



## Starting small.... Thinking big.

Early learning & care for every child

Melbourne, August 20, 2007

[www.toronto.ca/firstduty](http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty)



## The Vision

“...What we envision will be a first “tier” program for early child development, **as important as** the elementary and secondary school system and the post-secondary education system. The system should consist of **community-based centres operating at the local level and linked to local schools within a provincial framework...**”

Early Years Study McCain & Mustard, 1999

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## The Goal of Toronto First Duty

An **early learning and care program** for every child that supports the **healthy development of children**, at the same time as it **supports parents to work or study**, and **supports parents in their parenting role.**

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## Inform public policy...

...by answering the following questions:

- How would a **universal early learning and care system** look to parents and communities?
- What kind of **learning environment** would it provide for children?
- What **professional skills** are required?
- How would it **operate**?
- How can **existing community resources** be organized to serve as a strong foundation for new investments?

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## Start Up, Pilots, System Change

- **2000 – 2002: Start Up**
- **2002 – 2005: Phase One: Five Pilot Sites**
- **2005 – 2008: Phase Two: Scaling Up**

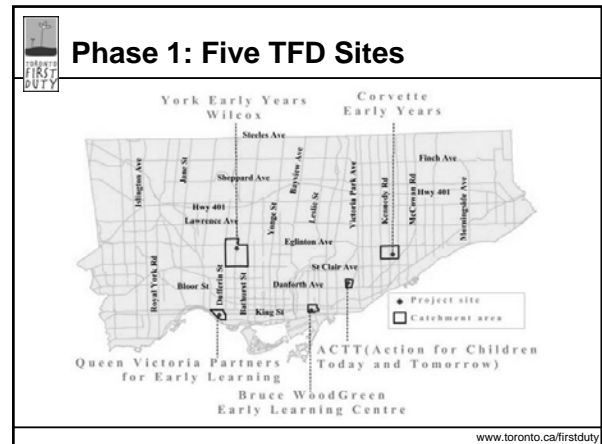
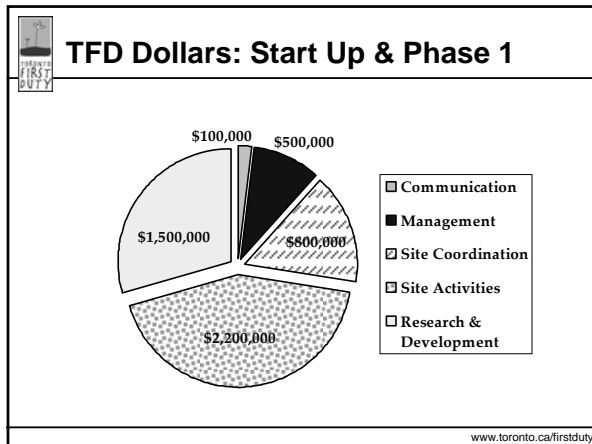
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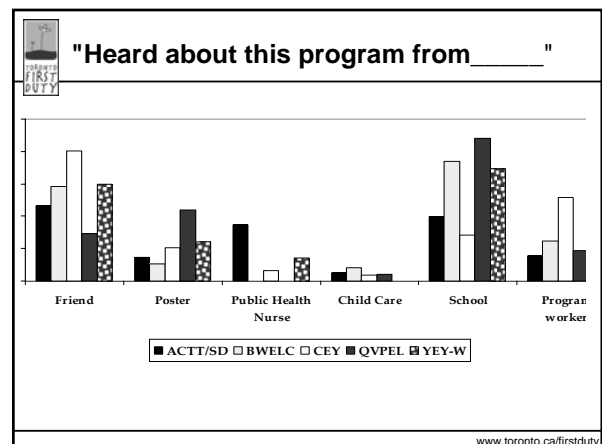
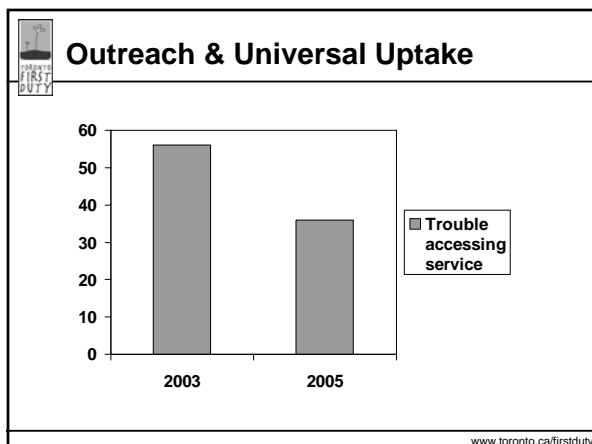
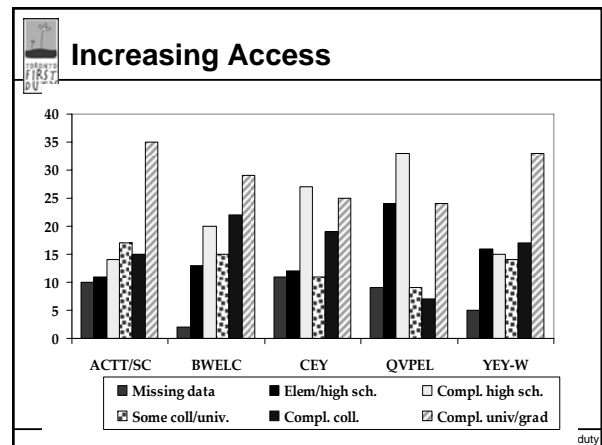
## Toronto First Duty Core Elements

