



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

A Record of Participant Discussions

# Edmonton

November 5, 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 prepared 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 Edmonton consultation held on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the Genesis Early Learning Centre. Forty participants took part in the discussions. The project partners greatly appreciate the time and energy the participants contributed to the discussions and thank them all individually for their insights and commitment to this work.

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

## 2. Integration

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

#### Theme: Overall

##### *Subtheme: Awareness*

- Do parents, specifically mothers know what their supports are? Are they well informed – does integration mean community, education or EL and C?

##### *Subtheme: Definitions*

- What do we mean by EL and CC
- Clearly define “who” we are talking about
- Define integration – at each level with a consistent vision at each level. Gov’t needs to match with integration and forgo the silo’ed current existence.
- Need for clear definitions, philosophies, shared vision.

##### *Subtheme: Vision*

- Need to get clear on the vision – respect all sides – increase trust levels – so integration is possible. If trust is low, no integration possible.
- What is the vision – look like? sound like? feel like? for stakeholders
- A common philosophy and/or approach must be the foundation

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

- Childcare is now a significant choice for dual earner high income families not just those in low SES situations. Everyone is looking for the same thing no matter what your income level – high quality, accessible, seamless, affordable care for children.
- The experience of an integrated ELC system has a critical impact on children and families

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

- ECD-ED Will the continuum of care be fluid between the formal education system and the ELC? They have  $\leftrightarrow$  concepts, philosophies, resources
- Integrating ELC cannot just simply be pushing the school system down into the early years
- Program philosophy – what principles guide practice and how do those principles determine credentials of educators?
- This movement has the potential of infiltrating ELC principles (child centered, play) into upper grades
- Health is significantly missing from the integration of ELC.

## Theme: Goals

### *Subtheme: Lifelong Learning*

- Child care as early learning

### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- Family well-being as a general consideration

### *Subtheme: Equity*

- Let's create a level playing field for children

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Pedagogical Approach – consistency/quality

### *Subtheme: Family Focus*

- Children live in families – not outside of them.
- Families and children are the first priority

### *Subtheme: Access*

- Access and equality of access (affordability) for all
- Equitable access to affordable care regardless of geography
- How do we meet the goals of child development and provide care for children of employed parents who work in non-standard jobs? (Low-income rotation shifts, non-standard hours). Is this achievable?

### *Subtheme: Choice*

- Do “today’s” parents trust every childcare center?
- Provide choice for parents with an integrated Early Learning and Care umbrella – helping parents to navigate through the system.
- Choices for families using integrated ELC services
- How do parents/family fit into this process? Personal freedom and choices

### *Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate*

- Recognition for the quality programs and educators at the high levels and downward. Looking at the curriculum and understanding the developmental level to ensure that children are capable of learning at an age appropriate level (play based learning)

### *Subtheme: Central v Decentralized, Provincial v Local*

- Bottom up to top down – bottom up be clear and be bold with what is needed for integration.

- How do we honour, regard unique elements important to various ELC programs and services under an integrated system (cultural values, parent as primary caregivers of their children, inclusion meaningfully integrated? Not just topically addressed, not one size fits all, but under a framework where important care foundational elements are standard to all programs and not just haphazardly addressed.
- How would integration look in urban and rural areas?
- Standardized/consistency of quality educational programs/care levels
- The balance between gov't as drivers/facilitators and the need for local context.
- Won't look the same in every community a need for flexibility

#### *Subtheme: Inclusive*

- Multiculturalism. What are the vulnerabilities of our multicultural population? How can optimal development of all children be included in pedagogy?
- With the influx of immigrant /refugee individuals relocating to Alberta, how will we ensure that the values, traditions and childrearing practices be valued and considered in this framework?

#### *Subtheme: Seamless*

- Smooth transitions for children and families (during the day as well as year to year)

#### *Subtheme: Evidence-based*

- Evidence-based practice.

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

#### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Is this becoming too close to “state” control – taking responsibility from the family or will this mission be one of inclusive facilitation of researched best practice for the betterment of all children in Alberta?
- Public provision and funding
- Which ministries will be involved other than human services and education?
- Public management – there are some ideas here that are different from a conceptual perspective – i.e.: public management of privately operated services. Public management of a mixed delivery system? Or a new concept, e.g. phase out of for-profit operations
- One ministry oversee ELC – seamless delivery of supports and services, access
- Will quality programming in childcare centers continue as is or will early childhood programs become part of education mandate?
- Clear benchmarks for ELC provision and frequent monitoring/oversight
- How could we possibly integrate the hodgepodge that is early learning and care under human services: K programs are already part of a larger system. Early care and learning is not. The issue of public vs. private huge. Are there examples of success where public funding goes to private institutions in education?
- How does the province provide appropriate, respectful and inclusive governance for ELC?

- Idea – development of early learning and care council that would be the driver in setting philosophy/direction
- Important to consider what roles for provincial gov't are. Defining "quality", setting standards for integration. Planning, especially with respect to workforce.
- Increase accountability for high quality childcare i.e. should there be private?? Is accreditation really accomplishing what its intent is/was?
- Teeth to accreditation/non-compliance
- What changes will need to occur within the ministries (education and human services) in order to facilitate proper integration?
- What ministry? Health, education, human services
- How will governing bodies support childcare and education in integrating ELC, not only on a financial level, but with an authentic knowing of the challenges the child care sector holds?

#### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Alignment of funding, addressing gaps
- Funding – currently as a "service for pay model" child care is positioned as a private enterprise. How can this be moved into a community based model that creates quality of programming for all?
- Funding inequities – how do we try to raise discussions of integration and quality of services when financial commitment is often driven by "what we can afford" or political leadership dictates.
- How will this be funded? Will that funding be sustainable and appropriate given the individual need of children and their families?
- Is there enough funding to really effectively follow through on what an accreditation should look like?
- Question – how would funding work? Which ministry?
- Resources

#### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Appropriate training/upgrading of professional qualifications available (creation of programs/access to programs)
- Consistency and training challenges
- How do we reconcile the high level programs that we strive towards with low trained work force?
- I'm concerned about what it will take to have a workforce sufficient to support an ELC system
- ED Access to post-secondary training for certificate, diploma, degree and masters levels – costs and access while child care staff are working.
- Pedagogy and best practice – what training will be required of caregivers/staff?
- Staffing and education of staff
- Education/training for ELC professionals
- What is the role of business/employers in ensuring high quality child care options?

- What is the employer's role in integrating ELC in the work place (where do they fit in?) for seamless integration to occur, it has to be from the home to the workplace, community and beyond.

#### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Be wary of big box companies seeking a way to opt out. It could undermine development of a system.
- What about corporate childcare? Publicly traded childcare – will they just “opt out” of integration?
- Public and private children; do we continue with both systems and move forward?
- Not for profit vs. for profit?
- Universal pre-k programming, i.e.: educational programming for 4 year olds and ideally 3 year olds... but at least 4 year olds
- Wrap-around services and supports
- If we bring young children into schools, that means they will be going from home (a safe place) into an area with many children. At this moment I see early learning geographically separate from school: a small setting. Bringing them geographically in the school building may be quite overwhelming for them.
- Schools as hubs – 0-8: seamless delivery can take to ensure we create a framework that works for children and families in Alberta

#### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Concerned about whether “curriculum” becomes the focus for the integrated system, instead of recognizing play and learning through play as essential for the early years
- I see Head Start as a philosophy. There is no real program or syllabus of what a teacher needs to do. I think it is necessary to streamline and have a syllabus so every head start teacher knows what needs to be done and still has liberty for personal variation.

#### *Subtheme: Regulations and Standards*

- How does accreditation fit into this model?
- The regulation that childcare centers are having to follow are not as stringent in schools (Kindergarten and up) – how will these regulations be standardized and what about the number of resources needed to do this?

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Timing*

- The movement now is exceptionally timely! We need to have a plan ready to go for whenever the gov't is able to implement it

#### *Subtheme: Starting Points*

- The idea that an education be integrated at all levels – policy/governance etc. – multiple dimensions to consider

- What will all of this look like? Will the expertise of early childhood educators be a part of this?
- Where to begin?
- Patchwork of ELC is already established and the current work force is diverse – need to start here.
- How do we take what we have and move forward: Accrediting, measure of quality
- I see many different programs: Headstart, playschool, early intervention, all governed by different agencies in one community. Bundling them would – in my vision – be more labour efficient, financially efficient, might generate more ideas and then give better outcomes for children and their families.

#### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- Who will be involved or asked to the discussion? Community stakeholders?

#### *Subtheme: Change Management*

- Transition - Many have a stake in the existing system (many early childhood professionals included) the question for me is how to transition successfully.
- Moving from patchwork to system without creating a new separate system
- Transition to this – whatever this is – may be challenging.
- Trial and error what works for our population?

#### *Subtheme: Models*

- There is no one model
- Looking at other models for other places (provinces and countries). Does this work for us?
- Having other provinces that have already integrated ELC there are learnings that we can use.

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

### **Theme: Type of Integration**

#### *Subtheme: Age Groups*

- Vertical integration – mixed age groupings support children’s relationships – building/creating opportunities for the culture of childhood to emerge

#### *Subtheme: Early Childhood Development & Education Paradigms*

- Early learning values need to filter up to the school system rather than “schoolification” of the early years.
- Would like to see a continuum of some sort – which ensures the pedagogy of early childhood, is respected.

#### *Subtheme: Programs & Services*

- Alberta currently has programs/services across ministries that need to be integrated

- Better bridges between childcare and early learning programs.
- I see the early childhood as a valuable area for integration. At this moment I see very scattered programs. That may be confusing for parents, and not be in the best interest of the children.
- 0-5 childcare being integrated within the school systems.
- Base ECL in the schools, so the kids can “grow up” there – wrap around services.
- I think there is an opportunity for early learning in childcare settings and learning about care in education settings (reciprocal learning)
- Integration and community programming neighbourhood “hubs”, school communities.
- Supports put in place for partnerships between childcare and educ.

*Subtheme: Public and Private Delivery Organizations*

- How do we address profit vs. non-profit when there is a vast difference in program quality?

**Theme: Level of Integration**

*Subtheme: Broadly Focused*

- Broad. I think this is “all or nothing” land of argument – we need integration for all levels – horizontal/vertical and in all dimensions. The bigger question for me is where to begin.
- Broadly based, to ensure integration across a range of contexts, e.g., rural, day homes.

*Subtheme: Full Integration*

- Complete integration – a comprehensive framework that outlines: Educational philosophy and curriculum, Financing, Governance, Credentialing, etc.
- Go for full – and see what comes of the effort. Another option may emerge or become clearer.
- I see vertical and horizontal integration
- Ideally, full integration would be a model to achieve. However, what will it take to position ELC across the ministries?
- Full integration, ideal
- While partial integration is more likely the reality we live today I believe it’s important if we are ever going to make long term impact that we should strive for full integration if we are ever going to achieve “big idea” shifts and change – otherwise we continue to live and support a “patchwork” system as opposed to a comprehensive “framework” deserving of the children and families we serve.

*Subtheme: Partial Integration*

- Partial integration – responsive to choice and unique needs of each “community”
- Partial integration, part of process. Identify gaps in funding, equity of resources for quality ... supported transitions.

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Access/Equity of Access*

- Easily accessible
- There needs to be a space for every child in Alberta that needs childcare. Not just 3 in 10.
- There needs to be high quality childcare accessible to all children, regardless of income, ability, parental knowledge etc.
- To resource in the early years/speech therapy, OT, PT, as well as kindergarten and up will be important
- Benefits: Equity in access to resources/supports for community /school programs.
- More equity, a better continuum. Let's have more supports and services for all children and families, not just those e.g. with a disability.
- Shouldn't be a debate of universal vs. targeted as all Albertan's should have equity in LC

### *Subtheme: Diverse/Responsive*

- Diversity – value/embrace diversity of children and families
- Responsive programming
- Allow flexibility within models to meet the needs/address challenges of each community
- Different models in different places – unique communities within province
- Local – monitor support

### *Subtheme: Family Centered*

- Specific to the needs of the families
- Increasing focus on working with families – the care part is an extension of the family
- Need to consider the necessary resources that need to be available to the parents at the same time

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- More standards as to what quality childcare should be

### *Subtheme: Seamless*

- Seamless transition from infancy to school

## Theme: Links to Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Across ministries – there is momentum – right now/many individual ministry's initiatives happening in isolation from other ministries
- Ed, human services, health – Under what auspice?
- Horizontal integration; not competing for the funding for the same type of care.
- Integrating ELC in Alberta needs to go beyond the 2 ministries, and include others as a demonstration of the fundamental importance of children and families.

- Provincial: ministry (Education), Policy, Funding – Should ELC be associated with schools (community hub) – if so put under Education
- Shared governance
- Government Role: defining quality of workers and environment.
- Health needs to be involved, not just child care and education

#### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Integrate resources for parents – more than childcare (parent link/mental health, etc.)
- Public and private funding
- Sustainability goals

#### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Education, leadership partners with what exists
- What can happen to increase education levels for those who care for our youngest and sometimes most vulnerable citizens?

#### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Municipal – planning implementation monitoring
- Municipal-local – workforce.

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Build Awareness*

- Also need to provide/disseminate this info to families that choose to be outside of the ELC system
- Normalize the concept of ELC. Is it for everyone?

#### *Subtheme: Feasibility*

- I believe integration will be difficult when you look at the numbers and levels of programming that happens in early learning programs already. The level of integration will truly depend on the existing early learning programs.

#### *Subtheme: Build On What Exists*

- How to integrate what currently exists with where we are going.
- To begin with something that will successfully integrate what is currently in place
- Working with local stakeholders and utilizing local resources for examples, senior homes, schools

#### *Subtheme: Starting Points*

- Can minimize the risk if seeds are planted right – local champions to prove worth and build constituency to advocate for it
- Ideally – start off with integration of philosophies and then services – the rest of the things (e.g. governance, finance) will follow.

- Address gaps
- Identify the gaps
- Building bridges

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

### Theme: Contextual Factors

#### *Subtheme: Environmental Drivers/Enabling Factors*

- Province has changed considerably in demographics since 2006 when Federal ECDI was ended by Harper gov't.
- We have a relatively young population with many families in need of childcare. Offering an ELC system seems timely and recognition of the importance of care and early learning in child dev. is growing.
- Who lives in Alberta now? Will the new demographic make a difference to attitudinal change.
- There is a consensus that women/men in the work force is a reality and care outside the home is important and necessary.
- Recent provincial data (ECMap) addresses need for change.
- While many have known the value and importance of brain development in the early years – mounting evidence and discussion between Ministries (Health, Education and Human Services) such as the CMO's paper or "Let's Talk About the Early Years" has really raised awareness and interest on the importance of revisiting how we support our youngest citizens
- Things are happening in the ministries and at the ground so are we ready to go the distance. What will it take to bring all the momentum from various areas together into one voice, one force.
- Research solidly backs up a move toward integrated ELC – data from ECmap + early child development support this
- I think we are at a timely juncture in AB to reflect on integration of ELC given directions taken in the last number of years (Accreditation) ELC Curriculum framework whereby there is provincial commitment and support to enhance both standards and practice in tandem for those working in ELC environments in some formal and intentional manner
- Now more than ever before – the spikes of change need to be firmly set into the ground to stake the claim and ensure sustainability of this movement towards integration.

