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WESTERN UNIVERSITY

The Relatedness of Leadership *to* Infant Education and Care: A Journey with Hannah Arendt

by

Tina Bonnett

AN ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

In current movements that seek to redress the early education and care sector, professionals who work with infants are gaining recognition for possessing a unique set of expertise and competencies that extend beyond custodial caregiving. In this emerging recognition however, the relatedness between leadership *and* infant caregiving is scant in early years research, policy, and practice agendas. This phenomenon is evidenced in course outcomes, content, and experiential elements in an Ontario early years honours leadership degree. As such, this Organizational Improvement (OIP) plan endeavours to tangibly intersect leadership and infant caregiving by examining contextual informants relating to this problem of practice. Care, an ethics of care, and the problematic past of leadership and infant caregiving are deliberated. Trust and care are likewise surveyed and posited as main to actioning the change necessitated to more closely ally leadership with infant caregiving in preservice academic and experiential degree learning.

Leadership in this change plan is conjectured as twofold granted that it is not only central to the momentum necessitated to action change, but also to the de-coupling that resides between leadership and infant caregiving in the postsecondary program affixed to this OIP. The mutually complementary qualities that exist between relational leadership and infant caregiving, apprised by Arendt's (1958, 1968) interwoven theories of natality, plurality, and action, is argued as a fitting theoretical stance to underpin this plan. Principal to proposed solutions is stakeholder readiness and responses, most notably those of infants and future infant caregiving leaders. Mainstay to this OIP are strategies to navigate change which are inclusive of Empowerment Evaluation and relationally-based communication. Ultimately, this Organizational Improvement Plan advocates for preservice early education and care students to engage in degree level

learning that incites deconstruction, reflection, and revisioning of narratives that locate infant caregiving within a relational leadership paradigm.

Keywords: organizational improvement plan, relational leadership, organizational change, infant caregiving, Arendt, ethics of care

Executive Summary

The early childhood education and care sector is in a state of research, policy, and practice emergence in many countries across the world. The links between early childhood experiences and longitudinal developmental outcomes, and the critical role that early years professionals play in setting the trajectory for lifelong learning, behaviour and health of the young child are now validated by empirical research. In these validations, those who work with the infant population are becoming recognized as possessing specialized knowledge and competencies. A lack of leadership mention is however evidenced in research, policy, and competency agendas associated with professionals who work in the early years field, and is most pronounced in those who work with the infant population. This dilemma translates to an early years degree program, that is delivered in an Ontario college that has been in operation since the early 1960's, where disunion is evidenced between leadership *and* infant caregiving in preservice learning. In view of this the following Problem of Practice (POP) emerges: *The relatedness of leadership to infant education and care is lacking within course outcomes, content, and experiential elements in an Honours Bachelor of Early Years Leadership degree.* Hence, this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) strives to couple leadership with infant caregiving in preservice academic and experiential learning with the aim of rousing future infant caregivers to situate themselves in a relational leadership paradigm.

Primary to the aforementioned problem of practice are the deeply rooted historical inequities faced by those who work with infants. Immersed in a profession rooted in care, those who work alongside children in their formative years have been traditionally viewed as custodial caregivers. Gender inequity intensifies these challenges as this occupation is predominantly occupied by women, and women whose work is situated in care has conventionally been undervalued and underpaid. Further influencing this problem of practice is an education/care binary that positions the former as superior to the latter, and diminishes this care-grounded profession. Intensifying this are underlying policy messages that depict those who work with infants as leadership inept. In aspirations to give voice to unrealized leadership aptitude that lives within preservice professionals who envision working with infants, care is focal. In harmony with the care element main to this OIP, are the tenets of trust and ethics.

In the quest to move towards the abovementioned preferred organizational state, leadership is dual. First, it applies to the leadership required to mobilize change within the organization. Second, it pertains to the aim to unite leadership with infant caregiving in preservice degree learning. Given the centrality of relationship-based practice in infant caregiving, relational leadership theory (RLT) informed by Arendt's (1958, 1968) interconnected theories of natality, plurality, and action, is fundamental to the momentum necessitated to generate change. Core to the relational leadership stance and solutions of this OIP is a web of human relationships (Arendt, 1958). Arendt's theory of natality, which prompts the unearthing of newness and wholeness, builds on this relational posture as it acts as a catalyst for preservice infant caregivers to revision how leadership can be embodied in practice. Plurality, most notably in relation to stakeholder perspectives and concerted actioning of solutions, builds on the RLT within this plan. Also core to the relational posture are the principles of process, becoming, and expecting

the unexpected. It is worthy to note that in all processes central to actioning these change solutions internal and external stakeholders are at the fore. Prime are infants who entrust their well-being to the adults who care for them. In safeguarding ethical rights for infants, and preservice infant caregiving leaders, Empowerment Evaluation, and a relationally-based Community of Practice model, are cardinal. In leaning on RLT, the following four solutions are proposed to foster the change required to interlace leadership with infant caregiving in the degree connected to this OIP:

1. Advocating for policy change that deems degree credentials as requisite for preservice professionals who envision working with infants.
2. Integrating academic and experiential learning outcomes into course syllabi that distinctly pair leadership and infant caregiving.
3. Academic and experiential learning opportunities that create spaces for early years degree students to de-construct, reflect on, and revision narratives of infant caregiving that are more closely associated with leadership.
4. Enhance partnerships with infant-based community organizations who are equipped to mentor future infant education and caregiving leaders.

The above solutions are intended to unfold in an emergent fashion that allow for stakeholder feedback and modification in all phases of change. Initial implementation is projected to commence in September, 2019 with the distribution of the Executive Summary to stakeholders followed by course outcome examination, adaptations to academic and experiential learning, and establishment of infant-based field partnerships in the later part of 2019 and first half of 2020. This is to be followed by program mapping of Provincial Vocational Learning Outcomes (PVLO's) to Course Vocational Learning Outcomes (CVLO's) in June, 2020. The 2024 full program review is anticipated to play a significant role in solidifying the future change path of this plan.

This Organizational Improvement Plan thus keeps in tandem with current initiatives that endeavour to renew the early childhood education and care profession. In this redressing,

leadership capacity of the infant caregiver merits reflection. Postsecondary organizations who prepare the next generation of infant caregivers hold a responsibility to unpack why leadership and infant caregiving lack intersection in preservice learning. The Ontario Early Childhood Leadership degree affiliated with this plan is proposed as a fitting organizational setting in which to accomplish such. Consequently, this Organizational Improvement Plan endeavours to interrupt antiquated narratives about those who work with the zero to two population, to nurture more progressive rhetoric and perspectives that tangibly relate relational leadership to infant caregiving. Re-conceptualizing infant caregiving within a leadership paradigm is requisite as it holds possibilities to enrich the trajectory for both infants, and early childhood education and care professionals who are specialized to care for them.

Acknowledgements

“No human life, not even the life of the hermit in nature’s wildness, is possible without a world which directly or indirectly testifies to the presence of other human beings” (Arendt, 1958, p. 22).

In keeping with this Arendtian thought, it is with sincerest gratitude that I acknowledge the caring human beings who walked alongside me in this doctoral journey. First, I am grateful to Dr. Rita Gardiner, who early in my Ed.D. journey invited me into an Arendtian world that renewed my thinking about infant caregiving. I also extend my thanks to Dr. Jun Li who, as my advisor, appreciated my reluctance to adopt mainstream theory in favour of Hannah Arendt’s work. Sincerest thank you to Cheryl Bauman-Buffone, who pushed me outside of my comfort to reflect on a visual representation of my doctoral work, and Julie Cross who using her brilliant creativity captured my understanding of the intersection between the theories of natality, plurality, and action (Arendt, 1958, 1968) *and* infant caregiving leadership.

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Acronyms

CAE	Centre for Academic Excellence
cece	College of Early Childhood Educators (Ontario)
CPHA	Canadian Public Health Association
CVLO	Course Vocational Learning Outcome
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
EE	Empowerment Evaluation
CoP	Community of Practice
IMHP	Infant Mental Health Promotion
MTCU	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
NAEYC	National Association Education of Young Children
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIP	Organizational Improvement Plan
OPSEU	Ontario Public Service Employees Union
PAC	Program Advisory Committee
PDSA	Plan, Do, Study, Act
PEQAB	Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board
PVLO	Program Vocational Learning Outcome
R&I	Research and Innovation
RLT	Relational Leadership Theory
WAIMH	World Association for Infant Mental Health

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

The field of early childhood education and care (ECEC) is in a state of revisioning in many countries across the world. The link between early childhood experiences and longitudinal developmental outcomes, and the critical role that early childhood educators play in setting the trajectory for lifelong learning, behaviour and health of the young child are gradually being validated by empirical research, (Denburg & Daneman, 2010; Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2007; Shonkoff, 2010). In these validations, professionals who work with infants are becoming recognized as possessing knowledge and competencies that extend beyond custodial caregiving. Those who work with children in their formative years, including infant caregivers, are now associated with expertise in the areas of building relationships, child development, play facilitation, reflective practice, pedagogical observation and documentation, critical reflection, collaborative inquiry, inclusion and environmental design (Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2014). A lack of leadership mention is however evidenced in research, policy, and practice agendas associated with professionals who work in the early years field, *particularly within those who work with the infant population.*

This phenomenon is evidenced in an Ontario early years leadership degree where a lack of connectedness between leadership *and* infant education and care exists in course outcomes, content and field experiences. Informal reviews and community field partner reports indicate that preservice professionals are lacking in academic and field learning experiences that bring leadership and infant care together. At the root of this are course outcomes that do not explicitly pair leadership theory and practice with infant caregiving. As such, this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) endeavours to interrupt antiquated discourses about infant caregiving, to generate perspectives and narratives that more tangibly relate leadership to infant education

and care within preservice learning. In the quest to accomplish this, it is essential to first note that the word *infant* in this narrative speaks generally to the young child who is zero to two years of age. Culture, geography, parenting and other informants are recognized in this text as holding potential to shape diverse ideologies affixed to the chronological age of the infant that may exist across the globe. Usage of the term *caregiving* in this plan aligns with Elliott's (2007) reasoning that "the web of professional caregiving is intricate, with strands connecting from caregiver to the baby, and to the other caregivers and the other people in the baby's life" (p. 87). Moreover, caregiving is complex, difficult to articulate, and precarious to quantify (Elliott, 2007). It is also crucial to emphasize that the designation of early childhood education does not suffice to inform the central vision of this plan. More fitting, this work identifies with the descriptor of early childhood education *and care* (ECEC), as care is a central to infant pedagogy (Davis & Degotardi, 2015) and the vehicle through which responsive, engaging and inquisitive relationships are nurtured in early years environments (Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017). In aspirations to give voice to unrealized leadership aptitude that lives within those who work with infants care is argued as mutually complementary to, and at parity with, education.

Chapter 1 of this organizational improvement plan thus explores the organization in relation to this facet of practice that requires strengthening. Questions that emerge from the problem, a leadership position and theoretical lens, a vision for change, and change readiness are likewise examined in response to the following problem of practice: *The relatedness of leadership to infant education and care is lacking within course outcomes, content, and experiential elements in an Honours Bachelor of Early Years Leadership degree.*

Organizational Context

This organizational improvement plan is situated in a postsecondary setting that has been in operation since the early 1960's. First established as a polytechnic school, the college was originally branded with a focus on applied arts and technology. Construction, trades and technology were central to initial operations of this higher learning organization. The first student residence opened at the end of the 1990's. During this timeframe the college expanded to include regional campuses, and other sites within Ontario. This postsecondary institution has now grown to deliver more than 200 degree, diploma, certificate, graduate certificate and apprenticeship programs. Under its current president, who commenced his post approximately five years ago, the college is generating its resources to develop centres for transportation technology, aviation, and product validation. Public safety, and digital and performing arts, are also high on the agenda of this organization. A recently designated centre that supports research and innovation has been established to enhance scholarly activity within this postsecondary environment. Over the course of its 50 years in operation, five presidents have led the college that currently has 43, 000 part-time, full-time and online students enrolled. This organization attracts students from over 65 countries, and has over 180,000 alumni employed around the world. The mission of this organization is to provide pathways to success, and exceptional learning experiences with a global outlook to meet student and employer needs. The vision and values promote potential, and focus on students, communities, resources, change and engagement. Current strategic goals incorporate innovation, exceptional learning experiences, enrolment growth, wise use of resources, and creating sustainable sources for alternative revenue.

Although this college has widened its portfolio of program offerings to meet current international market need, continued efforts are made to remain community focused and student centered. Exceptional student learning experiences, community engagement and pathways to employment success, which were primary to the original establishment of the college, are focal in current day. A multimillion dollar centre for construction trades and technology also keeps the initial vision of this postsecondary setting alive. It is important to note that the college's historical mandate to offer diploma and certificate level programs, is now complemented with degree level programs. The early years program associated with this change plan is one such degree delivered by this organization. In reflection of this, faculty members who teach in this program must possess masters or doctoral credentials. This paradigm shift of degree level learning and increased faculty qualifications is valued by some managers and employees, and contested by others.

Broad Cultural, Social, Political and Economic Contexts

As the landscape of the Ontario college system is transforming so is the culture within the organization. A culture of fostering success for both domestic and international students, inclusion of research in the student and faculty experience, quality assurance measures, and a focus on fostering leadership capacity within students are core to teaching and learning. From a social perspective, the college has maintained true to its vision to deliver programs that are community responsive. Although neoliberal tendencies are evidenced in facets of operations, collaboration with domestic and international industry partners is at the fore. This is most apparent in Program Advisory Committee (PAC) contributions to program development and renewal, and in international partnerships that promote study abroad learning. These cultural, social, political and economic organizational contexts are likely to be impacted by the recent

2018 Ontario provincial election which placed the Progressive Conservative party in power. Although free speech on postsecondary campuses and an appointment of a new lead for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) are the only immediate alterations to postsecondary education (Choise, 2018), significant systemic changes under the newly elected government are anticipated.

Trends increasingly associated with postsecondary education such as neoliberalism, globalization, commercialization, entrepreneurialism, and decreased government funding (Brown, 2015) also influence this change plan. Provincial government policy is pressuring the college to create a more cost effective and efficient system, and align operations and delivery of programs with the new economy (OPSEU, 2018). In response to these shifting trends and government pressure, differentiation strategies are at the fore of the college's current strategic mandate agenda (Hayfa, 2015). A movement towards centralized decision-making is also unfolding, however is being challenged by the faculty union as collegial governance is pursued.

Context data: internal and external. Presently, 441 professors hold full-time positions within this institution, which culminates in 30 percent of all teaching positions. The remaining positions are part-time teaching contracts that typically last a duration of 14 weeks. Approximately 50 full-time faculty members are employed in the department that this organizational plan is situated within, all whom are responsible to adhere to institutional policy. Five full-time faculty teach within the program associated with this change plan, with each possessing a diverse area of speciality in psychology, inclusion, occupational therapy, elementary school teaching, or early childhood education and care. One of these five members is the academic coordinator of the program, and another is the field/internship coordinator. The leader guiding this organizational plan is the field/internship coordinator, and a curriculum coach

for the department. Thus, this OIP leader has agency to recommend and navigate changes to program outcomes, curriculum and field experiences to promote connectedness between leadership and infant caregiving.

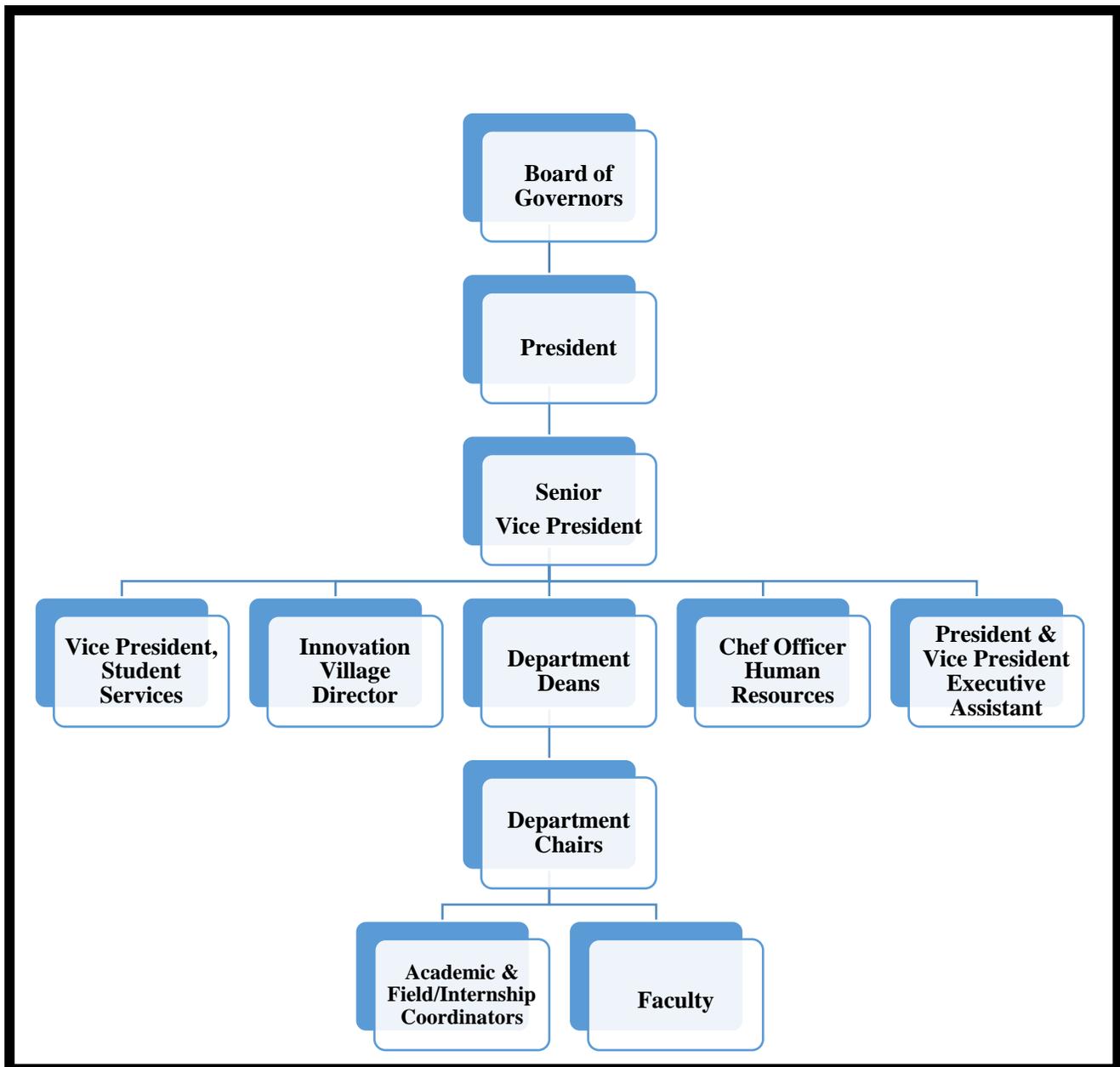
Externally, The Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators (cece) governs early childhood and care professionals, and is therefore pertinent in this plan. In cece's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* (2017), Practice 1V centres on professionalism and leadership, stating that "all registered early childhood educators, regardless of position or title, are leaders" (p. 14). The Child Care and Early Years Act (Ministry of Education, 2014) similarly acts as a governing body in the sector by regulating childcare. Although the Act itself does little to address leadership in the sector, it does advocate for quality early years care via environmental and staffing regulations. The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB), an advisory agency that makes recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development of Ontario, is another external body that informs this degree. In 2017, a formal program review was conducted by PEQAB, and a seven year renewal was granted to the college for continued delivery. In the renewal report the program was commended for the collaboration and caring the faculty team demonstrated in the on-site renewal visit, and for the reciprocal relationships that exist between program faculty and community partners. This requires reflection in this change plan granted that dissonance can lie between caring for others and institutional priorities (Gardiner, 2015).

Organizational Structure and Established Leadership Approach

A board of governors informs operations of the college with the mandate to develop and oversee the implementation of policy, and mission and goal achievement through the President.

Leadership approaches differ across departments however a hierarchal, top down framework is evidenced in most areas of the organization.

Figure 1
Organizational Leadership Structure



Note. Data for this figure was obtained from the organization's OPSEU President. In order to maintain organizational anonymity this name is not identified.

