



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

A Record of Stakeholder Discussions
Lethbridge Regional Discussion
April 17, 2015



The Muttart Foundation

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Introduction

In April 2015, the Muttart Foundation sponsored four regional stakeholder consultations to consider how best to advance the educational preparation and professional learning of Alberta's early learning and care workforce. The regional consultations 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 stakeholders invited to participate in the four regional consultations included senior staff from early learning and care organizations, senior staff from schools and school divisions that offer Early Childhood Services (ECS) under the Ministry of Education, academic staff from post-secondary institutions as well as staff from infrastructure organizations that support service delivery. In addition, staff from the Ministries of Human Services, Education and Health participated in the discussions.

To support the stakeholder discussions, the Foundation commissioned a discussion paper on the educational preparation and professional learning of early childhood education and care workforces (['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 ongoing professional learning and program delivery and child and family outcomes. It concluded with the identification of proposed changes to increase the educational preparation and professional learning of the Alberta early learning and care workforce.

Each of the regional stakeholder consultations followed a similar discussion format. 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 required of 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 the worksheets and none of the comments presented in the consultation reports were attributed to individual participants.

This report presents the stakeholder comments from the Lethbridge regional consultation held on April 17th at Holy Spirit Central Office. Twenty-eight stakeholders from the Lethbridge and the Medicine Hat regions participated in the discussions.

A consolidated consultation report, prepared by the Muttart Foundation, summarizes the major findings from the four regional meetings.

The Muttart Foundation greatly appreciates the 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 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

- recent volume
- children spend majority of day in non-parental care
- longer hours, spots for daycare
- supply vs. demand
- children spend so much of their time outside parental care

The need for high-quality early learning and care

- for more children to have quality care
- passion is becoming more prevalent in the community for quality care
- increasing need for high quality early learning and care programs
- putting quality as #1 priority in ECE and programming
- ECMapping results-majority of children spend early years in some form of non-parental care - increase educational base is a contributing factor for high quality

- enhancing the development of those children by- informing and supporting their parents and providing meaningful activities for the children
- concern of the well being of children in care settings
- discrepancy between centres that are struggling and the ones that are doing well
- program appeal, how well does it fit into the schedule of a working person or parent? How useful is the material taught? How much does it cost?
- that play is learning and how we engage children takes a lot of thought

Educational preparation of the workforce

- the ELC workforce open the doors to higher learning standards for each early childhood educator
- education!
- educational requirements
- high number in the ELC field do not have an educational background in early childhood development
- ensure staff are educated in child development -brain development - early years development
- the abolition or change of the "equivalency" program by change I mean if equivalencies are to stay they should exclude "psychology" or "nursing" and accept very related fields only such as "education degree" "social work" etc. would be a good consideration
- is it easier to obtain equivalences or about the same as obtaining ece specific education, more or less affordable?
- specialized training to support the early brain development is curtail
- increasing education-funding
- highly skilled and dedicated adults helping shape the child's early learning
- most children now spending great amounts of time in Ed. & care facilities -they need to be better educated
- bridge the gap between professionals, most staff either unqualified or underpaid to get qualifications
- that we need to look ahead and make sure that people are educated in early learning and understand child development
- because ability to use equivalency drives people away from taking ECE
- workforce: change; support; setting standards for high learning opportunities; consistency & cultural diversity -years of experience & being an advocate for young children
- minimum requirements

Using curricular resources

- clear curriculum
- consistency with curriculum in early learning & care
- curriculum framework of other provinces and nations
- consistency
- consistency with curriculum and time spent in programs

- curriculum framework

Professional Learning for the workforce

- support PLC and professional learning that provides ongoing development and coaching to move theory to practice
- professional development

Staff qualifications, recruitment and support

- need for qualified staff. This is hard when the early childhood education allows all kinds of equivalencies
- responsibility of the centres to employ qualified staff with background in EL
- enlarging workforce to meet need
- lack of qualified workers
- supporting current workforce
- support & develop

Supporting the field as a profession

- what opportunities for advancement in childcare? Do they value experience? Are the credentials to get there attainable?
- support to promote professionalism
- professional recognition
- field wants to be seen as a profession
- desire of the field to be recognized as a profession
- a workforce that is empowered to stand up for themselves and articulate to others why what they do is important
- be recognized as professionals

Workforce remuneration

- need to raise salary
- like it or not, it is money
- salary needs to be higher to justify more education
- equitable pay for the work being done - we need a new view
- poor wages/ financial
- still playing catch -up with educational fields
- providing better pay for CDA and CDW staff
- salary for front line workers
- pay for ECEC staff
- job appeal, the work, rate of pay, ability to find an employer which might offer benefits etc. this is also correlated with employers cash flow and ability to afford these things
- how are wages comparable with other jobs requiring the same level of education/schooling? Is the debt/wage ratio reasonable?
- monetary incentive

- appealing wages
- salary

The demands placed on the ELC workforce

- time and financial
- poor working conditions
- there is a considerable amount of diversity in the requirements to do (variance and credentials) this job
- these "key drivers" would benefit the teacher to help families become unified and meeting developmental need of the child
- complexity of the workforce and supporting them in their learning & development
- ethnic diversity and put \$ into training and hours for children to be cared for properly with educated people

Workforce composition and approach to service delivery

- include the male role more in the workforce
- supporting/ creating consistent values
- mainly women in the field

Service oversight and consistency

- consistency across the field/ ministries/ organizations
- lack of convergence between human services, AB health, education

Political and public support for investments in early learning and care

- public perception of child care is low priority - babysitting
- for society to respect the field of ECE
- public perception
- community and parents are advocates for rich environments
- political view
- how is the job valued by our society? Do people feel their work is important or valued?
- public perception -salary -desire of the field to be recognized as a profession
- seeing children as our future
- valuing childhood

Research on the Importance of the Early Years and Alberta's EDI results

- OECD
- early learning & brain research drive training & preparation
- 5 yr are so critical
- understanding of the imperative window of brain dev. In early years
- brain development research (first 5 yrs)
- research
- acknowledgement of importance of Early Childhood Education based on research

- increased awareness of the importance of the early years and current brain research
- research in child development -workforce requirements
- brain research- window of opportunity in early years to build strong foundations for life learning and mental health
- brain research that is out there

Societal changes

- the world has changed - children who stay home don't play with other children
- societal change
- society and world has changed

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

Political context and support

- ensuring EL is a priority for all levels of education and school boards. Priority currently seems to be high school. Most senior admin have high school background. Rarely do EL professionals reach decision making levels in school boards
- Early Learning carries no voice in decision making in higher levels
- current fiscal climate

Public awareness and support for early learning and care

- lack of knowledge in society of important places of early learning
- what parents and families and business, community know about child development
- we keep sharing the message of our passion with the same passionate people
- clear picture of societal costs
- society views of ELC as custodial
- Public Education about the field- value the field-increase pay and education
- media: negatives- screen time, values taught (for children)
- media: positives- public knowledge of the importance of early childhood (for families and societies at large)
- teach students and the community in general why their work is valuable and important
- help people in general understand how learning through play is valuable and important
- a mindset that honours the importance and significance of EL
- getting the knowledge out there in society that the early years really matter
- parents training and education on the importance of the 1st five years
- educating parents about early learning
- families view of care for their children

Families' access to early learning and child care

- need to make sure programs are available
- these are critical years -ECE is not for everyone

- less family supports when raising children, different parenting story
- both parents are in the workforce- needs for family not a want
- parents are requiring more care for children

The diverse needs of children and their families – meeting family needs

- consideration of diverse families, economics, poverty, and sensitive to ethnic backgrounds
- new Canadian demographic
- the contextual factors that will bring change for all young children that need care or begin K5 are critical to give the best possible care in mtg the developmental needs SPICE

Financing early learning and care

- is this a government driven initiative, will government set the criteria and fund it? And will the costs be passed along to families?
- funding available to afford higher educated staff
- financial means
- adequate compensation for ELC

Post-secondary infrastructure or capacity

- with enrollment already low in diploma classes, how are we going to fill degree classes & attract a new generation of professionals
- cuts on post-secondary
- colleges are dropping ECE programs, not expanding to meet the need for more educated workforce
- cuts to post- secondary
- can post- secondary institutions support this?

Workforce – recruitment and retention of qualified staff

- males in the workforce - role modelling
- element of care & finding appropriate people
- will new field be able to attract appropriate workers?
- needing more replacement staff
- gendered differences- applying and enticing men to the field
- lack of workforce causes hiring of less quality employees

Workforce – educational preparation and the impacts of higher requirements

- there will be barriers for some existing childcare workers to attain adequate levels
- empowering the primary child care experts with education
- using curriculum framework requires an ECE background
- leaders don't have enough experience/preparation to complete their role/job properly
- will the element of 'caring ' be as important as academic preparation?
- there is no policy in place that all ECEs are required to have a higher standard of education other than the 3 levels we currently have

- changing minimum requirements
- ECS & degree have many benefits
- workforce at different levels
- leadership requirements in regards to daycare centres
- education!
- increased education - knowledge & leadership of services
- increased education-front line staff - resistance to change
- monetary compensation that reflects the amount of education
- respecting those older staff who are already in workforce to further education
- put more value on experience and less on unrelated/barely related certificates
- abolish or change the equivalences program

Accommodating changes to the workforce

- how to support current workforce?
- overcoming the inertia of the above
- people involved in change need to have the passion
- stress of change & burnout (resistance to change)
- may lose excellent front-line workers in implementation of change
- bridging the gap of the existing workforce
- resistance to change
- getting child care providers motivated for the change
- transition
- tensions between Practitioners without credentials and new requirements
- transition
- clearly defined expectations for the ELC

Challenges facing the current workforce

- the culture, perspectives, assumptions, practices that currently exist
- time (2)
- caregiver burn out
- gender equity
- support those in the workforce currently & new workforce
- time away for studies and PD
- current practices
- knowledge and awareness

Approaching the workforce as a profession – professional learning

- knowledge and awareness for ECE and professionalism
- clearly defined expectations for the ELC workforce at different levels- standards clearly defined
- common credentialing for professionalization
- raise the profile of ECE workers

- training of senior administrator on the importance of those 1st five years
- training for directors of programs in leadership
- more workshops
- making sure that there are programs available for training and professional development
- make the program's more interactive, have licensing and accreditation reps give lectures, have seasoned owners share experiences, including first aid in programs

The absence of an ELC system

- there is no formalized system that links all the programs
- different ministries for childcare vs education
- programs need to be available to help support the required workforce
- Alberta has a wide variety of ELC and ECS programs -non-profit, for-profit, unregulated care, centre-based, family day homes, private preschools and ECS, public early learning programs and kindergartens
- spaces/ regulation

Determining the nature of change

- knowing what to change to
- changes that are considered must be simplified and clarified
- change vs acceptance
- being sensitive to how we approach new ideas

Research to support change

- understand the research

Other contextual factors to consider

- where are children learning their values?
- children are citizens at birth

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

The diverse and growing needs of children and families

- supporting diversity
- changing demographic
- embracing the different choices of parents
- complex needs of children

The financing for early learning and care

- need increased funding/time for ongoing professional development
- funding for this field - make childcare affordable for parents

Government oversight and political support

- environment as they function as competent professionals - do we have an early learning and care service ministry?
- pushing up with the value of early learning
- political priorities/ social factor
- communicate to the govt (ongoing)

Public awareness – arguments for support

- advocate to families
- public bulletin boards - importance of the early years
- need a common language to sell the public on the importance of ELC
- society is at risk of being disrespectful
- society has a responsibility to contribute to high quality ELC
- need more public bill boards out there recognizing the importance of early years and child development/ brain development
- set children on a good path reduces future costs -financial benefits
- financial benefit
- advocacy for the field -towards the general public at the parents level
- thinking about what's important now in a child's life rather than getting ready for later
- 5 yrs. of age are so critical so it's important that we provide as many learning opportunities to assist: knowledge & awareness
- education for all stakeholders

Factors influencing any change process

- defining early childhood
- resistant to change
- resistance to change (2)
- importance of common understanding of the early years- the importance of understanding the language
- appreciation for frontline workers concerns
- knowing what to change to
- stop push down of curric - strengthen push back/up

The early learning and care workforce

Educational preparation

- that education of people working with these little people is critical
- education/theory vs reality experiences of leadership
- in addition to need for specialized training in ECD and methods, need to add management related training , e.g. budgeting, personnel, public relations
- knowing what theory is and what realistic demands are out in the field
- experience vs. training

- college/ universities offering training; training directed to early childhood/certification
- need to acknowledge the experience of the workers, there is more to being a director than a two year diploma
- series of domains, areas - need to be knowledge of

The early childhood educator as a professional

- requirements to maintain professional development
- defining what ECE, professionalism for families & prof
- early childhood educators understand nature of work as profession
- professional competence-command -set of knowledge, skills, values, motivation, moral compass, deep sense & understanding
- code of ethics & professional association would be NEEDED

Recruitment and retention

- qualified people move out of care positions for higher pay
- context-need more males in ELC environments -key is higher salary
- how do we attract appropriate workers
- not enough men in early learning field- salaries low, respect low
- we need more male role models in ELC so children experience a diverse gender balance
- front-line staff -caregiver burnout

Other comments

- importance of play- 'what is play'?
- key drivers: advocacy, quality care, diversity and workforce knowledge
- benefits are very valuable

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 areas for competence identified 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 (13 – 50 percent) or agreed (9 – 35 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 (4 percent) ‘disagreed’ and one ‘strongly disagreed’. Two participants (8 percent) had a response of ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

Participants identified the following reasons for supporting early childhood educators as professionals

The importance of the early years

- if 85% of children's core brain structure is developed by age 4 ECEs should have the same education if not more!
- crucial years for children- need to set up environment to best meet children's needs
- sculpting the young minds of children
- crucial years for children
- no respect for children at this stage in their development
- child development starts at birth
- because children and families are not commodities
- because of the importance of early years & specialized skills & training
- we now know we can support through brain research that learning begins at birth (some say prenatally) so why do we not think of education beginning then
- education begins at home and within all early learning and care programs

The competencies (knowledge, skills, values and motivations) educators need to work with young children and their families.

