



Toward a Provincial Framework for Early Learning and Care in Alberta

A Record of Participant Discussions

Medicine Hat

November 22, 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 Medicine Hat consultation held on November 22nd, 2012 at the Southside Event Centre. Nineteen 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. An Integrated Approach

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

Theme: The Case for Integration

- Integrating I feel is key to success, having everyone on the same page, same goals though it may be different community to community.
- We appreciate concept of integration – child receives range of services from different publically funded programs without multiple registrations, waiting and philosophies. Continuity for children and families would be better achieved with matching developmental philosophies where the child services are not for profit. We do not wish to have businesses profiting off of children. Profiting off of children influences our intent and lens on what we are doing to support child development and family development in a child led, play based home-like centers

Theme: Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Governance

- One ministry – who will provide support: education, human services, health or will it become a new ministry, early learning. New funding or taking from each ministry.
- Education already has the infrastructure – it would need to be extended to children before school age. But need to be respectful of “schoolification”

Subtheme: Human Resources

- How will we be able to increase current early childhood educator’s level of education?

Subtheme: Financing

- Cost and understanding why early learning is important. Greater understanding of the professional caregivers. Community perspective – local.
- Funding, not enough supports
- Standardized usages and fees.
- Theme – cost, PUF, how.
- Where do we get the money?

Subtheme: Curriculum

- All for play based learning, 0-3 fun, less structure would like more structure around 3-6 but still able to follow the lead of the child
- Worry about too much structure guidelines that could take away from lead of child.
- Whole child: continuum – smooth transition when under one umbrella.

Subtheme: Service Delivery

- Current operators have been in this field for years; they deserve respect and deserve to have a place in any new developments.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child-centered

- What is best for children and families? Children 0-4 deserve the same level of services and funding that 5 year olds do.

Subtheme: Quality/Affordability

- Quality care/training/paid.
- Level of quality
- Spaces cannot be the only concern. We can't only look at numbers – it must be quality
- Key themes I consider would be affordability and quality of ELC for every child participant and their families.

Subtheme: Access

- Equal access to all children –currently have/have not; all children benefit
- Community based – we come to the children in their community
- Universal access moving from a deficit model.

Subtheme: Consistency

- Will there be: Consistency in wages; Consistency in continued education: Consistency in benefits; Consistency in programming and behavior management

Subtheme: Family Centered

- We need to keep family as part of the processes. We need to support parents so they can be their children's first and most important teacher.
- I question the direction of society as a whole. I strongly believe children need to develop attachments to these primary caregivers and these attachments must be strong. Our society has become one of greed, of wants and this is affecting all of our children from birth to 18. I believe children are lonely, sad and are grieving. Are we setting up future generations of empty vessels if we make outside of the home ELC readily available?

Subtheme: Strength-based

- Universal access moving from a deficit model.
- Challenging parent's values by assessing their children. Right now we are working from a deficit model – have to test and assess children to prove they need programming.

Theme: General

- Where do we start? How do we come to consensus? How do we make it clear, easy to follow, when there is change in government, etc.?
- Excited!! When and where to start? Important for ALL children to have access. It's overwhelming to think about. There will be respect for what we do.
- Wrap around support for all people, families, parents, and children.
- I feel that ELC needs to become an important part of our society, provincial and federal. ELC affects more than just families with young children.

Theme: Models for Consideration

- The Nordic country model is wonderful but unsure if Alberta, Medicine Hat or Canada is ready for that way of thinking.
- Can we use the model from the Scandinavian countries? Compare cost of current situation in AB with, for example, cost in Norway in providing daycare to children 0-6. Provide choice to families – do you want to take advantage of subsidized/free childcare for your children or would you like to receive a certain similar amount of money from the government, and stay home to take care of your child, for example, 3 years?

Theme: Transitions

- Work load to make changes – who are involved? Responsibility?

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

Theme: Full Integration

- I believe Universal program with equal access for everyone would be the best.
- I feel it should be full integration. Go big. We may only have this one opportunity.
- Full integration – under education umbrella
- Full integration would be the ultimate goal! Accessibility = funding for everyone. A common educational background. Common goals when educating young children. Set fees across province or regions as well as staff wages.
- I believe full integration would be preferable for the majority of families
- Integration at all levels.
- Across the board services. Less transitions for children. There is too much fragmentation of services largely based on funding formulas. This needs to be easier.
- Complete integration for those who want it = choice. Number of families working. Models of families changing. Choice for care if stay at home – support money for parent to stay with child.

- If I ignore my deep concern listed above and accept that this is the direction our society is heading, then I think Alberta, or at least Medicine Hat, is ready for something closer to full integration (a chart was provided).
- We could potentially benefit children and allow families to reach their potential with integration of publically funded, equitable child services that integrate health, education and human service ministries.

