

**Recommendations for Promoting Early Years Policy, Governance &
Structure in British Columbia**

Teresa Butler

**School of Public Administration
University of Victoria**

April 2010

ADMN 598 Project

Academic Supervisor: Dr. Lynda Gagne, University of Victoria

**Client: ECD Policy & Support, MCFD
Supervisor: Aleksandra Stevanovic**

**The views expressed in this paper are the author's and do not necessarily
reflect the opinions of the ECD Policy & Support Team, MCFD, or the
provincial government.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to develop recommendations for advancement of governance, structure and integration of early years policy (including early childhood development and child care) in B.C. This report was developed in consultation with the Early Years Policy and Support Team with the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development, with the intent of providing valuable information regarding the key elements of successful policy from around the globe in order to bring early years policy to the forefront of the B.C. political agenda in order to advance policy and better serve children and families across the province.

The report is guided by these four critical questions:

1. What is the current state of early years policy in B.C.?
2. What does the literature tell us are the key enabling elements of successful early years policy?
3. What lessons can be learned from innovative practices in Canada and elsewhere with regard to early years policy?
4. How may early years governance, structure and integration be brought to the forefront of the B.C. political agenda in order to advance policy and better serve children and families across the province?

Guided by these four questions, the report contains an overview of existing early years policy in B.C. based on available public policy documents, a literature review of key elements of successful policy, and a cross-jurisdictional scan of existing early years policy in New Zealand, Denmark, Italy and the Province of Ontario. Based on these three exercises, recommendations for the advancement of early years policy in the current B.C. political agenda are presented.

The review and analysis of available B.C. early years policy documents identifies many different players acting to advance and support policy throughout the province, with many provincial government ministries sharing responsibility for the development and delivery of early years services. The ministerial “split” between early learning (led by the Ministry of Education) and care (led by the Ministry of Children and Family Development) was identified as a potential area for future attention, given recent moves in other Canadian provinces to consolidate such services under a single lead ministry. In addition, the current lack of an overarching vision for provincial early years policy and generally weak and/or disconnected performance measures were also identified as potential barriers to creating a province-wide, comprehensive system of services and supports.

The review and analysis of the available literature review on successful early years policy examines how success is defined in the literature, including various perspectives on what constitutes and motivates successful early years policy. In

addition key elements of successful high-quality early years policy and programs are also summarized. The identified factors included the need for a single, lead department or ministry to govern early years policy, the benefits of a systematic, integrated approach to early learning care, and the role of program quality in determining child and family outcomes.

The cross-jurisdictional scan examines early years policy in four other jurisdictions (Ontario, Denmark, Italy and New Zealand), with the aim of identifying common practices associated with high quality, comprehensive systems of support. Each of the four reviewed jurisdictions presents opportunities for policy makers to learn from the experiences of other systems of governance to implement best practices in the specific B.C. context. Although selected for their established standards of excellence in various aspects of early years policy, (e.g. New Zealand's approach to diversity/inclusion or Italy's high-quality early childhood curricula), a number of key elements emerged from each country's thematic review, including the importance of:

1. Establishing full-day services for children and families, with a focus on establishing a seamless day of early learning and care programs;
2. High (relative) Gross Domestic Product (GDP) investment in early learning and care services;
3. Low (relative) parent fees for early years services, with low-income families fully subsidized;
4. Holistic, child centred approach to care and learning through a shared standard curriculum which incorporates elements of Aboriginal/indigenous culture and language; and
5. Consolidation of early years services under a single lead ministry or agency.

Based on the results of the review of B.C. early years policy documents, the literature review and cross-jurisdictional scan, the following recommendations are intended to promote and advance early years policy in B.C.'s specific economic, political and social context:

1. **Establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between all ministries identified as providing early years services to facilitate the timely sharing of program information/data** – to improve lateral communication between partner ministries and support a more systematic approach to early years policy.
2. **Establish an inter-ministry task-force of financial experts to assess the current state of early years funding in B.C.** – to conduct a full assessment of federal, provincial, and local programs to assess the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities of the current system of governance.

3. **Develop a province-wide Early Years Plan** –develop an integrated and coordinated strategic plan for early years policy and programs in B.C., in consultation and collaboration with all key players identified through Recommendations #1 and #2. The plan should focus on building on existing strengths within the current system, and capitalizing on opportunities for integration and coordination between funding partners to reduce service delivery gaps and/or duplication and improve access for families with young children. The plan should fall under the existing priorities of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (F/P/T) Agreement on Early Childhood Development (ECD), providing a strategic framework for current and future investments.
4. **Designate a lead ministry/agency for early learning, child care and parenting supports** – to lead policy development for the early years and reconcile the current ministerial division between early learning and care with the aim to improving communication, integration and coordination.
5. **Develop a comprehensive and meaningful set of performance measures for early years policy in order to more adequately assess and monitor policy and program direction** – in conjunction with the development of an early years strategic plan, develop a meaningful set of performance measures which are directly linked with the intended goals of the strategic plan in order to better monitor progress over time and allow for redirection and adjustment of policy as needed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY2

TABLE OF FIGURES6

Section 1: INTRODUCTION7
 Objectives7
 Structure of the Report8

Section II: BACKGROUND9
 Client: MCFD Early Years Policy and Support Team9
 Context: The Cross-Ministry Nature of the Early Years9

Section III: METHODOLOGY15
 Information Sources15

Section IV: OVERVIEW OF B.C. EARLY YEARS POLICY16
 MCFD Documents16
 MEd Documents21
 MHLS Documents23
 Non-Government Documents24
 Analysis of B.C. Early Years Policy27

Section V: LITERATURE REVIEW29
 Perspectives on Successful Early Years Policy29
 Key Drivers of Successful Early Years Policy31

Section VI: CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL SCAN OF EARLY YEARS POLICY ...34
 Ontario, Canada34
 Denmark36
 Italy38
 New Zealand40
 Analysis of Jurisdictional Scan42

Section VII: ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS44

Section VIII: CONCLUSION47

Section IX: REFERENCES48

Section X: APPENDICES57
 Annex A: List of Acronyms57
 Annex B: Description of B.C. Provincial Early Years Programs58

TABLE OF FIGURES

Table 1 - Cross-Ministry Early Years Policy & Programs in B.C. 10

Table 2 - MCFD Strategic Goals & Performance Measures 16

Table 3 - HELP Early Years Policy Recommendations from 15 by 15 Report 24

Table 4 - Summary of Early Childhood Education & Care in Denmark 37

Table 5 - Summary of Early Childhood Education and Care in Italy 39

Section 1: INTRODUCTION

A child's experiences in the first six years of life have a profound impact on their future cognitive, social, physical and emotional development. Research indicates that these early years are crucial for the long-term development of life-skills and future success in life (Young, 2007; Shanker, 2007; Kershaw, 2009). In many ways, the early years set the foundation for an individual's life course, providing finite opportunities to promote and support healthy development and growth.

Parents are universally recognized as the primary caregivers for their children, providing support and family connections to children in their early years. However, extended family, friends, communities and local, provincial and national governments also play important roles in supporting children in their early years.

It is in this context that early years services and supports, including early learning, early childhood development (ECD) and child care aim to provide optimal environments for children to thrive and grow. In British Columbia (B.C.) the provincial government assumes primary responsibility in the policy development and delivery of early years services across the province. Provincial investments in the early years are delivered through a number of ministries, and are guided by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Agreement on ECD, focusing on the following four shared priorities:

1. Promotion of healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy;
2. Improvement of parenting and family supports;
3. Strengthening of ECD, learning and care; and
4. Strengthening of community supports

(Human Resources & Skills Development [HRSDC], 2000).

These priorities guide provincial investments in the early years, and are intended to support children to achieve their fullest potential. The provincial government of B.C. offers a range of services and supports under the Agreement, with a total annual investment of over \$662 million in 2007/08 (Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2009a, p.41). Investments are delivered by a number of partner ministries, most notably the Ministries of Children and Family Development, (MCFD) Education, (MEd) Healthy Living and Sport, (MHLS) Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, (MARR) Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, (MALMD) and Housing and Social Development (MHSD).

Objectives

The objective of this project is to develop recommendations for the MCFD Early Years Policy and Support Team on how to promote early years policy onto the current B.C. political agenda. A key focus of the Early Years Policy and Support

Team is the development of an integrated and comprehensive system of supports for families with young children (ages 0 – 6 years) across the province.

The recommendations are based on a cross-jurisdictional scan of existing early years policy in New Zealand, selected European nations, and other Canadian provinces, and a literature review on elements of successful early years policy practices.

The report is guided by these four critical questions:

1. What is the current state of early years policy in B.C.?
2. What does the literature tell us are the key enabling elements of successful early years policy?
3. What lessons can be learned from innovative practices in Canada and elsewhere with regard to early years policy?
4. How may early years governance, structure and integration be brought to the forefront of the B.C. political agenda in order to advance policy to better serve children and families across the province?

Structure of the Report

This remainder of this report is divided into sub-sections. Section II covers the related background on the client, and the current context of early years policy in B.C. Section III includes a discussion on the methodology utilized during the preparation of this report. Section IV presents an overview of the current state of early years policy in B.C. based on available public policy documents. Section V includes a literature review of related academic papers and reports regarding successful practices in early years policies. Section VI covers the cross-jurisdictional scan of early years policy and practices in other countries/provinces. Discussion and recommendations drawn from the various aspects of this report are included in Section VII, with the paper's conclusion presented in Section VIII.

Section II: BACKGROUND

Client: MCFD Early Years Policy and Support Team

The B.C. Early Years Policy and Support Team (EYPST) is situated in MCFD Provincial Office, under the Integrated Policy and Legislation Team, and is responsible for the development and delivery of comprehensive early years policy and support, including ECD and child care. Following the recommendations stemming from the Hughes Report, (Hughes, 2006) MCFD's governance structure has been decentralized over the last few years with five regional offices now assuming primary responsibility for direct program delivery. This has resulted in the need for increased coordination between the Provincial Office and the five regional offices to manage provincial early years services to ensure policies are coherent and consistent across all five regions.

As a key component of the MCFD Integrated Policy and Legislation Team, the EYPST works in collaboration with the regions and other MCFD policy teams, including Children and Youth with Special Needs and Infant and Child Mental Health, to develop and deliver services for children and families based on community need.

Context: The Cross-Ministry Nature of the Early Years

Early years services and initiatives are inherently cross-ministry in nature, since they are intended to address the holistic needs of young children and their families. The varied individual, cultural, socio-economic, and developmental needs of B.C. families require provincial ministries to collaborate and work together towards an integrated system of early years-related policy. For instance, families requiring support services for a child with special needs may turn to MCFD for assistance programs such as Supported Child Development. The same families may also require assistance accessing affordable housing and/or income-assistance, through the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, or wish to access available early childhood screenings for their child through the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. Given the range of individual and family needs, the social services ministries continually strive to integrate existing programs and initiative in order to better serve B.C. families.

Provincial ministries in B.C. offer a wide range of early years services geared at supporting families. Many of the programs overlap between two or more ministries, usually with one ministry taking the "lead" on the initiative, and others taking more of a "partner" role, including funding support, collaboration, and/or policy development. The table on the next page provides an at-a-glance summary of available provincial early years services in B.C. under each of the four F/P/T ECD priorities, and indicates which ministries are involved as either a "lead" or a "partner" in policy development and program delivery (for a complete listing of early years programs including program descriptions, please refer to Annex B).

Table 1 - Cross-Ministry Early Years Policy & Programs in B.C.

