

# **OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE**



## **Early Learning Asset Mapping Project FINAL REPORT**

**August 2014**



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## Executive Summary

The 2003 report on early childhood development for Ontario First Nations children consisted of identifying existing First Nations early childhood development programs as well as early childhood development needs in order to flag any concerns or gaps for consideration in future program planning. The subsequent update “Ontario First Nations Early Childhood Development Roll-up Report” of 2005 encompassed early childhood development, early learning and childcare using the 2003 report together with a two-day regional dialogue. The intent of the asset mapping exercise was to support community level development of Early Childhood Development plans that would ultimately lead to the emergence of an Early Childhood Strategy for First Nations in Ontario. The 2014 Early Learning Asset Mapping Project (ELAMP) Report will now update the previous information and provide the First Nation communities with a better understanding of the following:

- their current assets which support early learning
- gaps, overlaps, opportunities to create a locally appropriate and viable early learning strategy
- links to existing resources to inform their programming
- ideas for potential partnerships for early learning
- coordinating and streamlining assets available in all sectors

The ELAMP began in spring of 2013 and was finalized in August of 2014.

The results identified by the ELAMP participants are summarized in this Report including: “What does Early Learning mean to the First Nation communities; early learning key supports; early learning informal assets; other early learning assets; early learning staff supports; and, early learning gaps and challenges. The early learning assets were illustrated onto asset wheels in each First Nation community providing the participants with key information as to any strengths or challenges in any of the quadrants: physical, social, intellectual and cultural. The final summary of results provides an overview of suggestions from the participating First Nation communities for the potential for local streamlining, partnering and merging of programs and services for greater impact. The summary also includes an analysis against the Draft First Nations Early Learning Model that was developed from various discussions and events focused on Early Learning.

There were project challenges throughout the ELAMP process such as: additional funding required to undertake the capacity development at the community level; PTOs varied in the way they carried out the project which resulted in various raw data submissions; stronger personalities within some communities monopolized the ELAMP process; many trained facilitators and PTOs encountered reluctance by communities to participate; and, finally provincial and federal funding cuts impeded the coordination efforts of the PTOs and COO.

Participants of the Early Learning Asset Mapping Project were provided with copies of the Facilitation Guide and were encouraged to bring together community members to continue on with **Steps Four, Five and Six** of the process. Finally, the analysis of information collected through the ELAMP has been used to formulate four strong recommendations on next steps for First Nations Early Learning in Ontario.

## Introduction and Background

There has been much attention focused on Early Childhood Development since the federal and provincial governments made a commitment in 2000 to work with Aboriginal people on addressing developmental needs of Aboriginal children. There are many moving parts associated with Early Learning (developmental and learning programming and resources for children 0-6 yrs) for First Nation communities and it is important to analyze changes over time and assess current circumstances on a regular basis.

In 2009 the government of Ontario announced that it would proceed with implementing recommendations from a commissioned report entitled “With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario.” The announcement sparked concern within First Nation communities because of potential impacts on various elements of Early Learning. Initial concerns centered on the possibility of widening the existing education attainment gap between First Nation students attending community schools and other students in the provincial system due to the introduction of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK). Another concern was the potential impact of FDK on enrolment in First Nation Day Care facilities.

A notable concern was that funding gaps would most certainly increase as the changes announced by the province were accompanied by large infusions of funding for retrofits and additions to existing facilities. Indian Affairs announced they would be developing a 5-year strategy for Early Learning but no additional funding was provided other than the ability of First Nations to implement FDK upon one year’s notice. This meant that FDK students would be funded as full time equivalents (FTEs) through the nominal roll. To date the federal 5-year strategy has not been presented to First Nations, although First Nations did participate in the initial gathering of information for the proposed strategy.

Upon review of the situation the Coordination Units at the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) quickly recognized that the potential impacts for First Nations would require the coordination of Health, Social Services and Education Units. The Chiefs-in-Assembly passed two resolutions in November of 2010 (10-16 and 10-23 – refer to Appendices for copies of these resolutions) in an attempt to address the expressed concerns. The resolutions resulted in the establishment of a regional working group, brainstorming sessions, two early learning forums, and an early learning summit. The information gathered over this time provided a foundation for the First Nations Early Learning Model called for in Resolution 10-23.

From the outset of the establishment of the regional working group it was deemed important to update the “Ontario First Nations Early Childhood Development Roll-up Report” of 2005 to provide the much needed information to finalize an Early Learning Model for First Nations in Ontario, inform the development of appropriate resource material and determine next steps. The previous work provided extensive information on federal and provincial programs and services, a summary of results from the asset mapping exercise and 10 key recommendations. However, the intent of the 2004 asset mapping exercise (that resulted in the 2005 Roll-up Report) was never fully realized and many First Nations did not develop Early Learning strategies which, in turn, impeded the development of an Early Learning Strategy for First Nations in Ontario.

Discussions with the newly formed Early Learning Division at the Ministry of Education resulted in an invitation to submit a proposal to update the previous asset mapping exercise. A proposal was submitted in November 2012 and an agreement was set up in February 2013 for COO to undertake the work. The project experienced some delays and additional funding had to be sequestered to ensure the project would yield high-quality results.

## **Demographic Data**

The 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) indicates a population of 12,651,795 in Ontario with 704,260 under 4 years (5.6%). Within that overall figure 201,100 are First Nations people with 17,580 0-4 years (8.7%). This demonstrates the exceptionally large portion of early learners within our First Nation communities regardless of residency and the importance of ensuring Early Learning strategies, programming and planning are in place. The Ontario First Nations population on-reserve grew by about 7.6 percent from 2003 to 2010.

## **Purpose of ELAMP**

The 2013-14 ELAMP served multiple purposes. Overall the project provides an update to the information gathered in 2004. This update provides relevant information to finalize the Early Learning Model for First Nations in Ontario and inform the development of appropriate resource material for First Nations to improve and streamline the delivery of Early Learning programming.

The asset mapping process provides an opportunity for First Nation communities to gain a clearer understanding of:

- their current assets which support early learning;
- gaps, overlaps, opportunities to create a locally appropriate and viable early learning strategy;
- links to existing resources to inform their programming;
- ideas for potential partnerships for early learning; and,
- coordinating and streamlining assets available in all sectors.

The analysis of collected data also presents evidence to support advocacy efforts at both the provincial and federal levels related to addressing aspirations and identified gaps. Finally, the roll-up report will be used by the Early Years Division at the Ministry of Education to inform future policy and programming decisions.

## **Asset Mapping Methodology**

### **Planning and Development Stage**

Cindy Crowe Consulting was contracted to adapt the 2010 Chiefs of Ontario Mno-Bimaadziwin Facilitation Guide (used to develop a strategy to promote healthy eating, active living, and smoke-free communities among First Nations in Ontario). Crow Consulting was also responsible for training facilitators and providing support to the ELAMP facilitators throughout the various stages of the project.

The ELAMP Strategy was developed to meet the needs of the 2013-2014 ELAMP and considered funded programs or services currently in place in the community; key supports; informal assets; and, any other community assets supporting Early Learning. The ELAMP Facilitation Guide, ELAMP Strategy and ELAMP Evaluation Plan were all finalized by July 2013.

The ELAMP Facilitation Guide was distributed to all the ELAMP facilitators and is a free tool available for all Ontario First Nations. The guide includes Six Steps of Asset Mapping (see full information on each step included as Appendices):

- STEP ONE:**                    Define Early Learning
  
- STEP TWO:**                    Identify and list assets
  
- STEP THREE:**                Map assets on asset wheel. Locate strengths and gaps to determine whether holistic needs are being met
  
- STEP FOUR:**                Review Early Learning definition – set goals
  
- STEP FIVE:**                List objectives and activities to meet the goals and links between assets
  
- STEP SIX:**                    Assess and prioritize activities – use to input into Early Learning Plan

Dates for the original train-the-facilitator sessions were set: one in Sudbury (August 13 and 14, 2013) and one in Thunder Bay (September 23 and 24 2013). Subsequent train-the-facilitator sessions were held February 2014 in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie to train community representatives to facilitate their own asset mapping sessions.<sup>1</sup>

## **Implementation Stage**

### *Training Sessions*

Five training sessions, four in person and one via teleconference (for a total increase of three training sessions) were conducted.

There are 133 First Nations in the Province of Ontario supported through five Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTO); these being Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), Grand Council Treaty #3 (GCT#3), the Union of Ontario Indians (UOI), the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) and the Independent First Nations (IFN). Originally in the ELAMP process, eleven facilitators were targeted: four from the NAN communities; three from the UOI communities; one from the IFN communities; one from the AIAI communities; and, two from the GCT#3 communities. However, these numbers changed following the first two training sessions when funding challenges were identified and a subsequent request was made to the funding ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> These sessions were held to accommodate the needs of the Union of Ontario communities that did not have a trained facilitator assigned to them.

