

**Proceedings Document from the Common Table Forum  
on Full Day Learning for Four and Five Year Olds**

June 11, 2008

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### **Introduction: Who is the Common Table?**

The Common Table for Childhood Development & Care Ontario was formed February 2005 and represents stakeholders that come together to promote collaboration in advocacy and delivery of services to children and families. It is a broad network including: Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, Best Start Resource Centre by Health Nexus, Boys and Girls Clubs of Ontario, Campaign 2000, Child Care Resource & Research Unit, College of Applied Arts & Technology – ECE Coordinators Group, CUPE Ontario, Early Childhood Resource Teachers Network of Ontario, Family Support Institute Ontario, Home Child Care Association of Ontario, L'Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario, Middle Childhood Matters Coalition, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care Ontario Early Years Centre Provincial Network, Organization for Parent Participation in Child Care and Education Ontario, Rural Voices.

### **Why did the Common Table hold the Forum?**

The Common Table recognizes full day learning for four and five year olds as an issue of great importance for our stakeholders. The Forum allowed us to consult with our community and gather information for further discussion and create recommendations to be presented to Dr. Charles Pascal, the Early Learning Advisor for the Province of Ontario.

### **What is this Document?**

This “Proceedings Document” is not an analysis of the Forum’s discussion rather it is a record of the presentation made on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Process Used at the Forum**

The Forum opened with remarks by Dr. Charles Pascal, the province’s Early Learning Advisor. We heard three presentations of different models. Participants broke into small groups to discuss barriers and opportunities for each of the seven categories of questions. To send us your feedback, go to WEBSITE to download our “Delegate Questionnaire” from the June forum.

### **What are the Next Steps for the Common Table?**

A report with analysis and recommendations will be available in the fall.

### **What are the Next Steps for Full Day Learning for four and five year olds in Ontario?**

Dr. Charles Pascal is set to report to the Premier’s office in February 2009. The Provincial Government has allocated \$200 million dollars in the 2010 budget, with a further \$300 million dollars in the 2011 budget for full-day learning.

Dr. Pascal has a new website with a discussion guide that may be used by an individual or a group to organize submissions. For a group submission, the group will want to arrange for a facilitator/leader and someone to summarize the discussion and review it with the group before submitting it. There are 20 questions divided into five sections. Responding to all the questions as a group takes about two hours. If you have less time you may want to choose the sections or questions you want to focus on in advance. <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/index.html>

## Guiding Principles for Full Day Learning for Four and Five Year Olds:

1. ***Meets the needs of all families:*** No matter how or by whom the program is delivered it must be **child focused** and support the needs of all families. The full-day programs should ensure that children, whose families opt for a shorter day, would still receive a curriculum that addresses all of the developmental domains.
2. ***Parent involvement*** is an integral part of a child's learning so the program must be delivered in a manner that is supportive to **all** families. It must welcome and encourage parent **participation** in the care and development of their young children.
3. ***Seamless/ Integrated Day:*** Many children have to adjust to major environmental and pedagogical changes in the course of their day, dealing with duplication, fragmentation, or inconsistencies in their learning and care. Integrated services meet the developmental and care needs of the child and are provided in a variety of settings, including full-day programs in schools, full-day programs in centre-based child care, and through coordination between school and either centre-based or home-based regulated child care programs.
4. ***Child Centred Curriculum:*** Learning theories and **developmentally appropriate play based learning practices** should guide the design and implementation of the early learning programs and support growth **in all of the developmental domains**; recognizing that social, emotional and creative development need to be addressed just as much as the cognitive, language or physical development.
5. ***Ensure High Quality Service:*** High quality early learning and care programs promote healthy child development. Educators and researchers have concluded that the quality of these services is positively impacted by:
  - **Learning Environment:** A quality setting is one that is child-centered, providing care integrated with developmentally appropriate activities for young children. The setting has a richness of resources including educational tools and high nutritional standards.
  - **Adult to Child Ratios:** The number of adults as compared to the number of children is crucial given that high adult to child ratios enhances the capacity of staff to more sensitively interact with the children and parents.
  - **Qualifications, Remuneration and Morale of Staff and Providers:** Highly qualified, well-paid and well-supported staff who experience high job satisfaction are better able to respond to all children, to plan and support developmentally appropriate programming, and to provide learning and care that respects diversity and values all children and families.
  - **Public Non-profit Delivery:** The research in Canada and internationally is clear that non-profit early learning programs generally serve children and families better and is of higher quality. For these reasons, any new investment in the sector should be **expanded in the public and non-profit sector only.**
  - **Inclusion:** The principle of inclusion goes beyond the notion of physical integration and fully incorporates basic values that promote and advance participation, friendship and a celebration of diversity. All children are active participants, not just observers on the sidelines.

