



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

A Record of Stakeholder Discussions
Edmonton Regional Discussion
April 8, 2015



The Muttart Foundation

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Introduction

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

The stakeholders invited to participate in the four regional consultations included senior staff from early learning and care organizations, senior staff from schools and school divisions that offer Early Childhood Services (ECS) under the Ministry of Education, academic staff from post-secondary institutions as well as staff from infrastructure organizations that support service delivery. In addition, staff from the Ministries of Human Services, Education and Health also participated in the discussions.

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

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

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

This report presents the stakeholder comments from the Edmonton regional consultation held on April 8th at the Genesis Early Learning Centre, Edmonton Catholic Schools. Forty stakeholders from the Edmonton and the Fort McMurray regions participated in the discussions.

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

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

The Results of Stakeholder Discussions

The Alberta Early Learning and Care Workforce – Demands and Realities

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

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

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

The complex situations and needs of children and families

- ECE staff have more demands put on them daily
- children being "kicked" out of childcare & kindergarten
- number of children identified w/ special needs continues to rise - we need to have spaces/programs available
- lots of young families are immigrants and they face many challenges
- francophone families are facing issues
- stabilizing family and staff
- sensitivity to diverse situations
- better support for family

The increasing demand for early learning and care

- rights of families for quality inclusive contexts in early learning & care programs
- need for more space - high demands on educators

- young children are receiving non-parental care
- parent need for childcare
- access to quality affordable space
- family life
- availability issue
- in approximately 70 percent of families with children under age six, both parents work outside the home
- access to more programs for Pre-K
- more children requiring childcare and expectations for what happens there is increasing
- growing preschool population
- investment, working parents, lack of family close by, inclusive demands
- space demand
- increasing numbers of children in non-parental care combined with the evidence about the importance of early experience points to importance of well qualified educators
- families need for child care/early learning programs
- increasing early learning population and needs
- demand & diversity
- demands of ELCC & families' needs

Research on the importance of the early years and Alberta's EDI results

- brain research ensures that we do better now that we know what a difference those first few years make
- research + evidence that developmentally + economically benefits society
- need understanding/deeper knowledge base re: the importance of the early years, evidence from brain development research, economic value, social value
- importance of early years for a child's lifetime of growth & development
- greater awareness of the critical periods of human development in early years
- research
- research & knowledge subject to: Importance of early brain development! At birth a child's brain is 25% developed. By age 5 the brain reaches approximately 90% development placing tremendous importance on the quality of experiences provided in the early years
- importance/value of early years better understood all the time
- importance of the early years
- the belief that children are shaped by the experiences in the early years
- new research on learning & development
- response to current research in early childhood development (play, brain development, mental health issues)
- children's dev. needs
- EDI results
- poor results of children- currently weak, EDI results could be used to highlight this need to public
- Alberta's EDI results are poor-approximately 29% of children have difficulty in one or more areas of development. Normal average is 25%

Political and public support for investments in early learning and care

- recognition in the value of the development that happens in the early years
- political change
- beginning awareness of the possible benefits of early education to social health and prosperity
- community buy-in, young families/people who are going to have children soon
- political will & public perception
- government funding for education
- have them push
- environmental factors
- increasing public policy focus on school readiness and optimal development in the early years, both of which can also be dangerous drivers for change, in that they tend to "pathologize" children and families in relationship to standardized norms of development and performance
- higher policy profile, demographic changes - need for family supports, lack of quality spaces, affordability
- understanding the value of ELCC to our communities and province
- international/national shifts of childcare from human services departments to education ministries
- lobbying by stakeholders
- it's time we stop procrastinating & move forward
- more 'media' attention given to the shortage of childcare/space
- new change
- political will
- rights of the child
- young children as citizens deserving of quality care, societies understanding of this

The importance of high-quality in early learning and care

- quality of care and education (6)
- need for quality childcare-being consistent within the field
- children entering 21st century need to be prepared for a faster pace of learning
- parents demanding/community demanding higher quality
- best practices evidence based
- quality caregivers=quality programming
- much of our time in grade 1 and 2 is spent on basic alphabets and numbering concepts
- know better about this - do better for children and families
- we share pedagogy with other countries -we need to keep up with other countries
- knowledge of the importance of the 'adult in the room' to the quality of programming for young children to achieve positive outcomes
- consistency on quality
- diversity inclusion, language development and diversity environments
- to promote educated staff to the field to provide all children with their right to quality learning and care

- ELCC values vs school readiness
- parents demand higher level programs for their children
- well educated & supported educators are the key to high quality environments for young children
- accreditation-???

Higher educational levels for the workforce

- need for qualified educators to support family & children
- need to increase education level of early learning staff in order to better support the children and their families
- upon completion of theory development - practicum prior to graduation
- support for specialized services in the sector: currently the two-year diploma is very compressed and generally provides foundational knowledge for typically developing children 3-5 years of age. In research prepared a few years back by the CCHRSC feedback from professionals made a compelling case for the need for specialized training on two levels: Administrative Leadership and Infant Care, School Aged Care & Children with Special Needs, and Parenting programs
- Alberta or Canadian degrees
- two -year diploma then four year bachelor degree, relevant context to understand ELCC e.g. social/emotional development/communication (recognize infant communication)
- standards of practice: with the onset of accreditation & more recently the introduction of the ELCC Curriculum Framework there is a need for a strong foundation of core knowledge relative to early childhood development
- ECE'S are increasingly moving into a broader range of roles and responsibilities which they are less prepared to work with. This was also a key theme from focus groups held by CCHRSC in examining People, Programs and Practices is that there is a heightened sense of expectations for skills and knowledge required for ECE's
- inconsistent staffing qualifications
- formal education-ECE diploma-moving towards degree
- unskilled workforce in both childcare & teachers teaching children 3-8
- buy in for the educational aspects changing (bump up to true diploma + degree)
- increasing numbers of centres being opened with insufficient staff trained to operate them

The implementation of the Alberta early learning and care curriculum framework

- link to curriculum framework
- potential of curriculum framework
- curriculum framework, readiness within the field to embrace it
- the ELCC curriculum framework
- response to the Alberta curriculum framework

The demands placed on the ELC workforce

- understanding of child development
- engagement and agency of ECE's

- commitment
- time
- demands on educators to do more within the context of their day to day work
- high demands on the workforce continues to grow

Supporting the field as a profession

- the field needs to be professionalized-it is a complex job
- awareness of child care as a profession
- people in the field wanting to elevate the esteem people have toward the work they do and improve quality of the program
- to be more respected as professional in our field and valued by education
- profession/career vs 'job'

Professional learning for the workforce

- beyond workshop
- enhance abilities & knowledge of educators
- upon entering the workforce-team teaching with experienced workforce
- collaboration-build learning community's
- continued PD annually from a professional association/the programs/ agencies
- teaching educators about the Alberta early learning curriculum framework

Workforce remuneration

- compensation for educators
- better wages
- truly value our staff including \$\$\$ for salaries, resources, PD

Negative public perceptions of child care

- public avoidance of CC

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

The organization, financing and delivery of services

Market delivery/approach to early learning

- a mixed-market system-profit and non-profit - and relatively low level of public investment in child care nationally and internationally
- market base/business model in AB vs. publically supported
- private system-commodity-profits
- auspice - history of Alberta in supporting child care as need of workforce
- space creation vs. quality

Financing early learning and care – cost for parents

- families pay for what they can get, some areas do not have a 'choice' (i.e. rural Alberta)
- the cost of this proposed change can't be passed on to families
- funding
- up-front cost- how long will it take before the public sees benefits?
- cost to parents
- cost (2)
- human services oversee \$ for some/most of services in some way now quality often costs more so those that can afford it do

The absence of an ELC system

- childcare is not a system like education is a system
- need for system rather than isolated centres trying to survive without adequate funding
- needs to be comprehensive child care early learning system
- no system to support ECE's
- lack of cohesive system=fragmentation
- human services/education?
- legislation-human services, education

The relationships between early learning and care and education

- EL and care frame
- separation of care and education
- early learning care is just about care rather than being a part of education system
- respect & understanding from education
- ongoing division, tension between notions of care and notions of early education-jurisdictional, professional, philosophical-the professional divide and inequitable resources/recognition of ECS/kindergarten
- transitional
- competing work- will people still want to move to education

Political context and political support

- change in government leadership
- government
- political will-change can't cost parents more
- advocate for federal program-all provinces are aligned now-window-or opportunity to raise federal
- politics, economic, willingness, social equity/justice
- election

Public awareness and support for early learning and care

- sharing knowledge of ECE with public

- lack of value to the work
- image of the child
- views of children, families, care & education
- us valuing children inconsistent and sometimes poor training & education of ECE
- children-what they need
- support for the most vulnerable citizens @ a critical time
- value of rights of child
- science/medicine -effected brain development
- societies view whether we need 'childcare'
- community
- lack of public awareness and support
- importance of high quality early learning & care experiences
- societal views of childhood, family responsibility, what is childcare and who provides it and what they do
- lack of knowledge for society
- societal factors
- continuing dominance of the notion that child care is the private responsibility of families

Families access to early learning and child care

- not enough space/ more children
- accessibility
- affordable space/ location
- should strengthen families

The diverse needs of children and their families

- cultural
- cultural context of immigration
- key factors- retention, quality, accessible, inclusive and affordable
- diversity
- diversity within a classroom

The importance of high-quality early learning and care

- continuous high turnover & retention challenges influence quality
- lack of consistent knowledge awareness and understanding of what value we associate with quality early learning practices/programs
- childcare professionals not substitutes to mothers, the practice is elevated to ensure early learning/social/emotional development a resource for parents
- emerging nature of the pedagogies, new pedagogies, critical pedagogies, pedagogies that challenge entrenched practices