### *Support Meetings*

There were numerous one-on-one support meetings in addition to the formal group sessions including teleconferences, GoToMeetings and email responses for any individual facilitators or Provincial Territorial Organizations as required.

## **Community Development Stage**

This was the period of asset mapping at the community level with support from the trained facilitators. Contracts and Agreements were set up between Chiefs of Ontario and trained facilitators and/or PTOs specifying work plans, timelines, reporting requirements and other deliverables to meet the intentions of this work. Trained facilitators and PTOs were bound by these agreements to capture the required information and submit to Cindy Crowe Consulting and COO for analysis and consolidation for the final report. It was critical to ensure that the asset mapping work undertaken did not raise expectations that any identified needs can or would be immediately met. The final reports were received in August 2014.

## **Evaluation Stage**

This involved both summarizing and rolling up the work undertaken. A process was established for debriefing with the facilitators through a series of teleconferences. This stage was completed in August 2014. The final report with recommendations is being provided to meet:

- Internal requirements of Resolution 10-23 for reporting back to Chiefs in Assembly;
- External requirements of the project funder; and,
- Emerging need for an Ontario First Nations Early Learning Business Case for either or both Canada (INAC (AANDC), Health Canada and HRSDC), and Ontario (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs).

## **Summary of Results**

The following summary outlines an overview of the various results identified by the ELAMP participants.

### **Early Learning**

The following section is a summary of results from **Step One** in the Facilitation Guide – an open discussion to define Early Learning.

#### **Child Development**

- Help children develop relationship with the world, including people, animals, other living beings “Even if they develop a relationship with a frog”
- Learning to get along with other children
- Supporting mother and unborn child i.e. support situations where mother doesn’t take care of herself during pregnancy so that child grows healthily

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- Providing information about FASD
- Teaching children at early age to respect and gain life skills they were born with
- Helping children to figure out their gifts, talents, capabilities and limitations
- Helping children to learn to accept themselves so they can function in society
- Helping child/babies learn who they are (not exactly identity), what they are capable of, their relationship to the external world
- Teach newborns and toddlers what they have to learn growing up
- Building foundation for children to learn and experience the world / Building a foundation for lifelong learning
- Love, care, bonding, healthy relationships with external world
- Child development: Shapes; Foundation – how child is raised in first couple years of development; Bonding
- All aspects of a person’s life: Socially, Physically, Mentally, Emotionally, Traditionally
- Teaching children to “become people of the land”
- “What kind of adults do we want to grow up”
- Determining goals for early learning
- Awareness of how we currently teach our children
- They learn in a much different way from the past
- Currently teach children a “non-native way of life”
- Role and responsibilities
- Confidence building, security and stability
- When you ridicule a child, they grow up thinking they are worthless
- When you support a child to have confidence, they grow up confident
- “When you throw a stone into a lake, it starts a ripple effect – a child bonds with family, then community, then nation”
- “When a child is inside watching TV or playing videos games and they are given pop and chips to eat, you are losing something important – need to take children to gatherings and community events so that child is able to connect and be exposed to the outside world”
- Showing affection and praise
- Children learn to say “I love you” and are not afraid of giving praise
- “What it is to be a woman or a man”
- Responsibility of family, community and nation to include children
- Never tell children to “go away”
- Involve children in decision-making
- Teaching children responsibilities
- Child has to clean up after themselves
- Child has to know their part or what they have to do as they grow up
- Learning to listen and have respect for family and environment growing up
- Participant is teaching her grandchildren what a fork or spoon is, to brush her teeth, to wash her face and hands before she eats
- Child has to grow up with knowledge in order to be clean and healthy

### Positive Role Models

- Healthy workers and caregivers
- Parents, family, children need to see healthy people
- Bringing healthy babies into the world



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- Whole community
- Educating parents to become better caregivers
- Giving information, including both positives and negatives
- Children need to be in a safe environment
- Most important is the child
- Hygiene
- Healthy eating and healthy eating habits
- Feeding children healthy breakfasts
- Have the duty to report to child/family services if child's safety is at risk
- Need workers to know job positions on the line if they do not report

### Culture

- Parents used to bring their children everywhere in a tikinagan to learn about the world
- Awareness of all the languages and dialects in our nation (greater community) and individual communities
- Teaching traditional life skills and native language at early age
- Meet with Elders about early learning
- Participant met with an Elder about early learning and the Elder made this comment that “from an early age, we are teaching our kids a non-native way of life” and the Elder's point was not to lose our culture and language
- Early Learning defined by how we want our children to succeed
- Different cultures around the world teach children specific skills or knowledge so that they are better equipped to live a certain way as adults
- Cultural/spiritual events/gatherings
- Respect for others and nature learned at cultural events, spiritual gatherings
- Participant commented on how young people came to a powwow dressed inappropriately and an Elder came up to them and told them to go home and change because of this
- It's up to family, community and nation to teach what the cultural and spiritual events are about and what is appropriate or not
- Taking children out on the land
- Outdoor experiences like camping
- Not ridiculing or embarrassing children when they speak language
- Can discourage children from speaking it, even if they are mispronouncing

### Assets

**Step Two and Three** of the Facilitation Guide called for a mapping of assets identified by participants. These assets were illustrated onto asset wheels (refer to Appendices for sample) providing the First Nation communities with key information as to any balances or imbalances on the asset wheel i.e. strengths or challenges in any of the quadrants: physical, social, intellectual and cultural. The assets are in no particular order of importance.

#### *Key supports*

Key supports (assets) in the community for early learning could be defined as Elders, language, church.

### **Elders**

- Cultural teachings, Christian teachings
- Skills such sewing, beading, crafts

### **Language**

- Teaching the language
- Language retention

### **Culture**

- Land based, spiritual, teachings
- Learning to live off the land
- Occur with the seasons such as cultural week, awareness and powwows
- Traditional hunting weeks, fishing
- Ceremonies
- Drumming and dancing
- Natural environment – Land-water, environment, nature
- Cultural, traditional values
- Utilizing resources off the land
- Traditional foods used in feasts and gatherings
- Berry picking
- Traditional medicines
- Using medicines from the land
- Teaching children according to the different seasons about different styles of plants, animals, work, wood
- Craft making such as Birch bark baskets
- Ancestral history
- Using family traplines, for camping

### **Spiritual beliefs**

- Church

### **School**

- Teachers
- Immersion Teachers
- Teacher Homemakers
- Registered Early Childhood Educator
- Social Development counselors
- Breakfast programs
- After-school programs
- School pow wows
- Use of NNEC, Wahsa, Contact North (in Northern Ontario)
- Local, qualified teachers and educators

- Our own people are teaching

**Natural resources**

- Community located on the land
- Have our own resources (land based living and activities)
- Able to use resources from the land for hunting, trapping and teaching, etc.
- Utilizing local resources off the land such as hunting for moose, ducks, fish

*Informal Assets*

Informal assets in the community for early learning could be defined as parents, family units, grandparents.

**Parents/Family**

- Parent’s faith in children’s success
- Using parenting skills at home
- Extended family

**Support system**

- Volunteers
- Caring for animals (pets)
- Community support
- Role models and leaders
- Promoting positive values
- Resilience - Believing in oneself and others

**Health**

- Pharmacists
- Alternative Therapy
- Physio/Occupational Therapists
- Psychiatrist
- Speech Pathologist/Assistant
- Dietitian
- Social Workers
- Chiropractors
- Addiction Workers
- Mid wives (Aboriginal)
- FASD Worker (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome)
- Community Health Rep
- Hospital Advocate
- Fire Department/First Response
- Ambulance
- Family Home Visitors

- PSW (Personal Support Worker)
- Dentist & Dental Hygienist
- Teeth care
- Dental/oral health
- Immunization, birth registration
- Access to telehealth
- Crisis team
- counselors
- Foot care – diabetes

### *Other Assets*

Other assets in the community for early learning would be all other assets identified except those listed under key supports and informal assets.