Overall competencies

- need the knowledge and competence for high quality

Knowledge of child development and/or early learning

- expertise in development
- curriculum planning
- all areas of development -diff development at varying times
- ECS must meet the developmental needs of young children and meeting the most crucial demands of setting up learning environments and engaging, facilitating, motivating and supervising at the same time remain professional
- educated to understand the needs of children and how they develop, able to complete planning that meets the needs of children

- from experience, early childhood education is best understood as a profession, teachers are trained in the area to develop educational programs from the child's interest in order to meet their developmental needs which are long term benefits for our future
- strong educational basis to create an optimal learning environment for children
- strong educational basis to create an optimal learning environment for children and articulate why the environment & play curriculum is important
- ECE work involves: caring for children
- understanding child development (DAP)
- serve + return
- we are given tools to help alert us to when a child may need additional help. These are not methods that would be used if this field was considered vocational
- having a professional in the work force will always benefit the children in regards to care
- many early learning educators are the ones that are identified children with delays or other emotional needs

Working with families and the community

- training needs to include how to work with families, workers supplement parental/ caregiver role, they do not supplant or supersede it
- working with families and other community agencies/ stakeholders

Specialized educational field

- field experience/training -research, learning/development -evaluation & growth -reflective practitioner -Just become a life-long learner
- unique body of knowledge, training to utilize, preparation/education
- it requires a unique body of knowledge
- body of specialized knowledge
- specialized body of knowledge
- a problem is that it is not recognized in education as a professional who can plan, assess children
- specialized field
- need that foundation of learning

Ongoing professional learning

- staying current with emerging practices
- different ways to access education
- professional learning around child development and pedagogy has to be a way of recognizing experience
- they have to have ongoing learning and development that contributes to a body of knowledge and practice
- continual self-reflection, learning and evolving pedagogy are required rather than a finite set of skills and a common approach

- ongoing process of learning and development that you need to keep current with

Early learning and care as a profession

- dealing with people is a profession- dealing with objects are vocations
- ECE is seen as a profession!
- ECE is specialized profession assisting in sculpting the young minds of children 0-5
- it is crucial that it is seen as a profession
- there is a need for trained professionals as well as those who provide support - more sustainable for the system

Supports for a profession – code of ethics, professional body

- licensing- answer to a higher authority
- if it is to be understood as a profession, they need to be trained as professionals (degree)
- as a profession maintaining competency would be supported and even mandatory
- would like to see a professional body mandating competency
- organization that oversees ECE and provides opportunities for PD, etc.
- code of ethics- though we typically borrow these from others
- code of ethics
- have a code of ethics
- self- regulating- entrance requirement, professional development

Limited public understandings of ECEs and their work

- parents see ECE not as equal to teachers
- once again society does not have the understanding of the importance of early years- however having a degree is no substitute for real life experience
- needs to be a cultural change in mindset to look at as a professional
- would increase recognition and appreciation of the importance of the field
- in order for people to be seen as professionals there has to be an expectation and understanding from families and society
- this should be the goal but when education prep and compensation remain low, society will continue to view ECE as vocational
- society's value of childhood or lack thereof contributes

Strengthening education and training infrastructure

- constant push to add more academia
- trainers need to be professional
- the qualification of those doing the training of this workforce should be more rigorous

General comments

- low salary
- high costs for parents

- supplement parent roles - support & advocate
- there is also room for support staff & secondary staff in ECE fields
- no curriculum is the same across the board
- at some point in history it was determined that education began at 6, later adding 5 year old kindergarten and to some extent 4 year old programming

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

Agreement with the main areas of competence

- would not delete any
- N/A
- it is a good list
- competencies are very broad
- over-arching enough
- keep seven areas of competence
- covers all the very important areas

Areas of competence participants highlighted or proposed further development

Knowledge of how children learn and develop

- infant/ toddler very important
- specialization area -infant/toddler
- children learn and develop- plan rich early learning environment, sensitive interaction and scaffolding knowledge
- Assessment (making assessment on children's progress to know when to move forward or back up)
- infant + toddler
- school age

Working with families and accommodating diversity

- diversity of families' needs to be informed to the staff & growing community
- working with families- collaborate with families, value parents as primary caregiver, learn from families, families require more support from educators
- socio-economics/poverty
- intervention & preventative for at-risk families
- diversity/culture
- diversity
- working w/families -social context

Caring and self-care

- in order to form significant attachment, the staff need form to practice self-care and be able to go to work with a positive, mental attitude
- building ethical relationships
- not just caring ethically but building ethical relationships
- more emphasis on self care - given the large population of day home provides isolation is a huge barrier/ concern
- caring Ethically- reciprocal relationship with parents, coworkers, children and others
- engage in a global care- move from me to we

Supporting children with disabilities

- not disability but varying needs (supporting children with varying needs) or diverse needs
- varying needs/ diverse needs vs. disabilities
- "varying abilities" that encompasses all rather than disabilities
- supporting children with diversity -abilities

Work with curricular resources

- what would curricular resources be?
- curricular resources- learning through play, intentional play approaches, children are capable learners

Linking research to practice

- taking practices and new info

Communicating with a Democratic Community

- embrace cooperation with team and families and embrace learning as a whole

Additional areas of competence for consideration

Leadership

- leadership focus
- add: assessment role for leadership
- leadership
- add leadership

Management, Leadership and/or administration

- within the framework- the management of the programs need to be part of the company
- more education for administration
- business admin
- business skills-need to add more education for those who rise to admin positions

- business admin as part of degree
- to move past classroom more education required to manage a center organization
- management/leadership/overseeing of front line staff by directors to ensure the program is being run smoothly and meeting the other core competencies
- add - assessment, management (LEADERSHIP) supervision

Other areas of competence or areas of focus

- community?
- continued early childhood development SPICE/learning through play -"finances"- teacher education - workshops/conferences
- continuous evaluations of the program -child & staff & family input (participation)
- knowledge of how- element of trust
- children's rights
- interpersonal skills

General comments on competencies

- some areas too broad -social economic awareness
- it should be this general but explained rather than a list of specific skills

Educational preparation for early childhood educators

- change and strategies must be enforced for all sectors that provide services especially day home providers
- minimum educational qualification is not enough - knowledge, skills and abilities are crucial
- certified kindergarten teachers should have an early childhood diploma as well
- should Early childhood educators be certified staff with teaching degrees
- sometimes we promote people above their capabilities with a two year diploma

Ongoing professional learning

- commitment to Prof development, accreditation requirements ie. 40 hrs of PD/yr?
- PDF's for all ECE (1/2 day for prep; staff self care & education of diverse workshops regarding ECE & central changes) vs ECS-PEF's
- change is difficult, but they (staff) need to be supported for continued education

Workplace staffing considerations – including staff teams

- support children with disabilities- ECE are positive and confident when supported need to work with disciplinary team
- supporting children with disabilities-it is tough to provide appropriate support without access to a professional therapeutic team
- have a professional ece in each classroom with trained support staff who take on clearly defined roles

- specific streams under threes, 3-6, school care

Other considerations around competencies

- if changes are being examined for all ECE educators
- code of ethics-council - provincially representation
- proper wages to cut down on staff turn over
- linking research - it is critical that there is a strong foundation in evidence based practice to enable curriculum to move from paper to practice
- how do we promote these features beyond those in the early childhood field?

