



Advancing the Educational Preparation and Professional
Development of Alberta's Early Learning and Care Workforce

A Record of Stakeholder Discussions
Family Day Home
Regional Discussion
Red Deer - May 12, 2015



The Muttart Foundation

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Results of Stakeholder Discussions.....	2
The Alberta Early Learning and Care Workforce – Demands and Realities.....	2
The key drivers for change in the educational preparation and professional learning of the ELC workforce	2
The contextual factors to consider in thinking about changes to educational preparation and professional learning of the early learning and care workforce?	4
Participant thoughts and ideas arising from their discussions of the key drivers for change and the contextual factors to consider in advancing change	6
Core Competencies for Early Childhood educators and Certificated Teachers.....	7
Supporting and approaching early childhood educators as professionals	8
Participant discussions on supporting early childhood educators as professionals.....	8
Participant additions, deletions or changes to the seven areas for competence outlined in the discussion paper.....	9
Participant assessment and discussion of the current capacity of early learning and care workplaces to support staff in the delivery of high-quality services.	10
Participants discussions of the factors that shape the current capacity of early learning and care workplaces to support staff in the delivery of high-quality services.	11
Participant thoughts and ideas arising from their discussion of competencies and workplace capacity	12
The Educational Preparation and Professional Learning for Early Childhood Educators and Certificated Teachers	13
The level and nature of formal educational preparation for staff who work in licensed or approved early learning and care programs	14
The forms of professional learning and requirements for professional learning for staff who work in licensed or approved early learning and care programs.....	17
Advancing Change in the Educational Preparation and Professional Learning of Alberta’s ELC Workforce – A consideration of possible options for change.....	19
Advancing the educational preparation of the early learning and care workforce.....	19
The specific changes most important for strengthening the educational preparation of the early learning and care workforce.....	19

Considerations (opportunities/challenges/or cautions) in strengthening the early learning and care workforce’s educational preparation 21

Supporting the early childhood educator as a competent professional..... 22

The specific changes most important for supporting the early childhood educator as a competent professional..... 22

Considerations (opportunities/challenges/or cautions) in supporting the early childhood educator as a competent professional..... 24

Introduction

In May 2015, the Muttart Foundation sponsored a regional meeting of Family Day Home stakeholders to consider how best to advance the educational preparation and professional learning of Alberta's early learning and care workforce. The regional consultation discussed the growing body of research that looks at the formal educational preparation and professional learning of the early childhood education and care workforce, considered the implications of this research for certified early childhood educators and certificated teachers in Alberta and explored possible options to increase the capacity of those staff who work with young children to respond to the growing educational and social demands placed upon them.

The twenty-one stakeholders who participated in the regional discussion included senior staff members from day home agencies and day home operators in the Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer regions.

To support the stakeholder discussions, the Foundation commissioned a discussion paper: (['Advancing the Educational Preparation and Professional Development of Alberta's Early Learning and Care Workforce'](#)). The discussion paper reviewed the research on staff educational preparation and professional learning and examined the links between staff's formal education and access to professional learning and program delivery and child and family outcomes. It concluded with some proposed changes to increase the educational preparation and professional learning of the Alberta early learning and care workforce.

Participants engaged in a series of facilitated discussions which considered the drivers for change and key contextual factors shaping the Alberta early learning and care workforce; the core competencies early childhood educators and certificated teachers require to work with children below the mandatory school age and their families; the formal educational preparation and professional learning that supports a high-quality early learning and care workforce; and proposed changes in how Alberta approaches the formal educational requirements and professional learning for early childhood educators and certificated teachers.

The consultation participants recorded their individual responses to the discussion questions on worksheets, which then formed the basis for group discussions. Completed participant worksheets were collected at the end of the consultation and transcribed to provide a record of the discussions. Participants were not required to identify themselves on their worksheets and none of the comments transcribed in the consultation reports are attributed to individual participants. Fourteen participants submitted their completed worksheets at the end of the consultation and their comments have been recorded in this report.

The Muttart Foundation greatly appreciates the many insights the stakeholders brought to the discussions as well as their generous allocation of time both in preparing for and participating in the consultations.

