



Toward a Provincial Framework for Early Learning and Care in Alberta

A Record of Participant Discussions

Lethbridge

November 16, 2012

Fort McMurray • Grande Prairie • Edmonton • Red Deer • Calgary • Medicine Hat • Lethbridge



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1. Introduction

In November 2012, The Muttart Foundation, Success By 6 and Calgary UpStart hosted consultations in 7 Alberta cities to consider the design of a new provincial framework for early learning and care. The consultations, funded in part with support from the Government of Alberta Ministries of Human Services and Education, explored how Alberta might, over time, more closely integrate early learning and care and how a potential framework could be structured to guide and support this process of integration.

The stakeholders invited to attend the consultations included senior staff and volunteers from early learning and care organizations, senior staff who oversee or work in school-based early learning programs, academic staff from post-secondary institutions as well as staff from infrastructure organizations that support service delivery.

To support the consultation discussions, the project partners contracted a team of early education and care researchers to prepare background papers that were circulated to the participants in advance of the consultations. The background papers provided an overview of the main idea of integrating early learning and care and considered the potential features or nature of this integration across the key domains of service design, funding and delivery. The papers summarized the research literature on integration, and provided examples of how individual jurisdictions have approached integration (copies of these background reports can be downloaded from the Muttart Foundation website at www.muttart.org/reports).

The consultations followed a similar format. At each meeting, the participants engaged in a series of facilitated discussions that initially explored the main idea of more closely integrating early learning and care followed by a series of more detailed discussions on the main design features or elements of a more integrated approach and their expression in a new provincial framework.

Throughout the discussions, participants recorded their own responses to the various questions they considered on individual feedback sheets. These sheets were then collected at the end of the consultations, transcribed and analyzed to provide a record of the discussions. The participant comments were organized according to the main questions they considered and sorted to reflect the key themes and ideas they expressed. The comments made were not attributed to individual participants.

This report presents the participant comments from the Lethbridge consultation held on November 16th, 2012 at the Holy Spirit Central Office. Twenty-eight participants took part in the discussions. The project partners greatly appreciate the time and energy the participants contributed to the discussions and thank them all individually for their insights and commitment to this work.

A final consultation summary report prepared by the Muttart Foundation, Success By 6 and Calgary UpStart for the Ministries of Human Services and Education presents the findings from across the seven consultations. Copies of this report can also be requested from the three project partners.

2. Integration

What key themes, ideas and questions emerge for you when you consider more closely integrating ELC in AB?

Theme: Overall

Subtheme: Definition

- Common definition of integration: common use of language.

Subtheme: Drivers for Change

- Is the push economic/or truly what is best for children and families?
- Remember – the better outcome for children as they can be reached earlier and have smoother transition from program to program etc.
- Is the push to get more parents into the work force?
- What is activating all this? Is providing childcare for children of working or otherwise absent parents – beneficial?

Theme: The Scope of the ELC System

- ELC – best if a 0-8 year approach, children need a strong foundation – learning to read – reading to learn.
- Still fragmented along age of child. Reframe to first 2000 days.
- The first 2000 days as opposed to segmented age groupings.
- The focus still seems to be over 2 years.

Theme: Early Childhood Development & Education Paradigms

- Education and childcare need to truly acknowledge one another's skill sets, training, expertise and have a better understanding of one another's program
- Educational teachers working with early childhood educators to create best environment – daycare – preschool – kindergarten for those with special needs.
- How do we educate the teachers with early learning so they can continue to guide the children towards success?
- Merger - not take over.
- Merging childcare and education – key learning.
- Should be play based learning.
- Can we reconcile the idea that education and care are more closely related then is currently reflected in our system?

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child-Focused

- How do we maintain a focus on what is in the best interest of children and their families?

Subtheme: Family/Parent Involvement

- Parent involvement.
- Professionals can refer parents to other resources more easily.
- The literature skims over supports for parenting/parents.

Subtheme: Access

- Easier access for families.
- It should be available for every child.
- Accessibility of all children: “seamless’ integration from 0-8 instead of the ‘first 2000 days’”.

Subtheme: Seamless Delivery

- Continuity of care – seamless and less stressful changes for family and children.
- Consistent support between families, programs.
- Having seamless services facilitated in same environment/complex
- Seamless integration to assist the children to become avid learners at an earlier age as well as family supports.
- Seamless integration for all children including with special needs to be able to access services: one stop shopping idea, “home daycare, preschool, kindergarten.

Theme: Other Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Curriculum

- Curriculum – ensure it really pays attention to what is developmentally appropriate not getting ready for school/work/taxpayer.
- How do we create a smoother early learning curriculum into a grade one level from kindergarten.
- Integration of the physical environment (pragmatics).
- Need review of curriculum for infants and toddlers as a specialized area.

Subtheme: Finance

- Available ongoing funding- with all of the gov’t cutbacks will there be money continually available even with changes of gov’t in the future?
- How will funding work.
- Provincial funding will it be supported by an aging constituent base who are personally affected with different priorities like ailing health and own individual support needs?

Subtheme: Governance

- An idea I have is integrating under one ministry to reduce competition amongst current stakeholders and create more streamlining of services for children and families ages 0-12.
- I felt like the move to an integrated human services ministry took the focus off of children and youth services within the province. Alignment between childcare/out of school care licensing act and the education act.
- In Alberta, integration tends to be quite divided due to the governance of each program. 0-3 tend to have different guidelines which make assisting diversity more difficult and tends to blend all developments of children together as well as less resources for families unless children have high needs. 3-4 tend to have a different guideline leading towards education. And the 4.5 – 6 works towards education.
- Is ELC more closely aligned with the ministry of education or the ministry of human services? Can we engage the federal government again?

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Also, I believe that all people working in ELC settings should be fully trained, certified early learning specialists. These practitioners should be adequately compensated for the important work they do.
- Mandatory education in ECE for all teachers for 0-8
- What type of early learning training will be required and how will it be facilitated.

Subtheme: Organizing Services – public v private

- Private and public ownership of spaces.
- How on earth will private childcare providers react/be included/be inspired to move forward/embrace/accept the plan? I'm not from this province; I have a difficult time wrapping my head around for profit vs. non profit delivery.

Subtheme: Organizing Services – service configurations

- What role would service providers and local schools play within an integrated system?
- Full day kindergarten – full school days? How does this respond to need for actual full day care: more fragmentation for child?
- Work together to align services.

Subtheme: Organizing Services – regional differences

- Remember how this plays out for rural, parents/community.
- Universality of access is a big concern for me – regional disparity is a factor – with 70% of the population being in urban centers this would make a real sense for them. The sparsely populated rural areas struggle with access to libraries, parent links centers etc. Long bus rides to access programs are

prohibitive. Cultural barriers are also a concern – this could really be positive for the majority but unintentionally create additional disparity.

Theme: General

- The question always is how? I see the value in integration and would fully support such a move but only if it would clearly improve the quality and accessibility of programs.

Theme: Other Considerations

- Are the positive outcomes cited in the literature a comparison of children's programs or does it include a comparison with early learning management and delivered by the child's parents?
- Early learning and care must be approached as an entirely new system built from the bottom up.
- Federal funding support/plan that addresses the needs of individual regions but exists and is fair: was such a big agenda 5-7 years ago, and was not agenda item at all last election – what happened to the momentum? Can it be restored? Is it necessary?

What level or type of integration do you see as valuable in Alberta?

Theme: Common Purpose

- We must work beyond our values, beliefs and agendas and work towards a common definition, common language and common goals and objectives.

Theme: Level of Integration

Subtheme: Full integration

- Yup – full integration please.
- Full integration of all supports to children, not just education and care.
- Full integration that allows for jurisdictional need to be addressed.
- Full integration through health, care, and any services needed.
- Full integration would be the optimum. That includes care, education and community.
- Full integration for 0-8, not just 0-6 with a specialized cross ministerial department devoted to ECE.
- I feel a high level of integration and support is valuable for all children.
- I support full integration to reduce administrative costs and competing philosophies, regulations and funding sources.
- I would favour a fully integrated model with a separate ministry. I feel that this is the best way to give the ELC field the importance it deserves.

Subtheme: Partial integration

- I don't think we are close to full integration - we'll have to start in places where we can actually make it happen (e.g. curriculum).

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Access

- Equal opportunities for all children.

Subtheme: Choice

- Available choices for parents.

Subtheme: Seamless Continuum

- I feel that a seamless transition from care to programs to home is needed.
- Continuity and consistency is important. Re in Kenya children stay with the same providers for all programming for a minimum of 3 years. This allows for relationship building (two ways). If the relationship is good, this is very positive for the child.
- It would be valuable to see more integrated services made available for the child and family throughout their early years which follows the child no matter their program.

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Aligning the practices across education settings and child care settings based upon developmental appropriateness for young children.
- I see the importance of integration taking place as early as infant to age 8. It is also very important to set up variety of areas so children can proceed as their development enhances. Many children may be below or above their age in development.

Theme: Links to Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Finances

- Fully publicly funded.
- Publicly funded.
- Funding should be accessible in all different environments for children with disabilities.

Subtheme: Governance

- ELC Ministry responsible for all childcare centers through Kindergarten and all the way to Grade 3 (div1).
- Cross ministry for governance.
- I think the move to shift children and youth services into human services was detrimental to the development and enhancement of ELC.

- With the loss of a separate ministry of children and youth services within the province I think it could be beneficial to integrate ELC with the ministry of education because then we might see a shift back to a children and youth focus.

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Educated staff in ECE.
- Using ECE teachers in kindergarten program and offering accessible training for certified teachers to gain information on “play based” philosophy and setting up the environment for inquiry and discovery.

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Schools and service providers are already working with the same children so there needs to be a better alignment of services. Children deserve the right to develop skills at a younger age and families deserve greater support for their 0-5 year olds to ensure they are prepared for elementary school.
- A network of services that work together, rather than parents trying to figure out a jigsaw puzzle in order to meet the needs of their child!

Subtheme: Curriculum Framework

- Early learning programs that support social and play based learning and exploration and address needs of both typical and special needs children.

Theme: General

- A clearer picture of what is available to families and children.
- Integrating best understanding of child development into these settings/services is prudent and logical.

Theme: Moving Forward

Subtheme: Engagement

- More conversations/discussions across child care and education realms to enhance the understanding as we move toward a more integrated setting.

How would you characterize the state of readiness in AB for more closely integrating ELC?

Theme: Public Awareness

- Community needs to understand that we live in a different world, not a better or worse one.
- If people don't understand it won't happen.
- The critical mass of the public has to recognize the crucial nature of this work
- Need to educate and create awareness on ongoing basis.

- Poor. Require public education and analysis of beliefs about societal responsibilities for children, caring work (private non-profit vs. public paid) and equity for women.

Theme: Links to Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- If you ask any given ministry, they are prepared to lead it. They'll have the philosophy and the ideas of how to proceed. "Give us the money and the authority and turn us loose".
- In my experience, cross – ministry initiatives don't work well ... yet.

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Education for staff is a huge issue.

