



Conseil des Services du District de
Manitoulin-Sudbury
District Services Board

Child Care Quality Assurance March 22, 2018



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Executive Summary

High quality Child Care programs provide enriching early learning experiences that promote future well-being. The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board is committed to quality programs for all children. High quality programs respect diversity, equity, and inclusion and should value the language and cultural needs of our communities. Child Care programs should be inclusive of and accessible to children with a range of abilities.

Over the last two years the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has been assessing program quality in the Child Care programs across our district. Program reviews were done in 2015/16 and again in 2016/17. There are **several areas of staff development** which require immediate and ongoing attention to ensure the delivery of high quality Child Care programs namely:

- Understanding the stages of child development to ensure age appropriate expectations
- Delivering programs that support language and literacy development
- Promoting and supporting the development of self-regulation skills in children
- Developing pedagogical documentation skills and making documentation a daily habit and ongoing process of inquiry
- Promoting self-help and independence skills in children
- Increasing staff understanding of diversity and community culture
- Improving staff well-being, professionalism and mentoring

The reviews have confirmed that in most cases:

- children were found to be safe
- nutritious snacks and meals were provided to the children
- minimum Ministry of Education guidelines appeared to be met
- children appear to be happy and content
- all programs have an abundance of high quality equipment and furnishings

It is important to ensure the latest evidence and research is used to design programs. Programs should continue to be guided by

- [How Does Learning Happen?](#)
- [Think, Feel, Act: Lessons for Research about Young Children](#)
- [The Early Learning Framework](#)
- [Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework](#)

Increased partnerships between the Quality Assurance Program and Special Needs Resource program would support an inclusive and responsive environment for all children. Consistent and intentional support will lead to high quality programs that will enrich early learning and promote future well-being.

Introduction

The Child Care Mission of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) is to support social and economic development by investing in and supporting an affordable, accessible and accountable Child Care system benefitting children, their parents, caregivers and the broader community.

High quality Child Care programs provide enriching early learning experiences that promote future well-being. The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB is committed to quality programs for all children. High quality programs respect diversity, equity, and inclusion and should value the language and cultural needs of our communities. Child Care programs should be inclusive of and accessible to children with a range of abilities.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board provides funding and program support to 9 agencies who delivery 17 Child Care programs and 4 EarlyON centres, with extended, outreach, throughout the Manitoulin-Sudbury District.

Region	Community	Agency	Program
Manitoulin	Gore Bay	Gore Bay Child Care Centre	Infant-School Age
	Manitowaning	Gore Bay Child Care Centre	School Age
	Mindemoya	Manitoulin Family Resources	Family Group
	Mindemoya	Manitoulin Family Resources	School Age
	Little Current	Manitoulin Family Resources	Toddler-School Age
	Entire Region	Manitoulin Family Resources	Private Home Daycare
	Entire Region	Manitoulin Family Resources	EarlyON (English)
	Lacloche	Espanola	All Star Children's Services
Espanola		The One Tot Stop	Infant-School Age
Espanola		Our Children Our Future	Infant-School Age
Massey		The One Tot Stop	Preschool-School Age (S. Geiger)
Massey		The One Tot Stop	Preschool-School Age (St Mary's)
Entire Region		Our Children Our Future	EarlyON (French and English)
Entire Region		Manitoulin Family Resources	Private Home Daycare
Sudbury East		Markstay	YMCA
	Warren	Le Carrefour Francophone	School Age (French)
	St Charles	Le Carrefour Francophone	School Age (French)
	Noëlville	Le Carrefour Francophone	Preschool-School Age (French)
	Entire Region	West Nipissing Child Care Corporation	Private Home Daycare
	Entire Region	Our Children Our Future	EarlyON (French and English)
Sudbury North	Chapleau	Chapleau Child Care	Infant-School Age
	Chapleau	Chapleau Child Care	Toddler-School Age (French)
	Entire Region	Chapleau Child Care	EarlyON (French and English)

Methodology

In 2015 the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB embarked on a journey with Child Care providers to enhance their capacity to ensure children and families had access to high quality programs in our district.

Child Care providers and DSB staff agreed to begin the process with a quality review of each site. After researching many assessment tools, it was decided that the Program Quality Indicator ([PQI](#)) tool developed by the City of Greater Sudbury would be used in conjunction with *How Does Learning Happen?*

PQI focuses on the six principles of Early Learning for Every Child Today ([ELECT](#)). The principles are:

1. Lifelong Learning and Health
2. Partnerships
3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
4. Curriculum
5. Play
6. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE)/Staff

The [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\)](#) authorizes the Minister of Education to issue policy statements regarding programming and pedagogy to guide operators of Child Care and early years programs and services. On June 8, 2015 the Minister of Education named [How Does Learning Happen?, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years \(2014\)](#) as the document to be used for this purpose.