The Results of Stakeholder Discussions

The Alberta Early Learning and Care Workforce – Demands and Realities

In their opening discussions, participants considered two related dimensions of the current demands and realities confronting the early learning and care workforce. First, they identified the key drivers for change in the workforce’s educational preparation and professional learning. Second, they identified the contextual factors to consider in thinking about possible changes to the workforce’s educational preparation and professional learning requirements.

The arguments participants advanced in respect to these two related areas are presented below under summary headings.

The key drivers for change in the educational preparation and professional learning of the ELC workforce

The increasing demand for early learning and care

- demand for quality childcare spaces
- demand for quality childcare - affordable accessible
- demand for “quality” childcare from parents, agencies, gov’t etc.
- accessibility
- demand for “quality” though accreditation standards
- need for more spaces
- parents – pressure for quality – educational need

The implementation of curriculum framework

- curriculum framework (4 comments)
- curriculum positive

Accreditation, program standards and funding

- accreditation (8 comments)
- accreditation of funding
- continuous project dev. mandatory
- consistency standards
- accreditation standards
- government
 1. accreditation
 2. school system

Demands placed on the workforce

- barriers
 1. time
 2. practicum
 3. schooling funding
 4. self-employed not eligible for many of the benefits
- demands of school preparedness
- barriers
 1. time
 2. money
 3. organization
- push for early childhood development practices

Discussion of Family Day Homes (FDH) (within discussion paper or as part of ELC field)

- recognition of FDH
- FDH very small component of this document
- lack specificity for FDH (+ its unique issues) founders/business
- isolation of the day home

FDH service delivery model

- FDH, shift work options – extended hours
- long hours
- fragmented system lifestyle
- shift work options (hours)
- extended hours
- time (work 10 hour days plus own young family)

Educational levels of workforce and professional learning

- family day home providers not trained – educated
- expectation that FDH provider with no training are able to achieve same level as ECE trained profession
- introspection, equivalency
- graduates from MRU not necessarily prepared as a workforce
- post-secondary education
- equivalency
- there is an expectation for staff providers to provide quality child care, enriched environments and ongoing learning opportunities. Without an early learning background it is difficult for staff and providers to offer this.
- build professionalism from foundations

Practicum requirements and challenges

- wage loss if having to leave day home to complete a practicum

- other practicum requirements re: number of children - cost of education - unfair staff qualification - equivalencies
- credibility of practicum
- “practicum” issues

Parent participation and expectations

- parent participation (3 comments)
- public not looking for babysitting, mostly, as was the case previously

Funding or investment

- funding of courses – expenses consistent measurable standards
- funds (2 comments)
- investing now rather than paying later
- investing in education, workforce, parents etc.
- Calgary living wage \$17 – level 1 is paid \$15
- benefit (pay off) to provider
- cost

The importance of research and high quality

- awareness of core brain development and importance of a curriculum
- research on brain development
- early childhood development positive prevention on strategy
- create a healthier population – not just spaces
- community – demographics dictate quality of care
- measurable consistency across the province

Structural barriers or considerations

- lack of diligence with municipal by-laws-to create balance and accountability
- urban/ rural

The contextual factors to consider in thinking about changes to educational preparation and professional learning of the early learning and care workforce?

Education levels of family day home operators and incentives to upgrade

- some providers may not hold a high school diploma, making further education more difficult
- equivalency?
- learning
- equivalencies for CDS not appropriate
- caregivers – increase education = time plus money

- the cost of upgrading staff qualifications is expensive, not specific to FDH, what is the payoff, no extra income
- incentive for providers to continue their education
- minimum qualifications or not

Language and literacy levels of family day home operators

- literacy of ESL providers
- ESL (3 comments)
- ESL challenges

Time and resources to complete education and provide care

- no access to PD funding for day home providers
- time (2 comments)
- time available to complete training – work life balance
- no access to PD funding
- legislation requirement – no “breaks” 10 hour days and no “breaks” from difficult children
- support for day home providers cost of training

Recruitment and retention of providers

- recruitment – no incentive to register with an agency as opposed to running a private day home – private day homes need to have some accountability/monitoring
- recruitment and retention of providers (especially in rural areas)
- could lose them to private care
- recruitment
- recruitment and retention of providers
- most providers only plan on working as a provider until their children are in school, not really looked at as a long time career
- competition with private options
- not a “career” choice – it is a temporary job

