

**In the Best Interests of Children and Families:**

**A Plenary Discussion of Early Childhood  
Education and Care in Alberta**



The Muttart Foundation



**The Muttart Foundation  
November 2011**

## **I. Introduction**

This summary report outlines the major themes that emerged from a series of facilitated discussions with fifty-one participants involved in early childhood education and care in Alberta, hosted by The Muttart Foundation and Success By 6 of the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. The discussions took place at the Genesis Early Learning Centre at St. Bede's School in Edmonton on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

The meeting was organized both to review the findings from a series of five regional forums organized to discuss The Muttart Foundation's paper '*In the Best Interests of Children and Families: A Discussion of Early Childhood Education and Care in Alberta*' and to consider the broad outlines of a possible path forward for strengthening early childhood education and care in the Province. An electronic copy of the discussion paper is available for download from The Muttart Foundation web-site ([www.muttart.org](http://www.muttart.org)).

This report highlights the emergent discussion themes but does not seek to analyze or weight them in any deliberate manner. The primary audience for the report is the participants themselves who can hopefully use it as a record of their own thoughts as well as those of their fellow participants.

## **II. Background**

In the fall of 2010, The Muttart Foundation released a discussion paper on the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care in the Province of Alberta (*In the Best Interests of Children and Families: A Discussion of Early Childhood Education and Care in Alberta*). The paper was developed to stimulate discussion on how Alberta might best approach the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care for its youngest citizens and their families.

Following the release of the paper, the Foundation, with the support of a series of partners, hosted five regional forums across the Province. The forums provided an opportunity for a broad

array of early childhood education and care stakeholders to come together to consider the ideas presented in the paper and to share their own insights and perspectives on the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care. A follow up sixth forum was held in Calgary with senior staff, most of whom were childhood educators.

Upon completion of the regional forums, The Muttart Foundation prepared a report that summarized the key themes from the discussions (*In the Best Interests of Children and Families: A Discussion of Early Childhood Education and Care in Alberta – A Synthesis of Regional Discussions*). It concluded with an initial framing of the key issues or questions that early childhood educators and caregivers will need to consider in supporting changes that advance the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care. An electronic copy of the discussion paper is available for download from The Muttart Foundation web-site ([www.muttart.org](http://www.muttart.org)).

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Foundation in partnership with Success by 6 convened a follow-up plenary forum to bring together a cross-section of stakeholders from the regional forums. Fifty participants, representing a variety of perspectives on early childhood education and care in Alberta, attended the plenary forum (See Attachment A for a listing of participants and their organizational affiliation). As in the original regional forums, participants were not asked to represent their organizations, but rather to provide their insights on the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care.

As part of the discussions, the forum participants first considered the major findings from the regional forums and then explored the key actions or strategies discussed at the forums to advance the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care. To structure the discussions of possible strategies for change, the participants first considered the merits of an overall provincial framework for early childhood education and care, before considering the key specific actions or steps that might form the basis of advancing the field.

The agenda for the day was organized around a series of facilitated discussions that considered three related streams of inquiry:

- the use of an ECEC framework with strategic actions to advance change;
- the possible format and content of an ECEC framework ; and
- the proposed strategic actions or steps to advance the funding and delivery of ECEC.

A copy of the agenda is provided in Attachment B.

This document contains the transcribed notes from each of the major sessions, organized into themes.

### **III. Forum Discussions**

#### **3.1 Moving Forward: An ECEC Framework with Strategic Actions for Change**

The initial discussions considered the proposed strategy of advancing the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care through the development of a broad overarching framework with a supporting series of key strategic actions to improve the quality and enhance the quantity of services.

These discussions explored three main areas:

- Participants' response to a framework with supporting strategic key actions or steps;
- Participants' assessments of the merits of the proposed strategic actions; and
- Participants' identification of additional strategic actions to improve the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care.

##### **3.1.1 An Alberta ECEC Framework with Key Supporting Strategic Actions or Steps**

Participant discussions revealed general support for a broad framework to guide the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care. Participants identified some cautions around such a framework and commented on the importance of the process required to guide its development.

## **Benefits**

- We need such a framework (lay out the values and vision required to gain political and public support and to support each driver).
- A framework provides an opportunity for clarity of ECEC so all have some language, same vision: provincial departments, regional parents.
- ECEC framework is beneficial for creating common language.
- Framework helps clarify the why and what's (definitions) – needs to includes outcomes and actions.
- It will increase the value of early childhood.
- Makes sure we are on the same page.
- Strategic drivers need to be the leaders from all stakeholders. Framework is workable. A framework works to “frame” the goals and keep a focus to move forward.
- We must have a vision, principles, goals and action plan that are commonly adapted.
- Without a framework in place, how can a standalone Ministry function effectively?
- Framework and planning are necessary to institute “real change”.
- Need a common mission and framework for proceeding.
- Absolute agreement with ECEC framework; focus change around ECED drivers to develop/strengthen early years.

## **Cautions**

- Framework – you get 1 point for the framework, 10 points to implement it, but you have to start with the framework.
- Frameworks have potential but must be coupled with leadership and resources.
- Framework would be excellent. The challenge is separating the drivers: we need to accept that they are solidly interconnected.

## **Questions**

- What is the long term goal?
- Why get schools involved? Why not support existing?

## **Framing**

- I agree with the idea of a framework, but feel it should be broader than ECEC – minimally broaden it to early learning and care. More optimally, anchor this within an ECD framework (e.g. ECEC is key area of activity in an ECD framework).
- Be pragmatic while encompassing the full spectrum of child development.
- ECD is too big.
- ECEC framework needs to not exclude other components of ECD where are parenting resources (e.g. parent link centers).
- ECEC framework or ECD framework? AND NOT OR! ECD framework is the why.
- If you start with public health visits to enhance ‘buy-in’ with Albertans – this maybe a start. Caution – not all new parents access public health.
- Issue of framework: broad ECD? Narrower ECEC?
- Potentially we could take a few steps backwards to look at developing a pathway for all children starting at 0 years onwards to include all interventions from public health, wellness, and education to truly incorporate all stakeholders.
- Early learning, education care. Needs to be under early child development (includes all domains).
- ECD is too big!
- ECE means education and learning; care is broader.
- Use of term “education” implies schools – schools not necessarily seen as positive places for Aboriginal populations. A challenge, then, is to think about the language of the framework (e.g. education versus learning).

## **Definitions**

- Clear definitions needed: education, care, early years, parents-caregivers (those in parenting role).
- Clear on definitions (education and care and all those people who provide that for young children will determine other drivers and actions).
- Definitions of key terms are important.

- Drivers are international national trends, research, provincial/national that shape ECEC work.
- Drivers are trends (local, national, international), research/discussion papers that are or support action and influence trends.
- We need more detailed definition of terms: e.g. education (process) versus education (systems), care (process) versus care (e.g. childcare system).