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. For Early Childhood Services (ECS) funded through the Ministry of Education 4 participants (15 percent) assessed the current capacity to be 'weak' and 1 participant (4 percent) 'very weak'. 8 participants (31 percent) assessed the current capacity as 'strong' and one participant (4 percent) as 'very strong'. 7 participants (27 percent) assessed the capacity as 'neither strong nor weak' while 5 participants (19 percent) offered a response of 'don't know'.

For early learning and care services supported through the Ministry of Human Services, 11 participants (42 percent) assessed the capacity as 'weak' and one participant (4 percent) as 'very weak'. 9 participants (35 percent) assessed the capacity as 'neither strong nor weak', 4 participants (15 percent) as 'strong', while one participant (4 percent) offered a 'don't know' response.

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

Staff educational preparation and educational requirements

- ECS programs-not all kindergarten teachers have an ECE background or are required to
- ECS programs-educated ECEs are not always available to run early learning programs
- ECS programs-ECEs are supported by/supervised by teachers and principals who may not have a background in ECE and this not understand some of the play-based principles
- most community-based child care do not have professionally trained staff due to low salary
- not all ECE have the EC backgrounds, knowledge etc. in meeting the developmental needs of young children for some kindergarten educators a lack of understanding the pedagogical knowledge e.g.. Most of the K-5 teachers couldn't understand what the benefits were of learning through play

- educational quality does not always make staff qualified
- community-based childcare-system set up to provide equivalencies for other education does not support high quality programming
- lack of common educational preparation to inform curriculum development in ELCC
- lack of ECE specialization in ECS has impacted quality of programming
- need to revisit concept of teachers teaching KG in Alberta- they must have an ECE diploma as well as B.Ed. like it was in the early 1980s- you needed to have both in order to teach KG
- as with any human based service, the deliverables are most strongly influenced by the character and qualities of the workers
- ECS need to follow a more ECE foundation
- community-based childcare-difficulty finding educators with diploma in ECE

Licensing standards, regulations & monitoring

- lower child/staff ratio (2)
- lower staff ratio, costly programs
- Community-based childcare-even with accreditation the standards are not high enough
- conflicting regulation
- lack of consistency in regulations
- fragmented regulatory system
- some day homes have these things but they should be more regulated, better monitored and forced to become licensed. Private day homes should be abolished
- licensing health accreditation school district

Opportunities for professional learning in education supported services

- consistent opportunity for professional learning (ECS)
- our kindergarten teachers receive professional development as well as our early learning educators
- there are some supports, but they need to be streamlined, coverage for staff to get support & have time to fulfill full potential

Opportunities for professional learning in child care services

- little to no opportunities for PD
- difficulty firing up staff for PD
- opportunities for learning & developing competencies within structures of the work week
- no opportunities for planning time
- daycare is given tools and support from outside services. Daycares must hold license and daycares get funding to help their staff learn and grow
- PD CC - we need more for sure!
- daycares have lost funding that used to be able to allow centres to fund their staff in completing extra classes/workshops/conferences

- family day homes are considered self-employed and do not receive all of the supports daycare employees receive. ACCA funding & gov't funding
- from a day home perspective , requirements for maintaining competency are non-existent on at provincial level- maybe this is because day home providers are considered self- employed

Perceptions of services and their support

- ECS gets more support and is seen as a professional
- our principals visit the classrooms to ensure that teachers and educators are supported
- public perception says that day homes are babysitters
- child care has improved over the years but does not have the professional aspect
- ECE doesn't have much of a voice compared to schools

Comments on the capacity of services to provide supports for children & families

System observations or comments

- the systems are broken, we need a similar system that is merged * one ministry
- practice drives the system not the system practice
- ECS has a good system with access to resources
- Community-based childcare-no unified system that is publicly recognized as in education that brings legitimacy to the field
- need strong system and good practices will fall into place
- comprehensive system- (licensing, school district, accreditation etc.)
- functions in spite of system
- better in ECS because of Ministerial support and credentialing
- comprehensive system that's not conflicting
- the 'system competencies' is a reality and an educational reserve for our future leaders
- the system competency in both systems struggle
- neither system is fully competent

Range of capacities

- depending on the community and their capacity
- minimal supports for children with additional needs (PUFF)
- there are spectrums from excellent to poor

Financing models and challenges

- funding expectation between HS and Board of Ed is different
- leaning more towards weak, childcare centers are often on tight budgets allowing little to no extra staff, depending on management some centers may not support staff at all while others go above & beyond
- working in daycare it can be very difficult to get funding for children who have needs that require additional supports

- Alberta education put barriers to access to early learning prior to kindergarten by funding based only on deficit
- needs to be universally funding no matter the needs of each child
- funding for education only available to employees, not self employed
- daycare is more up and down with funding compared to ECS funding manual
- ECS programs-there is publicly funded system in place that is recognized and supported by the community
- systemic change in terms of who get funding (universal access)
- business model in ELCC Is profit- based
- low remuneration
- financial remuneration

Other comments

- begin with ii -through observation help parents? To identify early disabilities
- their approach is meeting the KSA for the ATA -leaving the lack of the importance of SPICE
- ECS programs-may be a tendency to download curriculum goals of higher grades to kindergarten
- not much knowledge of preschool & kindergarten & how they work outside of BAS programs
- proper facilitators
- low salaries, isolation of day homes, limited PD, ignorance of parents (wants work sheet to prove child is learning)
- training, curricula, regulations, and supervision are certainly necessary but ' high quality' services are still a function of the person(s) delivering services.
- families will be drawn to day care settings by credentials and advertising but they will stay there based on how their needs and wants are reflected in what the staff provides
- collaborative approach to administration and support staff

Participant thoughts and ideas arising from the their discussions of competencies and workplace capacity

Education levels and professional learning for staff

- education-degree, ongoing prof development
- surface learning
- lack of ECS support or even knowledge or what is learning through play
- ECE-trained w/ being a facilitator, motivator, supervisor, observer
- in depth training meeting SPICE needs
- less prof develop
- elem. principals need to understand ECE, ECS
- children are affected by their society -economics, diversity. ECE competence helps simplify problems that may arise in their child's future.