### Theme: Levels of Readiness

#### *Subtheme: Ready*

- Ready
- The time is right

- If readiness is characterized by crisis... we are ready. Gov't support –Premier support readiness. However I believe our readiness will be best responded to with a shared vision/release “what we traditionally do”.
- I believe we are at beginning stages of readiness but we must look at ELC and make some changes at the provincial level around regulations and accreditation. ELC needs to be on a level field regarding programming and educational levels of educators.
- Need to start somewhere – I believe it's really just the leadership that needs to take place.
- Yes Ready!
- No time like the present to begin integration
- Poised and on the cusp of beginning change
- The community of ELC professionals, families commitments to change is as important as commitment from Alberta Government.
- The time is now; work hard at starting this work.
- There is a need and the political will to move forward on ELC
- There seems to be a general sense that ELC is a good thing to be doing.
- Very promising – with accreditation program, early learning and care curriculum I feel strongly Alberta is ready for moving forwards

*Subtheme: Mixed Readiness/Readiness By Area*

- Accreditation – paves the way for readiness at the front line
- Moving towards readiness
- Desire – yes. Readiness – not very organized
- Hope: 70% of women work – need is great. More awareness. Provincial support for change
- Mixed messages about what under lining is about – parents feel pressure to structure and schoolify – evidence supports play.
- More challenge in some area, than others e.g. financing and governance.
- More readiness in some areas than others.
- On a scale from 1-10, in my rural area, I would say 4. I think people do not always see the value. They like to keep their own school. May be afraid to give up their provision for the bigger picture. I think closer integration is an excellent idea. There is a lot of knowledge and finances.
- There “appears” to be readiness for discussion and change around ELC as characterized by the Premier’s focus in ECD, Muttart & Success by 6’s facilitated process across the province and with the province (AE and HS), and the social policy framework. However, it is a significant shift in thinking for Albertans, early learning/education and childcare focus and I’m not sure the readiness is there beyond a select few.
- Those in the field are mixed in terms of readiness for integrating. There is still reluctance, not as much to the idea of integration, but as to how that could be accomplished. Reluctance for role release.
- We are ready to have discussions but change will take time. Need to transform thinking before change occurs.

- Currently there is no uniform set of standards in early childcare so there will be difficulty in integration services with a wide range of procedures. However, in some aspects this might be easier to initiate the integration, i.e. provide some standards to work towards.
- Philosophies have been aligning slowly but (philosophy of play in school system)

#### *Subtheme: Challenges around Readiness*

- Slow - many years away. This is a huge process. Better answered once I understand exactly where we are in the process.
- Fear of the unknown
- Difficult: Rural vs. urban. Financial. Public vs. Private. Parental control (home schooling)
- Our educational system is too rigid in order to consider the child as part of family, rather than a “purchaser of education” only.
- I feel we are moving backwards towards further fragmentation especially as we encourage large corporations to take a larger portion of the ELC sector through public financing of these facilities with profit as their primary goal. This is counterproductive to ELC goals and integration as I think these types of organizations shirk integration.

### **Theme: Readiness by Stakeholders**

#### *Subtheme: Public and Families*

- Public readiness amongst families and children.
- Families want it – children need it.
- Alberta is still the wildest – in general Albertans don’t like gov’t involvement but like the gov’t stamp of approval.

#### *Subtheme: Political and Government*

- Depends on stakeholders and government
- Public will, political?
- The gov’t pallet/interest is high – we need to push clearly and forcefully for gov’t to break the silos and lead by example to truly integrate across sectors to strengthen services for children and families.
- There is a political will to better support early child development but not to make gov’t bigger. The approach would need to be broader based – what do you need and how can we support it?
- Government readiness – talk about but is the commitment there?
- There is a political window of opportunity – does the civil service have the capacity and motivation to take advantage of it?
- Readiness, as assessed by apparent buy-in, seems high within gov’t ministries and within upper-level ELC circles. I’m not so sure about buy-in rural areas, at political levels (MLAs, e.g.), in the private sector, and among front line child care workers.
- Political readiness tied to public readiness
- Committed leadership from AB Gov’t
- We need strong leadership from politicians

## Theme: Link to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Seems funding continues to be in separate pots and when \$ are made available – conditions are placed along with all of this.
- Seems to be a vision of I'll give my \$ if you do... “

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Develop a work force plan

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- A Key – Education ministry to take lead responsibility for ELC – with input and support from other Ministries.
- Community Partnership <-> gov't – a champion with the system.

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Starting Point*

- At least with a framework we begin to see the issues which can be problem solved overtime, without a framework, we remain stagnant.
- This conversation is a beginning.
- People on the ground doing the work can lead innovation

### *Subtheme: Things to Keep in Mind*

- Remember, Alberta is the wild west
- Be willing to consider that other Ministries, organizations or groups could do the job as well as your current affiliation.
- Need for equity in childcare/readiness to address challenges/gaps is well poised

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

## Theme: Direction

### *Subtheme: Definition*

- What do we mean by ELC
- Consistent understanding: what is it – do we all define ELC the same? How do we integrate a collective vision when consensus or consistency is so broadly defined and/or understood.

### *Subtheme: Vision*

- Vision – what is in it?
- Clarity of vision.
- We need a clear vision and collaboration between the “ministries” and stakeholders

- We need a strong vision of where we are going to avoid above.
- Strong vision
- The Goal... “In the best interests of all children and families”

#### *Subtheme: The Case*

- Anything is better than nothing. Different models in different places for examples in downtown Calgary perhaps Oil Companies could fund to attract best and brightest female engineers.
- The benefits beyond just return on investment. Our public education system attracts the best and brightest in the world – ELC could be extension of that
- Connect our future citizens to community from the start – better for children, parents, community etc.
- Good childcare is like having a “co-parent” best way to educate yourself on how to parent.

### **Theme: Principles**

#### *Subtheme: Child Centered*

- Child at the center
- Children – best interest

#### *Subtheme: Access/Equity of Access*

- Accessible to all – gov’t must take the lead (ministry)
- Ease of access for parents
- Equity does not mean same for all, it means that everyone gets what they need
- Types of family; hours of care, resources
- Equity for all
- Equal access to same resources
- Tackle barriers to access - all children, society
- Be inclusive of everyone.

#### *Subtheme: Family Focus and Family Support*

- Families' needs are evolving and different at every stage of childhood.
- Respect for parental/family rights and responsibilities
- Role and value of family and strength based.
- A variety of options available to meet families’ needs.
- Real choice!!!
- Families should not feel pressure or obligated to place their children in care which is not up to their standards or is not meeting their needs.
- Through various stages of family development
- Role and value of family and strength based.
- Resources available for parents.

#### *Subtheme: Consistent*

- Learning environments are important: “standardization” across different types of care – quality can be expected everywhere.

#### *Subtheme: Diversity*

- Diverse population – needs of all need to be considered
- Embrace our multi-cultural landscape
- Diversity, changing community/Equity in “Access” to all children/diversity/needs of individual children and families.(culture, disability, at risk, language, poverty) – families who may be isolated

#### *Subtheme: Flexibility*

- I’m happy to hear that there isn’t a “one program for all” model. We need flexible and responsive programs for Alberta’s diversity, however, this does not mean good programming for some and not so good for others.
- Unique needs of communities

### **Theme: Bridging Paradigms & Boundaries**

#### *Subtheme: Early Childhood Development & Education Paradigms*

- Broad view of what is learning
- A good philosophical framework – early learning is about care – it depends on care.
- Challenge of unique pedagogy in EC – not well understood or accepted
- Share philosophical framework, in training, human services
- The elementary education system is prepared to receive ELC children
- Ensure early childhood specialized knowledge is respected
- Making sure this integration is as much about “care” as “early learning”
- Need for community/schools to be open to acknowledging knowledge of diverse experience/perspectives. (We cannot be “experts” within the full continuum)
- Philosophical/pedagogical framework from government to provide the foundation and quality supported in research (evidence-based/research informed)
- Reciprocity – that education doesn’t shadow the contributions and insights of ELC providers.

#### *Subtheme: Health*

- Health Services needs to be involved

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

#### *Subtheme: Governance*

- This needs to happen at the same time as determining where leadership needs to sit.
- Where is the best place to house this? Education? Human services?

- This needs to be coordinated through public bodies either at a provincial or municipal level. Without gov't buy in and/or support, it cannot occur.
- Early learning and care – should be its own department... or a more direct bridge between the 2 ministries.
- Ministries may cause concern as they may work too much in their own vacuums.
- To ensure that the integrity of each ministry is left intact. i.e. danger of amalgamation is that it then becomes too big or too broad and is lost

#### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Public vs. private delivery
- Be careful of the overlap of services

#### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Access to early learning post-secondary opportunities from level 1 – Masters level; from day home provider – Ministry staff.
- Need to work on education our childcare workers: to heighten the importance of early learning, to provide high standards of care, to provide wrap-around services and guidance
- Staffing – education - \$

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Raise Awareness*

- How to get message across that this is everyone's business educating – the why is clear
- Importance of getting wide buy-in. Need for local champions to sustain support for change.
- Public needs to be informed and involved.
- Important to articulate present role of ELC and future role of ELC system, so people can understand the difference

#### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- For this to work, we need to be sure that “stakeholders” at all levels understand and see value in having an integrated framework, a system for ELC. A clear vision, and the value of that vision, needs to be articulated and promoted at all levels, from parents to cabinet ministers. I am concerned that, given the “radical” nature of the proposed system and public reluctance to engage in change that might require funding, failure to get widespread buy-in could doom the effort.
- Every level needs to be working together. There is a huge struggle for programs and funders municipal funding has a mandate, Provincial funders has another separate mandate and in discussions with each you do not combine or overlap (educational vs. family support)
- Trust is low – this needs to be addressed first and foremost to create the environment for true integration. Not all are comfortable or familiar with cross collaborative work. People will need to be shown how to do this work and come to the table – truly ready to change and be open to the collaboration.

- Gather representation from families in Alberta to be part of the planning process, implementation
- Local stakeholders must be involved
- Need to consider knowledge, input etc. from all fronts
- This process is also evolving and that it takes discussion like this with various stakeholders to continue moving in a forward direction.

#### *Subtheme: Explore Other Models*

- Based on research, look to other models both nationally and internationally but construct a “made in Alberta” system.
- Put forward LOCAL STORIES – child study center. Genesis for example. Perhaps stories/examples and models from Sweden etc. is not the best approach.
- Looking at experience in other jurisdiction – not to sacrifice one as we expand and develop another, e.g. FDK and its impact on children 0-3

#### *Subtheme: Build on What Exists*

- Need to reflect on where we’ve been and explore meaningfully what has worked or made a difference and why so we can build on lessons from the past.
- Recognizing the good things that have been done to date – i.e.: accreditation, early learning and care curriculum framework.
- There are many good programs and services currently available so important to keep those good pieces.

#### *Subtheme: Planning*

- Use EDI results
- We first need to establish baseline data which we do not have – info on levels of training; facility; current waitlists; current governance structures; kincare data, etc.
- How are we going to move this forward?

#### *Subtheme: Managing Change*

- We all need to change towards a new shared vision.
- Impact on current child care programs
- That thought be given to how we transition forward over the long term. Often initiatives and projects with good intention are introduced, but only under short time frames that as a result do not always support long term change.
- This is a huge change and many people are not comfortable with change. This is also a logical step. Most of all we need to look at the comfort level of children and families. There may be differences between urban and rural.
- A commitment to integration means creating a place (aka a framework) for all those supporting children 0-12. We’ll have to break past the boundaries and boxes we currently live in and are reluctant to let go of (i.e.. Turf wars). This won’t be easy because we are so used to fighting for what we have, we’re afraid of letting go of what we have, for fear of losing what little we have that is working.

### 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

###### *Subtheme: Vision, Awareness and Understanding*

- How do we come to a common understanding?
- Values are diverse, personal and sometimes conflicting – how do we create a set of goals that absorbs/responds to diverse values?
- Whose voice do we listen to? How do we give communities a common language so they can begin to have those discussions? What if the voices are conflicting? What if the needs from the community are so diverse?
- Do people in the community really understand and appreciate the importance of the early years to future outcomes for children? Do Albertans really understand why it is important to support ALL kids and families, especially those who may struggle to provide for their own children?
- Division of goals and purposes is founded on values – values about children and child rearing, the role of gov't in caring for children.
- Is it integration or connectivity between these areas that is the vision?

###### *Subtheme: Case for Goals*

- Because it is a good thing to do.
- Need the why and then follow with the what and how
- Need to establish why ELC system should be a public undertaking, via gov't
- Recognition that early learning is critical to overall development of children

##### Theme: Goals

###### *Subtheme: General Reflections*

- Are all the goals compatible?
- How do we come to a common understanding about what is meant by these goals to set a clear path forward? There would need to be understanding (clarity) for all involved. (e.g., government, service providers, families of working SES and communities broadly speaking) and which would lead to significant buy-in (or not). If there is different understanding – or the right voices are not included in that understanding – the outcome is not going to be appropriate for those who are in need of ELC.
- Question would be how/where do you start in providing quality care and, secondly, family support services?
- The goals seem a bit vague. They need to be articulated more clearly, with more emphasis as to why each is important.

- Goals/purpose are very important – critical to be broad based so they can be integrated in diverse contexts inquiry that are meaningful for children families and educators
- Investing in healthy children, families, communities
- Investing in economic and citizenships participation of these children for the future (community wealth and health)
- Sharing common values/beliefs about the importance of early learning and care programs – from 0 years onwards.

#### *Subtheme: Lifelong Learning*

- Learning begins at and continues into adulthood - care and learning go hand in hand.
- Early learning is the foundation for lifelong learning and each child should have access to a quality early learning environment but not an extension of elementary school
- Goals/purpose: Fostering holistic development and well-being in children
- Lifelong learning – as our understanding of brain development/neuroscience develops. How can we continue to understand and follow best practice processes for all children – again speaking to gender equity and equity of opportunity
- Life-long learning: Importance of valuing today'ness to borrow a term from Sweden to ensure that the focus is not only preparation for school years.

#### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- Family support and well-being – most programs really struggle with how to nurture this partnership role meaningfully and effectively. Education places significant focus on children, when in fact parents and families are integral to ELC environments and services
- Gender equity – family support and well-being – lifelong learning – community cohesion
- Support families in their parenting journey
- What is the families' role in ELC?

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

- How is community cohesion defined and understood across ELC sector? With ever changing family values, numbers of families who are no longer a part of their cultural communities of origin, how do we cultivate and support a meaningful sense of community in ELC practice?
- What does social inclusion look like?

#### *Subtheme: Gender and Child Equity*

- Concerns about pressure on women, especially in regards to community engagements. How to involve whole community not just mothers with young children?
- Creating access to the labour market for women?
- Ensuring marginalized/vulnerable/low income/special needs children and families are not left out
- How do we accomplish that ELC does not remain a woman's job, but can we get a mixture of genders?
- Equity of opportunity for vulnerable families is key. Speaks to ease of access

- Values and beliefs of all citizens. Convention on Rights of Child.
- Gender equity – family support and wellbeing – lifelong learning – community cohesion

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Access*

- ELC is accessible for all children regardless of finances, ethnic background, locale
- Increase accessibility for all children/families to high quality care.

### *Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility*

- Uniformity in what is being delivered
- How such a framework can fit the changing demographics and family makeup over time
- Responsive to the needs of the community
- Will we be committed to implementing or pursuing the goals equitably, for example, rural and urban, inner city and suburban; aboriginal and immigrant/refugee and others; children with disabilities?
- Remember that there are differing mediums for learning; children respond to different styles

### *Subtheme: Continuum*

- ELC is part of a continuum from birth to old age – lifelong learning
- Spectrum of supports

### *Subtheme: Diversity*

- Must work for multi-cultural, aboriginal, single parents
- Can we support ELC notion of ECD and family support (e.g. Work-family integration) for families with diverse work lives and needs (e.g. families with disability)?

### *Subtheme: Choice*

- How do we as a society consider “parent choice” and “human rights” of children?

### *Subtheme: Holistic*

- Need a holistic approach to early learning and care

### *Subtheme: Inclusion*

- Preserving cultural values and language should also be a goal
- How do we overcome cultured barriers (some very religious cultures like to keep their kids at the home)?

### *Subtheme: Parent Involvement*

- How can we ensure we teach all parents in the community? In this information era, parents who have less access to information can obtain the best possible ELC for their children.

- How can we obtain more parent involvement as ELC does now only happen in the school but perpetuates to the children's homes.
- How will the family component of early childhood and care be integrated into the education system (seamlessly)?
- Natural relationships can be established with families when ELC provides intentional focus on family support as well as ELC

*Subtheme: Quality, Responsive Services*

- High quality programming for all
- Support quality child care
- Responsive to timing of resources.. when child/family needs them
- Early childhood development – the importance of pedagogical continuity involving teachers, child care staff and parents – play based, inquiry based, literacy rich environments – importance of this as part of a high quality ELC program.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Governance*

- Include Health and Wellness
- We need leadership from federal gov't province and municipal
- Who – governance model
- Who is leading ELC?
- Integration of Governance – one Ministry needs to take the lead, to move the work forward – common framework.