Parent and public understanding and expectations

- people are thinking about it differently
- “My child should be reading right now” (age 3)
- lack of parent education
- awareness campaign to increase understanding of child care vs babysitting
- change public perception of importance of early learning vs old term babysitters

Private unregulated services – and approved FDHs

- private and licenced day homes need to have equal playing fields – especially when it comes to ratios and number of children that they can have in care

- unbalanced system (private vs agency)
- private babysitters v. monitored (legislation!)
- private babysitters - legislation
- private approved
- private vs accreditation care

Cost to run family day home

- cost
- sustainability
- cost – funding is generally allotted for “staff” - not
- economically feasible for day home providers
- money (2 comments)
- time and money
- agency funding – cost today homes

Supporting field as a profession

- college of early childcare professionals
- professional competent = central role

Urban/Rural challenges

- accessibility – especially for rural providers
- municipality differences
- rural – urban

Other comments

- location of providers (home) seems to de-value the providers
- oil price

Participant thoughts and ideas arising from their discussions of the key drivers for change and the contextual factors to consider in advancing change

Political will and public support

- public \$ comes with expectations - what are the outcomes
- community awareness of differences between private vs registered (many misconceptions)
- outcome- healthier population = less mental health issues
- accredited day home need to be recognised more

Private care v. accredited/regulated care

- the community and parents need to be educated about the difference between private and accredited programs as well as the benefits that “quality” childcare can provide for their children
- there is more incentive to have a private day home as opposed to an accredited home, private day homes can have more children and so not have the same expectations and workload with planning, documentation, observations, assessments etc. many providers have told me that it is not worth becoming registered as they are required to do more work and make less money as they can take less children.
- private vs contracted, more demands being placed on providers pushed them to go private
- private vs. regulated

High-quality early learning and care

- focus on quality not quantity – we may lose day home providers, but wouldn’t we want to look at more quality of care, than losing number of providers - moving forward we would have providers with passion to be in the field of day homes
- core competencies
- critical – nature of relationships supports their development interactions, values, and knowledge
- competence = deeper understanding and deeper level
- core competencies caring ethically, pedagogy (curricular resources) work with families and community (disabled children)
- professional = deep understanding
- relationship is key – how strongly does training focus on the (knowledge vs. skill vs. aptitudes)

Other Comment

- EDI

Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Certificated Teachers.

In their second round of discussions, participants considered the core competencies early childhood educators and certificated teachers require to support high-quality early learning and care for young children and their families. Their discussions explored three related themes. First, the argument advanced in the discussion paper that early childhood educators should be supported and approached as professionals. Second, the seven identified areas for competence based on a review of the research literature. And third, the current capacity of early learning and care workplaces to support the work of early childhood educators as competent professionals.

The ideas and arguments participants presented in these three discussions are presented below under summary headings.

Supporting and approaching early childhood educators as professionals

The majority of participants either strongly agreed (4 – 34 percent) or agreed (7 – 58 percent) with the argument that early childhood educators should be supported and approached as professionals in their work with young children and their families. One participant (8 percent) strongly disagreed with this argument.

Participant discussions on supporting early childhood educators as professionals.

Argument in support of professionalizing the field

- in an ideal world this should be a profession not something to be done while raising own children or can't do anything else
- in an ideal world
- it should be more professional
- I think it should be seen as a profession but I don't believe that we are there yet. I think that society still sees childcare and child care providers whichever capacity as baby sitting not professionals.
- not recognised as a "profession"
- as well not looked at as a profession it is either a stepping stone or temporary job
- It should be more professional - reality will not happen
- career

The complex and demanding nature of the work with children and families

- early childhood education should be supported as a profession and not as a vocational field. The work you do is not mechanical you are working with a little human being and not a thing
- profession is that a deep understanding of children and child, adult relationship is needed to provide the optimal environment
- not mechanical work
- there is little support for including children with disabilities and the funding/ support to include them is decreasing rather than increasing

Educational preparation for early childhood educators

- mandating regulated education courses – technical language or is there embedded evolving knowledge
- child care can be a profession but someone may not have the means or desire to further their education - a large portion of providers choose to be a provider in order to stay home with their family

- since the level of education is less then it is not deemed as professional

Other comments

- professionalism can be interpreted
- time barriers
- within the field yes, outside the field from public eye no
- lack of education and understanding from the community at large as to what ECE includes and the important role that it plays in our society

Participant additions, deletions or changes to the seven areas for competence outlined in the discussion paper.

