QUALITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY (QIDEA)

PROVINCIAL POLICY, STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Early Learning, Inclusion and Child Development Branch

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

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Introduction:

Children in Newfoundland and Labrador have the right to fully participate in early learning and child care (ELCC). The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to providing child-centred, strengths-based, play-based early learning and child care programs that are free from discrimination. This commitment includes ensuring all children have fair access to opportunities and services that support their belonging and wellbeing.

One of the main goals of the Early Learning, Inclusion and Child Development Branch of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is to ensure that children have opportunities to thrive in ELCC environments. To help children thrive, ELCC providers are expected to engage with children and create opportunities for them to take part fully in their communities. A rights-based approach recognizes children as active contributors to shared experiences with their peers, families, and communities.

Quality, inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible (QIDEA) ELCC environments are places where all children are welcome and feel they belong. These environments build on children's strengths and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate and thrive. This includes welcoming children of all abilities, beliefs, practices, ethnicities, languages, religions, cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, expressions, interests, and physical abilities—as well as any other aspect that makes each person unique. Welcoming all children requires developing respectful relationships with children, families, and communities to create learning environments where everyone is valued.

The QIDEA Policy and Standards Manual uses a strength-based approach that plans for environments where all children can belong. In this approach, resources are used to reduce barriers to participation. A key question is: Are resources being used to improve children's experiences in the learning environment?

In QIDEA ELCC environments, people are not supports. While people can be supportive, supports are tools that promote independence and meaningful participation. These may include assistive technology, education and training focused on diversity and inclusion, universal design for learning, and accessible physical or digital design.

Strategies are the actions taken to remove barriers, increase independence, and create opportunities for children to participate and contribute.

Resources are the connections needed to access supports and strategies. Resources include the people, time, and funding required to obtain tools and carry out actions that

meet needs or reduce barriers to participation. Resources are only effective when guided by a well-designed plan focused on supporting children's growth and development.

Understanding children's experiences, planning appropriate supports, being flexible with strategies, and having access to the right resources are essential. Requesting resources without a clear plan can sometimes make it harder to meet children's needs required to support growth and development.

Purpose:

The QIDEA Policy and Standards Manual provides the policies and standards that ELCC providers must follow to create and maintain environments that are high-quality, inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible. The manual is meant to guide families, early childhood educators (ECEs), and other early learning and care professionals. It describes evidence-based practices and quality interactions that support children's and families' wellbeing and sense of belonging across ELCC settings.

Providers must create ELCC environments that are welcoming, safe, caring, and free of barriers for children and families. These environments need to recognize and build on children's unique identities, strengths, ideas, and interests.

ECEs and service providers must understand and acknowledge the diversity within children's communities. Communities are vibrant, and all people have many different parts to their identity. These parts are connected and cannot be viewed separately.

ELCC providers are expected to use this manual to ensure their programs and services follow the QIDEA policies and standards described here, as well as requirements found in legislation.

Application:

The QIDEA Policy and Standards Manual must always be applied in a way that supports and protects children's equitable access to ELCC environments, programs, and services. This means that all applications from children and families are welcomed and accepted, attendance is encouraged.

If there are exceptional circumstances where the QIDEA policies or standards need to be applied differently, this must be approved by the Provincial Director of Program and Policy in the Early Learning, Inclusion and Child Development Branch of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The QIDEA Policy and Standards Manual applies to all ELCC environments, programs, services, and all professionals connected to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This includes associations and organizations such as but not limited to the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL); family child care agencies; approved early childhood educator (ECE) post-secondary program curricula; centre-based child care providers; family-based child care providers; family resource centres and associations; and public libraries.

Principles:

The following principles of quality, inclusion, diversity, equity and access guide practices and approaches within ELCC settings.

Quality	All children are actively involved in play that interests them and feel a sense of belonging in warm, welcoming ELCC environments. This includes having well-trained ECEs/providers and environments that build on children's strengths, use available resources well, and support meaningful engagement for every child.
Inclusion	All ELCC programs and services must create and provide access to inclusive spaces where every child has a fair chance to play, learn, and take part. This includes children with disabilities, children from all cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds, and children with different interests or support needs. The Human Rights Act, [SNL2010 CHAPTER H-13.1 - HUMAN RIGHTS ACT, 2010](#) reminds us that everyone has the right to be treated fairly.
Diversity	Everyone in an ELCC setting is expected to treat every child with respect and dignity. All children—no matter their abilities, backgrounds, cultures, identities, beliefs, languages, or families—have the right to fully take part in the ELCC environment.
Equity	ELCC means recognizing children's uniqueness and designing programs and learning experiences that ensure children's participation, so they can thrive in environments that are accessible and appropriate.
Access	ELCC environments are places where children feel welcome and can learn and participate in play through appropriate access to outdoor time and interest-based experiences. The Accessibility Act, [Accessibility Act - Social Supports and Well-Being](#) shows how using the right materials, tools, and accessible spaces helps all children take part in learning, care, and community activities.

Legislative Authority and Relevant Documents:

The Child Care Act and Child Care Regulations outline the requirements for operating regulated child care in the province.

Relevant legislation and other documents which outline the rights of children, families and participants in child care, include the: Accessibility Act; Child and Youth Advocate Act; Human Rights Act; Labour Standards Act; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Canadian Bill of Rights; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities; and, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Behaviours

When we talk about inclusion, people often raise concerns about "challenging" child behaviours. In ELCC settings, the expectations for children to follow rules or manage their emotions on their own can be very high. These expectations may not match what is developmentally appropriate for young children.

All behaviour—whether from children or adults—is a form of communication. Instead of thinking of behaviour as good (compliant) or bad (non-compliant), it can help to see it as a temporary emotional and physical response. Children may react to things in their environment, their relationships, their experiences, or other factors we may or may not know about. As child care professionals, it is important to stay curious about what children might be feeling or trying to express, how they are responding, and how we can support them as they work through these moments. Some behaviours may happen many times, while others are brief or happen only once. These policies aim to shift the focus from expecting compliance to supporting the wellbeing of children and adults.

The overall atmosphere of an ELCC environment plays a key role. Fewer challenging behaviours tend to occur in settings that focus on children's strengths and interests. These environments are calm, thoughtful, and flexible. They offer children a variety of materials and experiences, as well as flexible routines for play, meals, and snacks. Challenging behaviours are less common when children have long periods of uninterrupted play—indoors and outdoors—and when they have many chances to make choices and follow their own interests. It is also important for early childhood educators and providers to reflect on how they view their own behaviour and the behaviour of others, including the children in their care.

