



Ontario

connections

Linking Families and Communities

A publication of the Family Supports Institute Ontario

Volume 24, No. 1 / Spring 2017

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What are the experiences of young breastfeeding mothers?

A summary of a mixed-methods analysis of correlations between exclusivity, duration and support

by Jessica Milburn, B.A. in Child Development, Seneca College

Over the last century, becoming a mother under the age of twenty-five has gone from common practice to often being considered a risk factor in Western society. Young mothers from the current era can sometimes be viewed as having a lack of judgement and self-control, which can also be presumed to be reflected in their parenting choices (Easterbrooks, Chaudhuri, Bartlett & Copeman, 2010; Hunter, Magill-Cuerdon, 2014). In contrast to previous research, this study found that although young mothers do often seem to endure more challenges, they can demonstrate a high degree of perseverance, competence, resilience and a deep love for their children. Young mothers who breastfed and gave birth to their first child before the age of twenty-six voluntarily engaged in this mixed-methods study, which included data from thirty-one surveys and four semi-structured interviews.

Findings

Young breastfeeding mothers seem to be able to make healthy choices for themselves and their families, however, a lack of financial support, requiring them to go back to work, can negatively impact their breastfeeding choices. If a mother must work it complicates the breastfeeding process and can create greater costs than anticipated. On the other hand, the longer a young mother breastfed exclusively, the more social and emotional challenges they faced, demonstrating a possible need for greater professional and social support. Quantitative data also demonstrated that in-law support can positively affect breastfeeding duration and exclusivity, especially when it involves her partner's family. The qualitative data demonstrated that a strong relationship with the child's father, financial assistance,

supportive environments and a community of professional and social support can positively impact breastfeeding duration and exclusivity.

Recommendations

Many people in Canada likely feel that breastfeeding is widely accepted simply because it is not against the law to publicly breastfeed, uncovered. What was found is this is only the beginning of creating a society of acceptance and encouragement. What is desired is that our society can move beyond a legal allowance to creating an overall environment of support for breastfeeding. Although not against the law, many of the mothers interviewed and previous research reflects a difficulty with public nursing and/or pumping and many places that really do not make effective accommodations to support nursing

We can ask ourselves, why is a nursing mother and child not welcome here? and how can we make accommodations to support nursing mothers within this environment?

mothers. This can include hospitals, schools, places of employment, the community and home. Hospital support could focus on being more consistent, flexible and extend beyond the initiation stage. We think breastfeeding is accepted every where in Canada, however, there are places that we still do not question why a mother and her nursing child are not welcome. School and work are two places that accommodations could possibly be made to better support breastfeeding mothers. We can ask ourselves, why is a nursing mother and child not welcome here? and how can we make accommodations to support nursing mothers within this environment? Communities can address the issue of

breastfeeding in a number of ways from access to nursing rooms, to changes in overall treatment of young mothers. Information and resources could be provided within nursing rooms. At home, support may be increased by providing more information for the people living with the mother.

There is not one answer, as the study suggests. The experiences of young breastfeeding mothers are as diverse as the families' themselves. A multi-faceted approach, including financial, professional and social support, may be the best way to ensure all young breastfeeding mothers are receiving the encouragement and resources necessary to fulfill their personal

breastfeeding goals, while maintaining self-care, during their breastfeeding journey. As a society, we can start asking questions such as how can we make this environment more breastfeeding supportive? and also recognize the efforts of young breastfeeding mothers, as they are trying to provide a lifetime of benefits to their child.

References

- Easterbrooks, M. A., Chaudhuri, J. H., Bartlett, J. D., & Copeman, A. (2010). Resilience in parenting among young mothers: Family and ecological risks and opportunities. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 1-9.
- Hunter, L., & Magill-Cuerden, J. (2014). Young mothers' decisions to initiate and continue breastfeeding in the UK: Tensions inherent in the paradox between being, but not being able to be seen to be, a good mother. *Evidence Based Midwifery*, 12(2), 46-51.



SAVE THE DATE

2017 FRP CANADA NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND AGM

Monday Sept. 25th – Wednesday, Sept. 27th

Best Western Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre, London, Ontario

THEME: THE POWER OF PLAY

Other Conference Topics Include:

- Fathering
- Financial Literacy
- A Child's Right to Play (Article 31 UNCRC)
- Outdoor Adventurous Play
- A full day session of the Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program
- And so much more!

Visit our Event Page for a current list of speakers and keynotes: <https://frp2017.eventbrite.ca>

Contact: conference@frp.ca



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RYERSON UNIVERSITY

Course Series in Family Supports and Community Engagement

As we are about to dive into summer, it not too early to begin planning for the fall. Many look to September as the start of the year as our children head back school and so do many adult learners looking to upgrade their own skills and knowledge. Have you considered enrolling in a course in family supports as a way to start your new year of learning? The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education will hold its Open House for Fall 2017 on August 24, 2017 from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Mark your calendar. This is an opportunity to learn about the Course Series in Family Supports and Community Engagement.