Agreement with the seven main areas of competence

- all are valuable
- I would not delete anything I strongly agree with all the competencies.
- I do not believe that our current ELCC trained professionals come out able to demonstrate all 7 areas, although I view each of them as important
- I would not change the competencies but is not or can be implemented in the family day home

Important areas of competence for consideration

- caring ethically
- knowledge of how children learn
- working with curricular resources
- working with families – It is so important for family investment. Children come from families, we need that relationship
- research/practice link – curriculum framework
- democratic community
- education families
- caring ethically – self-care needs outside supports

Importance of post-secondary education including competencies in curriculum

- they are all important however ECE's are not educated on all of these competencies even in diploma courses
- diploma currently only touches on core competencies
- our universities and colleges need to teach them
- the last two core competencies seem like they would primarily fall on the agency but these competencies should be part of the educational requirements/courses available

Considerations in thinking about competencies

- there needs to be different ways to implement these that fit for the needs of day homes as opposed to daycare centres
- random thoughts
 1. change language to early learning professionals
 2. or at least early learning and care (to align accreditation)
 3. Ontario uses early childcare professionals
- parents and the community needs to be educated on the importance of these competencies
- I think the competences are great but are a very “tall order” when it comes to FDH
- some may be carried out by agency (#6, 7) rather than providers
- these expectations on provider will be challenging as a lot of providers stay in that role on a short term basis as they usually only have fdh in their home until their own children are in school full time.

Other comments related to the field as a whole

- code of ethics needs to be industry wide
- in other provinces there is a basic ECE infant/toddler and special needs training
- difficult to have consistency across all provinces when each province has different priorities/mandates/government.
- we identify quality care as a sector
- we defend our profession

Other Comments

- my experience parents choose family day home to have a “family-like” experience for their children (at-home, natural) not a – day care centre is different although goal is the same. “agency” vs. providers competency
- EDI
- public understanding

Participant assessment and discussion of the current capacity of early learning and care workplaces to support staff in the delivery of high-quality services.

Participants offered the following assessments of the current capacity of early learning and care workplaces to support staff in the delivery of high-quality services. 4 participants (30 percent) assessed their current capacity as ‘weak’ and 2 (15 percent percent) ‘very weak’. 1 participants (8 percent) assessed their current capacity as ‘strong’ and one participant (8 percent) as ‘very strong’. 4 participants (31 percent) described them as neither strong no weak. One (8 percent) participant assessed the current capacity as ‘very strong’ within the agency, yet ‘very weak’ provincially. One (8 percent) other participant assessed the capacity as ‘strong’ within the agency and ‘weak’ provincially.

Participant discussion of the factors that shape the current capacity of early learning and care workplaces to support staff in the delivery of high-quality services.

Need for increased education

- staff within an agency need the education to support new ideas and wants of thinking for those day home providers seeking and obtaining further ED
- many leaders have little or no training in leading adults, and are not ECE trained (hold equivalencies)

Post-secondary institution ECE programming

- educational institutions have a responsibility to educate graduates on core competencies
- educational institutions need to teach these
- diploma doesn't touch on many of the competencies

Assessments of capacity

- provincial system very weak – fractured systems “piecemeal”
- Very Strong – with agency, Very weak – provincially
- I would say is very weak globally or provincially
- agency wise is very strong
- Strong – within agency, Weak – government

Barriers to building service capacity in family day home settings

- release time for providers for training during work hours
- No voice in gov't
- Professional association
- Gov't
- could be better regarding the supports they have - it works well i.e. agencies

Need for clear outcomes or expectations

- need clear expectations of competencies
- system competency can't exist without and agreed upon outcome or expectation
- we need a measured system/benchmarks

Financing challenges and need for additional supports

- needs to be more support for early childhood education
- lack of funding reduces probability of further education
- supports financially
- financially need more support providers
- government would need to help financially

