

What makes the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Program work? What else do we need to maximize Early Childhood Development? Policy implications for Canada

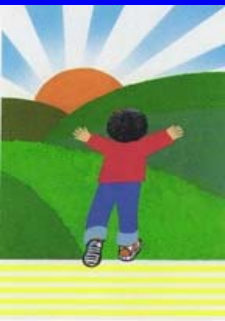
Ray DeV. Peters
Queen's University

Presented to the Conference on School Readiness
and School Success:
From Research to Policy and Practice

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<http://bbbf.queensu.ca>
ray.peters@queensu.ca



OBJECTIVES OF PRESENTATION



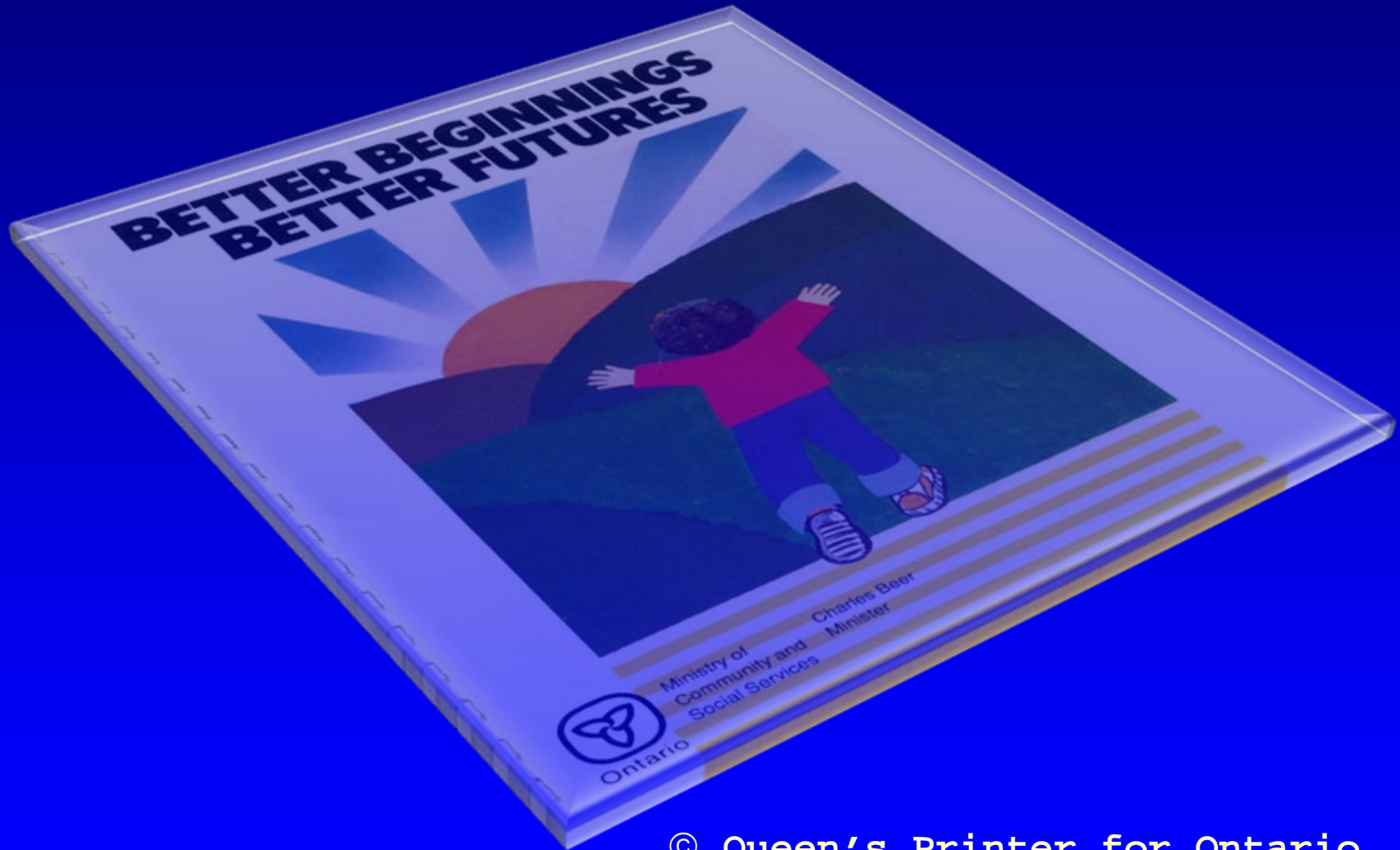
1. To describe what worked and what did not work in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project.
2. To discuss the implications of these research findings for Early Childhood Development policy in Canada.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP



In 1988, the Ontario Government convened a Technical Advisory Group of program experts and researchers to carry out an international review of successful prevention and promotion programs for young children.

BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES: AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF PRIMARY PREVENTION OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS



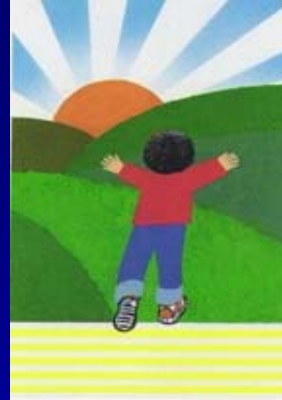
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There are limitations to current knowledge regarding effective intervention programs.



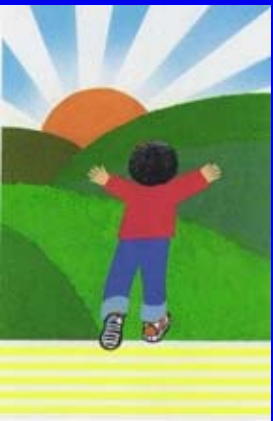
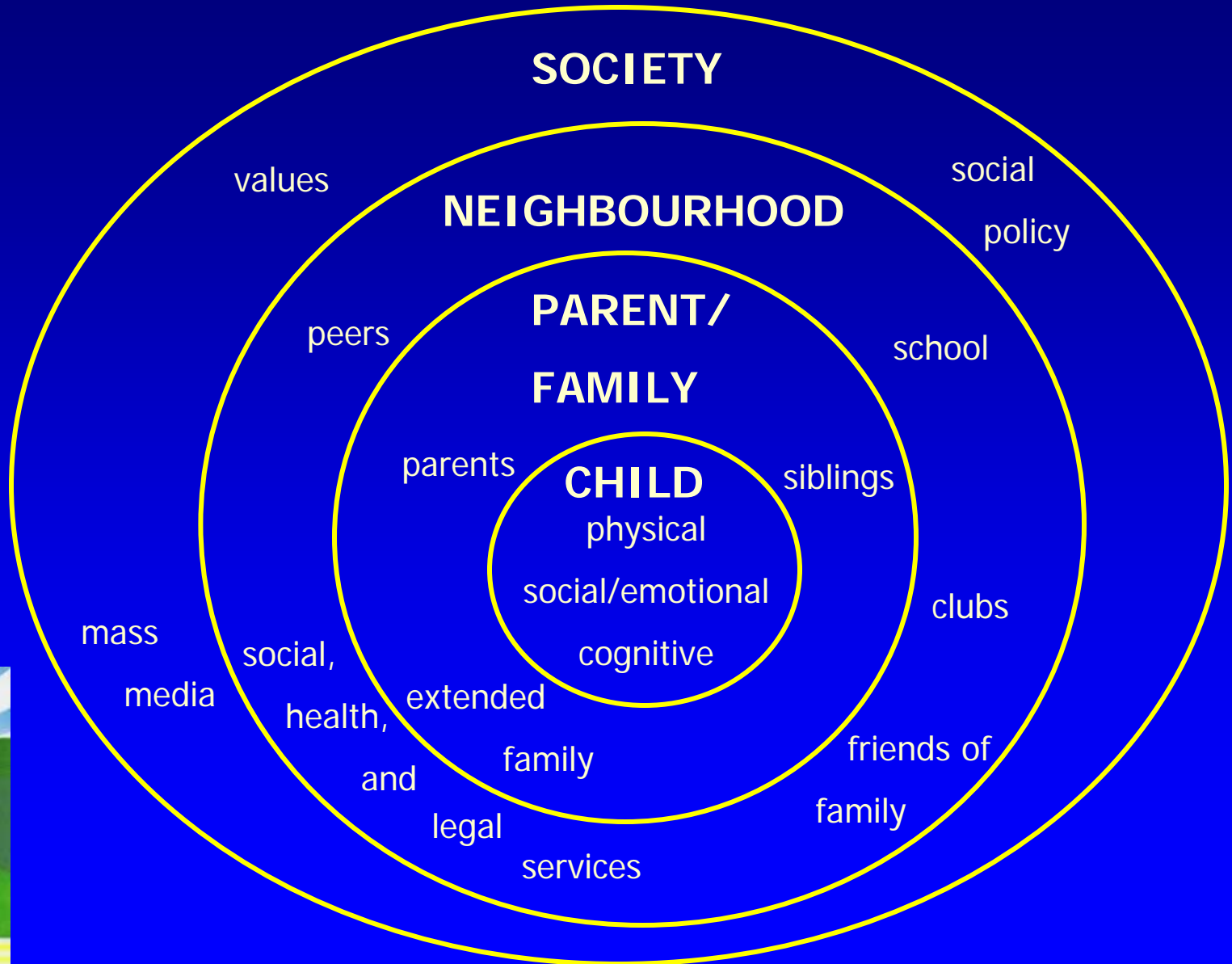
- Most effective demonstrations are small scale (involving less than 100 families)
- Little is known about the effects of expanding these demonstration programs to larger groups
- Costs of implementing programs are seldom collected or reported. This makes it difficult for policy makers to make informed decisions
- There are a few projects which have carried out quality economic analyses. However, again, these projects have had small sample sizes, making extrapolations to large-scale implementations difficult

There is much rhetoric about the importance of programs being *comprehensive, ecological, holistic, community-based, collaborative and/or integrated*



- However, there are virtually no well-researched programs for young children which have successfully incorporated these characteristics into the program model

Ecological Model of Child Development

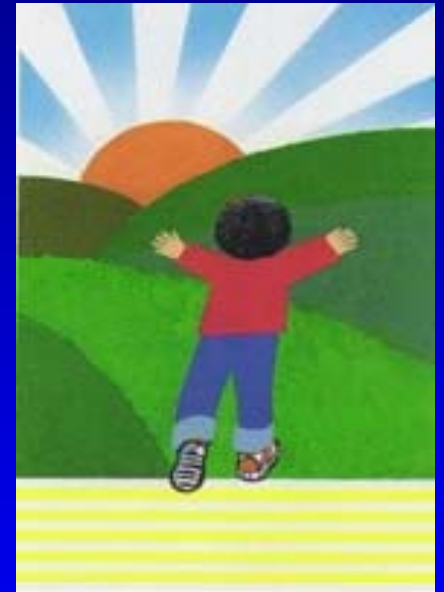




Programs and Evaluations need to be more ecological.