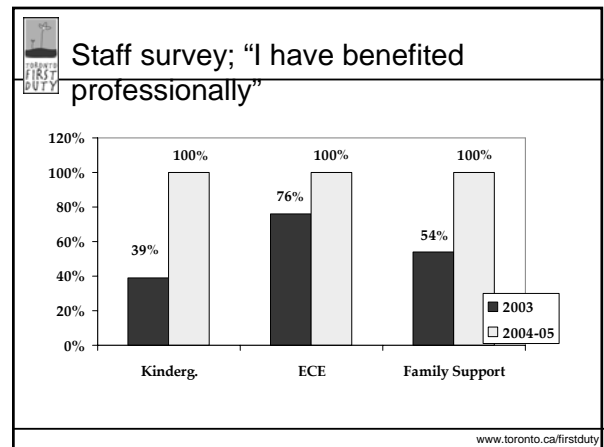
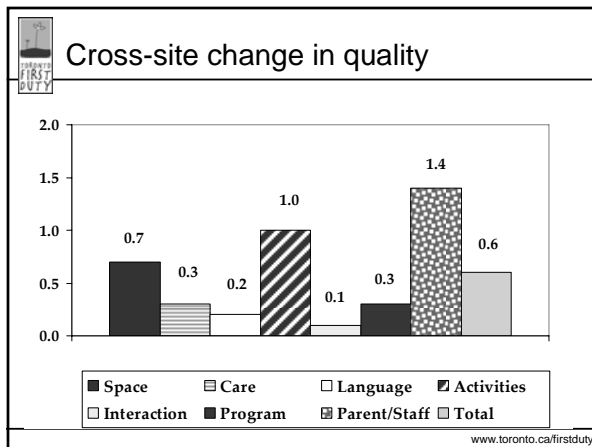
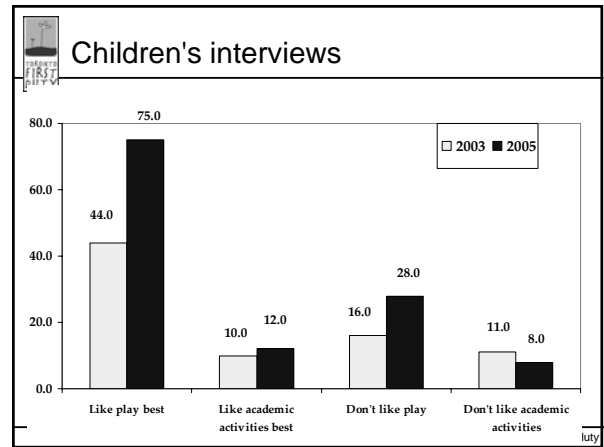
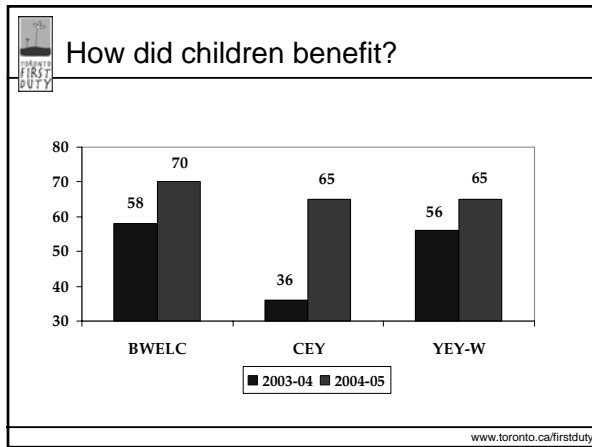
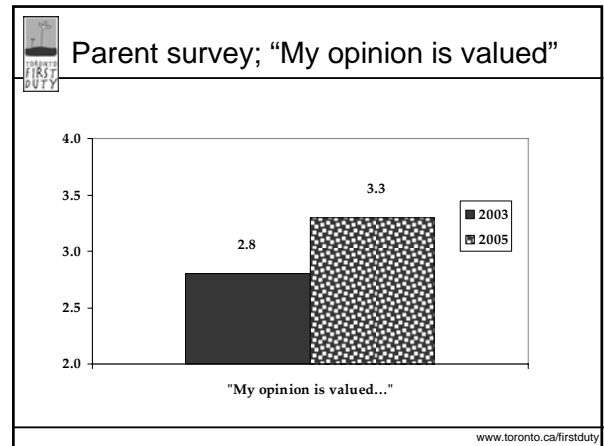
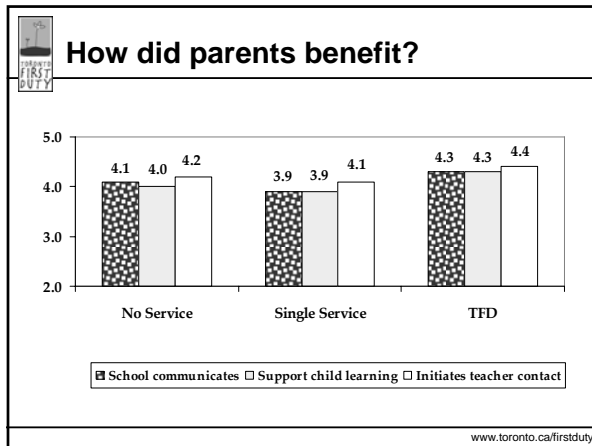
- Governance
- Seamless Access
- Early Learning Environment
- Early Childhood Staff Team
- Parent Involvement

