

**A Discussion Paper for ECEBC Board of Directors:
Professional Leadership in Early Childhood Education**

**A Summary of University of Victoria, British Columbia
– Investigating Quality (IQ), Early Learning
Framework Proposal and Three International Models:**

**New Zealand
United States
United Kingdom**

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Introduction

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) has received funding from Van City to develop and implement a professional leadership strategy for Early Childhood Educators (ECE) in BC. To assist in the development of the strategy, ECEBC has initiated a limited review of:

1. The Provincial Implementation of the Early Learning Framework Proposal submitted by University of Victoria, Selkirk College and Northern Light College,
2. Investigating Quality (IQ) project - The University of Victoria, and
3. Three international leadership models,
 - a. Early Childhood Leadership Institute – United States,
 - b. Centres of Innovation – New Zealand, and
 - c. The National College of School Leadership – United Kingdom and.

As part of the review the consultant identified a number of other initiatives that could provide insight and guidance to the ECEBC board of directors in their planning. Projects such as the Transatlantic Consortium in Early Childhood Intervention, Dare to Learn – Australia, the International Leadership Project – Finland, London Metropolitan University and the University of Winnipeg Advance Diploma in Leadership. Information and ideas from these additional projects has been incorporated into the summary, below. The next section includes a summary analysis of the models’ purpose, goals/objectives and activities with the intent of assisting ECEBC in gaining ideas, strategies and resources for developing a “made in BC leadership strategy”.

The findings of this exercise will also advise a framework for selecting potential sites to develop, implement and evaluate leadership strategies in a select number of communities and identify ideas for a leadership institute.

Summary

A brief summary of some of the key findings on leadership and potential strategies are summarized below.

Leadership

All of the materials and models reviewed emphasis the key links between leadership and quality early childhood programs. From a leadership perspective two views dominate, the first, which places emphasis on a hierarchical approach with a focus on administration and management. The second approach is a broader and more holistic approach based on collaboration, networking and mutual sharing of ideas to “deepen” the knowledge of the early childhood field. Such an approach is illustrated in the following research experts.

- Effective leadership characteristics often identified by educators in the field of early childhood included; “power for rather than power over (Valerie Hall, 1996), a culture of trust, openness, involvement, commitment to children, goal oriented, assertive, proactive, visionary, influential, good communication, good working relationships, acknowledging staff strengths and provide constructive feedback, assist less qualified staff, multifaceted and flexible (Carol Aubry, 2006).
- “There is a need to develop effective early childhood reflective and strategic skills to increase self understanding, thinking about complex problems and look at alternative routs to problem solving.” (Carol Aubry, 2006)
- “Leaders are seen as people who encourage empowerment, who understand the professional field and who are committed to a better deal for women and children” (Cushla Scrivens, 1999).

Quality

Quality has historically been defined and measured by standards and what has become commonly known as “best practice”. This view tends to embrace regulatory standards, accreditation models, standardized assessments such are Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales and places emphasis on “fixing” problems. There is an underlying assumption in this approach that a “one size fits all”. The alternative view, which appears to be more embedded in an ecological model, views the child in the context of family and community. The focus is on a “deeper” understanding of the child and childhood. Focus is placed on understanding quality in relation to the child’s experiences as a child and gives consideration to cultural reflection, knowledge sharing, engagement, action research, and pedagogical learning approaches.

Tools to Develop Leadership

Numerous tools and strategies were identified in the various leadership initiatives reviewed and included; case studies, workshops, seminars and conferences; retreats and residential institutes, videos, role playing research associates, mentorship and mentor meetings; forums and summits, networking, web site development, on-line interaction; site observation, program tours and international exchanges; centres of innovation, and engagement of parents, professionals and children. Where post diploma/degree programs existed, course content varied, however most programs placed emphasis on management skills development in the areas of communication, problem solving or conflict resolution, organizational behaviour, human resource and financial management.

It is significant to note that all of the models reviewed were either administered through a post secondary institution or had a strong partnership with such an institution. Those models most developed, such as New Zealand (Pathway to the Future:Nga Huarahi Arataki) and the UK (Every Child Matters) also had a strong national policy framework, which fostered leadership development and provided significant public funding. Other funding sources included foundations, philanthropic ventures and corporate contribution.