- Consider development of “whole child” – physical, social, behavioural, cognitive and emotional development and well-being
- Parent and family functioning and characteristics
- Neighbourhood characteristics and change

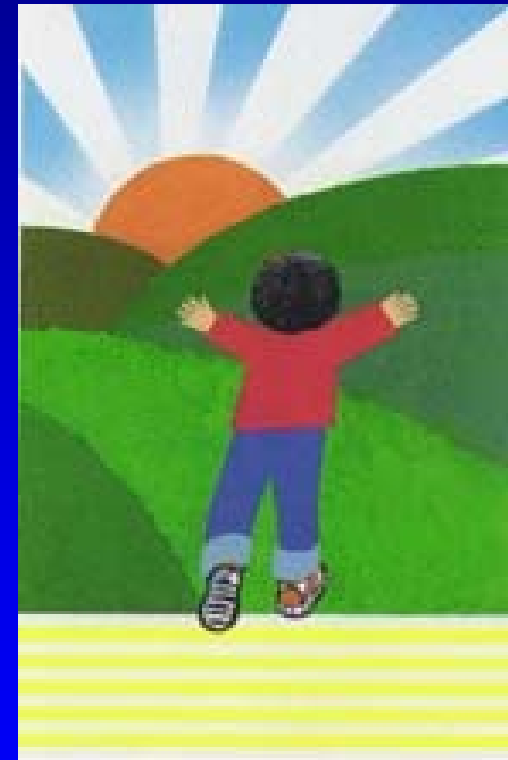
It was in this social policy context that the Ontario, Canada provincial government announced the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project in 1990.



Better Beginnings, Better Futures

Purpose:

A 25-year longitudinal prevention policy research demonstration project to provide information on the effectiveness of prevention as a policy for children.



Younger Child Sites (0 - 4 yrs)

- Guelph: Willow Road
▪ 500 children
- Kingston: Northern Area
▪ 876 children
- Ottawa: Albion-
Heatherington
▪ 552 children
- Toronto: Regent Park
▪ 900 children
- Walpole Island First Nation:
▪ 200 children

Older Child Sites (4 - 8yrs)

- Cornwall: 4 Francophone
primary schools
▪ 530 children
- Etobicoke: Highfield Junior
School
▪ 517 children
- Sudbury: Flour Mill / le
Moulin à Fleur
and Donovan
▪ 503 children

PROJECT BUDGET & CHILD POPULATION

YOUNGER CHILD SITES	96/97 BUDGET # CHILDREN	
Guelph	\$ 499,992	500
Kingston	\$ 723,559	876
Ottawa	\$ 515,979	552
Toronto	\$ 710,512	900
Walpole Is.	\$ 325,857	200
ALL SITES	\$2,775,899	3,028
OLDER CHILD SITES		
Cornwall	\$ 580,938	529
Highfield	\$ 512,166	517
Sudbury	\$ 657,942	503
ALL SITES	\$1,751,046	1,549

BOTTOM-UP PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT APPROACH



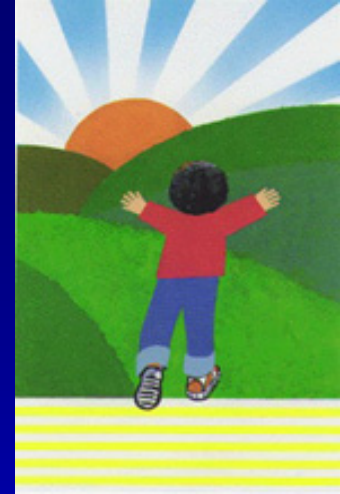
Each community to undertake as many high quality programs as possible, which could be expected to produce positive child development outcomes, within the limits of available resources and local needs.

CHILD PROGRAMS AT OLDER SITES

- In-class and in-school programs
- Child care enhancements
- Before and after-school activities
- School “breakfastclub”
- Recreation programs

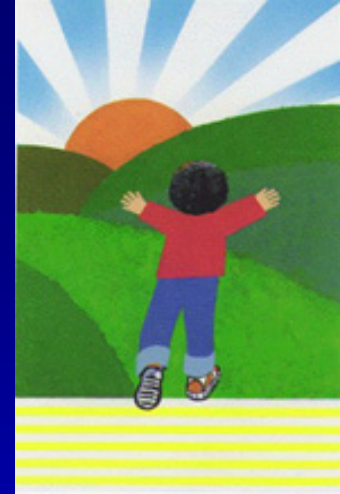


CHILD PROGRAMS AT YOUNGER SITES



- **home visiting**
- **child care enhancements**
- **playgroups**
- **parent and child drop-in**
- **parent “take-a-break”**
- **parent and infant group**

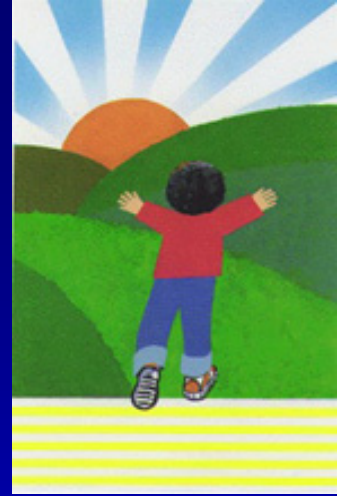
FAMILY HEALTH & SUPPORT PROGRAMS



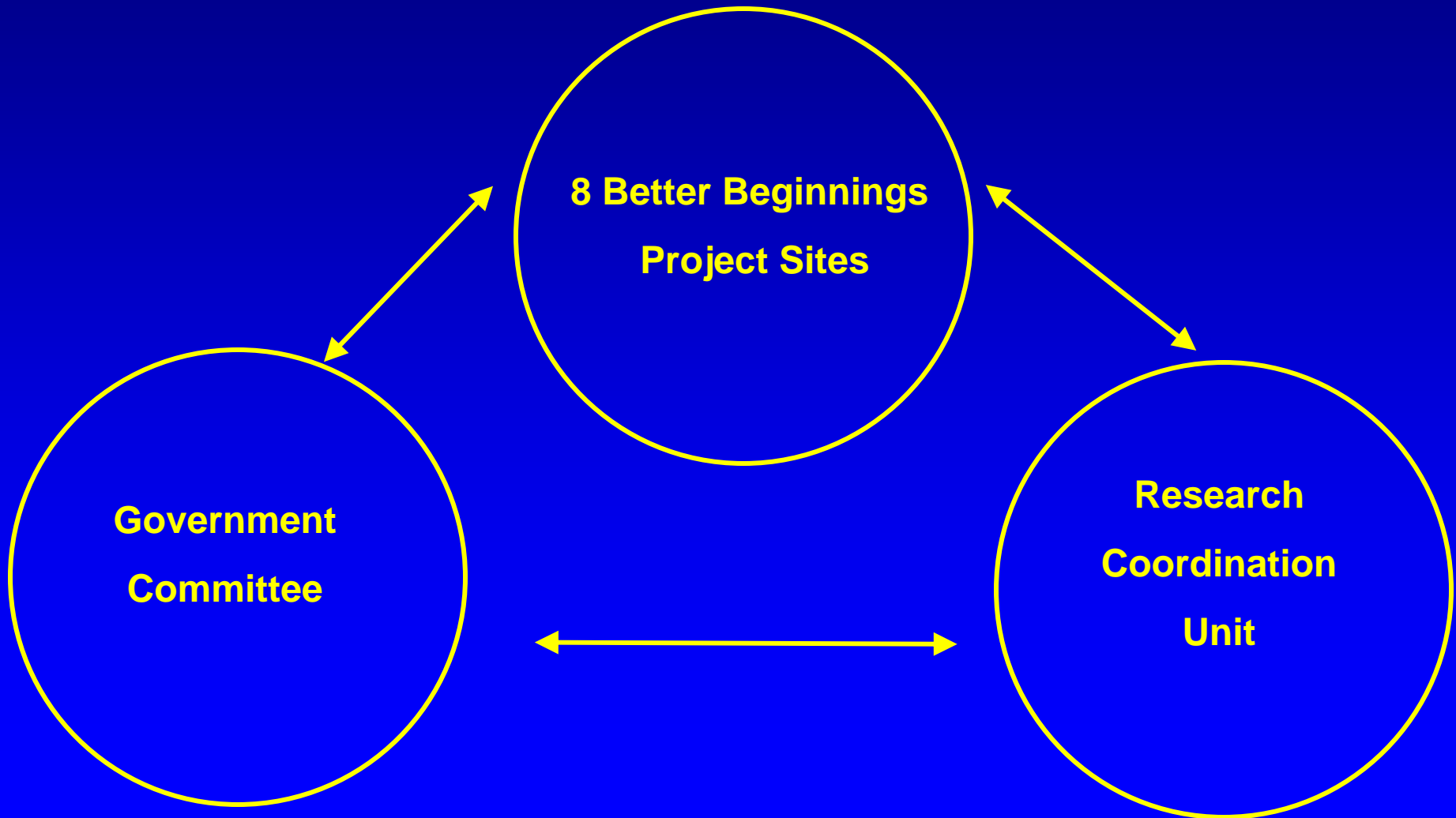
- parent support groups
- parenting workshops
- one-on-one support
- food, clothing & infant emergency supplies
- adult education
- ESL programs
- family camps
- outreach to families

