

Early Learning and Child Care Regional Table TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

The regional table is intended to address the development of an Ontario First Nations-specific approach for early learning and child care services and programming. The Early Learning and Child Care Regional Table (ELCCRT) will support all First Nations in Ontario as they assert their sovereignty, jurisdiction, and their chosen expression of nationhood.

Purpose

The ELCCRT will assist in developing a coordinated approach to early learning and child care services and programs. The focus of the ELCCRT is achieving a shared vision of high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care programs and services.

Guiding Principles

1. **Open, Respectful, and Transparent:** Representatives acknowledge and commit to honest, open, and transparent communication.
2. **Timely and Effective Communication:** Representatives acknowledge the responsibility to communicate in a timely fashion to their respective leadership and communities that they represent.
3. **Accountability:** Representatives support the principle of accountability. This includes accountability to Political Leadership, decision makers, and to each other for programs and services.
4. **Evidence-Informed:** Representatives will consider the best available evidence including qualitative, quantitative, and experiential information.

Agreements, Initiatives and First Nation Sovereignty:

Nothing in this Terms of Reference shall supersede any pre-existing agreements, understandings, or working relationships that may currently exist between a First Nation or First Nations and the Province, or First Nations and the Federal Government.

Nothing in this Terms of Reference shall limit the ability of an individual First Nation or service delivery agency from entering into agreements in any matter that they should choose to pursue. This reflects respect for First Nation's sovereignty.

Mandate/Objective

The ELCCRT will discuss and advise on issues relating to early learning and childcare, and will:

- Support First Nations to assert jurisdiction over early years, child care and all 0-12 children's services
- Collaborate with all members in the development of priorities and goals
- Discuss policy, planning, and the delivery of 0-12 children's services
- Analyze and mitigate any potential impacts of changes to early learning and childcare policy and delivery.
- Address gaps in data for First Nations populations to build the evidence base for ongoing change in accordance with OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession)
- Provide best advice on all Provincial and Federal funding agreements for First Nation ELCC.

In addition, the membership may decide to establish sub-groups periodically to address specific issues as required.

All activities, recommendations, and reports provided by this table will go to the Social Services Coordination Unit, the Chiefs Committee on Social, and the Chiefs in Assembly for approval and final decisions.

The ELCCRT will develop and approve an annual work plan identifying key priorities, timelines, and resources required.

Membership

The ELCCRT will consist of the following members:

- One ELCC representative from each Provincial Territorial Organization who is not a current SSCU member. This representative must be delegated by the Leadership of each PTO, IFN, and Unaffiliated First Nation and their contact information sent to COO for establishing a contact group. This includes:
 - Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI)
 - Grand Council Treaty #3 (GCT#3)
 - Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)
 - Union of Ontario Indians: Anishinabek Nation UOI
 - Independent First Nations (IFN)
 - Six Nations of the Grand River
 - Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
 - Mushkegowuk Council

- Unaffiliated First Nations
- One representative from the Ontario First Nation Young Peoples Council
- Elders and Knowledge Keepers

Alternates are encouraged to attend meetings. As required, other organizations will be invited.

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

All members are responsible for:

- reviewing materials provided before each meeting;
- participating in meetings and advising on items presented for discussion;
- actively considering ideas and issues raised;
- helping to build agreement between differing viewpoints or competing priorities to provide consensus advice;
- reviewing and providing feedback on materials drafted; and
- Maintaining the confidentiality of materials, discussions, and recommendations, as agreed to by the table.

Meetings and Procedures

Meetings will occur as required and as determined by the work plan. Each member will provide updates to their respective First Nation leadership.

Confidentiality

The Table may have access to information that is considered confidential. This will be stated concerning what information specifically is confidential and the time frame that this confidentiality is in place.

These terms of reference are agreed to by all members by consensus.

Last updated May 26, 2023