

Early Childhood Development Single Window Strategy:
Summary Report of
First Nations Regional Dialogue Sessions



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Table of Contents

Background	1
Methodology	3
<i>Objective</i>	3
<i>Lead Agency</i>	4
The Assembly of First Nations	4
<i>Limitation</i>	5
Dialogue Outcomes	5
<i>Challenges to the Integration of Current ECD Programs</i>	5
<i>A Vision of Early Childhood</i>	5
<i>Organization/ Government (Roles, Responsibilities, Authorities)</i>	7
<i>Management and Administration Processes</i>	8
<i>Enablers (Infrastructure, Competencies and Resource Requirements)</i>	8
Resource Requirements	9
Standards	9
<i>Further Thoughts on a “Single Window” Approach</i>	9
<i>Supports and Capacity Development</i>	10
<i>Next Steps</i>	11
<i>Best Practices</i>	11
Conclusions	12
<i>Recommended Actions from the 2005 Regional Dialogues</i>	13

Background

On October 31st, 2002, the federal government announced new funding of \$320 million over the next five years, and \$65 million per year ongoing, for a strategy to support the early childhood development (ECD) of Aboriginal children. The strategy was intended to complement the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Early Childhood Development Agreement reached by First Ministers in September 2000. It was also in keeping with Government of Canada commitments made in the January 2001 Speech from the Throne, 2001 Federal Budget, and the September 2002 Speech from the Throne.

The ECD Strategy was aimed at identifying means by which programming can be better suited to community needs. To help guide the strategy, a number of action groups were struck, including: the ECD Interdepartmental Working Group (ECD-IWG), an Assistant Deputy Minister Steering Committee, an ECD coordination team within Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB); and discussions with the National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs), community-level service delivery organizations and other groups. The ECD-IWG consists of members from Health Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSD), as well as the five NAOs (AFN, ITK, NWAC, CAP, MNC). The three federal ministries have collaboratively undertaken several initiatives, including an environmental scan and survey of Aboriginal Children led by HRSD, pilot projects led by INAC, and National Dialogue led by Health Canada.

In addition to their own National Dialogue, Health Canada responded favourably to NAO requests to undertake distinct dialogues with their stakeholders. AFN held its National Dialogue on December 16, 2003, whose objective was to seek input about various possibilities and best options (cooperation, coordination, collaboration, integration, consolidation) for harmonizing federal programs to ultimately improve the allocation of funding and the delivery of ECD programming. The AFN invited the Chiefs Committee on Health, Chiefs Committee on Education, Chiefs Committee on Social Development and Chiefs Committee on Human Resources Development to participate, as well as their corresponding technical committees. The results from the AFN National Dialogue were put together in report form and submitted to Health Canada (Appendix A). Participants, however, made it clear that, due to tight timeframes, and the limited extent of First Nations representation, the AFN's National Dialogue did not satisfy the federal duty to consult First Nations on the ECD Strategy.

Since the launch of the 2002 ECD Strategy, the only other opportunity the AFN had to be involved in the federal ECD Strategy was by participating in the ECD IWG. Notwithstanding, the AFN has not had any meaningful contribution in shaping the direction of the strategy. Clearly expressed during the AFN's 2003 National Dialogue, First Nations have felt dissatisfied with the ECD strategy development process to date and have not been adequately involved in planning and decision-making.

In response to an invitation to participate in a July 27th ECD-IWG meeting, the AFN proposed to host a senior officials bilateral meeting to address ongoing First Nations concerns. The invitation was extended by the National Chief to Deputy Minister Ian Green which also outlined key principles seen as critical to securing the AFN's further participation in the ECD Strategy:

1. Any monetary savings resulting from efficiencies must be reinvested into First Nations infrastructure;
2. Real change and benefits for First Nations children and communities will be contingent on distinct targeted funding for First Nations;
3. Once sustainable funding has been identified, there must be ease of the administrative burden faced by First Nations communities;
4. The success of integration at the national level must create opportunities for integration at the community level.
5. Discussions must be held with the three constitutionally recognized peoples and their politically representative organizations, that is, the AFN, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Metis National Council;
6. Joint planning must take place between the federal government and First Nations leadership aligned with the principle of collaboration to which the Prime Minister committed during the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable. First Nations leadership must be proactively and meaningfully engaged in the development of the new National Child Care Program.