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- **community leadership development**
- **special community events and celebrations**
- **safety initiatives in the neighbourhood**
- **community field trips**
- **community gardens & co-op food purchasing**
- **youth recreation programs**
- **youth leadership training**



Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Overall Project Organization

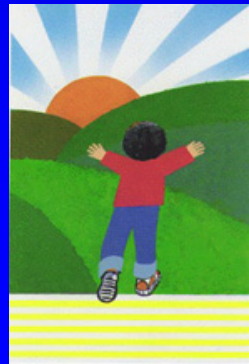


Planning Phase (1991-1993)

Community residents, service-provider partners, and staff designed a comprehensive, ecological program model.

Demonstration Phase (1994-1998)

Project provided five years of intervention for children from birth to age 4 and their families in 5 sites (younger child sites) and for children 4 to 8 years of age and their families in 3 sites (older child sites).





Research Questions

1. How do the Better Beginnings communities develop and implement programs? Are they characterized by:
 - Parent and community involvement?
 - Integration of services?
 - High quality programs?

Project Development & Program Model Research



Research Questions

2. Are the Better Beginnings programs effective in:

- Preventing serious problems in young children?
- Promoting healthy child and family development?
- Enhancing the abilities of disadvantaged communities to provide for children and their families?

Outcome Evaluation Research



Research Questions

3. What are the annual costs of these programs?

Economic Analysis Research

Research Questions

4. What are the long-term effects and cost-benefits for children and their families in terms of:
- Educational achievements and high school graduation rates?
 - Use of special education, health, and social services?
 - Employment and social assistance?
 - Criminal charges and convictions?
 - Teen pregnancy?
 - Drug and alcohol abuse?

Long Term Follow-up Research

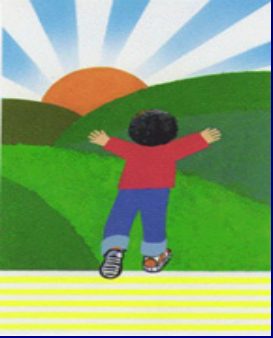




Research Questions

The first three questions are addressed by results of the research on the Demonstration Phase of the Project (1993-1998) in a “Short Term Findings Report”. <http://bbbf.queensu.ca>

The fourth question is being answered in follow-up research of Better Beginnings children as they develop into adolescence and beyond.



Data Collection

Program funding of the eight sites began in April of 1991. It took 2½ years for local projects and programs to develop to the point where valuations could begin in the fall of 1993.

Extensive information was collected and reported by the Research Coordination Unit on “start up” processes.

Baseline measures on children, families, and neighbourhoods were collected in 1992-1993.

Data Collection (continued)

In 1993-94, a longitudinal research group of 1,400 children and their families was recruited in 8 project and 3 comparison sites.

Outcome measures were collected on these children/families for 5 years.

During this 5 year period, information was also collected regularly on:

- Project organization
- Service integration
- Local programs
- Program costs
- Resident participation

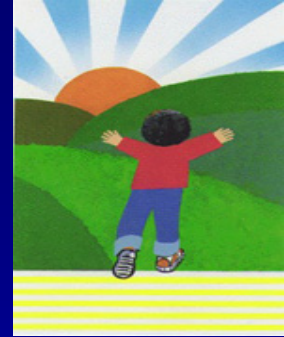


LONGITUDINAL FOLLOW-UP OF CHILDREN IN GRADES 1 AND 3 FROM THE YOUNGER SITES



- **531 children of the families from the 5 younger child Better Beginnings neighbourhoods**
- **164 children of the families from the comparison neighbourhoods**

Outcome Measures Collected at Grades 1 and 3



Domain	No. of Measures Analyzed
Child Prosocial Behaviour	6
Child Emotional & Behavioural Problems	10
School Performance	13
Child's Physical Health	6
Parent Health	4
Parent Social/Emotional Functioning	6
Parenting	3
Neighbourhood Quality & Involvement	12
TOTAL	60 X 2 = 120

FINDINGS



- **9 significant differences across the sites, 7.5 %**
- **3 favored Better Beginnings**
- **6 favored Comparison Sites**
- **Similar to CCDP outcomes (St. Pierre et al, 1997)**



WHY SUCH NEGATIVE FINDINGS?

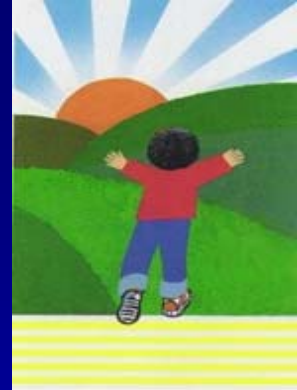
- **Mandate of Better Beginnings, Better Futures too broad**
- **Resources too few**

Costs of Model Programs for Very Young Children (0 to 4) and their Families

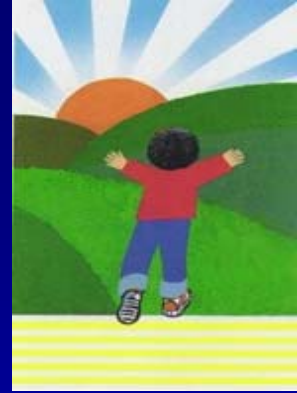
Program Name	Average Cost per child per year	Number of years	Total Program Cost per Child
Abecedarian *	\$20,000	5	\$100,000
IHDP *	\$23,582	3	\$ 70,747
CCDP	\$10,800	5	\$ 54,000
Early Head Start	\$10,100	3	\$ 30,300
Perry Preschool*	\$15,069	2	\$ 30,138
Chicago Child-Parent Centers *	\$ 7,617	2	\$ 15,234
Nurse Home Visitation *	\$ 5,250	2.5	\$ 13,125
Sure Start	\$ 2,357	4	\$ 9,428
 Better Beginnings, Better Futures	\$ 1,300	4	\$ 5,200

Note: All dollar values are in 2005 Canadian dollars.

** Indicates programs with at least one significant long-term positive effect.*



**Why such a difference in
long-term effects in younger
versus older child program
sites?**



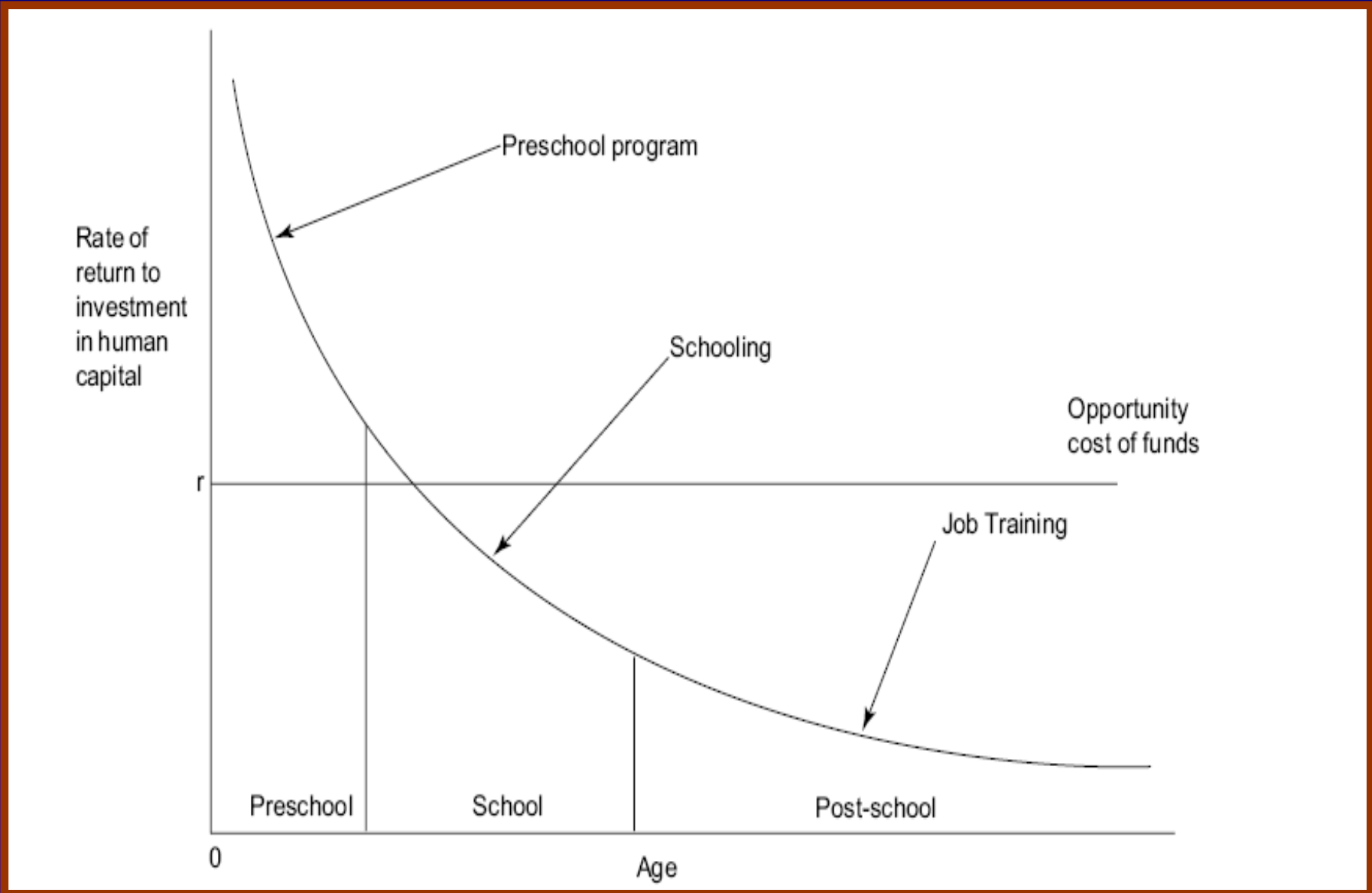
- Older child sites organized around the school
- No such universal system available for children 0-4

