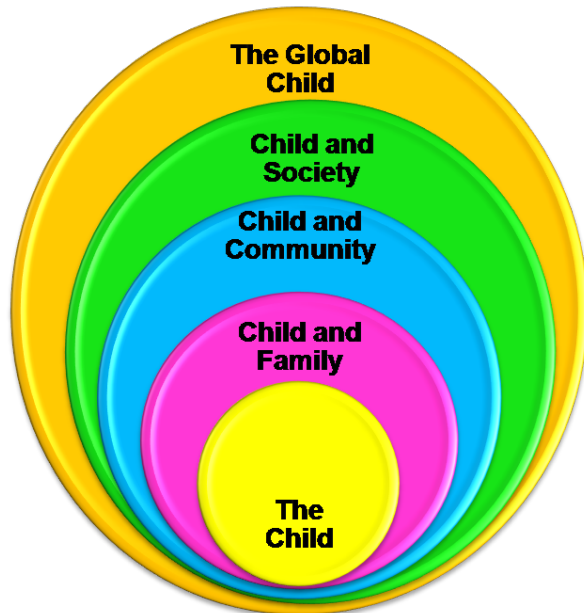




A Conceptual Framework for Early Child Development (ECD)

Led by Dr. Ray Doiron & Dr. Martha Gabriel



The Research in Early Child Development (RECD) Initiative has refined a conceptual framework for early child development in Prince Edward Island pertaining to children up to eight years old. The goal of the framework is to spark discussion and highlight connections, while setting a theoretical grounding for future research. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological model of human development proposes that humans do not develop in isolation but in relation to their family, school, community, society, and the global world. He maintains that each of these changing environments, as well as the interactions among them, are key to healthy human development.

"Child development takes place through processes of progressively more complex interaction between an active child and the persons, objects and symbols in his/her immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The RECD model strongly reflects the belief that not only does the environment affect the child, but the child also affects his/her environment.

The Child: Aspects of a child's biology, genetics, and brain development. Individuals are the focus of much of the work collected in the ECD field on PEI. Individual child indicators include such characteristics as well-being, weight, and height.

Child & Family: The child's home environment and extended family. The family/home environment is the child's most influential component in this age group (0 to 8 years). The family environment includes such qualities as family values, history, culture, beliefs, parenting styles, socioeconomic status, and parental education level.

Child & Community: The child's life beyond the home. This component consists of a child's daily community and includes such settings as parks, libraries, public services (i.e., health, social), and educational settings (i.e., early learning centres, elementary schools).

Child & Society: The attitudes/ideologies of a child's culture. This component includes aspects of where the child lives including religion, ethnicity, and nationality. It also involves macro institutions, such as federal and provincial governments and public policy.

The Global Child: The child as a citizen of the global world. A child's global society includes cultural conditions, patterning of environmental events, and transitions over the life course. Examples include the impact of the technological progress, global economics, and political strife.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Doiron, Gabriel, Arias de Sanchez, Wartman. (2009). *Research in Early Child Development Initiative*.