Presented by:

Elizabeth Hawley
Director, Effective Practice and Programs, Child Development Resource Connection Peel

Tracy Petersen
Director, Sunshine Children’s Centre

Raising the Bar in Peel

A commitment to Best Practices in Early Learning and Child Care by the Early Childhood Education Community in Peel
After consulting with the Licensed Child Care Community in Peel, participants felt that Quality Child Care was about..
History

**Raising the Bar** was developed and introduced in Hamilton, Ontario to promote and support observance of community standards. CDRCP acquired the rights to participate in the program however made it unique to Peel. This was done by customizing it to incorporate standards and resource tools used in this Region.
Other communities participating in Raising the Bar

Currently there are 14 areas in Ontario that participate in the program including Hamilton, Waterloo and York.

For a detailed list please log on to www.cdrcp.com and click on the Raising the Bar tab
In 2007 - 2008

- Child Development Resource Connection Peel (CDRCP) as the lead agency, on behalf of the Quality Early Learning Mentoring Partnership Peel (QEMPP) applied to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for funding for a three year project. The funding was awarded and the program started in 2008 launching Raising the Bar in Peel.

- QEMPP was the initial partnership for community collaboration and included the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario – Peel Branch, Sheridan College, PLASP, CDRCP and Caring for Kinds,

- CDRCP also partnered with the Region of Peel
What is Raising the Bar?

Raising the Bar is a voluntary annual quality initiative for early learning and licensed child care programs. Levels of quality are achieved in the three areas: Quality Assurance, Best Practices and Professional Education.
Three levels of Quality Assurance

- Quality is monitored through frequent on-site observations.
- Parent, staff or providers feedback is collected annually.
- Action plans are developed to address areas of need and to plan for improvement.
- In addition to annual licensing reviews and local public health inspections, Raising the Bar in Peel programs undergo site visits by Third Party Consultants and are required to submit their inclusion policy, both requirement of which are unique to Peel.
Best Practices

- Raising the Bar offers information for parents and promotes opportunities for community involvement.
- There are detailed policies, procedures and management practices to guide day-to-day operations.
- Specific strategies are in place to support optimal child health and development.
- Resources and information about child development are provided to parents, staff and providers.
**Professional Education**

- The team of Early Years professionals in Raising the Bar in Peel programs maintain credentials and commit to additional professional education each year.
- All Staff are required to have current First Aid and CPR certificates.
- Cooks are required to have Food Handlers' Certificate training.
- All directors and staff attend workshops and conferences to enhance their understanding of early childhood education and child care.
- Raising the Bar in Peel programs support staff’s professional education through mentorship and by providing practical training opportunities for cooperative education students.
Professional Education

- In 2011, 430 professionals involved in Raising the Bar in Peel received Platinum certificates for attending 20 hours or more of Professional Education in that year.
- 561 professionals were involved in networking opportunities with other professionals in the field.
- There were a total of 41 Professional Education opportunities made available to Raising the Bar in Peel participants.

*Please refer to the Early Learning and Child Care Task Force Resource Binder under the Quality section.*
Raising the Bar in Peel

- Promotes healthy early learning and child care programs
- Builds on strengths of the local early learning and child care communities
- Provides and recommends a series of activities to guide and monitor best practices
- Provides Professional Education opportunities through mentorship and collaborative practices
Raising the Bar Levels

- **Bronze level** programs follow fundamental quality indicators and are also in full compliance with Ontario's Day Nurseries Act.
- **Silver level** programs have additional strategies to enhance quality.
- **Gold level** programs demonstrate a long-term commitment to high quality in early learning and child care.
- A binder with all the policies, procedures and requirements is submitted to the RTB coordinator. All binders must contain the documentation to prove that each requirement is met for the level each centre is completing.
Copy of the Level Certificates

This program is supported in the community by:

[Logos of Region of Peel and Child Development Resource Connection]

Chair, Advisory Committee

Coordinator, Raising the Bar in Peel

2011
After the Gold Certificate

- Centres are part of the Gold Maintenance Program where they are required to maintain all of the Gold Raising the Bar standards and achieve further standards as set by the Advisory committee on an annual basis.
Advisory Committee Membership includes representatives from:

- Child Development Resource Connection Peel
- Sheridan College
- Not for Profit Child Care
- For Profit/Commercial Child Care
- Nursery Schools
- Home Child Care
- Brampton Caledon Community Living
- Infant and Child Development Services Peel
- Region of Peel
- French Child Care
- Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario Peel Branch
- Peel Health
In Addition to the Advisory Committee

- 67 Peer Reviewers donated their time to review each Program binder that was submitted at the end of their review year. This was to ensure all programs met the requirements for the achievement level being obtained.

- A total of 644 in-kind hours were donated including time from the Advisory Committee, Professional Education presenters and Peer Reviewers.
2011

- There are **135** programs in Peel participating.
- 61 are For Profit/Commercial Centres
- 71 Non-Profit Centres
- 2 Home Child Care Association - For Profit Centres
- 1 Home Child Care Association - Non-Profit Centre
- 12 New programs are joining Raising the Bar
- **792** Professionals attended training within the year
- **1,200** staff are employed in Raising the Bar in Peel programs
- **12,000** children are attending centres/home child care that participate in Raising the Bar in Peel.
Advantages of Participation

- Children attend centres whose standards are well above the minimum requirements.
- Parents are given the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Centres are able to display their certificates for parents to see.
- Staff are provided with a free membership to Child Development Resource Connection Peel’s Resource Centre.
- Staff are provided with a wide range of Professional Education opportunities at a lower cost.
Continued feedback

- “Using the Operating Criteria is a great tool to improve and update the classroom environment”
- “I feel that our Parent Handbook and policy manual are now more complete”
- “Curriculum became more child directed”
- “There is more opportunity to network with others”
- “It created more accountability to our profession.”
- “It has increased parent involvement.”
Tracy Petersen – Director, Sunshine Children’s Centre
Raising the Bar Participant
Welcome to Sunshine Children’s Centre
Raising the Bar Participant - Gold Level
RTB

Quality Assurance

Best Practices

Professional Development
How Sunshine Children’s Centre meets the RTB Requirements

Category One: Quality Assurance

Parent Feedback Surveys, Staff Work Environment Surveys and Staff Exit Surveys were all implemented. These surveys have been valuable tools, collecting feedback and following up with action plans to make improvements.

All staff are now trained in the use of an Environmental Assessment Tool.

We use the Operating Criteria. Each year, a 3rd party Analyst completes an observation to ensure the program has met the requirements and they provide valuable feedback and resources.
Category Two: Best Practice

Policies and Procedures
Changes were implemented to our Parent & Staff Handbooks, Student Orientation Packages, Job Descriptions, Health and Safety Practices and Inclusion Policies.

Children’s Development
Over a one year process, we revamped our entire curriculum to support the continuum of development. We recognize the benefits of play based learning. Our Centre now follows the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) framework.
Category Two: Best Practices continued

Family and Community Involvement

- Various workshops were offered for parents along with opportunities for parent involvement at the Centre

- We are proud to participate in fundraisers and campaigns such as; Casual for the Cure, MADD, The Sharing Place (food and clothing bank), Monthly Intergenerational Program with our community Seniors Residence, French programs for the children, Sunshine is even part of a current television commercial through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and Peel District School Board promoting co-op education.
Category Three: Professional Development

- Since participating in RTB, the Professional Development component has had one of the largest impacts on increasing quality.
- All program staff in gold level must attend a minimum of 8 hours of professional development each year.
- Personally, RTB gave me the confidence to participate in, and then facilitate a Mentoring Pairs (MPCC) year long program. I am a peer reviewer, proud to teach an ECE course, part time at Humber College, I sit on a number of different Boards and Committees that believe in increasing quality. I also attend the Supervisor Network Meetings, a great opportunity to network with other Supervisors who share wonderful ideas and resources.
Networking

There are several networking opportunities available to programs once they become involved in Raising the Bar in Peel

- RTB meetings
- Recognition and Celebration events
- Peer Review Days
- Professional Education
- Program visits
- Sharing of resources and information
Summation

- This morning I shared few examples of one Centre participating in RTB.

- Over 135 programs from a variety of Centres have volunteered to participate. I have had the pleasure of visiting some of the other wonderful Centres, meeting other dedicated, passionate Supervisors and staff who are as proud of their Centres as I am of Sunshine, and I hope that I represent them fairly. Wouldn't it be great if all Licensed Centres in Peel participated in this program?
Does a “Gold Level maintenance” mean that I am finished? That my centre and the other centres are finished?

Absolutely not. I read and interesting quote by Rick Pinto “**Excellence is the unlimited ability to improve the quality of what you have to offer**” Personally, I do not believe that any Centre is “perfect” , this would imply that they are finished growing.
I have the utmost respect for the RTB Peel coordinator Gayle Ballard who is incredibly supportive, knowledgeable and works diligently to enhance the quality of licensed child care in Peel. I am confident that the other Supervisors who are involved in Raising the Bar Peel share this sentiment.

It puts a smile on my face when I think of over 12,000 children in Peel who are ultimately reaping the benefits of RTB.
For more information about Raising the Bar in Peel please go to [www.cdrerculosis.com/rtb/raising-the-bar](http://www.cdrerculosis.com/rtb/raising-the-bar)
Or call 905-507-9360

Thank You

Elizabeth Hawley

Tracy Petersen