

July 20, 2018



Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care

Executive Summary

The Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association and Kenjgewin Teg are the co-leads for the Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence.

The Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence has a mandate to provide professional learning supports across the province through streams in all Ministry regions to support culturally relevant programming and the delivery of high-quality Indigenous child care and early years programs in the broad spectrum of Indigenous communities and organizations on and off-reserve, including First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

The Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence promotes Indigenous pedagogy and the inherent right of Indigenous children and families to have culturally relevant early years and child care programs that respect the diverse cultures of Indigenous (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) peoples in Ontario and aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Calls to Action 2015. Indigenous knowledge, ways of knowing and being and connection to all of creation is the foundation for educators, children and families to be in relationship together in a safe environment that contributes to Indigenous identity formation.

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*A Canada-Ontario
Early Learning and
Care Initiative*

The Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence embraces the values of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (2014). We believe that each child carries their own gifts, that they are strong, resilient and capable; they have the right to explore, test, inquire and learn on the land and to be in relationship with the land alongside their educators.

Overview of the Indigenous Centre's Goals and Objectives with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (2014)

Key Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for educators to critically reflect on their practice through an Indigenous lens. Educators will consider how Indigenous world-view intersects with current practice and how that view can begin to create high quality culturally safe space within the child care and early years programs
- To offer professional learning that supports culturally based early childhood education for Indigenous children across the province that reflects current research, promising practices and Indigenous ways of knowing and being
- To support safe dialogue and relationship building with non-Indigenous educators to create awareness and understanding of the history of colonization in Canada; reconciliatory practices and Indigenous concepts that reflect the diversity in Ontario

The Centre will reach these goals by:

- Establishing and coordinating seven (7) Indigenous Community Educators in the six (6) regions to foster relationships across the early years sector
- Indigenous Community Educators will offer cultural contexts and concepts for consideration and Indigenous pedagogy will be the foundation for communities of practice. The role of Elder, Senator and traditional knowledge keepers, the place of ceremony and relationship with the land will be seamlessly integrated
- Being responsive to identified community learning aspirations and developing innovative culturally relevant professional learning resources in various mediums
- Committing to continuous reflection, documentation and evaluation to support vibrant learning communities
- Collaborating with the Secretariat and the Provincial and Francophone Centres of Excellence
- Honouring the critical roles of Indigenous culture and language in the restoration of well-being