Themes: Principles

Subtheme: Parent Involvement/Choice

- Have we moved to a place where both parents choosing to be in the work force is valued? How do we make ELC work for them and their schedule? How do we make sure they are involved?
- This can be a choice but parents should still have choice. NOT a state mandated system.

Theme: Readiness By Stakeholder

Subtheme: Parents

- I think it will be a hard sell to parents looking to turn over a major portion of child rearing to "professionals".
- I think there has been a push recently for integrating the two; parents seem more informed of the benefits of quality early years programs and are becoming more demanding of this type of service.

Subtheme: Government

- Does our political structure of 4 year governments allow for bold but necessary change?
- I was encouraged by the information presented this morning concerning the provincial government's apparent commitment to Early Childhood Education and care and to their response to our initial discussions with them. The whole notion of the Political Window being open.
- The current government seems fairly ready. I wonder about public support, funding of early learning and care still is not widely supported.

Subtheme: Community Level

- With new brain research available it clearly emphasizes the importance of early years and parents as well as educators are more informed.
- With the EDI mapping information becoming available communities are aware of where children's needs are and wanting to have more support to fill these needs.
- Beliefs about what education is, when it begins and who is responsible for it need to be addressed.

Subtheme: ELC Stakeholders

- I feel Alberta is ready for integrating ELC. There are many preschools already in operation and well supported by families.
- Getting teachers on board – changing their pre-trained ideas of curriculum to center based learned.
- Those in the field are ready – Is our male dominated, “old boy” network ready?
- A lack of respect for one another as agencies – need to network together and involve our families and each take the piece of the puzzle that fits best for the child. I have seen organizations start to get better in working together over the past couple of years.
- Talks are happening but facilities are not ready/available currently to make this happen quickly.
- This would need a lot of work – we’ve all working against each other almost letting pride of what we offer take precedence over what’s best for families

Theme: Feasibility and Timing

- I think we are further ahead than 10 years ago but a long way from being able to mobilize into action.
- This is an opportune time.
- We need to recognize the time is right to make changes. Moving forward and realizing the changing times, challenges with so many dedicated people with the best interests of children the main goal.
- With the changing demographics and the centralization of population into urban areas, the province is ripe for change. This is so necessary. The continuity that used to be provided by geographic proximity of extended family must be complemented with quality supports for families.

Theme: Other Considerations

- Need local input.
- Already have accreditation in daycares so they are accountable for delivering quality care.
- Child care is viewed only as alternative to at home care and tied to free market participation and is a family responsibility (deficit perception)
- Unsure... the child directed/natural based (Reggio inspired) environments seem hard to find here...

What do we need to keep in mind as we consider integrating ELC in Alberta?

Theme: Awareness & Engagement

- Educate all stakeholders, i.e. all citizens, on what this looks like.
- Professionals, families, seniors, general society.

Theme: Scope of System

- Need to integrate age 0 and beyond. If early years are being adapted we need to continue into the child's later years as to not have all of our efforts wasted
- Integration up to age 8, which is then a large foundation for children, would be very beneficial to continue this seamless integration. As well, as educating and assisting families.
- Having common language and understanding.

Theme: Early Childhood Development & Education Paradigms

- Current brain research supporting the needs/EC service provision.
- Learning is development on a foundation of relationships, attachments, security. When the foundation is achieved then, and only then is real learning (not coping or surviving or adapting) made possible.
- Learning and care cannot have one without the other. First is the care if a child doesn't have a bond/connection with his caregiver he can't move up the pyramid to explore be curious and learn.
- Quality of programming that enhances the child's ability to learn inherently through exploration, social interactions and play. The emphasis cannot simply be on "school readiness".
- To acknowledge everyone's expertise – ECD and school system.
- To assist seamless integration, it would be beneficial to have early childhood developers working alongside educational teachers to assist learning, through developmentally appropriate activities and child directed centers.
- Quality of programming that enhances the child's ability to learn inherently through exploration, social interactions and play. The emphasis cannot simply be on "school readiness".

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child-Centered

- To keep the best interest of the child and the family at the forefront.

Subtheme: Parental Choice and Involvement

- Question that arises – if society is pushing for children to go into care – where is the choice or the support for parents to stay at home? We all need to take responsibility for our youngest citizens; parents, caregivers, teachers, business.

- Parents are key – how to honor and respect the parents’ knowledge stay at home parents as well as those at work.

Subtheme: Holistic

- Needs to address all facet, community, care, learning.

Subtheme: Regional/Community Differences

- Rural communities are different than urban.
- We need to keep in mind the diverse demographics of this place. Just like 25 to 30% of children experiencing difficulty (EDI) is not acceptable – 40% of the population unable to access ELC integration would not be acceptable. A one size fits all system will not work in AB. A rural, culturally sensitive plan needs to be part of this.

Theme: Link to Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Curriculum

- How programs will be run-curriculum
- Reuse curriculum at post-secondary level

Subtheme: Finance

- Cost/funding.
- Funding – very important.
- Our current reality of AB investing the 2nd to last amount in ELC needs to be addressed.
- We think we are getting somewhere then funding changes/ministers change/gov’t changes.

Subtheme: Governance

- Human services/education have to partner with infrastructure
- I think the biggest challenge revolves around legislation. There are huge gaps between the licensing acts associated with child care and the education act. Further, if school districts won’t start a pre-school or other type of childcare setting for 0-6 year olds, they do not have and play by the same rules as other for profit or non-profit service providers outside the education field. There needs to be common legislation even before we start looking at moving ELC into one ministry.
- Other parts of government that deal with families.
- Supervision of programs.
- Governance – to be very clear with policies and procedures.
- Difficulty to keep moving forward when ministries keep changing.

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Other parts of community – nonprofits, business, health, family literacy (under enterprise and advanced education).

- Who will run these programs: for profit, nonprofit, schools? Will they work together?

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Compensation in the workforce must correlate with the education and experience vital for high quality.
- Recognizing the need for early childhood educators' qualifications.
- Educational requirements across the field to be the same.
- Educational teachers need to "buy" into early learning philosophy "play-based" learning.
- Human resources historically has been a barrier to success (frontline and leadership).
- Staffing and education standards. Basic and further education availability for staff.
- Training for teachers on how to set up centers and follow play-based learning philosophy and documentation – funding should be available and accessible.
- Need appropriate delivery of schooling for hands on learning of how to set up centers and follow the play based learning styles and documentation starts now.

Theme: Moving Forward

- It will be a slow messy process that will ultimately benefit all of society.
- Let's get started as soon as possible
- How do we get there from here. How do we support current system during the transition. What first steps are most important to promote quality care in all parts of the province?
- Academics debating the pros and cons of various options? Are they producing ivory tower paradigms that are impractical and unmanageable?
- To be aware that Alberta is a province whose demography is changing and whose needs are changing.

Theme: General

- Alberta seems to have a great base of support services for children with additional/complex needs. Congrats!
- That we do not need to consider working within historical structures that are predicated on historical beliefs about children, women and family. We can do away with childcare pre-k, k, and elementary if we choose to create a seamless system through which the children move as they are ready. Education of teachers of children birth to 8 (12?) is at the same minimum level, with specialization for infants, toddlers, onward.
- Who is we? We need to relinquish the hats (previous or present) we wear.
- There are models emerging in this country – let's keep an eye on them.

3. Goals & Purposes

What key themes, ideas and questions emerge for you when you consider the goals and purposes for ELC in Alberta?

Theme: Arguments for Change

- It will lead to reduction in crime, unwanted pregnancy, school dropout rates, etc., etc.
- If we invest in ELC now to avoid social costs later.

Theme: Goals For ELC

Subtheme: Early Childhood Development/Lifelong Learning

- Have every child become an active learner.
- Forward thinking – helps with more stable citizens later on.
- Lifelong and family enhancing environments where children live and learn – supporting the whole family.
- Children deserve it: They are ours now. Give them a sense of worth, connection with their families' caregivers and communities.
- First 2000 days are the most critical to one's life. This is rewarding – they have so much to teach us!
- Creating a healthy and whole, productive workforce.
- ELC sets foundation for lifelong learning.
- Individual human capital development.
- Set them up for success.
- Production of a competent, healthy and adaptive – palatable goal for Alberta's- workforce.
- Equity. Social commitment to wellbeing of all children (inclusions).

Subtheme: Cohesion

- Creating inclusive and connected communities where all people are valued.
- Social well being.

Subtheme: Gender and Child Equity

- Emergence of the recognition of children as citizens at birth not withstanding parent's ability to access.
- If the optimal goal is social equity and providing a voice to all, particularly bringing the voices of the oppressed to the center, it would be effective framework that benefits all.
- Equity not equality.
- Putting the pieces together. I think the last goal is tacked on.
- Gender equity – services within and outside the home of gender distribution caring workforce.

Subtheme: Multiple/Interrelated Goals

- All these goals represent the foundation on which our children, families and communities can build so that each is able to fulfill its true potential
- I like goals 1,2,3 on page 7 – i.e. lifelong learning, family support and community and social cohesion.
- Also if you do 1,2,3 then 4 should happen – it is a spin-off result, not a goal.

Subtheme: Other Goals

- Goals and purposes must reflect child, family, community and society values, beliefs and needs.
- No children in poverty.
- To what end is all this striving to achieve? How do you define “success” in life? What do we value? Do I dare ask, “What is the meaning of life?” As you answer/define these, you back plan to optimize its achievement.
- Can the goals be defined/articulated? How will they be measured? By whom? Can we accomplish the goals and objectives within the current infrastructure?

Theme: ECD and Education Paradigms

- I feel child care and education professionals may differ on the goals as well as purposes for ELC and Alberta.
- The point is not what a child learns at what time but more the fact that a child learns to explore, create, and learn through their environment around them.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Quality

- Improved access to quality services for all children.

Subtheme: Consistency

- Consistency between service providers.
- Consistency for children in adult interaction and programming options.

Subtheme: Continuum of Support

- How do we incorporate the social support so they also continue to contribute to their child’s development?

Subtheme: Universal Access

- Universal supports for all. Let’s coordinate support to make this happen.

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Understanding the developmental levels of children as well the research of brain development should gear us towards setting up our goal and purpose for children.

Subtheme: Family Involvement

- Get to connect with families – relationship.
- Supporting families in seeking services and providing services as needed by families.
- Can't separate child from "family" take care of the family.
- I think it is essential that we support families rather than supplant families
- The child does not emerge from the womb as a ward of the state and the family's values and aspirations for that child get lost – they must be supported in the parenting process. One size fits all programming will not work. There must be diversity and choice for families. The first 2000 days is so developmentally critical that the family must have a great input.
- Family values and cultural diversity must be respected, the child must be regarded in the context of their particular family.

Subtheme: Changing Community Needs

- More grandparents and dads are caregivers – societal change
- Will it be sensitive to our increasingly globalized population and the diversity of communities across the province?

Theme: Links to Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Development of policy standards that can be understood by all
- Who is responsible for what?

