



Northwest Territories
Education, Culture and
Employment

**EARLY
CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT**
Action Plan
2016 - 2017



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Introduction

The Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) Framework for Early Childhood Development: Right from the Start was released in 2013.

The Framework guides the GNWT's actions in the areas of early childhood over a 10 year period. It was based on a community engagement process that included home visits, regional meetings and focus groups, and a Roundtable and Elders' Sharing Circle.

In addition, the report entitled Success in Early Childhood:

How Do We Get There provided the evidence to support the Framework's development.

The first Action Plan to support the ECD Framework was released in 2014 and ended in March 2016. In order to build on our successes, this document lays out the continued work required to support the ECD Framework in 2016/17.

The first Action Plan identified seven Commitments and 22 Areas for Action under which the Departments of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment would work to advance ECD goals. This document is organized in the same manner, outlining accomplishments and progress to date in each of the 22 Areas for Action. This document also identifies work that needs to be completed in 2016/17 to continue to advance the Commitments. All of the proposed work found in this document can be accomplished within existing financial and human resources.

In addition to the 22 Areas for Action, this document proposes a 23rd Area for Action.

The 23rd Area for Action outlines the GNWT's commitment to preparing a three-year ECD Action Plan that will begin in 2017/18 and that captures the priorities of the 18th Legislative Assembly.

AREA FOR ACTION 1

Increase access to midwifery services and further integrate midwifery into perinatal care.

Commitment 1:

EXPECTANT MOTHERS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO EVIDENCE-BASED SERVICES THAT SUPPORT IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR MOM AND BABY

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Over the past two years HSS has revised and standardized the NWT Prenatal Record form for use in all NWT health facilities.

The form will help identify at-risk mothers and initiate referrals to services. Implementation of these forms will be covered in Area for Action 2 during the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

HSS started midwifery services in Hay River in early 2015. Along with these new services, a monitoring and evaluation plan for Hay River midwifery services was developed and is ready for use.

In the Beaufort Delta region, an alternative model of maternal care was determined to be more appropriate than a midwifery model. As a result, in 2015 – 2016 the **Beaufort Delta Health and Social Services Authority (BDHSSA)** implemented a Maternal Care Nurse Practitioner model, which has increased supports to community-based perinatal services. The BDHSSA Maternal Care Nurse Practitioner goes on community visits to provide education and support to staff, perinatal clients and their families.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016 – 2017, HSS will build on the successes of the existing midwifery programs, ensuring they are well supported through developing and revising the Midwifery Program Standards; and implementing the monitoring and evaluation plan. Work will also begin on developing a Territorial Midwifery Program.

- Modernize policies, processes, and standards to support a future territorial midwifery program.
- Complete consultation on the Territorial Midwifery Program.
- Ongoing scoping and development of program options for the proposed Territorial Midwifery Program.

Accountability

HSS



AREA FOR ACTION 2

Standardize prenatal referrals for expectant mothers with addiction issues

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Over the past two years, HSS has revised and standardized the NWT Prenatal Record form for use in all NWT health facilities.

The form will help identify at-risk mothers and initiate referrals to services. Training and support on the NWT Prenatal Record forms was not completed, and will be carried over to 2016-2017.

HSS formalized and standardized its referral process for expectant mothers with addictions issues in 2014 -2015. Through the existing contract with the Aventa Treatment Centre for Women, pregnant women with addictions have priority access to treatment when they request it. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of screening and priority access protocols for addictions and mental health treatment was not accomplished in 2014-2016 and will be carried over to 2016-2017.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016 – 2017, HSS will continue to work on its revised prenatal form, ensuring consistent implementation and integration into the Electronic Medical Record (EMR). HSS will also work to ensure that its newly implemented priority referral process is practiced throughout the NWT through an integrated care management approach.

