

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board Child Care Quality Assurance

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Prepared for:

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Management and Board

Prepared by:

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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 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. This statement is intended to ensure high quality experiences that lead to positive outcomes for children's learning, development, health and well-being.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has embarked on a journey with child care providers to enhance their capacity to ensure children and families have 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

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.

Timeline

June 2015

Quality Assurance (QA) Working Group Established

- **Membership:** representatives from child care programs and Children's Programs Supervisor
- **Objective:** develop a community approach to quality assurance and professional development for Child Care in the Manitoulin- Sudbury District.

July 2015

Program Quality Indicator (PQI)

- After researching numerous assessment tools, the QA working group agreed that the **Program Quality Indicator (PQI)** created by the City of Greater Sudbury would be the most effective tool to establish community and program baselines.

August 2015

Workplan Created

- Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB contracted with Our Children Our Future (OCOF) to develop and implement a Quality Assurance Workplan. OCOF staff have considerable experience using the PQI tool.
- **Quality leads** were chosen for each program

September 2015

PQI Training

- Quality leads received a 1/2 day **training** to better understand the PQI.
- Once trained, the expectation was that quality leads would conduct the PQI assessments with OCOF staff

**Fall 2015-
Winter 2016**

Site Visits

- OCOF staff conducted **site visits** and completed the PQI with Quality Leads for each site.
- **Summary reports** were shared with Children's Programs Supervisor and site supervisors.

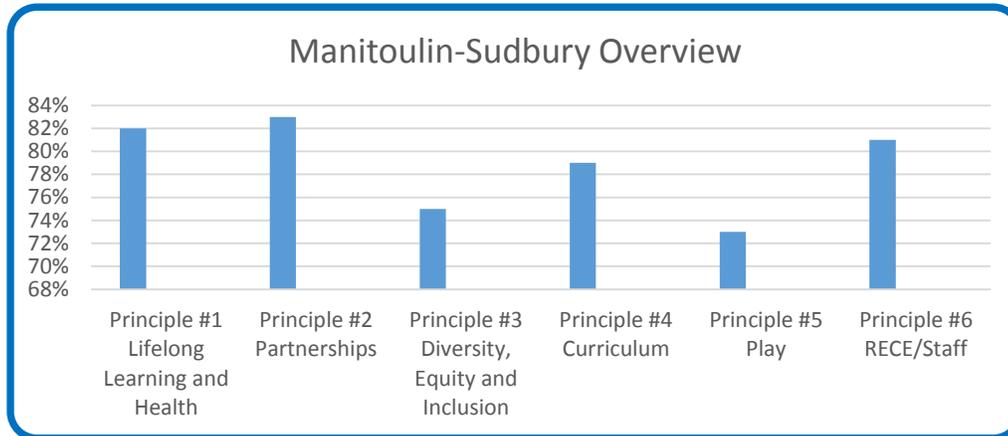
Winter 2016

- One time funding provided to Child Care programs to support their individual quality assurance plans.

**Winter/Spring
2016**

- Numerous Professional Development Opportunities were offered to child care staff.

The chart below outlines the summary of findings from all site visits.



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 on a daily basis. Some staff are **eager to embrace** the Ministry's Framework and Pedagogy for Ontario Early Childhood Settings.
- 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 do not share space with a school or other community organization do not have the challenges that the programs that do share space, seem to have. With some recommendations, suggestions and creativity, the shared space challenges can be addressed.

Some challenges were identified during the site visits including:

- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** in many cases the culture of individual communities is not addressed.
- **Knowledge of Families and Family Involvement in Curriculum Planning:** it was not clear in many cases that families are involved in the programs
- **The Environment as the Third Teacher:** most programs have a wonderful supply of natural furniture and equipment, however, in many cases the environment is not the third teacher and opportunities for exploration, discovery and experimentation are being missed.
- **Emergent/Play-Based Curriculum:** It is was evident that many staff would benefit from learning about and embracing Emergent/Play-based Curriculum.
- **Life Skills:** In many cases children were not providing with the opportunity and tools to demonstrate that they are capable and competent. This was particularly evident during meal time as children were not given the opportunity to serve themselves.
- **Problem-Solving Techniques:** Children were often not provided the opportunity to problem solve, in some cases children were not supported in labeling their emotions and develop self-regulation skills, instead they were told how they should feel.
- **Positive Role Modeling:** Children learn by watching and listening to adults, educators did not always role model positive language, hygiene practices and proper eating habits and manners.

- **Language, Literacy and Numeracy:** In most cases programs were lacking in the development of language, literacy and numeracy. There were few opportunities for children to engage and express themselves.
- **Positive Redirection:** Staff were often seen directing children (focusing on telling them what to do and what not to do) rather than connecting with children (getting down to their level, playing with them, providing a positive and rich environment with plenty of opportunity to engage and express themselves).
- **Sound Knowledge of Child Development:** it was clear in some programs that educators did not have a sound knowledge of child development, which in turn makes providing age-appropriate programming difficult.
- ***ELECT; Think, Feel, Act; How Does Learning Happen? Documents:*** some staff indicated they are familiar with these documents, while many did not.

After each site visit, the programs received a summary of the visit along with recommendations to address any challenges identified. In addition to individual support, program staff have been invited to numerous professional development opportunities aimed to build capacity including:

- **Program Statement Development:** each program is required by the Ministry of Education to develop a program statement that is consistent with the Minister's policy statement on programming and pedagogy. Ministry of Education staff attended a professional learning conversation with providers to provide additional support to program staff in advance of them developing their program statement.
- **College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) Code of Ethics:** Participants in the College of ECE Leadership Pilot offered workshops on Manitoulin and in Chapleau for program staff to better understand the CECE Code of Ethics. In addition to the Code of Ethics workshop the participants developed a workshop to help staff embrace *How Does Learning Happen?* this workshop was also offered on Manitoulin and in Chapleau.
- **Making Visible the Competent Child:** this workshop focused on the image of the child in relation to intelligent materials and the environment-the third teacher.
- **Relationship Building for Diversity and Inclusion:** this workshop aimed to build bridges between groups/people by sharing with participant's principles, attitudes and skills that create inclusive environments where people feel a sense of belonging.

In addition to the professional learning opportunities, programs have been working with OCOF staff to build on the successes and address the challenges identified during site visits.

During the summer of 2016, OCOF staff and DSB staff will determine what professional learning topics will be offered based on feedback from child care providers. Site visits will be conducted in the fall of 2016 and a follow up report will be completed.