



# **'WHAT WE HEARD'**

*Report to Employment and Social Development Canada on  
the feedback received regarding the*

## **Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework Engagement**

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## Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) was originally established in 1971 as the Native Council of Canada, to represent the interests of Métis and non-status Indians, and citizens not represented by the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami or the Métis National Council. Reorganized and renamed in 1993, CAP has extended its constituency to include all off-reserve status and non-status, Métis and Southern Inuit Indigenous Peoples, and serves as a national voice for its provincial and territorial affiliate organizations. For the purposes of this document, the term 'off-reserve' references all CAP constituents including off-reserve, status, non-status, Metis and Southern Inuit.

## Executive Summary

### **Introduction**

This report presents findings provided by Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Constituents on early learning and child care. Participants invited to attend regional roundtables represent a broad range of voices from urban, rural and remote ECE workers, Day Care Administrators, health care workers, school board members, staff from Aboriginal Resource Centres and community centres, Aboriginal Head Start Program staff, outreach workers, social workers, Provincial and Federal government employees, parents, federally-funded prenatal program administrators, YMCA staff and CAP Provincial Affiliate Members. The engagement sessions were undertaken from the period of June 2017 to August 2017 to inform future federal policy and contributions to an Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

### **Background**

In response to challenges in meeting child care needs of Indigenous families, the Government of Canada invited feedback from Indigenous peoples to help co-develop an Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework that reflects the unique cultures and needs of First Nations, Inuit and Metis children across Canada, including off-reserve status and non-status to:

- Identify strengths, challenges and opportunities through engagement and dialogue
- Discuss communities' needs and priorities
- Develop meaningful principles and goals
- Plan concrete actions in the short, medium and long-term.

The engagement sessions sought feedback on three federal Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care programs, to better understand what was working well and what could be improved for the development of an Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.



### **Methodology**

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) was the key operative on the delivery of the regional roundtables in coordination with its eleven Provincial affiliates. CAP and its regional offices worked closely to design the methodology for the roundtables to include a broad cross-section of participants. CAP employed a series of approaches and processes to engage community and experts to draw out ideas for the new federal Framework. The CAP Early Learning and Child Care Circle, a national technical working group was formed to help guide the work of the engagement.

To gather feedback, participants were invited to eight regional roundtables that occurred between June 10 and August 10, 2017. The roundtables included participants from urban, rural and remote communities across Canada. Discussions at the sessions focused on contributing to the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) Framework, intended to reflect the unique cultures and needs of off-reserve Indigenous families and children across Canada, and on how programs could work together to support improved health, education and wellness. Responses were requested to themed questions posed by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

### **Findings**

Throughout the themed discussions, participants expressed concerns regarding a lack of funding. Additional feedback received could be organized into the following areas:

- The importance of language training
- Culture
- Elder involvement
- Increased access to services for off-reserve people
- Investments in human resources and training (i.e. ECE's and administrators, Elders, families, community)
- Increased financial investments in existing programs (AHSUNC) to better serve off-reserve communities
- Family involvement (supported by family wellness programs and evaluations) and family supports
- Community driven support.

Several key points emerged during the engagement process, including:

- There are significant gaps in the accessibility of any services (especially culturally sensitive services) to off-reserve Indigenous people across the country, particularly in urban, rural and remote communities
- There is a significant lack of access to ELCC programs and services in off-reserve communities in many areas of Canada especially urban, rural and remote communities
- There is a lack of subsidized spaces for children in ELCC programs and particularly culturally relevant programs and infant spaces
- Training for ELCC program staff is required; an emphasis is needed on training provided at the community level to support improved staff retention



- There is a lack of culturally trained qualified ECE workers
- Administrators and ECE staff for ELCC programs are generally underfunded and under-compensated
- Traditional language training needs to be an integral part of all Indigenous early learning and child care programming
- Indigenous people living in urban, rural and remote communities have a right to equal access to ELCC programs
- Elder and family involvement in ELCC programs is needed to assist in teaching traditional languages and culture
- Prompt access to supports for children with special needs is desperately required
- Challenges in providing transportation to and from ELCC programs are a barrier to participation, particularly in rural and remote areas.





## Discussion Themes

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) requested feedback on the thematically organized questions indicated below:

### **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

- Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities):
  - What is currently working well?
  - What needs to be improved?
  - Is there an ELCC program or service that you or your community would like to access but cannot?
  - Describe barriers or challenges that need to be addressed so that improvements can be made, to Federal and/or Provincial programs/funding
- General Needs:
  - What should Indigenous children learn or experience in ELCC programs?
  - What should Indigenous parents and caregivers learn or gain from ELCC programs?
  - What does “quality” in ELCC mean to you?

### **THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

- How will we know if an Indigenous ELCC program is successful?
- Are there meaningful ways to measure success for Indigenous children?
- Can you describe some successes and promising practices in Indigenous early learning and child care in your community? Provide suggestions on how we can build on these successes.

### **THEME 3: Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

- What do ELCC programs look like for Indigenous children?
- What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the federal government and other partners?
- What are your hopes, dreams and visions for Indigenous children and families?
- If you had more funding from a community perspective for ELCC, what would you do with it?
- Additional comments, thoughts, feedback is welcomed.

### **THEME 4: Planning for the Future of Early Learning and Child Care**

- What do ELCC programs look like for Indigenous children? What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the Federal Government and others?



## Engagement Feedback

*The questions presented by ESDC for consideration under four themes were incorporated into discussions under three themes as per recommendations of participants from the initial roundtable session hosted by CAP. All the information requested in the four themes continues to be reflected in the three themes synthesized for more fluid participant engagement.*

### **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

#### ***Existing ELCC Programs***

Participants recognized many existing programs that are working well, including Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC), Babies First, Best Beginnings, Family Resource Centres, Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP), day care centres and in-school nursery and kindergarten.

#### ***Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement: Collaboration Between Partners***

The sessions recognized the importance of establishing and maintaining good working relationships between Indigenous communities, the Federal government and other partners. Collaborative relationships will support informed decision-making based on the unique needs of the community.

The sessions acknowledged some successful programs, including:

- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) and Post Natal programs in Manitoba as well as AHSUNC – (more funded programs are needed)
- The Prince Edward Island Child Care program where children learn about their language and culture
- Native Council of Nova Scotia has good programs/supports for families
- The “Under One Sky Head Start” program in Fredericton, NB, which is recognized as a model Head Start Program, but has long wait lists. (It is also the only off-reserve Head Start Program in the province and has funding for spaces for only 6 children)
- The “Fit as a Fiddle” program, outdoor children’s programs, pre-natal programs, and a children’s meal program (recently with a \$30,000 grant) in Newfoundland and Labrador
- St. John’s Native Friendship Centre recently opened an Indigenous Day Care, the only one in the province of NL
- The “Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters” (HIPPY) outreach program in Vancouver, BC and ‘Success by Six’
- The Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre, which has an Inuit focus with a full continuum of services and support from cultural specialities and Elders
- The Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Columbia is a model of a successful provincial association that supports Aboriginal Head Start Programs across Canada.



- In Saskatchewan, some programs work closely with Elders, especially with supporting language training

**“We would like to see all programs available to all children and communities, including services and supports for special needs and access to therapists.”**

*- (Manitoba Regional Roundtable)*

### ***Aboriginal Head Start Programs***

Sessions unanimously recognized that Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities programs is a successful model for a culturally supported early learning program. The premise of the Aboriginal Head Start Program is that it is founded on the six program pillars:

1. Aboriginal culture and language
2. Education and school readiness
3. Health promotion
4. Nutrition
5. Social support and
6. Parental involvement.

Ceremonies and a connection to the land are an integral part of all Aboriginal Head Start programs. Numerous participants indicated that they currently have limited or no access to AHSUNC programs. Many of the Aboriginal Head Start Programs are located on-reserves and not accessible to off-reserve Indigenous families. There was an emphasis across all sessions for increased access to AHSUNC programs for off-reserve, urban, rural and remote communities.

### ***Greater Access Required***

It was acknowledged that off-reserve Indigenous children will benefit from improved access to Aboriginal Head Start programs, and cultural activities. Some sessions indicated that every Indigenous child should have access to an Aboriginal Head Start program regardless of where they reside. One session, recognized that access to cultural programming is important and should also be available and provided to Indigenous children that reside in non-Indigenous foster care.

**“Former graduates of the Aboriginal Head Start (in Urban and Northern Communities program) recognize the quality of the program. The AHSUNC model could be easily integrated into day care programs.”**

*- (CAP ELCC Circle)*



### ***Barriers and Challenges***

Participants identified barriers and challenges to be addressed to support ELCC programs to succeed. Sessions stressed that government funding is essential to support the operation and maintenance of ELCC programs, services, and facilities.

Collaboration between Provincial and Federal governments and communities was recognized by all sessions as being critically important to the efficient coordination of the programs. Several sessions stressed the need for improved communication between Federal and Provincial departments. Other significant barriers and challenges identified included:

- Infrastructure support is as a major barrier in many rural, northern and remote communities. Even if they had more funding dollars, some communities identified that there are no buildings to house the need for more day care centres
- Communities recognized challenges with proposal writing, including inadequate timelines, especially considering many remote communities have issues with reliable internet access
- Participants requested to have more flexible funding to better accommodate individual community needs and supports for capacity to write proposals
- Transportation is a significant barrier to access programs identified at all regional engagement sessions regardless of location
- Numerous participants indicated the barriers to access programs that were offered on-reserve and are not open to persons that reside off-reserve
- There was also a concern at many sessions that there is a complete lack of programs and services accessible to off-reserve populations.

### ***ELCC Program Improvements***

Several ELCC program improvements were requested. Specific suggestions included the following:

- All ELCC programs should be more affordable and more accessible to Indigenous people off-reserve
- Language and culture should be an integral part of all ELCC programming; the importance of this was unanimous at all nine CAP sessions
- It is recommended that all Federal funding for IELCC be streamed through one Federal Ministry to better serve Indigenous children and families (ESDC)
- More funding is required for Aboriginal Head Start programs off-reserve, urban, rural and remote (all Indigenous children should have access regardless of status or where they reside)
- Transportation to and from programs should be provided and is identified as a major barrier across regions and communities
- Upgraded and well-maintained facilities are required



- Affordable programs should be more accessible on weekends, evenings and after school (accommodating shift-workers and parents that work non-traditional hours)
- Programs should encourage the involvement of:
  - Elders who can provide cultural and traditional language training
  - Parents who can provide program support
  - Community members' input into program development
- Faster access to psychological/behavioural assessments should be available to children, to assist in ensuring they promptly receive any specialized services they require to learn
- Pursue collaboration and networking arrangements between ELCC service providers
- Offer parenting workshops and activities to encourage and support healthy families starting with prenatal and post-natal programs, nutrition programming and parenting supports
- Consistently available child care is needed, particularly in urban, rural and remote areas.

### **Government Funding**

As echoed in discussions on the other questions presented, participants insisted that consistent long-term funding with flexible parameters based on individual community needs, is required to support affordable ELCC programs and services. Stable funding is needed to ensure all Indigenous children and families have access to ELCC programs needed to support their success. Subsidies should be available to all families regardless of their income.

Several regions identified frustration from a disconnect between Federal and Provincial governments. Requests were made to remove jurisdictional barriers, such as Provinces refusing to license Federal Day Cares.

**“Every community should be able to access some form of ELCC services and know what is available.”**

*- (B.C. Regional Roundtable)*

### **ELCC Program Employees**

Participants recognized the importance of attracting experienced, compassionate, qualified, and motivated Indigenous staff to deliver ELCC programs. To achieve this:

- Funding is required to provide fair compensation, ongoing training, health benefits and potentially even remote living allowances
- Local ECE training programs should be offered and accessible in rural and remote communities to support sustainable and adequate staffing for ELCC
- It was suggested that scholarships be offered to encourage Indigenous students to pursue careers as early childhood educators in ELCC programs
- ELCC programs should be provided in safe, licensed and caring learning environments
- Participants in many sessions were in agreement that all ELCC employees should have cultural training, even those working with mainstream children.



### **Teaching Culture in ELCC Programs**

What should be taught in ELCC programs was a key topic of discussion. It was unanimous across all the engagement sessions that language and culture are at the core of all programming. Programs should include land-based programming and cultural teachings, and language instruction with a land-based component. Children should learn about the seven sacred teachings, the medicine wheel, and preparing traditional nutritious foods. Participants support teaching children to establish and maintain a connection with their Indigenous culture, traditions and languages, as it would promote pride, self-confidence and social awareness. Elder involvement is identified as essential to all Indigenous early learning programs. The history of Indigenous peoples in Canada needs to be incorporated into programming.

Lessons should be structured, stable and regularly assessed. Children should learn about healthy relationships; sharing, respectful and acceptable behaviour; and should feel valued and have pride in their culture.

**“Children should not be punished for brief absences from school while they participate in cultural activities with their families, such as hunting or trapping.”**

*- (Quebec Regional Roundtable)*

Furthermore, sessions indicated that traditional-language speaking role models, teachers, parents and Elders could support culture through storytelling, cultural activities, crafts, books and games created in Indigenous languages. One session explained how traditional lessons and legends taught through storytelling, were often recalled, retold and remembered for future generations.

### **Caregivers/Parents Role in ELCC Programs**

Indigenous parents and caregivers identified a desire to learn from ELCC programs and be encouraged to rejuvenate the heritage they historically tried to hide. Participants requested parenting programs, health education and financial literacy support. Language training for parents is also expressed as being important to support children’s language development at home.

Social workers and foster parents should be educated about Indigenous culture and have the opportunity to participate in appropriately designed cultural ELCC programs.

**“Honour and support mental health needs of children.”**

*- (B.C. Regional Roundtable)*



## THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices

### ***What is a Successful Program?***

The sessions discussed successes and promising practices in Indigenous ELCC. Successful programs will provide training in traditional languages, beliefs, values, skills, crafts, and cultural activities. Additionally, they will teach children about healthy living, nutrition, healthy relationships, and include land-based programming. Participants were unanimous in agreeing that a program could be considered a success when the children enrolled are speaking their language, living their culture, proud of who they are and they demonstrate their cultural knowledge and skills outside of the program.

**We will know a program is successful when children are engaged in the program, keen to learn traditional languages and customs, eager to attend, inspired, respectful, confident, enthusiastic, thriving, happy, proud, and exceeding mainstream educational guidelines.**

*- (Unanimous at all Regional Roundtables)*

Participants recognized the importance of providing learning in outdoor environments including land-based learning curriculum. Children from successful programs will learn coping, communication and leadership skills and will be prepared to enter into the school system. Furthermore, successful programs will result in children retaining the knowledge gained in ELCC programs and passing it along to future generations.

The sessions acknowledged some localized successful programs, including:

- Aboriginal Head Start programs that incorporate outdoor learning
- Under One Sky Head Start Program
- Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre
- BC Aboriginal Head Start Association
- Turtle Island Daycare
- Aboriginal Resource Centers
- Indigenous Childcare Program in St. John's through the local Friendship Centre.

Participants suggested that ELCC successes could be built on, by:

- Funding more off-reserve, urban, rural and northern Aboriginal Head Start programs
- Subsidizing the cost of ELCC programs, to make participation more affordable
- Encouraging parents and Elders to be involved in supporting ELCC cultural activities
- Informing communities about ELCC programs through social media, etc.
- Expanding access to ELCC programs to all children
- Hiring qualified, appropriately paid and educated Indigenous frontline staff.



Successful programs could provide students with opportunities such as:

- Access to activities on the land
- Access to traditional language immersion programs
- Transportation to and from ELCC programs
- Community visits to meet with and learn from Elders
- Participation in traditional ceremonies with Elders' participation
- Safe and well-maintained learning spaces and playground environments
- Easy mobile access to supports that meet the unique learning needs of children
- Learning about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada
- Activities that promote greater self-confidence and self-awareness.

**“Poverty levels need to be addressed regarding housing, food, education and employment. “**

*- (B.C. Regional Roundtable)*

### ***Measuring Success***

The success of ELCC programs could be measured by:

- Monitoring enrolment rates, attendance, secondary and post-secondary graduation rates and highest education levels achieved
- Quality means that information provided is evidence based, programs are adequately funded, reliable and consistent.
- Tracking the longitudinal progress of children that have participated in AHSUNC programs historically
- Surveying parents, caregivers, children and communities.

Community needs assessments could measure a community's overall health and wellness, and help determine the impacts of having accessible ELCC programs. Additionally, it was suggested that an addendum to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale be developed specifically for Indigenous child care facilities, to rate and measure their success.

One participant shared findings in her community, where she tracked the longitudinal progress of children and found that a significant percentage of graduating students, had attended either an Aboriginal Head Start or daycare program.

**“Address poverty and housing first.”**

*- (Manitoba Regional Roundtable)*



### **THEME 3: Planning for the Future of Early Learning and Child Care**

#### ***A Future for Indigenous Children***

It was unanimous at engagement sessions across the country that in an ideal world all children will have a strong sense of identity and self-worth. They speak their languages fluently, and are proudly living their culture. In an ideal world, all Indigenous children are:

- Imagined as proudly self-identifying as Indigenous people
- Children and families are thriving, strong and fluent in their languages
- Are learning how to share their culture with others
- Are successful, independent, happy, active, and literate.

With adequate amounts of funding, in an ideal world, Indigenous early learning and child care programs have the following:

- Quality universal child care is accessible to everyone, regardless of location, status or income level and will be funded adequately so all off-reserve children have an opportunity to participate regardless of where they live or their socio-economic status
- Will provide more “land-based learning” programs with schools continuing with land-based learning activities as well as other culturally appropriate activities (e.g. traditional language training...)
- Elders are an integral part of all ELCC programming
- ELCC programs are meeting the needs of all children, including those with special needs
- Trauma-informed practices are a standard
- Will provide programs available in both urban and rural settings - jurisdictional programming barriers are removed to ensure programs are meeting the needs of families and communities and not government parameters
- Will promote healthy, non-violent, addiction-free, caring and interactive families
- Children learn about the seven teachings, problem solving skills, and traditional parenting skills are offered to families
- Include activities that facilitate children learning about their culture and being proud of who they are
- Facilities that offer affordable services and enough available spaces
- Transitional supports are in place to support children entering formal schooling, including continued cultural programming for school age children
- Programs will assist and support impoverished families
- Will allow for off-reserve children and families to attend on-reserve programs in their area if that is the most accessible program (*remove jurisdictional barriers*)
- Will provide flexible hours so those parents who work shift work can participate
- Access to healing and self-care activities and culturally knowledgeable mentors will also be provided
- Have staff who can speak their traditional language fluidly.



### ***A Future for Indigenous Families***

Participants envisioned healthy, vibrant, financially independent and empowered Indigenous families who actively practice and respect their culture, language, and medicines at home, and pass their traditional knowledge along to future generations. Participants anticipated that off-reserve Indigenous families will be recognized, accepted and included in ELCC programs and that community programs will support a “whole family” approach.

**“Quality staff are compensated fairly with decent wages for the important work that they do.”**

*- (New Brunswick Regional Roundtable)*

### ***A Future for Indigenous Communities***

Numerous sessions suggested a model for sustainable, stable communities is access to culturally appropriate community centres that provide a client-centred seamless approach to programs and services with whole family programming under one roof including early learning, parenting, youth, healthy living, employment services, financial literacy training and Elder lounges. Community engaged facilities that offer wrap-around services for families have:

- Programs and staff that address nutrition and housing issues with parents
- Services under one roof including pre-natal, ELCC, health, parenting, medical, financial literacy...
- Educational activities that are available for parents to learn proper child care skills to assist their child successfully in the home
- Programs are easily accessible to all families regardless of their situation or socio-economic status
- Communities will know where the resources are to access funding; and will have competent staffing to submit proposals.

Participants recognized that successes could be promptly achieved by providing counselling to families who are healing from past traumas. Participants asked for governments to remove barriers to services and programs for off-reserve people. To support continued growth and prosperity, it was suggested that successful Indigenous families could blend traditional knowledge with modern practices and technology.

### ***Allocating Additional Funding***

Participants considered options for allocating additional funding if it became available from government for ELCC programs. A number of suggestions were offered, including:

- Creating more off-reserve ELCC programs,
- Teaching traditional language, cooking, crafts and other culturally significant activities
- Larger facilities to accommodate an expanded program, inclusive of child care space, a youth centre, medical services, family programs and seniors/Elder programs
- Expanding programs to provide access to Métis children and families



- Expanding programs to accommodate additional children
- Building playgrounds and recreational facilities
- Valuing Elders to teach cultural activities to children
- Enabling subsidized access to low-cost or no-cost ELCC programs
- Providing nutritious lunch programs for children
- Ensuring safe subsidized housing for low income families
- Providing more opportunities for local ECE training and professional development for ELCC staff (rural and remote)
- Enhancing Indigenous learning tools, books and toys
- Offering short term respite care for new parents and parents of children with special needs.

**“Successful children become successful adults.”**

*- (New Brunswick Regional Roundtable)*

### ***The Importance of Collaboration***

Sessions acknowledged that while Indigenous communities, the Federal government and others may have separate and unique roles, their multi-lateral collaboration on ELCC programs and their understanding of communities’ needs, will ultimately benefit children and families. During the sessions, participants realized they were unaware of some existing Federal programs, and requested to be kept better informed of services and opportunities available to assist Indigenous families and children.

It is recommended that funding for all Indigenous ELCC programs is streamed under one Federal Department to better serve Indigenous families regardless of where they are located.

Finally, participants recognized that the continued alignment of the key principles rooted in the recommendations made by the Royal Commissions on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Jordan’s Principle and most recently the Daniels Decision will strongly support the successes of culturally safe Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Programming. It was further agreed that Indigenous communities, families and children will experience lasting benefits from establishing and cultivating inter-community linkages.

**“Children demonstrate visible signs of cultural knowledge outside of child care is a strong measure of programming success.”**

*- (Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Roundtable)*



## Early Learning and Child Care Circle Highlights

A number of key issues were raised during the CAP ELCC Circle. Below are just a few of the highlights heard at the session:

- Language
- Culture
- Flexible funding is critical to the success of ELCC programs and services
- Every Indigenous child should have access to ELCC programs, regardless of whether they identify as being off-reserve or on-reserve, status or non-status, Metis or Inuit
- Costs related to remoteness should never be a reason not to provide ELCC
- Ensure that decisions made about Indigenous children are made by an Indigenous group or a trusted partner
- Collaboration is needed from all levels of government and organizations involved in funding ELCC programs, to support their effective and efficient delivery
- Transportation of children to and from ELCC programs is expensive and can be a significant barrier to their consistent access and participation
- Surplus funds at the end of the fiscal period should be permitted to be carried over rather than returned
- Government must consistently recognize the rights of self-identified Indigenous people living off-reserve
- The final ruling rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada on *Daniels vs. Canada* is key to ensuring that each and every Indigenous person in this country has equal access to the same rights, programs and services
- Equitable services are required in remote communities.