<http://ce-online.ryerson.ca/ce/default.aspx?id=330>

The course series in Family Supports and Community Engagement addresses the growing demand for skills that expand and integrate knowledge for practitioners in the fields of early learning, family support, community engagement, and health related sectors. It will also support learners working in diverse community-based programs.

AWARDS AND BURSURIES:

There are number of awards and bursuries available to all student attending the Chang School of Continuing Education which include both needs-based awards and merit-based awards. Please see the list below for possibilities:

CESAR GENERAL BURSARY

Awarded by: The Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson (CESAR)

Eligibility/Criteria: Students registered in a continuing education, distance education or part-time degree course. Criteria is based on financial need.

Description: Non-repayable award

Number of Bursaries Available: Varies

Value: \$500

How to Apply: Applications are available online at www.mycesar.ca.

Required Courses

CSWP 936 Social Work: Community Engagement Practices

CVFS 403 Family Supports: Family Supports Theory and Practice

Electives (select one)

CINT 905 Interdisciplinary Studies: Conflict Resolution in Community Services

CSWP 935 Social Work: Engaging Diverse Communities

CVFS 401 Family Supports: Contemporary Family Issues

CVFS 403 Family Supports: Guiding Children's Development

Those who successfully complete this course series are eligible to earn a Professional Development Award from The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education. Once you have successfully completed the courses, email The Chang School at ce@ryerson.ca with your name, student number, and the course series you have completed. Upon verification, you will receive your Professional Development Award.

THE G. RAYMOND CHANG SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION TUITION FEE BURSARY

Eligibility/Criteria: Students registered in a Chang School course or certificate program. Criteria are demonstrated financial need and demonstrated academic objectives and/or performance.

Description: Non-repayable tuition waiver

Number of Bursaries Available: Varies

Value: Up to \$600 for one course

How to Apply: Application forms will be available online starting June 10. Application forms (PDF) are available online and from The Chang School, Heaslip House, 297 Victoria Street. Applications must be handed in to The Chang School.

If you would like to discuss this learning opportunity please contact Catherine Moher, at cmoher@ryerson.ca or telephone 416-979-5000, ext. 2535.

Creating a Renewed Child Care and Early Years Policy Framework



As many of you are aware the Ministry of Education, undertook a series of information gathering sessions over the winter months. The information collected is being utilized to create a Renewed Child Care and Early Years Policy Framework. These sessions, including 19 town hall regional sessions, 25 one-on-one interviews with employers and 22 targeted engagement sessions with various stakeholder groups including delivery partners. Two of these targeted sessions included meeting with family support practitioners working in our Child Care Resource Centres/FRPs, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Ontario Early Years Centres and Better Beginnings Better Futures programs. The MOE also conducted an online survey for parents and received over 6000 responses.

This framework has taken place in the context of unprecedented change in the early years system. This change has included: The new Child Care and Early Years Act (2014), the rollout of Full Day Kindergarten, expansion of Before and Afterschool programs and a commitment to integrate the province's child and family programs by 2018. The feedback from these engagement activities will inform and guide the work of the Renewed Policy Framework and sustain the momentum of positive change.

On September 12, 2016, the Throne Speech committed to 100,000 new licensed child care spaces for children birth to 4 years over the next 5 years. This 5 year roll-out plan in the licensed sector requires both operating and capital funding to support expansion, recruitment and training of staff and will be informed

by the engagement process that took place between November 2016 and January 2017.

Ontario has made significant investments in child care and early years. Currently, child and family programs receive \$100 million per year and there is no discussion of any increase to this funding envelope. Municipalities across the province are in the process of undertaking a planning process within their jurisdictions as to how they will integrate the child and family programs into their current menu of services. Each municipality or DSSAB currently oversees the operation of Child Care Resource Centres also known as Family Resource Programs but will also now have responsibility for Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres and Better Beginnings Better Future programs. Deadline for

submission of these plans has been extended to September 29, 2017, however, the funding allocation has not been confirmed.

As mentioned, two targeted sessions for family support practitioners were held on November 30, 2016 at the FSIO Annual General Meeting and again on February 1, 2017 co-sponsored by the Toronto District School Board and FSIO. Over 50 participants attended each session. Although participants from family support programs were invited to attend any regional sessions, the consultations were dominated by parents and practitioners working in licensed child care so the sessions naturally focused more on the issues and concerns of parents and services providers in the licensed child care sector. The two targeted sessions tailored to service providers in the family

support sector and facilitated by Ministry of Education staff gave voice to the issues and concerns that we have in relation to the current menu of services available to families and children across the province. Ministry staff recorded and helped facilitate discussion based on a series of questions (See Figure 1) focused on Access, Responsiveness and Quality.

