NEW BRUNSWICK EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

Health and Education Research Group
UNB Faculty of Education
Final Report
October 22, 2013

PRESENTATION FRAMEWORK

- **BACKGROUND**
- **RESEARCH DESIGN**
- **UTILIZATION AND FINANCIAL REPORTING**
- **PRACTICES OF INTEGRATION**
- **BENEFITS & LESSONS LEARNED**
- **IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Background

- 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 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 Development Centre (ECDC) demonstration sites.

Intent of Demonstration

- Four centres were chosen, representing both Anglophone and Francophone sectors in two urban and two rural settings.

- Five additional provincial sites were funded by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation. Four of these sites remain in operation.

- 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.

HERG Research Design

- **Case study methodology** was employed to facilitate a systematic investigation of site experiences
- The evaluation framework documented the process by which the ECDCs **coordinated**, **connected** and **integrated** early childhood services within an educational framework.
- Methods included the application of **key informant interviews**, **focus groups**, **surveys**, and the **Indicators of Change** instrument, as well as the analysis of financial and utilization data over the three-year demonstration period.

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*

Mission and Goal

Mission - To foster the positive growth and development of children and their families

Goal - To enhance system capacity to respond in a timely, effective and integrated manner to the strength and need and profiles of children and their families

Participants

- Provincial Demonstration Site Teams
- McCain - supported Early Childhood Site Committees
- McCain Foundation Project Authorities
- Health and Education Research Group Evaluation Coordinators
- Project Advisory Inter-departmental Committee
- Other Provincial Integrated Service Delivery Initiatives

Components

Early Learning Environment

Early Childhood Team and Service Providers

Leadership & Management Structure

Access and Intake Processes

Parent and Community Engagement Opportunities and Activities

Activities

- Review NB Curricululm Framework for Early Learning and Childcare and the Provincial Kindergarten Curriculum
- Develop shared learning philosophies, goals and objectives
- Identify and implement joint opportunities for learning activities across programs
- Design learning spaces to meet child and family needs
- Identify and apply methods for early screening and intervention within program processes
- Develop and implement mechanisms for monitoring of program quality and effectiveness

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- Share strategies for child care, preschool and parent/family programs
- Develop linkages with community and intervention service providers in the provision of early childhood programming
- Provide joint in-service professional development activities

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- Assess community needs and capacity related to early childhood services
- Allocate and share resources to support integrated service delivery efforts
- Establish program policies and practices that facilitate development of integrated services
- Hire and supervise early childhood staff team members

- Ensure program access to children and families from local catchment and rural areas
- Provide ease of movement or access between program services and activities for children and their families
- Extend accessibility of services through support funding and program fees
- Use common intake screening and assessment forms/protocols
- Monitor program reach and participation, and undertake strategies to address challenges to accessibility

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- Provide opportunities for parent input in decision-making related to delivery of early childhood services
- Invite participation of family and community members in regular program activities
- Design program opportunities for enhancing parenting capacity
- Maintain ongoing communication and connections with participating families and community members

Outputs

- Program policy documents
- Early screening tools and protocols for intervention
- Program learning guides
- Learning space plans
- Strategy documents for program review

- Protocols for inter-program and inter-agency information exchange
- Interprofessional training sessions

- Need and capacity assessment reports
- Pooled budget plans
- Program policy and practice documents

- Intake screening and assessment protocols
- Inter-program accessibility policy procedures
- Funding and support program documents
- Program access and participation review guidelines

- Parent and community survey and interview instruments
- Parenting program documents
- Communcation and promotional materials, and media releases

Outcomes

- Increased collaboration in curriculum design and delivery among early child service providers
- Enhanced working relationships among early child hood and community service providers
- Increased access for families to early childhood supports and services
- Increased participation of families and community members in early childhood initiatives
- Strengthened family and parenting capacity

- Enhanced family and community attachments
- Increased school engagement and academic success

Positive growth and development of children and their families

- Strengthened community and regional early childhood service delivery capacity
- Enhanced integrated service delivery approaches among departmental and community service providers

Research Areas of Inquiry

- Reach and engagement
- Stakeholders and staff satisfaction
- Challenges and solutions
- Practices of integration
- Lessons learned
- Developments to enhance the effectiveness
- Operational costs and financial supports

Stories of Utilization

- *Lunchtime on Drop-in day is similar to a cross between an episode of "19 Kids and Counting" and "Come Dine with Me." Parents and children, grandparents, aunts, caregivers, early interventionists, speech therapists and whoever is in the centre are invited to come and break bread at our growing table.*

- *At first it is loud and chaotic as we all work together to mash, chop, stir, pour and serve. We all fill our plates with bread, fresh vegetables, meat and potatoes. Everyone helps each other get set up to eat and help to feed all the children and babies so everyone gets a chance to relax and chat awhile.*

