

Bernhard, J. K., Pollard, J., Eggers-Pierola, C., & Morin, A. (2000). *Infants and toddlers in Canadian multi-age childcare centres: Age, ability and linguistic inclusion*. Ottawa: Research Connections Canada. [Also published in French as *Les poupons et les jeunes enfants dans les garderies pour âges multiples*. Ottawa: Research Connections Canada.

### **ABSTRACT**

The Ryerson Multi-Age Early Childhood Education study summarized here was conducted to provide an overall understanding of how multi-age models can be used in group, child care settings to meet the needs of children, families and caregivers. The focus of our work was on the inclusion of infants and toddlers with preschool and school-age children in licensed child care centres across Canada.

Our multi-pronged approach consisted of nine component studies designed to provide triangulated data related to the specific research questions. Interviews with provincial and territorial policymakers and an extensive review of existing legislation were conducted. Responses to two group surveys provided information regarding the activities of group, licensed child care centres operating with multi-age groupings (N=110) and early childhood education institutions across Canada (N=87). Site visits to 12 child care centres were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of multi-age grouping arrangements across Canada. These visits included focus groups with family members and observations of older and younger focal children enrolled in the programs. Finally, a set of studies were conducted at the Ryerson laboratory school to shed light on the process of moving to multi-age, the safety of infants, and reconsideration of quality and assessment issues.