The CAP ELCC Circle discussed values that should guide Indigenous ELCC, including:

- Nothing about us without us
- We are one
- We are connected
- We keep families' whole
- We celebrate growth and strengths
- We honour and acknowledge connectedness
- We are family centred/family first, community centred

Additionally, the Circle drafted the following list of proposed guiding principles:

- What we do reaches the whole family and benefits and grows community connections
- Open, respectful communication and collaboration is required
- We all benefit from learning about our culture and language
- Federal Government's foremost guiding principle is the priority of quality education for children, by providing funding supports over the established time period
- Services and resources reaching all families regardless of where they live, off-reserve, urban, rural, remote



- The Federal Government must consult with programs prior to making any funding changes, as a result of a change in the administrator, Minister or government (a newly elected Government cannot end a funded program without consulting communities)
- Honouring all of our relationships, with land, ancestors and descendants
- Aboriginal Head Start Programs give our children what residential school took away
- Parents and educators have the greatest impact and are valued and invested;
- Safety comes first; happy, healthy, and safe families thrive
- Respect and honour:
  - Diversity, protocols, ‘teachings in everything’
  - Connections.

**“We hope for a future where off-reserve families are recognised, accepted and included whether they are status or non-status.”**

*- (New Brunswick Regional Roundtable)*

## **Regional Roundtable Highlights**

A number of key issues were raised during each of the sessions. Below are just a few of the highlights heard at the Regional Roundtables:

### ***Manitoba Regional Roundtable***

- Quality universal child care accessible for all
- Programs should be available to all children and communities, including services to support children with special and unique needs
- Traditional language and language teachers are integral to Indigenous ELCC programs
- There are not enough funded spaces, particularly for infants; subsidies should be available to everyone
- Recognize the link with poverty (addressing poverty addresses many ELCC issues)
- Funding is needed for capital projects, fairer staff wages and child-parent programs (Centre Directors take a lower salary so they can pay staff a decent wage; regardless, they lose qualified staff to schools and CSF; they cannot compete with the higher wages)
- Culture should be taught (pay Elders to participate)
- Land based learning/outdoor programming
- Disconnect between Federal and Provincial governments needs to improve to better serve communities
- Need more realistic timelines and flexibility on funding proposals especially for rural and remote communities that may have limitations to internet access and unique needs.

### ***Nova Scotia/Prince Edward Island ELCC Regional Roundtable***

- AHSUNC Program is working well, no need to reinvent the wheel, need more funded programs accessible to off-reserve urban and rural communities



- Improved language programs for children
- Culturally safe day cares
- There needs to be greater access to affordable programs; consider giving off-reserve families access to on-reserve programs (take down barriers to access)
- Notably a complete lack of accessible programming available to off-reserve populations
- Increase access to services or daycare for children with special needs
- Need for low income housing
- Need for accessible and affordable after hour child care (to accommodate shift workers)
- Child care is costly; reconsider the eligibility for subsidized childcare
- Better promotion and communication of programs available
- Need for whole family support services
- There is a lack of compensation for culturally trained staff.

#### ***Alberta/Saskatchewan ELCC Regional Roundtable***

- Consistent, stable funding is needed to support ELCC programs
- More spaces should be available to accommodate more children
- Cultural traditions are embedded into all routines
- Language and cultural practices included in all programming
- Meet basic family needs, shelter, food security
- Eliminate low income barriers
- More Head Start programs off-reserve and urban
- Provide programs specifically for Indigenous children and families, rather than trying to incorporate children into non-Indigenous programs
- Mental health supports needed, especially in remote, rural communities
- Programs are required for children and parents to support healthy families.

#### ***New Brunswick ELCC Regional Roundtable***

- Funding is needed to accommodate the appropriate number of facilities in each province, with sufficient spaces to allow Indigenous people who are living off-reserve to have access
- Funding is needed to provide traditional language training for Indigenous families
- Programs need appropriate funding to include activities for older children (e.g. afterschool programs and youth activities)
- Indigenous communities and government need to work together on programs
- The Under One Sky Head Start program in NB works very well and offers supports to children and families, however, they have a long waiting list and no other AHSUNC locations in the province
- Huge need for facilities and programs in rural and urban centres
- Affordable or no cost child care services are required; a family's socio-economic status should not affect their ability to participate in ELCC programs
- Funding to provide traditional language training
- There is a high off-reserve populations need improved access to programs and services



- Improve partnerships between governments and communities
- Access to culturally sensitive affordable or no cost child care services to all families regardless of socio-economic status.

***Newfoundland and Labrador ELCC Regional Roundtable***

- The Federal Government needs to fund/facilitate programs
- The price of child care is too high for many Indigenous families
- Families should receive funding directly, to enable their participation in ELCC programs
- High staff turnover is a challenge
- Professional development about Indigenous children/culture should be provided to all ECE workers as part of the standard training
- Indigenous child care program in St. John's is a good model (SJNFC)
- Need more trained Indigenous ECE workers and administrators
- Proposal writing to access funding is an issue for many communities with limited capacity
- Indigenous community centre with programs to meet all family needs (prenatal to senior)
- Support groups are required for parents and children with special needs/disabilities.

***British Columbia ELCC Regional Roundtable***

- A greater financial commitment from government is needed for more programs and lower child care fees, particularly for urban off-reserve programs
- Lack of Federal funding serving urban off-reserve populations
- Aboriginal Head Start programs are working well, but need for more programs both rural and urban communities to serve off-reserve families
- The lack of consistent funding from government will cause successful partnerships to fail
- Supports are needed for families and children with special needs
- Promising practices: many programs that start from prenatal programs and parent and tot programs have demonstrated to become a ladder to success
- Programs delivered in First languages
- Urban non-status, off-reserve and Metis currently fall through the cracks to access programs and services
- Children's needs for food, housing, and education must be met; the implications of poverty must be addressed.

***Quebec ELCC Regional Roundtable***

- Funding is required to identify gaps in services available to Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and families
- Need for language and culture programs to be offered to help strengthen identity
- Focus on opportunities for children aged 0-6 (preschool, early learning, kindergarten)
- The Provincial government in Quebec needs to recognize Indigenous peoples



- Funding from government is needed to task an organization with establishing and cultivating inter-community links
- A successful program translates into young people knowing their language and eager to share their culture and traditions with others
- More daycares, early childhood centres and community centres are needed-there is currently limited or no access to culturally sensitive programs
- Daycares combining Indigenous and non-Indigenous children will reduce conflicts.

#### **Ontario ELCC Regional Roundtable**

- More culturally-specific Indigenous early learning programs are required
- Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre is a model of successful cultural programming, including language training, cultural teachings and community partnerships
- More licensed spaces are needed for children's programs
- Increased supports are needed for children who have special needs
- Funding is required to employ early childhood education staff, Indigenous language instructors and quality support staff
- Transportation to and from programs is often a barrier to access for Indigenous families
- The first five years of life are critical to the child's life in terms of brain development and learning language – it provides a good foundation for life if the proper investment is made
- Increased communications between organizations are required to support successful ELCC programs
- Funding translates into quality of care and should be monitored to ensure it is used in the manner it is intended.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Outcomes of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples community engagement align with previous reports and Federal engagement on ELCC, including the Native Council of Canada (now known as Congress of Aboriginal Peoples) 1990 research project, *Native Child Care, "The Circle of Care"*. It is evident that what was considered a daycare crisis and issues that plagued families in the 1980's has not improved in over 20 years. Child care is neither universal, nor affordable and the challenges experienced are still several times greater for off-reserve families who continue to find themselves in a jurisdictional wasteland. The 1995 launch of the Aboriginal Head Start Initiative was followed by nation-wide engagement with Indigenous communities and families. The Ministry's intention in 1995 was to develop an early intervention program for Aboriginal children and their families who live in urban centres and large northern communities. Throughout all the engagement processes, participants consistently supported the idea of ELCC programs providing Indigenous children and families with learning opportunities from early childhood onwards. Current engagement reiterates what parents and communities previously sought, including:

- Effective early intervention programs that not only meet the needs of the whole child,



and also the needs of the family through comprehensive support services and parental involvement

- Address poverty, including subsidized access to child care; children living in poverty are at higher risk on all indicators
- Programming needs to promote and protect Indigenous languages and cultures including language training for parents to support language speaking at home
- Land-based programming for children
- Within communities, the range of services for children and families can include family healing support, health services, child welfare and early intervention, including pre-natal
- Improved partnerships and communication between Federal and Provincial programs, services and funding is essential to better support children, families and communities
- Improve collaboration between existing programs and services to support families
- Funding and programming needs to be diverse and flexible to meet the range of needs and diversity of communities, remove restrictive government parameters
- Preservation of local control and community and parent input is essential
- The need for training opportunities for ECE and Day Care administrators offered in local communities is advocated for to better support retention of trained staff.

Since 1995, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern (AHSUNC) has provided funding to Aboriginal community-based organizations to develop programs that promote the healthy development of Aboriginal preschool children in urban and northern communities. Conceptually AHSUNC culturally supports the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical development of Aboriginal children, while supporting their parents and guardians as their primary teachers.

A 2010-2011 study of AHSUNC by Public Health Agency of Canada found the program had a significant positive impact on school readiness skills including language, motor and academic skills. All eight CAP regional roundtables articulated a clear consensus that currently there is a significant lack of access to Aboriginal Head Start programming throughout the country, in urban, northern and rural regions for off-reserve families. Investing, improving and increasing access to early learning for Indigenous families utilizing the Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Initiative principles and guidelines to establish cultural ELCC programs makes a logical starting point to improve the lives of off-reserve Indigenous children, families and communities.

Recent research demonstrates that high quality birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13% per year return on investment (Heckman 2016). Furthermore, affordability and quality of child care not only have significant impact on the participation of parents in the labour market, but also on children's lifelong development including a variety of life outcomes such as education outcomes, health, employment, income, IQ, social behaviors and reduced criminal activity (Evaluation Services PHAC 2012; Heckman 2016). One of the foremost investments that governments can make to improve the country's



social and economic fabric is to provide solid support for children. Off-reserve Indigenous children deserve an equal chance.

**“Don’t reinvent what is working. Just make more of it available (i.e. AHSUNC).”**

*- (Nova Scotia/Prince Edward Island Regional Roundtable)*



## Recommendations

Throughout the engagement process, many CAP constituents clearly articulated non-existent access to culturally relevant programs and services and significant deficits in adequate funding for early learning and child care for their children. Based on the regional roundtable community engagement on early learning and child care, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples makes the following recommendations:

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples recommends that key pillars of the IELCC Framework are:

### **Funding**

1. The Federal Government streamlines all funding for Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care through one Federal Ministry.
2. Parameters for funding applications are flexible to meet diverse community needs.
3. Provides for increased investments in programs and services for off-reserve children and families, including an infusion of financial resources to existing programs such as AHSUNC to improve access to more children and communities.
4. Funding deadlines are reasonable and considerate of regions that have limited internet access.
5. Increase funding to support adequate infrastructure development to accommodate off-reserve families and for necessary improvements and upgrades to existing infrastructure.
6. Needs to ensure that all early childhood workers are well-compensated, well-supported, recognized and appreciated for the importance of their work.

### **Intergovernmental Relations**

7. The Federal Government legislate an **Early Learning and Child Care Act immediately** that commits perpetual funding and the mechanisms to support sustainable, high quality early learning and child care for all children 0-6 years that includes specific provisions for off-reserve children and families. This legislation will align with education acts already in place.
8. Federal and Provincial governments improve communications and stronger alliances to better serve off-reserve families and communities.
9. Will acknowledge the key roles of federal/provincial/territorial/Indigenous governments in designing programs with shared visions and also respecting and honouring differences that are inclusive of off-reserve families.
10. Will honour and respect the key principles rooted in the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Jordan's Principle and Daniels Decision.



### **Culture**

11. Ensures traditional language training is an integral part of all Indigenous early learning and child care programming.
12. Ensures that early learning programming for Indigenous children encompasses a land-based component.
13. Ensures that early learning programs provide and support opportunities for Elders, traditional people and cultural people to interact with children.
14. Ensures that early learning programs create an environment that incorporates Indigenous cultural values and beliefs to all aspects of daily programming, program governance and administration.

### **Accessibility**

15. Must address the significant gap in programs and services for Indigenous families living off-reserve.
16. Ensures that high quality services are accessible to **all** children including those living off-reserve in urban, rural and remote communities. There is adequate funding for spaces for **all** children, including infant spaces.
17. Recognizes the importance of full inclusion and supports for children and parents with disabilities.
18. Ensures that early learning programs include a transportation component to ensure accessibility for all.

### **Programming**

19. Needs to take a comprehensive approach to early learning and child care services for off-reserve children so as to include a variety of services that are responsive to diverse family and community needs and are accessible to all regardless of status or where they reside.
20. Will ensure that early learning will foster a desire for life-long learning in the child.
21. Will ensure that trauma-informed practices are a standard for all ECE programs.
22. Needs to ensure ECE training opportunities are accessible at the local community level.
23. All ELCC training includes a cultural component.
24. Ensures that early learning programs will be managed in such a way that parents have a meaningful experience in the planning, development, operation and evaluation of the program.
25. Needs to ensure early learning programs are considerate of shift-workers and families who work non-traditional days/hours.
26. Will incorporate culturally tested systems to evaluate, measure and report, including data.
27. Nothing about us without us.



## Acknowledgements

Participants of the CAP engagement process appreciated that funding from Employment and Social Development Canada enabled them to be consulted with and invited to submit feedback into shaping the development of an Indigenous ELCC Framework, and guiding future federal investments and programming. They look forward to a framework that reflects the unique cultures, needs and priorities of Indigenous peoples living on and off-reserve, in cities and remote areas, and in the North, based on key principles rooted in the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Jordan's Principle and Daniels Decision.





## Acronyms

*The following acronyms are used within this report:*

AHSUNC.....	Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities
CAP.....	Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
CPNP.....	Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program
ECE.....	Early Childhood Educator
ELCC.....	Early Learning and Child Care
ESDC.....	Employment and Social Development Canada
IELCC .....	Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care

## References

*Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Initiative Principles and Guidelines, Revised:* October 1998.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/publications/aboriginal-head-start-urban-northern-initiative.html>

*Evaluation of the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities Program at the Public Health Agency of Canada*

Prepared by Evaluation Services Public Health Agency of Canada. March 20, 2012

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/corporate/mandate/about-agency/office-evaluation/evaluation-reports/evaluation-aboriginal-head-start-urban-northern-communities-program.html>

*Native Child Care “The Circle of Care”.* Native Council of Canada. Researched and prepared by Lee Seto-Thomas. 1990.

*There’s more to gain by taking a comprehensive approach to early childhood development.*

The Heckman Equation, One-pager. James J. Heckman. 2016.

[https://heckmanequation.org/assets/2017/01/F\\_Heckman\\_CBAOnePager\\_120516.pdf](https://heckmanequation.org/assets/2017/01/F_Heckman_CBAOnePager_120516.pdf)



## **Aboriginal Head Start Statement of Beliefs and Values About Children**

While First Nations people, Métis and Inuit have distinct cultures and languages, they also share common beliefs, values and histories. It is with this in mind that the Statement of Beliefs and Values about Children was written.

### ***We believe...***

That children are a gift from the Creator.

That our children have a right to live proudly as Aboriginal people in the lands of their ancestors.

That children have a right to learn their respective Aboriginal language(s) and histories, and adults have a responsibility to pass on the instructions that the Creator gave in the beginning of time as are reflected in our languages, cultural beliefs and cultural practices.

That each child is part of what makes a community whole.

That it is essential for children to develop meaningful relationships with Elders, the carriers of knowledge and history.

That children, under the guidance of Elders, will learn to love learning throughout their life.

That adults are community role models who are to teach children how to live a good life.

That children deserve opportunities to gain knowledge and experience of how to live a good life.

That children acquire knowledge by watching, listening and doing, and adults are responsible for encouraging and guiding them in all those activities.

That children, through being loved, valued and encouraged, will gain the courage, the strength and the wisdom to use the power of a good mind and spirit in all that they do.

That children have a right to enjoy the opportunities that education offers.

That children have a right to live in healthy, self-determining communities that are free of violence.



## Engagement Sessions Held

*CAP received feedback from participants invited to attend the following sessions:*

SESSIONS HELD	REGION	LOCATION	DATE
ELCC Regional Roundtable	Manitoba	Thompson	June 10, 2017
ELCC Regional Roundtable	Nova Scotia/Prince Edward Island	Truro	June 14, 2017
ELCC Regional Roundtable	Alberta/Saskatchewan	Edmonton	June 22, 2017
ELCC Regional Roundtable	New Brunswick	Fredericton	June 24, 2017
ELCC Regional Roundtable	Newfoundland and Labrador	Corner Brook	July 5, 2017
ELCC Regional Roundtable	British Columbia	Abbotsford	July 13, 2017
CAP ELCC Circle	National Technical Working Group		July 18-19, 2017
ELCC Regional Roundtable	Quebec	Gatineau	July 26, 2017
ELCC Regional Roundtable	Ontario	Ottawa	August 10, 2017





**CAP ELCC CIRCLE**  
**NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP**

*July 18-19, 2017*

**Indigenous Early Learning  
& Child Care**

**CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**  
**Early Learning and Child Care Circle**  
**National Technical Working Group**  
**Meeting Summary**

Finback Room, Sheraton Wall Centre,  
 1088 Burrard Street, Vancouver, British Columbia

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The Chair explained that CAP represents the interests of off-reserve, status and non-status, Metis and southern Inuit, and that the ELCC Circle was assembled to reflect on reports to date, and to support the synthesis and development of clear and concise recommendations for the National Framework.

Jill Henry, Manager, Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Secretariat, reviewed an Engagement and Social Development Canada (ESDC) presentation titled, “Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) Framework, Engaging Indigenous Peoples” providing an overview of the engagement process and next steps for development of a National Framework.

Virginia Gluska, Senior Manager / IELCC Congress of Aboriginal Peoples provided an overview of the CAP IELCC regional roundtable sessions held in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. Additional sessions will take place in Ontario and Quebec. A draft report of each session will be provided to participants from each sessions prior to finalization and incorporation into a National Roll-up Report.

Ms. Gluska noted emerging themes in sessions to date, including: recommendations to break down silos and address gaps in funding; provide funding for comprehensive engagement to reach all parts of the country; address barriers to access to programs and services for urban, rural and off reserve.

A table depicting the feedback provided in the theme areas that emerged at the ELCC Circle meeting follows:

Values Guiding IELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing about us, without us</li> <li>• We are one</li> <li>• We are connected</li> <li>• We keep families whole</li> <li>• Celebrate growth and strengths</li> <li>• We honour and acknowledge connectedness</li> <li>• We are family centred, community centred</li> <li>• Family first.</li> </ul>
Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to early childhood education for all Indigenous children, regardless of whether they are on or off reserve, status or non-status</li> <li>• Community-led accessible and flexible funding, with reduced barriers:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decisions on funding should be made as close to the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community level as possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Avoid distinction-based funding</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Federal Government’s foremost guiding principle is the priority of quality education for Indigenous children by providing funding supports over the established time period</li> <li>• Employ simple processes to access funding</li> <li>• Use consistent principles or pillars</li> <li>• Youth are an intrinsic part of the process</li> <li>• Equity in funding is needed for the provinces and the territories</li> <li>• The goals are 75% Indigenous representation on boards and 75% Indigenous staff working with Indigenous children and families</li> <li>• What we do reaches the whole family and benefits and grows community connections</li> <li>• Open, respectful communication and collaboration</li> <li>• Respect and honour diversity, protocols, teachings in everything</li> <li>• Services and resources reaching all families wherever they live</li> <li>• We all benefit from learning about our culture and language</li> <li>• Safety comes first; happy, healthy, safe families thrive</li> <li>• Honour all of our relationships, with land, ancestors and descendants</li> <li>• Better lives for Indigenous children and communities</li> <li>• The Federal Government should consult with programs prior to making changes in how funding is delivered; include education training, and the space and time to value the work</li> <li>• Consider the value placed on parents and educators and the investments in staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Human impact requires investment</li> <li>○ Invest in human capacity because they have the greatest impact on children</li> <li>○ Invest in parents</li> <li>○ People and relationships are our greatest investment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sharing is a valuable learning opportunity.</li> </ul>
<p>Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements to guide a framework would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Investment in culture and language</li> <li>○ Elder involvement</li> <li>○ Parental involvement</li> <li>○ Training for staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Incorporation of culture into IELCC with illustrations of what that would look like, e.g. sewing traditional clothing, dressing a caribou and preserving the meat, carving, etc.</li> <li>• Policies could incorporate hiring through an Indigenous lens</li> <li>• Need funding for the creation of Indigenous (FNMI)-specific material</li> <li>• Respect is needed for cultural differences in governance, programming, and infrastructure</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective and efficient delivery of funds from government</li> <li>• Indigenous people have to be involved; programs and funding should not be left to Ottawa bureaucrats</li> <li>• Graduates who participated in the 20-year anniversary of the AHSUNC program, recognized the importance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stories (space and place, Elders present, safety, etc.)</li> <li>○ Culture and language</li> <li>○ Parents and family involvement</li> <li>○ Resilience</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do not create a system just for children who live in the cities</li> <li>• Ensure Elders are an allowable expense and there are funds to support them</li> <li>• Allow Elders to drop-in to programs</li> <li>• Make the overhead affordable.</li> </ul>
Lessons Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal limitations on use of funds reinforces the silo approach</li> <li>• Need direct funding relationships with Indigenous organizations</li> <li>• Realize that change and improving outcomes are long term goals</li> <li>• Create a short term perspective to guide the long term vision</li> <li>• Holistic programs and policies are needed that go beyond daycare and early learning, including: prenatal, post natal, care for families</li> <li>• Continuum of support is needed for children transitioning to the mainstream schools after day care or HS</li> <li>• Discuss how to implement the Framework as soon as possible</li> <li>• There are common needs and this is the opportunity to address those</li> <li>• Administrative support is needed to implement policies and processes and to gather the collective voice of the individuals who are operating small programs</li> <li>• Develop capacity within institutions and establish connections across ministries</li> <li>• Support early childhood care educators</li> <li>• An online program is needed to share ideas on common issues</li> <li>• Advocacy, financial support and leadership is needed</li> <li>• Invest in developing capacity</li> <li>• Include in the Framework a plan that has clear steps, checks and balances, and strong policies.</li> </ul>
National Framework Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intent is to develop a community led, flexible framework based on what is already working well – it is a higher level policy that will describe how best to provide affordable, quality early learning education access across the country</li> <li>• Ability for all levels of Indigenous, local, provincial and federal governments and related organizations to work together</li> <li>• The Framework should recognize the need to address racism and</li> </ul>