Average Costs of Public Education in Ontario

	Average Cost per child per year	Number of years	Total Program Cost per Child
Ontario Kindergarten	\$ 3,200	2	\$ 6,400
Ontario Primary School	\$ 6,400	8	\$ 51,200
Ontario Secondary School	\$ 8,100	4	\$ 32,400
Total Public Education Age 4-18		14	\$ 90,000

Note: All dollar values are in 2005 Canadian dollars.

Rates of Return to Human Capital Investment Initially Setting Investment to be Equal Across All Ages. Source: Heckman (2000).





Centre d'excellence
pour le développement des jeunes enfants

Centre of Excellence
for Early Childhood Development

ENCYCLOPEDIA ON
EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT



Importance of early childhood development

Invest in the Very Young

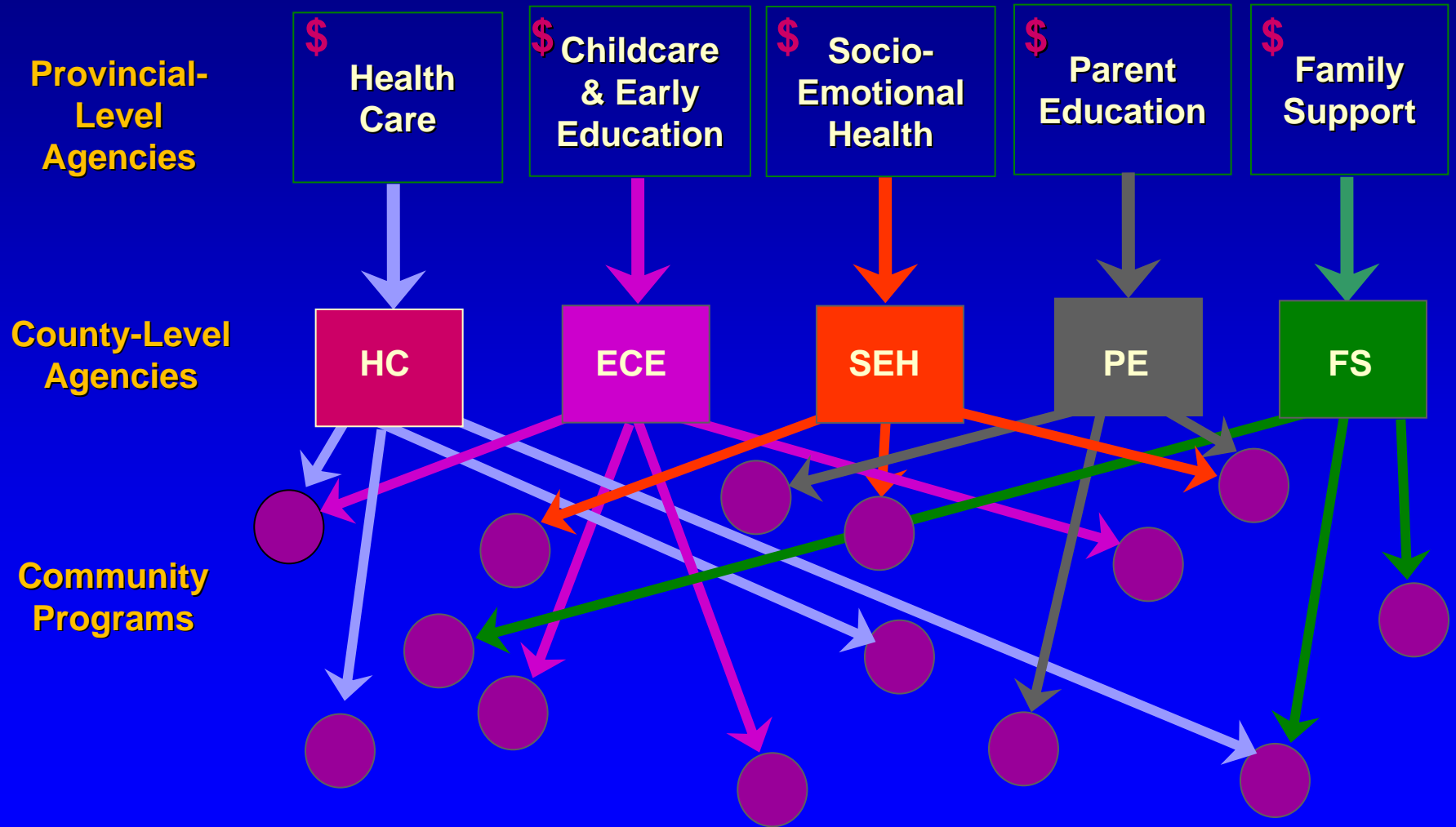
JAMES J. HECKMAN, PhD

2000 Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences

***Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor of
Economics, University of Chicago, USA***

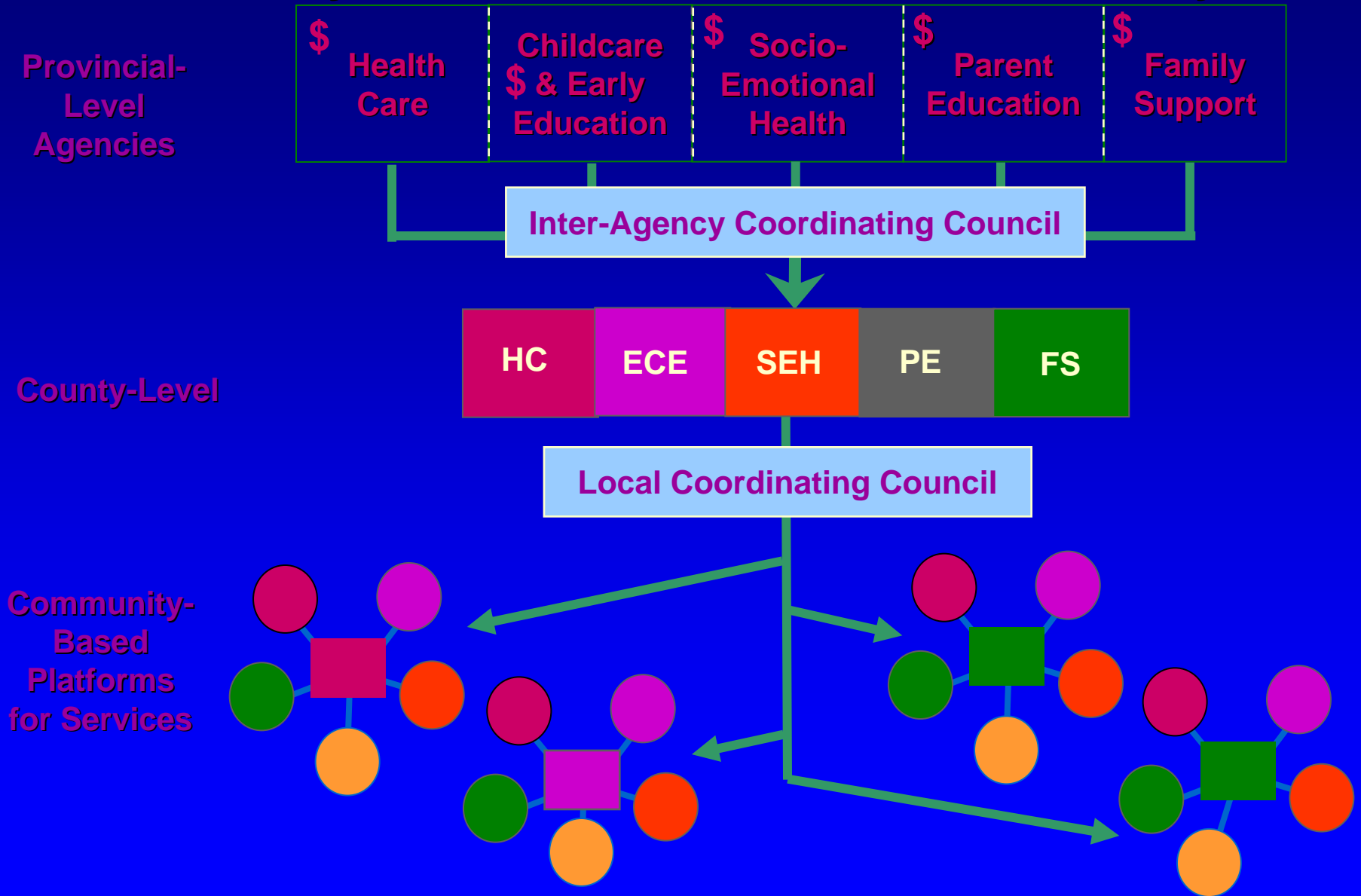
Where Are We Now?

