



## Toward a Provincial Framework for Early Learning and Care in Alberta

A Record of Participant Discussions

# Calgary

November 15, 2012

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



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## 1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

This report presents the participant comments from the Calgary consultation held on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the Radisson Hotel. Fifty-five participants took part in the discussions. The project partners greatly appreciate the time and energy the participants contributed to the discussions and thank them all individually for their insights and commitment to this work.

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

## 2. Integrative Elements

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

### Theme: Contextual Considerations

#### *Subtheme: Questions*

- Does integration = quality – the earlier we provide quality (not integration) the better outcomes. Will a focus on integration distract need to address strengthening child care? We need to pay attention to this.
- Does integration equal quality?
- Value of full integration – i.e. it is valuable?

#### *Subtheme: Vision, Goals, Purposes and Outcomes*

- Keep the end in mind (outcomes/results). First things first – prioritization.
- Given the complexity of integration it will be essential to start with the end result in mind; by doing so, it should be easier to prioritize approaches/strategies
- Must ensure improved outcomes for children, families and communities
- What outcomes do we want to see? What is the bigger picture?
- Promoting and supporting the well-being of children in a child-centered framework needs to be explicitly addressed and fully integrated in an ELC framework.
- I tend to go to the operationalizing level first. However, I see the importance of establishing foundational statements. Statements would include beliefs, role identification, vision etc.

#### *Subtheme: Scope*

- 0-3 is a critical time in brain development
- Healthy brain development supported from birth
- Starting early, 0-3, is an important theme due to the brain development going on at that time – so huge integration needs to happen between public health / family outreach programs especially for our most at risk populations and family care centers. Parent link centers/neighbourhood initiatives

#### *Subtheme: Level of Integration*

- What are the barriers that stand in the way of full integration?
- Would it be possible to keep the vision of full integration as we implement partial integration?
- Integrating ELC
- What does integration look like?

- Integrated approach – definitely agree that having a partial approach would be complicated.
- How do we define integration/education/care?

## **Theme: Foundational Discussions**

### *Subtheme: Weaving Together ELC Paradigms, Professions and Practices*

- Consensus on philosophy will be critical but the ultimate battle will be over funding and authority.
- Does integration mean integrated with education? What about health?
- Education as it is currently structured and trained is not ready to support ELC
- ELC is a specialty and cannot be seen as a downward extension of education
- How 2 systems would be able to integrate/funding (transition), human resources, governance into one seamless system.
- How can early learning and child care lead this? There needs to be leadership
- It's more than education all ministries need to be involved. Early development vs. early learning (people link learning to education only)
- How can we integrate differing philosophies/perspectives between education ministries and Human Services?
- Is “learning” rather than healthy development on all domains (emotional and physical and moral are most likely to be minimized with an education approach)
- Need to ensure sound/emotional learning aspects of children and families
- Philosophy/pedagogy
- Relationship is equally or more important than learning opportunity
- Should an education model be desired for the young people? I see this as being very important and recognize the impact this will be on our community. Outcomes will and have proven this is a must for Alberta.
- The care part of ELC should not come 2<sup>nd</sup> to the learning part. Children need a warm nurturing environment to build the foundation for all learning to come (as well as overall health, well-being and relationship building)
- The need for stakeholders to try to “open their perspectives” to new collaborations, ideas, models
- Therefore finding shared models and philosophies/pedagogy are critical.
- What the package called “schoolification” is a real and genuine concern. We already know K-3 approaches to education not based are on best practices from a child development perspective... we need to avoid those pitfalls for our early learners
- What's going to be the balance between nurturing and...concern for the developmental trajectory? Do we want children brought up under this auspice of 1 overarching philosophical framework?

- You cannot work against the developing brain – in many areas (ACC etc.) if the emotional side is not regulated – and this happens first – the cognitive side will not take in information. In “how children succeed”, author makes many considered points related to emotional and social health – it is character not cognitive that helps children succeed. The unit on education is too narrow and misinterpreted.

*Subtheme: Family & Child Centered*

- At the beginning of parenthood (i.e. pregnancy) it is primarily a health event that, over time becomes a nurturing event – the early childhood experience begins at the parent – how they prenatally parent the unborn child, then once the child is born, it is the home and early relationship with the child. Supporting/educating parents beginning in pregnancy in relation to healthy lifestyle and early nurturing is critical (the foundation). See research: fetal programming. – key messages/support from the beginning
- Parents are looking for opportunities for integrative delivery of care and learning (multi age solutions for families)
- Needs of the children and needs of the families
- Support families – supporting stay @ home families equally to service providers.
- Whether a parent becomes one by accident, or by planning, once they arrive in pregnancy/early parenthood – there must exist a cohesive, comprehensive, intentional and holistic (social, financial, health, employer, policy) Support and approaches for parents to begin well.
- A laudable idea, combining education and nurturing care by caregivers/educators other than their parents.
- Can we overcome the assumption that the format is responsible for the early years. That parents both can and should provide for their children in this down period
- How can we ensure a primary role for families and communities? Family centered approach. Systems can lack sensitivity. Neither education nor children’s essential services are especially known for this sensitivity.
- How will a comprehensive ELC framework support parents as a “plan A” strategy for ELC?
- Ideas: integration starts before the child family planning, education of parents to be and health services are puzzle pieces.
- Questions: How do we keep this from becoming a replacement for parental care? How support for families to provide their best quality of education and care going to be supported.
- Parents within communities need to be mobilized to give input and take ownership of ELC specific to their needs.

### *Subtheme: Health Systems*

- Health aspect i.e. nutrition – foundational piece that is missing
- Health is notably absent from the discussion papers. Health is interconnected to ELC. It is a foundational piece in an ELC framework. Health is the first and most fundamental need in Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs and needs to be satisfied before higher order needs like creativity, learning, and problem solving occur (4 levels upon Maslow’s)
- Need to include health in the integrated system
- Question – missing a key ministry of health is not part of integrated ministerial framework. Health has greatest points of contact with young families especially prior to “traditional” introduction to early learning environments at approx. 3 years.
- Too often budgets are used to pay staff at the expense of down grading healthy menus. The Alberta gov’t has invested a great deal of resources in promoting and supporting the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth and child care as a primary setting for implementation.
- Where is Health and development?

### *Subthemes: Public and Private Systems*

- How can we reconcile the private business approach with a public approach. They are incompatible in fundamental ways.
- What is the best way to minimize the private sector
- Variety of providers – day care and formal programs

## **Themes: Principles**

### *Subtheme: Inclusion*

- How is this framework including our aboriginal peoples?
- Question: how can we ensure that Francophone’s will be included in the Alberta integration solution?

### *Subtheme: Access*

- Complexity of integration all models of delivery systems accessibility in every sense of the word.

### *Subtheme: Affordability*

- Enriched vs. rich.
- The disparity between families who can afford quality care and those who cannot.
- Affordable child care has to be in place – similar to Quebec? Not sure...
- Does cost of child care options drive most decisions of parents with children 0-6

#### *Subtheme: Choice*

- Allowing families to choose ELC options which necessitates educating them about options, having access to options in rural, small, remote communities (#'s)

#### *Subtheme: Continuum*

- Collective impact, funding uniqueness of ages and stages. Culturally sensitive integration.
- Equal across services, supports for all children across the age range

#### *Subtheme: Holistic*

- Holistic human development (not just learning)

#### *Subtheme: Universal*

- Early intervention/support can alter outcomes for all children – not just those with needs
- Need to normalize supports and universal support/services

#### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Quality is more important than integration
- When considering integrating ECC in Alberta – the question of quality comes to mind. With integrating programs/services who is accountable for the quality and how would this be managed.

#### *Subtheme: Physical Health*

- Space adequate, food budget, infrastructure (e.g. kitchen space, storage, equipment) and staff training to support healthy menus are facing omissions. Children in full time care need ½ to 2/3 of their daily nutrient needs met while in care. A hungry child will not learn and play. A well fed child (and nutritious food) will engage and learn. Health includes not only nutrition, but also active play, parenting, oral health, injury prevention and so on.

### **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

#### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Alignment of ECD with ministry of Education and local boards. Most schools continue to operate as siloed institutions – need for processes to engage families, teachers and community in the transition (strongly believe in a return attempt at community school model) from early years!
- Integration – discussed establishment of new ministry – I feel caution of compartmentalizing rather than holistic approach.

- What would a single ministry look like?
- Having stronger coordination of government, institution – community work together on this key.
- There must be better coordination of services amongst ministries (Education, FSS, Health, and Mental Health). Is this possible?
- Variety of services needed for integration and who will lead these services together as a group.

#### *Subtheme: Financing*

- How will this be funded?
- What will be the extra costs involved?
- Will “Alberta” be willing to invest the money required in a consistent coherent way

#### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Curriculum Framework. Financing. Governance. Location. How do we integrate all this?

#### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Accreditation body for all ELC for consistency of service
- Professional standards of ECEs
- What about compensation tables for ECE.

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Awareness*

- Greater awareness around the impact (SRI) for early years investment needed at all levels – political/corporate/community
- How do we educate the public on research? Can ECMap’s results direct and influence decisions?
- That political ideology can be a stumbling block in a conservative province
- Need for all involved to understand the research around the importance of LEC. How do we support the parents with the necessary skills?

#### *Subtheme: Timing*

- What keeps coming to mind is what are we waiting for? We have the potential to reduce redundancies, focus funding, streamline policies and procedures, improve quality of early learning, and reduce stress for families. Why are we stuck? Are we so tied to our bureaucratic structures that maintaining these structures takes priority over what we all know would be best for our province? Can we get past our capitalistic mentality?

### *Subtheme: Community Voice*

- How do we ensure the voices of families are included in the process of integration?
- How do we ensure voices of all stakeholders in the childcare arena?

### *Subtheme: Change Process*

- How do people/systems “let go”, Change, collaborate – for real this time
- That it’s easiest to go down paths that others have shown to be problematic. That when we’re starting from the very bottom any forward movement can be cast as a major step and grand accomplishment
- How can we learn from challenges from other provinces/models?

### *Subtheme: Miscellaneous Things*

- How will this be evaluated?
- Question ltd # of kids in licensed care?
- Meeting children’s and family’s needs at all stages of development is responsibility to be shared: individual, extended and family, community and broader society.

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

### **Theme: Contextual Ideas**

#### *Subtheme: Nature of Integration*

- Define integration- partially to begin. Shared space? Shared philosophy? Shared beneficiaries?

#### *Subtheme: Scope*

- Focus should be on children (all ages birth to 6/8) – not services.
- The objective here is nurturing healthy families 0-6 –it’s not just early learning and care – it must be nested within someplace that can make that all happen.
- Calls into question what is next up: 0-2, 3-5 - all critical milestones.

#### *Subtheme: Case for Integration*

- Good data needed to support integration (e.g. ECmap)

#### *Subtheme: Engagement & Awareness*

- Critical to include non-governmental agencies, institutions, and problems in the delivery of ELC. Most notably, faith communities and seniors seem to be an untapped resource

- Is the public ready for a blending of purposes for children 0-6 yr. – ready for ‘care’ and ‘education’ to go hand in hand? I say yes, the public is very prepared

## Theme: Level of Integration

### *Subtheme: Full Integration*

- Full integration would be most beneficial for children, but I am unsure of the willingness or ability of government to embark upon and follow through with a tri-ministry effort (human services, health education)
- Vision of full integration – with an understanding and commitment that full integration will take years/decades – but if the vision is there, then even though the players change, the commitment to the vision remains.
- Complete integration
- Ideal: Full integration with ELC nested within a larger ECD framework which includes supports for family’s roles in learning and care of their children. Otherwise becomes piecemeal services
- If the research evidence shows that the best outcomes result from full integration, why would we settle for anything less?
- If we don’t fully integrate outcomes will not be fully realized
- Full integration in my opinion would be the most valuable in terms of convenience for young families.
- Full integration with multiple ministries including health, education, and human services, or a single, new ministry that looks only @ ECD
- If we settle for partial integration we settle for more limited impact on young children’s lives and less chance of moving forward with a strong platform and central vision. Let’s be bold!
- The short term pain and cost/re-adjustments in systems may seem overwhelming, but the long term gain economically would offset those costs over time. We are more in a position now to make the switch than we may be down the road when our energy resources are depleted. But that will be when we need the young children of today to have the ability to participate fully in society and the economy.

### *Subtheme: Fuller Integration over time*

- I see value in partial integration as a starting point and eventually fully integrating
- It is the “building of the cathedral” concept that is, takes centuries to build a cathedral, yet when complete, you think it was designed by 1 architect.
- There is a model – developmental process – cooperation – collaboration – integration we may be best served by moving slowly but surely to integration.
- Full integration – gradual introduction and blending of ministries

- Full integration – of early learning and care across the province. Perhaps phased approach
- Full would be ideal but perhaps we're not yet ready – a staged approach?
- I would prefer full integration through one ministry that is responsible for early learning and care. I think the reality is more likely that we have a phased in approach to achieving this goal.

#### *Subtheme: Partial Integration*

- Currently there seems to be a real patchwork pictured in terms of programs services, supports, pedagogy and funding. It seems hard to just jump from a segregated system of “silos” to a full integration. Even amongst the ELCC community there is not yet clarity or consistency – let's start there, within the education and health communities there is also so much strength that we can build on – healthy children and families (health services). Learning focus (from education), protection from social services.
- Partial integration because it is both education and health – these 2 pillars must be seamless, collaborative, universally accessible, well-funded. (No better investment” than pregnancy thru 6 years”
- Partial integration is a good place to start.
- Ideally full integration but realistically partial integration alongside the reconciliation model.
- Prefer full integration but partial integration would likely be more palatable to the general public.
- Something that involves integration community/multi-disciplinary focused on family and child.
- Levels/types of integration is dependent on public readiness.

#### **Theme: Bridging Early Education with Care**

- All levels identified along with a stronger emphasis on social and emotional development.
- Bridging the care of children with what we know about ECD and intervention is brilliant. This means down where the governance is separate and funding “blind”. Bring all levels together.
- The more important integration is that of care and education.

#### **Theme: Provincial Governance Models**

##### *Subtheme: Ministerial Structure and Oversight*

- Creates a new ministry for early learning and care

- In form of ministry for ELC but this government is focused on amalgamation therefore we had to make sure the right areas are amalgamated
- Though the one-ministry approach would be ideal, politically it would be challenging to obtain a buy-in.
- If a separate minister is set up, how do we transition out of ELC ministry to education? Are we creating another barrier?
- One that has strong mandate/goals – clearly determine line of communication, adequate (sustainable) funding and management of human resources with appropriate transitions from previous systems.
- Education – has an early learning branch
- Education is not necessarily the ministry that needs to lead this. There needs to be a vision and one voice from all the ministries involved.
- Integrated between education and health for kids and families
- No ministerial head-butting!
- The integration of ministries is almost secondary because it happens all the time.
- A mixed model makes sense. Concerned health is not a partner (wellness perspective and as assurance developmental issues are addressed well from an early intervention perspective)
- Governance needs to be larger than just education and human services

#### *Subtheme: Early Learning Secretariat Structure*

- Human services perhaps a place to see an early learning secretariat.
- Early learning secretariat
- Is it possible to establish a nonpartisan body like an early years secretariat? This would possibly shield this important work from the shifting winds of political priorities. Perhaps a tax base that just funds this area.

### **Theme: Links to Integrated Elements**

#### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Educating child care workers to qualify in common license
- Highly trained, professional care aligned with teacher training and preparation programs

#### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Development of Alberta curriculum guide or at least developmental understanding

#### *Subtheme: Finance*

- A clear funding model recognizing the need for parental choice will likely be needed to move the discussion forward.

- Public – gov't funded grants subsidies

#### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Spaces where families can experience a sense of community, build social networks and social capital that is/has key impacts on learning outcomes. That it remain throughout the early years in one situation – rather than fragmentation of services.
- I would love to see Jr. kindergarten in Alberta and full day kindergarten.
- If private delivery, then high standards and licensed
- The role of the private sector in Alberta society cannot be underestimated. The existing network of for profit services and the corporate sector are both key pieces in finding an Alberta solution.
- Need to consider what the appetite for a community school/family center model of education as the primary site.
- Integration to be successful must be seamless, relatively simple and accountable to variety of AB stakeholders – taxpayers, educator and most importantly parents.

### **Theme: Principles**

#### *Subtheme: Child-Centered*

- What children need vs. what we provide! Change our focus

#### *Subtheme: Parent Involvement*

- Building capacity of parents/caregivers to provide health and safety to their children. Both intentional and unintentional falls (concessions)
- What do they need; how do we best support their critical environments: Home/family, ELC, School, Community

#### *Subtheme: Quality and Quantity of Service*

- Focus on quality of services
- The overall effect of such integration is a change (either positive or negative) in the level of service.

#### *Subtheme: Culturally Responsive*

- Partial integration should consider Francophones in the governance model

### **Theme: Other Models**

- Swedish examples is seen as the “gold standard”. Can we use that to guide/develop our integration model?

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

### Theme: Level of Readiness

#### *Subtheme: Ready*

- Alberta is ready for a system that is equitable, accessible and well thought out. The provincial and federal government have undervalued the youngest generation of Albertans (who are voiceless) for decades. It's time.
- Better than ever before (I have worked in children's mental health for 35 years)
- Very ready – all key stakeholders desperate to help the families and children in which they work with – the desire to collaborate, try innovation, make a difference is there.
- Very ready, but lots to do
- Both politically and socially, more ready now than we've ever been in past.
- ELC community ready ideologically and institutionally
- The research, political will, merging practices and awareness are aligning for this to come to fruition (EDI data)
- There is a "policy window" which is open. There is an economically favorable environment. The political context makes real change possible.
- It's a Premier priority!
- More than ready.
- Readiness is ripe – need for change in investing funding resources into one – especially in the area of human services –child care. Very fragmented and need to improved quality, coordination of care – not just from education perspective but from developmental, parenting viewpoint and positive outcomes with our families.
- The E-Mapping has paved the way! Upstart gets policy makers with program talks – we love Muttart as a force to organize and vet ideas. We are on our way – let's be bold.
- The fact that it is a priority for gov't is encouraging
- Very open to this as it seems the ministries and various sectors (both public and private) are open to collaboration. Premier Redford has indicated ELC is important. Communities are on board via ECMap data and coalition initiatives. "collective impact" is the buzz word of the day (good one at that). MRU/Grant Mac are in the process of developing curriculum – stars are beginning to align!
- Very ready
- We are very ready and the time is feeling right
- With premier support, we will never be more ready.

### *Subtheme: Cautious/mixed/unclear*

- Depends on how we define integration.
- Are the following ready: educators, business, tax payers, etc.?
- The barriers include: current systemic structures; current funding structures but the child care community is supportive.
- Everyone seems geared up, but is there readiness within the business/corporate community? Among people without children
- Education is currently experiencing significant change in development of the development and inclusive education system. Will they be able to take on another significant restructuring?
- Front-line providers – less aware of the coming change – more aware of where duplication is present – or completely unvested in this level of discussion
- Gov't showing willingness but needs to follow through and listen to discussion forums.
- I don't know for sure but these forums and the discussion really indicate a readiness to move forward.
- I feel there needs to be a great deal of work ahead with the school boards and faculties of education to be "ready" for implementation
- I'm not sure at this point – looking forward to having more today.
- Need to change the title/name to be more inclusive of families, early learning=education and care=daycare need a "and \_\_\_\_" to represent families
- New Canadians struggle with lack of knowledge. More awareness would help
- How about parents and the general public? Unclear.
- Policy makers and administrator are engaged in the "idea" of change. Battling through their own agendas to make the change fit what they are doing. Fearful to "hope" for a real change – and equally fearful the paperwork will overtake their lives!

### *Subtheme: Mixed Readiness*

- We have done a lot of work foundationally for including child care, but we have a long way to go – pocket of great support – especially with both – not so much education.
- At the end of day, I am hopeful that the government stars are aligning and there is a gov't/high level appetite for this however from what I am hearing I'm not certain of the public appetite. I live in hope.
- Government is ready in spirit, but the government machinery may be weak.
- I think there is appropriate wariness about systematizing childhood but an acknowledgement that improved ELC services will level the playing field for children and families living in poverty and who are vulnerable. I think moving in this area needs to be done with wisdom, sensitivity and adequate resources.