- increase confidence in the field of ECE as leaders
- need for ECEs to be viewed as a profession for PD, benefits, code of ethics, etc.

Service infrastructure, licensing standards and regulations

- lack of facilities make child care cost higher
- ratios for adult to child - make costs difficult for childcare
- child/staff ratio not considered?
- emphasis on C/S ratio 5 yr. 1-10 -environ are critical
- CC policies are enforced w/ a licensing officer to ensure meeting expectations
- system regs. don't make sense. Ratios in care are one thing then they go to kindergarten and there are no ratios

System development and service planning

- merge into one ministry for children
- have our ministry to govern
- private programs vs. government
- need for universal access for all children in all ECE settings
- any system that drives the practice is inherently incompetent
- to train the workforce is one thing but when they are placed into an undefined, under supported and under manned workplace they just feel incompetent and exhausted
- universal accessibility
- work together so children can be in care eg. childcare centres only take children on a full time basis -because of regulations and because of business model needing full time dollars
- challenges outside of school system with independent community based child care

Financing models for early learning and care

- more financing for 'system competence'
- cost prohibited to provide support in the centres

Other thoughts and ideas

- in the south we are further along with collaborating and using "work around" to provide the best for children and families
- without autonomy we are working under complicated systems

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 need as well as the ongoing professional learning opportunities that have the potential to improve their practice.

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

The level and nature of formal educational preparation for staff in Early Childhood Services (including kindergarten)

Masters level

- M.Ed. specializing in early childhood for those in leadership positions

ECE Degree

- a degree in specialized ECE-university program
- lead teacher -4 year degree in ECE with streams of study within per age group
- degree with focus - early childhood
- specialized in EL - 4 yr. education
- BA- early childhood
- undergraduate in ECE

ECE Degree with Specialization (Management or Leadership)

- a degree for management
- supervisor/director/principal 6 year

B Ed. Degree with specialization

- kindergarten teachers have an education degree but also need to have an ECE specialization (seem to hear too often of teachers with no background being placed in kindergarten)
- as well Ed. Leaders need early childhood coursework
- B.Ed 4 yr -ECE training specific/credential
- teachers degree- having foundation of Early Learning with specialized training - Ongoing relevant workshops
- at least one adult should have a B.Ed. w/early learning courses
- B.Ed. with specialization in early learning
- B Ed with specialization in early childhood
- B.Ed. With ECE background as discussed
- B.Ed. with EC background
- certificate teacher with an early learning teacher
- B.Ed. plus ECE Diploma for kindergarten teachers, Gr 1-3
- minimum B Ed with ECE specialization

B Ed. Degree

- four year B.Ed.

Four-year Degree or qualification

- 4 year diploma
- min 4 years
- 4 year degree

Diploma

- education degree or level 3 with minimum requirement for further continuous education in early childhood courses
- a diploma in ECE fr. a recog. college
- at minimum a diploma
- early learning /education teachers/program managers need at least a diploma in ECE/ELC
- ECE diploma or higher -prefer to have degree
- ECE Diploma for other staff in KG, Gr. 1-3

Certificate

- support staff -minimum one year diploma in ECE

Other levels/types of educational preparation and learning

- specialization in EL to Grade 3
- determine what needs to be accomplished and construct system around it
- have additional certification/education for admin
- ELC at least Level 1
- plus ongoing required PD for all workers
- teacher could advance their knowledge & benefit high quality from achieving both ECE & ECS certification
- experience is an asset
- ongoing data regarding ECE in the form of workshops; conferences
- 7 competencies
- equivalencies don't give the same level of understanding as ELC training does
- other support staff should have some ECE education
- ECE
- not familiar
- ongoing PD
- level 2&3 should be given consideration as an apprenticeship style program rather than a practicum
- they should have ECE specific education

Standardization of post-secondary courses

- the difference between systems- training that doesn't transfer from college to university has to change
- content of programs across the country

The level and nature of formal educational preparation for staff in child care services (including centre-based care, preschools, family day homes)

ECE Degree

- undergraduate in ECE
- lead teacher -4 year degree in ECE with streams of study within per age group
- supervisor/director/principal 6 year

B Ed. Degree

- preschools- four year B.ED

General Degree with Specialization

- a degree for management
- degree would be preferable

Two-year diploma qualification

- there has to be level 3 mandatory
- 3rd -ECE supervisor
- a diploma in EC and a strong base of interpersonal training
- 2 yr diploma -degree B ECE (2 yr + 1 yr)
- foundation of ECE diploma
- centre based care and family day homes- two year
- 2 yr. diploma in Early Learning
- minimum diploma in ECE- no equivalencies
- two year diploma should be the standard, four year ideal
- ECE diploma at minimum -move to degree
- EC frontline worker diploma
- 2 year diploma would be great but is that realistic? (infrastructure+ post secondary capacity)

Certificate

- minimum one year ECE training to start
- min. CDW-ECE certificate with emphasis on continuing education within a time frame
- support staff -minimum one year diploma in ECE
- 1 year certificate child development assistant should maybe be the minimum requirement

Workplace staffing models

- at least one adult should have a B.Ed. w/ early learning courses or degree in ECS
- so certificate (1 yr.) for level 1, diploma (2yr) for level 2 and 4 yr. level 3

Professional Development requirements

- committed to ongoing training in ECE and specialized
- plus ongoing required PD
- ongoing professional development along w/ mentors
- Pd funding grant announcement - 3 streams
- mandatory continued PD
- ongoing professional development (2)
- it is important to maintain education throughout, more than starting at a certain level and staying there.

Management or leadership training/education

- management/leadership/admin
- customer service management & fiscal training etc. for owners/directors
- further educational requirements for those who want to become directors of centres, they need additional knowledge how to run a centre, leadership skills, basic financial skills, conflict resolution skills etc.

Areas of education or training

- early childhood brain development- stages, milestones, factors promoting, factors inhibiting
- need infant/toddler care training for early years
- ECE competencies
- core competencies
- critical nature of relationships (connections, attachments) and how to foster them
- possibly different specialized courses ex infant/toddler
- they should have ECE specific education
- infant specific program planning

CDA or Level 1 (orientation course)

- must have level one before working in daycare (not during or after)
- a minimum course to start (perhaps the 50 hr orientation before commencement) then the commitment to take minimum # of courses every year
- the orientation course should be eliminated

Removal of equivalencies

- no equivalencies (2)

Other comments on educational preparation

- accreditation
- level 2&3 should be given consideration as an apprenticeship style program rather than a practicum
- teacher would benefit from the further education such as university certification
- took away quality funding

- too many stringent regulations
- grandfather but phase out
- those with less than two year should be actively working to increase their education
- staff take this base and never go beyond
- differences across provinces

Participant comments in support of changes to the level and nature of formal educational preparation

