From Toronto First Duty Vision to Policy Reality:
Scaling Up, Watering Down in the Provincial Implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten at the
Bruce/WoodGreen Demonstration Site
by
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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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FROM TORONTO FIRST DUTY VISION TO POLICY REALITY:  
SCALING UP, WATERING DOWN IN THE PROVINCIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF 
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SITE 
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Abstract 

Ontario’s Full-day Kindergarten (FDK) evolved in part out of Toronto First Duty (TFD), a demonstration project and feasibility study of integrated early childhood programs delivered through a partnership spanning different auspices. TFD used a model in which kindergarten, child care and other services provided an integrated program. This study tracks the evolution of the FDK program using a case study of Bruce Public School. Through a partnership with WoodGreen Community Services this site became part of TFD and evolved into the internationally known Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre (BWELC). At full implementation, BWELC provided a full-day, play-based, high quality program for 4-year-old and 5-year-old children, delivered by an integrated staff team, with wrap-around, comprehensive child care. It became the seed for the “scaling up” of Ontario’s FDK program. In more recent years, changes to the staffing and program delivery models with the roll-out of FDK have impacted the early learning experience in a way that might be considered “watering down.” This study aims to tell the story of what occurred at BWELC and why it happened, focusing on the cornerstones of quality and staff integration, moving from initial vision to current reality.

Building on the research of the TFD project, the current study continued to employ a case study approach and mixed methods, combining both qualitative and quantitative forms of
inquiry. Data were collected using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale–Revised, the Toronto Operating Criteria, the Indicators of Change tool, a parent/guardian survey and key informant interviews.

The study approach involved three intersecting conceptual frameworks: Theory of change, integration/integrated services, and leadership. A concurrent triangulation approach was used to examine convergence among the data sources.

The findings point to reductions in integration and leadership as Bruce Public School adopted the scaled-up system of FDK and to the effects of these key challenges on quality. The study contributes to our understanding of elements that need to be in place to provide high quality early learning environments and provides suggestions for further systems change to address the shortfalls in Ontario’s current FDK program and to continue the transformation into an effective system.
Acknowledgments

It has been a privilege to be part of the journey at Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre. In my capacity as Vice-President, Family & Neighbourhood Service at WoodGreen Community Services, I had the opportunity to play a lead role in the development of the site. I was also a member of the Toronto First Duty Steering Committee, working with colleagues and stakeholders from many auspices to create a new framework for early learning in Ontario. Thanks are due to the many people who accompanied and supported me along the way:

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List of Terms/Abbreviations used in this report:

BJPS: Bruce Junior Public School

BWELC: Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre

ECE: Early Childhood Educator. NOTE: In Ontario, ECEs must be registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators in order to practice and have the designation “RECE”. However, they are referred to as ECE throughout this paper. In Ontario, the ECE qualification is granted after successful completion of a two-year diploma program at a community college approved by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Individuals with training from outside of Ontario can submit their qualifications and apply to the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators to obtain RECE status.

EDP: Extended-day program

FDK: Full-day Kindergarten: an early learning program for 4 and 5-year-olds

HDK: Half-day Kindergarten: morning only or afternoon only program

OCT: Ontario Certified Teacher. NOTE: In Ontario, teachers must be certified by the College of Teachers, a self-regulatory professional organization, in order to teach in publicly funded schools. Individuals from Ontario must have completed a minimum three-year postsecondary degree and a two- to four-semester teacher education program from an institution approved by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Individuals with training from outside of Ontario can submit their qualifications and apply to the Ontario College of Teachers to obtain certification.

TDSB: Toronto District School Board

TOC: Toronto Operating Criteria

TFD: Toronto First Duty
Prologue:

Since 1982, I have held a leadership role as the head of the child care services unit within WoodGreen Community Services, a multi-service, United Way\(^1\) member organization operating primarily in the east end of Toronto. Toronto is Canada’s largest city and one of the most multicultural cities in the world. The city’s diversity is evident throughout WoodGreen’s broad catchment area. Toronto is organized into 44 electoral wards, and WoodGreen’s catchment area spans several wards. More detailed information about Toronto’s Ward 30, where the Bruce/WoodGreen site is located, is provided in the Methodology section.

WoodGreen’s history of providing child care dates back to the late 1930s when the organization’s founder, Rev. Ray McCleary, the minister at the WoodGreen United Church in the Riverdale area of Toronto, started a nursery program in his home. At that time, more than 60% of the area’s residents were receiving financial relief from the city and there were no child care or recreational programs for families. The nursery program moved into WoodGreen’s flagship building at 835 Queen Street in Toronto when the building opened in 1948 and continued to operate until the end of 2012 when the building closed its doors. Much has changed during the course of my tenure including the size of the unit (from two child care sites in 1982 to eight in 2006 and then seven in 2012), the increasing scope of programs (the addition of special needs resourcing, nursery school, neighbourhood programs and summer camps), and my role (from Director to Vice-President). The Riverdale community has also changed substantially over the decades, transforming from a predominantly low-income area into a thriving and diverse neighbourhood. As a result the child care programs, which were initially created to provide support for disadvantaged families, now serve a broad cross-section of families. But what has

\(^1\) United Way is a worldwide not-for-profit movement that raises support locally in order to support social services and respond to community needs.
remained unchanged from WoodGreen’s pioneering days as a child care provider is the agency’s commitment to providing affordable and accessible services for young children and their families and my own commitment to ensuring that these services are high quality, innovative, and responsive to evolving community needs.

Over more than three decades, my position has provided me with opportunities to engage in important initiatives within the early years sector aimed at positive and progressive transformation, both within WoodGreen and more broadly. Chief among these has been the work with the Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre (BWELC), the most well-known and longest running of the Toronto First Duty (TFD) demonstration sites that informed Ontario’s full-day early learning kindergarten program (Corter, Janmohamed, & Pelletier, 2012; Pascal, 2009). Inspired by the first Early Years Study authored by the late Dr. Fraser Mustard and Margaret McCain (1999), which argued for the value of early education for every child, TFD, which ran for a decade, embraced the aim of showcasing how governments and communities can optimize early child development. The research I have undertaken forms another chapter in the important story of BWELC and by association, Ontario’s progress towards a universally accessible full-day kindergarten program.

My academic work is framed by my experiences and beliefs and is therefore not entirely objective. The three-plus decades I have spent in the field of early learning position me as an invested researcher, which is both a limitation and a strength. I honour the need for objective data and recognize that my own observations, insights and biases are part of the research.
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets the context for the study by providing an overview of the study’s purpose along with background information about the Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre, Toronto First Duty, and the development of Ontario’s full-day early learning program.

Background

Ontario’s Ministry of Education oversees elementary education in the province and sets out the standards and requirements that govern the policies and programs of all publicly funded schools. There are approximately 4,000 publicly funded elementary schools across the province, serving over 1.4 million students from kindergarten through grade eight. Within the city of Toronto, there are four school boards that are authorized by the Ministry of Education to operate the publicly funded schools: Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, French-language school board (Conseil scolaire Viamonde), and French-language Catholic school board (Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud). The Toronto District School Board, which oversees the schools that are part of this study, is the largest school board in Canada serving over 245,000 students.

The purpose of this study was to track the evolution of Ontario’s full-day early learning kindergarten program through a case study of Bruce Junior Public School (BJPS). The school, which is within WoodGreen’s catchment area, first opened in 1923 but found itself threatened with closure several decades later due to low enrollment. One of the reasons for the low enrollment was the lack of a child care centre within the school: Families who required child care support opted to enrol their children in two neighbouring schools where WoodGreen operated on-site child care programs.
Through the intervention of Dr. Fraser Mustard and other early years champions, BJPS was saved from closure by becoming part of Toronto First Duty (TFD), where it merged with WoodGreen Community Services and evolved into the internationally known Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre (BWELC). Initially the child care component of BWELC only served kindergarten-aged children but, over the ensuing years in response to the needs of the community, the child care expanded to include toddlers (18 months to 2.5 years old), preschoolers (2.5 to 4-years old) and school aged children (6 to 12-year olds). The child care’s current capacity is 109 children and the school’s current population, although still relatively small with just over 200 students, is stable. More information about the history of BWELC is provided later in this chapter.

At its high point, BWELC achieved full implementation of a high quality, innovative, play-based, full-day program for 4-year old and 5-year-old children. As will be discussed in greater detail later in the thesis, program quality was assessed by two different validated measures, each administered by different external evaluators not connected to this thesis study. The program was considered to be integrated as it met the OECD (2001) definition of “teamwork among staff with different professional backgrounds” (OECD, 2001, p. 9). The staff team included both an Ontario certified teacher (OCT) and an early childhood educator (ECE). There was also service integration, combining child care and education plus services related to health, literacy and parenting supports. For example, Toronto Public Health offered on site programs such as “Nobody’s Perfect” and dental health screening. The Parenting and Family Literacy Centre at the site provided parenting supports such as “Roots of Empathy” along with activities for parents and other caregivers that were facilitated by an RECE.
**Ontario’s move to full-day kindergarten**

BWELC’s progress and achievements were measured through Toronto First Duty research and documented in the Toronto First Duty reports, discussed later in this thesis. The success of the program put it in the spotlight on a local, national and international level. It became the seed for the design of Ontario’s full-day early learning kindergarten model (hereafter referred to as “FDK”) as evidenced by Premier Dalton McGuinty’s choice of BWELC as the site for his announcement of the appointment of Dr. Charles Pascal to the position of Special Advisor on Early Learning. Following that announcement in late 2007, Dr. Pascal and his team conducted extensive research and, in June 2009, released the report entitled *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario*, which has informed policy and practice in Ontario, across Canada, and beyond (Pascal, 2009). In more recent years, changes to the staffing and program delivery models due to the roll-out of FDK have affected the early learning experience in a way that might be considered “watering down.” This study builds on the story that was told through the numerous TFD research reports. It aims to describe and explore the reasons for the changes that occurred at BWELC with a focus on the transition from TFD to the implementation of government funded FDK. Changes in leadership, staff teamwork and program quality are analyzed in the transition from the multiple services integration model in TFD to the more limited integration of child care and kindergarten in the scaled up FDK model. The study’s focus is on the cornerstones of quality and staff integration, moving from initial vision to current reality. It is intended to add to the body of research and knowledge gathered throughout TFD and present recommendations for the next steps in achieving Ontario’s vision for early learning.
September 2010 marked the beginning of a new chapter in education in Ontario as the phase one schools of FDK programs opened their doors to welcome both 4-year-old (junior kindergarten) and 5-year-old (senior kindergarten) children for a full day. Prior to this date, kindergarten had been available to children on a half-day basis for two years, beginning at the age of four. Kindergarten is offered five days per week as part of the publicly funded elementary school system, but attendance is not mandatory. Nevertheless, approximately 97% of parents in Toronto were enrolling their children in senior kindergarten during the TFD demonstration project timeframe (Toronto District School Board, 2009). The first wave of children in FDK included approximately 35,000 children, representing 16 percent of eligible junior and senior kindergarten children across the province (Babbage, 2009). Additional schools were added in September 2011, bringing the number of FDK students to 50,000 and by September 2012 the FDK program was operating in approximately 50% of all schools in Ontario, serving 122,000 children (Grieve, 2012). Full roll-out was achieved in September 2014.

FDK programs are not new to Ontario. For example, prior to September 2010, FDK programs were being offered through French-language school boards with funding received as part of the government’s first-language enhancement policy for francophones (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2008, p. 6). Full-day senior kindergarten programs for 5-year-olds have also been available in other Canadian provinces such as Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. On the international stage, various forms of universal education programs have been available to children either aged three or under or aged three to five in a majority of U.S. states and in many European countries including Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Italy and Portugal (Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, 2008, p. 6). While there are
many FDK programs nationally and internationally, Ontario’s full day early learning program has several distinguishing features:

- The kindergarten program is government funded and free for all 4- and 5-year-old children. Parents are required to pay a fee for the Extended-day (Before and After) school programs and for non-instructional days, such as Professional Activity Days and spring and winter breaks. In some jurisdictions, including Toronto, families may be eligible for financial assistance in the form of subsidy to cover the costs.

- The teaching team is comprised of an Ontario certified teacher (OCT) and early childhood educator (ECE) working together, using their complementary skills to create the learning environment. Teachers have knowledge of curriculum, assessment, evaluation and reporting and child development, while ECEs have more in-depth knowledge of early childhood development, observation and assessment and bring a focus on age-appropriate program planning that promotes each child’s physical, cognitive, language, emotional, social and creative development and well-being. In particular, ECEs have knowledge of programming for play-based learning. The intent of the policy was to have these two qualified professionals in the classroom for the full school day in order to provide greater opportunities for understanding and meeting the unique needs of each child and more time for effective individual and group instruction (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011), accompanied by an integration of education and care at the ministerial level.

- A play-based educational program during the regular school day, through which children develop a strong foundation for learning, engage in healthy physical activities and the arts, and develop socially and emotionally through interaction with their peers and the
educators who guide them in their learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). The framework for the program is described in the Ministry’s publication Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12 – Policy and Program Requirements.

- Children can attend for a total of two years, for what is considered junior (4-year-old) and senior (5-year-old) kindergarten, recently renamed as Kindergarten Year 1 and Kindergarten Year 2. In most cases, the kindergarten classrooms are blended to include both junior and senior kindergarten children.

- An integrated before-and-after-school program, staffed primarily by ECEs, provides children with more opportunities to learn and grow and provides a seamless day with fewer transitions for children and families (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). This feature centred on providing the extended day program in the same classroom that children attended during the regular school day, thereby eliminating the experience of moving to and from separate child care rooms located elsewhere in the school. The extended day, before-and-after-school program was intended to be part of a seamless day of programming from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with two ECEs and one kindergarten teacher in overlapping times (Pascal, 2009). This integrates child care and education in before and after school hours, consistent with the integration of care and kindergarten that is part of the “school day” hours in FDK. School boards had the option of directly operating the extended day parts of the program or entering into agreements with other organizations, known as Third Party operators, to deliver the before-and-after school components. Although most school boards opted out of directly offering the seamless day due to administrative challenges in integrating before and after-school child care, some Ontario school boards were able to use the seamless day approach during the initial
implementation period. However, most abandoned direct delivery early on and currently, among the English language boards, only the separate and public boards in Ottawa/Carleton and Waterloo continue to directly operate the extended-day programs (Janmohamed, McCuaig, Akbari, Gananathan, & Jenkins, 2014, p. 6). While extended-day options continue to be available to families, this occurs through several different auspices including district-run programs in some schools and programs run by eligible third party operators on behalf of the school boards in other schools.

**Toronto First Duty**

Ontario’s Full-day Kindergarten evolved in part out of the Toronto First Duty (TFD) demonstration project (Corter, Janmohamed, & Pelletier, 2012). Envisioned in 1999 by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation (ACF) and the City of Toronto through the Toronto Children’s Advocate, the demonstration project’s aim was to conduct a feasibility study on integrated early childhood programs. Could Toronto develop a model in which existing kindergarten, child care, parenting supports and other social services came together in an integrated program? It would require a true partnership among key stakeholder groups representing different auspices.

The partnership expanded to include the Toronto District School Board and five community agencies – Child Development Institute, East York/East Toronto Family Resources, Macaulay Child Development Centre, Not Your Average Daycare (NYAD) and WoodGreen Community Services - each of which played the lead role at one of five pilot sites. Site selection was determined after agencies applied to the ‘Million Dollar Early Years Challenge’, which was launched by ACF to support innovative approaches to delivering integrated early childhood programs (Corter et al., 2007). A more detailed description of the evolution of BWELC is included later in this chapter. Ongoing research was supported by the Atkinson Charitable
Foundation over the ten years of the project (2001 through 2011). Funding for research and development was also provided by Human Resource Development Canada and the principal investigators were awarded additional funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to continue the research beyond the scope of the initial funding.

The research agenda, led by researchers in the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study and the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, tracked the development, implementation and impact at the pilot sites in three areas: (1) program, policy and services; (2) children and parents; and (3) community and public awareness. The research measures and perspectives assessed service integration and utilization, provided evidence about children’s developmental outcomes related to well-being and school achievement and gauged changes in communities and public awareness. Using mixed methods, case study and quasi-experimental methodologies, the research design included both process and outcome evaluation (Corter et al., 2007).

The TFD research approach differed from traditional evaluations that look at input and outcomes without necessarily specifying what happens in between by placing an emphasis on mapping the overlapping and intersecting pathways on the journey to creating the integrated full-day program. Numerous pathways can be identified:

- The pathway embarked upon by the staff team focused on integration efforts and having different practitioners working together.
- The pathway for the early learning environment focused on creating cohesion around different ideas about and approaches to learning.
• The pathway for families focused on how to foster the involvement of families and enhance the connection between parents and practitioners.

These efforts to meet the goals of the project triggered processes that occurred on each pathway. One example was developing and implementing strategies to promote teamwork and integration. Understanding those processes, identifying what worked well and why that resulted in improvements, and charting the progress on the various pathways, generated data and evidence that were used in turn to help create better outcomes. Through this formative evaluation process (O’Leary, 2010), data and information contributed to further development of the change initiative.

The ultimate aim of the project was to generate evidence that could be used to improve practice and policy. The immediate aims were to support child development, while also providing support to parents. Input was encouraged and promoted from a variety of stakeholders including educators who worked on quality and play, parents who had a voice on the integrated governance committee and in the programs, regulators, administrators, and early learning leaders. The excerpt below from the TFD Phase 3 report describes the knowledge-transfer loop that helped drive innovation:

Over the course of the project, formative findings were fed back to project sites to allow leaders and practitioners to work on improving programming and delivery as part of a research and development approach following the principles of “design research” (Pelletier & Corter, 2006). In this mixed methods approach, findings are continuously fed into design and delivery improvements in an iterative fashion. At the same time, findings on the implementation process, showing how an existing fragmented system
could be integrated to improve program quality and outreach to the underserved, were shared with different levels of government (from municipal to provincial), along with other stakeholder groups in education and social services. As outcome findings began to emerge for children and parents and for program quality, they were also shared with policy and practice stakeholders (Corter, Janmohamed, & Pelletier, 2012, p. 8).

Eighteen reports were generated over the decade from 2001 to 2011 tracking the progress and lessons learned from Toronto First Duty. It is important to note that the research component allowed the project to gain traction and ultimately shaped the FDK program. The evidence gathered throughout TFD foreshadowed Ontario’s play-based kindergarten curriculum, provided a template for professional teams, and established a roadmap for integration and seamless delivery of services for young children and their families.

The Phase 1 final report of TFD was released in October 2007 (Corter et al, 2007). A month later, in November 2007, Dr. Charles E. Pascal (Executive Director of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation at the time) was appointed by Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty as Special Advisor on Early Learning and was asked to recommend the best way to implement full-day learning for 4- and 5-year-olds. Following an extensive period of cross-province consultation, research, discussion and analysis, on June 15, 2009 Dr. Pascal presented his report, *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario* (Pascal, 2009). The report contained 20 recommendations on the implementation of full-day early learning for Ontario’s 4- and 5-year-old students, on how to improve education for children up to 12 and how to increase supports for young families. Among the report’s recommendations that map on to the
TFD design elements and demonstrate how TFD helped in the development of FDK are the following:

Recommendation #10: The Early Years Policy Framework should contain:

- Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT – a play-based approach that was used at BWELC) as the curriculum and pedagogical framework for the Early Learning Program for 4- and 5-year olds

Recommendation #13: The Early Years Policy Framework should establish staffing for early learning environments as follows:

- The Early Learning Program for 4- and 5-year old children should be staffed by teams of certified teachers and registered early childhood educators (ECEs). (Pascal, 2009, p. 56)

**BWELC in focus**

BWELC was one of Toronto First Duty’s five pilot sites. As the Vice-President, Family & Neighbourhood Services (formerly Director, Child Care Services), for WoodGreen Community Services (a multi-site, multi-service, non-profit, United Way member agency) I was deeply involved in the project from its inception. The story of Bruce Public School spans many generations, beginning with the school’s original opening in 1923. By the late 1990s, the school was suffering from drastically low enrolment, and an Area Review Committee (ARC) was initiated by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to consider the ongoing viability of the school. At that time, membership of ARCs included the principals from all the schools in the same “family of schools”, school board staff, parent council representatives and community representatives. WoodGreen Community Services had been delivering child care services in two
schools in the family of schools and I was therefore invited to be part of the ARC as a community representative.

Following a rigorous and detailed process, the Bruce Public School ARC unanimously recommended to the TDSB that the school remain open. Among the strategies presented to TDSB to ensure the school’s ongoing viability, WoodGreen declared its interest and commitment to opening a child care centre in the school, based on the understanding that a portion of Bruce Public School’s potential child population was enrolling in other area schools because of the availability of child care. Despite the strong case put forward to the TDSB, in June of 2000 the decision was made to close the school. Shortly after this, municipal and school board elections were held and Paula Fletcher, who had also been a participant on the ARC, ran for the position of School Trustee, on a campaign that included a pledge to try to save the school from closure. Ms. Fletcher won the election and, due in large measure to the intervention of early years champion Dr. Fraser Mustard and his proposal to develop an Early Child Development Centre at Bruce Public School, and the Atkinson Foundation’s offer to provide financial support for this “experiment,” the earlier decision was reversed by the newly elected Board of Trustees of the TDSB, and the wheels were set in motion for the development of BWELC.

Once the threat of closure was removed, proposals were submitted to both the Atkinson Charitable Foundation and the provincial government’s Early Years Challenge Fund to develop an early years centre. Although the proposal to the government was rejected, the Atkinson Foundation agreed to move ahead because the aims of the project were consistent with the Toronto First Duty vision, and funding was approved in June 2002. By September of that year a coordinator had been hired, and the program received its license to operate a full-day program
for 4-and-5-year old children in early January 2003. The room met provincial licensing standards for kindergarten-aged children and delivered a program that integrated child care and kindergarten. The Atkinson Foundation lobbied to have the Bruce site added as a demonstration site to the TFD project and the site was given the name of Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre, combining the Bruce School programs with WoodGreen Community Services’ programs.

Throughout the ensuing years the centre experienced high levels of success and popularity and child care services expanded to serve school-aged children (6 to 12 year olds) as well as preschool children (2.5 to 3.8 year olds). BWELC was also granted a Purchase of Service Agreement by the City of Toronto, which allowed the centre to accept children whose families were eligible for fee subsidies, thus increasing the reach to populations who might not have attended otherwise. In addition, the operating hours of the site’s Parent and Family Literacy Centre were extended beyond the core hours funded by the TDSB as part of BWELC’s commitment to be responsive to identified community needs, with funding for enhanced staff hours covered by the project.

Among the many successes at BWELC, one of the most significant was the strong and cohesive staff team in the junior and senior kindergarten program which operated with a teacher employed by the school board and ECEs employed by WoodGreen (Corter et al., 2007). The staff saw themselves as functioning as a fully integrated unit rather than as individuals with distinct roles, and this integration extended to all areas of the program including planning, implementation, child observation and evaluation. The staff team of OCT and RECE engaged in joint professional development activities in the areas of curriculum development, child development, child management and other areas of mutual interest. There were notable
differences in training and compensation: ECEs, who had completed a two-year college diploma program earned considerably less annual salary than their OCT counterparts who had completed a university degree plus teacher-training program. Yet despite these differences, the ECEs were considered full and equal early learning team partners and they participated alongside the teachers in all areas including planning, child assessment and parent interviews. This teamwork did not just happen: It was facilitated and promoted by the leadership team that was guided and supported by a TDSB Superintendent who, as a transformational leader, ensured that the right people were in place to achieve the desired outcomes.

For parents and children, the experience at BWELC was seamless: Parents knew they could approach any of the educators with questions to gain information about their child’s progress (Arimura, 2008), and children did not differentiate between the adults in the room, considering each one to be their teacher, addressing each one on a first name basis, and forming supportive relationships. In addition to the integrated staff team, BWELC also successfully modeled the use of play-based curriculum and the seamless day for families by offering a variety of options for non-school hours including extended-day programs operating before and/or after the school day. While care options for non-school hours are not a unique feature, the staff schedules were intentionally designed to facilitate delivering the program in a seamless and integrated way, and this represented an innovative approach. The diagram below provides a representation of the daily schedule and staff shifts prior to the implementation of FDK, when the kindergarten program was a half-day and was offered in two blocks: morning and afternoon. The OCT’s shift was determined by the school day schedule, with the morning kindergarten running from 8:30 to 11:45 a.m. and the afternoon kindergarten running from 12:45 to 3:30 p.m.
In this diagram, WoodGreen employees are identified as ECE#1, ECE#2, ECE#3 and TDSB staff is identified as OCT (Ontario Certified Teacher).

**Figure 1: Daily schedule and staff shifts – pre-FDK**

All program aspects and activities occurred in the kindergarten classroom. Children who stayed over the lunch period received a catered meal and were supervised by the ECE staff. Lunch and breaks for ECE#1 would be provided between 10:00 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. and for ECE#2 between 11:45 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. These breaks would be covered by ECE#3 when needed.

Families could also participate in the Parenting and Family Literacy Centre operated by the Toronto District School Board and staffed by an ECE. The PFLC was considered one of the TFD integrated services at the BWELC site. It contributed to the overall success at the site by offering a different type of program and a venue for parents and caregivers to be part of a community of learning and active engagement centred on young children. Parents of kindergarten children who participated in the PFLC with their younger children could join their kindergarten children for lunch in the classroom, room 3, located down the hall. The physical layout of this room is depicted in Appendix A. Workshops and other events were also held.
during non-school hours to connect families with community resources including Toronto Public Health.

The sense and spirit of integration extended beyond the kindergarten. Overall governance of BWELC occurred through a management team of the site partners and parents; the school’s leadership team included the school principal (employed by TDSB) and child care manager (employed by WoodGreen); the staff team included WoodGreen ECEs working with the 2.5 - 3.8 year olds and 6 - 12 year olds, the TDSB parenting workers in the Parenting and Family Literacy Centre, kindergarten teachers and, to varying degrees, teachers in grades one and up. Integration extended to other early years partners including Toronto Public Health and services for children and families with special needs through the Resource Teacher employed by WoodGreen.

Phase 1 of TFD spanned the years from 2002 through 2005 and, once this initial demonstration period had concluded (Corter et al., 2007), BWELC was the only one of the five TFD sites to move forward into Phase 2 as a prototype. This decision was based on the progress achieved at the site during Phase 1 compared to the other four sites in the area of integration as documented in the Toronto First Duty Phase 1 Final Report (Corter et al., 2007). The report provides case studies of all five sites and outlines the challenges, such as issues around leadership, that limited the four sites in achieving levels of integration that were central to TFD’s objectives. The report concluded that the BWELC model was sustainable and the TFD steering committee thereby determined that the site should continue to receive support to move forward into Phase 2.

The goals of Phase 2 were to further the integration process, and to continue the research on the integrated program with an eye to setting the stage for the implementation of full-day
kindergarten in the province. Unlike the other TFD sites, BWELC did not have a special coordinator for integration: the child care manager, employed by WoodGreen, worked in partnership with the school principal to drive integration efforts. This model, relying on an existing paid staff position, seemed to represent a more realistic picture and sustainable model for FDK because of how it supported the integration of the child care within the school program. The site was granted funding from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation for an additional three-year period, through to June of 2008 with a focus on moving forward on the integration of curriculum and pedagogical approaches and the early years staff team (Corter et al., 2009). By the end of Phase 2 BWELC had become the exemplar for the potential of integrated early years programming in a school-as-hub model (Pelletier, 2012) and met the multiple and changing needs of families through a variety of supports and resources.

By this point, through strategic advocacy efforts by the TFD champions and as a means of knowledge mobilization, the site was attracting a great deal of attention along with visitors from across the country and around the world. Educators and scholars interested in similar forms of integration came to see for themselves how it worked in action. Indeed the “TFD model” has become a benchmark for similar efforts. One example of a program on an international level that has referenced the TFD model is Doveton College in Melbourne, Australia where the program for 3 and 4-year olds is “taught by a full-time early childhood teacher in each room and our team of highly qualified educators” (Doveton College, 2015). Closer to home, TFD has also “inspired Early Years Centres in Coquitlam and Mission, B.C., Early Child Development Centres in New Brunswick, Smart Start sites in PEI, and the extension of School Plus in Nova Scotia” (McCuaig, 2012). As with the original five TFD sites, each of these programs may look different. However, they all build on the lessons learned regarding the benefits of seamless and integrated
programs for children, families, communities, educators and, more broadly, for the early years system. Children benefit from improved school readiness while their families experience less stress, more opportunities for involvement and improved access to resources so they are better able to support children’s learning (Pelletier, 2012). The benefits to communities include improved scores on the community-level Early Development Instrument, which is used in a number of parts of the world (Janus & Offord, 2006), and improved school/community connections. Reflecting on the TFD experience McCuaig (2012) found that educators benefit from an environment that is less isolated and gain professional satisfaction from opportunities for collaboration and joint learning while the broader early years system benefits from an increase in quality.

**Integration**

Integration is a key term throughout this thesis and is used to refer to traditionally separate services working together in new ways. It is used in reference to the staff team of OCT and RECE, as well as to the integration of child care and education with other early years services such as health, literacy and parenting supports. Integration is discussed in greater detail in the section describing the theoretical framework and in the literature review.

Many components go into creating a seamless and integrated program. Building an integrated staff team and locating programs within school environments can be important factors in meeting the needs of children and their families. Studies by Arimura et al. (2011), Corter, Patel, Pelletier, and Bertrand (2008) and Dryfoos, Quinn, and Barkin (2005) demonstrated what can happen when services that are traditionally offered by separate entities are brought together into integrated early childhood programs and offered in schools. In particular, in considering the service integration goals of combining early education and care into a seamless early learning
program, Arimura (2015) reviewed literature that showed gains in children’s cognitive and social-emotional development, increases in the extent of parent involvement, and enhanced quality in learning environments (Arimura, 2015, p. 17). Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, and Henrich’s (2000) evaluation of the CoZi\textsuperscript{2} model, a whole school reform model that combines on-site, daylong, and year-round preschool, after-school care, and family support services within a school revealed significantly higher school climate and parent involvement. Selden, Sowa, and Sandfort (2006) also found that interagency collaboration in the field of early care and education had a clear impact on management, program and client outcomes. Zigler and Finn-Stevenson (2007) argued that raising academic achievement requires an early care and education system provided in schools that delivers quality child care and preschool experiences. They believe such a system should embrace a whole-child approach that nurtures cognitive development, physical and mental health and social-emotional behaviours, all of which are important to successful schooling.