Theme: Mixed

- Consistency across Alberta. Appropriate funding for the integrated services
- A continuum
- More supports for all children, no curriculum required in childcare!
- Half way between – long steps and scary process to transition to full

Theme: Partial

- Education taking over ELC but with approved operators as contracted providers. This will allow programs that are already high quality to continue their good work
- Parent fees and wages must be standardized
- Schools as the community hub to access supports and services for children. Maybe they aren't called "schools". Create environments that are safe – common understanding and basis to meet the needs of all children

Theme: Transitions

- How to get them from here? The importance of keeping folks focused on the goal of creating a system that supports child and families in a more cohesive manner.
- While transitioning supports in place for us? Community? Workers? Family support workers.

Theme: General

- I am not sure; whatever works best for families, children and professionals involved.
- We are not at full integration

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

Theme: General

- With the research for ECMap we know that many children in AB are struggling in many developmental areas. What we are currently doing now is not addressing all of these issues

Theme: Overall Level of Readiness

Subtheme: High Readiness

- High I think. I believe there is readiness for closely integrating early development and care. What if we called it Early Development, Health and Care for children and families – let's not leave the family out of our care plan?
- High- we have to show cost by current system compare to new system. Have to put value on having a teacher with a degree in every daycare. Have to realize/show that providing small (or big) pots of money all over the place might add up to the cost of Universal program.
- I would see moving toward full integration as a long term goal. Short term goal would be start monitoring and regulated from a single ministry or branch.

Subtheme: Mixed Readiness

- In my opinion Albertans are eager for change however hesitant to take leadership
- There is a lot of work to be done here. Alberta knows the system needs to improve but integration becomes a challenge when asking folks to move into new systems. There is a sense that their system should stay.
- About 60% ready though there is still the notion of private/public schools gradually thinking or receptive to early learning. Must "state" notion of family/childcare too young to be in school.
- Getting there, people are discussing it, but not sure if all are ready for the changes required.
- It worries me that we are not ready; we are not all on the same page with these ideas yet. I think it makes a lot of people nervous and unsure this point. Parents are ready but still need to be educated in what to expect (what's appropriate)

Theme: Stakeholders

Subtheme: Parents

- Families are ready! Stakeholders need to be too.
- I feel that there is a realization of the importance of early intervention and education and the recognition of ECE is increasing. Parents are more informed as to what they are looking for and expectations of centers and quality of staff and instruction.

Subtheme: Politicians

- Need the support of politicians to move forward - \$

Subtheme: Professionals

- I think that we require changes to our community child care centers, I don't feel that we are ready for full integration
- I believe the people that work in the fields related to ELC are ready; I am not sure about the rest of the province.
- People directly involved with children ready.

Subtheme: The Public

- General population may not understand importance of child development
- The window is open – the public and the government are becoming more aware that ELC matters.
- The window is open – the public and the government are becoming more aware that ELC matters.

Theme: Other Considerations

- I think that structuring early years too much, is unneeded pressure!
- Children require structure and consistency from our community, don't want it to be overwhelming for them before the school years

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

Theme: Family Focused

- We hope to keep in mind that the child is usually part of some form of family unit and it is their development and body/mind/spirit that we hope to positively influence not curricular. "Curricular" is a loaded word and will/could negatively influence public perception of what children need to develop optimally and develop healthy outcomes
- We need to keep in mind that children need to be at home with a caring adult first and foremost. We need to keep our ELC programs, inquiry programs, play programs, how to make a friend program.
- The family, we need family not to be lost in the process. Not everyone wants to have their children in the care of others. Make it so parents can be home with their children and ensure they have the supports and knowledge to be their children's first teacher. Allow choices for family whether it be putting children into care or being a stay at home parent.

Theme: Awareness and Support

- Change the attitude around family values – to increase value of time spent with family – and quality of care provided for children. Increased maternity leave, increased pay for staying home with child, increased salary, increased vacation
- All players – education level, understanding of development and these critical years, parental opportunities, responsibility.

- Public perception and self-perception of those in the field. Many front line workers don't realize the system is fractured or that they can be involved in changing it, get past longing for days of old it is a myth.
- There appears to be a lot of for-profit facilities there are varying levels of education and knowledge.
- Changes in government if this are a long-term process, what happens to the process if it changes?

Theme: Integration Elements

Subtheme: Curriculum Framework

- The ELC values of play and the whole child must not be lost. Entering kindergarten prepared to succeed must focus on social, emotional readiness, even kindergarten should be play-based and active- not a place for grade one type curriculum.
- Age appropriate instruction/play based.
- Children learn most 0-3 playing, building trust and relationships; 3-4 very important to continue this learning process through play!
- Children need to be children. We need to instill values, and positive growth into them, yet allowing them to lead this direction
- Let them play and learn and they can go to school and have framework

Subtheme: Financing

- Possibility of increased taxes. Requirement of higher education and salaries.
- \$\$\$! Education for all – level the playing field. Families having choices and doing what is best for their children. Make it equal for families – regarding culture, socio-economic status, and parental education.