### **Early Learning Programming**

- Dedicated workers
- Trust building with parents
- Work with families needing support
- Teaching parents to budget
- One-on-one support for parents
- Grief counseling
- Positive self-esteem building
- Stress relief program for kids
- Support groups, walking groups
- Parenting classes
- Prenatal classes
- Toddler afternoon program
- Home support
- Healthy Babies program
- Right To Play program
- Sharing circles for support
- Healthy snack programs
- Traditional cooking classes
- Day care & other preschool programs
- Parental involvement in EL programs
- Milk & pampers program, at lower costs
- Food bank
- Clothing giveaway program
- Work with the school
- Child Services resources
- Babysitting program

### **Community Programming**

- Community kitchen/garden
- Elders program
- Treatment programs for parents
- Literacy summer camps

### **Community Resources**

- Service vehicles
- Police
- Awareness and knowledge of help and support
- Availability of services and help (both inside and outside)
- Accessing treatment
- Use of Canadian Rangers, NAPS
- Use of local business
- Community exchanges: work, sports, social, education & awareness, environment, opportunity of learning
- Community events: Community carnivals, Social nights

### **Funding**

- Able to secure funding and determine how funding is used
- Access to Casino Rama funding & other sources

### **Buildings/Facilities**

- Medical Clinic
- Pharmacy
- Shelters
- Social Services Building
- Radio Station Building
- Tourism Building
- Museum
- Bingo Hall
- Housing
- Seniors Building
- Special Services
- Long Term Care
- 2 Day Care Centres
- Birthing Building
- Community center
- Gymnasium for kids and parents
- School field-rink
- Women's crisis shelter

### **Communication**

- Video conferencing/teleconference
- Photo-taking of children
- Internet access
- Local media with local content: Radio, TV
- Radio station for communication
- Internet access
- Network with each other and different communities
- Partnership within the community

### **Human Resources**

- Employment Opportunity
- Planning
- Training
- Workshops and training brought to the community for onsite delivery
- Resource people
- Staff/Workers: Frontline workers (doctors, nurses, PSW); Trained and knowledgeable/skilled people doing appropriate jobs

### **Recreational Activities/Sports**

- Community Garden
- Fitness Centre
- Community Hall
- Library
- Veterans Park
- Baseball Diamonds
- Play grounds
- Arenas
- Profit Fitness Gym
- Theatre
- Sports Coaches
- Librarian
- Outdoor activities: Ice sculptures, sliding, skating
- *“20 years ago there were more sports and recreation then Facebook came into our lives and video games”*
- *“Don’t understand why there are laptops being brought into the classrooms because I don’t believe it’s helpful for encouraging physical and outdoors activity (paraphrase)”*

### *Formal Staff Supports*

The following summary of information provided by the ELAMP participants illustrates the roles and responsibilities of staff that provide support to Early Learning in the community.

### **Aboriginal Headstart Coordinator**

- Plan activities to do with kids and staff
- Identify and select people to carry out tasks and training
- Report to the right people to get things going
- Complete work plans

### **Healthy Babies Healthy Children/FASD/Early Child Development Worker**

- Plan activities (cooking classes plus lots of other activities)
- Do networking with other health/school personnel/workers

### **Childcare Initiative Program Coordinator**

- Coordinate program/activities – planning activities
- Teach small children 3 years old to preschoolers
- Offer respite care and drop-in services
- Cultural planning for youth (do camping and traditional cooking and other activities)
- Nutrition snack program
- Provide support to parents

### **Health Director/Assistant Health Director**

- Supervision of employees and ECD centre
- Looks after licensing requirements for day care
- Staffing requirements
- Narrative and financial reporting
- Planning, implementing

### **Education Director**

- Planning finances, activities, hiring, curriculum
- Problem solving
- Funds available
- Support, approval, signing
- Teacher hiring (along with the board)
- Proposals
- Budgeting
- Implementing new programs for young children
- Being well informed of education policy and reforms
- Involving parents in their child's education

### **Chief and Council**

- Council members provide support to early learning programs
- Receive and disperse funds
- Negotiate and lobby for funds

- Endorse the program

**Leadership**

- Support and recognize the work of employees
- Give direction to employees and to supervisors of employees
- Attend meetings focus on
- The leadership needs to be educated on program and needs
- To become more involved
- To be a spokesperson to government, negotiates and advocates
- Each councilor has portfolios (i.e. education portfolio)
- Need to be proactive
- Be visible at functions
- Maintain confidentiality – most important

**Band Manager/Band Administrator**

- Proposals, budgets
- Needs to be more knowledgeable
- The main liaison between community > leadership > government/agencies
- Needs to be supportive
- Needs people skills
- Needs to keep an open mind
- Confidentiality is most important

**Early Childhood Development Worker**

- Manager/coordinator, educator, cooks, security/driver, maintenance, family support

**Family Services**

- Prevention
- Family counselors
- Child & Family Youth Workers

**Gaps & Challenges**

During **Step Three** of the asset mapping process, First Nation communities were asked to identify the gaps and challenges that affect Early Learning. The following summary outlines an overview of the various results identified by the ELAMP participants concerning gaps and challenges.

**Education**

- Lack of understanding of early learning
- Need cultural curriculum
- Need to teach about true history
- Western learning



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- *“What is the measuring stick we are comparing ourselves to? To mainstream society? To ministry?”*
- *“The gaps we face are within the Western way of learning, whereas in traditional learning the knowledge is already there (paraphrase)”*
- Identifying the current model of early learning that is used
- *“There are models that are orally being followed but not being written down”*
- *“There is early learning in our communities; otherwise we’d be dummies!”*
- Jurisdictional issues between provincial and federal government
- Need clear authority over early learning
- Lack of skilled educators
- Need more educated community educators with post-secondary training
- Need specialized educators (ECE, FASD)
- Professionalism of educators needed
- Teachers lack cultural knowledge
- Need more preparation for children leaving communities to pursue education
- Ministry criteria is different from ours

### Funding

- Need financial resources (crucial issue)
- Programs not funded adequately
- Lack of knowledge or awareness of funding
- Lack of expertise
- Lack of professional services
- Lack of resources
- Lack of supplies and equipment
- Need equipment for children
- Lack of training
- Lack of information coming to the communities
- Lack of employment

### Location/Geographical Area

- Different needs (*Context from notes: different needs in each community and in comparison with southern communities*)
- No road access, isolation
- Northern communities at a disadvantage
- Lack of access to funding dollars/government/resources because communities are isolated from the south
- Southern communities have more access to funding dollars, resources and networks and are able to be more involved in the process of accessing resources and networks
- No networking between and within communities
- No networking between community program and departments
- Need improved communication

### **Leadership**

- Need more volunteers
- Need consistency
- Need a clear plan on meeting individual needs
- Lack of support from Chief & Council
- Some programs not prioritized by Chief & Council
- Chief & Council do not show support as they should
- Chief & Council do not realize importance of program

### **Essential Services**

- State of emergencies, waiting periods, some communities might get help or not
- Community emergencies such as floods, storms, deaths, power outages
- Leads to postponing or cancelling activities/programming
- Leads to school closures for various reasons
- Denial of the basic necessities of life
- Need clean drinking water
- Lack of housing
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of action against lateral violence
- Political influence and interference
- Nepotism

### **High Turnover of Staff**

- Staff changes according to new chief and council
- No continuity in program

### **Positive Role Models**

- Need more use and representation of positive role models
- Need workers role modelling a positive lifestyle to kids, family and communities (i.e. NNADAP and FASD workers)

### **Facilities**

- Lack of space to carry on programs
- Need to set up Licenses for early learning programs
- Need pre-school program/building (day care, New Horizon, Headstart)
- Need insurance for licensed centers
- Storage needed
- Transportation in community

## Culture

- Cultural differences (*Context from notes: cultural differences from the south*)
- Loss of language
- Native language immersion needed
- Loss of traditional knowledge and practices
- Lack of bush survival skills
- Need traditional skills teaching
- Need legends, storytelling
- More interaction with Elders
- Learning traditional values
- Lack of Native identity
- Need cultural coordinators

## Social Issues

- Building of self-esteem
- Building pride
- Lack of interest of motivation in social activities
- Alcohol/substance abuse
- Deal with drug abuse among parents
- Residential schools
- Family breakdown
- Teaching children to deal with family breakdowns
- Anger management
- Lack of positive parenting
- Lack of parental involvement and support
- Community involvement
- Need to promote early learning awareness

## Prevention

- Need to create safe and secure learning environment
- Need more focus on prevention for parents
- Need support groups – sharing circles
- Need play groups for moms and babies
- People afraid of making mistakes
- Fear new challenges or do not believe in themselves
- Stealing and vandalism of building, supplies and equipment
- Hinder work that workers have to do
- Need to limit use of technology

## Health Issues

- Lack of training to support children with disabilities
- Accommodating children with disabilities
- Need wheelchair access

- Hearing, speech issues
- Safety measures
- Lack of fresh-nutritious food
- Nutrition program
- Scarcity of natural foods and medicines
- More awareness of disorders (ADD, ADHD, FASD, diabetes)
- Need more use of testing tools

