




Speaking Out Discussion Series Findings

Caring At Work Campaign 2004
A community based development
project sponsored by

 Child Care Connections
100-1200 Tower Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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This spring, Child Care Connection Nova Scotia (CCCNS) began work on the Caring At Work Campaign 2004, a project with the end goal of taking action and implementing new strategies to achieve the child care sector's collective vision for the future. Throughout March and April, CCCNS implemented the first, information-gathering phase of the campaign, the **Speaking Out Discussion Series**. This phase included three main activities:

- **Preliminary Interviews:** 25 telephone interviews with centre administrators
- **"Host Your Own Discussion Group" packages:** 350 packages sent to centres and other stakeholders describing how to host your own discussion group
- **Province-wide discussion groups:** 5 discussion groups held throughout the province, including Halifax, Bridgewater, Sydney, Truro and Yarmouth.

The following is a summary of findings from these activities, and a definition of the next steps in the Caring At Work Campaign 2004.

Speaking Out Discussion Series Results

The feelings and needs of participants in all three activities, although each communicated differently or with certain regional slants, were strikingly similar. Below is a description of where participants see child care now, where they want it to be and how they feel we will get there.

- *Current Situation:* Participants felt the sector's strengths lay in the quality of those people in the field and in the resources available to them (i.e. workshops, associations, etc.). They saw opportunities for change and betterment in upcoming elections, recent media attention and federal commitments to child care (i.e. Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Care). Participants felt the sector lacked funding, a united voice, respect and recognition.
- *Where we want to be-- The Vision:* Participants imagined a sector where practitioners are a well-trained, diverse team dedicated to what they do; spaces are big, bright, clean, well-equipped and stimulating to children; and the programs and services are high quality and child-centred, guided by a standards of practice and code of ethics.
- *How we get there-- The Priorities:* Five key priority areas were discovered.
 - **Developing a strong professional infrastructure** (i.e. strong, representative association, standards of practice and code of ethics)
 - **Building relationships and working together within the sector** (i.e. opportunities to get together, communication between programs and centres, building trust and a strong unified voice).
 - **Obtaining increased and sustained government funding**
 - **Alleviating retention and recruitment problems** (i.e. problem caused by low wages and negative public perception among other things).
 - **Increasing awareness within and outside the sector** (i.e. education of the sector, the government and the general public about the importance of quality care and the people who provide it).



What the Child Care Sector in Nova Scotia Wants

In analyzing the information gathered during the **Speaking Out Discussion Series**, CCCNS developed a broad, all-encompassing statement describing what the child care sector in Nova Scotia wants:

The Nova Scotia child care sector wants a comprehensive infrastructure that supports quality child care, its implementation and sustenance being a partnership of the sector and the government of Nova Scotia.

This infrastructure, is outlined in detail in a national publication titled, *A Best Practices Approach to Regulated Child Care within a Framework that Supports Good Outcomes for Children* (Ferguson, E. E., Jerchel, L., Lutes, D., Mauch, D., and Rochon, K. F., 2003). CCCNS will be hosting presentations on this paper to the sector in two locations: Halifax, June 8, 7-9 pm, at Mount Saint Vincent University; and in Kentville, June 9, 7-9 pm at NSCC Kingstec Campus.

If you are interested in attending, please call Connections for more details.

The Next Steps

In order to achieve the goal of developing this comprehensive infrastructure, CCCNS will be targeting two audiences: **policy makers and "influencers"** (i.e. politicians) and **members of the child care sector**. It is the hope of CCCNS that through our communication with the child care sector, the sector will, in turn, communicate these message to parents, each other and other members of the Nova Scotia public. CCCNS can provide the tools, but it is the responsibility of all members of the sector to take steps toward reaching our collective goals! This is a great opportunity to network and communicate with colleagues and to work together. CCCNS has developed several campaigns in order to communicate the sector's messages to our audiences.

- **Vote Child Care Campaign:** Reaching the policy makers and "influencers" though "voting for child care" and encouraging others to do the same.
- **Information Awareness Campaign:** Educating policy makers on the child care sector and what we want, through presentations to caucuses, and informing the sector through presentations on results of series and next steps.
- **Child Care Awareness Days:** The purpose of Child Care Awareness Days is to educate the public about the importance of child care practitioners in society. Additional events this year will target policy makers and the business community.

How You Can Participate


There are many ways for all members of the sector to get involved in these activities, and to work together toward our collective goals. These include:

- Attend one of the presentations by CCCNS on the comprehensive infrastructure we seek, and distribute this information to others
- Take part in the **Vote Child Care Campaign** and encourage others to do so
- Participate in Child Care Awareness Days activities or hold your own

For more information on the Caring At Work Campaign 2004, and all activities, please contact Child Care Connection Nova Scotia at (902) 423-8199 (*HRM*) or at 1-800-565-8199 (*Atlantic Canada*).

We would love to hear from you!

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