In addition to the six principles of ELECT, the review referenced the four foundations of Learning as outlined in *How Does Learning Happen?*

FOUNDATIONS	GOALS FOR CHILDREN	EXPECTATIONS FOR PROGRAMS
Belonging	Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.	Early childhood programs cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them.
Well-Being	Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.	Early childhood programs nurture children’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
Engagement	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.	Early childhood programs provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.
Expression	Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways.	Early childhood programs foster communication and expression in all forms.

Since the review in 2015, organizations were required to develop a program statement that is consistent with the Minister’s Policy statement on programming and pedagogy issued under subsection 55(3) of the Act.

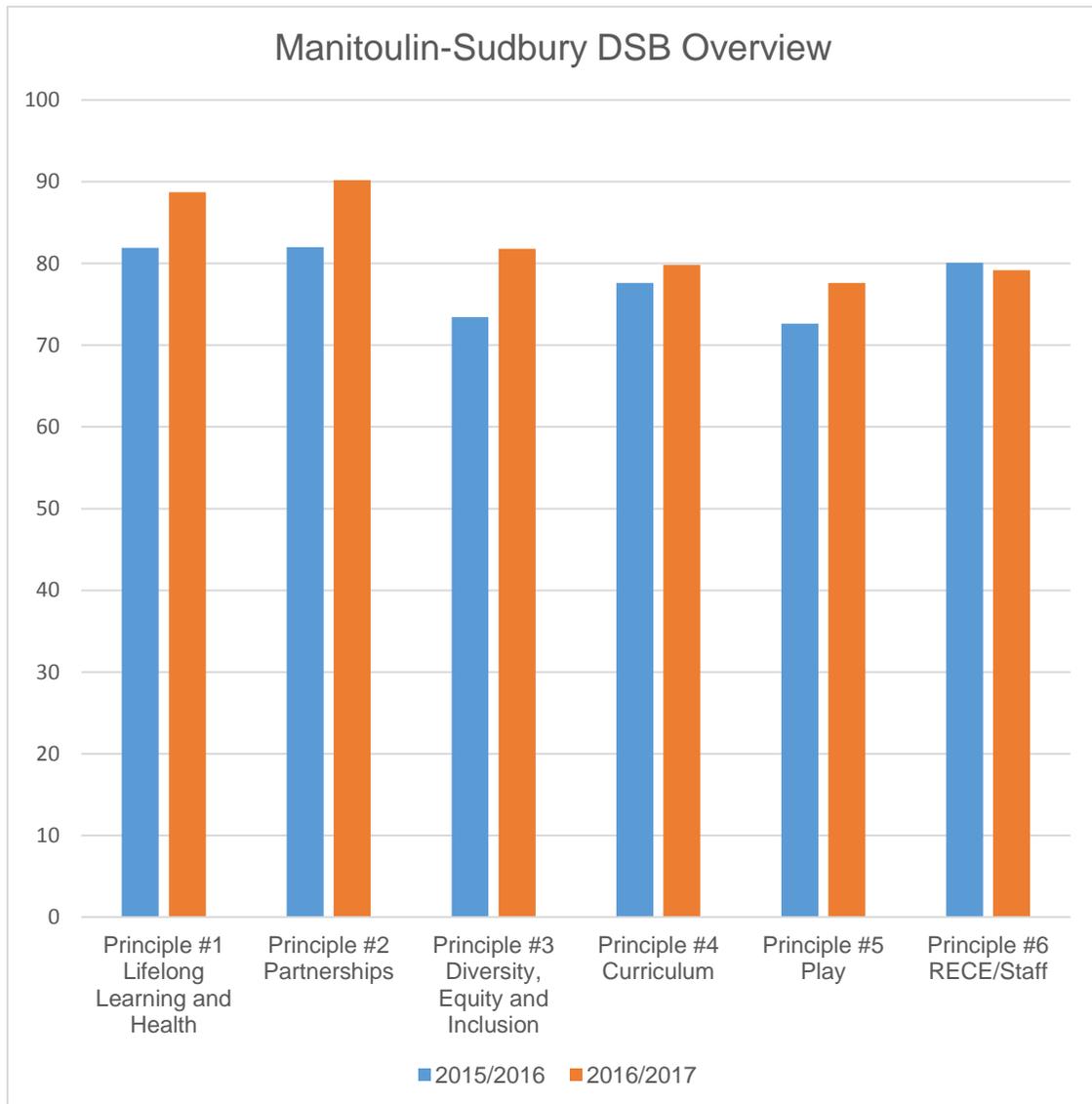
The program statement is expected to reflect a view of children as being competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. The program statement should describe the goals that guide the program for children at a Child Care centre it operates or at a home Child Care premises it oversees, and the approaches that will be implemented in the program.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has continued its work with Child Care providers to enhance quality in the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB area. In 2016/17 A follow-up Program Quality Indicator (PQI) review was conducted at each site to compare from one year to the next. To assess program accountability each organizations program statement was used to develop reflective questions and to provide feedback.