- Provide training and support to front line staff using the revised, standardized NWT Prenatal Record form in both paper and electronic format.
- Integrate the revised, standardized NWT Prenatal Record form into Electronic Medical Records.
- Support frontline workers to continue implementing the standardized referral process for mothers with addictions issues by providing training and communicating to the frontline staff responsible for making sure referral protocols are followed and expectant mothers with addictions are supported through an integrated care management approach
- Monitor and report on use of formalized, standardized referral process for expectant mothers with addictions issues.

Accountability

HSS

AREA FOR ACTION 3

Improve outreach and support for expectant mothers in the areas of nutrition, breastfeeding, referrals to community groups and resources, education around smoking, alcohol and drugs, mental health, labor and delivery information

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

HSS continues to support health care facilities to achieve the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation.

The designation is an international initiative established by the World Health Organization to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding and care for childbearing women, their infants, and families. Achieving BFI designation can take between 3 to 10 years. One of the first steps in the process of applying for, and achieving BFI designation is a Certificate of Participation. In the past two years, three facilities achieved Certificates of Participation for the Baby Friendly Initiative:

- Stanton Territorial Health Authority
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority
- Beaufort Delta Health and Social Services Authority

Highlights of other accomplishments in this area include provision of about 40 Breastfeeding Kits to Community Health Representatives and Boarding Homes, and delivery of breastfeeding training through community-based programs.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016 – 2017, HSS will continue to support facilities to achieve and maintain their BFI designation, and continue to provide support to community-based breastfeeding and prenatal nutrition programs. Continue to provide support to community-based breastfeeding programs

- Research standards for breastfeeding and nutrition based on best practice, guidelines and standards
- Provide additional breastfeeding training through training programs for health care practitioners
- Identify opportunities to improve outreach and support for breastfeeding and prenatal nutrition
- Develop a standard BFI approved training package to be delivered in all regions to support the BFI process
- Investigate establishment of a peer support program to help individuals through the facility accreditation process

Accountability

HSS

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 4

Build on the strengths of the Healthy Family Program in all regions in the NWT

Commitment 2:

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMMING AIMED AT INFANTS, CHILDREN AND PARENTS WILL BE EXPANDED

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The review of the Child and Family Resource Programs and Services model pilot in Ndilo and Tulita was completed in 2014-2015 by ECE.

Based on the review recommendations, it was decided to transfer the funding from the pilot to strengthen the Healthy Family Program.

This funding supported the expansion of the Healthy Family Program to Tuktoyaktuk. The Healthy Family Program is now delivered in 16 communities.

As of 2015-2016, all 16 Healthy Family Program sites are receiving funding.

In 2015-2016, program standards were developed to support the Healthy Family Program. Based on feedback throughout this process, the need to review the Healthy Family Program was identified.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016-2017, HSS will review the Healthy Family Program. The review will focus on the sustainability of the training model and the alignment of the program to community needs. Monitoring and evaluation efforts identified in the previous Action Plan will be on hold until the Healthy Family Program review is completed.

- Review the alignment of the Healthy Family Program training model to community needs.
- Continue to fund the HSS Authorities to ensure each region has access to funding for training and support for the effective delivery of a **Healthy Family Program (HFP)** in all regions in the NWT.

Accountability

HSS

AREA FOR ACTION 5

Expand programs aimed at improving oral health and nutrition

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

HSS received funding from the **Territorial Health Investment Fund (THIF)** to support activities towards implementation of a new oral health approach in the NWT.

Based on the 2014 review entitled *Brushing Up on Oral Health*, HSS is developing an approach to address the following three goals:

1. Create one unified and integrated program for the entire NWT;
2. Improve prevention and oral health education; and,
3. Reduce instances of preventable oral health issues and associated conditions.