Planning

Planning is part of everyday interactions with children and part of all areas of an ELCC environment. High-quality planning is strength-based, meaning ECEs focus on children's strengths and interests. ECEs pay close attention to children's play and talk with children and colleagues about how to build on those play interests the next day.

By engaging with children and colleagues, ECEs also identify and address barriers that some children may experience. While planning ways to extend play opportunities, they also plan how to remove these barriers so that all children have fair and meaningful opportunities to follow their interests.

Planning includes a shared understanding that all children and families are welcome. When needed, documents listed in the section on legislative authority can be used to help everyone develop a shared perspective on how and why all children and families are included.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for everyone, and Tiered Supports for some children, are two approaches that help create a range of ways for children and families to engage and participate.

Components of ELCC Environments

There are two main parts of ELCC environments:

- **Physical environments**

  These include indoor and outdoor spaces, shared community spaces, and forms of transportation. Physical environments are made up of many things, such as:

  - schedules and routines
  - equipment and toys
  - children's books
  - learning centres and materials
  - food and clothing
  - buildings, weather, water, sand, and other natural materials

- **Social and emotional environments**

  These include the interests, wellbeing, behaviours, and attitudes of children and ECEs. They also include:

  - planning

- peer interactions
- relationships between children and adults
- connections between home and ELCC settings
- relationships with cultures, materials, play, activities, projects, books, routines, responsibilities, and transitions

Questions/Inquiries:

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Policy No.1: Access and Participation in ELCC Environments
Effective Date:
Date Revised:
Policy Cross References:
Legislative References:

Policy Statement:

To predict and prevent barriers and to extend children's play, early childhood educators (ECEs) must pay close attention to the ways that children play, communicate, interact with peers, their routines, and surroundings. Observation, documentation, and planning are essential to recognizing, planning and removing barriers to participation.

Children who use ELCC services must be able to take part fully in all activities. The steps needed to remove barriers can be different for each setting, each child, and each family. To notice and prevent barriers—and to help extend children's play—ECEs need to pay close attention to how children play, communicate, interact with others, and move through their routines and surroundings.

Observation, documentation, and planning are essential for recognizing barriers, planning supports, and taking action to remove barriers so all children can participate.

Standards:

1. Continual Efforts to Remove Barriers

Everyone in an ELCC environment works together to identify barriers and make sure they are understood, addressed, and removed so children and families can fully participate. Members of the ELCC community pay close attention to how children play and communicate. This helps them predict and prevent new barriers and build on children's ideas, interests, and play.

Removing barriers is an important part of observing children, keeping notes about their interests, and planning for meaningful participation.

2. Communication with Families

Families know their children best, and their knowledge is essential in creating accessible and engaging environments. ELCC services must listen carefully and communicate clearly with families to support working together.

3. Responsive Relationships

Members of ELCC environments listen closely to the insights shared by children, families, community agencies, and experts. These insights help guide planning and programming. This is one of the main purposes of strong relationships and open communication.

Listening carefully and responding warmly are key elements of human interaction. They help build relationships, support problem-solving, and show care and understanding.

4. Flexible Daily Practices

Members of ELCC environments are expected to be interested, engaged, and flexible in their daily practices to welcome and support full participation by all children and families. This includes, but is not limited to:

- encouraging spontaneous learning moments
- keeping some transitions brief
- offering long periods of uninterrupted play (artistic, constructive, pretend, storytelling, sensory, outdoor, inquiry-based)
- providing flexible schedules and expectations
- welcoming visitors
- offering flexible snack and meal times
- creating many opportunities for movement, indoors and outdoors
- encouraging children to continue or return to their play across days

This also means supporting all types of play—individual, cooperative, associative, parallel, and collaborative—without treating one type as more important than the others.

ECEs create spontaneous learning opportunities, reduce long transition times, use songs and music, and weave pretend play and movement throughout the day. They build the curriculum around children's strengths and interests. ECEs provide 'just enough' support to help a child learn a skill that is slightly beyond what they can do independently, making learning visible and meaningful.

When children are deeply engaged in play and it is time to move to another activity (such as going outside or having a snack), staff must allow children to save their play if it is not ready to be finished. For example, if children are building with natural materials or creating artwork, there needs to be a space where they can keep their work and return to it later.

While learning to clean up is important, encouraging children to return to their play encourages imagination, creativity, motivation and to enjoy learning.

Procedures:

1. ECEs and service providers support children's sense of self through respectful and responsive interactions, and by valuing and encouraging their interests.

    1.1 ECEs and service providers understand that they help shape and support children's identities in positive ways.
    1.2 ECEs and service providers understand that early learning and care is meant to nourish children's play, interests, and wellbeing.
    1.3 ECEs and service providers work with families to learn about children's strengths and interests, rather than focusing on what children cannot do. ELCC services are for learning and child care.
    1.4 ECEs and service providers understand the importance of keeping personal information about children and families private.

2. ECEs and service providers reflect on their own perspectives and practices.
    2.1 All adults understand that interactions based on unintentional prejudice or assumptions may be harmful. They seek support from ELICD consultants and community agencies and expertise when these feelings or rigid approaches appear.
    2.2 ECEs and service providers learn to identify and remove deficit-focused approaches in their teaching and care.
    2.3 ECEs and service providers recognize that missing information, prejudice, or negative attitudes within the service may create barriers to participation for some children and families.

3. Welcoming all enrolled children and supporting their participation is core work for ELICD, ECEs, and providers.
    3.1 Services must require staff to support full and equitable participation for all enrolled children. This is a requirement for ECE certification, licensing, licence renewal, participation in the Wage Grid, and the Operating Grant Program.

3.2 Negative messages directed toward children or families are serious and may violate the Children, Youth and Families Act, the Human Rights Act, the Accessibility Act, or the Child Care Act.

4 QIDEA values must be communicated clearly in the child care service handbook and in all communication with children and families.
    4.1 QIDEA ELCC services are committed to the principle that every child deserves opportunities to grow and develop fully.
    4.2 QIDEA principles must be included in all child care service policies, programs, and approaches.

5 At QIDEA services, all members work to foster respect, value differences, and identify bias and prejudice.
    5.1 Administrators, pedagogical leaders, mentors, providers, and ECEs take immediate action to address harmful attitudes and behaviours. They follow-up with conversations and practices that counter deficit-focused, behaviours toward children or adults.
    5.2 Providers create an environment that communicates that children and families belong. Belonging is experienced through warm, trusting relationships with peers and ECEs.

6 ELCC providers make daily efforts to learn about children's strengths and interests and to remove barriers to participation.
    6.1 ECEs and service providers create opportunities for children and families to be seen, respected, and valued in the child care service.
    6.2 QIDEA-compliant ELCC services are committed to ensuring every child has opportunities to develop to their fullest potential.