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Cost-who will pay? How will it be supported by gov't, municipalities, private sector?
- Issues: what will cost be? How can we make it fiscally sustainable?
- How do we create a framework that is financially sustainable and “untouchable”?

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Education level of educators – valuing the field
- Quality staff and workforce?
- The work force
- Highly educated service providers are needed

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Does this vision include community hubs- are there other sectors to connect to / to meet the needs of all kids across the lifespan – is this one party or a bigger picture.
- Early years centers encompassing a range of services for families have potential to be a vehicle for social inclusion and community cohesion (possibly gender equity)

- With the school admin e.g. meeting, information sharing, staff meetings etc. Building relationships together between school, families, early learning programs
- ELC should be part of hub of services (physical location) including school, community health center, school, library, social services.
- Neighborhood Hub
- Supporting families and community building within a network of services
- We did once have what were referred to as a community schools based in similar intent
- Profit vs. non-profit – when is what happens for child no longer about profits?
- Integrated services
- Linkages to continuum of resources/supports beyond E.L.
- Pre-k programming

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- Who needs to be at the table to move this agenda forward?
- Give the people a venue to speak, to share their knowledge and experience
- Need to involve families – not tell them

### *Subtheme: Planning & Action*

- Where do we start?
- Iterative over time to reflect dynamic changes of family and community.

### *Subtheme: Capacity Building*

- Need to create, support, and build associations that support professional development and ELC community. E.G., Early child care association.

### *Subtheme: Key Considerations*

- Make the language impossible to say no to
- The process is challenging and complex
- Time – there is always a fiscal timeframe on services which inhibits long-term visions/goals.
- Why only age up to 6?
- Spaces/places for families – what is a community? How does community support families? (i.e. nutrition, daily needs – laundry, safety services)

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

### **Theme: Goals**

### *Subtheme: General Comments*

- Goals will set foundation – for public education/awareness
- This set of goals as outlined in the paper – goals are inter-related and interdependent
- It is also important to reassess our goals. Not sure how often.
- Compelling goals will act to increase integration
- Might be useful to distinguish between goals for nature of ECL system versus goals for implementing the system

### *Subtheme: Lifelong Learning*

- Lifelong learning – productive, safe civil society: reflective practice, Valuing “Todayness”
- Early and equal opportunity in a rapidly changing world – lifelong learning

### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- That “family” be supported welcomed as “co-contributors” to the design, goals and objectives that support children’s optimal dev. in the early years.
- Supporting family well-being. Families are different now and we need policy to support them best. Cost of housing is up. Income has stagnated, university costs are high and family structure has changed. Key to their idea is choice at local community level.
- Family support is developed based on the family representation in a community.
- Parent education (parenting)
- Increase knowledge that “Dads” play an important role.
- Family engagement (resources, support)
- Family ELC is about supporting children and parents (need a family approach – what is good for parents as well as their kids).
- Early childhood development supports for a family.
- Development of healthy children and families.
- Family Attachment – extended family learner. We support families at the beginning year. Mental health.

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

- Child well being done will/can bring about social cohesion and social inclusion and possibly equity of opportunities (gender equity tricky though tides are turning with more women in the position of main bread winner).
- Statements regarding building of community and citizenship based on ECL – social inclusion
- Development of Empathy, Emotional intelligence to further personal, inter and intra personal skills towards a Civil Society.

## **Theme: Bridging Early Learning and Care**

- We need to teach “human development” in all grades of school – we need to understand who we are as a species and how we grow, think, learn as a species.

- That children are active participants in their own learning as opposed to students of a pre-determined curriculum
- Something to address the connection between ELC and AB Education, regular school
- Ready for children vs. school readiness.
- Play based philosophy/environment
- ECD – Pedagogy (families, teacher, childcare)
- Childcare is about learning. Child care is about child development
- A strong focus and value associated with the early years (optimal dev.) being as important as the focus on “school readiness”

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Family Involvement*

- The work is done with families
- Families are engaged in children’s learning
- Engagement of families. Meaningful and values engagement. Strength – based , family
- Family involvement

### *Subtheme: Access and Equity of Access*

- To guarantee quality care learning and for all children? Or every child that needs it
- All children ( all )
- Timely support for families and children: move away from “targeting” only particular groups
- Choice (real choice!)
- Provisions of more space to offer the same quality programming for all children to access.
- One goal should refer to basic expectations of ELC: Affordable, accessible, high quality.
- Equitable access for all who request it
- Affordability
- Accessible education to ensure trained staff/workforce. Robust Alberta child care association that houses: college of ECE’s, ARCQE, accreditation
- Accessibility
- Access to all children including aboriginal children.
- Increase access and increase quality
- Equitable provisions of quality care and learning to support child and family
- Access – in every community. Equitable access/inclusive.
- Seamless delivery of supports and services for families and children – universal access – equity of access.
- Equitable development across province across families

### *Subtheme: Safe*

- Safe Children – safe and inspiring environments – positive stimulation for development involvement of parents.

- Safe and caring communities

*Subtheme: Quality of Service/Developmentally Appropriate*

- Quality, affordability, accessibility
- Quality programs that begin in child/families
- Quality of environments
- It is quality care that is important. Not the type of care – non-for profit vs. for profit vs. private vs. center based vs. home care etc.
- High quality programming
- Developmentally appropriate

*Subtheme: Holistic*

- Much greater than “school readiness” (Stop using this phrase)
- Interweave social determinants of health
- Focus on social relationships, resiliency, public awareness /messages.

*Subtheme: Inclusive*

- Programming that recognizes cultural capital
- Zero-rejection of children from ELC.
- Outreach elements to communities/at risk populations
- Humility of service providers that are willing to see/value diversity and reflect on other ways of being.
- Inclusion (special needs, multicultural, all abilities) – but not let the kids who are in the middle fall through the cracks
- Support for diversity (cultural, ability, social language etc.)
- Diverse cultural recognition

*Subtheme: Reflective Practice*

- Continuing reflective practice on the decisions, goals and processes being considered.

*Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility*

- Flexible and responsive services
- Standards and consistencies

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Support for staff
- Education/training/continuing professional development for staff
- Education standards, resource support
- College - development of supporting professional associations

#### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Integration of Governance.
- Whose responsibility is it to provide <-> equity of opportunities for all children?
- Partnership between Ministry and municipalities/communities/jurisdictions.
- Local decision making.

#### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Funding to provide better specialized staff (includes increase in pay)

#### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Integrated services and equal partnerships (Child Care-Education-Health)
- Integrated services with child care and education. (Education includes inclusive intervention which also then includes AB health).
- The goal of having childcare centers becoming a hub of services for all needs: childcare, parent resources, community equity, life-long learning, health services, mental health services, etc., etc., etc.

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Profile for ELC*

- Recognizing and valuing the ELC services as quality of life contributors/investments in the future for the collective society: setting of/monitoring of standards – adequate resourcing; ensuring equal opportunity for access to affordable care province-wide across the population.
- Recognizing and valuing the expert/professional ELC provides services including: adequate and standardized educational opportunities; improved pay and working conditions; reflective practitioners.
- Getting recognition from all sectors of the community that ELC is essential and has benefits for all
- Framing values/goals in way that speaks to everyone – what is compelling to the broadest public – use of language

#### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- Participatory engagement
- Ongoing communication and discussion opportunities

#### *Subtheme: Links*

- The idea that ELC is just one policy solution in a platform of multiple policy approaches to enhance child development and family well-being.
- Dovetail framework to the family care clinics to support community at the front line level.
- Connect with IHE and re: long-term benefit to the AB = budget/funding

#### *Subtheme: Build on What Exists*

- The expertise of the early childhood educator and importance. Recognize the quality not for profit organizations for the work that is already happening in those programs.
- What is working? What is not working and why?

#### *Subtheme: Feasibility*

- Understand fully the complexity that the silo'ed reality creates for integration to be successful or not.

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

### **Theme: Overall**

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

- Goals Well Being Values of well-being...
- Need a common vision that all Albertans in urban and rural Alberta can buy into
- Around the general goals and purposes we are likely to reach agreement. What societal values do we uphold? The values that founded Canada? Inclusive of immigrant family's values – as our country grows? Will there be choice for parents/How does that support the development of Canadian society and children?
- Common set of values/beliefs – those are universal elements
- All are important; caution on how they are stated – interrelated and inter-dependent. They accommodate a variety of options; quality, accountability
- Ultimate goal is the same – i.e. providing high quality programming for children and families in an inclusive wrap around, environment
- All are important goals – how they are stated as key

#### *Subtheme: Lifelong Learning*

- Lifelong learning will be easy to get agreement on – it's a concept that has existed for a long time
- Lifelong learning – a perception that education is the silver bullet to all social problems
- Goal 1 and 4 (ECD as lifelong learning from a holistic perspective and gender equity and equity for all children) – I think these are goals that people can easily gain some common consensus and language around and there is good research to support them. On the other hand, goals 2 and 3 are not as easy to define as they are emerging ideas (community and social cohesion) or people have different understanding or expectations of what family support and wellbeing is and should look like for all.
- ECD and lifelong learning. Family support and wellbeing. Agreement is easier. Potential pitfalls that these goals don't require ECD program.
- ECD and lifelong learning

- Lifelong early childhood development
- All families will agree that they want their child to reach full potential – how the child gets there may be where we differ. Education and key messages.

#### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- Supporting family well-being and development – validation existing system of services enhancing area of choices acknowledges changing world
- Family support and well-being. There is already considerable consensus around the family as the first and most important influence for a child; that a family needs to be healthy and supported for children to develop in a healthy way.
- Family support and well being
- Perhaps, change is consistent with the need for greater participation in the workforce

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

- Social cohesion – much more difficult for people to understand and dialogue about equity. Critically important to include these more difficult issues in the discussion – it is possible to meet the first one without addressing the need for childcare.
- Community cohesion already exists in a number of areas so I believe that this one would be the one most likely agreed upon.
- Civil Society – children who not only become part of the workforce but become contributing, socially aware citizens.

#### *Subtheme: Gender and Child Equity*

- Women’s participation in the workforce.
- With about 70% of women are in the workforce, the need for ELC is great. Costs are high change lack of success for poor and marginalized as well as for middle class families
- Child equity – it’s easier to get support for children as they’re clearly vulnerable (use a more comprehensive family approach)

#### *Subtheme: Economic return*

- The economic argument, Albertans understand the investment argument

### **Theme: Principles**

#### *Subtheme: Seamless*

- Easily navigated system

#### *Subtheme: Safe*

- The ultimate goal for all stakeholders is generally to ensure that children are in safe and nurturing learning environments. What and how that is anticipated to look like is often the challenge.

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- That we need it. A system! Quality is essential!
- Quality provisions of services
- Provisions of quality, equitable ELC

### *Subtheme: Strength-Based*

- Our current programs are difficult model that is willing to “fix” families and “fix” children. I think that programs that continue to reflect this “social band aid” approach will continue to receive attention

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

### *Subtheme: Education*

- A level of education for ELC teachers. We can all agree that ELC should be high quality, which is where education of teachers comes in

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Framework that it is education. That is important. That is it research based

### *Subtheme: A Public Good – Public Management*

- Need to advocate for why this is a public good
- Better Governance and Organization
- I would suggest that if ELC is viewed as a public good and in the public interest, consensus could be reached on almost all of the values/goals. On the other hand, if provision of ELC is seen as a for profit market opportunity, then the focus of the provider/owner is very different – less interested in equity of access, affordability, quality training
- Might have difficulty with who is responsible for children, private, public

### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Bigger picture – Financing

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Sharing of facilities
- Place making – wraparound services and delivery of supports and services in a “hub”

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Working Across Boundaries*

- Partnering of child care and education (i.e. what’s best for kids and families?)
- Need to bridge and support smoother transitions for children between ELC and education environments.
- People on a whole collaborate and work together within their community serving a common purpose

- It is easiest to see the case; easy to “talk the talk”.
- Early Childhood Development – what are the threads we can all agree on?

*Subtheme: Key Messages*

- What are the common messages we can agree on?

*Subtheme: Resistance*

- Tough. Spend time to create a level/style formula discussion so proactive discussion can take place. Name the “elephant” in the room – to increase trust, agreement may be more readily reached.

*Subtheme: “Iffy” nature*

- Success is contingent on relationships of past that impact future relationship/partnership potential
- Dependent upon the players at the table

*Subthemes: Links to Other Activities*

- Learning from the Regional Collaborative Discussion – we cannot assume links know how to collaborate or understand integration fully – need to level with the playing field

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

### **Theme: The idea of Integration**

- Idea of integration is difficult and yet fundamental to the discussion of ELC

### **Theme: Goals**

*Subtheme: General Goals/Vision*

- What does it “look” like? What is “it”?
- To what extent is the ELC center intended/required to be a support for communities beyond the individual child.
- How goals are framed will be all important.
- When we start moving beyond values/beliefs that will evoke discrepancies – setting direction.
- What the framework looks like will need to be.
- Coherent, long term vision – competing values among individuals and groups as to what ELC should look like

### *Subtheme: Lifelong Learning*

- Many people have a lack of understanding regarding early learning and the importance of what we do. This makes it very difficult for people to believe that early learning is lifelong learning.
- Yes, but ELC should not be exclusively about readiness for school – Difficult concept for parents to understand because “readiness” is misinterpreted.

### *Subtheme: Family Support*

- Family support well being
- Family support may be difficult to get agreement on simply because of the amount of resources that will likely be needed to realize this.
- Family support and well-being - from my experience childcare has been focused on care of the individual child; serving the family has been treated separately
- Complexity of family dynamics and cultural implications
- All stakeholders will likely agree that family support is needed, but often individuals and programs are/may feel that they’re walking on broken glass, in regards to offending families, or our creating policies or supporting diverse families.
- Some people will interpret ‘support’ as institutionalization

### *Subtheme: Community Cohesion*

- Not sure if there is a general understanding of community cohesion and local inclusion particularly given Alberta’s cult of the individual independence
- Some people will say that these forms of inclusion should be handled by other community activities e.g. churches, schools, YMCAs etc.

### *Subtheme: Equity*

- Gender equity – workforce and parenting – males as role-models – wages/stigma and understanding around ECD
- Gender equity – while most will say it’s important, many will still not do anything to advance this goal.
- Gender equity – not a great concern for many (particularly men in power). Gender equity perceived as unimportant or an exaggeration.
- The idea of children’s rights can be nebulous and threatening; if it ain’t broke...
- Difficult to see equity and strengths be all children and families
- Equitable vs. equal.
- Gender equality. Politics and business are still dominated by males. This may be a distraction in moving forward.

## **Theme: Principles**

### *Subtheme: Family Engagement*

- Shifting perspective to create “places” of engagement for families/children for all families/children will be viewed in ways that worry that “people will take advantage” and

that those who can afford should do their own which will decrease \$ for services for those who could benefit. There needs to be more responsive models that can support families rather than learning “need” for some at expense of others.

#### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Maybe quality.
- Quality – can be subjective and dependent on individual beliefs and understanding of what is important.

#### *Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility*

- Consistency of application in ELC environments – While unique components should be reflected and supported even with foundational elements/standards (i.e. accreditation) is not always practiced at the same caliber and standard. Q: How do we maintain opportunity to reflect unique program dimensions without compromising quality and standards?

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

#### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Governance – where are the needs of Early Learning and Care best served... Education or Human Services? What services should be included and who should pay.

#### *Subtheme: Organizing Service Delivery*

- Private business vs. public.

#### *Subtheme: Finance*

- Long term goals need long term budgeting
- Who to finance and how much?
- Financial – community and wages
- Distribution of resources, knowledge, due to “territorial”, “silo” practices

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Feasibility*

- Until all programs are at the same level and providing a quality program it would be very difficult.
- If the people in the field stay within their territories/silos and are not equipped with the knowledge and tools to venture into the collaborative world/discussion agreement will be difficult to reach. Honour what each trip to the table determine what is moveable and what is not. Start small – build upon success – and move towards the more complex issues. Then, if we need a framework to be put forward for discussion
- Turf potentially giving up but does this really need to happen if we are genuinely coming together to build stronger and better environments with a combination of Human Services and Education? Should make our outcomes stronger not divided!