Several regional demonstration projects were implemented in the last quarter of 2015-2016 fiscal year. The objective is to test the community-based prevention programming proposed approaches to ensure relevancy at the community level. The nutrition program and Healthy Family Collective Kitchen share best practices and success stories through regular teleconference calls with all of the Healthy Family Programs (HFP). At year-end, each program submits a program evaluation report and is shared with all HFP coordinators. Education, support and promotion of breastfeeding are on-going through a range of initiatives including presentations, resources and materials, training and awareness campaigns. For example, approximately 40 Breastfeeding Kits were distributed to all Community Health Representatives (CHRs) and Boarding Homes. Funding has also been provided to each HFP to support and promote breastfeeding to program participants.

In October 2015, nutrition training was provided to Healthy Family Program workers in the Sahtu in Norman Wells, October 27-29, 2015. Breastfeeding Training is planned for February 2016 (organized by Moms, Boobs and Babies, funded by HSS) for Yellowknife and Inuvik participants. Other highlights include the development of nutritional guidelines for young children, and delivery of nutrition training through community-based programs.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016-2017, HSS will focus on further development of the new oral health approach and continuing to provide support for sustainable nutrition strategies.

- Development and testing of oral health prevention programming specifically targeting prenatal and infant/child health programs.
- Work with licensed child day care facilities to improve the delivery of promotion and prevention programming for children attending licensed facilities (*examples may include promoting healthy behaviors and forming good habits such as teeth brushing and the selection of healthy snacks*).
- Development of a revised oral health treatment delivery model and oral health treatment implementation plan.

Accountability

HSS

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 6

Standardize the use and implementation of universal screening tools and assessments aimed at identifying vulnerable or at-risk families and children

Commitment 3: EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT, INTERVENTION AND RESPONSES WILL BE IMPROVED

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

In 2014-2015, HSS completed a one-time pilot assessment of 75% of all NWT children born in 2009 using an assessment tool called the Rourke Form.

The assessment included screening of sight, hearing, speech and developmental readiness. The results from the baseline assessment and **Early Development Instrument (EDI)** were used in the development of the Early Intervention Pilots (*see Area for Action 7 for more information*).

Using results and feedback from this one-time assessment, a series of standardized screening tools were developed. These are referred to as the NWT **Well Child Record (WCR)**. The NWT Well Child Record forms were developed for use by Physicians, Community Health Nurses and Public Health Nurses. To support implementation and ongoing use, the NWT Well Child Record Clinical Practice Standard was approved in March 2015.

Implementation of the 9 age specific forms of the NWT Well Child Record was completed in May 2015, including the development of resource material and training of health care providers.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

Moving forward, the NWT Well Child Record forms are scheduled for integration to the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) in early 2016; the EMR is being implemented through a phased rollout to all primary care and specialist clinics, and Community Health Centers. Integrate NWT Well Child Record into Electronic Medical Record (EMR) according to the EMR schedule.

- Explore options for analysis and reporting from EMR as well as other data sources to ensure evidence informed decision making and program development.
- Share reporting from EMR, where appropriate, to inform program development and planning.
- Continue Early Development Instrument (EDI) data collection, and reporting to inform program development and performance monitoring.

Accountability

HSS

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 7

Ensure consistent equitable access to Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Public Health and community counseling services and follow up for children identified with developmental issues



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Over the past two years, HSS has conducted two evaluations of important early childhood intervention and response services; Rehabilitation Services and TeleSpeech.

The final evaluation reports will help guide future plans to improve service delivery in these areas.

During this time, the HSS has also worked with two regional authorities and one Aboriginal Government to develop three early childhood development Early Intervention pilot projects. The pilot project teams used baseline data from the EDI, as well as the one-time Rourke pilot results, to develop projects targeting regional needs.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016-2017, HSS will use evaluation findings and recommendations to guide improvements to the delivery of rehabilitation services in the NWT. HSS will also continue to support its early intervention pilot project partners to implement their projects. The pilot projects are expected to run for 3 years until 2017/18.

