

# MAKING PROGRESS IN Early Childhood Education

**THE MARGARET AND WALLACE MCCAIN  
FAMILY FOUNDATION  
2008-2016**

*The Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation (MWMFF) champions effective early childhood education programs that provide equal opportunities for all children, support families, align with the school system and operate within a public, provincial or territorial framework.*

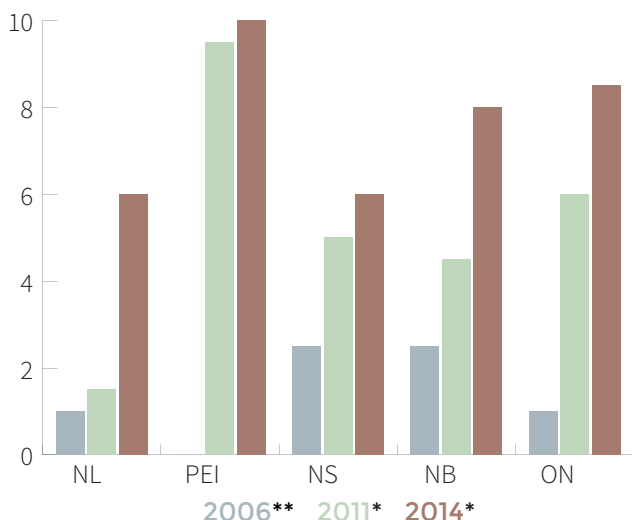
~From the MWMFF Mission Statement

The Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation works in partnership with community agencies, academic institutions and governments in Atlantic Canada to inform best practices in early educational programs.

The influence of the Foundation since it adopted the above mission in 2008 can be quantified using the Early Childhood Education Report (ECER). The ECER assesses provincial and territorial early education policies and practices in five categories: governance, funding, access, quality and accountability. Researchers populate the report with data verified by provincial/territorial officials to provide a numerical assessment (out of 15) of each jurisdiction's early education standing.

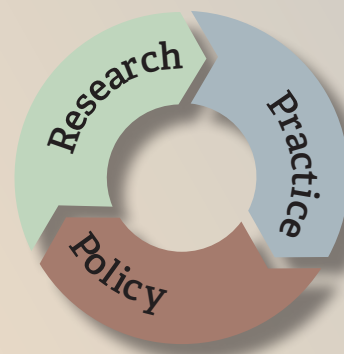
Using the metrics of the ECER, Chart 1 shows the progress made in Atlantic Canada and Ontario between 2006, when provinces provided their baseline data as part of the QUAD (Quality, Universal Inclusion, Affordable, Developmental) childcare agreements negotiated with the federal government, and in 2011 and 2014, the dates of the latest ECER releases.

**Chart 1: Changes in ECE Quality / Access  
2006 - 2014, Atlantic Provinces & Ontario**



The remarkable change in standings of the provinces (NL 1–6; PEI 0–10; NS 2.5–6; NB 2.5–8 and Ontario 1–8.5) show the influence of the QUAD agreements, which required provinces to develop early years plans as a condition of funding, and reflects the work of the MWMFF in supporting effective early childhood strategies with its partners.

From its inception, the Foundation recognized the significant role research could play in strengthening the quality of early childhood program practice and in influencing public policy. Together these have a positive impact on child outcomes. The reciprocity of the evidence, of policy and of practice continues to guide the work.



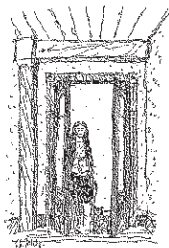
Commissioned by the Government of Ontario, the first Early Years Study (1999)<sup>1</sup> is seminal to the work of the Foundation. Co-chaired by Margaret McCain and the late Fraser Mustard, it changed the conversation about early childhood, grounding it in the science of brain development. It drew from neurobiology and emerging genetic research to provide credibility in ways that previous discussions could not. It anchored early development not only to life-long learning, health and behaviour, but also to pluralistic, democratic societies. It recruited new advocates from education, health, business, and justice. It argued that young children were not solely the responsibility of their families, but of the entire village, and in that village governments have a responsibility to lead. And it made key recommendations for going forward — central was that high quality early learning should be available to every child.

