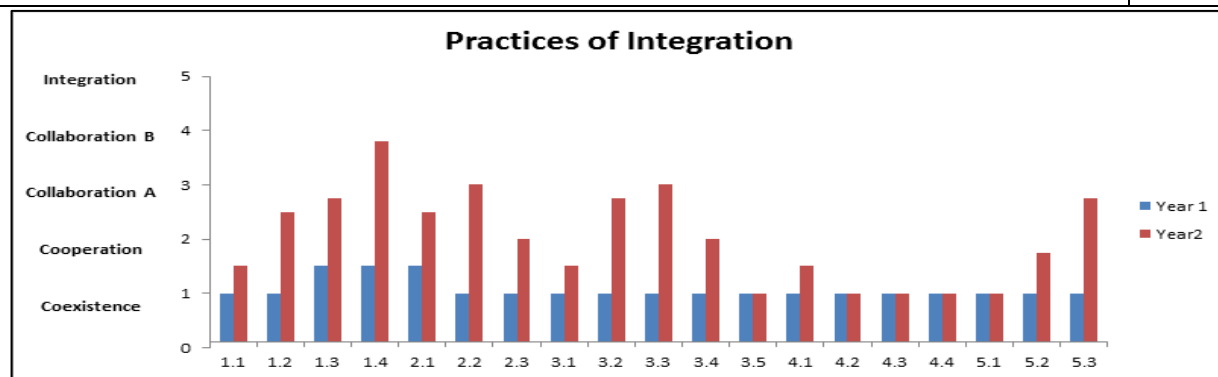
- Start SMART has successfully implemented childcare and afterschool programs.
- All Start SMART early childhood educators have completed or are undertaking provincial curriculum training.
- Start SMART has successfully held four partnership meetings. An environmental scan is underway. Gaps and needs have been identified. Action items have been outlined and are in the process of being implemented.
- Start SMART has successfully integrated a child with autism into the childcare program. Autism therapy is provided daily at the school by an educator from Autism Connections. Discussions and meetings among the school, parents, and the autism agency have taken place to facilitate the process of transition from therapy into childcare, as well as from childcare into kindergarten. The Methods and Resource teacher and the principal have been actively involved in these meetings.
- Utilization has increased by more than 300% from Year 2 to Year 3.
- An ECE exchange was undertaken between the centre and the university, whereby two staff members from the university's Early Childhood Centre worked for one day at Start SMART, and one ECDC staff member gave support to the university ECEs.

## Identified Community Needs

- Turnover in leadership for the centre (Start SMART has just hired its third director)
- Need to build a sense of collaboration between the school staff and the centre
- Need to institute regular board meetings to ensure the sharing of information and collaborative growth

## Next Steps

- Programs under the umbrella of Start SMART intend to work more closely together in communicating regarding programs, planning for future programs, and engaging parents to take a more active role in Start SMART.
- Start SMART will continue to meet with partners to implement action plans and complete the planned environmental scan. Tracking utilization across programs and sharing information were identified as critical discussion topics for future meetings.
- Start SMART will invite parents to sit on the board. Parent surveys will continue to be used across programs (e.g., childcare and INKs) to get an expanded view of parents' needs.



Key Element

Leadership &  
Management

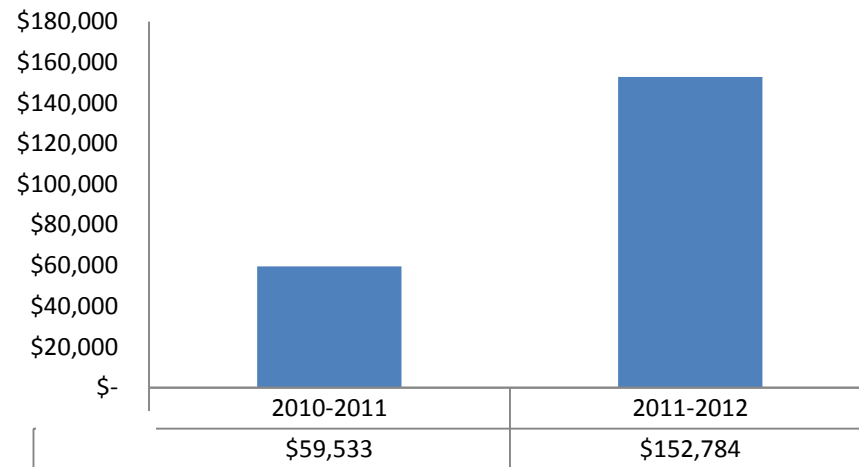
Access

Early Learning  
Environment

Early Learning  
Team

Family &  
Community

## Revenue



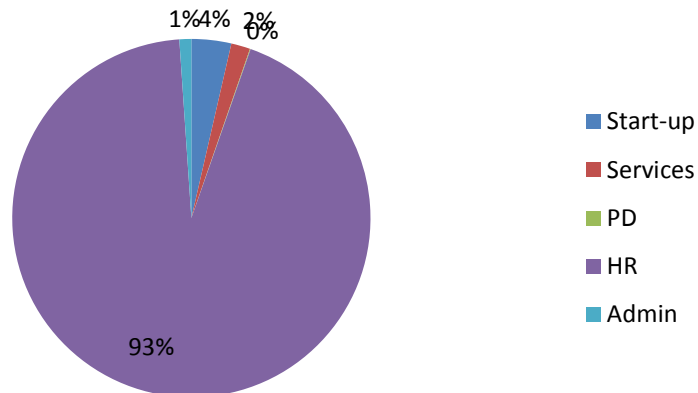
### Funding sources include:

- Program Operating Grants (Wage Enhancement Grants)
- Childcare Fee Subsidies (Education and Early Childhood Development funding for working parents who meet program criteria, as well as children who have been identified by the Public Health 3.5 Clinic or Early Intervention)
- Child Care Parents' Fees
- Donations and Fundraising

### Program Delivery Costs:

The hourly cost of delivering programming has decreased from 2010-2011 (\$6.86) to 2011-2012 (\$5.30). The lower hourly costs are due, in part, to the volunteers who facilitate the adult/child "INKs" programs. These programs are well attended.

## Expenditures



### Expenditures:

The chart to the left presents expenditures for 2011-2012. It is notable that 93% of expenditures are related to Human Resources, which is due to the hiring of staff to support the growth in utilization hours that occurred with the opening of childcare (2-5 years) and afterschool care programs. Service, Start-up, PD and Administration account for 7% of expenditures.

### 3.9 Millville Early Years Initiative

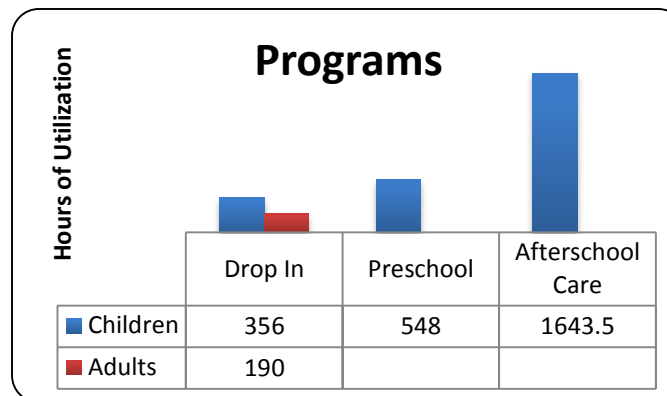
Millville is situated on the Nackawic River approximately 58 kilometers northwest of Fredericton. Millville has two convenience stores/gas stations, as well as a volunteer fire department, several churches and an elementary school.

In February 2008, a group of community members attended a presentation on the McCain-Mustard Early Years Study. A committee was formed to explore how support could be offered to families with young children. Subsequently, this committee incorporated as a non-profit agency dedicated to providing support for the needs of local children and their families through the development and coordination of programs, activities and services. The committee, known as MYRCI (Millville Youth Recreation Community Initiative), was committed to developing strong partnerships with the school, service providers and community partners. The core committee was composed of a public health nurse who worked in the Healthy Learners in School Program, an administrative assistant from the Region 3 Health Authority, a representative from the Home and School Association, a teacher, and a representative from the Community Youth Initiative.

The Centre Coordinator, a graduate of an ECE program, was responsible for organizing and delivering the Drop-in Program at Millville School. She also acted as a liaison for all activities that were under the umbrella of the Millville Early Years Initiative. Two other members of the early childhood team worked with the preschool and afterschool programs that were housed in the Millville Community Centre.

MYRCI had a history of partnerships with Millville School staff, the school district, Millville Village Council, the Department of Social Development, and community volunteers. These groups had offered a variety of programming prior to engaging in the early childhood initiative, including a ten week soccer program involving 60 children; a dance program engaging 18 children; and various community events (e.g. Family Fun Community Days, and the Community Halloween Trick or Treat Party). The Millville Early Years Initiative had been successful in becoming licensed for 20 afterschool and 12 preschool spaces. The floors in the Community Centre had been renovated, new toys purchased, and playground fencing erected. Grants from the Early Years Action Group, Communities Raising Children, and the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation had helped to finance these endeavours.

The committee identified parental need, grant money and support from the Village as factors that contributed to their successes during the first few months. However, a number of challenges confronted the group, making it difficult for the Early Childhood Initiative to move forward. These included challenges with school operations, accessing space in the school, frequent changes in board membership, limited volunteers, and the steep learning curve associated with non-profit incorporation and the licensing of childcare programs.



The Millville Early Years Initiative ran three programs in their first year. Both the preschool program, which ran three mornings a week, and the daily afterschool program were housed in the Community Centre. The weekly Drop-in Program was housed in the school. At the end of the first year, outstanding issues between the Early Years Initiative and the school remained unresolved. Historically, the school had been frequently used by the community, and several individuals had access to the building. A series of events led the school district to mandate the control and monitoring of outside access to the school. With this responsibility, the school administrator and teachers were reluctant to offer more than one room in the school for early childhood activities. As tensions between the school and community increased, a facilitator was retained to help to mediate the situation. In the end, the school did not offer additional space beyond one classroom. The Millville Early Years initiative chose not to move into the school space for the following reasons:

- Upon inspection by the province, the school classroom did not provide enough space for current clientele in either preschool or afterschool programs.
- The amount of space limited access to needed equipment and materials.
- The lack of space limited the possibility of growth that would lead to sustainability.
- The cost of installing an adjoining bathroom was prohibitive.

With this decision, Millville withdrew its participation as an early childhood development centre. Lessons learned from the experience of the Millville site impacted the development and functioning of the other provincial ECDCs. Such lessons included:

- The importance of the role of the principal in planning and implementation activities
- The importance of the leadership in engaging the school staff in partnership with early years stakeholders, and in facilitating an understanding of the function of an ECDC
- The importance of building a shared vision among all stakeholders engaged in providing services, programs, and education to parents, families and children
- The need to build respectful relationships among partners that involve understanding each other's roles, mandates and responsibilities
- The necessity of developing joint projects that provide an environment where partners can develop a collaborative relationship that revolves around the needs of parents, families and children

## 4.0 Practices of Integration: Cross Case Summary

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The Indicators of Change instrument (ICI), adapted from the Toronto First Duty (TFD) program, has been used to track the process of integration over a three-year period (2009-2012). The ICI documents this process along a continuum from co-existence, to coordination of services, to full integration in the following six specific categories:

- Early learning environment
- Early childhood team and service providers
- Leadership and management structure
- Access and intake processes
- Parent and community opportunities for engagement and activities
- Language and cultural identity

Indicators in these categories describe critical characteristics and actions in each of the six continuum fields. Numerical ratings, derived from the administration of a Likert scale survey, range from 1 to 5, where 1 represents coexistence and 5 represents integration.

In Year 1 (2009-2010), the ICI was used to create a snapshot of the individual centres at the beginning of their three-year journey. The Administrative Council of each site, working with HERG facilitators in a focus group format, plotted baseline positions on the integration continuum for each of the indicators. The rich discussions generated in the focus groups were recorded and then synthesized for each indicator in the five categories. The finalized document was also used by the sites as a planning tool for future activities/initiatives.

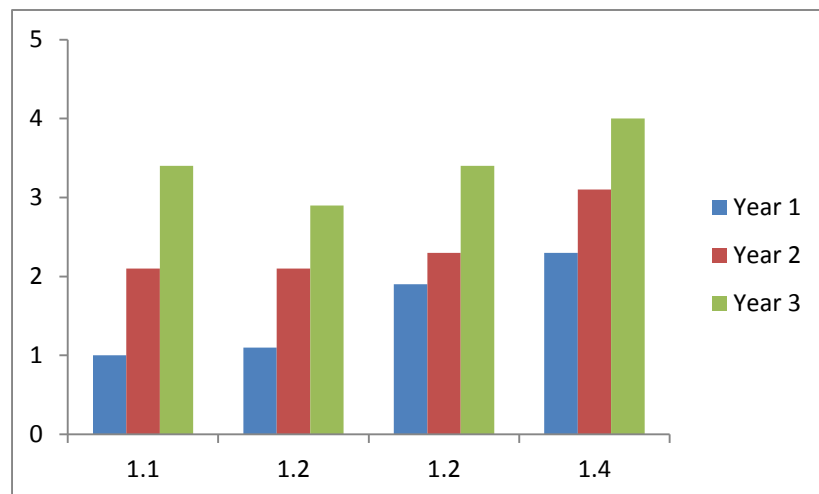
Prior to Year 2 (2010-2011) data collection activities, the indicators were revised by HERG in consultation with the sites to reflect the New Brunswick early childhood context, with exemplars for each of the points along the continuum of change drawn from individual sites. In 2011 and 2012, the ICI was repeated using the revised instrument including a sixth indicator category, *Language and Cultural Identity*. Through this process, a number of sites recognized that they had plotted initial baseline positions in Year 1 at a more advanced point along the continuum than their actual processes warranted. During the Year 2 focus groups, participants reflected on their initial starting points in Year 1 and the progress made to date, in some cases plotting a new, more realistic baseline. In Year 3, the focus group participants revisited their starting points in Year 1, reviewed the progress they had made in Year 2, and documented the gains realized in Year 3. As part of this discussion, participants identified a number of new directions to incorporate into their strategic plans. Individual reports were created and shared with the key site contacts.

The following section contains a synthesis of the four individual reports for the initial NB demonstration sites, including the range of numerical ratings for each of the indicators, a comparison of aggregated Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 results, and a summary of key discussion

points. The second part of this section of the report presents the Year 1 and Year 2 aggregated benchmarks for three Carleton York Victoria (CYV) sites, and for Kent *La Boussole*. The process of plotting baseline data and considering their progress using the ICI instrument directed the attention of board members to the process of integration; raised the level of awareness with respect to areas of strength and challenge; and guided discussion with respect to planning future endeavours.