Subtheme: Governance/Regulations

- Childcare regulation vs. school
- Child care licensing regulations vs. school rules. Which one will prevail or will they be combined
- Difference in regulation between school and daycare.

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Readiness of workers, family, supports
- Recognition, development and maintaining (retention) staff at centers.
- Momentum if a new government is put in place in a few years.

Subtheme: Service Delivery

- Family day homes – how will they fit in?
- Need to consider a strategy that brings public and private together in a system that has the best interest of the child at heart.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Access

- Parents while away need care for a full work day – we can't simply have preschool programs that finish at 3 or that are only 3 hours in length.

Subtheme: Universal

- We need to offer a support system to all families within our community, without over powering them.

Subtheme: Child Centered

- Need to keep the needs of the children and their families first

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate

- Intervention services as required.

Theme: General

- Environments = nurturing not just spaces.
- Funders, families, environment, choices, early childhood professionals, cost, levels of government, sector/public.
- We need to remember the diversity of culture; financial resources and accessibility.

Theme: Build on What Exists

- Need to consider the great work many people are already doing in this area – respect.
- Our history – we used to have municipalities involved. Will they be willing to go back to that?

3. Goals & Purposes

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

Theme: The Goals

Subtheme: Family and Child-related Goals

- The continuum: Wrap around support for whole child and family
- Beliefs and value systems. Ongoing and continuing support to children, families and communities.
- To provide early learning environments for children that also support families and communities in whatever way best supports their youngest citizens.

- We require supports for families in our community to have access to quality child care!

Subtheme: Lifelong Learning/Child Development

- Children to feel valued, respected, cared for, safe.
- Learning ultimate goal – children are happy, supported and feel successful
- We need supports to offer more early development

Subtheme: Family Support and Well-being

- Parent to feel valued, respected, in control instead of looking for support and taking whatever is given by the top down approach. A society that values children and families and education move from me to we. Invest in the child here and now the child's development is perceived as a valuable process not an end product. A paradigm shift from ministries.
- Strengthen families – unit- less stress, separation, divorce

Subtheme: Community Cohesion

- Community cohesion and what that looks like from streets, to buildings – a place where everyone belongs.

Subtheme: Gender and Child Equity

- Children deserve to have their rights respected
- Women and children in society.

Theme: Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Staff needs to have more education to shape where childcare should go, more supports and structure, but stay play based!
- Common education and pay scale amongst staff. Consistency for children, space, and education of staff that is caring for them. Family support – at early stages –parents and attachment so their brain develops to help them be ready to learn.

Subtheme: Finance

- Free class 1-12 for everyone – no school fees, no tuition for college and university.
- Though I don't like putting a dollar sign on the head of our children, I feel that to get the other sectors to buy into this idea they must understand money. There must be seamless integration for all levels of care. Support families for full life.

Subtheme: Governance

- Has to be government directed – one minded. Not all these tiers doing their own thing (school system, daycare system). High quality learning for 1-6 year olds, priority of family life/time together – strengthen family, government directed standards throughout province. Happiness, relationships - learn what you need.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child centered

- Too much pressure on child to form into what you want them to become, system needs to form around the child

Subtheme: Choice

- Choice for families – early learning environment, stay at home parent – equal support.

Theme: Principles

- Quality care does not just mean creating spaces – what do those spaces look like, what happens in those spaces, what does a safe, caring space look like, how do we measure quality? What does it look like? How do we support it?
- A sense of community; opportunities for all.

Theme: Awareness & Support

- How do you communicate these goals on a broader level to those people that do not have children or children of those ages?

Theme: General

- Societal changes – not just looking at ELC
- Happy (relationships) = resiliency.
- Idea – goals will have to be on board, measurable, meaningful for all stakeholders. Lack of understanding
- It is for the greater good
- Theme – it takes a village, a caring village.
- Presently children are associated with a dollar figure – children are put through a microscope and assessed for developmental skills, rated by percentiles and a child is a dollar figure in a competitive deficit based model for obtaining early learning funding. We need to avoid associating children with \$\$ or business.
- That we all come together as a profession to work towards the common goal. That we all know why we do what we do. That we build stronger community connections and smoother transitions throughout education.

