



	REPORT NO.: 2019-60
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 2019	DATE PREPARED: OCTOBER 28, 2019
SUBJECT: CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS PEDAGOGIST MODEL	

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT with respect to Report No. 2019-60, (Client Services Division), we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (the Board), approve the attached plan for a Child Care Early Years Pedagogist Model for the District of Thunder Bay.

AND THAT the Board directs Administration to proceed with the implementation of a pedagogist model for the child care and early years' system.

**REPORT SUMMARY**

To provide the Board with a proposed new pedagogist model for child care and early years service system that supports the engagement of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

**BACKGROUND**

From January 2011 to April 2011, Administration conducted a review of the existing 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, now known as, 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 piloted 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 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 Child Care Centre and Child Care Programs Officer.

The AQI also had factors that were considered to be a challenge in determining quality measurement within a child care centre, for example:

- 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.

Administration has worked 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?"

In early 2019, Administration reviewed the AQI on its effectiveness for change within the Child Care Early Years System. The findings demonstrated that the AQI did not effect change in the way that it was expected.

At its July 2019 meeting, the Board approved Report No. 2019-37 (First Report – Child Care Early Years Pedagogist Network), and the Board directed Administration to prepare a report on a new Pedagogist Model for Child Care Early Years System.

### **COMMENTS**

The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 legislation and accompanying regulations supports Ontario's vision for the early years. Ontario Regulation 137/15 under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 includes program-related requirements for centre-based and home child care programs that align with How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years and helps child care settings put the ideas and approaches of this pedagogical framework into practice.

The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 sets out the authority for the Minister of Education to issue policy statements for the purpose of guiding early years programs and services. The Minister has issued a policy statement naming How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years as the provincial framework to guide programming and pedagogy in licensed child care settings across Ontario.

In partnership with the government of Canada, in 2018 the Ministry of Education established Provincial, Francophone and Indigenous Centre of Excellence (CoE) to support professional development in the child care and early years sector.

To fully understand the value of the Model, one must first understand the meaning of the word "pedagogy." The Ministry of Education states that pedagogy is the understanding of how learning takes place and the practices that support that understanding (HDLH, 2014, p. 5). When pedagogy and leadership are combined, the result is pedagogical leadership which involves "leading or guiding the study of the teaching and learning process" (Coughlin & Baird, 2013).

A pedagogist would immerse themselves in the centres while supporting educators to engage with children and families on innovative, critically reflective practices that would extend the practice of the educators and the children that would lead to the following:

- Enrich learning environments and build pedagogical capacity of program staff;

- Support the engagement of How Does Learning Happen, including the use of pedagogical documentation that supports belonging, expression, engagement and well-being;
- Build a community of learners within the District of Thunder Bay;
- Work within each centres context as well as a network of other pedagogical leads within the District of Thunder Bay and the Centres of Excellence;
- A pedagogist would work closely with educators in their own early years and child care programs, responding to each program's individual needs and circumstances.

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.

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 and EarlyON Centres, that will be working through a pedagogical lens. Students being taught to be thinkers first before doers.

Pedagogical leadership is necessary to ensure a strong foundation for the pedagogical model in our community; one that leads and inspires progressive change for the well-being of the District of Thunder Bay (the District). *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* 2014 (p5) (Attachment 1 – Proposed Model)

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**



The costs related to the Pedagogists are considered "Program" rather than "Administrative". Therefore, the shift to the Pedagogist Model will increase Program expenses (\$269,100 in 2020) with an offsetting reduction in Administrative expenses, with no change in the total Provincial funding envelope. This will be reflected in the 2020 proposed Operating Budget to be submitted to the Board at the November 20, 2019 Board Meeting.

**CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that the Pedagogist Model presented will lead and inspire progressive change within the child care and early years programs in the District of Thunder Bay (the District).

**REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED**

Attachment #1: [Proposed Pedagogist Model](#)

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**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

**The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board  
Proposed Pedagogical Model**

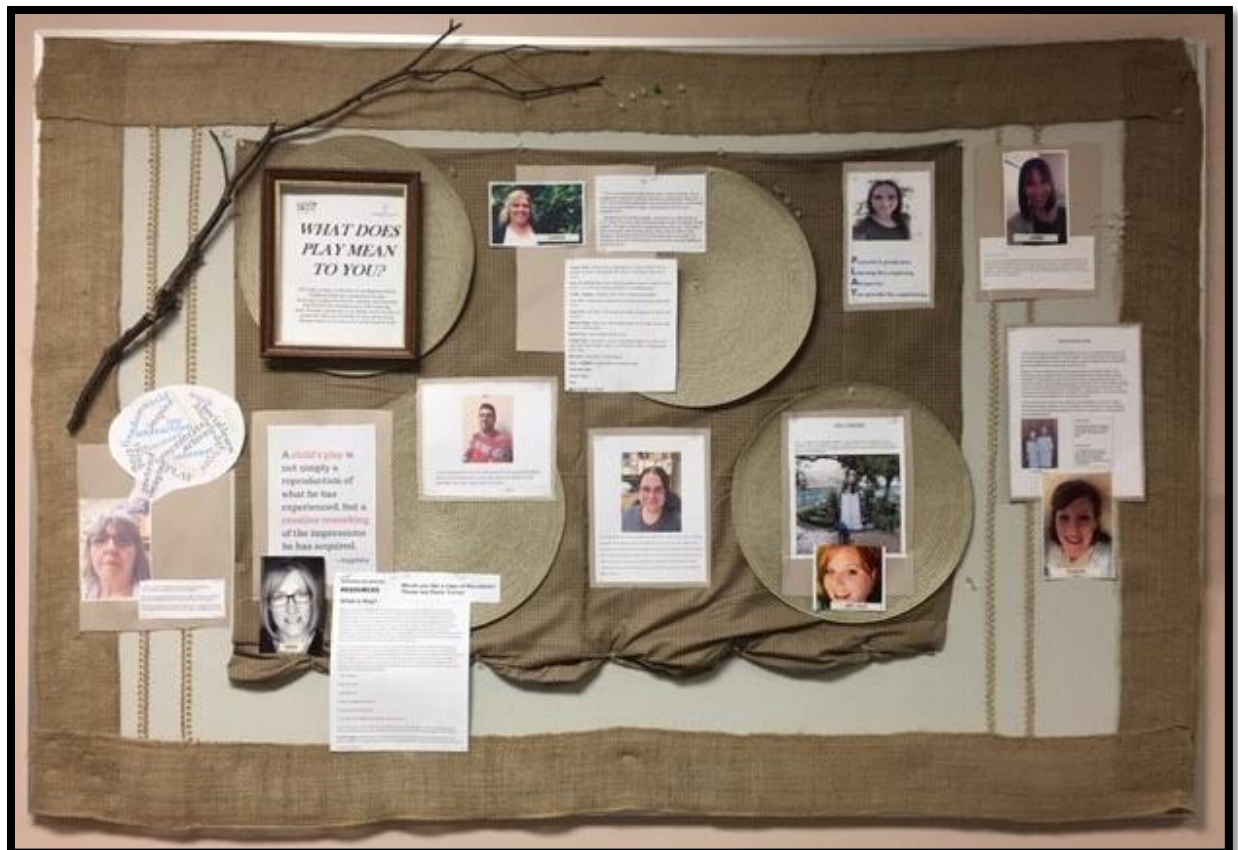


Louise Piercey, Manager of Child Care and Early Years Programs

Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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## **The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board Proposed Pedagogical Model**

The Child Care and Early Years team at the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) is proposing a new Pedagogical Model (Model). This Model will be comprised of a team of pedagogists who work alongside Child Care and EarlyON staff to co-create, co-think and co-learn with respect to the unique needs, interests, and strengths of each individual program. The Ontario Provincial Centre of Excellence (COE) describes this as “[working] toward ongoing professional learning that is situated, co-created, and meaningful to the particular children, families and adults within a program” (2017, p. 2).

The Pedagogical Model is being driven as a result of a number of changes in the field of early childhood education in Ontario, including:

- The development of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years* (2014);
- the College of Early Childhood Educators Continuous Professional Learning requirements (2016);
- the work of the Provincial Centre of Excellence (2018); and
- Confederation College’s new program standards (2019).

The ultimate goal of this Model will be to effectuate high quality early years programs that will foster a strong, healthy start for children and aid in breaking the cycle of social assistance.

