

## Hamilton Best Start Workshop

### Family Support: Leadership Ideas for Building the Capacity of Families and Children

John Lord

September 21, 2010

## John Lord



**John Lord** is a researcher, author, and family member. He was the founding director of the Centre for Community Based Research in Kitchener. He has written extensively on issues related to inclusion and participation of families and vulnerable citizens. His latest book is *Pathways to Inclusion: Building a New Story with People and Communities*.

John Lord's website can be found at [www.johnlord.net](http://www.johnlord.net)

## How the World is Changing

### The last two decades

- Expanded awareness and knowledge about building resilient families and communities
- We can think of this as a new paradigm or a *New Story*

## Karen Lord at 3 1/2



## Karen Lord at 31<sup>1/2</sup>



## How the World is Changing

The United Nations Convention says that each person with a disability has a **'right'** to participate in families and communities



## How the World is Changing

Provincial governments are increasingly supporting direct funding to families – this has tremendous potential, but has a dark side if infrastructure supports are not available to families as well

## How the World is Changing

- Communities and services are gradually changing their attitudes, policies, and actions toward acceptance and inclusion



## How the World is Changing

- The aging society and baby boomer demands are increasingly reducing resources for children
- Canada is significantly behind European countries in our commitment to children

## How the World is Changing

- Other ways you are noticing the world is changing that might have an impact on families and on the work you do?
  - locally, provincially, nationally?

*Leaders 'notice' what is happening in the world and what change is occurring*

## A Conversation about 'Families'...

Often families 'internalize' the cultural view that **disability is a burden** and protection is more important than participation and inclusion



## A Conversation about 'Families'...

Few **service systems** have helped families to overcome these views



## A Conversation about 'Families'...

What are we learning from disability leaders, family leaders, and research about what is important for families and children?

- Centrality of the 'right' values
- Impact of social inclusion
- Power of family to family support

*How is your work reflecting these trends?*

## A Conversation about 'Families'...

Families need **personalized family support** to overcome the cultural scripts & to internalize values of inclusion, community, & equanimity



- BREAK TIME

## Building Capacity

Capacity building is enhanced when we look at the strengths around us and use those strengths to mobilize people to act in new ways. It is kind of like looking at something and suddenly seeing potential. Capacity building begins with a mind-set that sees possibility and intentionally builds on that potential.

## Effective Family Support Builds Family Capacity By....

Empowering Families  
to be intentional & to set goals & take action



## Effective Family Support Builds Family Capacity By....

**Building resilience** of families by enabling people to see their strengths & to build on them



## The Mystery of Resilience

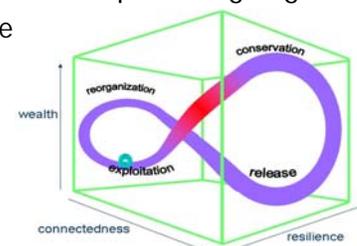
Why is it that some families are:

- Elastic
- Emotionally strong
- Cope well with adversity
- Resourceful

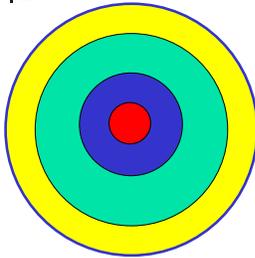
## The Paradox of Resilience

Resilience is about experiencing huge change while also staying the same

C.S. Hollings



## Effective Family Support Builds Family Capacity By....



Enabling families to build **networks of support**, within their family, among other families, with friends, and with the wider community

## Effective Family Support Builds Family Capacity By....



Building **confidence & commitment** of families to human rights, social inclusion, & community participation

## Effective Family Support Builds Family Capacity By....

### Other strategies that help build capacity...

- Community resources
- Linking family to family
- Sharing appropriate and timely information
- Building on strengths
- Building partnerships and collaboration
- Role modeling questions, ideas and actions

## Effective Family Support Builds Family Capacity

### What can we expect from capacity building?

- Increased relationships
- Mutual support and learning
- Shift in the balance in power
- Increased confidence and competence
- Change at a personal and systems level

## Leadership

- In terms of building the capacity of families and children, what does leadership mean for us today?

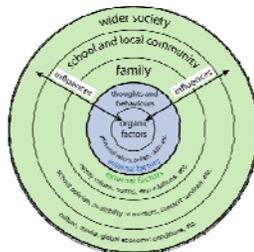
## Leadership and the Power of Principles

- "We need simple principles in these turbulent times." Margaret Wheatley
- Principles provide guideposts for implementing values and vision

## Family Support Principles

### Ecological

Families are seen as an ecological unit, where actions of any member are connected with the actions & reactions of other members



*What does this principle mean for our role as leaders?*

## Family Support Principles

### Participation

Families learn and grow through participation in family and community life



*What does this principle mean for our role as leaders?*

## Family Support Principles

### Strengths

Families have strengths and gifts that are valued and nurtured

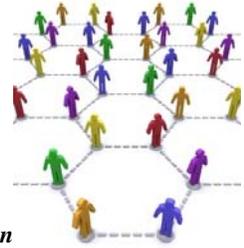


*What does this principle mean for our role as leaders?*

## Family Support Principles

### Social Networks

Families have social networks that can be strengthened and expanded



*What does this principle mean for our role as leaders?*

## Family Support Principles

### Partnership

Families have control over any formal supports designated on their behalf



*What does this principle mean for our role as leaders?*

## Family Support Principles

### Facilitation

Families benefit from deep listen, intentional planning, & sound facilitation



*What does this principle mean for our role as leaders?*

## Family Support Principles

### Self-help

Families have access to family networks and autonomous family groups



*What does this principle mean for our role as leaders?*

## Family Support Principles: Implications for Leadership

- Importance of managing *and* leading
- Support staff to work from *principles*
- *Engage families* at multiple levels
- Value and support *families connecting with families* – autonomous family networks
- Strengthen *facilitation* – formal and informal

## Conclusion

Family Support:  
Building a Future



## Resources

- Family Alliance Ontario  
[www.family-alliance.com](http://www.family-alliance.com)
- John Lord website [www.johnlord.net](http://www.johnlord.net)
- Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement [www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca)
- Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario  
[www.individualizedfunding.ca](http://www.individualizedfunding.ca)