

QUALITY IN THE EARLY YEARS:

Annotated Bibliography

SSHRC Ideas Connect

Conestoga College

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A collection of summaries in the form of annotations on articles discussing quality in the Early Years sector intended to inform the community and inspire discussion.

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Title:

1. Guide to the National Quality Standard

Citation:

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2017). *Guide to the National Quality Standard*. Retrieved June 26, 2017, from <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-03-Guide-to-NQS.pdf>

Summary (highlights of the article):

In December 2009, the Australian governments came together to create a National Quality Framework for ECEC called the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF will replace Australia's "state and territory licensing and quality assurance processes" (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 7). There are four main components to the NQF:

1. "The National Quality Standard (NQS) for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care;
2. a national quality rating and assessment process;
3. streamlined regulatory arrangements;
4. a national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments – the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – to oversee the system" (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 7).

The NQS follows the 6 guiding principles of the NQF:

1. "The rights and best interests of the child are paramount.
2. Children are successful, competent and capable learners.
3. Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin the framework.
4. Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.
5. The role of parents and families is respected and supported.
6. Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services." (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 8).

The NQS is made up of 7 main quality areas, which are further broken down into 18 standards, with a few in each area. These standards are then broken down further into 58 elements. The overarching main quality areas are as follows:

1. “Educational program and practice;
2. Children’s health and safety;
3. Physical environment;
4. Staffing arrangements;
5. Relationships with children;
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities;
7. Leadership and service management” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 9).

The first quality area is “educational program and practice” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 17). This quality area focuses on promoting a stimulating and engaging program that supports and enhances the learning and development of the children. This quality area is comprised of two main standards:

1. ‘An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development.
2. Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child.” (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 17).

The second quality area is “children’s health and safety” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 44). This quality area focuses on the health and safety of children. It is comprised of three main standards:

1. “Each child’s health is promoted.
2. Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.
3. Each child is protected.” (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 44).

The third quality area is “physical environment” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 79). This quality area focuses on providing a safe and appropriate

physical environment with experiences that are diverse and promote the learning and development of children. It is comprised of three main standards:

1. “The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service.
2. The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.
3. The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future.” (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 79).

The fourth quality area is “staffing arrangements” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 105). This quality area focuses on the qualifications and experience of educators and supervisors, their ability to develop relationships with children, the environment they are able to create, and the engagement of children they promote. It is comprised of two main standards:

1. “Staffing arrangements enhance children’s learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing.
2. Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are respectful and ethical.” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 105).

The fifth quality area is “relationships with children” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 119). This quality area focuses on responsive and respectful relationships with children that promote their sense of security and belonging. It is comprised of two main standards:

1. “Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.
2. Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 119).

The sixth quality area is “collaborative partnerships with families and communities” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 140). This quality area focuses on building relationships and partnerships with families and the community that are collaborative, communicative, and consultative. It is comprised of three main standards:

1. “Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.
2. Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about childrearing are respected.
3. The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children’s learning and wellbeing.” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 140).

The seventh and final quality area is “leadership and service management” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 164). This quality area focuses on the effectiveness of the leadership and management, the documentation and maintenance of the policies, procedures, and records, and the planning and review process. It is comprised of three main standards:

1. “Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.
2. There is a commitment to continuous improvement.
3. Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service.” (Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017, p. 164).

Key Messages:

- Australia’s National Quality Standard (NQS) is made up of 7 main quality areas, and each is comprised of various main standards

Title:

2. Quality of Early Childhood Development Programs in Global Contexts: Rationale for Investment, Conceptual Framework and Implications for Equity

Citation:

Britto, P. R., Boller, K., & Yoshikawa, H. (2011). Quality of Early Childhood Development Programs in Global Contexts: Rationale for Investment, Conceptual Framework and Implications for Equity. *Social Policy Report*, 25(2), 1-31.

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Britto et al. (2011) discuss the global context of early childhood development (ECD) programs, policy, and quality. The authors explain the link between equity and access, and present a framework for understanding and measuring quality globally. Finally, the gaps in existing quality measures are discussed, along with the implications for ECD services, policy, and research.

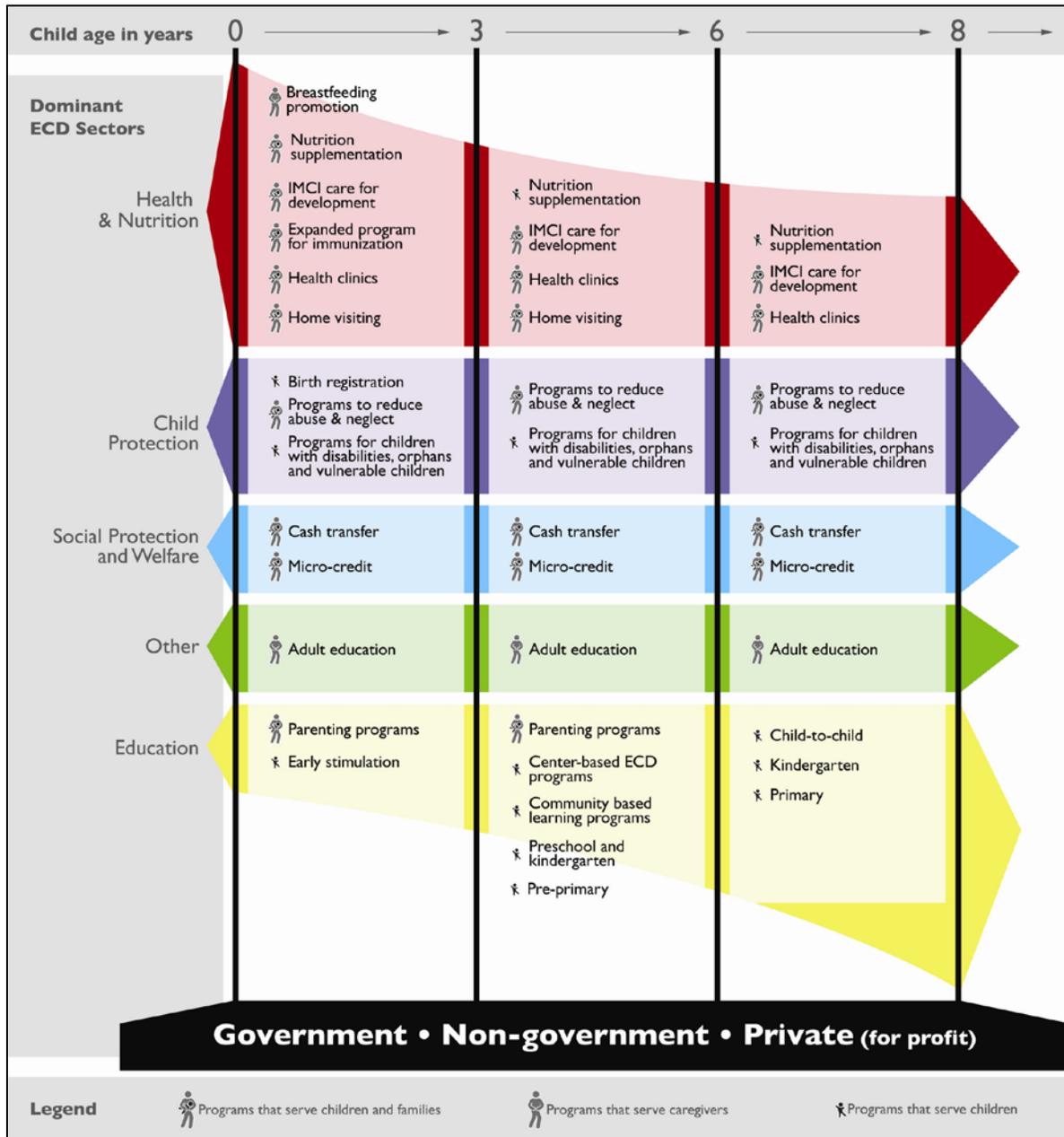
Britto et al. (2011) begin by discussing that across the globe there are gaps in opportunities and outcomes for children, stating that often children “either fail to survive . . . or fail to thrive . . . [and] over 200 million children under 5 years of age are not achieving their developmental potential” (Britto et al., 2011, p. 3). This is why an equity approach to ECD is highlighted in this article. Britto et al. (2011) define ECD as a “broad range of supports for young children and families” and define equity for ECD as “equitable access and opportunity for quality programs and services” (p. 3). It is important for there to be a focus on equity and quality rather than just access, as improving access does not necessarily lead to the improvement of service quality. Britto et al. (2011) also note that there is a growing consensus that there should be a seamless integration of services across ECD that focuses on the health, learning, behavior, and economic well-being of children and families.

Britto et al. (2011) identify 4 dimensions they state are critical for ECD and represent the diversity of ECD programs:

1. “Target age of children served
2. Method of service delivery

3. Focus of the program
4. Actors sponsoring and implementing the program” (Britto et al., 2011, p. 5).

These dimensions are summarized and illustrated in the following diagram regarding the categorization of ECD programs:

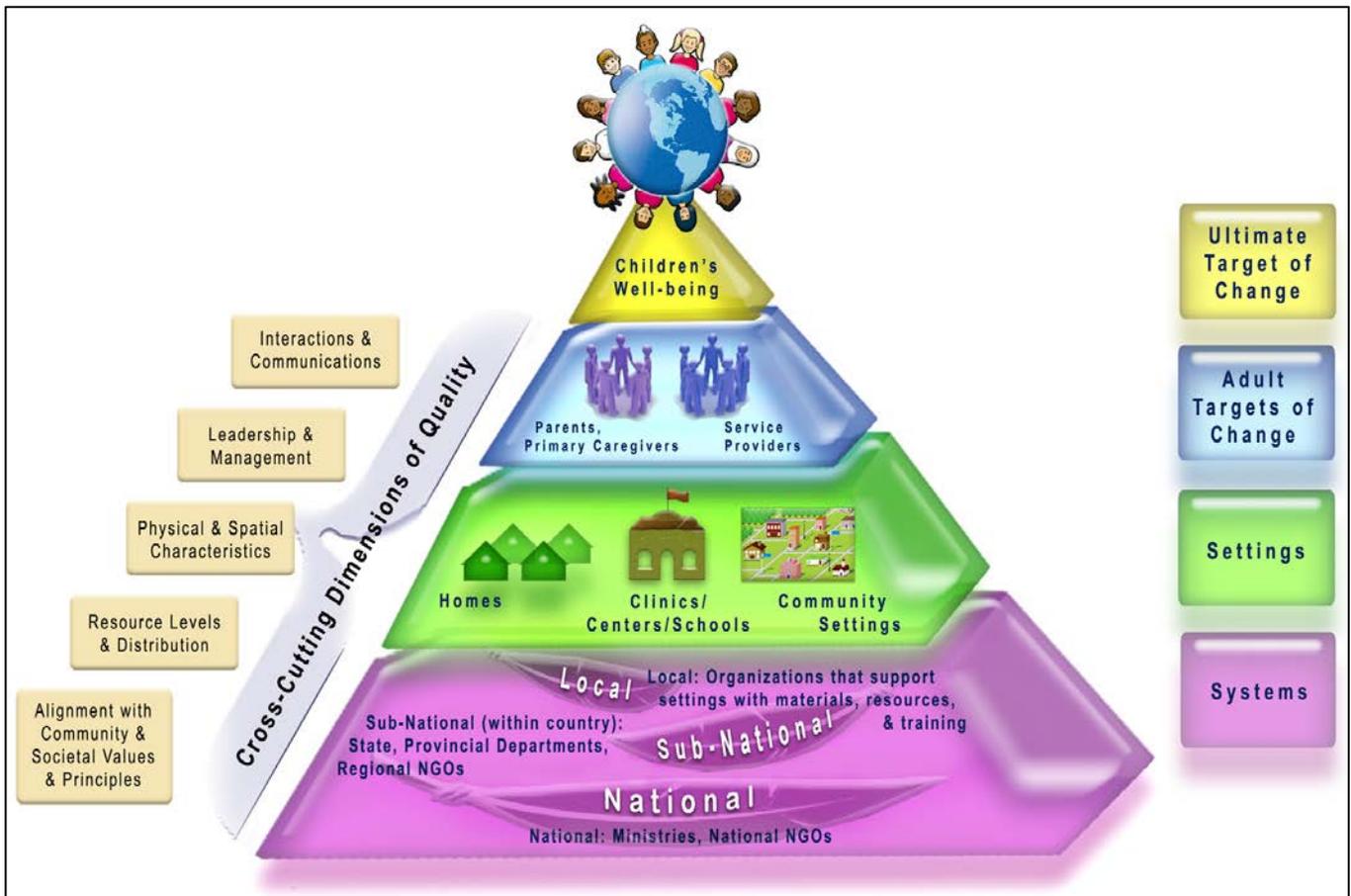


(Britto et al., 2011, p. 6, Figure 1).

According to Britto et al. (2011), this diagram demonstrates the complex tapestry of ECD programs in which the concept of quality needs to be constructed, understood, and applied.

Britto et al. (2011) then discuss how global conventions and frameworks can help influence national social policy regarding equitable, quality ECD programs, such as the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (ERA) framework. These declarations provide a human rights and equity approach to help “foster environments and contexts to promote the holistic development of all children” (Britto et al., 2011, p. 8). An equity approach ensures that all families have access to quality ECD programs.

When conceptualizing quality, an “ecological systems perspective” is suggested because it includes both the “proximal social settings of child development and interactions therein” along with “levels of systems that are important for program or policy implementation” (Britto et al., 2011, p. 9). Looking at these different levels when considering quality is important to prevent a “one size fits all” mentality because “quality measurement requires grounding in country and community context, values, and needs” (Britto et al., 2011, p. 9). Britto et al. (2011) outline the ecological systems perspective on quality in the following diagram:



(Britto et al., 2011, p. 10, Figure 2).

In summary, quality is a construct that is grounded in the culture, setting, time, and type of the program being considered. It is constantly changing and evolving, with some universal components and some population-specific components. The process of defining quality “benefits from a collaborative, co-constructed approach with multiple stakeholder groups” and should include a diverse range of perspectives, although one definition of quality may not be possible (Britto et al., 2011, p. 16). Britto et al. (2011) also suggest that quality might not be the correct terminology, as it suggests a “uniform, measurable standard where none exists” (Britto et al., 2011, 14). They suggest the term “effectiveness factors” instead.

Key Messages:

- There is a focus on equity and quality rather than only access
- Quality is a construct that is grounded in the culture, setting, time, and type of the program that is being considered
- Quality is constantly changing and evolving
- A single definition of quality may not be possible

Title:

3. Quality in Early Care and Education

Citation:

California Childcare Health Program. (2006). *Quality in Early Care and Education*. Retrieved August 2017, from https://cchp.ucsf.edu/sites/cchp.ucsf.edu/files/4_CCHC_Quality_0606.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

Over the past 50 years, there has been a growing number of children spending time in ECE programs due to increased labour participation by mothers. According to the California Childcare Health Program (2006), as a result of “high numbers of children spending time in non-parental care, attention has been drawn to the quality of available ECE programs and the effects of quality care on children’s health and well-being” (p. 1). There is a large body of research that supports the findings that high quality ECE programs have social, emotional, and cognitive developmental benefits for children.

The California Childcare Health Program (2006) outlines 5 main components of quality ECE programs:

1. “Quality relationships;
2. Predictable routines;
3. ECE provider qualifications;
4. Adult/child ratio and group size;
5. Staff turnover” (California Childcare Health Program, 2006, p. 2).

Quality ECE programs should promote positive, warm relationships between program staff, families, and children. Routines should be predictable with structured activities and opportunities for one on one interactions with children. Poorly organized routines can be stressful for children and cause injury, power struggles, and the spread of infection. In addition to degrees, having specialized training better equips educators to facilitate learning, and professional development opportunities are helpful to keep up-to-date in the field. Children in smaller child to staff ratios experience more individualized attention. Educators are able to be more responsive, involved, and less restricting. Smaller group size helps prevent the spread of

infection. High staff turnover creates difficult adjustment periods for children, and creates an unstable program.

The California Childcare Health Program (2006) discusses several barriers to quality in ECE programs. Barriers such as “low compensation, inadequate benefits, and limited growth opportunities” can lead to high staff turnover (California Childcare Health Program, 2006, p. 4). New staff may not be as experienced, and would require continuous training. This can be expensive and make high quality care unaffordable for many. High staff turnover can also create an unstable, disruptive environment for children, who will lose the caring relationships they are forming with their educators. The program may also not be able to meet the various needs of all the children due to a lack of resources or support. The child’s needs may also not align with the policy regulations which can be difficult for educators to navigate, such as napping or toileting.

The California Childcare Health Program (2006) outlines some indicators of program quality “as described and accepted by ECE professionals”:

1. “Developmentally appropriate environment and activities;
2. Responsive staff-child interactions;
3. Accepted behavior guidance techniques;
4. Learning opportunities (“teachable moments”);
5. ECE providers’ education and staff development;
6. Parent, staff and child education;
7. Child-directed activities” (California Childcare Health Program, 2006, pp. 4-5).

Key Messages:

- High quality ECE programs have social, emotional, and cognitive developmental benefits for children
- Quality programs should promote positive, warm relationships and have predictable routines and structured activities
- Barriers to quality include low compensation, not many growth opportunities, and poor benefits

Title:

4. A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children

Citation:

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2007). *A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children*. Retrieved February 2017, from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Policy_Framework.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

This article intends to provide clarification and strategies for policymakers to help in the decision-making process when thinking about young children. Utilizing research and scientific evidence help explain and justify the policy implications for policymakers. In the executive summary, it is discussed how the article utilizes neuroscience and child development research to investigate the “why” and the “what” when investing in young children, and includes the findings from four decades of research in program evaluation to investigate the “when” and the “how”. The article posits that “this combination . . . can provide an informed and pragmatic framework for those engaged in policy design and implementation” (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007, p. 2). The article’s main scope of focus is the pre-natal stage to five years of age.

The next sections of the article are broken down into the different environments, or “contexts” that children develop in which policy should take into consideration. Each section details what research and science say about how to produce health outcomes within that context. These contexts are: “the nuclear family; out-of-home settings; multi-generational programs; family economics and maternal employment and; environmental contamination” (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007, p. 12). Each section discusses the relevant research and scientific evidence, and then provides policy implications.