### **Keep in Mind**

- Be clear about the framework's intended outcome: increase high school completion, life longer learning contributes to society's productivity, decreased cost to society.
- Early childhood framework is a curriculum pedagogical approach: a curriculum that is not curriculum.
- Ensure education is far beyond training in adoption of a curricular framework.
- General History of defending the value of early childhood. I am tired of defending it!
- Include outcomes – evaluation and logic models.
- Framework needs to be non-institutional, parental resource, universal in scope, respectful of cultures.
- Embrace the parenting resources of all parents (e.g. immigrant parents, first nations). Every parent is involved.
- Provide pedagogical leadership degree prepared by educator (0-5, diploma as entry to practice).
- Framework has to include a clear vision (i.e. purpose and outcomes).
- Framework will contain goals, ideas, and concerns.
- Governance is a critical component of a framework.

### **Process**

- What is our timeframe? We need a time-frame for the framework.
- Consider the vision 1<sup>st</sup> then the accommodation can follow. Drivers – consider – political will as a driver, human services policy for Alberta (pre-birth).

- Four out of six areas “needing information” are tied to parent and families and their realities and experiences. How do we develop framework rooted in this?

### **Linkages**

- Include partnerships – link to education/educational outcomes, link to mental health and wellness initiatives/outcomes.
- Framework must be developed collectively in an open/transparent way.
- It needs to be a partnership model with win-wins between/among “competing groups (e.g. ECD versus education ECEC).
- We need grass roots – political support, parents get their attention (see Norlien Foundation, Corriveau Report, Muttart).
- How to involve or coordinate EC map research/coalitions?
- Look at ways to link with strategies that are already proclaimed – addiction and mental health strategy – preventative elements, family focused, and inclusive education.
- Look to what is working in other provinces but realize that Albertans also want “made in Alberta” so adjust other frameworks to work in Alberta.
- Need public input on framework. Need agreement on values or guiding principles underlying the framework.
- Public engagement and buy-in.
- Utilize research and discussion paper to advance and influence the actions.
- Key is political support to development of ECEC framework. Are all the appropriate partners represented in this group (e.g. Health Services, School Board, EC experts). Opportunity to move towards human services policy with key vision statements.

### **3.1.2 The Merits of the Proposed Supporting Strategic Actions or Steps**

Participants saw merit in trying to enhance the quality and increase the quantity of services through some strategic actions or steps. They noted that these strategic actions might best be considered as steps towards a more comprehensive approach to the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care.



## **General Feedback**

- I like all the strategic drivers.
- Strategic drivers/actions are a good place to start but not sufficient to gain momentum. There are many around ECD and ACEC; an opportunity for synergy building on multiple methods.

## **College of Early Childhood Educators**

- For ECE profession to be “professionalized”, you need to have quality work fields for the educators to feed into so we don’t lose them.
- How would a college be implemented? Would it replace/supplement programs in other institutions? An ATA approach? ACCA? What?
- How are we going to increase salaries for ECE to attract more people? If we make a college, how is that change going to be reflected in the field?

## **Curriculum Framework**

- Curriculum should reflect “learning through play”.

## **Junior Kindergarten & Kindergarten**

- What is different between JK and early childhood program?
- Other JK and K is too narrow to be a driver – leave this as a content issue within curriculum.
- What is the difference between JK and early childhood programming?

## **Education and Training**

- If we also ask for increased education and training, how do we keep the staff we have now? Increase their wages?

## **New Partnership with Province, Municipalities and School Boards**

- The Province, municipalities, schools board are good, but we also need to include service providers.

## **General Approach to Drivers**

- The College is not the 1<sup>st</sup> step – we need to increase value for early childhood.
- Use as many drivers as possible/necessary that people understand the importance of early years: public support, public engagement.
- How do we connect the existing ECD/ECEC initiatives (e.g. City of Edmonton, ECD mapping, etc.) framework to be shared with these initiatives?
- Driver 1, 2 are critical to traction for all other drivers.

### **3.1.3 Additional Strategic Actions or Steps**

Participants identified some additional key actions they felt could advance the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care.

#### **Public Awareness, Education & Support**

- The education of the public is a key: parents, stakeholders, business, politicians, etc.
- Responsibility of parent is to learn about what is good/quality child care and learning.
- What the public is asking for is an important driver: issue of “selling” education for 0-3 to the public.
- Marketing to the public to educate them on the “value” of ECEC.
- A significant driver is being able to show the ‘need’ for quality childcare.
- Educate parents on the quality of early childhood and importance of 0-5 years.
- How do we educate parents (TV, radio, teachers, and coaches)?
- Education to families.
- Public education – early childhood development.
- A course for every pregnant man on the value of early childhood (0-5).
- Create awareness of where families are right now.

#### **Political Awareness, Engagement & Will**

- Missing drivers? Political perception/will for ECE.
- Political will (e.g. public education, parent education, quality child care).

## **Publicly Funded Early Learning Programs**

- Publicly funded early learning programs. Why is not publicly funded childcare a key action (publicly funded JK and K are!).

## **Surfacing New Drivers**

- Focus or trends need to be identified to determine other possible drivers.
- Need to consider evidence-base of research on ECE.
- What is presently working and is something we can build upon? I hear a lot of negatives but what are some of the present-day positives?
- Don't re-invent the wheel – look to successful drivers in other jurisdictions (e.g. Ontario). Example. Provincial initiative to end homelessness looked to the US and “Housing First” as a successful model.

## **Additional Considerations**

- Additional drivers include: perceptions on “individual choice” versus public good.
- Confirm that this is complementary, not competing, with parental care.
- The field needs to develop a cohesive way of working together.
- We must come at this from a civil society, children's right perspective. How can we promote children's rights as human rights, and human rights at the center of civil society.
- Issue of need for resources: financial, human?
- Governance – who is the lead for ECEC provincially?
- How can we promote early childhood education (learning) and care as a fundamental principle and indication of a civil society? How can we educate and care for our children is a broad comment on the kind of society we are, or we want to be?

## **3.2. An Alberta ECEC Framework – Content, Structure and Process**

The second main set of facilitated discussions explored, in more detail, participants' responses to the development of an Alberta ECEC framework. Participants considered five related discussions in respect to a possible framework:

- The benefits and challenges associated with a framework;
- The possible elements or components of a framework;
- The stakeholders who need to help shape and develop the a framework;
- The key elements (or things) to keep in mind in developing a framework; and
- The key actions or steps required to advance work around a framework.

### 3.2.1 Benefits & Challenges

#### **The Benefits**

- Equal opportunity – every child has basics (equitable) all on same page (awareness) delineate ECE/ECLC, clarify definitions, need broad framework first.
- Will provide a clear definition of early child “development learning” and scope.
- Clarity, informed decisions, tool for planning, funding, resourcing and evaluating.
- Benefits of a “straw dog”. Let people see if it fits with their values and promotes transparency.
- Creates one voice.
- Will lay out clear responsibilities and authorities.
- Promotes equity (equitable opportunity for all children); provide definition (ECD vs. ECEC); list why framework is important.
- Ensures people are on the same page.
- Provides pre-education on the importance and value of ECE.
- Strategic drivers could help with the process and with the framework.