Organizational leaders, for the most part, subscribe to an approach which Sowell (2004) describes as a structural framework that is problem-oriented, where focus is placed on rational division of labour. Absent from this framework is consideration of human needs and existing power that exists within the organization. This is likely due to what Pollanen (2016) rationalizes as a response to competitive and regulatory forces.

The Organization and Arendtian Theory

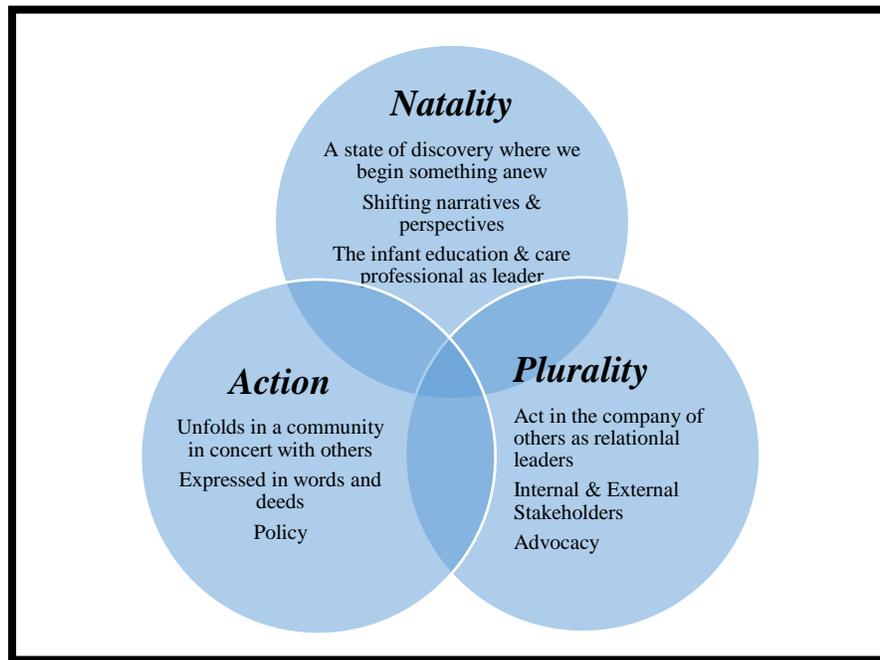
When contemplating an organizational theory to anchor this change plan, the word *theory* itself first demands examination. Traditionally defined as “a statement of relations among concepts with a set of boundary assumptions and constraints” (Bacharach, 1989, p. 496) the word theory suggests that concepts are firmly positioned. Theory in its traditional sense, according to Adams and Buetow (2014) is disconnected from real life, and typically removed from realistic change (Arendt, 1958). These characteristics make the aforementioned definition of theory unsuitable to influence this change plan which is anticipated to explore lived experiences of students, faculty, and those within the community and organization. More fittingly, Bowen-Moore (1989) postulates that Arendtian theory is tentative in nature, does not subscribe to ‘isms’, and does not easily fit into one position. Situating this change plan in Arendtian theory provides “a useful resource for moving beyond the impasse that some scholars attribute to existing research on praxis and organizational change” (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017, p. 507). In reflection of this, Arendt’s (1958, 1986) interwoven theories of natality, plurality, and action, guide the vision to relate leadership with infant caregiving. In Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition* (1958), natality poses the newcomer as owning the capacity to begin something anew, which often is prompted by the question: who are you? Newness and *who-ness*

are foundational to natality, and position one as in a continual state of emergence. Bowen-Moore (1989), a follower of Arendt, surmises that beginnings pervade the human experience and are often difficult. Dimensions of natality are relevant to organizational principles in this change plan as the organization is required to re-consider its stance about the work of the infant caregiving in the context of leadership. New beginnings are necessary, however are anticipated to be difficult given current narrative which undervalues women who work in caring professions (Bacchi, 2009; Findlay, Findlay & Stewart, 2009). Applying natality to the organization means one cannot predict outcomes as the “character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings and origins” (Arendt, 1958, p, 178). It similarly means that unpredictability in organizational processes, as well as within the people who work in the organization, are expected as change unfolds.

Plurality, which calls us to consider the value of a pluralistic society where we work in collaboration with one another (Arendt, 1958), also pertains to organizational dimensions of this plan. In the pursuit to minimize the disconnection between leadership and infant caregiving, collaboration amongst faculty, varying departments, and community partners is essential. Plurality, according to Gardiner and Fulfer (2017), enables diverse voices within the organization to be heard and encourages people to express themselves without worry of disapproval. If the leadership and infant caregiving are to be interlaced in a thoughtful way within the organization, multiple actors require their voices to be heard and reflected upon. Action, rooted in the idea that when one acts they take initiative and set something into motion (Arendt, 1958), likewise applies to the organization in this plan. Arendt is concerned with how action unfolds in community, and how a person acts in concert with others (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017). Through an Arendtian lens,

action furthermore means that we should expect the unexpected and that disclosure of who somebody is, is inherent in words and deeds.

Figure 2
Arendt's Interconnected Theories



Note. Adapted from “The Human Condition”, by H. Arendt, 1958, and “Between Past and Future”, by H. Arendt, 1968.

Leadership Position

In the endeavour to mobilize the change necessitated to relate leadership with infant caregiving, the position of this change plan leader warrants reflection. Thus, my leadership philosophy is grounded in Arendtian (1958, 1968) theory which proposes a view of leader as beginner who acts in the company of others, in a relation of independence with others. Arendt’s (1958) concept of natality, which situates the leader within a space of newness and *who-ness* and prompts the leader to ask themselves “who are you?” (p. 178), is foundational to the way in which I reflect about myself as a leader. Fostering trusting and transparent relationships is

furthermore a core principle of my leadership thinking. Underpinning trust and transparency lies “not only an internal sense of purpose, but also a genuine responsiveness towards others” (Gardiner, 2015, p. 6-7). Care is central to relationships and is evident in my interactions, work, and exchanges with the world. I parallel my convictions of leadership with the Arendtian (1958) supposition that through action and speech each individual reveals her/himself to others. It is through action and speech that leaders position themselves to share rationales for decision making and/or change, which may or may not be understood and embraced by members. Leadership does not necessarily mean that the leader holds the same values and beliefs of others, but rather that the plural values and beliefs of all are heard and explored in a safe environment. Multiplicity of perspectives is thus core to my leadership and change position as when a range of stances are considered empowerment “to look more diversely into the rationality, dynamism, and complexity of the implementation process” (Li, 2016, p. 99) has opportunity to transpire. Moving forward in my pursuit of discovering who I am as a leader in this change plan, I intend to think using Arendt (Gardiner, 2015) to unearth the diverse perspectives of others and the newness and who-ness of my leadership potential.

Leadership Theoretical Lens

In endeavoring to couple competencies of the infant education and care professional with leadership is it critical to first identify the problematic past of ECEC and leadership. Conservative approaches to leadership, which are administrative, hierarchal and often male dominated, have challenged this field because they contradict work rooted in caring (Berger, 2015). Conversely, new leadership possibilities have potential to arise when we open spaces and allow for the unexpected to emerge (Berger, 2015). Recent attention to the early childhood sector creates new spaces for early years preservice students to uncover what leadership looks like in

infant caregivers. As such, Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) is proposed to guide this organizational change plan. Leadership is claimed to be “a relational enterprise founded upon mutual respect and trust” (Gardiner, 2015, p. 8) and is allied with principles such as care, plurality, and shared values. A relational approach grounded in care embodies trust, the ability to candidly express rationales for unpopular decisions, collaboration, consensus-building, shared governance, mutual respect and freedom of expression (Gardiner, 2015). These principles parallel knowledge and skills substantiated in sector advancements which formally articulate the breadth and depth of specialized knowledge and skills that are central to the infant education and care professional. Moreover, relationship-based practice is at the core of early childhood pedagogy and is foundational to the knowledge-base and skill set of professionals who work with the young child (Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2007, 2014), and principal to the work of caregiving (Elliot, 2002).

Arendt and Relational Leadership Theory. Anchoring relational leadership principles in this change plan is Arendtian theory which suggests that leadership is “intrinsically connected to a world of intersubjective relationships” (Gardiner, 2015a, p. 16). Arendt proposes a view of leader as beginner who acts in the company of others, in a relation of interdependence with others (Berger, 2015a). Explored in Arendt’s *The human condition* (1958) and *Between past and future* (1968) natality presents the newcomer as owning the capacity to begin something anew, which often is prompted by the question: who are you?. This question is significant as it provokes the relational leader to consider who they strive to be within the emerging field of early childhood leadership, in relationship with others. Arendt (1958) also incites us to consider the value of a pluralistic society, where we work as collaborative leaders. We are prompted to offer attention to the things that we share in common and “the web of human relationships” (Arendt,

1958, p. 183) that inform our interactions with others. Arendtian theory furthermore urges the relational leader to reflect on their actions, and how they reveal themselves through words and deeds. Drawing on Arendt's interrelated theories of natality, plurality and action has potential to strengthen the relatedness of leadership to infant education and care within this postsecondary degree program.

Framing the Leadership Problem of Practice

The early childhood profession has historically struggled to legitimize the knowledge and skills required by those who specialize to work with the young child. Challenges faced in this legitimization include societal perspectives of the early childhood educator as babysitter, low levels of respect and professional recognition (Elliot, 2002; Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017), poor working conditions (Davis & Degotardi, 2015; Friendly & Prentice, 2009), and high turnover rates (Chu, 2016; OECD, 2013). Immersed in a profession rooted in care, professionals who work with the young child have been traditionally viewed as custodial caregivers who simply watch over when parents are not present (Rockel, 2009). Gender inequity has intensified these challenges as throughout history this profession has been predominantly occupied by women, and women whose work is situated in care has conventionally been undervalued and underpaid (Kane, 2008; Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017). These barriers are now being challenged, however continue to permeate the early childhood occupation and are most visible within education and care practitioners who work with infants (Chu, 2016; McDowell Clark & Baylis, 2012).

Compounding this is the lack of concrete connectedness that exists between leadership and infant caregiving within literature. Although a body of literature exploring early childhood education and care in the context of leadership is emerging, research specifically correlating the

work of the infant specialist with leadership is sparse. Deepening this gap, are findings which suggest that early childhood teachers struggle to perceive themselves as leaders (Campbell-Evans, Stamopoulos & Maloney, 2014). Within guiding early years pedagogical documents an underlying message that leadership is absent or lacking within the workforce, and that infant specialization and leadership are not interconnected, exists. Although the National Association for the Education of Young Children/NAEYC (2009), Infant Mental Health Promotion/IMHP (2011) and Zero to Three (2016) pedagogical and policy documents advocate for recognition and enhanced working conditions for those who work with infants, direct usage of the words *leadership* and *leader* present infrequently and are utilized to depict a profession that is inadequate in both. NAEYC (2009) proposes that “a more diverse leadership for the profession as a whole” (p. 5) is needed.

Emerging Literature

In contemporary literature, Moss (2017) invites early years professionals to disrupt outdated discourse, and generate forward thinking narratives about the early years field which are “varied, vibrant and vocal” (p.12). Narrative surrounding the work of early childhood professionals is gradually shifting due to an increased understanding of child development and pedagogical practice, professionalization of the field, research, policy and advocacy efforts (Haslip & Gullo, 2018). The absence of leadership acknowledgement visible in the past is gradually being disrupted by research that claims leadership is evidenced in reforms that are building capacity in the profession (Campbell-Evans, Stamopoulos & Maloney, 2014) in pedagogical leaders who practice using a distributed model (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011), and in authentic leaders who work in the early years sector (LaRocco & Bruns, 2013). Heikka and Waniganayake suggest that a distributed model has potential to generate ECEC leadership capacity as it fosters a

participatory and collaborative approach. Although these elements align with this plan, the case management focus that is attached to this approach differs sharply. Similarly, LaRocco and Brun's authentic approach is fitting as it parallels the vision of this change leader to reach shared goals, and engage in ongoing learning. Although relational in nature this model does not however align with this plan as it focuses on nurturing behaviours with the goal of having others mimic, as opposed to embracing the natality and plurality of others that is later discussed in this plan.

Specific to the zero to two population, the early childhood professional's role in addressing the needs of infants and their families is on the agenda internationally (Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Manning-Morton, 2006; Rockel, 2009). A budding body of research that highlights the connectedness between care in infancy and brain development, health, and well-being (McCain, Mustard & Shanker, 2007) is reinforcing efforts in the sector to revision what it means to be an early childhood professional. Outdated perspectives which have suppressed professions rooted in care are being countered by current ideologies and theories which include an ethics of care (Smit & Scherman, 2016), professional care (Davis & Degotardi, 2015), care as political practice (Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017) and a pedagogy of care (Rockel, 2009). Elliot (2002) reasons that engaging in dialogue about the complexities of infant/toddler caregiving can act as a catalyst to raise consciousness about challenges faced in the profession. In this dialogue, the premise that "[g]ood infant care is neither baby-sitting, nor preschool, it is a special kind of care that resembles no other" (Zero to Three, 2016, p.3) is being taken up by scholars and early years professionals.

Policy implications. Historically deficient, policy specific to the early childhood education and care profession, is beginning to play a more prevalent role in the sector (Moss, 2007). Within

policy nevertheless, a gap exists between leadership and the specialized expertise typical to the infant education and care professional. This is contradictory given that policy links a plethora of competencies to the work of an infant caregiver, and situates professionals who work with infants as significant contributors to longitudinal outcomes of young children. Current policy development raises “new questions about the possibility and responsibility of early childhood educators to enact leadership by taking a stance and becoming active participants in change” (Berger, 2015, p. 131-132). In the emergence of these new questions and possibilities, the leadership approach that best complements the work of infant caregiving warrants consideration. Attention to Canadian childcare advocates who have “challenged the displacement of care in ECEC and pushed for care’s inclusion in policy deliberation” (Langford et al., 2017, p. 320) likewise merits reflection by postsecondary organizations that prepare future early childhood education and care leaders to work with infants.

Broad political, economic, and social influences. Politics informs growth in the early years field in Canada, and thus resonates as relevant in this organizational improvement plan. Federal funding programs support families to access formalized childcare which is decreasing unregulated babysitter care, and increasing regulated care. In 2006 the government opened 200,000 new childcare spaces (Service Canada, 2016) across Canada. Between 2006 and 2014, new regulated spaces have increased at 3.7% per year (Service Canada, 2016). A universally accessible system of childcare in Canada for families is on the federal government agenda, with the goal of growing the number of funded spaces in regulated care. These political initiatives influence this change plan as increased accessibility to childcare for Ontario families is creating a need for more qualified early childhood leaders.

Neoliberalism and the knowledge economy, as well, influence the quest to unite leadership with infant caregiving. A neoliberal approach, according to Brown (2015), penalizes those who engage in care work, and intensifies gender subordination. This demands pause as women obtain more education than men and are disproportionately responsible for care work of all kinds, yet they earn less than 80 percent of their male counterparts (Brown, 2015). The infant caregiving profession, which is primarily occupied by women, is likely to remain in a state of being undervalued and insufficiently compensated if neoliberal ideology continues to infiltrate early education and care policy. Discourse lies within this as infant specialists are deemed responsible for developmental outcomes of the child, yet are not viewed as knowledgeable professionals or leaders who are worthy of compensation and respect. Linking the infant to fiscal consolidation, economic prosperity, service and knowledge economies, public investment (OECD, 2013), economic effects that impact community and society, and a return on investment (Canadian Public Health Association, 2016) postures infant education and care professionals as accountable for future global economic prosperity. This is problematic given the lack of respect and recognition that has traditionally accompanied the work of those who work with children in their formative years. Exacerbating this is the knowledge economy which pressures students to invest in degree level education. Tension exists in this as postsecondary students who intend to work with infants following graduation earn less than half of the salary of an elementary teacher (Friendly & Prentice, 2009). What is to be questioned in these neoliberal and knowledge economy discourses is how better working conditions and professional status can be secured to reflect the recommendation that degree, as opposed to diploma credentials, is requisite for those who work with infants.

Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice

Two significant lines of inquiry arise in this change plan. The first is that early childhood professionals grapple to perceive themselves as leaders (Campbell-Evans, Stamopoulos & Maloney, 2014; Woodrow & Busch, 2008). This necessitates reflection as postsecondary students are mentored in their zero to two field/internship placements by professionals who may not realize their own leadership potential. Given that the overarching goal of field practicum is for student protégés to observe seasoned educators and develop their own teaching style and beliefs about who they are as an emerging early childhood practitioner (Johnson, La Parro & Crosby, 2016), mentors who do not regard themselves as leaders may impact the ability of protégés to view themselves as leaders. This brings to the forefront Hobbs and Stovall's (2015) claim that early childhood professionals often feel unprepared to act in the role of mentor, and are in need of formalized mentor training. If field placement mentors are not trained and committed to nurture leadership within preservice professionals, the goal of this change plan to foster relatedness between leadership and infant caregiving is likely to be compromised.

A second obstacle that stems from the endeavour to couple leadership and infant caregiving is the conflictual past of leadership and the early years field. Primary to this is the lack of attention that has been offered to theorizing and researching early childhood leadership (Woodrow & Busch, 2008). Traditional views of leadership, which do not align with the collaborative and relational approach typical to this profession, have also impeded advancements because they have ignored the gendered and caring characteristics of the field (Berger, 2015a). This troubled past is entrenched in historical roots that extend far beyond the change capacity of this organizational plan. Nonetheless, it highlights the need for postsecondary programs to

provoke preservice professionals to interrupt conventional narratives about infant caregiving and leadership, and examine potential leadership theories and approaches that align with the field.

A Phenomenon that Influences the Problem of Practice

The most prominent phenomenon that impacts this problem of practice is an education/care binary. Care is particularly relevant to professional identities of those who work with infants, however is undervalued as a skill within discourses of professional practice (Davis & Degotardi, 2015; Elliott, 2007), and perceived as a pre-requisite to education (Langford et al., 2017). This is evidenced in the Canadian childcare sector where early years professionals are “extremely devalued, marginalized, and absent in a political sphere, whereby care is conceptualized as counter-to rather than central-to a functioning democracy” (Langford et al., 2017, p. 318). Reconceptualization of traditional societal and systemic beliefs surrounding care and education is paramount in this change plan, but is apt to be met with resistance by some stakeholders. Navigating this resistance with Arendtian theory, which prompts thinking “anew what has been frozen into thought” (Bowen-Moore, 1989, p. 70), holds potential to reconstruct the education/care binary that is critical to unifying leadership with infant caregiving.

Challenges that emerge from the main problem. Two fundamental challenges surface from the main problem. First, tension lies between the program and some stakeholders who have expressed that degree level learning is not required for those who work with children in their formative years. An emerging body of literature linking longitudinal developmental outcomes to early caregiving experiences (Denburg & Daneman, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2014; Shonkoff, 2010; Shonkoff & Levitt, 2010) challenges this ideology. Current research indicates that infant caregiving is complex, multifaceted and challenging (Jung, 2013; Moss, Boddy &

Cameron, 2006; Recchia, Lee & Shin, 2015) and worthy of degree level learning (NAEYC, 2009; Norris, 2010). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009) further counters this stance by calling for postsecondary institutions to enrich early years teacher education by grounding preservice learning in research, with a specific focus on the birth to age three. The four year early years-based degree attached to this change plan, which is a research intensive program, is arguably a means to more comprehensively prepare future infant caregivers to engage as leaders. This shift in proposed credentials nonetheless poses a challenge as it is not a philosophy espoused by all stakeholders.

A second challenge in this change plan is the juxtaposed leadership philosophies of the organization and change leader(s). As previously imparted, organizational leadership within the change plan setting is predominantly hierarchal in nature. Paralleling Austin and Jones's (2016) perspective of hierarchal governance, leadership within the organization is grounded in vertical relationships, centralized decision-making, and governance that is concentrated in the hands of those who are delegated with the power to manage. This contrasts the posture of this plan where leadership is purported to be "intrinsically connected to a world of intersubjective relationships" (Gardiner, 2015a, p. 16). Kezar's (2014) assertion that change agents are often ineffective when their position is disparate from the organizations thus demands monitoring in change plan processes.