- *There's something about breaking bread together at a table that changes us all. We sit and share a few smiles and laughs, a few tears and regrets, a few recipes, a few tips, and lots of fellowship and love. We know by looking around at everyone that we all bring something unique to this table and we can all help one another.* (Site Director)
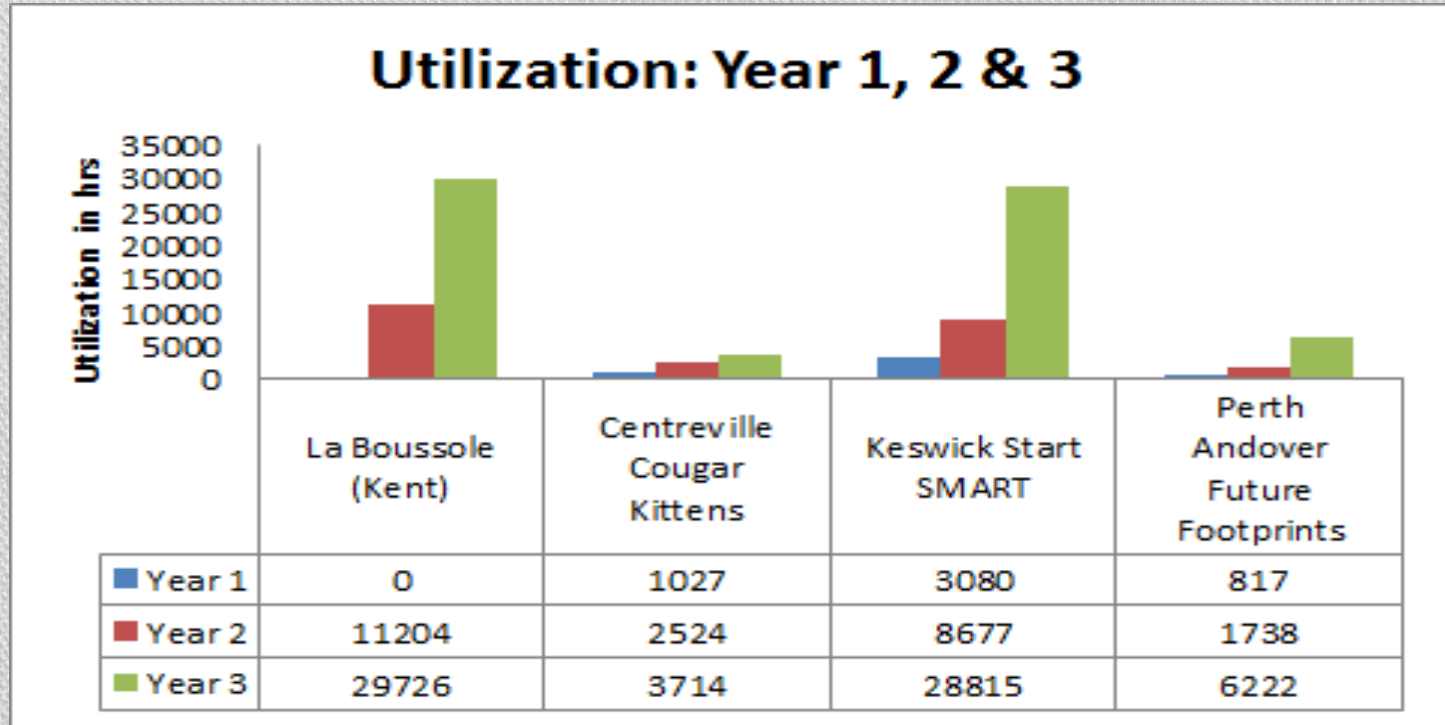
Utilization – 4 NB Demonstration Sites

Utilization: Year 1, 2 & 3

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	73571	148513	194002
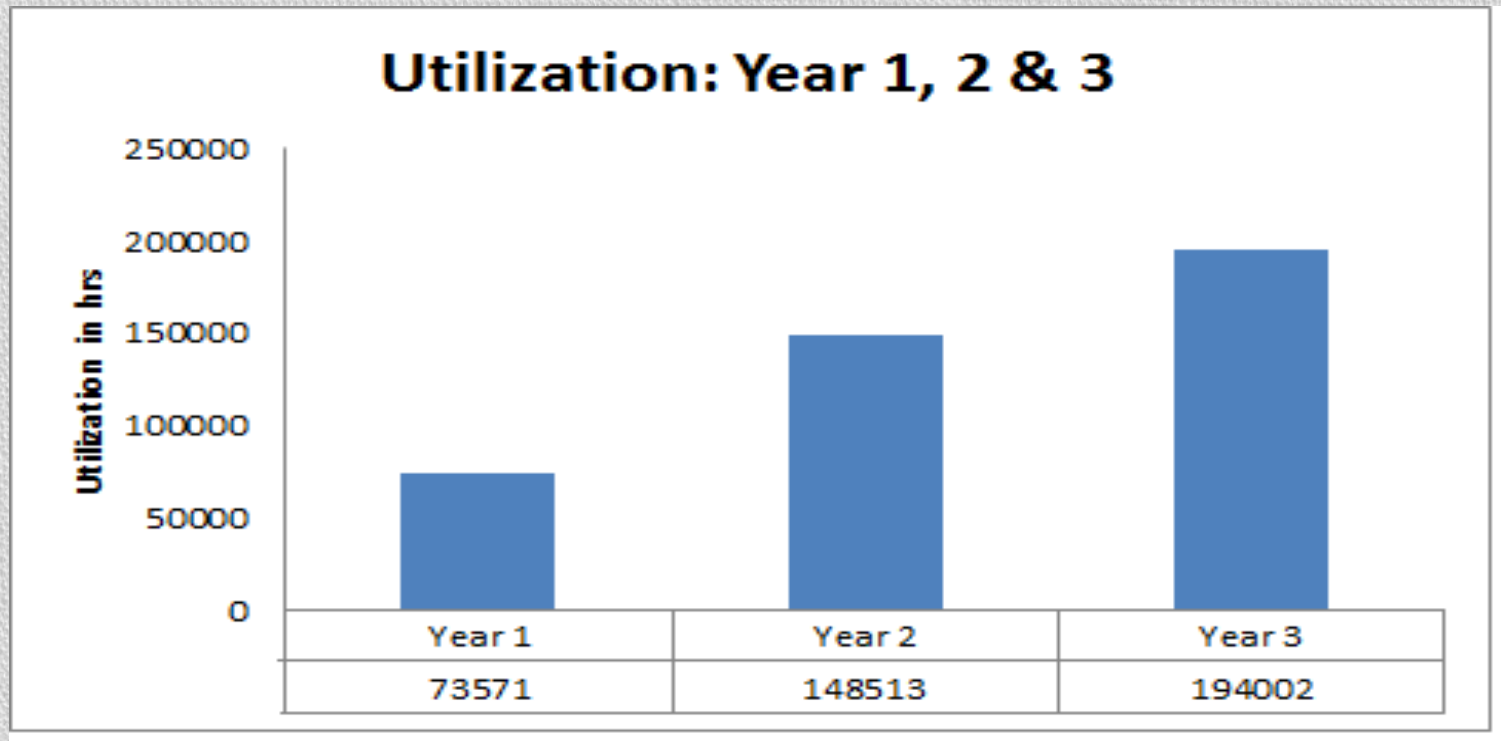
Utilization is reported in hours of usage across three categories: (1) child-only services (childcare, afterschool care, and preschool); (2) adult/child services (e.g., drop-in, family celebrations); and (3) adult-only services (e.g., parenting programs). In the final demonstration year, utilization hours increased by approximately 24% across the initial four demonstration sites.