#### **The Challenges**

- A concern it is a zero sum game (e.g. seniors, health, etc. if focus on 0-5). We need to reframe this.
- People believe that public resources are zero-sum game; reframe the win-lose current status.
- We’ll need a group of champions.
- Nothing about parents. Community “values” is not necessarily that but values of a few that are more vocal in their community. How will we get to the value of others?

- Challenges of a framework is getting consensus and an open-ness to change.
- Creating a framework that works for everyone .. who will develop and define the framework, will it be done under cross ministry/super ministry/all stakeholders having input? Too many working is sometimes not as collaborative as it should be.
- Framework paralysis: steps forward, small wins, John Kotter’s successful change.
- Getting consensus. Interest of the public funding versus for profit business. Cultural religious review regarding parental roles and responsibilities versus role of the state.
- Need for plain language.
- Challenge of definitions (e.g. early years, education (process or the system), care (process or the systems)).
- The challenge is the size and scope of the work.
- Challenge to ensure “community values” reflect all communities and therefore are representative of all parents and caregivers.
- Challenges – a framework that can work for all audiences, a framework that can address vulnerable populations and be embraced by them.
- The research is there to prove that what our intended end-goals has been proven nationally and internationally. We need to get the action of moving forward, doing “what is right”. It seems that taking years to develop a framework just to create a “made-in-Alberta” answer is not the best answer.

### 3.2.2 Possible Elements of an ECEC Framework

#### **Framing & Scope**

- Ecological model, with child at the center, then family, and then supports.
- Scope: ECEC, Early Learning or Early Childhood development.
- The framework needs to be broad enough in relation to the vision and values etc.
- Clarify age groups (0-6?) and the rationale.
- We should develop a framework on ECEC based on socio-cultural theory, with schools at the center, supported by supports and services that are broad and include health, welfare, employment (etc.).

## **Definitions**

- Clear definitions.
- Define terms.

## **Rationale, Purpose and Goals**

- Define purpose – why such a proposal?
- Let's adopt a “children's rights” lens.
- Need to have rationale with stories and example of why we need a framework.
- Clear purpose and goals.
- The rationale is not to “produce” citizens but to serve children as who they are as children – do what is good for children.
- What are we trying to create for whom?
- Commonly agreed upon goals and examples of strategies for each.
- Purpose and rationale.
- Goals and strategies.

## **Governance**

- Governance: roles and responsibilities (describe the “wins” for each stakeholder).
- Leadership - I do not support a different ministry focused on ECE: it fragments interface with families.
- Leadership - I support a cross Ministry approach.
- We need a new governance structure to allow us to have these decisions about early childhood.

## **Stakeholders & Partners**

- Define stakeholders.
- Elaborate on role of partnerships and key partners.

## **Principles**

- Enunciation of values or guiding principles on which framework is based.

- Values and principles.
- Confirmation that the “how to” can vary according to differing needs (e.g. First Nations, mainstream, religious groups, etc.).

### **Funding**

- Financial and delivery models.
- Provisions for sustainability.
- Sustainability and a financial model.

### **Strategies**

- A list of “starting point” strategies.
- Describe the key interventions.

### **Communication**

- Communication plan.
- Communication strategy.

### **Accountability**

- Accountability measures.
- Accountability plan.

### **Evaluation**

- Definition (outcome) and new measures.
- Evaluation plan – how will we know it is working?

### **General**

- General Framework should contain: purpose and why, define scope, define stakeholders, ways to evaluate and monitor, definition of success; financing models and accountability mechanisms, delivery models and governance models.
- This needs to be a “living document” with ongoing consultation with parents and community.

- I support the list of suggestions from the slide suggested.
- We need document for ongoing dialogue.

### 3.2.3 Key Stakeholders Who Need to be Involved/Engaged

#### **Parents, Caregivers Kids and Families.**

- Parents of head start boards, playschool (preschool) boards, school councils to provide a voice in consultations.
- The child as the primary stakeholder.
- Caregivers.
- Include caregivers when referencing parents as stakeholders (e.g. parents/caregivers).
- Need to look at ways of engaging men in this agenda; must not see this as a women's and children agenda only.
- Parents need to be included in the framework. They are an important consideration because they are providing the children that are the basis for all of this.
- Ensure children's voice is heard.
- Parents who use services need to be included – we need their buy in.

#### **Non-Parents**

- People with no children and seniors.
- Young adults and grandparents.
- Seniors.
- People without kids.
- Taxpayers: those without children in the system.

#### **Service Providers**

- Front-line providers are key stakeholders: e.g. child care practitioners, validators (Accreditation), ARCQE.
- Get the people who have been in this work years and years and ask them what has been working and what has not (don't just give money to the schools).



- NGOS –huge number of organizations that work in the community who support families and young children. They need to be respected and included.
- The various services that support children.
- Almost everyone in the education system.

### **Politicians & Civil Service**

- We need to be strategic about seeking the champion. The politicians (e.g. Premier and others) need to set the stage for human services and policy directions.
- Who are the champions within the government (all parties)? Identify those who are already supporting and start with them through formal and informal opportunities.
- Members of the Legislative Assembly.
- Senior civil servants from across ministries that deal with children: e.g.
  - Children and Youth,
  - Education,
  - Health & Wellness,
  - Sports & Recreation,
  - Justice,
  - etc.
- Cross ministries – best fit under Justice and Children’s Rights.

### **Intermediary Organizations**

- Child and Family Service Authority Boards.
- Family Children Support Services of Alberta.
- Pre-School Associations.
- College of Alberta School Superintendents.
- Inter School Trustee Association.
- Alberta Childcare Association.

### **Post-Secondary**

- Universities (in MRU, U of C) need to be involved as educators of the educators.

- Colleges who train early childhood educators.

### **Municipalities**

- Town councils/municipalities.
- Municipalities and their FCSS programs.
- Rural Communities.

### **General**

- Rural communities.
- Philanthropic organizations.
- Charitable Foundations.
- Faith-based communities (e.g. churches, mosques, etc.).
- Business.
- Civic Clubs (e.g. Elks, Lions, 4H).
- Cultural groups.

## **3.2.4 Key Things to Keep In Mind**

### **Building on & Linking**

- Can we draw upon the consultations that have already happened in the province re: Action on Inclusion and EC mapping?
- Need to have a public consultation process that would include a variety of mechanisms to reach a broad group.
- Build on local work and models that already exist and/or being developed?
- Explore strategic connections with other work (includes cross ministry work): e.g. EC mapping.
- Look at other jurisdictions: their success, failures, challenges.
- We don't need more knowledge of early childhood, but how to use what we have.
- Utilize the large number of existing programs and connect them.
- How do we connect and build on the current initiatives: Muttart, ECMap, Early childhood within Department of Education? The time is ripe.

## **Engagement, Consultation & Communication**

- Ensure those who are currently involved in ECE or care are involved in the communication of actions.
- The community is not monolithic – remember diversity and engage it accordingly.
- The capacity of the child care community to respond and manage change – they have been trained to be preservationists – so spending time with them on vision and exploring how they fit in is important.
- Educate parents!
- We need ongoing and two-way communication.
- Communication and public awareness; 2 ways, repetitive, ongoing.
- Need for public input on common values, parents and families, consider research (informed professional input and evidence-based).
- Driven by stakeholders with the knowledge of early childhood development.
- Keep the broad sector informed.