## Synopsis: Toronto First Duty

Model presented by Jill Worthy, Superintendent, Toronto District School Board. The goal of Toronto First Duty is to create an early learning and care program for every child that:

- Supports the healthy development and successful learning experiences for all children, at the same time as it
- Supports parents to work or study
- Supports parents in their parenting role

Toronto First Duty was initiated in 1999 with the aim of demonstrating the value of integrating kindergarten, child care and parenting supports in an early years strategy.

The 5 “Core Elements” of the Toronto First Duty Model are:

- **An Integrated Early Years Learning Environment** - blending the three streams of kindergarten, child care/early childhood education and parenting. Strategies may include shared space, resources and approaches.
- **An Early Childhood Staff Team** - integrating staff from the three early years streams with each member delivering core aspects of the Early Years Learning Environment. Strategies may include the development of a generic job description.
- **An Integrated Governance Model** – Funded by the Toronto District School Board and parent fees, the program is a partnership between the school board and Woodgreen Community Services.
- **Seamless Access** - to services and facilitated access to other services. Strategies include; common intake to the programs, integrated client information/data collection.
- **Parent Involvement** - to increase the participation of parents/caregivers strategies may include participation in the governance, program and planning.

In essence, the Toronto First Duty model is one in which the school becomes a “hub” for accessing family services (i.e. early learning and child care) in a local community. The Kindergarten program uses an integrated joint curriculum taught by a collaborative early learning team that is comprised of Kindergarten teachers, Early Childhood Educators, and teaching assistants.

## **Synopsis of: U of T – Early Learning Centre & Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)**

Model presented by Ryan Campbell, Preschool and Kindergarten Supervisor at the Early Learning Centre, University of Toronto. This model is a partnership between an early learning and child care centre and a public elementary school. Kindergarten aged children stay in the same integrated early learning classroom throughout the whole day. A kindergarten teacher from Huron Public School visits the Early Learning Centre on a daily basis and teaches the “core” program. The curriculum used in this model is comprised of revised kindergarten expectations used in conjunction with the basic principles of emergent curriculum.

### **Program planning:**

- Weekly curriculum web shared by ELC staff and TDSB teacher
- Afternoon program a combination of teacher-planned experiences and ECE - planned experiences (“complimentary”)
- All experiences developed in recognition of observed interests
- Some opportunities for team planning

### **Staff Roles & Responsibilities:**

- All Kindergarten program staff have a shared responsibility to plan and implement weekly curriculum experiences
- All Kindergarten staff collaborate to track the developmental progress of every child enrolled in the program:
  - i) TDSB teacher writes report cards in consultation with ECE staff
  - ii) Entire team attends parent-teacher conferences
  - iii) ECE staff ensure ongoing tracking of progress via: journals (daily); observations (daily); assessment tools (as needed); and student portfolios

## Synopsis: Early Learning – A NEW Approach

This theoretical model for full day learning for four and five year olds was presented for discussion by Jane Mercer of the Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care. This model proposes the creation of a new “Early Years Division” within the Ministry of Education to govern full day early learning programs in Ontario. **School boards** and **municipalities** would be responsible for administering and allocating funding to the appropriate full day learning programs.

School boards would:

- Develop Full Day Early Learning programs for 4 and 5 year olds
- Within the School Board’s system, in the school’s own “on-site” program, in collaborations “on site” or “off site”, with early learning & ELCC programs

Municipalities would:

- Develop Full Day Early Learning programs for 4 and 5 year olds within the Children’s Services system
- Use existing capacity and programs in Municipal child care centres or in non-profit Early Learning & Child Care centres

ALL Programs would:

- Be funded by the NEW \$8,000 Early Learning per diem (for approx 1100 hrs of EL per child per year)\*
- Meet the policies & curriculum of the NEW “Early Years Division”
- Be responsive to families/ communities

In essence, this model aims to create an integrated early learning program that is a seamless day in one location. A unified curriculum (a blend of the *Early Learning for Every Child Today* (ELECT) and the Ministry of Education’s Revised Kindergarten Curriculum) would be taught collaboratively by an Early Learning team (Kindergarten teachers, ECEs, and a NEW “ECE specialist Qualification” (a new Early Learning Centre degree) for the “Team Lead” in all Early Learning Programs.