	<p>oppression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The framework should demonstrate the effort to reach the objective</li> <li>• The framework should ensure that early learning centres have access to supports throughout the process</li> <li>• Disposition of funding</li> <li>• More and different programs.</li> </ul>
<p>Vision for the Future - “10 years from now what does early learning look like for our communities”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight themes to build on – outcomes of regional engagement: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Culture and language</li> <li>2. Elder involvement</li> <li>3. Increased reach of services</li> <li>4. Investments in human resources; staff, Elder, families, community</li> <li>5. Increase financial investments to existing programs</li> <li>6. Training /resources</li> <li>7. Family wellness program, family involvement</li> <li>8. Evaluations / support delivery that is community driven</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Consider a model with a National AHSUNC panel, tasked with oversight</li> <li>• Build on key strategies and actions; create priorities and actions for government, Indigenous leadership, grounded in a vision, guiding principles and goals</li> <li>• Core values of truth, respect, compassion and generosity, nurturing belonging</li> <li>• Consider a future without violence, no one in jail; everyone safe and in good health</li> <li>• Children that are well-fed and honoured</li> <li>• Relationships that are nourished</li> <li>• Children who are happy, healthy and able to pursue their dreams</li> <li>• Centres where the children and families are supported</li> <li>• Belonging grows good feelings, and a sense of place</li> <li>• Mainstream education that is driven by the concept of wellness of Indigenous families and children</li> <li>• Grow what works; identify what is effective and expand it.</li> </ul>
<p>Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding is the number one priority</li> <li>• There is need for flexible funding</li> <li>• Small communities cannot be left out of child care funding</li> <li>• Fragmented funding to different organizations has resulted in operating in silos</li> <li>• There would be value in revitalizing the conversation about a more fluid funding model</li> <li>• Ensure an enduring AHSUNC process</li> <li>• In 2015 there was an evaluation on which Ministry was most appropriate to manage AHSUNC</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing precludes investing funds in Indigenous communities; however, provinces and territories will determine their own action plans</li> <li>• How does the Framework roll out for communities? How do communities apply for and receive funding?</li> <li>• Intention to build flexibility into processes with the overarching goal to being to improve the successful reach of early childhood education (ECE)</li> <li>• Move away from the contribution agreement funding approach</li> <li>• Funding should be streamlined into one pot (under one Ministry)</li> <li>• Application requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is no sense in requiring proposals with complicated or involved templates</li> <li>○ Basic guidelines based on cultural needs</li> <li>○ Include parental and community input</li> <li>○ Description and cost of the child care program</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provincial funding should go to family programs and should focus on the community</li> <li>• Ensure funding does not just cover administration costs for the agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify who is going to be governing and administrating, so that funds are not lost at the community level</li> <li>○ Disallow any percentage to go to the administration of the funds</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Endorse the need to fund staff capacity and investments in human capital and infrastructure</li> <li>• Ensure funds are going to Indigenous groups that deliver Indigenous programs</li> <li>• When daycare spaces are filled with non-Indigenous children, the mainstream system receives funding targeted for Indigenous programs if they say they are offering an “Indigenous’ program or activity</li> <li>• Accountability is needed for funding provided to support Indigenous families.</li> </ul>
Provisions for Cultural Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In rural and remote areas, AHSUNC is the best option</li> <li>• Early learning must be culturally relevant and include family, community, etc.; successful programs invite extended family to participate</li> <li>• PEI is negotiating a bilateral agreement with the province to improve early childhood education, which might address AHSUNC specifically</li> <li>• There is inconsistency across the country – only some provinces/territories offer Indigenous programs</li> <li>• Some mainstream agencies apply for funding and think that inviting one Elder once a year is enough to address the cultural programming needs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many mainstream agencies provide services to Indigenous children and the parents have no other options</li> <li>• When Aboriginal children come to AHSUNC that is supporting community – the government has to hear that Indigenous people need to stay together as a community</li> <li>• Although AHSUNC staff sit on school boards to provide input into some cultural training for mainstream schools they are not funded to do so</li> <li>• Work with mainstream educators to ensure that they are providing appropriate learning opportunities for Indigenous children.</li> </ul>
Jurisdictional Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AHSUNC programs have great relationships with provincial and federal governments; however, new funds will lead to even better relationships</li> <li>• Government partners are not in communities and do not know how best to move forward</li> <li>• Importance of incorporating identification and establishment of relationships with organizational partners for funding paths</li> <li>• Encourage government to look at creative processes, be proactive and positive</li> <li>• Apply and honour Jordan’s Principle that clarifies that if an Indigenous child needs medical treatment, the government of first contact is the one that will pay for the services</li> <li>• Every program is only as good as the people delivering it and it is important to consider capacity in any funding stream</li> <li>• Identify and review alternative education models that are effective</li> <li>• There is a commitment by the Federal Government to support Indigenous peoples, and a provincial responsibility for daycare</li> <li>• Provinces and territories should sign onto the Indigenous ELCC Framework</li> </ul>
Training for Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge staff and their knowledge</li> <li>• Early childhood education (ECE) training programs should be developed by community, for community</li> <li>• There are gaps in terms of the numbers of trained ECE workers</li> <li>• Start at the community level with flexible, unique training opportunities</li> <li>• An Indigenous ECE training program should address needs identified by the community</li> <li>• Most colleges preparing people to work in ECE are not multi-faceted – there needs to be work with families, parents, and communities</li> <li>• Monitoring is part of capacity building</li> <li>• Training institutes need to include culture as part of ECE training</li> <li>• Create a new curriculum or work to broaden the established ECE training program</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider a National Aboriginal Head Start Training Institute, offering more one than cultural studies class in an ECE training program</li> <li>• Deliver the program nationally through a coordinated effort based on beliefs and values that have made the program successful</li> <li>• Indigenous ways of being and living are found within the community</li> <li>• Use the Leadership Administration Management Program as the model for a training program</li> <li>• Design a process to recruit people who are qualified to provide service for children</li> <li>• Consider a mentorship program</li> <li>• Train early childhood educators with specific strategies to emphasize professionalism.</li> </ul>
Research and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is need for a national program to document the success of AHSUNC; studies indicate that the results for the child are good when children participate in high quality programs</li> <li>• Data collection and reports should be included in the Framework</li> <li>• Data is needed to support claims</li> <li>• In other jurisdictions (e.g. New Zealand and the Maori people) education stems from the concepts of well-being, belonging, contribution, exploration crossed with empowerment, family and community relationships</li> <li>• Create a tool that can provide statistics on the effectiveness of AHSUNC, from Year One to graduation</li> <li>• What is evaluated becomes the driver – is this the priority of the community?</li> <li>• Stories and quotes need to be included as well as statistics, for evaluations</li> <li>• What is the role of AHSUNC nationally and what should the Treasury Board expect as a result of the funding envelope? Pride in culture, improved well-being, etc. are key measures of success that should be included – not a Brigrance evaluation</li> <li>• Vancouver School Board is focusing on improvement of the “collective self-esteem of First Nations’ children”; how many of those have attended an AHSUNC program could be a measurement of success</li> <li>• The capacity of Indigenous researchers is another consideration</li> <li>• There should be an opportunity to revisit the framework in a timely manner.</li> </ul>
Involvement of Elders in Early Childhood Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include Elders in all early learning</li> <li>• Elders provide natural teaching in communities where parents work; they play an important role in teaching ways of being.</li> <li>• Each AHSUNC program should employ a male and a female Elder</li> </ul>

<p>Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve Indigenous peoples at the local and regional levels</li> <li>• Need an Indigenous advisory body with no parameters</li> <li>• Decisions on programming should be based on community need; the community gets to decide where the funding goes</li> <li>• The community must play the lead role in decision-making</li> <li>• Ensure the well-being of those connected with missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls</li> <li>• Explore existing community-based funding models; roll out a pilot project at the end of the first year, with expectations of transparency and flexibility</li> <li>• There should be no competition for funding between early education providers</li> <li>• Indigenous people must be in charge of and/or responsible for their own work with their own people</li> <li>• Reconciliation is not a second chance at assimilation</li> <li>• Do not ignore urban Indigenous peoples; fiscal restraint is another form of racism.</li> </ul>
<p>Long-term Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The term should be longer than 10 years</li> <li>• Start with children in daycare, work with families; support children through grade school, high school graduation and post secondary graduation</li> <li>• Ensure that we are not further damaging young people</li> <li>• There should be fewer Indigenous children in foster care and correctional institutions</li> <li>• Recognize past oppression and racism, otherwise past and present traumas will continue to undermine good intentions.</li> </ul>
<p>Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day care should be covered by public school systems for children five and under</li> <li>• Equitable services are needed in remote communities</li> <li>• Need for government to recognize rights of self-identified Indigenous persons living off-reserve</li> <li>• Higher adult to child ratio is needed</li> <li>• Special needs support should be brought to the children; remove barriers</li> <li>• Provide supports to monitor systems (e.g. enable program consultant to visit centres annually)</li> <li>• Add capacity to support programs</li> <li>• Provide more supports for parents in their role as “first teachers”</li> <li>• Identify resources for communities</li> <li>• Bring people together to share best practices</li> <li>• Support the IELCC system to be successful (licensing, regulation, interaction with provinces)</li> <li>• Foster better partnerships with universities and colleges to increase</li> </ul>

	<p>Indigenous components in the training offered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with mutual accountability while continuing to reflect and evaluate the progress</li> <li>• Ask existing organizations about what they need to sustain current IELCC work (e.g. ongoing funding to stay in place).</li> </ul>
<p>Remote and Rural Areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The greatest need is in the north</li> <li>• Costs related to remoteness should never be seen as a reason not to provide ELCC</li> <li>• Every Indigenous child should have access to ELCC</li> <li>• Surplus funds at the end of the fiscal period should be permitted to be carried over</li> <li>• There should be a policy for employing local people first.</li> </ul>
<p>AHSUNC Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AHSUNC has been in existence for 22 years – it is a good model but it requires greater investment</li> <li>• Support for increased funding for AHSUNC programs with Indigenous languages and cultures being central</li> <li>• Current funding levels for AHSUNC are inadequate; additional funding is needed for administration, logistics, training, and staffing</li> <li>• Build on existing programs and services that have demonstrated effectiveness e.g. AHSUNC</li> <li>• Use the AHSUNC model in other Indigenous day care programs.</li> <li>• Invest in the AHSUNC Indigenous preschool model – get communities to develop the plan</li> <li>• The number of funded seats in AHSUNC programs is inadequate across the country for off-reserve communities</li> <li>• There is need for statistics, data/longitudinal studies on AHSUNC</li> <li>• Funding must be secured for off-reserve, Metis and Inuit-specific AHSUNC</li> <li>• Transportation of children to and from the programs, which is a huge expense, is a key barrier to participation</li> <li>• There is need for wrap around services e.g. pre-natal, one-stop service for everyone, including language and culture</li> <li>• Short-term provincial initiatives and federal evaluations focus narrowly every five years</li> <li>• We do not want one model fits all; consider whether a community can open a centre</li> <li>• Every child has a right to Indigenous-based play and education</li> <li>• Understanding how the community works is paramount – the programming cannot be overly restrictive; let the community decide the pillars of their own programs</li> <li>• Promotes language culture and building strength in children and families</li> <li>• Allow carry over funds for future expenses</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the unique needs of the communities; honour Elders</li> <li>• Communicate the needs of the community and the program to funders</li> <li>• Requests for Indigenous day care could be supplemented at new and existing sites.</li> </ul>
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) utilized inappropriate standardized tests some educators started to “teach to the test” to achieve high scores, thinking it would affect funding</li> <li>• In Labrador, parents speak Inuit; the tests included pictures of tractors, snakes, and the colour gray; however, there are no Inuit words for these</li> <li>• A Brigrance evaluation was done on the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre; the goal was for every Inuit child in Ottawa would live a good life, e.g., with access to traditional food, etc.</li> <li>• It is essential to be consistent around what is being measured while being flexible enough to fit to each community.</li> </ul>
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was suggested that a songwriter be engaged to write a national song to be sung by children in AHSUNC every morning to encourage a sense of belonging and a better sense of self-esteem</li> <li>• End colonizing practices</li> <li>• There is need for ongoing engagement to ensure federal government processes for Indigenous people are led by Indigenous people</li> <li>• Foster parents are a key audience for engagement</li> <li>• How do we advance ideas and plans provincially and be the engine to move the initiative off the table and into the community?</li> <li>• Ensure that decisions made about Indigenous children are made by an Indigenous group or a trusted partner.</li> </ul>





## **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*Alberta/Saskatchewan Session | June 22, 2017*

**Indigenous Early Learning  
& Child Care**

## **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

**Specific Needs: Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities:**

### **1. What is currently working well?**

- SK only:
  - Complex Care Intervention Plans – pull together team/ parent/aid/teacher (daily contact)
  - Problems - separation anxiety/stress/toy/insecure
  - Too much labels/ schizophrenia – space has less stimulus
- On-reserve programs and circumstances are definitely different from urban centres including resources and funding
- There are some good resources and supports
- Traditional parenting, health for two and supportive outreach and referrals
- Parent support, resource for kids
- Having basic needs met such as food, shelter
- Speech pathology
- Psychological/ behaviour assessment, testing works well
- Stress balls, made own
- Rubber bands to move feet temporarily
- Focus on feelings, compete attention/ meltdown/ cope
- Use words or feelings when you do this: “It made me feel...”
- Time in – no timeout
- Boundaries – parents don’t say “no”
- Attention increase, teacher boundaries, ask to enter boundaries
- Parent/ teacher development, function okay
- Child sleeping issues, routine, stop sugars, cocoon in warm blanket, spa, screen time space
- Educating parents – boundaries
- Use manners, separation, say goodbye, bedtime routine, children respond to you, teacher primary, teacher toy incentives – field trips, going to pet store
- Child/families involved together – grandparents
- Culture/ language is a part of learning
- Workers and trainers qualified
- Transportation provided
- Elders are teaching in the programs
- Age appropriate learning
- Access assessments
- Inclusive approach
- Addressing barriers to improve learning

- Recognition and acknowledgement of needs
  - One on one teaching health/dental with families
  - Be the best parents in early development
  - Mentoring and parent education through modeling and coaching
  - Consistent funding, recognition for Indigenous programming and not combined programming
  - There is continuity in programming
  - Children are learning from their community and developing skills which will help them in their journeys
  - Language, cognitive skills, cultural skills
  - Working closely with Elders on reserves, with language and implementation
  - Inter-agency programming - shared solutions to help
  - Families - mental health, addiction, healing
  - Worker/client relationships - build on negatives turned into positive; open family talks.
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## **2. What needs to be improved?**

- People struggle to access things like therapists for speech, etc. (special needs supports)
- Fundamental improvements are needed:
  - Acknowledge if family basic needs not met then how to make early learning a priority
  - Northern communities have road conditions next to impossible, so there are problems accessing water
  - No resources or time to access resources
  - Sometimes the busses can't run and only pick up some children
  - Housing and access to housing is deplorable – and no help
  - Childcare workers judge without understanding what is going on with children
- Indigenous culture needs to be in all the ECE curriculum
- Language, positive encouragement, location
- Cultural awareness, Indigenous culture
- Trauma informed practice
- Support
- Have activities for kids and parents more often
- Have more workshops for kids/ parents
- Show our kids respect/ manners/ helping others
- Mental health supports are needed
- Family education program, emotional intelligence
- Transportation – no bus system, low income, no designated bus
- Program Head Start funded so low
- High functioning kids – limit; learn to speak out if they need more, speak up
- All interaction to improve speech
- Technology – use smartboard/ iPad with high needs children to work on speech improvement
- Kids need more activity; hyperactive

- Use local area, swim, skate, ski hill
- Family struggles – need support to help during violence, ETOH, parent struggle
- Need mental health support
- Debrief with children after apprehension
- Improve parent sharing circles; discuss sensitive issues at parent /teacher interviews, mom/ grandmother had issues together, let children talk and allow them time; police involved, what are their roles?
- Some issues get pushed under the rug; children fall through the cracks; parent support workers are needed
- Parents with mental issues i.e. depression; need to keep support going
- Understand coping; go back to root; how to cross boundaries to support
- Affirmations, coping, outreach
- What is their safety plan- who next?
- Tools – safe plans, memorise cell numbers
- Check in with kids
- Incorporate medicine wheel
- Isolation; holistic resources – who are your resources?
- Talking circles – spiritual talks
- Parent involvement; consistent; supports are needed for families
- Support groups parent/teacher/child safety plans to improve how children deal with loss, and how parents support them
- How to manage situations
- Empower parents to express issues
- Teachers who are violent or call students names
- Empower parents to talk to students
- Urban Northern Child Care / Aboriginal Head Starts don't have funding access to special needs funding through childcare licensing facilities
- More spaces should be available; transportation, salaries/wages need to be improved
- Positions are being left due to lack of wages
- Burnout mode
- Protocols should be followed, under funding
- Relation building, community relationships, partnerships and collaboration
- People feel marginalized; consider qualifications / professional development
- Language cultural practices
- Parental connections, community or kinship connections
- Identifying traumas
- Skills for teachers (educators)
- Literacy (children, parent, caregivers)
- Toxic working environment - own personal views regarding client/parent
- Think positive/encouragement
- No job security - contract positions (healthy thinking for staff)
- Improve interactions between parents and children

- Low income barriers
- Funding and resources available
- Federal and Provincial - phone other agencies for ideas (normalization)
- More culture and language
- Gambling concerns: money spent not on children/family.

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**3. Is there an early learning and child care program or service that you or your community would like to access but cannot?**

*Describe barriers or challenges that need to be addressed so that improvements can be made, to Federal and/or provincial programs/funding?*

- Childcare workers assess children-special needs; sometimes they cannot; some are assessed but there are no resources to address issues identified:
  - This is crucial: we're not going to put up or stay stuck in bad conditions
  - These are our children and families
  - Advocate for our rights
  - Must have equitable services
- Mental health – there are higher incidents of tragedy and loss; therefore grandparents are crucial
- Access funding resources etc. mental health
- Young people are being killed; there is no support for children
- Emotional intelligence - growing awareness of emotional intelligence for healthier relationships, less dysfunction and less violence
- After school programs (Boy and Girls Club)
- Isolated communities, mental health issues
- Dealing with us as a family
- Group homes, receiving homes, bringing the children back to the community
- Underfunded lunch program for Head Start
- Waiting lists
- People not aware of services
- AAS – judgement, they don't want others to know, first one on one are outreach workers, listen to group – bring Elders in; do more outdoor activities.
- Looking into helping all the families needs
- need more parenting programs
- Transportation
- Everything always comes with a cost
- More knowledge needed on funding access
- Service providers need to be recognized
- “Kids First” program
- Focus on 0-5 years - have many supports, life skills, budgeting, assessments
- Mental health workers working with trauma based/partnership

- Access-transportation, jurisdiction, funding, access to specialized professionals e.g. SLP, various therapists (O/T, P/T) assessments
- Communication (lack); cooperation is needed between daycare and Head Start funding
- Lack of Aboriginal “Head Start” programs in urban areas
- Not enough day care spaces for children
- Lack of Aboriginal daycare of childcare educators (urban)
- Attendance of children going to “Head Start”
- Social funding is not equal.
- After school programs (Boys and Girls Club)
- Isolated communities dealing with Mental Health as a family
- Group homes - receiving homes needed, bring in the children back to their own community
- Underfunded programs like “Head Start”.

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### **General Needs:**

#### **1. What should Indigenous children learn or experience in early learning and child care programs?**

*What role should culture play in early learning and childcare?*

- Their own background
- Their language, identity, culture
- Where they come from
- Have Elders storytelling or singing, teaching
- Enhanced social, emotional, and cognitive development
- Need sense of belonging and learn the different roles
- Need to be connected to environment
- Grandparents enable children and should also be taught about boundaries
- Smudge/traditional practices
- Building pride through language/ identity
- Learn traditional roles – gifts, 2-spiritedness
- Emotional intelligence; coping, grief, avenues, support systems/ resources and expression of feelings
- Historical impacts; levels of abandonment; assimilation, Chiefs, treaty, residential, social work impact
- Mentoring/ goal setting – empowerment-self efficacy
- Hands on impact; fish vertebrae necklace, storytelling/ cultural
- Creative expression/tactical/ nature, take it outside more stimulus
- Speaking language
- Life skills; finance; value of hard work/ money
- Day home/daycare made access to Elders, learn culture, ceremony
- Cooking – introduce new fruit, skills, eggs children scramble themselves
- Need interactions and want to talk, build skills and vocabulary

- Reading – need more Indigenous writers, depository
  - Love, attention, self, others, encouragement
  - Healthy relationship boundaries
  - Safe and secure environment
  - Indigenous employees and role models
  - Knowing who they are and where they come from
  - Cultural traditions imbedded into routines
  - Holistic (4 directions)
  - Based on 7 sacred teachings
  - Sense of self identity, sense of belonging
    - Pride in knowing their culture; language
    - Use of relevant and representative materials that promote learning
  - Routines incorporating Aboriginal customs
  - Storytelling, oral culture/ history
  - Medicine natural, language,
  - Wisdom, courage, humility, respect, honesty, love, etc.
  - Medicine wheel. Integrity (truth).
  - Ceremonies, sweat, naming
  - Basis of learning.
  - Be ok with where you come from
  - The program "Who's Driving the Bus" got kids talking about driving the bus (i.e.: taking their power back, children being sexually abused)
  - Move children to take on their own responsibilities
  - Culture - need to define culture so people understand, especially in communities with all kinds of religions
  - Mental health - kids trying to be something/someone else (want to be German, anything but Native)
  - Trauma - Elders must know what trauma means - it must be explained to them.
- 

## **2. What should Indigenous parents and caregivers learn or gain from early learning and childcare programs?**

- Family support group for single parents/ blended families/grandparents raising grandchildren
- Resources available in our communities
- Workshop on parenting skills
- Talk to children, learn better meals (low fat, low sugar, involve children in cooking)
- Kinship building amongst peers
- Prenatal classes, ask to help / build relationships
- Access to resources / supports; engage with children; teaching through modelling
- Grandparent enabling / boundaries; taking care of themselves
- Learn about self care, coping, DFF pacifiers, parenting skills

- Health care, shots, medical care, info, potty-training skills
  - Cultural significance of children as gifts
  - Early years are important – first 5 years are the foundation for life
  - How to be positive role models
  - Nurture the child’s spirit and gifts
  - Involve all caregivers, grandmothers, aunties
  - Empowerment about child development:
    - Gain support, mentoring, and parental support; confidence
    - Build relationship with the child care programs
  - Learn about limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour and to develop those with their children
  - Parents learn ELCC Program – a better understanding of the program and what it has to offer
  - Children get confused at parent's behaviours, therefore family circles should be held with the goal to build trust
  - Get to know the parents
  - Should children be removed from homes that are too violent and have too much drinking?
  - Money is always an issue
  - Be kind to staff and clients.
- 

### **3. What does “quality” in early learning and child care mean to you?**

- The child being well loved, safe and secure
- Having supports and not feeling judged when asking for help
- Able to talk to care giver; early learning teacher on child development
- Informed, persistent, supported
- Outcome based – proactive rather than reactive
- Meets needs of child/parent not funder
- Flexible
- Partnership community capacity building
- Multiyear funding commitment
- Teachers calm, creative
- Following child care licensing – safely
- Qualified ECE staff
- Solid cultural learning and experiences
- Nutritious food
- Involving and building community
- Preparedness for learning / school / life skills
- Developing relationships
- Incorporating relevant materials/ representative materials that promote learning
- Safe and secure

