



Report To: Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB Board  
From: Suzanne Malette, Children's Program Supervisor  
Date: February 18, 2010  
Re: Early Learning Program – Extended Day Component

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. THAT the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB urges the Ministry of Education to carefully review the planning, consulting and communication processes currently in place to make sure that what is being developed is consistent with the principles described in the Pascal Report.
2. THAT the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB urge the Ministry of Education to allow for flexibility at the local community level to develop our own Before and After school program with the Child Care Providers.
3. THAT the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB continues to advocate for a child care base funding model. This model would cover basic operating costs to ensure the viability and the sustainability of all of the Child Care programs without having to rely on numbers of children attending the child care centre.
4. THAT the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB advocate to the Ministry of Education to allow flexibility and encourage school boards to work with child care providers to ensure a seamless transition from child care to ELP. In schools where the extended day is not feasible for the school board to deliver, the school board should share curriculum with child care providers to ensure a seamless transition.

## **REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to:

- Ensure that all partners involved in the ELP process are working collaboratively together to assure a seamless, streamlined and parent-friendly early learning system that Pascal designed.
- Ensure that school boards work together with the existing Child Care Providers in their schools to assure their viability.

A memo from Assistant Deputy Minister Jim Grieve was distributed on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 describing how the Early Learning Program – Extended Day Component will be implemented as of September 2010. The memo provided us with further information about what the extended day component of the Early Learning Program (ELP) would look like.

Two schools have been selected to implement the ELP in the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB jurisdiction, A.B. Ellis and École St-Joseph both located in Espanola. This will have some impact on the Child Care Centres located in those schools. One centre has reported that they could possibly have a 20% loss in revenue when losing the 4 & 5 year olds to the full day Program. As an option to recovering some of this cost they are sending out a survey in the community to determine if there is a need for an Infant program. If the need is there they will put together a business plan and try and seek startup funding to renovate their existing space and purchase the equipment needed. The school board has mentioned that they could look at the possibility to offer more space for this infant program. One program feels that if parents decide to use the ELP full day there is the possibility they will have to close their before and after school program. They are still waiting to see what the parent's decision will be. All centres have expressed if they lose their qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECE) to the school boards it will be very difficult to find and hire new ECEs as there are few to be hired. This could affect their license as the Day Nurseries Act requires one qualified ECE staff per age group. Some have already hired Youth Workers to fill these positions and MCYS considers them otherwise approved.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Early Learning Program is the implementation of full-day early learning for four and five year olds starting in September 2010. The goal is to make the program available over time to all four and five year old students. This multi-year, phased-in approach will allow parents do have a choice about their child's participation, including the option of full-day or half day attendance.

The ELP program has two basic components:

- A core component that will be offered each school day during the hours of the instructional program (i.e. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.). In each classroom, an

educator team of one certified teacher and one early childhood educator (ECE) will work side by side to deliver the program.

- An extended day component that will be available before and after school (i.e. 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 to 6:00 p.m.). A student's participation in this component of the program is at the option of parents and guardians, but boards must offer the program where there is sufficient enrolment to make a program viable. This component of the ELP will be led by ECEs. It will be funded through parent fees set on a cost-recovery basis, with subsidies available for families who need help with the cost.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The Objective of this report is to remind the Ministry of Education to remember Pascal's advise to take the time to "get it right" for the sake of the children. In some communities, that may mean that the implementation of the Early Learning Program occur differently than in other communities. What works in a rural area may not work in an urban area and vice versa.

Ontario's early learning and child care service system must include a standard menu of services with the allowance for local flexibility in implementation.

Where there are not sufficient number of children for the School Boards to run the extended day ELP, as this is the case in the majority of schools in this Board's jurisdiction, the Ministry of Education needs to develop a strategy plan to allow Child Care Providers to offer the before and after school program.

## **CONCLUSION**

While the successful implementation of this initiative will present challenges, the Ministry of Education has already demonstrated its capacity to achieve positive change that benefits students, parents, and the communities.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB and the School Boards in its jurisdiction have had close communication in regards to the Schools that have been chosen to offer the Early Learning Program. The School Boards have expressed strongly that they want to continue working with the Child Care Providers located in their schools and they are open to any recommendations to ensure their viability. We need a quality children's service system that is accountable, sustainable, flexible, and benefits all.