## Early Learning Opportunities

This section provides an overview of suggestions from the First Nation communities for the potential for local streamlining, partnering and merging of programs and services for greater impact:

- Establish networks/relationships with service providers to obtain new resources, guest speakers and increased awareness of programs and services available
- Encourage participation within the “at-risk” populations
- Centralize services in one location rather than scattered within community
- Develop a parenting resource library in which community members could borrow
- Utilize existing assets within the community efficiently
- Conduct outreach to parents and families
- Include parents and families in program planning – long & short term planning
- Enhance communication of services between departments including pooling resources, experiences and overall sharing of innovative means
- Access adequate funding resources
- Learn and utilize existing technological resources i.e. reduce travel costs
- Access learning materials through online resources and tele-learning
- Implement home visits which will increase knowledge about where the children are coming from
- Encourage children to plan, arrange and implement things (empowerment comes from within an individual, family and community)
- Support the Parent-Teacher Association which improves overall communication between the parents in the community and the school itself
- Encourage cultural teaching at the early learning level
- Provide consistent programming
- Provide early assessments i.e. speech pathologist, OTC, development
- Creating movements (e.g. Rachel’s Challenge) that spread throughout the community and promote random acts of kindness
- Provide universal childcare that is accessible to all children
- Leadership to come together to set goals and have a person who is mainly focused on the child’s welfare to make sure everyone is staying on track towards goals
- An all-inclusive approach (health/education/spiritual, etc.) to early learning
- Conduct a cost analysis of program resources from 2005 (using the Chiefs of Ontario Early Learning Asset Report of 2005) against current funding levels to determine program discontinuations, movement of programming resources from one Ministry to another and the changes in funding as a result
- Look at options for transportation for families who lack the ability to attend programming outside the First Nation

## Analysis of Results

The following Draft First Nations Early Learning Model (Framework) was developed as a result of activities associated with the All Chiefs Resolutions from 2010. As discussed earlier in this Report one of the objectives of the ELAMP was to inform the completion of the Draft Model for presentation to the Chiefs in Assembly. Therefore the Analysis of Results includes analysis in relation to the Model as well as other more generalized analysis.

### Draft Model (Framework)

#### Vision

- All First Nation communities in Ontario have the resources and expertise to support parents and families to provide children age 0-6 with the tools for life that build a foundation for lifelong learning.

#### Principles

- Recognize and respect regional diversity
- Revitalization of language and culture
- Physical and mental health

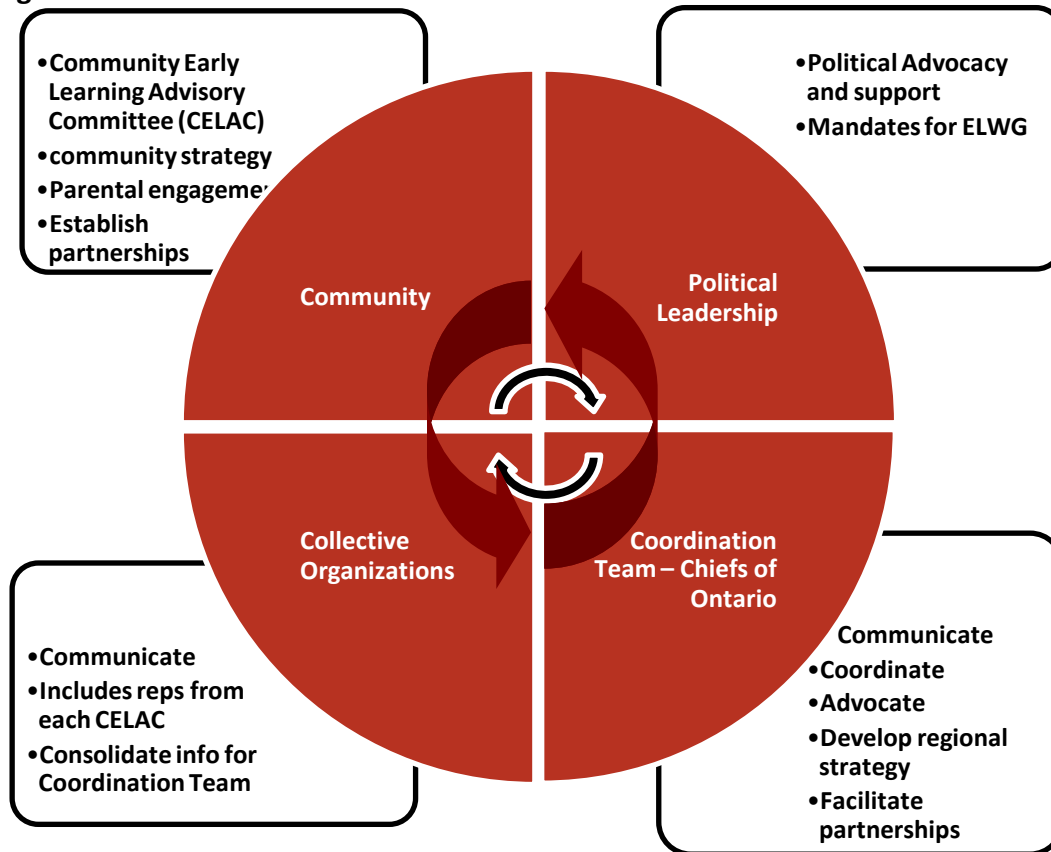
#### Pillars

- Community
- Collective Organizations
- Regional Organization (COO)
- Political Leadership

#### Key Components

- Needs – Tool Kit
- Best Practices
- Priorities
- Goals
- Barriers to success

**Working Model**



**Key Components within Working Model**

	Needs	Best Practices	Priorities	Goals	Barriers
Community	Apply toolkit	Pass on successes	Determine priorities	Measure success	Identify barriers
Collective Organizations	Assist communities	Recommend avenues for sharing	Consolidate and pass on	Assist with community goal setting	Consolidate and pass on
Coordination Team	Ensure toolkit is current	Ensure BP's are shared	Create regional strategy	Measure success	Analyze options
Political Leadership	Political advocacy		Ratify regional strategy		Advocate for change

## Analysis

The summary of results under **Step One** – Define Early Learning are consistent with the vision for the First Nations Early Learning model whereby parents, families and community all aim to provide children 0-6 with the tools for life. Results in many of the sections also support the principles of the Model.

The exercise of listing and mapping assets in **Step Two and Three** provided First Nation communities and organizations with a better understanding of the wide range of supports for Early Learning. It is anticipated that this Report will provide others with some ideas of supports that may not be currently utilized within their community or organizations.

An important part of **Step Three** was the assessment of balances and imbalances of the Asset Wheel. This assessment provided participants with the ability to highlight their strengths as well as identify gaps and development opportunities.

Information recorded under the heading of Education provides support for the Model principle on Revitalization of Language and Culture. Feedback in this section also supports the mechanism within the model that brings areas of collective concern forward to Political Leadership for action. An example of this is the reference to jurisdictional issues and the matter of asserting First Nation authority. The need for involving Political Leadership supports the Pillars of the Model whereby information flows from First Nations to Collective Organizations to COO to Political Leadership if/when necessary.

Results contained in the Gaps and Challenges section of this Report support the establishment of a technical advisory committee to undertake the following activities:

- Support the development of language and culture curriculum for Early Learners
- Address the need for more trained and specialized educators
- Collection of further information (perhaps a survey) on:
  - What professional services are lacking?
  - What type of information are First Nations not receiving?
  - What type of supplies, equipment and additional infrastructure are needed?
  - What type of funding is not available to meet current and projected needs?
  - What types of training needs are not being met?
  - Options for addressing political interference and lack of continuity in programming.

The Model calls for the development of an Early Learning Toolkit to assist First Nation communities in the planning and execution of individual Early Learning Strategies. Much of the data collected through the ELAMP provides support for this proposed activity, such as:

- The need for addressing the lack of understanding of Early Learning programming and associated funding streams;
- The need for inter-sectoral collaboration at community, collective organization and COO levels;
- Providing information on differences and similarities between provincial and First Nation criteria;
- Providing avenues for networking to communicate, problem-solve and share successes;

## Early Learning Asset Mapping Project Final Report

- Sharing links to programs and information to deal with the many social issues that can affect the ability of the community to deliver strong Early Learning programming; and,
- Ideas for establishing support groups and play groups.

Results of the ELAMP also reveal strong linkages between the ability of the community to deliver strong Early Learning programming and various other issues plaguing communities. This supports the Model which encourages communities to engage across all sectors within the community and establish partnerships to collaborate on solutions.