Developing post-secondary education capacity and delivery of education programs

- online is not the best learning platform for ELCC
- education preparation institutes -capacity available -they should be in line with what is expected
- Alberta curriculum framework needs to be used as a resource for colleges, universities, practicums
- technology to enhance learning opportunities
- post-secondary has challenges graduating enough and keep them in the field- continues to be a challenge because of economics, challenges of their roles, isolation, lack of esteem
- for ECE's to pay for post-secondary, bursaries, grants, college degrees are expensive as even are PD workshops needed to renew certification
- colleges need to sustain funding for ELCC programs as an investment in society's future generation
- funding as post-secondary needs to be sustainable for post-secondary institutions developing degrees and PD continuing ed courses

Geographic considerations

- geography
- people willing to go to remote areas
- location-urban vs rural

The recruitment and retention of early childhood educators

- are there people interested in the field?
- strategies to recruit & retain qualified staff
- who are the people interested in this work?
- staff turnover

The educational level of the ELC workforce

- language written and oral
- 3 levels of training=levels of pay (41% are lowest level)
- big Issue- 41% level 1 practitioner impacting quality
- requirement needed for accredited centres to have more quality staff
- vast practice/knowledge gap that currently exists relative to theory & practice concepts
- cost of upgrading certification requirements and recruiting workforce willing to invest in more education
- 41% of staff have level I
- help all levels especially with staffing in current centres
- mandating educational training for staff who with preschool age children (not required to attend)
- diversity of training, compensation
- staff training/compensation

- the childcare workforce would need to be required to get staff trained-probably some people would leave the field
- older generation may not want to go back to school

The reliance on educational equivalencies

- some degrees are not equivalent training but recognized
- percentage of the existing workforce that is minimally certified and/or equivalency certified
- too broad an array of educational equivalencies initially expanded to offset demands of space creation & growth in the sector. This has not necessarily proven to enhance quality of care provided- specific to specialized core competencies focused on early learning
- credit for previous training

Professional learning for the workforce

- availability of training and professional learning in French
- model of professional development (presently) doesn't work
- ongoing coaching in areas such as the framework as well as supporting children with SN
- organization of work in the sector-all contact time with children, little provision operationally for work time devoted to professional learning, ongoing education preparation and; little capacity to provide any kind of concrete support for educational preparation -time or money
- need that requires PD ongoing
- for operators to provide paid training sessions or release/compensate staff for attending
- time and availability of training
- time to educate-coverage-ratio
- diversity in staff training
- oversee of learning through our current practices
- coaches/mentors
- what PD need to look like-stand/sit & deliver does not work to actually change practices

Workforce remuneration

- pay a living wage with benefits
- compensation issues
- the current workforce profile is largely marginalized women working a low wage
- pay – childcare – needs to be addressed

Approaching the workforce as a profession

- 41% level one who do not see themselves as professionals
- requiring professional standards
- childcare needs to be seen as a profession (ACA-involvement in this) ongoing PD minimum education

- short term pain for long term gain - professionalization occurring over time - shift to requirement for further education
- if considering similar to education system; language is important to professionalize the workforce, other professionals hold each other to professional practice/ethically and conceptually

Workforce supports and timelines for making changes

- release time? how would that work?
- time restrictions
- ensure that as we follow through with these changes we give staff opportunity to complete recommendations over time
- time frame for completion
- time

Challenges facing the current workforce

- ratio
- does staffing issues strengthen or decrease value
- working conditions - long days, staff/child ratio
- diminished workforce

Alberta early learning and care curriculum framework

- provincial framework- curriculum
- common curriculum

Other comments

- start with movement and move downwards
- physical settings -program settings-DC OSC pre-school etc.
- accreditation. Licensing and regulation

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

The Alberta early learning and care curriculum framework

- curriculum framework- quality control
- curriculum framework
- EL+CC curriculum framework
- leadership to actualize the ELCC curriculum
- strong leadership to move the curriculum forward

The diverse and growing needs of children and families

- diversity of family and staff
- didn't really think of/consider cultural perspective

- more children needing additional supports
- inclusive childcare
- barriers for accessibility
- more spaces needed
- increasing early learning population and needs
- space demand
- usable space in a setting where parents are satisfied and have access

The financing for early learning and care

- decrease in post- secondary support/funding to EL and C
- need funding to subsidize wages on a greater level
- where does increase in cost come in? government? parents?
- we fundraise and work casinos to stay open
- as a not for profit group we run a consistent debt every year
- difficulty of moving from free CDA course to next step - requiring paying for 10 courses to get CDW and then again for CDS
- economic benefit 7 to 1

Political will and public support

- need political will and societal support
- political will
- demand for care amongst working professionals is currently visible in media-political opportunity
- the notion that child care is a commodity to be purchased is a bad driver and a dangerous one
- recognize value of work
- societies understanding the impact of quality early learning and care
- societal value does not value ECS-entrepreneurial over ethical right? is it?
- society value-right of child to have a quality environment-"women's place in the home"
- consideration for public investment

High-quality early learning and care

- quality-caregivers have profound impact on the children in their care
- what is quality programing?
- what sets quality overall in CE
- need for consistent level of quality - very inconsistent-due to workforce quality-variation in training levels
- accreditation has not actually improved the quality as hoped
- licensing requirements and accreditation
- space creation vs quality
- demand should be matched w/quality
- know the importance of the educator - key to high quality

- leadership-vision and values needed to lead towards a better quality

Research on early learning and early childhood development

- ECMap data-Province of AB
- EDI info so important-need to keep gathering this data to strengthen society
- EcMapping - poor showing
- EDI/AFWI
- ECMap results - behind the 8 ball already
- brain development research
- You Bet We Care studies
- research and data available

The relationships between community-based child care and public schools

- preschool should be embedded into the school system
- childcare to be part of the schools within the school
- childcare getting kicked out of school spaces
- barriers are the paperwork that needs to be worked out to get a preschool into a school
- this is the problem within the ECE and education fields
- education ministry needs to be at the table to discuss childcare spaces in schools, however, the care, pedagogy is different from school curriculum

An early learning and care system

- some of the challenges we face are system enabled
- need to integrate the system-a public system of ECEC that include community-based/school based, profit/non-profit, family day home, centre leased, preschool family support
- AB has many ministries that touch early childhood-health, education, human services
- having proper education does not mean success by itself if the system does not enable the pedagogy
- profit vs non-profit

The early learning and care workforce

The early childhood educator as a professional

- want to raise the ECE profession vs job
- the definition of a professional has an element of extension to work in the career
- can't de-stabilize current system but until we ask for more staff qualifications & degrees won't be a profession
- competent staff working in a competent systems
- long term look to countries with ece profession -Sweden etc.

Educational preparation

- core educational qualification drives need for post-secondary

- 41% have level one
- 58 hr orientation course for child care staff
- staff to be grounded in developmentally appropriate practice
- lack of consistent knowledge awareness and understanding of what value we associate with quality early learning practices/programs
- parents access providers and ask what type of education the provider have

Remuneration

- early educators should not be under paid
- can have a long career & not live on poverty line
- we should be able to afford to staff CDS as all staff without hurting the families

Internal workforce dynamics

- older grads not recognizing the work of younger grads
- demands on workforce increased expectations
- demographics of the sector-young women having their own families who leave the sector & don't return-because they can't find child care
- mentoring & coaching with the centre
- diverse workforce, types of programs
- PLC model- way to shift practice

Introducing changes in early learning and care

- need buy-in from the existing workforce-there is resistance
- buy-in from the workforce in ELC
- there are breaks that stop things from moving forward
- potential for divisiveness rather than collaboration-inequities across different ecec environments is sensitive
- people in the group still hold out hope for change
- we know what we need to do, but why are we stuck? too many short band-aids?
- importance of a conversation regarding the early years
- accreditation-needs to be revised-"blow it all up!"
- values tidiness

Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Certificated Teachers

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

and care workplaces to support the work of early childhood educators as competent professionals.

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

Supporting and approaching early childhood educators as professionals

The majority of participants either strongly agreed (24 – 73 percent) or agreed (7 – 21 percent) with the argument that early childhood educators should be supported and approached as professionals in their work with young children and their families.

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

Research on the importance of the early years

- the research has always stated children birth- 5 are the informative years, the importance of competent/knowledgeable/reflective persons with aptitude are in care up to 10 hours per day, possibly 50 hours per week
- Early years are the foundation for learning
- ECD
- increasing expectations of those working front line with young children to facilitate "optimal developmental potential" and to prepare young children to participate in formal school settings
- we need to do better for children
- based on evidence and research on the importance of the early years in terms of lifelong impacts: family systems * and systems competencies needed
- we know the research, we cannot keep ignoring this
- greater impact/critical in early years
- expanding knowledge base in early childhood

Parents and children's need for early learning and care

- parents need childcare and want quality care
- high number of children needing financial support
- so many children spending time away from parents-parents can't teach
- increasing number of children with special needs
- increase use of care by parents, demands we do our best
- cultural diversity

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

Overall competencies

- core competencies
- working with young children requires an individual to have professional competence
- the rights for child to experience sensitivity and understanding is essential, this would require a knowledgeable workforce/competent workforce
- competent staff in competent programming (systems)
- all of the competencies identified have been strongly reinforced and validated both in research as well as echoed by professionals across the country as not only important, but necessary change in order for ED to effectively be able to meet expanding role
- takes passion, dedication & EDUCATION to provide quality care
- knowledge skill & will - attitude & values motivation

Knowledge of child development and/or early learning

- child care professionals role in delivering high quality early learning & care - connected to child development
- educators need to understand how children learn and develop in order to set up their classrooms
- ECEs play an important role in learning & development
- linking research to practice
- intricate job, need understanding of family systems, philosophies, development, self-knowledge
- opportunities to support family, universal knowledge of ECD
- using knowledge of how children learn
- need to be able to connect this knowledge to pedagogical practice
- they must translate philosophies and principles and translate them to practice

Professional judgement, critical thinking and reflection

- requires day to day decisions to support all kids
- ECE's must continuously use professional judgement based on their knowledge of all children in care; inclusive to their development and learning
- a profession indicates specialized training & knowledge and requires critical thinking & reflection
- engage in higher order thinking, problem solving, advance language skills etc.
- reflection is required
- critical thinking
- reflective practitioners

