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# Progress Report

November, 2009



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**Alberta Resource Centre  
FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT**

*...for early learning and care services*

# Alberta Resource Centre For Quality Enhancement

## Message from the Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement (ARCQE) we invite you to peruse our Progress Report.

The Progress Report highlights our achievements and gives an overview of our many accomplishments. In its short 5 year history, ARCQE has forged strong relationships with the community and now offers diverse supports to ensure that front line service staff, that work with children and families in Alberta, have access to practices and knowledge that support continuous quality improvement. ARCQE's goal is to continue to build on our strengths and our commitments to the early learning and child care field.

The Board of Directors thanks the ARCQE staff for their diligence, creativity and resourcefulness in ensuring that this agency can continue to provide much needed support to our clients. We also wish to thank our partners and clients for their trust and assistance in achieving our goals and we look forward to many more years of community engagement in the child care field in Alberta.

Co-Chairs,



Cathy Smey Carston



Sherrill Brown

Five years into the process of accreditation, demand for site specific support is continuously on the rise. In 2008, **100%** of ARCQE sponsored services available were scheduled and delivered in a record six month period. Given this an additional **33%** increase in services was engaged in order to meet with escalating demand for support. Early trends for 2009 again continue to reinforce need and benefits of Coaching supports with **100%** of sponsored services available to Out of School Care programs accessed only three months into the year and **72%** of contracted services for child care programs being issued in under six months time. Interesting service activity trends...

Types of Service Contracts	Service Activity
Coaching & Mentoring support	1019 site specific contracts since 2005
Most requested service: Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)	134 agencies which translates to 959 staff practice observations
Regional contract support	ARCQE had formally partnered with 6 of 10 CFSA's to deliver: intensified supports, enhanced professional development opportunities & best practice resources.
Inter-Ministry Initiatives	Alberta Education: Aboriginal & Cultural resource development  Family Violence/ACYS: Bullying project  ACYS: Recruitment & Retention

## Mentorship & Coaching

**“Research to date indicates that positive, attentive caregiver interactions with children are associated with positive child outcomes in all developmental domains” (Dunn 1993).**

With caregiver interactions noted as the single most important element of quality (CCAAC 2005) it is not surprising that services most in demand from ARCQE relates to coaching and mentoring support. In the past year alone ARCQE provided in excess of **12,900** hours in onsite practical support to **461** child care programs across the province. In April 2009 ARCQE was contracted to provide site specific support to **390** new agencies; including Out of School Care programs which by end of year would see a projected increase of site specific service hours to a staggering **20,700** in the last five years alone.

Impact of coaching and mentoring support is far reaching and the level of involvement varied. To date of the **482** programs that have become accredited over the past five years, **89%** have accessed ARCQE services for pre-accreditation support. Of those served, **95%** were successful on their first attempt. Additionally, caseload trends indicate given most programs have professional development and service strategies identified as part of annual program goals, involvement with ARCQE once initiated is maintained as part of continuous quality improvement.

*Our Coach was very refreshing and knowledgeable. The one on one coaching was the most beneficial. All of my questions were answered. Everything was great! Thank you so much for all your help.”*

*Grande Prairie Friendship Centre – Aboriginal Head Start Program*

## Board Members

The 2009-2010 Board of Directors has representation from a number of geographic regions in Alberta as well as at a national level. Board members contribute a wealth of education and a expertise specific to child care.

**Dr. Sherrill Brown**, Early Learning and Child Care, Grant MacEwan University, Edmonton

**Cathy Smey Carston**, Early Learning and Child Care, Mt. Royal College, Calgary

**Debi Pagee**, Alberta Family Child Care Association, Edmonton

**Ilene Fleming**, Success By 6®, Edmonton

**Marilyn Boisvert**, Alliance of Early Learning Programs, Grande Prairie

**Sherry Chichenko**, Medicine Hat District Childcare Association, Medicine Hat

**Anne Maxwell**, Canadian Child Care Federation, Ottawa

For an updated list of Board members including biographies, please visit our website.

ARCQE was established in November of 2004 under the guidance of national and provincial partners as a new and innovative project to support the child care sector. It has since become incorporated as an independent non-profit organization supporting as many as **850** licensed child care programs province-wide. Formalization of the society offered a natural and timely opportunity to review the agency's Vision and Mission which led to the philosophy that guides the service and support the agency provides today.

### Vision

ARCQE, is the agency of choice and hub of leadership excellence, where excited and motivated staff, lead and inspire educated and committed professionals to deliver exemplary practices through accessible and flexible programs that support community, children and families.

### Mission

Creatively inspire professionals to build leadership and capacity by enhancing quality in programs and services that support children and families. This is accomplished through:

- Community Building
- Professional Development and Training
- Research and Best Practice
- Resource Development and Distribution
- Mentorship and Coaching

*The aspects of ARCQE involvement most helpful was being supported and having someone to answer questions on the basis that they are knowledgeable about the information they are sharing.*

*T.L.C Family Day Homes - Calgary*



With the onset of accreditation in Alberta, it quickly became apparent that a wide array of additional resources would be needed to support agencies in meeting standards of excellence. This led to the development of accreditation Portfolio Resource Kits and professional passports as a means of ensuring that programs are gathering current, clear and comprehensive evidence relative to their program practices.

Accreditation Resources	Numbers Distributed
Portfolio Resource Kits	173
Professional Passports	206

ARCQE has also been engaged in two exciting initiatives with Alberta Education to develop curriculum guides and resource materials to support professionals with integration of culturally sensitive practices and Aboriginal teachings in child care settings. In total **191** resource baskets were developed and are now in circulation across the province which programs access via a Resource Access Pass (RAP) card with ARCQE.