Beyond locating the programs in schools, positioning and consolidating the responsibility for early learning and care under one government ministry is a third key factor in delivering an integrative response. Moss and Bennett (2006), provide a strong rationale for integrating child care and education into the education system thereby eliminating an obstacle to delivering integrated early childhood education and care services. The reasons include:

“…the primary focus on children adopted by education; the importance of lifelong learning and a recognition that children are learners from birth, not just from 3;

stronger infrastructure within education (e.g. for data collection, training and

\textsuperscript{2}CoZi: Co for James Comer, Zi for Edward Zigler. Comer’s School Development Program was a school management and collaborative decision making model. Zigler’s School of the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century model included on-site, daylong, and year-round preschool, after-school care, and family support services.
support, curriculum, evaluation and research); and a belief that education provides a better basis than welfare for developing a service based on universal entitlement” (Moss & Bennett, 2006, p. 1).

By integrating early childhood within the Ministry of Education, Ontario joined the ranks of countries around the world who have this policy approach including the Nordic countries, Iceland, New Zealand, Vietnam, Spain, Botswana, Brazil, Slovenia, Sweden, England, Jamaica, Scotland, Norway, Romania and Zambia (Bennett & Kaga, 2010, p. 36).

In order to continue to build on the work completed from 2002 to 2008, and with external funding provided through grants to the principal investigators (Corter, Janmohamed, & Pelletier, 2012; Corter & Pelletier, 2009) TFD entered into Phase 3, continuing to look at issues of program and staff team integration, relational issues, infrastructure challenges, educator training, labour issues, planning and scheduling, and responding effectively to children with special needs at BWELC and other integrated early learning environments (Corter, Janmohamed, & Pelletier, 2012; Janmohamed, Pelletier, & Corter, 2011). In a report released in November 2011 entitled Toronto First Duty, Phase 3: The Bruce WoodGreen Case Study, the research team presented a series of findings and lessons learned at the site, which included the following:

- Teamwork within an integrated early learning environment requires both program and pedagogical leadership
- Professionals need access to regular learning opportunities that maximize evidence based practice strengthens high quality programs
- Educators need to understand and utilize a variety of tools that measure quality of programming and curriculum implementation which enables them to deliver well
rounded early learning experiences that support children’s self-regulation and learning.

(Janmohamed, Pelletier, & Corter, 2011, p. 3)

These findings represent outcomes of the pathways travelled by the staff team in creating the early learning environment. They emanate from the processes undertaken at the site under the joint leadership of the school principal and the child care manager with guidance and support from the governance committee to build commitment from the team to program integration. The processes included providing supports and resources in areas including curriculum development, time and space to meet, ongoing joint professional development, and encouraging mutual respect. These factors are discussed in more detail in the literature review.

Given the importance of integration to achieving the vision of Toronto First Duty, the Indicators of Change (Atkinson Centre, OISE/UT, 2005) was designed to guide, track and assess the progress of Toronto First Duty sites on the path to integration of programs and services including child care, early childhood education, family support programs and kindergarten. Service integration in Toronto First Duty was organized around five core elements – local governance, seamless access, learning environment, early childhood staff team, and parent participation. These elements were identified as keys to meeting the project’s vision “to create a service delivery system that provides a seamless blend of integrated early learning, care, services, and supports for all young children and their families in defined communities” (Atkinson Centre, OISE/UT, 2005). The indicators and benchmarks corresponded to the vision and expectations of the funding partners and the tool was intended to support planning and priority setting. The initial tool included a total of nineteen program indicators, with four in the area of local governance, three in seamless access, five related to learning environment, four for the early childhood staff team and three for parent participation. For each program indicator,
progress was mapped along a continuum using a 1 to 5 scale from coexistence (level 1) to coordination (level 2), collaboration A (level 3), collaboration B (level 4) and integration (level 5). (See Appendix F).

The first round of Indicators of Change assessments occurred in 2005 and included the five Toronto First Duty sites: (1) York Early Years-Wilcox (YEY-W); (2) Queen Victoria Partnerships for Early Learning Project (QVPEL); (3) Corvette Early Years (CEY); (4) BWELC; (5) Action for Children Today and Tomorrow/Secord Dawes (ACCT/SD). The Toronto First Duty Phase 1 Summary Report (2006) summarized the June 2005 benchmark scores for the five sites in the five areas covered by the indicators – governance, seamless access, early learning environment, early childhood team, and parent participation – and BWELC achieved (or tied) the highest rating on each indicator. While it is important to note that each site operated under a different model, the results illustrated that BWELC had made good progress towards integration by 2005.

As reported in the Phase 2 Research Progress Report (Toronto First Duty Research Team, 2007) the 2006 assessment revealed a reduction of the integration scores in all areas. With respect to local governance, there was a decline from the overall score of 4 achieved in 2005 to a score of 3.5 for service planning and monitoring and a lower score of 3.5 in the area of human resources. In the area of seamless access, the score declined to 4 from the 4.5 received in 2005. For the early learning environment, the 2006 assessment showed a score of 3.5 in the area of curriculum and pedagogy (down from 4.5 in 2005), a score of 3.5 in the areas of daily routines and in children’s development and progress (down from 4 in 2005), and a score of 3 in the area of program quality (down from 4 in 2005). There were also decreased scores related to the early childhood staff team, with a score of 3 (down from 4) in the area of program planning, a score of
3.5 in the area of child management (down from 4) and a score of 3.5 in the area of staff development (down from 4.5). The parent participation scores also declined slightly, with parenting capacity receiving a 4 instead of the 4.5 achieved in 2005.

In response to the 2006 *Indicator of Change* results provided by the research team, the staff and management at BWELC set about to refocus on integration on several fronts: staff teamwork centred on an early years staff team, joint professional development, integrated curriculum development, increased program quality in the early learning environment, a review and refresh of the site’s program statement, and communication strategies. As a result of this renewed focus, there were changes to the site’s leadership, curriculum planning, and family/community integration. The integrated team also worked together to clean up, beautify and reorganize the kindergarten classroom learning environment. Through concentrated efforts and the involvement of key stakeholders both on the ground and in the broader environment, the site made good progress and, by the time of the 2008 assessment, the Indicators of Change scores had improved in most areas.
The one area where improvement was not evident related to seamless access, and this was due to issues of capacity, child care provision and child care affordability: Parent fees increased in 2008 due to a change in the level of financial support from the Atkinson Foundation, and families who required financial assistance to attend the program had to apply for subsidy through Toronto Children’s Services.

At the height of its success, BWELC was recognized by a broad range of stakeholders as a leader in delivering a high performing, high quality, integrated program. A 2009 video about the site produced by Kerry McCuaig of the Atkinson Centre was created as an advocacy and promotional tool. Narrated by the principal researcher, Dr. Carl Corter, the video summarized
how the site pioneered Toronto First Duty and laid the groundwork for the model that was recommended in Dr. Charles Pascal’s report to the premier of Ontario on full day learning, *With Our Best Future in Mind* (Pascal, 2009). In the video, Dr. Corter traces the site’s evolution, starting from “its first goal of merging preschool service silos of kindergarten, child care and family support services into a single program offering families full-day, year-round, flexible and affordable enrollment options…The integrated, holistic approach developed for the 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds grew down to encompass younger children and grew up to embrace older children in the primary grades.” He concludes by noting that BWELC’s “integrated programming pushes back against developmentally inappropriate curriculum and instead gives us a vision of what learning should be – active, engaging, coherent, not-modularized….It’s focused on building the child’s capacity to self-regulate, to manage his or her own learning” (McCuaig, 2009). In addition to input from Dr. Corter, practitioners, parents and other professionals were also interviewed for the video, thereby continuing the narrative of the BWELC story and illustrating the positive thinking about the program by staff and parents.

Building on the recommendations from Dr. Pascal’s report, the provincial government’s initial proposal for the new FDK legislation included a model under which every aspect of the program would be delivered through the auspice of school boards. This would mean that all of the ECEs, including those delivering the extended-day programs, would be employees of the school boards. It would also mean that all administrative aspects of the extended-day programs would be the responsibility of school board administrators. While this proposal seemed to provide the best possible way to entrench integrated staff teams, it raised concerns among child care operators. The most significant concern was that under this model the extended-day program would not fall under the provincial Day Nurseries Act and, as such, would not be
subject to the same regulations regarding child:staff ratios, group size, and other operational and health and safety standards. This change was viewed by child care operators as being contrary to the best interests of young children, especially the 3.8-year-olds in junior kindergarten.

Operators were also concerned about the impact on families and the disconnect of having a child enrolled in a licensed child care centre potentially from birth until kindergarten, then enrolled in a school board run program for two years, then back into licensed child care once the child entered grade one and was in child care before and/or after school. It was felt that this lack of continuity would be disruptive, especially for families with more than one child enrolled at a site. A further concern related to the financial implications of having a significant cohort of kindergarten-aged children removed from the child care system without corresponding assurances of enhanced government funding for children under 3.8-years-old.

Child care operators were not the only constituency to raise concerns: School administrators in many jurisdictions felt unprepared and under-resourced to take on the added responsibilities of running extended-day programs, especially when it came to functions such as fee collection and operating programs on non-instructional days. Many groups presented deputations in response to the proposed regulations and ultimately the government decided that the extended-day programs would be operated as part of the licensed child care system run, in most cases, by non-profit operators.

Having been in a leadership role at the BWELC site throughout its evolution, I experienced a mix of interest/optimism and trepidation about what would happen when it was transformed from the BWELC model to the new Ontario FDK model. During the initial implementation phases (Phases 1 and 2) of FDK beginning in September 2010, many school boards, including TDSB, decided to set up FDK programs in schools that did not have child care
centres on the premises in order to focus on developing the kindergarten program without the complications of extended care for before and after school. Bruce Junior Public School was therefore not selected to be either a Phase 1 (2010) or Phase 2 (2011) school for FDK because there was a child care centre in place. However, the school was selected as a Phase 3 site for September 2012, along with two other neighbourhood schools where WoodGreen Community Services operated child care programs – Leslieville Public School and Morse Street Public School, both of which previously offered only half-day kindergarten programs whereas BJPS had offered BWELC’s full-day integrated programming. Prior to September 2012 the programs at these two other schools followed a more traditional model whereby the child care and school programs were co-located within the school but were not integrated with respect to operational aspects: WoodGreen provided child care before and after school, over the lunch period, and on non-school days for kindergarten and school-aged children, plus full-day programs for preschool children aged 2.5 to 3.8 and the school operated the kindergarten programs.

With the conversion to FDK in September 2012 the programs at all three schools, including BJPS, would be delivered under a different model with one of the most significant changes being that the ECEs working in the kindergarten programs would become employees of the TDSB and the program would operate within the TDSB and provincial framework. For BJPS, this meant that the ECEs who had been working in the kindergarten program as WoodGreen employees would need to go through a recruitment and selection process to become employees of the school board in order to stay at BJPS. Alternatively, these individuals could remain in ECE roles at WoodGreen without shifting to work in FDK. Parents who had been enjoying and benefitting from the high-quality BWELC integrated program would now send their children to full-day kindergarten and would make arrangements for before and after school
child care through WoodGreen. Therefore, families still had access to child care at BJPS, but under a different model.

The impetus for this research arose from the story of full-day kindergarten that represented a new and broad initiative that would change the face of early education in Ontario. It had roots in the TFD demonstration project, thus it was important to close the TFD story as it transitioned to FDK. Toronto First Duty came about out of a desire to improve both the early learning experiences of children and the lives of their families. Similarly, with a long-term goal of providing children with the best possible start in life, the province of Ontario embarked on an extensive process of change.

As Ontario’s FDK program scaled up and the BWELC program shifted to the new FDK model, there were changes in the staff team composition and framework of the program. These changes raised questions that this research project aimed to address, specifically with respect to understanding the impact of the changes on integration and the ripple effect on program quality: How would the large scale roll-out of FDK impact the factors that made BWELC a success? What changes would be evident and why did these changes occur?

**Research questions**

- How does the BWELC experience illustrate possible links between policy changes, integration and leadership, and program quality as evidenced by what occurred at the site when it converted from a demonstration project to Ontario’s FDK delivery model?
- What were the challenges in ensuring quality programming in scaling up the FDK platform and how can the lessons learned through the BWELC experience inform ongoing policy development?
My hypothesis at the outset of the research, which was informed by my practitioner knowledge and expertise together with the research that had been ongoing at the site, was that there would be changes to levels of integration as a result of the reconfiguration of the staff team. I further hypothesized that the lower degree of integration, combined with reduced leadership involvement and differences in the structure of the learning environment with the broad roll-out of FDK would result in a decline in program quality.

Since integration is a key theme of this research project it is useful to understand integration within the current research framework. Bennett and Kaga (2010) describe early childhood service integration as having two aspects. The first, conceptual integration, refers to how we think about integration and, for the purpose of describing the early childhood and care system, is achieved when the system has gone beyond thinking and talking about ‘childcare’ and ‘education.’ Structural integration, which refers to how the system is organized, involves six areas: (1) policy making and administration, (2) access to services, (3) funding, (4) regulation, including curriculum or similar guidelines, (5) workforce, including structure, education and pay, and (6) type of provision (Bennett & Kaga, 2010, p. 38). Using this framework to reflect on BWELC, the assertion that the site delivered an integrated program can be measured as follows: Conceptually, the full-day kindergarten program was not thought about or referred to as ‘childcare’ and ‘education’: It was viewed as an early learning environment as reflected in its name – Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre as opposed to Bruce Child Care in Bruce Public School. Structurally:

- integrated policy making and administration were achieved through the site’s governance committee which provided oversight and direction, and through the site’s leadership team of the principal and child care manager;
• access to services for families related to health, literacy and resources for children with special needs was achieved through the hub model approach
• curriculum planning and implementation was a major focus of professional development and team-building initiatives and occurred within the integrated staff team
• provision of the program occurred through a seamless and integrated approach

BWELC did not achieve structural integration in the areas of funding or workforce due to system and regulatory reasons: Unlike kindergarten which is funded directly by the Ministry of Education, child care in Ontario is still funded through a complex and multi-pronged system that includes parent fees for service, Purchase of Service agreements between child care centres and municipalities related to families who are eligible for fee subsidies, and a multitude of grants. It is worth noting that within the city of Toronto, efforts have been underway to revise and refine the funding system to address issues of complexity, affordability and access. With respect to workforce, there remains a significant disparity between the pay scales for certified teachers and registered early childhood educators. There is also a disparity in wages paid to ECEs, with ECEs working in kindergarten classrooms earning more on an hourly basis than their counterparts who are working in child care centres. Despite gains that have been made in Ontario by the introduction of the College of ECEs and the more recent Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant to increase wages for ECEs outside of the school system to bridge the salary gaps, the human resource and workforce issues continue to dominate the current child care agenda.

Integration of child care and education, housed within the government department responsible for education, has numerous advantages including greater continuity and fewer transitions for children, universal access for families which increases the ability of parents to be active in the labour market, a well-educated workforce, and enhanced learning. It can also
“change the perceptions of ECCE...including greater recognition of its pedagogical value...[and] provide a higher valuation to staff working in ECCE” (Bennett & Kaga, 2010, pp. 40-41).

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that collaboration in early learning and care “represents a sound management strategy for bringing in more resources to better support and promote greater satisfaction among staff” (Selden, Sowa, & Sandfort, 2006, p. 419).

**Theory of Change**

Integrating child care and education, delivering full-day as opposed to half-day kindergarten programs, creating educator teams of OCT and RECE professionals and promoting a play-based approach to learning all represent significant changes to Ontario’s early learning system. Change is never without its challenges. Theory of Change (ToC), a logic model used in the not-for-profit and government sectors, provides one platform for understanding and promoting social change. Experts in the area of ToC (Walker & Kubisch, 2008) speak about the importance of understanding “the causal chain that links success in systems building to changes in outcomes for children” [and] “the critical milestones along this pathway that will enable all stakeholders to know that the initiative is being implemented effectively and is on the right track for producing improved outcomes for children” (Walker & Kubisch, 2008, p. 495). The model outlines the sequence of actions that describe what the program is and what it will do, and how investments link to results. It involves defining long term goals, then using backwards mapping to identify preconditions or requirements required to achieve that goal. Other steps in the method involve identifying basic assumptions, identifying interventions, developing indicators, and then explaining the logic of the initiative (Center for Theory of Change, 2013; University of Wisconsin, Division of Cooperative Extension, 2008). The change process is mapped through looking at linkages and outcomes that create an outcomes pathway. In order for the process to be
effective, it needs to be inclusive and involve many participants and perspectives. By reflecting on what has and has not worked, participants and practitioners can work towards solutions and plan for the future. In addition to being a support to practice, ToC can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs: It was used in both ways in the current study.

When applied to the development of FDK programs in Ontario, ToC may be represented as follows (see Figure 3):
Figure 3: Theory of Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes – Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What we invest</td>
<td>What we do</td>
<td>Results/impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>Build professional learning communities</td>
<td>FDK program leads to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/educators</td>
<td>Conduct workshops, meetings</td>
<td>more individualized programming for children through play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Foster integration</td>
<td>empower parents/guardians through providing more opportunities for engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Deliver services</td>
<td>more partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Develop curriculum, resources</td>
<td>enhanced sense of mission and shared goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Provide training</td>
<td>more play -&gt; more self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>Participate in conferences</td>
<td>JK/SK children have access to a full-day early learning program delivered by a team of professionals and including extended-day options for families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Conduct site visits</td>
<td>staff team of certified teacher and RECE work collaboratively within the Early Learning Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Assess and evaluate</td>
<td>parents/guardians are engaged as active participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work with partners</td>
<td>extended-day options are available to address family needs outside of instructional days/hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>better outcomes for children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from University of Wisconsin-Extension, 2008

Toronto First Duty represented an important process step in working towards the long-term goal. The project in general, and the BWELC site in particular, served as a launching pad for the development of Ontario’s FDK program. With the FDK program still in its early days of implementation, there remain numerous questions and uncertainties about how the program will continue to roll out and refine and what impact it will have on families, particularly those families who had previously accessed and relied upon child care programs to meet their needs.
Can we use the BWELC case study to examine how successfully FDK programs are achieving the outcomes and if they are having the impact that the Theory of Change logic model identifies as the end goal? Assessing program quality using established evaluation tools was identified as one way of answering these questions. The research was also intended to explore and articulate the role of ECEs in the FDK programs and to help determine appropriate additional resources, including professional development, for both ECEs and certified teachers to enable them to create an optimal learning environment. By also providing parents with an opportunity to reflect upon their experience in FDK programs, this research was further intended to inform program and policy decision-makers in determining the model for delivering FDK programs that best promotes child development while meeting families’ needs.

Limitations

From the outset of this research, I identified certain limitations. First, given my detailed, intense and ongoing involvement in all aspects of TFD and BWELC and the responsibilities inherent in my position for overseeing the child care program, it was important for me to safeguard against any possible conflict of interest or other ethical problems such as perception of coercion while conducting an investigation into changes at the BWELC site. By the 2011-2012 school year the JK/SK program offered to families at BWELC was performing well, achieving high scores on the City of Toronto Operating Criteria reviews, seeing positive outcomes in children and enjoying strong staff partnerships. Having invested many years working with partners and stakeholders to achieve this outcome, I needed to minimize any potential biases I might have as a collector and interpreter of data. This was achieved by having my supervisor’s trained graduate students, unknown to me, carry out the data collection, specifically for two measures. The first measure, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised Edition
(ECERS-R), is a validated instrument that assesses quality in group care environments for young children. The second measure, the Indicators of Change, is a tool that was designed to guide track and assess the progress of TFD sites on the path to integration using facilitated focus group sessions with key stakeholders. The second limitation was that the case study was based on one school where FDK was implemented in September 2012, although some parent feedback data collection also occurred at the two other schools that converted to FDK at the same time where WoodGreen is the child care provider. The experience within these schools may or may not be representative of the broader experience within the city or the province.

**Organization of the study**

Chapter One has presented an introduction and overview of the study and the case of integrated services at BJPS, both in BWELC and as the site converted to FDK, and has discussed its significance. The chapter began by providing background information and then discussed Ontario’s move to full-day kindergarten, Toronto First Duty and BWELC in focus. The study’s research questions were presented. The chapter also discussed change, integration and leadership, and the theoretical frameworks for these themes are further described in the next section.

The remaining chapters of the thesis are structured as follows: Chapter Two provides a more general review of literature related to: change in the service system; the evolution of early learning programs and non-parental care options in Ontario; the value of early learning and play-based learning; comparison of full-day versus half-day kindergarten programs; leadership, staff integration and the relationship to quality. Chapter Three details the research methodology including a description of the mixed methods approach used in the study. Chapter Four describes the data analysis, including descriptive and statistical analyses, presents the results and
offers an interpretation of the results. Chapter Five provides a summary, a discussion of the results and conclusions, including implications for practice and for future research.

**Theoretical and conceptual frameworks**

1. **Theory of Change**

   According to Stein and Valters (2012), the main purposes of theory of change include “strategic planning, description, monitoring and evaluation, and learning” (Stein & Valters, 2012, p. 2). Theory of change is an outcomes framework: It involves identifying desired outcomes and then mapping the inputs and outputs that will result in achieving that outcome (Center for Theory of Change, 2013). One view of theories of change is that they “capture complex initiatives…[and] start with a goal, before deciding what programmatic approaches are needed” (Clark & Anderson, 2004). It helps describe how and why an initiative works and can be used to explain the steps that lead to the long term goal and the connections between activities and outcomes (Stein & Valters, 2012, p. 3). Given the purpose of theory of change and its relationship to change initiatives, I determined that it provided me with the framework through which to describe both TFD and the change in Ontario’s early learning system as it moved to FDK at the Bruce Site.

   When TFD was established its goal was to explore how early childhood programs could be integrated and how governments, school boards, child care centres, parenting supports and other social services could come together to create better outcomes for children and families. My involvement at BWELC throughout the course of TFD provided me with the opportunity to map the investments, activities and participants that contributed to creating a more seamless and integrated program at the BWELC site in keeping with the goals of TFD. Based in part on the experience at BWELC as documented through the TFD research reports, the government of Ontario embarked on a change process in order to bring about better outcomes for children.
which it believed could be accomplished by providing a full-day early learning program delivered by a team of professionals.

2. Meaning of integration/integrated services

‘Integration’ can have different meanings and definitions and can be associated with terms such as networking, cooperation, collaboration, coordination, partnership, merger, alliance, alignment and coalition (Boydell, Bullock, & Goering, 2009). The same is true of the term ‘integrated services’ which, when applied in an educational context, can be used at the organizational level to refer to integration across organizations offering diverse early years services such as school education and early childhood education and care or at the level of a single organization that provides a range of services (Wong & Sumsion, 2013). Integration can also be viewed as being vertical or horizontal: Vertical integration occurs when different organizations come together and involves bringing together different levels in one hierarchy under one governance and management structure; horizontal integration refers to cooperation/collaboration, forming linkages, sharing resources and bringing together professionals, services, and organizations that operate at similar levels within a hierarchy (England & Lester, 2005; Fooks, 2007). When ‘integration’ refers to staff, the term ‘interprofessional’ can be useful to describe work that “involves practitioners from different professions working in an integrated way on a shared task, rather than in parallel or in sequence” (Payler & Georgeson, 2013, p. 380) or may be described as ‘transdisciplinary’ when different professionals begin to share the same roles.

Social practice theory can be used when thinking about integration to describe how “knowledge is socially situated, mediated and provisional and learning takes place through participation” (Payler & Georgeson, 2013, p. 383). Working effectively in an interprofessional
manner depends on interpersonal factors such as involvement, good communication, creating 
links and participating in meetings and visits rather than on structural factors such as systems and 
procedures or individual factors such as staff knowledge/capacity (Payler & Georgeson, 2013, p. 
388). Given the focus on interprofessional working and on supporting professional learning 
communities at BWELC, this framework provides a useful lens for understanding what went 
wrong and what went right.

The use of ‘integration’ and ‘integrated services’ within this study draws on the 
frameworks that have been described above. For the purposes of this study, ‘integrated’ has 
been used to describe the educator team within the kindergarten classroom that integrates an 
OCT and an RECE, professionals with a shared interest in early learning but with different 
credentials and experience. ‘Integration’ in this study also refers to combining education and 
child care within one program in order to provide a more seamless experience for children. The 
term also relates to the broader range of early years services that formed part of the experience 
available for children and families at BWELC including health resources, parenting and literacy 
support, and support for children with special needs. Further discussion of integration is 
provided in the literature review.

3. Theory and leadership

Interest in educational leadership is linked to the belief that the quality of leadership 
makes a significant difference in school and student outcomes (Bush, 2007, p. 391). One part of 
a leader’s role is management, which is linked to ensuring that current organizational and system 
functions are implemented and maintained in an efficient and effective manner (Bush, 2007; 
Cuban, 1988; Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001). Leadership differs from management in that is 
linked to values, purpose and change, to the development of other people and to influencing
others’ actions by shaping the goals, motivations and actions of others, to developing people (Bush, 2007; Cuban, 1988; Day et al., 2001). I considered various theories related to leadership in education in order to determine which framework best fit my research, and a brief overview of several of these theories follows.

Managerial leadership theory assumes that the focus of leaders should be on functions, tasks and behaviours that facilitate the work of others within the organization. This is accomplished through successfully managing existing activities which include goal setting, needs identification, priority-setting, planning, budgeting, implementing and evaluating (Caldwell, 1992; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999).

Participative leadership theory focuses on group decision-making processes and assumes that participation will bond staff together and take the pressure off of school leaders (Sergiovanni, 1984). The model’s assumptions are that participation will increase school effectiveness, is justified by democratic principles, and allows for leadership to potentially be available to any legitimate stakeholder (Leithwood et al., 1999).

The approach of post-modern leadership is consistent with participative leadership in that it aligns with democracy and advocates a “more consultative, participatory, inclusionary stance” (Starrat, 2001, p. 348). The model highlights the importance of individual perspectives, emphasizing how stakeholders have the right to have a say, and that the role of leaders is to respect and pay attention to their voices (Bush, 2007).

Transactional leadership involves an exchange process and refers to how the relationship between the leader and the staff is based upon an exchange for some sort of valued resource (Miller & Miller, 2001). Bush (2003) positions transactional leadership within a political framework since exchange is an established political strategy for members of an organization.
While the exchange might result in benefits for both parties, this approach does not engage staff in any long-term way, and there is no long-term commitment to a set of values or an organizational vision.

Instructional leadership “is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, including the professional learning of teachers as well as student growth” (Southworth, 2002, p. 79). Activities within this framework target improving teaching and learning and strategies to accomplish this include modelling, monitoring, and professional dialogue and discussion (Bush, 2007).

Since the current study is concerned with leadership for change, the theories described above did not seem to provide an appropriate framework. Two other theoretical frameworks seemed more aligned with my research. The first framework is transformational leadership since it assumes leadership should be focused on building vision, establishing goals, modelling best practice and values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating productive cultures and developing structures to foster participation in decisions (Bush, 2007, p. 396). The second is distributed leadership in which the central ideas are that leading and managing organizations involves multiple individuals and not just the designated leader, and that the practice of leading and managing needs to be examined, especially in terms of interactions (Spillane & Mertz, 2015). Transformational and distributed leadership are discussed in more detail as part of the literature review.

4. Evaluative lens for research

O’Leary (2010) describes how research generates knowledge in order to bring about change to meet specific goals: build broader understanding, pave the way for change, action change within a system, emancipate through action, and expose and change the dominant system
The type of research that is undertaken corresponds to the goal. Given the current study’s research goal of paving the way for change, an evaluative framework was applied. Evaluation research “attempts to determine the value of some initiative. [It] identifies an initiative’s consequences as well as opportunities for modification and improvement” (O’Leary, 2010, p. 138). By using this framework, my intention was to evaluate what occurred as FDK was rolled out using the experience at one demonstration site in order to provide decision-makers with data for evidence-based decision-making on how to improve the FDK system. This evaluative framework worked in concert with the Theory of Change approach used in this thesis to explore the factors that lead to successful outcomes. Further discussion about how the evaluation framework was used in this study appears in the methodology chapter.
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study sought to gain an understanding of what occurred at BWELC as the site transitioned from a TFD demonstration site to Ontario’s FDK model, focusing on how the quality of the program was impacted and why. The study further aimed to identify the challenges in ensuring quality programming in scaling up the FDK platform to understand how the lessons learned from the BWELC case study could inform ongoing policy development. The literature review in this chapter begins by exploring factors that were significant in creating a high quality, integrated early learning program at BWELC. To this end, literature related to the key themes of change, leadership, integration and quality is reviewed. In order to gain a historical perspective on the current FDK and extended-day program offerings, literature outlining the evolution of kindergarten and child care in Ontario is also reviewed. Rounding out the examination of Ontario’s FDK program, the review then focuses on two important pillars that the Ontario government chose to adopt: play-based learning and offering a full-day program, which represented a change from the half-day program that had operated for decades. The literature review provides a backdrop for analysis and discussion of the study’s findings.

Change in the service system

Chapter one introduced the Theory of Change logic model and presented a framework for how the model could represent the development of Ontario’s FDK program. As summarized by Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) based on descriptions by Connell, Kubisch, Schorr and Weiss (1995), the change process involves a number of steps that involve stakeholders in a collaborative manner. The first step is to focus on the long-term vision of an initiative, the aim of which should be closely linked to the existence of a local or national problem. After agreeing to the ultimate aim of the program, the second step is to consider the necessary outcomes that
will be required in order for the aim to be met in the longer term. From there, outputs and short-term outcomes that will help to achieve specified targets are articulated. Following this, stakeholders consider the most appropriate activities or interventions that are required to bring about the required change. Finally, stakeholders are required to consider what resources can realistically be allocated, including staff, organizational capacity, networks, facilities and finances (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007, p. 443).

When Ontario’s FDK program is mapped according to the steps outlined above, the process can be described as follows: The stakeholders included two levels of government, a range of early learning partners, families, children and communities. The identified long-term vision for FDK was to move from the problematic chaos of multiple, disjointed services to an integrated system to create better outcomes for children while providing supports for families. The necessary outcomes for the aim to be met in the long term and to ensure that families were receiving more benefits from a seamless, integrated system than they had experienced prior to FDK included: more individualized programming for children through play; more opportunities for communication with parents/guardians; more partnerships; an enhanced sense of mission and shared goals; a full-day early learning program delivered by a team of professionals and including extended-day options for families. The outputs to achieve the targets included direct service delivery, developing curriculum resources, providing training, working with partners and participants, assessing and evaluating the program. Participants included JK/SK children and their families, school and child care staff, decision-makers, stakeholders and other community programs.

With respect to resource allocation, as a demonstration site BWELC benefitted from high input levels across many spectrums including financial, leadership, governance, parental
engagement strategies and curriculum support. There are many concrete examples of the support that BWELC received as part of TFD. First, the site received financial support from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation over several years which both helped offset parent fees, thereby increasing accessibility, and supported professional development. Second, the on-site leadership team and governance committee were committed to organizing and supporting joint professional and curriculum development and joint planning time. This was accomplished by providing coverage, as needed, so that the staff team members could be off-program at the same time and by securing necessary funds and resources. Third, parent engagement was supported by organizing special events such as health screening days and family movie nights and through promoting integrative practices between the Parenting and Family Literacy Centre and the classrooms on a regular basis. In FDK, resource allocation proved to be the most challenging step in the process, especially related to time, money, and parent engagement. With respect to funding, BWELC benefitted from financial support from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation for research and development and for program related costs, which included making time for staff to meet. In contrast FDK, as part of a publicly-funded system, depends on funding that is provided from the provincial government. As a result, funding requirements for FDK bump up against numerous and complex competing demands both within the education sector and in other ministries.