- Train professionals working with kids
  - Caring/compassionate staff that will empower our children
  - Continuity of frontline staff.
- 

## **THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

### **1. How will we know if an Indigenous early learning and child care program is successful?**

*Are there meaningful ways to measure success for Indigenous children?*

- Assignments about reaching goals:
    - Work with teacher and care giver about setting targets, a goal that they can achieve
    - If they are attending class daily, it shows they like it at school
  - Successes:
    - Completion of high school, post secondary (longitudinal tracking)
    - Mental health coping skills utilized, function without tantrums/ meltdowns
    - Leadership skills/ qualities – practice ceremony Sundance etc.
    - Decreased incarceration/ rehab addictions
    - Able to have a sense of confidence
    - Able to speak clearly, fluently in native language, express emotions in productive ways
    - Identify colours, things
    - Respectful to others and self
    - Encouraged faith, hope self worth, self love and sense of belonging
    - Teaching independent, eager learners, self initiative drive, purpose, direction, supports, goals
    - More volunteerism – take care of Elders, community, mentorship, employable
  - Increased self confidence as individuals and as a family unit:
    - Observations
    - Statistical changes in family reconciliation and family maintenance
    - Children showing increased self esteem and successful in school
  - Hard to track kids, especially if you don't know parents
  - Happy and thriving kids:
    - Families are together
    - Consistent attendance
    - There is no initiative for children in Indigenous “Head Start”
  - Keeping accurate records
    - Database
    - Help with needs based on child and family to make positive health choices
    - Resolution and being more engaged in daily life choices
    - One on one program based on needs and strengths.
-

## **2. Can you describe some successes and promising practices in Indigenous early learning and child care in your community? Suggestions on how we can build on these successes?**

- When there is more funding there is better success:
    - There are always activities like cooking, making crafts, cultural events
  - Access funding for resources:
    - Having support when needed
    - Not feeling judged when asking for help
    - Having good communication between parents and teachers
  - Successful practices
    - Language rebirth starting
    - “Moms R Us” cultural specific programming
    - Parent and tot
    - Aboriginal/Indigenous recognition starting
    - Parent in-service/discussion/opinion for change
  - Head start graduation
    - Suggestions:
      - Education grant
      - Gift cards for attendance
      - Fun field trip (year end)
  - Integrating culture and create positive self esteem:
    - Only a person can define themselves
    - Maintaining pride as a Indigenous people.
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### **THEME 3: Planning for the future of Early Learning and Child Care**

#### **1. What does early learning and child care programs look like for Indigenous children?**

- Having healthy relationships - family
  - Cultural awareness
  - More community involvement
  - Preparing the parent to teach their child; support the parent
- Culturally based in all of Canada:
  - First Nations history ideology in all curriculum
  - Accredited child care facilities by Indigenous people for Indigenous people
  - Well respected, holistic, grounded by Elders, people
  - Own funding stream, sustainable
- Cultural identity – strong maintenance, keep maintaining cultural, language, knowing “right from wrong”:
  - More awareness
  - Realization of the importance of roles and responsibilities

- In 10 years from now the urban setting will be more educated and incorporate Indigenous teaching in the curriculum; ceremonies, berry picking, sweet grass picking, hunting, fishing, sweats, Sundance, ceremony enhances behaviour
  - Easy access to services:
    - Mobile services that come to the centres i.e. specialists, professionals
    - Free bus services to programs and specialist visits
    - Lower ratios in classroom
    - Qualified and educated, well paid frontline staff
    - Incorporating culture, having tools available
  - An accessible program with a strong cultural component that empowers future First Nations generations
  - Total language immersion:
    - Training modules for parents and children
    - More community involvement.
- 

## **2. What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the federal government and other partners?**

- Provide consistent funding
  - Community – open, receiving, supportive to workers, parents:
    - Federal – mutual trust, more involved parents, value in participation
    - Funders committed, open minded to different teaching techniques and outcomes
  - Every Indigenous community should be given that same opportunity to be provided with programs, funding, teachings, straight across and so society as a whole will benefit
    - Advocates
  - Dedicated funding
    - Enhanced Partnerships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous community
    - Active involvement of indigenous communities
  - Roles – Indigenous communities- programming / cultural defined:
    - Federal government – funding
    - Other partners – funding, partnership/ co-op teaching
  - Funding for on and off reserve.
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## **3. What are your hopes, dreams and vision for Indigenous children and families?**

- Positive support for families; able to speak their language, know their culture
- Vision / hope family:
  - Healthy, resilient, ETOH/drug free, self reliant families and individuals
  - Parents have jobs
  - Community kinship is strong; community members open and friendly and helpful
  - Strong recreational facilities in community

- Creative ways of learning
  - Language / cultural practices
  - Pass the dependency – modelling / mentoring traditional practices
  - Parent volunteers
  - All community members helping each other
  - Representation of indigenous people in key roles in Canada i.e. doctors, judges, media, dentists, teachers (roles models)
  - That all children are given the same opportunities whether it be in rural or urban settings
    - Healthy families
    - Relationship building
    - Trust – gained
    - Self-care – parents/ child/community
    - Educated
    - Positive cultural awareness
  - To be successful and empowered:
    - School readiness
    - Employment
    - Family unit – strong
    - Continued teaching passed down from generations
    - Diversity and identity – important
  - All Indigenous children are empowered to fulfill their dreams
  - More money – expand cultural program
  - More daycare spots
  - More training for teacher parents
  - Preventative programming
  - Healthy happy families:
    - Teach the children early
    - Teach the parents and recognize when they need coping skills to provide positive homes
    - Traditional values being implemented within the community
    - It takes a community to raise a child – teach right from wrong.
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**4. If you had more funding from a community perspective for early learning and childcare, what would you do with it?**

- Unlimited funding
  - Fair, equitable salary, programs
  - Facilities/ play ground well maintained
  - Student teacher adequate ratios especially those children with special needs
  - Educated educators – Indigenous
- Education – or educated our peoples – staff retreats, self care
  - Self direction – having a voice
  - Safe housing

- Better pay to attract experienced, educated, and qualified staff and to retain them
    - Continued professional development, resources to maintain and enhance the program
    - Collaboration for increased referrals and access to resources
    - Every door is the right door
  - Build a playground, arcade, recreation centre for youth and families
  - Create hands on material to help support each individual family based on need.
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# **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*British Columbia Session | July 13, 2017*

## **Indigenous Early Learning & Child Care**

*Prepared by:  
Rae Ratslef, Raincoast Ventures Ltd., Report Recorder*

## **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

**Specific Needs:** Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities):

### **1. What is currently working well?**

- Aboriginal Head Start is working well and have had a positive impact on families:
  - Cultural and language components
  - Parent involvement/Elder involvement
  - Nutrition and health promotion
  - Education
  - Social support
  - Ceremonies
  - Connection to the land
  - Many Nations represented in programs
  - Do celebrations well and it makes you want to be a part of the community
  - Home Away from Home
  - The six components of AHS work well: culture and language, parent and Elder involvement, nutrition and health promotion, education, social supports and ceremonies and the connection to the land
- Some good partnerships have been enabled by the ASI funding; however, it is a concern that the partnerships may fail due to lack of funding overtime
- Children who start to thrive in child care impact on the whole family's well-being and cohesiveness
- Being able to provide transportation to Head Start
- On and off reserve Head Start programs have reduced barriers to accessing services
- Providing food in programs
- Better access to support services (OT, PT, SCD, etc.)
- Providing a place to teach traditional language
- Giving a venue to learn about history
- Many programs do a good job of teaching language and culture
- No cost to families
- There is funding available for Early Childhood Education (ECE), but it is for First Nations people only
- The city has more resources such as special supports and transportation
- Incorporate healthy living, traditional foods
- Engagement with families – it lets them know that they have a voice
- Families can reconnect with community

- Some good partnerships enabled by ASI
- Funding for First Nations members only to get early childhood education
- Flexibility to serve members the way that they need
- Vancouver's Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program works well as an outreach program
- People are doing a good job to reducing barriers and providing food in programs
- There is better access to support services
- There are safe places now to learn traditional language and history.

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## **2. What needs to be improved?**

- Access – 26% of the population self-identify as Aboriginal and there is no Aboriginal Head Start program for them
- There needs to be more programs throughout the province
- Waitlists for early interventions services need to be shortened
- Supports are needed for families and children with special needs
- Retaining staff long term needs to be a priority – if staff stay longer they develop stronger relationships with families, which creates strong outcomes for communities overall
- There is need to improve wages in order to retain staff
- Funding is needed for people to access training – it is an issue that the training dollars are usually only available to First Nations
- Collaboration is needed, e.g. Memoranda of Understanding between Federal/Provincial/Territorial/First Nations governments and amongst community members in communities
- Programs outgrow their spaces or are short spaces because of the lack of funding, e.g. the 1-5 program is only half a day whereas if there were more funding available a longer program would be more useful
- City programs receive no Federal funding other than a few of the Head Starts; however, there are only 12 of those in BC
- Wait list reductions
- More parent involvement
- Families do not have access to cultural supports at AHS so kids get left behind in terms of their culture and language; although the children are learning the parents are not
- More HUB models are needed
- There is need to address the high turnover in staff
- More qualified early childhood educators are needed
- More Elder involvement
- Having a family involvement worker
- Communication between programs is needed
- Improve networking between all organizations at all levels
- More collaborating with schools, library and foster parents

- Preventative support
- Culture and language is not an enhancement, it is a right
- Social workers and foster parents need to be educated about culture and participate in programs
- Cultural awareness (SAN-YAS)
- Training
- Improve wages, benefits and education to staff to retain them
- Certain Head Starts cater to certain parents, e.g. preschool vs. daycare
- Working families that need full day care do not have access to cultural programs
- Foster children are not being referred to IDP/SCD
- ADP/ASCD gap in program-ADP goes until age 3; if child does not have access to child care, there is not an ability to still support at home
- Turnover in ECD's and Early Intervention support needs to be reduced
- Qualified ECE's, SN's and IT's are needed
- There is need for funding to support Aboriginal children with special needs
- Head Start should be in all communities
- There is no consistency with programs across the provinces and territories – some have many, some have a few, some have none
- Who controls the funding? There are huge gaps in service
- Services vary in child care centers for children with extra support needs
- Family support services are needed, as well as advocacy for families that do not have a voice
- Help building children's attachment to their community as opposed to removing children
- More collaboration in order to personalize the framework
- There is no federal funding for city programs off reserve
- Equal access to cultural resources and supports is needed
- More government commitment to lower child care fees
- Families not feeling connected to Strong Starts – they need a sense of belonging.

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**3. Is there an early learning and child care program or service that you or your community would like to access but cannot?**

*Describe barriers or challenges that need to be addressed so that improvements can be made, to Federal and/or provincial programs/funding?*

- More Head Start programs are needed in rural areas
- There are no Metis Head Start programs
- More funding is needed to increase the current programs that are available to service more of the need for children under the age of six
- Jordan's Principle – there are still children falling through the cracks relating to that – it needs to be addressed
- Transportation is an issue for many
- There is a lack of sites

- Access is needed for all communities to family wellness programs
- Expand the Head Start programs – there are only 12 in BC
- Child care for all ages is over \$1,000/month in Vancouver and only about 50% of that cost is covered by subsidy; there is need for more government commitment to lower fees for childcare; without this there is a risk that children are in unsafe childcare or parents cannot work because childcare is unaffordable
- More of our people should be trained to work in our own communities
- Funding and accessibility
- There is a lack of afterschool programs
- A gas card could be provided so that the families could attend events several times/week
- Language nests work well
- On reserve families coming into cities cannot find childcare services
- There are different levels of separation from community, land and kinship – there is need to consider how that can be remediated with early childhood education
- Outreach programs in communities would be very helpful, particularly in rural communities where transportation is an issue
- More Indigenous, provincially funded, preschools, early year services and programs
- Transportation to programs
- Build beautiful new buildings for our children; programs are still being held in old residential schools
- Money is being spent on schools and not early years programs
- Community needs assessments should be conducted
- We need more early childhood educators who are First Nations
- Sites are needed for healing and wellness
- Language Nests are an issue for non-local languages
- More urban programs are needed; it is a major issue that there is such a low number of urban Head Start programs
- On-reserve families come into the cities to get employment or education but cannot find services/child care
- Loss of intimacy with where you are from and still following old assimilation policies
- Funding is an issue
- ECD outreach into rural communities with families who otherwise would not come to the programs
- There are huge waitlist for services, e.g. OIT, SLP, PIT, ASCD, AIDP, and behavioural consultants
- There are not enough programs/services for children that need access to programs like Head Start
- There are not enough child care spaces available
- More Head Start programs are needed for both rural and urban communities and for all Aboriginal populations

- There is no Metis Head Start program
- Some programs have AIPP, and some maternal child health-streamline, which enhances these programs
- More Aboriginal people need to be trained in specialist services
- Accessibility to federal programs, e.g. Head Start, needs to be improved
- More after school programs are needed.

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**General Needs:**

**1. What should Indigenous children learn or experience in early learning and child care programs?**

*What role should culture play in early learning and childcare?*

- Access to land, and land-based teachings especially for urban sites
- Access to traditional harvesting practices, ceremonies, and multi-generational programming with involving knowledge keepers
- Access to consistent caregiving – inclusion and affection
- Connection to what is happening in the community
- Opportunities to be exposed to different cultural experiences of the people attending the programs
- Opportunities for hands-on field trips and on-the-land experiences
- Consistent and responsive caregiving
- Opportunity to learn the language
- Experience time with Elders and babies
- Access to traditional foods
- Influence from both genders
- Connections with nature and land
- Participating in preparation of traditional foods, e.g. bannock
- Learning social skills, language, culture, history, and teachings from elders, and a connection to the land
- Sense of belonging
- Exposure to different environments and foods
- Language and culture is an inherent right, not a privilege
- Experience traditional ways of being: drumming, smudging, circle
- Understanding indigenous culture is not a religion, it is a way of life
- Traditional crafts: rattles, drums, beading
- Inherent right not just an enforcement; a way of life
- Language – understanding who they are and where they came from
- Teachings of extended family members

- Respecting all cultures
  - Access to good role models.
- 

## **2. What should Indigenous parents and caregivers learn or gain from early learning and child care programs?**

- Creating adult connections and peer support
  - Learning to play with children
  - Rebuilding a sense of community
  - Role-modeling
  - Building a sense of family and a sense of belonging
  - Opportunity to learn culture and language along with their children
  - Teachings from Elders and the medicine wheel
  - Identify and connect them to their roots
  - Parents who are involved help the kids have a positive sense of who they are
  - Cultivating a life long learner
  - Parents need to learn with their children and have an opportunity to get to know other parents and grandparents
  - Being together in a safe environment
  - Knowledge of child development
  - Learn how to play with their children
  - Space for their own gifts and talents
  - Gain sense of pride in their cultural background
  - Parenting skills
  - Learning the language alongside the children and continue at home
  - Respect
  - Medicine wheel teachings – everything is based on it: physical, spiritual, emotional, mental-balance of life
  - Identity
  - Connecting to their roots
  - Parents need to learn with their children
  - Learn more about their community
  - Get to know other parents and grandparents
  - Be together in a safe environment.
-

### 3. What does “quality” in early learning and child care mean to you?

- Educators have the ability to develop and support their own training in the development of the program
- Supports a vibrant profession
- Lower ratios of educator to children
- Support educators with wages, training, and benefits
- Quality means inspired, trained, dedicated, educators excited about the work they do
- Educators should get down on the child’s level and play
- Involves the Elder’s community
- Parents feel welcome and a part of the program
- Parent and community governance and leadership
- Physically healthy, engaging, inspiring, natural lighting, natural toys, updated furnishings, easy access to outside
- Quality ECD equals family wellness
- Indigenous materials and equipment
- Qualified staff
- Holistic
- Knowledge keepers, family, and Elders all included
- Education starts early, not just from mainstream
- Community uses programs
- Practicing respect
- Builds relationships
- Adequate ratio to provide care that meets the child’s basic needs of attachment, social-emotional needs and builds a foundation
- Policies and procedures
- Connections to the land
- Access to employment insurance services and outreach
- Staff are culturally aware
- Trauma informed
- Aboriginal world view
- Family centered
- Safe, bright spaces that are well planned out and have a connection to the land
- Resident Elder on the payroll
- Access to resources: Early Intervention Service
- Equity over quality
- AHS component/philosophy
- Values based rather than outcomes
- Inclusion; obtaining support for children who require extra support
- Thinking about next steps after O-B, AHS

- Elder's teachings
  - Working together, supporting one another
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## **THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

### **1. How will we know if an Indigenous early learning and child care program is successful?**

*Are there meaningful ways to measure success for Indigenous children?*

- Attendance
- Different types of assessment
- By asking parents and listening to their feedback
- Program evaluation
- Graduation rates
- No standard template – bring back oral language and storytelling
- Successes will be different in each community – it is how you interpret your own successes
- Rural areas will be different than urban
- All around community health and wellness
- Hearing the stories from the families; doing some interviews
- Families feel safe enough to share their experiences as part of the program
- Looking to children for their sense of pride and belonging
- Seeing parents actively engage with their children
- Partnerships with school districts and others
- Longitudinal studies and links to other questionnaires
- Participation of Elders
- Showing demand for the program – waitlists
- Scrap books
- Feedback directly from parents
- Parent survey
- Children are happy/proud and celebrating successes
- Children keep coming back generation after generation
- Measured on values and not outcomes
- Bringing back oral language and story telling
- Family input – collaborative communication
- Success will be shown differently with each community through sharing knowledge stories
- Each community will determine its own success – rural areas will be different than others
- Use of the medicine wheel – the community surrounds the children as a whole
- Community health and wellness
- Consistency
- Feedback from talking circles

- Interviews face-to-face with someone they trust
- Participation of Elders and knowledge keepers
- Waitlists – demands
- Extended families are also participating
- Word of mouth
- Screening tools such as ASO
- Sense of pride in children
- Partnership with school districts to ease transitions
- Longitudinal studies
- Linking with EDI data through the CHEQ family questionnaire
- Families engaging with their children within the program.

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**2. Can you describe some successes and promising practices in Indigenous early learning and child care in your community? Suggestions on how we can build on these successes?**

- Parents have come into the program and it has become a ladder of success for them, e.g. they have taken their ECD or ECE certification or are working as driver/cook, etc. and laddering up
- Language nest
- Elder participation
- Land based
- Being very flexible
- Starting with the community and where they are at
- Thinking outside the box with the involvement of different leadership, ages
- More knowledgeable about trauma
- Community health and wellness
- Importance of listening to the community
- Collaboration and partnerships in the community working for a shared vision; pooling funding/resources to deliver a quality program
- Approaching families and Elders first to see what their vision and knowledge is and then implementing that so they will get what they need out of the program
- Supporting transitions to school – Head Start to Kindergarten
- Having IADP and AISD, which is a provincial-wide program, in more provinces
- Having a fathers program, e.g. Aboriginal Fathers Coordinator for children 0-6 has had a huge success rate and they are building a support network with each other; 65 fathers were engaged in the program in the first month
- 0-6 programs always happen during the day and there is not much for evenings/weekends
- Empowering parents when we find their gift – supporting them by letting them come and cook/garden, etc.

- Even though things are hard there is still success
- Promising practices: many programs that start from prenatal programs and parent and tot programs become a ladder to success
- Having children in ECD can become a ladder to personal success for parents
- Language Nest, Elder participation, land based education, responsible curriculum, learning stories, traditional food, inclusion etc.
- Start with the community and where they are at
- Think outside the box
- More knowledge about trauma and the affects on our children
- Qualitative evaluations
- Community health and wellness
- Importance of listening to our communities
- Approaching Elders and families first and building programs around First Nations traditional teachings
- Successful partnerships with other organizations, e.g. Strong Start, LFMAS partnership
- Grow and develop new program spaces to eliminate waitlists
- More cultural resources available; inspire communities to build on resources
- Pool funding to bridge gaps in programs available
- Elder and parent involvement in programs; build into budgets to compensate for wages, invest in parent councils/circles
- ASCD – all across Canada with permanent positions in programs
- Supporting transitions to schools
- Provincially funded practices
- ASCD child circle of support
- More men trained in ECE
- Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP).