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

Theme: Goals & Purposes

Subtheme: Child Development

- Let's call it Early Child and Family Health, Development and Care. Are we fully integrated without a health component; we would be remiss to not include child/family health in this goal.
- Meeting all the needs of each child as whole

Subtheme: Family Support

- Helping parents make good choices. Supports to families means more than just programs, parents now don't seem to have what was considered common sense, we need to help them gain the information that is simple and basic. The framework needs to be a working document so that it can evolve with society, allowed to change.
- Essential to support the whole child and their family
- Need to help parents make good choices for their children
- Support families to have the options they need, consistent and reasonable policy.
- Supporting families and communities as primary caregivers and supporting relationships with those involved with provides services for children purpose build centers.

Subtheme: Gender & Child Equity

- Allowing child to have supports and decisions
- Use Scandinavian countries as model. Use the declaration of the "rights of the child" UNICEF as a baseline – as Canada has agreed to this. Equality – for everyone, same standard throughout provinces

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Access

- Bring resources to the community
- Easy access for all children
- Goal - ELC, by the year 2022, will be an equitable system for children from the ages of 0-6, that all families can have access to and input to, to develop interdependent, empathetic, self-motivated individuals 9 out of 10 times

Subtheme: Choice

- Choice part for families
- Family support and choice – some families want to stay home with their children
- Choices for families – full day, half day.

Subtheme: Quality

- Inclusive care – non-profit care – every child gets quality early learning and care.

Subtheme: Seamless

- Don't want to see families going to multiple agencies to get needs met

Subtheme: Strength-Based/Developmentally Appropriate

- Strength based programming with supports for needs provided
- Meet children and families where they are at!
- Value where child is at now versus what we want them to be.

Theme: Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Human Resources

- Human resource development money. Financing/funding issues.
- Providing ECE with the education, tools, to assist in building the successful environment for the child to grow and develop into.
- Structure to allow for staff to have education and pay scale consistent and equal.

Subtheme: Curriculum Framework

- Preschool is not boot camp for kindergarten - keep the focus on play.

Subtheme: Finance

- Funding can be found in one place and services.

Theme: Other Considerations

- Long-term results. Consistent relevant regulations.
- Flexibility. Evolving framework – we need to build in flexibility so that changes can be made.
- Main goals: universal publically funded early child development supports, child and family optimal development of mind, body, spirit; community, society and global cohesion, universal equity for all children and families.
- The continuum needs to continue past early childhood – begins there – moves on.

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

Theme: Most Agreement

Subtheme: Affordability

- Subsidized daycare for everyone. Childcare worker level 1, 2 and 3 to be able to work in daycare (no requirement of degree). I'm afraid that it would be piecework - to have good ELC we have to have good and unison leadership/governance/values.

Subtheme: Lifelong Learning/Child Development

- I like the goal of lifelong learning, easier to sell.
- Goals: feeling safe, valued, connected, resiliency; happiness and relationships and attachment and well-adjusted children and families
- Lifelong learning – those people already involved in ELC understand that the early years are critical
- Lifelong. Reaching agreement around most of our purposes surrounding early child developmental supports. Let's keep curriculum and education out of our labels and goals and use development, health, wellness. Remove readiness for school goal as this induces fear, guilt and a very small outcome of a well and healthy adjusted child.

Subtheme: Family Supports

- Family supports – ELC stakeholders know families need assistance
- Support Parents and understanding

Subtheme: Gender and Child Equity

- Equity. Creates an environment of haves and have nots, people do not feel like they are missing out on an opportunity for their children
- Equal opportunity for all

Subthemes: Principles

- Quality, affordable education. Year round wrap around services.
- Quality, support year round for special needs.

Subtheme: Integrative Elements

- Financing - Investment in ELC is critical, families need support.
- Governance - Licensing issues always changing

Subtheme: General Considerations

- Programs all have an idea of what needs to change – long process to get out facts of changes required, end ideas
- That changes are required to make what we do more successful

- Opting in licensing. One system – year round wrap-around services.
- Integration Education, funding! Goal
- The changes are going to be all different from a preschool daycare – Junior K class

Theme: Least Agreement

Subtheme: Goals

- Community cohesion – such variety in the goals and beliefs of families
- Lifelong Foundation for life learning and societal contributors. Do we need to be globally competitive if our goal is global cohesion and social inclusion? (which tends to have a more cooperative position). Eliminating the business aspect to children's care – let's go not for-profit child/family supports so children do not become subjected to business philosophy

Subtheme: Funding

- Accessible by all – relating to funding and public support. Community cohesion – not so much a disagreement but a lack of understanding about early education and care, could support this goal were it funded and delivered in a more cohesive manner.
- Funding - who should be responsible (government, regions) nobody wants the responsibility. I guess it would be useful to compare the use of preventable dollars spend – instead of fixing problems later.
- Financial funding from government.
- Financial.
- Making it accessible to all! Government funding!
- Perhaps funding, qualification of staff, licensing
- That is a public good – then everyone needs to pay for it.
- Funding will be a challenge – who gets the money, who distributes it? Getting stakeholders out of their silos.