Potential OIP perceptions and responses. In view of Arendtian (1958) theory, which reasons we should expect the unexpected, the change leader anticipates diverse stakeholder perceptions and responses. Berger (2015), an Arendtian scholar, postulates that when we situate our thinking in events that disrupt our understanding we face not knowing, and are driven to find meaning. This philosophy guides this change plan leader who is cognizant that in the quest to

relate leadership with infant caregiving, disruptions in understanding are likely to occur for both herself and stakeholders. A caring and relational approach generates an atmosphere of openness where leaders can be both candid and responsive to contentions of others (Gardiner, 2015), which is key in monitoring and being receptive to the plural perceptions and responses of stakeholders. Should this change plan be ineffective at minimizing the gap between leadership and infant caregiving, it will nevertheless contribute to Berger's (2015) provocation to construct novel questions about the accountability and potential of ECEC's to actively engage as leaders by establishing a position and becoming advocates in change processes.

Leadership Focused Vision for Change

Informal Program Advisory Committee and community field partner reports denote that preservice professionals would benefit from more frequent and intentional academic and field learning experiences that bring leadership and infant care together. Although strengthening the early years sector is the foundational goal of this degree, course outcomes do not explicitly connect the two domains of leadership and infant caregiving. This gap results in academic experiences that minimally encourage students to explore the infant caregiver as leader. It likewise leads to field experiences where students are paired with mentors who do not situate themselves in the context of leadership and/or do not subscribe to the philosophy that a four year leadership degree is necessary for infant caregivers. Re-envisioning the current organizational state includes distinct connectedness between leadership and infant caregiving in academic elements of the program, and an increase in partnerships with infant-based organizations who concur that degree level credentials and leadership competencies are warranted for professions who work with the zero to two population.

Present and Envisioned Social State

Although respect and professional recognition is emerging, low pay and a lack of acknowledgement of the specialized skills core to this profession continue to permeate the field (Friendly & Prentice, 2009; Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017). Care remains largely undervalued in early years Canadian politics and practice (Langford et al., 2017; Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017), and human capital discourse pervades early years policies and dominates discourse within the discipline (Langford et al., 2017; Moss, 2017). Despite these less than ideal circumstances, a burgeoning body of research correlates early caregiving experiences to longitudinal outcomes of the child (Shonkoff, 2010; Shonkoff & Levitt, 2010). Consequently, reconceptualization movements in the sector are gaining momentum (Elfer & Dearnley, 2007; Jung, 2015; Manning-Morton, 2006; Rockel, 2009) and efforts are being made to modernize the social state of infant caregivers, who possess a lower status than those who teach older children (Jung, 2013; McDowall Clark & Baylis, 2012). Care is gaining attention, and discourses which embrace the notion that “the work of relationship and caring deserves a closer look and further articulation” (Elliott, 2002, p. 300) are infiltrating research and literature. The envisioned social state hence embodies Elliott’s (2007) term *professional caregiving*, and acknowledges that infant caregivers possess leadership capabilities.

Change priorities. First and foremost, infants are focal to change priorities. Although infant education and care professionals are central in this organizational plan, longitudinal development and wellbeing of infants is principal. In efforts to counter the often overlooked rights of infants (WAIMH, 2016), the change plan leader is committed to advocating for the voice of this sometimes marginalized population. The idea that very young children given the time and space “demonstrate not only that they have views, experiences and perspectives to express, but that

their expression can contribute positively to decisions that affect the realisation of their rights and wellbeing” (Lansdown, 2011, p. 7) requires leader, organization, and stakeholder attention as the change priorities identified below evolve.

The first organizational change priority is analysis of course outcomes and content to determine how leadership and infant caregiving can be concretely allied in academic and field experiences. Learning opportunities that prompt preservice professionals to scrutinize the education/care binary evidenced in policies and pedagogical documents is paramount. Quality measures, which include mapping of course learning outcomes (CVLO’s) to program vocational learning outcomes (PVLO’s), and also adherence to Postsecondary Education and Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) program renewal recommendations, are first and foremost. Securing partnerships with community organizations that possess the capacity to nurture both leadership and caregiving competencies in preservice professionals is likewise prominent in change priorities. Core to change for student and community stakeholders is elevating infant caregiver status. Thorpe, Ailwood, Brownlee and Boyd (2011) posit that postsecondary students are interested in working with younger children, but are reluctant to do so due to poor working conditions. Exacerbating this are findings which indicate that infant education and care professionals have higher employment turn-over rates than those who work with older children (Chu, 2016; Rockel, 2009). In mobilizing change, consideration of how the organization and stakeholders can contribute to increasing retention by pairing leadership with infant caregiving is of precedence.

Construction of the envisioned state. Specific to the organization, the envisioned state is dependent on review of course outcomes and content, and generation of academic and experiential learning opportunities that foster relatedness of leadership to infant caregiving.

Appraisal of field manuals, utilized by students in their infant field experience(s), is also required. Conducting an environmental scan of infant-based organizations who are positioned to mentor preservice infant education and care leaders is necessary. Particular to the broader community, curriculum and field recommendations offered by program advisory members can contribute to processes that cultivate the coupling of leadership and infant caregiving. Field placement mentor feedback is essential, as is mentor training that focuses on correlations between leadership and the work of zero to two professionals. Collaboration with the newly founded Ontario Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care (2018) is additionally ideal. A partnership between this change plan organization and the centre is established with the intent to build leadership through pedagogists who mentor students in their field placements. Should mentorship prove to be robust, potential exists for preservice infant caregivers to have opportunities to reflect on how they can actively partake in bridging leadership with infant caregiving.

Internal and external change plan drivers. Informal feedback from postsecondary students is relevant to this organizational plan. In a 2017 Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) program review faculty noted that students did not express interest in specializing to work with the infant population, but rather seek further study or employment with a focus on school-aged children. Moreover, students disclosed that leadership competencies are needed for those who anticipate working with children over two years of age, but not by those who aspire to work with children between zero and two years of age. Community partners, who act as field placement hosts and Program Advisory Committee (PAC) members for the program, additionally act as compelling informants in this change plan. In a 2018 PAC meeting, community partners voiced concerns about the lack of ability of preservice professionals to

envision themselves as leaders working alongside the zero to two population. PEQAB and PAC feedback therefore act as driving forces in this change plan.

Given the unprecedented attention that the early education and care sector is currently receiving, robust external data is also readily available to inform this change plan. Most pertinent are the initiatives facilitated by the College of Early Childhood Educators (cece), which as of 2007 governs the Ontario early childhood sector and oversees regulation. As an element of regulatory status, cece is being deliberate in efforts to promote leadership research and training (College of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, 2018). This theme is paralleled in The Early Childhood Education Report 2017 (Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, 2017). This report identifies challenges in the early years field, namely workforce instability, and reiterates leadership as a viable means to combat this challenge. The newly established Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care (2018), led jointly by the Faculty of Education at Western University and the Ontario Reggio Association, comparably distinguishes the criticality of building leadership capacity in the early years sector. A central vision of this centre, which is in its foundational stages of development, is to prepare pedagogical facilitators to engage as leaders, mentors and coaches with early years professionals in communities throughout Ontario (The Ontario Reggio Association & The Faculty of Education, Western Ontario, 2018). These sources of internal and external data highlight the need for postsecondary programs to prepare preservice professionals, including those who aim to work with infants, to engage as leaders in the sector.

Organizational Change Readiness

Although change management experts highlight the importance of determining change readiness, scholarly evidence and validated tools to guide this process are limited (Rafferty,

Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013; Weiner, 2009; Weiner, Amick & Lee, 2008). Subsequently Arendtian (1958, 1968) theory, which is a useful resource for navigating organizational change (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017), is referenced to explore change readiness in this organizational improvement plan. In reflecting on this, the Arendtian supposition that we cannot know the truth of another's intentions merits contemplation. Rather than predicting the readiness of others to change, readiness in this plan is revealed in stakeholders' openness to entangle themselves in a web of human relations (Arendt, 1958). Readiness is additionally indicated in the willingness of Program Advisory Committee members, community organizations, students and faculty to ponder the newness and who-ness (Arendt, 1958) of the leadership potential that exists within infant caregivers. Commitment to pairing leadership with infant caregiving using a plural approach is similarly a marker of readiness. Situating change in a plural approach promotes respect for diverse voices, and promotes trust (Gardiner, 2016). This is significant granted that change scholars identify trust as a qualifier of change readiness (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016; Judge & Douglas, 2009). Trust is also likely to influence inclinations of stakeholders to act in concert with one another in the context of community, which is fundamental to Arendt's basis of action (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017). Given that the work of infant caregivers is guided by policy and pedagogical documents that are anchored in relationships, trust, and diversity, readiness to engage relationally and foster trust is a familiar to the practice of stakeholders. Accordingly, review of policy and pedagogical documents that validate care and promote the linkages between leadership and infant caregiving is key to further bolstering stakeholder change readiness.

Competing Internal and External Change Forces

As postsecondary education becomes increasingly entrenched in neoliberal tendencies (Brown, 2015; Olssen & Peters, 2005) so do the competing forces of increasing tuition and

decreased student funding in Ontario that impact this change plan. Although the province has the highest and fastest growing tuition rates in Canada, federal government transfer payments to postsecondary institutions have declined by 50 percent since the 1990's (Pollanen, 2016) This is compounded by degree credentials that are proposed as requisite for early childhood professionals (NAEYC, 2009; Norris, 2010). Tension exists between the increased expectation of education and the low wages of graduates who work with infants. In Canada, the benchmark for ECEC salaries is two-thirds of those earned by kindergarten teachers. Ontario does not meet this mark leaving preservice infant caregivers caught between the high investment of obtaining a degree, and the reality of earning less than half of the national salary typical to the early childhood profession (Atkinson Centre, 2017) upon graduation.

A second change force that influences this plan is competing agendas of the college and the early years sector. Despite “compelling evidence that validates the robust interactions among genes, early experiences, and environmental influences that shape the architecture and function of the brain” (Shankoff & Levitt, 2010, p. 689), postsecondary institutions are not taking a lead role in ensuring that preservice professionals are educated to work with infants. The college's focus on aviation, product technology, public safety and digital arts and technology leaves infant caregiving largely unaddressed. Silenced are infant caregivers, who are ironically named in a host of policies as critical to the future economic livelihood of our globe (CPHA, 2016; OECD, 2013). Intensifying this is the mandate of Ontario colleges to create more opportunities for women to work in industries that have been traditionally male dominated (Ontario colleges, 2018.). These visions, although plausibly an attempt to combat gender boundaries and foster equality, deepen existing challenges in the ECEC profession. As more women enroll in postsecondary education to gain credentials to work outside of the home, an increased number of

qualified infant caregivers is needed. This tension necessitates Canadian postsecondary institutions to examine how they can play a role in contributing to a workforce that comprehensively prepares infant education and caregiving leaders.

Change readiness of stakeholders. The premise that “there is a need to develop and investigate alternative frameworks for ECE leadership, frameworks that expand not only the notion of leadership, but also the identities of the early childhood profession” (Berger, 2015, p. 133) is focal to the program associated with this change plan. Unfortunately, this is not a widely accepted idea in all Ontario early years communities. Change readiness is thus inconsistently apparent in the aim to unite leadership with infant caregiving. Informal reports indicate that faculty and PAC members are positioned to participate in enacting change. Research and policy recommendations that warrant degree credentials, strengthening of leadership in the sector, and valuing care as a professional skill, are generally accepted by faculty and PAC partners. The conception of The Ontario Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care (2018) similarly points to change readiness. Above all, should policy and research represent the voice of infants, eagerness for change is discernable. The lack of understanding of care (Elliott, 2007; Langford et al., 2017; Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017; Rockel, 2009) and early childhood leadership (Berger, 2015a; Stamopoulos, 2012) draw attention to disparities that unfavorably impact developmental trajectories of infants. Strengthening these facets could ultimately contribute to the quality of infant care experiences, thus posturing infants as change ready. Conversely, change readiness is varied in community partners who host students in their field placements. Initiatives that advocate for degree credentials are sometimes refuted by professionals who possess a two year early childhood education and care diploma. A lack of insight about infant caregiving, which is multidimensional and complex (Elliott, 2007; Jung,

2013), intensifies this challenge. Along with this, the undervaluing of caregiving professions (Langford et al., 2017; Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017; Rockel, 2009) impedes readiness for some stakeholders. As long as society forsakes care in favour of education, readiness to situate infant care in a leadership paradigm may not be fully realized.

Strategies to navigate stakeholder resistance. Kezar (2014) contends that rather than circumventing resistance, change agents should embrace it through ongoing dialogue. The relational stance of this change plan, which theorizes that acting and speaking together generates action (Arendt, 1958), is expected to promote reflective discussion as this change plan develops. Furthermore offering attention to power, which is elemental to every organizational framework (Manning, 2017), merits attention in this change plan. Contrary to other organizational paradigms, Arendt's (1970) theory of power is unique in that it characterizes power as existing when we act in concert with one another. In Arendt's *On violence* (1970), power is purported to remain in existence only as long as a group keeps together, and vanishes when the group is no longer cohesive. Power is not perceived by Arendt as negative, but rather as an opportunity for reaching goals and enterprises. This distinct designation of collaborative power is a strategy that is intended to be accessed to minimize stakeholder resistance. Also worthy of forethought is Stamopoulos's (2012) claim that resistance emerges when reforms lack an interpretive lens and are asymmetric with the critical needs of professionals. It is crucial for change plan leader(s) to remain mindful of the needs of infants, students, PAC members, and field placement mentors. It is equally vital that the significance of care, and the entanglement of human relations (Arendt, 1958) that inform the relational approach of this plan, are communicated in a way that demonstrates acceptance of the diverse perspectives of others. Stakeholder resistance may also be buffered by:

1. Sharing mapping of course and program learning outcomes with stakeholders.
2. Seeking ongoing input/feedback from internal and external stakeholders.
3. Initiating the change plan with community partners who are affiliated with the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care.
4. Utilizing language in a way that intentionally advocates for care/caregiving.
5. Developing academic and field experiences that prepare postsecondary students to articulate and advocate for infant education and caregiving leadership.
6. Using the monitoring and evaluation tool later explored in Chapter 3.

In navigating resistance, Berger's (2015) reminder that "leadership, is about making visible the unpredictability, creativity and messiness of the lived experience" (p. 139) is germane. Resistance to the proposition that leadership and infant caregiving intersect is probable to arise as change emerges. In these instances, the action required to gulf present and envisioned organizational states can be reinforced by drawing on Arendtian theory.

Reflections

The early childhood education and care sector is presently in a state of revisioning. Outdated narrative, saturated with a lack of regard for infant caregiving, is being renewed as research and policy attests to the complex knowledge and competencies required by those who work with the zero to two population. In this revisioning, the relatedness of leadership to infant education and care merits examination. The postsecondary program affixed to this change plan has potential to contribute to this by inviting preservice professionals to explore how leadership and infant caregiving intersect. As such, this organizational improvement plan seeks to tangibly relate leadership with infant education and care, employing relational leadership theory interwoven with Arendtian (1958, 1968) praxis to mobilize change. Foundational to all organizational improvement plan facets is the web of relationships that informs our interactions with others and the interconnected theories of natality, plurality and action (Arendt, 1958, 1968).

In the quest to accomplish the above, further planning and development is required. Chapter 2 consequently proposes a leadership framework, giving consideration to the multiple perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Li, 2016; Manning, 2017), that are applicable to guiding change processes. Relational leadership is further unpacked in regards to contexts and processes of leading change. Potential solutions to address the lack of alignment between leadership and infant caregiving in academic and experiential learning, with respect to organizational contexts, are examined. An ethics of care, relative to the organization and stakeholders, is likewise appraised with intent to strengthen the problem of practice explored in this organizational change plan.

CHAPTER 2: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In Chapter 1 of this plan, a problem of practice within an Ontario postsecondary degree program was introduced and examined in relation to organizational contexts and change readiness. Leadership was also explored and declared as twofold given it implicates both the quest to minimize the disconnection between leadership and infant education and care in academic and experiential curriculum in an early years degree program, *and* the leadership approach required to move this organizational plan forward. In Chapter 2, these concepts are further probed with respect to the leadership framework necessitated to generate change. Critical analyses of the organization, and possible solutions to address the disconnection between leadership and infant caregiving are proposed. Lastly, an ethics of care is rationalized as a viable framework to navigate ethical responsibilities and challenges that have potential to arise in the quest to relate leadership with infant caregiving.

Relationships as a Leadership Approach to Change

In reflecting on the leader(s) approach to change the obvious tenet of relationships, central to relational leadership theory, emerges. Gardiner (2015) contends that relationships and mutual responsiveness are core to our existence and are therefore integral to leadership. Kezar (2014) extends this concept by proclaiming that relationships in a system are core to change. Building on this argument is the notion that change is more fruitful when it includes stakeholders who are open minded advocates (Buller, 2015). In the pursuit to minimize the disconnection between leadership and infant caregiving concerted efforts amongst faculty, varying departments, and community partners as key stakeholders, is essential. In reflection of this, nurturing collaborative relationships with stakeholders who possess open minds and are willing to advocate is focal. Influencing this is the non-hierarchical stance of this plan, which is anticipated to enable all stakeholders to participate in the advocacy required to take steps forward in altering the decoupling that exists between leadership and infant caregiving. In these concerted advocacy efforts, is critical for change leader(s) to remain mindful of the diverse values and priorities of stakeholders and the complementary and competing values and goals of internal and external change plan influencers, which Yuki and Mahoud (2010) associate with organizational change success. These include organizational values and strategic goals, which in this change plan organization incorporates meeting the needs of students, promoting potential and fostering engagement. They also encompass early years sector agendas that give credit to the ideology that degree level learning is necessary for infant caregivers, and acknowledge the expertise that infant education and care professionals bring to their work. In these advocacy encounters, which are deeply relational in nature, keeping with Arendt's (1958) view that "everybody sees and hears from different positions" (p. 57) is critical granted that heterogeneous perspectives are main to

this change initiative. It is through the fostering of diverse stakeholder viewpoints that trust and care are projected to be cultivated.

Trust and Care as Impetuses of Change

Mainstay to the relational approach of this change plan is trust and care. In efforts to propel change onward, reciprocal trust amongst the change leader(s), organization, and stakeholders is essential. Correlated with job performance and satisfaction (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002), trust is widely studied and yet highly controversial in leadership academia. This is largely due to diverse definitions and philosophies of trust, situated in both cognitive and behavioural theories, which lack clarity and consistency. Trust in this change plan adheres to the premise that when a leader cultivates a trusting environment that shared governance and reciprocal respect are enabled through meaningful conversation (Gardiner, 2015). It likewise parallels the notion of a collective approach, which is foundational to relational leadership. Consequently, trust in this change plan is not situated in a fixed definition but rather in the work of Enid Elliott (2007), an infant education and care scholar. Elliott parallels trust with responsiveness, confidence, safety, security and hope, however cautions that trust can be easily and inexplicably disrupted. She furthermore argues that trust unfolds in caring relationships, both with the self and with others. Gardiner (2015) adds to this line of inquiry by suggesting that relationships, care, and trust are inherently tied to leadership. Leaning on Arendtian theory Gardiner surmises that “caring means allowing others to express themselves freely” (p. 155). In establishing the trust required to initiate change, care will be demonstrated by the leader(s) encouragement of stakeholders to openly express their philosophical orientation about the relatedness of leadership and infant caregiving in degree level learning. Also central to the significance of care, in response to inciting change, is the principle of ethics which Ciulla (2009) ascribes to caring leadership. It

furthermore entails attention, solicitude, and active engagement with others, and holds the leader responsible to their duties. In view of the vulnerability commonly associated with infancy, which is more comprehensively elucidated later in this chapter, care is foundational to the leadership posture of this plan. In favour of this is the already existing alignment that is evidenced between relationships, trust, and care, and the early years pedagogical document that guides learning of the postsecondary students affected by this plan. How does learning happen?: Ontario's pedagogy for the early years (Ministry of Education, 2014), ascertains that trusting and caring relationships are critical to the developing child and the practice of professionals who work with children in their formative years. In view of this, early childhood education and care professionals, and preservice professionals studying to work in the field, are well acquainted with the dimensions of trust and care. These familiar principles of practice are probable to foster what scholars identify as the propensity to trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Rotter, 1967), which is predicted to favourably influence change.