Results

The chart below outlines the comparison of PQI results for full day centre based programs. The PQI tool was not used in stand-alone before and after school programs and licensed home Child Care programs. Program statements and a narrative approach were more appropriate for these programs. The chart below indicates that there has been some growth in programs.



Successes

In most cases:

Programs were found to be **safe** and providing **nutritious snacks and meals** to the children in their care. Documents required by the Ministry of Education were posted, and **minimum Ministry of Education guidelines** appeared to be met.



Children appear to be **happy and content** in most programs, and there are many smiles and much laughter. Research shows that the highest indicator of a quality program is staff. Many of the programs employ staff with a variety of backgrounds, education and training, and in most cases, the staff are **dedicated** to the children and families they serve daily. Some staff have **embraced** the Ministry's Framework and Pedagogy for Ontario Early Childhood Settings.

Everyone is in a different place on their journey.

Programs have a **wonderful supply of natural furniture and equipment**, as well as materials that can be used in a variety of ways in each program. Programs that share space with a school or community organization continue to build partnerships to support the community. All programs have an **abundance** of high quality equipment and furnishings. To support a high-quality play-based learning environment, there will be an ongoing need for materials and supplies as well as professional learning opportunities to support intentional use of materials and supplies.



Areas for Growth

Through observation and conversation with staff, it was clear that growth is required in the following areas and should be focused on with intention:



Staffing continues to be a challenge for programs in the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB. Organizations continue to struggle with the **recruitment and retention** of RECE's as a result many programs are staffed with non-RECE's. To support the **recruitment** of RECE's it is necessary to increase awareness of the profession, this could be accomplished by participating in high school career fairs, community career fairs and promotion of the profession. The province of Ontario is addressing **recruitment** through the workforce strategy as outlined in [Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework](#).

Quality, pedagogical support and an increased focus on staff well-being can result in improved staff **retention**. Organizations have received funding to support a quality lead position that will work in partnership with the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Quality Assurance Program. The quality leads will be trained to mentor staff on site, they will be supported by their peers and the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Quality Assurance Program. It is expected as confidence, pedagogical understanding and staff well-being increase, staff retention will improve.

Professionalism

(regardless of education/experience) continues to be a challenge. Staff need to understand and value their work, they are educators and co researchers with children. Understanding and abiding by the College of Early Childhood Educators [Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice](#) is essential for all staff working with children and families. In the coming year it will be important to increase staff understanding of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of all staff working with children and families.



Sound Knowledge of Child Development remains an area of growth required in the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB. It is difficult to plan for children when staff is unaware of basic child development. In many cases, staff are not qualified which makes age appropriate planning challenging. It is recommended that additional efforts be made to provide a variety of opportunities for staff to receive professional learning. In January 2018 a half day workshop was provided for to enhance staff knowledge. The workshop was well attended but did not reach all staff in the district. It is also recommended that staff be supported through ongoing studies and mentorship opportunities. Quality leads along with the support of the quality assurance program will help increase professional learning opportunities.



Language and Literacy

should be integrated into every activity in every room. Language and literacy is often missed because of insufficient knowledge about its importance from infancy. Continued efforts to increase capacity in language and literacy is critical to program success. Many staff are receiving [Learning Language and Loving It](#) training which should be followed up with increased mentorship opportunities with the quality leads, quality assurance program and special needs resource program. This component is of critical importance and attention needs to be paid on an ongoing basis.

Self-regulation Skills are necessary for both children and staff. For children to learn to self-regulate, it is crucial that educators provide the means and opportunity to self-regulate. There appears to be some struggle for staff in allowing children the opportunity to experience a variety of emotions. Supporting children in the process of labeling their emotions and validating that it's "ok" to experience them, is just the beginning. Assisting children in working through their emotions will begin to give children the necessary skills to self-regulate. Self-regulation is about how a child can deal effectively with stressors and then recover. Staff can help children to learn strategies for becoming or staying calm and focused by enabling them to recognize and regulate their emotional states and impulses and become more aware of the effects of their actions on others. Staff members would benefit from additional professional learning to help understand the variety of emotions children feel and how they are expressed.





Pedagogical Documentation continues to be an area of growth for staff. Staff understand how important documentation is to “show” the learning that is taking place, however, putting the puzzle pieces together is a little more difficult than we ever expected. Once the staff understands the process, it will come naturally – with lots of practice. For now, staff are encouraged to keep observing children and following their interests, keep taking photographs and studying them, and try

their best to expand on the learning already taking place. It is important to continue to ask questions: *“What do they know? What don’t they know? What do they want to know?”* It is premature to plan for professional learning to support documentation at this point, priority should be given to better understanding the image of the child and observation techniques.