## **Key Elements of the Framework**

- How can a child human rights perspective be incorporated into the framework?
- View parents as resources in the framework.
- Use simple and universal language.
- Be clear about the economic impact.
- Include social return on investment.
- No to an ECD ministry.
- Do not recommend establishing a new ministry only for ECD (prefer not to compartmentalize by age at the Ministry level).
- A governance (ministry) structure that facilitates integration.
- The framework must accommodate urban, rural and Aboriginal and the general diversity of needs throughout the province.
- We need to compromise and include flexibility - but don't compromise to the lowest common denominator.

- We need to determine what is good for children based on established practice, research, and evidence.

### **The Process**

- Let's not approach this as 'victims'. This is what we are doing, this is what we need.
- Identify the "who": we need an organized group that the credibility and neutrality with shared responsibility and kudos.
- We need real agreement among the champions of the framework.
- Be aware of power structures and perceptions: e.g. school boards are more "powerful" than small ECE agencies, how parents perceive schools as place of education and do not necessarily view ECE as learning.
- Short term success stories and a long term vision that is attainable.
- Be strategic in the timing and actions. Recognize when to go quickly and when to go slowly.
- Ongoing message (e.g. consensus) on message from leaders and champions for different areas.

### **3.2.5 Key Actions or Steps Required to Move Forward**

#### **Convening**

- Develop a backbone organization(s).
- Leader/champion to convene/cajole/convince/organize.
- Leader must have credibility/trust from sector.
- Leader must be neutral.
- Leadership may be shared (responsibility and credit).

#### **Mobilize**

- Mobilize our key strategic people.
- Engage key stakeholders.
- Explore key people or ministries, engage champions, establish dialogue.

- Start getting the word out to early childhood educators that some change is coming so they are on board.
- Share this information with ACCA, possibility of creating regional gatherings to move agenda forward.
- Develop a communication with other early childhood development practitioners.
- We need to inform politicians about the research vis-a-vis economic importance (investment in ECD) and the cost of not acting.

### **Public Education & Awareness**

- Ensure research is available to demonstrate what is happening in the rest of Canada, what is successful and what is a failure (other provincial models).
- Parents need opportunities to learn about the new knowledge; they will be able to influence politicians.
- Need a marketing initiative to the public.

### **Drafting the Framework**

- Instead of spending years debating what should be in a framework, appoint a committee to write one drawing from all the frameworks already developed across Canada and across the world. Then create opportunities for stakeholders to respond, then revise it based on their responses.
- Develop and circulate a Straw Dog for discussion.

### **Quick Wins**

- Action needed, short term gains to build momentum.

## **3.3. Strategic Actions to Advance Early Childhood Education and Care**

Following the two rounds of discussions on a provincial framework, participants considered some possible strategic actions or steps that might be taken to increase the quantity and quality of early childhood education and care. Specifically, participants were asked to consider the five strategic actions that received support through the regional forum discussions:

- The formation of a College of Early Childhood Educators;
- The development of a curriculum framework for early childhood education and care;
- Increases in the education and training for early childhood educators;
- The introduction of Junior Kindergarten and full day Kindergarten; and
- The development of new partnerships between the Province, School Boards and Municipalities to expand service delivery.

In addition to these five strategic actions, participants were also asked to comment on a sixth possible strategic action or initiative that emerged through the first two rounds of participant discussions:

- Building public and public awareness of and support for early childhood education and care.

Within each of the discussions, participants explored the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed strategic action; gave some consideration to the key stakeholders who need to be involved in the work; considered what actions were required to move work in the area forward and highlighted further questions that arose in respect to the strategic action. As befits the nature of the strategic actions the participants considered, the discussions were free-flowing and varied.

### 3.3.1 A College of Early Childhood Educators

Participants offered some measure of support for the introduction of a College of Early Childhood Educators. They saw the College as having some potential to increase the professional orientation of the field and to help improve ongoing support for early childhood educators. They saw value in looking at the similar college structures in place in other regions of the country.

#### **Benefits**

- A College would add credibility of CEC and the field.
- The research says that a key indicator of quality is staff training – this fits within that resource base.
- Quality.

- Professionalism.
- It would create accountability to a standard.
- College a good idea because requirements/professional development come from within rather than being externally imposed.
- Can address discipline and professional development.
- It would make things more open and transparent.
- Help create a professional identity.
- Could promote/improve access to professional development.
- College certified required by accreditation – raises the bar from others, an improvement from the status quo.
- If compensation increased, would attract more people, therefore, not the personnel shortage now experienced, therefore, can increase the basic requirements.
- There is support for engaging professional development and a self-regulating (discipline committee).

### **Challenges**

- It will be a difficult transition.
- A College does not address the workforce strategy.
- Could also limit staff availability in certain cases (e.g. rural settings that are more remote).
- This will present an issue for rural areas where only 20% of kids are already in regulated care, 70% are owner operated.
- In the past, the government has reduced standards to reflect the supply, this creates a fall out from professional associations.

### **Considerations**

- Build development of ECE College into framework to be an avenue of ensuring quality care of children.
- ECE College, if established/proposal within framework, should have connection with Alberta Teachers' Association.

- There would be a cost if mandated: e.g. membership in a professional association.
- We need competitive wages and benefits (e.g. RRSP) to keep child care professionals in the field BEFORE the College of ECE.
- Must be legislative to be part of College of ECE. All workers must be part of CECE to work in regulated childcare.
- College of ECE membership must have a minimum of a diploma.

### **Stakeholders**

- Alberta Childcare Association.
- Government (legislation).
- Alberta Teachers Association (How they intersect).
- Superintendents.
- Preschool Associations.
- Universities that have early childhood education programs in place.
- Alberta Teachers Association.
- AELCS, ARCQE, ACCA, Early Childhood Education Council.

### **Questions**

- How do we raise the bar in regulation?
- Is a college of ECE useful BEFORE regulations are increased?
- What levels would it include (child care, pre-school and kindergarten)?
- Would it increase the number of regulated child care spaces?
- Can a College stipulate a level of education for membership that might be higher than the government requirement?
- What happens to currently trained staff? Do we grandfather staff already trained?

### **Next Steps**

- We need to hear from Ontario on their experiences.
- Need for more information about the scope of influence about the College (bring in someone from Ontario to share their journey).



- Increase the basic requirements beyond 50 hours; current regulations not high enough; increase number of regulated spots.

### 3.3.2 A Curriculum Framework for ECEC Environments

Participants considered a number of issues related to the development of an ECEC framework and raised some concerns around the process for its development. The term 'curriculum' was seen by some to have a more narrow focus that might limit its use in early learning settings. Participants saw the value of a curriculum framework in establishing the credibility of early learning and in raising the quality of services. They affirmed that a broad group of stakeholders would need to participate in its development. Participants also saw significant linkages between a curriculum framework and the other aspects of a proposed ECEC framework.