This annotated bibliography will focus on the context which discusses quality in ECEC. The Center on the Developing Child (2007) begins by discussing the heavily researched and evidenced fact that the quality of ECEC has lasting effects; the higher the quality, the more

beneficial it is, whereas the lower the quality, the more detrimental it is. This quality can be measured by either structural (i.e. ratio) or process indicators (i.e. discipline). The Center on the Developing Child (2007) then states that evidence has shown that there are 6 principal elements that consistently lead to positive impacts. These elements are:

1. “Highly skilled teachers;
2. Small class sizes and high adult-to-child ratios;
3. Age-appropriate curricula and stimulating materials in a safe physical setting;
4. A language-rich environment;
5. Warm, responsive interactions between staff and children, and;
6. High and consistent levels of child participation” (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007, p. 4).

The Center on the Developing Child (2007) adds that there are still remaining questions surrounding these elements. It is not yet known whether it is the combination of these elements together that leads to the strongest impact, or if there are elements more important than others. It is also not yet certain what the threshold of quality is that must be crossed in order to ensure the sustainability of these benefits.

The stated policy implications are to ensure that the participation of low-income families in high-quality services can improve developmental outcomes for the children. Additionally, ECEC settings that do not meet minimum requirements are in need of more public attention.

The Center on the Developing Child (2007) concludes by stating that strengthening quality is critical, and it requires accountability practices that have stable funding and support from the government. While government partnership is important, The Center on the Developing Child (2007) states that the government cannot do it all, and it requires a sharing of responsibility and cost through public-private sector partnerships where both will benefit in the end. It is important to keep in mind that “interventions [of quality] should be evaluated to strengthen their impact, not to erect barriers to participation” (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007, p. 27).

Key Messages:

- The strengthening of quality is critical and requires accountability practices with stable funding from the government

- There needs to be a sharing of responsibility and cost through public-private sector partnerships
- Unsure if it is a combination of structural and process quality that has the strongest impact, or if one element is stronger than the other

Title:

5. Quality Targets in Services for Young Children

Citation:

Childcare Resource and Research Unit. (2004). *Quality Targets in Services for Young Children*. Retrieved May 2017, from http://www.childcarequality.ca/wdocs/QbD_QualityTargets.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

It is first important to understand how The Childcare Network approaches quality. The Network views quality as subjective and relative, and as a participatory, democratic process which is important in and of itself and is continuously evolving. The recommendation outlined specific objectives that would come together to serve as a broad definition of a “good quality service system” (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2004, p. 1). These specific objectives are:

1. “Affordability;
2. Access to services in all areas, both urban and rural;
3. Access to services for children with special needs;
4. Combining safe and secure care with a pedagogical approach;
5. Close and responsive relations between services, parents and local communities;
6. Diversity and flexibility of services;
7. Increased choice for parents;
8. Coherence between different services” (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2004, p. 1).

Specific conditions needed to achieve these objectives were recommended as well, such as:

1. “A policy framework for service provision;
2. Coordination of responsibility for services;
3. Appropriate staffing and staff conditions;
4. Curricular framework;
5. Appropriate physical environments;
6. Infrastructure for planning, monitoring, support, training, research and development;

7. Adequate financing” (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2004, p. 1).

In order to achieve these objectives, The Childcare Network proposed 40 “Quality Targets” that should be reached within ten years. They are divided into the categories of policy framework, financial, levels and types of service, education, staff-child ratios, staff employment and training, environment and health, parents and the community, and performance. The Network emphasizes that the targets are not trying to standardize everything, but instead they are intended to require a commitment to “support common objectives and principles” (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2004, p. 4). The 40 targets are:

Policy Framework Targets:

1. Governments should provide a published statement of intent for care and education services of young children at all policy levels, drawing on professional and public input.
2. One department should take responsibility for implementing the policy at both national and regional levels.
3. Governments should construct a program to implement the policy with strategies, targets, and resources.
4. Frameworks with specified time limits should be made and reviewed regularly to make sure targets are met.
5. Governments should create an infrastructure for planning, monitoring, training, and research.
6. This infrastructure should include measures of supply, demand, and need.

Financial Targets:

7. The public spending on services for children 5 and under should be a minimum of 1% of GDP.
8. A portion of this should be for developing infrastructure, with at least 5% on support, advisory, and training, and at least 1% on research and monitoring.
9. A capital spending program should support building and renovations in relation to environmental and health targets.
10. Fees for parents in publicly funded ECEC should be 15% of the monthly household income or less.

Targets for Levels and Types of Service:

11. Full time publicly funded spots should be available for minimum 15% of children under 3, and minimum 90% of children 3-6 years.
12. There should be flexibility of hours and attendance.
13. Parents should have a range of choice in services.
14. The value of diversity should be promoted.
15. Staffing or specialist assistance should be available to all children with disabilities to ensure equal access.

Education Targets:

16. All services for young children should have values and objectives, including an explicit educational philosophy.
17. The philosophy should include participation from parents, staff, and any other stakeholders.
18. The philosophy should be broad and promote all developmental areas and skills, as well as community awareness, autonomy, identity, relationships, and attitudes towards learning.
19. The implementation strategy for putting the philosophy into practice should be stated and explicit.
20. The environment should reflect and value each child's background.

Targets for Staff-Child Ratios:

21. Ratios should be directly related to group age and size, and should not be less than 1:4 for under 12 months (infant), 1:6 for 12-23 months (infant/toddler), 1:8 for 24-35 months (toddler), and 1:15 for 36-71 months (preschool). Family childcare should be no less than 1:4, including carer's own children.
22. 10% of the working week should be put aside for training and preparation.
23. Supply coverage should always be available to maintain ratios.
24. Administrative, domestic, and janitorial work should be allotted hours outside those spent with children.

Targets for Staff Employment and Training:

25. All qualified staff should be paid a nationally or locally agreed upon wage, comparable to teachers.

26. 60% minimum of staff have at least 3 years of post-secondary training with both theory and practical components. Staff without this level of training should have access to it, including in-service.
27. All ECEC staff should have access to in-service training.
28. All staff should have the right to union affiliation.
29. 20% minimum of staff should be men.

Environment and Health Targets:

30. All services should meet health and safety requirements.
31. The physical environment should be well planned and reflective of the educational philosophy.
32. There should be sufficient indoor and outdoor space to meet the needs of children, parents, and staff. Specifically, indoors, at least 6 sq. metres for each child under 3, and 4 sq. metres for each child 3-6 years. Outdoors, at least 6 sq. metres per child. Additionally, 5% of indoor space for adults.
33. Food should be nutritional, culturally appropriate, and preparation facilities should be available onsite.

Targets for Parents and the Community:

34. Decision-making processes should be fully participatory involving parents, staff, and children.
35. There should be formal and informal connections with the community.
36. Employment procedures and recruiting should reflect the diversity of the local community.

Performance Targets:

37. Progress on objectives and budgetary spending should be annually reported.
38. Children's progress should be assessed regularly.
39. The assessment process should reflect the views of the family and the community.
40. Staff should regularly engage in self-reflection and evaluation.

Key Messages:

- Views quality as a subjective and relative, participatory, democratic process
- Quality is continuously evolving

- The proposed 40 “Quality Targets” are intended to require a commitment to maintain common intentions and principles

Title:

6. What is Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care?

Citation:

Childcare Resource and Research Unit. (2016). *What is Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care?* Retrieved February 2017, from <http://findingqualitychildcare.ca/high-quality-child-care/what-is-quality>

Summary (highlights of the article):

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) indicate what quality in ECEC is through the eyes of children and parents, and some overall elements of quality that are generally understood. The CRRU (2016) also discusses factors that set the stage for quality and what impacts it. This website was set up in order to educate Canadian parents about quality in ECEC.

The CRRU (2016) states that through the eyes of children, quality means feeling accepted, having relationships with friends and responsive adults, being emotionally and physically comfortable, and having fun through engaging activities. Through the eyes of the parents, quality involves the health, safety, and the happiness of their child. Parents also look at the convenience and affordability of the program. The CRRU (2016) states that some parents might also include school readiness and academic skill building such as counting in their visions of quality, whereas other parents might include the socialization experience of their child.

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit observes that there is no single definition of quality in child care, however there are certain elements that are commonly understood and identified as important. These elements include:

1. "Health, safety, and good hygiene;
2. Good nutrition;
3. A well-maintained environment set up for children;
4. An adequate number of staff who are sensitive and responsive to children;
5. Opportunities for active play – especially outdoors;
6. Opportunities for quiet play and rest;

7. Opportunities for developing motor, social, language and cognitive skills through play;
8. Positive interactions with adults;
9. Practices that support positive interaction amongst children;
10. Facilitation of emotional growth;
11. Participation of, support for and communication with parents, and;
12. Respect for diversity and difference, gender equality and inclusion of children with disabilities” (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2016, para. 9).

The CRRU (2016) does lay out a broad, generally recognized definition of what high quality child care is, stating it must have “broad learning and development goals for children, going beyond narrow academic aims . . . [and] an approach that ‘lets children be children’, which means learning through play and experiencing a wide range of artistic, cultural, cognitive, social and physical activities” (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2016, para. 11).

The CRRU (2016) then outlines 6 key factors that help facilitate quality in ECEC, which are regulation, training, wages and working conditions, staff-child ratios and group size, educational elements, and auspice. The CRRU (2016) suggests that high quality centres should go above and beyond minimum regulations, and they should ensure that staff have proper ECE training. They also suggest providing staff with higher wages and good working conditions, having smaller group sizes and high ratios, having a clear philosophy, framework, and pedagogical approach, and having public, non-profit auspice.

Key Messages:

- Quality for children means feeling accepted, having fun, and having supportive relationships
- Quality for parents means convenience and affordability, as well as health, safety, and happiness for their child
- No single definition for quality

Title:

7. Quality in Family Child Care: A Focus Group Study with Canadian Providers

Citation:

Doherty, G. (2015). Quality in Family Child Care: A Focus Group Study with Canadian Providers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 43(3), 157-167.

Summary (highlights of the article):

The purpose of the study is to educate government, researchers, and workers in the field about family child care. It attempts to understand how providers view family child care in order to link higher levels in various child developmental areas with specific provider attributes and actions, and then evaluate the effectiveness of provider suggested supports through existing research.

The providers that participated in this study identified 7 different components that are necessary to ensure quality in family child care. These 7 components are:

1. “Children’s physical and emotional safety and well-being are protected;
 2. The provider is affectionate and supportive with each child;
 3. The provider-parent relationship is collaborative and professional;
 4. The setting looks and acts like a family home;
 5. The home and neighborhood are used as learning opportunities;
 6. The presence of a mixed-age group is used as a learning opportunity, and;
 7. The provider successfully addresses the challenges inherent in the occupation”
- (Doherty, 2015, p. 158).

Each of these components was also broken down and analyzed in further detail. The results of the study also suggest that these views would probably be shared by other Anglo-Saxon countries.

Doherty (2015) then discusses the impact of providers’ behaviours on the linguistic, cognitive, and social development respectively, as well as the impact of providers’ characteristics on children’s development. Doherty outlines 3 “realities” that demonstrate a need to better the quality of family child care. These 3 realities are:

1. “The current substantial use of family child care for preschoolers who are in a critical period for developing the basic skills essential for school-readiness;
2. The likelihood that this will continue for the foreseeable future, and;
3. The consistent finding that children who participate in family child care as infants and toddlers obtain lower scores on standard measures of cognitive and language development and have poorer pre-academic skills at school entry than their peers who received center-based care” (Doherty, 2015, p. 163).

Doherty (2015) concludes by discussing the policy and practical implications of these findings for ECEC, especially family child care. In terms of policy implications and considerations, Doherty (2015) discusses the following: the retirement of the baby boomers combined with a decrease in workforce entrance and a competitive global economy; a small and un-validated existing body of research that should be invested in; recognizing the distinction between family and centre child care, and that attempts to make family child care more like centre child care in the name of quality will be ineffective; governments must include representatives from all levels of the field when considering regulations and policies; resources to develop formal provider networks should be provided to help deliver interventions and supports; and ongoing funding to ensure supports are free or affordable.

In terms of practice implications and considerations, Doherty (2015) mentions three effective approaches to increase quality of family child care:

1. “Training for newly licensed providers and professional development for those with experience;
2. Affiliation with a formal staffed provider network, and;
3. Certain types of home visiting” (Doherty, 2015, p. 162).

The types of home visits that Doherty (2015) refers to are outlined further as visits that use a formal quality assessment tool, and frequent home visits that focus on provider and parent collaboration.

Key Messages:

- Attempts to make family child care more like centre child care in the name of quality will be ineffective

- Governments need to include representatives from all levels in the field when considering policies and regulations
- Resources to develop formal provider networks should be provided to assist in delivering interventions and supports

Title:

8. A Critical Analysis of the National Quality Framework: Mobilising for a Vision for Children Beyond Minimum Standards

Citation:

Fenech, M., Giugni, M., & Bown, K. (2012). A Critical Analysis of the National Quality Framework: Mobilising for a Vision for Children Beyond Minimum Standards. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 37(4), 5-14.

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Fenech et al. (2012) discuss the new National Quality Framework (NQF) established in Australia, critique it using Foucault's (1991) theorization of governmentality, and pose suggestions and recommendations for ECEC activists and advocates moving forward using Sumsion's (2006) conceptual framework for political activism.

Prior to the NQF, the ECEC sector in Australia suffered from policy fragmentation, poor working conditions and training for staff, and deficient public investment. The Australian approach to ECEC regulation was also widely criticized for being individually licensed by state, limiting high-quality support on a national scale. The introduction of the NQF meant all states agreed to a national ECEC approach. The NQF included:

1. "A streamlined licensing and accreditation system;
2. A national Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF);
3. New national quality standards and Quality Rating System (QRS);
4. New national legislative body – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)" (Fenech et al., 2012, pp. 5-6).

Although the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was finalized in 2009, it became legally enforceable in 2010 through requirements in the following areas:

1. "Provider and service approvals;
2. Certified supervisors;
3. The assessment and rating system;
4. Policies and procedures;

5. Children's health and safety;
6. A centre's physical environment;
7. Staffing, information, and records;
8. The establishing and roles of the ACECQA" (Fenech et al., 2012, p. 6).

There were mixed initial reactions upon announcement of the NQF – some warned that it was an ambitious undertaking and would require significant determination, while others celebrated an attempt to overhaul the sector. The private sector was concerned that there would be increases in fees for parents, due to increased quality standards and increasing accessibility and affordability barriers.

Fenech et al. (2012) discuss the NQF as an “art” of the government through Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality. Foucault (1991) defines government as growing the state's power and pushing its agenda by guiding the conduct of the population. The “art” of the government are the strategies used to influence the population's actions and conduct. Fenech et al. (2012) believe that the Australian government asserts certain “truths” about the NQF to help shape the thinking of the population and promote the government's agenda. Fenech et al. (2012) state that the Australian government manifests 6 “truths” about the NQF:

1. “The NQF will lead to improved quality standards and practices;
2. The NQF will drive quality improvement;
3. Under the NQF all children will have access to quality ECEC;
4. Robust standards can be developed in the context of market provisioning;
5. Families will be able to use NQS ratings to make more informed decisions about the centre they enrol their child in;
6. Regulation is the primary way to ensure quality in ECEC” (Fenech et al., 2012, p. 6).

Fenech et al. (2012) then investigate the accuracy of each “truth”. Rather than improving quality consistently across ECEC, the NQF promotes a set of minimum standards that are just “good enough” for children and not considered high quality. The use of the term “quality” is used to make the government “look good”. There is also little incentive or support provided by the NQF to help centres achieve anything higher than the minimum standard. This will limit the amount of children with access to high quality ECEC because many centres will be operating at the bare minimum of quality, according to regulated standards. Certain aspects of the regulations also mean that not all children will have equal access to RECEs at all times. Fenech

et al. (2012) state that there is an ongoing contradiction between quality and profit, and so a market-based system is unlikely to achieve high-quality standards. While the new NQF is presented as an unprecedented “freedom of choice”, it is a very small freedom of choice from a very small pool, as most centres can only afford to do the bare minimum. The NQF also assumes that all families understand and value quality in the same way, which is not the case. There are different levels of understanding, and different cultural values of what quality is. Some families also have specialized needs. Baseline, mainstream ECEC services do not work for all families. The NQF also does not address other important barriers to quality in ECEC, like staff recruitment and retention, but claims that regulation is the key. Overall, Fenech et al. (2012) believe that the NQF is not a reliable solution for the quality dilemma.

Fenech et al. (2012) then introduce Sumsion’s (2006) approach to political activism to address how advocates for ECEC can move forward from the groundwork of the NQF. Activism is defined as “challenging and transforming established and taken-for-granted discourses within which an issue is positioned” (Fenech et al., 2012, p. 10). Politics is defined as “the distribution of power, particularly when conflicting values and agendas prohibit policy consensus” (Fenech et al., 2012, p. 10). According to Fenech et al. (2012) we need to now shift from advocacy to activism, and from policy to politics. Sumsion’s (2006) approach involves 3 strategies:

1. Critical imagination – “conceptualising existing problems and potential solutions in alternative frames of reference” (Fenech et al., 2012, p. 10);
2. Critical literacy – “identifying privileged values and agendas, and intentionally probing for points of vulnerability where pressure may be applied” (Fenech et al., 2012, pp. 10-11);
3. Critical action – “forming strategic alliances on common points of interest with stakeholders beyond those teaching and working in ECEC” (Fenech et al., 2012, p. 11).

Through critical imagination, one can take two different perspectives when examining the NQF. The retrospective perspective would keep longstanding sector issues in mind and see the NQF as a reform that can use regulation to move the sector forward. The future visionary oriented perspective uses critical imagination to see how the sector of ECEC could be when addressing children’s rights and using continuously improving standards of high quality and excellence, rather than mediocrity.

Through critical literacy, one can use the discourse around the NQF to “identify points of vulnerability” rather than immobilize the advocacy movement. These points of vulnerability include the push for high quality but the lack of public investment, and the dependence of the NQF on a stable workforce (which the sector lacks). ECEC advocates can use these vulnerabilities as points of future activism.

