



	REPORT NO.: 2019-37
MEETING DATE: JULY 18, 2019	DATE PREPARED: JULY 2, 2019
SUBJECT: FIRST REPORT – CHILD CARE EARLY YEARS PEDAGOGIST NETWORK	

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2019-37, (Client Services Division), we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (the Board), approve the receipt of the First Report – for a Child Care Early Years Pedagogical Network Model.

AND THAT the Board Direct Administration to prepare a report with recommendations on a new pedagogist network model for the child care and early years' system to be presented at the November Board meeting for the Board's consideration.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide the Board with information relative to a new model for child care and early years capacity building that supports the Child Care and Early Years service system and aligns with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

BACKGROUND

From January 2011 to April 2011, Administration conducted a review of the Quality Assurance Program. The goal of the review was to identify ways in which the reliability and consistency of quality measurement in child care programs could be improved. It was determined that the self-assessment process, being used at the time, was a valuable but inadequate driver for making and sustaining concrete improvements at a program and system level. Upon completion of this review, TBDSSAB began to explore options that would facilitate a transition to an objective, evidence based process where evaluators external to the individual programs conducted programs review. It was after this review, that the Toronto Operating Criteria, was renamed to the Early Learning and Care Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI), was found to be the most effective and appropriate for the needs of the District of Thunder Bay.

In June 2011, TBDSSAB began to the (AQI), which concluded in August of 2011. The following key findings were highlighted:

1. The overall review of the tool was appropriate for use in the District of Thunder Bay.
2. The tool was able to clearly and consistently identify non-compliance items which isolated areas of opportunity for quality improvement in specific programs. And that the tool identified and clarified in more detail strengths and areas of non-compliance consistent with the findings of the former self-administered QA Tool.
3. The evaluations identified training needs and future capacity building opportunities for child care programs.
4. Child Care Operators and staff who participated in the pilot had an enhanced understanding of evidence based quality measurement processes and high quality early learning and care expectations, which they reported impacted their daily practice.
5. The committee members involved in the pilot noted that it contributed to their understanding of quality service expectations from a client perspective.

A phased in approach was taken to implement the AQI and in 2015, TBDSSAB began to implement the AQI with all licensed child care programs. TBDSSAB has fully implemented the AQI consistently from 2015 to present.

Over the past 4 years there have been many professional learning opportunities that have been provided to the Early Learning community as well as individual learning opportunities for programs based on areas of non-compliance and recognized need by the program and Child Care Programs Officer.

With the purpose of implementing the AQI, to ensure that child care programs offered high quality standards of care and to act as a driver for making and sustaining concrete improvements at a program and service system level, Administration would have expected that the scores would improve over time. Child Care Programs Officers have reported that when going back year over year, some of the programs have been at the same level of programing as the previous year. Administration has collected four years of data that demonstrates that the intended outcomes of the AQI have not been fully achieved.

As well, there are other factors, such as but not limited to, that have led Administration to explore ways to work with child care and early years programs to build capacity and to assist programs to align with Ontario's pedagogy for the Early Years, "How Does Learning Happen?"

Three examples of other factors are:

- Interactions sections have the same weight as program plans (difference of importance/value added to a program)
i.e. "Staff unaware of number of children in the room" or "Staff shout at children" **has the same value as** "One block activity per week on program plan" or "Toy bins and/or shelves are labelled with words and/or pictures."
- The weight of the playground assessment often increases and/or skews the centre average (for example, playgrounds has 6 sections and preschool has 31 sections) (**A passing score on the AQI is 3/5**)
- The AQI does not consider or accommodate varying philosophies (Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio Emilia). These philosophies are important to our community in allowing families to have a choice in the education and care that their child receives. Because of the inability to be flexible with the tool, the programs score lower.

COMMENTS

In April 2018, Western University and Ontario Reggio Association (ORA) were designated to lead the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care with support from a number of partners in six ministerial regions of Ontario. This, along with the Indigenous Centre of Excellence and the Francophone Centre of Excellence are coordinated by the Secretariat for Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care. (Attachment #1 - Executive Summary - Provincial Center of Excellence)

In January 2019, Administration was approached by the Provincial Centre of Excellence to discuss their work to create a network of Pedagogists across Ontario.

On March 4, 2019, the Provincial Centre of Excellence staff visited Thunder Bay and shared their proposed work with the child care and early years community.

The Role of a Pedagogist

The pedagogist will be connected to the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care, but not hired by the Centre, to work with approximately 50 educators. The pedagogist is an intellectually curious individual who is already in a pedagogical leadership position in her or his organization and/or in the community, or who is immersed in programs and highly motivated to study educational theory and curriculum and comfortable with uncertainty and complexity. The role of the pedagogist is akin to that of a critical friend in New Zealand, a pedagoga in Italy, or a pedagogic coordinator in Belgium. The pedagogist is not “in ratio” in a program, but works closely with educators in their contexts by supporting pedagogies at a community level.