Early Years Policy and/or Program	Lead and/or Partner Ministries Involved in Program and Policy Delivery						
	MCFD	MEd	MHLS/MHS	MHSD	MALMD	MARR	MOF
1. Promotion of healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy							
Parent Information Publications	Partner		Lead				
Infant Development and Aboriginal Infant Development Programs	Lead						
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Prevention	Lead		Partner				
Tobacco Control Program/Tobacco Reduction (Cessation Resources)			Lead				
Early Childhood Screening			Lead				
Monthly Natal Supplement				Lead			
2. Improvement of parenting and family supports							
B.C. Family Bonus							Lead
Building Blocks	Lead						
Family Resource Programs & Aboriginal Family Resource Programs	Lead		Partner			Partner	
Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program, Parent-Child Mother Goose, Father Involvement Network	Partner						
Family Maintenance Program				Lead			
Income Assistance				Lead			
Rental Assistance Program				Lead			
Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program				Lead			
3. Strengthening of ECD, learning and care							
Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Initiatives	Lead		Partner			Partner	
Child Care Programs (CCOF, Major/Minor Capital, Subsidy, CCRRs, ECE Registry)	Lead						
Child Care Licensing	Partner		Lead				
Strong Start BC Early Learning Centres	Partner	Lead					
Ready, Set, Learn	Partner	Lead					
Books for BC Babies	Partner	Partner					

Early Years Policy and/or Program	Lead and/or Partner Ministries Involved in Program and Policy Delivery						
	MCFD	MEd	MHLS/MHS	MHSD	MALMD	MARR	MOF
Child Health Passport			Lead				
Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development	Lead						
Childhood Immunizations			Lead				
Autism Early Intervention Services and Early Intervention Therapy	Lead						
Roots of Empathy	Partner	Partner					
Seeds of Empathy and Aboriginal Seeds of Empathy	Lead						
B.C. Healthy Kids Program			Partner	Lead			
Aboriginal Education Initiatives		Partner			Partner	Lead	
Aboriginal Health Initiatives			Partner			Lead	
B.C. Language Initiative (First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council)						Lead	
Early Years Refugee Pilot	Partner	Partner	Partner		Lead		
Full-day Kindergarten (Early Childhood Learning Agency)	Partner	Lead					
4. Strengthening of community supports							
ECD Evaluation Project	Lead						
Children First	Lead						
Success By 6®	Lead						
Human Early Learning Partnership	Partner	Partner	Partner				
Neighbourhood Hubs	Lead	Partner	Partner			Partner	
Immigrant Settlement Services Agencies	Partner				Lead		

Adapted from:
MCFD, 2009a; MEd, 2010; MHSD, 2010; BC Housing, 2010; MARR, 2010; Welcome BC, 2010).

As demonstrated by the table on the previous pages, early years services in B.C. are delivered and shared by a variety of partner and lead ministries. It is clear that the three ministries leading the majority of early years services are MCFD, MEd and MHLS, with MARR, MALMD and MHSD taking on more of a supporting role, with the notable exception of income-support programs which are primarily led through MHSD.

There are some advantages associated with a cross-ministry approach to early years policy. One advantage includes the ability for one ministry to take ownership of a program/policy and provide specialized leadership and governance according to their respective responsibility area. For instance, MARR leads a number of Aboriginal-related programs with policy implications for children and families, including Aboriginal Education, Health and Language initiatives. Cultural-specific programs such as these should necessarily be led by the provincial ministry responsible for leading relationship and reconciliation development with First Nations and Aboriginal communities. Given the inherent historical and cultural sensitivities regarding the B.C. Aboriginal community, the integrity of these programs may be jeopardized if they were offered through a different provincial ministry that did not have a specialized focus on cultural needs, such as MCFD, MEd or MHLS.

Another advantage of a cross-ministry approach is the multiple opportunities for integration and collaboration between ministries. For instance, the Immigrant and Settlement Services Agencies (ISSAs) led by the MALMD offer a range of services for immigrant families in B.C. Through a partnership with MCFD, MALMD has integrated a number of early years services through the settlement agencies to better meet the needs of immigrant families. Families accessing services through a settlement agency are able to apply for child care subsidy using translation services provided through the ISSA. This is just one of many examples of provincial integration and collaboration on early years services.

The main disadvantage associated with this approach to early years service delivery is arguably the flip-side of the main advantages. Specifically, integration and collaboration is often hard to achieve, especially between ministries that have historically acted relatively independent of each other. Ministries face challenges when integrating programs, often resulting in the unnecessary duplication and/or overlap of programs, resources and funding. For instance, StrongStart BC Early Learning Programs, led by MEd and offering free opportunities for parents with young children to attend a quality early learning program, may be seen as competition for Family Resource Programs, led by MCFD and offering a range of parent support services including play-based early learning opportunities. Although both programs arguably strive to support the same families and reach similar goals, they are funded through two separate ministries, with little apparent connection or collaboration. The sheer number of early years services listed in the table on the previous pages indicate that there may be other examples of unnecessary duplication of effort and funding, resulting in a sometimes disconnected system of supports.

Another disadvantage of a multi-ministry approach to the early years is that the complexity of the system acts as a barrier to families wishing to access services. Parents and families may experience a disjointed and uncoordinated series of programs, with multiple points of access and an often confusing array of requirements. For example, families accessing income-assistance must do so through the MHSD; however, in order to apply for child care subsidy, they must access a completely different provincial ministry (MCFD). This ministerial division between programs can often result in families not knowing where to turn for assistance. Without significant and meaningful collaboration between ministries, this may result in some families falling through the cracks in the system, and missing out on services they may not be aware are available to them.

Arguably one of the greatest weaknesses in the B.C. early years system is the division between early learning and care. In B.C., early learning services including kindergarten, preschool and StrongStart BC Early Learning Programs are led by the MEd, while ECD and child care services are led by the MCFD. In other Canadian provinces, early learning, ECD and child care are linked under a single governing ministry, as is the case with the Ministry of Youth and Children's Services in Ontario. This separation between early learning and care in B.C. has resulted in criticism by some ECD and child care advocates, many of whom assert that such ministerial divisions may result in competition for limited resources and in unnecessary duplication of some services. With early learning emerging as a high priority for the current B.C. government, there are concerns in the early years community that "soft" services such as ECD may be negatively impacted (First Call, 2009).

The split between early learning and care in B.C. may have significant ramifications on the pending introduction of full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds. This is an important development in B.C. early years policy, signalled in the 2008 Speech from the Throne (Legislative Assembly of B.C., 2008). Until now, full-day kindergarten had only been offered to limited portions of the B.C. population at the discretion of boards of education. The populations served include Aboriginal students, English language learners, and certain types of students with special needs (MEd, 2010).

The ministerial split between early learning and care may impact the roll-out of full-day kindergarten, if child care and ECD services are not fully integrated into the emerging early learning system. For instance, parents of young children may require child care before and/or after the publicly funded full-day kindergarten program, resulting in a need to coordinate and integrate both early learning and care systems. How the B.C. Provincial Government chooses to develop this emerging system of care remains to be seen, and is being closely watched by the early years sector.

In conclusion, it is clear that the regionalized structure of MCFD and the cross-ministry nature of early years programs in B.C. pose significant opportunities and challenges to the EYPST regarding the delivery of a comprehensive early years

policy. Emerging policy initiatives must take into account the unique structure of the early years and early learning policy in B.C.

Section III: METHODOLOGY

In order to address the four key questions presented under the statement of objectives, the following tasks were undertaken:

1. An overview of current early years policy landscape in B.C.;
2. A jurisdictional scan of existing early years policy in other parts of Canada, Europe and New Zealand, and;
3. A literature review on best practices relating to early years policy.

The overall research approach was primarily qualitative, due to the nature of the policy issue to be addressed. Research focused primarily on analyzing and assessing various policy documents, reports and articles from the media. The selection of jurisdictions included in the scan was undertaken in consultation with the client. A number of areas of interest motivating the final decisions, including high OECD recognition for progressive early years policy (Denmark), internationally recognized early years curricula (Italy), successful integration of Aboriginal interests in a national program (New Zealand), and the introduction of full-day kindergarten in a Canadian province (Ontario).

Information Sources

The overview of the historical and current early years policy in B.C. was conducted through the review of publicly available government documents, including action plans, Ministry service plans, Annual Reports, and Special Reports. In addition, media releases, newspaper articles and early years stakeholder organization's public documents, including forum reports, and proposals, were reviewed to document a clear conceptual understanding of the current state of early years policy in B.C. The cross-jurisdictional scan was drawn from similar public documents to create a broad picture of the current state of early years policy in each of the countries/provinces selected for the jurisdictional scan.

The literature review focused on academic articles and government and non-government reports that describe the key factors critical to the successful development of a comprehensive early years policy. Literature on a number of different elements of early years policy, including supporting early childhood development, family supports, and early learning and care, were consulted to determine the common themes and/or elements required for successful long-term comprehensive early years policy in B.C.

Section IV: OVERVIEW OF B.C. EARLY YEARS POLICY

Section IV addresses the first focus question: “*What is the current state of early years policy in B.C.?*” by examining available public policy documents from the three primary partner ministries identified in Section II (MCFD, MEd and MHLS) as well as selected non-government sources including three early years advocacy/research groups (First Call BC, the Human Early Learning Partnership and the BC Healthy Child Development Alliance). A recently proposed early years plan representing Aboriginal interests was also included in the review, to highlight the need to fully integrate an Aboriginal/First Nations focus in B.C. early years policy.

The following four sub-sections review available public policy documents released through MCFD, MEd, MHLS and non-government sources respectively. The section concludes with an analysis of the reviewed documents from the four categories, as well as a summary of areas for attention and potential growth/development in order to advance early years policy in B.C.

MCFD Documents

As the lead ministry in early years policy, there are a number of MCFD policy-related documents pertaining to the early years. In addition to a range of supports for children and families, including children with special needs, child protection, Aboriginal services, foster care/adoption, child and youth mental health and youth justice, MCFD retains responsibility for ECD and child care, both of which are governed by the Ministry’s strategic plan of *Strong, Safe and Supported: Government’s Commitment to Children and Youth* (MCFD, 2008a). This strategic plan outlines five primary “pillars” that focus on key elements of an integrated system of supports for families and children in B.C. as shown in Table 2:

Table 2 - MCFD Strategic Goals & Performance Measures

Strong, Safe & Supported Strategic Plan & MCFD Annual Service Plan Goals	Annual Service Plan Performance Measure
1. Prevention: Government will place a primary focus on preventing vulnerability in children and youth by providing strong supports for individuals, families and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry funded licensed child care spaces.
2. Early Intervention: Government will provide early intervention services to vulnerable children and youth within their families and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children safely placed with extended family or in the community.
3. Intervention and Support: Government will provide intervention services and supports based on the assessment of individual needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in care under continuing custody orders whose grade level is as prescribed for their age. • Recurrence of child neglect and/or abuse by family.

4. The Aboriginal Approach: Aboriginal people will be supported to exercise jurisdiction in delivering child and family services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal children in care who are served by delegated Aboriginal agencies
5. Quality Assurance: Child, youth and family development services will be based on evidence gathered through a strong quality assurance system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

(MCFD, 2008a, p.5; MCFD, 2009b).

Early years services and supports fall primarily under the first Pillar (Prevention) on the *Strong, Safe and Supported* strategic plan, although certain programs and services could arguably fall under Pillar 2, (Early Intervention) Pillar 4 (The Aboriginal Approach) and/or Pillar 5 (Quality Assurance). Examples of such services include Success by 6[®] (SB6) a province-wide community development initiative, and Family Resource Programs (FRPs) that provide “a range of basic services, including clothing and toy exchanges, health screenings, parenting support and nutritional education,” (MCFD, 2009a, p.14). Both initiatives are led by MCFD, and include specific components and funding to address the needs of Aboriginal individuals, families and communities.

Early years services which may also fall under the Quality Assurance pillar would include investments in research into the early years, through the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), the Early Learning and Child Care Research Unit (ELCCRU) and the Collaborative ECD Evaluation Project (MCFD, 2009a, p.29-31). All of these research initiatives focus on investigating quality in early years programs and services to improve and build upon existing initiatives.

The *Strong, Safe and Supported* document is an overarching plan, intended to guide investments in children and youth, led by MCFD, in partnership with the MEd and MHLS. Although the stated goals/pillars appear to present a comprehensive front for child, youth and family policy, the associated performance measures for each goal do not fully align. For instance, it is arguable that the number of licensed child care spaces fully measures the progress MCFD has achieved towards reducing preventable vulnerabilities under Pillar 1.

When reviewing the accompanying Operational Plan for MCFD, the strategies listed under each Pillar more fully explain how the Ministry proposes to achieve their stated goals. For example, the first strategy listed under the MCFD Operational Plan for Pillar 1 (Prevention) is to, “develop, cost and implement a comprehensive, innovative, cross-ministry Early Years Plan (including child care and early childhood development) together with provincial, national and international experts/stakeholders,” (MCFD, 2009c, p.3). The proposed timeline for this action cites an implementation date of spring 2009; however, to date no provincial plan has been released by MCFD (MCFD, 2009c, p.3).

A second important strategic document recently released by MCFD is “Child Care in British Columbia,” (2009d). This document “outlines key goals,

accomplishments and commitments,” (p.1) in the child care policy sector. Similar to the *Strong, Safe and Supported* document, the Child Care Plan contains five principles that emerged from various stakeholder and community engagement sessions conducted in 2005 and 2006, as follows:

1. Accessibility: increase the number of licensed child care spaces while improving access to existing services;
2. Quality: enhance the quality and standards of child care programs and services;
3. Human Resource Development: increase the capacity of the child care sector to deliver quality programs and services;
4. Integration, Co-location, Partnerships and Communities: improve supports available to help families, child care providers and communities to build on their strengths; and
5. Sustainability: provide equitable and predictable child care funding

(MCFD, 2009d).