Uncoordinated, Sector-Specific ECD Services



Where Are We Going?

A Community Platform-Based ECD Service System



High Quality Early Childhood Development Programs

&

Effective Parenting

can have a profound impact on
developing these core capacities
early in life.

Early learning and child care: How does Canada measure up?

International comparisons using data from
Starting Strong II

(Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development, 2006)

Figure 1. Employment rates of mothers with children 0-6 years

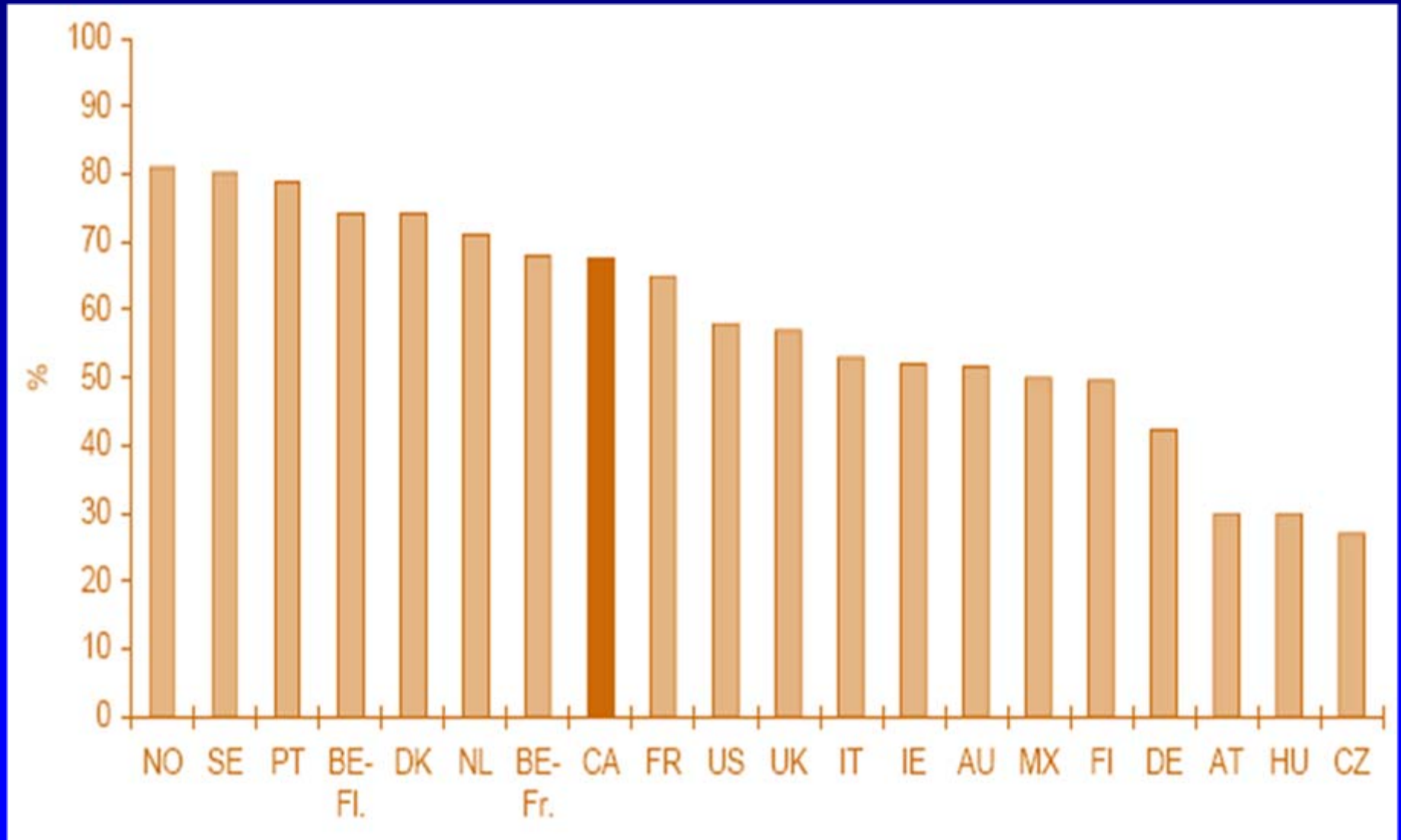


Figure 2. Percent of children living below the poverty line

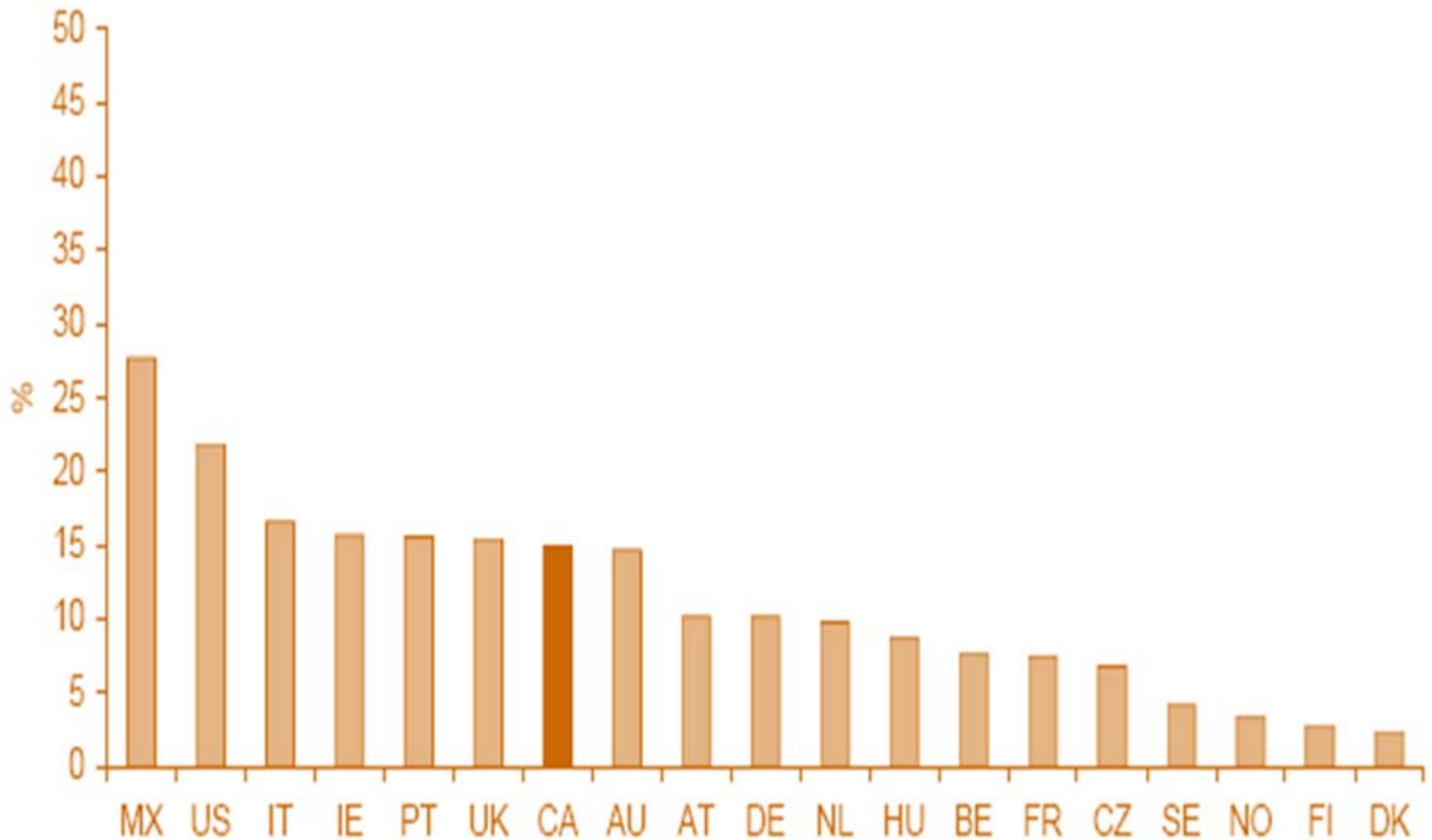


Figure 3. GDP per capita (in U.S. \$)

