Toronto First Duty- Parents, Community, and Integration

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This afternoon's presentation

- Parent-Community Involvement - background
- PCI in the TFD model, and findings on:
- Outreach
- Parent involvement & family life (+ Peel)
- Community & public awareness
- Conclusions

Defining Parent-Community Involvement -PCI

- Parents in children's services (e.g. PI in school)
- Programming for parenting (e.g. parenting programs)
- Family supports (e.g. quality child care)
- Community partnerships for families

Lip service to PI but business as usual?

"Everybody has the wording; everybody has the concept. They say 'We engage the parents' and you say 'Well how do you engage the parents'? 'Well you know, we have pajama nights. And we have this one grandmother and she volunteers in the library all the time.'"

TFD2 Key Informant commenting on the state of Parent Involvement/Engagement around the province.

Multiple social forces in PCI policy

- Demographic changes: older parents, fewer children
- Pressures for democratic participation/accountability
- Closing gaps for disadvantaged parents/communities
- Political attractiveness of supporting parents & community
- Funding cuts and off-loading services; parents filling in

PI as $ Dollars and Cents

"If every parent of a child between the ages of 1 and 9 read to the child five days a week for one hour, that would be 8.7 billion annual hours supporting reading.

To pay teachers to do the same job one-on-one would cost as much as it costs to run the entire public education system in the US."

US Federal Website: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

Education & EC: more than good economics

- Education is not only about economic investment and preparing children for academic success and participation in the workforce.
- Other aims are also important (Kahne, 1996)
  - Developmental/humanistic
  - Children's and Parents' rights
  - Community building and a civil society

EC and PCI are foundational for all of these aims

The TFD model & PCI

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TFD1 Core Model

- Integrated core:
  {kindergarten, child care & family support}
  + other services
- Integrated on dimensions of
  - early learning environment,
  - staff team,
  - governance,
  - seamless access &
  - **parent participation**
- Neighbourhood schools as hub
- **Different starting points – opportunities, partners & communities**

TFD Aims

- To transform public policies on early childhood programs
- *By* implementing & evaluating a universal early learning and care program for every child that:
  - Supports the healthy development of children,
    and at the same time
  - **Supports parents in their parenting role**
  - **Supports parents to work or study**

Research Strands

Programs, Policies & Practices

Child & Family

Community Capacity & Public Awareness

TFD effectiveness "process"

TFD Program with **outreach**
  - Staff teamwork: eye on results
  - **Parents: parenting, self-efficacy, & family life**
Children's development

TFD findings on parents & community

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- **TFD Partners: TDSB, City, ACF**
- **Community service organizations**
- **Outreach**
- **Parent involvement & family life**
- **Community awareness**

TFD community building

- Parent & community input into the development and implementation of TFD site programs, via consultations & governance
- Building community awareness of the project
- Building the service community through site level steering committees

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It's all about outreach & equity

- Well-intentioned programs can increase inequities in our society

  - If they don't reach those most in need

  - if they are more effective for more able children and families
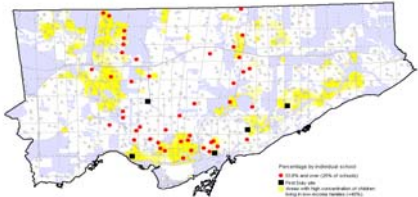
Ceci, S. & Paterno (2004). The rhetoric and reality of gap closing. *American Psychologist.60*(2), 149-160.

TFD sites (■) mapped on community demographics & school readiness

Yellow= more than 40% of children in low-income families
Red dots= schools with more than a third of un-ready children

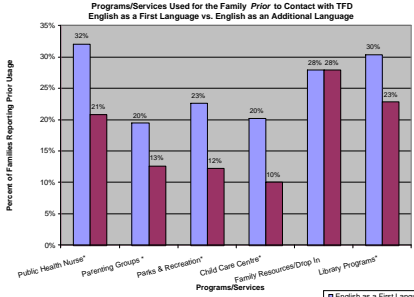Percentage of children with low EDI on one subscale or more

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TFD & Outreach: Closing Service Gaps

Programs/Services Used for the Family *Prior* to Contact with TFD
English as a First Language vs. English as an Additional Language

(* p< .05, significant difference by chi² test)

