SCHOOLS AT THE CENTRE
Findings from Case Studies Exploring Seamless Early Learning in Ontario

Dr. Zeenat Janmohamed
The Study

- Explores impact of FDK and EDP on educators, families and early years administrators
- Three Ontario regions, four school boards
- Mixed methods including surveys, interviews, focus groups and text analysis
- Research partnership between George Brown College, Atkinson Centre, school boards, regional governments, community stakeholders
Policy Context

• With Our Best Future in Mind (2009)

• Full day kindergarten (2010-2014) – 260,000 children

• Legislation change (Education Act, College of ECE)

• FDK/EDP educator teams – created 10,000 new ECE positions

• Contracted- and school board- operated extended day programs

• Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014
Case study: Ottawa-Carleton Region

- 2009 – Licensed care available in 12 schools
- 2014 – Extended Day Programs in 100 out of 117 schools serving approximately 6,000 students
- Some boards also directly operate preschool programs
Case Study: Waterloo Region

• 2009 - Licensed care available in 28 schools with 1,523 spaces

• 2014 – EDP in 64 out of 71 schools serving approximately 4,000 students

• 52 Youth Development Programs offered by Community Providers

• Centralize fee collection and registry operated by the Region assists families to access services
Parent Demographic

Marital Status
- Married
- Other

Country of Birth
- Canada
- Other

Home Language
- English
- Other

Employment
- Full Time
- Part Time
- Stay at Home
- Unemployed
- Student
Key Findings: Parents

- The study examined FDK/EDP impact on:
  - Child and family life
  - Access to child care
  - Parents’ ability to work
Parent Satisfaction with Services

- **Child Has Benefited**: Agree - 80%, Not Sure - 20%
- **Happy with Quality**: Agree - 70%, Not Sure - 30%
- **FDK Helps School Readiness Socially**: Agree - 90%, Not Sure - 10%
- **FDK Helps School Readiness Academically**: Agree - 60%, Not Sure - 40%
Parent Satisfaction with Services

- Increased School Involvement
- Want FDK to Continue
- FDK Has Provided More Family Support
- I Support Other Child Family Services

Agree | Not Sure | Disagree
Parents receiving fee subsidies and parents on subsidy wait list
Parents receiving fee subsidies are more positive about FDK
Findings: Parent Focus Groups

- Value play based learning – recognize link between play / children’s learning
- Want additional support for family through the school – particularly families with higher needs
- Want programs for their younger children available through school
- Some classes too structured for 3-5 year olds
- Divided as to whether FDK has increased or decreased parent involvement in child’s learning
Educator Profile

- Educator survey: 530 respondents/ 20% response rate.

- RECEs work school hours more frequently in Waterloo, and more morning and afternoon shifts in Ottawa. Halton is exclusively school hours.

- All EDP programs in Halton delivered by community providers.
Educator Profile – 4 school boards

- Average experience and years at board of OCTs greater than RECEs
- Significant number of RECEs have an undergraduate degree in addition to ECE diploma
Educator Team Role Clarity

- Differences in the way that RECEs and OCTs view their roles in FDK
Educator Team Role Clarity

- Differences in the way that RECEs and OCTs view their roles in FDK
Most RECEs’ salaries increased or stayed the same. Benefits have increased for most RECEs.
More ECEs agree that having a union has improved working conditions.

Almost all RECEs felt their professional status has increased or stayed the same.
Educator Interviews

• Boards have appointed principal lead and/or ECE manager – important factor in team building

• Educator teams vary in capacity, knowledge

• Limited access to professional development and planning time difficult for ECEs — further strain on educators’ capacity to build partnership

• Children with special needs require additional support
Key Findings: Administrators

- PD opportunities for RECEs dependent on administrator flexibility and school budgets
- Role of educators are becoming clearer
- Lack of PD, program planning time for RECEs a problem across all boards
- Limited knowledge about RECEs and play-based learning in school system
- Significant pressure to ensure literacy and numeracy success
Schools at the Centre: Partnership

Waterloo Region District School Board
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Halton District School Board
Halton Catholic District School Board
Region of Waterloo

Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
Atkinson Foundation
Lawson Foundation

Atkinson Centre, University of Toronto
School of Early Childhood, George Brown College
Schools at the Centre

For more information,

Dr. Zeenat Janmohamed
zjanmoha@georgebrown.ca
www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/Resources/Topics/Seamless_Day_Schools/index.html