Utilization – Additional MWMFF Funded Sites

Utilization: Year 1, 2 & 3

	La Boussole (Kent)	Centreville Cougar Kittens	Keswick Start SMART	Perth Andover Future Footprints
Year 1	0	1027	3080	817
Year 2	11204	2524	8677	1738
Year 3	29726	3714	28815	6222

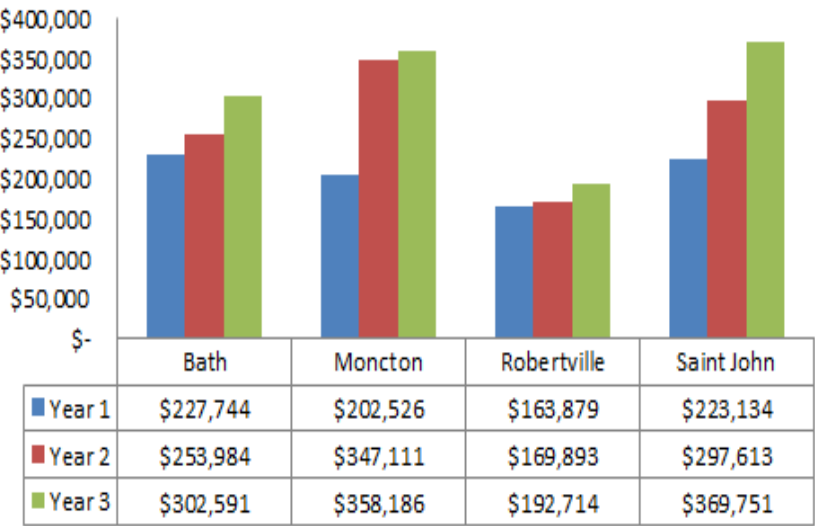*Utilization in hrs (chart vertical axis: 0 – 35000)*