<sup>1</sup> McCain, M.N., Mustard, F.J. (1999) *The Early Years Study - Reversing the Real Brain Drain*. Toronto: Queen's Printer.



## Early Years Study

Final Report



April 1999

Co-chairs: Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain & J. Fraser Mustard

### 1999: THE STUDY THAT STARTED IT ALL...

It was also the genesis of Toronto First Duty (TFD). Launched by the Atkinson Foundation in 2002, TFD's ambition was to showcase the directives from the *Early Years Study*. It began with a simple assumption: it is only through public policy that permanent and sustainable change takes place.

The extensive evaluation of the TFD project became the compelling story of how scientific evidence was turned into community action and ultimately public policy. MWMFF shared the TFD findings with its Atlantic partners, who used the TFD tools to develop their own models of integrated children's service delivery.

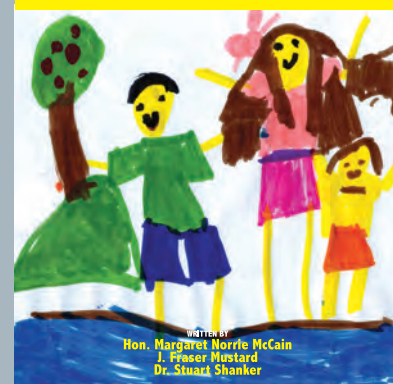
authors championed full day kindergarten, which became a key plank in the 2008 election platforms of two of the major parties. Following the election, the Premier commissioned *With our best future in mind*<sup>3</sup>, the policy blueprint for full day learning in Ontario.

Although others have taken modest steps, Ontario is the only jurisdiction in North America to provide two years of publicly delivered early education. Over 250,000, 4- and 5-year old children participate. No other jurisdiction has the depth of coverage with 94 per cent of all eligible children enrolled. In addition, full day kindergarten has created 10,000 new public sector jobs in the ECE workforce.

Recognizing the need to consolidate support, the MWMFF and Lawson Foundation called together other funders to join forces in their work around early childhood. The Early Child Development Funders Working Group (ECD-FWG)<sup>4</sup> emerged as a cross-Canada network of eight very diverse foundations with a deeply shared commitment to children. It arrived at a common goal: quality, publicly funded, early childhood education for every preschool-aged child.

## EARLY YEARS STUDY 2

Putting Science into Action



### 2007: DOCUMENTED THE ROLE OF PUBLIC DELIVERY



Phase 3 Report

Carl Corter  
Zeenat Janmohamed  
Janette Pelletier

Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study  
Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
University of Toronto

OCTOBER 2012

### 2002: DEMONSTRATED THE POSSIBLE

Supported by MWMFF and the Lawson Foundation, *Early Years Study 2* (2007)<sup>2</sup> was influenced by the TFD story. In their second collaboration McCain and Mustard concluded that in the Canadian context, if all children are to receive the advantages of quality early education, public delivery must be central to any early years strategy. Education was the logical base and had the capacity to adapt and grow down to embrace younger children and their families.

Early Years Study 2 became the catalyst for Ontario's Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) program. The study's

<sup>2</sup> *Early Years Study 2: Putting science into action*. McCain M. N., Mustard J. F., Shanker D. S. (2007). Toronto: Council of Early Child Development.

<sup>3</sup> Pascal, C.E. (2009) *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario*. Toronto: Queen's Printer.