Although Child Care in B.C. attempts to lay out a concrete plan for long-term policy development, the “priority actions” identified under each principle appear largely to be actions already currently undertaken by MCFD. For instance, under Principle 5 (Sustainability), the first priority action is to, “provide child care operating funding,” (p.8). The ministry currently provides operating funding through its Child Care Operating Funding program. The action does not stipulate how much funding should be provided, or even whether current levels should be maintained. It is arguable as to whether or not such a vague action would actually contribute to the principle of sustainability given these limitations.

MCFD has also released a plan titled, “Children and Youth with Special Needs: A Framework for Action (2008b) that outlines, “B.C.’s strategy for improving the system of support for children and youth with special needs and their families,” (p.4). The framework presents three primary goals, with specific actions under each, as follows:

1. Improved Access: the right to services at any time;
2. Effective Services: high-quality services with strong evaluation; and
3. Coherent Systems: improved integration and coordination

(MCFD, 2008b).

The actions outlined under this framework seek to improve the existing system of supports for children with special needs. The document falls under the umbrella of the *Strong, Safe and Supported* overarching plan, and is intended to address the special needs of children in their early years.

The MCFD provincial plan for “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD): Building on Strengths” (2008c) is another strategic planning document presenting a

summary of progress made in FASD prevention and support since 2003, as well as “a framework for action for the next ten years on which to plan ongoing strategic work” (p.2). The ten-year plan component of the document focuses on three primary goals for the province:

1. Women of childbearing age have access to effective support and have healthy pregnancies;
2. Children are born healthy and free of the effects of prenatal alcohol and substance exposure; and
3. People living with FASD are supported to reach their full potential in healthy and safe communities

(MCFD, 2008c, p.13).

These three primary goals focus on the prevention of FASD, and the supports available to individuals and families living with the disorder. The plan also includes six cross-government strategic objectives under these goals, intended to address the impacts of the disorder as well as specific priorities under each of the objectives, focusing on impacts for individuals/communities, professionals/service providers, policy and research/evaluation (MCFD, 2008c, p.15). The ten-year plan presents a fairly comprehensive roadmap for the next ten years of policy development, and focuses not only on prevention through public awareness and support, but also on clinical diagnosis, assessment and treatment for individuals living with FASD.

MCFD’s “B.C. ECD Action Plan – A Work in Progress,” (2002) focuses solely on the 0 – 6 years cohort. Published eight years ago, this plan outlines the cross-ministry government initiatives that address each of the four shared priorities outlined under the F/P/T Agreement on ECD. The plan also presents the primary priorities for ECD, as follows:

1. Expansion of the learning initiatives (Make Children First pilot projects) to all regions within B.C.;
2. Development of ECD programs and services across Aboriginal communities;
3. Development of a new operating funding program for child care providers;
4. Expansion of the Building Blocks programs throughout B.C.;
5. Expansion of the Infant Development Program (IDP);
6. Expansion of FRPs; and
7. Establishment of an ECD Legacy Fund in the Vancouver Foundation

(MCFD, 2002, pp.4 – 5).

It is apparent from a review of the ECD Action Plan, that this document has become dated. Many of the strategic priorities outlined above have already been achieved. For example, the new operating funding program outlined in the third

priority has been achieved through the establishment of the MCFD's CCOF program. Likewise, the IDPs have been expanded since 2002 with an all-time high in annual funding of \$18 million in 2009/10 (MCFD, 2009e).

In addition, many of the ECD Action Plan priorities no longer align with the Ministry's new transformation agenda, with primary responsibility for direct service delivery falling to regional offices for a more efficient and equitable allocation of resources. Likewise, the government-wide focus on a "New Relationship" with Aboriginal communities is also not reflected in this document, at least not to the degree of focus presented in the Strong, Safe and Supported Strategic Plan, which devotes one of five pillars to an "Aboriginal Approach" to service development and delivery. Based on these inconsistencies, it may be safe to conclude that the ECD Action Plan is no longer a governing document for MCFD.

Some of the MCFD Regions have released early years strategic plans and/or frameworks intended to govern strategic investments, partnership building and coalition/networking in their respective communities. One such example is the Vancouver Coastal region's recently released Early Years Framework (MCFD, 2009f). This framework does an excellent job of outlining the overarching vision, mission and principles of the various stakeholders in the regional and community context contributing to the provision of early years services and supports. The document clearly defines the roles and mandates of the stakeholders; however, the plan does not include any accountability or performance measures to progress against the plan's stated goals. There is reference to the development of an annual work plan which will identify strategies to address stated priorities, although it remains unclear how the region will actually measure progress achieved under the shared priorities. Although the framework is a step in the right direction in terms of coordinating early years services, it is not intended to be an overarching provincial plan, and therefore does not respond to calls for provincial coordination.

In terms of performance measurement, MCFD has released a series of four reports under the F/P/T ECD Agreement (September, 2000) to fulfill their commitment to public reporting on indicators of healthy child development. The reports focus mainly on data collected through the National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth (NLSCY) using an agreed-upon set of common indicators that all provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec, use to report on child health and well-being (MCFD, 2009g, p.3) across five broad categories:

1. Physical Health (e.g. birthweight, infant mortality, prevalence of breastfeeding, etc.);
2. Safety and Security (injury mortality and injury hospitalization);
3. Early Childhood Development (physical health and motor development, emotional health, language/number skills);

4. Family-related Indicators (e.g. parental education and level of income, positive parenting, tobacco use during pregnancy, etc.);
5. Community-related Indicators (community safety and cohesion)

(MCFD, 2009g).

In addition to the common indicators/categories, B.C. has also opted to include additional indicators on the health and well-being of the Status Indian child population (Status Indian as defined by the Indian Act), (MCFD, 2009g, p.5).

These series of reports are useful on two important fronts: 1) they monitor B.C.'s performance relative to that of other Canadian provinces; and 2) they track progress over time, demonstrating trends and patterns. B.C.'s performance has been consistently strongest in the Physical Health and Safety and Security categories, with above the national average performance on indicators such as low birthweight, preterm birthrate, vaccine preventable diseases, injury hospitalization rate and prevalence/duration of breastfeeding, (MCFD, 2009g, pp.7-16).

In contrast, B.C. has consistently performed below the national average on some indicators under the ECD, Family-related and Community-related categories, including delayed motor and social development, emotional health, parental income, family functioning and neighbourhood cohesion/safety, (MCFD, 2009g, pp.17-37).

It is interesting to note that B.C.'s high performance on the health-related indicators falls under the purview of the MHLS, while the lower performance under the ECD, family and community-related indicators falls mainly under the purview of MCFD and to a lesser extent MEd. The ministerial divisions noted previously may be a factor in this trend, as well as the need for increased collaboration and coordination of policy and funding across all partner ministries.

MEd Documents

MEd shares responsibility for early years policy and program development with MCFD and MHLS, and is responsible for the administration and oversight of the B.C. public and independent school systems, including early learning opportunities, and Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements (MEd, 2009a). A review of pertinent policy documents on the early years is presented in this section, with a particular focus on the expansion of early learning options in B.C.

As a key partner in the development and delivery of early years provincial services, MEd has recently published two critical documents related to the 0 – 6 years cohort. The first of these documents is the B.C. Early Learning Framework (2008a) “intended to guide and support ECEs, StrongStart BC facilitators, early years professionals, service providers, communities and governments in providing rich early learning experiences for children from birth to kindergarten

(p.2). The Early Learning Framework and its accompanying guide “Understanding the B.C. Early Learning Framework,” (2008b) presents four primary focuses of early learning, as follows:

1. Well-being and belonging;
2. Exploration and creativity;
3. Languages and literacies; and
4. Social responsibility and diversity

(MEd, 2008b, p.17).

The four focuses outlined above are not intended to be exclusive; the Framework recognizes the overlapping nature of these priorities. The associated learning goals under each of the four focuses are intended to broaden and deepen children’s experiences in early childhood, while encouraging ECEs to engage in “pedagogical narration” or careful observation and analysis of a child’s “everyday behaviour,” (MEd, 2008b, p.11). Through such observations, documentation and critical reflection, the careful observer may reflect on their education practices, and recognize the child’s inherent skills, knowledge and abilities.

The B.C. Early Learning Framework sets a standard for ECEs working in the early years field, with the focus on improving quality and enhancing positive ECD experiences for children prior to entering formal schooling.

The second primary MEd document focusing on the early years is the ECLA’s report on the implications of expanding full-day kindergarten in B.C. to five, four and three year old children, titled “Expanding Early Learning in B.C. for Children Ages 3 to 5,” (2009b). This document mainly summarizes current research regarding implementation and impacts of full-day kindergarten for children ages three to five-years old, as well as responses from the province-wide online consultations from interested stakeholder groups.

In general, the report points to research indicating the overall beneficial effects of expanded early learning opportunities for young children, including “improvements in reading, writing, math, creativity, social development, work habits, motor skills, and performance on standardized tests,” (MEd, 2009b, p.2). Critical to the success of such programs is their relative quality, as defined through established curriculum, small class sizes, linked/coordinated support services, etc., and the support of well-trained and compensated ECE instructors (MEd, 2009b, pp.2-3). The results of the community consultations are also quite positive according to this report, with the majority of respondents voicing strong support for full-day kindergarten for five and four-year olds with some respondents voicing concerns over programming for three-year olds. One of the main themes in responses was the need to ensure all new programs were entirely voluntary, providing families with choice in if, how, and when their child would participate.

The report points to some major considerations that must be addressed prior to implementation, including human resources considerations, availability of space, and operating costs (MEd, 2009b, pp.3-4). The report recommends the development of a human resources plan, further investigation of capital cost requirements, and examination of the current school board funding model, since all three factors would influence the overall cost of any program expansion.

Given the current economic climate, the initial investment to provide full-day kindergarten to all three, four and five-year olds in the province may not be possible. The ECLA has utilized the contents of the report to focus attention on the development of a staged implementation for five-year olds commencing in 2010. This will provide the government with time to recruit additional ECE instructors, and ensure adequate space for new programs (MEd, 2009b).

MHLS Documents

The third provincial ministry included under this review is MHLS, which provides supports and initiatives geared towards promoting health and sport, including healthy pregnancy, women's health, Aboriginal healthy living, seniors' healthy living, communicable diseases and addictions prevention, and sports and recreation promotion (MHLS, 2009a). MHLS works in collaboration with MCFD and MEd on a number of early years initiatives, including infant and early childhood immunizations/screening, FASD prevention, healthy nutrition programs, perinatal depression services, midwifery, breast feeding support, and shaken baby prevention. (MCFD, 2009a).

MHLS also prepares a number of free parent publications, including "Baby's Best Chance," (2005) "Toddler's First Steps," (2008a) and the Child Health Passport (2008b). These publications are intended to provide parents and caregivers with information on "topics related to child development, safety, nutrition, overall child health and parenting," (MHLS, 2009b). These publications provide valuable information regarding healthy child development, which is vital to overall well-being during the formative years. These publications demonstrate clear links between the MHLS and MCFD/MEd regarding early years policy and initiatives.

In addition to the parent publications, MHLS also provides early childhood vision, dental and hearing screening, and administers the province's immunization plan. Health screenings and immunization cover children between 0 – 6 years. To motivate its immunization policy, the Ministry has released "Immunize B.C.: A strategic framework for immunization in B.C." (2007). One of the main performance measures identified in this document is the percentage of two-year olds with up-to-date immunizations (p.6). The early childhood health screenings help to ensure young children are provided with adequate health care and early interventions when necessary.

Links such as those demonstrated through the above MHLS programs clearly identify the cross-ministry nature of early years policy in B.C. Although MCFD

does take the lead on the majority of early years programs/initiatives, the two partner ministries of MHLs and MEd also play a vital and integral role in providing services to young children and their families across the province.

Non-Government Documents

The provincial government is not the only organization in B.C. that has produced important strategic policy documents relating to the early years. A number of advocacy/awareness groups, as well as academic and consulting organizations have released important strategic frameworks and policy recommendations which may have or may yet influence provincial policy in B.C.

One such example of influential non-government policy recommendations is the HELP report (Kershaw, Anderson, Hertzman & Warburton, 2009), “15 by 15: A comprehensive policy framework for early human capital investment in B.C.” HELP is an interdisciplinary research network of six major BC universities that contributes to new knowledge and quality in early child development opportunities.