- Readiness in terms of not for profits, governments, health - not the provincial government – conservative philosophy. Concerned that the conversations stand behind private entrepreneurs. Use funding formulas that do not support these kind of initiatives if the services aren't universal then in high needs neighbourhoods the programs will suffer – staff as they get educated go to the higher paying jobs in wealthier neighbourhoods
- Seems to be commitment/passion for professionals in ELC field to the concept – philosophically ready, but what about our actions?
- Seems to be some gov't readiness
- The stars seem more closely aligned at this time than any time previous to this. I think people who work in the early childhood world are already at the table for this, but government and the general public lack awareness of the value of integrating ELC. They need to know the issues created by our changing society as well as the research in brain development, etc.
- Unsure. Personally I believe that if we don't change something about the way we support families in caring for, raising and teaching young children we will continue to struggle with an illness focused system. Can't learn if you aren't healthy in the broadest possible description of health
- Village being started, commonality of language starting
- Not I am not sure how ready Alberta is for this but from discussions with other individuals they seem to think we have a long road ahead to see this happen.

#### *Subtheme: Not Ready*

- The core problem still remains around health disparities and that professionals have to advocate for yet overlook this population – I would question the readiness.
- Historically gov't has not taken the lead in supporting early learning and care – or at least not direct support. Seems to prefer private sector initiative
- Honestly, uninformed (unconscious incompetence). Likely characteristics of most Albertans. They don't know what they don't know.
- Struggle with libertarian view points from the perspective of individuals – parent choice/rights and practice of Business vs. Gov't – P3's, corporate investment

### **Theme: Considerations**

#### *Subtheme: Drivers for Change*

- Demographics are changing, becoming more diverse which may support an environment for change.
- The need seems to be great as access is often an issue. The families of AB are ready for this and there seems to be a great need.

- Using EDI stats from ECMap project is already in place – and characterize state of readiness in 5 domains of childhood development. We don't need to re-invent the wheel.

*Subtheme: Francophone*

- With regards to the francophone community, the francophone school boards, Francophone ELC services providers, francophone parents, associations are ready to move forward with an integrated solution. They are in fact more integrated than majority services.

*Subtheme: Cross Paradigms*

- Move some of the focus from formal education to the development of emotional regulations and social skills

*Subtheme: For-Profit Stakeholders*

- For profit daycare need to be considered. For some small operations this is their livelihood.

*Subtheme: Engagement and Awareness*

- We now work with communities – we train with parents, follow parents as well as researchers, psychologists etc.
- “No more barriers” - we have to all be in the room
- Where is the voice of frontline workers?
- This is a public issue but gov't needs to “listen” to individuals
- We also don't have the support resources for families necessary to fully engage with ELC e.g. GP's, education, specialists, parent Networks
- How are we changing how we communicate to ensure there is widespread readiness
- What is readiness of families in communities? How will we capture their experiences, changes required?

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

### **Theme: Context**

*Subtheme: Definitions*

- How do you define care, education?
- How do we define education? How do we define integration? How do we define care?

### *Subtheme: Vision, Goals & Outcomes*

- We need to have clear goal – dream – vision of where we want to be. May have diverse ways to achieve/travel different paths.
- Helping parents to stay at home for the 1<sup>st</sup> 1-2 years is critical.
- One statement we must be careful about is “early childhood care so parents can join the workforce” the bigger picture is helping to make sure people aren’t forced to join the workforce before they are ready to. (once again – nurturing the family)
- What outcomes are we working on?
- The Beneficiaries: kids, families, communities, and their health and learning
- How are we going to evaluate outcomes of integration?

## **Theme: Principles**

### *Subtheme: Child-Centered*

- Be open to new roles, relationships and putting young children at the heart of all the work.
- Children and what they need
- Focus on child/families is vital and on the “well child”
- It’s about vulnerable children and families

### *Subtheme: Embedded in Parent/Family*

- Institutionalization is a caution! Family is the first place for rearing.
- Home and family are primary socialization agents. We need to find a way to support these agents to be healthy and active, not replace them
- How do you hold the child and by extension the family in the center of all formal structures, systems, etc.
- Human anthropology tells us young children need close and consistent relationships with caring adults, not institutionalized care. Need to be sure quality indicators include this opportunity. Need for diverse and multiple options
- The system can’t be everything to everyone: i.e. charter schools, designer programs, elite athletic school. Base it in the family not in a place.
- Entire families contribute to ELC. Grandparents. Over 6 kids. aunts/uncles/ community groups.

### *Subtheme: Choice*

- Choice is important when integrating the goals and ideals of care and education. Other important aspects include cost and of course, quality. None of this matters if the integration is of poor quality.
- Parents can “opt out” of provincial system

- Battle of authority – does government have the right to direct the “raising of children”. Consider public push back to changes in the education act that were seen by some as undermining parental authority.

*Subtheme: Quality*

- Quality out of home care that is accessible and affordable ensures women’s full participation in society.
- Building on the quality that leverages current assets and capabilities

*Subtheme: Inclusive/Diverse*

- Best practices based on identified research. Diversity to population. Variety of languages and backgrounds. Try to teach not assume westernization.
- We need to keep the level of multi-cultural children, families and care givers.
- Addressing including and supporting our rural children. Sense of urgency!
- Each family is different, has different priorities. Need to respect and recognize different levels of need
- I’m very cautious in accepting strategies that are “top down” and don’t reflect the diversity of needs.

*Subtheme: Strength-Based*

- Strength-based approach
- The strengths of each member of the “community”

*Subtheme: Responsive*

- To borrow a phrase from education’s recent work in creating the collaborative regional service delivery model: “the right service, in the right place, at the right time”

*Subtheme: Universal*

- Remove stigma from accessing support – make it part of continuum of services available with all to all. Normalizing accessing support

*Subtheme: Bridging ELC Paradigms, Professions and Practices*

- Decrease schoolification.
- Once again – ELC is both educating and health
- The interconnectedness of Health to care. Care and health starts at age 0 or even preconception. What are the outcomes we are measuring? Are the outcomes for health, education, care not the same? Physical health should not be ignored

### *Subtheme: Private and Public Interests/delivery*

- Private interests are very strong and have political clout
- There is a common belief that within big “C” Alberta that the private sector will address all concerns minimizing the role of the public sector. In this particular case, I believe that the role of the public sector is essential for ensuring access to quality for all citizens. The role of the public sector (aka provincial gov’t) is to teach everyone what quality is and to ensure all citizens have access to quality program. Such an attitude has socialist overtones which is okay because it helps everyone not just the wealthy.
- Private sector mobilizes behind this how?

## **Theme: Links to Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Common ministry, inter-ministerial approach
- Transparency amongst ministries important and communication.

### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Financial foundations – public/private
- That this is a complex issue that needs time and \$\$ to implement.
- The funding of the integrated system is important and the quality of the education/care is very important

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Value professionalization
- The education and pay levels of people doing the work is critical to success.

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Is traditional school and right setting e.g. already have 6 year olds on buses for over an hour a day?? Community.

### *Subtheme: Curriculum*

- Need to establish a strong core approach to the systems and services
- Curriculum must contain all domains that silo’ed departments focus on: health, human services, education (related to ELC) i.e. GPC funding – public health and injury prevention

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Window of Opportunity*

- We have an 18 month window of opportunity politically. Go now!
- The political cycle gives 3 more years (18 months to start) to make progress.
- Political will – sounds promising.
- Build on positive intent that many have.

### *Subtheme: Awareness and Engagement*

- How we connect with aboriginal communities. This should be considered.
- Education of parents and those professionals and members and partners in the community who work with them –we need to be all on the same page before we can edit/proofread/publish this book!
- Education of the public especially about what young children need.
- Public appetite/shifting understanding of the importance of “more than just babysitting”
- The point that poor services are worse than no services is really important
- We will need to create a lot of buy-in from everyone including families.
- Awareness and education (public) is crucial.
- Engaging families to understand what are their views.
- Frontline workers/caregivers presently not well-educated/well-versed in importance of child development and their importance in that role. They need to buy-in to this “new” philosophy and approach as to parents whose voices are still absent in these discussions.
- Need a structure to sustain ongoing conversations from all stakeholders – this is what breaks down silos (keep this type of structure/discussion going – not high level discussion but front line discussions
- Who are the stakeholders and continuing to engage them?
- Communication as to direction of what has been done to this point (at a government level).
- How do we get all the research out to those who will make the decisions in the gov’t

### *Subtheme: Structural Barriers*

- Political and social conservatism within AB will be a barrier to full integration
- That the political landscape in Alberta needs to change!

### *Subtheme: Planning, Action & Change*

- If we don’t do something different with some conscious authority, we are going to get what we’ve always got. Raising the bar requires effort and eyes forward.

- Often different “culture industries” that have provided good services but have not integrated become threatened – fight for their narrow piece of the pie. We need to help carer of the children feel valued and valuable – as the lowest paid yet the most important. They develop fear easily
- The role of ego, power, position... it needs to be taken into account.
- Seek natural overlaps for the first steps and “institutionalize” them.
- Complexity means that people will need to be open to the learning and be open to the challenges and the lack of a concrete, ready-made model
- Transitions and integrate “how to” when making changes with integration within and between communities
- The need to establish an environment (funding, policy support) that makes it easier for stakeholders to “retool”, to reassess their role/opportunities to further integrate
- The use of funding to implement strategies should be considered in framework. How can we make this as simple as possible for families, service providers, program designers, etc.
- That communities are empowered when they are mobilized and equipped with resources to create their own “best practices” for caring for their own
- We need to plan cautiously – as this supportive government may not last and sustainability will be a challenge
- Being realistic of roadblocks, challenges – can these be addressed, how will they be addressed. Have a plan.
- Fresh eyes/innovation new way to think of it
- Reasonable time frame not dependent on political whims/schedule
- The impact this will have on all parties. We need to recognize the amount of work that will be involved.

### 3. Goals & Purposes

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

**Theme: Overall Context**

*Subtheme: Questions about Scope, Goals & Outcomes*

- Who does this serve?
- Are we all on the same page regarding goals? Who decides the goals?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What are the priorities?
- What are the “outcomes” What do we want to start with

- Do we have outcomes by which this will determine if an ELC framework is successful or not?
- Do we know where we are going?
- Who are the stakeholders of this system?

*Subtheme: Elevating ELC*

- ELC must be recognized as critical component of the development of the child

**Theme: Preference for Goals**

*Subtheme: Children - Lifelong Learning*

- Early Learning academies – can it be done without sacrificing the mental health of students
- Lifelong learning: early development – lifelong learning
- Lifelong learning – what does the transition look like from ELC to the next phase of families and child. How do we foster the notion of learning in the child’s family and child’s family and child’s next phase of development – it’s important to give consideration to this and how ELC will support the next phase.
- Preparing children to become lifelong learners should include an ELC pathway for Francophones. These children will enter into a francophone system at age 5-6 and their success in that system will depend on their access to French language ELC

*Subtheme: Children - Well Being*

- Referring to children as “learners” and “workers” does not reflect the best in our society – they are young human beings who also learn and will eventually work. I worry that we’re beginning to lose our perspective on this.
- Remember children- we are human beings not human doings
- What is the image of the child in Alberta/Canada? What value are we truly placing on children – commodities, emotional investments in our future? We need a common image to work from and to work towards.
- Child wellness from a holistic perspective.
- Early childhood development
- Doing what’s right, for the child – in terms of child development, enter when needed.
- Need to have a common vision that is based on the importance of supporting growth and development in the early years, not because it is preparation for the “next steps” but as being an important in lifetime development.

### *Subtheme: Children – Human Capital Development*

- Competing in world market, financial and political security.
- Economic case – good investment prevention! Mitigates expense later work force/talent
- In the long term, we need to be competitive and in a good global position – economic.

### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- Family support and well being
- There is a disconnect between the wealth in Alberta and the stats re domestic violence. Families need help.
- The isolation of young families – often a future of neglect for the child in these very early years.
- Family support more well being

### *Subtheme: Community Cohesion & Social Inclusion*

- To support healthy and inclusive communities – I am very intrigued by the concept of providing spaces in which parents community members and service providers can come together to support child well-being. This needs to encompass the breadth of supports/programs in the community and not a prescriptive “one size fits all” approach, however, I see this as a great opportunity. It must be built in from the start.
- Social inclusion, includes social support networks
- Social inclusion – although it takes a village to raise a child, it is in the raising of children that we create a village
- Social inclusion
- Social capital development for long term
- Community well-being
- Communities are healthy
- Common cohesion and social inclusion
- Building safer communities.
- Build communities and collaboration that can engage and support together “ to raise the child” and support the family

### *Subtheme: Gender Equity & Child Rights*

- All children have the right to ELC.
- Child rights
- Equity
- Equity of opportunity
- Equity of opportunity and support across the lifespan

- Equity, especially gender equity, is essential and requires flexible and adaptive approaches
- Gender Equity
- Gender equity and equity of opportunity for all children
- Equity of opportunity from birth.

#### *Subtheme: Goals are Interdependent*

- A productive society is one that consists of healthy citizens, strong communities who are using their strengths to their fullest capacity
- Goals and purposes of health, education, and care are similar if not the same i.e. one voice, one vision on a provincial or even national level would be beneficial.
- I think 2 elements must be acknowledged. The absolute focus should be on the benefits to the child. And all of this work should be a foundation for all other work it in future years (Yes – having cake and eating it!) foundational not replacing.....
- Need to merge the goals to decide how we offer the services to meet the goals.
- Possible to have several goals/anticipated outcomes: children are well adjusted/prepared to gain knowledge and are able to learn, less stress on other areas of society; welfare justice, health.
- Need to merge the goals to decide how we offer the services to meet the goals.
- Recognition that goals and purposes may vary for different sectors and if we want to engage all sectors of society, we need to be comfortable with differing focuses. (i.e. private sector may focus on potential development of employees)
- Need to orient goals within all rationales to gain support
- The goals outlined in this discussion paper are good.
- Universal childcare for the healthy development and wellbeing of children parallels the work of population health – i.e. Health is concerned with the whole population and in reducing social inequities. A holistic conceptualization of health and ECD includes physical, social, and emotional wellbeing and all the socioeconomic and physical factors that influence populations. This indeed parallels the benefits/goals/purposes of ELC: well-being, healthy development, lifelong learning, supporting families, etc.
- There are many different themes around the goals and purposes including: what is best for child, best for society, best for economy.
- ELC goals support growth and development across the lifespan and therefore are not limited to the early years.

#### *Subtheme: Possible Conflicts around Goals*

- How can goals align between 2 differing ministries and other stakeholders, change management, conflict?

- Are the goals of those who can make the decision the same as the goals if those who work in the EC field? They may be on different pages.

## Themes: Principles

### *Subtheme: Child-Centered*

- Child centered: how about making the system ready for the child, not vice versa?
- Community capacity building to meet the needs of families and children is central – social capital, space/place, and inclusion.
- Is ELC primarily child centered with inclusion of other significant stakeholders (e.g. Family), or is it community centered with a focus on how that is mobilized to care for its youngest members?

### *Subtheme: Continuum of Supports*

- A continuum of supports.
- The role of developmental trajectory – this should be a core goal. Is the child developing according to the norm? What kind of supports do we provide along the way.
- Need to be based on approaches that are developmentally appropriate and not for the convenience of providers

### *Subtheme: ELC embedded in Families*

- ELC as a complement not substitute to parental care
- Need to be focused on family in the context of their communities
- Supporting families parents, as they raise their children with quality care, family supports, consideration of the needs of diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century families (Alberta)
- Continuity of parental support – Issues that are identified early may not be resolved until much later
- Conversation goes back and forth about family support and involvement, yet none of the suggestions really talk about what that would look like.
- Family support and community building: why is it not capacity building – always sounds paternalistic!
- Parents: first best teachers – build capacity

### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- How are families being engaged in this conversation?
- How to engage the stakeholders affected by the various rationales – agree that no arguments can be discounted or left off the table

### *Subtheme: Holistic*

- Has to be rounded – see the ECMap and its 5 developmental domains.
- Must support a wholistic approach to the healthy development of the child and family

### *Subtheme: Inclusive*

- Inclusive – all cultures, all genders
- Inclusive communities are built around families. Women – children are often the care of these families. Providing a continuum of services which includes ELC but also education, health and community services is the only way to build inclusive communities
- The current movement is toward inclusion and integration at the practice level, specifically with parents and professionals as equals.
- How will children with special needs be included and how will their needs be addressed?
- Inclusive setting and spaces support community capacity and growth

### *Subtheme: Evidence Based*

- We need good data – ECMap. This must continue, engages community, buy in from corporate partners.

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Quality essential and needs defining
- Quality vs. quantity

### *Subtheme: Seamless*

- How do we create seamlessness? Where does the money come from to support this?

## **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- I worry that without a Ministry of ELC leading from mandates, agreement on goals and purposes may never be reached. The ELC sector has many stakeholders who seem to work from different agendas and with different definition for things like quality of care, learning, etc.
- Question/comments. Still confusing when we are talking about ELC: how that would be done with current model implied by endorsement of Human Services and Education but not Health?

### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Who will be paying for this what is required to have a sustainable funding stream and what are the costs – is it to society, families or private or mix?

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- All educators should have to have early childhood education.
- Goal: college of early learning educators
- The universities are behind – continuing to churn out graduates who want to work with adults rather than children.

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- ELC and all the other pieces under “one roof”
- Model Reggio Emilia is the best model!
- Public vs. private delivery.
- How to combine private and public systems?
- How much responsibility does the private sector have?

## **Theme: Additional Themes**

### *Subthemes: Role of Health*

- Why isn't the Ministry of Health a partner in this process of developing a ECL framework without HEALTH (system level) and health (family level) there can be no learning!
- Healthy development working/school parents must be occupied by other parent supports – education, parents need the knowledge. This includes: primary protection, relationship, learning opportunities, connections with community.
- Will Human Services lead the framework or will it be Education or should it be Health?

### *Subtheme: Cross Paradigms, Professions and Practices*

- How do you blend health and education to create an integration?

### *Subtheme: Voluntary Versus Mandated*

- How much of this is mandated and how much suggested or voluntary?

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Research & Evidence-Based*

- Strong coherent vision – based in research. Is it thin?

- Use research: What is the rationale for our investment? The case is that it will lead to more rationale investment and better services
- We need to pay for research focused on prevention \$ population-based studies

*Subtheme: Planning & Action*

- What is time line for action?
- How to restructure the policy environment to support holistic/wide range adoption of changed practices (i.e. within or outside of existing ministries)?

*Subtheme: Awareness and Education*

- Social marketing campaign
- The understanding of funders is leading to greater and more broad based approaches
- Raise the status of child care: Moms, dads, child care professionals

*Subtheme: Links to Broader Initiatives*

- Social policy has to be here in a supportive role

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

**Theme: Preferred Goals**

*Subtheme: Early Childhood Development*

- Change “wellbeing” to “well-becoming” of the child.
- Achieve optimal developmental trajectory
- Building a common vision based on common values and beliefs and eventually practices that support healthy child development
- Children wellbeing and well becoming
- Cognitive social and emotional growth of child
- ECD/lifelong learning
- Establishing foundation for lifelong learning
- Everyone under one roof working towards the same goals/ outcomes “healthy child development”
- Healthy development
- Healthy social emotional development.
- Lifelong learning
- Lifelong learning approach
- Optimal health and development

- Purposes – healthy. That education and care contributes to health
- School readiness – emotional regulation, social skills, physical health, mental health
- Self-actualization in both personal and economic endeavors
- Set the foundation for lifelong learning
- The human capital argument would seem to be important in our current political context.
- To be able to fulfill their full potential

#### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- Build community capacity to assist families in raising kids who have the opportunity to thrive and soar.
- Creation of a cohesive system that supports, enhances, compliments the important work that families do (a great example would be requiring employers to contribute to the creation/maintenance of high quality childcare for their employees) (support families to effectively nurture/care for their children)-this may mean support for a mom to stay at home, may mean a quality childcare environment (choice, flexibility, fluidity)
- Healthy families and communities
- Development of resiliency in child and family
- Families are the 1<sup>st</sup> and most important teacher in a child's life. We need to support them.
- Family support and well being
- Family support/well-being
- Family wellness and health – health is a resources for everyday living.
- Goal: meet the needs of families in equal opportunity to child development in first 2000 days.
- Healthy family functioning
- Not just child development – also family development and community development
- Strengthen families
- Support for families
- Support in place for families
- Supporting families
- The social, physical, intellectual and emotional health of each citizen is maximized through effective high quality, intentional, cohesive support of the family

#### *Subtheme: Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion*

- Community cohesion & social inclusion
- Community cohesion/social inclusion
- Community connections
- Connection to broader community is critical

- Creating of the community building piece – strongly feel that ELC is a profound opportunity to build support systems, reduce isolation, and build strong communities (seeing evidence of this in ECmap as communities come around an issue of shared importance (systems ecological model, etc.) evidence
- Healthy, well educated, innovative empathetic citizens.
- Look at end product – functioning adults who contribute to society in the way their skills and abilities allow.
- Including social – emotional but must include both kids in care and kids at home.
- Providing the strongest foundation in the early years will lead to a stronger community in years to come.
- Purpose to have a province with healthy, well educated, innovative, empathetic, engaged citizens
- Social inclusion, community cohesion – building social capital
- Supports Alberta’s economic future
- Albertans are a resource to be developed

#### *Subtheme: Gender Equity and Child’s Rights*

- Encourage women’s full participation in society and stimulate and support a more involved role for men.
- Gender equity and equity of opportunity
- Equal opportunities for all children
- Equity for all children
- Equity of opportunity for all children is key!
- Focus on equity of opportunity and rights of the child
- Gender equity
- Gender equity – equity of opportunity.