- there needs to be more financial resources available to providers to upgrade education or to continue with professional development. Providers are considered as self-employed and don't have access to that PD funding. FDH consultants need to be able to (sentence not finished)
- I think agencies support providers as much as possible when delivering high quality services. However I do not feel that the providers are supported in other ways to further their education so that they have more knowledge/skills to provide high quality services.
- lacks support for professional development
- to maintain and improve care of course more support are needed especially if expectations are increased

Variations across programs, agencies and day homes

- inconsistency of education and knowledge individuals working in this profession
- inconsistency in expectation of programs/day homes from licensing
- Consultants – 25 dayhomes each
- licensing officer - standardized
- no consistent messaging politically/publicly
- accred. - government - inconsistent – for day care consulted - created by professionals
- not same access as daycare who can be a released for professional development these FDH providers are the “only” staff

Lack of public awareness and support

- lack of understanding of the community about the importance of this services
- more involvement with community, government

Other comments

- AFCCA
- timing
- not family day home specific
- app on ipad to make learning stories – child helps w/ learning story on app
- to make learning stories
- keynotes app.

Participant thoughts and ideas arising from their discussion of competencies and workplace capacity

Strategies for change or need for additional planning

- reduce/limit staff attraction and turn it into staff retention or money to be used for professional development

- not either/or – ECD or workplace supports quality childcare must be available to all whether working families or not, it’s about a competent system for Alberta’s children to grow/develop
- planning document
- need big change – not little details – not about status quo
- planning
- quality enhancement
- FDH’s are being turned into mini daycares too institutional
- centred focus

Additional supports to be considered

- consultant extra support
- accreditation forms visits
- IPP for providers
- Curriculum framework visits
- Provocation visits
- small caseload
- consultants – 25 day homes each meet – 15 minute talk about other forms of support to FDH
- second set of eyes - additional support/resource
- needs to include system wide to increase relationship – social emotional skills/relational skills
- quality enhancement consultant – extra support
- curriculum framework – workshops

Public awareness and political engagement

- families and community also need to be aware of the idea of “profession” and what quality care looks like
- government does not treat us as a profession and allow us input and representation

Other comment

- document

The Educational Preparation and Professional Learning for Early Childhood Educators and Certificated Teachers

The third round of participant discussions considered the formal educational preparation of early childhood educators and certificated teachers as well as their ongoing professional learning. Participants considered both the level (length of period of study) and the nature of formal educational preparation staff who work with young children require as well as the ongoing professional learning opportunities that have the potential to strengthen their practice.

Participant ideas and arguments in response to those two main areas are presented below.

The level and nature of formal educational preparation for staff who work in licensed or approved early learning and care programs

Management and leadership education and training

- education should provide more opportunity for specialized training, e.g. leadership and management training
- I agree that management staff should have specialized training in management leadership.
- more opportunities and funding or incentive for staff to continue education once they have reached “supervisor” certification level
- experience must play into operation/director roles to be effective
- administration expectations

Degree qualification

- anyone who touches the life of a child should have a diploma/degree
- consultant more than provider 4/6year degree
- agency operator more than consultant measure of early childhood on B.Ed. This would seriously impact agency salaries
- expt. (like teaches) – education
- 4 year degree for directors

Diploma qualification

- formal ECE in a specialization in CDW
- supervisors – ‘leads’ – diploma
- CDS as an entry level – minimum requirement
- provider – college/university diploma
- directors/operators – diploma w experience (min 5 yrs) – both or degree in ECD
- would be ideal to have all ECE’s in each type of program to have level 3, 2 year diploma – minimum

Certificate qualification

- right now providers with no level, obtaining a level 1 once approved. I feel they only get that because they have to and don’t value the education piece. If we had a minimum of level 2 or higher it would “weed” out those who are not in it long term or don’t see it as a profession. This would be specific to early childhood training, not equivalencies. This would lead to quality care not quantity
- one year certificate as basic
- minimum certificate in ELCC – equivalencies must measure ECD knowledge

- approved currently has not requirements. Moving to a 2 year diploma would decimate FDH. A requirement for a 1 year certificate while they are working and after a certain period of time (incentives)
- licensed a one year certificate plus specialization (special needs OSC, infant/toddlers, etc.)
- for family day home providers at the minimum it should be the orientation course. (we try at our agency to have providers attain this within the first six months) I would like to see at least a certificate so a 1 year certificate for an EHCC program
- I think it might be difficult to have all staff in daycare, playschools, day home etc. have the requirement to complete a specific amount of training in day care settings it may be easier because they may work towards a degree. For FDH I think a one year certificate (level 2) is much more realistic as a lot of providers do not have the intent to stay in FDH long term, it's usually a solution to their child care needs.