- ECE will increase opportunities for Early Childhood Consultants to work with HSS staff at the community and regional level in the delivery of early intervention programs.
- Based on findings from the evaluations of rehab services, develop an implementation plan to improve rehabilitation services and follow up as part of the next ECD Action Plan.
- Develop data collection, analysis and reporting standards to support program monitoring and evidence informed decision making.
- Continue to work with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority, and Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency to implement and monitor their early intervention pilot projects.

Accountability

HSS

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 8

Strengthen the alignment between early childhood programs and services and the needs of communities

Commitment 4: COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION IMPROVED ACROSS THE CONTINUUM OF ECD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a standardized method, developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies, of measuring five core areas of early childhood development that are known to be good predictors of school readiness and of adult health, education and social outcomes.

EDI data is captured through a checklist completed by kindergarten teachers. A summary report of the NWT 2012-2014 baseline EDI results was made public in September 2014. The EDI data is in its fifth year of data collection. The 2014-15 reports were shared with HSS and Education Superintendents in November 2015.

A program inventory of all ECD programs and support services, for all communities in the NWT, was completed.

Geographic Information System (GIS) is a data tool to capture, store, and represent information. GIS reporting capability was completed and reports can be displayed by region and community. However, there may be other ways to best present the data. These alternative approaches will be explored during the 2016-17 bridge Action Plan.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

A work plan will be developed to outline the best way to maximize use of the data to inform decisions related to Early Childhood programming.

- Use the EDI data to make informed decisions about ECD programs and services.
- Collaborate to develop approaches to utilize existing data sources, including broader socio-economic and program data, to assess NWT well child record and EDI results.
- Develop approaches to update and effectively communicate a detailed inventory of all ECD programs, support and services, for all communities in the NWT.

Accountability

HSS

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 9

Support communities to improve the coordination and alignment between early childhood development programs

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

To increase community level discussions, ECE brought together workers in ECD on two occasions:

1. Workers from all ECD locations that receive funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada were invited to participate in the Weaving our Wisdom Gathering. This territorial wellness gathering included elders, partners and youth from all 33 communities. The gathering focused on themes related to family, community and general wellness.
2. Workers from all eight of the NWT's Aboriginal Head Start programs met in November 2015 to build a plan to work collaboratively on early childhood development. Aboriginal Head Start is a preschool program for First Nations, Inuit and Metis children and their families.

Many community wellness plans have also identified important ECD-related program and service plans and serve as important sources of information on community ECD priorities. HSS supported community wellness plan development, implementation and reporting through contribution agreements over the last two years, and will continue to do so moving forward.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016-2017, ECE will continue to support partnerships and develop relationships across ECD programs and services. ECE will also refocus efforts in supporting interagency ECD committees where they are established.

- Strengthen relationships with partners in the delivery of community wellness plans related to children 0-5 years of age.
- Develop a standard, territorial orientation process for Divisional Education Councils (DECs) to ensure that all NWT children transition to school in a manner that creates the least amount of stress and to identify specific needs for each child.
- Provide support to identified communities to strengthen the sharing of resources and information across early childhood development programs.
- Work to enhance supports for parents to assist in referrals and program navigation.

Accountability

ECE

HSS

AREA FOR ACTION 10

Support at-risk children and families using an interdisciplinary approach

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

HSS and ECE have formed a working group, which is moving forward on the information sharing pieces necessary to promote an interdisciplinary approach.

The Department of Justice is supporting HSS and ECE in the development of a common consent form and Information Sharing Agreement, in compliance with HSS and ECE legislation.

Funding was provided to Lynn's Place and Rock Hill Apartments to deliver ECD programming aimed at mothers living in transitional housing. This funding will continue in the 2016-2017 bridge Action Plan.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

For the 2016-17 bridge ECD Action Plan, HSS and ECE will continue to address information sharing to support integrated care, with a focus on children receiving services under the Child and Family Services Act.