#### *Subtheme: Other Reflections on Goals*

- Set a standard that is expected to be achieved and surpassed; don’t meet the minimal standard – beat the minimal standard.
- The four rationale are all important: a great framework for going forward.
- Goal: High quality, affordable early learning and care opportunities for all Alberta families.
- Our goal is self-actualizing – Maslow’s hierarchy. Food and safety important and must be achieved 1<sup>st</sup> before even ED can be addressed.
- There are a lot of spin off benefits: e.g. better academic achievement, greater employabilities/better success in the work force, improved emotional environment in the schools, save money on future healthcare.
- To establish a common commitment to the early years as a high priority area of investment for the healthy future of our province.

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Access, Inclusion and Universality*

- Engage in community. Each child no matter socio economic status, background, ethnicity, challenges should have access.
- Provide access to whatever supports the child requires.
- Any support/activities/programs need to respect and support all families beliefs and approaches to child rearing – industry, stay home, full day care, part time etc.
- Equity across all types of childcare (i.e. Day home, daycare, preschool) because these reflect parent choices and are all valid and reflective of community/social support at large. Citizenship.
- Efforts and initiative must reach all therefore be culturally and geographically relevant.

### *Subtheme: Child Centered*

- Child centered not system centered.
- View that the system is ready for the child NOT the child is ready for the system
- Goal: ensure system supports the child's needs and place/level vs. the child having to "fit" or be prepared' for the next level/placement: all children feel attached, accepted and belong to family, community, society.

### *Subtheme: Examples Offered by Participants*

#### *Example 1*

1. Happy healthy children (defining health in its broadest sense – education, foundations for learning, determinants of health, readiness to enter formal schooling)
2. An environment in the home and the community that contributes to #1
3. Community stakeholders of all stripes and levels who are knowledgeable and supportive of happy, healthy children
4. Increased education for all families around education, health and its impact on learning, community, etc. \*Needs to include "health" in all the goals in its broadest sense\*

#### *Example 2*

Holistic approach:

1. To ensure the child/families wellbeing (developmental, cognitive, social/emotional, physical) are at the center of any goals/purpose

2. To ensure support/roles that communities play in this wellbeing. When families work (paternal leave policies) support necessary. Would include finances, human resources
3. Universal access affordability, appropriate services/resources for all families – including families with increased risk factors (aboriginal families priority) and barriers e.g. Inclusive of immigrants, ESL families \*how do we access their voices? E.g. CWAA. What about how they use gender equity? What does it mean to have a family centered approach with different cultures? Need to educate families/communities re: change required to focus on development, psychosocial, cognitive needs of children.
4. Change management
5. Capacity building – focus on strengths

### *Example 3*

- Priority 1 – All young children have access to high quality ELC experiences to enhance their development
- Priority 2 - Parents are supported in their ELC roles through access to high quality ELC programs for their child development and parent education.
- Priority 3 – early learning leads to lifelong benefits to individual and community
- Priority 4 – Communities are strengthened as children and parents are supported

### *Subtheme: Other Thoughts on Goals*

- Many goals are both process and outcome.
- Goals and purposes: Rather than success by Six, Self-sufficient by 26. Lifelong learning. Raising Adults.

### *Subtheme: Integrated Services for the Early Years*

- Integrating child care with community resources
- Integration of early years to what is happening in schools – continuity of care and learning. Building highly engaged communities all the way through (i.e. consolidated research of J. Epstein) Evidence.
- Pre natal education for parents on basic child development, support and education for new families, promotion of ELC opportunities for immigrant families.
- Include prenatal, health, parenting.
- Holistic approach – health , social, emotional, literacy, communications.

### *Subtheme: Prevention Focus*

- Prevention focus is required
- Prevention/proactive

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Quality care and learning opportunities and positive development – Equitable and flexible access of opportunity (relate to gender pie).
- High quality, universal, affordable early learning and care for ALL AB families
- Quality child care for all at a low cost to parents. This will create a mutually beneficial situation.
- Where more women may enter the workforce and the child experiences excellent developmental care and education all for \$10 a day.
- Quality childcare is a huge protective factor.

### *Subtheme: Research & Evidence Based*

- Build greater equity, consistency and cohesion based on greater “common” understanding around the critical elements of child development (current research and evidence based) within the diverse groups and pull together/open our minds, be innovative and ready to put our old traditional assumptions aside.
- Tap into work around brain development.
- Grounded in a strong understanding of child development and early brain development.

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Has to include health services and education systems.
- Across the lifespan demands integration of ministries.
- Including the local community, government institutions, it has to be multi-disciplinary when everyone has a stake in it. There is ownership, and responsibility for child’s future that falls on everyone.
- Although there would likely be cross ministerial collaboration, there would have to be a strong commitment with one vision. A true collaboration – not political bullying and the battle of wills to win votes or build empires or profile one ministry over another.
- Whatever Ministry(s) leads this process should do it by choice, not default.

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- ECE in the classrooms
- Having families and child care center
- Purposeful space and place for families to come together. Ex: could schools do this after all types of learning there – prenatal, health, parenting.
- Ensure schools readiness, not in the academic context but much broader development (social, emotional, physical, etc.)
- Integration of services and role of community

- Integration of services, collaboration, community engagement
- Healthy development, including mental health – greater role of mental health workers in the schools.
- Developmental screening and early intervention pathways clear and available.

*Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Provincial curriculum

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Path Forward*

- Implementation requires: staff professional development, infrastructure and supporting resources
- Support for the implementation and use of a framework
- Upstream thinking – proactive use of resources to prevent problems (enhance potential) in children/families rather than target resources to those experiencing issues (from pregnancy onward). Promoting healthy starts
- We need a revolution

*Subtheme: Made in Alberta*

- ELC is situated in a social context which is specific to AB. ELC goals and purposes should all serve to improve Alberta society.

*Subtheme: Awareness & Engagement*

- Integration of services, collaboration, community engagement
- Collaborative engagement
- Stakeholders – get the voice of families and frontline workers
- Education of all citizens about the importance of early child development
- Education/awareness of importance of early years and diverse ways to support this
- Recognition that the early learning years are, in and of themselves, important

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

**Theme: Preference for Possible Goals**

*Subtheme: General Reflections*

- I believe all stakeholders have the best interest of children at heart. The “big goals” are clearly supported. The challenge will be in operationalizing.

- ELC investment as preventative for social costs (crime, etc.).
- I don't believe any stakeholders are most likely to reach agreement. I think this is a red herring. I believe the provincial government should set standards and provide supports and then let ELC stakeholders meet those standards. Areas they won't agree on: what does quality child care mean? How much is enough support? What level of training is required? May agree but the cost of such training will determine whether there is agreement or not. What is appropriate for facilities?
- We need a common definition of care and outcomes. Should we even be calling it care?
- The more philosophical goals will be commonly agreed upon as no-one disagrees that children/families aren't important.

#### *Subtheme: Early Childhood Development – Lifelong Learning*

- Depends on what the goals and principles are – one would think healthy childhood development would be a goal – in which all would agree.
- ELC stakeholders will most likely reach agreement on the long term vision of focus on the early years will benefit in creating a stronger community in years to come. It is critical to society to have a strong foundation.
- Foundation for lifelong learning has potential to speak to all sectors and ties into need for ongoing learning in a rapidly working society.
- Goal #1: support children's wellbeing. More quantifiable data available
- Goal 1 – Child wellbeing and development. It is the clearest and least political. We are already down the pathway and Young K and K, preschool well entrenched in our culture and the need for child care for pragmatic reasons. Community/family building and equity issues are more divisive and complex.
- If we use 5 domains of development: physical wellbeing – likely; speech and language development – likely; thinking skills – not likely; health - likely; social skills – not likely.
- Optimal child development
- Supporting children's well-being and development – early learning as a foundation for lifelong learning – consensus that many stakeholders value.
- The value of the child and the need for a seamless approach.
- There appears to be a strong spirit in the province around support for children and families, educators and health, including the early years. However, once we go deeper into the harder stuff, it's harder to get agreement.
- The importance of early learning and care for long-term healthy development; the provision of services that need to be well advertised and accessible for all families; that in essence we are raising adults, not children (a long term focus).

#### *Subtheme: Early Childhood Development – Human Capital*

- Theoretical agreement on importance of investment in ELC.
- In Alberta economic case will “sell it”. We need to educate and build awareness of impact to GDP and contribution to knowledge economy.
- I think the human capital argument might be the easiest sell when members of the general public and politicians are included as stakeholders, and the equity of opportunity goal otherwise.

#### *Subtheme: Early Childhood Development and Family Support*

- Early child development and family support. They seem most natural for people to understand and see the value of.
- Importance and critical nature of #1 and 2.
- Supporting children well-being. Development supporting family well-being

#### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- A matter of starting where the energy and momentum is rather than what is most important. Most important for me is family strengthening and well being
- Family as 1<sup>st</sup> and most important in child’s life supported by high quality ELC, IF family chooses to access ELC.
- Family support – gender acknowledgement of parental stress and its impact on child development.
- Family support and well-being (from sector)
- Successful integrated adults. Contribute to economy. Not be burden on service
- Worried about family engagement vs. support.

#### *Subtheme: Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion*

- Social capital may also bring stakeholders together as the focus of a safe and economically stable society.

#### *Subtheme: Equity of Opportunity*

- With the latest info on brain development the equity of opportunity rational needs to get greater buy-in.

### **Theme: Other Integrative Elements**

#### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- I think they will reach agreement on adopting a new curriculum

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- The pieces that are easier to respond to may be agreed upon quicker. i.e. increase professional development, increase standards and certification for caregivers educators.

## **Themes: Principles of Early Learning & Care**

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- The importance of integrating quality (level of education) into everything we do.
- Quality care – everyone wants and believes in this whether there is consistent idea of what it is.
- Quality – everyone benefits
- Standard of childcare service – this is more tangible

### *Subtheme: Equity*

- Equity – an Alberta value.
- Shift required from equality to equity; shift from parents/families solely responsible.

## **Theme: Additional Considerations**

- The parents are hungry for good information about what is in the best interests of their children. There needs to be more public information about what children need – public education will be a very necessary underpinning of the goals and rationale. With education of the public then we will get buy in on healthy child development
- I think they will agree on full day ECS programs - with early childhood educators in the classroom.
- Who are the stakeholders? Why aren't parents and families considered stakeholders for this discussion? These are the center of ELC – without these, what is the purpose?
- Timeframe may pose challenges.

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

### **Theme: Context**

- Definition of early learning and education: what is it?
- Vision: arriving at a common vision: character development vs. goal achievement.

## Theme: Goals

### *Subtheme: Early Childhood Development – Human Capital*

- Economic development – development of a productive future workforce. Too narrow – we are not factors of production.

### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- Family coaching, mental health in the schools, anything having to do with morals or values, continuity of care between home and school.
- Family support and well-being (from public).
- Empowering families vs. service/care providers
- The role of the family and the authority/power struggle between family and caregivers.
- Societal push back against being told how to raise children.

### *Subtheme: Community Cohesion & Social Inclusion*

- Community cohesion social inclusion gender equity, equity of opportunity. Will feel less natural for people; people won't see alignment, rationale for such goals, difficulty in consensus of meaning and understanding of such goals
- ELC as a means of building society – Collective/public services are not an AB value
- Goals #3 and #4.
- Social inclusion
- Supporting strong healthy – inclusive communities. What does this look like?
- What does inclusion look like for people? It needs to be about the people, not the providers: e.g. belong is not a welcoming environment that is provided for someone belong is how I feel – how I make lifelong connections.

### *Subtheme: Gender & Children's Equity*

- Advancing equity for women and children – possible but will be challenging in terms of what does this look, what are cultural expectations and how do we bring awareness to the public, systems and organizations – this is an issue all around the world and is still taking place. How can we bring opportunities of equity for women and children.
- Difficult to get agreement on: advanced equity for parents and children; supporting family well-being; supporting strong healthy and inclusive community
- Equity of opportunity for all children, because the value placed on individuals own initiative we don't live in a culture that cares for the collective, and our belief in the ability and power of the individual to pull things together in order to get ahead seems to 'trump' every time.

- Gender equity and equity of opportunity for all children. Will be a harder sell in a conservative environment, but a very important goal. We don't have a lot of public discourse about social goals in Canada. We need more. Larger discussions about the civil society – all the programs we watch are the American discussions – they have a very negative influence on Canadian thinking.
- It is harder to discuss by those who are not disadvantaged; it is culturally defined and not all cultural ideals support equity; it is politicized. There is not general agreement this is a “good thing” for families communities and society. Just reference the American political debates that pointed at the prevalence of entitled and male-oriented thinking of a sizeable portion of the population. Easy to forget about newcomers, aboriginal females, the poor, the developmentally delayed, the mentally ill. We “in charge” assume alignment of needs and goals from these silent populations.

*Subtheme: Related to Goals in General*

- Defining exactly what goal is different – organizations want different outcomes. Industry, parents, kids themselves, society, community educators. Different expectations and needs.
- I think the broader the goal we settle on, the easier it will be for agreement to be reached.
- Probably the goals and purposes mean something different to different bureaucracies both provincially and within a local level so that it seems difficult for everyone to “leave their hats at the door – the gaps persist!
- The day to day “how do we get there” will be difficult because, at the end of the day, the people truly involved in these decisions (such as those of us here today) have their own agendas/biases as we reflect various sectors. Integration/commonality can only go so far unless it is accompanied by a societal shift. It is the chicken and the egg quandary at its finest!
- With emerging research, applied practices (success elsewhere), the rationales may be evident and agreed upon, but the overall funding piece/policy ownership/and general social policy approach will be challenging to come to agreement.

*Subtheme: Awareness*

- As a family level practitioner we must make sure we engage and educate families, agencies professionals and community members – there can be no social change unless we first educate and cause a shift in focus towards the value and importance of the early years. Need to be able to articulate what are the benefits or a focus on education to the funders, governments, communicates and agencies.

### *Subtheme: Evaluation*

- How to determine when goals have been achieved or when to change course?
- How to measure “success”?
- Evaluation and measuring outcomes is critical but will be very challenging.

## **Theme: Principles**

### *Subtheme: Inclusive and Diverse*

- How do we bring awareness and respect, cultural views and traditions. Society, immigrant, aboriginal?
- Need agreement of what is family centered care with other cultures.
- Be responsive to community not dictate.

### *Subtheme: Family Choice*

- Mandatory anything will be difficult to reach agreement. Need to remember that kindergarten is optional and there are still parents who don't recognize value of appropriately educated teacher for early years

## **Theme: Links to Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Difficult to reach agreement: the amount of responsibility (ex. Requiring employers to be part of the solution).
- More challenges in terms of process and who is responsible: incorporating different cultural norms may be difficult.
- Who is going to lead it? I think there are many political egos to satisfy.
- Clear, inter-ministerial agreement on who is responsible for what? Answering the question: who is the client? Family? Child? Community?
- Finances, human resources are an accountability issue with goals – who is responsible?

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Difficulty - funding
- Reallocating existing resources – not needing more just different.
- There may be some difficulty in areas such as how to fund an integrated system.
- Financial “piece of the pie”. Who does what?
- More funding will need to be invested in further education

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- It will be challenging to weed out level 1 & 2's.

- Salary increases.

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- Is there some behind the scenes reason why the Ministry of Health is not talked about and/or represented in this process?
- Community involvement – the how, length of time it takes as well as the question “who is the community?”
- Aboriginal families/ communities – including them in goals/strategies will be challenging: e.g. their programs/services/resources are funded federally and the ELC is provincially funded.

### *Subtheme: Collaboration*

- How does the community work together? How do we create an open environment that is centered around family and child rather than mandate of an ongoing system?
- Boundaries and jurisdictions will be barriers for moving forward in the determination of goals and direction
- Very hard get the private sector on board.
- Aligning funding and funders: sharing and holding hands.
- Competitiveness of our society

## **Theme: Other Considerations**

- Profit vs. not for profit: teacher vs. babysitter.
- Where is the data supporting the current framework?
- Accepting research theories and tradition i.e. Learning through play. To realize – learn, unlearn, and relearn. Caution – avoid ‘fade out’.
- Capacity and change management - \$\$, need to feel safe and secure to change.

## **4. Integrative Elements**

### **4.1 Governance**

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

## Theme: Context

### *Subtheme: Goals*

- Goals are needed to determine what and how we're governing – what are we trying to accomplish?
- Will “the less government” part of the population be persuaded by the need for more governance to achieve these goals?

### *Subtheme: Questions*

- Who will lead the framework?
- Who does what – clear thinking around this?
- Who is ultimately responsible? For what?
- How will policies change? What will be the process?
- Who is/should be at the “table”?
- The 3 ideas provided are consistent with the working ethos of the GOA. The question remains as to whether it should be a ministry or a dept. within human services consisting of existing components of Ed, health and HS.
- Who will run this system?

## Theme: Provincial Leadership

### *Subtheme: Ministerial Oversight – A Single Ministry*

- If one Ministry could be formed with all this expertise at the table, that would be ideal – but with the current gov't, I don't think it's realistic.
- Of course the most obvious is who is responsible – ultimately everyone but it may not feel that way so governance – we need a new ministry to take a holistic view with the parent choice.
- Single ministry –newly created.
- Governance of ELC should be done by an ELC specific ministry or mandate. Will provide clarity, consistency and common language. If different ministries are leading different components we continue with “silo” model
- Single ministry newly created.

### *Subtheme: Ministerial Oversight – A Secretariat Structure*

- A “secretariat” comprised of Ministries with interest or stake in ELC?
- Establish an early learning and care secretariat with membership from health, human services, education, post-secondary and infrastructure and finance.

### *Subtheme: Ministerial Oversight – Cross-Ministry*

- Perhaps viewing governance as a shared responsibility.

- Close cross-multi-ministerial collaboration including health, human services, education etc. with human services taking the lead.
- Incorporating all ministries will be crucial – human service, health, education
- Inter-ministerial work, connection, collaboration. Spirit of consultation and cooperation, not compliance
- Must include representation from Education, Human Services and Health.
- Incorporating all ministries will be crucial – Human services, health, and education. But who will lead the framework?
- A provincial steering committee with cross ministerial representation.
- Cross ministry initiative – shared commitment by both
- Ministry of health needs to be part of the governance framework not an afterthought (new closer working relationships). Despite the financial implication, ELC needs more not-for-profit (community) and publically funded opportunities for learning and care [as opposed to “for profit”]

#### *Subtheme: Provincial Leadership*

- Need a champion (on a provincial level) who can move the work ahead and use their passion to ignite the passion of the 3 ministries and be available and accountable to the people of the province

### **Theme: Local Governance**

#### *Subtheme: Local Leadership*

- How to balance political need for hierarchy and the nature of community development (need nimble, incubator that will grow right government model).
- How will this be structured – top down, true community development model?
- If within every community a family engagement and early learning and care center was established, local volunteer boards that include community members, business and local politicians and parents could provide local governance for each center. The problem it is very challenging to find volunteers for this kind of Board. Often the voices heard do not really represent those of the community.
- Need dedicated skilled leadership at the local levels to implement and lead the changes being proposed.
- Community representation on governance.
- What is the influence of local groups?
- Respecting uniqueness of communities. Making change measurable in ECMap.
- Capacity at local level if this is where funding devolves to.
- What is the influence of local groups?

