ECC 136: Project Model Reflections

Juanita - Roots and Seeds of Empathy

Karli – Bank Street

Katy – Montessori

Sheena – Aboriginal Head Start Program

As a group, Karli, Katy, Sheena and I all took the opportunity to research a program model that we had no or very little knowledge about. On Monday August 10th we shared our learning and discussed how the Child Care Regulations apply to each of the four programs.

Karli: “Bank Street Program” – Created by Lucy Mitchell

I learnt from Karli this program began as a study to learn about “what types of environments best supports children’s development and nourishing children’s potential”. The data from this study was used to help create successful classroom environments.

Karli was impress how Lucy Mitchell pulled together a group of psychologists, anthropologists, educators, social workers and medical professionals to study the “whole child” to understand the best environment for the individual child.

The research data showed children like to: be explores – therefore the child/children need an environment “… big enough, varied enough; to call forth all their young powers of sense and imagination” stated Lucy Mitchell. Allowing children to use their imagination and play, be hands on, experiment, follow their own interests, be a learner, be a teacher, and be a classmate in their surrounding environment.

Families are encouraged to volunteer to build a partnership with the child and teacher.

I also learnt there are 3 programs by age/grade within the Bank Street program model: – nursery to kindergarten, grade 1 to 4, and grade 5 to 8. Karli and I chatted about the nursery age, was it a pre kindergarten age? I am curious to learn if it is and if the nursery age program is mandatory or not?

Child Care Regulations:

Nursery to kindergarten we thought would follow Schedule E - Group Child Care (30 Months to School Age) of the “Provincial Child Care Regulations, Under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act. With not knowing the nursery age the program may also include Group Child Care (under 36 Months). I will need to do a little more research to answer this scenario.

We felt the grade 1 to 4 and grade 5 to 8 would fall under a school district regulations.

Katy: “Montessori Program” – Created by Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori believed it was important to “guide children in learning rather than lecture them from a book”. And had the belief in the creative potential of children, their drive to learn, and the right of each child to be treated as an individual. Maria saw that children needed hands – on learning in a carefully planned environment. “Free exploration and learning in uninterrupted blocks of time, in order to get the most out of their learning experiences” was her style of learning. And still to this day the Montessori Programs echo Maria’s beliefs.

What I found interesting in Katy’s research was the “Sensitive periods – (children become ready to learn different types of skills at specific points in their development, which we are aware of). As each sensitive period varies from one child to another, the teacher is mindful of the appropriate time to introduce new ideas to each child”. I felt this connection valued the importance of every child being unique and highly respected by the teacher. Children learn through hands – on approach, explore and experiment, at their own pace, and embrace mindfulness.

Through their Montessori environment children learn along with “teaching” which is a partnership of the “school and the family”. I also learnt the Montessori program is a multi-age group. “The children are able to assist one another in their learning processes”. Children learning from children, and children teaching to children.

Child Care Regulations:

I believe the Montessori Program would fall under the “Provincial Child Care Regulations” and would be a combination of Group Child Care (30 Months to School age) and Group Child Care (School Age) from Schedule E, to operate as a multi-age group centre, under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act.

Sheena: “Aboriginal Head Start Program” – Created by Minister of Health, Diane Marleau

Diane Marleau states “Early intervention at the preschool age gives children good self-esteem, a desire for learning and opportunities to develop fully as young people”.

Sheena explained the program was build on “Aboriginal people’s values beliefs, ideas and interest, and to support parents and children in their goals to build a better future for themselves” within their local community to also reflect their culture and specific needs. The Federal government initially funded this program to get it up and running.

Together families, Elders, educators and children participate in the preschool program. The program “Empower parents to play a major part in planning, developing, operating and evaluating the project. Empowering the parents can foster a sense of trust, respect, and confidence in knowing that the resources they need for the family are available”. Parents can participate in workshops with their child and without their child, and engage in cultural events and family activities.

I learnt this program not only meets the needs of the child, it also strongly strives to meet the needs of the parents, family, and community. Supporting them spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, supporting physical growth, and encouraging each Aboriginal child to enjoy life-long learning.

“First Nations, Metis and Inuit people recognize children as their nations’ most valuable resource”.

Child Care Regulations:

The Aboriginal Head Start Program falls under the “Provincial Child Care Regulations” under the “Community Care and Assisted Living Act”. Schedule E – Group Child Care (under 36 Months) and Group Child Care (30 Months to School Age), or Preschool (30 Months to School Age).

Juanita: Roots and Seeds of Empathy Program – Created by Mary Gordon

**Roots and Seeds of Empathy Program focuses on tackling the bullying problems within our young children by increasing empathy to encourage positive pro-social behaviours to help reduce aggressive behaviours in our school-aged and child care centre aged children.**

It is a classroom program where infants “the little teacher” and parent visit elementary schools/child care centres on a regular basis, in order to allow the students/children to observe the infants’ development and emotions, while educating both the students/children’s mind and heart lessons.

Around the lavender blanket the children are able to watch a loving and secure relationship attachment between the parent and the infant. The family guide encourages the children to observe the baby’s development, to label the infants feelings, and to talk about their own feelings and those of others”. Learning about empathy.

When discussing my program model to my group, I could feel the passion for this model. How important it is to teach our children empathy. As Mary Gordon stated “It’s my believe empathy cannot be taught, but it can be caught”.

Child Care Regulations:

We believe the Seeds of Empathy Program would fall under the “Provincial Child Care Regulations” Group Child Care (30 Months to School age) from Schedule E, under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act. And the Roots of Empathy Program would fall under the school district regulations.

I believe all of the above program models have important roles in child care. All of them express strong connections/relationships around the children - family, Elders, educators, teachers, volunteers, and medical professionals. Building the relationship between child and parent is highly valued. The image of the child is seen as the child being “whole”, “learners”, “teachers”, and being an image of “Hope”.

At our centre, we do our very best to provided a warm and inviting environment, follow the interests of the children through exploring and experiments, talk, express, share and show our values, beliefs and culture to support our children and families. We try daily to be aware and show empathy, to lead with our hearts, to care for one another. Unaware of the Roots and Seeds of Empathy Program Models, I already know for myself I would like to continue learning, and the staff members at our centre, have expressed they too would like to learn more about these positive programs. Our centre is located on Huband Park Elementary School grounds, together embracing the Seeds of Empathy and Roots of Empathy Programs would be remarkable!

“A Pedagogy of Hope” – Mary Gordon.