The HELP report was prepared to respond to the provincial government’s goal of reducing the overall child developmental vulnerability rate, as measured by HELP, to 15 per cent by 2015/16 (B.C. Government, 2008a, p.30). The report states that the percentage of students entering kindergarten who are not “ready to learn” rose from 26 per cent in 2004 to 29 per cent in 2007. It recommends a fundamental shift in government that incorporates stronger early childhood development policy and investments as part of the long term provincial economic strategy. The report includes six policy recommendations to help both the federal and provincial governments achieve this goal, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 - HELP Early Years Policy Recommendations from 15 by 15 Report

Time Recommendations	○ Enhance maternity & parental leave from 12 to 18 months, reserving additional months for fathers.	\$1.5 billion annually
	○ Enhance employment standards to support a shorter work week for parents of young children.	
Resource Recommendations	○ Build on income support policies to mitigate poverty among families with children.	
Service Recommendations	○ Build on pregnancy, health and parenting supports for children from birth to 18 months.	\$1.5 billion annually
	○ Build on a seamless and affordable system of early education & care for children 19 months to kindergarten entry.	
	○ Build on the work of local ECD coalitions to enhance program coordination between all local services that support families with children from birth to age six.	

(Adapted from Kershaw et al, 2009).

The report outlines the existing gaps in early years policy, both at the federal and provincial levels; the recommendations are designed to move the province towards a distribution of resources more on par with other OECD nations.

An advocacy/awareness groups, the B.C. Healthy Child Development Alliance (BCHCDA) “a coalition of health, social education and community organizations sharing a common interest in ensuring the healthy development of children in B.C.” (MCFD, 2009a, p.27) held two forums, one in 2004, and a second one in 2007, regarding the state of ECD in B.C. Both forums hosted a range of ECD, child care and child health professionals from a variety of backgrounds, all with a common interest in, “healthy early child development ... and knowledge exchange regarding the need for an evidence-based collective and defined approach towards creating a framework that will set the stage for promoting the positive evolution of healthy child development in B.C.” (BCHCDA, 2007, p.4).

Five recommendations were drawn from the 2004 forum, specifically:

1. B.C. Framework for ECD – in consultation with all interested parties and stakeholders, develop a mandated policy framework that includes a fully funded long term strategic implementation plan; a flexible governance model; a mechanism to enable inter-ministerial and cross-jurisdictional collaboration; and an oversight body such as Children and Families Secretariat or a separate Ministry.
2. Integration and Coordination – establish consistent policies across ministries and programs; coordinate inter-ministerial planning and allocation of resources; coordinate information management systems that include all programs, regardless of funding sources; and develop mechanisms such as “pathfinders” to help families and caregivers learn about and gain access to resources.
3. A System of Child Care – put in place a child care system that supports universally accessible child care that is clearly connected to the school system and child development centres; provides a range of direct care and early learning activities; and is geared towards the needs of parents who work.
4. Accountability – embed accountability mechanisms in a provincial ECD framework in order to assist in the achievement of integration and coordination of services, to enable clear and transparent financial reporting, and to support quality assessment practices that operate across sectors and agencies.
5. An Aboriginal ECD Policy – develop an Aboriginal ECD Policy that is complementary to the overall provincial ECD Framework but which acknowledges the unique situation of Aboriginal people both with respect to needs, rights and entitlements

(BCHCDA, 2004).

The 2007 forum revisited the 2004 recommendations, and focused primarily on how to advance the current state of early years policy by drawing on evidence-based practices drawn from other jurisdictions, specifically other parts of Canada, Sweden and New Zealand, and applying these practices in the specific B.C. context. The main thrust of the recommendations centre on the need “for a collective approach for moving forward priority areas which support healthy child development in B.C.” (BCHCDA, 2007, p.6).

First Call BC, a cross-sectoral partnership of organizations and individuals committed to strengthening support for the well-being of children and youth in B.C., has also released an important strategic document pertaining to the early years. The First Call Framework proposes “a comprehensive basket of supports, services and strategies that together are known to facilitate healthy ECD for children between 0 to 6 years of age” (First Call BC, 2008, p.7). The proposed “basket of services” is comprised of five components, as follows:

1. A continuum of ECD supports and services - supports and services that directly encourage and promote the healthy development of young children and families from the point of considering pregnancy through to entry into full-time school;
2. Practitioners involved directly in ECD – investing in practitioners to build community capacity, facilitate community planning and encourage an integrated family-centred ECD service delivery approach;
3. Community based collaboration, infrastructure and action – connecting and positively engaging young children and families to their local community, and in turn mobilizing communities around the needs of young children and families;
4. Research and mechanisms for accountability – implementing province-wide research and public accountability mechanisms for monitoring whether the ECD outcomes for young children and families improve as ECD spending increases; and
5. Cross Government Commitment, Supportive Provincial Policies and Long-term Integrated Funding – developing cross government commitment, supportive provincial policies and sustained integrated funding to provide the essential base for the ECD basket, without which practitioners and communities cannot effectively deliver the supports and services that young children and families need

(First Call BC, 2008, pp.10-16).

The above five components form a well-rounded framework for action on the early years, focusing on the primary needs of young children and their families. The First Call B.C. Framework calls for a “shift in priorities” with a focus on prevention and early intervention, rather than providing subsequent interventions and supports later in life (First Call BC, 2008, p.17). This concept complements

the MCFD strategic plan of Strong, Safe and Supported, particularly under Pillars 1 (Prevention) and 2 (Early Intervention).

In terms of Aboriginal early years policy in B.C., a recent strategic plan released by Little Drum Consulting proposes a provincial vision and a set of principles and goals related specifically to Aboriginal children and their families in B.C. Although this is not a government document, MCFD, MHLS and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) were acknowledged for their support and funding for the project.

The Aboriginal strategic plan was developed in consultation with an Aboriginal Advisory Circle, and was based on “community engagement with over 400 participants, including Aboriginal families, Elders, early years stakeholders and organizations from across the province” (Little Drum Consulting, 2009, p.12). These consultations results in four common goals, articulated in the Aboriginal strategic plan as follows:

1. Foster Aboriginal child and family wellness;
2. Build capacity within Aboriginal families, communities and organizations;
3. Ensure Aboriginal worldviews and cultural are integral in all programs and services; and
4. Ensure all Aboriginal programs are culturally safe, accessible and integrated

(Little Drum Consulting, 2009, p.17).

The Aboriginal goals presented above are unique, in that they focus solely on B.C.'s Aboriginal population for early years policy. Although the MCFD strategic plan does reference Aboriginal goals under Pillar 4 (Aboriginal Approach) it does not articulate a clear focus on the early years, other than a reference to supporting Aboriginal people to develop their own plan for the early years (Pillar 4, Action 12).

Analysis of B.C. Early Years Policy

Section IV's review of early learning and care policy-related documents provides a snapshot of the current state of early years policy in B.C. Based on this review, it is clear that early years policy is quite varied, with many different players acting to advance and support policy throughout the province. Three provincial government ministries, MCFD, MEd, and MHLS, share responsibility for the development and delivery of early years services, while non-government advocacy and consulting groups continue to lobby for a more systematic, and fully-funded provincial strategy for ECD and child care. The document review revealed the following areas for potential improvement/attention:

1. Lack of an overarching provincial plan for the Early Years.

There is currently no overarching provincial strategic plan for the early years in B.C. although regional plans have been developed in partnership with some of the MCFD Regional Offices. Early years stakeholders, including First Call B.C., and the B.C. Healthy Child Development Alliance, (BCHCDA), have been active in voicing concern in recent years over this lack of a coordinated provincial policy. First Call B.C. published a proposed ECD Framework in 2008, (First Call BC, 2008), and the Alliance held a forum on ECD in 2007 in which the key recommendation was the development of an ECD Provincial Framework, (Buote, 2007, p.7). In addition, other Canadian provinces, most notably Ontario, have been actively pursuing a more comprehensive early years agenda, linking early learning, ECD and child care (Pascal, 2009).

2. Generally weak and/or disconnected performance measures.

Most of the strategic planning documents reviewed indicated clear goals, vision and principles for achieving intended results; however, many of them did not clearly outline how progress would be measured or achieved. Where performance measures are identified, they did not always clearly line up with the stated goal. For instance, the MCFD Service Plan purports to measure success against the “Prevention” pillar through measuring the number of licensed child care spaces. A more appropriate measure would perhaps be a decrease in vulnerability rates, as measured through the Early Development Instrument (EDI), (Kershaw, 2009). This measure would more closely align with the stated goal of preventing vulnerability in children and youth.

3. Ministerial division between “care” (MCFD) and “education” (MEd).

Based on the review of documents, it is clear that MEd retains responsibility for education, including early education, (e.g. pre-kindergarten) while MCFD retains responsibility for the care of children and families, (e.g. child care, supported child development, etc.). This division in responsibility may contribute to a disconnected system of supports, with competition arising for finite resources, (e.g. early childhood educators, infrastructure, funding, etc.).

Section V: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review portion of this report synthesizes the academic and grey literature on early childhood education and care. The review focuses on best-practices and recommendations for improving and enhancing early childhood education and care policy (also referred to as early years policy), in order to answer the second of the key focus questions: *What does the literature tell us are the key enabling elements of successful early years policy?*

To begin to address this question, the first section of this review focuses on examining how success is defined in the literature, including various perspectives on what constitutes and motivates successful early years policy. In the second section, the key elements of successful high-quality early years policy and programs are summarized, based on the results of the literature review.

Perspectives on Successful Early Years Policy

Success is a relative and subjective term. How success is defined in terms of early years policy varies between nations, provinces, communities and even individuals within the same family. In general terms, the definition of what constitutes successful policy may be determined by the underlying rationale for the program/policy itself. In other words, we can define success through the degree to which the policy achieves the intended and explicit goals of the program. So in order to define success, we must know what the program and/or policy was attempting to achieve.

In terms of early years policy and programs, the literature refers to a range of possible goals, including supporting economic development by supporting parents (and particularly mothers) to work outside the home and addressing early vulnerabilities to improve life-long child development outcomes (Kershaw et al, 2009; Heckman, 2000; OECD, 2006c), promoting positive child development and well-being by capitalizing on finite opportunities for development (McCain, Mustard, & Shanker, 2007). and preventing inequalities for families and children at-risk of social exclusion (Waldfogel, 2004).

The three goals of early years policy outlined above are not intended to be mutually exclusive – it is doubtful that any early years policy would focus solely on or achieve just one of these goals. Rather, early years policy is likely to produce a range of beneficial results for the children enrolled in the program, their parents, and the broader community. Early years policy systems such as those in Canada, which do not clearly articulate the goals of early learning and child care programs, “have swung back and forth” between the various rationales, resulting in an overall lack of coherence and integrity (Friendly, Doherty & Beach, 2007, p.4). In the absence of an overarching policy plan, it is difficult to define what successful early years policy constitutes in Canada. Given this limitation, each of the three rationales is presented below, with a focus on how success may be defined for each of these rationales.

The first of the three rationales focuses on the economic benefits of providing quality early years services for young children and families. Heckman (2000) argues that early investments in children are proven to yield a higher rate of return over a life course when compared to more-costly, later in life investments in teenagers or young adults. Heckman's line of reasoning is based on recent research regarding the impact of early experiences on a child's future growth and development. This rationale for the provision of early childhood services is also referred to as the "productivity argument" as it focuses on what the recipients of early years services will produce over a life-course (Heckman & Masterov, 2007). This rationale is future-focused, with the benefits viewed over a lifetime and the policy value implied through a high return on initial investment.

A second line of reasoning under the economic rationale is based on the benefits not only for children, but for their working families. From this perspective, child care is provided to support families and in particular mothers to enter/re-enter the workforce, thereby contributing to overall productivity and increasing labour force attachment (Kershaw et al, 2009; OECD, 2006c). Since mothers are the traditional primary caregivers for young children, the high cost of child care, or lack of available quality services may act as barriers for workforce participation (Kimmel, 1998). Through the provision of accessible and affordable child care, working parents are viewed as "key driver[s]" of economic prosperity and are supported to contribute to the local economy through workforce participation (OECD, 2006c, p.12). Again, the focus under this rationale is not so much on the immediate benefits to the child, but rather on either the long-term return on investment, or the more immediate economic stimulus provided through increased parental employment.

In contrast to the economic rationale, much of the literature focuses on the social, emotional, physical and cognitive impacts of quality early learning and child care opportunities on the child (Barnett, 1995, p.25; Currie, 2001). Through this view, children are not simply viewed as "investments" requiring a positive return; rather, they are viewed as individuals with their own rights and values, supported through quality programming. The goals under this rationale focus more on promoting positive outcomes for children, rather than on garnering returns on investments or securing economic stimulus through increased parental workforce participation. Research under this rationale focuses on altering "developmental trajectories" through the quality, intensity and duration of a child's earliest experiences (McCain, Mustard & Shanker, 2007, p.13). Under this rationale, early years services aim to capitalize on a child's early experiences, which act in a unique way on their brain's developmental "plasticity" to help set their life course (Shanker, 2007).

