



early childhood community development centre

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CHILD CARE MENTORING PROJECT SHOWS ADMINISTRATION & EDUCATOR BEHAVIOUR LINKED TO PROGRAM QUALITY

Thorold, Ontario: Does the way your child's day care centre's Supervisor manage its operations really affect the quality of care your child receives? A province-wide research study conducted by Dr. Gillian Doherty, PhD together with one of Canada's leading professional resource centres for early learning and child care indicates that it does.

In recognition of the upcoming National Child Day (November 20, 2011), the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) is releasing data from its Mentoring Pairs for Child Care (MPCC) project. Building on strong evidence that a supervisor with effective administration and leadership skills is crucial for developing and sustaining an early learning and care program that enhances children's development, the project aimed to enhance the quality of Ontario's child care centres through increasing supervisors' application of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council's *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators* (CCHRSC, 2006). While the task was to learn about and better implement these administrative standards at their centres, a mentoring process that included individual, pair and group learning, sharing, reflection, assessment, planning and reporting was also utilized.

The MPCC project was undertaken in partnership with 24 post-secondary institutions across the province and was funded by the Government of Ontario. Over 540 licensed child care supervisors and assistant supervisors completed a year-long course, receiving post-diploma credit recognition for doing so. The data shows that graduates of the MPCC program are more professionally connected, confident, leadership oriented, knowledgeable and skilled, and have improved quality in child care administration and programming. Participants have also reported additional benefits to their organizations and the larger early learning and care community.

The project enhanced the quality of a sub-sample of mentee graduates' centres to a degree that could not have happened simply by chance. Demonstrating such significant gains less than two months after the completion of the program is a remarkable achievement given the opinion expressed by experts that enhanced service delivery after administrator training takes time and may not be demonstrable for a year or more. Further analysis on pre- and post-course observation data, collected by observers trained to inter-rater reliability standards, showed that:

- educator behaviour (sensitivity) with children predicts programming quality;
- poor administration is a predictor of poor quality, and;
- administrative improvements predict improvements in program quality.

"Historically, there has been a tendency for early learning and child care programs to equate quality primarily with staff/child ratios, the teaching philosophy and methods that were used in the classroom, and the safety and cleanliness of the physical surroundings children were in," says Tammy McCormick Ferguson, Executive Director, ECCDC. "What this research points to is the importance of management and administration skills in the child care context, and how important it is that child care staff be aware of and strive to adhere to a uniform set of occupational standards."

This research is garnering attention across Ontario, as well as in the national and international early learning and child care communities. Graduates and community partners across this province are also 'continuing the mentoring momentum' through the implementation of locally developed sustainability plans. To learn more about these efforts, download a copy of the Final Outcome report or summary power point slides, and to view a video on the project, please visit www.mentoringpairsforchildcare.org.

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For more information on the project or results, or to arrange an interview, please contact Glory Ressler at gressler@eccdc.org or 905-931-7311. The ECCDC is a professional resource, training and referral organization whose services are available to Early Childhood Educators and teachers, as well as others involved in the care and education of young children. For more information, please visit: www.eccdc.org.