## 4.1 The Demonstration Sites

### Key Element 1: Leadership & Management



*A local governance structure is responsible for program policies, resource allocation, service planning and monitoring, and human resource decisions.*

#### Indicator 1.1: Program Mandate, Policies & Practices

Year 1 Rating Range	1.0 – 1.0
Year 2 Rating Range	1.75 – 2.5
Year 3 Rating Range	2.75 – 4.0

**Accomplishments:** Three of the sites were active members in their regional early childhood boards or coalitions. In Year 3, there was recognition of the importance of increasing community awareness of the early childhood programs and services. The *Table de concertation de Chaleur* prepared a bilingual handbook of all early childhood services (targeted and universal) in the region. A short description of each service/program contact information was included in the publication. The ECI committee in Woodstock appointed a sub-committee to address issues of community awareness. In Saint John, the Early Childhood Coalition was successful in obtaining a grant



from the Social Inclusion Network for the purpose of identifying community needs and potential partnerships in the area of early childhood.

Most sites have expanded their relationships with existing partners. *Le Phare* has continued to build partnerships focused on literacy, language and cultural identity, as well as children's health and wellness. Bath has expanded partnerships with the school to include the delivery of a Middle School Breakfast Program.

**Next steps:** Upcoming partnerships include the opening of a Fitness Centre for parents, staff, students, and community members; the creation of a Community Nutrition Program in Bath; the engagement of discussions regarding the establishment of Public Health immunization clinics; collaboration between the 3.5 Clinic and Talk with Me to offer hearing screenings; and the creation of a Sensory Room with Family Plus at the Early Learning Centre.

**Challenges:** It was noted that changes in staff and/or challenges experienced by those in leadership roles impacted the site's ability to sustain and expand existing relationships. This pointed to the importance of policies and partnership agreements that could lead to site sustainability.

#### **Indicator 1.2: Service Planning & Monitoring**

Year 1 Rating Range	1.0 – 1.5
Year 2 Rating Range	1.75 – 2.5
Year 3 Rating Range	2.0 – 3.5

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There was evidence of significant growth in these areas with respect to the development and implementation of programs that address areas of identified need. All sites have developed and implemented at least one project with one or more partners. Other sites have expanded joint projects from Year 2 and have expanded programming to increase utilization and parental involvement.

#### **Next steps:**

- The formalization of existing partnerships to ensure that partnership agreements are flexible, negotiable, and responsive to community needs
- The development of a mechanism for sharing information among partners at the regional and community levels
- The expansion of the breadth of regional partnerships

### Indicator 1.3: Allocation of Financial Resources

Year 1 Rating Range	1.0 – 3.0
Year 2 Rating Range	1.0 – 3.0
Year 3 Rating Range	2.75 – 4.0

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The final ratings for all sites indicated that not only are partners working together, but some have moved to the point of expanding their contribution of resources to joint activities. One of the most significant examples of this was in evidence during the prekindergarten week activities in Bath. These activities were delivered traditionally by teachers; in Year 2, it was delivered by kindergarten teachers assisted by the early childhood educator; and in Year 3, the prekindergarten week was delivered by the early childhood educator in the kindergarten room. The project was supported financially by the school, the district, the early childhood centre, and the Family Resource Centre. As in Year 2, the school remained the most prominent contributor of resources for all four sites.

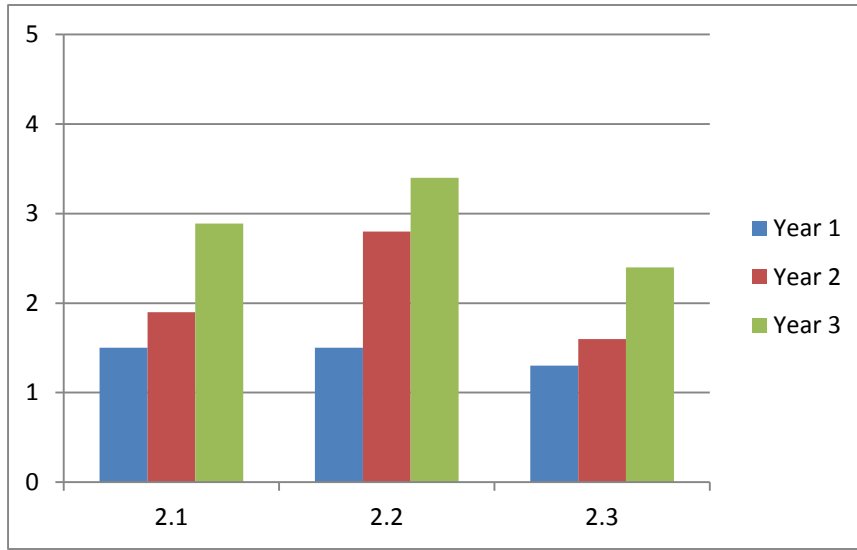
### Indicator 1.4: Human Resources

Year 1 Rating Range	1.0 – 3.0
Year 2 Rating Range	3.0 – 3.5
Year 3 Rating Range	4.0 – 4.0

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The integration of human resources experienced significant growth in Year 3 with all sites progressing to a *Collaboration B* level. In Year 2, *Le Phare* and the *Early Learning Centre* hired childcare coordinators to oversee this aspect of the centre so that the directors could focus on building and extending partnerships. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development expanded the use of its provincial portal and email services to include early childhood educators and staff, thus creating consistency across all ECDCs with respect to closure policies, work hours, internet /phone/fax access and custodial services.

## **Key Element 2: Access and Intake Processes**



*Seamless access is available to an expanded and comprehensive early learning and care program, providing a continuum of supports and services to all families and young children, prenatally to six years of age.*

### **Indicator 2.1: Capacity**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.5

Year 3 Rating Range 2.0 – 3.5

Capacity is defined as the site's ability to understand and implement programming to meet the needs of children, parents and families. Each early childhood centre offers flexible childcare - full time, part-time, and occasional care. Advances in this area by Year 3 included:

- The expansion of childcare hours in Bath to meet the needs of shift workers

- The expansion of afterschool programming in two sites (In Moncton, parents requested expanded afterschool programming that focuses on *francization*)
- The continuation of activities that engage parents and children in joint events (The “pyjama literacy night” has become a favourite monthly event in Robertville)
- The increase of utilization of parenting programs when the early childhood centre offers supper and free childcare
- The addition of programs in Saint John that help children and parents who are dealing with grief and loss
- Formal and informal consultation strategies, such as talking with parents at Meet the Teacher night and during the Door to Door campaign

**Next steps** include the placement of a comment or suggestion box in a common area, the creation of an informal checklist to track parents’ comments, the continuation of the consultation initiatives that have proven successful in the last few years, and the continued inclusion of parents on program committees and advisory boards.

## **Indicator 2.2: Child Care Provision and Affordability**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 3.0

Year 2 Rating Range 2.0 – 3.5

Year 3 Rating Range 3.0 – 3.5

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All four sites experienced gains in the utilization of childcare and afterschool care. With the expansion of space in the elementary school, Bath was able to offer additional four-year-old preschool classes, and introduced a three-year-old preschool. In Saint John, the YMCA Strong Kids and Strong Families Campaign funded childcare spaces for eight families. No-cost programming offered at the sites included:

- Pre- and postnatal programs by VON
- Drop-in play groups offered by Family Resource Centres
- School-wide activities involving children as well as families
- Parenting programs organized by Talk With Me/*Parle-moi*
- Family activities co-sponsored by the school and the ECDCs to promote literacy and healthy active living
- Professional development for early childhood educators, service providers and community partners

In addition, each site expressed its intention to increase program offerings in Year 4.

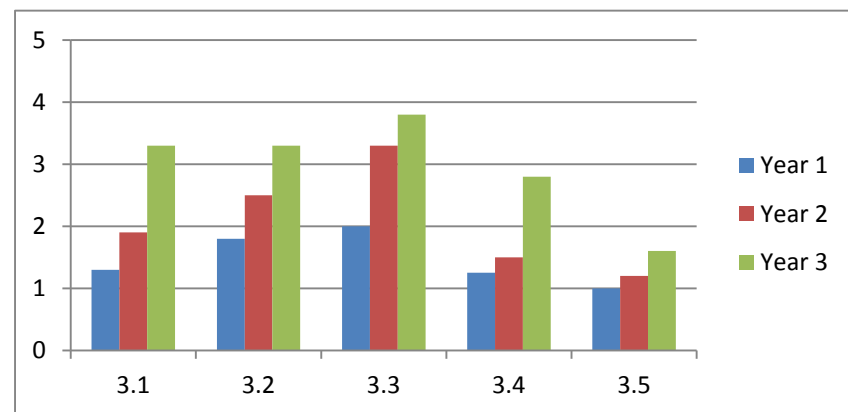
## **Indicator 2.3: Intake, Enrolment & Attendance**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0  
Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.5  
Year 3 Rating Range 1.5 – 3.0

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Tracking the utilization by families, parents and children provided a clear picture of the types and patterns of usage in each community. One site provided a centre sign-in sheet for all programs that were offered at the site. Discussion around this indicator centered on the need to design a universal permission and attendance form. Several sites indicated plans to move forward in the creation of these forms.

### **Key Element 3: Early Learning Environment**



*High quality learning environments combine learning expectations, activities, and routines from existing kindergarten, early childhood education/child care, and parentina/familv support proarams.*

### **Indicator 3.1: Curriculum Framework and Pedagogical Approach**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0  
Year 2 Rating Range 1.25 – 3.5  
Year 3 Rating Range 2.5 – 4.0

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The early childhood educators and the kindergarten teachers have shared copies of their respective curriculum with each other. In Year 2, two events were identified as advancing the process of building bridges between the two programs:

- One of the Curriculum Days School in District 14 engaged early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers in a collaborative discussion around curriculum issues
- A common scheduled meeting time around the preschool week initiative was organized by one site

Differences between the philosophical foundations of the kindergarten and preschool curricula were still viewed as significant. One site noted that pressure to prepare children to meet provincial benchmarks was a challenge, as there was not a shared understanding of what it means to “prepare children for school”. In Francophone sites, participants expressed the hope that the work that was being completed at the departmental level would have an impact in bridging the two curricula. In Robertville, the district created a team of early childhood stakeholders tasked with looking at challenges in preparing children for the transition from early childhood education to kindergarten.

### **Indicator 3.2: Daily Routines and Schedules**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 3.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.75 – 3.5

Year 3 Rating Range 3.0 – 3.75

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Daily routines were well coordinated between the ECDCs and the schools. In some sites, children from the centre were included in gym, music and library programs. Preschool children were generally integrated into special school-wide activities such as concerts, school-supported presentations and celebrations, and family events. Transition challenges for children were minimized, especially at *Le Phare* and *Step Ahead* where the before- and afterschool care programs were held onsite. At several sites, the prekindergarten EYE-DA screening was completed onsite at the ECDC. The centres were also involved in the coordination and scheduling of partner programs.

### **Indicator 3.3: Use of Space**

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 3:0

Year 2 Rating Range 3:0 – 3.5

Year 3 Rating Range 3.0 – 4.0

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All sites experienced growth in the area of sharing space. The ECDCs in Robertville and Saint John are located in community schools that have a history of sharing space with partners. Not only has this sharing continued, but there has been an expansion of programming. Saint John has expanded programming to involve new initiatives with Family Plus and with the YMCA (adult and child programs dealing with grief and loss). Robertville has continued to share office space with the Family Resource Centre, and to share the kitchen with parents and the school. In Moncton, a French language program for new Canadians, *Petits crayons*, was offered at the centre as well as at the local Toys R Us. Bath expanded its afterschool program into the cafeteria, which also doubled as the lunch room and the site of the Breakfast Program.

Accessing additional space was a challenge in several of the centres. Moncton recently reached an agreement with the school district to expand their afterschool program by using the portable music classroom.

### Indicator 3.4: Children's Development and Progress

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 2:0

Year 2 Rating Range 1:0 – 2.0

Year 3 Rating Range 2.0 – 3.5

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Sites reported a greater openness related to sharing the tools used to document children's development and progress. All schools across New Brunswick use the EYE-DA as part of the pre-kindergarten screener. In several instances, the screenings have taken place in the ECDC. At these locations, the early childhood educator has been invited to be part of the transition team meeting.

The Public Health 3.5 Clinic was held in two centres. This allowed for an immediate connection with early childhood services through the site director, who acted as a liaison between families and service providers. In one case, Early Intervention worked with children and families at the ECDC. All sites were actively using narrative documentation/learning stories to record the development of the children in the centre. Individual child portfolios were also created by early childhood educators.

The transition to school meetings have provided opportunities for the sharing of tools and practices in documenting children's development and progress in several sites.

### Indicator 3.5: Program Quality

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.75

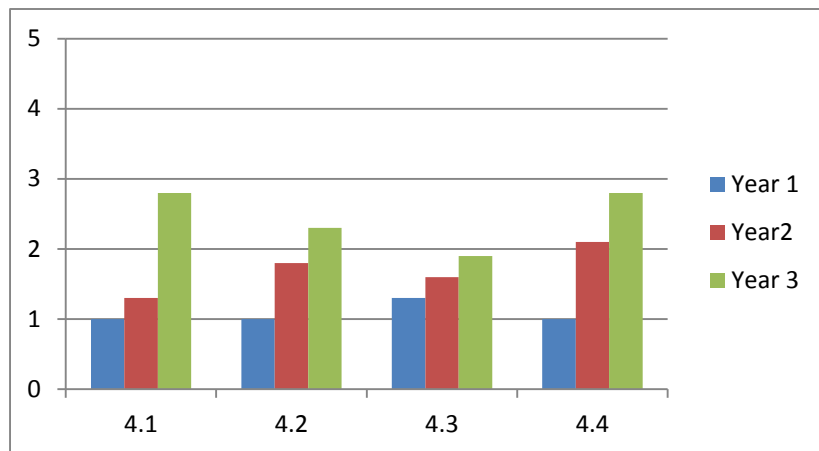
Year 3 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

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Assessing program quality was a reported challenge, with site staff members indicating that they were unsure about how to move forward in assessing this measure. Sites reported that informal sharing had taken place among partners with respect to tools used to measure program quality. Discussion among focus group participants indicated that *program quality* could refer to several aspects of the ECDC's programs, processes and services. Some suggested that it could be beneficial to look at the quality of individual programs utilizing tools that are already in place. Further, in creating joint initiatives, program quality indicators could be developed as part of the planning process. Finally, the quality of the integration of services could be measured by tools developed by the Early Years Study 3 (2011) and Starting Strong III (2012). It was evident from focus group feedback that this area should be targeted for additional consultation and development, both at the regional and provincial levels.



#### **Key Element 4: Early Childhood Staff and Service Providers**



*Develop an early childhood staff team that works together to achieve program goals.*

#### **Indicator 4.1: Program Planning and Implementation**

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 1:0

Year 2 Rating Range 1:0 – 1.5

Year 3 Rating Range 1.75 – 3.75

There was a decrease in the number of joint activities between kindergarten and preschool children in several sites. At two centres, the challenge was related to the New Brunswick Teachers Association guidelines regarding kindergarten class size. In another centre, a change in school principal and lack of a formal partnership agreement contributed to the decrease in collaboration. Robertville continued to organize biweekly activities with the school's kindergarten class. All sites have maintained practices related to involvement in school-wide initiatives.