Specialization in early childhood education

- staff should have relevant education to the early learning field

Equivalencies and the orientation course

- I do not believe that equivalencies are of value
- ECE Pure – possibility of no equivalencies
- no equivalencies
- orientation course – gone
- giving certification for “equivalency” does not necessarily bring trained staff into the field who are able to provide quality programs for children
- no equivalencies or a course that reinforces early childhood development and learning
- minimum certificate in ELCC – equivalencies must measure ECD knowledge

Basic level of certification to enter field

- it is a basic course for entering level to compete equally with childcare professionals
- preparation/recognition at a high school level
- Kathy Nutbrown (UK) – common base of qualifications are needed
- base competence meet accreditation standards – understand accred standards
- early childhood development – basic nurturing personality inclusion

Range of qualifications

- these are significant variations - needs to be flattened out
- the type of level of education level should be – level 1 orientation course in early childhood development – level 2 certificate (educators) – Level 3 diploma (supervisory position) Degrees – executive director
- options on social work – family counselling
- continuous professional development move towards a degree in ECE with a specialty in child development accountability

The importance of education

- level of education prep. matters a complex relationships and nature
- providers may remain in this held if it is more – professionalism = they have more invested
- higher education to meet government/society demands for quality care
- I think that if they have this level of education it would help them in their work, understanding and practice

Considerations in implementing increased educational levels

- there should be a renewal/update needed for all levels of education
- hurdle – financial support to further education
- time to complete coursework while working
- the answer to this is difficult – I believe that education is extremely important in any profession. I see the value in FDH providers having the ability to access education to get level 1, 2, 3 however our biggest challenge is recruitment and retaining providers. The more expectations we place on them the more difficult it seems to keep them
- current providers grandfather them in support them with P.D. modules, videos, on line courses
- develop an on- the- job training program
- hours of work of providers requires different on-going- education opportunities
- various types of programs need to be available to meet the differing needs of providers – various levels would be beneficial or are we looking for every provider to be educated to the same level. Continuity across the provinces difference course, classes combine to equate to the 2 levels
- bigger question - how is this achievable and sustainable - a college of childcare professionals should be established and province should not support/allow private care...
- longer term staff retention, not attraction - a bonus type piece for those who invest in further education – like accred wage top up and more longer term graces rather than quick band aids

The need for specific competencies

- awareness for early years needs
- early childhood education programs that also include family support courses. strong focus on relationship based relations and adult – child interaction for family day homes a “ small resources course”
- strong understanding competent
- more than “knowledge” is required

Qualifications across different programs

- licensed and approved (FDH) need to be considered separately
- playschools should be the same as daycares

Professional learning and ongoing support

- education and professional development needs to be an ongoing pursuit
- emphasis on shared learning
- centers would actually be easier to support/monitor etc.
- support is to enhance program
- can take – support by government

Other comments

- provincial regulations
- reality in college is very different than what it's like once one hits the work force

The forms of professional learning and requirements for professional learning for staff who work in licensed or approved early learning and care programs

Types of professional learning and delivery models

- webinars, conferences, workshops, etc.
- to stay current
- child development
- ongoing education (always evolving) – keep up with current theories and practices
- peer support
- technology and emerging trends
- mentoring/observation component
- improved pd sources
- in to keep updated to connect to keep promotion
- variety of modalities – online, in person, combination
- theme for on – going PD

Mandatory requirements for professional learning

- mandatory P.D. – minimum requirement
- I would like to use a requirement in place for all early childhood educators that they must attend a minimum of 20 hours of professional development in order to keep their credentials in good standing. This will help professionals to stay current in their practices
- minimum amount of w/s conferences.
- PD credits
- to keep your designation – required to be involved in designated number of pd sessions or hours of work
- minimum requirement of so many hours of PD per year
- PD development regular basis

- annually attend 10-20 hours current PD sessions approved by the program/director/session
- I think that all staff should be required to complete a base number of hours through online learning, workshops, conferences or credit courses through college/universities