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Training needs to happen – play based and be available for all staff – which will fund it? Keeping in mind "merging" of childcare and education
- Uniform training to set up environment

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- How do we align all the competing delivery models now. There are a variety of reasons people and organizations are in the field. How do bring these competing objectives together for good of children and families
- We need to advance setting up environments for quality learning with whatever organization – public or private – provides them.

Subtheme: Curriculum Framework

- Invite the children to explore, discover and then appropriate documentation needs to happen
- Making learning fun and natural through inquiry and discovery. 0-8 years? Center based learning?
- Making learning fun and natural, less stressful for children. They push letters and numbers academically too early or when children aren't ready creates added pressure.

Theme: Moving Forward

Subtheme: Developing Support

- How do we get everyone in this same mindset in our current competitive world?
- Will operators of childcare centers/preschools buy in and invest into greater integration?

Theme: Other Considerations

- How do you measure it?
- 2.3 – federal vs. provincial interest. Liberals vs. Conservatives
- A child in every port and 2 cars in every garage?
- Lack of knowledge of different sectors
- Place for formulation and evolution of national identity in a transnational economy

What are the main goals and purposes for ELC that you see as critical to include in a new provincial framework?

Theme: Public Education/Awareness

- Education for society in the value of investing in our children
- Engaging the parents and community to embrace ELC and make it a priority area for child development
- Need to build on educating parents. Giving them opportunities to learn

Theme: Goals

Subtheme: All Four Goals

- The over-arching goal or purpose of ELC should be to provide the opportunity for all children to develop the physical, psychological, spiritual and cultural foundations necessary to become contributing members of a socially just society. So.... If that is the big umbrella then the 4 goals outlined would be contributors.

Subtheme: Early Childhood Development/Lifelong Learning

- Strong, interdependent people progressing through life
- Early childhood development – lifelong learning
- Giving every child an opportunity to achieve their full potential
- Raising resilient citizens who can be self-sufficient later in life.
- To develop lifelong learners/socially competent people. This leads to poverty reduction, reduction of teen pregnancy, increase literacy rates, increase positive relationships, decrease violence, decrease criminal activity
- ELC should promote: a commitment to lifelong learning, healthy lifestyles
- Maximize child development opportunities (but to what end?)

Subtheme: Family support

- That it has family support as a key goal, not viewed as second choice for parents who can't stay home, but a support for all families
- Family friendly workforce (Government help create family friendly rules for businesses)
- The main goal and purpose would be to support families in their role as primary care and socializing agents of their children... to increase or improve parenting skills and effectiveness
- Working together; professionals and families!
- You have to treat families as a whole

Subtheme: Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion

- Community cohesion and social inclusion – ex: high income neighbourhoods, lower income neighborhoods with a lot of community interaction
- Social interactions and connections – sense of community, intellectual development

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Family Involvement

- Being made available to parents.
- Putting into practice and applying what we know about early childhood development so that parents can be more confident and content with their own children
- Caring, contributing – not just to the tax base – but within their families first, Then the larger and expanded communities (Not a burden on society)
- Empowering parents as a society/workplace
- Reality is there are a growing number of children attending ELC facilities
- When/where the family chooses
- Home and school programming that supports parents in their skills to raise their children
- Honouring and valuing children and families
- Include social opportunities for families and children
- Family input and involvement critical = child care therefore more engaged

Subtheme: Seamless

- Seamless delivery system

Subtheme: Access

- Equal access to quality programming
- For parents – my experience is they are not looking so much for quality more for convenience and they may not know what to look for in a program. More hours per day may be viewed as better
- Improve accessibility and education because not all parents or families see the need or lack the ability to get their children involved in ELC

- Right of access for optimal development
- Access to quality programming designed to meet the needs of the family, that supports family values is essential. We do not want “cookie cutter” citizens, universal access to quality programs cannot imply a universal program with mandatory participation.
- Services that are easily accessible to families.

Subtheme: Consistency

- Consistency in delivering high quality care!
- Consistent programming for special needs children with good pen modeling that is consistent through school and doesn’t end at grade one.

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- The importance of state of the child now
- As much as possible, meeting with each child where they are and helping them move forward.
- That we fund early childhood as an important stage on its own, not driven by school readiness goals or preparing children for a competitive work force.

Subtheme: Strength-Based

- Move away from deficit model of children and families

Subtheme: Flexibility

- How to bridge the gap from provincial level to the community given diverse needs from community to community (e.g. Alberta Health vs. Chinook/Calgary etc. health regions)

Theme: Links to Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Curriculum Framework

- Learning through play: curiosity, problem solving, healthy families, healthy communities.
- ELC should be: based on learning thorough play and exploration
- Bridging the gap between learning through play and academic achievement.

Subtheme: Financing

- Funding
- Funding needs to follow the child to wherever the child goes as well as funding an environment enhancement program
- Get active with funding for education. Teachers need to buy in to early learning
- Long-term financial benefits – ratio of now: later is 1:7,

Subtheme: Governance

- A coming together/meshing of what right now are 2 separate systems

Subtheme: Organizing Service Delivery

- Also, involving some of these opportunities through the child centers/ education classrooms. Having supports being an extension of learning and involvement with family.
- Licensing – increase consistency across areas

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Don't lose sight of education, support, materials, etc.
- Education for early learning teams (care and education)
- Standard education for all staff
- Support for caregivers by means of a more professional salary: higher education

Subtheme: Inclusion

- Respect for diversity in family formation execution of child-rearing
- To incorporate all aspects of needs for children and families – “one-stop shopping” “inclusive”.

Theme: General Considerations

- Quality early learning and care = “money in the bank”
- To provide a voice to children and families
- Encouraging community and parent support of services
- In an ideal world – if money was not a factor – what would parents choose? We need to ask them what's right for them.

Around which goals and purposes do you anticipate ELC stakeholders are most likely to reach agreement and why?

Theme: Goals

Subtheme: Multiple Goals

- All 3 on page 7, not 4
- Goals 1, 2 and 3 ... probably not 4.

Subtheme: Children's Development

- Meeting children's needs
- Everyone wants the best for their own children – relate to this. Everyone wants to improve society – decrease negative features.
- ELC – lifelong learning – as more knowledge is gained on how exposure and experience impacts brain development this becomes easier to conceptualize
- Lifelong learning – everyone seems to agree that this is a reality in today's society, especially the workforce
- Supporting children's wellbeing for ultimate payoff – lifelong learning, engaged workforce, healthy citizens that contribute to societal good.

- Supporting children's well-being because of the notion of human capital
- That ELC is important for all children since the window of opportunity/brain development is so rapid in young children
- The intellectual development because has traditionally been seen as a measure of the success of a program and is easy to assess. However, it is difficult to quantify a child's ability to problem solve or the level of his curiosity.
- The need to foster life-long learning

Subtheme: Family Support

- Need for greater parent knowledge on the development in the early years
- Two and three – reflecting on shifting views and values – ex: safety of children, walking to school, playing outside, playground (children going by their selves)
- Family support and well-being. This is already happening amongst different stakeholders, but there needs to be an alignment of resources
- Importance of offering and supporting children and families
- They will agree family supports are necessary to work with the whole child

Subtheme: Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion

- Long term positive effects for society as a whole – a connected community.

Theme: Link to Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Quality

- That the need for high quality and easily accessible care continues to increase
- Brain research backs importance of critical years being 0-8 – we know that quality care is necessary and foundation for civil society
- Goals for quality programming and what that quality will look like in terms of training of care providers.
- I see agreement on goal of quality

Subtheme: Quality and Access

- That the need for high quality and easily accessible care continues to increase

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- The developmental level of the child has to be considered when setting up the appropriate approach.
- What developmentally appropriate programming will look like.

Subtheme: Family Involvement

- The need for greater parent involvement

Subtheme: Financial Support

- More financial support

Subtheme: Service Delivery

- The struggle will happen when people realize their individual program may evolve or be lost.

Themes: Link to Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Curriculum Framework

- Full integration for early learning and care, with shared pedagogy to ensure children are receiving similar exposure to ideas, experiences
- That educators will need to work together to set up an agreed upon learning environment

Subtheme: Governance

- Many early childhood practitioners are fearful of possibility of moving under ministry of education

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Stakeholders will agree to take already trained and get them involved in early learning programs now
- Those who are not trained, have programs/workshops available and affordable.
- Keep stakeholders in the loop. Talk to us! We're experts!
- Valuing early childhood educators as professionals in society – viewed as 'babysitting'.

Theme: General Themes

- Agreement that a more integrated approach is necessary.
- Easier to build a building, even though it costs – it's concrete
- Fits the community development model that has become popular
- Immediate effects for children at risk, despite their opinions/perceptions of the parents
- If we believe our philosophies won't be jeopardized. We've been providing care for a long time and know the importance of what we do.
- Male support and advocacy of this concept. Everyone wants a better future
- Understanding the bigger picture (not to take it personally – the need for change) but to see the possibility of a better opportunities for children and families

Around which goals and purposes will they find it more difficult to reach agreement? Why?

Subtheme: Lifelong Learning

- I actually think #1 supporting children's wellbeing – goes against our existing systems (although there is improvement)
- Goes against our society's focus – all children will go to university or that is the highest level
- It will be difficult to agree on "what school readiness looks like"
- Lifelong learning and keeping up with new information resources
- Society does not recognize the value of other skills/knowledge – this goes against developmental levels/stages, strategies or how young people learn.
- The longer term goals of lifelong learning and healthy lifestyle choices as these are so far in the future as well as being difficult to quantify

Subtheme: Community Cohesion & Social Inclusion

- Community cohesion and social inclusion. More difficult to measure outcomes of this goal

Subtheme: Gender and Child Equity

- Equity - significant ideological difference about who is responsible for the care and education of young children. Society? Women?
- Advancing equality and equity – Albertans don't buy this.
- Contribution to a social justice and inclusive society – some ELC stakeholders may find it difficult to achieve consensus on how all children/citizens can authentically contribute
- Gender equity and equity of opportunity for all children. Difficult to fight the old boys club mentality
- Shifting to the mindset of social equity – our competitive world encourages people to strive for more, the best, etc. at the cost of critical features/elements of a socially just society.
- Reaching families with needs: educating the public on this.

Theme: Principles of ELC

Subtheme: Child Centered

- What children's needs are

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Changing mindsets of developmentally appropriate as opposed to age appropriate

Subtheme: Quality

- What "quality" looks like

Subtheme: Inclusion

- Inclusion will be a struggle if centers are not ready.

Subtheme: Seamless

- Seamless funding will create challenges

Theme: Links to Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Who is accountable to who? Who decides how the funds are allocated?
- Where do the funds come from?
- Under which ministry will we operate?

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Reaching higher education levels
- Remuneration
- Training for staff – making it accessible and available

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Having early learning program all on one site
- Increasing number of big box early learning ex: Australian model. 10 more coming into Alberta. This can be a challenge to daycare, preschools and kindergartens
- Who will run and oversee programs?

