

## Outcomes for Caring

A joint project sponsored by Child Care Connection Nova Scotia (CCCNS) in partnership with the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of NS (CCECENS) and the Nova Scotia Child Care Association (NSCCA) with funding from Human Resources & Social Development Canada.

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Nova Scotia Child Care Association

Increasing awareness of the impact of one's practice and enhancing one's ability to measure its effectiveness results in the continuous improvement of programs. In Early Learning and Child Care, increasing the quality of a program directly benefits children in their growth and development. The **Outcomes for Caring project** began in October 2005 with the goal to make visible the link between quality practice (as demonstrated by adherence to the Certification Council of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (CCECENS) certification criteria) and positive outcomes for children.

CCECENS oversees a voluntary certification process for child care practitioners in teaching (Early Childhood Educator-ECE) positions. The certification evaluation and validation involves assessment on fifteen criteria based on developmentally appropriate practice. The concept of developmentally appropriateness has two dimensions- age appropriateness and individual appropriateness. The former focuses on "universal, predictable, sequences of growth and change in children"<sup>1</sup> and the latter that "each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style and family background."<sup>2</sup> Developmentally appropriate practice focuses on each child as an individual and responds to that child in a manner that optimizes his/her growth and experience. Such an approach respects diversity, ability and contextual factors for the child.

The **Outcomes for Caring project** will identify age appropriate developmental outcomes for children 0-6 in relation to the fifteen criteria. When practice is developmentally appropriate, we anticipate positive outcomes for children 0-6 in the four domains of child development. Tools that assess children's development within the context of the certification criteria are also being identified and explored.

A *cross-sectorial working group* made up of practitioners from the sponsoring organizations and a training institution guide the development of the outcomes. Researchers with a background in educational psychology and measurement and developmental and clinical psychology provide an *interdisciplinary component* to the project. Products and events developed to articulate the link between age appropriate developmental outcomes with certification of practice will be disseminated to practitioners, parents and the broader community. Watch for a Forum to be held in connection with the Caring Connection conference and Trade Show, January 26-28, 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> Bredekamp, S. (1986) "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in early Childhood Education Serving children from Birth through Age 8. Expanded Edition, Washington: NAEYC. P.2

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*