Fullan, Cuttress and Kilcher (2005) offer a perspective on why ideas or policies may be successful in one situation but not in another, identifying the missing ingredient as “change knowledge: understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice” (Fullan et al., 2005, p. 54). Based on my personal experience with BWELC, I consider their perspective relevant to and reflective of the change process that
occurred at the site. They identify eight drivers as keys to creating effective and lasting change. The drivers that seem most reflective of what transpired at BWELC and through the development of FDK, and that form part of the Theory of Change framework used in this study, are described in detail in the following paragraphs while other drivers are mentioned without deep discussion.

The first driver, engaging people’s moral purpose, relates to the why of change which, in education, is about improving society by improving education systems. According to Fullan et al. (2005), will “raise the bar and close the gap in student achievement” (Fullan et al., 2005, p. 54). Ontario’s FDK program was envisioned by the provincial government as a way to improve the education system and, as such, satisfies the intent of the first driver.

The second driver, building capacity, describes elements that contribute to moving the system forward. These include policies, strategies, resources, actions, increased knowledge and an improved infrastructure that will provide training, consulting and other forms of support. Fullan et al. (2005) contend that “capacity building is a collective phenomenon. Whole schools, whole districts, and whole systems must increase their capacity as groups. Building group capacity is difficult because it involves working together in new ways” (Fullan et al., 2005, p. 55). As described in the TFD research reports (Corter et al., 2007, 2009, 2012) within BWELC, capacity building was a key focus and the infrastructure that was in place ensured that resources were devoted to promoting, supporting, and facilitating working together in new ways.

Driver three, understanding the change process, addresses how making change work involves energy, ideas, commitment, ownership and establishing the conditions for continuous improvement. At BWELC, regular meetings at both the management committee and direct service levels provided opportunities for review and reflection on the change process, and these
meetings translated into action areas for improvement. The fourth driver, developing cultures for learning, builds on the concept of continuous improvement by describing the importance of learning during implementation, stressing how a “powerful driver of change involves learning from peers, especially those who are further along in implementing new ideas” (Fullan et al., 2005, p. 55). This provides the platform for developing professional learning communities, a key component of change, which is linked to “lateral capacity building’...[whereby] schools and communities learn from one another...[which] widens the pool of ideas and enhances a greater ‘we-we’ identity” (Fullan et al., 2005, p. 57). The TFD research reports (Corter et al., 2007, 2009, 2012) provide evidence of how BWELC created what Fullan et al. (2005) describe as a climate of knowledge sharing and collective identity. The site’s progress in implementing new ideas positioned it to inform the broader initiative of FDK.

Evaluation is the fifth driver of change, important for both external accountability and internal data processing. Through ongoing assessment, systems can achieve major improvements. As described in the introduction section of this thesis related to TFD research and as discussed in the TFD reports (Corter et al., 2007, 2009, 2012), BWELC benefitted from ongoing evaluation which created a knowledge-transfer loop and continuous improvement. The current study used evaluation tools to assess the learning environment post-implementation of FDK in order to identify areas for improvement. This also loops back to the fourth driver, developing cultures for learning, since data were used for continuous improvement in communities of practice.

The sixth driver for change, leadership, is a key theme in the current study. Fullan et al. (2005) emphasize that key roles of leadership are leading productive change, developing leadership in others and “building enduring greatness in the organization, rather than focusing on
short-term results...There is no other driver as essential as leadership for sustainable reform” (Fullan et al., 2005, p. 57). BWELC benefitted from strong day-to-day leadership at the site from the school principal and child care manager, and from the management committee that included key stakeholders across several auspices. Leadership at the system’s level came from the TFD Steering Committee. Appendix B outlines the membership of the BWELC management committee and Appendix C outlines the membership of the TFD steering committee. Post-FDK implementation, much of this effective infrastructure ceased to exist.

Fullan et al. (2005) describe the seventh driver as fostering coherence making, which refers to the ongoing process of alignment and being clear about how the big picture fits together. It involves investing in capacity building and enabling people to focus on strategies for effective learning. As described in the TFD research reports (Corter et al., 2007, 2009, 2012), these processes occurred at BWELC through meetings, joint planning time and engaging with experts in the areas of curriculum. The eighth and final driver is cultivating what Fullan et al. (2005) identify as trilevel development of system transformation, with the three levels being (1) the school and community level; (2) the district level; and (3) the ‘state’ level. This means simultaneously developing better individuals, better organizations and better systems. This development is supported by what they term “‘learning in context’ – that is, learning in the actual situations we want to change” (Fullan et al, 2005, p. 58). There is a need to understand new ways of working across levels, and this occurs by reflecting, learning and doing better as changes are being implemented. This driver is relevant to the FDK experience as its evolution has progressed from level one to level three fairly rapidly, perhaps without sufficient focus on or understanding of change knowledge, which is central to success.
Beyond the eight drivers, another important concept put forward by Fullan (2001) is that of the implementation dip. He contends that change will not go smoothly during the initial phases of implementation because those involved in the change process are dealing with new beliefs, understandings, skill, competencies and behaviours. As described in the 2009 TFD report (Corter et al., 2009) the BWELC site experienced an implementation dip in 2007 during the course of the TFD development and this was reflected in lower levels of integration within the program which resulted in lower ratings on quality assessment tools. Instead of giving up, the site went through a period of transformation that began with refocusing of the vision or moral purpose and ultimately resulted in reconfiguring the staff team and investing resources to improve the early learning environment. To the extent to which this study reveals decreased levels of quality post-FDK introduction, the concept of an implementation dip becomes a useful springboard to considering how to effect positive change and move closer to the vision.

**Leadership**

As discussed in the previous section, leadership is a key driver of change. Several studies on leadership fit with Fullan’s approach because of how they position leadership support and professional learning. Among these, Orr, Berg, Shore and Meier (2008) state that “leadership for change involves fostering organizational stability, developing organizational capacity for change and engaging staff as a professional learning community” (Orr, Berg, Shore & Meier, 2008, p. 683). Williams, Kirst, Haertel, Woody and Levin (2005) and Watts et al. (2006) also believe that leadership support and effective management of the improvement process through developing collaborative solutions are key factors associated with high performance organizations.
As outlined in the introduction, one theoretical framework that aligns with this study is transformation. The transformational conception of leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003) provides a useful lens through which to view the BWELC experience. In addition to providing intellectual direction, transformational leadership focuses on innovating within an organization while empowering and supporting partners in decision making (Conley & Goldman, 1994; Leithwood, 1994). Transformational leadership practices can have a strong positive effect on developing a sense of commitment to a professional learning community, shared mission and collective efficacy (Ross & Gray, 2006).

Leithwood and Sun (2012) note how transformational theory argues that “given adequate support, organizational members become highly engaged and motivated by goals that are inspirational because those goals are associated with values in which they strongly believe – or are persuaded to strongly believe” (Leithwood & Sun, 2012, p. 388). Their summary of leadership practices includes: (1) Setting directions by developing a shared vision and building goal consensus and holding high performance expectations; (2) developing people by providing individualized support and intellectual stimulation and by modeling valued behaviours, beliefs and values; (3) redesigning organizations by strengthening the school culture, building structure to enable collaboration and engaging parents and the wider community; and (4) improving the instructional program by focusing on instructional development (Leithwood & Sun, 2012, p. 400-401). As previously described, the leadership team at BWELC included the school principal, child care manager and a management/governance committee of key stakeholders and partners. Reflecting on the experience at BWELC through the TFD reports (Corter et al., 2007, 2009, 2012), it is clear that each of these leadership practices was in evidence and through developing a shared vision, providing support, strengthening the organization structure, enabling
collaboration, engaging parents and other parts of the community, there was a high level of performance. These practices included specific activities such as arranging times for common professional development, scheduling family events in order to be inclusive and support parent involvement, promoting the involvement of community partners such as Toronto Public Health (Corter et al., 2007)

The second leadership framework that aligns with the current study is distributed leadership. Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) discuss the importance of both positional and distributed leadership in improving educational practice. Positional leaders include any formally appointed leaders and, in order to achieve positive educational outcomes, leadership from the school principals, child care directors and others in similar roles is required. However, collaborative leadership approaches are also required, which suggests that one of the essential goals of a director’s leadership is to create the conditions necessary for collaborative and distributive leadership.

Colmer, Waniganayake and Field (2014) build on the concept of distributed leadership as described by Harris (2009) to include concepts of interdependence, leadership practice and professional learning. Distributed leadership is associated with professional learning with a focus on collective rather than individual development (Glatter, 2009), and involves creating opportunities that enable individuals with specific knowledge or expertise to lead the development of others in the team (Spillane, 2006). Distributed leadership involves strategies such as collaborative professional development and decision-making and the creation of professional learning environments that empower educators to debate, discuss, disagree and provide critical feedback to each other (Clarkin-Phillips, 2007, 2011; Jordan, 2008; Robinson, 2009; Thornton, 2009). When distributed leadership is successfully implemented within an early
years setting, it supports the educator’s sense of being valued, maintains professional learning activities, and encourages the leadership growth of individuals (Clarkin-Phillips, 2007, 2011; Jordan, 2008; Thornton, Wansbrough, Clarkin-Phillips, Aitken, & Tamati, 2009). Since within distributed leadership approaches the focus is on interactions rather than actions (Clarkin-Phillips, 2007; Thornton et al, 2009) there is an emphasis on relationships and interdependence. This approach is therefore suited to early learning environments which emphasize staff teams (Colmer et al, 2014).

Effective leadership is vital to navigating change, creating learning organizations and driving quality improvement. Rodd (2015) identifies several key factors for effective leadership including valuing staff as professionals, building on others’ strengths to help them grow to their highest potential, empowering others to work towards improving quality, and acting as intentional agents of change by inspiring and mobilizing action towards a shared vision (Rodd, 2015). She asserts that quality and leadership are inseparable, and that leadership is a collaborative and collective endeavour whereby individuals are supported to drive quality forward through continuous focus on their own and others’ professional learning and development.

Leadership is both strategic, dealing with ‘the what’ of programs by focusing on their vision and direction, and operational, focusing on people issues and ‘the how’ of implementing policies and initiatives. To drive quality forward, leaders need to create a workplace culture and climate that emphasizes people and talent development and provides opportunities for everyone to learn, develop and succeed professionally through the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, skills, and expertise. In order to assist and support colleagues and stakeholders through the process of change and help them become active and creative participators, leaders
should be a source of inspiration while at the same time demonstrating and valuing engagement, enablement through skill development and empowerment (Rodd, 2015).

From my vantage point, the leadership that was provided at BWELC was reflective of the qualities described by Rodd and others. Feedback from team members through the Indicator of Change focus groups that were documented as part of TFD (Corter et al., 2007, 2009, 2012) provides evidence that the leadership team at the site, together with the members of the management committee, worked closely with the staff team, providing support and empowering others in creating a high quality environment. Through the Indicators of Change focus group post-implementation of FDK and the key informant interviews with individuals who had been members of the BWELC management committee, this thesis addresses the question of whether the same type and quality of leadership was sustained in the transition to FDK.

**Integration**

Integration is a key theme in the current study, referring to both service integration which, in Ontario’s FDK experience, combines early education and care into a seamless program, and staff team integration – the delivery of Ontario’s FDK program by two professionals within the early learning program, an RECE and an OCT. Literature related to integration is therefore reviewed in this section.

The first area of review is service integration. Effective service integration can bring about positive outcomes including (1) supporting the multiple needs of children and families through a menu of available services; (2) improving the quality and continuity of children’s early experiences, and (3) enhancing program and community capacity by fostering collaborative learning and resource sharing opportunities (Pelletier & Corter, 2006). The TFD project in general, and the BWELC site in particular, demonstrated the benefits of service integration by
offering a comprehensive menu of services to families including kindergarten, child care, family supports and other services including literacy programs, health screenings and nutrition programs (Corter & Pelletier, 2010).

Selden, Sowa and Sandfort (2006) concluded that “interagency collaboration is based on the premise that value is created – both for the organizations and for the clients they serve – when disparate organizations work together” (Selden, Sowa, & Sandfort, 2006, p. 421). Such collaborations can lead to the creation of integrated staff teams, which are a key component of professional learning communities. Dufour (2004) has defined such integrated communities as embodying three big ideas: focusing on learning rather than teaching, working collaboratively, and focusing on results. When describing the culture of collaboration, he discusses the importance of going beyond the more simplistic views of collaboration, such as being congenial with one another, building group comraderie, developing consensus on operational procedures, and organizing committees.

The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement (Dufour, 2004, p. 9).

The importance of integrating early childhood education and care services was emphasized in the OECD reports Starting Strong (2001) and Starting Strong II (2006) which noted that integration would increase the amount and quality of resources available to young children. Historically, a division has existed between education and care in many OECD countries (Bennett, 2011). Child care systems have been designed for the few but not the many
and education systems have been built on the basis of universal access and entitlement, with education receiving more public resources and more political support, but “integration of child care and early education services has emerged as a solution to transform both types of service into something that is not exactly like either – a solution in which the new whole is greater than the sum of its former parts” (Cleveland & Colley, 2013, p. 170). A fully integrated system must include both structural aspects (governance, broad access, common funding, common curricula, common regulation, unified workforce) and conceptual aspects (philosophical) (Cleveland & Colley, 2013, p. 171).

The benefits from integrating child care and education as described by Kaga, Bennett and Moss (2010) include:

- Rethinking the purpose, provision and practice of ECCE across all age groups, including children both under and over 3 years; changed perceptions of ECCE among the workforce, parents and wider public, including greater recognition of its pedagogical value; a higher valuation given to saff working in ECCE; the creation of a stronger ECCE system that enjoys parity with and can influence compulsory education; greater coherence in policy; the reduction or elimination of inequalities between services for children under and over 3 years; and increased resourcing for ECCE through merging administration and eliminating duplication. (Kaga, Bennett, & Moss, 2010, p. 12).

When Cleveland and Colley (2013) compared integration of child care and education in Canada to Sweden, New Zealand, England and Wales, they found that, overall, the integration of early childhood education and care services in Canada is less developed than in Europe.
However, they also concluded that Ontario’s FDK program represents important progress in service integration (Cleveland & Colley 2013).

The second area of integration covered by this literature review concerns integrated staff teams. One of the features that differentiates Ontario’s FDK program from others, nationally and internationally, is that kindergarten teachers and ECEs have a legislated “duty to cooperate” (Government of Ontario, 2010) in planning and delivering the play-based curriculum. This requirement evolved from an understanding that both professionals had skills, training and expertise that, when integrated, would deliver the best possible program to children. The integrated staff team was repeatedly recognized in the TFD research reports (Corter et al, 2007, 2009, 2012) as one of the key success factors at BWELC. As also documented in the TFD reports, building that team did not just happen: It required organizational support, resources and the provision of time for the team to learn together, plan together, problem-solve and build relationships. The team at BWELC was broader than the OCT and RECE working in the kindergarten program, including the RECE staff in the Parenting and Family Literacy Centre employed by TDSB, the Special Needs Resource teacher employed by WoodGreen, the school principal and child care manager. In contrast, in the current FDK program the team is comprised of the two educators (OCT and RECE).

At a policy level, the professionalism of ECEs in Ontario was strengthened by the Early Childhood Educator Act (2007), which created the College of Early Childhood Educators and required ECEs to maintain good standing and hold the professional qualification of Registered Early Childhood Educator. The child care sector was also repositioned within the government framework, moving from the Ministry of Community and Social Services into the Ministry of Education, thereby clearly recognizing that early learning experiences are a vital component of a
child’s education and that child care is far more than babysitting. Bennett and Kaga (2010) note that positioning early child care and education within the Ministry of Education is important because “education stresses the importance of lifelong learning and a recognition that children are learners from birth...[and] a greater concern for laying a strong foundation for successful schooling” (Bennett & Kaga, 2010, p. 36). Reports by UNESCO (2010) and the OECD (2006) have also identified the trend to integrate responsibility for both child care and education of young children within the Ministry of Education.

Prior to FDK, ECEs worked primarily in licensed child care centres, family resource programs, private home child cares, programs for children with special needs or as educational assistants within school boards. ECEs working in child care centres located within schools had the opportunity for relationships with teachers and other members of the school staff team. However, these relationships could, at best, be described as co-existence where the professionals plan and carry out programs independently of each other, and more rarely could be described as co-operation where professionals share program plans, curriculum expectations and strategies. Integration, wherein the professionals plan and deliver consolidated activities, was not part of the operating plan (Pelletier & Bertrand, 2016; Pelletier, Brent, & Anderson, 2014; Pelletier & Corter, 2005). However, ECEs in child care programs generally have experience working as part of a team, partnering with at least one other staff member (ECE or non-ECE) to plan and deliver programs since child care is organized around age-group specific program rooms with licensed capacities that usually require at least two staff in order to meet legislated child-to-staff ratios. Kindergarten teachers, on the other hand, are used to teaching (instructing, planning and assessing) on their own so, for them, the switch to working in partnership “requires an extra
effort, including time, space, and a commitment to coordinate with others” (Kremenitzer & Myler, 2006, p. 165).

A study carried out by Janmohamed, McCuaig, Akbari, Gananthan and Jenkins (2014) called *Schools at the Centre* was conducted within four school boards across Ontario (Waterloo, Ottawa Carleton, Halton Public and Halton Catholic), provided interesting insight into how the professional team within FDK programs view the experience. One of the study’s findings is that teachers and ECEs do not always share the same view of their roles. Anecdotal accounts from ECE practitioners working in FDK classrooms indicate that they are often viewed by the teachers as educational assistants who are there to provide support to the teacher as opposed to equal partners in program delivery. Furthermore, ECEs working in the extended-day Before and After programs find themselves at odds with the kindergarten teachers about the sharing of classroom space, equipment and materials and the territorial conflict is a barrier to successful collaboration. Another finding of the study is that both sets of educators identify planning as central to a comprehensive learning program and express their commitment to improving access to planning, yet they identify the limited access to joint planning time and joint professional development as a contributing factor to weak professional partnerships (Janmohamed, et al., 2014, p. 9). My study complements the findings of this earlier study by examining the change in how the team at BWELC worked compared to how the team in the FDK program worked.

Studies that have looked at inter-professional work, or “integrated working” highlight the demands such as governance, leadership, organizational culture and ethos, team-building and ‘frontline’ professional practice that ensue when moving from a ‘single’ professional context to an inter-professional working environment (Press, Sumsion, & Wong, 2010; Robinson, Atkinson, & Downing, 2008). It is important for the organizational culture to foster mutual
respect among professionals, appreciate the complementary strengths of different specialist knowledge and expertise, and to devote resources to maximize the synergies between the professions (Robinson et al., 2008).

What, then, are the ingredients for successful integrated work? Press, Sumsion and Wong (2010) analyzed data from a study they conducted using ten case study sites and identified a number of themes conducive to inter-professional working. Key among these are the themes of “collective ownership and joint professional learning...professional agency and efficacy...trust, perseverance and reciprocal respect...team-building around a coherent philosophy and culture” (Press et al., 2010; Wong, Sumsion, & Press, 2012, pp. 85-87). They describe how working inter-professionally allows for the exploration of new ideas, creates opportunities for personal and professional growth and leads to a shared vision and a culture in which everyone recognizes that they have a role to play in contributing to the greater good. They also acknowledge there are “demands and ensuing challenges...with governance, leadership, organizational culture and ethos, ‘frontline’ professional practice and team-building” (Press et al., 2010; Wong et al., 2012, p. 83) that come with the shift from single to inter-professional working places.

The issue of educator teams was also one of the key themes addressed in the study that was funded by the Ministry of Education conducted by Vanderlee, Youmans, Peters and Eastabrook of Queen’s University and by Janus, Duku and Schell of McMaster University (2012). The study acknowledged that the effectiveness of the educator team was essential in providing an optimal FDK learning environment but reported that “the findings suggest that full-day kindergarten educator teams were not fully leveraging the collective expertise of two professions (i.e. certified teachers and RECEs)” (Queen's University; McMaster University; Ministry of Education, Government of Ontario, 2013, p. 13). This disconnect can be attributed,
in part, to a lack of clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the team members.

This thesis will be examining this issue in relation to the BWELC change to FDK.

**Quality**

Quality matters. This statement is irrefutable in the context of child care services, but it is also fraught with complexity: What does quality mean? How is it measured? Why is it important? What do parents know about quality? Moss and Pence (1994) talk about two different meanings of the word, one of which is analytic and descriptive while the other is evaluative. In the descriptive meaning, ‘quality’ is used to analyze, describe and understand what makes something what it is – its essence or nature. In the evaluative meaning of quality, which has more bearing on the current study, the goal is to assess how well a service performs and the extent to which it meets its goals and objectives. In researching programs for young children, a common approach is to define quality indirectly in terms of certain processes in the service, such as child-adult interactions, or structural features, such as staff:child ratios, group size and staff training.

Parents and professionals may differ from one another in how they define and evaluate child care quality. Parents care about quality in relation to the needs of their own child and their own family, wanting assurances that their child’s experiences will be safe, pleasant and developmentally sound (Lerner & Phillips, 1994). Parents value healthy and safe environments, warm and nurturing teachers/caregivers, and positive relationships between themselves and those teachers/caregivers (Cleveland, Susman-Stillman & Halle, 2013; Howe, Jacobs, Vulekich & Recchia, 2013). They are concerned about both structural areas - such as health and safety, physical environments, hours of operation, proximity, cost, and staff qualifications – and process areas – such as staff:child interactions, activities and experiences, program philosophy.
Early years professionals share parents’ perspectives on what constitutes quality in both structural and process areas. However, their understanding of quality may also be linked to more objective and quantifiable measures of the learning environment. Researchers have considered the issue of quality and its impact on outcomes for children. Barnett (2011) and Barnett et al. (2008) concluded that well-designed programs generate benefits for children and their families and that the type of learning/teaching is of critical importance. He also noted that a developmentally appropriate curriculum with a strong emphasis on play can enhance learning and development and improve both the social and academic success of young children. Melhuish (1993) similarly found that whether preschool experiences affect children’s development depends on the quality of care provided.

If early learning programs are going to be effective in promoting child development, they need to be of high quality (Cleveland, Susman-Stillman, & Halle, 2013; Moss & Pence, 1994; Prochner & Howe, 2000). In keeping with the goal of ensuring better outcomes for children outlined in the Theory of Change model, understanding and assessing quality was a key focus of this study. While researchers may agree that high quality early learning experiences have positive effects on children, there is far less certainty about how to measure quality (Cassidy et al., 2005, p. 506). Phillips and Howes (1987) described approaches that have been used to measure global quality and provided one of the earlier distinctions between structural and process quality. Structural aspects often refer to indicators that are mandated by licensing or other regulations, encompassing elements such as group composition, staff:child ratios and staff qualifications (Cassidy et al, 2005, p. 507). Process quality refers to the “dynamic environment that captures children’s actual experiences” (Phillips & Howes, 1987, p. 9) or “actual experiences that occur in child care settings, including children’s interactions with caregivers and
peers and their participation in different activities” (Vandell & Wolfe, 2000, p. 3). The measures used in the current study capture both structural and process quality aspects of the early learning environment.

As previously described, prior to the introduction of FDK, the integrated kindergarten program at BWELC was staffed by a kindergarten teacher working for the TDSB and an ECE working for WoodGreen. In the BWELC model, the program received high ratings with respect to the quality of the program delivered by the integrated staff team. Under the Ontario-wide FDK model, there were several changes to the program delivery such as differences in macro level leadership and the fact that both staff members in the kindergarten classroom were employed by the school board. In order to understand if the changes to the model impacted quality, quality has to be measured. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways including objective, standardized approaches and narrative, experiential inputs. In gathering evidence to assess the differences in quality over time at BWELC a cross-section of approaches was used. Even though assessing quality can be challenging, measuring global classroom quality using rating scales such as those used in the current study, the ECERS-R and the Toronto Children’s Services Operating Criteria (TOC), provides an assessment of various dimensions of quality and the impact on child outcomes. Similarly, the parent survey, Indicators of Change assessment and key informant interviews used in this study all contribute to our understanding of what happened at BWELC and why. Therefore, each approach can contribute to quality enhancement.

**Kindergarten and child care in Ontario**

The current study is focused on the quality of the program being delivered to children in a system where a primary aim is to provide an integrated early learning environment. Kindergarten and child care have followed different trajectories tracing back more than a
century, and it is useful to understand their parallel evolutions to gain perspective on the present day structure. This section of the literature review therefore provides background and history on kindergarten and child care in Ontario, which is important both for honouring and learning from the past.

According to the government of Ontario, a primary goal of education is to “build a foundation in key areas that will help unlock each student’s potential” and an important mechanism to achieving this goal is involving children in kindergarten programs “in many different kinds of activities designed to help young learners explore, discover and grow...through play based learning” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011).

Kindergarten programs have been in existence since the 1800s. Friedrich Froebel, who opened an institute of preschool education in Germany in 1840, is credited with creating the name Kindergarten, which means “garden of children.” Kindergarten was originally intended to help young children transition from home to formal schooling by helping them develop basic skills, learn to communicate, interact with others, and begin to move out into the world, away from their parents/guardians. Froebel’s approach to preschool education involved a focus on play and creative activities, self-expression, teaching children about nature, and introducing them to a broader world outside of the home where they could participate in a social environment and learn about interpersonal relationships within a group of peers.

In contrast to kindergarten, child care’s evolution has followed a somewhat different path. Infant schools were first developed in Canada in the 1800s as a means of dealing with poor children and providing them with care and instruction. A variety of terms were used to describe these early programs designed to care for children in the temporary absence of their parents, including crèche, day nursery, day care, child care, foster home care and family home day care
The programs combined a focus on moral education and basic custodial care, and infant schools were considered as a “nursery of knowledge” (Prochner & Howe, 2000, p. 21). Care for young children was important both from a welfare perspective and to ensure that working-class mothers could be employed outside the home, but it was not part of the school system.

Likewise, Bennett and Kaga (2010) describe how early childhood care and education evolved from two different traditions: The care element emerged as charitable activities targeting health and welfare issues for children of working parents and families and risk. Child care was primarily considered a social service for poor families, or to help families who were dealing with some sort of crisis. The education side, providing kindergarten and pre-primary classes, was created by the middle-classes to prepare their children for school (Bennett & Kaga, 2010, pp. 35-36). Although their roots differed, kindergarten and child care programs have intersected and blended over the course of many years. In the early days of kindergarten, Froebel’s model was transported to many other countries. Kindergarten was considered part of the New Education Movement, a child-centred approach that differed from the Old Education methods of recitation and rote learning. It emphasized learning through doing and providing children with objects to manipulate and explore (Prochner & Howe, 2000, p. 29). By the late 1870s, private kindergartens began to appear in many of the larger towns and in cities in Canada. This development was “motivated by the idea that children benefit from formal education and influenced by the thinking of the time about the importance of education in early childhood” (Friendly, Beach, Ferns, & Turiano, 2007, p. XIII). In Canada, free kindergartens, run by missionary and charitable groups, began to spread, largely because they could play a role in social reform while also helping to assimilate immigrant children. Like the infant schools of the
1830s, they combined early schooling with a child care service for families where the mother was employed outside of the home (Prochner & Howe, 2000, p. 23).

Canada’s history of early childhood care was shaped by immigration, industrialization and the nature of private charities. The development of programs followed the country’s settlement patterns: infant schools first opened in the east, especially as immigration increased in the 1840s and 1850s, and then moved west in the early part of the 20th century. When kindergarten arrived in Canada, almost all of the first programs were in southern Ontario including Canada’s first public school kindergarten, which was opened by the Toronto Board of Education/City of Toronto in 1883 (Dixon, 1994). Under the Public School Act of 1885, school boards were allowed to provide programs for 5-year-old children. The Act was further amended in 1887 to allow the inclusion of younger children, to deal more specifically with how kindergarten programs were organized, and to determine the training required for kindergarten teachers and how the programs would be funded. By 1900, there were kindergartens across the province of Ontario and programs expanded significantly during World War II and afterwards (Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, 2001). Outside of Ontario, the Winnipeg Free Kindergarten Association, established in 1892, ran the best-known Free Kindergartens. Women were responsible for organizing and operating most of the privately sponsored programs for young children, including charity kindergartens, nursery schools and day nurseries and, with the exception of public school kindergartens, private charities ran almost all programs for preschoolers prior to World War II (Prochner & Howe, 2000, pp. 12-13).

The role of the early kindergartens extended beyond teaching 3- to 5-year-olds and, similar to child care programs, met broader family needs by providing a measure of care for these children while their mothers were at work. Women began entering the paid labour force in
Canada in large numbers after the beginning of manufacturing in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century (Connelly, 2006). Although the role of rearing children and maintaining the family remained important, from the 1850s women began working in factories and then moved into clerical, health care, teaching and other white collar jobs. By 1881, women made up 42\% of the industrial workforce in Montreal and 33\% in Toronto, with jobs concentrated in the cotton and textile industries, shoe factories, garment production and the tobacco industry. Among the many challenges facing women, child care was a paramount concern, and often restricted a woman’s ability to participate in the workforce (Connelly, 2006).

During the first and second world wars, most jobs went to single or childless married women before they went to women with children. As the demands of wartime production grew, child care was used as an incentive to get women into the labour force or into volunteer and support positions within the army (Crompton & Vickers, 2000). This provided women with an opportunity to have some financial and personal independence while also demonstrating that they could work outside the home without neglecting their children. WoodGreen was among the first organizations in Toronto to provide child care services: In 1937, its founder, Reverend Ray McCleary, opened his home on Boulton Avenue to parents who needed a safe environment for their children while they were working. When the organization moved from Rev. McCleary’s home to its newly built community centre location at 835 Queen Street East in 1948, child care remained a key service, allowing women to work instead of relying on welfare (WoodGreen.org, 2015). Decades later, WoodGreen’s commitment to meeting the needs of families remains evident in its delivery of responsive high quality child care services, including the program at Bruce Public School.
Government did not become involved in child care until World War II. In 1942, an Order-in-Council established the Dominion-Provincial-War-time Agreement. This first federal intervention in organized child care, in which only Ontario and Quebec participated, offered 50% cost sharing to help provinces provide child care for children whose mothers were working in essential war industries (Friendly, Beach, Ferns, & Turiano, 2007, p. XIII). Unfortunately, this government support was short-lived: After the war, pressure was put on women to quit their jobs in order to make room for the men returning home, and this included ending government sponsored child care facilities. Once the funding support ended, the result was the closure of all of the centres that had opened in Quebec and many of those in Ontario. As noted by Friendly (1994) the first major advocacy group in Canada, known as the Day Nursery and Day Care Parents’ Association, was established in Toronto to oppose the closing of the wartime day nurseries. The group launched a public campaign that included protest marches to the provincial government’s headquarters at Queen’s Park, lobbying politicians, and a letter writing campaign, an effort that resulted in a number of centres remaining open or reopening (Friendly, 1994).