Subtheme: Financing

- Denmark, Finland and Sweden. Tax base – comparison. 70-80% tax on income to accommodate gov't supports
- How is funding going to be used?
- Difficulty on what the cost will be and who provides funds
- Funding pieces difficult – who funds what?
- How programs will be funded
- How to support vulnerable children – who? Financing? For some, it will be about not being able to see immediate results
- Seamless funding will create challenges
- Funding

Subtheme: Curriculum

- Curriculum

Theme: Standardized Approach

- Differences between city and rural programs
- Take away the uniqueness of each program and becoming “cookie cutter” programs

Theme: The Role of the Family

- Formation of family and execution of child rearing duties is diverse. This will influence what people believe is “good” to provide to whom and by whom and why?
- The role of the family will be a real sticky point – the idea of parental choice and the autonomy of families... whether the state has the say about what is best for a child or whether the parent will direct and the state support those goals and aspirations. Diversity of programming and a parent’s right to choose will be spots in which there is some difficulty achieving consensus.

Theme: ECD and Education Paradigms

- Any goals and purposes will be difficult to render consensus on so long as service providers are free to come from their own philosophical bases. Having said that – I believe some criteria will be more likely to be universal (or at least I hope so!) e.g. safe, confident, competent, compassionate children, then people
- How far and who blends together collaboratively to gain the most success with ELC
- What fundamental needs are being addressed in ELC?
- Changing people’s mindset on what ELC means and how practical practice is used.

Theme: General Considerations

- Believing it will make a difference because the long term outcomes won’t be known for some time.
- Do stakeholders want a more concise description of the specifics of the goals/purposes?
- Many changes would have to be made
- Who does what best? Therefore what are the right choices?

4. Integrative Elements

4.1 Governance

What key themes, ideas and questions emerge when you consider the governance of early learning and care?

Theme: Public Management

- Public/government as authority, sets principles/guidelines accountability with input from stakeholders. Broad framework allows flexibility at the delivery level.

Theme: Governance Functions

Subtheme: Accountability

- Accountability lines clearly driven/drawn
- Robust accountability and data collection systems

Subtheme: Working Across Boundaries

- How are gray areas managed (public health issue vs. early learning issue)?
- Government agenda for “common good” can be different and somehow these need to be streamlined into ELC strategy that can address those issues in concrete ways.
- Need for coordination of governance – there is power in common direction. Ministries with a common set of goals
- Provision of guidelines by combined jurisdiction of human services and education with stakeholders’ fallback.
- The 5 whys – especially “who” governs – ministry of education, health, human services?
- The key question for me is the makeup of the Governing body – who? How are they chosen? What qualifications are necessary? And who do they report to?
- Who can bring a non-partisan perspective to the works? Can ministries co-operate? I.e. one leader will the other’s accept, support, and coordinate with?
- Who would authorize? Ministry? Public and private cross? Decisions made who can we trust to lead us?
- Will duplication or unnecessary parallels be eliminated to free up resources that can be slotted “the lead”?
- Who governs this? Depends if private sector funding is significant part – they will want a way.
- Will we just create a new “school board” for 0-6? If so, we need permanent operational funding.

Subtheme: Regional Flexibility

- Community driven
- Decentralized decision making to localities is favorable
- I don’t think a one size fits all program can work in such a diverse province – culturally. Rural/urban, first nations, geographic span.
- Need to recognize local needs
- Real regard for rural/urban rights to access and universality of access.

Subtheme: Federal Role

- Federal and provincial commitments, priorities differ as to who is in power
- How can federal gov’t be influenced in this area?

Theme: Links to Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- I believe that a Market Model with flexible guidelines will be necessary.
- Market Model? If so, provision of guidelines
- Mixed economy approaches?
- Profit vs. nonprofit
- What about the private programs
- Public/private?

Subtheme: Human Resources

- ECE practitioners require more meaningful critique of practice.

Theme: Other Considerations

- What has worked/not worked in other provinces? Why?
- How can we lessen the gaps – not lose children?
- Review of (provinces mandate) (what works, what does not work. Build on to basis of findings)
- Do we have the will to do this?
- Is it an elected body? If so, how do we raise the profile so that the election has meaning: i.e. the electorate understands the issues and elects the best candidate. Is there another viable way to choose?

What key guidelines or directions should a provincial framework include around governance?

Theme: Public Management

- Provincial funding and governance – public management, is required.

Theme: Provincial Oversight

Subtheme: One Ministry/Body

- One Ministry with linkages to this (Health, Justice, etc.)
- It makes sense to move ECE under ministry of education: umbrella.
- Perhaps a provincial publicly funded governing body

Subtheme: Cross Ministry

- Cross ministry approach between Human Services, Education and Health and well being
- Will there still be silo approaches to implementation issues?

Subtheme: Other

- Show me the model that works and that's what I'll want
- Frontline - staffing, schedule, facility design and programming

- Good governance is/ought to be universally applicable

Theme: Principles Related to Governance Model

Subtheme: Authority

- Clear statement of where authority lies and how to have meaningful input into decision making

Subtheme: Regional/Community Flexibility

- Local authority is, perhaps key
- Regional authority/advisory boards with community representation (cross-culture, as an example, rural/urban mix also)
- Take into account circumstances that exists outside of the big cities
- There should be regional input and regional boards (advisory) so that the diversity of the population can be carefully considered.
- A local governing bodies implementing at the local level and reporting to the Provincial body
- Provincial – guidelines/policies; Local – what are the local needs of families and cultures

Subtheme: Key Functions/Aspects

- Monitor and evaluate based on outcomes, as well as square footage and number of toilets
- Ensure accountability by outlining sound business practice regarding spending
- Do planning and admin programs (with input from stakeholders, including parents) based on needs/gaps in services

Subtheme: Inclusion

- Include contributors to the governance process that have service delivery experience
- Cultural implications

Theme: Moving Forward

- Make sure the plan is doable
- Pick something that successive gov'ts can support
- Educate parents about what quality looks like
- Many changes took place in the province as policies and procedures were put in place and then changed quickly when it was found they didn't work. Avoid a mismatch of services and streamline.

Theme: Larger Question

- What role does the electorate play – at present most electors pay very little attention to the people they are voting into their school boards?

Which of these guidelines or directions do you anticipate ELC stakeholders will find most agreement on? Why?

Theme: Regional Flexibility

- Local authority as they may see immediate results of their decision making processes.

Theme: Appropriate Oversight

- So long as governance doesn't get in the way of dedicated, passionate service providers doing their jobs

Theme: Planned Approach

- A systematic and planned approach

Theme: Participation

- Increased family and community participation

Theme: Integration

- Page 14 - Planning integrated early learning

Least agreement? And why?

Theme: Public Management

- Accountability is often seen as a "bad word"
- Public management
- Most service providers will be worried and not want to move away from the "market model": intimidated by gov't intervention, cost of quality care and reduction of profit margin.

Theme: Cross Ministry Governance

- Bringing ministries together
- Many won't come to the table to dialogue, don't talk to each other, won't "play nice"

Theme: Transition

- Having to give up a philosophy and/or current model of delivery to adopt the new universal one.

What do we need to keep in mind as we consider what a proposed provincial framework will include in respect to governance?

Theme: Provincial Leadership

- How will collaboration at the Ministerial level be most effective? Timely?

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Consistency

- Consistency in governance systems

Subtheme: Inclusion

- Needs and interests of diverse population, marginalized groups

Subtheme: Quality

- Quality assurance

Subtheme: Accountability

- Clear accountability

Subtheme: Regional/Community Flexibility

- Certainly the diversity in the province and the need for flexible guidelines respecting demographics, geography, culture and the rural vs. urban issues: Right of access and universal access. What provisions the provincial framework will have for parents who choose to implement programming at home; financial considerations etc.?

Themes: Link to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Finances

- Cost effectiveness

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- We have a market model and moving to a public model will take time and be difficult. Money will have to be a “carrot” yet there is distrust of government in general.
- Everything on page 12: Service Planning and Management strategies: targets, benchmarks, timelines.

Themes: Moving Forward

- Community engagement too takes time and funding.

4.2 Finances

What key themes, ideas and questions emerge for you when you consider financing for early learning and care?

Theme: Case for Investment

- Investment in ELC is akin to buying insurance – you likely won't need if you purchase in advance
- It would appear that investing in ELC would pay much more in significant dividends than virtually any other investment

Theme: Areas of Investment

Subtheme: Services & Service Providers

- Focus on service delivery and operational funding vs. project/program level
- More than just talking about daycare and ECS

Subtheme: Staffing

- Funding for increased provider education, training and remuneration – public responsibility? Would the public support this?

Subtheme: Parents

- If it is going to a learning system – funds need to be available for parents and community

Subtheme: Private & Public Delivery

- Financing for non-profit centers – totally unfair.
- How can a maximum fee schedule work in the private business model?

Theme: Length & Timeline of Investment

Subtheme: Length

- Sustainability of dollars – not project initiated
- Permanent and sustainable funding
- Sustainability
- Sustainability is big issue
- Long term sustainable funding
- ELC services require more long-term public investment and education and care funded under core single program – universally accessible to all
- Long-term investment plan

Subtheme: Volume of Investment

- Our current investment is paltry
- What are we going to be willing to give up to have this?

- More funding is needed – capital funding for buildings that are “community hubs” or for outreach services to smaller communities. Sustainability is important – too often initiatives are funded for a short-term, not the long-term. Funding should be based on established “community need” where proposed programs demonstrate a gap in service.

Theme: Public & Private Investment

Subtheme: General

- Who’s going to be willing to give money?
- Who pays what? If you have a combination of public and private investment, how do you determine what money pays for what outcome?
- Will sources combine to fund programming?
- New money? From where?

Subtheme: Private

- Why private industry or public be willing to invest?
- Private investors
- Private investment companies may be a positive venture as government money may be limited – combination of both

Subtheme: Public

- Government needs to prioritize ELC by investing in the early years
- Demand as a priority “ELC” have government put the money where their mouth is.
- Public funding through tax system (operational/base funding)

Theme: Supply Side & Demand Side Mechanisms

- We need to maintain both supply side and demand side funding with more of an emphasis on demand side

Theme: Principles of ELC

Subtheme: Access

- Focus on universal access

Subtheme: Quality

- Don’t sacrifice quality
- Should be based on the quality of programs and assessment required on a regular basis.

Theme: Links to Other Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Who is accountable for the equal distribution of funds?

- Will one source or body be in charge of distributing and managing funds and resources?

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Our current system of education is limited (available dollars, affects: classroom sizes, teacher qualifications, facilities)
- Professionalize the profession – pay ECE's more reflective wages

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Partnering with municipalities (FCSS) to re-engage just creates another administrative level

Theme: Other Considerations

- More to it than is represented by the questions in the summary pages
- Multi-faceted framework
- Work with government and become a united force.
- Adapt another model? Some are more expensive than others to implement.

What key guidelines or directions should a provincial framework include in respect to financing?

Theme: The Case

- Recognize that the investment may not have immediate tangible payback. Stick with it.