<sup>4</sup> Ecdfwg.ca



### 2009: PROVIDED THE BLUEPRINT

# Impact of Quebec's Universal Low-Fee Childcare Program on Female Labour Force Participation, Domestic Income, and Government Budgets

Pierre Fortin, Luc Godbout, Suzie St-Cerny

## Abstract

We estimate that in 2008 universal access to low-fee childcare in Quebec induced nearly 70,000 more mothers to hold jobs than if no such program had existed – an increase of 3.8% in women employment. By our calculation, Quebec's domestic income (GDP) was higher by about 1.7% (\$5 billion) as a result. We ran a simulation of the impact of the childcare program on government consource revenues and family transfers. We find that the tax-transfer return the federal and Quebec governments get from the program significantly exceeds its cost.

Pierre Fortin is Professor of Economics at Université du Québec à Montréal. Luc Godbout is Professor of Taxation in the Department of Economics at Université du Québec à Montréal. Suzie St-Cerny is a research associate at Université du Québec à Montréal. They are co-authors of the report "The Economic and Social Payoffs of Full Day Early Learning: An Economic Analysis of the Recommendations of With Our Best Future in Mind". They are also co-authors of the report "The Economic and Social Payoffs of Full Day Early Learning: An Economic Analysis of the Recommendations of With Our Best Future in Mind".

QUEBEC

## EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FUNDERS WORKING GROUP

Atkinson Foundation  
Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation  
Lyle S. Hallman Foundation  
Lawson Foundation  
Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation  
J.W. McConnell Family Foundation  
Muttart Foundation  
Jimmy Pratt Foundation

To justify the call for public investment, the ECD-FWG worked to put the early years economic story on the map. Among its first activities was a collaboration with leading Quebec economists to demonstrate the financial benefits of the province's low cost early education and care services. The study showed how public investments more than pay for themselves through increased economic activity, expanded maternal labour force participation, a reduced draw on social spending and increased tax revenues.

## SPECIAL REPORT TD Economics

November 27, 2012

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION HAS WIDESPREAD AND LONG LASTING BENEFITS

The following is a literature review of the benefits and costs associated with high-quality early childhood programs. It is not meant to provide explicit policy recommendations, as it is a very complex sector and requires a more in-depth analysis before established recommendations can be made.

#### Highlights

- There is a great deal of literature showing compelling evidence of the benefits of early learning. Not only do high-quality early childhood education programs benefit children, they also have positive impacts on parents and the economy as a whole.
- Several studies show that the benefits of early childhood education far outweigh the costs. However, quantifying these benefits is not an exact science and results are likely subject to a large margin of error.
- Given the unprecedented number of benefits that early childhood education can provide, it follows that more focus should be put on investing in, and improving, the system. Indeed, in most parts of Canada, there currently exists a gap between potential needs and the state of formal schooling, and the limited child care spaces that are available are often very costly for parents.
- The federal and provincial/territorial governments provide some funding for early childhood education, and have taken some steps to improve the system. Still, public spending in Canada falls short of this in many advanced economies. While governments at all levels are in no position to fund program spending at this time given budget constraints, this is one area that they should consider making a high priority over the medium term, as their finances move back into balance.
- Ultimately, investment in early education can help to address core economic and social challenges facing Canada. It can help reduce poverty, address skills shortages, improve productivity and innovation, and a host of other national priorities.

Education and skills development unlock the potential of individuals and shape the quality of their lives. Learning takes place in all stages of life, and the biggest impact happens early in life. While it is well acknowledged that primary, secondary and post-secondary schooling develops and enhances key life skills and abilities, the learning that occurs during the first five years of life can have long-term impacts on children that are often underestimated. There is a great deal of literature showing overwhelming evidence that high-quality early childhood education – gains not only for children, but for parents and the economy as a whole. This report estimates that the benefits of early learning far outweigh the costs.

TD BANK

Craig Alexander, VP & Chief Economist  
Dina Ignatovic, Economist, 416-945-1212

ECD-FWG members went on to support several other high profile studies. Economists were commissioned to quantify the economic benefits of full day kindergarten in Ontario. MWMFF worked with the TD Bank to produce its special report on the business case for investment in ECE and the Foundation continues to work with its grantees to quantify the regional benefits of spending in early childhood.