Response to the Request for Grant Proposal
BC Ministry of Education: Early Learning Framework (BCELF)

Purpose:

Assist the Ministry of Education in introducing and supporting the implementation of the Early Learning Framework (ELF) for those who work with children aged three to four and to the post secondary instructors who deliver pre-service training and education.

Goal:

- To work collaboratively and in consultation with, the Ministry of Education to develop, deliver, evaluate, and revise curricula for the ECE sector and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the BCELF.
- To make available to stakeholders, training products resulting from this initiative.

Objectives:

- To build links and develop mutual understanding among the various occupational groups and organizations within the early learning sector, including but not limited to early childhood educators, primary teachers, school districts, Strong Start facilitators, and family child care providers.
- To contribute to the creation of complimentary, seamless opportunities for early learning.
- To establish productive working relationships among the ECE training institutions, the early learning sector, and other groups whose work with young children will be informed by the BCELF
- To develop and deliver post diploma professional development to ECE Field Leaders in order to support the implementation of the BCELF within the ECE community and the college system and to prepare the Field Leaders to deliver in-service training to the early learning field and other interested stakeholders.
- To develop and deliver professional development to ECE College Instructors. The professional development will support the implementation of the BCELF within existing college curricula and utilize the knowledge and expertise of College Instructors to deliver (as co-instructors, along with Field Leaders) in-service training to the early learning field and other interested stakeholders.
- To develop and deliver in-service training on the BCELF to practitioners in the early learning sector and other stakeholders who work with young children.
- To collect feedback on the existing BCELF to help inform future drafts.
- To collect feedback on the training materials to inform future deliveries and initiatives for implementing the BCELF.
- To document and evaluate the effectiveness of this process as a means of implementing BCELF.
- To recommend strategies for implementing the BCELF beyond the completion of the project.

Leaderships Activities:

Through a collaborative partnership between the three above noted post secondary institutions and the Ministry of Education, three major in-service initiatives will be developed to communicate the concepts of the BCELf policy paper to the community and stakeholders. These stakeholders include early childhood educators, family childcare providers, primary school teachers, Infant Development Program consultants, supported childcare consultants, ECE college and university instructors and others.

Core curriculum will be developed that can be adapted and expanded for each training event. Curriculum will include a Training Blueprint document, Facilitator Guide based on blueprint and Train-the-Trainer guide. Training to be offered both centrally and regionally and in three strands. Strand One will include a post diploma training for 15 Field Leaders, Strand Two professional development for 25 ECE College Instructors and Strand Three in-service training for practitioners

Investing in Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (IQ) University of Victoria, BC

Vision:

Early childhood settings are spaces for children, families, community and educators to engage and interact, opening up possibilities for all levels of program quality that are much more dynamic than those achievable through a “minimum standards” approach,

“We believe that for quality to take on depth, meaning and purpose, processes of engagement, discussion, and interaction are critical in shaping positive caregiving environments and practices”.

Purpose:

The focus of the IQ project is to identify and work with diverse streams of research and practice in order to broaden and deepen early childhood discussions in Canada.

Objectives:

- Promote the active engagement of early childhood educators, college and university instructors, researchers, and policy-makers in critical reflections on quality.
- Promote the active engagement of early childhood educators in discussions and actions that lead to the formation of innovative spaces for young children and families.

Leaderships Activities:

Summit

- Summit on Rethinking Pedagogy, Training and Professional Development in Early Childhood Education. A two day summit to bring together a small group of international leaders in ECE who share a perspective of young children as meaningful knowledge makers to discuss training, professional development and pedagogical issues, explore ways to effect change at the policy, pedagogical and training levels, support the development of a sophisticated field at local, provincial, national and international levels, and create meaningful dialogues between policy makers, ECE and researchers.

Forums

- Three forums with international ECCE leaders to promote discussion on quality at a local, provincial, national and international level.
- 1) International Development Perspectives on Quality and Policy. Forum to examine the broad, intersectoral approaches to early childhood.
 - 2) Indigenous Approaches to Quality Child Care. Holistic views of international indigenous leaders on quality with emphasis on life principles of relationality, respect, wholeness, sacredness, continuity, connections between the past and the future, relationships with nature and spiritual well being.
 - 3) Beyond Quality and other Critiques. Opportunities to discuss challenges and innovations in practice and pedagogy.
 - 4) Innovative Approaches to Assessment in ECCE: The Use of Learning Stories in New Zealand with Margaret Carr and Wendy Lee.