### *Subtheme: Parental Involvement*

- Key theme: there must be a blending of the voice and rights of a parent with the role and purpose of government. Perhaps this is addressed by role clarity and responsibility clarity.
- Parents as ultimate authority who have the power to make decisions in the best interests of their child.
- How do we include families in this framework?
- What is the role of parents? Community members?
- How do we include families in this framework and ensure that they are involved in benefitting from services?

### *Subtheme: Broad Stakeholders*

- All stakeholders involved in the framework – parents, etc.
- Involvement of stakeholders in decision making. Previous experiences have had policy makers make decisions first then consult – feedback from stakeholders never used.
- Stakeholders –who should be part of discussion?

## **Theme: Principles**

### *Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility*

- Development of broad provincial framework with flexibility at the local levels
- Must provide a governance structure/parameters to assure system wide consistency but balance with the ability for local communities to meet their own, unique needs

### *Subtheme: Accessibility*

- Accessed by all – no barriers

## **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- The price tag – going to be big.

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Build capacity of non-profits.

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Education/training requirements – ACT/REGS – need to be increased.

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Planning*

- What are the next steps to move forward in the ideas/goals?
- Establish a Provincial Steering Committee.

### *Subtheme: Thoughts on Governance Functions*

- How do we know this is working? (evaluation piece)
- Stay out of the operations.
- Future orientated strategic; generation, fiduciary.
- Public/private/government.
- Development of “terms of reference” to be follow.

### *Subtheme: Working Together*

- Spirit of cooperation vs. compliance
- Spirit of cooperation.
- Currently governance/admin – threatening – if you don’t or if you complain etc... we will take away funding. Don’t tell others only select people informed of changes etc.; fracturing community; creating/cultivating competition.

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

### Theme: General Comments

#### *Subtheme: Guidelines*

- A key guideline is the definition of what quality means for early learning and care.
- A governance document that clearly explains and deliver roles, financing, service delivery, etc.

#### *Subtheme: Goals for ELC*

- All 3 goals around governance would be wonderful in some capacity.
- Focus on children’s rights.
- Descriptions of practice specific to developmental outcomes.
- High expectations for “the village”/service providers.

#### *Subtheme: Assumptions*

- A fundamental belief that children are learners from conception.
- Shooting for full integration of governance - knowing that chaos will briefly ensue.

## Theme: Governance Models

### *Subtheme: Single Ministry*

- A ministry of early childhood would speak volumes to the gov'ts commitment
- Early learning and care secretariat? Maybe within Human Services? Stakeholder tables parents/professionals. A steering committee with local advisory groups?

### *Subtheme: Shared Governance*

- Utilizing the tri-ministerial group working on ECD to provide key learnings and methods
- Danger of cross or multi-ministry approach is how to establish decision making channels
- Human Services, Education and Health
- Representation from both ministries
- Government Steering Committee? With local advisory groups and input from community.
- Have steering committee of leaders (educated in ELCC) and Human Services, Education, Health to bring voice from field and help direct/develop policies.
- Increase holistic approach among ministries, around compartmentalized, fragmented approach.

## Theme: Other Key Features

### *Subtheme: Communication and Decision-making*

- Clear lines of communication and decision making.
- Great communication between all 3 ministries, communities and Albertans as a whole!

### *Subtheme: Responsive Governance*

- Governance model needs to be flexible and adaptable to changing demographics and society norms.

### *Subtheme: Stakeholder Engagement*

- Who is the governing body/who are the stakeholders that need to be engaged? Ensuring that community is engaged in a meaningful way and that differing cultural values and traditions are respected.
- Need a provincial steering committee consisting of all ministries involved, as well as key stakeholders representing rural, urban, for profit, nonprofit, from all across Alberta.
- Space/support for community engagement piece.

- Provide for stakeholder/consultation/input (including parents, children and personnel) prior to decision making
- Key direction is to view all stakeholders including parents, community members, service providers and government as partners. Respect and value of each stakeholder's role is essential. Things will go much better in terms of governance with the spirit of cooperation and collaboration rather than a spirit of compliance.
- Anyone who stands to profit from government money should not be allowed to represent field or be a part of decisions, i.e.: AELCS, Upstart, Private consultants – should not be allowed to work in partnership or on committees with any governance/governing bodies.
- Ask children what they think!
- Provincial framework also needs input from the front line professionals to help shape the framework.
- Representation from the field – regular round table discussions
- Stakeholders, leaders and key members of the community should participate to discussions.

#### *Subtheme: Family Participation*

- Family/community participation needs to be strength based and also recognize the realities of family participation i.e. how do you truly build a system that focuses on meaningful engagement and inclusion – not just traditional models that actually reinforce reg. stereotypes and misperceptions: e.g. new Canadians don't care about education because don't attend parent teachers conferences. The reality is that when you are working 3 part time jobs, you cannot physically attend.
- Increased parent and community participation.
- Of course, parents and families need to be engaged and have a voice.
- Parents need to be included not just in an institutionalized way through boards but also in determining what supports they need for ECD and where they go to access them.

#### *Subtheme: Provincial and Regional Oversight/management*

- Must be responsive to community needs.
- Overarching policies to determine quality standards supported by locally driven adaptations to meet local needs of parents and communities.
- Top down bottom up – shared ownership.
- I like the idea of a provincial strategy and framework with local management and implementation.
- Overarching goals and policies to set the framework with local autonomy in implementation.
- Provincial strategy/local implementation.

- Input from community.
- Must be responsive to community needs
- Flexibility with framework – individual to sectors, re: how goals of framework are met.

## **Theme: Principles of ELC**

### *Subtheme: Child Centered*

- An understanding of what is good for children/families.
- Decisions all child development centered.
- Focus on children’s rights.

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Address issues of quality – build on successes from other shifts/models as well as our own – what elements worked well in the past? (Services support, etc.).
- Quality programming – not standard approaches to respond to problems i.e.: creating spaces, equivalencies – initiatives.

### *Subtheme: Continuum*

- Need for continuum – transition from early years to school (services support) how to attain quality and what happens if it’s not achieved?

### *Subtheme: Inclusion*

- Recognition of diversity.
- Enough balance i.e. the framework so – there is room for diversity without quality being eroded.

## **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Increasing funding of the “glue” in social policy.
- While I think federal money is important to support this initiative, I don’t trust the system because when money come such as CAPC, Alberta “makes its own” and we lose momentum.

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- HR and training, accountability, outcomes, targets

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Awareness, Understanding & Support*

- Engagement of community through social media campaigns, etc.
- Education and social/health marketing about the importance of the early years must be a significant focus on the governance of ELC. When people understand the importance and a change in culture about delivering ELC and the critical nature of the early years cannot be successful.
- Engagement of community through social media campaigns, etc.

### *Subtheme: Planning and Acting*

- Test a prototype of new government; don't worry about getting it perfect. Adapt, learn from other jurisdictions – don't reinvent the wheel.
- Clear established plan and rollout and regular check in points.
- Identify barriers before they surface – address them.
- Possible pilot – start small – evaluate – readjust – proceed
- Should be ongoing changes – not static.
- AELCS should be monitored better –should not have same council members longer than 4 years

### *Subtheme: Use Research*

- Look at research – based on healthy development to anchor framework – what does this look like?

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

## Theme: Overall

### *Subtheme: A Framework*

- Having an established framework

### *Subtheme: Staff Training*

- Definition of appropriate training.

### *Subtheme: Quality of Services*

- Definition of quality.

### *Subtheme: The Goal*

- Family support and child wellbeing.

## **Theme: Governance Features**

### *Subtheme: Communication*

- Need for clear lines of communication and decision making – which doesn't mean that how that will be developed will be easy to agree on.
- Clear process and expectations. Required/needed

### *Subtheme: Stakeholder Engagement*

- I think everyone will agree that we will need all players to be involved. I think stakeholders will want to be educated on the framework with input from the other parties.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Think everyone will agree that we will need all players to be involved
- Increased family/community participation. Many agencies see this need and do what they can with limited funds. Having consistent expectations and potential funding will definitely support families
- Stakeholder engagement – getting input.
- Being asked for input.

### *Subtheme: Provincial & Local Leadership*

- Government – need to control and can't own this (ex.: ECMapping).
- Local community participation – we need to hear from families and understand what they need. They will ultimately use the service.
- I think stakeholders will want to have Education lead the framework with input from other parties.

### *Subtheme: Cross Ministerial Cooperation*

- Bringing ministries of education and human service together – it makes sense in integrating services.

### *Subtheme: General Themes*

- Governance or licensing.
- Governance over accreditation.

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

- Acting now! Let's make collective impact.

- Prepare an ELCC background for policy workers – they would have a better understanding of field.

## Least agreement? And why?

### Theme: Public Management

- Greater public management – what does this look like who are major stakeholders where is funding coming, how does an evaluation framework play and who is responsible for reporting?
- Greater public management of ELC – most ELC is private and a business. There will be challenges in bringing some operators on board or in support. However, as some operators leave because they do not want to change a new operator will likely emerge to replace.
- Local Management of systems at local level – many different providers – there will be a need to have everyone support the process so changes can be made

### Theme: Possible Roles for Families

- #3 – families are so busy and challenged to do more than work and provide for their family

### Theme: Quality Practice

- What constitutes sound practice?

### Theme: Provincial Leadership

- Backbone? Ministry?
- Full/blended?
- Single Ministry – loss of control and \$

### Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

#### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Where does the buck stop?
- How much it costs and who will pay for it.
- Funding.
- The funding pool.

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- ELCC educated – because many owners/directors individuals attempting to represent the ELCC sector do not have a background education in ELCC.

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

**Theme: Context**

*Subtheme: Questions*

- What is the structure? Who owns ELC – is government community? What does a governance model look like? How will it be managed?
- The issue will accreditation continue to run as a neighborhood board?

*Subtheme: Vision, Goals & Purposes*

- One vision, one purpose, common outcomes and objectives = Healthy child development is the main goal.

*Subtheme: Scope*

- The range should be from conception to 6 years with supports for kids (and their families) dispersed to education, health, and child welfare.

**Theme: Key Features**

*Subtheme: Collaboration.*

- True collaboration – no political head butting of wills.

*Subtheme: Community Voice & Role*

- Community Flexibility – comm.-based solutions.
- School, community and family uniqueness.

*Subtheme: Stakeholders*

- Where is Health?
- The rights of everyone are addressed if those who don't agree are allowed to opt out: differences of opinion does not mean that no action should be taken.

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Child Centered*

- Centered on the maximum development of children.
- Where are children's rights in all this?
- Increase the profile of children's rights in the governance model.

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Avenues for increased quality. Professional development. Linkages among ministry activities.
- Quality and high standards.
- Quality.

### *Subtheme: Affordability*

- Price controls for parents.

### *Subtheme: Inclusion & Diversity*

- Be aware of people's diverse background and cultures.

### *Subtheme: Universal*

- Equitable with universal access available.

## Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Finance*

- The territories between who governs seems to be who has \$ so by making the governance at a neighborhood level will allow the money to flow into nonprofit agency boards

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Childcare should not be a commodity – profits should not be made from childcare/families. Limit for profit delivery.

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Awareness, Understanding & Support*

- Message required - social marketing campaign to increase professionalism – to produce support and funding needed.
- Public, corporate need to see the value: once the above is reinforced the work can begin.

- Strong message to the community at large – raising the views on “children” or “childcare”.

*Subtheme: Leadership*

- Change in leadership – can we navigate this process with people coming and going?

*Subtheme: Evaluation*

- Data gathering re: impact.

## 4.2 Financing

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

#### Theme: The Case for Investment

- Investment in supporting the early years – is everyone’s gain (publicly fund) – increase over time.
- I should be possible to save money if the services can reduce the burden in the health care system, prison system, social services.
- The willingness to expand public funding is limited. Must clearly demonstrate how integration saves or costs less than current model in order to sell. (Show me the chart). Example – companies in private sector invest in work life balance to retain employees instead of training new ones which is costly.

#### Theme: Distribution of Financing

*Subtheme: Areas for Investment*

- Discrepancy now between early childhood money and the 1-12 system.
- Money needs to be dedicated to infrastructure, specifically kitchens, storage, equipment, food prep – feeding kids is one of the primary needs of children in care – we see over and over again – the lack of dedicated equipment.
- Need for equity of payments per child so that middle class doesn’t get pushed out
- Need for redistribution; focus funding efforts; focus funding efforts on what is working well and producing results.
- Pay childcare workers/teachers more.

- Worry about it sounding too much like learning centers and that day homes and parents are not supported in their education of children – seems to go against the Alberta perspective.
- Funding goes where it has most impact – for the children – means well trained/certified/educated staff – appropriate resources/facilities
- Class-sizes/child-adult ratio for optimal programming in childcare and kindergarten.
- How does funding support day cares vs. day homes vs. stay at home parents?

#### *Subthemes: Strategies for Distribution*

- Please no more funding formulas or schemes! Put all of the money being directed towards ELC and ECS into one pot and then figure out how to redistribute it to meet the identified needs.
- Integration of cross ministry dollars a must. Do not piece –meal the \$ out.

#### *Subtheme: Public & Private Delivery*

- How do we decide how much goes to private and not for profit and education?
- Support government and the not for profit sector in developing sites is important. Childcare is not a place to make a profit.
- Private vs. public – needs larger discussion on parental values. Do parents value high quality ELC enough to pay the true cost of developing and sustaining it? How do we avoid multi-tiered system of quality and access if private providers dominate?
- Corporate social responsibility – good to look at this area.
- Funding should go to non-profit programs.

### **Theme: Source of Financing**

#### *Subtheme: Questions*

- Who would provide the funding? Would it be sustainable through changes of government? What would be the accountability? Would it be affordable for every family?
- Standard fees for childcare settings? Is this required?

#### *Subtheme: Mix of Public, Private & Parents*

- Mixture of public, private and community funds being innovative around how we utilize space.
- Parent-private-public
- Speaks to that responsibility doesn't just lie on government, or private, but everyone has a stake in it

- Is it possible to have some private financing without having undue influences on the children and families?
- Shared responsibility(private/public)

#### *Subtheme: Public Funding*

- Increase public funding over time
- Public investment over time
- Public/parents/private
- Publicly funded
- The federal and provincial governments have undervalued children and care of children demonstrated by lack of budget dedicated to this generation of Albertans
- Is there sufficient public funding to pay for this?
- Need for increased commitment of public funding.

### **Theme: Principles for ELC**

#### *Subtheme: Parent Involvement*

- Parents should be involved.

#### *Subtheme: Accessible and Inclusive*

- How or who will this be funded and how can we make access equal for all?
- Meeting specialized/diverse needs of children

#### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Quality care
- Level and quality of service to improve
- There is one definition of quality with many ways to achieve it, including many ways to finance it. All methods should be shared valued and utilized as long as quality ECL is achieved.
- Quality assurance is not necessarily linked to dollars provided – adequate funding is required.
- Need to put money into quality rather than propping up poor quality in programs.

### **Theme: Supply & Demand Side Mechanisms**

- Combo of demand/supply (to enhance/support choice)
- Have the funding follow the child from conception onwards.
- I do think it is important that there is universal funding and of a supply side – If we are looking at equity then this is important. Then we can get qualified workers throughout the system.

## **Theme: Length & Sustainability**

- How can the program be protected from the tendency of governments to change policy?
- Is it sustainable financing?
- In order for the quality of service, kinds of service, implementation of services to be a serious, an influx of \$ is necessary in the inception with careful sustainability plan put into place.
- Long term – past the next election
- Plan long term.
- Will it be shared by ministries? Who's budget? How will it be distributed?
- Sustainable funding

## **Theme: Governance**

- How funds are reported – what is the evaluation framework?

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Awareness*

- Funding for parents programming/public information campaign.
- Increase profile so community financial support can occur.
- Key messages of the importance of ELC.

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

## **Theme: Key Ideas**

### *Subtheme: Levels of Investment*

- Increase the levels of funding over time.
- How are we going to fund this – at the level it requires?

### *Subtheme: Public, Private & Parent Investment*

- Looking at corporate partnerships, community partnership. What does school funding model look like?
- How do we obtain business funding?
- Private funding to enhance services.

- Public funding to cross ministries so that the burden of one ministry and their mandates don't look at the holistic perspective for example if its Education, may have too much focus on school readiness and human services – too much “care” and health not focused enough on school readiness.
- Social policy funding – shifting to funding “the glue” – bringing service/existing supports together
- The model to be fluid – a combination of public and private funding sources woven together to create a seamless continuum of service that is universally accessible: e.g. prenatal/early parenting education is funded with some cost recovery (i.e. parents, early learning and health \$).
- Public Tax increase – public education on \$\$ benefits of ELC – healthier, well-educated children – less cost to health care – in future, the judicial system. This is short term pain for long term gain.

#### *Subtheme: Supply & Demand Side Mechanisms*

- Demand system would need minimum quality guidelines for providers and parents could only receive demand dollars for children in minimum quality environments. Similar to school model? Funding follows child?
- Tax credit for businesses to provide daycares or benefits to parents working for their company.
- Supply-side funding model

#### *Subtheme: Innovative Ideas*

- An early childcare “pension” like old age pension
- Innovative ways of utilizing funds, resources – physical, human.
- Social impact bonds for ELC.
- Innovative approaches - public/private partnerships P3

#### *Subtheme: Sustainability*

- Strong fund development plan that looks at sustainable funding
- Every time the government changes, sustainability becomes an issue. Maybe there is a need for a commitment to long term funding: long term funding: demonstrate a return on investment: rules in place to prevent excessive exploitation by private funding; demand side financing to avoid wasting money; outcome measuring to ensure the funds are well spent.
- Sustainability is critical. Funding should be to providers rather than families. If a family/parent does not believe in community support child care and learning they can opt out. I don't believe that those who opt out should also receive funding. Funding is to support the common good not ideologies. (i.e. Don't do a voucher system).

- We need a common funding process that is sustainable.
- Increased sustainable funding available.
- Sustainability.

## **Theme: Principles**

### *Subtheme: Child-Centered*

- The child is at the center providing high quality learning experiences.

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Quality through accreditation
- Parents wishing to return to work would have access to high quality childcare in which employer assists in the funding of as well as some cost recovery from parents.
- Quality child care

### *Subtheme: Access/Affordability*

- Access for all.
- Make it affordable.

## **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Oversight/Accountability*

- Highly accountable monitoring for outcomes based results
- Accountability built in
- Who will decide how it is allocated – will there be one governing agency?
- Clear outcomes (positive to sustain)
- Measure health outcomes of families and children (health – emotional, resilience, social, physical)
- Working with cross-ministries to ensure that funding reaches appropriate places.

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Funding should transition “for profit” ventures to bring up to framework guidelines
- The for-profit centers hold back the system as it is currently run. Needs to be some inclusion of them, but they can’t hold back progress re standards and curriculum development.
- Neighbourhood child care centers that have a focus on 0-5 involve multiple agencies and services. Build on what we have with schools, parent link centers, resource centers, involving health/education. The city could organize money like the FCSS set up. The centers would then report to the local authority. Outcomes would be developed.

- Equity of resources to child care centers.

*Subtheme: Service Delivery*

- Space and human resources around providing adequate, nutritional, affordable food for children. Too often money is used to pay staff at the cost of compromising food budgets.

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- College of E.C Educators
- Education of child care educators
- Initial startup re: education, professional development
- Make no assumptions that staff in care settings are now meeting all accreditation standards.
- Money should be allocated to training existing workforce in early learning and care.
- Move money away from Child Development assistant to CDW and CDS
- Quality assurance – trained staff, well paid staff (should be a career with full benefits).
- Should be mandatory that any staff that does not have a CDS diploma has 5 years to get it.
- Staff compensation – fair – equitable

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Awareness*

- Social messaging to society, corporations
- Funding needs to address public awareness (social Marketing) re. importance of early years.

*Subtheme: School*

- Schools would be a place for “lifelong learning” in communities – prenatal and parenting education, - preschool parents and children together activities – schools = shared cost with education and health.
- Not combining with grade 1-12 inclusive education budgets – mild moderate funding!

*Subtheme: A Variety of Thoughts*

- Spend on existing model (\$ spent on adding care elements to learning or vice versa) not on new models – costly to invest.
- Measurement (outcomes) is linked to financing.
- Gen 15x15 – from BC – results based budgeting!

- Keeping funding ELC for our early learners.

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

### **Theme: Overall**

- Guidelines appear straight forward – and make sense.
- This should be supported within various Ministries.