Through critical action, Fenech et al. (2012) state there is opportunity for increased, innovative collaboration with ECEC stakeholders such as families, which have often been underestimated. Studies show that when families are informed about quality, families are more likely to support investment in high quality standards.

Fenech et al. (2012) conclude by stating that while minimum standards, like the NQF, can cause small changes, it encourages us to embrace mediocrity and to “think small, be small, and maintain an oppressed status in what we would like to call our profession” (Fenech et al., 2012, p. 12). In their research, Fenech et al. (2012) spoke to many students who wanted to be educators in ECEC, who upon experiencing how poorly children are treated, decided not to practice as educators after graduation. Fenech et al. (2012) state that while ECEC is going through a period of change, we must ensure that it is significant, quality change, and cannot rely on regulatory reform as it often leads only to cosmetic improvements and minimum standards. Finally, it is imperative that educators and ECEC activists continue to engage in activist politics to hold the government accountable and move them from discourse to action.

Key Messages:

- There is an ongoing contradiction between quality and profit, and a market-based system is unlikely to achieve high quality standards
- There are different levels of understanding quality and different cultural values of what quality entails
- We must ensure that while ECEC is going through a period of change, this change is significant and does not rely on regulatory reform
- There needs to be a shift in ECEC from advocacy to activism, and from policy to politics in order to hold the government accountable and move from discourse to action

Title:

9. Quality by Design: What Do We Know About Quality in Early Learning and Child Care, and What Do We Think? A Literature Review

Citation:

Friendly, M., Doherty, G., & Beach, J. (2006). *Quality by Design: What Do We Know About Quality in Early Learning and Child Care, and What Do We Think? A Literature Review*.

Retrieved February 2017, from http://www.childcarequality.ca/wdocs/QbD_LiteratureReview.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

This literature review, which is part of an exploratory project called *Quality by Design*, is conducted by the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. It is meant to explore and discuss the ELCC system in Canada, its policies, quality, and best practices. Research and evidence from Canada, the United States, and Europe are compared and linked. Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) discuss quality both at a centre level and a system level. They then go on to establish eight elements of a high quality ELCC system, and discuss the research and literature that support each element. These eight elements are the framework used by the Region of Waterloo in the creation of the new Early Years Engage quality improvement vision.

For the purposes of this literature review, Friendly, Doherty and Beach define ELCC as “learning and care services provided outside the child’s home for children under age six that support both young children’s well-being and development and their parents’ activities in and out of the paid labour force” (Friendly et al., 2006, p. 1).

Bengt-Erik Andersson, a Swedish developmental psychologist, created a high quality child care concept utilizing aspects of the Swedish Parliament’s goals for children in preschool. These include norms and values, development and learning, and children’s influence. In summary, according to the Swedish ideals, preschool should help children understand and embrace the values of society (such as empathy and respect), it should help children develop identity, curiosity, independence, and confidence, and it should help children understand democracy and responsibility.

Thelma Harms, a professor at the University of North Carolina, also conceptualized high quality child care. She sees it as a multi-dimensional concept with three main goals:

1. "Protection of children's health and safety;
2. Nurturing emotional and pro-social development;
3. Providing intellectual stimulation through play and hands-on activities" (Friendly et al., 2006, p. 4).

After presenting these two international views on quality in ELCC, Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) discuss how Canada is unique in the fact that unfortunately there is no published national vision of quality, as recommended by the European Commission Childcare Network.

Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) then discuss how quality varies depending on the context of the individual or group making the judgment. A child may define quality as a fun, interesting, engaging, comfortable, and accepting environment. Parents may define quality as an affordable and convenient program where their child is healthy, safe, happy, and prepared for school. ELCC staff may define quality by the relationships they have with colleagues, the physical work environment, and the compatibility of the philosophy and approach of the program with what they learned in their ECE training. The community might define quality as reflecting and supporting the values, needs, and aspirations of the community.

Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) recognize that while the concept of quality varies depending on the country and the context, there are certain values that are so critical that they are universally understood as integral to quality. These components are:

1. "Safety;
2. Good hygiene;
3. Good nutrition;
4. Appropriate opportunities for rest;
5. Promotion of equality of opportunity regardless of gender or other differences;
6. Opportunities for play and for the development of motor, social, language and cognitive skills;
7. Positive interaction with adults;
8. Encouragement and facilitation of emotional growth;
9. An environment and practices that support positive interaction among the children" (Friendly et al., 2006, p. 7).

The process of defining quality itself is discussed as well, stating that it is relative, continuous, participatory, democratic process that is important in and of itself. In order to determine what quality is and how to obtain it within your own context, Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) lay out specific questions to consider:

1. "What is our image of the child?"
2. What do we want for our children?"
3. What is the place of children and childhood in our society?"
4. What is our image of the purpose and role of ELCC programs?"
5. How should ELCC programs interact with other community services?"
6. What are the respective responsibilities of the State and the child's family?" (Friendly et al., 2006, p. 9).

Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) then discuss quality at a child care centre level versus quality at the system level. At a centre level, the characteristics of a high quality program include:

1. Every child feels accepted and supported, engages in positive relationships with other children and adults, and finds activities interesting and satisfying.
2. Every parent feels that the health and safety of their child is being looked after, that the program promotes the optimal development of their child, they receive regular feedback about their child, and their role, values, and beliefs are respected and included.
3. The program is affordable and convenient.
4. Workplace relationships are collaborative, respectful, and supportive, and all staff feel valued.
5. Staff are happy with the working conditions and their health and safety is protected.
6. There is sufficient safe and accessible outdoor and indoor space.
7. There is a play-based, daily, planned program that provides a variety of opportunities for interaction, exploration, and experimentation.

Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) review the North American research behind quality at a centre level, with measurements on the key indicators of quality. Indicators that predict high quality are higher levels of ECE training, higher educator salaries, fewer children per educator, and free or subsidized rent resulting in higher centre revenue. Additional indicators are a higher level of educator satisfaction with co-worker support which contributes to a more positive

organizational climate, non-profit auspice, higher director salary, higher level of ECE education in directors, and explicit training for staff on reflective and responsive practice. It is emphasized that these elements provide higher quality together than individually.

Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) then address quality at a system level. They state that the conditions or elements of quality need to be considered as a whole, not individually, in order to be impactful. The major obstacles to achieving quality are mainly structural, and controlled by public policy, such as ratios and financing. Essentially, the most important contributors to quality take place at the system level rather than at the centre level. Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) then outline 8 elements of high quality ELCC at a system level. These 8 elements are:

1. “Ideas: A conceptual framework;
2. Governance: Roles and responsibilities;
3. Infrastructure: Coordinated program administration;
4. Planning and policy development: A strategy for implementation;
5. Financing: Substantial well-directed public investment;
6. Human Resources: Qualified personnel and support at all levels;
7. Physical environment: The program setting;
8. Data, research and evaluation: Collection and analysis of information for evaluating effective practice and ensuring accountability” (Friendly et al., 2006, p. 17).

The first element is “ideas” which consists of a clear program statement including the underlying values, long-term goals for children and families, an educational philosophy inspired by the values and goals, and a broad curriculum framework that includes the processes used.

The second element is “governance” which consists of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all levels of government, parents, and community, public management, non-profit operation, locally managed program delivery, and the involvement of stakeholders and researchers.

The third element is “infrastructure” which consists of one lead department organizing policy, planning, and delivery, a foundation in legislation, regulated and monitored minimum standards, ongoing quality improvement, consultation, and program assessment, and education

for the public around ELCC. Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) note that it is important to envision ELCC as one seamless system rather than a set of separate programs.

The fourth element is “planning and policy development” which consists of planning throughout the system using targets and timelines, using best practices and knowledge, mandatory involvement of stakeholders and experts in policy, and service planning locally.

The fifth element is “financing” which consists of sustained and sufficient financing that supports program operation, and covers capital development, infrastructure, and training, and affordable parent fees.

The sixth element is “human resources” which consists of system-wide leadership, a body of knowledgeable policymakers, RECEs, and researchers, post-secondary training for all staff, degree level education for lead staff, management training for supervisors, training before and during employment, good wages and working conditions that lower turnover, and support, respect, and recognition for staff.

The seventh element is “the physical environment” which consists of indoor and outdoor space that is well-designed, good quality equipment and resources, connections to the community, and amenities like natural light from windows.

The eighth element is “data, research and evaluation” which consists of a data collection and analysis strategy, a research agenda addressing key issues, and regular evaluation and review of approaches, innovations, and goals.

Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2006) conclude by stating that quality is a fluid concept that requires frequent review and discussion, and that the discussion and defining process is often just as important as the outcome itself.

Key Messages:

- Quality varies depending on the context of the individual or group making the judgment (child, parent, educator, community)
- Quality is a fluid concept and it requires frequent review and discussion
- The most important contributors to quality take place at the system level rather than at the centre level

Title:

10. Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework

Citation:

Government of Ontario (2017). *Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework*. Retrieved June 7th, 2017, from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/renewed_early_years_child_care_policy_framework_en.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

The Government of Ontario (2017) has created a renewed policy framework for the early years through consultation with stakeholders across the province, including parents, caregivers, early years and child care professionals, municipalities, school boards, employers, Indigenous partners, communities, and researchers. The Government of Ontario (2017) discusses current initiatives and strengths, what Ontario wants for the early years, and 7 key areas of action to address issues and achieve Ontario's new vision. Overall, the goal is to create an integrated continuum of learning for children up to 12 years of age.

In discussing current strengths and initiatives in the early years, the Government of Ontario (2017) highlights How Does Learning Happen (HDLH), the full-day kindergarten (FDK) program, the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA), the Early Childhood Educators Act and regulatory college in 2007, the Journey Together initiative for on and off reserve child and family programs, the Early Childhood Educator Qualifications Upgrade Program, the educator wage enhancements, and historic provincial investments. The Government of Ontario (2017) notes that since 2010, they have doubled the number of licensed child care spaces in schools to help contribute to a seamless day. The number of licensed child care spaces in Ontario has increased more than 108% since 2003-04. The Government of Ontario (2017) is also in the process of transforming all existing programs for children and families into one program model called the Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (OEYCFC), which will be managed by local municipalities and begin in 2018.

The Government of Ontario (2017) briefly touches on some of the key benefits to high quality ECEC for all children to justify this initiative. They note the health, well-being, and language benefits. Additional benefits include literacy, math benefits, and the economic return.

According to the Government of Ontario (2017), “for every dollar spent on a child’s early years, there is an immediate \$2 return on investment. Over the life of the child, this dollar investment can grow to return up to \$7” (p. 9). Intervening later on in life is much more costly. There are also community-wide benefits such as more employment opportunities for parents, a more diverse workforce for employers, and economically empowering women. Additional benefits include postsecondary and training opportunities for parents, closing the gender wage gap, and reducing poverty. The Government of Ontario (2017) also references the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), stating children have distinct rights such as protection, provision, participation, and play.

Through consultation and discussion with Ontario stakeholders, the Government of Ontario (2017) observed four broad themes emerging:

1. Families struggle to afford early years programs and services, including child care;
2. Families struggle to access quality early years programs and services, including child care;
3. The improvement of quality in ECEC needs to be supported;
4. The system is not responsive or inclusive enough for families.

These themes included specific issues such as the high cost of child care, a need for fee subsidies, a lack of space (especially for infants and toddlers), a lack of awareness about ECEC programs available, and a lack of access to early years information for parents. Additionally, there is a need for a holistic approach in Indigenous communities, a need for a consistent definition and measurement system of quality, more professional development and wage enhancement opportunities, more flexible hours for programs, locational barriers (rural, urban, transportation), more support for children with special needs, and more cultural responsiveness (Francophone, Indigenous, and multi-ethnic).

Building on the progress already made in the early years, the Government of Ontario (2017) has introduced a 7 point action plan to address these issues over the next five years:

1. “Increasing access to early years and child care programs and services;
2. Ensuring a more affordable early years and child care system;
3. Establishing an early years workforce strategy;
4. Determining a provincial definition of quality in the early years;

5. Developing an approach to promoting inclusion in early years and child care settings;
6. Creating an outcomes and measurement strategy;
7. Increasing public awareness of Ontario's early years and child care system" (Government of Ontario, 2017, p. 7).

The first action area, increasing access, includes a discussion about the Government of Ontario's (2017) Expansion Plan, which involves an investment to double the spaces (add 100,000) for children 4 years and under. This expansion uses school-based, community-based, and licensed home-based child care options to increase access. In order to help strengthen the licensed home child care sector, the Government of Ontario (2017) will provide base funding. The Government of Ontario (2017) will also increase licensed child care spaces in Indigenous communities. This action area also includes the creation of an Innovation Fund to support inventive, creative, and unique solutions to increase access and encourage growth (such as facilitating non-traditional hours). The Government of Ontario (2017) also plans on expanding before and after school programs for kindergarten to grade 6 to help facilitate a seamless day. The Government of Ontario (2017) intends to continue with the integration of existing child and family programs into one consistent suite of services.

The second action area, a more affordable system, includes an immediate 2017-18 investment of \$200 million to help increase access to licensed care for 24,000 more infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The Government of Ontario (2017) also plans on improving the current funding approach with an affordability and fee subsidy focus. It plans on creating an affordability strategy that includes an increase in funding of fee subsidies for families.

The third action area, a workforce strategy, focuses on the professionalization of the sector, and of educators. One of the components of this action area is a workforce strategy with recommendations and a long-term plan to support the growing profession and the complex issues of the sector such as recruitment and retention of educators. The Government of Ontario (2017) plans on continuing to support and improve the wage enhancement and home child care enhancement programs, as well as the Early Childhood Educator Qualifications Upgrade Program. The Government of Ontario (2017) also plans on improving professional development in the early years sector by including two provincially funded professional learning and leadership events a year, and by allowing for release time for additional professional development opportunities. The Government of Ontario (2017) will also create a resource

document to help improve culturally appropriate programming and promote French language and Francophone culture.

The fourth action area, a provincial definition of quality, focuses on creating a sense of consistency across diverse early years settings while still allowing for flexibility in order to create meaningful experiences for children. The Government of Ontario (2017) plans on developing a provincial definition of quality by 2019 through focused discussions with program leaders, Indigenous and Francophone partners, system managers, experts, members of the academic community, educators, parents, and children. The Government of Ontario (2017) also plans on researching and developing a mechanism for measuring and assessing quality.

The fifth action area, promoting inclusion, includes collaboration with Ontario's Special Needs Strategy and the new Ontario Autism Program to improve access to and efficiency of services for children with special needs. The Government of Ontario (2017) also plans on working with stakeholders to develop and release a new approach to supporting inclusion in early years settings in 2018.

The sixth action area, an outcomes and measurement strategy, focuses on monitoring the effectiveness of the early years system. To help accomplish this, the Government of Ontario (2017) plans on releasing a publicly accessible annual report with defined measures of progress on the 7 action points laid out in this framework, starting in the fall of 2017. The Government of Ontario (2017) will also develop a 5 year strategy to monitor, measure, and evaluate system progress. This strategy will include an outcomes framework, a data management approach for evidence-based decision making, and a research plan.

The seventh and final action area is increasing public awareness. This area focuses on informing parents and the public about the programs, services, and resources that are available to them. Furthermore, this action area explains the benefits of early years programs. To help accomplish this, the Government of Ontario (2017) plans on creating a public awareness campaign. The Government of Ontario (2017) also plans on launching a new website that will act as a "one-stop hub" for parents, containing information, resources, and tools regarding the early years. To help facilitate the integration and consistency of Ontario's child and family programs, the Government of Ontario (2017) will also create a new visual identity for these programs by January 2018 to make them more identifiable to parents and the public.

Key Messages:

- There is a need for a consistent definition and measurement system of quality

Title:

11. Developing and Supporting a High Quality Child Care Workforce in Canada

Citation:

Halfon, S., & Langford, R. (2015). Developing and Supporting a High Quality Child Care Workforce in Canada. *Our Schools / Our Selves*, 24(4), 131-144.

Summary (highlights of the article):

This article is a response to the fact that the government states objectives for high quality in early learning environments, but it is not followed up by action. It is a discussion on the 3 main barriers to action regarding high quality early learning and child care in the Canadian workforce, and other contributing factors. Halfon and Langford (2015) discuss the shift in ECEC that has been occurring over the past 10 years.

The first barrier to action is that ECEC is a private market, and therefore, a private problem. There is a fragmentation between running a market-based business and delivering a public service. Halfon and Langford (2015) state, "This fragmentation works against developing and supporting the child care workforce, diminishing their collective and professional identity, voice and power" (p. 134). Halfon and Langford (2015) then discuss how this market model for ECEC has been built upon gender inequalities. The suggested solutions for this barrier are a publicly-funded system and a shift in gendered attitudes.

The second barrier to action discussed is "the devaluation of caring work" (Halfon & Langford, 2015, p. 136). It is discussed how this devaluation is inadvertently perpetuated by the push for professionalization, and that one of the predominant causes is the gendered stereotype of the field. In some cases, individuals that work with children do not realize that they contribute to the devaluation of caring work. In the push for professionalization, educators often push away from the concept of "care" or caring work, in order to be taken more "seriously". Care is an integral part of ECEC, and should not be separated from the education aspect. The view of caring work by society is what needs to shift, as it is not just a "natural womanly trait".

The third barrier to action discussed is how the professional expectations for ECEC are increasing, but the workforce advocacy is decreasing. Halfon and Langford (2015) discuss how

there is a growing recognition of the critical role of ECEC staff, and a growing push for professionalization, but that this also comes with growing professional expectations, such as quality initiatives, educational qualifications, and continuous professional learning requirements. While these requirements of ECEC staff are rising, there is little advocacy being done to change the system to help benefit the staff themselves in response to having more asked of them. A suggested solution to this barrier is to look to other professional groups that have combined high qualifications with strong advocacy and the creation of unions, such as teachers and doctors.

Key Messages:

- ECEC should be a publicly-funded system and needs a shift in gendered attitudes
- Care is an integral part of ECEC and should not be separated from the education aspect
- Not enough advocacy being done to change the system to benefit ECEC staff

Title:

12. Determinants of Quality in Child Care: A Review of the Research Evidence

Citation:

Huntsman, L. (2008). *Determinants of Quality in Child Care: A Review of the Research Evidence*. Retrieved June 12, 2017, from http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/321617/research_qualitychildcare.pdf

Summary (highlight of the article):

This literature review discusses some of the research evidence on quality child care associated with promoting children's positive outcomes in all domains of development. It also talks about how to define quality and introduces different measurements of quality.

