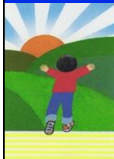


The Better Beginnings, Better Futures Community-Based Early Childhood Development Project: Policy Implications of Longitudinal Research

Ray DeV. Peters
Queen's University

TORONTO

October 22, 2012



<http://bbbf.queensu.ca>
ray.peters@queensu.ca



Better Beginnings, Better Futures

Purpose:

A 25-year longitudinal prevention policy research demonstration project to provide information on the effectiveness of prevention as a policy for children.

> Initiated in 1991 by Ontario Government



GOALS



Prevention

- To reduce the incidence of serious, long-term emotional and behavioural problems in children living in high risk neighbourhoods.

Promotion

- To promote the optimal social, emotional, behavioural, physical and educational development in children.

Community Development

- To strengthen the ability of disadvantaged communities to respond effectively to the social and economic needs of children and their families.

PROJECT MODEL



High Quality Programs

- For children and families from conception to age 4 or from ages 4 to 8.

Integrated Programs

- Health and social service providers “blend and unite.”

Community Involvement

- Parents and local citizens participate as equal partners with service-providers in planning, designing and carrying out programs in the neighbourhood.

<u><i>Younger Child Sites (0 - 4 yrs)</i></u>	<u><i>Older Child Sites (4 - 8yrs)</i></u>
<u>Guelph:</u> Willow Road ▪ 500 children	<u>Cornwall:</u> 4 Francophone primary schools ▪ 530 children
<u>Kingston:</u> Northern Area ▪ 876 children	<u>Etobicoke:</u> Highfield Junior School ▪ 517 children
<u>Ottawa:</u> Albion-Heatherington ▪ 552 children	<u>Sudbury:</u> Flour Mill / le Moulin à Fleur and Donovan ▪ 503 children
<u>Toronto:</u> Regent Park ▪ 900 children	
<u>Walpole Island First Nation:</u> ▪ 200 children	

BOTTOM-UP PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT APPROACH



Each community to undertake as many high quality programs as possible, which could be expected to produce positive child development outcomes, within the limits of available resources and local needs.

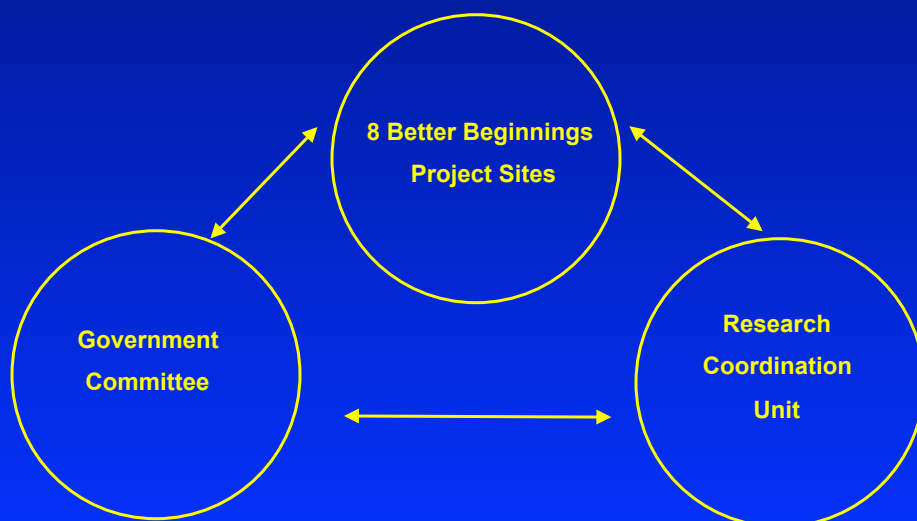
PROGRAMS OFFERED



Younger Sites: Average = 26
Range = 18-35
Older Sites: Average = 16
Range = 12-19

Larry Schweinhart from Perry Preschool has called the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project a “Meta Program.” We call it *A Strategy for Community-Based Early Childhood Development*

Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Overall Project Organization



Planning Phase (1991-1993)

Community residents, service-provider partners, and staff designed a comprehensive, ecological program model.

Demonstration Phase (1993-1998)

Project provided four years of intervention for children from birth to age 4 and their families in 5 sites (younger child sites) and for children 4 to 8 years of age and their families in 3 sites (older child sites).