## 4.0 Integrative Elements

### 4.1 Governance

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

##### Theme: Overall

###### *Subtheme: Guiding Values*

- Need to be guided by “what is in the best interest of children and families?”
- Remember - best interest of child and family, not the convenience of harried civil servants.

###### *Subtheme: Clarity on Governance*

- Needs to be a system in place but the roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and policies need to be consistent throughout the province.
- Need to be clear about who is responsible for what as ELC develops.
- How will the governance model ensure that those who make the decisions are keeping the best interests of the child and families in mind? Who is the best to govern?

###### *Subtheme: Public Management*

- Public management/public oversight is essential to ELC coordination of governance function between ministries – complex.
- Government has to lead in order to place enough importance on this that changes are made and implementation moves forward.

##### Theme: Ministerial Jurisdiction

###### *Subtheme: Questions*

- Who will govern?
- Some concerns re: who holds the purse holds the power.
- Who will be the governance for EL and care?
- Will a CF be mandated? Who will fund the PD of a CF? What ministry?
- Who is governing the early leaning and care? Probably ties into funding?
- Who in gov’t will lead? Education, social policy, health?
- Ownership – i.e. will early learning move to a different ministry? Or will ministries work to collaborate in a more intentional way. Partnerships become an expectation

###### *Subtheme: Single Ministry*

- If it’s under the umbrella of Educational system, how do we see ELC as being different and the same?
- We need one lead ministry responsible for implementation.

- Ministry lead – much talk about Education and Human Services but is there a role for other Ministries in terms of ELC? (Health? Community Development? Aboriginal. Serv.? Infrastructure? Post-secondary, municipal affairs, Employment and immigration?)
- I wonder about looking at Manitoba's model of ECD as a starting point or creating a secretariat to get it started.

#### *Subtheme: Cross Ministry or Shared Jurisdiction*

- With respect to the provincial government, how will different ministries coordinate themselves effectively? Human services, education, health and wellness...
- Should system fall under auspice, a consortium?
- Preference: decision making and funding need to be shared in some way.
- Multi-ministry
- Is there an opportunity for combined ministry involvement to serve families – care learning?
- Is a comprehensive, provincial mandate possible?
- How can we establish early learning and quality care as critical paths that need to be addressed by all ministries and by all levels of all institutions (schools, gov't, service agencies etc.)
- Do we limit ourselves thinking about governance under either education or human services? Should health be factored in as well?

### **Theme: Other Governance Themes**

#### *Subtheme: Public-Private*

- Is mixed market delivery viable or should it be phased out?
- Where does the private sector of care fit into this?
- We have large private sector involvement in this sector. How can governance include private business? What kinds of accommodation should and should not be made for private business?
- Theme that appears to emerge is public vs. private management
- How do we address current public vs. private?
- Given AB is market driven, wonder about option of putting controls in place. Wages and fees would help

#### *Subtheme: Community Voice/Decision Making*

- The government to have sole responsibility for governance or should the community and families have a role in it too? Commitment from government to move to introducing an ELC framework within the next 5 years
- Responsive quality early childhood programs are founded on democratic participation of children, families and community.
- Local level decision making
- Community role in governance.

- Invoke Community – parents/children in issues of program delivery – parents as partners (social inclusion, cultural sensitivity, community building)

*Subtheme: Accountability*

- Accountability measures need to be in place

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Integrated funding

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- ELC – Public Spaces/Hubs
- Looking at pieces holistically – program continuity transitions

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Responding to Diversity*

- Language of possibilities/ socio-cultural perspective that involves role of educator in relationship with child/family
- Early childhood program governance must acknowledge and value the diversity of program settings and social cultural controls of programs

*Subtheme: Equity of Access*

- Equity of delivery across the province: rural vs. urban, equitable access to resources.

**Theme: Moving Forward**

- I see this as very possible to do – I look at my sister provinces and they have survived this process.
- Great in theory what does it look like?
- Timeline? A sense of urgency.
- Need advocate for ELC – what is the value? Education ministry is trustworthy in public eye.

**What key guidelines should a provincial framework include in respect to governance?**

**Theme: Overall Considerations**

*Subtheme: Public Good & Management*

- Take child care out of reach of individual responsibility to public good
- Non-profit? Public management – mixed role?

*Subtheme: ELC as Part of Universal Family Development*

- Early childhood development and systemic support of family wellbeing will benefit all families, not just marginalized/vulnerable.

*Subtheme: One Part of a Strategy*

- ECD/ELC must be one prong of a comprehensive strategy to support families.

*Subtheme: Full Integration of Development Paradigms*

- Integration of learning and care should be developed in terms of place (housed together) – ethically and systematically

**Theme: Provincial Leadership**

*Subtheme: Ministerial Jurisdiction*

- Learn from the SHIP model – who holds purse strings, holds power. Integrated governance – advisory committee needs equity of power/voting/financial control
- The Provincial Government could establish a Secretariat (among, e.g.; Education, HS, HW) to handle decision making in government.
- Shared responsibility with one Ministry as the lead.

*Subtheme: Community & Parent Voice*

- Guidelines need to include greater involvement of community sector – what does that look like? Is it existing models or creating something new?
- Parent voice needs to be part of the structure.
- Responsibility at the provincial level with a structure in place for local decision making
- There needs to be a way to involve local communities in decision making. How can we avoid domination by a central hierarchy? Community and parental involvement can be critical for local adaptations

*Subtheme: Governance Activities & Roles*

- Accountability, responsibility, standards for quality care and how to maintain those standards.
- Are we operating on a command? Results based? If so, who is deciding what the results should be and how to obtain them?
- Is it going to be a germane model or a management model?
- What are the key aspects of how to govern the program? Guidelines? Policies and procedures?
- Who looks after keeping policies up to date?
- Shared governance means shared funding
- What are the frameworks of responsibility and frameworks of interest?

## Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- I like the Italian system where pedagogy is valued and supported by other dimensions.
- Intentional, accountability, partnerships. Aligning together with curriculum framework. Family supports/programs supports.

### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Base funding 2. Regulation, monitoring 3. Data collection to provide info – sustainability.
- Integration of funding required for integrated governance
- Sustainability over the long term
- Inclusive programming dollars, i.e. PUE/ELC/ basic grants. Universal pre-k funding

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Combination of service deliverers and policy makers would be best (community up and government down)
- Should municipalities be considered more in management of services given knowledge of needs?

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Credential levels of educators
- Support for p. development

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Child Centered*

- Design it around child/family first and foremost.

### *Subtheme: Access*

- Equal access to all families.

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Quality care most important. A variety of services available and supported to allow for choice. Non-profit and private center based care, family daycare, etc.
- If is not guided around quality, it is problematic
- Quality programming
- Quality programs.

### *Subtheme: Family & Parental Involvement*

- Family and Parental involvement

### *Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility*

- Balance between standards and flexibility

- Flexible/responsive to family dynamics
- Needs to consider rural groups, small Alberta communities whose needs are different than urban ELC environments

*Subtheme: Transparency*

- Transparency – may be difficult to ensure if governance is strictly a gov’t body

**Theme: Other Considerations**

- The timing is good.
- Make the system “agnostic” (using a term that came up today).
- Should be sustainable governance with adequate and consistent understanding of ELC issues.
- Regular review of the provincial framework is built in.
- Protect early childhood as specialized knowledge.

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

**Theme: General Comments**

- We don’t really recognize how many people work outside their homes

*Subtheme: Broad Goals, Purpose & Approaches*

- Agree on outcomes. i.e. what we want for our children and families
- Lifelong learning is perhaps better recognized
- Learning and care go hand in hand; recognized as a continuance of education from birth to adulthood.

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Accountability*

- Need for accountability

*Subtheme: Data-Driven*

- Utilizing research based policy analysis, policy making and administration as a basis for decision making.

## Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Need for curriculum framework guidance for consistency

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Engagement*

- Engagement of community

## Theme: Elements of Governance Model

### *Subtheme: Public Oversight*

- Government needs to play a role - set standards.
- That there has to be governance by certain guidelines

### *Subtheme: Ministerial Leadership*

- A Ministry needs to take the lead. Educ. Is the most likely as there is already a system, an infrastructure, etc. in place that could be built upon

### *Subtheme: Community Voice*

- Community as a watchdog – e.g. ELCC
- What about role of FCSS?

## Least agreement? Why?

## Theme: Provincial Model

### *Subtheme: Public Management*

- Gov't needs to play a role – interfering in parenting.

### *Subtheme: Ministerial Leadership*

- Ownership if only 1 ministry?
- Governance needs to include more than only Education and H.S. – need to consider Health and other.
- Who is going to govern: everyone wants a say.

### *Subtheme: Accountability*

- Approach to accountability.

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Role of Family*

- The importance of family involvement in programming and decision making.
- We need to be careful we don't assume the role of taking over the family.

## Theme: Links to Other Integrated Elements

### *Subtheme: Finance*

- Funding
- Shared funding – organizations appear to find it more difficult to share responsibility when they actually have to put money on the table.

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Language of a C.F. – Language of possibility/language of outcome.

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Service management planning.
- Public vs. private
- Public vs. private
- Public vs. Private. Funding. Takes courage in the government ministries to take the leap!
- Public/private – who is operating programs; what is the best approach?

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Resistance to Change*

- People fear for their jobs so we need to address this or it won't get off the ground.

## Theme: Other Considerations

- Angst around “schoolification”
- The young learners and the importance of a diverse learning environment and highly qualified staff with time for reflection and pedagogical considerations of programming.

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

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Accountability*

- What would community report re accountability look like?

### *Subtheme: Family Involvement*

- Can parents play the role that they currently are asked to play in non-profit societies? i.e. fund operations, create community, provide local advice.

### *Subtheme: Regional Flexibility*

- Rural and urban needs

## **Theme: Provincial Model**

### *Subtheme: Public Management*

- What do we mean by public management?

### *Subtheme: Ministerial Jurisdiction*

- Is it better to try to work out the government-level mechanisms (e.g.; secretariat) or to just have one department (e.g.; education) handle it? Explore possibility of different governance models in different locations.
- Need to trust who leads the governance – as partners, the strengths and advantages need to be acknowledged and shared.

### *Subtheme: Multiple Stakeholders*

- Partnership with government and community.
- Partnerships between government, regions, communities, child care sector
- Policy development is a joint effort – gov't research, practitioners, families.
- Funding, vision, data collection, regulation and monitoring, framework. Who are the stakeholders? Program delivery, choice, parent voice, diverse socio cultural views. Ministry-community, shared responsibility – partnership.

### *Subtheme: Governance Roles*

- The role of boards (non-profit) in the governance. If gov't is the governor then are they the policy or operational governor? If policy, then who manages the operations?

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

### *Subtheme: Curriculum*

- With respect to curriculum and professional development, who will oversee continued development and quality control?

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Window of Opportunity*

- How to seize the opportunity in the current political climate without moving in a direction that has an unintentional negative consequence? What kind of planning does this take?
- Timeline: urgency because of who is in gov't

*Subtheme: Path*

- We have survived Human Services – we can change.
- A smooth transition from what is currently in place so services are not lost in the interim.
- We will not be successful if we promote one way is the only way/or one is better than the other. Need different structures – different results

## 4.2 Financing

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

#### Theme: Areas of Investment

*Subtheme: Broad Funding Directions*

- Universal or targeted?
- Look at families and services holistically
- If 0-5 or prior to school – is the focus – can we work within existing systems to align and share existing systems to align and share existing resources that are invested in programs and services, i.e. Better alignment of ECS and licensed preschools
- Need to look at different ways of financing

#### Theme: Features of Financing Model

*Subtheme: Level of Investment*

- Lack of funding – start up
- Increase public funding.
- Increase municipal funding
- Funding \$1500 per child insufficient
- Finances are sufficient to ensure quality care and wages for staff
- Determining amount of funding needed

*Subtheme: Public & Private Investment*

- Provincial Government provides bulk of capital and operating costs with municipalities also involved
- If you would require a \$ contribution from parents, do you reach the population the program is intended for, or does a parent contribution form a barrier for parents, thus leaving out children from families of rich and low income families?
- If early learning and care to be publically funded, that's one thing; if not, what proportions is public or private.
- What is the role of the corporate sector in financing?
- Public? Family? Private Combination?
- Question of whether public funding should go to private business

- Is there evidence of public funds to private business that works? Where is the evidence?

#### *Subtheme: Blending & Braiding Funding*

- Combine the existing funding spent on ELC into our past – and then set up guidelines for who – i.e. local government will administer the dollars
- Alberta provides funding towards a range of programs/services to children through different ministries. HOW DO WE BLEND the funding to create an integrated early learning and care service?
- What about *<named program>* who are federally funded?
- Take into account separate current funding grants of *<named federally funded ELC program>*- begin to pool all to coordinate all.
- Duplication of funding and resource allocation
- What is currently allocated/available beyond Educ. and H.S.
- Can funding be distributed differently?

#### *Subtheme: Sustainability of Funding*

- Gov't sustainability – moving beyond seed money – but secure funding for ongoing service delivery that is responding to key objectives outlined by gov't or overarching body to support the framework

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

- Tax cuts for companies that fund an early learning program? Contributions from municipalities.
- Supply-side funding has to come with strict accountability from the gov't
- Would Alberta consider base funding?
- What to fund? How? Supply side funding creates greater stability.

#### *Subtheme: Fee Thresholds for Parents*

- What are capped parent fees? How much?
- Cap on profits for profit centers. Expectations for re-investment into the programs. Programs not meeting expectations may lose further funding, however, how to build quality without funding.
- Cap on Parent Fees. Bang for your buck.
- Cost for having staff with higher education cannot be downloaded onto the families.
- Cap fees – may be a problem for entrepreneurs.

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

#### *Subtheme: Financing for Human Resources*

- Market Model – Provincial wide salary scale - does that work?
- What are salary caps? How much is that?

- Wage top up is important to continue expecting staff to provide quality services. Province wide salary scale.
- Some support from government to increase education

*Subtheme: Governance*

- Need finances through one primary ministry to better see/align/and navigate strengths and gaps.
- For an integrated ELC we need ONE ministry/ council to set direction by developing Early Learning and Care Act
- Education take the lead and create continuity with the deputy ministries.

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Partnerships – using EPSB facilities and overhead costs

*Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Defining what is included in the ELC continuum.

**Theme: Other Considerations**

*Subtheme: Evaluation*

- Are we getting value for dollar currently spent?
- Review systems – look for duplication of services.
- Review current funding distribution

*Subtheme: Accountability*

- Transparency around public \$ - again business may become a little resistant
- Public accountability (increase public funding) may be resistant.
- Connected/recognized by gov't results based budgeting

*Subtheme: Access*

- Shared responsibility – however, no child (family) should be marginalized by lack of finances.
- Beware of a two tier system
- No family should lose dignity re access to ECL (finances)
- No child marginalized because of cost
- Equity is important

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

**Theme: Goals, Purpose & Outcomes**

- Pre-determine outcomes (realistic, achievable), that support framework

### *Subtheme: Level and Type of Investment*

- Funding should reflect model and service.
- Be careful of recommending one approach over the other in fiscal times where there is competing priorities for dollars.
- Based on program. What are the resources needed to deliver the program
- Strengths based models of reinforced funding of organizations that meet the needs of framework

## **Theme: Features of Financing Model**

### *Subtheme: Public Management*

- Purse holder holds power. Raise taxes.
- In order to finance barrier free streamlined quality ELC Alberta tax payers will need to contribute.
- Management of service costs? Not sure how this works in relation to parent fees and staff wages.
- Shared costs with province, municipalities and parents. (Federal Gov't transfers?)

### *Subtheme: Length & Durability of Investment*

- Long-term sustainable funding for purpose of planning and continuous improvement
- Reasonable timeline for financing?

### *Subtheme: Public & Private Delivery*

- Is Alberta going to continue to be market driven – if so, are there checks and balances that can be put in place to ensure parents don't suffer?
- Financing primarily for publicly provided services. Initial subsidies for profit groups – but phase out over 5-10 years.