■ English as a First Language
■ English as an Additional Language

TDSB research: Preschool service use

Table 35: Childcare and Pre-school Program Attendance by Race, JK-Grade 6

	Attended Child Care		Attended Pre-school Program
	Centre	Home daycare	
Student Racial Background			
Aboriginal	53%	2%	44%
Black	44%	12%	18%
East Asian	30%	5%	27%
Latin American	30%	6%	20%
Middle Eastern	26%	3%	17%
Mixed	39%	11%	33%
South Asian	9%	3%	29%
Southeast Asian	13%	4%	20%
White	33%	13%	47%
OVERALL	**27%**	**8%**	**32%**

O'Reilly, J. & Yau, M. (2009). *2008 Parent census, kindergarten-grade 6: System overview and detailed findings. Toronto District School Board Research Report.* http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/about_us/media_room/docs/2008ParentCensusK-6SystemOverviewAndDetailedFindings.pdf.
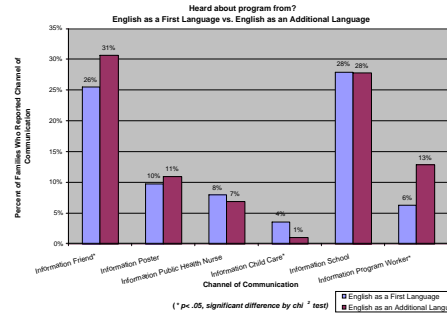
Outreach in TFD

- Referrals across services
- Professional outreach staff
- Health screening days
- Flyers/mailings
- Community groups
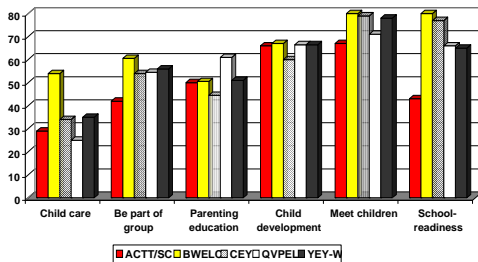- Press and other media

Plus the integration carrot:
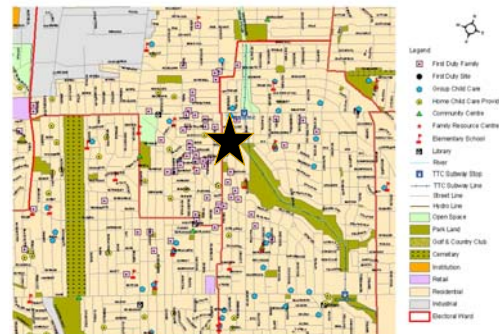- A menu of services to meet diverse parent goals

How parents heard about the program

Heard about program from?
English as a First Language vs. English as an Additional Language

(* p< .05, significant difference by chi ² test)

What do parents want: goals x site

Uptake on both sides of the track

From outreach to "retention": TFD Intake & Tracking data on participation

- Children whose mothers had lower education levels participated more in TFD services across four out of five sites

Sejal Patel's PhD thesis

TFD Impact on Parent Involvement

TFD parents more likely (than parents in comparison sites with one school based preschool program or no preschool programs) :

- To Feel responsible to talk to their child's teacher
- To Feel successful in helping their child learn

Sejal Patel's MA thesis

TFD effects on family stress & daily hassles

Context-

- Literature on parent stress and hassles (PDH-Crinic Greenberg, 1990) shows impact on family functioning and child development

- How parents and kids affected by disconnected EC services has not been studied until now-EC-PDH

- We compared 2 TFD sites to 2 matched sites with off site childcare and examined parents' reports of hassles and social support, and children's reports of their experiences.

Tomoko Arimura's MA thesis

Hassles and Family Life

- TFD parents reported fewer hassles and lower levels of stress relating to "having a hard time:
  - picking up my child at the end of the day
  - dealing with my child's behavioural difficulties at school
  - finding information on how to deal with my child's behaviour
  - finding the opportunity to talk to other parents at my child's school
  - approaching the teacher or people at the school to talk about what's going on with my child"

Parents' Social Support

- Parents in TFD sites reported that child care professionals <u>and</u> teachers were part of their "social support network"

- Parents using off-site child care reported that only child care professionals were part of their support network, <u>not</u> teachers

PCI piece still needs work

- Felt left out of design of TFD programs early on

- Some cultural groups "missed" by some programming

- Some individual families missed by outreach

- Parents like the services but PCI doesn't reach the point of full ownership.