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.
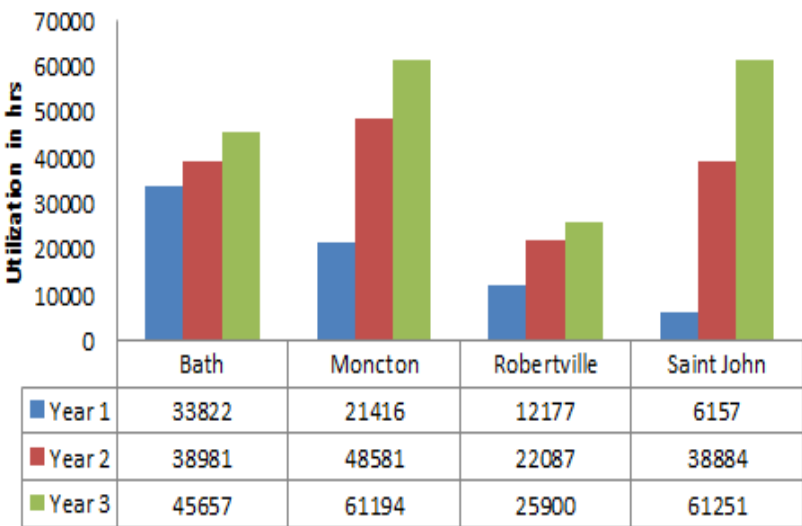
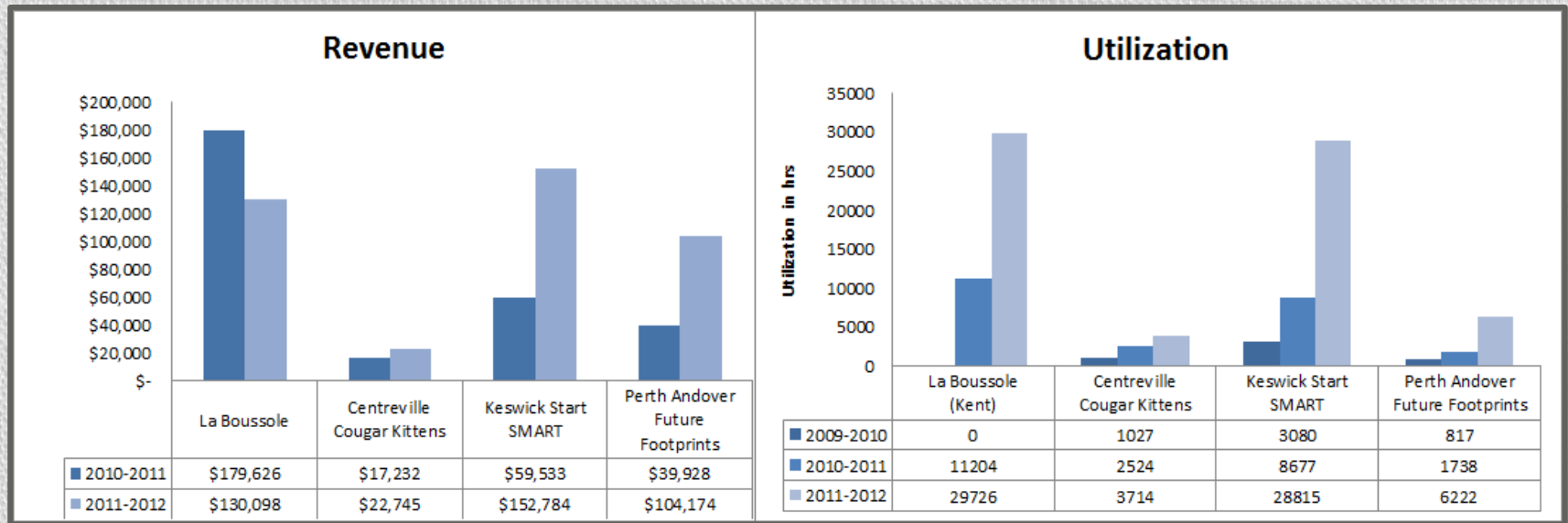# Revenue and Utilization: Demonstration Sites

Revenue: Year

	Bath	Moncton	Robertville	Saint John
Year 1	$227,744	$202,526	$163,879	$223,134
Year 2	$253,984	$347,111	$169,893	$297,613
Year 3	$302,591	$358,186	$192,714	$369,751

Utilization

	Bath	Moncton	Robertville	Saint John
Year 1	33822	21416	12177	6157
Year 2	38981	48581	22087	38884
Year 3	45657	61194	25900	61251

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

Revenue and Utilization: MWMFF Sites

Revenue

	La Boussole	Centreville Cougar Kittens	Keswick Start SMART	Perth Andover Future Footprints
2010-2011	$179,626	$17,232	$59,533	$39,928
2011-2012	$130,098	$22,745	$152,784	$104,174

Utilization

	La Boussole (Kent)	Centreville Cougar Kittens	Keswick Start SMART	Perth Andover Future Footprints
2009-2010	0	1027	3080	817
2010-2011	11204	2524	8677	1738
2011-2012	29726	3714	28815	6222

Cost Per Hour		
	2010-11	2011-12
Kent La Boussole	$16.03	$ 4.38
Centreville Cougar Kittens	$ 6.83	$ 6.12
Keswick Start SMART	$ 6.86	$ 5.30
Perth Future Footprints	$22.97	16.74

PRACTICES OF INTEGRATION

Indicators of Change Instrument

- The Indicators of Change instrument (ICI) was used to track the progress of the ECDCs toward the integration of programs and services over a three-year period.

- The ICI documented this process along a continuum from co-existence, to coordination of services, to full integration.

- It assisted educational and community stakeholders in setting priorities and action plans for moving forward toward a vision of service integration.

NB Demonstration Sites: Indicators of Change

- The Indicator Framework was applied as both an evaluation and service delivery planning tool, initially examining integration within five key elements:
  - Leadership & Management Structure
  - Access and Intake Processes
  - Early Learning Environment
  - Early Childhood Staff and Service Providers
  - Parent and Community Engagement Opportunities and Activities
- Administration resulted in the identification of example outputs at each level of change that could indicate or provide evidence of system delivery changes and enhancements.

Development of a Sixth Indicator

- New Brunswick's cultural context necessitated the adaptation of the Indicator Framework to include a sixth dimension or indicator, focusing on *cultural identity and language* for Francophone communities.

- This adaptation reflected the collaborative work of the Francophone ECDC demonstration sites and the Health and Education Research Group (HERG).

Evolving Applications of Indicators of Change

- The Indicator Framework has also been appropriated for other provincial ISD initiatives and demonstrations in New Brunswick.
  - Key planning and evaluation tool for the *NB Integrated Service Delivery Initiative* (provision of inter-disciplinary team-based service in school contexts for children and youth with emotional/behavioural disorders) (Morrison & Peterson, 2011)
  - Theoretical model of change delineated as a key underpinning to the levels and processes of change
- DEECD now developing a *Service Indicator Assessment Instrument* to measure:
  - Changes in the degree of service integration and collaboration at a departmental level
  - Change in levels of service integration and collaboration among early childhood service providers and community stakeholders