Shifting leadership principles and practices to achieve a new state. As discussed in Chapter 1, Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) is common to the practice of organizational change leader(s), which includes the faculty team attached to this plan. The congruency already established between the RLT approach of faculty members, and the leadership vision of this plan, is forecast to contribute to movement towards the preferred organizational state. Absent however, are formalized opportunities for students to envision how infant caregiving could be a facet of their leadership philosophy. Granted that the capacity to reflect on and articulate one's own leadership philosophy is linked to enactment of leadership (Jordan & Gabriel, 2009), exploration of student leadership philosophies in the context of infant caregiving is integral to rousing change. Looking to Arendt's (1958, 1968) theory of natality, which prompts the

unearthing of newness and who-ness, can act as a catalyst for preservice early years degree students to revision how infant caregiving could potentially be integrated into their leadership philosophy.

More specific to the organization, leadership approaches vary but are predominantly hierarchal in nature. As outlined in Chapter 1, a structural framework that is problem-oriented and focused on rational division of labour (Sowell, 2004) guides formal organizational leaders. Leadership in the organization is impacted by government scrutiny, which Lasher and Greene (2001) claim is reflective of challenging economic times. New Public Management (NPM) practices, and private-sector management techniques which are utilized to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public services (Pollanen, 2016), additionally shape organizational leadership within this OIP postsecondary setting. This could prove to be problematic granted that this leadership positionality differs from the relational approach main to plan leader(s). Using a multiperspectival approach, which Li (2016) theorizes entails “mobilizing a wide array of interdisciplinary inquires to look at societal reality more comprehensively and complementarily” (p. 100), is expected to buffer this incongruity as like Arendtian theory (1958) it takes into consideration manifold perspectives.

A Relational Framework for Leading the Change Process

Relational Leadership Theory (RLT), interwoven with Arendtian praxis, is rationalized as an advantageous approach to propel change forward. Foundational to this are the complex social processes that shape leadership (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, Marion, Seers, Orton & Schreiber, 2006; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001), and the premise that change is most effective when it does not align itself with rigid and linear planning (Baldrige & Deal, 1983; Mintzberg, 1994). This reasons that a non-malleable fixed tactic is not likely to advance the change necessitated to relate

leadership and infant caregiving. Hence, the emergent stance of relational leadership (Seers & Chopin, 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2012) guided by Arendt's (1958, 1968) theory of natality, which positions one in a continual state of emergence and discovery, is central to the leader(s) change approach.

Driven by the question *who are you?*, the leader(s) seeks to unearth the newness and who-ness (Arendt, 1958) of the preservice infant education and care leader, within the context of a profession that is currently in a state of re-imagining. Revisioning alternate futures for early childhood education and care (Moss, 2007, 2017), discourses of care (Davis & Degotardi, 2015; Langford et al., 2017) and early childhood leadership (Stamopoulos, 2012) are currently ensuing in the field, however require time to advance. In considering this, Kezar's (2014) invitation to shift our thinking about leadership from a change lens, to a process of becoming, is pertinent. Otherwise coined process ontology (Packendorff, Crevani & Lindgren, 2014) becoming is not an event, but an ongoing process where the organization is in a perpetual state of draft (Buller, 2015). Becoming is rooted in human action that is interactional and social in nature (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Packendorff et al., 2014). Complementary is Uhl-Bien's (2006) claim that "a relational orientation starts with processes, and not persons, and views persons, leadership and other relational realities as *made* in processes" (p. 655). This concept of process directly applies to the change required to harmonize leadership with infant caregiving as enactment of organizational plan solutions is not anticipated to be an episodic event that ends in a fixed outcome or solution. Instead, uncovering the newness and who-ness (Arendt, 1958) of infant caregiving in the context of leadership is foreseen to be a continuous and incremental process. The purpose of this plan is thus to initiate change that is in a state of indefinite momentum. Solutions specific to this change, which are later detailed in Chapter 2, are anticipated to unfold

over time in response to both the adapting climate of the organization, and the evolving field of early childhood education and care. Looking to Arendt's (1958, 1968) theory of natality, which deems one in a perpetual state of becoming, is therefore core to leading change processes.

Supplemental to the emergent posture of this leaders approach to change is a community oriented focus. Common to both infant education and care, and organizational leadership, are communities. Principal to the competencies associated with the work of the infant caregiver which are studied, practiced and reflected upon by preservice professionals in the degree affiliated with this change plan, is the capacity to support the child within their family and community. (Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2014).

Embedded in three of the thirteen Program Vocational Learning Outcomes (PVLO's) of this early years degree is the premise of community. Community and family support systems, establishment of responsive, collaborative and professional relationships with community partners, and collaboration with community professionals within diverse fields of practice, are expected degree graduate competencies. Much like this plan, fundamental to Arendt's work is the relations that exist between individuals and human communities (Tamboukou, 2016).

Bowen-Moore (1989) explores this when she surmises that Arendt's theory of natality "is the pre-condition for all communal relationships" (p. 18). She continues by asserting that when we pose the question *who are you?* that possibilities for new beginnings within communities arise. As future infant caregivers explore their identity as emerging leaders in preservice learning, the identities of early childhood education and care communities are also anticipated to be nurtured and ultimately altered. Community context is thus pivotal in leading change processes.

Critical Organizational Analysis

As signified in Chapter 1, change readiness is variant amongst stakeholders in this change plan. Common to Program Advisory Committee (PAC) and informal program renewal feedback is the reluctance of preservice early childhood professionals to position leadership within an infant care framework. Compounding this is the perception of some stakeholders that degree level credentials are not warranted for preservice professionals who aspire to work with the zero to two population. Common to this are faculty members who teach in the two year ECEC diploma program, and organizations that have historically employed ECEC diploma graduates. These limitations indicate that changes are needed within the preservice learning to ensure that early years degree postsecondary students have ample academic and field opportunities to explore and reflect upon how they may engage as infant education and caregiving leaders upon graduation. In these limitations two predominant themes emerge:

1. Infant caregiving and leadership are inconsistently associated with discourses of professional practice in preservice learning. This impacts the capacity of emerging infant caregivers to envision themselves as leaders.
2. A degree credential, rooted in leadership, is not deemed by some as essential for pre-service professionals who study to work with infants.

Contributing to the first identified gap are policies which have traditionally located care in a private, gendered, welfare construct, as opposed to education which is portrayed as a universal public good (Langford et al., 2017). This is exacerbated by the challenges associated with diverse interpretations and enactment of care (Davis & Degotardi, 2015). Research and literature are seeking to address these challenges and give voice to the complexities of infant education and care (Jung, 2013; Rockel, 2009). Davis and Degotardi (2015) call for care to be redressed as

integral to the practice and identity of the ECEC professional, and Elliott (2002) claims that the term *professional caregiving* should be utilized to frame early childhood education and care work. The concept of care however “requires more nuanced elucidation in order to position and claim it as integral to the practices, politics, and policies of ECEC” (Langford et al., 2017, p. 313). Similarly tensions between leadership and the early years profession, illuminated in former and later elements of this plan, amplify this limitation. Arguably, preservice infant education and care leaders could contribute to the revisioning of more comprehensive and current narratives of care and leadership, particularly if they are adequately prepared in postsecondary degree learning.

As indicated in the second problem, the ideology that a degree is not requisite for those who work with infants also presents as a gap in change readiness. Some community partners, as well as students, question the need for infant caregivers to earn a four year early years leadership degree, in lieu of a two year early childhood education diploma. This signifies a lack of understanding of the complexities that are relative to infant care (Chu, 2016; Elliott, 2007; Jung, 2013; Recchia, Lee & Shin, 2015) and the significant impact that early caregiving experiences have on the developing child (Shonkoff, 2010; Shonkoff & Levitt, 2010). Countering the ideology that degree credentials are not merited for infant caregivers is Norris (2010), and Garvis and Pendergast’s (2015) supposition that a correlation exists between the level of education of caregivers and childhood outcomes. Degree level learning that is focused on prenatal through three years of age, delivered in courses that are specifically dedicated to the infant and toddler years, is a suggested remedy that early years scholars endorse. Complicating this however, is the dilemma that early childhood professionals struggle to see themselves within a leadership framework (Campbell-Evans, Stamopoulos & Maloney, 2014; Woodrow & Busch, 2008). These

quandaries, when coupled, rationalize the need to strengthen postsecondary programs that ready future infant education and care leaders. In reflection of these two common themes related to readiness, changes needed include:

1. A turn in thinking about the infant caregiving professional as not needing a degree credential grounded in leadership *to* acknowledging why an early years leadership degree credential is essential for preservice professionals who envision working with infants.
2. A shift from academic and experiential learning opportunities that situate education as superior to care *to* ones that create spaces for early years degree students to de-construct, reflect on, and revision the education/care binary.

Organizational Analysis and Changes Needed

Accompanying readiness indicators which imply program changes needed are changes relating to the organization. Impeding desired change is the imbalance that exists between the vision of this four-year degree and student academic and field learning experiences. Grounded in preparing graduates to engage in pedagogical leadership in early childhood environments, family centres, early intervention programs, and in full day kindergarten programs (Gunter, 2012), the leadership pillar of this program is more commonly associated with students who aim to work with school-age children, as opposed to those who seek to work with infants. As aforementioned, in a 2018 Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, PAC members anecdotally noted that early years degree students who engage in preservice training with their organizations, and who aim to work with infants, do not perceive leadership as integral to their work as a caregiver. Conversely, students who endeavour to work with preschool or school-age children more readily articulate their future work within a leadership framework. Primary to this gap are course learning outcomes that generalize the early years, and do not specifically address infancy.

Moreover, course learning outcomes neglect to tangibly relate leadership with the work of infant education and care. Generic language such as children, childhood, the young child, early childhood, school-aged child, early human development, early years professionals, and early learning, is utilized repeatedly in course outcomes. Conversely, the word *infant* is noted within only two of the thirty five program syllabi reviewed. The term *leadership* is found repeatedly within course outcomes, and is affiliated with early childhood education and care and pedagogy. It is not however, in any of the thirty five syllabi examined, correlated specifically with infant education and care. Also noted as absent in course syllabi are descriptions, outcomes, content, and evaluation methodologies that provoke preservice ECEC professionals to analyse infant caregiving and leadership discourse. Examination of the culminating capstone research project, which occurs in year four of this degree program, correspondingly demonstrates a generalized focus on the early years with no specific attention to infant caregiving despite the fundamental underpinnings of the study to probe a leadership-oriented issue. These findings affirms Chu's (2016) assertion that early years degree programs do not emphasize the period of infancy in preservice learning. It likewise draws attention to the supposition that those who work with children in their foundational years grapple to see themselves with a leadership construct (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014). As such, in addition to the two changes highlighted on page 40, the following are required within the organization to bring visibility to the connectedness between leadership and infant caregiving:

3. A change from academic and experiential course learning outcomes that generically address early childhood in the context of leadership to academic and experiential course learning outcomes that distinctly pair leadership and infant caregiving. Eight newly developed outcomes follow later in this chapter.

4. A change from affiliations with field placement hosts who do not subscribe to the belief that leadership is requisite for those who work with infants *to* establishing more partnerships with infant-based community organizations who are equipped to mentor future infant education and caregivers, specifically in relation to leadership.

Analysis of changes needed through multiple lenses. Analysis of changes needed to reach the preferred organizational state require examination through the leadership framework that guides this plan. In addition to Arendtian theory (1958, 1968), fundamental to the framework for leading change is the process of becoming, and community. In examining these tenets, it is essential to once again highlight that the leader(s)'s approach is multiperspectival and inclusive of plural theories, philosophies, and perspectives of stakeholders. Varied viewpoints are projected to inform the editing of course outcomes that shape innovative academic and experiential learning experiences which promote renewal of antiquated education/care binary narratives. A plural approach also allows for disparate community stakeholder perceptions surrounding the premise that a leadership degree is warranted for preservice infant caregivers. The emergent position of the leader, which situates change in a perpetual state of draft (Buller, 2015), correspondingly contributes to proposed plan changes. A fixed standpoint and/or prescribed results are not sought in addressing the aforementioned changes needed. Instead, bringing action to the identified gaps involves an emergent approach that is non-episodic in nature. This re-emphasizes processes of becoming as main to navigating change in this plan.

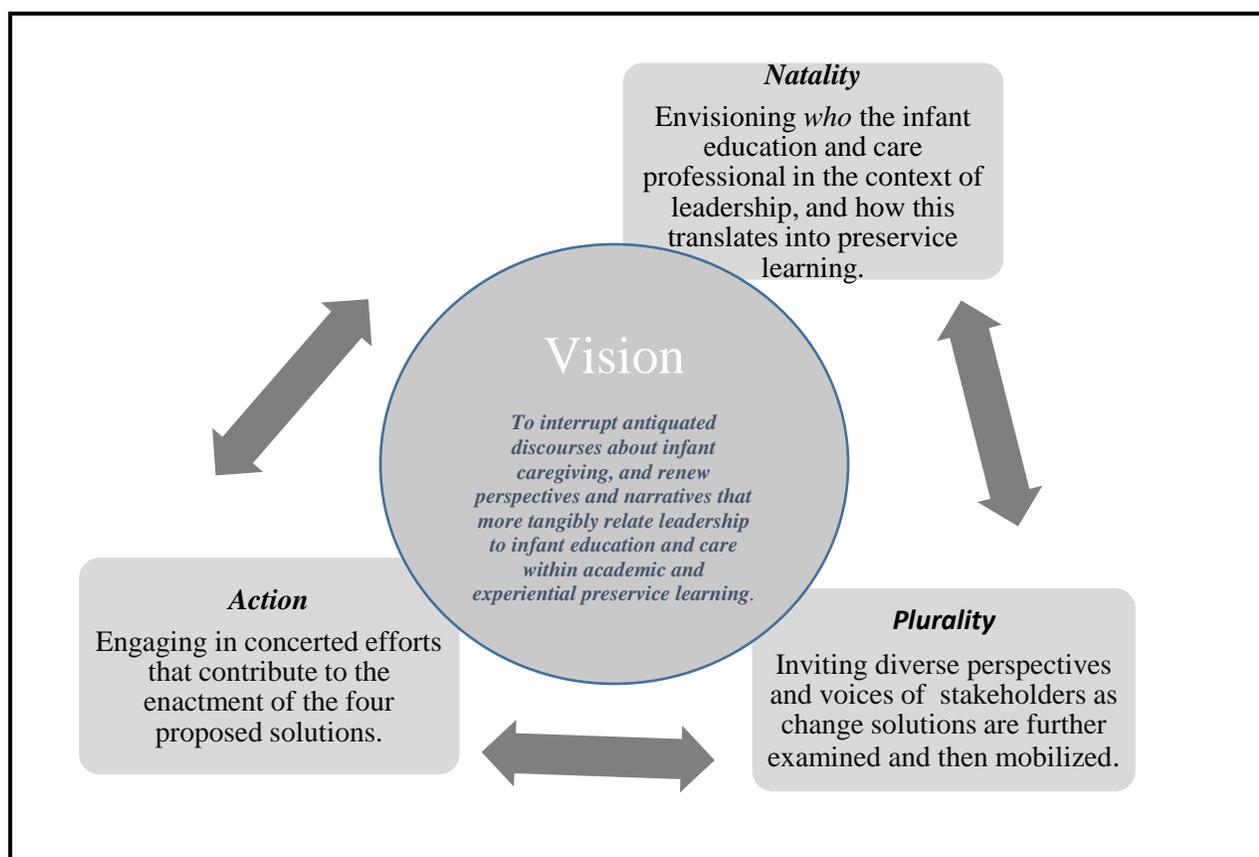
Leaning on diverse theories to inform a change path model. Similar to the way in which prescriptive leadership, higher education, and change theories are contested in this change plan, a fixed change path model is claimed as inadequate to advise this OIP. Alternately, principles derived from Cawsey, Deszca and Ingols's (2016) change path theory, interwoven with

Arendtian theory, are utilized. Fundamental to Cawsey et al.'s theory is the premise that in order to generate change, it is essential for the leader(s) to communicate a compelling vision within an open organizational system. This concept, coupled with the Arendtian-informed relational leadership posture of this plan, contributes to a Change Path Model which seeks to alter identified gaps. In reflecting on Arendt's work, natality provokes thinking about newness and *who-ness*. In the leadership milieu, this means opening spaces for nascent approaches, theories, and perspectives, specifically in relation to infant caregiving. In *The human condition* Arendt (1958) references natality to theorize that "with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world" (p. 176), and that it is through this that each person reveals themselves. This is critical to diminishing the aforesaid gaps as both words and deeds are needed in efforts to more tangibly relate leadership with infant caregiving. Second, plurality evokes diverse ways and principles of life (Bowen-Moore, 1989), which is core to uncovering the multitude of perspectives that are vital to diagnosing and curtailing gaps. Disparate stakeholder philosophies, most notably in regards to the proposition that a leadership degree is necessary for infant caregivers, require exploration. How these variant philosophies are unpacked in course outcomes and field placement experiences likewise demands consideration. In efforts to uncover and address gaps, it is paramount to remain mindful of Bolman and Deal's (2017) caution that the discounted perspective could be the one that derails change efforts. Employing Arendt's (1958) theory of plurality is projected to invite disparate stakeholder viewpoints, which is anticipated to support gap analysis and solution generation.

Arendt's (1958) theory of action, which "provides a rich theoretical resource that has the potential for promoting diversity and enabling praxis" (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017, p. 507), is additionally applicable when probing envisioned changes. Both diversity and praxis are pertinent

as professional caregiving, credentials for those who work with infants, leadership, and experiential learning are predicted to be reimagined by early years degree students through reflective experiences that provoke thought about how the gap between leadership and infant caregiving can be mitigated. What's more, the Arendtian premise of action functions as means to analyse gaps as it is rooted in *we*, whereby mutual consent to act collaboratively in a world of human affairs transpires (Bowen-Moore, 1989). This is significant as this plan pluralizes the term leadership in the endeavour to nurture the web of human relations (Arendt, 1958) that is core to disrupting the fissure that exists between leadership and infant caregiving in preservice learning. Representing these theoretical concepts, Figure 3 illustrates a clearly articulated vision, which Cawsey et al. (2015) link to change success, amalgamated with Arendtian theory (1958, 1968), for leading the change process:

Figure 3
Change Path Framework



Note. As indicated in the above figure, the vision of this change plan and Arendt's interconnected theories of natality, plurality and action are in relationship and render a means to navigate change. The vision is anticipated to remain stable, whereas the Arendtian elements of this figure are malleable and subject to bi-directionality should this be necessitated in change processes. Adapted from "The Human Condition", by H. Arendt, 1958, "Between Past and Future", by H. Arendt, 1968, and "Organizational Change-An Action Orientated toolkit (3rd ed.) by T.F. Cawsey, G. Deszca and C. Ingols, 2015. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

In reflection of the four previously mentioned changes necessitated to bridge the gap between leadership and infant caregiving, four solutions are proposed to mobilize change in this plan. It is worthy to re-establish that implementing solutions actively involves both the OIP writer, and the degree program faculty. As the faculty team is invited to collaboratively move solutions forward it is necessary to offer attention to Louvel's (2013) caution that professors are often conformists in organizational change processes. A bricolage approach, Louvel advises, can act as a driver to engage academics in change. Central to this is flexibility where the course of action becomes more solidified as change processes unfold. Furthermore, change processes are multimodal, and rely on already established resources and professional networks. These tenets, paired with the relational leadership approach main to this organizational change plan, are foreseen to influence the following four solutions. They are ordered in a sequence that fosters a fluid and emergent approach to change.

Solution 1. *Advocating for policy change that deems degree credentials as requisite for preservice professionals who envision working with infants.* In suggesting this solution, it is vital to clarify that change plan leader(s) do not project that the early childhood community as a whole will embrace this premise. The underlying policy assumption that degree-qualified early childhood professionals should work with older children or in formal positions of management

or mentoring (Garvis & Lemon, 2015) is not anticipated to be amended by enactment of this organizational plan. Instead, more realistically, change plan leader(s) strive to contribute to an emerging body of literature that suggests degree credentials are justified for infant caregivers (Chu, 2015; Garvis & Lemon, 2015; Norris, 2010). Expanding the diminutive existing literature surrounding infant care leadership is projected to stimulate attention of scholars in the field, who include ECEC diploma faculty, and preservice professionals. Other audiences focal in advocacy efforts are policy makers, and organizations who are committed to elevating the status of this profession. Community partners who host preservice professionals in their field work and later employ graduates, whom are more explicitly identified later in this chapter, likewise require attention in advocacy efforts.