Educational preparation for early childhood educators

- limited or no education stagnates
- because of the importance of the early years to future development and success, the people who work with and program for young children must be highly skilled/trained and act as professionals
- specialized training and knowledge is required to provide excellent services for children
- knowledgeable educators are the key to success
- limited education stagnates early learning in children
- limited or no training in ECE's stagnates the ability to reach high quality standards, exacerbates the staff turnover (see it as a job rather than a career therefore less investment, retention)

Professional learning

- ongoing professional learning
- ongoing professional learning required
- requires ongoing PD
- there is a sense of continuity in staying current, ongoing learning and professional development as part of the responsibility of being a professional
- continuing education is often part of a profession, would keep staff up to date & informed
- coaching/ mentoring

Ethical responsibilities and caring

- children to trust in their needs being met by people who remain consistent in their work and presence within the program
- pg. 8-attitudes, emotions and values
- caring ethically
- ethical responsibilities of caring for and educating young children in a diverse society
- ethical responsibilities
- ethical, critical thinking

The complex and demanding nature of work with young children and their families

- challenging work environments
- inclusive learners
- it requires more of a person than vocation might, as there always going to be something new to learn master, every situation will be new
- it requires continually growing as a professional, adjusting methods for different children and families each day
- ECE is an intricate job to do it well, a strong understanding of child development, family systems, educational approaches, self-knowledge, etc. is required

- the work of ECEs is no different than that of teachers in the context of how much knowledge and skill development is required to do this job properly
- complex work
- complex needs of children & families i.e. immigrant & refugee
- assist in building the foundation of a life
- working with families
- democratic community networking
- francophone school but do not speak French fluently
- ECE put forth a learning based program with emphasis on building relationships and trust to promote learning

Arguments in support of professionalizing or about professionalizing the field

- not sure why with all the research on the importance of early years that ECE is not a profession
- one of the greatest obstacles I believe is challenging the advancement of the early learning profession being situated within a formalized "system" that has enabled standards for early learning to be established based
- there is very poor membership in ACCA because many ECE's do not necessarily see themselves as professionals
- it requires the best possible people, best policies, and expertise such as another profession
- establishes a level of respect, initiative and decision making in learning and care
- babysitter view vs skills & training of total child development-social, emotional
- agrees with the statement because the earlier we can impact children's learning to better
- if it is treated as a profession, then the respect it deserves is more likely
- it would be better recognized as a profession if the ministry of education also recognized them as such
- until ECE is a profession we will not have the quality children need
- the work needs to be supported as a profession if we are to move forward
- it is a specialized area of work that calls for individuals interested in the work
- professional - recognized
- would make each feel like a professional
- in order to provide quality early learning & care experiences for children and their families our staff need to be recognized as professionals
- yes, we are professional, can we infuse the education from bottom and top into the middle staff to build professionalism and belief in what we do
- is it a profession? It is but we need to find a way to ensure that all staff in ELC are at same level
- goal is the professionalization of the field which generally requires specialized education
- if viewed as a profession educators would be more valued by family & community, lose the "babysitter" title
- exhausting to convince the external community that we are professional

- staff lose desire to educate & work hard when they're not respected for what they do

Infrastructure for a profession

- a professional organization that sets standards and registers/licenses its members (or a code of ethics to guide practice)
- college of professionals
- professional assoc. is the 'voice' to policy makers

Service management and environments – education and care

- at preschool level we should recognize junior kindergarten formally
- variety of program settings
- without a consistent ministerial jurisdiction whereby EL is embedded and reflected in public policy-with sustainable investment to develop an early learning system-services will continue to be offered

Investments in early learning and care

- it should be but don't yet believe we are there- we need to be compensated properly for educators
- support Heckman Equation -the importance of investment -public investment in early years
- remuneration is important

Learning from other models or jurisdictions

- again look to international
- professional models i.e.. Scandinavia

General comments

- accreditation does not allow us to go off script! Even if we are high quality
- if preschools will have a curriculum, training will be required

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

Agreement with the seven main areas of competence

- agree with seven areas of competence-perhaps add importance of reflective practice underwriting with curricular resources
- delighted with this high level outline: in particular the inclusion of caring ethically
- all were valid areas
- thoroughly covered
- all areas are extremely crucial to high quality care and education
- can't of think of anything
- change-nothing-looks great

- support all of the 7 areas
- I believe all of the competencies listed would be equally valuable in ensuring a holistic approach to support children's optimal development needs
- in an ideal and perfect world would not delete any of the areas as they are critical for growth and long term learning
- wouldn't add to or delete from the 7 areas of competence outlined in this discussion paper
- the 7 areas of competence outlined were an excellent representation of the requirements of the emerging professional educator

Additional areas of competence for consideration

Physical demands of work with young children

- physical competence/energy to play, interact
- physical competency needs to be reflected- the demands during job are physical and exhausting
- educators need to be physically able to do the position

Physical literacy

- physical literacy
- promote indoor & outdoor literacy

Addressing toxic stress

- possibly Add- caring ethically links to importance of mitigating toxic stress and importance of serve and return relationships
- toxic stress

Self-reflection

- add: mindfulness and responsive reflective caring
- add-reflectional professional-what does it take to do this i.e.. Curricular resources, working with families etc.
- in the sense of reflecting on practice, but more deeply about who we are as individuals
- self-reflection is a huge piece that goes unsupported
- high willingness to learn with and about children, families and self

Creativity and intentionality

- intentionality
- part of it is questioning "the man"
- creativity, flexibility, provide the appropriate environments
- educators who are thinkers & interpreters of early childhood philosophies & principles
- holistic approach

Other areas of competence or areas for focus

- infant toddler care
- ECEs have to do lot of other things -cooking, laundry
- add: democratic practices
- responsible citizenship-how to be a valued & contributing member of your community
- add-basic admin-intro to what it takes to operate child care
- possibly add communities from standpoint of working together, cross sector with communities partner including health
- looking at all seven competencies create a holistic approach to children and their families

Areas of competence participants highlighted

Working with families and accommodating diversity

- better understanding that ECE work with families
- working w/ families
- working with families as important as caring as a competence, cannot have early learning and child care without family collaboration
- better understanding with responding to the growing diversity with children and families and early learning staff
- working with families and supporting children with disabilities
- glad to see the section pertaining to working with families as this is often left out when discussing the role of an ECE
- diversity
- cultural competence (2)
- higher profile of cultural competence
- highlight cultural competence
- higher cultural focus
- culture

The importance of care and caring

- caring-very important-needs to be highlighted and not forgotten
- caring ethically (3)

A knowledge and understanding of how young children develop and/or learn

- child development-important base of knowledge
- using knowledge of how children learn and develop for an early year pedagogy
- knowledge of how children learn & develop
- below 3 needs to be just as valued and have same expectations as pre-school age

Work with curricular resources

- working with curricular resources (EL&CC curriculum framework for AB)
- communication w/in a democratic community - effective communication - accred stands support
- add to the section or curricular resources: appreciation of and ability to use time, space, materials to support curriculum and participation of children, families and educators as learners and citizens
- curricular resources-critical to the profession as a tool for intentional, reflective practice
- working with curricular resources

Linking research and practice

- linking research to practice and policy (2)
- policy linkage- more important to understand research and apply to practice and program
- policy linkage -this is a natural evolution of learning of people in the field - not entry level

Competence areas for further development– children with diverse abilities or inclusion

- we must align philosophies of early intervention/special education vs early childcare
- address inclusion and add to diversity - cultural
- change/expand write-up for children and disabilities: strength based, high expectations, view of child
- possibly merge- community within a democratic community into the other areas as applicable
- #5 supporting children with "diverse abilities" not disabilities
- while those working with young children generally have comfort in supporting typically developing children few entering the profession feel prepared relative to aspects of supporting children with disabilities, working with families & communication, understanding and applying theoretical approaches required to support increasing curr. expectations
- supporting children with disabilities considered 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' in their development
- supporting the children with diverse abilities/inclusion
- needs to be beyond children with disabilities and include all diversity
- supporting children with disabilities-not sure about the heading-maybe "supporting inclusion"-broadening this competency to make room for all
- enhance better understanding of children's inclusion, pedagogy- families and communities

Considerations in thinking about competencies

- "re: curricular resources"- requires time to plan/document

- considers the underlying philosophy to see "social relevance" and work related to social issues
- linking research to practice & policy - accreditation funding supports professional dev. activities
- 'caring' is central & pieces about differences and understanding can be taught but you must have a certain original skillset
- ensure the agenda comes from the child and not the care professional
- foundation knowledge theory
- life-long learning - willingness to learn, adapt & grow
- willingness to learn; have motivator to be passionate about
- willingness to continue to learn
- comparison to TQS but needs reflection build into it in a more meaningful way than in education

Workforce competence priorities

- teachers-caring ethically
- teachers-develop knowledge & develop pedagogy
- teachers-working with families
- teachers-research practice with policy
- teachers-comm 2 democratic
- ELCC-working with curriculum
- ELCC-supporting disabilities
- ELCC-research to practice

System competence

- competent system must be in place to draw competent staff
- there isn't a system/structure set up to support these competencies
- is very much a system piece

Questions and comments around a particular competency

- Alberta curriculum framework
- supporting children & disabilities-funding as well as partnerships with education must be addressed-this is a broader issue than a competency
- not sure how multilingualism will be effectively achieved when so many other competencies must be reached
- I wonder if recommendations to support such level of competencies in ECE in rural areas and in francophone settings can be part of the report
- will be helpful to support local authorities and to ensure quality in accessing quality early childhood education
- private & not for profit
- how do we build the skills?
- can these skills be taught?