#### **Benefits**

- Set consistent practice.
- Provides professionalism and standards.
- Creates a common language.
- Improve quality.
- Can help in developing "professional code of conduct".
- Resource/on-going training for early childhood staff.
- Over 40% of early childhood educators don't have university education – curriculum could resonate with them.

#### **Challenges**

- Develop standards around learning is difficult.
- "Curriculum" is a problematic term:
  - carries baggage, implies specific outcomes and measures;
  - carries some useful weight in education communities;
  - would be nice to replace the term, but no obvious alternatives; and
  - we could neutralize the term by using modifies (e.g. "early learning" and play curriculum (as in Saskatchewan)).
- Could create fear in terms of time.

- It's not a program manual, it's a philosophy.
- Its emergent.
- The capacity of the community to adapt is limited.
- Limitations of curriculum framework (name/term curriculum; purpose/implementation).
- Getting the proper weight between content versus process.
- Assessing the quality of the curriculum and the quality of implementation will be challenging.

### **Considerations**

- Need to define purpose of curriculum.
- We need a clear definition of curriculum.
- Create common language of what play-based learning means (e.g. Saskatchewan field uses early learning and play curriculum).
- Focus on developmental outcomes.
- Should be a dialogue, not just a binder.
- Philosophy of supporting kids and families.
- Facilitating inquiry based learning.
- Moving from theme-based learning to inquiry (e.g. in November, we should build snowmen to explore who we are in Canada versus the world).
- Use of word curriculum – at risk of creating a “push-down’ when we should be ‘push up’.
- Need to define relative weights of ‘content’ and ‘process’ in curriculum.
- Where is the word infant? I am worried about compartmentalization.
- Credentials of Educator programs and how to support the fundamental of DAPS.
- Page 21-end last paragraph, “non-regulated care”, use of definition.
- Critical to moving forward.
- The word “curriculum” has baggage.
- The word confers something serious.
- Primary audience – childcare providers, and “curriculum” not understood.

- Create common language around play-based learning e.g. early learning and play curriculum, not a recipe, it is a philosophy or learning in early years.
- We need to develop standards around learning.
- Mandatory PD in ECD in education; need mechanism for upgrading childcare providers.

### **Stakeholders**

- Children.
- Parents.
- Educators of early childhood and teachers need to be at the table.
- Specialists in early learning (college/university).
- Specialists in education (e.g. researchers).
- Faculties of Education, Diploma Programs.
- Organization that represents service providers.
- Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement.
- Alberta Child Care Association.
- Alberta Centre for Child, Family, and Community Research.
- Ministry of Education's Early Learning Branch.

### **Questions**

- What do we want the curriculum for?
- What is the purpose of our curriculum?
- Why are we doing all these good things?
- What is impacted by the framework? Children and Youth Services and Education.
- Who are the experts? People with the pedagogical basics.
- Who needs to be at the table when the curriculum is being designed?

### **Next Steps**

- Take a look what is out there what is working, what not (e.g. Ontario - review of it).
- Bring together key partners (e.g. Education, ACYS, ACCA, Colleges).
- Create a "straw dog draft" for input.

- Meet with Deputy of Education.
- Convene a symposium that presents curriculum from all other jurisdiction (see paper from Ryerson).
- Curriculum framework needs an implementation strategy beyond its publication.

### 3.3.3 Education & Formal Training for Early Childhood Educators

Participants considered an increase in the formal educational requirements for early childhood educators as necessary and were also supportive of increasing the ongoing training opportunities available to them. They saw the need to engage a broad array of stakeholders in considering how best to move forward in this area including early childhood educators working in the field. They recognized that increasing formal education levels would take time to achieve – and would need to accommodate the different elements of the early learning and care continuum.

#### **Benefits**

- Great – we need to treat early childhood educators as professionals.
- ECE's want to improve, want to be leaders, but feel blocked. This will help.
- If we want quality for our children – we need educated staff.
- It starts with a specialized body of knowledge – good to clarify this.
- Would have access to stronger-better practitioners.

#### **Challenges**

- There is a real gap between what day-care providers know and the knowledge they need.
- We can't impose education levels yet because we risk losing 50-60% of current staff. However, we could impose a mandated early childhood curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and evidence-based.
- Very long term support structure for funding.
- Many FDH practitioners might go underground if we require a two year diploma.
- Challenge of defining standards.
- Having difficulty to get interest in bachelor degree.
- How to pay staff with this level of education.

- Lack of support and little respect given to ECEs.
- Grads uncertain of where to go.
- Already a lack of qualified staff in small communities, rural and remote areas.
- Concerns with equivalencies (part of the framework): e.g. no consultation with colleagues.
- Might lead to apprenticeships.

### **Considerations**

- A framework and legislated requirements must be created first.
- Need formal education combined with ongoing training and mentoring.
- Careful on how to proceed: i.e. Prior Learning Assessment Review was done without consultation. Orientation course was supposed to be 5 years.
- Philosophy of supporting and facilitating inquiry-based learning.
- If we move from a 2 year to a 4 year (with EC specialization), we will need to grandfather folks into the certification process.
- Social workers and “addictions” folks have gone through these growing pains.
- Manitoba had back-up support for ECE’s to enable them to take training: workforce strategy.
- Rural online courses supported by Alberta Health site – certificate.
- A larger number level 1’s in the system.
- Orientation course gives people the false sense of knowledge.
- Who is going to pay for a bachelor’s degree? No support within the sector for the cost of education and training.
- There is a lot to consider: in-home, unlicensed and licensed; in training care; home practitioners will go underground if we required level 2; equivalences not all acceptable; apprenticeships idea; ECE education.
- We need accessible programs for ECE’s from all sectors (OSC, childcare, FDH).

### **Stakeholders**

- Children and parents/guardians/families.

- School and non-school providers of ECEC.
- University and College researchers and educators in early childhood development
- Experts in early learning.
- Experts in education and curriculum design.
- ACCA, ARCQE, ATA
- School Boards
- Other allied professionals.

### Questions

- Is mentoring possible? How would it be supported?
- How much would parents pay for childcare?
- How much would parents pay for enriched childcare (intentional, holistic, and developmentally appropriate). These answers may lead to buy-in from stakeholders.

### Next Steps

- Review current research and what goes on elsewhere.
- Define who is expected to deliver the curriculum (e.g. Children and Youth Services or Education).
- Create a draft and ask for feedback.
- Translate to practice: the child care community will need lots of support, they still do thematic programming.

### 3.3.4 Junior Kindergarten & Full Kindergarten

Participants saw some positives and some challenges in developing junior kindergarten and kindergarten options. They identified the need to consider the expansion of these programs in the broader context of early learning and care for children 0 to 6 years of age. They also commented on the need to consider how the implementation of new programs might need to look different in different communities. They commented on the need for a sustainable, long term approach to service expansion.