7 ELCC providers gather family feedback each year and use it to improve their services.
    7.1 Providers learn from families about what is going well.
    7.2 Providers ask families about areas that may need improvement.
    7.3 Exemplary services collect feedback more frequently.

8 Services provide many regular opportunities for families to contribute to contribute to children's learning and care.
    8.1 ECEs and providers understand that families are children's first educators. Knowledge from home improves the quality of children's experiences in early learning and care.

8.1.1 ECEs and providers create chances for families to share home knowledge—including children's interests, abilities, and strengths—when they start and throughout their time at the service.

8.1.2 Families are welcomed to contribute to ongoing displays or children's files. "Getting to know you" activities, family photos, stories, and items from home help strengthen the connection between ELCC and home and support children's sense of belonging.

9   Services seek family input about special occasions and significant family events.

9.1 ECEs and service providers create opportunities for families to share occasions of cultural or personal importance, such as holidays or the arrival of a new sibling.

9.2 ECEs and service providers ensure children's home lives are recognized, respected, and valued in ELCC environments.

10 ECEs and service providers use inclusive, person-first language. Tone and word choice are very important.

10.1   ELCC providers understand that words may mean different things to different people and that language can create barriers to participation.

10.2   Pedagogical leaders at the service and at ELICD guide administrators, ECEs, and consultants in thinking about diversity and in establishing clear expectations that forms of prejudice will not be tolerated.

10.3   ECEs and providers support children in understanding about diversity. All children and families are welcome – this is non-negotiable.

11 QIDEA and licensing consultants help design and support inclusive and accessible environments using UDL and tiered approaches.

11.1   For existing services, this includes:

11.1.1 implementing accessibility requirements in the Child Care Act and Regulations, Accessibility Act, and Human Rights Act;

11.1.2 consulting with families, community agencies, experts, and ELICD;

11.1.3 coaching and mentoring that encourages a growth mindset;

11.1.4 participating in ongoing professional learning;

11.1.5 empowering educators to make necessary changes to the environment; and,

11.1.6 prioritizing flexible scheduling.

11.2   For new services, this means planning and introducing accessibility measures before construction, following UDL principles and tiered approaches.

11.3   For early learning professionals, this includes accessing community-based agencies and QIDEA consultation services.

11.4   Consultants and community organizations work with ELCC providers to identify, reduce and remove barriers; ensure equitable access; supports, and build professional skills and resources.

11.4.1 Refusal to identify, address or remove barriers may result in violation orders or loss of public funding.

12 The QIDEA Team provides tailored support to families during transitions into, within, and out of ELCC settings.

13 The QIDEA Team assists with planning and coordinating supports and referrals for children when needed.

Quality ELCC Environments

Policy No. 2: **Quality ELCC Environments**

Effective Date:

Date Revised:

Policy Cross References:

Legislative References:

Policy Statement:

Quality ELCC environments—inside and outdoors—are welcoming spaces that encourage children to play, be curious, explore, and enjoy learning. Children make decisions about their play. Educators create rich opportunities for play, exploration, and discovery by building on each child's strengths, interests, and unique ways of engaging with the world.

When children have access to a variety of materials and resources that interest them, they can stay involved in play for longer periods of time. This kind of play is naturally motivating and helps children be active, engaged participants. By observing children, ECEs can offer additional materials or resources that help children continue exploring and learning. These materials and resources enable children's continued interest.

For example, in the natural materials or loose parts areas, if children are interested in animals and want to build homes or structures for the animals, they need enough materials. Enough materials prevent disagreements that may occur because children may have different ideas about what they want to build. Abundant materials encourage children to take part in the play.

Standards:

1. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

UDL frameworks are used to create child-centred, well-organized learning environments that welcome diversity. These environments offer many ways for children to express themselves and encourage play and engagement. ELCC environments—indoors and outdoors—must be welcoming, inviting, and full of a variety of materials for children. They must encourage different types of play, exploration, and learning for individuals and groups.

2. **Removal of Barriers in the Environment**

Removing barriers must be an ongoing priority in all ELCC environments. This applies during daily teaching, learning, and care, and when spaces are redesigned, reorganized, or children's ideas and interests change.

3. **Environments as the Third Teacher**

Families are children's first teachers. Educators are their second teachers. Environments are considered the third teacher.

ELCC services must carefully organize and prepare both physical and social environments as part of daily planning. This includes arranging safe, child-friendly, and engaging spaces indoors, outside, in community locations, and during transportation. It also includes planning materials, meals, routines, schedules, attitudes, and interactions that shape relationships.

Quality, inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible environments help children develop a sense of place as they practice routines and transitions. ECEs help children feel familiar and comfortable in indoor, outdoor, and community spaces. This sense of place supports children's belonging and long-term wellbeing.

4. **Interaction and Responsiveness**

Strong interactions between people are at the heart of children's learning, growth, and development in ELCC environments. Providers are responsible for offering spaces with many materials, experiences, and opportunities for communication.

Communication happens in many ways and often includes language, early literacy, inquiry, and emotional connection. ECEs notice and respond to children's cues and extend their interests through back-and-forth exchanges. Interactions are centred on the child and consider how children and families start connections and share their interests.

These interactions build trust, confidence, belonging, and wellbeing. Through them, ECEs help shape children's identities. Children and adults develop caring and appreciation for others through participation in ELCC environments.

ECEs and providers model respect, interest, and curiosity. They create opportunities to welcome diverse abilities and inclusive perspectives through children's literature, art, events, and experiences. These opportunities help all members of the community understand that everyone belongs.

5. **Children's Interests as Central Focus**

Children's ideas and interests guide ELCC environments, homerooms, and outdoor spaces. ELCC providers work with families to understand children's strengths and interests and offer programs that encourage active participation in all parts of the service.

Children and adults develop a positive sense of self in respectful and responsive ELCC settings. Children have joyful and meaningful experiences as their identities grow. ECEs model respect and curiosity.

ECEs take part in co-creating children's identities by frequently affirming children's sense of self and planning experiences that extend and enrich play. ELCC environments must support strong relationships between children and adults. Children who experience caring and appreciation from adults learn self-appreciation and self-care.

6. **Documentation**

Documentation is important and helps with planning, identifying patterns, individual and Documentation plays an important role in planning, noticing patterns, understanding individual and group interests, and promoting engagement. ELCC providers must create documentation that affirms children's identities and makes their learning visible.

Documentation includes full observations of children during play, routines, transitions, and interactions. ELCC providers document any concerns related to growth, development, or participation and work with families to plan appropriate supports. Documentation also includes children's creations.