Subtheme: Governance

- Governance
- Licensing standards are so restrictive and unrealistic and often not understanding the needs of children. School boards have selected not to work with these standards. We need one set of policies.

Subtheme: Other Considerations

- Different across the province however, the foundation needs to be the same.
- General opting out because of strong policies.
- The end results or expectations for a child.
- The pressures being put on a community to raise the expectations, when not all ready or in agreement
- Service delivery.

4. Integrative Elements

4.1 Governance

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

Theme: Focus

- Focus on the whole child – doesn't start or stop because of an age.

Theme: Approaches

Subtheme: One Ministry

- One ministry. Supports for children, common guidelines, philosophy: Health/Care/Education.

Subtheme: Shared Between Ministries

- Closer work between the ministries to align current practices and funding models.
- The past round of focus group meetings, there was talk of why is ministry of health not included? To truly be integrated and inclusive we need to have a tri-ministry governance: Health, Education and Human Services for Early Child/Family Development and Care.

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

Theme: Focus

- Whole person paradigm.
- Heart, Body, Mind, Soul.

Theme: Shared Governance

- Include all 3 ministries in governance: health, education and human services – shared language and guidelines (community), same theory of practice and philosophy. That way we could hopefully achieve minimum requirements and contributions of each ministry in all communities in the province for consistency.

Theme: Accommodation of Regional Differences

- The guidelines we should follow are improving the infrastructure so it is more consistent and still flexible to community needs. The goals and expectations are determined from one ministry or both. But families, communities and service providers work together to meet the specific ways that best meet local needs and culture.

Theme: Funding

- Public funding – access for all.

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

Theme: Most Agreement

- 1, 3. We know we need more alignment to bring services together so we can move forward

Theme: Least Agreement

- 2 – public perception of true cost of early learning and need for it.
- Who takes the lead?
- Ownership – whole new paradigm

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

- No written responses.

4.2 Financing

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

- No group discussion.

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

- No group discussion.

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

- No group discussion.

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?

- No group discussion.

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: Clear Scope and Goal

- Be aware of a common goal first, bring stakeholders together to discuss needs, discuss common solutions to needs, organize support for ELC based on needs
- Working 0-6 system; 6-18 system

Theme: Governance

- The ministry of human services should decide amongst themselves who delivers services and what regulations they fall under. Regulations that differ among service providers working under different can effect service delivery i.e.: regulated care safety and paperwork make delivery quality early education care a bigger challenge.
- Needs to be under one umbrella.
- Use a “pyramid of intervention” and work with a very close relationship with school boards. We would be run by something that looks like the school board system. We would be accessible to everyone or perhaps everyone would be entitled to our services. Early childhood educators would no longer have HR duties. Kindergarten would be full day and the teachers would either have education specific to early childhood or have a co-teacher with that specialization. Moving kindergarten under an early learning rather than school system – create a community center.
- Community involvement, partnership.

Theme: Continuum

- One system for 0-6 (children and ECS) - this system would control funding for centers, special funding for children with needs, regulate centers.
- Community center.

Theme: Delivery Groups

- Profit vs. not for profit.
- Will municipalities want to get involved again/ They were already in the past but then when the funding was pulled they got out as fast as possible
- Have Community Centers focus with all supports in that location and public access for all.
- Too many centers, too many families, not enough people able to take full lead

Theme: Principles

- Seamless; continuous program. Offer optional full day K.
- Seamless.

Theme: Services

- Wrap around services. Child's day is not full of interruptions. Parents feel their child is in a safe/caring/embracing environment and does not have to leave work to shuttle child. Services come to the child not having to go to hospital for service.
- Full day kindergarten must be in place
- OSC vs. daycare

Theme: Other Considerations

- Integration is key – organizations must be connected and communication must be efficient and open
- Supports to organize all programs
- Long time to get process moving/costs?
- Regulations, real for program and needs

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

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Access

- Year round services, no long breaks with education supports, wrap around and follow through

Subtheme Developmentally Appropriate

- Coming to children – not children coming to us

Subtheme: Family Focused

- Focus on families and the specific needs within the area – flexibility within the framework to meet more specific needs.