Overall the results of the ELAMP provide support for the First Nations Early Learning Model and the establishment of a technical working group.

## Conclusions

Participants of the Early Learning Asset Mapping Project were provided with copies of the Facilitation Guide and were encouraged to bring together community members to continue on with **Steps Four, Five and Six** of the process which call for setting goals to address identified gaps. Some of the feedback obtained from communities was that the Guide was found to be something they could use to help in the development of Early Learning Strategies for the community. Many participants expressed that this process “opened their eyes” regarding the assets that exist in the community and provided a better understanding of the importance of communication and coordination of services and programs to meet the needs of their children.

## Project Challenges

There were many challenges that hindered the progress and results of this project:

- Early in the project it was identified that additional funding was required to ensure the ELAMP was able to undertake the capacity development at the community level related to the asset mapping process. This took some time to secure and caused delays in the ability of trained facilitators to meet directly with communities.
- PTOs varied in the way they carried out the project, which caused some variation in how the information was provided for consolidation.
- Stronger personalities within some communities monopolized the ELAMP facilitator and the process.
- Many trained facilitators and PTOs encountered reluctance by communities to participate. Various reasons were cited, such as:
  - Timing – fiscal year end, end of school year;
  - Too busy – federal reports due; and,
  - Difficulty in getting the necessary participants from various sectors to attend.
- AANDC has cut funding to Aboriginal Representative Organizations, which has detrimentally impacted the ability of the PTOs and COO to coordinate on behalf of the First Nations in Ontario.
- The discontinuation of human resource support from the province of Ontario also substantially diminished the ability of COO to provide support for this project.
- Ongoing challenges with the federal Education Information System prevented access to much data related to Early Learning.



Despite the challenges this project still yielded much rich and informative data on the current state of Early Learning in First Nation communities.

## **Recommendations on Next Steps**

Analyses of the rich data collected in this project provide support for the following recommendations on next steps:

1. Encourage First Nations to utilize the Facilitation Guide to continue with **Steps 4, 5 and 6**.
2. Seek funding to develop the Toolkit to support the First Nations Early Learning Model and present to the Chiefs in Assembly once finalized.
3. Establish an Early Years Technical Table that includes representation from COO Education, Social Services and Health Units with the support of appropriate sub-committees and appropriate federal and provincial government representation to address some of the specific gaps and challenges identified in this report.
4. Draft a proposal to Labour Market Partnerships Program at MTCU (similar to work undertaken for First Nation Health Human Resources) to undertake:
  - a. an environmental scan of Early Learning human resource needs, informed by the First Nation health, education and social services sectors and the Early Learning providers;
  - b. a think tank bringing First Nations and Early Learning providers together to share the findings and consider potential joint strategies for First Nation Early Learning workers

## Appendices

### First Nation Responses

All 133 First Nation communities in the province of Ontario were invited to participate in the ELAMP. The following tables provide a listing of the communities that participated from each PTO:

#### ***Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians***

Caldwell First Nation
Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation
Oneida Nation of the Thames
Hiawatha First Nation
Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (Tyendinaga)

\*The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians had a 63% response rate.

#### ***Grand Council Treaty #3***

Waubaskang First Nation
Grassy Narrows First Nation
Northwest Angle #33A & B
Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation (Nestor Falls)
Obashkaandagang First Nation (Washagamis Bay)
Shoal Lake #40 First Nation
Eagle Lake First Nation
Big Grassy First Nation
Naotkamegwanning First Nation
Ochiichagwe' Babigo'Ining First Nation (Dalles)
Lac Seul First Nation
Wabigoon Lake First Nation
Naicatchewenin First Nation
Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation
Seine River First Nation
Couchiching First Nation
Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation
Rainy River First Nation (Manitou Rapids)
Wauzhusk Onigum First Nation (Rat Portage)

\*The Grand Council Treaty #3 had a 75% response rate.

#### ***Independent First Nations***

Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek First Nation (Sandpoint)
Animbiigoo Zaagiigan Anishinaabek First Nation

Wabaseemoong First Nation (Whitedog)
Six Nations of the Grand River Territory
Shawanaga First Nation
Mohawks of Akwesasne
Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug
Iskatewizaagegan No. 39
Independent First Nations
Chippewas of Saugeen
Bkejwanong Territory (Walpole Island)

\*The Independent First Nations had a 77% response rate.

### ***Nishnawbe Aski Nation***

Aroland First Nation
Attawapiskat First Nation
Beaverhouse First Nation
Brunswick House First Nation
Cat Lake First Nation
Constance Lake First Nation
Eabametoong First Nation
Ginoogaming First Nation
Keewaywin First Nation
Kingfisher Lake First Nation
Marten Falls First Nation
Mattagami First Nation
Mishkeegogamang First Nation
Moose Cree First Nation
Muskrat Dam First Nation
Nibinamik First Nation
North Caribou Lake First Nation
North Spirit Lake First Nation
Pikangikum First Nation
Poplar Hill First Nation
Sachigo Lake First Nation
Sandy Lake First Nation
Wapekeka First Nation
Webequie First Nation
Wunnumin Lake First Nation

\*The Nishnawbe Aski Nation had a 51% response rate. The response rate is lower for this PTO due to the large geographical area of the NAN territory, the high costs related to travel and the desire to engage a large representation of people involved in early learning and education in NAN communities.

### ***Union of Ontario Indians***

Pikwàkanagàn
Ojibways of Garden River

Sagamok Anishnawbek

Sheshegwaning First Nation

Thessalon First Nation

Wasauksing First Nation

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\*The Union of Ontario Indians (UOI) had a 16% response rate.

## List of Federal and Provincial Initiatives

A simple comparison of the initiatives listed in the Ontario First Nations ECD Roll-Up Report 2005 and the initiatives available in 2011-12 reveal a minor increase of less than 5% despite inflation and an on-reserve population growth of about 7.6 %. When considering recent cuts to the National Child Benefit Reinvestment program the minor increase no longer exists.

INITIATIVE	COMPONENTS	PREVIOUS FUNDING	FUNDING FY 2011-12
<b>A. FEDERAL</b>			
Aboriginal Head Start (Health Canada)	Culture & language; education & school readiness; health promotion; nutrition; social support; parental & family involvement	FY2002-03: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 First Nations</li> <li><b>\$4.7M</b></li> <li>Expanding in 04-05</li> </ul>	<b>\$7,925,397</b> allocated for 133 First Nations
Brighter Futures (Health Canada)	Mental health; child development; parenting skills; healthy babies; injury prevention; solvent abuse treatment	FY2002-03: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>128 First Nations</li> <li><b>\$7.8M</b></li> </ul>	n/a
Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (Health Canada)	Improved diets of pregnant & breastfeeding women; more access to nutrition information/services; more breastfeeding for longer duration; age-appropriate feeding	FY2003-04: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>92 projects served 125 First Nations</li> <li><b>\$1.4M</b></li> </ul>	<b>\$1,597,754</b> allocated for 133 First Nations
Children's Oral Health Initiative (Health Canada)	New initiative developed by FNIHB Dental Division in consultation with the Office of the Chief Dental Officer (OCDO) to address First Nations oral health		<b>\$770,692</b> allocated for 133 First Nations
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (Health Canada)	Assist those at risk; assist parents/ caregivers of children with FASD; help identify, assess & diagnose; provide FASD education & training	FY2004-05: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>\$1.9M</b> allocated</li> <li>Priority: asset mapping</li> </ul>	<b>\$1,802,457</b> allocated for 133 First Nations
Maternal Child Health	New initiative		<b>\$3,921,648</b> allocated for 133 First Nations