Data Collection

Program funding of the eight sites began in April of 1991. It took 2½ years for local projects and programs to develop to the point where valuations could begin in the fall of 1993.

Extensive information was collected and reported by the Research Coordination Unit on “start up” processes.

Baseline measures on children, families, and neighbourhoods were collected in 1992-1993.

Data Collection (continued)

In 1993-94, a longitudinal research group of 1,400 children and their families was recruited in 8 project and 3 comparison sites.

Outcome measures were collected on these children/families for 4 years.

During this 4 year period, information was also collected regularly on:

- Project organization
- Service integration
- Local programs
- Program costs
- Resident participation



Short Term Findings

(click on <http://bbbf.queensu.ca>)

During the first 4 years, what effects did the **Better Beginnings** Projects have on:

- >Project development and implementation?
- >Child Outcomes?
- >Parent and Family Outcomes?
- >Neighbourhood Outcomes?



Short-Term Results Promising: 1993-1998

- Solid resident involvement
- Partnerships with other local service-providers
- Strong locally-owned & operated project organizations
- Modest program costs: approximately \$800/family/year

And Positive Effects On:

- Children's emotional problems & social skills
- Parent's health promotion & disease-prevention behaviour
- Children's nutrition
- Special education rates
- Neighbourhood safety & satisfaction



THREE WAVES OF LONGITUDINAL FOLLOW-UP DATA IN THE OLDER CHILD SITES

- ☀ First wave collected in 2001-2002 when children in Grade 6.
- ☀ Second wave collected in 2004-2005 when children in Grade 9.
- ☀ Third wave collected in 2007-2008 when children in Grade 12



BETTER BEGININGS,
BETTER FUTURES
Grade 12 Follow-up:
RESULTS



<http://bbbf.queensu.ca>

Overall Results

The 3 older child sites (Cornwall, Etobicoke and Cornwall) demonstrated long-term positive outcomes for children and families.



GRADE 12 FINDINGS – 9 Years AFTER Program



YOUTH - Advantage to Better Beginnings

Education – special education

13% Better Beginnings
19% Comparison

Education – grades in HS

Better Beginnings youth higher

Health – regular exercise

81% Better Beginnings
72% Comparison

Crime – property offenses

29% Better Beginnings
40% Comparison

Community – neighbourhood deviance

Better Beginnings youth rated their neighbourhoods less deviant drug use, violence, and theft.



PARENTS
Advantage to Better Beginnings
Health –



Alcohol Consumption

Better Beginnings parents drank alcohol less.

1 other smoker in the house

25% Better Beginnings

33% Comparison

Emotional Issues – clinical depression

18% Better Beginnings

27% Comparison

Community - neighbourhood cohesion

Better Beginnings parents rated their neighbourhoods as more cohesive

("I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood.")



ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Better Beginnings, Better Futures: the 1st longitudinal economic analysis of a Canadian early childhood prevention model.

19 indicators that could be given
a dollar value and that cost the
government money for the
child and the adult in his/her family
that was interviewed.



COST SAVINGS RESULTS

COSTS:

BETTER BEGINNINGS:	\$2,991/ family
ADD'L HEALTH COSTS:	+ \$1,067/ family
TOTAL	\$ 4,058/ family

COST SAVINGS:

EDUCATION:	\$5,316/ child
SOCIAL SERVICES:	+ \$3,311/ parent
TOTAL	\$ 8,627/ family



***BETTER BEGINNINGS,
BETTER FUTURES***



**NET SAVINGS to government:
\$4,569 per family**

\$1 in; \$2.5 back

**LONGITUDINAL FOLLOW-UP OF
CHILDREN IN GRADES 1 AND 3
FROM THE YOUNGER SITES**



- 531 children of the families from the 5 younger child Better Beginnings neighbourhoods
- 164 children of the families from the comparison neighbourhoods

FINDINGS



- 9 significant differences across the sites, 7.5 %
- 3 favored Better Beginnings
- 6 favored Comparison Sites
- Similar to CCDP outcomes (St. Pierre et al, 1997)

WHY SUCH NEGATIVE FINDINGS IN THE LOGITUDINAL STUDY OF THR YOUNGER (0-4) SITES?