## **Benefits**

- It's foundational to good education.
- Required for early childhood development education.
- Continuous learning – child does not attend.
- Supports needed right across the EY (0-8) (should not be one of the drivers to move ECEC platform forward).
- The gap is widening (the haves and have nots) in terms of accessing preschool programs (We need to use the research we have to back up what we are providing).
- Kindergarten/PK are a start for sustainable funding for the sector.
- The public puts a “value” on early care and pressures political leaders to publicly fund ECD.
- Broader base of service for families.
- More children accessing early intervention.
- Great opportunity to extent “emergent curriculum” in an early learning environment bringing JK/K to this facility versus school.
- Return on investment.
- Provides equal opportunity for all children to have enriched early learning experiences before entering grade 1.
- Fully funded program for JK/K allow us to support children not previously identified ... and those who did not access regulated child care (as in many rural areas). Perhaps fully funded quality program from 0-8 would resolve this.
- The gap that exists at the beginning of KG is widening as many families don't access JK due to financial reasons.

## **Challenges**

- Public perception that we are “schooling” their children.
- Concerns that \$ would be diverted from quality 0-3 to support Pre K & K (broaden the gap)?
- Quality research-based, 0-8 system that puts the importance of the child (development of EY) at the essence.

- Please don't rob Peter to pay Paul. We need to look at a publicly funded continuum perhaps 0 to 8 years.
- What about the parent who wishes to keep their child at home? Why should they feel pressured to put their child in care, Junior Kindergarten and/or full day kindergarten?
- It should be the parent's choice if their children attend.
- Teachers for JK need to have ECD diploma – not B.ED.
- Does not meet the needs of families before 9 AM, after 3:30 PM, PD days, etc.
- Why fund JK and not existing programs?
- Current JK systems is focused on special needs.
- Full day K/JK has been turned down by government before – will they say “here it comes again”. Perhaps not the best “primary driver”.
- Concerns that 0-8 should be a focus.
- Idea is that these age groups 4-6 should be in formative “school buildings”.
- Staffing of qualified ECE's to move into this field.

### **Stakeholders**

- Parents/Caregivers (6x)
- Teachers.
- Schools Principals.
- Educational Administrators.
- School Trustees.
- Alberta Education.
- Community agencies.
- Service providers (2x).
- Local government.
- Agencies involved in childcare.
- Members of the Legislative Assembly.
- Political leadership.
- Alberta Health and Wellness.



## **Intermediaries**

- College and Universities providing programming.
- Decision makers: politicians, philanthropists.
- CFSA.

## **Considerations**

- Community: assessment of care required based on ECMap reporting; do we need 8AM-4PM programs to accommodate the need of families? Address extended hours; qualified staff available to both sectors.
- Universal pre-k funding is critical. It is not right that only children identified with needs receive pre-k funding. It is good for all children.
- Publicly funded JK/K could be a different location: e.g. YMCA, private schools, etc. Universal pre-Kindergarten.
- Community: assessment of care required based on ECMap reporting; what is the role of the program? Does it accommodate the need of families? Address extended hours? Qualified staff available to both sectors.
- A governance model to take this forward has to include stakeholders from all areas.
- JK/K programming melting both early intervention and child care needs. This programs needs to continue with summer. Before and after school care.
- Clarity required about what we mean by full day kindergarten. Do we mean for all? Do we mean mandatory?
- Fiscal support– infrastructure support, figure out barriers and how to overcome. Full day could lead to educated.
- Needs sustainability and commitment.
- Fiscal support (facilities and resources).
- Public perception and support for this is unclear.
- Parent education about quality JK/K programs: diversity of programs funded for JK full day K, preschools, childcare, family day home, home based kindergarten, programs.
- Funding for all to attend.
- Support document of programming when children have to leave: go to another center.

- School act changes: extend age to 17, funding to 21; forgot the foundation piece of 4-6 years olds.
- Learning and care of 3 /4 years olds cannot be separated.
- B/S and A/S care, 3/4 years old cannot combined with K children.
- JK/K implementation needs to be contextualized for each community – rural, urban, large metro – one brush stroke will paint the province it needs to be a mosaic approach.

### **Questions**

- How will the relationships be established? The marrying of two sectors.
- Infrastructure? Spaces? If funding ends how will there be support for parents requiring care?
- How is the infrastructure going to support this? Is there infrastructure even in place for JK/K? Is this solid and available infrastructure or temporary?
- If we funded 0- 6 well enough maybe we wouldn't need full day K or Pre-K funded.
- What about un-mandated fully funded JK/K?
- Seamless days for children that may require more than one type of program – is there a way to integrate these programs?

### **3.3.5 New Partnerships Between the Province, Municipalities and School Boards**

Participants initially considered the possible role of municipalities through an exploration of the development and implementation of the municipal service in Drayton Valley. They explored the models municipalities could use to support service delivery. Participants saw a potential for municipalities to play a larger role, but did see the challenges in sustaining this role with the current funding model. Participants expressed some concern in municipalities and school boards playing a greater role because of the potential impact on current smaller service providers, and the current challenges (provincially) around school budgets. They saw the need for clarity in mandate and purpose in moving these new partnerships forward.

### **Benefits**

- Municipalities' involvement is a key component in driving this forward.

- School boards and municipalities have the ability to push agenda if informed.
- School board and municipalities could work together and push the province. Use the Alberta Municipalities Association.
- Municipalities/School Board. Connection with local activities and actions, greater engagement and greater alignment with local groups and stronger continuity of care.
- Strong voice with Province.
- Municipalities have a voice with Province.
- Municipalities have the skills within its organization to support the “business” side of the operation.
- Ability to apply for grants.
- Close to the community.
- Aligns with an existing resource (e.g. FCSS) to get systems changing.
- Able to develop a strong business model (breakeven).
- Range of possibilities for school board and municipal leadership: can contract out and/or can deliver themselves (administrative responsibilities).

### **Challenges**

- The support for this among schools and municipalities is uneven and even weak.
- No champions for this – it will fall short.
- Recognition of early childhood as a profession from within and externally. Mandate with no resources – will be problematic.
- Support for this driver is weak at this time (this from service providers) but with a framework and mandate that articulates what we are doing they could be more comfortable.
- Better to mandate ECEC to partners with existing programs.

## **Considerations**

### **Framing**

- Frame the issue in a way that cities and municipalities can understand.
- Clarification from the province on what it means to “support” the family and the child.

### **Engaging Others**

- Get those leaders on board who will champion the benefits (e.g. seniors).
- Engage towns and government re: temporary foreign workers.
- Business needs support for foreign workers.
- Connect this to early childcare mapping initiatives.
- Business as partners. Present to them so that they see benefits.
- If province involved in the development of the framework, gives municipalities some direction and support and resources.
- Need a champion.

### **Sequencing with Other Actions**

- We must develop early the childhood as a profession first before we scale up these partnerships.
- Need provincial will, mandate, funding/resources first.
- Need a framework for early learning first.

### **Stakeholders**

- Parents and caregivers.
- Municipalities.
- Schools Boards.
- FCSS.
- CFSA.
- Business (particularly those employing foreign workers).
- Philanthropies.
- Alberta Health and Wellness.

- Alberta Education (2).
- Children's and Youth Services.
- Department of Infrastructure. This allows caretakers to have the doors open there is a need for after school care.