Under the Ontario Day Nurseries Act that was passed in March 1946, the former wartime nurseries that continued to operate received joint municipal-provincial funding (Prochner & Howe, 2000). The Act, which was Canada’s first child care legislation, established that centres would both care for and educate children (Friendly, 2000). Day nurseries became oriented toward child rather than adult needs (Varga, 1993) and group care was promoted as a normal support for families, with children receiving care from well-trained teachers (Prochner & Howe, 2003). At a federal level, the government did not get involved in child care again until 1966 with the introduction of the Canada Assistance Plan, which included cost sharing agreements with the provinces for welfare services including child care.
When Canada first became a country, there was no social welfare system and social assistance was addressed by the churches or charitable organizations. Governments started to assume responsibility for this area only after the end of World War II. Under Canada’s constitution, the federal government does not have any direct jurisdiction over child care: The provinces and territories are responsible for developing and administering education, health and social welfare. However, since the provinces do not have the financial resources to deliver these programs, grant programs have been established over time to allow the federal government to provide provincial governments with funds. As a result of these funding agreements, the federal government has had a level of involvement and has played a role in shaping child care policy while the provinces have become the program managers and deliverers (Doherty, Oloman, & Friendly, 1998). Although many of Canada’s programs, such as education and health care, have been developed to be universal and inclusive, this is not the case with child care.

Historically, child care in Canada has generally been viewed as a marketable service, purchased at the going rate in the marketplace (Prochner & Howe, 2000). This is because child care has not been viewed as a public good, and it is therefore not considered for direct or universal public funding. The failure to recognize child care as a public good is reflected in the way that the public attitude toward child care has been slow to change. “There has been an overriding tendency to view the need for child care as a problem, rather than an opportunity for communities to support families in providing for physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of their children” (Prochner & Howe, 2000, pp. 134-135).

Child care has evolved in Canada since the time of Confederation, and families, communities and governments have responded to the need for child care with a range of services. In Ontario, these services include licensed child care, Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and
Family Literacy Centres, library programs, health-based programs such as newborn screening and Healthy Babies Healthy Children, services for speech and language, developmental disabilities and blindness and low vision. This has created a diverse and disconnected non-system over the years, “a patchwork quilt of dissimilar policies and programs” (Prochner & Howe, 2000, p. 135). But while the country has undergone significant economic and social changes that have increased the need for child care, there have not been significant changes in attitude from both a public and a policy perspective, and child care has continued to be viewed primarily as a welfare service. Yet women’s participation in the workforce has steadily increased (Crompton & Vickers, 2000). Child care remains a central issue, not just for women, but for families, as a support to gaining economic stability (Liveris, 2015). Despite the promises of successive governments, Canada today is still without a national plan that directs child care policy; it is without a child care “system”.

Although the country remains sadly lacking when it comes to child care options, kindergarten programs are far more readily available. Today’s kindergarten programs may bear less resemblance to Froebel’s practices since different ideas about both the nature of childhood and the purposes of early education have evolved over the past century (Prochner & Howe, 2000, p. 74), but kindergartens can be found in countries around the world. In most provinces in Canada, kindergarten programs run for one year. Ontario offers both junior and senior kindergarten for children aged 3.8 to five years and, while all school boards are required to make junior and senior kindergarten programs available, attendance in the programs is optional. According to the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), “by the late 1970s close to 100 per cent of 5-year-olds were enrolled in kindergarten programs and by 1995 about 95 per cent of 4-year-olds were attending junior kindergarten programs” (Elementary Teachers'
Federation of Ontario, 2001, p. 3). Currently, Quebec’s junior kindergarten for 4-year-olds (prématernelle) is also an optional program but senior kindergarten for 5-year-olds (maternelle) is mandatory.

While nationally many kindergarten classes operate on a half-day basis, full-day kindergarten programs exist in some provinces in Canada including Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Prior to the 2009 release of Dr. Charles Pascal’s report, *With our best future in mind: Implementing early learning in Ontario*, full-day kindergarten programs existed in some areas of Ontario including French-language school boards and other jurisdictions, although most school boards operated half-day programs for both JK and SK programs. Where full-day programs were offered, attendance was on a full-day alternate day basis, making them equivalent to a half-day kindergarten program offered five days a week. Following the release of Dr. Pascal’s report and beginning in September 2010, full-day programs were introduced in 600 schools throughout the province of Ontario, with additional schools slated to transition to full-day over a four-year phase-in period. The intention was that the full-day/every day model would use play-based learning as this approach is seen to contribute to literacy development, social competence and skills in the areas of math and science (Pascal, 2009). And while kindergarten programs may not follow Froebel’s model, play remains a key component in Ontario.

**Play-based learning**

Pascal’s report recommended that the curriculum and pedagogical framework for all aspects of the early learning program – including both the FDK and extended-day components – should be ELECT (*Early Learning for Every Child Today*) (Pascal, 2009). This framework requires a play-based approach to learning and development (Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning, 2007). Reviewing literature related to play-based learning is relevant to the current...
study because the ECERS-R and TOC assessments of the early learning environment at Bruce Public School that provide data for this research evaluate the extent to which the environment supported the play-based approach both pre- and post-implementation of FDK.

Froebel was not alone in expounding the virtues of play. Developmental theorists including Pestalozzi (1894), Vygotsky (1987) and Piaget (1962) also stressed the importance of action as foundations for cognitive development and believed that “hands-on experiences in the form of play best advance children’s learning and development” (Kagan, Scott-Little, & Frelow, 2009, p. 18). More recently, researchers including Elkind (2007), Singer and Singer (1992), and Klugman (1997) have concluded that “play (is) the cornerstone of solid early childhood pedagogy” (Kagan, Scott-Little, & Frelow, 2009, p. 18). Play is a means through which children can generate and solve problems, explore their natural curiosities, and develop socially and emotionally. In its 2009 position statement on Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs, the National Association for the Education of Young Children stated that “play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition, and social competence” and that there are “links between play and foundational capacities such as memory, self-regulation, oral language abilities, social skills and success in schools” (NAEYC, 2009, p. 14).

Anderson (1998) notes that play can be defined from three perspectives: the exploratory and open-ended nature of play; the intrinsic, evolutionary and synergistic nature of play (as evidenced in the creative and fun aspects of play); and the developmental aspects of play. Hewes (2006) has similarly described different forms of play in childhood and how these evolve throughout childhood and follow a progression. Very young children (0 to 2.5 years) engage in exploratory play/object play/sensory play as they explore objects and environments. As children
move into the preschool and early school years (3-8 years), they engage in construction play, physical play (sensorimotor and rough-and-tumble play), dramatic play (solitary pretense), socio-dramatic play (pretense with peers, pretend play, fantasy play, make-believe, or symbolic play). By the time they are in school (ages 5-8 and up) children become more involved in games with rules (fixed, predetermined rules) and games with invented rules (rules that are modified by the players) (Hewes, 2006).

As noted by Hewes (2006), play is a common and universal experience that can be defined as behavior that is (a) intrinsically motivated; (b) controlled by the players; (c) concerned with process rather than product; (d) non literal; (e) free of externally imposed rules; and (f) characterized by the active engagement of the players. While there is no single definition of play, the definition of play that evolved out of several studies and was developed by the Hampshire Play Policy Forum in 2002 closely describes the rationale for implementing a play-based curriculum in Ontario’s FDK programs:

Play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to his/her development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop practice skills. It is essential for physical, emotional, and spiritual growth; for intellectual and educational development; and for acquiring social and behavioral skills (Stegelin, 2005, p. 76-77).

Zigler and Bishop-Josef (2009) provide a succinct summary of major findings from decades of empirical research into the benefits of play which include the following:

- Play benefits cognitive development including language skills, problem solving, perspective taking, representational skills, memory and creativity and has also been found to contribute to early literacy development;
• Play contributes to the development of social skills such as turn-taking, collaboration and following rules, empathy, self-regulation, impulse control and motivation;
• Play has positive effects on physical development including muscle development, coordination and obesity prevention. (Ziggler & Bishop-Josef, 2009, p. 9).

Despite the fact that play is recognized as having a powerful role in children’s development, it is often undervalued by educators and children are more likely to spend time in structured educational and recreational activities and less time involved in open-ended, self-initiated play (Hewes, 2006). In many cases, the focus on academics has translated into a push for literacy and numeracy experiences for young children. With so much emphasis on standardized testing, kindergarten environments are often considered the starting point for addressing cognitive development and, as a result, academically oriented curricula are often pushed at the expense of play (Ziggler & Bishop-Josef, 2009). Elkind (2012) strongly cautions against rote learning for young children noting that, for example, while children can be “taught” sight words, “rote learning can discourage a child from using the inductive, discovery and problem-solving strategies required for learning more advanced subject matter…offering young children very little challenge, interest or novelty” (Elkind, 2012, p. 86). Skolnick Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek and Michnick Golinkoff (2013) also argue that, when compared to direct instruction, “guided play approaches can be equally effective at delivering content and are more developmentally appropriate in their focus on child-centres exploration…[and] outperform direct-instruction approaches in encouraging a variety of positive academic outcomes” (Skolnick Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek & Michnick Golinkoff, 2013, p. 104).

There also appears to be a debate that has revolved around the question of how – and if – play can promote literacy. There can be no debate about the importance of literacy: Children
who fail to become literate in reading, math and, increasingly, technology, will have a difficult time navigating the world around them. Ziggler and Bishop-Josef (2009) noted that literacy can be developed through rote learning, but that this type of learning lacks meaning. They further state that young children often lack the level of reasoning that is required for formal instruction in reading and math (Ziggler & Bishop-Josef, 2009). Similarly, Elkind (2012) notes that children come away from rote learning with only surface knowledge, which is different from understanding.

One of the cautions about Ontario’s recent move to full-day learning has been to ensure that “schoolification” of the early years does not occur: the focus of kindergarten programs should be on developing the whole child while also preparing him/her for academic success. It is encouraging, therefore, to know that “there are consistent findings in research about the close relationship between symbolic play and literacy development and good evidence that increasing opportunities for rich symbolic play can have a positive influence on literacy development” (Hewes, 2006, p. 4). Saracho and Spodek (2006) reviewed 13 studies that examined the interaction between play and literacy and concluded that literacy learning can be promoted in a play setting and that “children use play as an important resource to explore their developing conceptions of the purposes and characteristics of print in the preschool years…A play and literacy relationship emerges when play assists young children to explore and comprehend” (Saracho & Spodek, 2006, p. 707).

Young children also develop their number knowledge and demonstrate math concepts through play. Clements and Sarama (2005) identified six categories of mathematics that emerge through play: classification (grouping, sorting or categorizing by attributes), magnitude (describing or comparing the size of objects); enumeration (saying number words, counting,
instantly recognizing a number of objects, or reading and writing numbers); dynamics (putting things together, taking them apart, or exploring motions; pattern and shape (identifying or creating patterns or shapes or exploring geometry concepts; and spatial relationships (describing or drawing a location or direction).

Play is important in many other aspects of child development. It provides opportunities to problem-solve, thereby promoting thinking and learning (Clements & Sarama, 2005; Pellegrini & Gustafson, 2005). As summarized by Savina (2014), play also enhances emotion regulation (Galyer & Evans, 2001), and metacognition (Robson, 2010; Whitebread, Coltman, Jameson, & Lauder, 2009), and contributes to children’s social competence (Lillard, 1998; Newton & Jenvey, 2011). Pretend play and games with rules foster self-regulation in several ways as children learn to inhibit their impulsive behaviour and follow rules, develop internal representations which guide their behaviour and engage in dialogue to resolve differences, reach agreements and invent play rules (Pelletier, 2011; Savina, 2014).

While play is beneficial to children’s development and learning, it can be challenging for educator teams to determine how to integrate play-based pedagogies into their classrooms because of inconsistencies in definitions of play and differing perspectives concerning the purpose of play (Pyle & Bigelow, 2014). Despite these challenges, when developing the Early Learning Framework at the core of the Kindergarten curriculum, Ontario’s Ministry of Education opted for a play-based model because it was claimed this approach was in the best interest of young children (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). The literature on play, such as the studies reviewed above, suggests that there is a basis of support for the belief that play-based learning will aid the development of self-regulation and other learning skills. These references support the connection to learning and self-regulation that tie into the Early Learning Framework.
documents and FDK program. Reviewing literature on play is important to this thesis because play is a new emphasis in the FDK model and is relevant with respect to the integrated staff team since team members may have different viewpoints on play. Furthermore, the focus on play may have an impact on the partnership with parents who may not understand a play-based model.

**Full-day versus half-day kindergarten programs**

As previously discussed, the government of Ontario made a conscious decision to move from the half-day junior and senior-kindergarten program it had offered for decades to a full-day program beginning in 2010. In making this move, Ontario was investing in doing more than doubling the amount of time that children spent in kindergarten: It was looking to enhance the content and quality of the program, as well as the length of the program, thereby improving outcomes for children. This section of the literature review considers research into full-day versus half-day kindergarten programs to gain an understanding of why the government made the change.

Full-day programs can take many different shapes and forms, and the distinctions between the different offerings may not be clear when reviewing literature in this area. Research studies do not always clarify the features that define a program as full day, and the term can, and does, mean different things in different places: full day may mean 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; it may mean a program that operates on full days but not five days per week; it may mean a program that is geared towards academics for segments of the day or a program with an integrated approach; in the context of kindergarten programs, it may be restricted to programs for 5-year olds as opposed to both 4-and-5 year olds. Furthermore, the length of time children spend in a program is only one aspect: Program content, pedagogy and quality are the critical factors that will determine outcomes for children. While added time may
increase the opportunity for increased learning, it is how that time is used that will determine effectiveness (Cooper, Batts Allen, Patall, & Dent, 2010).

Much of the research that has been conducted shows gains for children in FDK programs in areas such as language and cognition, emotional maturity, communication and general knowledge, all of which contribute to a child’s ability to succeed in school. Elicker and Mathur (1997) and Elicker (2000) concluded that FDK students made better progress academically than students who attended half-day or alternate day kindergarten programs and that FDK had stronger, longer-lasting academic benefits for children from low SES households. Elicker (2000) also found that there were positive effects of FDK beyond the cognitive/academic realm, noting that children who attended full-day programs were rated as having slightly more positive affect and better work habits.

Not all studies into FDK have yielded the same positive results, and some studies have suggested that immediate positive effects fade out over higher grade levels. A literature review conducted by Lash, Bae, Barrat, Burr, and Fong (2008) examined research from the United States reported from 1998-2008 on the impact of FDK as opposed to half-day programs on student achievement with the intentions (1) to examine and summarize the quality of the research designs of studies being reported and (2) to summarize the findings of those studies whose research designs were determined to be of adequate quality. After identifying 299 unduplicated references of literature on FDK published within the identified timeframe, they narrowed the field to 21 which passed an initial screening and, from these, found only 11 reports based on six studies that described research designs that they believed were of sufficient rigor to be included in the summary of research findings. Their review ultimately determined that there was insufficient strong evidence to judge the effect of full-day kindergarten, in part due to weak
research design: “...findings might suggest associations between students’ participation in full-day kindergarten and achievement, but they cannot identify whether the link between program and achievement is caused by kindergarten type or is due to other factors that might distinguish students in full- and half-day programs” (Lash, Bae, Barrat, Burr, & Fong, 2008).

Clark and Kirk’s (2000) review of FDK in the United States concluded that “Most of the recent research on all-day kindergarten indicates positive benefits for children in terms of academic achievement and behavior…[but] what children do in kindergarten may be more important than how long they are in the classroom each day” (Clark & Kirk, 2000, p. 231). They determined that the benefits of full-day programs include:

- Greater utilization of time and small group activities
- Both social and behavioral benefits from increased teacher-to-student and peer-to-peer interactions
- Parents and/or teachers are equally or more satisfied with a full-day program
- School attendance is as good or better for full-day students
- Full-day programs benefit students from low SES backgrounds
- Children are better prepared for first grade and therefore for future learning
- More classroom time provides a less rushed schedule and increased opportunity for individual instruction for children and proportionately less time on large-group or teacher-directed activities.

Gullo’s (2000) examination of the long-range effects of FDK programs on academic, educational and behavioural outcomes studied 974 second-grade children from a large school district in the midwestern United States of whom approximately 75% had been enrolled in FDK. The study found that children who attended FDK had higher reading and math scores than those
children in half-day programs, were less likely to be retained during their first three years of school and had significantly higher attendance than children who attended half-day (Gullo, 2000, p. 21).

Existing research into children involved in TFD experience does not provide insight into reading and math scores or the number of children retained during the first three years of school. However, the full-day integrated program that was offered at BWELC seemed to have an impact on attendance: The program seemed to bring in more parents and engage them in coming to the school and accessing services. According to feedback received through TFD (Corter et al., 2007, 2009, 2012), combining child care with kindergarten education met the needs of many families and the programs also met the needs of parents with different needs. The wide net cast by TFD increased both outreach in terms of who came into the schools, and the attendance rates and amounts of time that parents spent in the schools which, in turn, resulted in more regular and consistent attendance of children in the program. A recent study by Patel, Corter, Pelletier, and Bertrand (2016) considered the ‘dose factor’ of participation and found that more time at the centre was linked to higher teacher ratings of developmental readiness in three areas, demonstrating that TFD attendance did result in better outcomes for children.

Several studies (Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Painter, 2006; Lee, Burham, Ready, Honigan, & Meisels, 2006; Walston & West, 2004;) analyzed data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K). This report was based on the experiences of 20,000 parents and children and over 3,000 kindergarten teachers in the U.S. It examined different schools, characteristics of the full- and half- day classes including curriculum differences, and examined the cognitive gains made by children in both programs during the kindergarten year. Although Cannon et al. (2006) determined that the gains made by
participating in FDK might not be long-lasting, they, along with other researchers, concluded that there were benefits for students and for parents.

Among Walston and West’s (2004) key findings:

- Children in full-day programs, on average, make greater gains in reading achievement from fall to spring than those in half-day classes.
- Children in classes with 25 or more children make slightly smaller gains compared to those in classes with 18 to 24 children.
- Children in full-day programs, on average, make greater gains in their mathematics achievement scores from fall to spring compared to those in half-day programs (Walston & West, 2004, pp. 47, 49).

Lee et al. (2006) also concluded that FDK was beneficial, noting that “results are clear: when children’s social and academic backgrounds are taken into account, as well as structural, social and academic features of their schools, children who experience full-day kindergarten as a whole-school program are advantaged in terms of their cognitive learning (effects of 0.93 between-school SD in literacy and 0.75 between-school SD in mathematics)” (Lee, Burkam, Ready, Honigman, & Meisels, 2006, p. 195). Similarly, Cleveland et al. (2006) found that a range of full-day programs, including both kindergarten and child care, have positive effects on early childhood learning and development, including cognitive, language and socioemotional development.

Research methodologies in studies that explore the impact of program length on student gains are often weak, which makes it hard to draw definitive conclusions (Cooper et al., 2010). One area of weakness is a lack of studies that randomly assign children to FDK and HDK programs: In order to draw inferences, it is necessary to control variables that might confound
comparisons between group, but this has not been the case with most of the studies. A second weakness is that many studies have used small sample sizes, and this reduces the power of the studies. Third, the lack of diverse student populations in most studies reduces the researchers’ ability to examine the generality and specificity of effects. Thus there are problems with internal and external validity, a lack of statistical control and the potential of self-selection bias. Furthermore, there is no consistent definition of full-day kindergarten, creating an apples and oranges situation which is especially significant when comparing programs across jurisdictions and countries. As a result, generalizations about full-day versus half-day programs must be made with caution (Le, Kirby, Barney, Setodji, & Gershwin, 2006).

A further issue is that the focus of most studies has been on academic gains, and far less on non-academic areas such as the potential social and behavioural benefits from increased teacher-to-student and peer-to-peer interactions as well as from different types of teacher:student interactions, cognitive development and the growth of general knowledge, motor/physical development, emotional development including self-regulation, opportunities for success, parent and teacher satisfaction levels, and the impact on school attendance (Warburton, Warburton, & Hertzman, 2012). Barnett (2011) has identified a number of non-academic benefits that are derived from early childhood interventions including substantive short- and long-term effects on cognition, social-emotional development, school progress, and a reduction in anti-social behaviours. While noting that the long-term effects may be smaller than the initial effects, they are not insubstantial.

Cooper et al. (2010) examined the effects of FDK on both academic achievement and social development by conducting a meta-analysis. With respect to academic achievement, they found that “the effect of FDK on achievement was positive and significantly different from zero
under all models” (Cooper et al., 2010, p. 51). When looking at the overall association of FDK with nonacademic outcomes they found “sufficient data to conduct meta-analyses on five nonacademic outcomes that proponents claimed would be positively affected by FDK: attendance, self-confidence, ability to work and play with others, child independence, and parents’ preference for FDK...the results were mixed. There was some evidence of a positive association between FDK and the child’s self-confidence and ability to work and play with others, but evidence of a positive association between FDK and child independence and attendance was more tentative” (Cooper et al., 2010, p. 52). Looking at the impacts of FDK on students, instruction and teaching, parents, and society, they identified both the potential positive impacts and the negative impacts of full-day compared to half-day kindergarten. They also noted that, although FDK children experienced greater growth during the kindergarten year, when subsequent years were added to the analyses, the HDK students showed a stronger growth trajectory and seemed to have made up any early FDK advantage by the end of third grade. Among the explanations offered for the “fade-out” of the FDK effect they concluded that the effect becomes a smaller influence as children accumulate more experiences in an academic setting (Cooper et al., 2010, pp. 61-64).

Understanding the effects of FDK across a broad spectrum of stakeholders is important for the current study because this frames the rationale of why Ontario opted to invest significant resources in moving from a half-day model for kindergarten to providing the FDK program. However, beyond the amount of time spent in the program, it is the quality and content of the program that carry the potential benefits, and it is these aspects that are explored in the current thesis. Therefore, the negative effects from the literature do not operate against my hypothesis that degree of integration, leadership involvement and structure of the learning environment are
the factors that impact quality, not the length of the school day. A summary of the findings of Cooper et al. is adapted in the table below.

**Table 1: Potential positive and negative effects of FDK compared to HDK (Adapted from Cooper et al., 2010)**

*Potential positive effects of FDK compared to HDK*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For students</th>
<th>For instruction and teaching</th>
<th>For parents</th>
<th>For society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better academic skill development</td>
<td>Better student attendance</td>
<td>Lower child care costs</td>
<td>Levels the playing field for disadvantaged children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading readiness</td>
<td>More individualized instruction</td>
<td>Easier scheduling and transportation</td>
<td>More learning opportunities for low income children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language development, especially for ESL students</td>
<td>Easier identification of problem areas</td>
<td>More contact with the teacher</td>
<td>Decreased cost because of reduced need for retention and remediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher standardized test scores</td>
<td>Less hurried instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer grade retentions, less remediation</td>
<td>More repetition of material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer referrals to special education services</td>
<td>Less transition time between activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More independent learning</td>
<td>Fewer total students for each teacher to track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier transition to first grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Better socialization and peer relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>More cooperative behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunity to interact with other children and adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive influence on self-esteem, self-confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Potential negative effects of FDK compared to HDK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For students</th>
<th>For instruction and teaching</th>
<th>For parents</th>
<th>For society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Causes higher expectations for first graders</td>
<td>Less planning time</td>
<td>Child care needs of working parents still may not be met</td>
<td>Diminished parent responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First grade pushed down to kindergarten</td>
<td>Greater fatigue because of handling same students all day</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost (salaries, space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to achieve things before developmentally prepared</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Takes resources from more effective interventions (e.g., smaller classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K should be more learning by doing rather than worksheets and teacher-led instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Access is still unequal for disadvantaged students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased fatigue, irritability, aggression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lengthened adjustment because of separation anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor role models in lunchroom, playground</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of confidence, enjoyment of learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less time for informal learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of day in home is also important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer opportunities to visit informal education settings (e.g., museums)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Cooper, Batts Allen, Patall, & Dent, 2010, pp. 39-40)

Much of the research cited above on full-day programs has been conducted in the U.S., where kindergarten differs from what is offered in Ontario. Canadian studies have also shown the benefits of FDK. In response to the concern about weak research design in evaluating FDK programs, Warburton et al. (2012) used data from four sources provided by the British Columbia
Ministry of Education including (1) census data of all students in the school system; (2) province-wide Foundation Skills Assessments in reading, numeracy and writing taken in grade 4; (3) K-12 education experience of individuals born in 1991; and (4) all 15-year olds in school and their subsequent graduation status. The study focused on students who self-declared as Aboriginal or who had an ESL designation. Using all four sources of data, the study was able to “estimate the average marginal effect of increasing attendance in full day kindergarten on aggregated grade 4 educational attainment for [those] kindergarten children...[and found that] FDK improves outcomes for disadvantaged BC kids at grade 4” (Warburton, Warburton, & Hertzman, 2012, p. 598).

In the Ontario context, an empirical, longitudinal study was conducted by Maltais, Henry, Emond, and Mougeot (2011) for the French Catholic School Board of Central and Eastern Ontario. The study included three stages where the authors compared the development of children who had attended the full-day program during the 2000-2001 academic year to children who had attended the half-day program (1999-2000): Stage one was the end of kindergarten; stage two was the end of grade two; and stage three was the end of grade five. Their results indicated that the full-day program for 4-year olds is “more likely to enhance, in the longer term, linguistic and academic development in reading and mathematics. However, the program has little effect on writing competence as well as in regard to social-emotional and psychomotor development” (Maltais, Henry, Emond, & Mougeot, 2011, p. 67).

More recently, a report by Pelletier (2014) outlined research findings on several aspects of FDK and looked at children’s experiences and outcomes in FDK. She noted that “Children in FDK scored significantly higher on tasks of self-regulation involving inhibitory control than their peers in HDK, adding further support for the importance of a full day with more play
opportunities, and consistent with the research on the self-regulation benefits of play” (Pelletier, 2014, p. 5). Furthermore, over the three year period of the study (2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13) the overall results “showed significant benefits in vocabulary and self-regulation for all FDK children and showed continued gains for the older group of FDK children…The importance of vocabulary and self-regulation as cornerstones of healthy child development are strong evidence of FDK’s benefits for children’s development (which) in turn, has been shown to have benefits for later educational and economic success as well as social adjustment into adulthood” (Pelletier, 2014, p. 6).

A study conducted by researchers at Queen’s and McMaster Universities in Ontario from 2010-2012 measured the impact of FDK using both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods including the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and case studies. Data were collected from 690 children in 125 participating schools and included 257 children who were enrolled in FDK for two years, 223 who were enrolled in one year of FDK and 210 children who had no exposure to FDK. Child development was measured in five areas using the Early Development Instrument (Janus & Offord, 2006): Physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognition; and communication skills and general knowledge. As reported on the Ontario Ministry of Education website (2015), key findings of the study included the following impacts:

- Overall, students in FDK are better prepared to enter grade 1 and to be more successful in school
- In every area, students improved their readiness for grade 1 and accelerated their development
From its comparison of children with two years of FDK instruction and children with no FDK instruction, the study showed reduced risks for the FDK participants as illustrated below:

Table 2: Comparisons of children at risk with two years of FDK instruction and children with no FDK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Description</th>
<th>2 years of FDK</th>
<th>no FDK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risks in social competence development</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks in language and cognitive development</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks in communication skills and general knowledge development</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The findings from this Ontario study mirror those from other Canadian and U.S. studies and provide support for the conclusion that FDK has positive impacts on academic achievement and readiness and on developing competencies in young children. These impacts are not solely the result of spending more time in the program: They reflect the quality of the play-based program being delivered by the staff team. The contribution of the current study is to provide a deeper understanding of how leadership, integration and effective change management can support and improve quality in Ontario’s FDK programs.

Summary

This chapter has presented a review of literature related to factors that were significant in creating a high quality, integrated early learning environment at BWELC, a demonstration site within TFD. Literature related to the key themes of change, leadership, integration and quality were reviewed, with a focus on understanding how quality can be impacted by changes to leadership and integration. By exploring these themes and considering them in relation to the research study’s findings, it is possible to provide recommendations for continuous quality improvement in the delivery of Ontario’s FDK program.
In addition, the literature considered the evolution of early learning programs and non-parental care options in Ontario and the value of early learning. In order to understand two important pillars of Ontario’s FDK program, the review examined play-based learning and provided a comparison of full-day versus half-day kindergarten programs. The literature review provided support for the position that early learning that is play-based and delivered to children by integrated educator teams of trained professionals has positive effects on children’s academic and social development.

The study set out to address the following questions:

- How does the BWELC experience illustrate possible links between policy changes, integration and leadership, and program quality as evidenced by what occurred at the site when it converted from a demonstration project to Ontario’s FDK delivery model?
- What were the challenges in ensuring quality programming in scaling up the FDK platform and how can the lessons learned through the BWELC experience inform ongoing policy development?

The methodology used to address these questions is reviewed in the next chapter.
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Community context

As previously described, the case study centred on Bruce Public School, one location where FDK was implemented in September 2012. Parent feedback data collection also occurred at two other nearby schools that converted to FDK at the same time where WoodGreen is the child care provider: Morse Street Public School and Leslieville Public School. The three schools are in fairly close proximity to one another, and all three are located in Toronto’s Ward 30. Demographic information about the ward is summarized below.

Table 3: Profile - Ward 30 - 2011 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ward 30</th>
<th>City of Toronto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>53,290</td>
<td>2,615,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% that live in houses</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% that live in apartments</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% that live in row or town houses</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of population under the age of 5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of population aged 5-9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of households that are one-family</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of families that are couples with children</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of these families with 1 child</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of these families with 2 children</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of these families with 3 or more children</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of families that are lone-parent</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of these families with 1 child</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of these families with 2 children</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of these families with 3 or more children</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of families with children at home under the age of 6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of families with English as their mother tongue</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household income (2010)</td>
<td>$89,388</td>
<td>$87,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$66,139</td>
<td>$58,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of population that has post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(City of Toronto, 2015)

The table illustrates that, in most respects, Ward 30 is close to the averages for Toronto as a whole, with a few notable departures:
• There are more families in Ward 30 where English is the mother tongue as compared to the city as a whole

• The average and median household incomes in Ward 30 are higher than the city average

In addition to the information captured in Table 3, data from Statistics Canada, 2011 Census related to Ward 30’s child population also indicate that 2.3% of Toronto’s children aged 0-5 and 1.7% of Toronto’s children aged 6-9 live in ward 30. Data also show that almost 20% of children in Ward 30 live below the Low-Income Measure (LIM), which is below the city average of 25%.