### *Subtheme: Funding Strategies (Supply & Demand Side Mechanisms)*

- Supply side funding creates greater stability
- Subsidies (if we keep subsidies) need to cover more of the actual cost of childcare.
- Per child funding vs. per center – what are our intended outcomes?
- Criteria for access to funding
- Additional support for children/families that are vulnerable (new immigrants, language)
- Determine what is needed to protect. Fund based on need not “diagnosis” of child.
- Can we use a sliding fee scale model?
- Cap for fees

### *Subtheme: Equity of Access*

- All children and families have access to affordable childcare. Currently middle income families cannot afford it.
- Access for all- equity.

## Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Governance/accountability*

- Financing needs shared with community oversight to ensure a one government approach.
- Accountability mechanism
- Timelines – for funding, accountabilities of public \$

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Levels of staff education connected with remuneration. Budgeting education for executive directors – ED's need to have a level of education, a BSc in Social Sciences, and be knowledgeable in finance management.
- Require increase education of the workforce and increase remuneration
- Remuneration for staff, pension, benefit, equal opportunity for education
- Capacity building of ELC staff to support individual children.

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Capacity Building*

- What is the best way to support the capacity of the sector – new structures – new way of doing business?

### *Subtheme: Other Considerations*

- Does this connect to the Early Childhood Development Committee in any way? Does it need to?
- Kindergartens act SIB in ELC not ELC moving to school system. Need to work together.
- Remember disability, mental health etc.
- “Rip off the bandage” – just do it.

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

### Theme: Public Funding

- Public funding
- Public funding wherever possible/ accountability.
- Public funding and accountability wherever possible
- Public funding and accountability where possible
- Public funding

### *Subtheme: Level and Sustainability of Investment*

- This will be most difficult – the financial resources required will be significant

- Sustainable funding – collective balanced oversight of the funding to ensure integrated models.
- Funding – more – particularly for staff salaries.
- Some form of cost sharing required.
- Management of service costs should be shared responsibility of province – municipality

*Subtheme: Equity of Access for families*

- Support for vulnerable children
- Equity – advances social justice and early childhood development

*Subtheme: Effective & Efficient Services*

- Seamless services to best utilize resources
- Accreditation – re-allocation of funding is needed to human resources and capacity.
- Evaluate effectiveness of funding/accountability for public funds.
- Looking at current organizational structure to streamline funding structure. Accreditation needs re-vamping.

**Theme: Governance**

*Subtheme: Governance*

- Ministries need to join together to find ways to share responsibility
- Collaboration within government
- That community model or someone needs to manage service delivery.
- One ministry.

**Theme: Non-Profit and For Profit Delivery**

- Market model.
- Once the society has understood ELCC importance, you may have municipal support for ELCC. Public Education must be part of this, for community members to support municipal funding. Historically in AB we had municipalities investing in CC.

**Least agreement? Why?**

**Theme: Public & Private Investment**

- Who pays?
- What proportions of cost get covered privately
- Tax increase.
- Funding will be the most difficult to agree upon –who will pay for it??
- Who pays for it
- Who should pay? Meeting the demand!! If ELC is put in place, which ministry is on the hook?

- That parents are responsible for a portion of the costs and how as that determined? (i.e. % of income, # of children involved etc.)

### **Theme: Sustainable Funding**

- Confined by gov't cycle if reliant on grant funding – legislation may be required to protect funding allocations

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

- Perhaps for very outgoing children financing model that supports parents to be at home with their children i.e. tax breaks longer maternity/paternity leaves – is the model that works best.

### **Theme: For Profit and Non Profit Delivery**

- Cap profits on for-profit centers. Reinvest profits into program/services. Programs who do not meet standard/expectations to lose funds for long period of time.

### **Theme: Other Themes**

- Where do separately funded programs fit – from Health to Grant Recipient
- Collaborate/serve providers and ministries
- One Ministry driving ELC - learn from the power imbalance of the SHP model created by Ed being the purse holder

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

### **Theme: Opportunity/demand**

- Timing is ripe – have to strike while the iron is hot!
- The demand for child care is growing.

### **Theme: Vision for ELC**

- What are desired outcomes? The whole financing discussion depends on the answer to this question.

## Theme: Financing Themes

### *Subtheme: Public Management*

- What can be legislated? What can be government regulated?

### *Subtheme: Public Funding*

- There are many demands on the prov. budget – taxes may have to increase to pay for necessary services and this is a necessary service.
- Scrap 10% tax rate! Initiate a provincial sales tax!
- Provincial budget and other demands on system i.e. health/housing/education/social services/transportation etc.
- Some programs will need to be fully government funded if we want to reach the population that is most in need.

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

- Supply side funding creates greater stability

## Theme: Key Principles

### *Subtheme: Equity of Access*

- All children need to have access to high quality care (diversity, inclusiveness, ability, SES)
- Address gaps in equitable access to funding (i.e. – “pre-diagnosis”)

## Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Financing Mechanisms*

- Address duplication of funding to same child

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Collective equal decisions – making overseeing \$ allocations for 0-5 years – support the funding across Ministry
- We believe Education Ministry...
- Room for flexibility and local decision making
- One size does not fit all

### *Subtheme: Organization of Services*

- If we put caps and fee schedules in place will corporate child care just “opt out” of the provincial framework?

## Theme: Planning & Action

- Need to support the sector in partnership/collaboration. Funding some pilots.
- Settle on the ideal and the best path to get there

- Value for money?
- What can be evaluated and sustained?

## 4.3 Delivery Arrangements

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

#### Theme: General Directions

- In order for parents to navigate through systems – we need to have a clear understanding of early learning and care service delivery
- The ideas are exciting/interesting – organizing who does what? Currently services are disconnected.

#### Theme: Organizing Services

##### *Subtheme: Hubs & Networks*

- Recognize that not every centre can do it all. Importance of collaboration and partnership > range of service.
- Given ELC is more than just the formal sector/notion of supporting early years networks makes sense.
- Do some provide specialized services
- Partnerships development with community social service providers and go to human service providers and the larger education system.
- The idea of having a hub embedded in community, all services embedded intrigues me (e.g.; <named federally funded ELC program>, health, early learning, care, family resources) but how this rolls out at a provincial level and doesn't become one-offs in community is a question I can't answer.
- Diverse environment in the community to deliver ELC programs from large facilities – home providers.
- Can ELC be a resource for the day homes, informal care providers and parents?
- Horizontal integration of ELC Services is helpful/desirable to ensure children receive the right services at the right time from the right provider while at the same time preserving local character/reflecting local needs. Of options described, regional entity to manage aligns with other systems (i.e. education and health). ELC Networks within a region.
- Networks being able to respond to local contexts.

##### *Subtheme: Seamless/Continuum of Services*

- Continuum: re-configure transition points. Flexible funding elements. Coordination of “pre-school”/kindergarten. Centers within school sites (not necessarily school administered but supportive).

- How does service delivery cover transitions – provide wrap around services. Service delivery models reach to build on or be inclusive of what already exists

*Subtheme: The Role of Privately Owned/sponsored Services*

- What role does private sector play in this?
- Where does private childcare fit into this service delivery’s literature provided talked about “non-profit agencies”
- Private or public
- I see a role for employers to play in integrated ELC and family services in their business – especially large institutions such as the university and government.

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Family and/or Child Centered*

- Organize around family
- Can children come 1<sup>st</sup> when it comes to learning?
- Remember children and families are why we are doing this.

*Subtheme: Accessibility*

- Ability for services to be streamlined/easy access to parents
- How to increase spaces and accessibility?

*Subtheme: Adaptive*

- Adaptive service delivery needs also to be responsive to evolving needs – to grow with changes in practice directions, new emerging research, needs to have connectivity

*Subtheme: Choice*

- There needs to be options for families when choosing care, all should have the opportunity to choose what fits best for their family.

*Subtheme: Consistent while Responsive to Local Needs*

- Consistent relationships for children and families
- Need to be more coordinated – although there are ‘standards’ that guide service delivery, often times what is available region to region or every community to community is vastly different – while there needs to be some ‘flexibility’ in designing delivery of services that reflect unique community needs, consistency around “what” people (children/families) can/should expect is important.
- Recognize the differences or challenges that small rural communities have that urban centres don’t.
- There is always challenge of delivering services in the rural communities. How will we reach out to areas with limited resources

### *Subtheme: Inclusion*

- Can ELC accommodate inclusion of disabilities, cultural differences.

## **Theme: Crossing Paradigms, Professions and Practices**

- Break our silos – remove barriers
- Direct links between Early years and Education
- Kindergarten needs to have ECE influence.
- Philosophies, values, beliefs, different training
- Value of childcare vs. education. Need quality service at each sector.
- How do you pull together the strengths of ELC and education?
- Current service delivery is disconnected.

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

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Provincial and municipal responsibilities
- Should ministry take lead responsibility in service delivery?

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Need to improve level of education for the providers

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- The word “curriculum” – what will this mean to the 2 areas of childcare and education?
- Culturally sensitive

### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Sufficient financing to deliver services
- Sufficient financing to educate staff up to the appropriate level.

## **Theme: General Themes**

- Education, Health, HS: workforce org., mandatory membership of professional Associations, inform community, strategic plans
- Relevance and meaning to those delivering services
- Currently – public asks, “who does what?”
- How do aboriginal populations become engaged?
- What will the standards of care be for the integrated service – Childcare centres have stringent regulations
- Accreditation of service providers

## Theme: Build on What Exists

- How will we work with programs that are already in place
- Taking what has been successful and evaluating why and using those successes in organizing ELC. e.g. Accredited wage enhancement

## What key guidelines should a provincial framework include in respect to delivery arrangements?

### Theme: Direction

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

- Need clear direction in full-day kindergarten part of early learning and care framework.
- Make the purpose meaningful to everyone and deliver that message.
- Common vision. Professionals will need time to communicate. This doesn't just happen – we need a structure – not enough to say “all get along and work together”

#### *Subtheme: Common Language*

- There will need to be a common understanding of what their services are, what quality is, and how these can be complementary or coordinated services. Right now I think there is not a common language or understanding of child and family needs or among service providers about their philosophies and pedagogies.

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

- Include multi-disciplinary professionals
- ECE filtering up into the schools vs. schoolification of the early years.
- “Supported” collaboration between/within community programs and school. (More supportive, flexible transitions. i.e. PUF – Kindergarten)

### Theme: Principles

#### *Subtheme: Children First*

- Children come first- barriers should not be present if a child's development is priority.

#### *Subtheme: Inclusive*

- Needs to be inclusive, know communities, not have bias/danger of other self-named community hubs feeling threatened.
- Inclusion

#### *Subtheme: Transparency*

- Transparency

### *Subtheme: Quality*

- Quality care is what service delivery should be about.

### *Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility*

- Preserve ability to respond to local needs
- Have guidelines that, while being flexible, are meaningful to people and they feel ownership of.
- Guidelines need to be supportive, reflective of community shared values/beliefs
- Consideration given to unique needs of the family and community
- The guidelines should be structured enough to ensure consistent delivery of service, but flexible enough to meet the diversity and unique needs of communities provincially.
- Partnerships among stakeholders – built off local context/assets

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

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- One ministry to champion ELC involvement of municipalities/of parents.

### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Support partnership development.
- Challenge: municipalities have largely opted out of early learning child care, claiming it is a provincial gov't responsibility.
- Key standards for each program (Day care, <named federally funded ELC program>). Provide the necessities and support to make it happen.
- Schools are recognized for the role they can play in their communities.
- Could Parent Link centres play a different role?
- Do Parent Links play a role in linking families to services – challenge – not enough funding
- Easier access for parents – integration of system – access many childcare options through one organization (signals need for stakeholder partnerships)

### *Subtheme: Finance*

- Keeping cost affordable for all socio-economic groups
- Align current resources/supports across settings. I.e.; “educational funding supports – into childcare settings

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Protect Early Childhood Educator by proper recognitions for certification salaries etc.

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Planning*

- Needs to be time and opportunity to consider how various groups, services can work collaboratively. Having a curriculum framework can provide a meaningful platform to dialogue about ways we can strengthen and enhance services.
- Look for opportunities to align
- Need a solid infrastructure.
- Let's not go backwards.
- Acknowledge competing "firsts"

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

## Theme: Anticipated Changes

### *Subtheme: Raising Standards of Quality and Public Awareness*

- The standards because many of them are already there.
- Recognition for the education of children

### *Subtheme: Public Management*

- More public involvement in ELC
- Government needs to be the stamp of approval and take the leadership and there can be other mechanisms that hold the system up (like a Robust ACCA!)

## Theme: Service Design Elements

### *Subtheme: Seamless transitions*

- Seamless transitions – people/public expect this and if children come 1<sup>st</sup> then services should follow children and not change so drastically.

### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Focus of ELC in 1 ministry (education). Without a champion system may be inefficient/unacceptable.

### *Subtheme: Finance*

- Need for additional supports

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- ELC workers need additional support – both financially and continual professional development

*Subtheme: Consistency with Local Flexibility*

- Services match local/community/families
- Need for delivery model to be based on common qualifications across early learning and care.
- Working off of what's already in communities – expanding and supporting in new ways

**Theme: Crossing Paradigms, Professions & Practices**

- No schoolification of the early years!!!
- Needs to be based on a model that does not trump one over the other.

**Least agreement? Why?**

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Seamless*

- Seamless transitions – establishment and support of ELC being as legitimate as education and that education has a stake or can learn from ELC

*Subtheme: Consistency & Flexibility*

- Need for common service standards
- Appreciation for uniqueness of different populations, assessing same ability to access, where does parental choice fit in.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Governance*

- Who should manage?
- Where service delivery belongs (i.e.; under what ministry and governance model)

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Finances, because that may be hard to come by.

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Private operators may object to delivery standards, wage standards and increasing role of provincial gov't
- Additional supports for local public or non-profit multi-site/multi-service providers

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Protect EC Educators by paying salaries and benefits that keep these skilled specialized workers in the field!

## Theme: Moving Forward

- Not sure if the FCSS model can be used to deliver the integrated services. Similar models such as Lottery Boards were put in place years ago and didn't work. Part of this is because the models were put in place with very little guidance or standards of performance.
- Letting go, if needed...

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

### Theme: Directions

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

- Needs to be meaningful opportunity to collectively "vision" forward how coordinated service delivery could work
- Need a clear purpose otherwise harder to find a champion and promote buy-in
- Clarity and common understanding on what we are all looking towards. A framework can support a more collaborative "vision" forward.

#### *Subtheme: Scope of Integration*

- What are the boundaries of services provided?

#### *Subtheme: Public Management*

- The leadership needs to come from government as families trust programs that are stamped approved by government.

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

- The development of the trust between sectors will need particular focus and support – has to be done well.
- Other sectors believe they play a role in ELC from an ECD point of view. I.e.; health and employment and industry.
- Protect early childhood education – don't allow equivalencies.
- Consistent philosophies.

### Theme: Principles

#### *Subtheme: Child & Family Centered*

- What will give best results for the child – family

#### *Subtheme: Access*

- Is it equitable/affordable for all

- If we want to create a perception that ELC is everyone’s business, then everyone should be able to access it.

*Subtheme: Diversity*

- Until every child has a place in centers, the framework has to recognize diversity in who and how services are delivered.

*Subtheme: Made-in-Alberta*

- A “made in Alberta” model

*Subtheme: Flexibility*

- That there is a big variety in programs across Alberta and that the same program can be delivered very differently, depending urban or rural. And thus there may be very different needs.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Wrap around services for parents/families. Services are more closely connected/aligned and AWARE of each other.
- How can you either transition or accommodate the private sector in delivering services?

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Adequate financial and HR support
- \$\$ - Money to make this work – or redistribution of funding

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Workforce strategy.

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Planning*

- Anticipate community impacts and mitigate risks
- To be able to think beyond how we work traditionally to being open-minded to new and different or innovative ways to think forwards... Is this about how we fit ourselves into existing ministries, service delivery systems or is the best way forward “re-inventing” what/how service delivery meets current ELC needs?

*Subtheme: Links to Related Efforts*

- Links Opportunity of ECMap Coalitions – these could be ELC networks

## 4.4 Human Resources

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

#### Theme: Broader Comments

##### *Subtheme: Public Awareness*

- Strategy for change in public attitude around need for real qualified education.
- People with awareness/understanding of the complexity of ELC
- Public education, ECE.

