## How can integration of services for kindergarten- aged children be achieved?

The Integration Kit: Policy Papers

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AVAILABILITY Full paper in pdf [2]

## Excerpts from the executive summary:

The Integration Network Project was established to address one of the critical issues in the development of Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada today: the abrupt division for kindergarten-age children between "care" programs in child care centres and "education" in public kindergarten. The Project's focus is on seeking effective solutions to the problems and issues facing parents of kindergarten-age children.

These Policy Papers start with a vision of a non-fragmented, unified system. This vision piece describes how the system would look if we imagine that by 2010 programs have been revolutionized across the country and enjoy high levels of public support. It traces an imaginery route to success culminating in a system where services for young children are amalgamated in one Ministry - the Ministry of Learning &em; where the fees are affordable (maximum 20% of the costs), the teachers in the elementary and early childhood divisions have equal training and pay, principals are required to take professional development in early childhood education and, most importantly, the children enjoy a play-based learning environment within a flexible schedule.

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There are many structural, political, professional and historic barriers to overcome before there is an integrated approach to ECEC services for kindergarten-aged children in Canada. The Integration Network Project hopes that through this paper and its other activities, the dialogue will be stimulated. The goal is to strive for collaboration, mutual respect between sectors and communities and develop options based on collective imagination. Working together &em; parents, teachers and child care staff &em; can develop a strong policy framework followed by a strategic plan, lobby for change and effectively advocate to communities of interest.

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