

memo



Secretariat for the Centres of Excellence
Secrétariat pour les centres d'excellence

To: Early Years and Child Care Partners

From: Secretariat for the Centres of Excellence

Date: March 14, 2019

Re: Research Brief and Updates

Dear Early Years and Child Care Partners,

Thank you for taking the time to stay connected with the work of the Centres of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care. Through collaboration and dialogue, the Centres are participating in the transformation of professional learning for early childhood education in Ontario. Together with key provincial and local early years partners, the Centres are working to understand (1) how educators currently engage in professional learning and (2) the opportunities being provided for professional learning across Ontario's communities.

How does professional learning happen in Ontario?

In the summer of 2018, the Secretariat for the Centres of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care, in collaboration with the Francophone, Indigenous and Provincial Centres, developed and distributed a survey to the 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) across Ontario. The primary goal of the survey was to provide a snapshot of the current landscape of professional learning and quality initiatives for the early years and child care sector. Insights shared by CMSMs and DSSABs have been fundamental in establishing the initial work of the Centres of Excellence.

The research brief (online at http://bit.ly/ResearchBrief_1) offers an overview of key findings from the survey responses.

How have the survey findings supported the work of the Centres of Excellence?

Francophone Centre

The *Centre d'excellence francophone pour la petite enfance et la garde d'enfants'* vision is to support the development of educational leadership aligned with Ontario's early years education, while concentrating on francophone identity-building, in a French-speaking linguistic and cultural context. With this vision in mind, the results of the survey give a general overview of the geographic landscape of the provincial early years sector and provide an overview of French-language programs and services, ongoing professional initiatives and the mechanisms

that support them. By the same token, the information contained in the report informs us of the existing approaches and the models that support the commitment to the sector through ongoing professional development and networking in each of the regions and respective communities.

We have studied the various approaches to monitoring quality and improvement, the roles and responsibilities of quality employees, available resources and the regional capacity to support professional learning initiatives in French. While the *Centre d'excellence francophone* tries to support the development of leadership in early years as well as adult education within communities and professional learning networks, the data obtained informs us of the strengths and challenges that are relevant to the communities in question. The Centre d'excellence francophone's team continues work in close collaboration with the sector to broaden the system of networks operating in French within Ontario's communities.

Indigenous Centre

The Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence is taking a strength-based approach to knowledge exchange and supporting communities. The data provided by the CMSMs and DSSABs informed our strategy for knowledge exchange and leadership development in diverse communities.

Our community educators will facilitate Indigenous communities of practice online and in person by engaging existing early years networks. The Indigenous communities of practice will offer opportunities for reflection and dialogue on documentation and culturally relevant professional learning resources that honour the critical roles of Indigenous cultures, context, and language and promote restoration of well-being.

An Elders Council guides the work of the Ontario Indigenous Centre of Excellence. Elders and Knowledge Keepers from various Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Inuit, and Métis communities across Ontario link Indigenous knowledge and practice in early childhood settings with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

Provincial Centre

The data offered by service managers guides a systematic and equitable approach to creating a pedagogist network that aspires to reach all communities in the province (read online at bit.ly/DecPedagogistNews). Analyzing the data revealed the pre-existing structures for professional learning in Ontario and identified the organizations and individuals holding leadership positions in their respective regions. The Provincial Centre works within these structures and invites individuals already offering professional learning to become pedagogists. The intention is that the pedagogist role and supportive network will endure so that every educator in Ontario is connected and supported by a network of pedagogists.

What are recent initiatives taken by each Centre?

Francophone Centre

The launch activities continue into March. The team visited about ten cities and met with hundreds of early years professionals working in French-language programs in Ontario.

To provide an update and promote our program for the second year of operation, we organized two forums, one in Ottawa and one is upcoming in Toronto. ***Comment apprend-on en tant qu'adultes?*** ["How Does Learning Happen as an Adult?"] This is the primary question that we attempt to answer during the forums that close Year 1 of our Centre of Excellence. Community

leaders in child care and children's services are invited to the discussion in Toronto on March 19 and 20, 2019.

Indigenous Centre

The Indigenous Centre has established an Elders Council to advise and to support the work and path of the Indigenous Centre. It is our way of being and belief that our Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Senators guide, teach, and remind us of our roles and responsibilities to the children, families, land, and communities. Though the Council is small, we will continue to learn who those identified Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Senators are in each of the communities and seek to learn from them and provide opportunities for them to contribute to resource development and knowledge exchange sessions that will be recorded and shared on the portal.

Provincial Centre

The inaugural cohort of pedagogists completed 12 weeks of orientation in December 2018 by engaging in readings and online discussions. They are now in the exciting and challenging immersion phase of orientation, working alongside educators and children and embarking on collaborative inquiries within their local contexts. Their role asks them to invite complexity into classrooms and to regularly visit each others' thinking and stories in order to create new possibilities in the name of more liveable futures. The pedagogists' ideas and journey will be shared with the launching of the Centres' upcoming website in the Spring of 2019. Updates and news of the Provincial Centre can also be found at www.twitter.com/EYpedagogists.

The pedagogist network continues to grow in 2019 and a second cohort of pedagogist orientation has begun. We thank the CMSMs/DSSABs, licensed child care providers, and college ECE programs who helped recruit more than 50 early childhood education leaders to join in this exciting, rigorous process. If your organization currently has a professional learning specialist who doesn't have day-to-day classroom responsibilities, supports a large number of educators, and is interested in joining the next cohort of pedagogists in April or would like additional information about the pedagogist role, please contact pcengage@uwo.ca.

How to get in touch with Centres

Any general inquiry questions about the Secretariat for the Centres of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care can be forwarded to Tammy Johnson at tjohn64@uwo.ca.

Additional contacts for the individual Centres are:

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Thank you for your continued support of this initiative. We look forward to future engagement and the launching of our new website in Spring 2019.

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