### **Theme: Principles**

- Funding to support quality enhancements (as soon as we agree on what quality is).
- Universal access.
- Quality through accreditation funding.
- Accessibility for all.

### **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

- Staff being valued - \$ appreciated
- Accountability for funds

### **Theme: Funding Mechanisms**

- The supply side argument because we can all see the problems created by the “demand” model.

### **Theme: Sources**

- What is the right mixture of funding bodies? It depends on who you ask.

### **Theme: Long Term & Sustainable Funding**

- There is a need for long term funding.
- We need sustainable funding.
- More funding
- That funding needs to be increased to be able to implement ELC programming
- Sustainable

## **Least agreement? Why?**

### **Theme: Goals**

- Adequate funding required to achieve goals.
- Which outcome measures to test?
- Who would be responsible for the money as well as how it gets distributed?

### **Theme: Source of Funding**

- Where does funding come from?
- Private funding – how to keep influence in check
- Public/private portions re cost shift to a supply side
- Where the money should come from? Private vs. public vs. parents.
- There will definitely be problems created by the for profit centers and they have the ear of government leaders.
- Who will be funding this/where will the money come from?

### **Theme: Distribution**

- How to distribute the money? Where does it go?
- Redistribution Silo – keep own resources – fear of losing what they have.

### **Theme: Governance**

- Regulating mandated structures.
- Who manages funding?

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

### **Theme: Sustainability**

- Sustainable funding how are resources going to be allocated.

### **Theme: Principles of ELC**

#### *Subtheme: Access*

- Easy access.
- Access to all.

*Subtheme: Affordability*

- Affordable for everyone.

*Subtheme: Quality*

- Highest quality learning experience delivered most cost effectively.

*Subtheme: Choice*

- The Alberta view of choice.

*Subtheme: Universal*

- Principles of universality, involvement of parents/families

*Subtheme: Choice*

- Social conservatism will resist attempts to develop universal services that are globally and publicly funded. That a mix will be required to appease the population and will need to allow parents freedom of choice.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Governance*

- Who is around the table when deciding on what is “valued”

**Theme: Other Considerations**

*Subtheme: Awareness, Support & Understanding*

- Funding to support the education of society as to why this is so important!
- Public perception/political will needs to be addressed through social marketing/education campaign.

*Subtheme: Evaluation*

- Collect good data to show results and to justify expense. If good child care and learning – more females in workforce- more taxes – good data shows ROI.
- How are funding stakeholders going to work together, what does an evaluation framework look like?
- Outcomes reporting collecting data. Who is responsible to college? Is it a similar evaluation framework or different?

*Subtheme: Integration*

- Integration of all systems/levels of programming.

## 4.3 Organizing Services

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

### **Theme: Overall**

#### *Subtheme: Scope for Framework*

- How do you define services delivery – what about families who don't use outside child care?
- What is the scope of framework?
- Consider conception (aka pre-birth) onwards as part of one continuum
- There is no integration of the services needed

#### *Subtheme: The Case*

- Definite need to create opportunities for quality early learning experiences in rural/isolated communities.
- Need something – we have fragmented services.
- Each service delivered is very “separate”
- Disparity across the care system
- More services for francophone population (preschools)

#### *Subtheme: The Goal(s)*

- Services available to build resiliency in children and families.
- Need for universal goals on what is being delivered and how

### **Theme: Provincial-Local Relationships**

- Combination of provincial (i.e. standards, accreditation, funding, framework) but also local (community based).
- Delivery of services needs to be community based and based upon needs of families/ in communities.
- Local service providers, educators, parents, business, need to understand the common goal and accept varied methods of delivery – depending on community e.g. Fort McMurray, reserves, private preschool.
- There need to be standards – overarching with opportunities for localizing this without losing integrity.
- Develop community connections which all support early learning. Support and service is also required by the family.
- Differences between rural vs. urban services delivery.

- Centralized framework with guiding principles which allows local autonomy in delivery (keeping in mind accountability and consistency).

## **Theme: Delivery Models**

### *Subtheme: Hubs*

- Hub – co-location. Love it. Have provincial – municipal partnerships if we go back to that model – may need to consider what worked before and what did not work – all depends on locally
- Co-location with elementary schools wherever possible

### *Subtheme: Networks*

- Maintenance of services linkages to more closely connect and integrate those services. Add and envelop new service options.
- Networks of strong NFP services to children as way to meet needs of rural communities with no school.

### *Subtheme: Continuum*

- Creating spaces for consolidated with continuum/longer term vs. piece meal approach; to provide quality/equal access and opportunity for community building – supports, connected social capital – systems approach when appropriate

## **Theme: Service Providers**

### *Subtheme: For-Profit and Non-Profit Service Providers*

- There is assumption that non-profit and public delivery means quality. Why do we believe that this is true and why does it matter? Is it not so much about for profit, public or non-profit delivery, and more about most effective way to achieve impact?
- Important to expand the opportunities for gov't and not for profits to provide ELC and family centers for 0-5.
- With increase of government and not for profit there will be a decrease in for profit centers.
- Minimize for profit programs to a position where they serve families who opt out of the provincial ELC universally available

### *Subtheme: Schools*

- Service needs to coordinate with school not become school.
- Build on the infrastructure of schools. Back to the community school idea with an ELC component.
- Integrate all services at existing schools.

- Link between schools and out of school care needs to be strong – information and resources shared. Even staff sharing?

#### *Subtheme: Parents*

- Deliverers of service need to include family and community. More opportunity for in home service, day home and home care definition of quality services.
- Family/parents are often not assisted with being involved

#### *Subtheme: Municipality*

- Ministry consider new partnerships with municipalities to re-engage in delivery and support ELC.

### **Theme: Services**

#### *Subtheme: Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten*

- Start with full day kindergarten integrated with community based learning – after school daycare.
- #4 – integration of full day K and ELC. Is a great and necessary idea – we need to include publicly funded pre-k as well.

#### *Subtheme: Other Services*

- Tap into all services available in the community
- Organized with health and education and child services together.
- We need to understand what services we are organizing. No?
- Interactive web-based service delivery.

### **Theme: Other Considerations of Services**

#### *Subtheme: Geography*

- Geographic locations for service provision is to be carefully considered.
- Need an increased focus on “in home” service delivery parents not using childcare

#### *Subtheme: Awareness & Outreach*

- Begin messaging around the early learning services in prenatal classes.
- Online or p2p to help with dissemination
- Will there be an outreach aspect to delivery? Online support?

#### *Subtheme: Evaluation*

- Services delivered require ongoing evaluation to assess process and outcomes.

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Family Centered*

- Organized around families – giving families what they need to help their children thrive.
- Organized around the concept of family effectiveness, child’s well-being and well-becoming.
- Family positive friendly- multi-age solutions in one location consolidate different service providers under one
- Think about it (in part) from the point of view of the family. Even in terms of child drop off, parents may be “driving” their kids to 1 or more day cares, one or more “schools”, as well as recreational activities. Greater use of multi-spaces and multi services could be effective. Overlap and sharing as well.

### *Subtheme: Access*

- Challenges for families: attitude of the strong get stronger for majority of services.
- Equitable access to equitable supports across the province.
- It is important to acknowledge that smaller rural communities don’t have the municipal tax base or private sector availability that urban centers do – how do we make sure that all AB children have access to ELC in a very similar way?
- Flexibility of service is important to parents. I.e. online maternal system and French where it is rigid delivery.

## Theme: Link to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Governance and Oversight*

- What ministries will be involved?
- Accountability is essential.
- While this would seem to be an excellent opportunity for more cross ministry work, I feel that to be effective and efficient, our province needs a new ministry – the department of ELC – to operationalize an integrated framework. There are too many histories of working in silos for a collaborative approach to implementation to work – too much time would pass with too many children losing out on the opportunity to reach their potential in the meantime!

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Requirements to become an early childhood educators/teacher
- Early childhood education for educators/teachers
- Remuneration

### **Theme: Logistical Questions**

- How are new communities going to be provided the infrastructure for support? What about existing communities with established delivery systems? How will they be utilized effectively?
- Is there a role for the technology?
- Technological aspect? Filters in place?
- How to resolve “when the waterhole dries up, the animals look at each other differently”
- Can we move from compliance to cooperation?

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Build on*

- Build on existing frameworks and models.
- Reduce re-inventing the wheel: build on partner, practices of ‘promise’; map out existing/identify gaps and overlap.

#### *Subtheme: Starting Points*

- Organizing this in communities where the need is greatest may be the way to begin

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

### **Theme: Context**

#### *Subtheme: Goals*

- Needs to meet goals/objectives/mandate of ELC and based on family, community needs
- Mission/vision – commonality
- Goals/objectives of ELC framework
- P27 “the goal in Sweden is to support children’s development and learning and enable parents to combine parenthood with work or study” – universal acceptance of goal

#### *Subtheme: Scope*

- What about service delivery for the younger years (under 3)?
- What about the majority of children who are not in organized care? What does service delivery look like to them/for them.

## **Theme: Organizing Delivery**

### *Subtheme: Public & Private Delivery*

- Should be public and not for profit (as indicated) more than private focus for only those who can afford it.
- Phase out for profit ELC

### *Subtheme: Networks and Local Connections*

- Develop local networks of community.
- Additional support for the development of local networks to integrate some services.
- Networks – first 2000 days
- No distinction between “child care and “education” 0-6
- Think and connect all services.

### *Subtheme: Community Infrastructure*

- Use of public places
- Extend thinking to municipal planning (mandate space for families/childcare centers)
- Better use of afterhours schools, churches, other
- Ways to assess local service delivery/capacity

### *Subtheme: Schools*

- Integrate new or expanded services with elementary schools

## **Theme: Provincial-Local**

- Be sensitive to regional aspects.
- Close examination of rural vs. urban issues
- Community planning, include child care
- Local control over service delivery
- Strong component of local control. Broadly able to meet needs at the local level.
- Support for community based organization and solutions within a stronger, more supported context.
- Neighborhoods – how do you provide high quality services in all neighborhoods?

## Theme: Links to Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Ensure communication across jurisdictions is encouraged – especially for children with special needs i.e. child care and specialized preschool programs such as Providence, Renfrew, Heartland. Child care and schools
- Include other ministries: Health, libraries
- Key guidelines – service delivery
- Ministry of human resources – early learning, AB Ed, Finance – all on same page
- Overarching standards and accountability.
- Situate it within a new department!
- United ministry specific to early learning and care – creating an equal voice on issues

### *Subtheme: Funding and Human Resources*

- Adequate funding and human resources is vital
- Adequate/appropriate education, certification/training needs to be in place initially and ongoing – sustainability
- Money/finances
- Professional development for educators/teachers
- Requires increased support for P.D., linking, connecting etc. (fund “the game”)

## Themes: Principles

### *Subtheme: Holistic*

- Service delivery needs to focus on the whole child (between psychosocial development needs) within the context of family/community

### *Subtheme: Family-centered*

- Parents with few resources may need more services connected to child care centers
- Conversation around why do some families access services and some not?
- Parents helping the service understand their child – the parents create the first bridge. Then caregivers help the children bridge between services whether it be kindergarten to grade 1.
- Seamless from parent perspective with multiple points of access.
- Keep parents involved at all levels
- Increase “family care” models
- Parental choice (philosophy, religion, cultural)

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Established quality standards
- Quality and timeline for delivery

### *Subtheme: Equitable Access*

- Accessible, affordable
- Must ensure equitable access to all parents/children
- Equity of opportunity
- Accessibility/ affordability
- Sufficient diversity to be inclusive
- Focus on universal models
- Services delivery needs to be accessible, affordable, appropriate, effective and efficient.

### *Subtheme: Flexible and Responsive*

- Individual optimization to look for ways to make it recognizable but flexible enough for individual needs.
- High degree of flexibility required in service; must reflect the needs of the community.
- Responsive service options
- Variety of services available

## **Themes: Other Issues**

### *Subthemes: Evaluation*

- Outcomes on evaluating criteria that will be used to ensure accountability and consistency

### *Subtheme: Cooperation & Collaboration*

- Bridging is an important concept in the way we organize services
- Collaboration is integration. Schools need to be more open to allowing their use as community hubs and for child care – there are about 9 different school boards in our region. Many schools close over summers and holidays.
- Great communication between ministries and within all levels of governance right down to service providers and families
- New partnerships to support.
- Involve other ministries in community planning

### *Subtheme: General*

- Overlap of space and service with underlying common vision, values, culture, focus

- Principle based (not complaint based) that is in service to building inclusive communities – service delivery aimed at building capacity within the model – that includes governance that is reflective of stakeholders, not government??

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Build On*

- Creative uses of non-traditional spaces (malls, libraries)
- Leverage assets and capabilities
- Leverage what is already arising in community
- Use more of the existing spaces
- Use of existing spaces (school, parent link, etc.) as centers of lifelong service delivery

### *Subtheme: Research*

- Need to understand what's working and why? I.e. consider the developmental assets (Research Institute) and strive to provide ELC with these elements in mind.

### *Subtheme: Caution*

- Caution around “big players” e.g. Health and Education dictating service delivery
- Some work really well - others not so much. We need to be cautious about getting caught up in large, unfamiliar bureaucratic structures

### *Subtheme: Innovation*

- Innovation Out of the box thinking just followed by clear guidelines, expectations
- Use Upstart?

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

## **Theme: Goals**

### *Subtheme: Goals*

- Support for building resiliency in children and families.

### *Subtheme: The General Intent*

- In general, the focus in this industry and this passion will be well received until the devil emerges in the details.
- Fluidity of services from 0-6 years.

## Theme: Delivery Models

### *Subtheme: Hubs & Networks*

- Consolidation of services/resources in local community for easy access and as a support system.
- Offering several services in one location.
- One-stop shopping: care and learning opportunities.
- Networks –would need a champion.

### *Subtheme: Provincial-Municipal Partnership*

- Municipality had multiservice sites.
- Provincial municipal partnership.
- New provincial – municipal partnerships in support of ELC because something like this existed in the past and the mechanism to enact it are known.

### *Subtheme: Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten*

- Kindergarten linked with Pre-Kindergarten.

### *Subtheme: Schools*

- Currently schools do not appear to be doing the best with regard to social emotional development of children. Schools tend to have strict educational targets that determine success or failure for children.
- Use of schools and their resources will probably have the biggest buy-in.

### *Subtheme: Linking Related Services*

- Health, library, childcare, community services, subsidized housing.

### *Subtheme: Related Issues*

- The loss of business (subsidy) fee.
- Community/family based care

### *Subtheme: Local Control*

- Local control over service delivery

## Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Curriculum Framework (but not pedagogy): philosophy (but not implementation)

#### *Subtheme: Finance*

- Increase support/funding to existing strong programs
- Cross subsidization – profit and nonprofit, affluent and vulnerable

#### *Subtheme: Human Resource*

- Increased minimum formal education and professional development requirements for early childhood educators

### **Least agreement? Why?**

#### **Theme: Overall**

- The overall scope of the work – too ambitious for some.

#### **Theme: Principles:**

##### *Subtheme: Quality*

- “Closing” - non quality programs and services
- Schools have high student – teacher ratios which does not support SE development. Tend to teach to the top third of students. So not sure about all day ECS

##### *Subtheme: Access*

- Access points. Challenges around who/what organizations believe that they are the only or most appropriate provider

##### *Subtheme: Choice*

- Will families who choose to keep their child at home be at a disadvantage? (How do we support these parents?)

##### *Subtheme: Inclusive*

- Cultural expectation of what early childhood services should look like?

### **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

##### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Who is the manager of service delivery?

##### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Redistributing resources – messy business.

- Lack of finances

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Remuneration of educators – who and how much and whether it's equal.

**Theme: Organizing Services**

*Subtheme: Networks*

- Development of local ELC networks – networks of this nature have been created in some areas already, and in many cases they are costly and do not produce measurable results.

*Subtheme: Kindergarten*

- Full day ECS –no space, loss of business for private providers

*Subtheme: Private (non-profit: for-profit) and Public Delivery*

- Dropping for profit from the continuum of providers.
- NFP vs. profit – fundamental differences in philosophy/approach – can they effectively come together?
- What is the right balance between public and private delivery?
- How do you account for business that are presently running for profit care?
- Competing demands between public vs. private funding – issue of affordability

**Theme: Tricky Issues**

- “Closing” - non quality programs and services
- Do governments intervene in locations where there is not lots of childcare?
- Bureaucracies – will they help or get in the way?
- Need to look at models of collaboration – we don't seem to be getting that far with the current ones.
- Many find collaboration and integration time consuming, difficult to measure and irrelevant
- There needs to be some incentives

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

### Theme: Overall: Crossing ELC Paradigms, Professions and Practices

- Many do not distinguish between child care and education – and hence the push for changing things to improve integration and quality.

### Theme: Principles

#### *Subtheme: Universal Access*

- Equitable, non-tiered universal access to high quality.
- Access close to home – special challenges for rural communities and isolated populations
- Access for all
- Accessibility
- Universal for everyone.
- Universality

#### *Subtheme: Choice*

- Parental choice

#### *Subtheme: Community Differences*

- Diversity in community capacity
- Urban/rural service providers

### Theme: Service Model

#### *Subtheme: Delivery Models*

- Service delivery hubs – clear understanding of the diverse services available – CFSA, Education, Health, FCSS, City/municipal, literacy, recreation etc.

#### *Subtheme: Service Providers*

- Community association
- Public – private delivery – maintain it as it's a reality.
- Do not use for-profit ELC
- Awareness of isolation of many child care programs – find out why.

#### *Subtheme: Support for Parents at Home*

- Don't be punitive to groups such as stay at home parents and be careful we don't pit parent choices against parent choices.
- Stay at home parents
- The service delivery idea are primarily focused on out of home care; need to add in or refocus on supports for families to do ELC in home as well

#### *Subtheme: Service Infrastructure*

- Developers required to build child care space – even if they don't deliver services.

#### *Subtheme: Provincial-Local*

- Not just government ministries: community planning as well.
- The community development piece is huge – look to ECmap to see the potential diverse opportunities and untapped assets for illustration for how powerful this can be.

### **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

#### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Evaluation and accountability of services and service delivery.
- School boards cannot have all the power because they are problematic and divisive in many respects.

#### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Corporate investment in social change.
- Funding needs to be equitable there needs to be an agreed upon overarching vision, goal, understanding
- Sustainable supply side funding

#### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Increase quality, staff skill and professional development in all publically funded care centers – but what about privately funded?

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- All stakeholders need to be involved: e.g. community partners, firms, businesses, education, etc.

*Subtheme: Research*

- Look at really great models that are working.

## 4.4 Human Resources

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

#### Theme: Overall

*Subtheme: Scope and Impact*

- Need to think about parental need for care after school hours – (full day ECS)
- Does this include elementary teachers?
- This area of quality human resources is key to improving quality overall. There is a lot of thinking that needs to happen here.
- I believe this will have a huge impact on the quality of care and early learning programs.
- This has been a missing link for too long.

*Subtheme: Profile of the Profession*

- Need to make the profession viable so that ECEs will remain in the sector so this means equality of wages and the likes.
- Respect for the role of an EC educator
- Key themes – raising the profile and importance of ELC via expectations of professionals. Make it a career, not a fall back.
- Raise the profile of the childcare profession – “professionalize”
- Raise the profile to increase interest

#### Theme: Education of Early Learning Educators

*Subtheme: Formal Education/Training Requirement*

- Extra Language proficiency
- High level – minimum 2 year diploma
- Qualifications – more consistency, high standards, higher recognition
- Qualified and certified staff and personnel must be the persons to deliver programs
- Need minimum requirements in education
- Basic qualified staff in Centers
- Great to see increase in qualifications
- Higher education standards and remuneration would help

- 2 year ECE diploma minimum
- Appropriate post-secondary education
- Education – relevant to children 0-5
- Education a must, a college would be good.
- Education/training for early childhood educator
- Formal education and intrinsic qualities i.e. warm and fuzzy vs. cold and harsh.
- Minimum 2 yr. diploma requirement – all post-secondary provide rigorous programming for students
- Need ELC post-secondary credential –EC specialists
- Practicum programs for child care students – standard requirement
- Training – post diploma certificate/degree in ELCC for leaders/directors
- What is best education for ELC staff?
- Need to have early childhood education training mandatory for providers.
- Standardized training/qualifications for ELC.
- Consistency in staffing

#### *Subtheme: Leadership & Management*

- Leadership expertise within the field. The role of the manager/director is huge but do we have the right people, well people who know and love child care and are leaders. What are our expectations for these roles?
- Strong leadership – team builders

#### *Subtheme: Professional Development*

- Expectations of ongoing PD
- Improved ongoing prof development.
- Improved ongoing professional development – not sure if this is required as there is a ton of staff out there.
- Improved, ongoing PD and certification
- Ongoing professional development

#### *Subtheme: Upgrading, Grandfathering & Exemptions*

- Presently suggestion is to let current staff remain in field even if they don't want to upgrade. This waters down the profession – who will financially support these upgrades? Individuals? Agencies? Gov't?
- Specific strategies needed to help existing staff upgrade their qualifications.
- Tighten up equivalencies/exemptions

#### *Subtheme: Parents*

- Stay home families need to be educated and given opportunities to healthy childhood development

- Families engaged
- How do we include increased education of parents who choose to stay at home with child all children need to receive quality of care to strengthen their development and health outcomes?
- Keep the whole child in mind when designing qualifications of EC educators/workers

#### *Subtheme: Child Nutrition*

- One must also remember the importance of feeding kids while in care. Provincial child care consultations repeatedly show that child care cooks are often not trained at all or have very little education/training in cooking nutritious meals for large numbers of people. Children in care need ½ to 2/3 of their daily nutrient needs met. So eating is vital and cooks are a vital part of the human resources required in ELC.