- the core competencies may not be realized unless compensation is provided to child care professionals
- how to 'require' this with non-mandatory school age children
- it also shifts often, better learned when/as needed
- emphasize the role is not substitute mother/not a home-like environment, requires a rich learning environment

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

Participants offered the following assessments of the current capacity of early learning and care workplaces to support staff in the delivery of high-quality services. For Early Childhood Services (ECS), funded through the Ministry of Education, 15 participants (48 percent) assessed their current capacity as 'weak' and 2 (7 percent) 'very weak'. 8 participants (26 percent) assessed their current capacity as 'strong'. The remaining 6 participants (19 percent) who provided a response assessed the capacity as neither 'strong nor weak' (5 responses) or both 'strong and weak' (one response).

For early learning and care services, supported through the Ministry of Human Services, 16 participants (52 percent) assessed the capacity as 'weak' and 9 participants (29 percent) as 'very weak'. 6 participants (19 percent) assessed the capacity as 'neither strong nor weak', while 1 participant provided a 'don't know' response.

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

Staff educational preparation and educational requirements

- inconsistent education expectations & program expectation/allowances
- level exemptions lower staff qualifications -a nurse has no emergent curriculum or observation & doc. training, also lessens the value of the field...most anyone can do it
- in school based programs- well-articulated professional practice that is generally not founded on early childhood knowledge
- for francophone only kindergarten teachers are certified with an education degree
- in terms of ECS service professionals, I believe their strength lies in current theoretical knowledge supportive of the foundations required to support increased roles and responsibilities of ECE's in being able to effectively support and apply the concepts of pedagogy such as is defined in the newly evolving ELCC curriculum framework document
- lack of training specific to early learning in ECS
- day homes lack collaboration of a learning community

- we have very few ECS educators in our francophone that have the desirable level of education in our preschool and early learning programs
- need to increase levels of training and address weaknesses of the current equivalencies (cert. process) to increase the capacity of the "system"
- difficult for staff to access education and difficult to move to a profession given the current compensation levels
- teachers with B.Ed. and no required specialized ELCC training don't offer core competencies in care and support/best practice
- the current way our system is set up allows for individuals to be certified who are not formally trained in early learning
- certification in child care is not child development focused (science degrees-child development supervisor)
- equivalencies have really failed us
- challenge of equivalencies
- there has been certifications granted to newcomers whose experience and education has absolutely nothing to do with early learning & care which has taken away from the validity of certificates and devalued our workforce with incompetent and untrained individuals
- half have very poor knowledge of early childhood dev.
- better trained staff are -involved in admin-not as much time mentoring staff - leaving field due to pay & working conditions

Limited leadership capacity within organizations

- limited capacity for the kind of pedagogical leadership necessary to support and sustain professional practice
- community based programs-no leadership, insufficient resources, no infrastructure, inconsistencies in staff qualifications
- an infrastructure: leadership and stability
- needs: lack of leadership, need ongoing vision
- we throw in leaders who are not prepared
- missing pedagogical piece!- where is the support for leaders

Current focus of service regulations and standards

- better standard of care use more educators
- community based childcare has min. standards -harder to move as a system & regulations
- inconsistent levels of staffing
- monitoring ECS programs are primarily related to funding and use of the funds to support program
- complex paperwork and strict regulations do not ensure quality programming and learning environment

Opportunities for professional learning in education supported services

- strong re: system funding & PD support etc.
- there are opportunities & time given within the educational system (education) but the quality of PD still varies hugely
- PD opportunities
- ECS sector has flexibility of time, access to available resources and built in expectations for professional learning goals
- ECS advantages: flexibility of time (PD/ Planning), support for community of practice

A lower priority for early learning and care as compared to education

- community childcare is even worse- staff are not respected, educated and paid well
- in other ECS programs where the qualifications and pay are different, this is even more so the case
- ECS is still seen to be of lesser importance than the older grades, even though teachers generally have the same qualifications and are paid same
- difficult culture and values that do not place importance on the early years despite the evidence/research
- the cultural shift that is required within schools-and in the broader centres to make it possible for early childhood educators to become professional

Structural barriers to building service capacity in early learning and care

- while there is great will and even plans to have 'system competence' systemic barriers exist i.e. high staff turnover due to wages, lack of training, low commitment, also lack of career laddering to support growth of staff to eventually manage programs
- due to the lack of a supported provincial or federal system, staff are unsupported and working in crisis often
- committed, hardworking and often innovative but it is not a systemic approach
- advantage of being a system-framework to start with
- there is basically no structure in place at all
- we do not have a system in childcare
- public \$ to private organizations makes it hard to create a system
- private ECS operators can be very isolated as can K teachers in more isolated schools
- lack of monitoring ECS programs
- working conditions, hours, staff/child ratio, group size
- community based programs seem to have more difficulty coming to PD or receiving PD that is meaningful & changes practices due to higher staff turnover and long hours
- education (ECS) may have the structure to support staff but they do not have the knowledge or competencies, depends on each teacher, consultant, etc.
- public/private ECS operators not evaluated
- issue of private vs non-profit/market based care

A system in education (ECS)

- ECS programs exist within systems that could be adjusted -i.e. teachers are trained so adding to the system is possible
- education has the system
- education has the advantage of a system

Variations between service environments

- lack of consistency
- can't generalize across: some centres may be strong others weak (an issue in AB that accreditation has not been able to address - wide variance in levels of quality/ability/capacity)
- there is a vast difference in child care facilities
- CC- not all programs are inconsistent across the board
- difference in delivery and care for children and support to staff and families
- disparity between rural and urban centres in competencies of staff- day homes are weakest
- disconnected in appropriate PD offered
- this answer really depends on what you focus on
- trying their best, with varying degrees of success

Differences between child care and early childhood services

- CC they bring strong play based and emergent planning
- inconsistent between educators
- ECS-min knowledge of child develop
- ECS-curriculum-based & school readiness
- CCS-understanding child dev. doesn't feel supported-lose drive
- CCS-little planning/research time
- childcare generally is lacking flexibility and resources and does not expect staff to take on professional development activities
- professional opportunities supports for programming multi- disciplinary approach, PUF, collaboration, EYE-TA
- where ECS professionals tend to be challenged however is in the application of a framework that evolves from a "learn through play" philosophy
- ECS- child is expected to fit into school not the child fit into program/school

Financing challenges

- there is a lack of funding for preschool facilitators
- but not enough funding -to deliver training
- staff incentives and wages
- funded through the organizations themselves at a high \$ cost that is not sustainable for small operators
- resources for rural centres

- support through licensing and accreditation- the resources are there if we choose to use them, or we have to pay for it and we just don't have the resources
- need government support to provide quality, are all educators on the same level, get educators educated and then provide compensation appropriately

The work of individual organizations/programs to build capacity

- the ability to obtain both is there
- value of nurturing & play focus
- mentoring/coaching structures
- more programs like Norquest FDH provider course
- many organizations who are striving to support staff in delivering high quality services
- as an agency we are doing are best
- the question is referring to the place- my answer would be stronger as I have PD days as well as \$ in my pocket
- beginning

General comments

- any of the above can reach extreme depending on location and the personnel involved
- capacity low

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

Further competence considerations

- diversity including First Nations and Metis perspectives needs to be reflected in the competencies
- definition/understanding of professional 'competence'

Licensing standards and regulation

- Ed Cath - not allowing childcare in portables
- accreditation process supportive of system competence & unannounced monitoring visits during reaccreditation
- licensing minimums too low-education staff # educated staff
- director may be only level 3 staff in centre
- there are strengths and weaknesses in each area the system in ECE strongly supports health and safety (standards, monitoring, process)
- ECS has stronger learning standards and monitoring- a blend or combination is needed- bring together the custodial care oriented and learning oriented systems

System development and service planning

- inconsistency in program expectations in both kindergarten and childcare, preschool

- need to look at long term integration of system (a continuum of practices and smooth transition)
- the fact that we are talking about 2 different systems speak loudly to the idea of system competence
- system competence is not there
- worst year for parents is kindergarten year-difficult to find OPCS also-5yr old in both systems
- this is magnified in the kindergarten year when a five year old child must move between 2 systems in a day
- need to have an integrated system - policies – funding
- lack of infrastructure
- importance of transitions for children
- unrealistic expectation under present circumstances
- cross governmental ministry collaboration may lead to some efficiencies
- space to create childcare
- surprised that some said ECS as weak, but see where they were coming from

Financing considerations

- publicly funded
- hopeful? Or not? No funding? What is possible without financial resources?
- issue of fee for service- parents demand childcare is always open, affordable, etc. because "I am paying you"

Educational levels and professional learning for staff

- EA's & others not required ECD knowledge
- re: only teachers hold certification and not necessarily early childhood
- do we really have 44% as supervisors? Or is it equivalencies
- set PD days

Workforce considerations and challenges

- as a professional that works both within an organization supporting ELC sector broadly providing professional dev. and capacity building strategies, and as someone who currently instructs at the post- sec. level in the elementary education program of the U of A, I see strengths and weaknesses of professionals in both realms of the sector
- ECE's can't always focus on the competencies because are also cooking, cleaning, shovelling snow, other tasks outside of the actual care and learning of children
- director in ratio some hrs in day lack time to mentor/coach staff
- no flexibility of time
- professional capacity of the field

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

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

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

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

Masters level

- masters level
- U of A masters in early childhood-goal for lead teachers

ECE degree or degree with early learning specialization

- degree with ECS specialization
- degree in early learning and not just a degree in education
- degree w/ ECE focus
- early childhood education degree
- course related to the population of learner degree in EC
- early learning degree
- four year bachelor degree with emphasis on play, emergent curriculum (ELCC framework)
- degree prepared with substantive foundation in early childhood
- ECS- minimum four years post-secondary degree specialization in early childhood
- 4 yr. degree with an early childhood major
- ECE degree with education

B.Ed. with an early learning specialization

- teaching degree but early childhood specialty
- teachers should have several early childhood courses & be trained & coached on the same framework as childcare (like 30 years ago when they needed a 1 yr. certificate after their degree)
- the B.Ed. qualification for K is great, however it requires some form of ECE specialization whether as a minor or separate diploma certificate
- B.Ed. is not enough
- B.Ed. with ELCC specialization