While there has been a decrease in the formal program planning and implementation between kindergarten and preschool children, there has been an increase in engagement between other school students and the early childhood development centres. In Bath, older elementary children worked as “book buddies” with the four-year old preschool class; kindergarten children have visited the preschool room with their mentoring groups; and the early childhood educator planned the Transition to School Week” in consultation with elementary school staff. In Saint John, the Grade Eight social studies class was engaged with the preschool children on a weekly basis.

Other partners continued to plan and implement new joint initiatives. In Saint John, the Early Learning Centre and the Family Resource Centre partnered to offer a parenting course that was co-facilitated by an educator from each program. Several sites reported professional development opportunities that were open to multiple partners.

#### **Indicator 4.2: Behaviour Guidance/Management**

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1:0 – 3.0

Year 3 Rating Range 2.0 – 3.5

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In Year 2, the ECDCs experienced significant growth in this category by creating a common behaviour policy with the school and other partners so that there would be consistency in terms of conduct and respect in all programs. In Moncton, *Le Phare* worked closely with teachers and school administration around issues of child management, especially with respect to the afterschool program. All sites recognized the importance of developing a shared vision and practices with respect to behaviour guidance and management. During school-wide events, school concerts, and the utilization of school spaces (i.e. cafeteria, music room, library, and gym), participants noted that the code of conduct of the school must take precedence.

#### **Indicator 4.3: Roles and Responsibilities**

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 1:5 – 1.75

Year 3 Rating Range 1.75 – 2.0

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Roles and responsibilities have been outlined in partnership agreements between schools and districts. In the creation of joint activities, roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined. However, the individual ratings in Year 3 (ranging from 1.75 – 2.0) indicate that roles and responsibilities are still defined mainly by individual programs. This has been recognized as an area of focus in Year 4.

#### **Indicator 4.4: Staff Development**

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 1:0

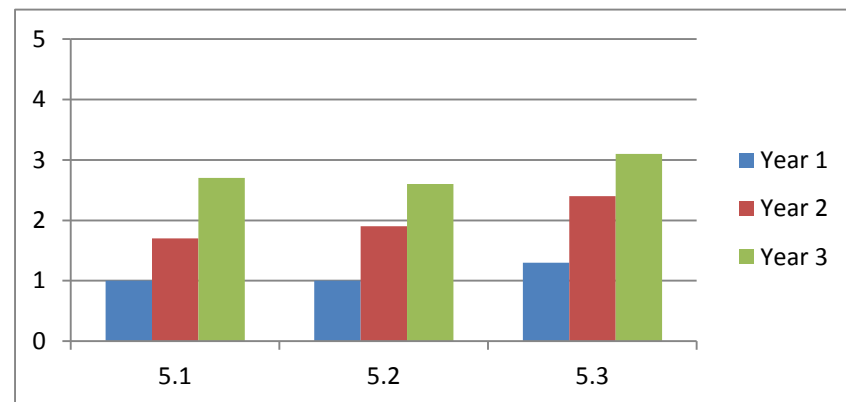
Year 2 Rating Range 1:5 – 3:0

Year 3 Rating Range 2.0 – 3.5

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In Year 2, some early childhood educators were invited to take part in school-based teacher professional development opportunities. In Year 3, opportunities for professional development appeared to be offered primarily by other early childhood partners. Talk With Me/*Parle-moi* offered a signing course to multiple partners. VON Healthy Baby and Me offered a course in “Conscious Discipline” for parents, service providers, early childhood educators and teachers. Early Intervention invited all service providers to a professional development opportunity with a special speaker from Family Resource Planning Canada.

### **Key Element 5: Parent and Community Engagement Opportunities and Activities**



*Parent participation in children's early learning and development should be increased through direct involvement in programs, planning, and decision-making.*

### **Indicator 5.1: Parent Input and Participation in Programs**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.5 – 2.0

Year 3 Rating Range 2.0 – 3.0

In Year 2, stakeholders discussed the need to empower parents to become part of development and decision-making processes. By Year 3, three of the sites had parent representation on their boards. In Saint John, there were plans to create a Parent Advisory Group that would liaise with the program committee and have input into making decisions about the programming of the centre. At three of the sites, parents were actively involved in volunteering and in participating in programming at the centre. In Moncton, parents have taken on a political role, lobbying the provincial government to consider the language and cultural needs of minority Francophone families living in an Anglophone environment. In Saint John, a door-to-door campaign resulted in an increase in utilization of childcare and drop-in playgroups. Robertville continued to have consistent utilization in family activities, such as the monthly “pyjama literacy nights”.

## Indicator 5.2: Parenting Capacity

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 1.5 – 2.75

Year 3 Rating Range 2.5 – 3.0

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All sites made gains in implementing initiatives to enhance parenting capacity. In Moncton, *Le Phare* worked closely with *La fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick* (FANB) and the district coordinator of *Francisation* in attempting to meet the linguistic and cultural needs of families. In one centre at the request of parents, the site director engaged professionals to offer parenting courses regarding children's sexuality, bullying, and other topics. The Saint John Early Learning Centre offered opportunities to enhance parenting capacities by working with partners such as the YMCA to offer programs, and by opening the centre to other partners for the purpose of building parenting capacity. The centre provided a neutral, safe environment for these meetings to occur. In Bath, two new initiatives were being planned that were expected to increase parenting capacity. These include the opening of a fitness centre and a community nutrition initiative in partnership with the Social Inclusion Network.

## Indicator 5.3: Relationships with Families

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

Year 2 Rating Range 2.0 – 3.5

Year 3 Rating Range 2.75 – 3.5

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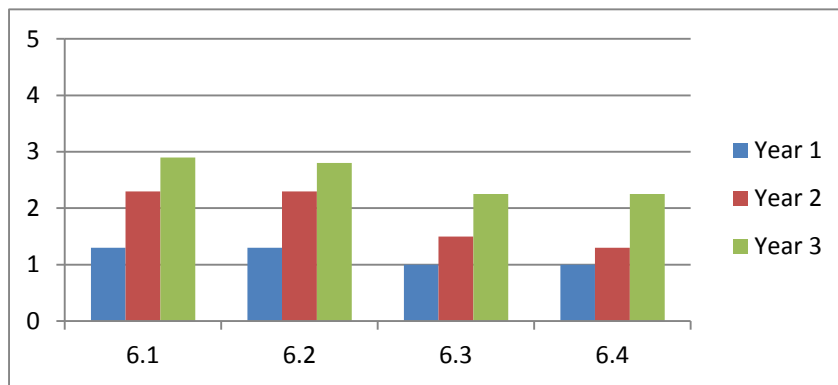
All four sites have developed strong relationships with families. Participants identified the site directors as key figures who have built trusting relationships with parents and families. In the key informant interviews, parents stated that the ECDCs serve as community hubs, places where they could access services as well as information and connection to other resources. The site directors and early childhood educators served as conduits, connecting parents to appropriate services. Sites reported working with their partners using the notion of "multiple entry points," so that a parent or family member could never be turned away. The concept of "no wrong door" presupposes that no matter what type of service or support a parent explores, s/he will receive help or be connected with the appropriate service provider.

In Year 2, all sites were sharing school voicemail services, and newsletters were used to let parents know about centre events, programs and services. Similarly, community partners and service providers worked together to publicize individual programs and events. Several sites also utilized social media to keep parents informed. In Saint John, the loss of the website *SJ Kids* has caused the Early Learning Centre to explore new alternatives. Future communication plans for the sites include:

- Building reciprocal web-links with partners
- Creating a formal communication plan with strategies for connecting with families
- Creating a website that connects all early childhood services, resources and programs

Community-wide events that were organized around themes such as bike safety or health and nutrition were successful in engaging and building relationships with families. Stakeholders indicated that engaging parents to help out with programs and special events served to empower and provide confidence among families.

### **Key Element 6: Language and Cultural Identity**



*Children, parent and family participation in the integrated programs, services, and activities of the ECDC should increase understanding and capacity with respect to linguistic and cultural identity.*

#### **Indicator 6.1: A Common Vision**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 1.5 – 3.0

Year 3 Rating Range 1.75 – 4.0

Representing a Francophone minority within an Anglophone setting, *Le Phare* articulated that creating a common vision with other Francophone partners was critical. The school district has indicated that cultural identity is a key focus of school improvement plans. As such, *Le Phare* was involved with the district in planning and implementing such activities *La semaine de la fierté française*. With the Université de Moncton, *Le Phare* has been participating in a research project to evaluate the process by which cultural identity and language are developed in minority French communities living in Anglophone majority contexts.

*Le centre de développement de la petite enfance et de la famille de Robertville* reported engagement in activities to support school and community events that celebrated cultural identity and language, such as *La semaine de la fierté française* and *Le tintamarre de la fête des Acadiens*; however, living in a predominately French milieu, the centre did not demonstrate the same needs as were represented at *Le Phare*.

#### **Indicator 6.2: Family and Community Engagement**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 1.5 – 3.0

Year 3 Rating Range 1.5 – 4.0

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*Le Phare* has undertaken conversations with both national and provincial partners with respect to strategies to engage families and communities in activities that support the development of language and cultural identity. This step was identified as very important to *Le Phare*, as many of their children come from *ayant droit* families where the primary language of communication is English. Both Francophone centres have undertaken a consultation process with parents in Year 3. *Le centre de développement de la petite enfance et de la famille de Robertville* continues to be involved in the cultural activities of the school. Future plans include the exploration of new partners such as *l'Association francophone des parents Nouveau-Brunswick* and *Patrimoine Canada*.

#### **Indicator 6.3: Professional Development for Early Childhood Team and Partners**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

Year 3 Rating Range 1.0 – 3.5

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There are few available professional development opportunities that pertain to cultural and linguistic identity; however, *Le Phare* reported participating in professional development activities during the summer months.

#### **Indicator 6.4: Cultural Identity and Language Strategies**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

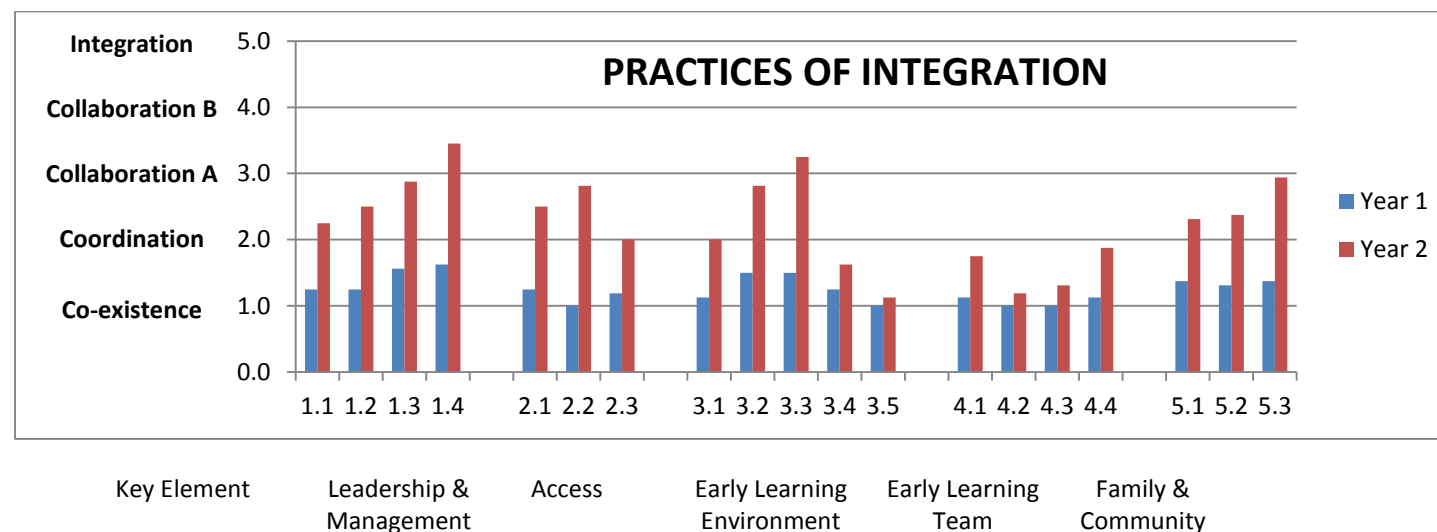
Year 3 Rating Range 1.0 – 3.5

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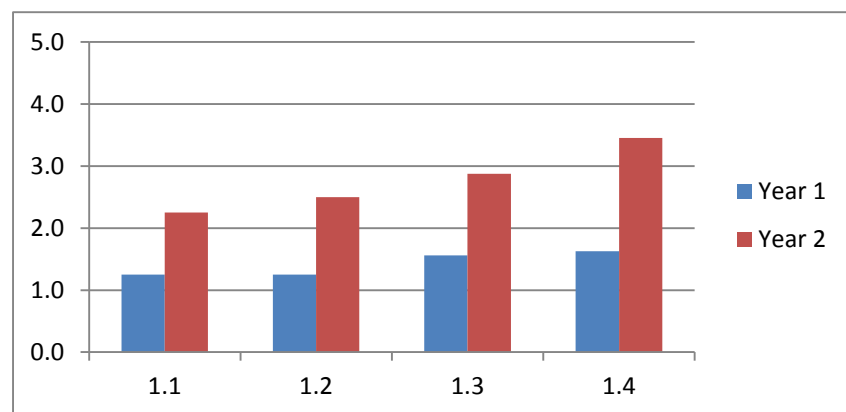
Each partner program develops its own specific objectives and strategies to foster the development of cultural identity and language. The Administrative Council of *Le Phare* has included participation in this process as part of its strategic plan.

## 4.2 MWMFF Supported Sites: La Boussole, Centreville Cougar Kittens, Future Footprints Family Centre, and Start SMART

Four additional sites completed the Indicators of Change in 2011 and 2012 – Centreville Cougar Kittens, *La Boussole* (Kent), Start SMART (Keswick) and Future Prints Family Centre (Perth-Andover). Both Start SMART and *La Boussole* hired site directors and opened their childcare programs in the fall of 2010. Centreville Cougar Kittens and Future Footprints Family Centre have hired site coordinators and are running programs with partners in their respective centres. All four sites have active leadership teams or committees who meet on a regular basis. The CYV coordinator facilitates operations at Centreville Cougar Kittens, Start SMART and Future Footprints Family Centre as part of the Carleton-York-Victoria (CYV) network of ECDCs. The graph below demonstrates growth along the integration continuum within key elements of Leadership and Management Structure, Early Learning Environment, and Parent and Community Engagement. These three areas will be discussed briefly in the following sections.



## Key Element 1: Leadership & Management Structure



*A local governance structure is responsible for program policies, resource allocation, service planning and monitoring, and human resource decisions.*

### Indicator 1.1: Program Mandate, Policies & Practices

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 1.5 - 3.0

All four sites have sought to build relationships with service providers and community partners in different ways. Keswick Start SMART (KSS), initiated a series of partnership meetings for the purpose of sharing missions, goals, policies and guidelines, as well as identifying gaps and creating a shared vision. An environmental scan was completed, several gaps identified, and a number of actions set in motion. Kent *La Boussole* (KLB) held two partners' meetings for the purpose of addressing long-term strategic planning. Perth-Andover Future Footprints (PAFF), Centreville Cougar Kittens (CCK) and KLB have had partners offering programming onsite for the past two years. KSS has worked with Autism Connections to deliver individual therapy sessions at the centre. Several service providers and community partners have served as board members at each site.