A pedagogist would spend her/his days:

- Working alongside educators leading a pedagogical project with the educators, children and families - to support the professional and pedagogical engagement of educators through collaboration and reflective practices.
- Working closely with educators to engage deeply in pedagogical documentation.
- Nurturing pedagogies that promote critical thinking, engaging with and inspiring others, promoting the building of community, and fostering creative and experimental spaces.
- Attending to the Calls for Action from the Truth & Reconciliation Commission and integrate them in program’s pedagogical projects.
- Organizing and leading team meetings, centre initiatives and professional learning opportunities in collaboration with regional coordinators and other pedagogists in your region/across the province.

In other words, through deep engagement with pedagogical documentation, pedagogists lead pedagogical projects of individual programs and connects them to the social and cultural fabric within communities, thus building capacity of educators in child care centres. (Attachment #2 – Role of the Pedagogist)

As well, beginning September 2020, Confederation College Early Childhood Education Program will be implementing this model into their teaching practices. The District of Thunder Bay will be seeing cohorts of students entering into their field placements with Child Care Programs EarlyON Centres that will be working through a pedagogical lens. Students being taught to be thinkers first before doers. Aligning these practices across the service system would give consistency to the practices that are happening within the Child Care and EarlyON programs and align with *How Does Learning Happen, Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

Administration has determined that it would be beneficial to the Child Care and Early Years community and more importantly, for the children and families that access child care and early years services, to pilot a network of pedagogists within the District of Thunder Bay. Also, TBDSSAB Child Care Programs Officers and the Early Years Programs Officer can be oriented (trained) as pedagogists to become a part of this network.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No additional financial resources are required to pilot a network of pedagogists within the District of Thunder Bay. The details of financial implications would be explored and presented in a subsequent report for the Board to review.



CONCLUSION

It is concluded that Administration will provide a detailed report at the November, 2019, Board Meeting outlining further details regarding the implementation of the pedagogist network within the District of Thunder Bay.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

Attachment #1: Executive Summary - Provincial Center of Excellence

Attachment #2: Role of the Pedagogist

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SUBMITTED / SIGNATURE:	 William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

April 26, 2018



Partnering Towards Excellence

Ontario Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care

Executive Summary

Western University and the Ontario Reggio Association (ORA) are pleased to lead the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care with invaluable support from a growing number of partners in the six ministerial regions of Ontario.

The Provincial Centre of Excellence promotes the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and embraces the values of Ontario's pedagogical framework *How Does Learning Happen* (2014), including the view of children as protagonists in their own lifeworlds with participatory rights and responsibilities. It recognizes children and educators as capable, resourceful co-researchers, interested in inquiring seriously into the world around them. At the core, the Centre is a *public forum for the advancement of early childhood pedagogies* in Ontario where educators, children, families, instructors, leaders, and researchers are invited to collaboratively reimagine early childhood education as spaces for democratic possibilities.

Overview of Centre Goals and Objectives

The Centre's goals include the following:

- generate a culture of and context for dynamic pedagogies through pedagogical documentation
- improve and sustain the liveliness within early years programs
- support dynamic and holistic early years programs with long-term commitment to continuous, innovative professional learning
- foster, advance, and nurture the views of children, families, educators, and early years outlined in *How Does Learning Happen?* and *The Kindergarten Program*
- enact a commitment to truth and reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities within the early years
- respond to the nuances of locally-situated communities within contexts that promote a coherent vision of early years programs for Ontario

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A Canada-Ontario
Early Learning and
Child Care initiative

Pedagogist Network

The Centre will reach these goals by:

- establishing and sustaining an innovative network of pedagogists that has local, regional, and provincial reach to advance public pedagogical forums that
 - respond to truth and reconciliation
 - promote innovation in pedagogical approaches and practices
 - foster innovative pedagogies through reflective professional learning
 - build democratic and situated early years programs
- conducting ongoing documentation, assessment, and evaluation of the pedagogist network to extend knowledge about professional learning
- encouraging sector relationship building and resource development that can support policy makers and government officials in developing and sustaining sector dialogues and policy among various early years programs
- building a long-term, sustainable learning network across the early years sector
- establishing collaborative, ongoing, intelligent accountability measures
- collaborating with the Secretariat and the Indigenous and Francophone Centres

Pedagogists

The Centre is premised in an emergent design-process that welcomes the multiplicities of which children and educators are capable and is expressed through the unique structure of a province-wide pedagogist network giving shape to an ecology of relations.

Pedagogists accompany, care for and about, and bring learning to life alongside children and early childhood educators. They are situated within the ongoingness of their communities across the province (see Figure 1). The Centre will leverage the roles of individuals in community organizations and postsecondary institutions already responsible for professional learning to become Ontario's pedagogists.

Pedagogists do not train educators.

Using *How Does Learning Happen*

(2014) and, where appropriate, *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), they foster democracy, social justice, and a culture of research, while supporting pedagogies at a community level. Through deep engagement with pedagogical documentation, pedagogists both promote innovation through the provision of learning initiatives within early years programs and connect the everyday pedagogical projects of individual programs with the social and cultural issues that are posed within communities.