### **Theme: Other Human Resource Issues**

#### *Subtheme: Recruitment & Retention*

- How to attract qualified/quality candidates to the profession?
- How can staff retention be improved?
- Obtaining quality/trained staff in remote areas. Updating and assuring skills.

#### *Subtheme: Remuneration & Benefits*

- Benefits given in lieu of pay
- Current pay scales do not necessarily reflect the critical importance of the early years
- Professional salary
- Provincial Wage Scale
- Would a public sector approach to salary scales, etc. actually work? What is the best practice model to use as a guide?
- Better remuneration needed to draw people to the profession.
- So an equitable wage increase for ECE's would be important. Higher wages for this profession would show a greater value for these people who may be educated in early child development as well as early learning and education. Government would have to finance this. Some? Parents? But dedicated government dollars would speak to the value we place on ECE's and the young population of Albertans.
- Higher wages and valued profession would solve many issues child care has in high staff turnover. Adequate wages to compensate for education would create a stronger workforce of ECE's

### *Subtheme: Preparation Time*

- Paid planning time daily for ECEs

## **Theme: Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten**

- K – full day vs. half day (teaching teams) what is makeup child care teams
- K teachers being specifically skilled in ECD.
- K-teachers get early childhood training
- Full day K
- Why just kindergarten teachers? Why not all elementary teachers having specific early childhood education
- Full day and Half day K offered in appropriate locations
- Team Education teams – teachers/ECEs?

## **Theme: Principles**

### *Subtheme: Universal Access*

- Pre-school offered universally
- All children must be able to access quality care
- Accredited child care offered in rural settings
- Concern about 2 level system when those who can afford will be able to pay for trained staff. Lower income and quality child care.

## **Theme: Links To Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Curriculum and human resource need to be attached
- Play based; pre-literacy skills; community based; experiential learning

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Standards for staff training – who determines?
- Which ministry would be responsible, accountable for funding for human resources?
- Who is verifying the “standardized” hiring protocols? (regulatory body insuring.... In hiring)

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- It is going to require \$\$.
- Adequate funding

- How do we account for funding in relation to requirements for increased training/education e.g. current ECS teachers or childcare worker who can't afford to take time off work to increase training/education?
- How to reconcile cost of staff who are well educated and paid with ability to invest \$
- How will teachers be supported through this financially?

#### *Subtheme: General*

- Better educated staff at both daycare and kindergarten – better pay for CC and more male role models.
- The # of different positions/jobs workforce for ELC will have – hierarchy?  
Type/level of training required for 0-4 and kindergarten
- Training of persons (who, where, with what curriculum)

### **Theme: Sector Capacity Building**

#### *Subtheme: Professional Associations*

- Professional associations
- Create “college of Early Learning and Care Professionals”
- Establish a “college” (professional association) that governs this work.
- A college or professional body for ECE's would be beneficial which would set minimum education standards, require ongoing, annual professional development. This all costs money of course.

#### *Subtheme: Universities, Colleges and Training Organizations*

- Advanced Education – develop specific course of study to support early learning and care.
- Issue that the post-secondary institutions are part of planning process with the end in mind i.e. specific early child hood clarification
- What institutions will provide programing for potential ELC staff?

#### *Subtheme: Workforce Strategy*

- How does the province successfully design and implement an ELC workforce strategy? i.e. what/who are key players to make that happen?
- Who is qualified to train ELC personnel? How much does it cost? How many do we as a province, need to produce a high quality standard of care ELC program? Where will these go? Personnel come from and who will pay them what they are worth so that they stay in the profession?

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Awareness, Understanding & Support*

- How can we influence society to value ELC professionals?
- Public education of this to have a common understanding. Clear messages.
- Social marketing campaign valuing early childhood professions

### *Subtheme: Build On*

- Build on the learning from the work that has already occurred in the accreditation work and levels of education for ECE professionals

### *Subtheme: Questions around Moving Forward*

- How can we ever get from where we currently are to where we need to be it's like trying to jump across the grand canyon!!
- What do you start with?

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

## **Theme: Context**

### *Subtheme: Definitions/Scope*

- What is quality care (define)
- We need definitions of a qualified service provider. What does a certified worker have to demonstrate?
- Still need a clear understanding of what is meant by integrated system – integrated with what?
- Do family day centers need to be created for families who believe/choose that children should be raised at home – not a daycare/preschool?

### *Subtheme: General Support*

- I am in support and in favor of all 5 outlined proposed ideas.

## **Theme: Professionalization**

### *Subtheme: Profile of Profession*

- Respect – pay, reputation, knowledge.
- Value – recognized within the community

### *Subtheme: Staffing requirements*

- Must have practical experience
- Language requirements
- Minimum requirements for staff working in child care centers/dayhome, etc.; shared values/common goals.
- Minimum qualifications – what are they?
- Qualifications – must understand child development.
- High standards of training for ELC provides in family day home as well as daycare centers.
- Moving to a principle based, consultative role of government rather than a compliance role, i.e. compliance is important but can't be only focus. Play to the highest common denominator and not the lowest common denominator in terms of approach. Appreciative inquiry strength based.
- No choice for training. Either agree to get it or not. Do not stay in field if not willing to increase education/training.
- Required ongoing professional development. Mandatory.
- It should not be a choice to have educated staff or not.

### *Subtheme: Certification*

- Certification
- Professional recertification procedures. How do we deal with disciplinary issues?
- Certification of early learning/care educators
- Certification of employees
- Differential teaching certificates so if you are teacher young kids you need specialized pedagogy. My professional certificate allow me to teach - that I can teach k-12 successfully

### *Subtheme: College of Early Childhood Educators*

- Need a college of early learning educators
- Professional college focused on salary grids, eligibility Professional criteria
- Develop a college of ECEs to monitor/certify the workforce; ensure ongoing professional development hours required each year; mentoring students a part of job.
- Disciplinary body
- Professional association. PD conferences could be organized through the association

### *Subtheme: A Union?*

- Do we want a unionized child care staff and what is the cost? Is Alberta ready? Must have a better credentialing process.

### *Subtheme: Evaluation*

- Evaluation processes are required to maintain the standards.
- What are Evaluation procedures to ensure we keep standards up?
- Ongoing evaluation.

## **Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development**

### *Subtheme: Scope*

- Who does this target? Only people in formal institutions? What about parent support/training for stay at home parents?
- Does this include people running day homes?
- Include specific training requirements for school age care and special needs care and infant/toddler care, leadership/management.

### *Subtheme: Educational Approach - Pedagogy*

- Children not mini adults. How to keep play priority as we move to formalized structures. This will lessen chance of schoolification.
- Common basics of education – play, CL development
- Kindergarten/ELS teachers should have basic of play, child development
- What does training look like? Child development, nutrition, physical development, first aid.
- Children are learners from conception onwards and the early care and learning they receive should reflect this.
- We need guidelines – we need something. What do we train and educate on?

### *Subtheme: Education*

- Increase minimum formal education and professional development requirements for early childhood educators
- Increasing the educational requirements for pre K and kindergarten – but perhaps there is a way to provide more qualifications and training for day homes as well.
- Raise the levels and expectations
- Minimum education training standards and how do we encourage/reinforce?
- Roles Critical – appropriate linkages between formal education, position rules and responsibilities for early childhood educators.

### *Subtheme: Leadership & Management*

- Ensure we have leadership expertise knowledge and training too as we build a more integrated system. There could be HR conflicts if there are not standards and clarity around roles, responsibility, salaries, titles, reporting, structures.
- Leadership and management skills need developing

- Leadership training needs to be included for directors/managers etc.
- Top leadership – skill set to support, develop staff

#### *Subtheme: Professional Development*

- A mature professional takes responsibility for his/her own professional development .
- Need shared opportunities for learning for all staff (teachers, child care professionals, cooks, caretakers, etc.) to bring people together to share values, goals, overarching vision – then can take online/overhead/alternative delivery of content. Need to build relationships first.
- Ongoing professional development for ELC professionals
- Resources available
- PD resources available – and move to increasing them in tough areas.
- Tough expectation for ongoing program development, paid for by employer and with time off.

#### *Subtheme: Equivalencies, Grandfathering & Equivalencies*

- Recognize only those educated in early childhood education – no equivalencies or Leap program.
- Early childhood education for kindergarten teachers would be wonderful to see perhaps having the assistant or aid in the classroom with education in early childhood as well. I am however not in favor of the educators that do not have their college diploma being grandfathered in . I think they should have a timeline either upgrade or move on.
- Eliminate acceptance of staff with CDA designation. Create level above CDS
- I do not support grandfathering untrained staff. There should be a time limit to get qualified. In many remote communities you have one child care option (one staff) of untrained staff are allowed “ grandfathered” it could take the lifetime of that employee for the community to receive trained staff and catch up with the rest of the province.
- Concerns around existing staff that choose not to upgrade their education, training. Discussion paper states they can stay in current positions until they leave the field – may lead to challenges. Conflicts when trying to strengthen/upgrade educational requirement to improve better care of children from a developmental, emotional/ biosocial perspective not only cognitive.
- Don’t grandfather existing staff after pressure of time and support for training to meet new standards. Weakens the field.

*Subtheme: Educational & Training Institutions*

- Institutions of higher learning should be eligible for funding if they build training modules with flexible deliveries to accommodate existing staff/worker schedules.
- Where the education is available in rural and urban centers?
- Create a ELC training program that is equivalent to an kindergarten teacher with length (4-5yrs) and focused on best practices for ELC.

**Theme: Remuneration, Recruitment & Retention**

*Subtheme: Recruitment & Retention*

- How to attract diversity of workers. Age, gender and culturally
- Environments – work satisfaction – retention

*Subtheme: Remuneration & Benefits*

- Adequate reimbursement/remuneration
- Demonstrate that care givers or educating with salaries that are valued.
- Move to increasing remuneration for staff: implement salary scale reflective of education/training
- Overall compensations – benefits etc.
- Pay equity for early childhood professionals

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Consistent*

- Common expectations and requirements for all educators.

*Subtheme: Diversity*

- Culturally competent training/component. How can newcomers to Canada/Alberta seamlessly integrate into this process

*Subtheme: Equity*

- Equity in everything.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Frameworks**

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Identity funding supports for certification/ recertification.
- Increased funding for EC programs

## **Theme: Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten**

- Early years training for kindergarten teachers
- ECE diploma/specialization for certified K teachers
- teachers should have ELC as part of training
- In kindergarten classes and recognized as experts.
- Kindergarten teachers, should be trained in ECE but we will still need a common pedagogical perspective to underlie this

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Change Strategies*

- Slow integration of changes
- Specific timelines in place to introduce and implement changes.
- Encourage male role models as EL educators
- Primary focus should be on training or retraining existing staff
- Raise the professionalism by increased education and compensation.
- Educate the public of what quality child care is.
- Decision making by all stakeholders.

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

## **Theme: Context**

### *Subtheme: Scope/definitions*

- Why all from birth to 6 or 8. Child care = 12
- What is quality of care? Most people would agree that quality is very important.

## **Theme: The Profession**

### *Subtheme: The Profile of Early Learning & Care*

- Raising the profile and value of the profession overall.
- Public awareness campaign to inform the public of the importance and impact of early childhood education

### *Subtheme: Certification and Credentialling*

- Common certification (need for); credentials
- That programming must be delivered by certified staff

- Agreement that a minimum formal education is required
- Development of a common learning and care post-secondary credential (key).
- All public government and non-profit organizations will like qualification, level of appropriate compensation.

*Subtheme: College of Early Learning Educators*

- College of ECEs amongst educated ECE because they would understand the value of it – creating more awareness, respect of the work

**Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development**

*Subtheme: Education*

- Education of EL educators is required to meet the expectations of the role
- Increased formal education – more qualified and informed staff
- Increasing minimum formal educational requirements, currently not all service providers are able to provide PD to improve/refresh skills, higher skill level would potentially improve overall program
- Investing in training, learning for K teachers and care professionals as well as parent certification.
- Level of early childhood workers education
- That education/training/certification is required for ELC staff

*Subtheme: Professional Development*

- Professional Development opportunities.
- Staff development

*Subtheme: Planning Time*

- Paid planning time daily – most ECEs don't get any paid time at all.

**Theme: ELC in Kindergarten**

- ELC training for current kindergarten teachers. Widely held view that K teachers don't have suitable grounding in EL theory and practice
- ECE education for kindergarten teachers. Because most aligned with system that most parents already engaged with and would support if it meant better outcomes/success for their children
- Full day Kindergarten as it is already happening in some communities
- ELC training for Kindergarten teachers

- I think most agreement will be for kindergarten teachers to have early childhood education or for ECE's to upgrade to "teach"
- Require EC specific training

### **Theme: Remuneration**

- Financial consistency and regulated child care salaries. Qualification. This is a "social shift" provides common starting points for teaching/learning) all centers no matter where they are would have a base level of qualified staff
- Remuneration because wages are what attract/retain professionals. You can't say children are important and then have a 7-11 worker make more money. You can't ask for more education and personal investment without having fair salary scales. Again – you may love children – but it doesn't pay the bills, feed the family and increase public perception as childcare being more than glorified babysitting!
- Compensation
- Better compensation
- Establishment of a salary scale for caregivers because it has known variables that can be worked into such a scale
- Implementation of wage scale – assuming it was connected to experiences along with education – much of workforce is experienced but lacks formal education
- Increased wages for ECEs
- Increased salary

### **Theme: Other Areas**

#### *Subtheme: Workforce Strategy*

- A comprehensive workforce strategy.

#### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Where programs are offered.

### **Least agreement? Why?**

### **Theme: The Profession**

#### *Subtheme: Workforce Profile*

- Many child care workers tend to receive more than Rehab or Ed aids.
- Shifting values and culture perceptions of child serving profession worth

- Because of all the complaining that accompanied the changes of the levels to certification requirements, front-line workers don't see the professional within themselves and thus don't lend credibility to the profession. It is so much more than simply having a love of children.

*Subtheme: College*

- Developing a college/professional body that is accountable to the provincial gov't

**Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development**

*Subtheme: Educational Requirements*

- Formal education – we still get a lot of blow back.
- Increase in formal education requirements. Currently hard enough to get staff that are fully trained. Must accompany increased staff salaries and professional credential
- Min 2 year post-secondary training as a minimal for all would have significant impact on workforce and being able to recruit/retain enough staff to meet the need.
- Level of training for each position?
- May be arguments from some that childcare does not require special training (anyone can do it).
- Need for minimum 2 yr. diploma – private/business operators because it would cut their profit margin needing to pay more.
- We don't seem to have an appetite for specialization in our teaching degree programs. This can create challenges in finding enough qualified staff for the available positions.
- What adequate training is
- What should minimum level be – certification, diploma degree.
- What constitutes the level of certification

*Subtheme: Professional Development*

- Ongoing upgrading and PD.
- School districts have greater opportunity to provide ongoing P.D.

*Subtheme: Grandfathering & Equivalencies*

- Credentialing newcomers who come with diverse backgrounds and ECE training and experience. Do we value experience? Where does that fit?

## **Theme: Remuneration & Benefits**

- Increased formal education , what does this look like for profit? Any and all ELC organizations will need to pay out greater compensation.
- Remuneration of professionals to reflect increased education requirements – scale if the funding does not match scale requirements, then providers would potentially decrease number of professionals or need to look for other methods of funding.
- Remuneration
- Competitive salaries for agencies and nonprofits.
- Province-wide salary scale for staff will be challenging with the private sector. You may lose a lot of staff if wages go down.

## **Theme: Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten**

- I am not in full agreement with full day kindergarten as it stands now.

## **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- For profits will not like this – drives up the cost of doing business and eats into profits.
- Additional opportunities to upgrade \$\$
- Has anyone done a salary comparison?
- Funding of higher salary scales.

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Common child care locations follow provincial guide lines. Licensed?

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Carryover of early learning philosophy to early grades in school system. Different pedagogy.
- The substance/context of a common curriculum

## **Theme: Workforce Strategy**

- The development of a comprehensive workforce strategy for early learning child care – it will bring up too many differences of opinion and self-interest (e.g. who is targeted, minimum qualifications, how to train them, etc.).
- How will this affect human resource issues?

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

### Theme: Definition of Quality

- What is quality care?

### Theme: The Profession

#### *Subtheme: Elevating the Profile of ELC*

- If looked upon as a profession - increase in individuals entering this area.
- Career pathways – where does one go after being an ELC worker if one wishes to remain in the business.
- Professionalizing this field
- Shifting the value of the people who work with our children
- Needs to happen in conjunction with childcare industry raising the profile of staff working in programs.
- What is it we value of improving human resources? If we say the children are the heart of the matter – we need to provide well trained, job satisfied employees, teachers, caregivers.

#### *Subtheme: Eligibility & Fit*

- Multicultural care givers – strong English
- Credentials aren't the whole answer – dispositions also play a role here.
- Still need staff with passion not just the qualification.

#### *Subtheme: Minimum Qualifications*

- If we require a minimum requirements of education for ELC employees, what happens to those not meeting requirement? Additional training? Who pays?

#### *Subtheme: Certification & Accreditation*

- Certification of all employees
- Keep accreditation but raise the standards.

#### *Subtheme: Job Structure*

- Time for EC to observe, plan, prepare – we need to restructure jobs to ensure that this “professional” space exists.

## **Theme: Education, Training & Professional Development**

### *Subtheme: Education*

- Early childhood education for ECS teachers
- Methods Format – flexible delivery
- That there already is a variety of education in the field – Beds, diplomas, and hands-on experience and this has created a lot of divisiveness
- Training of staff – need to understand child development

### *Subtheme: Professional Development*

- Ongoing PD opportunities
- PD opportunities

### *Subtheme: Leadership & Management Development*

- Leadership is critical and skill development for leaders in early childhood settings
- Management Systems to address directors role

### *Subtheme: Universities, Colleges and Training Organizations*

- How can training institutions modify/align their coursework to encourage and prepare students to stay in child care field
- The role of post- secondary institutions.

### *Subtheme: Upgrading*

- People taking time to upgrade – we need to make provision for this.

## **Theme: Remuneration**

- Provincial wide salary levels need to take into account local economics: e.g. the different cost of hiring in Fort McMurray and Lethbridge.
- Increased wages/respect for EL caregivers

## **Theme: Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten**

- The creation of ELC teams for K, childcare, preschool – this is really important. We can move on this.

## **Theme: Principles of ELC**

### *Subtheme: Inclusive*

- Address diversity – increasing population for locations i.e. Fort Mac Murray, particularly multicultural population, means we need to be culturally sensitive and adapt to these new realities.

### *Subtheme: Access*

- For all kids – financially, geographically, culturally

## **Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Available resources
- Cost – it's going to cost.
- Funding costs! Wow!
- Time and money
- We need the financial backing to develop training and pay adequate wages upon completion
- Who will fund training program?
- Who will pay?
- How do you “compensate” or “reward” parents/ families who choose to raise children home? Because it's about quality care (whether it's at home or daycare or day home).

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Integrated curriculum

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- We have to think about the environments ECE staff are working in – clean, safe, well-equipped.
- What about private – non-registered day homes?
- Parents are part of the human resource force – how do they fit into this drive for quality?