Provided below is a summary of the themes of our discussions on November 30, 2016 and February 1, 2017.

- Clarification around whether such programs are primarily concerned with providing programs, services and settings that improve parent/caregiver confidence and competence and thereby positively impacting child, family and community outcomes.
- Programs need to be tailored to communities. Cities, towns, villages, rural and isolated rural and indigenous communities need different modes of program delivery which could include centre-based, mobile units, school-based, pop-ups and online services. However it was noted that nothing replaces face-to-face contact. “It’s all about relationships”.
- Staffing models need to take into account the demands of the program i.e., one staff is not sufficient and skills go beyond knowledge of early childhood development.
- Relationships with other linked sectors and time to make these linkages has to be a consideration as part of the work. Linkages with the health care sector needs to be strengthened.

- Branding of the child and family centres is probably a good idea so that families will know what they are looking for.
- Much discussion about “quality” – need to define quality and how to evaluate quality. “These programs are more about how they feel than what they look like”. How do you evaluate this aspect? There is an interest in evidence-based practices and policies to ensure quality. A good research and evaluation strategy would be helpful.
- If programs are to have a measure of consistency, then a provincially determined orientation/training/ professional development plan would be helpful.
- There needs to be a careful balance in the relationship between schools and boards of education and other

community programming in the early years. Schools need to be partners and any conversations about using their space needs to happen in the spring. The school could be part of the hiring process and formation of committees.

- There is a need for careful consideration when working with immigrant and newcomer families who face multiple challenges.
- A system is needed for families and children with disabilities similar to the system provided for families and children in the licensed child care system. There is an inequity in service delivery and supports to families and children who do not access licensed child care. Referrals to external supports is not a system.

Key Discussion questions:

Access

1. What does access to early years and child care programs mean to you?
2. In your experience, what are the strengths of the current system and what are the biggest barriers to accessing early years programs in our community?
3. In your experience, what can be done by governments, communities, employers and providers to increase access to early years programs and licensed child care?

Responsiveness

1. Do parents have the early years and child care options they need?
2. What are the strengths of the current system and options available? What can be done to provide more choice and flexibility?

Quality

1. What does a high quality early years program look like?
2. What role should the province play in ensuring high quality early learning and child care programs?
3. How should we measure quality in our early years and child care programs?

Executive Report

By Cindy Smith and Priscilla Dutt

Since our last newsletter in October, there has been much activity within FSIO and Ontario!

On November 30, we had another successful AGM in Toronto, where we hosted a consultation with The Honorable Indira Naidoo-Harris (Associate Minister for the Early Years) and her team. It was exciting to hear FSIO members and supporters emphasize the importance of family support and suggest how it should fit into the new Early Years Policy Framework, alongside child care. Comments from our member and supporters influenced our response to *Building a Better Future: A Discussion Paper for Transforming Early Years and Child Care in Ontario* that was submitted to the province in December 2016 as part of our ongoing efforts to advocate on behalf of the field.

A second consultation session was held specifically for staff in PFLCs and standalone programs. This issue highlights FSIOs

collaboration with the Toronto District School Board PFLCs and the Ministry of Education to organize a consultation on February 1, 2017 regarding the upcoming implementation of Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres.

Meanwhile, FSIO board members have continued the planning processes that we reported on in the fall. We met with external consultants, Don Pollock from Management Advisory Service (MAS) and Cindy Himelstein from Toronto Children's Aid Society. The learning and reflection that took place on November 30 fed into another planning session with Cindy Himelstein, one of the founders of FSIO, on March 1, 2017. We looked back at FSIO's history and considered developments happening within the field to envision future directions for FSIO.

We will be continuing to offer professional learning opportunities and to recommend policy directions that support practitioners

and families during the implementation of Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres. Specifically, we plan to work closely with Shannon Fuller, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Early Years Division, as well as current family support programs, to deliver professional learning activities that bring programs together. We will also continue to respond to developments in the field, such as Ontario's 2017 budget, by voicing your interests and concerns.

You can stay tuned to professional learning opportunities and other FSIO activities in between newsletters through our new website. Please see announcement below.

These are exciting times in the field of family support, and we are glad to be a part of it with you!



FSIO has a New, Improved Website!

You've told us that you count on FSIO to keep you informed with developments in the sector and connected to your colleagues across the province. This is why we've launched a new website to keep you informed and connected in between our emails, newsletters, and professional learning events.

The website is your access point for the latest research, program tools and resources, and policy statements. You can also browse the professional learning calendar, with a schedule of events happening across the province, or peruse social service job postings.