These principles were based on considerations brought forward by participants attending the AFN National Dialogue, as well as those offered in similar reports and background documents compiled by First Nations individuals and organizations on the topic of ECD program and service integration.

The ECD senior officials bilateral session was held on October 8th, 2004. AFN's notes taken during the meeting are provided in Appendix B. Regional Chief Bill Erasmus and Richard Jock, the Assembly of First Nations Chief Executive Officer, requested verbal confirmation that the AFN would be given another opportunity to have input into the ECD Strategy by coordinating regional dialogues. On October 22, 2004, the National Chief forwarded a proposal for regional First Nations engagement to the Minister of Health, the Minister of Social Development, The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, and the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development requesting further participation on the ECD strategy.

Confirmation of funding was received at the end of January 2005 in the amount of \$175,000 (\$17,500 for each of the ten First Nations regions). Regions were notified that they were to conduct ECD dialogues by March 31, 2005. Despite the tight time frame, all regions opted to participate in the initiative. Furthermore, they ensured that the turn-out of Head Start workers, day care providers, children's program directors and so forth, offered a rich, mixed community perspective emanating from those individuals who work directly with First Nations children and know first hand their needs, those of their families, and of the overall community. Participants were genuinely concerned with the welfare of children in their community, and therefore, the feedback acquired from the regional dialogues was highly meaningful.

Methodology

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the regional dialogues was to validate responses in the AFN's National Dialogue of 2003, and allow a greater opportunity for community members who work with First Nations children, including child care providers, teachers, program directors, parents, etc., to provide their valuable and relevant input into the development of the ECD Strategy. The impetus to coordinate regional dialogues on the ECD Strategy stemmed from requests made by the original participants of the AFN National Dialogue to undertake a more adequate engagement process.

However, in light of the new Federal Budget 2005 announcement of \$100 million over five years being allocated to a First Nations set-aside of the Early Learning Child Care (ELCC) Initiative, the AFN agreed to leverage the opportunity for regional dialogues on the ECD Strategy to inform future investments stemming from the ELCC. A First Nations Action Plan on ELCC has been separately drafted to summarize those outcomes of the Regional Dialogues specific to ELCC.

Regional dialogues, held during the month of March 2005, included a variety of participants: First Nations leaders, Health Directors, Social Directors, but most of the groups included community-level service providers and ECD and ELCC specialists from Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements (AHRDAs) and Aboriginal Head Start programs.

The AFN commissioned a Facilitator's Guide and Background Discussion Paper (Appendix C and D) with questions related to ECD and the single window approach, as well as the ELCC QUAD principles' applicability/relevance to First Nations communities. The following nine questions were asked of the participants at the regional dialogues (including the ELCC questions):

1. What is your vision for a continuum of quality early childhood programs and services for the children of your community?
2. What would you identify as the key ideas or principles underlying First Nations quality programs and services for children and families?
3. Consider the following elements of quality: Quality, Universally Inclusive, Accessible, Developmental. Would they be appropriate for First Nations communities? Why? Why not? Would you change them? If so How? Are there other principles that should be included?
4. Is there effective coordination or integration of programs and services in your community that others should know about?
5. How could the federal government support the delivery of early childhood development programs and services in First Nations communities in more effective and efficient ways?

6. Would a “single window” approach where community programs and services are delivered in a coordinated approach be helpful? If yes, why would it be helpful? What would a single window approach look like for programs and services at the community level when implemented? How would they be administered? How would they be managed? How would they be funded? How would the programs and services be implemented for the children? If no, why would it not be helpful?
7. What supports, capacity development would be needed to implement a single window approach to early childhood program and service delivery in your community?
8. If a single window approach were implemented for First Nations early childhood programs and services, what role would regional or national First Nations bodies play? What authority or responsibility would they have?
9. If a single window approach were implemented for early child programs and services in our communities, what would be the next steps? How would you prioritize these steps?

As a result of the National Dialogue and Regional Dialogues held, the AFN has prepared this summary report intended to supplement the National Dialogue report of December 2003. This summary report addresses:

- Challenges to the integration of current ECD programs;
- A Vision;
- Organization/government (roles, responsibilities, authorities);
- Management and administration processes;
- Enablers (infrastructure, competencies and resource requirements); and
- Recommended actions.

Each First Nations region was allocated \$17,500 in order to host a regional dialogue session. The coordination of the meetings was left up to each of the regional representatives, as well as the coordination of facilitation and invitees. After the session, each region was asked to roll up the feedback and submit a final regional report to the AFN.