7. **Family Participation**

Families play a key role in creating meaningful learning environments by sharing knowledge that enriches experiences for all children. ELCC providers encourage family participation by meeting with families to discuss observations and documentation and by requesting informed consent when working with community agencies.

ECEs and administrators respond positively to family requests to plan for, participate in, and contribute to children's learning.

8. **Professional Learning**

ELCC providers participate in evidence-based professional learning that encourages a growth mindset and builds skills to support QIDEA in their services. This learning helps reduce barriers in homerooms and in all indoor and outdoor spaces. Professional learning also focuses on how ECEs help children participate, learn, and grow through play.

Procedures:

1. ECEs and service providers must use UDL principles and tiered supports in their ELCC service.

2. ECEs must prepare for and take part in planning sessions for the children in their homerooms. Administrators must attend planning sessions for children and for programming at their services.

3. ECEs must regularly provide long periods of uninterrupted play—indoors, outside, and in community space—with a wide variety of materials and sensory experiences.

4. ECEs and service providers must support children's play and encourage them to explore what interests them, indoors and outside.
    4.1 They pay close attention to children's play.
    4.2 They document what children are interested in.
    4.3 They plan to build on children's interests the next day or at the next opportunity.
    4.4 They ask children about their interests and create ways to extend those interests.

5. ECEs and service providers document all children's play and curiosities.
    5.1 They check with children to make sure they understand their interests correctly.
    5.2 They use documentation to support planning.
    5.3 They work with children to make their learning visible through things like wall displays, learning stories, digital records, or showing their creations.

6 ECEs and service providers must build connections with the community around the child care service, and welcome visitors from the children's communities.
    6.1 They understand that belonging comes from feeling connected to a place.
    6.2 They understand that positive experiences in familiar places support lifelong wellbeing.
    6.3 They understand that a sense of place helps children and adults feel stable, especially during transitions.

9. ECEs and service providers must offer guidance, coaching, and mentoring to help identify barriers to all enrolled children's participation in ELCC environments.

9.1 This includes observing play and strengthening communication and relationships with children, families, ECEs, and ELCC providers.

9.2 It includes creating learning experiences that spark and extend children's interests.

9.3 It includes:

    9.3.1 Regular planned and unplanned engagement with children during play, including observation, documentation, and planning.

    9.3.2 Identifying barriers and finding solutions.

    9.3.3 Involving families in removing barriers.

    9.3.4 Finding opportunities to support participation for all children.

    9.3.5 Mentoring others in positive behaviour guidance.

    9.3.6 Setting expectations for inclusive practice together.

10. Services must create regular opportunities for families to contribute to their children's learning and care. This begins with a 'getting to know you' form or other documentation that can be updated over time.

    10.1 ECEs and providers understand that families are children's first educators, and home knowledge improves children's experiences within services.

    10.2 ECEs and providers offer ways for families to share home knowledge, including information about their children's interests, abilities, strengths when they start at the service and updating over time.

    10.3 Families must be welcomed to contribute to ongoing displays or to add information to children's files. Activities like sharing photos, stories, and items from home—and sending pieces of children's work home—help build lasting connections between ELCC and home.

11. ECEs and service providers must seek family input on special occasions and shared family experiences.

    11.1 They must create opportunities for families to share culturally significant events or family changes, such as a new sibling.

    11.2 They must ensure cultural safety and respond respectfully to cultural needs.

    11.3 They must create opportunities for children's home lives to be recognized, respected, and valued in ELCC environments.

Responsive and Accountable Service Delivery

Policy No.3:   Access and Participation
Effective Date:
Date Revised:
Policy Cross References:
Legislative References:

Policy Statement:

All ELCC processes—such as asking for information, applying, enrolling, and taking part in the program—must be free from discrimination and bias.

ECEs and providers must follow QIDEA principles to create inclusive, welcoming spaces and to communicate respectfully with children and families.

All program planning and daily practice must support inclusion, build a sense of belonging, and ensure every child can take part equally.

Standards:

1. Inclusive and Responsive Practices

ELCC providers must welcome and respond to all children and families when they ask about services, apply, register, enroll, or take part in programs. Providers must actively involve families in decisions about their child's interests, learning, and wellbeing.

2. Collaboration with Community Agencies and Expertise

Early learning providers, community agencies, and partners work together with ELICD staff, children, families, and experts to remove barriers and support every child's participation in ELCC settings.

3. Accountability for Participation

ELCC environments must be inclusive, flexible, and adaptable. They must follow UDL and use tiered approaches to support children's diverse abilities and their social, cultural, and language identities. Programs must recognize and support each child's unique ways of knowing, doing, being, and becoming.

Procedures:

1. With support from ELICD consultants, all ELCC providers must create their own inclusive and accessible intake and application policies, forms, and handbooks. All staff must follow these policies.

   1.1 These policies must protect children and families by:

       1.1.1   having registration processes that are fair and consistent

       1.1.2   Making sure families stay engaged so they can complete their registration

       1.1.3   Ensuring families are welcome to participate in registration, attendance, and programming that supports (but not limited to):

           1.1.3.1   religion

           1.1.3.2   culture

           1.1.3.3   language

           1.1.3.4   disability

           1.1.3.5   gender

           1.1.3.6   behaviour

           1.1.3.7   interests

           1.1.3.8   development

           1.1.3.9   or any other reason not allowed under this policy

2. Providers and ECEs build trusting relationships with children and families.

   2.1 They create regular opportunities to share information about how to support children's experiences at the service.

   2.2 They talk with families about the importance of home routines, including:

       2.2.1   Feeling safe and secure

       2.2.2   Family story times

       2.2.3   Consistent bedtimes

       2.2.4   Long, uninterrupted sleep

       2.2.5   Long, uninterrupted play

       2.2.6   Sensory play

       2.2.7   Nutrition

       2.2.8   Hygiene

       2.2.9   Physical activity

       2.2.10 Limiting screen time

       2.2.11 Immunizations

   2.3 The service handbook includes resources that support wellbeing for children and families.

3. Two times a year, ELCC providers gather family feedback through surveys and other tools to:

3.1 understand how well the service is supporting relationships and responsive behaviours

3.2 learn what is working and identify areas that may need improvement

3.3 High-performing sites seek feedback more often.

4. ELICD employees maintain quarterly check-ins—and additional contact as needed—to ensure QIDEA principles and standards are being followed and continuously strengthened.

5. ELICD reviews family feedback about services to identify and support improvements in accessibility for children and families.

6. In ELCC environments, ELICD employees may:

6.1 Observe the learning environment to identify participation barriers, monitor ECE responsiveness, and see how children's interests are being supported.