Participants shared examples of several joint partnership initiatives that were implemented in Year 3, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Centreville Child Care (CCC) children take part in *Story Time with Mrs. T.*, as well as other centre initiatives
- CCC, Valley Family Resource Centre (VFRC), CCK and the school partnered in offering the Transition to School Week, which was co-taught by the kindergarten teacher and the early childhood educator from CCC.
- PAFF, VFRC, the school, district and local Rotary Club partnered to offer a comprehensive Transition to School Week



Challenges related to policies and practices identified by the sites include:

- *Policies that inhibit partnerships:* Sites reported persisting difficulties in breaking down inflexible barriers between jurisdictions. For some sites, engaging partners from Public Health has been challenging due to the strict mandates and guidelines that are in place.
- *Barriers to creating new initiatives:* Sites reported that not all participants feel that they have had an equal voice in the development or implementation of new joint initiatives. It was felt that equitable, respectful partner relationships were critical to the success of the initiative.

Next steps:

- Creation of formal partnership agreements with all partners to document existing practices and initiatives
- Creation of a pamphlet for all service providers and community stakeholders describing each service and how to make contact

### **Indicator 1.2: Service Planning and Monitoring**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 2.5 – 3.75

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Partners reported significant progress with respect to Indicator 1.2. The most prominent initiatives focused on creating a smoother transition for pre-schoolers into kindergarten. Joint initiatives with respect to Transition to School Week demonstrated the way in which greater access can be created for parents. In Centreville, the Transition to School initiative has led to discussions regarding the creation of a permanent preschool room in the school where the CCC will offer weekly preschool programming as well as other joint initiatives, including:

- A Wellness Fair held during the school's parent-teacher Interviews
- Summer Reading in the Park during T-ball practices
- PJ Reading for preschoolers, held at the same time as the school's Literacy Night
- Professional Drop-in sessions when parents can talk with service providers such as Talk With Me/*Parle-moi* and Early Intervention

### **Indicator 1.3: Allocation of Financial Resources**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.25

Year 2 Rating Range 2.25 – 3.5

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The indicator ratings reflect growth in this area across all four sites. Schools were a strong partner with each centre in terms of the sharing of resources and space. Each ECDC had a designated room or rooms in their respective schools. Sharing of space (e.g., gym, music room,

playground and cafeteria) was a common practice in all sites. The CCK, in partnership with the Village of Centreville and the school, created an early childhood playground. With other partners, CCK purchased a digital sign to promote early childhood events. At KSS, the sharing of resources extended to physical education equipment purchased by the INKs programs. Schools also provided spaces for service partners to deliver individual therapies for pre-schoolers and their parents.

#### Indicator 1.4: Human Resources

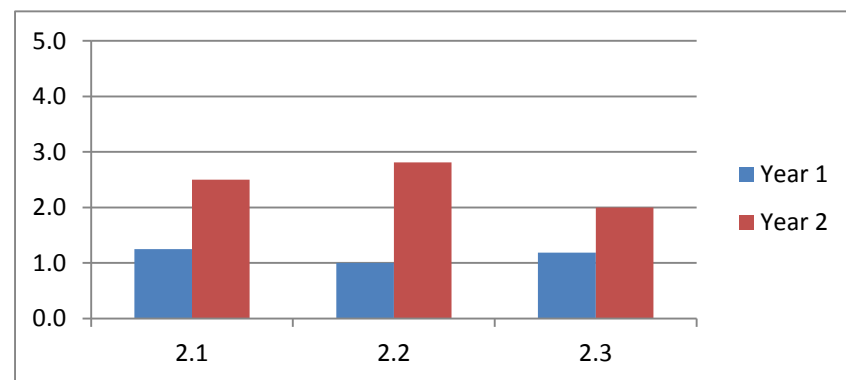
Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

Year 2 Rating Range 2.5 – 4.0

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All sites have hired a site director and created human resource documents, including staff and family handbooks. Three sites have experienced a change in director in Year 2. PAFF, CCK and KLB are in the process of developing their strategic plans for the coming year. KSS is working on bridging the gap between childcare and INKs programming to define the structure of the relationship in an early childhood model. CCK is in a unique position in that they do not have a childcare program within the school, as there is a successful licensed community childcare adjacent to the centre. CCK intends to create a human resources handbook that will describe the unique relationship that exists between Centreville Child Care and CCK. Lesson learned from the CCK partnership with an existing childcare centre have the potential to inform provincial strategy regarding how a model of integrated early childhood service delivery can function successfully without having a childcare component.

#### Key Element 2: Access and Intake Processes



*Seamless access is available to an expanded and comprehensive early learning and care program, providing a continuum of supports and services to all families and young children, prenatally to six years of age.*

## **Indicator 2.1: Capacity**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 2.25 – 2.75

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All sites have met with their active partners to discuss gaps and needs. Some have begun to collect utilization data for programs that take place onsite. A key challenge was noted with respect to tracking utilization of partner programs. There are a number of partner programs and services that are delivered in home, and utilization for such programs are not available to EDCs. It was noted that when these services are terminated, families may not access additional programs. In such cases, a gap of up to three years may exist between the termination of the service and kindergarten registration.

The building of trusting relationships between service providers and families was seen as critical to helping families access and navigate needed programs and resources. Participants identified Public Health and Early Intervention as two key partners who make initial connections with first time mothers and young families. It was noted that the trusting relationships that front line workers build with their clients facilitated the sharing of information about existing programs and supports.

The sites identified several future directions with respect to building capacity, creating awareness and identifying needs and gaps, including:

- Creation of a multi-pronged consultative process for assessing community needs (involving feedback forms, one-one-one consultation, door-to-door campaign, centre questionnaires)
- Identification and engagement of all partners who work in early childhood contexts

## **Indicator 2.2: Child Care Provision and Affordability**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 4.0

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In three of the four sites, childcare (2-5 and 5-12) provides flexible services for parents (full day, half day, part time and occasional care). In one site, two spaces in childcare have been reserved for teen-aged mothers wishing to complete their high school education. Centreville Cougar Kittens partners with the community's existing childcare centre to offer additional free programming for parents and children. Family Resource, Talk With Me and VON offer free programming for families with children from 0 to 5 years of age in three sites. Another site offers child/adult programming at two different times per week.

### Indicator 2.3: Intake, Enrolment and Attendance

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.75

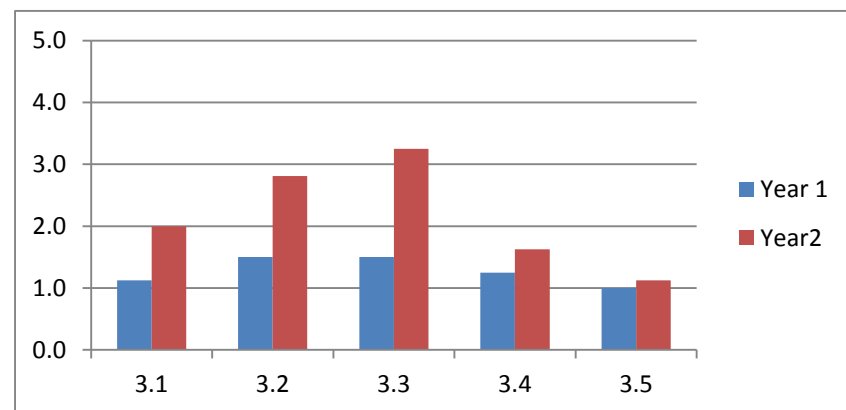
Year 2 Rating Range 1.5 – 2.5

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Two of the centres currently track utilization of drop-in programs. Utilization numbers, not names, are tracked for partner programs. Participants unanimously agreed that next steps should include:

- Creation of universal intake, enrolment and attendance protocols
- Creation of a universal permission form for sharing information with early childhood partners

### Key Element 3: Early Learning Environment



*High quality learning environments combine learning expectations, activities, and routines from existing kindergarten, early childhood education/childcare, and parenting/family support programs.*

### Indicator 3.1: Curriculum Framework and Pedagogical Approach

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 1.5 – 2.5

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In Year 1 the site directors, early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers of the CYV sites took part in a session during the school district curriculum delivery day. At one site, the early childhood educator and the kindergarten teacher jointly co-taught the Transition to Kindergarten program. Participants noted rich benefits related to collaborative planning time and program implementation. CYV staff

members have been provided with opportunities to attend presentations offered by partners organizations, and to participate in professional presentations by guest speakers.

### **Indicator 3.2: Daily Routines and Schedules**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

Year 2 Rating Range 2.5 – 3.0

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All four sites report progress in establishing and adopting routines and schedules. Efforts are made to coordinate schedules with those of partner programs, especially where such programming is delivered onsite at ECDCs. Three of the sites have afterschool childcare programs, which serve to minimize transitions for children. At PAFF, early childhood staff members pick up children from a private nursery school and deliver them to the childcare program at the ECDC. At KSS, autism therapy for one of the children in childcare is delivered onsite. In KLB and KSS, preschool children eat lunch in the school cafeteria. At CCK, a digital sign enhances community awareness of programming that is taking place at the school. Next steps include creating an electronic calendar linked to a website so parents and partners can have access to the scheduling of all early childhood programs and services offered in the area.

### **Indicator 3.3: Use of Space**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.5

Year 2 Rating Range 3.0 – 4.0

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Three of the four sites are located in designated Community Schools with a history of partnering with community groups. KSS, located in Keswick Valley Memorial School, has been actively open to community groups for many years. All sites have dedicated space in the school with partner programming being offered onsite. Access to other spaces (such as the gym, music room and library) is available to the centres when not in use by the school (i.e., after school, in the evenings, and during school closures for professional development and holidays). Smart START is experiencing some challenges with space as school enrolment is increasing, thus causing space to be at a premium.

### **Indicator 3.4: Children's Development and Progress**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.5

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Participants found this to be a challenging indicator to address unless joint projects or specific situations created a need to share information across jurisdictions. However, one circumstance required the organization of services and monitoring of a child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who receives his therapy at the centre. In this case, understanding the needs of the child and creating seamless transitions necessitated discussion among partners. The Methods and Resource teacher and the principal were actively involved in these meetings as they prepared to transition this child to kindergarten in the fall.

### Indicator 3.5: Program Quality

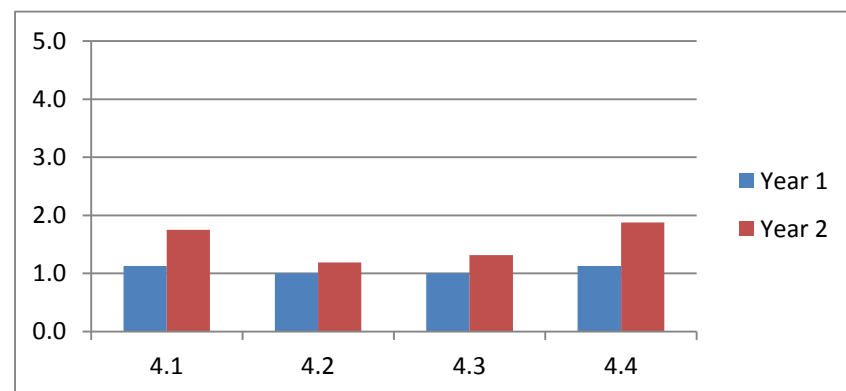
Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

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Similar to the with initial demonstration sites, these four centres struggled to conceptualize or operationalize quality measures. During the administration of the Indicators of Change instrument, discussions emerged around how program quality could and should be defined. Participants indicated that they were awaiting provincial direction in this area.

### Key Element 4: Early Childhood Staff and Service Providers



*Develop an early childhood staff team that works together to deliver and achieve program goals.*

### Indicator 4.1: Program Planning and Implementation

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 1.5 – 2.5

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There has been evidence of shared program planning activities across partners. At KSS, partners' meetings have provided opportunities for collaboration, as did the completion of the community's environmental scan. At CCK, the co-teaching of the Transition to School program provided an opportunity for the kindergarten teacher and early childhood educators to collaborate. Participants recognized that joint initiatives provided opportunities for partners to work collaboratively in sharing, planning and implementing essential programs and services.

#### **Indicator 4.2: Behaviour Guidance/Child Management**

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.75

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Many of the ECDCs have already adopted their respective school's vision pertaining to behaviour guidance and child management. Participants suggested that school visions, if appropriate, could be modified to suit early childhood and included in the Parents' Handbook. Key messages, common language, and consistent strategies were identified as having the potential to create a sense of a unified school community, and to minimize transitions for children entering kindergarten. Several sites suggested the possibility of a partnership between the ECDC children and older students in creating posters that reflected the preschoolers' understanding of the code of conduct.

#### **Indicator 4.3: Roles and Responsibilities**

Year 1 Rating Range 1:0 – 1.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.75

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Participants recognized that it is through the planning and implementation of joint projects that partners begin to solidify understanding of respective roles and responsibilities. PAFF reported gains in this area with the Transition to Kindergarten initiative.

#### **Indicator 4.4: Staff Development**

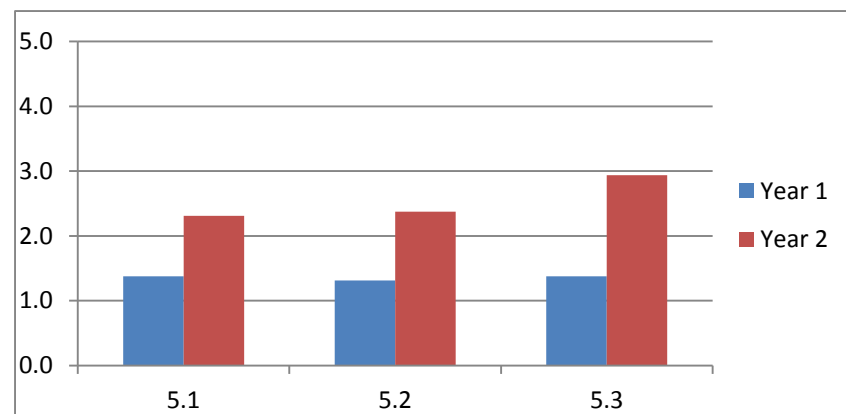
Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.5

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.5

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Year 1 saw opportunities for early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers to work together at a District Curriculum Day. In Year 2, partners invited ECDCs to participate a number of workshops. Participants recognized that this is an area that will evolve as the relationship between ECDCs and schools are more clearly defined by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

## **Key Element 5: Parent and Community Engagement Opportunities and Activities**



*Parent participation in children's early learning and development increases through direct involvement in programs, planning, and decision-making.*

### **Indicator 5.1: Parent Input and Participation in Programs**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

Year 2 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.75

KLB engaged in an extensive community consultation process prior to their opening. KLB, PAFF and CCK have strong parent representation on the early childhood board. These parents indicated that they feel valued and are committed to being involved in centre activities, and noted that they have assumed responsibilities in partner programs as well as at the board level. The INKs program at KSS engages parents, grandparents and caregivers. All sites report informal consultation with parents with respect to programming.