- a two year diploma that a teacher could take after degree
- minimum teacher-degree B.Ed. & additional year in early learning
- teacher degree with specialized in ECE
- teaching degree in specification in early learning or a new degree in B.Ed. with a major in early learning
- while four year education degree provides strong theoretical knowledge for those working in ECS/Kindergarten environments, there is a sense (a point recently reinforced by current students enrolled in the course I am teaching titled Theory to Practice in Early Childhood Education) that further course work in this area, and/or earlier introduction of concepts of play and inquiry approached learning would have further benefited their educational 'preparedness for the possibility of choosing and/or working in young aged early learning environments

Bachelor degree (no specialization mentioned)

- currently requires 4 yr. degree
- ECS teacher-bachelor degree
- a bachelors level degree with graduate studies options available
- dependent on role-director-degree
- ECS- degree and post diploma
- at least a degree w/some specific changes

Requirement of a Diploma level qualification

- integrated diploma prepared
- assistant- diploma
- min 2 yr. diploma in EC
- 2 year diploma minimum -moving to degree
- ECE specific diploma-degree
- ELCC Diploma
- educational assistant specializing in early education with a diploma
- degree or diploma specializing in early education
- 2 yr. diploma

Requirement of a Certificate level qualification (1 year)

- minimum - 1yr ELC college

Using a team approach with a range of credentials

- 60% having a degree in child studies; ladder up skills & knowledge of existing staff
- degree with ECD specialization with support staff @ diploma level
- bachelor of education with specialization in ECE lead teacher -minimum two year ECE/ELCC diploma for other staff
- team approach with laddering
- what about a team - or relief (support staff) could be different- but no equivalencies!
- need teams with time for reflective discussion

The importance of specialization

- education specific to what is developmentally appropriate
- needs something to address the specific environment of ECE
- specialized knowledge for inclusion of children with special needs
- child development
- child + brain development knowledge need to be included in which certification is required
- understanding children & play
- specialization in ECD/ECE for the professional therapists like OT, PT and SLP
- really specialized area so education needs to reflect this
- should include early learning

Formal educational preparation in ECS and child care services

- should the requirements be the same?

Other comments

- see Finland as ideal
- increased compensation for 4 years and beyond
- increase min # level 2/3 staff i.e. preschool childcare family day home
- research provides a lot of insight in this area
- it is very important that staff working with young children have adequate education
- more mentoring in ECS
- opportunities for prof learning
- more important is to make sure that recommendations made to the ministries are considering the reality of francophone

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

Degree level qualification

- 3-4 year degree in ECE/ ELCC for leaders
- a bachelors level degree with graduate studies options available
- need a degree - but have to be compensated

Degree and/or diploma qualifications

- need a baseline of education (2 years) moving towards a degree
- two year diploma- four year bachelor degree
- minimum EL&C diploma or B.Ed. with early learning specialization
- ECE degree or diploma/certificate for PDH
- 2 yr. diploma should be entry to practice, option for 4 yr. degree should be available
- 2 year diploma minimum -moving to degree

- degree or diploma should be the minimum
- degree or diploma that covers 7 areas (competencies)
- degree- diploma
- diploma-degree
- 2-4 years of education- but does this come out of not knowing what the possibilities are?
- minimum 2 yr. ECE diploma, option for a degree in early childhood & management
- degree with ECD specialization with support staff @ diploma level

Diploma level qualification (2 years)

- at least 2 yr. diploma-starting
- a minimum level 3 two year EC diploma with it being mandatory to have certain amount of P.D. each year
- childcare (no levels) minimum 2 yr. ECD diploma or equivalency but equivalencies need to be re-evaluated -director-degree with courses in administration, leadership
- ELCC diploma plus ongoing professional learning should be a minimum requirement
- foundation of diploma prepared -percentage?
- min 2 year diploma in EC in centers, FDH min one year diploma
- minimum ELCC Diploma+ ongoing professional learning requirement
- diploma's specializing in early education
- minimum - 2yr ELC diploma
- ECE/ELCC two year diploma is minimum
- with research strongly reinforcing the single-most influential element of quality being the caregiver, and increased expectations of roles and responsibilities that are now further impacting the work of ECE' s, I believe there is a growing recognition for the minimum level of education to consist of a two-year diploma as the entry point requirement
- diploma should be entry to practice
- minimum two years post- secondary specialisation in early childhood
- at least two year of training with a focus on pedagogy and how children learn

Certificate qualification (1 year)

- 1 yr. certificate
- family day home providers should require a minimum of CDW
- support staff need minimum one year ECE/ELCC certificate

Range of qualifications

- at minimum, certification, diploma preferred, degree for supervisors
- 60% having a degree in child services; ladder up skills of current staff and knowledge
- 50% staff degrees
- some degree prepared for pedagogical leadership-masters level to support pedagogical leadership

- leaders - masters-pedagogical practice
- some certificate prepared to support ratio requirements

Professional learning

- need opportunity for PD in inclusive services
- part of the P.D. needs to be about coaching
- with ongoing professional development
- both question A & B need ongoing PD/required

Comments on current educational requirements

- CDA needs upgrading
- starting with level 1 course and increasing
- PLEASE get rid of level one (tomorrow!)-at the very least
- takeout (exemptions, CDA)
- stop offering 45 hour course
- eliminate 50 hour minimum right now
- current system and certifications are adequate but do not feel because of budgets we need to rely on CDA'S

Similar qualification/educational requirements for ECS and child care services

- qualifications need to be same if we want the work of each to be valued
- eventually threshold be the same-a qualification to work/teach 0-8 yrs. whether is school system or childcare

Rural centre considerations

- rural Alberta has huge challenge to get qualified personal
- need distance education to provide for rural

General comments

- the only reason to support lower qualification for these staff is because of the current demand for spaces
- ECE specific
- need 10 year grandfather window
- see Finland as ideal
- increased compensation for 4 years & beyond
- make sure that recommendations made to the ministries are considering the reality of francophone
- as mentioned highly qualified
- this depends on the facility and resources the capacity of staff and board
- reallocate the wage enhancement-keep it in this field

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

The relationship between staff educational preparation and high-quality services

- this age group is our most vulnerable population with greatest potential, we know training supports quality and quality is the goal here
- research evidence makes plain that higher levels of educational preparation are linked to higher quality practice-need education specific to early learning, childcare...as per the 7 competency areas noted in the report
- it is the specialized training and education that is most important along with continuous learning that make an impact on the quality of care
- most important time in child's growth and development -need to ensure that we have high quality staff for high quality programs
- better qualified staff will create high quality pedagogical environments- positively impact early learning
- better qualified staff support a higher quality pedagogy that contributes to improved outcomes for children and their families
- we have seen the results of preschool children moving through system in the school, they are consistently top of their class
- research on the early years is clear-knowledge and competencies of early childhood education is key
- they will enhance children social and emotional functioning, support their engagement in learning and foster their cognitive and language development
- creates better competencies & knowledge for working with children & families

Current educational preparation for child care staff

- the course content for CDW and CDS are structured very well with ample knowledge on child development
- reflective practice-not possible in a vocational/apprenticeship kind education
- more detailed knowledge is needed for CDA certification
- I feel CDA certification needs to be overhauled with greater expectations implemented and taught
- 'coaching' should be part of the degree program
- not equivalencies

Funding support for educational preparation and professional learning

- barrier: this requires public funding & support
- professional development must be supported through funding for staff yet support for parents to have access to care when staff are on P.D.
- Professional learning community system in place that is \$ sponsored

Closer integration of Early Childhood Services (ECS) and child care services

- to improve collaboration between ECS & childcare, establish common standards of qualification, pay, benefits, working conditions, code of ethics OR you split the field even more than now
- both need ongoing PD/researched best practices & sharing we need to align both services
- ultimately they should be one and the same- one common system across settings
- tied to work across the system-centre based-school based
- there is no difference between pre-K, childcare and K; they all support children in their development and the families who love them yet for some reason we have decided age 5 is when 'serious development' that requires a profession begins

Supporting the field as a profession

- to be a professional
- adds value & professionalism to the workforce
- professional recognition

The specialized nature of early learning and care

- specialization of work in the field
- need to focus on ECE/ELCC specialization and field placements in early years/ childcare for all who work with and program for young children
- knowledge about early learning and development+ 7 core competencies are requirements for effectively working with young children
- research early years
- "vulnerable" population
- expanding knowledge base in ECE-important for the work
- understanding of curriculum
- understanding of development
- what children and families need
- an additional layer for child care is the business management aspect -payroll, budget, financial statements. Leaders are often consumed by this and not able to focus on mentoring staff

Early learning and care pedagogical practices or approaches

- documentation
- critical element is the way staff involve children, stimulate interactions (with) and between children
- use diverse scaffolding strategies
- high critical thinking skills
- planning
- Important to find a balance between regulations and pedagogy

Professional learning

- need to place emphasis on 'life-long' learning with a professional plan laddering with criteria
- PD- should be targeted
- need to define what is core P.D. for birth to five year old

Arguments for change

- as one parent said to me "we drop our kids off in care and we know every day is a crap shoot, we just hope everything will be okay"-this needs to stop!
- not everyone wants to put their children in EC programs but the option to do so and with highly qualified staff, should be there just as there is for K-12
- it is what we know is needed
- seamless ladder-certificate-diploma-degree-post graduate degree

Observations on the change process

- we need to break down old mindsets
- what does make people stay? What factors impact their sustainability?
- need time to shift to more education
- the reality of a childcare professional job description also includes tasks such as cooking and janitorial duties, how do you ensure these duties are not a part of the childcare professionals day even if they had a four year degree
- educational opportunities need to be available
- all the levels in the system are valuable and shouldn't be left out

General Comments

- that will give them basic training to handle curriculum
- team approach- once you get a ...
- staff outcomes of care are positive and responsive
- Australia/New Zealand international benchmark
- parents are not forced to put their children in public school. They can home- school or choose a private or charter school that suits their family

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

Coaching and/or mentoring approaches

- PD more than workshops-ongoing coaching
- coaching and mentoring
- ongoing PL + mentorship
- coaching model/mentoring/follow through
- mentoring & coaching with the centre
- online supported by coaching

- mentorship, coaching, engaged learning models
- degree and annual professional development, mentor support or team teaching
- pedagogical mentorship
- mentoring coaching by quality leaders in ECE/ ELCC
- professional learning- coaching/ modeling
- mentoring, PD coaching, goal setting, accountability, yearly PD specific to ECS
- mentorship structures

A college of ECEs and/or a professional association

- college of ECE & professional association
- college of ECEs
- creation of a professional body

A college of ECEs and mandatory professional learning

- should our ECE staff be a registered body with PD required yearly?
- ongoing, required training to maintain credential, annual reporting on training and learning goals planned and achieved through a college

Mandatory requirement for professional learning

- ongoing PD to be mandatory
- ongoing/required professional development
- mandatory PD opportunities with pay
- should be a requirement of pd for certification renewal 40-80 hours over 5 years...
- some mandatory-connected to system wide initiatives/priorities e.g. curriculum framework
- ongoing PD to retain their credentials
- Ontario mandated prof dev req's/accred/school act monitoring
- for educators receiving education degree, it would be critical to ensure more formal requirements for early learning and play based courses that help them transcend theoretical knowledge to practice applications and diverse early learning environments

Ongoing professional learning

- ongoing research
- ongoing
- ongoing relevant PD/CEU
- life-long learner should be one of the competencies

Planned and/or goal setting around professional learning

- need an educational plan to reach long term goals such as a Finland model
- steps of a professional learning model
- individual plans- team plans- centre plans
- professional goal setting(2)

- professional growth plan
- setting goals to reflect and prove child's learning
- need a plan based on evidence
- a plan - for prof. dev./expectations
- staff personal goals
- team goals
- growth plan

Support for professional reflection

- time for professional learning with children
- time for planning, reflection, documentation and team talk
- support for self- reflection
- ongoing reflection of children and learning
- reflection
- being reflective, a designer of learning

Types of professional learning, content and delivery models

- different modes of learning
- many different forms for all learning types
- communities of learners
- online, webinars, etc. different languages available
- stages of career from one off weekend-evening workshops to daytime and night school degree and graduate studies programs
- evidence based PD opportunities
- support for kindergarten teachers to implement provincial curriculum through Projects+ Project based learning
- what is the best form of PD for ECS?
- there are lots of PD opportunities for these teachers, but most focus on older children aren't useful for ECE environment
- value for learning through play, emergent curriculum, project based learning embedded
- play+ emergent curriculum
- needs more ECE specific PD
- early childhood development (stages & expectations)
- need a regulated/recognized training list
- project based approach
- observation & documentation
- ethics
- communication
- need accessible programs
- some choice

Other comments

- there are many P.D. opportunities for ECS providers through the school divisions
- this depends on the facility and resources the capacity of staff and board
- follow through with PD opportunities
- university degree
- minimum diploma in ECE- no equivalency
- other degrees must have 1 yr. of early learning & care studies
- need to compensate early childhood educator appropriately and need to include them as public sector workers like doctors, nurses, teachers
- creation of a system ECS & CCS
- culture of learning
- not sure
- presentation

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

Coaching and/or mentoring approaches

- ongoing coaching
- there is also a need for professional development supports that have been introduced over the past 10 years to broaden in their application to support coaching/mentoring on site with practitioner to support the theory to practice application often introduced in PD sessions
- ongoing reflection, goal setting, coaching, mentoring
- coaching and mentoring
- coaching model/mentoring/follow through
- mentoring & coaching with the centre
- online supported by coaching
- need more coaching or mentorship outside of the center
- mentorship structures
- mentorship, coaching, engaged learning models

Communities of learning

- ongoing PLC + mentorship
- opportunity for reflection with peers from other centers
- include workshops, formal teaching and certification but also with mentoring and professionals learning communities
- communities of learners

A college of ECEs or a professional association

- college of professionals to oversee the field
- ongoing PD monitory-professional association to evaluate this

- establish a self-regulatory college of early childhood educators
- develop a college or other professional organization
- should our ECE staff be a registered body with PD required yearly?

Mandatory requirement for professional learning

- yearly requirement - hours required
- prof learning requirement if PPP is mandated
- mandatory PD opportunities with pay
- credits tied to training through ARCQE (PD needs to be accredited)
- ongoing, required training to maintain credential, annual reporting on training and learning goals planned and achieved through a college
- should be a requirement of pd for certification renewal 40-80 hours over 5 years...
- required ongoing PD which can include visits/mentoring at quality centers
- ongoing/required professional development
- ongoing

Planned and/or goal setting around professional learning

- need an educational plan to reach long term goals such as a Finland model
- steps of a professional learning model
- individual plans- team plans- centre plans
- professional goal setting (2)
- having a plan
- project based work
- centres can take the project based philosophy
- project based approach
- support for self-reflection
- reflection

Support to participate in professional learning

- these services needs to be covered in some form of QEP
- authentic time and funding to support/impact change that effects 'genuine' practice supporting young children
- need opportunities to participate in PD as part of their work time, other professions have it and we can't expect people to become professional overnight on their own time and their own dime

Professional learning content and/or models of delivery

- what is the best form of PD for child care workers?
- monthly/biweekly strength enhancements need to be put in place to maintain a quality service and enhance programming
- many different forms for all learning types
- workshops, conferences, seminars

- different modes of learning
- stages of career from one off weekend-evening workshops to daytime and night school degree and graduate studies programs
- PD would need to have greater criteria to support career- laddering and foundational knowledge
- FDH- could be supported through agency
- early childhood focus
- it has become increasingly apparent over the last number of years, that ECE's in the early learning sector require a much greater emphasis on broader theoretical perspectives that would facilitate their ability to grasp concepts being introduced by way of the ELCC curriculum framework
- although level 3 staff with a two-year diploma do have strong foundations of 'play' that enable them to apply theoretical practices in diverse early learning environment, unless ECE have returned to further their educational knowledge since obtaining a diploma many may still struggle with post-modern concept as well as in keeping current on evolving research and best practice strategies emerging (i.e. importance of early brain development)
- PD would need to be delivered and support by way of specialized education and knowledge that supports the theory to practice strategies
- evidence based PD opportunities
- some mandatory-connected to system wide initiatives/priorities e.g. curriculum framework
- program planning, child guidance
- early childhood development (stages & expectations)
- DAP and child development
- pedagogy
- need a regulated/recognized training list
- observation & documentation
- communication
- ethical care
- ethics
- ongoing relevant PD/CEU
- diverse learners
- value multicultural diversity, support and include within the upgrade process
- some choice

Educational requirements for early childhood educators

- college two-year programme at minimum
- would same level of adult/child ratios be necessary if all educators had a higher education and more relative to supporting young children
- minimum diploma in ECE- no equivalency
- other degrees must have 1 yr. of early learning & care studies
- degree and annual PD, including mentor support and team teaching

- degree in early years; ongoing professional development
- anyone with less than ELCC diploma should be required to continue to progress toward that goal
- ELCC diploma holders would be required to have ongoing professional development
- as mentioned highly qualified
- 2 yr. diploma-move to degree

Other comments

- present facilitators PD needs to be put in place
- follow through with PD opportunities
- ongoing research
- time for implementation
- presentation
- fully implement the ELEC framework supported through education & PD support
- accred funding PD-licensed -not playschool, preschool, head start, early intervention
- ABCHS-PPG 5 x/10 months

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

Support for professional learning

- ongoing professional development (2 responses)
- emphasize professional learning
- P.D.
- need a system
- this is key element of a professional system
- life-long learning
- needed to support growth in the field for professional opportunities, ongoing professional engagement and agency
- mandatory workshops to keep up certification

The benefits of professional learning

- if we want our kids to be inquirers, then we want the adults to have similar processes
- need more support in order to make new learning 'stick'
- often change occurs when more than one person is knowledgeable in the field: common language, common understanding, professional equity (intellectual and pay)
- supports quality, staff retention
- allows for consistent practice expectations
- so that everybody is on the same page
- give ece's the knowledge and skills to either move laterally within the field or vertically
- degree in early years plus "ladder-up" existing staff knowledge and competencies
- staff outcomes of care are positive and responsive

- allows for age appropriate planning & developmental expectations
- allows for planning w/purpose & communicates with other parties
- allows for information to be shared with different stakeholders

Accommodates changing nature of the field/practice

- knowledge/research continually new
- the field is moving quickly
- rapidly changing nature of knowledge base, prof. learning to reflect on practice needed
- research has changed-this is a way to respond to this
- research based, evidence informed
- to keep up with current research
- evidence based vision = plan-focus on child

Approaches to professional development and delivery options

- change of practice requires identifying an area of growth, and reflecting how you learn, what you need...
- pedagogy mentorship that will guide and assist educators in planning but annual learning and goals to assist children in their learning in common language
- critical need for focused, planned professional learning in the field tied to a comprehensive plan and addressing clearly articulated short, medium and long goals
- online options
- teambuilding
- coaching
- coaching & mentoring
- creating a professional learning community
- integrate the professional learning opportunities
- network with others in the field

Time and space to undertake professional learning and implement new practices

- need support staff time to provide reflective practice
- paid time
- time to be "off the floor" and engage with other educators from other centres needed
- people really get excited about the workshop or whatever is they've attended and would love to implement what they have learned, but there is no follow up and the real world takes over and the new learning gets left behind

Regulations and standards

- both/all setting require high standards of competencies
- there is something that is a real barrier around the regulations that dictate the day to day operation within a classroom
- accreditation to up the ante re educational requirements. EG. At least 50% of staff must have 2 year dip for center to retain accreditation status (need transition period)

- regulations lend to the hand of practitioners

College of ECE

- through college type structure to assume protection of public, work in best interest of public via monitoring and continuous development

Other comments

- ladder of success (ladder being steps in learning)
- use professional learning in terminology
- accreditation - process 3 years QEP

Participant thoughts and ideas arising from their discussions of professional learning

Approaches to professional learning

- need whole team to go to the same PD experience
- not one off workshops, need long term coaching/mentoring
- "teacher as supervisor"-your own daily practice supports your professional learning
- need various formats for PD, face 2 face, eLearning
- creation of professional learning community
- communities of practice
- revise the current PD structure to get there
- practitioners that come out to centers
- both a personal plan and a system plan
- teach approach to staffing
- professional learning, workforce strategy
- communities of practice/communities of learning
- include coaching & mentoring training for lead teachers
- multilingual-use technology as needed

Supports for professional learning

- issue with time for PD, cost, closing annoys parents
- time for professional learning is difficult
- loss of top up wage when doing PD
- need to connect with and see other centres and meet - network with other educators
- professional learning needs to be integrated into work time
- expectation of profession learning as an individual practitioner in your daily practice

Oversight of professional learning

- need a college or body to oversee the education and activities of daycare/child care/ECS without the 'accreditation patrol'
- governing body that oversees-college of practitioners

Considerations in advancing change

- similar to social worker changes...
- parallels of social workers in AB: study their path?
- draw the line in the sand and take into account the repercussions and make steps mandatory but achievable to realize the ideal
- we can do it
- need to better engage parents in conversation regarding knowledgeable workforce
- be mindful of repercussions: requiring FDH education may create more underground economy in this area
- we shouldn't be separating ECS and childcare services and then school on top of that
- in order to get systematic support and funding we need to prove that the PD is having an impact
- interesting point of over professionalization of the field which is a problem in health - causes the high cost of health care
- having a plan
- there would have to be a scaffolding for this type of change
- we need leaders who have ECE/ELCC backgrounds so they can provide proper support and advice
- it would be a challenge for francophone school authority to find staff fully fluent in French and that have all the education needed

Relationship with accreditation

- barriers-policing "accreditation" takes away from professionalism
- if we are going to put money into PD we must blow up accreditation as this does not allow us to be professionals
- pilot sites for the curriculum framework have grown greatly with changes that were not visible through accreditation!
- accreditation too nit-picky and pick apart policy and procedures

Preparation and support of the early learning and care workforce

- registered ECE- professional
- research/evidence tells us that public investment in the early years makes sense; a focus of and for the child
- teach approach-with some staff with degree and others with 2 yr. diploma
- laddering
- competencies give a common framework for assessment

Regulations and standards

- regulations too rigid and structured
- licensing regulation - overhaul too sticky not realistic

Other comments

- we are not allowed to think for ourselves
- shifting the early childhood focus across the disciplines
- more monitoring in ECS programs-classrooms

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

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

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

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

Advancing the educational preparation of the early learning and care workforce

Participants either ‘strongly agreed’ (24 – 75 percent) or ‘agreed’ (7 – 22 percent) with the proposed changes to strengthen the educational capacity of the early learning and care work. One participant (3 percent) ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ with the proposed changes.

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

A two-year diploma as the minimum qualification for staff in child care settings

- raising the minimum educational qualification to a 2 yr. diploma with 44% of the current ECE workforce having very minimal education
- begin by increasing the minimum for CDA, then work towards diploma as entry to field , at the same time developing degree options that would allow teacher certification by ATA
- two-year diploma as min educational qualification
- minimum diploma in related field
- two-year diploma in child care
- 2-year diploma is a stepping stone to this over 10-20 years of grandfathering
- minimum 2-year diploma-with a provincial standard of this education

- the two-year diploma to be the minimum requirement
- important to ensure core compete. taught in 2 yr. diploma
- min 2- year to enter
- diploma necessity
- need to add minimal two-year diploma for other ECS staff

Four-year degree requirement

- to have the 4-year degree as a min requirement ASAP
- degree (4-year) specialization
- introduction of a degree specialization
- degree
- change diploma in college to degree sooner and then upgrade management to educate staff

Removal of the orientation course

- no CDA
- eliminate the 45 hour childcare course
- 1 course is not enough for entry
- get rid of orientation

Specialized education

- length of program and exposure to theory, practice, pedagogy at all levels
- reintroduction of early childhood development and in degree
- ECE/ELCC specialization
- it is not a degree vs diploma qualification as it is the specialization of education that needs to be addressed
- all certificated teachers in ECS settings have a specialization in EL
- the need for all educators to be educated in early learning and care
- get rid of equivalencies

Need for leadership and management education or training

- additional qualifications for leadership positions in licensed ELC programs
- increased training for managers and leaders
- additional qualifications in pedagogical leadership and management/leadership
- leadership positions

Raising of educational requirements

- new minimum education standard with clear plan, timelines to reach new requirements
- priority is to raise the bottom up
- it models that every level needs to become more aware and well rounded
- increase qualification of staff working with young children without passing on the cost to families

- minimum requirements
- the minimum requirement being bumped up because it will help weed out people who just fall into the field

Educational requirements for family day home providers

- minimum educational qualification for FDH providers
- day homes

Post-secondary program delivery and standards

- the establishment of a provincial standard for post-secondary ECE programs
- quality instruction
- quality practicums
- consistent college requirements
- timely and practical delivery of courses
- more institutes offering more access, evening classes
- if each course would be awarded rather than the giant leap to diploma or degree people might be more willing to buy into

Requirements for professional learning

- professionals learning requirements for ECEs
- ongoing learning for everyone
- prof learning
- continued education requirement
- professional learning requirements for ECE is specifically the ELCC framework
- ongoing education that enhances current practices

Increases in staff remuneration

- a living wage and increased public investment for a sustainable early learning experience
- wages
- pay scale must reflect new requirements

The need for planning around proposed changes – system change

- #1&2&3-difficult to pick-they are all important, it needs to be a plan to include all
- system change-vision of best quality care and learning for all children in all kinds & types of families
- plan for change-set out plan and work toward it and be prepared to adjust as needed while keeping the long term vision
- love the conceptual thinking vs buffet of recommendations
- system-evidence based/public
- plan-concrete steps to reach vision
- vision-best interest of the child
- centralizing programs - meaning uniformity

Professionalization of the field

- if the work requires effort to get into, people are going to take more seriously, feel more professional and act more professionally
- professionalization of ELCC educators
- code of ethics

Supports to assist staff in upgrading education

- govt assistance for upgrading
- provincial support
- ELCC diploma as a minimum requirement- anyone hired currently holding a certificate would receive support to work towards a diploma with a time line
- framework and 'non-contact' time

Considerations in introducing change

- we rely on levels to run our program- worry is about rural centres to get the educators of qualified certifications
- funding
- this must come from gov't

Service delivery observations

- build in spectrum of choice for families-the spectrum is based on quality standards and valuing rights of children & families
- the 44% that have 2+ yrs. of education spend most of their time coaching/mentoring and not on the development of the young children

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

Support from the field for changes

- be aware that frontline childcare folks do not necessarily see themselves as professionals and after a long day at work are too tired to care about advocacy, continuing education, linking with community partners
- will they buy-in to new standards?
- what is the buy in for the workforce to elevate their education?
- buy in from existing staff

Staff remuneration

- higher paid staff
- increased wages more in line with teachers in schools
- funding the training and paying staff enough to make this a possible career choice that is above poverty level

- need to tie some money to it, we are never going to get the staff numbers we need if people can't afford to be ECEs, need a living wage
- provide a living wage + benefits for the workforce- this is a social justice issue and a caring ethically criterion

Financial support for staff education

- financial aid and time support
- bursary for CDW to move to CDS certification
- more dollars to help these educators to attain these goals
- challenges- funds, time, to educate current staff
- providers to have access to bursary funds for formal education
- paid release time
- reimbursement of replacement staffing costs
- financial support
- challenges- 40% current workforce in Level 1, funding to support staff return to school, female dominated field
- existing staff in leadership positions will be eligible for provincial bursary support

Potential loss of staff – challenges finding or retaining staff

- lack or need for qualified staff
- people leaving fields
- current lack of workforce
- without a laddering of remuneration to align with increased educational requirements, many may opt out the sector to other professions
- existing diversity
- cautions- not lose any ECE that has been in the field for long time
- meeting the demand of the workforce
- current workforce challenges-marginalized woman who are paid low wage (very critical)
- time/family obligations
- might lose workforce-provider

Timelines for introducing change

- time to grandfather those currently in the field
- majority representation of ECE'S in the current workforce are level 1s, it will be important to consider a transition process that will ensure as effective a transition as possible so as not to decimate the workforce with further turnover/burnout factors in the process
- appropriate timelines that don't further destabilize what's already working
- also have to move efficiently enough so that the change gets momentum and can't be stalled by change in government etc.
- transition for the existing workforce
- timeframe & expectations

- this is going to take lots of years- grandfathering can take over 20 yrs. if we can allow people to keep the qualification until all new hires have the minimum level
- this will take a phased approach over time- don't want to lead to under staffing

Higher service costs for families, government or service providers

- affordability for families
- cost to families-if increased will take away the children of families who would benefit the most
- less children using licensed care
- cost of implementation
- higher education requirement would push wages up -centres may not be able to pay

Capacity to implement changes

- increasing the supervisors background training may be problematic for 'in school supervisors'
- having enough educators, professors, coaches in the current system to support such changes
- caution- capacity of post- secondary
- can staffing keep up to demand for children

Focus on specialized early learning and care education

- exemptions should not be allowed
- education outside of Canada or provinces should not be allowed
- minimum education background
- not accept equivalencies
- transition to a two- year diploma- eliminate certificate
- placements-ensuring all quality programs support new placements
- applied degree

Accommodations or supports for current workforce

- those already in workforce- ESL
- ESL
- those who already hold equivalencies
- consideration for years of relevant experience
- exemptions for prior learning
- consideration of immigrant workforce potential-to contribute to new understanding of practice in a diverse society as well as to become educated/qualified to work in the sector
- need ways to harness the passion people have for this field
- proper support to staff with minimal to no English
- need support for place for ECEs to go for PD ideas, ethical guidance, advocacy help, recommendations for solid research sources, etc.