## Resource Development & Distribution

While there are many valuable publications and resources available to address broad based business and management protocols, there are few formal documents that exist specific to operational guidelines for child care and/or accreditation of child care programs. Over the course of the past five years, ARCQE has worked diligently to create a number of new and innovative resources aimed at strengthening leadership & administration practices reflective of the Alberta child care sector.

It is clear by way of community response that materials developed are an important area of focus and valuable service niche for ARCQE to fill. Some of the resources created to date include policy packages specific to child care protocols such as: Use of Technology Materials in Programs For Young Children, Supervision Of Children & Reflecting Cultural Competencies In Practice. ARCQE has also developed a Orientation Manual to support transition of new staff entering the field, as well as a Business Plan Guide to support new owner/operators in effectively managing the business aspect of operating child care programs.

Custom Resources	Numbers Distributed
Policy Packages	1083
Orientation Manuals	68
Business Plan Guides	65

*All aspects of ARCQE's services were beneficial – guidance in providing information on developing policies, setting up workshops, understanding how to fill out forms. I am tremendously satisfied with the services that ARCQE offers that I can't imagine how to make it better"*

*Montessori Play and Learn – Edmonton*

## Meet the Staff

The Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement is staffed by 7 highly qualified and motivated individuals dedicated to improving the quality of child care services delivered to Albertans. These individuals bring to the centre a broad set of skills, knowledge and expertise in child care, administration, accreditation, leadership and best practice.

### Office Staff:

Corine Ferguson	Executive Director
Beth Arbuckle	Child Care Services
Launa Clark	Professional Development & Training
Cathryn Seifrit	Finance
Laura Brinker	Program Delivery
Carla Elliott	Program Delivery
Shelley Rowe	Administrator



## Community Building

Each year, ARCQE's involvement in the community grows... the following provides detailed information relating to the five service areas identified within the Mission statement.

“The quality and capacity of our future population depends on what we do now to support early child development.”

Dr. Fraser Mustard

Research shows that a child's brain will develop at an exponential rate during the first few years of life. Brain connections are developed through the stimulation of senses and are strengthened through repetition; hence providing appropriate stimulation in the first six years can have a long-lasting impact on a child's intellectual, emotional and social development. Nurturing environments that provide care and opportunities for learning and exploration are essential for healthy growth and development of children.

Over the past five years, ARCQE has learned much about community engagement; most importantly, that in order for it to be meaningful and effective it needs to be responsive, flexible and delivered through multi-faceted applications. In order to achieve this, ARCQE employs creative strategies that build capacity of professionals and enhances quality of service for children and families through relationship based practice.

With over **950** completed practice observations on record; ARCQE is now being invited to share what is quickly becoming one of the largest reflective samplings of its kind on professional practice.

This has resulted in heightened interest broadly with request for presentations nationally in Nova Scotia, service training commissioned by the Department of Health & Community Services in Newfoundland/Labrador, and an upcoming information session in Washington for the National Association of Early Young Children conference.



## Research & Best Practice

AS a first of a kind provincial agency dedicated to providing service support to the child care community; ARCQE finds itself in a unique position of garnering valuable insight and findings on caregiver practice. This has led to increased opportunities for ARCQE to utilize statistical information gathered over a five year period to formally review & report on patterns and trends in child care.

In 2007, ARCQE received a grant to conduct a province-wide survey designed to yield descriptive data about centre-based and school-aged caregivers, family child care home visitors and providers, and early childhood students in Alberta. It was also intended to answer questions about rates of turnover; reasons caregivers stay in, or leave their child care positions; and professional development activities. This resulted in the compilation of the agency's first formal research publication: "*Caring for our Future*".

Since then, ARCQE has also garnered national and international attention with respect to informative findings relative to data collected on caregiver interactions. In direct response to identified need ARCQE established a new innovative service based on use of a recognized reliable tool that offers detailed analysis on practice.

*When asked to identify the single most important factor keeping them at their present place of work, almost half of the caregivers (47.8 %) indicated "enjoy the children and families"*

*Caring for Our Future (2008)*



ARCQE prides itself on it's ability to continuously evaluate and evolve supports and services to meet growing and expanding needs of the community it serves. Evidence that the agency is effectively achieving its mission is attested by way of website activity where as many as **10,000** hits per month. Recent activity also suggests interest both nationally and internationally is increasing, with over **23** countries world wide viewing innovative practices developed by ARCQE.

## Professional Development

The demand for workshops, training and professional development continues to grow as programs aspire to increased standards of excellence and implementation of current best practice. In a five year period, ARCQE has creatively responded to identified needs from the sector in promoting **50** workshop topics related to the following program areas:

- Children & Programming
- School Age Care
- Families & Parenting
- Staff & Professionalism
- Administration & Governance
- Accreditation

Since its establishment in 2004, ARCQE has delivered over **700** workshops across Alberta connecting with over **5,000** child care professionals in the past year alone. New workshops offered also include a series specific to Out of School Care programs. Additional requests arising from ECS and Head Start programs.

With a client base of **850** programs and growing, ARCQE has positioned itself as a “go to” source for delivery of meaningful information on current practice trends reflective of the sector.

As a result ARCQE has garnered recognition, provincially and nationally as an organization that can coordinate support in event planning and/or provide expertise as presenters on best practice. This role has enabled ARCQE to partner with the sector as an active contributor in numerous conferences, symposiums, and various speaking engagements across Alberta.



*The workshop was great. Thank you for everything and most importantly allowing me to feel more confident because now I can teach children the importance of math through play.*  
Park Allen, YMCA