



Bringing Our Best to Full-Day Kindergarten:

Creating equitable & effective teaching teams

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Background

- Initial vision was 2 Early Childhood Educators and an Ontario Certified Teacher working as a team “to engage in respectful, reciprocal mentoring, always with their learners in mind.”

Charles Pascal, *With our best future in mind* (2009)

- Little previous research done on the interprofessional relationship between teachers and ECEs working in school classrooms.

Background

- 2010/11 Ontario began offering “an engaging, play-based educational program during the regular school day”
- Projected full implementation by September 2014
- Certified Teacher & Registered Early Childhood Educators comprise the “teaching team”
- “Work together to implement the program and maintain a safe and healthy environment”

Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011

Meta-Analysis of 1st & 2nd Years

Queen's University, McMaster University, Ministry of Education, (2012)

- ECEs and OCTs are trained professionals, and are providing a program to meet learning & developmental needs, yet are “not fully leveraging the collective expertise of the two professions” (p. 13)
- Tensions are reported around “roles & responsibilities” within teams
- Teachers more often accessing professional development

Ontario's New Inclusive Pedagogical Framework: How Does Learning Happen? (pg. 14)

Understanding of Children as Competent, Curious,
Capable of Complex Thinking, Rich in Potential

Child &
Family Programs

Child Care

Kindergarten

Elementary

Responsive Relationships

Learning through Exploration, Play, and Inquiry

Educators as Co-learners

Environment as Third Teacher

Pedagogical Documentation

Reflective Practice and Collaborative Inquiry

Belonging

Well-Being

Engagement

Expression

Foundations for Learning and Development

ELECT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Research Question

- From the perspectives of pioneering teaching teams, what supports the process of creating equitable and effective teaching partnerships in Full-Day Kindergarten classrooms?

Survey & Interview

- On-line survey (10-minute) distributed through professional networks, Ministry of Education and School Boards (2012-2014)
- 302 responses
- Follow-up Interview (30-minute) with individuals or Teams
- Ten in-depth interviews

Findings

Survey Results

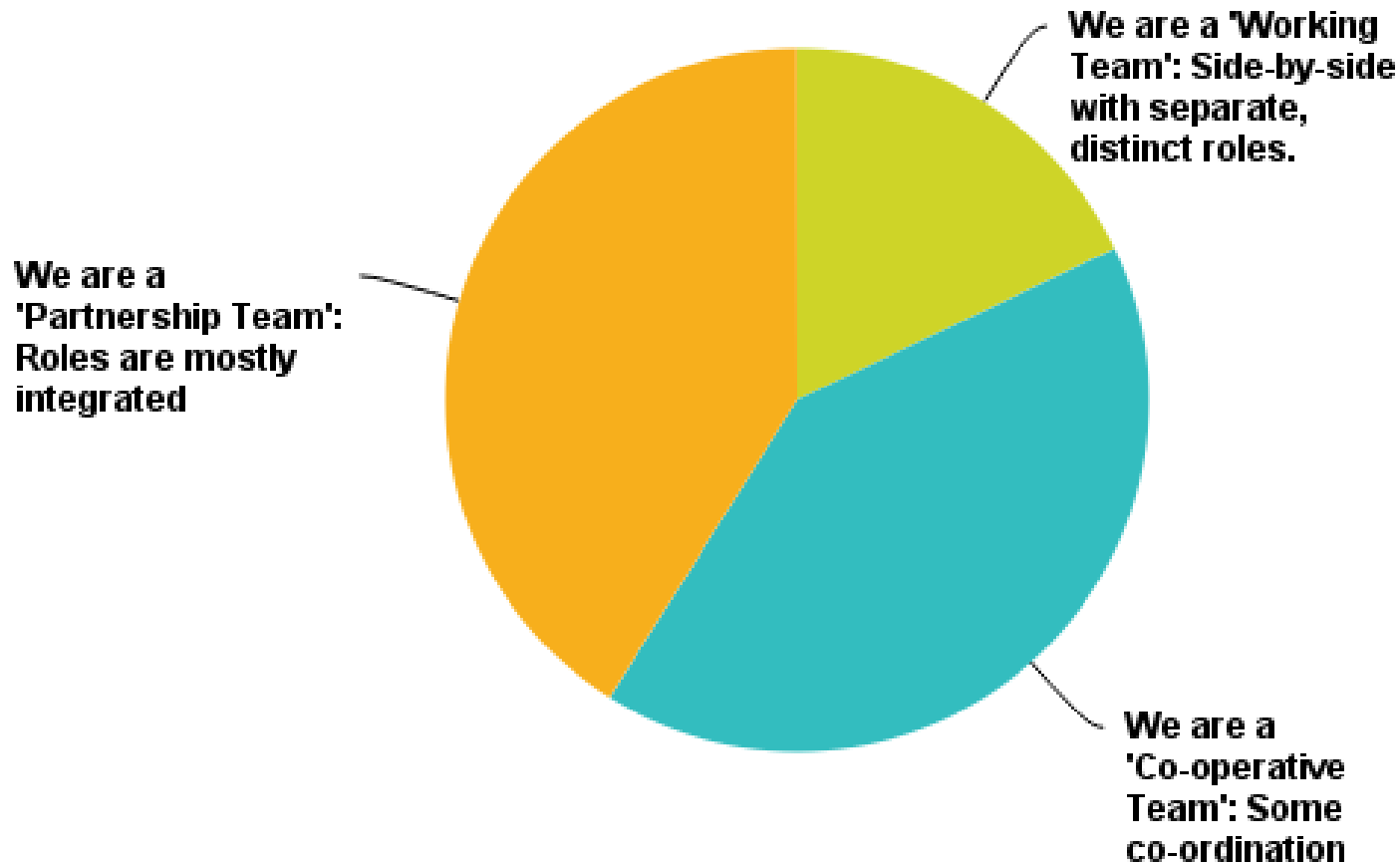
- Respondent employment position
 - 136 RECE (46.6%); 156 OCT (53.4%)
 - 51% began in the 1st year, 16.7% in the 2nd year, 32.3% in the 3rd year