The specialized nature of early learning and care

- having both an EC college diploma & a B.Ed. degree been able to meet the SPICE needs fr. learning through play to meeting the KSA's fr. the ATA
- the field of early childhood education has a unique set of learning objectives and knowledge requirements
- development of children needs to be considered when teachers are trained for various ages and then implemented in ECS programs which should be more play based
- child care providers should not be able to certify through equivalencies
- the knowledge and skills gained in the diploma are invaluable for working with young children
- training in brain development and how children develop benefits the early years and beyond
- both areas need early learning courses and continuous upgrading
- the education needs to be relevant in the field and centre they are working in
- the education is specialized for this field

Content areas for educational preparation

- interpersonal training
- increased interpersonal skills
- additional preparation for leadership and management
- critical elements need to be present & then you build the post sec programs around this -building toward a degree
- critical thinking skills enhance self-reflective practice
- training to recognize children who may have a need (could be trauma related or disability related)
- have specializations for different age groups

Alignment or closer integration of early learning and care services

- continuance of quality across all people
- similarity in deliverance of quality care

Supporting the field as a profession

- needed if we are to be seen as a profession

- being able to explain our profession and why we teach through play to our clients

Staff educational preparation and high-quality services

- developing ECE/ECS programs high quality is best
- needed to ensure children receiving high quality care
- administrators, university, senior admin need to understand what high quality looks like
- lesser qualifications for younger ages is detrimental to children's dispositions to learn
- should have more education for the younger children
- All children deserve and should receive quality service with professionals that have a four year degree
- lack of knowledge of understanding of the field results in poorer quality care for the children
- 1st nation/federal vs provincial funding must collaborate in order to provide high quality care within ECS & ECE

Service delivery and programming considerations

- educational expectations/requirements -focus in my daily lesson is the child. -treating each child as equal and unique regardless of race or cultural background is most important
- programming so children/families can have better outcomes
- care and learning cannot be separated
- support funding per-programs
- family day homes have been left out
- staff turnover needs to be lowered so centers can offer higher quality

Other considerations in staff educational preparation

- part of the requirements should be more than coursework i.e./ interview, past work, competencies
- interview process before enrollment
- opportunities in all areas of early childhood leadership, facilitating and teaching
- the capacity to support children's learning is not dependent upon the child's age
- make education standards across Canada, like chefs have a red seal; national consistency

The forms of professional learning and requirements for professional learning for Early Childhood Services staff (including kindergarten)

Mandatory requirement for professional learning

- ongoing mandatory to stay
- 24 hours min/year
- kindergarten teachers must participate in professional growth plans annually
- required -ongoing professional learning w/peers

- pd requirements- ongoing extra learning to continuously grow their knowledge of child care/ specific to staff

Ongoing professional learning

- ongoing, meaningful, supported, based on research, standards established; e.g. part or full day seminars
- ongoing prof develop
- professional learning is ongoing based on changes of health e.g.. Allergies, communise diversity
- annual growth plan
- professional growth plans

Types of professional learning, content and delivery models

- learning/development (based on updated research/PLC's
- keeping up 21st century learners
- based on the ECE teacher - self care because of the many 'hats' we teachers wear
- use of curriculum framework-learning communities
- specific to the program
- value of play
- documentation
- expand on cultural diversity
- need to be meaningful
- stages of development-milestones
- neurology -the serve and return importance of brain development
- autonomy to choose
- # hrs/online/in house/conf/conventions
- staff mentoring (coaching to modify classroom environment/ programming to meet needs of children
- everyone is required to do first-aid training, surely there can be more opportunities made available
- bringing people in, staff mentoring
- workshops/ book studies/etc.
- relevant workshops
- reflective practice

Things to consider when thinking about professional learning

- all ECE must meet the requirements of a college diploma and a university degree to fully grasp the key objectives of SPICE and how a child learns through play centered base or KSA requirement.
- N/A -does not work in profession
- need to be supported (time off/ financial)
- research based (2)
- connect with community organizations (health)

- trends in ECE - what is happening globally

Working as a team or collaborative projects

- minimum of longer terms learning with follow up activities, to make it reflective
- work as a team
- ongoing collaborative projects
- collaboration with staff working with children younger than staff assignment as well as older to get whole picture perspective

Other comments

- PD Days
- at least (1) Bed -with coursework +/-or experience in ECS & special needs
- PLCs
- minimum of proof of employment/volunteer in field
- needs to happen
- college or university level courses in ECE
- this is a minimum requirement
- PD funds
- regulating body that has rules about PD and funds to let that happen

The forms of professional learning and requirements for professional learning for child care staff (including centre-based care, preschools, family day homes)

Ongoing professional learning

- professional learning is continuous from 0-5 enforces a future of each individual child
- ongoing prof develop
- ongoing PD and workshops at needed

Mandatory requirement for professional learning

- 24 + hours/year
- 50 hours / year or approved PD to maintain license to practice or standing with a professional college of ECE
- a mandated requirement for ongoing competency
- mandatory learning that is related to the field
- would be beneficial if ECE professionals were required to keep up the professional development by taking x number of classes per year. Similar to registered massage therapists or social workers
- have an hour amount per year for each staff
- required -ongoing professional learning w/peers

Planned and/or goal setting around professional learning

- growth plan
- annual growth plan
- incentives to continue learning

Professional learning content and/or models of delivery

- let staff choose what PD think they want to do
- autonomy to choose
- specific training geared towards the ages working with and/ or specific needs
- early childhood courses (diversity, brain development)
- documentation
- leaders - business skills, management, financial training, conflict management, etc.
- expand on cultural diversity
- keeping up 21st c learners
- trends in ECE -what is happening globally
- # hrs/online/in house/conf/conventions
- priority program planning
- specific to the program or role of the staff
- college or university level courses in ECE
- reflective practice
- workshops
- inclusivity
- ECE each "PDF's" for preps & self-care

Communities of learning

- PLCs opportunities to learn regionally- to share and learn with colleagues
- learning/development (based on updated research/PLC's
- use of curriculum framework-learning communities

Educational requirements for early childhood educators

- child care certificates
- at least (1) B.Ed. or B ECS & coursework in special needs
- all ECE must meet the requirements of a college diploma and a university degree to fully grasp the key objectives of SPICE and how a child learns through play centered base or KSA requirement.
- management courses for directors
- commitment of higher learning leading to Child Development worker level
- child care diploma
- director/supervisor-degree

Other comments

- crucial
- learning to be well informed and education that will enhance one's understanding, knowledge
- work as a team
- visit a variety of centres that have quality programming

Participant comments in support of professional learning approaches and the requirement for ongoing professional learning

Professional growth plans

- annual growth plans (2)
- annual growth plan of both profession of ECE & ECS

Mandatory professional learning

- would plan/budget for those hours if it was mandatory
- annual amount of hours in PDF's
- min 40 hrs of PD/yr
- # of hours
- professionals in professional colleges all require this!