##### *Subtheme: Profile & Professionalization*

- How can professionalism be established and developed in the ELC workforce?
- ECE's need to be seen, and see themselves as professionals

#### Theme: Integrating Paradigms, Professions, Practices

- We need an early childhood credentials for teachers.
- This framework will require joint, equal governing oversight to determine and regulate the funding, accreditation, etc.
- The idea of the intentional teacher and a facilitator of learning may not be as prevalent in either certified teacher or ECE Diploma.
- Silos between funders, programs, curriculum, expectations, quality programming and various levels.
- Schools have certified teachers but it is a problem that they are not trained to do the role of ELC teacher.
- Same supports to childcare as to education. When children who are supported by supported child are absent we cannot pay the staff – would they do this to teachers?
- Inequities between systems – ELC and EDUC. Need to address.
- In order to integrate ELC – we need to integrate early childhood teachers
- Currently there is a diverse value placed on those that “care” for children vs. “educate” children. If we are to level the playing field, I agree that there needs to be higher levels of required training for childcare. Staff and wages that reflect the training. At the same time, there needs to be more ECD training for early educators. It's about bringing the level of training up albeit with a slightly different focus depending on background.
- Contrast for programs operated under education to those (ELC) under human services in education and compensation.
- ECE for Kindergarten teachers.
- Diverse populations i.e. level 1 EA vs. teacher with M. Ed.
- Shared/joint PD experiences community – Kindergarten
- Common ELC post-sec. credential

## Theme: Aspects of Human Resources

### *Subtheme: Level of Formal Education*

- Level of education: what's required? Are we able to attract staff with the required education level? Can we pay them accordingly? What do we do if we are unable to attract staff with the required education, but at the same time there is an obvious need for the program? Separate entity or AB teachers? Are we going to deal with a union?
- Increased education HR training
- Increase level of education for the workforce.
- How can ELC training be seen as specialized/unique?
- Educational opportunities
- Appropriate linkages between formal education and accreditation.
- Increase accessibility to education to people in the field from day home providers – ministry staff.
- Training quality in childcare but also in education (teachers need early childhood)

### *Subtheme: Standards and Qualifications*

- Relook at accreditation.
- What qualifications enable practitioners to deliver high quality early learning and care? ECS? Professional Learning? Embedded Professional learning
- Training accessibility.
- Qualifications – college of ECE
- Qualification standards
- Equivalencies for ELC certification by gov't brings a wide array of pedagogical or practices to the field.
- Certification move to the community with resources to support it.
- Raised credential requirements for childcare
- By requiring criteria "ECS" – enable ELC environments to hire the "very best" - gets around challenge of "union" rules/seniority

### *Subtheme: Remuneration*

- Salary scale that reflects education
- Pay equity for ELC professionals/regardless of education/experience based vs. setting
- Pay equality – higher pay for childcare based on increased training
- Increase remuneration for child care staff/workforce.
- Increase in pay structure
- Equity opportunities for all day early childhood teacher in terms of remuneration and benefits
- Can pay scales become more uniform and high enough to attract men and more stability?

#### *Subtheme: Universities & Colleges*

- How will universities and post-secondary institutes respond to ECE training/requirements?

#### *Subtheme: Professional Development*

- Mentorship for on-site pd.: credentials for high level education of educators.
- Childcare Diploma educated staff occasionally need more education or support to implement their learnings in the field.
- Increase minimum professional development requirements.

#### *Subtheme: Administrators and Senior managers*

- Many administrations in childcare are thrown into the role after years after being in the field, so having practical tools available.
- How can leadership (administrative and operations, governance) be developed: i.e. ED positions?
- Adequate training and professional development for new administrators.

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

#### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Resources
- Get real about training ELC workforce – the plan has existed for more than 20 years. Children and families deserve it, so fund it. When they're trained, Pay them!
- Equality in resources, and respect in delivery of services - ELC programs vs. school system
- Cost for paying staff with increased education cannot be downloaded directly on families.

#### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Curriculum framework may help.
- Common philosophical framework

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Subtheme: Planning*

- Workforce issues are huge. A comprehensive plan needs to be implemented soon because it will take years to build a qualified workforce.
- In theory common workforce planning is a good thing; in reality will be one of most challenging aspects
- Comprehensive workforce strategy

#### *Subtheme: Resources to Build Human Resources Capacity*

- Agree: Need to support expansion of existing services currently well served by the current model (i.e.: rural communities still struggling w/ resourcing programs with qualified staff. While they are supportive of a curriculum framework there is concern for how they will be

able to implement it... How do we develop entry points for communities at differing operational levels?

- Practical tools for individuals in the human services sector to utilize which are consistent throughout the province.

### **Theme: General Feedback**

- Yes to recommendations
- Integration at systemic level
- Contact hours – not PD - would they do this to a teacher? Sick/vacation – loss pay
- People who can draw families/parents into conversation regarding quality care and learning
- Can a college be established?
- Significant variances in education and expertise which will require an array of supports for those implementing ( i.e.: training that reinforces theory and practice) to know how to translate and implement what a curriculum framework might look like.

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

### **Theme: General**

#### *Subtheme: Raise Awareness and Profile*

- That ELC professionals are recognized for the specialized knowledge they possess about ELC
- Acknowledging specialized knowledge of child development required and family relationships to work in an early learning and care setting.
- Child care centers are struggling with being recognized for the quality of care/resources/learning that is happening in “some” areas. The tremendous vision of poor quality care is over shadowing the good news stories – and bringing down the image of what quality can look like. It’s time to step in and support what is good in the field and take a stand against what is not good.
- Buy-in society at large

#### *Subtheme: Goals and Outcomes*

- Articulate outcomes - fund work towards these
- Start with shared, agree upon outcomes and work backwards to implementation.
- Be clear about the values, principles, and expectations of common credentials

#### *Subtheme: Scope*

- Ensure day home and informal care providers are considered part of the HR plan

## Theme: Proposed Ideas

### *Subtheme: Standards, Credentials, Regulations*

- Increase credentials of front line people
- Expectations/credentials for each type of position in stratified workforce
- Build accreditation standards as base licensing
- Relook at qualification certification for those working in ELC programs regulated through Human Services
- Increase standards of accreditation
- Consideration for credentials that build and transfer from post-sec to post-sec or e.g. child care – education
- Adopt higher quality indicators for adult/child responsiveness

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

- Multi-disciplinary teams
- Who will be responsible for this education and are they talking and communicating the same language (e.g. post-secondary, pre service teachers, professional development, diplomas, etc.)
- We have many pedagogical thoughts, such as Montessori, theme based planning, Reggio inspired. How do we determine 1 pedagogical framework to be rolled out to the profession.
- Professional teams working with children/families – early childhood educators as equal partners
- Professional learning includes 0-K – all professionals and practitioners
- Kindergarten teachers and ECE background
- How do you integrate ELC workers?
- EC education for K. teachers
- Acknowledgement that early childhood requires specialized knowledge and skills.

### *Subtheme: Remuneration*

- We need to increase wages and respect and training for EC workers to encourage more individuals to enter the field and stay.
- Unified salary grid
- Need specialized education but needs to come with salary aligned with higher level of education. Currently while people might support this philosophically, financially people question why they would invest in additional education for same or less pay!

### *Subtheme: Education & Training*

- Training – consistent and intentional 0-8 years.
- Proper training at all levels.
- Once a framework is determined, ensure the formal education mirrors the expectations of the framework. The current workforce may require upgrading to support the framework
- Increase level of education required to work in ELC

- Education of professionals and the public regulation
- Education – broaden scope of skill set.
- Early childhood dev. training – is critical
- A required level of education for teachers/service providers

*Subtheme: Professional Development*

- Wage enhancement does not cover for staff professional development
- Timeline and vehicle/funds, post-secondary access for current child care staff to increase education.
- That P.D. be responsive, ongoing and meaningful.
- Ongoing, high-quality training will be key. Appropriate remuneration will be key.
- Leadership development
- Consideration for professional development models that involve on site – pedagogical practice with mentors. (pedagogical leaders)

*Subtheme: Upgrading Current ELC Staff*

- How will you ensure ECE's are scaled up? And teachers are qualified to teach Kindergarten (not secondary education).

*Subtheme: Post-Secondary*

- Colleges/universities to offer a common curriculum for credentialing

*Subtheme: College of Early Childhood Educators*

- Professionalism and the creation of college of ECE could support the expectations for education. Buy in of society to support
- Consideration for formation of credentialing a professional organization (governing body) of early childhood educators.
- Establish a college of ECE's to keep certification current

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Inclusion*

- Inclusive model requires training/understanding of inclusion and working with children and families of children with special needs.

*Subtheme: Equity*

- Equitability and equity

*Subtheme: Gender Neutral*

- Gender neutral profession.
- Communicate and advocate a gender-neutral profession

### *Subtheme: Flexibility*

- Use other examples i.e. addiction counsellor as Health Professionals (professional designation, pay equity, etc.) – AHS – balancing unique environments.

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

### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Solid infrastructure and adequate funding
- Resources for training
- Public funding and education for people who do not access the ELCC.
- I see a wide range of funding support observing many agencies within the province – so to see a more streamlined model would be more equitable
- Public funding – equity in workforce
- Funding processes and accessibility of funds be consistent and equitable

## **Theme: Other Issues**

### *Subtheme: Day to Day Practice*

- There needs to be reflection time for all staff and time for dialogue
- Solid infrastructure on an ongoing basis is important for the ELC sector to be able to implement a curriculum framework meaningfully (i.e.: effective planning time, not just over a lunch hour, nor with penalty of wage support while out of contact time with children)

### *Subtheme: Public-Private Delivery*

- Public, not for profit delivery
- Public, accessible, inclusive, high standards, community education partners

## **Theme: Moving Forward**

### *Subtheme: Planning*

- Review outcomes of accreditation process/standards
- Have a workforce strategy in place.
- Comprehensive workforce strategy essential to the long-term development and sustainability of a good ELC system
- What do we need to protect? What do we need to move forward?
- What research supports – Best practices

### *Subtheme: Other Models*

- Are there other examples of integrated training (e.g.; nursing)

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

### Theme: General Comments

#### *Subtheme: Awareness*

- Public education to start

#### *Subtheme: Public Management & Leadership*

- Government needs to take the lead
- Needs to come from government

#### *Subtheme: Raising Profile of ELC Profession*

- Elevate the profession to attract quality leaders/directors to have ELCC training.

### Theme: Education

#### *Subtheme: Cross Profession Education*

- Common credentialing because of capacity of training system to respond
- Education – degree program united workforce
- How do you work towards a model that enables ECE qualifications to take precedence in the workforce in ELC environments? ATA only allows teachers into professional associations.

#### *Subtheme: Increased Education*

- ECE for kindergarten teachers
- ECE training requirement for environments
- Increase level of education in the field
- Education – ensures quality
- Education of educators
- Improved training.

#### *Subtheme: Standards & Regulations*

- Why is there a licensing and an accreditation body – why can't they be the same thing? If more funding is attached to higher standards – there will be buy in.
- Regulation – mitigates risk
- Standards of care – could include ECE college
- ELC staff should have credentials
- The requirements, because we all want quality in our programs.
- For standards for ED as well, a frontline worker will not necessarily be a good ED.
- Accredited programs can perform for one.

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

### *Subtheme: Finances*

- Cap the parent fees.
- New funding partnerships with municipalities to support service delivery may be a challenge because of the fear of having inconsistent funding with the loss of sustainable programming.

## **Theme: Other Areas**

- Need to connect with results based budgeting – outcomes are connected to framework
- College of ECEs important

## **Least agreement? Why?**

### **Theme: General**

#### *Subtheme: Scope of ELC*

- Scope Birth to kinder.

#### *Subtheme: Employer/employee Relationships*

- Union vs. non union
- Unions – push back re: requirements, seniority
- Changes in work conditions (shift work for teachers) will be difficult to agree upon

### **Theme: Proposed Ideas**

#### *Subtheme: Remuneration*

- Salary scale/ private and capped – sector will not support
- Salary Grids
- Pay – based on value of children and ELC on role of ELC in society
- Compensation, because it may differ per area?

#### *Subtheme: Increased Education*

- I can imagine opposition, on the view that no further training is required

#### *Subtheme: Cross Domain Practice*

- I can imagine the ATA or others accepting the implication that teachers require additional training.
- EC Education for K teachers – some stakeholders will argue that a good teacher can teach any grade.

*Subtheme: Professional Association for Early Childhood Educators*

- Professional Association for child care.
- No to ECE professional Learning Association for EAs and child care
- No ECE professional body.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Value of ELC (resource lens)
- Sharing of resources
- Provide funding for current staff to increase education.
- Paid professional development time ongoing.
- Increased cost – increase opposition

*Subtheme: Partnerships with Municipalities*

- New funding partnerships with municipalities to support service delivery may be a challenge because of the fear of having inconsistent funding with the loss of sustainable programming.

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

**Theme: Case**

- Put value on Human Resource – it's important to quality care.
- Societal and perception values of ELC

**Theme: Principles**

*Subtheme: Parent Focused*

- Recognize family as qualified workforces, contribution to quality care and their ability to parent.

*Subtheme: Local Flexibility*

- We talk about bridging the gap between education and ELC. This needs to happen at a grass roots level and relationship building must begin within your community/your sector.

*Subtheme: Social Justice*

- Ensure the ELC industry doesn't perpetuate what it is supposed to solve i.e. inequity and exclusion. i.e. make sure it doesn't support low income.

*Subtheme: Focus on Outcomes*

- Outcome based.

*Subtheme: Child Centered*

- At the centre S/B best interest of children.

*Subtheme: Research Based*

- What is the model that can be learned from – pull from existing processes.

**Theme: Operational Considerations**

*Subtheme: Education & Qualifications*

- Government at some point needs to set a baseline and say, “This is the minimum education level for Early Learning and Child Care”
- There must be a regulation as to education level.
- Certification = Equivalencies of foreign educated people has hindered quality ELCC.
- Training for 0-8yrs should all be trained in early childhood.
- Equivalencies across professions.
- Increase to higher education for all ECE professionals including day home providers.
- Shared and joint objective with ELC environments
- Integration of people working on ELC will require integrating the training of school teachers, preschool/early educators, and childcare workers
- Mesh and integrate professional learning with education and child care practitioners and professionals.

*Subtheme: Professional Development*

- How to provide upgrade opportunities to current staff: how to pay for it?
- Training and professional development must be ongoing
- Quality professional development that is responsive to interests/areas of growth. That is more than the workshop model – which really does not work.

*Subtheme: Remuneration & Benefits*

- Higher pay and benefits are essential for ELC staff

*Subtheme: Staffing*

- Equitable distribution of qualified staff.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Resources
- Sufficient funding must be provided because of retention purposes.
- Sustainability

*Subtheme: Governance*

- Government needs to drive the cart and promote the importance of ELCC.

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Engagement/Stakeholder participation*

- Need to engage other stakeholders e.g. A.T.A.
- How do we bring together the expertise of those from various aspects of the sector so that the skill sets each possess contribute to better environments for children or families?
- How do we make sure those of various backgrounds have an equitable voice and value to ELC environments?
- Increasing accreditation - become one body to increase
- Associate Driven and represented by ACCA

*Subtheme: Managing Change*

- Journey to the change is challenging.
- Phased in approach
- Time – how long?

*Subtheme: Planning*

- Where we are now and where we want to be and allow the time and resources to get there.
- All 5 recommendations are linked (pg. 35-36) and should be considered. Sequence appropriately.

*Subtheme: Courage*

- Be bold!

## **4.5 Curriculum Framework**

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

**Theme: Context**

*Subtheme: Public Awareness*

- Community “education” on early learning and what that looks like.
- Public education marketed
- To educate the public first so that children are active and engaged learners. How do we?

### *Subtheme: Definitions*

- Developing common understanding of what is “curriculum”. A positive in enabling “informed” discussions on what it actually is and how we effectively support it (more than fill in the blank program sheets).
- Define “curriculum framework” need a common understanding
- Common understanding of what curriculum is – do we have one?

### *Subtheme: Scope*

- How will it benefit families who do not use child care?
- The younger ages not be forgotten in the framework
- What range (age)(service providers) it reaches too!

### *Subtheme: Case for Curriculum*

- We can't support increased standards for ELC service w/o a solid curriculum framework that educators need to guide the “how”
- Huge opportunity to influence practice
- Yes - we need a foundation to work from
- Consistent ELC framework – idea is exciting! To have a EL and C framework for curriculum development would assist in having more consistency in early learning
- Of course: but we know the why, now we need the what and how!