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### **THEME 3: Planning for the future of Early Learning and Child Care**

#### **1. What does early learning and child care programs look like for Indigenous children?**

- All inclusive
- More language speakers
- They will still exist and they will be plentiful delivered by parents with stable funding
- Ability to navigate the educational system
- Schools are learning more from early childhood
- Thriving community
- More outdoor programs
- Skilled TCs that are property compensated

- Information that children have been taught has been retained and they have passed it on to their own children – they become the educators
- Elders to be part of the program – included as paid employees
- Comprehensive programming for prenatal to school age – no gaps
- Language and culture flourishing
- More HUB models
- Less silos
- Hard to reach vulnerable families are supported
- A more wrap around approach to care
- More mixed age groups, free flowing
- Successful healing from trauma
- The whole family is healthy
- Be able to keep up with the population growth and the need
- More access to cultural programming
- Fully accessible and inclusive programming
- Increased number of knowledge speakers
- Every community able to access ECE
- Transportation barriers reduced
- Increased support through technology to cultural training
- More urban sites
- Stable funding with long-term Indigenous staff
- Skilled ECE that are properly compensated
- Hard to reach and vulnerable families are supported
- Delivered by past parents
- Stable funding
- Children understand who they are, where they come from and are proud
- Ability to navigate the educational system
- Schools learning from “Early Childhood” to better the success of the children
- Thriving children/community
- Our programs will be delivered in first languages
- Outdoors
- More urban sites
- Find ways to support smaller communities
- Reduced barriers from provincial legislation for cultural programming
- Full capacity
- New sites/buildings
- Every community should be able to access some form of ECD services and know what is available
- Transportation barriers reduced
- Increased support through technology

## **2. What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the federal government and other partners?**

- To hear the community's success stories
  - Informed policies and investments
  - Base decisions on the families' wellness
  - Collaboration at different levels
  - Urban Metis Non-status fall through the cracks – all Aboriginal people will have access to programs
  - Jordan's Principle will be implemented
  - Truth and Reconciliation will be actively worked on
  - No more waitlists – if Surrey needs three Head Starts then give them three
  - Federal and Provincial governments will fully understand the importance of early child care and development
  - Indigenous communities will have self-determination and self-governance for ECE programs
  - Federal government has to recognize the uniqueness of each community
  - Indigenous/Federal/Provincial/Territorial partners working together for the benefit of children and families
  - Assistance with funding from the Federal and Provincial governments
  - Urban, Metis, Non-status currently fall through the cracks – all Aboriginal people will have access to the programs
  - Jordan's principle will e fully implemented
  - Hear the community's success stories
  - Informed policies/investments
  - Live a day in the shoes of the front-line workers
  - Base decisions on family wellness
  - Gaps are identified
  - Collaboration at different levels
  - Better understanding by federal and provincial governments of community values, beliefs and needs.
- 

## **3. What are your hopes, dreams and vision for Indigenous children and families?**

- Proudly self-identifying
- Families will have their hopes, dreams and visions met
- Children are becoming educated, learning their culture and traditions
- Every program is rich in culture, language, traditional food and access to land
- Healthcare, dental care, and homes will be provided and people families will be debt free
- Ability to access all programs and resources
- Children becoming educated, learning

- Children thriving in a healthy community
  - More of a whole family approach
  - Not a focus on one culture – everyone is acknowledged
  - Less children in care
  - All children graduate Grade 12
  - All regions are more consistent
  - All families get their needs met without having to fight for it
  - Special needs having access to all the supports that they need – no wait lists
  - Want them to go to a safe place
  - Community family and child well being quality cultural programs that are easy to access with low barriers in every community
  - Truly family centred
  - Children and families supported to stay together in their communities
  - No children in care
  - Families are supported to access childcare that works best for them
  - Providers have better understanding of Indigenous communities
  - More of a whole family approach
  - Healthy, strong, happy, healing from history, pride, connection to land/Elders
  - Society accepting
  - More Metis specific services
  - More consistency in all regions
  - Access for children with special needs to all services
  - Support homes for vulnerable family's long term
  - Access to health programs, affordable daycare and early learning programs
  - Proudly self-identify
  - Health care, dental care, barrier free
  - Basic needs met but above and beyond that
  - Be a part of a healthy, vibrant community
  - Elders are able to share life experiences with youth
  - Community, family and child well-being
  - Families are supported and able to access the child care that works best for them including staying at home
  - Service providers have a better understanding of Indigenous communities' cultural humility
  - Programs that are easy to access/low barrier
  - Truly family centered
  - Quality of life is important
  - All children and families are supported to stay together in community; affordable, safe housing; poverty reduction.
-

**4. If you had more funding from a community perspective for early learning and childcare, what would you do with it?**

- Serve more families
- Head Start programs in all communities
- Wage increases and benefits for staff
- More outreach services
- Early intervention programs
- More maternal health programs
- Whole family wellness
- Poverty levels addressed in regard to food, education, housing and employment
- More Metis specific services/head start/preschool
- No waitlists
- More funding for childhood development
- Better wages for ECE's
- Specific training and tools to help support families with an Aboriginal focus
- Childcare in every community
- Honour and support mental health needs of the children
- Nutritional literacy
- All Indigenous families would have access to childcare where it works for them
- Increased infant/toddler programs funding
- Free ECE training for everyone
- More childcare vs. only preschool
- For every dollar you invest in the early years you get \$10 in return
- More programming to connect children back to the land
- Colleges for First Nations – specific training/tools needed to help support families
- Honouring and supporting mental health needs of the children
- Nutritional literacy
- Serve more families
- Increase services
- Create more positive places
- Take it to the people
- Create AHS learning Institutes with dedicated training to nurture AHS professionals
- Speech/language, OT, PT, SCD, AIDP services
- Early Intervention Services to be culturally safe
- Qualified and invested staff
- Maternal child health programs
- Midwives, doulas, natural holistic approach
- Whole family wellness
- Poverty levels need to be addressed

- Food, housing, education, and employment needs need to be met
  - Increased I/T programs funded so that families can work and access training
  - ECE free training for anybody who wants it
  - More child care versus only preschool.
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**5. Additional comments, thoughts, feedback:**

- We would like to see parent involvement in these meetings. We believe parents' input is important.
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# **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*Manitoba Session | June 10, 2017*

## **Indigenous Early Learning & Child Care**

*Prepared by:  
Freda Lepine, Report Recorder*

## **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs in Your Community**

**Specific Needs: Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities:**

### **1. What ELCC programs or services are available to you in your area?**

- Head Start
- Day Care
- Futures
- Babies First
- Parent Child Coalition
- Jordan's Principal
- Maternal Health
- CPNP
- Insight Mentor
- Best Beginnings
- CFS
- Family Resource Centres
- Community Schools and Parent Rooms
- All services should be available to all families and children regardless of jurisdiction  
Provincial or Federal
- Cross Lake:
  - Aboriginal Head Start
  - Day Care
  - CPNP
  - Star - FASD
  - Maternal Child
  - Nursery & Kindergarten – School
  - Family Enhancement
  - New Program – Jordan's Principal
  - Parent – Child Coalition
- Split Lake:
  - Day Care
  - Aboriginal Head Start
  - Kindergarten – School
  - CPNP
  - Nursery
- Thompson:
  - Futures
  - Aboriginal Head Start

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- School Programs
- Parent-Child Coalition
- Thicket Portage
  - AHS – (Program closing)
  - Nursery & Kindergarten (school)
  - CPNP
  - Mal
- Cranberry Portage
  - Day Care
  - Nursery & Kindergarten (School)
  - CAPC
  - CPNP
- Play groups, pre-school
- Literacy
- Child Care programs
- Post Natal
- Nursery/Kindergarten as part of school system
- Head Start ages 2/3
- Day Care focussed on working parents
- CPNP
- Maternal Child ages 0 to 6 – home visits
- CPMP pre-natal
- Nursery/Kindergarten
- Family enhancement program
- SOE
- CPNP
- Jordon’s Principal
- Moe the mouse
- Stars
- MCHP
- Wings of Discovery
- CFS
- Family Enhancement Program
- Ages and Stages
- Healthy Child Coalition
- Head start
- Day Care
- Nursery.

**2. Is there an ELCC program or service that you would like to access but are not currently accessing? If so, what are the reasons why you are not using this program or service?**

- We would like to see all programs available to all children and communities including services, special needs and access to therapists (not available to all, some we don't know exist)
- Not enough funded spots; (same spaces since 1996 for MKO Day Cares. 501 children in 23 centres in Northern Manitoba)
- need infant spots
- Provincial – no spaces in the north for children, no infant spots
- Funding for capital projects
- We want qualified child care to be equal
- Need another day care (Cross Lake)
- No buildings available for day care facilities
- Transportation is a barrier
- Limited or no public transportation in many communities
- More child-parent programming (barrier is funding)
- More traditional language & culture (funding required for Elders, tobacco offerings)
- Not enough space for programs, older buildings, mould
- More advocates
- Speech and language therapists
- Evaluations staff, children, program (see where you are and get feedback) – not available to us, lack of funding, lack of training
- Dial 4 (Assessment tool)
- Need more local training options
- Progress reports
- Accountability
- More centres
- Community exchange program.

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**3. What are the most important elements of early learning and child care programs/services? What does 'quality' in ELCC mean to you?**

- Space and facilities available to all qualified and knowledgeable staff, structure and stability, assessments
- Wage equality – increases in wages at all levels
- Centre Directors are subsidizing their wages so their staff can have a decent wage; losing qualified staff to schools and CFS because of wages
- Love, patience, nutrition, language, holistic child
- More professional development for staff

- Traditional language and culture
- Inclusive, accepting, non-judgemental, supportive
- Parent involvement and support
- Quality – more training for staff and funding for travel, etc.
- Meet the needs of the kids
- Help kids move forward in a positive way
- Safety
- Stability/Structure
- Qualified staff/knowledgeable staff
- Motivated staff
- Team work
- Parent involvement
- Safety first
- Volunteers
- Assessments
- Training
- Dial training.

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**4. What qualities or features do ELCC programs need to include or offer to help make them culturally-appropriate for your family/community (e.g. language teachings, Elder or knowledge-keeper participation, traditional foods/crafts, outdoor learning opportunities, parent/family involvement, etc.)?**

- Intro to Implement all cultural awareness i.e.: languages
- Language and people who speak the language; training for those who do not speak the language
- Hunters donate food – show kids how to prepare the food
- Take kids outdoors, nature walks
- Parents need to take an active role
- Elder participation, govt took away our Elder honorariums as eligible expense for AHS thus we lost Elders
- Need to be creative, think outside the box
- Traditional parenting programs – teaching parents a traditional life style of parenting
- Need to make sure parents don't feel judged
- Fluent in language, Elders
- Volunteer your time.

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**THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

**1. Can you provide examples of a successful ELCC program or service? What made it successful? What needs did it address?**

- Aboriginal Head Start
  - Day Care
  - SOE
- 

**2. What are some ways of measuring success of early learning and child care programs and services?**

- Evaluation – modify to community (assessment tools) etc.
  - Ages and Stages
  - Parent Involvement
  - Tracking Measures taken
  - Collaboration with 0 to 6 programs
  - Networking, education on the importance of ELCC, qualified staff in those areas; funding to match the qualified staff and operation and maintenance
  - Follow the child from 0 to grade 12 and into university because they attended programs
  - Evaluation – modify to community assessment tools etc.
  - Dial 4
  - Steps and stages.
- 

**3. How do we make sure those measures are meaningful for Indigenous communities?**

- Modify to meet the needs and work closely with communities
  - Meet communities where they are
  - Do a needs assessment for all communities
  - Subsidy across the board for Provincial and Federal Programs
  - Staff speak Cree to the children
  - Employment and training should be paying/supporting students going to school
  - Modify to meet the needs.
-

### **THEME 3: Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

#### **1. What is working well in the programs, services, and supports (e.g., FNICCI, AHSOR, AHSUNC) that are available in your community?**

- Subsidies should be available to all regardless of income
  - Improve – working as partners with provinces; province doesn't want to license federal centres because of jurisdictional issues
  - Family/parent involvement (HS)
  - CAPC- successful pre-school orientation program
  - Ensure whole family can come
  - Team Work – Stars, JP, Head Start, day care.
- 

#### **2. What do you feel is needed to enhance/improve/grow these programs?**

- People sitting at desks should not make our decisions; use grass roots people, who work on the floor with our children
  - Better communication
  - Team work
  - More training and motivated staff
  - Funding and training
  - Higher wages
  - Subsidies
  - Community involvement
  - Resources manual
  - Networking – sharing ideas
  - Funding
    - Bus (new bus to replace broken down bus)
    - Van
    - Salaries
    - Training
    - Support for families – speakers, home visits
  - Availability of books, toys and food (remote communities)
  - Networking and sharing ideas.
-

### **3. What are some of the main gaps or barriers to those programs, services and supports?**

- Lack of sharing ideas
  - Spaces
  - Parent Involvement
  - Gaps – not enough spaces or funding to match it
  - Wages, remoteness factor
  - Lack of professional development
  - Licensing – nobody is advocating on behalf of the children
  - Benefits, employment incentives, qualified staff, more community based training for ECE's
  - Disconnect between provincial and federal – want us to work and partner together but don't even talk to each other
  - Stop proposal driven and short deadlines
  - Money
  - Lack of sharing information
  - Lack of motivation
  - Lack of parental involvement.
- 

### **4. What are the three most important things that should be improved?**

- Wages
  - Spaces
  - Infrastructure
  - Parental involvement
  - Networking and sharing of ideas
  - Training
  - Management training
  - Self care.
- 

## **THEME 4: Planning for the Future of Early Learning and Child Care**

### **1. What is your vision for Indigenous children and families? What are your community's hopes and dreams for your children?**

- To have successful/happy children
- Health families and communities
- Address poverty first, (can't teach traditional language when you don't have a place to sleep)
- Hire Indigenous people knowledgeable in language and culture

- Live in harmony
  - Learn how to play
  - Life skills for parents and young people
  - Reading programs (all ages)
  - More family involvement
  - More toddler spaces
  - For parents to understand how important the early years are
  - Day spots to be available for infants
  - Parenting programs
  - People to work together
  - More recreation opportunities (safe), parks
  - Healing activities/self care
  - Family camping
  - Non-violent – drug free
  - Interactive – caring
  - Go back to concept “Takes a community to raise a child”
  - Live in harmony
  - Parents to practice traditional teachings
  - How to raise a child – some parents and grandparents are afraid of their child/grandchild
  - Parent/child activities
  - Parent workshops:
    - Cooking Activities
    - Gardening
    - Nutrition
    - Sewing
  - Community family tree
  - Traditional teachings
  - Physical activities
  - All about me
  - Nobody’s perfect
  - 7 Teachings
  - Reading program
  - Literacy
  - Problem solving skills
  - Giving them the skills to be independent
  - Giving them an identity
  - Live without addictions and violence.
-

**2. What are the most important things that you think Indigenous children should learn or experience from ELCC programs and services?**

- Identity
  - Identity – language and culture
  - Literacy – reading programs, build vocabulary
  - Physical activity
  - 7 teachings
  - Live without violence and addictions
  - Parental involvement in the teaching of the children using a holistic approach
  - Land based training – hunting, fishing, natural growth with the Elders
  - Play based learning, self-regulation
  - Identity of who they are and where they come from, teach them their history
  - Sense of self-worth and value
  - Empathy, connectedness, community
  - Why is it important to read, sing with children
- 

**3. What are the most important things that Indigenous parents and caregivers could learn or gain from ELCC programs and services?**

- Better boundaries for children
  - Giving them skills to be independent
  - Why is it important to read, sing with children
  - Why play is important
  - Parents involvement is critical; praise is critical
  - Be open minded, accepting of one another
  - Education
  - Consistency
  - Communication
  - Accept change
  - Parents self confidence and share knowledge to child
  - Create a bond – parent/child/community.
-

**4. In the future, what role should Indigenous communities, the federal government, and other partners play in designing, delivering and monitoring the results of ELCC programs and services?**

- Hire and ask the grassroots and frontline people
  - Partners that work together
    - Goals are more important than jurisdiction
    - Partners =
      - Governments (Federal and Provincial)
      - Indigenous communities
      - ECE's and program administrators.
- 

**5. In an ideal world, what does Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care look like ten years from now in Canada? In your region/community?**

- Quality universal childcare for everyone
  - My own licensing office (local licensing)
  - Our own people to regulate, and monitor and resources to advocate on behalf of our children in our own community
  - Administrative support staff.
  - Parental workshops and training
  - Better communication when proposals are submitted
  - Funding available in advance:
    - One place
    - Fewer restrictions on funding applications
- 

**Additional thoughts, suggestions or comments:**

- Call for proposals should have more realistic time lines as the remote communities often run into Internet issues
- There are requirements for funding so that it can't be side tracked
- Funding for special needs, training in FASD for ECE's EA's (difference between FASD/ADHD)
- Holistic programming, sharing information between programs
- Programming reflects communities – general parameters with flexibility
- Concern about “railroading” in communities when you have a strong voice
- Guidelines for next 10 years (need time to prepare)
- How do we stay involved to ensure our recommendations are being heard?

- Therapists are not available in the north, long waiting lists
  - Diagnoses are done, then no follow up as the waiting list is too long (many children fall between the cracks)
  - Referrals are slow
  - No access to doctors, therapists etc.
- 





# **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*New Brunswick Session | June 24, 2017*

## **Indigenous Early Learning & Child Care**

*Prepared by:  
Kristina Rogers, Report Recorder*

## **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

**Specific Needs:** Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities):

### **1. What is currently working well?**

- The NB Head Start program at Under One Sky works very well and offers supports to children and families, however, they have a long waiting list and no other locations in the province other than the Fredericton, NB site.
- The Under One Sky Head Start Program encapsulates the six Head Start components of education, nutrition, parent/guardian involvement, culture/language, health promotion and social supports very well. Those who have been able to access the facility felt the program is warm and inviting to all families (foster care and extended families as well) and really incorporates everyone in the activities and learning opportunities.
- Participants felt that the Head Start program offered valuable workshops and other learning opportunities to parents. The program is not based on just the concept of children learning but the parents and caregivers as well. A truly holistic family approach is taken that is culturally sensitive.

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### **2. What needs to be improved?**

- In NB there is only one Head Start program for the entire province that is located in Fredericton making it impossible for other areas to participate. Also the Fredericton location only has a certain number of available seats (6) which creates a waiting list for many families who would like to join the program.
- Increase funding to Under One Sky so they can create “satellite sites” in other areas of NB so more families can access the program.
- A huge need for other facilities around NB in both rural and urban centers.
- Develop the program further to cover a larger age range so that older children and youth could benefit from it. Allowing older children to be part of the program would also allow for a continuum of services for the younger children already enrolled in a Head Start program to continue their learning and cultural awareness.
- Include activities that would allow Elders to participate so they can educate the children on their culture and also offer opportunities to practice speaking their traditional language to the Elders.
- Head Start is more than a daycare service, it is an early learning program, and regular daycares do not offer such programs thus showing the extreme need for more funding to

create more Head Start facilities in multiple regions so families have an opportunity to participate.

- There is not enough funding or programs available to provide enough traditional language training opportunities to Indigenous families.
- Many children have been hurt and treated in a culturally insensitive manner at mainstream daycare facilities. More Head Start facilities are needed to ensure no child has to endure this type of treatment. These programs should also employ Indigenous people as staff members. Scholarships should be created to assist Indigenous people in becoming early childcare workers and educators.
- Childcare facilities should be small enough in order to be able to give enough focus to every individual child. In large facilities children can get “lost in the shuffle”.
- Have public health nurses involved in the program.
- More focus is still placed towards on-reserve based facilities that offer culturally appropriate services than off-reserve programs. There needs to be more emphasis and funding towards “urban” programs due to the high off-reserve Indigenous population.
- Off-reserve Indigenous people are often excluded or not welcomed at on-reserve facilities to access Head Start activities further showing the need for more urban funding to create off-reserve facilities to service this large population.
- Child care is very expensive and low-cost Indigenous specific services are needed to ensure culture is preserved throughout the generations.
- There are not enough supports for children with disabilities or special needs.
- There are not any supports for older children and youth. Youth need a safe enriching place to go (e.g. after school programs).
- The national Head Start needs to have a bigger role in decision making as it has been diminished over the years.
- There needs to be an Indigenous organization that deals with social service issues that work for the protection and care of Indigenous families.
- There is not enough community engagement on the issue.
- Develop more partnership with government and communities. Community centres should offer activities to engage with the Indigenous community around them to increase positive relationships and facilitate open discussion.
- Head Start programs and schools do not work together to try to offer a continuum of services to students. The education started in the Head Start program is not continued by the schools thus learning stops and prior learning fades.

**3. Is there an early learning and child care program or service that you or your community would like to access but cannot?**

*Describe barriers or challenges that need to be addressed so that improvements can be made, to Federal and/or provincial programs/funding?*

- Programs need appropriate funding levels to be able to include activities for older children like afterschool programs and youth activities because mainstream afterschool programs often do not have much participation by Indigenous children so the Indigenous students do not get to interact in a culturally meaningful way with their peers.
  - There needs to be enough funding provided by the government to have the appropriate number of facilities in each province with enough spaces so Indigenous people living off-reserve can have access. Children are the future and families need affordable and available child care services.
  - Some communities have a Head Start in their area but it is an on-reserve Head Start and there is either not enough spaces to allow off-reserve children to participate or the off-reserve children are not considered welcome in the on-reserve program. It should not matter if a child who needs services is an on-reserve or off-reserve Indigenous person.
  - Funding needs to be in place to have the same school meal program for off-reserve students as many on-reserve students do. There are also other benefits that the on-reserve children can access that are currently unavailable to the off-reserve children.
  - There are many Indigenous children in foster-care (with the majority of them placed with non-Indigenous foster parents) that are in crisis and have no opportunity to engage in cultural activities with other Indigenous children. A holistic program needs to include these children so they have a culturally sensitive place to get the support they need and learn about their culture. This creates a sense of identity and belonging in children and leads to pride in their culture and self-confidence.
  - The operating hours of the programs are very limited to families who need services only throughout the regular work day. This is a barrier to those parents and guardians who may work shift work or hours outside of the regular 8am-5pm workday. This means even if seats are available at their local Head Start they still cannot access its services and programs.
  - Since Head Start is over 20 years old there needs to be a study of the data pertaining to the children who have gone through the program as many of those children would have graduated high school now or are fast approaching that milestone. In this way there could be a comparison of any correlations between participating in a Head Start program and increased educational success in the future.
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## General Needs:

### **1. What should Indigenous children learn or experience in early learning and child care programs?**

*What role should culture play in early learning and childcare?*

- Early learning and childcare should encompass all regular early learning practices as well as Indigenous traditions.
- Culture should be the most pressing matter with a focus on language development so traditional languages are not lost. Cultural knowledge creates pride and self-confidence in Indigenous children, which in turn creates more social awareness and assists in lowering suicide rates among Indigenous people.
- Language education is hard to maintain when it is not supported in the school system therefore language development is an “up-hill” battle.
- Early learning and childcare should include cultural activities with Elders as it is vital that they have an opportunity to pass on their knowledge to the future generations.
- There needs to be more “land based learning”, especially with language training as well as spiritual teachings.
- Under One Sky (Head Start Fredericton) developed an outdoor learning program as it is easier to teach language skills using examples in nature since traditional languages have words for things that exist in nature and not as many words for man-made items. This makes language training more effective for children.
- Programs should also include school readiness skills taught with the cultural knowledge activities.
- Cultural education needs to move beyond early child care and into schools, especially traditional language training.
- Indigenous history should be taught so children can learn who their ancestors were and understand that Indigenous people have a very long and rich history they should be proud of Indigenous history courses should be included in all levels of school education and be a mandatory course like other mainstream history courses. Students of all races should be required to take them and these courses need to be accurate and culturally sensitive.

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### **2. What should Indigenous parents and caregivers learn or gain from early learning and child care programs?**

- Programs should involve the entire family so they can assist families in learning how to engage in educational and play activities that benefit children and parents.
- Expectant mothers should also be able to access services to assist them before their children are born (e.g. nutrition workshops, parenting classes...).

- Parents should gain a sense of community and inclusion in the program. They should feel there is an open avenue to communicate their needs with program staff and a support system for them.
  - Not every parent has the same education or skill level in order to help their child learn and grow. Some parents may need more help than others. A successful program can adapt to those different needs and assist all levels of parents succeed in offering their children more than they knew how to offer in the beginning.
  - The program should provide support for parents so that their child's learning does not stop once they leave the program for the day and can continue on in the home setting.
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### **3. What does "quality" in early learning and child care mean to you?**

- Quality traditional language training activities and time with Elders in order to access traditional knowledge.
  - A safe caring environment for children and parents.
  - A happy place full of sharing that the children find engaging. Learning and pride in one's culture.
  - Adequate facilities that are licensed and meet a certain set standard.
  - Children and families are valued and treated in a culturally sensitive manner.
  - Parents are engaged in the program and activities. Parents are included in activities and information is readily available to them about what is occurring at the facility.
  - Knowledgeable Indigenous staff who are qualified, educated, compassionate and culturally aware.
  - Quality staff are compensated fairly with decent wages for the important work they do. Also realize that these workers can be injured during their duties and may be subject to verbal abuse by guardians so their work needs to be honoured.
  - A mechanism or protocol in which complaints and issues can be fairly addresses about the facility, staff, curriculum, etc....
  - Nutritious snacks and meals for children who also have an opportunity to participate in the planning of these meals so they can learn and practice nutritional education.
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## **THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

### **1. How will we know if an Indigenous early learning and child care program is successful? Are there meaningful ways to measure success for Indigenous children?**

- Facilitate engagement sessions with Indigenous communities to determine progress.
- Children feel proud to share their culture with others. A general raising of cultural awareness and sensitivity will follow.

