

PARTNERS



Partners Promoting the Importance of Early Childhood Education

April 11, 2012

Honorable Minister Broten
Ministry of Education
Public Inquiries Unit
14th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Broten,

Partners Promoting the Importance of Early Childhood Education works collaboratively with the community to raise public awareness about the importance of early learning and child care. We are a group of non-profit organizations dedicated to high quality child care.

Our vision is a community that understands, promotes and champions early learning and child care. We work to achieve this through:

- education strategies that raise public awareness about the importance of early learning and child care,
- providing information for parents about the range of services available and how to choose quality early learning and child care experiences,
- promotion of the profession of Early Childhood Education,
- maintaining links with committees/groups that have congruent missions.

Over the years, Partners has made significant contributions to early learning and child care in London:

Partners has developed and distributed publications to promote the importance of early learning and child care. 'Early Years Matter', was a user-friendly guide to healthy child development that evolved into 'Child Care – Early Childhood Education in London', a brochure that includes a comprehensive listing of licensed child care and family resources, as well as tips on how to make a quality child care decision. Annually, 8400 brochures are distributed throughout the community and the brochure is available electronically on the familyinfo.ca and the City of London websites.

In collaboration with other groups sharing our vision and on our own, Partners has been pro-active in supporting officials from all levels of government to understand the importance of early learning and child care. Our members have hosted tours of their programs, meetings with stakeholders and participated in 'Adopt a Councilor' initiatives. During elections, candidates have been surveyed to determine their support for early learning and child care, and results have been distributed to the public.

Partners worked with the City of London, the Thames Valley District School Board and the London District Catholic School Board to host a cross-sector discussion on full day learning. A community report, based on this discussion, was sent to the provincial Early Learning Advisor, Dr Charles Pascal, to help inform his work. The initial discussion generated a very successful summer symposium on Full Day Early Learning and established an expectation for further cross-sector collaborations.

Our Recent Print & Social Media Strategy to Connect with Today's Families:

We recently pooled our funds and embarked on a \$60,000 marketing campaign to educate the public about the importance of licensed child care. This included a revised child care brochure with continued updated connections to www.familyinfo.ca. The print ad campaign is also being advertised in Mom & Caregiver for ten issues this year and in our local recreation guide in London and Middlesex.

Our strategy includes social media to target today's technological savvy parents and grandparents. Tbk Creative (www.tbkcreative.com), a local social media marketing company, has been retained by us to develop and oversee our social media campaign. We launched a corporate Facebook page in February, 2012. This launch included a sweepstakes to entice people to view and "like" this Facebook page thus enabling the sweepstakes to go viral (www.facebook.com/#!/londonchildcare). A Twitter account was also developed and can be followed @londonchildcare.

The contest was very successful and we acquired over 1700 fans on our Facebook page. The reach was to over 300,000 of friends of fans that were seeing our page with information about the importance of licensed child care.

Future Direction:

As grassroots child care organizations we are very dedicated to protecting the licensed child care spaces that we currently have in our community. We have taken major strides over the past year to ensure we are protecting the viability of our organizations.

We have worked together to develop some recommendations that will assist our organizations through the transition to serving younger age groups. These are small but necessary steps to continue to operate licensed child care facilities in our community. We encourage you to view these recommendations and bring them forward to your colleagues to inspire change that will have a great economic impact on our community.

Thank you for taking the time to look at what Partners has done and where Partners is going as a leading community group promoting the importance of early childhood education.

Sincerely,

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