- Mandate of Better Beginnings,
Better Futures too broad
- Resources too few

Costs of Model Programs for Very Young Children (0 to 4) and their Families

Program Name	Average Cost per child per year	Number of years	Total Program Cost per Child
Abecedarian *	\$20,000	5	\$100,000
IHDP *	\$23,582	3	\$ 70,747
CCDP	\$10,800	5	\$ 54,000
Early Head Start	\$10,100	3	\$ 30,300
Perry Preschool*	\$15,069	2	\$ 30,138
Chicago Child-Parent Centers *	\$ 7,617	2	\$ 15,234
Nurse Home Visitation *	\$ 5,250	2.5	\$ 13,125
Sure Start	\$ 2,357	4	\$ 9,428
 Better Beginnings, Better Futures	\$ 800	4	\$ 3,200

Note: All dollar values are in 2005 Canadian dollars.

** Indicates programs with at least one significant long-term positive effect.*



•Older child sites organized around the school

•No such universal system available for children 0-4

NEXT STEPS

- **Follow-up in mid-20's**
 - Anticipate even more net savings!
- **Evidence published in high quality research journal: SRCD Monograph, December 2010**
- **TOOLKIT "How to Start a Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project"**
 - 2012 - Manual & DVD
 - 2013 - workshops in every province and territory