### Comparing the Three Models - Governance

<b>Toronto First Duty</b>	<b>U of T – Early Learning Centre and Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)</b>	<b>Early Learning – a NEW Approach</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program administered by Toronto District School Board</li> <li>• The school setting is where the program operates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Joint Governance</b> between Early Learning Centre and Toronto District School Board</li> <li>• Early Learning Centre holds license and operates under Day Nurseries Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education with a new Early Years Division to be created with legislation to ensure universal public delivery.</li> <li>• Programs and funding to be administered by School Boards AND/or Municipalities</li> </ul>

### Comparing the Three Models - Funding and Parent Fees

Toronto First Duty	U of T – Early Learning Centre and Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)	Early Learning – a NEW Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Base funding provided by Toronto District School Board for each child to help cover the cost of the Kindergarten program (9:00am – 3:30pm)</li> <li>• Parent fees to cover extended hours (before and after)</li> <li>• Subsidies available for eligible families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toronto District School Board covers cost of on-site Kindergarten program (pays for the visiting Kindergarten teacher)</li> <li>• Parent fees to cover extended hours (before and after)</li> <li>• Subsidies available for eligible families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approx. \$8000 per year in Early Learning funding per 4 – 5 year old child</li> <li>• Allocated as a per diem and flowing to the applicable administrative body (School Board or Municipality)</li> <li>• Parent fees to cover extended hours (before and after)</li> <li>• Parent fees would be collected by School Board, Municipality, or ELCC Centre</li> <li>• Subsidies available for eligible families</li> </ul>

### Comparing the Three Models - Delivery Method and Location

Toronto First Duty	U of T – Early Learning Centre and Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)	Early Learning – a NEW Approach
<p><b>Location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program is centred in a school setting</li> <li>• Shared joint space for Early Learning Environment (Kindergarten and Preschool)</li> </ul> <p><b>Delivery Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Seamless” day for children (children stay in the same room)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom space is in Early Learning Centre</li> </ul> <p><b>Delivery Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily visiting Kindergarten teacher from Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Boards</b> to use “on-site” school settings in collaboration with ELCC programs</li> <li>• <b>Municipalities</b> to use <b>non-profit</b> ELCC centres</li> </ul> <p><b>Delivery Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Boards</b> develop Full Day Early Learning programs for 4 and 5 year olds <b>within the School Board’s system</b></li> <li>• <b>Municipalities</b> develop Full Day Early Learning programs for 4 and 5 year olds <b>within the Children’s Services system</b></li> </ul>

### Comparing the Three Models - Curriculum

Toronto First Duty	U of T – Early Learning Centre and Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)	Early Learning – a NEW Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum is a blend of the <i>Early Learning for Every Child Today</i> (ELECT) and the Ministry of Education’s Revised Kindergarten Curriculum</li> <li>• Play-based Early Learning</li> <li>• Seamless day, and <b>learning</b> to continue outside of “core Kindergarten program” into extended hours as well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten Teacher to use blend of Revised Kindergarten Curriculum and Emergent Curriculum</li> <li>• Joint-planning between Kindergarten Teacher and Early Childhood Educators</li> <li>• Early Childhood Educators monitor Kindergarten program to ensure continuity in learning and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum is a blend of the <i>Early Learning for Every Child Today</i> (ELECT) and the Ministry of Education’s Revised Kindergarten Curriculum</li> </ul>