Models of delivery for professional learning

- relevant workshops are helpful to support a higher level of learning to create competent professionals with continues reflection on new practices
- online learning with an on-site coaching component is the most powerful impact on practice
- ongoing, meaningful, supported, care competency, research and courses
- the curriculum framework can be a game-changer in the field so providing opportunities related to the framework, reflective practice and documentation is necessary

Content considerations for professional learning

- separate admin doing the things we're not good at
- in order to advocate for the field we need to be aware of the global trends, issues in childcare and be prepared to respond
- keeping up with additions/changes
- always striving for a better quality programming that results I better outcomes for children
- child care has a broader range of ages
- enhances self-reflective practice, currency in the field
- new studies & research is continually being done & it is important to be aware of the information

- some individuals can become stuck with doing things/planning/interacting a certain way and it is important to keep up with learning as it benefits ourselves and the children

Staffing considerations

- child care is extremely important, but there should be a grand- fathering in component
- financial support while still working
- interview process to let people in to the program

Participant thoughts and ideas arising from their discussions of professional learning

Professional learning requirements

- include an annual growth plan
- annual government plans
- ongoing , supported professional learning
- have a # of hours of mandated PD
- ongoing + supported
- annual growth plan/ connected to hours/ amount
- minimum # of hours
- an hourly minimum for professionals
- requirement to complete x number of courses to maintain certificate/license to teach - regulated perhaps through a college of ECE

Professional learning models of delivery or content considerations

- again how do we encourage or demand the workforce maintain professional learning yearly outside of the regular work day
- sometimes the best PD is learning from other sites -visits/discussions
- child's developmental needs: S.P.I.C.E.
- childcare convention days like teachers convention
- funding for day home professionals
- embedded learning within the day
- based on research
- staff mentoring
- planning in advance
- keeping up to date on new research & emerging best practice
- because as the system is now for daycare/day home there is not the infrastructure to support releasing staff during the work week
- National Standards from birth to age 3

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 the most important to implement; and third, the key considerations to take into account in advancing change.

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

Advancing the educational preparation of the early learning and care workforce

Participants either ‘strongly agreed’ (5 – 31 percent) or ‘agreed’ (8 – 50 percent) with the proposed changes to strengthen the educational capacity of the early learning and care work. Two participants (13 percent) ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ with the proposed changes and one participant (6 percent) ‘strongly disagreed’.

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

Four-year degree qualifications and/or two-year diploma minimum

- introduction of a specialized ECE education degree and a four year ECE degree
- min of 4 yrs. for ECE
- diploma/degree ELC
- move to a two- year diploma/ or degree
- minimum diploma for entry to practice
- minimum diploma standard
- the @ minimum diploma
- minimum standard of a two year diploma

Higher educational requirements

- remove equivalencies
- raising the minimum requirements in the ECE field
- ECE teachers will be required to meet minimum educational qualifications. Benefits will be seen in quality care across the spectrum of EC services

- requirement for license to practice and all must have to practice at all
- abolishing equivalencies obsolete
- increasing the length and amount of schooling
- set the foundation along with ongoing relevant specialized training

Additional supports for staff education and higher remuneration

- funding and support must accompany
- higher wages/government owned buildings -reduce costs to run programs, thus more money for PD
- requirement-mandated with funding
- wage increase/scale to education
- funding/salary
- wage enhancement
- supports financial and or personal
- more funding & substitute EC professionals for coverage for sick staff/workshops

Need for leadership and or management education or training

- additional qualifications for staff in management & leadership positions
- develop leadership to continue support in workforce (having a mentor to lead)
- leadership/ management to support the staff/ make changes
- higher qualifications for management

Change process considerations and cautions

- start conversation in own communities
- goal-mission statement -setting objectives to reach an goal(s)
- overtime
- the most important thing is mandatory professional upgrade be well planned, move from just two years to include longer term learning supported with release time & coaching to move up those their now doing the job
- going to be impossible with current funding & market model system we have now
- transitioning to this model-need to ensure adequate staff for quality child care/programing
- I am in agreement with maintaining a competency however am cautious about altering the current workforce by imposing requirements that are difficult/ impossible to attain

Workplace/service considerations

- build capacity within centres as well
- having standards and mandatory qualifications for Day Homes is a priority to ensure the safety of the children in spaces that are as of now unregulated
- policy & proper procedures; to create a safe, fun work environment
- building capacity in the centres- teach others so they can teach as well
- teamwork - change "I" to "we"

Workforce considerations

- can experience as a parent count as experience towards education certification? I.e. infant & toddler care
- being in favor of education- education does not mean you are more suited for work with children- fully support the minimum requirements to further your education on a continuous basis. E.g. must take child development course per year
- supports for existing workforce to meet the new educational requirements
- how to encourage & support so staff to complete and meet new requirements
- funding for day home PD
- helps with it viewed as a profession
- it may help society view the field as a profession
- make job prospects more desirable and valuing experience as an asset

Post-secondary program delivery and standards

- provincial standard for post secondary ECE prog.
- provincial standards for post secondary ECE programs
- consistency in education received
- provincial alignment at post secondary
- increase post secondary capacity in ECE programs

Broader community and or parent support

- ECE all to be supported by government, parents need to be supported as well
- society needs to be engaged in the importance of the early years
- generational
- support from society
- raising the profile publicly regarding the importance of early childhood and quality programming

Other specific change considerations

- value of play
- the will to follow through
- need to add infant/toddler specialization
- inclusive mandate for families

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

Public awareness of and support for early learning and care

- raising awareness of the importance of this field, to the public
- need to change perception of child care to early learning
- re-educate community on importance on EL
- opportunities-communication, education, respect

Support from and for post-secondary institutions

- colleges & universities must be in agreement with these proposed changes e.g.. Most EC courses are not transferable to most universities
- this areas is a crucial area for ECE scholars
- most colleges are quite supportive of offering courses off & on communities where as the university has less opportunity off campus
- need post-secondary on board with creative solutions to provide this education insights, weekends, study groups, online, daytime
- commitment from innovation and advanced education to support post-secondary ECE programs
- capacity of post-secondary to manage the number of child care workers required

Financing to support higher levels of staff education (including staff remuneration)

- time and financial
- funding for transitional period
- provide \$, grants to get additional training
- concerns provincial cut backs will affect the funds for bursaries
- wages match the education
- appropriate remuneration
- who is going to pay for the increase in costs on childcare-parents, public funding, combination? If costs are too high they will seek alternate, less desirable solutions. There needs to be a system in place other than the subsidy system
- financial remuneration
- the high cost of running a daycare makes it difficult to give employee benefits or wages they deserve, especially for smaller centres, the lower wages deter people from going into ECE
- funding and supporting the workforce to have time & energy to integrate new learning into their practice as is now
- funding needs to be available from govt.