## Early Learning Asset Mapping Project Final Report

(Health Canada)			
Day care: fed/prov (AANDC and MCYS)	Provincially licensed child care, cost-shared in Ontario under the 1965 Welfare Agreement, that meets provincial standards	FY2002-03: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 First Nations</li> <li>• <b>\$15.2M</b> (fed/prov)</li> <li>• 3,018 children</li> </ul>	<b>\$17.4M</b> is only the fee subsidy portion of the total that is federally/provincially cost-shared
First Nations & Inuit Child Care Initiative (HRSDC)	Enhances 49 First Nation daycare centres. Funds 5 additional First Nation daycares (operations & maintenance)	FY2004-05: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54 First Nations</li> <li>• <b>\$5.5M</b> (AHRDAs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$6,330,062/year</b></li> <li>• Total: 57 FN daycares</li> <li>• Funded through ASETAs</li> </ul>
K4/K5 (AANDC)	AANDC responsibility for First Nations education under the <i>Indian Act</i> . AANDC maintains nominal roll data	Specific amount for Kindergarten students unavailable	Specific amount for Kindergarten students unavailable
NCB Reinvestment (AANDC)	Various programs - Most popular program delivered: child nutrition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$10,771,250</b> total - OFN</li> <li>• cut by approximately 50% for 2014/15</li> </ul>
SPECIAL EDUCATION (AANDC)	First Nation schools Funding was for K-12 inclusive	FY2003-04: (\$17,061,700 K-12) Specific amount for Kindergarten students unavailable	Same level of funding - Specific amount for Kindergarten students unavailable
<b>B. PROVINCIAL</b>			
Aboriginal Healthy Babies Healthy Children (MOHLTC)	Preparation for parenting/ care-giving; prenatal; postpartum; assessing; home visiting; service coordination; early identification	FY2004-05: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About <b>\$7.7M</b></li> <li>• Through AHWS (to PTOs, shelters, healing lodges)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$8.5M allocated</li> <li>• This included <b>\$4.6M</b> for 120 First Nation programs (some directly funded &amp; some through PTOs)</li> </ul>

## Early Learning Asset Mapping Project Final Report

Aboriginal FASD and Aboriginal Child Nutrition Programs (MOHLTC-MCYS)	MOHLTC lead was transferred to MCYS; these programs were sun-setting in March 2006	FY2004-05: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 Aboriginal projects received <b>\$4.4M/yr</b> to serve clients from all OFNs</li> </ul>	
Early Years (MOHLTC-MCYS)	Seed funding for Early Years Centres (0 on-reserve but funded training in 2 FNs and operating & reno cost in one northern FN)	FY2003-04: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>29 First Nations received <b>\$3.8M</b></li> <li>No new funding</li> </ul>	
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>		<b>\$52.4M</b>	<b>\$55.1M</b>

## Relevant Chiefs Resolutions

POLITICAL OFFICE:  
 Fort William First Nation  
 R.R. #4  
 Suite 101, 90 Anemki Drive  
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 Thunder Bay, Ontario P7J 1A5  
 (807) 626 9339  
 (807) 626 9404 Fax



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 111 Peter Street, Suite 804  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 M5V 2H1  
 Tel: (416) 597-1266  
 Fax (416) 597-8365  
 1-877-517-6527  
 Website: www.chiefs-of-ontario.org

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## CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

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**SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY**  
**November 23-24-25, 2010**  
**Toronto, Ontario**

**RESOLUTION 10/16**

**SUBJECT: FIRST NATIONS CHILD CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MOVER: Chief Hazel Fox-Recollet, Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve**

**SECONDER: Chief Joel Abram, Oneida Nation of the Thames**

**DECISION: Consensus**

**WHEREAS:**

1. First Nations daycare/child care programs are provided through the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement, must adhere to the standards set out in the provincial legislation, (i.e., Day Nurseries Act), and have been without any additional funding directed to child care on reserve for many years.
2. Daycare/child care services in First Nation communities are vital, to the development of the child, and for preparing the child for entry into the education system, but were not included in the transition discussion on full day learning.
3. Daycare/child care is a much-needed program for all First Nations that will enhance full mental, physical, cultural, language, social and emotional development of our children, and will provide parental support that encourages employment, further education and training of our membership.
4. The daycare/child care programs have been transitioned to the Ministry of Education, required to be registered with the newly developed College of Early Childhood Education and to work within the development of an Early Childhood Educators Act, without consultation or consideration of the First Nations membership.
5. The daycare programs, supervisors and frontline staff have expressed their need for a networking body to assist in curriculum development, First Nation programming and information sharing.



**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, THE CHIEFS IN ASSEMBLY:**

1. Support the formation of a networking structure that will report to the Chiefs of Ontario through the Social Services Coordination Unit with the objective of advancing the best education in the early years of our children.
2. Demand that the federal government, the provincial government, and the Chiefs of Ontario Social Services, Education and Health Coordination Units meet to develop a strategy on the delivery of all day care/child care services to Ontario First Nations, and that the strategy include acquiring a commitment from both levels of government for expansion of services under the Day Nurseries Act.
3. Demand that the Ministry of Education honour the spirit and intent of the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement.
4. Encourage all First Nations Day Care/Child Care Centres to participate in the Early Learning Summit and the development of the five year strategy as identified by the Education Coordination Unit.
5. Mandate the Chiefs Committee on Social Services to initiate discussions with the Ministry of Education with the intent to influence the provincial government in ensuring that the Ministry of Education is fully apprised of its legal obligations under the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement.

**Certified Copy of a Resolution dated November 24, 2010.**



**Angus Toulouse, Ontario Regional Chief**

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## CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

**SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY**  
**November 23-24-25, 2010**  
**Toronto, Ontario**

**RESOLUTION 10/23**

**SUBJECT:** **EQUITABLE FIRST NATIONS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE CAPABILITIES, RESOURCES AND FUNDING**

**MOVER:** **Chief Joseph Gilbert, Bkejwanong First Nation**

**SECONDER:** **Chief Shining Turtle, Whitefish River First Nation**

**DECISION:** **Consensus**

### WHEREAS:

1. In 2009 the government of Ontario announced the implementation of full-day kindergarten in provincial schools for 2010, to include the hiring of new teachers, retrofitting and expansion of schools to fit needs, and updated curriculum with financial support of \$200 million for 600 schools in 2010, and \$300 million for an additional 200 schools in 2011.
2. First Nation schools must follow Ministry of Education standards and guidelines in order to receive funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).
3. The Province of Ontario and INAC are therefore further widening the gap in education needs for First Nations by drastically improving the provincial school system's early learning capabilities, while ignoring First Nations schools.
4. INAC has re-prioritized \$600,000 from current funds to support early learning for First Nation schools and students attending provincial schools for 2009. However, INAC has not made a firm commitment of new funds for the 2010-2011 fiscal year and beyond.
5. Child Care has been moved from the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education without consultation with First Nations.
6. INAC is currently developing a 5-year strategy for early learning within First Nations schools, with little to no consultations with First Nation education and social representatives.

7. First Nations that wish to offer full-time kindergarten are being denied the same additional resources and upgrades as their provincial school counterparts.
8. First Nations children have the right to accessible and comprehensive education programs, whether they attend provincial or First Nation schools.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, THE CHIEFS IN ASSEMBLY:**

1. Support the establishment of a regional working group that will include representation from the First Nations Child Care Advisory Committee, and have a mandate to create a First Nations Early Learning Model and identify those needs and gaps that exist which may pose barriers to the implementation of early childhood learning programs within First Nations, supported by funding from INAC.
2. Support an early learning summit for First Nation educational and child care experts to discuss the needs and best practices pertaining to early learning in First Nation communities.
3. Direct INAC to include First Nations in meaningful discussions on the 5-year strategy, to ensure that the needs of First Nation students are met.
4. Demand that the government of Ontario and its ministries conduct meaningful consultation and provide equitable and adequate information and support directly to First Nations when implementing new programs that affect First Nation schools and students.
5. Encourage all First Nations to take an active role to pursue equitable education funding for First Nation schools, including funding targeted for early childhood learning.
6. Demand the Ministry of Education and INAC honour their governments' duties to fund child care as documented in the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement.
7. Demand that INAC provide comparable and equitable funding and resources, as that of the Province of Ontario, for the purpose of implementing and maintaining early learning in those First Nations that wish to offer full-day, both senior and junior, kindergarten.