The third and final rationale for the provision of quality early learning and child care services focuses on targeting such services to disadvantaged and/or at-risk children and families, in order to address inequalities early on. Children at risk of social exclusion due to poverty, health, home/community environments, etc., may receive the greatest benefit from participating in quality early years programming

(Waldfoegel, 2007). Through participation, their social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs may be more fully met, resulting in improved levels of “school readiness and subsequent academic achievement” (Ramey & Ramey, 2004, p.471). This rationale acknowledges the disadvantages that children may experience during their earliest years as potential “social risks” that may exert considerable and long-lasting effects on their future development; however, these same risks may be at least in part mitigated by quality early experiences (Burchinal, Roberts, Zeisel, Hennon & Hooper, 2006, p.79).

It is clear based on this brief review of the varying and sometimes overlapping rationales behind the provision of early years services, that success may be defined in very different ways depending on the rationale. For instance, early years policy intended to promote positive child development and well-being may define success through such measures level of development readiness at kindergarten entry as measured by HELP’s Early Development Instrument, (Irwin & Hertzman, 2007), level of school performance at later grades as measured through the BC Ministry of Education’s Grade 4 Foundational Skills Assessment (FSA), or level of emotional health and social development as measured through the NLSCY (MCFD, 2009g). If the policy was intended to support parents to work outside the home, then potential measures of success may include levels of parental workforce participation or the percentage of parents returning to the workforce after receiving maternity/parental benefits. In short, the definition of success is contingent on the rationale for early years policy to which one subscribes.

In terms of defining successful policy for the purposes of this review, no one single definition can apply at the exclusion of others. A successful early years policy framework should incorporate elements of all three rationales discussed above. Programs may have multiple aims, including supporting parents in the workforce, supporting optimal child development, and targeting disadvantaged children to alter developmental trajectories. The second portion of this review will focus on the key components identified in the literature for successful early years policy, with success accepted as a multi-faceted term encompassing the range of potential benefits associated under each of rationale for early years policy.

Key Drivers of Successful Early Years Policy

The available literature is rich with recommendations regarding what comprises the key elements of successful early years policy. A range of potential directions for improvement exist, each focusing on enhancing existing systems to produce more universal, equitable, accessible and efficient results for children and their families. Key recommendations for enabling factors in successful early years policy drawn from the available literature include:

1. Equal Partnership between Early Learning and Care

Although arguably working towards similar aims and goals, the provision of early learning services and child care services have traditionally been “separate and unequal” (Scarr & Weinberg, 1986, p.1140). In Canada, the first child care services were offered through local charities, and were aimed at supporting working mothers, while early learning/kindergarten programs “catered to middle-class children” (Mahon, 2004, p.2). There was a clear division at the outset between child care (or child-minding) services developed to support the working class, and early learning programs designed to support children from higher income families.

This division or rift, although arguably less apparent in 21st century Canada, remains a major stumbling block for policy-makers interested in designing an integrated and coherent system of supports. Child care services continue to be viewed by government and the public as supports provided to enable parents to work outside the home, while early learning services continue to be viewed as part of the primary school system. This divide is apparent in many aspects of the respective system’s policy development, funding structure and human resource strategies. Much of the literature focuses on the need for “a more unified approach to learning” comprised through enhanced collaboration and partnership between the traditionally distinct early learning and child care (OECD, 2006c, p.13; UNESCO, 2003; Cooke, Keating, & McColm, 2005). Several of the reviewed sources cited the need to link the provision of early learning and child care under a single governing ministry or lead department (Child Care Resource and Research Unit [CRRU], 2007; Mahon, 2004; Friendly, Doherty & Beach, 2007).

2. Integration of Early Years Services

Integration of early years services is necessary in order to meet child and family needs and achieve intended outcomes. Due to the varied and multi-faceted nature of early years services, a number of ministries and departments are involved in the delivery of programs to children and families. In B.C. for instance, at least seven provincial ministries are involved in early years policy and program development (see pages 7-8 for a complete listing of these services). Given this complex and overlapping system of supports, the need for integration and collaboration across departments and ministries is necessary to ensure a comprehensive system. Above and beyond this, integrated supports are acknowledged to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children by reducing child poverty and increasing parental employment in low-income families (Waldfogel, 2004, p.3). Further, by delivering a mix of programs aimed at reducing vulnerabilities, program goals may be more fully realized (HELP, 2009, p.230).

Meaningful integration of policy development, funding structure and program delivery will only improve existing early years services, and enhance the benefits for service providers, families and children (NESSE, 2009). Through enhanced

integration, service providers will experience less difficulty in service provision and in structuring programs to meet family needs (Centre for Community Child Health, 2009). Families will experience reduced barriers to access and a more comprehensive system of supports while children will experience improved developmental outcomes (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2009; Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services [C4EO], 2009).

3. High Quality Programming

Early years policy must also focus on the quality of the services being provided to children and families. It is not enough to simply offer a service; rather, the system must support high quality provision in order to achieve intended program and policy goals. There are a number of acknowledged influencing factors on quality including:

1. The degree of staff training and certification;
2. Application of consistent standards and regulations across sectors (including low child-staff ratios);
3. Utilization of established curriculum frameworks;
4. Degree of parental involvement; and
5. Working conditions/salaries for early childhood educators/staff

(OECD, 2006c; Frede, 1995).

In order to support quality, each of these factors must be addressed to maximize benefits for children and families. In addition to these factors, the CRRU (2007) also points to the need for a "common policy framework with consistent infrastructure across the whole early learning and child care system" (p.3) in order to improve quality at the systematic level.

Section VI: CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL SCAN OF EARLY YEARS POLICY

In order to address the third focus question: *“What lessons can be learned from innovative practices in Canada and elsewhere with regard to early years policy?”* a review of other early years policy jurisdictions was necessary. By reviewing and analyzing how other jurisdictions structure and deliver systems of early learning and care, we may be able to learn valuable lessons on how B.C. can further advance existing early years policies.

The list of jurisdictions selected for this review was developed in partnership with the client. Countries were selected based on specific aspects of their early years policies, of particular relevance to B.C., as follows:

1. Province of Ontario – the recent move towards full-day kindergarten provided a timely opportunity to review a Canadian jurisdiction’s major policy shift, and how this may help to inform the emerging B.C. experience with full-day kindergarten implementation;
2. Denmark - selected given its high ranking among OECD nations in terms of early childhood education care, (OECD, 2006a);
3. Italy - identified as a country of interest, based on the application of the world-renowned Reggio Emilia curriculum; and
4. New Zealand - identified as a “world leader in an integrated early childhood and care system,” (Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, 2009, p.203); in particular the inclusion and incorporation of Maori cultural tenants in early years policy may be of particular interest to B.C.

Examination of these jurisdictions will help to inform specific recommendations for advancing early years policy in B.C. By learning from the experiences in other countries, B.C. may be better situated to adopt and implement meaningful policy shifts which would help to improve our national standing among other OECD nations in terms of early learning and care.

Ontario, Canada

Recently, the expansion of early learning has been of primary political, social and economic focus in the Province of Ontario. Premier Dalton McGuinty committed to the introduction of full-day early learning for four- and five-year olds in 2007, one year in advance of Premier Campbell’s similar commitment during the 2008 Speech from the Throne in B.C. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). McGuinty’s commitment was followed by an extensive period of consultation, led by Dr. Charles Pascal, culminating in the release of his 2009 report to government, “With Our Best Futures in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario.”

Pascal’s report outlines Ontario’s early learning policy, with striking similarities to the current B.C. experience. For instance, he argues that “more than one in four children who enter Grade One are significantly behind their peers,” rationalizing

the need for expanded early learning options in Ontario, (Pascal, 2009). Similarly in B.C., recent HELP reports on the results of the EDI indicate approximately one in four, or twenty-five per cent of B.C. children enter kindergarten with low levels of developmental readiness (Kershaw et al, 2009). Given the similar rates of developmental vulnerability between Ontario and B.C., it is understandable that expanded early learning options are being considered in both provinces.

The Pascal (2009) report recommends four primary components to a successful implementation of expanded early learning:

1. Full day learning for four- and five-year olds;
2. Before and after school care and summer programs for school-aged children;
3. Quality programs for young children; and
4. Enhanced parental leave by 2020

(Pascal, 2009, pp.51-52).

The report recommends that the first component (full-day early learning) being entirely publicly funded, with no added cost to parents and families. The second and third components (programs for school-aged children and programs for young children) would be funded through parent fees, with low-income subsidies available for those who qualify.

Pascal's (2009) recommendations for implementation recognize and build upon the pre-existing system of services and supports for families and children in Ontario. He notes the inherent disconnection and duplication of services under the current system, and recommends a more integrated and comprehensive system to more fully meet children and family needs. These recommendations parallel Kershaw et al's recent report (2009) based on the B.C. experience, which focuses on building existing capacity to provide parents with more time and resources to support young children. Both reports also recommend an expansion of the current parental leave system, with additional time reserved for fathers, (Pascal, 2009; Kershaw et al, 2009).

It is also interesting to note that Ontario is introducing the expanded early learning options through their Ministry of Education. Similar to the B.C. political structure, there is a division between child care which remains under the responsibility of the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and early learning, which remains under the purview of the Ontario Ministry of Education. Both provinces have committed to coordinating child care services with the expanded early learning options, in order to support parents in the workforce by providing a seamless day of care for young children. However, with the division of responsibility effectively split between two provincial ministries, seamless coordination may be a challenge. It remains to be seen how this split between

child care and early learning will impact potential implementation in both provinces.

In terms of performance measurement, the Ontario Ministry of Education focuses on four key priorities: 1) success for students; 2) strong people, strong economy; 3) better health; and 4) safe communities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p.6). The government tracks progress against these four priorities through a number of performance measures, (or “key results”) which are intended to demonstrate progress against the stated goals. For instance, the first priority, success for students, is measured through three key results: 1) smaller primary class sizes; 2) higher student achievement; and 3) closing the achievement gap, (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p.7). It is clear at first glance that progress made against these three key results would exert a positive influence over student success and achievement. This is a step forward in comparison to B.C. MCFD performance measurement, in which the measures don’t always line up with the stated goals, (e.g. an increase in child/youth health and well-being is measured solely through the number of funded licensed child care spaces, [MCFD, 2009b, p.11]).

It is clear based on this review, that the Ontario early learning experience parallels in many ways the current B.C. experience. With over one-quarter of children marked as developmentally vulnerable at school-entry, both governments have placed a priority on expanding early learning options to better support children in their early years, and provide additional support for parents and families, especially those currently in or planning to return to the workforce. Both expansions represent a significant government investment, grounded in an economic argument supporting the concept of early investments yielding higher returns over a life-course, as opposed to later in life, more costly supports (Heckman, 2000).

Denmark

Denmark has been recognized internationally as a world leader in the provision of an integrated early childhood education and care system, investing approximately 2.1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) on day care and leisure time facilities, (OECD, 2006b, p.313). Canada, in comparison, invests only 0.2 per cent of GDP on early childhood education and care, ranking in last place among OECD nations, (NIEER, 2006). In Denmark, access and provision of quality child care services is viewed as a parental and child right, with the focus on supporting children in their formative early years, and supporting parents in their roles in the workforce. The right to child care is protected by law in Denmark, with children guaranteed a child care space by the age of six months, (OECD, 2006b, p.311). This stands in stark contrast to the existing system of child care in B.C., which places the impetus on parents to locate and secure quality child care for their children; often a daunting and difficult task given long waitlists and high parental fees.

Child care and early education services are offered through a mix of public and private organizations; however, the private (independent, not-for-profit) organizations must adhere to local municipal guidelines in order to qualify for supplementary funding from the government, (OECD, 2006b, p.311). Quality is maintained through low child-staff ratios, high ECE salaries, and extensive ECE post-secondary training; however, parent fees (for child care) are capped at 30-33 per cent of operating costs, with lower income families paying less or no cost at all, (OECD, 2006b, p.313). Given this relatively low rate of parent contribution in comparison to other OECD nations, approximately 83 per cent of children are enrolled in a child care/preschool centre by 1-2 years of age, expanding to 98 per cent enrolment by age 6, (OECD, 2006b, p.312). This high rate of enrolment can be attributed to the high quality of the early childhood and education services, and the relatively low cost to families, resulting in a high workforce participation rate for parents of young children.

Denmark’s Ministry of Social Affairs maintains responsibility for the policy development of the early childhood system; preschool classes are governed by the Ministry of Education. There is an acknowledged “system of integrated care and education [which] emphasise [a] child’s development and well-being” (Hasan, 2007, p.3). Under the auspices of a social welfare system, child care and education are integrated and linked, with wrap around care services provided for children attending preschool and primary education, (UNESCO, 2002, p.31). Table 4 provides a brief summary of the various forms of early childhood education and care in Denmark.

