

Making children a priority: Saskatchewan listens ^[1]

Early learning and care discussion forums 2004

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AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from the report:

The findings from the 26 focus groups - parents, human service providers, organizations and professionals - confirm that the draft policy framework developed by the Department of Learning and the Department of Community Resources and Employment (DCRE) is heading in the right direction. The participants identified: the potential for this policy framework, the barriers that have to be overcome to move it forward, and the strengths that already exist at the provincial and local levels that can support this policy approach.

A few of the core concerns of participants about the current issues in early learning and care were expressed in terms of the need to address the:

- difficulty in accessing programs and services
- unique needs for delivery of services in the North and rural areas
- perceived inconsistency or lack of coherence in policies
- need for local information and assistance to help access programs and services
- need for accountability mechanisms to ensure quality programs and trained personnel to deliver them
- need for a consistent approach to track the growth and developmental needs of children, especially those with special needs.

At the same time, participants were able to name a whole host of programs they felt were helpful and moving in the right direction. They also saw evidence of government movement toward collaboration and commitment to learning and care. Some saw the discussion forums as an indication of commitment. The strengths (see Appendix A-1) provide a comprehensive list of positive indicators that include the local community as source of solutions and support.

Participants also addressed priorities for action that they thought were important to further develop this policy area. Fifteen priority themes emerged from the discussion forums, which were organized into five categories:

1. Valuing Early Learning and Care
2. Universality of Learning and Care
3. Quality of Learning and Care
4. Working Together and
5. Family Supports and Education

Related link: Saskatchewan provincial budget performance plan: KidsFirst strategy ^[3]

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- [1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/04/10/making-children-priority-saskatchewan-listens>
- [2] http://www.dcre.gov.sk.ca/publications/pdfs/Making_Children_a_Priority.pdf
- [3] http://www.dcre.gov.sk.ca/mediaroom/DCREbudgetMar04/pdfs/KidsFirst_plan04_05.pdf
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