### **Indicator 5.2: Parenting Capacity**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 1.75

Year 2 Rating Range 1.75 – 3.0

All four centres are running programs for parents with the goal of increasing parenting capacity. Pre- and postnatal programs (VON) and Valley Family Resource drop-in play groups are offered in three of the four sites. Talk With Me/*Parle-moi* also provides programming at three centres. Some sites offer unique parenting programs such as the INKs programs in KSS, Storytime with Mrs. T in CCK, and *Café*



*Jazette* in KLB. Most sites have held informal discussions with their partners with respect to programming that enhances parenting capacity. Three of the four centres have parents who are part of leadership boards or committees. Several of the sites have initiated a first joint partnership to address a need identified by parents.

### **Indicator 5.3: Relationships with Families**

Year 1 Rating Range 1.0 – 2.0

Year 2 Rating Range 2.75 – 3.0

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The four sites report strong relationships with families who are using the centres. Partners have shared their communication protocols; some centres have made use of partners' communication systems for publicizing events; others have created websites and Facebook pages.

Participants identified a number of challenges with respect to building relationships with families, including:

- Identifying ways to help families transition from one program to another
- Helping young families transition from in-home visitation programs to group programs
- Raising awareness of available programming among service providers and families

A key area of focus for Year 3 included actions to improve integrated service delivery. Suggestions for increasing parents' awareness of services within the community included using social media; providing reciprocal links on existing partners' websites; building individual ECDC websites; utilizing the schools' communication tools and systems; and creating pamphlets to be distributed through community bulletin boards, doctors' offices, and prenatal and transition to school information packages.

## 5.0 Key Informant Interviews: Cross Case Analysis

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Key informant interview protocols were designed to elicit the perspectives of a range of ECDC stakeholders. For these data collection activities, areas of inquiry focused on:

- Participants' perceptions of integrated service delivery
- Impact of the sites on children, parents, service providers and community partners over the past three years
- Growth of existing partnerships and the development of new collaborations
- Challenges faced by communities in offering services, resources and programs to families, parents and children (0-5 years)
- Benefits and constraints of scaling up the ECDC model to a provincial level
- Changes needed to support a fully integrated system of early childhood care and education

### 5.1 Methodology

During the Spring of Year 3, key informant interviews were conducted at all eight operational sites, either by phone or in face-to-face meetings and focus groups. Key informants were selected in consultation with site directors and board chairs. Specific attention was focused on ensuring that the informants represented multiple perspectives, including those of:

- Site directors
- Principals
- Transition to school coordinators
- Early childhood educators
- Kindergarten teachers
- Parents
- Service providers
- Partner program directors

A series of structured questions guided the interviews and focus groups, which varied in length from 30 to 60 minutes. Digital recordings, descriptive notes and interview summaries provided the basis from which to create a written outcome summary of each interview. Upon completion of the interviews, individual written summaries were merged to provide a unified data set. This data set was analyzed to identify theme statements related to the focus of the evaluation. Themes were subsequently sorted and organized into meaningful categories.

To ensure validity and congruence of findings, member checking was implemented. After a draft Interview report was written, findings were shared with key interview participants. Through this exchange, themes were confirmed, new issues emerged, and deeper understandings were acquired. Finally, in the process of data collection, coding, and analysis of the key informant interviews, peer evaluation was employed. In this process, researchers coded the same data and came together to share findings and interpretations to ensure consensus.

The following sections provide an overview of the key findings associated with this aspect of the research effort. Direct quotes attributed to one individual are indicated as such. All other comments represent opinions, statements or recommendations that were raised by more than half of the key informants.

## 5.2 Key Findings

Most participants described integrated service delivery as a physical location or community hub that provided services, resources, programs and activities for families, parents and children. Others described integrated service delivery as an *attitude or intention* – a way of relating to others in the delivery of services and supports. The majority of respondents believed that integrated service delivery was “the way it had to be”. Participants shared powerful narratives that spoke of the challenging circumstances experienced by many young families in New Brunswick. Such stories demonstrated the potential of integrated service delivery to engage and empower parents; to provide families, parents and children with the tools to succeed; to respond in authentic and appropriate ways to community needs; to collaborate with partners to support parents; and to create a safe environment where families could access the services they need. In *La Boussole* and *Le Phare*, participants described the purpose for creating an integrated early childhood service delivery model as the provision of an environment that encourages the development of linguistic and cultural identity. Eighty percent of the families attending *Le Phare* are *exogame*, with young children who do not possess a full command of the French language.

Service providers noted that the move to an integrated model represented a complex transition, in that they had been accustomed to working in silos with individual mandates, roles and responsibilities. Working toward integration meant moving out of comfort zones and redefining processes when collaborating with other professionals to create a comprehensive plan for families and children. Some expressed concern regarding the potential loss of identity as individual service providers, reallocation of funding, and unclear mandates. In some cases, there appeared to be a lack of understanding of the “big picture” regarding the intent and practice of integrated early childhood education and care.

Participants’ responses were analyzed to identify their perceptions regarding integrated early childhood education and care. The resulting thematic categories are presented and expanded upon below.

### ***Schools as ideal locations for Early Childhood Development Centres***

With the amalgamation of early childhood and education to form the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, schools were seen as the most appropriate locations to offer early childhood education and care. Participants described the amalgamation as a “win-win” situation. The location of ECDCs in schools provided spaces for the forging of relationships among ECEs, parents, children and school staff. Parents who had negative experience in their own schooling had opportunities to reframe their perceptions by being involved in celebratory, school-wide events (e.g., Christmas concerts, cultural events, literacy days). Further, teachers had an opportunity to get to know pre-kindergarten children and to understand their strengths, interests and special needs through the joint initiatives between the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes. Participants observed that the prekindergarten children felt a sense of comfort in the school, and were aware of the rules and routines.

### ***Principals’ roles expanded to include responsibility for ECDCs***

Integrated service delivery implies the existence of leadership with responsibility for the operation of the ECDC and its partner programs. Principals were identified as filling an essential leadership position. Principals participating in key informant interviews concurred with the notion that their responsibilities should be expanded to include the ECDCs. Reflecting upon his role, one principal stated that it was his responsibility to ensure the safety and security of everyone in the building, and to guarantee that the ECDC becomes fully integrated into the school community by taking part in full school activities. However, he questioned whether he would be able to take on this responsibility in addition to the tasks he already has as principal. Other principals asserted that the school districts have a role to play in the leadership of the ECDCs. In some cases, districts have contributed to necessary classroom renovations; acted as bankers for government funds and grants; provided in-kind resources and supports; and in one case, allocated time for the administrator to oversee the ECDC.

### ***Universally accessible services offered in a common location***

Participants expressed that having the services in one central hub ensured that everyone had access. In Community Schools, the school is already recognized as the centre of the community. Service providers who deliver programming and services at ECDCs reflected that this arrangement has minimized transitions and facilitated access for parents. In *La Boussole* and Step Ahead, extramural speech services are being delivered onsite. Early Intervention is working with families at the Early Learning Centre in Saint John.

In sites where Francophones represented a minority in an Anglophone majority, offering French services in a common location was seen to ensure accessibility based on language of choice. Although not all French service providers were working out of ECDCs at the time of the interviews, participants could see the potential of engaging more partners, thus increasing access to services. Presently, speech therapy, *Service de Francization*, *Petits crayons* (a language program for newcomers), *Parle-moi*, and *La mère l’oie* are offered at *Le Phare*. At *La Boussole*, the Family Resource Centre and VON Healthy Baby also offer programming. Robertville, located in a Francophone community, has a strong partnership with the Family Resource Centre. At *La Boussole* and *Le Phare*, participants saw the expansion of services and

programs as an opportunity for children and families to develop cultural and linguistic competencies.

Community partners and service providers offering programming at ECDCs shared their belief that participating parents and children experienced a comfortable environment that was free of stigma. Service providers also noted that parents were often more receptive to receiving one-on-one services at the centre than in their homes.

### ***Collaboration with Family Resource Centres and other community service providers***

Family Resource Centres have been instrumental in the development of some ECDCs, with involvement in planning, implementation and administrative activities; and have the potential to play a key role in the ongoing growth and development of early childhood services and supports in their respective regions. Other important partnerships at the community level such as Talk with Me, VON Healthy Baby and Me, and Early Intervention have the potential to break down existing silos, allowing programs and services to be delivered more effectively, efficiently and economically.

### ***Common vision and flexible schedules to accommodate families and partner programs***

This characteristic reflects the notion of integrated service delivery as *attitudinal* in nature, indicating collaborative practices and mutual respect. It was important to interviewees that all stakeholders had an equal voice in creating a common vision with respect to early childhood education and care. Collaborative practice involved the collective scheduling of space and resources, and the creation of joint initiatives while safeguarding the autonomy and integrity of individual programs.

### ***Access to information and appropriate service referrals for parents***

Not only were ECDCs seen as hubs for services, programs and resources; but also as information distribution centres. Participants noted that frequently, parents do not know where to begin when seeking support for their children and families. Key informants identified the site director as an essential source of knowledge related to early childhood services, activities and resources.

### ***Continuum of services for families***

Participants noted that integrated early childhood education and care encompassed the entire period from conception to school entry. The availability of both universal and targeted programs was seen as beneficial to families, as was the development of both free and paid programs. Participants asserted the importance of providing multiple points of entry to services, with parental choice considered to be a fundamental component. It was also suggested by participants that “early childhood” should be redefined to include children from birth to eight years of age.

### ***Preparing ALL children for school (universal versus targeted)***

Participants suggested that ECDC programs should be designed to allow all children to reach their full potential. Many indicated that the early childhood environment and curriculum provided an opportunity for children to gain skills and experiences that would assist them in becoming responsible citizens, and to develop critical thinking skills. The play-based provincial curricula (Anglophone and Francophone) were recognized as encouraging children to learn at their own rates. Francophone participants indicated that, in their context, preparing children for school also included providing opportunities for them to develop cultural and linguistic identities.

At *Le Phare*, parents reported observing a difference in school readiness between their children who had been at an ECDC for a year or more, and those who had not experienced this opportunity. One parent indicated that, even though her child completed the EYE-DA in English, the transition to school coordinator deemed that the child's French language skill was so strong that she did not have to take part in *Francization* classes.

### ***Systems that support parents and expand parenting capacity***

Participants recognized the parent as being the child's primary educator and caregiver. Stakeholders discussed the systemic issues of family dysfunction in the populations surrounding some ECDCs, noting that for the cycle were to be broken, early childhood services would need to provide opportunities to engage and support parents in expanding confidence and capacity regarding their children's education and care.

Discussions also centered around the difficulty in connecting with and engaging parents deemed to be at risk. Two factors identified in reaching these families included the creation of an outreach plan, and the provision of a welcoming environment where children, parents and family could feel safe and secure. A number of centres noted that they had created specific initiatives to engage at-risk families, including *Café Jasette* at *La Boussole*, and the Friday Café at the Early Learning Centre in Saint John.

### ***Systems that support the development of linguistic and cultural identity***

Early childhood was characterized as a critical time for children to develop in terms of linguistic and cultural identity. For ECDCs in a linguistic minority setting, it was seen as critical that parents be supported in understanding the importance of these goals, and be engaged in activities that support them.

## **5.3 Impacts**

Participants indicated that the ECDCs have had a significant impact on regional service delivery gaps, have improved access to programming, and have reached out to parents and children who might not otherwise have accessed needed services. Pre-existing relationships among service providers have made it easier to move to a more collaborative model. Both clients and service providers have benefited from having the ECDCs serve as the hub of the community. Key informant interviews yielded rich data with respect to the impact of the ECDCs

on other early childhood development centres; children, parents and families; service providers and community partners; and schools. Special note was made regarding the impacts related to cultural and linguistic literacy in Francophone minority settings.

### **5.3.1 Impacts on other early childhood development centres**

Participants indicated that centres had been in frequent contact with one another regarding the development and implementation of early childhood services. Site directors noted that it was useful to communicate with other directors with respect to human resource issues. Provincial ECDC gatherings have provided opportunities to share ideas and build professional networks. Participants noted a need for even more opportunities for collaboration among centres, and for reciprocal site visits. Some indicated that the amount of administrative work often impedes the time that directors have to interact with other centres. It is evident from the utilization and financial analyses that the four MWMFF centres have benefited significantly from lessons learned from the initial government-funded demonstration sites, particularly in the length of time required for planning and implementation.

### **5.3.2 Children**

Participants' responses with respect to impacts on children were overwhelmingly positive, and included the following themes:

#### *Preparation for school*

One participant associated with a school indicated that she had not previously been involved with programming that has had such an impact on children. It was noted by many that children were becoming more comfortable and confident in the school setting. Community School coordinators and principals were seen as instrumental in ensuring that children and parents become integrated into the larger school community. Parents noted enhanced readiness for school among their children who have been part of the ECDCs.

#### *Onsite delivery of services*

A participating autism professional noted that schools were the ideal location for therapy, as children on the spectrum were in need of opportunities to build social skills. Other professional services offered onsite included speech therapy and hearing tests. Offering services onsite was seen to minimize transition challenges for children, particularly for those involved in afterschool care.

#### *Quality early childhood education and care*

ECDC programming was characterized as allowing children to develop their whole potential, and assisting with school readiness in terms of emotional and social development. Participants shared the emerging sense of ownership on the part of the children – the notion that “this is their place”. As such, the availability of ECDCs was considered to minimize the stress and anxiety related to the transition from early childhood to kindergarten. Parents noted that the early childhood educators were identifying and working on specific child outcomes, and that their children's progress was evident.

### *Services for ayant-droit families*

*Le Phare* and *La Boussole* serve many *ayant droit* families in their respective communities. Participants observed that childcare programs in these ECDCs provided opportunities for prekindergarten children to gain fluency in speaking French, and an understanding of their Francophone culture.

### **5.3.3 Parents and families**

Participants indicated positive impacts on parents and families in two major ways. As service hubs, the ECDCs have increased parents' access to services, and enhanced the availability of programs and resources. Further, ECDCs were considered to have increased the engagement of parents and families in a variety of ways, outlined below.

#### *Services meeting the needs of parents and families*

- Flexible childcare (part-time, full time, and occasional care) accommodates the needs of parents.
- Parents feel secure knowing that their school-aged children transition so effortlessly to afterschool care.
- The fact that some support services are delivered at ECDCs (e.g., autism therapy, speech-language therapy, hearing tests) eliminates extra travel and time away from work for parents.

#### *Parent Engagement*

- Through coming to one program, such as VON Healthy Baby and Me, parents learn about other program offerings, such as FRC Drop-in Play Group.
- Parents are engaged as part of a collaborative team whose goal is to support the growth and development of children. These relationships are characterized by mutual respect and sharing.
- Child-minding services provided during parenting programs allows more parents to attend.
- Joint initiatives between ECDCs and community partners have increased the engagement and participation of vulnerable families.
- Parents noted specifically the value of opportunities to take part in events that engaged the whole family.
- Parents indicated opportunities to build social networks, and to develop linkages among families of children with special needs.
- Some parents expressed that their own perceptions of school were changing; rather than seeing the school as a threat, they indicated feeling welcome and safe.