- Children will be eager to attend the program daily. Children will show more engagement in school.
- Children exhibit a love of learning and learn more than their ABC's.
- Monitor enrolment and how many families return back to the program each year.
- Children meet regular mainstream educational guidelines.
- Kindergarten teachers often feel they can tell what children have had pre-school education by their actions. Therefore, survey teachers on this to gain insight.
- Survey parents and guardians regarding any differences they see in their children.
- Measure the highest education level achieved by past program participants to determine any correlations.
- If the program is successful children will be able to share their culture with others, which will increase other people's awareness.
- Use provincial assessments for child development to measure the child's developmental level.

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**2. Can you describe some successes and promising practices in Indigenous early learning and child care in your community? Suggestions on how we can build on these successes?**

- In NB there is one Head Start program for off-reserve people called Under One Sky. It has been very successful. Unfortunately this one facility cannot service everyone due to its location and size. There is a desperate need for additional funding for many more Head Start programs for off-reserve families across all areas of NB in both urban and rural settings.
  - Under One Sky (Head Start Fredericton) developed an outdoor learning program as it is easier to teach language skills using examples in nature since traditional languages have words for things that exist in nature and not as many words for man-made items. This is a successful activity but unfortunately is not available to many and thus needs to be duplicated across NB. To do this funding needs to be increased by the government.
  - Consistently including parents and Elders in the program works well and needs to continue.
  - The workshops for parents are of great benefit but more funding is needed to expand upon those.
  - A rating scale called E.C.E.R.S (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) exists that rates and measures child care facilities. This scale is not Aboriginal specific and developing an addendum for that scale for Indigenous facilities is very important.
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### **THEME 3: Planning for the future of Early Learning and Child Care**

#### **1. What does early learning and child care programs look like for Indigenous children?**

- It would include activities which facilitates children learning about their culture and being proud of who they are.
- Will be funded adequately so all off-reserve children have an opportunity to participate regardless of where they live or their socio-economic status.
- More “land-based learning” programs and schools continuing on with land-based learning activities as well as other culturally appropriate activities (e.g. traditional language training...).
- It would enable children to become independent.
- Programs would allow for off-reserve children to attend on-reserve programs in their area.
- A program available in many different areas of NB in both urban and rural settings.
- A program with flexible hours so those parents who work shift work could participate.
- A program flexible enough to provide short term respite care for new mothers and those who have children with disabilities or special needs so they can get some time for themselves. Also daycares just for babies staffed by older experienced staff and Elders.
- Elders working at the facilities.
- Facilities that offer affordable services and enough available seats.
- Community engaged facilities that offer wrap around services for families.
- Staff who can speak their traditional language fluidly.
- Children learning how to share their culture with others.
- Programs that are able to offer after-school programs for older children as well.
- Programs and staff that can addresses nutrition and housing issues with parents.
- Educational activities that are available for parents to learn proper child care skills to assist their child successfully in the home.
- Programs are easily accessible to all families regardless of their situation or socio-economic status.

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#### **2. What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the federal government and other partners?**

- The Federal government needs to show recognition of the importance of these programs to Indigenous families and support and fund them adequately.
- Government needs to be accountable and show their funding is adequate to meet the needs of these families.
- Government needs to provide funding, grants and loans to address issues.
- Government needs to expedite the process to get child care facilities licensed and opened in a timely manner.

- Indigenous communities and government need to work together on programs. Adequate care must be taken on both sides to make the space and time to build these relationships in a strong and fair way.
  - Initiatives and government programs need to be community driven from the beginning, not waiting to engage the communities at the end of the process when many decisions have already been made.
  - “We are not just askers of the funding, we are holders of the knowledge”.
  - Government needs to support Indigenous people in gaining the education to staff the programs for Indigenous children and families (e.g. grants, scholarships, etc....).
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### **3. What are your hopes, dreams and vision for Indigenous children and families?**

- Vibrant, thriving cultural experiences for children to grow up in and participate in.
  - Communities engaging in Indigenous cultural activities and festivals where all races are welcome and feel excited about participating. Communities becoming more aware of Indigenous culture and wanting to participate in such events.
  - Off-reserve families are recognised, accepted and included whether they are status or non-status.
  - Successful children becoming successful adults. Successful adults helping other adults.
  - Indigenous families being knowledgeable of their culture and being proud to share it with others. Keeping cultural aspects like traditional language alive for future generations.
  - Trauma informed care available to all. Helping children heal from past hurts and helping them learn to “step up” and claim their own identity proudly.
  - More options for older children like after school programs, youth programs, day camps, summer camps, etc.... in different areas of the province so everyone can participate in such events.
  - Government and Indigenous organizations (e.g. NBAPC) working together to engage in partnerships that lead to activities that will allow for the off-reserve community to access services and programs that will enrich their families. Adequate funding allotted by the government to make this possible across the entire province.
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### **4. If you had more funding from a community perspective for early learning and childcare, what would you do with it?**

- Each local area in NB to have a Head Start program providing services to families. Services and community centres for Indigenous off-reserve people available across all of NB.

- Invest in the programs so that many more children can attend. Ensure children get language training so they will be fluent in their traditional language as quickly as possible. Have a mechanism in place so this language training is continued past an early age to ensure it is maintained.
- Build a leadership institute that provides its own training programs for the staff, as well as both a child and adult language programs so all members of Indigenous families can become fluent in their traditional language. Create a world in which children communicate in their traditional language with their family and Elders.
- Affordable or no cost child care services so a family's socio-economic status does not affect their ability to participate.
- Programs for respite care for children so new mothers and those with children with disabilities and special needs can access short term child care to get time to recharge.
- Indigenous people trained to work at Indigenous facilities.
- Elders having a strong involvement in the programs for families. Promote Elder and youth engagement so young people can spend time and interact with Elders and gain access to their traditional historical knowledge.
- Health care nurses and other medical professionals to provide help, advice and services to families.
- Physical activity gym programs set up for a family's physical well-being, as well as nutritional education.

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## **5. Additional comments, thoughts, feedback:**

- There needs to be more Indigenous based books, stories and language tools throughout the education system.
- There needs to be culturally safe help and supports for those who have been abused.
- Government needs to take the suggestions and hopes expressed in these roundtables seriously.
- Need to look at the person as a whole in order to help them, refrain from breaking people down into smaller issues and making them deal with several different agencies to address them.
- It is productive to have these roundtables across the country, but more sessions across different areas in each province may be needed to get more people's feedback.
- It is important to realize that external environments can negate Indigenous pride. Therefore, all races need to become aware of and educated on Indigenous culture and history in order to stop this.

- The education system in Canada needs to be looked at and assessed so the things that are working within it are enhanced while those things that need to be changed are changed allowing room for new innovative ideas and practices.
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## **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*Newfoundland and Labrador Session  
July 5, 2017*

**Indigenous Early Learning  
& Child Care**

## **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

**Specific Needs:** Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities):

### **1. What is currently working well?**

- Desire to incorporate Indigenous resources
- Head start programs in Labrador are working well
- Early learning programs with no parent present works better than when a parent is present (sibling who had a parent present is not as advanced socially as the sibling who did not have the parent present)
- Daycare operator – do they teach early learning, they are not just babysitters
- ‘Fit as a Fiddle’ program teaches numbers, colours, and shapes. Parents are present during this event
- Outdoor programs are important e.g. Family Fun Day, visits in the communities
- Interactions with other children as socialization is important to function in the community
- Prenatal programs (ages 0-2)
  - Play group – drop in play
  - Physical education
  - Fire safety
  - Little chefs
  - Newfoundland Kitchen Party
  - Science
- Early programming and inclusion is important to the children
- In St. John’s, Operational Grant gave \$30,000 to provide meals
- Lessons with plants and cooking is currently working therefore more lessons should be provided
- Children based activities/themes – Let the children give ideas and work to include the idea (e.g. Child suggests fishing, include an activity showing how Indigenous children would fish)
- Transformational Learning.

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### **2. What needs to be improved?**

- Capacity
  - Issues with turnover in staff
  - Employees need to be properly trained in the specific programs
- The Federal Government needs to fund / facilitate programs for resources
- Programs and services need to be offered year round.

- Different communities have different cultures
  - Outdoor activities - It is important to know what works for all children
  - Parents work schedules– have activities available during evenings and weekends
  - Access
    - Programs and services need to be available in more locations therefore more people can attend
  - Cost
    - Provide more funds
    - The price of child care is too high for families to afford
  - Subsidy programs are only available to low income earners – the amounts specified make it difficult to qualify
  - Communication barriers create missed opportunities.
- 

**3. Is there an early learning and child care program or service that you or your community would like to access but cannot?**

*Describe barriers or challenges that need to be addressed so that improvements can be made, to Federal and/or provincial programs/funding?*

Barriers:

- Innovative programs have trouble getting funding due to lack of resources on the following:
  - How do I write a proposal?
  - How am I able to learn and apply for available funding?
  - What is required in a proposal?
  - Qalipu should hire individuals to write proposals and/or help members with writing proposals
- Communication
  - Programs and services that are offered are not well known to the public
- Programs and services in one community may not work in another community
- Funding should be available for people who suffer with addictions and mental health issues.

Challenges:

- Programs and services need to be available for adults in order to teach our children as well.
-

## **General Needs:**

### **1. What should Indigenous children learn or experience in early learning and child care programs?**

*What role should culture play in early learning and childcare?*

- Incorporate words with language i.e. matching games, place letters on blocks to create words and match to the identified word
  - Land based programs and learning
    - Fishing, plants, medicines
  - Important to connect to the land, i.e. collect plants and medicines
  - Lessons such as:
    - Start a fire, catching rabbit and fish, swimming, language, food, song, and dress
  - Programs should be for all children, Indigenous and non-Indigenous
  - Get the children to visit, interact with and learn from the Elders.
  - Play area with costume/dress
  - Basket weaving
  - Learning with fun & positivity
  - Learn traditional skills
  - History of our ancestors, good and bad history
  - How we look and identify as Indigenous is important to teach the younger children
  - Spirituality
  - Role-playing: educate our Indigenous children and others who need to relate to our Indigenous children
  - There should be youth programs available in all areas of province
- 

### **2. What should Indigenous parents and caregivers learn or gain from early learning and child care programs?**

- Past experiences are important, good or bad
- Parents should be part of the learning process
  - Should be involved in what the child is learning and learn along with them
- Educate our knowledge givers
- Parents would like to be aware of the needs in the area in which they live
- A program needs to be established for Indigenous parents and children
  - A weekend getaway learning the Indigenous culture
- Important to have men and women involved
- There should be groups teaching families
- Our current groups and programs can share what others are doing

- Incorporate innovative technology to teach the cultures
  - Language
    - Create an App to teach the verbal pronunciation of the language
    - First word booklet/pamphlet
    - Language booklets
  - Cookbooks.
- 

### **3. What does “quality” in early learning and child care mean to you?**

- Make sure the teachers are knowledgeable of the culture to teach the children
  - Are the children safe?
  - Are the children educated?
  - Government programs have assisted Early Child Education (ECE) Programs to hire a qualified individual
    - Set up levels based on how much the operator knows about Indigenous culture and have our program operators earn these levels based on their knowledge and incorporate the culture
  - Do our program operators have:
    - An Indigenous background
    - Some level of knowledge of the culture
    - Some culture or Indigenous courses in their educational background
  - Some child care providers are not equipped to handle some of the background differences of all children
    - Children have different needs due to disabilities and/or mental health
  - Indigenous individual issues are important
    - Health
    - Obesity
    - Diabetes
  - Professional development hours regarding Indigenous children for ECE workers
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## **THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

### **1. How will we know if an Indigenous early learning and child care program is successful?**

*Are there meaningful ways to measure success for Indigenous children?*

- Visible signs of cultural knowledge retention outside of childcare
- Children showing excitement and enthusiasm
- Parental participation and volunteering

- Attendance / continued attendance
  - Demonstrates an understanding
  - Asking questions and wanting to extend on the learning
  - Evidence of learning
  - Being discussed outside the classroom i.e. at home
  - Need more of a partnership with the Qalipu Community
  - Participation and interest level of the children
  - Documentation i.e. photos of the activities
  - Public interest / social media
  - Long term indicators such as staying in school, participating in cultural activities outside of childcare
  - Parent feedback
  - Make the program available to all children
  - Children bringing what they have learning home with them
  - Amount of interest in the programs
  - Do a family survey i.e. positive feedback
  - Set positive guidelines and reassess every six months
  - Both children and parents are learning
  - Ability to socialize
  - Preparedness for entry into school system
  - Resources and funding
  - Educated trainer / provider
  - Children showing engagement and happiness
  - Did the program create community connections?
  - If the children show knowledge of traditional skills.
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**2. Can you describe some successes and promising practices in Indigenous early learning and child care in your community? Suggestions on how we can build on these successes?**

- Inviting participants to the daycare for singing for events such as National Child Day
- Aboriginal Day activities
- Native Friendship Centre (St. John's and St. George's)
- Turtle Island Daycare
- Aboriginal Resource Centers
- Teaching Language
- Traditional skills and cultural activities
- Go to Pow Wows
- Good relationships and interactions with others
- Child/youth groups
- Going out in the community to meet Elders; interaction and knowledge is valuable

- Craft program, enables children to make Indigenous crafts and learn the teachings
- Mini pow-wows for winter carnival
- Drumming and crafts at resource centers
- Putting culture into the school curriculums
- Healthy living and nutrition
- Workshops
- Family Mawio'mi / camp
- Indigenous programs and youth programs
- Indigenous childcare program in St. John's (SJNFC).

### **Suggestions on how we can build on these successes?**

- More involvement, work with support groups, interaction between youth and Elders
- Reach out to more people through social media
- Advertising
- More funding and communication
- Sharing and networking success stories
  - Expanding the capacity to grow.

## **THEME 3: Planning for the future of Early Learning and Child Care**

### **1. What does early learning and child care programs look like for Indigenous children?**

- All inclusive
  - Cultural pictures
  - Dress
  - Music
- Culturally specific
- Children learn the language
- Activities on the land
  - Hunting and fishing
- Children are learning the culture, beliefs, values, and language
- Children are comfortable being Mi'kmaq and are accepted in the community
- Indigenous Mi'kmaq Pre-k and K-12 Immersion
- Mi'kmaq Daycare, create specific program with a parent program incorporated
- Programs are in place
- More trained Indigenous childcare / early teachers
- Affordable child care/ Affordable daycare
- Qualified staff with decent pay

- Holistic approach
- More self awareness, feels natural
- Available and accessible
- Properly resourced
- Adequate funding
- Affordable sports
- Easier access to extracurricular activities
- More traditional crafts
  - Sewing and knitting
- Children and families know more because they are being taught to speak and understand more of the Mi'kmaq culture
- There is more practising and sharing of the knowledge
- Community acceptance
  - In schools
  - Among non-Indigenous people
  - By general public
- Unlimited funds.

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**2. What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the federal government and other partners?**

- More connected in knowing the needs of the community
  - Good working relationships
- Easier access to funds
  - Know where the resources are to get the funding
- Federal government
  - Funding
  - Policy development and flexibility
  - Communication improvement
- Communities and other partners
  - Provide resource people e.g. Elders
  - Volunteer base
  - Informed programming and planning
  - Moral support
  - In-Kind cash contributions
- Provide financial support
- Awareness of programs and services available
- Encourage involvement
- Provide wisdom

- Provide the location for programs
  - Band and leaders should be strong and unified
  - Affordability to families and support
  - Sponsorship from business community
  - Local involvement and support
  - Funding
  - Community sponsors
  - Buildings
  - Facilities close enough to be accessible
  - Resources for crafts, programs, camping, fishing, workshops
  - Finances
  - New funding arrangements
  - Ideal collaboration or partnerships
  - Funding to grassroots
    - Simplified application processes
  - Community “proposal” person
  - Meeting need to be diverse in each community.
- 

### **3. What are your hopes, dreams and vision for Indigenous children and families?**

- Know Heritage
  - Live, respect and appreciate it
- Know the language/Children speaking Indigenous language
- Have language taught from early years
- Families speaking Indigenous languages
- Confidence in identity
- Children can pass on the culture to future generations
- Wellness
- Courses within the school system/preschool
- Incorporation of cultural practises in home and lifestyle
- Financial independence
- Healthy communities
- Healing from the past
- Balance of modern and traditional practices
- Indigenous inclusion in mainstream social parameters
- Aboriginal voices to be heard
- Safe playgrounds
- Proud of their culture
- Use traditional medicines

- Community garden
  - Education is key, assistance is needed
  - Support for people dealing with obesity and diabetes
  - More education for families with illnesses, special needs and disabilities
  - Information and updates on programs and services
    - Awareness
  - Clean water
  - Variety of programs for all ages
  - All children can afford to attend programs
  - Youth have the necessary skills/knowledge to be ready to take over from the Elders
    - Be ready to teach for future generations
  - Acceptance among all
  - Where we came from, who we are
  - Our history, our future
  - Know our culture and resources to get to know our culture
  - Choices
  - Culture lessons
  - Land based lessons
  - Strong environmental connection
  - “Charter schools” in every community
  - Good partnerships
  - Funding for programs right to the families
  - Affordable childcare for all
  - Meeting needs of diverse children.
- 

**4. If you had more funding from a community perspective for early learning and childcare, what would you do with it?**

- More programs
  - Language
  - Living off the land
  - Crafts
  - Cooking
- Education
  - Ancestry
  - Detailed curriculum
  - Brought into the school system
- Build or maintain more spaces
- Hire more staff
- Culturally appropriate training
  - Delivery from Indigenous organizations

- Invest to create a Legacy Fund
  - Take better care of Elders
  - Indigenous community center with programs
  - Support groups for parents and children with special needs/disabilities
  - Build a new child care facility
  - Youth center for teenagers
  - Assist with job opportunities
  - Implement all programs available in our area
  - More family oriented programs
  - Youth exchange programs
  - Senior programs
    - Visit nursing homes
    - Music and song
    - Crafts
    - Home visits
    - Senior socials
  - Money for families for
    - Childcare
    - Housing
    - Centers
    - Daycares
    - Education
    - Post-secondary
  - Job creations
  - Job training and funding
  - Indigenous unions
  - Quality housing
  - Tax breaks
  - Special Needs funding
  - Addictions funding
  - Mental Health funding
  - Community Gardens
  - Expand programs further and create new programs
  - Keep obtaining more funding
  - See previous answers to questions 1-3.
-

## 5. Additional comments, thoughts, feedback:

- Accountability for your history books
  - History of our people taught in schools
  - Laws for anti-bullying and violence against women can be adopted to meet the needs for various agencies.
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## **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Session  
June 14, 2017*

**Indigenous Early Learning  
& Child Care**

*Prepared by:  
Theresa Veniott, Report Recorder*

## **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

**Specific Needs:** Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities):

### **1. What is currently working well?**

- Head Start is working well because it's inclusive and it's across Canada
  - Tapping into current local activities and locations
  - Child care in Sydney, NS is available and accessible, but not affordable
  - PEI child care is working well, they are learning their language, learning their culture
  - Native Council of NS is working well for us and Provincial programs are working to help.
- 

### **2. What needs to be improved?**

- Mi'kmaq immersion off reserve in day cares
- Improved language programs
- More Head Start programs happening, it is not care, but it is culturally safe for children
- Increase in Head Start funding
- Culturally supportive training for day care workers
- Culturally safe daycares
- Mi'kmaq workers needed in day cares
- No spots available for us (children off-reserve)
- Need more Mi'kmaq language in child care
- Needs to be affordable
- Problems with non traditional work hours
- Shiftwork day care
- Charges are high for needing after hours child care
- Less charge for late fees / or no late charges for late pick
- Transportation assistance to programs
- Culturally safe spaces for children
- Funding
- Cultural camps for families
- Day care sick policies be developed
- Daycare food issues
- Children's special needs not always met at the day care
- More day care for infants-more infant spaces
- Funding subsidy information available and promoted
- Language
- Cultural activities at day cares
- Daycare funding for culture for on and off reserve daycares

- Subsidy reviews
- Criminal checks be done more than once a year
- Accessibility to services or daycare modification for children with special needs
- Encourage Elders to participate at daycares
- Create childcare spaces so that youth/teens are able to receive supports
- Lack of infant care
- Child care is expensive when you have an entry level job
- Lack of partnership with on reserve programs sometimes means lack of service
- Include the knowledge keepers
- Increase in child program funding from government
- Variety of Aboriginal language programs/teachings should be offered
- Address language and needs at the daycare
- Look at the age of daycare acceptance
- Shiftwork problems
- Off and on reserve relationship building to help the children
- Revision to the subsidy amounts
- More promotion/communication of what is available for programs
- There may be access, but no spots available
- We are isolated, we need to increase the relationship with Indigenous and non Indigenous Peoples
- There is a lack of trained staff
- There is a lack of compensation to culturally trained staff.

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**3. Is there an early learning and child care program or service that you or your community would like to access but cannot?**

*Describe barriers or challenges that need to be addressed so that improvements can be made, to Federal and/or provincial programs/funding?*

- Lack of programs completely for off reserve in our areas
  - Lack of trained and skilled staff and lack of good compensation to those who are trained
  - No access is available
  - Can't access on-reserve programs that may be closer than travel to nearest off-reserve programs.
  - Access to on-reserve programs would be helpful for off-reserve communities
  - Daycare, but no aboriginal access
  - NCNS chat and play group is great but there is a transportation issue
  - Transportation is an issue to everyone
  - No Aboriginal Head Start near most of us to access
  - In PEI there is one central Head Start and transportation is an issue
-

- Subsidy eligibility should be changed
- Autism workers are lacking
- Special needs children needs are not being met
- Assistance for parents who perform home care for family members which means the children are not able to access programs
- The perception that carries forward from residential schools stops people from accessing programs because there is a lot of trust issues
- No outreach services for our families under Head Start
- There is a need for more funding
- There is a need for access to mental health supports for child/youth and family
- Need low income housing assistance
- Need more affordable after hour child care. 2.00 per minute is outrageous
- Need grandparent/elder support because they are helping the parents to raise children
- Support for family members who are raising children
- Access to daycare may hinder access in relation to at home caregivers
- Location issues to access
- NCNS funding hasn't increased to assist with the increased need
- Lack of Aboriginal supports in the communities
- More spaces/staff for infants in daycare as well as special needs children
- Reduce barriers of off and on reserve child care
- Collaboration in services
- Families age out from Health Canada programs, there needs to be supports after a child is over 6
- Need outreach programs
- Not comfortable in group settings
- Not all people on reserve know about the NCNS and the off reserve programs that are available
- Needs to be policy changes in educational settings, autistic children, all children do not fit in the box
- Funding through mental health for children.

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## **THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

### **1. How will we know if an Indigenous early learning and child care program is successful?**

- When children know and are proud of who they are
- When children are practicing traditions and customs
- Speaking the language
- When they come home and are talking the talk and walking the walk

- When they know who they are
  - Learning the culture
  - Meeting their milestones
  - When Children actively present their culture and learn their sense of identity.
- 

## **2. Are there meaningful ways to measure success for Indigenous children?**

- Evaluation of the child and family by family –self evaluation
- The smile on their face
- Seeing projects completed
- Entering school prepared
- Meeting milestones
- This depends on the individual child.