### **Intermediary Organizations**

- Inner City Forum (Social Policy Group) Needs conversations with municipalities, Province and School Boards.
- CFSA.
- FCSS.
- Envelope funding for ECEC. Need to have philanthropists at the table. Service providers for organizational details. School systems. People without children – young families.
- Community and family, government, school, and even ECD providers, awareness and willingness to step outside their existing box.

### **Next Steps**

- Political understanding and a champion.
- Get school and municipal buy-in.
- Build a framework, mobilize leadership, and get money, go.
- Get it mandated by government – run by a ECD specialist.
- Power will follow the funding (e.g. schools). The driving force needs to be ECE.

### **3.3.6 Public and Political Awareness**

The participants engaged enthusiastically and knowledgeably in the discussion. They reached overall consensus on the importance of both public education and education with elected officials. They saw some openness amongst government members to listen to new messages around ECEC. Participants identified the critical need to get the messages right in order to have the desired impact, and acknowledged that there might well be a series of key messages that extend beyond economic arguments for investing in ECEC.

## **Benefits**

- Allows framework to move forward.
- Calls for change now are well-timed. There are some opportunities for changes and support for change (still some way from full support for change).
- The level of openness (support) varies by individual ministries. There is apparent support in the Ministry of Education for change and some support in the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.
- Universal approach.
- Climate conducive to new opportunity.
- Has long term economic impact.
- Based on research/business case.
- Public more responsive to brain development argument.

## **Challenges**

- Ministry support is disjointed.
- What is the “it”?
- “Old Boys” don’t think it is their responsibility.
- Not all access idea of collective responsibility.
- High risk or targeted strategy versus universal/equity approach.
- While individual governments are perhaps open to change – they are not being pressured to consider significant change at present.
- There may be some risk in placing too much emphasis on economic arguments alone . . . there is value in emphasizing the social importance of the early years and considering the links to civil society.
- The recent BC study 15 by 15 has a very strong economic focus that can perhaps put people off. It may also oversell the economic case which is risky.

## Considerations

### The Message

- What we know about ‘brain development’ tells that that we need to begin much earlier in supporting early child development (i.e. how that brain forms prematurely and early engagement with parents and primary caregivers to create foundational learning pathways) than when children enter childcare or school.
- We need to answer a key question: why would politicians and the public support additional investments in ECEC? What are the arguments that will convince them that public investments are important? Other jurisdictions have considered this and come up with different answers. In Australia, for example, the focus is on a productivity agenda.
- Political leaders are looking at long term economic returns for investments in ECEC. Some parallels with information presented on homelessness that helped to create the homelessness initiative. Realization that investments in prevention and service helped reduce costs in the long term.
- ECEC can be shown to have economic value and economic impact.
- 15 years ago much of the focus and support for investments in early intervention was linked to belief that these types of services reduced costs in the long term.
- The new research on early brain development presents some support for economic investments in ECEC, but can also be used to present arguments that draw on health and social interests/benefits.
- Public education could include a strong focus on the science of early brain development and the importance of the early years.
- The recently released MOH report entitled “Let’s Talk” takes a broader focus on ECD which is also important to consider.
- The recent discussions of inclusion in education in the province have emphasized the need to consider broader community benefits and value.
- Governments and the public need to consider the differences between arguments in support of universal supports and those that focus on targeted services and interventions. Governments have shown support for more targeted interventions.
- If the messages for the public are framed correctly we can avoid obvious differences in the various arguments and present a stronger better message.

- Quality of life – Healthy Alberta. Consistent accessible quality early child care, early child education, promotes a quality of life that government is willing to listen to.
- Focus on the optimizing the health and well-being of Albertans.
- Find out what are the foundations that childcare workers agree upon. Find these methodologies, techniques, learning’s etc. that workers agree upon and use this as the base foundation to move forward on.
- Benefits that exist as to why government should listen: quality of care and quality of life is key; the social return on investment shows the significant impact economically; the social impact on healthy child development is well documented.
- In approaching various groups, focus on why early year’s development is important to their organization: e.g. municipalities, schools boards, community organizations (e.g. United Way).
- Must have vision/values/principles articulated as the basis for discussions.
- It must be contextual to rural, urban and large metropolitan. Some structures may already be in place to advance the importance of early years (e.g. United Way, Government Relations Committee).
- Strategic decision needs to be made on scope in order to determine the message: early childhood education versus ECEC or early learning or ECD. Suggest advocating the framework broadly, using ECD.
- Opportunity for moving even further to optimizing the health of the population – even further ahead of prevention.
- Norlien Foundation has communicated strong messages to elected officials – not without some controversy.
- Questions remain as to what the support for change (or openness to change) focusses on.
- Politicians will need to see that the public puts a value on ECEC.

### **Openness to Messages**

- Government openness to messaging. The business case for early education is the cost-benefit; business influences government.
- Prevention in early childhood not intervention becoming more important (Calgary Council of Champions mention to government why early education is important).



- The time is ripe for prevention: cross ministerial work to fully address this issue: we need to be coordinated in our efforts with our message to further investment in all children, with focus on quantifiable deliverables, empirical evidence.
- Need to re-look at how we find programs for cross-sectoral movement. Hook in with identified strategies that we link to Perinatal strategy, early childhood development, Addiction and Mental Health, etc.
- Business leaders are open to supporting early years. Business leaders see the economic advantages for investing in early years. Business leaders can influence political leaders.
- The timing is great. It's a perfect storm for investing in early childhood education and care. The early year's investment will give children and families every opportunity to be supported, to minimize the need for prevention, early intervention, intervention.
- Shouldn't be concerned with whether government is open to discussions on quality childcare or not. If there is a need for government to hear this, then the stakeholders just need to make sure that the "story" is researched properly, positioned properly, and brought forward with the sustainable solutions.

### **Questions**

- Who is the body that can invite key stakeholders to the table to discuss a possible framework? Muttart Foundation is politically neutral. Are there others? We can't have a body that will be criticized in the event that a single stakeholder is missed out.

### **Stakeholders**

- Health system, whether that is AH&W, AHS or BOTH.
- To move this forward, it would be good to engage a multi-sector group in a leadership role: AUMA, AAMDC, FCSS, ASBA, United Way (a consortium).

### **Next Steps**

- Need credible organization to take this on.
- Need something to take forward.
- Strong, consistent messages will need to be delivered to at least three main ministries: Education, Health and Wellness and Children and Youth Services.

- Some credible body with a broad mandate and perhaps a collective mandate needs to move this forward. Muttart has some credibility here as does Success by 6 and the UW in Calgary through UpStart.
- We need to develop a better understanding of where the particular stakeholder groups are currently placed in terms of their understandings. We need to engage them with broader messages at first.
- There are needs for both public education and education with elected officials.