Learning Circles

- Series of “learning and sharing” circles in various communities in BC. This is a collaborative process of critical reflection on quality with early childhood educators. These circles allow the creation of innovative ECCE programs, support networks and dialogue within participating communities and allow diverse approaches to sustainable quality settings and builds capacity for creative practices to support children and families. Participants attend 12 full days of meetings with discussion and documentation of personal reflections and learning. Relief funding for back up staff is provided to free up staff time to participate. Site visits and on-line network pilot are also components of this project. This is an action research model with a group of ECEs from a variety of settings including aboriginal, multicultural, rural, urban, college and university based, preschool, full time day care, infant-toddler, and family day care.

This initiative incorporates participants aspirations, skills, knowledge and understanding into the learning context, provides theoretical and content knowledge along with information about alternative and innovative practices, investigation of pedagogy within ECE’s own setting, support of professional advisers to assist with questioning of practice, beliefs and understandings, critical reflection and support of inclusive and respective educational practice.

Centres of Innovation (COI) New Zealand

Mission:

“We are constantly challenging and extending the depth of knowledge within the ECE sector. Centres of Innovation (COI) foster research and development in ECE sector and reflect New Zealand’s heritage of ingenuity and innovation. The centres capitalize on the experience of those most likely to produce the best ideas – the people working the ECE services. The programme sees ECE teachers combining their skills with the complementary skills of researchers. The regular change in the research cycle allows the exploration, documentation and sharing of diverse range of skills and practices that continue to extend the effectiveness of teaching and learning.” Pathways to the Future.

Purpose:

The aim of the Centres of Innovation programme is to improve quality and strengthen effective teaching and learning practices in early childhood education services through researching innovative teaching processes.

Goals:

- Promote deeper exploration of innovative teaching and learning processes, which are already underway in early childhood.

Objectives:

- Further develop already established effective approaches and innovative practices to improve teaching and learning processes, which support the effective implementation of Te Whariki.
- Undertake participatory action research in partnership with a skilled research associate to show what impact their effective approaches and innovative practice have on learning and teaching.
- Share knowledge, understanding and models of practice with others in the ECE sector including parents and whanau.

Leadership Activities:

Centres of Innovation

- The early childhood strategic plan “Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki” (2002) established the Centres for Innovation as a strategy to improve quality of early childhood education. Four rounds of expressions of interest have occurred from licensed centres including home base networks. In total 19 centres have been identified in 4 rounds of selection. The Ministry of Education enters into 2 contracts, one with the selected centre and one with the research associate (see below for role).

Centres are funded and supported for three year terms to:

- Research and further develop an existing innovative practice designed to improve learning and teaching in early childhood education which can be used in other services, and
- Disseminate information about their innovation and the outcomes of their research.

The research component is conducted in partnership with research associates (someone who has access to ethics committee processes) and is action-oriented research. The key role of the research associate is to build capacity and mentor teachers in their role. In order to mentor, the research associate must have postgraduate qualifications and have ECE research experience along with a three-year commitment to the project.

Innovation in this context refers to learning and teaching practices, which are different in identifiable ways from typical programs – “taking best knowledge and using such knowledge to take practice to the leading edge”. Effective practice embraces approaches based on:

- A belief that the child is an active learner
- Responsive, reciprocal and respectful relationships established throughout the ECE service
- Learning and teaching passed on principles of Te Whariki (curriculum)
- Good communication between key interested parties
- The inclusion of all children, covering the range of abilities and experiences that each child has
- Recognition and support for the range of cultures among families involved in the service
- Overall quality learning and teaching practices.

Dissemination of information is key and may include print, web, visitor programmes, talks to parent and/or peers.

Research:

Research areas for each round of COI varied with the following stated outcomes:

Round 1 and 2 – “Competent practice in teaching and learning in Kaupapa Maori services, Pasifika immersion and bilingual services, services that integrate infant toddler and ICT into the curriculum. Community of learning approaches evident in the collaborative relationships with parents and whanau, and with other programmes, agencies and/or schools also matter”

Round 3 – “Deeper exploration of innovative and teaching and learning processes in 1) inclusive ECE for diverse children and families/whanau (including cultural inclusiveness and inclusion of children with special needs and gifted children) 2) content knowledge of ECE, 3) transitions from home to early childhood education services and from early childhood services to school.