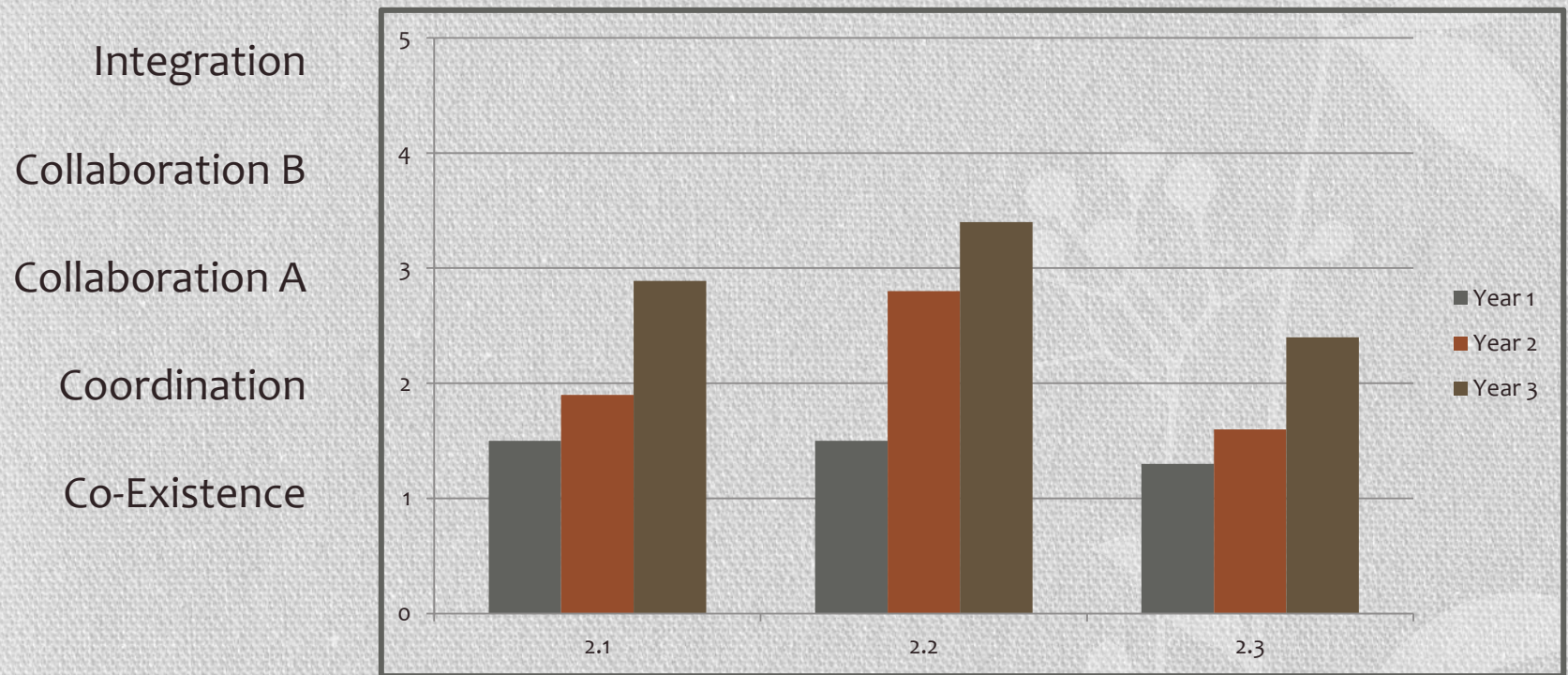# 1. Leadership and Management

Integration

Collaboration B

Collaboration A

Coordination

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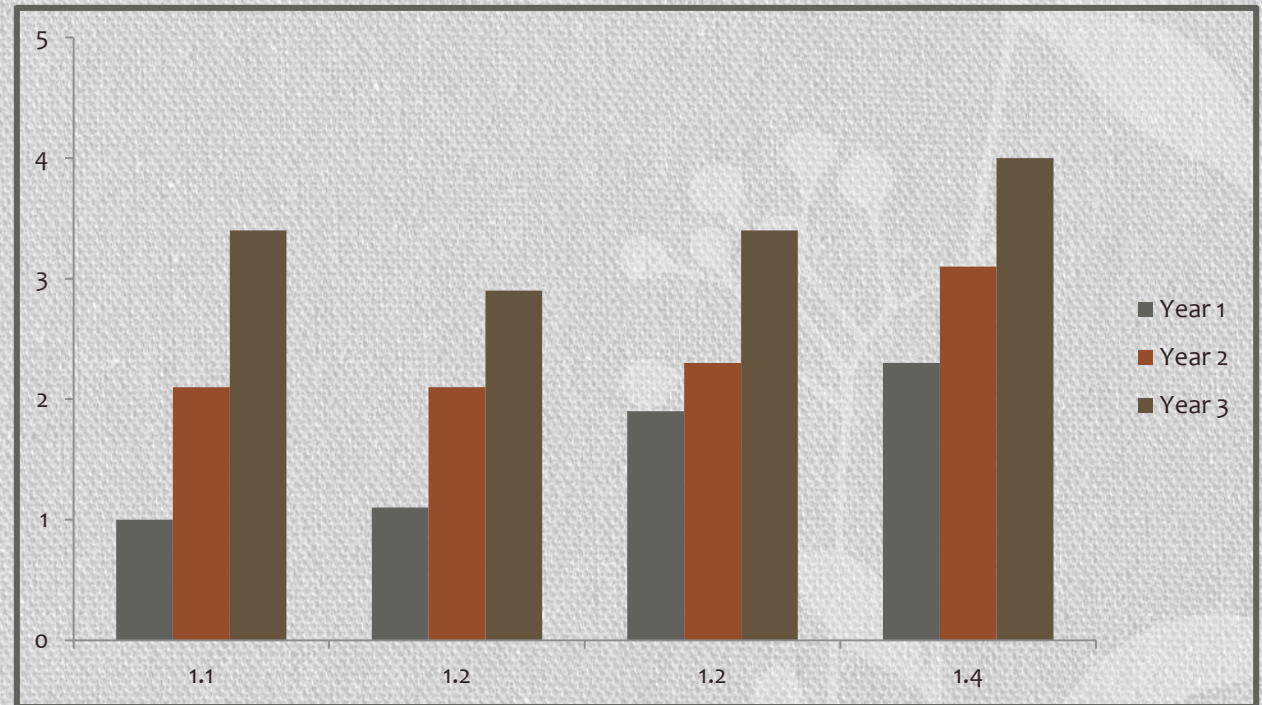
A local governance structure is responsible for program policies, resource allocation, service planning and monitoring, and human resource decisions.