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- ### Phase 1: Research and Evaluation
- Case studies across multiple sites.
  - Multiple data collection methods.
  - Multiple time points
  - Baseline/change comparisons
  - Community control approach to evaluating impact on children and parents.
  - A formative “learning organization” approach
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### Advantages for Early Childhood Staff Team

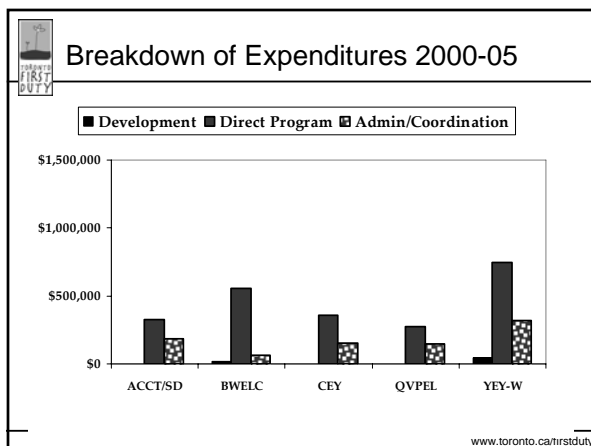
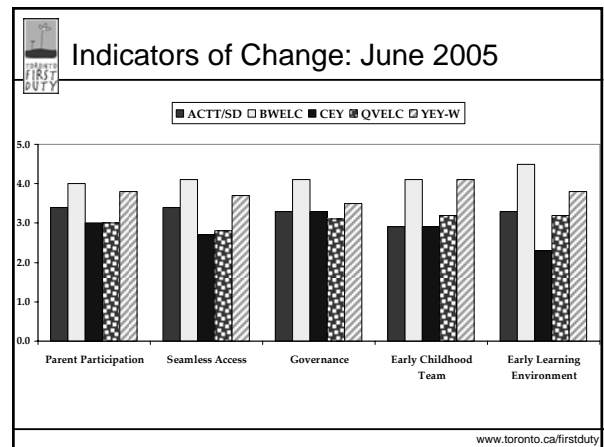
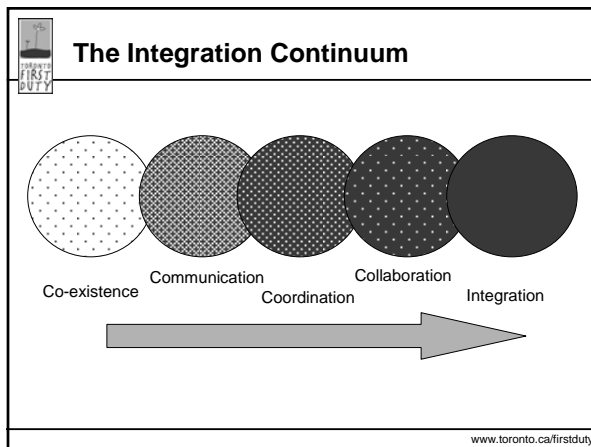
- Empowerment & recognition
- Access to resources
- Removal of isolation
- Shared responsibility & accountability
- Program quality improved – reduced child/staff ratios
- Better communication with families
- Opportunities for shared and increased professional development

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### Specificity, Intensity, & Relationships

- Adoption of a common approach for behaviour across professional groups
- Common PD in the approach
- An increasingly integrated staff team considering results for program quality and for children

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### Summary of TFD Phase 1 Findings

- Integrated professional supports improve programs and outcomes for all parents and kids
  - Program Quality enhanced
  - Parents empowered and involved
  - Child Development enhanced
- Integration is hard work, requiring professional and organizational change, but with tangible payoffs
- Child care, kindergarten & family support programs build a stable platform for early identification, intervention and family health care programs.
- More cost-effective than traditional delivery of programs and services.