Community Survey

In 2005 person-in-the street interviews in TFD neighborhoods among a diverse sample (35% high school or less, 44% non-parents, age 18 to 64) showed that:

- 7% had heard of TFD

- 97% agreed w/ service integration at schools

- 62 % agreed w/ higher taxes for better ECE

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Best Start Peel Parents

Peel Best Start parent questionnaire and daily "hassles" survey

- Survey asked about parents' needs for services in their communities
- Hassles related to seamless day, feelings of connectedness to child's school & parenting capacity

Examples of parent survey items

- I know all the programs/services in my community
- I have not been able to use many of the programs and services for children and families
- I do not feel like I am part of this community
- My child enjoys the programs and services
- Staff and teachers tell me about programs and services that are available

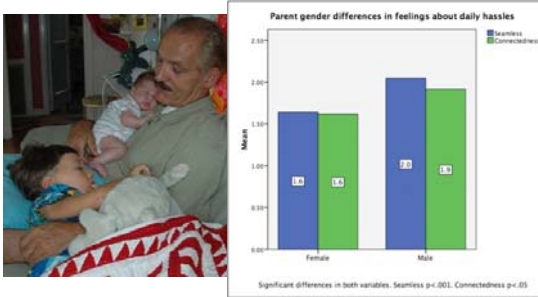## Examples of daily hassles items

- It's difficult to get my child ready in the morning
- It's difficult to find time to read with my child
- It's difficult to find time to play with my child
- It's difficult to know whether my child's behaviour is a problem…
- It's difficult to transport my child to school or child care
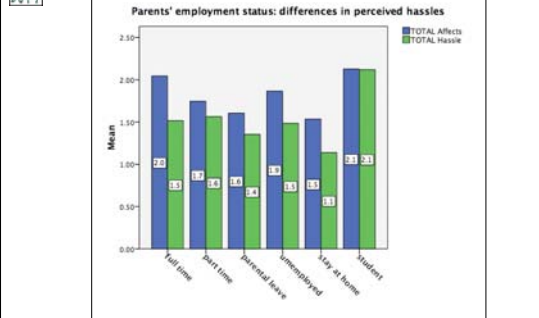
Some parent hassles results

- Items clustered into three areas
  - Seamless day
  - Connectedness to child's school and teacher
  - Parenting capacity
- Survey included types of hassles and degree to which parents were affected
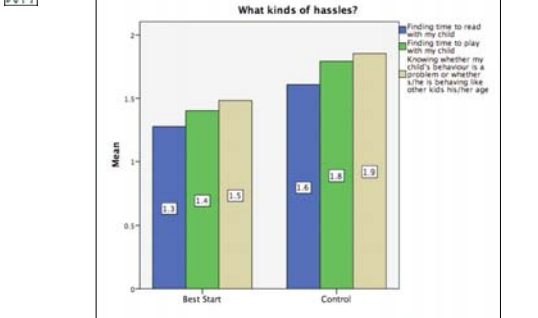
Men report more daily hassles

Employment Status and Hassles

Best Start vs. Control on 3 types of hassles

Child interview with finger puppets

- Child chooses a puppet for herself/himself and one for the researcher
- "Tell me about your day from the time you leave home until you go back home"

Other child interview questions to inform full-day early learning

- What do is your favourite thing here?
- What do teachers do?
- What's important to learn here?
- What should kids do if someone starts a fight?
- What should kids do if someone wants to play something they don't like?
- What should kids do if someone is crying?

Best Start site (first "child care" then K)

"First welcome and have snack and then play lego, read, make something for your mom. Then clean up, play outside, come in, wash hands, and do the message. And then we have large group and play something. Then after that we have small group and do something. Then we <u>plan</u> and then we play with our friends and after that it is clean-up time. Then we <u>recall</u> and tell the teacher what you did and then we have lunch. Then we play lego. Then we go to JK. After JK, [daycare staff] pick you up and after that we have snack and do anything you want. And then your mom and dad might pick you up soon and I get to stay long because Mommy picks me up late. Mommy is a teacher."

Control site (child travels to child care)

"I wait for Jacob and Noah to get out of [K] class so we can get into the car. And then we drive to [the babysitter's] house and then we have snack…and then we go to the basement and play…and then we come back upstairs to do some work and then we wait for our Mommy to come. And then we go. Jacob stays at [the babysitter's]. Me and Noah go to a daycare."

Conclusions for ELP & the Vision

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Conclusions

- Be clear on Aims & Theory of Change for PCI partnerships and integration
- Monitor Process and Success
- Build two-way partnerships that listen to and support parents & reach out to the underserved
- Work with community partners and parents to design programming
- Use integrated EC services to build capacity for parent involvement in school & community

Conclusions

- Use integrated EC services to foster parents' role in early learning
- Use integrated EC services and full year provision to improve the quality of family life
- Solve the puzzle we all need to figure out: How to build public awareness and community buy-in for the Vision
- Research!

Thanks for Listening!