Table 4 - Summary of Early Childhood Education & Care in Denmark

	Day care facilities	Kindergarten	<i>Leisure time or out-of-school-time care</i>
Age-group Served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 months to 6 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children age 7 years (compulsory) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-aged children
Type of Care/Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Day Care; • Centre-based Day Care; and • Independent Day Care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located in the primary schools; • Play-based and linked to developmental stage of the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of school, leisure-based activity centres.
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-paid (capped at 30 – 33% of operating costs with lower income families paying less or no fees); and • Public expenditures (i.e. municipal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free – no cost to parents; funded through public expenditures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-paid (capped at 30 – 33% of operating costs with lower income families paying less or no fees).

	grants).		
Rates of Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% of 1-2 year olds; and • 94% of 3-5 year olds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of 6-10 year olds.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98% of 5-6/7 year olds (free preschool/kindergarten with integrated, wrap-around child care). 		

Adapted from OECD, 2006b

The Danish system varies from the one in B.C., which while retaining responsibility for the public policy realm of child care and education, does not fully integrate the two systems, or fully publicly fund both. Primary education is at little or no-cost to parents; however, prohibitively high parent fees for child care exist, limiting access and choice for many families.

The dominant pedagogical framework in the Danish early childhood education system is a holistic, child-centered approach, (Jensen, 2009, p.7). Quality is seen as integral to a comprehensive and universal system, which is put in place not only to support parents as they work, but also acknowledges the rights of the child. Although there is recent movement in B.C. to lean towards a more holistic approach to child care and early education, as demonstrated by the B.C. Early Learning Framework (2008), there is still a strong focus on academic achievement and success later in life. The Nordic approach focuses more on the child as they are now, and less on how they will develop later. The B.C. system tends to focus more on future gains and rewards, as evidenced and supported by cost-benefit analyses which argue for increased return on public investments the earlier in life they are initiated, (Heckman, 2000).

Italy

In Italy, policy responsibility for early childhood development and for infants/toddlers lies with the local and regional authorities, while the Ministry of Education retains responsibility for policy related to children ages 3 – 6 years of age (OECD, 2001a). For children under the age of three years, a patchwork of home-based and family arrangements dominate Italian ECD policy, with families accessing localized, regional services that vary from community to community. Although a universal system of early childhood education and care would likely better serve the entire population, many existing Italian early years child development has been “recognized as outstanding,” (OECD, 2001a) due likely in part to the implementation of the Reggio Emilia approach, known as the “gold standard for quality early childhood education” (New, 2007, p.5).

Under the guidance of the Italian Ministry of Education, early years policy for the three to six years age group has achieved more wide-spread and universal coverage, with over 90 per cent of children attending a publicly funded nursery

school, or “scuole materne” (OECD, 2001a). An overview of the early childhood education and care services offered in Italy is presented in Table 5.

Table 5 - Summary of Early Childhood Education and Care in Italy

Service Type	Age Group Served	Funding	Provision
<i>Infant/Toddler Care (asilo nido)</i>	Children under 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsored and funded by municipalities and parent fees. 	Approximately 6% of children
<i>Nursery Schools (scuola maternal)</i>	Children 3- to 6-years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57% publicly funded (Ministry of Education); and 29% Regionally and parent-fee funded; 14% municipally funded. 	95% of children
<i>Integrated municipal services (including Reggio Emilia)</i>	Children 1- to 6-years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies by region – combination of publicly funded and parent-fee driven. 	N/A

Adapted from OECD, 2001a

The majority of care provision for children from birth to age one is provided for in the home, or by informal family arrangements. There is a recognized need in Italy to expand the focus on the early years to include a more comprehensive system of supports for children between the ages of birth and three, (OECD, 2001a). At age three, when the Ministry of Education takes the lead on policy development, a larger scope of services are available to families, not unlike the B.C. experience, in which many children’s services are funded by community and local initiatives until school-entry (ate approximately age six).

Of particular interest to the B.C. experience is the Reggio Emila approach, which involves a community-wide response to early childhood development, care and well-being, where all aspects of a local area are galvanized to support optimal development. The approach “highlight[s] previously unimagined and rarely realized potentials of children and teachers to learn together, the rights of families to participate, and the responsibilities of a community to support such collaborative engagement” (New, 2007, p.5). This focus on parent and community involvement has also taken root in many B.C. programs for children, including Success by 6[®], and Children First, which focus on raising the profile of ECD with non-traditional community partners, including local business leaders and advocacy groups.

Following the tenets of the Reggio Emila approach, there are five central features which may be of particular interest to the B.C. experience:

1. The concept of teachers as learners – where adults and children learn together in a collaborative environment;

2. *Progettazione* (long-term project work) as a curriculum vehicle – where teachers pose real-world and relevant problems or questions for children to explore and investigate;
3. Children’s multiple symbolic languages as culturally constructed modes of discourse – providing children with multiple forms of media (clay, paint, drawing, etc.) to express complex ideas and emotions;
4. The physical environment as a developmental niche – creating a welcoming and pleasing environment to complement the importance of the learning process; and
5. Parental involvement as a form of civic engagement – where parents share the responsibility for learning with educators

(New, 2007, pp.6-7).

The five central themes to the Reggio Emilia approach outlined above have been recognized as an international standard for quality experiences in early learning environments. The inclusion of a more child-centred focus is paramount – and the inclusion of parents and community members as important players in the developmental process is also in its way, groundbreaking. Many of the tenants of this system are already informally recognized in the existing B.C. experience; however, a more formal recognition and incorporation could stand to improve the quality and meaning of early childhood development and care services across the province.

New Zealand

Similar to the Nordic experience, early childhood education and care in New Zealand has evolved into a holistic and child-centred system of services and supports. In 1986, New Zealand became the first country in the world to situate both their child care and education systems under the Ministry of Education (Kamerman, 2005, p.194). This shift in policy was attributed in part to the long-standing tradition of parent-led preschools which prevented the “rift” between education and care so often experienced in other nations from forming (OECD, 2004). The newly merged system was innovative, with a strong emphasis on “diversity, equity and bi-culturalism ... [and] proper training for ECE staff” (OECD, 2004, p.17).

To complement the tenets of this newly formed and integrated system, the New Zealand government supported the development of a new joint curriculum and ten-year strategic plan through extensive consultation with families, parents, communities and Maori culture (OECD, 2004, p.17). This new curriculum, called the Te Whāriki or “woven mat,” is intended to guide all educators, parents, families, and communities to “nurture learning dispositions, promote bi-culturalism and to reflect the realities of the young children in the services” (OECD, 2004, p.18). The Te Whāriki is intended to “share a common vision of what success looks like” to anyone working with children in New Zealand, (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2002).

The inclusion of Maori culture in this pedagogy is not simply a token gesture. Maori language and cultural tenets form the basis of the curricula following the extensive community consultations at the beginning of the development process. The five major principles of the Maori culture were woven into equivalent guiding principles of the ten-year plan “to help [children] become competent learners in society” (OECD, 2004, p.17) as follows:

1. Well-being (Mana Atua) - The health and wellbeing of the child is protected and nurtured;
2. Belonging (Mana Whenua) - Children and families feel they belong here;
3. Contribution (Mana Tangata) – Opportunities for learning are equitable and each child’s contribution is valued;
4. Communication (Mana Reo) - The languages and symbols of children’s cultures are promoted and protected; and
5. Exploration (Mana Aoturoa) - The child learns through active exploration of the environment

(OECD, 2004, p.18).

It is perhaps in this aspect that B.C. stands to benefit the most from the New Zealand experience – the successful integration of Aboriginal cultural language, spirit and beliefs in a universally linked child care and education system is a worthy goal to strive towards.

Similar to Denmark and Canada, early childhood services in New Zealand are made up of a mix of public and private facilities. The services offered in New Zealand include:

1. Kindergarten – for children ages two to five, offering a choice of either morning or afternoon care, (publicly funded);
2. Education and care centres – licensed to either serve the under two population; the over two population, or; a mix of both, including both standard facilities and specialist childcare centres such as those run by Montessori and Rudolph Steiner schools.
3. Play-centres – parent-led co-operatives, funded through parent fees;
4. Home-based/Family Child Care – usually offered to small groups of children and boast flexible drop-in hours;
5. Correspondence School – offered in special circumstances, (e.g. children with special needs, or living in remote communities) to children under the age of six; and
6. Playgroups – parent-supervised, community-based leisure activities for young children.

Adapted from New Zealand Immigration, 2010.

The services listed above form the foundation for the New Zealand early learning and care system. They are intended to provide all children with quality early learning environments, regardless of income, ethnicity or other individual-specific circumstances. Quality is of central concern in the ten-year plan as well, with a focus on “increasing participation in quality ECE services, and [the] quality of

ECE services,” and includes specific strategies to respond to the needs of the Maori culture, (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2002).

B.C. stands to learn a great deal from the New Zealand experience, especially in light of our growing Aboriginal and immigrant populations. As a multi-cultural society, early years provincial policy must be responsive and attentive to the specific cultural and language needs of all children.

Analysis of Jurisdictional Scan

This brief cross-jurisdictional scan demonstrates the various approaches different countries adopt in terms of early learning and care policy. Each of the four reviewed jurisdictions presents opportunities for policy makers to learn from the experiences of other systems of governance to implement best practices in the specific B.C. context. Although selected for their established standards of excellence in various aspects of early years policy, (e.g. New Zealand’s approach to diversity/inclusion or Italy’s high-quality early childhood curricula), a number of key elements emerged from each country’s thematic review:

1. Ontario, Canada

- a. Implementation of full-day kindergarten with a focus on a seamless day of early learning and care for children and families, (including wrap-around child care and family services) to support positive child development and parent’s workforce attachment; and
- b. Integration of services through Best Start Child and Family Centres to include ECD, early learning, health and child care services.

(Pascal, 2009).

2. Denmark

- a. High (relative) GDP investment in early learning and care;
- b. Provision of child care outside the home viewed as a parental right and protected through legislation;
- c. Low (relative) parent fees for child care services, with low-income families fully subsidized; and
- d. Holistic, child centred approach through a shared standard curriculum.

3. Italy

- a. Internationally recognized high-standard in curricula (Reggio-Emilia);
- b. Child-centred, holistic approach to ECD and early learning; and
- c. Inclusion of parents and community members seen as integral to healthy child development.

4. New Zealand

- a. Holistic, child centred approach to early childhood development;
- b. Early years services governed through a single ministry for enhanced integration;

- c. Emphasis on “diversity, equity and bi-culturalism” (OECD, 2004, p.17) through shared curriculum;
- d. Bi-cultural curriculum founded on Maori cultural tenants.

Section VII: ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the results of the B.C. policy document review, the cross-jurisdictional scan, and the literature review, there are a number of common themes/issues which arise in terms of promoting and enhancing existing early years policy. This section presents a synopsis of the lessons gathered through the three previous sections, and concludes with a number of recommendations stemming from these reviews to address the last of the four key focus questions: *How may early years governance, structure and integration be brought to the forefront of the B.C. political agenda in order to advance policy to better serve children and families across the province?*

Section IV's review and analysis of available B.C. early years policy documents revealed the ministerial division between early learning and care, the lack of an overarching vision for early years policy and generally weak and/or inadequate performance measurement. These identified weaknesses act as barriers to creating a province-wide, comprehensive system of services and supports, and must be addressed in order to achieve the same levels of success experienced in other jurisdictions.

Section V's review and analysis of the available literature examined the various definitions of successful early years policy, and identified key enabling factors for success. The identified factors included the need for a single, lead department or ministry to govern early years policy, the benefits of a systematic, integrated approach to early learning care, and the role of program quality in determining child and family outcomes.

Section VI's cross-jurisdictional scan examined early years policy in other jurisdictions, with the aim of identifying common practices and policies which could be applied in the B.C. context to advance policy. Ontario's focus on developing a seamless day of early learning and care could be adopted in B.C. with positive benefits including increased parental workforce attachment, increased levels of school readiness in young children and increased parental engagement in the early learning/school system. Denmark's focus on accessibility and child care as a legislatively protected parental right represents a dramatically different approach to the provision of child care than what is currently practiced in B.C. Elements of Italy's internationally recognized early childhood curricula could be included in a B.C. curricula for three- and/or four-year olds. In addition, a heightened focus on community and family roles in health child development could also be implemented in B.C. Finally, New Zealand's integration of care and early learning under a single ministry could be modeled as a progress step towards policy cohesion in B.C. As well, the inclusion of Aboriginal cultural tenants in a nationally-accepted standard for early learning and care is of particular significance given the culturally rich B.C. population.

Given these issues/themes, the following recommendations are intended to promote and advance early years policy in B.C.'s specific economic, political and social context:

Recommendation #1: Establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between all ministries identified as providing early years services to facilitate the timely sharing of program information/data.

Given the identified need to more fully integrate programs and supports, provincial ministries offering early years services must be able to communicate with other partner ministries in a timely manner regarding specific program and policy information. By establishing MOUs between the lead ministry, and all other ministries providing early years services, the provincial government will be better situated to more fully integrate and coordinate child and family services across the province.