### **5.3.4 Service Providers**

Service providers recognized the need to have mechanisms in place to ensure that partners meet more frequently. Creating a strategic plan was considered essential, as was clarification of roles and collaborations regarding programs and mandates. Participants noted that sites would benefit from clear directives from the province. The following themes were identified regarding the role of partnerships among ECDCs and service providers.



### *Forging strong relationships*

Service providers and community partners recognized that they share a common goal, which is to support families and children in their positive growth and development. Participants reported that site directors are integral to the facilitation of relationships and in ensuring common understanding.

### *Working together*

Many participants referred to strong relationships between ECDCs and schools. In some cases, childcare programming has been integrated into the school community, and prekindergarten children have engaged in joint activities with kindergartens. Where partners have identified gaps, plans have been made to address these areas of challenge. Participants cautioned that it takes time to understand the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

### *Using the hub model*

ECDCs experienced growth and increases in program utilization when centres were framed as community hubs. Further, the delivery of support services at ECDCs has increased accessibility for families, minimized transitions for children, and reduced travel time and costs.

## **5.3.5 Schools**

Participants felt that schools were gaining a deeper appreciation for and understanding of early childhood education and care. Furthermore, there was consensus that teachers and school staff were beginning to understand the difference between childcare and an early childhood development centre. Having the principal involved in the development and implementation of the centre was seen as critical in this regard. The Indicators of Change instrument was characterized as useful in measuring growth and in facilitating self-reflection. Several participants noted that it would be useful for site directors and early childhood educators to be included in schools' professional development activities, in order to broaden overall understanding of early childhood issues among school staff.

### *Teachers' relationships with parents*

Teachers indicated that their perceptions of parents were evolving due to the existence of more frequent opportunities to meet and consult. These opportunities have resulted in stronger relationships between teachers and parents, and have contributed to the development of shared understandings and goals.

### *Teachers' relationships with children*

Opportunities for early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers to work together more collaboratively were seen to ease the transition between early childhood and kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers indicated that having knowledge of children's strengths and challenges, and knowing them as people, allowed them to make informed decisions with respect to class composition and curricular

planning. Further, children's knowledge of the school's routines, physical layout and staff was believed to facilitate the transition into kindergarten.

### 5.3.6 Cultural and Linguistic Literacy

Participants in the Francophone regions recognized the importance of early childhood development centres in preserving French language and culture. Two important factors in supporting linguistic literacy were identified as the delivery of services in French, and *Francization* support offered to *ayant droit* families through childcare and community-wide family activities. Some participants perceived a lack of provincial strategy regarding Francophone leadership in the area of integrated early childhood education and care.

## 5.4 Challenges in delivering programs, services, and activities

Three major themes emerged as participants discussed the challenges that hindered families from accessing programs, services and activities. The first and most predominant theme was related to the challenge of reaching the families representing the greatest levels of need. Participants identified three challenges in this area:

- *Accessing services.* Access to programs was characterized as not truly universal when families are unable to attend due to lack of transportation or finances.
- *Understanding of the importance of early childhood education and care.* Some participants felt that there was a general lack of awareness related to the long-term benefits of quality early childhood education and care. It was also acknowledged that some families may be distrustful of service providers based on past experience, leading to fears that they may lose their children or be judged regarding their parenting capacity should they access support services.
- *Attending to basic needs.* Key informants noted that for parents experiencing unemployment or struggling to provide for their families' basic needs for food and shelter, primary concerns take precedence over other needs. It was suggested that stakeholders address ways to communicate with families facing financial challenges, and to offer guidance related to accessing necessary services, supports, and funding options.

A second noted challenge was with respect to partner services that are not coordinated or connected with ECDCs. Even though many services are offered in a central location, participants indicated concern over the development of comprehensive case plans for children and families; insufficient communication among partners who are offering services to the same family; the lack of reciprocal understanding on the part of service providers of each others' mandates, roles, responsibilities, and eligibility criteria; and a lack of provincial guidance regarding such coordination at the community level.

Thirdly, challenges related to access and availability of services were noted, including:

- Availability of services in rural regions
- Space considerations and limitations
- Finding and sustaining quality services in French
- Guaranteeing uniformity and quality of services
- Attracting and keeping qualified early childhood staff

## **5.5 Reflections on the integrated early childhood model using an educational platform**

Over the past three years, the eight ECDCs have been demonstrating an integrated early childhood service delivery model built upon an educational platform. Key informants were asked to consider the benefits and constraints of this model in their individual contexts. There were no constraints voiced by participants in response to this question. Noted benefits focused primarily on those impacting children and families. Participants indicated that children involved in the model were more prepared for school. ECDCs were described as employing a holistic, play-based emergent curriculum that encourages children to use their imagination and develop their creativity. Being housed in schools was described as beneficial for the early identification of special needs and the implementation of appropriate interventions.

Participants indicated that within this model, the school becomes a place for families to play, learn and grow together. Cultural activities, holiday celebrations, and school-wide initiatives were seen as engaging families in the school community. Participants noted a change in parental attitudes towards school, and in the kinds of relationships that parents were building with teachers and administrators. All stakeholders recognized the importance of building trusting relationships with children, parents and families. Recognizing the key role that parents play as children's first teachers and caregivers, early childhood educators highlighted the importance of finding ways to engage parents in meaningful ways.

From a financial perspective, the ECDCs were described by participants as "cost effective". It was noted that housing all programs and services in one location reduces travel and service delivery costs, while increasing accessibility. It was also believed that school-based centres provide a familiar context for parents seeking services. Finally, collaboration among partners within an educational setting was believed to increase the quality and effectiveness of services.

## **5.6 Recommendations to support the provision of ECDCs at a Provincial level**

While participants were positive with respect to the implementation of a fully integrated system of early childhood services and care, they also noted that there were challenges related to the scaling up of such a system at a provincial level. Some expressed concern that a provincial initiative might diminish the individual identity of the regional centres. An additional concern was noted regarding the ability to maintain funding for existing programs, such as those of the Family Resource Centres.

Private childcare owners expressed concern that the scaling up of the model to a provincial level could result in a loss or decrease in livelihood. Issues related to the identification of sufficient and appropriate space in schools were raised, as were concerns regarding the potential difficulties faced by small rural areas in attracting and maintaining qualified early childhood educators. Inequities in salary ranges for early childhood educators as compared to other educational professionals were also identified as a challenge. Further, participants suggested that province-wide professional development opportunities and workshops would be needed to introduce the ECDC concept to all stakeholders to enable shared understanding and vision.

Additional recommendations with respect to implementing a provincial model involved the following themes:

*Leadership from the government*

- Create a provincial vision and model for early childhood education and care.
- Engage stakeholders in a consultative process in developing this vision and model.
- Elicit support and clear direction from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- Establish directives regarding collaboration between the Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development, Social Development, and Health.
- Create a provincial model that works in all contexts, taking into account regional considerations, flexible and creative childcare options, and the provision of space in schools.

*Building a culture of integration*

- Design opportunities (i.e., professional development and training) for those who will be involved in the integrated model.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of all service providers and community partners.
- Provide opportunities for all potential partners to build relationships and define collaborative initiatives (e.g., the early childhood educator and the kindergarten teacher).
- Develop early childhood teams for each ECDC.

*Educational opportunities and wage parity*

- Create accessible programs for early childhood educators to earn qualifications.
- Develop an agreement between universities and community colleges that facilitates the pursuit of a university degree for early childhood educators.
- Build a wage scale that recognizes the education and experience of early childhood educators.

*Parental Choice*

- Develop programming that meets the needs of both working and stay-at-home parents.
- Provide free programming options for parents and children, and flexible childcare for working parents (part-time, full time, and occasional care).
- Develop programming that takes into consideration parents' schedules (e.g., shift work).

*Financial responsibility*

- Move service providers out of silos and create one funding mechanism for all early childhood services and programs.
- Deliver programs and services at one hub to decrease travel and delivery costs.

- Make use of unused spaces in schools.
- Build upon the existing educational infrastructure to further reduce costs.
- Focus on early identification of issues and implementation of services.

#### *Community level leadership and management*

- Create a Regional Advisory Committee with membership among principals, school district representatives, parents, service providers and community partners.
- Recognize that the centre must respond to regional and local needs.
- Facilitate strong relationships with families.
- Ensure parental representation on boards and committees.

## **5.7 Lessons Learned**

#### *Planning an early childhood development centre*

- The creation of an ECDC requires the collaboration of multiple stakeholders and community partners.
- Assessment and reflection are important components within development processes, and will facilitate a sustained focus on ECDC goals and growth.
- Community consultation is a critical consideration in the development phase, providing a means for ensuring that the ECDC meets the needs of the community.

#### *Leadership and management*

- The leadership of parents is an essential component in the planning and ongoing operations of ECDCs, and can ensure that programs and activities are meeting the needs of children and families.
- Strategic plans should be developed that include both long- and short-term goals.
- An effective communication strategy will ensure that families, community members, service providers and school staff have a shared understanding of the scope of services.
- The identification of a visionary/champion at the community level will support ECDCs in moving forward in a timely manner.
- ECDCs would benefit from the establishment of a Regional Advisory Committee that represents all community stakeholders. The role of the Regional Advisory Committee could include ensuring that early childhood programs and services do not become “schoolified,” but utilize a play-based emergent focus.

#### *Early childhood team and partners*

- The site director should know the community well, understand and have experience in early childhood education, and have the skills to establish collaborative working relationships with others.

- Opportunities should be provided for community partners to develop shared goals and plans related to how their respective programs and services will work together and meet community needs.
- Opportunities for networking among service providers would allow stakeholders to learn from each other and create supportive and strength-based relationships.

#### *Early learning environment*

- Support services delivered in the child's natural environment are more authentic and can engage other children and staff in service delivery processes.
- Documented goals for ECDCs should be grounded in the notion that services should foster the development of ALL children from a strength-based perspective.

#### *Family and community engagement*

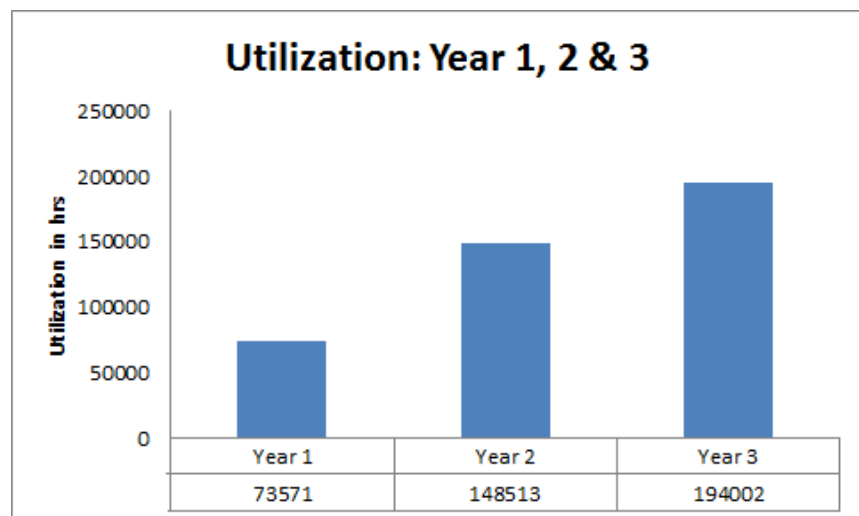
- Parents should be made aware of opportunities to be involved in the centre, and should be supported in their autonomy to choose when and how to be involved.
- Flexible childcare options that minimize transitions for children can provide "peace of mind" for parents.
- The "one-stop" approach to the delivery of services increases accessibility for parents, families and community members.

## 6. Utilization, Financial and In-kind Contributions: Cross Case Analysis

### 6.1 Utilization

#### 6.1.1 Initial Provincial Early Childhood Demonstration Sites

Utilization is reported in hours of usage across three categories: (1) child-only services (childcare, afterschool care, and preschool); (2) adult/child services (e.g., drop-in, family celebrations); and (3) adult-only services (e.g., parenting programs). In the past year, utilization hours have increased by approximately 24% across the initial four demonstration sites.

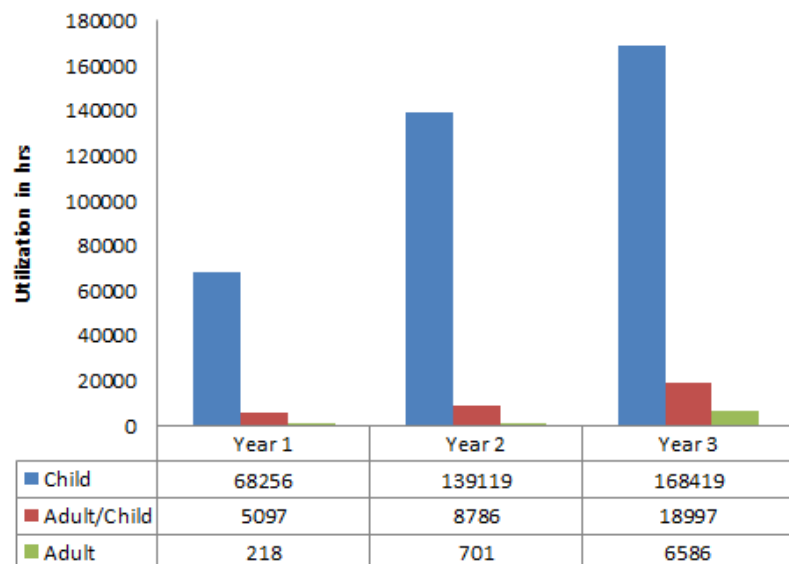


All ECDCs experienced an increase in utilization in Year 3. As the Bath site began at almost full capacity, only a slight change in utilization was seen in Year 2. However, program expansion included a second four-year-old preschool class, as well as the addition of a three-year-old preschool class, both housed in the elementary school. The provision of space in the cafeteria allowed for expansion in the afterschool program. Moncton experienced a significant increase in Year 2 due to the addition of an afterschool program to continue *Francization* at the school level at the request of parents. Intensive negotiations between the site, the school and the district in Year 3 have resulted in the expansion of the afterschool program beginning in Year 4. Robertville had consistent utilization over the first two years and reduced operational costs significantly. With the support of a grant from the Early Learning and Child Care Trust Fund, Robertville was able to expand its childcare program to include children aged 15

to 24 months in Year 3. High regional demand for childcare for this age group may provide a niche that moves Robertville towards sustainability. Saint John opened its program in May of Year 1, resulting in a significant increase in utilization in Year 2. Childcare programming options have increased steadily since that time, with the majority of children being supported through integrated funding or childcare subsidies.