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- Who determines what components to be included in programs?
- Can we hear the voices in the field? What is the grassroots saying?

- Involve frontline ECEs in the planning process – listen to their voices – provide opportunities for them to be a part of the discussions
- We will need buy-in from all stakeholders.

## 4.5 Curriculum Framework

**What key themes, ideas and questions emerge for you when you consider the idea of an early learning and care curriculum framework?**

### **Theme: Context**

#### *Subtheme: Definitions*

- Wording of curriculum – honors parents as 1<sup>st</sup> educator, professionals involved have a “partnership with parents
- Framework vs. curriculum – what do they mean? Mean together?
- Need to avoid word “curriculum” (quite prescriptive for a time that should be unscripted – do not – schoolification)

#### *Subtheme: The Case*

- Pedagogical conversations, a guide for educators/stimulus, standards will enable greater alignment for young children.
- A curriculum framework will build credibility, consistent quality practices.

#### *Subtheme: Questions*

- What components will be reflected in the curriculum and to what extent?
- What will be the key areas? Child development

### **Theme: Some Key Tensions**

#### *Subtheme: Crossing ELC Paradigms, Professions and Practices*

- As kids moved from ECL to formal education, both parties would be aware of the expectations of self and other partner. Give guideline for HR and education requirements of staff.
- Blending of teachers (Bed) curriculum with EC curriculum – 2 year – transfer Bed
- Health information needs to be a core component of this curriculum –we know that healthy kids learn better at all ages. This needs to include but not be limited to nutrition, sleep, emotional-social wellness, family relationships, stress, etc.
- Issues about focus and balance – education, care – and philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of each.

- Feeling attached to caregivers: connection/trust/comfort.
- Play as the focus
- Play is so important
- Teachers curriculum blend with health – “pediatric” curriculum
- Voices of early learning
- Why does the curriculum need to align more closely with the school based and community-based curriculums? I challenge that idea. It doesn’t have to align more closely. Depends on the goals and outcomes. If our goal is healthy child development, then there already is a rich learning environment for ECE’s to draw upon: e.g. food and eating represents another facet of multimodal literacy – eating experience and food opens a child’s world to diversity (naan, bannock, kim chi), inclusion, equity, language (what does your zucchini taste like? What color is it? How many pieces do you have? Social behaviors – “thank you”, please can I have more” etc. ECE’s could perhaps learn how to draw out there conversations in children in their everyday activities. There does not have to be a whole new “curriculum” developed for young children.

*Subtheme: Mandatory or Voluntary?*

- Mandatory – parent choice
- A positive move for the province. ELC operators that choose not to receive public funds would not have to follow any of the curriculum? A disconnect in service is a possibility. Hopefully at least be certified/recognized, certain basic components would have to be followed.
- Agree with concept of linking the use of common curriculum with receiving public money.
- All regulated services would use a common curriculum resource.

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Child-Centered*

- Based on the children and families/communities

*Subtheme: Embedded in Parent/Families*

- Parent engagement vs. involvement
- Remember parent is the first educator.
- The accessibility for quality education and developmental services is common/ability of parents to navigate the “best” is easier.

### *Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate*

- Developmentally appropriate programming to support development of whole child – integrated – not “subject” based – play-based learning – safe exploration
- Advantage of having all stakeholders have input to develop appropriate curriculum for the developmental age groups defined as well as cultural needs
- Expectations at each age group – prior learning
- Themes of early learning: the key areas of concern would be very different for early childhood.

### *Subtheme: Equity*

- Potential to have a common curriculum resources so no child is disadvantaged depending upon choices parents make

### *Subtheme: Evidence-Based*

- Use the research on brain development.
- Continuity, research and evidence based frame work to guide the work
- Could be based on qualitative research.
- Existing research/programming balanced with existing curriculum with seeking input from current professionals.
- Important to look at frameworks across the country to determine strengths and challenges of each.
- Need to ensure brain development and ECD research (Norlien) forms the foundation for an ELC curriculum.
- Needs to be based in best practice literature as in supporting documents.

### *Subtheme: Consistency ... but flexible.*

- A broad “framework” that can be adapted to different contexts.
- It is a framework not a template or specified “curriculum” and can guide programs based on unique needs of children families and community
- Must be centralized and rolled out provincially
- Open frame to be developed at provincial level which allows for local input and implementation tailored to meet needs of community – cultural/economic/etc.
- Would offer a standardization to ensure all kids received same.

### *Subtheme: Holistic*

- Content curriculum should parallel the 5 domains of ECD

### *Subtheme: Seamless*

- Transition from childcare to kindergarten – how will it be received by education if outcomes; goals differ from their traditional learning approach/methods of instruction

## **Themes: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- How will reporting on outcomes happen/look like
- Who will implement this? Government Ministry? If so, which one? Universities?
- Concern about monitoring/evaluation of delivery

### *Subtheme: Finance*

- Funding support

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- The environment is important – who is delivering what service, in collaboration with whom, where.
- How do we connect community based services together?
- Where located? To have access/take advantage of variety of community resources

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Challenges with ECE's who are not educated in the foundational ECE courses.
- Education of EL Educators
- Human resources, governance, \$\$ implications.
- PD/training – who what when where why?
- This is just as important for ELC as for questions, must ensure a way to get high quality ELC staff training to implement the curriculum “towards Provincial framework)
- Training/professional development – what will it look like?
- Training/professional development

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Leadership*

- Who will be contributing to the curriculum framework? Parents, educators/care givers, politicians, community services, business world.
- Who will create the curriculum framework? Colleges and Universities?
- Who will decide this framework? Play based framework!

### *Subtheme: Planning*

- How long will it take to implement it? Are the supports already in place or are they yet to be determined?
- Planned implementation and staff development are essential

### *Subtheme: Adaptive*

- Who will ensure it is a dynamic framework and not a static/stagnant one, aka a “living document”?

### *Subtheme: Thinking Big*

- Aim for national curriculum.

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

### **Theme: Context**

#### *Subtheme: Definitions*

- What do we mean by framework?

#### *Subtheme: Scope*

- Begins with the parents at time of conception (help parents to recognize the value of their nurturing relationship on early child development – impart skills to parents to cope with stress, understand child behavior, positive discipline).

### **Theme: Cross ELC Paradigms, Professions and Practices**

- “Transition to”, rather than “readiness for” school –based learning
- Based on the principles of early child hood development and emergent.
- Building bridges with education?
- Caution development of “prep’ for kindergarten or gr. 1 tone/emphasis
- Don’t “throw the baby out with the bath water”. Look at/learn from what the K program statement has to offer.
- ELC is a transition to school – not a prep for school
- Inquiry based/exploratory/experiential
- Integrate education, care and health
- Play based – structured and unstructured, seamless move into formal school
- Play based and safe exploration.
- Play based; experiential

- Positive discipline focusing on problem solving, not simply controlling behavior

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Child-Centered*

- All programs must use some form of curriculum that relates to the framework. There should be evidence of thoughtful, purposeful and meaningful programming that supports children and families – meaningful to children.
- Intellectually stimulating while at the same time child focus (needs interest, play, exploration).
- Child-focused – inclusive culturally, physically, emotionally, cognitively
- Client centered – family focused.

### *Subtheme: Embedded in Family & Parents*

- How to incorporate family's ideas/goals/wishes.
- Family supports: Community connections, crc – all components – helping families/community to understand.
- Family based curriculum – the child is not an isolated entity.
- Curriculum focuses on families (parents given the skills to parent effectively)
- ELC curriculum needs to include a focus on families/parents as well. E.g. various community agencies and programs can deliver content to families which are consistent with the general ELC curriculum.
- Integration of ELC and home.
- All caregivers, regardless of role, will have the same philosophy (honor the child's uniqueness, experiential, high-nurturing relationships, positive citizenship – emphasis learning as play in beginning) active learning
- Prepare parents as first educator – we would need to teach the parents (as partners).
- Parents should be included.

### *Subtheme: Community Based*

- Community based.
- Rooted in, driven by community actors.

### *Subtheme: Consistent ... but Flexible*

- Not open to personal interpretation and delivered in consistent manner.
- Flexible.

### *Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate*

- Developmentally appropriate

### *Subtheme: Diversity*

- Respects cultural diversity.
- Diversity – need to address this well.
- Agree with aligning ELC curriculum with school-based services but need to ensure ELC curriculum is comprehensive, responsive to the community/culture or locale where it occurs and age specific e.g. play vs. typical school

### *Subtheme: Evidence*

- Alignment with research!
- Based on best practices.
- Based on current research.
- Need to have consistent evidence-based curriculum from our education institutions for staff and moneys at a personal and organizational level to support
- Use demonstrated best practices!! Don't re-invent the wheel, just tweak it. It does not need an "Alberta made" stamp.

### *Subtheme: Holistic*

- Need to address bullying.
- Holistic "whole child" family programing parental component/engagement
- Holistic 5 domains from EDI/1<sup>st</sup> 2000 days
- Addressing 5 domains (ECmap): physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language literacy; communication and general knowledge
- Build upon ECMap domains
- Holistic curriculum – health, education, care, "wellbeing" component in the curriculum
- Curriculum focuses on holistic wellbeing. Physical, emotional, social, intellectual
- Focusing on brain development, social, emotional, physical development, research and best practice
- Include attention to citizenship.
- Incorporate 5 domains of EDI
- Involve multiple/holistic teachings.
- Maslow's hierarchy: basic needs must be addressed 1<sup>st</sup>
- Social/emotional development play based
- Spiral curriculum
- Values literacy

### *Subtheme: Inclusive*

- Inclusive – how will the unique and exceptional needs be addressed

- Ensure it encompasses needs of all levels of child development – including those children with special needs.
- Inclusive of special needs.

*Subtheme: Responsive*

- Circle back to pick up skills that are weak or missing//consistently working with each individual child's situation/temperament.

*Subtheme: Seamless*

- Aim for the smooth transition B- 4 or 10 – 12,

*Subtheme: Relationship-Based*

- Community and relationship based,

**Theme: Links with Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Financing*

- Minimum standards for resources
- Resources to support implementation would have to be significant

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- All ECE's must be trained/educated to be able to implement/use a curriculum framework in their programs – or have a mentoring, program to help those who do not have the education/background
- ECD diploma should be eligible by its design for first two years of B.Ed.
- Launching a curriculum framework will be key: getting people together for joint learning opportunities will be important. Bring educators, parents educators together to learn key concepts.
- Leadership/management
- Support for directors to learn about leadership and how to support their staff in implementation
- Use of resources/staffing – training and PD opportunities for staff.
- P.D. funding and time for staff to attend
- Need for staff prof. Development and education regarding the curriculum
- Professional development/maintenance

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Have schools be the hub of all communities – early parenting workshops, day cares, prenatal.
- Wrap around services

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Awareness*

- Need for public education of curriculum. I.e.: EMap – first 2000 days – 5 domains
- Public education – caring for children is the most important job. Invest in the training of staff to be consistent with what is outlined in the curriculum

### *Subtheme: Engaging Stakeholders*

- Align with all stakeholders (schools, community, Health, etc.)
- Input from variety of sources
- Invite frontline staff, directors of programs to contribute to creation process
- Involve all stakeholders
- All stakeholders to be engaged.

### *Subtheme: Capacity*

- Will need to dramatically build up agency capacity.

### *Subtheme: Ease of Implementation*

- Framework should be practical, preventative, and educational. Should also address health issues such as gender identity/biases and sexuality in children.
- Easy to deliver, easy to update.

### *Subtheme: Evaluation*

- Do we need measure to go with the curriculum?

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

### **Theme: The Overall Idea**

- Agree a framework is important
- The word “curriculum” might make the field “fearful” but will like the idea behind it.
- I think all guidelines will tend to be more controversial than not as everyone has invested interests and competing ideals, but people will support guidelines.

### **Theme: The Ultimate Outcome**

- We want to do more to have healthy children and families

## Theme: Principles or “Process Outcomes”

### *Subtheme: Access*

- Since so many people offering care in isolation from others – creating opportunities for them to come together and learn will be important.

### *Subtheme: Equity*

- Like to have a common curriculum: there is less chance for disparity and/or feelings of being disadvantaged. There is always a concern around special interest groups wanting to have curriculum “molded” around their own biases/needs.

### *Subtheme: Consistent ... but Flexible*

- Having a common curriculum.
- It should be clear and standardized – not based on perceptions of how it should be delivered.
- Broad, common program framework – enabling communities to tailor for their needs.

## Theme: Key Features

### *Subtheme: Evidence-Based*

- This whole area will be contentious as the models suggested – which are most strongly supported by evidence are far from professional community vision of what children are, need, can be.

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Parents would feel more confident when finding care or programs.

### *Subtheme: Holistic*

- A holistic approach.
- Holistic component added to curriculum.

### *Subthemes: Cross ELC Paradigms*

- Pre-literacy skills.
- Aligns it as an educational program.
- Need for a curriculum framework that brings childcare into early learning
- Play based learning ! Experience learning!

## **Theme: Links with Other Integrative Elements**

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- A guide to follow will be helpful especially for new ELCC graduates entering the field
- ECE with background in ECE will value the framework to help guide their practice
- I think there will be agreement that public support for training will need to be put in place.
- Staff being able to use training more effectively (those who have ECE training).
- Staff professional development – will ensure quality.

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Should curriculum be legislated? If \$ is attached then yes.
- The development of a curriculum framework should be legislated.

## **Least agreement? Why?**

### **Theme: Language and Definitions**

- I challenge the idea and language of calling it a curriculum. Curriculum is misunderstood and is associated with an educational system of curriculum. Another word instead of curriculum? Play-based learning definition of play vs. curriculum.
- Maybe the word “curriculum”.
- What is a curriculum framework?
- The definition of play.
- The very definition/purpose of “curriculum”.

### **Theme: The Value of a Curriculum Framework**

- People who see ELC programs as “care” only.
- People do not see the value in this.
- The value of childcare providers bringing this career up to a highly professional level – this requires a big culture shift.

### **Theme: The Scope of the Curriculum**

- What about children not attending programs?

## **Theme: Bridging Boundaries**

### *Subtheme: Weaving Together ELC Paradigms, Professions and Practices*

- What will be in the content? ECD or Education?
- Academic vs. play.
- Always a concern around special interest groups wanting to have curriculum “molded” around their own biases/needs.
- Common pedagogy – e.g. Montessori has a different curriculum (not play based)
- Curriculum confusion.
- Experiential learning vs. traditional learning.
- Implementation of learn through play vs. traditional.
- Nonacademic approach – more play based.
- Some will want more “school-like” whereas others will want learning through play more important.
- Character development or goal achieving?
- How will it deal with discipline and broader care issues?

### *Subtheme: Collaboration*

- It requires the collaborative approach and while we are on the road to collaboration, there is still a lot of “we vs. them”, limited sharing of resources, and marginalization of one another combined with competing for limited fund/ monies.

### *Subtheme: Degree of Flexibility.*

- A framework is not a recipe book – its pedagogical stance. How tight or loose should it be?
- What about those who want a Montessori or traditional approach – where does that fit?

## **Theme: The Measures Required to Develop & Implement**

### *Subtheme: Resources*

- Financial, technical and human support to develop it and implement it.

### *Subtheme: Resistance to Change*

- Social hierarchies are a problem but will break in time.
- Special interest groups will want their own way.
- What about special interest programs – Montessori, Waldorf, etc.?
- Agreement between agencies offering ECL to large school boards: it’s the way we do it.

- We have been adult/teacher focused for generations. Being child centered is a whole new world.
- ECEs who are in role because it is a job – they view their role as babysitting and that anyone can do it.

*Subtheme: Complementary Tools*

- No legislation/mandate at present. Do people have to opt-in to it? Should it be legislated – what about non-licensed?

**Theme: Links with Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Staff development – cost of training.
- Staff development to help current with research.
- EC diploma equally 2 years transferability to B.Ed. program
- Staff professional development.

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- For profit – big box programs/owners because it will require more trained/educated ECEs – which will then require increased wages.
- Private operators may not appreciate being told how to operate their programs.

**Theme: Moving Forward**

- Who should/needs to be at the table when creating/developing curriculums?
- What implementation will look like?
- What is the role of colleges, university, accreditation and licensing. Will they want to change?

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

**Theme: Overall**

*Subtheme: Definitions*

- Define “curriculum” as typically an educational term.

*Subtheme: Drivers to Consider*

- Alberta is an increasingly multicultural province.
- The rate of birth is increasing.

- There are a lot more transient families (e.g. Fort McMurray).
- Technological change – learn, unlearn, relearn.

#### *Subtheme: Scope*

- What about parents who keep their children home? Where is their voice? How are their needs met? Are they in or out?
- It needs to part of a bigger continuum and system: what is happening in 1-12 system, post-secondary system, etc.

#### *Subtheme: Goals & Purposes*

- What will the outcomes look like?

### **Theme: A Curriculum Framework Features**

#### *Subtheme: Cross ELC Paradigms, Professions and Practices*

- Concern about term “aligning” services between school and community.
- I like the concept of kindergarten being the top of the ELC rung vs. it being the bottom of the school based rung.
- Different philosophies – Reggio etc.
- Early learning based.
- Play as the basis.
- School readiness vs. life readiness
- Shift thinking/culture within the ELCC field.
- We need to keep away from the “schoolification” of ELC as then it will become very academic based experience.
- Different beliefs/values around what purpose of EC is re: what defines learning/education – many people believe in traditional learning approaches – difficult to encourage/promote different way of thinking viewing children learning/pedagogy differences.

#### *Subtheme: Other Key Features*

- Degree of academic rigour
- Should be legislated? Should it be mandated?
- Not prescriptive of “what to do Monday morning”.

#### *Subtheme: Provincial-Regional-Community Flexibility*

- Regional difference – urban and rural, north and south, other geographical differences.

#### *Subtheme: Complementary Tools*

- Where “the child care and licensing Act” does fit into this?

*Subtheme: Dissemination Strategy*

- How do we disseminate the curriculum to all providers?

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Parents as First ELC Educators*

- Learning stories that go home for parent feedback/comments – parents as partners.
- Supporting/educating the stay at home parents somehow to have access to curriculum and input on the curriculum.
- Involvement of families.

*Subtheme: Cooperation & Collaboration*

- Collaboration among colleges/universities/licensing
- Trust is an issue.

*Subtheme: Embracing Diversity*

- Address diversity – integrate is a value, a culture shift, and train for it.
- We are a multi-cultural province

**Theme: Links with Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Curriculum framework should provide experiences that develop the ECE in his/her values/practices. Looking at ECE first then look at curriculum/work with children.
- Education of EL Educators.
- Shared training (child care and education).
- What training will be involved?
- Educators' self-worth is important.
- Time for EL educators to plan, prepare, observe, implement.
- Ongoing professional development.
- Transfer credits to Bachelor programs.

*Subtheme: Financing*

- Don't want any communities to be disadvantaged because of resource accessibility issues.
- Limited resources in some communities – not able to support a provincial framework no matter how much in favour they are.
- Need for resources
- Scarce resources
- Supports for curriculum both financial and leadership, especially during initial implementation and then for sustainability.
- This is where the rubber hits the road for the children. This area must get lion's share of resources and focus on what we need to succeed.

- Important to remember the skills of people delivering it.
- Supports for staff to step out of their ingrained roles.
- The framework is only as good as the people who are delivering it.

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Development and Implementation*

- Who should be at the table? Human Services, Education, front line? Administrators? Leadership – universities?
- Who will monitor that the curriculum is being implemented?
- Who writes it, who updates it, how they do it, how made available to others?
- That the right people decision makers, stakeholders are at the table. We need to be careful of ‘downloading’ school approach to early years.
- Who should be at the table? This could be contentious.

### *Subtheme: Awareness, Understanding & Support*

- Clear messages to community/society.
- Public relations work to be done to establish critical nature of this work.
- There is value in implementing a framework but is industry/society ready? Need to do groundwork to prepare staff.

### *Subtheme: Change Management*

- Implementation will take considerable time: many people are resisters to change!
- Minimize losses and optimize gains (what’s in it for you!): e.g. Education losing ECS but we’ve been doing it and doing it well.
- There will be transitional issues.
- Will education see this as a loss or a threat?
- Consider the ease of implementation in all communities.
- Time commitment.

### *Subtheme: Adaptive Approach*

- Treat it like a living document that needs to be tested and refreshed continuously.
- Updating curriculum and trained individuals keeping skills and knowledge base current with best practices.