## **3. Can you describe some successes and promising practices in Indigenous early learning and child care in your community? Suggestions on how we can build on these successes?**

- Aboriginal Head Start is a demonstrated success
  - Don't reinvent what is working just make more of it available (AHSUNC)
  - Individual self esteem that is present and noticeable
  - Integrated learning
  - It's all about their home life and addressing issues and barriers
  - Services should be provided to the whole family
  - Standardized ways for all children don't work
  - More services for all children
  - Look at enhancing pieces that are lacking in areas
- 

## **THEME 3: Planning for the future of Early Learning and Child Care**

### **1. What does early learning and child care programs look like for Indigenous children in an ideal world, 10 years from now?**

- Culturally friendly
- More programs
- Accessible to all
- Free
- Low costs
- Culturally friendly
- No limits in relation to on and off reserve children
- Elder participation

- Have wik'wams for camps to build again and again
  - Supported by the community and a lot of involvement from the community
  - Partnering with other programs and services
  - Programs for parents
  - Have cultural camps in our communities.
- 

## **2. What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the federal government and other partners?**

- More Indigenous communities looking after the programs
  - Work better together on and off reserve
  - More funding
  - Less federal government involvement
  - Elder involvement
  - Spiritual content and assistance with curriculum
  - Funded by government but delivered by the community
  - Indigenous leaders to have a bigger role to get the funding secured
  - Save our lands and environments and teach our children.
- 

## **3. What are your hopes, dreams and vision for Indigenous children and families in an ideal world 10 years from now?**

- That our kids will be strong and proud and have a strong vision
- Happy, strong, healthy families
- For people to be proud of who they are
- For my child not to be embarrassed of who she is
- More schools can teach our culture and daycares and languages
- Indigenous staff available
- Revisit traditional beliefs
- That our children will be the educators
- Not be held back because of your nationality
- Freedom to be who we are, and knowing who we are
- Envision the teaching systems
- We learn visually
- More public education
- Equality
- No more white privilege
- They don't have to fight for their sense of self
- Self identification acceptance
- Reduce barriers in education
- Comfortably access programs

- More comfort in accessing centers.
- 

**4. If you had more funding from a community perspective for early learning and childcare, what would you do with it?**

- Teach language
  - More fluent in the language
  - Oral tradition is important.
  - More front line workers
  - People want to work with native organizations or mental health workers
  - Hire mental health workers who are Indigenous
  - Enhance preventative services
  - Have more positive feedback
  - Daycare, more daycare sites, more staff and do home visits, play therapists, language people
  - Literature to share with everyone
  - Hire more traditionalists to help with children
  - The importance of traditions be taught, natural life, natural medicines
  - Fund more education on the history of Indigenous peoples
  - Need Indigenous people who outreach with us to help to direct us in programs
  - Home supports
  - Home base for us all, we need a building
  - Actual building for a base and have programs to develop the next 10 years
  - Educate government and the workers on the culture
  - More educational information available
  - Some staff at daycares aren't actually interacting with the children
  - Sometimes parents over look children's issues
  - More consultation with daycare on children with the parents
  - Important to have Indigenous teachers and staff
  - It's not about learning from books, but from people who have lived it
- 





# **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*Ontario Session | August 10, 2017*

## **Indigenous Early Learning & Child Care**

*Prepared by:  
Rae Ratslef, Raincoast Ventures Ltd., Report Recorder*

## **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

**Specific Needs:** Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities):

### **1. What is currently working well?**

- Seeing the focus on the whole child
- Opportunities for preschool socialization
- Culture specialists support programs
- Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (OICC) has an Inuit focus with a full continuum of services and support from cultural specialties and Elders; its programming is rooted in Inuit values and incorporates traditional foods, games, customs and songs
- Parenting support is important
- Opportunities for socialization in preparation for entry into mainstream school
- Incorporating language, song, teaching, and reintroduction of cultural elements very early on with the bridging program from infancy to K-4
- Getting children comfortably aware of self
- Wabano Centre has Elders teaching traditional crafts but does not have an Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) program
- Continuum of the scope – having programming that starts from pregnancy, 18 months, toddler, pre-school, and that is offered morning and afternoon and evenings/weekends/day – range of availability of the program is beneficial.

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### **2. What needs to be improved?**

- A better transition to mainstream school entry and the expectation of what happens when children leave the programs – there is a divide between the academic/intellectual approach vs. the whole child approach
- More Indigenous programs and services that are culturally specific
- More licensed spaces are needed – existing programs and services have long wait lists
- Trained early childhood educators, specific to Indigenous cultures
- Long term flexible funding
- Many early learning education provincial program requirements are contradictory to cultural traditions – there is need for more flexibility
- Support is needed to develop funding proposals
- Better caregiver qualifications
- Improved cultural awareness of the caregiver

- Developing standards that are not mainstream and that are more culturally sensitive
- There is no AHSUNC at Wabano and we do not know where to refer children to
- Funding is needed to create more seats for children to attend programs
- Having more knowledge about different resources outside of Wabano – being more connected to others
- Increased supports for children who have special needs, e.g. hearing disabilities
- More funding to hire support staff so that quality care can be offered – currently the number of participants greatly outnumbers the staff
- Funding to employ Indigenous language instructors
- Inability to support cultural learnings, or to access materials needed that are land-based to teach about land based activities in northern Inuit communities
- There are not enough Elders available – Elders who come to town for medical reasons could volunteer to teach the children; it could be therapeutic for them to be around children; the Elder escorts could also volunteer
- Opportunities for professional development built into the workday
- Relief is needed for cultural teachers, e.g. there is only one person on staff who can speak Inuktitut – there are no apprenticeship programs or volunteer programs in place
- More culturally specific Indigenous early learning programs
- More trained early childhood education staff with knowledge of Indigenous cultures
- Increased communications and meetings between organizations.

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**3. Is there an early learning and child care program or service that you or your community would like to access but cannot?**

*Describe barriers or challenges that need to be addressed so that improvements can be made to Federal and/or provincial programs/funding?*

- In Kingston area there is not an AHSUNC program; there is need for access to AHSUNC for children that are not on reserve
  - Indigenous Family Drop-in Centres – operating services that are well rounded and offered on weekends, evenings, weekday – sometime the timing of a program is a barrier for working parents
  - Transportation to and from programs is often a barrier
  - There is need for access to more cultural camps in the summer and during spring break
  - Places for children are usually full to capacity and Band members are given first priority
  - Too much First Nations focus in the Elders
  - Indigenous curriculum is needed in schools.
-

## **General Needs:**

### **1. What should Indigenous children learn or experience in early learning and child care programs?**

*What role should culture play in early learning and childcare?*

- Indigenous language
- Cultural ways and teachings
- Games, songs, naming practices, throat singing, story telling
- Elders and the strength in Elders
- On the land traditional ways
- Sense of pride in culture and who they are
- Culture should play the biggest possible part
- Culture should be introduced, reintroduced and reinforced from the start and throughout the programming
- Culture should be the core of the framework and needs to be changeable for Inuit, Mohawk, etc.
- Early introduction of math, sciences, Indigenous languages and teachings and art
- Getting the child comfortable with who they are
- Elders participating so that the young are giving back to the old
- Reintegrate culture as medicine
- Traditional foods and the resources that are needed to make them available
- Inuit and Métis cultures are forgotten
- Mainstream curriculum should teach non-Indigenous children about Indigenous ways of life
- Empower parents – they are struggling day-to-day and don't have the energy to do this; one option is a parent/teacher learning circle of success
- Culture should guide the framework.

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### **2. What should Indigenous parents and caregivers learn or gain from early learning and child care programs?**

- If there is a generational skip, parents may need to learn/relearn culture and traditions along with their children
- Language
- Valuing their role as parents as first teachers
- That their culture is valued
- The first five years of life are critical to the child's life in terms of brain development and learning language – it provides a good foundation for life if the proper investment is made

- Residential school survivors lost their ability to parent – teach them how to parent again and that there is no shame in having lost that along the way
  - Involve parents in the program development so that they feel like they have a voice in a cooperative approach – this will set the ground for building trust between government and Indigenous communities
  - Being empowered
  - Resources to help them deal with their daily struggles
  - Much of the cultural programming is specific to First Nations; there is need for Inuit and Métis specific programming
  - Children having their basic needs met so that they are confident and feel they can participate in school
  - The role of men and women in parenting traditionally
  - Teaching people how to parent
  - Many parents want to learn their language and have lost that – resources are needed for more language teachers
  - Healing from intergenerational trauma
  - Setting clear expectations
  - How to cook traditional foods
  - Use YouTube/podcasts to teach languages
  - Teaching men the value in education and the importance of taking education more seriously because it impacts on their kids and how they interact in the economy.
- 

### **3. What does “quality” in early learning and child care mean to you?**

- Loving, supportive staff
- Programs that value cultural ways
- Elders and community involvement
- Whole teachings and authentic teaching
- Opportunities for risk taking – kids are “bubble wrapped” because of provincial legislation
- Taking early learning teachings onto the land
- Rooted in traditional value systems
- Support community
- Build capacity, language and culture
- School does not provide sufficient education and cultural sensitivity – it is damaging to a child’s self-esteem; we need to give them a fair start with screening processes and criteria that need to be met by the caregiver who does not have to be Indigenous but needs to be sensitive and with the appropriate training/education
- Métis specific programming is needed

- Learn about other cultures
  - Funding is needed – it translates into quality of care; if the funding is delegated appropriately; there needs to be measures to make sure the funding is getting to where it's supposed to go.
- 

## **THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

### **1. How will we know if an Indigenous early learning and child care program is successful?**

*Are there meaningful ways to measure success for Indigenous children?*

- There will be really good collaboration between children, parents and schools
  - When the children work on projects, e.g. mini books/essay, they will reflect the teachings they have learned about their culture
  - Standardized testing will be used to measure the success
  - Daily agenda is provided so that parents know how their children are doing
  - Increase communication and receive positive feedback from the parents to support good collaboration
  - When children are correcting each other in terms of traditional practices
  - Bring in different Elders, e.g. Algonquin and Mohawk, and then quiz the children afterwards on each other's culture
  - When children are passing along traditional knowledge peer-to-peer
  - Language is being used
  - Culturally appropriate measuring tools are in place
  - Investing into research into an Indigenous way of life – there is very little statistical information currently available
  - Institute a longitudinal study to see if it is successful over a long period of time
  - Ask the kids – are they feeling more confident? In place? Like they belong?
  - Ask the parents – do they see a change in their children?
  - “Success” would be specific to the Indigenous people – you need to develop the meaning of success through research, e.g. many children were diagnosed with language delay but their skillset to perform physical things were much higher than mainstream
  - When children say they want to be a teacher when they grow up.
-

## **2. Can you describe some successes and promising practices in Indigenous early learning and child care in your community? Suggestions on how we can build on these successes?**

- Institute it now and make language mandatory in the early learning education realm – it has to be continued on every single level of education; at the same time involve families – teaching language has to be done at home too
  - Make language programs available for everyone who is interested
  - Enhanced cultural program
  - Set up a pen pal system between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children to share their realities
  - Have an exchange program for children to go north or where their ancestors are from – funding is needed for this meaningful exchange
  - Strong communities that instil confidence in the parents that they can pass onto the kids
  - In Nunavut they use only Inuktitut until Grade 5 and then they learn in English
  - Incorporating language into the curriculum.
- 

### **THEME 3: Planning for the future of Early Learning and Child Care**

#### **1. What does early learning and child care programs look like for Indigenous children?**

- Children who know how to live off of the land; know that hunting is about survival
  - Aware of proper cultural practices across cultures and respecting them
  - Learning to speak their mother tongues, and parents too
  - Indigenous history training should be in curriculum for schools across the board
  - Focus on hands on skills, e.g. learning to build a drum, canoe, talking stick, igloo, etc. experiential learning that children remember and learn from
  - Curriculum changed
  - Making job opportunities available, e.g. taking someone from the community, funding their training, and have them sign a contract to return and teach in their community
  - There are more job opportunities that speak English and French – why do we have to sacrifice?
  - Get Elders in to teach all the languages and instead of letting the children play games, make them watch APTN every night; encourage the teachings at home.
-

## **2. What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the federal government and other partners?**

- Better communication between the different groups
  - Understanding and respect for different cultures and knowing that different tools are used in different cultures, e.g. rifles are a strong part of Inuit culture but special permission is needed to use them in Kindergarten
  - Trained educators to go into early childhood education and then give back to their community by returning home to work
  - Make a mandatory component for education and health care to receive culturally appropriate training – we could learn a lot from BC and from New Zealand as well
  - Sharing each other's cultural orientation between agencies and communities, e.g. Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre sharing its internal practices with others such as Wabano
  - More communication and pathways so that everyone feels more involved.
- 

## **3. What are your hopes, dreams and vision for Indigenous children and families?**

- Indigenous children and families being proud of their culture
  - If our children do not have to have brainstorming sessions like this in future
  - Equal opportunities for Indigenous children
  - Educating our youth so that they can teach others and impart others
  - Ability to dream and aspire
  - Pride
  - Knowledgeable
  - Comfortable in their own skin
  - Do not feel like a burden on society and government
  - Change the mindset of society over time
  - Learn from one another
  - Be accountable and responsible within the community
  - Have children who are healthy and happy.
-

**4. If you had more funding from a community perspective for early learning and childcare, what would you do with it?**

- Indigenous language training year round
  - Sending families onto their ancestral lands to learn how they lived
  - Teaching about traditional practices and traditional foods
  - Culture is a priority, e.g. dancing/singing
  - Create a job – especially for urban Indigenous people – bring them back to the community to provide the children with hands on learning
  - Employ someone to provide the tools and supplies and resources needed to implement culturally appropriate training
  - Encourage community members to become teachers and give back to their community – make a program specifically for interested community members, e.g. make a number of volunteer hours mandatory to support existing programs
  - Pay Elders, they need transportation and to eat – out of common decency and respect pay them something
  - Hire those with extensive cultural knowledge and who can teach it to the children.
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## **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*Quebec Session | July 27, 2017*

### **Indigenous Early Learning & Child Care**

*Prepared by:*

*Carrie Peacock, Raincoast Ventures Ltd., Report Recorder*

## **THEME 1: Early Learning and Child Care Needs – Current Federal Programs – Strengths, Benefits and Areas for Improvement**

**Specific Needs:** Thinking about existing federal programs, services and supports (e.g. First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve, Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities):

### **1. What is currently working well?**

- We do not have access to programs
- Could we ask for this in a town like Sherbrooke,? Could we do a big daycare?
- In Trois-Rivieres there is a Friendship Centre - it is some distance from the daycare; they want another daycare
- Native people need a place where they can get all the information they need
- It is helpful to have a centre where people can share culture, and do activities; a place where people can learn to bead, sew and share knowledge
- There are many communities in remote locations; they need schools but do not have the financial resources to do so
- Daycares will take a certain percentage of native children – they leave out the Métis children
- Early learning and child care needs to be to available in our community.

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### **2. What needs to be improved?**

- There are no programs to improve
- Governments are not listening to our needs
- Government does not recognize Métis people in the province of Quebec
- Nothing is moving forward
- In and around Gatineau, there are no programs
- Arrange for Elders from different ethnic groups should share stories with children; they have so much knowledge to share; sharing knowledge gives Elders a sense of purpose
- For 15 minutes a day, culture could be taught to kindergarten and elementary school children; this would create a snowball effect when students share what they have learned with their parents; talking about culture with their families could revitalize an interest in cultural family activities.
- Find competent people to teach the children culture
- In Quebec, services are often refused to the Métis people
- In Quebec we need to educate provincial government; they do not recognize anyone with native ancestry and do not recognize status natives
- Clarification is needed on how to identify a native person in QC
- There may be some grants available – Métis people need to be acknowledged
- We need to share stories with our children; when you tell a bedtime story, the stories live

with them forever

- To develop a child's dexterity, teach them how to make necklaces or bracelets
- A Métis child could learn about culture at day care
- Children should learn how to make dream catchers
- Integrating children of different ethnicity groups at day cares would be useful; each child could share a bit about their culture every day; this would promote interest in each other's cultures and would support open-mindedness
- Children from different ethnic groups have different instruments, songs, and stories they can share with their peers
- Learning to sing "Happy Birthday" in Algonquin or other languages would be helpful
- It is important to maintain contact with reserves:
  - Field trips to reserves would be beneficial
  - Urban children could learn about on-reserve children
  - On-reserve children could come to town to visit urban children
- Designate "traditional teachers" for young people; children could be learning lessons in a traditional language
- Children need a place where they can learn traditions, customs, and live with different ethnic groups
- Qualified teachers could be expensive
- Mixing children of different ethnicities and backgrounds prevents enabling "hate" between status and non-status people
- Respect of the land and languages is important

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**3. Is there an early learning and child care program or service that you or your community would like to access but cannot?**

*Describe barriers or challenges that need to be addressed so that improvements can be made, to Federal and/or Provincial programs/funding?*

- We are not aware of any programs in the province of Quebec
- We cannot answer this question – there are none
- We know that culture and language programs would help strengthen personal identities of people
- Early childhood centres do not offer languages relevant to Métis people
- Barriers and racism impact Métis people; we get rejected by non-Indigenous and Indigenous people, despite working together for years
- Residential schools left many citizens with identity issues
- Children and youth should have contact with traditional language, culture and activities (i.e. singing, dancing, drumming, ceremonies)
- It is important to establish and maintain a connection with culture and the language, then incorporate it into every school curriculum

- I started trapping when I was young; children need to learn culture from an early age; for example, a 20-year old person cannot learn to get used to the sights and smells of hunting
  - Schools should enable children to be absent to connect with their culture; for example, a boy who leaves school to go hunting for a week with his father should not be punished for being absent
  - Traditional learning should be offered at early learning centres
  - It is important to teach children to prepare traditional meals
  - Grandparents can teach children a lot about culture
  - Help daycares build and maintain Métis culture.
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### **General Needs:**

#### **1. What should Indigenous children learn or experience in early learning and child care programs?**

*What role should culture play in early learning and childcare?*

- We should have people who have already learned the language, available to teach or participate early learning and child care programs
  - We need to know our own culture before trying to teach it to children
  - Sharing legends with children is important and intriguing; lessons shared in legends are often remembered best
  - Elders transmit legends and teach culture well
  - Young children need to learn about the seven sacred teachings, and the seven grandfathers.
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#### **2. What should Indigenous parents and caregivers learn or gain from early learning and child care programs?**

- We need to find a way to remove our fears; when we were young, native children were often ridiculed or punished for acting “native”
- Many of our grandparents learned to hide their Métis heritage; we need to rejuvenate it
- A new legend could be shared with children each week; parents should be informed a week in advance of the legends children will be learning and what key messages to support at home
- Learning traditional activities can encourage Indigenous children to be proud of their ancestry
- Children should be encouraged to play games in Algonquin, as it is the basis of many traditional languages
- Education begins with the parents; they should watch native television programs, and encourage their children to do the same

- Many children are too preoccupied with computer games – the legalization of marijuana will have further impacts on the youth, society and our future generations
  - Many Métis children were raised not knowing they were Métis; those of us who knew, hid our ancestry
  - We need to be proud to be native, and learn how to handle criticism and disrespect
- 

### **3. What does “quality” in early learning and child care mean to you?**

- Start by teaching children a traditional language
  - The best age for learning is 0-6 years
  - The facilitator of children’s programs should be a teacher
  - We need to teach children how to have a small campfire without burning down the province
  - Grandparents could help teach the children; children should be shown images of traditional cultural activities
  - I know of a class that spent an afternoon with a Métis grandmother learning about traditional plants; the children enjoyed this
  - Educated and knowledgeable Elders are often in “high demand”; care is needed to not confuse an Elder’s western knowledge with traditional knowledge
  - Teachings need to have an impact on children
  - Lessons need to be delivered to children with love and care.
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## **THEME 2: Successes and Promising Practices**

### **1. How will we know if an Indigenous early learning and child care program is successful?**

*Are there meaningful ways to measure success for Indigenous children?*

- A successful program leaves young people keen to share their knowledge and crafts learned at workshops (i.e. drumming, dancing, beading)
- If a child is taught to dance and he shares it with others - that is success
- Many teens seek to identify themselves; encourage them to be proud of their ancestry
- For years, ancestors hid their culture for fear they would look foolish
- Start opening ourselves to other cultures and be attentive
- If a child care centre is opened for Métis children, others should be welcomed
- What little culture we remember, should be shared; children who experienced the “Little Natives” program, now have families in the community
- Children can learn from their families and aunts and are proud of their achievements

- If my son teaches his son and he teaches his son – this is success in my view
  - Adults must be involved; without seeking the information you will not be able to support their knowledge
  - Children dance at pow-wows but do not understand why
  - At night, when there are fires we need to join in
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**2. Can you describe some successes and promising practices in Indigenous early learning and child care in your community? Suggestions on how we can build on these successes?**

- Ensure that Elders are participating and the focus of ceremonies
  - Parents should not neglect their children; include them in activities
  - Teach children to be kind, love and respect each other (i.e. family and friends)
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**THEME 3: Planning for the future of Early Learning and Child Care**

**1. What does early learning and child care programs look like for Indigenous children?**

- Access to nature is an important part of culture
  - Many Métis people live in towns; programs could be taught near parks or a forest to provide children with the important access to nature
  - First Nations' Elders are the guardians of many traditions; they know what the ancestors did
  - First Nations carry the knowledge of traditions – we should seek knowledge from them.
  - Government makes us believe that Métis people are non-Indigenous people
  - It is scary to think it could take ten years to see a change; this could happen quickly with the right approach
  - The ideal early learning and child care program must be close to nature
  - Early learning and child care programs should have access to a forest for children to walk it and learn about plants
  - Children should be taught at an early age to rejuvenate themselves by returning to the land
  - We could develop a joint program for native and Métis children
  - Speak with the Elders and invite them to transmit their knowledge
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## **2. What roles are played by Indigenous communities, the federal government and other partners?**

- Government should recognize our needs of Indigenous/Metis people in Quebec
  - There are many problems in Quebec, including a lack of recognition of Métis people
  - We need an organization to provide information on funding available to help build child care services
  - An organization could bring communities together and cultivate inter-community links
  - Without funding we cannot do anything; there is division between Métis and others; we need to establish links to move forward together
  - Consider the well-being of our “people” as a whole, rather than the well-being of individuals
  - Métis people could stand together and create links with others
  - In Quebec there are 26,000 recognized Métis citizens
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## **3. What are your hopes, dreams and vision for Indigenous children and families?**

- We want to grow up to be autonomous, independent and take care of themselves
  - Children need role models and mentors
  - We want people to live in harmony, not judge one another
  - Encourage children to treat people like we did traditionally
  - A Métis citizen cannot be a model for Algonquin or Mi'kmaq person; youth need appropriate models to follow
  - Children need activities that promote self-confidence
  - People need to understand the “cyclical vision”; every person is equally important and everyone has a role
  - Consider the well-being of the community; encourage children to attend university
  - Children need to learn how to avoid arguments from lasting too long
  - Fix gaps between Métis, non-natives and natives
  - Government’s recognition of natives is critical
  - All nations need to learn to walk together and stop fighting
  - Unity is important
  - There should be a treaty between nations; a commitment is needed to “stop stabbing each other in the backs” to enable us all to progress.
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#### **4. If you had more funding from a community perspective for early learning and childcare, what would you do with it?**

- Create a huge centre with services for children of all ages:
    - Offer early childhood activities, cultural activities, medical services, and Elders programs
    - Centres should be large in bigger communities like Sherbrooke or Maniwaki, and smaller in smaller communities
    - Provide access to nature
    - Provide a way to bring people to the centre
  - We need more daycares, more early childhood centres and more community centres
  - More than one government-funded centre is needed, where Elders can share their knowledge and teach others.
  - A program is needed to provide access to food:
    - So many children are malnourished; some go a whole day without eating
    - Feed children who show up to daycare or school with empty stomachs
    - Provide sandwiches to children, as many may not have anything to eat when they get home
  - Battered women need to be protected and need somewhere to go; many have to return home and get beaten again, continuing the circle of abuse
  - Start working cooperatively with reserves - create access to centres for people living off-reserves and provide access for Métis children
  - Create mixed daycares for natives and non-natives; this will reduce the fighting
  - So many women have gone missing or have been murdered; when a woman leaves a family behind, her children are forced into white foster homes; relatives should take responsibility for them, with funding from government
  - Métis Elders should be mentoring Métis children; Algonquin Elders should be mentoring Algonquin children
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#### **5. Additional comments, thoughts, feedback:**

- There is a shortage of qualified early learning child care workers
- Early learning child care workers are insufficiently paid
- Métis children need to be represented in any funding made available in the province
- Many children who attended licensed daycares or “Head Start” programs were successful throughout their education
- It is important to focus on opportunities for children 0-6 (preschool, early learning, kindergarten)
- Schools receive funding for children, but may not have extra funding for special services required by some children; many children have special needs that are not being met
- Make sure children have access to quality, early learning and child care programs

- In Ontario, students are asked to self-identify as Indigenous, Métis or otherwise; this does not occur in Quebec
  - Schools need to identify when Métis children require additional supports (i.e. learning differences, etc.); funding should be provided to support extra supports for them
  - On reserve there are fewer problems as programs are more available; off-reserve programs are lacking in the province
  - We need to identify gaps between services and programs offered to Indigenous and non-Indigenous children
  - All early learning child care workers should be required to have cultural training (for all children)
  - Government should be able to explain differences between a native child and a Métis child; humans seem to be “numbered” by government
  - In Maniwaki, someone met with each parent a year before a child even began school, to ensure the child was prepared; this should be offered for Métis children as well
  - Specialists should be available to assist Métis children, as needed
  - There should be follow up with parents to ensure Inuit, Métis and Native children have access to any special services needed.
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## **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

*Réunion de Québec | July 27, 2017*

**Apprentissage et garde des jeunes enfants  
Tour de table régional**

*Prepared by:*

*Carrie Peacock, Raincoast Ventures Ltd., Rapporteur Secrétaire*

## **THÈME 1 : Besoins en matière d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants autochtones — Programmes fédéraux actuels — forces, avantages et secteurs à améliorer**

**Besoins particuliers** : Penser aux programmes, services et soutiens fédéraux actuels (c.-à-d. Initiative en matière de garde d'enfants chez les Premières nations et les Inuits, Programme d'aide préscolaire aux Autochtones, Programme d'aide préscolaire aux Autochtones dans les collectivités urbaines et nordiques).