## FEASIBILITY STUDY of UNIVERSAL AFFORDABLE DAYCARE in the NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Zeynep Jarmachani, PhD Candidate, Fellow  
Atkinson Centre/University of Toronto

Human Resources, UT

University of Toronto

## THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PAYOFFS OF FULL DAY EARLY LEARNING AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF WITH OUR BEST FUTURE IN MIND

### SUMMARY

An economic impact study by the Centre for Spatial Economics (CSE) finds that Ontario will benefit in both the short- and long-term as full day early learning becomes available in Ontario schools. The analysis prepared by economist Robert Foorholm found the plan to invest in full day schooling for four- and five-year-olds delivers an immediate return of \$2.02 for every \$1 invested in operations and \$1.47 for every \$1 invested in capital infrastructure. The study also found that full-time schooling for youngsters is an effective job creator. Every \$1-million invested in operations results in 29.3 jobs; every \$1-million for new and renovated classrooms produces 20.1 jobs. Medium- and longer-term economic impacts are measured in terms of the benefits for children and their parents (primarily mothers) against the cost of the program. Here the study found that every \$1 invested in early learning generates benefits of \$2.42 for the province through increased earnings, improved health outcomes and reduced social costs.

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In 2007 the Ontario government committed to build on its Best Start strategy for offering a full-day learning program for four- and five-year-old children. In the same year, the Premier charged Charles Pascal with developing an implementation plan. The resulting strategy, detailed in the report With Our Best Future in Mind, brings together the current array of child care, family support services and education under one program and policy roof. The Pascal report recommends spending up to \$1-billion annually to cover the cost of a full school day for kindergarten-aged children. An additional \$1.7-billion would be used to upgrade or build new classrooms to accommodate the full-time attendance of approximately 250,000 youngsters. Where demand is sufficient school boards would offer after-school and summer programming for children 4 to 12 years in a cost-recovery basis. As schools pick up the care of older children all services to the

ONTARIO

## CHILD CARE in NEW BRUNSWICK: The SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACTS



NEW BRUNSWICK

For Studies in Education

International Relations and  
Toronto

November 2013





The role of the MWMFF board chair as a champion for early education cannot be overstated. Margaret McCain commands platforms, opens doors for conversations with policy makers and key Canadian influencers, convenes stakeholders and brings an important

prestige to the file. Margaret's credibility lies in her knowledge of early childhood education and its social and economic benefits. She has an engaging style, which allows her to deliver hard messages to everyone from policy makers to front line advocates. The requirement of grantees to work with the Foundation's program director, Jane Bertrand, brings continuity, experience, a deep expertise and builds linkages to maximize impact.

MWMFF assists its partners in their efforts to inform public policy, improve ECE practice and to document the impact of early education on children, families and communities.

New Brunswick's Early Childhood Development Centres demonstrated the integrated governance of education and early years programming, making the province the first in Canada to bring education and care together at both the ministry and community level.

MWMFF's work with the Kettle Stony Point First Nations helped it become the first Aboriginal community in Ontario to offer full day learning.

A partnership with MWMFF, CHANCES Family Centres and the government of PEI is

modeling the benefits of universal access to early years programming and is quantifying the benefits of uninterrupted coverage for vulnerable children.

With the support of MWMFF, Nova Scotia is expanding Early Years Centres across the province to provide publicly delivered early learning to four year olds and school based child and family supports.

