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*Caring and Learning Environments:*

*Quality in Regulated Family Child Care Across Canada*

**Principal Investigators:**

Gillian Doherty  
Child Care Consultant, Ontario and  
Adjunct Professor, Department of Family Relations and Applied  
Nutrition, University of Guelph

Donna S. Lero  
Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition  
University of Guelph

Hillel Goelman  
Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education  
University of British Columbia

Jocelyne Tougas  
Child Care Consultant, Québec

Annette LaGrange  
Faculty of Education  
University of Calgary

Published by:

Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being  
University of Guelph, Ontario

Copy editing: Denis Alarie and Judith Bell

Translation: Jocelyne Tougas

Design/layout: Fairmont House Design

Printing: MOM Printing

To obtain additional copies of this report, please contact:

Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being  
University of Guelph  
Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1

Tel: (519) 824-4120, ext. 3829

e-mail: [cfww@uoguelph.ca](mailto:cfww@uoguelph.ca)

Website: [www.uoguelph.ca/cfww](http://www.uoguelph.ca/cfww)

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

This research was funded by the Child Care Visions Program of the Social Development Partnerships Division of Human Resources Development Canada. The views expressed are solely those of the authors and do not represent the official policy of the Department of Human Resources Development Canada.

# ***Summary of Recommendations***

## ***Recommendation on Regulation***

1. Starting immediately, all jurisdictions must examine their existing policies and practices to identify those that act as disincentives for family child care providers to join the regulated system. Policies and practices that act as disincentives must be changed. In addition, all jurisdictions must immediately begin work on the development and implementation of policies and practices that will encourage family child care providers to join and remain in the regulated system, including the implementation of our recommendations 7 and 8.

## ***Recommendations on Provider Preparation***

2. Starting immediately, all jurisdictions must require the successful completion of a first aid course, including CPR for young children, as a pre-condition to becoming regulated.
3. By the year 2003, all jurisdictions must require regulated providers who have not completed a post-secondary ECCE credential to complete a basic family child care provider course within the first year of starting to provide care. This course should include units on: basic health and safety, setting up the environment, nutrition, child development, child guidance, working with mixed age groups, formulating appropriate daily routines, partnerships with parents, good business practices, and balancing work and family responsibilities. Providers who have completed a post-secondary ECCE credential but not a formal family child care-related course must be required to take training on issues specific to family child care within the first year of providing care. This training should include working with mixed-age groups, appropriate business practices, and balancing work and family responsibilities.
4. By the year 2003, all jurisdictions must require regulated providers to engage in a minimum of six hours of professional development each year.
5. Between now and the year 2003, all jurisdictions must take the steps required in their jurisdiction to ensure the availability and accessibility of appropriate training and professional development for ALL family child care providers regardless of their regulatory status.

### ***Recommendation on Infrastructure***

6. By 2003, all jurisdictions must ensure the availability of a variety of provider support services across their jurisdiction by providing adequate levels of funding for existing provider supports such as child care resource programs and family child care agencies and creating new services where none exist. Particular attention must be given to financial assistance for the development and on-going support of provider associations.

### ***Recommendations on Provider Income***

7. Starting immediately, all jurisdictions must implement an income enhancement grant for regulated providers. The grant amount must ensure that all providers working full-time and caring for four or more children receive, after child-care related expenses and before taxes, the equivalent of what would be earned, on average, by an entry level staff person working full-time in a centre in the same jurisdiction. Full-time for providers should be defined as at least eight hours a day, FIVE DAYS A WEEK, for 48 weeks.
8. Starting immediately, all jurisdictions must begin providing start-up grants and annual operating grants to all regulated providers.

### ***Recommendations Related to Children with Specific Characteristics***

9. Starting immediately, all jurisdictions must provide an ‘infant incentive grant’ to regulated family child care homes providing care for a child under age 18 months in recognition of the additional time, expense and effort required to provide high quality care for very young children.
10. All jurisdictions must work with family child care provider associations, family child care agencies and other organizations providing training and professional development to develop and implement opportunities for providers to obtain special training for working with infants and young toddlers in the context of a family setting and a mixed-age group.
11. Starting immediately, all jurisdictions must provide ‘special needs funding’ to regulated family child care providers looking after a child who has special needs. Such funding must take into account the particular needs of the individual child(ren) and the type of additional assistance or costs that might be required to provide appropriate care. In situations where a provider cannot accept her full complement of children because of the time and attention required by the child, the special needs funding must include compensation for her lost income.

12. All jurisdictions must take action to ensure the provision of training specific to the child's needs plus consultation and appropriate resources for providers caring for a child who has special needs.

***Recommendation on Provider Recruitment***

13. Governments, family child care organizations and professional organizations must immediately undertake public education/awareness strategies that will assist people to understand the link between the importance of children's experience during their early years and the value of people who work in child care.