- Provide funding to NGOs to deliver ECD programming aimed at mothers living in transitional housing in Yellowknife at Lynn's Place and Rock Hill Apartments.
- Work with partners to review best practices of existing integrated service delivery models (examples of service delivery partners are the Justice Integrated Case Management model, services delivered by the YWCA at Lynn's Place.
- Determine what information should be shared across service delivery partners, and for what purpose, in order to provide the best care for children.



LAWRENCE NORBERT

Accountability

ECE

HSS

AREA FOR ACTION 11

Target campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood development, the impact of the early years, the role of parents and those who work with children

Commitment 5: PROMOTION, AWARENESS AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES RELATED TO EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AVAILABLE TO ALL FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Over the past two years, a number of initiatives were delivered to raise the awareness about the importance of early childhood development.

Highlights include the production of a quarterly newsletter to all licensed early childhood programs; production and distribution of Healthy Family Program promotional items; delivering micro awareness campaigns on nutrition and immunizations; and delivering **NWT Foster Parent training (PRIDE)**.

A multi-year agreement for ECD Social Marketing was awarded to Outcrop Communications. Self-regulation and oral health were identified as priority areas of the social marketing campaign.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

The 2016 – 2017 bridge ECD Action Plan will focus on delivering a social marketing campaign on oral health and self-regulation to parents, families, caregivers and other partners.

- Continue social marketing campaigns targeted to parents, families, caregivers and other partners regarding Oral Health and Self-Regulation.
- Determine a measure of reach and a strategy for evaluating the impact of the social marketing campaign, in alignment with the GNWT Corporate Communications Strategy.

Accountability

HSS

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 12

Use innovative mediums and technology to reach people with culturally relevant promotion and prevention tools, updates on available programming for parents and children, and health and education messages

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Supporting NWT parents and caregivers with information, tools, and options for programs and services aimed at healthy childhood development remains a priority.

Over the past two years, HSS adjusted some of the original targets to focus more broadly on pre-natal programming delivered through the Vital Abel and Inuvik boarding homes, rather than specifically on the baby bag program.

ECE distributed 100 iPad Minis to new parents and primary caregivers across the NWT as part of its iPad Minis for New Parents and Primary Caregivers Initiative pilot.

ECE and HSS regularly posted and promoted ECD events, programs and services on the *Right from the Start* Facebook page.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

The focus for 2016/17 is to explore areas for improvement and build on successes for each of these projects including the *Right from the Start* website, pre-natal programming offered through Vital Abel and Inuvik boarding homes, and the iPad Minis initiative.

- Enhance and refresh the *Right from the Start* website.
- Continue to support Vital Abel and Inuvik boarding homes through contribution agreements for their pre-natal programming in 2016-2017.
- Continue to distribute iPad minis to new parents and primary caregivers throughout the NWT while implementing the established program specific monitoring and evaluation plan.
- Build on NWT Library Services by distributing iPads to public libraries throughout the NWT.
- Investigate opportunities to sustain the use of innovative mediums and technology to reach people with culturally relevant information on early childhood development.

Accountability

ECE

HSS

AREA FOR ACTION 13

Strengthen preventative approaches to children’s health and well-being and build understandings of healthy child development in children and youth

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Development and delivery of a dual credit Senior Secondary early childhood development course, was completed in 2014-15, through a partnership with Aurora College.

High school students who complete the post-secondary course receive credits on their high school transcript, as well as credits towards an Aurora College certificate. Leaving high school, students who take the course will be better prepared if they wish to pursue further education and a career in Early Childhood Development.

Promotion and time for revisions to the initial dual credit Senior Secondary pilot are required to support successful expansion of the pilot delivery.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

Teacher resources and course revisions will be completed and promotion will be completed to support successful delivery of pilots in three communities during the 2016-17 school year.

- ECE will collaborate with HSS on the development of a revised JK to Grade 9 health curriculum in order to ensure preventative approaches to children’s health are included.
- Finalize the development of a high quality dual credit program which meets the needs of Aurora College instructors and dual credit requirements.
- Expand on the 2014-15 pilot of the Senior Secondary early childhood development course by delivering additional pilots in up to two communities during the 2016-17 school year.