There are 28 licensed child care centres operating in Ward 30 and four private home child care agencies. In the child care centres, 9 provide programs for infants, 16 provide programs for toddlers, 25 provide programs for preschool, 13 provide programs for kindergarten children (this includes 10 FDK before-and-after school programs in 14 elementary schools) and 17 provide programs for school age (City of Toronto, 2015).

Overview of the study design

This study used a mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative forms of inquiry to build on the research of the TFD project and understand what happened at BWELC, a TFD demonstration site, as the school transitioned from TFD to the implementation of FDK. The philosophical worldview that influenced the research methodology was pragmatism. Pragmatism stems from the work of Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey (Cherryholmes, 1992) and has been described as a worldview that arises out of actions, situations, and consequences (Creswell, 2009). Pragmatism fits a mixed methods research approach because of several characteristics outlined by Cresswell:
• it allows researchers to draw from both qualitative and quantitative assumptions; it provides researchers with freedom of choice in selecting the methods, techniques and procedures that best meet their needs and purposes;

• it allows researchers to look at many approaches for collecting and analyzing data;

• it allows researchers to use both qualitative and quantitative data to provide the best understanding of the research problem;

• pragmatists agree that research occurs in social, historical, political and other contexts and, therefore, the theoretical lens is reflective of social justice and political aims

• it opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis. (Cresswell, 2009, p. 10-11).

I determined that pragmatism was the appropriate worldview for this study since the research was oriented towards real-world practice, occurred in a social, historical and political context and sought deeper understandings of the phenomena. Furthermore, in line with the characteristics outlined above, my study relied on multiple methods and different forms of data collection and analysis. Since the study focused on the impacts on program quality as BWELC switched to Ontario’s FDK model, it was important to consider a variety of stakeholder perspectives, including subjective reactions alongside objective measures. In keeping with the evaluative framework described in the introduction, various approaches were used to gather evidence about and evaluate the outcomes and the processes across different perspectives. The methods included document review, focus groups, key informants, surveys, and comparing before/after data on quality assessment measures.

Throughout the span of the Toronto First Duty project, the larger research project employed a case study approach to map the change that occurred at BWELC with the evolution
of a seamless, integrated program for JK/SK children. For the current study, the case study approach was used to analyze the impact on quality of the changes at BWELC after the introduction of FDK. It built on the case study research conducted as part of Toronto First Duty, picking up where Phase 3 of TFD left off (Corter et al., 2012) as BWELC moved from its pre-FDK configuration to the new model. The case study followed the procedures that were used in previously approved and completed TFD studies. Additional ethical approval was obtained for a parent survey.

The study centred on key components that were reviewed in the literature section: (1) Classroom environment quality; (2) Integration, leadership and staff team; (3) Parent/guardian perspective. Once initial data analysis was completed on the results from the four measures (ECERS-R, TOC, Indicators of Change, parent/guardian survey), key informant questionnaires were completed with a small group of stakeholders who had been involved with BWELC, TFD, and FDK over an extended period of time to gain their insights into the data results with implications for the key emergent themes. More information about the key informants/stakeholders is provided later in this chapter.

To maintain objectivity and ensure there was no conflict of interest, I did not directly carry out most of the data collection: The ECERS-R observation was completed by graduate students, whom I did not know and who were employed as research assistants by the TFD principal investigators; the TOC assessments were completed by staff of Toronto Children’s Services as part of their regular monitoring of the sites; the Indicators of Change process was led by other researchers employed by the TFD principal investigators. I had the primary role in circulating and receiving the key informant questionnaires and parent surveys. Assistance in coding and data analysis for the questionnaires was provided by graduate students at
OISE/University of Toronto, and assistance in coding and data analysis for the parent survey was provided by a colleague who is a research associate at THETA, The Toronto Health Economics and Technology Assessment Collaborative.

Overall, data analysis followed a general inductive approach, which involved analyzing the core meanings that emerged and identifying the most important themes (Thomas, 2006). Analysis of ECERS-R scores, TOC ratings and Indicators of Change feedback from key stakeholders provided insight into the impacts of changes that occurred with the transformation to the new FDK program delivery model as compared to the pre-FDK program model. Within the evaluative framework, concurrent triangulation was used to determine the degree of convergence across the sources of data. A thematic analysis was used with the key informant responses in order to examine and record patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Creating codes and themes qualitatively and then counting the number of times they occur in the text data is a form of data transformation that often occurs in concurrent strategies in order to quantify the qualitative data (Creswell, 2009, p. 218).

**Research measures**

1. **Classroom Environment Quality: The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)** (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005)

   **Background**

   The existence of validated assessment tools enables the early learning sector to measure quality. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), which is a validated instrument, was designed to assess quality in group care environments for young children. The ECERS-R continues to be among the most widely used early childhood environment quality assessment tools in North America and around the world (Harms, Clifford,
& Cryer, 2015). It is a comprehensive tool, consisting of process and structural aspects. Process quality and structural quality are assessed through direct observation. The ECERS-R is a standardized measure, which consists of 43 items that assess the quality of the environment, and these items gauge how the environment provides for children’s most basic needs: health and safety, building positive relationships, and opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience. To this end, the scale is organized around seven subscales: (1) Space and Furnishings; (2) Personal Care Routines; (3) Language-Reasoning; (4) Activities; (5) Interaction; (6) Program Structure; and (7) Parents and Staff. All components are considered to be of equal importance. Each item in each subscale is ranked from 1 to 7, with 1 describing inadequate conditions and 7 describing excellent conditions. A summary of the ECERS-R appears in Appendix D.

Field tests of the ECERS-R reveal acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability at the three levels of scoring – indicators, items and total score (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005, p. 3). As summarized by Sylva et al. (2006), researchers have repeatedly reported that higher ECERS-R score are related to better child outcome measures (De Kruijf, McWilliam, Ridley, & Wakely, 2000; Gilliam, 2000; Jaeger & Funk, 2001; Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997; Phillips, McCartney, & Scarr, 1987).

The ECERS-R is not without its limitations. It provides a snapshot of the quality of the early learning environment at one particular point in time. It does not measure the quality of parenting programming and activities (OCBCC, 2007). Several studies, including ones by Cassidy, Hestenes, Hegde, Hestenes, and Mims (2005), Gordon, Fujimoto, Kaestner, Korenman, and Abner (2013), and Perlman, Zellman, and Le (2004) have examined the properties of the ECERS-R and identified implications for how quality is measured by the scale.
As part of the Toronto First Duty Research, the ECERS-R was consistently used to assess the kindergarten classroom in BWELC with assessments completed in 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2010 by a trained outside observer with no connection to the BWELC program. These assessments corresponded to the period when the staffing model in the kindergarten classroom consisted of a teacher employed by the Toronto District School Board and an Early Childhood Educator employed by WoodGreen. As previously discussed, the program delivery model changed in September 2012 at which point the school board became the employer of the Early Childhood Educator in the kindergarten classroom instead of WoodGreen.

**ECERS-R data collection and analysis**

Since the ECERS-R was used at BWELC throughout TFD, I determined that using the measure again for the purposes of this study would provide a good comparison of pre- and post-implementation of FDK. Using the same process that had been implemented for the ECERS-R assessments throughout TFD, the assessment for the current study was completed by a trained outside observer, whom I did not know. The observer was a Master’s level graduate with significant training in the administration of the ECERS-R. She was trained in the methodology by a certified instructor.

The ECERS-R assessment for this study was completed in May 2013, near the end of the first school year under the Full-day Kindergarten model. By that time, the one large kindergarten classroom (room 3) had been divided into two separate classrooms, known as 3(a) and 3(b), each with an OCT and RECE, and each of these rooms was assessed separately on two different dates. The observer rated each room and summarized the scores on the ECERS-R Profile form, including a calculation of an average score for each subscale. The observer also completed an expanded version score sheet, which included in-depth and detailed information.
about the time of day, the number of staff and children present in the environment, and comments for each subscale. Separate forms were completed for each room (3a and 3b). During the assessment of room 3(a), there were two staff and 22 children present in the room. For room 3(b), there were two staff members with 25 children for most of the assessment period, although this increased to three staff with 27 children for a portion of the observation time period. The observation period in room 3(a) was 4 hours 30 minutes and the observation period in room 3(b) was 6 hours. Table 4 provides details about the staff participants in rooms 3(a) and 3(b):

Table 4: Details regarding staff participants in May 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff designation</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Prior experience at BWELC – Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Room 3(a)</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education - 2006</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECE Room 3(a)</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education Diploma – 2006</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Room 3(b)</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education - 2008</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECE Room 3(b)</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education Diploma - 2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from the May 2013 assessments were transferred by me into an Excel format for analysis and comparison to the earlier ECERS-R assessments that had been completed at BWELC under TFD.

2. Classroom Environment Quality: Toronto Children’s Services Operating Criteria

(Toronto Children’s Services, circa 2000)

Background

The Toronto Operating Criteria (TOC) is a tool that has been used to assess quality for over a decade. The criteria outline the City of Toronto’s expectations, service operating
standards, guidelines and practices. Licensed child care programs in the City of Toronto that wish to enter into a service contract for fee subsidy must meet these criteria, which are over and above the regulations that centres must meet to become licensed. Without a Purchase of Service Agreement, centres cannot enrol children whose parents receive subsidized child care which is funded by the City. The criteria assessment occurs prior to the signing of the initial Purchase of Service Agreement and at least annually thereafter to measure quality and contract compliance and the assessment is completed by a Quality Assurance Analyst employed by Toronto Children’s Services.

There are nine core components included in the TOC, but only one selected subscale – Preschool program, which included kindergarten – was considered for the current study. The tool has been in use for several years, and has been validated as an assessment measure.\(^3\) The TOC rates items on a scale of 1 to 4, where 4 is the highest rating. Centres must achieve a minimum rating of 3 to meet City of Toronto standards and when a rating is less than 3, the centre is given a timeline by which to confirm that corrective action has been taken. Since January 2008, scores have been posted on the city of Toronto’s website – www.toronto.ca/children - so that parents and other interested parties can have easy access to a centre’s scores.

The assessment of program rooms includes six categories, with items that are rated in each area. The categories are (1) Structure of the day; (2) Physical environment; (3) Learning; (4) Physical needs; (5) Health and safety; (6) Interactions. A summary of the Toronto Operating

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\(^3\) In January 2014 the city introduced a new version of the criteria, *Early Learning and Care Assessment for Quality Improvement*, now known as AQI. However, for the purposes of this study, the discussion refers to the pre-2014 version of the tool.
Criteria (circa 2000) appears in Appendix E. The validation work only supported use of the overall score and the Interactions subscale.

**Toronto Operating Criteria (TOC) data collection and analysis**

As noted, the TOC assessment is completed on an annual basis. Similar to the ECERS-R assessments, since TOC assessments were completed at BWELC throughout TFD, I determined that using the measure again for the purposes of this study would provide a good comparison of pre- and post-implementation of FDK. The current study considered results for the kindergarten room at BWELC over five consecutive years beginning in 2009. There is an important stipulation that had to be considered in the analysis of the year-to-year results: In 2009 and 2010, the annual assessments were conducted by the City Consultants who had an ongoing advisory/mentoring role with the centre. A 2009/2010 study conducted by Perlman and Falenchuk (2010) concluded that the support aspects of the consultant’s role needed to be disentangled from the assessment role in order to better ensure an unbiased and objective rating and support inter-rater reliability (Perlman & Falenchuk, 2010). The City responded by creating a new team of Quality Assurance consultants whose role is solely to conduct assessments using the measure, and it was members of this team who completed the assessments in the later years.

The consultants spend several hours in the program room and use the criteria checklist to document what they see within the environment. Generally-speaking they are silent observers, although they may ask for clarification if they are unable to make a clear determination of whether an indicator has been met or not. Following the assessment they usually meet with the program manager or designate to review the results, identify areas of non-compliance, and set a timeframe within which the manager must confirm the actions taken to achieve compliance. The checklist results are converted into scores, and the scores are posted on the City’s website.
To enable data analysis, the scores over the five year period were transferred by me into an Excel spreadsheet. A series of graphs was generated from the Excel inputs.

3. Integration, leadership and staff team: Indicators of Change

Background
As described in chapter one, the Indicators of Change tool, was designed to guide, track and assess the progress of Toronto First Duty sites on the path to integration. The Indicators of Change assessment was completed at BWELC on several occasions during the course of the Toronto First Duty project and the results were summarized in the research progress reports. The focus group discussion participants remained consistent year after year.

Indicators of Change data collection and analysis
Unlike the ECERS-R and TOC, which were completed by independent external assessors, the Indicators of Change assessments occurred through a focus group discussion involving key site stakeholders and were facilitated by a researcher, with ratings determined by consensus (Pelletier & Bertrand, 2015). The sessions took place at the BWELC site and included members of the management committee (see Appendix B). The consensus model was used, in part, to support the experience of collectively creating and implementing a blueprint of priorities and activities through collaboration among partners (Atkinson Centre, OISE/UT, 2005). Each index/core element of the tool was presented and the group decided collectively where the program fit along the scale based on five possible options. The list below illustrates how the scale was used with respect to the core element of the staff team

1. Co-location: ECEs and teachers work as individuals in separate programs
2. Communication: ECEs and teachers share/discuss planning and observations with each other.

3. Coordination: ECEs and teachers organize program planning and implementation to complement each other.

4. Collaboration: ECEs’ and teachers’ roles and responsibilities overlap with each other.

5. Integration: A single common program – ECEs and teachers are an early learning team with interchangeable roles and responsibilities.

In order to gain data from pre-and-post-implementation of FDK perspectives, in addition to the assessments conducted during the course of TFD, the tool was administered in May 2012, just prior to the implementation of full-day kindergarten. It was used again in May 2013 to determine changes that had occurred after the implementation of the new full-day kindergarten model. While the earlier assessments included all five core elements, the May 2012 and May 2013 assessments included only three elements that comprised the adaptation of the Indicators of Change for FDK: Early Learning Environment, Early Learning Team and Parent Participation. The remaining two domains were omitted since they no longer existed in the new FDK model. The management committee that had overseen BWELC ceased to exist: it no longer had a role to play since governance and oversight shifted exclusively to the school board. Access also changed and was no longer seamless: families had to go through one registration processes with the school for kindergarten, a second process for extended-day programs if needed through WoodGreen as the child care operator, and additional processes to connect to other early years services.
4. **Parent/guardian perspectives: Survey**

**Background**

Given the key vantage point of “vested interests” of parents regarding full-day learning (Arimura, 2008, 2015; Corter & Pelletier, 2010), what it means to their children and family life, I also considered it important to gather evidence about their experiences, their feelings and their ideas regarding the impact of this change on their children and themselves with respect to family life and work/life balance. I felt this was particularly true for parents who were benefiting from the effective integrated early learning services offered at their children’s school. To this end, another inquiry strategy used in the study was survey research, which generally “provide(s) a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 12). Parent feedback was included in order to gain an understanding of families’ relationships to the FDK program: What were they looking for, how were the programs meeting their needs, or were their needs not being met?

For this research study, parent participants were recruited from among all parents of junior and senior kindergarten children in the three school programs preselected for the study. Since not all parents were from BWELC, the parent data are not part of the case study. Parents from Morse Street Public School and Leslieville Public School were included in order to generate a broader response on the question of how families were experiencing the new FDK program as opposed to the previous experience of kindergarten and child care as distinct programs. This group constituted a convenience or nonprobability sample for two reasons: (1) the selected schools all included child care operations under the jurisdiction of WoodGreen, and (2) it was dependent on participants self-identifying and making themselves available to take part. The survey was intended to track one group of participants over time to examine change. It
was administered at the following two time points: spring of 2012 when their child completed junior kindergarten and prior to the conversion to FDK, and again in spring 2013 when their child completed senior kindergarten following the conversion to FDK. Seventeen families participated in the first survey run. The second group of participants (n=54) included families with children in junior or senior kindergarten during the 2012-2013 academic year with FDK to provide an opportunity to identify differences in perception for parents whose children had two different experiences (both half day and full-day kindergarten) and those who only experienced the full-day model. Eleven parents completed the survey in both runs.

**Parent survey data collection and analysis**

The survey was the sole instrument for parent data. At the end of the survey participants were invited to participate in a structured interview to offer further insights into parents’ perspectives about changes in FDK, but no parents signed up for this option and therefore no interviews were conducted.

The survey collected background and demographic information about the family, the child and the child’s prior program/care experience. Parents/guardians were also asked about the experience in JK/SK from both their own perspective and that of their child.

The key concepts measured by the surveys included parent perceptions of:

- FDK effects on their child and on their families
- Staff team and the relationship between the kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator
- FDK effects on work/life balance, with a particular focus on the variations between parents who had prior child care arrangements and parents who did not have prior child care arrangements.
I developed the survey instrument (Appendix G), which was reviewed and approved through the Ethics Review Committees at the University of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board. The survey was pilot-tested using a group of ten WoodGreen child care staff managers to determine problems or issues with the questions, format or scales. Some elements related to demographic and background information were adapted from surveys conducted as part of Toronto First Duty and Best Start Peel research with the permission of the survey developers, Dr. Janette Pelletier and Dr. Carl Corter. The section of the survey related to the JK/SK experience was designed by me. For this section a Likert (ordinal data) five-point scale was used to rate items from strongly agree to strongly disagree. An online version was prepared using the University of Toronto’s Survey Wizard tool.

For phase one of the survey, Informed Consent forms were provided to 163 families across the three schools (Appendix H). Initial response was very low so an incentive was offered ($5 per completed survey to be given to the school to purchase library books) to try to elicit a greater participation rate. With this incentive, 32 individuals agreed to participate and they received the survey by email with a link to the Survey Wizard survey. The option of receiving a hardcopy of the survey was offered, but no respondents indicated that this was required. Of the 32 potential respondents, only 17 completed the survey, four at BWELC, nine at Leslieville, four at Morse. The remaining 15 individuals received several reminder notices but, for reasons unknown, did not complete the survey.

Phase two of the survey was launched in February 2013. In order to generate increased interest, a parent information session was held the evening of February 21, 2013 where Dr. Janette Pelletier presented the key findings from her research in Peel, which demonstrated the benefits of full-day kindergarten. This was followed by a presentation outlining the current
research study. The session was well attended, but most of the participants were parents of children who would be entering kindergarten in September 2013 and were therefore ineligible for completing the survey. The Informed Consent letters were delivered to 274 families across the three schools at the end of February 2013 through either the child care centre (for families with children in the EDP) or through the kindergarten classroom. Eighty-eight parents returned signed consent forms indicating their agreement to take part in the survey. Of these, 54 did complete the survey, eight at BWELC, 19 at Leslieville and 27 at Morse. The remaining individuals received several reminder notices but did not complete the survey. It was difficult to ascertain the reasons for the low response rate, but the low response rate limited the analysis possibilities and introduced concerns about selection bias. Therefore, while the survey results serve as important descriptive content, they must be treated with caution and not considered a centrepiece to the current study.

Given the low number of parent survey respondents, simple descriptive data analysis was done using Excel. As previously described, two rounds of data collection were completed from the parent population at the three schools included in the research. In order to analyze parents’ perceptions pre- and post- conversion to FDK within a longitudinal perspective, attempts were made to match respondents across the first and second round of surveys through demographic data such as postal codes, child’s date of birth, family composition, and similar characteristics. Using postal code and child’s date of birth, eleven families were identified as completing the survey in both the first and second round: eight of these families attended Leslieville, two attended Morse in both years, and one attended BWELC for JK and Morse for SK, which meant that the pre-and-post assessment of the parent experience at BWELC could not be completed.
Unfortunately, due to the small number of parents who completed the survey, the findings could not be considered statistically significant and may not be representative of unsampled parents. However, the parent feedback that was received forms a part of the change story, at least for some parents, and is therefore included in the findings.

5. **Identifying emergent themes: Key informant questionnaires**

**Background**

Key informants are individuals whose role or experiences result in them having relevant information or knowledge, and they can be instrumental in providing insight and building understanding (O’Leary, 2010, p 171). Key informants may be experts, insiders within organizations, individuals who are highly experienced in an area of exploration, and leaders at either a formal or informal level. While key informants may often be called upon during preliminary phases of an investigation or to generate primary data, they can also be used to overview gathered data (O’Leary, 2010), as was the case with the current study.

Interviewing is a method of qualitative data collection that involves seeking open-ended answers related to topic areas or themes (Cresswell, 2009; O’Leary, 2010). Interviews can take many forms but, regardless of whether the interview is formal or informal, structured or unstructured, conducted one-on-one or in a group, the intention is to elicit views and opinions from the participants.

In consultation with my research supervisor, Dr. Janette Pelletier, a small group of key informants was identified, all of whom had been involved with TFD and at BWELC. The group included individuals considered to be experts and highly experienced with Ontario’s FDK, insiders within the school, and leaders within the field: Two of the key informants had been part of the management committee of BWELC and had worked closely with Dr. Charles Pascal on
data collection and analysis and on the preparation of With Our Best Future in Mind (Pascal, 2009); two were primary researchers with the TFD project; three were employed in different roles at BWELC (principal, child care manager, OCT in the FDK classroom); one had been the RECE in the kindergarten room during BWELC and is currently employed as an RECE in a FDK room in a different school; and I was the ninth key informant. All of the key informants had participated in the Indicators of Change focus groups on at least one occasion during TFD and/or post-implementation of FDK. The nine key informants were approached and asked to corroborate the interpretations of the findings from the four measures: ECERS-R, TOC, Indicators of Change and parent/guardian survey. Although everyone agreed to participate, only eight completed and returned the questionnaires.

**Key informant data collection and analysis**

The decision to undertake key informant interviews was reached after the research results had been compiled as a way of gaining broader insight into what the data revealed. In order to expedite the process, the key informants received three documents by email: (1) Informed Consent (Appendix K); (2) Summary of Research Results (Appendix L); (3) Key Informant Questions (Appendix M). Informants were asked to provide their responses via email. The names and positions of the key informants were removed from the completed questionnaires prior to analysis by graduate students who were blind to the identity of the key informant participants.

Following receipt of the responses, a meeting was convened that involved the two graduate students, Dr. Janette Pelletier as my research supervisor, and myself as principal researcher. My role was to co-develop and guide the coding that would be undertaken by graduate students unknown by the key informants and who did not know the identity of these
informants. Upon reviewing the results, we identified four key emergent themes: (1) Approach, which included model and structure of the partnership, model and structure of the program, model and structure of philosophy, and model and structure of caregiver relationships; (2) Standards, which included the Ontario Day Nursery Act and the TOC; (3) Relationships, including parents, leadership and staff team, and staff team; (4) Resources, including financial, human resources, and time.

Following the initial meeting the two graduate students coded the results according to the key themes. They used a checkmark system to indicate when a participant mentioned a theme in their response. The graduate students sent me the initial coding for my review and approval. During the coding process some adjustments were made, such as combining questions one and two since responses to question two mirrored those for question one, or the respondent simply stated “see above.” Furthermore, certain categories were refined: For example, the category that was labelled “Standards” during the initial meeting was collapsed during the coding process to include both monitoring and regulatory areas plus expectations as a whole. At the other end of the spectrum, themes that had not been identified in the initial review meeting emerged during the deeper coding analysis and were added. These included “integration decline” and “change itself takes time.” The two graduate students worked together and independently to code the interviews. Independent coding resulted in a high reliability rate of more than 90%.

Data analysis involved counting and comparing the frequency with which key informants identified a specific theme. Analysis also involved comparing the results of the KI interviews with the results from the other forms of data.
Chapter 4: FINDINGS

1. Classroom Environment Quality: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)

The ECERS-R assesses the environment through sub-scales for seven areas: Space and Furnishings; Personal Care; Language-Reasoning; Activities; Interaction; Program Structure; Parents and Staff.

As previously described, the ECERS-R was used to assess the environment in BWELC kindergarten program on four occasions as part of Toronto First Duty research – 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2010. It was used in 2013 as part of this research study. By 2013 what had been one large kindergarten classroom, Room 3, had been divided into two smaller classrooms, which the school identified as Room 3(a) and room 3(b). The rooms were assessed separately for the current study and therefore the figures below use the labels 2013 (a) and 2013 (b) to distinguish between the two rooms.

Scores for each individual item on the ECERS-R scale can range from 1 (unacceptable) to 7 (excellent). Scores for the individual items are then added to reach a total score for each sub-scale. For example, the 2013 assessment for Room 3(a) in the Space and Furnishings Subscale resulted in the following scores:

1) Indoor space = 7
2) Furniture for care, play, & learning = 6
3) Furnishings for relaxation = 6
4) Room arrangement = 7
5) Space for privacy = 6
6) Child-related display = 6
7) Space for gross motor = 4
8) Gross motor equipment = 7

Total score = 49

Table 5 provides a summary of the total scores achieved in each assessment area in both 2008 and 2010 when BWELC was part of TFD, and in 2013, post-implementation of FDK by which time Room 3 had been split into Room 3(a) and Room 3(b).

Table 5 – ECERS-R Scores – BWELC - Kindergarten Room 3: 2008-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Space and Furnishings</th>
<th>Personal Care</th>
<th>Language - Reasoning</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Program Structure</th>
<th>Parents and Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>39.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>52.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>69.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>41.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(a)</td>
<td>49.00</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>37.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm 3(b)</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>37.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>242.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>288.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(a)</td>
<td>241.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm 3(b)</td>
<td>208.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the scoring system for ECERS-R, point differences are meaningful, such that a two-point improvement or decline is important.

While Table 5 provides a broad overview, the graphs that follow summarize the findings of the five reviews conducted from 2003 to 2013 and illustrate the scores pre- and post-implementation of FDK, including the changes over time during the implementation of TFD project at BWELC. When considering the results, it is important to note that, as previously described in Table 4, the individuals in room 3(b) did not have prior experience at BWELC working as an integrated staff team, unlike their colleagues in room 3(a). A brief discussion is included following each graph for the elements that are considered most critical to the current study.
Figure 4 - Graph: Total Average ECERS-R Scores – 2003-2013

![Graph showing Total Average Score vs. Year]

**Figure 4: 2003-2010 = pre-FDK; 2013 = post-FDK**

From an overall perspective, the results show a decline in scores with the transition to the Full-day Kindergarten model in 2012/13. As illustrated above, the site showed fairly good overall quality in 2003 and then generally improved over the ensuing seven years, peaking in 2010 when the overall rating was a full two points higher than in 2003. This change can be attributed to the fact that by 2010 the integrated staff team was functioning at an optimal level, with the teachers and ECEs working collaboratively as equal team members with time and professional supports in place. By 2013, under the new model, classroom 3(a) had reverted to 2008 levels and classroom 3(b) to 2003 levels. This decline occurred during the same timespan when the staffing model changed and the staff team no longer had joint planning time and other professional supports.
Space and Furnishings subscale

Figure 5 – Graph: Space & Furnishings Average ECERS-R Scores – 2003-2013

Figure 5: 2003-2010 = pre-FDK; 2013 = post-FDK

The Space and Furnishings subscale considers indoor space, room furnishings, room arrangement, the availability of space for privacy, child-related displays, and gross motor space and equipment. The summary of this sub-scale is presented because, unlike in schools with purpose-built KG classrooms, the kindergarten program continued to operate in the same general space before and after the change to FDK. As described earlier, there was a significant change to the indoor space from pre-to- post conversion to FDK: Pre-conversion, the kindergarten program took place in one large, double-classroom-sized room with ample space whereas in 2012/13, in preparation for FDK, the room was divided into two distinct spaces identified as 3(a) and 3(b). The 2013 ratings remained fairly consistent with the 2008 and 2010 assessments. However, the 2013 assessment showed a lack of furnishings for relaxation and insufficient child-related displays in 3(b). Overall, room 3(b) reverted to the level assessed in 2006, losing some of the gains made under the integrated model.
Personal Care subscale:

Figure 6 - Graph: Personal Care Average ECERS-R Scores – 2003-2013

![Graph showing Personal Care Average scores from 2003 to 2013 for BWGKindergarten Room 3]

**Figure 6: 2003-2010 = pre-FDK; 2013 = post-FDK**

The Personal Care subscale measures greetings and departures, meals, snacks, nap, rest, toileting, diapering, and health and safety practices. This area proved challenging in the BWELC model as the staff team struggled to land on common practices for elements that are fundamental in a child care program and less so in a traditional HDK program. As illustrated, by 2010 the integrated staff team was able to deliver on meeting the identified goals for these elements. However, by 2013, health and safety practices related to toileting and hand washing and questions related to some of the food and nutrition elements translated into lower scores.

These results are included because they reflect the difference in regulatory oversight and compliance requirements between child care programs and kindergarten programs: Within the licensed child care sector, if handwashing and similar health-related practices are not being followed, centres are required to achieve compliance.
Language-Reasoning subscale:

Figure 7 - Graph: Language-Reasoning Average ECERS-R Scores – 2003-2013

![Language - Reasoning average](image)

**Figure 7: 2003-2010 = pre-FDK; 2013 = post-FDK**

The items covered by this subscale are presence and quality of books and pictures, encouraging children to communicate, using language to develop reasoning skills, and informal use of language. The results indicate that, similar to other sub-scales, this area was assessed at its highest level in 2010. The 2013 assessment showed only a minor decline in room 3(a) but a more significant decline in 3(b). Although in the 2013 assessment both rooms were found to have a wide variety and selection of language materials including many books, word games, flannel boards and stories, the observation of 3(b) yielded fewer examples of children being encouraged to communicate and less informal use of language.
Activities subscale

Figure 8 - Graph: Activities Average ECERS-R Scores – 2003-2013

Figure 8: 2003-2010 = pre-FDK; 2013 = post-FDK

The items covered by this subscale are fine motor, art, music/movement, blocks, sand/water, dramatic play, nature/science, math/number, use of TV, videos and/or computers, promoting acceptance of diversity. Once again, the highest score is attributed to 2010. On this sub-scale, a decline is evident in both room 3(a) and 3(b). The areas where lower scores were assigned to both rooms in 2013 included blocks (insufficient for the number of children), limited opportunities for sand and water play (no sand in either room and only a few toys available for water play), dramatic play (limited props and dress-up clothing), math/number activities, and limited diversity in materials promoting acceptance of diversity.
**Interaction Subscale:**

Figure 9 - Graph: Interaction Average ECERS-R Scores – 2003-2013

![Interaction - average](image)

**Figure 9: 2003-2010 = pre-FDK; 2013 = post-FDK**

The items covered by this subscale are supervision of children, discipline, staff-child interactions and interactions among children. Scores in this subscale have been high in each assessment. While this trend continued for the 2013 assessment in one FDK room, in the other room it was observed that there were problems with the degree of supervision that children were receiving.
Program structure subscale

Figure 10 – Graph: Program Structure Average ECERS-R Scores – 2003-2013

![Program Structure - average](chart)

**Figure 10: 2003-2010 = pre-FDK; 2013 = post-FDK**

The items covered in this subscale are schedule, free play, group time, and provisions for children with disabilities.