In view that a plethora of complex competencies are associated with infant caregiving, (Chu, 2016; Elliott, 2007; Jung, 2013; Recchia et al., 2015), and that understanding early years pedagogy encompasses learning and caring about theoretical, ethical and philosophical aspects of teaching, and values, practices, histories and world cultural views (Nuttall, 2005), it is reasonable to surmise that a four year degree is warranted for preservice professionals to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to work with this population. Adding to this rationale are findings which indicate that when early years caregivers have higher levels of education that they are more sensitive and appropriate in their interactions with young children (Elliot, 2007), and child developmental outcomes are more favourable (Norris, 2010). It can also be logically argued that the societal silence encasing those who work with infants demands degree graduates who are well versed in policy and who can critically analyse and revision infant care leadership narrative. What's more, leadership and advocacy "could create a counter culture to the dominant discourse that diminishes and ignores caring work" (Elliot, 2007, p. 145). Problematic in this however is

that early childhood professionals in Canada are identified as an untapped resource for childcare advocacy (Macdonald, Richardson & Langford, 2015). This deficiency further indicates that a leadership degree that focuses on advocacy development, such as the one attached to this change plan, should be standard for preservice infant caregivers.

In strategizing that advocacy is applicable to change plan solutions, critical advocacy inquiry rises to the fore. According to Pasque and Carducci (2015) critical advocacy theory is participatory, addresses real world issues, and engages stakeholders on a continual basis to ensure that action is sustained. This theory is suited to frame academic and field learning in preparing preservice infant care leaders to unearth how they can actively partake in advocating for leadership degree credentials. Learning experiences anticipated to foster learning of this nature include reflective practice journaling, in class and on-line debates, reading of scholarly literature that explores degree level credentials in the context of infant caregiving, review of policy and pedagogical documents that address knowledge and competencies associated with infant caregiving, and investigation of advocacy initiatives that validate the relatedness between leadership and infant caregiving. Similarly, in Program Advisory Committee and field placement partnership meetings, the leader(s) can stir stakeholders to consider how infant caregivers who obtain degrees are more comprehensively prepared to engage in the complex work of leadership. Queries typical to critical advocacy, such as questioning how groups are represented in discourse practices and social systems and what knowledges are silenced or made invisible in these discourses (Pasque & Carducci, 2015) can impel stakeholders to engage in dialogue that explores rationales as to why a four year leadership degree is requisite in addressing the complexities central to infant caregiving. Outside of provoking students and stakeholders to reflect on why a leadership degree is relevant for infant caregivers, marketing initiatives that showcase

accomplishments of graduates who work as infant care leaders can assist with realizing this solution. Likewise, encouragement of degree students to consider a capstone research project that explores correlations between holistic infant outcomes and diploma/degree credentials of early childhood professionals, may further deepen the rationale that a degree is an essential credential for infant caregivers.

Solution 2. *Integrating academic and experiential learning outcomes into course syllabi that distinctly pair leadership and infant caregiving.* A prospering body of research indicates that leadership should be studied by postsecondary students readying to work in the early years sector (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014; Dubois-Davey, 2000; Garrow-Oliver, 2018). Early education and care academics also postulate that infant specialization and an ethics of care should be clearly evidenced in in undergraduate ECEC programs (Powell, 2007; Rockel, 2009). Amid these propositions lies the central vision of this organizational improvement plan to incorporate leadership into infant caregiving, which is currently deficient in course learning outcomes. This solution hence seeks to connect these two facets of study in course outcomes within the degree affixed to this plan. Typically adaptations to course outcomes occur following a formalized program review, however policy in this postsecondary setting allows for 20 percent of course outcome and description change to occur between the five to seven year span between reviews. Using Bloom's taxonomy, which generates incremental learning, curriculum, instruction and evaluation methodologies where lower to higher level cognitive levels are scaffolded as learning progresses (Hung Lau, Tri Khai, Nkoma & Richardson, 2018) the following eight newly designed outcomes act as a solution. This solution keeps with the college program review process of mapping Course Vocational Learning Outcomes (CVLO's) to provincial Program Vocational Learning Outcomes (PVLO's). Thirteen PVLO's frame this early years degree, with

the following five resonating as most salient: PVLO #6: develop a pedagogical leadership philosophy, PVLO #8: establish reciprocal relationships with community partners, PVLO #9: ethics, PVLO # 10: advocacy, and PVLO # 13: communicate with structured and coherent arguments. In addition, the course to which each outcome applies is identified in italics:

1. Utilizing historical and contemporary lenses, appraise how infant caregiving is influenced by an education/care binary. (PVLO #6, *Philosophy & History of ECE*).
2. Analyse the relevance of infant care in relation to one's own early years leadership philosophy. (PVLO #6, *Intro to Early Childhood Leadership*).
3. Examine terminology typical to professional caregiving. (PVLO, #13, *Principles to Practice*).
4. Create advocacy strategies that contribute to revisioning of infant caregivers and their leadership capacities. (PVLO #10, *Advocacy & Leadership*).
5. Evaluate leadership theories contradictory to, and complementary to, infant caregiving. (PVLO #6, *Curriculum Leadership in ECE Programs*).
6. Illustrate how an ethics of care applies to infant care leadership. (PVLO #9, *Applied Research Methods*).
7. Interpret how policy informs the work of the infant care leader. (PVLO #6, *Social Policy in Canada*).
8. Identify local, national and international career prospects for early years leadership degree graduates who aim to work with infants. (PVLO #8, *Internship*).

The courses attached to each of the outcomes are delivered in years one through four, thus allowing for a breadth of time for students to scaffold, re-examine and critically analyse infant caregiving in relation to leadership. These outcomes are designed to inform course content, textbooks, supplemental readings, in class learning activities and evaluation methodologies, which likely require adaptation should these outcomes be incorporated into course syllabi.

Solution 3. *Academic and experiential learning opportunities that create spaces for early years degree students to de-construct, reflect on, and revision narratives of infant caregiving*

that are more closely associated with leadership. Core to this solution is the education/care binary that infiltrates the early years sector, with the positioning of the former as superior to the later (Garvis & Pendergast, 2015; Langford et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2017). Influencing this binary is policy, which often fails to include or offer merit to care (Elliott, 2007; Langford et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2017). Heightening this are lack of opportunities for preservice caregivers to gain theoretical and practical knowledge about infancy (Garvis & Lemon, 2015; Recchia & Shin, 2015), and unpack the complexities of caregiving (Elliot, 2007; Langford et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2017; Rockel, 2009). Subsequently, academic learning experiences that cultivate analysis of early education and care policy is paramount in this solution. Likewise, theories that explore an ethics of care require reflection given that many scholars take up education/care tensions when examining this ethical stance. Tronto's (1998) call for organizations and individuals to consider how attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness are integral to professional practice and professional identity demands examination in preservice learning. In line with this idea, caring as a facet of professional identity (Dalli, 2008; Davis & Degotardi, 2015; Elliot, 2007; Rockel, 2009) merits exploration. Granted that the challenges of caregiving are seldom discussed publically, and that articulating one's own practice about care can be an intensely personal process (Elliot, 2007), reflective practice opportunities that provoke examination of these topics is paramount. Moreover, this focus is critical granted that reflection and self-inquiry are vital components of leadership and change management (Stamopoulos, 2012). The learning that supports students' leadership philosophy development holds potential to act as a driver in supporting students to examine how infant caregiving may be a facet of their professional leadership philosophy. In stimulating reflection about the education/care binary and its connectedness to infant care leadership, course

textbooks, supplementary readings, lecture topics, in class learning activities, readings and evaluation methodologies require examination and adaptation.

Meaningful, interactive experiences in high-quality infant settings are foundational for those who envision working with the young child (Recchia & Shin, 2010). Thus, experiential learning facets also require attention in this solution. Relevant are three field placements, each culminating 224 hours, and one 420 hour internship. Problematic in this solution is that many students express dissatisfaction with their infant placements (Rouse, Morrissey & Rahimi, 2012), and have limited opportunities to learn about infants in field settings (Garvis & Lemon, 2015; Recchia & Shin, 2010). Enriching field placement learning so that preservice infant care leaders are incited to de-construct, reflect on and revision the relatedness of leadership and infant caregiving is vital in buffering this identified gap. To address this, field placement manuals and seminars require updating to include learning opportunities that rouse students to reflect on the connectedness between leadership and infant caregiving. Well-designed opportunities for reflection about service experiences are claimed to enhance classroom content (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Eyler, 2002), and thus resonate as germane in this solution. Open-ended online learning experiences, which support reflective practice in ECEC (Manning-Morton, 2006; Chu, 2016), are key in encouraging preservice professionals to critically reflect upon how they can contribute to destabilizing the education/care binary that saturates the early childhood education and care sector. Chu's (2016) assertion that future infant caregivers are more adequately prepared for the workforce when they engage in reflective seminars, further extends this argument. Similarly, both policy analyses and online learning are applicable strategies to enrich learning experiences that intersect leadership and infant caregiving. Critical to all of these propositions that strengthen

experiential learning is the protégé/mentor relationship, which Bonnett and Ly (2017) assert is correlated to leadership development of the preservice ECEC professional.

Also pertinent to enhancement of field experiences is the necessity to offer preservice ECEC's opportunities to engage in diverse infant-based service learning environments. Beck (2013) concedes that future early years professionals benefit from exposure to variant pedagogical approaches in order to construct new knowledge and beliefs. Granted that a prime goal of this change plan is to dismantle existing narrative about infant caregiving leadership with the vision of renewal, Beck's recommendation to place students in pedagogically disparate learning environments is relevant. Thus, augmentation of existing and new infant-oriented partnerships with organizations that possess divergent pedagogical philosophies is required to bring this solution to fruition.

Solution 4. *Enhance partnerships with infant-based community organizations who are equipped to mentor future infant education and care leaders.* Field experiences and internships, and accompanying mentorship, are a critical component of preservice learning for early childhood professionals (Ackerman, 2004; Bennett, 2007; Bonnett & Ly; 2017; Norris, 2010). Limitations in field placement experiences have however been identified in the Canadian childcare sector, most notably in the area of meaningful mentor/protégé relationships (Bonnett & Ly, 2017). Research indicates that early preservice ECEC's do not have adequate infant practicum experiences (Chu, 2016; Garvis & Pendergast, 2015), and that few mentors are qualified and experienced to pedagogically lead students in these placements (Rockel, 2009). Complicating this is the need for stronger leadership constructs within the sector (Stamopoulos, 2012). In efforts to close these gaps, Norris (2010) argues that ECEC programs should develop solidified working relationships with organizations who are prepared to mentor preservice infant

caregivers. Ngai, Cheung, Ngai and Chan (2010) suggest that reciprocity, collaboration, trust, a sense of identify and purpose, shared resources, ongoing assessment, clear identification of the service needs of the organization and an emergent approach can enrich field placement experiences for preservice learners. This tenets are main to advancing this solution.

Accompanying the above rationale for solution #4, are infant-based organizations that do not currently have formalized partnerships with the program attached to this OIP. Online review of policy, practices, services and employment positions indicate that the organizations below have the capacity to mentor preservice infant caregivers to become leaders in the sector. A Community of Practice approach to foster change communications, later elucidated in Chapter 3, is projected to positively impact the proposed partnerships:

1. Child and Parent Resource Institute
2. Mommy Connections
3. Secure Connections, Therapeutic Parenting, Right from the Beginning (London location)
4. Home Visiting Program for Infants (London location)
5. Ontario Health Units: Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, Community Early Years Partnership, Baby Friendly Initiative
6. Motherisk
7. Ontario Association for Infant and Child Development
8. Child First: Infant and Child Development Division
9. Best Start Resource Centre
10. Infant Mental Health Promotion
11. Vanier Children's Services: Early Years Program
12. London Pregnancy and Family Support Centre
13. Ministry of Education: Early Years Division
14. Elgin Perinatal Support Group
15. Fresh Start Maternity Supports

Resourcing OIP Solutions

Referencing resource dependency theory, Kezar (2014), contends that organizations are not self-sustaining and the human agency can impact change processes. Therefore, as the above four solutions are put into motion, internal and external resourcing of time, finances, information, and

technology require thought via a human agency lens. Likewise, potential consequences and benefits warrant consideration. Table 1 addresses these OIP dimensions. Re-occurring themes in resourcing of solutions below include salaried faculty time to gather information, review, and develop academic and experiential outcomes and curriculum. They also include advocacy, marketing, and community field partnerships.

Table 1
Resourcing OIP Solutions

	Solution 1: <i>Degree Credentials</i>	Solution 2: <i>Course Outcomes</i>	Solution 3: <i>Ed/Care Binary Discourse Analysis</i>	Solution 4: <i>Field/Internship Partnerships</i>
Time	Faculty: Advocacy initiatives (ex: Open House, Information sessions, research and publishing), Course Preparation	Faculty: Syllabi, Curriculum, Resource and Evaluation Updates	Faculty: Research teaching resources, develop in class and field placement learning experiences and evaluations, restructuring of capstone research projects	Field/Internship Coordinator: Contact, sharing of program information, vetting of placement/internship suitability, and partnership establishment
Fiscal	Faculty Workload Assignment: Salary	Faculty Workload Assignment: Salary	Faculty Workload Assignment: Salary, Textbooks and teaching resources,	Faculty Workload Assignment: Salary
Information	College of ECE: Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice	Access to course syllabi in the program to monitor scaffolding of learning in outcomes across the four year program Course outcome tools (ex: Bloom's Taxonomy, College Online Mapping System)	Library and Bookstore information services, Infant-oriented policy documents	Field placement organization information, including mentoring capacity
Technology	For marketing of degree graduates employment successes in working with infants	College course mapping system	Online discussion forum development and management	Online resources for field placement/internship partners
Potential Challenges	Stakeholder resistance, including diploma programs and graduates, resistance to cost of a degree for those who aim to work with infants	Increase in faculty workload Deviation from college policy which specifies no more than 20% adaptations in outcomes	Stakeholder resistance to revisioned Ed/Care binary discourses, a scarcity of literature/research to inform critical analysis in student learning	Termination of some existing field placement/internship partnerships

Potential Benefits	Favourable developmental infant outcomes & elevation of the infant caregiver profile as leader	Academic and placement experiences that enhance preparedness for the work of the infant care leader	Renewed thinking about the relatedness of leadership & infant care which may improve status and recognition	Enhanced mentoring, fit of placement organizations and better employment prospects for infant care leaders
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Enacting solutions. The manner in which the above four change solutions are anticipated to be implemented requires contemplation. Although a Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model (Cleary, 1995) could be employed to navigate change processes, this prescriptive approach is not ideal as change rarely progresses in smooth linear fashion (Orgrinc & Shojania, 2014; Taylor-Adams & Vincent, 2004). Furthermore, Reed and Card (2016) caution the use of the PDSA model given that it is often inadequately interpreted, and requires an extensive repertoire of skills and knowledge to execute. An alternative to this prescriptive schema is Arendtian theory (1958), which impels us to challenge prescriptive ways of thinking (Bowen-Moore, 1989). Arendt incites us to think to enable our understanding, “not in terms of knowledge, but in terms of meaning” (Gardiner, 2015, p. 99). Thus, in moving through solution implementation processes it is thinking processes, and not a constricted model, that is of essence. Natality and plurality can act as catalysts for this as they provoke thinking anew, offering attention to a plurality of perspectives.

By the same token, in planning for, actioning, and reflecting upon solution implementation, Arendt’s (1958) call to make promises to one another and forgive when promises do not always reach fruition, is principal. Though planning and enacting of solutions are critical dimensions of this change plan, leader(s) and stakeholders will be invited to commit and then forgive should elements of this plan develop in ways that are not anticipated. A relational approach to leadership, which “allows a person to not only acknowledge, but learn from mistakes” (Gardiner, 2015, p. 55), is foreseen to sustain this endeavour. Likewise, Arendt’s notion of ethical action,

which is anchored in a commitment to others (Gardiner, 2015), is postulated to guide leaders and stakeholders as solutions are enacted. As such, ethical responsibilities associated with solution implementation necessitate continued analysis and attention in all OIP phases.

Extending the theoretical underpinnings of solution enactment are tangible strategies to promote the process-based, plural and ethical tenets summarized above. Core to this is the RLT-oriented approach of this plan which aligns with the premise that change is most effective when it does not align itself with a fixed planning approach (Baldrige & Deal, 1983; Mintzberg, 1994). As solutions are implemented they are shaped to unfold in a flexible fashion over a five year period leading to the next formal program review in 2024. This is further described in the Organizational Improvement Plan Phases model (Figure 4) in Chapter 3. Enactment is also anticipated to be influenced by a Community of Practice model which fosters plurality of perspectives and voices, and ethicality. This enactment element is also further surveyed in the final chapter of this change plan.

Ethics and Anticipated Organizational Change Issues

In organizational change processes ethics must be confronted by all parties involved (Enrich, Harris, Kelnowski, Smeed & Spina, 2015). In the same manner, ethics are central to the work of all leaders (Kezar, 2014; Northouse, 2016), and to early childhood professionals (Giovacco-Johnson, 2011; Swick & Brown, 1999; Taggart, 2016). Adding to these concepts is the notion that ECEC leaders play a significant role in fostering a nurturing society through caring, which Swick and Brown (1999) indicate is relevant to ethical practice. On these grounds, the interrelated ethical dimensions that are inherent to organizational change, early childhood leadership, and care, reason an Ethics of Care as suited to inform curriculum and experiential learning adaptations in the degree program affixed to this plan. Relationships, trust and care,

which are articulated earlier in this chapter as catalysts of change, deepen rationales for rooting this OIP in an Ethics of Care. It situating this plan in care ethics it is vital to note that naming terms typical to an ethics of care, such as caring about, caring for, caregiving and care receiving, minimize the undervaluing and romanticizing of care (Tronto, 1998). Hence, prescribed definitions are not named in this change plan given the vexing nature of care (Langford et al., 2017). Instead, the principles of attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness, which Tronto (1998) specifies as akin to care, are accessed to ethically steer change.

Supplementary to this, an Ethics of Care is relatable to this plan as it is gaining increasing attention as care theory takes on a profounder importance in theorizing and literature (Langford et al., 2017), and as it becomes progressively recognized as complementary to relational leadership (Smit & Scherman, 2016). Central to the Ethics of Care in proposed changes is quality care which entails creating and maintaining consistent, predictable and secure relationships where children and adults come together, relate and learn from and with each other (Richardson et al., 2017). Building upon this premise, is Smit and Scherman's (2016) theorization that an Ethics of Care commences with the ideology that as humans we are intrinsically relational, responsive beings, who thrive on connectedness and interdependence. This parallels theory core to this change plan, where leadership is distinguished as a relational enterprise grounded in mutual respect, trust, care, shared values, and responsive to a plurality of perspectives (Gardiner, 2015). The most salient rationale however, for situating this change plan in an Ethics of Care, is this capacity of this paradigm to use caring as a means to create opportunities that enrich and broaden understandings of the work of early childhood professionals, which according to Goldstein (1998) stimulates alternatives to outdated care perspectives. In reflection of this, care

ethics is cardinal in contributing to the intent of this OIP to elevate infant caregiving within preservice learning,

Ethical Challenges

In deliberating ethical challenges applicable to the abovementioned proposed curriculum and field modifications, change leader(s) take up Nodding's (2009) feminist-oriented work which suggests that an Ethics of Care impels us do the 'right thing', especially when the care is concerned with humans. Thus, critical analyses of ethical considerations relating to all stakeholders impacted by this change plan is justified. At the nucleus of this are infants. In view that the needs of older children often silence the voices of infants (WAIMH, 2016) it is critical that attention is offered to the zero to two population in this plan. In favour of this is an expanding research body that brings notice to early childhood education and care through the lens of infants. Enriching this is Elwick, Bradley and Sumsion's (2013) claim that early childhood professionals are positioned to create spaces that allow for infants to express their perspectives of ECEC practice. Arguably, an Ethics of Care, which emphasizes the morality of attending to and meeting the needs of others that we take responsibility for (Held, 2006), can act as a stimulant to create these spaces and promote ethical accountability for stakeholders to protect infants who may in any way be influenced by the changes outlined in this organizational plan. This necessitates the organization and stakeholders, including the leader(s) who plan, guide and enact change, to remain cognizant of how adaptations to degree curriculum and experiential components may impact infants. In safeguarding the voice of infants, Lansdown's (2011) reminder that infants have the capacity to participate in decisions informing their well-being, via the willingness of adults to listen, is of utmost importance.

