



Terms of Reference

Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and the Northwest Territories Early Childhood Association (NWTECA) NOVEMBER 2023

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this terms of reference (TOR) is to provide clarity on the working relationship between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and the Northwest Territories Early Childhood Association (NWTECA) as the Department works with partners including the NWTECA to develop an early learning and child care (ELCC) system in the NWT.

2.0 BACKGROUND

ECE has been working collaboratively with governments and community-based partners to support the ELCC sector in the NWT. ECE has developed a ten-year *2030 Early Learning and Child Care Strategy*, and through the *2021-2025 Canada-Northwest Territories ELCC Extension Agreement* (Extension Agreement) and *2021-2026 Canada – NWT Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement* (CW-ELCC Agreement), committed to building a Canada-wide system for ELCC, with the aim of supporting all families in having access to quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive ELCC programming regardless of where they live in the NWT.

The scope of the system change envisioned requires collaborative work amongst actors across the sector, including ECE, Indigenous Governments and organizations, operators of licensed ELCC programs, educators, post-secondary institutions, and other community-based ELCC partners, including the NWTECA.

The NWTECA, established on January 2021 has a mandate to advocate on behalf of the ELCC sector and inform transformation toward an ELCC system in the NWT. The NWTECA is one of the key community-based ELCC partners for ECE to discuss topics related to transformation of the ELCC system in the NWT.

The NWTECA will help inform the development and/or implementation of the following ECE strategies, agreements and actions plans (as applicable):

- *2030 ELCC Strategy*
- *Canada-Northwest Territories (NWT) ELCC Extension Agreement (2021-2025)*
- *Canada – NWT Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement (2021-2026)*
 - Development of a wage grid and certification process
 - Development of new funding mechanisms for licensed ELCC programs
 - Other ELCC initiatives of mutual interest may also be discussed



3.0 APPROACH

ECE and the NWTECA intend to meet and discuss topics related, but not limited, to the development of an ELCC system of quality, affordable, inclusive, flexible and accessible early learning and child care for families in the NWT.

This includes:

- Consideration of the professionalization of those educators working within the system.
- Compensation for educators' role.
- Discussion to support the coordination of engagement and/or information sharing with licensed programs and early childhood educators, as deemed necessary.
- Collaboration between ECE and the NWTECA that supports the identification of opportunities, concerns, and emerging issues and, where possible, the means to address them.

4.0 MEMBERS

The NWTECA and ECE agree to the inclusion of individuals from both organizations with roles that reflect the nature of this TOR.

Primary representatives for the Members are:

- a. ECE:
Assistant Deputy Minister, Education and Culture, ECE
- b. NWTECA:
Co-Chairperson, NWTECA
Co-Chairperson, NWTECA

Beyond the primary representatives, general participation may include up to all NWTECA Board members and up to 9 representatives from ECE. Identification of individuals for general membership for each organization is left to the discretion of each primary representative. For the benefit of the other organization, ECE and the NWTECA will each share when there are changes to the individuals identified as being part of general membership.

Quorum is required for meetings and is considered attained when 50% of members, including NWTECA Board members and ECE staff, from each organization are in attendance.

Communication between the NWTECA and ECE will happen through the primary representatives, or their designate. Communication can include agenda/meeting minutes distribution and other correspondence.



4.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Members

<p>ECE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the NWTECA to confirm and finalize meeting agendas. • Chair meetings. • Regularly inform the Deputy Minister and Minister of ECE on development and implementation progress related to the <i>Canada – NWT Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement</i>, joint efforts, work and/or communications with the NWTECA. • Share relevant updates and information with the NWTECA. • Engage with the NWTECA and the sector, to receive input that advances ELCC system transformation. • keep confidential any information provided by the NWTECA, that they identify as confidential.
<p>NWTECA</p>	<p>Following the establishment of the NWTECA, the organization has identified the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and develop NWT early learning and child care. • Advocate as a non-partisan, non-sectarian organization at all levels of government for a quality early learning and child care system. • Educate the public about early learning and child care as a profession and as a service. • Work in partnership with those involved with the care and education of children. • Help to build cohesiveness in the early childhood education field in the NWT by providing opportunities to connect and network – both territorially and nationally.



5.0 MEETINGS

5.1 Meeting Frequency

There will be at least 2 regular meetings per year, approximately 2 hour(s) long. Additional meetings may be scheduled to address issues or developments between regular meetings, as needed.

5.2 Meeting Type and Location

Meetings will take place through telephone/video conferences.

5.3 Attendance or Guests and/or Observers

Meetings are not open to any person or organization, except when agreed upon by members. When agreed upon by both members, invited guests, observers or advisors (such as operators of licensed ELCC programs and early childhood educators) may participate in meetings to provide information or expertise on a topic.

5.4 Decision-Making

Meetings between the members are intended to inform the transformation of the ELCC system. This group is not intended to act as a decision-making body; however, if decisions related to 5.0 (Meetings) are required, they will be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be obtained, opinions for and against a particular decision will be documented in meeting minutes.

6.0 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

ECE is bound by the federal agreements for development and implementation of changes to the sector. These agreements set mandatory parameters that may limit flexibility of implementation desired by NWTECA, Indigenous Governments and organizations, licensed ELCC programs, educators, post-secondary institutions, and other community-based ELCC partners.

ECE is also bound by existing legislation, including the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP)*, and fiscal realities that restrict available resources.

The NWTECA is bound by its constitution and by-laws governing its operation and priorities.

This TOR is intended solely to clarify the nature of the relationship between ECE and the NWTECA and is intended to be undertaken in good faith. No part of this TOR will be legally binding on either ECE or the NWTECA or limit the abilities of either to have a difference of opinion or prevents either from communicating that difference of opinion, as long as that opinion is based on understood accurate and factual information.



7.0 REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required by the Members to determine if amendments are needed. Proposed changes will be reviewed by Members and endorsed at subsequent meetings.

8.0 SIGNATURE BLOCK

This TOR has been signed by the Members on the dates written below:

<p>SIGNED on the _____ day of _____, 2024 by</p> <hr/> <p>Shannon Barnett-Aikman Assistant Deputy Minister, Education and Culture Department of Education, Culture and Employment Government of the Northwest Territories</p>	<p>SIGNED on the _____ day of _____, 2024 by</p> <hr/> <p>Patricia Davison, Chairperson Northwest Territories Early Childhood Association</p> <hr/> <p>Karen Rawson, Co-Chairperson Northwest Territories Early Childhood Association</p>
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