While both rooms received high scores in the areas of free play, group time and provisions for children with disabilities, post FDK implementation they scored a 2 with respect to the schedule since there was no written schedule posted in either room. A posted schedule is used as a quality indicator in the ECERS-R scale to provide clarity as to the general sequence of events to be followed. Posting a schedule is not required by school boards.
Parents and staff subscale

Figure 11 - Graph: Parents and Staff Average ECERS-R Scores – 2003-2013

![Parents & Staff - Average](image)

**Figure 11: 2003-2010 = pre-FDK; 2013 = post-FDK**

The items covered in this subscale are provisions for parents, personal needs of staff and professional needs of staff; staff interaction and cooperation; supervision and evaluation of staff; opportunities for professional growth.

This subscale saw the most dramatic improvement from the first use of the ECERS-R in 2003 through the ensuing years as the site benefited from a focus on strengthening and supporting the staff as individuals and as a team. While the 2013 assessment did not match the peak value attained in 2010, both rooms appeared to be benefitting from the provisions and practices put in place prior to full-day kindergarten. The one area of change was that specific joint planning time was no longer provided for the teachers and ECEs, and this change negatively impacted the assessment.
2. **Classroom Environment Quality: Toronto Operating Criteria**

The TOC assessments were completed by Program Consultants or Quality Assurance Consultants employed by the City of Toronto as part of their regular jobs. Data were publicly available and were used here. This study compared the results for the kindergarten room over five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 in order to track how quality ratings changed as the program configuration changed. In 2013, the first year of full-day kindergarten implementation, separate assessments were competed for kindergarten room 3(a) and kindergarten room 3(b).

The results are summarized below in graph and table form:

Figure 12 – Graph: Toronto Operation Criteria – Overall Average Score – 2009 - 2013

![Graph: Toronto Operating Criteria – BWELC Kindergarten Room – Overall Average Score](image)

**Figure 12: 2009 - 2011 = pre-FDK; 2012 and 2013 = post-FDK**
Table 6 - Toronto Operating Criteria Scores – BWELC - Kindergarten Room 3: 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Daily schedule</th>
<th>Program plans posted</th>
<th>Activities &amp; experiences</th>
<th>Indoor physical play environment</th>
<th>Displays</th>
<th>Diversity in toys</th>
<th>Art &amp; sensory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(a)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(b)</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Books &amp; accessories</th>
<th>Language &amp; listening</th>
<th>Music &amp; accessories</th>
<th>Computer usage</th>
<th>Dramatic Play</th>
<th>Construction &amp; block play</th>
<th>Cognitive &amp; manipulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(a)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(b)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Science &amp; nature</th>
<th>Active play</th>
<th>Meals &amp; snacks</th>
<th>Equipment for eating</th>
<th>Toileting routines &amp; supplies</th>
<th>Cloakroom &amp; storage</th>
<th>Health &amp; safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(a)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(b)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Toy washing</th>
<th>Children’s hand washing</th>
<th>Staff hand washing</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>Attendance verification</th>
<th>Positive atmosphere</th>
<th>Supervision of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(a)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(b)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Fostering independence</th>
<th>Supporting self esteem</th>
<th>Behaviour guidance</th>
<th>Supporting communication skills</th>
<th>Extending children’s learning</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(a)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Rm3(b)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated above, the program earned a perfect score of 4.0 in 2009 in every area while operating under the integrated BWELC model. The same score was achieved in 2010 and again in 2011 with the following exceptions: There was a minor reduction in the score to 3.94 in 2010 due to issues related to meals and snacks and the cloakroom/storage area. Another minor reduction occurred in 2011 related to computer usage (failure to post guidelines for
children to follow), insufficient equipment for eating, and failing to follow Toronto Public Health guidelines for toy washing.

The 2012 assessment was conducted on September 27, 2012, within the first month after the introduction of full-day kindergarten at BWELC. There was a more significant reduction to the score in this assessment, with an average of only 3.13. The drop in scores corresponds with when the city shifted to a more rigorous assessment process, with the assessments completed by quality assurance analysts rather than the consultants. The change in who was conducting the assessments coincided with the switch in program delivery from the BWELC model to the FDK model. This change in personnel may have had minimal impact on the scores but the decline was not due to the change in rigor of assessment. Table 6 above shows the scores for each item, but the details for the items that dropped by 1 or 2 points are summarized below. The average score improved to 3.36 for both of the kindergarten classrooms (Room 3(a) and Room 3(b)) with the 2013 assessment, which was conducted in May 2013. However, there remained some items that received ratings of 1 or 2.

Table 7: Summary – Toronto Operating Criteria – Areas of decline/reasons for lower score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of decline</th>
<th>Reasons for lower score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily and visual schedules posted</td>
<td>Did not use real pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity in play equipment/toys</td>
<td>No toys and play materials accessible to the children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only one ‘people’ prop accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art/sensory activities, equipment, materials</td>
<td>No modeling material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and accessories (declined in 2012, rebounded in 2013)</td>
<td>Area did not include soft seating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and accessories (declined in 2012, rebounded in 2013)</td>
<td>No variety of music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer usage</td>
<td>No written guidelines posted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dramatic play activities/accessories: remained at level 4 in 2012; declined in 2013

Accessories and equipment did not offer a variety of role-playing opportunities and did not encourage a variety of role playing possibilities

Health and safety (declined in 2012, rebounded in 2013)

Electrical outlets not covered

Children’s handwashing/sanitizing: remained at level 4 in 2012; declined in 2013

Only some children washed hands before snack and children did not follow posted handwashing procedures

Adult handwashing/sanitizing: remained at level 4 in 2012; declined in 2013

Staff did not wash hands before serving snack; Staff did not wash/sanitize their hands before eating, serving food, after toileting and if they wipe children’s noses.

Attendance verification

Main attendance did not reflect the children who left for a small group experience
Staff used portable attendance to record arrival and departure times instead of recording these on a main attendance form.

As with the ECERS-R assessment, the scores on the TOC decreased under the full-day kindergarten operating model and, again, this was often with respect to health and safety issues where standards in early childhood environments are higher and more rigidly enforced than in kindergarten classrooms.
3. Integration, leadership and staff team: Indicators of Change

As previously discussed, the Indicators of Change assessments in 2005, 2006 and 2008 occurred during the lifespan of the official Toronto First Duty project and involved a consistent and broad group of stakeholders including members of the BWELC management committee. Additional assessments occurred in May 2012 (pre-conversion to FDK) and May 2013 (post-conversion to FDK) and these only involved staff working at the site (principal, kindergarten teacher, ECE staff, site manager employed by WoodGreen). The 2012 and 2013 assessments were based on a revised form of the Indicators of Change tool and the areas of Governance and Seamless Access were not included as these were no longer relevant outside of the Toronto First Duty model. The results of these two assessments are summarized in Figure 13 below. In order to provide a broader picture, Figure 14 illustrates the scores across the three dimensions and provides a comparison across time of the assessments completed using the Indicators of Change tool.
Figure 13 – Graph: BWELC – Indicators of Change – 2012, 2013

Figure 14 – Graph: BWELC – Indicators of Change – 2005 - 2013
The spring 2012 assessment before FDK reflects the high degree of integration at the site. This integration was supported by the site leadership team of the school principal and child care manager and by the site’s management committee. Participants described the program as being completely integrated, using a play-based approach and following the Early Learning Framework (ELECT) guidelines. Front-line staff (kindergarten teacher and ECE) reported working together to plan and deliver every aspect of the program, attending professional development sessions together, referring to one another as “room partners” and following the same daily routines including the same lunch hour. They noted that observation and documentation of the children was done together, that any concerns related to children were brought to the team and that input was received from both TDSB staff and WoodGreen’s Special Needs Resource Consultant. The staff team participated in two planning sessions per week and were also able to find time during the day to plan, discuss and reflect on the children. Planning time was facilitated at the site as part of the TFD model but was not built into the FDK model. Staff used a common approach to behaviour management, common language and common strategies. The site manager attended the school staff meetings as part of the broader site staff team. Parent engagement occurred through several strategies including joint curriculum night, access to planning sheets, school blog, sending activities home, encouraging parents to be involved in the classroom, participation on the school council, email communication and a variety of family programs.

The 2013 assessment, post FDK implementation, revealed many changes. Although the front line staff still reported using a common planning framework, they noted that they did not use the same type of formal planning time and, instead, had to find time to meet and plan on a more informal basis. While there were some staffing changes during this time period, there was also consistency within the staff team: In one FDK room the OCT and RECE had both been part
of the team pre-implementation of FDK although the RECE, who had previously been an employee of WoodGreen, was now employed by TDSB. The second FDK room was staffed by an OCT and RECE without prior involvement in BWELC. WoodGreen staff in the extended-day program were individuals with continuous involvement from BWELC through to FDK.

Despite this continuity, there were indications that the two staff in each of the FDK classroom, both of whom were now employees of the school board, no longer functioned as equal room partners. One of the OCTs and one RECE, both of whom had been part of BWELC, participated in the 2013 Indicators of Change focus group and the examples below, transcribed from the 2013 focus group report, provide evidence of the changes:

- With respect to documenting children’s development and progress, staff reported that although they shared observations, the teacher was the one to write the reports
- The RECE was more reluctant to take a lead role
- The RECE was more often performing the “not so great jobs” such as assisting children with toileting routines and cleaning up after activities
- Staff did not express an equal degree of confidence to speak up
- Team members did not consistently ask one another what they thought or wanted
- There were no opportunities for joint professional development

The assessment also recognized the impacts of the different operating model, with the RECE in the classroom during the school day being an employee of the TDSB while the RECE staff providing the extended-day before and after care for the JK/SK children were employees of WoodGreen. Participants acknowledged that there was more segregation, but felt that they still shared the space and information about learning experiences and activities, followed the same rules, expectations and behaviour guidance strategies.
4. Parent/guardian perspectives: Survey

The first round of the survey occurred in spring of 2012, prior to the implementation of full-day kindergarten at the three participating schools. As previously reported, out of the 163 families who were invited to participate, only 17 provided a response. For the second round of the survey in spring of 2013, following the implementation of full-day kindergarten at the three participating schools, out of 274 families who were invited to participate, only 54 provided a response. Thus, this comparison includes 17 families in 2011-2012 and 54 families in 2012-2013. Sections A and B of the survey tool requested background information about the family and the child’s prior program/care experience. Appendix I summarizes the responses for these two sections and includes demographic data collected from respondents, information about the family’s kindergarten child’s characteristics, and information about the child’s prior program/care experiences.

Table 8: Summary of Respondents’ Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between the ages of 35 to 55</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married or living in a common-law relationship</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as first language</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed post-secondary education (college, university undergraduate, graduate degree)</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time (30 hours or more per week)</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child enrolled in child care prior to starting kindergarten</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the final part of the survey (Section C), parents/guardians were asked a series of twelve questions about the experience in JK/SK from both their own perspective and that of their child. They were asked to respond on a Likert scale from “strongly agree” to “agree” to “not sure” to
“disagree” to “strongly disagree”. Although the low number of respondents in 2011-2012 (n=17) cannot be considered representative of the entire population of parents/guardians of children enrolled in junior kindergarten in the three subject schools during the 2011-2012 school year, the results can be interpreted as reflecting positive feedback from the sample since the majority indicated that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statements. Similarly, the low number of respondents in 2012-2013 (n=54) cannot be considered representative of the entire population of parents/guardians of children enrolled in senior kindergarten in the three subject school during the 2012-2013 school year. However, the results display different viewpoints from those recorded for the 2011-2012 school year in every category.

The following pages display the responses to each of the twelve questions, presenting a comparison of responses from round one, pre-implementation of FDK (2011-2012) and from round two (2012-2013), post-implementation of FDK. The results show the percentage of individuals who provided a response using each Likert scale qualifier.
Figures a and b above reveal a modest decrease in the percentage of respondents who strongly agree that the child enjoyed the experience in the kindergarten classroom although the 2012-2013 results still indicate an overall positive response (94% total who strongly agree or agree).
Similar to Q1, the graphs above reveal a decrease in the percentage of respondents who strongly agree that the child benefitted from the kindergarten program. While the 2012-2013 results still indicate an overall positive response (92% total who strongly agree or agree), they also introduce a small percentage who indicated they were not sure or who did not provide a response.
On the issue of quality (Q3), there was a decrease in the percentage of parents reporting they strongly agreed that they were happy with the quality in 2012-2013 (35%) in FDK as opposed to 2011-2012 (43%) in TFD. The 2012-2013 results also revealed that 11% of respondents were not happy with the quality (disagree) whereas no respondents had indicated unhappiness in 2011-2012.
A somewhat larger percentage of respondents in 2012-2013 strongly agreed that the teaching team in FDK made them feel welcome. However, there were also a small percentage of respondents who disagreed with this statement in 2012-2013 and a small percentage of respondents in both years who were not sure.
A somewhat larger percentage of respondents in 2012-2013 strongly agreed that the program helped their child develop socially. However, unlike 2011-2012 where every respondent either strongly agreed or agreed, there were also a small percentage of respondents who disagreed with this statement in 2012-2013 and a small percentage who were not sure or who provided no response.
A somewhat larger percentage of respondents in 2012-2013 strongly agreed that the program helped their child develop academically. In both years there was also a small percentage of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement plus a small percentage who were not sure or who provided no response.
Figures 20a and 20b reveal a decrease in the percentage of respondents who strongly agree that the program provided them with opportunities to be involved in their child’s learning. The 2012-2013 results indicate a 20% decline in the number who strongly agree or agree and introduced a small percentage who disagreed, were not sure or who did not provide a response.
In 2011-2012, all respondents indicated that the program did a good job adjusting to their child’s needs. The 2012-2013 survey returned more of a mixed response, including a decline in the number who agreed, and an increase in the number who were not sure or disagreed.
Although not all respondents in 2011-2012 felt the team helped them understand what their child was learning, the results show a decline in agreement from 82% in 2011-2012 in TFD to only 55% in 2012-2013 in FDK, plus an increase in those who disagreed, up from 6% in 2011-2012 to 26% in 2012-2013, post-implementation of FDK.
As with Q9, although not all respondents in 2011-2012 felt the integrated staff team in TFD provided ideas for learning at home, the results show a sharp decline in agreement from 94% in 2011-2012 to only 58% in 2012-2013 once FDK had been implemented. Furthermore, 23% of respondents disagreed with this statement in 2012-2013 (FDK).
The Q11 responses also demonstrate a decline in agreement from 100% in 2011-2012 (TFD) to only 60% in 2012-2013 (FDK). Furthermore, 29% of respondents disagreed with this statement in 2012-2013, post-implementation of FDK.
Although 6% of respondents disagreed with this statement in 2011-2012 in TFD and another 6% indicated they were not sure, the 2012-2013 FDK results showed a sharp increase in the number of respondents who disagreed (up to 41%), or strongly disagreed (up to 7%), plus 30% who were not sure.
The second round of the survey in 2012-2013 included a final section that was not part of the first round wherein parents/guardians were asked an additional three questions using Likert scale ratings ("strongly agree" to "agree" to "not sure" to "disagree" to "strongly disagree") about the experience in full-day JK/SK from both their own perspective and that of their child. The responses from parents in all three schools are represented in the graphs below:

Figure 27: Survey Section C – Question 13

**Q13: Child adjusted easily to length of day in FDK 2012-2013 (n=54)**

A majority of respondents (65%) reported that their child adjusted easily to the length of day but 15% disagreed with this statement.
A majority of respondents (67%) agreed that their child had adjusted easily to the social and academic demands of the FDK program, but 9% disagreed with this statement.

Figure 29: Survey Section C – Question 15

Q15: Staff team appear to share common roles & responsibilities 2012-2013 (n=54)
A slight majority of respondents (52%) agreed that the staff team appeared to share common roles and responsibilities but 13% disagreed with this statement and 20% indicated they were not sure.

In addition to survey questions 13, 14 and 15 which were added to round two and summarized above, parents/guardians in round two were also asked five questions related to their use or non-use of extended-day programs (before/after school and non-school days) and were provided with an opportunity to provide narrative comments about their experience in the full-day program. When asked if their child was enrolled in the Extended-day Program (EDP) operated by WoodGreen, 49 participants responded to this question, with 27 answering “yes”: six at Bruce, nine at Leslieville, and twelve at Morse. When asked if the EDP met their family’s needs, five families at Bruce responded “yes” (1 did not provide a response), seven at Leslieville responded “yes” and two responded “no”, and all twelve at Morse responded “yes.” Participants were also afforded an opportunity to provide comments. Only a few comments were received, and these spoke to drawbacks and problem areas such as the cost of the program, the lack of a lunch program in FDK, lack of flexibility regarding attendance options and the lack of available extended-day programs for children after FDK. One parent also noted that the FDK program met their family’s child care needs but not necessarily the child’s academic needs. Another parent identified the lack of communication between the FDK program and the extended-day program as problematic.

In summary, parent/guardian perspectives of FDK were generally positive, but with more negative responses in round two across the three sites post-implementation of FDK. The parent/guardian feedback corroborates the ECERS-R, TOC and Indicators of Change results.
pointing to a downturn in quality and in level of integration post-implementation of FDK. This provides good triangulation of the data.

5. Identifying emergent themes: Key informant questionnaires

As previously described, nine key informants were identified to review the results from the ECERS-R and TOC quality assessments, the Indicators of Change focus group discussions and the parent surveys. Each of these individuals had been involved at the BWELC site throughout the course of the TFD demonstration project and/or with TFD on a broader platform. The key themes that emerged were organized into categories and sub-categories by the graduate students and then reviewed by me. These are outlined below:

Category 1 – Approach

This category included the following sub-categories:

- Model and structure of the partnership
  - Regarding the team of Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) and Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT), the emergent themes included degree of collaboration, provision of joint planning time, and whether or not the RECE skillset was being fully utilized.
  - Regarding the coordinator/child care manager, the emergent themes were the changed role and reduced influence in FDK.

- Model and structure of program
  - Emergent themes included the status of the seamless day and scheduling

- Model and structure of philosophy
  - Emergent theme was the status of a common pedagogical approach and common vision, where all staff buy into the same approach.
Model and structure of caregiver relationships

- The emergent theme was that a shift had occurred: Under the BWELC model in TFD there was an open door approach, families had choice in their level of involvement. Post-implementation of FDK parent involvement/presence in the program shifted to become more regulated, limited, and scheduled.

Category 2 – Standards

This category included the following sub-categories:

- Monitoring of the EDP (child care portion of FDK) by Provincial Program Advisors for licensing purposes
- Monitoring by Toronto Children’s Services for quality
- The emergent themes included the different regulations/expectations for child care and kindergarten programs in a number of areas (facilities/room size/number of toilets; staff:child ratios; provision of lunch) and how these differences impacted the program.

Category 3 – Relationships

This category included the following sub-categories:

- Relationship between staff and parents
- Relationship between the leadership and the staff team
- Relationship within the staff team of RECE and OCT

Category 4 – Resources

This category included the sub-categories of financial resources, human resources, and time.

Certain adjustments were made when the responses were reviewed. First, it became apparent that questions one and two could be collapsed for coding purposes since many respondents noted “see above” or “as above”. For Question 3, which referred to the parent...
surveys, multiple respondents commented that the sample size was too low to make accurate inferences. Questions 5 and 6 were also collapsed since most respondents included any “other comments” (asked for in Question 6) in their response to Question 5.

The primary coding scheme was used for all questions and the results appear below. In order to address themes that emerged in the responses to certain questions, additional coding was included as indicated.
Table 9: Key Informant Question Responses

NOTES TO CODING:

1. If a participant mentioned a theme in the response, the number “1” appears in the cell in the participant’s column.

2. If a participant mentioned a theme more than once in the response, the cell is highlighted in yellow.

3. “NR” indicates response unavailable for coding.

QUESTION 1 and QUESTION 2 (combined for coding)

QUALITY: The ECERS-R and TOC data revealed a downturn in quality across many of the indicators and subscales. The Indicators of Change data show a decline in the areas of parent participation, early childhood staff team and the early learning environment. Why do you think the results look like this?

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QUESTION 3

Parent Engagement: Survey data with the few parents who participated showed that they are not as happy with the program post-implementation of FDK. Why do you think the results look like this?

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QUESTION 4

What would you identify as the major challenges in scaling up the BWELC model?

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QUESTION 5 and QUESTION 6 (combined for coding)

What do you feel needs to be done to address the challenges? Any other comments?

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Based on the analysis provided above, key informants identified the model and structure of both the partnership and the program and the decline in integration as major challenges and significant factors negatively impacting the quality of the program. Differences in standards and
expectations between child care and education were also cited as factors. Illustrative quotes from key informants are included below with respect to the emergent themes:

- The level of integration of the staff team went down. During TFD, staff from both areas (child care and TDSB) worked together, which included joint planning opportunities, joint professional development, joint parent teacher interviews. The RECEs working for TDSB in the FDK program do not hold the same responsibilities as the RECEs had in the TFD integrated model: They do not get planning time with the teachers, they are not expected to meet with parents. Their role is more as an Educational Assistant and they are not viewed as being equal with the TDSB OCTs. When staff are no longer working as a full team, they no longer share a sense of mission around children and families: They are no longer working across disciplines, no longer sharing ideas, and no longer working together for improvement of integration.

- Since the role of the RECE in the FDK classroom is not one of an equal partner, many RECEs are not able to sufficiently influence planning and implementation of program elements that would result in higher quality early learning environments.

- Within the school board, the professional value of ECEs is not valued in the same way as that of teachers.

- In BWELC the child care manager played a key role in overseeing and coordinating the early years program which including facilitating the team in working together cohesively and helping the team problem-solve as issues arose. The manager also provided expertise and understanding of the TOC and ECERS-R indicators. In the current FDK program, the child care manager does not play a role in oversight, coordination or support of the FDK team.
• Standards that the extended-day Before-and-After program has to meet for licensing and TOC do not apply to the kindergarten program and this has created challenges in areas such as what is displayed in the room, what procedures are followed and so forth. Quality control is not carried out in kindergartens as it is in regulated child care.

• Parent involvement has decreased since opportunities for parent involvement are more structured and less of an open-door policy. Parents do not have access into the classroom in the FDK program. Parents have also expressed concern about the large number of students in the kindergarten classrooms, about the fact that lunch is no longer provided for their children and that there is only one staff in each FDK room over the lunch period.

• BWELC benefitted from financial resources and support from a team of professionals. This included governance, professional development and curriculum support.

• In the FDK current model, leadership is a challenge. The leadership team was a major component in the BWELC model’s success, with the principal and child care manager providing a united front and following the same policies and procedures. Currently, although the team is still technically in place, TDSB staff report only to the principal and child care staff report only to the child care manager which has caused some tension: The child care manager can make suggestions and provide support but the TDSB staff are under no obligation to listen or follow through.

• In the BWELC model, everyone was on the same page. The staff team was carefully assembled to include individuals with an appreciation for and enthusiasm to embrace the seamless, integrated vision. This included the leadership and staff. Staff were hired knowing they were going into a team teaching environment where no one was considered to be more important than the other and everyone contributed.
• BWELC focussed on quality and collaboration between the RECEs and OCTs and this was reinforced by the leadership team. A common pedagogical approach was valued and intentionally promoted.

• The FDK program is now very separate from the child care. There should be more integration between the child care and school staff.

• Teacher training programs may not specifically prepare teachers for working with kindergarten-aged children and for understanding and embracing a play-based learning philosophy and approach.

• Staff teamwork is crucial to any efforts to integrate and improve the quality of the program and engage parents.

• “Duty to cooperate” is a lofty policy principle but there doesn’t seem to be implementation/professional development work on the conceptual understanding of teamwork, integration with parents, measuring quality, and so forth.

• Over the years, TFD findings showed a correlation between program quality and integration such that as integration declined, so did quality. With the advent of FDK, integration efforts ended in TDSB schools.
First there was the vision: Give Ontario’s children the best possible start in life by providing them with high quality early learning environments that are seamless, integrated, and staffed by professionals in the areas of learning and development (Mustard & McCain, 1999).

Next there was the pilot project: Toronto First Duty, examining the feasibility of delivering integrated early childhood programs that combine kindergarten, child care, parenting supports and other social services and conducting research to track the impact of service integration on children’s developmental outcomes.

From this there evolved: BWELC, one of five pilot sites that weathered ups-and-downs, implementation dips and, ultimately, the successful demonstration of the positive power of integrated staff teams (OCT and RECE), play-based curriculum and a seamless day for children.

And then: Full-day kindergarten for junior and senior kindergarten children across the province of Ontario, including the availability of extended and non-instructional day programs.

And now: The research findings from this study suggest that early implementation of FDK programs do not realize the vision partly due to the lack of integration in the educator teams and to issues of leadership. This, in turn, is associated with lower program quality.

The Theory of Change process described in Chapter 1 outlined required investments in terms of both inputs and outputs that are needed to achieve the desired outcomes and impacts of the FDK program. Key among these are the investments in the staff team at both the direct service and leadership levels in order to foster engagement, support integration and build success. The path to success at BWELC had been built on leadership as documented by converging sources of data including key informant interviews and linked to administrative actions such as arranging for joint professional development and ensuring joint planning time.
Success had also been fostered by a focus on integration and a commitment to quality, informed through an ongoing process of assessment and evaluation. Evaluation is an important tool that helps program implementers take stock of the direction in which they are headed and determine how to improve the journey. It is a process for communicating and giving stakeholders a better understanding of the program while building support for the vision. The current study has been another step in the evaluation process and represents an opportunity to take stock of FDK through the lens of a case study about one school’s experience and to use the findings to suggest improvements to Ontario’s FDK system.

At the outset, this study set out to answer the following research questions:

**Research questions:**

1. **How does the BWELC experience illustrate possible links between policy changes, integration and leadership, and program quality as evidenced by what occurred at the site when it converted from a demonstration project to Ontario’s FDK delivery model?**

2. **What were the challenges in ensuring quality programming in scaling up the FDK platform and how can the lessons learned through the BWELC experience inform ongoing policy development?**

   The evidence provided in this study was derived from multiple data sources: the ECERS-R (program quality), TOC (program quality), Indicators of Change (program and staff integration), parent/guardian surveys (parent perspectives) and key informant questionnaires (expert viewpoints). In answer to the first research question, the data demonstrated that the quality of the program had been negatively impacted by the change in delivery model, by the decline in the level of integration in the educator teams, and by reduced leadership involvement. The parent/guardian survey responses, although limited in number and scope, showed that most
respondents perceived the program to be of high quality and beneficial to the children, but also showed that parents/guardians did not feel that they had sufficient opportunities for involvement, which was identified as an important desired outcome of the FDK model.

The second research question of the current study sought to identify the challenges in ensuring quality programing as the program at BWELC changed to the FDK model and to use the lessons learned from the BWELC case study to address the question of “where do we go from here?” in scaling up FDK. As described in the literature review in chapter two, previous research has shown that FDK has been beneficial to children and families on many fronts. However, as revealed by the data generated in this study, the system continues to face challenges. These are discussed below.

Leadership

While BWELC was part of the TFD demonstration project, it benefitted from strong leadership at both the site-specific level and at a broader system level. TFD received high level support from a steering committee with a mandate to think outside the box, identify and break down barriers, and move from siloed to integrated service delivery. The Steering Committee membership included senior staff from the Ontario Government, Toronto Children’s Services, Toronto Public Health, Toronto District School Board, the Atkinson Foundation, all partner agencies operating TFD pilot sites and other key stakeholders. This group was able to improve partnerships, develop new operating frameworks, and forge ahead on changes to existing systems that would enable effective and meaningful collaboration.

The initiatives that were initially launched at the macro level then cascaded to the micro level, most noticeably at BWELC where during the TFD days, there was cross-over participation at the local governance table, creating a two-way street for idea generation, review and
reflection. The TFD Phase 2 final report recognized the importance of the role of the principal and child care manager at BWELC as integration leaders (Corter et al., 2009, p. 2), and the report concluded that it was evident that the team at BWELC, from the site leadership (principal and child care manager) to the direct contact staff (both TDSB and WoodGreen employees) “got it.”

Given that many of the personnel at BWELC remained consistent pre- and post-implementation of FDK, how could the decline in quality and integration evidenced in the data results be attributed to leadership? The Indicators of Change and Key Informant Questionnaires provide insight into this question. As presented in the Key Informant findings, although the working relationship between the school principal and the child care manager did not change, the dynamics within the environment did change in several ways:

- The child care manager no longer had a direct role in the operation of the FDK program during the regular school day and had no supervisory responsibility for the RECE staff in the FDK program. This negatively impacted her ability to support the program to meet the TOC and ECERS-R (quality) environmental indicators, areas in which she had knowledge, expertise and experience.

- Similarly, the school principal no longer had a direct role in the extended-day program operated by WoodGreen.

- Staff:student ratios in the FDK program changed from 1:10 under the BWELC model to 1:18 or 1:19 in FDK and there were more students overall. These changes resulted in larger numbers of staff, students, parents/guardians and more relationships for the principal and child care manager to manage.
• The RECE staff in the FDK program were new to the site and did not necessarily share the same perspective on integration or the same understanding of play-based learning, presenting a new challenge to leadership;

• There was not the same degree of broad-based, senior level support from other stakeholders at the school board or city levels.

As noted in the Chapter One, within BWELC during TFD, capacity building was a key focus and there was a solid infrastructure in place to ensure that resources were devoted to promoting, supporting, and facilitating working together in new ways. Extending this beyond one school to a whole district and a whole system has proven more daunting. Considering the challenges faced at BWELC where a framework had been collectively developed for integration and collaboration, one can project that the transition to FDK has been even more challenging for other school teams, never a part of TFD, where an operating model has been thrust upon them instead of evolving from the ground up.

When the TFD pilot ended, the Steering Committee ceased to exist, although several members of that group went on to senior positions within the Ministry of Education, entrusted with operationalizing FDK across the province. Current efforts continue to be focused on providing professional development and resources to administrators and other practitioners in leadership roles to shrink the divide. The Leadership Strategy developed by the Ontario Government to foster leadership recognizes the critical role leaders play in creating the conditions for success. The Strategy provides a comprehensive plan of action to foster and support leadership and includes the Early Years. In 2013 the Assistant Deputy Minister for Early Learning in the Ministry of Education announced funding for supervisory level early years lead positions. Among the key responsibilities of the early years leadership position are “leadership
of system-wide implementation of the vision of creating a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services...[and]. coordination of a system plan to strengthen integration of full-day kindergarten, child care, and early years programs” (Grieve, 2013). The government’s intent is that these positions will help realize Ontario’s vision for the early years through strategic planning, focusing on program quality and evaluation, developing processes for issue management and fostering integration.

The leadership practices that were in evidence at BWELC during TFD supported the development of a shared vision, strengthened the organizational structure, enabled collaboration, and engaged parents and other parts of the community. Sustaining these practices on the broader provincial platform of FDK posed implementation challenges, including varying degrees of skill, understanding, and commitment to the vision from those in leadership positions, and these challenges may have undermined the transformative potential (Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002). Without supportive leadership, a strong shared focus, and resources to support collective learning, it is difficult to build the effective professional learning communities that result in positive change (Louis & Kruse, 1995).