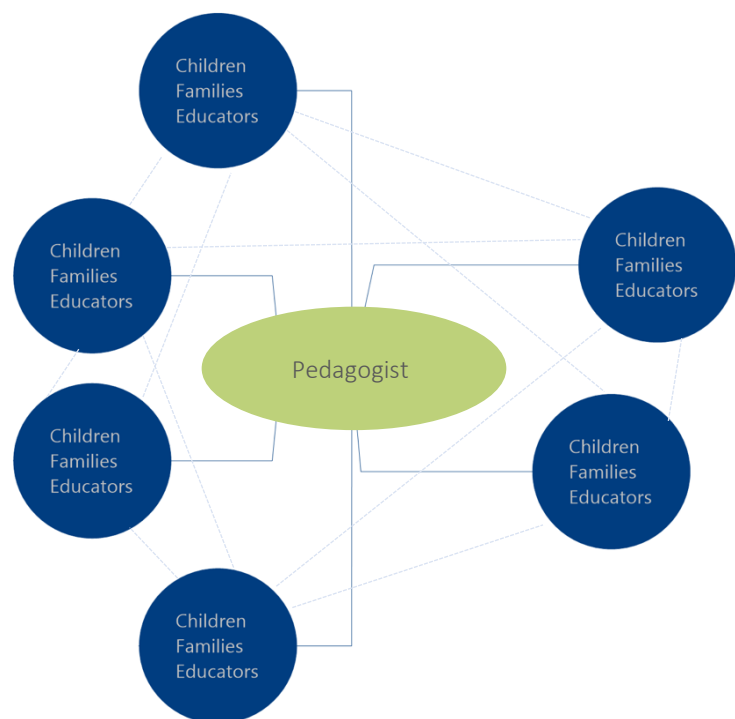


Figure 1. A pedagogist's relations in a community

BUILDING A PEDAGOGIST NETWORK

What is the Role of the Pedagogist?

A pedagogist is a specialized role introduced to Ontario by the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care. The role of the pedagogist is new in Ontario, but is akin to that of a critical friend in New Zealand, a pedagoga in Italy, or a pedagogic coordinator in Belgium. The role was piloted in British Columbia by the *Investigating Quality Project* (2008-2018).

A pedagogist is not “in ratio” in a program, but instead works closely with approximately 50 educators in their context to promote the critical reflection on early childhood pedagogies at a community level. Through deep engagement with pedagogical documentation, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and the values of *How Does Learning Happen* (2014), pedagogists lead pedagogical projects in individual programs and connect them to the social and cultural fabric of communities. With children, families, educators and others, pedagogists help to reimagine early childhood education as a plurality of spaces for democratic possibilities.

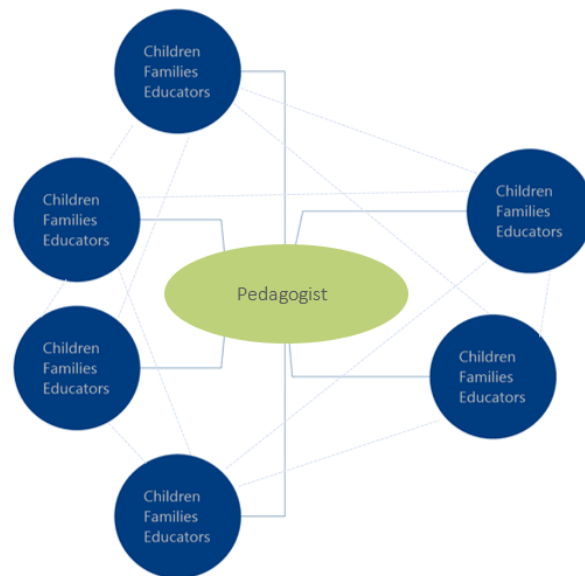


Figure 1. A pedagogist's relations in a community

Pedagogists are responsive to the particularities of the situations in which they are working, and do not provide one-time professional development (for example, in the form of workshops). Overall, they spend their time:

- working collaboratively and reflectively alongside educators to support their professional and pedagogical engagement by, for example, leading a pedagogical project with them, children and families;
- working closely with educators to engage deeply in pedagogical documentation;
- nurturing pedagogies that promote critical thinking, engaging with and inspiring others, promoting the building of community, and fostering creative and experimental spaces;

- attending to the Calls to Action from the Truth & Reconciliation Commission and integrating them into pedagogical projects;
- organizing and leading team meetings, centre initiatives and professional learning opportunities in collaboration with regional coordinators and other pedagogists in individual regions and across the province; and
- networking and learning alongside other pedagogists through the Centre.

Who Becomes a Pedagogist?

Pedagogists are not employees of the Provincial Centre of Excellence. Each pedagogist is an intellectually curious individual who is already in a pedagogical leadership position in their organization and/or community, or who are immersed in programs and highly motivated to study educational theory and curriculum and comfortable with uncertainty and complexity.

How Does One Become a Pedagogist?

To become oriented to the role of the pedagogist, educators participate in a 12-week orientation with the Centre of Excellence - approximately 8 to 10 hours/week, which includes a 2-hour synchronous online gathering and time to read, view videos, and post responses in an online learning management system. Following these 12 weeks, they become active participants in the Centre's network of pedagogists. Ongoing participation for pedagogists involves meeting regularly and engaging in other related activities regionally as appropriate.