Theme: Areas for Investment

- If greater qualifications for deliverers, expect greater compensation
Invest in educators instead of just teachers, bridge the gap between educators and care providers
- Staffing costs
- We need to invest in providing parents opportunities and develop..... to provide early learning to their children.
- More funding for family support where children live
- Substantial increase in levels of funding to enhance quality of programming, the training and compensation of staff at a level where they would stay in the profession, and the costs associated with administration and quality assurance

Subtheme: Public & Private Investment

- Possible sources of additional funding – health department and justice who, in an ideal world, would see their costs decrease as we raise healthier more self-assured children
- Public funding – Swedish model
- Needs to be publicly funded and go beyond traditional child care/ECS

- Current initiatives in this category can't reach everyone now – add more?

Themes: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Better allocation of resources between ministries
- Strict accountability for useful funds: audits on a regular basis

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Working with children of that age is critical – specific type of person with training – not necessarily a degree

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Do private industry providers have to comply with “provincial” model?
- Employer Centers - in an ideal world; industry should be involved. ELC funding and onsite opportunities for children would build employee loyalty and stability of workforce. It would be a powerful recruitment tool, attracting stable, family oriented employees – a win/win situation.
- Universal delivery?
- Balance of for profit and non-profit taken into consideration
- Big box childcare – 10 centers coming to Alberta

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Strength-Based & Inclusive

- Not be based on perceived child deficit or “at risk” populations: the supports go beyond that.
- What about unique/special needs? The greater the “conscience” society develops/programming for everyone now = add more?

Subtheme: Cost Effectiveness

- Don't go to the most expensive. That doesn't mean the best for the job
- Needs to be reasonable
- Over accreditation will make it too expensive

Subtheme: Regional Needs

- A stark reality is that many rural children will not be able to attend programming but that does not preclude investing in quality and informed parenting.
- Another factor to consider – in rural areas where universality of access to quality programs is difficult – consideration should be given to more parenting programs and partnerships
- Community input determines need/gaps funding are managed at a local level and provided from regional and provincial coffers. Accountability and transparency are built into the framework; however, accreditation standards

need to be based on outcomes, as well as what is in place. Partnerships with local networks, regional authorities are solid and relationships are built on trust and honesty. ELC is more than daycare and kindergarten – the framework has to include other elements like family support and parent education

- Take into consideration family dynamics and suburban and rural needs

Theme: Other Considerations

- Alignment of funding towards investment vs. divestment
- Review present model – successes and failures

Which of these guidelines or directions do you anticipate ELC stakeholders will find most agreement on? Why?

Theme: Level of Investment

- Stakeholders will agree with more dollars coming to the ELC world. New partnerships at the local level will be enhanced; existing ones will be strengthened
- I believe all will agree that investment in the first 2000 days is critical and is money well spent
- Commitment to increase the level of public investment over time.

Theme: Long Term Nature

- Long term finance plan especially regarding staffing – operators could recruit and maintain staff if appropriate compensation was available
- Need long term sustainable funding to sustain

Theme: Areas of Investment

- Special needs, low income families, ESL
- Wages to be broadened and increased across the sector
- Management of service costs for families

Theme: Funding Partnerships

- Funding partnerships with municipality to expand services

Least agreement? Why?

Theme: Governance

- Who will manage the funds? At present there are funds from multiple sources for services and if they are combined I wonder who would be willing to give up control of their funds for better service provision

- Other departments of provincial government as they will not easily see the connections between better services in the early years as it relates to the services they provide.

Theme: Supply Side and Demand Side

- Strong supply-side as opposed to demand side
- Study on supply and demand

Theme: Areas of Investment

Subtheme: Priorities of Investment

- How and where to spend money

Subtheme: Recipients of Investment

- Who will get the money – why not me?

Subtheme: Funding Mechanisms/Limits

- Maximum fee schedules – in a community with high demand – operators could charge higher fees. This creates an inherent inequality in access for parents
- Also – there may be a pushback from some providers as they feel threatened with new qualification demands
- Establishing a maximum fee schedule may reduce profit margins for private, for-profit business. No one will want more reporting requirements

Subtheme: Regional Flexibility

- A fair and equitable funding formula – reflecting the realities of limited access in sparsely populated areas.

What do we need to keep in mind as we consider what a proposed provincial framework will include in respect to financing for early learning and care?

Theme: Goals

- Need to be really sure about purpose
- Why are we doing this?

Theme: Area of Investment

- Facilities
- Training

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Choice

- Parental choice – diversity of programming – difficulty of universal access.

- Right of refusal; parents choosing to be the ‘early educators’ receiving tax breaks as they choose to forego the second income to enrich their own child’s first 2000 days. (otherwise they are paying higher taxes to fund what they will not be accessing; when they are suffering financially in order to be their child’s first educator)

Subtheme: Regional Flexibility

- Community driven based funding models may be the best way to go with how dollars are allocated. Rural Alberta has additional challenges with transportation issues and lower numbers (economy of scale issues). There needs to be flexibility with funding going to support families with its many facets, including literacy, parent education, home visitation, etc.

Subtheme: Access

- Universal access is crucial if we are going to impact positively long term outcomes

Theme: Quality & Level of Investment

Subtheme: Length

- Sustainability

Subtheme: Level

- It’s not going to be cheap. If we try to go forward with an inexpensive, ‘good enough’ model, we will not achieve high quality for all.
- Not cheap – huge up front cost but if we do this right we can steal money from health and justice!

Subtheme: Public & Private Funding

- It needs to be publicly funded
- Support gov’t both province and federal
- The taxpayer

Theme: Links to Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Who will be calling the shots? What are their priorities – goals, purposes? How will it impact existing service providers/stakeholders

Theme: Moving Forward

- Don’t get stuck on existing systems
- They need to present this in a way that will create buy in
- It doesn’t happen over night

4.3 Organizing Services

What key themes, ideas and questions emerge for you when you consider how to organize early learning and care service delivery?

Theme: Delivery Models

Subtheme: One Stop or Hub

- Delivery of services should be hub based.
- Finding a way to integrate services into one stop shopping format so that all families regardless of finances can access services with ease. Whether stay at home, daycare, preschool, etc.
- Locally have “hub” where families connect and unite on common ground

Subtheme: Networked/Collaborative

- Finding a way to collaborate the services to supply the seamless distribution for ELC including the family. Including info from ECD mapping involving community resources to fill in the need.

Theme: Features of Services and Service Delivery

- Physical infrastructure must be designed to complement an integrated delivery
- Management needs assessment would have to be considered – perhaps looking at the ECDMapping results could be a starting point
- Why a full day kindergarten? What does full day mean?
- Before we think about full day Kindergarten we need to address universal access to EL for 3 and 4 year olds
- How do we organize around time? Night care, extended care, sporadic care (military families/incarcerations)
- What are the barriers that may prevent access for families? How can we resolve them?

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child centered

- Child professionals would move to meet children and families where they are – not the other way around.

Subtheme: Choice

- Delivery needs to be diverse and inclusive to meet the needs of families and communities

Subtheme: Collaboration

- Can we create scenario where all existing stakeholders have a key role to play in ELC delivery?
- Current stakeholders need to work together

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Do we need to have ages and grades or can we just develop curriculum based on developmentally appropriate activities and skill development

Subthemes: Regional/Community Flexibility

- A local flavor – local autonomy to address unique needs of individual communities
- Will uniformity be required? How much latitude permitted?
- Community-based focus – what are needs/gaps in service. Consultation with parents, stakeholders, partnerships with local government, regional authorities, Provincial ministries. Support for “family centers” that respond to integrated service needs. Stakeholders are involved in a local ELC network.
- What philosophy is adopted? There are considerable variations on how different models approach it. Each community is different in how it is set up
- Need to acknowledge and give control to communities
- Programs that are sensitive to the cultural norms and values of community members
- Rural ELC options
- How to make delivery effective in more remote areas?

Subtheme: Quality

- Having quality intervention that is able to reach each family’s needs.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Curriculum

- Would curriculum be a common program structure? Who would be in charge of formulating the program? How would it be implemented?

Subtheme: Governance

- Programs that adhere to the guidelines set out by a provincial governing body when it speaks to staffing qualifications, ratios, and perhaps broad curricular goals based on a solid understanding of early childhood development and best practices
- Who holds the purse strings and how will we expand existing services – there will need to be greater collaboration between ministries – or a new one formed – all under one umbrella

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Higher staff qualifications

- Respect for other professionals and willingness to learn from them
- Training for staff

Subtheme: Finances

- Financially and as a viable choice for parents, why would you consider this? You would put private centers at a huge disadvantage.
- Funding – to nonprofits and municipalities. Not profit multi service providers – Foothills child wellness network
- Unfair – additional supports for non-profit organizations – many of us have been in the field for many years. Profits or private should not come into it as long as the organization meets the standard necessary for quality care

Theme: Moving Forward

- How can we enhance and promote what is already positively supporting the framework.
- Previous non-stakeholders need to be informed and encouraged to be supportive

What key guidelines or directions should a provincial framework include in respect to organizing service delivery?

Theme: Delivery Models, Service Providers & Infrastructure

- An early childhood Center (hub model) might work in some communities while in others, a quality well supported Day Home model may work better.
- No. 3 - Direction should be given to ensure local early learning and childcare facilitators network with one another.
- ELC networks must be coordinated to provide seamless and responsive ELC.
- Need to broaden the concept of who are the service providers in a network
- Public model utilizing existing infrastructure
- Purpose built spaces are best – so programs are not “in jeopardy”

Themes: Principles

Subtheme: Parental Choice

- Flexibility and choice in model
- Finding out the foundation of the families (cultural, social, etc.) and connect the services according to the need.

Subtheme: Parent Involvement

- Empowering parents to be involved in the process
- Parents need to be directly involved in making the decisions on services needed and being able to access

- Keep in mind the requirements of the parents in your community and mesh their needs with what is in the best interest of the children: i.e. consistency, fewer transitions.

Subtheme: Consistency

- There needs to be a common approach to meet the needs of the child and family

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Developmentally appropriate curriculum rather than age appropriate curriculum

Subtheme: Regional Flexibility

- All types of settings need to be considered.
- Rural – not as many services.
- Help without the “red tape” – integration needs to happen locally where services are needed.
- The community is asked what needs they have. These are included in service plans that are approved at a local or regional level. Integrated services are funded as a priority. Money has to be the incentive. Service networks provide/inform the region about what’s needed with money provided for the community hub with outreach services.
- While there should be broad provincial guidelines that will ensure consistency throughout the province, there should be local control over individual program decisions and models.

Subtheme: Continuum of Support

- Continuums cannot be established within silos.
- Children moving from program to program would find continuity of care.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Finances

- Base funding.

Subtheme: Curriculum

- Professionals to develop curriculum – with a few organizations including School Based, Colleges and universities.

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Membership in professional association or unionization
- Local ELC service networks could take the form of a professional association connected to a provincial professional association that is responsible for accrediting, educational requirements etc.

Theme: Moving Forward

- Need to build on what is already there.
- Streamline. Start by having more collaboration amongst existing service providers and move to one ministry that oversees delivery – through variety ground level services providers.
- Consider what organizations and institutions are currently involved in various aspects of ELC service delivery.
- Try to analyze what is working well and what is not working well within the different foundational parameters of licensed programs vs. education etc.