6.2 Provide resources to help remove participation barriers

6.3 Offer on-site consultation, strategies, and guidance to support high-quality, inclusive, evidence-based practices.

6.4 Model ways to ensure all children participate meaningfully.

6.5 Help with changes to programs, equipment, or environments.

6.6 Join support planning with children and families who want or need coordination with community experts, agencies, or associations.

7. ELICD employees model respectful and responsive relationships when they engage with children and families in ELCC environments.

8. ELICD employees work with children, families, and community partners to ensure wrap-around supports are available and to promote equitable participation in ELCC.

9. ECEs must prepare for and take part in planning sessions for children in their homerooms. Administrators must attend planning sessions related to children and programming in their services.

10. ELICD employees ensure that program modifications and transitions are planned using a holistic, team-based approach.

11. ELICD staff work with the broader community to support equitable access to high-quality early learning and care. This includes:

11.1 Making referrals to government departments, health services, and community agencies and helping families navigate these services.

11.2 Identifying barriers to inclusion and working with ELCC providers, families, and community partners to remove them.

11.3 Supporting equitable access and participation by offering training, mentoring, coaching, and resources that build service capacity and confidence.

Coordinating Quality, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility

Policy No 4: Coordinating Supports for Accessibility
Effective Date:
Date Revised:
Policy Cross Reference:
Legislative References:

Policy Statement:

Coordinating supports in ELCC means that families, community partners, and ELCC providers work together to create shared plans. Good coordination requires everyone in a child's circle of care to communicate clearly, participate actively, and use collaborative practices that ensure fair access to ELCC.

The most important part of this work is recognizing and removing barriers that limit children's participation. Children's interests must be protected by using coordinated, responsive, and supportive approaches.

Standards:

1. **Inclusion is for Everyone**

   Information sharing and collaboration must take place for all enrolled children. These practices help create accessible, equitable, and inclusive programs. Community expertise should be used to support meaningful participation. ELCC services must be open and willing to work together so children can learn and grow in environments that are accessible, welcoming, and respectful of diverse abilities, identities, and family backgrounds.

2. **Systems-wide Approach**

   Partners and service providers work together in the best interests of children. They share information through various methods while protecting privacy and confidentiality. Through ongoing communication, they gather information that helps guide next steps and support planning for each child.

   High-quality ELCC depends on the active involvement of families, community agencies, and experts. Their knowledge helps shape coordinated efforts that identify and remove barriers to children's and families' participation.

3. Coordinated Planning - Knowledge Growth

If a service provider or partner notices that a child experiences complex barriers that are *not* being addressed through regular adjustments to the learning environment, play opportunities, or information sharing, they must begin coordinated planning. A child or family may also request coordinated planning at any time.

ECEs and operators need strong knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality, inclusive, equitable, and accessible ELCC programs. ECEs must continue to grow their understanding of practices that remove barriers for children and families. ECEs and providers must take part in coordinated planning and contribute to the process.

Procedures:

Providers must take part in coordinated planning and contribute fully to the process.

1. ECEs show warmth and comfort with difference and diversity.

   1.1 ECEs and service providers use accurate identity-affirming language when talking about human differences.
   1.2 They encourage children to learn about how they differ from each other, especially through their interests.
   1.3 They treat all children and families fairly and with care.
   1.4 They understand that children learn prejudice from seeing prejudice—not from learning about differences.
   1.5 They reflect on their own feelings and behaviours to avoid expressing bias.

2. ECEs and service providers use 'tell me' statements and 'I wonder' statements.

   2.1 Children are guided to use these statements too, as a way to show genuine interest and respect for their peers.

   2.2 Through play, children are encouraged to build self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social behaviours.

   2.3 ECEs and service providers help children affirm and be curious about one another's different interests and identities.

3. Accessibility strategies benefit everyone.
   3.1 Instead of singling out children for mild interventions, ECEs apply learning and care strategies across the whole environment using UDL and tiered approaches
   3.2 Tiered approaches are used when needed to support children's participation.

3.3 ECEs must prepare for and participate in planning sessions for the children in their homerooms. Administrators must attend planning sessions for children in their services.

4. ELCC providers must create inclusive intake and application processes. With support from ELICD consultants, providers must create inclusive and accessible intake policies, forms, and handbooks—and ensure all staff follow them.

4.1 These policies must ensure:

4.1.1 Fair and consistent participation in registration

4.1.2 Maintaining engagement with families and supporting them until registration is complete

4.1.3 facilitating registration, attendance, or equitable access to programming that values:

    4.1.3.1 religion

    4.1.3.2 culture

    4.1.3.3 language

    4.1.3.4 disability

    4.1.3.5 gender

    4.1.3.6 behaviour

    4.1.3.7 interests

    4.1.3.8 development

    4.1.3.9 or any other characteristics that may not be mentioned by this policy

5. Providers connect with community agencies and experts. ECEs and child car providers reach out to community organizations and specialists for guidance on accessibility, including physical spaces, play, nutrition, and inclusive, anti-bias practices.

5.1 Community partners offer support to strengthen program quality and the learning environment.

5.2 Families receive information about these relationships and are welcomed to participate or make their own connections.

5.3 When training sessions are offered about accessibility, families are invited to attend and make their own connections.

6. ELICD staff work together to support coordinated planning with providers, families, and community partners by:

6.4 sharing information in ways that protect privacy and confidentiality

6.5 participating in planning that focuses on each child's learning and development

6.6 working with others to design and deliver programs and services

6.7 checking in regularly to see how things are going

6.8 helping identify and fix gaps or barriers in services.

Policy No.5: Enhancing Access, Participation, and Support During Transitions

Effective Date:
Date Revised:
Policy Cross Reference:
Documentation Policy
Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy (Dept. of EECD).
Transition Planning Guidelines (Dept. of EECD)
Legislative References:

Policy Statement:

Transition planning helps children move smoothly between different settings, activities, routines, or learning environments. It supports children and their families so they can adapt comfortably and confidently to new situations. Effective transition planning creates predictable, developmentally appropriate experiences that reduce stress and build a sense of security and independence. It is especially important to ensure children with learning, developmental, or growth-related needs receive consistent, coordinated services and support throughout each transition.

Standards:

1. Knowing and Communicating the Purpose of the Transition

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides consistent, province-wide opportunities for children, families, child care centres, and schools to practice transitions for children from birth to age thirteen.

Transitions work best when children understand why they are happening. ELCC providers must explain the purpose of each transition in a way children can understand. When children move to a new place, their role and participation may change, so communication is essential.

Services and ECEs must use an individualized, coordinated, and integrated approach to planning transitions, working closely with all members of children's care team(s).