Recommendation #2: Establish an inter-ministry task-force of experts to assess the current state of early years funding in B.C.

Given the diverse, cross-ministry/government nature of early years programming, it is necessary to conduct a full assessment of federal, provincial, and local programs to assess the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities of the current system of governance. After a full and comprehensive listing has been established, the financial team can assess the level of duplication and/or overlap and make necessary recommendations to the lead ministry/agency regarding policy shifts. This will help to more fully integrate the existing system of supports, as well as identify areas for potential growth and development, which can also inform the development of the emerging Early Years Plan under Recommendation #3.

Recommendation #3: Develop a province-wide Early Years Plan.

Consistent with stakeholder/advocacy recommendations, other jurisdictional practices and recommendations in the academic literature, develop, cost and implement an integrated and coordinated strategic plan for early years policy and programs in B.C., in consultation and collaboration with all key players identified through Recommendations #1 and #2. The plan should focus on building on existing strengths within the current system, and capitalizing on opportunities for integration and coordination between funding partners to reduce service delivery gaps and/or duplication and improve access for families with young children. The plan should fall under the existing priorities of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (F/P/T) Agreement on Early Childhood Development (ECD), providing a strategic framework for current and future investments.

In order to ensure Aboriginal and First Nations interests are fully represented, adopt a similar consultation process during the development phase of the plan to that which was implemented in New Zealand. The plan must be universal in application, but also flexible enough to allow for the diverse nature of the B.C. population. Stakeholder buy-in will only be achieved through extensive consultation and communication.

Recommendation #4: Designate a lead ministry/agency for early learning, child care and parenting supports.

Consistent with the academic literature, designate either a lead provincial ministry or agency with the necessary authority to lead provincial policy development for the early years, including child care, early learning and parental supports. The current system splits ministerial responsibility between MEd and MCFD, and is not effective in developing a comprehensive and integrated system of supports. Similar to New Zealand's structure of governance, moving all early years policy under the responsibility of MEd would help improve communication, integration and coordination, and assist the province in developing a more coordinated system of supports with less duplication and/or overlap.

Recommendation #5: Develop a comprehensive and meaningful set of performance measures for early years policy in order to more adequately assess and monitor policy and program direction.

In conjunction with the development of an early years strategic plan, develop a meaningful set of performance measures which are directly linked with the intended goals of the strategic plan in order to better monitor progress over time and allow for redirection and adjustment of policy as needed.

The performance measures must be representative of the goals set out to be achieved, and must rely on valid and reliable data sources. Partnership with B.C. universities will likely be necessary to develop the indicators of success, (e.g. HELP's Early Development Instrument).

Section VIII: CONCLUSION

B.C. is well situated to make positive advances in the field of early years policy. The Government of British Columbia has made progressive steps towards placing a primary focus on families and young children, supporting population-wide assessments for all children at kindergarten entry through HELP, and committing to implementing full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds by September 2011. The Government has further committed to reducing childhood vulnerability (as measured by the EDI) to 15 per cent by 2015 – an admirable and arguably achievable goal.

In order to achieve this mandate, the Government should look to other successful jurisdiction's approach to early year policy, as well as examine what the literature tells us about effective practices and policies. By learning from other's experiences, the provincial government will be able to achieve their stated goals, and focus on the needs of children and families across the province. The recommendations presented in this paper are intended as an important first step towards achieving a comprehensive, seamless system of supports that are necessary to fully support B.C.'s young children and their families.

Section IX: REFERENCES

- Barnett, S. (1995). Long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes. *The Future of Children*, 5 (3), 25-50.
- Bennett, J. (2004). *Early education financing: What is useful to know?* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Bennett, J. (2008). Early childhood education and care systems in the OECD countries: The issue of tradition and governance. *Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development*, 1-5. Retrieved from <http://www.enfant-encyclopedie.com/pages/PDF/BennettANGxp.pdf>
- BC Healthy Child Development Alliance [BCHCDA]. (2004). Healthy BC child forum: Working group discussions. Retrieved from http://www.childhealthbc.ca/chbc-media/pdf-library/bchcda/forums/Healthy_BC_Child_Forum_Nov2004.pdf
- BCHCDA. (2007). *Moving forward together: How do we make it happen?* uote, D. Retrieved from <http://www.childhealthbc.ca/chbc-media/pdf-library/bchcda/forums/BCHealthyChildDevelopmentAllianceForum2007Report.pdf>
- B.C. Housing, (2010). *Rental assistance program website*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from <http://www.bchousing.org/programs/RAP>
- Burchinal, M., Roberts, J., Zeisel, S., Hennon, E., & Hooper, S. (2006). Social risk and protective child, parenting and child care factors in early elementary school years. *Parenting: Science and Practice*, 6 (1), 79-113.
- Centre for Community Child Health. (2009). *Policy brief no.17: Integrating services for young children and their families*. Royal Children's Hospital. Victoria, Australia: Buote, D. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001373/137394e.pdf>
- Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services. (2009). *Improving developmental outcomes for children through effective practice in integrating early years services*. London, United Kingdom. Retrieved from http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/earlyyears/effectivepractice/files/c4eo_effective_practice_progress_map_summary_3.pdf
- Childcare Resource and Research Unit. (2007). *Elements of a high quality early*

- learning and child care system*. Quality By Design Project. Retrieved from <http://www.childcarequality.ca/>
- Cleveland, G. & Krashinsky, M. (2004). *Financing early learning and child care in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.
- Cooke, M., Keating, D., & McColm, M. (2005). *Early learning and care in the city update 2005*. Summer Institute on Early Childhood Development. George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario. Retrieved from [http://www.georgebrown.ca/summerinstitute/Early Learning and Care Update 2005.pdf](http://www.georgebrown.ca/summerinstitute/Early_Learning_and_Care_Update_2005.pdf)
- Currie, J. (2001). Early childhood education programs. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 15 (2), pp.213-238.
- Engle, P., Black, M., Behrman, J., Cabral de Mello, M., Gertler, P., Kapiriri, L., et al. (2007). Strategies to avoid the loss of developmental potential in more than 200 million children in the developing world. *The Lancet*, 369 (9557), 229-242.
- First Call BC. (2008). *Early childhood development in BC: First Call's framework for action*. First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. Vancouver, British Columbia: Coates, P. Retrieved from <http://www.firstcallbc.org/pdfs/EarlyChildhood/1-framework%202008.pdf>
- First Call BC. (2009). September 9, 2009 *early childhood development roundtable minutes*. Retrieved from <http://www.firstcallbc.org/pdfs/CurrentIssues/minutes%20sep%2009.pdf>
- Frede, E. (1995). The Role of Program Quality in Producing Early Childhood Program Benefits. *The Future of Children*, 5 (3), pp. 115-132.
- Friendly M., Doherty G. and Beach J. (2006). *Quality by design: What do we know about quality in early learning and child care and what do we think? A literature review*. Child Care Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto. Retrieved from <http://www.plan4preschool.org/documents/canada.pdf>
- Hasan, A. (2007). Public policy in early childhood education and care. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 1 (1), 1-10. Retrieved from http://childcarecanada.org/res/docs/icep_issue1/1_Abrar_Hasan.pdf
- Heckman, J. (2000). *Invest in the very young*. Harris School of Public Policy

- Studies. University of Chicago. Retrieved from http://www.ounceofprevention.org/includes/tiny_mce/plugins/filemanager/files/Heckman%20Invest%20in%20the%20Very%20Young%20Final%20PDF.pdf
- Heckman, J. & Masterov, D. (2007). The productivity argument for investing in young children. *Review of Agricultural Economics*, 29 (3), pp 446-493.
- HighScope Educational Research Foundation. (2010). *HighScope perry preschool study*. Retrieved from <http://highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=219>
- Hughes, T. (2006). *B.C. children and youth review: An independent review of B.C.'s child protection system*. Submitted to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Retrieved from http://www3.telus.net/public/wnn/EBulletins/Hughes_Report.htm
- Human Early Learning Partnership. (2009). *The early development instrument in B.C.: Documenting impact and action in schools, Communities and Early Childhood Development*. Canadian Council on Learning. Retrieved from http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/2009/EDI_in_BC_Jan_09.pdf
- Human Resources & Skills Development. (2000). *First minister's communiqué on ECD*. Government of Canada website. Retrieved from http://www.ecd-elcc.ca/eng/ecd/ecd_communique.shtml
- Irwin, L. & Hertzman, C., (2007). *It takes a child to raise a community: "Population-based" measurement of early child development*. Human Early Learning Partnership. Retrieved from <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/2007/It%20Takes%20a%20Child%20HELP%20Brief%20July%202007.pdf>
- Jenkins, S. (2005). *Whole of government policy framework for the early years*. The Interagency Policy Coordination Committee. Retrieved from http://www.education.tas.gov.au/early-learning/early_years/early-years-resources/Earlyyearsframework.pdf
- Jensen, B. (2009). A Nordic approach to early childhood education and socially endangered children. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 17 (1), 7 - 21.
- Kamerman, S. (2005). Early childhood education and care in advanced industrialized countries: Current policy and program trends. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87 (3), 193-195.

- Kimmel, J. (1998). Child care costs as a barrier to employment for single and married mothers. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 80 (2), pp. 287-299.
- Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. (2008). *Speech from the throne*. 4th Session, 38th Parliament of the Province of British Columbia. Retrieved from <http://qp.gov.bc.ca/38th4th/4-8-38-4.htm>
- Little Drum Consulting. (2009). *Creating pathways: An Aboriginal early years five-year strategic plan*. Gerlach, A. & Gray Smith, M. Retrieved from <http://littledrum.com/pdf/aboriginal%20early%20years%20strategic%20plan.pdf>
- Kershaw, P., Anderson, L., Hertzman, C., & Warburton, B. (2009). *15 by 15: A comprehensive framework for early human capital investment in B.C.* Human Early Learning Partnership. Retrieved from <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/2009/15by15-Executive-Summary.pdf>
- Mahon, R. (2004). *Early child learning and care in Canada: Who rules? Who should rule?* Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.
- Marshall, N. (2004). The quality of early child care and children's development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13 (4), 165-168.
- McCain, M., Mustard, F., Shanker, S. (2007). *Early years study 2: Putting science into action*. Council for Early Childhood Development. Retrieved from <http://www.frasermustardchair.ca/wp-content/uploads/early-years-study-optimized.pdf>
- Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. (2010). *Social programs website*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/social/default.html>
- Ministry of Children and Family Development [MCFD]. (2002). *B.C. early childhood development action plan – A work in progress*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/pdf/ecd_action_plan_revised_june02.pdf
- MCFD. (2008a). *Strong safe and supported: a commitment to B.C.'s children and youth*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/pdf/Strong_Safe_Supported.pdf

- MCFD. (2008b). *Children and youth with special needs: A framework for action*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/pdf/CYSN_FrameWorkForAction_Combo_LR.pdf
- MCFD. (2008c). *Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: Building on strengths*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/fasd/pdf/FASD_TenYearPlan_WEB.pdf
- MCFD. (2009a). *British Columbia's early years annual report 2007/2008*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/pdf/EarlyYearsAnnualReport2009_Web.pdf
- MCFD. (2009b). *Annual service plan report 2008/09*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual_Reports/2008_2009/cfd/cfd.pdf
- MCFD. (2009c). *Strong, safe and supported operational plan 2007-2012*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/PubDocs/bcdocs/437989/2007_2012.pdf
- MCFD. (2009d). *Child care in British Columbia*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/pdfs/child_care_in_bc_2008_final.pdf
- MCFD. (2009e). *Infant and child development programs are protected*. Opinion-Editorial. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009CFD0008-000457.pdf
- MCFD. (2009f). *Early years framework: Vancouver coastal region*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.vch.ca/media/VCH_Early_Years_Framework2009.pdf
- MCFD. (2009g). *Indicators of early childhood health and well-being in B.C.* Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/pdf/early_indicators_fourth_report.pdf
- Ministry of Education. (2008a). *B.C. early learning framework*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/pdfs/early_learning_framework.pdf

- Ministry of Education. (2008b). *Understanding the B.C. early learning framework: From theory to practice*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/pdfs/from_theory_to_practice.pdf
- Ministry of Education. (2009a). *Service plan update 2009/10 – 2010/11*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2009_Sept_Update/sp/pdf/ministry/educ.pdf
- Ministry of Education. (2009b). *Expanding early learning in B.C. for children age 3 to 5*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/ecla/topics/ecla_report.pdf
- Ministry of Education. (2010). *Ministry of Education: Early learning initiatives website*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/full_day_kindergarten.htm
- Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. (2005). *Baby's best chance (6th Ed.)*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2005/babybestchance.pdf>
- Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. (2007). *Immunize British Columbia: A strategic framework for immunizations in B.C.*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from <http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/publications/year/2007/immunizebc.pdf>
- Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. (2008a). *Toddler's first steps*. 2nd Ed. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/PubDocs/bcdocs/437200/TFS_Intro.pdf
- Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. (2008b). *Child health passport*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from <http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/publications/year/2008/childhealthpassport.pdf>
- Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. (2009a). *Service plan update 2009/10 – 2011/12*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2009_Sept_Update/sp/pdf/ministry/hls.pdf
- Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. (2009b). *Parent publication initiative website*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from <http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/children/initiatives/parent.html>