For FSIO members, the website is also an online community similar to Facebook, where you can communicate directly with colleagues across Ontario. Members will also have direct online access to the FSIO newsletter and other resources written by FSIO.

We're excited to announce that you are now able to pay membership fees and complete event registration online through the new website!

FSIO's staff and board will be updating the website regularly, and we welcome your input! If you have a resource or event you'd like to share or want to suggest a

topic to be included on the website, email admin@fsio.ca

In fact, we welcome your involvement in multiple ways!

Staff and board will also be writing blog posts for the website to keep you more informed about FSIO's work, particularly in relation to the upcoming implementation of Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres.

Please visit our website at fsio.ca

Check back often!



Professional Development Opportunities

Toronto Police Services presents:

What about the Children? The Hidden Victims of Domestic Violence

Dates: June 2, 2015

Location: Woodbine Banquet Hall Convention Centre
For more information: Ann-Marie.Tupling@torontopolice.on.ca

RECE Conference presents:

Finding a Home in the World: Migration, Indigeneity and Citizenship

Dates: October 24 -27, 2017

Location: Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario
For more information: <http://receinternational.org/>

SOS Workshops presents:

Trauma in The Mind's Eye: Mitigating & Eliminating Intrusive Thoughts, Flashbacks & Nightmares

Dates: October 13, 2017

Location: London, Ontario
For more information: <https://sosworkshops.ca/workshopPages/nZlodre.php>

Speech Services Niagara presents:

Emergent Literacy Conference: Literacy and Poverty (Niagara-on-the-Lake)

Dates: November 13 – 14, 2017

Location: Niagara-on-the-Lake
For more information: <http://www.speechservicesniagara.ca/>

Remarks from the Editor

By Catherine Moher, Editor

At this moment many practitioners in the family support sector are working with municipalities to create plans for the newly rebranded Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres. Many countless hours have been spent making plans that will ensure that families and children can easily navigate and access local family support services across the province. At the same time the Ministry of Education (MOE) is also working on the development of a *Renewed Child Care and Early Years Policy Framework*. The MOE held 19 Town Hall meetings, 25 one-to-one interviews with employers and 22 targeted engagement sessions with various stakeholders groups including delivery partners and an online survey for parents. This issue highlights two of these targeted sessions with family support practitioners held in Toronto. A summary of comments voiced by practitioners will resonate with many working in the family support sector in Ontario.

This issue also highlights a research study undertaken by Jessica Milburn, a recent graduate of Seneca's degree program in Child Development. Her study focused on the experiences of young breastfeeding mothers. FSIO would like to continue highlighting the research undertaken by undergraduate and graduate students as well as those family support programs who are undertaking research and evaluation. We invite you to share your research that touches on the theory and practice of family support.

Your research studies can be highlighted in our newsletter, *Ontario Connections*, our monthly e-blasts and/or our new and improved website. Please make sure you have a look at our [website](#) where FSIO has compiled the latest research, program tools and resources and policy statements. This is another way for our community of practitioners to connect and share with one another.

FSIO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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WHAT IS THE FAMILY SUPPORTS INSTITUTE ONTARIO?

The Family Supports Institute Ontario is an organization that promotes family friendly policy and research and provides opportunities for professional development. Its primary goal is to develop capacity amongst family support practitioners who work in a variety of settings across the province of Ontario. Using the Metro Association of Family Resource Programs and the Ontario Association of Family Resource Programs as its foundation, the Family Supports Institute Ontario will bring together practitioners working in Family Resource Programs, (FRPs), Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC), Community Action Programs for Children and Canada's Prenatal Nutrition Programs (CAPC/CPNP) to name a few.

Membership Rates

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE
Organization/agency	\$100
Individual Friends and Supporters	\$80
Full-time students	\$25

Membership Form

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Cheques should be made payable to Family Supports Institute Ontario

Mail to: Family Supports Institute Ontario 489 College St. Suite 206, Toronto Ontario, M6G 1A5

Ontario Connections welcomes your input.

For publication dates/submission deadlines, please email program.manager@fsio.ca. Due to time and space restrictions, we are not always able to publish all articles submitted. Others may be edited for length and/or content. We do value all contributions and encourage you to continue to participate by sending us your information, articles and responses. The opinions expressed are those of the individual author(s) and not necessarily those of the Family Supports Institute Ontario.

This issue of Ontario Connections is funded and published by the Family Supports Institute Ontario and distributed to members.

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Benefits of Membership

- Receive member-only savings of up to 20% on our capacity building workshops and knowledge fairs.
- Establish a dialogue in support of family-friendly policies through our policy development team.
- Networking opportunities with colleagues in the sector.
- Relevant and timely E-newsblasts.
- Quarterly newsletter.
- Access to new research, current policy initiatives and the ever expanding sector of practitioners.
- Being connected and finding our voice!