Degrees of Partnership

- A great variation along a continuum of integration:
- 18.5% indicated they had separate and distinct roles
- 39.9% indicated they did some planning and coordinating
- 41.6% indicated they planned and implemented jointly

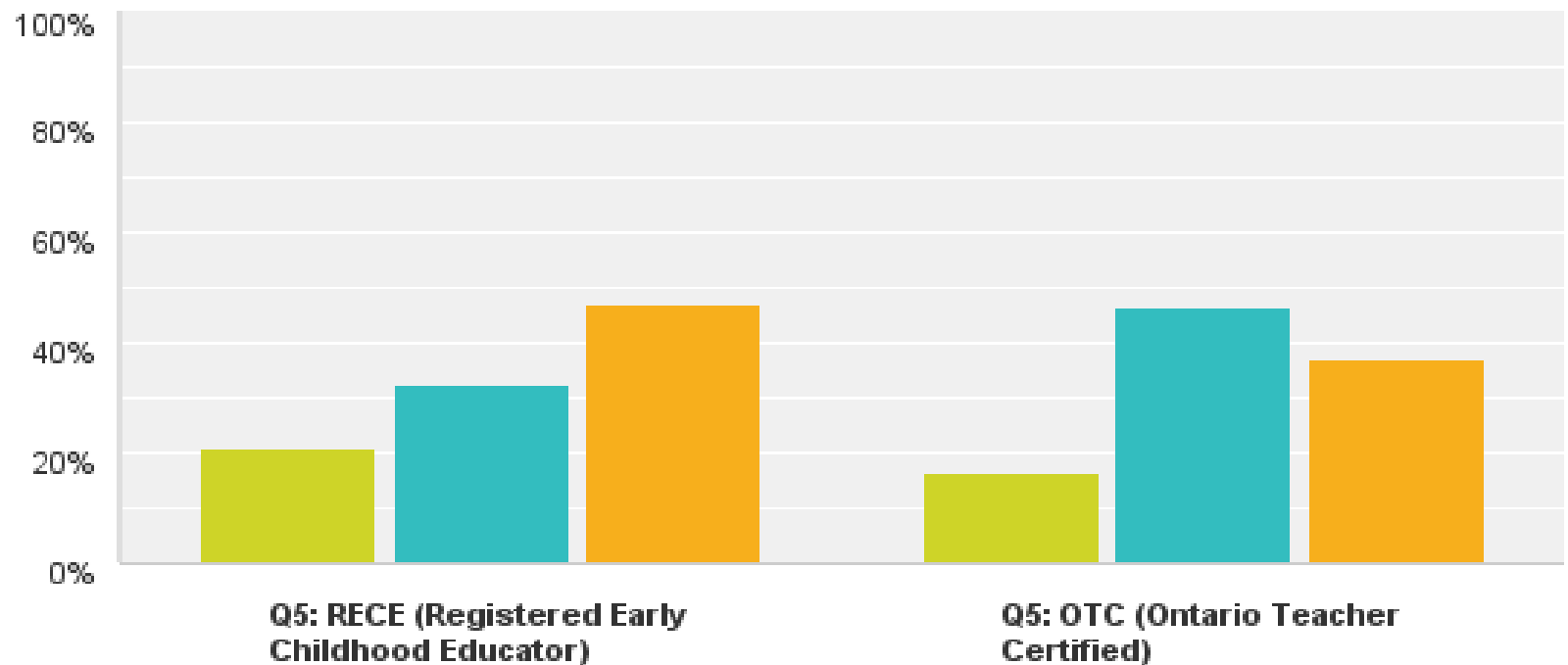
Q7 There are a variety of ways to balance roles and responsibilities in team teaching situations. When you reflect on your work in a Full-Day Early Learning Team which best describes your experience?

