

**Ministry of Children and  
Youth Services**

Early Learning and Child  
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**Ministère des Services  
à l'enfance et à la jeunesse**

Direction de l'apprentissage et du  
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RECEIVED  
OCT 25 2012

October 22, 2012

Mr. Les Gamble  
Chair  
Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board  
210 Mead Boulevard  
Espanola ON P5E 1R9

Dear Mr. Gamble,

Your letter to Premier Dalton McGuinty regarding Best Start, was forwarded by the Honourable Laurel Broten, Minister of Education to the Honourable Eric Hoskins, Minister of Children and Youth Services. I have been asked to respond and appreciate the opportunity to share information about our ministry's work to develop integrated services in the child and family services sector.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is committed to making it easier for families to find and access the services they need at all stages of a child's development. An integrated system of services for children and families will improve the quality of services for children and families by improving access, enhancing information and referral functions, and streamlining access to specialized supports.

As you noted in your letter, Dr. Charles Pascal, in his report *With Our Best Future in Mind*, recommended the creation of Best Start Child and Family Centres in schools to deliver integrated services for children and families. Since the submission of Dr. Pascal's report, the ministry has been working with local communities to explore the best approaches to integrating services for children and families, including through the concept of Child and Family Centres or hubs.

The focus of the ministry is on improving outcomes for young children. We have learned through consultations and research that the development of Child and Family Centres is only one part of a broader approach to achieving the ministries' goals. The ministry is continuing to conduct research and work with its ministerial colleagues to determine the best approach to improving outcomes for young children.

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Last year, under the Community Action Research – Community Integration Leaders project, four communities – London, Hastings-Prince Edward, Sudbury and Toronto – took significant steps toward realizing the Best Start vision of integrating children’s services in a seamless way that best prepares children for success. In 2012/2013, we’ve increased our funding for this project to support six Community Integration Leaders sites. These communities will work with us to move toward integrated services.

Findings from these research projects will guide the province as we prepare to further strengthen the child and family services system. The ministry is not in a position to fund capital requests related to the Child and Family Centres concept while this research phase is on-going.

We are building on the collective energy and momentum across Ontario communities to move toward an integrated system of services that gives parents what they need and supports the early development of their children. Thank you for your community’s commitment to this goal and your on-going work in the Sudbury-Manitoulin area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacey Weber', written in a cursive style.

Stacey Weber  
A/Director

c: Premier Dalton McGuinty  
The Honourable Laurel Broten, Minister of Education