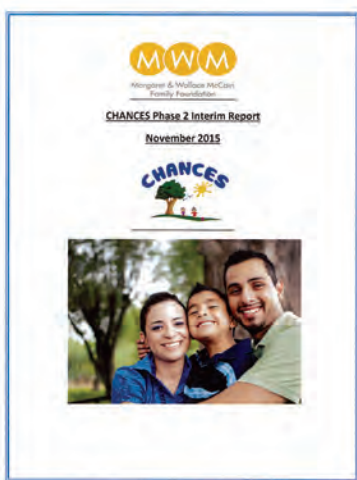
In partnership with the Pratt Foundation in Newfoundland, MWMFF supported a discussion paper and public conversation on a made-in-NL early years strategy. Its recommendations are reflected in the province's new directions, including establishing full day kindergarten.



Across Atlantic Canada MWMFF invests in the capacity of the early childhood workforce through the development of an online ECE degree course led by the Department of Education at the University of New Brunswick, the development of professional learning tools and curriculum supports and documenting processes of integration in ECE program and practices.

While MWMFF focuses on Atlantic Canada it is assisted in reaching a pan-Canadian, and indeed an international, audience through its partnerships with grantees. It was among the Canadian contributors to a prestigious Paris conference in June 2016 hosted by the OECD. It champions knowledge development and mobilization alongside the Centre for Excellence in Early Childhood Development at the Universities of Montréal and Laval. *The Encyclopedia for Early Childhood Development*<sup>5</sup> synthesizes the most up-to-date scientific knowledge on early childhood development; from conception to age five.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/>



The Atkinson Centre at the University of Toronto expands the reach of evidence and best practice through its collaboration with the School of Early Childhood at George Brown College and the Science of Early Childhood Development (SECD) at Red River College in Winnipeg. Inspired by the first Early Years Study, the SECD is an online learning resource, now used internationally in multiple training programs including ECE and medicine. As an online resource it is accessible in remote communities as well as urban classrooms and is a respected knowledge source used by educators and pedagogical leaders.

Educator  
Capacity

Nova Scotia  
Early Years  
Centers

Kettle Stony  
Point First  
Nations

Knowledge  
Development  
and  
Mobilization

CHANCES  
Family  
Services

New Brunswick  
Early Child  
Development  
Centres

Another tool with international reach, the *Early Childhood Education Report* monitors early childhood policy across Canada's 13 jurisdictions and can be adapted to other federated structures.

The report serves as a guide to policy makers; identifies gaps in need of attention; provides accountability to the public for investments and supports advocates to engage for effective change. It is released every three years. The next, and third report, is due in 2017.



The ECE Report has been recognized across Canada for its contribution to systems development.

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“In 2011, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) ranked PEI's new early learning and child care system second in Canada, behind only Quebec. Since then, our system has been further enhanced through continued education and training of our early childhood educators and ongoing support to the implementation of our provincial early learning curriculum framework. Earlier today, OISE released its Early Childhood Education 2014 Report, increasing PEI's rating and moving it to a first place tie with Quebec.”

~ The Honourable Frank Lewis  
Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island  
Speech from the Throne, 2014



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“We acknowledge and appreciate the valuable information included, as it has helped to highlight pertinent areas on which to focus as we build a strong early childhood system for our youngest learners.”

~ Darrin Pike, M.Ed.,  
Deputy Minister Education,  
Newfoundland & Labrador



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“The release of the Early Childhood Education Report 2014 is timely as we embark on exciting new developments in New Brunswick. I have noted the great strides the province has accomplished in a short three-year period: a score increasing from 4.5 points on the index in 2011 to a total of 8 points in 2014, which represents a 23% improvement. I am confident that we will demonstrate even greater improvements in the coming years as we move New Brunswick forward.”

~ Premier Brian Gallant, New Brunswick

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“The Ministry of Education has used the information and research to inform our early learning policy and program development. We are pleased to see such a depth of information and range of research findings on the importance of high quality environments to support children's learning and development.”

~ Rod Allen,  
Superintendent Learning Division,  
British Columbia

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“Early Childhood Education Report 2014 provides a very interesting overview of developments, and will be a mirror to policymakers across Canada. The concluding remarks say it best, pointing to the real place where impact needs to be found; in the discussions and actions on the ground and including many participants.”