Secondary to the ethical responsibility of listening to the voice of infants arise postsecondary students, who in this plan are encouraged to contemplate their future in the workforce as infant caregivers. Although informal PAC and PEQAB findings and emerging research indicate that this postsecondary program falls short in adequately preparing preservice professionals to work with infants (NAEYC, 2009; Norris, 2010), it is to be questioned if urging students to work with infants is ethical. Impelling future professionals to consider a future career alongside the infant population is problematic given the deeply rooted gendered and unjust history of professional caregiving (Langford et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2017). Granted that society has a tendency to devalue and inadequately compensate jobs traditionally held by women (England, 2010; Picchio, 1992), ethical issues ensue when promoting preservice women to enter a field that is prone to inequities. Most noteworthy in these inequities is the incongruity between the cost of education and salary upon graduation for those who have intentions of working with infants. The typical tuition cost to obtain a two year diploma in Ontario is \$4800, while in contrast the cost of a four year college baccalaureate degree is \$24,400 (ontariocolleges.ca, 2018). In Canada, early childhood professionals who possess a two year diploma earn on average \$22,500, and those with a four year degree earn \$25,800 (Beach & Costigliola, 2005). It could be argued that the mere increase of \$3300 in salary for a degree versus a diploma graduate does not justify the additional \$19,600 cost of obtaining a four year degree. The OIP goal to promote a leadership degree credential within future infant caregivers counters this notion however, and prepares infant caregiving leaders for career and salary advancements.

A supplemental ethical dilemma is the endeavour of this change plan to prepare future infant caregivers to act as leaders in a field predominantly occupied by women (Doherty, Lero, Goelman, Lagrange & Tougas, 2000; Friendly & Prentice, 2009). Gardiner's (2015) claim that

prejudice against women in leadership is embedded in the cultural imagination, which in turn devaluates women's abilities to engage as leaders, predisposes the preservice infant caregiver who is studying in a leadership degree to face prejudice upon entry into the workforce. The relational approach main to this plan exacerbates this problem as according to Eagly (2005) a relational stance may actually work against women leaders since it reinforces gender stereotypes. It is thus a thorny proposition to prepare and encourage early years degree students, who are predominantly women, to pursue a career working as infant education and caregiving leaders. Orientating this organizational plan in an Ethics of Care, which positions human relations at the nucleus of leadership where all voices are important (Beck, 1992; Enrich et al.; Noddings, 1984; Shapiro & Gross, 2013) is projected to buffer some of these ethical challenges by enabling the voices of infants and students to inform change processes. Should alternate strategies to an Ethics of Care be required, this OIP leader plans to turn to Kezar's (2014) ethics and organizational change recommendations which are inclusive of not only care-based thinking but also reflection, maintaining a focus on students, appropriate use of data, co-creating through ongoing dialogue, broad and full information disclosures and embracement of resistance.

Addressing ethical considerations. In view that Ethics of Care scholars have found inspiration from Arendt (Cioflec, 2012; Fisher, 2012; Gardiner, 2015), Arendtian theory extends to the ethical dimensions of this plan. By coupling the principles of an Ethics of Care with Arendtian theory ethical considerations applicable to this organizational improvement plan can be reflected on in a thoughtful and planned manner prior to change implementation. Looking back to the Change Path Framework of this OIP prompts reminders of the well outlined vision which is informed by Arendt's (1958, 1968) interrelated theories of natality, plurality and action. Core to these connected theories is the renewal of infant caregiving leadership, divergent

stakeholder voices, and concerted efforts. Thinking with Arendt to thoughtfully plan also postures leader(s) to be genuinely responsive towards others (Gardiner, 2015). This is paramount when contemplating potential effects for infants, and postsecondary students studying to enter the infant education and care workforce. Enhancing this is the foundational goal of the leader(s) to ensure that all action is enacted in a responsible manner whereby attentiveness and responsiveness to the plural perspectives of all stakeholders, most notably infants and preservice infant caregiving professionals, occurs. Apprising changes with reference to Arendtian theory also fosters an ethical praxis as Arendt is concerned with how action unfolds in community and how a person acts in concert with others (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017), much like Smit and Scherman's (2016) connectedness and interdependence descriptors of an Ethics of Care.

Complementary to the aforementioned tenets common to an Ethics of Care framework, two tactics are proposed to cultivate ethicality in this change plan. First, Arendtian theory is relied on given its connectedness to ethical practice. Drawing on Arendt's work, Gardiner (2015) surmises that critical thinking enables "us to reflect upon our actions, and to ensure that our ethical intent is in alignment with our actions" (p. 99). She furthermore postulates that questioning our values and beliefs allows us to respond in a more caring fashion to new events. This is critical in light that infants and postsecondary students have potential to be impacted by proposed plan changes. Critical thinking that fosters reflection about how OIP actions may influence infants, students and others, is hence fundamental to all stages of this change plan and critical to the monitoring and evaluation methodologies discussed in the next chapter. Building on this is Arendt's premise of action, which is founded upon mutual commitment to others. This commitment, according to Gardiner (2015), is demonstrated through promise-making and forgiveness. Promises to hear and be responsive to the voices of infants, preservice infant education and caregiving leaders, and

stakeholders is essential. Forgiveness for any wrong doing as change unfolds is also crucial, especially granted that theorists advise that it is important to tolerate and value mistakes in organizational learning processes (Kezar, 2014).

Also notable is the regulatory body that governs the Ontario early childhood sector. The College of Early Childhood Educators (cece) guides the profession via *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* (2017). In this code, responsibilities to children, families, colleagues, the profession, community, and public hold early childhood professionals accountable in their practice. Standards within these ethical responsibilities include caring, responsive relationships, and leadership, which are all pivotal in this change plan. Reference to and compliance with this governing document is imperative in curriculum and experiential change processes that ensue in all junctures of this organizational plan.

Conclusion

In this chapter the leadership approach central to this plan is broadened to include the concept that relationships function as a catalyst of change. Trust and care are emphasized as requisite to propelling change forward, most prominently when engaging stakeholders in change processes. Leadership principles and practices that necessitate change are proposed in efforts to move towards the preferred organizational state. Framing theories that could conceivably lead change are interrogated resulting in the postulation that a multiperspectival approach, primarily led by Arendtian theory (1958, 1968), is best suited to steer change. Readiness findings surveyed in Chapter 1 are also further elaborated in relation to the gaps that reside within the Bachelor Degree associated with this plan. These gaps are assessed to generate four solutions that are minimal in resource dependency. To conclude this chapter, an Ethics of Care is probed and

deemed as a complementary means to circumvent and navigate ethical challenges that have prospective to arise as change emerges.

Looking ahead to Chapter 3, strategies to mobilize change are unpacked giving consideration to the flexibility required to meet stakeholder response(s). Limitations affiliated with change implementation are additionally measured, and Empowerment Evaluation is reasoned as a fitting method to monitor and evaluate change processes and refinement of solutions. Tactics to cultivate awareness and communicate change are additionally proposed. Next steps to further rally change, as well as provocations for future reflections as this organizational improvement plan moves towards active implementation, are proposed. In keeping with the first two chapters of this plan, Chapter 3 continues to build momentum in efforts to bridge the disconnection between leadership and infant caregiving in a postsecondary early years degree program.

CHAPTER 3: ACTIONING, EVALUATING, AND COMMUNICATING CHANGE FOR LEADERSHIP IN INFANT CAREGIVING

Paralleling previously explored facets of this organizational improvement plan, relational leadership apprised by Arendtian (1958, 1968) theory, is employed in this final chapter to bring optics to actioning change. Congruencies and contradictions in organizational and OIP change strategies, goals, and priorities are of focus with the vision of fostering an improved state for infants, infant caregiving leaders, and internal and external stakeholders. The necessity to re-structure priorities, academic and experiential learning and evaluation, and program mapping is also examined. Tactics to foster understanding of stakeholder responses to implementation,

methods to address ongoing feedback, and modes to engage and empower individual and collective change are surveyed. Resources necessitated to enact change, challenges likely to arise, and limitations are likewise assessed. Empowerment Evaluation is argued as a fitting method to monitor the actioning of this OIP, and a plan to clearly and persuasively communicate change is summarized. This final chapter concludes by weighing future considerations pertinent in the quest to weave leadership with infant caregiving in an Ontario postsecondary program that readies future early education and caregiving leaders.

Actioning Change as Implementation

Research demonstrates that alternative approaches may more accurately reflect the on-the-ground realities of what it takes to fortify education and child outcomes (Honig, 2009). The alternative approach of *action*, as opposed to implementation, is therefore utilized to ground this final change plan chapter. Probed by Arendt (1958) in *The human condition*, action entails beginning, leading, and setting something into motion. Adopting Arendt's work, Gardiner (2015) surmises that through action and speech people express who they are, and reveal distinct their personal identity. Gardiner (2015) further examines this Arendtian concept by linking it to ethical action that is grounded in commitments to others where power is located in "the collective action of individuals joined together to fight a common cause" (p. 106). Primary to this theoretical perspective of action is mutual collaboration that transpires within a world of human affairs (Bowen-Moore, 1989). Hence, in actioning this change plan, the unique relationship between action and engaging collectively is of essence. Augmenting this rationale is Honig's (2009) call to mobilize change using a co-construction approach where people are central. This is of utmost importance as Honig's work is policy-focused, like the first solution of this plan.

Further to this, the use of Arendt's (1958) theory of action denotes that this plan does not adhere to a fixed schema, but rather is anchored in an emergent and flexible structure. Enacting solutions embraces Browne & Wildavsky's (1983) idea that although anticipating stages of action can prove fruitful, un-designed outcomes are typical when mobilizing change as goals are subject to shifting. The premise that change should be dynamic and transform over time (Browne and Wildavsky, 1983; Sabatier, 1986) thus meshes seamlessly with the emergent nature of this plan. Moreover, Arendt's (1958) reminder that the unexpected should be expected further reasons the term *action* as applicable to the foci of this chapter. In leaning on this action-based approach that is entrenched in relationships however, it is critical to remain mindful that relationships can both fuel and frustrate those involved in change (Honig, 2009; Knapp, 1997). Empowerment Evaluation and a communication plan, reviewed later in this chapter, have potential to mediate these relational aspects core to actioning change. First however, in outlining a relationally-based plan to action change it is worthy to re-visit the four solutions summarized in Chapter 2 that are central to this organizational change plan, and outline affiliated goals and priorities:

1. Advocating for policy change that deems degree credentials as requisite for preservice professionals who envision working with infants.
2. Integrating academic and experiential learning outcomes into course syllabi that distinctly pair leadership and infant caregiving.
3. Academic and experiential learning opportunities that create spaces for early years degree students to de-construct, reflect on, and revision narratives of infant caregiving that are more closely associated with leadership.

4. Enhance partnerships with infant-based community organizations who are equipped to mentor future infant education and care leaders.

Goals, Priorities, and the Implementation Plan

In framing implementation goals and priorities the fit of this plan, relative to the organization, requires deliberation. Significant to this framing is organizational culture and history, which Honig (2009) theorizes is critical to activating change. Positioning their thinking in Arendtian theory, Veck and Jessop (2016) allege that “there is a loss of respect for what the past might teach us about current educational practices and difficulties” (p. 131). The culture and history of this college setting, early years program, and the ECEC field as a whole, which is unpacked in detail in Chapter 1, thus merits persistent consideration as goals and priorities are established. In this, the attention that change theorists offer to places (Browne and Wildavsky, 1983; Honig, 2009) comes to the fore. Affiliating this change plan with both local and national early childhood education and care places, is paramount in goal and priority generation. Addressing change in this chapter necessitates continued awareness of the interrelated local and Canadian cultural and historical contexts, also highlighted in Chapter 1, that inform infant caregiving and leadership.

In addition to the significance of places in setting goals and priorities, is uniformities and disparities that surface between this plan and organizational strategies. As aforementioned in the introductory chapter, strategic goals of the change plan organization include innovation, exceptional learning experiences, enrolment growth, and wise and creative use of sustainable resources. Meeting the needs of students, employers, and communities, as well as fostering change and engagement are pivotal to the vision, mission and values. Although OIP leader(s) do

not seek to reach a global platform, plans to mobilize solutions align with the organizational strategy which situates students and communities at the forefront. Exceptional learning experiences are anticipated to be nurtured via program mapping, which is informed by PAC members who represent the community and student experience. In actioning the proposed solutions, innovative strategies to more closely affiliate leadership with infant caregiving also have potential to be fostered. Thus two key goals, that complement organizational strategies, frame implementation of this change plan:

1. Mobilization of the above four solutions. In actioning solutions, the emergent, process-based change stance core to this plan is of essence. Also central to this goal are stakeholder contributions which may result in solution adaptation at varying change intersections. Activating OIP solutions is also subject to a scaffolding approach as solutions are ordered to build on one another.

2. Mapping of Program Vocational Learning Outcomes (PVLO's) to Course Learning Outcomes (CVLO's). The foundational objectives of this goal are to assure integrity in program and course delivery, and to align re-designed course learning outcomes to provincially mandated program outcomes. Distinctly pairing leadership with infant caregiving in CVLO's and developing academic and experiential curricula that creates spaces for early years degree students to de-construct, reflect on, and revision narratives of infant caregiving that are more closely associated with leadership, and then mapping to PVLO's, is projected to support the faculty team in their teaching and field supervision work. In movements to attain this goal, collaboration between the college's Centre of Academic Excellence and the faculty team is of essence.

Ascertaining Priorities

Establishing priorities in actioning change is shown to be advantageous (Brown & Wildavsky, 1983; Kezar, 2014), and is therefore main when reflecting on the above goals and solutions. At the nucleus of priorities are infants who, according to Sarah Te One (2010), have perspectives and rights that include having their needs met by adults who are responsible for them. Te One proposes that these responsibilities comprise of respecting the child's rights to express their views. Granted that infant caregivers are ethically responsible to the children they care for (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2017; NAEYC, 2011), it is critical that preservice learning offers opportunities that appraise and enhance this commitment. Thus, as changes are actioned in this postsecondary program, potential implications for infants are of precedence. Similarly, postsecondary students who envision working with infants are of priority. Granted that students in the degree affixed to this OIP are studying to engage as future leaders in the sector, it is essential that actioning solutions contributes to this obligation. It is as equally imperative that postsecondary students in this program are informed of change processes, and the rationales behind this pursuit, so in their field experiences and upon graduation they are equipped to counter the marginalization and lack of recognition that is typical to infant caregiving (Chu, 2016; McDowell Clark & Baylis, 2012). Likewise, it is of priority that future infant care leaders have the knowledge and skills to articulate and advocate for linkages that exist between leadership and infant caregiving. Finally, stakeholders who include PAC members and community partners who host students in their field placements, are primary as they are acknowledged in former chapters to be significant in synergizing this plan.

Program mapping. Also pivotal in change implementation is program quality assurance, which is regulated within this postsecondary institution by program mapping. A pedagogical tool

utilized by this change plan organization, mapping is a core strategy for examining the role of different elements of learning environments as they build towards shared learning outcomes, and promote a more wholesome understanding of where to assess and document learning (National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2018). Mapping of adapted or new course learning outcomes (CVLO's), as identified in solution two, to provincial learning outcomes (PVLO's), is critical in ensuring program integrity. Consideration of the PEQAB recommendations from the 2017 program review is also essential in striving for quality assurance. It is as equally mandatory that the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (2017) be considered in view that this body regulates the early years education and care sector in Ontario.

An improved position for social and organizational stakeholders. Social actors that are foreseen to be positively impacted by mobilizing change include preservice professionals studying to care for infants, advocates of care work, and most importantly infants. In reflection that early childhood education and care professionals who work with infants are more prone to inequities than those who work with older children (Chu, 2016; McDowell Clark & Baylis, 2012), it is vital to consider how employment of solutions can enhance circumstances for both current and future infant caregivers. Pertinent to this are studies which indicate that no more than 16.8% of Canadian ECEC's are satisfied with their salary (Beach & Costigloila, 2013; Royer & Moreau, 2015). This, according to Jeon & Wells (2018), results in burnout, professional disengagement, a lower commitment to the organization, increased absenteeism and productivity, lack of policy and procedure compliancy, disengagement, and lower quality care. It is plausible to reason that wages may be higher for infant caregivers who graduate from an early year's degree program that is leadership-focused, in contrast to those who graduate from a

diploma program. It is also reasonable to deduce that a degree credential, as opposed to a diploma credential, is more probable to result in career and leadership advancement. In elevating the profession, via financial remuneration and leadership opportunities, the education/care binary that has long pervaded the field (Langford, Richardson, Albanese, Bezanon, Prentice & White, 2017; Richardson, Hewes & Whitty, 2017) is hoped to be disrupted allowing for care to gain closer equality with education. Should care gain parity with education Elliott's (2007) prompt to articulate care work within a framework of *professional caregiving* (Elliott, 2007) has possibilities to contribute to disrupting passé narratives that fall short in articulating the complexities integral to the knowledge and skills typical to this profession.

Shifting the trajectory for infant well-being. As conditions improve for degree students and the status of care work, infants are expected to benefit. Should this change plan promote recognition that infant caregiving work is multidimensional, complex, and worthy of degree credentials (Chu, 2016; Elliott, 2007; Jung, 2013; Recchia, Lee & Shin, 2015) the zero to two population is more likely to be cared for by graduates who have four years of education, as opposed to two. Furthermore, being cared for by graduates who are well versed in relational leadership, which Eagly (2005) ties to advocacy, has potential to advantage infants who rely on adults to enable their voices (Lansdown, 2011; Sarah Te One, 2010; WAIMH, 2016). Ultimately, in mobilizing change solutions infants who are cared for by degree graduates, educated in infant caregiving leadership, are apt to reap benefits as a result of this increased level of specialized education.

Program re-structuring. Although organizational structure does not require reprioritizing, priorities within the program necessitate shifting. Syllabi, teaching and evaluation methodologies need to weave leadership with infant caregiving in both academic and experiential learning, and

be reflective of adapted course learning outcomes that invite students to analyse education/care rhetoric. Re-structuring of CVLO's, which map to PVLO's, also demand attention by program faculty. The college's Centre of Academic Excellence, a division that facilitates and monitors program reviews and renewals that are governed by PEQAB and MTCU, is forecasted to play a role in mapping processes. Re-organization of faculty may also be warranted to ensure that professors, who are assigned to teach courses that have outcomes which emphasize learning in the area of infant caregiving leadership, possess applicable credentials and eagerness to advocate for this care-grounded profession.