**Certified Copy of a Resolution dated November 24, 2010.**



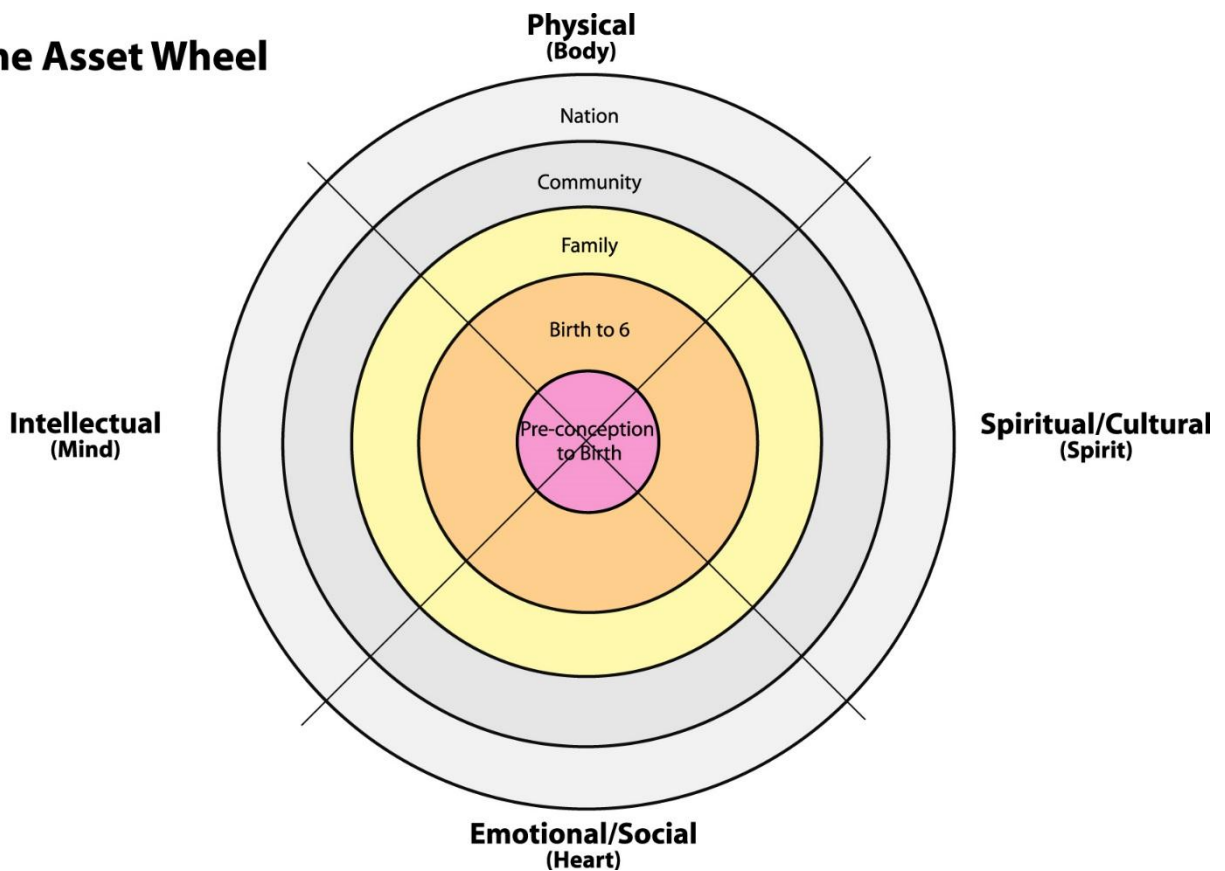
**Angus Toulouse, Ontario Regional Chief**



## Asset Wheel Used

The following wheel was modified from the one contained in the Facilitator Guide by the participants of the train-the-facilitators session held in Sudbury (August 13 and 14, 2013). This is the Asset Wheel used in the ELAMP.

### The Asset Wheel



## Six Steps of Asset Mapping



**STEP ONE:** Define Early Learning

**STEP TWO:** Identify and list assets

**STEP THREE:** Map assets on asset wheel.  
Locate strengths and gaps to determine whether holistic needs are being met

**STEP FOUR:** Review Early Learning definition – set goals

**STEP FIVE:** List objectives and activities to meet the goals and links between assets

**STEP SIX:** Assess and prioritize activities – use to input into Early Learning Plan

### TIPS!

Remember! This is not a learning exercise, rather an individual and team building exercise. You are empowering the participants! Have some fun!

If you are not having fun, then your participants are probably not having fun either. You can get more ideas across if people are engaged!

## STEP ONE: Define Early Learning Open Discussion

Now that you have ensured that all the participants are comfortable with the setting, the process and each other, you can begin the asset mapping process!

In order to assist with this Early Learning definition you could initiate some suggested **discussion**, such as:

- What is 'Early Learning' i.e. physical, mental, emotional and Spiritual
- How are you coordinating an Early Learning Plan at the community level
- What are your successes and challenges
- Given your current status (current health related programs, successes and barriers to integration), what are some ideas on how Early Learning programming could be better coordinated

### SETTING

Casual seating – preferably open square setting – easy for everyone to see brainstorming unfold.

#### Resources:

Flip chart paper, scentless markers OR PowerPoint with word processing page.

**You will record all of their input in point form which will be reviewed at Step Four.**

### EXPERIENCE

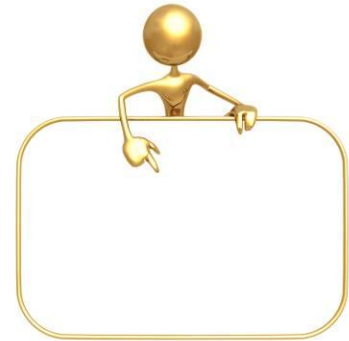
I have found what really works well is to type up this material and print out and have ready as handouts for day two!



## STEP TWO: Identify and List Assets Create a List of Assets!

Now that the participants are familiar with what assets are it is time to have them **identify the assets in their community** that will help them to develop an effective Early Learning program.

Be prepared that this step could take some time and you do not want to *rush* people. This is a step that you can always refer back to if people are thinking of additional assets.



### SETTING

Casual seating – preferably open square setting – easy for everyone to see exercise unfold.

#### Resources:

Flip chart paper, scentless markers OR PowerPoint with word processing page

Once all the assets have been listed you can determine whether each asset is a people, community, physical or economic asset i.e. the nurse is a people asset; the AHS is a community asset; the community centre is a physical asset; the bingo is an economic asset.

Alternatively, you could do this piece when you are plotting the assets as well, doing the two pieces together!

### STEP THREE: Map the Assets

Now the real fun begins! This is where the participants will really start to understand the asset mapping process. The next task is to begin plotting the identified assets onto the Asset Wheel within the **four quadrants** and **five rings** that focus on the needs of children, families and the community. These quadrants include the *physical, emotional-social, intellectual, and spiritual-cultural* aspects of the assets. The five rings (or circles) of the asset wheel are: economic, physical, community, people and child and family (refer to the diagram on the following page).

#### SETTING

Casual seating – preferably open square setting – easy for everyone to see brainstorming

#### Resources:

LARGE Asset Wheel Visual Aid, masking tape, DOTS

### Plot all the identified assets on the Asset Wheel

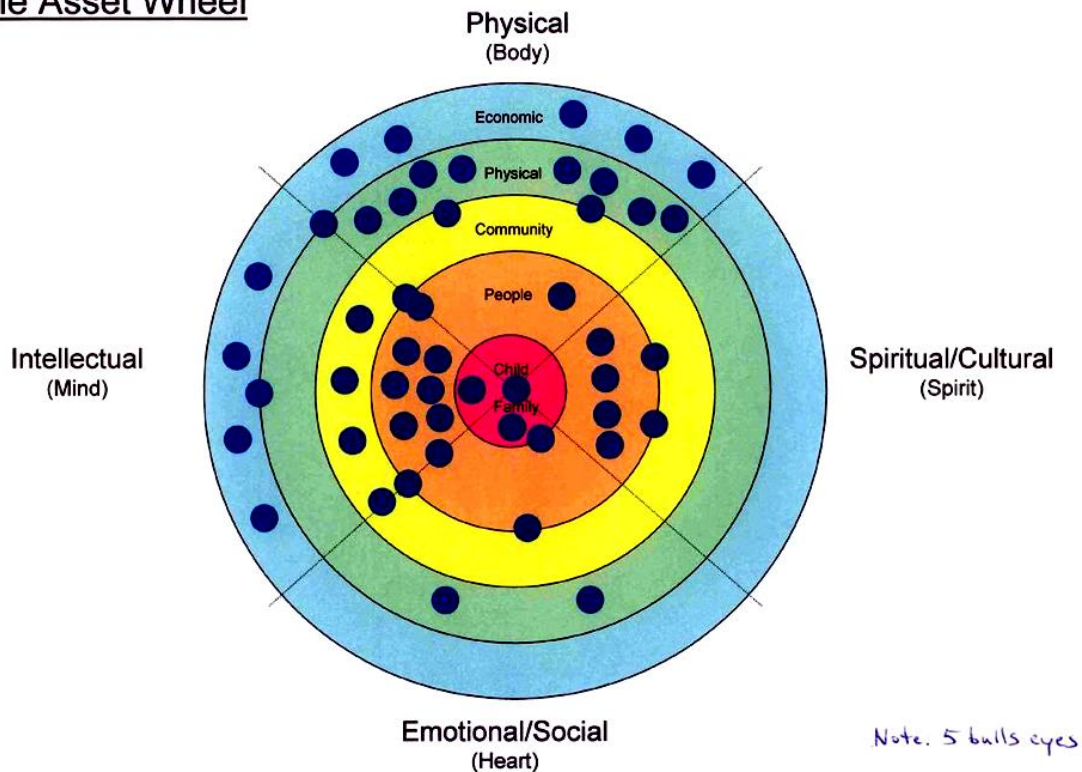
**Plotting** is accomplished by using dots to represent each of the previously identified assets. Each asset is read aloud and a determination is made whether the asset meets a physical, emotional-social, intellectual or spiritual-cultural need. For the first few assets you may want to indicate where the asset fits i.e. the nurse is a people asset and meets a physical need; the AHS program is a community asset and meets an intellectual need; the community centre is a physical asset and meets a social need; the bingo is an economic asset and meets a cultural need.