2. Collaboration

Early learning professionals work with ELICD, families, schools and community partners to plan and support transitions. Children and families play active roles in planning, practicing, and making decisions throughout transition processes.

Transition teams hold planning meetings early to make sure care remains consistent, coordinated, developmentally appropriate, and emotionally supportive. Whenever possible, planning should begin at least six months before the transition**.**

The members of a transition team will depend on the type of transition. Children and families are included whenever appropriate. Other team members may include teachers, principals, guidance counsellors, social workers, and any other professionals involved in the child(ren)'s care.

3. Anticipate and Warmly Receive Children and Families

Transition destinations prepare for and welcome every child and family. Creating respectful, ready, and inviting environments is essential during transitions such as:

- entering an ELCC service (Early Learning Gateway - Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
- moving within homerooms in a regulated child care service
- moving between homerooms
- moving from one child care service to another, including Pre-Kindergarten
- transitioning from an ELCC service to school
- leaving an ELCC service
- moving between an ELCC service and community spaces or events

4. Family Participation

ELCC providers actively include families in all parts of transition planning. Families' perspectives and insights are essential and help shape decisions and practices before, during, and after transitions.

5. Preventing Barriers

Transition planning must identify and address possible barriers early to ensure all children and families are included and supported. A transition plan must include:

- a full review of the child's goals, accommodations, supports, and services. These may already be listed in the child's service plan or in their coordinated planning record.
- identification of new goals and the organizations or resources that may help meet them
- referrals to services when needed
- sharing relevant information with service organizations, with consent
- help applying for supports and services in collaboration with school and service providers
- at least three opportunities for the child to practice the transition
- a review of how practice transitions went and areas for improvement

6. Practicing Transitions:

Transition practice should be a regular part of ELCC programming. For major transitions—such as entering school or moving to a new child care setting—practice should begin at least six months in advance.

7. Children's Experiences

All children's perspectives must be considered and included in transition processes. From a young age, children are encouraged to recognize their strengths, understand potential challenges, and develop self-advocacy and problem-solving skills. Adults listen to and support children's voices throughout the process.

8. Documentation

Transition plans and strategies must be documented in children's ELCC records. With consent, all relevant electronic and written information must be shared with the receiving program or service within five business days after the transition.

Procedures:

1. Communicating about Transitions
   1.1 ELCC providers explain to children and families that transitions are changes and opportunities to try new things.
   1.2 Transitions are treated as a normal and expected part of life.

2. Connecting with the Community - Service providers build relationships with the community around the child care setting and welcome visitors from the places that matter to children.
   2.1 ECEs and providers understand that belonging comes from feeling connected to places.
   2.2 Positive connections to places help support lifelong wellbeing and can help children and adults feel more secure during transitions.

3. Involving Community Members in Transition Planning
   3.1 ECEs and service providers invite and welcome community members to take part in transition planning.
   3.2 All children are included in decisions about practicing transitions and the transition process.
   3.3 Providers and ECEs create opportunities for all children to move through and participate in their communities as part of transition practice.
   3.4 They visit places children may transition to in the future. For example, visiting a public library helps children practice temporary transitions and meet new people.
   3.5 ECEs and service providers teach children that they can feel a sense of belonging in new places.

4. Creating Welcoming Transition Destinations
   4.1 Places children are moving to must plan ahead and warmly welcome families and children.
   4.2 Families and children must have positive, affirming experiences from the very first contact.
   4.3 ECEs and providers recognize that a family's past experiences with systems influence how children respond. Respectful and responsive interactions help families feel valued, which in turn helps children feel safe and confident about new experiences.

5. Planning Transitions Together
   5.1 ELICD staff talk with ECEs, children, and families about transition planning and ask for their ideas. They discuss:
      5.1.1 children's strengths
      5.1.2 possible challenges
      5.1.3 needed supports
      5.1.4 members of the transition team
      5.1.5 timelines

5.2 Staff help children and families connect current transitions to similar ones they have already experienced, reinforcing that transitions are safe and healthy parts of ELCC environments.

5.3 Transition Planning includes:
- 5.3.1 building respectful, responsive, and collaborative relationships where everyone's contributions are valued
- 5.3.2 creating meaningful opportunities to practice transitions, along with strategies that support every child's participation
- 5.3.3 carrying out detailed plans to smooth transition for all children
- 5.3.4 sharing relevant information in a timely way, especially during the six months before a planned transition

7. All partners clearly define and discuss the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in transition practice, planning, and processes.

8. Providers help children understand and build on their individual strengths.

9. Children are given opportunities to develop self-advocacy, independence, and critical-thinking skills.

10. ECEs must prepare for and participate in planning sessions for the children in their homerooms. Administrators must attend planning sessions for both children and program planning within their services.

Enhancements to Early Learning Child Care Environments

Policy No.6: Enhancements to Early Learning Child Care Environments by Competent and Professional Early Childhood Educators

Effective Date:
Date Revised:
Policy Cross References:
Legislative References:

Policy Statement:

Children and families may face unexpected challenges when participating in ELCC environments. To make sure everyone feels welcomed and supported as they learn, grow, and develop, providers, administrators, and ECEs must stay flexible and work to identify and remove barriers. They may also need to add supports to help ensure all children can participate fully and equitably.

ELCC services are staffed by skilled and dedicated professionals who work together to offer high-quality programs, create accessible environments, and provide supports that help all enrolled children participate equitably in learning and care environments.

Standards:

1. **General Supports – Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

UDL is a way of designing early learning environments so that play, routines, schedules, materials, and experiences are interesting and accessible to many different learners from the start. Instead of making changes only when challenges appear, UDL recognizes that all children learn in different ways and builds flexibility into everyday programming.

In ELCC settings, the goal of UDL is to anticipate and remove unnecessary barriers so all children and families can take part and feel included. This approach benefits everyone, including children who experience disabilities or other barriers to equitable participation.

2. Targeted Supports

Targeted supports are for children who may need extra help or experience challenges with participation. These supports are an important part of a tiered approach.

Like UDL, targeted supports are part of daily practice for ECEs and service providers. They require ongoing reflection about what is working well and what could be improved.

Targeted supports may be planned or spontaneous and are usually temporary. Examples include:

- setting up cooperative play opportunities
- helping children move through parts of a routine
- supporting children to start play or choose activities
- guiding peer conflict resolution
- offering calming tools and co-regulation strategies
- supporting social interactions, communication, or self-care

Some children need these supports some of the time, depending on the situation.

3. Intense Supports – for Complex Barriers

When children experience more complex barriers, collaborative planning is required. Children, families, and service providers may take part in a coordinated process when a child's needs cannot be fully met through regular program planning.