Subtheme: Strength-Based

- Focus on the positives in these communities and building on them versus fear-based reactive services. “Pyramid of Intervention”

Subtheme: Inclusion

- Inclusion and universal supports

Theme: Links to Integrated Elements

Subtheme: Regional Oversight/Governance

- Do not have a super-board, allow local autonomy for decisions and organization for this area/needs. The provincial framework should include broad-based goals

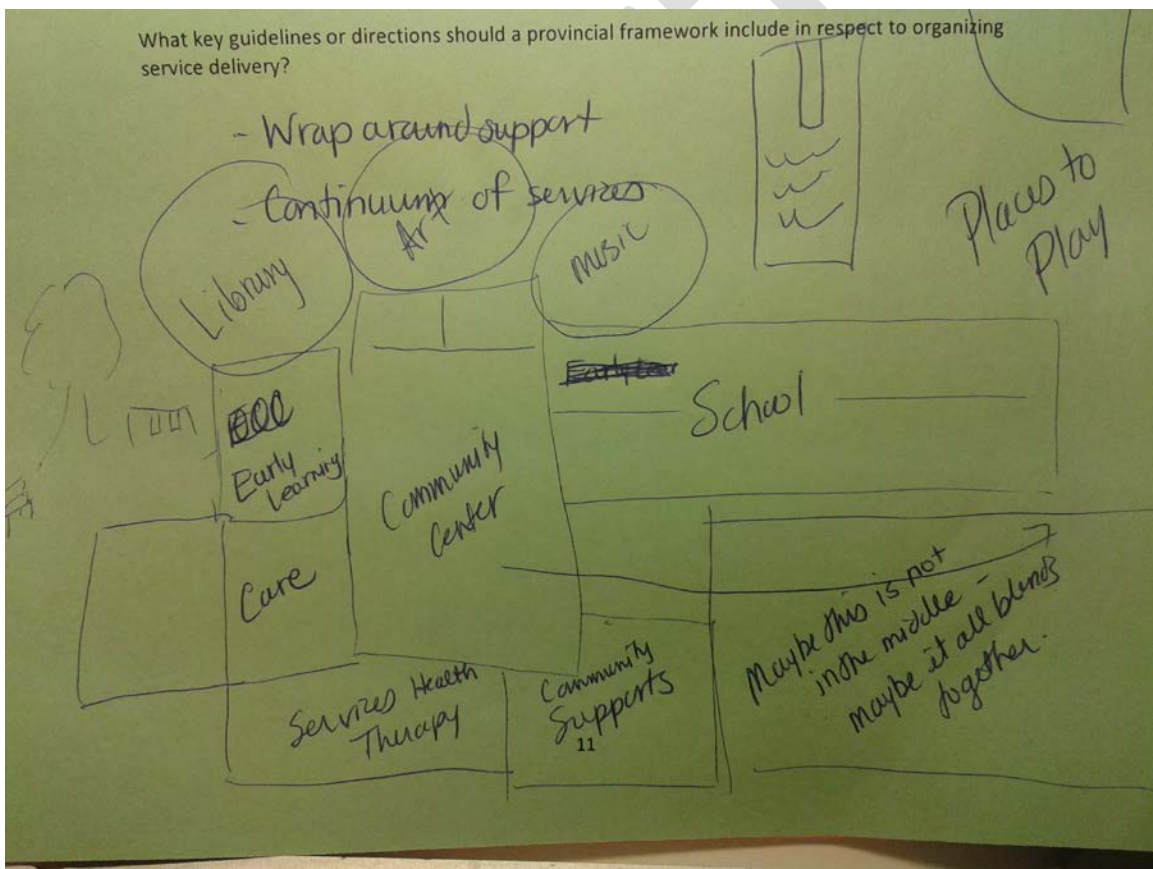
Subtheme: Human Resources

- Change of regulation, staffing
- Education of caregivers and momentary value is at high standard = value of children. Environment – 3rd teacher honors the child and family. Licensing rules – need to change to guiding principles and pedagogy
- Have education sessions to get everyone going in the same direction. Support to deal with the changes (professional development). Everyone has the same umbrella of what drives your decisions, but therefore will look different in Medicine Hat than it does in Edmonton.
- If you are going to have a multisite, multiservice organization, you must have dedicated directors for each site. One person can't handle running a day home agency, a daycare and OSC. There must be a multi-tiered management strategy.

- PD opportunities, resources (equipment and knowledge) comes from connecting.

Subtheme: Organizing Services/Infrastructure

- Focus on building a community with and around these centers.
- Continuum of services.
- Full day every day kindergarten.
- Programs should be connected to one another by networks or child care association.
- Transportation
- Wrap around support.



Subtheme: Curriculum

- Respectful, child honoring, the whole child approach. A research-based neuro-science pedagogy that provides the underpinning for the framework.

Theme: Regional Flexibility

- Some guidelines – beliefs to move discussion – but focused on individual community.

Theme: General

- Programs meeting same needs offering same services 0-3, 3-6, 6+.
- Continuity of services, wages and expectations of quality. Existing organizations need to work more collaboratively while we work towards greater integration.

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

- #1 and 2
- Provincial-municipal partnerships
- 3 – continuity of information follows child and families
- What is in the best interest of a child will help all stakeholders agree, regardless of how the organization is set up.
- Full day Kindergarten services
- Additional supports for all programs
- Community resources
- One umbrella or mandate

Least agreement? Why?

