

## PART 1 – STATE-RUN CHILDHOOD

1. **School** – from birth to graduation
2. Standardized **thinking** from birth to graduation, all-day, all-year
3. Parents as **gender neutral workers**, not parents as parents
4. Assessment, documentation & **'intervention'**
5. Data collection & **'data linkage'**

All-day Kindergarten is the **tip of the iceberg**. The goals of the all-day Kindergarten proposal can not be fully appreciated without understanding the full scope of the 'Early Learning Report' that accompanies it.

The **iceberg** is the report prepared by Dalton McGuinty's 'Early Learning Advisor', Charles Pascal entitled, 'With Our Best Future in Mind – Implementing Early Learning in Ontario'. There is no way to read this report without realizing that, if acted upon, it would represent an unprecedented – and dangerously intrusive – level of government involvement in the lives of families in this province.

### **A word about the government's intentions:**

Had Dalton McGuinty unequivocally denounced this report we would be inclined to believe that he does not want care and education for children 0 to 12 to be controlled by the Ministry of Education. But McGuinty has not distanced himself from the recommendations in the Pascal report, leading Ontarians to the logical conclusion that when all-day Kindergarten is implemented, he indeed might implement the report's full intent. The report is unabashedly highlighted on the government's website:

[http://www.ontario.ca/ontprodconsume/groups/content/@gosp/@initiative/documents/document/ont06\\_018899.pdf](http://www.ontario.ca/ontprodconsume/groups/content/@gosp/@initiative/documents/document/ont06_018899.pdf)

Already, McGuinty – through Bill 242 – has put forth legislation to change the Education Act so that all third party school-based daycares (such as those run by the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs) will be kicked out and replaced with state controlled daycare programs, before and after school and all summer long. And of course, Pascal makes the classic argument that if the whole report is not implemented we will not 'reap' the full benefits of all-day Kindergarten.

### **Note to Dalton McGuinty:**

If we are mistaken – and you do not believe in or condone the recommendations of the Pascal report – please publicly denounce it and pull it off your (our) government's taxpayer-funded website.

### **1. School – from birth to graduation:**

In the new 'Child and Family Service System' for children 0 to 12, family drop-in and childcare centres would become state-controlled affairs. While existing providers would be grandfathered in, "All service expansion, however, should take place

through [government controlled] Best Start Child and Family Centres and school boards” (p.20)

New all-day Kindergarten would double as daycare, freeing up ‘resources’ so that more daycare could be created for even younger children (p. 22). On page 23 Pascal refers to the “**savings generated from the implementation of the Early Learning Program**”. Of course there will be ‘savings’ because now that the care of 3-5 year olds will be in schools where there is no mandated minimum ratios or maximum group sizes, it will ‘cost’ less. While regulations in the Day Nurseries Act have for decades ensured that children this age would not have fewer than one adult to 8-10 children, the Education Act stipulates no such thing.

- “Programs for children and families would be integrated into ‘Best Start Child and Family Centres under a single municipal system **manager**” (p.5)
- “These new centres would be developed and expanded by consolidating and **re-engineering** the resources, governance, and mandates of existing child care, family resource, and early intervention services. This includes regulated group and homechild care, family resource programs, Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Preschool Speech and Language, Child Care Special Needs Resourcing, and family literacy coordinators.” (p. 20)
- “The Province should create a continuum of early learning, child care, and family supports for children from the **prenatal period through to adolescence**, under the **leadership of the Minister of Education**.” (p. 14)

## **2. Standardized thinking from birth to graduation, all-day, all-year:**

Daycare and schooling will use a ‘common curriculum’ developed by the Ministry. This will allow for the so-called ‘seamless’ day, week, year (*and life*) to happen. It will also facilitate the ‘successful’ data collection and assessment outlined in **point 5** below. School, ‘extended day’ and summer programming will all follow direction from the same manual:

- “The Early Learning Program [Junior & Senior Kindergarten], whether attended for a half, full, or extended day, is a **single program** with a **single pedagogical and curriculum approach** planned and delivered by qualified educators using common space and resources. ... This would be a **year-round, school-board-operated program**.” (p. 18)
- “We need a common programming framework **for all of Ontario’s early childhood settings**.”(p. 26) “Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) [should be] the curriculum and pedagogical framework for Best Start Child and Family Centres, the Early Learning Program, and the Extended Day Primary program.” (p. 25)

- “The Continuum of Development in ELECT outlines the **sequence of skills** that children from **0 to 8** years old **can be expected to acquire** across broad developmental domains...: (p. 26)

### 3. Parents as ‘gender neutral’ workers, not parents as parents:

The ‘default’ is that both parents are ‘working’. The rhetoric in this document continually assumes all parents are at jobs – or temporarily ‘on leave’ from them. Is anyone looking after their children at home?

- “And in the not too distant future, I see more parents using these centres as they foster their attachment to their new babies during their **extended parental leave.**” (p. 6)
- “The mother is on **parental leave** while the father works.” ( p.16) (This line is found in a grey sidebar entitled ‘Imagine’ which I implore you to read – its utopian description of school life, including but not limited to principals cheerily greeting and conversing with each and every family at the school house doors each morning is beyond ridicule.)
- In case you had any doubt about this really being universal daycare, one of the ‘results’ that would be tracked (as a positive) is “the number of parents able to work because of the **availability of affordable childcare.**” In other words, how many more (mothers) can we get out of the house *working*? (p. 39)
- The recommended 400 weeks of leave “designates six weeks for the exclusive use of the father or other non-birthing parent; if not used, this time would be **deducted** from the 400 days”. The state would regressively coerce families into dividing their leave based upon gender lines. Quebec has a 5 week ‘use-it-or-lose-it’ fathers leave and Sweden, a two month one.

**NOTE:** I organized a ‘non-traditional’ Career Day at the last school where I taught, focussing on jobs not traditionally done by women (ex/ female backhoe operator) and men (ex/ stay-at-home Dad). Like most people, I support more fathers being the home parent but as one mother said to me, ‘I don’t want or need the government telling me how to work things out with my husband’.

### 4. Assessment, documentation & intervention:

There is continual talk of correcting problems before it is too late. (Pascal: “The goal is to catch problems in children well before they enter the Early Learning Program.” p. 28)

While only a tiny minority of children have problems that need serious intervention (see Section 3 on research below), Pascal’s report continually implies that problems are so pervasive – and parents too unable to notice and address them – that the state must provide universal ‘screening’ and quite often ‘interventions’.

- Under ‘More Timely Intervention for Children’, Pascal states: “It is important to **monitor** the developmental progress of **all** children and essential for children with special challenges.” “Best Start Child and Family Centres should play a central role in the consolidation and **re-engineering of early identification and intervention programs.**” “For children with identified challenges, professionals will work with parents to develop an intervention strategy, **becoming the child’s advocate** [not parents].” P. 21.
- “To get this right, along with integration of support to families, Ontario needs a consistent approach to screening **all children as early in life as possible.** (p. 28)
- Pascal advocates the use of something called the “Nipissing District Developmental Screens (NDDS)” which “**offers 13 screens that assess children’s development at intervals between 1 month of age and 6 years.**” (p. 28)
- Please read: “Municipal authorities are in a good position to build the necessary links between and among public health, school boards, and specialized agencies to **ensure** that parents take advantage of the one-stop service model in the Best Start Child and Family Centre. Incorporating the NDDS and the Continuum of Development in ELECT into a **consistent early identification** protocol will enhance observation and **documentation** by educators. A further developmental check using the NDDS should be carried out at registration for the Early Learning Program. Assessments of children **at birth**, at **18 months**, and at **registration for the full-day Early Learning Program [Kindergarten]** will provide parents with good information about their child and complement the **detailed portfolios** of each child’s progress in early years programming...”(p. 29)

It becomes obvious in the next section – data collection and linkage – why screening, assessments and documentation – from birth to graduation – is so important for the management of this new **state-run childhood**....