- support of current staff to reach minimum training expectation of 2 year diploma & on to 4 year degree

Family Day Home providers

- funding/timelines-min educational qualifications FDH providers
- how will you ensure day homes are in fact trained?

Current regulations, service standards including Accreditation

- we need to blow accreditation up and start over
- accreditation has not raised the quality of childcare
- % ELC staff - Level 1,2,3
- staffing/ratios
- we cannot keep it as is and also do what is proposed
- current staffing- time, effort and cost

Building post-secondary infrastructure or capacity

- academic standards for all post-secondary offerings of ELCC diploma in Alberta
- not offered by private vocational colleges
- also need masters and PhD prepared professionals to teach in post-secondary and lead research
- need to support creative options for those wanting to achieve educational requirements other than only after hour course studies
- educational institutes should follow the same guidelines
- field placement requirements met in a variety of settings
- strong programs like Norquest -1yr program
- diploma providers must also have ELCC diploma
- protect ELCC - prep programs @ post-secondary
- financial support to institutions to offer additional sections of courses in various delivery formats and structures
- government must lead the way and acknowledge/encourage ELCC learning and this means @ universities/colleges

Supporting the move towards an ELC profession

- professional recognition vs. reinvestment into education
- proposed changes 10,7,6
- help all levels especially with staffing in current centres, staffing with minimal to no English
- opportunities- build our profession
- opportunities- increase wages, professionalism, leadership vision

Planning for and implementing change

- how do we get from here to there? Plan

- cautions: take a look at repercussions with other models. E.g. Ontario. Avoid one step forward 2 steps back. Learn from others
- develop standards of practice & code of ethics -accreditation role? Code of ethics NAEYC
- accommodation or incremental integration of diversity into a common system that still allows differences- but with one set of standards
- universal understanding of principles
- its problematic for public \$ to flow into private center's profit
- change new funding/regulatory mechanism
- could schools receive a bonus for having these programs under their umbrella?
- money
- laddering-bridging-recognition of education
- who is the workforce?
- location
- which organizations have a high staff retention rate? Learn from the CCP why they stay at certain childcare centres
- connectedness linkages between individuals, groups and organizations
- maybe according to 'level' comes different roles or responsibilities

Supporting the early childhood educator as a competent professional

Participants either 'strongly agreed' (21 – 66 percent) or 'agreed' (9 – 28 percent) with the proposed changes to support the early childhood educator as a competent professional. Two participants (2 - 6 percent) 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the proposed changes.

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

Educational level and specialization

- two-year diploma as the minimum qualification for staff in licensed ELC program
- additional qualification for staff in management or leadership positions
- minimum education qualification for FDH providers
- increase education requirements
- education needs to be covered
- qualifications specifically for educators in leadership positions
- creating an additional level of certification for management leadership may draw those who ladder up
- increasing minimum qualifications-provide access to online, conference learning

Support for system change or a broad vision for change

- creation of new model
- create a system/plan to move ahead

- just looking at learning requirements, standards, code of ethics, professional organization etc. is not enough we need societal support and political will to elevate the view of ECE/ELCC as valued professional
- competent systems
- needs system change/support of public funding
- framework vision
- can't be taken apart as one relies on the other
- all of the above

Staff remuneration

- compensation
- salary guidelines
- pay and benefits must be attractive (there is usually a surplus of people with teaching degrees -why? They are attracted to pay, working conditions and respect given to their qualification)
- some money needs to come first to reward people for sticking with a difficult field and advancing their education to do so
- people typically look at remuneration as one measurement to choosing a profession, often they pay their student loans etc. once they are working at a living wage, currently it is not a living wage/salary
- realigning the educational requirements, remuneration and working environments for ECEs
- remuneration
- educators need to be better compensated for their time, especially in rural Alberta centres need to be publically funded
- realignment of remuneration and working environments needs to happen quickly as well or we will not attract and retain people to the workforce or within specific jobs

Professional oversight or service oversight

- professional association - required membership & conditions to belong
- professional college can help achieve many of the required elements
- a new model of oversight
- are we over regulated? We need a single system
- idea that the Ministry of Human Services will provide oversight is important
- can build the model for oversight to best fit the nuances of the ECE sector rather than fitting it into the education ministry that is fundamentally different

Professional development and learning

- ongoing professional learning (3)
- ongoing professional learning requirements (2)
- ongoing PD/learning requirements
- ongoing education that enhances current practices
- ongoing professional learning environment

- PD
- professional learning requirements ECEs
- all levels will have ongoing continued growth & development
- all on-going professional learning, development of standards, code of ethics, oversight of programs, remuneration
- support for educators- professional development
- in service sessions to complete diploma
- coaches to support their on-going growth as a professional
- coaching vs one off workshops - some workshops are okay but this can't comprise all ongoing PD
- mentoring centres with the Alberta curriculum framework
- the bursary was used for level 2 and level 3, not sure where they are now
- strategies-current certified/assist/worker level eligible for provincial support

Professional standards of practice and or a code of ethics

- standards of practice (2)
- code of ethics (2)
- standards of practice & code of ethics
- can't have a code of ethics without standard of practice
- aligned ethics/ required standard
- development of standards of practice and code of ethics
- provincial code of ethics
- embrace/ NAEYS/CECE/CCCF code of ethics
- standards of practice- clarity of expectations
- measurement of quality practice
- aligning a graduated quality standard from childcare to education
- provincial standard of education & care programs

Change across ECEC environments

- include requirements for all staff working in ECE as well
- implement ELCC curriculum framework province-wide
- current-licensed ELCC environ. Only -HSC -change

Staff working conditions or environments

- working conditions -hours, staff room, planning time
- realignment of working environment etc. for early childhood educators code of ethics
- non-contact time

Government and public support for change

- recognition
- public buy in
- ministries backing

- provincial support

Supports for change

- grandfathering
- there needs to be a concrete session for most people
- funding enhancements

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

Challenges or cautions in advancing change

- ECE's generally do take pride in their work and on an individual and program level, they will be threatened by change
- ECEs require support within the workplace, the work itself is difficult and resources are not readily available for ECEs
- not enough time to mentor/coach
- replacement staffing costs -strategies? Shortage of staff ELCC (turnover/low wages)
- will this additional learning create schedule conflict
- how to create learning expectations for those with alternative certification
- many programs will not want to make changes due to fear of staff retention
- areas where aren't a lot of people to begin with
- lack of qualified staff in transition phase
- lower interest in fields- don't want four year degree
- the number of staff in the field who are educated enough to train/educate a 2 year diploma
- the biggest challenge will be helping people enhance their existing education and raise wages to draw people to the field
- staffing with minimal to no English
- proper support to staff with minimal to English

The educational preparation of early childhood educators

- opportunities: increased educational standards would serve to enhance recognition and value of ECE's....something that when asked professionals responded noting was equally as valuable as appropriate remuneration
- opportunities: setting a standard for minimum education as a two year diploma ensures that all ECE'S are able to spend more time on enjoying their roles and engagement with young children
- need to be careful not to fall back into trap of equivalencies
- moving towards a 4 year degree and remunerate individuals for each course they take- pay scale for each course taken-publically funded

Professional learning for early childhood educators

- reallocate level 1 wage top up & PD funding to start
- challenges: due to adult child ratios, educators struggle with the desire to attend professional development as this can only occur at the end of long work days, weekends, and/or by using unpaid time away
- enhancing ways to support access to professional development may lend to greater professional job satisfaction
- restructuring PD
- shift from isolated workshop to change to full intentional PD
- on-going affordable professional learning
- more PD for staff-family day homes

Improved staff remuneration and working environments

- challenges: low overall remuneration to minimize incentive/motivation for existing professionals to further their knowledge
- funding to pay childcare staff in all setting not just where parents can afford to pay more
- appropriate wage
- we must have a way to realize remuneration to ensure we don't end up losing good people or having day homes go 'underground'
- paid release time - \$ cost? strategies?

Financing for early learning and care

- fee increase to cover staff qualification upgrades
- no funding to upgrade new diploma
- how do you enforce remuneration when it is parents paying for service
- we need more public funding in the field
- changing the way dollars are leveraged
- funding (2)
- cost

Service design and delivery

- policies/laws/regulations making processes that will be open and supportive of collaboration
- opportunities- integration, awareness of diverse fields
- allow for innovations such as forest schools: First nations language & culture transmission
- don't forget OOSC -how will they be impacted and many are tied with child care
- challenges- blending diverse fields of practice
- Ministry of Human Services-consult (diverse stakeholders H.S. include. Not just licensed environments)
- folks who work in baby & toddler room have the most influence on child dev -they must be part of our profession
- will day homes reduce the number as they no longer get 'categorized' as a day home?

- could schools play a role in the first year of training?
- lots of paperwork for consultants
- lot of paperwork for providers

Professionalization of the workforce

- code of ethics NAEYC, BCECE, CCCF
- code of ethics
- code of ethics-challenge-how to achieve in the absence of a system
- creating an early learning and care professional group for all centres to participate
- must create a 'competent system' to support competent professional

Workforce considerations and needs

- help all levels especially with staffing in current centres
- carry out the role with passion
- workforce willing to be trained
- support to grandfather existing staff
- diversity

Government and public support for change

- need political will
- public perceptions
- government must acknowledge the value of the work done in the field and support professionalization- this means give critical support to policies that reflect the body of research for the best practice

The capacity of post-secondary institutions

- sustaining colleges to offer diploma
- ensuring colleges are accredited -offering quality education (is CDI equivalent to McEwan diploma?)
- the ripple effect w/n the settings-secondary education requirements to teach the courses, provide coaching...
- post-sec programs and support

The change process

- please can we take the risk and just do this?
- we do know what works and what must be done - Lets Do It!
- be leaders!
- only opportunity- it would only make you stronger
- caution is to move quickly but not to destabilize an already fragile system
- confident plan of the 'how' needs to be in place looking at licensing standards and ensuring that they are raised from minimum to a higher standard