Funding or incentives related to professional learning

- funding for staff retention rather than attraction
- more funding for professional development
- funding?
- won't happen without money

Accountability, standards and College of ECEs

- college of early childhood
- possibility of "college of ECE" – licence to practice
- accountability (2 comments)
- annual performance evaluation – constructive feedback, personal goal setting

Other comments

- experience must play into operator/director roles to be effective
- What we have
 - support providers
 - PD
 - resources
 - videos
 - online courses
- Ideal
 - keep current PD
 - credit
 - work experience
 - renew your credential
- continued work in an approved or licenses programs

Participant thoughts or ideas arising from their discussion of professional learning

- what would be the role in an agency if the minimum level of entry was CDS or degree with CDE as specialty
- back up worker?
- credential and requirements – maintain

Advancing Change in the Educational Preparation and Professional Learning of Alberta’s ELC Workforce – A consideration of possible options for change

The final round of participant discussions considered the proposed changes outlined in the discussion paper to advance the formal educational preparation and professional learning of the early learning and care workforce. As presented in the discussion paper, the proposed changes provide a starting point for stakeholder discussions.

Participants considered the proposed changes identified to advance the educational preparation of the workforce and those to support the early childhood educator as a professional from three related perspectives. First, the overall direction and content of the proposed changes; second, the specific changes they considered most important to implement; and third, the key considerations to take into account in advancing change.

The results of participant discussions of these areas are presented below.

Advancing the educational preparation of the early learning and care workforce

Participants either ‘strongly agreed’ (2 – 14 percent) or ‘agreed’ (9 – 64 percent) with the proposed changes to strengthen the educational capacity of the early learning and care work. Two participants (14 percent) ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ with the proposed changes and one participant (7 percent) disagreed with the proposed changes.

The specific changes most important for strengthening the educational preparation of the early learning and care workforce

Educational preparation

- additional qualifications of staff in leadership/management positions
- no more equivalencies
- strongly agree with a move to a one year certificate for all caregivers (in the near future) with the required funding
- additional qualifications (with supporting funding) for management and leadership positions
- a move to 1 year certificate for all childcare caregivers
- provincial standards, additional qualifications for staff in management and leadership positions, minimum 2 year diploma, introducing a degree program/qualification, supports for existing workforce to meet new requirements
- move to two year diploma as the minimum qualifications
- I think if you are working with children you should have education and practice in this field
- minimum qualifications –level 2 diploma – but with time to achieve this

- education piece
- no equivalencies
- 2 year diploma requirement is too much to ask from day home providers
- I agree if you grandfather them only with a level one and then gradually going higher with a diploma
- increased education is vital, however I do not think we will have FDH providers achieving a two year diploma. It will force them into private system

Post-secondary program standards, courses and delivery models

- provincial standards for ECEC educational programs
- review and update courses curriculum
- provincial standards for post-secondary ECE programs (must be equal)
- educational institutions that deliver flexible programs
- supporting existing with flexible learning options
- provincial standards
- to provide educational opportunities for individuals to be able to attain the requirements
- delivery flexibility

Access to funding to support increased educational requirements and professional learning

- access to supports for educational funding
- supports to existing workforce to meet educational requirements for ECE
- funding
- supporting existing workforce

Considerations to take into account when thinking about change

- not enough “how” – stages to get there?
- unregulated, unmaintained “babysitting” kept to 2 or less in legislation
- an understanding of how we could prepare for a drastic amount of providers bailing
- grandfather providers with more than 2 years experience in with endorsement from agency
- must make educational requirements attainable for day home providers

Other Comments

- public seeing us as professionals
- accountability – what did you learn, how is this helping your profession of childcare
- now is the time
- engagement from the childcare sector
- opportunity – workforce/educational

Considerations (opportunities/challenges/or cautions) in strengthening the early learning and care workforce's educational preparation

Goals, outcomes and timeline

- starting with requiring a two year minimum diploma qualifications might be better long term goal
- start at a basic level
- reasonable specific time periods to meet educational requirements
- setting specific goals in mind
- time (2 comments)
- time to change – years
- what it will do to the current shortage of child care spaces that is already in effect. I think if they started with a gradual increase and gave time to work towards a final outcome.
- what is the timeline
 - too short – they will leave
 - too long – change will not be significant
- timelines