## 5. Data collection & data linkage:

Pascal writes:

- “The **Early Years Index** that I am proposing would track access, program effectiveness, resources, and outcomes. It will draw on assessment tools already in use and introduce new measures [see below] where necessary. (p.38)
- “The index should track results for children and families, using such indicators as (p.39):
  - **birth measures**, the enhanced **18-month** well-baby visit, and **Early Learning Program registration measures [Kindergarten]**;
  - the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and the Kindergarten Parent Survey;
  - Middle-Years Development Instrument data (under development);

- school achievement as measured by Grade 3 and Grade 6 academic assessments [**grade 3 and grade 6 testing**] of the independent Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO);
- well-being indicators for 12-year-olds [**such as?**]"
- “Program evaluation criteria should **link** the practice guidelines in ELECT and the operation of Best Start Child and Family Centres, the Early Learning Program, and the Extended Day Primary program.”
- “The EDI uses **data collected by a teacher** in the latter half of Senior Kindergarten, using a tool that measures each child’s development in five areas ...” “EDI findings are most effective when **linked** to other measures, such as the social and economic status of the community; the availability of children’s programs, libraries, community centres, and playgrounds; and health, crime, or employment statistics. By **tracking over time**, governments, schools, and agencies can evaluate the impact of their programs on children’s well-being.”
- “Manitoba and British Columbia are working towards **linking information** about children’s **status at birth**, in **early childhood**, and at **school entry** to **school performance** and **high school completion**. **This is a promising practice that Ontario should explore.**” “With this system in place we could, for example, **compare Grade 3 school assessments** for children who **attended** the Early Learning Program and Best Start Child and Family Centres *with those of children who did not.*”
- “**Linking children’s information** to other **social, economic, and health data** is an essential accountability mechanism, providing information to schools, Best Start Child and Family Centres, municipal authorities, and school boards ...” (p.40)

**Pascal tells us (above) that British Columbia has a ‘linkage’ model we should explore. What follows are four examples of ‘data linkage’ in British Columbia. Do people in Ontario know about this?**

- Since 2003, without the informed consent of the parents and children involved, the BC government, through the **Human Early Learning Partnership (H.E.L.P.)**, has been collecting "person specific" data on "all children in British Columbia" and their families "from preconception to young adulthood".  
**Developmental Trajectories Research Unit (CYDTRU) Research**  
(Paragraph 1, 2 & 3 on homepage)  
[http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/CYDTRU/developmental\\_research.htm](http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/CYDTRU/developmental_research.htm)
- Personal data available for “linkage” includes the following records: the **Kindergarten** Early Development Instrument, “electronic medical records” from school dental checks, school behaviour and achievement data, Strong Start in-school drop-ins for ages 0-5, medical, birth, death, perinatal, mental health, injury, stress, daycare, child in-provincial-care, ethnicity, hospital, pharmaceutical, “socioeconomic census data”, and Workers’

Compensation Board.

**Child and Youth Developmental Trajectories Research Unit [CYDTRU]**

(p. 1 & 2 - very easy to see)

[http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/CYDTRU\\_Brief\\_March\\_2006.pdf](http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/CYDTRU_Brief_March_2006.pdf)

- Personal income tax data linkage is a goal **H.E.L.P.** staff state in a Statistics Canada report:  
**National Data Sets: Sources of Information for Canadian Child Care Data**  
(p. 19)  
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2006284-eng.pdf>
- In 2004 HELP claimed to have “**completed linkage of 97 percent of BC school-aged children’s personal education and personal health numbers**”. This took place in a few months after “Ministerial” approval was given.  
**HELP Health-Education Data Crosswalk** (p.1)  
[http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/HELP\\_Crosswalk\\_Update\\_07-26-04.doc](http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/HELP_Crosswalk_Update_07-26-04.doc)