2. Access and Intake Processes

Integration

Collaboration B

Collaboration A

Coordination

Co-Existence

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.

3. Early Learning Environment

Integration

Collaboration B

Collaboration A

Coordination

Co-Existence
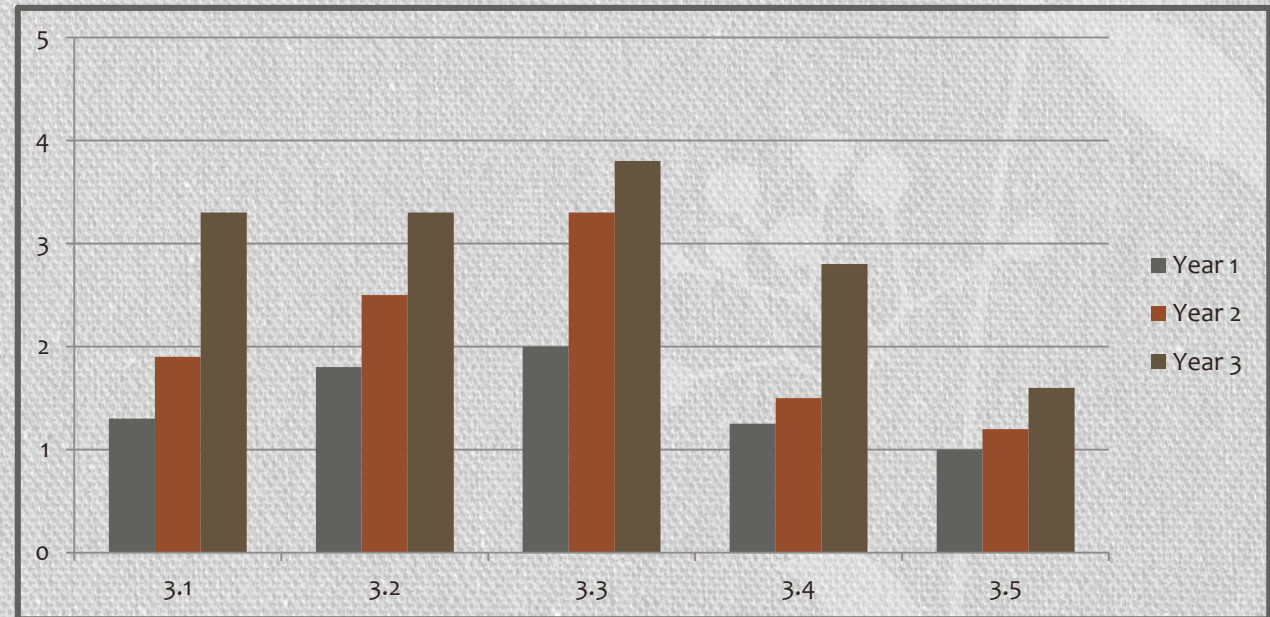
High quality learning environments combine learning expectations, activities, and routines from existing kindergarten, early childhood education/child care, and parenting/family support programs
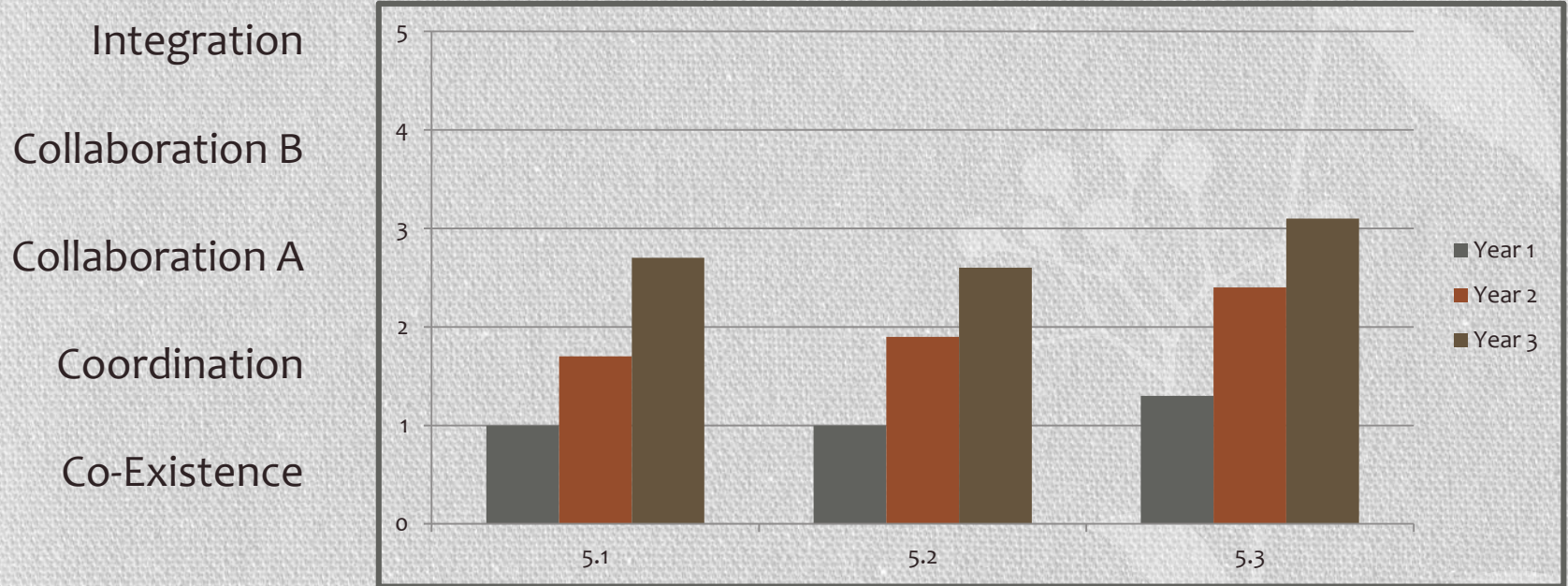
4. Early Childhood Staff and Service Providers

