

OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS IN IMPLEMENTING DR. PASCAL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHS

- Try to focus on what works best for families, not what works best for service providers
- Already working together & striving to move towards collaboration, then integration
- Work together from necessity
- Summer Celebration – professionals working together (ECE & School Board staff)
- We are a flexible group
- Strength of our network
- Buy in & support of members including schools, early learning and aboriginal partners
- Resource teachers are already in daycares (one per daycare)
- Some schools have already been offering full time Junior Kindergarten – this includes 'Our Lady of the Way' and some aboriginal schools
- We are ready in some communities
- We have an excellent transition to school system in place
- Have system in place for evaluation (ex., EDI & DAC's)
- Currently work with existing funding to offer programming in a more flexible way (ex., "Tutors in Classroom (OFIP))
- Extension of "students in success"
- School nutrition programs currently in place (Breakfast for all – Huffman) – we are already partnering as agencies to provide services throughout our communities as needed
- OEYC & FRP's are already our Best Start Hubs
- Currently have a community based service plan
- Liaison between schools and First Nation communities have already been established (ex., Brent Tookenay)
- Working to engage parents
- Aboriginal Head Start Program – is already doing many of the suggestions outlined in the Pascal report
- Have early identification programs in place in some schools for JK/SK children
- JK/SK teachers see the benefits of having an ECE in the classroom with them
- Toronto First Duty presented to ECE & education staff – now see the benefits & possibilities
- Most of our hubs are co-located with child care settings
- Relationships between agencies have always existed – now are enhanced & new ones developed through Best Start network
- Schools at our table are actively involved in Best Start
- Service providers are very flexible

OPPORTUNITIES

- 400 days parental leave – increase allows more parents to be involved with early learning
- Changing ECE professionals scope to include ages birth to age 8
- Will be able to build upon opportunities for continuing education for all early learning professionals (from all sectors)
- Opportunity to increase links with schools in communities
- Opportunity for increased linkages with First Nation communities
- Building parent/teacher relationships
- Flexible program
- Parents to have opportunity to be with class – scheduled in
- Enhance workplace policies – family and baby friendly
- All professionals working with children aged 4 & 5 will be school board employees – consistency
- Contracts with partners ex/ recreation programs
- Make schools community hubs (where possible)
- Opportunity to address some transportation issues – JK/SK students will be at school & can receive all services there
- Need to look at child care settings & the viability of them after they lose the 4 & 5 year old children
- Opportunity to have increased early i.d. opportunities based on curriculum & developmental needs
- Connect more with parents
- Opportunity to be more family focused in schools
- Seamless service
- Easy to use & seamless referral pathway
- After school programs – with agencies working together – especially for pre-teen population
- Out-reach & skill building opportunities/ life skills
- Standardized tools
- Help parents of overcoming 'stigma' of asking for support
- Continuity of family relationships
- Services are in a good environment
- Work to ensure nutrition for all – universal
- Opportunity to pool resources
- Opportunity to educate municipal leaders, school principals, and decision makers regarding the Pascal report & the recommendations
- Bring families into schools to offer programs
- Attachment building – parents (based on the evidence re: attachment)
- "Prince of a program" – page 33 report
- Opportunity to build a system that will work the best for our communities & residents
- Work closer with aboriginal professionals, partners & families
- Link to First Nations to know what communities want/need (Chief's Secretariat?)
- Increase culturally appropriate programs (p.31 report)

WEAKNESSES		THREATS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all employers are baby & family friendly • Lack of available resources in our district • Lack of capital dollars to renovate daycares to increase spaces for younger kids, including infants • Lack of infant spaces available in daycares – but current numbers don’t justify a program • ECE College courses – need to be enhanced & improved to meet the increasing needs & professional responsibilities of the profession • Don’t have something in place to identify all JK/SK children in need • Our “birth to age 3” centres need to be moved to the schools to reduce fragmentation of services – in some communities • Don’t have on-reserve First nation representation on our network – therefore don’t have their input/wants/needs identified • Federal vs. provincial government – lack of communication & collaboration • Don’t have the population & demand to meet the numbers requirements for the after school programs recommended by Dr. Pascal • Lack of enough qualified ECE’s • Lack of required human resources – intervention programs, hub staff, ECE • Lack of adequate funding for transportation • Lack of required physical and material resources – ex/ Robert Moore school – will we now get the additional room & money to have child care etc. in the new school? • Lack of stability of JK/SK teachers – lack of continuity of staffing (especially in small school boards) • If we increase early id, will we have the necessary resources to meet the need • Federal vs. provincial funding 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lose the scarce professional staff that we have if changes to employers are enforced • Viability of daycare settings once 4 & 5 year olds do not attend • ½ day programs at schools are not an option due to funding & geography • Aboriginal Head Start - age 2.6 to 5 years (how will AHS fit?) • Pay discrepancy for ECE’s • Current fee subsidy & licensing of daycares • Best Start Hub staff must be independent & not tied to staff ratios for daycares • Fast implementation timelines • What will happen when government changes • Nursery schools – program viabilities? • Will there actually be fewer choices for families? • Will be difficult to offer last minute daycare opportunities – will we continue to have flexibility • Multiple tiers of administration & bureaucracy – will use money that could be used for service delivery – especially in communities where the system is already working well • Reduction of parent leave if the ‘dad’ can’t do a portion – need to remove the penalty • Additional training of teachers – though beneficial, how intensive is the training; ECE’s also need programs enhanced • Statement from ETAO– lack of support & buy provincially • Reduction in quality of services to ‘make it work’ • Will this really meet the needs in our communities? • Will there be dollars attached to implementing recommendations • Will funding be sustainable • Will some programs lose funding in order to fund the changes to the system • Class size limits will impact availability of new programs (ex/ SK/grade 1 splits) • Programs funded over 2 networks/DSSABs (PSL, IHP, HB/HC) • Classification of ECE within school unions u • What happens to 4 year olds who don’t go to school • Parents history with education system may impact linkages & how comfortable they are in the school • Will school boards be funded to provide services to JK/SK students that are currently provided in the Early Years programs? • Will lose ECE professionals to school boards • HB/HC is mandated & legislated – will this be changed • What about Educational Assistants jobs? • Recommendations may not be as beneficial for our area as other parts of Ontario • Need to be flexible – can’t be the “Toronto model” for all • What about Fly-In First nation communities • All ministries need to have input & review the plan – not just Ministry of Education • First nation communities were left out of Best Start – will they be left out of this?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Child Care providers must review programs to provide feedback as to the impact on full-day JK/SK for their child care programs. They have been asked to provide comments on the viability of their programs, the opportunities for them to expand into infant & toddler care and also the risks for them as child care programs.
2. The SWOT analysis will be forwarded to network members for review and comment. A revised analysis will be prepared for the September 3 Best Start network meeting.
3. Review our risks & opportunities at the September 3 Best Start network meeting. The response to Sandra Russell will be finalized at that time.
4. Best Start network members will be asked to come to the September 3 meeting prepared to discuss how we could implement the recommendations in our network area.