



What is child care's potential?

- ✓ **A Canadian study followed a group of children who were enrolled in family child care as preschoolers until they were age 17 or 18. Those who had been in higher quality child care homes, as measured by a standard observation rating scale, obtained higher scores on tests of academic achievement and general intellectual ability at age 12 or 13 and also at age 17 or 18.** ("The Victoria Day Care Research Project: Overview of a Longitudinal Study of Child Care and Human Development in Canada, *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*, 2000, vol. 8, 49-54)
- ✓ **Similar long-term benefits from high quality child care have been found among children who attended child care centres prior to starting school.** ("Issues in Canadian Child Care: What Does The Research Tell Us?" *Research Connections*, vol 5, in press)

Realities

- ✓ **Seven out of ten mothers with children under age 6 are in the paid workforce.** (*Profiling Canada's Families II*, Vanier Institute of the Family, 2000, p. 86)
- ✓ **Almost 9 out of 10 working women return to work within a year after giving birth.** (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, September 1, 1999)
- ✓ **In 1996, the percentage of husband/wife families who were poor was 10.5%; if the wives' earnings were removed, 21.4% of husband/wife families would have a family income below the poverty line.** (Statistics Canada, reported in *Poverty Profile 1996*, National Council on Welfare, 1998, p. 87)

Quality of child care in Canada, 1998/99

Two of the *You Bet I Care!* project studies looked at quality in centres and family child care homes respectively in six provinces and one territory. They found that:

- ✓ environments that protect children's health and safety with warm, supportive adults are the norm in Canadian child care settings; but
- ✓ only about a third of centres and a third of family child care homes provide experiences that support and encourage children's social, language and cognitive development.

What makes the difference?

The *You Bet I Care!* project found that in both centre- and family-based child care the strongest predictors of the availability of experiences that stimulate children's development were:

- ✓ the centre teacher having post-secondary ECCE education or the family child care provider having completed a formal family child care-specific training course;
- ✓ the adult's income level (higher income predicted higher quality);
- ✓ the family child care provider networking on a regular basis with other providers; the centre teacher satisfied with the work environment and support received from co-workers and supervisors.

The two reports from the latest "You Bet I Care!" studies, one looking at quality in centres and the other at quality in family child care homes, are posted in down-loadable form on the University of Guelph website www.uoguelph.ca/cfww. Printed hard copies are not yet available.