Accountability

ECE

HSS

AREA FOR ACTION 14

Address the infrastructure challenges of finding safe and appropriate locations for early childhood development programs and child care services as identified by each community

Commitment 6: ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY, AFFORDABLE EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS AND CHILD CARE SERVICES ARE ENHANCED

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The development of a policy on publicly funded, private owned infrastructure was led by the Departments of Executive and Finance.



LAWRENCE NORBERT

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

During the 2016-17 bridge ECD Action Plan, ECE will implement the new policy on publicly funded, private owned infrastructure.

- Communicate the new GNWT policy for guiding partnerships, capital projects and public investment with the Early Childhood sector.
- Address identified infrastructure challenges in schools to facilitate adding Junior Kindergarten in regional centres and Yellowknife (dependent on the 18th Legislative Assembly's decision regarding territorial implementation).

Accountability

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 15

Restructure administration and finance processes for all early childhood development programs to promote equity, inclusion, quality and program stability

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The Early Childhood Program (ECP) Review (Report 1 and 2) was completed in September 2015 and shared with Cabinet in October 2015.

Actions outlined in the ECP Review are addressed, in part, through the 2016-17 bridge Action Plan.

Development of a comprehensive Policy and Procedures Manual will begin by March, 2016. This will help to ensure that the Regulations, policies, funding and reporting guidelines are up-to-date and followed consistently between regions.

An application process for ECP, which incorporates appropriate funding streams into one funding proposal and contribution agreement, with optional multi-year timeframes, will be completed by March 2016.

In addition to the Feasibility Study of Universal Affordable Day Care in the Northwest Territories, reviews of the **Healthy Children Initiative (HCI)** and **Small Communities Initiative (SCI)** were completed.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

The focus for 2016 – 2017 will be to improve the quality of the Early Childhood Program (ECP) and strengthen the Healthy Children Initiative (HCI) by making the appropriate changes to these two initiatives.

- Implementation of the new Early Childhood Consultant Policy and Program Manual to ensure that the regulations, policies, funding and reporting guidelines are up-to-date.
- Consolidation of applications for ECP funding to limit the number of application and contribution agreements required from each operator.
- Implementation of Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) training to support the process for measuring and monitoring quality of licensed day care facilities.
- Begin the development of an early learning framework for children ages 0-3 years.
- Begin the development of a credentialing system for licensed early childhood staff.
- Revising the HCI program scope, principles and funding guidelines to reflect a focus on early intervention for children at-risk for or whom are already experiencing developmental delays.
- Revising the funding support model for licensed early childhood programs
- Improve affordability of daycare, ensuring sustainability for operators of early childhood programs and expanding access to early childhood programs across the territory.

Accountability

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 16

Provide access to high quality early education programs



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

At the direction of the Premier, a review of Junior Kindergarten (JK) was completed in October, 2015.

The JK Review will be shared with the 18th Legislative Assembly for direction on moving forward with territorial implementation.

JK was implemented in small communities in 2014-15 and continued in 16 communities in 2015-16.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016 – 2017, work will continue to support the territorial implementation of Junior Kindergarten.

- Development of a communication plan for parents, AHS programs, and other key stakeholders.
 - Work with communities to strengthen and support existing sites where JK is currently delivered, while supporting implementation in all NWT communities.
 - Work with stakeholders and communities to explore options for free play-based care for 4 year olds.
 - Implementation plan developed to ensure existing licensed early childhood programs (e.g., AHS, preschool programs, day care centres, family day homes)
- continue to be supported throughout implementation.
 - Identify the cost of renovations needed for all remaining JK classrooms.
 - Revision of the JK/K curriculum, including articulation of specific expectations for 4 and 5 year olds.
 - Provide ongoing training to JK/K teachers, including assessment for 4 and 5 year olds.
 - Revise the JK/K MEA plan.
 - Begin development of an action plan for universal daycare within the next two years.