### *Subtheme: Goals*

- How to measure if children became lifelong learners?

### *Subtheme: Reconciliation of Education and Care Paradigms*

- Care and learning are equally important and different for age groups
- Concern: would the curriculum be based on or focused on school readiness. If that's the case – it would need to be revisited
- How can the curriculum be integrated and continuous with the late school curriculum?
- Curriculum needs to be play based. My concern is that it becomes a very institute/school setting for very young children.
- More traditional pedagogical guidelines, how is this different from a more traditional content based curriculum.
- Need to emphasize that this is not about pushing down of schooling and why that is important.
- There be a focus on training through play not school readiness
- What are our values and beliefs around young children?
- Developmentally appropriate
- Looking at play and what is developmentally appropriate.
- Age appropriate, play base curriculum.

## Theme: Principles

### *Subtheme: Made-in Alberta*

- Must reflect Alberta Values/Goals

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

- Best practices in terms of child development/programming: incidental learning/teaching strategies; experiential learning/teaching; following the child's lead – joint attention; natural teaching strategies; embedded learning in play activities; language enriched.
- Neuro-developmental research
- Still have challenge of integrating neuro-science into tangible practices - knowledge translation: Who? How?
- Long term evidence of curriculum frameworks such as Te Whariki and Reggio approaches.

### *Subtheme: Inclusion/Diversity/Local Context*

- Must be inclusive of all children.
- Incorporate different early learning environments in urban and rural Alberta
- The curriculum requirements would need to be adaptable to the various communities in this province.
- Attention to the diversity of cultural contexts for ELC
- Diversity of Albertan's children and families - the need for the curriculum to reflect that.
- Must acknowledge different social and cultural contexts.

### *Subtheme: Mandated or Voluntary*

- Will it be mandated?
- All programs must be equipped to deliver the curriculum

### *Subtheme: Seamless*

- Model that supports children's optimal dev. 0-12 to facilitate smooth seamless transitions between ELC/school system

## Theme: Links to Integrated Frameworks

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Front line staff in centers still do not have a good understanding of child growth/development. This compromises quality and early learning opportunities because staff do not recognize these opportunities.
- What would "training and/or education" look like? How do we balance the specialized knowledge of ELC's and Teachers to support an ELC framework?
- Government need to understand the different levels of delivery in programs and be prepared to support programs with staff develop.
- How can it roll out to a current structural system that involves 3 levels of credentials?
- Organize the work force. For example – ACCA

- What professional development format will it involve?
- Knowledge, Training, Experience and enthusiasm of staff, etc.
- Professional development, roll out of training: How will this happen?

*Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- Combining community agencies
- Question: what would service planning look like with an EL and C curriculum framework
- Fit with assessment e.g. Glenrose what about mental health (our philosophies are different)?

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Managing Change*

- Different than a “traditional curriculum”: how will people embrace it?
- Making this change? Leaders need change management

*Subtheme: Engaging Stakeholders*

- Embrace across Human/Service and Educations as well as private centers and curriculums
- How will health professionals be involved?
- I think an integrated ELC curriculum framework is very exciting but I wonder how challenging it would be to get a tradition such as education to collaborate with early childhood folks in the development of such a framework. Who would drive this and how would all the right voices be included?
- Who will determine what curriculum would need to be developed?
- Framework needs to be agreed upon by all ELC programs

*Subtheme: Build on*

- We need to draw on and adapt what is already in place now.

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

**Theme: General Approach**

*Subtheme: Reconciling Education and Care Paradigms*

- Curriculum right from birth
- Away from traditional thought processes around development and learning “school readiness”
- Curriculum - what does this mean? Ensure it doesn’t mean school: ready for school
- Curriculum should emphasize the primary importance of play, and ensure that appropriate training for professionals is in place.

- If a more broad framework is developed, it should emphasize broad developmental goals for children. This can be interpreted incredibly differently depending on philosophies, backgrounds, etc.. There needs to be common understanding of the elements of a broad curriculum are and very skilled staff that can operationalize that in an ELC context.
- Learning leads development
- Needs to meaningfully engage and build upon what family community and practitioners know about children “collectively” not in isolation or one-dimensional perspective approach.
- Play as integral to development of who child but how do we make “the case” for play
- Play based
- Bridge between ECD and k-3
- Play, play, play – the foundation of the framework – families need to understand the value
- There needs to be a strong statement about how children learn and thrive, and about the condition that promote learning and thriving.
- Values and belief around young children: Hire quality, well-trained staff – curriculum delivery.
- Guidelines – emergent and evolving curriculum which bridges EL and C and the school years

#### *Subtheme: Research & Evidence*

- Best practices
- Research – based pedagogy; Multi-disciplinary plan
- Start with a brief review of existing curriculum (e.g.; New Brunswick) and modify with input from ACCA, AB Educ., MacEwan, and Mt. Royal.
- We have opportunity to tap into the wealth of new knowledge around supporting ELC: there is a need to implement this new knowledge and understand the impact on children and families.

### **Theme: Principles**

#### *Subtheme: Developmentally Appropriate*

- Age appropriate development of curriculum
- Developmentally based – developmentally appropriate

#### *Subtheme: Family-Parent Involvement*

- Responsive to families
- Oriented Programming
- Parental/family involvement.
- Parent focus on a quality frameworks that outlines and supports the adults role in guiding children’s learning relevant to children’s interests with children as opposed to “for” children – curriculum that is reflective responsive and meaningful to each child.

*Subtheme: Holistic*

- Develop within broad categories
- Holistic of care/learning

*Subtheme: Inclusive/Diversity/Flexibility*

- Inclusive – adapt to a variety of early learning programs.
- Needs to work everywhere – in every community

*Subtheme: Accountability*

- Different model of accountability for children

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Finances*

- \$\$ - roll out training

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Colleges and Universities must train students toward the framework.
- Continued prof dev. for the person working with young children.
- Currently graduates begin working in the field and must advocate to implement their knowledge within the program – or they compromise their practice to do the work as the program dictates which often times is not best practice.
- Provide regular, well supported prof. development opportunities for staff, parents. Play-based/experiential programming
- Include training for educators
- Qualified people to implement curriculum a strong understanding of early learning
- There needs to be a strong statement about how professionals in ELC learn and thrive, and about the conditions that promote learning and thriving among professionals.
- Training (teachers vs. early childhood educators). Link to accreditation – we can't add on!
- What PD model will be used?
- What PL/post-secondary training is required?

*Subtheme: Governance*

- Strong focus on sustainability and collective decision making with all stakeholders from all level 5 grassroots to governing bodies

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Timing*

- This province has the opportunity to do something really unique. We will need to get it right.

#### *Subtheme: Evolutionary Approach*

- The development of curriculum only the start
- Plan for ongoing implementation, pro. Development and support for curriculum framework

#### *Subtheme: Stakeholder Engagement*

- Early childhood educator opinions and expertise should be a part of the curriculum.
- Ensuring parent and practitioner voice is heard: culturally sensitive, equitable
- Ensure parent involvement when building the framework so the family support piece is not lost
- Engagement of families is essential to building the foundation of early learning – this is part of the curriculum

### **Theme: Other Considerations**

- Common Messages – key ideas
- Ensure programs are capable of delivering the curriculum
- We have good examples to work from in other provinces.
- A clean direction
- Common framework of practice
- Support to do it!

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

#### **Theme: Overall Support**

##### *Subtheme: Goals and Vision*

- Goals Vision: Values + beliefs around EL and C
- The focus on early child development
- That ELC is essential for a vibrant Alberta

##### *Subtheme: Case for Curriculum Framework*

- That we need a framework for curriculum
- I expect ready full agreement from all.
- Guideline for pedagogical practice
- Common guidelines and accountability
- That we need one

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

- Drawing on the resources that have already been tried and proven successful
- ECD – research based

- Research-based, best practice curriculum
- Opportunity for alignment based on latest knowledge and research
- Promising practices
- Research informed, evidence based

## Theme: Content

### *Subtheme: Reconciling Education and Care Paradigms*

- Play based, natural teaching strategies
- Play-based
- I think there is a general understanding that play is important for their age of development
- In a curriculum framework that is not safely based on “school readiness”
- Inquiry based, language rich, creative.
- Play based foundations
- Education component for early learning to the community to encourage buy in.
- Integrating approach to ELC in community based and school based section – the challenge may be which approach.

### *Subtheme: Inclusion and Diversity (child-centred)*

- Culturally sensitive
- Inclusive – multi-disciplinary team
- A creative, open-ended process that still enables ELC practitioners to explore flexible and meaningful ways that they can transcend and incorporate important foundations/elements of a curriculum
- Inclusive setting and optimal environment
- Multi Resources – multi disc. model
- Child centred
- Developmental appropriateness

### *Subtheme: Engaging Stakeholders*

- Provincial – municipal partnerships in support of EL and C
- Health ministries to understand the importance of early learning, and physical needs of children, to bring the information to be accessible to new parents.
- Broader stakeholders.
- Framework developed with community

### *Subtheme: Building Human Resources Capacity*

- Needs to be training institutes that can offer the supports to ECE to work with a broad curriculum framework.
- H.R. – to deliver and get supported to do so.
- Joint prolonged support – good idea but many territorial challenges in practice – ECEs not confident in their current practice

*Subtheme: Building On & Expanding*

- Align with what exists – k program statement. Child care accreditation
- Expanding existing services is a way to utilize programs and services which are already established and sustainable

## **Least agreement? Why?**

### **Theme: Reconciling Education and Care Paradigms**

- Areas in the curriculum
- What the details of the curriculum framework are – most disagreements because of the lack of inconsistency of defining terms like play, curriculum, family support etc.
- Use of the term curriculum
- Many parents have expectations that learning is structured. How do you educate parents regarding what curriculum for infants and toddlers looks like
- Pedagogical Practices – how do we inform parents/practitioners that this is not a “schoolification” of the early years?
- What is in the framework?

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

*Subtheme: Developing Human Resource Capacity*

- Contracts/unions – not always in best interest of program or child.
- Change different levels of programming, education, understanding
- Long-term costly professional development model for ELCC field. Too costly.
- Training/Education leading to credentials: rural challenges re: hiring trained staff, costs, issues of private/non-profit dynamics

*Subtheme: Finances/Capacity Building*

- Funding to support the implementation of the curriculum framework.
- Additional supports for local public or non-profit multisite, multiservice providers

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Managing Change*

- How will all programs equalize? Levels of funding
- Change is hard. Needs time and engagement from CC community
- To give up their autonomy and integrate into a larger agency.
- Common curriculum resource – mandated for use – how to “live” curriculum

### *Subtheme: Public/Government Support*

- That this will require significant public support - because of barriers to understanding/accepting ECE and specialized field of knowledge - professional practice
- Will the government (Human Services, Health, Education) champion the curriculum framework that is developed?

## **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: Goals & Purposes**

- Need goal, values, beliefs, clearly articulated vision or else we don't know what curriculum to develop

### **Theme: Features of Curriculum**

#### *Subtheme: Reconciling Education and Care Paradigms – Child Development*

- How do children grow and thrive. What are the environments, situation, contexts, experiences - but what are the things that support the growth and development of staff.
- How do children under 6 learn best – how can this learning be documented?
- What does responsive care look like?
- Making play visible
- Modeling of professional parenting – we need framework to assist with communication of why play. Have examples to work with from other provinces
- Play based, inquisitive, family unit, developmentally appropriate, well-funded, well educated in early childhood.
- We need ways to inform the public/parents about the value of play.
- Requires a shift in practice and belief system in both practitioners and parents around how young children grow and develop

#### *Subtheme: Process of Developing Curriculum*

- Teachers and ECD staff need to collaborate – but how to bridge?
- We need to find ways to involve elementary education and child care staff in shared, not separate, conversations re design and implementation of curriculum. We need to articulate and promote the value and importance of connecting these groups

#### *Subtheme: Features of Curriculum*

- The curriculum framework is written to support the pedagogical relationship between the educator and the child
- The curriculum needs to be liveable: put easily into practice.
- Does a curriculum framework necessitate checklist of outcomes?
- Tangible knowledge translation

- Importance of “reflective” practice and time/provision to support opportunities to thoughtfully reflect on what is taking place that may inform future directions – Current ELC environments and dynamics of adult/child ratios does not adequately provide for this.

*Subtheme: Accountability*

- Must have accountability measures in place or won’t happen everywhere
- Have accountability measures in place.

*Subtheme: Flexibility*

- May look different in different communities – embrace diversity
- Needs to be flexible.

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Funding - sustainable
- What resources are needed?

*Subtheme: Governance*

- Challenge – Who is responsible? Mandated?

*Subtheme: Building Human Resource Capacity*

- Current contracts within the school system itself including support – service contracts which may be unionized and hamper the process of hiring best – fit candidates for the positions
- Professional development is huge cornerstone
- Key messages: Professional learning and training to embed vision into practice
- What shifts for staff credentials can be likely made?
- We must keep quality high, especially in professional development
- Majority of teachers do not have an early childcare background. Time lines for the re-educating of a trained work force
- Implications on p/d and ensuring there is capacity to be successful

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Capacity Building*

- Needs long term support after development – can’t just assume once its developed people will “get it “ and practice it with intention
- Programs need time and support to actively understand and implement it... Not just learning about it but having practical opportunity to model hands on what it looks like in action

*Subtheme: Implementation*

- Whether or not an ELC system works, a curriculum framework or guidelines would be a huge asset. This would be a good and safe and relatively easy place to start.

## 5. Reflections

### What is your level of support for trying to advance change that more closely integrates ELC in AB?

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
24	3	2		

### Theme: Framing

*Subtheme: Language*

- Language is really important, need to set boundaries and need to clearly define

*Subtheme: Clarity*

- If we don't know why we are doing this, it won't work
- Goal and purposes lay foundation for how to proceed
- Goals and purpose - it needs to be sold really important
- A foundation is required to guide all this – lets agree on goals first

*Subtheme: The Case for Integration*

- We need the why of this to be as compelling to a broad array of recipients/folks
- I do believe changes must be made to move forward
- It's important to value children in early years for the early years rather than looking ahead – today'sness

*Subtheme: The Goals*

- Children – rights of the children (1<sup>st</sup> main goal)
- Gender equity – FM women are strong

*Subtheme: Reconciling Education and Care Paradigms*

- Alignment of values, philosophies and best practices

- I get worried about ELC programs and hope that people recognize the expertise of these programs when decisions are being made
- Caution: “schoolification” – ELC pushing up to gr. 1,2,3
- Need for common values, measures and goals
- ELC is integral and trying to separate the two approaches (education and learning) will not be supportive moving forward

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

#### *Subtheme: Building Human Resource Capacity*

- Increase in equitable pay for ECE’s
- Teachers should better understand the role of ECEs and childcare philosophies

#### *Subtheme: Curriculum Frameworks*

- I support curriculum and continuity of care for all age groups

#### *Subtheme: Finances*

- I believe there should be more funding and the need for professional development for all persons working with children that includes early childhood education

### **Theme: Moving Forward**

#### *Window of Opportunity*

- Politically, the timing is good – premier’s mandate letters re: EC and cross- ministry work
- Window of opportunity to do better
- Its big, complex, but it’s needed and the timing is right
- Get at it - the opportunity is there politically right now

#### *Subtheme: Engaging Stakeholders*

- Communicate with communities
- Don’t try to push this through from the top – engage everyone

#### *Subtheme: Managing Change*

- Need more details to make change
- Don’t be afraid of the complexity – just jump in
- Consider the impact of changes

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
17	7	1		

**Theme: Ministerial Authority**

*Subtheme: Public Management*

- Unpack the idea of public management.

*Subtheme: Ministerial Oversight/Jurisdiction*

- Lots of discussion about whose auspice
- Nothing being declared as to what ministry would need to support this
- A champion who is invested – childcare is not unit-dimensional, but multi-ministerial approach. Might keep the investment going forward
- Strong EC minister to establish policy and deliver
- Education should take the lead and work in collaboration with other ministries
- Have education as the lead – work in collaboration with the other ministries – very intentional with accountability measures, partnerships etc.
- Separate ministry EC (bridge education, community services)
- Some discomfort upon becoming completely under Education: strangely support this but uncertain as to how the uniqueness of ELC needs to be valued for both components not one or the other.