According to Huntsman (2008), the reason why people define quality differently is due to their varying perspectives. The main perspective being used through research is a developmental perspective, which defines high quality care as promoting optimal child outcomes. Low quality care is defined as leading to negative outcomes. In addition to the developmental perspective, Huntsman (2008) states that there are three other perspectives to be considered: the government or regulatory perspective, the parent perspective, and the staff perspective.

Huntsman (2008) states that there are two different categories of quality when it comes to measurement, which are structural quality and process quality. Structural quality looks at the setting, whereas process quality looks at what occurs within the setting.

Typically, instruments created to assess quality fall into two categories: "aspects of the child care setting" and "interactions between caregivers and children" (Huntsman, 2008, pp. 2-3). There are a few measurable and regulable aspects of quality that are commonly researched:

1. "Child adult ratio
2. Group size
3. Caregiver education, qualifications and training
4. Stability, staff turnover and staff wages

5. Physical aspects of the child care setting” (Huntsman, 2008, pp. 4-8).

Key Messages:

- Quality is defined differently because of varying perspectives
- Three perspectives that should be considered are the government perspective, the parent perspective, and the staff perspective
- Two categories of quality that need to be measured: structural quality and process quality

Title:

13. Exploring Educators' Perspectives: How Does Learning Through 'Happiness' Promote Quality Early Childhood Education?

Citation:

Ikegami, K., & Agbenyega, J. (2014). Exploring Educators' Perspectives: How Does Learning Through 'Happiness' Promote Quality Early Childhood Education? *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(3), 46-55.

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Ikegami and Agbenyega (2014) explain why the need to understand quality in early childhood education in Japan is growing, and how happiness promotes quality in early childhood education.

It is important for educators to understand quality from diverse cultural and social perspectives so that they can meet each child's needs. By conducting face-to-face interviews with early childhood educators in the Sapporo Soka Kindergarten, researchers found 4 themes of happiness that promote quality:

1. "Conception of happiness;
2. Fostering determination;
3. Fostering hope;
4. Fostering appreciation" (Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014, p. 48).

According to Ikegami and Agbenyega (2014), the most important thing for children's development is happiness, and it is a "fundamental purpose of quality education" (p. 49). Sometimes, children will fake their happiness to please their educators, which is not the same happiness that Ikegami and Agbenyega are referring to. Happiness is only counted when children's happiness comes from within and naturally by accomplishing certain goals that they are eager to work towards. In addition, Ikegami and Agbenyega (2014) also address that children who are happy about their learning experiences will grow the spirit of not giving up to benefit their adulthood later. Inner happiness helps prevent children's school withdrawal

behaviours or lack of engagement. In other words, inner happiness helps to grow young children's positive attitudes towards learning experiences.

According to Ikegami and Agbenyega (2014), the findings based on the case study are significant in relation to quality in early childhood education. It shows that cultural factors and people's thinking leads to the meaning of quality in early learning programs. Also, the new idea of paying attention to children's happiness to ensure their engagement is extremely valuable. Happiness provides psychological and emotional stability to support children's attention and engagement during practical learning experiences.

In addition, children need a sense of happiness and belonging to enjoy their programs and become more confident about themselves. This positive feeling will support children to be positive learners and ensure success. In order to encourage happiness, early childhood educators must take the responsibility of helping children to develop their own personality.

Ikegami and Agbenyega (2014) also demonstrate that every child is unique – the educator's goal is to empower each child to contribute towards a happy and peaceful world. It is the educator's responsibility to value each child's happiness and use it to open the child's potential abilities.

Key Messages:

- Educators need to understand quality from diverse cultural and social perspectives in order to meet each child's individual needs
- The most important aspect for children's development is happiness
- It is the educator's goal to empower children to contribute to a happy and peaceful world

Title:

14. Quality and Early Childhood Education and Care: A policy Initiative for the 21st Century

Citation:

Ishimine, K., Tayler, C. & Bennett, J. (2010). Quality and Early Childhood Education and Care: A policy Initiative for the 21st Century. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 4(2), 67-80.

Summary (highlights of the article):

According to Ishimine et al. (2010), in order to analyze the main issues of quality in the early learning sector, the Council of Australian Government asks 4 questions:

1. "What constructs make up and define quality in programs?"
2. How do we measure quality in a program and at a systemic level?"
3. How is high quality in a program delineated?"
4. What is the link between quality indicators and child outcomes?" (Ishimine et al., 2010, p. 68).

In general, according to Ishimine et al. (2010), the two kinds of quality that need to be examined are structural quality and process quality. Structural quality focuses on measurable aspects such as the physical environment, ratios, and staff qualifications. Process quality refers to things influencing the day-to-day experience within ECEC including interactions, leadership, and pedagogical skills. Process quality is often much more difficult to measure, if at all possible. Furthermore, Ishimine et al. (2010) state that there are 7 aspects of quality that fit under either structural or process quality. Interaction quality, child-outcome quality, and standards pertaining to parent/community outreach and involvement all fall under process quality. Orientation quality, educational concept and practice, and operational quality all fall under structural quality. According to Ishimine et al. (2010), process quality directly impacts child outcomes, whereas structural quality indirectly impacts child outcomes through impacting process quality.

In the next part of the article, Ishimine et al. (2010) discuss the Australian quality assurance system called the "Quality Improvement and Accreditation System" (QIAS). The QIAS provides 7 areas to measure quality:

1. "Staff relationship with children and peers,
2. Partnerships with families,
3. Programming and evaluation,
4. Children's experiences and learning,
5. Protective care and safety,
6. Health, nutrition and wellbeing,
7. Administration procedures to support quality" (Ishimine et al., 2010, p. 71).

Ishimine (2010) states that as of 2010, a new Quality Rating System (QRS) is under development in Australia to be piloted soon. The new quality assessment includes 7 areas:

1. "Educational program and practice,
2. Children's health and safety,
3. Physical environment,
4. Staffing arrangement,
5. Relationships with children,
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities,
7. Leadership and service management" (Ishimine et al., 2010, p. 74).

In conclusion, the existing QIAS could not achieve the goal of determining quality beyond a minimal threshold in Australia due to a lack of a research base when it was developed by the Government of Australia.

Key Messages:

- Two types of quality that need to be examined are structural quality and process quality
- Process quality directly impacts child outcomes, whereas structural quality indirectly impacts child outcomes

Title:

15. The Quality Imperative: Tracing the Rise of “Quality” in Australian Early Childhood Education and Care Policy

Citation:

Logan, H., Press, F., & Sumsion, J. (2012). The Quality Imperative: Tracing the Rise of “Quality” in Australian Early Childhood Education and Care Policy. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 37(3), 4-13.

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Logan et al. (2012) discuss the history of discourses and policies regarding ECEC in Australia. Specifically, they discuss the rise of a focus on quality and how it came about. Logan et al. (2012) use a metaphor of a braided river to discuss 7 main streams of research and discourse on quality in ECEC, and then move on to discuss 5 main periods of development in the history of quality in Australian ECEC.

Logan et al. (2012) begin by expressing the importance of using history to address the concerns of today. By looking at how a focus on quality came about, it can inform future discourse and policy around quality in ECEC. In the recent past, there has been a heavy focus on affordability and availability, which has overshadowed quality. Logan et al. (2012) state that as the field of ECEC is currently going through a period of change and growth, it is a perfect opportunity to revisit quality, its history, and possibilities for the future.

For the purposes of their article, Logan et al. (2012) define what they mean when they discuss “discourses” and “gazes”. Discourses that are dominant at the time hold the power of dictating “knowledge” and “truth”, and “promote certain ways of thinking about the world” (Logan et al., 2012, p. 5). A gaze is “a way of loosely grouping multiple discourses in government policy to promote views based on particular philosophical beliefs” (Logan et al., 2012, p. 5). Logan et al. (2012) discuss the political gaze, which is collectively made up of and informed by 4 other gazes: the equity gaze, the psychological gaze, the economic gaze, and the regulatory gaze. These discourses and gazes frame the way we look at ECEC policy.

Logan et al. (2012) continue by outlining the metaphor of the braided river that they use to discuss the different streams of research, debate, and policy interest regarding quality in ECEC. Looking at these areas over history, we can see different streams emerge that ebb, flow, intertwine, converge, and diverge at different times. There are 2 broad, overarching themes that have historically categorized the research and debate around quality: “philosophical discussions about the meaning of quality and . . . research interested in untangling the various childcare variables on child outcomes” (Logan et al., 2012, p. 5). Drawing from these two main themes, Logan et al. (2012) identify 7 streams of quality studies throughout history:

1. Connecting high-quality ECEC to economic and social gains, and highlighting long-term benefits for children, families, and society (for example, the HighScope Perry Preschool Project).
2. Identifying, defining, and measuring structural and process elements and characteristics of quality (for example, assessment tools like ECERS-R).
3. Considering the assumptions, beliefs, understandings, and perspectives of different stakeholders regarding quality (for example, parents, educators, and children).
4. Context establishing studies that investigate the history of ECEC and the political, economic, and societal influences on its development.
5. Critiques and recommendations for ECEC policy relating directly to quality.
6. Critiques of using quality as an objective for policy and practice and how it is conceptualized and determined.
7. An ecological perspective that looks at who determines quality and how it is understood in different contexts, highlighting the need for a flexible, culturally and contextually relevant system (for example, Indigenous perspectives).

Logan et al. (2012) then map the shifts and tensions of ECEC policy and research on quality in Australia from 1972-2009, and categorize it into 5 main periods:

1. “1972-1983: The reluctant acknowledgement of women’s workforce participation: Quality subsumed” (Logan et al., 2012, p. 7).

This period began with the introduction of the *Child Care Act 1972* (Cth), enabling the government to fund child care and therefore inexplicitly promoting quality through funding the employment of qualified staff. The main discourses at the time were around the role of women, women’s employment rights and workforce participation, and the role of child

care for working mothers. The overarching gazes were a gender equity gaze and an economic gaze (women entering the workforce was good for the economy). The dominant stream of research and debate was questioning if child care was harmful for children or not. Quality was overshadowed by these discourses and gazes.

2. "1984-1993: Women's workforce participation entrenched, social wage, demand outstrips supply: Quality emerges" (Logan et al., 2012, pp. 7-8).

This period began with increased government funding leading to an expansion of child care places. There were also key policy changes made regarding standards, and the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) was established. The NCAC was in charge of quality assurance, which put a policy focus on quality. As child care became a necessity for families due to more women entering the workforce, there became a shortage of spaces for children. The funding rules changed and were no longer linked to staff qualifications, causing quality concerns due to the increased expense to centres of affording qualified staff. The major research stream also changed and became about investigating structural and process elements of child care, and what type of child care is the best for children. While this did reflect a psychological gaze, the economic gaze also persisted due to the focus of policy on solving the shortage of spaces, which still overshadowed a focus on quality.

3. "1994-2000: Privatisation of the sector: Quality legitimised but threatened" (Logan et al., 2012, p. 8).

At the beginning of this period, the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) was introduced, which tied government funding to a national quality system. The concept of quality began to emerge in government reports, but still remained in the shadows of discourses of availability and affordability. A major stream of research became "critiques of policy aimed at improving quality in ECEC, and questions about the compatibility of quality and the profit motive" (Logan et al., 2012). The for-profit model dominated, which amplified business discourses. Quality was sought after but costly, so QIAS was heavily relied on as a "reassurance" of quality. Quality was predominantly discussed in terms of performance measures and accountability. A regulatory gaze appeared, which focused on the "disempowerment" of educators as standards rose.

Another stream of research emerged which “questioned assumptions about the meaning of quality when positioned within regulatory discourses” (Logan et al., 2012).

4. “2001-2007: Corporatisation” (Logan et al., 2012, p. 9).

This period saw an unprecedented growth in corporate child care, further promoting the private, for-profit model. A research stream emerged “warning of the dangers of relying primarily on market models to ensure quality” (Logan et al., 2012). Economic and regulatory gazes continued to dominate policy, which brought about concerns regarding quality and corporatization. According to Logan et al. (2012) this is where the way we understand and value quality began to change drastically.

5. “2008-2009: Quality front and centre” (Logan et al., 2012, pp. 9-10).

As some large child care corporations began to collapse, the government began to recognise the consequences of the market-model, and the importance of “nationally consistent standards” (Logan et al., 2012). A national reform of ECEC policy began, with quality at the center. A national Quality Framework was created with three main focuses: “an integrated system of licensing, regulation, and accreditation; strong national standards; and a quality rating system” (Logan et al., 2012). Streams of research shifted to focus on the social and economic benefits of quality ECEC, and the understanding of quality as a complex, “multi-dimensional construct” (Logan et al., 2012). This period also saw a large blurring of lines between public and private ECEC as large non-profit organisations began to combine aspects of corporate governance with social conscience principles.

Key Messages:

- As the field of ECEC is going through a period of change, the history of quality and the possibilities surrounding quality for the future should be examined
- Heavy focuses on affordability and availability have overshadowed quality in the recent past
- Gazes (political, equity, psychological, economic, and regulatory) frame the way we look at ECEC policy

Title:

16. Early Years Study 3: Making Decisions, Taking Action (Chapter 3, Section 3)

Citation:

McCain, M. N., Mustard, J. F., & McCuaig, K. (2011). *Early Years Study 3: Making Decisions, Taking Action*. Toronto, Canada: Margaret & Wallace McCain Family Foundation.

Summary (highlights of the article):

This summary focuses on Chapter 3, Section 3 of the Early Years Study 3, which discusses components of quality ECEC. McCain, Mustard, and McCuaig (2011) state that high quality ECEC centres are aesthetically pleasant, bright, organized, and clean. They promote environmentally responsible behaviours, such as recycling. High quality ECEC centres also have a variety of materials for children to play with, including storybooks and a cozy sitting area. Educators are knowledgeable, responsive, and encourage language use “to enrich exploration and expand problem solving” (McCain, Mustard, & McCuaig, 2011, p. 52).

According to McCain, Mustard, and McCuaig (2011), quality ECEC programs should have guiding principles and approaches that recognize children’s experiences and are grounded in play. The curriculum should be flexible and change depending on the children, families, and community, or depending on new knowledge. It should address all developmental areas of the child with broad learning expectations. Educators should use documentation to track the children’s progress, as well as their own. Families and communities should be viewed as partners, and the program should show respect for diversity using methods of inclusion and equity.

McCain, Mustard, and McCuaig (2011) state that according to the research, environments that use child-initiated approaches and focus on social learning, and learning how to learn, lead to longer-term child outcomes. Centres should view social and cognitive goals as equally important. Educators and children should share in the thinking process and extend ideas and concepts together.

Key Messages:

- High quality ECEC programs should have guiding principles and approaches that recognize children's experiences and are grounded in play
- The curriculum should be flexible and address all areas of children's development
- Environments that use child-initiated approaches and focus on social learning lead to longer-term child outcomes

Title:

17. NAEYC Early Learning Program Standards

Citation:

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2017). *NAEYC Early Learning Program Standards*. Retrieved November 2017, from https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/early-learning/OverviewStandards_0.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) introduces 10 early learning program standards along with rationales for each one. These are:

1. “Relationships;
2. Curriculum;
3. Teaching;
4. Assessment of child progress;
5. Health;
6. Staff competencies, preparation, and support;
7. Families;
8. Community relationships;
9. Physical environment;
10. Leadership and management” (NAEYC, 2017, paras. 1-21).

The first standard addressed is relationships. A high quality early learning program should be able to build positive relationships among all families and young children to encourage a sense of belonging, self-worth, and to build community citizenship.

The second standard addressed is curriculum. According to NAEYC (2017), curriculum should have consistent goals that focus on specific areas of learning and development such as social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive.

The third standard addressed is teaching. According to NAEYC (2017), educators must use a variety of appropriate instructional approaches that address the program's goals so that every child is respected, valued, and represented in the classroom.

The fourth standard addressed is assessment of child progress. According to NAEYC (2017), the evaluation of children's progress should be an ongoing process using both formal and informal assessments to determine how a child is progressing, and whether they could benefit from some additional interventions. This assessment process should be sensitive to cultural contexts and should also strive to improve teaching and the program.

The fifth standard addressed is health. A high quality program should promote and maintain the health, nutrition, and safety of children and staff, including mental and social wellbeing. The program should also prevent illness.

The sixth standard addressed is staff competencies, preparation, and support. Staff should have appropriate qualifications, knowledge, and commitment. Additionally, teachers should be responsive to children and families' needs and interests, and have ongoing professional development opportunities to remain up-to-date in their field.

The seventh standard addressed is families. Collaborating and maintaining positive relationships with families is integral to a child's development. These relationships should be sensitive to all types of families from all backgrounds.

The eighth standard addressed is community relationships. Programs should build and maintain relationships with the community to help connect families with appropriate community resources. These community resources should be integrated into the program for the children.

The ninth standard addressed is physical environment. The outdoor and indoor physical environments should be well designed and maintained, and promote the health and safety of children and staff.

The last standard addressed is leadership and management. According to NAEYC (2017), programs should have comprehensive, well planned and implemented policies, procedures, and systems that allow things to run smoothly in terms of financing, staff retention, regulations, relationships, and accountability.

Key Messages:

- High quality early learning programs means having positive relationships among all children and families, including community relationships
- Programs should have well planned and implemented policies and procedures, and competent and qualified staff
- Educators must use a variety of instructional approaches, and the evaluation of children's progress should be ongoing

Title:

18. Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care

Citation:

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2012). *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*. Retrieved November 2017, from http://www.forpedi.com.br/downloads/forpedi_anexo_0509121501208.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

In the executive summary, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes the benefits of ECEC that are widely supported by research. These benefits include more equitable child outcomes, poverty reduction, increased intergenerational social mobility, more female participation in the workforce, and increased fertility rates (OECD, 2012). The benefits are conditional on quality. The OECD then introduces five key policy levers that help encourage quality in ECEC. The five policy levers are:

1. "Setting out quality goals and regulations;
2. Designing and implementing curriculum and standards;
3. Improving qualifications, training and working conditions;
4. Engaging families and communities;
5. Advancing data collection, research and monitoring" (OECD, 2012, p. 3).