A Plan for Navigating Transition

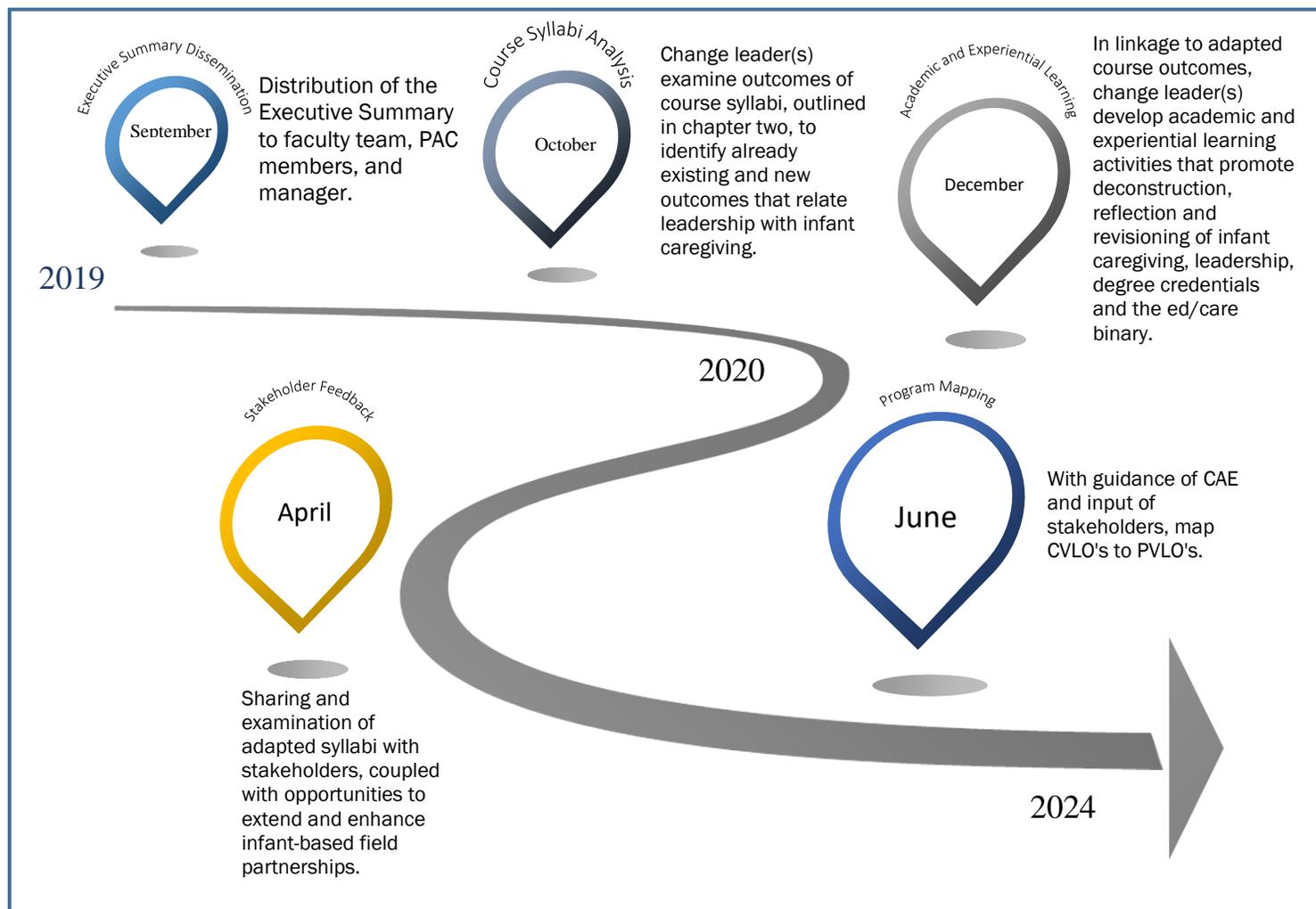
Mainstay to steering transition is understanding and responsiveness to stakeholder reactions (Kezar, 2014; Scott & Lane, 2000). Arendtian (1958, 1968) theory, which alternately informs the relational leadership approach of this plan, is instrumental in the objective to understand and adapt to stakeholder feedback. Core to understanding and being responsive to stakeholder responses, is promise making and forgiveness. Though unrealized promises can negatively influence implementation initiatives (Browne & Wildavsky, 1983), a balance between keeping promises and forgiving others, which Gardiner surmises (2016) is fundamental to Arendt's thinking, guides this plan. Should stakeholders resist change activation, reciprocal forgiveness that fosters the nascent capacity to begin anew (Arendt, 1958, 1968), is paramount. Similarly, plurality is applicable in aspirations to identify with stakeholder perceptions. As plural voices of stakeholders are fostered in actioning this plan, diversity is key as "when plurality is diminished, so are the conditions for action and possibilities for change" (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017, p. 509). Multiplicity of perspectives, which is core to change implementation (Honig, 2009; Sabatier, 1986), is essential in gaining fulsome comprehension of the responses of others, and in

strategizing to respond sensitively to these responses. By the same token, action through which an Arendtian lens is always reflective of lived experiences (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017), is thus germane in gauging stakeholder feedback and planning for implementation modifications.

Capturing lived experiences of stakeholders, primarily students, PAC members, and organizations who mentor preservice infant caregivers in service learning, is predicted to nurture the cooperation required amongst organizations that is deemed essential to change enactment (Browne & Wildavsky, 1983; Honig, 2009; Sabatier, 1986).

Also significant in the plan to navigate change is the need to build momentum, within the context of a timeline. This scaling up of change, according to Kezar (2014), can be facilitated through social movements. Central to this are social and professional networks where like-minded people champion local change. These networks foster ownership that is responsive to context, culture, and structures, and incite motivation in change leaders. More particular to the early education and care profession, Shonkoff (2009) calls for policy makers to contribute to the momentum required to alter the current state of ECEC by “leveraging the science of child development and its underlying neurobiology to create the framework for a new era of innovation in early childhood policy and practice’ (p. 79). Hence in thrusting this plan forward networking, in the form of a Community of Practice (CoP), is intended to be utilized. Core to this CoP approach, which is surveyed later in this chapter, is policy informed by early years science. As momentum is cultivated using these tactics a timeline, which Sridharan, Campbell and Zinzow (2006) argue leads to more focused stakeholder dialogue and improved planning, is as follows:

Figure 4
Organizational Improvement Plan Phases



Supplemental Resource Considerations

In Chapter 2 resourcing of OIP solutions is detailed. Ancillary to this is faculty research and publication support that is necessary to contribute to generating literature that entangles leadership with infant caregiving. In reflection that research is a tool that impacts policy change (Schilling, Giles-Corti, & Sallis, 2009), funded time for faculty to research and publish scholarly literature is necessitated to examine the education/care binary that is at the nucleus of antiquated

narratives of infant caregiving evidenced in policy. Research and published literature, exploring infant caregiving leadership and related topics, is also required for reading packages and learning experiences that prepare preservice degree students who envision working in this profession. Furthermore, resourcing to accommodate faculty examination of the student capstone research project is basic to implementation processes. In-depth review of this student project to establish if leadership and infant caregiving are tangibly represented and promoted as a viable research focus is instrumental in actioning change and in creating spaces for students to de-construct, reflect on and revision narratives that incorporate leadership. This calls for organizational and/or division funded research, and program curriculum re-design reinforcement.

Implementation challenges and limitations. Impediments are typical when rallying change (Browne & Wildavsky, 1983; Kezar, 2014) and are therefore expected to transpire. Although Arendt (1958) cautions us to expect the unexpected, challenges and limitations common to mobilizing change such as community politics and disappointments associated with unfilled promises (Browne & Wildavsky, 1983) are anticipated. A significant foreseen implementation challenge is securing of workload time for change plan leader(s) to dedicate towards analysis of course outcomes, learning experiences, and mapping of CVLO's to PVLO's. In reflection that postsecondary settings are becoming increasingly neoliberal in their day to day operations (Brown, 2015), validating paid faculty time to engage in the work necessary to action solutions could be problematic. Also likely to pose a challenge are misconceptions, that exist with some organizations who host students in their field placements, about the degree central to this change plan. In PAC meetings, and other encounters with field partners, misunderstandings of the differences between the college's two year ECEC diploma and four year ECEC leadership

degree are often noted by faculty within both teaching teams. These misunderstandings could hinder implementation of the four solutions main to this plan.

A limitation specific to the endeavour to conjoin leadership with caregiving in this early years leadership degree program are constraints surrounding the capacity of change plan leaders, and stakeholders, to renew traditional narratives that undermine work situated in care. The education/care binary that burdens the sector (Davis & Degotardi, 2005; Elliott, 2007; Langford, Richardson, Albanese, Bezanson, Prentice & White, 2017) is subject to Browne and Wildavsky's (1983) caution that many social problems are grandiose, difficult to measure and define, contextual, and not entirely solvable. Intensifying this is deeply entrenched gender inequities, examined in Chapters 1 and 2, which pervade this care-positioned profession. Although traditional views which reason care as subordinate to education are being countered in a burgeoning body of literature, care is far from a level playing field with education, posturing this as a significant limitation in enacting OIP change.

Secondary to the above mentioned limitations are restrictions imposed by the organization surrounding adaptations to course outcomes in the period between program reviews. As previously alluded to in this plan, no more than 20% of courses outcomes can be modified unless a formalized program review transpires. Rationales behind this include maintenance of pedagogical integrity, minimization of program vision drift, and assurance that publically accessible marketing materials are accurate. Adhering to this internal organizational policy regulation limits the changes that are required to ally leadership and infant caregiving within course outcomes and descriptions. In addressing this limitation OIP leader(s) need to closely document the 20% changes made to CVLO's in the non-program review period. Additional

recommended changes also require documentation as they can be utilized to inform the next program review that is scheduled to occur in 2024.

The final limitation worthy of mention encompasses the opposing leadership approaches that are projected to influence the actioning of solutions. As previously mentioned, leadership within the organization is predominantly hierarchal and top-down in nature. The relational leadership underpinnings of the change plan thus sits counter to operations of the organization. Looking back to Chapter 1, the supposition that discord lies between a caring approach and institutional priorities (Gardiner, 2015) re-emerges as relevant. This limitation, although largely insurmountable to conquer for OIP change leader(s), is projected to be curtailed by employment of a collaborative approach that is reflective of relationally-based interactions and dialogue. These strategies are comprehensively examined in the final two sections of this chapter which emphasize monitoring and evaluation, and communicating change.

Monitoring and Evaluating Change Processes

In reflecting on a fitting methodology to monitor and evaluate this change plan, it is first essential to underscore that the organization attached to this OIP is a complex setting. Typical to complex social systems are numerous and often unknown perplexing variables which are informed by human and social environments (Homer-Dixon, 1995; Forss, Murra & Schwartz, 2011). This necessitates multi-dimensional interventions and sub-interventions with feedback loops that are responsive to numerous influencing factors (Forss, Murra & Schwartz, 2011). Monitoring and evaluating the complex also warrants a novel approach given each evaluation assignment is unique and needs to be approached as such (Forss, Murra & Schwartz, 2011). Distinctive to this change plan is Fitzpatrick, Sanders and Worthen's (2004) idea of monitoring which focuses on delivery of a plan or model, the nature of the delivery, and the successes and

challenges encountered. Correspondingly, evaluation involves the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine worth or merit in relation to those criteria (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004). In monitoring and evaluating the noted OIP components, it is critical to concretely identify the “so what, who cares?” (Brook, 2018) question common to this field of study. Given that leadership is being increasingly valued as a critical competency of professionals who work with children in their formative years (Campbell-Evans & Stampoulos, 2014), monitoring and evaluation is argued to matter to the early years postsecondary program main to this OIP. Central to this are preservice postsecondary students who have a vested interest, and commitment to, working alongside children in their formative years of life. Monitoring and evaluation processes are additionally relevant to the varying stakeholders who are anticipated to influence course and vocational learning outcome adaptation, and enhancement of infant-oriented field placements. Moreover, although this plan may not have the capacity to influence the sector as a whole, it is aimed to influence and be *cared about* by those who work in the early education and care sector. At the nucleus of this profession are children, most notably infants who are probable to be impacted by enactment processes.

Reflecting on the attributes of monitoring and evaluating, and the foundational tenets of this change plan, the following aspects demand monitoring (M) and/or evaluation (E):

Table 2
Monitoring and Evaluation Elements

OIP Element	M & E Contribution to OIP	Related to Solution # (s)
1. Analysis of course outcomes to determine leadership linkage to infant education and care.	Promote accountability of course and program integrity.	2, 3
2. Mapping of re-designed course outcomes to program vocational outcomes.	Accountability that course outcomes and provincial learning outcomes align.	2, 3
3. Enhancement of field partnerships with infant-based organizations.	Assurance of quality field environments that have potential to offer optimum student learning experience.	2, 3, 4
4. Stakeholder contribution: early years organizations who host degree students in field and internship experiences.	Enable the voices of community partners to ensure they are represented in course outcome, content and field changes.	2, 3, 4
5. Program Advisory Committee, degree faculty.	Ensure that voices of other stakeholders are heard as program and field changes are made.	1, 2, 3, 4
6. Organizational context: Vision, Mission & Values	Prompt reflection about how proposed OIP changes align with the organization.	1, 2, 3, 4
7. Change drivers within early years sector: policy.	Assurance that OIP changes parallel current shifts within practice and policy.	1, 4
8. Resource dependency: guidance of the postsecondary institutions Centre for Academic Excellence for mapping tools, time for contributions of faculty, and community partnership capacity.	Aid with determination of cost, funds, and capacity within the institution, and outside of the institution.	1, 2, 3, 4
9. Capacity of relational leadership to mobilize change within this OIP.	Promote collaborative reflection to gain evidence about leadership demanded to enable OIP change.	1, 2, 3, 4
10. Relevance of Arendt's (1958, 1968) interconnected theories of natality, plurality and action in enacting OIP change.	Foster collaborative reflection to gain evidence about theoretical framework that underpins this OIP.	1, 2, 3, 4

Empowerment Evaluation

Articulated by Fetterman, Rodriguez-Campos and Zukoski (2018) as a conceptual framework steered by process theory, Empowerment Evaluation helps community members to

uncover the logic behind their action. In reflection of this, and in response to the above identified elements, Empowerment Evaluation (EE) is deemed as an appropriate methodology to reflect on and track OIP change processes. Utilized in over 16 countries for over 20 years, EE is responsive to complex systems (Patton, 2017; Wandersman, Alia, Cook, Hsu & Ramaswamy, 2016), and is ethical and pragmatic in nature (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2018). These dimensions are relevant granted that this change plan is situated in a complex organization where ethics are eminent given the probability that infants will be influenced as action transpires. EE is also applicable as movements towards inclusion of practice-based evidence, in conjunction with scientific evidence, mirrors the foundational goal of this organizational change plan to develop “professional and academic knowledge that integrates both practice and research, linking theory with inquiry” (Western Education, 2016). Foundational to this approach is improvement, community ownership and knowledge, inclusion, democratic participation, social justice, evidence-based strategies, capacity building, organizational learning and accountability (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2018). Similarly, EE is deeply rooted in citizenship and community, where both people and actions matter (Fetterman, 2018). Participants of EE are empowered as they partake in leadership and advocacy behaviours (Pinto, Rahman & Williams, 2014). Empowerment Evaluation additionally has capabilities to enhance participation of multiple stakeholders fostering ownership, commitment, follow through, and sustainability (Fetterman, Rodriguez-Campos & Zukosk, 2018). Also core to EE is a critical friend whose role is to pose difficult questions (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2018), and nurture ethical and practical processes (Scriven, 2017). A critical friend is principal to EE as it is “like a fulcrum in terms of fundamental relationships” (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2018, p. 80) that can be applied to influence and maximize the potential of a group. These qualities correspond with the Arendtian

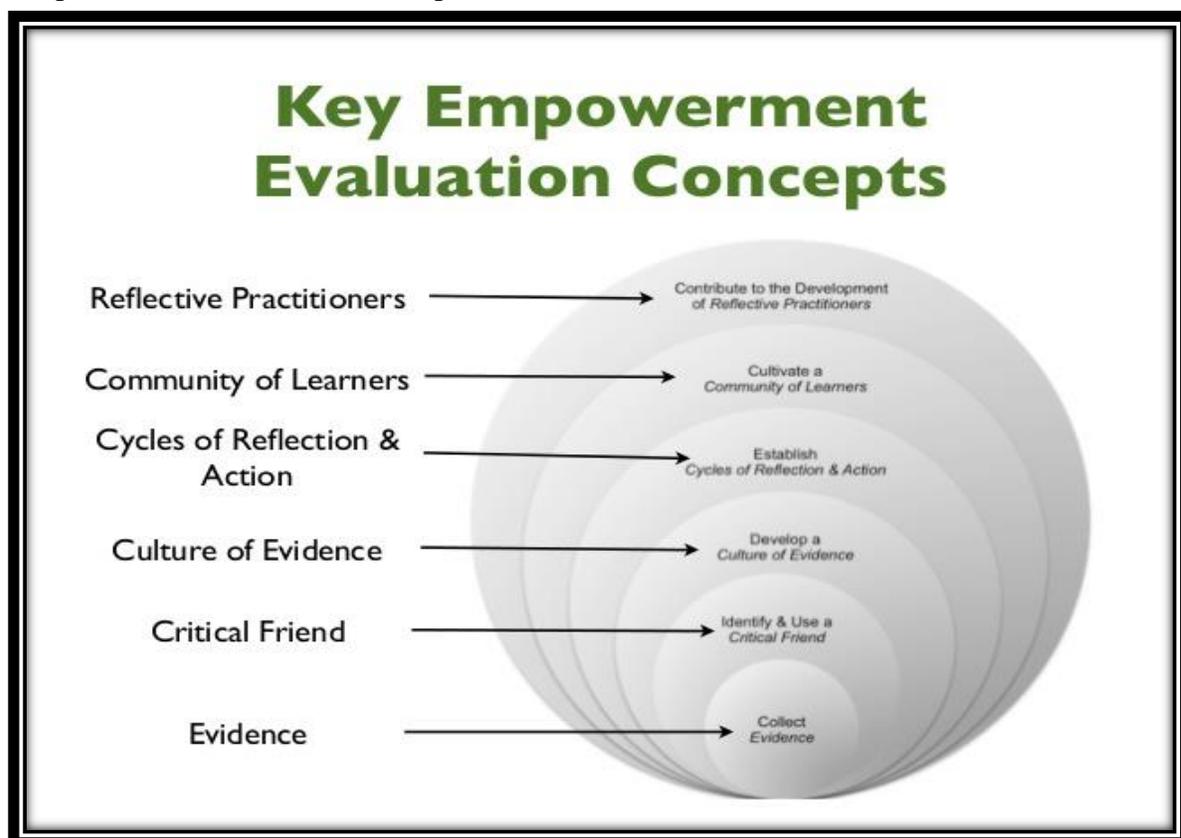
theory and relational leadership stance detailed in the first two chapters of this plan. Specific to the Arendtian informed, relational leadership position of this plan, Empowerment Evaluation is ideal to underpin this OIP as it:

- a. Democratizes conversation about important public issues, and fosters social betterment (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004). This OIP aims to promote conversation relating to the connectedness between leadership and infant care.
- b. Facilitates citizen participation (Fetterman, 2017; Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007; Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004). This OIP is rooted in relational leadership that is grounded in Arendt's (1958, 1968) theories of plurality and action.
- c. Is grounded in relationships (Fetterman, 2017). Relationship-based practice and a relational way of leading are main in this OIP.
- d. Gives voice to marginalized populations (Fetterman, 2017; Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004). This OIP seeks to give voice to infant caregiving professionals who have capacity to engage as leaders.
- e. Relies on cycles of observation, reflection and action that are ongoing and iterative (Fetterman, 2017). OIP tenets that require monitoring, will be captured using observation and reflection techniques. The leader(s) of this plan intends to journal using field notes to capture processes. These observations and reflections are anticipated to inform action required to generate change.
- f. Is grounded in improvement, community ownership, inclusion, democratic participation, social justice, community knowledge, evidence-based strategies, capacity building, organizational learning and accountability (Fetterman, 2017; Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007). These principles are central to the early years degree program and the postsecondary institution in which this OIP is situated.

Methodological knowledge and rigor have developed significantly since Empowerment Evaluation was first studied (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007). It is paramount to note however that limitations exist with this methodology that warrant consideration. Evaluator bias may arise granted that the evaluator decides which stakeholders to include, questions to pose, methodology to employ, and reporting methods to use (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007). This, according to Scriven (2017), could lead to validity and credibility issues. Fetterman, Rodriguez-Campos and

Zukoski (2018) suggest that this can be buffered by inclusion of a professional evaluator alongside EE processes that are predominantly conducted by community and program members, and by using EE tools. Additional strategies to minimize barriers and encourage integrity in EE processes include identifying perceptions, understandings of evaluation, time and energy commitments, and roles and responsibilities, of stakeholders (Schoes, Murphy-Berman & Chankers, 2000). Focal to these tactics, is the criticality of balancing stakeholder voices with the adeptness to decide which ones take precedence (Schoes, Murphy-Berman & Chankers, 2000). Ultimately, Empowerment Evaluation is a valuable tool however it must be used carefully and thoughtfully (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004). Using a careful and thoughtful approach, the following key EE concepts have potential to foster accountability and decision-making in this organizational improvement plan:

Figure 5
Key Empowerment Evaluation Concepts



Note. Adapted from "SAGE talks Webinar Series: Empowerment Evaluation" by David Fetterman, 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/sagepublications/empowerment-eval-presentation-final>.

The above Empowerment Evaluation concepts complement the Arendtian informed relational leadership approach that is core to fostering relatedness between leadership and infant education and care. Empowerment principles such as reflective practice, community/stakeholder participation, and collaborative action mirror the position of this change plan. Thus, an Empowerment-based Evaluation tool that borrows principles from both of Fetterman and Wandersman's (2018) three and ten step frameworks of EE, is summarized in Table 3 in efforts to support accountability and decision-making as action unfolds:

Table 3

Empowerment Evaluation of OIP Solution 1

OIP Solution #1: *Advocating for policy change that deems degree credentials as requisite for preservice professionals who envision working with infants.*

Purpose of Evaluation: To promote accountability of course and program integrity.