### **What is Pedagogy?**

In order to fully understand the value of the Model, one must first understand the meaning of the word “pedagogy.” The Ministry of Education states that pedagogy is the understanding of how learning takes place and the practices that support that understanding (HDLH, 2014, p. 5). When pedagogy and leadership are combined, the result is pedagogical leadership which involves “leading or guiding the study of the teaching and learning process” (Coughlin & Baird, 2013). Pedagogical leadership is necessary to ensure a strong foundation for the pedagogical model in our community; one that leads and inspires progressive change for the well-being of the District of Thunder Bay (the District).



### What is the role of a Pedagogist?

Pedagogists collaborate with program staff to co-create sustainable professional learning dialogues grounded in pedagogical thinking. “As pedagogists attend to relationships and questions that matter to programs, they create possibilities for relational professional learning that values the multitude of perspectives, histories, and knowledge present in a space” (COE, 2017, p. 2).

A pedagogist would immerse them self in TBDSSAB funded centres while supporting educators to engage with children and families on innovative, critically reflective practices. Other responsibilities of a pedagogist include:

- enriching learning environments and building pedagogical capacity of program staff;
- supporting the engagement of *How Does Learning Happen?*, including the use of pedagogical documentation;
- building a community of learners within the District;
- working within the context of individual centres, as well as a network of other pedagogical leads within the District and the 3 Centres of Excellence (Provincial, Francophone, and Indigenous); and
- working closely with educators and responding to each program’s unique needs and circumstances, rather than providing educators with one-time professional development (e.g. workshops)  
(Ontario Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care, November 2018).



### Why Pedagogical Documentation?

In early childhood education, documentation is a collection of evidence that begins with observation and recording. Documentation can include images, videos, artifacts, and written records that capture moments in time and provide evidence of learning and development. The term *pedagogical documentation* refers to “the process of carefully studying and intentionally recording the process of a student’s learning and attempting

to animate the process for others” (Fleet, Patterson & Robertson, p. 74). The example below illustrates this process:

While exploring a real hammer with nails, Miko, age 2, shared some of his thoughts, understandings, and memories of a hammer he has seen before.

***“Going in wood” “Look” “Big hammer tapping on wood”***

***“Wow!” “Look... hammer going in wood”***

Miko shares as he hammers one nail into the wood, carefully and with caution. Miko has great control, hitting the nail on the head. Then he stops and puts the hammer down to tell us more about what he knows:

***“Construction site on Paw Patrol... I watch Ryder on construction crew.. Rubble on construction crew”***

***“Digger! I read construction book at Tata’s house”***

***“Green truck from construction site”***

Miko shares some memories of other times he has seen a hammer in action. His memory recall is incredible in helping us understand the connections that he is making!

(Chepil & Zhu, 2019)



Pedagogical documentation is used to engage the educator in observing, documenting, and critically reflecting on children’s learning; it can be shared with families, educators, and children. It opens the door for continued dialogue that enriches the experiences of the child, educator, and family by bringing meaning to the learning that is taking place.

Documentation can also unlock the potential to critically reflect on educator’s ideas, perspective and feelings. The collection of evidence and data concerning individual educators, programs, centres, and system will demonstrate successes, opportunities, and implications for future work. Pedagogists will track centre growth and learning through the development of pedagogical documentation.

## Implementation of the Pedagogical Model

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the COE, in partnership with the TBDSSAB, hosted a community engagement session. This session was an introduction to the purpose and goals of the COE and the idea of pedagogists working within our community. Child Care and EarlyON teams left the session in anticipation of what's to come and resonating with new ideas:

*“engaging in work that takes children’s ideas seriously,”*

*“pedagogy is systemic and challenging,”*

*“opens up the discussion of how we can do what we do better”.*

This session set the stage for a shift in our current procedures which begins by preparing the Child Care and Early Years team for change, and then phasing in the Model.

First, as a result of the Ministry of Education establishing the COE for Early Years and Child Care, administration recommends that TBDSSAB staff become trained pedagogists (see Appendix A: Phase 1). This process involves two components:

1. Participating in a 12-week orientation with the COE (roughly 8 to 10 hours per week, including a 2-hour synchronous online gathering and participation in an online learning forum); and
2. An immersion phase where pedagogists become active participants in the COE network and eventually work alongside approximately 50 educators. In this phase, pedagogists share pedagogical documentation, meet regularly with the COE, and lead pedagogical projects to enrich and enliven the early years sector (Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care, December 2018).