Round 4 - “Effective and innovative teaching that strengthens learning outcomes through responsive, respectful and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things Resources” (Expression of Interest – Centres of Innovation)

Project web site:

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout+index&indexid=8303&indexparentid+5234>

National College for School Leadership (NCSL) United Kingdom

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) exists to help make a difference to the lives and the life changes of children and young people throughout the development of world-class school leaders. (NCSL is a non-departmental public body of the Department for Children, Schools and Families).

Purpose:

To improve the lives and life chances of all children and young people throughout the country by developing work-class school leaders, system leaders and future leaders.

Goals:

- Transform children's achievement and well-being through excellent school leadership
- Develop leadership within and beyond the school
- Identify and grow tomorrow's leaders
- Create a fit for purpose, national College

Objectives:

- Work closely with school leaders and other partners
- Listen to school leaders to ensure they have a strong voice in the development of programmes
- Ensure all school leaders have fair and equal access to College programmes and activities and strive to be an exemplary equal opportunities employer
- Tailor leadership provision to individual and local contexts
- Draw on best practice anywhere in the world, so we are an authoritative national voice on school leadership and management issues both to school leaders and to Government
- Constantly evaluate our impact, welcoming external challenge

Leadership Activities:

NCSL is focussed on the development of children in the school years. Specific professional training programme for leaders of children's centres children birth to 4 years has been developed and is an accredited course for 1 year. Focus on the early years will be the next phase of this initiative. The following initiatives are geared toward teachers and administrators, however the concepts could be adopted for ECE.

Programmes

- Flexible learning combine national standards with tailored learning

Strategic Leadership

- Opportunity for school leaders to build their knowledge and understanding of key issues around technology to enhance and extend learning in and out of schools.

Online Communities

- Allow individuals to connect with peers from across the education sector to engage in professional dialogue, to stimulate debate and to learn from the wisdom of others. Our online communities are open to an increasingly wide range of school leaders - including head teachers, deputy heads, middle leaders and school business managers from schools, children's centres and further education colleges. Access to a confidential and extensive network of colleagues, experts and policy-makers to debate, discuss and share ideas.

London Leadership Strategy

Goals: raise standards across London schools, re-establish London as a leading force in educational development, motivate education professionals to work in London, narrow the achievement gap within London's schools; nurture, develop and sustain best practice, grow a collaborative culture across London's schools to enhance pupil learning, learn from London ideas, and disseminate the learning to others nationally and internationally.

- Consultant Leader Deployment Programme: designed to match qualified consultant leaders with schools that are facing challenging circumstances. A training programme designed to provide suitable candidates with the skills needed to help the strategy to provide programmes and support to London schools.
- Extended Leadership Visits: senior members of selected London schools have the opportunity to make two-day visits to schools focusing on key areas, such as behaviour management.
- Program for New Secondary Head Masters: open to those within their first year of headship in London, the programme aims to maximize the impact of new head teachers. It consists of a 24-hour residential course coupled with leadership co-coaching with current London heads. A development programme to prepare aspiring black and minority ethnic London leaders for higher-level leadership roles within education.
- Graduate Program in Educational Leadership, Development and Consultancy enhances participants' command of the research, theory and techniques underlying training and consultancy.
- Mentoring-coaching: a programme to familiarize participants with generic skills of mentoring-coaching.

- Head Teach Coaching Program open to new middle managers, particularly overseas-trained or newly qualified teachers, the programme provides practical guidance and advice on taking on a management role, coupled with subject- or pastoral-specific tutoring.
- Network Leadership Program open to new leaders within London schools. Participants take part in up to three targeted visits to other London schools, with opportunities to develop best practice. leadershipstrategy@ncsl.org.uk

Networked Learning Communities

- The Networked Learning Communities programme includes over 134 school networks with approximately 35,000 staff and over 675,000 pupils. Their work has been a major influence on the formation of other partnership initiatives. Through their work, these groups of schools demonstrated the massive potential benefits that can come from working together. These benefits are visible at all levels, from pupils to school leaders.
- NCSL has drawn the knowledge gained from the programme into this single website. The website features collections of conference and research papers, magazine articles and tools and many practical resources which can support schools and other organisations in working together. It offers material for academic researchers, school leaders and classroom teachers, presented as bite-sized pieces, programme-wide reviews and just about everything in-between.