LEAD AGENCY

THE ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

The AFN’s Health and Social Development Secretariat is dedicated to improving the health and social status of First Nations Peoples. The Secretariat supports the AFN Chiefs Committee on Health, the AFN Chiefs Committee on Social Development, the National First Nations Health Technicians Network, the First Nations-INAC Policy Advisory Group, and provides expert technical advice and lobby efforts to First Nations’ leaders and their health and social technicians. The Secretariat is committed to a reciprocal and collaborative working relationship with the federal government, particularly with Health Canada, Social Development Canada, Human Resource Development Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs

Canada, and the Public Health Agency. This continues to be a priority in ensuring coordinated approaches to addressing the health and social service delivery needs and issues of First Nations: their governments, communities and peoples. While the regional dialogues were supported by the AFN Health and Social Secretariat, they were undertaken in partnership with First Nations Provincial and Territorial Organizations.

LIMITATION

The “single window” concept is very broad and its usefulness at the community level will vary. Participants were sceptical of the “single window” concept. They did, however, continue to answer the workshop questions to the best of their ability in order to ensure input into the ECD strategy.

The tight time frame prevented the preparatory launch of a communications strategy on the ECD Strategy and the regional dialogue process. This impeded participants’ ability to fully engage in discussions if they had received little information in advance of the subject and process at hand. As well, the tight time frame presented a difficult challenge for the AFN to provide an in-depth analysis of dialogue outcomes, and undertake a thorough review of the summary report with the National First Nations Health Technicians, regional social technicians, Chiefs Committees on Health and Social Development, the Chief Executive Officer and National Chief’s Office. Hence, it is anticipated that this summary report will remain draft until all review/approvals processes can be adequately completed (July 2005). A Final Summary Report will be submitted to Health Canada at this time.

Dialogue Outcomes

CHALLENGES TO THE INTEGRATION OF CURRENT ECD PROGRAMS

One of the most apparent challenges to the integration of ECD programs is the lack of awareness at the community level as to what the “single window” is, (some were referring to it as a “secret window”). Participants did not know what programs were included in the ‘basket of services’ and the “single window” concept, so it was difficult for many of the participants to expand on questions when they lacked such knowledge. There is widespread suspicion that the federal government has already established what the “single window” means, and that the latter presents an opportunity to justify funding cuts if any savings are incurred as a result of integration. On the other hand, participants were hopeful that integration would result in less “piecemeal” funding which would streamline reporting at the community level.

A VISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

There were many common visions expressed across the country. The following is a sample of the input provided.

All regions envisioned a federally-funded program that is resourced at a level that will *"enable meaningful strategic investments into the current and future well-being of First Nations children, families, communities and Nations."*

"Support for families and communities to raise a generation of children unscathed by the damage inflicted on their parents, grandparents and great grand-parents - a generation of children who are mentally alert, emotionally competent, socially confident, physically healthy, culturally invested and spiritually aware."

"A licensed facility by a First Nations Authority with sustainable funding and support ... where linkages can be developed without penalty."

"A One-Stop Shop - Early Childhood Centre ... where all children have access to ECD programming regardless of their situation."

"Support for the development of a universally-accessible, locally-controlled, community-based system of care for infants and young children from birth to 6 years- including those not yet born."

"Infants and young children get all of the supports that they need for their survival and healthy development, [and] are not exposed to conditions and environments that degrade their quality of life, and enter school ready to learn and to succeed."

"Where First Nations children receive the tools for life and have a strong sense of self-esteem, identity and belonging, where they receive loving care, nurturance, safety, guidance, and have opportunities to learn and positive experiences to remember."

"Where every First Nation community can offer Aboriginal Head Start as a foundational program that provides information and support to parents and caregivers, supports and stimulates children's growth and development by introducing them to new people, places and things."

"One with adequate resources, where there is the ability to serve every child in the community. The services and programs should be based on each community's cultural and traditional values and work towards ensuring the conservation of the First Nations' language. Culture and language should be integrated to the early childhood programs and fully involve community elders."

"To have a real understanding at the political level of the need and importance of childhood services."

"Flexibility in program development based on demographics."

"Support for children and families with special needs."

“One where education and quality/standard of services are of high importance ... where First Nations culture and traditions are important in developing ECD and ELCC programs and services.”