### Comparing the Three Models - Human Resources

Toronto First Duty	U of T – Early Learning Centre and Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)	Early Learning – a NEW Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten Teachers and Early Childhood Educators to work side by side in a team in developing and planning of program</li> <li>• Both Kindergarten Teachers and Early Childhood Educators share responsibilities of talking with parents</li> <li>• Kindergarten teacher prepares formal report cards</li> <li>• “Early Learning Team” is made up of the following components               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Early Childhood Educators and Assistants</li> <li>○ Kindergarten Teachers and Special Needs Assistants</li> <li>○ Parenting Workers</li> <li>○ Resource Staff from both streams</li> <li>○ Student Placements</li> <li>○ Parent and Community Volunteers</li> <li>○ Child Care Manager and School Principal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint planning between Kindergarten Teacher and Early Childhood Educators</li> <li>• Occasional opportunities for shared Professional Development (e.g. touring of similar programs)</li> <li>• Kindergarten Teacher prepares formal report cards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriately trained Early Learning team, working collaboratively in a respectful environment</li> <li>• NEW Early Years Division may include the creation of an Early Years Specialist credential to teach children aged 0-8 years</li> <li>• ECE specialist Qualification (a new Early Learning Centre degree) for the “Team Lead” in all Early Learning Programs</li> <li>• <b>Equivalent</b> pay scale for all professionals working as the “Team Lead” in each setting</li> <li>• Professional development <b>provided to all team members</b></li> </ul>

### Comparing the Three Models - Parent Choice and Involvement

Toronto First Duty	U of T – Early Learning Centre and Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)	Early Learning – a NEW Approach
<p><b>Choice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various enrolment options are available to suit needs of families (half-day, full-day, extended-day)</li> </ul> <p><b>Involvement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input into decision-making and programs</li> <li>• Active and direct participation in children’s early learning and development (<b>parents are welcome to participate in the classroom</b>)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Choice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since program is in Early Learning Centre, it allows for children to remain in program during extended hours</li> <li>• This also allows children to stay in one setting (instead of learning Early Learning Centre and walking to school building)</li> </ul> <p><b>Involvement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Learning Centre encourages parent input into all of its programs and policies through its Parent Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Parents are encouraged to join their children for lunch, snacks, or any other time throughout the day in an effort to bridge home and family life</li> </ul>	<p><b>Choice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents may choose which style of program suits their child and family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Core Day</b> (9am to 3:30pm) in School setting or</li> <li>○ <b>Extended Day</b> in an Early Learning and Child Care centre</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Involvement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are welcome to directly participate in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Classroom and program</li> <li>○ Governance of program</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Comparing the Three Models - System Building

<b>Toronto First Duty</b>	<b>U of T – Early Learning Centre and Huron Public School (Toronto District School Board)</b>	<b>Early Learning – a NEW Approach</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a seamless Early Learning day for children</li> <li>• Integration of Kindergarten and Early Childhood Education staff</li> <li>• Part of Toronto First Duty’s mandate is to utilize and create partnerships with pre-existing community assets (such as Child Care Centres)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Learning Centre classroom space used throughout the day (MAXIMIZES the use of existing resources)</li> <li>• ENSURES STABILITY for ALL of our Early Learning programs (Child Care, OEYCs, Family Resource, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Maximizes existing resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximizes the use of physical space in our existing schools and child care centres before any additional resources need to be spent on Capital development</li> <li>• Maximizes our Human Resources by ensuring that all of our ECEs and teachers remain employed and have the opportunity to develop their skills</li> <li>• ENSURES STABILITY for ALL of our Early Learning Programs (child care, OEYCs, Family resource)</li> <li>• Does not displace programs or dollars in School, Child Care or Family Support Program</li> </ul>

### Selected Feedback from Discussion Groups - Governance

Barriers	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring accountability</li> <li>• Who will be responsible for administering programs in communities?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ school boards?</li> <li>○ municipalities?</li> <li>○ both?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There is a fear in the ELCC sector of “too much bureaucracy” being created to administer Full-Day Early Learning</li> <li>• Municipal administration of ELCC is different and this could present problems for coordination and consistency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create and pass legislation “enshrining” the Full-Day Early Learning program as permanent (so no future government could eliminate it)</li> <li>• To receive <u>Provincial funding</u> for Early Learning programs in ELCC</li> <li>• Opportunity for ECEs to have equal representation, input, and decision-making alongside teachers and other stakeholders</li> <li>• An opportunity to create an “Early Years Division” within Ministry of Education               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ would help to bridge gaps between Ministry of Education and Ministry of Child &amp; Youth Services</li> <li>○ to pool resources for ELCC that are currently coming from different Ministries</li> <li>○ would help to ensure accountability to public</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To think larger than a small system for 4 and 5 year olds (i.e. thinking about the WHOLE system for 0-12)</li> <li>• To have First Nation/Aboriginal communities manage their own programs</li> </ul>