Participants/Stakeholders: _____

Date: _____

Evaluation Questions	Evidence	Critical Friend Feedback	Rating	Next Steps
1. What methods have been utilized to analyse course outcomes? 2. Does existing evidence exist that supports relatedness of leadership and infant education and care? 3. What resources, policy, and pedagogical documents can inform revision of learning outcomes? 4. What courses are fitting to embed revised outcomes?				1. Date of Next Reflection: _____ 2. Date of Next Reflection: _____ 3. Date of Next Reflection: _____ 4. Date of Next Reflection: _____

Rating Scale: 1=outcome in preliminary stage, 2=outcome in process, 3=outcome nearly met, 4=outcome met

This template is also intended to be applied and customized to monitor and evaluate solutions two, three, and four outlined in Chapter 2. Paralleling the Key Empowerment Evaluation Concepts identified in Figure 5, this tool is designed to promote a reflective approach to change enactment within a community of learners. A time commitment of approximately four hours, once every four months, is essential for participants of Empowerment Evaluation processes. Cycles of reflection and action are informed by the evidence documented, critical friend feedback, and the rating scale which indicates the stage of progress. It is also created with the objective of promoting stakeholder contributions and planning for the future, which are key to maintaining momentum in change processes (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2018). In line with Chapter 1 however, the use of this monitoring and evaluation tool is subject to Arendt's (1958) claim that outcomes cannot always be predicted given that "unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings and origins" (p. 178). Should the unexpected arise as this change plan is actioned, adaptations to this empowerment evaluation instrument may be merited.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and Change Processes

In the endeavour to destabilize the status quo and move towards a preferred organizational state, leaders must communicate the need for change (Battliana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache & Alexander, 2010). Correspondingly, in reflection that hegemonic relationships and resistance are common to communication organizational strategies often utilized (Zoller, 2014), it is imperative that a plan to communicate change is outlined to minimize these challenges. In seeking to expand the theoretical and topical diversity that resides across organizational communication research (Zoller, 2014) this plan continues to lean on Arendt's (1958, 1968) work to theorize how change can be best communicated. Primary to this is Tamboukou's (2016) postulation that "communication through organic involvement in the web of relations is the backdrop of the

human condition itself for Arendt” (p. 140). Relationships with both internal and external stakeholders, including postsecondary students studying to engage in infant caregiving leadership work, PAC members, governing ECEC organization and most importantly infants, are at the nucleus of the plan to communicate the need for change and change processes. In communicating the need for change and associated processes, this plan adheres to Lewis’s (2011) claim that when stakeholders are encouraged to contribute their expertise, insights and suggestions, communication is more effective. If furthermore takes into account the significance that trust plays in enhancing open communication and ethicality, and in clarifying misunderstandings (Kezar, 2014). Fundamental to this is the premise that trust “enhances open communication, which is likely to identify any ethical problems” (Kezar, 2014, p. 216). This is of great consequence given the responsibility that change leader(s) hold to ensure ethical practice in the commitment to maintain the well-being of infants who may be potentially impacted by change. Trust is also noteworthy in communication exchanges that are anticipated to transpire within the Community of Practice model outlined in this chapter. Kezar (2014) declares that trust is essential in a learning community of this nature as it sets the stage for participants to engage with one another. Trust is furthermore basic to the plan to communicate change as it is linked to fostering open sharing of ideas (Barge & Little, 2002). In these sharing experiences, situating communication within Arendt’s theorization of caring, which Gardiner (2015) surmises allows everyone to express themselves freely, is similarly foundational. This obliges that leaders welcome dialogue and debate where all voices are heard and respected. Key to trust and care in communications that prompt dialogue and debate are the faculty team, CoP participants and PAC members.

Complementing the relational dimensions that translate from the first two chapters to this final chapter is Arendt's (1958, 1968) interconnected theories of natality, plurality and action. According to Bowen-Moore (1989) "Arendt's philosophy of natality is characterized by its novel approach to the *way we address* the issues which confront us and to the *way we think and speak* of them" (p. 150). As change is communicated, consideration of how the de-coupling that resides between leadership and infant caregiving in this postsecondary program is addressed, and the ways in which leader(s) and stakeholders think and speak of this, is key. Also common to both Arendtian (1958) theory and communication strategies of this plan is plurality of perspectives. Arendt surmises that when we interrupt ordinary thinking diverse standpoints can be interjected for reflection (Bowen-Moore, 1989). In this plan, these divergent perspectives are expected to transpire as stakeholders act together, which according to Arendt (1958) engenders power. This requires that stakeholders who are often receivers, and not producers, of communication in change processes (Lewis, 2011) are invited to actively partake in communicating the need for change both within and external to the organization. A participatory approach, which Lewis (2011) suggests is main to enacting and communicating change, is integral to this objective of nurturing active participation especially granted that it minimizes resistance. This demands that stakeholders, who predominantly consist of those who work in the education and care sector, are willing to subscribe to Arendtian theory which calls us to speak, act and tell stories in a public forum (Berger, 2015). It also requires that change plan leader(s) are adequately prepared and positioned to advocate for the intersect of leadership and infant caregiving in postsecondary learning given that "leadership is no longer bound to a position or the achievement of pre-defined goals, rather, it is manifested in the courage to speak and act" (Berger, 2015, p. 485). In these ongoing acting and speaking encounters that address change warranted, stories about the

education/care binary, the gendered nature of infant caregiving, and the lack of recognition for the specialized knowledge and skills required for those who work with the zero to two population, necessitate articulation through the perspectives of multiple voices. Dialogical wisdom, which is characterized by the respecting of multiple points of views and voices (Barge & Little, 2002) is of significance as these stories are communicated and reflected upon.

Multiplicity of Voices

Multiplicity of voices, perspectives and responses is also pertinent to fostering awareness of change within the organization. Kezar (2014) postulates that campus-wide conversations incite recasting of ideas, reconstruction of new identities, and generate conversation about what is plausible for the organization in relation to its history, norms and social functions. Although this may necessitate divergent approaches, all communication that transpires endorses the premise that dialogue needs to be relationally focused (Barge & Little, 2002; Isaacs, 1999). Promoting awareness of change within the organization is also subject to the multiple, often conflicting voices that arise in organizational change (Barge & Little, 2002). Turning to Arendtian (1958, 1968) theory, which calls for plurality of voices where divergent perspectives can be deliberated, is projected to act as guide to navigate key stakeholder voices. In these voices responsibility exists to protect and represent the voice of infants. These voices include:

1. Faculty: As articulated in Chapter 1, the five member faculty team associated with this change plan are relational in their interactions and communications. The 2017 PEQAB report affirmed the collaborative and united approach of this team, and commended the team's commitment to strengthening the early education and care sector. This relational stance is projected to create open spaces for the dialogue that is essential to change communication (Lewis, 2011).

Distributing portions of this change plan to faculty for review, and engaging collaboratively to

generate methodologies to distribute and gather information as solutions are enacted is also a facet of the plan to communicate change. Likely to surface in responses and questions of the faculty team, is the previously mentioned need for funded time to re-design course outcomes and evaluation methodologies that more closely align leadership with infant caregiving. Funded research time to investigate infant caregiving leadership, the education/care binary that influences this field, and future prospects for this care-oriented profession, are also expected to be questioned.

2. Field Placement Partners: Mainstay to this change plan are community stakeholders, who act as members on PAC and program review committees, and host degree students in experiential components of the program. In view that community stakeholders need to have expansive and inclusive dialogue in change processes (Kezar, 2014), and socialization into their roles (Lewis, 2011), communication is key. Reactions and queries about mentorship, and how adapted outcomes and learning experiences may impact the organizations that host students in their field work, are foreseeable. Stakeholders who have traditionally employed two year diploma graduates to work with infants may also inquire about how the proposed solution: *advocating for policy change that deems degree credentials as requisite for preservice professionals who envision working with infants*, will influence practice, wages, leadership roles with organizations, and infant caregiving. In planning to cultivate communication with field placement stakeholders, and the plurality of voices outlined above, processes to transparently and convincingly communicate change are worthy of deliberation.

3. Management: In view that this change plan is positioned in an organization that predominantly adheres to top-down, hierarchal leadership, communicating change could prove to be problematic. Binding all four proposed solutions to PEQAB and PAC recommendations, the

ECEC regulatory body in Ontario, and the program mapping tool that this organization utilizes, is main to buffering the communication challenges that may transpire due to incongruencies between the organizational and change plan leadership approaches. Given the neoliberal tendencies of the management team, as identified in Chapter 1, it is projected that reactions and questions will centre on time and funds required to enact solutions and conduct research. Questions about how this change plan could contribute to marketing and increased enrolment numbers are also liable to be queried.

4. Early Childhood Education (ECE) Diploma Faculty and Students: As aforesaid in previous chapters, not all professionals who work in the early education and care profession understand and/or support movements in the sector that advocate for degree level learning. This has the propensity to contribute to tension between faculty in the two year diploma, and four year degree program. Consequently, it is imperative that communication between diploma and degree faculty within this organization occurs, especially given that approximately 30 students from the diploma program bridge into the degree program each year often with the intent of gaining increasing education to work with the school-age population. Examined in Chapter 1, the goal of this early years degree program is to prepare graduates to work in early years settings. Increased communications amongst ECE diploma and degree faculty is paramount in the advocacy dimensions of this OIP to develop critical policy that highlights the validity of degree level learning for infant caregiving leaders. Probable to surface in these communications are responses and questions that seek to probe education/care binary discourses, the lack of professional and financial recognition that continues to pervade the field, and how a degree level credential has potential to mitigate inequities for preservice professionals who aim to work as infant caregiving leaders.

Although not projected to be key in communications, three alternate voices influence change in this plan. They include the Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE) which oversees quality assurance, and internal and external feedback in program reviews and renewals. Dialogue with CAE is furthermore applicable to later phases of OIP development where mapping to ensure pedagogical integrity of the program is planned. Media and Library Services is also relevant in communications as this department is required to play a role in addressing the aforementioned shortage of literature exploring the relatedness of leadership to infant caregiving that hinders change progression. Ongoing correspondence between faculty and Media and Library Services is prime to ensuring that as research, literature and policy expands in the fields of leadership, infant caregiving, care professions and the education/care binary, that is it made accessible to faculty, and students studying in this early years program. Lastly, Research and Innovation (R&I), the department that oversees faculty and student capstone research, and collaborates with industry and business partners and funders is germane in communications. The ethical considerations that accompany conducting research with and/or about infants necessitates reciprocal dialogue amongst R&I, faculty, students, and community partners given the vulnerability that is often associated with infancy (Lansdown, 2011; WAIMH, 2016).

Communication Strategies for Varying Audiences

In strategizing to communicate clearly and persuasively about the change path, realizations met, strengths, and facets that require strengthening in change processes, continuous dialogue is fundamental. Contrary to traditional approaches of circumventing conversation that opposes change, this plan subscribes to generative forms of dialogue that prompts negotiation and critique at different levels as the path of change alters over time (Kezar, 2014; Thomas, Sargent & Hardy, 2011). Strategies to communicate across multifarious audiences tie to Arendt's (1958, 1968)

theories of natality, plurality and action which are theorized earlier in this chapter as influencers of change communication. Significant to these theories is addressing, thinking and speaking about issues, interrupting ordinary thinking to interject new perspectives, and collective action which entails speech and storytelling. Communicating clearly and convincingly thus necessitates that leader(s) and stakeholders engage concertedly to disrupt antiquated rhetoric about infant care leaders. In doing so, inviting disparate stories that delve into infant caregiving, leadership, the education/care binary, and degree credentials is of essence. Referring to Arendt's work as a theoretical basis, Berger (2015) postulates that when communities come together in a public forum to share stories that "new meanings, new realities, and new relationships" (p. 137) have opportunity to arise. Adjunct to the value of stories, is the necessity to explain processes, create skill-building and information dissemination activities, alter evaluation systems, and acclimatize stakeholders to their functions in the course of change, which Lewis (2011) views as cardinal to communicating change. These communication principles translate not only to communicating clearly and persuasively, but also to the ways in which the channelling of communication is strategized in this OIP.

Channelling Communication

In response to the multiperspectival and plural posture of this change plan, a blend of both interpersonal and mediated methodologies (Lewis, 2011) is proposed to guide the channelling of communications. The interpersonal approach, which promotes face-to-face dialogue (Lewis, 2011), may prove applicable to all aforementioned voices. It is however liable to be most relevant to communications with faculty, the Centre of Academic Excellence, the ECE diploma program and field partners, given the nature of the responses and queries that are predicted to ensue from these stakeholders. A mediated methodology uses technology and/or mass media

(Lewis, 2011) and is forecasted to be most pertinent in communications with management, Media and Library Services and the Research and Innovation Department. Similar to the interpersonal approach, the mediated approach may apply to all stakeholders. In employing both methodologies, the nature, time, frequency, and design of the message require thought and planning (Lewis, 2011). In keeping with the emergent stance of this plan fixed tactics are not proposed, but rather a flexible framework that initially proposes communications occur a minimum of once per month. Communications are also reflective of stakeholder involvement in the four proposed solutions.

Table 4
Channelling Communication

Solution	Stakeholder	Interpersonal Communication	Mediated Communication
1. <i>Advocating for policy change that deems degree credentials as requisite for preservice professionals who envision working with infants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty/Leader(s) • R&I • Field Partners • ECE Diploma 	* * *	*
2. <i>Integrating academic and experiential learning outcomes into course syllabi that distinctly pair leadership and infant caregiving.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty/Leader(s) • Management • CAE • Field Partners 	* * *	*
3. <i>Academic and experiential learning opportunities that create spaces for early years degree students to de-construct, reflect on, and revision narratives of infant caregiving that are more closely associated with leadership.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty/Leader(s) • CAE • Media & Library • Field Partners 	* * *	*
4. <i>Enhance partnerships with infant-based community organizations who are equipped to mentor future infant education and care leaders.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty/Leader(s) • Field Partners 	* *	* *

Channelling Communication via a Community of Practice. The work of Arendt posits that citizens should assemble in public spaces to “discuss and form opinions, participate in public-political affairs, have a say in policy formation, endow each other with the power to act, forgive each other for political transgressions, [and] demonstrate their action in speech” (Bowen-Moore, 1989, p. 152). In consonance with this thinking, which calls for dialogue and policy formation that is inclusive of diverse voices, formation of a Community of Practice (CoP) is elemental in the plan to channel communication. The CoP model has gained increasing attention in the past couple of decades (Ampartzaki, Kypriotaki, Voreadou, Dardioti & Stathi, 2013; Yin & Zheng, 2018) and is linked to leadership (Cobb, McClain, Lamberg & Dean, 2003; Coburn, 2001; Stein & Nelson, 2003; Printy, 2008) and trust (Ying & Zheng, 2018). Described as a working framework that provokes negotiation of knowledge to improve situations and find effective solutions to issues and problems, CoP’s encourage involvement at different levels where participants can decide their particular role as a member (Ampartzaki et al., 2013). Benefits of CoP’s include an increased understanding of children’s needs and one’s own professional identify, enriched organizational learning and improvement, cultivation of individual and collective practice, increased stakeholder involvement (Kirkby, Walsh & Keary, 2018) productive learning, change and innovation, and paved pathways to educational change (Printy, 2008). Common to a Community of Practice are members who share values and interests by engaging in concerted activities to produce shared resources (Printy, 2008; Wenger, 1998). Principles essential to CoP’s include social and organizational structure, open dialogue encompassing diverse perspectives and responsiveness to the expertise of others, varied levels of participation, public and private spaces to debate, a mix of sharing experiences with other approaches, a spirit of inquiry that nurtures positive shifts in identity and a rhythm that considers

timing and events that accommodates the community. In CoP experiences, singular, unified and blended voices, which Barge and Little (2002) stipulate as main to communicating change, is of magnitude as all stakeholders are incited to disrupt conventional discourse about infant caregiving, and the education/care binary to renew perspectives that encompass leadership. Important to note nonetheless, is that management does not always recognize the value that CoP's add to the organization, and that potential exists for CoP's to perpetuate stereotypes, prejudice and monotonous practices (Printy, 2008). Inviting all previously identified voices to engage in the Community of Practice, including management, is proposed as a strategy to nurture recognition of the value that the CoP brings not only to this degree program, but also to the organization. Should management not have adequate time to participate in interpersonal community of practice exchanges, mediated communication could prove valuable.

Next Steps to Action This OIP

The emergent disposition of this plan necessitates that forethought is offered to next steps. This is critical as the aim to relate leadership with infant caregiving in this degree program is likely to take time, adaptation, trust, and care to evolve. First and foremost in subsequent steps is the proposition that articulation of a clear vision is foundational in inciting stakeholders to embrace change (Buller, 2015; Haque, TitiAmayah & Liu, 2016; Kezar, 2014). An executive summary of the plan that is concretely connected to PEQAB recommendations, and Provincial Learning Outcomes of this early years program, presented at a PAC meeting in the fall of 2019 is a viable means to disseminate the vision of this plan. Requesting to have change plan discussions as a standing agenda item for the team that is directly affiliated to this degree program may also prove fruitful in continuing to move this plan onward. Publication of a peer-reviewed, scholarly article is also applicable to next steps as advocacy on broader level could lead other scholars in

the profession to reflect on the problem of practice that is prime to this plan. Sustained efforts to deepen and widen partnerships with organizations that are infant-based, and with the newly established Ontario Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care is likewise basic to impelling change. Also pivotal to synergizing solutions is the necessity to uncover the rationale(s) behind, and potential strategies to mediate, the dissatisfaction that postsecondary students commonly report about their infant placement experiences (Garvis & Lemon, 2015; Recchia & Shin, 2010). As movements are made to minimize the problem of practice core to this OIP, intentional focus on this challenge is imperative given that a significant influencer of preservice learning is field work (Ackerman, 2004; Bennett, 2007; Bonnett & Ly, 2017). This is noteworthy as experiential learning is posited in this plan to contribute to setting the trajectory for future infant caregivers to envision themselves as leaders. Mentorship challenges associated with this, discussed in Chapter 2, thus require cogitation as next steps unfold.

Prospects for Infant Caregiving Leadership

Conventional perceptions and narratives about infant caregiving are progressively being replaced by ones that acknowledge the specialized knowledge and skills required to work with the zero to two population. Care, a foundational dimension of infant caregiving work, is likewise becoming valued as a professional competency that is worthy of recognition and respect. In these advancements, it is vital that unceasing attention is offered to the capacity that lies within infant caregivers to engage as leaders. It is furthermore imperative that those who prepare to work with infants critically reflect on how policy, pedagogical documents, advocacy efforts, and competencies typical to the work of the infant specialist, synthesize with relational leadership. Similarly, relational leadership in the context of an Ethics of Care, merits probing in efforts to elevate the leadership profile for those who work in this profession. In looking to action this

change plan, leadership is additionally foundational. Twofold, leadership is central to bringing action to the proposed solutions *and* to the pursuit to interlace leadership with infant caregiving in academic and experiential learning. Arendt's proposition "that leadership functions best when it arises out of individuals working together, rather than directed by one person" (Gardiner, 2015, p. 35) is applicable to both of these leadership dimensions. Contemplating the future of infant caregiving leadership in this degree program warrants further interrogation to unearth how leader(s) can work together to shift the current positioning of infant caregiving in this leadership-oriented program. Conversely, alternate theoretical perspectives that probe leadership, the education/care binary, and the profession of infant caregiving require cogitation as this postsecondary organization readies future ECEC leaders to enter the workforce. As progress is made towards a desired organization state, deliberating how to more transparently market this leadership degree program to reflect the intentional focus that is placed on infant caregiving is crucial. Active contributions to critical policy analysis and development, by faculty and students, is similarly essential in the advocacy that is required to elevate the profile of infant caregivers. Ultimately, this organizational change plan draws attention to two fields of study, leadership and infant caregiving, which currently lack concrete connectedness in an Ontario early years degree program. Moreover, it seeks to illuminate relatedness between relational leadership and infant caregiving, with the intent of stimulating future research and reflection that interweaves these two disciplines. Possibilities to alter the trajectory for preservice infant caregivers, and in turn infant well-being, lie in renewed narratives that situate infant caregiving within a leadership paradigm.

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