In addition, to ensure that the Child Care and Early Years Program staff are consistent with the overall service system delivery of the Pedagogical Model, the current Program

Officers, Supervisor and Manager should be oriented collectively. The team will meet regularly to debrief on the coursework during the 12-week orientation which will enable an open dialogue. This dialogue is also known as *pedagogical conversation* which encourages others' points of view, critical thinking, and co-construction of knowledge.

Moving toward a Model that requires pedagogists to work alongside Child Care and EarlyON teams will take careful and thoughtful planning. HDLH reminds us that "Curriculum (the content of learning) and pedagogy (how learning happens) in early years settings are shaped by views about the children, the role of the educators and families, and the relationships among them" (2014, p.5).

In aligning with Ontario's Pedagogy, it is important that the TBDSSAB take time to build strong relationships with children, families, educators, and community partners founded on the Four Foundations: *Belonging, Engagement, Expression, and Well-Being*. This process will begin by collaborating with the Confederation College to pursue synonymous objectives for the community and a seamless service delivery. (see Appendix A: Phase 2).

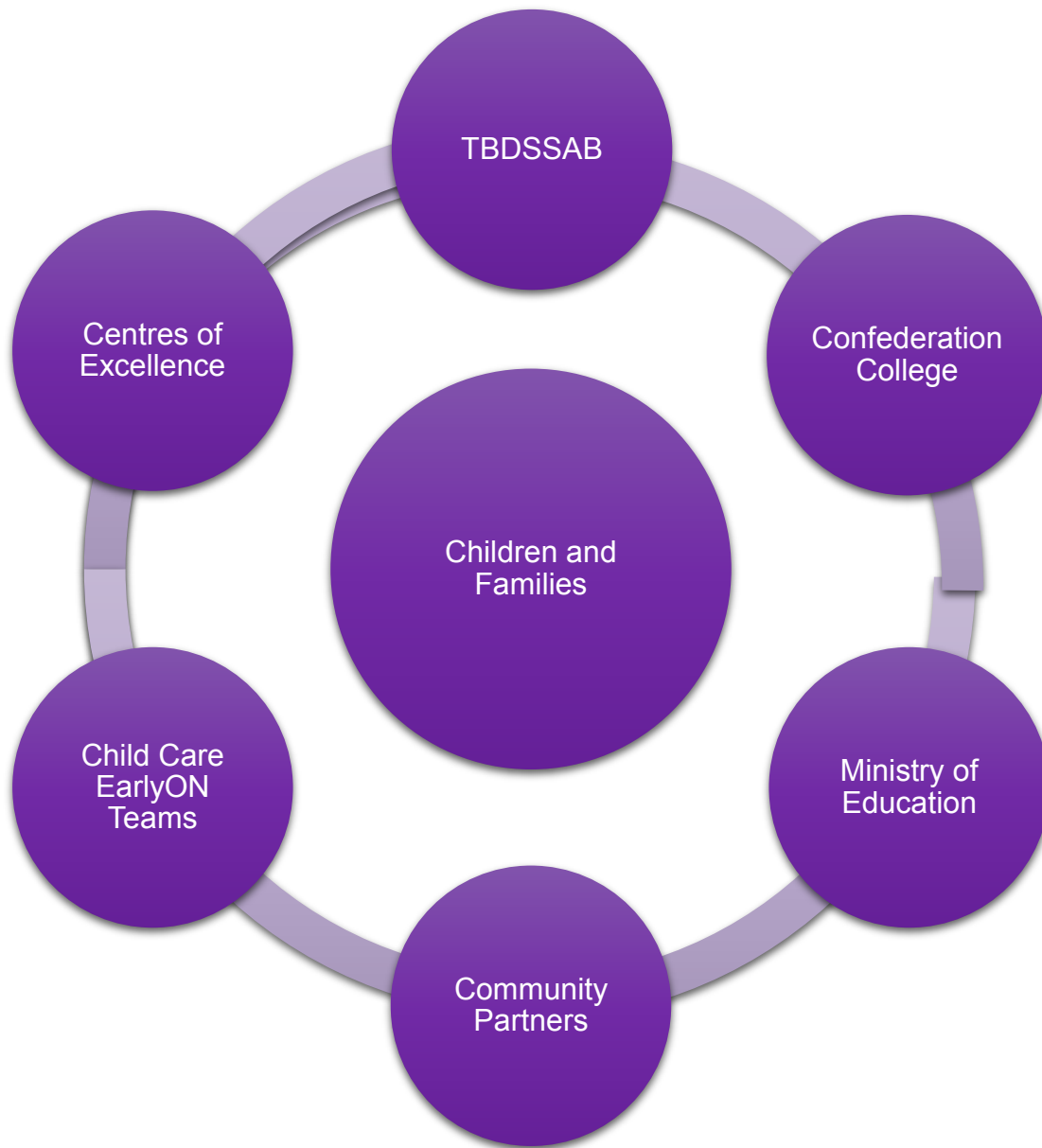
Together, the TBDSSAB and Confederation College will lead a pedagogical network and promote a community of learners who put children and families at the core of their work. For example, this work might entail:

- moving from a focus on technical tasks and skills to critically think and make ethical decisions;
- understanding that there are no absolute truths;
- working with others, co-creating, and co-constructing;
- pausing, noticing, reflecting, questioning, communicating, and enterprising; and
- being inquisitive, assertive, optimistic, and open-minded (Broere, 2019).



See Figure 1 which depicts this community of learners and illustrates how positive relationships and collaboration are paramount to the success of the Pedagogical Model.

*Figure 1: Community of Learners*



Program supervisors and staff have to see themselves in the Model. In order for that to happen, they have to understand the purpose and intent of the Model which is when the work will become very intentional. Staff that work within Child Care and EarlyOn Programs will receive training on what the Pedagogical Model is and what to expect in each of their programs. This will be achieved using several methods including but not limited to:

- communities of practice;
- book studies;
- staff meetings;
- lunch and learns; and
- pedagogical documentation.

Once the community has been oriented to and prepared for the Pedagogical Model, the pedagogists will begin working meticulously. The team of pedagogists will immerse themselves in programs and begin supporting educators through critically reflective practices using situated goals and objectives (see Appendix A: Phase 3).

## **Evaluation**

Pre and post measurements will be developed with the assistance of the TBDSSAB Data & Research Analysts (see Appendix A: Phase 4). These tool will include qualitative and quantitative feedback from:

- Child Care and Early Years Staff;
- Child Care and Early Years Families;
- Early Childhood Education Students in Child Care & Early Years Centres;
- Supervisors of Child Care and Early Years Centres;
- Pedagogists; and
- Community Partners.

With documentation being an important tool in how children's learning takes place and as a part of the inception of the Model, administration is also recommending that it be used as part of the pre and post measure, as it will document change over time.

As an addition to these measures, the TBDSSAB Board of Directors will be made aware of the status of the Model. Administration will do an annual update that demonstrates progress, achievement, and challenges, as well as an 5-year review to ensure best practice and relevancy (see Appendix A: Phase 5).

## **Conclusion**

The Pedagogical Model is driven by current research and trends in early childhood education and the need for new methods of supporting high quality early years programs. As we gain new knowledge and insight into the role of the pedagogist, and as new research unfolds, this Model will be revisited and evolved respectively.

Again, the fundamental goal of the Model is to contribute to a system that recognizes the potential of children, and values high-quality early learning as a means to achieving a self-sufficient community. Knowing that the well-being of our communities depends on the care and support our children receive, we urge your thoughtful consideration of this proposal.



**Appendix A:** *An illustration of how the Model will be phased in, with Phase 3, 4, and 5 repeating after Year 1.*

### Phase 1: Orientation and Training 2020

TBDSSAB staff Oriented to Pedagogist Model via Provincial Centres of Excellence orientation and mentorship with Confederation College Faculty



### Phase 2: Educating the Community 2020

TBDSSAB and Confederation College collaborate to transition Child Care and EarlyON centres to Pedagogical Model, helping programs to understand the logistics of the Model.



### Phase 3: Year 1 Implementation 2020-2021

Pedagogists begin their work alongside Child Care and EarlyON programs using relevant goals and objectives (i.e. Program Statement)



### Phase 4: Development of Pre and Post Measure 2020-2021

Work with Data and Research Analysts to develop and implement pre and post measures that invite feedback from CCEY Staff, parents/caregivers, pedagogists & community partners



### Phase 5: Evaluation

Year 1 pre measure (mid-2020), year 1 post measure (end of 2021), and process review (2024)



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