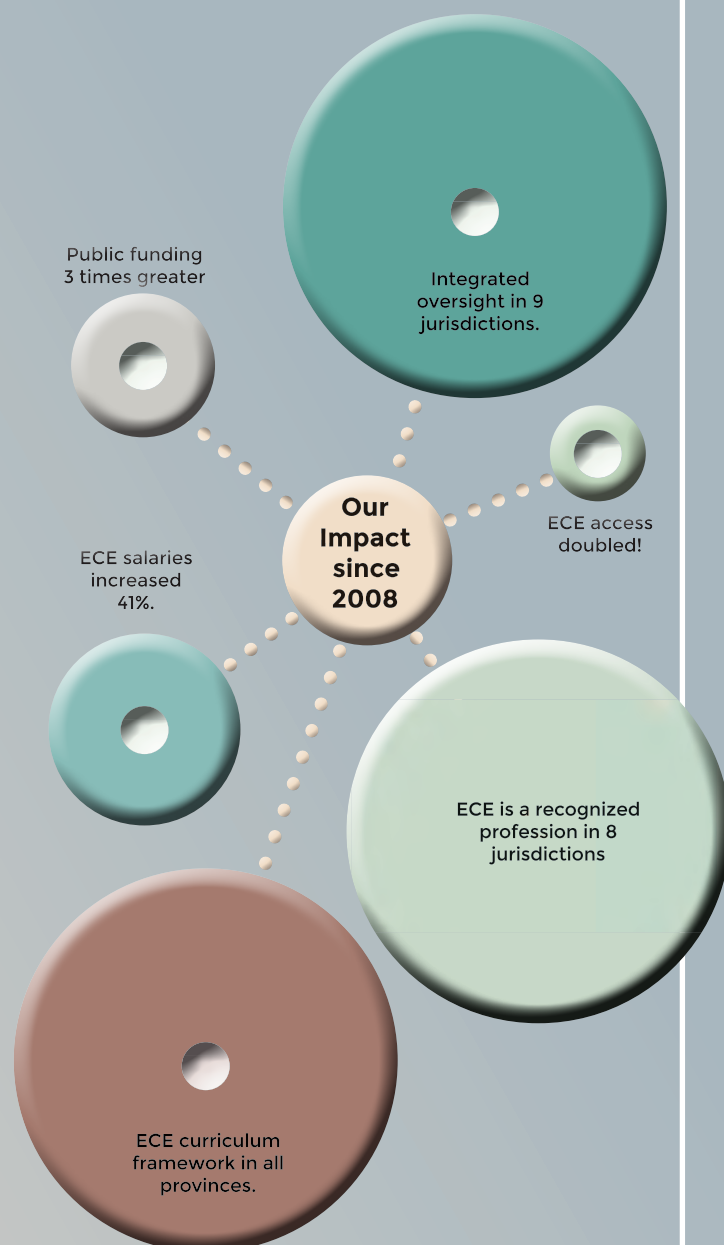
~Tove Mogstad Slinde,  
Chair, Network on Early Childhood Education and Care,  
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

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Since MWMFF adopted early childhood education as its focus it has documented much of the change it has help to shape. Public funding for early childhood education has tripled. Access to early childhood programming has doubled. Eight jurisdictions have consolidated oversight for early education and childcare. And program quality has been enhanced through measures to improve the compensation and recognition of the early childhood workforce and to provide resources to the sector.

And in part due to the work of MWMFF early education is again on the national stage. After a decade's absence the federal government is once more engaged. It arrives with a commitment of funding and a new pan-Canadian framework for early education and care. This does not end the work of the Foundation but takes it to a new level. In the words of its founder: “While investment is important; it is more important to spend smart.”







## **OPPORTUNITIES**

For the first time in 10 years, early childhood  
learning is again at centre stage!

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