According to the OECD (2012), by setting goals and regulations around quality, we can better provide resources to areas of priority, consolidate political will, improve government leadership in ECEC, improve consistency and coordination of ECEC services, and provide guidance and clarity for providers and families. The OECD (2012) acknowledges that there are some challenges when it comes to setting quality goals and minimum standards, such as:

1. "Building consensus on the goals;
2. Aligning ECEC goals with goals of other levels of education or other child-focused services;
3. Translating the goals into action;
4. Securing financial resources to meet the quality standards;

5. Lack of transparency among different providers;
6. Adapting to local needs and constraints;
7. Implementation;
8. Managing the regulation of private provision” (OECD, 2012, p. 10).

In regards to the second policy lever, the OECD (2012) states that curriculum and learning standards help ensure even quality throughout all ECEC settings, they support and guide staff, and they inform parents. Countries approach curriculum differently, such as academic versus comprehensive focused, and staff-initiated versus child-initiated. It is important to consider the critical learning and development areas to create a customized and locally adapted curriculum that fits the values and needs of the staff, families, children, and community. For example, Nordic countries focus on staff expectations rather than child outcomes, while Anglo-Saxon countries focus on child outcomes. The OECD (2012) notes that there is an increasingly large body of research that supports the importance of play. The main challenges of curriculum and learning standards are:

1. “Defining goals and content;
2. Aligning them with the school-level framework;
3. Communicating it to relevant staff when it is created or revised;
4. Implementing it effectively;
5. Evaluating its contents and its implementation” (OECD, 2012, p. 11).

According to the OECD (2012) higher qualifications in staff can contribute to better child outcomes, but this is due to the ability of the staff rather than the qualification itself. High quality staff are skilled at involving children, stimulating interactions, and scaffolding. In general, the OECD (2012) has found that kindergarten and preschool staff often have more professional development opportunities than child care centre staff. These opportunities tend to focus on pedagogies and instructional practices, curriculum implementation, language and subject matters, monitoring and assessment, and communication and management (OECD, 2012). Along with staff qualifications, working conditions can also help improve the quality of ECEC. The OECD (2012) state that working conditions and the quality of ECEC can be improved by lowering group size, increasing the staff-child ratios, and creating more competitive wages and benefits. Additional improvements include maintaining a reasonable schedule and workload for staff, lowering staff turnover, ensuring a good physical environment, and hiring a competent and

supportive centre manager (OECD, 2012). The main challenges in promoting a high quality workforce include:

1. “Raising staff qualification levels;
2. Recruiting, retaining, and diversifying a qualified workforce;
3. Continuously up-skilling the workforce;
4. Ensuring the quality of the workforce in the private sector” (OECD, 2012, p. 12).

The fourth policy lever discusses engaging families and communities. According to OECD (2012), family partnership and collaboration is key for ECEC staff to learn about the children. This family communication is strongly tied to later academic success, graduating high-school, socio-emotional development, and societal adaption (OECD, 2012). Community engagement is also important, as it can help connect families to important services and resources, it can provide parents with a “social network” that helps reduce stress and promotes smart choices, and it can stimulate social cohesion and public order (OECD, 2012). The OECD (2012) identifies some challenges to family and community engagement, such as:

1. “Lack of awareness and motivation;
2. Communication and outreach of ECEC services;
3. Time constraints to be engaged;
4. The increasing inequity and diversity among parents;
5. Managing dysfunctional communities;
6. Facilitating co-operation between ECEC services and other services, as well as between ECEC and other levels of education” (OECD, 2012, p. 12).

Policy lever five focuses on data collection, research, and monitoring. According to the OECD (2012), there are 7 purposes for monitoring ECEC: “child development, staff performance, service quality, regulation compliance, curriculum implementation, parent satisfaction, and workforce supply and working conditions” (OECD, 2012, p. 13). In regards to research, the OECD (2012) states it can provide explanations for the successes and failures of ECEC, it can help shed light on areas of priority for funding, and it can provide evidence to inform practice. It is noted that both qualitative and quantitative research are important and of value. There are challenges associated with data collection, research, and monitoring, such as:

1. “Ensuring the data is consistent across services and regions;

2. Ensuring the collected data is used to the full extent;
3. A need for more evidence on the effects of ECEC and cost-benefit analysis;
4. Under-researched areas or areas with newly growing interest;
5. Dissemination” (OECD, 2012, p. 13).

The next part of the document focuses on minimum standards in ECEC and why they matter. The OECD (2012) states that minimum standards define what is considered “adequate” or “good enough” quality for ECEC. Not only does regulation help define and enforce minimum standards, it can also help promote equity for disadvantaged families. Research shows that higher standards in ECEC lead to better child outcomes in many developmental areas. The problem is that raising these standards to be of higher quality can be costly, and so ECEC providers have to raise their rates to account for this, which limits options for low-income families. This additional cost may discourage ECEC providers from increasing access for families, and therefore allow informal, low quality ECEC providers to enter the market. The OECD (2012) notes that the research shows it is much more difficult and costly to intervene later on in life, so investing in higher quality ECEC early on and setting high minimum standards is more effective and less costly in the long run.

The OECD (2012) then discusses which aspects of quality matter the most, or have the greatest influence on child development. The aspects of quality investigated are:

1. Staff-child ratios and group size:

The OECD (2012) states that ratio is usually the best predictor of high quality in ECEC because it can increase the frequency of quality interactions with children, and it creates a safer environment for children. Small group size also has a similar effect. However, the evidence does not show as strong of a connection.

2. Staff qualification level and specialised training:

According to the OECD (2012), research shows that ECEC staff that have higher education and more specialised training can better stimulate warm, supportive, engaging interactions, and can also elicit ideas from and monitor the progress of children more effectively. It is not necessarily the qualification itself that equals quality, but the ability of the educator to create a better pedagogic environment. The OECD (2012) states that it is important to hit the right balance, because the qualification standards must be high enough to ensure high quality, but we must also keep salary expectations in mind as higher educational qualifications often equal lead to increased salaries.

3. Staff salaries:

Competitive minimum wages can attract more qualified and motivated staff, can lower staff turnover, and can improve relationships with children. Staff will be less likely to take a second job and, therefore, will experience less fatigue and greater performance within their educator position.

4. Program duration:

The length of program participation has been associated through research with future achievement, including better vocabulary, memory, and math scores. The OECD (2012) state the results from a study that shows the improvement in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) scores by ten points at age 15, when extending participation in ECEC by one year.

5. Curriculum:

Having a well-planned curriculum or set of standards helps increase consistency across the ECEC sector and prioritizes certain learning goals. It ensures all important developmental areas are attended to, it shapes staff behaviour and guides practice, it facilitates communication with parents, and it ensures pedagogical continuity from ECEC to school.

6. Physical environment:

Physical spaces should be well-defined to promote positive interactions and exploration. Countries should have minimum “space per child” standards that vary based on age group.

7. Staff gender and diversity:

ECEC is overwhelmingly female dominated. However, research shows that it is important for boys to have strong male role models in the classroom. Increased male presence in ECEC also helps counter the traditional gender views of women as naturally good with children. It is also important for ECEC centres to be ethnically diverse to help children counter stereotypes, learn respect for other cultures, and have an open mind.

The OECD (2012) then discusses the policy implications. The first policy implication is to create and enforce minimum standards that apply to all levels and settings of ECEC regardless of public or private operation. However, these should recognize that standards may differ slightly for different age groups and settings. This will need to be supported by adequate financing from all levels that attracts high quality staff. The second policy implication is that governments should ensure universal and affordable access to ECEC by investing in ECEC programs for

children aged 0-6, so that all parents have equal options. Research shows that these systems often are more equitable, follow higher quality standards, and have more qualified staff. The third policy implication is to define minimum standards through a participatory and democratic process that includes children, parents, families, and professionals.

The OECD (2012) concludes by stating certain aspects that are still unknown and require further research and investigation. These aspects are:

1. “Long-term impacts of minimum standards;
2. Research to reflect complex realities;
3. Impact of a diverse workforce on child development;
4. Optimal assurance of non-regulated care services” (OECD, 2012, p. 39).

Key Messages:

- Benefits of ECEC include more equitable child outcomes, poverty reduction, increased intergenerational social mobility, increased female participation in the workforce, and increased fertility rates
- Working conditions and the quality of ECEC can be improved by lowering group size, increasing ratios, and creating more competitive wages
- Staff-child ratios are usually the best predictor of high quality in ECEC because it can increase the frequency of quality interactions with children

Title:

19. Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Canada Country Note

Citation:

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2004). *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Canada Country Note* [Directorate review report]. Retrieved May 2017, from <http://www.oecd.org/canada/33850725.pdf>

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) makes 6 recommendations about how to improve quality in Canadian early learning programs.

The first recommendation is to “develop a national quality framework for early childhood services across all sectors, and the infrastructure at the provincial level to ensure effective implementation” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 11). This framework should focus on broad, holistic development rather than specific curricular objectives, and include:

1. “A statement of values and goals;
2. A summary of program standards;
3. An outline of what each age group of children can be expected to learn across broad developmental areas;
4. The processes by which the children will achieve those goals, and the role of the educator” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 79).

Other countries around the world have already adopted this approach and proven it possible, such as Sweden and New Zealand. The OECD (2004) recommends that in the Canadian context, this framework should incorporate a more clear inclusion of First Peoples heritage, a heavier focus on physical health and development, more promotion of autonomy and creativity, and socio-emotional screening for vulnerable children. Additionally, ECE services should be large enough that staff can work in teams to facilitate professional collaboration, learning, and program monitoring and evaluation. At a provincial level, the framework should be tailored to local concerns, languages, and traditions.

The second recommendation is to “link accreditation of services to structural requirements and the achievement of quality targets” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 11). The quality of ECEC in Canada is mediocre on average, with kindergarten being good quality and child care services being low quality. Part of this is due to centres having survival as the primary focus rather than quality, because of funding. This lack of funding also leads to poor wages for staff, and lesser professional development opportunities. The OECD (2004) draws on the experience of other OECD countries who have taken on the long-term project of improving quality to put forth 3 of the most important quality indicators:

1. “Adequate and regular funding of services;
2. Basic structural requirements are respected;
3. High quality management” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 80).

The third recommendation is to “review ECEC professional profiles, improve recruitment levels and strengthen the initial and in-service training of staff” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 11). The OECD (2004) discusses how the traditional sense of ECEC and ECEC professionals is shifting, and so are the expectations of them. Today’s society expects ECEC centres and staff to initialize lifelong learning in children, to provide individualized support to each child and family, to engage in ongoing evaluation of the children’s learning, and to be a platform for collective participation and professional development. This represents the new “professional profile” of ECEC staff. The OECD (2004) recommends specialized training for the early childhood field in order to improve recruitment, compensation, and retention.

The fourth recommendation is to “provide publicly-funded, high quality interventions in all disadvantaged areas” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 11). Again drawing on research from the experiences of other OECD countries, the OECD (2004) suggests that there are 5 conditions that improve the effectiveness of interventions for disadvantaged groups. These conditions are:

1. “Early learning programmes take place within a general framework of anti-poverty and community development policies;
2. Programmes are multi-functional and engage communities as well as children;
3. Programming for children is intensive;

4. Programmes are pedagogically sound and conducted by appropriately trained professionals;
5. Enriched health and nutrition inputs may be necessary to ensure that young children can take full advantage of the early childhood service” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, pp. 81-82).

The fifth recommendation is to “provide attractive indoor and outdoor learning environments” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 11). According to the OECD (2004), the quality and design of early childhood physical environments in Canada is poor. This includes many materials that are conventional and lack learning potential, such as plastic toys and worksheets. The OECD (2004) recommends four considerations in terms of physical space:

1. “Rearrange the classroom in appealing corners or areas;
2. Check regularly the content of the corners and replace unattractive materials with more appealing ones;
3. Introduce new and unconventional materials and activities;
4. Observe children, discover their interests and find activities that meet these orientations” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 82).

The OECD (2004) states that it is important for the adults to engage and interact with the children in the physical environment to increase interest and learning opportunities. It is also important that the purpose and design of the outdoor space is not just physically recreational, but also incorporates opportunities for interaction with nature.

The sixth recommendation is to “co-ordinate Canadian research and through funding, orient it further toward important policy issues” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 11). The OECD (2004) state that while there are some provincial and university level research initiatives in Canada, the upcoming years in the field of Canadian ECEC are very important and require extra consideration, including the following recommendations:

1. Regular policy review and cycle of research for ECEC on provincial and national levels;
2. Enhancement of public accountability mechanisms through data collection;
3. Large programs being independently evaluated;

4. Publishing annual reviews of ECEC policy and data on provincial and national levels.

Key Messages:

- There should be a national quality framework for ECEC across all sectors, with a more clear inclusion of First Peoples heritage in the Canadian context
- The most important quality indicators are adequate funding, respect for basic structural requirements, and quality management
- The traditional sense of ECEC is shifting, and there should be specialized training in order to improve recruitment, compensation, and retention

Title:

20. Discourses on Quality Care: the Investigating 'Quality' Project and the Canadian Experience

Citation:

Pence, A. & Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2008). Discourses on Quality Care: the Investigating 'Quality' Project and the Canadian Experience. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(3), 241-255.

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) discuss some of the theoretical perspectives that are addressed, how the ECEC discourse and policies in Canada have evolved over the years, and the Investigating Quality project from British Columbia.

Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that Canada is known to self-identify as multicultural with commitments to diversity and social equity. However, typically the approaches, policies, research, and discourse in Canada regarding early childhood do not reflect or support these dynamics. Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw's (2008) view is that the field of ECEC in Canada would benefit from a diversity of voices and critiques from different perspectives.

Other parts of the world are embracing and engaging in post-structural, decolonizing, and critical explorations (for example: New Zealand, Australia, Italy, Scandinavia, and Spain). Post-structuralists, postmodernists, and critical theorists believe that how "knowledge" or "truth" is constructed is a function of power. Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that these issues of knowledge and power are at the centre of the "quality" debate. The approaches that have been widely taken and accepted thus far represent the dominant views of dominant groups. Our understanding of concepts like quality are formed around what discourses and approaches are allowed and commonly used.

Modernity and positivism are the two theoretical orientations that the Canadian ECEC sector has typically been grounded in. These orientations believe that there is one, objective, universal "truth" or "understanding" regardless of context. Canada also has historical experience with the concept and effects of colonization, specifically with the experiences of First Peoples. Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that the concept of colonization has lately been

getting associated with the ECEC sector, as it is often seen as “a colonized activity dominated by certain thought and interest groups” (p. 242). Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) also state that the challenges associated with physical colonization of countries and peoples opened up new possibilities, as can the challenges associated with the colonization of the ECEC sector.

In reviewing the history of the evolution of the ECEC sector in Canada, Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that it first emerged as a quickly growing topic in the 1960s, when women and mothers began entering the workforce in large numbers. At first, the research that was emerging had a consensus that non-maternal care was bad for children. In the 1970s, as maternal workforce participation continued to increase, the research on the topic also increased. The consensus changed, stating that non-maternal care wasn't necessarily “bad” for children, but that “it depends”. The research focus then became “depends on what?”, and this is how quality became a key concept and research focus in ECEC in Canada.

Exploring the interaction between quality and factors using a positivist approach with quantitative methods and measurements became the major quality activity. This includes the “trinity” of quality indicators commonly used in North America (group size, ratios, and training/qualifications). Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that these indicators are “geographically and socially bound”, making them outdated (p. 243). Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) believe that Canadian ECEC research needs to expand into post-structural and post-colonial understandings and approaches. The current approach contributes to standardization, managerialism, and top-down idea formation, which does not help accomplish Canada's vision of diversity, equity, capacity promotion, and local control. Seeking a “best practices” approach that can be applied to all contexts contributes to this issue, and promotes the idea of “one objective truth”. Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) conclude this section by stating “the concern here is not so much that Canada can be seen both as limited in its approach to research and in its failure to create a public system of early learning and child care, but for the disconnect between its social values of diversity, equity and democratic voice, and its early years literature that remains expert driven, methodologically restricted, and contextually limited” (p. 245).

Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) then discuss some alternative perspectives in early childhood studies. The first is postmodernism, post-structuralism, and feminism. This perspective believes that practices based on developmental perspectives include the

“observation, surveillance, and production of children” and therefore create “oppressive environments for children and women” (p. 246). These educational and psychological theories do not account for the realities of contemporary society.

The second alternative perspective is social constructionism. Social constructionism views the idea of childhood as a social construct that is created by those with “power” and “knowledge”. Emerging views in social constructionism question the normality of the stage of childhood when it comes to child development. Some have begun to rethink the role of children in society and early childhood settings, viewing children as “human beings with rights, strengths and multiple identities” (p. 246). According to Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008), this helps to move away from shaping children to fit the “normal” developmental pattern and instead allows for a strength-based, multiplicity perspective of children.

The third alternative perspective is post-colonial and Indigenous studies. Post-colonial studies look at the history and influence of colonialism and imperialism, and the presence they still have today. Decolonization is a political act against “colonial, oppressive, and exclusionary” practices in the ECEC sector (p. 247). Indigenous studies look at how some of the discourses around Indigenous communities can be oppressive and exclusionary. Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that we should be including the diverse knowledge and perspectives of the Indigenous community in our understandings of child development and our approach to ECEC in Canada.

Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) then discuss some examples of practical applications of these alternative perspectives that brought about new understandings of quality. These reconceptualist perspectives value collaboration and knowledge creation at local levels, and view theory and practice as inseparable. Quality, therefore, is viewed as embedded in practice and the realities of children, families, and the community.

Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) note the Italian Reggio Emilia project, which “transformed practice . . . reimagining the child and the role of early childhood educators and institutions” (p. 247). This project includes emphasis on collaborative reflection and pedagogical documentation. Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that the Reggio conceptualization of the role of the educator and pedagogical documentation moves past only observing, and is considered a “tool for uncovering dominant discourses, social injustices, and respect for diversity” (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008, p. 248).

Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) also note the Australian context, specifically Glenda MacNaughton and her focus on challenging uniformity and the traditional models of curriculum such as the top-down approach, and instead embracing social justice and social change. MacNaughton proposed “Critically Knowing Early Childhood Communities” as an alternative professional development method where educators can “honour ethical engagement with children, respect diverse and multiple childhoods, and embed quality in all that they do” (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008, p. 248).

The third and final example of alternative perspectives in practice given by Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) is the unique bi-cultural curriculum introduced in New Zealand. In this curriculum model, educators use participatory action research to define their learning goals and guide their practice. The perspectives, hopes, rights, and voices of the child, family, and community serve as the foundation for this. Another unique aspect of this curriculum model is the purpose and method of assessment. Rather than focusing on measuring school readiness, Learning Stories involve “collaboration with families, high expectations of confidence in the children, and multiple opportunities for children to tell their stories” (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008, p. 249).

Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) then discuss the Investigating Quality (IQ) project. Traditionally, both Canada and the United States have adopted positivist, top-down approaches that attribute power and privilege to the elite. The IQ project, which started in 2005, sought to look at how other countries are embracing new ways of understanding that embrace change and inclusion, and how those countries have brought these new understandings and approaches to the center of the conversation around ECEC. The IQ project used forums and Learning Circles to explore the stories of educators, practitioners, and college instructors. What the IQ project discovered is that in these countries where a shift of perspectives in the field was successful, “academia worked closely with government, professional leadership, training programs, and practitioners” (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008, p. 249). The IQ project also discovered that a critical element to the broadening of the perspectives in the field is the engagement of tertiary Canadian institutions, such as colleges and universities. Doing this can help expand the educational and career “ladder” for educators by providing more “upper-level” courses in the field and eliminating the “educational dead-end” many educators experience after receiving a two-year diploma (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008, p. 250).

Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that this reconceptualist movement has been much more accepted in Canada than the United States. They also mention some of the results that have occurred since the IQ project began, which include “increasing numbers of participants for IQ supported events, consistently strong evaluations of such activities, growing numbers of applicants for undergraduate, master’s level and doctoral level programs, inclusion of IQ leaders in other provincial initiatives, increasing echoes of the terms used by various international guests (Learning Stories, Documentation, Diversity and Social Equity, etc.), and increasingly strong working relationships between IQ team members and government, the professional association, college instructors, and practitioners in the field” (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008, p. 250). Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) state that moving forward, more universities need to follow this approach, and funding agencies need to follow suit. In conclusion, Pence and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2008) believe that there is a place for both old and new perspectives in the future of ECEC.

Key Messages:

- The field of ECEC in Canada would benefit from a diversity of voices and critiques from different perspectives
- Our understanding of quality is formed around which discourses and approaches are commonly used
- Quality is embedded in practice and the realities of children, families, and the community

Title:

21. Quality in Early Education Classrooms: Definitions, Gaps, and Systems

Citation:

Pianta, R., Downer, J., & Hamre, B. (2016). Quality in Early Education Classrooms: Definitions, Gaps, and Systems. *The Future of Children, 26*(2), 119-137.

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Pianta et al. (2016) state that there is already plenty of evidence on the importance of quality, and there is much agreement from parents, professionals, and policymakers as well. The focus of this article is on how to define quality, how to measure it, and how to ensure that more children experience it. Pianta et al. (2016) note that in general there are not common definitions or measures of quality, and this affects the attempts to increase it. Pianta et al. (2016) then outline 4 aspects that definitions of quality generally include:

1. “Structural elements;
2. Features of the classroom environment;
3. Quality rating and improvement systems;
4. Educator-student interaction” (Pianta et al., 2016, p. 120).

When deciding where to invest in ECEC, policymakers often refer to the minimum recommended standards, which often predominantly reflect structural elements of quality. The most commonly addressed structural elements are educator qualifications and ratios. Group size and program duration are also often considered. According to Pianta et al. (2016), full-day programs with small group sizes and well-qualified staff can set the stage for, but do not endure quality.

When it comes to the classroom environment, the most commonly considered measure is the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised Edition (ECERS-R), which observes multiple features such as equipment and hygiene. However, according to recent studies, ECERS has become less relevant and the link between scores and child outcomes has weakened due to the shrinking variation in quality among programs as they catch up. The most

recent research suggests that educator-student interactions are more accurate at predicting child outcomes. The new edition, ECERS-3, looks more closely at those interactions.

One of the main purposes of quality rating and improvement systems (QRISs) is to document and improve quality, and create a market of quality for parents to choose from. This leads to more children experiencing high quality ECEC programs. QRISs can also lead to investments and incentives. Pianta et al. (2016) state that many people assume that QRISs lead to better child outcomes. However, this assumption is not supported by research. The fact that this research is limited means that QRISs should be used with caution, as they are often large investments but may not lead to any improvements. Instead, specific aspects of quality should be targeted, as this is more promising.

Pianta et al. (2016) state that it is becoming more commonly known that educator-student interactions are one of the most important aspects of ECEC experiences. According to the research, there is a lack in effective interactions, as one study demonstrates that children only had adult interaction 27% of the day, and another study shows that children only interacted with the educator 4 minutes per hour (Pianta et al., 2016). While some teachers may interact with the group all day, each child only gets a fractional amount of time. Studies have also shown that disadvantaged and minority children are more likely to experience lower quality interactions. Pianta et al. (2016) suggest that to improve interactions, there should be a focus on professional development for educators.

According to Pianta et al. (2016), research shows that educator-child interactions and quality learning materials have more influence on development than structural features. The most important aspects of educator-child interactions are “when teachers emphasize conceptual understanding, give feedback that extends students’ skills, and engage children in conversation” (Pianta et al., 2016, p. 125). When children experience more quality interactions, it can lead to better academic achievement and fewer behavioural problems all the way through adolescence. These interactions can also help to reduce vulnerability to developmental risks. These benefits are even stronger for vulnerable children, and children who experience high quality interactions over a period of years.

Pianta et al. (2016) state that there are some areas that require more research in terms of educator-child interactions, such as how individual children experience the same classroom differently, the content of instructional interactions, and which characteristics or skills help

educators have better interactions with children. Pianta et al. (2016) state that one of the best ways to help educators improve their skills is to have opportunities to see other educators using effective teaching methods. It is especially important for educators to observe their stress and emotional regulation. Educator stress and burnout are one of the major causes for poor classroom interactions, and make behavioural problems much more likely. According to the research, “nearly half of all teachers leave the profession in their first five years, citing stress or burnout as the primary factor. And half the teachers who retire early name chronic occupational stress and mental or physical health problems as the reasons for their decision” (Pianta et al., 2016. P. 128). Pianta et al. (2016) recommend mindfulness practices or yoga to help lower stress levels, and recommend that more research needs to be done in this area to help create targeted interventions.

Pianta et al. (2016) conclude by discussing the increasing public investment in ECEC in the past two decades, and the opportunities it has opened up for children. However, they also state that these opportunities from investments do not lead to improved outcomes or a closing of the low to middle income child achievement gap. The focus must be on quality. More research needs to be done in regards to which aspects of ECEC opportunities have the largest impact on child development and child outcomes. Pianta et al. (2016) state that when defining quality we must focus on the classroom experiences rather than structural features, and that these experiences can be significantly improved through “targeted and sustained professional development” (p. 119). Further, they recommend that since most efforts to improve the consistency of quality have been ineffective, a multi-year approach to quality is required, because ensuring high quality can leave a lasting impact on a child’s development in just nine months. We must create a clear definition of quality in order to build coherence in the system. Moving forward, Pianta et al. (2016) state that “we may need to analyze the conditions under which large, diverse communities build and implement early education systems that promote learning and reduce gaps” (p. 130).

According to Pianta et al. (2016), there is now plenty of research on the importance of quality, so the next era of research needs to focus on defining, measuring, and ensuring the consistency of quality in ECEC. Classroom experiences of educators and children need to be put at the core of the quality journey.

Key Messages:

- Educator-child interactions and quality learning materials have more influence on development than structural features
- When defining quality, we must focus on the classroom experiences rather than the structural features
- A multi-year approach to quality is required
- A clear definition of quality needs to be created in order to build coherence in the system

Title:

22. Quality: What it is and Why it Matters in Early Childhood Education

Citation:

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy. (2012). *Quality: What it Is and Why it Matters in Early Childhood Education*. Retrieved May 2017, from http://www.scaany.org/documents/quality_earlyed_scaapolicybrief_sept2012.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

This policy brief explains why quality matters, demonstrates what quality looks like, and how it should be measured.

First, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (2012) discusses why quality matters. Quality ECEC helps prepare children for school by addressing all developmental needs, such as physical development, social and emotional development, cognitive development, language and literacy development, and the child's attitudes and approaches to learning. Once a child starts school at a deficit in these key areas, it can be difficult for them to close the gap. High quality ECEC can have lasting positive benefits such as better academic success, fewer behavioural problems, higher graduation rates, lower rates of crime in juveniles, a decrease in the need for special education services later on, and fewer teenaged pregnancies. The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (2012) notes that while high quality ECEC can have positive effects, low quality ECEC can have equally harmful effects. Both of these effects are amplified for children from disadvantaged situations or with special needs, and these are often the children who struggle to access high quality programs.

Second, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (2012) discusses what quality looks like. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states that high quality ECEC should be safe and nurturing, should address all of the child's developmental areas, and should be responsive to the needs of the family. One of the biggest indicators of quality in ECEC is the interactions and relationships the educator has with the children. High quality educators should have four year degrees and specific ECE training, should speak to the children at their height level, should be affectionate with children, and should communicate with

the family about the child's progress. The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (2012) lays out key components of a high quality ECEC program, which include:

1. "A developmentally appropriate curriculum;
2. Adequate teacher training;
3. A safe environment;
4. Small group size and low adult to child ratios;
5. Parent-teacher communication (family engagement)" (Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 2012, p. 2).

Third, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (2012) discusses how quality is measured. There are both structural and process indicators for quality. Process measures use standardized tools such as the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), or the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) to measure quality. Programs receive ratings in the areas of:

1. "Space and furnishing;
2. Basic care routines;
3. Language development;
4. Social development;
5. Learning activities;
6. Provisions for adult needs" (Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 2012, p. 3).

Structural measures look at aspects such as caregiver characteristics, ratios, and class sizes. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (C.L.A.S.S.) uses observation to evaluate interactions between educators and children in the areas of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.

Fourth, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (2012) discusses that the workforce is the key to quality. Quality comes down to the ability of the staff to provide quality care. New York State's Core Body of Knowledge outlines 7 competencies that are recommended practices for ECEC educators. These are designed to provide a new way to look at professional development. These 7 competencies are:

1. "Child Growth and Development
2. Family and Community Relationships

3. Observation and Assessment
4. Environment and Curriculum
5. Health, Safety and Nutrition
6. Professionalism and Leadership
7. Administration and Management” (Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 2012, p. 3).

It is then discussed how research shows that higher education and training of staff leads to better quality of ECEC for children. However, the career ladder is not yet in place for the ECEC workforce, and staff have no incentive to achieve a higher level of education. The average salaries of ECEC workers, pizza delivery people, and dog walkers are then compared, showing how poorly compensated ECEC staff are. In conclusion, the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (2012) state that without government investment, the ECEC workforce will continue to be undereducated and underpaid, and quality will be threatened as a result.

Key Messages:

- High quality ECEC can have lasting positive benefits and low quality ECEC can have equally harmful effects
- One of the biggest indicators of quality in ECEC is the interactions and relationships the educator has with the children
- The workforce is the key to quality because quality comes down to the ability of the staff to provide quality care

Title:

23. Associations between Structural Quality Aspects and Process Quality in Dutch Early Childhood Education and Care Settings

Citation:

Slot, P. L., Leseman, P. P. M., Verhagen, J., & Mulder, H. (2015). Associations between Structural Quality Aspects and Process Quality in Dutch Early Childhood Education and Care Settings. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 33*, 64-76.

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Slot et al. (2015) investigate the relationship between structural and process quality in ECEC, with a particular focus on the Dutch system which is fairly strongly regulated in terms of structural aspects of quality.

First, Slot et al. (2015) observe that quality in ECEC is generally discussed in terms of two types of characteristics that influence child development – structural and process. Process quality focuses on “the child’s day-to-day experiences in ECEC settings and . . . aspects of children’s activities and interactions” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 64). Structural quality focuses on the “regulable aspects of ECEC . . . such as group size, children-to-teacher ratio, and teachers’ qualifications” and is considered a precondition to process quality (Slot et al., 2015, p. 64). According to Slot et al. (2015), regulations, curriculum, and funding all focus on structural quality whereas the outcomes and benefits for stakeholders depend on process quality.

In their study, Slot et al. (2015) had observations done using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) manual to evaluate 8 dimensions of quality in the classroom that fall under two broad domains, which are emotional quality and educational quality. The dimensions under emotional quality are:

1. Positive climate

“Reflects the warmth, respect, and enjoyment displayed during interactions of the teacher and children” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 68).

2. Negative climate

“Reflects the overall negativity expressed in the classroom by the teacher and the children” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 68).

3. Teacher sensitivity

“The extent to which the teacher is aware and responsive to the children’s needs” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 68).

4. Regard for child perspectives

“The degree to which the teacher’s interactions with children and classroom activities capture the children’s interests, and the degree to which children’s independence is encouraged” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 68).

5. Behavior guidance

“The teacher’s ability to promote positive behavior and redirect problem behavior” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 68).

The dimensions under educational quality are:

6. Facilitation of learning and development

“How well the teacher facilitates activities to support children’s learning and development” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 68).

7. Quality of feedback

“The degree to which the teacher’s feedback promotes learning and expands children’s participation” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 68).

8. Language modeling

“The extent to which the teacher models and encourages children’s use of language” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 68).

Slot et al. (2015) then had educators report the degree to which certain developmentally appropriate and beneficial activities were present in their classroom. Eight scales were constructed to encompass the activities:

1. Emotional support

2. Play

3. Self-regulation

4. Pretend play

5. Language activities

6. Literacy activities

7. Math activities

Slot et al. (2015) then had educators report on certain “structural classroom and center characteristics” (p. 69). The following variables were included:

1. “Group size
2. Children-to-teacher ratio
3. Teacher’s education
4. Education program
5. Professional development
6. Type of provision” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 69).

According to the results of the study, regarding process quality there was “moderate to high emotional process quality and low to moderate educational quality” (Slot et al., 2015, p. 72). The results also showed that “daycare settings” demonstrated a higher amount of time spent on care routines, while “preschool settings” demonstrated a higher amount of time spent on educational activities. Providing creative and educational activities along with opportunities for free play revealed to be more important than quality in care routines, and had a medium to strong effect on educational process quality. This effect was strongest when the educational activities were provided in small subgroups. The study also found that using an approved, comprehensive education program had a moderate effect on educational process quality. While pre-service education for teachers had only a small effect on emotional process quality, professional development activities were the strongest predictor for emotional and educational process quality.

Key Messages:

- Providing creative and educational activities and opportunities for free play seems to be more important than quality in care routines
- Professional development activities seem to be a stronger predictor for emotional and educational process quality

Title:

24. Parents' and Providers' Views of Important Aspects of Child Care Quality

Citation:

Sosinsky, L., Halle, T., Susman-Stillman, A., Cleveland, J., & Li, W. (2015). *Parents' and Providers' Views of Important Aspects of Child Care Quality* [Child Trends Publication # 2015-13]. Retrieved June 5th, 2017, from <https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2015-13ParentsProvidersViewsQuality.pdf>

Summary (highlights of the article):

This report was part of an initiative called the Maryland-Minnesota Child Care Research Partnership, where two states agreed to collaborate through research to inform policy on the highest priority issues in ECEC. These issues include subsidy policy, quality improvement strategies, and parental decision making.

Sosinsky et al. (2015) state that it is important to understand how parents and providers perceive quality so that we can strengthen relationships, inform quality improvement efforts, and help parents pick the child care that is best for their family. In the study, 92 providers participated and 19 parents participated, drawn from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. They were asked about their overall idea of quality, what quality means to them, and what emerging quality constructs are the most important.

Sosinsky et al. (2015) asked the parents and providers to first rank 4 general "constructs" of quality based on what was most important to them. Sosinsky et al. (2015) then broke down each main construct into more specific quality practices (19 total), and again asked the participants to rank the importance of each. The 4 overarching constructs are:

1. "Strategies to implement developmentally appropriate practices (DAP);
2. Strategies to promote and support children's social and emotional development (SE);
3. Family-sensitive caregiving practices (FSC);
4. Cultural responsiveness (CR)" (Sosinsky et al., 2015, p. 2).

"Developmentally appropriate practices" was ranked most important by the majority (79%) of parents and 33% of providers, while social and emotional development was

ranked most important by the majority (41%) of providers and 16% of parents (Sosinsky et al., 2015, p. 2). Zero parents ranked either family sensitive caregiving or cultural responsiveness as most important.

Under the individual practices for the developmentally appropriate construct, both parents (53%) and providers (57%) ranked “knows about children’s changing needs as they grow and develop” as most important (Sosinsky et al., 2015).

Under the individual practices for the social and emotional development construct, “helps children learn to control their behavior” was ranked most important by the majority (33%) of parents, while “helps children to build relationships with peers and other adults” was ranked most important by the majority (36%) of providers (Sosinsky et al., 2015, p. 2).

Under the family-sensitive caregiving practices construct, “is willing to work with parents about their work schedules” was ranked most important by the majority (37%) of parents, while “cares about the entire family, not just the child” was ranked most important by the majority (50%) of providers (Sosinsky et al., 2015, p. 2). Zero parents ranked “connects families to community resources” as most important (Sosinsky et al., 2015).

Under the cultural responsiveness construct, “promotes ways to communicate with families who speak a language not spoken by the provider” was ranked most important by the majority (51%) of parents, while “gathers information about families’ beliefs, customs, and ways that each family does things” was ranked most important by the majority (53%) of providers (Sosinsky et al., 2015). Zero parents ranked “arranges the care setting so that it reflects different cultural backgrounds of the children and their families” as most important (Sosinsky et al., 2015, p. 3).

In conclusion, Sosinsky et al. (2015) hope that this study can disseminate the fact that parents and providers have different quality priorities, inform future quality initiatives, strengthen relationships between families and providers, help parents make better ECEC choices for their families, and help providers offer families that care.