Supports for staff in raising level of education

- how to effectively train staff while they work full time
- how to effectively have staff do training while working FT
- strategies to help existing workforce
- open up/find time to get additional training
- opportunity for in house training depending on needs of staff

Workforce considerations in introducing change

Attracting new staff

- how do we bring people into the field
- how to get people into the field

- attracting staff
- how to obtain new professionals & keep them

Retaining existing staff

- burn out
- keeping staff in the field
- how to implement changes without losing the workforce in place & disrupting programs & children
- may be resistance from the current workforce

Grandfathering considerations for current staff

- grandfathering in- affected by pay, benefits, etc.
- if you grandfather -make sure to provide enough time but also stick to stop at target dates
- reluctant to change, someone to make sure that the changes are happening- grandfathering in the changes but don't make it too far away, within five years
- Grandfathering staff

Staff educational preparation – content considerations

- including home visitation as a part of care and programming- which requires specialized training/ education
- management with ECE knowledge
- same entry qualification for all ECE programs
- specialization for infants
- common courses across the province for everyone so we have a common value based pedagogy
- consistency of curriculum

Professional learning (professionalism)

- ongoing professional learning
- tie to a regulatory learning
- mandated PD
- increase our professionalism
- college of ECEs

Timelines and the process for change

- appropriate yet not too slow timelines
- this will take time, need to provide time for the process
- clear deadlines for this new qualification strategy
- phase in approach with new staff mentioned
- who is going to monitor the changes?
- how is it going to be monitored?

Service delivery considerations and cautions

- challenges-supporting, but not taking the responsibility of child rearing away from parents/guardians, families of child developments
- if current workforce is required to achieve minimum education requirements that they don't currently have, what will happen to all the families currently relying on these day home providers for daily care? When will these providers be accessing the programs?
- concerns over private childcare/ day homes

Other considerations

- cautions-ECE/ECS respecting
- financial accountability
- accessibility
- opportunity-improved outcomes for children (ECMap >50% entering K ready)
- ECE programs valued/educational training facility

Supporting the early childhood educator as a competent professional

Participants either 'strongly agreed' (14 – 61 percent) or 'agreed' (8 – 35 percent) with the proposed changes to support the early childhood educator as a competent professional. One participants (4 percent) 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the proposed changes.

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

Public awareness of and support for early learning and care

- changes such as high quality benefits both the child and community in knowledge
- public perception of the field

Staff educational level and or requirements

- additional requirements for all ECE professionals
- entry educational requirement
- ECE diploma & a teacher certificate from B.Ed. or bachelor degree P.6
- equivalencies should need to gain ECE specific education to keep certification (the full course should eventually be completed)
- realigning the formal education
- higher educational support

Financing for early learning and care

- funding
- financial support
- government needs to take more responsibility ensuring that child care is affordable for parents, while maintaining attractive ways for staff to prevent staff turnover rates

Oversight of the field, support for professional recognition

- provincial regulation that is consistently interpreted across the province around quality child care and ECE education at post-secondary level
- a new model of oversight for the profession
- having certified professions will then provide effective ECE pedagogical services that will meet the SPICE dev of all children
- support as professionals
- strongly supportive of a governing body similar to the set up of the Alberta College of Social workers; code of ethics, competency program, etc.
- seen as a professional
- governing bodies
- regulatory body (through or beside a stand-alone ministry)
- oversight of ECEC
- oversight of the profession
- a body to regulate the field, i.e. requirements to complete PD

Professional learning requirements and supports

- ongoing professional learning requirements, but not ongoing certification
- professional learning requirements for ECEs
- professional development and financial support for it
- specific hours of approved PD
- ongoing professional learning
- profession learning
- the professional learning requirements,
- either to provide funding for staff for PD opportunities or
- certification leads to hoop jumping
- self selected PD leads to growth
- college approval
- infrastructure
- pool of EAS to sub in for release time
- professional learning requirements for ECE's
- education time
- provide opportunities within work week to complete PD opportunities

Staff remuneration

- realignment of education remuneration and working changes
- remuneration
- the remuneration has to increase as the quality of work environment
- realigning ECE formal education, remuneration & working conditions
- remuneration increase and working environments that value collaboration, documentation and reflection

- increase salaries
- increasing numeration with increase education
- realigning ECE
- pay

Standards of Practice as well as a Code of Ethics

- EC educator standards of practice and code of ethics
- standards of practice & code of ethics

Other specific change considerations

- specifications & more solidified, specific things need to be added
- level on hire
- government needs to take accountability
- the market model system does make a system that makes these changes attainable
- planning and participation with others
- these will prevent all the problem areas that plague most ECE services

Considerations (opportunities/challenges/or cautions) in supporting the Early Childhood Educator as a competent professional

Professional learning for early childhood educators

- time for P.D./ financial (remuneration)
- how can ECEC professionals go for PD days if they're supposed to be watching children
- finding the time without disrupting families & children while not taking teachers downtimes (weekends)
- time/resources for professional learning
- families will need daycares, day homes so when will they be able to have time for PD?
- when there be time for the PD -some structure form
- when they occur (finding time)
- ongoing responsibility for own learning and maintenance of standards
- opportunities-PDF's for ECE

Educational preparation of early childhood educators

- can we agree on what the core elements to be included are? What these educators need to know and be able to do?
- equivalencies & low education/exceptions
- lack of opportunity to work & get education
- logistic implementation of the education and funds
- curriculum consistency
- making opportunities for lower education & equivalencies to catch up
- possibility of reducing or preventing staff burn out by having properly trained staff
- is to recognize the value of many years of experience

- cultural diversity & ethnic backgrounds
- entry aptitude (2)
- cautions-literacy

Financing for early learning and care

- higher wages
- opportunity for increase remuneration
- cautions-salary guide
- government support (3)
- how will this be funded?
- need funding for centres & employees expanding
- create affordable spaces for ECE by gov't i.e.. Unused school space or space in gov't spaces
- challenge -financial - & the implications to environments & programs
- finding resources
- educational funding
- who is taking on financial
- opportunity of incentives
- could parents afford childcare?
- incentives for well done childcare (provider centre)

Oversight of an early learning and care profession

- who will oversee the profession -government, professional body such as ACCA?
- governing body (2)
- governing body such as a college to oversee competent professionals
- we can learn the positives and negatives of a professional body from provinces such as Manitoba and Ontario

Workforce considerations and cautions

- one important thing to consider is how to make any or all of these changes involve input from those dedicated, busy full time working staff with families and outside responsibilities
- cautions-high turn-over of staff & burn out
- employee benefits
- long term employment vs burn out -lack of motivation
- burn out (stress)
- possibility of staff turn-over with additional education

Parent and public support for early learning and care

- public education
- need to make parents aware these issues and to garner their support for this necessary step to providing high quality programs

- public education about the value of ELCC
- parent education on professionalism
- they are devalued as babysitters in my experience we need to challenge this thought

Other considerations

- can't totally set aside the practical implementation considerations
- opportunities-benefits
- opportunities-incentive to appreciate
- cautions-cultural funding/cultural ethnicity
- provincial and federal regulations, opportunities, incentives, salary grids (big difference)
- provide spaces
- universal child care act
- regional and cultural variances
- work more jointly together with ECS and Child care