

Children, Their Families and Community Supports: What the Research Tells Us **Jenny Jenkins and Janette Pelletier**

Participants in Workshop #1 at the Summer Institute responded to questions about the social dynamics of early learning staff teams, following a discussion in the workshop. As the responses indicate, shared professional development opportunities for staff teams in the Full-Day Early Learning/Kindergarten program and in the future Child and Family Centres were viewed as both 1) the most successful strategies for creating shared understanding among staff teams and 2) the area most in need of support. Other points were also brought forward as important elements to success in full-day early learning programs and CFCs. Read on....

With respect to the building of social understanding among early learning professions:

1. What good practice have you seen for this in your setting?
 - a. Joint PD days with both K teacher and ECE/ regular meetings around team building, problem solving, and program development and evaluation.
 - Of those who responded, ~ 80% mentioned this in some form.
 - b. Sharing knowledge, language, and vision, as well as space and resources – reciprocal support.
 - ~50% mentioned this.
 - c. Explicitly defining roles with presentations to delineate those roles.
 - ~50% mentioned this
 - d. Using provisional planning time for its intended purpose.
 - ~30% mentioned this
 - e. Involvement of Principal, trustees, liaisons, and advisory committees.
 - ~30% mentioned this

2. How could good practice be increased?
 - a. Increase joint PD and meetings between teachers and ECEs regarding curriculum development, planning, and implementation (i.e. collaborative curriculum planning).
 - Of those who responded, ~90% mentioned this.
 - b. Involvement of families as part of collaborative team (e.g. home visits to gather information) and programming to help parents (e.g. to learn about child development). Families must become partners.
 - ~75-80% mentioned this. For some, this was a clear focus.
 - c. In-service training for teachers on collaboration and building communication skills (e.g. problem solving and integrating ideas).
 - ~35% mentioned this

- d. ECE/Kindergarten exchange programs (may relate to (c) above)
 - ~35% mentioned this

***Note:** between (c) and (d) – which are both concerned with improving communication/collaboration, over 50% mentioned this as important
- e. Leadership from top down to facilitate communication and consider all perspectives (i.e. principal downward)
 - ~20% mentioned this
- f. More appreciation/celebration days for service providers 0-6 yrs.
 - ~10% mentioned this
- g. More research into school readiness
 - ~10% mentioned this

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