Which of these guidelines or directions do you anticipate ELC stakeholders will find most agreement on? Why?

Theme: Overall

- What is the purpose?

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Accessible & Responsive

- Services that meet the needs for their situation.
- We all agree that it can be a tough world for families who are trying to negotiate the world of services their children need
- Equitable access in all communities
- Agreement that services need to be made available in the community for families and that a wide range of services would be the most beneficial.

Theme: Links to Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Finances

- Stakeholders will appreciate additional funding as an incentive to being more integrated.

Subtheme: Governance

- I think ELC stakeholders will be able to identify how to best share responsibilities for service delivery under one integrated model.
- The ELC community has been speaking up about linking with maternity education for many years and are “ready” for it. Advanced education and Ministry of Health and Wellness are a natural fit.

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Alberta has a very long history of not being into the not-for-profit versus for profit argument.

- Parents will agree with sites that have many programs contained within its walls.
- ELC stakeholders would find support for local non-profit multi-site service providers.

Least agreement? Why?

Theme: The Scope

- Separating early childhood out into phases.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- The management of services – who is responsible for what and how to integrate them?
- Will be deciding on which ministry could ultimately house ELC?

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Currently principals are responsible for children in school during the school day. The responsibility after school and who is legally held responsible – e.g. programs on school site but not school staff.
- We need purpose built space.
- It may be difficult for us to move from our agency perspective to an integrated delivery where each step on the continuum holds equal value
- The division between public and private sector – with the non-profit center being seen by the gov't as most deserving of additional funding.
- Idea number 4 – due to the barriers with regard to facilities as well as responsibilities
- Whether services should be a public or private responsibility and who manages these services?
- Should the services be publicly or privately owned?
- Most stakeholders will not agree with having to relocate or changing their services to be more integrated and inclusive (without more money). In some communities, the 'hub' notion would not work, especially where there is no public transportation. School boards and service providers will have to be "in sync" with many issues to iron out.
- Full day Kindergarten – ELC 0-6 are not convinced of the value and developmental appropriateness of this initiative. Speaks to emphasis on one age group over another. Why not have a full day infant program?

Themes: Principles

Subtheme: Family Centered & Parent Involvement

- Approach the whole family health, healthy parents, healthy children.
- Parent involvement.
- The system has done a great job of projecting a certain level of involvement with parents. However, true reality is that there is no real hands-on involvement for parents when it comes to ELC delivery.

Subtheme: Regional Flexibility

- Possibly servicing more remote communities as the larger populations may dominate.
- Rural groups usually provide services across the age continuum.

What do we need to keep in mind as we consider what a proposed provincial framework will include in respect to organizing service delivery?

Theme: Context

Subtheme: Awareness

- Parent education and community input are key to moving forward. Baby steps to reaching our ideal situation will be necessary.

Subtheme: Purposes & Goals

- Healthy families – healthy communities.

Subtheme: Infrastructure

- The availability of space.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Family Centered, Parent Involvement

- How do we create a system that looks like this: Triangle with Child-parent-service provider?

Subtheme: Quality

- Focus should be on “quality” or outcomes, whether a public or private auspice.

Subtheme: Accessibility

- Accessibility of services more difficult in rural spread out communities.
- How are these services going to be made more accessible and how do we manage how they are distributed.

Subtheme: Affordability

- Cost of child care – if ages 3-6 are in school-based programs, the cost for running an infant center with its 1-2, 1-4 staff ratio becomes exorbitant. Who pays for this?

Subtheme: Regional Flexibility

- Although communities should drive the bus, what is on the bus must compliment what research tells us about young children.
- Local needs.
- Must keep in mind local strengths, needs and challenges for accessing high quality ELC. All children regardless of geography deserve and have the right to ELC.

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Early developmental encompasses health, recreation, cultural pursuits. Service delivery needs to attend to children who are reared in the home and their family's needs.

Theme: Links to Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Who monitors the progress to make sure the services used are beneficial and should be continued? Also, where is the accountability?
- Licensing regulations should apply to all programs and ratios should be met.

Subtheme: Human Resources

- ELC professionals must gain a better understanding of what we currently provide. How can we move forward if we don't fully respect and understand the role we play?

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Transportation is a major consideration – so having services coming into “hubs” is one way of being responsive.

Theme: Crossing ECD & Education Paradigms, Professions & Practices

- Why the differentiation between “school-based full day Kindergarten” and “community-based out of school based care services”?
- Respect all professionals involved.
- We need to keep in mind that not all ELC is confined to schools and childcare.

Theme: Moving Forward

- It will take time – need good communication

4.4 Human Resources

What key themes, ideas and questions emerge for you when you consider the human resources related to an integrated approach to ELC?

Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development

Subtheme: Minimum Education

- A 2 year diploma minimum – rather than a 50 hr. course.
- All staff require specialized training in early childhood and development.
- Appropriate education.
- Better qualified staff – understand human development – require ECE diploma.
- Investment in undergraduate degree programs face to face and online for workers for children 0-8 years.
- Levels of education.
- Minimum 2 year diploma in ECE to practice but supervised.
- Post-secondary be well-educated in the framework so that their programs emulate and enrich the framework
- The varying levels of education of staff within ELC.
- How to increase education standards for practitioners, with financial remuneration to match.

Subtheme: Differentiated Education

- A 2 tiered system/an assumption that a certificated teacher knows how and what to teach young children/an assumption that a non-licensed site is less worthy than a licensed site.
- ECE diploma cheaper than Alberta Teacher Association rates, but “best practice” utilizes highly trained deliverers.
- Promote the idea of sufficient staff to scaffold and provide serve and return opportunities.

Subtheme: Professional Development

- Childcare how has PD funding - \$1000/year until you have completed a 2 year of ECE then may apply for \$300/year.
- Support for educators.
- Parents and early childhood partners be able to access training information.
- PD provided that support – enhances the framework.
- Ongoing professional development.

Subtheme: Equivalencies, Grandfathering, Upgrading

- No equivalencies.

- Increase training for those already in the field while they stay in the workforce.

Subtheme: Areas of Education

- Kindergarten teachers/all working with 0-8 years.
- Effective management for administrators.

Subtheme: Standards, Credentials & Accreditations

- Center and individual accreditation.
- Common credential.
- Occupational standards.
- Occupational standards in ELC (University of Lethbridge research).

Subtheme: Universities & Colleges

- What are our universities and colleges doing to prepare ELC practitioners?

Theme: Remuneration, Recruitment & Retention

Subtheme: Remuneration

- Pay the ECE's as "professionals".
- Province-wide salaries for ECE's in relation to other professions.
- Remuneration.
- Lower wages scale in care versus education.

Subtheme: Recruitment & Retention

- Appropriate hours of work.
- Managing turnover.
- Retain work/life balance.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Finance

- It would be nice if resources could merge and be combined to make it easier for parents to access them in a more effective manner.
- It will cost.

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Use existing personnel? A broad spectrum exists. Will the current government convert the new system or will that be replaced and/or suspended?

Theme: Crossing ECD & Education Paradigms, Professions & Practices

- Gain the knowledge and education between an educational teacher alongside an early learning educator to set up the environment and implement the program.
- Having kindergarten teachers gain early learning education. Also, increase education for ECE to teacher kindergarten.
- Provide training for certified teachers on quality early learning environments
- Themes: a need for some agreement and consistency around EC education/training whether in a child care or early ed./preschool setting.

Theme: Questions

- Minimum standards for delivery (delivery of what?)?
- Qualifications – ECE diploma v.s. B.Ed?
- Does more education ensure quality?

What key guidelines or directions should a provincial framework include in respect to human resources?

Theme: Context

Subtheme: Raise the Profile of the ELC Profession

- ECE world needs to be viewed as a professional field, it is undervalued and this is evident in the pay this field makes.
- Helped to raise the profile of those who work in the field.

Subtheme: Scope

- Increase early learning up to age 8.

Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development

Subtheme: Minimum Education Requirement

- Leveling of education requirements.
- Establish post-secondary curriculum? What level?
- Minimum education for ELC staff with support for training over time.
- Directions – detail minimum training requirements to care for and work with young children.
- Minimum education requirements need to increase.

Subtheme: Areas of Education

- Components for additional/new training?
- Specialized management/director training for ECCE childcare centers.

Subtheme: Professional Development

- Increase professional development.
- Requirements to stay current in the field either through workshops, credit courses.
- Continual education to assist with growing needs and concerns in the center and with families.
- Ongoing training and PD opportunities to keep abreast with latest brain research etc.
- Required ongoing professional development.
- Set a requirement for ongoing professional PD once trained.

Theme: Remuneration

- Province wide salary scales ... salary match training/education and experiences.
- Wage reviews.

Theme: Infrastructure and Oversight

- Accreditation body.

Theme: Recruitment & Retention

- Encourage/attract males into the field of early childhood. (one of the few professions where men and women are not viewed equally/or equitably represented).

Theme: Crossing ECD & Education Paradigms, Professions & Practices

- The provincial framework should build upon knowledge and experience of EC practitioners and build upon their sense of professionalism. Kindergarten should become part of early learning. In BC, ECE's can teach kindergarten.
- Also, gain a more united team with less division of roles but more guided towards the needs of the child, family and environment.
- Kindergarten and early learning programs should be staffed with people who are aware of child development and play based learning.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Consistent & Flexible

- Universal training? Standards?

Subtheme: Quality

- Staff ratios should be maintained

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Will governance be amenable to service delivery? Or serve some other purposes?

Subtheme: Public & Private Delivery

- For Profit associations or union with attendant benefits.
- Public model of delivery with province wide consistency with respect to remuneration.

Theme: Moving Forward

Subtheme: Transitions

- What do you do with the old guard?
- Grandfather in current staff with timeline to complete qualifications.

Which of these guidelines or directions do you anticipate ELC stakeholders will find most agreement on? Why?

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child and Family-Centered

- Came from a place of honouring and valuing early development and families
- Staff need to come from a mindset of meeting children and families where they are all at and supporting them optimally

Theme: Education, Professional Development & Training

Subtheme: Education

- Minimum education increase – affects quality
- Increased training.
- Education guidelines for all those involved in early learning programs and minimum requirements and education guidelines for those involved
- Most would agree that services should be delivered by an educated workforce. That is valued and receives a competitive wage and workplace environment support.
- Increased education – more educated workplace will have greater benefits for our children.
- ECE diploma minimum.
- ECE for kindergarten teachers – with the dissemination in recent years about brain development in young children society and the fields of ELC and education recognize the value of this.

- Raising standards or rather minimum education requirements.

Subtheme: Area of Training

- Specialized director/manager training – affects quality/turnover/employee engagement

Subtheme: Remuneration

- Wage/remuneration

Theme: Crossing ECD & Education Paradigms, Professions & Practices

- Use your early learning educators to run existing programs and support certified teachers alongside to be trained
- Gained knowledge and education with early learning to have a foundation

Theme: Other Themes

- Gaining a common group to better assist families
- That the “voice” of all involved be brought forward.

Least agreement? Why?

Theme: Public Awareness

- The public needs to be aware of impact of increased investment.

Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development

- Also, who is most qualified to educate with early learning?
- Figuring out what extra education is needed and how to go about doing it.
- How will staff be able to enhance training and who will fund that training?
- Common credentialing because of historical paths and ownership of methodology.
- What qualifications are needed? What is best practice and how do you train for that?

Theme: Links to Other Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Finances

- How funds should be distributed.
- Where the funding comes from.

Theme: Remuneration

- Wages, acceptance of those on different education levels
- We need time and increased wages to ensure staff education will meet the need (more money = more interest).

Theme: Managing Change

- Do I have to learn the new way?
- Will competitiveness be replaced by cooperation?
- Will my job be gone?
- Will we have sufficient staff capacity?

What do we need to keep in mind as we consider what a proposed provincial framework will include in respect to human resources for early learning and care?

Theme: Overall

Subtheme: Raising the Profile of the Profession

- Making ECE a profession and valued by society

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility

- Needs to be flexible to meet diversity – children, families, settings, communities, etc.

Subtheme: Competition & Cooperation

- We need to keep in mind some of the animosity that exists between some of current service providers. i.e. school districts vs. regulated and approved care. Also public perception that child care is competing against the stay at home mom/parent.

Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development

- The training currently required.
- Training needs to be ongoing to meet the needs of current best practice research.
- Training should be done according to the needs in your demographics.
- Ongoing training and development of all staff needs to be in place.
- Access to training facilities.
- High quality of experience and education for those involved in early learning programs.

Theme: Crossing the ECD & Education Paradigm, Profession & Practices

- Certified teachers teaching k-3 need to be trained and supported on play based learning philosophy and environments.
- Supporting teachers to gain the necessary training needed.
- How do we support teachers as they gain education?

Theme: College of Early Childhood Educators

- One overarching professional body to speak for the field, in which membership in in good standing is required to practice.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Financing

- Cost/investment in training in terms of time/commitment.
- We need to have financial support to increase level of education requirement for all early learning staff.
- Resources to support education and training.

Theme: Other Considerations

- To build in the ability to retain those currently working in the field.
- This is a gender heavy field: we need to explore balancing male/female workers.

4.5 Curriculum Framework

What key themes, ideas and questions emerge for you when you consider a curriculum framework?

Theme: Overall

Subtheme: Goals

- Components that address the “big-picture”, such as social equity.
- Focus on socialization, community developmentally appropriate.
- We need to stop projecting our own or society’s hopes and aspirations on children.

Subtheme: The Case

- Framework/guiding principles
- Framework curriculum – not necessarily bad.

Subtheme: Definitions & Language

- I embrace the idea of a 'program (not curriculum) framework. That way whether a child care facility or early ed. Facility was working with a '3 yr. old' each child would naturally be entitled to a certain level of program content – provincially approved – meeting developmentally appropriate practice standards cross the learning domains – goal to produce competent, confident children – context of the curriculum (e.g. Chosen themes, topics, games, etc. can be unique to each site/setting)
- Language (similar)
- Rebranding of the term curriculum or use of a different word would be necessary to address the schoolification of ELC.
- Take out the word "curriculum".

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child-Centered

- Following the child's lead.
- Curriculum must honor the child as knowledgeable and has the embedded ability to scaffold learning.
- Planning and activities in the classroom are a result of children's interests.

Subtheme: Family Centered, Parent Involvement

- Parent understanding and education.

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Does a curriculum framework need to fit the traditional model of ages/grades or can we create frameworks that reflect development stages and the needs of individual families
- How do you stop the curriculum from being one of getting ready for the next stage? Pre-school getting ready for kindergarten, kindergarten to grade 1
- Set up curriculum through a developmental level and not chronological age.
- A continuum of development that all humans participate in.
- Emergent curriculum based on a continuum.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements:

Subtheme: Governance

- Who would monitor a curriculum? Too big!

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Educational requirements for delivery need to be staggered in for current workers.

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- Why is it just regulated that receive public funding?

Theme: Crossing ECD & Education Paradigms, Professions & Practices

- Common content and process areas across the frameworks that include guiding principles – emphasis on quality of interactions and relationships. New Brunswick framework appears to be gaining acceptance in a number of provinces; why not look at this seriously? (Grant MacEwan and Mount Royal – both urban centers) will the needs of rural settings be represented?
- Difference in professional opinions re best way to educate
- Early childhood education – play based.

Subtheme: Curriculum Content

- Work assessment into this.
- I like to see early learning educators involved in putting together curriculum.
- Non-school readiness, not academically driven.
- Philosophy.
- Play based.
- Play based learning
- Recognize diversity, culture, gender, etc.

Subtheme: Quality

- What is quality? Who maintains? Manages? Enforces?
- Consensus around what is best practice? I don't see it now.
- Build on research and best practices. Who do we believe?

Theme: Moving Forward

- It is possible to base curriculum off a similar “emergent curriculum philosophy.
- Made in Alberta Unique settings (i.e. not Quebec).
- We need to teach children that there is more to life than power/prestige (profitability/popularity).
- Accredited – child care professionals have already developed standards for quality early childhood education. Please consult them!

What key guidelines or directions should a provincial framework include in respect to a curriculum framework?

Theme: Awareness & Engagement

- Education of public for what EE looks like.
- Advanced education (colleges, universities) need to be involved and on board.

Theme: ECD and Education Paradigms

- Broad based curriculum – not just about reading and writing.

- Center based learning with purposeful play is very beneficial. Giving a child an opportunity to explore and learn in a non-threatening environment. But all resources need to be on the same page to set up the environment, resources, etc. to assist the child's success.
- Creativity encouraged not stifled.
- Children develop positive interactions.
- Classroom curriculum is play based – learn common skills through: work table, sand table, art, dramatic play, blocks, literature, manipulation, gross motor...
- Create an environment where: children are free to explore/dream, children develop a desire to learn.
- Curriculum is open ended – allow for free play.
- Play based.
- Play based!!
- Play-based – active learning.
- Use principles from Early childhood, not education (or schoolification).

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child-Focused

- Keep the interest of the child at the center of it.

Subtheme: Stakeholder Support

- Input should be gathered from a widely diverse sector of stakeholders and in non-stakeholders then get their perspective because these are often the ones that we need to convince.
- Involves all stakeholders as well as advocates and educates non-stakeholders.

Subtheme: Parent Support

- Determine with the help of parents what their hopes and aspirations are for their children and then try to help their children develop their own dreams and aspirations.
- Parental education and support – the time the child is in care or with parents. Parent has to ultimate responsibility. Don't take that away. Build their skills.

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Developmentally appropriate practice.
- Developmentally appropriate.
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum based on where a child is at in different key areas both academic, emotional, social, etc.: a wholistic approach.
- Must be a developmentally appropriate play based framework that is based on continuum of development as opposed to set learning outcomes.
- The child's developmental abilities.

- Users must have a sound understanding of what is ‘developmentally appropriate’.
- Development milestones.

Subtheme: Inclusive

- We need culturally sensitive support.

Subtheme: Regional-Local Flexibility

- Regional advisory boards should have input as AB has such diversity in population; rural/urban/cultural mosaic, first nations, remote locations – lack of universal access to current programming.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Provincial framework should focus on educated workforce and remuneration to match.
- Ongoing professional development money for all staff. Currently people with a 2 year diploma in ECE may apply. In \$300 grant, but that money is finite.

Theme: Other Considerations

- Base it on research.
- Needs its own system and transition to education system is important.
- All children have access to positive adult role models.
- Focusing on the process and learning than the product in the end.
- Based on an ‘emergent curriculum’ perspective.

Which of these guidelines or directions do you anticipate ELC stakeholders will find most agreement on? Why?

Theme: Child-Centred Early Learning

- Play based learning – it is the best way for children to learn and develop skills in the early years it should focus on the child’s area of interest and learning should be embedded in these areas.
- Theory of childhood development – easy to train people in knowledge
- We need to engage children in learning where they want to be active participants.
- Curriculum based on children’s interest – research shows how well children learn when interested and engaged in the topic.
- That children learn in their own way and at their own pace. And we need to adjust our programs accordingly.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Continuum of Support

- The idea of continuum of a continuum.

Subtheme: Inclusive

- Inclusive and meets the needs of all children and families.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Professional development – stakeholders should embrace lifelong learning.

Subtheme: Organizing Services

- All of the guidelines are sound and good theories. However, the services need to align.

Theme: Other Considerations

- Adopt and tweak the NB curriculum guidelines.
- This should address all early childhood programs and the professionals who work on them.
- Put it in broad terms, make it easy to implement.
- We all want children to grow up to be healthy, kind knowledgeable adults. How best can we do this?

Least agreement? Why?

Theme: Approach to Early Learning and Care

- Play-based programming/learning.
- Play-based, for some – “old school” thinking.

Theme: Links to Other Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Most B. Ed’s have 2 credit courses that apply to early childhood (0-6) ECE diploma graduates have 2 years of education in this field.
- Professional development – stakeholders may find it difficult to change long standing practice.

Subtheme: Finances

- The necessity of having all areas in the classroom – because of expenses tied in with all of the areas.

Subtheme: Governance

- Who decides what quality childcare education is?
- Any accountability or assessment interest.
- Implementation – who has control?

Subtheme: Assessment of Practice

- The content and delivery methods.
- Responsibility for assessment.
- How to assess.
- Responsibility for assessment – differing opinions/research depending on personal preferred delivery/curriculum of choice.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Family Centered

- Family centered – some families are hard to engage.

Subtheme: Inclusive

- Culturally we all learn in different ways and at their own pace.

Theme: Other Considerations

- How to implement curriculum where it is beneficial to all children
- Who knows best?
- Recognition of expertise outside regulated services.
- The disagreements will happen with implementing the change and how this would affect an already overburdened workforce who is dealing with accreditation and licensing.

What do we need to keep in mind as we consider what a proposed provincial framework will include in respect a curriculum framework?

Theme: Overall

Subtheme: The Case

- A curriculum framework is necessary to be able to engage in reflective practice.
- Many of us in the EC field have been looking for direction in this regard to ensure quality, and equity between sites.
- Best interest of the child and family: keep that at the front not what the system already is.

Subtheme: Language

- The whole notion of a curriculum may seem threatening, restrictive or too directive to some.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Regional Flexibility

- There needs to be broad guidelines as to content and process that allows for regional flexibility – the needs truly differ from region to region based on population density, cultural diversity and other demographic features.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Who determines? How/Who retrains? How?

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Educated teachers with ECE background.
- Some educator re-education.
- Ongoing education requirements for ECE's.

Theme: Bridging ECD & Education Paradigms, Professions & Practices

- Not to forget the social aspect of learning.
- Different philosophies.
- Understanding of play-based/emergent curriculum.
- If a child is stressed, low self-esteem, etc. the learning will be greatly hindered.

Theme: Competition & Cooperation

- If we are to achieve a truly integrated curricular framework that meets all children where they are, we need to break the silos of “school” and “community” based services. Is the school not part of the community?
- How to involve the community and the education system to work together?