Key Messages:

- It is important to understand how parents and providers perceive quality in order to strengthen relationships and inform quality improvement efforts

Title:

25. The Child Care Transition, Innocenti Report Card 8

Citation:

UNICEF. (2008). *The Child Care Transition, Innocenti Report Card 8* [Report No. 8]. Retrieved February 2017, from https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc8_eng.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

The eighth installment of a series of Innocenti Report Cards produced by UNICEF about the OECD countries (the world's most advanced economies) is meant to ensure the preservation of children's rights, and to collect data on how this is being done, to what extent, and how the countries compare. There is also a discussion around the revolution of both child care and neuroscience, benefits and risks, considerations, and benchmarks for quality.

The Report Card begins by discussing the shift that is happening globally with regards to child development and education. More children than ever are enrolled in out of home care, and science is evolving to provide evidence on the developmental effects of this phenomena as well – a “parallel revolution”.

UNICEF consulted with government officials and academic experts from OECD countries and the World Bank to put together 10 benchmarks that represent an internationally applicable set of minimum standards when it comes to early childhood services. The Report Card states that these benchmarks are a step towards international monitoring of the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*. The 10 benchmarks are broken up into the categories of policy framework, access, quality, and supporting context. The 10 benchmarks are as follows:

1. “A minimum entitlement to paid parental leave . . . one parent be entitled to leave of at least a year at 50 per cent of salary . . . At least two weeks should be specifically reserved for fathers;
2. A national plan with priority for disadvantaged children;
3. A minimum level of child care provision for under-threes . . . should be available for at least 25 per cent of children under the age of three;

4. A minimum level of access for four-year-olds . . . at least 80 per cent of four-year-olds participate . . . for a minimum of 15 hours per week;
5. A minimum level of training for all staff . . . at least 80 per cent of staff . . . should have relevant training . . . all staff should complete an induction course;
6. A minimum proportion of staff with higher level education and training . . . at least 50 per cent of staff . . . should have a minimum of three years tertiary education with a recognized qualification in early childhood studies or a related field;
7. A minimum staff-to-children ratio . . . of pre-school children (4-5 year olds) . . . should not be greater than 15 to 1, and that group size should not exceed 24;
8. A minimum level of public funding . . . should not be less than 1 per cent GDP;
9. A low level of child poverty . . . less than 10 per cent;
10. Universal outreach . . . services should also be available to the children of disadvantaged families” (UNICEF, 2008, pp. 13-14).

The Report Card then observes that quality is interpreted differently in different OECD countries. For example, in France, the United States, and the United Kingdom, ECEC is seen primarily as school success preparation. In Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, ECEC is seen not only as preparation for school, but an investment in society and citizenship, as it is an opportunity for developing social skills like self-regulation, and awareness of others.

The Report Card recognizes that defining and monitoring quality is a challenge for governments, and that it should involve parents, communities, child care professionals, and academic institutions. It states that the one aspect that influences the quality of ECEC the most is the ability of the caregiver to build relationships with children, provide a consistent, sensitive, and stimulating environment, and be responsive to the child. According to the Report Card, this is the essence of quality, but it is hard to measure. However, we can measure known preconditions of quality, such as numbers of well trained staff. The Report Card then discusses that a high staff turnover rate is a barrier to this element of quality, and this turnover is caused by a wide pay gap due to the assumption that ECEC is suitable for young, transient, or unqualified workers. In terms of funding, the Report Card states that the quality of ECEC is likely to be higher if it is financed and monitored by the government.

The Report Card then addresses children’s rights according to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* as it relates to quality. According to the Convention, children have a right to

education beginning at birth, and this education should be focused on the individual child while respecting their evolving capacities.

The Report Card identifies two problems when it comes to quality. The first is that the quality of ECEC might not be understood by parents, and impacts their ability as consumers to make informed decisions. The second problem is that when ECEC is of poor quality, it might take years for the detrimental effects of this to show. However, they are irreversible.

The Report Card makes some recommendations to achieve higher quality ECEC. First, they suggest that to make progress in this field requires a shift in public attitudes towards ECEC and quality. Second, they suggest improving wages and working conditions for ECEC staff. Third, they suggest integrating ECEC into wider teaching and caring professions. Fourth, they suggest increasing the availability of academic opportunities and qualifications in ECEC. Fifth, they suggest anchoring practice and policy making in research.

The Report Card concludes by stating that investing in high quality ECEC comes with many benefits, such as giving children the best start, limiting disadvantage early on, equality for women, boosting educational achievement, and citizenship. They emphasize, again, that “at the heart of the quality question are child care staff who are well trained, well motivated, well remunerated, and well respected in their communities” (UNICEF, 2008).

Key Messages:

- Quality is interpreted differently in different countries (ECEC seen as school preparation vs. ECEC seen as an investment and opportunity for learning)
- Defining and monitoring quality should involve parents, communities, child care professionals, and academic institutions
- Building relationships with children is the essence of quality, but is hard to measure

Title:

26. Child Care Quality: Does It Matter and Does It Need to Be Improved?

Citation:

Vandell, D. L., & Wolfe, B. (2000). *Child Care Quality: Does It Matter and Does It Need to Be Improved?* Retrieved February 2017, from https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/s_wifis17c01.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Vandell and Wolfe (2000) review the research on the quality of ECEC settings, the need for ECEC in Wisconsin, the role that ECEC can play in the future of children, the connection to the family, the quality of ECEC in the United States, and the possible solutions and costs on a policy level.

First, Vandell and Wolfe (2000) address the question “does quality matter?” through both the short-term and long-term effects of quality in ECEC. According to Vandell and Wolfe (2000), there are two main ways to measure quality in ECEC, which are process quality and structural characteristics. Process quality involves observation in ECEC settings, and ratings in areas like interactions, activities, and safety measures. Structural characteristics are assessed using elements like ratio, group size, and educator training. Vandell and Wolfe (2000) note that process quality and structural characteristics are often interdependent, and that the age of the children impacts which indicators will be stronger predictors of quality.

Vandell and Wolfe (2000) discuss the short-term effects of ECEC quality in terms of both process quality and structural quality. Higher process quality leads to happier children with closer educator relationships that perform better academically. Poorer process quality can lead to behavioural problems. Higher structural quality leads to children that are more cooperative and less hostile, have better general knowledge, and are better at conversation. Vandell and Wolfe (2000) then discuss the long-term effects of ECEC quality. They state that higher quality ECEC leads to better math and reading skills, less behavioural problems, higher IQ scores, lower juvenile crime rates, and double monthly earnings than peers in adulthood. They also found that if educator quality was raised from the lowest quality to the highest quality, a child's school readiness would increase by 50%. Additionally, on average, individuals who participated

in high quality ECEC are more likely to have children at an older age, attend four-year college, and complete high school, but less likely to get arrested or receive public assistance.

Second, Vandell and Wolfe (2000) discuss the effect of the quality of ECEC on a parent's employment and education. According to research, mothers are more likely to retain jobs, work more hours, and have higher educational attainment later in life when low-income families receive high quality ECEC. Employees may also have higher productivity when their children are in higher quality ECEC. Poor quality ECEC causes mothers to leave the workforce.

Third, Vandell and Wolfe (2000) discuss the quality of ECEC in the United States. Overall, research has found that ECEC in the United States is fair on average and rarely excellent. It is concluded that there is plenty of room for improvement.

Fourth, Vandell and Wolfe (2000) note that the private market does not work as well for ECEC like it does for other industries for 3 reasons. First, it is difficult for parents to compare the quality of ECEC programs due to a lack of information, and confusion around the information they do receive. Second, due to externality – effects beyond the primary consumers (parents) – the market system can fail. Parents do not take into consideration the society-level benefits, such as lower crime rates, less need for social services, and lower cost of later education, as well as higher productivity levels. Third, parents of young children often have lower incomes and cannot afford high quality ECEC. Low-income families also sometimes have odd work schedules which do not fit into the working hours of ECEC centres.

Fifth, Vandell and Wolfe (2000) look at whether ECEC is an issue of public policy or if it is a private market matter. According to Vandell and Wolfe (2000) this is a matter of judgement, not research. According to the polls, Americans support the idea of the government allocating more funding to provide ECEC for low-income families. Ultimately, all of society benefits from high quality ECEC.

Lastly, Vandell and Wolfe (2000) discuss how the government can improve ECEC, and what it will cost to do so. They suggest some possible interventions that can be implemented by the public-sector, including:

1. "Information and referral;
2. Licensing requirements;
3. Placement activities;

4. Financial incentives;
5. Training for child care workers;
6. Tax credit for parents;
7. Incentives for employer-provided care;
8. Direct provision of care;
9. Tuition subsidies” (Vandell and Wolfe, 2000, p. 8).

According to the research, decreasing the child-adult ratio by one child increases costs by 4.5%, increasing the average educational level of the staff by one year of education increases total costs by 3.4%, and improving overall centre quality by 25% costs 10% more in total. Vandell and Wolfe (2000) state that the improvement that is likely to be the most expensive is caregiver training, including in-service, however there is not research on this aspect yet.

In conclusion, ECEC in the United States is on average poor or fair, often does not comply with recommended standards, and the level of education for ECEC staff is decreasing. There is a need for government intervention, as all of society will benefit from better quality ECEC, including:

1. “Children attending schools with others whose behavior may be influenced by their child care setting;
2. Taxpayers who will save money through reductions in education costs;
3. Employers who benefit from more productive workers;
4. Potentially citizens who gain through reduced crime and public assistance needs” (Vandell and Wolfe, 2000, p. 9).

Key Messages:

- Higher quality ECEC leads to better math and reading skills, higher IQ scores, and double monthly earnings than their peers in adulthood
- If educator quality was raised from the lowest quality to the highest quality, a child’s school readiness would increase by 50%
- There is a need for government intervention because all of society would benefit from better quality ECEC

Title:

27. Quality ECEC For All: Why We Can't Afford Not to Invest in It

Citation:

Vandenbroeck, M. (2015). Quality ECEC For All: Why we can't afford not to invest in it. *Our Schools / Our Selves*, 24(4), 171 – 182.

Summary (highlights of the article):

In this article, Vandenbroeck (2015) discusses the economic, educational, and social rationales of ECEC. There is also discussion about the problem of unequal access, the market system, and the five criteria for quality for all. Vandenbroeck (2015) then concludes by addressing progressive universalism.

Vandenbroeck (2015) begins by discussing the arguments and the evidence for ECEC. He notes that demographics are changing and developed countries are going to start experiencing aging populations, which would lead to an increase in social welfare spending and an economic challenge. It is important to ensure that as many men and women are employed as possible. An investment in ECEC is economically unavoidable in order to create a stronger, equal workforce. Vandenbroeck (2015) also states that there is sufficient, heavy evidence supporting the beneficial effects of high quality ECEC on all developmental domains, as well as the negative influence of poor quality ECEC. He notes that while investing in quality ECEC is beneficial, investment alone cannot create a more equal society. Low-income children often benefit the most from high quality ECEC. However, they are less likely to receive it due to affordability.

Next, Vandenbroeck (2015) discusses the problem of unequal access. He states that the initial research on this topic focused on the different demographics of families such as income and ethnicity, and unequal access was understood as a result of parental choice. Vandenbroeck (2015) argues that this ignores structural positions of disadvantage and places the responsibility on the parents, framing them as consumers. He states that this "choice" is merely a choice of the lesser evil, because one cannot desire what is not available. Choice implies that there is equal access to a market full of equal options, however this is not the case in ECEC. Vandenbroeck (2015) argues that a broader ecological perspective is necessary when looking

at the relationship between parental behaviour and environmental constraints, as it focuses on different factors at different levels. There is the families at the micro-level, the services at the meso-level, the neighbourhoods at the macro-level, and the policies at the exo-level. All of these levels interact to impact ECEC.

Vandenbroeck (2015) then discusses the issue that the market system is rarely equal. He states that countries that chose not to invest in ECEC in previous decades have felt an even stronger necessity later on. As a way around using government funds, some countries chose to expand the ECEC system using private market funding. Vandenbroeck (2015) states that these market operating systems are less effective in attracting lower-income families. The most effective strategy in reducing enrollment inequalities is creating a general quality regulatory framework that includes public policies on availability, entitlement, and cost. Vandenbroeck (2015) also notes that there is a shortage of ECEC overall, especially for the youngest children, up to the age of 3. He states that this may be due to a rationing that happens during shortages, where prioritization occurs that intentionally or unintentionally discriminates against disadvantaged children from low-income or ethnic minority families. Parents that work or sign up to waiting lists early often get priority status. However, parents that have precarious work cannot plan that far ahead; immigrant families often do not have as much access to ECEC services, and both often require more flexible hours of service due to irregular work hours.

Vandenbroeck (2015) then outlines 5 criteria for quality for all. These criteria are:

1. Availability

High quality ECEC should be located near disadvantaged families, however a targeted system based on a needs or risk framework should be avoided, as general, universal systems based on a children's rights' perspective are more effective.

2. Affordability

When public funding is available, ECEC should be free, or parental fees should be determined according to income to make it more affordable. It must be kept in mind that some parents still also have to pay a "symbolic price", such as being labelled "low-income" or "at-risk" when accepting subsidy.

3. Accessibility

The two criteria above do not necessarily ensure accessibility. There are other important considerations, such as language barriers, knowledge of the system and procedures,

waiting lists, and priorities of management. Planning should take place locally, including analyzing barriers to participation and community outreach.

4. Usefulness

ECEC should represent families' needs and demands, such as hours of operation. The processes for creating ECEC policies should be participatory and democratic.

5. Comprehensibility

The meaning of the ECEC services should match with the meaning of ECEC that parents hold. ECEC should align with the values, beliefs, and educational practices of the families and the community. Inter-agency collaboration has been found most effective in communities of diversity.

In conclusion, Vandebroek (2015) states that quality cannot truly exist without equity. Without equal access to quality, ECEC will perpetuate the cycle of societal inequity. In interest of saving money on the budget, countries have started re-adopting the targeted approach. Vandebroek (2015) reiterates that this approach rarely works because the middle class does not support it, targeted services are often poor quality, and research shows that ECEC works best when children participate in diverse mixed groups. Vandebroek (2015) states that the way forward should be progressive universalism, which means universal ECEC for everyone, and then within those services there is special attention for families with additional needs.

Key Messages:

- The way forward should be with universal ECEC for everyone
- The most effective way to reduce inequalities is by creating a general quality regulatory framework
- Quality cannot truly exist without equity

Title:

28. Issues in Education: Expanding Conceptions of Quality: Cultivating Trusting Relationships in Early Learning and Development Programs

Citation:

Vaughns, A. B. (2013). Issues in Education: Expanding Conceptions of Quality: Cultivating Trusting Relationships in Early Learning and Development Programs. *Childhood Education*, 89(5), 323-324.

Summary (highlights of the article):

Vaughns (2013) discusses how many ECEC programs currently measure quality, and how quality should be observed. Vaughns (2013) states that when it comes to improving quality, there is a focus on abstract concepts such as building trusting relationships. While we know that many of the key aspects of quality are those concepts, we continually attempt to measure quality in ways that emphasize more structural factors. This would include ratio, qualifications, and health and safety practices. If we want to understand a program's true level of quality, "we must seek to cultivate, understand, and value abstract conditions, such as relational trust, in addition to measuring concrete factors, such as structural quality" (Vaughns, 2013, p. 323).

Vaughns (2013) then discusses Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) and the issues they present. In general, it is assumed that if a program receives a high QRIS score, then the program is of high quality and the system works. Vaughns (2013) states that similar to the way standardized testing does not represent a full view of a student's ability, QRIS provides a limited view of program quality. Vaughns (2013) believes that we need to broaden our conception of quality and include more abstract factors such as relational trust. While Vaughns (2013) recognizes that there is still a need for QRIS to evaluate structural quality, not all programs can address these structural factors largely due to 3 main reasons:

1. Programs with large numbers of low-income families cannot afford to hire more educators to decrease ratio and group sizes.
2. Programs, especially with large numbers of low-income families, often cannot afford to pay high quality educators with higher qualifications.

3. Programs can struggle to make environmental and structural improvements because of the cost.

According to Vaughns (2013), the QRIS can also be ineffective because programs have learned how to “beat the system” by “staging” their program on days that assessors will be visiting. They often hire more staff and rent supplies and equipment for the day of the evaluation. This is made worse by the fact that there are very few assessors, and they often visit only a few times per year.

Revisiting cultivating trusting relationships, Vaughns (2013) states that it should be considered the foundation of quality. This trust also increases parental involvement, which has positive outcomes for children. It is not only important to build trusting relationships with the parents, but also with the administration and wider community as well. All stakeholders must be considered, both inside and outside the classroom.

In conclusion, Vaughns (2013) asserts that we need to build a new conception and measurement system of quality that combines both structural components and more abstract components like trusting relationships.

Key Messages:

- We need to value the abstract conditions like relational trust alongside measuring structural factors in order to understand a program’s true level of quality
- We need to broaden our conception of quality
- Cultivating trusting relationships should be considered the foundation of quality

Title:

29. Quality in Early Childhood Education: an International Review and Guide for Policy Makers

Citation:

Whitebread, D., Kuvalja, M., & O'Connor, A. (2015). *Quality in Early Childhood Education: an International Review and Guide for Policy Makers*. Retrieved October, 2017, from https://www.wise-qatar.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/wise-research-7-cambridge-11_17.pdf

This article is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on examining the importance of high quality ECE experiences for children from a developmental science perspective, looking at the emotional, social, cognitive, language, self-regulation, and playfulness outcomes. The second section focuses on quality in ECE including international developments, progress, examples, and defining and measuring indicators of quality. The third section focuses on the implications this information has on policy and practice. This summary will focus on the first and second sections.

Whitebread et al. (2015) begin by noting the shift that has occurred in the field due to evolving research that has changed a perspective on ECE as “child minding” to a perspective that acknowledges the criticality of early years experiences and their effect on future achievements, success, and wellbeing. Research has also emphasized the importance of the quality of care provided during these years. High quality ECE programs reap benefits in areas such as language, social, developmental, academic, health, employment, economic and behavioural. Whitebread et al. (2015) also note that investing in early ECE interventions is far less costly and more effective than remedial education interventions for adults or young drop-outs.