The TFD experience represented both transformational and distributed leadership as described in the introduction chapter of this thesis. It focused on building vision, establishing goals, modelling best practice and values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating productive cultures and fostering participation in decisions (Bush, 2007, p. 396). Leadership was distributive in that it involved multiple individuals and not just the designated leaders, and was reliant on interactions and collaborations. The scope of the individuals involved is described in the Appendices B and C that detail the membership structure of both the BWELC management committee and the TFD steering committee. Beyond these individuals, members of the staff
team at the BWELC site also played a leadership role in how they created the learning environment and modelled best practice. Once TFD ended and the kindergarten program became part of the broader FDK system, the type of leadership at the school site level changed and essentially reverted to a managerial leadership approach under the school principal.

System-wide elements of leadership still exist, including the Toronto Child & Family Network, formed in 2012, which operates as a distributive leadership model. The Network is a partnership between a cross-section of agencies and organizations that share the same goal of promoting positive outcomes for children and families. The Network drives change and contributes to services by:

- enhancing community engagement at the local and system level
- organizing and integrating services with the goal of improved outcomes for children
- aligning provincial, municipal and community planning, policies, processes and programs. (City of Toronto, 2016)

The Network’s Steering Committee includes leaders from various sectors and community-based/sectoral subcommittees plan and provide advice on the development of a high-quality, accessible and comprehensive system of services for children from birth to 12 years of age.

Integration

Integration is a key part of the Ontario Early Years Framework vision and is an important factor in achieving success. The Indicators of Change results for the current study, which reveal how the staff team was functioning, provide a good reflection on the area of integration post-implementation of FDK. The Indicators of Change process was important for TFD on a macro level in that it mapped both the challenges and opportunities inherent in increased collaboration
and coordination between key players. The 2012 pre-FDK assessment at BWELC reflected the high degree of integration at the site, with stakeholders describing the program as being completely integrated, using a play-based approach and following the Early Learning Framework (ELF) guidelines. The staff in the kindergarten room referred to one another as “room partners”, despite the differences in credentials, and reported working together to plan and deliver every aspect of the program. By the 2013 assessment, post-implementation of FDK, much had changed. While families still had access to child care through the extended day before-and-after programs, the change in the operating model meant that there was less integration and the program was no longer seamless: Children were with one group of ECEs before and after school and with different educators during the FDK portion of the day.

When the transition to FDK occurred, some staff members in the FDK program at the time were new to one another and not all members had been part of the team within BWELC. During the focus group discussion, it was reported that the OCT and RECE no longer functioned as equal room partners, and aspects of the roles and responsibilities of the positions were distinct and disconnected: The OCT held responsibility for writing reports, RECEs were reluctant to take a lead role and were often stuck performing the “not so great jobs” (helping children change soiled clothing, cleaning up after creative activities, emptying the water table and so forth). The key informant responses also pointed to differences in the relationships between the OCT and RECE, specifically citing the issue of no common planning time for the team as a barrier to integration. These findings about the relationship between the OCT and RECE are further reinforced by other studies: The Schools at the Centre report provides an insightful analogy that was expressed by a number of participants in their study who “describe the relationship as an ‘arranged marriage’ with no time to date in advance” (Janmohamed et al., 2014, p. 26). From
research conducted in Peel Region, Pelletier (2014) also reported that “research reports have been consistent with some of the stories of teachers having more power than ECEs in the classroom and with inequities in working conditions” but also noted “increasing collaboration” (Pelletier, 2014).

As noted by one key informant, throughout the span of TFD, BWELC focused on quality and collaboration between the RECE and OCT. The joint team of educators was supported and reinforced by the school principal and child care manager and a common pedagogical approach was valued and intentionally promoted. BWELC as a whole (including programs for preschool and school age children) experienced an implementation dip in 2006/2007 when integration wavered. The impact of this was captured in the TFD Phase 2 report which noted that as integration decreased, quality also decreased as measured by lower scores on the ECERS-R and on the 2007 TOC assessment (Corter et al., 2009). The evidence from the current study demonstrates that this implementation dip is seen again in the introduction of FDK at BWELC: Findings from environment ratings, the Indicators of Change, parent/guardian surveys and key informant questionnaires also point to a decline in quality corresponding to a decline in integration. In response to the 2006/2007 implementation dip, several interventions helped turn the situation around, including the engagement of a curriculum specialist by the governance committee to work with the team and a change in on-site leadership to re-marshall the forces. Over time, these investments in resource provision brought about changes that enabled the program to reach its pinnacle of success. It is important to note that, had these supports and resources not been available, it is possible that the identified problems would not have been resolved, and BWELC would likely have fizzled out instead of regaining traction and moving forward. Support of this nature is costly and, given the restrictive funding environment facing
school boards and a number of competing demands, it seems unlikely that this degree of support would be available to the current FDK system.

That said, integration remains of key importance in building a system for children and families that will meet the desired outcomes. Press et al. (2010) provide the following definition of integrated services:

Integrated services provide access to multiple services to children and families in a cohesive and holistic way. They recognise the impact of family and community contexts on children’s development and learning and focus on improving outcomes for children, families and communities. Through respectful, collaborative relationships, they seek to maximise the impact of different disciplinary expertise in a shared intent to respond to family and community contexts (Press et al., 2010, p. 53).

Integration requires a clear sense of purpose and a shared vision and philosophy, especially when different agencies or teams are coming together. Wong, Press and Sumsion (2012) note that “achieving integration requires action at every level of the organization so that it becomes part of its culture and ethos...integration is dependent on teamwork and strong working partnerships” (Wong, Press, & Sumsion, 2012, p. 6). Currently, the lack of system-wide action has meant that integration has not been achieved. However, as demonstrated through the literature, system change can best be accomplished when leadership focuses on building the capacity of the local staff team and provides support for collaboration and reflection so that integration improves. The Ontario government has demonstrated a commitment to this type of collaborative and reflective process, engaging with stakeholders while implementing big system change to avoid unintended consequences. One example of this is the recent consultation process undertaken by the Ministry of Education on regulatory changes to the new Child Care
and Early Years Act. This type of process, together with a sharing of information and a commitment to continued dialogue, facilitates transformational change.

Staff team

Key informants in the current study expressed that limited access to joint planning time is a barrier to creating strong professional partnerships in the classroom, a theme that is echoed in the Schools at the Centre Report (Janmohamed et al., 2014, p. 26). During the BWELC era, team planning meetings included both the OCT and the RECE. Depending on the scope of the meetings, the site’s child care manager and other resource professionals would participate in these meetings as well. Providing time for the teams to meet and using a democratic approach during team meetings was a key driver for success, enabling individuals to move out of old roles and to get excited about how they could contribute to driving improvement. In telling the story of the BWELC experience, the TFD Phase 2 final report noted that “with strong leadership and time to meet, integrated staff teams can improve the quality of their work together and strengthen a common pedagogy, curriculum and learning environment they provide for children” (Corter et al., 2009, p. 5). In the current system, access to joint planning time is inconsistent. Despite the legislated “duty to cooperate” (Government of Ontario, 2010), and the recognition that joint planning is of great value in positioning the educators to meet the learning goals of the children, the provision of time and space to meet as an integrated team is left to individual schools. It is also difficult to assess how joint planning meetings are conducted when they do occur, and if the input of all participants is encouraged and valued.

In order to have an integrated and coherent program, it is essential to move beyond having two people in the room with different backgrounds with no support for meeting regularly to plan and receive feedback. Wong et al. (2012) highlight that “staff must find ways to retain
their specialist expertise while broadening their knowledge and skills through working with other professionals” (Wong et al., 2012, p. 7). Providing such opportunities is of great importance given that OCTs working in FDK classrooms may not have received sufficient training to be able to understand and value play-based learning and RECEs may not have sufficient understanding of the goals and learning priorities of the kindergarten curriculum.

Another area that was identified by the key informants as a barrier to building a successful partnership and an integrated approach was insufficient opportunity for ongoing joint professional development. In the BWELC model, joint professional development was a cornerstone of the program’s operations: Coverage was provided by WoodGreen for the kindergarten-based ECEs to attend relevant TDSB professional development activities, and TDSB staff participated in WoodGreen-sponsored training sessions including age-group specific learning around behavioural expectations and child management strategies. School boards have started to make inroads into this area including, in some instances, inviting the Extended-day Program ECEs to attend sessions alongside the kindergarten educator teams and providing money to cover the costs of replacement staff.

Efforts are also being made by school boards and the government to engage educators, both within their teams and individually, in training in How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). This framework represents an important step forward since it embeds quality within the regulations. The framework is organized around four foundations or “frames”: Belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression. The framework is intended to support pedagogy and curriculum/program development in all early years programs and these four frames are central to Ministry of Education’s recently released (interim) The Kindergarten Program, 2016. Initiatives are also
being enacted through other key stakeholders. These include the TDSB’s newly formed professional learning network, Kindergarten L.I.V.E.: Kindergarten Leaders Inspiring Visions of Excellence, which “engages educators in rich and meaningful learning” (Toronto District School Board, 2015). Providing these professional learning opportunities represents a positive step forward, and can strengthen the early learning team if members are able to participate in training together.

A key premise in Pascal’s vision was that by configuring FDK educator teams to include both a certified teacher and an RECE, each profession’s training, skills and perspectives would make valuable contributions that would help children flourish. Akin to this was the idea that the professions could form a learning community, sharing ideas, strategies and approaches and continuously learning from one another. Studies such as Schools at the Centre (Janmohamed et al., 2014) suggest that there has been positive movement towards reciprocal mentoring and professional respect, but the status of ECEs versus teachers is still a problem, and structural factors need to be addressed. Professional teamwork and respect are connected to quality, and well-functioning educator teams are essential to achieving positive learning outcomes.

Boosting integration will not just happen: It requires time for educator teams to work, plan, problem-solve and learn together and the system will continue to benefit from creating communities of learning, where ideas are shared across boards and jurisdictions. Some solutions are already underway: For example, through the Toronto Child and Family Network, Toronto Children’s Services is working with community representatives and both the Toronto Catholic and Toronto Public School Boards on reinvigorating the Working Together resource. This resource, which included separate documents for school boards, child cares and family support programs, was developed by the Best Start Network in 2005 to guide collaborative development
among early years service providers, focusing on programs in schools. It is hoped that the revamped resource, framed around the principles of *How Does Learning Happen?* will be available electronically and provide practical examples, suggestions and scenarios to key stakeholders including school and child care administrators and direct contact staff on how to work together to achieve success.

As noted earlier in this thesis, the very low parent survey response rate meant that only minimal data were gleaned from parents overall and scant data were available to specifically compare the experience at BWELC pre- and post- conversion to the FDK/EDP model. Nevertheless, potential themes did emerge from the parent survey data. Responses in the second year suggest a downward shift in virtually all areas that were addressed in both years. Parent responses to the additional questions asked in year 2 revealed mixed views on whether the staff team appeared to share common roles and responsibilities.

Among the factors that set Ontario’s FDK apart from other full-day programs, two of the most significant elements are the educator teams that include both an OCT and an RECE, and the play-based curriculum. Given the emphasis on play, it is important to recognize that the members of the educator teams may have different conceptualisations of play and play-based learning. A recent study by Fesseha and Pyle (2016) explored how kindergarten teachers in Ontario define play-based learning. From survey data they collected from 69 participants, they developed two definitions of play, one focused on social development through play and the other on academic and social development, but also noted that there were inconsistencies in participants’ definitions and implementation of play-based learning in kindergarten classrooms (Fesseha & Pyle, 2016, p. 1). Chapter two included a discussion of research findings that highlighted play as an important part of early childhood pedagogy (Elkind, 2007, 2012; Hewes,
2006; Kagan et al., 2009; Klugman, 1997; NAEYC, 2009; Singer & Singer, 1992; Skolnick et al., 2013; Stegelin, 2005; Zigler & Bishop-Josef, 2009). Play is embedded in Ontario’s kindergarten curriculum as a result of such findings. However, as discussed by Fesseha and Pyle, the current lack of a consistent definition of play-based learning is a major concern. Therefore, the development of a consistent definition is essential in order to provide educator teams “with a basis on which to construct their play-based pedagogy” (Fesseha & Pyle, p. 12) in order for there to be successful implementation of the FDK program.

The educator teams and curriculum approach are important factors in creating quality early learning environments: It is likely that children can benefit from the combined expertise and skills of professionals who are knowledgeable in child development, observation, curriculum and pedagogy and from the opportunity to explore and engage in a learning environment that is responsive to their needs and interests. In addition, children who participate in Extended-day Programs are provided with continued opportunities to be under the care of ECEs, both to extend the learning from the FDK program and explore other areas of interest.

Through its involvement in Toronto First Duty, BWELC benefitted from being the subject of on-going research, and the research findings went on to inform both policy and practice. With a steady stream of visitors to the site, BWELC was continuously striving to improve and demonstrate best practice in terms of curriculum, teamwork, integrated services and responsiveness to the needs of families. As one of the key informants noted, BWELC was a recognized early leader and received attention from researchers and professionals accordingly. This attention, and the intense research lens, probably helped to promote reflective practice and continuous learning among the participants, and this built strength of character as well as
strengthening the program since professionals were routinely asked “why?”, “what next?” and “how?” as the model developed.

While research into FDK is ongoing, BWELC is not currently in the spotlight (outside of the current study). From my perspective, this has translated into more of a status quo approach to the day-to-day operations and less of a charge towards innovation. For the moment, the FDK program at Bruce Public School may still look and function somewhat differently from the program at other schools because many of the key players are still in place, most notably the school principal and child care manager plus a few of the front-line staff. This team is providing some continuity of approach and is still working within the framework that was put in place pre-FDK implementation. However, as discussed earlier, there have been changes to the degree of involvement and influence that the child care manager has in the FDK classroom during the regular school day and differences in the school principal’s involvement in the extended-day child care program. The orientation towards and commitment to shared leadership will not necessarily be found in many other schools or at a macro level at the TDSB or other school boards: Child care managers responsible for the Extended-day Program are not generally considered part of a school’s leadership team. The BWELC team pre-FDK implementation was successful because there was buy-in to the shared vision from all participants, including the kindergarten teacher, the ECEs, the principal and the child care manager. Team members recognized that the key elements to success included mutual respect as professionals and time for joint activities: planning, professional development, documenting children’s progress, reporting to parents, and creating a positive learning environment. Under the school-board operated FDK programs, these elements are not consistently in evidence.
System change is a challenging process. The Theory of Change framework presented earlier in this thesis related to the development of the FDK program at BWELC and outlined a number of desired results/impacts. The BWELC model pre-implementation of FDK had accomplished the desired results as evidenced by the scores on the three assessment measures. These scores demonstrated that the program was providing quality programming for children through play; opportunities for communication with parents/guardians; partnerships; enhanced sense of mission and shared goals; a full-day early learning program delivered by a team of professionals and including extended-day options for families; a staff team of certified teacher and RECE work collaboratively; parents/guardians are engaged as active participants; better outcomes for children. While the current FDK program at Bruce is having some of these impacts by providing a play-based program delivered by a team of professionals and supported by extended-day options, the program is falling short in other areas: There is less collaboration within staff teams, less engagement of parents/guardians, less sense of a shared mission and shared goals, and less of an emphasis on partnerships.

Ontario’s policy and framework for the FDK program was based on research that demonstrated that a full-day kindergarten program with a play-based curriculum delivered by a professional team of certified teachers and early childhood educators offered the best formula for creating high quality early learning environments. The focus of the past five years has been on getting the FDK system in place. If the themes that emerged from the experience at Bruce Public School are indicative of the broader FDK experience, it appears that it will take several more years to get it working effectively. Creating FDK required thinking outside the box, challenging existing norms, and asking “what if” and “how?” We’re not finished with answering those or other questions.
My detailed involvement in all aspects of TFD and BWELC can be viewed as both a significant limitation of this study because of potential bias and as a benefit, providing a depth and breadth of knowledge. To minimize against bias influencing the results I relied on assessments conducted by other trained professionals. In the case of the ECERS-R and Indicators of Change focus groups conducted post-implementation of FDK, the assessments were conducted by graduate students who were aware of the study’s goals but who were unknown to me and to the staff teams. The TOC assessments were conducted by trained staff from Toronto Children’s Services as part of the City’s own annual process and were not directly related to the goals of this study. The ECERS-R, TOC and Indicators of Change assessments generated numeric responses for presentation and interpretation. The concurrent triangulation approach determined a convergence of results from the different data collection methods. A second limitation is the generalizability of the findings from this study to FDK programs generally since the thesis was designed as a single case study focusing on only one school site, with minimal back-up data provided from parents/guardians at two other schools. As noted in the introductory section of this thesis, the experience captured within this study may or may not be representative of the broader experience within the city or the province. That said, the experience at BWELC, a single location, provided much of the impetus for Ontario’s Full-Day Learning program, so the continued evolution of the BWELC case study is a story worth telling.
Recommendations

The findings of the current study, including feedback from key informants, point to certain recommendations for moving forward:

1) Focus on leadership:

Within school environments, the principal and/or vice-principal is considered to be the leadership. The BWELC model demonstrated that a leadership team including the child care manager could be instrumental in fostering integration while building on the professional expertise of leaders from different parts of the sector (Corter et al., 2007). The model also imbued members of the educator team with leadership responsibilities, allowing them to create a new form of partnership and collectively build on a shared vision. Building leadership capacity within educators and leadership teams both within school sites and across the early years sector should be a priority focus, with strategies and resources put in place developed to support this development.

Whalley et al. (2008) conducted research into a leadership program developed in the UK known as the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) which was “rooted in a pedagogy of participation” (Whalley et al., 2008, p. 7) and included a multi-disciplinary focus. This program was developed during a period when services for children and families were being integrated and its development was inspired by the need to support early years leaders through the integration process. During the pilot phase, the NPQICL was rated as being successful, with participants rating the approach as “very satisfactory…providing academic challenge…[and] resulting in significant changes in practice” (Whalley et al., 2008, p. 9). The program’s characteristics include promoting learning communities, building on previous knowledge and experience of participants and actively involving participants in the processes of their own change. Experiential learning, mentoring,
tutoring, peer learning and networking are used as learning tools (Whalley et al., 2008). A program of this nature could make a significant contribution to Ontario’s early years sector and further consideration is recommended.

2) **Focus on integration:**

How can levels of integration be improved? Some key informants suggested that the school boards should operate the EDPs as well as the FDK programs, a recommendation that was originally put forward in *With our best future in mind* (Pascal, 2009). Would this change result in more of an investment from school board leadership positions? Would the role of RECEs change? Would levels of integration improve? Would quality improve? Perhaps, but this is an unlikely direction in the short term given the potential impacts and ramifications to the broader early years sector. Such a move would also require providing school board leaders with a greater understanding of the child care sector, including legislative and regulatory frameworks. It is possible to find mechanisms through which school leaders and educator teams – including staff working directly in FDK and those working in EDP programs – can work together. By reflecting on their current practice and engaging in collective discussion, these teams could generate new approaches to improve early years environments, foster learning and development in children, and engage parents/guardians.

3) **Focus on the staff team and foster professional learning communities:**

Continued professional development and support are integral to quality early childhood provision (OECD, 2006). Therefore, ongoing joint professional development and building professional learning communities must be a priority. A review of research into professional development conducted by Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung (2007) found that teacher learning involved three iterative processes: engaging with prior knowledge and practices;
developing awareness of new information; and creating dissonance with current practice. How can this learning best be accomplished? The effectiveness of one-off events in achieving change in practice is questionable (Burgess, Robertson, & Patterson, 2010; MacNaughton & Hughes, 2007). Providing educator teams with opportunities to participate in professional dialogue and collective reflection in order to jointly examine their practice in ongoing cycles is a far more effective process for professional learning (Colmer, Waniganayake, & Field, 2014, p. 104).

Professional learning is supported where groups of educators with varying qualifications, such as the educator teams within FDK, work collaboratively in documentation of practice and co-construction of pedagogy (Urban, Vandenbroeck, Peeters, Lazzari, & van Laere, 2011). Within the FDK educator teams, building a common understanding of play-based learning is a prime area for joint learning. Using the provincial How Does Learning Happen? document as a cornerstone for this joint learning can be an excellent starting point since the document describes how relationships, environment, family and educators are essential elements in learning and in enhancing a child’s optimal development. While establishing professional learning communities and regular processes for collaborative learning may be difficult to achieve due to limited resources (Woodrow & Busch, 2008), this needs to be given priority attention by early years leaders if the educator teams are going to be successful and impactful.

Inter-professional practice can be a driver for organizational change (Edwards, 2009). Key elements of inter-professional practice include collaboration, knowledge sharing and learning from practice (Wong et al., 2012). In order for integration to be successful, team members need to understand how integration will improve their program’s ability to achieve its intended outcomes. They need to believe that what they are doing is in the best interest of the program and that it is connected to the program’s purpose and priorities.
4) **Focus on quality:**

Ontario’s FDK programs are intended to provide high quality early learning environments. Looking at the BWELC program through the lens of the ECERS-R and the TOC helped identify areas for improvement at the site. The lessons learned may provide insight into how to ensure that Ontario meets its goals for early learning.

The ECERS-R assessments at BWELC revealed that the site received its highest evaluation in 2010 at the point in time when it had benefitted from substantial and ongoing professional and team development work and was operating as an integrated system. The 2010 scores reflected a positive turn-around at the site after an implementation dip in 2006-2007, a decline which was captured at the time through the TOC review. The implementation dip manifested in the early learning environment as a decline in integration around curriculum and common learning outcomes and within the staff team as staff focused more on their respective programs than on working across programs. There were also fewer opportunities for professional development and fewer joint staff development events (Corter et al., 2009; Corter et al., 2007). Hurdles in implementation have to be understood in the context of change often taking a period of years instead of months. By 2007 BWELC had been operating for many years, but implementation is not just the initial step and the program was still implementing a change agenda in an ongoing process of improvement in a complete system. In response to the decline in both integration and quality, efforts became focused on actively pursuing integration with respect to curriculum and pedagogical approaches. To achieve this goal, professional development was organized for the staff team and an action plan was developed and implemented. The early years team members, under the leadership of the school principal and
the child care manager, were able to re-focus, re-envision, and re-vamp their program. The success of their undertaking is reflected in the 2008 and 2010 ECERS-R results.

The areas of professional development and fostering integration have been discussed above, so the question becomes how to support these areas to improve quality. Some of these challenges could be resolved by an increase in financial resources from the province and school boards to enhance joint planning time and professional development opportunities for educator teams. Despite the many competing demands for resources, the early years need to remain a priority with respect to policy development and funding allocations.

Visions are aspirational. The progress over the last fifteen years towards achieving the vision of creating a system that provides better outcomes for children has been impressive and transformational. At a systems level, the child care portfolio has been moved from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services into the Ministry of Education, which supports integration and recognizes the important role of child care as part of the early learning system. In the policy realm, we have seen the full implementation of FDK which now serves over 750,000 children across the province, the new How Does Learning Happen? policy framework, and the replacement of an outdated Ontario Day Nurseries Act with the recently proclaimed new Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. The advent of Ontario’s College of Early Childhood Educators in 2007 has contributed to the professionalism of early childhood educators and created a platform for promoting ongoing professional development and joint professional learning. We have experienced system and transformational change, backed up with key commitments from the government to modernization and stabilization. The provincial government continues to work in collaboration and cooperation with other levels of government on transformational change.
The contribution of the current study has been to show how processes that were critical to success at a demonstration site were difficult to reproduce on a large scale when implementing broader system change. The thesis provided an evidence-based understanding of how the processes of leadership, integration and effective change management were of critical importance to the successful implementation of a seamless, integrated, high quality program at the BWELC demonstration site. These processes had been shown in previous local and international research to be pathways to success (Bennett & Kaga, 2010; Bush, 2007; Clarkin-Phillips, 2011; Cleveland & Colley, 2013; Corter & Pelletier, 2009; Fullan, 2001; Harris, 2009; Kaga et al., 2010; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Press et al., 2010; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007; UNESCO, 2010).

Despite some watering down during the process of scaling up at one site, this study nevertheless points to opportunities to realign leadership, integration and change management as the system moves forward in realizing the vision of providing high quality early learning environments to create better outcomes for children and families. The thesis contributes valuable insight to the literature on early years policy and integrated services and highlights the important processes that lead to positive outcomes in scaling up from a demonstration site to broader policy.

Naturally, these recommendations are seriously limited by the nature of a single case study approach. System-wide research will be necessary to draw more generalizable conclusions. The hope is that this study has generated useful ideas and further questions that can inform this more comprehensive evaluation of the implementation progress of the policies and programs central to this case study.
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Ziggler, E., & Finn-Stevenson, M. (2007). From research to policy and practice: The school of

Appendix A - Bruce WoodGreen Learning Environment
Appendix B: Membership of BWELC Management Committee – 2004

The Management Committee consists of 11 members. Ex-officio members do not have a vote.

A. **Toronto District School Board**
   1. Principal, Bruce Public School
   2. Superintendent of Education
   3. Manager, Parenting and Family Literacy Programs
   4. Alternate for Manager
   5. Lead Instructor, Parenting and Family Literacy Programs

B. **WoodGreen Community Centre of Toronto**
   5. Director, Child Care Services

C. **Parents/Community**
   6. Chairperson, Bruce School Council
   7. Additional Parent Representative

D. **City of Toronto**
   8. Program Manager, Toronto First Duty
   9. Program Consultant, Children’s Services Division

E. **Atkinson Centre – University of Toronto**
   9. Executive Director

F. **Atkinson Charitable Foundation**
   10. Executive Administrator

G. **The Crèche Child & Family Centre**
   11. Manager of Early Intervention

H. **Research Team**
   12. OISE
   13. OISE

I. **Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre**
   14. Project Manager
Appendix C: Membership of Toronto First Duty Steering Committee – 2004

1. Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development
2. Atkinson Charitable Foundation
3. City of Toronto
   a. Director, Contracted Services, Toronto Children’s Services
   b. Regional Director, Family Health/Healthy Lifestyle, Toronto Public Health
   c. Policy Development Officer, Social Development and Administration Division
4. Child Care Education Foundation
5. Elementary Toronto Teachers
6. Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario
7. OISE Research Team
8. Ontario Government Ministry of Children and Youth Services – Manager, Compliance Review Services
9. Ryerson University
10. Senior staff from the five TFD pilot sites: East York/East Toronto; Macaulay Child Development Centre; NYAD (Not Your Average Daycare); The Crèche Child & Family Centre; WoodGreen Community Services
11. Toronto District School Board, Superintendent, Early Years
**ECERS-R Profile**

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### I. Space & Furnishings (1-5)
- 1. Indoor space
- 2. Furnishings for routine use, play & learning
- 3. Furnishings for relaxation & comfort
- 4. Room arrangement for play
- 5. Space for privacy
- 6. Child-related display
- 7. Space for gross motor play
- 8. Gross motor equipment

#### Obs. 1
- average subscale score

#### Obs. 2

### II. Personal Care Routines (9-14)
- 9. Greeting/departing
- 10. Meals/snack
- 11. Nap/rest
- 12. Toileting/diapering
- 13. Health practices
- 14. Safety practices

### III. Language-Reasoning (15-18)
- 15. Books and pictures
- 16. Encouraging children to communicate
- 17. Using language to develop reasoning skills
- 18. Informal use of language

### IV. Activities (19-28)
- 19. Fine motor
- 20. Art
- 21. Music/movement
- 22. Blocks
- 23. Sand/water
- 24. Dramatic play
- 25. Nature/science
- 26. Math/number
- 27. Use of TV, video, and/or computer
- 28. Promoting acceptance of diversity

### IV. Interaction (29-33)
- 29. Supervision of gross motor activities
- 30. General supervision of children
- 31. Disciplines
- 32. Staff-child interactions
- 33. Interactions among children

### VI. Program Structure (34-37)
- 34. Schedule
- 35. Free play
- 36. Group time
- 37. Provisions for children with disabilities

### VII. Parents and Staff (38-43)
- 38. Provisions for parent
- 39. Provisions for personal needs of staff
- 40. Provisions for professional needs of staff
- 41. Staff interaction and cooperation
- 42. Supervision and evaluation of staff
- 43. Opportunities for professional growth

### Average Subscale Scores

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APPENDIX E

TORONTO OPERATING CRITERIA

(pre-2014)

1. Structure of the Day
   - Daily and visual schedules posted
   - Program plans/Outline of activities posted
   - Activities and experiences offered to children

2. Physical Environment
   - Indoor physical environment
   - Displays
   - Diversity in play equipment/Toys

3. Learning
   - Art/Sensory activities, equipment and materials
   - Books and accessories
   - Language and learning
   - Music and accessories
   - TV and/or Movie Usage (not applicable to BWELC Kindergarten room assessments)
   - Computer usage
   - Dramatic play activities and accessories
   - Construction/Block activities and accessories
   - Cognitive/Manipulative activities and accessories
   - Science and nature experiences and accessories and materials
4. Physical Needs
   - Meals and/or snack time
   - Equipment required for eating/seating
   - Toileting/Diapering routines and supplies
   - Cots and bedding (not applicable to BWELC Kindergarten room assessments)
   - Cloakroom space and storage

5. Health and Safety
   - Health and safety
   - Toys and play equipment washing
   - Children’s hand washing/Sanitizing practices
   - Staff hand washing/Sanitizing practices
   - Transitions
   - Attendance verification

6. Interactions
   - Positive atmosphere
   - Supervision of children
   - Fostering children’s independence
   - Supporting the development of self esteem
   - Behaviour guidance
   - Supporting the development of communication skills
   - Extending children’s learning
**APPENDIX F**

**Toronto First Duty Indicators of Change**

*Benchmarking dimensions of early childhood service integration*

1. **Local Governance**

   1.1 Program mandate, Policies & Practices

   - Establish a single governance structure that is responsible for financial, human resource, and operational decisions
   - Use joint program statement for the common early learning and care program that meets all relevant requirements.

   1.2 Service Planning & Monitoring

   - Carry out common service planning and monitor use of early learning and care program within the defined catchment area

   1.3 Allocation of Financial, Space & Program Resources

   - Manage and administer a pooled funding envelope, space and program resources for the common early learning & care program

   1.4 Human Resources

   - Use common human resource policies and practices for the early childhood staff team.

2. **Seamless Access**

   2.1 Capacity

   - Provide access to a common early learning and care program for all children 0-6 and their parents in the catchment area, regardless of parents’ work status, family SES, age or special needs.
   - Have links to early intervention, community health, and social services in a common program that are accessible as needed
2.2 Child Care Provision & Affordability
- Expand provision of flexible nonparental care through a common early learning and care program that accommodates the changing needs of families in the area with young children 0-6 years.
- Support integrated early learning and care with base funding and standard, affordable fees for some of the programs.

2.3 Intake, Enrollment & Attendance
- Use a common intake form and attendance system for all common early learning and care programs.
- Monitor utilization to ensure participation includes all groups within the community

3. Early Learning Environment

3.1 Curriculum Framework & Pedagogical Approach
- Establish and implement program philosophy, goals, and objectives that support children’s early development as part of common early learning & care program.