“One where communities can upgrade their facilities to meet standards ... where they have access to resources such as child psychologists ... receive consistent and constant funding to maintain First Nation language and culture programs ...”

ORGANIZATION/GOVERNMENT (ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AUTHORITIES)

Participants in the regional dialogues felt that the federal government should develop a communications strategy that clarifies the concept of ECD as an overarching principle, rather than another “silo” program, to encourage First Nations to buy-in and fully engage in further internal ECD planning.

The federal government should follow through on previous announcements by releasing incremental funding for First Nations ECD programs and ensure that all current program agreements and funding sources are adequate, secure, and on-going.

The federal government should also review community reporting requirements to ensure these are minimized as *“directors are overwhelmed”*.

The federal government should support communities in their culture and language preservation and integration in the ECD programs. Communities should be supported to develop their own *“one window approach”* and *“base it on what is actually happening at the community level”*.

The national level is responsible for lobbying for more resources; especially in the areas of capital, special needs and human resources. Its role is to be active in policy/strategic development, monitoring and evaluation. The national level should ensure that regions and communities receive their ongoing support for national conferences and training to ensure networking opportunities. Many participants felt that a national body should maintain a database of all ECD programs in the country. Saskatchewan regional dialogue participants suggested that tribal councils establish Centres of Excellence to further support their communities with resource centres and home visiting programs, working in partnership with training programs.

Most important, a common sentiment expressed, consisted in the federal government needing to lead by example, without abusing its power, being accountable, sharing information, and ultimately, “walking the talk”. Participants indicated that, if First Nations are to be asked to include integration among the programs they deliver, then the federal government should be better coordinated across its program areas since, currently, funding is still being allocated to First Nations in a piecemeal fashion.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES

Participants felt that federal and provincial government policies that impact the health and well-being of First Nations children *"should be identified and explored in the context of defining a holistic early childhood development strategy...early childhood development does not take place in a vacuum...[therefore] a First Nations early childhood education, care and development strategy [should] be nested within a larger focus that evaluates the outcomes of all federal and provincial government social, economic, environmental and political policies that impact early childhood."* (BC Regional Dialogue)

All regions expressed some interest in "one pot of funding" for ECD, with regionally based resources; however, this interest was qualified with many conditions, such as the assurance that the government respects regional diversity, that there would be no funding cuts, and that this would mean less reporting for communities.

First Nations spoke of a bilateral relationship which bypasses the provincial government. They felt that it is another unnecessary layer of administration, given that there are already financial and administrative processes in place to support direct funding to First Nations. Furthermore, provincial governments' priorities may not be consistent with those of First Nations. Notwithstanding, broader discussions with provincial governments are required, since many communities are subsidized by the provinces, yet provincial laws and regulations are not necessarily adapted to their realities.

Some regions also suggested the creation of a regional ECD Secretariat or central body, where this adequately resourced body could participate effectively and equitably in discussions with the federal government.

ENABLERS (INFRASTRUCTURE, COMPETENCIES AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS)

One common theme stressed by all regional dialogue reports is the dire need for capital and infrastructure in First Nations communities. The lack of infrastructure to house child care programs in First Nations communities is a significant challenge that has been largely neglected. Many First Nations operate their child care centres out of inadequate, old and, at times, unsafe facilities due to a lack of funding. Other First Nations do not have a building to accommodate a child care program, making them ineligible to provide this much needed service. An infrastructure needs assessment is required to obtain a clear picture of the current situation. This is an issue that must be examined separately, and requires its own separate funding envelope in addition to the program and administration budget. Clarification is also required with respect to which federal department has the responsibility for capital costs relating to child care facilities.

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Many participants felt that the funding formula needs to be based on First Nations needs, and include transportation, facilities, operations, and maintenance costs. First Nations also require additional funding for capital and human resources, and to serve children with special needs.

More funding was reportedly required to compensate teachers more adequately. Some participants gave concrete examples where they felt low morale knowing that the janitor at their child care centre made more than they did, while they were responsible for caring for the children. Participants wanted a better system that supports teachers to explore training opportunities without worrying about finding/funding a substitute teacher. They noted that teachers require incentives and a more supportive environment to avoid “burn-out” especially since children need stability in caregiving.

Most regional dialogues highlighted the need for special consideration of isolated communities. Disparities in nutritional value of meals/snacks provided to children due to lack of affordable access to certain foods in northern communities, were also noted.