## Attachment A – List of Participants

Full Name	Job Title	
Dr. Heather Raymond	Principal, K.I.D.S. Amiskwaciy Academy	Edmonton Public School Board
Dr. Jane Hewes	Chair, Early Learning & Child Care	MacEwan
Dr. Joanne Baxter	Instructor	Mount Royal University, Child & Youth Studies
Dr. Ruth Collins-Nakai	Director	The Muttart Foundation
	Director, Community Partnerships & Community Strategies/Support	
Mr. Ken Dropka		Government of Alberta, Children and Youth Services
Mr. Michael Phair		
Mr. Phil Carlton	Director	UpStart Champions for Children & Youth
Ms. Andrea Thiessen	Department of Human Services	Grande Prairie Regional College
Ms. Annalise Yuzda	General Manager, Child Care Services	YMCA
Ms. Annette Driessen	Director of Community Services	Town of Drayton Valley
Ms. Bernice Taylor	Program Manager	Early Childhood Development Centre
Ms. Chantelle Normand		United Way of Alberta Capital Region
Ms. Corine Gannon	District Principal	Edmonton Catholic School District
Ms. Darlene Frith	Director	Manning Early Childhood Child Care Program
Ms. Debra Polischuk	Supervisory - Instructional Support Team, Area D	Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District #1
Ms. Gail Campbell	Director, Early Learning Branch	Government of Alberta
Ms. Ingrid Morden	Early Childhood Consultant	Lethbridge School District No. 51
Ms. Isabelle Plomp	Early Intervention Specialist	Palliser Regional Schools
Ms. Janice Popp	Managing Director, Innovation & Business Development	Alberta Centre for Child, Family & Community Research
Ms. Jenny Kain		City of Edmonton
Ms. Joan Green	System Principal - Early Learning	Calgary Board of Education
Ms. Judy Hillier	Director of Primary Services	Medicine Hat School District No. 76
Ms. Karen Baretta	Executive Director	Alberta Child Care Association
Ms. Karin Freiberg	Early Learning Consultant, Peace River and Area	Alliance of Early Learning Programs
Ms. Kim Pinnock	Senior Northern Development Officer	Northern Alberta Development Council
Ms. La Vonne Rideout	Community Development Zone Coordinator	Early Child Development: Mapping Project (ECMap)
	Senior Manager of Child Development Services, Child Care Branch	
Ms. Leann Wagner		Govt. of Alberta, Children/Youth Services, Child Care
Ms. Lee Watt	Child Care Licensing Supervisor	CFSA - Region 4
Ms. Leslie Barker	Research Project Coordinator - Early Childhood Team	Alberta Health Services
Ms. Louise Forest	Project Manager, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health	Government of Alberta, Health and Wellness
Ms. Lynn Groves Hautmann	President and CEO	Chrysalis
Ms. Margaret Golberg	Executive Director	Community Options
Ms. Margaret Jev	Early Years Strategy Lead	United Way of Calgary , Upstart
Ms. Marilyn Boisvert	Consultant	Alliance of Early Learning Programs - Region 8
Ms. Marjorie Cole	President	Calgary Preschool Teachers Association

Ms. Michelle MacKinnon	Early Childhood Services Coordinator	Holy Spirit Catholic Schools
Ms. Nicki Dublenko	Executive Director	Child Development Dayhomes
Ms. Pat Caulfield Fontaine	Chair & Instructor, Early Learning and Child Care	Grande Prairie Regional College
Ms. Patricia Lynch-Staunton	Program Advisor, Early Education	Lethbridge College
Ms. Patricia Mackenzie	Board Member	Success by 6
Ms. Sarina DeLange	Director	High Five
Ms. Sharon Lagace	Director	Watch Me Grow Family Child Care
Ms. Shelley Birchard	Manager, Children and Youth Mental Health and FASD	Alberta Health and Wellness
Ms. Shirley Dawley		CFSA - Region 4
Ms. Susan Abells	Partner, Abells Henry Public Affairs	The Abells Group Inc.
Ms. Susan Garrow-Oliver	Assistant Professor	Mount Royal University
Ms. Tanis Cochrane	Vice President - Children & Youth Strategy	YMCA Calgary
Ms. Teresa McReynolds-Tupper	Community Services Clerk	County of Northern Lights
Ms. Wendy Yewman	Executive Manager, Regional Office	Child & Family Services Region 6
Ms. Yvonne Chiu	Executive Director	Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative Ltd.

**Facilitators**

Dr. Jeff Bisanz  
Mr. Mark Cabaj  
Ms. Gloria Chalmers  
Ms. Muriel Dunnigan  
Ms. Liz McCord  
Dr. Christopher Smith  
Ms. Tara Stang

## Attachment B – Agenda for October 11, 2011

### **In the Best Interests of Children and Families: A Plenary Discussion of Early Childhood Education and Care in Alberta**

**Tuesday, October 11, 2011  
10: 00 am to 4:00 pm  
St. Bede’s School  
10537 – 44 Street, Edmonton**

#### **Meeting Agenda**

**9:30 Coffee & Refreshments**

**10:00 Introduction and Meeting Overview**

**10:10 Summary of the Regional Forums**

Presentation of Forum Findings

- Discussions on the current state of early childhood education and care
- Discussions on a new approach
- Discussions on change and the implications of change

Small Group Conversations

*(Background Document: In the Best Interests of Children and Families: A Discussion of Early Childhood Education and Care in Alberta – A Synthesis of Regional Discussions)*

**11:00 Moving Forward: An ECEC Framework with Strategic Drivers For Change**

Presentation of Possible Change Strategy Ideas

- The challenge of making change in a complex environment
- The concept of an Alberta Early Childhood and Education and Care Framework
- Possible starting points or drivers for change

The development of a College of ECEs

The development of a curriculum framework for ECEC environments

The increase in education and formal training requirements for ECEs

The introduction of publicly funded JK and the expansion of K to full-day

The development of new partnerships between the province and municipalities and/or school boards to expand service delivery

#### Facilitated Small Group Discussions

1. What are your thoughts about moving forward with an ECEC framework and pursuing change around strategic drivers?
2. Are the proposed strategic drivers reasonable places to start?
3. Are there additional, important strategic drivers that are missing?

#### **12:00 Lunch**

#### **12:45 Rotation 1: An Alberta ECEC Framework**

Brief Presentation – The Concept of an ECEC Framework

#### Facilitated Small Group Discussions

1. What are the potential benefits and challenges of creating a framework for ECEC in Alberta?
2. What should the framework contain?
3. Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved to create a framework?
4. What are the things we need to keep in mind in order to develop a robust framework that is supported by key stakeholders and helpful for moving forward?
5. What are the key actions or next steps required to move work in this area forward?

Facilitators will briefly report back on group discussions

#### **2:00 Strategic Driver Discussion: Rotation 1**

Brief overview of process

#### Facilitated Small Group Discussions

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this driver as it relates to a more robust ECEC sector in Alberta?
2. Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved to move it forward?
3. How would you rate the support for this strategic driver (e.g. weak, average, strong) including government and other stakeholders?
4. What are the key actions or next steps required to move work in this area forward?
5. What questions do you have about this driver?

**2:40 Transition & Break**

**2:50 Strategic Driver Discussion: Rotation 2**

Repeat of first rotation process

Facilitators will briefly report back on group discussions

**3:30 Reflections**

Open Plenary Discussions

1. What do we need to keep in mind to ensure that we are successful in moving forward?
2. How do you feel you can contribute to moving forward?
3. Other thoughts and observations

**3:50 Looking Ahead - Next Steps**

**4:00 Meeting Close**