Accountability

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 17

Support culture-based programs that foster Aboriginal language development in children and involving Elders in programs

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The Aboriginal Languages Secretariat (ALS) was established after the development of the ECD Framework and two-year action plan, ending in 2014-15.

Work in the area of Aboriginal language development in children will be supported by the ALS.

The Language Nest funding model was amended and funding now goes directly to Aboriginal Governments (rather than being provided to programs based on a proposal and contribution agreement process).

Revisions to the *Elders and Schools* document, to reflect ECD, have started but additional revisions are required. This work is being completed through the **Education Renewal and Innovation (ERI)** Aboriginal Languages and Culture Based Education Working Group.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

During the 2016-17 bridge ECD Action Plan, the Aboriginal Languages Secretariat (ALS) will support actions related to Aboriginal cultures and languages activities for licensed early childhood programs.

- With participation from interested Aboriginal Governments, review the current NWT Aboriginal Language Nest program to ensure effective support for Aboriginal cultures and languages for licensed early childhood programs.

Accountability

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 18

Develop cultural competencies of early childhood professionals.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The annual Early Childhood Symposium included a session from the Culture and Heritage staff.

ECD staff is also involved in **Education Renewal and Innovation (ERI)** K-12 working groups that support the work identified in the area of cultural competencies. Concrete actions for 2016-17 have been identified.

Begin development of a PeopleSoft Manual, to share information on how to access the training calendar, by March 31, 2016 to support licensed early childhood program staff's access to training.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In 2016 – 2017, the following actions are aimed at ensuring early childhood programs and services create culturally safe environments and encounters and reduce any sense of personal risk that individuals might experience when accessing a GNWT program or service.

- Examine existing GNWT, and other, culturally appropriate resources and materials to share with licensed early childhood programs.
- Distribute the PeopleSoft Manual to licensed early childhood programs for early childhood staff in centres and family day homes to access the GNWT Training Calendar.
- Offer licensed early childhood program staff access to the GNWT's online Aboriginal cultural awareness training.
- Through the early intervention pilot projects, test and explore the concept cultural relevancy and cultural competency in practice with children, families and communities.

Accountability

ECE

HSS

AREA FOR ACTION 19

Enhance program resources for early childhood development programs



LAWRENCE NOBERT

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

During the 2016-17 bridge ECD Action Plan, development of an early learning framework and JK/K curriculum revisions will begin.

- Begin the development of an early learning framework and implementation guide for children ages 0-3 years.
- Revise the JK/K curriculum, including articulation of specific expectations for 4 and 5 year olds.
- Provide ongoing training to JK/K teachers, including assessment of 4 and 5 year olds.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Early Development Instrument (EDI) collection is ongoing, as outlined in Area for Action 8.

Development of a culturally appropriate, play-based early learning framework for children ages 0-3 in the NWT was not started in the first two years of the Framework's implementation. This has been identified for development in the 2016-17 bridge Action Plan.

A jurisdictional scan of other Early Learning Frameworks was completed and adapted by Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). This will inform development of an NWT Early Learning Framework and supporting resources.

Accountability

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 20

Improve the quality of licensed early childhood education and care programs



LAWRENCE NOBERT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Early Childhood Consultants were provided online introductory courses for **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)** for completion by March 2015.

A jurisdictional scan was conducted to confirm what is used and the pros and cons of the tools, with related costs, before recommending training and the use of the tool. Training for ECERS, by an authorized trainer, occurred in March 2016.

Annual NWT Early Childhood Symposiums were held in September 2014 and August 2015.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

Development of a plan to implement ECERS in licensed programs (including a schedule, templates, and communication materials) for implementation in 2016-17. This will support the actions identified in the 2016-17 bridge Action Plan.

