

HAMILTON EARLY YEARS QUALITY PROGRAM



Hamilton

Background: Co-Investigation of Quality by the Region of Waterloo and City of Hamilton

In partnership, the Region of Waterloo and the City of Hamilton as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) engaged in a process to investigate early learning and child care quality. The investigation led to “Co-Constructing Quality in ELCC: A Community Framework”. This resource supports quality through eight elements, a vision for the community and goals for children and families.

We aimed for a process to mobilize, energize, and support intrinsic drive for continuous learning, quality improvement and enhancement. The Quality Project team was convened in August 2015 and worked collaboratively for one year. Along the way, we invited others to share their insights and join in the ongoing dialogue and learning to further a vision of high quality in early learning and child care in communities.

During this evolutionary time in Early Childhood Education, we appreciated the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Region of Waterloo to bring forward a resource to guide quality assurance in communities. Following the 2016 project, each of the communities developed plans to implement the resource as a guide to quality for early years programs and services in their respective systems.

Hamilton Early Years Quality Program

The **Hamilton Early Years Quality Program** will begin in February 2017 with implementation of a continuous quality assurance process that applies the aforementioned framework as a guiding resource. Implemented through agreements with all early years service providers, it involves a pattern of site visits for appreciative inquiry and dialogue to collaboratively generate quality assurance goals and action plans for each organization. Achievement of goals is enhanced and supported through access to professional learning, consultation and other community resources.

“Ontario’s children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.”

Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2014

Acknowledgements

Connecting with Communities

Thank you to the community key informants for assembling focus groups of participants in each community, who shared perspectives added depth and rich context to this quality investigation. Your real life examples illuminated the research.

Quality Project Key Informant
Community Summary with Strategies

Brant Community, Bruce Community, Halton Community, London and Middlesex Community, Niagara Community, Peel Community, Peterborough Community, Simcoe Community, Sudbury Community, Toronto Community, Thunder Bay Community, Wellington-Guelph Community, City of Hamilton, and Region of Waterloo.

Champions for Quality

We gratefully appreciate the interest, insights and perspectives offered to us in development of Co-constructing Quality in ELCC: A Community Framework. Many dynamic and inspiring discussions furthered our work and contributed to the overall project.

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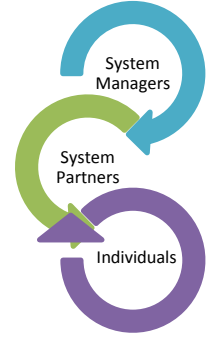
The project team would also like to acknowledge the contributions of all staff from the Region of Waterloo, City of Hamilton and Affiliated Services for Children and Youth that helped to develop the quality framework.



Hamilton Early Years Quality Program

A resource for community-wide quality assurance that furthers collective commitment to the vision and goals of [Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan](#), Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights, Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth, and *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

*Together, we are “making Hamilton the best place to raise a child, the best place to **be** a child” and cultivating high quality early years programs and services where children, families and educators are viewed as capable and competent.*

8 Elements	Vision for an Early Years Community	Goals for Children and Families in an Early Years Community	About our implementation process...
Ideas	Children benefit from early years experiences that are coherent with current pedagogy, and informed by current research on child health, development and learning.	The lived experiences of children and families are coherent with current pedagogy and system values. They are welcomed and respected for their culture, diversity, and supported in seamless transitions to other services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality is a shared responsibility and a complex construct supported through a system of relationships, - the relationships between educators, children and their parents, among professionals, within organizations, between the system and its service providing partners, and throughout the community. A “Vision for an Early Years Community” and “Goals for Children and Families” are mapped against the eight elements described in <i>Quality By Design</i> (Friendly, Doherty, Beach 2006). Grounded by current research and pedagogy, the framework strategies align with views and values of <i>How Does Learning Happen?</i> (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2014). Implemented through agreements with all early years service providers, it involves a pattern of site visits for appreciative inquiry and dialogue to collaboratively generate quality assurance goals and action plans for each organization. Achievement of goals is enhanced and supported through A Professional Learning Consultant from ASCY and access to community resources such as special needs resourcing supports. 
Governance	System partners have well-designed governance structures and clear lines of accountability.	Children and families are engaged in the community in meaningful ways and feel a sense of belonging. Families know they can share ideas, concerns, ask questions, and will be responded to respectfully. Children and families have access to meaningful relationships in neighbourhood programs where system partners are responsive to their needs.	
Infrastructure	Early years programs are purpose built or purposely designed, co-located or connected to other services within neighbourhoods. Common, system-wide processes exist.	Families can easily identify and locate system partner locations and understand these are places to go for early years programs and services.	
Planning & Policy Development	The well-being of children and families is at the centre of policy and planning, both in the broader community and with system partners.	Policies are designed in the best interests of children, and families are confident in the system.	
Financing	Public dollars are directed to fund high quality programs and increasingly support early years programs that are accessible for all families. Programs are adequately resourced and demonstrate viability through fiscal accountability and sound business practices.	Children and families are able to choose early years programs and services that are consistently high quality, inclusive and accessible to them.	
Human Resources	Early years professionals are qualified for their position, compensated fairly, respected in the community and workplace, contribute leadership and expertise, and engage in reflective practice and life-long learning. All professionals understand the importance of their role in making person-to-person connections to support positive relationships.	The relationships between children, families and professionals within the system are reciprocal, in that each are recognised for their expertise, knowledge and they support one another in their respective roles. Children and families gain a strong sense of confidence and belonging when system partners provide positive work environments and opportunities for leadership.	
Environments as Contexts for Relationships	Provide a climate for early years experiences that foster relationships, belonging, and well-being among children, families and educators. Environments are designed, maintained and equipped to provoke curiosity, exploration, inquiry, support self-regulation through play, and reflect respect for children as capable and competent.	Children have a right to experience meaningful, active, creative, exploratory play, both indoors and outdoors. Environments are intentionally planned, appropriately equipped for children's development, and support their health and well-being. Early years system partners make person-to-person connections with parents/primary caregivers and build trusting, respectful relationships with children, families and professionals.	
Data, Research and Evaluation	System managers and system partners gather, utilize, share, and link data to guide planning, continuous quality improvement which contributes to the growing body of early childhood research.	Children and families benefit from early years programs that engage in a cycle of continuous quality improvement and monitoring. Children and families contribute thoughts and ideas that inform both program and system planning. Children's learning and development is made visible and celebrated through portfolios and documentation. Families have access to information that is meaningful to them, both to engage with their child and at the system level, inform decision making and for learning.	