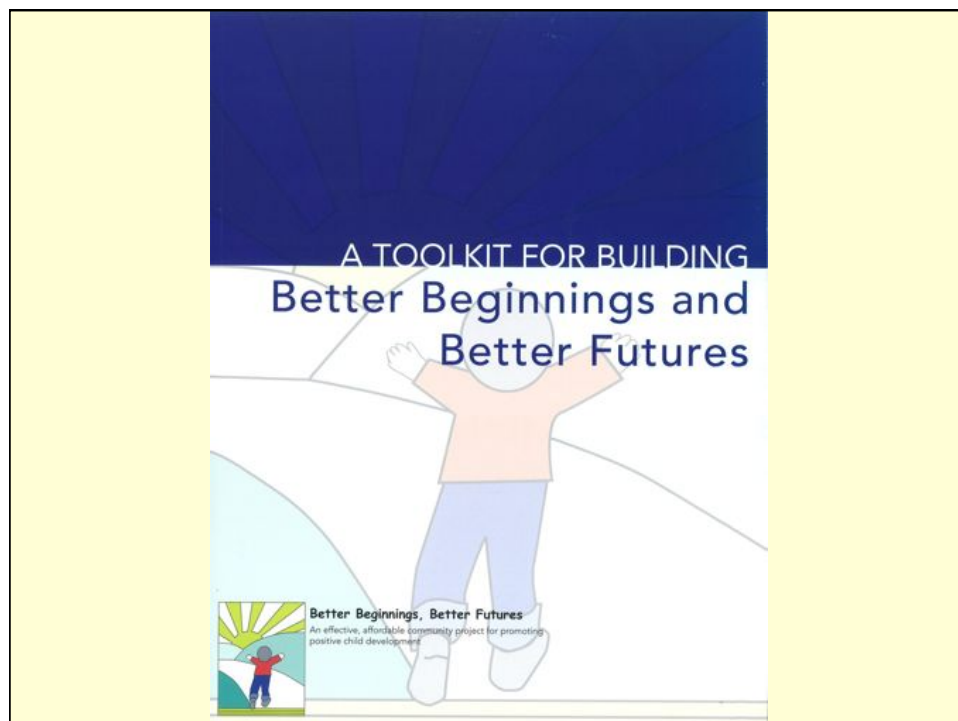
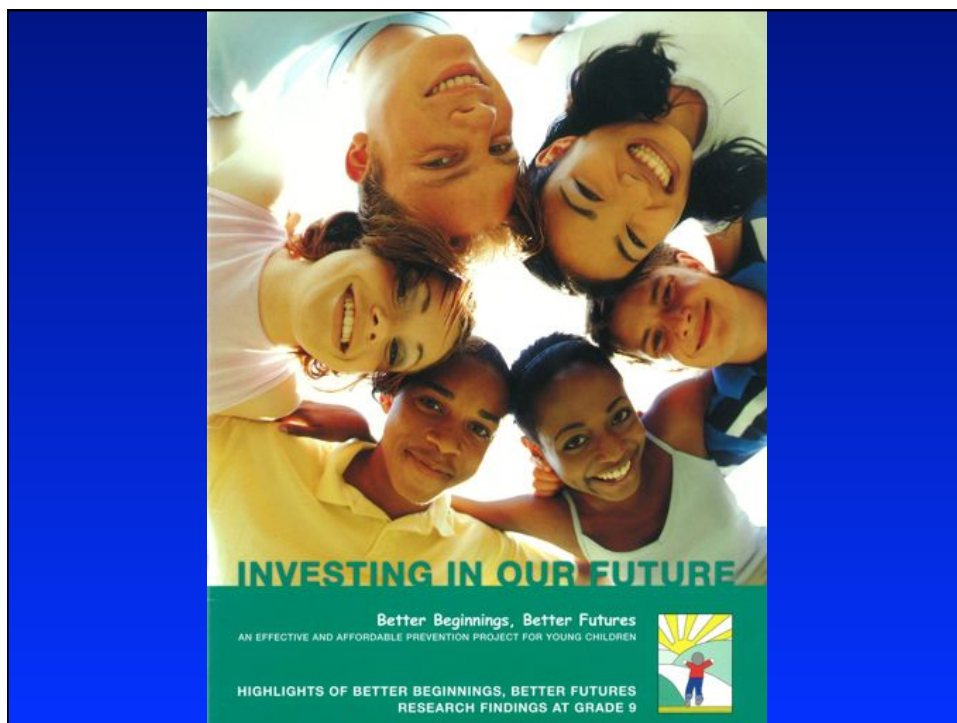
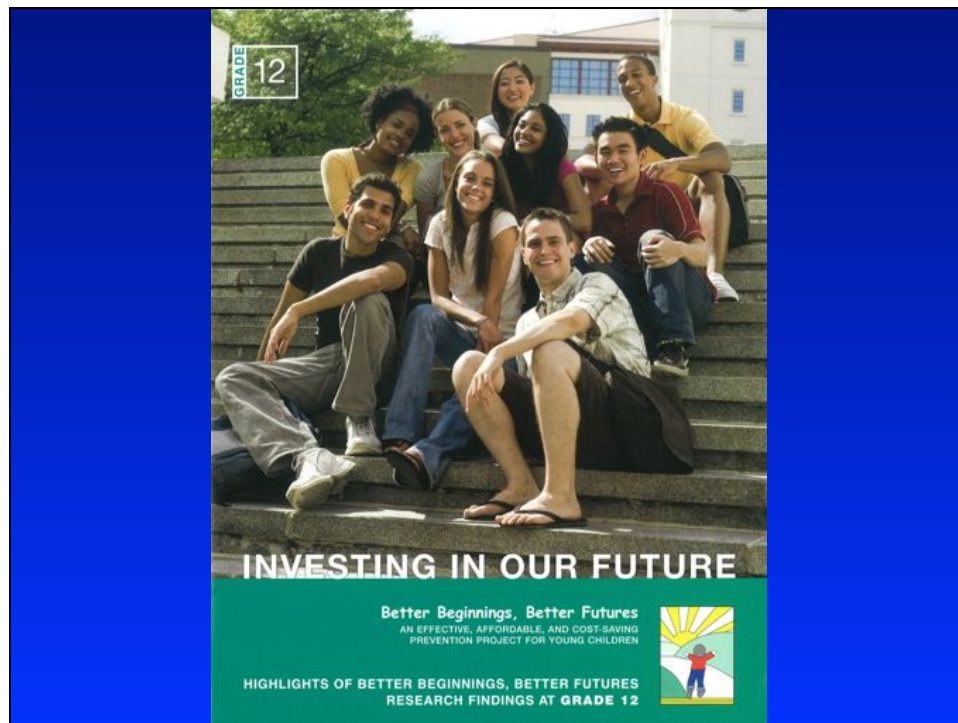


TABLE OF CONTENTS

- About Better Beginnings, Better Futures
- Chapter 1: History and Overview
- Chapter 2: Developing Your Program Model
- Chapter 3: Research and Evaluation
- Chapter 4: Community Resident Participation
- Chapter 5: Engaging Community Partners
- Chapter 6: Project Organization and Management
- Chapter 7: Working with Government and Other Funders





A substantial investment in early child development will be necessary if we are to improve the competence, health and well-being of our population.

-Fraser Mustard