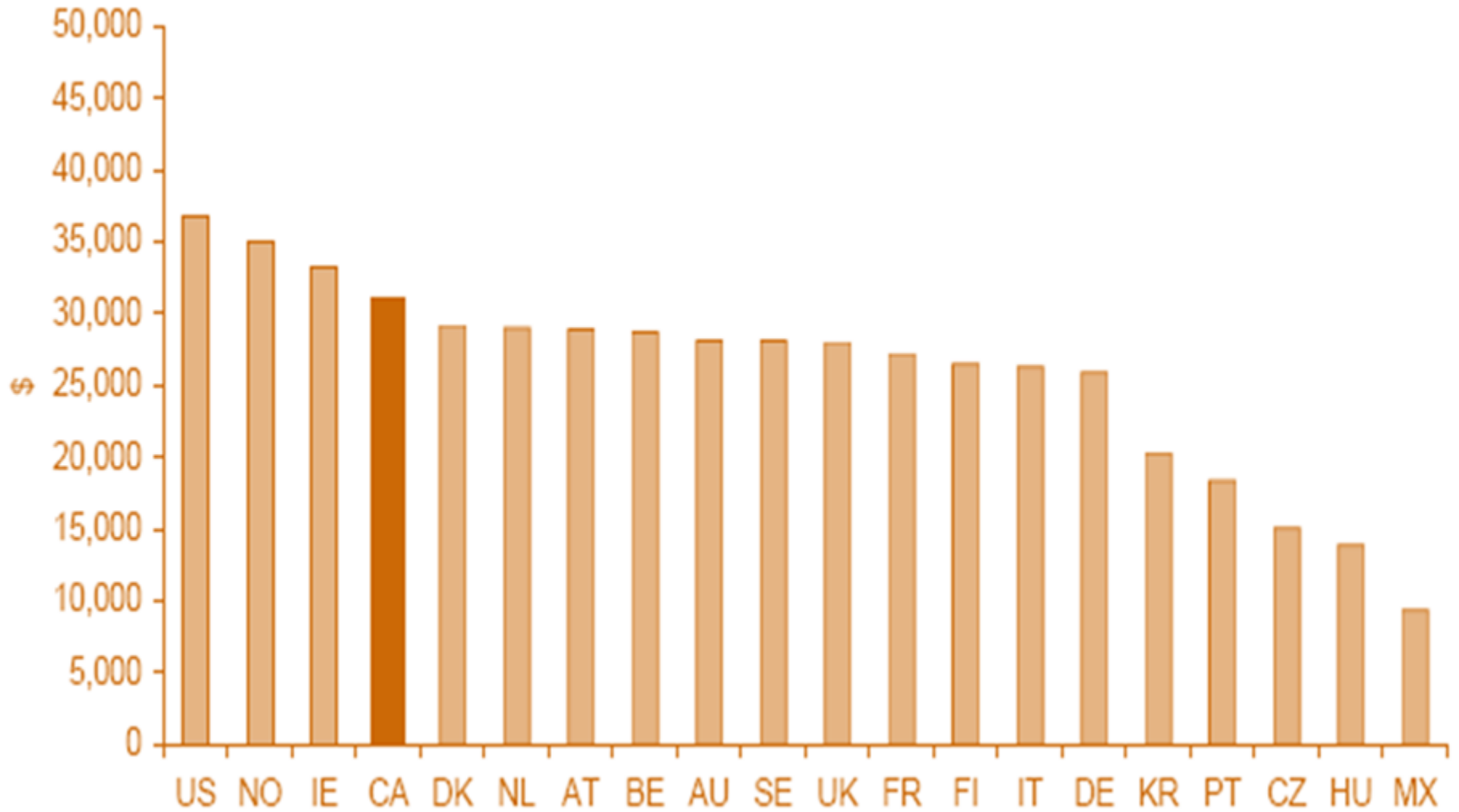


Figure 4. Public spending on ELCC programs for children 0-6 as a % of GDP

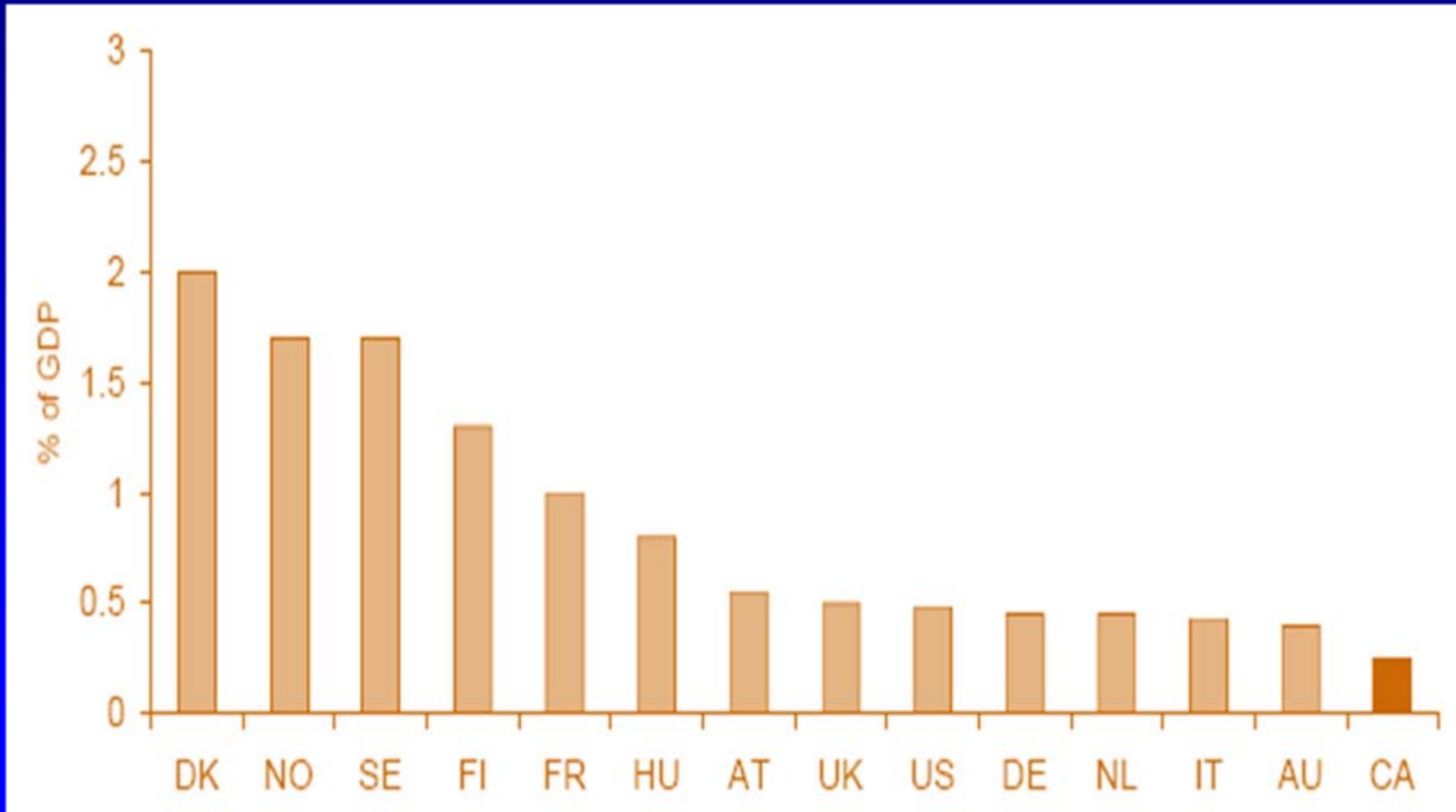


Figure 5. Costs to parents for ELCC programs

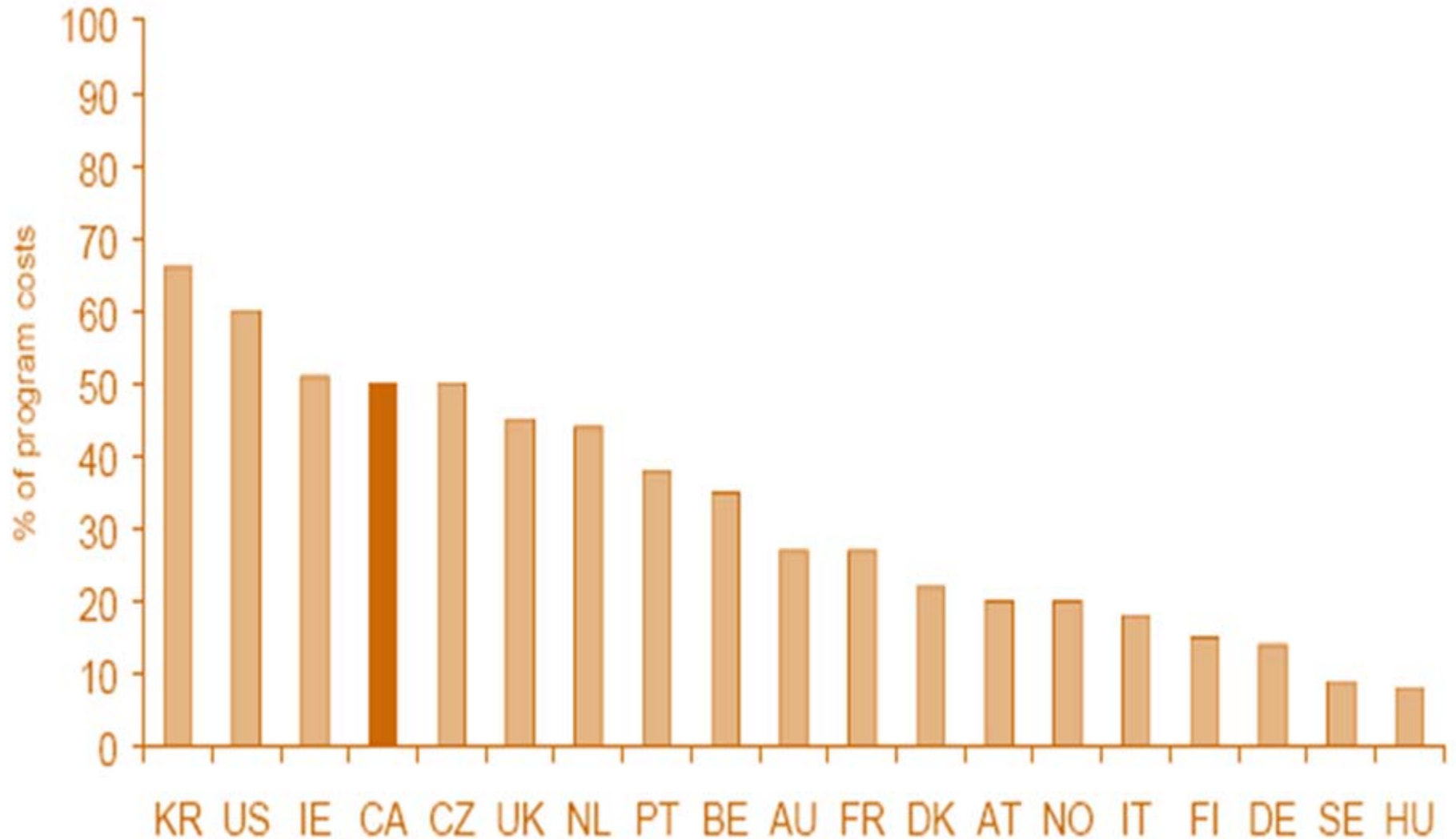


Figure 6. Percent of children 0-3 years in regulated ELCC programs

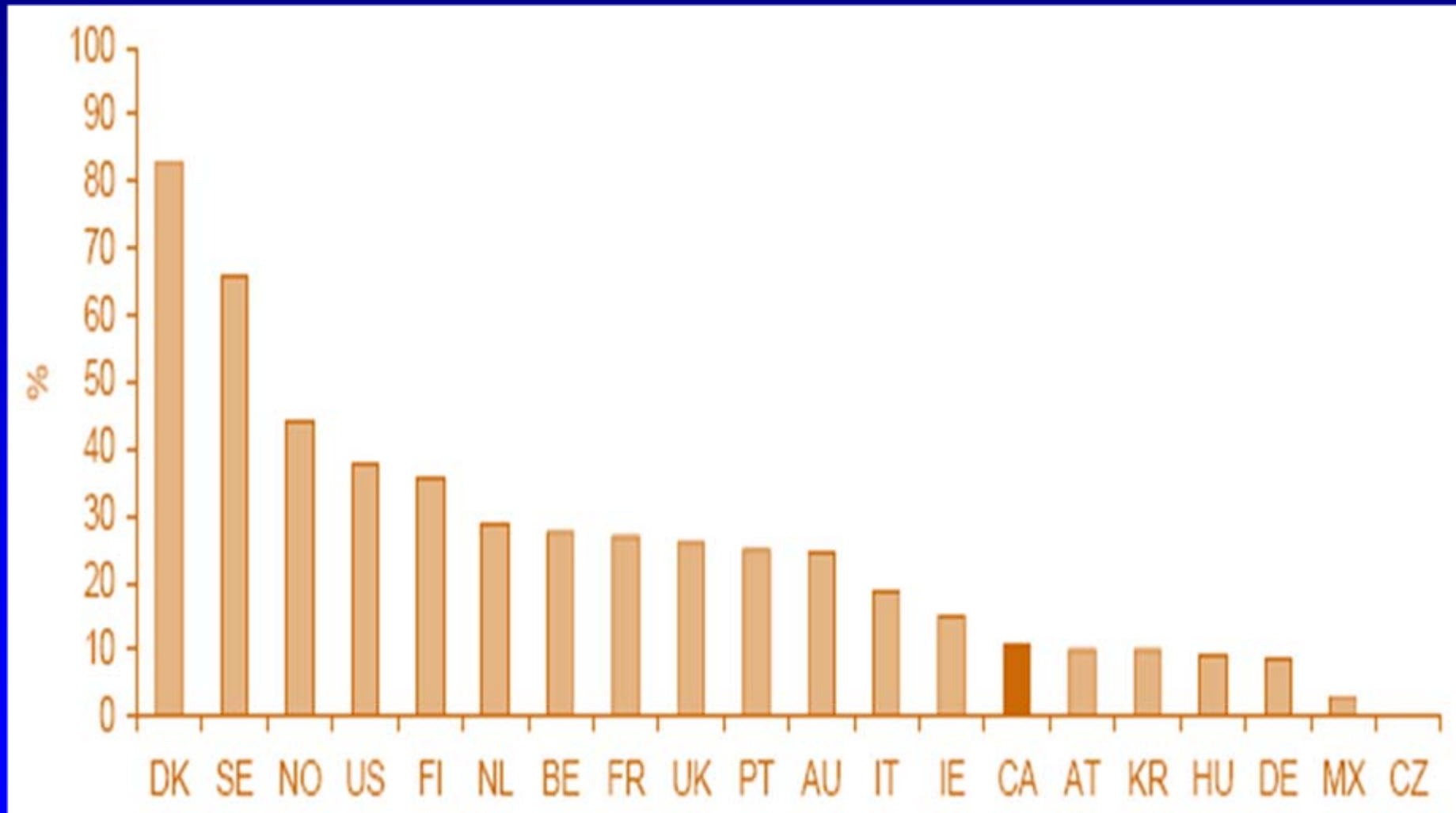
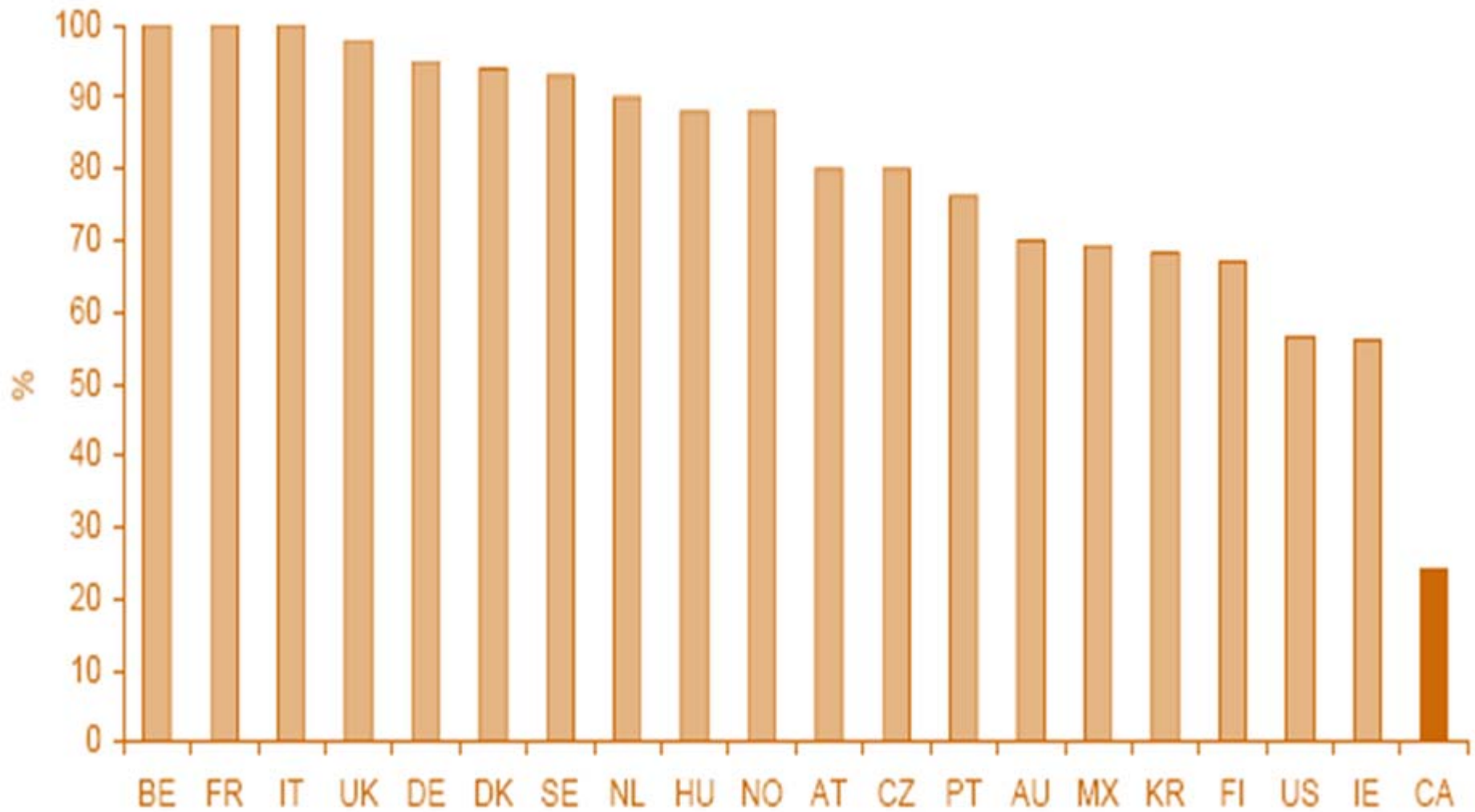


Figure 7. Rate of access to ELCC programs for 3-6 year olds



Coverage: Regulated child care spaces by province/territory and percentage of children (0-5) for whom there is a regulated child care space – 2006

	Centre-based full- and part-day child care for 0-5	Children 0-5 for whom there is a regulated child care space (%)
Ontario	138,979	16.9
Canada	387,562	19.3

**Expenditures on early
childhood programs in OECD
countries range from about
0.2% to 2% of GDP**

Canada is at the lowest end spending about 0.2%. The European Union recommends its member states devote at least 1% of GDP to early childhood services. For Canada this represents about \$10 billion.

If spending in early childhood equaled the cost per child in primary school (\$7,600), about \$10 billion in new spending would be required.