### Categories of Utilization: Years 1, 2 & 3



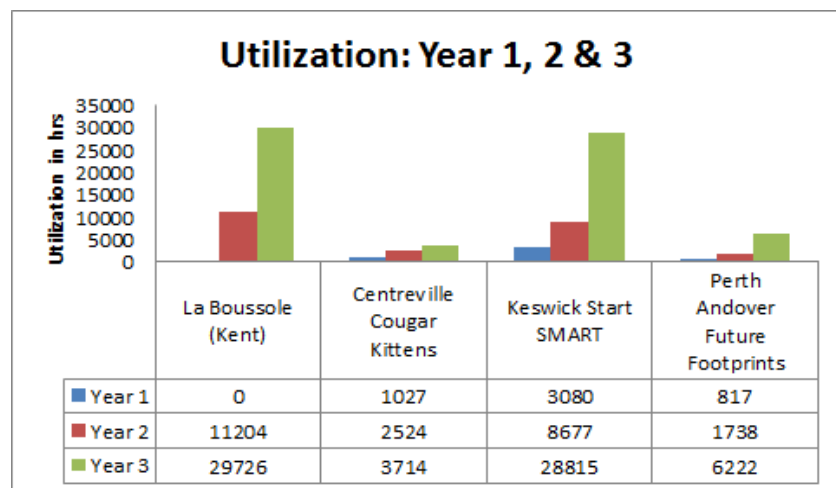
The graph to the left indicates that the Child category, which includes childcare, afterschool care and preschool, has experienced the most significant growth over the past two years. Bath and Moncton offer both childcare (2-5 years) and afterschool care. The afterschool program has been a key factor in Bath becoming self-sustaining by the end of Year 3. Robertville has indicated its intent to offer an afterschool program at the beginning of Year 4, focusing on special programming such as art and music. A private afterschool program is already in place in the school. The Saint John Early Learning Centre shares the school with the Boys and Girls Club and an interfaith program, who offer free programming for K-8 and K-2, respectively.

The Adult/Child category includes programming in which both adults and children attend. For the most part, there is no cost for these programs. Bath, Robertville and Saint John partner with their respective Family Resource Centres to offer adult/child programming. Saint John also offers a drop-in play group three mornings per week. Bath extends the work of the Valley Family Resource Centre by continuing to offer the play group program throughout school vacation times. Moncton offers

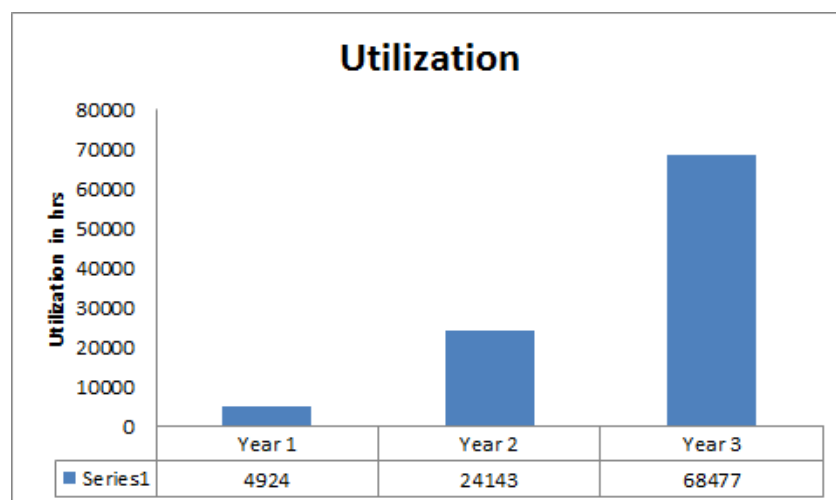
adult/child programming that is designed to promote linguistic and cultural literacy. *Le Phare* has partnered with CAFI in offering *Francization* to immigrant families and their children. Other partners involved in delivering adult/child programming include VON Healthy Baby and Me, and Talk With Me. Public Health also conducts the 3.5 Clinic at the Saint John and the Bath sites.

The Adult program category experienced the slowest growth over the first two years of the initiative. However, Year 3 has seen pronounced growth in parenting programming across sites. Increased growth in this category in Saint John could be due to the fact that FRC has partnered with the centre to provide child-minding services.

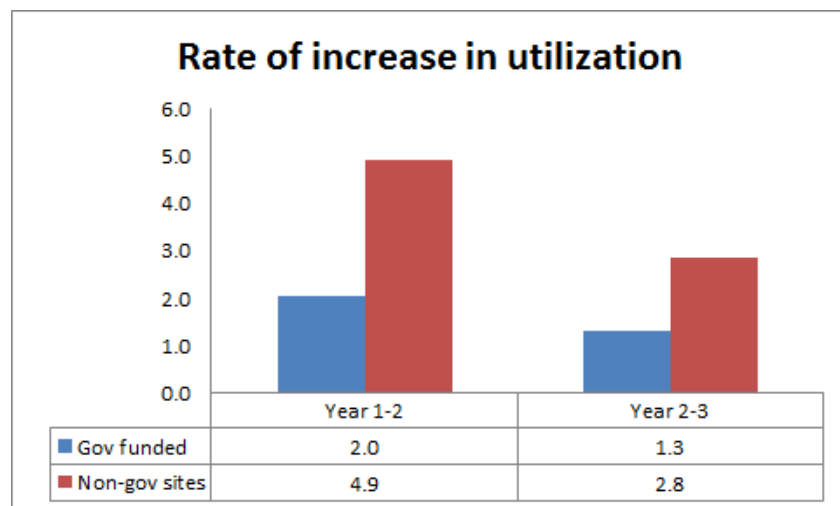
### 6.1.2 MWMFF-supported Sites



All four MWMFF-supported sites experienced an increase in utilization hours in Years 2 and 3. The growth at *La Boussole* is attributed to the increase in the number of children in childcare, as well to as an expansion in the adult/child programming offered by the centre and its partners. Keswick Start SMART also realized a significant increase in utilization hours. This is due, in part, to an increase in the usage of the afterschool and childcare (2-5 years) services. The adult/child programs offered twice weekly in Keswick reported increased attendance by parents, grandparents and preschool children. Despite the setbacks experienced by the flooding in Perth-Andover and the relocation of the centre for a six-month period, Future Footprints still reported significant growth in all programs. Centreville is the only MWMFF centre without a childcare component. This site has reported continued growth and a strengthening of the partnerships among the ECDC, community childcare providers, and the school.



Utilization in the four MWMFF-supported sites increased by almost 500% from Year 1 to Year 2; and utilization nearly tripled from Year 2 to Year 3.

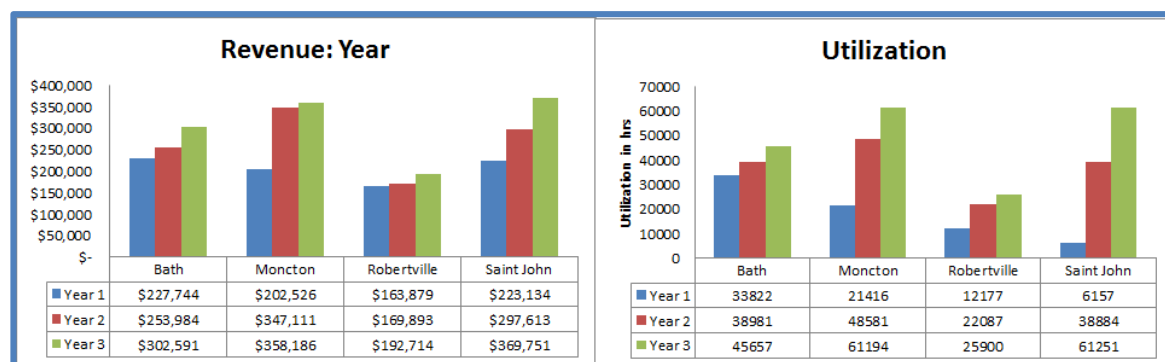


The graph to the left compares the rate of increase in utilization from Year 1 to Year 2, and from Year 2 to Year 3 in both the initial demonstration sites and the four MWMFF-supported sites. Notably, the highest increases were experienced in the non-government sites. This result may be attributed to the fact that the MWMFF centres benefited from the lessons learned in the initial demonstration sites. Not only were these lessons learned beneficial from a financial standpoint, but also from an administrative and operational point of view. The rate of growth also speaks to the power of grassroots initiatives that begin with strong partnerships in place. The lessons learned from these ECDCs highlight the importance of beginning the planning process with all early childhood stakeholders at the table; and to the importance of understanding community needs and implementing programming, services and activities that address these needs.

## 6.2 Revenue

### 6.2.1 Initial New Brunswick Early Childhood Demonstration Sites

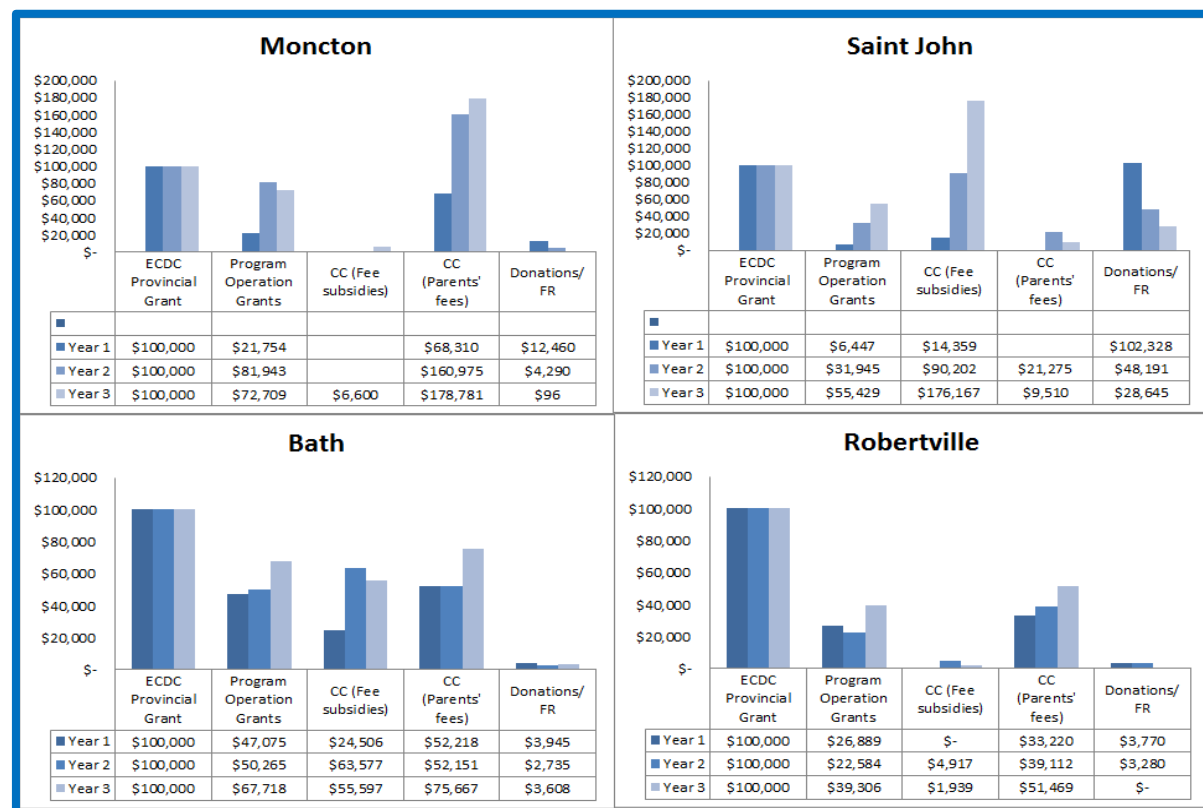
Revenues for the four initial demonstration sites over the three-year period of the initiative are presented alongside utilization figures, in order to arrive at an estimated “cost per hour” for services. Revenue is generated from five sources: government funding, program operating grants, childcare fee subsidies, parent childcare fees, and donations and fundraising.



Cost per Hour			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Bath	\$ 6.73	\$ 6.51	\$ 6.63
Moncton	\$ 9.46	\$ 7.14	\$ 5.85
Robertville	\$ 13.48	\$ 7.69	\$ 7.44
Saint John	\$ 36.24	\$ 7.68	\$ 6.04
Average	\$ 16.48	\$ 7.26	\$ 6.49

The following graphs compare revenues from the four initial demonstration sites. All sites receive income from parent subsidies and/or integrated funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; however, the amount of revenue from this source varies considerably from site to site. Saint John serves a relatively high needs population, and this is reflected in the high level of childcare fee subsidies. As utilization has increased, so has the level of subsidies. Moncton, on the other hand, receives most of its childcare revenue from parents' fees. Presently, *Le Phare* is receiving subsidies for two special needs children. In Bath, childcare revenue is realized through childcare subsidies and parent fees, with the latter being the higher of the two. Donations and fundraising have diminished considerably in all sites. In Saint John, the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative engaged in significant fundraising activities on behalf of the Early Learning Centre prior to opening. Resulting donations were spread across the three years of the demonstration. Saint John and Bath saw increases in utilization due to new programming. Robertville received a grant from the Early Learning and Child Care Trust Fund to service a new program for children of 15-24 months of age.

## Sources of Revenue

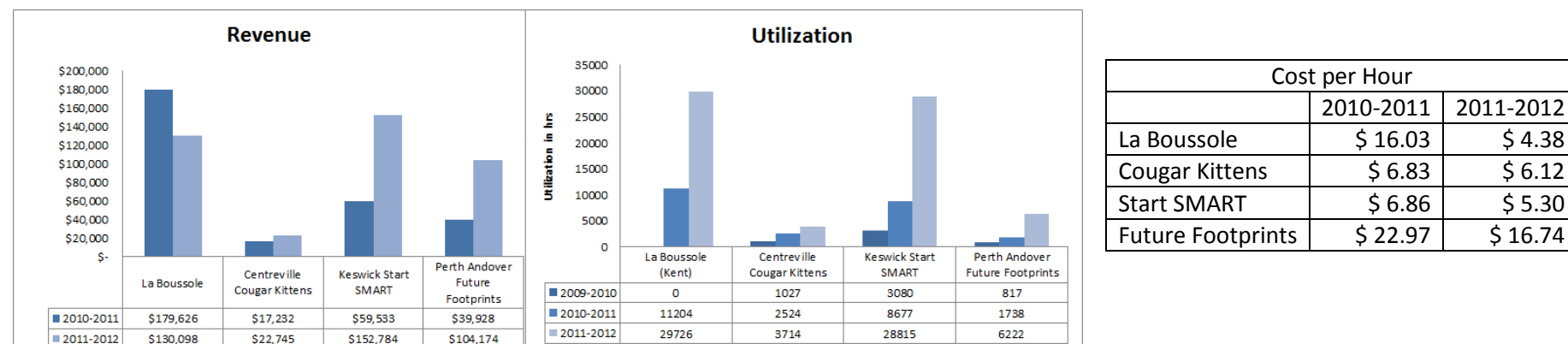


Funding sources include:

- ECDC Provincial Grants (\$100,000 per year for three years)
- Program Operating Grants (Additional grants such as IWK, Active Kids, Communities Raising Children)
- Childcare Fee Subsidies (Education and Early Childhood Development funding for working parents who meet program criteria, as well as children who have been identified by the Public Health 3.5 Clinic or Early Intervention)
- Childcare Parents' Fees
- Donations and fundraising

## 6.2.2 MWMFF-supported Sites

The four MWMFF ECDCs were not included in the initial, provincially-funded demonstration initiative; and thus, did not receive \$100,000 in annual seed funding from the New Brunswick government. Revenues were generated from four main sources: program operating grants, childcare fee subsidies, parent childcare fees, and donations and fundraising. Revenue figures are presented alongside utilization figures, in order to arrive at an estimated “cost per hour” for services.



