



## MODELS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES:

An international conference

June 5-6, 2012 | Hotel Omni Mont-Royal, Montréal, Quebec, Canada



## TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

The [Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development](#), the [Strategic Knowledge Cluster on Early Child Development](#) and the Marie Curie International Network on Early Childhood Health Development are pleased to offer this one-page summary of take-home messages based on what we have learned from the international conference *Models of Early Childhood Services*. We hope this document will be helpful to you and your colleagues.

### MODELS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES: WHAT WORKS INTERNATIONALLY?

- Early childhood services start before birth for optimum child well-being. Offering access to [universal services](#) in the area of basic needs (e.g., health, education, social services) and unifying the early childhood education and care (ECEC) services are a must to providing a good start for all children.
- The most [successful early childhood services](#) appear to be those that 1) offer quality access; 2) have a holistic approach; 3) are child centered; 4) cultivate both [cognitive and non-cognitive skills](#) and, 5) engage families in everyday learning.
- When women are educated and empowered, children do better and it helps to [break the cycle of poverty](#). Access to [low-cost ECEC](#) also helps to reduce child poverty and can lessen its [negative effects](#).

### PREVENTING IS BETTER THAN CURING: INVESTING IN THE EARLY YEARS PAYS OFF

Benefits and challenges of implementing large-scale best early childhood practices

- Implementing a public health initiative at a [population level](#) helps 1) strengthen parenting skills and empower parents; 2) improve children's life outcomes; 3) build healthy communities, and 4) reduce social inequities. Program delivery should be guided by the [principles](#) of equity, inclusion, quality, capacity building and partnership.
- The challenge is to implement large-scale practices while [maintaining quality](#) and [fidelity](#). Scaling up is also extremely costly, making it a political issue. Therefore, it is essential to have evidence of [cost-effectiveness](#) before implementing a program.

### IMPORTANCE OF ECD: GOVERNMENT'S ROLE SHOULD BE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT

- Investing in early childhood development (ECD) is strategic and crucial for a country, but it takes [political will](#), [leadership](#), [commitment](#) and [integrated planning](#) to influence policy changes.
- Evidence-based research is essential for good policy and [social experimentation](#) (e.g., pilot projects) can greatly contribute to improving the quality of public policies by, for instance, helping to identify barriers, measure outcomes and impacts and provide cost-effectiveness.

“The role of public policy is to weave a strong social fabric with institutions and programmes that respond to people's everyday needs throughout their life cycle. [...] We need a global alliance of partners across all sectors to promote and advance ECD.”  
*Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director, UN Women, and former President of Chile*

This report and the PowerPoint presentations (keynotes and workshops) of the conference are available at: [www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca](http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca) under the Colloquia section.