- 0-6 system that removes kindergarten.
- Who, where – human nature – what is in it for me?
- Location?
- Year round supports.
- Funding.
- Profit vs. non-profit.

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

Theme: Principles

- Parents should have choice – if they want to stay at home – there should be incentives or supports available.
- The flow of programs and supports – seamless.

Theme: Link to Other Integrative Elements

Subtheme: Curriculum Framework

- Curriculum Framework: programming for children, educating workforce, developmentally appropriate, respectful human rights, includes families – extended, a level of education standards for delivery, money to support the people in providing care, developed by an informed body, based on research/best practice.

Subtheme: Financing

- Financing - long or short term.

Theme: Possible Models

- Model Service delivery – Churchill Park – staff training, community hubs, municipal model.
- New Brunswick version: Grand McEwan/Mount Royal already being worked on.

Theme: Regulations & Licensing

- Licensing needs to be consistent from ELC providers and K.
- Child care licensing vs. school rules integration.

Theme: General Considerations

- Real life issues – and restrictions we face
- It has to be sustainable. Political will can't influence the framework every few years.

4.4 Human Resources

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

Theme: The Case

- Quality care = quality staff = educated not trained.

Theme: Scope

- How would day home providers do – how would it affect?

Theme: Cross ECD & Education Paradigms, Professions & Practices

- Balancing out the difference between the levels of education between K vs. child care professionals. How do you support the individuals already doing the work.
- Why is there a level of respect difference between ECEs and teachers!

Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development

Subtheme: Education/Profession

- Training education across all levels. Pay levels represent professionals i.e.: recognition.

Subtheme: Professional Development/Upgrading

- Professional development opportunities – providing training. Competitive wages that are.....
- How do we support people who are already in the field? Many people don't have time or finance to pursue further education. Plus at this time, there isn't enough remuneration to make it more worthwhile.

Theme: Remuneration

- Wages, continuing education benefits, health benefits, etc., recognition of the importance of this work.
- Pay levels represent professionals i.e.: recognition.
- Equal pay and education regarding early care and education: we need minimal requirements.
- To keep diploma ELCC grads in the field and to attract men to the field pay must be higher.

What key guidelines or directions should a provincial framework include in respect to human resources for early learning and care?

- Equality and structure with pay and staffing requirements.
- Standardization of training, wages, benefits. Retention of staff. Focus on building skills within the workplace. Multidisciplinary team, all directors/principals need to have ECE background.
- Things like equivalencies where child and youth care grads or primary teacher are given level 3 is disrespectful to the ELCC workforce. ELCC need also to be supported with professional development days. They are given money for PD but then no time.
- Follow other professional platforms
- Funding/wages. Ongoing professional development
- Maintain PD to maintain your professional association.

- ECE's need to be recognized as professionals – they need a higher level of education and... a higher level of pay. They also need to respect themselves.
- Professional certification body
- Ongoing professional development requirements
- Staff equivalencies don't make sense.

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

Most agreement?

- Increased formal education
- Need better pay, benefits, and environments. Multidisciplinary staffing
- Salary scales – it would make it more
- Seeing themselves as professionals, not babysitters

Least agreement?

- Gender equality.
- Level 1 is not an acceptable level of education to work with children
- Parents would have to be paying more if staff are to be paid more. Unless, however, there was adequate supply funding
- Higher education is required

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?

- To respect our human resources including the children and families we serve
- Programs need to be supported in hiring quality staff.
- What will we do for casual staff filling in for sick days, vacation, etc.?

4.5 Curriculum Framework

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

Theme: Profile of Profession

- We are respected as educators as well as nurturers. Very careful around assessment and evaluation.

Theme: Scope

- Learning starts as soon as baby is born, environment needs to be included. Whole child – families. Active learner, lifelong learners, choices: full day K.
- We need services for the community as a whole.
- Treat 0-6 subsection of education, grade 1 plus.

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate/holistic

- Remembering developmentally appropriate practice. When curriculum is flexible it can meet individual needs but must follow a philosophy that is common – cannot be open to any interpretation. Based on solid research and strong early learning and care principles.
- Holistic approach: environmental, mind, body, spirit, philosophy/principles, supports.
- SLP-learning development – intellectual, developmental principals supports founded by ministry of health, education and human services.

Theme: Crossing ELC and Education Paradigms, Professions & Practices

- What is the end goal, what are we trying to achieve? Schoolification – need to avoid like the plague.
- Curriculum often means “evaluation”. Developmental supports would require a multi-disciplinary input – children would benefit most from multi-lens of supports: e.g. OT-mental health – social, public health, PT-spiritual development, emotional
- It includes kindergarten under an early learning focus rather than a school focus.
- Not schoolified – no work sheets, no report cards.
- Play based learning.