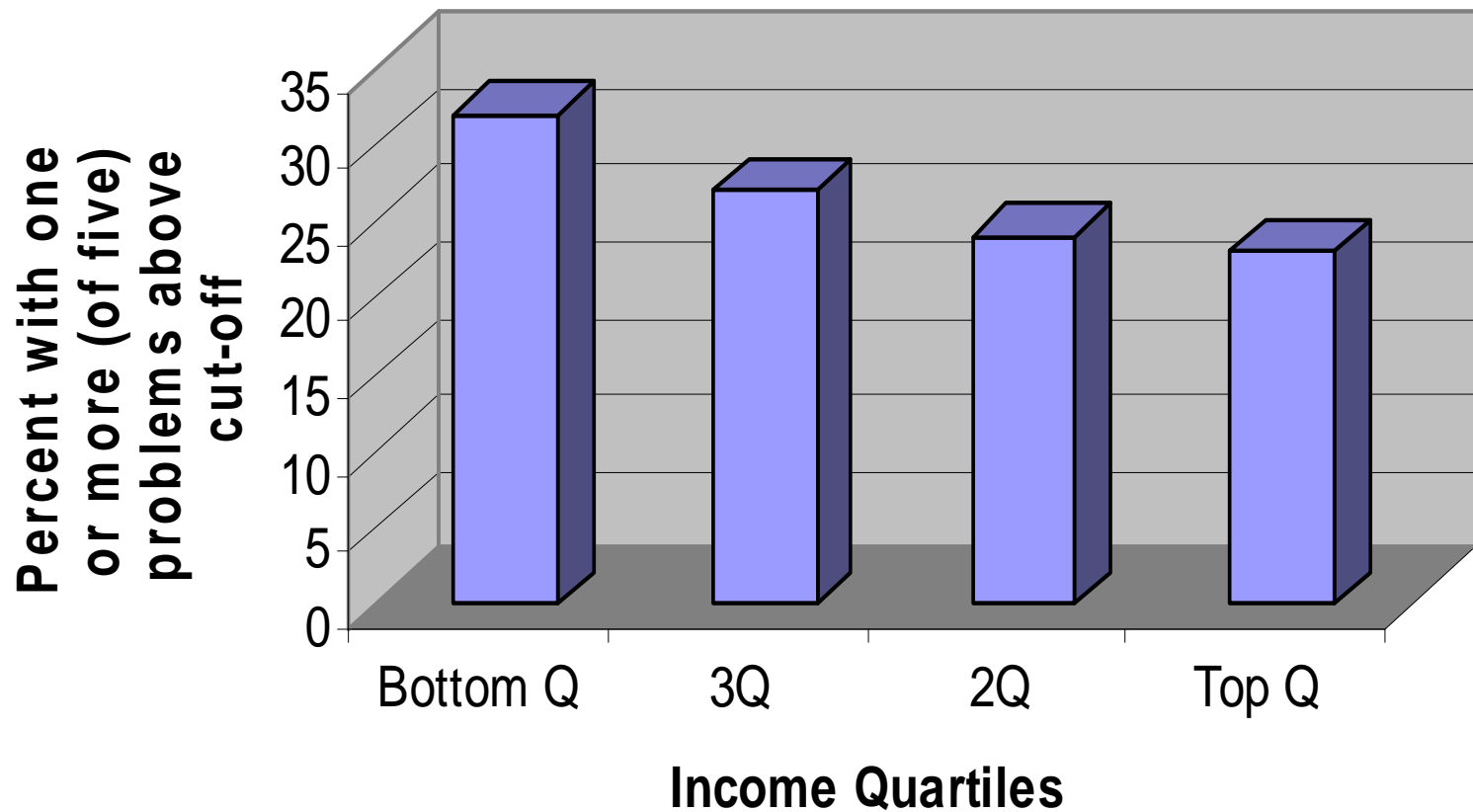
A substantial investment in early child development will be necessary if we are to improve the competence, health and well-being of our population.

-Fraser Mustard

“It is important in my view that a government institution (or municipal institution) be given the mandate and authority to organize ECD with a clear performance criterion – and that is to raise readiness-to-learn scores for six-year-olds.”

-David Dodge, Bank of Canada

Vulnerable Children by Household Income:



“access to high- quality and affordable care and learning environments should be a right and entitlement for all children, rather than a privilege”.

-The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights

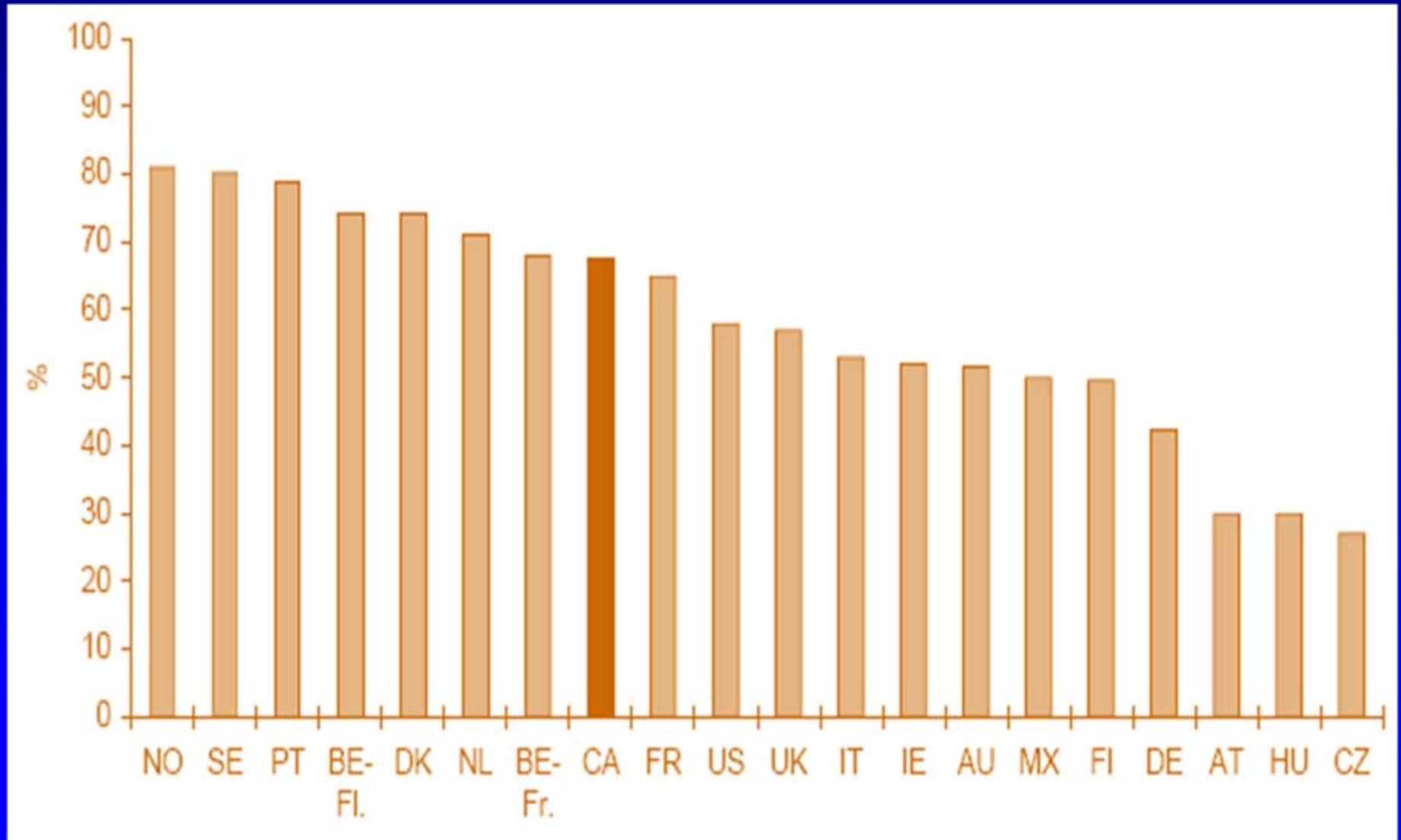
Canadian Parents of Young Children

Invest in Kids (2002)

Survey of 1600 parents

With children 0-6 years old

Figure 1. Employment rates of mothers with children 0-6 years



Invest in Kids Survey (2002)

The Good News:

- > 90 % think parenting is the most important thing they do.
- > 80% agreed with “The influence of parents during a child’s early development is absolutely critical to the way a child turns out as an adult”

Invest in Kids Survey (2002)

The Bad News:

- Many reported using hostile/ineffective parenting practices.
- < 50% thought it was important to provide a stimulating, sensitive environment to their young children.

Invest in Kids Survey (2002)

- Most parents reported little confidence or knowledge in how to influence their child's social and emotional development.
- Before first baby was born 44% of parents felt prepared for parenthood.
- After baby's birth, 18% felt confident as parents.

Invest in Kids Survey (2002)

These low levels of confidence and knowledge applied equally to all socio economic status groups, mothers and fathers, single and two parent families

Invest in Kids Survey (2002)

- After birth of first child, 45% of parents felt they did not receive enough emotional or practical support as parents.
- 58% of new parents disagreed with the statement: “I think Canada values its young children.”

- Why this disconnect in parents between perceived importance of parenting and parents' feelings of low knowledge, confidence and support?
- The very few parenting classes in Canada are for problem children or parents in the child welfare system.
- No universal, high quality parenting supports in Canada.

What would an ideal ELCC system entail?

- Maternal/Parental leave for all families with an infant from birth to 18-24 months. Currently, leave is from birth to 1 year for some parents in Canada.
- * 1.5/2 to 4 years of high quality, universally accessible early learning and care centres, located in neighbourhood centres preferably primary schools.
- Also schools function as a neighbourhood “hub” for child and parent supports.

What would an ideal ELCC system entail?

- 4-5 years full-time, optional kindergarten
- 4-12 years before and after-school, holiday and summer programs.

*The test of the morality
of a society is what it
does for its children.*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)