- Ministry of Housing and Social Development. (2010). Ministry programs and services website. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/programs/index.htm>
- NESSE. (2009). *Early childhood education and care: Key lessons from research for policy makers*. European Commission. Retrieved from <http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/reports/ecec-report-pdf>
- New, R., (2007). Reggio Emilia as cultural activity. *Theory into Practice*, 46 (1), 5–13.
- New Zealand Immigration. (2010). *New Zealand immigration packs: Education*. New Zealand's Information Network. Retrieved from <http://www.nz-immigration.co.nz/education/early-childhood.html>
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2002). *Pathways to the future: Nga huarahi arataki*. Government of New Zealand.
- NIEER, (2006). *New OECD reports paints multinational picture of early Education*, 4 (6). Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/psm/index.php?article=186>
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP]. (2000). *The high/scope perry preschool project*. U.S. Department of Justice: Parks, G. Retrieved from <http://www.sfi.dk/graphics/Campbell/Dokumenter/Farrington%20marts08/The%20High-Scope%20Perry%20Preschool%20Project.pdf>
- OECD. (2001a). *Appendix 1: An overview of ECEC systems in participating countries*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/44/12/1942329.pdf>
- OECD. (2001b). *OECD country note: Early childhood education and care policy in Italy*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/17/33915831.pdf>
- OECD. (2004). *Curricula and pedagogies in early childhood education and care*. Directorate for Education. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/36/31672150.pdf>
- OECD. (2006a). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/document/63/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_37416703_1_1_1_1,00.html#ES

- OECD. (2006b). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care – Denmark. Annex E*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/16/42/37423394.pdf>
- OECD. (2006c). *Starting strong II: Executive summary*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/38/2/37417240.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009). *Results-based plan briefing book 2009/10*. Government of Ontario. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/annualreport/0910/EDUplan0910E.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010). *Early learning*. Government of Ontario. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/earlylearning/background.html>
- Pascal, C. (2009). *With our best future in mind: Implementing early learning in Ontario*. Government of Ontario. Retrieved from http://www.ontario.ca/ontprodconsume/groups/content/@gopsp/@initiative/documents/document/ont06_018899.pdf
- Prinz, R. J., & Sanders, M. R. (2007). Adopting a population level approach to parenting and family support interventions. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 27, 739–749.
- Province of B.C. (2008). *Strategic plan 2008/09 – 2010/11*. Retrieved from http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2008/stplan/2008_Strategic_Plan.pdf
- Ramey, C., & Ramey, S. (2004). Early learning and school readiness: Can early intervention make a difference? *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* 50 (4), pp. 471-491.
- Scarr, S., & Weinberg R., (1986). The early childhood enterprise: Care and education of the young. *American Psychologist*, 41 (10), pp.1140-1146
- Shanker, S. (2007). *The science of early brain development*. York University. Retrieved from http://www.manitoba.ca/healthychild/ncd/forum2007_shanker.pdf
- Social Care Institute for Excellence. (2009). Benefits for children of integrating early years services. *Community Care*, 1764, 24 - 26. Retrieved from <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/Article.aspx?liArticleID=111141&PrinterFriendly=true>
- Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, (2009). *Early childhood*

- education and care: Next steps*. Retrieved from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/40/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/soci-e/rep-e/rep05apr09-e.pdf>
- Stoney, L., Mitchell, A. & Warner, M. (2006). Smarter reform: Moving beyond single-program solutions to an early care and education system. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, 37 (2), pp.101-115.
- Turner, K., & Sanders, M. (2006). Dissemination of evidence-based parenting and family support strategies: Learning from the triple P – Positive parenting program system approach. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 11, 176-193.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]. (2002). An integrated approach to early childhood education and care. *Early Childhood and Family Policy Series*, 3. Sao Paulo, Brazil: Hadad, L. Retrieved from <http://www.ctc-health.org.cn/file/20080527005.pdf>
- UNESCO. (2003). *Cross- sectoral co-ordination in early childhood: Some lessons to learn*. Section for Early Childhood and Inclusive Education. Paris, France. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001373/137394e.pdf>
- Waldfoegel J. (2004). *Social mobility, life chances, and the early years*. Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion. Retrieved from <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/CP/CASEPaper88.pdf>
- Welcome BC, (2010). *Service providers website*. Government of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/index.html
- Young, M.E. (2007). *Early child development: From measurement to action*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Retrieved from R:\HQ-Early Years\ECDPolicy\Research\Mustard, Fraser\2007_files\ECD_WB.pdf

Section X: APPENDICES

Annex A: List of Acronyms

B.C.	British Columbia, Canada
BCHCDA	British Columbia Healthy Child Development Alliance
CCOF	Child Care Operating Funding Program (B.C. Provincial Government)
ECEs	Early Childhood Educators
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECLA	Early Childhood Learning Agency (B.C. Provincial Government)
ELCCRU	Early Learning and Child Care Research Unit
EYPST	B.C. Early Years Policy and Support Team (MCFD)
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
F/P/T	Federal – Provincial – Territorial (Canada)
FRPs	Family Resource Programs
HELP	Human Early Learning Partnership
HRSDC	Human Resources and Social Development Canada
IDP	Infant Development Program
MALMD	Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (B.C. Provincial Government)
MARR	Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (B.C. Provincial Government)
MCFD	Ministry of Children and Family Development (B.C. Provincial Government)
MEd	Ministry of Education (B.C. Provincial Government)
MHLS	Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport (B.C. Provincial Government)
MHS	Ministry of Health Services (B.C. Provincial Government)
MOF	Ministry of Finance (B.C. Provincial Government)

Annex B: Description of B.C. Provincial Early Years Programs

Early Years Program	Description
Parent Information Publications	Free publications provided to parents to enhance knowledge on key parenting topics (Baby's Best Chance and Toddler's First Steps).
Infant Development and Aboriginal Infant Development Programs	Provides home-based support, assessment and intervention services for children, birth to age three who are at risk for developmental delay or who have been diagnosed with a disability.
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Prevention	Provides a range of community-based initiatives in public awareness, early identification and support for women at risk, and the diagnosis, assessment and support of those affected by FASD.
Tobacco Control Program/Tobacco Reduction (Cessation Resources)	Health practitioner and client-centered resources for pregnant women and young mothers, including the B.C. Reproductive Care Program Guideline: Tobacco Use in the Perinatal Period.
Early Childhood Screening	Provides dental, hearing and vision screening services free of charge to all children in B.C.
Monthly Natal Supplement	Provided to pregnant recipients and to family units with a dependent child under the age of seven months. This supplement is intended to assist in meeting extra costs associated with prenatal and postnatal expenses.
B.C. Family Bonus	Provides a tax-free payment to moderate-income families with dependent children, making it easier for families with children to leave and stay off income assistance because they can continue to receive the bonus for their children while working or going to school.
Building Blocks (including Home Visiting)	Encompasses a range of community-based programs designed to increase the ability of parents to support the healthy development of children up to six years of age.
Family Resource Programs & Aboriginal Family Resource Programs	Provide community-based services that support the healthy development of children and families by strengthening parenting skills, building family/community connection and providing stimulating learning environments for children.
Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program, Parent-Child Mother Goose, Father Involvement Network	Provides a number of family support and early childhood development programs and services across B.C.
Family Maintenance Program	Monitors and enforces maintenance orders and agreements (for either child support or spousal support).
Income Assistance	Assists British Columbians by helping people move from income assistance to sustainable employment, and by providing income assistance to those who are unable to fully participate

Early Years Program	Description
	in the workforce.
Rental Assistance Program	Provides eligible low-income, working families with cash assistance to help with their monthly rent payments.
Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program	Housing related support services for women and their dependent children fleeing violence.
Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Initiatives	Promotes the capacity of Aboriginal communities to deliver culturally appropriate early childhood development services, both on and off reserve, through 43 Aboriginal agencies across B.C.
Child Care Programs (CCOF, Major/Minor Capital, Subsidy, CCRRs, ECE Registry)	A variety of programs that support affordable, accessible and inclusive child care services across the Province.
Child Care Licensing	Sets out health and safety requirements, license application requirements, staffing qualifications, and program standards for licensed child care settings.
Strong Start BC Early Learning Centres	Provide school-based early learning services for adults and their young children, aged birth to five, at no cost to families.
Ready, Set, Learn	An early childhood initiative that provides an opportunity for elementary schools offering kindergarten to partner with community-based early childhood service providers to influence school readiness in children.
Books for BC Babies	A community-based literacy program that introduces parents of newborns to the benefits of early and frequent reading to infants and toddlers, while increasing awareness of library services.
Child Health Passport	A passport-sized booklet for parents to use to record important health information about their child, including height and weight, illnesses, injuries, allergies, hospitalizations, and vaccinations.
Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development	Enables children who have extra support needs to participate in inclusive child care settings. Services are available for children from birth to age twelve and for youth aged 13 to 18 in some communities.
Childhood Immunizations	One of the most comprehensive immunization programs in Canada, which strives to exceed national expectations in immunization coverage and service.
Autism Early Intervention Services and Early Intervention Therapy (EIT)	Autism Early Intervention Services are designed to provide choice and flexibility for families. Parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder under age six are eligible to receive up to \$20,000 per year to assist with the cost of specialized treatment or intervention based on best

Early Years Program	Description
	practices for children with ASD. EIT provides community-based physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and family support worker services to preschool children who are at risk of developmental delay or who have a disability and/or developmental delay.
Roots of Empathy	An evidence-based classroom program for students aged five to 14, aimed at reducing aggression and violence among schoolchildren while raising social and emotional competence and increasing empathy.
Seeds of Empathy and Aboriginal Seeds of Empathy	A program designed to develop social and emotional literacy in children aged three to five, and is based on the Roots of Empathy program.
B.C. Healthy Kids Program	Provides basic dental and optical services for children in low and moderate income families in receipt of premium assistance through the Medical Services Plan of the Ministry of Health Services.
Aboriginal Education Initiatives	Stronger support for the revitalization of traditional teachings and the honouring of elders as the keepers of Aboriginal knowledge, culture and languages, with a focus to better integrate Aboriginal languages, histories, cultures and world views into public school curriculum and improve the learning environment for First Nations and Métis students.
Aboriginal Health Initiatives	A number of provincial programs and initiatives geared to help improve the health outcomes for Aboriginal people.
B.C. Language Initiative (First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council)	Commitment to Aboriginal language and cultural revitalization supporting language and culture camps; language and culture master-apprentice programs; pre-school language and culture immersion programs; and First Nations community language and culture authorities.
Early Years Refugee Pilot	Pilot projects which will develop effective, community-based responses to the settlement, early childhood development and early learning needs of vulnerable refugee children 0-6 years of age and their families.
Full-day Kindergarten (Early Childhood Learning Agency)	Government announced in the 2009 Speech from the Throne, British Columbia is making full day kindergarten available to all five year olds in the province. Full day kindergarten will be available for up to half of B.C.'s eligible students in September 2010. By September 2011, full day kindergarten will be available across the province.
ECD Evaluation Project	The ECD Funder's Network, composed of representatives from Community Action Plan for Children, Children First, Success by 6®, and supported by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Public Health Agency of Canada, Human Early Learning Partnership, Max Bell Foundation and participating communities, works on the development of an integrated evaluation and reporting system for programs

Early Years Program	Description
	related to early childhood development that would support four long-term outcomes.
Children First	A community development initiative that incorporates a strength-based population health approach to improving outcomes for young children, 0 – 6 years, and their families. The initiative builds on the existing strengths and capacities in a community.
Success By 6®	A province-wide joint initiative of United Ways, Credit Unions of BC, the BC Government, through the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and community leaders. SB6 is focused on developing community-based partnerships that support healthy outcomes and strengthen services for children, 0 to 6 years, across B.C.
Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP)	A collaborative, interdisciplinary research network that contributes to new knowledge in early child development and enhances the quality of children’s early years.
Neighbourhood Hubs	Community-based resources that provide children and families with a range of early childhood development services, child care and family support programs in a single setting.
Immigrant Settlement Services Agencies	Contracts with third-party agencies to provide essential settlement services for newcomers.

Adapted from:
MCFD, 2009a; MEd, 2010; MHSD, 2010; BC Housing, 2010; MARR, 2010; Welcome BC, 2010.