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

Theme: Principles

Subtheme: Child Centered

- Respect for children and families. Play – inclusive. Everyone is working towards the same goals and have the same ideas. Everyone is educated and knowledgeable in early childhood education. We aren't preparing anyone for anything. Lots of professional development opportunities. Family-centered, richly involved. Lots of communication. The whole child.

Subtheme: Inclusive Community

- Keeping inclusive community.

Theme: ELC Paradigm

- Inquiry based programs, inclusive programming, holistic programming, family centered programming.
- Including play – following the lead of child
- Not based on learning outcomes – based on needs of children. Leadership needs to understand early learning. Holistic wrap around services. New Brunswick offers a good model for Early Childhood Curriculum.
- Parents fear of school work too early.
- Play-based, child led. Relationship based developmental supports, guided by adults and community members (i.e.: elders, multi-aged groups in a home like environment) meeting needs of the children instead of outcomes based.

Theme: General Considerations

- Positive interactions. Relationships between home and community. Play. Well educated individuals – well paid.
- Taking us back to ECE not administration.

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

Most agreement?

- If program using government funding follows the outlined curriculum provided to all centers, programs across province.
- Increase in professional development and ongoing training.

Least agreement?

- Amount of involvement of different stakeholders.
- Play – following the child.

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

- The current disconnect and competition between centers. The varying levels of education among staff.

- What kind of individuals will this framework develop?
- 0-6: very important critical time for young children but has to be fun – skill building time creating a sense of self, mold time to next level of 6/8 – 12 yrs. Much more structured and see more results from hard work of the child “PLAY” from time period.

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
6	4			

- People have spoken. To the child first family and a level of education for caregivers.
- What are the specifics and what the timeline will be?
- Publicly funded system. Wrap around services and a continuum. 0-18
- As long as it embraces the learning and care that people have passionately spoken to, and doesn't get watered down
- To hear the voice of the early learning community. They bring knowledge, skills, attitudes
- How much change? Timeline for the project

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
6	3		1	

Theme: The Case for Change

- What we have isn't working and so change is needed

Theme: One Ministry

- One ministry for all children: families
- Needs one umbrella. Needs one ministry.
- Integration needs inclusion of all 3 ministries – form one.
- One ministry oversees it all
- Under one umbrella – one ministry
- Ministry of early childhood development or as part of ministry of Ed

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
11		2		

Theme: Public & Private Funding

- Public financing
- Municipal funding and governance flowing from one ministry.
- Public system of investments
- Public funding

Theme: Supply Side Funding

- Supply side funding, funding for education, funding for remuneration of ECE's
- Supply funding like k-12

Theme: Consistent Funding

- All levels same supports and grants
- Municipal funding and governance = universal equity for all

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
6	4			

- Not disconnected again one ministry: Municipal supported and financed.
- Community Centers – not school, daycare, health centers.
- Phase in – hybrid model.
- One ministry to manage at the community.
- Community vendors – all come together.
- Is it under a school board? Is it contracts with schools? Is it city-run?

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
9	1			

- Some concern to the process of these changes.
- Quality system needs to educate and pay workers, including benefits.
- Educate and pay what they are worth.
- Recognized for your education.
- Support-change – but unknown at this time.
- Phase in will be necessary.

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
7	3			

Theme: General

- Guiding principles – process –continuum. Less rules – high standards education.
- I want no more worksheets! I want confident kids.

Theme: Crossing ECD and Education Paradigms, Professions and Practices

- Early child development philosophy.
- Guiding principles instead of curriculum. Some countries have least amount of rules have higher education.
- Childcare centers on health and safety of child. Education more structured format.
- Developmentally appropriate
- Hate word “curriculum”
- Must be developmentally appropriate – play-based.

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

Theme: Action

- To follow through on these discussions!
- Lean forward! ACT!!
- Act.
- Need to see results in what we require.

Theme: Engagement

- Involve tri-ministry! Thanks!

Theme: Concrete Initiatives

- Full day kindergarten. Implement before and after care in schools. Implement full day Jr. K and before and after care available. Increasing funding for staffing
- Regulations. Grandfathering/movement of higher/better educated staff. Community involvement.
- Needs to be some - staffing as a starting point – same level of education same staffing.
- Rules and regulations need to be consistent across the board and structured.

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

Theme: Act

- How many more conversations do we need to have? Please act.
- How long will this take? Will PUF support disappear?
- When do we stop talking and start acting?

Theme: Ripple Effects

- Changes in all levels of early childhood educators.
- How will it affect our community as a whole?
- I'm interested to see what we will all look like. A cohesive unit. How our community will change.

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

- Be excited.
- It needs to provide support for children and families.
- Be open to change. Make decisions that are not EGO based.
- Look at New Brunswick model – adopt for Alberta.
- Lots of work.
- Long time line.