Families and professionals work together to:

- understand the child's experiences
- create a shared plan
- carry out the steps in their respective roles
- check in regularly on the child's engagement
- review progress and decide on next steps

This collaborative approach ensures children experiencing complex needs receive consistent, meaningful support.

4. Continued Professional Learning and Encouraging a Growth Mindset

Providing quality care for all children includes supporting ECEs and providers in their own learning and growth. A growth mindset helps practitioners stay open to new knowledge and approaches.

Some parts of a child's care plan may require ECEs to learn more about the specific barriers a child is experiencing. Ongoing professional learning, skill development, and reflective practice help ECEs deliver high-quality, accessible care.

Professional growth and child-centred, inclusive care go hand in hand.

Procedures

1. Access to Children's Literature

    1.1 ECEs and service providers build relationships with local libraries so they can borrow and share a wide range of children's books.

    1.2 The books available at the service reflect and respect diverse people, cultures, and ways of living.

    1.3 Books are selected based on children's interests, emerging interests, and opportunities to spark curiosity.

    1.4 Books are rotated. However, favourite titles may remain available for longer.

    1.5 Early learning and care services help families access home-lending programs through local libraries.

2. Engaging Children in Active Play

    2.1 ELCC providers create programs that invite children to actively participate in play that interests them.

    2.2 Children take part in daily physical activity that builds lifelong healthy habits and supports overall wellbeing.

    2.3 ECEs model active play both inside and outdoors.

    2.4 Children are encouraged to play for long periods without interruption.

    2.5 When play must pause, ECEs take steps to preserve children's ideas so the play can continue later or the next day.

3. Inclusive Language and Communication

    3.1 Everyone uses inclusive, person-first language and pays particular attention to pronunciation, tone and word choice.

    3.2 Staff understand that words can have different meanings for different people.

4. QIDEA Team Responsibilities:

    4.1 Coach and mentor early learning professionals, families, and community partners to ensure all children are participating equitably.

    4.2 Coordinate training and professional resources to strengthen skills and knowledge for delivering high-quality, play-based, developmentally and culturally appropriate programs.

4.3 Model cultural safety and cultural responsiveness.

4.4 Model responsive interactions between adults and children that follow children's interests, questions, and engagement—rather than adult-directed themes or long, required whole-group activities.

4.5 Work with community agencies and partners to find solutions that support equitable participation, especially when unique barriers are identified.

    4.5.1 This may include accessing materials or equipment, adding new items to the environment, or addressing accessibility needs.

4.6 Attend team and planning meetings, help create responsive and inclusive practices, and offer prompts and materials that spark children's interests.

4.7 Review programs and services to ensure policies, practices, materials, equipment, and activities respect and value the identities and diversity of all children, families, and early learning professionals.

4.8 Monitor programs to ensure that physical and social environments meet quality standards, accessibility requirements, and UDL principles.

Appendix A

Glossary:

Access	Early learning and child care environments are places where all children feel welcome and can take part in learning and play. Children have access to outdoor time and activities based on their interests. The Accessibility Act emphasizes the importance of using adapted materials, tools, and accessible spaces so all children can participate in learning, care, and community activities.
Accessible Environment	An early learning and care environment where everyone can participate fully, without barriers. It is also a place where educators and staff are always working to identify and remove any barriers that do appear.
Adult-centric	These are systems, routines, schedules, programs, and ways of working that are designed mainly for the comfort and convenience of adults. They assume that adults always know best or that adults should be the main drivers of children's play, learning, and development. Adult-centric approaches place a high value on children's compliance and treat children as "not yet" adults instead of recognizing them as capable individuals who contribute to and participate in their communities.
Asset-oriented	These are systems, routines, schedules, and ways of working that build on the abilities, skills, and interests children, families, and communities already have. They strengthen these abilities, value relationships, and recognize everyone's contributions. This approach also rejects negative labels like 'at-risk' and avoids deficit-based or prejudicial thinking.
Barrier	A barrier is anything in an environment or situation that makes it harder for people to have fair access or to take part fully. Barriers can look different depending on the person and the context.

Examples include: |

- Physical barriers:
  Things like narrow washrooms, buildings or playgrounds designed only for non-disabled people, or materials and furniture that some children cannot use.
- Attitudinal barriers:
  Beliefs or behaviours such as discrimination, deficitbased thinking, rigid program rules, prejudice, or lack of awareness.
- Communication barriers:
  Challenges in how information is shared—such as speaking too quietly, using small print, not having braille options, or using language that some people cannot understand.

Barriers are not the same for everyone. What makes participation difficult for one person may not affect someone else.

Behaviour is Communication	All behaviour is a reaction to something—either from inside us (like memories, worries, fears, or expectations) or from outside of us (like discomfort, pain, pleasure, or experiences). When a behaviour seems challenging, it usually has a purpose. For example, a child might: • Avoid, escape, or delay an activity (like trying not to clean up). • Get or access something they want (like trying to play with an iPad). • Respond to a specific activity or sensory input (like reacting to loud noises). • Seek connection (like looking for attention or feedback from adults or peers). Understanding the purpose behind the behaviour helps us respond in supportive and effective ways.
Child-centric/children-centric	This refers to systems, routines, schedules, and ways of working that put children's experiences and best

interests first. There are two main kinds of child-centred approaches:

1. Deficit-based child-centrism:
   This approach views children as lacking skills or needing to be fixed or controlled. It focuses on what children *cannot* do, and on compliance or identifying problems. This can lead to stressful or even harmful experiences for children and families.
2. Strengths-based (asset-focused) child-centrism:
   This approach values children's and families' strengths, interests, contributions, and participation. It supports nurturing relationships that help children feel safe, confident, and like they belong. This type of child-centrism builds self-confidence and supports strong mental health for children and families.

Children	Persons younger than the age of thirteen as defined by 2 (e) of the Child Care Act.
Coaching	A clear, step-by-step process that includes setting goals, making action plans, and getting regular feedback. It is designed to help and motivate early childhood providers to strengthen their practices in Quality, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (QIDEA).
Community Agency	A public, for profit or nonprofit organization, which operates social programs and services at the community level.
Coordinated Plan	A document and initiatives that identify the steps required to achieve the goals and objectives of enabling ELCC services to remove barriers to participation for all enrolled children.
Collaborative Partnerships, Practices and Processes	Dynamic ongoing asset-oriented partnerships, practices and processes that view children as active participants along with their families, early learning practitioners and community partners, in identifying practices and solutions that contribute to optimal wellbeing. They result in creative relationships with children, families, and community-based expertise that ensure striving for barrier reduction is a part of everyday

practices in ELCC settings. This is particularly essential for children experiencing complex barriers to ensure children-centric, consistent, holistic, and wrap-around support.