**Theme: Governance Considerations**

*Subtheme: Accountability*

- Hold ECL programs accountable for quality care and learning which will in turn give us better outcomes

*Subtheme: Collaboration/Shared Ownership*

- How collaborative will it be?
- I believe the current governance works to a degree but also think that changes for the better can happen through cross collaboration and integration. This can strengthen governance
- I'm a huge supporter of integration and cross collaboration: its only way to do business when working with kids
- Shared ownership and collaboration: gov't, community programs, families, schools etc...

- Will there be equal participation and ownership?

*Subtheme: Regional/Local Flexibility*

- Avoid micro management by government
- Ensure resources support the policy and locally managed

*Subtheme: Parental and Family Voice*

- How do you maintain parental involvement like in non-profit societies
- Parents’ voice should not be impeded upon. Governance role is important but parents input and community also need to be included and accountable
- What is democratic participation when you are 2? What is democratic when you are single mom of two with minimum paid wage jobs.

*Subtheme: The Public*

- What is public interest in this?

*Subtheme: Role of Umbrella Organization*

- Need for AB Child Care Association to be a big player in the governance model

**Theme: Cautions & Opportunities**

- Sector is divided and is a culture unto itself
- Caution for a highly regulated already industry
- Concerns that the theory is different than reality for things like shared accountability shared standards
- I am concerned about the ownership of these frameworks. I have a hard time trying to envision what it would look like
- Timing is ripe

**c) Financing early learning and care – the level and nature of public and private investments**

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	8	2		

*Theme: Public Awareness*

- Concerns about proposed changes because don't think there is enough public understanding

- Not common understanding that is telling a village to raise a child
- Emergence of public responsibility will elevate the importance and recognition of ELC
- Recognition of the importance early learning and care is for our families and society
- Concerned of the cost to public and how you get the community to support such overwhelming change

*Subtheme: Area of Investment*

- Financing must meet/support service delivery and human resources (training)
- Quality staff – remunerated appropriately
- Supports – training, governance supports

*Subtheme: Level of Investment*

- If we were properly funded – quality would follow
- Increase funding
- Make sure to finance properly, and accountability to the tax payers
- More in early childhood activities – a must
- Sufficient financing to allow for quality EL programs

*Subtheme: Source of Investment*

- Can financing still come from parent fees but the supports are funded by the gov't?
- Caution on the private side of investments
- Concerned of the cost to public and how you get the community to support such overwhelming change
- Need to be more publicly funded
- We need to use our tax payer dollar very carefully – with long-term sustainable funding that is carefully audited.
- In this region – high costs

*Subtheme: Features of Service*

- Inclusive programming critical
- Incorporate universal pre-k programming

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Build on What Exists*

- Need to work within what we have, re-structuring and duplication of services
- Review duplication of services
- Services to children should be reviewed to avoid duplication

*Subtheme: Public & Non-Profit Delivery*

- If we suggest going to non-profit only going backwards; it is about quality

- There should be a made in AB model that honours the entrepreneurial spirit and private enterprise

*Subtheme: Planning & Action*

- Identifying what is non- negotiable – absolute to protect, room for change, significant change
- This needs to be tied to an intentional and comprehensive plan to reach this vision
- We need thorough assessment of all gov’t funding that goes to ELC programs before we can make changes/proposals for change
- Well informed recommendations are needed – integrity
- Supportive and needs public infrastructure to move forward with authenticity and commitment

*Subtheme: Cross Boundary*

- EL and education can mentor each other without the need of additional finances
- One ministry – education recommended as it is already publicly funded with universal access

*Subtheme: Timing & Transitions*

- Timing is right to take these steps at a beginning level
- People worry about what they have to gain and what they have to lose

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
19	7			

**Theme: Framing Issues**

*Subtheme: Language*

- Needs to be examination of the language. We used to talk about ELC services – often work deficit of “intervention” focused on not from a “what’s best” process

*Subtheme: Scope of Integration*

- Aligning and navigation – wraparound services
- ELC has opportunity to deliver broad base service to families; universal service
- Need to ensure boundaries to what services are included

- This must happen at all levels from top down to the bottom up. There must be a middle ground

*Subtheme: Key Actors*

- Have municipal (local) involvement
- Municipality should take on a more meaningful role

**Theme: Links to Other Integrative Elements**

*Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Must have proper credentials – this includes support staff in early learning

*Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- I am concerned that education will take over the early year experiences of infants and toddlers: the focus needs to remain play-based.

*Subtheme: Finances*

- Make the system financially viable

**Theme: Moving Forward**

*Subtheme: Current State*

- Still so fragmented
- We are fragmented and not organized now.

*Subtheme: Build on What Exists*

- Francophone community already organizes and has strength
- Identify what works – protect it

*Subtheme: Cross Boundary Work*

- How on earth do you create an environment for cross ministries with practical solutions?
- Need for better alignment, collaborative transitions, creative partnerships
- This is the driver – importance of burden, trust amongst stakeholders: synergy or magic can happen if there is trust.
- Up till now, there seems to be a “turf-war” approach to ‘not mine’ – needs to be a full commitment of all for all
- Will do more interagency work

*Subtheme: Regional Flexibility*

- Community sensitivity in rural and urban communities is needed. Not all service delivery looks the same in various communities.
- Leave details local level

**Theme: Other**

- Includes the family
- Passion

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	2			

**Theme: Raising Quality & Standards**

- Public role – gov't needs to up the minimum qualification
- Commit to bringing up the standard. Gov't it shall be...
- Staff are the backbone of industry and not stable at all. Raising the standards for all programs
- Credential – yes
- We need to have higher education expectations for early childhood educators

**Theme: Professionalize Work/Association**

- Staff – need to be professional and belong to professional organization like ACCA.
- Needs to validate/recognition/opportunity/supports education and professional development for ELCC educators
- Mandatory membership for appropriate association (ACCA or CHRP)

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

- Regulations should be same as accreditation standards for all programs for change to truly occur
- Quality programs: Quality educator – early childhood educators: Quality Training – standardization and to a level that allows for professional development for managerial roles
- We need to address appropriate training and professional development. Ensure that associations and unions are brought on board as companions on the journey so that the best candidates are hired for their expertise and not because of seniority
- Time to put ELC on front burner and for those who work with them and elevate training to support ELC pros in achieving higher standards
- Professional development is key

**Theme: Province Wide-Consistent**

- Province - level of education of staff
- This is critical – common language, expectations, standards, continuity for families and accountability
- Very fragmented – different levels, different responsibilities. Fix this.
- Common workforce standard, expectations around prof. development

**Theme: Planning**

- Identify where most at risk for poor quality and create new Human Resource model to improve practice standards
- Where do we need to get to and how do we get there?
- Needs to be phased in over time with a plan

**Theme: Areas of Development**

- E.C. professionals being ill-prepared to take over administrative roles. Need supports for further education, professional development and skills training
- Are teachers in schools able and willing to take ECE courses and will education faculty accept ECE's?

**Theme: Other Models**

- Learn from other provinces (Ontario) where ECE staff were snapped up by the education system
- Make sure you have a provincial wage scale
- Dovetails with financing piece
- A strong need for capacity bldg.

**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
21	4			

## Theme: The Value

- Working on this – strongly supported to strengthen the field to strengthen theoretical base that has been eroded in history
- Make visible this integrated field
- Essential to shared vision, philosophy
- Its overdue – to raise standard of practice
- Influence practice
- Will elevate the field, validate work that happens front-line
- Yes, it will encourage collaboration and consistency within education and EL and care professionals
- Provide consistency, will bring accessibility
- This is long overdue in our society, we need to ensure that all children have the opportunity to quality ELC

## Theme: The Content

- Successfully implemented in other jurisdictions
- Simple tool in influencing day to day practice
- Concern would dilute the learn through play as difficult to make it tangible
- Ensure that it is standard across all sectors
- Wrap-around families
- Reggio inspired: play, inclusive, creative
- I support a well-developed, carefully considered curriculum for children under 4 that takes into consideration the unique needs of the age group, community and realistic financial restraints of the family
- Based on recent research into how young children learn and monitored closely
- Social justice element that can be facilitated through a common curriculum framework
- Seamless transition to schools

## Theme: Links to Other Integrated Elements

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- What professional development supports will be needed for maintaining the integrity to what a curriculum framework can provide?

## Theme: Moving Forward

- Education as lead
- Need to ensure education doesn't overwhelm the development of this. This has to be an opportunity to define the field of ELC
- This is the long range vision

- Nimble...
- Yes with stakeholder interests and co-created with all stakeholders

### **Theme: Opportunities & Timing**

- Move fast – the time is right
- Don't wait for 10 years

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

### **Theme: Integrative Elements**

#### *Subtheme: Goals & Purposes*

- Solidifying goals/purpose
- Solidify the purpose, goal of integrated ELC

#### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- Commitment to expanding credentials and wages to support increased training.
- Bringing the workforce together and educate them on the framework (public education)

#### *Subtheme: Governance*

- Governance – decision makes saying this is the way it will happen. Two departments need shared leadership to get this done.
- Moving the governance issue forward at the cross-ministry level – ECD is important to the Premier.
- Begin with governance decision – identify ministry lead.

#### *Subtheme: Financing*

- Sustainable financial commitment and also commitment to a 3 yr. plan
- Funding
- Commitment to raise wages/credentials of ELCC educators
- Securing funding
- New source for capital for space creation

#### *Subtheme: Organizing Services*

- We need to be sure to allow choices for families and not move to a cookie cutter program that looks like an extension of the school system.

### **Theme: Broaden Engagement**

#### *Subtheme: General Stakeholders*

- Continuing to have dialogue

- Ensure that people at all levels feel this is an important step (vision)
- Continue to have dialogue
- Continue to engage stakeholders
- What other stakeholders need to become part of the consideration?
- Unite stakeholders and move forward
- Broaden stakeholders

*Subtheme: Service Providers*

- Were private and for profits invited?
- Speak to people at the front line level to allow them opportunity to buy in

*Subtheme: Service Users*

- Communication with families

*Subtheme: Government Engagement*

- Results of provincial discussion need to be presented to ministries and premier
- What to consider now to move forward: commitment! Leadership team to start the discussion with senior ministry staff and community stakeholders.

*Subtheme: Education*

- Ensure the support and partnership with education
- Partnership with education
- Was ATA invited?

*Subtheme: Health*

- Bring community into discussion and Health

*Subtheme: Linking with Other Government Initiatives*

- Honing in with ECD Framework Initiative – communicating our results; <named individual within Ministry> et al – integrated to our success; first steps - don't assume they know anything
- Ensure the endorsement or support of interministerial ECD team. (based in Human Services).
- Alignment with social policy framework

**Theme: Other Moving Forward Themes**

*Subtheme: Build Public Awareness*

- Get the support of the public; community; all stakeholders to buy into the importance of ELC
- Create profile amongst Albertans of value of ELC

#### *Subtheme: Establish Leadership*

- Government encouraged to take leadership as the sector is fragmented
- Evaluate information and develop a committee or board.

#### *Subtheme: Looking Inward & Outward*

- We need to draw on the success of other provinces and countries that are 4 years ahead of us. We need to look inward for identifying what's working and looking at ways of incorporating that into the new framework.

#### *Subtheme: Planning & Action*

- Where are the opportunities?
- Pay attention to the ramifications of taking action
- Make sure we are ready and capable to move forward with next step
- How to coordinate informed action coming out of all these discussions?

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

### **Theme: General Impressions**

- There's great momentum building
- A lot of work to be done
- Hope that the commitment gets us there
- Its ultimately about teaching and dreaming big
- Good conversation: collaboration and conversation are the first steps to sustainable change
- There is a lot of work to be done

### **Theme: The ELC System**

#### *Subtheme: Scope*

- Will this be available to all service providers or only some that fall under a certain category. My fear is that only non-for-profit based centers be considered. In the literature provided this was stated many times over. Quality childcare should be the benchmark for ELC programs. I worry about creating a 2-tiered system if box daycares and corporate, publicly traded childcare "opt out" of the provincial framework.

#### *Subtheme: Managing Integration*

- How do you move the goals that are intertwined and interrelated – as a collective framework to move it forward in an incremental and integral fashion.
- This process is like renovating a house one thing leads to another.
- This is a mutually enhancing initiative, highlighting and advertising the enhancements will provide the traction to move forward

- What is first?

## Theme: Integrative Elements

### *Subtheme: Human Resources*

- First ECEs need to be remunerated fairly
- ECEs need to buy in that they are professionals
- H.R. is first step – they need buy in
- ECEs need to buy in to the idea that they are professionals
- Human resources, need to have buy-in

### *Subtheme: Curriculum Framework*

- Curriculum development is necessary but what it looks like is a challenge

### *Subtheme: Finances*

- The financial challenges of making this vision come to life. The buy in of community for the funding

## Theme: Moving Forward

### *Subtheme: Building Awareness*

- Aside from designing a framework and figuring out the technicalities of implementation, we need a strategy for gaining broad public support
- The need to emphasize the importance of ELC for a society

### *Subtheme: Drivers for Change*

- The supporting factors are: college; pay that reflects value and the challenges that are in line with being a professional.

### *Subtheme: Made in Alberta*

- Alberta has an entrepreneurial spirit and we need to embrace that moving forward. If we just go the “not for profit” way then we lose out on this ingenuity and strengths
- The need for a “made in Alberta” framework is not just a cliché – it is real.

### *Subtheme: Window of Opportunity*

- There are many initiatives and high level conversations about ELC – and social issues in general - already underway. I personally have moved a considerable distance in the last few years. The EC community is being heard but there is a real need to move more quickly now.
- Not to be constrained by current provincial structure, creating the safe environment to make it happen.

### *Subtheme: Leadership & Planning*

- What next? Who will take the lead? What is the timeline? How will we do all of this?

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

### Theme: General Attitude

#### *Subtheme: Positive*

- Bravo! It is so nice to see a gov't looking at the work we have been doing for a lifetime and saying this is important and we need to make changes
- Closer than ever before. The door is open so now is the time to make your voice heard
- Go! And keep working toward the goal
- It's exciting!
- It's exciting.
- Progress has been promising – let's push forward
- Strike while the iron is hot
- Thank you for the work and vision
- This is exciting, but challenging work
- Very exciting to have a provincial framework, it has been a long time coming. The importance of the Early years is critical and we need to ensure that every child in Alberta has the opportunity to access early learning programming through a provincial framework
- We need to do this
- I think exciting times are ahead and I hope that I along with my colleagues can play a significant role in supporting the development of the framework! I think it is going to take significant collaboration.
- It's a good thing
- Hallelujah! Yippee! Bravo!

#### *Subtheme: Mixed/Cautious*

- Hold tight to the light in the storm!
- This has all been talked about before; is it really going to happen? Can early childhood as an industry come together and work towards a common goal?
- I am not sure how my program fits into the plan.
- What can you do to help move this forward?

### Theme: Advice

#### *Subtheme: Design Considerations*

- ELC needs are very different than educational needs. Yes, there needs to be integration of similar goals, but the differences in needs should also be acknowledged and a focus of the framework
- Please look at high quality programs to set a new standard. Understand that some of the new framework will mean training. Staff development will need to occur. Provide these grassroots programs with funding to make this happen

- The provincial framework and the curriculum framework needs to be rooted in current research and models (provincially, nationally and internationally) that work best to better the lives of children and support families and communities
- Be clear, protect what is strong – reshape what is not.

*Subtheme: Stakeholder Considerations*

- Needs support and to speak to its value – it’s a long term commitment
- It is time to take this info along with the ECD Mapping “hard data” on development of our children, to the gov’t
- I think in order for this process to be legitimate, ACCA needs to be involved, ACCA must be more robust. The college of ECE’s was a recurring theme which must come from ACCA.
- Going to need some champions and support to make it real
- ACCA must be the home for Accreditation and training (ARCQE)

**Theme: Key Message**

- ELC is a valuable, essential service and in its current state is a fragmented system. It could be so much more and our kids deserve it.
- This is an opportunity to learn from each other and enhance ELC to be more valued and supported by gov’t and for education to be more play oriented