Integration

Collaboration B

Collaboration A

Coordination

Co-Existence
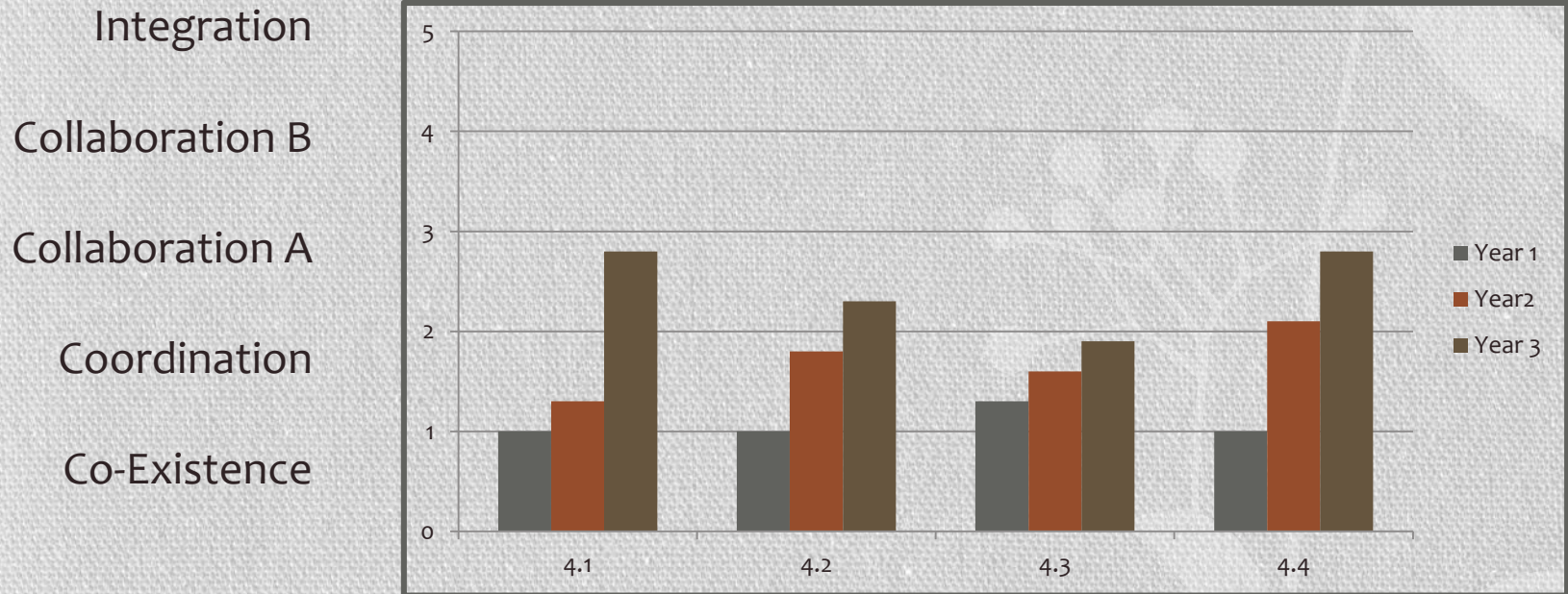
Develop an early childhood staff team that works together to achieve program goals.