In looking at issues of sustainability, it is important to consider not only the financial viability of continuing without the annual provincial contribution of \$100,000, but also the ways in which the sites are working to increase the availability, accessibility and affordability of high quality early childhood care, education and supports. The CYV sites offer an encouraging vision of the capacity of communities to understand and meet their own needs without reliance on extensive government funding. Other promising practices related to sustainability include collaborating with other early childhood service providers to strengthen the capacity of communities to support families; ensuring high quality education and care by implementing evidence-based practices; and creating an inclusive, universal and comprehensive program of services that ensure the healthy development of children and families.

## 7.0 Provincial Impacts and Implications

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This section of the report frames study findings within the context of policy changes that have taken place in New Brunswick over the three-year duration of the study. This chapter also highlights the points of convergence between study findings and provincial plans for re-conceptualizing the delivery of early childhood services and supports in New Brunswick. In June 2012, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development released *Putting Children First: Positioning Early Childhood for the Future*, which outlines elements and timelines related to the province's three-year action plan. This section is organized according to the individual elements of the action plan, followed by an overview of the challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for moving forward that emerged from the New Brunswick Early Childhood Demonstration Site Evaluation.

### 7.1 Evidence-based Policy and Practice

*Our vision is to have an early learning and childcare system that meets the needs of New Brunswick families, no matter where they live. This is an essential element in both social and economic policy — Premier David Alward (Putting Children First, 2012, p.2).*

*Starting Strong III* (2012) recognized the importance of research as an “influential tool to inform policy and practice” (p.13). Among member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “research has played a key role in explaining the success and failure of programmes; prioritising important areas of ECDC investment; and informing practices through evidence” (p. 13). Both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms have been utilized in this regard, with the acknowledgment that “qualitative research plays an essential role in informing practices with local values and democracy” (p. 13).

In *Putting Children First* (2012), Minister Jody Carr of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development described the process of developing the provincial action plan, which included consultations with passionate, committed early childhood stakeholders. These stakeholders were described as having an intimate understanding of early childhood education research, which links success in school and later life to the quality of the early childhood experience. The action plan draws upon *The International Convention of the Rights of Children* and the 2010 UNESCO study, *Caring and Learning Together: A cross-national study of integration of early childhood care and education within education*, to provide an evidence-based foundation for building the future of early childhood education and care in New Brunswick. The first document underlines the importance of “fully preparing children to have a fulfilling life in our society, raising children in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, liberty, ability and solidarity” (2012, p.2). The UNESCO study suggests that *learning* be redefined as a function that occurs both in and beyond the classroom. Additionally, the UNESCO document emphasizes the importance of reexamining both how and where early childhood services are delivered.

### 7.1.1 Integrating education and childcare services

An overarching theme emerging from the Year 1 key informant interviews was *the need to break down the barriers that exist among departments*. Community partners, service providers and early childhood educators noted two key areas that are directly impacted by these barriers: the sharing of information and data; and divergence among various departmental policies. Participants indicated their belief that the development of policies related to the sharing of information would encourage open communication and the formation of professional partnerships designed to respond to families and children, and would avoid duplication of services (HERG Interim Report, 2011, p. 20). A number of community partners/service providers proposed the creation of a single department responsible for the education and health of all children at the community and provincial levels. These participants pointed to existing structures in Prince Edward Island and Ontario by way of example.

*The various government departments....have to work better together in order to develop and elaborate upon the various services and prevent the waste of time, money, etc. <that occurs when> they work in silos. They also need to consider integrating or implementing the rich services that already exist within the community. (Key Informant, HERG Interim Report, 2011)*

In describing the key features of the new provincial action plan, Premier Alward noted the integration of early childhood services into the newly formed Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The move created a foundation for:

- Building a continuum of learning and care that begins at birth
- Providing accessible, affordable and inclusive childcare within high-quality learning environments
- Promoting the unique linguistic and cultural elements of New Brunswick communities

### 7.1.2 Redefining early childhood: Closing the gap

*A challenge related to partnerships is the gap in service delivery during the period between the end of preschool and the beginning of kindergarten. Informants reported that even if children in kindergarten are immediately assessed and services requested, the wait time for services could be between nine months and one year. (HERG Year 2 Report, p. 32).*

With the formation of the integrated Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, New Brunswick redefined the range of early childhood to include children from birth to eight years of age. *Putting Children First* suggested that this redefinition would “facilitate a smooth and seamless transition of services from one part of our system to the other” (p. 4). In the past, early intervention services had served children from 0-5 years of age, causing a gap in service as children transitioned from early childhood to kindergarten and early

primary grades. As a result of the new departmental structure, early intervention agencies have had their mandates expanded to include children from 0-8 years of age. These service providers will work closely with the school system to facilitate a more seamless transition to school.

In this study's Interim Report (January 2011), respondents indicated that the "sharing of information between childcare, kindergarten and service providers who are responding to student and family needs is critical" (p. 21). Participants also noted that, "policies must be developed to facilitate partnerships among professionals to ensure that needs are met at the local level" (p.21). Communication among partners was seen as particularly critical in transitioning children from early childhood to kindergarten. While not all of the challenges raised by stakeholders in Years 1 and 2 have been specifically addressed by the 2012 integration of education and early childhood services, it is anticipated that having one department will facilitate communication, sharing of information, and reduction of wait times. Premier Alward echoes this belief in the benefits of extending the departmental mandate: "It sets the foundation for ongoing system reform and builds momentum for the continuing expansion of early childhood services" (*Putting Children First*, 2012, p.2).

### 7.1.3 Restructuring service delivery systems

*A community effort working with families is beneficial to all children, parents and partners. Children have a greater sense of place and security when they realize other adults care about their wellbeing. When partners work in unison, it creates better harmony and problem solving* (Service Provider, HERG Interim Report, 2011, p. 12).

In the Year 1 stakeholder survey, respondents were asked to identify the benefits that were being realized through the demonstration centres. Participants described early childhood integrated service delivery as, "....a holistic approach to comprehensive programming and services working together to strengthen children and families <with the view of producing> long term impacts. In this approach, the child becomes the focus, the community becomes strong, and partners work together to share information so that programming, services and interventions benefit children and families" (Interim Report, 2011, p. 14). The restructuring of early childhood services was also a key component of *Putting Children First* (2012). "By integrating the many early childhood services and the education system, we are changing the way we work on behalf of children" (p.4). The action plan goes on to say that integration will facilitate collaborative planning and accountability for designing service delivery methods that address local needs. Drawing upon the research of the UNESCO study, *Caring and Learning Together*, the action plan states that a simple integration of education and early childhood services is not enough – the structure of how services are delivered needs to bridge the gap that exists between preschool and kindergarten. Rather than children and parents having to fit into the mandates of individual services, services must re-examine their mandates in order to meet the needs of families.



#### 7.1.4 Creating a unified provincial vision

As early as Year 2 of the demonstration initiative, early childhood stakeholders reflected upon what needed to take place in order for integrated early childhood service delivery to move forward provincially. Participants indicated that early childhood and education should be integrated at the community, departmental and provincial levels.

*If this political merger is to create sustainable change, the province must articulate a clear, overarching provincial vision supported by policies, long-term objectives, and implementation plans including timeframes and descriptions of comprehensive service delivery. When creating supporting policies, key informants cautioned that political decisions should be guided by the needs of children and families. The existing silos of service delivery systems were believed to create gaps in service, redundancies, fragmented programs, and barriers to information-sharing and collaboration” (HERG, Year 2 Report, 2011, p. 43.)*

The vision of these key informants and early childhood stakeholders was realized, in part, by the sweeping changes to departmental structures and mandates announced in the 2012 provincial action plan.

*New Brunswick will have a unified, cohesive approach to early childhood development. We will have the organizational framework and the supporting administration and policies to provide the level of programming and service delivery our children and families deserve” (Putting Children First: Positioning Early Childhood for the Future, 2012, p.4).*

*The success of this plan relies on the integration of services through collaboration from all government departments and community service providers involved in any way with early childhood development and education” (p. 2).*

#### 7.1.5 Building early childhood networks

In the Year 2 report, promising interactions among community partners, service providers, early childhood development centres and the schools were documented to identify lessons learned from the demonstration sites. In essence, effective interactions were those that opened lines of communication among educators, early childhood centres and community partners. Community consultation practices were seen as integral to responding unique regional needs. The inclusion of transition to schools coordinators and site directors on regional early childhood committees served to bring all stakeholders to a common table for monthly meetings. Building relationships among diverse stakeholders was considered essential to breaking down existing silos, allowing programs/services to be delivered more effectively, efficiently and economically.

*Putting Children First* (2012) affirms that the successful integration of education and early childhood services rests in opportunities for all stakeholders – governmental and non-governmental – to develop a shared vision, to plan collaboratively, and to set goals. In so doing, services will be delivered more efficiently and effectively, reducing duplication and costs. The provincial action plan includes a framework for facilitating this process at provincial and regional levels.

*Each region will have a local director of early childhood services who will also sit on the management teams of the school districts. The director will ensure an integrated approach to services and a smoother transition for children into the school system. ....The role of the director of early childhood services will include creating and supporting local early childhood service networks....* (Putting Children First, 2012, p.6).

#### **7.1.6 Aligning provincial boundaries for education and early childhood services**

*An area of challenge <is represented by> the differences in geographical boundaries among the Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development, Social Development and Health, which can lead to difficulties for some centres in trying to connect with their regional service providers* (HERG Year 2 Report, 2012, p. 32).

Geographical differences and the existing silos of service delivery systems often create gaps in service, redundancies, fragmented programs, and barriers to information sharing and collaboration. In creating the current action plan, the province took steps to address the challenges caused by silos and differences in geographical boundaries. *Putting Children First* established new boundaries for early childhood services that are in line with seven redefined school districts. The report posits that, “....this will ensure greater opportunities for linkages between the early childhood regions and school districts and establish a learning continuum from birth onward” (2012, p. 6).

#### **7.1.7 Promoting linguistic and cultural identity**

At the outset of evaluation activities, it became evident that promoting language and cultural identity was a strong area of focus for the three Francophone sites. As a response, early in the first year of evaluation a sixth indicator was added to the Indicators of Change instrument. The *Language and Cultural Identity* indicator measures growth in child, parent and family participation in activities that promote increased understanding and capacity with respect to linguistic and cultural identity. Sensitive to this unique provincial context, the government has created “a management structure for early childhood services at the provincial and local levels <that> will have primary responsibility to provide strong leadership and to be committed to the promotion and protection of linguistic and cultural identities. This further means that both official language communities will plan and deliver supportive and responsive services to better meet their needs” (Putting Children First, 2012, p.6).

### 7.1.8 Consulting with early childhood stakeholders in creating provincial and regional strategic plans

Throughout the evaluation period, ECDCs consistently highlighted the need to bring all early childhood stakeholders to the table. In this regard, all centres made efforts to have partners serve on leadership committees at the site level. Numerous sites provided examples of initiatives that engaged two or more partners in successful joint projects implemented to address the specific needs of their communities. At a provincial level, two early childhood networks, one Anglophone and one Francophone, are being established under the terms of the government's early childhood action plan. Under the leadership of two provincial Directors of Early Childhood Services, these networks will:

- Bring together all provincial partners who work with children 0 to 8 years of age
- Develop a strategic framework for early childhood, provincially and locally
- Provide leadership to individual agencies in terms of implementing the strategic framework
- Report publically and annually on their progress

Regional early childhood networks will identify local needs; develop joint plans to address challenges; conduct annual joint planning sessions; join forces to provide targeted interventions according to identified needs; and clarify roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication and maximize resources. Anglophone and Francophone Directors of Early Childhood Services will be responsible to:

- Serve on the school district management teams
- Create and support local early childhood service networks
- Manage contracts with Early Intervention and other agencies
- Interface between the Early Childhood Development branch and the implementation team of the province-wide Integrated Service Delivery Framework
- Provide leadership to government and community agencies and to the school system in the delivery of services to children 0 to 8 years of age

### 7.1.9 Recognizing the value of Early Childhood Educators

*Finding and retaining qualified staff members was reported as a significant challenge, especially for the Francophone centres. Concern was noted regarding the pay inequities existing among early childhood educators, kindergarten teachers and other service providers (HERG Year 2 Report, 2011, p. 32).*

Starting Strong III (2012) noted that early childhood educators play, "the key role in ensuring healthy child development and learning" (p. 11). The study concluded that higher education qualifications were connected to better child outcomes: "More specialized education and

training of staff is found to be strongly associated with stable, sensitive and stimulating interactions in ECDC settings” (p.11). Responding to these findings, the New Brunswick Early Childhood Action Plan announced the government’s intention to:

- Develop and offer two introductory courses on early childhood education (one in English and one in French) for persons working with children from birth to five years of age
- Develop a certification model for the early childhood education sector
- Re-instate the wage improvement of \$2.75 per hour for untrained childcare staff
- Improve salaries of educators with recognized training
- Explore the implementation of a two-year program for early childhood education (*Putting Children First*, 2012, p. 8)

## 7.2 Conclusion

As the provincial Early Childhood Networks move forward in creating a strategic plan, they have an opportunity to build on the promising practices that continue to be demonstrated in the eight Early Childhood Development Centres. Regional characteristics are well represented across sites, providing a series of unique profiles and experiences upon which to draw lessons learned. Bath Step Ahead Family Learning Centre, with licensed childcare and afterschool care, demonstrates how an early childhood development centre can be financially viable and sustainable; provide an environment that acts as a hub for other early childhood services, and act as a catalyst for other community initiatives. At *Le Phare*, the impact of cultural and linguistic initiatives is evident in the positive and seamless transition to kindergarten among ECDC children. The growth in utilization at the Early Learning Centre in Saint John demonstrates the value of universal access to quality programs, whereby parents can connect with other families and access support; service providers can work with their clients in comfortable and familiar locations; and community newcomers can access flexible childcare services while they undertake language training. The Robertville experience demonstrates the importance of engaging all partners so that stakeholders develop a shared vision for early childhood services and supports. Perth-Andover and Keswick illustrate how early childhood development centres and community partnerships have the capacity to thrive without reliance upon extensive government funding commitments. *La Boussole* provides a model of how to conduct regional consultations for the purpose of identifying unique community needs. Centreville exemplifies how an early childhood development centre can function in a school without licensed childcare, and how partnerships with community childcare providers can strengthen services and provide more seamless transitions to kindergarten.

These highlights represent only a portion of the lessons learned throughout the three-year evaluation. As the Early Childhood Development Centres move forward, it is expected that they will continue to provide valuable insights to support the scaling up of integrated models of service delivery for New Brunswick children and their families.

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## Appendix A: ECDC Logic Model

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# New Brunswick Early Childhood Development Centre Initiative Logic Model

Philosophy/Assumptions: *Developmental perspectives, , strength-focused methods, family/community collaboration, universal access, early intervention, and Integrated service delivery*