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**Phase 2: Scaling Up TFD**

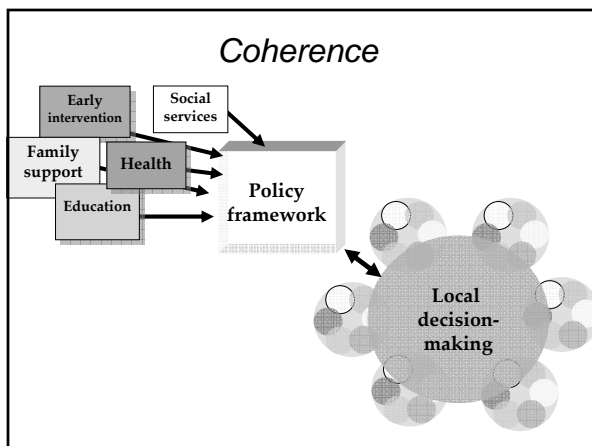
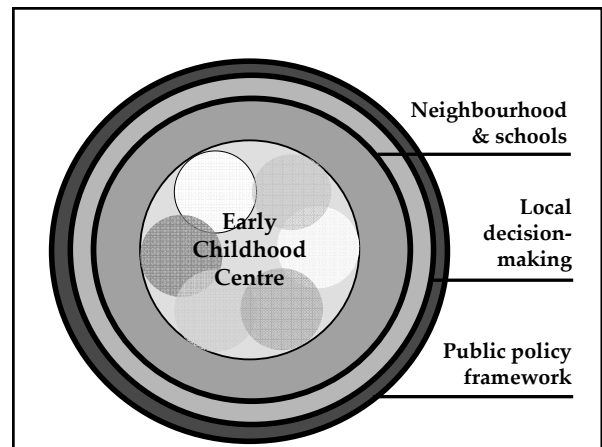
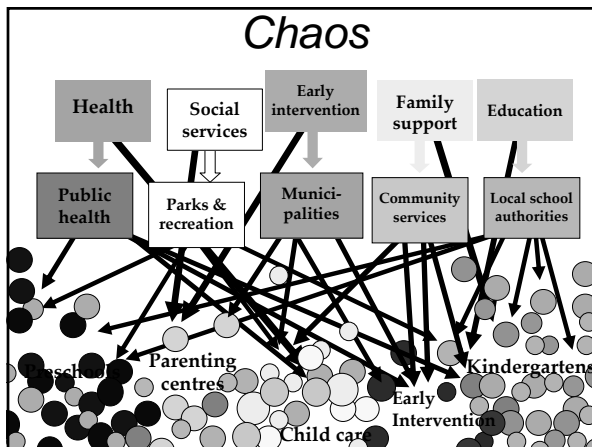
- Informing Toronto Best Start system transformation
- Continuing the prototype
- Dissemination

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**From pilot program to system policy**



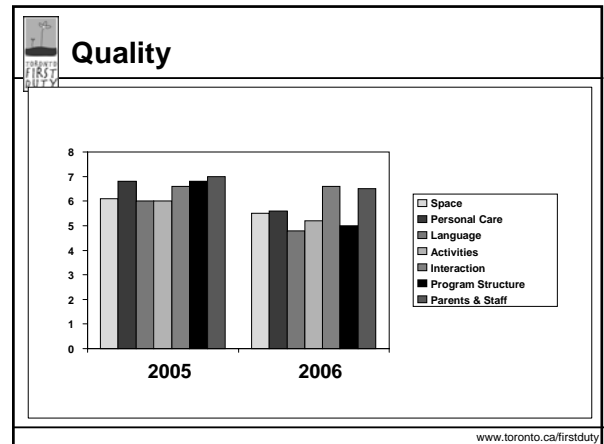
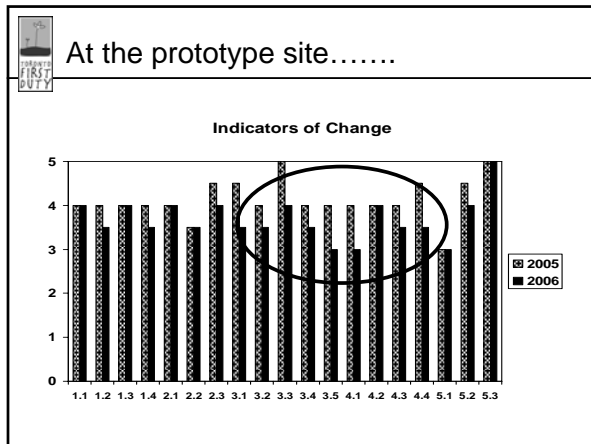
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**Policy initiatives**

- Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Curriculum Guide for Early Childhood Programs
- Widespread use of Nipissing District Developmental Screen
- Quality and Human Resources Report
- Community Early Child Development Reporting

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- ### Lessons Learned
- Service integration is a hard concept in the abstract.
  - Transforming program leader roles & responsibilities leverages change.
  - Much easier to start up new activities than join up existing programs.
  - Need for common curriculum framework, program policies and ongoing professional development.

- ### To think & talk about.....
1. How to we keep child care in early child development & early learning programs?
  2. Is good coordination the friend or enemy of integration?
  3. How do we keep the developing child at the centre of early years' programs?
  4. What are the barriers and downsides to a 0 to 6 years 'first tier' of public education?

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