### Selected Feedback from Discussion Groups - Funding and Parent Fees

Barriers	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue of securing funding for the long-term</li> <li>• Fear of funding being allocated to commercial, for-profit centres:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “big-box”</li> <li>○ Montessori</li> <li>○ private schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Currently there are issues around subsidies:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ cap on number of subsidies, eligibility, etc.</li> <li>○ inconsistent subsidies depending on the municipality</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There is concern that the promised provincial funding will not be enough to cover the cost of full day learning for four and five year olds.</li> <li>• If parents are required to pay additional fees for an extended day beyond 9-3:30, who will collect the fees?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are expecting that their children will be in a seamless program in one location with one curriculum:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ this presents an opportunity to raise issue of funding the whole day (before and after extended hours as well)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To ensure that current child care funding stays (no removal of funding for 4 and 5 year olds in non-profit care)</li> <li>• To move agenda forward on limiting capital funding to only non-profit ELCC</li> <li>• Funding for Full Day Early Learning will be new money: this will free up existing resources in ELCC sector</li> </ul>

### Selected Feedback from Discussion Groups - Delivery Method and Location

Barriers	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we ensure delivery of a seamless program and curriculum?</li> <li>• Transportation (rural communities), ratios, classrooms and space etc.</li> <li>• How can ECEs and teachers work together when each stream works under different legislation? (i.e. D.N.A. vs. Education Act)</li> <li>• May be a challenge to integrate all staffing (tasks, planning, hours, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to streamline and integrate Early Learning and family services into one program and location</li> <li>• “Seamless” day presents opportunities to create continuity in staffing (i.e. not separating staff into core day and before and after)</li> </ul>

### Selected Feedback from Discussion Groups - Curriculum

Barriers	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal awareness, understanding, and acceptance of future mandated curriculum</li> <li>• School board and teachers have publicly stated that Kindergarten teachers should provide instruction and ECEs should deliver before and after care, and provide assistance in classrooms to Kindergarten teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For ECEs, teachers, and other professionals to work together as a “team” to produce a great curriculum</li> <li>• To develop a curriculum that runs all day (including before and after school programs)</li> <li>• Getting back to “play-based learning”</li> </ul>

### Selected Feedback from Discussion Groups - Human Resources

Barriers	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different salaries; different unions</li> <li>• Summer hours (teachers do not work in the summer)</li> <li>• Recruitment and retention problems in ELCC sector across Canada will be exacerbated by the expansion of full day learning unless working conditions are wages are improved.</li> <li>• Who would provide extra training for ECEs to upgrade their diplomas? Is there capacity within colleges/universities to do so?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To build partnerships and relationships with schools and other services</li> <li>• To have a post-diploma year (specialty) added to the ECE program at the college level; and improve the overall education and training of ECEs</li> <li>• To combine Preschool and Kindergarten teachers in similar training</li> <li>• An opportunity to unionize child care workers</li> </ul>

### Selected Feedback from Discussion Groups - Parent Choice and Involvement

Barriers	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents without transportation or living in remote communities</li> <li>• Parents of children with special needs have to be addressed</li> <li>• Model of 9am to 3:30pm would not meet the needs of many working parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing programs with flexible hours for Early Learning would fit with many parents' work needs (half-day, full-day, before and after, etc.)</li> <li>• To engage and involve parents more directly with their child's early learning and care</li> </ul>

### Selected Feedback from Discussion Groups - System Building

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What about home child care providers? Will they be left out? Will parents have a choice?</li> <li>• Perception that school boards tend to choose a provider (ELCC) that they are already involved with</li> <li>• Integrating existing ELCC with school boards and Ministry of Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing the importance and value that home child care provides to the ELCC system (before and after, parental choice, etc.)</li> <li>• Since the Provincial funding for Full Day Early Learning is “new money”, this could free up current existing funding and resources within ELCC sector</li> <li>• Creation of an “Early Years Division” could be used to integrate existing services such as Ontario Early Years Centres</li> </ul>