Self-help and Independence Skills are not always evident in programs. Most organization’s Program Statements, indicate the belief that children are competent and capable of complex thinking. Site visits have shown that educators seem to be struggling with giving up the “control” that educators have so children can be capable and competent. There are so many skills children must learn to get through life successfully, including problem-solving and decision-making. Because educators are caring and kind, they tend to feel the need to do everything for children and solve their problems to “make it better”. The image of the child needs to be better understood.



Efforts to be helpful are in fact stunting children’s growth and holding them back. Examples include small activities like serving their own food at snack/meal time, to problem-solving on a larger scale such as a toddler figuring out how to see out a window in his/her program that’s just too high. It is important to give them the time, the opportunity and the materials necessary to help themselves, to take risks, and to problem-solve and make decisions.

Diversity and the Culture of the Community

we all live in communities that have something special to offer. From language and traditions to socio-economics and lifestyle, culture is diverse, but our programs are often the same. Programs have been encouraged to reflect on themselves, their community and the families using their programs. It is important to recognize what makes our families unique. Programs should be considering community and family traditions, for example fishing, hunting, recreation, arts and food. In addition to traditions our communities have several landmarks and attractions that make us unique, these should also be considered when planning.



French language services are provided in accordance with French Language Services Act, programs will continue to be supported in their efforts to support staff, children and families develop their francophone identity. The Aménagement Linguistique Framework for the Early Years in Ontario when developed will support the development of program objectives including building francophone identity, parent and community engagement and the delivery of high quality French-language early years programs and service. Programs will be supported in their understanding of the framework.



Indigenous Programs and Services are of considerable importance in our communities. As the service system manager for Child Care and EarlyON Centres, the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board is responsible for programming for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and families off-reserve.

Aboriginal Cultural Competency and family engagement sessions were held last winter and spring, the sessions resulted in the development of a community vision that we: *“create a generation who naturally dismantle oppression”*.

To achieve the vision, several goals have been identified:

1. Increased access to culturally relevant services and programs for Indigenous families.
2. Enhanced and accurate Indigenous content.
3. Fostering Indigenous Identity.
4. Supporting Indigenous and non-Indigenous develop capacity.

Programs are committed to achieving the goals outlined above and recognize that additional professional development and reflection is necessary to achieve the vision. Programs will be supported by the Mniidoo Mnisging Sharing and Learning Centre for All. As described in the [Journey Together proposal](#).

Family Engagement is essential to successful Child Care programs. [Think, Feel, Act](#) and [How Does Learning Happen?](#) both focus on “connections” and “relationships”, including those with the families of the children in our early learning and care programs. Programs have been challenged to consider what family engagement looks and feels like. Additional work needs to be done to better understand family engagement. Guided



discussions to support family engagement would be beneficial for Child Care programs. Quality leads will be asked to look at family engagement more closely to ensure families are both engaged and involved in their child’s program.

Mental Health Awareness is of interest to staff working in early learning environments. Staff are looking for strategies to support their own mental health as well as the mental health of their colleagues, children in care and families. Additional professional learning opportunities need to be developed to build staff capacity.

Program Statements should be evident and clearly visible to children, families, visitors and staff. The program statement needs to be understood and lived daily in programs. Many programs would benefit from additional support to better understand their program statement and ensure it is lived. Programs should foster a sense of belonging, well-being, expression and engagement for children, families and educators.

Summary of Recommendations

After each site visit, the programs received a summary of the visit along with recommendations to support continued growth. Follow up visits are needed to ensure programs are supported in their efforts to grow.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Quality Assurance Program should conduct site visits for all EarlyON programs in the coming months and develop responsive capacity building plans to support program and staff growth.

To support both staff recruitment and retention, increased awareness of the profession is needed.

A fulsome Quality Assurance Program would include regular site visits, ideally once per month per site and ongoing mentorship and professional learning opportunities.

Programs need to be supported in their efforts to be responsive to child and family interests and needs to support development, health and well-being.

Programs should provide an environment that fosters a sense of belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

It is important to ensure the latest evidence and research is used to design programs fostering positive child and family outcomes. Programs should continue to be guided by

- [How Does Learning Happen?](#)
- [Think, Feel, Act: Lessons for Research about Young Children](#)
- [The Early Learning Framework](#)
- [Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework](#)

Increased partnerships between the Quality Assurance Program and Special Needs Resource program would support an inclusive and responsive environment for all children.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board Quality Assurance Program looks forward to further supporting Child Care and EarlyON programs in our communities. Consistent and intentional support will lead to high quality programs that will enrich early learning and promote future well-being.