Community/Continuum of Care	People who are important in a child's life, such as family members, grandparents, foster parents, caregivers, friends, early learning staff, health professionals, and other service providers.
Complex Barriers	Strong or frequent experiences that last a long time and negatively affect a person's health, learning, or safety— or the safety of others. These impacts can show up in many areas, such as thinking and learning, physical health, wellbeing, personal care, behaviour, relationships, and communication, and they can occur across different settings.
Confidential	Private information is shared only when a parent or guardian gives consent unless sharing is allowed under the Information and Privacy Act.
Consultation	A professional relationship that supports learning and improvement in early learning and child care. It focuses on teaching and learning approaches, child development, emergent curriculum, and ways to strengthen family engagement.
Coordinating Supports	When it is difficult to remove barriers to a child's participation, partners come together to create a plan. Each partner carries out the actions in their own work plan, shares updates on the child's progress, and works with the group to review how things are going.
Culturally Responsive	Using and building on the skills and knowledge gained through cultural awareness, humility, and sensitivity. This means continually reflecting on personal values, biases, and assumptions—and recognizing those of others—to create more respectful and compassionate relationships with people who are different from oneself.
Cultural Safety	A feeling shared by diverse communities that they are welcomed and that they belong.

De-coding Behaviours	With empathy and curiosity, it is recognized that all behaviour is a response to something in a child's environment. Behaviour is a form of communication. Rather than trying to make a child behave a certain way, the focus is on understanding what is causing stress or discomfort. The goal is to change the environment or reduce the trigger, instead of trying to change the child.
Diverse Abilities	Some people use this term instead of 'disabilities' to focus on the fact that everyone has strengths and abilities, and that these abilities are different for each person. Children and families can choose the term they prefer.
Diversity	ELCC programs value and include every child. All children—of all abilities, backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, languages, family situations, gender identities, interests, and physical abilities—have the right to take part in ELCC.
ELCC Community	Community members who care about programs and services for children from before birth to age 13. These ELCC community members can include Early Childhood Educators, consultants, health-care providers who work with young children, families, business owners and staff who support ELCC, and employees or volunteers from non-profits, co-ops, and charities, as well as other community experts who help support ELCC.
Early Learning, Inclusion, and Child Development (ELICD) Quality, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (QIDEA) Program	A consultation program designed for participation by staff at regulated child care services, to enhance ELCC quality, program design, learning processes, engagement, pedagogical practices, interactions with children and families, professional learning opportunities, and structural aspects of learning environments, and reduce barriers to participation.
Early Learning Professional	A person who works with young children and helps support their learning, development, and wellbeing.
Environments	ELCC can happen in many places in the community, both indoors and outdoors.

Equitable Supports and Services	Support and services are adjusted based on the different barriers each person faces.
Equity	In ELCC, this means recognizing that every child is unique and designing programs that support each child's full participation. It ensures all children can thrive in learning environments that are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to everyone's needs.
Evidence-Based	Practices, professional learning, teaching approaches, and strategies that are based on research and informed by strong examples from other jurisdictions.
Family	Primary caregivers are the main adults who care for a child. This can include parents, parents' partners, foster parents, guardians, siblings, step-siblings, grandparents, and other extended family members.
Growth Mindset	The curiosity and enjoyment that come from knowing there is always more to learn and room to grow. This mindset helps create a sense of wonder and keeps people engaged and interested in both new and familiar experiences.
Home	The conditions and factors in the places where people live. This includes the physical space, cultural background, family relationships, and daily interactions within the household. These social and emotional conditions influence a person's development and overall wellbeing.
Inclusion	Inclusion means that people of all abilities, health conditions, ethnicities, genders, identities, religions, languages, interests, and socioeconomic backgrounds belong in their communities. It means everyone is welcomed and able to take part fully in public life.
	In early learning and care settings, inclusion means creating environments where all children have fair and equitable opportunities to play, learn, and participate. This includes children with disabilities, children from all cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds, and children with different interests and participation needs.

Inclusive Practices	Daily ELCC practices that work to prevent barriers and remove them when they appear.
Information-Sharing	ELCC professionals understand the importance of sharing information appropriately while protecting privacy and confidentiality. Information about children and families is protected under the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). Information is only shared when informed consent has been given or when required by law.
Integrated	Quality ELCC experiences happen when services work together and build strong partnerships with families and community experts.
Individual Program Plan (Planning)	A written plan that focuses on a child's strengths and the barriers they experience. The plan is created with input from the child's family, community care team, child care staff, and other professionals or community experts. A process within a coordinating-supports approach that centres on sharing relevant information among different service providers to support the child's wellbeing and remove barriers.
Mentoring	A professional relationship between colleagues that supports a growth mindset and encourages the sharing of knowledge and skills. Mentorship focuses on long-term personal and professional development. Mentoring can happen through ongoing professional learning that is built into daily ELCC practices.
Multi-Disciplinary	The involvement of professionals from different disciplines.
Observation	The process of collecting clear, factual information for a specific purpose, such as planning, finding the right resources, understanding children's interests and play.
Parent	Anyone identified as the legal guardian of the child.

Participation	Taking part means that all children are welcomed, included, and able to contribute to the decisions, play, and environments that affect them.
Pedagogy / Pedagogical Practices	The practices of teaching, learning, and caring.
Professional Learning	Learning to improve professional knowledge and skills.
Quality	All children take part in meaningful play that interests them and feel a sense of belonging in warm, welcoming early learning and care environments. This is supported by well-trained Early Childhood Educators and providers, and by learning environments that focus on children's strengths and encourage active engagement.
Team / Planning Meeting	Early learning professionals work together to talk about what children are interested in, what they might be curious about next, and how to extend their learning by creating meaningful experiences and learning invitations (i.e., provocations).
Tiered Approaches	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) uses a three-tiered approach to provide flexible levels of support for children. • **Tier 1** is high-quality instruction and programming for all children, based on UDL principles. • **Tier 2** gives targeted, short-term support in small groups for children who need more help than Tier 1 can provide. These supports are guided by regular monitoring of each child's progress. • **Tier 3** offers intensive, individualized support for a small number of children who continue to experience challenges. Tier 3 support is added on top of Tier 1 and Tier 2 practices to ensure each child gets what they need.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	A framework that helps create child-centred, inclusive, and accessible learning environments by designing flexible programs with many ways for children to play, participate, learn, and express themselves. UDL focuses on anticipating and removing barriers before they happen so all children can engage fully.