3.2 Daily Routines and Schedules
- Use a single schedule for a common early learning and care program with a variety of activities available to young children and their families.

3.3 Use of Space
- Redefine combined common early learning and care program space by its function, rather than the program operator.

3.4 Children’s Development & Progress
- Use a common mechanism/approach to track children’s development, identify difficulties, and provide early intervention where appropriate

3.5 Program Quality
- Use a common mechanism to monitor & ensure program quality

4. Early Childhood Staff Team

4.1 Program Planning & Implementation
- Plan and deliver consolidated activities in the common early learning and care program

4.2 Behaviour Guidance/Child Management
- Carry out common behavior guidance protocol

4.3 Roles & Responsibilities
- Establish common roles and responsibilities for the early childhood staff team.
- Revise job description of the early childhood staff team and supervisors to reflect expectations

4.4 Staff Development
- Provide common staff development for combined early childhood team

5. Parent Participation

5.1 Parent Input & Participation in Programs
- Establish a common approach to ensure meaningful parental input into programming decisions
- Encourage regular parent participation in all aspects of the common early learning and care program

5.2 Parenting Capacity
- Involve parents in regular, ongoing activities that benefit parenting abilities

5.3 Relationships with Families
- Establish common policies and practices that build responsive, reciprocal relationships with families

APPENDIX G

Survey

Principal Researcher: Elaine Levy
Research Supervisor: Dr. Janette Pelletier
SURVEY FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN FULL DAY EARLY LEARNING KINDERGARTEN (FDELK)

General instructions:

The purpose of this survey is to assess how parents/guardians experience Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten programs in which their children are enrolled and, in particular, to identify the changes that parents/guardians experience as their children move from a half-day program to the FDELK program. To this end, parents/guardians will be asked to complete a survey at two points in time: (1) in spring 2012 when your child has been in JK for the school year; (2) in spring 2013 when your child has been in SK for the school year.

The survey includes questions concerning your attitudes towards FDELK, any changes you have noticed/experienced from when your child was enrolled in a half-day program to when he/she was enrolled in the FDELK program - particularly if your child was enrolled in a child care program prior to starting in the FDELK program, your satisfaction with the program, and any impacts of the FDELK program on your family life.

The survey also asks some very important background information questions which will help us interpret the results.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance in completing this survey. Any information you provide will be treated confidentially. Please do not write your name or your child’s name on this form.

SECTION A: Background

A1. Your postal code:     □ Male     □ Female
A2. Your gender:          □ 18-24     □ 25-34     □ 35-44     □ 45-54     □ 55-64
A3: Your age:             □ Married/Common-law □ Single □ Divorced □ Widow/er
A4: Your marital status   □ 1st language:
A5: Your language(s):     □ 2nd language:
                          At home we speak:
A6: Your country of birth:
                          □ Canada
                          □ Other country: ______________________________________
                          If other country: Number of years in Canada:
A7: Your cultural, racial, religious or ethnic origin (please describe however you see yourself, in a way that you feel comfortable):
A8: What is the highest level of education that you and/or your partner have completed?
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<tr>
<td>□ Completed community college or technical</td>
<td>□ Completed community college or technical college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Completed undergraduate university degree</td>
<td>□ Completed undergraduate university degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Completed graduate/advanced university degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A9: What is your current employment status and/or the employment status of your partner?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myself</th>
<th>My partner</th>
<th>□ N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Full time (30 hours or more per week)</td>
<td>□ Full time (30 hours or more per week)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Part time</td>
<td>□ Part time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Parental leave</td>
<td>□ Parental leave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Unemployed</td>
<td>□ Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Stay at home parent</td>
<td>□ Stay at home parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Student</td>
<td>□ Student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A10: Who lives in your home?**

| □ Couple with child/ren                     |                                                |                                            |
| □ Single parent family (mother head)        |                                                |                                            |
| □ Single parent family (father head)        |                                                |                                            |
| □ Extended family (parents, child/ren & other relatives) | |                                            |
| □ Grandparents (with child/ren)             |                                                |                                            |
| □ Other (please describe):                  |                                                |                                            |

**A11: How long have you lived in your current neighbourhood?**

| □ less than one year                        |                                                |                                            |
| □ 1 to 5 years                              |                                                |                                            |
| □ 6 to 10 years                             |                                                |                                            |
| □ 11 to 15 years                            |                                                |                                            |
| □ 16 to 20 years                            |                                                |                                            |

**A12: Your kindergarten child:**

| □ Male                                      | □ Female                                       |                                            |

213
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>□ First born</th>
<th>□ Later born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Birthdate (day/month/year):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A13: School child attends: 

A14: Does your child currently attend child care? □ No □ Yes 
If “yes”, is the child care located in the school? □ No □ Yes

A15: Siblings: If you have other children attending this school, please circle the child/ren’s grade level(s) (circle all that apply) JK SK 1 2 3 4 5 6

A16: Your child attends this school because: □ It is our home school □ Under optional attendance 
If your child attends this school under optional attendance, please indicate the reason: □ Child attends the school based licensed child care in the school □ Child attends a licensed child care in the catchment area of the school □ Older sibling already enrolled in the school □ Other: please specify: ________________________________

SECTION B: Child’s prior program/care experience

B1: Please indicate the grade level and school year in which your JK/SK child started at this school: □ JK: □ 2011 □ 2012 □ 2013 □ SK: □ 2011 □ 2012 □ 2013

B2: Prior to starting in JK/SK, was your child enrolled in a child care centre? □ Yes □ No
If you answered “no”, please go to question B3. 
If you answered “yes”, please answer the following questions.

B2a: Did your child attend the child care centre located in his/her current school? □ Yes □ No

B2b: If “yes”, how old was your child when he/she first was first enrolled in this centre?:

B2c: If “no”, please provide the name of the child care centre your child attended and the age at which your child was first enrolled in this centre. If your child attended more than one child care centre, please provide the information for each centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of child care:</th>
<th>Child’s age when enrolled:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of child care:</td>
<td>Child’s age when enrolled:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of child care:</td>
<td>Child’s age when enrolled:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B3: If your child was not enrolled in a child care centre prior to starting JK/SK, please indicate if
he/she participated in any of the programs identified below:

- □ Home-based child care (full/part time, babysitting in/away from home)
  - □ Regularly
  - □ Occasionally
  - □ Seldom

- □ Part time nursery program
  - □ Regularly
  - □ Occasionally
  - □ Seldom

- □ Drop-in/PFLC (Parenting & Family Literacy Program)
  - □ Regularly
  - □ Occasionally
  - □ Seldom

- □ Library program
  - □ Regularly
  - □ Occasionally
  - □ Seldom

- □ Other (please list)
  - □ Regularly
  - □ Occasionally
  - □ Seldom

**SECTION C: The JK/SK experience.**

During this school year, my child has been enrolled in: □ JK □ SK

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong> My child has enjoyed his/her experience in this program.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong> My child has benefitted from his/her experience in this program</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C3</strong> I am happy with the quality of the program</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C4</strong> The early learning teaching team made me feel welcome in the program</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C5</strong> The program helped my child develop <strong>socially</strong></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C6</strong> The program helped my child develop <strong>academically</strong></td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C7</strong> The program provided me with opportunities to be involved in my child’s learning</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C8</strong> The program did a good job of adjusting to my child’s needs</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C9</strong> The early learning teaching team helped me understand what my child is learning</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C10</strong> The early learning teaching team provided me with helpful ideas on how to support my child’s learning at home</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C11</strong> The early learning teaching team reached out to provide me with information about my child’s progress</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C12</strong> I was able to have meaningful input into programming decisions</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions C13 – C20 are to be completed for children in FDELK only (Spring 2013):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>agree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C13</strong> My child adjusted easily to the length of day</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C14</strong> My child adjusted easily to the social and academic demands of the full day program.</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C15</strong> The staff team appear to share common roles and responsibilities for developing and delivering the program</td>
<td>□ strongly agree</td>
<td>□ agree</td>
<td>□ not sure</td>
<td>□ disagree</td>
<td>□ strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C16** Did you complete a survey prior to the start of the school year indicating your need for extended care (before/after school and non-school days)? □ Yes □ No

**C17** Is your child currently enrolled in an extended-day program? □ Yes □ No

If “yes”, does this program meet your family’s needs? □ Yes □ No

**Comments:**

**C18** If your child was enrolled in a child care program prior to his/her enrolment in the FDELK program, please check the statement below that most accurately reflects your experience:

(a) For families in FDELK program only (regular school day):

□ The current arrangement meets my family’s needs as well as my previous arrangement

□ The current arrangement does not meet my family’s needs as well as my previous arrangement
(b) For families in FDELK program plus extended-day program:
   - The current arrangement meets my family’s needs as well as my previous arrangement
   - The current arrangement does not meet my family’s needs as well as my previous arrangement

Comments:

C19 What has been the most beneficial part(s) of the full day program for your child, for you, and/or for your family?

C20 What has been the most challenging part(s) of the full day program for your child, for you, and/or for your family?

Thank you for your feedback.

If you would be interested in participating in an interview as a follow-up to this survey, please contact:

Elaine Levy, Principal Researcher: 416-645-6000 ext. 1155
Date: April 2012

Study Name: Family Perceptions and Experiences with Ontario’s Full Day Learning Program.

Researchers: Elaine Levy, Vice-President, Family & Neighbourhood Services, WoodGreen Community Services and PhD student OISE/U of T
815 Danforth Avenue, Suite 100, Toronto, ON M4J 1L2
416.645.6000, ext. 1155

Purpose of the Research: The purpose of this research is to assess how parents/guardians experience Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten (FDELK) programs in which their children are enrolled and, in particular, to identify the changes that parents/guardians experience as their children move from a half-day program to the FDELK program. The research will ask questions concerning parent/guardian attitudes towards FDELK, any changes noticed/experienced as children move from half-day JK/SK programs to full day JK/SK programs, particularly in families where the child was enrolled in a child care program prior to starting in the full day JK/SK program. The research will assess parent/guardian satisfaction with the full day learning program, and any impacts of the full day learning program on your family life. The research will form the basis of a thesis dissertation for the primary researcher’s completion of a PhD in Early Learning through the Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology at the University of Toronto/Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:
A. If your child is enrolled in junior kindergarten as of September 2011, you will be asked to complete a survey at two points in time:
   (1) when your child is completing junior kindergarten (Spring 2012) in a half-day program or an integrated program;
   (2) when your child is completing senior kindergarten (Spring 2013) in a full day program.

B. If your child is enrolling in junior kindergarten in September 2012, you will be asked to complete the survey once, in spring 2013.

Completing the survey will take approximately 20 minutes. After completing the survey you will be asked if you are interested in taking part in an interview to follow up on your survey answers. If you volunteer to participate in an interview, the interview will be scheduled at your convenience and will take approximately 30 minutes.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: Full day learning is a new and broad initiative that is changing the face of early education in Ontario. By participating in this research and reflecting on your experience in full day learning programs, you will be providing input to help ensure that the full day
learning program is delivered through the best possible model – one that meets the needs of children and their families.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with any staff of the school or of WoodGreen Community Services either now, or in the future.

**Withdrawal from the Study:** You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, school staff, WoodGreen Community Services, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed.

**Confidentiality:** All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence. You will not be asked to include your name or your child’s name on the survey. Unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Survey completion will be via the internet. Hardcopy surveys may be available upon request. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only research staff will have access to this information. Data will be kept for eight years and then discarded. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

**Questions About the Research?** If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact the researcher’s supervisor, Dr. Janette Pelletier either by telephone at (416) 934.4506 or by e-mail: janette.pelletier@utoronto.ca. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Ethics Review Board at the University of Toronto and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or (416) 946-3273. The research has also been approved by Toronto District School Board’s Ethics Research Review Committee.

**Legal Rights and Signatures:**

I (name of participant – please print)______________________________, consent to participate in the Family Perceptions and Experiences with Ontario’s Full Day Learning Program research study conducted by Elaine Levy. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

_________________________________________________________  __________________________
Participant’s signature                  Date

_________________________________________________________  April 24, 2012
Principal Investigator’s signature  Date
The survey is to be completed online. Please provide your e:mail address so that the survey can be sent to you and completed via the internet. Your e:mail will be used by the system but will not be stored with your response, thereby ensuring confidentiality.

E:mail: ________________________________________________

If it is not possible for you to complete the survey electronically and you need to complete the survey in hardcopy, please check here □.

Please indicate the name of your child’s teacher: _________________________________. A hardcopy will be forwarded to you for completion.

Please check here if you would like to receive a copy of the summary of results upon final completion: □
APPENDIX I:

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSES TO SURVEY SECTIONS A AND B

The first round of the survey occurred in spring of 2012, prior to the implementation of full-day kindergarten at the three subject schools. Seventeen responses were received: 4 from families with children at Bruce, 9 from families with children at Leslieville, and 4 from families with children at Morse. The demographic data collected from respondents revealed the following characteristics:

- 100% female
- 82% between the ages of 35-55; 12% were 25 – 34; 6% were 45-54
- 94% reported that they were married or living in a common-law relationship
- 94% identified English as their first language
- 76% identified Canada as their country of birth
- 47% had completed a university undergraduate degree; 35% had completed a graduate degree,
  12% had completed a college diploma program; 6% had competed secondary school.
- 53% reported being employed full time; 29% reported being a stay-at-home parent; 12%
  reported being employed part time; 6% reported being on pregnancy leave.
- 94% reported living arrangements that included a couple with children; 6% report other living arrangements
- 53% reported that they had lived in their current neighbourhood for 6-10 years; 35% reported 1-5 years; 12% reported 16-20 years

With respect to the family’s kindergarten child, the results showed the following characteristics:

- 53% of children were male; 47% were female
- 82% of children were first born; 18% were later born
53% of children attended Leslieville; 24% attended Morse; 24% attended Bruce

59% of children were currently enrolled in child care and, of these 80% were in the child care in the school

59% of children were attending the school under optional attendance. The TDSB Optional Attendance Policy and Procedure allows student to access schools and programs that are available to them outside of their designated attendance area based on their home address under certain conditions. Among these, “Every child enrolled in a school-based, licensed child care centre has the right to attend the host school, even when it is not the child’s designated school by home address.” (Toronto District School Board, 2009). Of these 10 children, 50% had been granted optional attendance because of their enrollment in the child care program in the school while the remaining 50% had been approved for other reasons. For the remaining 41%, the school in which they were enrolled was their home school.

Parents/guardians were asked about their child’s prior program/care experiences and the survey revealed the following results:

59% of children were enrolled in a child care centre prior to starting JK/SK. Of these, 70% were in the child care in their current school. For the seven children who had not been enrolled in a child care centre, an analysis of their participation in other programs, is summarized in the table below.
Participation rates in non-child care programs by percent

- **Home based child care**: Regularly - 30%, Occasionally - 5%, Seldom - 15%, N/A - 5%
- **Part-time nursery**: Regularly - 40%, Occasionally - 10%, Seldom - 15%, N/A - 5%
- **Drop-in centre**: Regularly - 50%, Occasionally - 20%, Seldom - 10%, N/A - 5%
- **Library program**: Regularly - 20%, Occasionally - 10%, Seldom - 5%, N/A - 5%
The second round of the survey occurred in spring of 2013, following the implementation of full-day kindergarten at the three subject schools. Fifty-four responses were received: 8 from families with children at Bruce, 19 from families with children at Leslieville, and 27 from families with children at Morse. The demographic data collected from respondents revealed the following characteristics:

87% female; 9% male; remainder did not respond
80% between the ages of 35-55; 15% were 25–34; 4% were 45-54; remainder did not respond
87% reported that they were married or living in a common-law relationship; 7% identified as single parent (female led); 4% divorced; remainder did not respond
93% identified English as their first language
81% identified Canada as their country of birth
44% had completed a university undergraduate degree; 39% had completed a graduate degree, 9% had completed a college diploma program; 7% had competed secondary school.
66% reported being employed full time; 15% reported being a stay-at-home parent; 11% reported being employed part time; 6% reported being unemployed; 2% reported being on pregnancy leave.
85% reported living arrangements that included a couple with children; 11% reported living in single family mother led homes; 2% reported living with extended family; 2% report other living arrangements
50% reported that they had lived in their current neighbourhood for 6-10 years; 31% reported 1-5 years; 13% reported 11-15 years; 4% reported 16-20 years; 2% reported less than one year.

With respect to the family’s kindergarten child, the results showed the following characteristics:
61% of children were male; 47% were female

65% of children were first born; 35% were later born

50% of children attended Morse; 35% attended Leslieville; 15% attended Bruce

57% of children were currently enrolled in child care and, of these 97% were in the child care in the school

37% of children were attending the school under optional attendance. Of these 20 children, 50% had been granted optional attendance because of their enrollment in the child care program in the school, 10% had older siblings in the school and the remaining 40% had been approved for other reasons. For the remaining 63%, the school in which they were enrolled was their home school.

Parents/guardians were asked about their child’s prior program/care experiences and the survey revealed the following results:

68% of children were enrolled in a child care centre prior to starting JK/SK. Of these, 42% were in the child care in their current school. For the seventeen children who had not been enrolled in a child care centre, an analysis of their participation in other programs, is summarized in the table below.
Participation rates in non-child care programs by percent

- Home based child care
- Part-time nursery
- Drop-in centre
- Library program

Legend:
- regularly
- occasionally
- seldom
- n/a
APPENDIX J:

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSES TO SURVEY SECTION C

Survey Round 1: 2011 - 2012

Breakdown of parent/guardian responses by site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Enjoyed experience</th>
<th>Benefitted from program</th>
<th>Happy with quality</th>
<th>Parent made to feel welcome</th>
<th>Helped child develop socially</th>
<th>Helped child develop academically</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 4)</td>
<td>1 – strongly agree</td>
<td>2 – strongly agree</td>
<td>1 – strongly agree</td>
<td>2 – strongly agree</td>
<td>2 – strongly agree</td>
<td>4 - agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>2 – agree</td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>2 – agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslieville</td>
<td>6 – strongly</td>
<td>5 – strongly agree</td>
<td>5 – strongly agree</td>
<td>6 – strongly agree</td>
<td>4 – strongly agree</td>
<td>4 – strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 9)</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>4 – agree</td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>5 – agree</td>
<td>4 – agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 4)</td>
<td>2 – strongly agree</td>
<td>2 – strongly agree</td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>1 – strongly agree</td>
<td>1 – strongly agree</td>
<td>1 – strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – agree</td>
<td>1 – not sure</td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>1 – not sure</td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>1 – not sure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Opportunities for involvement</th>
<th>Adjusting to child’s needs</th>
<th>Help parent understand what child was learning</th>
<th>Ideas for learning at home</th>
<th>Info about child’s progress</th>
<th>Meaningful input</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 4)</td>
<td>1 – agree</td>
<td>2 – agree</td>
<td>1 – strongly agree</td>
<td>2 – agree</td>
<td>3 – agree</td>
<td>1 – agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – not sure</td>
<td>2 – not sure</td>
<td>1 – agree</td>
<td>1 – not sure</td>
<td>1 – not sure</td>
<td>2 – not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – disagree</td>
<td>1 – disagree</td>
<td>1 – not sure</td>
<td>1 - disagree</td>
<td>1 – disagree</td>
<td>1 – disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslieville</td>
<td>3 – strongly agree</td>
<td>4 – strongly agree</td>
<td>4 – strongly agree</td>
<td>3 – strongly agree</td>
<td>4 – strongly agree</td>
<td>4 – agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – not sure</td>
<td>2 – not sure</td>
<td>1 – not sure</td>
<td>1 - not sure</td>
<td>2 – disagree</td>
<td>2 – disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N = 4)</td>
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Survey Round 2: 2012 - 2013

Breakdown of parent/guardian responses by site (Note: no response is charted as “n/a”):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Enjoyed experience</th>
<th>Benefitted from program</th>
<th>Happy with quality</th>
<th>Parent made to feel welcome</th>
<th>Helped child develop socially</th>
<th>Helped child develop academically</th>
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<th>Help parent understand what child was learning</th>
<th>Ideas for learning at home</th>
<th>Info about child’s progress</th>
<th>Meaningful input</th>
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228
The demographic information provided by parents (postal code, child’s birthdate) allowed for a comparison of pre- and post- FDK experiences for a small sample, with eleven families completing the survey in both year one and year two. Eight of these families were enrolled at Leslieville during both years, two were enrolled at Morse during both years, and one was enrolled at Bruce in year one and then at Morse in year two. An analysis of these families’ responses to the questions in section “C: appears below:

**Leslieville**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question C1:</th>
<th>My child has enjoyed his/her experience in this program</th>
<th>Question C2:</th>
<th>My child benefitted from his/her experience in this program</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>year 1</td>
<td>year 2</td>
<td>year 1</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Question C3: I am happy with the quality of the program</td>
<td>Question C4: The early learning team made me feel welcome in the program</td>
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<td><strong>year 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>year 2</strong></td>
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<td>strongly agree</td>
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<table>
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<th>Question C5: The program helped my child develop socially</th>
<th>Question C6: The program helped my child develop academically</th>
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<th>Question C7: The program provided me with opportunities to be involved</th>
<th>Question C8: The program did a good job of adjusting to my child’s needs</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>The team helped me understand what my child is learning.</td>
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| C9:       | year 1  
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|           | Family 3: strongly agree  
|           | Family 4: strongly agree  
|           | Family 5: agree  
|           | Family 6: agree  
|           | Family 7: strongly agree  
|           | Family 8: not sure  |
|           | year 2  
|           | Family 1: agree  
|           | Family 2: not sure  
|           | Family 3: agree  
|           | Family 4: strongly agree  
|           | Family 5: strongly agree  
|           | Family 6: not sure  
|           | Family 7: agree  
|           | Family 8: not sure  |

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>The team reached out to provide info about my child’s progress</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>I was able to have meaningful input into programming decisions</th>
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| C11:      | year 1  
|           | Family 1: agree  
|           | Family 2: agree  
|           | Family 3: strongly agree  
|           | Family 4: strongly agree  
|           | Family 5: agree  
|           | Family 6: strongly agree  
|           | Family 7: strongly agree  
|           | Family 8: agree  |
|           | year 2  
|           | Family 1: agree  
|           | Family 2: disagree  
|           | Family 3: not sure  
|           | Family 4: strongly agree  
|           | Family 5: strongly agree  
|           | Family 6: disagree  
|           | Family 7: agree  
|           | Family 8: not sure  |
**Morse and Bruce:**

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<th>My child has enjoyed his/her experience in this program</th>
<th>Question C2:</th>
<th>My child benefitted from his/her experience in this program</th>
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<th>I am happy with the quality of the program</th>
<th>Question C4:</th>
<th>The early learning team made me feel welcome in the program</th>
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<td>year 2 (Morse)</td>
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<th>Question C6:</th>
<th>The program helped my child develop academically</th>
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<th>The program did a good job of adjusting to my child’s needs</th>
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<td>Family 10</td>
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<td>disagree</td>
<td>Family 10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>year 2 (Morse)</td>
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<td>Question C10:</td>
<td>The team provided me with helpful ideas to support my child's learning</td>
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<th>Question C11:</th>
<th>The team reached out to provide info about my child's progress</th>
<th>Question C12:</th>
<th>I was able to have meaningful input into programming decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>year 1</td>
<td>year 2</td>
<td>year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family 9</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>Family 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family 10</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>Family 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family 11</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K: Key informant Consent Form

Date: December 1, 2015

Researcher: Elaine Levy, Vice-President, Family & Neighbourhood Services, WoodGreen Community Services and PhD student OISE/U of T

815 Danforth Avenue, Suite 100, Toronto, ON M4J 1L2

416.645.6000, ext. 1155

Purpose of the Research: Ontario’s FDELK program has been modeled, in large part, on the Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre’s (BWELC) integrated/seamless delivery model. Under that model, the ECE staff in the kindergarten program were employees of WoodGreen Community Services. In September 2012, when Bruce Public School converted to a FDELK program for JK and SK children, the ECE staff became employees of the TDSB and the program operates within the TDSB framework. At BWELC, the research will identify changes as the program moved to a TDSB operated FDELK program. The research will assess impacts that the operational changes have had, including parent/guardian satisfaction with the FDELK program. The research forms the basis of a thesis dissertation for the primary researcher’s completion of a PhD in Early Learning through the Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology at the University of Toronto/Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

What you will be asked to do in the research:

In addition to parent/guardian surveys, a case study approach and key informant interviews are being used to evaluate changes at BWELC as a result of the implementation of the FDELK model. The case study builds on case study research already done at BWELC and picks up where TFD phase 3 left off as BWELC moved to the FDELK model. The case study follows the procedures that were used in previously approved Toronto First Duty studies, including in-class observations and evidence-based storytelling.

Specifically, environment quality was assessed using the ECERS-R and Toronto Operating Criteria (TOC) and staff team integration was assessed using the Indicators of Change.

As a member of the TFD team, you are being asked to participate in a key informant interview.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: Full day learning is a new and broad initiative that is changing the face of early education in Ontario. By participating in this research and reflecting on your experience, you will be providing input about the full-day model.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. If you decide not to consent, there will be no negative consequences for you.
Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed.

Confidentiality: All personal information you supply during the research will be held in confidence; that is, unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only research staff will have access to this information. Data will be kept for eight years and then discarded. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions about the research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact the researcher’s supervisor, Dr. Janette Pelletier either by telephone at (416) 934.4506 or by e-mail: janette.pelletier@utoronto.ca. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Ethics Review Board at the University of Toronto and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or (416) 946-3273.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I (name of participant), consent to participate in the research study conducted by Elaine Levy through the Key Informant Interview. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature or digital signature below indicates my consent.

_________________________________________  Date
Participant’s signature  Dec. 1, 2015

_________________________________________
Principal Investigator’s signature  Date
Appendix L: Summary of research findings – December 2015

Research Project: A Case Study of a Toronto First Duty Site Following Provincial Implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten: The Bruce/WoodGreen Story

Principal Investigator: Elaine Levy, PhD Student, OISE/University of Toronto

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)

The graphs below depict ECERS-R assessment results for the Kindergarten room at BWELC. The assessments in 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2010 occurred pre-implementation of FDK. The assessment in 2013 was conducted post-implementation of FDK when the one room had been divided into two classrooms, named 3(a) and 3(b).
**Toronto Operating Criteria (TOC)**

The graph below depicts Toronto Operating Criteria (TOC) assessment results for the Kindergarten room at BWELC. The assessments in 2009, 2010 and 2011 occurred pre-implementation of FDK. The assessment in 2012 was conducted post-implementation of FDK when the kindergarten program operated in one room. By the time of the 2013 assessment, the one room had been divided into two classrooms, named 3(a) and 3(b).
Details of the criteria scores for 2009, 2012 and 2013 appear below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Daily schedule</th>
<th>Program plans posted</th>
<th>Activities &amp; experiences</th>
<th>Indoor physical play environment</th>
<th>Displays</th>
<th>Diversity in toys</th>
<th>Art &amp; sensory</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Books &amp; accessories</th>
<th>Language &amp; listening</th>
<th>Music &amp; accessories</th>
<th>Computer usage</th>
<th>Dramatic Play</th>
<th>Construction &amp; block play</th>
<th>Cognitive &amp; manipulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>2.00</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Science &amp; nature</th>
<th>Active play</th>
<th>Meals &amp; snacks</th>
<th>Equipment for eating</th>
<th>Toileting routines &amp; supplies</th>
<th>Cloakroom &amp; storage</th>
<th>Health &amp; safety</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>2013 (3rd-A)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Toy washing</th>
<th>Children's hand washing</th>
<th>Staff hand washing</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>Attendance verification</th>
<th>Positive atmosphere</th>
<th>Supervision of children</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>2013 (3rd-A)</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 (3rd-B)</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Fostering independence</th>
<th>Supporting self esteem</th>
<th>Behaviour guidance</th>
<th>Supporting communication skills</th>
<th>Extending children's learning</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
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<td>2013 (3rd-B)</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Indicators of Change (Integration)**

The graph below depicts Indicator of Change assessment results at BWELC in three areas: Parent participation, Early Childhood Team and Learning Environment. The assessments in 2005, 2006 and 2008 occurred during the lifespan of the official Toronto First Duty project and involved a broad group of stakeholders including members of the BWELC management committee. The assessment in May 2012 occurred pre-conversion to FDK. The May 2013 assessment occurred post-conversion to FDK. Both the 2012 and 2013 assessments only involved staff working at the site (principal, kindergarten teacher, ECE staff, site manager employed by WoodGreen).
Parent Survey

Parent survey data was collected in two rounds, the first of which occurred in spring 2012, prior to the implementation of FDK, and the second of which occurred in spring 2013, post-implementation of FDK. The graphs below illustrate responses to a series of questions for each of the two school years:

![Experience in JK/SK - 2011-2012 school year - Questions 1 - 6 (by percent)](image)
Child enjoyed experience
Child benefitted from program
Happy with quality
Teaching team made parent feel welcome
Helped child develop socially
Helped child develop academically

Experience in JK/SK - 2012-2013 school year - Questions 1 - 6 (by percent)
Experience in JK/SK - 2011-2012 school year - Questions 7 - 12 (by percent)

- Opportunities to be involved in child's learning
- Good job adjusting to child's needs
- Team helped parent understand what child was learning
- Team provided ideas for learning at home
- Team provided info about child's progress
- Able to have meaningful input into program decisions

Experience in JK/SK - 2012-2013 school year - Questions 7 - 12 (by percent)

- Opportunities to be involved in child's learning
- Good job adjusting to child's needs
- Team helped parent understand what child was learning
- Team provided ideas for learning at home
- Team provided info about child's progress
- Able to have meaningful input into program decisions

Graphs showing percentages of responses for each statement, with categories for strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree, and no response.
Questions 13 – 15, depicted below, were only asked in round two, at the end of the 2012-2013 school year, post-implementation of FDK.
Appendix M: Key Informant Questions

Research Project: A Case Study of a Toronto First Duty Site Following Provincial Implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten: The Bruce/WoodGreen Story

Principal Investigator: Elaine Levy, PhD Student, OISE/University of Toronto

Please provide the following information:

Date of email response:

Key Informant's name/Position:

The purpose of this interview is to gain your insight into some recent results at BWELC following the implementation of full-day kindergarten. Please review the results in the attached document. I would like you to comment on why you think the results look like this. Please provide your answers below.

1. Quality – The ECERS-R and TOC data revealed a downturn in quality across many of the indicators and subscales.

2. Integration – The Indicators of Change data show a decline in the areas of parent participation, the early childhood staff team and the early learning environment.
3. Parent engagement – survey data with the few parents who participated showed that they are not as happy (fewer who strongly agree).

4. What would you identify as the major challenges in scaling up the BWELC model?

5. What do you feel needs to be done to address the challenges?

6. Any additional comments?

Thank you.