STANDARDS

Standards development respecting distinct interests/contexts of First Nations was underlined, relating to: building codes for special facilities such as schools, hospitals, day cares; standards for program delivery; and, standards of employment for staff delivering programs.

Participants generally stated that they wanted some form of standards, but would only agree to accepting them if the government assured them that they would not be closed down and if they would be provided with adequate funding to achieve a higher standard.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON A “SINGLE WINDOW” APPROACH

There was definitely no consensus with regards to the acceptance of the “single window” approach being proposed by the federal government. A communications strategy is desperately required to clearly explain the concept and identify what “basket of services” are included in the ECD Strategy. *Ultimately, First Nations will define what single window means to their own communities.*

Communities need to be reassured by the federal government of the motive behind the impetus to integrate early childhood services as many are sceptical that the government is looking to cut costs.

If any administration costs are saved via integration, the federal government should consider increasing funding allocations to First Nations and ensure universal access to quality early childhood services.

Participants felt that a single window approach for First Nations ECD would have to include: universal access to all ECD programs; bridging to adulthood; continuing services beyond age 6 or 12.

Special needs children and their families are severely under-resourced. There is a desperate need for help in obtaining diagnostic services, and increasing access to psychologists, therapists, etc.

Participants felt that a single window approach should be holistic, and include more than health programming. As stated earlier, it should translate to universal access to all ECD programs for all First Nations communities.

First Nations talked of a single window approach allowing them to pool resources together, or working collaboratively at the community level. Many participants felt that a single window approach with one agreement and common outcomes and reporting requirements could contribute to reducing the burden of multiple and excessive accountability processes.

Participants agreed that a single window approach could work if the funding was guaranteed, no funding cuts were experienced, and if they would have the flexibility to spend the savings on supportive elements such as salary increases, depending on unique communities needs. First Nations want the ability to carry-over surpluses from year to year and to move money from one program to another depending on need. *Multi-year agreements* would ensure the continuity and flexibility of funding.

First Nations felt that there should be appropriate funding levels for quality programs - all communities should be able to run programs based on need as opposed to population base.

Some felt the single window approach would work well in smaller communities so that one facility could house all the early childhood programs and services. There would be one administrator, thus reducing the number of "upper level" management positions. Participants felt that this approach could reduce gaps in service delivery, and this approach may work for administrative purposes.

SUPPORTS AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Regions spoke similarly of the need for more training at different levels - ECD instructors, policy development/analysis, administration, research, finance, etc. They would like to have opportunities to thoroughly examine existing ECD models, frameworks, best practices, and American Indian ECD programs, to ensure a broad approach to their strategy.

Most of the regions spoke of their intention to gather more teaching resources, lend toys/books libraries, in-home parental support/training and other community

initiatives, for their children's programs. They identified the proper supports required in order to create better linkages for programs that impact children.

The government must respect "*our way of life and have flexible guidelines...as opposed to policy...to respect First Nations culture, values, traditions and diversity among First Nations*".

It is essential that the strategy support First Nations communities "*to design a policy, legislative and regulatory regime that adequately reflects the linguistic and cultural foundation of programs, and community priorities and realities, with respect to staffing, facilities, programming, etc.*" (BC)

As noted earlier, support for major capital funding for facilities, and to access more health professionals such as speech therapists, psychologists, occupational therapists, was seen as critical. Infrastructure components identified included buildings, training and wage equity for program staff.

NEXT STEPS

After establishing a clear definition of single window, regions felt that they must first develop community/regional/national bodies if these do not already exist. At all times, First Nations insisted this be a community-driven, community-owned process and the determination of whether a single window is applied, and how much integration is implemented, would be left entirely up to the community.

A comprehensive ECD strategy with a strong communications component should be developed at all levels to ensure that everyone is clear on the concept of "single window", and what the expectations are from all levels. A funding mechanism must be developed, including more funding for capital, renovations and special needs, which are currently lacking. Regions may need to conduct a needs assessment in order to look at items communities are lacking, and what is required in the area of programming and infrastructure.

Community based programs with adequate financial and human resources should be developed with long range plans (minimum of 5 years) using the priorities that have been identified.

BEST PRACTICES

First Nations do integrate and coordinate services in an informal manner already. Given the multiple funding sources and the varied reporting requirements which often act as barriers to working together effectively, service providers at the local level have had to be creative and resourceful. Many of the ad-hoc integration efforts described were developed in order to fill gaps which exist within the various programs. They are practical, common sense approaches to maximizing the limited amounts of funding each program receives.