Whitebread et al. (2015) then discuss some of the international ECE goals that exist and how they have evolved over the years. They mention the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), and the Millennium Development Goals in the Millennium Declaration (2000). For the most part, all of these goals were not met within the timeframe specified, and a new set of goals replaced them. Whitebread et al. (2015) state that one of the reasons these goals were not met

may have been due to their unambitious nature which did not attract enough resources and support. The most recent set of international goals developed by the United Nations are the Sustainable Development Goals created in 2015 to be accomplished by 2030. These goals include the following regarding quality:

1. “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education;
2. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all;
3. By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially the least developed countries and small island developing States” (Whitebread et al., 2015, p. 25).

Whitebread et al. (2015) then move on to defining and measuring indicators of quality in ECE. Definitions of quality “differ across countries, societies, and cultures . . . [and] should reflect local values and perspectives on young children’s development as well as scientifically established predictors of their cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development” (Whitebread et al., 2015, p. 25).

Indicators of quality are typically categorized under structural quality or process quality. Whitebread et al. (2015) state that structural quality focuses on the features of the ECE setting, is easier to measure, and usually more regulated. It includes indicators such as qualifications, ratio, wages, curriculum, and health and safety. Process quality focuses on the “dynamic” aspects of the program, such as the experiences and interactions the child has. It is typically harder to measure and define, but is more predictive of child outcomes. It includes indicators such as teacher practices and instruction, interactions, and parent and community participation. Whitebread et al. (2015) state that structural and process quality overlap and influence each other, such as wages and ratio being significant predictors of process quality.

Whitebread et al. (2015) then list a number of factors that are commonly known to contribute to high quality ECE:

1. Physical environment

The physical environment of the children should have a combination of indoor and outdoor play areas, and outdoor play areas should be natural and unplanned with “adventure playgrounds” to explore. Resources and materials should be open-ended, accessible to children, and follow their interests. Spaces and boundaries should be well-defined, and there should be good “space per child”.

2. Staff qualifications

Educators should have specific education and training in ECE and child development, however experience gained in ECE settings is also of high value. In-service training and professional development have been shown to be an even stronger indicator of quality than training and experience when it includes: “i) active workshops, ii) a curriculum model providing both theory and application, iii) multiple workshop sessions, iv) classroom visits with observations, and v) feedback and opportunities for teachers to reflect upon learning and shared experiences” (Whitebread et al., 2015, p. 28).

3. Leadership

Those in leadership roles (i.e. supervisors, directors, principals) should be supportive of teachers and provide them with guidance. They should have high responsibility, confidence, professionalism, and flexibility. Leaders should also have strong relationship building skills and communication skills. They should have a vision for the program, and participate in a democratic decision making process.

4. Ratio and group sizes, teacher-child interaction, and stability of care

Lower staff/child ratios and smaller group sizes are associated with higher process quality. It allows for warmer, more responsive, and emotionally supportive teacher-child interactions. Having stable care with low staff turnover allows for stronger teacher-child bonds, higher levels of interactions, and less behavioural problems.

5. Duration and dosage of provision

Longer durations and higher “dosages” of program participation reduce “fade out effects”, increase long-term gains, and have more visible impact.

6. Parental and community participation

Cooperation between families and teachers allows for continuity between the ECE program and home. Getting parents involved early on can also increase parental involvement in primary and secondary school. These relationships with parents can also allow teachers to learn more about the children, understand them better, and put families in contact with other information and services.

7. Curriculum/teaching and learning processes

Curriculum refers to the “content and methods used for learning and development and serves as the foundation on which pedagogy is developed” (Whitebread et al., 2015, p. 30). Curriculums should be developmentally appropriate and well-implemented, and there should be equal importance and consideration given to cognitive and social development. High quality curriculums should include “social pretend play”, “child-initiated play”, and a variety of well-organized, appropriate activities for children to choose from including arts activities. These activities should be a mix of child-initiated and teacher-initiated, and children should be consulted in the planning and implementation processes.

In terms of measuring quality, Whitebread et al. (2015) state that there are a variety of instruments used that range from all-encompassing and addressing all areas of quality, while some focus in on one specific quality indicator. Some instruments are for groups of children, while some are focused on individual experiences. The instruments discussed are as follows:

1. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)
2. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – 3 (ECERS-3)
3. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Extension (ECERS-E)
4. The Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R)
5. The Observational Record of Caregiving Environments (ORCE)
6. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
7. The Classroom Practices Inventory (CPI)
8. The Individualized Classroom Assessment Scoring System (inCLASS)
9. The Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)
10. The Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measure (ECCOM)
11. The Preschool Program Quality Assessment – 2nd Edition (PQA)

Whitebread et al. (2015) then discuss how both OECD countries and developing countries are progressing towards quality. In both OECD countries and developing countries, teacher qualifications remain a major issue as there is a lack of consistency within and among countries. The most common challenges that OECD countries face in “establishing a high quality workforce include I) raising staff qualification levels, II) recruiting, retaining, and diversifying a qualified workforce, III) continuously upskilling the workforce, and IV) ensuring the quality of the workforce in the private sector” (Whitebread et al., 2015, p. 34). Among OECD

countries there are differences in curriculum or learning standards. For example, Nordic countries focus on what is expected of staff, whereas Anglo-Saxon countries focus on child outcomes. Whitebread et al. (2015) also state that many OECD countries place a focus on literacy and numeracy, however, significant evidence suggests that starting too early in these areas can be potentially damaging for children.

Whitebread et al. (2015) then discuss some significant approaches to ECE that have had an international impact and help contribute to quality. The commonality between all of these approaches is “the emphasis put on the child as the active learner with the teachers acting as collaborators, facilitators, and partners in the learning process” (Whitebread et al., 2015, p. 37). The approaches highlighted are:

1. High/Scope
2. Reggio Emilia
3. Forest schools
4. Montessori
5. Steiner
6. Tools of the Mind

Whitebread et al. (2015) also discuss some initiatives and NGOs around the world that are working to improve quality or provide quality experiences:

1. Playeum Children’s Centre for Creativity
2. Centre for Inspired Teaching
3. Sesame Street Preschools
4. Lively Minds
5. The Madrasa Pre-School Programme
6. Right to Play

Whitebread et al. (2015) also note some case studies of ECE schools around the world that are working to provide quality experiences:

1. The Riverside School – Ahmedabad, India
2. Qatar Academy Early Education Centre and Qatar Academy Al Wakra Preschool – Doha, Qatar
3. Anji Jiguan Kindergarten – Anji, China

4. Homerton Nursery – Cambridge, UK
5. Blue School – New York City, USA
6. Fuji International indergarten – Robina, Australia

Whitebread et al. (2015) conclude by discussing the policy and practice implications of all this information. While there may be some indicators of quality ECE that could be universal, they “need to be made relevant to the life experiences of children in the countries and cultures within which they live” (Whitebread et al., 2015, p. 51). As a summary, Whitebread et al. (2015) provide four key characteristics of high quality ECE:

1. “Principles: the competent child as a citizen with developmental rights, playful learning, active, self-regulating learners, exploration and inquiry learning, and educating the whole child, including emotional and social as well as cognitive and academic areas;
2. Provision: time and space for playful learning, outdoor play offering the experience of risk, rich resources supporting children’s creativity, generous teacher-pupil ratios, and well-trained practitioners;
3. Pedagogy: relational, play-based pedagogy promoting self-regulatory development, emotionally warm adult-child relationships, dialogic and collaborative talk, inquiry-based approach, and teachers as facilitators;
4. Curriculum: rich, well-resourced play opportunities including a wide range of play types based on children’s interests and life experiences, child-initiated activities, and avoidance of too early emphasis on formal learning of literacy and numeracy” (Whitebread et al., 2015, p. 51).

Whitebread et al. (2015) state that the most crucial of these is the structural factors that governments and policy-makers have the most influence over, which predominantly lie under the “provision” heading.

Whitebread et al. (2015) then make 16 policy recommendations to achieve quality in ECE, however they note that the practice and execution of these recommendations relies on the quality of the workforce:

1. “Pre-school provision should be available and fully funded by the state from the age of six months until children are seven years of age;

2. Educators working in ECE provision should be educated to degree level in evidence-based courses specifically designed to enable them to meet the developmental needs of children in this age range and education should contain training in methods of research;
3. The initial training of educators should be overlapped with that of child health and family support professionals;
4. This initial training should be systematically supported by a structured program of in-service or continuing professional development, with the opportunity for practitioners to gain qualifications at the Masters level;
5. Leaders in ECE settings should be specifically trained in the skills of leadership to the Masters level;
6. A culture of 'teacher as researcher' should be supported;
7. Staff/child ratios should be set at 1:4 with the youngest children and no more than 1:10 with six to seven-year-olds;
8. The focus of the curriculum should be on supporting children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development, in the round; while the state might set out broad guidelines reflecting cultural values, the details of the ECE curriculum should be determined by the professional body of educators in any particular setting, so that it can be relevant, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate for the children in that setting;
9. Key curricula priorities should include the development of children's oral language abilities, their emotional awareness and regulation, their social understanding and skills, and their self-regulation abilities;
10. Assessment of children's progress should be observation-based and lead to a qualitative profile of the child;
11. The state should lay down minimum space requirements per child for preschool settings, including generous indoor and outdoor provision;
12. Materials and apparatus in indoor and outdoor spaces should be open-ended, of high quality, and accessible to the children;
13. The physical provision and materials in ECE settings should be designed to support the full range of play experiences, including physical play, exploratory, sorting, and constructional play with objects, symbolic play, with the full range of means of expression and communication, pretense and games with rules;

14. Structures should be put in place which support parental and community support for ECE settings; the integration of services to families with young children, including education, health, and social services within ECE settings should be supported;
15. ECE settings should be required and funded to provide parenting classes to their communities and to employ parental and community liaison professionals;
16. ECE practice should incorporate the involvement of members of the community in the work of the educational setting and opportunities for ECE practitioners to take children out of the setting and into the community” (Whitebread et al., 2015, pp. 52-53).

Key Messages:

- Investing in quality ECEC provides benefits in areas such as language, social, academic, behavioural, and more
- Definitions of quality differ across countries and cultures and should reflect local values and perspectives
- The most crucial characteristic of high quality ECEC are structural factors that governments and policy makers have the most influence over

Title:

30. Trends in Child Care/Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Development Policy in Canada and the United States

Citation:

White, L. A. (2004). Trends in Child Care/Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Development Policy in Canada and the United States. *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, 34(4), 665-687.

Summary (highlights of the article):

This article investigates the use of language and how it influences policy around quality early learning and child care (ELCC) in Canada compared to the United States. This summary will focus more heavily on the Canadian information.

White (2004) begins by stating that language has the power to influence how people think about and respond to certain public policy developments that might be controversial to some. Alongside the push for a national publicly funded early childhood education and care (ECEC) program, there is also the counter argument that child care is a private family responsibility, and the government's only role should be to provide tax breaks to families so one parent can stay home. This promotes a child welfare function for child care rather than a learning and development function. White (2004) contrasts this view of the early years with the view that governments and society have held about elementary and secondary education, which has been publicly funded for decades. White (2004) notes that there has been a trend lately in both the United States and Canada that promotes the idea of a uniting of the two policy streams of education and child care.

The discussion around child care has shifted – it no longer talks only about “child care”, but now also includes development. This has led to terms now commonly used like ECEC and ELCC that adopt a more holistic view of early years programs. In Canada, governments tend to emphasize the development aspect, whereas in the United States, the education aspect tends to be emphasized. This is because the term development brings attention to the whole child, rather than just education and academic performance.

In 2004, the Social Services Ministers at both federal and provincial levels agreed upon four principles to inform the funding for child care programs:

1. Quality;
2. Universal inclusivity;
3. Accessibility;
4. Developmentally focused programs.

The research on factors that influence healthy child development influenced policy-makers to acknowledge the importance of high quality ECEC. There has also been an emphasis on school readiness as a result of research that points to the economic benefits that come from investing in quality ECEC. By shifting the language from “child care” to “early care and education”, this can help stimulate more public investment in ECEC. White (2004) also notes that investing in quality ECEC has broader benefits to society as well, such as a more productive workforce, higher graduation rates, better employment, better health, and less welfare dependency.

White (2004) states that while it isn't yet known whether language shift influences policy change, or policy change influences a language shift, what is known is that it has brought the issue into the public spotlight. In Canada, this shift makes the scope of ECEC more universal and not just for disadvantaged families or working parents.

White (2004) notes that there are two sides to the argument in regard of the term “education”. On one hand, the term “education” makes it seem more legitimate, as most of society already acknowledges and values the importance of elementary and secondary education for all children, and that it is the government's responsibility to provide it. It helps reinforce the concept that ECEC is not just “babysitting”. It also provides opportunity for requiring higher education levels for staff. On the other hand, some argue that this minimizes the focus on child development, and the social and emotional aspects. The use of the term “education” also causes concern that the schools might take over the arena of the early years as part of their auspice. Using “learning” rather than “education” can help broaden it to include other early years programs. White (2004) also warns that while it is important to focus on the children, it is important not to forget that another one of the main purposes of quality ECEC is to draw attention to equality for women, and getting women into the workforce.

White (2004) discusses that one of the main differences between Canada and the United States is that the early years community in Canada is strongly opposed to commercial for-profit ECEC programs. According to the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, Canada should “in conjunction with the strong evidence from . . . research, support an early learning and care system that is driven by a public, non-profit sector rather than a commercial system controlled by market forces” (White, 2004, p. 678).

White (2004) concludes by noting that many countries have made substantial progress in the realm of quality for ECEC, however Canada becomes more and more of an outlier, specifically in terms of program delivery and funding for pre-primary education. In terms of spending per GDP, Canada falls behind most OECD countries, which is unusual for a country like Canada. White (2004) recommends that all of this information provides Canada with plenty of opportunity to revisit ECEC policy.

Key Messages:

- Investing in high quality ECEC benefits society, as it helps build a more productive workforce, higher graduation rates, better employment and health, and more
- One of the main purposes of quality ECEC is to draw attention to equality for women

Title:

31. Proposal for Key Principles for Early Childhood Education and Care: Report of the Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care Under the Auspices of the European Commission

Citation:

Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care. (2014). *Proposal for Key Principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*. Retrieved February 2017, from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/strategic-framework/archive/documents/ecec-quality-framework_en.pdf

Summary (highlights of the article):

This report outlines a discussion of recommendations and findings of the Working Group of the European Commission, including their methodology and the research justifying their claims. This report also puts forward 10 action statements for ensuring high quality ECEC, called the Quality Framework for ECEC.

The first section discusses why the Working Group undertook this project, the context of the project, and the auspice of the Working Group. The Working Group is under the auspice of the European Commission. This project is part of the EU2020 Strategy – a continent-wide strategy for growth and improvement by 2020 amongst all sectors, including Early Childhood Education and Care. The Working Group briefly touches on the main research that justifies the prioritization of quality in the ECEC sector, stating “the European Commission has emphasised – based on analysis of the latest cross-national evidence and discussions with high-level experts – that access to universally available, high-quality inclusive ECEC services is beneficial for all” (Working Group on ECEC, 2014, p. 3). It would not only assist children in finding their “potential”, but it can also help to engage the family to improve their employment, job training, and parent education. They further quantify their goal for the ECEC sector by stating that high quality ECEC should see participation of “at least 95% of children between the age of 4 and compulsory school age by 2020” (Working Group on ECEC, 2014, p. 3).

The second section of this document details how the Working Group was put together, the methodology they used in the development of this proposal, and the five key areas that

helped them narrow their focus in the creation of the 10 Principles of Quality. They developed these five main areas by placing the child at the centre of the conversation. These five areas are: access, workforce, the curriculum, evaluation and monitoring, and governance and funding.

The third section of this document discusses the European ECEC context, and how the Group interprets quality. They define three different domains of quality: “structural quality” (which refers to the ECEC system and its organization), “process quality” (which refers to the day-to-day operations, pedagogy, and practice in ECEC settings), and “outcome quality” (which refers to the benefits and outcomes of ECEC for all stakeholders). There are three main issues that underpin each of the principles outlined in this framework that are essential for high quality ECEC: “a clear image and voice of the child and childhood should be valued”, “parents are the most important partners and their participation is essential”, and “a shared understanding of quality” (Working Group for ECEC, 2014, pp. 7-8). The 10 main principles of the framework are briefly discussed, accompanied by case studies evidencing these principles. The Working Group points out that none of these principles should be taken individually to improve quality, but that they are interdependent. The 10 principles, or action statements, to strengthen the quality of ECEC are as follows:

1. “Available and affordable to all families and their children.
2. Encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.
3. Well-qualified staff whose initial and continuing training enables them to fulfil their professional role.
4. Supportive working conditions including professional leadership which creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and cooperation with parents.
5. A curriculum based on pedagogic goals, values, and approaches which enable children to reach their full potential in a holistic way.
6. A curriculum which requires staff to collaborate with children, colleagues and parents, and to reflect on their own practice.
7. Monitoring and evaluating produces information at the relevant local, regional and/or national level to support continuing improvements in the quality of policy and practice.
8. Monitoring and evaluation which is in the best interest of the child.

9. Stakeholders in the ECEC system have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities, and know that they are expected to collaborate with partner organizations.
10. Legislation, regulation, and/or funding supports progress towards a universal legal entitlement to publicly subsidised or funded ECEC, and progress is regularly reported to all stakeholders.” (Working Group on ECEC, 2014, pp. 20-65).

By 2020, the Working Group suggests that at least 90% of ECEC should be of good or better quality using these criteria.

In terms of the benefits and effects of quality ECEC, the Working Group (2014) states that “benefits of ECEC attendance are mainly related to children’s educational attainment and the evidence emphasizes such gains are even more salient for children from disadvantaged backgrounds” (p. 13). Throughout the document, the Working Group emphasizes the fact that while there are widely known benefits of ECEC for all children, they are even further amplified for children and families that are more vulnerable and come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Key Messages:

- Prioritizing high quality ECEC is justified because it benefits all
- Three different domains of quality: structural quality, process quality, and outcome quality