



## **Making Headlines**

*Susan Ramsay, Early Literacy Specialist HFL&A 613-354-6318 (ext 32)*

We want to get it right.

The Canada Council on Learning October 2011 report states that internationally, Canada is losing its competitive edge with education at each stage of learning, from preschoolers to senior citizens. One of its key findings? “Early childhood education and learning (ELEL) affects a child’s health, well-being and skills development, yet research indicates that 25% of Canadian children entering school lack the foundation needed for successful acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills.”

<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Newsroom/Releases/20111011FutureLearning.html>

The report does not point the finger at educators or parents, but rather criticizes Canada’s disjointed system of policy creation with respect to education. And it highlights the impact of early childhood education on lifelong learning.

But who are the early childhood educators in children’s lives?

In 2008 the Institute for Research on Public Policy cited 2004-5 Statistics Canada data showing that (excluding Quebec) 35% of Canadian preschoolers were cared for by an unlicensed childcare provider, neighbour or relative. Licensed care (regulated home childcare, daycare, and kindergarten programs) was provided by 42% while care by a parent or family member in their home accounted for 23%. (<http://www.irpp.org/choices/archive/vol14no12.pdf>)

In Ontario, with the introduction of full day learning, these percentages will change for children from 3.8 to 6 years of age. For children under 3, however, there will likely be increased reliance on unregulated child care. Funding for licensed childcare programs and fee subsidies for families needing child care is low. Yet the employment and career needs of families with young families remain high.

If, as these two reports suggest, children need more help to develop early literacy and numeracy skills prior to school entry, and about one third of young children are cared for in unlicensed

settings, then we need to recognize and support the important work of home childcare providers.

Home Child Care News is an online resource that is new this fall. It has been developed specifically for home childcare providers, foster parents and family members who care for infants, toddlers or preschoolers in their homes. Home Child Care News features literacy, speech and language information and tips. Those who visit the site can post questions or comments. Ideas generated through these posts will help guide the focus of future editions of Home Child Care News.

Home Child Care News includes activities for supporting children's literacy development in the kitchen, during outdoor or active play, craft times and more. There is a featured story caregivers can share with children each month. For caregivers living in the northern regions of Hastings or Frontenac Counties, or in Lennox & Addington County, a limited supply of free books is available for home libraries. As well, there are downloadable resources for all caregivers to help support the early and emergent literacy needs of children in their care. Home Child Care News also invites face to face networking through childcare support groups in Kingston, Napanee and Belleville.

Those who care for young children in their homes contribute significantly to our society. They enable economic stability of families with young children. Home childcare providers are positioned to be prime educators in children's language and literacy development.

By visiting Home Child Care News each month for new editions, we hope home childcare providers will know they are valued and supported.

Home Child Care News can be found at [www.homechildcarenews.com](http://www.homechildcarenews.com).