### **1. Actuellement, qu'est-ce qui fonctionne bien?**

- Nous n'avons pas accès à ces programmes.
- Pouvons-nous en obtenir dans une ville comme Sherbrooke? Pouvons-nous ouvrir une vaste garderie?
- À Trois-Rivières, il existe un Centre d'amitié; il est assez loin de la garderie; ils veulent une autre garderie
- Les Autochtones ont besoin d'un lieu où obtenir tous les renseignements souhaités
- Il est pratique d'avoir un centre où les gens peuvent partager la culture et participer à des activités; un lieu où les gens peuvent apprendre à perler, coudre et partager le savoir
- Il y a plusieurs collectivités dans les endroits éloignés; ils ont besoin d'école, mais ils n'ont pas les ressources financières pour en avoir
- Les garderies accepteront un certain pourcentage d'enfants autochtones; elles excluent les enfants métis
- Apprentissage et garde des jeunes enfants doit être accessible dans notre collectivité

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### **2. Qu'est-ce qu'on doit améliorer?**

- Il n'y a aucun programme à améliorer
- Les gouvernements ne tiennent pas compte de nos besoins
- Le gouvernement ne reconnaît pas les Métis dans la province de Québec
- Rien n'avance
- Dans la région de Gatineau, il n'y a aucun programme
- Il existe des Centres d'amitié à Montréal, à Maniwaki et à quelques endroits
- Les jeunes et les enfants des réserves ont besoin d'un lieu où trouver de l'aide au besoin
- On a fait des efforts pour ouvrir un Centre d'amitié autochtone, mais cela avance lentement
- En Ontario, on refuse souvent des services aux Métis
- À Val-d'Or, il y a un Centre d'amitié autochtone destiné aux Autochtones inscrits; on doit trouver un lieu pour les Métis de Val-d'Or
- Au Québec, nous devons sensibiliser le gouvernement provincial; ils ne reconnaissent personne ayant un ancêtre autochtone et ne reconnaissent pas les Autochtones inscrits
- Il faut préciser la notion d'identification d'un Autochtone
- Le manque de reconnaissance est le principal problème : « Si vous êtes musulman, vous pouvez obtenir ce que vous voulez »

- Des subventions sont peut-être disponibles; les Métis doivent être mis au courant
  - Nous devons partager nos histoires avec nos enfants; quand vous contez une histoire avant le coucher, ces histoires les accompagnent toute leur vie
  - Pour développer la dextérité des enfants, enseignez-leur à faire des colliers ou des bracelets
  - Un enfant métis peut mieux connaître sa culture dans une garderie
  - Les enfants devraient apprendre à fabriquer des capteurs de rêve
  - Il pourrait être utile d'intégrer des enfants de différents groupes ethniques dans les garderies; chaque enfant pourrait partager un peu de sa culture chaque jour; ceci éveillerait l'intérêt envers la culture des autres et appuierait l'ouverture d'esprit
  - Les enfants de différents groupes ethniques ont des instruments, chants et histoires distincts qu'ils peuvent partager avec leurs pairs
  - Apprendre à chanter « Joyeux anniversaire » en algonquin ou d'autres langues serait utile
  - Il importe de maintenir la communication avec les réserves :
    - des sorties éducatives dans les réserves seraient avantageuses
    - des enfants urbains pourraient mieux connaître les enfants des réserves
    - les enfants des réserves pourraient venir en ville pour visiter les enfants urbains
  - S'organiser pour que les Aînés de différents groupes ethniques puissent partager des histoires avec les enfants; ils ont tellement de connaissances à partager; partager leur savoir donne aux Aînés un sens à leur vie
  - Trouver des personnes compétentes pour enseigner leur culture aux enfants
  - Designer des « enseignants traditionnels » pour les jeunes; les enfants pourraient apprendre des leçons dans leur langue ancestrale
  - Les enfants ont besoin d'un lieu où apprendre les traditions, les cultures et vivre avec différents groupes ethniques
  - Des enseignants qualifiés pourraient coûter cher
  - Mêler les enfants de différentes ethnies et antécédents empêche d'instiller la « haine » entre les Autochtones inscrits et les non-inscrits
  - Il est important de respecter le territoire et les langues
  - Pendant 15 minutes par jour, on pourrait enseigner la culture aux enfants des garderies et des écoles primaires; cela crée un effet boule de neige quand les élèves partagent ce qu'ils ont appris avec leurs parents; parler de la culture avec leur famille pourrait revitaliser un intérêt envers les activités culturelles familiales
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**3. Est-ce qu'il existe un programme ou un service d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants dont vous ou votre collectivité aimeriez profiter sans y parvenir?**

*Décrivez les obstacles ou les difficultés à lever pour concrétiser ces améliorations, quant aux programmes et au financement fédéral et provincial.*

- Nous n'avons entendu parler d'aucun programme au Québec
- Nous ne pouvons pas répondre à cette question — il n'y en a pas
- Le CPA devrait nous envoyer de l'information sur les programmes offerts

- Nous savons que les programmes culturels et langagiers renforcent l'identité personnelle
- Les pensionnats indiens ont causé des problèmes d'identité à plusieurs citoyens
- Les enfants et les jeunes devraient se familiariser avec les langues, cultures et activités ancestrales (le chant, la danse, les tambours, les cérémonies)
- Les centres de la petite enfance n'offrent pas de langues pertinentes au Métis
- Les obstacles et le racisme touchent les Métis; nous sommes rejetés par les non-Autochtones et les Autochtones, en dépit de travail commun depuis des années
- Il faut établir et entretenir un lien avec la culture et la langue, puis les intégrer dans chaque programme scolaire
- Les écoles devraient permettre aux élèves de s'absenter pour se brancher à leur culture; ainsi, un garçon qui quitte l'école pour chasser pendant une semaine avec son père ne devrait pas être puni pour son absence
- L'apprentissage ancestral devrait être offert dans les centres de la petite enfance
- J'ai commencé à trapper quand j'étais jeune. Les enfants doivent apprendre leur culture en bas âge; un adulte de 20 ans ne peut s'habituer à la vue et aux odeurs de la chasse
- Il faut enseigner aux enfants à préparer les mets traditionnels
- Les grands-parents peuvent en apprendre beaucoup aux enfants sur la culture
- Rehausser l'âge de « jeune » de 30 à 40 ans
- Aider les garderies à édifier et à entretenir une culture métisse

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### **Besoins généraux**

#### **1. Qu'est-ce que les enfants autochtones apprennent ou expérimentent dans les programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants?**

*Quel rôle devrait jouer la culture dans l'apprentissage et la garde des jeunes enfants ?*

- Nous devrions engager des personnes qui ont déjà appris la langue, pour enseigner ou participer aux programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants
  - Nous devons connaître notre propre culture avant d'essayer de l'enseigner aux enfants
  - Transmettre les légendes aux enfants est important et intrigant; les leçons apprises dans les légendes sont souvent celles qu'on se rappelle le mieux
  - Les Aînés transmettent les légendes et enseignent bien la culture
  - Les jeunes enfants doivent apprendre les sept enseignements sacrés et les sept grands-pères.
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## **2. Qu'est-ce que les parents et les éducateurs autochtones devraient apprendre ou obtenir des programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants?**

- Nous devons trouver un moyen de vaincre nos peurs; quand nous étions jeunes, les enfants autochtones étaient souvent ridiculisés ou punis pour avoir agi en « autochtone ».
  - Plusieurs de nos grands-parents ont appris à cacher leur héritage métis; nous devons le revigorer
  - Une nouvelle légende pourrait être partagée avec les enfants chaque semaine; les parents devraient être informés une semaine à l'avance des légendes que les enfants apprendront pour savoir quel message clé appuyer à la maison
  - Il faut inciter les enfants à regarder des émissions de télévision autochtones plutôt que jouer à des jeux vidéo; créer des jeux en algonquin, comme base des langues ancestrales
  - L'éducation commence par les parents; ils devraient regarder des émissions de télévision autochtones et inciter leurs enfants à faire de même
  - Plusieurs enfants sont trop occupés par les jeux vidéo – la légalisation de la marijuana aura de profondes répercussions sur les jeunes, la société et les générations futures
  - Plusieurs enfants métis ont été élevés sans savoir qui ils étaient; ceux d'entre nous qui savaient ont caché nos ancêtres
  - Nous devons être fiers d'être autochtones, et apprendre à traiter les critiques et l'irrespect
  - Les activités d'apprentissage traditionnelles peuvent encourager les enfants autochtones à être fiers de leurs ancêtres
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## **3. Qu'est-ce que le mot « qualité » dans le cadre de l'apprentissage et de la garde des jeunes enfants signifie pour vous?**

- L'animateur de programmes pour enfants devrait être un enseignant
- Nous devons enseigner aux enfants comment allumer un petit feu de camp sans incendier toute la province
- Les grands-parents pourraient contribuer à l'enseignement des enfants; les enfants devraient voir des images des activités culturelles ancestrales
- Je connais une classe qui passe un après-midi avec des grand-mères métisses à découvrir les plantes traditionnelles; les enfants adorent cela
- Nous ne pouvons éliminer les ordinateurs de nos vies, mais nous pouvons montrer aux jeunes qu'il y a plus que cela dans la vie
- Commencer par enseigner aux enfants la langue ancestrale
- Le meilleur âge pour apprendre est de 0 à 6 ans
- Les Aînés possédant éducation et savoir sont souvent en « grande demande »; il faut prendre garde à ne pas confondre le savoir occidental des Aînés et le savoir ancestral
- Les enseignements doivent avoir une incidence sur les enfants
- Les leçons doivent être présentées aux enfants avec amour et attention

## **THÈME 2 : Réussites et pratiques prometteuses**

### **1. Comment saurons-nous si un programme d'apprentissage et de garde de jeunes enfants autochtones est une réussite?**

*Est-ce qu'il existe des méthodes rigoureuses qui nous permettent de mesurer la réussite des enfants autochtones?*

- Un programme réussi rend les jeunes enclins à partager leur savoir et leur dextérité aux ateliers (les tambours, la danse, le perlage)
- Si un enfant apprend à danser et qu'il partage avec d'autres, c'est une réussite
- Plusieurs adolescents cherchent à s'identifier; incitez-les à être fiers de leurs ancêtres
- Pendant des années, les ancêtres ont caché leur culture par peur d'avoir l'air fou
- Commencez par ouvrir votre esprit aux autres cultures et soyez à l'écoute
- Si un centre de la petite enfance s'ouvre pour les enfants métis, d'autres devraient suivre
- Nous devrions partager la culture dont nous disposons, si infime qu'elle soit; les enfants qui connaissent le programme « Petits autochtones » ont maintenant des familles dans la collectivité
- Les enfants peuvent apprendre de leur famille et tantes et sont fiers de leurs réalisations
- Si mon fils enseigne à son fils et que celui-ci enseigne à son fils, c'est une réussite selon moi
- Les adultes doivent s'engager; sans rechercher leurs sources, vous ne serez pas capables d'appuyer leur savoir
- Les enfants dansent dans les pow-wow, mais ils ne comprennent pas pourquoi
- Le soir, à l'heure des feux, nous devons nous rassembler tout autour
- Si vous ne participez pas à des activités culturelles, vous n'apprendrez rien

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### **2. Pouvez-vous décrire certaines réussites et pratiques prometteuses dans l'apprentissage et la garde des jeunes enfants autochtones dans votre collectivité? Avez-vous des idées sur la manière dont nous pourrions édifier sur ces réussites?**

- Veiller à ce que les Aînés participent au cœur des cérémonies
  - Les parents ne devraient pas négliger leurs enfants; les inclure dans les activités
  - Enseigner aux enfants à être gentils, aimant et respectueux envers les autres (la famille et les amis, etc.)
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### **THÈME 3 : Planifier l'avenir d'Apprentissage et garde des jeunes enfants**

#### **1. À quoi ressembleront les programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants autochtones?**

- Le gouvernement nous fait croire que les Métis sont des non-Autochtones
- Cela fait peur de penser qu'un changement peut prendre dix ans à se concrétiser; il devrait se produire plus rapidement grâce à la bonne démarche
- Le programme idéal d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants doit se rapprocher de la nature
- Plusieurs Métis vivent en ville; les programmes pourraient se dérouler près d'un parc ou d'une forêt afin de fournir aux enfants un accès important à la nature
- L'accès à la nature constitue une part importante de la culture
- Les programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants devraient avoir accès à une forêt pour que les enfants puissent y marcher et en apprendre plus sur les plantes
- Les enfants devraient apprendre en bas âge à se régénérer en retournant sur leur terre
- Nous devons élaborer un programme mixte pour les enfants autochtones et métis
- Parlez avec les Aînés et invitez-les à transmettre leur savoir
- Les Aînés des premières nations sont les gardiens de plusieurs traditions et ils savent ce que les ancêtres ont fait
- Les premières nations charrient la connaissance des traditions; nous devrions tirer notre savoir du leur

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#### **2. Quel rôle jouent les collectivités autochtones, le gouvernement fédéral et les autres partenaires?**

- Le gouvernement devrait tenir compte de nos besoins
- Il y a plusieurs problèmes au Québec, dont le manque de reconnaissance des Métis
- Nous avons besoin d'un organisme qui fournit l'information sur les fonds disponibles pour structurer des services de garde d'enfants
- Un organisme pourrait rassembler les collectivités et cultiver des liens entre elles
- Sans fonds, nous ne pouvons rien faire; il y a division entre les Métis et les autres; nous devons créer des liens pour aller de l'avant ensemble
- Envisager le bien-être de notre « peuple » dans son ensemble, plutôt que le bien-être des individus
- Les Métis doivent s'épauler et créer des liens avec les autres
- Au Québec, il existe 26 000 citoyens métis reconnus
- Aux yeux de plusieurs, il n'y a pas de citoyens métis en Atlantique

### **3. Quels sont vos espoirs, vos rêves et votre vision pour les enfants et les familles autochtones?**

- Nous voulons grandir pour devenir autonomes, indépendants et prendre soin d'eux
  - Les enfants ont besoin de modèles de rôle et de mentor
  - Un citoyen métis ne peut être un modèle pour un Algonquin ou un Mi'kmaq; les jeunes ont besoin de modèles à suivre pertinents
  - Les enfants ont besoin d'activités qui stimulent la confiance en soi
  - Les gens veulent comprendre la « vision cyclique »; chaque personne est également importante et chacun a un rôle
  - Envisager le bien-être de la collectivité; incitez les enfants à fréquenter l'université
  - Nous voulons que les gens vivent en harmonie, sans se juger les uns les autres
  - Inciter les enfants à traiter les gens comme nous le faisons par tradition
  - Les enfants doivent apprendre comment éviter les querelles qui durent trop longtemps
  - Comblent les écarts entre les Métis, les non-Autochtones et les Autochtones
  - La reconnaissance du gouvernement est cruciale pour les Autochtones
  - Toutes les nations doivent apprendre à marcher de concert et à cesser de se battre
  - L'unité est importante
  - Il faudrait signer des traités entre nations; il faut s'engager à « cesser de se poignarder dans le dos les uns les autres » afin de nous permettre à tous de progresser
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### **4. Si vous aviez plus de fonds d'un point de vue communautaire pour l'Apprentissage et la garde des jeunes enfants, qu'en feriez-vous?**

- Nous voulons plus de garderies, plus de centres de garde des jeunes enfants et plus de centres communautaires
- Nous avons besoin d'un programme d'accès à la nourriture :
  - tant d'enfants sont mal nourris; certains passent toute la journée sans manger
  - nourrir les enfants qui se rendent dans une garderie ou une école l'estomac vide
  - fournir des sandwiches aux enfants, car plusieurs n'ont peut-être rien mangé quand ils rentrent à la maison
- Créer un centre de distribution avec services pour les enfants de tous âges :
  - offrir des activités aux jeunes enfants, des activités culturelles, des services médicaux et des programmes destinés aux Aînés
  - les centres devraient être vastes dans de grandes collectivités comme Sherbrooke ou Maniwaki, et plus petits dans des collectivités plus petites
  - offrir un accès à la nature
  - fournir un moyen de rassembler les gens au centre
- Nous avons besoin de centres pour les Aînés et les jeunes en particulier

- Quand les jeunes vont à l'école, il n'y a pas de fonds pour les installer
- Les femmes battues ont besoin de protection et d'un endroit où aller; plusieurs doivent retourner à la maison et se font battre à nouveau, perpétuant le cercle de la violence
- Commencer à travailler avec les réserves; créer des centres pour les personnes qui vivent dans les réserves et fournir un accès aux enfants métis
- Créer des garderies mixtes pour les Autochtones et les non-Autochtones; ceci atténuera les conflits
- Tant de femmes ont été portées disparues ou ont été assassinées; quand une femme laisse une famille derrière, ses enfants sont placés dans des familles d'accueil blanches; l'entourage devrait en prendre la responsabilité, avec des fonds du gouvernement
- Les Aînés métis devraient superviser les enfants métis; les Aînés algonquins devraient superviser les enfants algonquins
- Il faut créer plus d'un centre financé par le gouvernement, où les Aînés pourraient partager leur savoir et enseigner aux autres

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## **5. Autres commentaires, idées, rétroaction**

- Est-ce que le CPA va recevoir des fonds pour l'apprentissage et la garde des jeunes enfants? Il faut tenir compte des enfants métis dans toute allocation financière
- Plusieurs enfants qui fréquentent des garderies agréées ou des programmes « d'aide préscolaire » ont réussi grâce à leurs études
- Il faut se concentrer sur les possibilités offertes aux enfants de 0 à 6 ans (préscolaire, apprentissage et garde des jeunes enfants, jardin d'enfance)
- Les écoles reçoivent des fonds pour les enfants, mais manquent parfois de fonds supplémentaires destinés aux services particuliers requis par certains enfants; plusieurs enfants ont des besoins particuliers qui ne sont pas satisfaits
- S'assurer que les enfants ont accès à des programmes d'apprentissage et de garde des jeunes enfants de qualité
- En Ontario, on demande aux étudiants de s'identifier comme Autochtones, Métis ou autre; ce n'est pas le cas au Québec
- Les écoles doivent le déclarer quand des enfants métis requièrent du soutien supplémentaire (différences d'apprentissage, etc.); il faut fournir des fonds pour appuyer les efforts supplémentaires
- Dans les réserves, il y a moins de problèmes, car les programmes sont plus accessibles; les programmes hors réserve manquent
- Nous devons déterminer les écarts entre les services et les programmes offerts aux enfants autochtones et aux enfants non autochtones
- Tous les travailleurs de l'apprentissage et la garde des jeunes enfants devraient avoir une formation culturelle (pour tous les enfants)
- Il y a pénurie de travailleurs qualifiés en apprentissage et garde des jeunes enfants

- Les travailleurs en apprentissage et garde des jeunes enfants sont parfois insuffisamment rémunérés
  - Le gouvernement devrait pouvoir expliquer les distinctions entre un enfant autochtone et un enfant métis; les humains semblent être « numérotés » par le gouvernement
  - À Maniwaki, quelqu'un rencontre chaque parent un an avant même que l'enfant ne fréquente l'école, pour préparer l'enfant; cela devrait être offert aux enfants métis aussi
  - Il faut engager des spécialistes pour aider les enfants métis, s'il y a lieu
  - Il faut assurer le suivi avec les parents pour veiller à ce que les enfants inuits, métis et autochtones aient accès à tout service particulier requis
  - Il faut démarcher auprès du gouvernement fédéral pour lui faire savoir ce qui est important dans le cadre de l'apprentissage et de la garde des jeunes enfants
  - Nous ne savons pas si le gouvernement sera réélu dans deux ans; nous devons chercher des fonds maintenant.
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