Lead Practitioners

- SSAT lead practitioners are outstanding teachers recruited on a one year basis who disseminate best practice in their subject through regional networks. They run events throughout the country and also produce resources for our website. [lead practitioner pages](#).

EMC Leadership

- On line resource for leaders designed to assist with challenges associated with meeting government agenda “Every Child Matters”. Resource bank and practical approaches for use in schools, community and partners. Based on principles of mind map to enable individuals to develop local solutions. Site offers “think pieces” – ways to encourage different perspectives, “tools” – for use in leadership development and community engagement, “case studies”- from different schools and in different contexts and “publications”.

Learning Gateway

- On line virtual learning environment. Provides access to online communities and resource and enables participants to complete work on line and track progress.

**Centre for Early Childhood Leadership
University of Illinois, United States**

Purpose:

Enhancing the management skills, professional orientation, and leadership capacity of early childhood administrators.

Objectives:

- Training to improve the knowledge base, skills and competencies of directors who administer early childhood programs
- Technical assistance to improve program quality
- Research on key professional development issues
- Public awareness of the critical role that early childhood directors play in the provision of quality services for children and families.

Models of Leadership:

McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program

- A two-year program of 34 semester hours of graduate level course work and on site technical assistance designed to achieve accreditation. On completion participants received a M.ED. Thirty directors of centre-based programs met weekly for 4 hours, engaged in on-site program improvement targeted toward accreditation and conducted research programs, which documented their activities. Directors were selected based on their potential to become strong advocates for young children and families.

Seminar format of instruction included lectures, presentations, large and small discussion groups, role-playing and videotaping. Two full time faculty members served as instructors plus 25 guest instructors with various expertise presented at sessions.

Field supervisors worked 1:1 to help improve quality of programs and increase number of accredited programs. These supervisors conducted classes on NAEYC centre accreditation, facilitated networking and mentoring, conducted site observations, facilitated staff and parent meetings, conducted staff development workshops and assisted with self-study process.

Curriculum is problem centred and site specific, integrating theory with experience and included the following courses:

- Individual and Organization Perspectives on Adult Development
- Technology in Child Care Administration
- Grant writing and Fundraising for Early Childhood Programs
- Strategies for Supervision and Staff Development
- Organization Theory, Group Dynamics, and Leadership Applications
- Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Early Childhood Education
- Contemporary Survey of Child Development
- Early Childhood Curriculum
- Early Childhood Program Evaluation
- Child, Family and Community
- Perspectives on Contemporary Issues in Education
- Financial and Legal Aspects of Child Care Management
- Introduction to Graduate Research
- Research for Teachers.

Participants wrote grant applications as part of the curriculum targeting program improvements they wish to make over the 24-month training cycle which were funded. Students also designed and implemented research studies.

Taking Charge of Change

- A leadership training program of approximately 110 accumulated hours of instruction and technical assistance of 10 months. On completion participants received 6 semester hours of college credits. Five instructors provided the core training with the use of other experts and mentors. Participants were selected based on their demonstrated commitment to quality of care, interest in meeting NAEYC accreditation, leadership potential and ability to affect change. Participants represented a geographical, cultural, ethnic and racial mix of the work force. Participants were interviewed with an in-depth needs assessment conducted. Case studies used in the training were based on critical incident scenarios and program profiles completed by participants.

The training focussed on the individual, organization and systematic change in the early childhood leaders role as change agent. Training included a 6-day summer residential institute followed by 2 three-day retreats throughout the year. Seminars included formal presentations, large group discussions, small group experiences, role playing and videotaping. Mentors, who are graduates of the training program, work with participants to develop program improvement plans and document progress in achieving organizational change. They met with participants at the summer institute, during retreats, made site visits, organized regional “mentee” meetings, provided technical assistance via phone and email and reviewed participant’s reflections. Web site discussions were also conducted.

Curriculum content included Strategies for Supervision and Staff Development, Organizational Theory, Group Dynamics and Leadership Application

Evaluation:

Findings from the research on the Centre for Childhood Leadership models are summarized below:

- Respondents indicated how much they did not know about effective supervision and organizational leadership
- 20% of programs were accredited when training began, which increased to 43%
- 97% of directors planned to remain in field five years from study
- 19% had advanced degrees when enrolled in leadership training, 46% had masters or doctorate and 43% of those with associated or bachelor degrees were enrolled in degree programs.
- All participants indicated that the training initiated other professional development opportunities.

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