- Implement the plan to build on the use of Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) in the NWT to focus on continuous quality improvement of programs.
- Develop a plan for the use of the Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) in the NWT.
- Host the annual NWT Early Childhood Development Symposium in collaboration with HSS.

Accountability

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 21

Increase the number of qualified early childhood development professionals in licensed programs

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Development of the Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) Program was initiated in 2015-16 and will be completed in 2016-17.

This will help support licensed early childhood program staff in meeting the Regulation requirements that state “primary staff will have the opportunity to demonstrate competency”.

The annual Early Childhood Symposium, held in Yellowknife in August 2015, also supports this area of action. In 2014-15, 10 scholarships were provided to eligible postsecondary students enrolled in early childhood development programs. In 2015-16, this increased to 15 students who were eligible and received \$5,000 scholarships.

The Early Childhood Staff Grant is provided to licensed early childhood program staff based on staff’s level of postsecondary education and the number of hours worked per quarter. The Early Childhood Staff Grant revealed that only 25% of the early childhood sector has completed postsecondary education in early childhood.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

In the 2016-17 bridge Action Plan, Aurora College, in partnership with ECE, will establish transferability between their Early Childhood Certificate program and other postsecondary programs to support increase of postsecondary training in the early childhood development sector.

- Support Aurora College in the delivery of Early Childhood Development Certificate program
- Support primary staff of licensed early childhood programs in meeting the NWT Child Daycare Act Regulations by:
 - Continue the creation of a Competency Based Assessment (CBA) Program to recognize the experience and prior learning of staff already working in licensed early childhood programs.
 - Beginning to draft a manual to support training to Early Childhood Consultants on the use of the CBA program.
- Licensed early childhood program providers will be provided access to the Government of Alberta’s Introduction to Early Childhood online course during the 2016-17 fiscal year.
- Provide ongoing support to licensed early childhood program staff to obtain postsecondary education
- Begin to determine the requirements for the development of a NWT credentialing system for licensed Early Childhood Program staff.

Accountability

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 22

Develop and implement a Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability (MEA) Plan for the renewed Early Childhood Development (ECD) Framework and Action Plan

Commitment 7:

MONITORING, REPORTING AND ONGOING EVALUATION FOR CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability (MEA) Plan for the ECD Framework was completed in October 2014.

The MEA Plan includes a mechanism for continuous quality improvement. Information emerging out of the Plan's activities can support the development of the renewed three year action plan (2017-18 to 2019-20).

Monitoring, reporting and ongoing evaluation has supported a number of ECD initiatives. For example, the Hay River Midwifery Program is developing a monitoring and evaluation plan to guide timely feedback and allow for continuous quality improvement. An evaluation of the iPad Minis Initiative was completed in Fall 2015. Specific program evaluation plans have identified other data sources and resources, such as the Early Development Instrument results, to support evaluative work.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the ECD Framework will be ongoing until the end of the ECD Strategic Framework (2023). Information regarding the implementation of the 2014-2016 ECD action plan will be collected over the 2016-2017 fiscal year to support the development of the renewed three year action plan.

WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

Revise the MEA Plan to ensure:

- MEA activities are reported on to inform effective programs and services.
- Information is collected to support the development of the renewed, three year action plan.

Accountability

HSS

ECE

AREA FOR ACTION 23

Create a detailed, 3-year Action Plan, for 2017 – 2020, to continue to build on the work from the 2014 – 2017 Action Plan

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

This is a new Area for Action that was not included in the previous Action Plan.



WORK TO COMPLETE IN 2016 – 2017

Information regarding the implementation of the 2014-2016 ECD action plan will be collected over the 2016-2017 fiscal year to support the development of the renewed three year action plan

- ECE and HSS will work together to develop a three-year, detailed action plan covering the 2017-2020 time period, which aligns with the priorities and business plan timeline of the 18th Legislative Assembly.

Accountability

ECE

HSS