## 5. Reflections

**What is your level of support for trying to advance change that more closely integrates ELC in Alberta in the following areas?**

a) Goals and purposes for early learning and care

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
30	6	2		

### Theme: Overall

#### *Subtheme: Questions*

- Sounds really great but don't know enough yet current systems not working but how it will work out is still unknown e.g.) what are the goals and outcomes
- What are we are trying to achieve?
- Would like to move forward but need more info about what integration means – must agree to common goals.

#### *Subtheme: The Case*

- Things are currently fragmented and chaotic – we could benefit from a more organized and systematic model and approach to goals.
- It's about time we move forward in the right direction – all the elements are here.
- Common vision needs to be understood.
- Yes to quality care and equal opportunities.
- Clear goals will help reduce fragmentation – address as a continuum.
- This change is positive and long time coming! Very fragmented system currently and in need of change.
- We need everyone on same page in order to provide good quality... its more than just care.
- Let's be really clear about what we are trying to achieve. We have to start here before curriculum. This has to be a primary focus.
- Agreement needed and common goals
- Creating strong foundations for society

- More focus on the importance of the early years.

### **Theme: Awareness, Understanding & Support**

- We need ground up support from business and public demand for this.
- How it's packaged and sold important for buy in.
- Language needs to be digestible for general public.
- Public education on expectations of programs.
- We need to get this right and the public is not aware of what's important so making the public aware of the importance of ELC is Huge.

### **Theme: Links to Other Integrated Elements**

#### *Subtheme: Governance*

- I strongly support ELC goals but continue to believe it needs to be nested within a broader framework with at least a true Tri-Ministry, and at best a children's ministry.
- I cannot get my head around why health isn't a big player

#### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Concentrate on professionalism

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Planning*

- Need to put in plan so it doesn't change
- Need to start acting quickly but intentionally

#### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- Not sure that all stakeholders have been consulted (parents, frontline workers, etc.)
- Private providers (70% of service??) must be engaged

### **Theme: Parting Thought**

- I am excited to see this movement happening the tone has changed since Apr/May 2011 – open, positive, more forward thinking – less complaining.

b) Governance – management, planning, participation and ownership

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
16	10	9		

**Theme: Questions**

- More info needed re: accountability and ownership.
- Sounds really great but don't know enough yet current systems not working but how it will work out is still unknown. What are the goals and outcomes?
- Who will own it? Structure? And what will happen in bad times?
- More information needed to decide.
- Who's going to own it, what's the structure?

**Theme: The Case**

- The status quo is not good enough for our children – worried about what the changes might be.
- This needs to be determined – very important.
- What we have now currently isn't working – even with an implicit outcome. Whatever we do with the framework for ELC, lets address this.

**Theme: Engagement**

*Subtheme: Stakeholders in General*

- Involve stakeholders in process of paving the way for this development: government needs to be transparent.
- More stakeholders, building collaborative and action groups made up of partners.
- We need to have more people around the table.
- Need the key decision makers to be part of this discussion. Real live people need to have a voice they cannot make decision.
- Discussions with other ministries need to happen. Also – parents, providers.

*Subtheme: Government Ministries/Schools*

- Ministers or Department of Education, Human Resources, Health and Welfare, business - all need a connect.
- Participation from policy makers i.e. superintendent
- So complex – we need to involve 3 or more ministries: Health, Advanced Education, etc.

*Subtheme: Health*

- Health (non-acute care)
- Health not involved in discussion paper – need to involve this ministry
- Need health at the table

**Theme: Provincial Models**

- Children’s ministry or tri-ministry around ECD
- Create a children’s ministry to prevent stalling out by bureaucratic quagmires.
- Increased integration and communication among ministries
- Need for ministerial cooperation i.e. a secretariat (funded) Education/human services/health/finance and stakeholders?
- Need integration/communication between ministries: Education, Human Services, Health.

**Theme: Other Considerations**

- More focus on public funding
- Flexibility and mobility, how does one involve community without so much government involvement?
- We do need a plan and soon or will lose momentum. Let’s act intentionally and thoughtfully.

**c) Financing early learning and care**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don’t know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
16	13	16		

## Theme: The Case

- The current model is not equitable.
- I didn't get to this topic for discussion but I know we need to make changes.
- Need for affordable childcare - middle income suffer; need to know more about impact on private programs.
- We spend a lot of government money to prop up struggling programs and some are really bad. We are not spending our money on quality. Putting money on spaces and quantity and # vs. quality. And where is the fiscal responsibility?

## Theme: Awareness & Understanding

- Getting public on board – education required.
- Increased funding – needs huge public education and awareness piece.
- Is there going to be buy in? Use social media.
- Needs public awareness and education around ELC initiatives

## Theme: Key Ideas

### *Subtheme: Public & Private Funding*

- In favor of public funded system. Universal accessibility – a child right
- Profit should not be made from families and children, should be publicly funded
- Publicly funded system – is the driver in the changing quality.
- We need to be more creative about using public; private and corporate money – use the way education funding is used continue to raise awareness in the public
- I do agree with notion of “capped” fees.
- Social impact bond – generating money – huge opportunity.
- Don't rethink government and corporate world as intersecting areas.
- Concern about funding and where it will come from and responsibility/ accountability and sustainability.

### *Subtheme: Supply & Demand Side Funding Mechanisms*

- Financing has to follow the child, model pushed down to preconception. Child funding is provided to the program not paid to the family.
- Supply side investment.

### *Subtheme: Sustainability*

- We have no answers to HOW, we have lots of questions around building sustainable models.
- Must be sustainable.

**Theme: Link to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Private mix of public and private without really clear understanding about why. What are the roles and responsibilities?

**d) Organizing early learning and care service delivery**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
15	9	9		

**Theme: Overall Direction**

*Subtheme: Questions*

- Don't know enough to give strong support for concept of organizing EC and C delivery
- What will this look like? Who? Why? When?
- Where, what, who, why – infrastructure needed on all levels.

*Subtheme: Goals*

- Can't be organized without clear goals however agree with better use of existing spaces and co-locating programs. This is the ultimate answer. Using existing spaces –agree strongly. The rest is too premature.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Public (community) Management*

- Move to central public funded system. In the meantime strengthen networks of exist services. This requires new ways of working together.
- I am against for-profit centers – I support centralized, publicly funded model.
- Community-based.
- Managing resources at local level.

- Changes need to be community based, accessible, affordable, appropriate, effective, and efficient and focused on whole child.

*Subtheme: Financing*

- Reorganizing or restructuring not going to solve the problem of quality and resources.

*Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- I have concerns with schoolification.
- Concerned about kindergarten seen as the beginning of education rather than as the pinnacle of early child care.

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Adaptability*

- Develop framework that allows flexibility that meets the outcomes that are set within the framework.

*Subtheme: Parent Support*

- Parents must be supported to be good stay at home parents with support.
- How to incorporate family's wishes/needs into system. Reconciling child's right to have appropriate experiences with parents. Lack of awareness for understanding of importance of early learning.
- Family centered/accessible.
- Combine programs: look at from family perspective.

*Subtheme: Affordability*

- Affordable.

**Theme: Structural Features**

*Subtheme: Networking*

- Networking between services, parents, business, health, etc. essential.

*Subtheme: Standards*

- Need to reorganize because standards require supervision – should be standards.

*Subtheme: Space*

- Combine our services/spaces/look at multi-purpose/multipartner options
- Excited about multi use of spaces, people.

- Need to rethink spaces and use of them.

**Theme: Moving Forward**

- Timeline needs to be developed.
- Establish a timeline.

e) Human resources in early learning and care

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
25	9	1		

**Theme: Scope**

- Who are the human resources? Parents also need education as well as support staff (e.g. cooks, caretakers, etc.). We need a culture shift here.

**Theme: Value**

- A challenge of ECD is better working conditions.
- A significant key to have impact on outcomes for our kids – must continue to invest in this area.
- Go for gold in this area
- If the rest falls through this needs to happen.

**Theme: Conditions for Success**

- We have to build on common expectations and have a clear idea of what we are demanding of human resources. We need the money to get there. There needs to be a well thought out plan.
- This requires leadership.

## **Theme: Education**

### *Subtheme: Standards & Accreditation*

- Accreditation, training of staff, level of certification
- Dedicated streams of learning
- Support higher education levels
- Education levels.
- Accreditation by all
- Higher expectations of child care staff
- Integration of ECD with school preparation
- Need a common standard of education throughout province for early care ...
- Reduce barriers to education
- Education and training is critical.
- Educators need a degree to work with children to increase quality. Need to not grandfather.
- Key component of a strong educational experience for young children. Best practice is 4yrs not 2
- Concerns if training/education would be voluntary vs. mandatory

### *Subtheme: Organizational Leadership*

- Support for leaders as well.
- Leadership training and certification: leadership skills in our centers is needed.
- Better leadership programming, post degree in leadership.

### *Subtheme: Staff Development and Education*

- Concerns around education/training and who is going to fund this.
- Professional development/(needs funding support)
- Publicly funded education
- Do not grandfather in untrained staff

## **Theme: Remuneration & Benefits**

- Make it financially attractive
- Need for supports in ECEs getting education along with increase wages
- Pay equity

## **Theme: Other Considerations**

- We need to involve stakeholders and what is involved – we need to have a common ground – this is huge - \$; time; commitment
- Building up profile

- Full day kindergarten is not the best option in all situations and for all children.
- Don't start or end with kindergarten. The transition year in a growing continuum from preconception to adulthood (or at least to the school system)

#### f) An early learning and care curriculum framework

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly support trying to make change in this area	Support trying to make change, but some concerns about the proposed changes	Don't know more discussion needed of the proposed changes	Do not currently support change, but willing to continue to discuss the possibility of making changes	Strongly oppose trying to make change in this area
22	6	7		

#### Theme: Value of a Curriculum Framework

- Very valuable to have consistency within the sector
- I think this is exciting and an important aspect to the discussion
- Important to have this in place
- Very needed

#### Theme: Bridging ELC and Education Paradigms

##### *Subtheme: Concepts & Language*

- We need another word. Not to call it curriculum. FRAMEWORK, GUIDELINES?
- Build awareness that it is a framework and don't fear the word curriculum.
- Define the word curriculum.
- Not called curriculum. Too closely tied to education framework.
- Use Early childhood development – not the word curriculum... leads to “academic” concepts.
- Defining “curriculum” is important. All the right ministries need to be present as equal partners

##### *Subtheme: Relationships*

- The communication between schools and day care needs to be open.
- Concern about school based programs not expecting to align or adapt to child care programs.
- I have a grave concern that aligning community based and school based is a kind of code for creating school for 4 and 5 year olds. This is only an early learning

framework and it is placing early learning too close to school and has less emphasis on care. I am also concerned that this is really about facilitating a 9-5 work day for parents more than it is providing optimal child development and learning for 0-5 year olds.

- Play-based learning

### **Theme: Consult**

- Look forward to conversation, alignment, equitability for all children
- Room for local input – tailor to group working with

### **Theme: Conditions for Success**

- Equity in programs
- Use best practice evidence for this.
- Ensure that service providers have thorough knowledge of child development (physical and intellectual and emotional).
- In principle – strongly support – need to have strong staff or be able to inform parents of value.
- My cautions are huge – need to find cohesiveness and all the ministries need to be at the table: Human Services, Health, Education. .
- Curriculum needs to be fluid, flexible and involve whole child – bio psycho social within context of family and community. Need sound evaluation processes and assessing outcomes/indicators of curriculum.
- More thought will produce better curriculum
- Need to start from birth or before (prenatally)

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

### **Theme: Build Awareness & Understanding**

- Educating the public as to the importance of an integrated ELC
- Public information and education about the importance of ELC.

### **Theme: Develop a Framework**

- Take the discussions into consideration; develop a framework; invite another round of discussion.
- Need more information, details a straw dog model based on a current discussion may be a place to start.
- Develop a unified framework

## Theme: Engage

### *Subtheme: Broad Engagement*

- Engage community, if they are to own it, they should be a part of the conversation.
- Having these sessions are a great step towards this
- Roll out of Muttart Foundation plan. If discussion groups and input is positive across the province, then, including significant champions and stakeholders across the province to advocate and lobby to have clean and intentional buy-in from community stakeholders. Need to intentional and thoughtful in work with gov't.
- Involving parents children front line in conversation
- Need for consensus amongst stakeholders including broader stakeholders – e.g. public. Once the consultations are done – get busy creating and doing homework.
- All of the above. Public consultation needs to be done.
- Engage parents/guardians
- Continued implementation of the plan that's been developed. So far, then going to broader consultation, and finding champions need to take this forward in government.
- Need to engage community
- Parent (voters) consultation
- Engage Politicians
- Public stakeholder consultation needs to be done
- Soliciting feedback from stakeholders and broadening base of stakeholders: frontline child care staff, ECS teachers, Parents.
- Still need to have the parents voice, religious voice, cultural voice
- Take the pulse of the public and frontline staff. (parents, other adults, community , business)
- Engaging front line

### *Subtheme: Decision-Makers Engagement*

- Bring in the stakeholders who can make it happen: government decision makers, senior levels of Education, business (corporate and small), city leaders (municipalities), unions, University is here – keep them here.
- Talk to Health. You can see by Let's Talk what Health's commitment is.
- Bringing the change makers to the table – gov't, corporations
- Secure buy-in at the highest levels for a unified framework and initiative; buy-in from front line staff and parents (public engagement)
- Reporting back to Secretary
- Love to see provincial champion for early learning and care that isn't limited to government.

## **Theme: Secure Leadership**

- Strong commitment from the gov't to involve all ministries at the table.
- Lead 3 ministries involved.
- All ministries need to be included. This is a must.
- Cross ministry meeting/discussion – where do they stand on this – what do they believe?
- Need all 3 ministries
- Get policy makers committed – not just consulting.
- Recognition and intentional decision making to establish a culture of collaboration and consensus. There is little evidence or history that people in ELC field can get along and work well with others in the field. Please design activities to begin this collaborative culture.
- Need to address the issue of ELC with those who make the decision!
- Stakeholder discussions with those that can make change.
- Take the ideas forward to the people who have the power to move the work forward.

## **Theme: Secure Financing**

- Finances
- Funding is ongoing to sustain
- Needs to be money
- Sustainable funding – commitment
- Who is going to fund the way forward?

## **Theme: Measurement and Standards**

- Tools to measure outcomes
- Minimal standards of care for children during their most formative years.

## **Theme: Planning**

- Establish and solidify a clear goal/vision
- Concrete steps and goals and timeframe – very necessary
- Create a clear goal and vision
- Establish common purpose and goals
- If we come together again, help us all to develop a deeper understanding of how the Provincial Government makes decision about the next right thing to do.
- We need more direction so we can move forward with action.
- Keep talking but get an action plan.

## Theme: Action Steps

- Be bold, take decisive action. Commit the money.
- Develop action plans.
- Wouldn't be part of doing the actions, but something needs to happen.
- Next steps – evidence of action taking place as a result of consultations.

## Theme: Parting Thoughts

- I am curious as to how this correlates with the UNICEF child care transition report card (Incento Research Institute).
- Keep up the great work!

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

### Theme: Overall

#### *Subtheme: Vision, Purpose & Goals*

- Clearly define the over-arching vision that outlines impact we want to have so can then go forward and outline processes, Structures, framework. Etc. to achieve the vision.
- Everyone should be able to see themselves in the impact statement
- There is lots of varying ideas even within this group of fairly like-minded people
- Similar vision within the room, that people are wanting change

#### *Subtheme: Definitions*

- What do we mean by integration – integration center education?? Or an integrated service delivery model – shared outcomes, shared philosophy. Partnership and collaborative approaches.

#### *Subtheme: The Case for Integration*

- As a province we should have this in place.
- Childcare is infrastructure – as important as roads.
- Childcare infrastructure

## Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Perhaps education could take the lead as they have a track record (and the buildings) and seem well organized. As long as health, human services are on board

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- \$ talks
- Gov't – public funds, private funds
- We need dedicated, long-term sustainable funding and commitment

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Human resources from the other ministries (e.g. education and health). We need to support this framework too so should be considered in the whole framework
- Child Care staff and operators will need significant support to implement and understand the curriculum framework but it is worth it.

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Action*

- There is great enthusiasm for an integrated approach that takes in 0-5's
- Let's get going
- Need to move forward
- Go for full integration

### *Subtheme: Strategy*

- Let's create a core curriculum and service process that will be like our well accepted idea of a strong public education system. It should be "good enough" for everyone with a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Let's not try to make a framework that does "it" all.

### *Subtheme: Engaging Key Actors*

- Bring in business too.
- Keep the family central to this ("nurturing healthy families")
- Consider P3s Public Private partnerships
- Need to engage all stakeholder voices in processes, public/private providers, school boards, post-secondary and ministerial: i.e.: 1:1, social media, tele conferences, etc.
- A key ministry is missing –HEALTH
- Move out of the inner sphere of influence, further into the community.
- Bring all stakeholders to table (parents, front lines, cultural, municipal, corporate, groups!!!)
- Need to engage all stakeholder voices in processes; public/private providers,

- Significant question! Why is ministry of Health not involved in the initiative with ELC?
- Board of Education (CBE) still defensive in its practices and not open to criticism and collaborative efforts.
- Social inclusion of some part of the population: immigrants, Francophones, low income families
- The most important stakeholders and decision-maker is missing -PARENTS
- What about those not familiar with using child care?
- Bring all stakeholders to table (parents, cultures; frontline, community, corporate, ministries)
- Where are the regionally diverse voices in all of this?
- I'm an educator in Health care and I am discouraged that our ministry is NOT actively collaborating and investing in this initiative with Human and Education ministries
- Where does involvement of other stakeholders come in?
- Conversations to continue
- The need for these types of conversations to keep happening to ensure all perspectives can continue to keep being blended

#### *Subtheme: Build Awareness*

- Awareness of info/resources conversation currently happening out there
- Build awareness of the importance of investing in the early years vs. school age
- Need to have clear communication that is heartfelt and focused on what's best for children and families.
- Public awareness of ELC
- Need communication

#### *Subtheme: Working Across Boundaries*

- Need for creating new partnerships.
- Break down silos to do real and long-lasting work.
- Need for collaboration.

### **Theme: Parting Thoughts**

- As an educator, I often forget about child care 0-4 and how vital quality care is for Alberta's young children. Also helps to remind me that varied backgrounds, cultures and experiences our children come to us with.
- I leave with cautious hope
- Brilliant minds and great discussions: I hope it comes across in the written material.
- I am small cog in a very large wheel over which I can have input but no control. All I can do is what I do and how important it is to do it.

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

### Theme: Get Involved

- Let's get going. How do we get involved?
- Come on in
- Let's work together to get it done!
- Let's work together to move this forward
- Need change for quality!
- Let's not let this lose momentum
- You have a voice, advocate for yourself and for your profession
- Let's work together for best outcomes for the children of tomorrow.
- Let's keep working towards vision.

### Theme: Optimism

- The climate is more right now than at any previous time. Momentum needs to be maintained
- Exciting time for change!
- Go for it!
- I support the idea of a potential new provincial framework for ELC because changes have to be made.
- Keep the excitement/momentum
- Look forward to change – its positive
- Passion/possibilities are growing
- Political climate, social policy framework/leadership are good for change.
- Stars are lining up: brain research/awareness/ECD
- This is an exciting initiative that has Alberta joining the ranks of ELC leaders rather than lagging behind as we have done.
- This is brilliant
- We can make collective impact
- This is the most important discussion we have had in a while. Let's do it!

### Theme: Things to Think About

- Community engagement awareness/ECMap/Upstart
- I hope it encompasses more than 4 and 5 year olds in kindergarten
- It would be important for Alberta to reach the 4 large priority goals/especially the goals of : community cohesion – social inclusion, equity of opportunity for children
- Learning theory/systems approach – ecological model

- SRI – human capital needs in AB
- Thank you for initiating these changes
- This implementation should be considered non-negotiable
- Vote
- Increase capacity, professionalism, better recognition, respect and credibility.

### **Theme: Keep Our Feet on the Ground**

- It will be a challenge, there are many road blocks ahead, but stick with it and always keep in mind who is at the center of everything we do – children.
- Keep calm and carry on
- This is important work and we must all be prepared to give up something and truly change our actions in service to achieving the impact we want to have. This work is in service to something greater than any one of us can achieve on our own.
- We need to settle on a vision that attracts buy in there's light at the end of the tunnel!!!