

The Early Development Imperative – A
Pan-Canadian Conference

Winnipeg, Manitoba

**Dan Offord and Early Child
Development**

By J. Fraser Mustard
The Founders' Network
Founding Chairman
Council for Early Child Development

November 16, 2009

Christie Lake and “Dr. Dan”

Dan Offord’s commitment to early child development is exemplified by his 47 years as the volunteer director of Christie Lake Summer Camp.

“He was a leader, a teacher, a mentor, confidant and friend.”

– Staff and Kids

These were also his characteristics as a professor of child psychiatry at McMaster University for 25 years.

Dan Offord

Child Psychiatry at McMaster

1978 - 2003

**- A brilliant creative sensitive
academic leader**

Offord's Interests

- **Prevention** – improved early child development
- **Treatment** – diagnosis, treatment, and support

Gaza Child Health Survey 1999

- Helped Thomas Miller's group
- **Findings** – A significant correlation between lifetime trauma exposure and mental health problems.

Rates of Boys' Emotional Behavioural Problems

	Gaza Health Study (6-11 yrs) %	OCHS Study * (6-11 yrs) %
Conduct Disorder	22.9	6.2
ADHD	11.9	9.7
Emotional Disorder	49.0	11.1
One or more Disorders	55.7	19.6

* OCHS – Ontario Child Health Survey

Canadian Institute for Advanced Research

Population Health

Bob Evans and Clyde Hertzman

Human Development

Dan Keating, Clyde Hertzman
and Dan Offord

Early Years Action Group – North York

Clara Will

Established 1995

Members included:

Clara Will

Jim Grieve

Ontario Early Years Study

Premier Harris – 1998

Co-chairs: McCain and Mustard

Members: Dan Offord, Robin Williams,
Clara Will

Early Years Study – Outcome Measures

The earliest time, given our present institutional structures, when a measurement can readily be made of development in the early years on all children is when they enter the school system.

Early Years Study – Outcome Measures

1. Physical health and well-being
2. Social competence
3. Emotional maturity
4. Language richness
5. General knowledge and cognitive skills

October 3, 1997

Early Years Action Group

Offord, Bennett, Racine, Gordon,
Willms, Grieve, Pascal, Will

Jim Grieve to arrange a meeting with:

- M. Jackson – North York Board of Education
- F. Mustard to meet with ECE (kindergarten)

Federal Government National Advisory Group EDI

Richard Tremblay – Univ of Montreal

Clyde Hertzman - UBC

Doug Willms – Univ of New Brunswick

Allen Zeesman – Federal government

Dan Offord - McMaster

and others

Magdalena Janus

Born in Poland

MSc – 1985 – Krakow

PhD – 1989 – Cambridge (MRC Unit on Development and Integration of Behaviour), Supervisor – Linde

Research Fellow, Psychiatry, Hospital for Sick Children, 1993-98

Project Coordinator for EDI, Centre for Studies of Children at Risk (McMaster), 1998

Assistant Professor, 2002

Associate Professor, Dept of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience (McMaster), 2008

Government of Ontario

- 2001 – Children's Secretariat established endowment fund for research in early child development – funded Magdalena's chair

Early Years Action Group

1998

- 3 year grant, Human Resources Canada, Pilot EDI
- Toronto District School Board - Offord Centre (Dan Offord and Magdalena Janus)
- All former North York public schools

Early Years Action Group

Meeting October 1999, Toronto
Clara Will

Speakers:

- Charles Pascal – Atkinson Fdn.
- Dan Keating – CIAR, OISE (UofT)
- Dan Offord – CIAR, EDI
- Allen Zeesman – UEY
- Marland, Godfrey and Jackson

Understanding Early Years Project

November 1999

To review findings from North York
Early Years team – Clara Will

Allen Zeesman, Margo Craig Garrison,
Dan Offord, Magdalena Janus, Doug
Willms, Clyde Hertzman, Jane Bertrand,
and Fraser Mustard

Understanding Early Years will use EDI.
Local data will be linked to McMaster.

EDI – North York *

EDI Test	Percent with Low EDI Score		
	York Central	York W.	Eglin/Law
Physical Health	28	39	23
Social Competence	29	41	27
Emotional Maturity	24	29	25
Language	15	28	16
Cognition & General Know.	34	46	25

* Early Years Action Group – Clara Will

Western Australia – EDI and Improving ECD

	Year	
	2003	2006
	Decrease in the % of vulnerable children	
Floreat	47.22%	14.3%
Wembley	47.11%	11.8%

EDI and School Performance

# of Vulnerabilities	% Failing Grade 4 Test	% Not Passing Grade 4
0	13.6	17.8
1	26.7	33.9
2-3	29.5	43.1
4-5	48.4	68.3

With Our Best Future in Mind – Pascal report

Recommendation 1:

The province should create a continuum of early learning, child care, and family supports for children from the prenatal period through to adolescence, under the leadership of the Minister of Education.

With Our Best Future in Mind – Pascal report

Recommendation 2:

The Ministry of Education should establish an Early Years Division to develop and implement an Early Years Policy Framework that will create a continuity of early learning experiences for children from 0 to 8 years of age.

Some Offord / Janus Papers

1. Janus, Offord, Walsh, Racine, Mustard. 2000. International Conference on Infant Studies. UK.
2. Janus, Offord. 2000. Readiness to learn at school. ISUMA.
3. Janus, Walsh, Offord. 2001. Society for Research in Child Development.
4. Janus, Offord. 2001. Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology. Oxford.

Offord's Influences re ECD

1. **Pascal** – Atkinson Foundation and Early Learning in Ontario report. 2009.
2. **Clara Will** – Early Years Action Group – North York
 - Early Years Study.
 - First EDI Community Assessment North York.
3. **Robin Williams** – Early Years Study.
 - Canadian Council for Early Child Development (board chair).

Offord's Influences re ECD (con't)

4. **Jim Grieve** – North York School Board
 - Piloted EDI with kindergarten staff.
 - Vice-chair, Council for Early Child Development.
 - ADM Education – Early Years program (0 to 8 years), November 2009.

5. **Jane Bertrand** – George Brown College and OISE
 - Atkinson Foundation support of Keating.
 - Early Years Study 1 & 2.
 - Advisor, McCain Family Foundation.

6. **Magdalena Janus** – Offord Centre, McMaster University.
 - EDI outcome measure.

Janus, M. and Keating, D.

“Towards a civic community for children. In celebration of the life and work of Dr. Dan Offord”.

Society for Research in Child Development. April 2005. Atlanta, USA.