As the participants begin to plot the assets, it will become obvious that opinions will differ on which section the asset should be placed. Some assets could potentially fit in a number of sections but the idea is to agree on which section each asset best fits and acknowledge that the asset also addresses needs in other sections as well.



## The Asset Wheel



This diagram illustrates an example of an asset wheel that was utilized in this activity to “plot” the community’s assets.

### **Assess the Balances and Imbalances of the Wheel**

Once all of the dots have been placed on the wheel, invite participants to look closely at the wheel and see where there are **balances and imbalances**. This is an opportunity for community members to see that their community has many assets. This can be very affirming for the participants. They will be able to see where many of their strengths lie and where they could use some development overall.

#### Example:

For the example illustrated above, the Asset Wheel is not balanced. There are a lot of assets in the Intellectual and Physical quadrants and not so many in the Spiritual/Cultural quadrants. The focus group needed to keep this imbalance in mind while working on the Health Care Plan.

## STEP FOUR: Set Early Learning Goals

### SETTING

Casual seating – preferably open square setting – easy for everyone to see brainstorming unfold.

#### Resources:

Previous handouts from Step One with definition discussion, flip chart paper, scentless markers OR PowerPoint with word processing page.

You can have everyone review the definition discussion from Step One within the handouts.

You want to remind everyone of the discussion about the definition of 'Early Learning' from the previous day.

There may be some additional input which you can add.

You should anticipate that by this point in the process, people would have a more refined idea of what 'Early Learning' means to them, their families and the community.

Also from the plotting of the Asset Wheel and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their community's assets, they should be able to come up with a clear definition of what the 'Early Learning' programming should look like.

How can you achieve these goals with the assets that you have and by addressing the gaps?

You could develop a **Vision Statement** and/or **Mission Statement** that says how you will achieve Early Learning keeping in mind your assets, gaps and other work.

## STEP FIVE: Develop Objectives and Activities Voting!

Next you will ask the participants to **identify 5 - 7 assets** from the total list of assets that will be *fundamental* in further development of strategies and activities to support the goals from the Vision/Mission Statements.

In order to not place any pressure on any one individual, you will request the participants to place a dot by each of their choices which are listed on flipchart paper. You can have them do this individually or the preferable format is to have a few people vote together. If your focus group is small i.e. 8 to 10 people, you can let them proceed all at once. It may be helpful to have a quick discussion on why each of the top 7 assets is important to Early Learning.

Then you can determine which assets received the most votes in order of priority. These **asset priorities** will be utilized in the following section.

### Brainstorming Activities



participants will **brainstorm activities** that involve or focus on each asset. The participants should target 2 or 3 activities for each asset.

Ideally, you should set a target time for the group to finish and you can monitor their progress i.e. remind a group that they only have 15 minutes left to address 2 other assets.

This task will require flip chart paper for each asset that was previously identified as a priority. Depending on how many people you have in your focus group, you could divide people up into breakout groups of five to eight people. This allows the process to accomplish more tasks at once.

Next you would assign specific assets for each breakout group. One asset at a time, the

#### SETTING

Flip chart paper up on walls with easy access.

#### Resources:

List of Assets on flip chart paper, DOTS

#### SETTING

Casual seating (preferably open square setting) easy for everyone to see visioning.

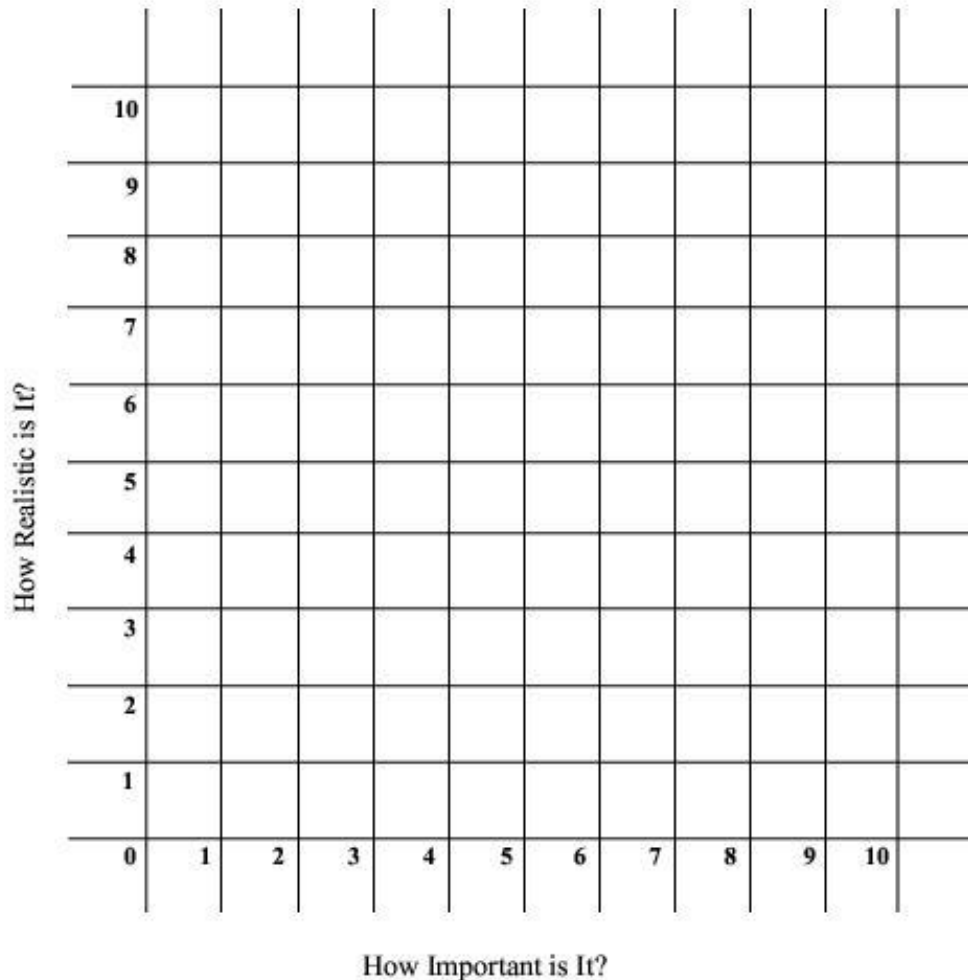
#### Resources:

Flip chart paper, scentless markers OR PowerPoint with word processing page.

## Assess Community Readiness

With each activity identified in the previous section, the participants will **assess the level of readiness** for these activities. In order to do this, the participants will be asked on a scale of 1 to 10 their assessment of the activity's importance and realistic value based on the vision statement and balances/imbbalances of the asset wheel.

This can be conducted in a scale format such as the following example:



Once the scale is completed, it will become very obvious to the focus group which activities can be part of immediate, intermediate and long-term planning. By assessing the readiness, the participants are able to determine whether it is an activity that can be initiated relatively quickly with few requirements or if it is an activity that is going to require time and additional resources to put into action.

This will assist the focus group to determine their **key activities** to be included into the Early Learning Community Plan.

## STEP SIX: Input into Early Learning Community Plan

Now utilizing the key activities from STEP FIVE the participants are ready to input into the Early Learning Community Plan.

### SETTING

Casual seating – preferably open square setting – easy for everyone to see brainstorming

#### Resources:

Flip chart paper, scentless markers OR PowerPoint with word processing page

### Develop a measurable goal statement for each activity

Further to completing the Early Learning plan, the participants are now asked to develop a **measurable goal statement** for each activity. By developing this type of statement the community is answering the question, "How will we know we are successful?" A goal statement includes the activity to accomplish, timeframes and the number of the target population that the activity hopes to serve.

### Identify Community Partners

Participants from various agencies or organizations in the community may be beginning to see ways that they will be able to network or collaborate on one or more of the goals that have been developed. In this column, **list programs** that can be involved in the development, coordination and delivery of the activities.

### Identify Resources

In this column, **list resources** that can be involved in the development, coordination and delivery of the activities. The completed chart is the Early Learning Plan!

#### Example:

Refer to the following page for an example of an Early Learning Community Plan.