Post-secondary program considerations

- they would also need to look at how this will affect the educational facilities
- accessibility for rural caregivers/staff to recognized formal education, including funding and distance learning opportunities
- location – rural settings make it very difficult to attain education goals
- educational institutions that have made curriculum changes align discussions paper or creation of curriculums at university level that are current and relevant
- what will program look like?
- attracting new people into colleges when many are closing programs
- methods of delivery
- post-secondary need relevant curriculum and flexible learning options

Comments on the educational levels

- get rid of equivalencies
- no equivalencies

Financing, funding and other supports for staff

- who is funding the education, increased fees parents, public funding pay?
- Benefits to staff for increasing their education? – not working towards education after starting working with none
- cost (2 comments)

- would it mean providers asking for more money if so, would other services like subsidy be on board to support.
- funding for all
- can government support this more educated workforce?
- money (2 comments)
- increase wages leading to increased cost for child care services – requires increased public funding (direct support)

Challenges when thinking about implementation

- how is this implemented?
- support for existing staff must be taken into account in order to avoid losing the workforce that we do have
- discussion – collaboration – with part time staff – within sector – with government
- organizing ourselves
- caution –if pd funding provided how to keep providers when education it met
- release time providers/agency staff
- setting (rural challenges)
- losing staff
- what happens to existing ECE workers that do not meet the criteria?
- parents also need to be part of the conversation

Other comments

- pd requirements – tied to provider funding
- I strongly I agree with this
- languages and culture
- family structure

Supporting the early childhood educator as a competent professional

Participants either ‘strongly agreed’ (3 – 23 percent) or ‘agreed’ (10 – 77 percent) with the proposed changes to support the early childhood educator as a competent professional.

The specific changes most important for supporting the early childhood educator as a competent professional

Educational qualifications

- realising ECE formal education, remuneration working conditions
- qualification
- education
- realising ECE formal education
- realign formal education: college of ECE

Professionalization of the workforce, standards and oversight

- develop body to oversee ECE profession
- oversight of ECE profession by stand-alone regulatory body
- for people to be (public, parents and professionals) the importance of the early years for children to have a strong early childhood educators voice in government as well as a strong professional association
- a code of ethics for Alberta for all - use CCCF
- accountability
- development of a provincial early learning professional code of ethics
- develop of early learning professional college
- involving the profession in making decisions that affect them
- oversight of profession
- regulator/college
- oversight of the ECE profession
- poor standards for post ECEC programs

Professional learning for early childhood educators

- quality professional development
- pedagogy
- follow up on what their training had done to help them in their role
- professional learning requirements
- ongoing PD
- learning – ongoing – requirement
- remuneration and working conditions, professional learning requirements
- professional learning requirements

Financing for early learning and care

- funding
- accountable and credible support from agencies
- bursary
- resources

Public education, parent engagement and stakeholder consultation

- parental involvement
- public education
- involve families
- network with colleagues
- more discussion/collaboration such as this

The change process

- get organized

- times
- realignment

Considerations (opportunities/challenges/or cautions) in supporting the early childhood educator as a competent professional

Funding to support changes (sustainability, accountability)

- availability of funding and time
- system needs to be sustainable
- significant sustainable investment required
- funding (3 comments)
- funding to make it attractive and attainable
- accountable, assessable, grassroots (have providers involved)
- new system needs to be sustainable, accountable, and is a grassroots initiative
- money (2 comments)

Public education

- educating the public on the benefit and importance of this profession
- publicly recognized
- recognition
- more education to the public supporting the value and important of ECE
- promoting ECE worlds
- making the profession creditable + respectful = money + time + opportunity

Parent engagement and ensuring their needs are met

- parental involvement
- before a decision made will it meet family needs
- new system meets parents needs? – i.e financial family supports
- parents need to be part of the conversation too

Workforce considerations and needs

- front line staff need to be included and have buy in to the new system
- rural challenges addressed
- complexity for FDN self-employed providers – long hours/business training addressed (relief provider going into have to allow provider to work on education)
- government needs to actively engage in stake holders
- continued PD
- time commitment
- support
- opportunity
- advancement

The change process

- timelines
- plan – not just idea
- great change management approach is essential to any policy changes

Other comment

- pedagogy