

Friends of Children Award

Jim Grieve

Jim Grieve was the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Early Years Division (EYD) for the Ontario Ministry of Education (MOE) from 2009 - 2015. This portfolio gave Jim responsibility for the conversion to full-day every day kindergarten, staffed by a certificated teacher and a Registered Early Childhood Educator. He also oversaw the transfer of child care and family support programs from the Ministry of Children's Services to the MOE. Guiding these changes required optimism, diplomacy, respect, and the ability to listen and build bridges.

Jim assembled a team in the EYD who mirrored his collaborative approach. The changes that have been introduced are both structural and philosophical. The team engaged in provincial consultations, listening to a wide range of sectors, including educators working directly with children, families, Indigenous communities, administrators, municipalities, agencies responsible for designing professional learning, unions, tertiary education, professional associations, school boards, the College of Early Childhood Educators, and others. In 2013, two documents were released: *Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research about Young Children*, and *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework*. Among the guiding principles identified in the latter document was an articulated view of the child as "competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential" (p. 7). The *Think, Feel, Act* document included articles written by CAYC members Dr. Carol Anne Wien, Anne Marie Coughlin, Lorrie Baird, and Karyn Callaghan, among others, with video clips posted on the MOE website. These initiatives served to encourage critical reflection on how we view children, and how that is reflected in practice and policy. In 2014, *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* was released, including an articulated view not only of the competent child, but also of the competent educator and family. This document is designed to provoke thought and conversation. It is not a checklist or a 'how to' manual, a decision that signals significant change in thinking.



Jim has been a passionate advocate for early learning, working as one of the founding members of the Council for Early Child Development. Working with Dr. Fraser Mustard, Dr. Dan Offord, Dr. Magdalena Janus and other leaders, he developed strong multi-sectoral initiatives to support children and families in Canada. He has often said that he has to be sure he is making good decisions, or he will pay the price at home: his wife, son, and daughter are all kindergarten teachers.

Since 2010, Jim has co-chaired a working group on early learning and development for the Council of Ministers of Education Canada and is a member of the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care. Despite this national and international profile, Jim Grieve remains the kind of leader who connects directly with people. At a recent provincial conference, in a room with 360 people, he visited every table.

Jim has done more than oversee a transition in structure and practice in early learning in Ontario; he has worked with a team to guide a transformation in thinking. He has done so with courage in the true sense of that word: it is work of the heart.

Respectfully submitted by Karyn Callaghan