Theme: Build On

Subtheme: Other Initiatives

- Don't reinvent the wheel. Use what has been developed by accreditation.
- There is a framework in place in the Province – 100 coalitions focusing on the needs of the first 2000 days. Early childhood mapping coalition.

Subtheme: Engagement & Awareness

- We need to continue broad discussion like this one to keep reminding stakeholders of the bigger picture.
- We need parent education.
- Parents will require education on the framework.

Subtheme: Feasibility

- Keep it realistic and family friendly.
- How to support this framework?

Subtheme: A Big Thought

- Keep the focus on the future and social justice: keep it research based.

5. Individual Reflections

a) Goals and purposes for early learning and care

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
12	11			

Theme: Case

- I want my grandchild to have the very best.
- Yes - we need a common framework.

Theme: Scope, Goals & Purposes

- Support for families throughout the province and just not child care and education.
- As long as we're talking about support for families throughout the province – support the family, don't supplant it.
- Support for families not just the children.
- Need to be clearer on what this is? Is it about early learning or daycare/schools – or even more to it than that?
- Waiting for a clear vision of what this will look like. Because if we don't know where we are going, how will we know when we get there?

Theme: Link to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Curriculum Framework

- Really concerned about curriculum.

Subtheme: Finances

- It's not going to be cheap but now that the door's open, we need to get it right.

Theme: Feasibility

- How practical the proposal is in terms of implementation.
- I support for what we can learn along the way if nothing else.
- Tough to create a model of universal access that will not fall into trap of "institutionalized".

Theme: General

- Thank you for involving childcare professionals. We do feel our education and experience can be an asset to future planning.
- Regional discussions need to come from stakeholders in order to make collaborative decisions.

b) Governance – management, planning, participation and ownership

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
8	10	5		

Theme: The Case

- Haven't really hit the nail on the head yet with current model.

Theme: Clarity on Integrated Framework

- Getting there - still a bit fuzzy.
- I don't know what it will look like – how will we choose these people?
- Need more info on how to implement this – hope things that are at provincial level will be applicable across the province.
- So many models that don't work well. Does a perfect model exist?

Subtheme: Scope

- What age? 0-8 or 0-6?

- ELC should be 0-8 years.

Theme: Provincial Models

Subtheme: One Ministry

- Amalgamation of ministries.
- From one ministry.
- Full integration – one model.
- We need to align – and amalgamate or merge ministries.

Subtheme: Cross-Ministry

- As long as it is a cross ministerial governance with regional consideration and guidelines regulations that are flexible dependent on community need, demographic consideration and cultural diversity.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Collaborative

- Are all of the voices going to be heard?
- Equal weight from all shareholders while working collaboratively.

Subtheme: Family Voice

- Family and community participation!
- Family participation – input absolutely necessary.

Subtheme: Accountability

- Clear accountability.

Subtheme: Regional Flexibility

- Municipally driven – world exists outside of Calgary/Edmonton.
- Need that regional advisory so that gov't aware of demographics etc.
- Need regional network – local needs.

Theme: Links to Other Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Funding

- Funding is very fractured.

Theme: Other Considerations

- We need ministerial and collective buy-in.

c) Financing early learning and care

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
8	8	5	2	

Theme: The Case

- Value 0-8 years as critical years – research supports this.
- Value of 0-8 years as critical enough to research and support it.

Theme: Questions

- Haven't had a real chance to learn about and reflect on this.
- Need more info on specifics.

Theme: Public & Private Investment

Subtheme: Public & Private Investment

- Needs to be publically funded.
- We lose focus when we are collecting fees: we need a public funded model.
- Issues of public funds means higher taxes.
- Federal and provincial gov't funding to support change!
- Universal access for publicly funded programs.
- Federal government needs to put their money where their mouth is.

Subtheme: For Profit & Not-for-Profit Delivery

- Public/private not an issue – quality is quality.
- Private delivery tied to labour market participation.
- Public delivery model.

Theme: Area of Investment

- Parents are currently forced into silos of care – subsidy issues and collection of parent fees are an issue.
- Administrative costs of financing a service delivery.
- Help address middle income barriers.

Theme: Volume and Length of Investment

- Need sustainability – use existing networks.

Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- Issues of accountability.
- My previous experience has supported this idea: it's all dependent on who we bring on board – who leads.

Subtheme: Human Resources

- This could be the biggest stumbling block – professional development. funding needs to be consistent and ongoing.

Theme: Regional Flexibility

- Can't be universal due to geography.

Theme: General Considerations

- Has potential to derail a lot of things. Why are they really invested – selves or good for families?
- More options/more cost effective.
- Put money where your mouth is.
- Cooperation, let go of turf wars.

d) Organizing early learning and care service delivery

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
8	11	3	1	

Theme: Delivery Models

Subtheme: Community Hub

- Community hub design for providing services for families. Create the structure or make use of current infrastructure.
- Merging needs to happen and space needs to be designed to support community hubs.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Access

- Want it be accessible to everyone.

Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility

- I would like to see provincial consistency.
- Urban vs. rural and the #'s that dictate how that happens.

Subtheme: Seamless

- Put value on early years and eliminate disconnect between preschool and school

Subtheme: Strength-based

- Come from a strength based.

Theme: Build on What Exists... But Adapt

- Do not reinvent the wheel – use the tools developed by accreditation to ensure quality.
- Make use of existing spaces and expand and go from there.
- What will the impact be to private operators?

Theme: Rules, Regulations, Standards

- Licensing is so primitive right now.
- Need to ensure group care and 1:1 care are adapted to clients.
- Note - 1:1 care for crisis situations needs to be more immediate.

Theme: General

- Will we be stuck in a rut of traditional delivery?
- Embracing change.
- Get rid of the silos.
- Looking forward to seeing how this pans out.

e) Human resources in early learning and care

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
10	7	5	1	

Theme: Valuing the Profession

- Professionalize the profession.
- Valuing the profession more will lead to a pride in the staff and retention.
- We need to professionalize the profession – everyone!!

Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development

- Experienced staff from diverse cultural backgrounds and education as well as ongoing professional development. Training must be viewed positively as they add a richness and diversity that parents value.
- High level of education costly to drive out to smaller community – can't pay as much.
- Need consistency and education, ongoing training.
- Properly trained.
- Support professional development of staff.
- Levels of ed. Professional development. Certification.
- Training opportunities and PD provided/funded.
- Workforce solidarity – same qualifications.

Theme: Flexibility

- Being open to multiple ways of working with children.
- Issues of geography: rural vs. urban.
- Cultural diversity/sensitivity.

Theme: Remuneration & Benefits

- Compensation must match the education and experience
- Differing qualifications and wage disparity.
- Equality in pay.
- Equality in pay for training received.

Theme: Other Considerations

- Nothing concrete yet to form an opinion.
- Increased standards for people working with children.
- Grand mothering those that cannot or will not credential has already been tried. I do not support this.

f) An early learning and care curriculum framework

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
12	7	2		

Theme: ECD & Education Paradigms

- Children will learn best when they have a rich environment where they are free to explore and where the adult can assist them in extending their learning.
- Play based, child driven, involving the whole child.

Theme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Incorporate SPICE learning areas for all age levels 0-8. Developmental domains not age appropriate domains. Children progress at their own pace and learning ability.
- What is developmentally appropriate – we want home-like setting with caring caregivers.
- Who decides developmentally appropriate milestones in our increasing diverse country?
- Framework that has developmental domains – “S-P-I-C-E”

Theme: Consistency and Flexibility

- Currently a hodge-podge – need some universal guidelines that will also reflect the diversity of the province.
- Move away from canned curriculum.
- Reflection of all Albertans – not just the urban centers.

Theme: Other Considerations

- How can you be reflective without being subjective and measure how you are doing.
- Proper documentation to be able to track development all the way up to age 8.

What do you see as the next critical steps to move the development of provincial ELC framework forward?

Theme: Refining Definitions & Getting Clarity

- Common language and goals.
- Common language.
- Is it just childcare vs. education?

Theme: Awareness & Education

- Educating communities/parents/teachers/early childhood educator on importance of ELC framework for future of society.
- Educate parents/community members/caregivers/educators about the framework and get everyone on board.

Theme: Consultation & Engagement

Subtheme: General

- Continued consultation with stakeholders because information is threatening.
- Community consultations or some feedback/input request with parents and service providers/staff in programs.
- Continue to gather opinions and then narrow down the group decisions based on province wide opinion.
- Develop bare bones and then take it out to stakeholders.
- Generating buy in.

Subtheme: Ministerial Level

- Alignment of provincial ministries.
- Need public support and backing and beliefs from the Alberta government.
- Funding meeting with ministries to keep united conversations happening.
- Meeting with ministries, take little steps but keep moving forward to reach our goal!

Subtheme: Community/Local

- Consultation and valuing the input of local stakeholders.

Theme: Sharing Results

- Share with us the curriculum development that has been contracted out.

Theme: General

- I agree this will not happen quickly...
- Good start and appreciate all the work that has already been done.

What key ideas, themes or questions stand out for you as you leave the forum today?

- Encouraged that we have a voice at the table.
- There is change coming.
- I love the idea of the window!
- I didn't know this was possible!
- The spectrum should be expanded to include family support (today seemed to focus on daycare and Kindergarten) and its many and complex facets.
- Thank you for your initiative with this process!
- Governance and financing most challenging.
- There are currently 100 coalitions (ECMap Project) Province wide that are very familiar with local programs, resources and demographics. It would seem reasonable to utilize this existing framework for input and advice.
- It was a very interesting and though provoking day. A good place to start

- I see common thoughts from different experiences and walks of life coming together and realizing its time now to merge, align =- get it together for the betterment of the society.
- All sources of child care programs aligning together and working for the best needs of the children.
- Common language/goals across early childhood providers.
- Consistency is key (in service provision, access, etc.).
- Need flexibility in service delivery/within overarching consistency.
- What can we do next?
- When can I start?
- Put the framework in motion, it is very exciting and timely for change.
- Will we see this through?

What do you most want to say to your ELC colleagues about a potential new provincial framework for ELC?

- This is important work – we need your enthusiasm and ambition.
- Good luck. We hope this great vision comes to fruition.
- Look at the EMap coalition as a network for routing funding, accountability etc. It's in place, why reinvent the wheel?
- Keep working.
- This is a huge “window” of opportunity in the early childhood world, for children, families and communities in AB. A great place to start, but a very complex process... it will be exciting to see what transpires.
- Exciting future with many dedicated passionate people.
- Thanks - you guys and gals are awesome.
- It must incorporate the diverse nature of Alberta. Norway may be a great model but the expanse of the north and the sparse population of SE AB make this difficult.
- We are getting close!
- ELC is huge and in the forefront of discussions. Now is the time to have a voice!
- Families need to be informed and part of the discussion.
- Lots of good ideas in the works but a long road to travel on.
- Let's do it.
- This is an excellent opportunity to make change and put in place the framework for our children and families to become more successful! As communities and as a province, we need to collaborate to enhance the ELC in Alberta.
- Training is a key component in whatever model is explored.
- Alberta needs to step up the requirements with all parties involved without youngest citizens.