Answered: 290 Skipped: 13



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Answered: 282 Skipped: 11



 We are a 'Working Team': Side-by-side with separate, distinct roles.

 We are a 'Co-operative Team': Some co-ordination

 We are a 'Partnership Team': Roles are mostly integrated

Roles in the Classroom

- Respondents view themselves as practicing similar roles in the areas where assistants have traditionally been highly involved
 - i.e., behaviour guidance, working with individuals or small groups, attending to children's physical needs
- Respondents view themselves as practicing different roles in traditionally teacher-led areas
 - i.e., curriculum planning, assessment, and evaluation

Perceptions of Strengths

Knowledge of Child Development

RECEs (95.5%) & OCTs (69.5%)

Experience in Play-Based Learning

RECE (90.8) & OCT (36.8)

Perceptions of Strengths

Familiarity with Ministry Curriculum Documents

OCT (85.8%) & RECE (40.3)

Expertise in Teaching Literacy & Numeracy

OCTs (81.9%) than RECEs (60.5)

Perceptions of Strengths

Child Assessment-

OCT (72.7%) & RECE (63.8%)

Knowledge of Teaching Theory and Best Practices

OCT (84.5%) & RECE (51.2%)

Areas of Need

RECEs:

- Literacy and Numeracy (21.4 pt. spread)
- Ministry Documents (45.5 pt. spread)
- Child Assessment (8.9 pt. spread)
- Teaching Theory and Best Practices (33.3 pt. spread)

Areas of Need

OCTs:

- Knowledge of Child Development (26 pt. spread)
- Play-based Learning (54 pt. spread)

More Survey Results

Advice for new teams

- Communication is key
- Be flexible and willing to share ideas
- Common planning time
- Respect each other's experience and contribution
- Visit other teams
- Know the curriculum, know the education act, know your union rep.

Voices from the Field

- “It has been an extremely positive transition. A very rewarding and fulfilling job.” Year 1 RECE
- “I feel we do not have a collaborative team. There is a lot of resistance on both sides (ECE/OCT) of each other’s role and what the program should look like.” Year 1 OCT
- “We need to put our difference aside, and make it work for the children. We need to see the team as a partnership and share responsibilities equally.” Year 1 RECE

Interview Findings

Case Study of a Kindergarten Teaching Team

Background:

- ECE has 5 years experience working in a team in a childcare kindergarten program, 2 years in full-day K (ECE, B.A.)
- OCT has 24 years experience as a primary teacher, 11 years in half-day kindergarten, 2 years in full-day K (B.A., B.ED.)

Similarities and Differences from Previous Roles

RECE

- Similar- working as a team, observing children, focusing on what works for children
- Different- setting, rules and regulations, greater focus on cognitive assessment and less on development generally, less documentation of children's work

Similarities and Differences from Previous Roles

OCT

- Similar-follow a self-made long-range plan and assessments, focus on curriculum
- Different-fewer children, fewer reports, more time to interact with individual children, has become more observant and “in tune” with children due to ECE’s influence

Supports for Successful Collaboration

- Previous teamwork
- Being considered equals by staff, admin, parents and each other
- Communication, respect, and consistency
- Shared responsibilities

Supports for successful Collaboration

- Experimenting to see what works
- Observing and learning from each other
- Discussing issues with other teams