# 5. Parent and Community Engagement

Integration

Collaboration B

Collaboration A

Coordination

Co-Existence

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

6. Language and Cultural Identity

Integration

Collaboration B

Collaboration A

Coordination

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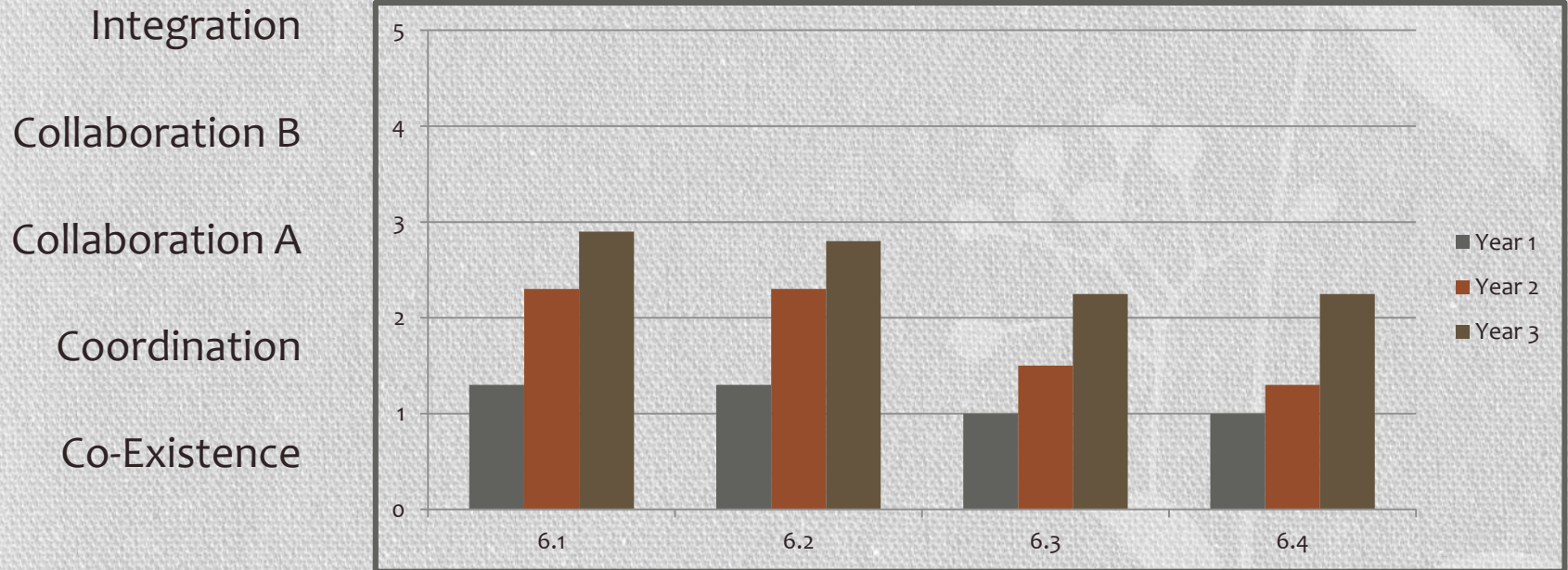
Children, parent and family participation in the integrated programs, services, and activities of the ECDC should increase understanding and capacity with respect to linguistic and cultural identity.

BENEFITS TO FAMILIES:
A MOTHER'S STORY

LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons Learned

- Leadership and Management
  - Active, committed school principals who have a conceptual understanding of early childhood centres move more quickly toward integration of the early learning centre into the school community.
  - Parent representatives on boards assist in developing programs/services that meet the unique needs of the community.
  - Strong board representation from community partners and service providers moves EDCDs more fluidly toward engaging in joint initiatives that expand capacity and reach.
- Access to programs and services
  - Building on the experience of established early childhood centres and partner programs increases the success and speed of practices of integration at new ECDCs.

Lessons Learned

- ## School-based centres:
  - Minimize transitions for children and parents and provide increased access to needed services
  - Prepare children and parents for school, and prepare schools for children
  - Benefit from shared spaces (gym, library, music and art room, cafeteria)
  - Provide a hub for access to information and services related to early childhood and family and parenting support
  - Build strong relationships between the school and parents

Lessons Learned

- Early learning teams benefit from:
  - Opportunities and time to understand each other's vision, mandates, goals, and curricula
  - Common scheduled planning time for early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers
  - Opportunities for common professional development
  - Structured processes for planning and implementing joint initiatives
- Family and community engagement
  - Community consultation as a consistent aspect of ECDC sites ensures the understanding of community needs in planning programs and services.
  - Family and community engagement is enhanced when participants have a voice in planning and implementing programs and services.
  - Using existing committee and network infrastructures to facilitate relationships between the ECDC sites and community partners/service providers increases family and community engagement.

IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

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).

Changing Provincial Early Childhood Landscape

- Many policy changes have occurred in New Brunswick over the three-year duration of the study.

- 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.

- Study findings saw numerous points of convergence with provincial plans for re-conceptualizing the delivery of early childhood services and supports in New Brunswick.

Integrating Education and Childcare Services

- "Government departments….have to work better together in order to develop and elaborate upon the various services and prevent the loss 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).

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).

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).

Creating a Unified Provincial Vision

- "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.)

Building Early Childhood Networks

- "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" (HERG, Year 3 Report, 2012, p. 108).

Aligning Provincial Boundaries

- "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, 2011, p. 32).

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" (HERG, Year 3 Report, 2012, p. 109).

Consultation with ECEs on Strategic Plans

- "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" (HERG, Year 3 Report, 2012, p. 110).

Post-Demonstration Period

- MWMFF funded a follow-up evaluation of progress at 5 ECDCs:
  - Step Ahead Bath Family Learning Centre
  - Perth Andover Future Footprints Family Learning Centre
  - Centreville Cougar Kittens
  - Keswick Start SMART
  - Kent La Boussole
- Findings show evidence of:
  - Strong working relationships between school and centres
  - Centres as hubs of community activity and support where parents, children, service providers and community partners feel welcome and valued
  - Movement from a siloed, individualistic model of service delivery to a more integrated approach to early childhood services