The informal collaborative relationships established between service providers reflect a community development model, more consistent with a holistic approach

to responding to family and community needs. They are not just child or parent focused, they are inclusive of health, education, prevention and child care programs.

The following are examples of effective coordination efforts at the community level:

- Ebb and Flow First Nation (Manitoba) - “one stop shopping” for specialists in disability assessments, speech and language assessments, physiotherapists and psychologists.
- Peguis First Nation (Manitoba) - Therapist (specifically for young children) regularly visits from the city and provides assistance to the different programs. This service is shared by the various community programs.
- The Carrier Sekani First Nation (BC) have the “Carrier Sekani Integrated Services Plan” which outlines their community planning process. Their objective is the development of an integrated service delivery system in order to make the most efficient use of the resources within their community. This approach emphasizes the involvement of the entire community to assist in eliminating the gaps which exist and to improve services generally.
- The Wemotaci (Quebec) community model emphasizes joint program management with close ties between the early childhood program and health and education sectors. Joint meetings are held several times per month to develop a coordinated response between each sector for identified needs.
- Kingsclear First Nation house their Aboriginal Head Start program, daycare program and K-4 in the same building which facilitates mutual support and regular communication.

As previously mentioned, these are informal integration efforts elaborated in response to community needs with the limited resources provided. First Nations community service providers want to do more. In order to do so, they require adequate funding levels, flexible policies and program requirements and the necessary capacity in order to provide a comprehensive continuum of services. Each region that participated in the regional dialogue process emphasized the desire to provide a “seamless continuum of services” from prenatal services, to after-school programs, to support and counselling programs for adolescents and programs targeted for parents. It was repeatedly emphasized that development is a lifelong process and the programs and supports available should reflect that knowledge/philosophy.

Conclusions

First Nations will conditionally accept the concept of single window, but they expressed their frustration with the lack of information received from the federal government on this initiative. Of particular concern, to First Nations participants is the lack of clarity with respect to implications of the single window approach for First Nations communities. Uncertainty relating to the amount of funding and nature of programs to be offered as part of the “basket of services”, makes First Nations’ support improbable at this stage without conditions of equal partnership/shared management being specified. Simply put, First Nations have told us that *they will determine what the concept of “single window” will mean to their own communities.*

First Nations must be full partners in a clearly laid out transition plan and broad communications strategy, and there must be immediate clarification as to the basket of children’s services that are being offered within the context of the Early Childhood Development single window initiative. There must be assurance that ECD funds will not be utilized to subsidize budget cuts.

The AFN and First Nations Provincial /Territorial Organizations must be engaged as equal partners in all aspects of policy and capacity development in order to ensure that the areas of quality control and standards, evaluation, and any other First Nations’ concerns are fully addressed.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM THE 2005 REGIONAL DIALOGUES¹

1. Integration of services must *enhance*, not diminish, existing programs and be truly effective in creating effective infrastructure and processes for communication, administration, and evaluation.
2. There must be flexibility in order to honour and preserve diversity between First Nations communities and a broad range of community needs and processes.
3. Any development of ECD policy and corresponding implementation that impacts current program delivery will require appropriate, substantive discussion that fulfills First Nation standards with regard to representation, inclusion of community members, and opportunity for all First Nations to participate.
4. Program development and implementation must be built upon, and reflect in implementation, the values and beliefs of First Nations peoples.
5. Program development and implementation must be reflective of, developed and controlled by First Nations communities.

¹ Based largely on December 2003 AFN National Dialogue recommendations with revisions based on feedback from communities.

6. There is a dire need for improved communications at the community level. The concept of “single window” without a clear definition has created suspicion and mistrust toward the federal government.
7. The roles of governments (including First Nations, federal and provincial/territorial governments) must be clearly articulated.
8. There is a need for sustained and adequate resources inclusive of capital development and administrative support; a mechanism is required to fund:
 - capital costs;
 - operational costs;
 - a fair portion of the funding to smaller, less populated communities; and
 - special needs funding (and provincial and federal government jurisdictional disputes of responsibility must also be addressed).
9. Should integration of programs and services occur, it must be done with the full participation and endorsement of First Nations, guided by priorities and guidelines established by communities and with full recognition that diversity is strong within First Nations communities and, therefore, flexibility is needed in all child development areas.