

## What Others are Saying About the *Early Years Study 3*

Benchmarking children’s outcomes at a population level is crucial to inform policy makers on where, what and how to scale up programs and to reach universality, accountability and comparability within and among countries. The Early Development Instrument, pioneered in Canada and promoted worldwide under Fraser's guidance, helps countries measure the well-being of a nation's most valuable asset—their young. The Early Childhood Education Index complements this effort by examining the policy frameworks that promote quality, accessible programs for young children. We, in the global ECD community, are grateful for Fraser's translation of the science of brain development over the past decade with the *Early Years Study 1* and *2* and this current volume, *Early Years Study 3*. As the study demonstrates, Canada has made considerable progress toward building a system to ensure children's healthy development. We give tribute to Fraser for his dedication, indomitable spirit and energy in promoting understanding of the importance of a child’s early experience throughout the life of that child. We will remember his words that ECE belongs to all children.

*Dr. Mary Young, pediatrician and former Lead Child Development Specialist in the World Bank's Human Development Network*

*Early Years Study 3* continues in a tradition of knowledge mobilization that informs the Canadian context of child development. This third edition affords educators a critical opportunity to redirect energies and resources currently consumed by reactive models of special education and services. As school districts struggle with burgeoning rates of childhood disabilities, EYS3 directs a preventative approach to supporting all children and families. The evidence informs families, educators, policy-makers and economists with a contemporary understanding of investing in early learning and caring.

*Dr. David Philpott, Program Chair, Special Education, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland & Labrador*

We see from this report that many provinces have increased their investments in the early years, but there remains much to do to see a real difference. Investing in quality and in what has been demonstrated as effective still needs to guide our actions. We need to keep track of what we do and how it impacts young children's lives and the well-being of their families.

*Claire Gascon Giard, Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development/Strategic Knowledge Cluster on ECD*

The new *Early Years Study 3* is not only an excellent compendium of information, but also a good read—a straightforward, understandable and logical case for investment in early child development. EYS3 can be read, understood and enjoyed by an academic and a teenager alike. In fact, I would suggest this book—or at least parts of it—be incorporated into a high school curriculum. Perhaps then, eventually, all politicians will understand this issue, and not just the selected few. The authors bring to life a new index—the Early Childhood Education Index (ECEI). Based on sound evidence, all reviewed in the study, the ECEI combines jurisdictionally controlled factors that matter to the achievement of high quality in early childhood education into a tool to assess the provinces' progress in a way that is comparable and equitable. The index is timely and innovative, and quite simply unique. It will lend itself easily to providing background provincial benchmarks in other ongoing monitoring efforts, in particular as the implementation of full-day kindergarten becomes more widespread. As the EYS3 eloquently makes clear, children do not develop in a vacuum, and the network of systems available—or not available—to support all families in raising and educating the youngest population easily translates into making or breaking a successful and civic society. The new ECEI should be widely embraced as a powerful tool in advocacy, policy evaluation and reporting on progress in all areas relevant to child development.

*Dr. Magdalena Janus, Associate Professor at the Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University, Ontario Chair in Early Child Development and co-creator of the Early Development Instrument (EDI)*

This report reinforces the critical importance of the early years to long-term health and development and makes the case for investments in early education—an investment that pays out benefits for children, families and communities today and in the future.

*Joan Lombardi, Ph.D. Child and Family Policy Specialist; Former Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-Departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development for the Administration for Children and Families under the US Department of Health and Human Services.*

The *Early Years Study 3* makes clear that there is a strong scientific and economic basis for investing in high quality ECE programs for all young children. If this is to become a reality, the public must have clear information on the extent to which policies actually support this goal province by province. The *Early Years Study 3* provides this information for the first time. With the Early Childhood Education Index, citizens now have a detailed guide for the policy improvements that their province must make to prepare all children to succeed in the 21st century.

*W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D., Director, National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University and co-author of the annual State of Preschool*

*Early Years Study 3* is the third in a series of Canadian studies highlighting the importance of early childhood development for the health and well being of individuals and societies. In Study 3, McCain, Mustard, McCuaig and Bertrand present the most recent scientific and social policy evidence in support of enhancing early childhood learning and care in Canada. The report presents an impressive amount of well-documented evidence in a very readable and accessible style. Of particular interest is the Early Childhood Education Index 2011, presented in the final chapter. This index will make major contributions to social policy discussions and decisions in regarding early childhood education in Canada in the coming years. Study 3 is a “must read” for everyone interested in the well being of Canadian society.

***Ray DeV. Peters, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Research Director of the Better Beginning, Better Futures Longitudinal Study***

The Lawson Foundation is pleased to support *Early Years Study 3* and the development of the Early Childhood Education Index. Monitoring is an integral part of democratic accountability to children, families and the public and is essential for informed decision-making. The Early Childhood Education Index will provide a better understanding of quality, access, financing and policy of early years programming across Canada. It complements other important monitoring efforts The Lawson Foundation has helped establish and supports including: the Early Development Instrument, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card and the work of the Canadian Child Development Monitoring Network.

***Evan Wood, President, the Lawson Foundation***

This new *EYS* report gives us a solid and elegant overview of the actual state of knowledge in early human development. Clearly set at the interface of biological and social sciences, this new science of ECD is transformative. The report synthesizes new research that illustrates how early experience sculpts the brain and the neurobiological systems. The synthesis describes the processes through which early experience can get embedded in the biology of the developing child. The report also confirms that the consilience of disciplines, that is, the integration of trans-disciplinary expertise, is a *passage obligé* for the science of ECD. Clearly written, it is a remarkable translational tool. I would recommend it to any college and undergraduate student interested in human development.

***Michel Boivin, Ph.D., MSRC/FSRC, Canada Research Chair in Child Development ;  
Professeur École de psychologie, Université Laval; Professeur***

Canadian families and children are fortunate to have a universal health care system and public schooling. However, in the critical early years of life there is no universal public platform to provide supports for whole child development and for parenting. Existing preschool services are usually fragmented in ways that reduce their effectiveness in supporting family life, healthy child development, and the transition to school. Furthermore, access to these services is often limited for families from minority language groups, with lower incomes, etc. *Early Years Study 3* makes a very strong case for a universal platform to support early child development as a key to a healthy and just society. And it points the way to concrete programming and policy actions that are needed. These important ideas in *Early Years Study 3* are firmly anchored in the growing evidence from many research fields. In fact, *Early Years Study 3* argues for the development of integrated knowledge about early human development, from epigenetics to education, as a basis for public policy and programs. Here is integrative and innovative thinking aimed at a better future for all.

*Dr. Carl Corter, Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto*

In *Early Years Study 3*, McCain, Mustard and McCuaig help to shine light on the growing intergenerational tension in Canada. Their compelling review of the evidence shows this tension can only be solved permanently and sustainably through public policy change that reallocates substantial government funding in support of the generation raising young children. The analysis of early care and learning programs provides ample evidence for senior governments across Canada to remedy the service poverty that exists for families with preschool kids. The new Early Childhood Education Index in turn adds to policy monitoring, which now shows more clearly than ever that Canadians have much to accomplish before Canada once again works for all generations.

*Dr. Paul Kershaw, Associate Professor, UBC & Human Early Learning*

Just finished reading the report - it is terrific. A fantastic summary of the basic science written in an easily accessible form, and a closely reasoned case (with a great use of data) to argue the implications for service delivery and policy, and a road map with examples. I am circulating it widely here.

*Professor Frank Oberklaid, Founding Director, Centre for Community Child Health at The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne; Professor of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne*